OVERNET.

2023 WPC

Faster & Better Power BI

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Who I am

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Co Founder

Marco Englaro

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Improve speed performance of Power BI

Power BI

Performance Issues

Right Approach

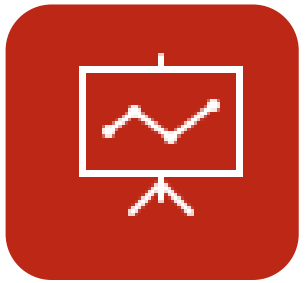
Environment and Architecture

Power BI Capacity

Semantic Model

Connection Type

Data Model



Report

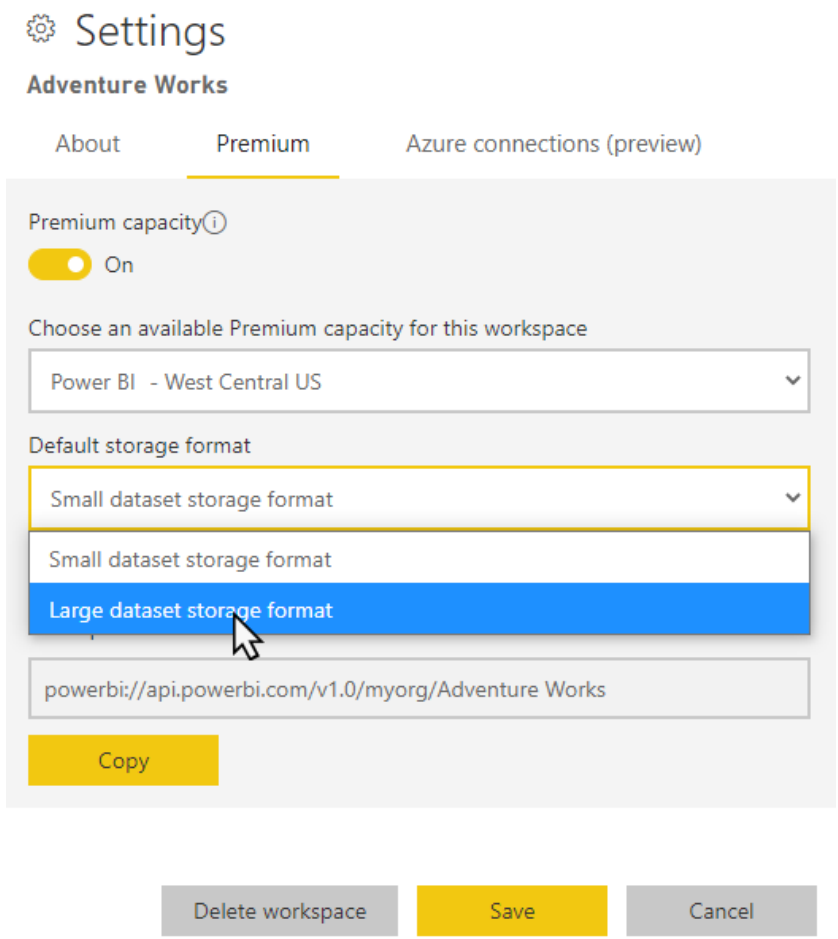
Dax Query

Report Interaction

Environment and Architecture

- Power BI Capacity - Large Dataset

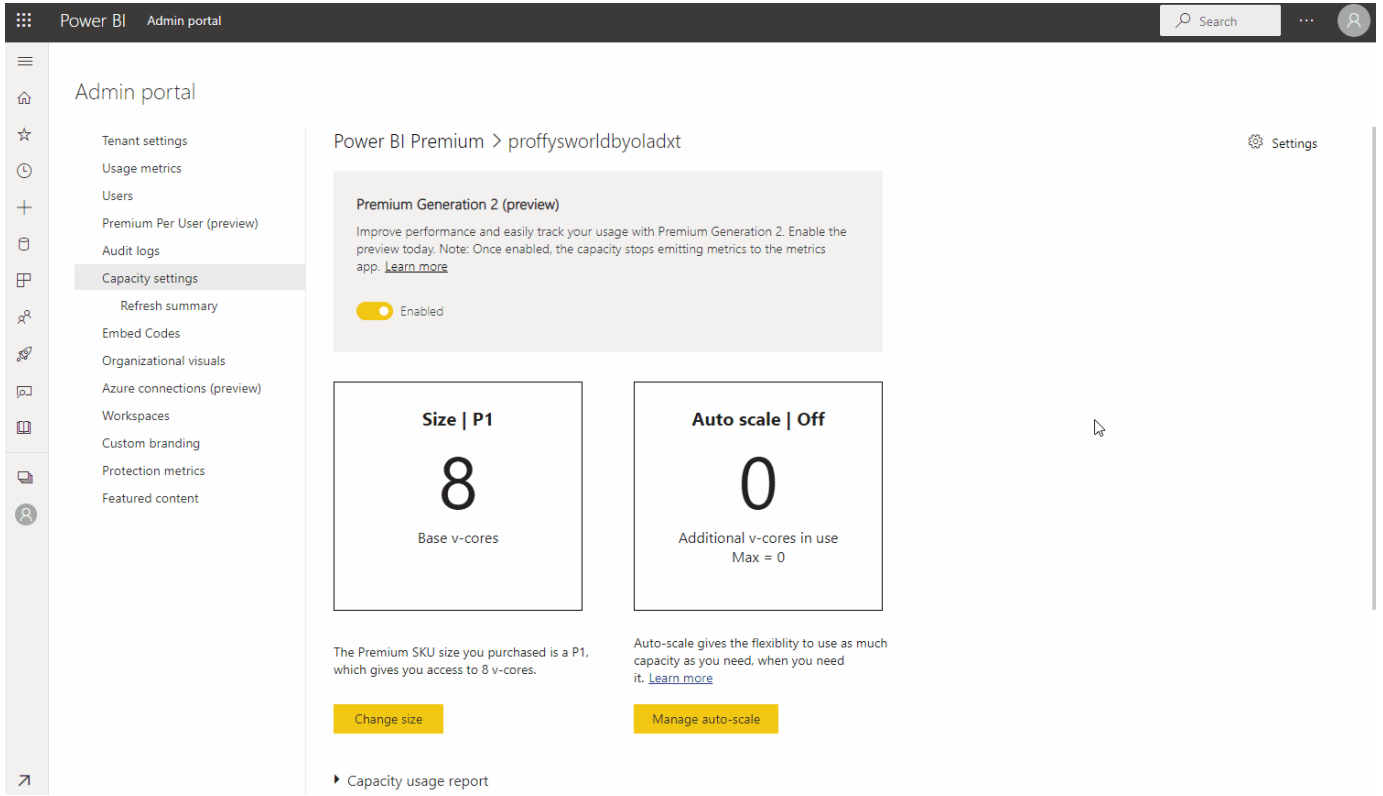
Large semantic model storage format setting has benefits.
When enabled, the large semantic model storage format can improve XMLA write operations performance.
For semantic models using the large semantic model storage format, Power BI automatically sets the default segment size to 8 million rows to strike a good balance between memory requirements and query performance for large tables.



Environment and Architecture

- Power BI Capacity - Autoscale

Automatically use more v-cores (virtual CPU cores) when the computing load on your Power BI Premium subscription would otherwise be slowed by its capacity.

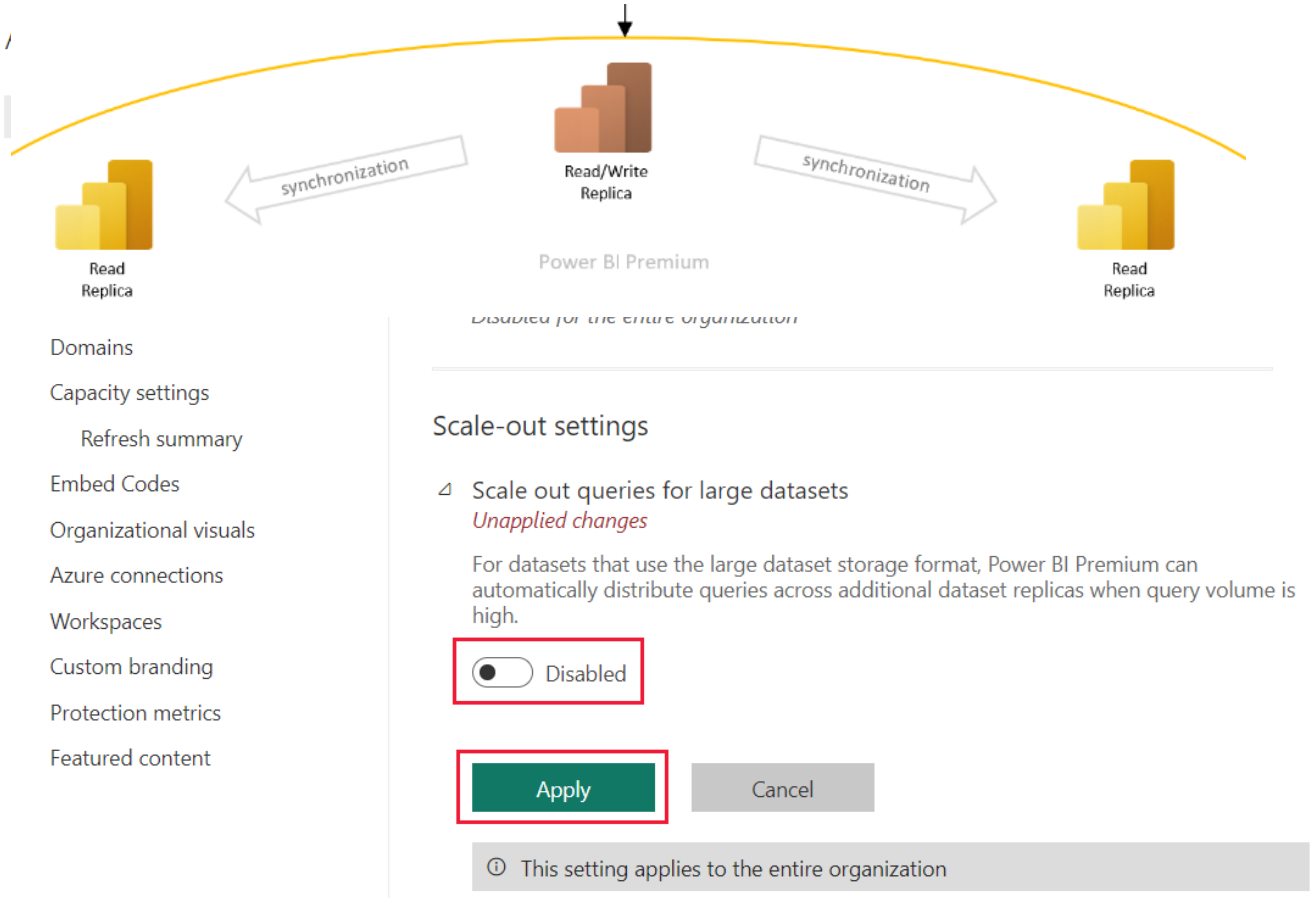


Environment and Architecture

- Power BI Capacity - Scale Out

  Semantic model scale-out helps Power BI deliver fast performance while your reports and dashboards are consumed by a large audience.
  Semantic model scale-out uses your Premium capacity to host one or more read-only replicas of your primary semantic model.

