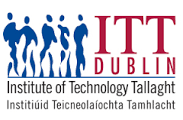
[](http://www.google.ie/url?url=http://www.strata3.com/work/eir&rct=j&frm=1&q=&esrc=s&sa=U&ved=0ahUKEwiFmPOj5J_LAhUElg8KHb58Ag4QwW4IJTAI&usg=AFQjCNF7d0WVa4dG9Fiq3ekZYNHnOHKhmQ)[](http://www.google.ie/url?url=http://www.irelandmalaysia.com/ima-news/attachment/itt-logo-300/&rct=j&frm=1&q=&esrc=s&sa=U&ved=0ahUKEwi-3JW35J_LAhVEcg8KHWHGCl4QwW4IGTAC&usg=AFQjCNEU2XEjW7ufLdWniUV4eP0aw2HJyg)

Critical Evaluation of MicroStrategy

Dashboarding Tool

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# 1. Introduction

This report will outline both the advantages and disadvantages of the dashboarding capabilities of MicroStrategy. I will draw comparison from other Business Intelligence (BI) Tools in order to give a clear understanding of what MicroStrategy is and why Eir is putting such a big emphasis on using the tool. I will also give my opinion on why dashboarding is so important in a reporting section of a company and how it benefits other parts of the company also. Within the report I will be building a MicroStrategy dashboard myself from an Eir dataset. Drawing light onto how MicroStrategy is better than its competitors will be one of my aims throughout the report and I’ll do this through comparative grids giving various different sections of MicroStrategy rates against its competitors such as Tableau and Hyperion. I will also give in depth descriptions of the BI Tools and what they contain and give to their customers.

## What is a dashboard?

A dashboard-style report is a display of related sets of data on one screen. A dashboard-style report is commonly used to assess company or personal performance, to take a status check of the company, or to monitor personal work or work group contributions to overall goals of the business. Dashboard style documents summarize key business indicators by presenting them in visually intuitive, easy-to-read, interactive documents. A dashboard-style report allows interactivity from users, so each user can change how they see the data, within the limits of what the controls allow them. Users can change how they view the dashboard's data using interactive features, such as selectors, grouping, widgets, and visualizations. They can explore data via multiple paths, using text, data filtering, and layers of organization. Dashboards are extremely important in Eir as the reporting team sent out a huge amount of reports on a daily weekly and monthly basis therefore they must have dashboards in order to easily describe what the data is coming back as. It is also important for parts of the company that might not be as educated on how data work and need a visual depiction to help understand the reports better.



# 2. Market Leaders

There is a variety of different Business Intelligent Software out there all competing with one another in order to get the most customers. The different ones I will be particularly looking at will be MicroStrategy, Hyperion and Tableau. Each of these BI tools has their own different capabilities and are also very similar in so ways. Eir have previously used Hyperion for their BI Tool but are now putting all their reporting analysis into MicroStrategy due to its ease of use and great dashboarding capabilities. I will then use Tableau as a third BI tool to draw comparisons to both Hyperion and MicrStrategy.

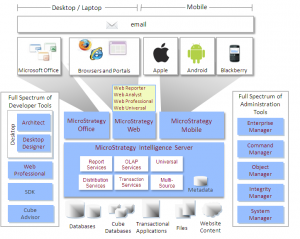
## 2.1. MicroStrategy

MicroStrategy is becoming Eir’s main BI front end tool as the company is currently in the transition of putting all their data into a single consolidate warehouse called EDW (Enterprise Data Warehouse).

The MicroStrategy Analytics platform is a self-service business intelligence platform that supports both data mining and visualization. Available for Web-based or on-premise deployment, this platform can be implemented on a gradual and as-needed basis, so users can start small and scale to enterprise-level deployment overtime.

This platform supports interactive dashboards that combine the functionality of multiple applications, including dashboards that can monitor markets and company portfolios, conduct risk analyses and correlate real-time data analysis with information from news and social media.

