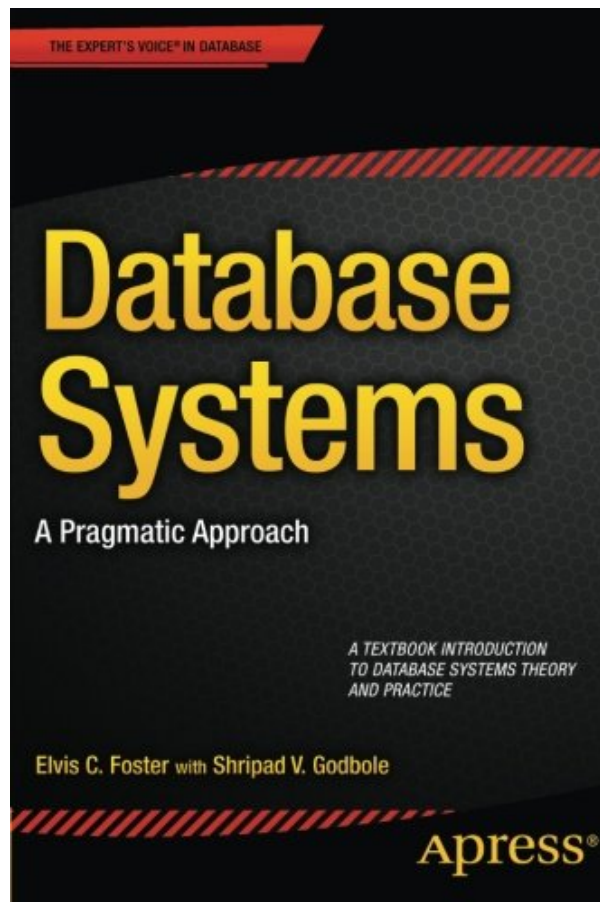


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About the Author

Elvis C. Foster is Associate Professor of Computer Science at Keene State College, New Hampshire. He holds a Bachelor of Science (BSc) in Computer Science and Electronics, as well as a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Computer Science (specializing in strategic information systems and database systems) from University of the West Indies, Mona Jamaica. Dr. Foster has over 25 years of combined experience as a software engineer, database expert, information technology executive and consultant, and computer science educator. He has had the favorable experience of being involved with the design and/or development of software systems for various medium-sized and large organizations, including the central bank of his own country. He has lectured at the tertiary level in three different countries, including the United States, where he now resides. He has produced many outstanding computer science and information technology professionals. Many of them have excelled at graduate school; others have gone straight to industry after their first degree; the thorough grounding acquired often serves them well, whether it be in leading software engineering enterprises around the world, or in other chosen vocations. His textbooks draw from that experience.

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Database Systems: A Pragmatic Approach is a classroom textbook for use by students who are learning about relational databases, and the professors who teach them. It discusses the database as an essential component of a software system, as well as a valuable, mission critical corporate resource. The book is based on lecture notes that have been tested and proven over several years, with outstanding results. It also exemplifies mastery of the technique of combining and balancing theory with practice, to give students their best chance at success. Upholding his aim for brevity, comprehensive coverage, and relevance, author Elvis C. Foster's practical and methodical discussion style gets straight to the salient issues, and avoids unnecessary fluff as well as an overkill of theoretical calculations.

The book discusses concepts, principles, design, implementation, and management issues of databases. Each chapter is organized systematically into brief, reader-friendly sections, with itemization of the important points to be remembered. It adopts a methodical and pragmatic approach to solving database systems problems. Diagrams and illustrations also sum up the salient points to enhance learning. Additionally, the book includes a number of Foster's original methodologies that add clarity and creativity to the database modeling and design experience while making a novel contribution to the discipline. Everything combines to make Database Systems: A Pragmatic Approach an excellent textbook for students, and an excellent resource on theory for the practitioner.

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engineering enterprises around the world, or in other chosen vocations. His textbooks draw from that experience.

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Fundamentally Solid

By Marlon A. Moncrieffe

This book is an excellent resource that delves into both the science and fundamental principles that are the underpinning of database systems, as well as practical hands-on examples of these principles applied in common software paradigms. In doing so the book lives up to its title, while not short-changing the reader on essential information. The reader's attention is directed to the most salient points of the topic, so that a fundamental understanding is accomplished without being overwhelmed.

The choice to present the various facets of database systems in the context of software engineering rather than as a stand-alone topic was a wise departure from other texts which deal with the topic in-depth but in a vacuum. Both students and practicing engineers will be grateful for the meaningful examples that demonstrate the concept at hand.

The content is presented in the form of conversational chapters, twenty-five in all, grouped into five divisions. As is typical from this author the appendices are nearly as rich in information as the regular text of the book; the reader will get more than they bargained for while reviewing the topics covered there.

Just about every facet of database systems is covered, suiting it very well to be used as both a study guide and a reference manual. Of special note is the section on relational calculus, which is covered particularly well in this book. Along with efficient database design, relational calculus remains one of the most important yet least understood aspects of database systems among practicing professionals.

As with other books from Foster, the content is both experientially relevant and academically rigorous. The result is a fine text that represents a valuable contribution to the field.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful.

I've said in the past that one of the best things I ever did was to get a college ...

By Brian S. Peasland

I've said in the past that one of the best things I ever did was to get a college degree in my chosen field, Computer Science, specifically focusing on database systems. When in college, I didn't learn "Oracle" or "SQL Server" per se. Rather, I was taught the fundamentals on how database systems work. My first DBA job was working with Oracle. Later on, I was asked to learn SQL Server. The transition was easy for me because I had a solid foundation and a good understanding of database fundamentals. At one point, I was an instructor at a local college and I taught a database course focusing on Oracle administration. This college billed itself as providing graduates that are "business ready". Students from this institution learned Oracle and Cisco, etc. I soon found out that their students never learned how computer systems really work. So their graduates could help a company that used Oracle but not a company that used SQL Server or DB2. Quite simply, the students had no solid foundation to work from. I'm also amazed at the number of database application developers who don't know what Third Normal Form is yet they create database tables. It seems like people aren't learning the fundamentals like they used to.

I mention all of the above as reasons for buying this book. This book is for anyone that needs to understand how database systems work, to learn a solid database foundation, regardless of the database vendor. Yet the book does detail information on Oracle, SQL Server, DB2 and more. If you're an IT professional who works

with relational database systems, then get this book to improve your foundation of how relational databases work.

I found Part B of the book to be very refreshing. It was good to brush up on Normal Forms, Relationships defined, surrogate keys, ERD's and UML. I've always felt that Relational Algebra and Relational Calculus should be required for anyone to help understand how and why SQL works and the authors discuss this quite well in Chapters 7 and 8. Part C covers SQL statements, the lingua franca of any relational database professional. Part D covers different database systems: Oracle, SQL Server, DB2, and MySQL. I thought that each chapter was light and could have been expanded further, but they do serve as introductory information. Discussions of the different RDBMS platforms often starts flame wars so maybe that's why the authors didn't provide further detail. Appendix B, discussing tree structures, I felt should not have been an appendix. Its material is too important for all Database Administrators. Yet the material is here so please give it a read.

All in all, this is a great book for any relational database professional. This will help provide a solid foundation for career success. Armed with the information in this book, one should be able to work with any RDBMS platform and understand, at a conceptual level, what the database engine is trying to achieve.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

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