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CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY

SuperData delights clients with Tableau & Amazon Redshift

SuperData is a privately-held market intelligence research provider specializing in the video game sector. With customers ranging from Wargaming and Trion to payment firms and game publishers, SuperData has become a go-to source for learning what's up in the gaming world. The startup, founded in 2009, found that an Excel-based product simply couldn't scale efficiently when the job at hand is to crunch data from more than 40 million video gamers each month. And customers had to work to dig the insights out of the multi-spreadsheet reports.

After testing their concept with an open-source business intelligence solution, SuperData chose Tableau and Amazon Redshift for its Arcade gaming intelligence product. Today, customers can log into Arcade (in Tableau Server) from any browser. Once in, customers can securely interact with intuitive data visualizations that delight both existing and prospective customers alike. And it's not just customers enjoying the change. SuperData analysts can now work faster—freeing up time to answer more interesting questions.

“It's the same data we used to present in spreadsheets, but the conversation is so much easier.”

—Sam Barberie, VP of Product and Business Development, SuperData



SuperData
New York, New York

www.superdataresearch.com

Cut hours from standard reporting

Enabled analyst speed and flexibility

Delivered a more engaging customer experience



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“Customers don’t want to leaf through spreadsheets looking for insights”

Each month, the SuperData team collects, cleans, and aggregates transactional data from nearly 40 million paying gamers. The data is gathered directly from the game companies themselves.

“Data providers share anonymously and learn about the industry that’s relevant to them,” explains Sam Barberie, VP of Product and Business Development at SuperData. Analysts combine the transactional data with relevant data from other sources. From there, they develop tailored models that deliver reports, which speak to the broader industry.

As a small company—SuperData employs fewer than 50 people—working efficiently with big data is crucial. Unfortunately, the analyst team’s Microsoft Excel-based process was not as efficient as Sam would like.

“Delivering just the standard data sets—no custom work, just custom splices of existing data—would take a full day of an analyst’s time to ship out,” explains Sam. And as a rapidly growing start-up, the team at SuperData needed to free up time for more strategic efforts.

“As we scale the business, we want to spend more time on models and custom research rather than on putting together things in spreadsheets,” Sam says. And while some of SuperData’s customers are extremely technically-savvy, with advanced Excel skills, others were far less interested in crunching data to understand the content.

“Some of our customers don’t want to leaf through hundreds of thousands of data points to figure it out,” Sam notes. This was particularly true for prospective clients.

“It was hard when we would say, ‘Here are ten different spreadsheets with samples across different platforms and areas of the industry.’ And it would be up to them to leaf through it and see what kinds of insights they could pull from it,” he says.

The team at SuperData began to look for a solution to engage both current and prospective clients.



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One important consideration was ensuring the data would be seen only by authorized people. “Data security is huge for us. We use every industry standard to keep the data secure,” explains Sam.

Evaluating Tableau and Pentaho

Initially, the team looked at Tableau, in part because many of their clients were already using Tableau in their own organizations. At the time, Tableau seemed like a more robust investment than SuperData was ready to make on an untested idea.

Instead, they opted to build out a Beta solution using the open source solution, Pentaho. “It proved the case internally—we knew this approach could drive things forward,” says Sam. “But we quickly realized the limits of Pentaho meant we wouldn’t take this as far we wanted.”

The team reevaluated Tableau and decided they were ready to make the jump.

“We seemed to have the bandwidth on the client side and lack of bandwidth on the analyst side in terms of how much more they could scale building these custom Excel spreadsheets. It was the tipping point.”

The SuperData team developed Arcade, game data intelligence reports built in Tableau. For the first major iteration and for a few substantial changes, the team relied on Tableau partner USEReady.

“They are experts and immediately grasped what we wanted,” says Sam.

