

(January 6th, 2014)

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!

Happy New Year! I hope you all had a great holiday season and I wish you all a happy, healthy, and prosperous 2014!

We took the girls diving on the excellent [Turks & Caicos Aggressor](#) over Christmas, where I racked up my 300th dive on the Christmas Day night dive watching nurse sharks in a feeding frenzy. Both kids hit 50 dives each, passed their Advanced Open Water certifications, and also got certified to dive with Nitrox (enriched air) – pretty cool for 12 and 13 years old!

Just before New Year I published my two traditional end-of-year blog posts:

- [2013: the year in books](#)
- [2013: the year by the numbers](#) (which also has a couple of diving photos in)

We published two new Pluralsight courses since the last newsletter – check them out:

- Joe's new course on [SQL Server: Database Creation, Configuration, and Alteration](#)
- Jon's new course on [SQL Server: Using SQL Sentry Plan Explorer](#)

Altogether we now have 30 Pluralsight courses available and we're planning to add more than 20 more courses this year. See our full list [here](#).

Also check out the very bottom of the newsletter for details of the **Spring 2014 SQLintersection** conference and **how you can get a \$50 Amazon gift card for referring someone** to our IEO and IEHW classes.

The last book I profiled in 2013 was by Sara Wheeler and the first book I finished in 2014 was Sara Wheeler's [Travels in a Thin Country: A Journey Through Chile](#). This is an excellent account of Wheeler's year traveling from the north to the south of Chile, with lots of the country's history thrown in. She also goes to Tierra del Fuego, which is very high on my list of places to see in the world, and it was cool to read a contemporary account of life there, compared to accounts I've read from British naval explorations in the 18th and 19th centuries (e.g. Darwin, Fitzroy). I strongly recommend this for fans of travelogues, as well as Chatwin's [In Patagonia](#) and Theroux's [The Old Patagonian Express: By Train Through the Americas](#).

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 problems I see quite often is where SQL Agent jobs that are responsible for database maintenance aren't running because of some problem or other and the DBA doesn't notice.

As an example, consider a database that is critical to a company's workload but where performance can start to suffer badly when index fragmentation occurs. What if the Agent job stops working? Or can't run? Or isn't doing what it should do?

If no-one's looking at the output of the job periodically, no-one's going to notice the issue until it becomes a real production performance problem. How can this be?

I know people are busy and often over-worked, but it's hard to justify being in the situation where a critical maintenance job isn't working and no-one notices until performance starts to degrade catastrophically.

One of a DBA's primary responsibilities is to maintain the performance of production workloads, and making sure that critical maintenance tasks are being performed.

End of story.

Call to action: please make sure you're SQL Agent jobs are actually running (e.g. the Agent job isn't disabled or something like that), and that you're validating the output of the jobs to make sure they're doing what you expect.

I'm curious to hear your thoughts on the situation I described above, so please feel free to [drop me a line](#), always treated confidentially, of course.

Video Demo

In the first Insider demo video this year, I'd like to give you an extract from Jonathan's new Pluralsight course on [SQL Server: Using SQL Sentry Plan Explorer](#). In the demo he compares the missing index information presented in Management Studio with that presented in the free edition of SQL Sentry Plan Explorer.

The video is about five and a half minutes long and you can get it in WMV format [here](#).

You can get the query plan file used in the demo [here](#).

Enjoy!

SQLskills Offerings

If you know someone who would benefit from our IE0: Immersion Event for Accidental/Junior DBA or IEHW: Immersion Event on SQL Server Hardware, refer them to us and when they register we'll send you a \$50 Amazon gift card. Either they (or you) just need to let us know you referred them, we'll match it up to their registration and send you the gift card.

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. Additionally, most of our public training courses will be held in the first half of this year. We might add a couple of other classes in the second half of the year, but not all that many (maybe one or two IE1 deliveries and one IE2). Please plan accordingly.

Finally, to help your boss understand the importance of focused, technical training, we've added a few new items to help you justify spending your training dollars with us:

- [Letter to your boss explaining why SQLskills training is worthwhile](#)
- [Community blog posts about our classes](#)
- [Immersion Event FAQ](#)

2014 Immersion Events

Tampa, FL

- February 3-7, 2014: **IE1**: Immersion Event on Internals and Performance
- February 3-5, 2014: **IE0**: Immersion Event for the Accidental/Junior DBA
- February 6-7, 2014: **IEHW**: Immersion Event on SQL Server Hardware
- February 10-14, 2014: **IE2**: Immersion Event on Performance Tuning
- February 10-14, 2014: **IEBI**: Immersion Event on Business Intelligence
- February 17-21, 2014: **IE3**: Immersion Event on High Availability and Disaster Recovery
- February 17-21, 2014: **IEDEV**: Immersion Event for Developers

Australia

- Sydney, NSW; March 10-14, 2014: **IE1**: Immersion Event on Internals and Performance
- Melbourne, VIC; March 17-21, 2014 **IE1**: Immersion Event on Internals and Performance

Chicago, IL

- April 28 – May 2, 2014: **IE1**: Immersion Event on Internals and Performance
- April 28 – May 2, 2014: **IEBI**: Immersion Event on Business Intelligence
- May 5-6, 2014: **IEHW**: Immersion Event on SQL Server Hardware

- May 5-9, 2014: **IE2**: Immersion Event on Performance Tuning
- May 12-16, 2014: **IE3**: Immersion Event on High Availability and Disaster Recovery
- May 13-16, 2014: **IETS**: Immersion Event on Advanced Transact-SQL
- May 19-23, 2014: **IE4**: Immersion Event on Security, PowerShell, and Developer Support
- May 19-21, 2014: **IE0**: Immersion Event for the Accidental/Junior DBA

Bellevue, WA

- June 9-13, 2014: **IE1**: Immersion Event on Internals and Performance
- June 16-20, 2014: **IE2**: Immersion Event on Performance Tuning

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

SQLintersection

Our Spring SQLintersection conference has an amazing line-up of 5 tracks over 3 days with 7 full-day workshops (2 pre-cons on Saturday, 3 on Sunday, and 2 post-cons on Thursday). The conference runs from Sunday, April 13 through Wednesday, April 16, 2014 in Orlando, FL at the JW Marriott. We plan to pack in a lot of information about best practices, architectural/design decisions, platform choices, and new features coming in SQL Server 2014. The specific sessions, titles, and abstracts are on the [SQLintersection](#) site and if you register for the full show package before January 17, 2014, you'll also receive your choice of an XBOX One, Surface 2, or a gift card.

Our confirmed speaker line-up includes: Kimberly L. **Tripp**, Paul S. **Randal**, Brent **Ozar**, Aaron **Bertrand**, Andrew **Kelly**, Bob **Beauchemin**, Bob **Ward**, David **Pless**, Erin **Stellato**, Glenn **Berry**, Grant **Fritchey**, Jeremiah **Peschka**, Jonathan **Kehayias**, Kendra **Little**, Kevin **Kline**, Steve **Jones**, Tim **Chapman**, and a few more surprises still coming!

This is going to be THE *get-your-questions-answered* and *architect-the-RIGHT-solutions* event of the first half of 2014!

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

Paul@SQLskills.com and Kimberly@SQLskills.com