

(April 21st, 2011)

If you know someone who you think would benefit from being an Insider, feel free to forward this PDF to them so they can sign up [here](#).

Quick tips for our Insider friends!

Hey Insiders!

This bi-weekly Quick Tips is coming to you from what we call our “vacation home” in Redmond. We’re back from 3 weeks in Florida and Germany, but only for a week before we’re off again, this time on-site with private clients in Michigan and then we’re heading to Chicago for our Immersion Event on Internals and Performance (week of May 2).

Munich was a lot of fun—apart from us both getting nasty colds on the way over. We spent 2.5 days teaching advanced performance, recovery, and development techniques to about 60 of the Microsoft Premier Field Engineers in EMEA. Luckily we felt well enough on our last day to go out and enjoy the sights (and beer, sausages, and sauerkraut!). Pictures coming in a blog post next week.

If you’re interested in history, I recently finished a very good (but heavy going) book by Gore Vidal called ***Creation***, about a Persian Ambassador to India, Greece, and China around 450BC. Well worth checking out.

Please [let us know](#) if you liked what you read/saw here and/or have any suggestions for future Quick Tips.

Paul's Ponderings

Today is a bit of a rant: I’m getting tired of hearing about the cloud.

I’ve been asked several times in recent weeks if I’m worried about the current dramatic shift of enterprises to using SQL Azure.

I keep getting badgered by people to starting playing with SQL Azure so I can start recommending it to our clients.

I see people proselytizing ‘cloud cloud cloud’ and how it will be a great benefit to *everyone* without really laying out the pros and cons.

Huh? What dramatic shift is occurring to using SQL Azure? Why would I recommend SQL Azure to our clients when most of them are perfectly happy with what they have?

Now don’t get me wrong—this isn’t an anti-cloud rant, and there are some great benefits to using cloud storage if you want to devolve yourself of data management responsibilities, but there also

some serious downsides which often aren't discussed properly that make it unattractive for many enterprises:

- The database size limit is 50GB
- You can't use BACKUP and RESTORE – only export the data or copy it to a new Azure database (which defeats the purpose of having off-site backups)
- You can't do auditing or use transparent data encryption
- You can't use replication or database mirroring to maintain your own redundant copy of the data (although they do keep redundant copies for you)
- You have to rely on someone else's high-availability and disaster recovery strategy (and just this morning, Amazon Web Services was down – along with everyone making use of them). SQL Azure provides a 99.9% availability SLA, with a 10% credit if it drops below that in any month, and 25% credit if it drops below 99% in any month. Still, 8.76 hours of downtime per year isn't too bad for many customers.
- There's no facility for managing very large databases (i.e. the ability to create filegroups and use partitioning)
- There's no support for CLR, Full-Text, or Service Broker
- You can't really do performance analysis and tuning (like running profiler, for instance)
- And a bunch of other things

I know that most of our clients want to keep control of their data, their workload performance, their data security, and their data availability in-house and so they're not interested in the cloud. But I'll be charitable and say 'yet'.

I'm really interested to know your views on the cloud—feel free to [drop me a line](#), confidentially as always.

Video Demo

Last week I blogged about using wait stats, latch stats, and spinlock stats as part of your performance tuning toolset so I thought I'd do a demo for you that shows using wait and latch stats. The demo investigates a poorly performing log file, takes action, and then compares the before and after wait stats to see the effect the action made. The short video (9 minutes) explains what is going on and also shows an interesting outstanding I/O limit that the log manager enforces.

I produced the video in WMV and MOV formats so everyone can watch. You can get the videos:

- For WMV: [here](#)
- For MOV: [here](#)

I recommend downloading before watching. And you can get the demo code [here](#), including the wait stats, latch stats, and virtual file stats scripts I use.

SQLskills Offerings

Our classes in Chicago and London are just about sold-out with only a couple of seats left in each, so now's the time to think about coming to one of the four Immersion Events we have in Bellevue, Washington in August. A few hardy souls are even taking all four classes in a row – wow! See [here](#) for more details.

Summary

I hope you've enjoyed this issue - I really enjoy putting these together.

If there is anything else you're interested in, we'd love to hear from you - [drop us a line](#).

Thanks - Paul and Kimberly