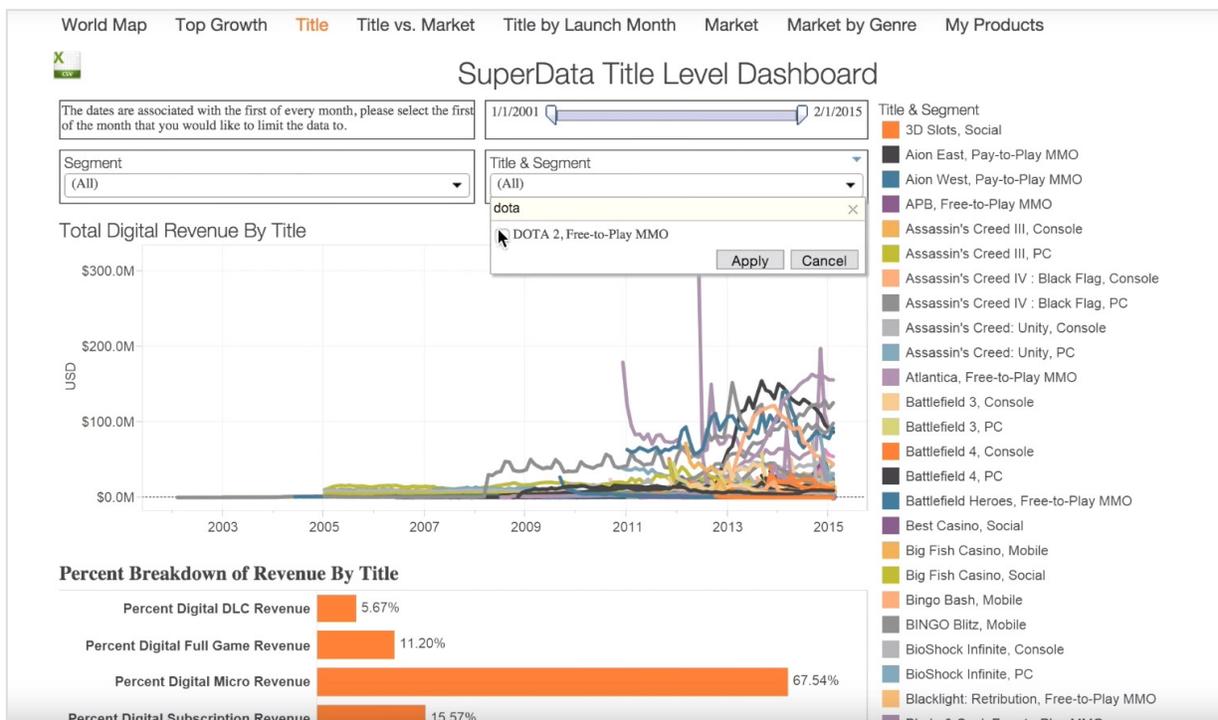
Today, SuperData analysts author visualizations in Tableau Desktop. They connect to data stored in Amazon Redshift using Tableau’s native data connector. Analysts then publish completed dashboards and vizzes to Tableau Server, where customers and internal users can log on to view and interact with the data.



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“Arcade is a web-based dashboard. People log in with their ID and password, and then have access to either the entire offering or whatever splices or platforms they have subscribed to,” says Sam.

“Just having the knowledge that a lot of our clients were already using Tableau, and knowing they trust their data with it was comforting. Because they really guard that stuff!” he says.



Customers interact with game data visualized with Tableau.

“It’s the same data, but the conversation is much easier”

Since adopting Tableau, the team at SuperData has seen a number of benefits including:

- **Improving sales.** Since debuting the Arcade intelligence reports, SuperData has seen an increase in new clients. Sam attributes the uptick in part to the Tableau solution.

“Tons of potential clients— who are now existing clients—came out of the woodwork saying,



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‘Oh, I saw you guys produced this (Arcade in Tableau). I’d love to learn more about it.’ It has really been a boon to us.”

Sam points out that it’s much easier for potential clients to quickly “get” the value of the visualized data compared with the spreadsheet format.

“It’s the same data we used to present in spreadsheets, but the conversation is so much easier. Not only do prospective clients instantly see in the demo what the product is and how it’s used, but also they can see how visualizing the data lets them eyeball insights and see valuable info.”

- **Delighting existing clients.** Customers have embraced the new Arcade reports. The response was so strong, Sam says, that word spread quickly to customers not yet receiving the new intelligence reports.

“A lot of existing customers who had been on the old deliverables pipeline popped up saying, ‘When do we get this? Where do we get this? How?’” Sam says with a laugh.

- **Increasing speed and flexibility.** “Backend time for getting stuff through dashboards—we update Server and then the data is pushed instantly. Our customers get it right away,” Sam explains. He notes that this speed has “improved substantially” the number of customers that the company can serve.

Even more importantly? “It’s giving us more time to think about how we want to evolve the data,” Sam says.

“Now that the burden of time is taken off the analysts, it’s even easier and more efficient to work with clients of different sizes and different needs. We flip a couple of switches on the backend and the customers know what they’re going to get every month. And it’s not any additional time for us.”