CUSTOMER CASE STUDY

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DISCOVER, SCOPE, DELIVER

Hydro Tasmania
The power of natural thinking

Using Safyr® to harness the power of natural thinking in a SAP Business Intelligence project

Project

Meeting business requirements for information

Delivering reports, dashboards and analytics solutions based on SAP and SAP BW source data

Challenge

Staff unfamiliar with SAP and SAP BW

No available data model for SAP and SAP BW sources

Traditional approach using Google searches, and hypothesis testing unsuccessful

Solution

Safyr used to infer data models from customised SAP implementation

Benefits

- Time saved
- Improved accuracy
- Increased productivity

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Background

Hydro Tasmania has been a leader in renewable energy development since it pioneered hydroelectric power generation in Australia over one hundred years ago.

It is now the country's largest producer of renewable energy. They use a combination of water and wind power to harness natural energy that they sell into the national grid.

In addition the company owns Momentum Energy, a specialist electricity retailer that provides high quality products and services to their customers in Australia. They also operate an international consulting business, Entura which offers expert power engineering, renewable energy, water and environmental solutions locally, nationally and internationally.

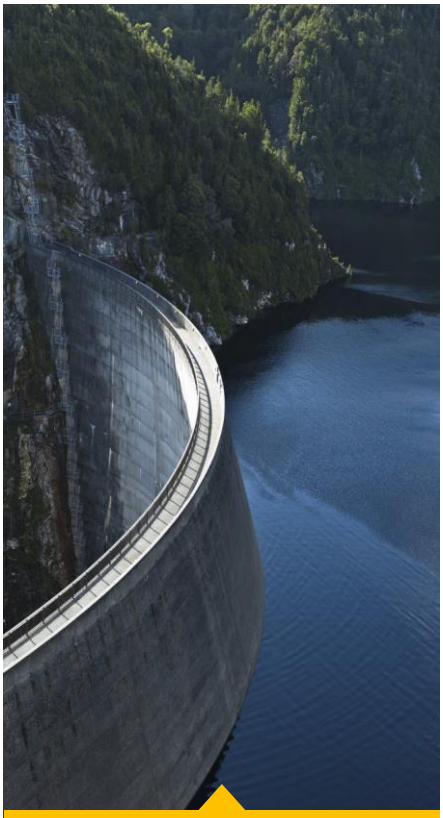
Situation

Hydro Tasmania started an implementation of SAP in 2010 to replace over 50 legacy applications to bring more control and easier management to the business. SAP went live in 2013, although there is still ongoing work to refine the solution being undertaken.

The modules implemented include Finance, HR, Supply Chain, Asset Management, Project Management, EHS, GRC and BW.

Other applications which support other areas of the business still remain, including Retail systems which are mainly used by Momentum Energy.

Initial reports were developed by the System Integrator.



Hydro Tasmania's Gordon Dam
The dam is 192 metres (630 ft.) long and 140 metres (460 ft.) high. It is the tallest dam in Tasmania and the fifth-tallest in Australia.

Subsequently, the Business Intelligence team, managed by Scott Delaney, was charged with delivering enhancements to those; as well as building new reports, dashboards and analytics from both SAP and SAP Business Warehouse (BW) sources using the SAP Business Objects product suite. (WEB Intelligence, Crystal Reports, Dashboards and Analytics

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Challenge

The first challenge encountered by the BI team was the lack of data models or documentation about the data models for SAP ECC or for SAP BW.

This meant that they had no start point from which to begin to find the data they needed in order to be able to build or enhance the reports, dashboards or analytics which were required by the business.

Prior to the implementation of SAP, the team had been extremely proficient and confident in providing data to the business which originated in the various legacy applications.

Now however they needed to understand how to get data from new sources, SAP and SAP BW, without documentation or data models.

Whilst trying to build skills in these systems, the size, complexity and opaque nature of their data models meant that this task was extremely daunting and led to the team becoming frustrated and working at a reduced pace.

This metadata discovery, or source data analysis phase in any information focused project is critical for success because without accurate information about the underlying data structures of an application from which to work, the implementation team are hampered in their efforts to deliver.

Small, often in house built applications, databases or spreadsheets usually present little in the way of an obstacle for discovery, however large, complex and customised packaged applications offer a challenge on a much greater scale and with more associated risk if not done properly.

As a result, they found that putting together a [simple] single data model containing just the tables they needed for a particular set of reports could cost as much as AUS$20,000 in internal resources.

Hydro Tasmania, a leader in wind and other renewable energy technologies.

It quickly became obvious that trying to locate the right data from SAP or SAP BW was a major hurdle which affected the BI team's ability to meet deadlines and was resulting in a growing backlog and potential damage to their internal reputation.

