



# Microsoft® SQL Server® 2008



# Agora

Enabling your business through technology

## Empower Business Users with Report Builder 2.0

By Ken Lai

includes a new version of Report Builder which was first introduced in SQL Server 2005. It allows end users to create ad hoc reports without the requirement for deep technical knowledge. It delivers an intuitive, Office-like report authoring environment enabling business and power users to leverage their experience with Microsoft Office 2007 products. It's now a local client install rather than a click-once application that you download and install from Report manager. Since it is a thick client application you can now design more complex reports than prior versions. Compared with Report Builder 1.0, here is my list of the top 5 new features:

### 1. Enable users to customize and update all existing reports.

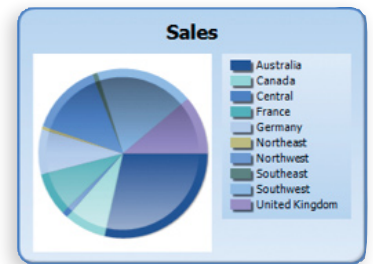
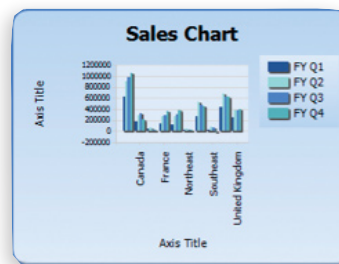
I feel this is the best new feature. Report Builder 1.0 claimed it allowed business users to create their own reports. While factually correct, Report Builder 1.0 only allowed creation of reports against the Report Model (a report model is a business description of an underlying database that is used for building ad hoc reports in Report Builder 1.0. It is an additional layer of information that maps database tables and views into concepts that are meaningful to business users.). If you deployed reports that did not use a Report Model as data source and then tried to modify them using Report Builder 1.0 the program didn't allow you to open the existing report, because the data source associated with the report was not a report model. This limitation frustrated people when they were not using a Report Model as their

report data source. With Report Builder 2.0 full data source support is provided. It continues to support the Report Model, and also allows you to create your own data sources based on a relational database or multi-dimensional database. You can use the server resources such as shared data sources. This is great improvement as users are able to customize and update all existing reports, regardless of where they were initially designed.

### 2. Multiple data regions in a single report

In most situations people want to create a report which combines multiple charts and tables. But this was not possible in Report Builder 1.0 because it only supported one data region in the report. Users were required to either create a chart report or a table but not both. Report Builder 2.0 supports multiple data regions in a single report. You can insert tables and charts and also matrixes into a single report, and they can have queries of data from multiple data sources. The following is an example of combining different regions.

# 2.0



Sales Region	FY Q1	FY Q2	FY Q3	FY Q4	Total
Australia	\$626,825.65	\$911,188.77	\$975,861.11	\$1,063,258.66	\$3,577,134.19
Canada	\$182,737.45	\$285,676.59	\$327,422.30	\$212,312.26	\$1,008,148.59
Central	\$34,130.97	\$64,721.98	\$32,327.36	\$10,729.21	\$141,909.52
France	\$144,772.31	\$263,505.09	\$278,582.88	\$362,094.84	\$1,048,955.12
Germany	\$123,103.21	\$266,150.18	\$299,468.24	\$387,395.43	\$1,076,117.07
Northeast	\$2,688.40	\$37,728.28	\$17,827.71	\$21,908.77	\$80,153.16
Northwest	\$275,446.28	\$539,579.71	\$469,188.12	\$456,313.95	\$1,740,528.07
Southeast	\$18,719.65	\$75,324.14	\$51,834.65	(\$20,474.10)	\$125,404.35
Southwest	\$431,239.69	\$673,054.14	\$622,084.23	\$629,765.44	\$2,356,143.50
United Kingdom	\$244,001.21	\$378,311.01	\$377,910.01	\$396,650.45	\$1,396,872.69
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$2,083,664.82</b>	<b>\$3,495,239.90</b>	<b>\$3,452,506.60</b>	<b>\$3,519,954.93</b>	<b>\$12,551,366.25</b>

# 2.0

## Empower Business Users with Report Builder 2.0

### 3. Flexible Report Layout

Another significant enhancement delivered in Report Builder 2.0 is the new Flexible Report Layout data region. This feature allows users

