

# Entrinsic Informer Product Report

August 2014

Based on 64 reviews on TrustRadius

trustradius™

## About this Report

This report is based on 64 in-depth authenticated user reviews about Entrinsik Informer on our site, TrustRadius.com. This report also includes information from interviews with Entrinsik management and independent research conducted by TrustRadius. TrustRadius is the leading online community for professionals to exchange candid insights and opinions about business software through in-depth user reviews.

## Report Summary

Entrinsik Informer is a business intelligence and reporting solution with more than 1,500 customers and partners worldwide. Informer utilizes a data federation architecture that can retrieve data from relational (e.g. SQL) or Multivalue databases without having to copy the data to a cube or warehouse or go through a complex ETL process for reporting and analysis.

Informer users are extremely loyal and happy with the product overall. Ratings across a range of metrics including likelihood to recommend and renew, product usability, and support and implementation are all significantly higher than the average ratings for other BI products on the TrustRadius site. The average “likelihood to recommend” rating for the Business Intelligence category as a whole is 8.5 versus an average of 9.2 for Entrinsik.

Informer is used by customers in a variety of industries where there is a strong need to manage large volumes of operational data. Typical customers have limited IT support and a relatively non-technical user base. For this reason, there is an enormous emphasis on usability which is reflected in the high score for usability from reviewers on TrustRadius. Users can perform quite technical tasks like using JavaScript to build calculated columns in tables without any help required from the IT department.

In addition to being able to connect to multiple data sources for real-time analysis, the Informer platform includes interactive dashboards for creating and sharing charts and graphs, and other visualizations. Organizations utilize Informer’s built-in security framework that provides role-based user permissions and access control to underlying data.

Reviews on TrustRadius indicate that the overall product strengths are: the very easy-to-use interface, ease of connection to data sources, security, customer support, calculated fields, and finally, value for the cost. Improvements that users would like to see in the future include increased speed at high data volumes, more robust dashboards, better training and documentation, improved security, and a data dictionary to help novice users understand field names.

Entrinsik says they are currently focused on improving speed for users processing very high data volumes and providing additional options for visualizing data with improved dashboard functionality.

## Company Overview

Entrinsic Informer is an easy to install and use reporting and business intelligence solution. Although initially focused on reporting against Rocket U2 databases, it now supports a wide range of data sources including Microsoft® SQL Server, Informix®, Oracle®, IBM DB2®, MySQL, Microsoft Access®, UniData®, UniVerse®, Rocket D3, Google Docs, data warehouses, Microsoft Excel spreadsheets and much more.

