Microsoft Power BI

Intro to M Programming

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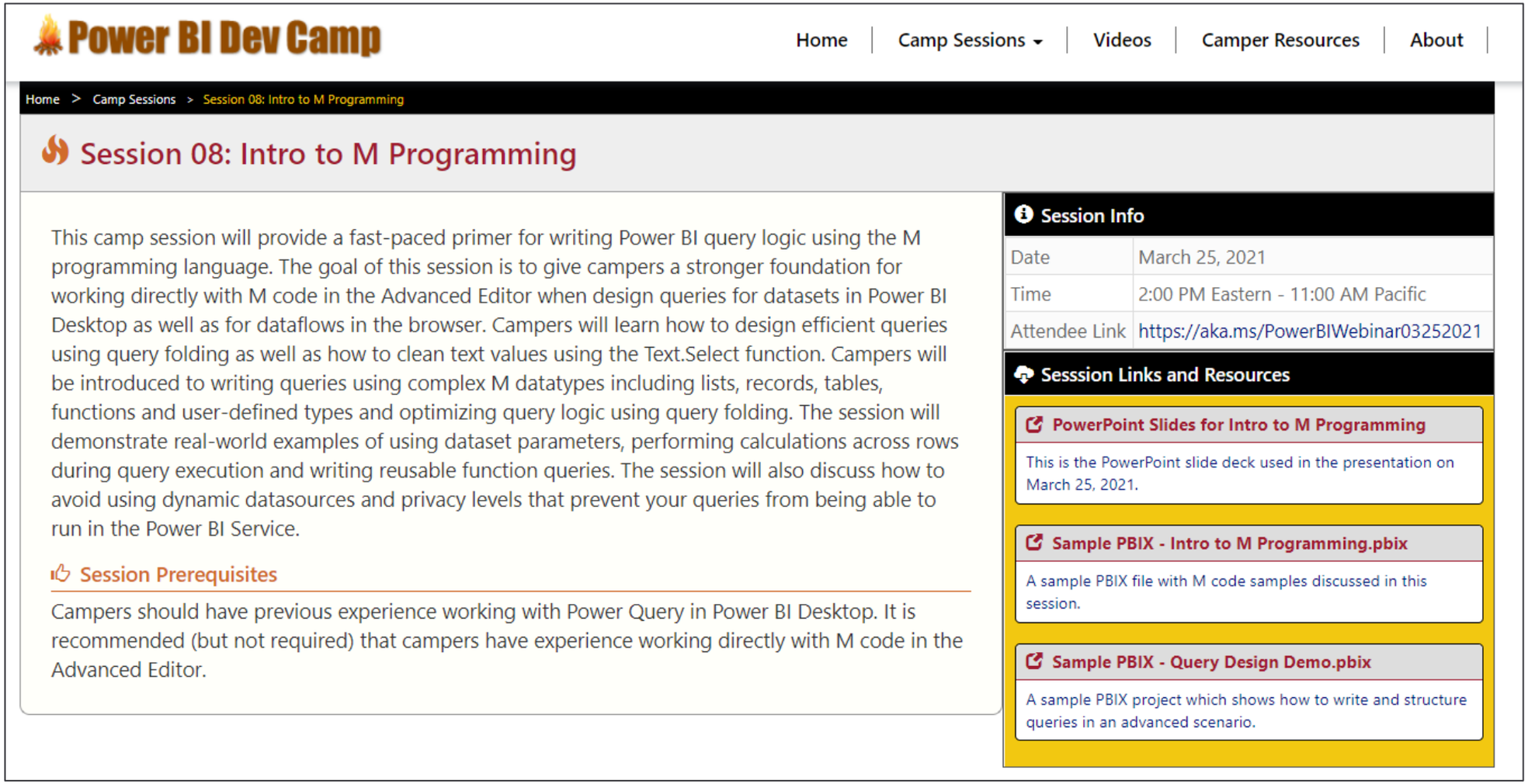
Power BI Customer Advisory Team (PBICAT)

Welcome to Power BI Dev Camp

- Power BI Dev Camp Portal - https://powerbidevcamp.net

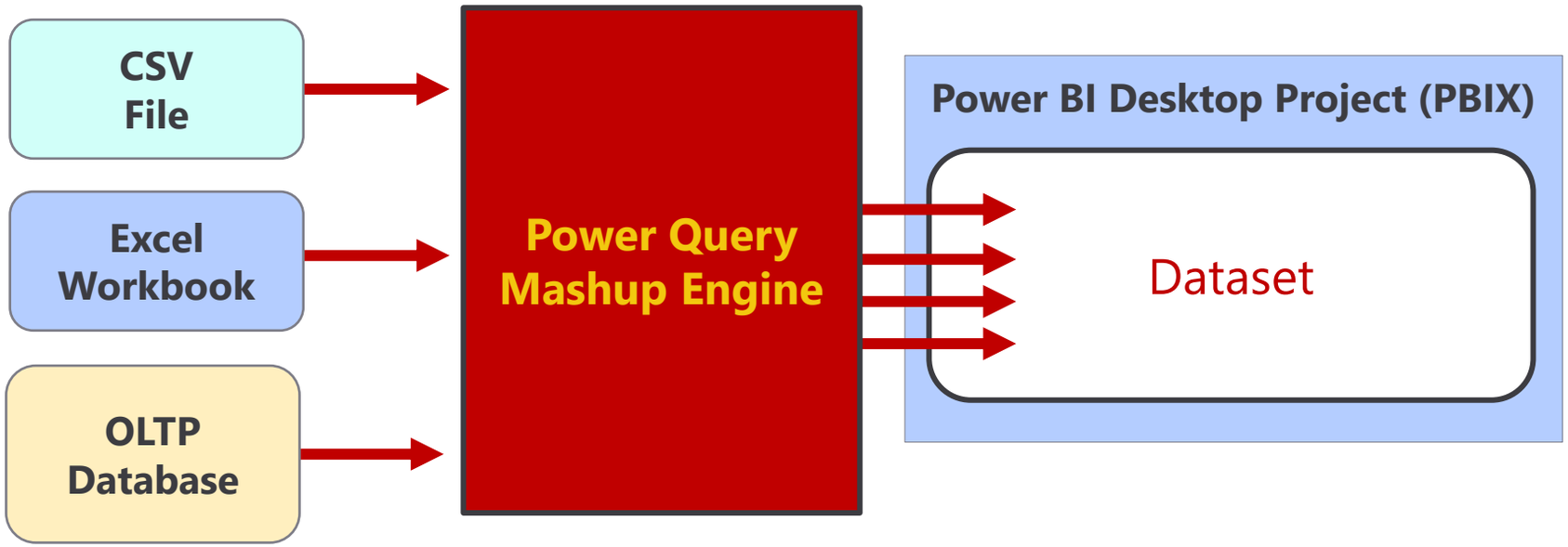


Agenda

- The Power Query Mashup Engine
- M Programming Fundamentals
- Programming Lists, Records and Tables
- Understanding Query Folding
- Choosing Between OData.Feed & Web.Contents
- Writing Reusable Function Queries
- Designing with Query Parameters

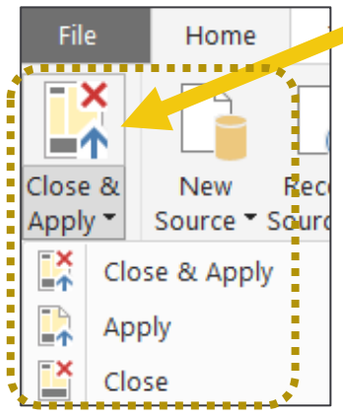
Power Query is an ETL Tool

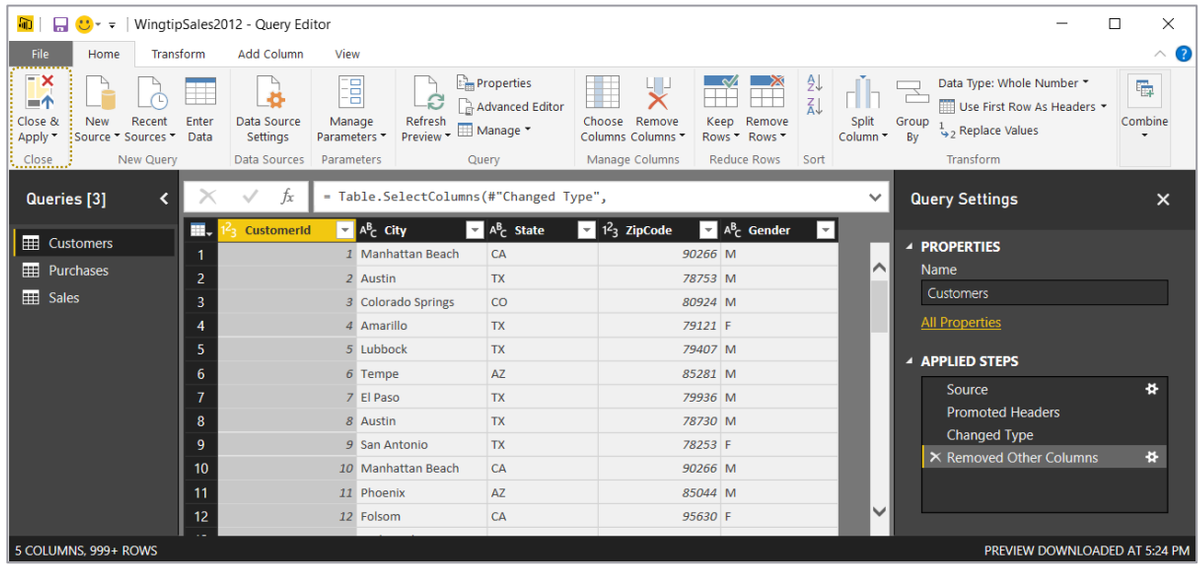
- **ETL process is essential part of any BI Project**
  - Extract the data from wherever it lives
  - Transform the shape of the data for better analysis
  - Load the data into dataset for analysis and reporting



