SQL Query Optimization for Researchers

- As researcher analysts, we often need costly SQL queries.
 - Wide time ranges
 - Nationwide studies
 - Complicated cohort criteria
- In this presentation, we will talk about how to safely and efficiently approach heavy data needs, and we will troubleshoot some illustrative example queries.

Presented by Andrew Holbrook, VINCI Data Services



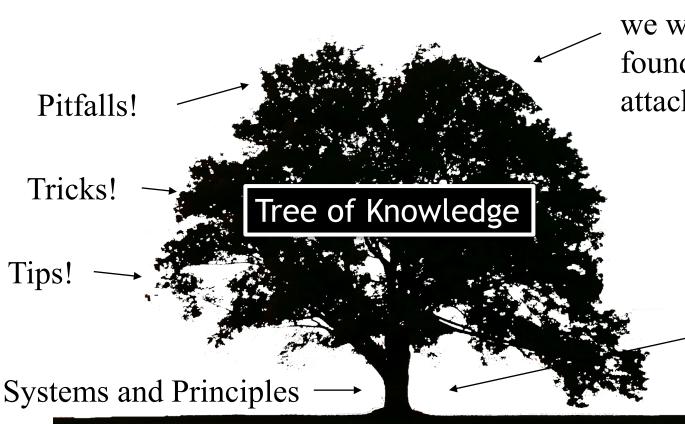
Assumptions

I assume:

- You know how to write basic to intermediate
 SQL queries.
- You know basic CDW architecture, e.g.
 - Dim vs Fact tables
 - Foreign keys
- You can ensure your queries return the correct results.
 - This CyberSeminar is focused on getting the same results faster.



The Plan

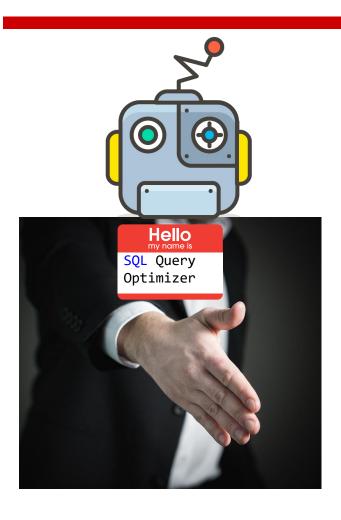


When we arrive here, we will have a solid foundation to which to attach these details.

> We will start at the bottom with nontechnical explanations.



Meet Your Colleague



Strengths:

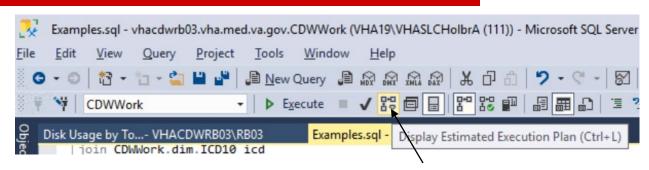
- Searching
- Sorting
- Syntax
- Arithmetic

Weaknesses:

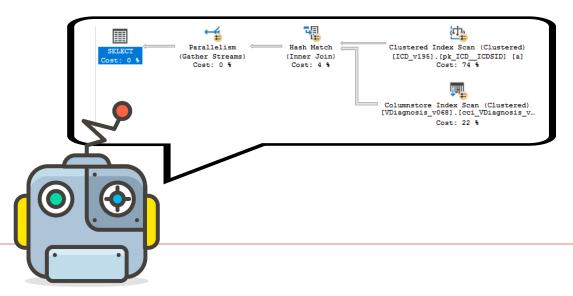
- Common sense
- Context
- Matching datatypes
- Algebra



Query Plans



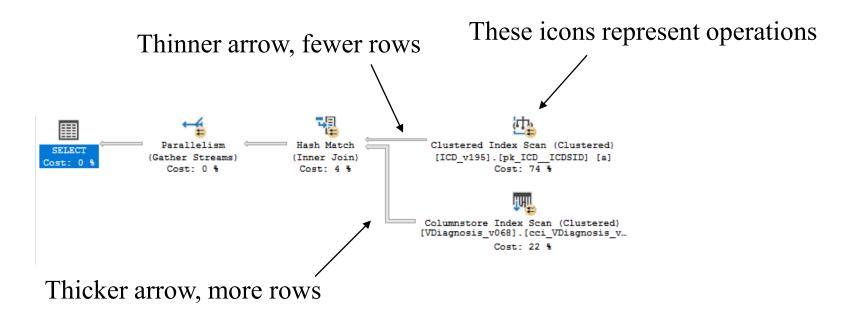
Click! This doesn't run the query, it just asks your colleague what he'd do IF you ran the query.





