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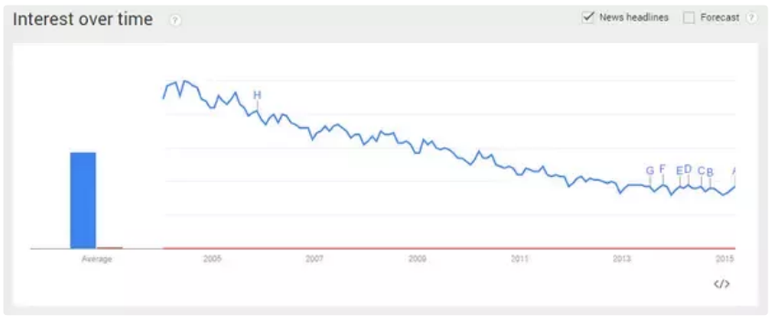
Should I learn SQL or NoSQL? MySQL or MongoDB? And why?

8 Answers

Lukas Eder, I'm the CEO of Data Geekery, the company behind http://www.jooq.org
Answered Mar 29, 2015

This Google Trends search should give you an idea what technology is going to stay popular for another while:

Google Trends - sql, nosql



Now, this doesn't mean that NoSQL is not a good or in some areas a popular thing. But it is a niche technology that solves niche problems, whereas SQL is *THE* data access and manipulation technology.

So, you should learn SQL first, and after - say 5 years or so - when you run into one of the tricky parts of SQL (e.g. hierarchical data), you might still try one of the niche databases, like Neo4j or some other graph database - because with some experience, you might make the right choice then.

In the case of MongoDB, there is no reason to learn that first, as quite a few RDBMS already cover MongoDB's feature set (e.g. PostgreSQL) in a more unified way, while still giving you access to the awesomeness of SQL.

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Greg Kemnitz, Postgres internals, embedded device db internals, MySQL user-level
Answered Mar 29, 2015

If you're going to have a career in data management, you'll want to learn SQL; after all, even a lot of "NoSQL" db engines have SQL-like query languages. And the vast majority of NoSQL environments use SQL engines for something or another in their infrastructure (usually aggregation and reporting).

You can't "learn NoSQL", as the NoSQL engines are quite different from each

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databases and the strengths and weaknesses of name-value-pair data models would be useful, as most NoSQL systems are one or the other, or sometimes both.

So, I'm going to go with something like "learn both, but if you have to learn one first, go with SQL first". If you are actively using MongoDB, go ahead, but learn SQL (and possibly MySQL) quickly.

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Kathryn Vargas, works at 3T Software Labs
Answered Sep 22

Learning both definitely will yield the most advantages, especially given the growing trend of hybrid database approaches. MongoDB cites a few of them here: Hybrid Deployments with MongoDB and MySQL: 3 Examples

The company I work for has built one of the most popular MongoDB GUIs (then called MongoChef), which has now turned into a full-fledged MongoDB IDE. And yet most of our users (around 80%) still use an SQL server in their day-to-day work. That paints a pretty clear picture of “database coexistence”.

From our experience, most people who have made the leap to MongoDB have SQL knowledge. So we’ve made it easier for SQL users/experts to get the hang of the MongoDB query language through features like SQL Query, which lets you write SQL to query MongoDB (see: How to Query MongoDB with SQL | Studio 3T (formerly MongoChef) - The IDE for MongoDB).

Bottom line: It will only benefit to know both, and in case you’re making the move from SQL to NoSQL (in this case, MongoDB), there are tools out there that can help ease your transition.

***Disclaimer**: I work for 3T Software Labs, the makers of Studio 3T.*

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