I am sure you know by now that being a DBA requires a huge skill set covering a wide spectrum of technologies. You also know that configuring and maintaining a stable and secure database environment takes a lot of planning and research. DBAs are expected to know a little about everything. But what makes being a DBA even harder is that technology is a fast-paced industry, with rapid advancements that seem to outdate things before you’ve even had a chance to learn them. The days are over when you learned a skill and then worked for several years before you needed to upgrade your skill set. You need to learn new things constantly and stay on top of the latest industry news in order to excel as a DBA.

Luckily, there is a plethora of resources to help you keep up with the latest technology and industry standards, including web sites, white papers, webcasts, podcasts, and even free training events. You should definitely take advantage of the knowledge and experience offered by others. If you have a question or an issue, chances are that you are not the first one to experience the problem, and there is already a well-documented solution on the Internet. You just need to know where to find it. This chapter lists resources that can help you with your planning and research, along with finding the answers to any questions or issues you may encounter along the way.

Upcoming Releases

At the time of this writing, the release of SQL Server 2008 Release 2 is just around the corner, and SQL Server 11 is in the works. From the looks of things, Policy-Based Management is going to stick around a while.

Microsoft’s SQL Server Connect web site (http://connect.microsoft.com/SQLServer) allows you to collaborate with Microsoft employees and other members of the SQL Server community to provide feedback about SQL Server and submit ideas for the next release. If there is something you would like to see changed or added, or even if you just find a bug—in Policy-Based Management or elsewhere in SQL Server 2008—log in to this web site. The more votes an item receives on the SQL Server Connect web site, the more likely you are to see it added or fixed in the next release. If you do add something to the SQL Server Connect web site, make sure to advertise it.

SQL Server Web Sites

Following are some web sites that are useful when working with Policy-Based Management. They are good resources for anything you can imagine when working with SQL Server. Plenty of people frequent these web sites, and many are willing to answer any questions you may have.
• Professional Association for SQL Server (PASS): http://www.sqlpass.org
• SQL Server Central: http://www.sqlservercentral.com
• Simple-Talk: http://www.simple-talk.com/sql
• SQLServerPedia: http://www.sqlserverpedia.com
• MSSQLTips: http://www.mssqltips.com
• SQLTeam: http://www.sqlteam.com
• SQL Server Performance: http://www.sql-server-performance.com
• SQL Server Community: http://www.sqlcommunity.com

Blogs

The longer we have worked with SQL Server, the more we have found that blogs can be one of the most valuable sources of information on the Internet. Many of the people who post on blogs either had an issue they overcame or learned something interesting, and then published their findings for the world to see. This is the kind of information that you can’t find in the product documentation.

In addition to an entire blog dedicated to Policy-Based Management maintained by many of the developers of the product, several other bloggers routinely post their experiences with Policy-Based Management. Many of the bloggers have a category you can use to filter on only the posts pertaining to Policy-Based Management.

The following are some blogs that contain useful Policy-Based Management information:

• MSDN Policy-Based Management: http://blogs.msdn.com/sqlpbm/
• Lara Rubbelke: http://sqlblog.com/blogs/lara_rubbelke/archive/tags/Policy+Based+Management/default.aspx
• Bob Beauchemin: http://www.sqlskills.com/BLOGS/BOBB/category/Policy-Based-Management.aspx
• Colin Stasiuk: http://benchmarkitconsulting.com/tag/pbm/
• Jorge Segarra: http://sqlchicken.com/tag/policy-based-management/

White Papers

White papers, sometimes referred to as technical articles, offer an in-depth look into a specific topic within SQL Server. There are several good white papers on Policy-Based Management. Also, some white papers that are not specifically targeted for Policy-Based Management are full of useful information when it comes to deploying Policy-Based Management in your environment.

The following are some white papers that contain information about Policy-Based Management information: