

# MYLITTLEADMIN WEB-BASED SQL MANAGER PACKS A BIG PUNCH

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*In the web hosting world there's rarely a "Holy Grail" in software. With all the choices available these days the software starts to blend together and it gets hard to discern which software is really better than the rest.*

*Similarly, web hosting customers often have a hard time differentiating between hosts because of the multitude of choices out there. Eventually, a customer's final decision boils down to the number of features offered and the price. Hosts need software that will allow them to offer great features while helping keep pricing down.*

*One piece of software for managing Microsoft SQL Server databases on the web stands out in both price and features. That software is **myLittleTools' myLittleAdmin**.*

## INTRODUCTION

When a host decides to offer Microsoft SQL Server databases as a feature, customers need a way to access their databases. Usually it's through one of the following ways:

**MS SQL Enterprise Manager** - Many hosts choose to have their customers use the free built-in desktop Enterprise Manager, which has become a familiar way to edit SQL Server. But using Enterprise Manager has several pitfalls. **1.** It creates a potential security risk for web hosts; port 1433 has to be open in order for customers to manage their database. **2.** It has to be installed on the user's machine, if the user can even acquire the software itself (which is included with the MS SQL installation CD or full download, but is not available separately). **3.** It also allows its users to see not only their database, but all databases on the SQL server. While users don't have access to databases other than their own, they already know one piece of the puzzle to getting some else's data... the database name.

**Web-Based Tools** - Web-based tools, on the other hand, offer more flexibility and control over what the user can and can't see. There are a number of free web-based tools out there such as ASPEnterpriseManager and Microsoft's Web Data Admin, but free tools often lead to poor support, few updates, and are usually incomplete tools as in the case of both ASPEnterpriseManager and Web Data Admin. You also run the risk of potential security compromises if the software isn't being constantly revised and updated by the community.

Payware web-based tools are often very expensive and finding a payware solution that is complete, usable, and affordable is quite a challenge. That is, until you look at myLittleTools' myLittleAdmin (visit them on the web at <http://www.myLittleTools.net>).

## MYLITTLETOOLS' MYLITTLEADMIN

One feature that's sure to keep hosted customers using MS SQL happy, and the hosts who have to shell out the bucks for a good tool, is myLittleTools' myLittleAdmin, a web-based Microsoft SQL Server database management tool that brings the familiar Microsoft Enterprise Manager look and feel to your web browser (see Figure 1).

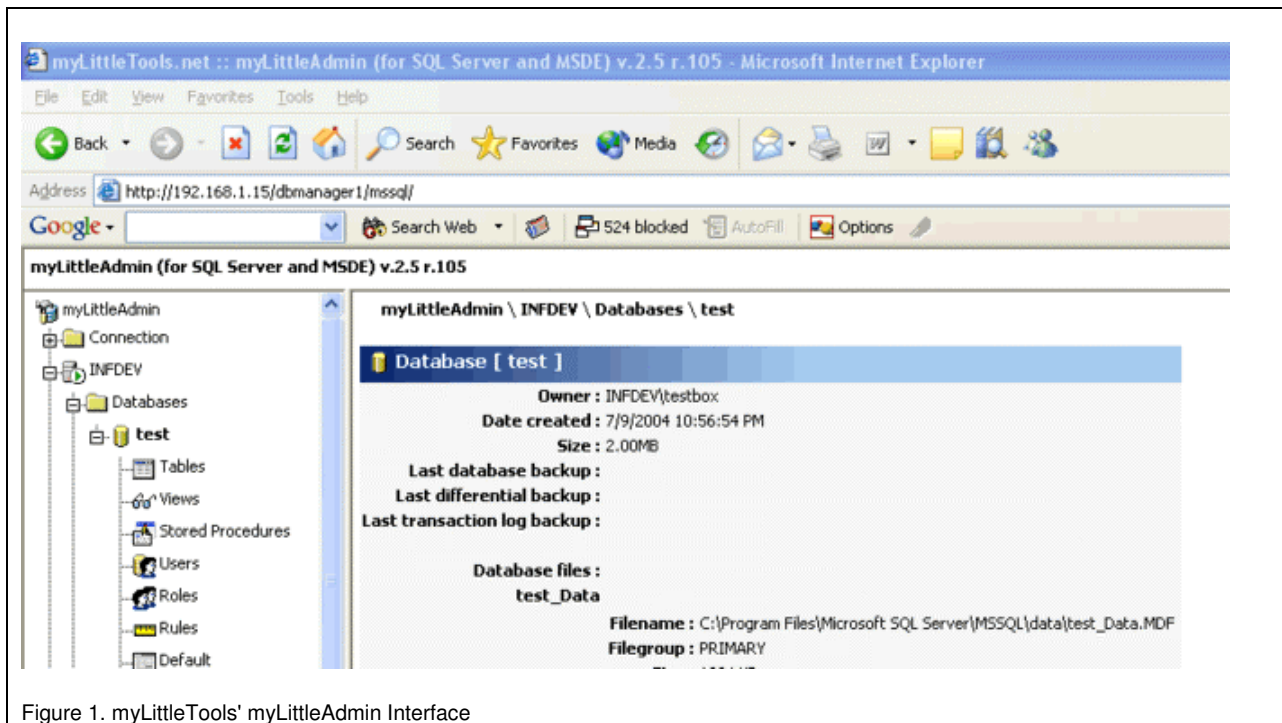


Figure 1. myLittleTools' myLittleAdmin Interface

There are two versions of myLittleAdmin. A less expensive web hosting version, which allows you to use myLittleAdmin to access only one database server and has a limited feature set that web hosts need, and an Enterprise version, which has all the bells and whistles and allows connection to multiple database servers through the one installation.

