For The Intermediate Oracle Developer

The vast majority of Oracle SQL books discuss some syntax, provide the barest rudiments of using Oracle SQL, and perhaps include a few simple examples. It might be enough to pass a survey course, or give you some buzz words to drop in conversation with real Oracle DBAs. But if you use Oracle SQL on a regular basis, you want much more. You want to access the full power of SQL to write queries in an Oracle environment. You want a solid understanding of what’s possible with Oracle SQL, creative techniques for writing effective and accurate queries, and the practical, hands-on information that leads to true mastery of the language. Simply put, you want useful, expert best practices that can be put to work immediately, not just non-vendor specific overview or theory. Updated to cover the latest version of Oracle, Oracle 10g, this new edition of the highly regarded Mastering Oracle SQL has a stronger focus on technique and on Oracles implementation of SQL than any other book on the market. It covers Oracle’s vast library of built-in functions, the full range of Oracle SQL query-writing features, regular expression support, new aggregate and analytic functions, subqueries in the SELECT and WITH clauses, multiset union operators, enhanced support for hierarchical queries: leaf and loop detection, and the CONNECT_BY_ROOT operator, new partitioning methods (some introduced in Oracle9i Release 2), and the native XML datatype, XMLType. Mastering Oracle SQL, 2nd Edition fills the gap between the sometimes spotty vendor documentation, and other books on SQL that just don’t explore the full depth of what is possible with Oracle-specific SQL. For those who want to harness the untapped (and often overlooked) power of Oracle SQL, this essential guide for putting Oracle SQL to work will prove invaluable.

The goal of the authors is to explain how to write good readable SQL queries in Oracle 10g. The book starts with how to construct SELECT statements to group, filter and format result sets for dates, reports and data analysis. Then it proceeds to cover Oracle-specific queries and functions for hierarchies (data in tree structures), object-oriented types, XML documents, regular expressions and models (spreadsheet-like objects). Where relevant, there are notes about the differences between SQL for Oracle 10, Oracle 9 and the ANSI standard.

As expected from the title, the chapters using declarative programming (i.e. SQL queries) for relational data, hierarchical data and reports are the
most comprehensive. Chapters on interfacing Oracle SQL with other technologies such as scripting (Oracles PL/SQL), object-oriented types, XML and regular expressions, or on optimization, are brief but sufficient to get you started, especially if you have an existing background in those technologies.

This is the 2nd edition, so it's not surprising that the scope of the book is well-defined and that the writing is easy to read and polished. The example data and queries are just complex enough to demonstrate the issues without obscuring the main points. Minor annoyance about Chapter 15, SQL Best Practices, which does not explain how to use the query analyzer and bind variables.

I was already familiar with basic Oracle SQL but didn't really understand the language; this book blew away many of the fuzzy concepts in my mind and provided me the framework to tackle more complex problems.


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