

(October 15th, 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 Redmond, where we've just returned from a week onsite with a customer in Omaha, Nebraska. But, we're not home for long. Kimberly's off to New York later this week to join in the DotNetRocks! Road Trip for their Thursday, October 18 evening event (register for FREE [here](#)) and then we're both off to Las Vegas at the end of the month for the SQL Connections conference.

We're continuing our recording activities and there are two more Pluralsight courses that should go live this week – Jonathan's *SQL Server: Deadlock Analysis and Prevention* and Erin's *SQL Server: Benchmarking and Baselineing* – making eight courses altogether, with 4 more coming by the end of the month.

The most recent book I've read is Gore Vidal's *1876* – the third in his celebrated Narratives of Empire series. This book covers the corrupt Presidential election between Hayes and Tilden and the events leading up to it. The book paints an excellent portrait of political and societal life in New York and Washington during the Centennial year. I've already started the next in the series, *Empire*, and I'm looking forward to beginning the biography of Ulysses S. Grant I have sitting on the shelf. I strongly recommend it, as I do all of Vidal's books. I didn't realize that Vidal passed away earlier this summer – RIP.

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

After last time's ponderings on crash recovery, there was almost absolute silence from you all, compared to the general 20+ responses I get. I find the same thing when I do a blog survey on something like backup testing or disaster recovery testing – whenever the subject is something that people know they *should* be doing but *aren't* doing, people tend not to 'fess up. It'll be interesting to see what level of responses I get today...

Last week, when I wasn't teaching, I was producing Erin's *Benchmarking and Baselineing* course, and she echoes a sentiment that we stress several times during our IE2 course on Performance Tuning. The sentiment is this: it's far easier to troubleshoot a performance problem when you have historical data compared to when you don't.

This is called having a baseline – a set of measurements of performance metrics when the overall system is performing normally (i.e. satisfactorily for users). Erin paints a comprehensive picture of what this involves, but some examples are:

- The I/O load during regular and peak operations, from the SQL Server and Windows perspectives
- Buffer pool health (e.g. Page Life Expectancy and Lazywriter activity)
- Run-time characteristics of important queries
- Wait statistics

Having a baseline means that when performance appears to be suffering, measurements can be taken and compared against the baseline, to identify areas that have changed. This allows you to target further investigations rather than do what I call ‘flailing’ or ‘knee-jerk’ performance tuning, where you have no idea where to start or pick a random symptom and focus on that, wasting precious time.

One thing I see quite commonly is that a client has no way to accurately measure how long an operation takes. How many of you have heard things like ‘the web site seems slower today’ or ‘my query seems to be taking longer sometimes’?

Just like having a baseline, it’s very important that operations in your environment can be measured accurately so you can determine where a slowdown is occurring. For instance, if you have a web site front-end, connecting to a mid-tier caching server, connecting to a back-end database server and things start to run slowly then how do you ascertain which of the components in the overall data flow is contributing to the slow down?

Only by having performance and timing metrics at each stage in the data flow can you do that, and only by comparing against your baseline.

Call to action: Think about how you measure performance on your systems, and how you work out where performance problems are when they occur. Do you have a baseline you can use? If not, are you going to work towards getting one?

I’m curious to hear your thoughts about baselining, so please feel free to [drop me a line](#), treated confidentially of course.

Video Demo

During the week I got a shock when my ‘DBCC’ Tweetdeck search column turned up a post about a SQL injection attack using DBCC commands. When I clicked through, however, I found that the vulnerability was in Sybase, not my old code. ☺

With that in mind though, this time I want to point you at another of the MCM videos we recorded for Microsoft at the end of 2010. This one is by Bob Beauchemin and spends just over 40 minutes covering *EXECUTE AS and SQL Injection*. You can get to the MSDN video download page [here](#). As another piece of homework, check out Kimberly's blog post on *Little Bobby Tables and SQL Injection* [here](#).

Enjoy!

SQLskills Offerings

All of our 2013 public classes are now open for registration! Based on requests from people, attendee ratings of the hotels we used this year, and the ease of using hotels we know, we're using the same locations again. This means we cover both sides of the US, central US, and Europe.

Please know that these classes are final as the hotel contracts are signed, and the classes will not be cancelled or moved for any reason, nor will the dates change.

- February 4-8, 2013: Internals and Performance (**IE1**) in Tampa, FL – USA
- February 11-15, 2013: Performance Tuning (**IE2**) in Tampa, FL – USA
- April 29-May 3, 2013: Internals and Performance (**IE1**) in Chicago, IL – USA
- April 29-May 3, 2013: Immersion Event for Business Intelligence (**IEBI**) in Chicago, IL – USA (co-located but in a different training room. Attendance is for one event or the other; these cannot be combined for one attendee where they move back/forth.)
- May 6-10, 2013: Performance Tuning (**IE2**) in Chicago, IL – USA
- May 13-17, 2013: High Availability & Disaster Recovery (**IE3**) in Chicago, IL – USA
- May 13-17, 2013: Immersion Event for Developers (**IEDev**) in Chicago, IL – USA (co-located but in a different training room. Attendance is for one event or the other; these cannot be combined for one attendee where they move back/forth.)
- May 20-24, 2013: Development Support (**IE4**) in Chicago, IL – USA
- June 3-7, 2013: Internals and Performance (**IE1**) in London – UK
- June 10-14, 2013: Performance Tuning (**IE2**) in London – UK
- June 17-21, 2013: High Availability & Disaster Recovery (**IE3**) in London – UK
- June 24-28, 2013: Development Support (**IE4**) in London – UK
- September 16-20, 2013: Internals and Performance (**IE1**) in Bellevue, WA – USA
- September 23-27, 2013: Performance Tuning (**IE2**) in Bellevue, WA – USA

One thing to note is that the course prices have increased slightly for 2013, reflecting increasing food, logistics, travel, and accommodation costs. We kept our prices the same for the last three years but now we have to raise them a little.

For US classes, the new early-bird price is US\$3,295 and the full-price is US\$3,795. However, for all registrations received before January 1, 2013, and for all past attendees in the 12 months

prior to registration, we will only charge the 2012 early bird price of US\$2,995 – super-early-bird! – **get your registrations in early!**

For UK classes, the new early-bird price is US\$3,795 and the full-price is US\$4,295. There is a similar super-early-bird and past-attendee price equal to the 2012 UK early bird price of US\$3,495 – **again, get your registrations in early!**

See [here](#) for the main Immersion Event Calendar page that allows you to drill through to each class for more details and registration links.

So, that's it for now. We hope to see you soon!

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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