

How to save the Plan Cache

by Alessandro Mortola





Sponsor & Org



















- I have worked with all versions from Sql Server 7.0 to Sql Server 2022
- I spoke several times at Sql Saturday, Data
 Saturday and SqlStart! editions
- I am an author for sqlservercentral.com
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- The Plan Cache and its limits
- How to use the Plan Cache properly
 - Ad hoc queries vs Parameterized
- Parameterization
- What if your queries are not parameterized?
 - Simple Parameterization
 - Forced Parameterization
- Other options for Ad hoc queries
 - Optimize for Ad hoc Workloads
 - TF 253

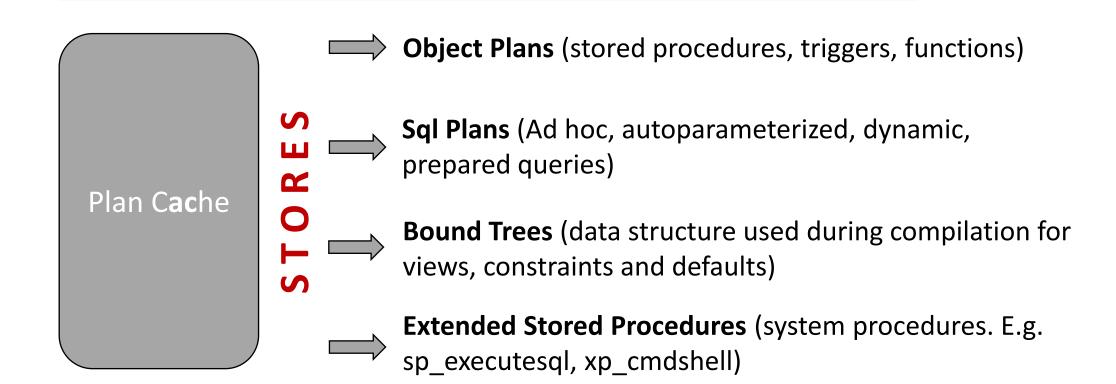
Agenda

Sql Server Cache

Plan Cache
Reserved for
execution plans

Data Cache
Reserved for Indexes
and Data

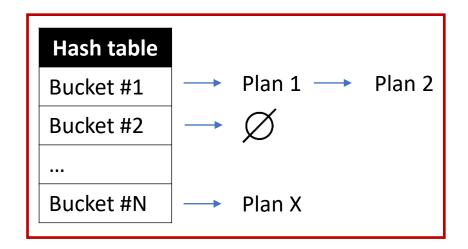
Other Small Caches



The Plan Cache

Each Store (Object Plans, Sql Plans, Bound Trees and Extended Stored Procedures) contains a hash table to keep track of all the plans in that particular store. Each bucket in the hash table contains zero, one, or more cached plans.

The DMV **sys.dm_os_memory_cache_hash_tables** gives us information about each hash table.

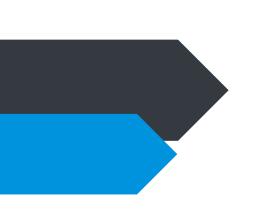


Name	Plan cache store	Buckets_count	Buckets_max_length	Buckets_avg_length
Object Plans	CACHESTORE_OBJCP	40009		
SQL Plans	CACHESTORE_SQLCP	40009		
Bound Trees	CACHESTORE_PHDR	4001		
Extended Stored Procedures	CACHESTORE_XPROC	127		

The Plan Cache

The DMV **sys.dm_os_memory_cache_counters** provides information about the cache entries allocated.

Name	Plan cache store	Pages_kb	Entries_count
Object Plans	CACHESTORE_OBJCP		
SQL Plans	CACHESTORE_SQLCP		•••
Bound Trees	CACHESTORE_PHDR		•••
Extended Stored Procedures	CACHESTORE_XPROC		•••



The Plan Cache Pressure Limit

Starting from Sql Server 2005 SP2, there are two limitations related to the plan cache:

Total size (depending on the server memory)

- 75% of visible target memory from 0 to 4 GB
- + 10% of visible target memory from 4 GB to 64 GB
- + 5% of visible target memory > 64 GB

e.g.

Sql Server Memory: 64 GB

Plan Cache: 3 GB + 6 GB

Number of entries

SQL Server also indicates memory pressure when the number of plans in a store exceeds four times the hash table size for that store, regardless of the actual size of the plans.

These limits can be raised with the documented 8032 (total size) and trace flag 174 (number of entries).

Two query types to deal with Adhoc vs Parameterized

The Cache

select SalesOrderID, OrderQty, ProductID
from Sales.SalesOrderDetailEnlarged
where ProductID = 777;



objtype	usecounts	text
Adhoc	1	select SalesOrderID, OrderQty, ProductID from Sales.SalesOrderDetailEnlarged where ProductID = 777;

select SalesOrderID, OrderQty, ProductID
from Sales.SalesOrderDetailEnlarged
where ProductID = 778;



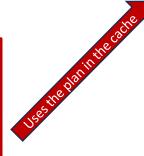
objtype	usecounts	text
Adhoc	1	select SalesOrderID, OrderQty, ProductID from Sales.SalesOrderDetailEnlarged where ProductID = 778;

exec sp_executesql
@stmt = N'select SalesOrderID,
OrderQty, ProductID
from Sales.SalesOrderDetailEnlarged
where ProductID = @pid;',
@params = N'@pid int', @pid = 777;



objtype	usecounts	text
Prepared	2	<pre>(@pid int)select SalesOrderID, OrderQty, ProductID from Sales.SalesOrderDetailEnlarged where ProductID = @pid;</pre>

exec sp_executesql
@stmt = N'select SalesOrderID,
OrderQty, ProductID
from Sales.SalesOrderDetailEnlarged
where ProductID = @pid;',
@params = N'@pid int', @pid = 778;



To keep in mind

#1 #2 #3

Compiling a query has a cost in terms of time and resources (e.g. CPU, RAM)

SQL Server has an efficient algorithm to find an existing plan related to a specific statement. The minimal resources that are used by this scan are less than the resources that should be used for compiling every statement

The way SQL Server looks at the plan in cache is by calculating a hash value of the query text

#4 #5

Ad hoc queries are the main responsible for plan pollution

Execution plans remain in the cache as long as there is enough memory to store them. When memory pressure exists, the SQL Server uses a cost-based approach to determine which plans to remove from the cache



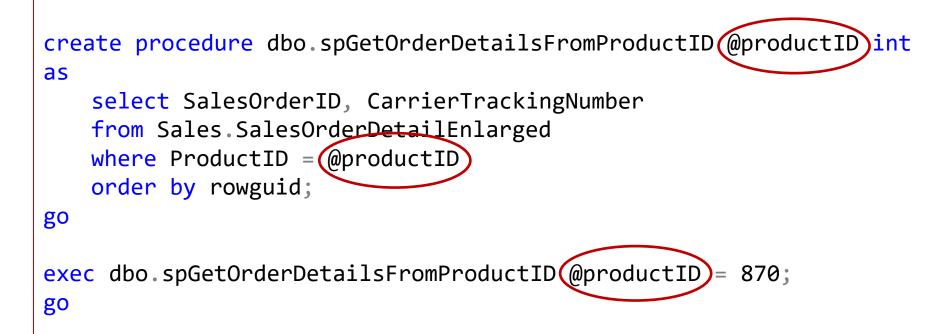
02_PlanPollution.sql



How to use the Plan Cache properly

PARAMETERIZATION #1 – Stored procedures

CacheObjType	ObjType	Estimated number of rows based on
Compiled Plan	Proc	Statistics Histogram



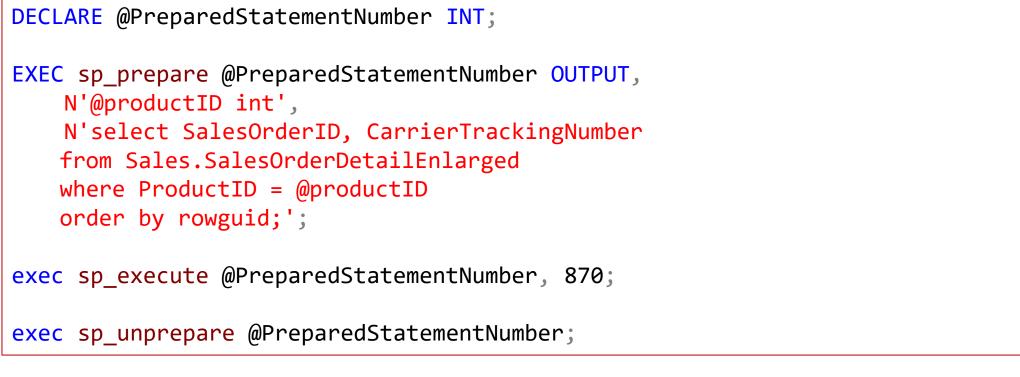


PARAMETERIZATION #2 – Dynamic Sql with sp_executesql

CacheObjType	ObjType	Estimated number of rows based on
Compiled Plan	Prepared	Statistics Histogram

