# Troubleshooting and Solving Data Join Pitfalls v1.5 | Google Cloud Skills Boost

Qwiklabs : 21-26 minutes

### Overview

BigQuery is Google's fully managed, NoOps, low cost analytics database. With BigQuery you can query terabytes and terabytes of data without having any infrastructure to manage or needing a database administrator. BigQuery uses SQL and can take advantage of the pay-as-you-go model. BigQuery allows you to focus on analyzing data to find meaningful insights.

Joining data tables can provide meaningful insight into your dataset. However, when you join your data, there are common pitfalls that could corrupt your results. This lab focuses on avoiding those pitfalls. Types of joins:

- *Cross join*: combines each row of the first dataset with each row of the second dataset, where every combination is represented in the output.
- *Inner join*: requires that key values exist in both tables for the records to appear in the results table. Records appear in the merge only if there are matches in both tables for the key values.
- *Left join*: Each row in the left table appears in the results, regardless of whether there are matches in the right table.
- *Right join*: the reverse of a left join. Each row in the right table appears in the results, regardless of whether there are matches in the left table.

For more information about joins, see Join Page.

The dataset you'll use is an ecommerce dataset that has millions of Google Analytics records for the Google Merchandise Store loaded into BigQuery. You have a copy of that dataset for this lab and will explore the available fields and row for insights.

For syntax information to help you follow and update the queries, see Standard SQL Query Syntax.

## What you'll do

In this lab, you perform these tasks:

- Use BigQuery to explore a dataset
- Troubleshoot duplicate rows in a dataset
- Create joins between data tables
- Understand each join type

# Setup and requirements

For each lab, you get a new Google Cloud project and set of resources for a fixed time at no cost.

- 1. Sign in to Qwiklabs using an incognito window.
- 2. Note the lab's access time (for example, 1:15:00), and make sure you can finish within that time. There is no pause feature. You can restart if needed, but you have to start at the beginning.
- 3. When ready, click Start lab.
- 4. Note your lab credentials (**Username** and **Password**). You will use them to sign in to the Google Cloud Console.
- 5. Click Open Google Console.
- 6. Click **Use another account** and copy/paste credentials for **this** lab into the prompts. If you use other credentials, you'll receive errors or **incur charges**.
- 7. Accept the terms and skip the recovery resource page.

### **Open BigQuery Console**

1. In the Google Cloud Console, select **Navigation menu > BigQuery**.

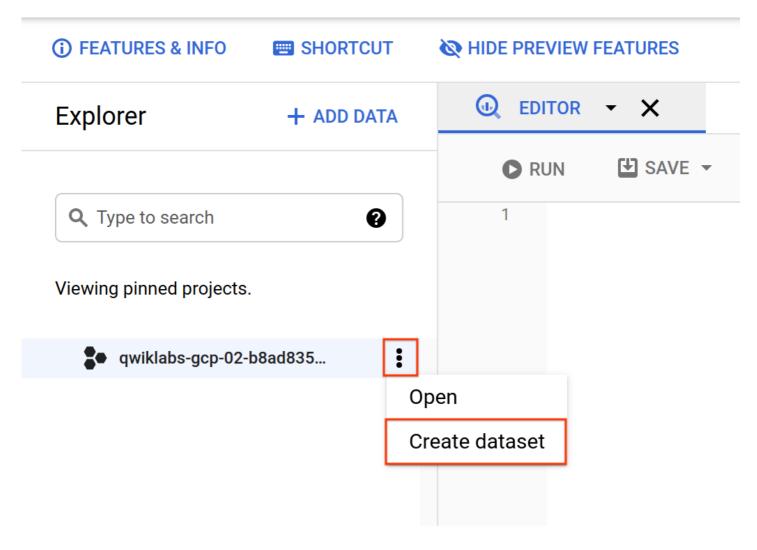
The **Welcome to BigQuery in the Cloud Console** message box opens. This message box provides a link to the quickstart guide and lists UI updates.

2. Click Done.

# Task 1. Create a new dataset to store your tables

In your BigQuery project, create a new dataset titled ecommerce.

