

The IBM logo, consisting of the letters "IBM" in a bold, sans-serif font, with a period at the end.

IBM Cognos

Review From A Customer

From IT Central Station, the leading review site for enterprise technology solutions.

Review by a Real User

Verified by IT Central Station



Senior BI Architect at a healthcare company
with 10,001+ employees

it_user502383

WHAT IS MOST VALUABLE?

Cognos contains many components that make up the entire Cognos suite. The starting point is the meta data designer, which is Framework Manager. Framework manager allows you to pull in database tables from any type of database, this is referred to as the 'Database Layer'. Then you create the Business Layer where you update the column names with 'business names' and remove the geek speak or database names. You can also include data transformations and table joins in this layer. Finally you create the Presentation Layer that points to the Business Layer. The presentation layer is usually the only layer that is published in the Cognos package. Cubes contain data hierarchies and time dimensions to allow a report consumer to 'click and drag' the data elements that they want to analyze to their reports. Transformer is the product that allows you to pull large amounts of data together, to allow clients to slice and dice their data any way that they want. Report Studio allows for sophisticated reporting. Each of these is valuable; there is not just one that is more valuable than the other.

HOW HAS IT HELPED MY ORGANIZATION?

We developed sophisticated reports in the fundraising area, which pulls in data from many different databases and presents graphs, charts and summary financial information over any time period that the person wants to see. This set of reports are run or used on average 15,000 times per month by hundreds of end users. Another example is building financial data using cubes. The cubes contain 11+ years of financial data and we have the add-in for Microsoft Excel, which allows end users to build their own ad-hoc reports for trending and analysis.

WHAT NEEDS IMPROVEMENT?

Right now, we are in the midst of implementing a brand new version of Cognos, named Cognos Analytics. This version is very, very different from prior versions. We are finding 'undocumented features' on a daily basis and reporting issues to IBM. We are working thru the issues, but it is very stressful on us, finding out functionality that was in the previous release but is missing now in Cognos Analytics version 11. Here are just a few examples of issues that we are facing as of today! We have identified other issues, which have been resolved or we have workarounds. - In our CA production environment, we imported reporting content that included saved output of financial reports. The saved output did NOT import and therefore users will not be able to pull up the reports in production! This works in our other CA environments, but failing in production! When you have a saved output report that contains links to drill thru reports and you want to open them in a new browser window, it fails! You have to go in and modify the reports to open in the same window, so now the user cannot see the original report that they clicked on. You also lose the ability to export reports to Excel or PDF when you have drill thrus to a new window. If you run a report, have it emailed out and you attach a link to the report in the email, it fails only in our production environment. The Search and Select prompt fails on the prompt page.



[Read 11 reviews of IBM Cognos](#)

FOR HOW LONG HAVE I USED THE SOLUTION?

I have used it since 2005, so 11 years now.

WHAT DO I THINK ABOUT THE STABILITY OF THE SOLUTION?

The product is stable, but we continue to find issues due to the product's newness.

WHAT DO I THINK ABOUT THE SCALABILITY OF THE SOLUTION?

The product is very scalable and can support thousands of end users. HUGE companies are using this product.

HOW IS CUSTOMER SERVICE AND TECHNICAL SUPPORT?

I rate technical support with a 8-9/10. We occasionally need to escalate issues to senior technical support.

WHICH SOLUTIONS DID WE USE PREVIOUSLY?

I was an independent consultant and have used competing products; they all have their quirks. Here at the university, we for the most part use Cognos.

HOW WAS THE INITIAL SETUP?

The initial setup can be complex for large organizations; for smaller companies, it is easier.

WHAT'S MY EXPERIENCE WITH PRICING, SETUP COST, AND LICENSING?

For the university, Cognos is very competitive, because IBM offers huge discounts to higher education. My advice would be to work with an IBM business partner.

WHICH OTHER SOLUTIONS DID I EVALUATE?

Cognos was already installed here when I was hired. The university hired me for my experience.

WHAT OTHER ADVICE DO I HAVE?

Hire an experienced business partner, who can provide ongoing support and training.

[Read 11 reviews of IBM Cognos](#)