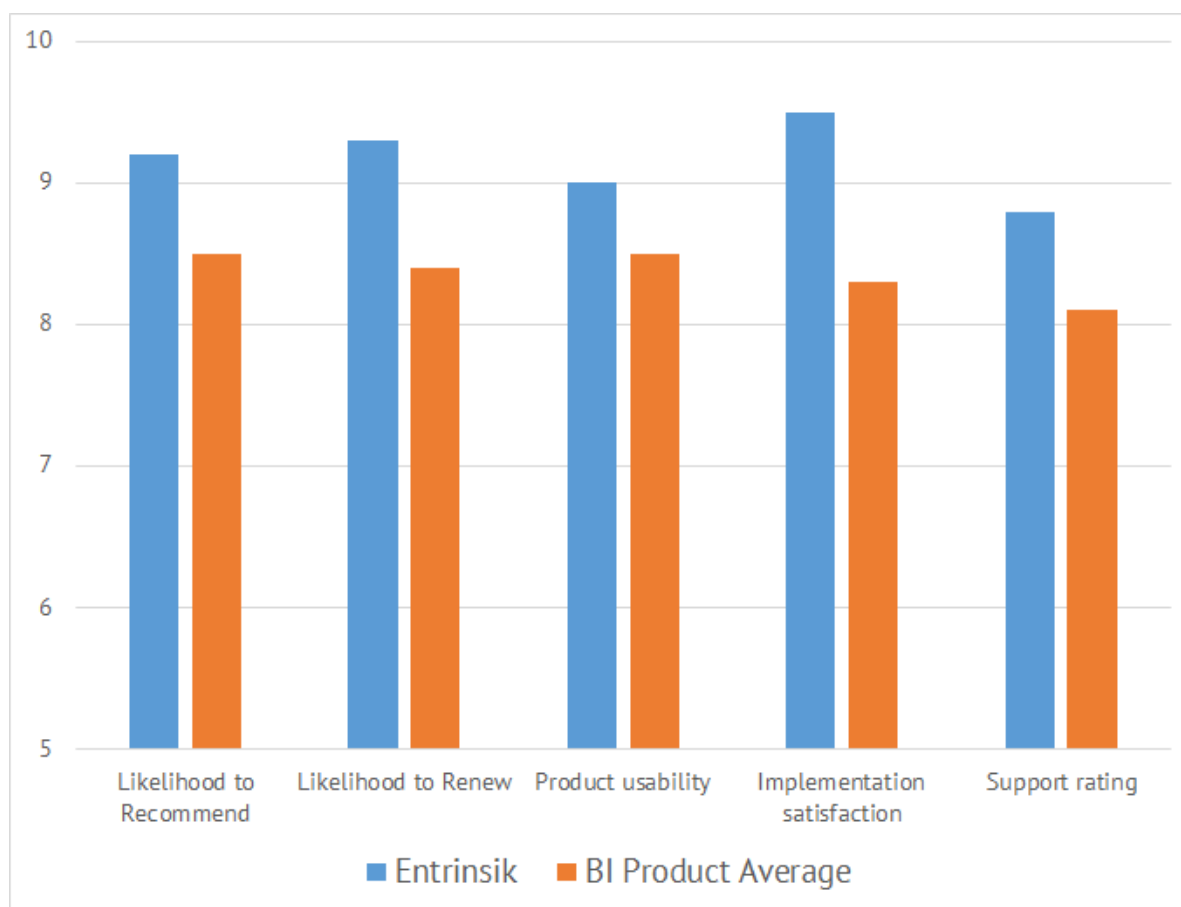
<b>Company status</b>	Private
<b>Customers</b>	1,500
<b>Employees</b>	30
<b>History</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Founded in 1984 as an event management software vendor focused on universities with a product called Enrole (previously Semtek).</li><li>• Informer was originally designed as a tool for reporting against Rocket U2 (UniVerse and UniData ) MultiValue databases, and grew to dominate that market.</li><li>• As the database market has moved to SQL, Informer has followed and now supports a broad range of databases.</li><li>• Entrinsic sells Informer directly, but also has approximately 25 Partners who either embed or resell Informer including Paciolan, Healthport, and SugarCRM.</li><li>• The company also has a co-selling relationship with Ellucian, an ERP system used by higher education institutions.</li></ul>
<b>Customers &amp; Use Cases</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Typical Informer customers are small or medium-sized colleges and universities as well as other industries including Insurance, Healthcare, Public Safety, Information Technology, Construction, Manufacturing, Publishing, and more.</li><li>• Customers typically have diverse and significant reporting needs, but limited IT support, and a relatively non-technical user base.</li><li>• Customers have often struggled with other BI tools in the past that were too difficult to use and deploy.</li><li>• Use cases are as varied as the organizations that use the product, but a common characteristic is that customers usually have large transaction databases. For example, a college will have a database of student enrollment, credit hours, and other information with millions of rows of data. Various members of the administration team will need to pull this data frequently in order to do their jobs.</li></ul>

## Informer Aggregate User Ratings

Entrinsik gets very high ratings across the board, significantly higher than the BI product average across every reported facet by users.

*"Informer is a great product that produces superior results right out of the box. It is a product we depend on every single day in our entire organization and it always produces great results and truly worth every last cent of investment. The enhancements over the years have taken an already great product and truly made it better and the company is always listening to their customers to better the product and add features that truly enhance the customer experience".*

Todd Doster, Sagitta Administrator at MHBT



## Product Strengths

The following is a distillation of product strengths which emerge from the 64 reviews on TrustRadius.

