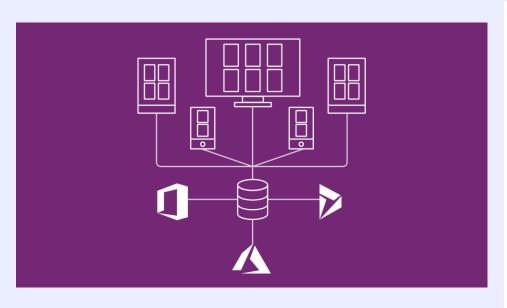
## LEVERAGING POWER BI WITH THE COMMON DATA SERVICE



Joe Griffin



https://crmchap.co.uk



**y** joejgriffin



JJGriffin

## AGENDA

- About Me
- Common Data Service ("CDS") Background
  - History
  - Dynamics 365: The awkward bedfellow?
  - Brief Overview of Built-in Reporting Options
- Using Power BI with CDS
  - Licensing Considerations
  - Power BI Online
    - Apps for Power BI
    - Data flows
  - Power BI Desktop
    - Common Data Service Connector
    - FetchXML
    - SQL via Data Export Service
    - Azure Data Lake
- Closing Remarks

## ABOUT ME

- Director @ SOLO Cloud Solutions, MS Gold Partner consultancy practice in the UK
- Hold various certifications (Translation: I like shiny badges! (\*\*))
- Worked with Dynamics CRM/Dynamics 365 for around 5 years; previous background of SQL, C#, Office 365; lots of my daily work involves the Power Platform, including:
  - Power Apps
  - Power Automate
  - Power BI
  - Bespoke technical integrations involving these products.
- PRINCE2 PM/Agile Practitioner
- Certified Scrum Master (Scrum Alliance)
- CRMUG/D365UG NW Committee Member













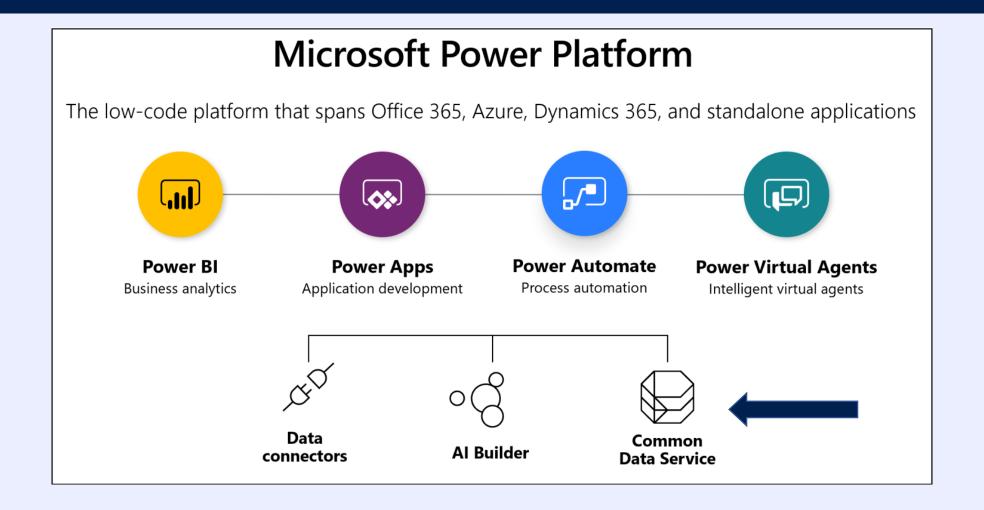




## COMMON DATA SERVICE OVERVIEW

- First released in 2016, alongside Power Apps.
- Designed to be the central storage unit for your core business data, that can then be leveraged by other tools within the Power Platform.
- Cloud-only product.
- Feature highlight:
  - Allows you to model your business data via Entities (think tables), that can be related alongside each other
  - Supports custom, calculated and rollup fields, of various data types (text, date/time, currency etc.)
  - Business logic automation via tools such as Business Rules
  - Powerful, yet highly customisable, security access framework
- Best thought of as "SQL Server on steroids"
- Version 2 of the CDS saw a complete overhaul of the technical architecture of the solution, introducing new capabilities and features

## CDS WITHIN THE POWER PLATFORM



## DYNAMICS 365: THE AWKWARD BEDFELLOW?

- Originally, CDS was dis-associated from Dynamics 365, with capabilities to integrate both databases together, where required.
- Version 2 addressed this, by re-purposing the Dynamics 365 database as the "new" CDS; with the recognition that Version 1 was duplicating what was already available elsewhere.
- If you hear people talk about CDS and the Dynamics 365 database, they are the <u>same</u> thing
- Users of the V1 of CDS should have migrated across already to V2
- In retrospect, a **VERY** good decision.
- Understanding the history and traditional features available within Dynamics CRM/365 can be helpful when evaluating CDS reporting options.

