Faster & Better Power Bl



Sponsors













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Marco Englaro











Improve speed performance of Power BI



















Performance Issues



















Right Approach



Environment and Architecture

Power BI Capacity

Gateway Configuration

Driver Configuration



Semantic Model

Connection Type Data Model



Report

Dax Query Report Interaction









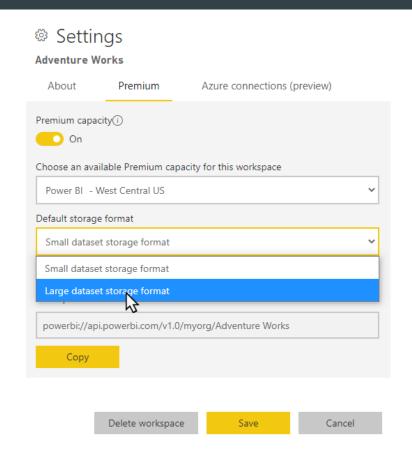




• Power BI Capacity - Large Dataset

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.











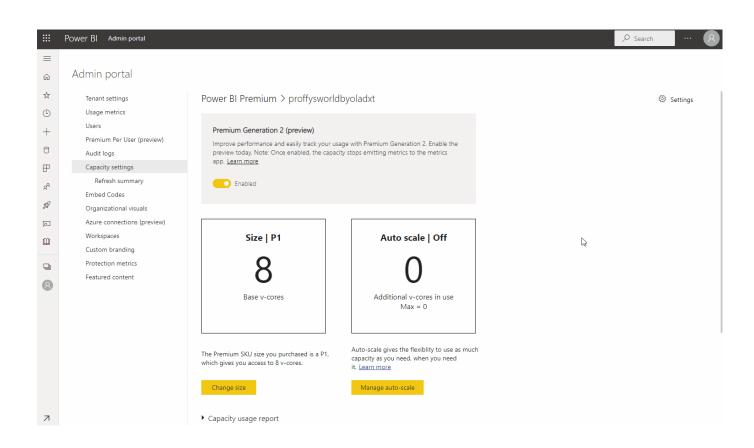






Power BI Capacity - Autoscale

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.

















Power BI Capacity - Scale Out

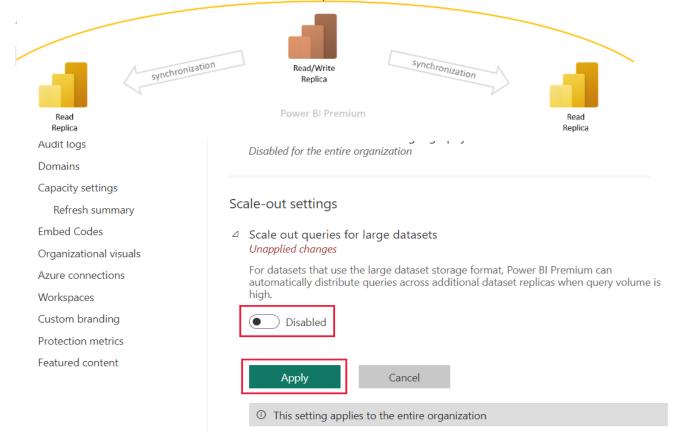
Semantic model scale-out helps Power BI deliver fast performance while your reports and dashboards are consumed by a large audience. Semantic model scale-out uses your Premium capacity to host one or more read-only replicas of your primary semantic model.

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









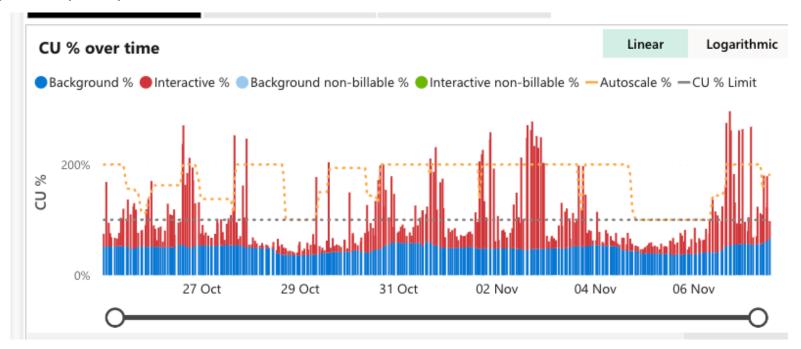






Power BI Capacity - Monitoring

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**

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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

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.

