Windward AutoTag Vs Pentaho
A report on both systems

What is Pentaho?

Pentaho Reporting Engine is an open-source reporting tool that allows you to create relational and analytical reports from a wide range of data-sources and output types including: PDF, Excel, HTML, Text, etc... The open architecture and powerful API and extension points make sure this system can grow with your requirements.

What is Windward AutoTag?

The **AutoTag** design tool and Windward engine work together to break the reporting and docgen bottleneck. Windward saves you time and money because you design in Microsoft Word, Excel or PowerPoint, while the blazingly fast engine (for Java or .NET) reduces production time and total cost.

Pentaho Report Designer is a desktop application that provides a visual design environment to quickly create reports. It is geared towards experienced and power users, who are familiar with the concepts and data-sources used.
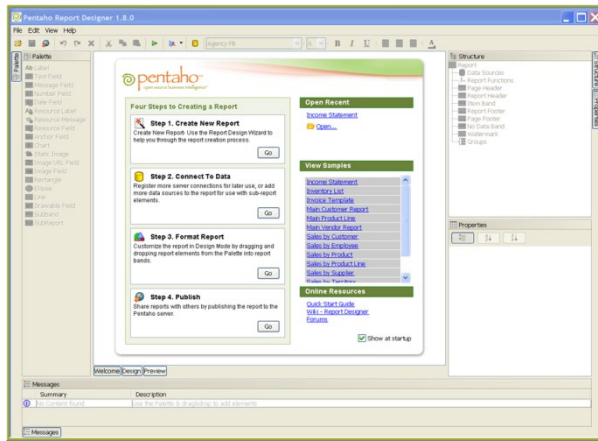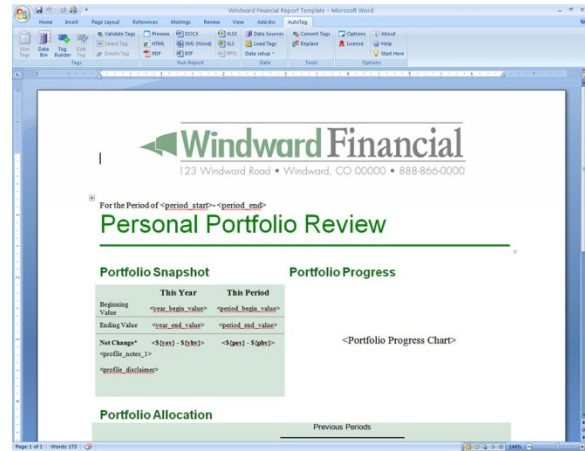
Windward AutoTag is a free-form report design tool for creating exactly the report layout you want. This important component of the Windward solution lets you design, format and edit reports completely in Microsoft Office (Word, Excel and PowerPoint)

Pentaho is open source software which is coming from Pentaho Reporting Community Edition (CE) which includes the Pentaho Report Designer, Pentaho Reporting Engine, Pentaho Reporting SDK and the common reporting libraries shared with the entire Pentaho BI Platform. Community Edition is self supported open source software. AutoTag is from Windward. Professionals of all skill levels can design and create reports in Windward AutoTag. Windward is available in a .Net, Java, or SharePoint engine. Both AutoTag and Pentaho are reporting software.

Procedures to Create New Report

Figure 1: Pentaho Report Designer

Opening Report Designer brings you to a Welcome page. Click File to start a new Project. It also provides the basic file operations for loading/saving and exporting reports. The applications settings are also available in this menu.

Figure 2: AutoTag, is an add-in to Excel/Word/PowerPoint, so report creation was a much simpler process than with the other tools we evaluated. We simply opened Microsoft Word and began adding the desired elements to our template (headers, footers, text blocks, charts, graphs, images, tables of contents, etc.) using Word's built-in commands

Each one of them has their own advantages, head to head the comparison leads to some interesting conclusions. This is a feature-by-feature comparison of Pentaho reporting to Windward reporting.

