(March 3rd, 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!

This newsletter is coming to you from Redmond where we've just arrived home after 3 weeks of Immersion Events in Tampa and a week in NYC teaching for two private clients. We barely have time to unpack before we fly out again tomorrow to Australia for two Immersion Events in Sydney and Melbourne – our first time back Down Under since 2009.

I'm running a survey on my blog at the moment, asking you to collect 24 hours of wait statistics and send them to me, in return for which I'll give you some insight into your data and send you a free, no-catch voucher for 30 days of access to all 100+ hours of our Pluralsight courses. See here for details.

We still have a few seats in those Australia classes so we've created a special offer – see here for details. Also, check out the latest details for our **Spring 2014 SQLintersection** conference (I blogged details here). With the newly-added SQL 2014 booth hosted by the SQLCAT team and a few more sessions by Microsoft engineers to round out our 5-star line-up, this is the place to be improving your SQL skills this April!

We've also published a new Pluralsight course since the last newsletter, Joe's *SQL Server: Transact-SQL Common Table Expressions* – check it out here.

The most recent book I've read is Marcus Luttrell's *Service: A Navy SEAL at War*. Luttrell is the Navy SEAL made famous by the recent blockbuster movie Lone Survivor, based (with quite a few moments of artistic license) on his excellent account of the ill-fated Operation Redwing in the book *Lone Survivor* (which I recommended last year). In *Service*, Luttrell adds more depth to SEAL team life and recounts his recovery from the physical and psychological wounds of Operation Redwing and his subsequent redeployment in Iraq. He also adds a lot of interesting detail about how he was rescued from the Afghan village after Redwing, and gives insight into the close-know community surrounding the SEAL teams. Very well written and engaging – definitely a must-read if you enjoyed either the book or film of *Lone Survivor*.

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

Earlier this year I had feedback from some of you that server sprawl (really 'SQL instance sprawl') is contributing heavily to your not having time to perform critical tasks on the most important SQL Server instances in your environment.

I think this problem has become worse in recent years with almost ubiquitous layered products like Microsoft's SharePoint, BizTalk, and Dynamics CRM requiring SQL Server as a back-end data store, not to mention a huge plethora of non-Microsoft layered products. The proliferation of these SQL Server instances, that aren't being used in what we might think of as *traditional* ways has contributed to the server-sprawl headache.

But let's not forget those traditional uses that cause extra SQL Server instances to pop up all over the place on the network:

- Log shipping secondary servers
- Database mirroring mirror servers
- 2012 availability group secondary replica servers
- Replication Distributor and Subscriber servers
- Development servers
- Test and Q&A servers

And then there are those you might not think of like SQL Express instances in point-of-sale terminals for large retail store chains.

SQL Server is everywhere.

So, how do you keep track of all these servers? Is there a way to reliably find them all?

In our experience, the only tool that will reliably find 100% of installed SQL Servers in a domain is the *Microsoft Assessment Planning Toolkit* (which you can download here). There are other methods out there (third-party tools, PowerShell scripts, old favorites like SQLPing) but none of them will catch all installed instances, including those that aren't actually running.

It's really important that you (or someone) are aware of all SQL Server instances so you can keep track of them for:

- Licensing
- Patching (especially any critical security patches)
- Including in a backup strategy
- Including in a high-availability strategy
- Performing regular maintenance
- Checking for best-practice configuration

And so on.

How often have you been asked to restore a database on a development server that you never knew existed because no-one had told you? Or found out that what started as a personal project on someone's development server has grown into a critical piece of infrastructure that no-one was managing?

Call to action: Make sure you know where all the SQL Servers are in your environment so you're not caught out. Yes, it's one more thing to add to your list of things to do, but it could end up saving you a lot of hassle down the line.

I'm curious to hear your thoughts on SQL Server sprawl, so please feel free to drop me a line, always treated confidentially, of course.

Video Demo

In this video, I'm sharing with you a long demo from my Pluralsight course *SQL Server: Troubleshooting Performance Using Wait Statistics*. The demo examines the wait types associated with a workload and uses Extended Events to drill into FGCB_ADD_REMOVE latch waits to determine which database is experiencing auto-growth.

The video is 8 minutes long and you can get it here.

You can get the demo code here.

Enjoy!

SQLskills Offerings

We've created a last-minute special offer for our classes in Sydney and Melbourne where you can bring a friend or colleague for half price for every regular registration – see here for details.

Please know that all of our classes will run and their dates will not 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 and, if added, they'll be held in the US). 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

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 12-16, 2014: **IEDEV**: Immersion Event for Developers
- 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 with 50 SQL sessions, 3 SQL keynotes, and 7 full-day workshops (2 pre-cons on Saturday [April 12], 3 on Sunday [April 13], and 2 post-cons on Thursday [April 17]). The main conference runs from Sunday evening, 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 (including a full day pre-conference workshop and multiple sessions during the conference).

The specific sessions, titles, and abstracts are on the SQLintersection site and if you register early, 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**, Jos **de Bruijn**, Kendra **Little**, Kevin **Kline**, Mike **Zwilling**, Steve **Jones**, and Tim **Chapman**!

We have a few more SQL team members joining us and the Microsoft CAT team will be hosting a booth to discuss SQL Server 2014 as well as what you're working on today! Register with the SQLskills discount code and save $50 on your registration!

This is going to be THE *get-your-questions-answered* and *architect-the-RIGHT-solutions* event of the first half of 2014! Plus, it's at the perfect time to get a jumpstart with SQL Server 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

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