### USER INTERFACE

- Drag and drop user interface is easy to use.
- Non-technical end users can design their own reports.
- Reports can be written without knowledge of SQL.
- Power users can create complex reports using JavaScript and SQL statements.

*"Ease of use for end-users: Drag and drop interface allows for users without database knowledge to create reports"*

Noelle Hurley, Business Process Analyst, Saint Xavier University"

*"Informer also has the ability to create complex reporting using JavaScript and native SQL statements. Although IT assistance is generally needed to write more complex reports, I have found any reporting requirement can be met using these advanced tools"*

Amanda Curran, Business Application Specialist at St. Ambrose University

### CONNECTION TO OTHER DATA SOURCES

- Easy to hook into numerous data sources.
- Very strong at reporting against a MultiValue database.
- Addition of SQL has greatly expanded product utility.
- Data can be pulled into a single report from multiple data sources.
- Easy to join disparate files with a common key.
- Live Excel allows users to manipulate data in Excel without having to log in to Informer.

*"Being able to link between more than one data source and report information from both sources is huge when it comes to writing reports"*

James Kastrantas, Admissions Data Reporter at Elmhurst College".

*"Informer was the best solution for reporting directly off of a multi-valued database. We researched other multi-valued reporting solutions and Informer was absolutely the best"*

Kyle Rima, Database Administrator at Westminster College

## SECURITY

- Flexible security settings restricting what data sources, files and fields users can access.
- Security audit reporting is very helpful.

*"Having security for reports and what tables you can report from is very important. You can give a user access to run just one report that is given to them, or give a user access to make their own reports, or any combination of these".*

James Kasantras, Admissions Data Reporter at Elmhurst College

*"The flexibility of security administration allows us to grant users access to only the data sources, files, fields, and reports related to their specific jobs".*

Kara Bosch, Director College Admin Support Training at Central Piedmont Community College

## CUSTOMER SUPPORT

- Customer support is highly responsive.
- Company listens to customers and frequently incorporates fixes/improvements in releases.

*"One last strength is Entrinsik support of the product. It seems like every few months a new release comes out. Small point releases take less than 30 minutes to install counting the time I start kicking people out until they can get back in and use the product. Every time I find a bug or something I think should work differently, it seems like the next release address it"*

David Prose, DBA at Elgin Community College

*"Entrinsik support is fantastic. Quick to respond and extremely helpful. Updates are quick to come out and easy to deploy"*

Analyst in Information Technology at Higher Education company with 201-500 employees

## REPORT SCHEDULING

- Reports can be scheduled to be delivered in almost any format.
- Report scheduling eliminates the need to run reports manually and saves a lot of time.

*"The ability to schedule reports has been fantastic. Before we had Informer, all reports were run manually. This has saved us a lot of time".*

Kyle Rima, Database Administrator at Westminster College

*"Reports can be derived in a variety of ways – Excel. Live Excel, PDF, CSV, Saved Lists, etc. Easy to schedule reports to have delivered via email to different people around our College at different times"*

Sarah Gaither, Accountant at Cape Fear Community College

## JAVASCRIPT

- The ability to write JavaScript into reports to manipulate the data is a great feature.

*"Using JavaScript for calculated columns is a big plus as it's a language that many employees know, or can learn".*

Lisa O'Dellick, Programmer/Analyst at Juniata College

*"Filters and columns can be easily created, and code can be written in JavaScript to create additional columns. Custom JavaScript functions can be created and then easily used in the code".*

Matthew Baker, Programmer Analyst at College of Wooster

## VALUE FOR MONEY

- Informer is relatively inexpensive.
- Its radical ease of use means that it delivers exceptional ROI.