Direct Query

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.















×

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**.



Power BI

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Service version: 13.0.22007.81 Client version: 2311.1.16680-train

Activity ID: feca37f4-57a2-4a11-ba3f-3e8ac4a89634

App Instance ID: wcd6v

User object ID: 3a453d62-107e-4e95-962b-f6c96a187e46

Tenant URL: https://app.powerbi.com/home?ctid=f6eeb23a-b8bd-4

Your data is stored in West Europe (Netherlands)

Thu Nov 23 2023 23:49:30 GMT+0100 (Ora standard dell'Europa centrale)













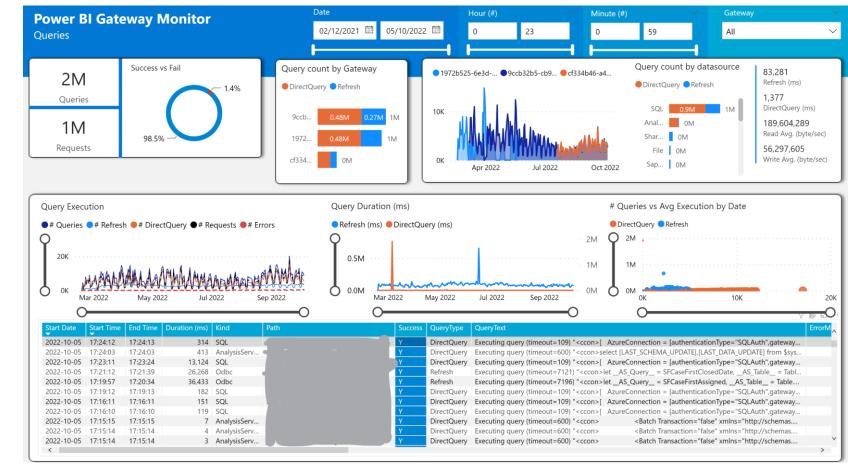




Gateway Configuration - Monitoring



Rui Romano Principal Program Manager















Right Approach



Environment and Architecture

Power BI Capacity Gateway Configuration **Driver Configuration**



Semantic Model

Connection Type Data Model



Report

Dax Query Report Interaction















Driver Configuration

Managed Driver

Microsoft Documentation

Vendor Documentation **Avoid Generic Drivers**













Right Approach



Environment and Architecture

Power BI Capacity Gateway Configuration **Driver Configuration**



Semantic Model

Connection Type Data Model



Report

Dax Query Report Interaction













Semantic Model – Connection Type



not everything is the same

Import Mode

Direct Query Mode

Composite Mode

Mixed Mode

Direct Lake















- 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















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.