Query Editor Window

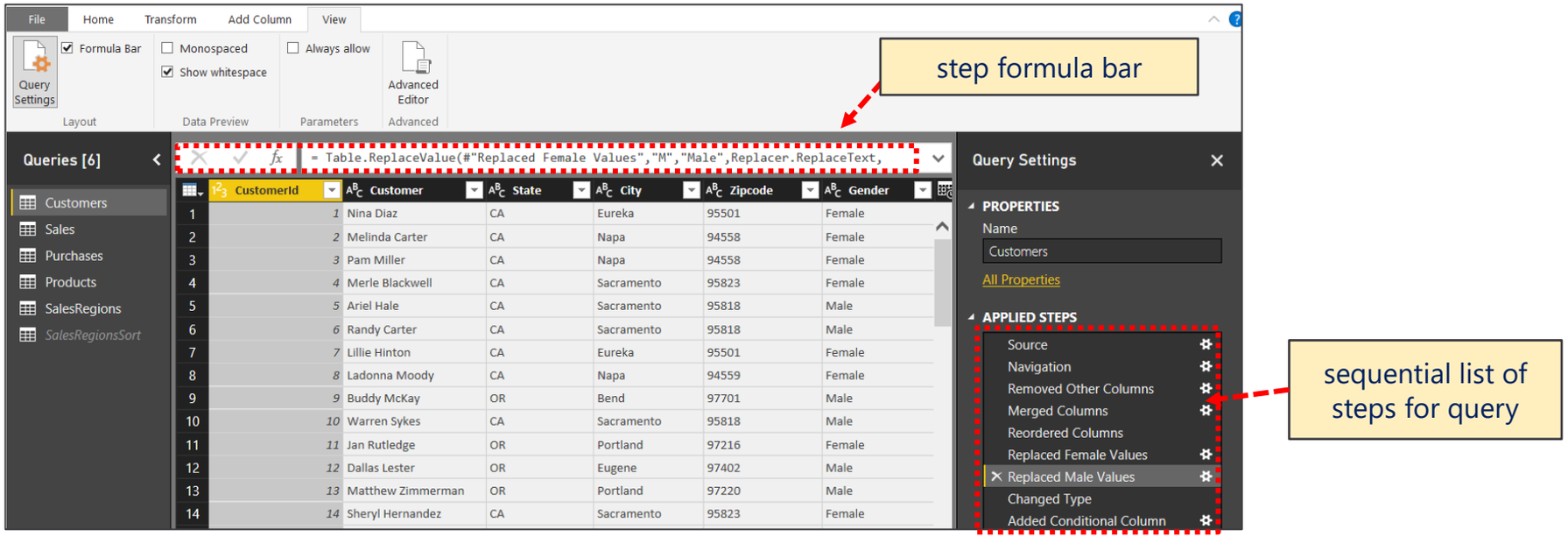
- **Power BI Desktop provides separate Query Editor window**
  - Provides easy-to-use UI experience for designing queries
  - Queries created by creating Applied Steps
  - Preview of table generated by query output shown in the middle
  - Query can be executed using Apply or Close & Apply command





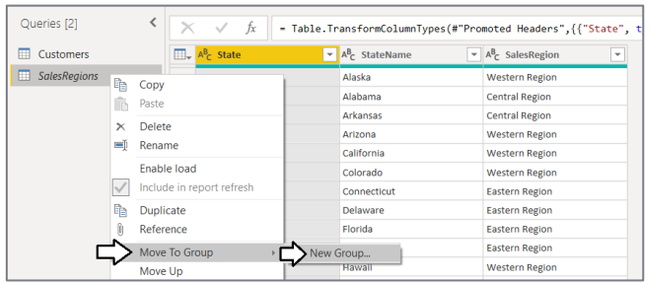
Query Steps

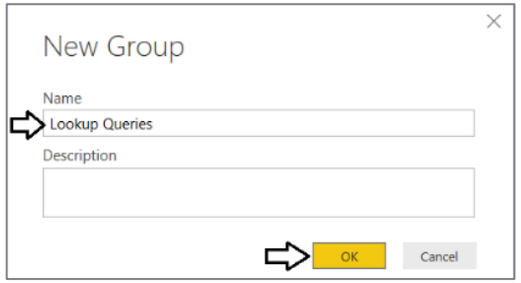
- **A query is created as a sequence of steps**
  - Each step is a parameterized operation in data processing pipeline
  - Query starts with Source step to extract data from a data source
  - Additional steps added to perform transform operations on data
  - Each step is recorded using M (aka Power Query Formula Language)



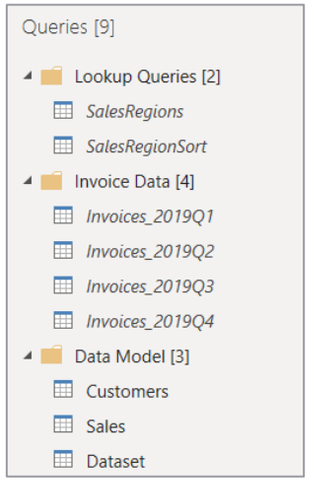
Structuring Queries into Folder Groups

- **Queries can be organized into folder groups**
  - Folder groups can be created for similar types of queries



