#FABCONSQLCON2026

FABCON | SQLCON
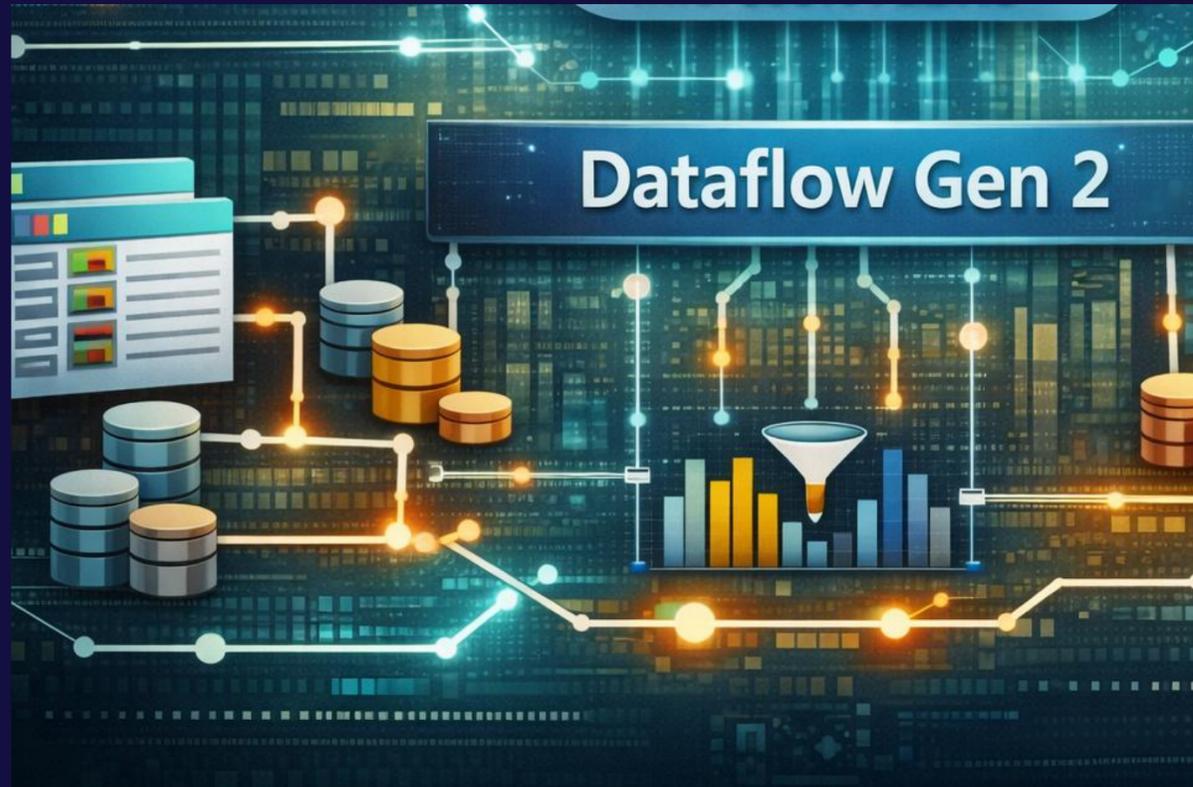Microsoft Fabric | Microsoft SQL
COMMUNITY CONFERENCE | COMMUNITY CONFERENCE

ATLANTA MARCH 16 - 20, 2026

Getting Started with
Dataflow Gen2:
Simple, Practical, Real

Cristian Angyal

About me

- **Electrical Engineering background**

- **Former Project Manager** *(PMP®, PMI-ACP®)*

- **Microsoft Certified Professional**
  (DP-600, DP-700, PL-300, MCT, MCSA, MCSE, MOS Master)

- **Romania PBI and Modern Excel UG Founder**
  https://www.meetup.com/romaniapug

- **Microsoft MVP (*Excel & Power BI*)**

- **Husband** *(+25y)* and **father** *(+9y)*

- Love to ski, travel and learn

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What You'll Leave With

By the end of this session:

- **Mental model**
  - What Dataflow Gen2 is, where it fits in Fabric, and when to use it.

