



Freckle Empowers Educators with Embedded Dashboards

Freckle empowers more than 550,000 teachers to reach every one of their students at the level that's best for them. As students practice math, English, social studies, science, and more via exercises on the Freckle app, they create a ton of data that can then be used via "adaptive practice" to adjust what the students should study next, based on the level of their inputs to the system.

Company Information

Team: Data team

Industry: Education

Role: Data Engineer

That data becomes incredibly valuable for teachers looking to adjust their lessons, and for district administrators to understand how their teachers are performing and assess school readiness for state tests. Internally, Freckle's product team learns from data to guide future lessons and product

development, while its sales team uses data to educate customers on how Freckle fits best for them.

In the early stages of growth for Freckle (formerly Front Row Education), the process for accessing data internally was overly challenging and complex for its data team.

"We had our business operations people running these super complex SQL queries and then they had to connect to our data center through a VPN to run those directly on our production database," said Alex Kurilin, CTO at Freckle. "As one of the people responsible for the database, that did not help me sleep well at night. We were just hoping not to nuke anything in the process."

Kurilin and his team began looking for a data analytics solution in 2017, hoping to identify a platform that would address their complete data workflow. To that point, they hadn't reached a level of data engineering maturity where they could justify ETLing data to a Snowflake or Redshift instance and using a separate tool to read and consume data. And with Kurilin as the primary engineer responsible for the analytics workflow, they didn't have the manpower to invest in a complicated set of solutions.

"Our team was certainly afraid of dedicating too much time getting an analytics platform up and running, because they thought it'd be an endless rabbit hole of engineering time, with several full-time engineers to get it done," said Kurilin. "But with Sisense for Cloud Data Teams, it essentially took one person to integrate it here, and it worked really fast and we saw results right away, which was very compelling to the team."

The Freckle team evaluated multiple analytics tools but said Sisense for Cloud Data Teams stood out as the best fit, due to its simplicity. Several members of the engineering team were already familiar with or proficient in SQL, which made using the platform's SQL-based editor easy to pick up quickly.



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Aiding Sales with Usage Data

Today, Sisense for Cloud Data Teams is very tightly integrated into Freckle’s daily workflow across the company. Account executives on its sales team use the platform when reaching out to school and district administrators and communicate ways that Freckle could be a good fit to accomplish their educational goals.

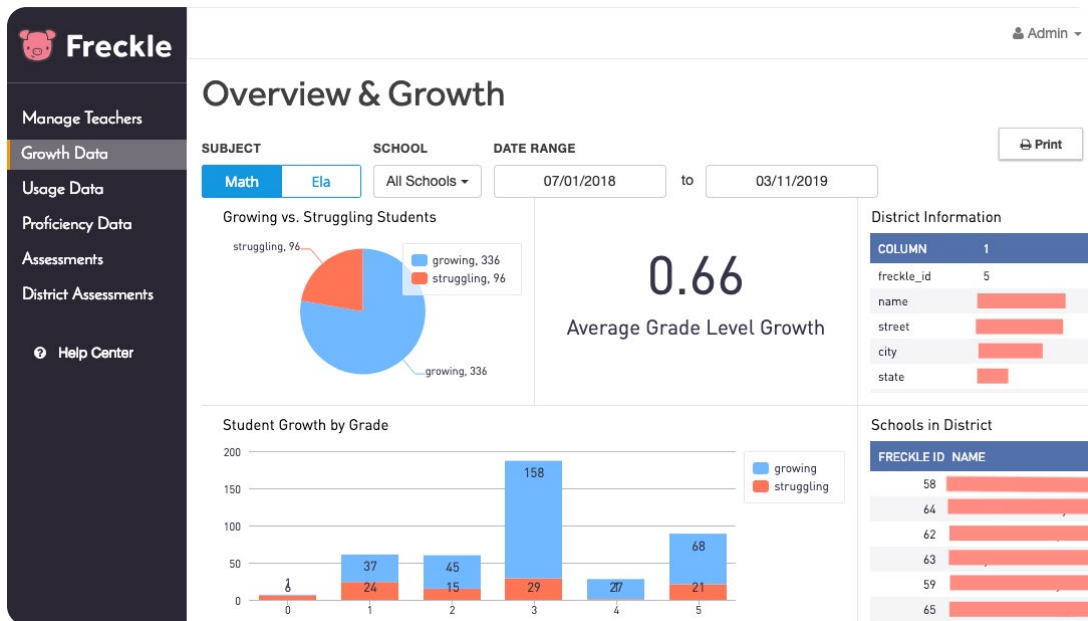
“One of the first things they do is visualize utilization of Freckle within the schools, to point out groups of teachers who are using it very actively and show students completing thousands of activities and sessions each week,” said Kurilin. “It allows them to clearly illustrate the growth that students show when using our product, and makes it much easier to explain the value they’d get from getting premium subscriptions or working more regularly with us. Sisense for Cloud Data Teams is an essential part of that sales process and helps us drive more revenue in our deals.”

