

Character data types and common issues

EXPLORATORY DATA ANALYSIS IN SQL



Christina Maimone
Data Scientist

PostgreSQL character types

`character(n)` or `char(n)`

- fixed length `n`
- trailing spaces ignored in comparisons

`character varying(n)` or `varchar(n)`

- variable length up to a maximum of `n`

`text` or `varchar`

- unlimited length

Types of text data

Categorical

Tues, Tuesday, Mon, TH

shirts, shoes, hats, pants

satisfied, very satisfied, unsatisfied

0349-938, 1254-001, 5477-651

red, blue, green, yellow

Unstructured Text

I really like this product. I use it every day. It's my favorite color.

We've redesigned your favorite t-shirt to make it even better. You'll love...

Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent, a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal...

Grouping and counting

```
SELECT category,          -- categorical variable
       count(*)           -- count rows for each category
FROM product              -- table
GROUP BY category;        -- categorical variable
```

category	count
Banana	1
Apple	4
apple	2
apple	1
banana	3

(5 rows)

Order: most frequent values

```
SELECT category,          -- categorical variable
       count(*)           -- count rows for each category
FROM product              -- table
GROUP BY category         -- categorical variable
ORDER BY count DESC;      -- show most frequent values first
```

```
category | count
-----+-----
Apple    |     4
banana   |     3
apple    |     2
Banana   |     1
apple    |     1
(5 rows)
```

Order: category value

```
SELECT category,      -- categorical variable
       count(*)       -- count rows for each category
FROM product          -- table
GROUP BY category     -- categorical variable
ORDER BY category;    -- order by categorical variable
```

```
category | count
-----+-----
apple    | 1
Apple    | 4
Banana   | 1
apple    | 2
banana   | 3
(5 rows)
```

Alphabetical order

```
-- Results
```

category	count
apple	1
Apple	4
Banana	1
apple	2
banana	3

(5 rows)

```
-- Alphabetical Order:
```

```
' ' < 'A' < 'a'
```

```
-- From results
```

```
' ' < 'A' < 'B' < 'a' < 'b'
```

Common issues

Case matters

```
'apple' != 'Apple'
```

Empty strings aren't null

```
' ' != NULL
```

Spaces count

```
' apple' != 'apple'
```

```
' ' != ''
```

Punctuation differences

```
'to-do' != 'to do'
```


Time to examine some text data

EXPLORATORY DATA ANALYSIS IN SQL

Cases and Spaces

EXPLORATORY DATA ANALYSIS IN SQL



Christina Maimone
Data Scientist

Converting case

```
SELECT lower('aBc DeFg 7-');
```

```
abc defg 7-
```

```
SELECT upper('aBc DeFg 7-');
```

```
ABC DEFG 7-
```

Case insensitive comparisons

```
SELECT *  
FROM fruit;
```

```
customer | fav_fruit  
-----+-----  
349 | apple      <- #1  
874 | Apple      <- #2  
703 | apple      <- #3  
667 | banana  
622 | banana  
387 | BANANA  
300 | APPLES      <- #4  
313 | apple      <- #5  
499 | banana  
418 | apple      <- #6  
841 | BANANA  
300 | APPLE      <- #7  
754 | apple      <- #8  
(13 rows)
```

```
SELECT *  
FROM fruit  
WHERE lower(fav_fruit)='apple';
```

```
customer | fav_fruit  
-----+-----  
349 | apple  
874 | Apple  
313 | apple  
418 | apple  
300 | APPLE  
(5 rows)
```

Case insensitive searches

```
-- Using LIKE
```

```
SELECT *  
  FROM fruit  
-- "apple" in value  
WHERE fav_fruit LIKE '%apple%';
```

```
customer | fav_fruit  
-----+-----  
      349 | apple  
      703 | apple  
      313 | apple  
      418 | apple  
      754 | apple  
(5 rows)
```

```
-- Using ILIKE
```

```
SELECT *  
  FROM fruit  
-- ILIKE for case insensitive  
WHERE fav_fruit ILIKE '%apple%';
```

```
customer | fav_fruit  
-----+-----  
      349 | apple  
      874 | Apple  
      703 | apple  
      300 | APPLES  
      313 | apple  
      418 | apple  
      300 | APPLE  
      754 | apple  
(8 rows)
```

Watch out!

```
SELECT fruit
FROM fruit2;
```

```
fruit
-----
apple
banana
pineapple
grapefruit
grapes
```

```
SELECT fruit
FROM fruit2
WHERE fruit LIKE '%apple%';
```

```
fruit
-----
apple
pineapple
```

Trimming spaces

```
SELECT trim(' abc ');
```

- `trim` or `btrim`: both ends
 - `trim(' abc ')` = `'abc'`
- `rtrim`: right end
 - `rtrim(' abc ')` = `' abc'`
- `ltrim`: left start
 - `ltrim(' abc ')` = `'abc '`

Trimming other values

```
SELECT trim('Wow!', '!');
```

Wow

```
SELECT trim('Wow!', '!wW');
```

0

Combining functions

```
SELECT trim(lower('Wow!'), '!w');
```

0

Bring order to messy text!

