

(December 17th, 2020)

If you know someone who would benefit from being an Insider, feel free to forward this PDF to them so they can sign up [here](#).



Note: As an Insider, you can read all prior Insider newsletters [here](#).

Quick Tips for our Insider friends!

The last newsletter of the year!

We've been quiet the last few weeks as we've been working hard building a system to provide streaming access to recordings of all our classes, putting together course bundles, finalizing our 2021 class schedule, and completely replacing our website back-end. It's been a ton of work, it's hugely exciting for us, and it's all live and available now – see below for details!

TAKE NOTE that we have some HUGE discounts running through the end of December!

From all of us at SQLskills, whatever you celebrate in the upcoming holiday season, we thank you for your support during 2020 and wish you the very best!

Stay safe out there – we'll be back with the next newsletter on January 5th.

SQLskills News

Live, ONLINE classes in 2021: our classes next year will again be live-streamed online, as it's not feasible to run in-person classes for the foreseeable future. Just like our last deliveries, we'll be running them as a series of half-day sessions so it's less onerous than the usual 9-hour days in our in-person classes.

Students loved the split training days, from the comfort of watching in sweatpants to the ability to still get some of their regular duties accomplished. We had rave reviews for the format. And, all attendees of a live class receive lifetime streaming access to the recording of the entire class – something we'd never done before this year!

Our upcoming live, online classes for Spring 2021 are as follows:

- **IEAzure:** Immersion Event on Azure SQL Database, Azure VMs, and Azure Managed Instance
 - February 23-24-25 and March 2-3-4, 2021
- **IEPTO1:** Immersion Event on Performance Tuning and Optimization – Part 1
 - March 15-16-17-18-10 and March 22-23-24-25-26, 2021

- **IEPTO2:** Immersion Event on Performance Tuning and Optimization – Part 2
 - April 12-13-14-15-16 and April 19-20-21-22-23, 2021
- **IEQS:** Immersion Event on Solving Common Performance Problems with Query Store
 - May 4-5-6, 2021
- **IEVLT:** Immersion Event on Very Large Tables: Optimizing Performance and Availability through Partitioning
 - May 17-18-19-20, 2021

These classes are available for registration individually or as part of a discounted bundle. You can get all the details on our [training options page](#) or just go directly to our [new shop](#). However, before you buy, be sure to review all of the new options and discounts, we're very excited to offer our new Blackbelt Badge and Bundles!

NEW: Streaming recordings of all classes!

We've built a new system that allows you to buy streaming access to all our 2019 and 2020 class recordings. All classes are available for a complete year of access and a few heavily discounted courses for 90 days of access, plus you can purchase them individually or as part of a discounted bundle. You can get all the details in our [training options page](#) or just go directly to our [new shop](#), and there are **huge discounts running through the end of the year!**

Kandio job candidate assessments: we've teamed up with Kandio to produce technical assessments to help companies screen candidates for job recruitment. If you want to make sure someone really knows what they say they know, check out the assessments [here](#).

Book Review

From the 2017 archives, I present the DK coffee-table book [Remarkable Books: The World's Most Beautiful and Historic Works](#). As you all know I'm seriously addicted to books and reading – a true bibliophile. I worked through this wonderful book during December 2017 reading about a few books each day. Here's the Amazon blurb about it that describes is better than I can:

“A beautifully illustrated guide to more than 75 of the world's most celebrated rare and seminal books and handwritten manuscripts ever produced with discussions of their purpose features and creators. From ancient masterpieces such as The Art of War written on the leaves of bamboo to the stunningly illustrated Birds of America to Chairman Mao's Little Red Book Remarkable Books delves into the stories behind the most incredible tomes ever produced offering an insight into their wider social and cultural context and is chronologically ordered to demonstrate the synergies between the growth in human knowledge and the bookmaking process. Alongside breathtaking images of the books and manuscripts themselves close-up views draw out interesting features which are discussed in greater detail while biographies tell the lives of the people who produced them. This coffee table-worthy book is wrapped in a textured jacket with gold foil making it a great gift for those with an interest in literature and art and design.”

