



SQL Queries for Mere Mortals(R): A Hands-On Guide to Data Manipulation in SQL

By Michael J. Hernandez, John L. Viescas

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Now there's a practical, hands-on guide to SQL for millions of beginning-to-intermediate database users who desperately need to create fast, accurate, effective queries -- whether they have formal database training or not. The authors begin by introducing the fundamental concepts underlying relational databases and SQL. They then introduce the absolute basics of SQL, including the SELECT statement, creating expressions, and applying filters. Next, they introduce techniques for solving one of the most common problems database users encounter: drawing data from multiple tables at once. The book includes detailed coverage of grouping, totaling, and summarizing data; using SQL to update, insert, and delete data; and more. In the final section, Hernandez and Viescas introduce "thinking out of the box" techniques that allow users to solve a wide variety of complex SQL problems. Most chapters end with sample problems, solutions, and result sets -- all based on a library of five real-world databases included on the accompanying CD-ROM.

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- Sales Rank: #993248 in Books
- Published on: 2000-08-31
- Format: Abridged
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.18" h x .96" w x 7.00" l,
- Binding: Paperback
- 528 pages

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

To the people who are accomplished in its use, Structured Query Language (SQL) is a highly capable, eminently flexible, even beautiful way of describing the data that you want from a database, or the changes that you want to make to a database. For the rest of us, however, SQL is a first-class nuisance that we do our best to avoid by relying on relatively user-friendly--but usually less powerful--tools. *SQL Queries for Mere Mortals* aims to bring SQL-phobes closer to the first camp by tutoring them carefully in what SQL can do.

The authors recognize that SQL queries usually come about as a result of questions from human beings, and so usefully spend a fair bit of time showing how to convert, say, "In what cities do our customers live?" into, "Select city from the customers table" and, finally, "SELECT city FROM customers" in SQL. They call this the "translation and clean up" process, and it's a fine approach. They don't press it too far, however, and are equally adept at presenting straight explanations of SQL syntax elements in prose. They spend a lot of energy graphically diagramming aspects of SQL syntax in a format that requires some up-front study. A particular reader might prefer text capsules to this arrow-intensive format, but other learners might like the graphical syntax diagrams. --David Wall

Topics covered: ANSI SQL/92 for people who need to use it to make queries against business databases. The authors introduce one or two syntax elements at a time--SELECT, WHERE, JOIN, UNION, and so on--and cover data extraction, data insertion, filtering, joins, calculations, and other capabilities of generic SQL.

From the Inside Flap

"Language is by its very nature a communal thing; that is, it expresses never the exact thing but a compromise--that which is common to you, me, and everybody."

--Thomas Earnest Hulme, *Speculations*

Learning how to retrieve information from a database is commonly a perplexing exercise. However, it can be a relatively easy task--as long as you understand the question you're posing to the database. Once you understand the question, you can translate it into the language used by any database system, which in most cases is Structured Query Language (SQL). You have to translate your request into an SQL statement so that your database system knows what information you want to retrieve. SQL provides the means for you and your database system to communicate with each other. Throughout our many years as database consultants, we've found that the number of people who merely need to retrieve information from a database far outnumber those who are charged with the task of creating programs and applications for a database. Unfortunately, no books focus solely on the subject of retrieving information, particularly from a "mere mortals" viewpoint. There are numerous good books on SQL, to be sure, but most are targeted toward database programming and development.

