



# Data Modeling for Experts with Power BI

Brain Melt Edition



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# After this session you will be able to:



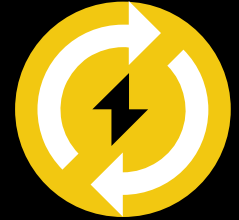
Successfully implement  
calculation groups



Build and optimize  
composite models



Combine DirectQuery  
and import storage  
modes in a single  
data model



Optimize query  
performance in  
complex situations

# What are we talking about?

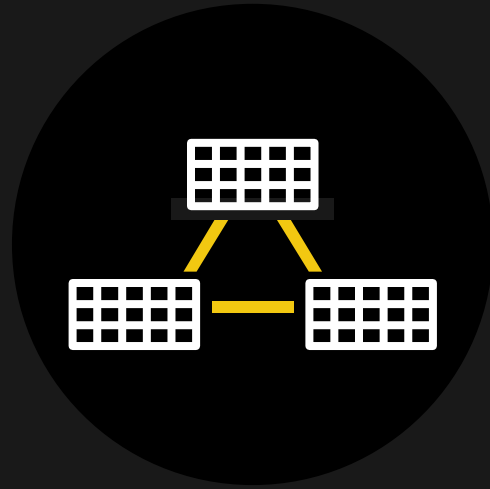
Gather



Clean



Model

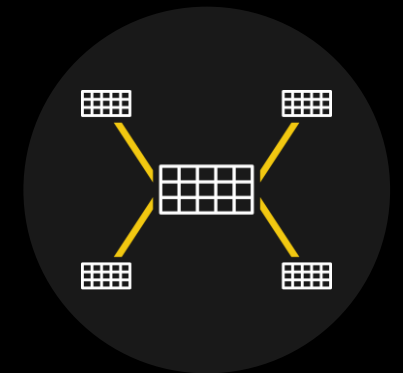
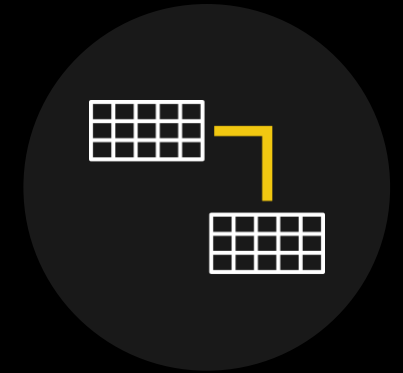


Visualize



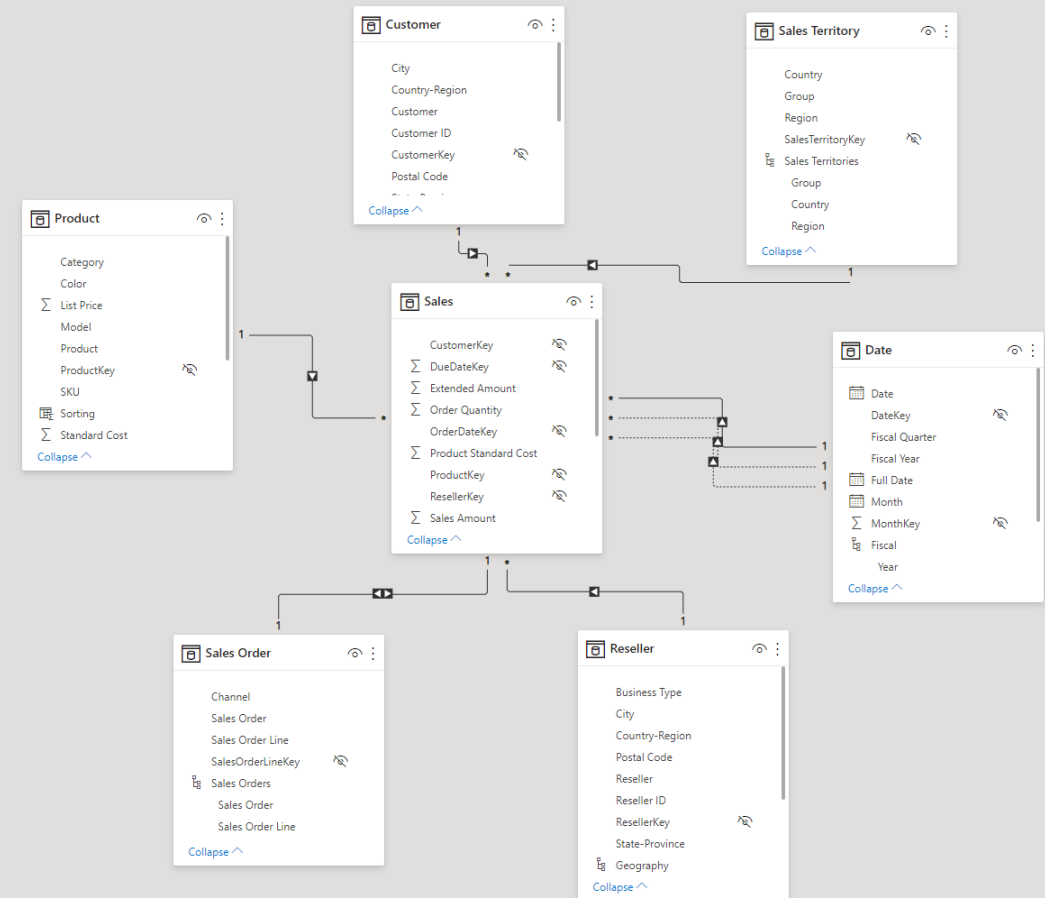
# We assume you know...