I'm familiar with many of the books covered especially the illustrated manuscripts from the Middle Ages as those are of particular interest to me. It really is a fantastic book itself and I hugely recommend it!

The Curious Case of...

This section of the newsletter explains recent problems we've helped with on client systems; they might be something you're experiencing too.

With all the information out there, it can be difficult to find where something is, even with a search engine. Last week someone asked me for a list of my blog posts about on-disk structures. Even though I have several blog post categories that cover those, there are a *lot* of posts. If you just want the basics of pages, records, and so on, you can read through my explanation [here](#)...

Ponderings...

(From Kimberly this time – enjoy!)

As the end of a trying year approaches, I'm greatly looking forward to 2021 and all the excitement that it will bring. We've all spent a lot of 2020 pondering how to work more effectively while doing so in difficult home office scenarios and/or difficult home situations (kids, pets, spouses that drink all of the coffee without making more ☺)...

In all seriousness, it's been a truly difficult year and I'm grateful it's almost over. I've spent a lot of my time trying to come up with more effective ways to offer our training, as well as how to electronically show what you've accomplished (with our badges). Now, I'm even more excited to announce lots of both!

We're excited to announce our new platform! Jonathan and I have spent many, many hours over the last month building a system to allow streaming access to all our class recordings, a complete overhaul and replacement of our e-commerce back-end, and I've learned more about Wordpress, Elementor, and various plugins than I ever expected too. I have to give huge thanks to Jon for his patience and expertise!

We now have a wide variety of individual course options, both live and recorded, but we've also added some bundled options with the lowest prices we've ever offered. Then, we lowered them even further for the remainder of 2020!

And with the badges that I told you about a few months ago, I've created a new SQLskills SQL Server 2019 Blackbelt – our most demanding badge to achieve, requiring the completion of SEVEN deep, technical courses!

So, what are your options? I summarized them on our [training options page](#). There are A LOT of new options so please review this thoroughly and [let me know](#) if you have any questions!

At the start of the year, when COVID-19 hit, it took a real toll on us, having to cancel all of our events and training. Little did we realize that through the year we'd bounce back by converting our classes to be all online, completely replace our old website (with the help of Blythe Morrow and her great team at [Paper Sword B2B](#)), AND do all the infrastructure work I described above. And if that wasn't enough, we actually *increased* our consulting work more than nearly any year in our 25-year history. We're truly lucky that even in the midst of a pandemic, companies still need their data workloads to perform well and be available, possibly even more so with everyone online. We're very thankful that we have that silver lining through an otherwise difficult year.

On a personal note, we want to sincerely thank Erin, Jon, and Tim for working through a lot of difficult times this year – we absolutely could not have kept going without you three!

And, from our team to yours, we wish you all the very best for a safe and joyous holiday season, and we look forward to bringing you more excellent content in 2021!

#TBT

(Turn Back Time...) Blog posts we've published since the previous newsletter plus some older resources we've referred to recently that you may find useful.

The theme for the TBT this time is FILESTREAM, which also ties in with the Curious Case this time; here are some useful links:

- My whitepaper: [FILESTREAM Storage in SQL Server 2008](#)
- My blog posts:
 - [FILESTREAM directory structure](#)
 - [FILESTREAM directory structure – where do the GUIDs come from?](#)
 - [FILESTREAM garbage collection](#)
 - [FILESTREAM blog category](#)

I hope you find these useful and interesting!

Video Demo

In this Insider video, Tim continues the series of Azure-related videos by showing how you can still use many of the same popular, off-the-shelf scripts that you use on-premises. One of the primary takeaways from this video is that Azure SQL Database is database scoped, meaning scripts that you previously could use at an instance level will have to be created per database.

The video is about 6 minutes long and you can get it in WMV format [here](#).

The demo code is [here](#).

Enjoy!

Upcoming SQLskills Events

Our 2021 classes will be entirely online in the Spring and they're open for registration!

With our new streaming system, you can now choose to attend a live, online event or purchase a recording to watch at your leisure, either individually or as part of a bundle. And all attendees of live events get lifetime access to the class recordings too!

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](#)

LIVE, Online Immersion Events:

Spring 2021

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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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