

I spend the bulk of my time working with Oracle database software and, more to the point, with people who use this software. Over the last 18 years, I've worked on many projects—successful ones as well as complete failures—and if I were to encapsulate my experiences into a few broad statements, they would be

- * An application built around the database—dependent on the database—will succeed or fail based on how it uses the database. Additionally, in my experience, all applications are built around databases. I cannot think of a single useful application that does not store data persistently somewhere.
- * Applications come, applications go. The *data*, however, lives forever. In the long term, the goal is not about building applications; it really is about using the data underneath these applications.
- * A development team needs at its heart a core of database-savvy developers who are responsible for ensuring the database logic is sound and the system is built to perform from day one. Tuning after the fact (tuning after deployment) typically means you did not give serious thought to these concerns during development.

These may seem like surprisingly obvious statements, but I have found that too many people approach the database as if it were a *black box*—something that they don't need to know about. Maybe they have a SQL generator that they figure will save them from the hardship of having to learn the SQL language. Maybe they figure they will just use the database like a flat file and do keyed reads. Whatever they figure, I can tell you that thinking along these lines is most certainly misguided: you simply cannot get away with not understanding the database and how best to work with it.

That is where this book comes in – it provides a balanced view of how a Java programmer can approach the Oracle database and use it successfully. Where and when database features such as stored procedures make sense – and how they fit in. The author explains how things work – which leads to an understanding of when to use a particular feature; and as importantly when *not* to use a particular feature.

That is what I like best about this book – it explains how things work. It does not just prescribe methods of doing something, it explains in detail the inner workings. With this knowledge you yourself will be able to make the judgment call as to whether a particular feature of Oracle is something you should or should not be using in your application. Additionally - the exposure to these features, many of which you might not otherwise be exposed to – is important as well. If you don't know something exists – you will never use it.

If you are a Java programmer looking to exploit Oracle, or a database developer looking to exploit Java – this is the book for you.

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