The desktop version of MicroStrategy Analytics is free, while the enterprise version is priced on a metered (for cloud-based deployment) or named-user basis. There is also a cloud based version of MicroStrategy available to companies called MicroStrategy Analytics Express which uses SaaS (Software as a Service).

[](http://innovacons.com/wp/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/mstr-architecture-4-e1365324288126.png)

There are a variety of schema options on MicroStrategy the main ones being Facts, Attributes and Hierarchies. Facts are anything that you want to display on your report that can be calculated such as for example if a company would need to measure their sales in a month on a particular report. Attributes would be the data in the warehouse which is descriptive such as a customer’s name, house number or billing account ID. Hierarchies will enable MicroStrategy users to browse through their attributes easily as it groups them together e.g. a time hierarchy would include Years, Months and Weeks.

There are also different application objects available in MicroStrategy. These applications include Metrics, Templates and Filters. Metrics are calculations within the report which are built through facts these are used to give for example and average of the revenue the company has had over a number of months. Templates are the layout of the report and how the data is viewed by the user and this can be changed by the user easily. Filters can be also applied onto reports in MicroStrategy these can be dates which you want your report to be filtered to.

## 2.2. Hyperion

Hyperion is the BI tool used previously by Eir before the adaptation of MicroStrategy. It is an old BI tool and is becoming less and less used throughout the company as all reports are starting to be created, deployed and ran on MicroStrategy in order to decommission all reports on Hyperion. MicroStrategy is a huge upgrade from Hyperion and will be much easier for users to read reports and get the results that they need from these reports. Hyperion is an oracle based BI tool which can create reports and build dashboards similar to MicroStrategy. However, the software is just not as advanced as that of MicroStrategy and therefore the change needs to happen.

Oracle have taking over Hyperion since 2007 and set it up in the business division of their company. The Hyperion portfolio includes products for financial management, budgeting, planning and forecasting (BP&F), financial reporting, database management, financial consolidation, treasury management and analytics.

## 2.3. Tableau



I will also use a third BI tool in order to show the advantages and disadvantages of MicroStrategy this one being the data visualisation company Tableau. It is uses its data visualisation to make it is easier for users to describe what the data is telling them through the use of the main topic of this report dashboards. It connects very easily to data sources be that a data warehouse or even Microsoft Excel. Similar to MicroStrategy is uses a drag – and – drop method which allows users to easily pull the data into the report without it being difficult to locate and add the specific data they need into the report. Tableau is a general purpose Data Analytics software with an excellent presentation layer (maybe one of the best in visual presentation of data) and highly ranked in user friendliness (may be second to MS Excel).On the downside, it is very expensive and not in everyone's budget. I felt myself when using Tableau that it was very easy to get around and I had no problems getting used to it as a new user of the tool.

There are various different versions of Tableau that can be downloaded depending on the users need from the too. There is tableau desktop which can be bought with two different versions of its own which are tableau personal and tableau professional. Tableau desktop personal allows you to connect to 6 data sources, including MS Excel and csv files, It gives you 1 year of updates and support included and local saving & sharing. Whereas Tableau desktop professional allows you to Connect to 44 data sources, including MS Excel and csv files, gives you 1 year of updates and support included with Local saving & sharing and it is compatible with Tableau Server and compatible with Tableau Online.

# 3. Important Factors

There are a lot of factors that need to be taking into consideration when choosing which business intelligence tool you are going to use. Each tool should be thoroughly examined before a company can bring it in to their own operation that they have running. During my time in Eir I have been giving the chance to speak with people whom were involved in the process of choosing MicroStrategy as Eir’s main BI tool and they’ve told me that they tested various options however, MicroStrategy was the best suited to what company is trying to achieve in its reporting area. I myself will examine various factors such as cost, ease of use and also how much training employees would need in order to understand the tool.