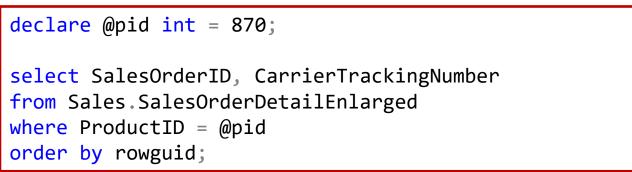
PARAMETERIZATION #3 – Using sp_prepare and sp_execute

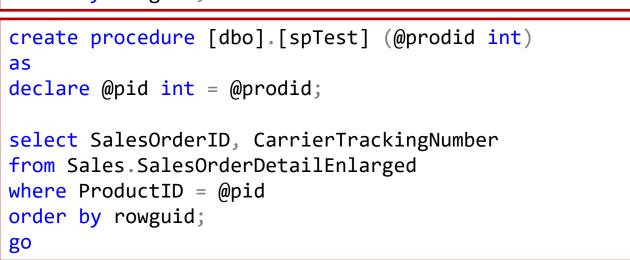
CacheObjType	ObjType	Estimated number of rows based on
Compiled Plan	Prepared	Statistics Header & Density Vector



Pay attention: Variables are NOT parameters

- Queries that filter by literals or parameters (with the exception of sp_prepare) use statistics HISTOGRAM
- Queries that filter by variables use statistics DENSITY_VECTOR







CacheObjType	ObjType
Compiled Plan	Adhoc



CacheObjType	ObjType
Compiled Plan	Proc



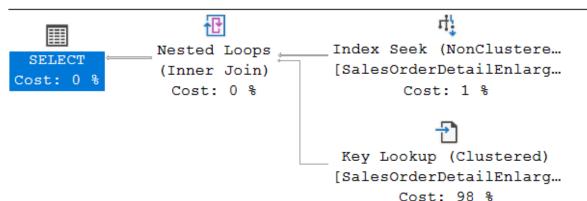
03_Parameterization

Parameter Sniffing (aka Parameter Sensitivity)

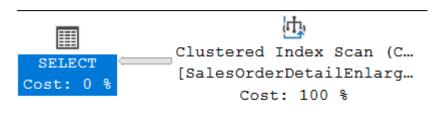
It is a performance optimization. The <u>first time</u> a user runs a parameterized query, Sql Server chooses a "good enough" plan basing the decision on the parameter values. That plan is used for the <u>next executions</u>.

What can go wrong? If the data distribution is unevenly distributed, the compiled plan may not fit all possible parameter values and performance problems may occur.

--@pid = 897 → 78 rows
select en.SalesOrderID, en.CarrierTrackingNumber
from Sales.SalesOrderDetailEnlarged en
where en.ProductID = @pid;



--@pid = 870 → 182832 rows
select en.SalesOrderID, en.CarrierTrackingNumber
from Sales.SalesOrderDetailEnlarged en
where en.ProductID = @pid;





Parameter Sniffing – An interesting metaphor

By Guy Glanster











Parameter Sniffing – How to deal with it

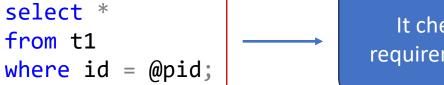
```
select SalesOrderID, CarrierTrackingNumber
                                      from Sales.SalesOrderDetailEnlarged
                                      where ProductID = @pid
Optimizing for a typical parameter
                                      option (optimize for (@pid = 123));
Optimizing on every execution
                                      option (recompile);
Optimizing for UNKNOWN
                                      option (optimize for unknown);
                                      declare @lpid int = @pid;
                                      select SalesOrderID, CarrierTrackingNumber
Using local variables
                                      from Sales.SalesOrderDetailEnlarged
                                      where ProductID = @lpid;
Disabling PS at Query level
                                      option (use hint ('DISABLE_PARAMETER_SNIFFING'));
Disabling PS at Database level
                                      alter database scoped configuration set parameter_sniffing = off
Disabling PS at Instance level
                                      Trace Flag 4136
```

Parameter Sensitive Plan Optimization New in Sql Server 2022 !!!

