QUICKLY RESOLVE SQL SERVER ISSUES

Oil & Gas Firm Drills Down to Quickly Resolve SQL Server Issues

OVERVIEW

This oil and gas company is headquartered in Fort Worth, Texas with locations across the United States – from the East Coast to Alaska, including many smaller drilling sites. All locations are tasked with extracting oil and gas and selling it to refineries.

As part of an IT group responsible for supporting the systems operations of a fast-paced oil and gas company located in Fort Worth, Texas, systems analyst Joel Rickertsen has a wide range of duties. His primary focus is on the company's 50 SQL Servers that range in size from 1-2 TB running on virtual machines to much larger databases that are clustered for fault tolerance. "We use SQL Server for many things, including monitoring the wells, production data, and how to run the wells. We also have monitoring systems that run safety systems in case a tank overflows," he explained. As a result, being able to diagnose performance issues and identify server resource bottlenecks to make sure SQL Server databases are running at peak performance is critical to the company's success.

ORGANIZATON PROFILE

Industry OIl and Gas   **Location** Fort Worth, Texas, USA   **Employees** 3,500

CHALLENGE

The challenge for this Fort Worth-based oil and gas firm's IT department was how to manage more servers, more efficiently. This firm's IT staff needed SQL Server solutions to help them monitor, diagnose, and optimize the more than 2,000 databases on 50 Microsoft SQL Servers.

Working for a company that is very careful about adding additional staff, Rickertsen explained that they were seeking a SQL Server performance and monitoring solution that could help them manage more servers in a more efficient manner. The firm's servers also house critical back-end information, such as SharePoint, financial information, and custom in-house engineering applications. "Basically, we have about 2,000 databases that we support that cover a wide range of information," Rickertsen said. Many of the company's smaller locations across the U.S. have print and file servers. "With 50 SQL Server instances, some type of solution was needed. We started looking at different things across the industry, and we came up with three or four possible solutions," he said.

> It (SQL Diagnostic Manager) was the most powerful and easiest to use when you consider our day-to-day workflow. If we needed to find an answer to a problem, it was real easy to go in there, identify it, and take care of it without any extra stuff getting in our way.

Joel Rickertsen, **systems analyst**, oil and gas company

SOLUTION

A combination of IDERA's SQL Diagnostic Manager and SQL Doctor has empowered this IT staff to more effectively manage the health, performance, and availability of their SQL Server environment. With SQL Diagnostic Manager, they can pinpoint performance problems before they become major issues. Leveraging

the corrective measures suggested by IDERA's SQL Doctor, administrators, developers, and analysts can now drill down into solutions to quickly diagnose and cure SQL Server performance issues and potential problems.

POWERFUL PERFORMANCE MONITORING AND DIAGNOSTICS

After conducting a detailed comparison, the company determined it was best to deploy IDERA's SQL Diagnostic Manager. "It was the most powerful and easiest to use when you consider our day-to-day workflow. If we needed to find an answer to a problem, it was really easy to go in there, identify it, and take care of it without any extra stuff getting in our way," Rickertsen said.

With SQL Diagnostic Manager, the IT department also discovered that it was very painless to deploy and very lightweight on the servers as it does not require that you deploy agents or database objects on the monitored servers. "Being able to easily identify and resolve SQL Server problems before they occur was a major improvement," Rickertsen said.

PERFORMANCE TUNING SIMPLIFIED

With SQL Diagnostic Manager's high-level monitoring in place, Rickertsen had obtained the continuous monitoring and real-time analysis he sought. The product also provided health and performance metrics across all SQL Servers enterprise-wide, including clustered configurations.

Even with the alerting offered by SQL Diagnostic Manager, Rickertsen was very excited when he learned about IDERA's new SQL Doctor product. Rickertsen was interested in the fact that he could simply point SQL Doctor at the server, run diagnostic analysis, and come away with expert recommendations. By scheduling analyses regularly, Rickertsen could be alerted to issues and provided with fixes on a regular basis; ultimately saving him time spent chasing problems.

"We were involved with the Beta testing of SQL Doctor and liked what we saw. We ordered it as soon as it became available," he said. By targeting some of the most common areas of SQL Server problems, such as queries, server configuration, security database objects, memory, and wait statistics, SQL Doctor is now helping the oil and gas firm retrieve all necessary information, analyze the results, pinpoint potential problems, and provide ranked recommendations that help resolve issues on the servers.

SAVE VALUABLE TIME WITH UNPARALLELED ANALYSIS

"Time is valuable. SQL Doctor lets me be more productive and focus my attention on the things that matter most," Rickertsen said. "Instead of going looking for problems, it finds problems and identifies them for me so I can be more efficient and easily manage more servers," he added. Once a problem or potential issue has been identified, SQL Doctor will even provide a recommendation along with executable scripts so developers can effectively implement those recommendations. As a result, SQL Doctor has helped with their SQL Server performance tuning and educated them about how to best resolve issues. "It helps developers look in the right direction. They can either improve on what they're doing or it helps them pinpoint what could or couldn't be an issue," Rickertsen said.

PROVIDES EXECUTABLE SCRIPTS FOR TUNING

Focused primarily on the health and performance of the servers rather than server content, Rickertson said the combination of SQL Diagnostic Manager and SQL Doctor is allowing him to work smarter. While SQL Diagnostic Manager works at the enterprise level to deliver performance monitoring, alerting, and diagnostics, SQL Doctor drills down to specific servers to identify performance bottlenecks and recommend solutions. Put simply, Rickertsen said, "SQL Doctor finds the problems and identifies them so I don't have to track them down." He added, "One of the best features is that it gives me suggestions on how to fix things or links me to more information." As a result, time saved equals productivity for his whole team.

SHARING AND EXPORTING FAVORITE PRODUCT FEATURE

Once SQL Doctor retrieves all of the related information, analyzes the results, pinpoints potential problems, and provides ranked recommendations, Rickertsen can then easily distribute any recommendations and impact analysis to others in the company. With SQL Doctor helping to optimize SQL performance, he feels he can resolve any issue he may encounter on the oil and gas firm's servers. Being able to easily share information across the organization is clearly Rickertsen's favorite product feature. "There is almost nothing I don't like about SQL Doctor. I really like that you can schedule a scan, review the results, export the findings, and use it later on or pass it onto others in the organization," he said.

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