

# Crystal Report 2008

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Excellence Group

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**Atidan White Paper**

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## Executive Summary

Crystal Reports is an intuitive reporting solution that helps you create flexible, feature-rich and dependable reports – tightly integrating them into both thick and thin client applications.

Crystal Reports provides you with:

- **Powerful report designer**
- **Flexible application development**
- **Report management and delivery**

### **Crystal Reports 2008**

Crystal Reports 2008 is a powerful, dynamic, actionable reporting solution that helps you design, explore, visualize, and deliver reports via the web or embedded in enterprise applications. It enables end users to consume reports with stunning visualizations, conduct on-report business modeling, and execute decisions instantly from the report itself – reducing dependency on IT and developer resources.

The following is an overview of the key benefits provided by Crystal Reports 2008:

- Empower end users to explore reports interactively
- Create compelling reports with stunning visualizations
- Develop powerful data mashups
- Save valuable report design time
- Enjoy comprehensive report deployment options and an improved report designer

## Features of Crystal Report 2008

- Flash Integration
- Xcelsius Integration
- Adobe Flex Integration
- Powerful Crosstabs
- Enhanced Web Services Data Driver
- Save reports directly to crystalreports.com
- Integrated Salesforce.com Driver
- Improved XML Exporting
- NET Report Modification SDK
- Interactive Report Viewing
- Flexible Pagination
- Built-in Barcode Support
- Enhanced Designer Features
- Single Edition
- Multilingual Reporting
- Reduced Install Footprint

## Empower end users to explore reports interactively

- **Xcelsius integration:**

Xcelsius-generated SWF files can be imported into a report. This enhances the reports with what-if scenario models that enable users to make important decisions dynamically, without leaving the report file.

**Business Perspective:**

- Improved visualization.
- Interactive reports.

**Developers Perspective:**

- Increased design time, as more time is spent on defining parameters on both sides: Crystal Report, Xcelsius.

- **Adobe Flex integration:**

Adobe Flex (SWF) applications can be embedded Integrated with operational workflows. Using Adobe Flex Builder one can create any business-user UI to access report data and integrate with external web services. Data in report can be passed to the Flex application via Flashvars, making it easy to create a flexible UI even when one don't have access to data via web services. The Flex applications can do tasks like database write-back – invoking operational workflows directly within Crystal Reports.

**Business Perspective:**

- Reporting Adobe flex application result.
- Database write-back is possible.

**Developers Perspective:**

- Increased design time, as more time is spent on defining parameters on both sides: Crystal Report, Adobe Flex.

- **Parameter panel:**

The report designer and the .NET Winform and .NET Webform viewers have a parameter panel so that parameter values can be set without refreshing data. Parameters used are displayed on the panel so that report consumers can easily see them, make changes, and have the new values applied directly to the saved data. Report designers build the parameter panels into their reports prior to publishing them for the end user's consumption.

**Business Perspective:**

- End user can change parameters for the saved data.

- **Interactive report viewing:**

On-report sorting, filtering, and report reformatting with the .NET Winform and NET Webform viewers allows users to explore information interactively without re-querying the database. New optional parameters provide for complex user driven filtering scenarios. Users can answer more business questions with fewer, more flexible reports – significantly reducing Developer and IT support dependency. The filtering panels and sorting buttons are pre-built into the report based on the requirements set upfront by the report consumers.

**Business and Developers Perspective:**

- Avoids Postback.

## Create compelling reports with stunning visualizations

- **Flash integration:**

A wide variety of flexible data presentation options are now available through Flash. Flash (SWF) files can be integrated into a report and report data can be shared with SWF via Flashvars for compelling, interactive, and information rich reports. The SWF files can be embedded in the report or linked via a website.

**Developers Perspective:**

- Increased design time, as more time is spent on defining parameters on both sides: Crystal Report, Flash application.

- **Powerful crosstabs:**

Summary, variance, and any other customer calculations can be inserted into a crosstab row or a column – especially useful for reports that benefit from a table structure such as financial reports. The crosstab table structure makes reports much faster to build and maintain. This feature also provides powerful benefits to crosstab based charts since custom formulas in the crosstab can be visualized within the charts.

**Developers Perspective:**

- Faster development.

- **Flexible pagination:**

Report designers can customize page size and easily control page breaking after N records/groups. A single report can combine portrait and landscape oriented pages and the white space at the end of groups can be removed by compressing the page footers. Online report consumption is improved because reports are easier to read.

**Business Perspective:**

- Clear and stunning visualization of report.

## Develop powerful data mashups

**• Integration with Xcelsius, Adobe Flex, and Adobe Flash:**

Developers now have the ability to produce powerful mashups pulling data from various sources. They can easily integrate components designed in Flash and Flex without any coding, and significantly expand the scope of their application deployment.

