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March 2009

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TECH FEATURES

MARCH 2009

SCHEDULED COURSES

FEATURED COURSE: Microsoft BI Bootcamp

EVENTS: Microsoft TechDays

TECH FEATURE: Making the Most of Fast Track DW Architectures

SPOTLIGHT: SolidQ Health Check for SQL Server

TRAINING & MENTORING: SQL MAPS

SERVICE OFFERING: Performance Analysis and Optimization

MENTOR FOCUS: Andrew Kelly

Making the Most of Fast Track Data Warehouse Architectures

In the new white paper "An Introduction to Fast Track Data Warehouse Architectures," Solid Quality Mentors' Erik Veerman gives you the information you need to get started with Microsoft's new SQL Server Fast Track Data Warehouse reference architectures and use them to implement the best possible business intelligence (BI) solution for your organization.



The Fast Track reference architectures provide tested, pre-configured architectures and architectural guidance for a BI solution's database components and hardware systems, taking the guesswork out of hardware and architectural decisions for the database layer of SQL Server-based BI solutions. To help you get the most out of the Fast Track reference architectures, this paper includes:

- An overview of the new Fast Track reference architectures
- A review of BI fundamentals and applicable hardware considerations
- The tested Fast Track reference architecture components and options
- Prescriptive guidance for designing and optimizing a solution
- Resources available to help you choose or create a new hardware configuration

If you are responsible for the ownership, management, planning, or design of a BI solution, this paper will give you the skills and resources you need to make the best decisions for your solution.

[Read the paper today](#)

PLUS!

- **BI Videos on SQLServerPedia.com:** Solid Quality Mentors has produced a series of screen cast videos that show you how to get started with Microsoft BI. You can view the 22 tutorial screen casts, most of which feature Mentor Peter Myers, on the SQLServerPedia.com wiki.
- **More BI Videos at LearnMicrosoftBI.com:** If you have clients trying to learn BI, Mentor Craig Utley has 30 videos available at LearnMicrosoftBI.com and is constantly adding to the collection.

Come Learn with Us

* Special pricing for early registration

SQL Server

[Live Online Course: Guru's SQL Server Database Administration](#)

Via Microsoft Office Live Meeting, check schedule for latest dates - Randy Dyess

[Advanced T-SQL Querying, Programming and Tuning for SQL Server 2005 & 2008](#)

May 4-8, Sacramento, CA - Itzik Ben-Gan

[Live Online Course: Microsoft SQL Server Performance Tuning Bootcamp](#)

Via Microsoft Office Live Meeting, check schedule for latest dates - Randy Dyess

* [T-SQL Fundamentals](#)

June 1-4, Bellevue, WA - Ron Talmage

Business Intelligence

[Solving Business Problems with MDX in SQL Server 2008](#)

April 6-8, Minneapolis, MN - Tim Peterson

[Microsoft BI Bootcamp: SQL Server 2008, Office System 2007 and PerformancePoint Server 2007](#)

SPOTLIGHT

How Healthy Is Your SQL Server System? Here's How to Know

Solid Quality Mentors provides a comprehensive Health Check service for systems using any version of Microsoft SQL Server. Much more than an assessment tool, the SolidQ Health Check for SQL Server is an advanced, specialized service that protects your investment in the Microsoft Data Platform.

Like your annual physical with a trusted physician, the Health Check provides peace of mind when systems are healthy as well as clear recommendations for continued

April 6-10, Beaverton, OR - Mentor TBD

* **Enterprise ETL with SQL Server 2008**

Integration Services

April 20-23, Minneapolis, MN - Mentor TBD
May 26-29, Beaverton, OR - Mentor TBD

* **Designing and Developing Solutions**

with SQL Server 2008 Analysis

Services

May 4-7, Bellevue, WA - Mentor TBD

**TechEd Pre-Con: Building an
End-to-End Microsoft Business
Intelligence Solution with Microsoft
SQL Server 2008 and Microsoft Office
PerformancePoint Server 2007**

May 10, Los Angeles, CA - Peter Myers

For more information or to register for these or other courses, see the Solid Quality™ Learning [full course schedule](#).

Need a different date or to schedule any of our courses as a private class at your premises? Contact info@solidq.com.

Featured Course

Microsoft BI Bootcamp: SQL Server 2008, Office System 2007 and PerformancePoint Server 2007

Written and presented by industry experts, this intensive five-day workshop - coming to Beaverton, OR, April 6-10 - gives professional developers the information and hands-on experience they need to deliver state-of-the-art, integrated reporting and analytics solutions using Microsoft business intelligence (BI).

After completing this workshop, students will be able to position different types of BI solutions, from enterprise data warehousing to data marts to real-time operational reporting and analytics.

Students will learn how to design and build powerful integrated solutions that provide users with rich reporting, analysis, visualization, and performance-management capabilities by targeting operational data from an existing line-of-business application using the Microsoft BI platform. Students will also work through 25 practical hands-on labs to build a complete BI solution by the end of the workshop.

The workshop focuses on a specific scenario: supplementing an existing line-of-business application with integrated reporting and analytics

wellness - giving you the information you need to make enhancements and further investments, if necessary. And if the SolidQ Health Check for SQL Server uncovers any problems, our Mentors investigate the issues until we find the root causes, and then we identify how to resolve them.

