(August 31ˢᵗ, 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 somewhere over the Atlantic, where Kimberly and I are on a flight from London to San Francisco, returning home after teaching our sold-out IEPTO1 class in London to 42 very happy students. London is such a great city, and we ticked a few more sightseeing items off our list, including St. Paul's Cathedral and Hampton Court Palace.

We've got a busy Fall with our remaining classes running in Dublin and Chicago, and another great week at SQLintersection (in Las Vegas this October) as well as PASS – that same week. We will be finalizing our entire line-up for SQLintersection this week and 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 some of your team (primarily 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 is Shane Harris' *@War: The Rise of the Military-Internet Complex*. This book is a really interesting account of the growth of the U.S. cyber-security machinery in the wake of the huge rise in hacking and cyber-espionage, most notably from China (according to the book), over the last ten years. It covers the NSA, other military and civilian companies, what they're doing, and how they're cooperating. It's also a warning that companies and the government need to be doing more to protect themselves and critical assets from cyber-threats. Highly recommended, and the inspiration for my editorial below.

Note: you can get all the prior Insider newsletters here.

Paul's Ponderings

Back in April last year I wrote an editorial in the newsletter focused on security, with my older TechNet Magazine article as a base. As I was reading the @War book I reviewed above, it struck me that security checklists and security reviews of SQL Server environments are all well and good, but there are a few missing things that I think are worth considering.

For instance, does your company provide training or guidance on recognizing and avoiding phishing emails? Phishing is the word describing an email that entices the recipient to open it and

maybe click a link, which then installs some malware on the computer. This could be something that logs keystrokes and sends them to another system on the Internet. If a DBA unknowingly installed such malware on a personal laptop, say, and then connected to a work system, the hackers could capture the DBA's login credentials.

Such phishing emails could be cleverly targeted, especially if hackers are going after a specific company and make an email look like it's coming from a source the DBA trusts. The @War book has several descriptions of this being done to companies like banks and defense contractors. You'll likely have received emails like that, purporting to come from Microsoft or PayPal or some other company you recognize, and urging you to click a link to fix something to do with your account.

A way to test people in your company would be to create a fake email with a link that takes them to a webpage showing that they've clicked something they shouldn't have, and to be wary in future – or just to keep track of what proportion of recipients in the company were fooled into clicking the link.

Another thing to be wary of is social engineering. This is where a hacker calls someone on the phone, pretending to be someone who needs some information that can help them break into a computer system, and fools the person into giving that information out. This wasn't in the @War book, but is something I've read about being used many times in the past, and is a relatively common technique used by phone scammers.

Finally, one of the things you might consider for your company is engaging the services of a third-party company that does penetration testing. These people will deliberately try to hack into your environment, with your permission, to discover security weaknesses that you can then patch before a malicious hacker tries to break in.

Sometimes this is known as *ethical hacking*, and you can actually learn how to do it yourself. For instance, on Pluralsight (where we host all our online training), there is a new set of courses that will help you learn how to think about security from the attacker's perspective and assess your own environment for security flaws. Check them out here.

Call to Action

If you're responsible for databases that contain any information that you don't want someone to have unauthorized access to, you need to make sure that your security doesn't have any problems. That includes making sure that the users are educated about ways that they can be duped into giving out info or installing malware, and testing your system's defenses to see if they can be broken. You can be sure that someone out there will try to get in sooner or later.

Video Demo

In the demo this time, Glenn demonstrates the latest version of CPU-Z and shows how to use it to quickly check the net effect of your power management settings in Windows and at the BIOS-level using the new CPU benchmark feature. You can download CPU-Z from this link: http://www.cpuid.com/softwares/cpu-z.html.

The video is about 5 minutes long and you can get it:

- In WMV format here.
- In MOV format 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 in September.

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

Dublin, Ireland

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

Chicago, IL

- November 16-18, 2015: **IE0**: Immersion Event for the Accidental/Junior DBA **6 seats remaining!**
- November 16-19, 2015: **IEPDS**: Immersion Event on Practical Data Science **5 seats remaining!**
- November 16-20, 2015: **IEPTO1**: Immersion Event on Performance Tuning and Optimization – Part 1 (formerly IE1) **SOLD OUT!**

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. Yes, it's the same week as PASS. No, that's not really a problem! We don't have a lot of folks that attend both PASS and SQLintersection so the overlapping week isn't a big problem. And, it's a great way to get different perspectives on the tech and have everyone come back and do knowledge-transfer.

Check it out 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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