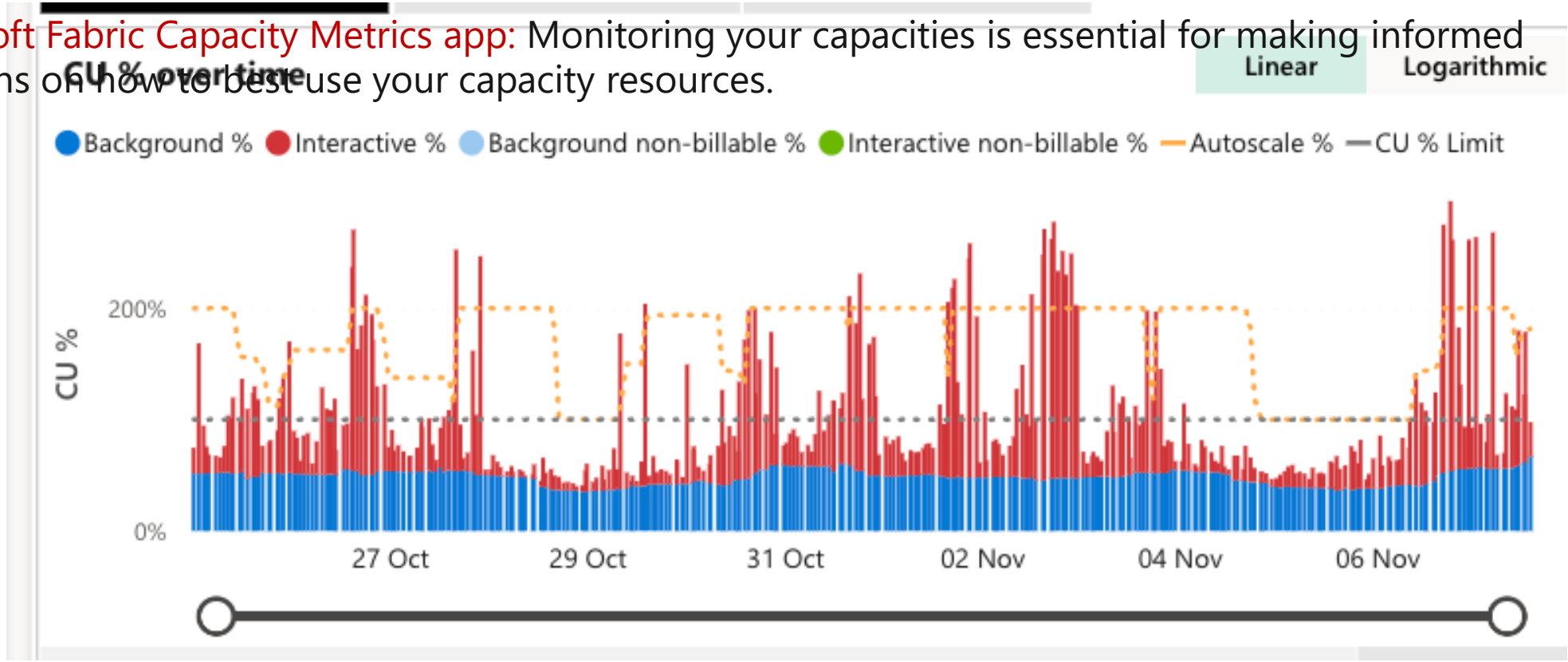
  By increasing throughput, the read-only replicas ensure performance doesn't slow down when multiple users submit queries at the same time.



Environment and Architecture

- Power BI Capacity - Monitoring

Microsoft Fabric Capacity Metrics app: Monitoring your capacities is essential for making informed decisions on how to best use your capacity resources.



Right Approach

Environment and Architecture

Power BI Capacity

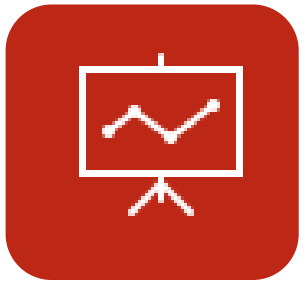
Gateway Configuration

Driver Configuration

Semantic Model

Connection Type

Data Model



Report

Dax Query

Report Interaction

OVERNET.

Environment and Architecture

- Gateway Configuration - Connection type

Separating sources prevents the gateway from having thousands of DirectQuery requests queued up at the same time as the morning's scheduled refresh of a large-size data model that's used for the company's main dashboard.

Schedule Refresh	Direct Query
Depending on your query size and the number of refreshes that occur per day, you can choose to stay with the recommended minimum hardware requirements or upgrade to a higher performance machine. If a given query isn't folded, transformations occur on the gateway machine. As a result, **the gateway machine benefits from having more available RAM**.	A query is sent each time any user opens the report or looks at data. If you expect more than 1,000 users to access the data concurrently, make sure your computer has robust and capable hardware components. **More CPU cores result in better throughput for a DirectQuery connection.**

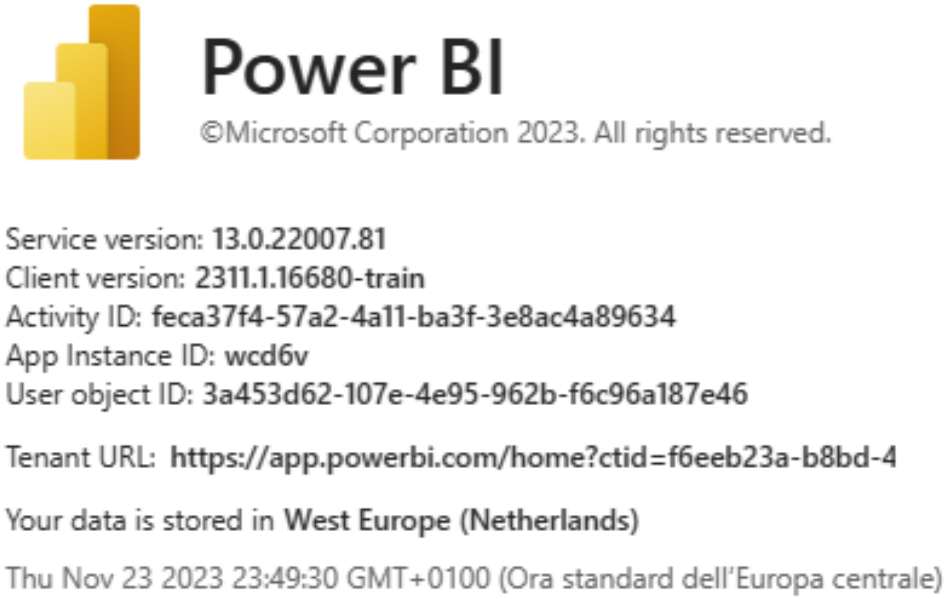
Environment and Architecture

- Gateway Configuration - Location

The location of the gateway installation can have significant effect on your query performance.

Try to make sure that your gateway, data source locations, and the Power BI tenant are as close as possible to each other to minimize network latency.

To determine your Power BI tenant location, in the Power BI service select the question mark (**?**) icon in the upper-right corner. Then select **About Power BI**.



Environment and Architecture

- Gateway Configuration - Monitoring

Rui Romano
Principal Program Manager

Environment and Architecture

- Driver Configuration

Managed Driver	Microsoft Documentation	Vendor Documentation	Avoid Generic Drivers

Right Approach

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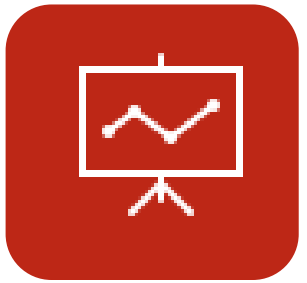


Report

Dax Query

Report Interaction

Semantic Model – Connecton Type

- not everything is the same

Import Mode

Direct Query Mode

Composite Mode

Mixed Mode

Direct Lake

Semantic Model – Data Model

1. Import only those columns you really need
2. Reduce the column cardinality!
3. Same as for columns, keep only those rows you need
4. Avoid using calculated columns whenever possible, since they are not being optimally compressed
5. Use proper data types (DateTime to Date)
6. Avoid using floating point data types
7. Disable Auto Date/Time option for data loading
8. Use Star schema instead of Snowflake schema when possible
9. Avoid bi-directional and many-to-many relationships against high cardinality columns
10. Overusing Calculated Columns
11. Overusing expensive relationships
12. Remove Primary Key columns from fact tables

Semantic Model – Data Model

Reduce the column cardinality!

High cardinality columns in PBI models can be particularly expensive. The best practice is to remove them from the model, especially when these columns are not relevant for data analysis, such as a GUID or timestamp of a SQL Server table.

However, whenever the information they contain is required, you can optimize these columns by splitting the value in two or more columns with a smaller number of distinct values.

This will require some more effort when accessing the column value, but the saving can be so high in large tables that it could definitely worth the effort.

