



# Modern Analytics Platforms: Product Profiles and Positioning

By Wayne Eckerson and Henry Eckerson

October 2017

Report Excerpt Reprinted by



## About the Authors

---



**Wayne W. Eckerson** has been a thought leader in the business intelligence and analytics field since the early 1990s. He is a sought-after consultant, noted speaker, and expert educator who thinks critically, writes clearly, and presents persuasively about complex topics. Eckerson has conducted many groundbreaking research studies, chaired numerous conferences, written two widely read books on performance dashboards and analytics, and consulted on BI, analytics, and data management topics for numerous organizations. Eckerson is the founder and principal consultant of Eckerson Group.



**Henry H. Eckerson** is a research analyst who covers business intelligence and analytics at Eckerson Group. He has a keen interest in artificial intelligence, deep learning, predictive analytics, and cloud data warehousing. When not researching and writing news and trend analysis articles and supporting Eckerson Group's lead analysts, Henry can be found skiing and biking in the mountains of Wyoming, Maine, and Montana. He is a graduate of St. Lawrence University and a resident of Bozeman, Montana

## About Eckerson Group

---

Eckerson Group is a research and consulting firm that helps business and analytics leaders use data and technology to drive better insights and actions. Through its reports and advisory services, the firm helps companies maximize their investments in data and analytics. Its researchers and consultants each have more than 25 years of experience in the field and are uniquely qualified to help business and technical leaders succeed with business intelligence, analytics, data management, data governance, performance management, and data science.



## About this Report

---

This product profile is part of a larger report, Modern Analytics Platforms: Product Profiles and Market Trends, that profiles products in a given market segment or functional category. The report is designed to help prospective buyers identify products that best match their requirements.

## What is a Modern Analytics Platform?

---

A modern analytics platform (MAP) is a software environment that is a proverbial one-stop shop for decision making that supports all modes of business intelligence (BI) and all types of business users. It is designed from the ground up to run on modern computing platforms: the Web, cloud, and mobile devices. It boasts a rich application programming interface (API) that supports a community of third-party developers who contribute add-ons, extensions, and utilities that enrich the MAP well beyond the resources and imagination of the platform vendor.

But more than just a collection of tools, functions, and features, a MAP balances trade-offs between different modes of BI and provides a bridge between them. For instance, a MAP supports both top-down and bottom-up BI, marrying the worlds of self-service and governance in a single platform. It also marries formal and ad hoc design methods by providing a rich development environment for IT and business developers as well as a canvas for power users to create data mashups and self-service reports and visualizations. Finally, it provides an adaptable data architecture that delivers both scalability and performance to support a variety of workloads and use cases.

*In short, a MAP is BI for the modern world.*

In short, a MAP is BI for the modern world. At a time when extraordinary gains in computer processing have transformed every facet of our personal and professional lives, a MAP applies the same power and vision to improving the way individuals and organizations turn data into insights and action. For a deeper dive into the characteristics of a MAP, read our report “[The Modern Analytics Platform: Balancing Dual and Dueling Imperatives.](#)”

**Evaluation Criteria.** The full report this excerpt is from evaluated nine products on eight criteria, four that represent “modern” and four that represent “analytics platform”. The “modern” criteria focus on Web client architecture, the cloud, pricing, and update cadence, while the “analytics platform” criteria focus on analytic modes, APIs, developer gallery, and connectors.

The products profiled in the full report are: Domo, Dundas BI, Looker, MicroStrategy 10, Microsoft Power BI, Qlik Sense, Tableau, Yellowfin, and Zoomdata. Each vendor reviewed its profile for accuracy prior to publication. Domo, Dundas BI, Looker, MicroStrategy 10, Microsoft Power BI, Qlik Sense, Tableau, Yellowfin, and Zoomdata. Each vendor reviewed its profile for accuracy prior to publication.

# Product Profiles

---

## Dundas BI

### *Overview*

Founded in 1992, Toronto-based Dundas has evolved from selling Windows-based charting components in the 1990s to dashboards in the late 2000s to recently (2014) a modern analytics platform with a full range of analytic functionality. For a small company (85 employees) with about 800 customers, Dundas packs a punch with a high-level of personal touch. Dundas offers a modern, Web-only and mobile-ready data delivery environment with rich governed discovery features, a robust API, and built-in multi-tenancy at affordable prices. A 250-user deployment with 25 power users and one developer/admin is \$3,226 a month for an annual subscription, or \$96,000 for a perpetual license.

