**Introduction**

In the last chapter, we saw how the various types of SQL joins can "connect" multiple tables in a single SELECT query. This powerful technique gives us fine‑grained control over the data our SQL queries return. However, SQL offers much more. In this chapter, we'll use the PACKT ONLINE SHOP database to see how

* subqueries
* case statements
* views

boost the flexibility and power of SQL, in an efficient, intuitive way. As we proceed, we'll have two activities

* Activity One
* Activity Two

and various exercises.

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Both MySQL and SQL Server handle subqueries. Although a SQL subquery is a complete, stand-alone SQL statement of its own, we'll focus on subqueries that return only one column. Placed in parentheses, a subquery, or "inner" query, nests inside a parent, or "outer" query. In a SQL statement, a subquery operates like a joined table. It gathers data in a structured way, and makes that data available for its outer SQL query. However, a subquery offers flexibility of its own, because it is not restricted to an existing database table. A subquery can nest in the

* SELECT
* FROM
* WHERE

clause of its parent query, and it can nest in another subquery. SQL Server supports up to 32 subquery nesting levels. In SQL, all SELECT, UPDATE, INSERT, and DELETE statements support subqueries. A subquery can certainly return two or more columns, but if the outer query expects only one column, the subquery must return only one column.

We'll use a subquery to solve a real-world problem using the PACKT\_ONLINE\_SHOP database, comparing that solution with a join-based solution we'll see first. Suppose a manager wants a list of products that have zero sales. As we start in, the PRODUCTS and ORDERITEMS tables probably have the information we need, because ORDERITEMS ties specific products to specific orders. Using what we learned about SQL joins, we can build a query to answer the question. The query

**USE packt\_online\_shop;**

**SELECT Products.ProductID, Products.ProductName,**

**Products.ProductCategoryID**

**FROM Products LEFT OUTER JOIN**

**OrderItems**

**ON Products.ProductID = OrderItems.ProductID**

**WHERE OrderItems.ProductID IS NULL**

**ORDER BY Products.ProductID;**

works for both MySQL 8.0.15 and SQL Server 2014. In this query, we placed the PRODUCTS table columns we want in the select clause. The left outer join matches the rows between the PRODUCTS and ORDERITEMS tables. It also combines those rows with PRODUCTS table rows that don't match with ORDERITEMS table rows. The query left outer joined the tables on their ProductID columns. In the where clause, IS NULL filtered out the PRODUCTS table rows that have a matching row in the OrderItems table. This makes sense, because we want the PRODUCTS table rows that don't appear in the ORDERITEMS table. The order by clause sorts the result set

**ProductID ProductName, ProductCategoryID**

'4' 'The Gourmet Crockpot' '1'

'8' 'tomato sauce' '3'

'9' 'pure vanilla' '1'

by ProductID. We can also solve the problem with a subquery.

This query

USE packt\_online\_shop;

SELECT Products.ProductID, Products.ProductName,

Products.ProductCategoryID

FROM Products

WHERE Products.ProductID NOT IN

(SELECT ProductID FROM OrderItems)

ORDER BY Products.ProductID;

also works for both MySQL 8.0.15 and SQL Server 2014. We'll focus on the inner query - the subquery - first, and then work out from there. In this query, we started with a complete SQL query

SELECT ProductID FROM OrderItems

that shows all the ProductID values in the OrderItems table. We placed this query inside parentheses to make it a subquery. In the outer query, the select and from clauses have the PRODUCTS table columns we want. The outer query where clause uses "not in" to filter out PRODUCTS table rows that don't exist in the subquery. The order by clause sorted the result set by ProductID. Although queries with joins often have better performance, a subquery structure can seem a little more intuitive at first glance.

**Exercise 1: Use a Subquery to Find the Customers Who Have Not Placed an Order**

Note

This exercise is designed for MySQL 8.0.15, but the concepts and syntax will work for SQL Server 2014.

1. We'll start with the ORDERS table, since the ORDERS table ties the orders together with the customers table. Build a list of CustomerID values for all customers in the ORDERS table. Test it, and put it aside for now:

USE packt\_online\_shop;

SELECT CustomerID FROM ORDERS;

2. Build a first name / last name list of all customers in the CUSTOMERS table. In the CONCAT function, add a space to format the name. Although we won't really need it, include the CustomerID as a good practice:

USE packt\_online\_shop;

SELECT CONCAT(customers.FirstName, ' ',

customers.LastName) AS 'name',

customers.CustomerID

FROM customers

3. Add a where clause to the query, using "not in" to filter the CUSTOMERS table with the subquery that we built first. Sort the result set by name:

USE packt\_online\_shop;

SELECT CONCAT(customers.FirstName, ' ',

customers.LastName) AS 'name',

customers.CustomerID

FROM customers

WHERE customers.customerID NOT IN

(SELECT CustomerID FROM ORDERS)

ORDER BY 'name';