User friendliness:

Windward provides great documentation and training videos to help new users save time – all at no cost. Pentaho only provides an "Evaluating Pentaho Reporting" user guide available on Pentaho's website, also free. The user guide provides a series of basic tutorials demonstrating the features Report Designer has to offer. Unfortunately the sample document used in collaboration with the guide is nowhere to be found and users are forced to either read through the example or experiment with their own data. Pentaho recommends using their Report Design Wizard to create the basis for your reports, but several different aspects of the wizard create more problems

than they solve. The AutoTag add-in for Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, & PowerPoint) greatly simplifies data layout and data-source mapping, allowing even non-programmers to automatically insert and validate tags in the template.
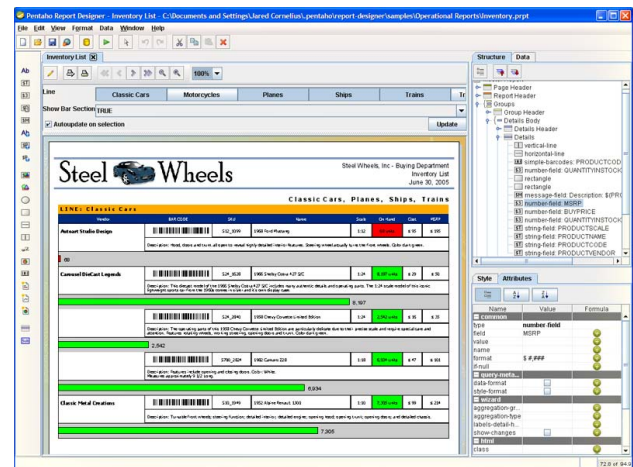
Flexibility:

The Design interface of Windward AutoTag is very simple and easy to design for everyone. Pentaho Report Designer is difficult to learn when compared to Windward because special training is needed to create reports.

Windward AutoTag Vs Pentaho Report Designer

Figure 3: Windward AutoTag

The design interface in Autotag showing a sample report design.

Figure 4: Pentaho Report Designer

The user interface of Pentaho Report Designer.

Pentaho is open source software but the greatest strength and greatest weakness of Pentaho's Report Designer arise from the open source software platform it is built on. The software is free and can be supported and developed by your own in-house software team. Once implemented, the software can be tailored to fit your business intelligence needs. However, the vast disadvantages outweigh the limited benefits of using Pentaho's open source software. While the software is both powerful and adaptable, it is also very difficult, if not impossible, to use without training and thus users will be unable to take immediate advantage of the product. If you are interested in

professional training you will need free time enough to fly to Florida, California, or Washington DC for a predetermined three day period. In addition to airfare, you will pay anywhere from $2,000 to $2,500 per course for classroom training. Even Pentaho's basic web-based training sessions only occur once a month and cost $300 per course, a total of $1,200 for their full recommended four-course training. In fact, Pentaho expects users to purchase their full BI Suite Enterprise Edition as evidenced in the BI Suite Enterprise Edition informational document which says "going it alone with free BI software not only increases your risk of failure, but turns out to be more expensive." Overall it seems choosing to implement this free software certainly carries a hefty price tag.

In the case of Windward, Even though it is not open source software, Windward provides great documentation and training videos to help new users save time - free of charge. Windward saves you time and money because you design in Microsoft Word, Excel or PowerPoint, while the blazingly fast engine (for Java or .NET) reduces production time and total cost.

Comparison of Features

The below mentioned table would make this clear. This table only lists the popular features that were touted to be "new" or "revamped" in both the software(s).

Feature	Pentaho	Windward AutoTag
Business-User Friendly?	Yes	Yes
SCORE (OUT OF 5)	4	5
Windward is simpler than Pentaho because it doesn't need any special training. Pentaho is very difficult to use without special training.		
Software Type	Open source software can be supported and developed by your own in house software team.	Licensed software is developed and supported by Windward
SCORE (OUT OF 5)	5	4.5
Easy to Learn?	No	Yes
SCORE (OUT OF 5)	3.5	5

Windward provides great documentation and training videos to help new users. Your only available Pentaho reference from this point on is the Evaluating Pentaho Reporting User Guide available on Pentaho's website. Unfortunately the sample document used in collaboration with the guide is nowhere to be found and users are forced to either read through the example or experiment with their own data.