- **Working patterns**
  - Append, Folder Connector, Parameters, Data Destination — reusable from Monday.

- **A full ETL flow**
  - From messy source files → clean Lakehouse table, scheduled and repeatable.

- **Gotchas to avoid**
  - The 5 most common mistakes — so you don't have to learn them the hard way.

What is Dataflow Gen2?

> "*A cloud-hosted Power Query experience inside Microsoft Fabric that lets you ingest, transform, and load data into Fabric items — without writing code.*"

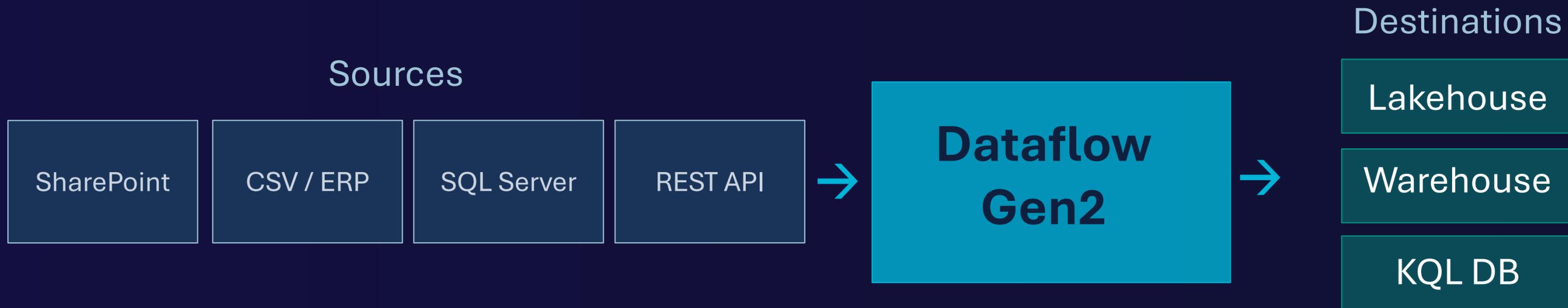| **Cloud-Hosted**	**Power Query**	**Fabric-Native**	**No Code**
Runs in Fabric no local PQ engine	Same editor as Power BI Desktop	Direct output to Lakehouse / Warehouse	Point-and-click ETL for analysts

- Why Fabric & DFG2 Now?
  - Data Destinations are first-class Fabric items
  - Automatic staging — no intermediate tables
  - VNet data gateway support for enterprise connectivity

Gen1 vs Gen2 — What Changed?

Feature	Dataflow Gen1	Dataflow Gen2
Platform	Power BI (Premium/PPU)	Microsoft Fabric (any F-SKU)
Output	Dataset (semantic model)	Lakehouse, Warehouse, KQL DB
Staging	Manual intermediate steps	Automatic — built-in
Data Gateway	On-prem gateway	VNet gateway supported
Performance	Standard Mashup	Enhanced engine + scale-out
Incremental	Limited	Native incremental refresh

💡 *If you know Power Query, you're already 80% of the way there. Gen2 is just Power Query with Fabric superpowers.*

Where DFG2 Fits in Fabric

Sources

SharePoint	CSV / ERP	SQL Server	REST API

→ **Dataflow Gen2** →

Destinations

Lakehouse

Warehouse

KQL DB

When to use DFG2 vs other approaches

- **Dataflow Gen2**
  - Business analyst or data engineer who knows PQ, needs governed repeatable ETL

- **Pipelines**
  - Orchestration, complex sequencing, dependencies, trigger-based workflows

- **Shortcuts**
  - Zero-copy access to existing data — no transformation needed

- **Notebooks**
  - Complex code-first transformations, ML preprocessing, Spark scale

Demo

5 Things to Take Away

- **DFG2 = Power Query + Fabric-native destinations**
  If you know PQ, you're already productive.

- **Start small, publish early**
  Don't build the perfect dataflow: build one that works, then iterate.

- **Use parameters from day one**
  Avoid hardcoded paths and dates: your future self will thank you.

