

What Is SAP BW?

SAP NetWeaver Business Warehouse

So what is SAP BW? SAP Business Warehouse (SAP BW) is a Data Warehouse for reporting and planning. Its primary focus is to make the collecting, combining and consumption of data as easy as possible.



Over time, the planning components of BW have grown and matured; Business Planning and Simulation (BW-BPS) and Integrated Planning (BW-IP). They are on-track to being depreciated and left alone as relics of a long forgotten age, to be strategically replaced by a separate planning tool '*BusinessObjects Planning and Consolidation (BPC)*'. The good news for now is that the BW-BPS and BW-IP planning components are still part of Netweaver BW and available for use. They will remain in working condition for many years to come, even if they no longer receive new functional enhancements. SAP can entice but not force customers to migrate to BPC as it is not 'just a technical migration'.

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Data Warehousing and Reporting Best Practices

With the strategic focus of planning moving over to a separate technology (BPC), the Netweaver BW solution will refine its core focus to what it does best; Data Warehousing and Reporting. This can be implemented by following a best practice philosophy known as the '3 C Sequence':

- Collect;
- Combine;
- Consume.

The collection of data from other systems can be done using a range of technologies and services. For Example: Flat files, databases, SAP systems, web interfaces, remote APIs, etc. As the IT industry grows and interface technologies evolve, SAP looks at whether or not to implement that as a mechanism for getting data in and out of Netweaver. BW in its own right then benefits from being able to pull data from these other systems using the interface.

Consider Your SAP BW Data Flow Strategy

Once the raw extracted data is secured within BW, it becomes the source and flows downstream to be combined with other data. The combining of data is an important step for all reporting solutions:

- Validate and cross-reference the data;
- Optimise for storage and reporting performance;
- Integrates several systems for the entire business process.

The combination area utilises two main pieces. A DataStore and a Transformation.

A DataStore is fundamentally designed to write large amounts of data, efficiently. A Transformation is a pipe that can modify data as it passes through. The collection area and combination area form the back-end of the Data Warehouse and are generally not available to the reporting user community.



What is SAP BW Reporting?

The consumption of the transformed data can be done using many different technologies and services for different purposes:

- Extracted by other systems (Planning or Global Reporting);
- Reporting (Queries);
- Pushed out to targeted users (Email);
- Referenced in Transformations.

The consumption area utilises three main pieces for:

- BW v3.x & v7.0+ it is an InfoCube, a MultiProvider and Query;
- BW v7.4+ it is a DataStore, a Composite Provider and HANA View / Query.

An InfoCube is the same combined data, stored to optimise reading not writing. A MultiProvider is a pipe used to provide different views of the Cube data. A Query is a multi-functional, interactive mechanism used to present the data. While a Transformation is technically used to get the data into a Cube, it should not modify the data in the consumption area. The consumption area forms the front-end of the Data Warehouse to service the reporting user community.

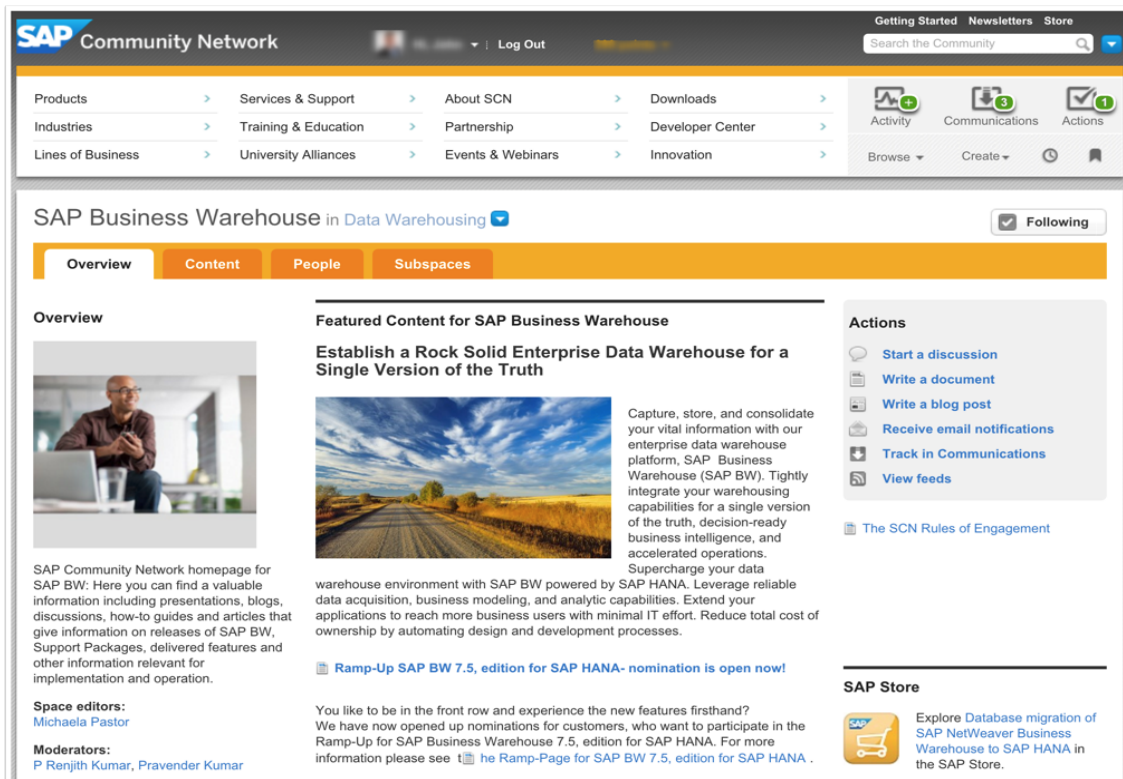
There are a range of technologies and services that enable the reporting user community to consume the data. The tools used will be determined by the functionality required and the platform for it to be delivered through. Some examples are:

- HANA Views;
- BusinessObjects: Web Intelligence, Analysis for Office, etc;
- Lumira;
- Business Explorer (BEx)(MS Office);
- Crystal reports;
- Various web browser tools;
- 3rd party tools (Cognos PowerPlay).

The data modeling in the data warehouse and each of the reporting solutions on offer require a significant investment of time and money. The choice to use a particular tool or to combine new data should be made with careful consideration of the whole enterprise and which business process is hurting the most.

More: Engage the Community for Answers

Join the SAP Community Network (SCN) and interact with like minded BW enthusiasts in the '[SAP Business Warehouse \(SCN Place\)](#)' forum.



Acknowledgements

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