Sisense for Cloud Data Teams is also used internally by account managers to ensure existing customers are using Freckle to its full potential. Those teams will examine real-time data in Sisense for Cloud Data Teams to see which students are engaging with the Freckle platform, and make suggestions about which teachers or schools could be engaging more actively. That has provided a big boost to account teams looking to display the value of Freckle and fueled more curiosity for data insights.

“Since we rolled out the dashboards, it’s been one of the most consistent areas of the product that we get feedback on from our salespeople and account teams as they try to come up with new ways to iterate and drill-down on the data,” said Corey Johns, senior software engineer at Freckle. “With many other aspects of our product we only get a slow trickle of feedback, but Sisense for Cloud Data Teams embeds have very consistently inspired our team to think about new ways they can use our data dashboards to better sell to people.”

Embedded Dashboards Empowering Administrators

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As district administrators began to see the value in these insights, there was an increasing thirst among them to access data more directly — as a result, Freckle took advantage of the platform’s [embedded dashboards](#) and the [Embed API](#) to provide direct data access to schools.

“It was initially a very manual process for the salespeople to show off our dashboards during their calls,” said Johns. “So we started looking at ways to expose data in the most useful way to the administrators, and we landed on the Sisense for Cloud Data Teams Embed API as a perfect fit. It straightforwardly allows our administrators to see those insights without having us walk them through it.”

With embedded dashboards enabled, school administrators now have real-time analytics at their fingertips to follow the growth of their students and schools, directly within Freckle’s product. They can drill down to get a sense of which parts of the product teachers and students are using most and better understand the full value of Freckle’s product suite.

“Sisense for Cloud Data Teams embedded dashboards give administrators a very powerful way to consistently validate that our product is working for them,” said Johns. “All the big questions they

need to answer — Are they getting their money's worth with Freckle? Are teachers using it? Is it helping students improve? And are they improving in specific academic subjects we are mandated to train them on? All of that is revealed within Sisense for Cloud Data Teams."

As more schools adopt technology like Freckle, there's an increasing expectation that administrators become more technical and build a data-driven culture to properly understand the value of these tools. Most of these school leaders don't come from a hyper-technical background, but Johns says the Sisense for Cloud Data Teams interface is intuitive enough to enable answering all their questions.

"Many of these schools were already familiar with existing dashboards we had created and exposed to them, and the Sisense for Cloud Data Teams embeds make it so that experience isn't any different for them," said Johns. "At the end of the day, they are primarily looking to consume the data, and we're not getting any sort of feedback that it is excessively complicated, which I think confirms that embedded dashboards with Sisense for Cloud Data Teams have been the right way to share data with them."

In the future, the Freckle team hopes to expand the power of their data even further by exposing dashboards directly to teachers.



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