Frequently Asked Questions – Master Data Services

### Q. What is MDM (Master Data Management)?

**A.** MDM or master data management comprises a set of processes and tools that consistently defines and manages the [non-transactional data entities](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Transaction_data) of an [organization](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Organization) (also called [reference data](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reference_data)). MDM has the objective of providing processes for collecting, aggregating, matching, consolidating, quality-assuring, persisting and distributing such data throughout an organization to ensure consistency and control in the ongoing maintenance and application use of this information. For more information, please visit: <http://msdn2.microsoft.com/en-us/library/bb190163.aspx>

### Q. What is Microsoft SQL Server Master Data Services?

**A.** SQL Server Master Data Services (MDS) helps organizations standardize and streamline the business data customers use across their organization to make critical business decisions. SQL Server MDS is a Master Data Management (MDM) application built from platform components which may be deployed as an application or extended by use of the platform components to consistently define and manage the critical data entities of an organization. MDS is an any-domain hub that supports but is not limited to domains such as product, customer, location, cost center, equipment, employee, and vendor.

Using MDS, customers can manage critical data assets by enabling proactive stewardship, enforcing data quality rules, defining workflows around data changes, notifying impacted parties, managing hierarchies, and sharing the authoritative source with all impacted systems.

### Q. What are the core problems customers should expect to solve with SQL Server MDS?

**A.** Master Data Services provides customers with MDM capabilities that helps manage the data organizations rely on to create a ‘single version of the truth.’ In large organizations, data is generated by multiple systems and parties across organizational and geographic boundaries. If that data isn’t reconciled in a central location, decisions may be made based on data that is inaccurate, incomplete or stale.

With MDS, customers not only have the software tools that enable data governance, they also have the infrastructure and APIs that provide a unified framework for rapidly building service-oriented applications.

The following scenarios are a sample of some of the ways customers will leverage MDS.

**Financial Application** – Providing a unified and consistent view of cost center information, chart of accounts, product and customer hierarchies.

**ERP Systems** – Product management of 100’s of attributes, classifications and hierarchies and consistency across multiple systems.

### Q. What specific MDS capabilities can I expect to see in SQL Server 2008 R2?

**A.** Master Data Services includes a Master Data Hub, a set of Services, and an Interface that enables organizations to manage important data assets for both line of business and analytic applications. More specifically MDS is a SQL Server Database, Windows Communication Foundation (WCF) Services, and an ASPX application that includes:

* Master Data Hub – Central Storage, Authoritative Source, Versioning, Rules, Transactions
* Stewardship Portal – Model Management, Documentation, Workflow, Integration

### Q. How is Master Data Management different from Meta Data Management?

**A.** Master data describes core business entities such as customers, locations, products, and so on. Metadata is "data about other data." It’s structured data which describes the characteristics of a resource. Meta-data answers the who, what, when, where, why, and how about every facet of the data that is documented.

**Q. What is the ship vehicle for Microsoft SQL Server Master Data Services?**

**A.** Microsoft SQL Server Master Data Services will ship as part of SQL Server 2008 R2

**Q. Will I be able to purchase SQL Server MDS as a standalone technology?**

**A.** No. MDS will ship as part of SQL Server 2008 R2 and customers will need to purchase a SQL Server 2008 R2 Enterprise license to access MDS capabilities.

### Q. I am considering purchasing SQL Server 2008 with Software Assurance (SA). Will I get the MDS capabilities shipping in SQL Server 2008 R2?

**A.** SQL Server MDS will ship as part of SQL Server 2008 R2. However, all packaging and pricing decisions on specific features are yet to be finalized. Customers purchasing SQL Server 2008 with SA will benefit from the new capabilities shipping in SQL Server 2008 R2 under their standard SA terms.

### Q. Will I need to purchase SharePoint Server to use Master Data Services (MDS)

**A.** No. MDS shipping as part of SQL Server 2008 R2 will not include a dependency on Microsoft Office SharePoint Server.

### Q. When can I get access to the public CTP?

**A.** The first public CTP for SQL Server Master Data Services will ship in H2 of 2009. Prior to that, we have an early technical preview for which we are only accepting early adopters on an exception basis to unblock SQL Server sales. For additional information on the early technical preview please send mail to [mdmatms@microsoft.com](mailto:mdmatms@microsoft.com).

### Q. Does the ‘Services’ moniker imply that this is a S + S offering? Is this MDM in the Cloud?

**A.** No. ‘Services’ refers to Windows Communication Foundation (WCF) services. For customers and partners, that means that everything that can be accomplished through the user interface can also be accomplished through WCF services. Additionally, the customer is not locked into the UI if it doesn’t meet end user requirements. It is easy to build a customized UI that better suits end user requirements and still be able to accomplish the same tasks using the service component.