- It is part of the Intelligent Query Processing family of features
- It is available for each edition
- It addresses the scenario where a single cached plan for a parameterized query isn't optimal for all possible incoming parameter values. This is the case with non-uniform data distributions
- The *dispatcher plan* contains the optimization logic called a *dispatcher expression*. The dispatcher plan maps to *query variants* based on the cardinality range boundary values predicates

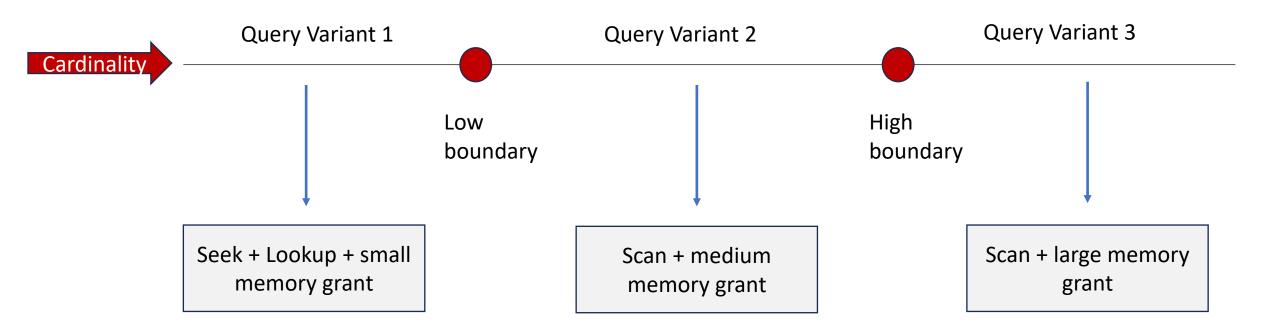
Parameter Sensitive Plan Optimization

New in Sql Server 2022!!!



It checks if PSPO requirements are met

It sets the high and low boundary values looking at the statistics



PSP optimization skipped reasons

There are 40 possible reasons why PSP optimization can be skipped and they are returned from the following query:

```
SELECT map_key, map_value
FROM sys.dm_xe_map_values
WHERE name = 'psp_skipped_reason_enum';
```

- NoParameter
- CompatLevelBelow160
- UnsupportedComparisonType
- SkewnessThresholdNotMet
- HasLocalVar
- SystemDB
- ...

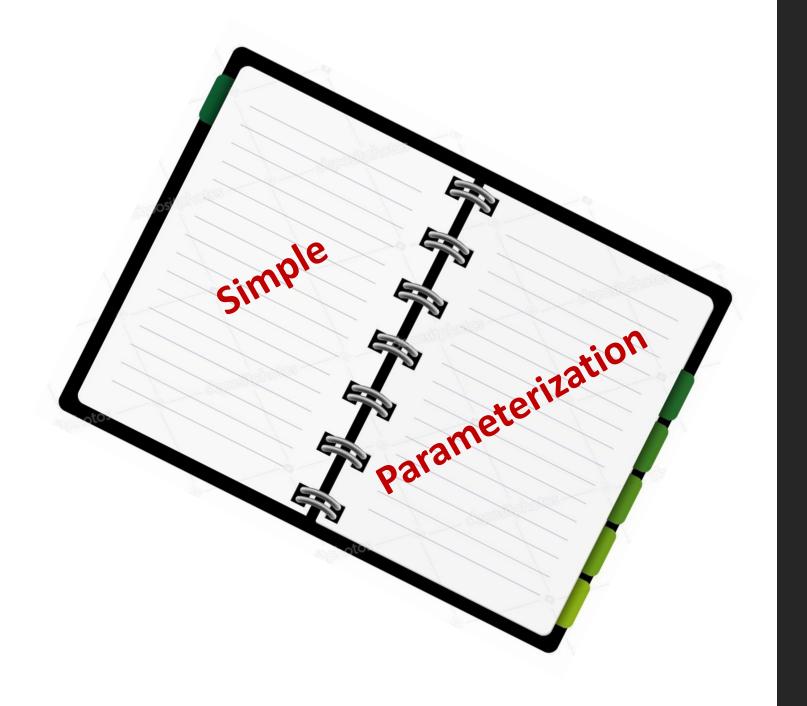
❖ The Extended Event parameter_sensitive_plan_optimization_skipped_reason occurs when the PSP optimization feature is skipped.