In this white paper, we'll be briefly discussing the installation and feature set of the Enterprise version since this will give you a good idea of the complete capabilities of this product. This product is so complex we could easily cover 100 pages on it, but for the sake of time, we'll try to highlight the product's strong points. We'll also show you why it's a much better choice than the free Microsoft Web Data Admin.

## INSTALLATION

Installation is a breeze. The software comes ready to be unzipped into your web server web root and since it is Active Server Pages (ASP) based, it will easily run on Microsoft platforms running Internet Information Server (IIS) with ASP enabled. Web Data Admin, on the other hand, is confusing to configure because it doesn't give you the option to put the app where you want it. It just installs through an MSI package, and you're left trying to figure out how to access it. I literally spent 20 minutes just trying to figure out how to move the installation to another site.

Once extracted into the web folder of your choice, the only thing I needed to do with myLittleAdmin was ensure the directory I extracted myLittleAdmin into was configured as an application (see Figure 2).

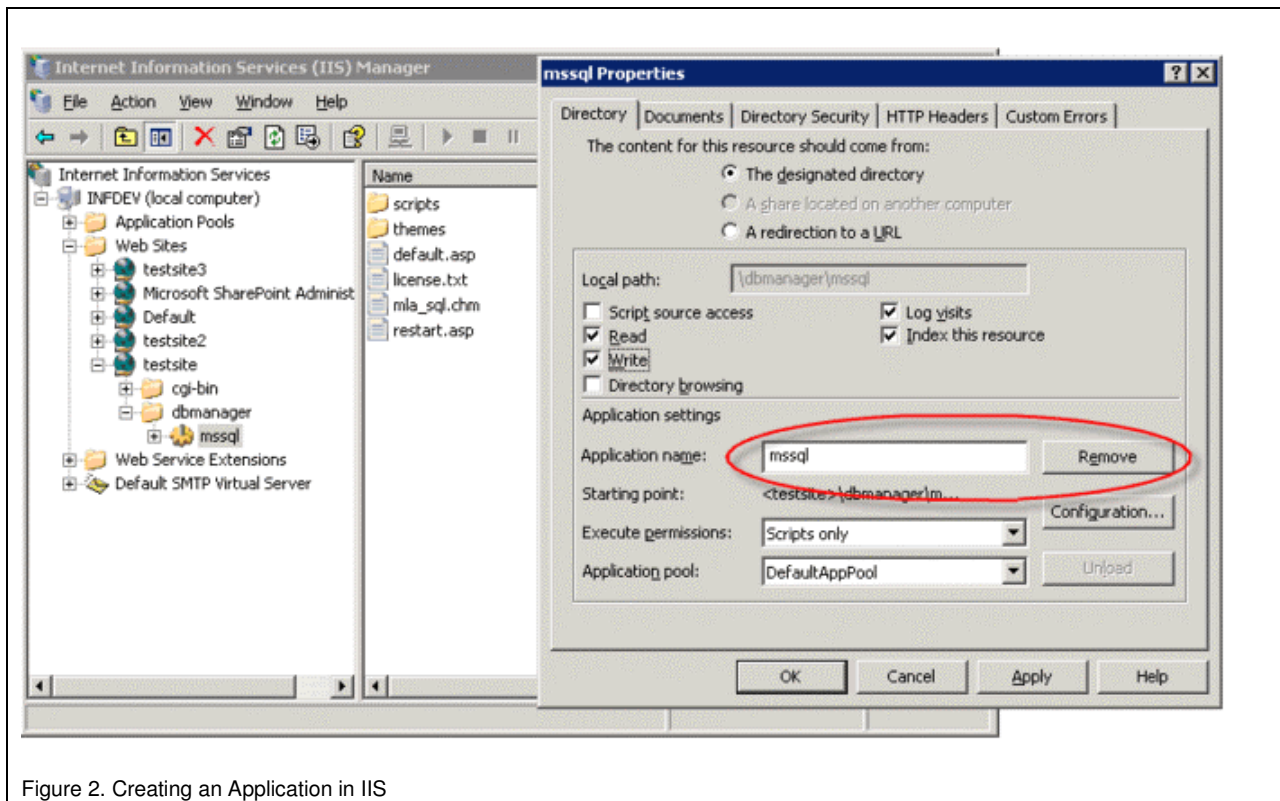


Figure 2. Creating an Application in IIS

Then, off to tweaking the config file. The config file, contained in the scripts/inc directory, contains all the settings for enabling/disabling the features of myLittleAdmin. You have a ton of flexibility here as well as the ability to offer varying levels of administrative privileges to allow, say, the system administrator to have full control over just about all the system features of MS SQL while giving the casual web user access to only their database and a limited subset of features.

Features you have control of include turning on and off features for editing databases, tables, views, stored procedures, users, roles, rules, logins, different tools (such as query analyzer, backup wizard, csv import, etc), backup devices, custom skins, and more.

Turning on or off privileges is as simple as putting a 1, 2, or 3 next to the appropriate feature, where 1, 2 and 3 are the privilege levels used to access myLittleAdmin.

Once you've modified the config file to your liking, that's it! All you need to do now is browse to the myLittleAdmin path with your web browser and you're ready to log in.