Connecting to Datasources.	Report Design Wizard also assists users in connecting to data, but requires users to use their complicated Query Designer Wizard to generate a query for the data source	Connecting to data sources is easier and more straight-forward using Windward
SCORE (OUT OF 5)	**3.5**	**5**

Embeddable Report Engine?	Yes	Yes
SCORE (OUT OF 5)	**5**	**5**

Report Designer	Pentaho Report Designer; is an open-source reporting tool that allows you to create relational and analytical reports from a wide range of data-sources and output types.	AutoTag; Markup document with tags in well-known MS Word! Create tags visually or textually using tag editor and wizards. Get data visually using data connection window.
SCORE (OUT OF 5)	**4.5**	**5**

Word / Excel/ Power Point. That means that you get to use the familiar Word interface as your report development environment.

Design Environment	Design Tab is a poor environment for creating reports	Excellent development environments are MS Word, Excel and PowerPoint.
SCORE (OUT OF 5)	**3**	**5**

environment of Windward AutoTag.

Variables Integration	Yes, But Difficult	Yes
SCORE (OUT OF 5)	**3.5**	**5**

objects. In Windward, it is very easy to work with data as it fits seamlessly in

Word and Excel.		
Data Placement	With data variables treated as objects, these objects can be placed anywhere in your report but fail to fit in-line with text or inside tables	Data is treated as text objects and easily fits in-line with text or into tables
SCORE (OUT OF 5)	4.5	5
Variables	Variables must be added one at a time into your report expression.	Multiple variables and even entire tables can be added to your report with a simple drag-and-drop.
SCORE (OUT OF 5)	4	5
Arithmetic Operators	Arithmetic operators can be added to reports and streamlined with the data being used	Arithmetic operators of Word, Excel and PowerPoint can be inherently used.
SCORE (OUT OF 5)	5	5
Formatting and Editing	Properties Window in Design Tab gives you unique control of the formatting and editing of variables but fails to make these options intuitive and user-friendly	Familiar formatting and editing tools of Word, Excel, and PowerPoint are used for data variables and are very easy to work with.
SCORE (OUT OF 5)	4.5	5
Previewing Reports	Yes	Yes
Windward's new chart building features are awesome! You get to use the wizards,		
SCORE (OUT OF 5)	5	5
current report in multiple file formats		
Running Reports	Yes	Yes
SCORE (OUT OF 5)	5	5

In Pentaho, Run Report generates reports in a format only Report Designer can open, although generated Previews can be saved in their given format. In Windward, Generates reports in multiple formats widely used throughout the business world		
Wizards/Shortcuts for frequent tasks	Yes	Yes
SCORE (OUT OF 5)	**3.5**	**4**
Pentaho's Report Design Wizard assists you to create and design reports.		
Custom Formulas	Yes	Yes (Inbuilt as well as via MS Office and VBA)
SCORE (OUT OF 5)	**4**	**4.5**
from existing ones to better suit a user's needs. Windward, via their own interface and MS Office's, support this. The Formula Editor in Pentaho allows you to create custom formulas.		
WYSIWYG (What you see is what you get) Interface	Yes	Single seamless interface
SCORE (OUT OF 5)	**4**	**4.5**
What-You-Get (WYSIWYG) mode.		
TOTAL	**71.5** **(Out of 85)**	**82.5** **(Out of 85)**

Looking at the figure one might ask, why are the marks not derived "out of 100". The marks were given on a scale of 5 for each feature that was considered to be important. Some features were groped into a single row because of the inter-related nature of these features themselves.

Software Learning Curve:

The learning curve for Windward is smaller when compared to Pentaho as once the basic knowledge of Tags is understood by the user, a custom format for almost any type of report can be designed quite easily. Although

a few features found in familiar word processors have been integrated, users must learn to navigate new menus and wizards in order to accomplish simple tasks they already know how to do in Microsoft Word, Excel and PowerPont. Creation of a report using Pentaho requires special training. Thus it takes more time to learn about this software.

To sum it up, Pentaho is Open source software, but when compared to Windward it seems choosing to implement this free software certainly carries a hefty price tag. Windward includes most of the features that are required for creating powerful and complex reports. The interface of Windward is clean and tightly integrated into Mircosoft Office applications like Word, Excel and PowerPoint. Overall, Windward makes a desirable reporting software for business professionals.

For more on these products visit:

www.windwardreports.com

www.reporting.pentaho.com