Semantic Model – Data Model

Avoid using calculated columns whenever possible, since they are not being optimally compressed

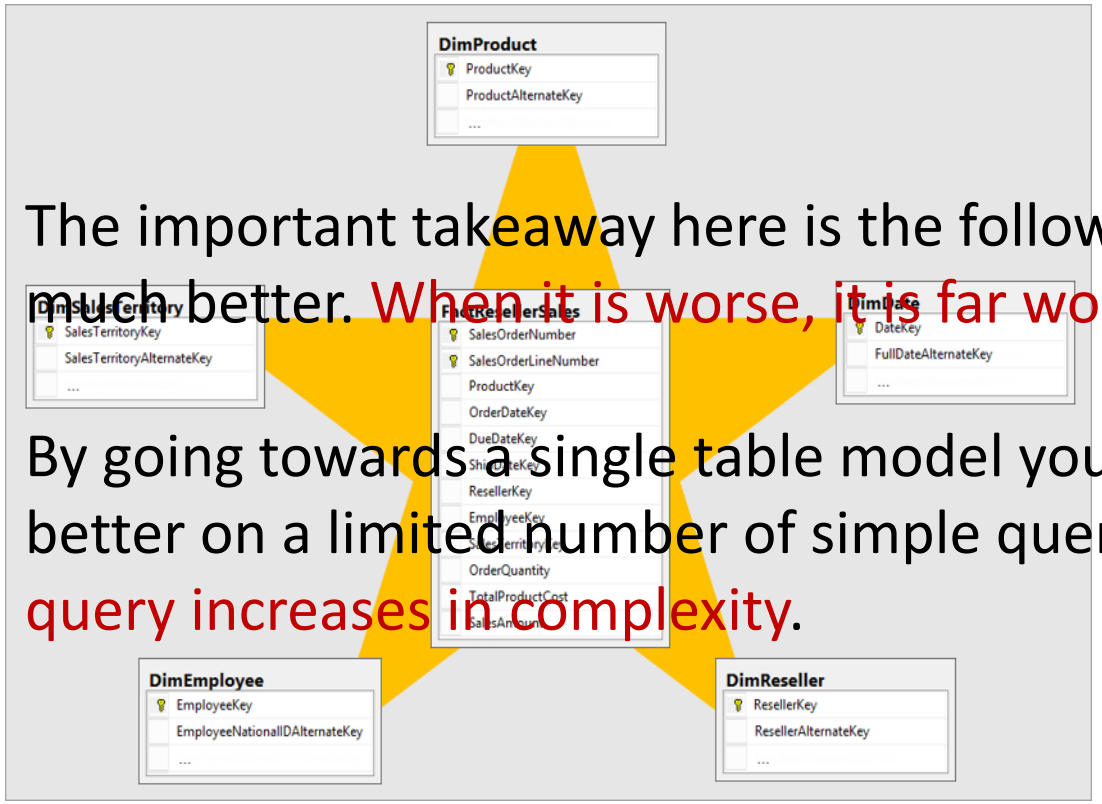
Created at the Data Source

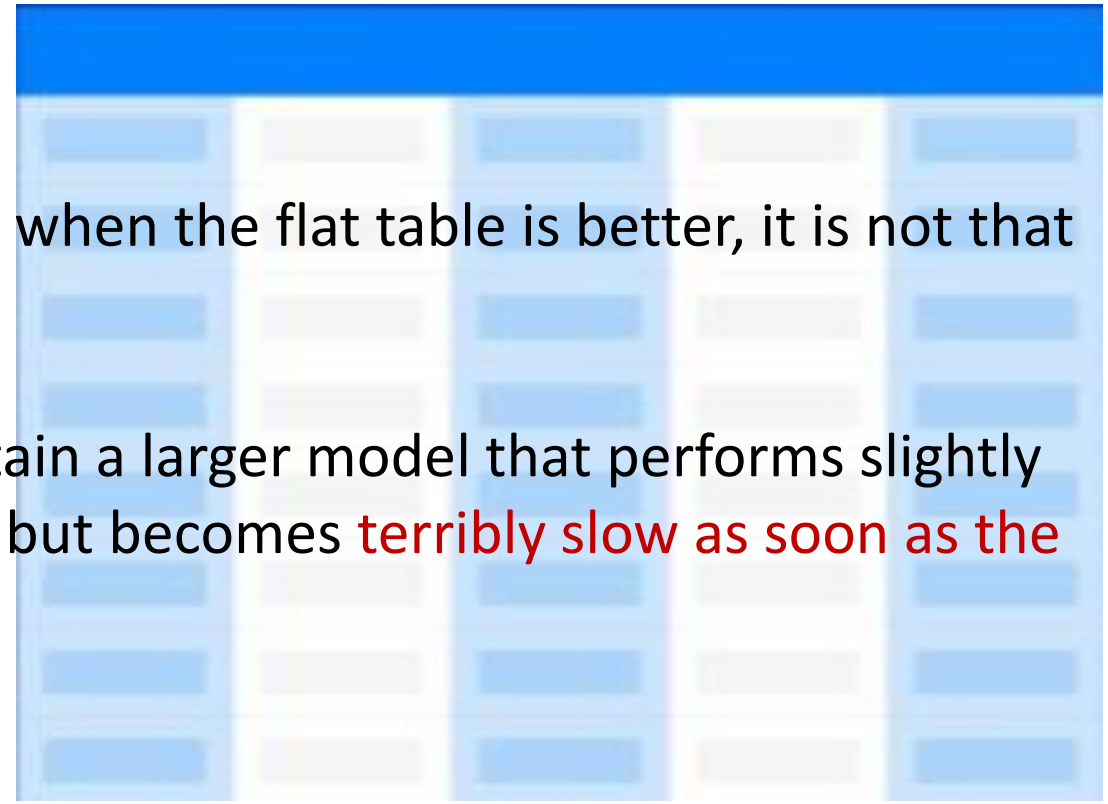
Created with Power Query

Created in DAX

Semantic Model – Data Model

Use Star schema instead of flat table



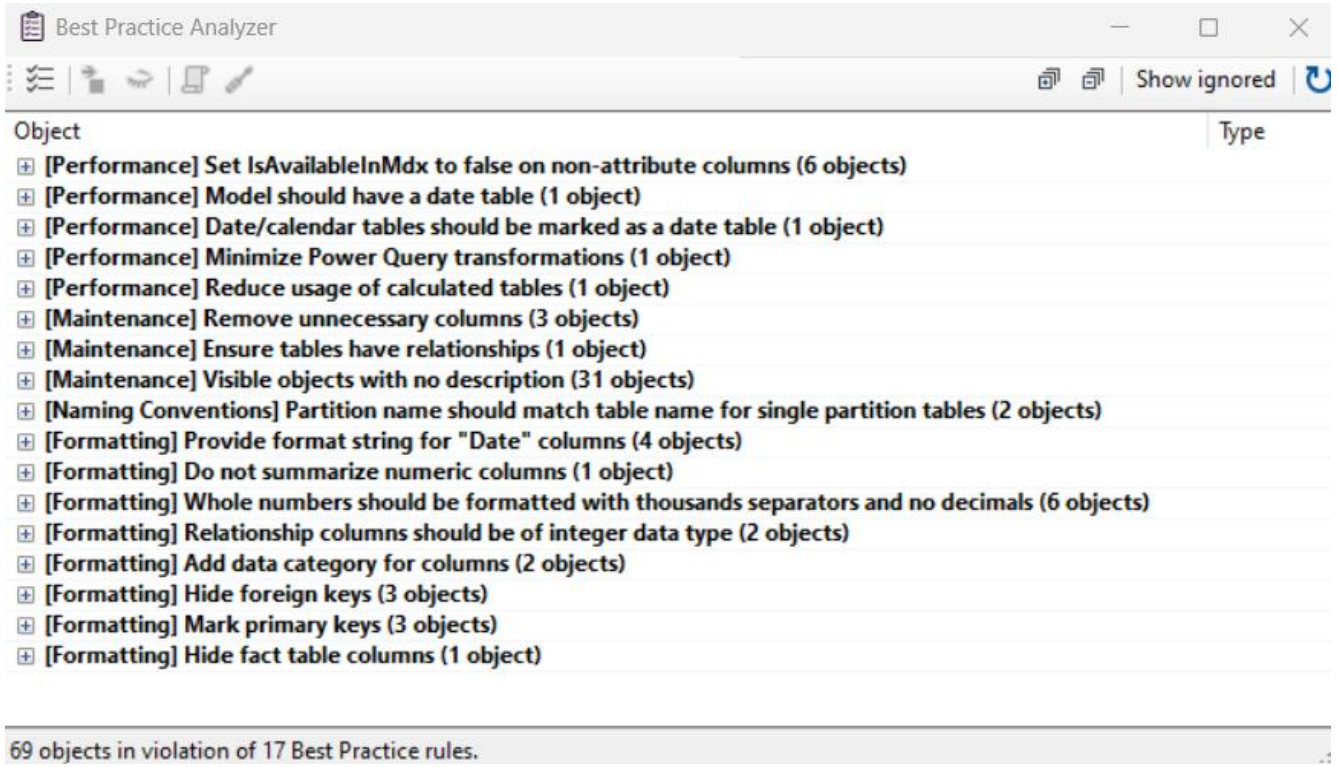


The important takeaway here is the following: when the flat table is better, it is not that much better. When it is worse, it is far worse!

By going towards a single table model you obtain a larger model that performs slightly better on a limited number of simple queries, but becomes terribly slow as soon as the query increases in complexity.