PSP optimization is not perfect yet

- We have more possible execution plans in cache, each of which can be sniffed and the medium plans are the more vulnerable
- PSP optimization currently only works with equality predicates



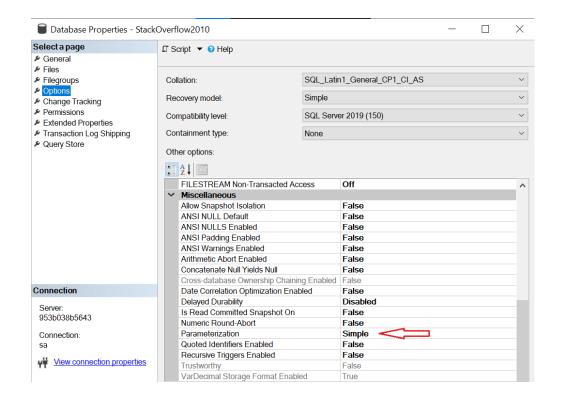




#1. What if your queries are not parameterized?

How Sql Server protects itself against "single use plans": Simple Parameterization

- With Simple Parameterization,
 before Sql Server 2005 known as
 auto-parameterization, Sql Server
 attempts to replace constant literal
 values with parameter markers
- It is set at database level and
 Simple is the default value



Simple Parameterization – When it is applied

The Simple Parameterization is applied to "simple and safe" queries



JOIN	ТОР	BULK INSERT	UNION
INTO	DISTINCT	GROUP BY	HAVING
Sub queries	Query hint	Constant comparison	

❖ Safe Execution Plan: regardless of the provided input parameter values, the query must always lead to the same execution plan [Klaus Aschenbrenner]

What is supported and not supported by the Simple Parameterization

	Supported	Not Supported
Functions	CAST & CONVERTABSFLOOR	LOWERUPPERCEILING
Global Variables	@@SPID@@TRANCOUNT	@@ROWCOUNT@@IDENTITY

The list of intrinsic functions compatible with simple parameterization is quite limited and undocumented. [Paul White]

Simple Parameterization – How it works

- Starting from an Ad hoc, Simple and Safe query, Sql Server substitutes literal values with parameters obtaining a parameterized plan
- Sql Server tries guessing the data type using the smallest compatible subtype.
 E.g.: with "WHERE BusinessEntityId = 1" the parameter will be defined as tinyint
- In the plan cache we have <u>one</u> **Compiled Plan / Prepared** statement with the full plan and <u>N</u> Adhoc shells (smaller than a full plan) that are really pointers to the Prepared
- Shell plans allow to bypass the parsing, parameter replacement, normalization and decoding stages
- The original text is manipulated and standardized (more details later)

Simple Parameterization – Data Type Inference

Numbers

- For strings of numbers without decimal points, Sql Server chooses from tinyint, smallint and int. For numbers beyond the range of integer, Sql Server uses numeric with the smallest possible precision
- Strings of numbers with decimal precision are interpreted as numeric with a precision and scale just large enough to contain the value provided
- Strings prefixed with a currency symbol are interpreted as money
- Strings in scientific notation translate to float

Simple Parameterization – Data Type Inference

Datetime and Uniqueidentifier

The literal value must be provided in ODBC escape format. e.g:

- {d '1901-01-01'}
- {ts '1900-01-01 12:34:56.790'}
- {guid 'F85C72AB-15F7-49E9-A949-273C55A6C393'}

General string and Binary

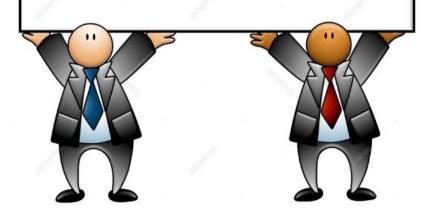
They are typed as varchar(8000), nvarchar(4000) or varbinary(8000). MAX is used if the literal exceeds 8000 bytes

[Ref. Paul White]