## USING MYLITTLEADMIN

Once you go to the myLittleAdmin main page in your web browser, you'll be presented with a couple of different ways to log into the MS SQL server, DSN-less or DSN (Figure 3). DSN-less gives you the most control over how you log into your database. DSN allows you to log in with only the DSN name and a username/password. In either case, you can also log in with a User Level password that grants you extra privileges depending on how you set your config file.

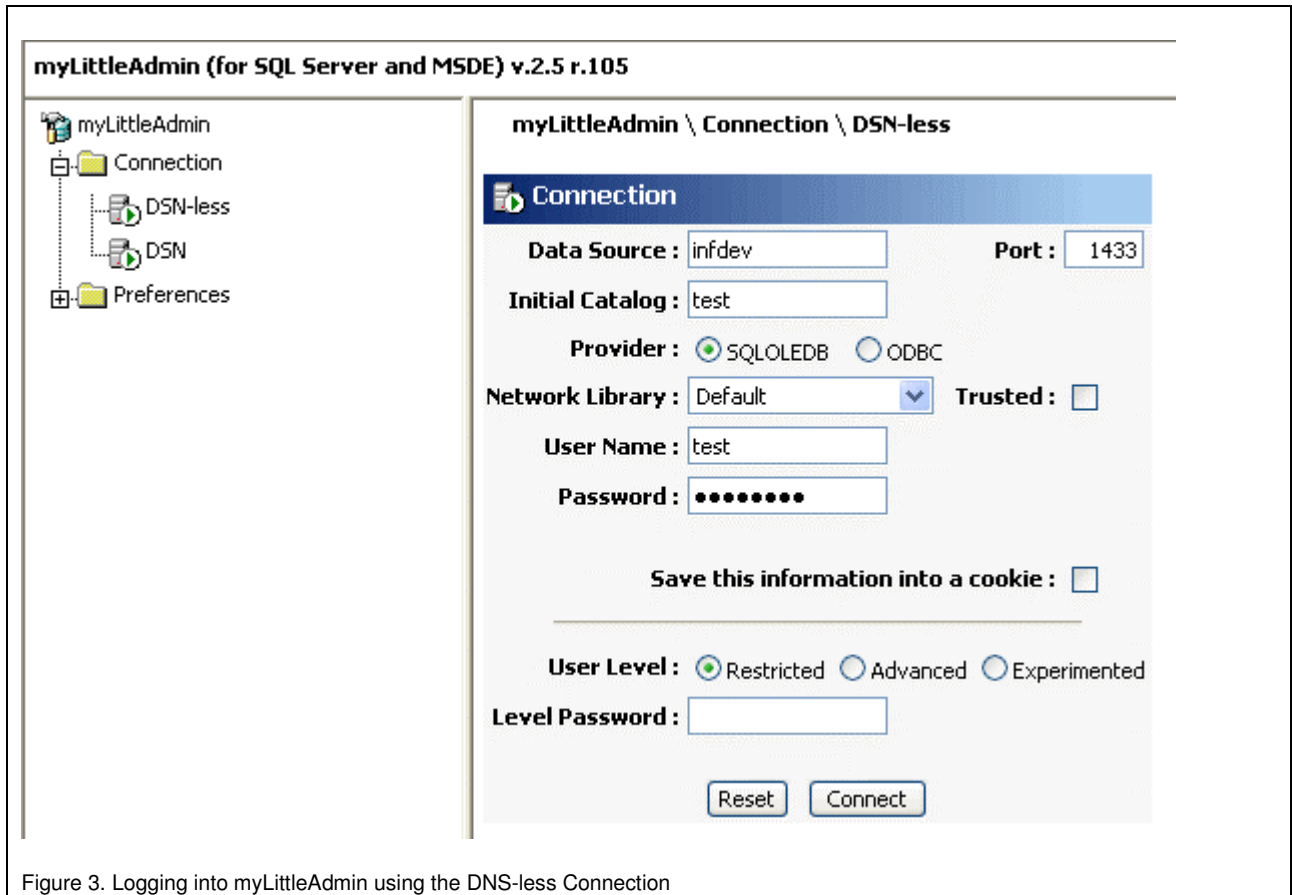


Figure 3. Logging into myLittleAdmin using the DNS-less Connection

Once you've logged in, the interface feels much like Microsoft's Enterprise Manager, so if you've been using Enterprise Manager, you're already right at home. You'll see a folder for databases, management, security, and tools (Figure 4)

