

(February 16th, 2015)

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 preparing to ship out to Australia tomorrow for our IEPTO2 class in Sydney (with Jonathan and Erin too). Talking of classes, our IEPTO1 in Chicago is only a few seats from selling out and the other are filling up fast.

We're all working on new Pluralsight courses, and Jonathan's next one on using Change Data Capture should be published very soon.

The two most recent books I've read are Gabrielle Zevin's [The Storied Life of A. J. Fikry](#), and Ernest Cline's [Ready Player One](#), and I highly recommend both of them.

Cline's book is a great novel about players competing to 'win' a world-encompassing immersive, virtual reality game after the founder dies and leaves a giant fortune to the winner. It's quite similar in scope to Snow Crash, but obviously a different story, and in this case the game environment is where most of the population spends all their time (but it's not an overtly dystopian or post-apocalyptic society). It reminds me of many happy nights of my college youth that I wasted playing in MUDs (Multi-User Dungeons).

Zevin's book is a great chick flick basically (which I love, but not usually in book form), about a book store and its owner and his life. It has lots of little twists in the gentle story and is a nice read. All the talk of bookstores forced me to take my girls to Elliott Bay Bookstore in Seattle on Friday to buy more books ☺

Note: you can get all the prior Insider newsletters [here](#).

Paul's Ponderings

Last week Jonathan pointed me at an interesting story about a psychology experiment involving monkeys and bananas and the reinforcement of constrained, negative thinking. The experiment actually never happened, but the story is quite illustrative. You can see a graphic of the story here: <http://i.stack.imgur.com/MyQki.jpg> (totally safe for work), and I'll paraphrase quickly below:

- A group of monkeys are trained to know that if any one of them attempts to climb a stepladder with a banana at the top, cold water is sprayed on all of them (i.e. temptation is

prevented by the spraying of cold water, so the group prevents any individual from trying to get the banana).

- When a new monkey is introduced, and tries to get the banana, all the other monkeys prevent it as they don't want to be sprayed with water. The new monkey learns that it can't get the banana.
- Eventually all the monkeys are replaced, and they all know not to try to get the banana, but none of them know why, as they'd only been told not to get the banana by the others.

It's a really interesting story of how conditioning can become groupthink (even if the experiment didn't actually happen).

There are obvious parallels in human society, and specifically in the work environments of many of you reading this newsletter. Let me explain:

- A new person (A) joins a team. The new person has a great idea for how to do something differently/better, and everyone else on the team prevents them from expressing their opinion because that won't be allowed, it won't work, and/or they could get into trouble (e.g. from an intransigent and influential boss/architect/senior developer).
- Eventually all the original people leave the team and it's only A and the people who joined the team after A that are left. They all have the ingrained knowledge that they can't try anything new, or try a specific technology because they won't be allowed to etc.

In other words, being constrained to incumbent technologies and methodologies becomes "the way it's done around here, because it's always been that way". It doesn't matter if the wider world knows that's maybe not the best way to do it, the historical groupthink wins out.

We see this with new clients over and over, and it can be really difficult to educate the client team as to different (usually better) ways of approaching a problem. Sometimes it's just one person who stymies all thoughts of innovation or change in the team, and sometimes it's the collective groupthink that does it.

In fact, there was a client (years ago), that Kimberly actually "fired" because of this. One meeting was enough but she told her contact ("the management") that she'd try again and meet again for a second session. In her post-mortem with management, her main quote was – your problems are more than technical (specifically person "X") and until that's resolved, I can't help you.

Here are some simple examples of ingrained behavior we've seen and corrected:

- Always use NOLOCK to work around blocking and deadlocking problems (and then it's used everywhere, and no one even realizes the negatives)
- Only ever rebuild an index to remove fragmentation, without considering FILLFACTORs or trying to reorganize rather than rebuild
- Always use a heap and never use a clustered index because heaps are faster
- When creating a primary key, always use a clustered index as that's the default so Microsoft must know that's always the right way to do it

- For each column that's used in a WHERE clause, create a single-column nonclustered index
- Always use OPTION (RECOMPILE) to prevent plans being put into the plan cache and taking precious memory away from the buffer pool
- Always use sp_executesql to put a plan into cache for ad hoc statements so that their plans get reused
- Always create one file per processor core for tempdb, because that was the Microsoft guidance for SQL Server 2000

As I hope you can see, these are all very blinkered (and in some cases downright wrong) views on a variety of SQL Server topics. There are cases when some of these are the right thing to do, but not ALL the time just because 'that's the way we do it here'.

Does this remind you of anywhere? Or of anyone?

It's a dangerous way for a team to work because it can lead to all kinds of problems (such as poor performance, failed disaster recovery, good people leaving the team, business failure) that can be extremely hard to fix unless someone takes a stand or someone from outside the team helps to break the impasse. And even then, it's a delicate process to provide education and slowly change the thinking of the team, or of that one person who dominates the team's thinking.

Call to action: Consider the environment you work in and whether the situation described above is how your team operates. Are you the person to take the stand to try to change the groupthink? Do you do it or do you move on? Or are you the person who's unreasonably dominating the team's thinking? Do you allow yourself to be changed or continue in your intransigence? It's a difficult situation to recognize you're in, whatever your role is, and a hard choice to decide what to do about it.

Video Demo

In this demo video, Jonathan shows how to configure a static port for named instances that will participate in an Availability Group so that the replicas all have the same TCP port to match the Listener configuration for failover.

The video is just over 6 minutes long and you can get it:

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

No demo code this time.

Enjoy!

SQLskills Offerings

We've released most of our classes for 2015. We might add one more domestic delivery of IEPTO1 in the 2nd half of the year and possibly IEPTO2 / IEBI but these will be partially based on instructor and conference schedules; it's important to note that 2nd half courses will be very limited.

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

- 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)

London, UK

- August 24-28, 2015: **IEPTO1**: Immersion Event on Performance Tuning and Optimization – Part 1 (formerly IE1)

Dublin, Ireland

- October 12-16, 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.

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