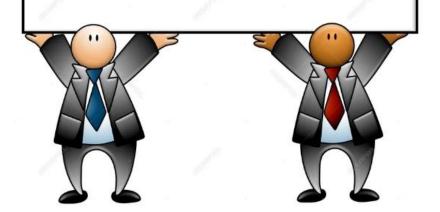
Original query text

- Keywords: UPPERCASE
- Data types: lowercase
- ASC is added in ORDER BY clause



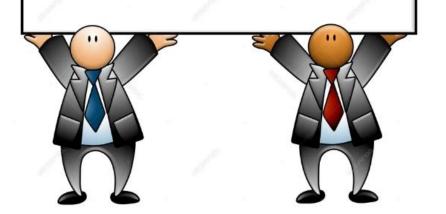
Original query text

- Global variables: lowercase
- Objects are delimited by square brackets



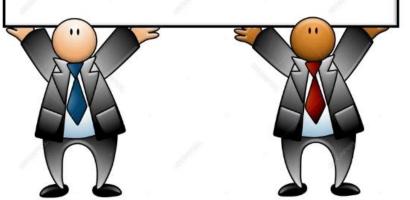
Original query text

- Unnecessary spaces and comments are removed
- CAST is replaced by CONVERT



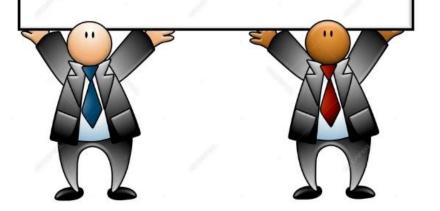
Original query text

- Parameter enumeration starts from @1
- Intrinsic functions: lowercase (but not CONVERT!)



Original query text

- AS used for aliases are removed
- != is substituted by <>
- ...



Original query text

Simple Parameterization – Final notes

- It is set at database level
- The main drawback is due to the Data Type inference. E.g.:

```
select Name from Production.Product where ProductID = 1;

go
select Name from Production.Product where ProductID = 256;

smallint
go
select Name from Production.Product where ProductID = 32768;

int
```





#2. What if your queries are not parameterized?

Forced Parameterization

- It was introduced in Sql Server 2005
- It tells SQL Server to parameterize all DML queries
- When the PARAMETERIZATION option is set to FORCED, any literal value that appears in a SELECT,
 INSERT, UPDATE, or DELETE statement, submitted in any form, is converted to a parameter during query compilation
- In the plan cache we have <u>one</u> Compiled Plan / Prepared statement with the full plan and <u>N</u>
 Compiled Plan / Adhoc shells (smaller than a full plan) that are really pointers to the Prepared statement

Forced Parameterization – When it is not applied

- Statements inside the bodies of stored procedures, triggers, or user-defined functions
- Statements inside a T-SQL cursor
- Statements that reference variables, such as WHERE T.col2 >= @bb
- Statements that contain more than 2,097 literals that are eligible for parameterization
- Statements that contain the RECOMPILE query hint
- The <select_list> of any SELECT statement
- Constant-foldable expressions that are arguments of the +, -, *, /, and % operators. E.g.: WHERE T.col2 = 1 + 2

Forced Parameterization – Data Type Inference

Numbers

- Integer literals that fit within int data type parameterize to int
- Larger integer literals that are part of predicates that involve comparison operators,
 parameterize to numeric (38,0)
- Larger literals that aren't parts of predicates that involve comparison operators parameterize to numeric whose precision is just large enough to support its size and whose scale is 0
- Fixed-point numeric literals parameterize to numeric
- Floating point numeric literals parameterize to float
- Money type literals parameterize to money

Forced Parameterization – Data Type Inference

NON parameterizable data types: Datetime and Uniqueidentifier

Constants specified by using ODBC extension syntax are NOT parameterized

General string and Binary

- Non-Unicode string literals parameterize to varchar(8000) or varchar(MAX)
- Unicode string literals parameterize to nvarchar(4000) or nvarchar(MAX)
- Binary literals parameterize to varbinary(8000) or varbinary(MAX)

Forced Parameterization – Text manipulation

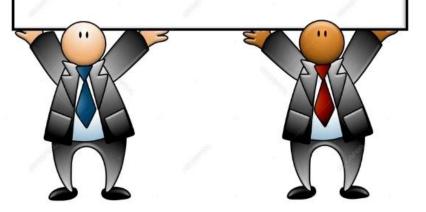


Original query text

Query text manipulated by the Forced Parameterization

Forced Parameterization – Text manipulation

- Keywords: lowercase
- Data type: lowercase
- Parameter enumeration starts from @0