Semantic Model – Data Model

External Tools



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Semantic Model – Data Model

External Tools

Log Results History Server Timings **VertiPaq Analyzer**

Tables
Columns
Relationships
Partitions
Summary

Name	Cardinality	Total Size	Data	Dictionary	Hier Size	Encoding	Data Type	RI Violations	User Hier Size	Rel Size	% Table	% DB
Sales	225.616.948	2.624.526.272	2.561.906.9...	42.341.056	15.287.296	Many	-	-	0	4.990.936		92,79%
Customer	1.868.084	201.471.877	26.116.400	137.940.517	37.414.960	Many	-	-	0	0		7,12%
CurrencyExchan...	202.100	1.281.712	728.352	396.152	144.264	Many	-	-	0	12.944		0,05%
Product	2.517	510.992	40.912	403.728	66.352	Many	-	-	0	0		0,02%
Date	4.018	423.066	41.848	333.346	47.872	Many	-	1	0	0		0,01%
Store	74	82.544	2.024	78.064	2.456	Many	-	-	0	0		0,00%
Date DQ	0	10.504	2.312	8.192	0	DQ	-	-	0	0		0,00%
Product DQ	0	9.992	2.040	7.952	0	DQ	-	-	0	0		0,00%
Customer DQ	0	9.488	1.904	7.584	0	DQ	-	-	0	0		0,00%
Sales DQ	0	7.184	1.904	5.256	0	DQ	-	-	0	24		0,00%
CurrencyExchan...	0	2.928	680	2.240	0	DQ	-	-	0	8		0,00%

Right Approach

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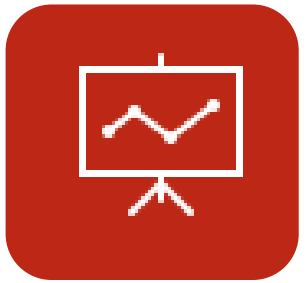
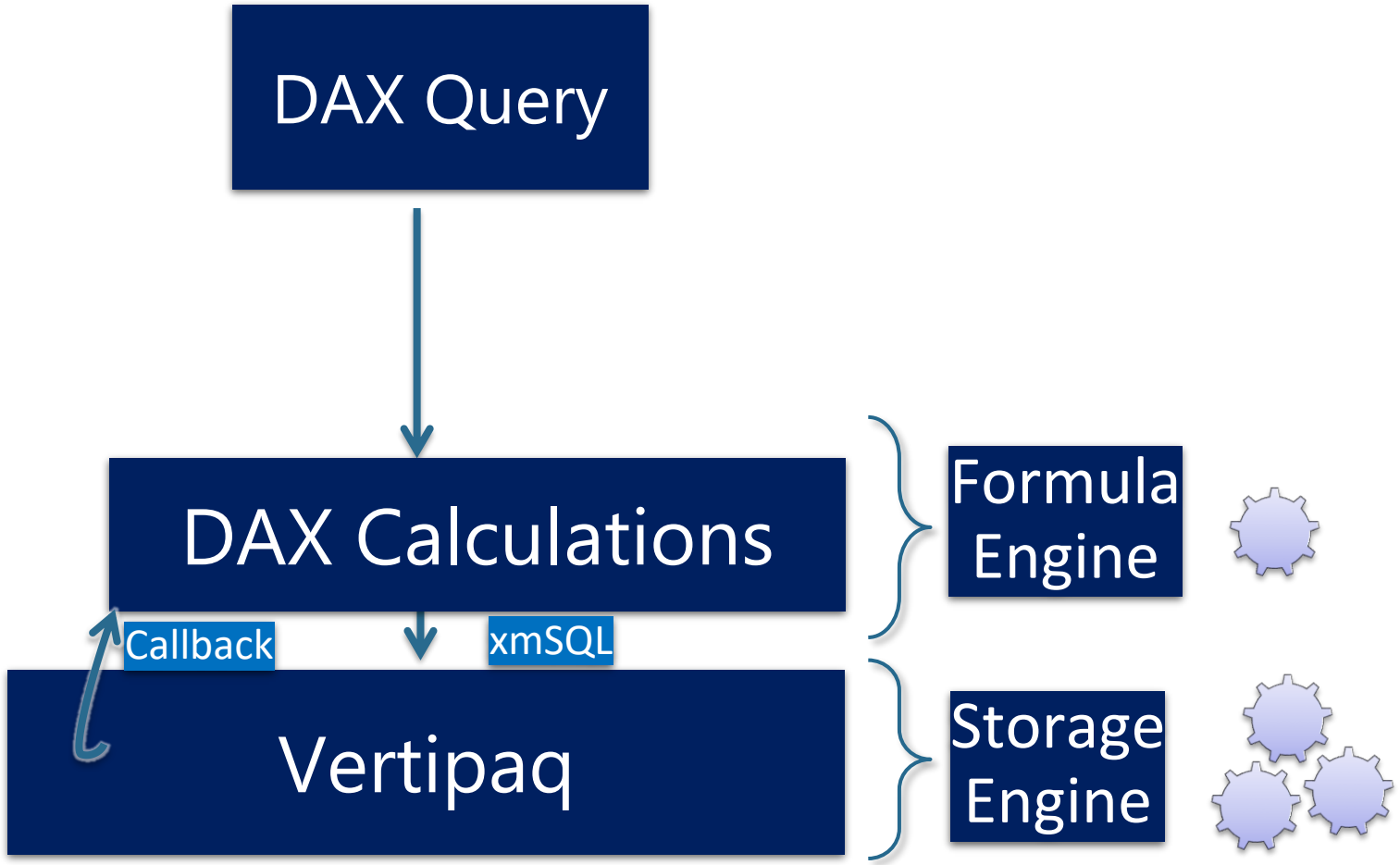


Report

Dax Query

Report Interaction

Report – Query Architecture



FORMULA ENGINE (FE)

- Monothreaded, ask and fetch SE queries sequentially
- Very Smart !
- Build execution plans
- No cache at FE level for DAX queries

STORAGE ENGINE (SE)

- Multithreaded, scan segments in parallel
- Very Fast !
- Can only handle simple arithmetic calculations (callback can be needed)
- SE query results are cached (if no callback)

Report – Dax Optimize

Sales Table: 225,616,948 Milion Rows

Year	Sales Gt 200
⊟ 2010	5.966.043.126,80
Aug	676.336.337,95
Dec	1.353.810.935,74
Jul	638.715.185,11
Jun	666.241.293,46
May	303.911.689,67
Nov	782.639.825,22
Oct	785.281.421,80
Sep	759.106.437,86
⊞ 2011	10.691.471.516,63
⊞ 2012	12.627.251.409,30
⊞ 2013	20.443.916.137,00
⊞ 2014	29.136.505.467,53
⊞ 2015	23.549.371.252,73
⊞ 2016	17.946.710.230,43
⊞ 2017	30.342.774.851,17
⊞ 2018	38.939.706.798,16
⊞ 2019	27.577.227.619,71
⊞ 2020	6.038.286.952,60
Total	223.259.265.362,06

It all starts with a report that users describe as slow. It contains a simple measure that computes sales for only transactions whose amount is greater than 200 US

DAX MEASURE

```
Sales Gt 200 = SUMX (Sales, IF (Sales[Quantity] * Sales[Net
Price] >= 200, Sales[Quantity] * Sales[Net Price]))
```

```
SUMX (
    Sales,
    IF (
        Sales[Quantity] * Sales[Net Price] >= 200,
        Sales[Quantity] * Sales[Net Price]
    )
)
```

DAX FORMATTER

Report – Dax Optimize

Sales Table: 225,616,948 Milion Rows

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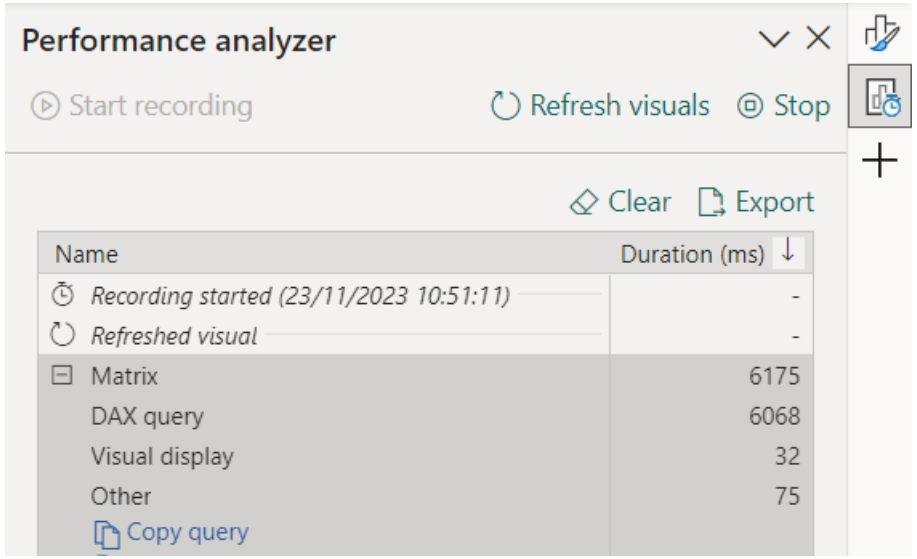
We use the Performance Analyzer tool in Power BI Desktop to retrieve the DAX query executed for the visual. The query took 6 seconds to run.



Report – Dax Optimize

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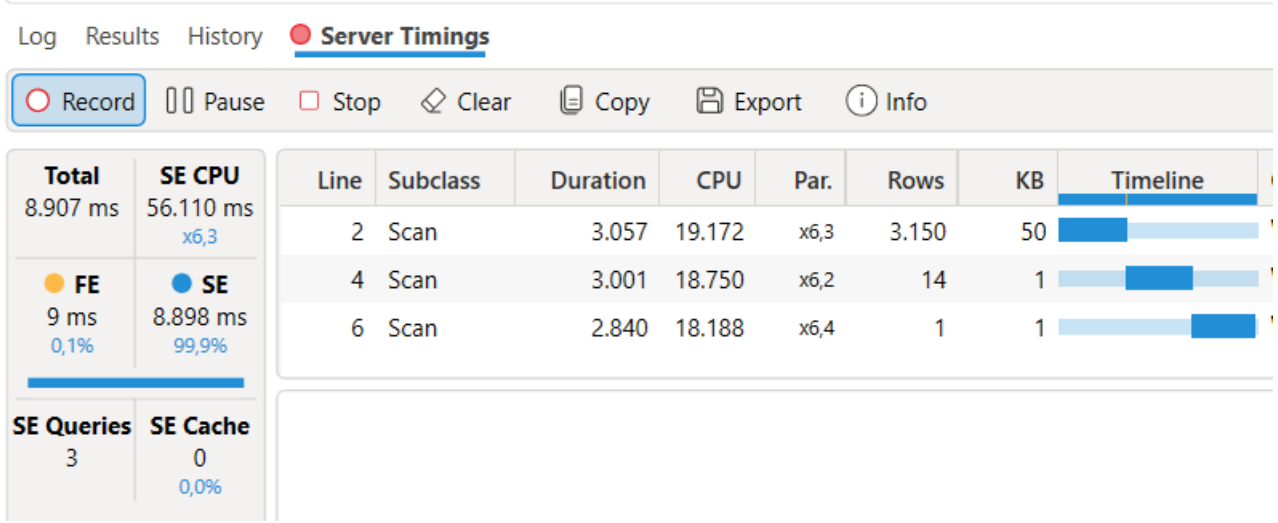
The first thing to do is to execute the query in DAX Studio with Server Timings enabled to obtain the first baseline. Later on, we will check that the simplified query did not change the timings in such a way that the issue seems resolved. Here is the DAX Studio timings report



