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Row Number Without Using Order By In SQL Server

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You might have already known that using **ROW_NUMBER()** function is used to generate sequential row numbers for the result set returned from the select query. You have to use ORDER BY clause along with ROW_NUMBER() to generate row numbers. In this article, I will show you a simple trick to generate row number without using ORDER BY clause.

Normally you can use ROW_NUMBER() as in the example below along with ORDER BY.



```
1  SELECT
2      ROW_NUMBER() OVER(ORDER BY Employee_Name ASC) AS Row_Num,
3      Employee_Name
4  FROM MTB_Table_A
5  GO
6
7  /* Result */
8  Row_Num      Employee_Name
9  -----
10  1            Ashley
11  2            Brayden
12  3            Emily
13  4            Emma
14  5            Jacob
15  6            Michael
16  7            Olivia
17  8            Ryan
18  9            Tyler
19  10           William
20
21  (10 row(s) affected)
```

If you try to use the ROW_NUMBER() function without ORDER BY clause, you will get an error as seen below.

```
1  SELECT
2      ROW_NUMBER() OVER() AS Row_Num,
3      Employee_Name
4  FROM MTB_Table_A
5  GO
6
7  /* Result */
8  Msg 4112, Level 15, State 1, Line 445
9  The function 'ROW_NUMBER' must have an OVER clause with ORDER BY.
```

If you do not want to order the result set and still want to generate the row numbers, then you can use a dummy sub query column inside the ORDER BY clause. The dummy query will avoid ordering the result set in any sequence. In this example the dummy sub query I have used is **Select 0**. You can substitute 0 with any number or string value. With this you can generate row number without using ORDER BY clause.

```
1  SELECT
2      ROW_NUMBER() OVER(ORDER BY (Select 0)) AS Row_Num,
3      Employee_Name
4  FROM MTB_Table_A
5  GO
6
7  /* Result */
8  Row_Num      Employee_Name
9  -----
10  1            William
11  2            Jacob
12  3            Tyler
13  4            Emma
14  5            Ryan
15  6            Ashley
16  7            Brayden
17  8            Olivia
18  9            Michael
19  10           Emily
20
21  (10 row(s) affected)
```

```
SELECT
    ROW_NUMBER() OVER(ORDER BY (Select 0)) AS Row_Num,
    Employee_Name
FROM MTB_Table_A
GO
```

.00 %

Results

Row_Num	Employee_Name
1	William
2	Jacob
3	Tyler
4	Emma
5	Ryan
6	Ashley
7	Brayden
8	Olivia
9	Michael
10	Emily

(10 row(s) affected)

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Reference

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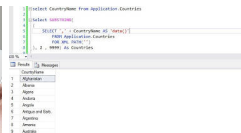


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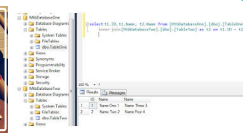
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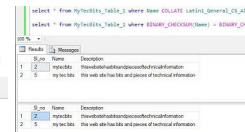
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