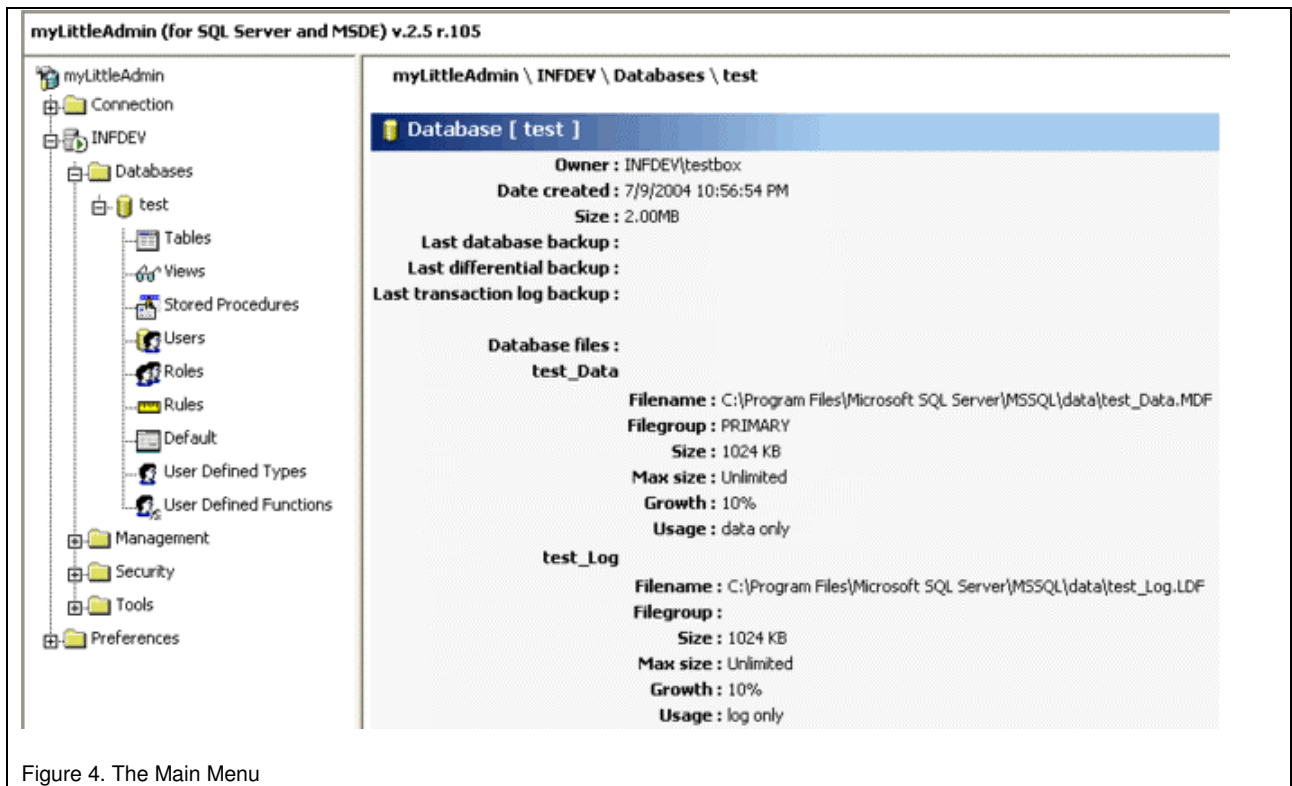


Figure 4. The Main Menu

You'll notice if you click on any particular database, you'll get detailed statistics on the database itself, including file MDF and log file sizes, backup dates, total disk size, and so forth. This is great information for hosted customers to have because it gives them basic information that might not be available in the control panel you use for hosting. You'll also notice the many things you can work with including tables, views, stored procedures, etc.

### Databases

You can easily create a new database by clicking the Databases folder itself. From this menu, you have several options. These include creating a new database, renaming a database, viewing database info/space usage, generating SQL script that you can use to recreate the database, backing up a database, detaching a database, and deleting a database (Figure 5). This view can be turned on or off for web hosted customers, say for example, if the database was created through a control panel and you didn't want your customers to manage the creation/deletion of databases unless it was through your control panel.

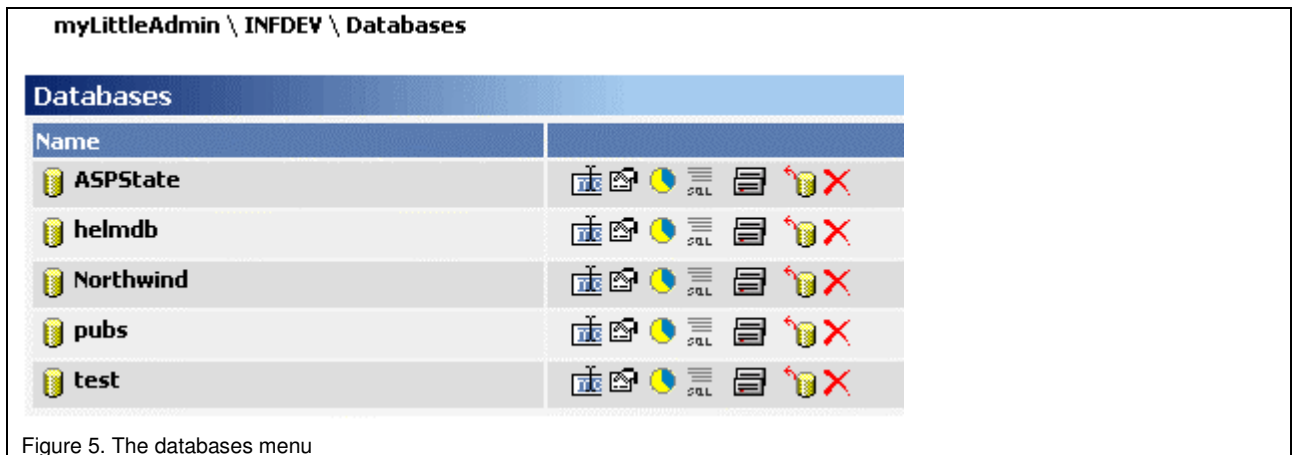


Figure 5. The databases menu

### Table

Clicking on the table menu brings up a list of tables in that database (Figure 6). You have many options from here including creating a new table (the yellow star at the top right), adding content to the table, searching for data within the table, renaming the table, managing the table structure (to include relationships, triggers, constraints, and indexes), creating the SQL code to create the table, and deleting the table.

