



Microsoft SQL Server Master Data Services FAQs

What exactly is MDM?

MDM, or master data management, can be described as the technology, tools, and processes required to create and maintain consistent and accurate lists of master data. MDM is not just a technological problem. In many cases, fundamental changes to business process will be required to maintain clean master data, and some of the most difficult MDM issues are more political than technical. MDM includes both creating and maintaining master data. Investing a lot of time, money, and effort in creating a clean, consistent set of master data is a wasted effort unless the solution includes tools and processes to keep the master data clean and consistent as it is updated and expanded.

MDM can also be described by the way that master data interacts with other data. For example, in transaction systems, master data is almost always involved with transactional data. A customer buys a product. A vendor sells a part, and a partner delivers a crate of materials to a location. An employee is hierarchically related to their manager, who reports up through a manager (another employee). A product may be a part of multiple hierarchies describing their placement within a store. This relationship between master data and transactional data may be fundamentally viewed as a noun/verb relationship. Transactional data capture the verbs, such as sale, delivery, purchase, email, and revocation; master data are the nouns. This is the same relationship data-warehouse facts and dimensions share. For more information, please visit: <http://msdn2.microsoft.com/en-us/library/bb190163.aspx>.

What is Master Data Services?

Master Data Services (MDS) helps organizations standardize and streamline the business data customers use across their organization to make critical business decisions. MDS is a Master Data Management (MDM) application built from platform components which may be deployed as an application or extended by use of the platform components to consistently define and manage the critical data entities of an organization. MDS is an any-domain hub that supports but is not limited to domains such as product, customer, location, cost center, equipment, employee, and vendor.

Using MDS, customers can manage critical data assets by enabling proactive stewardship, enforcing data quality rules, defining workflows around data changes, notifying impacted parties, managing hierarchies, and sharing the authoritative source with all impacted systems.

What is the ship vehicle for Microsoft SQL Server Master Data Services?

Microsoft SQL Server Master Data Services will ship as part of SQL Server 2008 R2

Will I be able to purchase SQL Server MDS as a standalone technology?

No, MDS will ship as part of SQL Server 2008 R2 and customers will need to purchase a SQL Server 2008 R2 license to access MDS capabilities.

I am considering purchasing SQL Server 2008 with Software Assurance (SA). Will I get the MDS capabilities shipping in SQL Server 2008 R2?

Yes, customers purchasing SQL Server 2008 with SA will be eligible to receive the new capabilities shipping SQL Server 2008 R2 at no additional cost.

How will SQL Server MDS will be licensed and priced?

We are still working through licensing & packaging details and at this point in time are not making any announcements on editions, licensing or specific feature differentiation for SQL Server 2008 R2.

Will I need to purchase SharePoint Server to use Master Data Services (MDS)?

No, MDS shipping as part of SQL Server 2008 R2 will not include a dependency on Microsoft Office SharePoint Server.

When can I get access to the public CTP?

The first public CTP for SQL Server Master Data Services will ship in H2 of 2009.

Why did the ship vehicle change from Office SharePoint to SQL Server?

The objective of the Stratature acquisition was to enable customers to manage their most important data records and to make these records available to their end users in a consistent way. To achieve this objective, we concluded that packaging the acquired technology as part of SQL Server was the right approach for the following reasons:

- **Alignment with how customers implement:** Based on early customer feedback, it became clear that our priority needed to focus on helping people manage their master data at the infrastructure level and that delivering this capability as part of our BI Platform would best enable infrastructure level adoption for customers.
- **Aligning with how customers buy:** Master Data Services (MDS) as a new service of SQL Server fits naturally into the Application Platform value proposition and sales motion. This allows our customers to purchase a complete solution without dramatically changing how they purchase IT infrastructure.

- **Technology alignment:** Most of the foundational technologies upon which MDS depends are in SQL Server. As a result shipping in the same schedule as the platform reduces confusion for customers and provides for more opportunities for integration with those technologies. This also includes aligning more closely with future technologies like Data Quality Services from the Zoomix acquisition.

What are the core problems should I expect to solve with SQL Server MDS?

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Who should I contact if I have additional questions?

For most questions, your first point of contact should be MDM at Microsoft mdmatms@microsoft.com