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 from home (Redmond) where we're back from two fantastic Immersion Events in London (Kensington) and just about to return to the UK at the end of the week for two more weeks of onsite training with a private client. We treated Jon and Joe to a few days of vacation in London at the end of our immersion events and we had a great time visiting the Natural History Museum, the British Museum (phenomenal!), Westminster Abbey, and the Tower of London.

During May we're offering you a ***Spring Cleaning special deal***. For new customers from anywhere in the world, we'll give you one of our flagship SQL Server Health Checks for a flat fee of $1300 (covering a health check of one SQL Server instance (SQL Server 2005+) up to a maximum of 6 hours), which is a saving of 33% off the regular price. You can get all the details of what's involved here.

The most recent book I've read is Neil Asher's *Gridlinked*. It's the first book I've read of his and I enjoyed it so much I picked up all his other books while I was in London. It's set in a human far future and introduces us to the society there which is run by AIs, who also control their instantaneous travel mechanism. It's gritty and so far hasn't been clichéd. It promises to be a great series, comparable to the likes of Peter F. Hamilton, Dan Simmons, and Alastair Reynolds. I'm already nearly done with the second book, *Prador Moon*, and I'm really enjoying that one too. I highly recommend Asher's books for sci-fi fans.

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

One of the things I've seen recently in the SQL community is people reinventing the wheel. I used to see it at Microsoft too – where developers would want to write their own version of code to do function X rather than re-using someone else's code that already does function X.

What a colossal waste of time! And company resources, if you think about it…

A prime example is writing a query involving DMVs. As you probably already know, many of the DMVs don't provide really useful information unless the results are manipulated in some way or joined with another DMV or catalog view.

An example would be one of my favorite DMVs – sys.dm_io_virtual_file_stats. On its own, it gives the cumulative read and write latencies for all I/Os done for all files in the instance, and the files are identified by database ID, file ID, and a hexadecimal file handle.

This information isn't really useful in that form. By doing some math on the output, basically converting the cumulative latencies into per-read/write latencies, and joining with sys.master_files to get file names and paths, the output becomes readable and easily understood.

Did I write the code to do that? No, I borrowed some code that Jimmy May (from the SQL CAT team) wrote and whenever I show it when teaching, I give credit to Jimmy for it.

Similarly, whenever I'm dealing with wait statistics, I use code I based on a query written by our own Glenn Berry, rather than working it out from scratch.

There's no shame in using or adapting code that someone else wrote and published – people like Jimmy, Glenn, and me publish code on our blogs specifically so you can use it to save yourself time and get useful information from SQL Server.

In fact, Glenn has a whole series of useful queries that he publishes as his Diagnostic Information Queries (a toolkit) – see here for the latest version.

If I'm ever going to write a new DMV-based query, I always check first to see if someone has already done the work – especially if I know it's going to involve joining with a few other DMVs and system catalogs and I'm going to have to play around to figure out which columns to join on.

I don't like reinventing the wheel – I'm too busy to waste my time doing that, and I think you are too.

Call to Action: The next time you're going to write some code to do function X, whether it's a DMV query, something in .NET, or anything else, do a quick search on Google or Bing to see if someone's already done all or most of what you need. Save yourself time by not reinventing the wheel.

I'm really interested to know your thoughts on reusing code—feel free to drop me a line, confidentially as always.

<u>Video Demo</u>

In the video for this newsletter, Jonathan introduces the SSMS Tools Pack – a free add-in that greatly enhances the functionality and user experience when working with Management Studio. The video shows how to configure and use the query history window and enhanced auto-saving features to prevent losing work in the event of a crash, and how to use the custom scripting options for Object Explorer provided by the Add-in. The video is 9 minutes long.

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

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

Enjoy!

SQLskills Offerings

We've extended our "buy in bulk" discount where you pre-pay a block of seats now to get a 28% discount off of full price and a 16% off of the early-bird price. See [here](#) for details. You can even use these "buy in bulk" seats for classes that no longer offer the early-bird price as long as they are not "sold-out."

Here's our complete 2012 schedule of classes. We're not adding anything else for 2012 but we are planning our 2013 calendar. It was a tough decision to stop our deliveries in August as we truly enjoy delivering these and meeting so many great SQL folks, but our travel schedule is just too full. With the holidays, Fall conferences such as SQL Connections and SQL PASS, and other engagements and projects on our schedule, we just can't add more business travel to our 2012 calendar.

Here are our remaining lasses for 2012:

- August 6-10, 2012: Internals and Performance (**IE1**) in Bellevue, WA – USA
- August 13-17, 2012: Performance Tuning (**IE2**) in Bellevue, WA – USA
- August 13-17, 2012: Immersion Event for Developers (**IEDev**) in Bellevue, WA – USA
- August 20-24, 2012: High Availability & Disaster Recovery (**IE3**) in Bellevue, WA – USA
- August 20-24, 2012: Immersion Event for Business Intelligence (**IEBI**) in Bellevue, WA – USA
- August 27-31, 2012: Development Support (**IE4**) in Bellevue, WA – USA

We hope to see you in Bellevue later this year; otherwise we'll plan to see you in 2013! As a note for 2013, we're currently planning our locations and we're looking at coastal locations (one on the east and one on the west) as well as our Chicago location for domestic events. And, we're likely to head back to London as well. We're planning to release our 2013 calendar in August/September.

As a note for those of you who really want us to come to *your* city… we'd LOVE to. However, we just can't be everywhere (we wish we could! ☺). Having said that though, these events are truly *immersion* events and if there isn't one in your city, it might be a good thing to consider the travel and time away. Being in a hotel for the event allows you to participate in evening events, network with your colleagues and focus on the class without the usual requirements of being in your hometown.

To make it easier on you, we work hard to book with hotels where the nightly sleeping costs are reasonable, where you won't need a rental car and in hub cities where flights are cheaper (i.e. Chicago/London/San Francisco/Charlotte). Our Bellevue/Seattle courses are a bit of a departure

from this as it's not a major hub city but we balance that with the fact that it's during the summer and many of our past attendees have combined their visit with summer family travel. August in the Pacific Northwest is absolutely stunning and we can give you all sorts of recommendations for sight-seeing if you're interested!

So, that's it for now. Our 2012 schedule is final and we're really looking forward to some great Immersion Events this year as well in 2013. We hope to see you soon!

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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