



Using Custom Business Analyst Data Source Layers in ESRI Business Analyst™ Server

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Using Custom Business Analyst Data Source Layers in ESRI Business Analyst Server

An ESRI Technical Paper

Contents	Page
Introduction.....	1
How Can I Use My Custom BDS Layers in ESRI Business Analyst Server?	1
What Is a BDS Layer?	1
BDS Layer Creation.....	1
Summary	9
Analyses	9
Reports	9
Trade Areas.....	9

Using Custom Business Analyst Data Source Layers in ESRI Business Analyst Server

Introduction

ESRI® Business Analyst™ Server is a server-based business solution product built using ESRI ArcGIS® technology. It comes with numerous built-in tools that allow you to perform business analyses and create presentation-quality outputs such as reports, charts, and grids.

Business Analyst Server comes with a rich set of datasets that is available out-of-the-box. It also allows you to bring in your own custom datasets to perform analyses and create reports.

How Can I Use My Custom BDS Layers in ESRI Business Analyst Server?

One of the commonly asked questions is, How can I use my own custom data layers in Business Analyst Server? Users want to be able to use the vast data that comes with this business solution product with their own custom data layers that they have created. This document explains the process of how to accomplish this task.

What Is a BDS Layer?

Business Analyst datasets are saved in layers commonly referred to as Business Analyst Data Source (BDS) layers. BDS is also used for the file extension (.bds).

BDS is an XML wrapper that provides many benefits over your standard dBASE tables. Among these benefits are

- BDS allows you to join your data to an existing BDS layer.
- BDS layers are used extensively in the Business Analyst suite of products.
- The Business Analyst product suite allows you to create a custom BDS layer in one product and use it across the Business Analyst suite of products.
- BDS layers allow you to create custom calculated fields.
- Many of the wizards in ESRI Business Analyst Desktop reference the BDS demographic layers that are provided.

BDS Layer Creation

The following sections describe the procedure, beginning with how to create a BDS layer and how to use the custom BDS layers that you created in Business Analyst Server.

You would first need to create a BDS layer in Business Analyst Desktop. After you create your BDS layer in Business Analyst Desktop, you can use the communications link between Business Analyst Desktop and Business Analyst Server, which will allow you to use the custom BDS layers in Business Analyst Server.

Creating a Custom BDS Layer in Business Analyst Desktop

Create a custom BDS layer in Business Analyst Desktop 9.3.1. Business Analyst Desktop documentation provides a detailed description on how to create BDS layers using your own custom data. You can find this information in the document titled *Using ArcGIS Business Analyst Manual*. The manual is installed in the documentation folder of Business Analyst when you install the product. Refer to this documentation if you are not familiar with the process.

This manual can also be accessed on ESRI's Web site (<http://www.esri.com>) and on ESRI's Support Web site (<http://support.esri.com>) in the Knowledge Base section, as follows:

- [Support Home](#) > [Knowledge Base](#) > [Product Documentation](#) > ArcGIS Business Analyst

In *Using ArcGIS Business Analyst Manual*, the information on how to create BDS layers is described under Chapter 6: "Adding Data to Business Analyst." Look for the Analysis layer setup section.

Note: Prior to creating custom BDS layers, remember to copy your custom data (.dbf) to this folder: <installDir>\My Output Data\Custom Analysis Layer.

You need to save your custom BDS layer file in this folder also. Note that the data (.dbf) and BDS layer (.bds) files are required to be stored in this location: <installDir>\My Output Data\Custom Analysis Layer.

Bringing the Custom BDS Layer into Business Analyst Server

The custom BDS layer you created is using your desktop product. You will need to bring it from Business Analyst Desktop to Business Analyst Server.

You can import the BDS layer from Business Analyst Desktop to Business Analyst Server by using the Upload Project feature. Upload/Download Projects is one of the many features available in Business Analyst Server. Make sure you install this feature.

Note: To be able to upload or download projects to or from Business Analyst Server, you need to have Upload/Download Projects available on your computer. To install this feature, execute the Business Analyst Server for the Microsoft .NET Framework setup.exe file on the computer that has Business Analyst Desktop. When you execute the setup.exe file, you will see several choices. Ensure that the feature called Upload/Download Projects is checked or selected. After you install this feature on your desktop, you will be able to upload or download projects from your desktop to your server. This design is based on the author-serve-use principle.