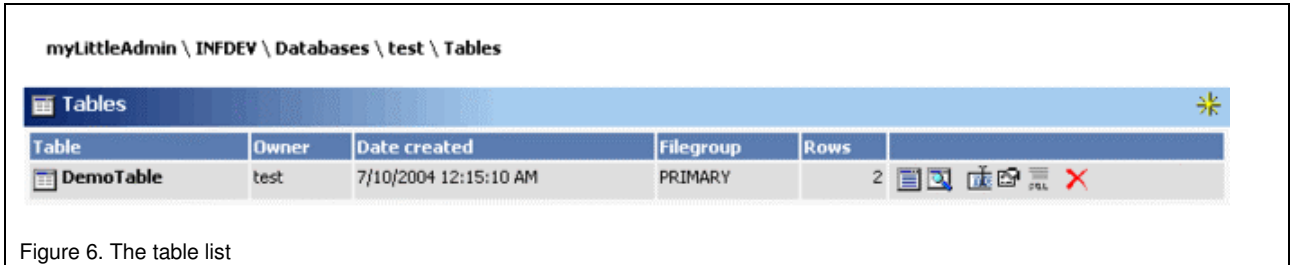


Figure 6. The table list

Viewing table content is simple. Click the content icon and you can instantly see your data (Figure 7). From here you can add data, search for data, create XML, CSV, and edit the table structure. And once you create an index on a table with a primary key, you can then easily edit the data in the table as well (Figure 8).

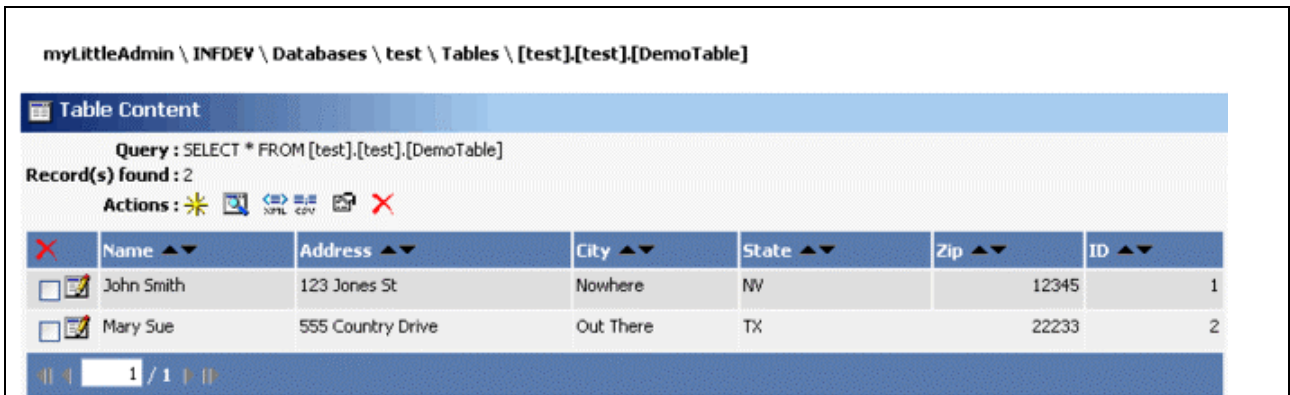


Figure 7. Table Content

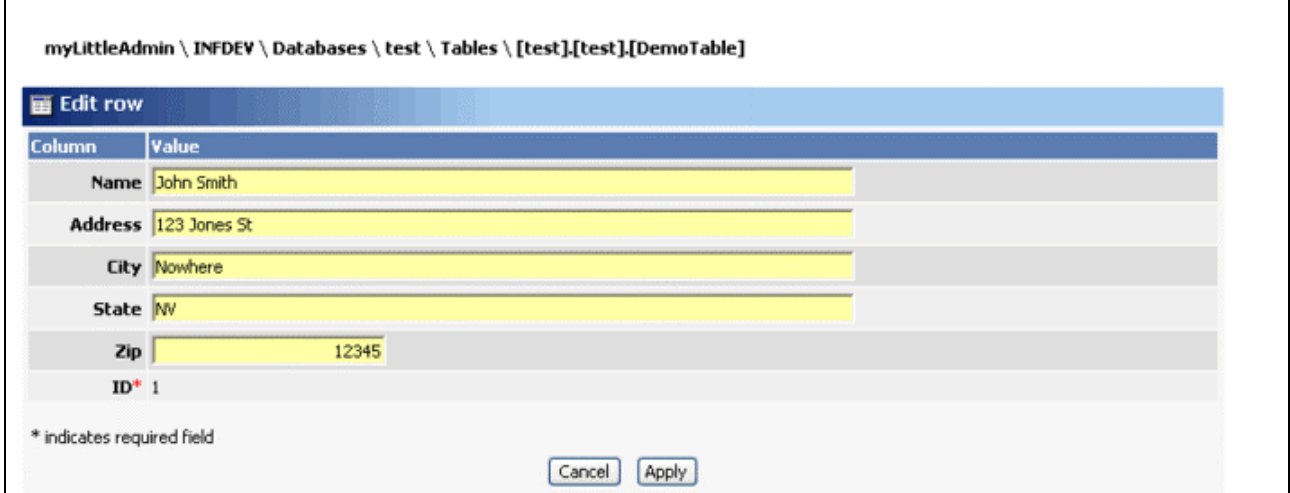


Figure 8. Edit Table Data

Figure 9 shows how detailed you can get with your table structure. You can edit table structure quickly and easily, including defining indexes, relationships, triggers, and constraints. All very powerful features of MS SQL 2000 and also one of the places where free tools like Microsoft's Web Data Admin fall short. They don't have this kind of flexibility or control to handle all the intricacies involved in complex database work.

