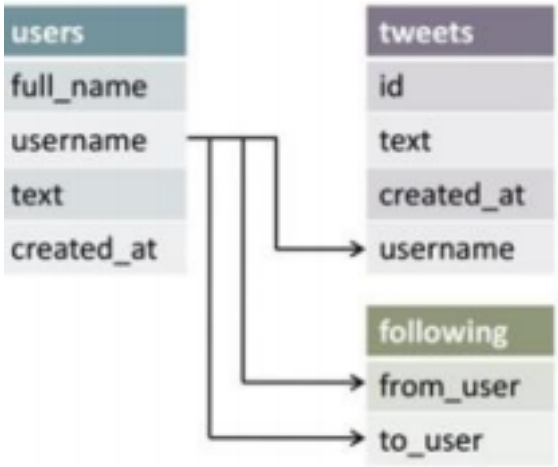
Module 1: Relational Databases

Introduction

Relational Databases

These databases are categorized by a set of tables where data gets fit into a pre-defined category. The table consists of rows and columns where the column has an entry for data for a specific category and rows contains instance for that data defined according to the category. The Structured Query Language (SQL) is the standard user and application program interface for a relational database.

There are various simple operations that can be applied over the table which makes these databases easier to extend, join two databases with a common relation and modify all existing applications.



Why to Learn DBMS?

Traditionally, data was organized in file formats. DBMS was a new concept then, and all the research was done to make it overcome the deficiencies in traditional style of data management. A modern DBMS has the following characteristics −

- **Real-world entity** − A modern DBMS is more realistic and uses real-world entities to design its architecture. It uses the behavior and attributes too. For example, a school database may use students as an entity and their age as an attribute.
- **Relation-based tables** − DBMS allows entities and relations among them to form tables. A user can understand the architecture of a database just by looking at the table names.
- **Isolation of data and application** − A database system is entirely different than its data. A database is an active entity, whereas data is said to be passive, on which the database works and organizes. DBMS also stores metadata, which is data about data, to ease its own process.

- **Less redundancy** − DBMS follows the rules of normalization, which splits a relation when any of its attributes is having redundancy in values. Normalization is a mathematically rich and scientific process that reduces data redundancy.
- **Consistency** − Consistency is a state where every relation in a database remains consistent. There exist methods and techniques, which can detect attempt of leaving database in inconsistent state. A DBMS can provide greater consistency as compared to earlier forms of data storing applications like file-processing systems.
- **Query Language** − DBMS is equipped with query language, which makes it more efficient to retrieve and manipulate data. A user can apply as many and as different filtering options as required to retrieve a set of data. Traditionally it was not possible where file-processing system was used.

Applications of DBMS

Database is a collection of related data and data is a collection of facts and figures that can be processed to produce information.

Mostly data represents recordable facts. Data aids in producing information, which is based on facts. For example, if we have data about marks obtained by all students, we can then conclude about toppers and average marks.

A **database management system** stores data in such a way that it becomes easier to retrieve, manipulate, and produce information. Following are the important characteristics and applications of DBMS.

- **ACID Properties** − DBMS follows the concepts of **A**tomicity, **C**onsistency, **I**solation, and **D**urability (normally shortened as ACID). These concepts are applied on transactions, which manipulate data in a database. ACID properties help the database stay healthy in multi-transactional environments and in case of failure.
- **Multiuser and Concurrent Access** − DBMS supports multi-user environment and allows them to access and manipulate data in parallel. Though there are restrictions on transactions when users attempt to handle the same data item, but users are always unaware of them.
- **Multiple views** − DBMS offers multiple views for different users. A user who is in the Sales department will have a different view of database than a person working in the Production department. This feature enables the users to have a concentrate view of the database according to their requirements.
- **Security** − Features like multiple views offer security to some extent where users are unable to access data of other users and departments. DBMS offers methods to impose constraints while entering data into the database and retrieving the same at a later stage. DBMS offers many different levels of security features, which enables multiple users to have different views with different features. For example, a user in the Sales department cannot see the data that belongs to the Purchase department. Additionally,

it can also be managed how much data of the Sales department should be displayed to the user. Since a DBMS is not saved on the disk as traditional file systems, it is very hard for miscreants to break the code.

