

Analytics Research Centre Prepares Tomorrow's Leaders:

Announcing the IBM Centre for Performance Management



Our world is swimming in data. Each day more than 15 petabytes of new information is created and collected. Businesses have more data about their customers than ever before, yet one in three business leaders makes critical decisions without the information they really need.

All of the data in the world is useless if you can't extract value from it. Business analytics skills are the new requirement for 21st century jobs, and universities must prepare students for a new world of work that integrates both business and technology skills. Employers today are looking for a broad set of workers with analytics capabilities to help support transformation in industries as diverse as healthcare, energy, infrastructure and the public sector.

That's why IBM and the University of Ottawa have teamed to create an international centre of excellence for business analytics at the Telfer School of Management. Announced on April 15, 2010, the IBM Centre for Performance Management will help prepare students for careers in "economy of tomorrow" industries – part of the new knowledge economy.

Over the next five years, IBM will invest cash and in-kind donations of research time, software, services, consulting and support staff. IBM will also make a significant contribution of hardware and software, and the Telfer School will establish a new \$1 million endowment fund as an institutional contribution to the new Centre.

Ranked as one of the best business schools worldwide and one of only three business schools in Canada with all three major international accreditations, the Telfer School of Management seeks to prepare students to achieve outstanding results as leaders of high performance organizations.

"Analytics can be applied to everyday challenges to vastly improve our lives and provide highly marketable skills to our university students entering the workforce," says Dr. Greg Richards, Professor of Performance Management, University of Ottawa Telfer School of Management. "This new Centre will allow us to collaborate across disciplines to drill into integrative processes and methods that dramatically improve organizational productivity."

The partnership with IBM to create the centre is an expansion and continuation of the existing relationship between IBM and the University of Ottawa. IBM researchers will reside at the university and work side by side with the Telfer School faculty and students in a lab environment that will centre on two key areas of the business analytics market: business intelligence and performance management. This represents a new model for collaboration at IBM. Joint research conducted will help inform the Telfer School's curriculum as it prepares students for jobs that will require deep analytics skills paired with specific industry knowledge.

Through this research and the associated curriculum, students will get access to resources and hands-on experience using IBM technology, such as Cognos software, that is now helping organizations worldwide to deal with the data deluge, and turn it into useful predictions to guide public policy or make crucial business decisions.

"Analytics decides which data you need to look at to make the best decision, and being able to make decisions is what allows you to build extra value. It helps you discover what you didn't even know you were looking for, in some cases" says Alain Doucet, Assistant Dean, External Relations, Telfer School of Management. "Telfer is leading the charge of validating performance management and business analytics, so the next generation knows how to use these technologies, tools and data to take an integrated, strategic view of the business."

Eventually, the Centre will be broadened to involve a network of top-tier business schools worldwide. "The intent is to create a close-knit, collaborative community of like-minded institutions with a prior background in business analytics and management who will actively share in research and curriculum development," says Marcellus Mindel, Head of Academic Partnerships at the Centre for Advanced Studies, IBM Canada Software Lab. "We want to create a network of world leaders in this area."

Analytics can be applied to improve performance for better outcomes no matter what the sector: business, non-profit, government, and healthcare. The Ottawa Hospital, for example, is three years into its journey from being a paper-based information-sharing environment to a digital one. The 12,000-person healthcare team uses IBM/Cognos business analytics as a foundation for knowledge discovery to help structure a better hospital system.

"All industries require a skilled workforce to make sense of their massive amounts of organizational data in a meaningful way," says Dale Potter, CIO, The Ottawa Hospital. "In healthcare, putting knowledge and relevant information quickly into the hands of people who need it can lead to better patient safety, improved quality of care and increased overall effectiveness of the institution. Business analytics is the technology foundation for how we are beginning to provide this kind of awareness across The Ottawa Hospital to improve patient care, and ultimately help save lives."

