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Intro to Database Management

May 13, 2025

For this project, I created a relational database to model a real-life book club using MySQL. The goal was to design a system that could track members, meetings, books, and reviews in a clear and well-organized format using entity-relationship principles. The final design includes five related tables: Members, Books, Meetings, Reviews, and Attends.

One of the most meaningful parts of the project was that I used real data from my actual book club, #JustRead. The books, meeting dates, and even member participation were based on our experiences over the past year. This made the process both engaging and practical, as I could immediately see the value of what I was creating.

As I built the database, I paid close attention to how the Attends table functioned. I realized that some members who joined in November shouldn’t appear in meetings held in January or earlier. This detail helped me refine the data to ensure it accurately represented real-world behavior. I also implemented a composite primary key in the Attends table using both MemberID and MeetingID, which allowed me to model the many-to-many relationship between members and meetings correctly.

Another challenge I encountered was learning how to use MySQL Workbench. I initially struggled with importing and executing SQL scripts, but after reviewing class videos and documentation, I was able to generate the appropriate SQL code and understand how the tool worked. This process helped me connect the practical side of database management with the theory I learned in class.

Additionally, I had the opportunity to speak with two friends who work at the New York Public Library. They provided insights on what types of data are useful in tracking member engagement and book popularity. For example, one suggestion was to track the length of meetings, which can indicate how engaged members were with a particular book. I added this attribute to the Meetings table as a result of that conversation.

Overall, this project helped me apply core database concepts while designing something grounded in real life. I gained practical skills in structuring tables, identifying relationships, using composite keys, and writing SQL to support future data analysis or application development.