

Cognos v8.3 Overview of New/Changed Features

COGNOS CONNECTION

NEW FEATURES

My Activities and Schedules

You can now manage IBM Cognos 8 activities from My Activities and Schedules in IBM Cognos Connection. You can view a list of your activities that are current, past, upcoming on a specific day, or scheduled. You can filter the list so that only the entries that you want appear. A bar chart shows you an overview of activities. You can set run priority for entries. You can also view the run history for entries, specify how long to keep run histories, and rerun failed entries.

IMPACT: Very similar to existing features in Schedule Management, but has a different look and feel and a user can set priority levels on items.

My Watch Items

Use the My Watch Items area of the portal to view and manage alerts for new report versions and rules that you have set for conditional report delivery. The My Watch Items functionality enables end users to monitor and manage business information that is critical to them from a single location. As a report owner, you must allow report users to receive alerts and create watch rules for the reports.

IMPACT: With the new alerts and rules (see below) available, My Watch is a centralized feature where a user can manage items of individual interest to the user.

Report Alerts

By enabling an alert on a report, you can now be notified when a new version is available. Whenever a report is run and saved due to a scheduled or manual run, all subscribers receive an email that a new version is available. Subscriptions are saved to the Alerts tab of My Watch items and can be maintained from that location

IMPACT: Users can receive an alert when a new report output is saved.

Watch Rules

A new watch rule action is available in Cognos Viewer. You can use watch rules to control when users are notified about the availability of new report versions. When a report is run and saved, a user-defined threshold condition is checked. If this condition satisfies a user's criteria, the report can be e-mailed. To create a watch rule, a saved report must be viewable in HTML format. You can select the data to be monitored and enter the threshold condition that will trigger the delivery of the report. Watch rules are saved to the Rules tab of My Watch Items, and can be maintained from that location. This feature lets users maintain their own report distribution preferences and avoid information overload.

IMPACT: Similar to Above Threshold Reporting. Reports are scheduled, run, and saved but the user would only be alerted if a particular data item reaches a threshold (e.g. – budget request is above a certain amount).

Saving Report Outputs to a File System

You can now export report results directly to a server file system using IBM Cognos Connection. You decide which formats to export, and select from a predefined set of directory locations. This feature makes it easy to integrate IBM Cognos content into other external applications. IBM Cognos 8 does not keep a record of the exported reports, but does prevent and resolve name conflicts that arise when the same file is saved multiple times to the same directory. You are responsible for managing the reports after export. An XML descriptor file with the same file name prefix is created, which can be used by an external application to locate and manage the exported reports.

IMPACT: This will allow reports to be accessed by users without the need for email delivery or a Cognos account. It will also allow other applications to utilize generated Cognos reports.

Tabbed Portal Pages

You can now create pages with multiple tabs that are easy to navigate. The new type of pages is also referred to as dashboards. Dashboards are created by using a new portlet named Multi-page.

IMPACT: Pages can be organized in a cleaner and efficient manner. Instead of having multiple tabs and pages, this will allow a single page to contain multiple report viewers.

Global Filters and Enhanced Portal Interactivity

You can select the dashboard context in the portal with one or more global filters. A global filter may be a prompt, a drill-up or drill-down action, or a report that is based on drill-through content. For example, you can add a prompt control to a portal page to automatically pass the selection to all reports on the page. When a prompt answer is changed, all related reports will refresh accordingly. So, if you answer a country prompt with Brazil, all related reports on the page will be filtered to show the data for Brazil. When these techniques are used on a tabbed dashboard, the context is passed to all corresponding sections of the dashboard. This functionality allows for a single selection to drive a number of reports at once.

IMPACT: This will allow multiple reports to be filtered on a page based on the completion of one set of prompts. For example, a user could have 4 reports on a page and could toggle between Academic/Fiscal Years by switching the value in a single drop-down box, changing the filtering on all 4 reports.

Support for Microsoft Excel 2007

IBM Cognos 8 supports Microsoft Excel 2007 native spreadsheets as a report format, in addition to the existing Microsoft Excel HTML formats. The Microsoft Excel 2007 XML format, also known as XLSX, provides a fast way to deliver native Excel spreadsheets to Microsoft Excel XP, Microsoft Excel 2003, and Microsoft Excel 2007. The use of a native Microsoft Excel format means that the spreadsheets are

smaller and more usable. Because the new Office Open XML format is a recognized industry standard supported by ECMA International, the new format provides the added benefit of an open, documented integration format that extends an open systems solution. The new format appears in the run report user interface. Users of Microsoft Excel XP and Microsoft Excel 2003 must install the Microsoft Office Compatibility Pack, which provides file open and save capabilities for the new format.

IMPACT: Allows users to export reports into Excel 2007 .xlsx format.

CHANGED FEATURES

Updated IBM Cognos Connection Look

The IBM Cognos Connection user interface was changed to provide more space for reports and information that you care about, and use less space for toolbars and functions. The new features include:

- The Launch menu, which replaces the Tools menu. This menu lets you access the IBM Cognos 8 studios, Drill-through Definitions, and IBM Cognos Administration.
- The my area icon , which lets you access the My Watch Items, My Preferences, and My Activities and Schedules areas in IBM Cognos Connection.
- The portal style named Business.
- The updated Welcome to IBM Cognos 8 page.

IMPACT: Look and feel changes reflecting new additions to Cognos Connection.

QUERY STUDIO

PDF Horizontal Pagination

Reports can now span two or more page widths in a PDF. This is useful when you want wide data items in lists and crosstabs to show in their original size. The shrink to fit the page width option from previous releases is still available. If you uncheck the shrink to fit the page width option, horizontal pagination occurs in the PDF output. This produces a report with two numbers in the footer of the PDF. The first is the vertical pagination number, the second is the horizontal pagination number. For example, 1 1, 1 2, 1 3, 2 1, 2 2, 2 3, and so on.

IMPACT: Wide lists can span across multiple PDF pages rather than automatically be shrunk to fit the page.