

aws marketplace

dbt

Reviews, tips, and advice from real users



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Product Recap



dbt Recap

dbt is a transformational tool that empowers data teams to quickly build trusted data models, providing a shared language for analysts and engineering teams. Its flexibility and robust feature set make it a popular choice for modern data teams seeking efficiency.

Designed to integrate seamlessly with the data warehouse, dbt enables analytics engineers to transform raw data into reliable datasets for analysis. Its SQL-centric approach reduces the learning curve for users familiar with it, allowing powerful transformations and data modeling without needing a custom backend. While widely beneficial, dbt could improve in areas like version management and support for complex transformations out of the box.

What are the most valuable features of dbt?

- **SQL-Based Development:** Facilitates transformations using SQL, streamlining the data modeling process.
- **Modularity:** Encourages reusable components, making projects easier to manage and scale.
- **Version Control:** Integrates with version control systems to track changes and collaborate effectively.
- **Testing Framework:** Ensures data quality through automated tests, increasing trust in data outputs.

What benefits should you expect from using dbt?

- **Efficiency:** Cuts down data processing times, allowing faster access to insights.
- **Collaboration:** Promotes teamwork through shared data models and a common working language.
- **Scalability:** Supports growing data demands by transforming complex data more flexibly and modularly.
- **Transparency:** Provides clear documentation and lineage tracking, aiding in troubleshooting and understanding.

In the finance industry, dbt helps in cleansing and preparing transactional data for analysis, leading to more accurate financial reporting. In e-commerce, it empowers teams to rapidly integrate and analyze customer behavior data, optimizing marketing strategies and improving user experience.

Valuable Features

Excerpts from real customer reviews on PeerSpot:

- ✓ “The most concrete outcome was a significant reduction in data errors reaching our downstream AI models, and after implementing dbt's testing layer, we caught roughly 70% of those issues at the transformation stage itself, before they ever touched the model.”



Harshwardhan Gullapalli

AI Engineer at a educational organization with 51-200 employees

- ✓ “I would say the best feature or the most desirable feature for dbt is the ability to write everything in code.”



Ahmed Shaaban

Principal Data Engineer at Integrant, Inc.

- ✓ “There is operational efficiency achieved, and data quality and governance have also been achieved with modular SQL and version controlling, which reduced duplication of data and data errors.”



Verified user

Senior Data Engineer at a pharma/biotech company with 10,001+ employees

- ✔ “Since we migrated from SSIS to dbt model architecture, it takes around four hours only to complete a full refresh, and the client is now happy because our downtime was drastically reduced when we perform a complete refresh of the data.”



Shubham-Agarwal

Manager Projects at Cognizant

- ✔ “dbt has positively impacted my organization by allowing us to create our data pipelines much faster, going from ingestion of data to creating a data product in weeks instead of months, and we can do it in-house with the skillset we already have.”



JohnnyHuang

Head of Data & AI engineering at One NZ

- ✔ “It is very convenient because at the end, I have the opportunity to orchestrate all my transformations in just one single place, rather than having them spread out.”



JohamAlvarez-Montoya

Data Engineer at Georgia Institute of Technology

✔ “From a developer point of view, I find the ease of development and the code to be the most useful capabilities of dbt.”



Verified user

Lead Software Engineer at a computer software company with 51-200 employees

What users had to say about valuable features:

“It is very convenient because at the end, I have the opportunity to orchestrate all my transformations in just one single place, rather than having them spread out. I can use SQL, which is very convenient for the sizes of data that I usually use in the day-to-day. Of course, some other deployments might require Spark, and in this case, it is not a good idea to use SQL plus dbt, but for most cases, it is very convenient. Because it is easy to set up, and also due to the cost, I have all the transformations in one single place with a very convenient tool.

“It is very convenient; I can set up the expectations really easily, all integrated in the tool that I usually use for my data transformation, so it is very convenient..”

JohamAlvarez-Montoya

Data Engineer at Georgia Institute of Technology

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“From a developer point of view, I find the ease of development and the code to be the most useful capabilities of dbt. I use VS Code to run the dbt models, and since the end user is only concerned about their output and reports, the ease of development and the fact that it is free are significant advantages.

I assess the impact of dbt's version control system on team collaboration as great. I have used it extensively, especially when we had situations where the code broke, as we were able to roll back to earlier versions thanks to version control.