With this in mind, we decided it was time to write a book that would help people learn how to query a database properly and effectively. The result of our decision is in your hands. This book is unique among SQL books in that it focuses only on the querying portion of SQL. When you finish reading this book, you'll have the skills you need to retrieve any information you require. Writing a book such as this is always a cooperative effort. There are always editors, colleagues, friends, and relatives willing to lend their support and provide valuable advice when we need it the most. These folks continually provide us with encouragement, help us to remain focused, and motivate us to see this project through to the end. First and foremost, we want to thank our editor, Mary O'Brien, for the opportunity to write this book. She saw the potential of an idea we had and pursued it with great dedication. We'd also like to thank Mary and her

assistant, Mariann Kourafas, for their great patience and unwavering support throughout the many months we were writing this book. And we can't forget Marilyn Rash and the production staff--great job, guys! Next, we'd like to acknowledge our technical editors Malcom C. Rubel, Michael Blaha, Alexander Tarasul, and Keith W. Hare. Malcom, as always, it's great to have you on the team! Michael and Alexander, thanks for all your thoughtful comments and suggestions. And a special thanks to Keith--he corrected a few minor errors we had in the SQL history timeline and provided much of the information for the What the Future Holds section of Chapter 3. Thanks once again to all of you for your time and input and for helping us to make this a solid treatise on SQL queries. Finally, a very special thanks to Joe Celko for providing the Foreword. Joe is an SQL expert, a colleague, and a good friend. We have a lot of respect for Joe's knowledge and expertise on the subject, and we're pleased to have his thoughts and comments at the beginning of our book.

Michael J. Hernandez

& John L. Viescas I want to give my most sincere thanks to my dear friend and colleague, John L. Viescas, for the opportunity of co-authoring this book with him. It was John who had the initial idea for this book, and over dinner one evening he talked me into writing it with him. John has been in the business a long time and is an established, respected author. It is my honor to share authorship with him on this work. Finally, I want to thank my wife Kendra. Once again, she has exhibited extreme patience while I toiled away at my writing. Her help has been invaluable, and yet again, I owe her a great debt. I would tell you that she is the love of my life, my closest confidant, and my best friend, but she abhors any sort of public displays of affection. (She refers to this as PDA.) So I'll just end with this: Well, Ked, we can resume a normal life again--until the next book!

Michael J. Hernandez

Bellevue, Washington

Gee, Mike! Are you trying to give me a big head or something? You're not such a slouch yourself. I may have talked you into doing the "next" Mere Mortals book on SQL, but you're the one who invented the now well-proven format and "voice" for this audience. It has been a fun and interesting task bringing the complex world of SQL (one of my favorite subjects) to such a wide audience. Thanks for letting me in on the project. Unlike yours, my wife, Suzanne, does not abhor PDAs. We both owe her a big hug--not just for putting up with me while I was "offline" doing this book but also for providing excellent behind-the-scenes editing and critical commentary of our material. She's no stranger when it comes to computers, but she's definitely a "mere mortal" when it comes to databases. She provided a perfect audience to test the draft chapters. I only had to make her one promise: I'm leaving my laptop home this spring on our next trip to Hawaii!

John I. Viescas

Austin, Texas 0201433362P04062001

From the Back Cover

In the past few years, SQL has evolved from a language known only to computer specialists to a widely used, international standard of the computer industry. The number of SQL-compatible databases shipping each year now totals in the millions. If you are accessing corporate information from the Internet or from an internal network, you are probably using SQL. *SQL Queries for Mere Mortals* will help new users learn the foundations of SQL queries, and will prove an essential reference guide for intermediate and advanced users. The accompanying CD contains five sample databases used for the example queries throughout the book, plus an evaluation copy of Microsoft SQL Server version 7.

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Kathleen King:

This SQL Queries for Mere Mortals(R): A Hands-On Guide to Data Manipulation in SQL is great publication for you because the content that is full of information for you who all always deal with world and still have to make decision every minute. This specific book reveal it details accurately using great organize word or we can state no rambling sentences within it. So if you are read the item hurriedly you can have whole info in it. Doesn't mean it only will give you straight forward sentences but challenging core information with beautiful delivering sentences. Having SQL Queries for Mere Mortals(R): A Hands-On Guide to Data Manipulation in SQL in your hand like keeping the world in your arm, facts in it is not ridiculous just one. We can say that no e-book that offer you world in ten or fifteen small right but this reserve already do that. So , it is good reading book. Hey there Mr. and Mrs. busy do you still doubt which?

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Maria Hughes:

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Stacey Sims:

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