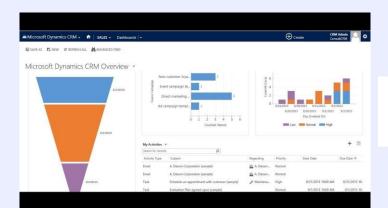


## A LONG TIME AGO...



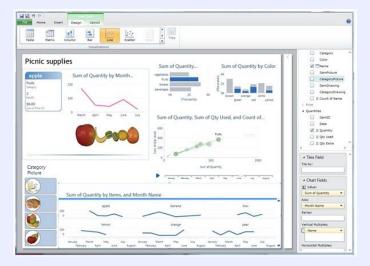




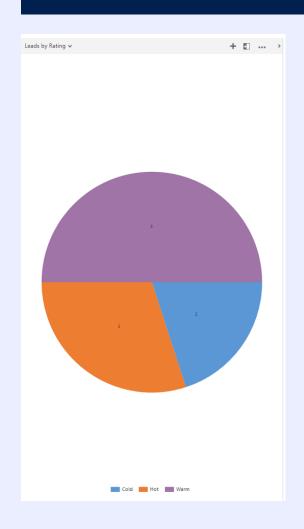


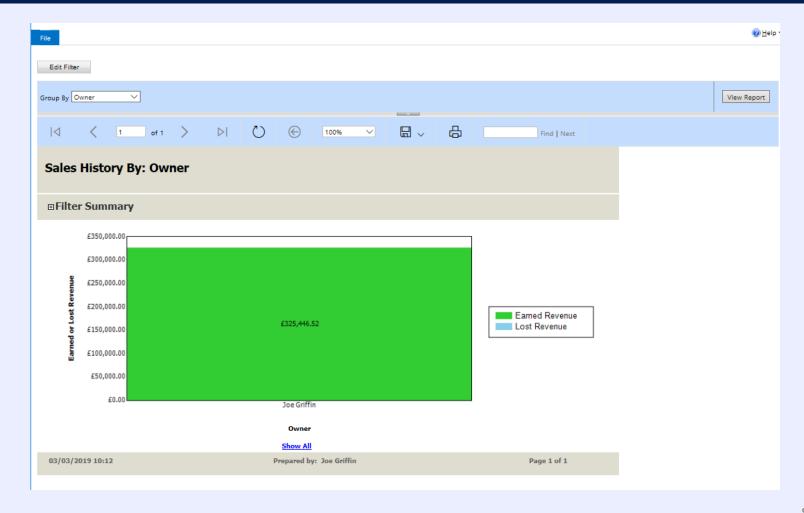
Dynamics CRM 2013

Project Crescent

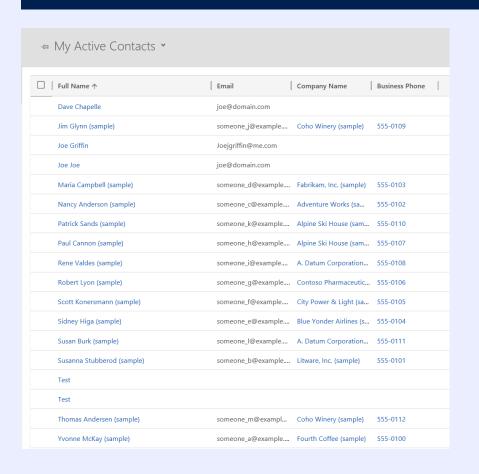


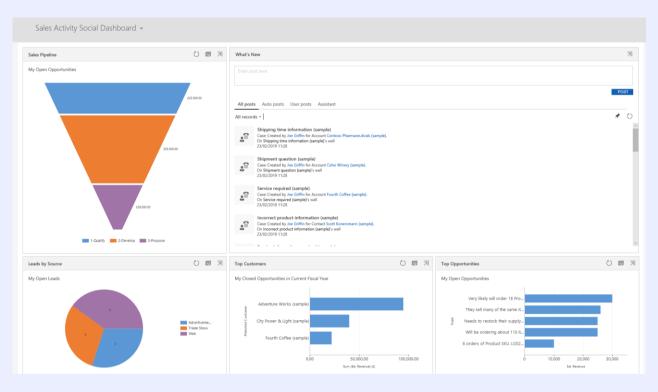
## DYNAMICS CRM 2013 REPORTING OPTIONS





## DYNAMICS CRM 2013 REPORTING OPTIONS





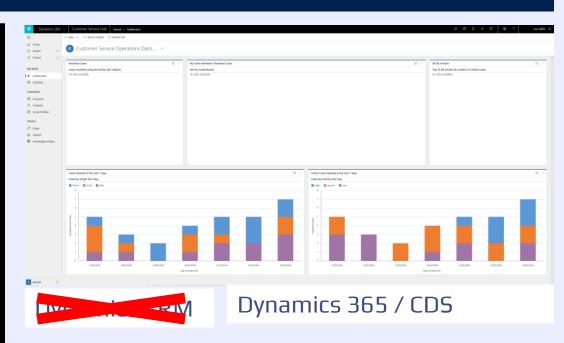
**ANYONE** using the application can create these

## FAST FORWARD TO TODAY











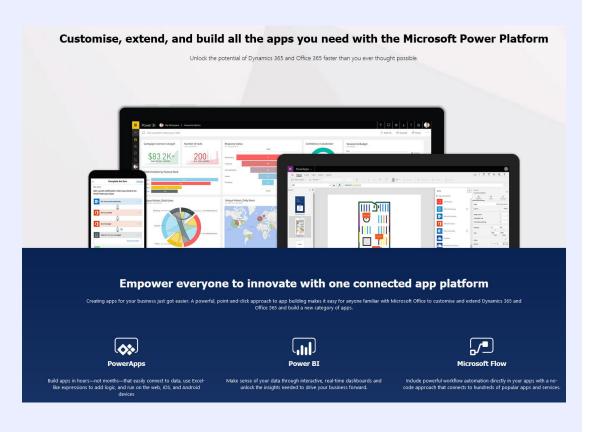


## REPORTING IN DYNAMICS 365 / CDS



Which leaves an obvious question...how does Power BI fit in?