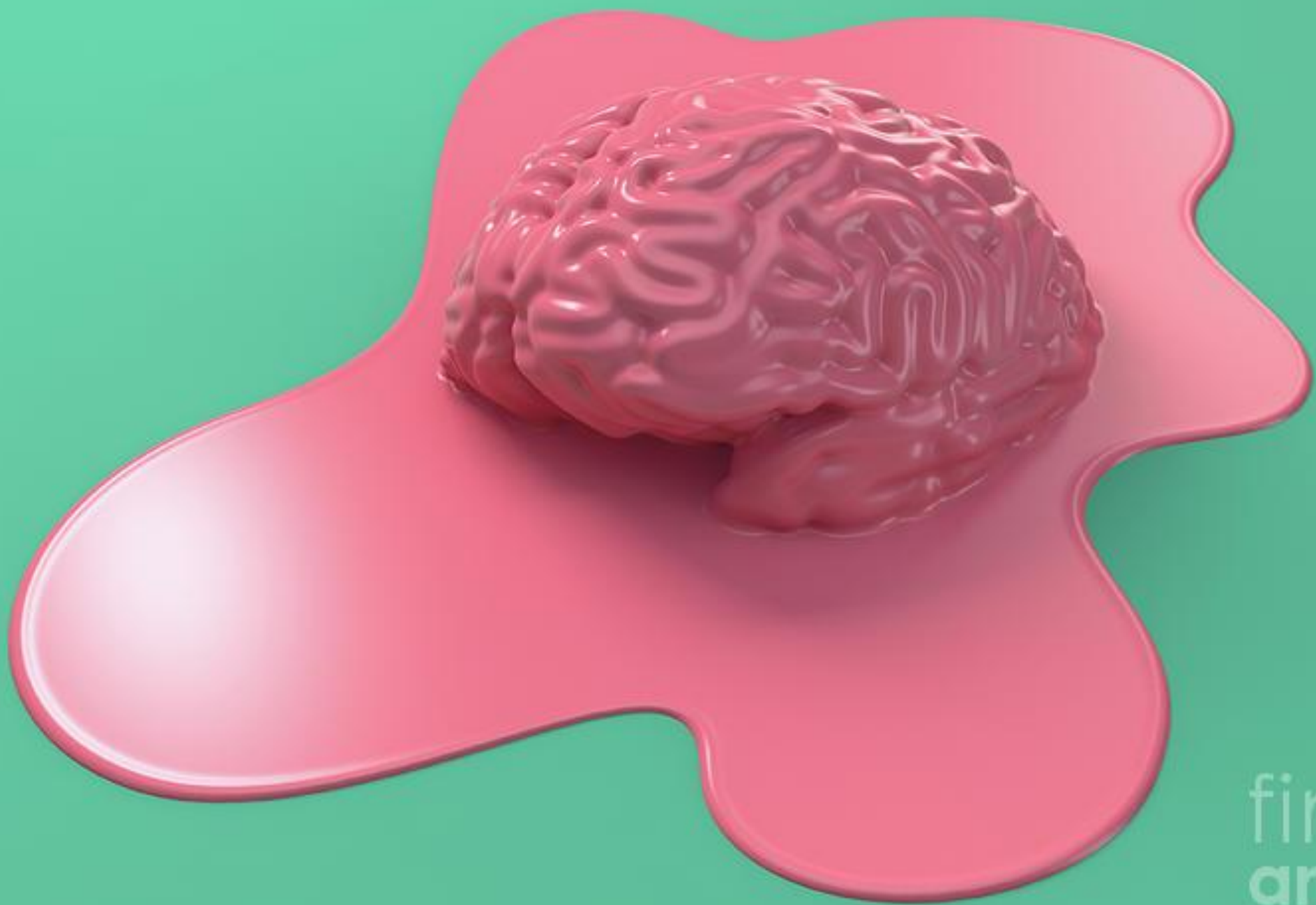
- The importance of a star schema
- Different data model types
- Modeling best practices, including naming conventions for tables and columns
- Auto date/time
- Relationship direction
- Limited and regular relationships
- Ambiguous data models
- Aggregations
- Dealing with multiple fact tables
- Different types of fact tables
- Slowly changing dimensions
- Data groups and hierarchies