myLittleAdmin \ INFDEV \ Databases \ test \ Tables \ [test].[test].[DemoTable]

Columns												
Key	Column	Type	Length	Prec.	Scale	Nullable	Default	Rule	Id.	Id. start	Id. seed	Row GUID
	Name	varchar	50			True			False			False
	Address	varchar	50			True			False			False
	City	varchar	50			True			False			False
	State	char	2			True			False			False
	Zip	int	4	10	0	True			False			False
	ID	int	4	10	0	False			True	1	1	False

Indexes										
Index	Columns	Primary	Unique	Clustered	Ignore dup. keys	Unique key	Stats no recomb.	Fill factor	File group	
PK_ID	ID	True	True	True	False	False	False	0	PRIMARY	

Relationships		
Relationship	Primary key table	Foreign key table

Triggers		
Trigger	Owner	Date created

Constraints			
Constraint	Owner	Date created	Constraint Definition Text

Figure 9. Managing Table Structure

### Stored Procedures

Stored procedures are a powerful feature of MS SQL. Like just about everything else in myLittleAdmin, stored procedures are a breeze to set up and manage. You can easily edit, view, export as SQL, and delete stored procedures through the stored procedure menu (Figure 10).

myLittleAdmin \ INFDEV \ Databases \ test \ Stored Procedures

Stored Procedures			
Stored Procedure	Owner	Date created	
sp_GetInventory	test	7/10/2004 1:22:17 AM	

Figure 10. The Stored Procedure menu

Creating stored procedures are about as straightforward as it gets (Figure 11).

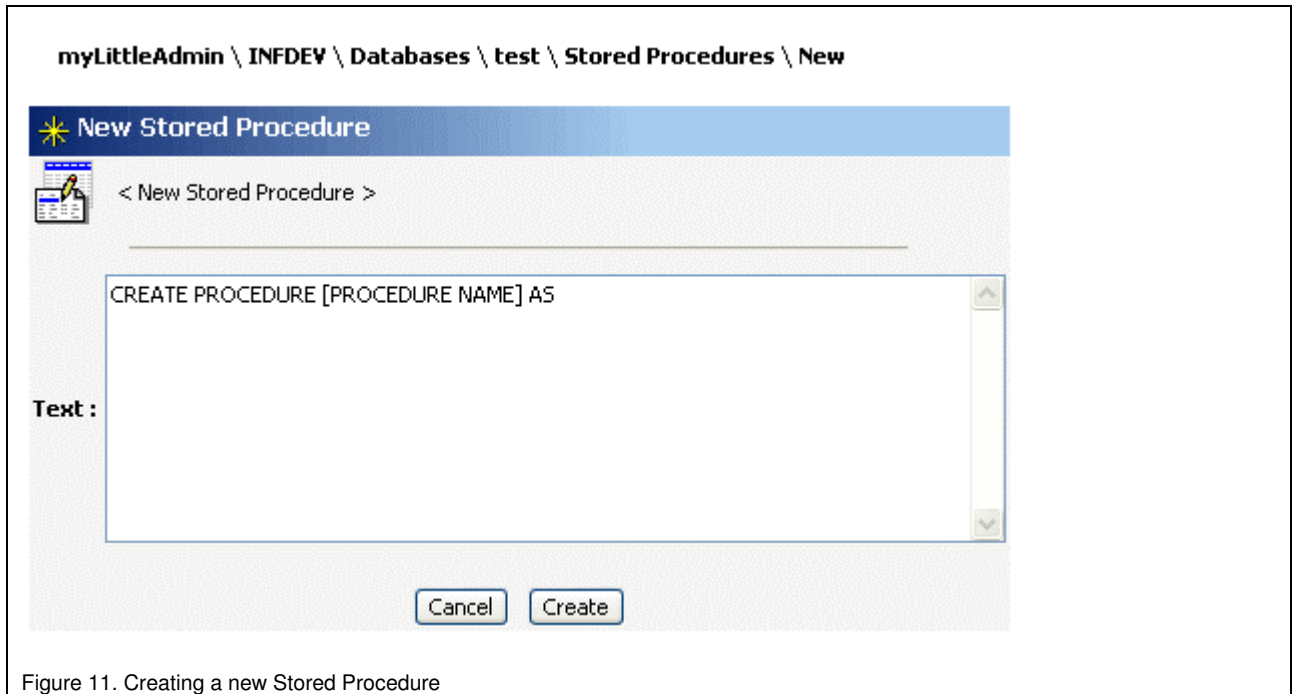


Figure 11. Creating a new Stored Procedure

### Managing DB Users

Managing users and their DB permissions can easily be done, just as it can in Microsoft Enterprise Manager, but editing the particular user through the users menu for the database (Figures 12 and 13). Managing Roles is just as simple through a similar menu. Again, these features can be turned on or off depending on your need. And just like Microsoft Enterprise Manager, you can also manage system level users in the same way, separately from the database users.

