

# THE CASE FOR DATA MINIMALISM:

It's time to stop overwhelming  
healthcare professionals



## It is time to challenge assumptions about the transformational nature of technology solutions in healthcare.

Technologies that provide executive insight on performance opportunities and trends in care delivery have been around for over a decade, but we are still in the foothills when it comes to just how effectively they present insight to the physicians and administrators who use them.



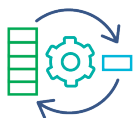
### Most healthcare solutions are stuck in the era of data maximalism.

Our new tools have coaxed us into an era of “data maximalism.” Current solution tools gather as much data as possible. They are capable of analyzing and reporting on all of it, but most fall short on helping users to marshal it. It is a common experience in health care to have in front of a user all the data they could want, and yet the user is unable to find the information they need. The power is there—but not the effectiveness.



### Too many opportunities = users tuning the entire intelligence source out

Here's an example of how data maximalism overwhelms physicians today. In theory, these tools should be able to pull relevant information from the Electronic Health Record (EHR) to make patient visits more productive—for example, by highlighting patient service opportunities that the physician may want to address. Yet many of the business intelligence tools that do this prompt a given physician to review and address **50-60 possible patient service opportunities** in an ordinary visit. As **less than a third of those opportunities tends to be both relevant and useful**, physicians have essentially been trained to ignore it.



### This is how the massive data gathering and decision-informing power of EHR gets chopped down to a stump. The solution to information overload is to apply the maxim of “data minimalism.”

Data minimalism operates on the belief that the most effective support will render only a minimal amount of information – the smallest amount of descriptive data necessary to illustrate a concept, presented in an actionable format, and at the moment of action itself. Think Google Search. Think of the Apple portfolio, broadly. The utility of a minimalism-inspired business intelligence technology is owed to the simplicity and intuitiveness and convenience of the user experience, not the complexity or comprehensiveness of the analytics or data reporting.

# Trying to build—or source—a data minimalist tool?

ENSURE THESE QUESTIONS ARE GUIDING EVERY USER INTERFACE DESIGN

Business Intelligence companies and the healthcare organizations that build BI tools in house must determine how the principle of data minimalism might apply to their products and benefit their users.

- What questions must we answer for each major user type?
- What information is necessary to answer them?
- How should the user's intended use of this data impact its format?
- What is the easiest and shortest way to express the needed information?
- How do we foreground the most important points in our communications?
- How will we measure the success of our approach from the user's viewpoint?



## To deliver the benefits of data minimalism, business intelligence designers must put a sincere focus on the end user

In practical terms, committing to the end user means bringing more client collaboration in the design of workflows, and defining with greater precision the role of the relevant information in supporting the end user's decision-making. Knowing that an analytical tool may actually increase demands on a user's time, solutions must find new ways to deliver value within established client workflows, limiting the burden of added steps.



## Achieving data minimalism is what it will take to unlock the potential of business intelligence in health care and every industry.

Applying data minimalism is an 'easier said than done' challenge, for certain. But if all business intelligence tools can evolve this way, then we will really see what kinds of transformative improvements they can achieve.

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