INFOCEPTS

Creating an Efficient, Error-Free MicroStrategy Environment by Scrubbing Old Metadata

Summary

A major specialty retailer needed a faster-performing, less error-prone MicroStrategy environment to run complex BI reports. To help, we scrubbed the old metadata and created a system that delivers critical, reliable business information in a timely manner.

Industry
Retail

Users
Sales and Marketing Managers, Senior Management, Store Operations

Technologies
MicroStrategy, SQL Server 2005, MicroStrategy Narrowcast Server

Team Size
2 InfoCeptians

The Challenge

Our client, a leading specialty retailer in the United States, faced major challenges with its MicroStrategy environment due to metadata that dated back 12-plus years and supported more than 500 complex reports. Over time, the client created several complex reports that led to the hard coding of schema objects and a convoluted relationship between schemas, causing inconsistencies in the metadata and raising the risk of error-prone results. The schemas were so badly affected that even scanning tools (like ScanMD) could not remove the inconsistencies and solve the problem.

Ultimately, several challenges ensued, such as reports timing out (due to incorrect schema design), invalid report data, and usability issues. Most problematic, however, was the difficulty in creating new subject areas in BI reporting — this process had become incredibly time-intensive and expensive, resulting in:

- Major delays in the delivery of critical business information.
- The delivery of incorrect information to business users.

Our client needed a far better, less costly solution and turned to InfoCepts for help.

The Solution

To create a more efficient MicroStrategy environment for our client, we conducted a series of tests to determine the cause of metadata inconsistencies and devised a process to implement an extensive metadata clean-up. The process started with a thorough investigation of unused reports, documents, and dependent objects, followed by the removal of these items from the metadata. Next, we analyzed schema objects no longer in use and removed unnecessary mappings from the database. Throughout the clean-up, daily scheduled reports to business users proceeded as usual, without interruption.

Our clean-up process, at a glance, took these steps:

- Determine the criteria for identifying unused objects.
- Identify unused public objects and delete them, using a Command Manager script.
- Clean-up the schema objects, check for the unused database instances, and remove the mappings.
- Conduct multiple rounds of testing in both staging and production environments to ensure no impact on the data or reports.

The Results

In our scrub of the MicroStrategy metadata, we removed more than 10,000 unused public objects and 250 schema objects. Ultimately, this brought a number of benefits to our client, including:

- The timely execution of scheduled reports — leading to the timely delivery of critical business information to end users.
- A more efficient, less costly way to include new subject areas in reporting and to add attributes, which increased user access to in-depth information about critical business functions like store sales details, new product lines, and fluctuations in existing sales trends.
- The ability for users to quickly create and deploy for use a number of reports, such as employee productivity reports and sales target tracking reports for individual employees in stores.

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