# AdventureWorks

## Our data model





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# Storage modes



# Different types of storage modes

## Three storage modes

- **Import** – data cached in the model
- **DirectQuery** – queries are submitted to the back-end data source
- **Dual** – can act in both above storage modes, depending on query context

## Configuring storage modes

- Storage modes are set on table level
- Setting storage mode to Import is an irreversible operation
- Data in DirectQuery mode cannot be displayed in the data tab

The screenshot displays the Power BI Desktop interface. The top ribbon includes tabs for File, Home, Help, and External Tools. The Home tab is active, showing various toolbars for Clipboard, Data, Queries, Relationships, Security, Q&A, and Share. The main workspace shows a data model with four tables: Product Subcategory, Product, Internet Sales, and Internet Sales - Agg. The tables are connected with relationships. The 'Internet Sales' table is highlighted with a yellow border. The 'Properties' pane on the right shows the 'Advanced' tab with the 'Storage mode' set to 'DirectQuery'.

**Product Subcategory**

- English Product Subcategory N...
- French Product Subcategory Na...
- ProductCategoryKey
- ProductSubcategoryAlt...
- ProductSubcategoryKey
- Spanish Product Subcategory N...

**Product**

- Arabic Description
- Chinese Description
- Class
- Color
- Days To Manufacture
- Dealer Price

**Internet Sales**

- Carrier Tracking Number
- CurrencyKey
- Customer PO Number
- CustomerKey
- Discount Amount
- DueDateKey
- Extended Amount
- Freight Amount
- Order Calendar Year

**Internet Sales - Agg**

- Count
- Order Calendar Year
- ProductSubcategoryKey
- Sales Amount

**Properties**

General

Name: Internet Sales

Description: Enter a description

Synonyms: Enter a comma-separated list of synonyms for Q&A

Row label: Select a row label

Key column: Select a column with unique values

Is hidden: No

Is featured table: No

Advanced

Storage mode: DirectQuery

# Understanding Dual mode

## Example

- Internet Sales → DirectQuery
- Internet Sales - Agg → Import
- Product Category → Dual

The screenshot displays the Microsoft Power BI Desktop interface. The top ribbon includes tabs for File, Home, Help, and External Tools. The Home tab is active, showing various toolbars for Clipboard, Data, Queries, Relationships, Security, and Q&A. The main workspace shows a data model with four tables: Product Subcategory, Product, Internet Sales, and Internet Sales - Agg. The tables are connected with relationships. The 'Internet Sales' table is highlighted with a yellow border. The 'Advanced' section of the Properties pane is highlighted with a red border, showing 'Storage mode' set to 'DirectQuery'.

**Product Subcategory**

- English Product Subcategory N...
- French Product Subcategory Na...
- ProductCategoryKey
- ProductSubcategoryAlt...
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- Spanish Product Subcategory N...

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**Internet Sales**

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**Internet Sales - Agg**

- Count
- Order Calendar Year
- ProductSubcategoryKey
- Sales Amount

**Properties**

**General**

Name: Internet Sales

Description: Enter a description

Synonyms: Enter a comma-separated list of synonyms for Q&A

Row label: Select a row label

Key column: Select a column with unique values

Is hidden: No

Is featured table: No

**Advanced**

Storage mode: DirectQuery

# Benefits

## Benefits to choose one or the other

- Improve query performance – cache data for faster end-user performance
- Data refresh optimization – no need to refresh for non-cached data
- Near-real time requirements – reduce query latency when in DirectQuery mode
- Large datasets – choose to not import certain data



# Caches and DirectQuery

## Risks of mixing storage modes

- Avoid mismatch in results when query bits DirectQuery compared to Import
- Data cached (import) could be behind compared to DirectQuery data
- Make sure cached data is kept **in sync** – regularly refresh!