View of Data in DBMS

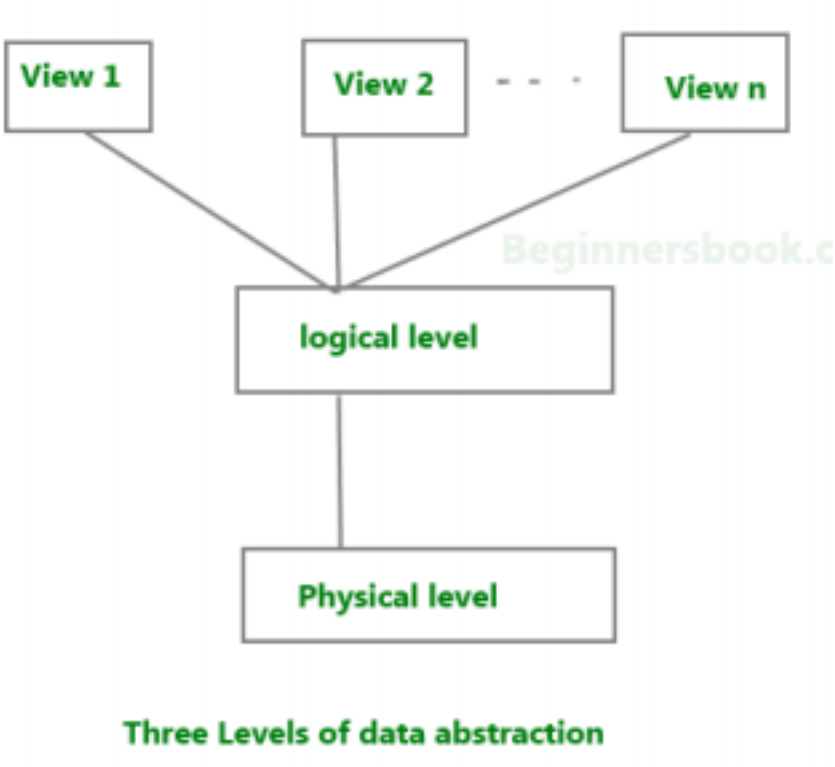
Abstraction is one of the main features of database systems. Hiding irrelevant details from user and providing abstract view of data to users, helps in easy and efficient **user database** interaction. In the previous session, we discussed the three level of DBMS architecture, the top level of that architecture is "view level". The view level provides the "**view of data**" to the users and hides the irrelevant details such as data relationship, database schema, constraints, security etc from the user.

To fully understand the view of data, you must have a basic knowledge of data abstraction and instance & schema. Refer these two tutorials to learn them in detail.

1. Data abstraction
2. Instance and schema

Data Abstraction in DBMS

Database systems are made-up of complex data structures. To ease the user interaction with database, the developers hide internal irrelevant details from users. This process of hiding irrelevant details from user is called data abstraction.



Three Levels of data abstraction

We have three levels of abstraction:

Physical level: This is the lowest level of data abstraction. It describes how data is actually stored in database. You can get the complex data structure details at this level.

Logical level: This is the middle level of 3-level data abstraction architecture. It describes what data is stored in database.

View level: Highest level of data abstraction. This level describes the user interaction with database system.

Example: Let's say we are storing customer information in a customer table. At physical level these records can be described as blocks of storage (bytes, gigabytes, terabytes etc.) in memory. These details are often hidden from the programmers.

At the logical level these records can be described as fields and attributes along with their data types, their relationship among each other can be logically implemented. The programmers generally work at this level because they are aware of such things about database systems.