**Developers Perspective:**

- Number of reports is reduced. All features can be incorporate in single report.

**• Web services data driver:**

Integrating with various web services is difficult and complex due to a variety of implementation types. The new data driver offers additional web access to web services by providing support for RPC encoding of SOAP messages, SSLsecured web servers, as well as a working compatibility with the WS-Security standards. It adapts to custom logon requirements such as email addresses or user/password. Developers combine the flexibility of XML and Web Services with report formatting and visualization to deliver reports that link report data to sophisticated interactive data mashups such as integration with third party mapping systems.

**Business Perspective:**

- Secure database from unauthorized viewing.

## Save valuable report design time

**• Built-in barcode support:**

Generate barcodes with only a few clicks of the mouse by using the new “turn to barcode” function in the context menu. Easily convert fields to Code39 barcodes without any coding or extra steps. Additional barcode fonts are available from third-party vendors.

**Business Perspective:**

- On time Barcode conversion.

**Developers Perspective:**

- Reduced design time.

- **Enhanced designer features:**

Report designer will be more productive with features like global formula search, duplicate formula, duplicate running total, auto complete field names, and the Find in Field Explorer feature.

**Developers Perspective:**

- Reduced design time.

- **Hyperlinking wizard:**

Report designers save time by automatically creating the Crystal Reports formula required to invoke a BusinessObjects Enterprise OpenDocument hyperlink. This functionality is provided in Crystal Reports 2008 Service Pack 0 (SP0).

**Developers Perspective:**

- Reduced design time.

- **Single edition:**

Crystal Reports 2008 comes in a single edition that is the feature equivalent of the old Developer Edition. This single offering provides customers with quick access to the features they need to meet any application and user requirement. Report samples and developer documentation are now a free, optional download.

**Developers Perspective:**

- Reduced design time.

- **Multilingual reporting:**

One can choose the working preferred language by simply selecting the language packs one wish to use during product installation. Then switch the report designer UI to use any of the installed language packs. The report content locale can also be explicitly set for each report file. This setting controls sorting, grouping and formatting that matches the local language customs and conventions.

**Business Perspective:**

- Globalised report.

- **Reduced install footprint:**

The download size has been reduced to 250MB to provide fast access via the download site. The runtime files included in developer applications are also significantly smaller.

**Business Perspective:**

- Reduced Installation time.

## Enjoy comprehensive deployment options

- **Save reports directly to crystalreports.com:**

Expand your deployment options with ondemand reporting capabilities when you open and save reports directly to crystalreports.com. This new integration allows you to manage and share your reports securely without dependency on IT.

**Business and Developers Perspective:**

- Less time in Saving report to crystalreports.com and Opening report from crystalreports.com

- **Integrated salesforce.com driver:**

The salesforce.com driver included with Crystal Reports 2008 allows for easy access to complete customer data – turning it into actionable business information. Reports that use a salesforce.com driver will refresh when deployed to crystalreports.com.

**Developers Perspective:**

- Reduced design time.

- **Improved XML exporting:**

Render reports in almost any format and enjoy faster and easier integration with industry-specific business processes – without any custom coding. The XSLT transformations are embedded into the report file and will be triggered by users from within the viewer when exporting to XML. This provides a powerful, flexible hook for transforming Crystal Reports data and integrating it into other applications.

**Developers Perspective:**

- Reduced design time

- **NET report modification SDK:**

The Report Application Server SDK is now available for users of CR.NET API without the use of a RAS server. Report modification such as changing / adding / removing database providers, adding / removing / creating report objects, parameters, formulas, and sections can be achieved by accessing the RAS SDK through the CR .NET SDK.

**Developers Perspective:**

- Enable various customization in report.

## What's Changed

Changes have been made to certain components of Crystal Reports 2008:

### **Reports samples and sample database:**

To reduce download time, report samples and the Xtreme sample database are now accessed through separate downloads on the Start Page of Crystal Reports 2008.

### **.NET developer SDK documentation, merge modules, and MSI files:**

.NET developer documentation, merge modules, and MSI files are now accessed through separate downloads on the Start Page of Crystal Reports 2008.

### **Report developer component (RDC):**

The RDC is unsupported in Crystal Reports 2008. Developers wishing to use Crystal Reports in a COM application should use Crystal Reports XI Release 2. The ActiveX viewer remains a fully supported component of Crystal Reports 2008.

### **Advanced DHTML viewers:**

The Advanced DHTML viewers have been removed from Crystal Reports 2008. The improvements to the DHTML viewers make these additional viewers unnecessary.

### **Java reporting component (JRC) availability and Java SDK documentation:**

Java developers now receive the JRC and Java SDK documentation through the free Crystal Reports for Eclipse download. This product will be updated on a separate schedule from Crystal Reports. Visit the start page in Crystal Reports 2008 for more information on updates to Crystal Reports for Eclipse