SQL NULL Values

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What is a NULL Value?

A field with a NULL value is a field with no value.

If a field in a table is optional, it is possible to insert a new record or update a record without adding a value to this field. Then, the field will be saved with a NULL value.

Note: A NULL value is different from a zero value or a field that contains spaces. A field with a NULL value is one that has been left blank during record creation!

How to Test for NULL Values?

It is not possible to test for NULL values with comparison operators, such as =, <, or <>.

We will have to use the `IS NULL` and `IS NOT NULL` operators instead.

IS NULL Syntax

```
SELECT column_names
FROM table_name
WHERE column_name IS NULL;
```

IS NOT NULL Syntax

```
SELECT column_names
FROM table_name
WHERE column_name IS NOT NULL;
```

Demo Database

Below is a selection from the "Customers" table in the Northwind sample database:

CustomerID	CustomerName	ContactName	Address	City	PostalCode
1	Alfreds Futterkiste	Maria Anders	Obere Str. 57	Berlin	12209
2	Ana Trujillo Emparedados y helados	Ana Trujillo	Avda. de la Constitución 2222	México D.F.	05021
3	Antonio Moreno Taquería	Antonio Moreno	Mataderos 2312	México D.F.	05023
4	Around the Horn	Thomas Hardy	120 Hanover Sq.	London	WA1 1DP
5	Berglunds snabbköp	Christina Berglund	Berguvsvägen 8	Luleå	S-958 22

The IS NULL Operator

The `IS NULL` operator is used to test for empty values (NULL values).

The following SQL lists all customers with a NULL value in the "Address" field:

Example

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```
SELECT CustomerName, ContactName, Address
FROM Customers
WHERE Address IS NULL;
```

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Tip: Always use IS NULL to look for NULL values.

The IS NOT NULL Operator

The `IS NOT NULL` operator is used to test for non-empty values (NOT NULL values).

The following SQL lists all customers with a value in the "Address" field:

Example

```
SELECT CustomerName, ContactName, Address
FROM Customers
WHERE Address IS NOT NULL;
```

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