1. In the left pane in the **Explorer** section, click on the **View actions** icon next to your *Project ID* and select **Create dataset**.



2. Set the *Dataset ID* to ecommerce. Leave the other options at their default values, and click **Create** dataset.

In the left pane, you see an ecommerce dataset listed under your project.

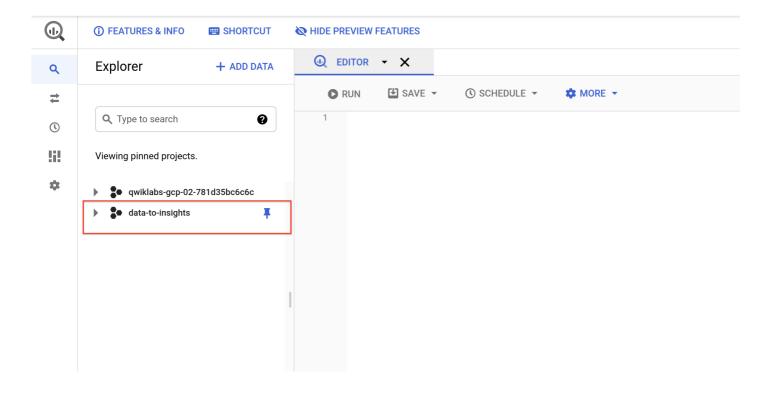
# Task 2. Pin the Lab Project in BigQuery

Scenario: Your team provides you with a new dataset on the inventory stock levels for each of your products for sale on your ecommerce website. You want to become familiar with the products on the website and the fields you could use to potentially join on to other datasets.

The project with the new dataset is **data-to-insights**.

BigQuery public datasets are not displayed by default in the BigQuery web UI. Since **data-to-insights** is a public dataset project, you have to pin it to your Resource Tree:

1. In a new browser window, open the public datasets project.



- 2. Close this browser window.
- 3. Return to and refresh the first BigQuery browser window to refresh the BigQuery web UI.

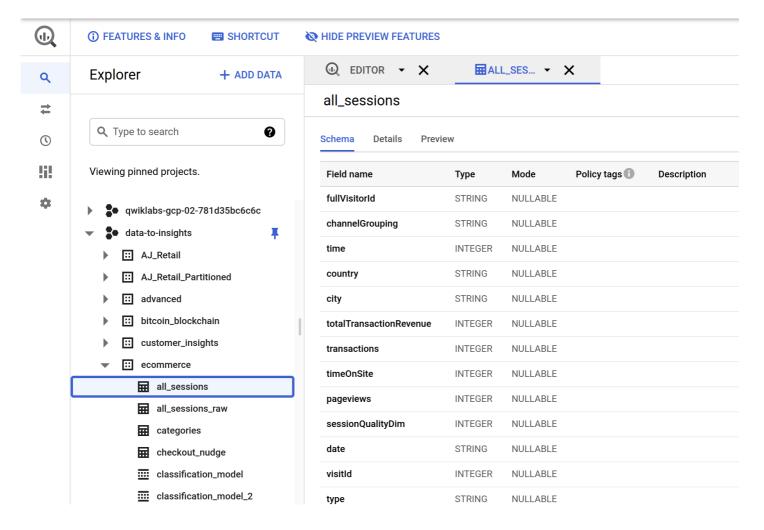
The data-to-insights project is listed in the Resource section.

Note: If the public data-to-insights project doesn't appear in the Explorer panel, then click on + ADD DATA > Star a project by name > Enter project name (data-to-insights) and click on Star.

# Task 3. Examine the fields

You want to become familiar with the products on the website and the fields you could use to create queries to analyze the dataset.

- 1. In the left pane in the Explorer section, navigate to data-to-insights > ecommerce > all\_sessions\_raw.
- 2. On the right, click the **Schema** tab to see the Fields and information about each field.



Task 4. Identify a key field in your ecommerce dataset

Examine the products and fields further. You want to become familiar with the products on the website and the fields you could use to potentially join on to other datasets.