# Behavior of Dual mode

## Query context defines storage mode used

- Sales per product subcategory, both tables will use Import mode
- Sales per product, both tables will hit DirectQuery
- Extended Amount per product subcategory, both tables will hit DirectQuery

The screenshot displays the Power BI Desktop interface. The ribbon at the top includes tabs for File, Home, Help, and External Tools. The Home tab is active, showing various toolbars like Clipboard, Data, Queries, Relationships, Security, and Q&A. The main workspace shows a data model with three tables: Product Subcategory, Product, and Internet Sales. The Internet Sales table is highlighted with a yellow border. The Properties pane on the right shows the 'Storage mode' set to 'DirectQuery'.

**Product Subcategory Table:**

- English Product Subcategory N...
- French Product Subcategory Na...
- ProductCategoryKey
- ProductSubcategoryAlt...
- ProductSubcategoryKey
- Spanish Product Subcategory N...

**Product Table:**

- Arabic Description
- Chinese Description
- Class
- Color
- Days To Manufacture
- Dealer Price

**Internet Sales - Agg Table:**

- Count
- Order Calendar Year
- ProductSubcategoryKey
- Sales Amount

**Internet Sales Table:**

- Carrier Tracking Number
- CurrencyKey
- Customer PO Number
- CustomerKey
- Discount Amount
- DueDateKey
- Extended Amount
- Freight Amount
- Order Calendar Year

**Properties Pane:**

- Name: Internet Sales
- Description: Enter a description
- Synonyms: Enter a comma-separated list of synonyms for Q&A
- Row label: Select a row label
- Key column: Select a column with unique values
- Is hidden: No
- Is featured table: No
- Storage mode: DirectQuery

# Composite models

# Introducing composite models

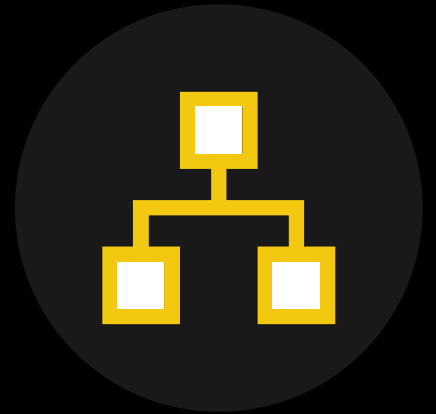
## Composite models do either or both of the following actions

- Combine data from one or more DirectQuery sources
- Combines data from DirectQuery and import data

## Three related features in Power BI

- Composite models, to allow different connections and storage models in a single data model
- Many-to-many relationships
- Storage modes