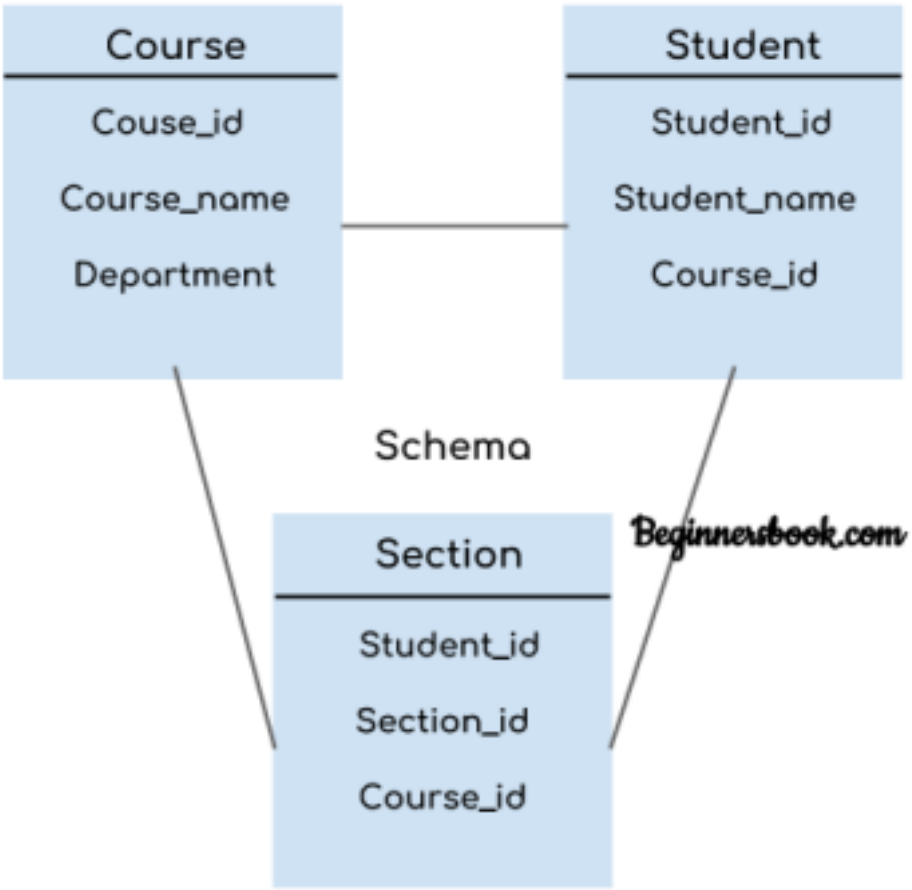
At view level, user just interact with system with the help of GUI and enter the details at the screen, they are not aware of how the data is stored and what data is stored; such details are hidden from them.

Instance and schema in DBMS

DBMS Schema

Definition of schema: Design of a database is called the schema. Schema is of three types: Physical schema, logical schema and view schema.

For example: In the following diagram, we have a schema that shows the relationship between three tables: Course, Student and Section. The diagram only shows the design of the database, it doesn't show the data present in those tables. Schema is only a structural view(design) of a database as shown in the diagram below.



he design of a database at physical level is called **physical schema**, how the data stored in blocks of storage is described at this level.

Design of database at logical level is called **logical schema**, programmers and database administrators work at this level, at this level data can be described as certain types of data records gets stored in data structures, however the internal details such as implementation of data structure is hidden at this level (available at physical level).

Design of database at view level is called **view schema**. This generally describes end user interaction with database systems.

DBMS Instance

Definition of instance: The data stored in database at a particular moment of time is called instance of database. Database schema defines the variable declarations in tables that belong to a particular database; the value of these variables at a moment of time is called the instance of that database.

For example, lets say we have a single table student in the database, today the table has 100 records, so today the instance of the database has 100 records. Lets say we are going to add another 100 records in this table by tomorrow so the instance of database tomorrow will have 200 records in table. In short, at a particular moment the data stored in database is called the instance, that changes over time when we add or delete data from the database.

Data Model

Data models define how the logical structure of a database is modeled. Data Models are fundamental entities to introduce abstraction in a DBMS. Data models define how data is connected to each other and how they are processed and stored inside the system.

The very first data model could be flat data-models, where all the data used are to be kept in the same plane. Earlier data models were not so scientific, hence they were prone to introduce lots of duplication and update anomalies.

Types of Data Models

There are several types of data models in DBMS. We will just see a basic overview of types of models.

Object based logical Models – Describe data at the conceptual and view

levels. 1. E-R Model

2. Object oriented Model

Record based logical Models – Like Object based model, they also describe data at the conceptual and view levels. These models specify logical structure of database with records, fields and attributes.

1. Relational Model
2. Hierarchical Model
3. Network Model – Network Model is same as hierarchical model except that it has graph-like structure rather than a tree-based structure. Unlike hierarchical model, this model allows each record to have more than one parent record.

Physical Data Models – These models describe data at the lowest level of abstraction.

