



10 Ways Sharperlight Can Transform Your Reporting Process

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Introduction

There are many challenges organisations face with their daily reporting, data analysis and business intelligence (BI) processes. Some of the common challenges include:

- No real-time access to data, resulting in delays in accessing data and an impact on business performance.
- Inability to fit into future BI strategies or provide a strategy for going forward.
- A one-size-fits-all strategy, leaving no flexibility.
- One-way read only functionality, unable to offer “write-back” capabilities.
- No integration with familiar tools, such as MS Excel, browsers and mobile technologies.
- Inability to operate across multiple data sources.
- Hidden costs in additional hardware and expensive consulting resources.

Taking these challenges on board, phiLight Software International developed Sharperlight, an enterprise reporting framework providing users with simplified intelligence to get control of their data in a way that no other solution can. In this eBook, we take a look at 10 ways in which Sharperlight transforms reporting to overcome these challenges.

1 - Sharperlight is Easy to Use

Sharperlight has a single, intuitive interface for building, exploring and publishing queries. The same common interface is available on the desktop, in Excel, in a browser and Microsoft SQL Reporting Services.

“We got to grips with Sharperlight really quickly and were writing reports within a day of having it installed. To be honest, Sharperlight has just made our lives so much easier!”

Henok Yemane, Group Financial Controller
Mintel Group



2 - Sharperlight is Accessible from MS Excel

Sharperlight has a native Microsoft Excel add-in, resulting in extremely high user adoption. From the comfort of Excel, users can create powerful and refreshable reports, using real-time data, from multiple databases.

“Because of its Excel presentation layer the end users could keep using the same Excel reports they had for years, but the data behind them was replaced with a single source of the truth.”

Rob Daw, Principal Consultant
MiPlan Consulting



3 - Sharperlight is Accessible from Web Browsers

With Sharperlight, reports can be published and securely accessed via the WebChannel. The Query Engine can securely deliver content over the web, as Reports, Charts, Pivot Tables, Dashboards and Mashups. This helps staff to make better informed decisions as accurate and timely information is available at any time, from any location, or any device.

“I cannot emphasise how critical these reports have been to the business. Without them, Hall & Prior would not be in a strong a financial position as it is.”

Matthew Wheatley, Chief Information Officer
Hall & Prior



4 - Sharperlight has Dashboards

Sharperlight has a built-in dashboard, allowing users to develop and publish geographically rich dashboards that are easy to create from queries and can show several reports on one beautiful screen.

“Management can now get an instant view of sales, cost of sales etc. via a dashboard helping improve our business decisions.”

Simon Robinson, Financial Controller
Doctors Chambers



5 - Sharperlight Provides Real-Time Functionality

Sharperlight's dynamic intelligent meta-data layer, DataModel, provides real-time, bi-directional, functionality for any business systems. The solution is designed as a generic technology toolset that enables the extraction of data and the ability to write back data to a different database via the Excel or Web interfaces then refresh a report or graph and see the updated data.

This feature is perfect for month-end, bulk data loads and budgeting. At month-end for example, you can re-run reports in real time, so you no longer need to wait for (overnight) refreshes of the data.

"We can now do in hours what took days or more with the traditional tools we had before."

Geoff Costello, Project Manager Data Migration Team
Office of Shared Services WA Government



6 - Sharperlight Provides Drill-Down and Drill-Through Capabilities

Sharperlight is so simple and flexible that it supports both drill-down and drill-through functionality. Using the Query Builder, the common user interface, you can drill down and drill through to the source data, making it easy to access information. Data is rapidly acquired, then can be shared and discussed. The slice and dice functionality is particularly useful when the auditors visit as you can quickly find the data required.

“You write a report in Sharperlight, press the button and away you go.”

Simon Robinson, Financial Controller
Doctors Chambers



7 - Sharperlight is a Self-Service System

Sharperlight's ease-of-use enables the lay user to carry out self-service reporting, rather than relying on reporting specialists. Once the Datamodel is set up, users can build and distribute reports themselves. IT/specialist report developers can still control and oversee the report delivery if required, but can focus instead on data access and security. This marks a shift in reporting as users can now get the data they need, when they need it and in a format that they require.

"It has reduced the burden on staff and given flexibility to the analysts to get the data they need."

David van den Berg, Chief Information Officer
Macmahon



8 - Sharperlight Reveals Hidden Data Intelligence

Sharperlight provides a high level of visibility as users can report across multiple systems, discovering trends and relationships that are otherwise obscured by separate applications. Users can report from multiple business systems within a single report, such as a finance system and an operations system, via a DataModel - a dynamic abstraction layer. You can also report from on-premise and SaaS applications at the same time.

“The system enables management to really look at data and analyse it and come up with KPIs to manage it. Additionally, because it’s so simple to use we can review key reports daily and nip any negative trends in the bud very early on.”

Matthew Wheatley, Chief Information Officer
Hall & Prior

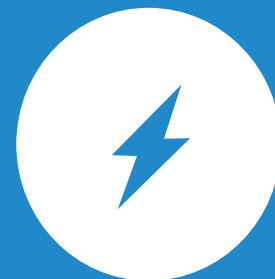


9 - Sharperlight is Extremely Quick

Within minutes, Sharperlight and Datamodels can be plugged in, turned on, reports built and deployed. Using the Query Builder, data is rapidly acquired, then can be shared and discussed. The slice and dice functionality is particularly useful when the auditors visit as you can quickly find the data required.

“It’s really transformed much of what we do because it’s so fast.”

Simon Robinson, Financial Controller
Doctors Chambers

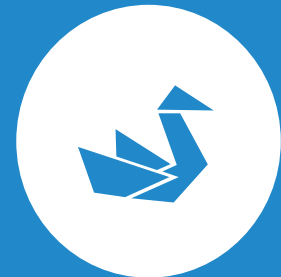


10 - Sharperlight can Enhance Existing BI Strategies

Sharperlight can fit into and enhance any existing BI strategy and grow as business requirements evolve over time, so organisations no longer need to stick with an inflexible, one-size-fits-all strategy. You may not need to replace what you currently have and by simply enhancing your existing strategy you can lower the financial cost and disruptive impact associated with an overall change in strategy. It is flexible in that it can adapt and change in line with business requirements.

“The performance of Sharperlight is extremely impressive.”

Geoff Costello, Office of Shared Services
Western Australia Government



Conclusion

All in all, Sharperlight provides simple tools that really empower the end user, making it easy to access data, at the right time and in a format that can be easily distributed. Whilst Sharperlight is one of many solutions that can handle big data, its simplicity, flexibility and unique functionality set it apart from the crowd.

Many organisations across a range of industry sectors are already benefiting from simplified reporting, including, government departments, manufacturers and education and healthcare providers.



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