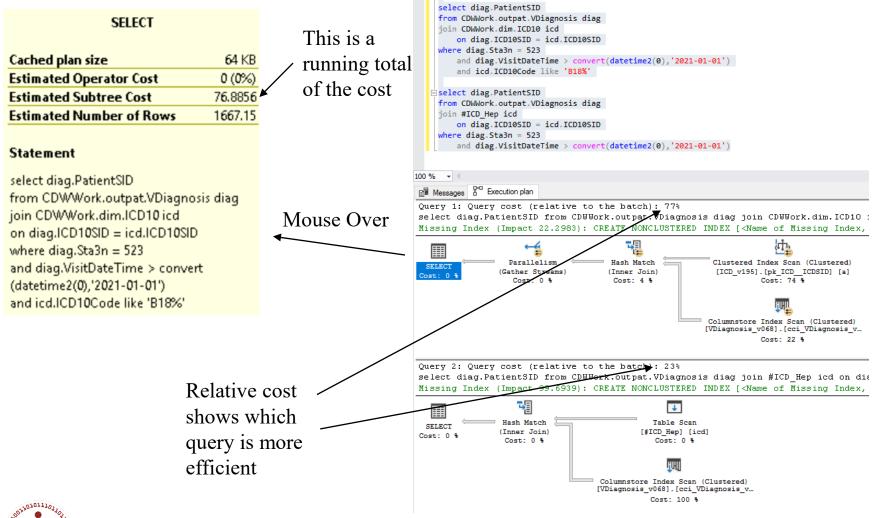
How to Read a Query Plan

- Each operation passes rows to the next from right to left.
- Mouse over operations for more info.
- Watch for warnings like 4 and 4





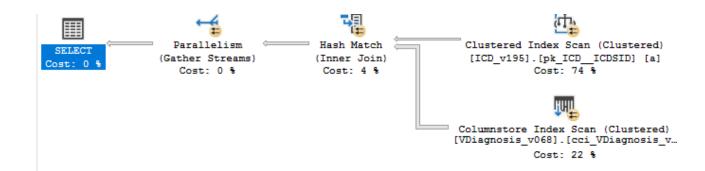
More Info from Query Plans



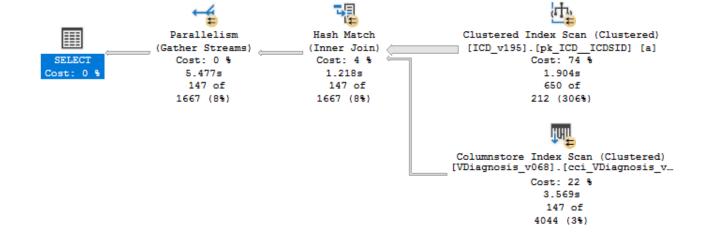


It was Just an Estimate!

Estimated

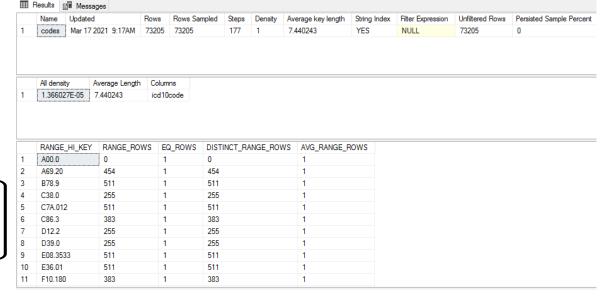


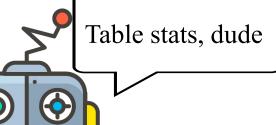
Actual





So Where Did Those Estimates Come From?

