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Jeannie Pridmore
University of West Georgia, jpridmor@westga.edu

Joy Godin
Georgia College, joy.godin@gcsu.edu

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DEVELOPING DATA ANALYSTS FOR THE 21ST CENTURY: AN SAP ANALYTIC CLOUD TUTORIAL

Jeannie Pridmore
University of West Georgia
jpridmor@westga.edu

Joy Godin
Georgia College
Joy.godin@gcsu.edu

ABSTRACT

SAP Analytic Cloud is the newest analytic software from SAP. SAC is platform independent and allows the user to discover, analyze, plan, and predict in one cloud application. Users of SAC can connect to a variety of data sources to create models and develop reports with charts, including Geo Maps, and tables (Ahmed, 2017). Charts can be compiled and shared with stakeholders in the SAP Digital Boardroom allowing teams to visualize, plan, and collaborate all in one product. This tutorial will provide the audience with example assignments and knowledge of how to develop assignments that will instill needed data analytic skills in new graduates. Participants will be shown how to connect to the SAP Analytic Cloud platform and create data models using a variety of visualizations. The lessons learned from this tutorial could be applied to many other data analytic platforms.

KEYWORDS

Data Analyst Skills, Higher Education, SAP Analytic Cloud

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Today, data is everywhere. Every action taken, both online and offline, generates data which businesses collect and analyze in order to make strategic decisions. There is currently around 40 trillion gigabytes of data, and every person will generate 1.7 megabytes of data every second (Petrov, 2019). This massive amount of data has made data analysts indispensable and in high demand in the 21st century. According to IBM, the annual demand for data analysts will result in 700,000 new positions in 2020 (Newsroom, 2018).

The overall goal of a data analysts is to analyze large data sets from a variety of sources so they can provide and communicate a holistic view of the data in order to make strategic decisions. A good data analyst can provide insights and reveal predicting trends that businesses can use to become more profitable, efficient, proactive, and intelligent. However, it can be difficult to find skilled data analysts.

Previous research has identified problems that businesses have in finding new hires with good data analytic skills (Mikalef et al., 2018). While some of these problems can be overcome with experience, higher education needs to focus on producing graduates who have the skills needed to be good data analysts. Mikalef and colleagues (2018) identified the following list of skills needed for a good data analyst.

1. Data management and challenges
2. Security, anonymity, privacy and ethics of data
3. Data flow management
4. Visualization and presentation of results
5. Programming and technical skills
6. Artificial intelligence and machine learning
7. Interpersonal and social skills
8. Domain Knowledge
9. Business and strategy competences
10. Distributed systems

There are several data analytic platforms available for use in industry today. However, the specific software being used in a business is not as important as the analyst having the skills listed above. This tutorial will walk the audience through the use of SAP Analytic Cloud (SAC) to produce graduates with these needed skills.

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