

Applying Filters to SQL Queries

Overview

This project is completed as part of a training exercise for Coursera's Google Cybersecurity Certificate. It is conducted at a fictitious large company.

Scenario

The exercise sets out a scenario in which I am a security professional at a company that operates in Mexico and part of my duties is to investigate securities issues to help keep the system secure. A potential security incident has occurred in which some failed login attempts were made after business hours (after 18:00) and outside of the country.

My job is to filter information from a database containing data about login attempts to investigate the incident and retrieve information about employees, their computers and departments they belong to keep machines updated.

Next, I will show all the steps followed using SQL queries to get the required information.

Retrieve after hours failed login attempts

The following screenshot shows the SQL query created to identify the failed login attempts occurred after 18:00 and the output obtained after the query was executed.

```
MariaDB [organization]> SELECT *
-> FROM log_in_attempts
-> WHERE login_time >'18:00' AND success=0;
```

event_id	username	login_date	login_time	country	ip_address	success
2	apatel	2022-05-10	20:27:27	CAN	192.168.205.12	0
18	pwashing	2022-05-11	19:28:50	US	192.168.66.142	0
20	tshah	2022-05-12	18:56:36	MEXICO	192.168.109.50	0
28	aestrada	2022-05-09	19:28:12	MEXICO	192.168.27.57	0
34	drosas	2022-05-11	21:02:04	US	192.168.45.93	0
42	cgriffin	2022-05-09	23:04:05	US	192.168.4.157	0
52	cjackson	2022-05-10	22:07:07	CAN	192.168.58.57	0
69	wjaffrey	2022-05-11	19:55:15	USA	192.168.100.17	0
82	abernard	2022-05-12	23:38:46	MEX	192.168.234.49	0
87	apatel	2022-05-08	22:38:31	CANADA	192.168.132.153	0
96	ivelasco	2022-05-09	22:36:36	CAN	192.168.84.194	0
104	asundara	2022-05-11	18:38:07	US	192.168.96.200	0
107	bisles	2022-05-12	20:25:57	USA	192.168.116.187	0
111	aestrada	2022-05-10	22:00:26	MEXICO	192.168.76.27	0
127	abellmas	2022-05-09	21:20:51	CANADA	192.168.70.122	0
131	bisles	2022-05-09	20:03:55	US	192.168.113.171	0
155	cgriffin	2022-05-12	22:18:42	USA	192.168.236.176	0
160	jclark	2022-05-10	20:49:00	CANADA	192.168.214.49	0
199	yappiah	2022-05-11	19:34:48	MEXICO	192.168.44.232	0

```
19 rows in set (0.001 sec)
```

The clauses **SELECT * FROM log_in_attempts** select all columns from the **log_in_attempts** table and then data is filtered when column **login_time >18** (after hour) and column **success=0** (fail attempt) using the clause **WHERE login_time >'18:00' AND success=0**.

Retrieve login attempts on specific dates

A suspicious event occurred on 2022-05-09, so the team has to investigate login activity on 2022-05-09 or the day before.

In this query, the first two clauses are the same as before to select all data from the **log_in_attempts** table but we changed the filter to **WHERE login_date= '2022-05-09' OR login_date='2022-05-08'** in order to identify the logins attempts occurred on the 2022-05-09 or 2022-05-8.

```
MariaDB [organization]> SELECT *
-> FROM log_in_attempts
-> WHERE login_date= '2022-05-09' OR login_date='2022-05-08';
```