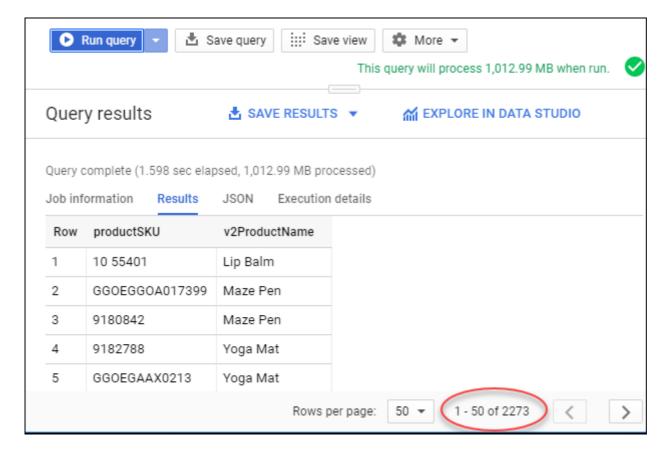
#### **Examine the records**

In this section, you find how many product names and product SKUs are on your website and whether either one of those fields is unique.

1. Find how many product names and product SKUs are on the website. **Copy and paste** the below query in the query **EDITOR**:

#standardSQL # how many products are on the website? SELECT DISTINCT productSKU, v2ProductName FROM `data-to-insights.ecommerce.all\_sessions\_raw`

- 2. Click RUN.
- 3. Look at the pagination results in the web UI for the total number of records returned, which in this case is 2,273 products and SKUs.



But...do the results mean that there are 2,273 unique product SKUs?

4. Copy and paste the below query to list the number of distinct SKUs are listed using DISTINCT:

#standardSQL # find the count of unique SKUs SELECT DISTINCT productSKU FROM `data-to-insights.ecommerce.all\_sessions\_raw`

#### 5. Click RUN.

The number of distinct SKUs are 1,909.

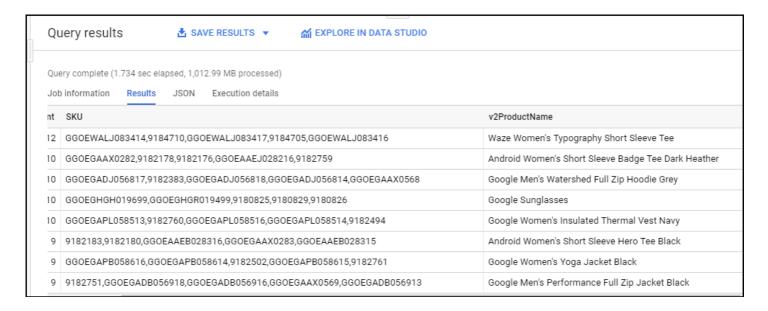
Hmmm...you have 1,909 distinct SKUs which is less than the 2,273 number for total number of products on the website. The first results probably contain products with duplicate SKUs.

- 6. Take an even closer look at the records. Determine which products have more than one SKU and which SKUs have more than one product.
- 7. **Copy and paste** the below query to determine if some product names have more than one SKU. Notice ou use the STRING\_AGG() function to aggregate all the product SKUs that are associated with one product name.

#standardSQL # how can we find the products with more than 1 sku? SELECT DISTINCT COUNT(DISTINCT productSKU) AS SKU\_count, STRING\_AGG(DISTINCT productSKU LIMIT 5) AS SKU, v2ProductName FROM `data-to-insights.ecommerce.all\_sessions\_raw` WHERE productSKU IS NOT NULL GROUP BY v2ProductName HAVING SKU\_count > 1 ORDER BY SKU\_count DESC # product name is not unique (expected for variants)

### 8. Click RUN.

Results:



Do some product names have more than one SKU? Look at the query results to confirm.

Answer: Yes

It may also be true that one product name be associated with more than one SKU. This can happen due to variation. For example, one product name (e.g. T-Shirt) can have multiple product variants like color, size, etc. You would expect one product to have many SKUs.

