

Analytics top priority in IT: survey


IBM's global poll of 2,500 chief information officers also reflects focus on cost-cutting

Globe and Mail Sep. 10, 2009

Business analytics – glean information from massive amounts of data and using that information to drive business decisions – is now the top priority for technology departments in the world's biggest companies, according to the largest survey of chief information officers ever undertaken.

A global study of more than 2500 CIOs in 78 countries – including Canada – released by IBM Thursday shows IT departments increasingly being consulted on core business-making decisions, as companies look to collect, store and analyze more data than ever before.

“What we're seeing is the role of CIOs being drawn in, even more so, right in the heart of the business,” IBM Canada president Dan Fortin said in an interview with the Globe and Mail. “They're no longer just the IT expert who's running the brain power in the basement.”

As the focus on analytics grows, businesses are also investing more money in keeping those huge stores of data secure, the survey shows. More than 70 per cent of CIOs said they planned to spend more money on risk management  and compliance tools.

However the global IT market – estimated to be worth more than \$3-trillion in 2010 – hasn't been immune to the effects of the global economic downturn. More than three quarters of the CIOs surveyed said they planned to implement virtualization projects, which tend to lower energy costs, for example, by replacing several servers working at lower capacity with one server working at full capacity, or using software to mimic a different operating system, rather than buying a new computer to run it.

In all, the survey found that CIOs on average spend 14 per cent of their time looking for ways to cut costs.

“The downturn has only brought us quicker to a realization that we're going to live through into the future – the notion of virtualizing, of making the data centre itself more efficient, to look to make the data centre greener – are things that all enterprises are on to. They need to do that,” Mr. Fortin said.