

(January 23rd, 2012)

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 Bali, Indonesia where we've just got off a live-aboard dive boat that operates out of the remote island of Papua (half of which is Indonesia and half of which is Papua New Guinea). The diversity of underwater life, both flora and fauna, was absolutely incredible and I'll be posting a bunch of dive photos over the coming weeks – watch the blog for details. Now to catch up with the pile of email...

All our 2012 classes through August are now open for registration and the UK classes in May are filling up fast. This is our complete set of class deliveries for all 2012 with only one more likely delivery of IE1 & IE2 back-to-back later in the year. Check out the final part of the newsletter for details.

The most recent book I've read is Gore Vidal's *Burr*. It's the first in Vidal's acclaimed *Narratives of Empire* series and contains the reminiscences of Vice President (and Colonel) Aaron Burr in the 1830s looking back over the last 60 years or so. Just like all of Vidal's books, it's incredibly detailed and well-written and is a complex book to read. I particularly enjoyed his insights in Washington and Jefferson. Along with this book, I strongly recommend all Vidal's historical fiction works – especially *Creation* and *Julian*, which I read last year.

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

Note: you can get all the prior Insider newsletters [here](#).

Paul's Ponderings

As anyone who teaches will know, there are quite a variety of personalities you encounter when teaching classes, and a lot of variety in the goals of people attending classes.

One of the things I find most annoying, and thankfully it doesn't happen very often, is when someone in a class is only interested in finding 'the answer' and doesn't care about anything else.

The same thing happens on internet forums and in emails I get sent. Two prime examples are people dealing with database corruption and people dealing with out-of-control transaction logs. Often they want to only know how to recover from corruption and how to shrink the transaction log, respectively.

Now that information is useful but it doesn't help prevent the problem from recurring in future – and in both these examples the problem is highly likely to recur (in my experience) if the only action taken is corrective rather than preventative.

It could very well be that these people are under the gun from management to get the problem solved, it could be that they don't care about the underlying cause, or that they're quite out of their depth and wouldn't understand the underlying cause without spending a lot of time getting the requisite background knowledge. There can be extenuating circumstances I guess.

But in a class environment I think it's inexcusable. The whole point of being in a class is to understand how to find the answer for yourself, so that you can determine 'the answer' over and over again using the knowledge and skills you've learned.

This follows-on from my 'learning' discussion in the previous newsletter. If you want to learn something about SQL Server, go a bit deeper and find out *why* the answer is what it is – the knowledge will be much more powerful and repeatedly applicable in diverse situations than just knowing 'the answer' for one situation. This is what the Microsoft Certified Master certification is all about.

If you can explain the 'why' as well as the answer, you'll also find yourself able to successfully argue technical matters with co-workers – a very useful skill!

One of the ways I learn is to look at forums or twitter #sqlhelp posts where I don't know the answer and then play around with SQL Server until I find the answer and get a good understanding of the background knowledge. Often I'll then blog about what I've learned. Of course, when I had source code access at Microsoft this was a lot easier...

Call to action: Next time you have to solve a problem with SQL Server, try not to stop when you find 'the answer'. Try to find some time to dig into the problem a bit deeper and figure out the *why* of the answer too. If you can make this second nature then you'll find your mastery of SQL Server increasing quickly.

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

Video Demo

This week I'd like to point you at a pre-recorded one. As many of you may know, SQLskills recorded 40 hours of MCM-level videos for Microsoft in December 2010 and they're all freely available online (see [here](#)). The one I'd like to recommend to you is Kimberly's excellent 30-minute lecture video on indexing strategies. One of the most common problems that can cause performance issues is incorrect indexing. In this particular video Kimberly explains ways to index for certain types of queries. Take some time to apply these practices to specific queries within your environment and start to get to the bottom of some of your performance problems!

You can get to the video in a variety of formats [here](#). Enjoy!

SQLskills Offerings

Registrations are starting to come in for our 2012 classes. We have a full schedule planned for 2012 and so we've come up with an offer to help you use your 2011 training budget before you lose it. If you want to "buy in bulk" and pre-pay a block of seats now, you can get a 28% discount off of full price and a 16% off of the early-bird price. See [here](#) for details.

We are offering all of our Immersion Events in 2012 – these classes are available for registration now!

- February 27 – March 2, 2012: Internals and Performance (**IE1**) in Tampa, FL
- March 5-9, 2012: Performance Tuning (**IE2**) in Tampa, FL
- March 12-16, 2012: High Availability/Disaster Recovery (**IE3**) in Tampa, FL
- April 16-20, 2012: Internals and Performance (**IE1**) in Chicago, IL
- April 16-20, 2012: Business Intelligence (**IEBI**) in Chicago, IL
- April 23-27, 2012: Performance Tuning (**IE2**) in Chicago, IL
- April 23-27, 2012: Developers (**IEDev**) in Chicago, IL
- May 7-11, 2012: Internals and Performance (**IE1**) in London, UK
- May 7-11, 2012: Business Intelligence (**IEBI**) in London, UK
- May 14-18, 2012: Performance Tuning (**IE2**) in London, UK
- May 14-18, 2012: Developers (**IEDev**) in London, UK
- August 2012: **IE1-IE2-IE3-IE4, IEDev**, and **IEBI** in Redmond/Bellevue (WA) again!

NOTE: These are the **only** locations/classes/cities being planned from January through August 2012. We are likely to offer one more IE1 & IE2 combination later in the year.

See [here](#) for all the details.

Summary

We hope you've enjoyed this issue - we 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

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