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







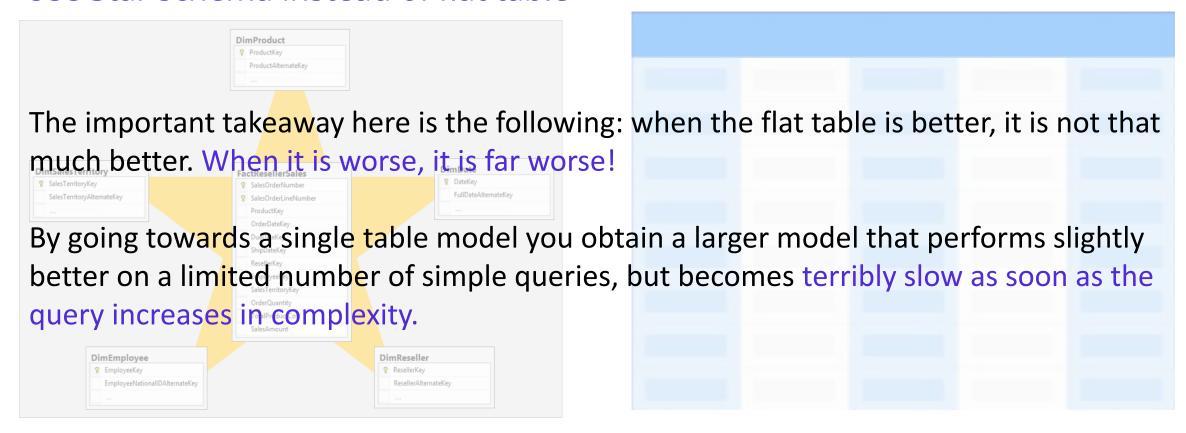








Use Star schema instead of flat table













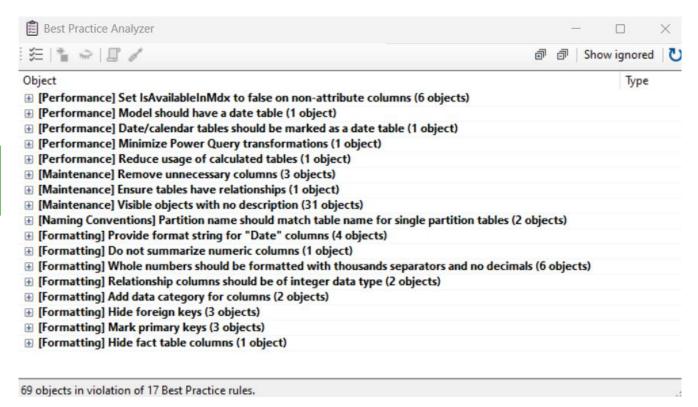




External Tools













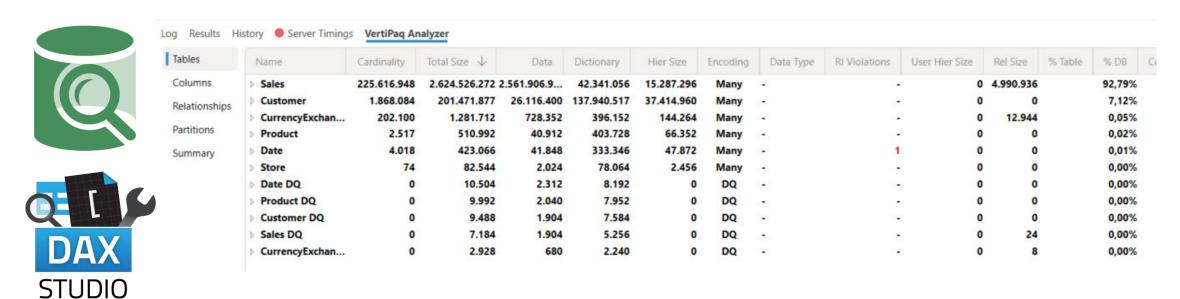








External Tools















Right Approach



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Power BI Capacity Gateway Configuration **Driver Configuration**



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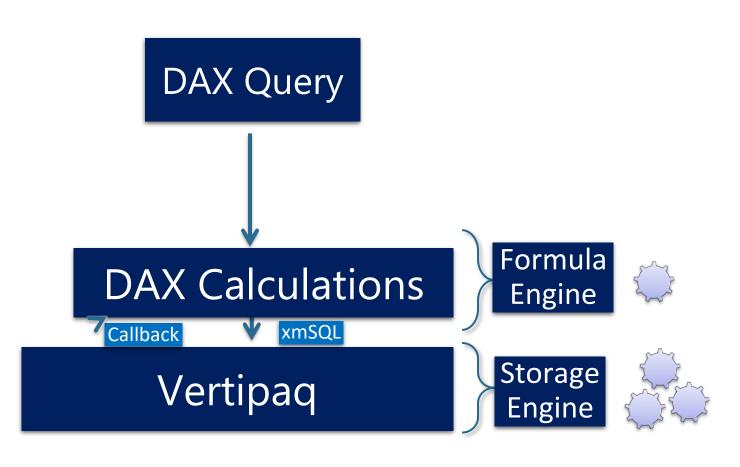








Report – Query Architecture



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)