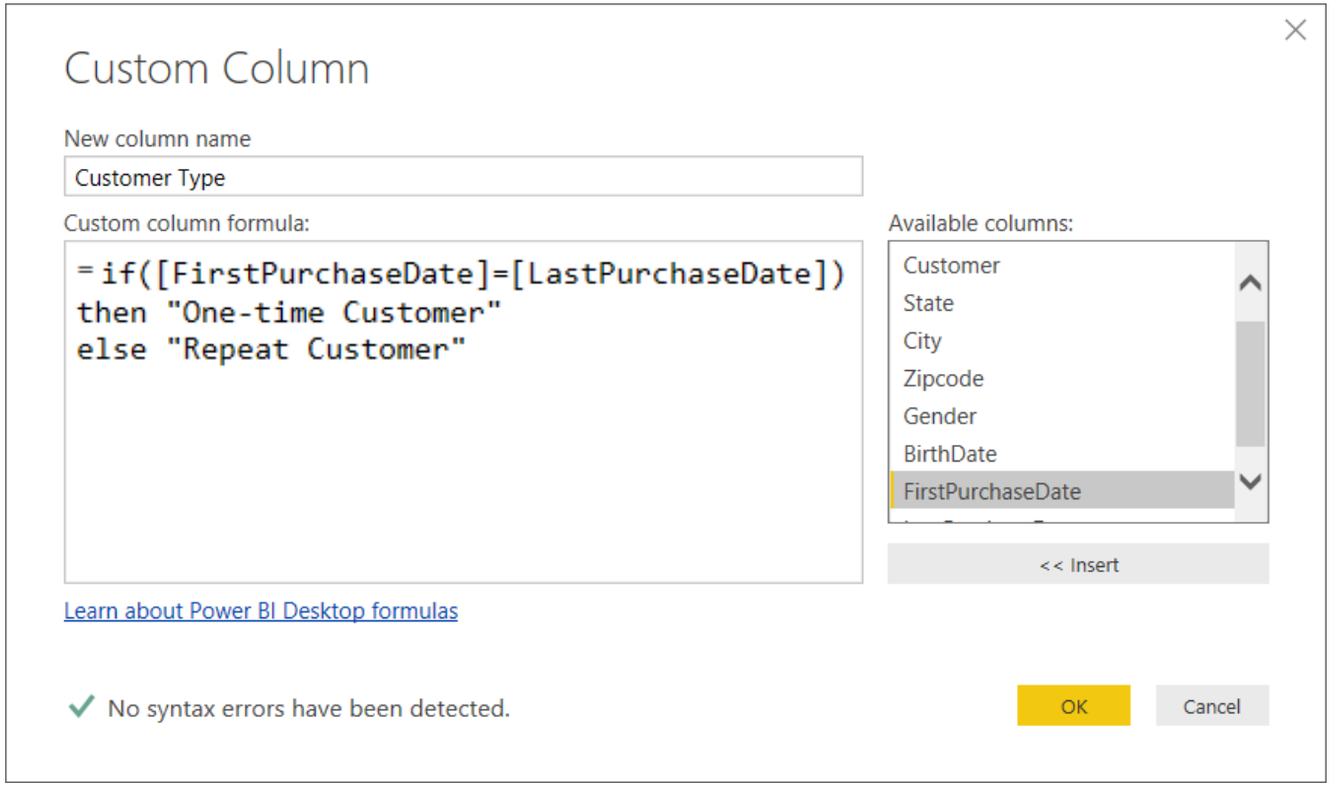


  - Makes it easier to manage project with large number of queries



Custom Column Dialog

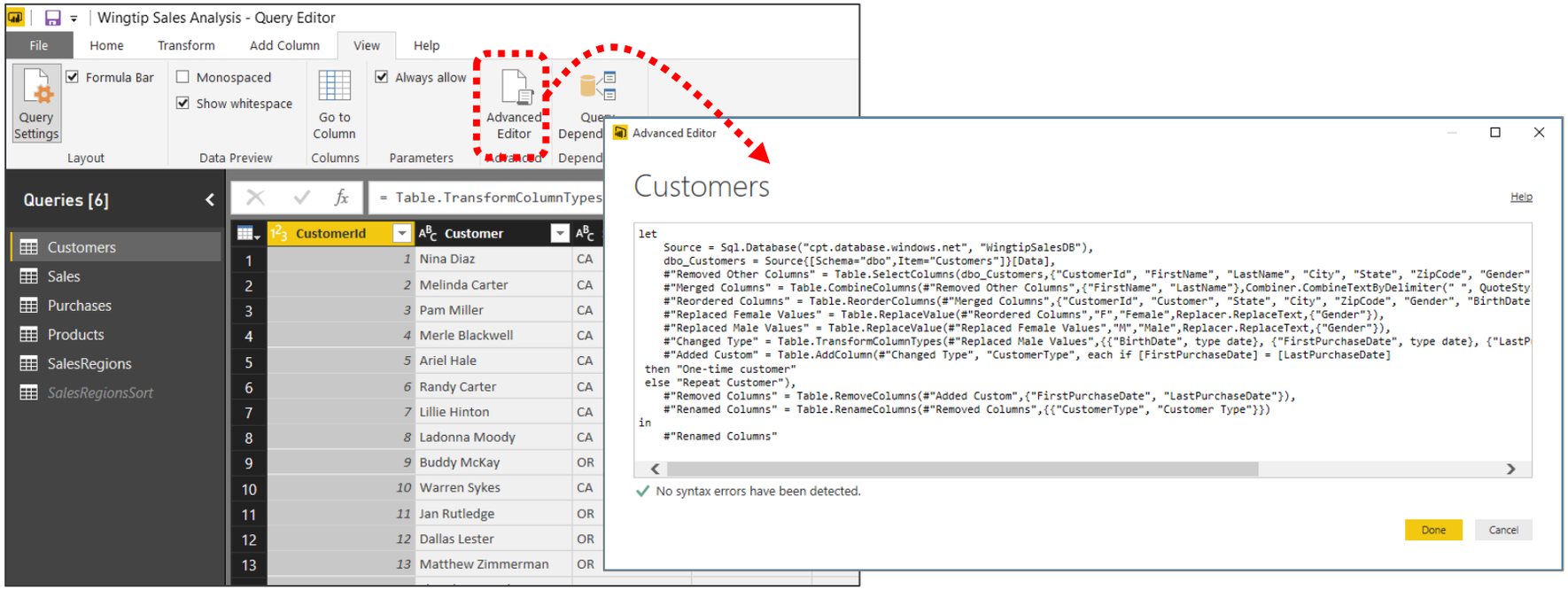
- **You can write M code directly for custom column**
  - The Custom Column dialog provides a simple M code editor



Advanced Editor

or more correctly - The Simple Editor for Advanced Users

- **Power BI Desktop based on "M" functional language**
  - Query in Power BI Desktop saved as set of M statements in code
  - Query Editor generates code in M behind the scenes
  - Advanced users can view & modify query code in Advanced Editor

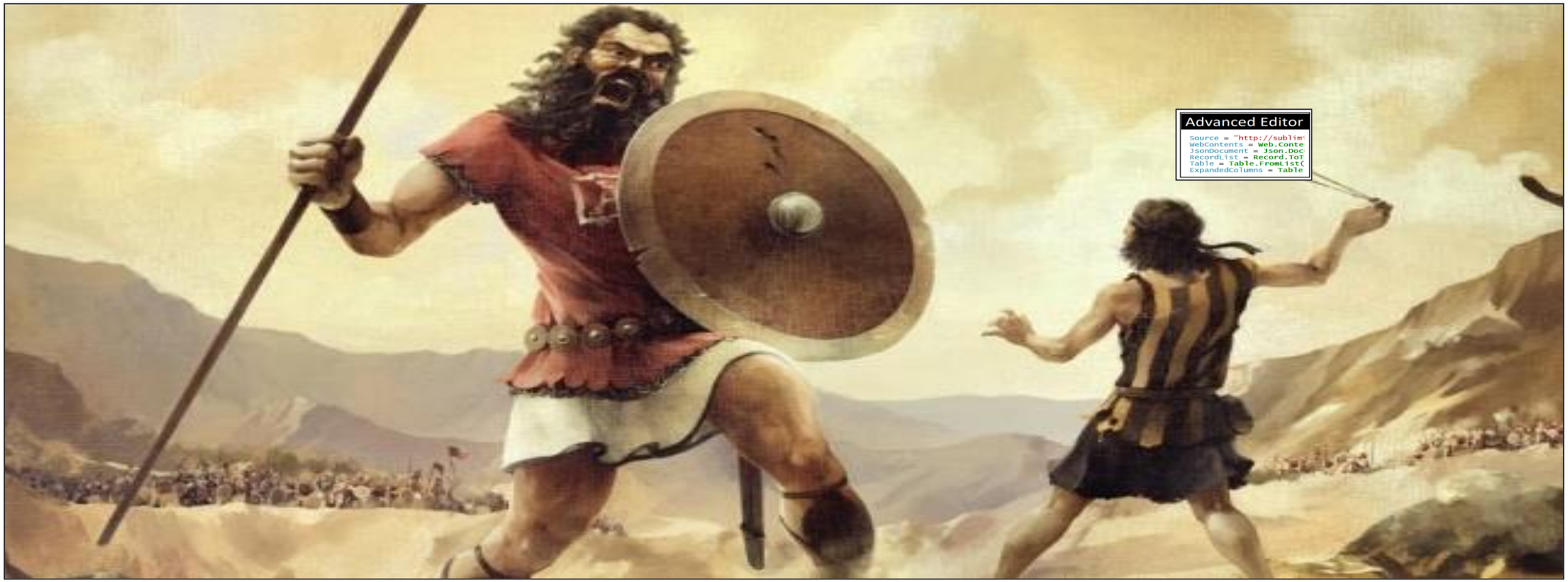


Why Should You Learn M Programming?

- **Accomplish things that cannot be done in query editor**
  - Working with query functions
  - Performing calculations across rows
  - Navigate to SharePoint list by list title instead of GUID with the ID
- **Author queries and check them into source control system**
  - Add query logic in .m files and store them in GitHub, TFS, etc.
  - Ensure query logic is the same across PBIX projects
- **Stay Ahead of the Pack and Win Admiration of Your Peers**
  - People will think you are buddies with Chris Webb!

Why Should You Learn M Programming?

- Take of the biggest of ELT challenges!



#1 Resource for Anyone Serious About Power Query

https://blog.crossjoin.co.uk

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Microsoft Power BI, Analysis Services, DAX, M, MDX, Power Query and Power Pivot

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Parquet File Performance In Power BI/Power Query

MARCH 21, 2021
By Chris Webb
in ADLSGEN2, PARQUET, POWER BI, POWER QUERY
1 COMMENT

There has been a lot of excitement around the newly-added support for reading from Parquet files in Power BI. However I have to admit that I was disappointed not to see any big improvements in performance when reading data from Parquet compared to reading data from CSV (for example, see here) when I first started testing it. So, is Power Query able to take advantage of Parquet's columnar storage when reading data?

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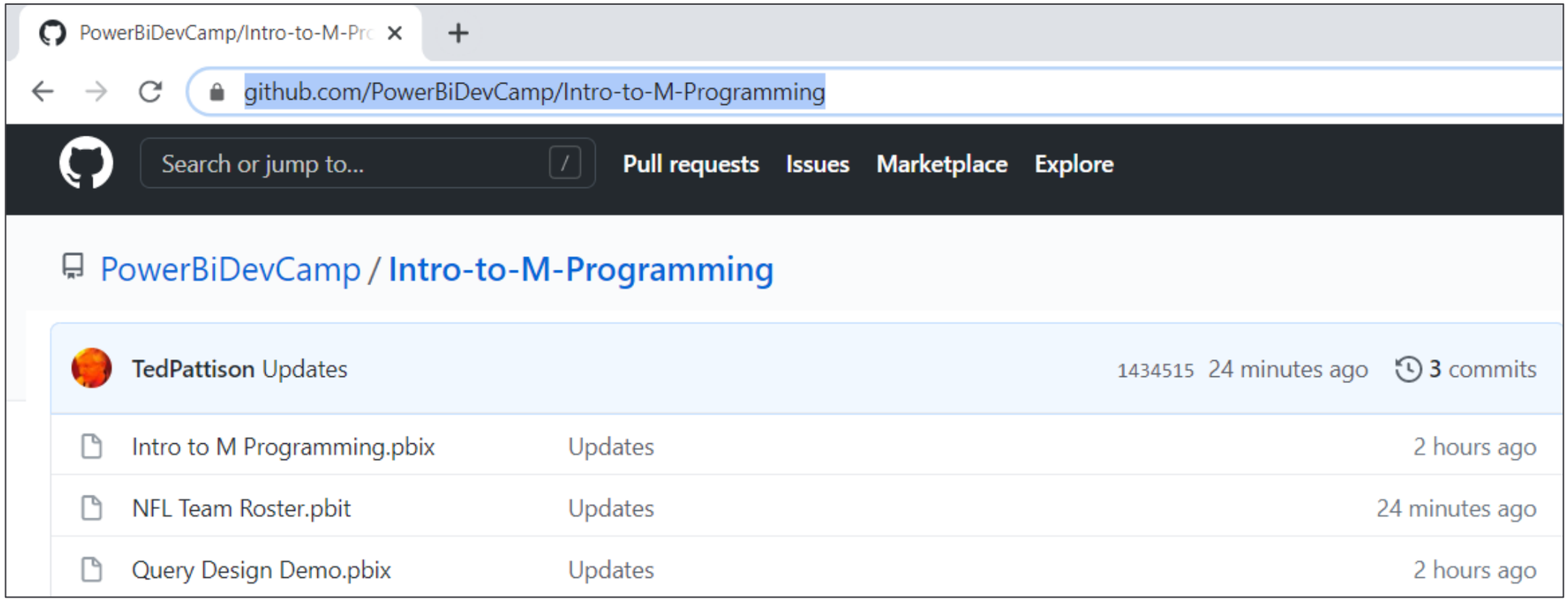
3 Sample Files Used in This Session