Entity-Relationship Model

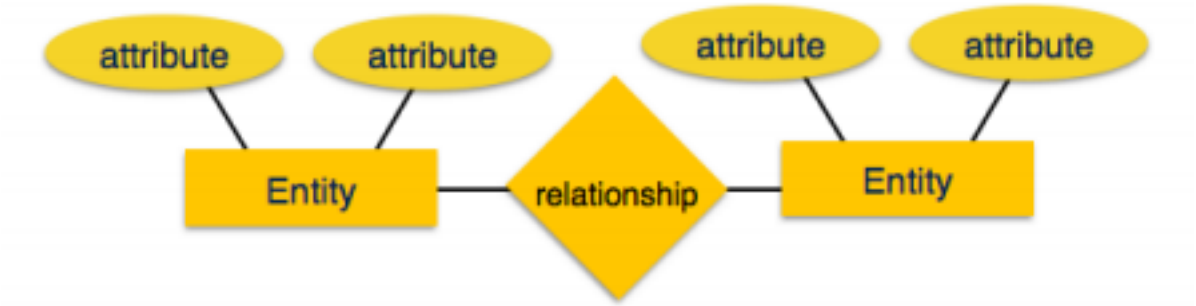
Entity-Relationship (ER) Model is based on the notion of real-world entities and relationships among them. While formulating real-world scenario into the database model, the ER Model creates entity set, relationship set, general attributes and constraints.

ER Model is best used for the conceptual design of a database.

ER Model is based on −

- **Entities** and their *attributes.*
- **Relationships** among entities.

These concepts are explained below.



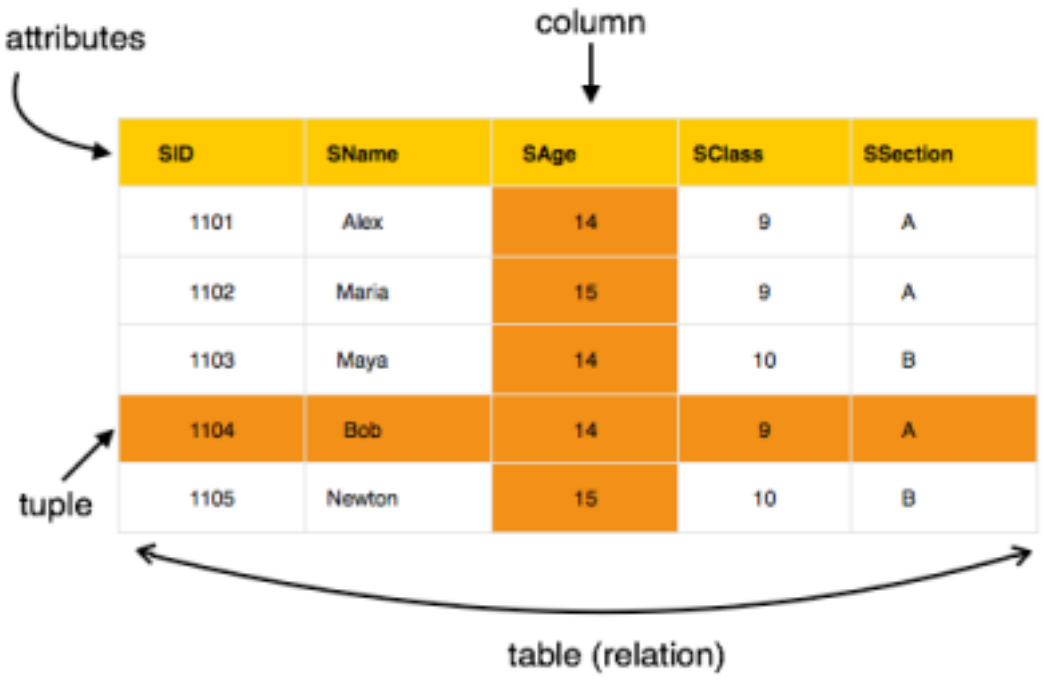
- **Entity** − An entity in an ER Model is a real-world entity having properties called **attributes**. Every **attribute** is defined by its set of values called **domain**. For example, in a school database, a student is considered as an entity. Student has various attributes like name, age, class, etc.
- **Relationship** − The logical association among entities is called ***relationship***. Relationships are mapped with entities in various ways. Mapping cardinalities define the number of association between two entities.

Mapping cardinalities −

- one to one
- one to many
- many to one
- many to many

Relational Model

The most popular data model in DBMS is the Relational Model. It is more scientific a model than others. This model is based on first-order predicate logic and defines a table as an **n-ary relation**.



The main highlights of this model are −

- Data is stored in tables called **relations**.
- Relations can be normalized.
- In normalized relations, values saved are atomic values.
- Each row in a relation contains a unique value.