### 9. Copy and paste the below query to find out:

#standardSQL SELECT DISTINCT COUNT(DISTINCT v2ProductName) AS product\_count, STRING\_AGG(DISTINCT v2ProductName LIMIT 5) AS product\_name, productSKU FROM `data-to-insights.ecommerce.all\_sessions\_raw` WHERE v2ProductName IS NOT NULL GROUP BY productSKU HAVING product\_count > 1 ORDER BY product\_count DESC # SKU is not unique (indicates data quality issues)

#### 10. Click RUN.

Query results		å SAVE RESULTS ▼					
uery com	plete (1.859 se	ec elapsed, 1,012.99 MB processed)					
ob inform	ation Resu	Its JSON Execution details					
42	2	Android Men's Heavyweight Long Sleeve Badge Tee Black, Android Heavyweight Long Sleeve Badge Tee Black	GGOEAAEB031214				
43	2	SPF-15 Lip Balm,SPF-15 Slim & Slender Lip Balm	9180777				
44	2	Gel Roller Pen,Bic Intensity Clic Gel Pen	GGOEGOAQ015999				
15	2	Google Metallic Notebook Set,Blue Metallic Textured Spiral Notebook Set	GGOEGOLC014299				
16	2	Google Collapsible Pet Bowl,Collapsible Pet Bowl	9180872				
17	2	Google Women's Vintage Hero Tee Platinum,Google Women's Short Sleeve V-Neck Tee Stone	GGOEGALJ034417				
18	2	Google Heavyweight Long Sleeve Hero Tee Navy,Google Men's Heavyweight Long Sleeve Hero Tee Navy	GGOEGAAX0311				
19	2	Large Recycled Journal/Pen Combo,Recycled Paper Journal Set	GGOEGAAX0081				
50	2	Google 3/4 Sleeve Raglan Henley Grey,Google Men's 3/4 Sleeve Raglan Henley Grey	GGOEGAEJ030715				

**Question:** When you look at the query results, are there single SKU values with more than one product name associated? What do you notice about those product names?

**Answer:** Yes, it looks like there are quite a few SKUs that have more than one product name. Several of the product names appear to be closely related with a few misspellings (e.g. Waterproof Gear Bag vs Waterproof Gear Bag).

You see why this could be an issue in the next section.

# Task 5. Pitfall: non-unique key

A SKU is designed to uniquely identify one product and will be the basis of your join condition when you join against other tables. Having a non-unique key can cause serious data issues.

1. Write a query to identify all the product names for the SKU 'GGOEGPJC019099'.

Possible solution:

#standardSQL # multiple records for this SKU SELECT DISTINCT v2ProductName, productSKU FROM `data-to-insights.ecommerce.all sessions raw` WHERE productSKU = 'GGOEGPJC019099'

#### 2. Click RUN.

v2ProductName	productSKU
7" Dog Frisbee	GGOEGPJC019099
7" Dog Frisbee	GGOEGPJC019099
Google 7-inch Dog Flying Disc Blue	GGOEGPJC019099

From the query results, it looks like there are three different names for the same product. In this example, there is a special character in one name and a slightly different name for another:

### Joining website data against your product inventory list

See the impact of joining on a dataset with multiple products for a single SKU. First, explore the product inventory dataset (the products table) to see if this SKU is unique there.

1. Copy and paste the below query:

#standardSQL # join in another table # products (has inventory) SELECT \* FROM `data-to-insights.ecommerce.products` WHERE SKU = 'GGOEGPJC019099'

2. Click RUN.

### Join pitfall: Unintentional many-to-one SKU relationship

Next, join the inventory dataset against your website product names and SKUs so you can have the inventory stock level associated with each product for sale on the website.

1. Copy and paste the below query:

#standardSQL SELECT DISTINCT website.v2ProductName, website.productSKU, inventory.stockLevel FROM `data-to-insights.ecommerce.all\_sessions\_raw` AS website JOIN `data-to-insights.ecommerce.products` AS inventory ON website.productSKU = inventory.SKU WHERE productSKU = 'GGOEGPJC019099'

2. Click RUN.

What happens when you join the website table and the product inventory table on SKU? Do you now have inventory stock levels for the product?