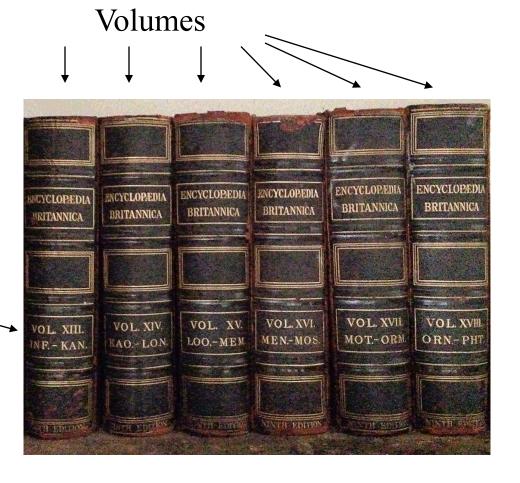






Partitions

Entries are stored alphabetically, and volumes are labeled with end



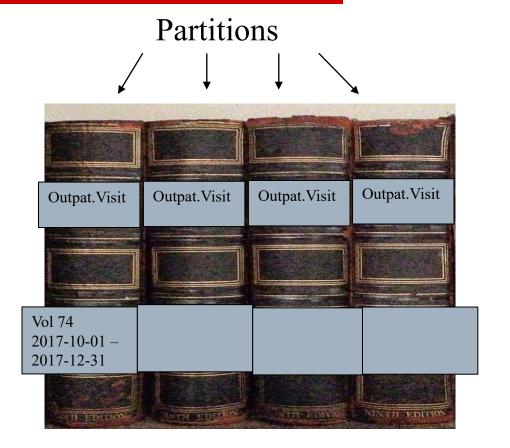




points

Partitions

Entries are stored by date, and partitions are labeled with end points







One More Thing

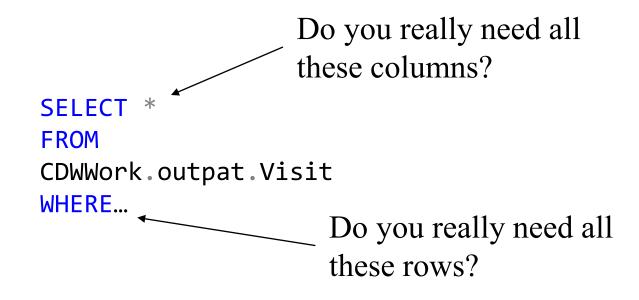
- Researchers must translate object names when using provisioned views.
 - Partitioning, indices, and metadata all apply!
 - Your execution plans will have an extra join to your cohort.

```
[CDWWork].[Outpat].[Visit]

[ORD_Holbrook_202202042D].[Src].[Outpat_Visit]
```

Now, Finally, Best Practices

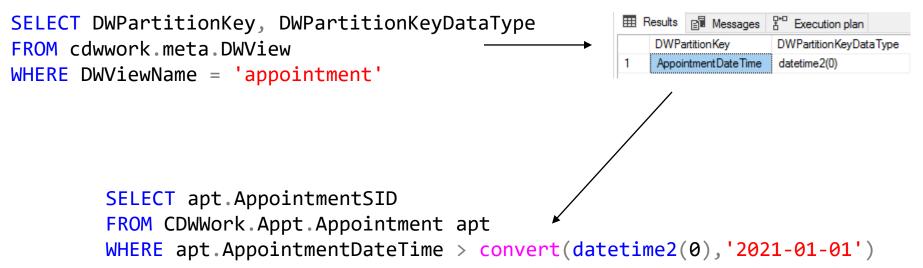
- Don't be greedy.
 - Select only the rows and columns you need, especially from fact tables.





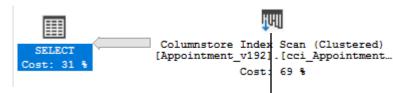
Partition Elimination

- CDW fact tables are partitioned. In order to use partition elimination:
 - Determine which column is used
 - Check the datatype for that column
 - Use that column and datatype in your WHERE clause





Did It Work?



Columnstore Index Scan (Clustered)

Scan a columnstore index, entirely or only a range.

Dhusiaal Oassatiaa	Columnstore Index Scan
Physical Operation	
Logical Operation	Clustered Index Scan
Estimated Execution Mode	Batch
Storage	ColumnStore
Estimated Operator Cost	20.4391 (69%)
Estimated I/O Cost	15.3258
Estimated Subtree Cost	20.4391
Estimated CPU Cost	5.11331
Estimated Number of Executions	1
Estimated Number of Rows to be Read	46434600
Estimated Number of Rows	37205500
Estimated Row Size	22 B
Partitioned	True
Ordered	True
Node ID	1

Predicate

([CDW12].[Appt].[Appointment_v192].[OpCode] as [a].[OpCode] \'X' OR [CDW12].[Appt].[Appointment_v192].[OpCode] as [a].[OpCode] \'X') AND ([CDW12].[Appt].[Appointment_v192].[OpCode] as [a]. [OpCode] \'D' OR [CDW12].[Appt].[Appointment_v192].[OpCode] as [a].[OpCode] \'D') AND [CDW12].[Appt].[Appointment_v192]. [Appointment_v192]. [Appointment_v192]. [Appointment_v192]. [AppointmentDateTime] as [a].[AppointmentDateTime] > '2021-01-01 00:00:00'