*"Entrinsik Informer remains the shining example of incredible ROI. Informer saves us over a full FTE in the time saved from running and scheduling and delivering formatted and accurate reports".*

Jeffrey Jones, System Analyst / Data Architect at Fresno Pacific University

*"Informer has had a positive effect on costs at CPCC. By allowing users to create, run, and modify their own reports, IT resources have been freed up to work on other projects. The Informer reporting tool has saved [us] over \$40,000 in IT personnel costs."*

Kara Bosch, Director College Admin Support Training at Central Piedmont Community College

## Areas for Improvement

Although reviews are overwhelmingly positive, there are some areas for improvement.

### 'BIG DATA' SPEED ISSUES

- The latest shipped version (4.4.1) has introduced slowness to the system at high data volumes.\*
- The ability to process very high data volumes is one of the most significant issues currently reported by reviewers.

*"The most recent version 4.4.1 has some performance issues and functions much slower than prior versions. This is frustrating to the end users. I do know Entrinsik is aware of and working on fixing this issue".*

Amanda Curran, Business Application Specialist at St. Ambrose University

*"Informer works well, but with large reports (250+ columns) tends to bog down at times."*

Jeff Butera, Associate Director of IT for Applications at Hampshire College

**\* With the latest release of Informer 4.4.2 the slowness has been resolved.**



## DASHBOARDS

- Many users feel that the dashboards added to the product in 2012 are a great start, but that there is still some room to grow.

*"Informer has room to grow in the dashboards delivered. While helpful and visually pleasing, they are not as robust as some of the other solutions that are more focused on the dashboards. The API leaves the opening for well-resourced organizations to enhance this data on their own"*

Jeffrey Jones, System Analyst / Data Architect at Fresno Pacific University

*"Additional visualizations would be beneficial, I would like to see a Funnel visualization, bubble charts etc."*

Ron Darschewski, Assistant Director Administrative Computing at Elmhurst College

## TRAINING & DOCUMENTATION

- Documentation of the product is inadequate, particularly in some more advanced areas.
- Several users suggest direct training classes on these more advanced topics.

*"Would like to see more detailed documentation on how to use certain features."*

Randall Miller, Operating Systems Administrator at Wilkes Community College

*"Some direct training on the advanced features of Entrinsik Informer would be helpful, e.g., more specific instructions on how to create computed columns within Informer reports."*

Technician in Information Technology at Higher Education company with 501-1000 employees

*"More detailed documentation, specifically about calculated columns and JavaScript examples would be nice."*

Matt Rudd, Assistant Director, Enterprise Applications and Servers at Lesley University

## SECURITY

- Security features are generally considered a strength, but several users say it is still too easy for a user to write a report that pulls huge quantities of data from the server and accidentally brings the system down.

*"They need a way to quit "runaway reports". We sometimes have users that will create huge reports and when they set them off, they take the system down."*

Jerry Fowler, Programmer at St. Ambrose University

*"It is rather easy to "break" the system with what I call runaway reports. The way the system requests data is rather poor in that it's an all or nothing deal."*

Steven McKinney, Network Administrator at Media Services Group Inc.



## DATA DICTIONARY

- Some users point out the need for a data dictionary mapping fields to non-technical descriptions to help the non-technical build their own reports.

*"There is no dictionary resource on the tables provided about Informer, so a lot of report writing is trial and error on my part. And I can find myself making assumptions about what a data field means."*

*Jennifer Coon, Associate Director of Reporting at Berklee College of Music*

*"It would be nice for Entrinsik to publish the schema of Informer's internal database. We have access to it and do report from it, but it takes longer to get the reporting correct than it would with a published schema to guide the way".*

*Amanda Curran, Business Application Specialist at St. Ambrose University*

**\* Informer enables end users to create more user-friendly field descriptions as part of Informer set up, but it's sometimes not utilized. Informer shows direct field relationships as reports are constructed as opposed to one big schema.**

## Informer Product Overview

Informer is an operational reporting engine designed specifically for non-technical users. It removes the reliance end-users have on IT resources to build and deploy reports. Unlike full-stack business intelligence products, it does not contain a data warehouse, but instead connects directly to a range of data sources allowing users to analyze data where it resides. This makes the product much faster to deploy and much easier for non-technical staff to run ad-hoc queries and create personalized reports.

