

# ORACLE CLOUD REPORTING: OTBI AND BI PUBLISHER

Your organization has decided to move to Oracle Cloud, but have you determined a reporting strategy? What reporting tools will your team be leveraging? The post explores two of the main reporting options within your Oracle Cloud footprint, and offers comparisons as well as scenarios to consider when determining your reporting strategy.



# What is “BI” Publisher and “OTBI”?



## WHAT IS ORACLE BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE (BI) PUBLISHER?

Oracle Business Intelligence Applications are complete, prebuilt BI solutions that deliver intuitive, role-based intelligence throughout an organization. BI Publisher can be used as an alternative reporting solution to OTBI. Some of the data sources available are SQL Query, XML, HCM Extract, and View Object (brought in through web service, ADPI, etc.).

BI Publisher works as an enterprise reporting solution for authoring, managing, and delivering reports from multiple data sources in multiple formats through multiple channels (E.g., checks, invoices, remittance, etc.). Utilize BI Publisher for writing your own SQL query, formatting reports, joining historical data with real-time information, and report bursting. Typical end users include Technical Human Resource Information System (HRIS) and IT Developers.

## WHAT IS ORACLE TRANSACTIONAL BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE (OTBI)?

OTBI provides a flexible and easy to use analysis tool that helps to gain real-time insight into transactional data. OTBI is aimed at business users and especially shines when the report creator is someone who does not know SQL and/or the underlying table structures. OTBI's core functionality allows users to simply drag and drop selected data from subject areas and use different graphical views. Data can be filtered, drill-down can be enabled, and action links can be created. Reports or dashboards can be scheduled for delivery and reports can be exported to Excel, Word, and other formats.

A reporting wizard (BI Composer) is available to guide casual business users through a few simple steps to run, edit or create OTBI reports and queries. Typical end users include Financial Analysts, Compensation Analysts, Benefit Analysts, and Human Resources Analysts.

# Which Report Best Suits my Organization?



**SCENARIO 1:** I just converted workers from PeopleSoft and need to validate the employees that loaded in Cloud

**Answer:** A direct database query to a single cloud table using BI Publisher

---

**SCENARIO 2:** I need a headcount report by Business Unit and Grade

**Answer:** Great candidate for OTBI, you can make the report drillable to get down to employee detail and even place as an infolet on employee homepage

---

**SCENARIO 3:** I have a highly formatted payslip that needs to be customized

**Answer:** BI Publisher and HCM Extracts

---

# What is the Difference Between OTBI and BI Publisher?



OTBI	BI Publisher
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Drop and Drag Interface/No SQL Needed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— More Technical/SQL Needed</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Presentation Layer Developed so user does not need to join different tables together</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Thousands of tables, multiple joins needed</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Subject Areas fields are intuitive</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Table name, fields, joins are not intuitive and documentation can be vague</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Reports can be built relatively quickly and updated rather quickly</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Reports can take very long to build, very complex, difficult to update</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Oracle investing heavily in this type of reporting so additional fields will continuously be added</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— OTBI is the Oracle preferred way of getting at data if possible</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Not all fields are available in subject areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Can get at almost all needed information</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Joining subject areas is not always possible and you may have requirements from multiple subject areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Joins may be complicated, but joining multiple tables can be done to get all required fields</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Data in subject areas can be misleading, drop and drag interface can make subject areas/data seem simpler than actuality and no visibility how data is actually retrieved from database</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Once SQL is mastered, creating datasets and modifying past data sets can be easy</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ As more and more clients adopt Cloud, more and more reporting resources will be available</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ As more and more clients adopt Cloud, more and more reporting resources will be available</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Viewing results is limited by use security</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Viewing results is <b>not</b> limited by user security</li> </ul>

## CONCLUSIONS

In choosing a reporting tool, there are a couple of key takeaways to keep in mind. Consideration of scalability is important, especially when it comes to payroll reporting or returning large amounts of data in general. Typically, HCM extracts are most scalable, then OTBI, then BI Publisher. Data security is also an important consideration. OTBI is more favorable when you want to use front end security configurations to which data returns on your report. If you want to bypass front end security or build in your own security parameters, BI publisher would be the tool. Both tools work well for the creation of reports.

**On projects where the decision to go with either OTBI or BI Publisher is a coin flip, Oracle tends to recommend OTBI.** The typical business user will probably prefer using OTBI due to OTBI enabling the customization and creation of user-friendly dashboards in a drag-and-drop fashion, whereas BI Publisher does not. Oracle maintains the presentation layer, so any changes to underlying tables Oracle will update, and thus keep your reports “upgrade safe”.

BI Publisher is more favorable for technical users and when the desired result is not a report, but data. BI Publisher is one of the primary ways of getting data out of Oracle Cloud (HCM Extract being the other). Users who are technically savvy enough to be using one of the other data source options such as web services would probably prefer the control of BI Publisher. There is also a set of APIs that allow retrieval of BI Publisher data in non-Cloud code.



## CONTACT

[Email cloud@elire.com](mailto:cloud@elire.com) to learn more about Oracle Cloud OBTI and BI Publisher

[Visit our website](#) & follow us on social media



## WEBINAR

Watch our [Cloud Reporting Webinar!](#)

## WHO IS ELIRE?

Established in 2005, Elire was formed by the merging of several independent PeopleSoft Consulting Services firms aiming to provide a level of service to their clients that had not been seen at the “Big 4” level.

Elire’s Founding Partners gathered together with the aim of creating a firm that would deliver a true, trusted advisorship to their client partners, remaining after “go-live” to ensure their organization was both comfortable with their new solution and had a roadmap in place for future value-add activities.

