Embedded Analytics: Questions to ask

An insights-driven application is one that goes beyond operational reporting and possesses six key characteristics. Here are the key questions that you should ask any embedded analytics vendor to ensure they can support your current and future requirements:

User Experience

- [ ] Can users seamlessly access embedded versions of the analytics application? What are the options and how are logins managed?

- [ ] What customization options are available to ensure a consistent visual style between the embedded analytics solution and the business application (colors, images, logos, language)?

- [ ] What visualizations are natively available right off?

- [ ] Can visualizations be added from other libraries if not offered natively? Which ones?

- [ ] What options do developers have to embed the analytics solution into the business application? How do these options match our development needs and standards?

- [ ] Are any supportive tools available for front-end developers?

- [ ] Does the embedded analytics solution offer: alerts, scheduled emails, automated and manual dashboard and data exports?

- [ ] Can users easily adjust dashboards and reports themselves?

- [ ] Can users easily upload data into the embedded analytics solution themselves (via CSV for example)?

User-Created Content

- [ ] Do you support user-created content? What type of content?

- [ ] Can users share content they have created with their peers?

- [ ] What skill level is required on the part of users in order to create content?

- [ ] What data exploration capabilities are regular business users able to use?

- [ ] What control mechanisms (semantic layers, reusable metrics, layered security) exist to ensure users do not produce and share inaccurate results?

- [ ] How can we manage new releases across deployments without breaking individual customizations made by our customers?

- [ ] What mechanisms exist to help guide users in asking new questions of the data (for example, hierarchical filtering options)?

- [ ] How can our technical users access advanced visualization capabilities? Do they need to contact their admins?

Analytical Capabilities

- [ ] Do you support advanced analytical capabilities such as time-series analysis, snapshotting, machine learning, or visualization of geospatial data?

- [ ] Can business analysts create new metrics easily and on-the-fly? How can they reuse pre-existing queries and metrics?

- [ ] Are the metrics able to adapt to different contexts (context-aware) or do they need to be rewritten for each new circumstance?

- [ ] Are the metrics dependent on the physical data? What happens when the data source structure changes?

Scalability

- [ ] What size of deployment are you able to support, in terms of client companies, their end users and total data volumes?

- [ ] How do you technically manage the separation of customers (i.e. client companies), teams and any other user groups, and their data, when all these run on the same embedded analytics platform? Is it automated?

- [ ] Does scaling to more users and user groups affect the performance of the embedded analytics solution? How?

- [ ] How much do you need to customize per user group?

- [ ] How are customizations (data pipeline, dashboard building, branding) handled per user group?

- [ ] How are releases of new versions managed across customers? How much time does the process take? How many errors across users' dashboards and reports are usually triggered?

- [ ] How often are new versions released?

- [ ] How does pricing change with an increased/decreased number of customers (i.e. client companies), user groups, and users?

Data and Operational Capabilities

- [ ] What data sources are supported by your embedded analytics platform?

- [ ] Do you allow the combining of multiple data sources within one data model?

- [ ] What is the data refresh rate in the solution? Do you support both full and incremental loads?

- [ ] How is the data load scheduled? How is the provisioning of data to users scheduled?

- [ ] What are the data modeling capabilities? What is the level of automation in data connection and modeling? How much effort is required from the data connection to make the data ready for exploration by the end user?

- [ ] What capabilities are available for data preparation? Where does data preparation occur?

- [ ] What are the security standards supported by the solution? Which regulatory requirements are covered? Does it fit our current needs and future plans?

- [ ] Which analytical and monitoring capabilities are available to overview the embedded analytics and its usage by the end users?

- [ ] Who is responsible for the maintenance and innovation of the analytics platform? How will it affect end users?

Integration and Orchestration

- [ ] How does the embedded analytics solution communicate with host applications? Which Single-Sign-On (SSO) options do you support?

- [ ] Does the platform embrace and extend modern UI frameworks such as React and Angular?

- [ ] Does the platform support agile change management? How are changes applied to customers' accounts? How fast can you deploy all changes to the customer base?

- [ ] Does the platform support different versions of analytical applications, such as a tiered offering, for customers? How can the resources (such as models, metrics or reports) be shared and reused across different versions?

- [ ] Are APIs provided for all operational functions including user, storage and front-end provisioning?

- [ ] Do you provide any services that can help with missing expertise or with streamlining the delivery timeline of the embedded analytics project?

Get in touch with our experts for personalized advice as well as a guided tour of the GoodData platform. They'll help you to discover its rich feature set, ease of implementation, and unparalleled performance.

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