Tableau goes Hyper to keep up with customers' data needs

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Tableau Software is revamping a core part of its technology to analyze data faster, a move intended to keep up with its customers' increasing big-data needs.

The Seattle company, which makes software to visualize analytics, is introducing its so-called Hyper engine in a software update Wednesday. The technology is designed to make the data-visualization process five times faster, meaning businesses can input millions of data points and see results in seconds.

Businesses use Tableau to make sense of information about everything from auto-sale trends to health-care-product inventory. As data continues to get easier to collect and there is more to analyze, Tableau's software needed to keep up.

"It's a natural and necessary product evolution," Gartner analyst Cindi Howson said. "It keeps up with current demand, and it improves the satisfaction with existing customers to let them continue to do faster, more sophisticated analytics within Tableau."

The company has faced growing competition from a number of smaller rivals, as well as entrenched players such as Microsoft with its Power BI product. Adding Hyper should help Tableau bring in new large customers as well as keep its existing users satisfied as they grow, Gartner analyst Rita Sallam said.
Gartner research shows Tableau ranks sixth in market share for the overall analytics software industry, but it holds the top spot in the more specific "modern BI platforms" industry, with 28.3 percent market share.

The Hyper technology was developed by a team at the Technical University of Munich. Tableau acquired the company that they spun out, called HyPer, in March 2016. HyPer focused on allowing users to add more information at the same time that data was being analyzed and processed, without slowing anything down.

Existing Tableau customers can upgrade to the newest version of the software whenever they want-it doesn't cost more-and all data and tools should transfer over smoothly, said Tableau chief product officer Francois Ajenstat.

That's the main reason the company took 18 months to integrate Hyper into the Tableau software. It wanted to make sure that all tools and processes worked the same way with the new engine and there would be no glitches, he said.

Tableau has been testing the new system since summer.

Another advantage of Hyper is yet to come. It will serve as the basis for Tableau's yet-to-be-released data-preparation product that will help companies get their data ready to be analyzed.

Wednesday's announcement of the Hyper integration could signal that this product, called Maestro while in development, will be released soon.

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