

#FABCONSQLCON2026

FABCON

Microsoft Fabric
COMMUNITY CONFERENCE

SQLCON

Microsoft SQL
COMMUNITY CONFERENCE

ATLANTA MARCH 16 - 20, 2026

Semantic Link Labs: The Data Detective's Toolkit



Jason Romans



Jason Romans

Cloud Data & Integration Developer

The DAX Shepherd



 @sql_jar

 jason-r-sql-jar

 <https://thedaxshepherd.com/>



 Nashville, TN, USA

 Began Career as a SQL Server DBA

 Transitioned to Microsoft BI Stack

 Data Engineering to Data Modeling

Standing on the Shoulders of Giants



Grateful for the people who share their knowledge, encourage us, answer questions, and help the rest of us learn faster.

Open the Case

Why this matters + what Semantic Link Labs enables



OPEN THE CASE



CASE DEMOS



DETECTIVE AGENCY



CASE CLOSED

YOU ARE HERE

Why BI Teams Need Detectives

Most teams troubleshoot after users complain.

Reports suddenly slow down

KPIs change without a clear explanation

“One small” change breaks multiple reports

Reports break after model updates

Symptoms aren't evidence — we need a repeatable method

Monk Moment: “Something’s off”

That instinct is valuable when paired with evidence.

Use the detective habit:

Notice the detail that doesn’t fit

Follow patterns (dependencies)

Prove it with evidence

It’s a gift... and a curse (models are powerful because they’re connected)

What You'll Learn

By the end, you'll be able to:

Investigate model performance with evidence (not guesses)

Trace dependencies to understand change impact (blast radius)

Detect report breakage and hygiene issues proactively

Operationalize investigations into a reusable notebook playbook

Semantic Link + Semantic Link Labs

What this unlocks:

Programmatic access to semantic models in Fabric / Power BI

Metadata-driven investigations you can repeat

Model inspections (BPA / VertiPaq)

Measure dependency analysis

Report inspections (broken objects / report BPA)

The Detective Method

Use this loop for every mystery you investigate.

Investigation loop:

Symptom (what users feel)

Evidence (what we can prove)

Suspects (ranked likely causes)

Fix (targeted action)

Prevention (make it repeatable)

Case Demos

Three case files. Three investigations. Evidence-driven outcomes.



OPEN THE CASE



CASE DEMOS



DETECTIVE AGENCY



CASE CLOSED

YOU ARE HERE

Case File: The Slow Model

Set the mystery. Collect evidence. Identify suspects.

VICTIM: Executive dashboard / high-visibility report

SYMPTOMS:

- Slow page loads
- Sluggish slicers
- Visuals lag

EVIDENCE TO COLLECT:

- Model Best Practice Analyzer findings
- VertiPaq analysis (what's large / expensive)

DEMO 1: The Slow Model

LIVE DEMO (with instant backup video)

What you'll see:

- Run Model BPA
- Run VertiPaq Analyzer
- Identify top suspects + quick wins

Case File: The Dependency Conspiracy

Set the mystery. Collect evidence. Identify suspects.

VICTIM: Core KPI measure (high usage)

SYMPTOMS:

- Fear of touching KPIs
- Unexpected downstream impact

EVIDENCE TO COLLECT:

- Measure dependency tree (upstream + downstream)
- High-usage objects / impacted reports

DEMO 2: The Dependency Conspiracy

LIVE DEMO (with instant backup video)

What you'll see:

- Show measure dependency tree
- Show high-usage objects / impacted reports
- Plan safe change + testing targets

Case File: The Broken Report Murders

Set the mystery. Collect evidence. Identify suspects.

VICTIM: Reports after a model change

SYMPTOMS:

- Broken visuals
- Missing fields
- “It worked yesterday” complaints

EVIDENCE TO COLLECT:

- Broken report objects list
- Report Best Practice Analyzer results

DEMO 3: The Broken Report Murders

LIVE DEMO (with instant backup video)

What you'll see:

- Scan for broken report objects
- Run Report BPA
- Triage + prevention checklist

Detective Agency

Turn hero work into a repeatable playbook your team can run.



OPEN THE CASE



CASE DEMOS



DETECTIVE AGENCY

YOU ARE HERE



CASE CLOSED

From Detective to Detective Agency

Maturity ladder:

Ad-hoc investigations (hero mode)

Reusable case notebooks

Standard checks: BPA + VertiPaq + dependencies + report scan

Run pre-release / post-change

Share results and build a playbook

Case Closed

Summarize the evidence. Lock in the takeaways.



OPEN THE CASE



CASE DEMOS



DETECTIVE AGENCY



CASE CLOSED

YOU ARE HERE

Case Closed: Key Takeaways

Remember these three things:

Turn “something’s off” into evidence using Semantic Link Labs

Use dependencies to reduce blast radius risk before changes

Make investigations repeatable so you find issues before users do

Resources + Q&A

Next steps:

Semantic Link Labs repo + sample notebooks

Create a 'case notebook' template for your team

Pick one model this week: run BPA + VertiPaq + dependency scan

Questions?

Sound off.
The mic is all yours.
Influence the product roadmap.

Join the Fabric User Panel



Share your feedback directly with our
Fabric product group and researchers.