Answer: Yes but the stockLevel is showing three times (one for each record)!

Next, run a query that shows the total stock level for each item in inventory.

3. Copy and paste the below query:

#standardSQL SELECT productSKU, SUM(stockLevel) AS total\_inventory FROM ( SELECT DISTINCT website.v2ProductName, website.productSKU, inventory.stockLevel FROM `data-to-insights.ecommerce.all\_sessions\_raw` AS website JOIN `data-to-insights.ecommerce.products` AS inventory ON website.productSKU = inventory.SKU WHERE productSKU = 'GGOEGPJC019099' ) GROUP BY productSKU

4. Click RUN.

# Task 6. Join pitfall solution: use distinct SKUs before joining

What are the options to solve your triple counting dilemma? First, you need to only select distinct SKUs from the website before joining on other datasets.

 Write a query to return the count of distinct productSKU from data-toinsights.ecommerce.all\_sessions\_raw.

Possible solution:

#standardSQL SELECT COUNT(DISTINCT website.productSKU) AS distinct\_sku\_count FROM `data-to-insights.ecommerce.all\_sessions\_raw` AS website

Answer: 1,909 distinct SKUs from the website dataset

### Join pitfall: Losing data records after a join

Now you're ready to join against your product inventory dataset again.

1. Copy and paste the below query:

#standardSQL SELECT DISTINCT website.productSKU FROM `data-to-insights.ecommerce.all\_sessions\_raw` AS website JOIN `data-to-insights.ecommerce.products` AS inventory ON website.productSKU = inventory.SKU

2. Click RUN.

How many records were returned? All 1,909 distinct SKUs?

Answer: No, just 1,090 records

You lost 819 SKUs after joining the datasets, investigate by adding more specificity in your fields.

3. Copy and paste the below query:

#standardSQL # pull ID fields from both tables SELECT DISTINCT website.productSKU AS website\_SKU, inventory.SKU AS inventory\_SKU FROM `data-to-insights.ecommerce.all\_sessions\_raw` AS website JOIN `data-to-insights.ecommerce.products` AS inventory ON website.productSKU = inventory.SKU # IDs are present in both tables, how can we dig deeper?

#### 4. Click RUN.

It appears the SKUs are present in both of those datasets after the join.

#### Join pitfall solution: Selecting the correct join type and filtering for NULL

The default JOIN type is an INNER JOIN which returns records only if there is a match on both the left and the right tables that are joined.

1. **Rewrite the previous query to use a different join type** to include all records from the website table, regardless of whether there is a match on a product inventory SKU record. Join type options: INNER JOIN, LEFT JOIN, RIGHT JOIN, FULL JOIN, CROSS JOIN

#### Possible solution:

#standardSQL # the secret is in the JOIN type # pull ID fields from both tables SELECT DISTINCT website.productSKU AS website\_SKU, inventory.SKU AS inventory\_SKU FROM `data-to-insights.ecommerce.all\_sessions\_raw` AS website LEFT JOIN `data-to-insights.ecommerce.products` AS inventory ON website.productSKU = inventory.SKU

#### 2. Click RUN.

You have successfully used a LEFT JOIN to return all of the original 1,909 website SKUs in your results.

How many SKUs are missing from your product inventory set?

3. **Write a query** to filter on NULL values from the inventory table.

#### Possible solution:

#standardSQL # find product SKUs in website table but not in product inventory table SELECT DISTINCT website.productSKU AS website\_SKU, inventory.SKU AS inventory\_SKU FROM `data-to-insights.ecommerce.all\_sessions\_raw` AS website LEFT JOIN `data-to-insights.ecommerce.products` AS inventory ON website.productSKU = inventory.SKU WHERE inventory.SKU IS NULL

- 4. Click RUN.
- 5. **Copy and paste** the below query to confirm using one of the specific SKUs from the website dataset:

#standardSQL # you can even pick one and confirm SELECT \* FROM `data-to-insights.ecommerce.products` WHERE SKU = 'GGOEGATJ060517' # query returns zero results

#### 6. Click RUN.

Why might the product inventory dataset be missing SKUs?