- **The Folder Connector is your best friend**
  For monthly/incremental file loads, it's unbeatable.

- **Set your refresh schedule before you walk away**
  A dataflow no one runs is just a draft.

Common Gotchas to Avoid

➤ ⚠️ **No Data Destination set**
   Query runs successfully — but data goes nowhere. Always set destination before publishing.

➤ ⚠️ **Mismatched column names**
   Source and destination schema must align. Use the column mapping UI to verify before publish.

➤ ⚠️ **Wrong refresh mode**
   Using Replace on a large table when you needed Append loses all historical data. Check first.

➤ ⚠️ **No gateway for on-premises sources**
   Plan connectivity early. VNet/on-prem gateway setup takes time: don't leave it for demo day.

Resources & Next Steps

- **Dataflow Gen2 Documentation**
  learn.microsoft.com/fabric/data-factory/dataflows-gen2-overview

- **Power Query M Function Reference**
  learn.microsoft.com/powerquery-m/power-query-m-function-reference

- **Microsoft Fabric Community**
  community.fabric.microsoft.com

- **YouTube, Blogs, Larger Community, etc**

> "*Append, Folder Connector, Parameters, Lakehouse Destination — once you know these building blocks, you can handle nearly any ETL scenario without a single line of code.*"

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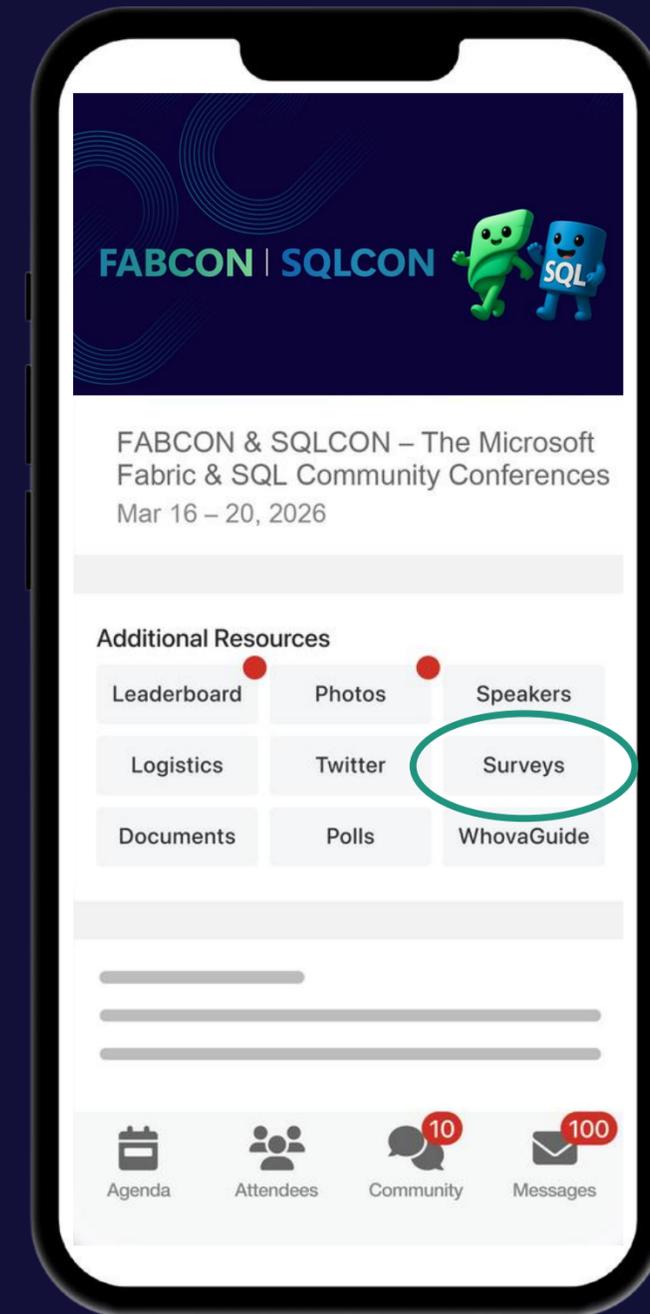
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