### INTRODUCING THE POWER PLATFORM



- Dynamics 365 is now, in effect, a Power App.
- Dynamics 365 customisation experience gradually migrating across to Power Apps and CDS.
- Microsoft are clearly signposting Power BI as their preferred platform for reporting within the wider stack

## SO WHERE DOES THIS LEAVE US?

- Dynamics 365 has numerous existing reporting options available, which can cover most business requirements...
- ...however, most of these have a "legacy" feel and appear to be out of step with the Power Platform.
- SSRS overcomplicates the technical architecture of CRM within the Power Platform
- Familiarity with Power BI now becomes mandatory when building out an effective business applications solution, especially if there is a requirement to integrate with external systems.
  - The flipside of this is that Power BI Developers must also start becoming familiar with Power Apps, the Common Data Service and Flow.

### A MINEFIELD OF OPTIONS

- Difficulties can arise when determining the best way to generate reporting information from CDS and how to align these to business requirements:
  - Does data need to be refreshed instantly or on schedule?
  - Are you querying just CDS data or do you need to bring in other application data?
  - What's the "state" of your data?
  - What are technical capabilities within your team/organisation?
  - How big is your wallet? (Most important question 🏐)
- Answering these questions will help you determine how a Power BI solution can fit in alongside CDS

# GETTING STARTED WITH POWER BI AND THE COMMON DATA SERVICE

### LICENSING NOTES

- Power BI is **NOT** an included SKU as part of the current Dynamics 365 / Power Apps licensing offers (i.e. the license types that include CDS storage).
- User must be assigned a Free or Professional License to access and deploy reports to the online service OR part of a Workspace assigned to a Premium capacity.
- Keep in mind the limitations around the Free SKU:
  - No internal/external sharing
  - No scheduling
  - Apps cannot be installed
  - Dataset size/refresh limitations

## POWER BI ONLINE

### POWER BI APPS

#### **OVERVIEW**

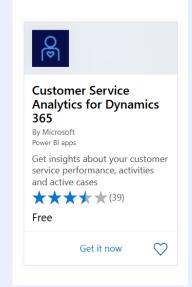
Pre-built Dashboard/Reports from Microsoft that expose CDS information from the Dynamics 365 Sales and Service Modules. Available on AppSource

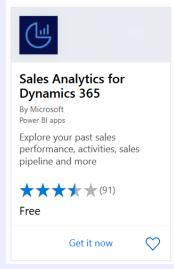
- + Quick and easy to deploy.
- + Exposes broad variety of "out of the box" functionality.
- + No Power BI development experience required.
- Power BI Professional License Required
- No ability to modify or expose bespoke CDS customization's
- US-centric from a reporting standpoint

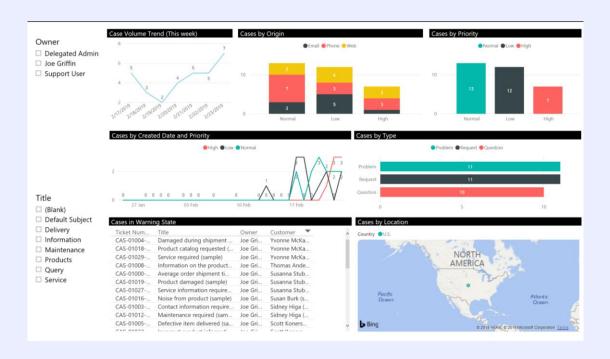
#### **VERDICT**

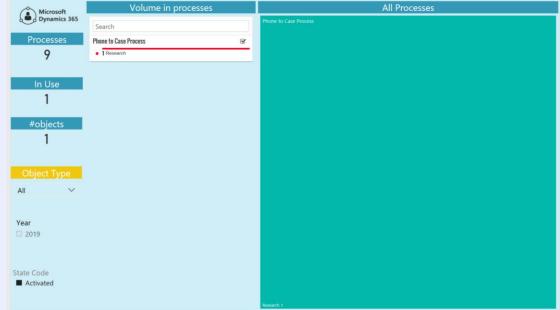
Useful for early-stage demonstrations involving Dynamics 365 or planning sessions to identify bespoke reporting requirements; for smaller organization's, potentially "good to go" as a solution.



