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Lab 4 – Question 8

Check constraints are methods by which one may limit the values that can be placed in a certain field of a table. The main benefit of check constraints is that they allow the database creator to ensure that a given field will only be populated with data that makes sense for what the field is populated by. This gives a database a massive advantage in that it makes it harder for a person to insert data that could potentially throw errors depending on how the database is queried by users. An example of a good check constraint would be that the field for a quantity of an item cannot have values below 0. Another example of a good check constraint would be that a percentage field cannot contain values below 0 or exceeding 100. An example of a poor use of check constraints would be to prevent an age field from having values above 100. The difference between these examples is that while both do indeed protect the database from being populated with nonsensical data, the age example is somewhat too restrictive in that it is very possible for a person's age to exceed 100, even if it is an uncommon occurrence. Therefore, this particular check constraint would not be ideal because legitimate data could fall outside of this restriction.