Object

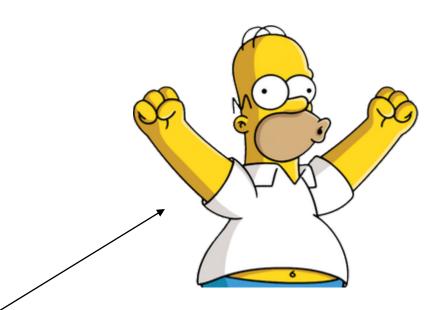
[CDW12].[Appt].[Appointment_v192].[cci_Appointment_v192] [a]

Output List

[CDW12].[Appt].[Appointment_v192].AppointmentSID, [CDW12]. [Appt].[Appointment_v192].OpCode

Seek Predicates

Seek Keys[1]: Start: Ptnld1001 >= Scalar Operator((87)), End: Ptnld1001 <= Scalar Operator((122))





Use Temp Dims

- Build yourself a temporary dimension with the SIDs you need.
 - Searching with wildcards is fine, because you're only using the dimension.
- Don't join to the fact table until you know what you're looking for.
 - In general, wildcard searches on fact tables should be avoided.
- Similarly, you can use temp tables for patient cohorts.



Temp Dim Example

```
SELECT diag PatientSID
FROM CDWWork outpat VDiagnosis diag
JOIN CDWWork.dim ICD10 icd
    ON diag.ICD10SID = icd.ICD10SID
WHERE diag Sta3n = 523
   AND diag VisitDateTime > convert(datetime2(0), '2021-01-01')
    AND icd ICD10Code LIKE 'B18%'
SELECT icd10SID 4
                                           Just grab the SID
INTO #ICD Hep
                                           we need for the
FROM CDWWork.dim.ICD10 icd
WHERE icd ICD10Code LIKE 'B18%'
                                           JOIN
SELECT diag PatientSID
FROM CDWWork outpat VDiagnosis diag
JOIN #ICD Hep icd
    ON diag.ICD10SID = icd.ICD10SID
WHERE diag.Sta3n = 523
    AND diag. VisitDateTime > convert(datetime2(0), '2021-01-01')
```

Multiple Fact Tables In One Query

- Joining multiple fact tables is not usually recommended.
 - Typically, it is better to refine a cohort over multiple queries.
- If you do use multiple fact tables in one query, remember to use the partition key for each one.



Use the Partition Key For Each Fact Table

```
Query 1: Query cost (relative to the batch): 79%
select diag.PatientSID, prov.ProviderSID
                                                          select diag.PatientSID, prov.ProviderSID from CDWWork.outpat.VDiagnosis diag join #ICD He
from CDWWork.outpat.VDiagnosis diag
join #ICD Hep icd
                                                                        Parallelism
                                                                                        Hash Match
                                                                      (Gather Streams)
                                                                                       (Inner Join)
                                                                                                      [#ICD Hep] [icd]
     on diag.ICD10SID = icd.ICD10SID
                                                                                        Cost: 0 %
                                                                                                        Cost: 0 %
join CDWWork.Outpat.VProvider prov
                                                                                                        Hash Match
                                                                                                                             Columnstore Index Scan.
     on diag. VisitSID = prov. VisitSID
                                                                                                       (Inner Join)
                                                                                                                             [VDiagnosis v068].[cci .
                                                                                                        Cost: 0 %
                                                                                                                                  Cost: 14 %
where diag.Sta3n = 523
     and diag.VisitDateTime
                                                                                                                             Columnstore Index Scan...
          > convert(datetime2(0),'2021-01-01')
                                                                                                                             [VProvider v050].[cci V...
                                                                                                                                  Cost: 86 %
select diag PatientSID, prov ProviderSID
                                                          Query 2: Query cost (relative to the batch): 21%
                                                          select diag.PatientSID, prov.ProviderSID from CDWWork.outpat.VDiagnosis diag join #ICD He
from CDWWork.outpat.VDiagnosis diag
join CDWWork.Outpat.VProvider prov
                                                                       Parallelism
                                                                                       Hash Match
                                                                                                       Table Scan
                                                           SELECT
                                                                      (Gather Streams)
                                                                                       (Inner Join)
                                                                                                     [#ICD Hep] [icd]
     on diag.VisitSID = prov.VisitSID
                                                          Cost: 0 %
                                                                                        Cost: 0 %
                                                                                                       Cost: 0 %
join #ICD Hep icd
     on diag.ICD10SID = icd.ICD10SID
                                                                                                       Hash Match
                                                                                                                            Columnstore Index Scan...
                                                                                                       (Inner Join)
                                                                                                                            [VDiagnosis v068].[cci ...
where diag.Sta3n = 523
                                                                                                       Cost: 0 %
                                                                                                                                 Cost: 54 %
     and diag.VisitDateTime
          > convert(datetime2(0),'2021-01-01')
                                                                                                                            Columnstore Index Scan...
                                                                                                                            [VProvider_v050].[cci_V...
     and prov. VisitDateTime
                                                                                                                                 Cost: 46 %
          > convert(datetime2(0), '2021-01-01'
                                                                           Does this change the
                                                                           results? Nope! But it sure
```

changes the performance.



