Great Book. If You Read It You Will Understand Why...

Tuning databases can be fun if built into the predeployment time allocated to building a system. Tuning ceases to be fun when its undertaken on a production system, overseen by an unhappy customer with crushing time constraints. Unfortunately, the latter scenario tends to be the more common. Microsoft SQL Server 2000 Performance Tuning Technical Reference provides database administrators and (to a lesser degree) developers with the information they need to extract maximum performance from Microsoft SQL Server 2000. This book favors optimization of SQL Server that can be done via the administrative interface rather than in application code. Most of database tuning has to do with sacrificing one aspect of performance (say, disk storage capacity) for the improvement of another (like the execution speed of a particular kind of query). The authors of this book—the team of consultants from a Texas company that specializes in database tuning, as well as from Microsoft—take care to explain the tradeoffs involved in various tuning decisions. Choose one option, they say, and performance metric A will improve at the expense of metric B. Having explained the design considerations for various tuning strategies, they walk their readers through how to do the tuning theyre talking about. Instructions arent for the clueless, but theyre fully adequate for SQL Server users who know their way around the interface generally. --David Wall Topics covered: How to make databases served by Microsoft SQL Server 2000 run as fast and as efficiently as possible by tweaking the way it runs. Emphasis is placed on read/write operations (including SQL Servers way of interacting with RAID arrays), performance monitors, and settings for processor, disk, and RAM usage. There is also a lot of information on capacity planning and system sizing.

My Personal Review: Considering the difficulty of the topic, this book is a fairly easy read. The single best thing about the book is that the advice is actionable. You can read this book and immediately begin tuning. Coverage is excellent—performance tuning, capacity planning, setting up disk drives, managing cpu, I/O, network, and memory, index tuning, backups, replication, OLTP.
versus OLAP, etc. For each subject area, the authors explain the applicable concepts and SQL Server tools, and then systematically explain their application using practical examples. Compared to other performance tuning books, it is an 80/20 book. By this I mean that the authors focus on what is most important and then move on to the next topic. They don't get carried away demonstrating how much they know about each concept or go into the minutia of the options of each SQL Server tool. I hope they write more books.

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