- Each column in a relation contains values from a same domain.

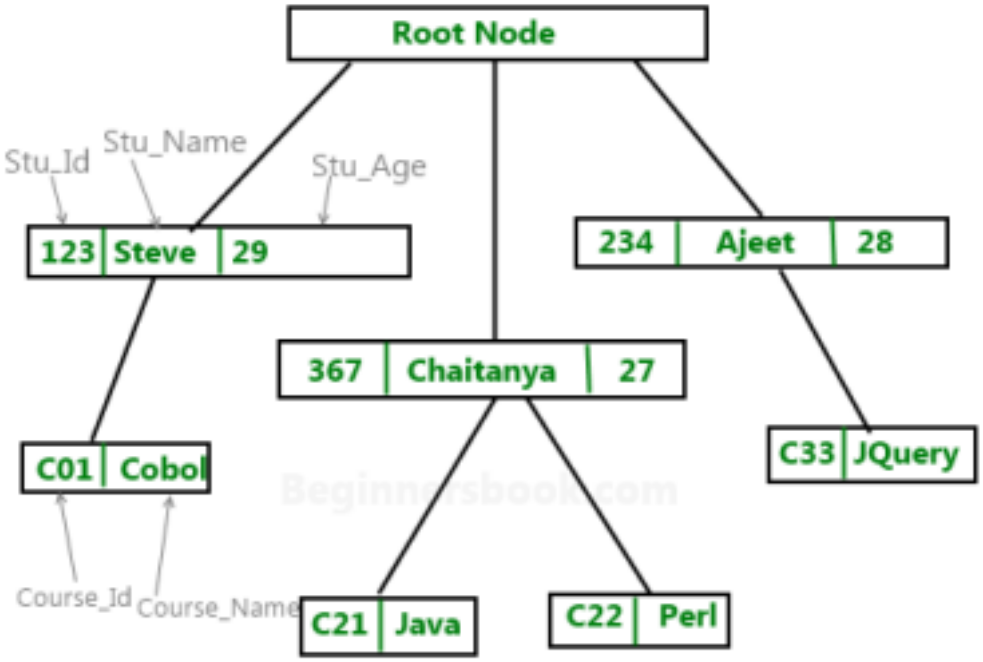
Hierarchical model

In **hierarchical model**, data is organized into a tree like structure with each record is having one parent record and many children. The main drawback of this model is that, it can have only one to many relationships between nodes.

Note: Hierarchical models are rarely used now.

Sample Hierarchical Model Diagram:

Lets say we have few students and few courses and a course can be assigned to a single student only, however a student take any number of courses so this relationship becomes one to many.



Example of hierarchical data represented as relational tables: The above hierarchical model can be represented as relational tables like this:

Stu_Id	Stu_Name	Stu_Age
123	Steve	29
367	Chaitanya	27
234	Ajeet	28

Course Table:

Course_Id	Course_Name	Stu_Id
C01	Cobol	123
C21	Java	367
C22	Perl	367
C33	JQuery	234

Network Model

- This is an extension of the Hierarchical model. In this model data is organised more like a graph, and are allowed to have more than one parent node.
- In this database model data is more related as more relationships are established in this database model. Also, as the data is more related, hence accessing the data is also easier and fast. This database model was used to map many-to-many data relationships.
- This was the most widely used database model, before Relational Model was introduced.

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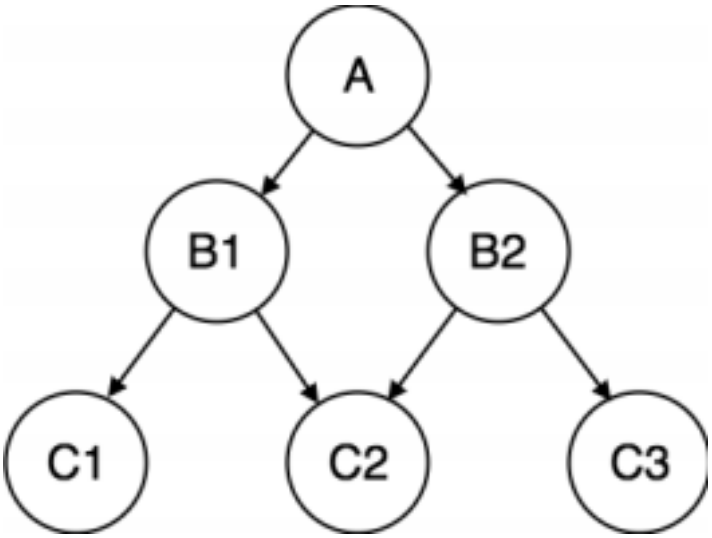


Database Architecture

The design of a DBMS depends on its architecture. It can be centralized or decentralized or hierarchical. The architecture of a DBMS can be seen as either single tier or multi-tier. An n tier architecture divides the whole system into related but independent **n** modules, which can be independently modified, altered, changed, or replaced.