To upload a project from your desktop:

- Start an ArcCatalog™ session on your desktop.
- In your ArcCatalog session, navigate to the Business Analyst Data folder.
- Right-click the project that you want to upload.
- A dialog box will appear, displaying the Upload Project option.

- The dialog box that opens shows the project contents for you to choose from.
- Check the items that you want to upload.
- Provide the URL to the Business Analyst Server instance that you want to upload the project to. The URL information can be typed in the Select Business Analyst Server text box. Note that a ToolTip is provided for you to construct this URL.
- If you have used this dialog box before, then the drop-down list also shows previous connections.
- Select the workspace and report format and choose a project.
- Note that you can create a new project or choose an existing project to upload to.

Note: You can find more information on this topic online in [ArcGIS Desktop Help](#). Look for the topic Authoring and serving content to Business Analyst Server.

Using the Custom BDS Layer in Business Analyst Server

How to Use the Custom BDS Layer in Business Analyst Server Analyses

Custom BDS layers can be used in analyses and reports.

Business Analyst Server enables you to perform analyses and create reports. These tools are built-in in the Web application, Analysis Center.

First launch the Business Analyst Server Web application, Analysis Center. Typically the URL for the Analysis Center looks like this:

- `http://<ServerName>/arcgis/baserver/analysiscenter/`

When the Analysis Center opens, select the repository, workspace, and project that you want to use, then click Business Analyst Tools. You will see your project open up.

- The tools are listed in the Tasks pane.
- Expand the Tasks pane if minimized.
- Expand the Analyses section.
- Select Spatial Overlay.



- The Spatial Overlay dialog box will appear. Click the Help button for details on each of the text boxes in this dialog box. The Help button launches help for this tool.
- For the purpose of completing this task
 - Provide an analysis name.
 - Select an overlay layer.
 - From the combo box in Data Layer, select the custom BDS layer you want to use.
 - Complete the requirements.
 - Click the Execute button to complete the analysis.

*How to Use the
Custom BDS Layer in
Business Analyst
Server Reports*

To prepare business reports using the custom BDS layer, you need to use the Reports section, which is located in the Tasks pane.

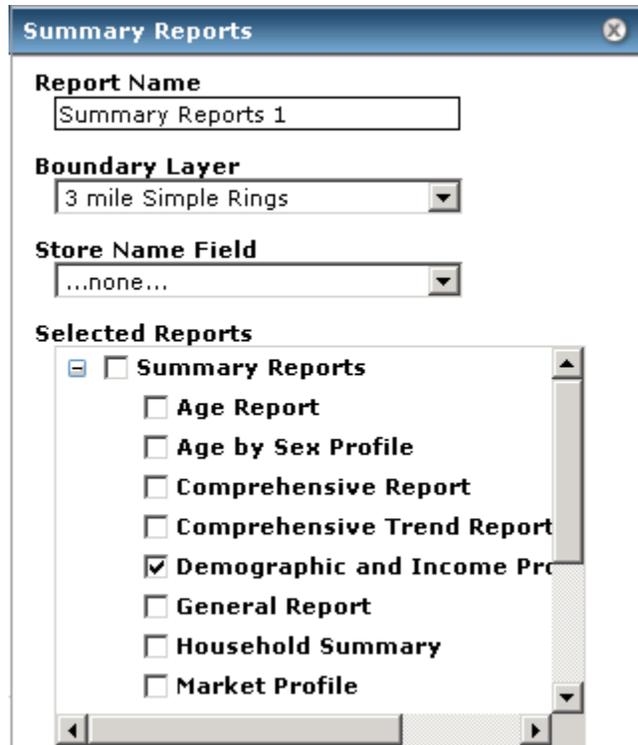
- Select Summary Reports.
 - Enter the report name.



- Select a boundary layer. This can be a trade area you have previously created.