- https://github.com/PowerBiDevCamp/Intro-to-M-Programming



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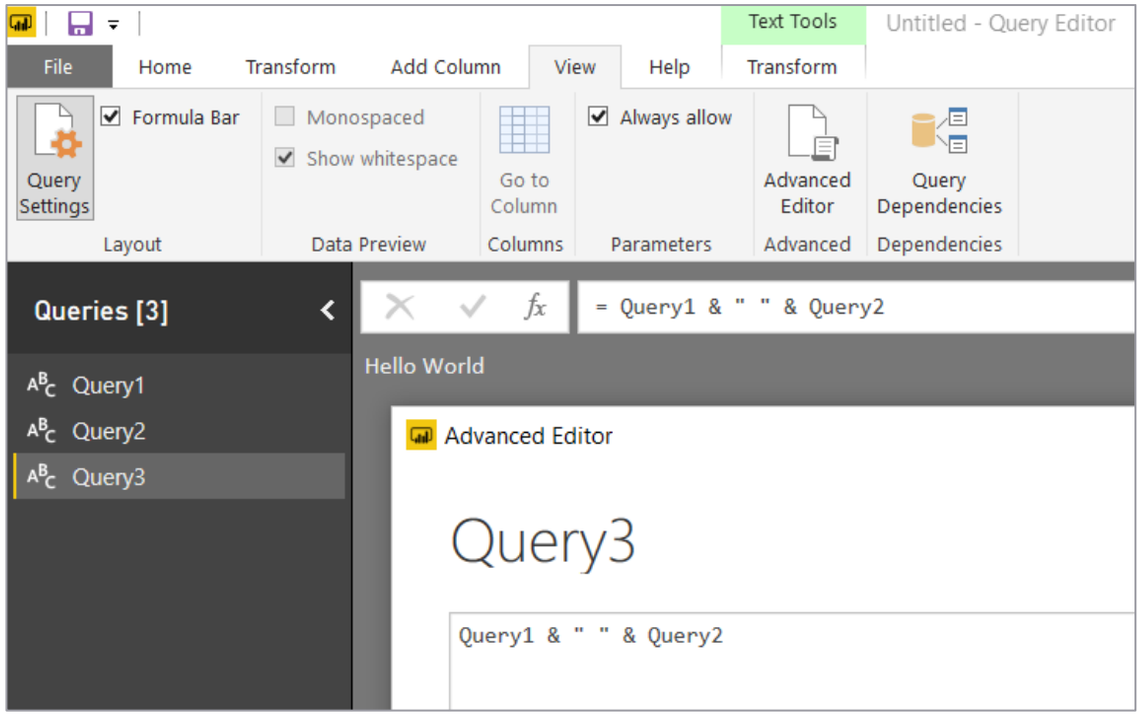
The M Programming Language

- **M is a *functional* programming language**
  - computation through evaluation of mathematical functions
  - Programming involves writing expressions instead of statements
  - M does not support changing-state or mutable data
  - Every query is a single expression that returns a single value
  - Every query has a return type

- **Get Started with M**
  - Language is case-sensitive
  - It's all about writing expressions
  - Query expressions can reference other queries by name

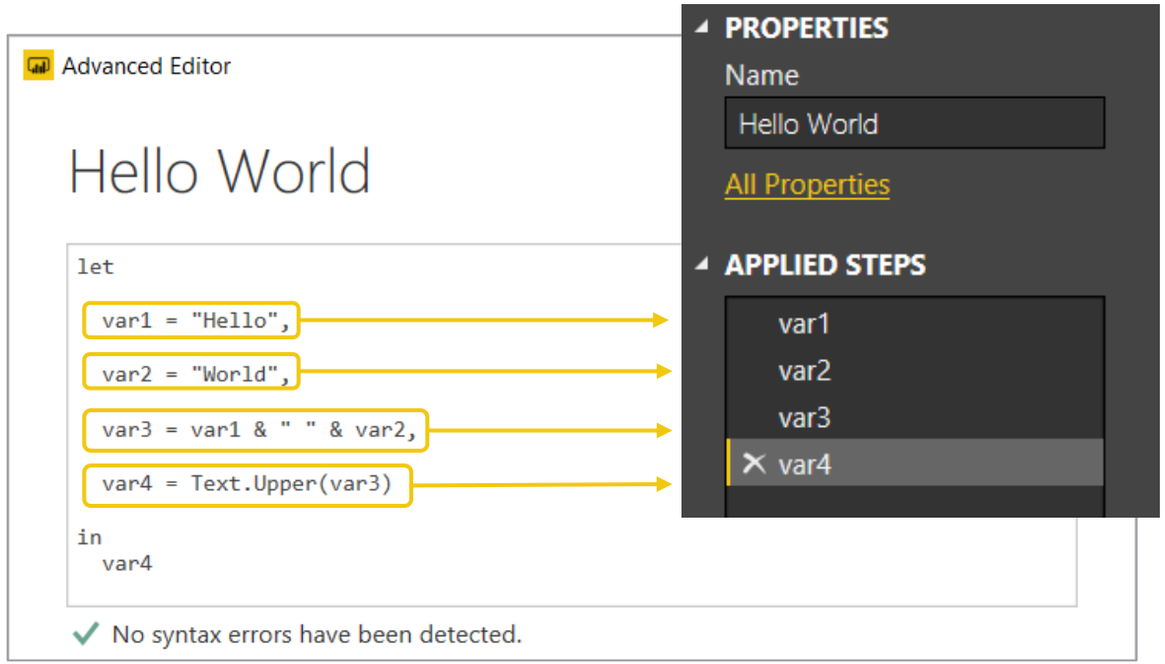
Referencing Other Queries

- **Query can reference other queries by name**
  - Every query is defined with a return type



Let Statement

- **Queries usually created using `let` statement**
  - Allows a single expressions to contain inner expressions
  - Each line in `let` block represents a separate expression
  - Each line in `let` block has variable which is named step
  - Each line in `let` block requires comma at end except for last line
  - Expression inside `in` block is returned as `let` statement value



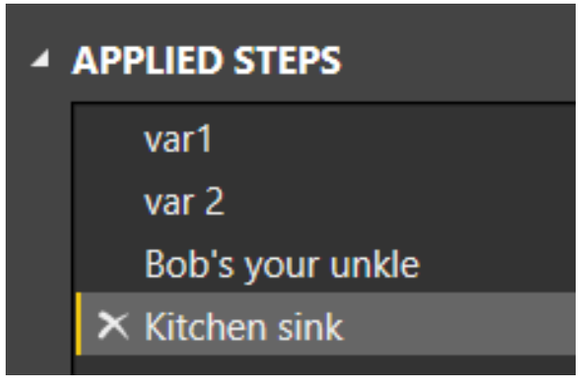
Comments and Variable Names

- **M supports using C-style comments**
  - Multiline comments created using **/* */**
  - Single line comments created using **//**

```
/*
  This is my most excellent query
*/
let

  var1 = 42, // the secret of life
```

- **Variable names with spaces must be enclosed in #" "**
  - Variable names with spaces created automatically by query designer

```
let

  var1 = "Spaces in ",

  #"var 2" = "variable names ",

  #"Bob's your unkle" = "are evil",

  #"Kitchen sink" = var1 & #"var 2" & #"Bob's your unkle"

in
  #"Kitchen sink"
```



Flow of Statement Evaluation

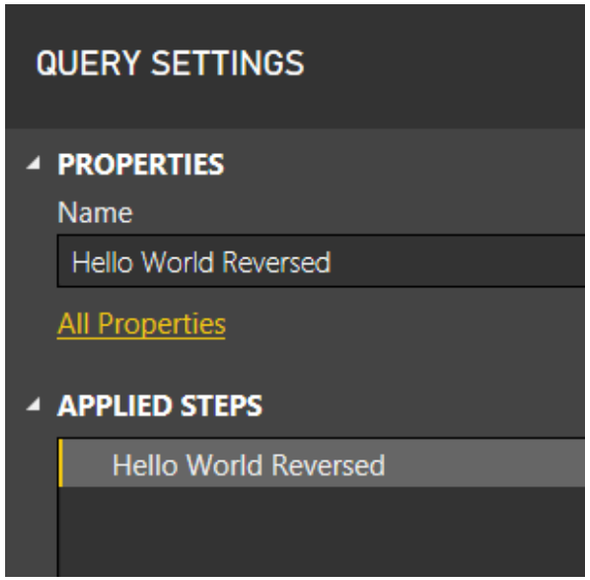
- **Evaluation starts with expression inside `in` block**
  - Expression evaluation triggers other expression evaluation

```
let
  var1 = "Hello",
  var2 = "World",
  var3 = var1 & " " & var2,
  output = Text.Upper(var3)
in
  output
```

Will This M Code Work?