## 3.1. Cost Factor

Cost is a huge consideration that must be taking into account in any company and the same goes for a huge telecommunications company like Eir. Every business needs to manage their spending sensibly and efficiently so that they can make as must revenue as they can with as little cost as they can. Therefore, they cannot just go straight in and purchase a product without checking every aspect of that product including the price. I have been involved within the revenue side of the company in which I had to create a report for them and I see how much emphasis there is on them to make sure figures are always at a surplus and not a deficit. The experience I have gained within Eir has shown me that cost is a huge aspect that transcends through every part of a company which I found to be extremely interesting and great to witness first hand.

### 3.1.1. MicroStrategy Cost

MicroStrategy is one of the most expensive BI tools in the market as you can see in the below pricing range. The various packages are priced below and a company must take this into consideration when deciding which MicroStrategy package would best suit them and their company. Eir themselves have acquired the web package in which users like myself can use MicroStrategy online also with this they have giving some of the employees with the most experience with the tool a server package or desktop package.

* **Web Package:**600/named user; 300K/ CPU core
* **Mobile Package:**600/named user; 300K/ CPU core
* **Architect Package:**$5,000/ named user
* **Server Package:**1,200/named user; 600K/CPU core

### 3.1.2 Hyperion Cost

Hyperion has a huge amount of different packages which users can choose from. Below I have chosen four of those packages and the license price of each of those packages from this I have seen that Hyperion comes in at a lot less than MicroStrategy and Tableau which might tempt users.

* **Hyperion Financial Management Plus:** 5,200
* **Hyperion Financial Close Management:** 5000
* **Hyperion Disclosure Management:** 10,000
* **Financial Management Analytics:** 1,000

### 3.1.3 Tableau Cost

Tableau like MicroStrategy is a very expensive BI tool and is this is one of it very few downfalls. Similarly to MicroStrategy Tableau can be purchased in different versions depending on the level of Tableau the user will need to use.

* **Tableau Personal**: 999.00
* **Tableau Professional**: 1’999.00
* **Tableau Server:** Starts at 10,000.00 for 10 users. Future annual upgrades & support are 25% per year
* **Tableau Online:** 500.00 per user, per year

## 3.2. Ease of Use

Ease of use needs to be examined in any BI tool before buying into it. The user of the tool must be able to navigate it easily in order to create the report and dashboard they needs. This is also important for the company as they need their employees to be able to require the skills of operating the tool quickly and adapt to it quickly also. This is taken into consideration on all the told I have examined with some more than others. From my own experience working in Eir I have seen first-hand that this is a big factor for them as they are making this big transition to using MicroStrategy. There is a lot of people inside the company and inside the reporting team that had never used the tool before and were unsure of what way to change from there ways of using the Hyperion reports they would usually run. Thus, creating an importance that MicroStrategy needed to be easy to use.

From my examination of each of the BI tools I have noticed that MicroStrategy is extremely easy to use due to its drag and drop capability. While creating the dashboard below I was able to easily drag in the data which I needed to present in the dashboard. The creative aspect of the dashboard was also very straightforward I aligned each of the sections of the dashboard with no difficulty at all.

## 3.3. Training Required

Another extremely important factor when acquiring a new BI tool would be how much training there will be required from employees. This is important as it will affect the work rate of the employees due to them having to take time out of their daily routine and projects in order to be trained onto the new tool. This can also transcend through a company such as Eir due to the reporting team being pivotal to the daily running of the company the reports which are ran on a daily will not be able to be done if the employees need to be taking away from their work in order to be trained. Therefore, when assessing a new BI tool a company must look into this aspect of the tool and ensure training is as minimal as possible fort the employees in the company.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Market Leaders | Cost Factor | Ease of Use | Training Required |
| **MicroStrategy** | 5 | 9 | 9 |
| **Hyperion** | 8 | 5 | 5 |
| **Tableau** | 5 | 10 | 9 |

# 4. MicroStategy Dashboard

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