		2008	2009				All Total	
Territory	Customer	Yearly Total	1	2	3	4	Yearly Total	
AFR	Territory Total		\$284.87			(\$4,633.20)	(\$4,348.33)	(\$4,348.33)
AFRICA	Territory Total				\$5,362.28		\$5,362.28	\$5,362.28
ASIA	A245-6			\$3879.32	\$2017.65	\$14137.44	\$20034	20034.41
	A283-7	\$11363						11362.57
	P201-6	\$50611		\$1292.00	\$23794.34		\$25086	75697.60
	RB		\$563.70				\$564	563.70
	S154-5	\$1302						1301.51
	S158-5	\$40581	\$0.00	\$4313.86	\$1199.37	\$0.00	\$5513	46093.81
	T61-04		\$0.00				\$0	0.00
	U25-07				\$1563.25		\$1563	1563.25
	Territory Total	\$103,855.92	\$563.70	\$9,485.18	\$28,574.61	\$14,137.44	\$52,760.93	\$156,616.85
CAN	Territory Total	\$67,779.23	\$4,281.02	\$983.10	\$61,272.92	\$4,516.32	\$71,053.36	\$138,832.59
EUR	Territory Total	\$152,461.82	\$61,747.98	\$1,459.31	\$284,810.79	\$0.00	\$348,018.08	\$500,479.90
LT	Territory Total	\$59,172.21	\$26,837.09	\$8,823.73	\$12,830.16	\$2,392.46	\$50,883.44	\$110,055.65
ME	Territory Total	\$179,320.54	\$564,789.67	\$41,596.23	\$218,922.30	(\$1,196.92)	\$824,111.28	\$1,003,431.82
USLE	Territory Total	\$229,406.85	\$65,338.29	\$76,806.97	\$89,976.74	\$25,243.70	\$257,365.70	\$486,772.55
USUE	Territory Total	\$309,558.25	\$156,323.80	\$146,437.14	\$182,728.14	\$27,964.44	\$513,453.52	\$823,011.77
USW	Territory Total	\$475,487.04	\$156,879.45	\$197,133.95	\$187,224.41	\$29,035.08	\$570,272.89	\$1,045,759.93
All Total		\$1,577,041.86	\$1,037,045.87	\$482,725.61	\$1,071,702.35	\$97,459.32	\$2,688,933.15	\$4,265,975.01

to build more flexible reports since it now supports free form layout which was not available in 1.0. When you build matrix reports, it supports multiple groups. In addition, users can add subtotals for each group level. For example, the figure above shows how you can add two levels in both rows and columns and a summary for each group level. You can also drill down by each group.

This flexibility is very nice to have as it was really difficult to add these subtotals to different group levels in Report Builder 1.0.

### 4. Enriched data visualization

Report Builder 2.0 has a new gauge data region which supports two gauge types; linear and radial. This new feature is especially good for building Key Performance Indicator reports for operational or executive dashboards.

Also, Report Builder 1.0 only included a limited number of report types; Column, Line, Bar and Area. In Report Builder 2.0 there are significantly more chart types. These are very similar to the charts found in Office 2007 and include Shape, Range, Scatter and Polar charts.

### 5. Office style user interface

In keeping with Microsoft's stated goal of bringing "BI to the Masses", the interface for Report Builder 2.0 is very similar to the

Office 2007 environment. This familiar interface makes Report Builder 2.0 much more intuitive and easy to use.

With these new features, business users now can more easily create richer reports with Report Builder 2.0 than the previous version. Report building can be done by a much wider spectrum of people and not be constrained by resources in the IT or Business Analysis functions. This should allow organizations to provide much better access to information for all of their knowledge workers.

For more information, please go to: <http://www.microsoft.com/sqlserver/2008/en/us/report-builder.aspx>

For more information about our Enterprise Application Development practice, please visit our website at [www.agorainc.com/development](http://www.agorainc.com/development)

Ken Lai is a Senior Software Developer at Agora. He can be reached at [klai@agorainc.com](mailto:klai@agorainc.com) or 416-304-1338 x20.



Agora Consulting Partners  
36 Toronto Street, Suite 960  
Toronto, ON M5C 2C5

[www.agorainc.com](http://www.agorainc.com)  
[sales@agorainc.com](mailto:sales@agorainc.com)  
416-304-1338