

INFUSE
DATA ANALYTICS

- SLOW ETL ROUTINES
- REGULAR FAILURES
- REPORTS ARRIVE LATE
- VITAL DECISIONS DELAYED
- DECLINING BUSINESS CONFIDENCE IN REPORTING
- IMPACT ON PROFITABILITY

MODERNISING A MATURE DATA WAREHOUSE TO RESOLVE POOR PERFORMANCE



CASE STUDY: Resolving poor performance in mature data warehouses and established analytics platforms for a national hospitality chain.

A national hospitality chain engaged with INFuse Data Analytics to deliver a scheme of work to improve the performance of their mature Data Warehouse. The SQL based Data Warehouse that had been continuously developed for over 15 years was struggling to meet the needs and expectations of the business. ETL (Extract, Transform, Load) routines were taking until the middle of the business day to complete, with regular failures and key reports were not being refreshed until the end of the business day. INFuse consultants embarked on a 3-month challenge to drastically improve this situation, resulting in significant business benefits.

BENEFITS OF MODERNISING YOUR DATA WAREHOUSE



Achieve a considerable improvement to your data load processes performance and efficiency.



Reduce ETL time by 60% with the Data Warehouse now updated before reports need to be run.



Run key reports in minutes rather than hours. Get information in the hands of the users sooner, any errors can be rectified and reports re-run in a timely fashion.



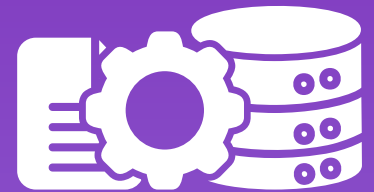
Cost savings. Archived data moved to cold storage, frees up space in expensive high availability hot storage.

THE SITUATION

The Data Warehouse has been developed over the course of many years using best practice principles by a number of different data warehouse and ETL developers. As the business and business requirements for data and analytics grew and evolved, so did the scale and scope of the data warehouse.

The data warehouse itself consisted of dozens of Fact, Dimension and Reporting tables that supported the business' business intelligence reports and analytics.

The ETL routines consisted of Stored Procedures orchestrated by SQL Server Integration Services. These ETL routines have changed over time to accommodate new requirements at the same time as the data volumes have increased resulting in the degradation of the performance of these routines.



BUSINESS PROBLEMS

Essential activity reports provided too late or not at all

Operational decisions made without insight

Wastage and diminished profitability based on poor decisions

Low confidence in reporting across the organisation

TECHNICAL CHALLENGES

Improve run time of ETL routines

Reduce time taken to update SSAS cubes

Improve performance of key business reports

Minimise failures



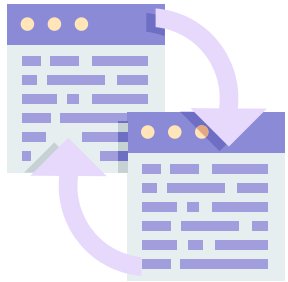
ENVIRONMENT





THE SOLUTION

INFuse consultants embarked on a 3-month challenge to drastically improve the situation for this company. We made vital changes to the following aspects of the data warehouse functionality, resulting in significant business benefits.

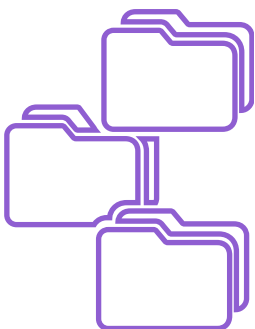


REFACTORING QUERIES & PROCEDURES

By benchmarking the performance of units of code within the Stored Procedures and queries in the ETL we were able to identify the long running areas of code that may be able to be re-factored to achieve better performance. This might include examining the query path to determine whether the tables are being accessed in the most efficient way. Often re-phrasing the SQL statement can achieve performance gains by using a more efficient approach to achieve the same outcome.

REVIEW INDEX STRATEGY

A well-designed index strategy can make considerable difference to query performance. Conversely an over indexed database can have a detrimental impact on performance. Indexing key columns in star-schema is standard but many data warehouse ETL routines will have complex logic in lower layers of the data warehouse. By measuring the usage and effectiveness of existing indexes, then dropping unnecessary indexes we often experience performance improvements to Insert and Update statements. When the logic requires the return a small set of data, index optimisation can be a powerful tool in the kitbag.



DATA ARCHIVING

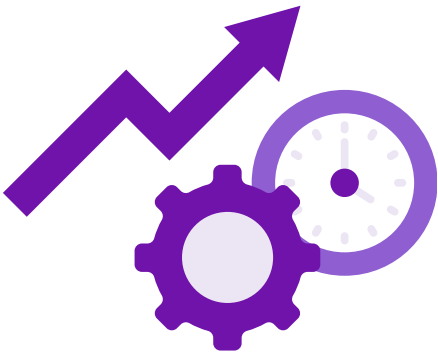
As history builds up over time, it is usually only once data volumes become an issue that an archiving strategy is considered, by which time performance degradation is already taking place. By properly designing data files and filegroups, partition schemes and functions and partitioning tables and indexes archiving data can be a simple task that requires minimal manual intervention and have a multitude of benefits including speeding up processing and querying data in the data warehouse as well as considerable cost savings over time.

SYSTEM RESOURCES

Monitoring system resources such as CPU and memory during peak and idle times can give a good indication whether performance can be improved by increasing the resources available to the applications. Data warehouse workloads read large amounts of data into available cache in memory. If there is no available space in cache then this increases the amount of disk i/o which has a significant impact on performance. By tracking the usage of memory and CPU during different times, we are able accurately determine the optimum resource requirements for the application.

BUSINESS BENEFITS

Using the techniques and approach we've detailed here, along with others, we were able to achieve a considerable improvement to this company's ETL and data warehouse performance and efficiency, reducing the ETL time from 6 hours to 2 hours. The Data Warehouse is now updated before reports need to be run, and key reports now run in minutes rather than hours. This means that Information is in the hands of the users sooner, any errors can be rectified and reports re-run in a timely fashion. The business has also seen significant cost savings, archived data being moved to cold storage, frees up space in expensive high availability hot storage.



CONTACT US

Find out more about this solution, or discuss your own Data Warehouse modernisation initiative.

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