Functions

- Avoid using functions on columns in WHERE or JOIN clauses.
 - In the SELECT clause is fine.
- Comparing a column to a function output is the correct way.
- Treat math like a function.
- Bottom line: Columns should be by themselves on one side of the operator in the WHERE clause if at all possible.



Functions on Columns

- When comparing columns, you will sometimes need some logic applied to one. In this case:
 - Leave fact table columns as-is, especially the partition column.
 - Pre-filter and pre-calculate in a CTE or temp table.



Column Function Example

Note the column inside a function in the SELECT clause. This is fine! Just don't do it in a JOIN or WHERE.

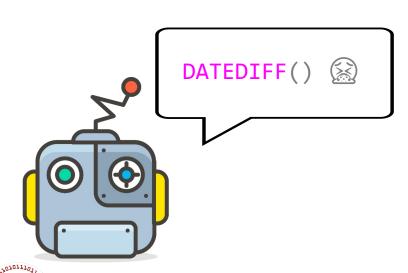
```
select PatientSID
FROM CDWWork.Outpat.Visit vis
WHERE year(vis.VisitDateTime) = '2020'
and Sta3n = 523
```

```
select PatientSID, year(vis.visitdatetime) as VisitYear
into #temp
From CDWWork.Outpat.Visit vis
WHERE vis.VisitDateTime >= convert(datetime2(0),'2020-01-01')
and vis.VisitDateTime < convert(datetime2(0),'2021-01-01')
and Sta3n = 523</pre>
```



Functions

Especially avoid functions like DateDiff() with multiple columns used as inputs. You should split the columns so they are on opposite sides of the operator.



Date Function Example

```
SELECT PatientSID
FROM CDWWork.Appt.Appointment apt
WHERE datediff(month, apt.AppointmentDateTime ,getdate()) between 0 and 1
```

Also, this yields the wrong result

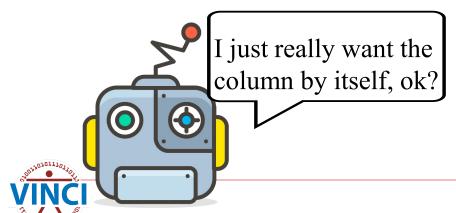
```
SELECT PatientSID
FROM CDWWork.Appt.Appointment apt
WHERE apt.AppointmentDateTime>=convert(datetime2(0),dateadd(month,-1 ,getdate()))
    AND apt.AppointmentDateTime < convert(datetime2(0),getdate())</pre>
```



Leave That Column Alone

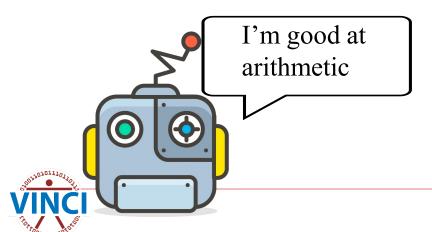
```
select p.PatientICN, p.PatientSID
from cdwwork.Patient.Patient p
where Sta3n + 1 = 661
```

```
select p.PatientICN, p.PatientSID
from cdwwork.Patient.Patient p
where Sta3n = 660
```



Functions

Don't worry about functions and math getting complicated. Just make sure it's isolated from the column.



Your Colleague Is Helpful



SELECT PatientSID

FROM CDWWork.Chem.LabChem lc

WHERE lc.LabChemCompleteDateTime >

convert(datetime2(0),'2021-03-12 10:54:14.253')

Repetition Legitimizes

Just make sure functions and math are isolated from the columns!