Report – Dax Optimize

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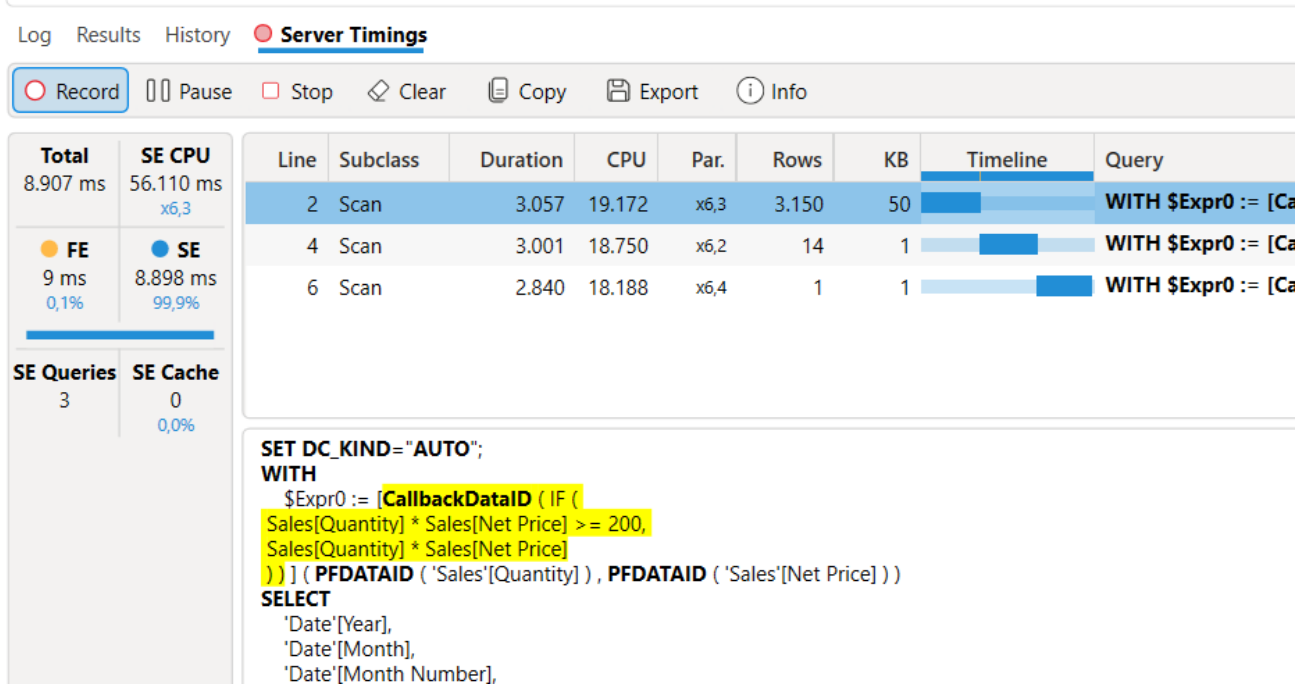

Though the entire execution time is reported as storage
engine CPU, we can clearly see a CallbackDataID, indicating that the formula engine is required to kick in to compute expressions that cannot be pushed down to the storage engine.

Report – Dax Optimize

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The problem is the IF statement inside the iteration carried on by SUMX, because the VertiPaq storage engine does not support conditional logic. We must rephrase the measure to avoid the IF statement; we replace it with a condition set by CALCULATE to rely on filtering rather than IF.

```
Sales Gt 200 =
SUMX (
    Sales,
    IF (
        Sales[Quantity] * Sales[Net Price] >= 200,
        Sales[Quantity] * Sales[Net Price]
    )
)
```

```
Sales Gt 200 =
CALCULATE (
    SUMX ( Sales, Sales[Quantity] * Sales[Net Price] ),
    FILTER ( Sales, Sales[Quantity] * Sales[Net Price] >= 200 )
)
```

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Report – Dax Optimize

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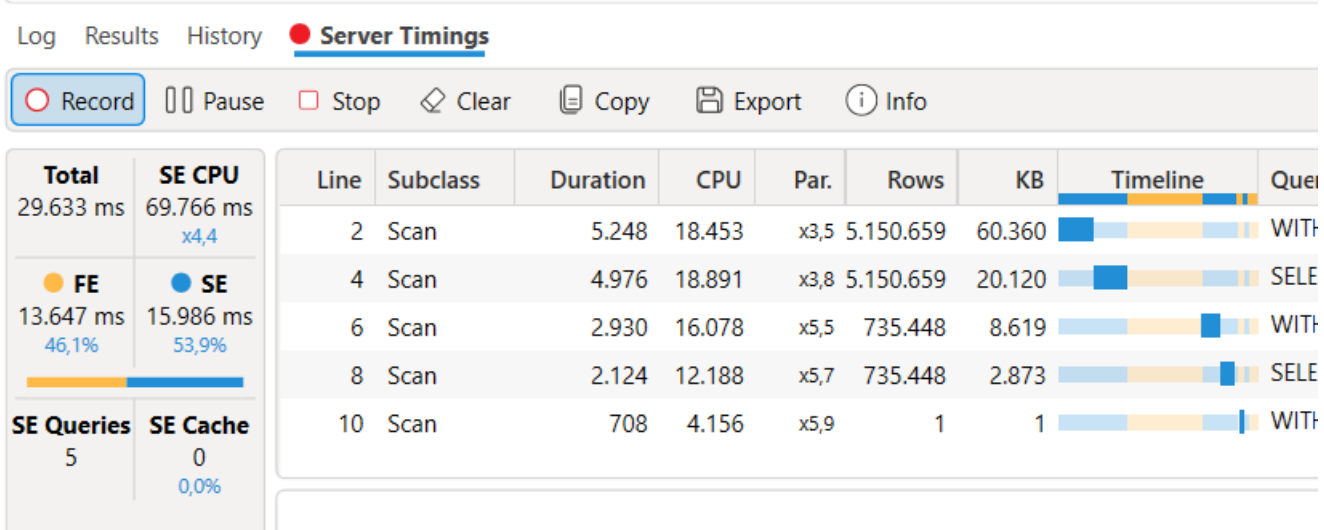
The storage engine CPU is a bit lower than the previous version of the measure, but the degree of parallelism is much lower this time. Moreover, the formula engine executes a significant portion of code, making the overall performance much worse than the previous one. Overall, the execution time went from 8 to 29 seconds



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Indeed, we used a filter over Sales as a filter argument in CALCULATE. A table filter is a very bad practice that newbies oftentimes use. A filter in CALCULATE should work on the minimum number of columns required to obtain its effect

```
Sales Gt 200 =
    CALCULATE (
        SUMX ( Sales, Sales[Quantity] * Sales[Net Price] ),
        FILTER ( Sales, Sales[Quantity] * Sales[Net Price] >= 200 )
    )       ALL (Sales[Quantity] , Sales[Net Price]),
                Sales[Quantity] * Sales[Net Price] >= 200 )
    )
)
```

Report – Dax Optimize

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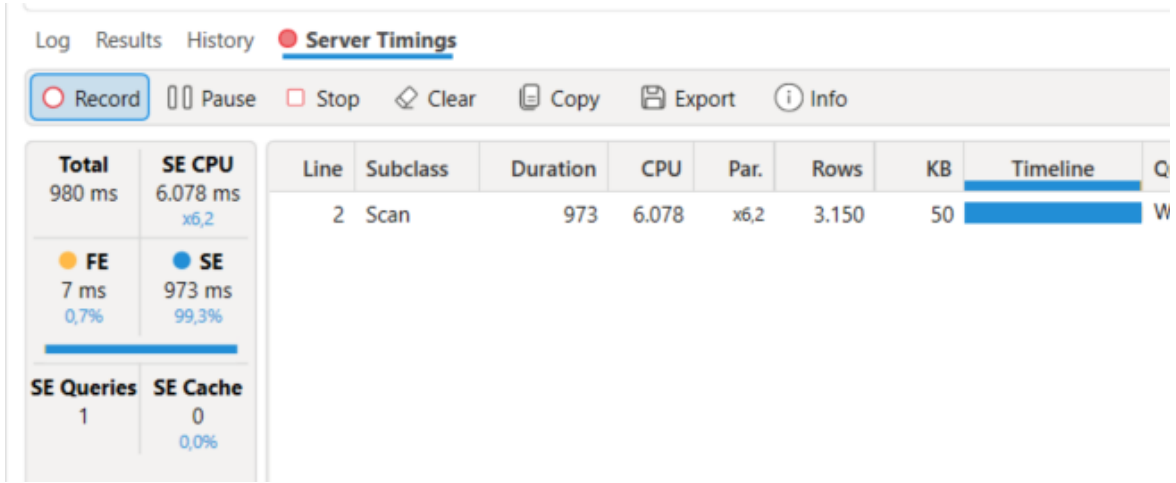
All the indicators are just perfect. The storage engine CPU is massively reduced, the degree of parallelism is back to being exceptional, there is virtually no formula engine involved in the query and no CallbackDataIDs anywhere.
Materialization is reduced from 5 million rows to only 3,150 rows