I find dbt's documentation site generator to be quite crisp and straightforward. It helps with project transparency and onboarding new team members because the documentation is excellent for addressing issues we face. I learned dbt concepts primarily using their website and their tutorials, which helped me significantly compared to other platforms such as YouTube and Udemy. The course content that dbt provides is free and excellent for anyone starting out..”

Verified user

Lead Software Engineer at a computer software company with 51-200 employees

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“dbt's incremental model let us handle late-arriving data efficiently without reprocessing everything. That clean output then fed directly into our GPT-4 structured output parser for financial mapping. The workflow fit really well because dbt gave us clear data lineage. We could trace any number of our final mapping output back to the source extract. That is critical in financial-based reporting, where auditors need to see the full transformation chain. For us, the standout features were the testing framework and the dependency graph. The tests, especially custom tests for financial data like validating that debits equal credits, caught a lot of our data quality issues early.

dbt's incremental model was key here. Rather than representing the entire dataset every run, dbt only touched the new or changed records, which kept our pipeline efficient as document volume grows. That said, dbt's scalability is fundamentally tied to your underlying database. In our setup, we managed performance by being deliberate about materialization strategies, using views for lightweight transformations and tables for incremental models for heavy aggregations..”

Harshwardhan Gullapalli

AI Engineer at a educational organization with 51-200 employees


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“dbt is very fast compared to the traditional tools. Previously, I worked on SSIS, which is provided by Microsoft, and data transformation took a considerable amount of time when dealing with large amounts of data. Since dbt works on the ELT architecture rather than the ETL architecture, it is much faster than traditional data transformation tools.

“Previously, we were using SSIS packages, which were very slow. Recently we migrated all our SSIS packages to dbt models. After the migration, we moved the data from SQL Server to Snowflake. Previously, our data pipeline took around two days to load complete data when performing a full refresh. Since we migrated from SSIS to dbt model architecture, it takes around four hours only to complete a full refresh. The client is now happy because our downtime was drastically reduced when we perform a complete refresh of the data..”

Shubham-Agarwal

Manager Projects at Cognizant

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“The best features of dbt include lineage and Jinja templating languages that make it easy for creating pipelines.

The built-in lineage feature provides a good understanding of the several layers where data is being loaded in dbt, allowing visibility from different layers into the end product.

dbt has positively impacted version controlling as it has different version control steps involved. The specific improvements seen with version control in dbt are that it has helped trace the data lineage, enabled faster trace and rollbacks, and enabled safe collaboration at every scale, which has improved data quality.

A return on investment has been seen from using dbt as the time has reduced while utilizing dbt in the form of data pipelines and ETL scripting. There is operational efficiency achieved, and data quality and governance have also been achieved with modular SQL and version controlling, which reduced duplication of data and data errors..”

Verified user

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Senior Data Engineer at a pharma/biotech company with 10,001+ employees

“dbt is a tool that is basically SQL and a little bit of Python, which is somewhat low entry-level, so many of the engineers can use it as well as the analysts. Multiple teams from the business side can use it as well if we allow them. Performance-wise, it mainly depends on the platform that hosts it, whether it is Snowflake or Databricks or BigQuery. There is not much complication. Of course, there are the benefits of having code, so you have a software development lifecycle; you can use version control, testing, and documentation.

“I would say the best feature or the most desirable feature for dbt is the ability to write everything in code. It is treating data the same way that Ansible did or Terraform did for infrastructure as code. Now you can code the pipeline instead of using SSIS and Apache NiFi and even Informatica PowerCenter. All of these tools are GUI-based tools. They have a low entry barrier, but you cannot really integrate them in a CI/CD pipeline, for example. For dbt, we can create those. More recently with the advances in AI, LLMs, and code assistant agents, we can hugely leverage those in dbt because I can simply ask the agent to write the code or write the model. However, you cannot really ask them to draw any SSIS package or an Apache NiFi flow, for example.

“I think that dbt helps us quite a bit because it exposes a little bit of the functionality of Snowflake directly to us. We can use it with ease because we have some experience with Snowflake and we know what controls to adjust. Because we are a team of multiple individuals, we need to collaborate. Without version control, you have to manage the whole codebase one feature at a time, but what we do is we can use branching and different feature branches. Each one of us is working on their own feature branch. We collaborate, we merge our changes, and we can roll back in case we introduced some bugs. I would say the version control feature is a huge bonus or a huge plus..”

Ahmed Shaaban

Principal Data Engineer at Integrant, Inc.

