

UK Insurance • Financial Services
Chaucer PLC**Chaucer PLC Streamlines SQL Server Monitoring and Reports with Idera****Idera products**

SQL diagnostics manager
SQL defrag manager
SQL compliance manager
SQL safe

Idera tools for SQL Server deliver these key benefits for Chaucer PLC

- Eliminate time consuming processes with centralized monitoring and auditing of servers.
- Minimize costly server downtime with real-time monitoring and customizable alerts for faster diagnosis and remediation of performance and availability problems.
- Audit virtually all SQL Server activity and data changes delivering customizable reports for compliance audits.
- Save money by reducing database backup time over native backups and reducing backup disk space requirements.

INDUSTRY Chaucer Holdings PLC (www.chaucerplc.com) is a specialist insurance and reinsurance group listed on the London Stock Exchange. It provides the capital and expertise required to write business at Lloyd's, the world's leading insurance and reinsurance market. The core of its business is underwriting marine, non-marine and motor insurance and nuclear industry insurance.

BUSINESS CHALLENGE The challenge for Chaucer's IT department involved finding effective tools that would enable the Senior Database Administrator to monitor a large number of SQL servers and provide overview reports as well as exception reporting. The DBA needed automated solutions—including an auditing system for servers for compliance/regulatory purposes—that would save time and enhance productivity.

IDERA SOLUTION A combination of Idera tools provides performance monitoring and diagnostics, auditing and alerts for server changes, and backup and recovery solutions to help proactively manage and troubleshoot the SQL Server environment from a central console.

As a major reinsurance company in the United Kingdom, Chaucer PLC's IT group must keep its SQL servers running at peak performance while also assuring compliance with industry regulations and complete backup of data. Chaucer has chosen several Idera tools to deliver timely and effective solutions to these challenges.

Robert Proudfoot, senior database administrator, is responsible for managing the SQL database server production environment, as well as a development environment. "We need to be able to adequately determine whether a server has sufficient memory, is performing optimally or not, and where we need to look to address issues that affect our server stability and performance," Proudfoot explained.

Proactive performance monitoring and alerts

"One of the standard problems for DBAs in the financial services industry is that we have day-to-day operations which utilize a fairly low percentage of our server's resources. Then, at month-end or quarter-close, all of a sudden our server utilization goes up significantly because we're running some quite large reports. Naturally we try and put in server hardware that's going to cope with day-to-day demands but will also be able to manage an end-of-month performance surge. Too much capacity and you're spending more money than you need to.

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Senior Database Administrator,
Chaucer PLC,
A major reinsurance company in the
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Proudfoot especially appreciates the email alerts from SQL diagnostic manager.

“Once I’ve managed to baseline my servers and find appropriate levels or metrics, I’m then able to instruct the diagnostic tool to send me an e-mail or in fact it can page me—something I did not have before. I automatically get an e-mail when one of my metric thresholds is exceeded so I can immediately react to a problem while it’s actually happening. Too often in the past I’d have to wait for my users to notify me that my application is not performing well. And then I’d have to dive in and have a look.”

Proudfoot noted that once he receives an e-mail he can use SQL diagnostic manager to look that up and resolve any issue and be far more proactive in the process. “So that’s been the real gem there from that side of things.”

Centralized, comprehensive compliance

Proudfoot initially purchased SQL compliance manager and then SQL diagnostic manager.

“Until SQL compliance manager we didn’t really have a centralized system for auditing our servers,” he recalled. “We had procedures, obviously, though they were quite manual and time-consuming to run and look through reports. What I really wanted was to free up my time with a tool that would allow me to get exception reports, so I didn’t have to look through pages and pages of paper.” Proudfoot said that he can now get comprehensive compliance reporting that keeps both managers and auditors happy.

Easier recovery, backup and defrag

“One of the major surprises in using Idera tools,” Proudfoot emphasized, “was in discovering that SQL safe was such a reasonable and accessible product.” Idera’s SQL safe provides a convenient backup and recovery solution that significantly reduces database backup time as well as reducing backup disk space requirements, helping to ensure compliance with backup and recovery policies.

The biggest surprise for Proudfoot, however, was the time saved with SQL defrag manager. “Managing indexes is a massive task for DBAs that’s so time-consuming,” he said. SQL defrag manager automates the labor intensive process of finding and fixing database index fragmentation issues across multiple SQL servers.

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About Idera

Idera provides tools for Microsoft SQL Server, SharePoint and PowerShell management and administration. Our products provide solutions for performance monitoring, backup and recovery, security and auditing and PowerShell scripting. Headquartered in Houston, Texas, Idera is a Microsoft Gold Partner and has over 5,000 customers worldwide.

More information

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"A pleasure to use"

"Certainly when it comes to the day-to-day sorts of things, Idera tools just make certain tasks really easy and simple," Proudfoot noted. "That's quite nice because it does mean you can focus on the bigger picture and so forth without having to spend half your day every day preparing reports or having to go through some quite technical exercises to put performance data together."

"For companies that don't have a dedicated SQL resource, or people who know less about SQL server or specialists, Idera tools would make it far easier for them to manage the servers."

"I know it sounds a bit corny," he concluded, "but in actual fact the Idera tools are a pleasure to use. Most tools simply don't look good. But Idera's are actually quite nice to look at and I enjoy clicking through the reports and various dashboards."



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