Report – Dax Query

1. Use Variables when you can precompute and reuse some calculations
2. Try to avoid CallBack (ex : complex filter)
3. Avoided this function SEARCH, IFERROR, CONTAINS, and INTERSECT functions
4. The FILTER function is often overused. Its main purpose is for filtering columns based on measure values.
5. Add column and measure references in your DAX expressions
6. Use ISBLANK() instead of =Blank() check
7. Use COUNTROWS instead of COUNT
8. Work upstream, if possible
9. format your code! (Use DAX Formatter)
10. Split your calculations in smaller blocks

Performance Issues

Environment and Architecture

Power BI Capacity
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Semantic Model

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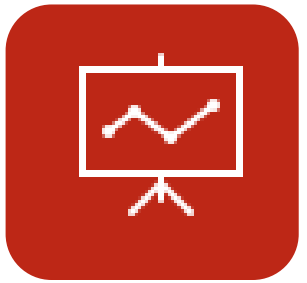
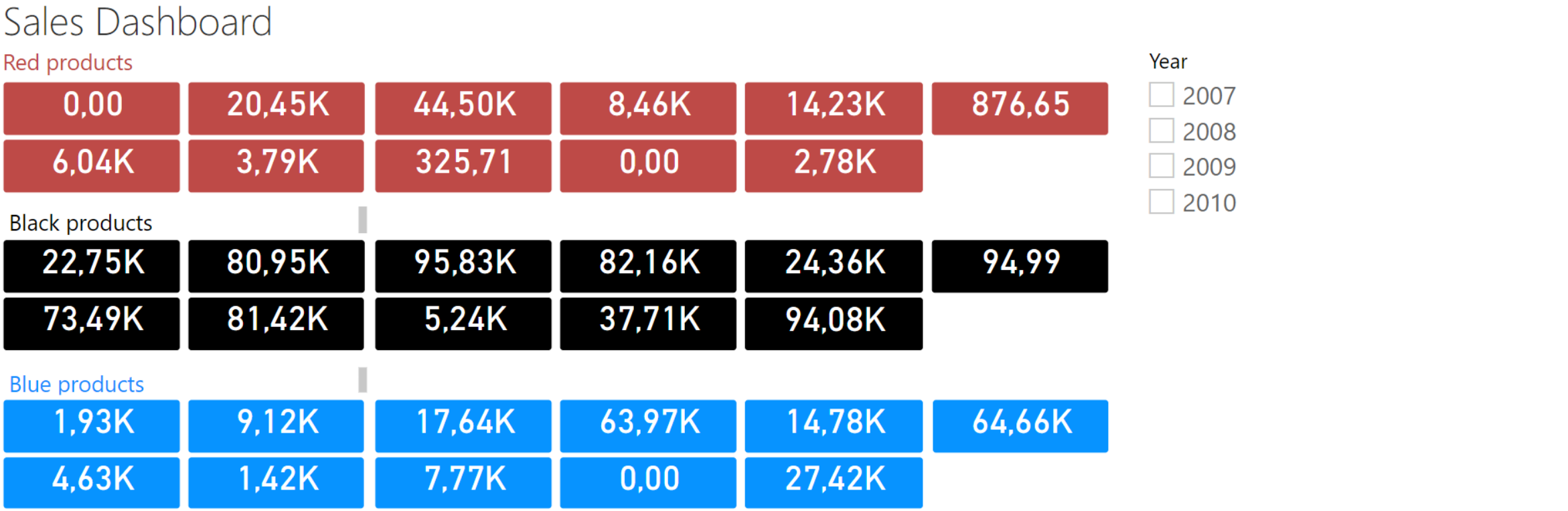


Report

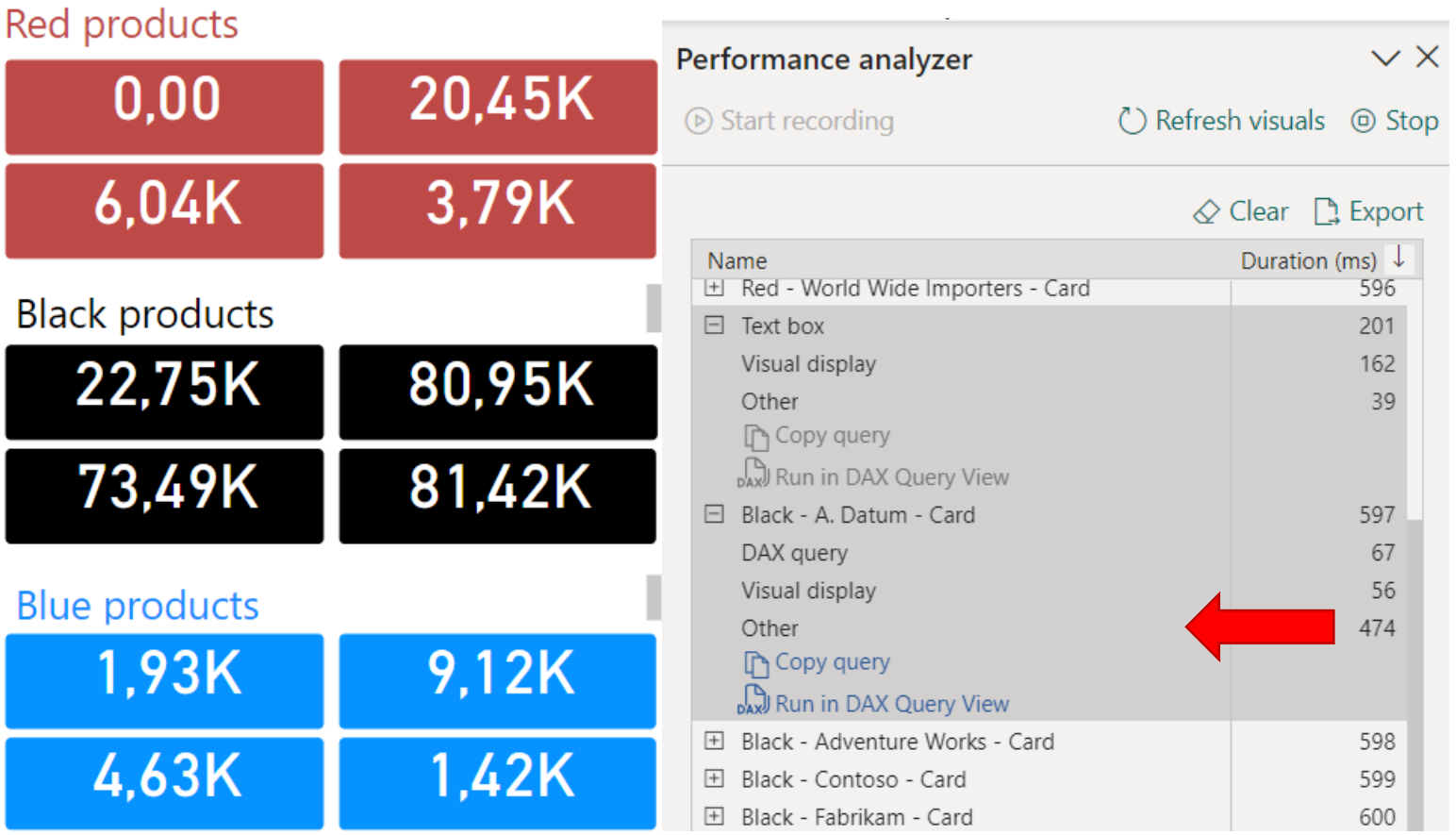
Dax Query
Report Interaction

Report – Report Interaction

The problem behind this report being slow is not to be found anywhere in the DAX code or in the model.
This report is slow because there are too many card visuals. In that scenario, the solution would be to use small multiples rather than focusing on the DAX code of the measures.



Report – Report Interaction

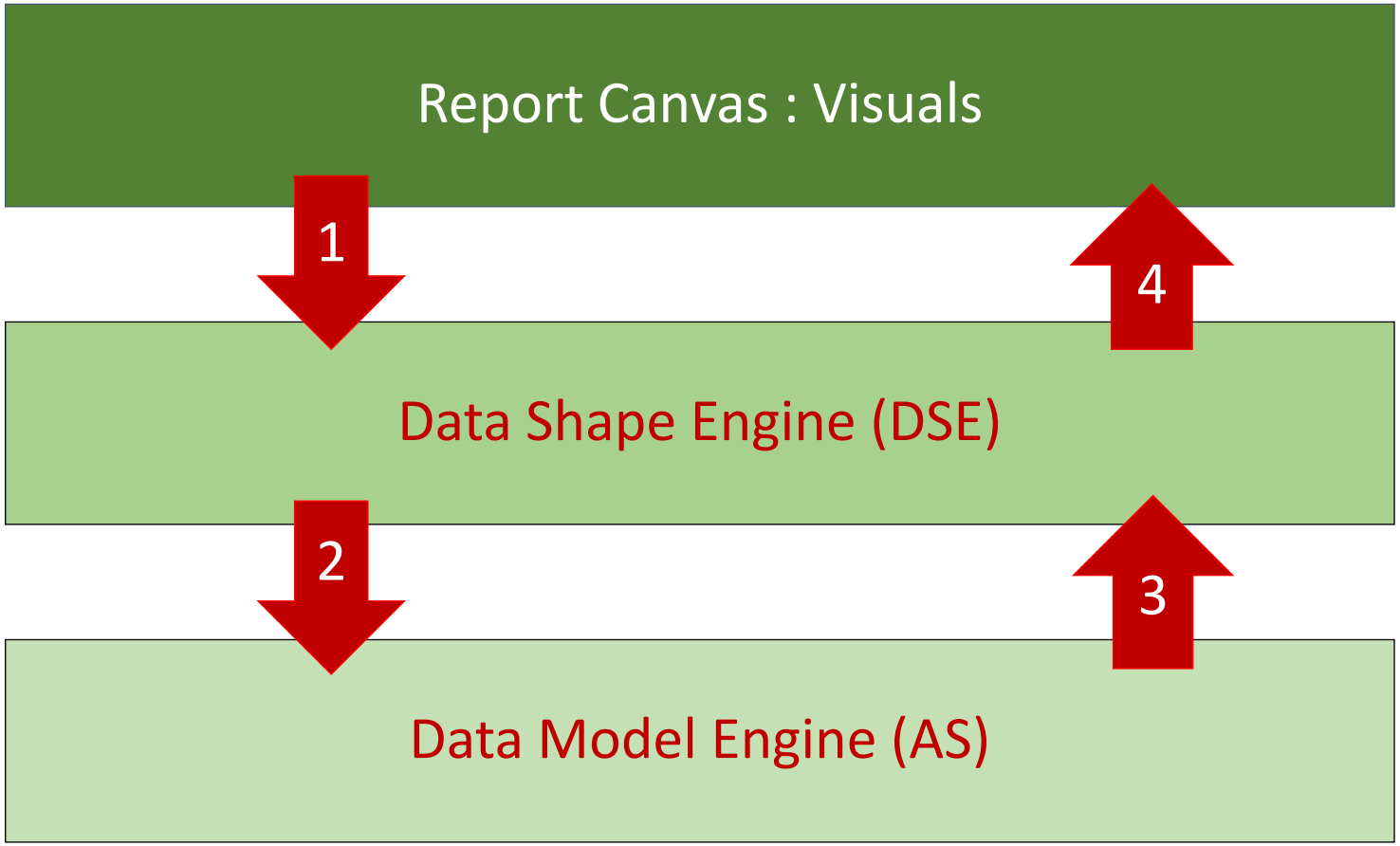


DAX query: this is the time required to execute the DAX query.

