

SAP Analytics Cloud, APOS Data Gateway & Azure SQL

Connecting SAP Analytics Cloud to Azure SQL

The implementation of SAP Analytics Cloud with APOS Data Gateway allowed Aspris to instill a culture of data literacy within the organization, leading to higher service levels for the young people in their care, better management of education, and greater accountability amongst their staff.

The combination of SAP Analytics Cloud, APOS Data Gateway, and Azure SQL is known internally at Aspris as “**Aspris Insight.**”

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“It all started off with a real gap in the market that APOS filled – a gateway between our Azure SQL data warehouse and our SAC front end. We didn’t find any other company providing that. We knew from an architectural perspective what we wanted to do, using SAC as our front-end reporting and dashboard solution.”

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– **Graham Soanes,**
Head of Data Management
Aspris

AT A GLANCE

CHALLENGES

Service managers, location managers, and regional managers need access to data that gives them up-to-the-minute information and statistics

Executives need to leverage real-time dashboards that show KPIs for ongoing operational management

Finance, HR needed performance analytics on current data

BENEFITS

Real-time access to Azure data

Strong query performance

Data security

Azure security integration

Simplified semantic layer

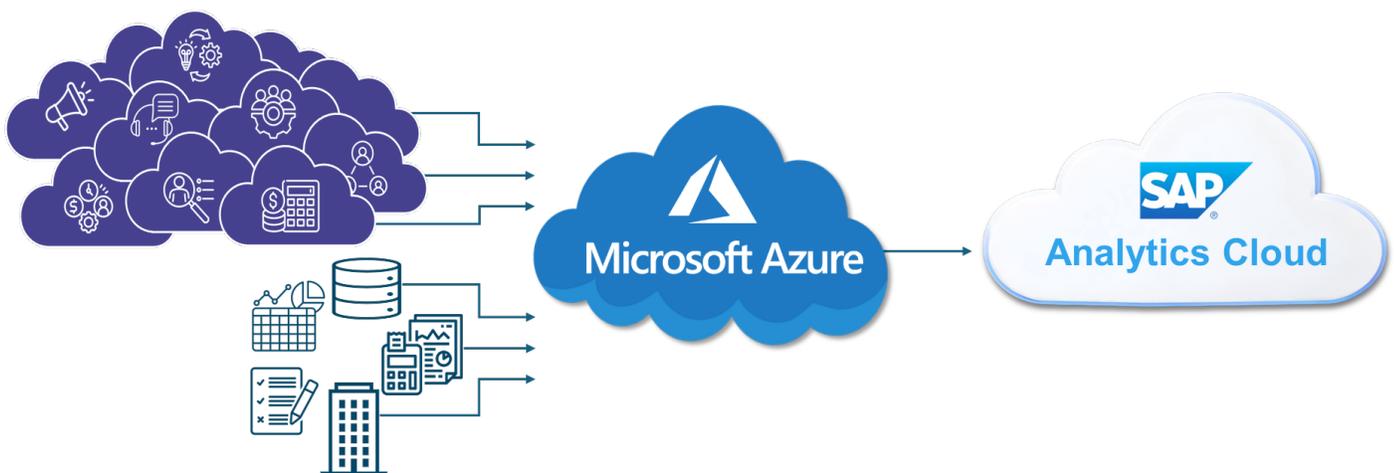
Landscape

Aspris’s digital transformation has taken them from static Web Intelligence reports with SAP BusinessObjects to real-time dashboards with SAP Analytics Cloud with SAP Analytics Cloud.

Graham Soanes, Head of Data Management at Aspris:

“As context, we have around 21 business applications from which we draw data regarding HR, payroll, recruitment, marketing, finance, etc. Then we have core operational systems, the systems that we use to manage young peoples’ journey with us – systems such as incident management, but also assets related to attainments and progress. We have a wide range of young people in our care and the data that we capture is part of that journey with us and is part of those business and core operational applications.

“We harness that data from our cloud providers and put it into our Azure SQL data warehouse, but we had no way of bringing that data into our SAC front end dashboard solution. So that’s where APOS came in. We do a lot of ETL processes from the cloud providers, but we had no way of harnessing and promoting that data to a graphical interface and allowing our people to consume that data. It’s gone really well.”



Core Challenge

In order to fulfill their objective of flexible and real-time analytics, timely access to current data was required. Processes were optimized for quick uploads of business application data into Microsoft Azure, and the analytics platform needed to align with this time-sensitive strategy.



Problem:

SAP Analytics Cloud does not provide live data connectivity to non-SAP data sources such as Microsoft Azure.

Pain:

Without live data connectivity, they would not be able to create real-time dashboards in SAP Analytics Cloud, which was their preferred analytics platform. They looked at Microsoft Power BI as a potential front end for their Microsoft Azure back end, but found it did not meet their technical, security and data presentation needs.

Requirements

Rapid, real-time data access:

- Service managers, location managers, and regional managers need access to data that gives them up-to-the-minute information and statistics
- Executives need to leverage real-time dashboards that show KPIs for ongoing management of operations
- Finance, HR need performance analytics on current data

Solution: APOS Data Gateway

APOS Live Data Gateway is a middleware platform which provides virtualized data connection and data transformation to enable live data connectivity and expanded data source options for SAP Analytics Cloud, with a primary focus on non-SAP data sources.