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Other Solutions Considered

“The team used to work with SSIS before I joined. They used to work with it, I believe, two or three years ago, but since I joined a year and a half ago, they switched to dbt. They switched to dbt just before I joined. I have also worked for some time with Apache NiFi as well..”

Ahmed Shaaban

Principal Data Engineer at Integrant, Inc.

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“I have not practically used a different solution for the same use cases, but I have been part of teams that used tools such as Alteryx, Informatica, and Talend, even though I did not work with them hands-on..”

Verified user

Lead Software Engineer at a computer software company with 51-200 employees

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“Before dbt, we were handling data transformation in a more ad-hoc way. We had Python scripts and custom SQL queries scattered across our n8n workflows, our automation platform. When we extracted financial data from PDFs using Tesseract OCR and LLM extraction, we would clean and transform it using Python code nodes within n8n. There was no clear lineage. If the number was wrong downstream, tracing back through n8n workflow logic was painful..”

Harshwardhan Gullapalli

AI Engineer at a educational organization with 51-200 employees

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“We did evaluate alternatives before committing to dbt. We looked at a few options. Apache Airflow was one. It is powerful for orchestration but felt like overkill for our use case and would have required significant DevOps overhead to manage. We also considered Talend and Informatica, but those were enterprise tools with enterprise pricing, and we were a lean team at Radiant Services..”

Harshwardhan Gullapalli

AI Engineer at a educational organization with 51-200 employees

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“I think the pricing is very convenient; one of the barriers is that for example, some of the companies that I have been with, dbt is a normal solution or neutral in terms of cost. It is not cheap or more expensive, but the problem is that companies are really locked in with existing vendors, and those vendors offer alternatives that might be less expensive given that they have other products. dbt only offers data transformation services, making it hard to compete with vendors that have all the packages included, such as cloud and processing services. If you compare the cost of those packages with dbt alone, it is more expensive to use dbt alone..”

Joham Alvarez-Montoya

Data Engineer at Georgia Institute of Technology


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“Previously, we were using SSIS packages, which were very slow. Recently we migrated all our SSIS packages to dbt models. After the migration, we moved the data from SQL Server to Snowflake. Previously, our data pipeline took around two days to load complete data when performing a full refresh. Since we migrated from SSIS to dbt model architecture, it takes around four hours only to complete a full refresh. The client is now happy because our downtime was drastically reduced when we perform a complete refresh of the data.

“The main reason we decided to switch to dbt is performance. As mentioned earlier, every quarter we perform a full refresh, and that refresh took considerable time on SQL Server. Since we had to migrate because our data is very large and growing daily, we adopted dbt because Snowflake is very fast. In Snowflake, the storage layer and the computation layer are separate, which is not present in the SQL Server traditional database. That is why we moved from SQL Server to Snowflake and from SSIS to dbt..”

Shubham-Agarwal

Manager Projects at Cognizant

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ROI

Real user quotes about their ROI:

I have seen a return on investment as it means we don't have to employ as many people; it's more about cost avoidance, but I have not removed employees.

JohnnyHuang

Head of Data & AI engineering at One NZ

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“Since we migrated from SSIS to dbt model architecture, it takes around four hours only to complete a full refresh. The client is now happy because our downtime was drastically reduced when we perform a complete refresh of the data..”

Shubham-Agarwal

Manager Projects at Cognizant

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“A return on investment has been seen from using dbt as the time has reduced while utilizing dbt in the form of data pipelines and ETL scripting. There is operational efficiency achieved, and data quality and governance have also been achieved with modular SQL and version controlling, which reduced duplication of data and data errors..”

Verified user

Senior Data Engineer at a pharma/biotech company with 10,001+ employees

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Use Case

“dbt is used for data transformation and data engineering with multiple data transformations and engineering functions. It is also used for orchestrating data engineering pipelines. An example of this is ingesting data from Azure Blob or S3 sources and then transforming it into different layers in the data platform..”

Verified user

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Senior Data Engineer at a pharma/biotech company with 10,001+ employees

“I am working with one of our enterprise customers, managing their newly established cloud warehouse. They are using Snowflake and we are using dbt to manage all the transformation and views and tables in Snowflake. I am not currently working with Cribl, but I used to work with it for almost three years. Currently, I am working with dbt and Snowflake stack..”

Ahmed Shaaban

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Principal Data Engineer at Integrant, Inc.