- **Yes, the Mashup Engine has no problem with this**
  - The order of expressions in `let` block doesn't matter
  - However, the Power Query designer might get confused

```
let
  var4 = Text.Upper(var3),
  var3 = var1 & " " & var2,
  var2 = "World",
  var1 = "Hello"
in
  var4
```



M Type System

- Built-in types

  `any, none`

  `null, logical, number, text, binary`

  `time, date, datetime, datetimezone, duration`

- Complex types

  `list, record, table, function`

- User-defined types
  - You can create custom types for records and tables

```
CustomerRecordType = type [FirstName = text, LastName = text],
```

Examples of programming with M Datatypes

```
let

  // primitives
  var1 = 123,       // number
  var2 = true,      // boolean
  var3 = "hello",   // text
  var4 = null,      // null

  // creating lists
  list1 = {1, 2, 3},          // list of three numbers

  // accessing list elements
  var5 = list1{1},

  // create records
  record1 = [ FirstName="Soupy", LastName="Sales", ID=3 ],

  // accessing records
  var6 = record1[FirstName],

  // table
  table1 = #table( {"A", "B"}, { {1, 2}, {3, 4} } ),

  // creating function
  function1 = (x) => x * 2,

  // calling function
  output = function1(var1)

  in
    output
```

Initializing Dates and Times

```
// time
var1 = #time(09,15,00),

// date
var2 = #date(2013,02,26),

// date and time
var3 = #datetime(2013,02,26, 09,15,00),

// date and time in specific timezone
var4 = #datetimezone(2013,02,26, 09,15,00, 09,00),

// time durection
var5 = #duration(0,1,30,0),
```

Catching Errors

- Error handling in M done using try .. otherwise

```
try Date.FromText([Raw Date]) otherwise null
```

- Error handling can avoid evaluation errors

```
AddedDateColumn1 = Table.AddColumn(Source, "Date1", each Date.FromText([Raw Date])),

AddedDateColumn2 = Table.AddColumn(AddedDateColumn1, "Date2", each ( try Date.FromText([Raw Date]) otherwise null ) )
```

- Expression causing errors replace with value such as null

	Raw Date	Date1	Date2
1	Feb 30, 2019	Error	null
2	March 4, 2019	3/4/2019	3/4/2019
3	Cinco de mayo, 2019	Error	null
4	6/4/2019	6/4/2019	6/4/2019
5	07-04-2019	7/4/2019	7/4/2019

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Lists

- **List is a single dimension array**
  - Literal list can be created using **{ }** operators
  - List elements accessed using **{ }** operator and zero-based index

```
let

  RatPack = { "Frank", "Dean", "Sammy" } ,

  FirstRat  = RatPack{0} ,
  SecondRat = RatPack{1} ,
  ThirdRat  = RatPack{2} ,

  output = FirstRat & ", " & SecondRat & " and " & ThirdRat

in
  output
```

  - Use **{ }?** to avoid error when index range is out-of-bounds

```
Rat4 = RatPack{4},   // error - index range out of bounds
Rat5 = RatPack{5}? , // no error - Rat5 equals null
```

Text.Select

- **Text.Select can be used to clean up text value**
  - You create a list of characters to include

```
// take a text value with unwanted charactors
input = "!!My text has some @bad things !&^",

// get upper and lower case letters
set1 = {"A".."Z"},
set2 = {"a".."z"},

// get digits 0-9 and convert to text
set3 = List.Transform({0..9}, each Number.ToText(_)),

// add any other allowed charactors
set4 = {" ", "-", "_", "."},

// combine all allowed charactors in single list
allowedChars = set1 & set2 & set3 & set4,

// call Text.Select to strip out unwanted charactors
output = Text.Select(input, allowedChars)
```

Records

- Record contains fields for single instance of entity

```
// create records by using [] and defining fields
Person1 = [FirstName="Chris", LastName="Webb"],
Person2 = [FirstName="Reza", LastName="Rad"],
Person3 = [FirstName="Matt", LastName="Masson"],


// access field inside a record using [] operator
FirstName1 = Person1[FirstName],
LastName2 =  Person2[LastName],
```

- You must often create records to call M library functions

```
// create a record to define HTTP request headers
RequestHeaders = [ Accept="application/json",
                   #"OData-MaxVersion"="4.0"],

// create a second record which contains the first record
OptionsRecord = [ Headers=RequestHeaders ],

// pass the second record as parameter to Web.Contents
Response = Web.Contents(url, OptionsRecord),
```

Combination Operator (&)

- Used to combine strings, arrays and records

```
// text concatenation: "ABC"
var1  = "A" & "BC",

// list concatenation: {1, 2, 3}
var2 = {1} & {2, 3},

// record merge: [ a = 1, b = 2 ]
var3 = [ a = 1 ] & [ b = 2 ],
```

Table.FromRecords

- **Table.FromRecords can be used to create table**
  - Table columns are not strongly typed

```
let

  CustomersTable = Table.FromRecords({
    [ FirstName="Matt", LastName="Masson"],
    [ FirstName="Chris", LastName="Webb"],
    [ FirstName="Reza", LastName="Rad"],
    [ FirstName="Chuck", LastName="Sterling"]
  })

in
  CustomersTable
```

	FirstName	LastName
1	Matt	Masson
2	Chris	Webb
3	Reza	Rad
4	Chuck	Sterling

Bad, Bad, Bad ☹

Creating User-defined Types

- **M allows you to create user-defined types**
  - Here is a user-defined type for a record and a table

```
CustomerRecordType = type [FirstName = text, LastName = text],

CustomerTableType = type table CustomerRecordType,
```

  - User-defined table used to create table with strongly typed columns

```
let

  CustomerRecordType = type [FirstName = text, LastName = text],

  CustomerTableType = type table CustomerRecordType,

  CustomersTable =
    #table(CustomerTableType, {
      { "Matt", "Masson" },
      { "Chris", "Webb" },
      { "Reza", "Rad" },
      { "Chuck", "Sterilicious"}
    }
  )
in
  CustomersTable
```

	FirstName	LastName
1	Matt	Masson
2	Chris	Webb
3	Reza	Rad
4	Chuck	Sterilicious

Performing Calculations Across Rows

- Requires adding an index column

	Quarter	Sales	Index	Running Total
1	2016-Q1	124	0	124
2	2016-Q2	154	1	278
3	2016-Q3	167	2	445
4	2016-Q4	188	3	633
5	2017-Q1	150	4	783
6	2017-Q2	193	5	976
7	2017-Q3	208	6	1184
8	2017-Q4	234	7	1418

PROPERTIES

Name

Sales Running Total

All Properties

APPLIED STEPS

Source

AddedIndex

AddedCustom

Custom Column

New column name

Running Total

Custom column formula:

```
= List.Sum(List.Range(AddedIndex[Sales], 0, [Index]+1))
```

Using Each with Unary Functions

- **Many library functions take function as parameters**
  - Function passed are often unary functions *(e.g. they accept 1 parameter)*

```
FilteredRows = Table.SelectRows(CustomersTable, (row) => row[CustomerId]<=10  ),
```

- **M provides each syntax to make code easier to read/write**
  - Unary parameter passed implicitly using _ variable

```
FilteredRows = Table.SelectRows(CustomersTable, each _[CustomerId]<=10  ),
```

  - You can omit _ variable when accessing fields inside record

```
FilteredRows = Table.SelectRows(CustomersTable, each [CustomerId]<=10  ),
```

```
AddedColumn =Table.AddColumn(FilteredRows, "Display Name", each [FirstName] & " " & [LastName])
```

  - You must use _ variable when using **each** with a list

```
MyList = { "Item 1", "Item 2", "Item 3" },

MyUpperCaseList = List.Transform(MyList, each Text.Upper(_) )
```

List.Generate

- `List.Generate` accepts 3 function parameters

```
MyList = List.Generate( ()=>1, (item)=>(item<=10), (item)=>(item+1) )
```

- You can use `each` syntax for 2nd and 3rd parameter

```
MyList = List.Generate( ()=>1, each _<=10, each _+1 )
```

- You can optionally split functions out into separate expressions

```
let

  StartFunction =  ()=>10,
  TestFunction = each (_ <= 70),
  IncrementFunction = each (_ + 10),

  MyList = List.Generate( StartFunction, TestFunction, IncrementFunction)

in
  MyList
```

	List
1	1
2	2
3	3
4	4
5	5
6	6
7	7
8	8
9	9
10	10

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Query Folding

- **Mashup engine pushes work back to datasource when possible**
  - Column selection and row filtering
  - Joins, Group By, Aggregate Operations
- **Datasource that support folding**
  - Relational database
  - Tabular and multidimensional databases
  - OData Web services
- **What happens when datasource doesn't support query folding?**
  - All work is done locally by the mashup engine
- **Things that affect whether query folding occurs**
  - The way you structure your M code
  - Privacy level of datasources
  - Native query execution

Query Folding Example

- When you execute this query in Power BI Desktop…

```
let
  Source = Sql.Database("ODYSSEUS", "WingtipSalesDB"),
  CustomersTable = Source{[Item="Customers"]}[Data],

  // select rows
  FilteredRows = Table.SelectRows(CustomersTable, each ([State] = "FL")),

  // select columns
  ColumnsToKeep = {"CustomerId", "FirstName", "LastName"} ,
  RemovedOtherColumns = Table.SelectColumns(FilteredRows, ColumnsToKeep),

  // rename columns
  ColumnRenamingMap = { {"FirstName", "First Name"}, {"LastName", "Last Name"} },
  RenamedColumns = Table.RenameColumns(RemovedOtherColumns, ColumnRenamingMap)

in
  RenamedColumns
```

- Mashup Engine executes the following SQL query

```
execute sp_executesql
N'select [_].[CustomerId] as [CustomerId],
         [_].[FirstName] as [First Name],
         [_].[LastName] as [Last Name]
  from [dbo].[Customers] as [_]
  where [_].[State] = ''FL'' and [_].[State] is not null'
```

Native Queries

- No query folding occurs after native query

```
let

  DatabaseServer = "cpt.database.windows.net",

  DatabaseName = "WingtipSalesDB",

  SQL = "SELECT CustomerId, FirstName, LastName" &
        " FROM Customers" &
        " WHERE CustomerId <= 10" &
        " ORDER BY LastName, FirstName" ,

  Source = Sql.Database( DatabaseServer, DatabaseName , [Query=SQL] ),

  output = Source

in
  output
```

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Microsoft Power BI, Analysis Services, DAX, M, MDX, Power Query and Power Pivot

