

SOUTH WALES POLICE DEPARTMENT

How South Wales PD Improves their SQL Server Management with IDERA

OVERVIEW

The South Wales Police Department is responsible for an area of around 812 square miles, home to 1.23 million people, approximately 42 percent of the country's entire population. The capital city, Cardiff is recognised as one of the fastest growing cities in Europe, while Swansea is a maritime city with a rich and varied history with many prime attractions. The South Wales area attracts about 4 million tourists each year.

ORGANIZATON PROFILE

SOUTH WALES POLICE DEPARTMENT

Industry Law Enforcement

Headquarters Wales, UK

Website www.south-wales.police.uk

CHALLENGE

The challenge for the South Wales Police IT department involved the migration of various legacy applications to one that relies heavily on SQL servers. A Senior Database Administrator, Justin Hostettler-Davies must supervise the monitoring and management of more than 30 SQL servers and provide performance reports as well as troubleshooting problems. The DBA staff needed automated solutions that would free them from having to individually log in to each server for maintenance tasks.

SOLUTION

IDERA's SQL Diagnostic Manager and SQL Admin Toolset provide automated solutions to improve the management and monitoring of database servers, helping DBAs to proactively manage and troubleshoot their extensive SQL Server environment of the South Wales Police Department—all through a central console.

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If we'd have had these tools a year or two ago, it would have been a lot less heartache in migrating our data to SQL servers. **It would have made my job a lot easier.**

Justin Hostettler-Davies **Senior Database Administrator**
South Wales Police Department

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THE WHOLE STORY

Supervising within a team of eight DBAs, senior database administrator Justin Hostettler-Davies is responsible for managing Microsoft SQL Server databases for widely distributed servers used by the South Wales Police Department in the UK.

“We were having difficulty maintaining all our databases on many different servers effectively and efficiently,” he explained. “Because many procedures were manual and very time-consuming, some maintenance tasks weren’t carried out as vigorously as they should have been.”

To help solve the problem, Hostettler-Davies evaluated potential SQL Server database monitoring tools about two years ago – including IDERA SQL Diagnostic Manager. The IT group already used other monitoring tools for its Oracle databases and was thinking of extending them to SQL Server databases. However, upon evaluation, “We found the competitor’s tools were quite limited in what they could provide us specifically, whereas IDERA’s tools offered multiple solutions to our problems.”

Once he installed SQL Diagnostic Manager, Hostettler-Davies discovered he could examine the size of data files over a specific time period such as the previous month. “We suddenly had a way to measure our monthly capacity growth which was quite important to us at the time,” he explained, “especially since we had merged many applications into the one, and we weren’t really sure how to project data growth. Soon enough we were able to accurately predict the size of the database and therefore plan for the future.”

Hostettler-Davies also appreciates the discovery function of SQL Diagnostic Manager that “allows you to see what SQL Server databases are out there on your network. If you’re unsure exactly what servers you have in your environment, IDERA has the tool that will help you find out. This was very helpful for us because in the past, most of our servers were maintained and handled by different teams.”

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We now have SQL Diagnostic Manager running on all our machines so we can constantly see how the CPUs are performing, what processes are running, whether all the services are up, and what queries may not be performing well. We can quickly check things like alert logs and SQL server logs and whether backups have been successful or not. Instead of manually having to troll through all the logs, we get the information we need on the screen with visual alerts. Before **SQL Diagnostic Manager**, we wouldn’t have been aware of problems so quickly, or been able to get so clear a picture of our server health.

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ADOPTION OF SQL ADMIN TOOLSET

Hostettler-Davies recently evaluated IDERA's SQL Admin Toolset™ which helps to simplify and automate many day-to-day database administration procedures for SQL Server databases. The SQL Admin Toolset streamlines database administration procedures by eliminating the need for manual intervention and the labor intensive searches for relevant information about the database state and its performance.

"In the time I had to evaluate IDERA's SQL Admin Toolset, I was very impressed by its ability to diagnose and resolve problems quickly, often before the user knows a problem exists," Hostettler-Davies said in his evaluation report. "Because it is housed 'all under one roof' it means the majority of the utilities included are easy to find and use."

According to Hostettler-Davies, the SQL Admin Toolset is "an extremely effective tool for identifying performance issues that may involve SQL Server. Utilities such as Quick-Reindex, Password Checker, and Database/Login Mover will certainly be used in earnest here at the South Wales Police Department."

"IDERA's ability to produce more complex inventory and patching reports also impressed, and again this will be utilised frequently and will replace existing working practices," he noted. Hostettler-Davies also indicated the functionality in the SQL Admin Toolset was so comprehensive that it would require three or four different individual tools from competitors to match its capabilities.

KEY BENEFITS

- Streamlines the general management, monitoring and auditing across all database servers.
- Minimizes costly server downtime with alerts that enable faster response times to investigate, diagnose and resolve any performance and availability problems.
- Eliminates current manual processes replacing them with more convenient and efficient automated tasks.
- Improves overall productivity of both skilled and novice DBAs as complex and time-consuming procedures are eliminated.
- Both end-user/customers and senior management are more content!

"We're actually going through a general IT health checking exercise right now, not just for our SQL Server databases. The IDERA tools have vastly improved the way we're able to report that information to the professionals who are doing these health checks. We've identified, for example, certain SA passwords that weren't strong enough."

"To conclude," Hostettler-Davies wrote in his evaluation, "I will be recommending the immediate purchase of the software (which is very reasonably priced for what it offers) with the view of utilising the tools as soon as possible to gain their benefits."

"If we'd have had these tools a year or two ago, it would have been a lot less heartache in migrating our data to SQL servers," he said. "It would have made my job a lot easier."

SQL Diagnostic Manager

ACHIEVE 24/7 SQL MONITORING

- Performance monitoring for physical and virtual environments
- Query plan monitoring to see the causes of blocks and deadlocks
- Transactional SQL Server application monitoring with SQL Workload Analysis
- Integrated SQL Doctor expert recommendations
- Predictive alerting with settings to avoid false alerts
- Web-based dashboard with at-a-glance views of top issues and alerts

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