<b>Data Sources</b>	Connect to all of your organizational data across multiple applications and databases, including Microsoft® SQL Server, Informix®, Oracle®, IBM DB2®, MySQL, Microsoft Access®, UniData®, UniVerse®, Rocket D3, Google Docs, data warehouses, Microsoft Excel spreadsheets and much more.
<b>Dashboards</b>	Use Informer Dashboards to easily create and share interactive, customizable charts, graphs, and other visualizations; then drill down into underlying data regardless of where it lives, email dashboards to coworkers and managers, even embed into your own website. Informer's easy-to-build dashboards create context for any user so they can make data-driven decisions in real time.
<b>Interface</b>	Unlike traditional reporting and business intelligence solutions, Informer is built to be truly self-service. Non-technical users can quickly and easily create, modify, and deliver their own reports based on their customized needs by using Informer's intuitive drag-and-drop interface. Dynamically group, sort, aggregate, pivot, chart, download, and/or visualize for personalized data views – all without reliance on IT staff.

<b>No ETL</b>	Informer uses a unique direct-to-data source connection to get real-time data from multiple sources without requiring an ETL (Extract, Transfer, Load) process. Informer's unique architecture performs queries against LIVE data from source systems using JDBC and ODBC drivers, making it possible to access any data from any source. Using these methods, Informer leverages existing database and report infrastructures without having to create a separate data warehouse or data cubes.
<b>Secure Data Access</b>	Built-in security framework provides role-based user permissions and access control. Comprehensive security options ensure end users access only the data that is relevant to their job role or function, taking out the worry and confusion of reporting against massive amounts of irrelevant data.
<b>Installation</b>	Informer installs in minutes with deployment to users in just days, supporting any number of users on any platform, all without requiring extensive professional services.
<b>Integrations</b>	Informer integrates with other front-end applications including PDF, Email, and LIVE Excel, providing business users with additional popular and useful methods of applying analysis to data. Informer is built for agility – it's your data, the way you need to see it.

## Informer Direction

Interview with Doug Leupen, Entrinsik President & CEO, and Sharon Shelton, VP of Informer Marketing.

### Product Positioning

*“Our primary differentiation is that Informer is an exceptionally easy to use and implement tool. Informer enables users (regardless of technical ability) to easily create reports & dashboards by securely extracting data from multiple data sources, in real time, into one web interface. Users can then visualize key metrics in interactive dashboards, filter, drilldown into the underlying data, share, and even embed reports and dashboards into portals or websites.”*

*“Informer emphasizes a self-service approach to reporting and BI, empowering end users to create personalized reports and analytical queries on their own using a highly intuitive web interface, freeing up IT staff to focus on other tasks. For example, many universities have tried IBM Cognos, SAP Business Objects, or other full-stack business intelligence systems but found them too difficult to use, or too IT-intensive.”*

### Target Customers

*“Our customer base includes organizations from various industries including higher education, insurance, healthcare, public safety, manufacturing, and many more. Midsized organizations are a specific sweet spot because they often have data dispersed in various silos across the organization and they need to provide access to relevant information for different users with different needs. A typical medium-sized organization might have 3,000 reports being used by hundreds of people across the organization. We satisfy a big need there.”*

### Technical Differentiation

*“Unlike the full-stack strategic business intelligence tools on the market, we do not rely on reporting against a data warehouse or cube. We can report directly against live operational databases. Data is retrieved from multiple data sources and stored in memory where it can be manipulated directly. Some assumed that doing this without having the data normalized in a data warehouse would not be practical, but we have shown otherwise and now others are following our lead.”*

### Product Roadmap

*“Informer cannot currently handle very large data volumes, which has not been a big issue since most of our customer base is comprised of mid-sized organizations with a significant need for a robust distributed reporting platform. However, as data volumes even in smaller organizations get larger, it's becoming important for us to be able to handle these very large data volumes effectively. A lot of current and future development work is focused on making the product much faster when connecting to multiple data stores with larger data volumes and being able to assemble ad-hoc reports with no lag time.”*