16.8 The FEDERATED Storage Engine

The `FEDERATED` storage engine lets you access data from a remote MySQL database without using replication or cluster technology. Querying a local `FEDERATED` table automatically pulls the data from the remote (federated) tables. No data is stored on the local tables.

To include the `FEDERATED` storage engine if you build MySQL from source, invoke `CMake` with the `-DWITH_FEDERATED_STORAGE_ENGINE` option.

The `FEDERATED` storage engine is not enabled by default in the running server; to enable `FEDERATED`, you must start the MySQL server binary using the `--federated` option.

To examine the source for the `FEDERATED` engine, look in the `storage/federated` directory of a MySQL source distribution.

16.8.1 FEDERATED Storage Engine Overview

When you create a table using one of the standard storage engines (such as `MyISAM`, `CSV` or `InnoDB`), the table consists of the table definition and the associated data. When you create a `FEDERATED` table, the table definition is the same, but the physical storage of the data is handled on a remote server.

A `FEDERATED` table consists of two elements:

- A *remote server* with a database table, which in turn consists of the table definition (stored in the MySQL data dictionary) and the associated table. The table type of the remote table may be any type supported by the remote `mysqld` server, including `MyISAM` or `InnoDB`.
- A *local server* with a database table, where the table definition matches that of the corresponding table on the remote server. The table definition is stored in the data dictionary. There is no data file on the local server. Instead, the table definition includes a connection string that points to the remote table.

When executing queries and statements on a `FEDERATED` table on the local server, the operations that would normally insert, update or delete information from a local data file are instead sent to the remote server for execution, where they update the data file on the remote server or return matching rows from the remote server.

The basic structure of a `FEDERATED` table setup is shown in Figure 16.2, “FEDERATED Table Structure”.

Figure 16.2 FEDERATED Table Structure