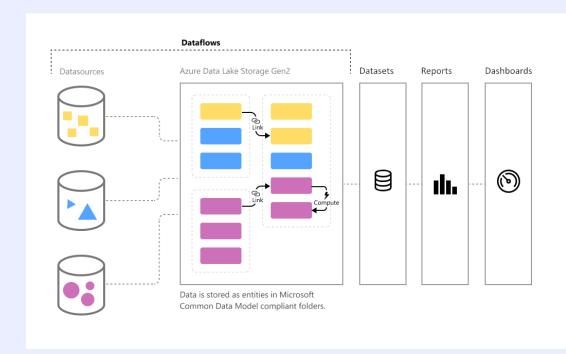








### DATA FLOWS



#### **OVERVIEW**

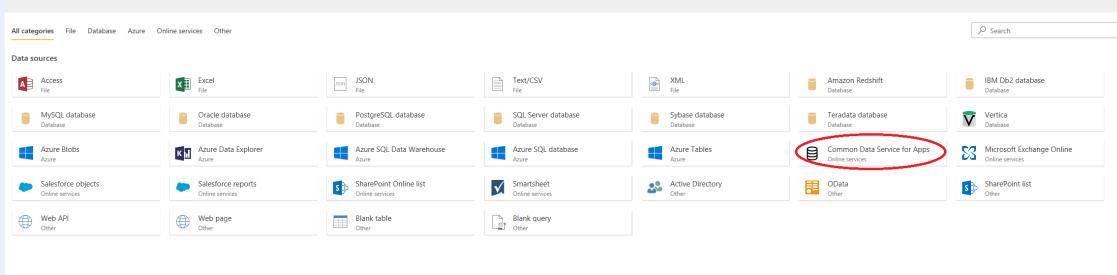
Using the Common Data Service for Apps connector, entities can be brought into a dataflow to centralise, combine and manipulate data for further consumption

- + Uses a fully supported connector, allowing you to quickly bring in data from the application.
- + Exposes all system/custom entities that the connecting user has access to.
- + Allows you to bring all connections to CDS within a single location.
- Requires considerable work in Power Query to create consolidated/focused queries.
- Some familiarity with CDS data structure is required.
- Requires Power BI Professional / Premium Capacity

#### **VERDICT**

Lots of potential here to help with consolidating datasets across a Power BI Online tenant, but considerable Power Query knowledge required to get the CDS data into the best format for end-user consumption

#### Choose data source





#### Connect to data source

Common Data Service for Apps
Online services

Connection settings

Server Url \*

https://jig.crm11.dynamics.com

Connection credentials

On-premises data gateway

(none) 

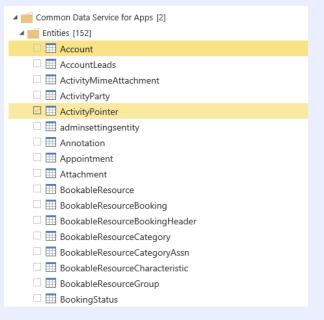
Authentication kind

Organizational account

You are currently signed in.

Sign in as different user

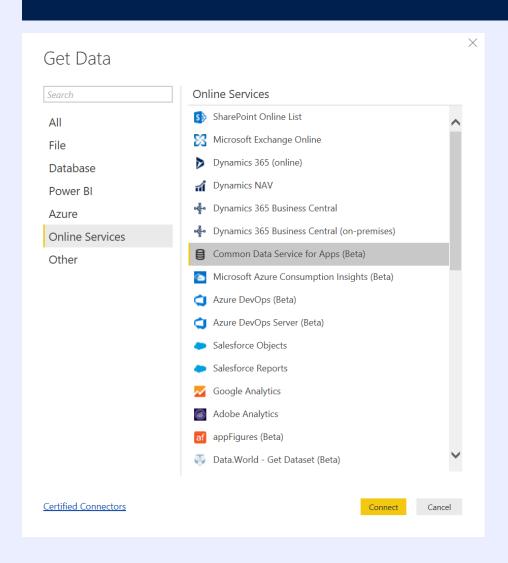




## DEMO

## POWER BI DESKTOP

## COMMON DATA SERVICE FOR APPS CONNECTOR



#### **OVERVIEW**

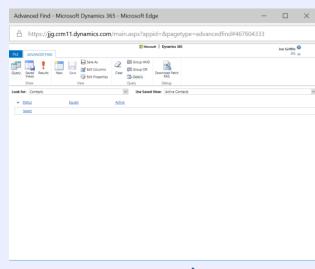
New connector for the Common Data Service for Apps Web API (i.e. the Dynamics 365 OData endpoint).

- + Quick and easy to deploy.
- + Options to re-order columns alphabetically and include formatted values automatically.
- + Power BI Professional not required.
- + Exposes all CDS data and custom functions/actions.
- Does not return labels for record ID's and lookups,

#### **VERDICT**

Represents the natural choice for report developers to quickly bring in CDS data into Power BI Desktop.