event_id	username	login_date	login_time	country	ip_address	success
1	jrafael	2022-05-09	04:56:27	CAN	192.168.243.140	1
3	dkot	2022-05-09	06:47:41	USA	192.168.151.162	1
4	dkot	2022-05-08	02:00:39	USA	192.168.178.71	0
8	bisles	2022-05-08	01:30:17	US	192.168.119.173	0
12	dkot	2022-05-08	09:11:34	USA	192.168.100.158	1
15	lyamamot	2022-05-09	17:17:26	USA	192.168.183.51	0
24	arusso	2022-05-09	06:49:39	MEXICO	192.168.171.192	1
25	sbaelish	2022-05-09	07:04:02	US	192.168.33.137	1
26	apatel	2022-05-08	17:27:00	CANADA	192.168.123.105	1
28	astrada	2022-05-09	19:28:12	MEXICO	192.168.27.57	0
30	yappiah	2022-05-09	03:22:22	MEX	192.168.124.48	1
32	acook	2022-05-09	02:52:02	CANADA	192.168.142.239	0
36	asundara	2022-05-08	09:00:42	US	192.168.78.151	1
38	sbaelish	2022-05-09	14:40:01	USA	192.168.60.42	1
39	yappiah	2022-05-09	07:56:40	MEXICO	192.168.57.115	1
42	cgriffin	2022-05-09	23:04:05	US	192.168.4.157	0
43	mcouliba	2022-05-08	02:35:34	CANADA	192.168.16.208	0
44	daquino	2022-05-08	07:02:35	CANADA	192.168.168.144	0
47	dkot	2022-05-08	05:06:45	US	192.168.233.24	1
49	asundara	2022-05-08	14:00:01	US	192.168.173.213	0
53	nmason	2022-05-08	11:51:38	CAN	192.168.133.188	1

Retrieve login attempts outside of Mexico

The team also has determined that the incident was originated by someone outside Mexico . These login attempts need to be investigated.

In this query, after selecting all data from the **log_in_attempts** table and considering that the country Mexico is represented with the values "MEX" or "MEXICO" a filter was created using the clause **WHERE NOT country LIKE "MEX%"**. The WHERE NOT clause with the LIKE operator is used to filter information that does not match the pattern "MEX%" in the column **country** of the table and the sign **%** indicates zero or more characters after the string "MEX".

```
MariaDB [organization]> SELECT *
-> FROM log_in_attempts
-> WHERE NOT country LIKE 'MEX%';
```

event_id	username	login_date	login_time	country	ip_address	success
1	jrafael	2022-05-09	04:56:27	CAN	192.168.243.140	1
2	apatel	2022-05-10	20:27:27	CAN	192.168.205.12	0
3	dkot	2022-05-09	06:47:41	USA	192.168.151.162	1
4	dkot	2022-05-08	02:00:39	USA	192.168.178.71	0
5	jrafael	2022-05-11	03:05:59	CANADA	192.168.86.232	0
7	eraab	2022-05-11	01:45:14	CAN	192.168.170.243	1
8	bisles	2022-05-08	01:30:17	US	192.168.119.173	0
10	jrafael	2022-05-12	09:33:19	CANADA	192.168.228.221	0
11	sgilmore	2022-05-11	10:16:29	CANADA	192.168.140.81	0
12	dkot	2022-05-08	09:11:34	USA	192.168.100.158	1
13	mrhah	2022-05-11	09:29:34	USA	192.168.246.135	1
14	sbaelish	2022-05-10	10:20:18	US	192.168.16.99	1
15	lyamamot	2022-05-09	17:17:26	USA	192.168.183.51	0
16	mcouliba	2022-05-11	06:44:22	CAN	192.168.172.189	1
17	pwashing	2022-05-11	02:33:02	USA	192.168.81.89	1
18	pwashing	2022-05-11	19:28:50	US	192.168.66.142	0
19	ihill	2022-05-12	13:09:04	US	192.168.142.245	1

Retrieve employees in Marketing

The security team needs to update the computers for employees of the Marketing department working in the East building.