What About NULLs in the Partition Field?

```
--fine query, but I want to include patients that have not been
discharged
select i.InpatientSID, i.PatientSID, i.AdmitDateTime,
i.DischargeDateTime
from cdwwork.Inpat.Inpatient i
where i.DischargeDateTime > convert(datetime2(0),'2022-05-01')
order by i.DischargeDateTime desc
```



What About NULLs in the Partition Field?

```
--no good, column inside function
--plus there are some weird old records where discharge never got filled in
select i.InpatientSID, i.PatientSID, i.AdmitDateTime, i.DischargeDateTime
from cdwwork.Inpat.Inpatient i
where isnull(i.DischargeDateTime,getdate()) > convert(datetime2(0),'2022-05-01')
order by i.DischargeDateTime desc
--no good, this use of OR prevents SQL from using the partition key
--humans know discharges should be after admissions, but SQL doesn't know that
select i.InpatientSID, i.PatientSID, i.AdmitDateTime, i.DischargeDateTime
from cdwwork.Inpat.Inpatient i
where (i.DischargeDateTime > convert(datetime2(0), '2022-05-01')
        or i.AdmitDateTime > convert(datetime2(0), '2022-05-01'))
order by i.DischargeDateTime desc
--this is the way
--explicitly tell SQL which partitions to look in for each set of conditions, either with a date range or NULL
select i.InpatientSID, i.PatientSID, i.AdmitDateTime, i.DischargeDateTime
from cdwwork.Inpat.Inpatient i
where i.DischargeDateTime > convert(datetime2(0), '2022-05-01')
    or (i.DischargeDateTime is null and i.AdmitDateTime > convert(datetime2(0), '2022-05-01'))
order by i.DischargeDateTime desc
```



Some Other Recommendations

- If you use many similar subqueries, consider CTEs or temp tables.
- If you iteratively create many temp tables while refining a dataset, consider using UPDATE.

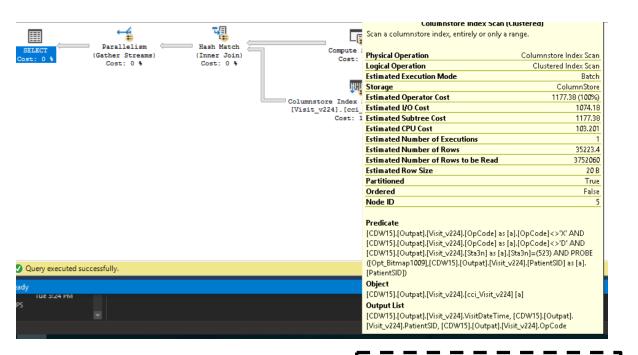


More Complicated Example

```
select temp.PatientSID, temp.IndexDate, vis.VisitDateTime
FROM CDWWork Outpat Visit vis
JOIN #visits temp
       on vis PatientSID = temp.PatientSID
WHERE vis Sta3n = 523
       and abs(datediff(month, temp.IndexDate, vis.VisitDateTime)) <= 1
select temp.PatientSID temp.IndexDate, vis.VisitDateTime
FROM CDWWork.Outpat.Visit vis
JOIN #visits temp
       on vis PatientSID
                          temp PatientSID
WHERE vis.Sta3n = 523
       and vis.VisitDateTime dateadd(month, -1, temp.IndexDate)
       and vis. VisitDateTime < dateadd(month, 1, temp.IndexDate)
```



Did It Work?





Seek Predicates

Seek Keys[1]: Start: Ptnld1001 >= Scalar Operator(RangePartitionNew ([@mindate],(1),'1999-10-01 00:00:00','2000-01-01 00:00:00','2000-04 -01 00:00:00','2001-01-01 00:00-00','2001-01-01



Why Not?

- If partition elimination is used, it will be the first step.
- Therefore, it can't be used with something that needs to be evaluated for every row.

```
select temp.PatientSID, temp.IndexDate, vis.VisitDateTime
FROM CDWWork.Outpat.Visit vis
JOIN #visits temp
on vis.PatientSID = temp.PatientSID
WHERE vis.Sta3n = 523
and vis.VisitDateTime >= dateadd(month, -1, temp.IndexDate)
and vis.VisitDateTime < dateadd(month, 1, temp.IndexDate)</pre>
```

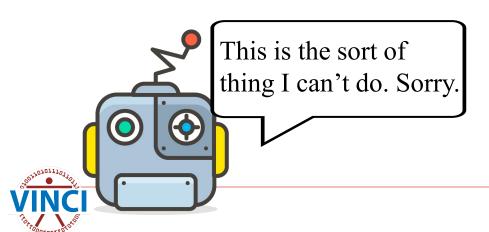


Should We Use the Partition?

```
select min(dateadd(month, -1, IndexDate)) FROM #visits
--2017-12-01 00:00:01
select max(dateadd(month, 1, IndexDate)) FROM #visits
--2018-02-01 23:59:54
```

Look at that narrow range! We SHOULD use the partition...but how?

A good plan would use the max and min dates to grab the right partition.



