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Using the OUTPUT Clause in TSQL for Auditing

The OUTPUT clause is often times underappreciated by the TSQL programmer. There are many really interesting things that you can do with the OUTPUT clause, from inserting to two tables with one statement or to replace the SCOPE_IDENTITY option. For this posting I am looking into using the OUTPUT clause for auditing.

By auditing in this example, I specifically mean tracking what was changed, and when it was changed.

In the sample below I create a database called output_demo, create a called Departments, add a few rows, create another table called DeptAudit then update Departments and insert to DeptAudit in one statement.

Which generates this output.

Where you can see that the update statement to change 'Cooking' to 'Camp Kitchen' was logged into the DeptAudit table showing both the old and the new value.

A similar process could be logged on INSERT, UPDATE, DELETE, or MERGE in order to track anything that is being changed in a table.

See Also

- OUTPUT clause with UPDATE Statements
- OUTPUT clause with INSERT Statements
- OUTPUT Clause SQL Training
- Using the OUTPUT Clause With An INSERT Statement