**Limited relationships might occur, when relationships cross source group**



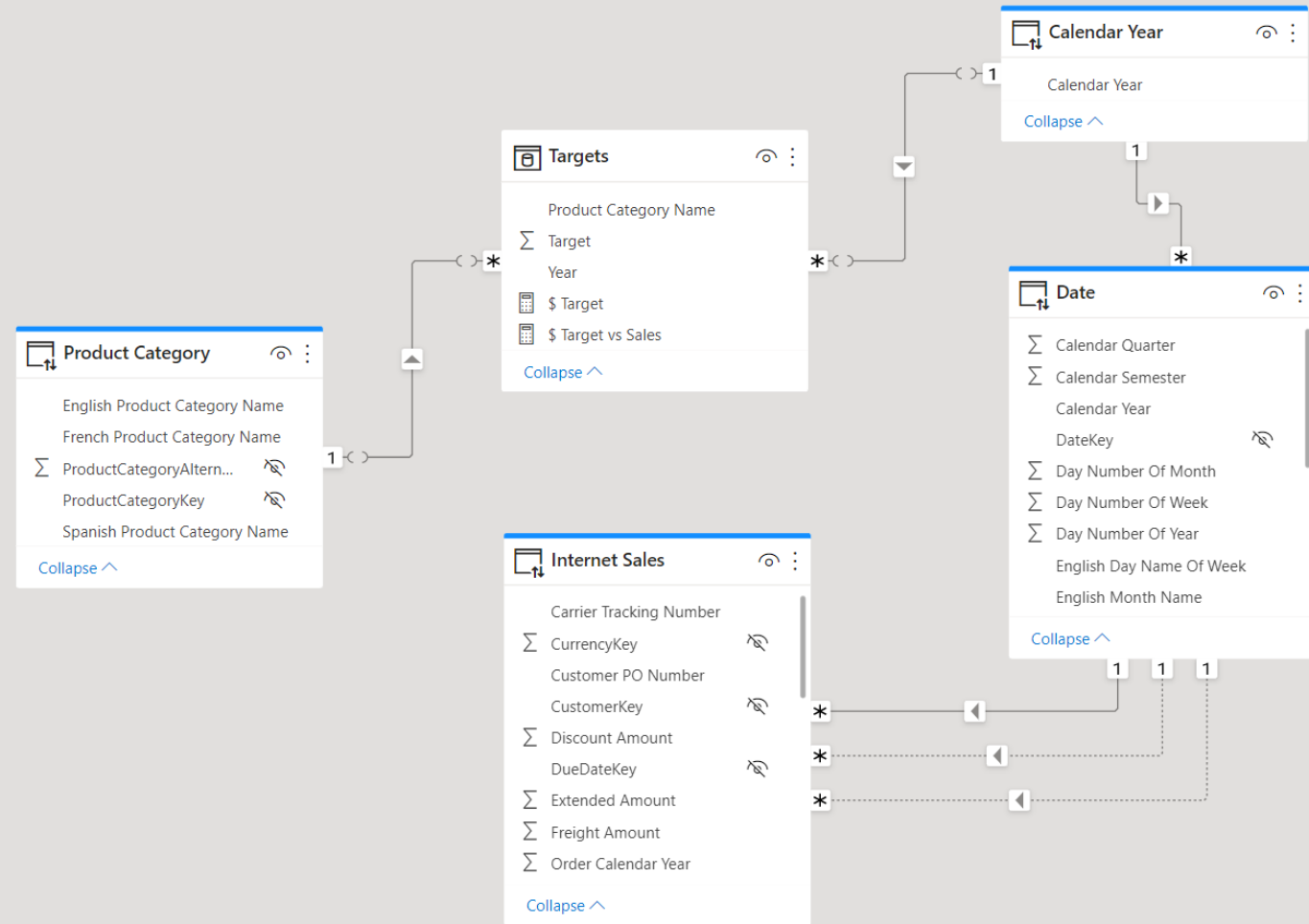
# Example, sales model with local target sheet

## Example use case for composite models in Power BI

- Centrally maintained data model, containing all sales
- Region has their own sheet with targets in Excel, which they can blend with the central data model

