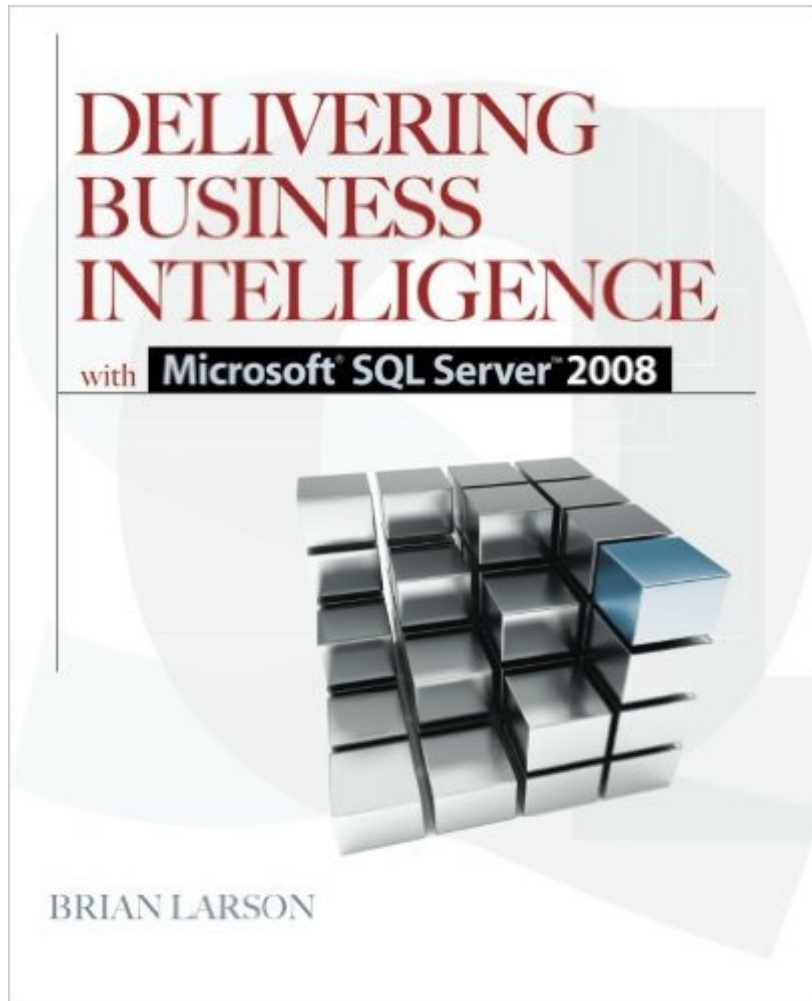


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Delivering Business Intelligence With Microsoft SQL Server 2008



Synopsis

Maximize the Business Intelligence Tools in Microsoft SQL Server 2008 Manage, analyze, and distribute enterprise data with help from this expert resource. Delivering Business Intelligence with Microsoft SQL Server 2008 covers the entire BI lifecycle and explains how to build robust data integration, reporting, and analysis solutions. Real-world examples illustrate all of the powerful BI capabilities of SQL Server 2008. This is your one-stop guide for transforming disparate data into actionable insight for users throughout your organization. Understand the goals and benefits of business intelligence Design and create relational data marts and OLAP cubes Manage Analysis Services databases using BI Development Studio Cleanse data and populate data marts with SQL Server Integration Services Take advantage of the flexibility of the Unified Dimensional Model Manipulate and analyze data using MDX scripts and queries Use data mining to identify data patterns, correlations, and clustering Develop and distribute interactive reports with SQL Server 2008 Reporting Services Integrate business intelligence into enterprise applications using ADO.NET and the Report Viewer Control

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Customer Reviews

This author sets out to walk you through a huge subject, which is Microsoft's BI stack, in a single volume and does an admiral job of introducing the key concepts and components that a Microsoft implementation requires. It should be considered a starting point from which much is to be gained. Experienced BI developers will learn about the new features in SQL 2008. He also spends an entire

chapter on Transformers or Microsoft SSIS explaining each of the components and going into detail where required. His explanation of the Unified Data Model is quite good. The only thing I didn't like about this book was that you need the custom database that is free and is downloadable and that he refers to throughout the book. What's not to like about that? You cannot find any link on the publisher's site, the reference to the page in the book doesn't work and searching for the code on the publisher's site returns empty. I finally contacted customer service who sent me over to technical services that finally sent me the link. Not the author's problem but maybe technical books should come out of the technical press.