Original query text

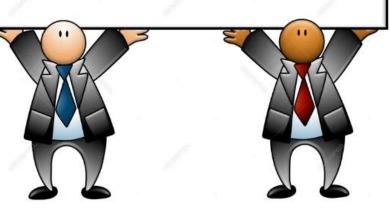
```
SELECT p.ProductId as ProductIdentifier, --Comment!!!
sc.Name AS SubCatName

FROM Production.Product p
INNER JOIN Production.ProductSubcategory sc
ON p.ProductSubcategoryID = sc.ProductSubcategoryID
WHERE p.ProductID = 1
ORDER BY p.ProductID
```

Query text manipulated by the Forced Parameterization

Forced Parameterization – Text manipulation

- Unnecessary spaces and comments are removed
- There is a space either side of the 'dot' between schema and object names



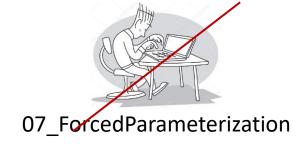
Original query text

Query text manipulated by the Forced Parameterization

Forced Parameterization – Final notes



- It is set at database level
- It can be set at query level with OPTION (PARAMETERIZATION FORCED)
- It doesn't have any particular drawbacks, even if it may cause a sub-optimal plan usage mainly in environments that rely heavily on indexed views and indexes on computed columns





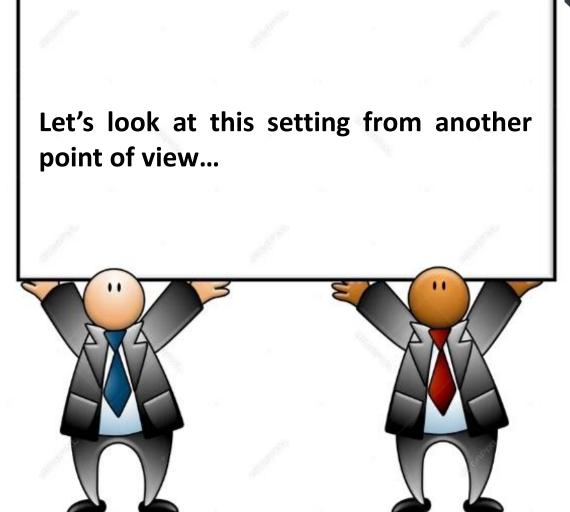
Another option for Ad hoc queries

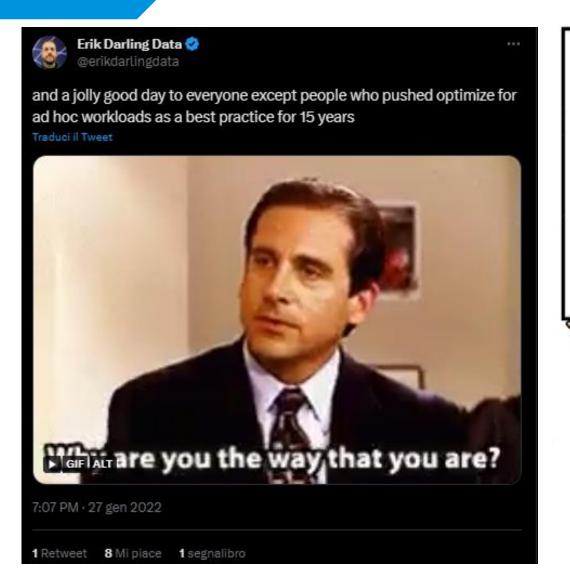
It is set at instance level
It has been available since Sql Server 2008

The behaviour

- When the Ad hoc query is compiled for the first time the Engine does not store the full plan, but <u>only a small stub</u>
- The compiled plan stub doesn't have an execution plan associated with it
- If the query is executed again, the stub is removed from the cache, the query is compiled again and the full execution plan is cached, ready for further reuse



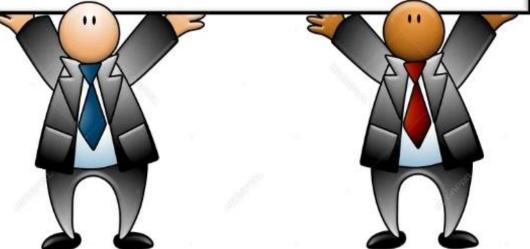




#1

The stubs are very small (generally < 1 Kb) but they still count for the total number of plans in the cache.

The only advantage is space saving.

