So how many rows of data did you say this tool can ingest? You said it's backed by a massively parallel processing engine? It runs in-memory? And… why should I care about any of this?

If flexibility, firepower, and adaptability were the only considerations for technology implementation, these decisions would be easier. The fickle business user-community though needs more convincing than raw numbers on paper. Especially when it comes to tools like interactive visualization, those that survive or thrive based on business user adoption, connecting with a broader community is absolutely vital.

Recent Aberdeen research explored the impact of data visualization and found that, in addition to greater analytical engagement, these users shared several common characteristics of user satisfaction, including:

> **Ease-of-use.** As the research discusses in detail, interactive visualization is all about exploring the data behind the data, the “why?” behind what is presented. All too often though, the tools don't resonate with the
business users typically asking those questions. Ease-of-use can be difficult to describe, and varies from company to company, but the general concepts apply broadly. Users need intuitive, drag-and-drop, easy drill-down capabilities in order to explore the data.

➔ **Data connectivity.** Nothing kills the momentum of analytical activity like hitting the invisible wall of data absence. In the heat of an analysis, users need the ability to pull in data from sources not necessarily presented to them in the original dashboard or visualization. The ability to connect to, and ingest information from other sources is a key enabling factor of interactive visualization.

➔ **Line-of-business fit.** Closely tied to ease-of-use, users need tools that fit the logic and taxonomy of their business area. Sometimes that involves “templatized” views of typical data, sometimes it involves dashboard visualizations pre-built with industry or role-specific KPI. Regardless of the approach, companies that make the effort to understand and deliver against those job role requirements are rewarded with higher user satisfaction.

The research shows that, above and beyond those using traditional BI in particular, companies using interactive visualization saw enhanced user satisfaction in these areas.
It’s virtually impossible to overstate the importance of delivering analytical capabilities that are approachable and consumable for a less technical line-of-business audience.

It’s important to note that general satisfaction levels for these three critical aspects are surprisingly low across the board. As sophistication and analytical firepower have increased for many of these tools, users are all too often confounded by the technology. This further highlights the importance of user satisfaction, and interactive visualization tools have gotten further than other analytical technologies in this regard.

Conclusion

It’s virtually impossible to overstate the importance of delivering analytical capabilities that are approachable and consumable for a less technical line-of-business audience. In a perfect world, the tools are well tailored to the needs of the business, readily adopted, and actively used, producing measurable performance improvements. The opposite scenario, however, paints a fairly bleak picture for any organization. It’s one thing to be able to interact with a chart or other visual rendering, but the answers quickly run out if there are embedded barriers to data access. Likewise, tools that are technically heavy handed or fail to speak the language of the business function at hand carry a similar risk of underutilization. This scenario starts with poorly tailored analytical capabilities and ends with “shelfware,” wasted time,
and sunk cost. Best-in-Class companies leverage an assortment of key processes and capabilities to empower the workforce with “stickier” solutions, ultimately driving enhanced user satisfaction

For more information, explore the full report here: The Visual Edge: Interactive Discovery vs. Traditional BI

About Aberdeen Group

Since 1988, Aberdeen Group has published research that helps businesses worldwide improve their performance. Our analysts derive fact-based, vendor-agnostic insights from a proprietary analytical framework, which identifies Best-in-Class organizations from primary research conducted with industry practitioners. The resulting research content is used by hundreds of thousands of business professionals to drive smarter decision-making and improve business strategy. Aberdeen Group is headquartered in Boston, MA.

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