This book is a perfect choice for people who are generally familiar with relational databases and business intelligence concepts who want to learn how to build them in MS SQL Server. The book covers the database engine, SSIS, SSAS, and SSRS. The outline of the book starts with setting up the environment then proceeds thru getting the data, analyzing it, and finally reporting it. This is the right order to cover these topics. There is not enough here to make you an expert on any topic, but there is a good introduction to the many topics in the area. The book is well written, edited, and illustrated. It includes complete coverage of "what SQL Server 2008 BI can do" but is short on "how to do it". There is a good mix of theory, examples, and practice with many "Learn-by-doing" exercises. These are very valuable. The book does include enough detail to answer most beginners' questions.

Content is great, well laid out, explains topics in easy to understand language for the most part. Big problem with the examples though. There is a cube project called MaxMinSalesDM. This is created by one VS2010 project. It is populated by another. Problem is the column names in one of the tables are incorrect (in the analysis services project, a table is called SalesPerson, but in the SSIS projects that populate the cube, the table is referenced as Sales_Person. When populating the Slowly changing dimension, this causes an error. For a beginner, I need to learn by example of these projects, and don't have the knowledge to fix these errors. This has caused me hours of trouble and for this reason, I might just skip this book if you are going to rely on the projects.

Well-written book tackling an enormous topic. In addition to providing good conceptual overviews, actually goes into a fair bit of practical detail on each of the three main components (SSIS, SSAS, SSRS). Author uses his own database rather than the AdventureWorks sample used by most other books. This is a big plus, the database is very small and the number of tables/entities to contend

with is easy to conceptualize. Plus it gets you more involved with the exercises - less chance of 'sleepwalking' through a topic because AdventureWorks sometimes makes things seem deceptively familiar. Maybe surprisingly, the SSAS section is the best part of the book - in particular, the MDX and Data Mining chapters. MDX is a quirky #if incredibly powerful# language, and the examples and diagrams in Chapters 11 and 12 are VERY well thought out and presented. You'll have to go to other sources to truly master either MDX or Data Mining, but this book contains a fine foundation. I dived straight into both these topics previously, using more 'advanced' books, and regretted it. The final section is around SSRS, to my mind the dullest, most vanilla, part of the MS BI stack. Ploughing through plumbing/security/drudgery is not something I ever find interesting, but even SSRS was made interesting here through examples consuming OLAP and DM. Finally, a cool little bonus hidden away in Chapter 18 showing an example of programming through [...]. I'd highly recommend the book - it's a comprehensive and practical overview.

Kudos to the author and his style of writing. He explains each and every step on SSIS and SSAS so eloquently that he makes the topic understanding a breeze. This is one of the very few books I have read that gets you hooked on to it and finish it as soon as possible with all the exploration you want to do in SSIS and SSAS. In short - an excellent book for starters.

I appreciate this book for what it is... a fairly well conceived tour through the landscape of BI. What it is not is a suitable teacher for anything but the most basic concepts, nor a guide book suitable for forging your own paths. If your learning style is see it in action before understanding what it's doing, then this is probably your book. If you require context to learn and need some solid background information as well as in depth analysis along the way, this book will disappoint. And in the sense that it takes you past or through all major and minor components of BI, including sources of data, data warehousing, transformations, integration services, cube building, cube querying, reporting services, it is in one sense comprehensive. However, you may often find, as I did, that even a little more depth would have been extremely useful.

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