## FETCHXML QUERIES VIA THE ODATA ENDPOINT





@odata.etag	fullname	emailaddress1	contactid
W/"998263"	Dave Chapelle	joe@domain.com	9d93561a-451f-e911-a96d-002248014cda
W/"1831644"	Jim Glynn (sample)	someone_j@example.com	1a04afdc-5d37-e911-a97c-0022480749f0
W/"1243387"	Joe Griffin	Joejgriffin@me.com	683c4b48-3723-e911-a96d-002248014cda
W/"998257"	Joe Joe	joe@domain.com	ec40c3f0-441f-e911-a96d-002248014cda
W/"1831602"	Maria Campbell (sample)	someone_d@example.com	0e04afdc-5d37-e911-a97c-0022480749f0
W/"1831595"	Nancy Anderson (sample)	someone_c@example.com	0c04afdc-5d37-e911-a97c-0022480749f0
W/"1831653"	Patrick Sands (sample)	someone_k@example.com	1c04afdc-5d37-e911-a97c-0022480749f0
W/"1831630"	Paul Cannon (sample)	someone_h@example.com	1604afdc-5d37-e911-a97c-0022480749f0
W/"1831637"	Rene Valdes (sample)	someone_i@example.com	1804afdc-5d37-e911-a97c-0022480749f0
W/"1831623"	Robert Lyon (sample)	someone_g@example.com	1404afdc-5d37-e911-a97c-0022480749f0
W/"1831616"	Scott Konersmann (sample)	someone_f@example.com	1204afdc-5d37-e911-a97c-0022480749f0
W/"1831609"	Sidney Higa (sample)	someone_e@example.com	1004afdc-5d37-e911-a97c-0022480749f0
W/"1831660"	Susan Burk (sample)	someone_l@example.com	1e04afdc-5d37-e911-a97c-0022480749f0
W/"1831588"	Susanna Stubberod (sample)	someone_b@example.com	0a04afdc-5d37-e911-a97c-0022480749f0
W/"998129"	Test		b10977d7-7b1e-e911-a970-0022480130e2
W/"998063"	Test		2525972a-751e-e911-a971-0022480140fe
W/"1831667"	Thomas Andersen (sample)	someone_m@example.com	2004afdc-5d37-e911-a97c-0022480749f0
W/"1831581"	Yvonne McKay (sample)	someone_a@example.com	0804afdc-5d37-e911-a97c-0022480749f0

#### **OVERVIEW**

By using the OData endpoint, it is possible to execute FetchXML queries to return data back into Power BI.

- + Full FetchXML functionality can be used (filtering, joins etc.)
- + Can re-use existing view/Report queries from Dynamics CRM / 365
- + Allows you to specify whether option set, user name etc. labels are returned or not.
- Requires some knowledge of M to implement
- Only useful if you have someone who is familiar with compiling FetchXML queries.
- Can cause performance issues when scaled.

#### **VERDICT**

Complex way to bring in data but allows for those who are familiar with building FetchXML queries to pass these onto BI Developers, without them needing to become overtly familiar with the application.

## AS ALWAYS, THE COMMUNITY DELIVERS...



#### Power Query (M) Builder

Version: 1.2018.1014.5

Author: Mohamed Rasheed (ITLec) and Ulrik "CRM Chart Guy" Carlsson (eLogic LLC)

Create Power Query (M) scripts for Dynamics 365 and Power BI

- Lets you generate M Code queries based off Entity views or FetchXML Queries; full support for paging.
- Can also generate OData queries
- Generates OptionSet label values too

In short, an AMAZING tool!

https://www.xrmtoolbox.com/plugins/PowerQueryBuilder/

## DEMO

## USING SQL VIA THE DATA EXPORT SERVICE

#### **OVERVIEW**

The underlying database technology for CDS is SQL Server, which can be exposed entirely as part of the Data Export Service. This allows you to continually sync data to a Azure hosted SQL database.

- + Allows you to leverage full capability of T-SQL when querying CDS data
- + Data Export Service delta-syncs provide near real-time view of data.
- + Greater level of control over database capacity, performance etc.
- Requires an infrastructure/billing commitment within Azure
- Some limitations on the entities that can be synchronized.
- Familiarity with how CDS handles underlying data types is still required.

#### **VERDICT**

Recommended solution for situations that require more complex and scalable reporting needs or where significant existing T-SQL technical knowledge exists within your team.

### DATA EXPORT SERVICE OVERVIEW

 $\times$ 



GET IT NOW

Dynamics 365 for Customer ...

Dynamics 365 for Field Service

Dynamics 365 for Project Ser...

Microsoft Dynamics 365

Work or school account

\*\*\*\*

Products Dynamics 365 for Sales

Publisher

Version

Updated

11/2/2016

Categories

Marketing

Support

Acquire Using

Apps for Dynamics 365

AppSource

Microsoft Dynamics 365 - Data Export Service Microsoft Dynamics 365

This service exports schema and data from Dynamics 365 (online) to customer owned Azure SOL database

Data Export Service is an add-on service for Dynamics 365 (online) that adds the ability to replicate sales, service and marketing data to a SQL store in a customer-owned Azure subscription. It simplifies the technical and administrative complexity of deploying and managing a data export solution - managing schema and data. You will be up and running in a matter of few minutes to export data to Azure

- · Export profiles configure entities and relationships to synchronize data with the destination database. Destination schema is automatically created and updated based on entity and relationship definition
- · Metadata changes such as addition or modification of fields are automatically synchronized
- · Push based delta synchronization as changes occur in the Dynamics 365. Delta changes are pushed
- Built-in recovery for addressing transient failures
- Delete log to track deletes along with their timestamps
- Download failure records with failure reason for error encountered during synchronization
- Monitoring and diagnostics on sync progress
- Scalable, reliable and secure cloud service operated by Microsoft
- APIs for programmatic management of export profiles

Availabe at: North America South America Europe Middle East Africa Japan Asia/Pacific Australia

- "Free" add-on solution for CDS / Dynamics 365
- Allows you continually sync data to a Azure SQL database or SOL Server on a Windows VM.
- One-way sync
- Required setup:
  - O Provision Azure environment:
    - SOL Database OR VM with SOL Server
    - Azure Key Vault
  - **Install Data Export Managed Solution**
  - Define Data Export Profile (i.e. list of entities to sync)
  - Begin sync:
    - Metadata
    - Initial data sync (can take a while!)
    - Continuous delta data sync.
- Effective replacement solution for SSIS, Kingswaysoft or Scribe Online solutions, where complex transformation options are not required during the sync process.