Answer: Unfortunately, there is no easy answer. It is most likely a business-related question:

- Some SKUs could be digital products that you don't store in inventory
- Old products you sold in past website orders are no longer offered in current inventory
- Legitimate missing data from inventory and should be tracked

Are there any products are in the product inventory dataset but missing from the website?

7. Write a query using a different join type to investigate.

#### Possible solution:

#standardSQL # reverse the join # find records in website but not in inventory SELECT DISTINCT website.productSKU AS website\_SKU, inventory.SKU AS inventory\_SKU FROM `data-to-insights.ecommerce.all\_sessions\_raw` AS website RIGHT JOIN `data-to-insights.ecommerce.products` AS inventory ON website.productSKU = inventory.SKU WHERE website.productSKU IS NULL

#### 8. Click RUN.

Answer: Yes. There are two product SKUs missing from the website dataset

Next, add more fields from the product inventory dataset for more details.

9. Copy and paste the below query:

#standardSQL # what are these products? # add more fields in the SELECT STATEMENT SELECT DISTINCT website.productSKU AS website\_SKU, inventory.\* FROM `data-to-insights.ecommerce.all\_sessions\_raw` AS website RIGHT JOIN `data-to-insights.ecommerce.productS` AS inventory ON website.productSKU = inventory.SKU WHERE website.productSKU IS NULL

#### 10. Click RUN.

Why would the below products be missing from the ecommerce website dataset?

Row	website_SKU	sku	name	orderedQuantity	stockLevel	restockingLeadTime	sentimentScore	sentimentMagnitude
1	null	GGOBJGOWUSG69402	USB wired soundbar - in store only	10	15	2	1.0	1.0
2	null	GGADFBSBKS42347	PC gaming speakers	0	100	1	null	null

#### Possible answers:

- One new product (no orders, no sentimentScore) and one product that is "in store only"
- Another is a new product with 0 orders

Why would the new product not show up on your website dataset?

• The website dataset is past order transactions by customers brand new products which have never been sold won't show up in web analytics until they're viewed or purchased

**Note:** You typically will not see RIGHT JOINs in production queries. You would simply just do a LEFT JOIN and switch the ordering of the tables.

What if you wanted one query that listed all products missing from either the website or inventory?

11. Write a query using a different join type.

Possible solution:

#standardSQL SELECT DISTINCT website.productSKU AS website\_SKU, inventory.SKU AS inventory\_SKU FROM `data-to-insights.ecommerce.all\_sessions\_raw` AS website FULL JOIN `data-to-insights.ecommerce.products` AS inventory ON website.productSKU = inventory.SKU WHERE website.productSKU IS NULL OR inventory.SKU IS NULL

#### 12. Click RUN.

You have your 819 + 2 = 821 product SKUs

LEFT JOIN + RIGHT JOIN = FULL JOIN which returns all records from both tables regardless of matching join keys. You then filter out where you have mismatches on either side

# Join pitfall: Unintentional Cross Join

Not knowing the relationship between data table keys (1:1, 1:N, N:N) can return unexpected results and also significantly reduce query performance.

The last join type is the CROSS JOIN.

Create a new table with a site-wide discount percent that you want to apply across products in the Clearance category.

Replacing the table named qwiklabs-\*\*\*.

1. Copy and paste the below query:

#standardSQL CREATE OR REPLACE TABLE ecommerce.site\_wide\_promotion AS SELECT .05 AS discount;

#### 2. Click RUN.

In the left pane, site\_wide\_promotion is now listed in the Resource section under qwiklabs-gcp-xxx > ecommerce.

3. Copy and paste the below query to find out how many products are in clearance:

SELECT DISTINCT productSKU, v2ProductCategory, discount FROM `data-to-insights.ecommerce.all\_sessions\_raw` AS website CROSS JOIN ecommerce.site\_wide\_promotion WHERE v2ProductCategory LIKE '%Clearance%'

#### 4. Click RUN.

**Note**: In the syntax there is no join condition (e.g. ON or USING) for a CROSS JOIN. The field is simply multiplied against the first dataset or .05 discount across all items.