My main use case for dbt is for data transformation and data engineering.

A specific example of how I use dbt for data transformation and engineering is that we use it to connect and ingest data from our Azure blob and S3 buckets, then transform through our glorified serving layers into our data platform.

“We use dbt to orchestrate our data engineering pipelines. .”

JohnnyHuang

Head of Data & AI engineering at One NZ

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“I have primarily used dbt for data transformation. My team and I work with source systems from various clients, some using Snowflake, others using SQL Server, and some using their own legacy source systems. We extract and load all the data into our data lake on Azure. From there, we use dbt to transform that data. In technical terms, we have extracted and loaded the data into our data lake, and from there we are doing the transformation with dbt. We are creating different layers such as silver, bronze, and gold to build a medallion architecture with dbt..”

Verified user

Lead Software Engineer at a computer software company with 51-200 employees

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“I am currently working with dbt and Snowflake together. We use dbt for data transformation purposes. We obtain the data and store the raw data directly into Snowflake, then perform all transformations using dbt to prepare the data for reporting purposes.

“We use dbt's modular SQL models. In dbt, we do not use full refresh or full data refresh. We have incremental strategies in place that only compute or transform incremental data, which operates in a CDC architecture. This approach is very fast, and we use it on a daily basis. We have scheduled all our dbt models using Airflow to run according to the scheduled time.

“We use dbt's testing framework and the inbuilt functionality of dbt testing. For example, we use dbt's built-in tests to identify not null values and determine how many not null columns and values exist in each column. Beyond the built-in functionality, we have written custom SQL scripts to create external test cases on our models.

“We ensure that incorrect or incomplete data does not go into the reporting layer because it can impact the business. We always perform dbt tests on our landing or raw data to ensure the correctness and completeness of the data before loading it into the final reporting layer. These reports are used by higher management, so we ensure that incorrect data is not published into the reporting layer for the Power BI reports.

“We use dbt's documentation site generator. In dbt, we have YML file functionality, which can be used for creating documentation for each model. Whenever we make modifications to a model, we always update the YML file so we can track the history of how frequently we change the model. When new team members join, they can refer to this documentation to understand the data lineage and the data transformation strategy of the project..”

Shubham-Agarwal

Manager Projects at Cognizant

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“My main use case for dbt was transforming messy, extracted financial data into clean, production-ready datasets. Let me give you a concrete example. We would extract trial balance data from PDFs using OCR and then feed it through our GenFin mapping workflow. Before that data reached our GPT-4 model for classification, we used dbt to normalize account codes, handle currency conversions, work with UAE and multi-currency scenarios for UAE compliance, and create aggregations by cost center and account type. So dbt's job was essentially to take a raw extraction output, validate it against our schema, handle any missing values or duplicate entries, and then materialize clean tables that our LLMs could reliably work with.

There was one more important place beyond just transformation. dbt gave us visibility into data quality throughout the pipeline. We built tests into our models, including checking for null values in critical fields such as account numbers, ensuring amounts were numeric and within expected range, and validating that our transformed data matched the source record counts. This was critical because if there was a gap between extraction and transformation, we would catch it before it hit the LLM. The dependency graph in dbt was invaluable when we had issues downstream in our mapping or disclosure notes workflows, as we could trace back through the DAG.

The most concrete outcome was a significant reduction in data errors reaching our downstream AI models. Before dbt, we were catching bad extractions only after the LLM had already processed them, which meant manual rework. After implementing dbt's testing layer, we caught roughly 70% of those issues at the transformation stage itself, before they ever touched the model. Processing speed also improved because dbt's incremental models only processed the delta into new records. Our nightly reconciliation runs for UAE corporate tax workflows dropped from around 40 minutes to under 10 minutes. The less obvious win was team confidence. Our chartered accountant clients started trusting the outputs more because we could show them the full transformation chain.

The shift in client trust was really tangible. Before dbt, when we delivered a mapped disclosure notes document, clients would ask us to walk them through how we arrived at the specific numbers. We would have to manually trace back

through extraction logs, which was time-consuming and sometimes incomplete. After dbt, we could literally show them the DAG, the dependency graph, and say, here is your source PDF, here is where we extracted the account code, here is the normalization rule we applied, and here is the aggregation, and here is your final mapped output. It is all documented and testable. That transparency eliminated a huge amount of back-and-forth. One specific example involved a client who was questioning why a particular cost center total did not match their internal records. With dbt's lineage, we traced it in minutes, found a rounding rule that needed adjustment in one model, fixed it, and reran the pipeline. The client saw the complete audit trail. That kind of visibility is what builds trust in a financial team.

