

(July 6th, 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 the Tropic Dancer live-aboard dive boat somewhere around Palau in the SW Pacific Ocean (see [here](#) for a Google map). We're half way through our summer dive trip with our girls; Micronesia's such a cool place!

Note: there will be no Insider newsletter on July 20th. The next one will be on August 3rd.

We've got a busy Fall with our classes running in London, Dublin, and Chicago and another great week at SQLIntersection (in Las Vegas this October). We might further tweak our line-up for SQLIntersection but we've already posted a lot of the great sessions that will be presented; it's going to be a fantastic week for database architects and developers! If you're going to PASS, consider sending your developers to SQLIntersection – then, everyone can return and cross train each other on what you've learned and you all win! Check out more information online at www.SQLIntersection.com and don't forget to register with the discount code of SQLskills to save \$50 off your registration.

The latest book I've read (prior to leaving on vacation – I've probably read ten more by now ☺) is Daniel Suarez' [Kill Decision](#). I read all Suarez' other books earlier this year and this one's just as good as the others – a fast-paced techno-thriller. The book's about drones and what happens when military drone strikes from an unknown source start assassinating people in the United States. There are some cool ideas in there, including using swarming algorithms to allow autonomous drones to overcome enemies, like how weaver ants do in the wild. But not so cool when they're coming after you... Highly recommended!

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

Paul's Ponderings

Earlier this year I took on a group of about 50 mentees to help through the rest of the year. It's been a lot of fun so far, but I won't take on that many again as it is very time consuming. I think next year I'll limit myself to ten or so, picked randomly from whoever's interested.

Anyway, one of the common requests from my mentees this year has been how to gauge their SQL Server skills, to know whether they're in a place to consider becoming a Senior DBA or even a consultant.

I didn't have an easy method for doing this at hand, so I made one up, using the curricula for our Immersion Events. We greatly expanded our Immersion Events when Microsoft stopped offering the on-site MCM training in Redmond in 2011 and our (at that time) IE1-IE2-IE3-IE4 classes covered what we thought you needed to be an MCM. So these can be used to assess your skills.

Here's the method (this isn't covert marketing for our classes – you guys already know about our classes):

- Use the curricula for IEPTO1, IEPTO2, IEHADR (see [here](#) and drill down)
- Create a spreadsheet with the modules (and if you want to go deeper, each sub-bullet for each module)
- Rate yourself 0 to 10, where 0 is you have no knowledge of it, and 10 means you think you're an expert who could handle complex consulting work involving that feature / topic
- Be honest – inflating the numbers doesn't help, as you're only kidding yourself
- If you want to do the same for dev skills, you can use the curricula for our old [IEDEV](#) and [IE4](#) classes too
- If you want to do the same for soft skills, there's a handy list of them [here](#)

The way I see things, a regular DBA should be on average 4-5+ across the IEPTO1/2/HADR curricula, a senior DBA is 6-7+, and a consultant is 7-8+. Bear in mind these are just *my* numbers – other people may interpret the data differently – but these numbers seem to bear out where my mentees are in their careers.

This method will let you easily see where the holes are in your knowledge. The rest is then up to you – plenty of learning resources out there on blogs, Pluralsight, the old MCM videos, and so on.

No call to action this time – enjoy your summer (or winter for those of you on the Southern Hemisphere ☺)!

Video Demo

If you've been using incremental statistics in SQL Server 2014, you may have noticed that it's not easy to find statistics information specific to the partitions. Recently Erin discovered some undocumented gems that will show the info you've wanted to see, and in this video she provides a quick tour of how to find it. Don't miss the Connect item in the script!

The video is about 7.5 minutes long and you can get it:

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

And the demo code is [here](#).

Enjoy!

SQLskills Offerings

We've released all of our classes for 2015, listed below. We'll release the first portion of our 2016 schedule around September/October.

To help your boss understand the importance of focused, technical training, we've also added a few 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

London, UK

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

Dublin, Ireland

- October 12-16, 2015: **IEPTO2**: Immersion Event on Performance Tuning and Optimization – Part 2 (formerly IE2)

Chicago, IL

- November 16-18, 2015: **IE0**: Immersion Event for the Accidental/Junior DBA
- November 16-19, 2015: **IEPDS**: Immersion Event on Practical Data Science
- November 16-20, 2015: **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.

SQLintersection

We're looking forward to another great SQLintersection event! This Fall SQLintersection is running the week of October 26, 2015 back in Las Vegas. There's a lot more information online at www.SQLintersection.com. When you register, 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

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