Source group – everything loaded from one DirectQuery source

All import tables and calculated tables are in one source group



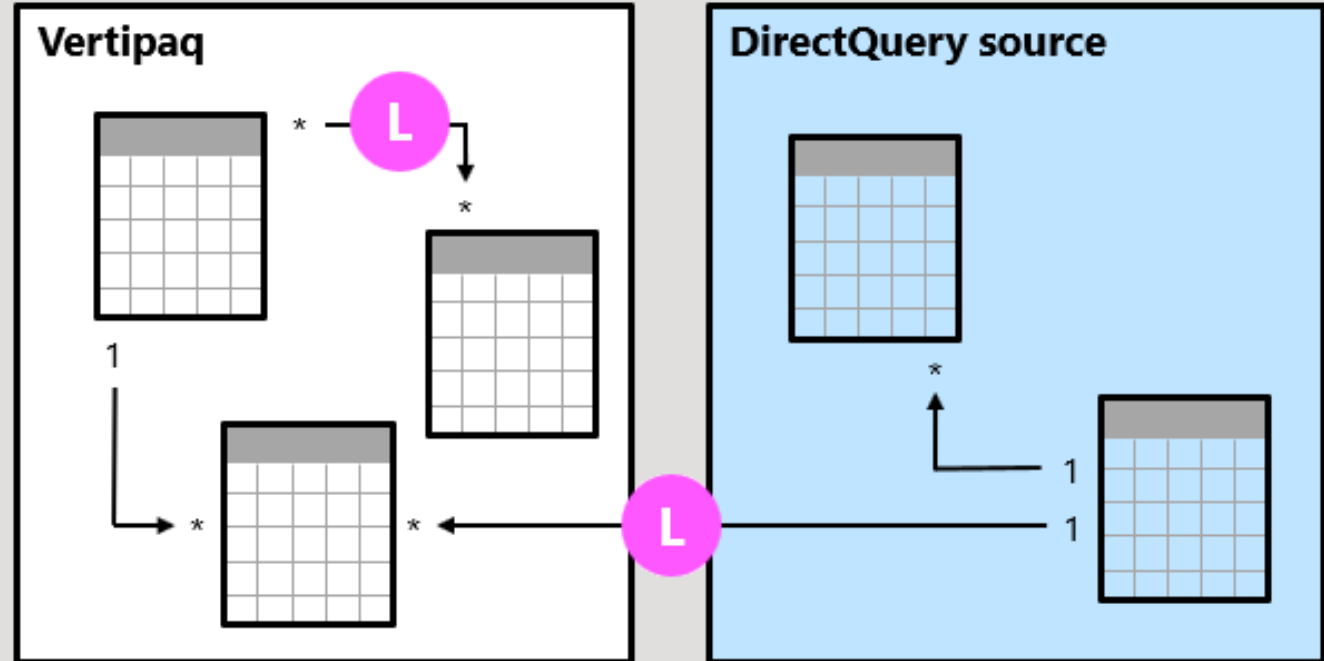


# Limited relationships

A model relationship is *limited* when there's no guaranteed "one" side

It can be the case for two reasons:

- The relationship uses a Many-to-many cardinality type (even if one or both columns contain unique values)
- The relationship is cross source group (which can only ever be the case for Composite models)
- It can be a cross-storage mode but does not have to be



# Composite models

Demo

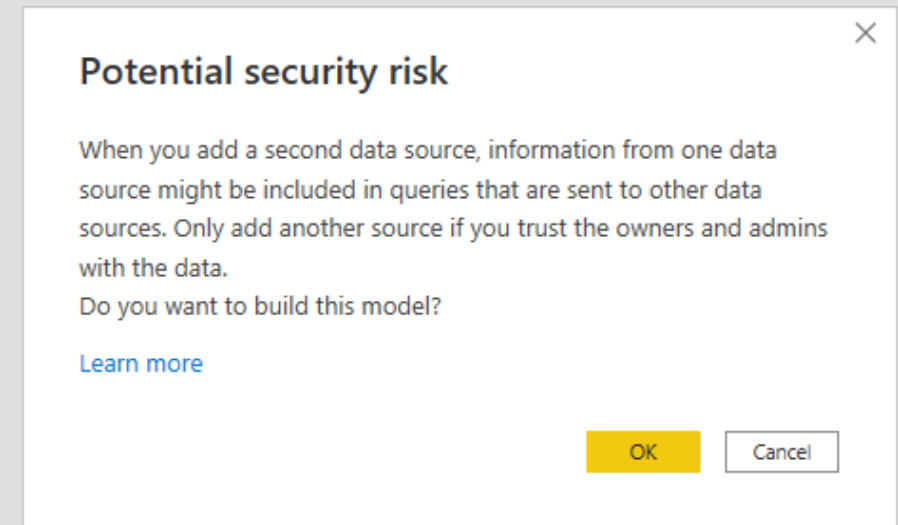
# Security implications

## Composite models do either or both of the following actions

- A query sent to one data source can include data values that have been retrieved from another data source

## Potentially

- Any administrator of the data sources, who can view the traces or audit logs could view this information, without permissions to the original data source
- The encryption setting for each source should be considered, to avoid breaching encryption while the data is included in a query sent to another unencrypted source



# Performance implications

## Composite models might have slower performance

- **General limitations of DirectQuery** apply, make sure the back-end data source has sufficient resources to provide best performance as possible
- Query execution potentially needs to **cross sources**, where values from one source needs to be evaluated in another source (rich set of values in the WHERE clause)
- **Difference in granularity** of data across sources, where on-demand aggregation is required before displaying data in a visual
- **Multiple queries** must be executed to retrieve results (typically with DistinctCount)



# Composite models using Power BI datasets and Analysis Services

With the ability to connect to Power BI datasets and Analysis Services models using DirectQuery (in preview since December 2020) you can now build a composite model using these sources.

