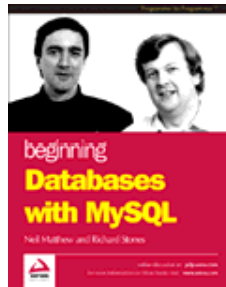by Bruno Sousa

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About the author:

Bruno is a student of computer engineering in Leiria. He also works as a programmer. He found Linux a few years ago and sees Linux as the fulfillment of a dream! The possibility of participating in the development of an operating System. The free time is dedicated to Linux, LinuxFocus (since he is an editor/translator), to his studies...

Bookreview: Beginning Databases with MySQL

Abstract:

This article will give a brief review about the book Beginning Databases with MySQL.
Beginning Databases with MySQL is a book from the well known Wrox press, the authors are Neil Mathew and Richard Stones. Two persons with a a lot of experience.

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Introduction

Nowadays, I think that nobody argues about the importance of the relational databases. Just try to imagine how it would be for the enterprises, If they couldn't have a powerful RDBMS. How to store the orders of a client ? How could they know their home addresses ? Just try to imagine... And here MySQL has a word to say!
This book will give you a general idea of what MySQL is, how you can use it, how you can access to your data with your own programs, how you can build your databases... For instance, if you are comfortable with Perl, the book dedicates an entire Chapter to this subject, using Perl DBI.

The Book's features

The book is well organized, the language used is not very technical, is easy to read and to understand. The examples are the standard (a database with customers, their orders, the items ordered) so it won't be difficult to follow the concepts, the ideas that these authors want to bring across. One other great feature that I've found in the book is that they start with a small database example but they develop it through the chapters, along the book. In the first ones they implement its design and logic, next they implement the necessary SQL code to create the Database and finally the code to insert data or to fetch data from the database.

Another good thing, is in the installation chapter which covers the installation on a Linux box or under Windows, and for Linux it is shown how to install MySQL with a binary package or from source (a great thing, don't you think ?!)

The book has 16 chapters... If you want to see what each chapter covers then click here.

Conclusion

From an academic point of view I would recommend this book for the classes where we learn all the concepts about Databases and the RDBMS. Why ?? Well, the book provides the necessary SQL commands to SELECT, UPDATE, INSERT, data or CREATE a database. But it's not only the commands, it explains the necessary concepts, such as tuples, the ideas behind the function of a RDBMS... things that we learn in these classes.

This recommendation applies to teachers and to students. For the teachers it could be the reference to prepare the classes, I would say a model. For the students to consolidate the topics learned in the classes.

At this moment, you may think we are using SQLServer or Oracle in our school, how can this book help us? It's simple, the book, for instance covers the connection to a Database using PHP, you could learn the concepts behind this. But on the other side it could provide to schools many benefits, the first would be an economical, MySQL is released under the GNU License, second the students, teachers could learn how MySQL performs a SELECT operation, for example (watching that in the source code). And a good project could be the improvement of the bad features and add new ones to MySQL.

From the professional point of view I would recommend the book for administrators and for programmers who are interested in MySQL. Administrators learn how to install MySQL, to configure the clients to connect through ODBC, and an important thing the Backup of the Database (although the book only introduces this scope). To the programmer is offered examples to connect to a MySQL Database using C C++, Perl using DBI and PHP (you can improve the site of your enterprise).

To conclude I recommend the book to all the persons that are interested in Learning MySQL, it is an excellent introduction to this great this piece of software.

References

I would suggest you to take a look at the following sites:

- Wrox, www.wrox.com
- MySQL's, www.mysql.org
- Home page of KSql ksql.sourceforge.net

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