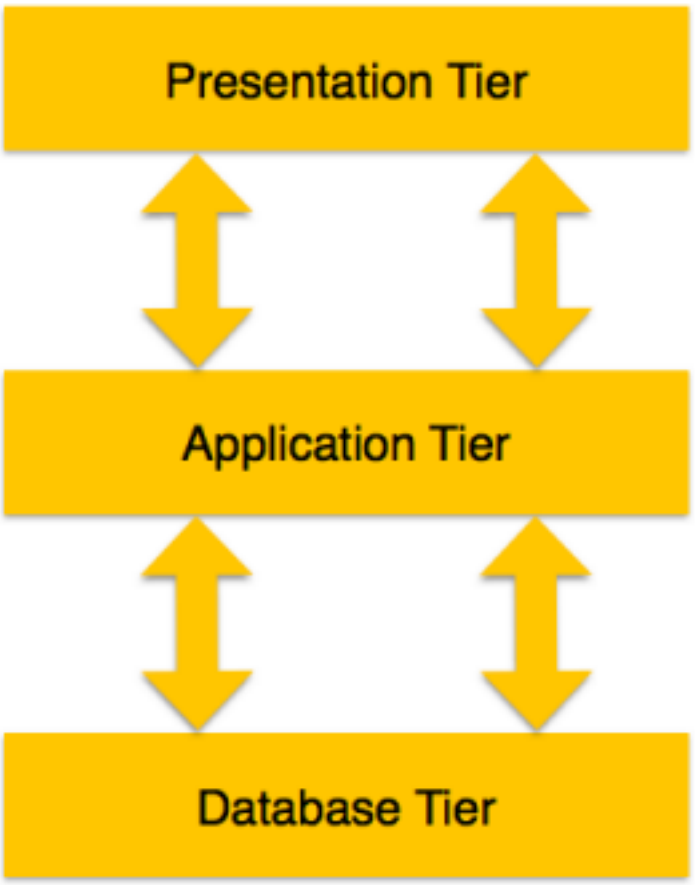
In 1-tier architecture, the DBMS is the only entity where the user directly sits on the DBMS and uses it. Any changes done here will directly be done on the DBMS itself. It does not provide handy tools for end-users. Database designers and programmers normally prefer to use single tier architecture.

If the architecture of DBMS is 2-tier, then it must have an application through which the DBMS can be accessed. Programmers use 2-tier architecture where they access the DBMS by means

of an application. Here the application tier is entirely independent of the database in terms of operation, design, and programming.

3-tier Architecture

A 3-tier architecture separates its tiers from each other based on the complexity of the users and how they use the data present in the database. It is the most widely used architecture to design a DBMS.



- **Database (Data) Tier** − At this tier, the database resides along with its query processing languages. We also have the relations that define the data and their constraints at this level.
- **Application (Middle) Tier** − At this tier reside the application server and the programs that access the database. For a user, this application tier presents an abstracted view of the database. End-users are unaware of any existence of the database beyond the application. At the other end, the database tier is not aware of any other user beyond the application tier. Hence, the application layer sits in the middle and acts as a mediator between the end-user and the database.
- **User (Presentation) Tier** − End-users operate on this tier and they know nothing about any existence of the database beyond this layer. At this layer, multiple views of the database can be provided by the application. All views are generated by applications that reside in the application tier.

Multiple-tier database architecture is highly modifiable, as almost all its components are independent and can be changed independently.

Database Users

Database users are the one who really use and take the benefits of database. There will be different types of users depending on their need and way of accessing the database.

1. **Application Programmers –** They are the developers who interact with the database by means of DML queries. These DML queries are written in the application programs like C, C++, JAVA, Pascal etc. These queries are converted into object code to communicate with the database. For example, writing a C program to generate the report of employees who are working in particular department will involve a query to fetch the data from database. It will include a embedded SQL query in the C Program.

