

Use a Query to access column description in SQL

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I am trying to access the Column description properties using the INFORMATION_SCHEMA

22

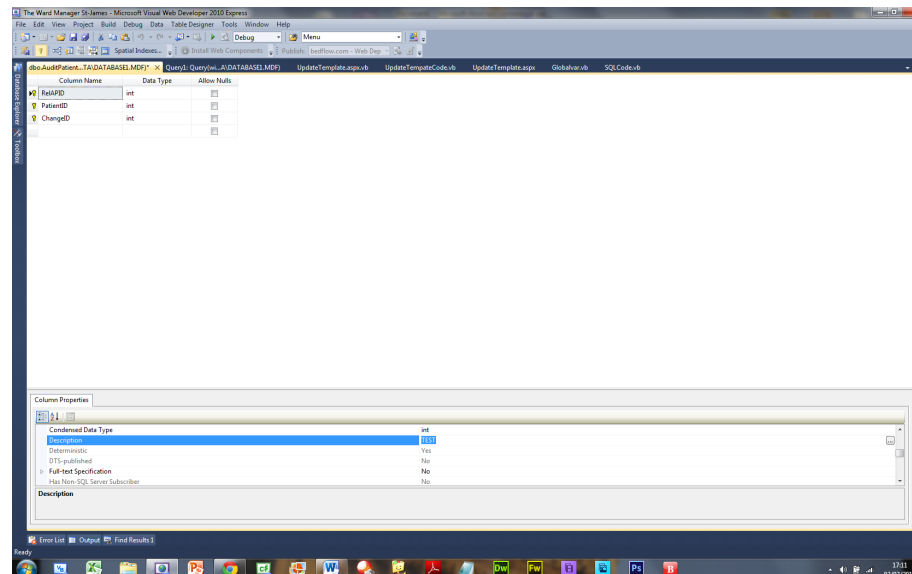


I have created this Query in the past to get the column name but i can not figure out how to get description of the column



11

```
SELECT COLUMN_NAME AS Output, ORDINAL_POSITION
FROM INFORMATION_SCHEMA.COLUMNS
WHERE (TABLE_NAME = @Tablename) AND (ORDINAL_POSITION = @Location)
```



This is where the Description is on the field properties

sql sql-server

edited Mar 2 '13 at 17:13

asked Mar 1 '13 at 15:44



Will Peckham

203 1 4 16

You can also do `sp_helptext yourtablename` – [DevelopmentIsMyPassion](#)
Mar 1 '13 at 15:46

What description do you mean? Where did you see this? – [RBarryYoung](#)
Mar 1 '13 at 16:27

5 Answers



56



If by 'description' you mean 'Description' displayed in SQL Management Studio in design mode, here it is:

```
select
    st.name [Table],
    sc.name [Column],
    sep.value [Description]
from sys.tables st
inner join sys.columns sc on st.object_id = sc.object_id
left join sys.extended_properties sep on st.object_id = sep.major_id
    and sc.column_id = sep.minor_id
    and sep.name = 'MS_Description'

where st.name = @TableName
and sc.name = @ColumnName
```

answered Mar 1 '13 at 16:38

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Incidentally

2,726 2 18 29

What would the best way for me to link the ORDINAL_POSITION to this?
(is it best to use it directly in the query or should i use the
COLUMN_NAME found in the query example i first posted to find the
description?) Thank you very much – [Will Peckham](#) Mar 2 '13 at 17:23

- 1 I believe INFORMATION_SCHEMA.COLUMNS.ORDINAL_POSITION is the same as sys.columns.column_id, so you should be able to use it directly when querying sys.extended_properties (as minor_id) – [Incidentally](#) Mar 2 '13 at 23:13

I am constantly having this VARANT type not supported error. :(and connection got dropped right after it. mssql2012 – [Ben](#) Jan 5 '18 at 12:30

▲
5

If you specifically want to use INFORMATION_SCHEMA (as I was) then the following query should help you obtain the column's description field:

```
SELECT COLUMN_NAME AS [Output]
      ,ORDINAL_POSITION
      ,prop.value AS [COLUMN_DESCRIPTION]
FROM INFORMATION_SCHEMA.TABLES AS tbl
INNER JOIN INFORMATION_SCHEMA.COLUMNS AS col ON col.TABLE_NAME = tbl
INNER JOIN sys.columns AS sc ON sc.object_id = object_id(tbl.table_s
tbl.table_name)
      AND sc.NAME = col.COLUMN_NAME
LEFT JOIN sys.extended_properties prop ON prop.major_id = sc.object_
      AND prop.minor_id = sc.column_id
      AND prop.NAME = 'MS_Description'
WHERE tbl.TABLE_NAME = @TableName
```

answered Jun 7 '17 at 10:19



Kez Floyd

79 1 4

Why the downvote? – [Kez Floyd](#) Jun 12 '17 at 11:54

1 thanks, just what I needed. Not sure why that would be downvoted. – [Rob](#)
Jan 22 '18 at 11:34



The [fn_listextendedproperty](#) system function will do what you're looking for.

2

It's also referred to as `sys.fn_listextendedproperty`.



Syntax is as follows:

```
fn_listextendedproperty (  
    { default | 'property_name' | NULL }  
    , { default | 'level0_object_type' | NULL }  
    , { default | 'level0_object_name' | NULL }  
    , { default | 'level1_object_type' | NULL }  
    , { default | 'level1_object_name' | NULL }  
    , { default | 'level2_object_type' | NULL }  
    , { default | 'level2_object_name' | NULL }  
)
```

Example Usage: Lists extended properties for all columns of the
`ScrapReason` table in the `Production` schema

```
USE AdventureWorks2012;  
GO  
SELECT objtype, objname, name, value  
FROM fn_listextendedproperty (NULL, 'schema', 'Production', 'table',  
    'column', NULL);  
GO
```

`sp_helptext` will not work since it can't be used for tables as per
[TechNet](#).

Displays the definition of a user-defined rule, default, unencrypted Transact-SQL stored procedure, user-defined Transact-SQL function, trigger, computed column, CHECK constraint, view, or system object such as a system stored procedure.

`sp_columns` does not return the `sys.extended_properties.value` field which you're looking for.

`fn_listextendedproperty` is arguably easier to work with and more generic than the query in the accepted answer.

edited Jul 30 '18 at 17:33

answered Apr 17 '14 at 20:55



Dennis T

587 3 18



exec sp_columns @Tablename... That's the system stored procedure that will give you the info.

1



Other than that, here is a post with a lot of good information on the INFORMATION SCHEMA views: [What is the equivalent of 'describe table' in SQL Server?](#)

edited May 23 '17 at 12:17



Community ♦

1 1

answered Mar 1 '13 at 16:16



Chains

9,880 8 38 60



Are you looking for the information in the sys.extended_properties view?

0



<https://stackoverflow.com/a/15008885/1948904>

edited May 23 '17 at 12:09



Community ♦

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answered Mar 1 '13 at 16:37



Drew Leffelman

496 2 8