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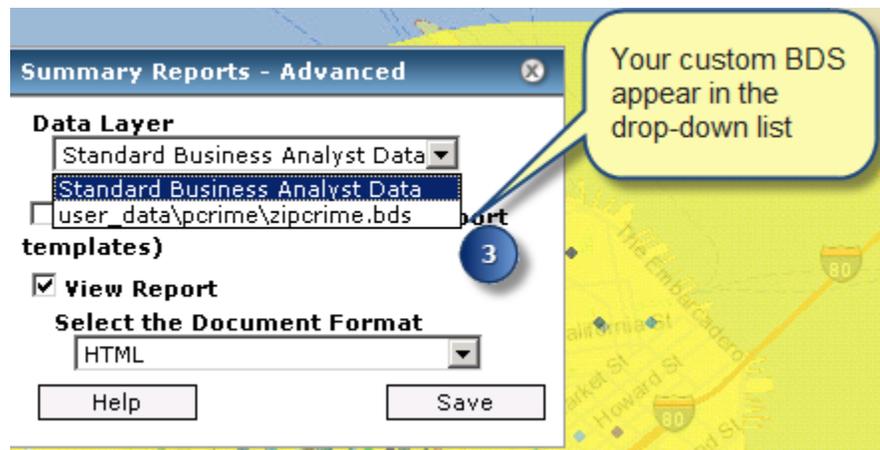
- Optionally select a Name field.



- Click the Advanced Options button.



- ◆ Custom BDS layers are listed in the Advanced dialog box under Data Layer.



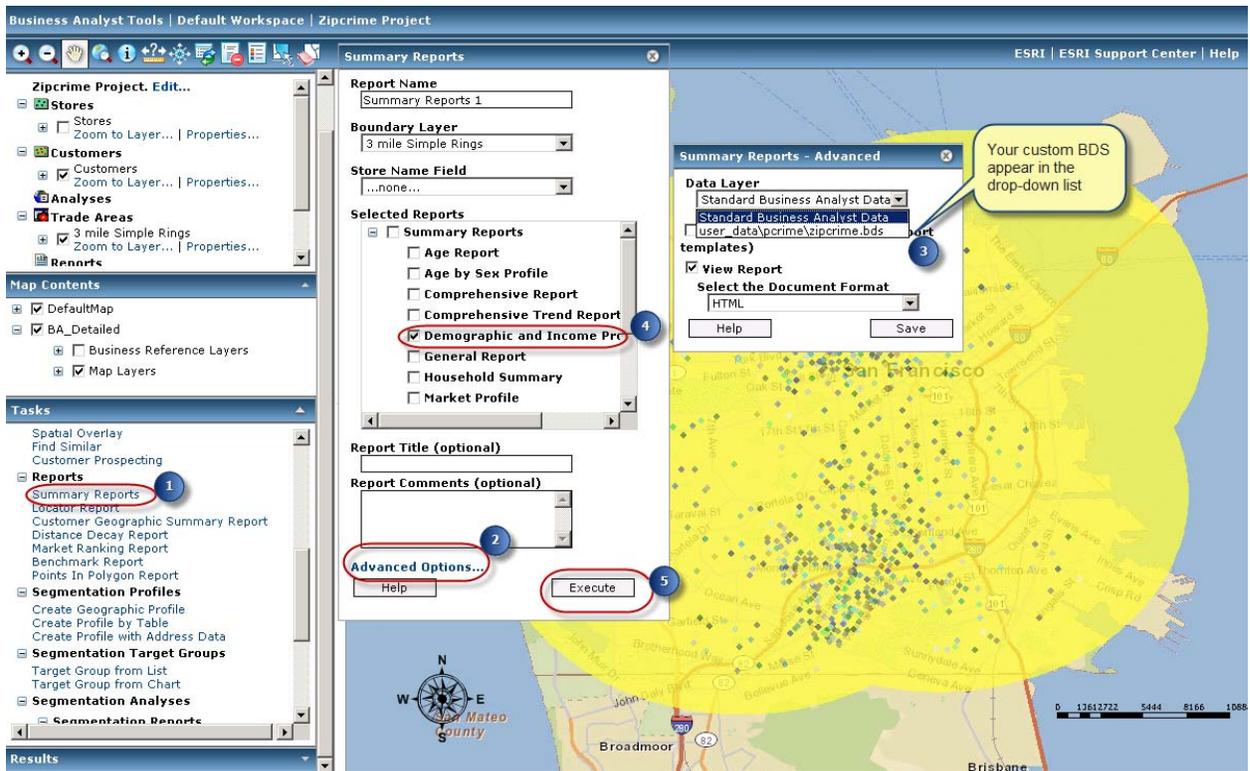
- ◇ Select from the Data Layer drop-down list the custom BDS layer you want to use.
 - ◇ Check the box if you want to insert a map.
 - ◇ Check the box if you want to view a report.
 - ◇ Select the Document Format from the drop-down list.
- In the Summary Reports dialog box, choose from the list of summary reports.