As part of the SolidQ Health Check, we assess your entire system - hardware, operating system, SQL Server instance, and databases - and provide you with:

- A detailed report about your system's current status
- Suggested changes to system configurations for better resource utilization
- Possible security, availability, and performance risks
- Clear, customized recommendations about system upgrades that could enhance your system

[Learn more and schedule your Health Check](#)

TRAINING & MENTORING

Introducing SQL MAPS: A 2-Day "Best Practices" Offering for Managing SQL Server

Planning a SQL Server upgrade or consolidation project? Wanting to get a handle on your SQL Server systems for management or regulatory purposes? Solid Quality Mentors' new SQL MAPS offering can get you jumpstarted. This 2-day best-practices offering documents all SQL Server instances on your network and features Solid Quality Mentors' expert training on new SQL Server 2008 management features and best practices.

The 2-day engagement begins with a MAPS automated discovery and documentation of all SQL Server instances, which generates reports about hardware specifications; OS and SQL Server details; licensing, security, and patch information; and possible upgrade paths. Unlike other inventory or management tools, MAPS is agent-less, collecting information from a single, networked computer.

Solid Quality Mentors' world-class SQL Server experts - who built the MAPS training content for Microsoft - will then train your staff on new SQL Server 2008 components that support management best practices, including Resource Governor, Policy Based Management, and the Performance Data Collector. As long as you have one SQL Server 2008 server in place, you can take advantage of these features to manage all your SQL Server 2008, 2005, and 2000 servers. And our experienced Mentors will provide observations and recommendations for optimal management of your complete SQL Server environment.

[Learn more and schedule your engagement](#)

SERVICE OFFERINGS

Go Deep with New Performance Analysis and Optimization Service

Solid Quality Mentors' new Performance Analysis and Optimization service gives customers a deep view into all performance, scalability, and reliability aspects of their SQL Server instances and host servers as well as the I/O subsystem components they use.

Going beyond the typical quick view, we assess the overall health of your entire database infrastructure. In addition to analyzing SQL Server internal objects such as tables, indexes, and queries, we investigate the host server on which your SQL Server instance is installed. And to identify current and potential issues or bottlenecks that might affect your system, we strive to understand all key metrics and components, including the storage I/O subsystem, waits and queues, and CPU and memory utilization.

At the end of each day, we'll review and discuss any applicable findings. And throughout the engagement, our Mentors will work with your staff to make sure they

functionality using SQL Server, Excel, ProClarity, SharePoint, and PerformancePoint. Note that this workshop is designed for professional developers with little or no experience building BI solutions. If you already have extensive experience building solutions on the Microsoft BI platform, you may find portions of this workshop to be a review of material that you are already familiar with.

[Learn more and register](#)

Customer Testimonial

"Regarding the Microsoft BI Bootcamp that Solid Quality Mentors' Peter Myers taught recently: To a person, my team said this was some of the best training they'd ever received. Peter's subject knowledge was superb, and his ability to respond to students' questions was impressive. We've already been applying some principles from the class to a couple of our projects and will apply more to future efforts."

Events

Mentors Speaking at Microsoft TechDays 2009

Join Solid Quality Mentors at Microsoft's 24-hour worldwide virtual TechDays developer event on April 1:

- Greg Low: "Answering the Queries Your Users Really Want to Ask"
- Eladio Rincon: "Improving the Access to Your Database" (Presented in Spanish)
- Ken Spencer: "Automating Task and Other Productivity Improvements for Windows Presentation Foundation Development"

[Learn more and register](#)

Other Upcoming Events:

understand the process for gathering and analyzing the metrics, giving them a head start on performing future performance analyses. At the end of the engagement, you'll receive the following items:

- A detailed report outlining all issues we found as well as recommendations, best practices, and action items
- A copy of the scripts we used during the engagement
- All data collected
- A solid professional relationship to build upon

Our performance and optimization analysis will give you the answers you're looking for - whether internal or external to your SQL Server installation - to ensure your system is operating at peak efficiency and can scale to meet your future needs.

[Learn more and schedule your performance analysis](#)

GET TO KNOW OUR MENTORS

Andrew Kelly: When a Function Is Indeed a Constant

Solid Quality Mentors' Andrew Kelly was recently collecting wait stats information for a client and ran across a peculiar situation. For a single SELECT statement, he received several different values for the GETDATE() column. GETDATE() or any other non-deterministic runtime constant scalar function should act as a constant for the life of the query execution, meaning these functions are evaluated once at the beginning of the query execution and that value is used for all resulting rows. So what was going on?

[Read the blog](#)



New Infrastructure Planning and Design Guide for SQL Server 2008

Over the past few months, Solid Quality Mentors' Steve Abraham and Greg Low have served as technical reviewers and subject matter experts with a Microsoft team creating the first Infrastructure Planning and Design (IPD) guide for SQL Server 2008, part of the Microsoft Solution Accelerator series. The guide, whose main author is Melissa Stowe, covers everything from identifying needed SQL Server roles to server placement and fault tolerance configurations.

[Download the guide](#)

Hot Links

Hitting Bookstores: *Inside Microsoft SQL Server 2008: T-SQL Querying*

Joe Chang: "Table Scan - Aggregate Cost Structure"

Jessica M. Moss: "SSIS Insert Statement Using an OLE DB Destination"

Greg Low's The Bit Bucket: "Reports on Reporting Services"

New Download: SQL Server 2008 System Views Map

- **SQL Server Connections, Orlando, FL, March 22-25:** Craig Utley on "Avoiding Common Analysis Services Mistakes"
- **SSWUG.org's Ultimate Virtual Conference, April 22-24:** Register with Solid Quality Mentors' VIP Code (SPSQLcoVIP) and Save \$10
- **SQL Saturday, Atlanta, GA, April 25:** Mentors Cover BI, SANS and SQL Server, Partitioning, and More!