Note the following design goals / non-goals for this feature:

## Goals:

- **Extend:** Add data to enterprise semantic model
- **Enrich:** Add measure, calculation, formatting to enrich enterprise semantic model without adding any data
- **Overview:** disjointed datasets to give business overview ('dashboard')

## Non goals:

- Combine two or more sources by joining large shared dimension tables
- Combine large dimension table and large fact table from different sources

# Composite models 2

Demo

# Calculation groups

# Introducing calculation groups

## Benefits

- Reduce the number of redundant measures and grouping common measure expressions as calculation items
- Avoids duplicating logic in different measures
- Typical use cases are
  - Time-intelligence calculations (YTD / QTD / MTD / ...)
  - Format string change, like currency conversions

## Limitations

- Can only be created from external tools in Power BI (Any tool using the XMLA endpoint such as Tabular Editor) – **but stay tuned....**
- Object level security on Calculation group items is not supported
- Smart narrative visuals in Power BI are not supported with Calculation Groups
- Be aware of potential unexpected behavior in combination with Composite Models





# How calculation groups work

## Specific DAX expressions for Calculation Groups

- SELECTEDMEASURE( )
- SELECTEDMEASURENAME( )
- ISSELECTEDMEASURE( )
- SELECTEDMEASUREFORMATSTRING( )

Classic measure:

```
MTD =  
    CALCULATE (  
        SUM ( Sales[SalesAmount] ),  
        DATESMTD ( DimDate[Date] )  
    )
```

Dynamic measure context MTD with Calculation Group:

```
MTD =  
    CALCULATE (  
        SELECTEDMEASURE (),  
        DATESMTD ( DimDate[Date] )  
    )
```

# Create and use calculation groups

Demo

# Wholesale and non-wholesale queries

# Remote vs local model

## Remote model – a model that serves as a data source for the current (local) model

- Remote / vs local table – a remote table is a table that is sourced from a remote model.  
Any table that is not from a remote model is considered local
- Remote measures are treated as a black box to the composite model: a calc groups might be applied, or not, depends on wholesale vs non-wholesale



# Wholesale vs non-wholesale

- **Wholesale:** depends on objects in single remote source group
  - Calculated columns defined on a table from a remote source group must be wholesale
- **Non-wholesale:** depends on objects in more than one source group



# Calculation groups and measures in a composite model

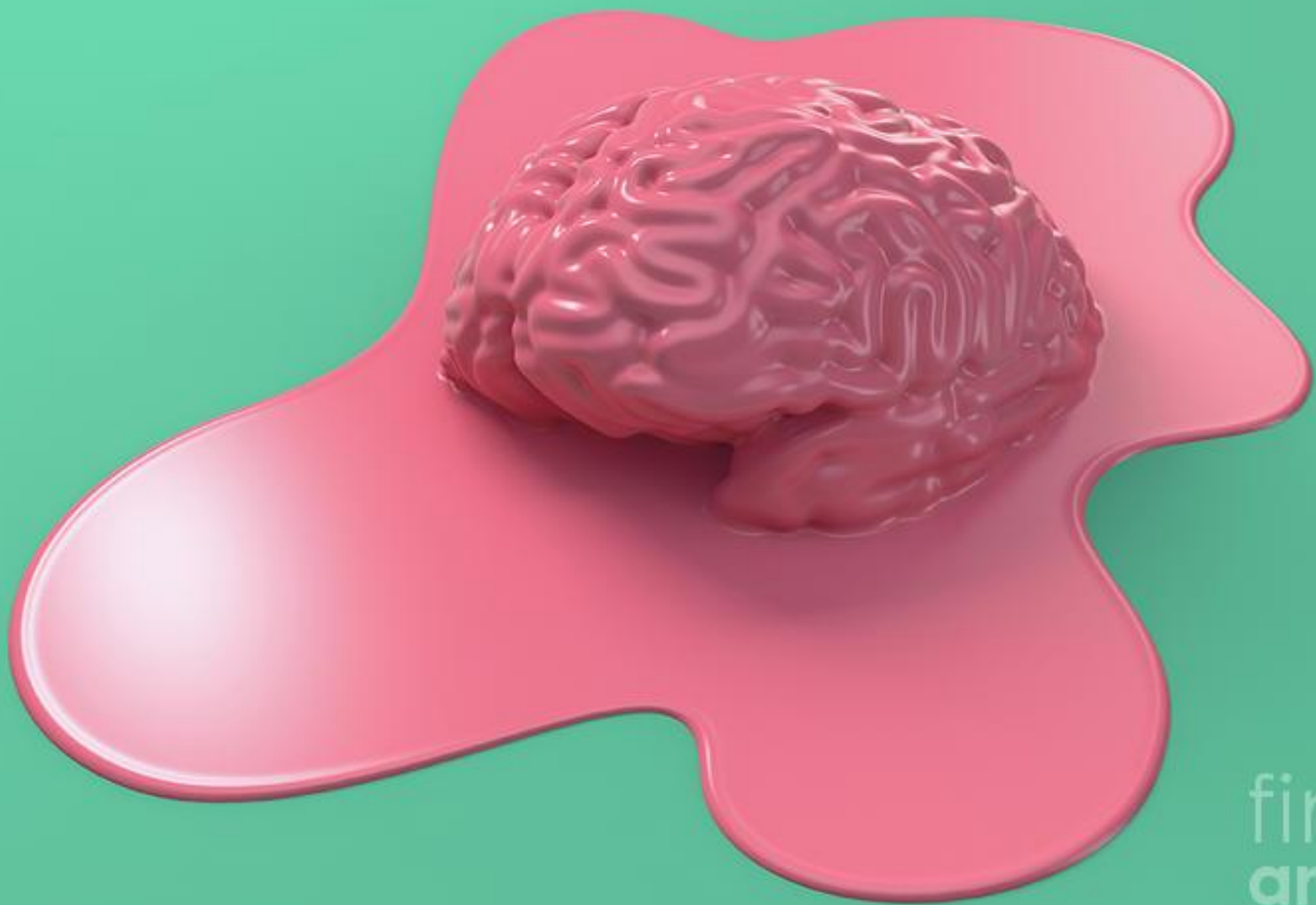
Depending on the configuration, calculation groups and measures have interesting interactions