Visual display: indicates the time required to render the visual. On more complex visuals, the rendering time might be significant.

Other: this is the time the visual had to wait before Power BI Desktop could execute the DAX query to populate the visual

Report – Report Interaction



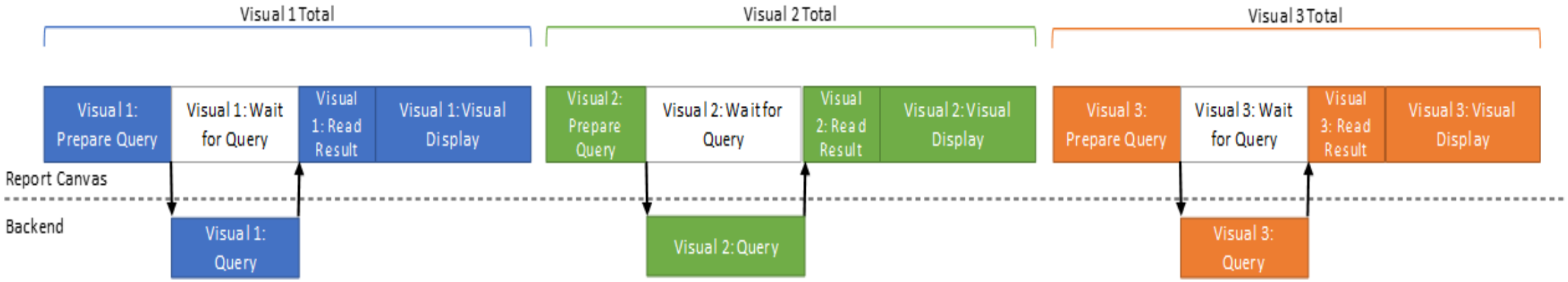
Execution Workflow

Report Canvas retrieves data using an internal, high-level Power BI query language known as Semantic Query.

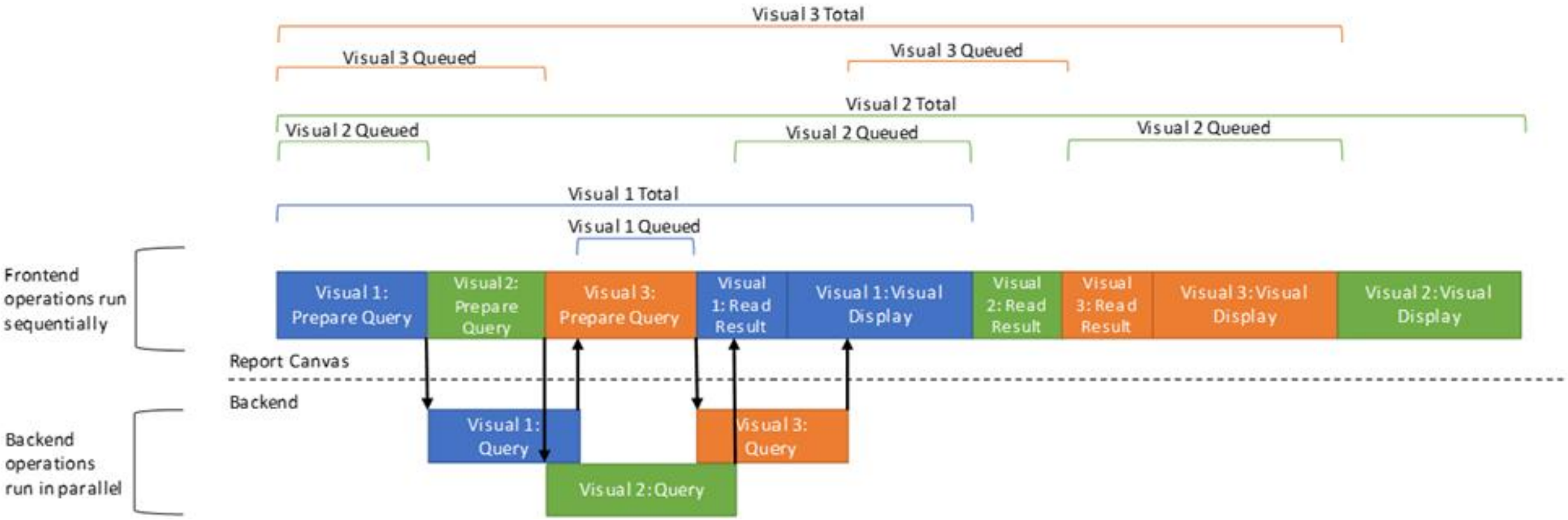
Data Shape Engine (DSE) evaluates semantic queries by generating and executing one or more DAX queries against a semantic model.

Data Model Engine (AS) stores the data model and provides reporting services, such as DAX query evaluation.

