



Part I. Introduction to Databases and Database Design

- **[Chapter 1](#)**: Goals of Effective Database Design
- **[Chapter 2](#)**: Database Types
- **[Chapter 3](#)**: Relational Database Fundamentals

The chapters in this part of the book provide background that is useful when studying database design.

[Chapter 1](#) explains the reasons why database design is important. It discusses the goals that you should keep in mind while designing databases. If you keep those goals in mind, you can stay focused on the end result and not get bogged down in the minutiae of technical details. If you understand the goals, you can know when it might be useful to bend the rules a bit.

[Chapter 2](#) describes several different kinds of databases. While this book (and most other database books) focuses on relational databases, there are other kinds of databases that are better suited to some tasks. If you know what alternatives are available, you can decide which will work best for you. (I once worked on a 40-developer project that failed largely because it used the wrong kind of database. Don't let that happen to you!)

[Chapter 3](#) provides background on relational databases. It explains common relational database terms and concepts that you need to understand the chapters that follow. You won't get as much out of the rest of the book if you don't understand the terminology.

Even if you're somewhat familiar with relational databases, give these chapters at least a quick glance to make sure you don't miss anything important. Pay particular attention to the terms described in **Chapter 3**, because you'll need to know them later.