Measure location	Is measure wholesaleable	Remote calc group applied
Remote	Yes	Yes
Local	Yes	Yes
Local	No (either because it depends on more than one source group or just the local source group)	No – but can be indirectly

Remember: measures might be impacted by remote calculation groups, when applied

# Calculation groups and wholesale / non-wholesale measures

Demo



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# Key take-aways

Consider picking the right storage mode for your need

Be aware of the security and performance implications of composite models

Reduce the number of redundant measures and avoid duplication calculation logic by successfully leveraging calculation groups

When working with composite models using Power BI datasets or Azure Analysis Services and calculation groups, keep in mind wholesale vs non-wholesale and the interaction with calculation groups



# Resources

## Calculation groups

[aka.ms/PowerBICalculationGroups](https://aka.ms/PowerBICalculationGroups)

## Different storage modes in Power BI

[aka.ms/PowerBIStorageModes](https://aka.ms/PowerBIStorageModes)

## Using Direct Query in Power BI

[aka.ms/DirectQueryPBI](https://aka.ms/DirectQueryPBI)

## Guidance for Composite Models

[aka.ms/CompositeModelsPBI](https://aka.ms/CompositeModelsPBI)

## Relationship evaluation

[aka.ms/DirectQueryRelationshipEvalPBI](https://aka.ms/DirectQueryRelationshipEvalPBI)

## DirectQuery for Power BI datasets and Azure Analysis Services (preview)

[aka.ms/PBIDirectQueryDatasets](https://aka.ms/PBIDirectQueryDatasets)

## Model relationships in Power BI

[aka.ms/ModelRelationshipsPBI](https://aka.ms/ModelRelationshipsPBI)

# Want to review all this content?

Webinar series: Mastering data modeling with Power BI

Episode 1 - Data modeling 101: Increasing the impact of Power BI

by Jeroen ter Heerdt, Microsoft and Marc Lelijveld, Macaw Netherlands

[Watch now](#) ↗

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Episode 2 - Learn advanced data modeling with Power BI

by Jeroen ter Heerdt, Microsoft and Marc Lelijveld, Macaw Netherlands

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Webinar series: Data modeling with Power BI

Episode 4 - Calculation groups and composite models

By Jeroen ter Heerdt, Microsoft and Marc Lelijveld, Macaw Netherlands

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[docs.microsoft.com/en-us/power-bi/fundamentals/webinars](https://docs.microsoft.com/en-us/power-bi/fundamentals/webinars)

Thank you

<https://sqlb.it/?9491>