APOS Live Data Gateway provided Aspris with:

- Real-time access to Azure data
- Strong query performance
- Data security
- Azure security integration
- Simplified semantic layer

Graham Soanes summarized their needs and how APOS Data Gateway filled them:

“It all started off with a real gap in the market that APOS filled – a gateway between our Azure SQL data warehouse and our SAC front end. We didn’t find any other company providing that. We knew from an architectural perspective what we wanted to do, using SAC as our front-end reporting and dashboard solution.”

Aspris’s journey with APOS began when they identified that gap in the market and their strategy. They needed a way to transfer their data to SAP Analytics Cloud, and APOS was the only company they found that could provide the live data connectivity to fill the gap between SAP Analytics Cloud and non-SAP data sources.

They did proof of concept with APOS Data Gateway, then went live rolling out key metrics for staff turnover to their HR department – head count, sickness, cost of recruitment, engagement, learning management. Then they rolled out dashboards to senior executives and directors. Finally, they created an operational reporting layer.

The result for Aspris was live data consumption, which replaced static reporting, and initiated a massive business culture shift toward greater data literacy:

“Every site leader within Aspris, whether it be a residential manager or a head teacher at a day school, had access to SAP Analytics Cloud to consume their data in real time from the data warehouse using APOS Live Data Gateway. This initial rollout started back in May 2023 and ran for a couple of months to get people embedded with using SAC as opposed to what they were using before, which was manual distribution of SAP BusinessObjects reports.”

The change Aspris implemented was not simply technological, but cultural. They changed the way they consumed and used knowledge to improve the educational services they delivered and the way they delivered them:

“We had a very big shift in the way that people consumed data – from their Inbox to a SAC login. As part of this rollout, we also wanted to instill a data culture within the organization. Previously, data literacy was not widely understood or practiced within the organization, at least not lower in the org chart than the executive team and the finance team. So instead of just bursting out reports using Web Intelligence, we wanted to get site leads to engage with data in real time using SAC. This implementation has allowed us to make this big shift from the old world of being saturated with data, versus now, where they are being proactive and consuming data.”

Outcomes

The Aspris digital transformation has been a great success, helping Aspris to become more data-driven and promoting a culture of data literacy:

- **Service managers, location managers and regional managers** receive real-time data for up-to-the-minute information relating to their responsibilities.
- **Executives** receive real-time business data, financial data and key financial metrics.
- **Administrative staff** is kept aware of the precise number of young people in Aspris’s care at any given time.
- **Finance and HR** can do performance analytics on current data.
- **Frontline staff** use the Quality dashboard to access real-time data from the core operational system on incidents, allowing them to ensure the young people in their care are safeguarded, and responses to incidents are escalated as necessary.
- **Attendance** reporting is a regulatory requirement, and Aspris now has this data in real time.

Graham Soanes concluded:

“So that’s where we are. It’s been a real success story. We’ve got people knocking on the door every day asking for new requirements and what else we can do in terms of real time data. Without APOS Live Data Gateway, we wouldn’t have been able to do any of this.”

The combination of SAP Analytics Cloud, APOS Data Gateway, and Azure SQL is known internally as **“Aspris Insight.”**

“Aspris Insight is at the forefront of everything we want to achieve technically moving forward.”

*– Graham Soanes, Head of Data Management, Aspris
(citing CEO Trevor Torrington’s vision)*

CUSTOMER PROFILE

Aspris

Aspris is the UK’s leading provider of specialized education and residential care services for young people with a range of needs, including autism, mental health challenges and learning difficulties. In the Middle East, Aspris provides mental health services in the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia. Their vision was to promote a data culture and grow data literacy at all levels of the organization, transforming the management of their business, improving accountability, and delivering a safe environment for the young people in their care.

APOS Data Gateway

APOS Data Gateway is a middleware platform that enables live, import, and export connectivity between SAP Analytics Cloud and a large variety of non-SAP data sources.



SAP® Analytics Cloud

APOS Data Gateway consists of:

 <p style="margin: 0;">Live Data Gateway Connect live to real-time data</p>	 <p style="margin: 0;">Import Data Gateway Extend data source options for SAC Planning</p>	 <p style="margin: 0;">Export Data Gateway Strategic data exports from data source to data source</p>
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APOS Data Gateway provides high-performance data connectivity, the ability to build sharable views on data from connected data assets using consistent, business-friendly, data-naming conventions.

APOS Data Gateway is the ideal solution for organizations that need to connect SAP Analytics Cloud to a vast number of data assets, immediately opening new Analytics opportunities.

[Learn more](#) about APOS Data Gateway

About APOS Systems

Since its beginning in 1992, APOS Systems has evolved from a custom business application development shop to a global provider of solutions promoting Well Managed Business Intelligence and Analytics.

APOS provides software products which deliver enhanced capabilities and strong agility in the management and administration of SAP BusinessObjects and SAP Analytics Cloud platforms, across the SAP solution landscape, and beyond. APOS well managed BI, well managed analytics, and hybrid BI and analytics products improve return on investment and time to value for our global base of customers. APOS solutions simplify, automate, complement, enhance and extend BI practices, and focus BI processes for greater agility in your organization's decision-making capabilities. apos.com