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Community Connector

A Biweekly Newsletter for SQL Server Professionals



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Dear Sandy,

Editorial

Chuck Heinzelman
PASS Director of Technical Publications



With Microsoft TechEd on the horizon, and the PASS Community Summit not too far off, I began thinking about educational opportunities for people in the IT industry. There are a wide range of potential training opportunities- CBTs, Self-Paced Training, Instructor-Led Training, and Technical Conferences. Each of these offerings has its distinct benefits and drawbacks. CBTs and Self-Paced Training offerings are nice because they are usually low cost, but finding the time and motivation to take them can be hard. Instructor-Led Training is more expensive, but the interaction with a real person is often good- especially if the training can be customized to a given work environment. Technical Conferences offer a large amount of information, but the expense and time that it takes to attend are sometimes more than a company is willing to part with.

I have been very fortunate to be able to attend at least one technical conference per year. Sometimes I actually make it to more than one. You might be asking yourself "How do you manage to consistently get to conferences?" No, I do not have an unlimited training budget. I have made many of the opportunities for myself.

So, how can you help yourself to get to more technical conferences? Here are a couple of tips:

- Get involved and volunteer with a professional organization- Organizations such as PASS would not run without many volunteers. Volunteers that do a lot of work for these types of organizations will sometimes be rewarded for their efforts with a complimentary registration to the organization's conference. You would still need to come up with travel and other expenses, but that might



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be an easier sell for your employer than a full conference fee.

- Speak-Many conferences- even those that are corporate-run- have an open call for speakers. Compensation for speaking generally ranges from a free registration to the conference (which is what PASS provides) to full travel and expenses. Some may even providestipends to speakers. You might still need to cover you travel and expenses, but at the very least the conference registration should be covered.

I've had varying degrees of success getting my employer to cover travel and expenses for the conferences that I got into on my own. One employer was willing to give me the time off without having to take vacation, but I had to cover my own expenses. Another employer looked at me speaking at a conference as free advertising for them, and covered my time away and expenses. I actually had a boss that- when I was offered an all-expenses paid trip to a conference- required me to provide justification for why they should let me go.

Personally, if you can only attend one conference per year I'd love to see you at the PASS Community Summit. When it comes to SQL Server education, it doesn't get much better. But, that's just my opinion.

Do you have other ways to stretch your educational budget? Drop me a line and let me know- yoursuggestions might come in handy!

Interview with Rick Pleczko, CEO of IDERA

By: Grant Fritchey, Principal DBA at FM Global

Idera provides a large selection of tools and utilities that help the SQL Server DBA administer and manage their databases and servers. Tools as diverse as SQL diagnostic manager, which monitors SQL Server, keeping track of performance and uptime and helping you diagnose bottlenecks and other problems, to SQL change manager which keeps track of changes are provided by Idera. These tools and others have made the company a common name in the industry. If nothing else, you know them from the bright orange displays and shirts at the PASS events. Idera's CEO, Rick Pleczko, took some time out of his day to talk with SQL Connector. Mr. Pleczko has more than 25 years experience in the industry where he as worked in various jobs including DBA, software engineer, and, of course, CEO.

PASS CONNECTOR: Hello Mr. Pleczko. Thanks for taking time to talk today. It's my understanding that Idera is releasing something new called the SQL admin toolset?

RICK PLECKZO: Indeed we are, yes.

PASS CONNECTOR: And it's composed of 24 tools or utilities?

RICK PLECKZO: It's 24 tools that perform discrete, and valuable, functions to help a DBA do their daily job. Each tool in itself has a rich set of functionality, but they're very, very focused. You have things like a tool that does backup status reports so that you can quickly check that all your servers have been completely backed up. There's another one that allows you to move databases around inside servers. Another example of the tools is one that allows you to check passwords to ensure that they meet good

security standards, are strong enough and don't have any blank passwords. There's others like cloning users, finding servers, login movers. If you think about it, it's really a Craftsman tool set a DBA. If you have a problem to fix today, you pull out the appropriate tool. Use that tool to go and fix it and then on to the next.

We designed the thing by talking to our customer DBA's. We ask them, "What are those really niggling admin problems you have to sort out where a very focused simple tool would just solve the problem for you?" This would save you from having to write and maintain a bunch of scripts or just firefight and hack it every time.

PASS CONNECTOR: That makes sense. Right now it's in Beta. When do you think it's going to be released?

RICK PLECKZO: The plan is to release it sometime around the end of June or early July.

PASS CONNECTOR: Excellent.

RICK PLECKZO: So that's only a few weeks away.

PASS CONNECTOR: How does that affect the rest of your product line? Obviously it doesn't hit on Mobile Manager or directly on Diagnostic Manager but it does seem to pull bits and pieces from some of the other products.