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Query Folding On SQL Queries In Power Query Using Value.NativeQuery() and EnableFolding=true

February 21, 2021
By Chris Webb
in M, Power BI, Power Query

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```
let
  Source = Sql.Databases("localhost"),
  AdventureWorksDW2017 = Source
    {[Name = "AdventureWorksDW2017"]}
    [Data],
  RunSQL = Value.NativeQuery(
    AdventureWorksDW2017,
    "SELECT EnglishDayNameOfWeek FROM DimDate",
    null,
    [EnableFolding = true]
  ),
  #"Filtered Rows" = Table.SelectRows(
    RunSQL,
    each (
      [EnglishDayNameOfWeek] = "Friday"
    )
  )
in
  #"Filtered Rows"
```

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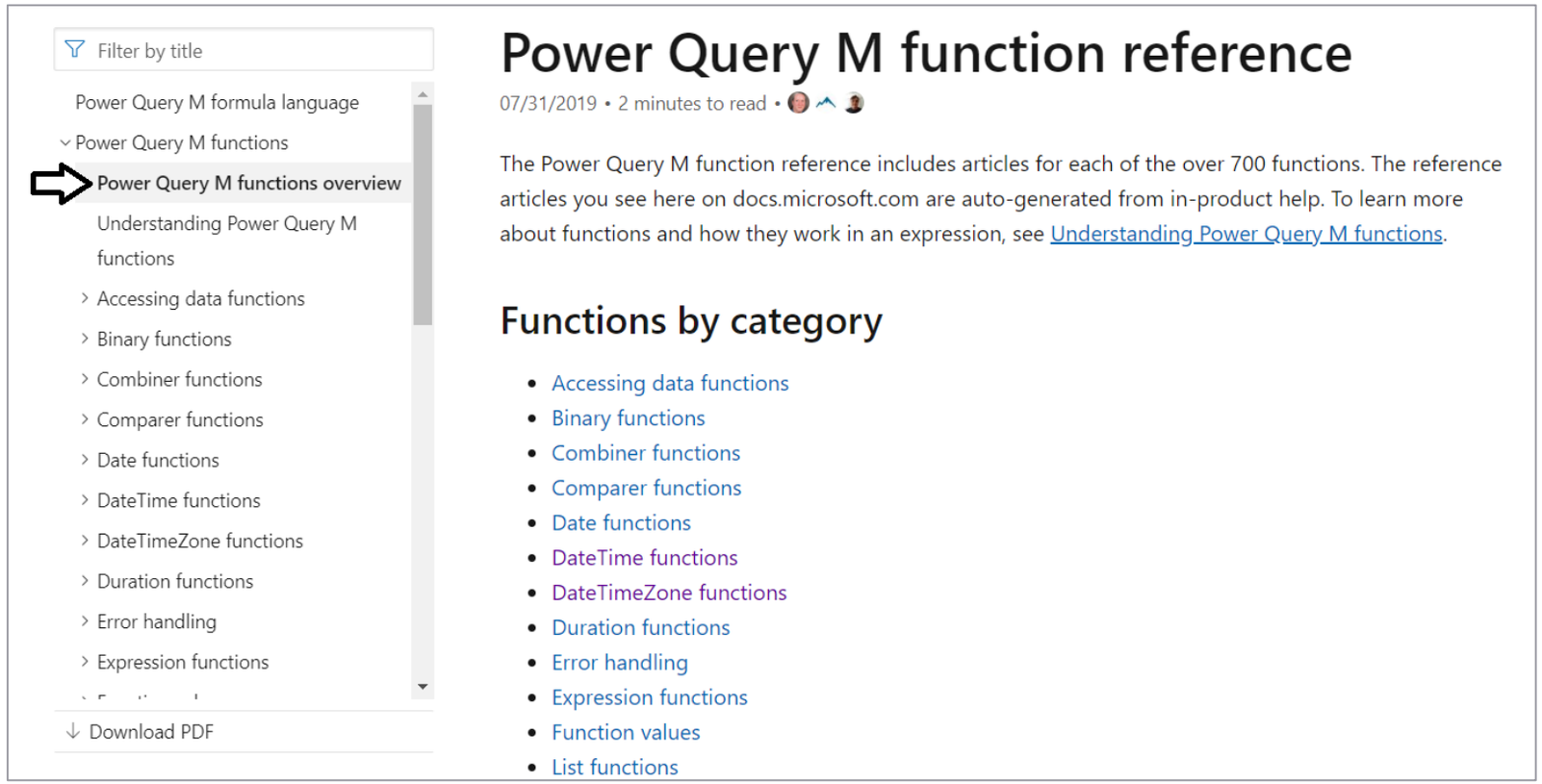
M Function Library

- Check out the Power Query M function reference
  - https://docs.microsoft.com/en-us/powerquery-m/power-query-m-function-reference



Accessing Data using OData.Feed

- **OData.Feed can pull data from OData web service**
  - OData connector assists with navigation through entities
  - OData connector support query folding

```
let
    Source = OData.Feed("http://subliminalsystems.com/api/"),

    // get Customers table
    CustomersTable = Source{[Name="Customers",Signature="table"]}[Data],

    // select columns
    ColumnsToKeep = {"CustomerId", "FirstName", "LastName", "City", "State", "Zipcode", "Gender", "BirthDate"},
    RemovedOtherColumns = Table.SelectColumns(CustomersTable, ColumnsToKeep),

    // select rows
    FilteredRows = Table.SelectRows(RemovedOtherColumns, each [CustomerId] <= 10),

    // perform other transforms
    ReplacedValue = Table.ReplaceValue(FilteredRows,"F","Female",Replacer.ReplaceText,{"Gender"}),
    ReplacedValue1 = Table.ReplaceValue(ReplacedValue,"M","Male",Replacer.ReplaceText,{"Gender"}),
    ChangedType = Table.TransformColumnTypes(ReplacedValue1,{{"BirthDate", type date}}),
    MergedColumns = Table.CombineColumns(ChangedType,{"FirstName", "LastName"},
                                         Combiner.CombineTextByDelimiter(" ", QuoteStyle.None),
                                         "Customer")

in
    MergedColumns
```

- **OData makes extra calls to acquire metadata**
  - Let's look at the execution of this query using Fiddler

Web.Contents

- **Can be more efficient than OData.Feed**
  - You can pass OData query string parameters (e.g. $select)

```
let
    // create REST URI for OData source
    Source = "http://subliminalsystems.com/api/Customers?" &
             "?$select=CustomerId,FirstName,LastName,City,State,Zipcode,Gender,BirthDate" &
             "&filter=(CustomerId+le+10)",

    // create options record for calling Web.Contents
    OptionsRecord =  [Headers=[Accept="application/json;odata=nometadata",
                               #"OData-MaxVersion"="4.0"]],

    // call Web.Content to make call across network
    WebContents = Web.Contents(Source, OptionsRecord),

    // deal with JSON dataset return by Web.Contents
    JsonDocument = Json.Document(WebContents),
    RecordList = Record.ToTable(JsonDocument){1}[Value],
    Table = Table.FromList(RecordList, Splitter.SplitByNothing(), null, null, ExtraValues.Error),
    ColumnsToExpand = {"CustomerId", "FirstName", "LastName", "City", "State", "Zipcode", "Gender", "BirthDate"},
    ExpandedColumns = Table.ExpandRecordColumn(Table, "Column1", ColumnsToExpand, ColumnsToExpand),
```

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- ▪ Designing with Query Parameters

Understanding Function Queries

- **Query can be converted into reusable function**
  - Requires editing query M code in Advanced Editor
  - Function query defined with one or more parameters

GetExpensesFromFile

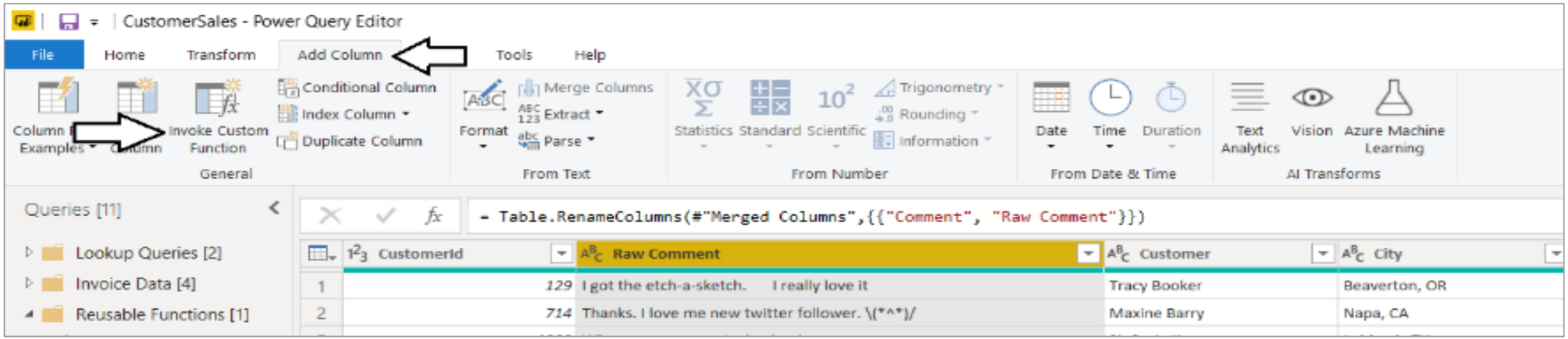
```
(FilePath as text) =>