Let's see the impact of unintentionally adding more than one record in the discount table.

5. Copy and paste the below query to insert two more records into the promotion table:

#standardSQL INSERT INTO ecommerce.site\_wide\_promotion (discount) VALUES (.04), (.03);

#### 6. Click RUN.

Next let's view the data values in the promotion table.

#### 7. Copy and paste the below query:

#standardSQL SELECT discount FROM ecommerce.site\_wide\_promotion

#### 8. Click RUN.

What happens when you apply the discount again across all 82 clearance products?

### 9. Copy and paste the below query:

#standardSQL # now what happens: SELECT DISTINCT productSKU, v2ProductCategory, discount FROM `data-to-insights.ecommerce.all\_sessions\_raw` AS website CROSS JOIN ecommerce.site\_wide\_promotion WHERE v2ProductCategory LIKE '%Clearance%'

#### 10. Click RUN.

How many products are returned?

Answer: Instead of 82, you now have 246 returned which is more records than your original table started with.

Let's investigate the underlying cause by examining one product SKU.

### 11. Copy and paste the below query:

#standardSQL SELECT DISTINCT productSKU, v2ProductCategory, discount FROM `data-to-insights.ecommerce.all\_sessions\_raw` AS website CROSS JOIN ecommerce.site\_wide\_promotion WHERE v2ProductCategory LIKE '%Clearance%' AND productSKU = 'GGOEGOLC013299'

#### 12. Click RUN.

What was the impact of the CROSS JOIN?

#### Answer:

Since there are 3 discount codes to cross join on, you are multiplying the original dataset by 3.

**Note:** This behavior isn't limited to cross joins, with a normal join you can unintentionally cross join when the data relationships are many-to-many this can easily result in returning millions or even billions of records unintentionally.

The solution is to know your data relationships before you join and don't assume keys are unique.

# Task 7. Deduplicating rows

At the start of the lab you wrote a query that showed multiple product names for a single SKU. Deduplicating records like this is a common skill for data analysts. Examine one way you can select only one product per SKU.

First, start with the query to show all product names per SKU.

#### 1. Copy and paste the below query:

#standardSQL # recall the earlier query that showed multiple product\_names for each SKU SELECT DISTINCT COUNT(DISTINCT v2ProductName) AS product\_count, STRING\_AGG(DISTINCT v2ProductName LIMIT 5) AS product\_name, productSKU FROM `data-to-insights.ecommerce.all\_sessions\_raw` WHERE v2ProductName IS NOT NULL GROUP BY productSKU HAVING product\_count > 1 ORDER BY product\_count DESC

#### 2. Click RUN.

Since most of the product names are extremely similar (and you want to map a single SKU to a single product), write a query to only choose one of the product\_names. You will be using this StackOverflow post by Felipe Hoffa as inspiration.

#### 3. Copy and paste the below query:

#standardSQL # take the one name associated with a SKU WITH product\_query AS ( SELECT DISTINCT v2ProductName, productSKU FROM `data-to-insights.ecommerce.all\_sessions\_raw` WHERE v2ProductName IS NOT NULL ) SELECT k.\* FROM ( # aggregate the products into an array and # only take 1 result SELECT ARRAY\_AGG(x LIMIT 1)[OFFSET(0)] k FROM product\_query x GROUP BY productSKU # this is the field you want deduplicated );

#### 4. Click RUN.

You have successfully deduplicated the product names for each SKU. Experiment with the above query and your own datasets to deduplicate your fields before joining against other datasets.

# Task 8. Test your understanding

# Congratulations!

You've concluded this lab and worked through some serious SQL join pitfalls by identifying duplicate records and knowing when to use each type of JOIN. Nice work!

# **End your lab**

When you have completed your lab, click **End Lab**. Google Cloud Skills Boost removes the resources you've used and cleans the account for you.

You will be given an opportunity to rate the lab experience. Select the applicable number of stars, type a comment, and then click **Submit**.

The number of stars indicates the following:

- 1 star = Very dissatisfied
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