

(August 4th, 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're home for most of August enjoying the better-than-average warm weather in the beautiful Pacific Northwest. We're working hard on new Immersion Event material and Pluralsight courses (two more should be released by the next newsletter).

Registrations are steadily coming in for the next of our popular SQLintersection conferences, in Las Vegas this November – see [here](#) for details. Our show focuses on the troubleshooting and performance problems that we know you're facing today but will also highlight best practices in architecture, design, and SQL Server 2014. For a total of 6 full days – you can immerse yourself into great content with speakers that you know will deliver! Also, use the discount code “SQLskills” and you can save \$50 off registration.

The most recent book I've read is Matt Taibbi's [*The Divide: American Injustice in the Age of the Wealth Gap*](#). This is a really interesting book, which furthers the current 'property gap'/'wealth gap' arguments that there are essentially two sets of constitutional rights and enforced laws in the United States these days, depending on your skin color and socio-economic status. To illustrate this, Taibbi discusses some of the most egregious financial scandals of the last ten years, where clearly guilty individuals were not prosecuted and hardly any of the wayward banks and financial institutions even had to admit guilt. Judges, almost unbelievably, ruled in favor of such individuals and institutions over and over. At the other end of the societal scale, Taibbi shows how police in some areas mercilessly harass and arrest the poorest people to fill up quotas and fulfill deeply-flawed policing procedures. Depending on your politics, you will agree or disagree with some of the sentiments expressed, but no-one can argue that people are treated differently by the US criminal justice system depending on their wealth. Strongly recommended.

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

Last week I was complaining on Twitter about some of the ridiculous questions I'd received one day over email (I get a bunch of SQL Server questions every day from random people across the

world), where it was clear that the senders had done no research at all before sending me an email. It was pretty frustrating and it bugs me when people are lazy.

I ended up tweeting:

Here's the rule: if my 14-yr old smart daughter could find the answer on Google from your question, you'd shouldn't ask or send in email.

It brings to mind a training course from my days at Microsoft entitled Precision Questioning. The course taught how to hone your questioning technique for maximum efficacy, saving time for the questioner and the person/group being questioned. It also stressed the need to do due diligence in trying to find the answer to your question before taking up someone else's time to help. I think something similar would be of great benefit to technical communities on the Internet where people ask questions.

Here are some quick guidelines for asking SQL Server questions I came up while writing this:

- State your problem as unambiguously as possible.
- State what research you've done before asking the question (this shows you've done due diligence). You could even say what you searched for on Google/Bing.
- State the SQL Server version/SP/CU/build you're using.
- State what you've done to try to alleviate your problem so far, if anything.
- Ideally, include all Transact-SQL code to reproduce the phenomena (or, at least the details of the schema, indexes, query, query plan etc.) – just use your best judgment and include these as an annotated/commented script.
- Include whatever results are pertinent.
- Try to anticipate what people would ask to get more information, and provide answers in your question.
- Say please and thank you.
- Don't demand urgent or immediate help – you're not entitled to anything.

Now, if you're using #sqlhelp on Twitter, most of this isn't possible. But asking a question over two tweets, using 1/2 and 2/2 is perfectly acceptable, and putting 'Looked on Google already' shows due diligence. You might be asked to post a longer question on a forum, in which case you should do so.

Whatever your chosen method for asking, make sure you respond to those who respond to you. Nothing puts people off from answering questions more than a complete lack of any thanks, or response to a clarifying question. And it's just common courtesy (sadly lacking these days, especially in the relative anonymity of the internet).

And don't forget, this isn't just for asking questions online, these guidelines should help within your company as well.

Now, where can you ask your question online?

- Twitter, using the #sqlhelp hash tag
- Forums like on [SQL Server Central](#), and their dedicated [Ask SQL Server Central](#) site
- MSDN's [SQL Server](#) forums
- SQL Sentry's [performance Q&A](#) forum
- [Stack Overflow](#) for general programming questions
- [Server Fault](#) for general admin questions
- Direct email to people

And a whole bunch of other places, but these are the main ones as far as I'm concerned.

The more information you can provide, show you've tried on your own to find an answer, and are polite and grateful, the more likely you'll get useful answers quickly. And if you're sending direct email, you'd better do all of this if you want a reply.

To finish off, I leave you with a blog post I wrote three years ago today: [RTFM. No seriously, R.T.F.M. Then ask your question.](#)

Call to action: The next time you're stumped for an answer and you'd like some free help, post your question using one of the mechanisms I've described above. But make sure you've done due diligence in trying to find the answer first, phrase the questions coherently, and if you have space, explain how you've searched and give as many pertinent details as possible. You'll be amazed at the great help you can get online!

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

Video Demo

In this demo video, Jonathan introduces the new framing implementation with windowing functions in SQL Server 2012, and shows how the default framing may not lead to the correct, or expected results, and how to change the frame definition to achieve the correct results.

The video is 4.5 minutes long and you can get it:

- In WMV format [here](#).
- In MOV format [here](#).

You can get the demo code [here](#).

Enjoy!

SQLskills Offerings

We've released all the classes for the remainder of 2014, including two in Australia in December. No other classes will be added in 2014 and their dates will not change; please plan accordingly. We expect to release the first half of our 2015 schedule around September.

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

Chicago, IL

- October 6-8, 2014: **IE0**: Immersion Event for the Accidental/Junior DBA
- October 9-10, 2014: **IEHW**: Immersion Event on SQL Server Hardware
- October 6-10, 2014: **IEPTO1**: Immersion Event on Performance Tuning and Optimization – Part 1 (formerly IE1)
- October 13-17, 2014: **IEPTO2**: Immersion Event on Performance Tuning and Optimization – Part 2 (formerly IE2)

Sydney, NSW, Australia

- December 8-12, 2014: **IEPTO1**: Immersion Event on Performance Tuning and Optimization – Part 1 (formerly IE1)

Canberra, ACT, Australia

- December 15-19, 2014: **IEPTO1**: Immersion Event on Performance Tuning and Optimization – Part 1 (formerly IE1)

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

Fall SQLintersection

This year our Fall SQLintersection conference will be the week of November 10th in Las Vegas. See [here](#) for details. Don't forget to use the discount code "SQLskills" (without the quotes and it isn't case-sensitive) and you can save \$50 off registration. We hope to see you there!

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