Let's Help Out

```
create clustered index idx_date on #visits (PatientSID,indexdate) --didn't help

create statistics dates on #visits (indexdate) --didn't help

select temp.PatientSID, temp.IndexDate, vis.VisitDateTime
FROM CDWWork.Outpat.Visit vis

JOIN #visits temp
on vis.PatientSID = temp.PatientSID
WHERE vis.Sta3n = 523
and vis.VisitDateTime >= dateadd(month, -1, temp.IndexDate)
and vis.VisitDateTime < dateadd(month, 1, temp.IndexDate)
and vis.VisitDateTime >= (select min(dateadd(month, -1, IndexDate)) FROM
#visits) --didn't help
```



Why Didn't That Last One Work?

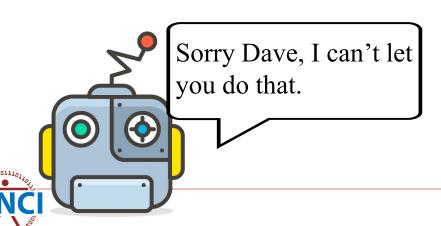
```
vis.VisitDateTime >= (select min(dateadd(month, -1, IndexDate)) FROM #visits)
--didn't help
```

If IndexDate was replaced with getdate(), then SQL would be able to use partition elimination. Even though select min()... will obviously only return one value, SQL doesn't know to do that part first.



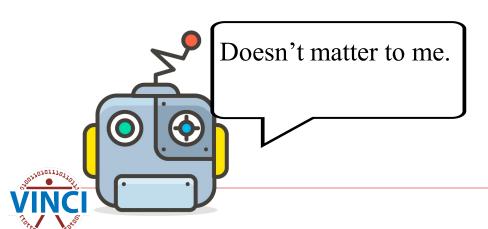
Do That Part First, Please

- How about if we move that line up to be the first thing in the WHERE clause?
- How about if we change the JOIN order to look at the temp table first?
- How about if we move that WHERE criterion into the inner JOIN clause?



So Order Doesn't Matter?

Yes it does! Remember that your script should be readable for you and other humans.

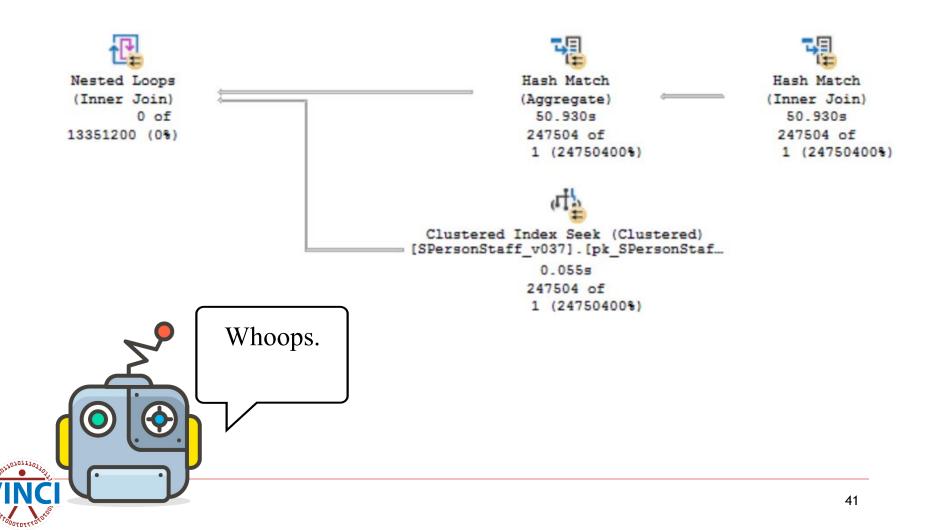


Back to the Problem

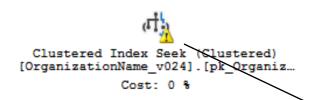
```
declare @mindate datetime2(0) =
        (select dateadd(month, -1, min(IndexDate))
        FROM #visits)
declare @maxdate datetime2(0) =
        (select dateadd(month, 1, max(IndexDate))
        FROM #visits)
select temp.PatientSID, temp.IndexDate, vis.VisitDateTime
FROM CDWWork.Outpat.Visit vis
JOIN #visits temp
        on vis.PatientSID = temp.PatientSID
WHERE vis Sta3n = 523
        and vis.VisitDateTime >= dateadd(month, -1, temp.IndexDate)
        and vis.VisitDateTime < dateadd(month, 1, temp.IndexDate)</pre>
        and vis.VisitDateTime >= @mindate --eureka
        and vis.VisitDateTime < @maxdate --I have found it
```



Whoa, Bad Estimates!