**ARCHIVE** 



#### **Dynamic365 Data Export Service**

BY SCOTT-DUROW / DEC 09, 2016 / DYNAMICS365, SPARKLE XRM

SHARE

If you've moved to Dynamics CRM/365 Online then the likelihood is that you've come up against the limitation of not being able to query the SQL database directly to perform more complex reporting or for custom integrations. Many on premises deployments rely on querying the backend databases and in the past this has been a blocker to moving to the cloud - or at least it has meant a complex and costly integration to copy the data from Dynamics 365 to a on prem SQL database.

The introduction of the Data Export Service is a real game changer with the possibility to replicate your data from Dynamics CRM/365 online to an Azure SQL database in your own Azure Subscription. Once you have your data in a SQL Database you can then using PowerBI, integrate with other systems and create a data warehouse. I've found that the speed of the replication is impressive, being minutes/seconds and not hours.



There are a number of perquisites to enabling this which you can read about in msdn:

https://technet.microsoft.com/en-us/library/mt744592.aspx

#### **PAGELIST**

Download License

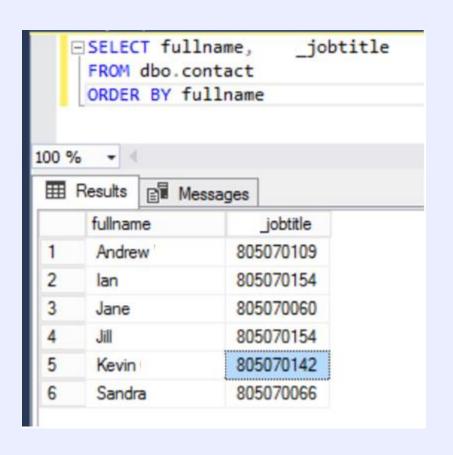
Ribbon Workbench

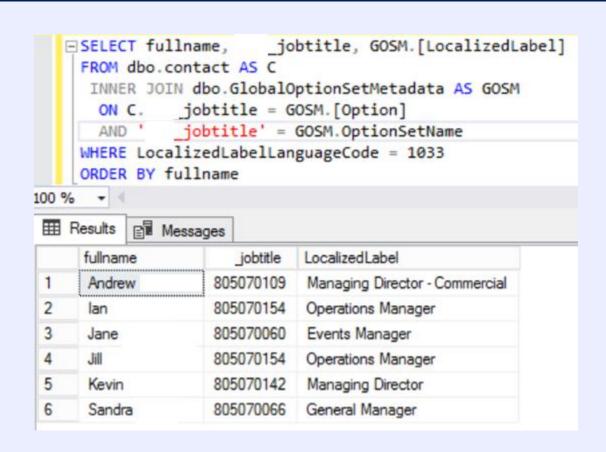
#### **TAGCLOUD**



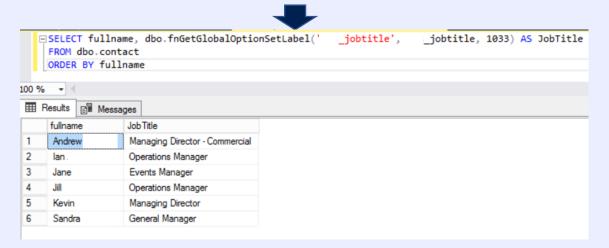


## HANDLING OPTION SET, STATUS & STATUS REASON VALUES





## HANDLING OPTION SET, STATUS & STATUS REASON VALUES





## COUPLE MORE THINGS TO REMEMBER...

- Record lookups are stored as GUID values, including for **ownerid** values be prepared to do plenty of joins in your queries!
- Data Export Service creates some additional tables, which may be of use:
  - AttributeMetadata Stores an overview of each attribute synced across useful for detecting changes and also as a reference for field data types.
  - **DeleteLog** Records the ID and date for each record deleted.
  - **TargetMetadata** Summary table of all the defined relationships included as part of the sync.
- P1 Premium is recommended SKU for Azure SQL, but S functions fine for smaller workloads; Azure Automation can be used to auto-scale your database.
- It's YOUR database, so feel free to bolt-on additional functionality to help suit your specific requirements, so long as it does not alter the base tables that sync data.

## DEMO

## DATA LAKE EXPORT

#### **OVERVIEW**

For situations where the size and complexity of your CDS deployment makes it difficult to work with the data using SQL, Data Lake export meets these objectives, allowing you to incorporate CDS data as part of your "big data" processes, leverage as part of machine learning (ML) activities or even query via Power BI.

