

## Blog Release

### Business Intelligence in the Cloud

#### *Benefits and Challenges for Companies Seeking Cloud-based BI*

**Sept. 19, 2011** – Cloud computing has been opening many doors across all industries, and it's having a new, profound effect on the business intelligence (BI) industry as well.

BI helps companies analyze data and turn it into valuable business information. As more data and applications migrate into the cloud, numerous new data sources are being created. BI providers are adapting their tools to this new reality, and successful companies must now evaluate and act upon this opportunity.

However, as with any new technology form, both pros and cons exist. Below are a few benefits and challenges that companies may experience when considering and deploying cloud-based BI solutions.

#### **Benefits**

- **Scalability** – Cloud-based or software-as-a-service (SaaS) solutions can be easily fit to companies of all shapes and sizes. This allows even the smallest businesses the ability to tailor a BI system to fit their needs and improve their businesses.
- **Easy of Entry** – Traditional site-licensed software included a lot of upfront IT costs to get the system up and running. But with a cloud-based BI solution, that upfront cost is reduced because all hardware and software systems are located and managed remotely by vendors and service providers.
- **Cost** – Cloud-based systems also allow companies to “rent” the software as opposed to buying a full license. This subscription-based approach can ensure that companies only pay for their organization’s usage.

#### **Challenges**

- **Security** – For many businesses, a lot of questions and concern still remain about the physical, network and external security of cloud computing platforms.
- **Emerging Technology** – Cloud computing is still a newer segment, and companies will have to expect and adjust to unforeseen and unexpected glitches as the web-based platform matures.
- **Data Movement** – Companies will also have to rely on data movement outside of their “four walls.” In contrast to an in-house system where connection time and

access is typically reliable, cloud-based products depend on multiple systems (i.e. a vendor's servers, ISP uptime, etc.) to complete day-to-day BI tasks.

***By Chris Hagans, VP Operations of WCI Consulting***

**About WCI Consulting**

Headquartered in Dallas, WCI Consulting focuses on mastering the technology and tools essential to business intelligence and applies the most effective and appropriate solutions to help clients turn data into valuable business information. More information is available online at [www.wiconsulting.com](http://www.wiconsulting.com).