RICK PLECKZO: It does, but if you look at our other products they provide a higher degree of automation where as the tools you point and shoot and they go and do their job. If you look at products like our Defrag Manager tool for example, that's going to provide automated monitoring and defragmentation. The index tools that we have in the Toolset are very much point them at the indexes in the database go and fix them now. But they're not going to sit there monitoring in the background allowing multiple people on multiple consoles to look at things. They really are that leather tool belt you have with the tools on it as opposed to automated systems for managing and monitoring.

PASS CONNECTOR: All right.

RICK PLECKZO: We see the toolset as something that every DBA or developer will have on their laptop. They'll pull out a tool out to do a specific job and then put it back on their lap top or as it were on their belt. Where as someone using Diagnostic Manager is running all of the time, it's monitoring, it's checking, it's telling, it's talking. The same with SQL defrag manager or SQLsafe, it's running, it's backing up, all that sort of stuff.

PASS CONNECTOR: That all makes sense. Hey, you're giving away a Nintendo Wii.

RICK PLECKZO: Yes.

PASS CONNECTOR: That's pretty exciting.

RICK PLECKZO: Well we're giving away actually a lot of WII's. We're giving away a

WII each day.

PASS CONNECTOR: Oh, that's right. So how much longer would anyone have to register to win that?

RICK PLECZKO: All this week. If we get a lot of feedback, we'll give away more of these. Because what we're trying to do is get a lot of feedback on the tools. This way we can make sure we've got the tools that are the most important to people and that the features in the tools we are delivering are the most important. Also, we can get ideas for new tools that we can use to extend and enhance the toolset later. We're trying to give folks the most opportunity and incentive to give us that feedback as possible.

PASS CONNECTOR: Is there any kind of SDK that comes with the Tool Set that allows the individual user to expand on it or modify the behavior?

RICK PLECZKO: Not yet, but that's a lot of the feedback we've got. They say, "Hey, we'd like a scriptable version of the tools." So we've put that in our plans as well.

PASS CONNECTOR: Excellent.

RICK PLECZKO: We're trying to get as much feedback as we can on what tools people want, what features they want in the tools and what extensible capabilities they want in the tools as well.

PASS CONNECTOR: Are there any new plans for SQL Scaler, Diagnostic Manager or anything else in the product line that you guys are coming out with any time soon?

RICK PLECZKO: Yes. In the next few days we'll be announcing a new version of Diagnostic Manager but I don't want to steal their thunder. That's May 13th that we'll be announcing a new version of Diagnostic Manager with some pretty cool features in it. Then during the summer a new version of our Compliance Manager product will be coming out. We just released a new version of our security analysis and administration product, SQL Secure. We have a constant, ever-evolving path of product refreshment.

PASS CONNECTOR: Does the release of SQL Server 2008 have an impact on any of your tools, especially this Admin Tool Set just coming out?

RICK PLECZKO: The Admin Tool Set is going to support from SQL Server 2000 through 2005 and on to 2008. No problems at all. That's factored in to the development. As far as the other products go, no, not really. What SQL Server 2008 actually gives us is that it makes it easier for us to do our jobs. Some of the new features and API's that they've put into SQL Server 2008 make it easier to get, managed, and alert on data. Microsoft is helping us and making our job easier, which we love.

PASS CONNECTOR: I can't argue with that. I only have one last question. Why orange?

RICK PLECZKO: Strangely enough it's a favorite color of mine and the team here. It

also means you can't get missed wherever you go wearing an orange polo shirt. You don't get lost in the crowd.

PASS CONNECTOR: You guys generally aren't. Thank you very much for your time.

DBA SIG Live Meeting Event

May 28th, 2008 - Noon Eastern

James Luetkehoelter will give a presentation titled SQL Server Disaster Recovery: Recovery/Backup Planning.

Abstract:

Disaster recovery planning has essentially two phases: mitigation (trying to prevent or minimize the effect of a disaster) and response (actually recovering from a disaster). In the SQL Server world, the response phase is dominated by the backup and recovery process. When planning for the backup and recovery process, it is imperative to actually think about the process in reverse. Whatever backup scheme you end up using should be driven by the recovery needs the business requires. We'll look at various business cases and discuss possible recovery/backup schemes that might satisfy them.

James Luetkehoelter is an MSCE, MSCD, MCDBA, MCT, and Oracle Certified Professional who has been working in the database field for more than a decade. He is currently the principle consultant and owner of Spyglass LLC, a data-centric consulting company and the author of Pro SQL Server Disaster Recovery published by Apress. James is a frequent presenter at SQL Server conferences, both in the US and in Europe. His teaching and presenting style is best described as "eclectic", though some may say "just plain goofy". In his spare time he catalogues the various pronunciations of "Luetkehoelter". He is currently at 2,017 distinct variations.