let
    Source = Csv.Document(Web.Contents(FilePath)
    #"Changed Type" = Table.TransformColumnTypes
```

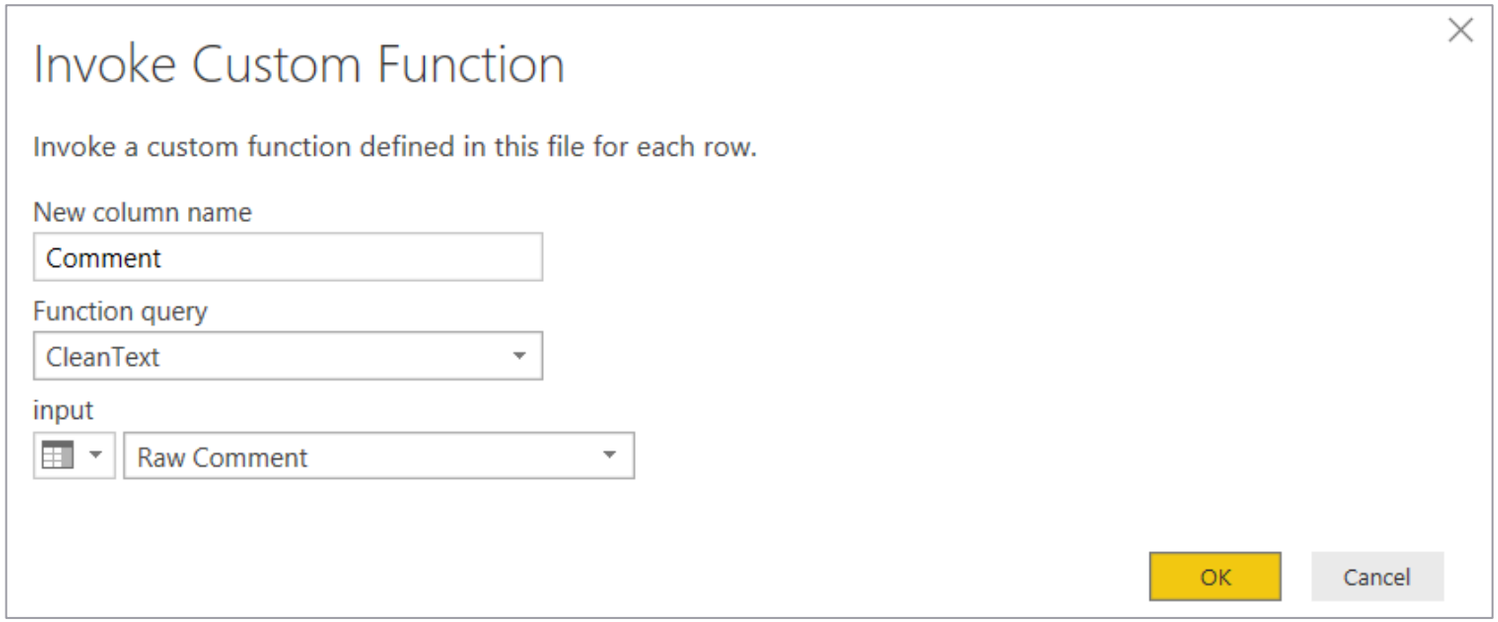
  - Function query can be called from other queries
  - Function query can be called using Invoke Custom Function
  - Function query can't be edited with visual designer

Creating a Function Query

- Requires adding parameter list

Calling a Function Query





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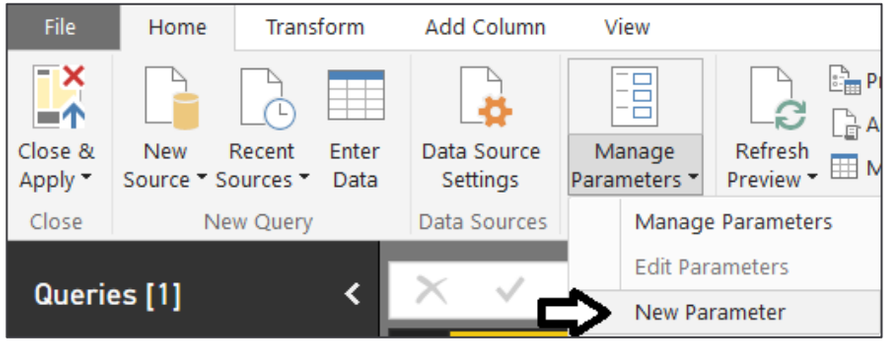
Query Parameters in Power BI Desktop

- **What is a Query Parameter?**
  - Configurable setting for PBIX file
  - Strongly-typed value to which you can apply restrictions
  - Can be referenced from a query
  - Can be referenced from DAX code in data model
  - Query parameters can be updated in Power BI Service

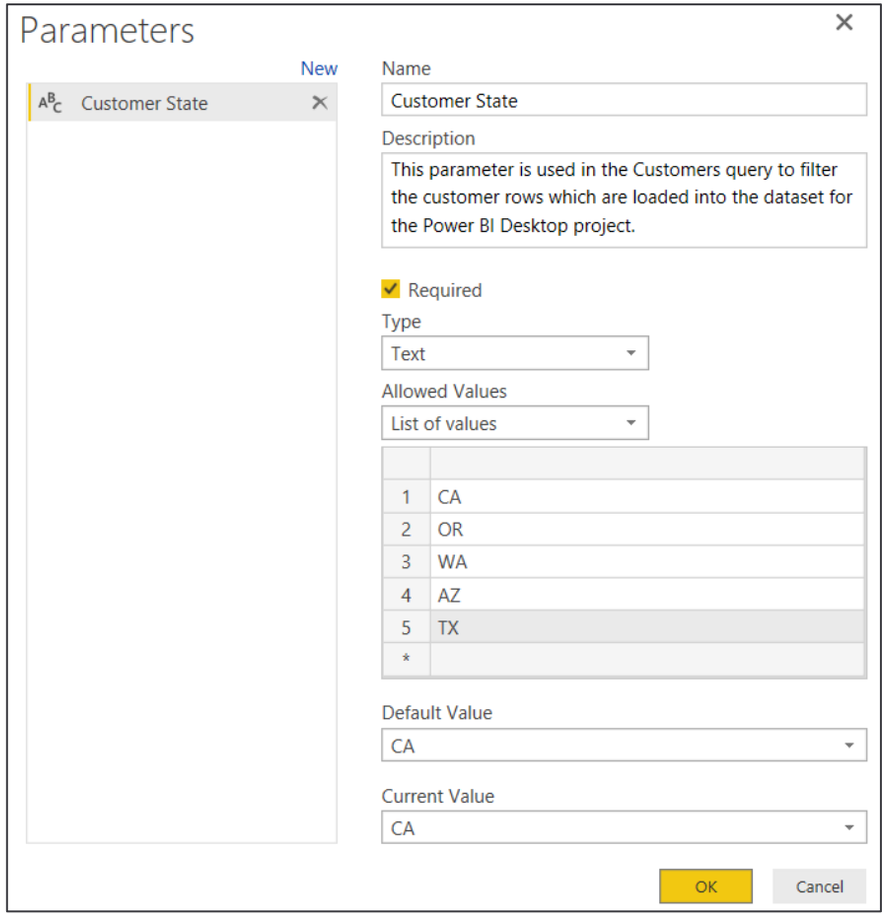
- **Where are Parameters commonly used**
  - To parameterize data source connection details
  - To filter rows when importing data
  - Commonly used together with Template Apps

Creating Query Parameters

- Parameters can be created using Manager Parameters menu

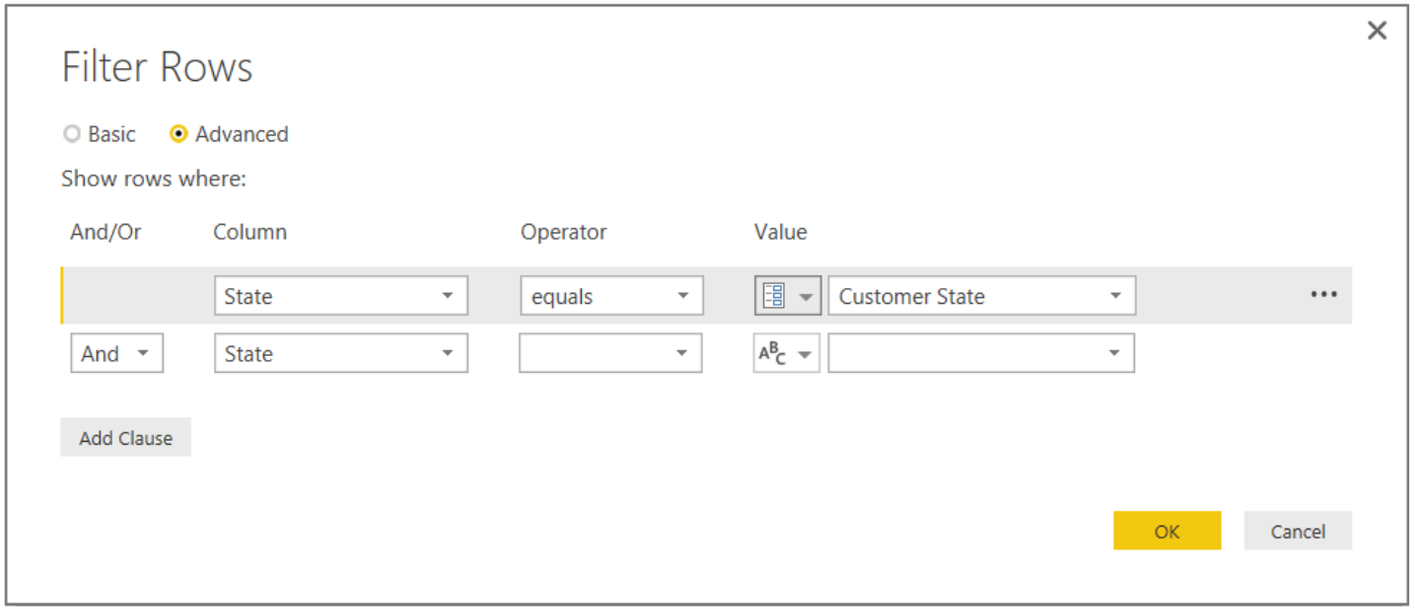


- Parameter properties
  - Name
