

Featured Client Profile:



“The Data Cookbook was one of those things you could just jump into right away.”

As Director of Information Systems at Bellevue University, Eric Weigel could see firsthand the issues that led to the inconsistencies with data definitions. “For example,” said Weigel, “when someone would write a report using the term ‘active student’, data was accessible on the institutional level and people were defining the term differently.” The multitude of people and resources handling the data definitions only seemed to muddy the waters. “There were emails, Word documents, Excel documents and files here and there; consultants were coming and going; and we had people writing queries in other departments. All of these different scenarios led to different definitions and made us realize there wasn’t a common understanding of how to define an ‘active student’.”

Once a group of data stewards called the “Data Forum” was established for proper authority of the definitions, the university’s new CIO suggested purchasing the Data Cookbook™ to streamline the processes and promote best practices. Weigel and his colleagues also were impressed with IData’s focus on higher education institutions, which gave them a better feel for the kinds of issues that Bellevue was encountering and insight as to how the Data Cookbook could resolve those issues. “We like that IData has had a presence in higher ed. We notice that IData attended the Higher Ed User’s Group (HEUG) conferences, which meant that we would have a group of folks that would be like us, could help us learn new things and leverage our existing knowledge.”

The tool’s practicality and ease of adoption impressed Weigel: “When we came across the Data Cookbook, the price seemed right; we could log into the website, and it seemed like a very quick and easy app for us.” Once implemented, it became readily apparent to Weigel and his colleagues that there was no hand-holding required from IData support staff. “We soon decided that we would work on defining terms and entering them into the Data Cookbook rather than having someone from IData come while different deans, directors and managers debated in meetings over the correct definition of an active student.” Weigel was also impressed with the assistance provided by IData CTO Ken Dezio and the implementation of the Data Cookbook with LDAP authentication, which according to Weigel “has been great so that we don’t have to worry about another username or password for people to memorize. We’re still learning more about the rights, and people are proposing terms as well as functional and technical definitions.”

Once the data dictionary is properly established with the Cookbook, Weigel is excited about the future of the Bellevue’s institutional reporting. “We like the idea that institutions can define their own terms and generate reports from them. It also looks like we will be able to do report definitions in the Data Cookbook and be able to tell what terms make up a report.” With the Data Cookbook facilitating better data stewardship and a common platform, Weigel sees a light at the end of the tunnel. “We want to make sure that everyone agrees upon the definition, because now when someone goes to write a report or query, the terms in the Data Cookbook will serve as the legend.”

About Bellevue University:

With over **9,000** students worldwide, Bellevue University is the largest private university in Nebraska. Regionally accredited, Bellevue University is proud to be an award-winning leader in distance learning; offering both online or in class settings at main campus or satellite locations. The school's accelerated degree completion programs have been recognized for innovation, leadership and diversity.

Today, more than 40 years after its founding, Bellevue University is thriving, growing and looking forward to the next 40 years — and beyond. For more information, visit their site at www.bellevue.edu.

About IData Inc.:

Since 2004, IData has assisted higher education institutions in becoming more successful with their administrative systems and reporting processes. Our consultants focus strictly on higher education and provide [consulting](#) in three primary areas: Technology Services (custom development and system integration), Institutional Research Services, and Implementation Services. With a client list including a wide-ranging and diverse set of institutions, IData is a recognized leader in the field and continues to offer innovative solutions. IData is committed to offering the best service possible to our clients and to delivering appropriate, timely, and robust solutions.

IData's Mission: Increasing the productivity of colleges, universities, and institutional research professionals through better use of administrative and data systems.

IData also draws upon the skills and experience of our innovative staff to develop software as a service (SaaS) products designed to help universities be more productive and successful. IData's flagship SaaS product is DataCookbook.com – a collaborative data dictionary and data management tool for higher education.

About the Data Cookbook:

DataCookbook.com is a process improvement tool that actually does improve the reporting process by applying key reporting best practices. Written by reporting professionals and Higher Education IT experts, the Data Cookbook provides a central, highly visible location to store all of the details of your institution's reporting terminology and report specifications. This helps improve the visibility of existing reports, and provides clear, agreed upon definitions of institutional terms for creating additional reports.

The Data Cookbook was developed by IData as an integral component of iData's Institutional Research reporting services. For more information on how IData can help your institution be more successful with Institutional research and reporting, please visit our Reporting Services site at www.idatainc.com/reporting