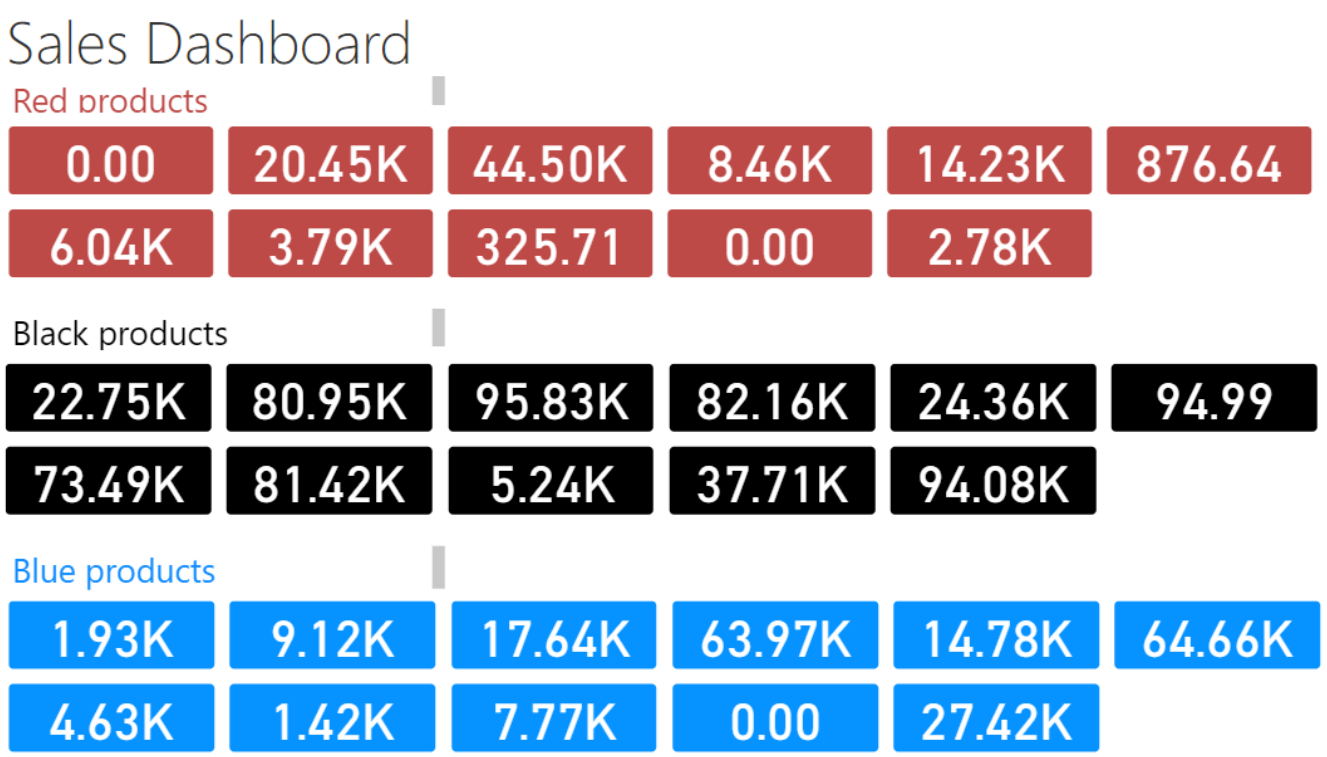
Report – Report Interaction

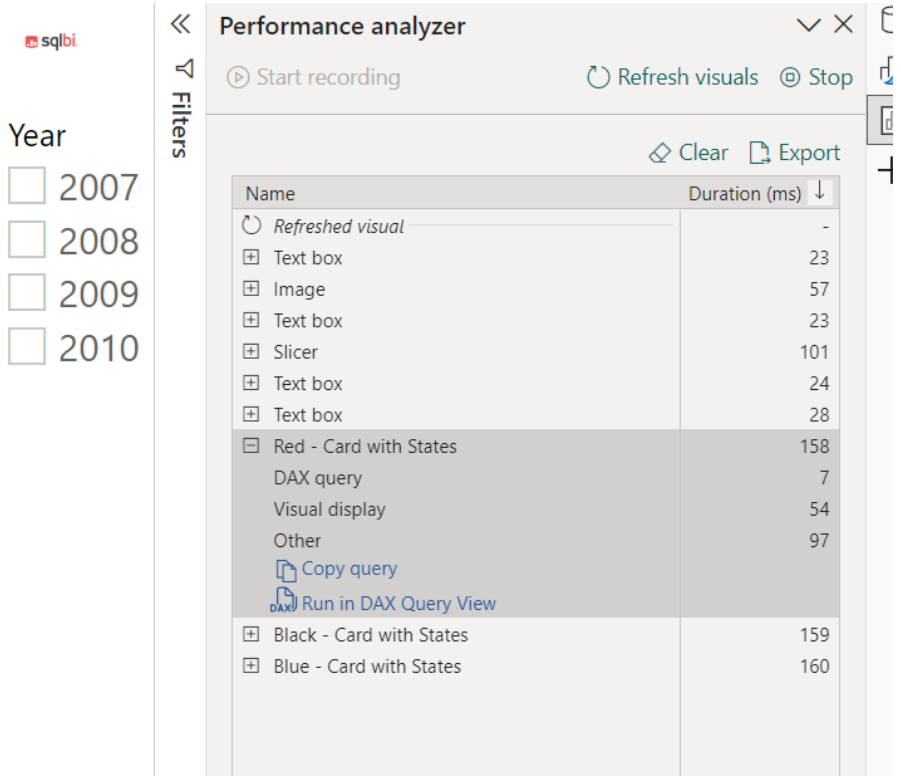


Report – Report Interaction



Report – Report Interaction

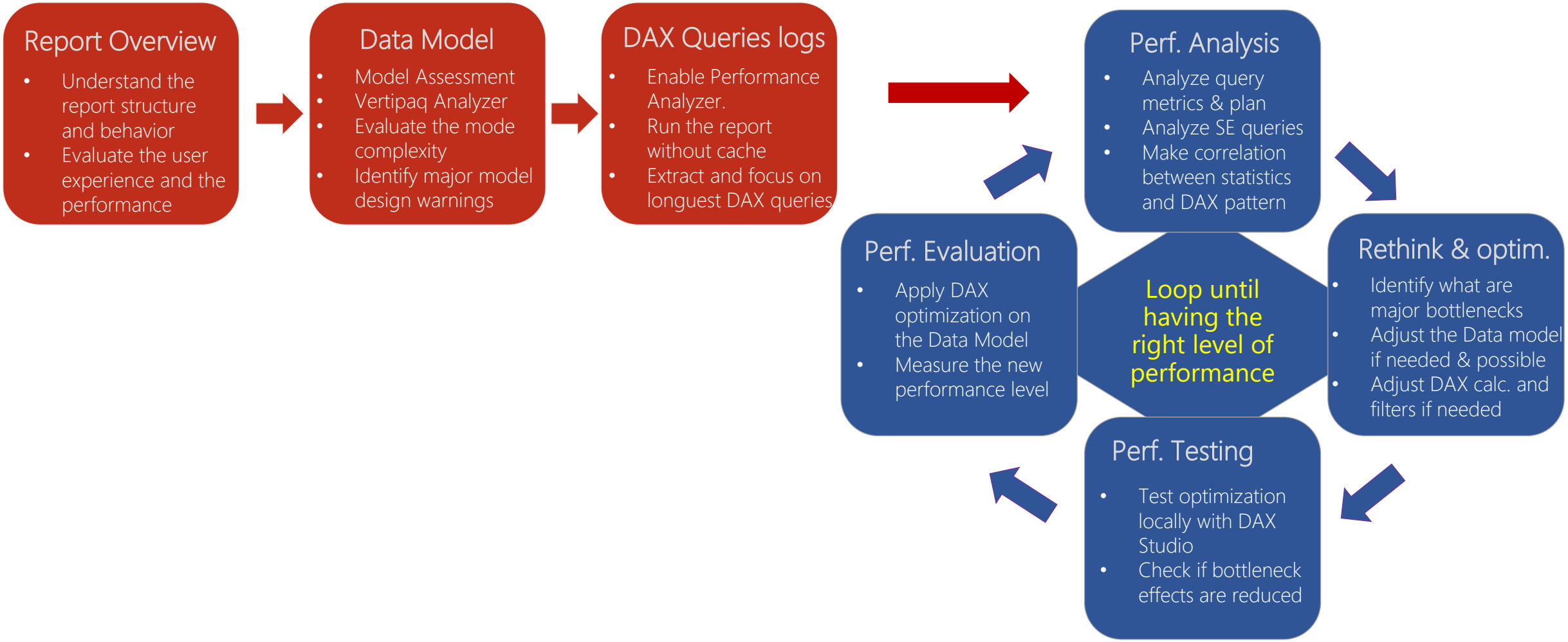




Report – Interaction

1. Limit the number of visuals in dashboards and reports
2. Remove unnecessary interactions between visuals
3. Reduce the amount of data loaded on page load
4. Use tooltips to provide more information on visuals and metrics
5. Allow users to personalize visuals in a report
6. Reduce queries
7. Use report backgrounds for static images
8. Avoid scrolls within the visual and on page
9. Test custom visual performance before use
10. Use drillthrough buttons instead of expecting users to right-click on data points

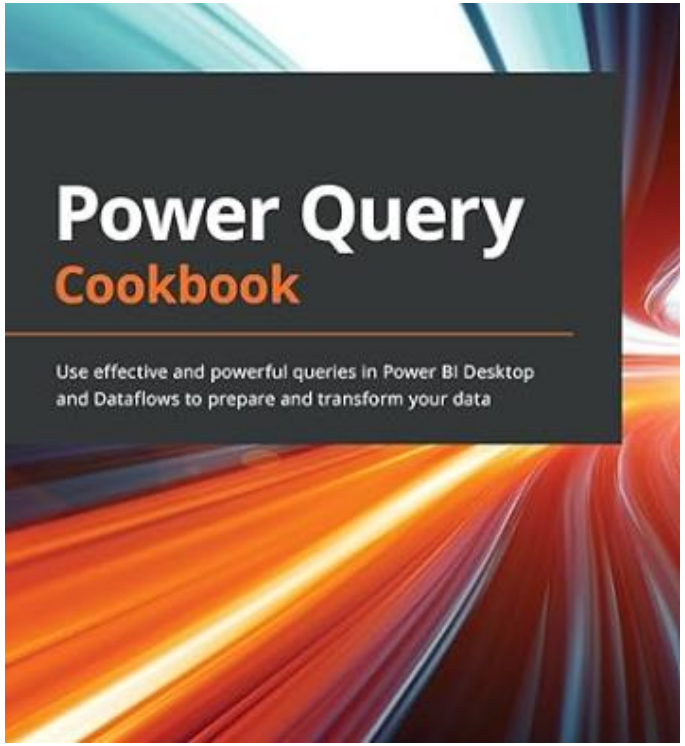
Performance Remediation Process

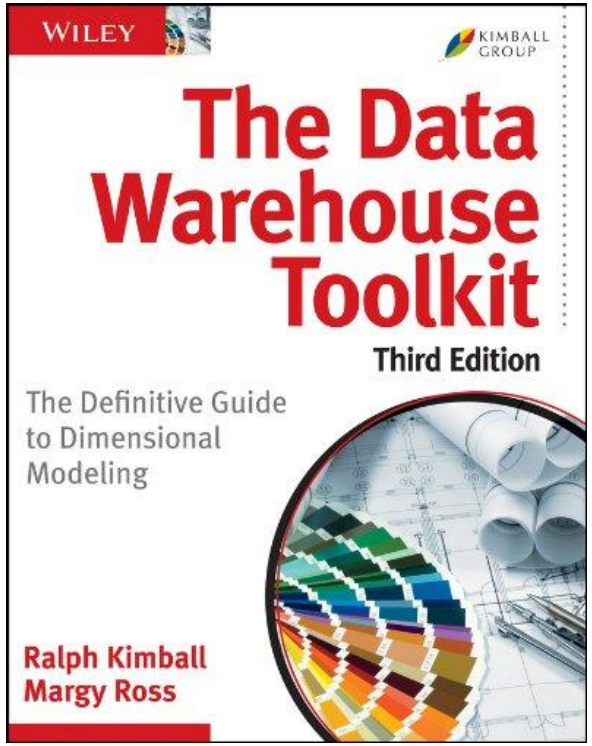


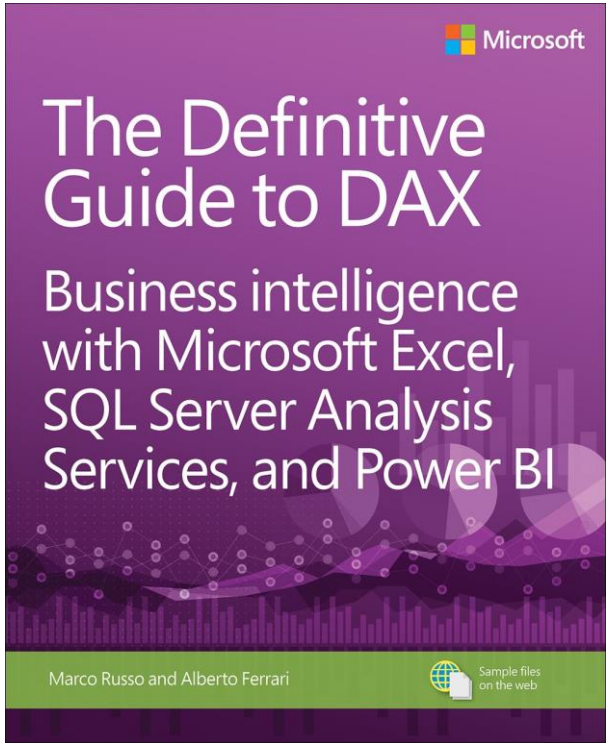
Tools

- https://tabulareditor.com/downloads
- https://daxstudio.org/
- https://www.pbiexplorer.com/
- https://www.elegantbi.com/post/reportanalyzer
- https://powerbi.microsoft.com/en-my/blog/best-practice-rules-to-improve-your-models-performance/
- https://www.elegantbi.com/post/bestpracticerulesavings

Book







2023 WPC

28, 29, 30 NOVEMBRE NH MILANO CONGRESS CENTRE

Valuta la sessione

G R A Z I E !