

Are Computers Necessary for Business Analysis?



Jackie Jansen

I thought that I would start 2003 with my first column being somewhat lighter than usual.

For Christmas this year I gave my husband the Dilbert™ daily calendar. Imagine my surprise when he brought home the first week's worth of pages (January 2 – 6) because they were all about **data mining!** I would love to reproduce them for you but cannot without special permission. Does that make Business Intelligence and Data Mining mainstream when Dilbert pokes fun at them?

After reading Dilbert I received an e-mail that I will reproduce here. Dilbert's humour and the quiz to follow convinced me to start this year off in a much lighter fashion. The following quiz was circulated among 13 year old students on the internet. The author is anonymous.

I took the quiz and then decided that we absolutely need computers to help with business analysis. I consider myself to have a reasonable level of education and intelligence but it would be hard to prove it if you saw my score on the quiz.

We all expect instant response from our computer queries and that is the trick here also. There are 5 questions below and you have to answer them very quickly. Don't take your time, aim for my famous multi-dimensional "speed of thought" analysis. Ready, Set, GO!



First Question: You are participating in a race. You overtake the second person. What position are you in?

Answer: If you answered that you are first, then you are absolutely wrong! If you overtake the second person, you take his place, you are second! Keep trying.

To answer the second question, don't take as much time as you took for the first question.

Second Question: If you overtake the last person, then you are...?

Answer: If you answered that you are second to last then you are wrong again. Tell me, how is it possible to overtake the LAST person?! How good at this are you?

Third Question: Very tricky math! This one must be done in your head only. Do NOT use paper and pencil or a calculator. Try it.

Take 1000 and add 40 to it.
Now add another 1000.
Now add 30.
Add another 1000.
Now add 20.
Now add another 1000.
Now add 10.
What's the total?

Answer: Did you get 5000? Sorry. The correct answer is actually 4100. Don't believe it? Check with your calculator! Is today your day? One more question to go.

Last Question: Mary's father has five daughters: 1. Nana, 2. Nene, 3. Nini, 4. Nono. What is the name of the fifth daughter?

Answer: Nunu? NO! I am afraid not. Her name is Mary. Read the question again.

Now based on your results – how do you want your business analysis done, by you or by your computer? 



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Note: The 2003 Dilbert™ calendar was written by Scott Adams and published by Andrews McMeel Publishing of Kansas City.