

## Microsoft SQL Server 2005 Raises Product to Competitive Level

Donald Feinberg

Microsoft's latest SQL Server release will bring the offering up to par with its competitors. But SQL Server 2005 must gain credibility in the market during the next few years.

## NEWS ANALYSIS

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### Event

On 7 June 2005, Microsoft announced plans to formally launch Microsoft SQL Server 2005, including its database management system (DBMS) product, in November 2005. Microsoft also announced the first round of audited benchmark results for SQL Server 2005, providing guidance on early performance abilities.

### Analysis

Microsoft customers and prospects have been anticipating the new version of SQL Server (originally code-named Yukon) for several years. Gartner believes SQL Server 2005 will, overall, have been worth the wait. Most of the functionality Microsoft promised for SQL Server 2005 appears to have been included, with the notable exception of a DBMS clustering solution for high availability. This feature has been pushed off to a future release, leaving Oracle as the only vendor offering a DBMS with a clustering implementation, through Oracle's Real Application Clusters. Features of SQL Server 2005 will include native XML (Extensible Markup Language) support, integration of the .NET environment into DBMS structures, native DBMS encryption, enhanced reporting and analysis services including OLAP (online analytical processing) functionality, advanced features to support the data warehousing and business intelligence market, data partitioning and snapshot isolation. Many of these features have been anticipated since the release of SQL Server 2000. As more than 20 Microsoft clients, small and large, have beta versions in production today, and Gartner believes many implementation issues have already been worked out.

Microsoft also announced a series of audited TPC (Transaction Processing Performance Council) benchmark results that show SQL Server 2005 is more than 150 percent faster than SQL Server 2000 — delivering on Microsoft's promise of increased performance. These results also show that Microsoft has a lower cost per transaction than its competitors.

### Recommendations

- **Microsoft customers and prospects:** Begin testing the new product while in its final pre-release version.
- **Customers are less risk-averse or need the added functionality or increased performance of SQL Server 2005:** Consider using the new release in limited production environments in 1Q06.
- **Customers that are risk-averse or do not need the added functionality or increased performance:** Wait for Microsoft to release Service Pack 1 (expected in 2Q06).

### Recommended Reading and Related Research

- "Magic Quadrant for Data Warehouse DBMSs, 2004" — Competition in the data warehouse DBMS market continued to heat up in 2004, as Netezza entered the market and leaders shifted. **By Kevin Strange**
- "MarketScope: OLTP Database Management System Market" — Leading vendors in the online transaction processing market will battle for market control by releasing new features, architectures and tools. **By Betsy Burton and Kevin Strange**

(You may need to sign in or be a Gartner client to access the documents referenced in this First Take.)

## Extended Analysis

### REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS

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Corporate Headquarters  
56 Top Gallant Road  
Stamford, CT 06902-7700  
U.S.A.  
+1 203 964 0096

European Headquarters  
Tamesis  
The Glanty  
Egham  
Surrey, TW20 9AW  
UNITED KINGDOM  
+44 1784 431611

Asia/Pacific Headquarters  
Level 7, 40 Miller Street  
North Sydney  
New South Wales 2060  
AUSTRALIA  
+61 2 9459 4600

Latin America Headquarters  
Av. das Nações Unidas 12.551  
9 andar—WTC  
04578-903 São Paulo SP  
BRAZIL  
+55 11 3443 1509