  - Description
  - Required
  - Allowed Values
  - Default Value
  - Current Value

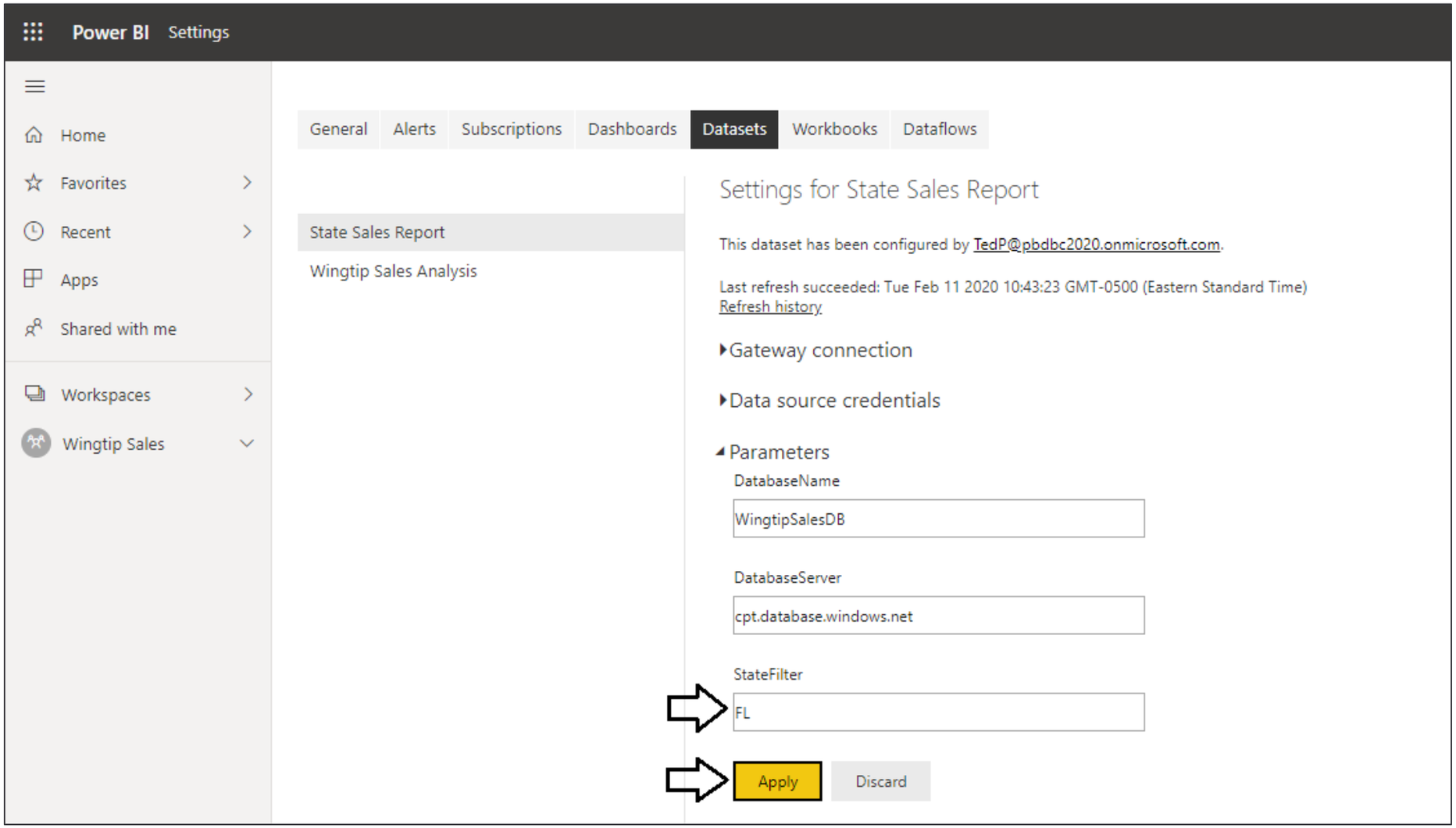


Referencing Parameters in a Query

- **Parameters can be referenced inside query**
  - Next query execution uses current parameter value

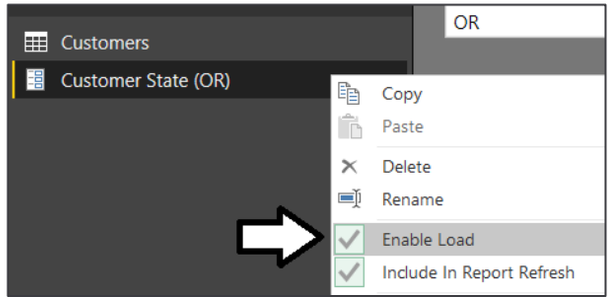


Updating Parameters in the Service

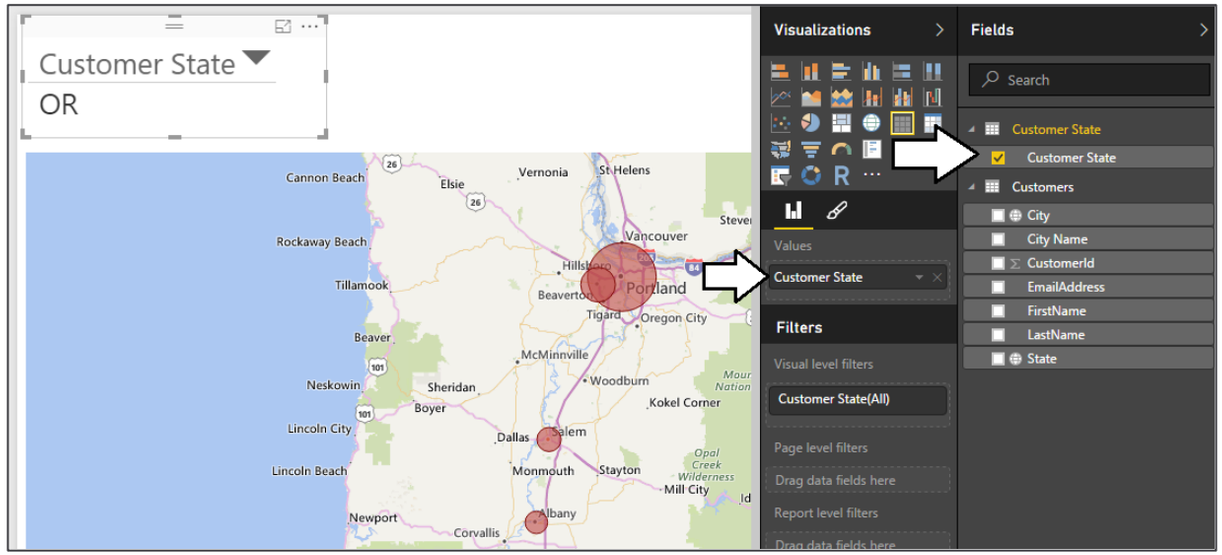


Making Parameters Available to Data Model

- Configure parameter's Enable Load setting

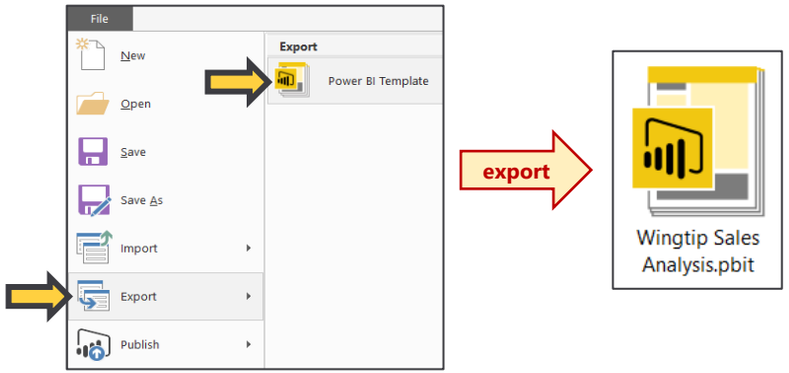


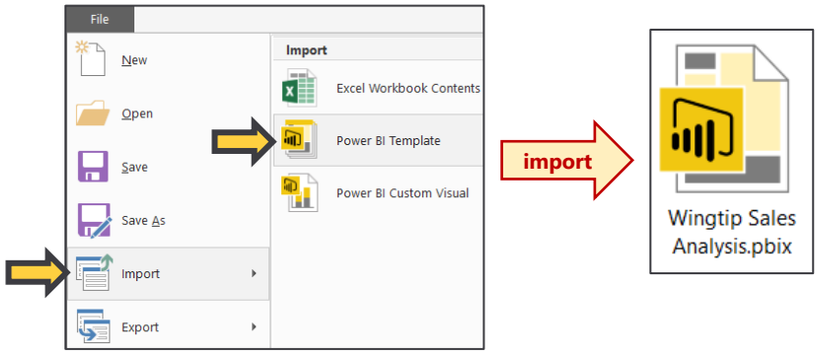
- Parameter becomes visible within fields list in report view



Power BI Project Template Files

- **PBIX project can be exported to project template file**
  - Template file created with PBIT file extension
  - Generated template files contains everything except for the data
  - PBIT template file can be imported to create new PBIX projects
  - Template files are powerful when used together with parameters
- **How are template files used?**
  - Export PBIX project to create a PBIT template file
  - Import the PBIT template file to create a new PBIX project





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Questions?

Microsoft Power BI