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Database Systems

2. Data vs. Information

As discussed in class, data and information may seem interchangeable, but data only becomes information once context is given. The database I chose to use is Skype. I chose to use this database because according to the PostGreSQL website, Skype used PostGreSQL to build much of their product. An example of an element of data from the skype database would be "JTHolden97". This is data because it is just a random string of characters with no meaning. The context given that makes this information is that it is a user's skype handle, which is a skype user's means of finding another user.

Without knowing the context, "JTHolden97" is data and is completely useless. One would not know if this was a user handle, a private message, a password, etc. The context is what makes it information, and therefore useful.

3.

The hierarchical model, as it sounds, arranges data in a set hierarchy. This means it is in a tree type format, which a base of the tree having branches that extend out. The network model was created to address some of the problems of the hierarchical model. The network model could sustain a many to many relationship with data while the hierarchical model could only have each record have one parent record. The relational database model is the most frequently used today. The relational model allowed for collections of data to be stored in tables.