Inside Microsoft SQL Server 2000 by Kalen Delaney

Ok, But Could Be A Lot Better

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My Personal Review:
Before Inside SQL Server 2000 came out, my favorite technical book on earth was Inside SQL Server 7. Up until today, there was no other book that I consulted with as much as I did with Inside 7. My copy is already in a very bad shape from overuse. I often consult with it whenever I am in doubt on any issue concerning SQL Server internals. I sometimes read from it to my students in class to prove a point. I had many expectations from inside SQL Server 2000 and I eagerly read every word in it. The book exceeded my expectations! Before it came out, I thought that it would have the same level of detail that Inside 7 had with additional discussions on SQL Server 2000s new features, but it goes far beyond that. In many areas it goes into smaller details than Inside 7 did discussing issues that I have never seen discussed in any other book or published document. For example, in the chapter about indexes DBCC PAGE is used extensively to actually traverse the B-Trees and examine the actual layout of the data in the index pages. By examining those, a lot of the points concerning the interesting index architecture that SQL Server uses become clearer. By getting to this level of detail, I feel that I have more adequate tools to make the right critical decisions in a system regarding which columns to index; on which column(s) to create the clustered index; space consumption of indexes on huge tables, and so on. The chapter also covers the new indexes on views and on computed columns. The chapter on locking discusses the locking architecture and the lock manager in detail but it also discusses internal lock structures such as Lock Blocks and Lock Owner Blocks in great depth. There is simply no way to get that information in any other source. Many internals related areas get more attention in Inside 2000 such as the storage engine and the relational engine. The query processor has a whole chapter of its own! The installation process is covered in great detail covering all the installation options, some of which are totally new, such as multi instances. It also covers hardware considerations such as RAID controllers, file system, memory and so on. The chapter on tables discusses internal page and row structures explaining every bit inside the row. T-SQL is not neglected either. Beyond programmatic aspects, Inside 2000 gets into the various internals and optimization aspects of the various constructs and handles query and performance tuning in depth. Among the topics that are covered are joins,
subqueries, derived tables, user defined functions, stored procedures, transactions, referential integrity including the new cascading referential constraints, after and instead of triggers, views, cursors, large objects and more. Full-Text searching has a whole new section. Tough areas such as plan caching; auto parameterization and reuse of execution plans are also explained in detail. Join algorithms including nested loops, hash and merge are also explained. The coverage of data modification internals is outstanding! It includes coverage of page splits; the various internal update mechanisms such as in-place and non in-place updates; bulk inserts optimization and more. All these were just examples. The book is very rich in the areas that it covers and it is definitely a must for programmers and DBAs that really want to know their stuff as far as SQL Server is concerned. The book is a work of art.

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