EXPLORATORY DATA ANALYSIS IN SQL

Splitting and concatenating text

EXPLORATORY DATA ANALYSIS IN SQL

SQL

Christina Maimone
Data Scientist

Substring

```
SELECT left('abcde', 2),    -- first 2 characters
       right('abcde', 2);  -- last 2 characters
```

```
left | right
-----+-----
ab   | de
```

```
SELECT left('abc', 10),
       length(left('abc', 10));
```

```
left | length
-----+-----
abc  |      3
```

Substring

```
SELECT substring(string FROM start FOR length);
```

```
SELECT substring('abcdef' FROM 2 FOR 3);
```

```
bcd
```

```
SELECT substr('abcdef', 2, 3);
```

Delimiters

```
some text,more text,still more text
      ^      ^
    delimiter delimiter
```

Fields/chunks:

1. some text
2. more text
3. still more text

Splitting on a delimiter

```
SELECT split_part(string, delimiter, part);
```

```
SELECT split_part('a,bc,d', ',', 2);
```

```
bc
```

Splitting on a delimiter

```
SELECT split_part('cats and dogs and fish', ' and ', 1);
```

```
cats
```


Concatenating text

```
SELECT concat('a', 2, 'cc');
```

```
a2cc
```

```
SELECT 'a' || 2 || 'cc';
```

```
a2cc
```

```
SELECT concat('a', NULL, 'cc');
```

```
acc
```

```
SELECT 'a' || NULL || 'cc';
```

Manipulate some strings!

EXPLORATORY DATA ANALYSIS IN SQL

Strategies for Multiple Transformations

EXPLORATORY DATA ANALYSIS IN SQL



Christina Maimone
Data Scientist

Multiple transformations

```
SELECT * FROM naics;
```

id	category	businesses
111110	Agriculture: Soybean Farming	4788
111130	Agriculture Dry Pea and Bean Farming	3606
111140	Agriculture: Wheat Farming	6393
111150	Agriculture - Corn Farming	26469
111160	Agriculture: Rice Farming	949
111199	Agriculture - All Other Grain Farming	15035
111211	Agriculture Potato Farming	617
611110	Education - Elementary and Secondary	187859
611210	Education Junior Colleges	3961
611310	Education: Colleges and Universities	29148

CASE WHEN

```
-- Case for each of :, -, and |
SELECT CASE WHEN category LIKE '%: %' THEN split_part(category, ': ', 1)
         WHEN category LIKE '% - %' THEN split_part(category, ' - ', 1)
         ELSE split_part(category, ' | ', 1)
        END AS major_category, -- alias the result
sum(businesses)               -- also select number of businesses

FROM naics

GROUP BY major_category;      -- Group by categories created above
```

```
major_category |  sum
-----+-----
Education      | 220968
Agriculture    |  57857
```

Recoding table

Original values: `fruit` table

customer	fav_fruit
349	apple
874	Apple
703	apple
667	bannana
622	banana
387	BANANA
300	APPLES
313	apple
499	banana
418	apple
841	BANANA
300	APPLE
754	apple

Standardized values: `recode` table

original	standardized
APPLES	apple
apple	apple
Apple	apple
bannana	banana
apple	apple
banana	banana
banana	banana
APPLE	apple
apple	apple
BANANA	banana

Step 1: CREATE TEMP TABLE

```
CREATE TEMP TABLE recode AS
```

```
  SELECT DISTINCT fav_fruit AS original, -- original, messy values
```

```
    fav_fruit AS standardized -- new standardized values
```

```
FROM fruit;
```

Initial table

```
SELECT *  
FROM recode;
```

original	standardized
APPLES	APPLES
apple	apple
Apple	Apple
bannana	bannana
apple	apple
banana	banana
banana	banana
APPLE	APPLE
apple	apple
BANANA	BANANA

(10 rows)

Step 2: UPDATE values

```
UPDATE table_name  
  SET column_name = new_value  
WHERE condition;
```

Step 2: UPDATE values

```
-- All rows: lower case, remove white space on ends
```

```
UPDATE recode  
  SET standardized=trim(lower(original));
```

```
-- Specific rows: correct a misspelling
```

```
UPDATE recode  
  SET standardized='banana'  
WHERE standardized LIKE '%nn%';
```

```
-- All rows: remove any s
```

```
UPDATE recode  
  SET standardized=rtrim(standardized, 's');
```

Resulting recode table

```
SELECT *  
FROM recode;
```

original		standardized
APPLES		apple
apple		apple
Apple		apple
apple		apple
banana		banana
banana		banana
APPLE		apple
apple		apple
BANANA		banana
bannana		banana

(10 rows)

Step 3: JOIN original and recode tables

Original only

```
SELECT fav_fruit, count(*)  
FROM fruit  
GROUP BY fav_fruit;
```

fav_fruit	count
APPLES	1
apple	1
apple	3
banana	1
BANANA	2
apple	1
APPLE	1
bannana	1
banana	1
Apple	1

(10 rows)

With recoded values

```
SELECT standardized,  
count(*)  
FROM fruit  
LEFT JOIN recode  
ON fav_fruit=original  
GROUP BY standardized;
```

standardized	count
apple	8
banana	5

(2 rows)

Recap

1. `CREATE TEMP TABLE` with original values
2. `UPDATE` to create standardized values
3. `JOIN` original data to standardized data

Clean up the Evanston 311 data!

EXPLORATORY DATA ANALYSIS IN SQL