One thing I would add positively was how well dbt's incremental models handled our late-arriving data scenarios. In financial processing, you often get corrections or amendments to documents days later, and incremental models let us efficiently merge those without full refreshes. That was really valuable for our UAE compliance workflows where reconciliation amendments came in batches..”

Harshwardhan Gullapalli

AI Engineer at a educational organization with 51-200 employees

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Setup

The setup process involves configuring and preparing the product or service for use, which may include tasks such as installation, account creation, initial configuration, and troubleshooting any issues that may arise. Below you can find real user quotes about the setup process.

“I store procedures calling within dbt statements. You can only use a selected statement in debt. If you want to use more advanced or more complicated SQL features, they are not supported right now by Dbt, so that can be a challenge..”

Joham Alvarez-Montoya

Data Engineer at Factored

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“I am not aware of the initial setup because they set up everything before I joined, but they are using dbt Cloud. I do not think there are many difficulties or any hurdles to overcome during setup. You simply link your dbt Cloud account with the Snowflake account and that is it..”

Ahmed Shaaban

Principal Data Engineer at Integrant, Inc.

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“My experience with the initial setup and deployment of dbt involved using VS Code. I am not very confident here because I received some help from another data engineer to set it up on my machine. However, I have used VS Code in the past, and with some libraries, it was successfully done, but I am not entirely certain about every detail..”

Verified user

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Lead Software Engineer at a computer software company with 51-200 employees

“I will say the deployment for dbt is very straightforward; once you have the experience, it is quite straightforward. For example, you can set up a Docker or Docker Compose and run it, or you can use directly the on-cloud version.

“I would say that the deployment for dbt requires about a day; a day could work, and with a day, you can set up and deploy dbt..”

JohamAlvarez-Montoya

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Data Engineer at Georgia Institute of Technology

Customer Service and Support

“The dbt support team is very responsive. Whenever we have any issues on the dbt side, we always reach out to them. We did not face any challenges in the initial setup. I would rate the technical support a nine out of ten..”

Shubham-Agarwal

Manager Projects at Cognizant

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“I may not have enough information to respond about the technical support of dbt because I have not reached out to dbt support at any time, probably because I have never needed it. In the three or four organizations that I have been with using dbt, I have not contacted the support service directly, so it may be a good sign..”

JohamAlvarez-Montoya

Data Engineer at Georgia Institute of Technology

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“dbt's customer support varies depending on which tier you are using. We ran dbt Core, which is open-source, so there is no direct vendor support. The community support is actually quite good, and the dbt Slack community is also very supportive. We found answers to most of our questions through the docs and community. If we would have been on dbt Cloud, there would be dedicated support, but the pricing did not work for our team size. For a bootstrapped FinTech team in India working on UAE compliance workflows, the cost-benefit was not there..”

Harshwardhan Gullapalli

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AI Engineer at a educational organization with 51-200 employees

“Earlier, we used technical support for dbt, but that was only valid for a month or fifteen days. We later moved to the paid version because I was working on the proof of concept of Qlik Sense and other tools, and we finalized dbt as well. Initially, I explored dbt for free for about ten days without trialing any further support.

So far, we have not interacted much with technical support because we usually get help from the community on their website. If you type your question, you will likely find that someone has already asked it, so we do not need to contact their support directly..”

Verified user

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Lead Software Engineer at a computer software company with 51-200 employees

Other Advice

“I am currently working with Power BI, Tableau, Python, [Databricks](#), Snowflake, and PySpark in the current project. I would rate my overall experience with dbt a nine out of ten..”

Shubham-Agarwal

Manager Projects at Cognizant

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“I am using a private cloud. I have used both on-prem and cloud versions of the product, but mainly the managed version, the on-cloud version. That is very convenient; of course with AI, that is being commoditized a little bit. But I like it; I used it more before. Now with AI, it is even easier to do documentation, but before AI, it was really convenient to generate documentation with that tool. My overall review rating for dbt is 7 out of 10..”

JohamAlvarez-Montoya

Data Engineer at Georgia Institute of Technology

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“My advice to others looking into using dbt is that it is a good tool for having ETL or ELT transformations done. To begin with, a pilot project can be added with modular SQL or modeling, [Git](#) workflows, and a standardized project structure from source, staging, intermediate, to the mart layers, which will optimize performance. I would rate this solution a seven out of ten..”

