NULL

Represntation – NULL

Meaning – unknown

Data Type – Special marker

Storage – Very minimal

Performance – Best

Comparison – IS NULL

Empty String

Representation – ‘’

Meaning – known, empty value

Data type – string(0)

Storage – occupies memory

Performance – fast

Comparison – =’’

Blank Space

Representation – ‘ ‘

Meaning – known, space value

Data type – string(1 or more)

Storage - Occupies memory (each space)

Performance – slow

Comparison - =’ ‘

Data Policies

Only use NULLs and empty strings, but avoid blank spaces (TRIM).

Only use NULLs and avoid using empty strings and blank spaces (NULLIF).

Use default value ‘unknown’ and avoid using nulls, empty strings, and blank spaces (COALESCE).

Example –

WITH Orders AS(

SELECT 1 Id, 'A' Category UNION

SELECT 2, NULL UNION

SELECT 3, '' UNION

SELECT 4, ' '

)

SELECT

\*,

DATALENGTH(Category) CategoryLen,

DATALENGTH(TRIM(Category)) Policy1,

NULLIF(TRIM(Category), '') Policy2,

COALESCE(Category, 'unknown') Policy3,

COALESCE(NULLIF(TRIM(Category), ''), 'unknown') Policy3Again

FROM Orders