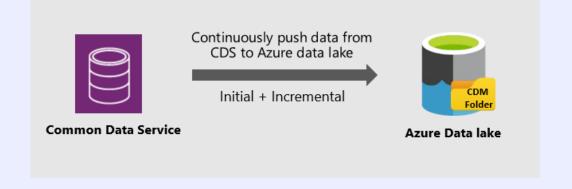
- + Potentially cheaper option versus SQL Server Data Export wizard
- + Provides near real-time export of data
- + Full CUD (Create, Update, Delete) operation support
- Requires an infrastructure/billing commitment within Azure
- Only supports entities enabled for change tracking
- Some Geographical/tenant restrictions check your CRM region first!
- Requires significant work in Power BI to consume the data.

#### **VERDICT**

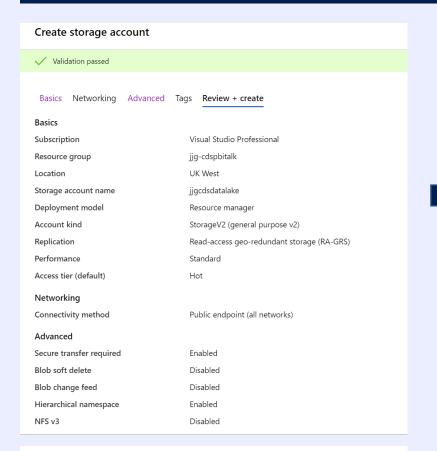
A true enterprise scale solution, only suitable where your CDS instance size is in the hundreds of GB's or if you have a specific requirement relating to ML/"big data" processing.

#### **FURTHER READING**

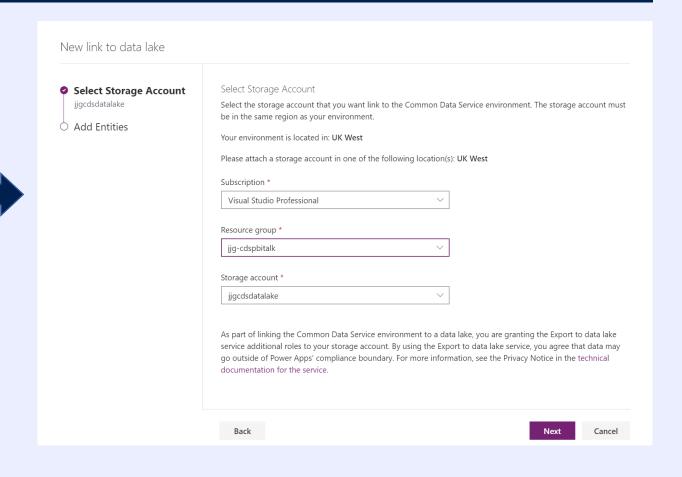
Export entity data to Azure Data Lake Storage Gen2 – Microsoft Docs



## SETUP STEPS

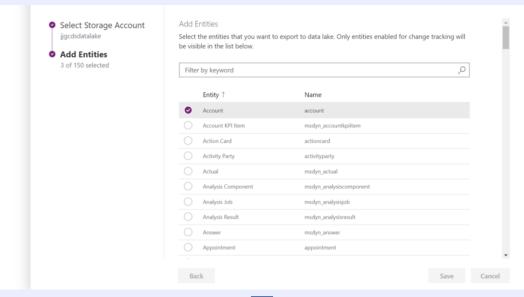


**Note**: CRM11 regions map to UK West in Azure





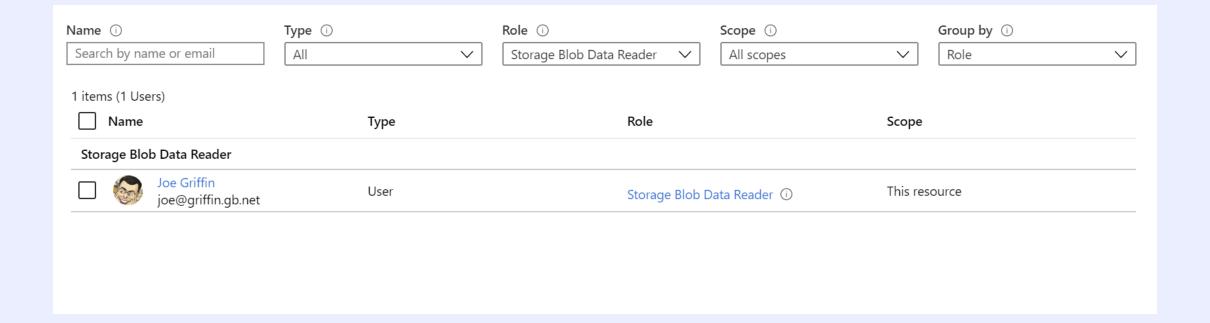
## SETUP STEPS





rthentication method: Access key (Switch to Azure AD User cation: commondataservice-jjg-orgabe4af40 / account	Account)					
earch blobs by prefix (case-sensitive)						
Name	Modified	Access tier	Blob type	Size	Lease state	
<u> </u>						• •
2019.csv	4/1/2020, 8:35:35 AM	Hot (Inferred)	Block blob	12.65 KiB	Available	•
2020.csv	4/1/2020, 8:35:35 AM	Hot (Inferred)	Block blob	1.85 KiB	Available	