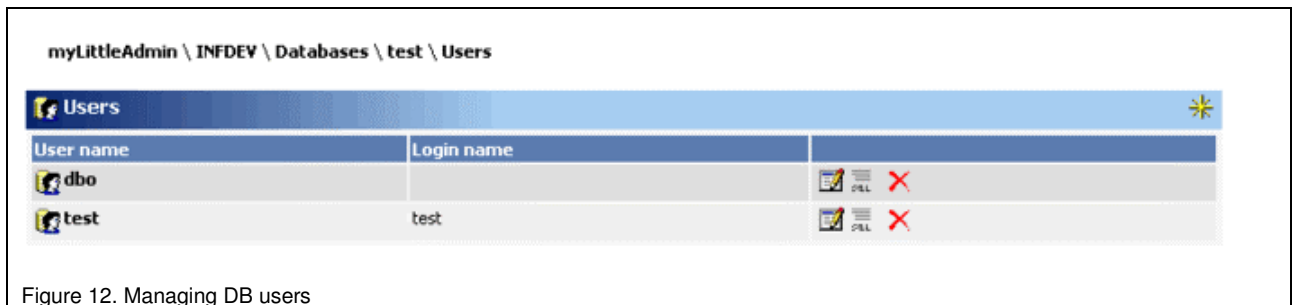


Figure 12. Managing DB users

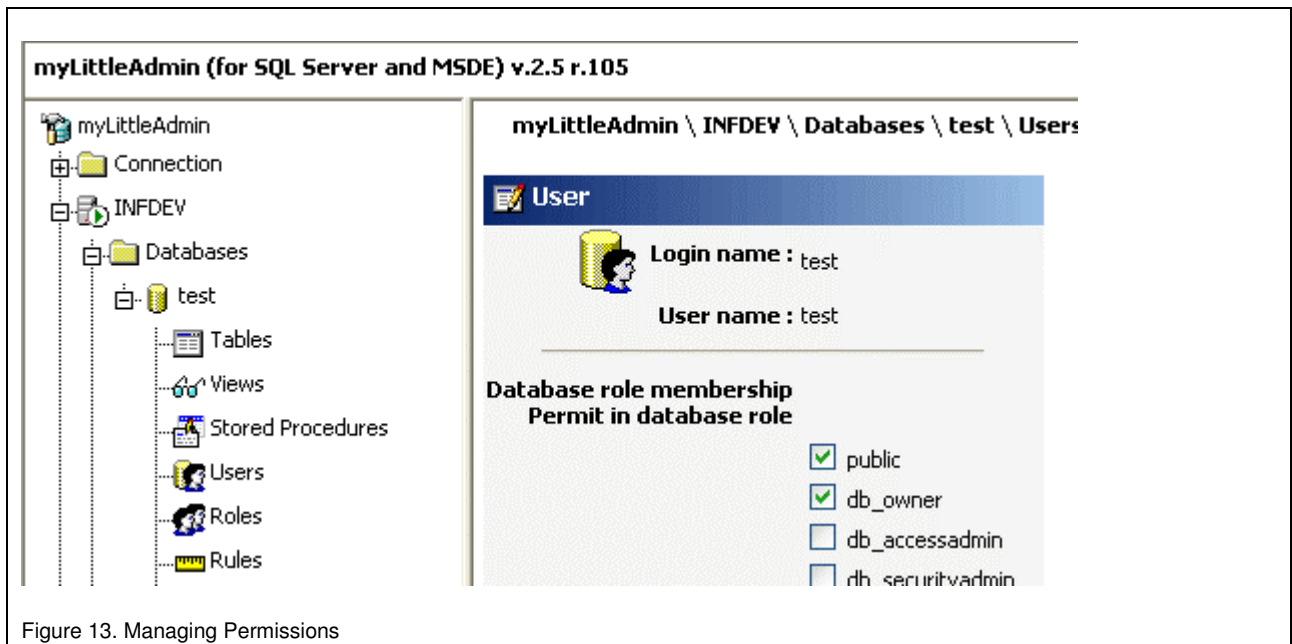


Figure 13. Managing Permissions

### Query Analyzer

Arguably, Query Analyzer is one of the most powerful features of SQL Server, and I'm glad to see it as part of myLittleAdmin (Figure 14). From here, all sorts of queries can be run, just like in Microsoft's Enterprise Manager.