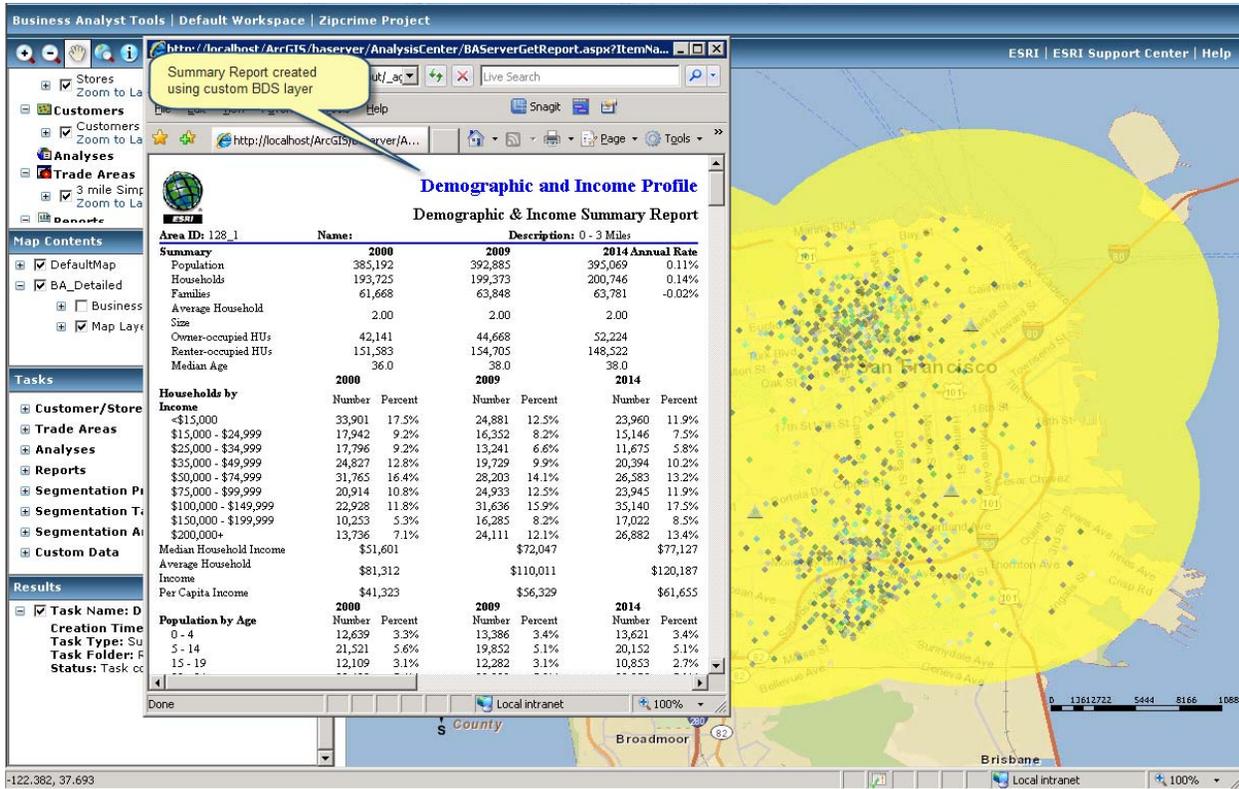
- Provide a report title and comments (optional).

