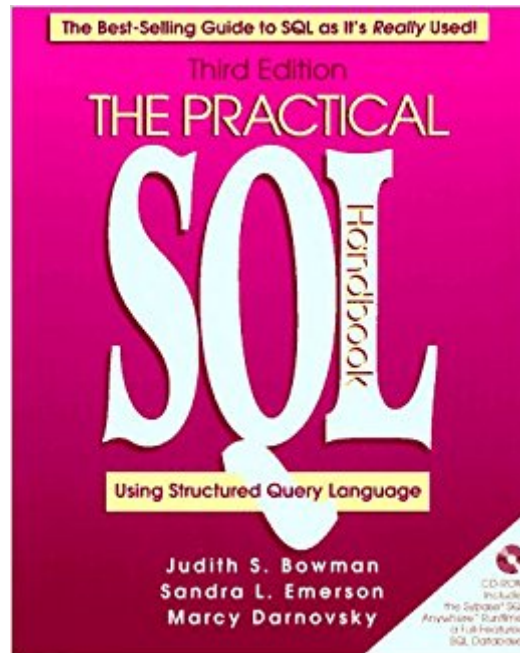# The Practical SQL Handbook: Using Structured Query Language (3rd Edition)

Synopsis

The Practical SQL Handbook is the best-selling guide to learning SQL, the standard language for accessing information in relational databases. This book not only teaches SQL as it has been established by ANSI standards committees but also as the language is used to solve real business problems. You'll learn step-by-step the basic vocabulary and functions of the language and the processes and issues involved in developing robust applications. This book provides a thorough grounding in the basics of database design, security, and integrity. You will learn SQL pragmatically, by creating a sample database and then working through dozens of examples with it. Fully updated to cover the ANSI SQL '92 standard, the third edition of The Practical SQL Handbook includes a cookbook of specific solutions, ready-to-use code, and general strategies for common business database challenges. Find out how to: *create and use views *use and apply subqueries *join tables for comprehensive data analysis *handle null values *create reports using groups and aggregate functions Bonus CD-ROM -- Get Hands-On Practice Using SQL!The CD-ROM includes the Windows 3.x , Windows 95, and Windows NT versions of the SybaseA (R) 3.0 SQL AnywhereaA A Runtime, a full-featured SQL database. 0201447878B04062001

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Customer Reviews

SQL appears simple, but can easily confuse a beginner. This book has excellent examples of SQL-92 to demonstrate effective SQL commands for the major RDBMSs. It also shows common mistakes and how to avoid them. There is a lot of hand-holding throughout the book, and I found the

explanations deliberate and well thought out. But it is not padded with fluff. I've seen books twice as thick and half as effective. Good definitions, queries and results. Topics covered include database design, creating and filling a database, selecting data, sorting, grouping, joins, subqueries, views, an overview of security, transactions, performance, and integrity, real world business problems, and how to avoid mistakes. I read it cover to cover twice and practiced the examples (except the views, which you can't use with the included Sybase SQL Anywhere). This book lays a good foundation to build upon. Possible follow-up books include "Introduction to SQL" by Rick van der Lans (published 1999) and "Joe Celko's SQL for Smarties" by (guess who) (publ. 2000). Good luck!

I've been using different dialects of SQL for about 6 years now and I've found this book to be a very good resource. If you use SQL enough, you will probably eventually want to get a more advanced book (such as one by Celko), but this book will take you far. It starts off with basic information on relational databases, ER diagrams, and normalization, and, maybe best of all, throughout the book are numerous and clear examples. It pretty much uses one example database for most examples, and it explains the layout of that database at the start. Also, the book is very good about showing where certain details differ between SQL-92 and popular SQL implementations, such as SQL Server (Sybase and Microsoft), SQL Anywhere, Informix, and Oracle PL/SQL. The examples very carefully and very clearly step through potentially confusing areas such as subqueries and existence checking. The emphasis throughout is on - as stated in the title - practical SQL. In summary, I think this book is an excellent learning tool and a good desktop reference.

If you know nothing about databases, this book is a great place to start. It explains what a relational database is, how to design and create one, and how to perform updates and queries. It covers just about everything you'll need to know, such as normalization, outer joins, security, and transaction processing. Even though the book sticks with the basics, it covers everything that most SQL programmers will need to know.One weakness of the book is that it doesn't distinguish which features are part of SQL-89, which are part of SQL2 (aka SQL-92). For some features, such as outer joins, implementation-specific syntax is given without the standard SQL syntax. Because of this, it may be more difficult for readers of this book to write SQL that will work on many different databases.An important thing to note about this book is that it covers only SQL. That means it doesn't cover stored procedure dialects, embedded SQL, or SQL APIs such as ODBC, JDBC, or DBI. If you're going to actually use SQL, you'll need another reference that explains how to interface with a SQL database.

Trying to find a good book on SQL is really tough. One test is whether the author can explain normalization in a way that is (a) understandable to the book's lay audience, (b) mostly accurate, and (c) mostly devoid of references to relational formalism (which is "relatively" hard even for C.S. majors to grok). The Practical SQL Handbook passes that test. Many don't. (I venture to say that most don't.)The Practical SQL Handbook is a good tutorial and "cookbook" of--as advertised--very practically oriented SQL. It won't turn you into a database designer. But on the other hand it won't severely mislead you either. It will certainly give you every opportunity to learn the basics of SQL and a bit more, and it does so with a friendly and straightforward style.I don't think this is a brilliant book, but many competing books are awful. I'd give it 4 stars on an absolute scale, but for its relative merit, it gets a full 5.

I have been programming for over 15 years, and I have never had the need to venture into the world of SQL, until early 2001. At that time I started looking for a basic book to help me understand the SQL syntax. I finally purchased this book in Jan 2002; by this time I had a rough understanding of SQL, but would have been hard pressed to write any useful statements. I typically used Access to create the statement and then copied it into my code.After reading this book I feel able to write most any SQL statement, and to be able to understand the current ones in the code. I also found the answer to several syntax problems that I had: why I would get an error with an SQL statement the had a aggregate function and I was trying to select a column value as well. I would recommend this book to any beginner who needs to have a better understanding of SQL.The only draw back, for me, was that the book concentrates on the SyBase version of SQL; however, there is a chart in the back of the book that list syntax for four different version of SQL: SyBase, Microsoft, Informix, and Oracle.

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