

(October 27th, 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 been feverishly working on content for the upcoming PASS and SQLIntersection conferences. I've also been dubbed 'Percocet Paul' this week as I had a cracked wisdom tooth removed on Tuesday and have been languishing on oxycodone, much to the amusement of people on Twitter, attempting to work through my books and magazines backlog.

2015 classes are open for registration! Our spring 2015 classes in Chicago and Bellevue are open for registrations. All classes have a discount for registering in 2014 (US\$125 off IE0 and US\$200 off all 5-day classes) so get those training budgets working for you before you lose them at the end of the year! **We're also bringing IEPTO2 to Sydney in February**, with big incentives for that and our IEPTO1 in Sydney in December! See [here](#) for details.

The most recent book I've read is Sharon Kay Penman's [A King's Ransom](#). This is the completely excellent sequel to [Lionheart](#). The first book covered Richard the Lionheart the legend, up to the point he started to return from Outremer after having failed to retake Jerusalem. This book covered Richard the Lionheart the man, including his imprisonment by Emperor Heinrich and subsequent political and military machinations leading up to his untimely death. Penman is a historical fiction master and I really strongly recommend these two books, and all other novels she's written - they're just fabulous.

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

I was struggling with what to write about this time, as I've been pretty much out of it languishing on oxycodone all week, and then it came to me. It's not very long, but it's highly germane to the previous week's discussions and work.

Before I get into the topic, I want to point you at a few blog posts I've written recently:

- [How to answer questions politely and correctly](#), which follows on from the 'asking questions' topic I addressed here a few newsletters ago.

- [Correctly adding data files to tempdb](#)
- [Knee-Jerk Perfmon Counters: Page Life Expectancy](#)

Each of these blog posts has an underlying, subtle or not-so-subtle theme: avoiding jumping to conclusions, or ‘knee-jerking’, as I like to call it.

It’s a natural human tendency to want to jump to a conclusion, to solve a problem, to rebut an opinion, to get something dealt with and move on as quickly as possible. I think it’s even more of a tendency or feels like a necessity in this day and age where we’re all pushed for time, over-worked, and under pressure.

However, I think that knee-jerking is often the worst thing you can do, and ends up costing more time, more hassle, and more stress than if a slower, more considered approach was taken to the matter at hand.

Back in the early ‘90s when I was a junior developer at DEC, straight out of college and eager to prove myself, I would get dinged in my performance reviews for being too quick to latch on to the cause of bug without exploring the subtleties of the surrounding code and/or the problem scenario. Ten years later when running a development team at Microsoft, I still occasionally found myself jumping to an architectural conclusion and had to force myself to be more open to the technical propositions of my senior developers and colleagues.

Knee-jerking is a hard habit to break, especially when you know you have a lot of expertise in an area and others consider your judgment sound – the tendency is to want to be the one that solves the problem, especially in a high-visibility, high-pressure scenario like a sudden performance problem or a catastrophic corruption issue.

Think about the Hollywood and comic-book heroes we’ve all seen... what is one of their common traits? When a crisis occurs, they’re cool, calm, and collected. They don’t knee-jerk. And invariably they solve the problem at hand.

Now if only all the crises we face could be so easily scripted for success? Most of the time there’s no easy answer that’s staring you in the face – it takes calmly working through a set of logical steps to dissect and analyze the problem, to weigh up the alternative solutions, and to pick the course of action that best satisfies all necessary conditions (e.g. risk, cost, time, data loss, available skills).

Call to action: I’d like you to practice “Stop / Think / Act” for problem solving. This means *not* jumping to conclusions, *not* knee-jerking, and *not* feeling pressured to jump at the first solution that comes into your head. It takes a conscious effort to realize you’re doing this (or that others are doing this) and apply the brakes. Explore alternative solutions or conclusions. You might end up going with your first inclination after all, but you’ll know you explored the solution space and hopefully picked the best one, rather than immediately jumping to the first one that comes to mind.

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

Video Demo

From Erin: When you see a compute scalar operator in a query plan, you may see it with an estimated cost of 0%. Is it really a free operation? Not usually. But understanding what's really going on behind the scenes usually takes a bit of work. In this video, we'll step through an example of when you might see a compute scalar operator, and how Extended Events can be a big help as you try to understand exactly what's happening in a plan.

The video is just under 8 minutes long and you can get:

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

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

Enjoy!

SQLskills Offerings

We've released our classes for the first half of 2015. We will add courses in the second half of 2015, but 2nd half courses will be limited. Also, please be aware that all classes have discounts for registering in 2014.

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](#)

Upcoming Immersion Events

Sydney, NSW, Australia

- December 8-12, 2014: **IEPTO1**: Immersion Event on Performance Tuning and Optimization – Part 1 (formerly IE1)
- February 23-27, 2015: **IEPTO2**: Immersion Event on Performance Tuning and Optimization – Part 2 (formerly IE2)

Chicago, IL

- April 27-29, 2015: **IE0**: Immersion Event for the Accidental/Junior DBA

- April 27-May 1, 2015: **IEPTO1**: Immersion Event on Performance Tuning and Optimization – Part 1 (formerly IE1)
- May 4-8, 2015: **IEPTO2**: Immersion Event on Performance Tuning and Optimization – Part 2 (formerly IE2)
- May 4-8, 2015: **IEBI**: Immersion Event on Business Intelligence
- May 11-15, 2015: **IEHADR**: Immersion Event on High Availability and Disaster Recovery (formerly IE3)

Bellevue, WA

- June 8-12, 2015: **IEPTO1**: Immersion Event on Performance Tuning and Optimization – Part 1 (formerly IE1)
- June 15-19, 2015: **IEPTO2**: Immersion Event on Performance Tuning and Optimization – Part 2 (formerly IE2)

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. Our Fall lineup is our best yet; targeting the pain points you're having TODAY with some sessions to help you get ready for tomorrow. We hope you can join us!

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.

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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