: Who originated the term Business Intelligence (BI)?

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Decision support and data warehousing sources agree that Howard Dresner coined and popularized the term Business Intelligence in 1989. In general, BI was used as an umbrella term for business reporting and analysis intended to support decision-making. Dresner defined BI as "concepts and methods to improve business decision making by using fact-based support systems."

Dresner Advisory Services (http://dresneradvisory.com/about) notes Dresner has been "involved in the Business Intelligence market for 27 years" (since approximately 1989). Sheina (2007) interviewed Dresner. She asked "You coined the term BI well before decision support systems hit the business computing mainstream. Do you think it has stood the test of time?" Dresner answered "Stood the test of time? Indeed it has! I just did a quick Google search of 'business intelligence' and got 123 million items returned. Granted that this is somewhat imprecise, but it does indicate that BI has become mainstream."

Sheina (2007) also noted in the written introduction to her interview that "Dresner is widely credited with coining the term 'business intelligence' while an analyst at IT research firm Gartner. He certainly has the credentials to be called a founding father after dedicating much of his life to researching BI technologies and trends, advising corporations and vendors and shaping the market."

In a prior article, Power (2003), I wrote "Nylund (1999) traces the developments associated with Business Intelligence (BI) to Procter & Gamble's efforts in 1985 to build a DSS that linked sales information and retail scanner data. Metaphor Computer Systems, a spinoff of researchers from Xerox's Palo Alto Research Center (PARC), built the early P&G DSS. Metaphor alumni latter founded many of the BI vendors: Richard Tanler founded Information Advantage and Katherine Glassey co-founded Brio Technologies. The term BI is a popularized, umbrella term supposedly introduced by Howard Dresner of the Gartner Group in 1989. BI describes a set of concepts and methods to improve business decision making by using fact-based support systems. BI is sometimes used interchangeably with briefing books, report and query tools and executive information systems. Business Intelligence systems are data-driven DSS."

Martens (2006) also agrees with this timeline for the origins of Business Intelligence (BI). Howard Dresner moved decision support toward more sophisticated reporting and analysis of business data.

References

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