

# How SYSCOLUMNS Is Used

**SYSCOLUMNS** is rarely if ever used. Although fundamentally a good idea, especially considering the similar manner in which relational databases expose their table definitions, the OpenInsight implementation of **SYSCOLUMNS** came later than the database implementation itself, and suffered accordingly.

- **SYSCOLUMNS** is not utilized in the database implementation because the database was already implemented;
- Since it is built on top of existing data structures (dictionaries), its reliability is affected by any problems in those data structures;
- Since application databases are often quite large in terms of the number of tables, combining information from those tables' dictionaries can be a lengthy operation.

Viewing the information in **SYSCOLUMNS** is a handy tool for developers doing a search to find all data tables that use a particular data type, or have a particular column name, etc. Also, a problem using **SYSCOLUMNS** may be an indicator that a problem exists in one of the application's dictionaries.