

FRANCISCAN HEALTH

Franciscan Health Services Keep Mission-critical Applications in Top Form

OVERVIEW

Established in 1968, Alverno Information Services, the IT Division of the Sisters of Franciscan Health, is responsible for managing the entire computing infrastructure of the eight hospitals and other healthcare facilities within the Franciscan Health system. To meet the growing IT needs of hospitals that service thousands of patients a day, Alverno has built an impressive infrastructure using state of the art information technology. Most of the core financial, clinical and management systems are third-party applications, and the majority use SQL Server as a backend database.

ORGANIZATON PROFILE

Industry Healthcare

Headquarters Mishawaka, Ind

Website www.franciscanhealth.org

CHALLENGE

Tom Sawyer is a Senior Database Administrator at Alverno. He and his team of four database administrators are faced with the challenge of keeping the critical systems, especially SQL Server, healthy for Franciscan Health. “SQL Server plays a very critical role in our infrastructure, said Tom. It comprises about 75% of our databases and serves as the backend to many of the critical hospital applications we use including our financial, materials management, and medical applications. With these types of applications and information at risk, we have to keep our SQL Server systems running smoothly at all times.”

“We use a wide range of healthcare applications at Franciscan Health, almost all of which are purchased applications, so we do not own the code. My team spends a great deal of time working with third-party application vendors recommending and implementing improvements to these applications. We were spending so much time doing investigative work. We decided that we needed a product that could monitor SQL Server proactively and help us more quickly find and diagnose problem code.”

“If we had a problem, we had no way to know concretely what the problem was. We would spend a lot of time setting up manual procedures to track activity for the same time the next day, but more often than not, the same set of conditions would not reoccur. We have wasted a lot of time and effort doing reactive performance investigation.”

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Tom Sawyer **Senior Database Administrator**



SOLUTION

“We recently used SQL Diagnostic Manager to resolve a problem with a glucose monitoring application quickly. End users reported performance problems. I opened SQL Diagnostic Manager and found a stored procedure that had been running for 40 minutes on one occurrence with other occurrences of the same stored procedure running at the same time as this long-running occurrence. That is when I realized that there was a problem with the application. We contacted the vendor. They discovered that the problem was related to a registry setting for their application, which they were able to change to correct the problem. This is one example of how SQL Diagnostic Manager has helped us to identify issues with vendor-written applications.”

BENEFITS

“SQL Diagnostic Manager has helped us become proactive rather than reactive in our performance troubleshooting efforts. But now, SQL Diagnostic Manager allows us to be proactive. It is always on, always tracking, and it keeps extensive historical performance and diagnostic information, so we can determine the source of a performance problem, even if the problem occurred months ago.”

“Here is an example. End users on a critical materials management application reported performance degradation. SQL Diagnostic Manager helped us determine that an sp stored procedure had been running for over an hour. We found that a report writer had been testing a poorly written report in a production environment. He assumed the code was ready for production when it needed further modifications. We were able to identify the report writer by the asset tag on his workstation. If we were not proactively monitoring, we would have never understood the cause of the problem.”

“SQL Diagnostic Manager also alerts us immediately if blocking is detected. It gives us information about the process, who is running it, the code being used, and who is being blocked. We then alert the application team about the problem and work with them to resolve the issue. Typically, we can identify and resolve blocking issues before the end user knows a problem exists!”

“Before we implemented SQL Diagnostic Manager, we were using a traditional enterprise monitoring product, BMC’s Patrol. It had an agent-based architecture that left more of a footprint on the server and was much more difficult to configure and use. But more importantly, it did not give the database administrators the depth of information that we need to diagnose and solve SQL Server performance problems. It gave us basic information like CPU and I/O, but it did not monitor the most critical part of SQL Server performance - the actual code being run by SQL Server! SQL Diagnostic Manager, on the other hand, is agentless, leaving a much smaller footprint on our servers and it is always monitoring the code being passed to the SQL Server. Before we implemented SQL Diagnostic Manager, we were paying more for an inferior product.”

“In a nutshell, SQL Diagnostic Manager makes our team more efficient and more proactive. We rely on SQL Diagnostic Manager from IDERA to keep our SQL Server infrastructure healthy, and our mission-critical applications are performing well. With SQL Diagnostic Manager in place, we save hours of time each week and thousands of dollars a year! I recommend SQL Diagnostic Manager to any SQL Server shop interested in monitoring mission-critical applications.”

SQL Diagnostic Manager

ACHIEVE 24/7 SQL MONITORING

- Monitor performance for physical, virtual, and cloud environments.
- Monitor queries and query plans to see the causes of blocks and deadlocks.
- View expert recommendations to optimize performance.
- Alert predictively with settings to avoid false alerts.
- View summary of top issues and alerts.
- Monitor application transactions and optimize SQL queries.

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