2. **Sophisticated Users –** They are database developers, who write SQL queries to select/insert/delete/update data. They do not use any application or programs to request the database. They directly interact with the database by means of query language like SQL. These users will be scientists, engineers, analysts who thoroughly study SQL and DBMS to apply the concepts in their requirement. In short, we can say this category includes designers and developers of DBMS and SQL.

3. **Specialized Users –** These are also sophisticated users, but they write special database application programs. They are the developers who develop the complex programs to the requirement.

4. **Stand-alone Users –** These users will have stand –alone database for their personal use. These kinds of database will have readymade database packages which will have menus and graphical interfaces.

5. **Native Users –** these are the users who use the existing application to interact with the database. For example, online library system, ticket booking systems, ATMs etc which has existing application and users use them to interact with the database to fulfil their requests.

Database Administrators

The life cycle of database starts from designing, implementing to administration of it. A database for any kind of requirement needs to be designed perfectly so that it should work without any issues. Once all the design is complete, it needs to be installed. Once this step is complete, users start using the database. The database grows as the data grows in the database. When the database becomes huge, its performance comes down. Also accessing the data from the database becomes challenge. There will be unused memory in database, making the memory inevitably huge. These administration and maintenance of database is taken care by database Administrator – DBA. A DBA has many responsibilities. A good performing database is in the hands of DBA.

- **Installing and upgrading the DBMS Servers: –** DBA is responsible for installing a new DBMS server for the new projects. He is also responsible for upgrading these servers as there are new versions comes in the market or requirement. If there is any failure in upgradation of the existing servers, he should be able revert the new changes

back to the older version, thus maintaining the DBMS working. He is also responsible for updating the service packs/ hot fixes/ patches to the DBMS servers.

- **Design and implementation: –** Designing the database and implementing is also DBA's responsibility. He should be able to decide proper memory management, file

organizations, error handling, log maintenance etc for the database.

- **Performance tuning: –** Since database is huge and it will have lots of tables, data, constraints and indices, there will be variations in the performance from time to time. Also, because of some designing issues or data growth, the database will not work as expected. It is responsibility of the DBA to tune the database performance. He is responsible to make sure all the queries and programs works in fraction of seconds.

- **Migrate database servers: –** Sometimes, users using oracle would like to shift to SQL server or Netezza. It is the responsibility of DBA to make sure that migration happens without any failure, and there is no data loss.

- **Backup and Recovery: –** Proper backup and recovery programs needs to be developed by DBA and has to be maintained him. This is one of the main responsibilities of DBA. Data/objects should be backed up regularly so that if there is any crash, it should be recovered without much effort and data loss.

- **Security: –** DBA is responsible for creating various database users and roles, and giving them different levels of access rights.

- **Documentation: –** DBA should be properly documenting all his activities so that if he quits or any new DBA comes in, he should be able to understand the database without any effort. He should basically maintain all his installation, backup, recovery, security methods. He should keep various reports about database performance.

In order to perform his entire task, he should have very good command over

DBMS. **Types of DBA**

There are different kinds of DBA depending on the responsibility that he owns.

- **Administrative DBA –** This DBA is mainly concerned with installing, and maintaining DBMS servers. His prime tasks are installing, backups, recovery, security, replications, memory management, configurations and tuning. He is mainly responsible for all administrative tasks of a database.

- **Development DBA –** He is responsible for creating queries and procedure for the requirement. Basically his task is similar to any database developer.

- **Database Architect –** Database architect is responsible for creating and maintaining the users, roles, access rights, tables, views, constraints and indexes. He is mainly responsible for designing the structure of the database depending on the requirement. These structures will be used by developers and development DBA to code.

- **Data Warehouse DBA –**DBA should be able to maintain the data and procedures from various sources in the datawarehouse. These sources can be files, COBOL, or any other programs. Here data and programs will be from different sources. A good DBA should

be able to keep the performance and function levels from these sources at same pace to make the datawarehouse to work.

- **Application DBA –**He acts like a bridge between the application program and the database. He makes sure all the application program is optimized to interact with the database. He ensures all the activities from installing, upgrading, and patching, maintaining, backup, recovery to executing the records works without any issues.
- **OLAP DBA –** He is responsible for installing and maintaining the database in OLAP systems. He maintains only OLAP databases.