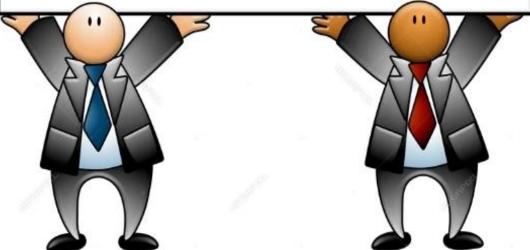




#2

There aren't plans in the cache to analyse for the stubs.

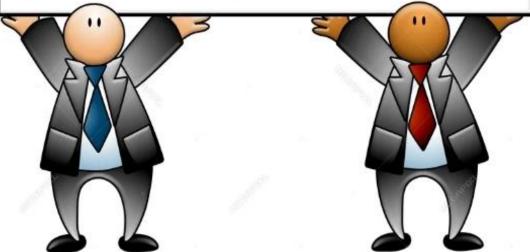
Do you capture query plans in a different way? (Query Store, monitoring tool, etc.)



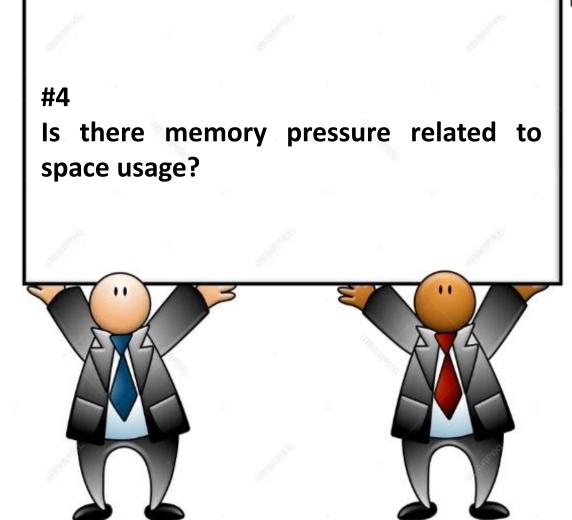


#3

A second execution of an Ad hoc query needs recompiling, that means *time* and usage of resources.

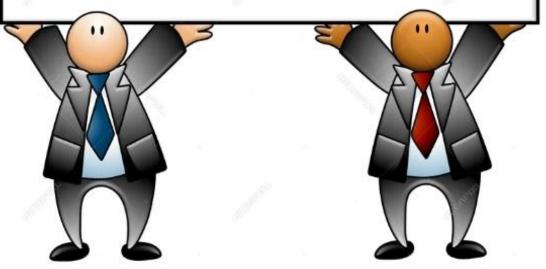








#5
How many queries are in the cache with execution_count = 1? And how many with execution_count > 1?





Another option for Ad hoc queries

The Trace Flag 253

- It prevents the caching of Adhoc plans
- If enabled at query level, it prevents simple parameterization
- It is undocumented



Resources



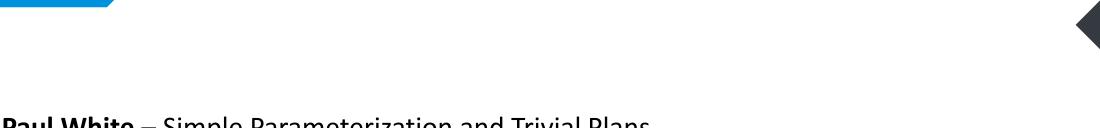


Erin Stellato – SQL Server Plan Cache Limits
https://www.sqlskills.com/blogs/erin/sql-server-plan-cache-limits/

Guy Glantser - How to Use Parameters Like a Pro and Boost Performance https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PR39RcJV1K8

Sergio Govoni – SQL Server 2022 Parameter Sensitive Plan Optimization https://t.ly/Pk2bM

Resources



Paul White – Simple Parameterization and Trivial Plans https://sqlperformance.com/2022/03/sql-performance/simple-param-trivial-plans-1

Erik Darling – No, Really: Don't Optimize For Ad Hoc Workloads As A Best Practice https://erikdarlingdata.com/no-really-dont-optimize-for-ad-hoc-workloads-as-a-best-practice/

Randolph West – Don't optimize for ad hoc workloads as a best practice https://bornsql.ca/blog/dont-optimize-for-ad-hoc-workloads-as-a-best-practice/

Jonathan Kehayias – Enlarging the AdventureWorks Sample Databases https://www.sqlskills.com/blogs/jonathan/enlarging-the-adventureworks-sample-databases/



Are there any questions?



#37 PARMA 2023



Grazie!!!