To attend the meeting, you will need:

- An Internet connection for the presentation
- A telephone connection for the audio

The URL for the meeting is: <https://www.livemeeting.com/rm/microsoft/join>

Meeting ID: **SIGS**

Meeting Key: **SGISSIGS**

The Location is: <https://www112.livemeeting.com/cc/microsoft>

Audio Conferencing: **(Toll-Free): +1 (866) 500-6738**

Participant Code: **4048733**

When attending the meeting, please observe the following common courtesies:

1. If you are using a speaker phone, please mute it unless you are asking a question. That way, other participants will not be disturbed by the noise in your

environment.

2. If you need to leave the meeting temporarily, please hang up and call us back, unless your phone is silent when on hold. Your hold music and/or message is disturbing to other participants.

FIRST TIME USERS:

To save time before the meeting, check your system to make sure it is compatible with [Microsoft Office Live Meeting](#).

If you have any questions, please contact sharond@voicenet.com

Webcast Series

Solid Quality™ Mentors & PASS Hosts Webcast Series



Solid Quality Mentors, in partnership with the Professional Association for SQL Server (PASS), is presenting a free webcast series.

The webcasts feature leading SQL Server and business intelligence (BI) experts and are scheduled for every Wednesday from April 30 to June 4, running from 10:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. India Standard Time (GMT + 05:30).

The series includes the following presentations:

April 30

Peter Myers: Introduction to SQL Server 2008 Reporting Services

May 07

Rushabh Mehta: Introduction to SQL Server Integration Services

May 14

Greg Low: Avoiding Stored Procedure Recompiles

May 21

Randy Dyess: SQL Server 2005 Clustering

May 28

Sony Jose: Budgeting with Microsoft Performance Point Server

June 04

Craig Utley: Avoiding Common Analysis Services Design Problems

For more information about any of the webcasts, go to the Solid Quality Mentors [Events page](#); to register, simply click the Register Now button beside the webcast you want to attend.

The call to Speakers for the PASS 2008 Community Summit is now Closed.

Thanks to everyone who has submitted an abstract!

Speakers will be notified by May 30th regarding the status of their abstract submissions.

Volunteer at Microsoft Launch Events!

March - June 2008

Microsoft has invited PASS to exhibit in their booths at the 61-US city "Heroes Happen Here" launch road show and **we need you!**

We're looking for enthusiastic volunteers to help man the PASS table, spread the word about PASS, and sign up new members. **As a thank you, every volunteer will receive a special, limited-edition PASS golf shirt AND a chance to win 1 of 2 Zunes!**

Check out the Heroes Happen Here website at:

<http://www.microsoft.com/heroeshappenhere/register/default.msp>

Email Hazel at hazel.maxwell@sqlpass.org to advise which city you can attend.

Thank you for your support!



SQLSaturday #4 is a free training event that will be held in Orange County on June 7th and 8th, 2008 at the Orange County Convention Center.

[Registration](#) and [call for speakers](#) is now open!

This event is being organized by the Orlando SQL Server Users Group. Click [here](#) for more information.

Information from Microsoft

[Win a Windows Home Server!](#)

Evalu'08 and you could win! Download a free trial or take a Virtual Lab of Windows Server 2008, Visual Studio 2008, SQL Server 2008 or other Microsoft Server products and be entered for a chance to win an HP MediaSmart Server powered by Windows Home Server software. To sign up and for the official rules, visit [Evalu'08](#).

[Knowledge Base Article: How to extend the Windows Server 2008 evaluation period](#)

This article describes how to extend, or re-arm, the windows Server 2008 evaluation period up to 240 days.

[Test Drive Windows Server 2008](#)

The Windows Server 2008 test drive allows you to try the latest release from Microsoft instantly. By simply logging onto our test-drive environment using your web browser, you will be able to experience Windows Server 2008 first hand through a collection of short virtual labs and video walk-throughs.

[Webcast Series: 24 Hours of Windows Server 2008](#)

Watch these 90-minute Windows Server 2008 webcasts and learn how your organization can leverage the enhancements in Windows Server 2008 improve your organization's networking infrastructure and security, server performance and reliability, remote resource access, and client deployment. Subject matter experts break down what these upgrades mean for your environment and how to take advantage of them. Tune in for live webcasts and stream or download webcasts for on-demand viewing.

PASS Organization & Mission

PASS was founded by Microsoft and CA to provide users of SQL Server a peer network and to help build a body of expertise to help educate millions of SQL Server users around the world.

Currently, PASS is a global community for more than 25,000 SQL Server professionals. It is the first independent, user-run, not-for-profit association dedicated to providing SQL Server users around the world with the tools and knowledge to achieve unparalleled business results.

Our Mission:

- Provide a forum for SQL Server education
- Build and grow the SQL Server Community
- Facilitate member networking & provide an infrastructure to enable the exchange of information within SQL Server disciplines- DBA/Developers, BI Professionals, etc.
- Work with Microsoft to influence the direction of the SQL Server product and services
- Publish high quality technical materials including the Connector & the SQL Server Standard Magazine
- Build the largest archive of user created SQL Server and Business Intelligence reference material

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