### *Modern*

#### **Web Client**

When it overhauled its dashboard product, Dundas made sure to build its new full-stack BI environment with a modern, thin-client interface. The Dundas BI client is based on HTML5, JavaScript, and CSS3 and works with any HTML5 browser. Users can view, analyze, administer, and create content on any device without sacrificing performance or functionality. No desktop application is required, although developers can download the software to a Windows desktop or server machine and run the software there, if they choose.

#### **Cloud**

Currently, Dundas BI has one foot on-premises and one foot on the cloud. Thinking ahead, Dundas built the product to support true multi-tenancy, allowing solution providers to give each tenant its own administration interface to enable different database connections and BI functionality. The product also can run as a PaaS when customers instantiate their own license (BYOL) on Microsoft Azure. On the downside, Dundas does not have a SaaS product, although users can try the product online for free for 45 days. Nor does it have a database gateway for querying on-premises systems from the cloud, although the company says it will ship a hybrid cloud gateway in the fourth quarter. Also, Dundas BI is not yet available on Amazon AWS or Google Cloud Platform.

#### **Progressive Pricing**

Dundas is gradually moving away from a traditional pricing mindset. It offers flexible pricing (i.e., perpetual or subscription, named or concurrent user licenses) and a free 45-day trial—either an online version geared to business managers or a desktop download for developers. However, it currently does not publish its pricing or offer a freemium version. Its pricing is a tad complex for a single product without editions. Customers must configure three types of users (i.e., developers, power, standard), select named or concurrent user licenses for each, and purchase an instance license to run the server.

## Software Updates

Although it uses agile development methods, Dundas only ships two major and several minor software releases each year, giving it a quarterly update cadence. As it more fully embraces the cloud, we expect it to increase the pace of updates.

## *Analytics Platform*

### **Analytic Modes**

Dundas offers one of the more complete platforms from a feature and function perspective. Dundas has extended its platform on the casual user side to support reporting, dashboards, and OLAP, and on the power user side to support visual discovery, collaboration, and advanced analytics. As expected from a former visualization component maker, its visualizations are top-notch and its design environment gives developers fine-grained control over layouts and placements. Dundas is now adding complementary capabilities, such as self-service data preparation, integration with more analytic languages (e.g., Python), and natural language search and generation.

### **APIs**

Dundas BI is an open, programmable platform designed with customization, extensibility, embeddability, and integration in mind. Dundas BI comes with hundreds of documented APIs for .NET, REST, and JavaScript that encompass a wide range of functionality, including authentication, visualization, data connectivity, exports, file system management, custom calculations, and administration. Its APIs support many levels of customizations, from simple end user configurations to CSS styling and full scripting. Dundas BI also integrates with the entire Microsoft BI stack, and it has several dozen software vendors who have embedded the product.

### **Developer Zone**

Given its emphasis on embedding, Dundas does not yet have much developer activity on its community site, called "[The Cube](#)." But in all fairness, both the product and the community site are fairly new, so the company says it expects developer engagement to grow. In The Cube, Dundas BI customers can discuss issues, engage with Dundas experts, and download scripts and samples, such as D3 visualizations. Because this is a private community, it's hard to examine the volume of discussions and types of downloads available either from Dundas, its partners, or its registered customers.

### **Connectors**

Dundas offers connectors to 30 data sources, including relational databases (e.g., Vertica, Teradata, SQL Server, Access), cloud databases (e.g., Redshift, Google BigQuery), cloud applications (e.g., Salesforce, Google Analytics), files (e.g., CSV, Excel, SharePoint lists), and OLAP databases (e.g., SQL Server Analysis Services). It also supports ODBC, JDBC, and OData interfaces. Dundas also ships an API that enables developers to create their own custom connectors. Dundas is exploring a relationship with a third-party provider to grow its list of data connectors.

## Recommendation

Dundas BI is ideal for small and midsize companies or large departments that serve large numbers of casual users who benefit from finely designed dashboards, reports, and OLAP-style analyses. Dundas BI offers a modern, Web-only and mobile-ready analytics platform with strong customer support and service. It also provides a rich governance framework for managing self-service activity, a robust API with strong embedding and extensibility options, and built-in multi-tenancy at affordable prices.



Need help with your business analytics or data management and governance strategy?  
Want to learn about the latest business analytics and big data tools and trends?  
Check out **Eckerson Group** research and consulting services.