

QlikTech International's QlikView VS Windward Reports AutoTag

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Objective: This white paper compares and contrasts features and functions of QlikTech International's QlikView to Windward Reports AutoTag.

QlikView is business intelligence (BI) software at its best and Windward Reports is reporting software at its best. Comparing the two software platforms is difficult considering they are designed to accomplish different tasks. They do however share underlying similarities and both platforms could benefit from picking up a few traits of each other. QlikView is incapable of allowing you to freely write a document with data variables intended for document generation or mail merge. AutoTag is incapable of creating three different data sheets containing the same underlying data that can drill down into each other. Despite the fact that comparing these two products is like comparing apples to oranges this white paper will compare and contrast the two nonetheless.

The first place most people will look for information on these products is the web, and this is where we will start as well. Windward Reports has two websites; one intended for technical users and the other for business users. QlikView only has one site, and it serves as an effective hybrid of the two sites hosted by Windward. The QlikView site is a far more effective marketing tool than either of Windward's individual sites. The QlikView site features a large flash ad with a 'Free Download' banner. Windward's technical site offers a free product demo but the business site only offers a guide to reporting and a video featuring the design tool AutoTag which in my opinion does not provide enough compelling information to make users want to learn more about the product let alone buy a license. QlikView's site also contains several small navigational windows linked to their respective pages, one of which being a featured article in Time Magazine. Windward's business site also features small informational windows that link to various pages on the site, but nothing matches the power of the Time Magazine article QlikView boasts. This article is the single most powerful piece of marketing material on their site. At the top of the QlikView site the tab next to the main page is 'Demos'. This page contains a huge number of samples covering an extremely broad range of topics from business statistics to fantasy football. These samples do a fantastic job of demonstrating both the power and versatility of QlikView. Windward offers some samples on each site but they are not as diverse or extensive as the samples found on QlikView's site.

Once users have investigated each product's site and downloaded a trial version of the application (unless they were on Windward's business site) the time comes for direct evaluation. QlikView comes in its own application while AutoTag is integrated into Microsoft

Office. Business professionals who wish to use QlikView will have to go through a considerable amount of training and will not feel comfortable creating their own documents from scratch even after completing the training. QlikView offers consulting for those purchasing the software, but the install and setup service does not come cheap. In practice I believe most people designing QlikView documents will have a technical background. If an IT professional sets up the AutoTag software the majority of business users who are experienced enough with Microsoft Office will have no problem designing their own reports. With Arrow's integration into Microsoft SharePoint a single user will be able to design reports and then make those reports available on an ad-hoc basis to everyone in the business. QlikView can be deployed through a server and users are able to open documents either in QlikView installed on their own computer or through a variety of web services. This makes any QlikView document available to anyone anytime as long as they have an internet connection. Arrow has the potential to be hosted live on the internet giving users remote access from any location, but its primary intended purpose is for interoffice use.

Designing in either application is best left for IT professionals, but business users will undoubtedly feel more comfortable using AutoTag with its Office integration. Windward intends for users to design reports just as they design any standard Word documents, Excel spreadsheets, and PowerPoint presentations. AutoTag uses Tags to represent data variables and these Tags can be placed in line with text, inside tables, and implemented into charts and graphs. QlikView documents are intended to be built one parameter at a time. QlikView makes use of scripting to establish your datasource connection and only one select statement can be added to the script at a time. The ideal design method is to select a single data variable, place the data into a table, chart, graph, or dashboard, and then repeat for additional data variables. Any data variable in QlikView can be selected and then drilled down. For example, if you have a list of customers and a chart of total sales selecting an individual customer would modify the chart to reflect the sales for only that customer. This feature makes QlikView the most interactive and easiest-to-use BI platform currently available and is miles ahead of Windward in terms of providing BI on an ad-hoc basis.

With your report or sheet created it comes time to deploy your document and deploying reports is another area where these two products have limited similarity. Reports created with AutoTag are intended to be shared with a number of individuals and are easy to print or email. AutoTag gives users the flexibility to output to various Microsoft Office formats as well as HTML, PDF, and RTF. These factors solidify AutoTag as an excellent product for document generation and mail merge. QlikView documents are intended to be hosted on a server and shared via the internet although individual pages and tables can be exported as Excel documents. This makes QlikView an extremely efficient dashboarding tool and real-time

analysis platform. Considering how important up-to-date information is for all companies, Windward would be wise to include some form of internet deployment in new versions of AutoTag and Arrow.