Verified user

Senior Data Engineer at a pharma/biotech company with 10,001+ employees

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“The most concrete outcome was a significant reduction in data errors reaching our downstream AI models. Before dbt, we were catching bad extractions only after the LLM had already processed them, which meant manual rework. After implementing dbt's testing layer, we caught roughly 70% of those issues at the transformation stage itself, before they ever touched the model. Processing speed also improved because dbt's incremental models only processed the delta into new records. Our nightly reconciliation runs for UAE corporate tax workflows dropped from around 40 minutes to under 10 minutes. I would rate this product an 8 out of 10..”

Harshwardhan Gullapalli

AI Engineer at a educational organization with 51-200 employees

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“In terms of metrics, I do not have exact metrics, but I get a sense of the speed of opening and closing data requests. I am not that familiar with the Scrum Master of our squad, but I believe our burn chart or something like that, which is an agile metric that measures the finished user stories, is the only sense or only kind of metrics that we have at the moment. However, you do get a sense of

accomplishment and the speed of delivering value.

“I would say just the testing is something to focus on. dbt Fusion is something I am not completely aware of, but I need to try it because I think it is a great feature, especially because we are dealing with multiple models. For our use case, we are dealing with 50 plus, almost 100 models. Many models are running at the same time. If you add up all the compile time and parsing time, it can add up to quite a bit. dbt Fusion promises that the parsing is much faster in one-tenth of the time, I believe.

“I would say you really need to take care of your model and your data model because dbt gives you some freedom. If you do not really know what you are going to do, you can really mess things up. So you need to take care of the model, design your layers, define the responsibilities of each layer, define the criteria of each data layer, define the tests, and that is it.

“I would rate this product an eight out of ten..”

Ahmed Shaaban

Principal Data Engineer at Integrant, Inc.

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“From a developer point of view, I find the ease of development and the code to be the most useful capabilities of dbt. I use VS Code to run the dbt models, and since the end user is only concerned about their output and reports, the ease of development and the fact that it is free are significant advantages.

I assess the impact of dbt's version control system on team collaboration as great. I have used it extensively, especially when we had situations where the code broke, as we were able to roll back to earlier versions thanks to version control.

I find dbt's documentation site generator to be quite crisp and straightforward. It helps with project transparency and onboarding new team members because the

documentation is excellent for addressing issues we face. I learned dbt concepts primarily using their website and their tutorials, which helped me significantly compared to other platforms such as YouTube and Udemy. The course content that dbt provides is free and excellent for anyone starting out.

dbt seems quite adequate currently, but if I needed to name a few areas for improvement, I would mention the migration of code to [Git](#) and [GitHub](#), which sometimes fails and can be confusing for developers during handover. There are some glitches in the connection, but I am unsure if that is an issue from the dbt side or something else, so I cannot comment definitively.

I would rate my overall experience with dbt at eight out of ten..”

Verified user

Lead Software Engineer at a computer software company with 51-200 employees

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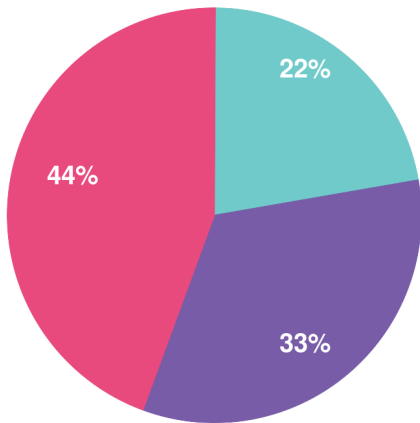
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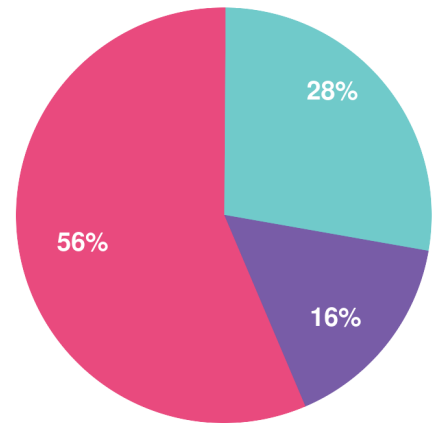
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