Remember Table Statistics?



If you see these warnings in your project or temp tables, consider (re)indexing them.

Clustered Index Seek (Clustered) Scanning a particular range of rows from a clustered index.	
Logical Operation	Clustered Index Seel
Actual Execution Mode	Rov
Estimated Execution Mode	Rov
Storage	RowStor
Number of Rows Read	132
Actual Number of Rows	132
Actual Number of Batches	
Estimated I/O Cost	0.003125
Estimated Operator Cost	0.0178185 (0%
Estimated CPU Cost	0.000158
Estimated Subtree Cost	0.017818
Number of Executions	132:
Estimated Number of Executions	6.385032
Estimated Number of Rows	
Estimated Number of Rows to be Read	
Estimated Row Size	15 8
Actual Rebinds	
Actual Rewinds	
Ordered	Tru
Node ID	8
Predicate [CDW30].[NDimMill].[OrganizationName [a].[ActiveIndicator]=(1) Object	_v024].[ActiveIndicator] as
[CDW30].[NDimMill].[OrganizationName	_v024].
[pk_OrganizationName_OrganizationName_	meSID] [a]
Output List	
[CDW30].[NDimMill].	
[OrganizationName_v024].OrganizationN	ameSID
Warnings	
Columns With No Statistics: [CDW30],[NE	,
[OrganizationName_v024].OrganizationN	ameSID
Seek Predicates	
Seek Keys[1]: Prefix: [CDW30].[NDimMill].	
[OrganizationName_v024].OrganizationN Operator([CDW30].[NDimMill].[Organizat	

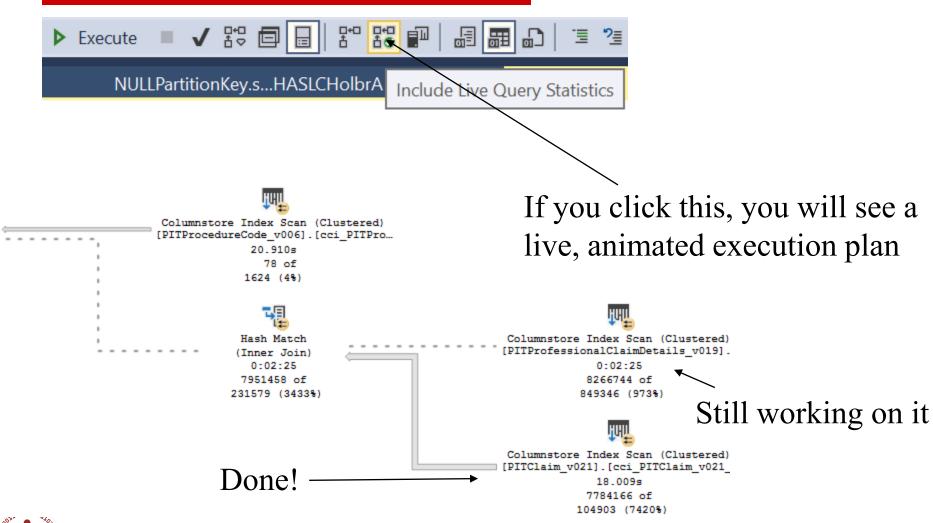


Bad Estimates

- Try adding a predicate on an indexed column like Sta3n.
 - Remember that sometimes you want to add criteria that don't change your results, just for performance.



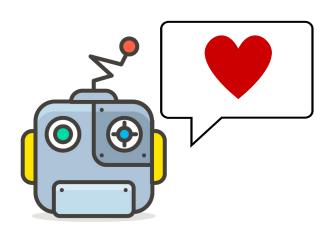
Bonus Tip: Live Query Statistics





Key Takeaways

- Don't be greedy!
- Use partitions!
- Separate functions from columns.
- Work with your colleague.





VINCI Resources

- VINCI University (va.gov)
- VINCI Training & Office Hour (va.gov)
 - Especially "Managing Research Data in SQL Server" VINCI Training Hour.
 - VINCI Office Hours every Wednesday at 3 PM ET.



BISL Resources

- CDW Guide Query Best Practices.docx (va.gov)
- Six Steps to Query Improvement
- BISL Training (sharepoint.com)
 - Especially SQL Office Hours on Tuesdays and Fridays.



One More Resource

SQL Server Execution Plans, Third Edition, by Grant Fritchey - Simple Talk (redgate.com)



Questions?

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- Andrew.Holbrook@va.gov

