(June 26th, 2023)

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!

This newsletter comes to you from Camp Savage, where the (unusual, for June in the Pacific Northwest) good weather continues and I've been working on getting my big machines ready for a summer of construction work.

On Thursday, July 6 we're having a one-day sale of our signature Blackbelt recorded course bundle: 158-hours of our best training content for less than $1,500. See here for details. Our lowest price ever – wow!

As always, take care and be safe!

<u>SQLskills Health Check SALE!</u>

We've added the ability to purchase a self-service health check using a credit card, so you don't have to wait until we've done a scoping call, wait for budget approval, get agreements signed – you can just click and go!

Once you purchase the health check, you get access to our health check package (tailored for whichever version you select) that you can immediately run and then securely upload the data for us to analyze and give you a report on the results.

To celebrate this, we're running a special offer where a **<u>health check for a single-instance is only US$2,495</u>**, compared to the usual price of US$3,495, when purchased via credit card.

See here for details and let me know if you have any questions.

We look forward to helping you make sure your SQL Server environment is running well and configured correctly!

PASS Data Community Summit 2023

Kimberly will be presenting at PASS this year and on November 14th she'll be presenting a pre-con workshop: *Queries Gone Wrong: Caching, Statistics, Cardinality -> Solutions!* Check out the details on the PASS website [here](#).

Book Review

The latest book I've read is Benjamin Lorr's *[The Secret Life of Groceries: The Dark Miracle of the American Supermarket](#)*. This piqued my interest as a behind-the-scenes look at something we take for granted. From Amazon: "In this page-turning exposé, author Benjamin Lorr pulls back the curtain on the highly secretive grocery industry. Combining deep sourcing, immersive reporting, and sharp, often laugh-out-loud prose, Lorr leads a wild investigation, asking what does it take to run a supermarket? How does our food get on the shelves? And who suffers for our increasing demands for convenience and efficiency?" It's *extremely* interesting and, as with any food-related exposé, pretty shocking too. Highly recommended!

The Curious Case of…

This section of the newsletter explains recent problems we've helped with on client systems or been asked about over email or #sqlhelp; they might be something you're experiencing too.

Here's something that I was actually asked three times last week! What is wait resource (0:0:0) when you're performance troubleshooting? You can read through my explanation [here](#)…

Ponderings…

As anyone who teaches will know, there are quite a variety of personalities you encounter when teaching classes, and a lot of variety in the goals of people attending classes.

One of the things I've always found annoying, and thankfully it doesn't happen very often, is when someone in a class is only interested in finding 'the answer' and doesn't care about anything else. Nowadays, I guess I'm more dismayed than annoyed, as I know the person is likely to face a similar problem in future, where the answer they got from class won't apply and if they didn't learn the methodology or reasoning to arrive at the answer, they'll be unable to work out how to solve the new problem.

The same thing happens on internet forums and in emails I receive. Two prime examples are people dealing with database corruption and people dealing with out-of-control transaction logs. Often they want to know only how to recover from corruption and how to shrink the transaction log, respectively. Corruption crops up regularly in questions I'm asked, but questions on log shrinking are a lot rarer than they used to be. Nowadays it's more common for people to want to

know exactly what caused a particular performance problem just from looking at some wait stats data.

Now that information is useful but it doesn't help prevent the problem from recurring in future – and in both these examples the problem is highly likely to recur (in my experience) if the only action taken is corrective rather than preventative.

It could very well be that these people are under the gun from management to get the problem solved, it could be that they don't care about the underlying cause, or that they're quite out of their depth and wouldn't understand the underlying cause without spending a lot of time getting the requisite background knowledge. There can be extenuating circumstances I guess.

But in a class environment I think it's inexcusable. The whole point of being in a class is to understand how to find the answer for yourself, so that you can determine 'the answer' over and over again using the knowledge and skills you've learned.

If you want to learn something about SQL Server, go a bit deeper and find out *why* the answer is what it is – the knowledge will be much more powerful and repeatedly applicable in diverse situations than just knowing 'the answer' for one situation. This is what the Microsoft Certified Master certification used to be all about before Microsoft killed it back in 2012 (wow – more than ten years ago now!)

If you can explain the 'why' as well as the answer, you'll also find yourself able to successfully argue technical matters with co-workers – a very useful skill!

One of the ways I learn is to look at forums or twitter #sqlhelp posts where I don't know the answer and then play around with SQL Server until I find the answer and get a good understanding of the background knowledge. Often I'll then blog about what I've learned. Of course, when I had source code access at Microsoft this was certainly easier…

One of things I told mentees in the past was to lurk on various question forums and try to figure out the answers from experimentation. This is how I've populated some of the entries in my wait stats library when I can't remember what a particular piece of code does. And I still wish I had source code access again…

Call to action: Next time you have to solve a problem with SQL Server, try not to stop when you find 'the answer'. Try to find some time to dig into the problem a bit deeper and figure out the *why* of the answer too. If you can make this second nature then you'll find your mastery of SQL Server increasing quickly. Consider taking just 10-15 minutes each day to learn something new or refresh yourself on something that's a bit rusty…

#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.

My favorite session at PASS last year was my Mythbusters talk, so that's the theme for #TBT this time. Here are some myths resources for you:

- The very first Pluralsight course we (I) recorded: *SQL Server: Myths and Misconceptions* that has almost four hours covering a plethora of SQL Server myths.
- My blog post series from April 2010 – *A SQL Server DBA Myth A Day* – and this blog post has links to all 30. Some of the later ones had 20+ myths busted in one post, as I got a bit carried away ☺
- The same blog post series, but organized as a handy PDF file.

I hope you find these useful and interesting!

Video Demo

For the video this time, I'd like to share a clip from my newly-revamped course on Pluralsight: *Communications: How to Talk, Write, Present, and Get Ahead!* In this clip I talk about starting a blog and a bunch of advice for how to go about blogging.

The video is 5 minutes long and you can get it in MP4 format here.

Enjoy!

Upcoming SQLskills Events

We've decided to record SQL Server 2022 updates relevant to our class material rather than running full classes, as, to be honest, not much has changed in our space and 2022 focused a lot on Azure extensions.

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

You can get all the details on our training options page or just go directly to our shop.

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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