

Dynamic Data Transformation: The New Approach

Tim Royston-Webb



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1 Benefits of Structured Data

One of the key benefits of structured data is that it is typically organised, predictable and defined.

I define 'Dynamic Data Transformation' as the process by which structured data can be remapped dynamically in the application layer and therefore temporarily transformed from one value to another in a managed way.



By transforming data dynamically, data can be remapped to better interface with other data sets or client processes. Now this sounds quite technical but what does this actually mean in real terms?

Simply put, as a business you want data presented to you in line with your business process. Therefore, you want to have the data presented how you require it not how someone else defines it.

2 Data with a purpose

I firmly believe that for data to have business value it must have a purpose, and that purpose must enable a process that supports a business outcome.

The value is in the outcome. This is the important thing to remember.

Every day I hear clients are frustrated at their inability to be able to use and analyse data in a way that fits their business process resulting in many days of man effort to force data into a form that aligns with their process.

Is the data itself valuable? It may be unique, and of a high quality but for it to be valuable it must fit in with your process.



Take for example the system that shows sales made across Europe. If another client uses the same system but instead wants to see European sales with slightly different constituent countries, selecting Europe as a country set doesn't work for that client. Instead they typically have to output all the country data and then use Excel or another system to build new aggregates views.

3 A commitment to standards

Why should not I as a client be able to load my own country or field definitions and have data presented to me in line with my process?

This is what I call 'Dynamic Data Transformation', the ability to change data sets dynamically within the application layer so that they transform from one form to another as needed.



What if I want to see all my sales figures in different currencies? Why cannot I normalise all my currencies taking account of different exchanges rates at the time of sale so they are presented in a form that fits my process? *That is 'Dynamic Data Transformation'.*

The greatest barrier to transforming data dynamically is the ability to standardise data so that it can be consistently transformed. This makes dynamic data better suited to well defined structured data. Requiring sets of well thought through data taxonomies that will standardise data values.

However, embracing 'Dynamic Data Transformation' requires a commitment to standards, a relentless focus on structure and a disciplined culture to challenge existing data structures to seek out opportunities for standardisation and transformation.

4 Empowering clients

As discussed 'Dynamic Data Transformation' happens in the application layer but to enable it data must be structured, well defined, standardised and clean. The commitment to dynamic data requires an investment at every level of an intelligence provider. The problem for many companies is their data archives are vast and this data is continually in use.

Therefore, the process to change data structures against this backdrop requires vision, a major financial commitment and a strategic mandate. Sadly too many intelligence companies are happy to force customers down their view of the world without making this commitment.

Addressing this anomaly, Pivotal iQ has from day one laid down a strategic intent to challenge and standardise where possible every data asset that it builds and partners with via the mapping of all data to a common standard data format which can interface with many more data sets. Thus, 'Dynamic Data Transformation' allows Pivotal iQ to dynamically provide data to clients in a structured way that better suits their process, allowing timelier and accurate analysis combined with more relevant insights.

Simply put, Pivotal iQ's application layers empowers the client to decide how the data should be presented to fit their process.



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Tim Royston-Webb has helped guide several business intelligence organizations with senior leadership roles within Gideon Gartner's *GIGA* and *Forrester Research Group*. He has also globally led the technology businesses of *Computerwire*, *Butler*, *Datamonitor Ovum* and latterly *Kable Research*. Bringing a comprehensive and independent point of view, Tim is passionate about helping providers and enterprises to benefit from *Pivotal iQ's* unique insights to drive further value into their businesses. A big data thinker with an analytical mindset, his focus currently is on redefining sourcing intelligence and establishing *Pivotal iQ* as the global thought leader in sourcing. Tim earned his MBA in Sustainability Leadership from the University of Cumbria.

The *Reflections Briefing Series* is an ongoing series of key opinions and views on the ICT sourcing sector and related markets. These opinions are made available by Pivotal iQ Limited as part of its ongoing mission to redefine sourcing intelligence.