<https://aka.ms/JoinFabricUserPanel>

Join the SQL User Panel



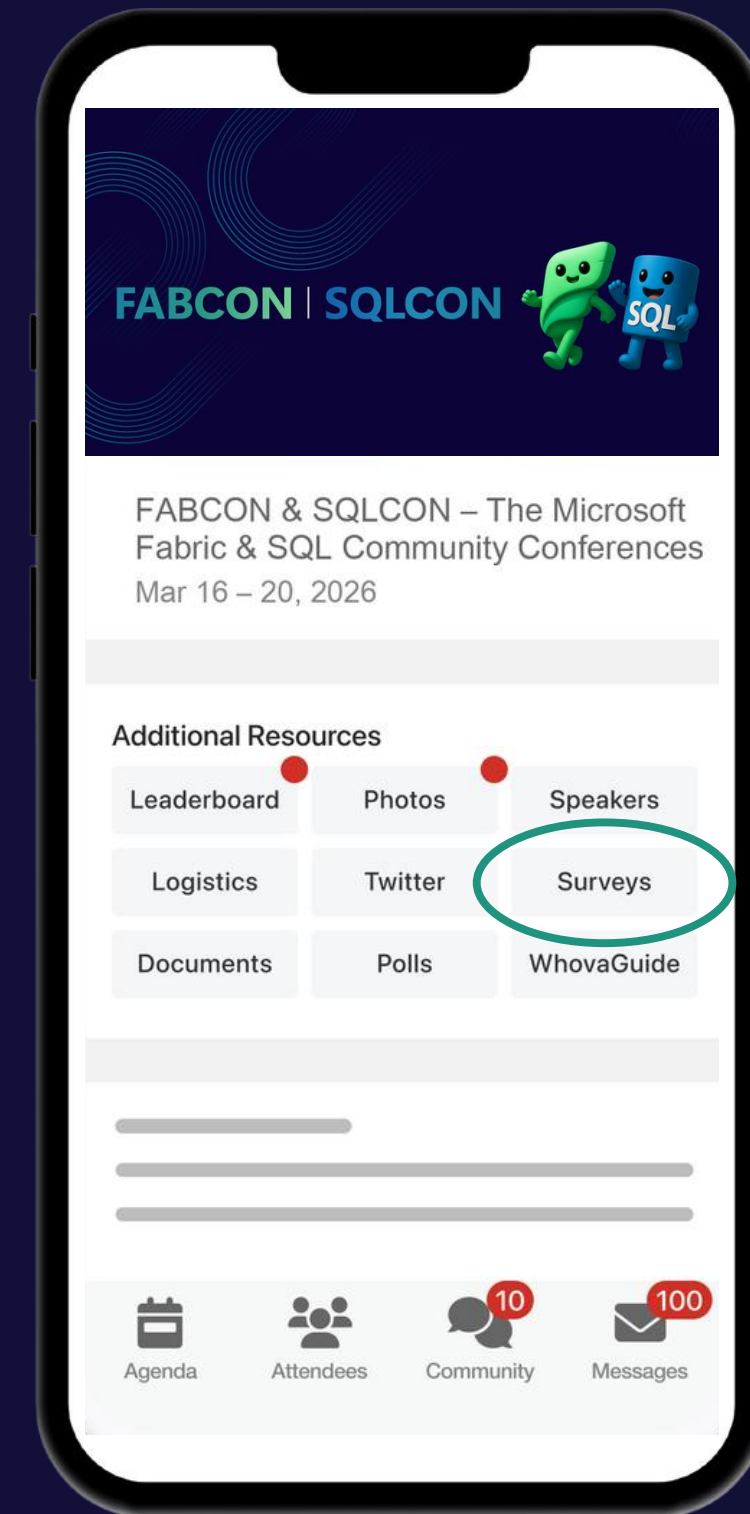
Influence our SQL roadmap and ensure
it meets your real-life needs

<https://aka.ms/JoinSQLUserPanel>

How was the session?



Complete Session Surveys in
Uhova for your chance to WIN
PRIZES!

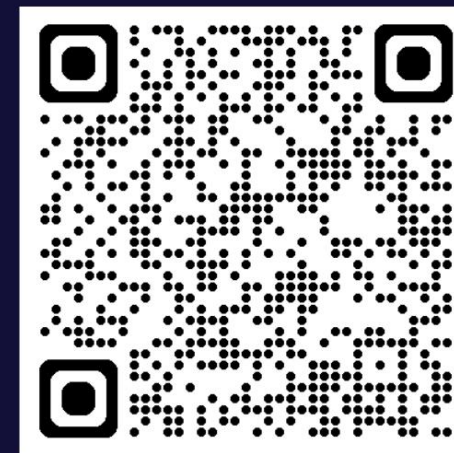


Get Two Fabric Certifications for FREE

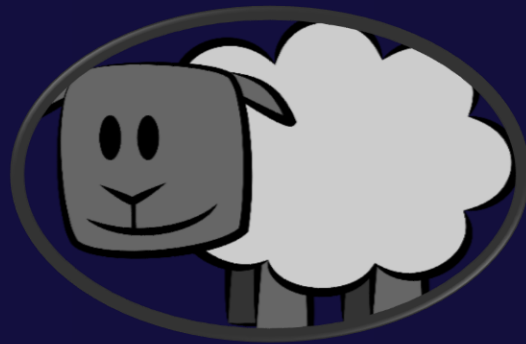
Attendees of FABCON can take the Fabric Analytics Engineer or Fabric Data Engineer exam for free. Be part of the 2 fastest growing role-based certifications in Microsoft history.

Request your voucher by March 23, 2026.

<https://aka.ms/fabcon/cert100>



THANK YOU



The Dax Shepherd

Jason Romans
thedaxshepherd@gmail.com
[linkedin.com/in/jason-r-sql-jar/](https://www.linkedin.com/in/jason-r-sql-jar/)
www.thedaxshepherd.com

Contact Information