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			
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± 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
Bblock *= 200, Sales[Quantity] * Sales[Net Price]))
  Sales,
  IF
    Sales[Quantity] * Sales[Net Price] >= 200,
    Sales[Quantity] * Sales[Net Price]
```











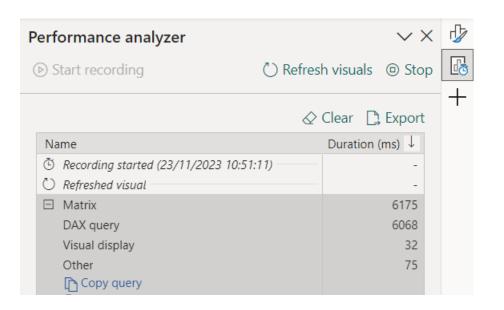




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We use the Performance Analyzer tool in Power BI Desktop to retrieve the DAX query executed for the visual. The query took 6 seconds to run.











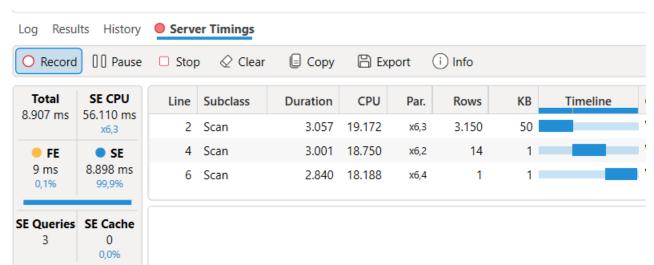




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The first thing to do is to execute the query in DAX Studio with Server Timings enabled to obtain the first baseline. Later on, we will check that the simplified query did not change the timings in such a way that the issue seems resolved. Here is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











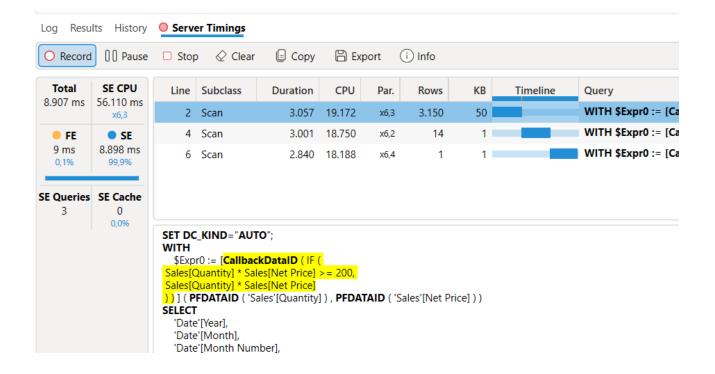






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Though the entire execution time is reported as storage engine CPU, we can clearly see a CallbackDataID, indicating that the formula engine is required to kick in to compute expressions that cannot be pushed down to the storage engine.













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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.









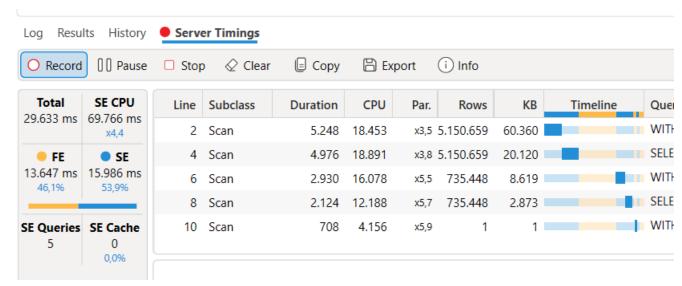




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The storage engine CPU is a bit lower than the previous version of the measure, but the degree of parallelism is much lower this time. Moreover, the formula engine executes a significant portion of code, making the overall performance much worse than 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 )
      )
```











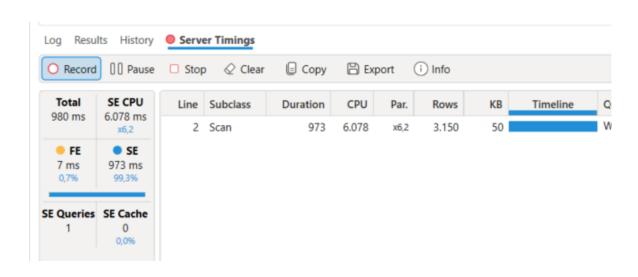


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All the indicators are just perfect. The storage engine CPU is massively reduced, the degree of parallelism is back to being exceptional, there is virtually no formula engine involved in the query and no CallbackDataIDs anywhere.

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













Right Approach



Environment and Architecture

Power BI Capacity Gateway Configuration **Driver Configuration**



Semantic Model

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Report

Dax Query **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.

