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Oracle / PLSQL: || Operator

This Oracle tutorial explains how to use the Oracle/PLSQL `||` concatenate operator with syntax and examples.

Description

The Oracle/PLSQL `||` operator allows you to concatenate 2 or more strings together.

Syntax

The syntax for the `||` operator in Oracle/PLSQL is:

```
string1 || string2 [ || string_n ]
```

Parameters or Arguments

string1
    The first string to concatenate.

string2
    The second string to concatenate.

string_n
    Optional. The nth string to concatenate.

Returns

The `||` operator returns a string value.

Applies To

The `||` operator can be used in the following versions of Oracle/PLSQL:

- Oracle 12c, Oracle 11g, Oracle 10g, Oracle 9i, Oracle 8i

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Example

Let's look at some concatentaion examples and explore how to use the `||` operator in Oracle/PLSQL.

For example:

```
'Tech on' || ' the Net'
Result: 'Tech on the Net'

'a' || 'b' || 'c' || 'd'
Result: 'abcd'
```

Concatenate Space Characters

When you are concatenating values together, you might want to add space characters to separate your concatenated values. Otherwise, you might get a long string with the concatenated values running together. This makes it very difficult to read the results.

Let's look at an easy example.

We can concatenate a space character using the `||` operator.

For example:

```
SELECT 'Dave' || ' ' || 'Anderson'
FROM dual;
Result: 'Dave Anderson'
```

In this example, we have used the `||` operator to add a space character between the values *Dave* and *Anderson*. This will prevent our values from being squished together.

Instead our result would appear as follows:

```
'Dave Anderson'
```

You would more commonly use the `||` operator to concatenate a space character when you are concatentating multiple fields together.

For example:

```
SELECT first_name || ' ' || last_name AS customer_name
FROM customers;
```

This example would return a result set with one column that consisted of the *first_name* and *last_name* fields (separated by a space) from the *customers* table. The column in the result set would be aliased as *customer_name*.

Concatenate Single Quotes

Since the `||` operator will concatenate string values that are enclosed in single quotes, it isn't straight forward how to add a single quote character within the result of the concatenated string.

Let's look at a fairly easy example that shows how to add a single quote to the resulting string using the `||` operator.

For example:

```
SELECT 'Let''s' || ' learn Oracle'
```
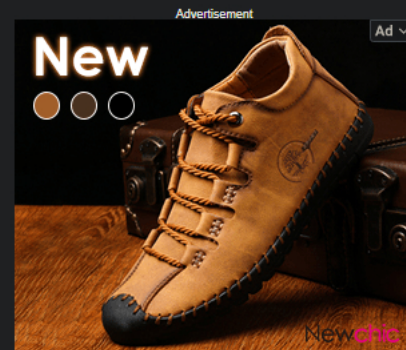
```
FROM dual;
Result: 'Let's learn Oracle'
```

Since our string values are enclosed in single quotes, we use 2 additional single quotes within the surrounding quotes to represent a single quotation mark in the resulting concatenated string.

If you wanted to separate out the single quote from the other string values, you could also rewrite this query as follows:

```
SELECT 'Let' || '''' || 's' || ' learn Oracle'
FROM dual;
Result: 'Let's learn Oracle'
```

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