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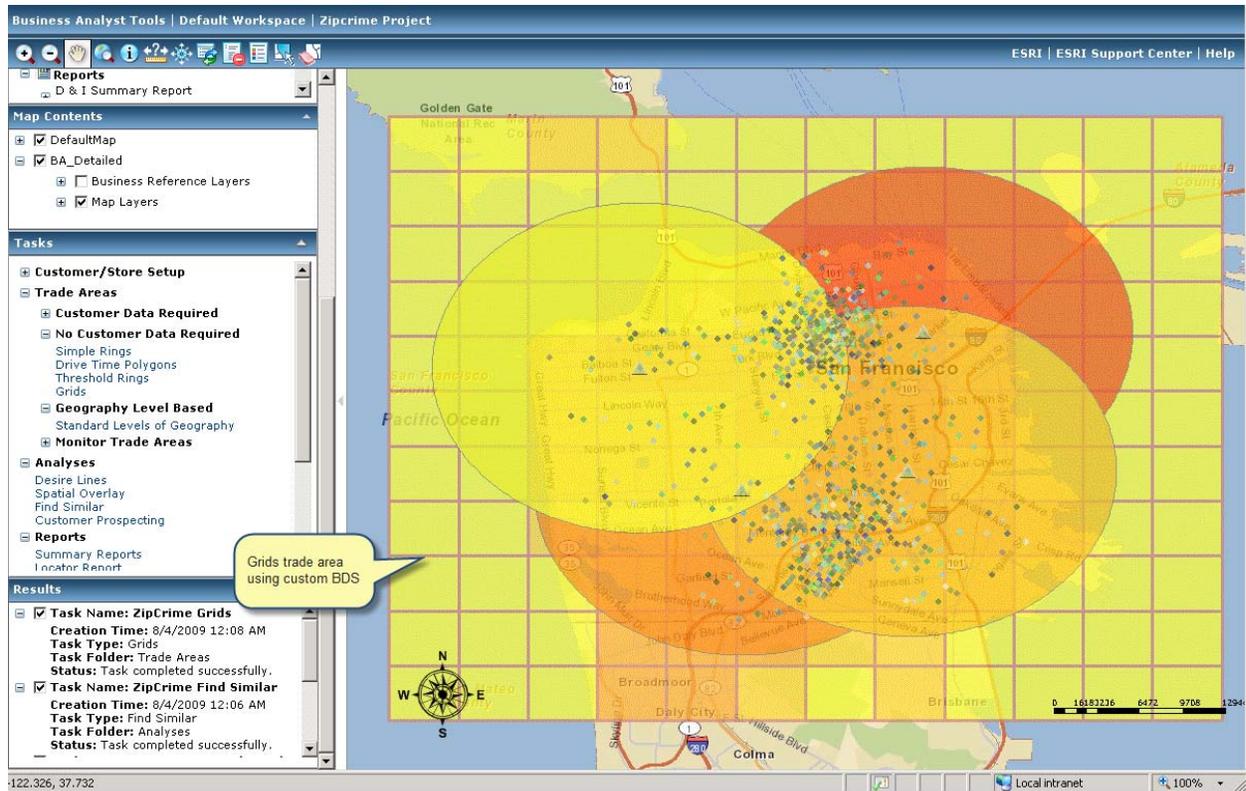
- Click the Execute button to generate the selected report using the custom BDS layer that you uploaded.



Your report will appear as demonstrated in the screen shot.



The screen shot below shows a trade area (grid) created using a custom BDS layer.



Summary Many of the built-in business tools in the Analysis Center reference the demographic layers. When you bring in a custom BDS layer using the Upload Project feature, that layer will be listed in the drop-down list of the available data layers. This enables you to use your customized data via the BDS layers in Business Analyst Server to perform several operations.

After you upload the custom BDS layer into your Business Analyst Server instance, you can start using it in the Analysis Center to perform analyses, create trade areas, and generate reports.

Analyses Custom BDS layers can be used in the Customer Prospecting, Find Similar, and Spatial Overlay analyses.

Reports Custom BDS can also be used in various types of reports, such as Benchmark, Distance Decay, Market Ranking, and Summary.

Trade Areas You can also use your custom BDS layers to create trade areas, such as threshold rings and grids.



About ESRI

Since 1969, ESRI has been helping organizations map and model our world. ESRI's GIS software tools and methodologies enable these organizations to effectively analyze and manage their geographic information and make better decisions. They are supported by our experienced and knowledgeable staff and extensive network of business partners and international distributors.

A full-service GIS company, ESRI supports the implementation of GIS technology on desktops, servers, online services, and mobile devices. These GIS solutions are flexible, customizable, and easy to use.

Our Focus

ESRI software is used by hundreds of thousands of organizations that apply GIS to solve problems and make our world a better place to live. We pay close attention to our users to ensure they have the best tools possible to accomplish their missions. A comprehensive suite of training options offered worldwide helps our users fully leverage their GIS applications.

ESRI is a socially conscious business, actively supporting organizations involved in education, conservation, sustainable development, and humanitarian affairs.

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