Sales Dashboard

Red products						Year
0,00	20,45K	44,50K	8,46K	14,23K	876,65	2007
6,04K	3,79K	325,71	0,00	2,78K		2009
Black products						2010
22,75K	80,95K	95,83K	82,16K	24,36K	94,99	
73,49K	81,42K	5,24K	37,71K	94,08K		
Blue products						
1,93K	9,12K	17,64K	63,97K	14,78K	64,66K	
4,63K	1,42K	7,77K	0,00	27,42K		



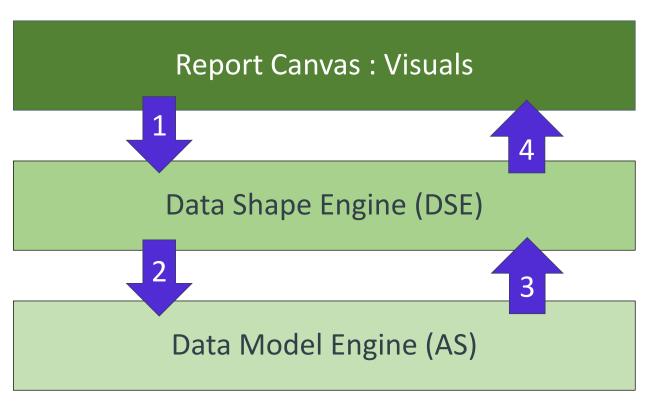












Execution Workflow

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.



