

Thorogood case study
Insurance

Democratizing data analysis with Thorogood's Reporting and Analytics Hub

What if knowledge was shared rather than stored? What if every company had a virtual campus library where insights from every corner of the organization were available to all instead of trapped on local hard drives, and within specific software programs?

When Thorogood launched its Reporting and Analytics Hub (R & A Hub), it set out to turn these visions into reality. Leveraging Microsoft SharePoint's unique blend of functionality and user experience, the application gives companies the ability to build a centralized catalog of analyses and insights that users throughout the organization can access and incorporate into their work. It accomplishes this by enabling each of those users to file their own reporting outputs in a single, universal location. The result is a virtual repository where people throughout a company can turn when looking for answers, ideas, and insights. For businesses that have adopted the Reporting and Analytics Hub, the tool has been nothing short of transformative.

Building a knowledge repository

One of the earliest adopters of the Reporting and Analytics Hub was a major UK insurer that relies heavily on a wide variety of reporting in its day-to-day business. Like many companies, it was looking for a way to practice the collaborative spirit that it preached. One of the biggest obstacles it faced was the way in which its



technology contributed to information silos. Every day, its employees were performing analyses that others would find relevant, but the only conduit between them was direct person-to-person communication.

When Thorogood installed an early version of the R & A Hub on the company's servers, those at the firm suddenly had a way to pick the brains of fellow colleagues. Previously, if a user created a report, any insights contained therein were more or less trapped within that user's personal orbit. Somebody would perform a piece of analysis, use it for some specific purpose, and then file it away on a local hard drive. With the launch of the R & A Hub, that user now has a centralized place where they can share that analysis, and other users have a place where they can turn to find such results.

In designing the Hub, Thorogood aimed to create a tool that built the requisite bridges between users across departments, regardless of the reporting platforms they were using. It leveraged SharePoint's functionality to create a metadata tagging tool that enables users to file and browse reports by administrator-curated keywords. A user looking for data on a certain topic can turn to the catalog to peruse reports shared by others in the company. Similarly, someone who runs a report on a certain topic can tag that report for the benefit of future users. Once those reports are uploaded, they become visible to anyone with access to the Hub, who can filter them by keyword, category, or search bar query. After locating a report, a user simply clicks on a link that opens the file in its native application and can also predefine their default selections, so it is relevant for their role.

The Hub accomplishes all of this while still enabling a company like our client to maintain a high degree of control over reach and visibility without sacrificing security and robustness for searchability. Dividing users into administrators, power users, and users, the Hub brings to life any desired governance structure to create a safe environment where sharing and accessing data is enabled for the right people, at the right level.

An enhanced Hub in the cloud

Recently, the client enlisted Thorogood to move the tool to the cloud from its former home on company servers, opening up a new realm of possibilities. The primary motivation of the move was that the company was adopting a cloud first policy and also rolling out Microsoft's Power BI as a reporting tool. Users at the firm were increasingly utilizing such software to complement

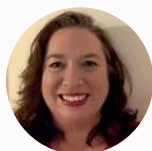
their work within the company's primary reporting software (SSRS). By moving the Hub to SharePoint Online, Thorogood were able to customize the tool to accommodate outputs from multiple vendors. It also put the company in better position to adapt to future change.

With the launch of the new version of the tool, users can now effectively catalog their Power BI reports alongside their SSRS reports, bringing the insurer one step closer to becoming a truly open access organization. Another feature of the cloud environment is the ability to incorporate Active Directory groups to better segment access. Thorogood tailored the tool so that users will only see reports pertaining to their division, making for an easier, less cluttered navigation experience. Other enhancements include an improved homepage, a catalogue of how-to videos that offer a users' guide for the Hub, and the ability to personalize the Hub by marking reports as favorites.

The expanded functionality of the new tool is coupled with an enhanced resilience to change. By staging the tool in the cloud, the client has future-proofed the tool by ensuring that it can easily adapt to evolving needs. Among many potential benefits, this guarantees that the Hub will always include the most up-to-date security features, a critical consideration for any company looking to widen access to data. The faster delivery and enhanced functionality of a native-to-cloud Hub also comes at a lower cost than the on-premises version, which required dedicated space on a company's server.

Bridging the gap between individuals and platforms

Collaboration is little more than a buzzword without the tools and processes to make it happen. At companies like this client, the Hub is playing a critical role in companywide sharing by bridging the gaps that exist between individuals and platforms. By creating a multi-disciplinary and customizable space where disparate technology outputs can be stored and made visible for utilization by other users, companies can create an environment where ideas are hatched, output is incentivized, and collaboration is encouraged. Improving access to reporting is a simple step that firms can take to engender a spirit of solution-oriented analysis and innovation. As one senior businessperson at the company noted, improving the visibility of impactful reports helps to show users the possibilities of reporting and incentivizes them to perform their own unique analyses.



Find out more:

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