To gather information about these machines, in this query the statement **SELECT * FROM employees** is used to select all data from table **employees**, then the information is filtered using the clause **WHERE office LIKE 'East%' AND department='Marketing'**. As there are more than one office in the East building, it was used the operator **LIKE** combined with the sign **%** to match a pattern starting with the word **East** followed by zero or more characters. The **AND** operator indicates that the two conditions must be met, people belong to the Marketing department and located in the East building.

```
MariaDB [organization]> SELECT *
-> FROM employees
-> WHERE office LIKE 'East%' AND department='Marketing';
```

employee_id	device_id	username	department	office
1000	a320b137c219	elarson	Marketing	East-170
1052	a192b174c940	jdarosa	Marketing	East-195
1075	x573y883z772	fbautist	Marketing	East-267
1088	k865l965m233	rgosh	Marketing	East-157
1103	NULL	randerss	Marketing	East-460
1156	a184b775c707	dellery	Marketing	East-417
1163	h679i515j339	cwilliam	Marketing	East-216

7 rows in set (0.001 sec)

Retrieve employees in Finance or Sales

A different security Update needs to be implemented in the computers for people working in the Finance or Sales departments so in this query a different filter is created using the clause

WHERE department='Finance' OR department='Sales'. The OR operator is used to filter people who work either in the Finance or Sales department. The output of this query gives us information about these machines.

```
MariaDB [organization]> SELECT *
-> FROM employees
-> WHERE department='Finance' OR department='Sales';
```

employee_id	device_id	username	department	office
1003	d394e816f943	sgilmore	Finance	South-153
1007	h174i497j413	wjaffrey	Finance	North-406
1008	i858j583k571	abernard	Finance	South-170
1009	NULL	lrodriqu	Sales	South-134
1010	k242l212m542	jlansky	Finance	South-109
1011	l748m120n401	drosas	Sales	South-292
1015	p611q262r945	jsoto	Finance	North-271
1017	r550s824t230	jclark	Finance	North-188
1018	s310t540u653	abellmas	Finance	North-403
1022	w237x430y567	arusso	Finance	West-465
1024	y976z753a267	iuduike	Sales	South-215
1025	z381a365b233	jhill	Sales	North-115
1029	d336e475f676	ivelasco	Finance	East-156
1035	j236k303l245	bisles	Sales	South-171
1039	n253o917p623	cjackson	Sales	East-378
1041	p929q222r778	cgriffin	Sales	North-208
1044	s429t157u159	tbarnes	Finance	West-415
1045	t567u844v434	pwashing	Finance	East-115

Retrieve all employees not in IT

Finally the team needs to get information about the machines used for people working in departments different from IT Technology to perform another software update.

A query was created using the filter **WHERE NOT department='Information Technology'**. The WHERE clause with the NOT operator filters data not matching the Information Technology department.

```
MariaDB [organization]> SELECT *
-> FROM employees
-> WHERE NOT department='Information Technology';
```

employee_id	device_id	username	department	office
1000	a320b137c219	elarson	Marketing	East-170
1001	b239c825d303	bmoreno	Marketing	Central-276
1002	c116d593e558	tshah	Human Resources	North-434
1003	d394e816f943	sgilmore	Finance	South-153
1004	e218f877g788	eraab	Human Resources	South-127
1005	f551g340h864	gesparza	Human Resources	South-366
1007	h174i497j413	wjaffrey	Finance	North-406
1008	i858j583k571	abernard	Finance	South-170
1009	NULL	lrodriqu	Sales	South-134
1010	k242l212m542	jlansky	Finance	South-109
1011	l748m120n401	drosas	Sales	South-292
1015	p611q262r945	jsoto	Finance	North-271
1016	q793r736s288	sbaelish	Human Resources	North-229
1017	r550s824t230	jclark	Finance	North-188
1018	s310t540u653	abellmas	Finance	North-403
1020	u899v381w363	arutley	Marketing	South-351
1022	w237x430y567	arusso	Finance	West-465
1024	y976z753a267	iuduike	Sales	South-215
1025	z381a365b233	jhill	Sales	North-115

Summary

In this project it was necessary to create SQL queries to retrieve information from a structured database to help to investigate a security incident involving login attempts and for updating software in different computer networks of the organization.

The queries ,first selected all information from tables **log_in_attempts** and **employees** using the statement **SELECT * FROM** and then the information was filtered according to the required task using the clause **WHERE** with different operators like **NOT, OR, AND, LIKE** and **%**.

As a security professional, having a solid understanding of SQL language is a plus to identify threats like SQL injections attacks, perform penetration testing and help developers to improve the security of their code.