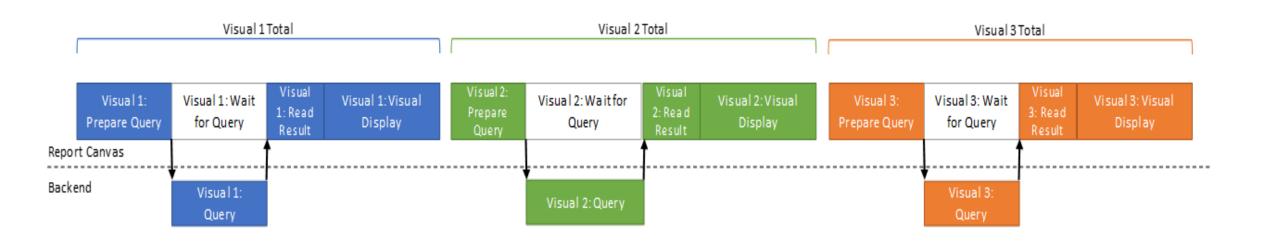














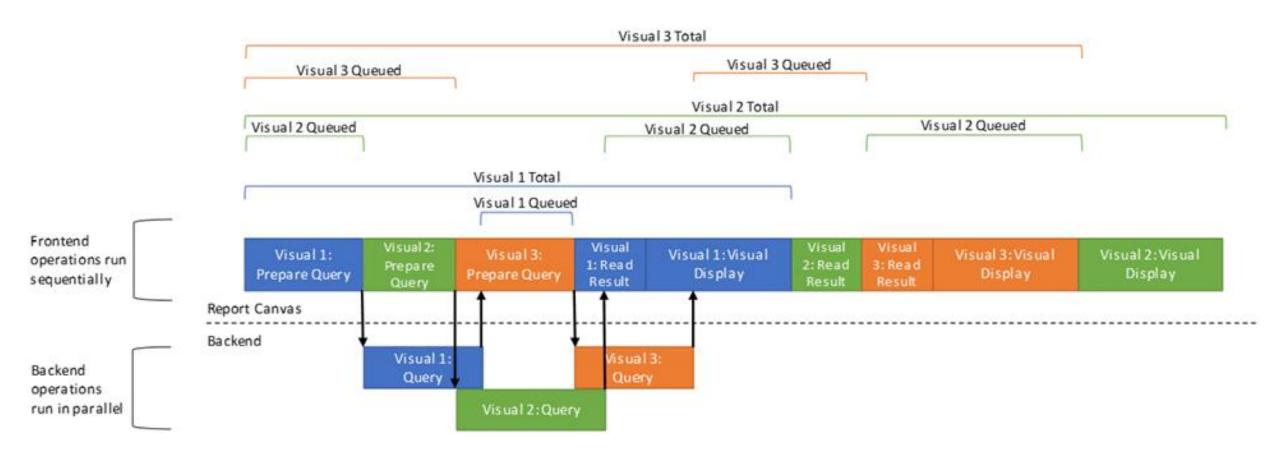














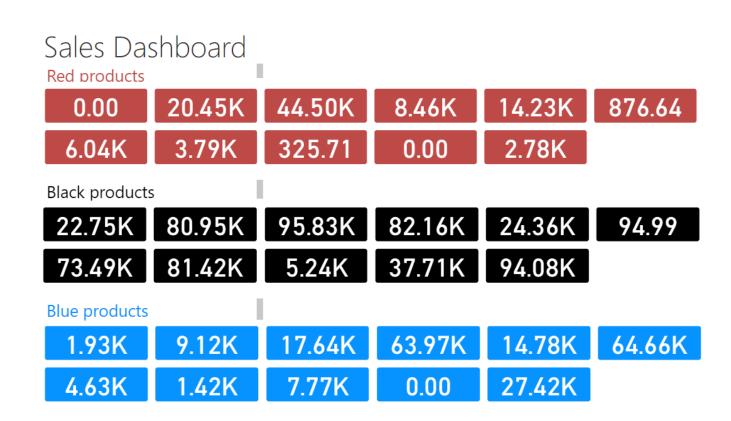


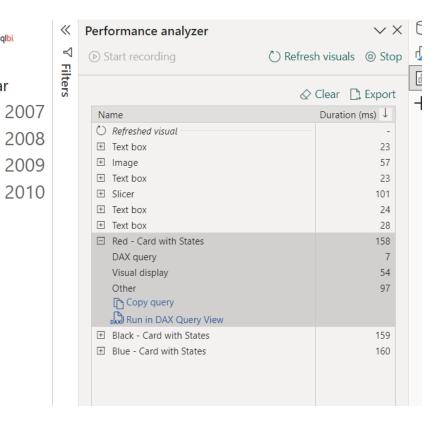




















■ sqlbi

Year





- 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

Report Overview

- Understand the report structure and behavior
- Evaluate the user experience and the performance



Data Model

- Model Assessment
- Vertipag Analyzer
- Evaluate the mode
- Identify major model design warnings

DAX Queries logs

- Enable Performance Analyzer.
- Run the report without cache
- Extract and focus on longuest DAX queries



Perf. Analysis

- Analyze query metrics & plan
- Analyze SE queries
- Make correlation between statistics and DAX pattern

having the

right level of

performance



Perf. Evaluation

- **Apply DAX** Data Model
- Measure the new performance level

- optimization on the

Rethink & optim. Loop until

- Identify what are major bottlenecks
- Adjust the Data model if needed & possible
- Adjust DAX calc. and filters if needed



Perf. Testing

- Test optimization locally with DAX
- Check if bottleneck effects are reduced















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/bestpractice-rules-to-improve-your-models-performance/
- https://www.elegantbi.com/post/bestpracticerulesavings







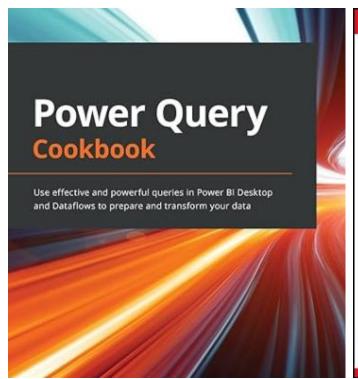


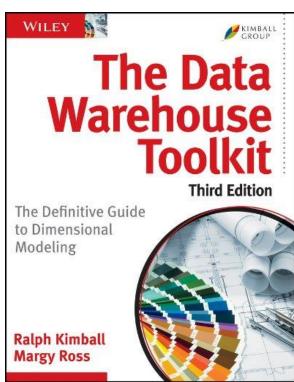




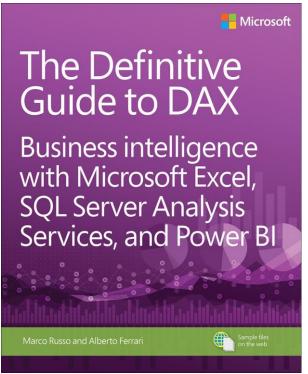


Books

























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