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- The foreign key identifies a column or a set of columns in one (referencing) table that refers to a column or set of columns in another (referenced) table. We call it a referential constraint between two tables.
- The columns in the referenced table must be a primary key or unique key.
- The values in one row of the referencing columns must occur in a single row in the referenced table.
- Most of the time, a foreign key reflects a one to many relationship.





Referential Actions

- CASCADE: A foreign key with a cascade delete means that if a record in the parent table is deleted, then the corresponding records in the child table will automatically be deleted.
- RESTRICT: A row in the referenced table cannot be updated or deleted if dependent rows still exist. In that case, no data change is even attempted.
- NO ACTION: The UPDATE or DELETE SQL statement is executed on the referenced table only if none of the referential relationships is violated. This is different from the RESTRICT, which does not allow UPDATE or DELETE in any case.
- SET NULL or SET DEFAULT: The foreign key values in the referencing row are set to NULL or DEFAULT VALUE when the referenced row is updated or deleted.



Artificial Key

- An artificial key is used by the DBMS system to identify an instance of a relation. It is not derived from any application data in the database.
- Using an artificial key as the primary key insulates the database relationships from changes in data values or database design (making your database more agile) and guarantees uniqueness.
- An artificial key is also called a surrogate key.





Advantages of using an artificial key

- Database applications won't lose their "handle" on the row because the data changes;
- Many database systems do not support cascading updates of keys across foreign key constraints. This results in difficulty in modifying the primary key data. Using an artificial key may avoid the problem.
- Artificial keys are composed of a compact data type, such as four-byte integers. This allows the database to query faster than using primary keys consisting of multiple columns or a long attribute, such as an email address.



Constraints on Attributes and Tuples

- When we create a database table, we can declare two kinds of constraints:
 - A constraint on a single attribute.
 - A constraint on a tuple as a whole.
- Not-Null constraints.
- CHECK constraints (not supported in MySQL yet):

CREATE TABLE MovieStar (

name char(30) PRIMARY KEY,

gender char(1),

CHECK(gender='F' or name NOT LIKE 'Ms. %')

);





