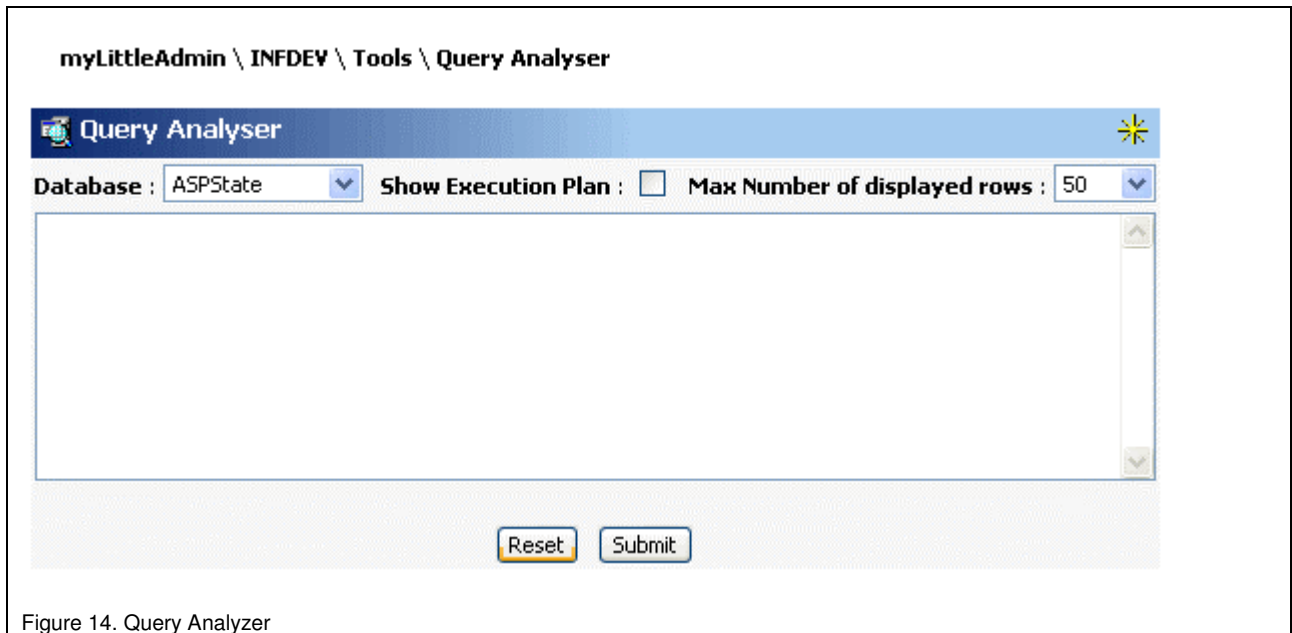


Figure 14. Query Analyzer

## Management, Security, and Tools

Like Microsoft's Enterprise Manager, myLittleTools can help administrators by giving insight to the system-level operation of their servers. myLittleAdmin allows administrators to create, edit, and delete system users, create backup devices and backup databases, attach databases, watch processes, and see the locks on databases. Unfortunately, unlike Enterprise Manager, you cannot kill processes through myLittleAdmin.

Some of the noteworthy features here include a nifty Generate Insert Scripts features which allows you to easy create SQL code that takes the data in your tables and creates an Insert script that you can then use to rebuild the table and data, should you need it later.

You can also import data from an external database into your SQL database using a CSV file of data exported from your external database. No doubt this will come in handy for tons of folks who are trying to move their database from one host to another.

Administrators can easily backup databases to devices they've set up in myLittleAdmin and Restore them as necessary as well. I would have liked to have seen the ability to restore a database from a local disk since I often have customers asking me to restore their database for them and have to copy the DB to the server before I can restore it.

Keep in mind, there are some features missing. Data Transformation Services is not included. And administrative tasks are still missing like creating Database Maintenance plans and viewing SQL Server logs.

## OTHER THINGS TO CONSIDER

myLittleAdmin is skinnable. That means you can give it your own look and feel to match your own web site. The code is open and written in ASP, so someone with some good knowledge of ASP can make this tool look even better. You can customize the icons, change the text, and so on.

myLittleTools' support is excellent! Prompt, courteous, and helpful. While I've rarely had an occasion to ask for support, it's good knowing it's there when I need it. They're also willing to listen to their customers for ideas and feedback on their products.

## COMPARISONS

It's difficult to compare myLittleAdmin to other web-based SQL management tools. There just aren't any others out there I've reviewed that seem to come close. As mentioned earlier, the free tool from Microsoft called Web Data Admin is way behind myLittleAdmin. It was rather tedious to install and very limited as far as features go. myLittleAdmin is definitely the choice if you're looking for an editor that can do just about everything MS Enterprise Manager can.

## CONCLUSION

A host is only as good as the features it offers. The power, flexibility, and affordability of myLittleTools' myLittleAdmin for MS SQL Server makes this product a must-have if you're going to be offering MS SQL Server hosting and want to keep your customers happy. This product comes highly recommended!

## How INFUSEWEB LLC HAS BENEFITED FROM MYLITTLEADMIN

Infuseweb hosts Microsoft SQL Server 2000 databases for its web hosted customers. Many customers are new to MS SQL Server and don't know how to use Microsoft's Enterprise Manager to edit their databases, much less where to get it. Many don't even have MS SQL 2000 installed on their local machines. It was essential we found a web-based tool which could provide the level of accessibility that Microsoft's Enterprise Manager provides while being affordable enough to meet our budget. myLittleAdmin was the MS SQL editor tool of choice after careful review of many different options from free to payware tools, both in features and price,. Customer comments have been very positive since implementation and we look forward to using it as our MS SQL Server 2000 demands continue to grow.

A direct quote from one of our satisfied .NET developer customers:

*"myLittleTools' SQL Database manager has increased my productivity while working remotely by providing an extremely fast, reliable connection to my customers data. This is extremely crucial tool for any serious developer who works in a remote setting."*

*David Dimmer, President of Fyin Inc. and Infuseweb customer*

## ABOUT INFUSEWEB LLC

Anthony Wilko is president of Infuseweb LLC, a full-featured, affordable Windows-based web hosting company located in San Antonio, TX, USA. He has been working in the web hosting industry supporting individual users and small businesses with web hosting and design needs since 1998.

Infuseweb is dedicated to providing the individual user and small business with powerful, affordable, and easy-to-use web, e-mail, and database hosting, domain registration, and web design solutions.

Visit <http://www.infuseweb.com> for more information.

## MORE INFORMATION

### myLittleTools

<http://www.myLittleTools.net>

### myLittleAdmin Live Demo

[http://www.myLittleTools.net/livedemo/mla\\_sql](http://www.myLittleTools.net/livedemo/mla_sql)

### myLittleAdmin Free Lite Edition Download

[http://www.mylittletools.net/scripts/en/mla\\_sql/download.asp](http://www.mylittletools.net/scripts/en/mla_sql/download.asp)

### Microsoft SQL Server

<http://www.microsoft.com/sql>

### Infuseweb Hosting

<http://www.infuseweb.com>

### Fyin Inc.

<http://www.fyin.com>