## DON'T FORGET...



## VIEWING DATA LAKE CONTENT IN POWER BI

Content	Name	Extension	Date accessed	Date modified	Date created	Attributes	Folder Path
Binary	Model_1585726653.json	.json	null	01/04/2020 07:37:33	null	Record	https://jjgcdsdatalake.dfs.core.windows.net/commond
Binary	2019.csv	.csv	null	01/04/2020 07:37:32	null	Record	https://jjgcdsdatalake.dfs.core.windows.net/commond
Binary	2019.csv.blockidx	.blockidx	null	01/04/2020 07:35:35	null	Record	https://jjgcdsdatalake.dfs.core.windows.net/commond
Binary	2019.csv.lck	.lck	null	01/04/2020 07:35:35	null	Record	https://jjgcdsdatalake.dfs.core.windows.net/commond
Binary	2020.csv	.csv	null	01/04/2020 07:37:32	null	Record	https://jjgcdsdatalake.dfs.core.windows.net/commond
Binary	2020.csv.blockidx	.blockidx	null	01/04/2020 07:35:35	null	Record	https://jjgcdsdatalake.dfs.core.windows.net/commond
Binary	2020.csv.lck	.lck	null	01/04/2020 07:35:35	null	Record	https://jjgcdsdatalake.dfs.core.windows.net/commond
Binary	account-EntityMetadata.json	.json	null	01/04/2020 07:35:33	null	Record	https://jjgcdsdatalake.dfs.core.windows.net/commond
Binary	account-model.json	.json	null	01/04/2020 07:37:32	null	Record	https://jjgcdsdatalake.dfs.core.windows.net/commond
Binary	2019.csv	.csv	null	01/04/2020 07:37:32	null	Record	https://jjgcdsdatalake.dfs.core.windows.net/commond
Binary	2019.csv.blockidx	.blockidx	null	01/04/2020 07:36:09	null	Record	https://jjgcdsdatalake.dfs.core.windows.net/commond
Binary	2019.csv.lck	.lck	null	01/04/2020 07:36:07	null	Record	https://jjgcdsdatalake.dfs.core.windows.net/commond
Binary	contact-EntityMetadata.json	.json	null	01/04/2020 07:35:33	null	Record	https://jjgcdsdatalake.dfs.core.windows.net/commond
Binary	contact-model.json	.json	null	01/04/2020 07:37:32	null	Record	https://jjgcdsdatalake.dfs.core.windows.net/commond
Binary	empty.csv	.csv	null	01/04/2020 07:35:36	null	Record	https://jjgcdsdatalake.dfs.core.windows.net/commond
Binary	2019.csv	.csv	null	01/04/2020 07:37:32	null	Record	https://jjgcdsdatalake.dfs.core.windows.net/commond
Binary	2019.csv.blockidx	.blockidx	null	01/04/2020 07:35:38	null	Record	https://jjgcdsdatalake.dfs.core.windows.net/commond
Binary	2019.csv.lck	.lck	null	01/04/2020 07:35:38	null	Record	https://jjgcdsdatalake.dfs.core.windows.net/commond
Binary	lead-EntityMetadata.json	.json	null	01/04/2020 07:35:36	null	Record	https://jjgcdsdatalake.dfs.core.windows.net/commond
Binary	lead-model.json	.json	null	01/04/2020 07:37:33	null	Record	https://jjgcdsdatalake.dfs.core.windows.net/commond

<sup>1</sup> The data in the preview has been truncated due to size limits.

## WRAPPING UP

## SO WHAT'S THE BEST WAY TO CONSUME CDS DATA WITHIN POWER BI?

- Getting your CDS data into SQL does make it a lot easier for traditional BI developers to consume data from the application...
- ...if they have some awareness of how the application stores option set values, lookup fields etc.
- Common Data Service connector should be your go-to destination when building out a report from scratch.
- For more advanced requirements, consider going down the SQL/data lake route.

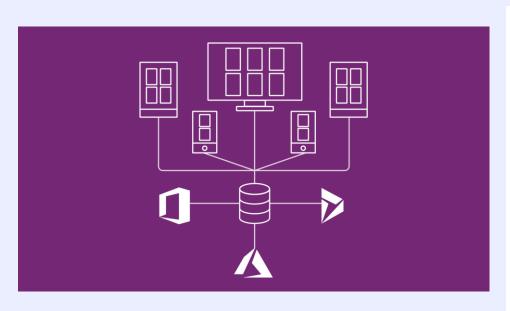
## CLOSING THOUGHTS

- Today, it's easier than ever before to use Power BI alongside CDS, thereby making Power BI your first-preference reporting tool.
- Having a good awareness of the underlying data types and how relationships operate in CDS will help you immensely.
- Review Power BI licensing <u>before</u> rolling your content out.
- Remember: In most cases, a solution that works for Dynamics CRM / Dynamics 365 will also work for CDS

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Power Apps Community Plan: Free personal environment, including CDS and Power Apps
- Microsoft Learn Learning Paths:
  - Consume data with Power BI
  - Get started using Common Data Service
  - <u>Create relationships, business rules, calculations and rollups in Common Data Service</u>
  - Manage permissions and administration for Common Data Service
- Blog Posts:
  - <u>Evaluating Power BI Desktop Connector Options for Dynamics 365 Customer Engagement</u>
  - Exam 70-779 Revision Notes Series

## THANK YOU FOR LISTENING! ANY QUESTIONS...?



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