Initial approaches to the problem

As Scott Delaney says: "We were originally informed that no data model was available for the SAP application or for SAP BW".

The System Integrator involved in the project also offered to build a data model for them, however the time it would have taken was not fitting and the price was outside the acceptable budget parameters.

Lacking a clear set of documentation, the team resorted to a combination of searching Google for SAP data models and using a 'best guess' approach to finding what they needed for reporting, analytics and dashboards.

They also made use of a process of hypothesis testing through data observation.

As they continued to struggle to deliver this content accurately and in an acceptable timescale, they decided to look for other methods of accessing and understanding SAP and SAP BW metadata.

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Choosing Safyr

As part of their search, a team member found Safyr, which on initial investigation gave them confidence that it would help them to quickly and accurately find the part of the SAP model that they needed for the specific business area they were working on.

After contacting Silwood Technology, the team downloaded an evaluation copy of the software and arranged for a presentation and demonstration of the product from the vendor.

Having seen and experienced the functionality of the product the team were confident that firstly; it would meet their needs and secondly; at the price point of the software it would pay for itself within a couple of months. Subsequently a decision to purchase the software and an initial training course was scheduled.

Experience with Safyr

The installation of Safyr was easy, quick (about 30 minutes) and free of complications or problems once the small piece of SAP certified Safyr ABAP code was loaded into the target SAP systems.

The team also decided to undertake the initial 1 day training course, They found the education useful and it helped them to pick up the use of the product very quickly.

Since then Safyr has proved to be valuable and was used extensively in the early stages of the BI project. It is still in regular use to-day helping the team to meet the reporting needs of the business.

Scott Delaney states that Safyr has easily met their expectations in terms of the functionality they required.

It has enabled them to navigate the SAP and SAP BW data models and quickly find the parts of the data model they need which rep-resent the data required for reporting and save those as Safyr Subject Areas.

> “We were originally informed that no data model was available for the SAP application

Scott Delaney
Hydro Tasmania

He also picked out the Application Hierarchy view of the SAP data model and the Table Row count function as being welcome surprises in their use of Safyr. The Application Hierarchy provides a means to see which SAP Tables are used by which SAP Programs, Functions, etc. The Row Count facility has made it easy for them to confidently ignore tables which are included in a result set but which contain no data.

Whilst Safyr can export its Subject Areas to a variety of modelling tools including ERwin, ER/Studio and SAP PowerDesigner, the team at Hydro Tasmania decided to make exten-sive use of Safyr’s Enterprise Relationship Diagrammer module for visualising and sharing the Subject Areas which were the results of their analysis of the SAP data model.

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Benefits

Scott Delaney reports that “Safyr has proved to be a highly successful addition to the tools avail-able to the team and played a significant part in helping them to clear the backlog of reporting requests and that as expected the return on investment in the product was easily realised within a few months”.

He estimates that the time saved or additional productivity was equivalent to at least ¾ of a Full Time Employee.

He describes how tasks that, without Safyr, would have taken days or weeks now take hours or possibly a day and mentions a specific example where previously finding a specific set of tables took 93 hours, the same task now took only 35 minutes using Safyr!

The BI team has greater confidence in their own work and no longer waste time wondering if the results of their Google searching are correct and trying to check them.

Scott again “As a result of our investment in Safyr we are able to take a more agile approach to meeting the demands for new reports and data within acceptable timescales and the business’ trust in the information they provide is growing”.

The future

The BI team will continue to use Safyr to help drive high quality information flow to support business initiatives.

Hydro Tasmania will shortly be embarking on an Information Governance Framework project to deliver an inventory of available data across the company. The objectives are to enable better communication via data models of information used by the business, better integration and improved analytics.

Safyr will be used to deliver the SAP data models for that project and its scope may be broadened to make it easier for other packaged applications with complex and inaccessible data models to be included.

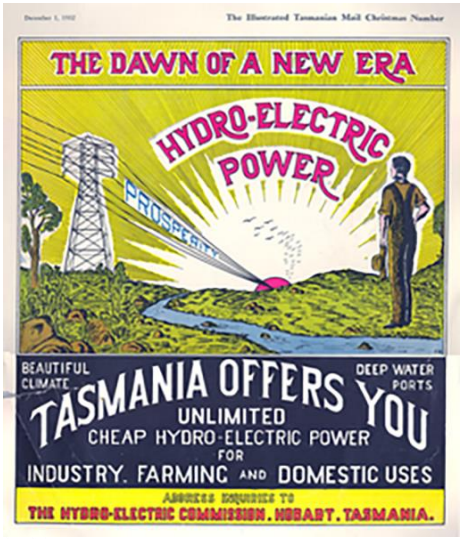

Image courtesy of University of Tasmania