9.25. Set Returning Functions

This section describes functions that possibly return more than one row. The most widely used functions in this class are series generating functions, as detailed in Table 9.64 and Table 9.65. Other, more specialized set-returning functions are described elsewhere in this manual. See Section 7.2.1.4 for ways to combine multiple set-returning functions.

Table 9.64. Series Generating Functions

Function Description

`generate_series ( start integer, stop integer [, step integer ] ) → setof integer`
`generate_series ( start bigint, stop bigint [, step bigint ] ) → setof bigint`
`generate_series ( start numeric, stop numeric [, step numeric ] ) → setof numeric`
Generates a series of values from *start* to *stop*, with a step size of *step*. *step* defaults to 1.

`generate_series ( start timestamp, stop timestamp, step interval ) → setof timestamp`
`generate_series ( start timestamp with time zone, stop timestamp with time zone, step interval ) → setof timestamp with time zone`
Generates a series of values from *start* to *stop*, with a step size of *step*.

When *step* is positive, zero rows are returned if *start* is greater than *stop*. Conversely, when *step* is negative, zero rows are returned if *start* is less than *stop*. Zero rows are also returned if any input is NULL. It is an error for *step* to be zero. Some examples follow:

```
SELECT * FROM generate_series(2,4);
 generate_series
-----------------
               2
               3
               4
(3 rows)

SELECT * FROM generate_series(5,1,-2);
 generate_series
-----------------
               5
               3
               1
(3 rows)

SELECT * FROM generate_series(4,3);
 generate_series
-----------------
(0 rows)

SELECT generate_series(1.1, 4, 1.3);
 generate_series
-----------------
             1.1
             2.4
             3.7
(3 rows)

-- this example relies on the date-plus-integer operator:
SELECT current_date + s.a AS dates FROM generate_series(0,14,7) AS s(a);
   dates
------------
 2004-02-05
 2004-02-12
 2004-02-19
(3 rows)

SELECT * FROM generate_series('2008-03-01 00:00'::timestamp,
                              '2008-03-04 12:00', '10 hours');
   generate_series
---------------------
 2008-03-01 00:00:00
 2008-03-01 10:00:00
 2008-03-01 20:00:00
 2008-03-02 06:00:00
 2008-03-02 16:00:00
 2008-03-03 02:00:00
 2008-03-03 12:00:00
 2008-03-03 22:00:00
 2008-03-04 08:00:00
(9 rows)
```

Table 9.65. Subscript Generating Functions

Function Description
`generate_subscripts` (*`array`* anyarray, *`dim`* `integer`) → `setof integer` Generates a series comprising the valid subscripts of the *`dim`*'th dimension of the given array.
`generate_subscripts` (*`array`* anyarray, *`dim`* `integer`, *`reverse`* `boolean`) → `setof integer` Generates a series comprising the valid subscripts of the *`dim`*'th dimension of the given array. When *`reverse`* is true, returns the series in reverse order.

`generate_subscripts` is a convenience function that generates the set of valid subscripts for the specified dimension of the given array. Zero rows are returned for arrays that do not have the requested dimension, or if any input is `NULL`. Some examples follow:

```
-- basic usage:
SELECT generate_subscripts('{NULL,1,NULL,2}'::int[], 1) AS s;
 s
---
 1
 2
 3
 4
(4 rows)

-- presenting an array, the subscript and the subscripted
-- value requires a subquery:
SELECT * FROM arrays;
         a
--------------------
 {-1,-2}
 {100,200,300}
(2 rows)

SELECT a AS array, s AS subscript, a[s] AS value
FROM (SELECT generate_subscripts(a, 1) AS s, a FROM arrays) foo;
     array     | subscript | value
---------------+-----------+-------
 {-1,-2}       |         1 |    -1
 {-1,-2}       |         2 |    -2
 {100,200,300} |         1 |   100
 {100,200,300} |         2 |   200
 {100,200,300} |         3 |   300
(5 rows)

-- unnest a 2D array:
CREATE OR REPLACE FUNCTION unnest2(anyarray)
RETURNS SETOF anyelement AS $$
select $1[i][j]
   from generate_subscripts($1,1) g1(i),
        generate_subscripts($1,2) g2(j);
$$ LANGUAGE sql IMMUTABLE;
CREATE FUNCTION
SELECT * FROM unnest2(ARRAY[[1,2],[3,4]]);
 unnest2
---------
       1
       2
       3
       4
(4 rows)
```

When a function in the `FROM` clause is suffixed by `WITH ORDINALITY`, a `bigint` column is appended to the function's output column(s), which starts from 1 and increments by 1 for each row of the function's output. This is most useful in the case of set returning functions such as `unnest()`.

```
-- set returning function WITH ORDINALITY:
SELECT * FROM pg_ls_dir('.') WITH ORDINALITY AS t(ls,n);
       ls        | n
-----------------+----
 pg_serial       |  1
 pg_twophase     |  2
 postmaster.opts |  3
 pg_notify       |  4
 postgresql.conf |  5
 pg_tblspc       |  6
 logfile         |  7
 base            |  8
 postmaster.pid  |  9
 pg_ident.conf   | 10
 global          | 11
 pg_xact         | 12
 pg_snapshots    | 13
 pg_multixact    | 14
 PG_VERSION      | 15
 pg_wal          | 16
 pg_hba.conf     | 17
 pg_stat_tmp     | 18
 pg_subtrans     | 19
(19 rows)
```


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