

# TWENTY YEARS OF PERFORMANCE TUNING

by Chris Lawson



## TIP #3

### Be an Expert on *Active Session History*

I've noticed that many DBAs are only vaguely aware of the capability of Active Session History, or *ASH*. This is a mistake, because ASH is one of the most powerful diagnostic tools we have.

I often describe ASH as a "Poor Man's Tracing" tool. With just a simple script, you can see what a session was doing recently--or even days prior. Of course, ASH only shows sessions that are indeed waiting, but in most cases that's exactly what you want. For recent events, use the *V\$* version; for prior events, use the *DBA\_HIST* version. I often join to the *DBA\_OBJECTS* view to show the *Object\_Name*.

Here are just a few uses:

- Listing the top sql for a long report
- Tracking down a blocking session, and the object blocked
- Determining what type of disk reads are holding things up
- Finding the Sql causing frequent redo log sync (commits)

Of course, there are dozens more uses. I find it most helpful to develop my own script, instead of running the canned "ASH Report."



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***Twenty Years of Performance Tuning*** is a series of tips based on the author's experience solving performance problems over the last 20 years.