

Tech Tip Tuesday—November 1, 2016

by David Hirsch

It was great seeing so many of you at Livery Coach User Experience last week. For those of you who weren't able to attend, we had 40 attendees representing 30 different companies from across North America, so in addition to learning more about Livery Coach.net and some of our other products and plans, it was also a great networking opportunity. We hope to be able to have these on at least an annual basis, and are also exploring how we can take them on the road. For those of you who were unable to attend, we will cover some of the topics in this and future editions of Tech Tip Tuesday. For this week, we'll talk about the rollout progress, and also about performance.

Livery Coach .net rollout nears completion

We are continuing to roll out the next generation of Livery Coach, LiveryCoach.net, to all of our customers, and at this point the majority of our clients are mostly or completely on LiveryCoach.net.

We encourage all of you to move to 100% LiveryCoach.net as soon as is practical. At this point, we no longer recommend running a "hybrid" system, and can no longer support such a configuration.

Livery Coach .net speed

Chip gave a presentation in speed, and the sorts of elements that affect the apparent speed of Livery Coach. One significant factor is the speed of the CPU of the SQL Server. While we are continuing to make efforts to optimize and tune the performance of LiveryCoach.net, it is still a more sophisticated, more powerful system than the old "VB6" version, and needs hardware to match. A few important points:

1. If you are using the "free" version of Microsoft SQL (called SQL Express), you are subjecting yourself to some severe limitations. Even if you have a third-party backup plan (since SQL Express can't do automated SQL backups), you still might be missing important database maintenance, such as rebuilding the index tables (which are part of the database that make requests for data faster). Over time, these get more and more fragmented, slowing performance. What's more, the amount of memory that SQL Express can access is limited to 1Gb. Unless you are the small end of the spectrum (fewer than, say, 10 trips/day), your database is likely larger than this. If SQL can't fit the whole database in memory, it has to resort to reading from (much slower) disk.

In addition, Chip discussed the concept of CPU speed—the faster the better. There is a site, cpubenchmark.net, that assigns a "CPU Mark" for all the processors out there, past and current. As preparation for the User Experience, Chip checked some of the specs of the attendee's systems in advance. One customer, who does in the hundreds of trips/day (and has no complaints about speed), has a CPU with a benchmark index of nearly 19,000. Another company, which has had more issues, also does hundreds of trips/day, but has a CPU with a score of only in the 4,000 range (it's an old server). While replacing a server isn't cheap, the increase in productivity for the entire office usually makes it well worth it. Do you know what your CPU benchmark is?