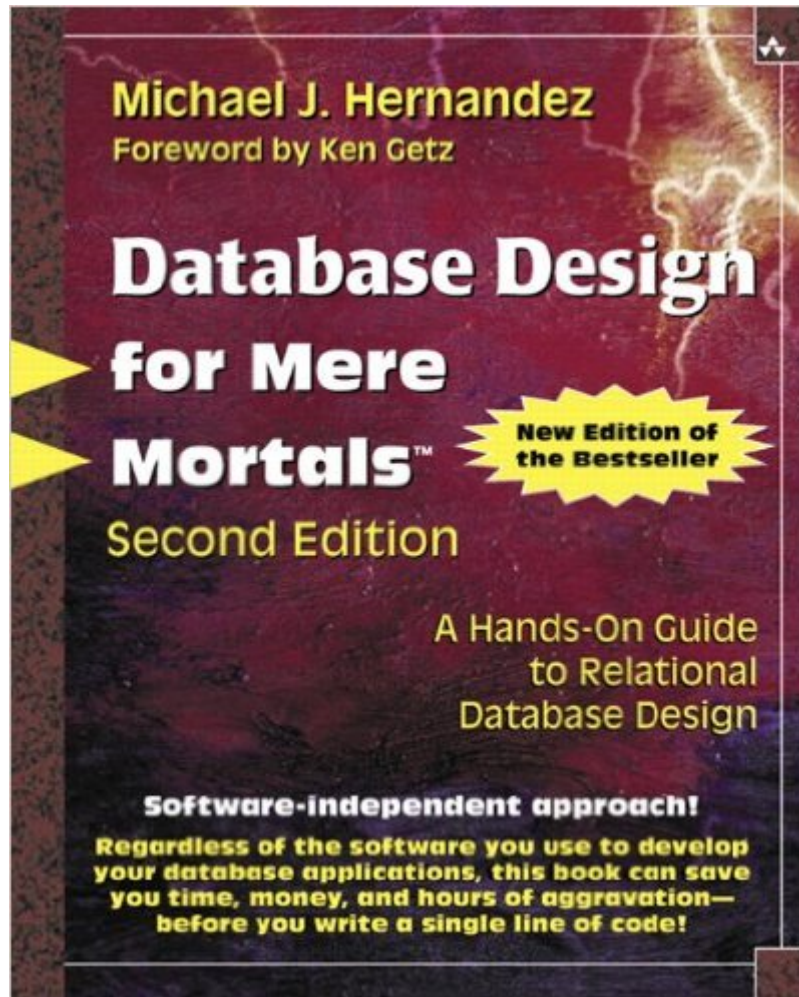# Database Design For Mere Mortals: A Hands-On Guide To Relational Database Design (2nd Edition)

Synopsis

â œThis book takes the somewhat daunting process of database design and breaks it into completely manageable and understandable components. Mikeâ ™s approach whilst simple is completely professional, and I can recommend this book to any novice database designer.â •
Â Â Â Â Â â "Sandra Barker, Lecturer, University of South Australia, Australia â œDatabases are a critical infrastructure technology for information systems and todayâ ™s business. Mike Hernandez has written a literate explanation of database technologyâ "a topic that is intricate and often obscure. If you design databases yourself, this book will educate you about pitfalls and show you what to do. If you purchase products that use a database, the book explains the technology so that you can understand what the vendor is doing and assess their products better.â •
Â Â Â Â Â â "Michael Blaha, consultant and trainer, author of A Managerâ ™s Guide to Database Technology â œIf you told me that Mike Hernandez could improve on the first edition of Database Design for Mere Mortals I wouldnâ ™t have believed you, but he did! The second edition is packed with more real-world examples, detailed explanations, and even includes database-design tools on the CD-ROM! This is a must-read for anyone who is even remotely interested in relational database design, from the individual who is called upon occasionally to create a useful tool at work, to the seasoned professional who wants to brush up on the fundamentals. Simply put, if you want to do it right, read this book!â • Â Â Â Â Â â "Matt Greer, Process Control Development, The Dow Chemical Company â œMikeâ ™s approach to database design is totally common-sense based, yet heâ ™s adhered to all the rules of good relational database design. I use Mikeâ ™s books in my starter database-design class, and I recommend his books to anyone whoâ ™s interested in learning how to design databases or how to write SQL queries.â • Â Â Â Â Â â "Michelle Poolet, President, MVDS, Inc. â œSlapping together sophisticated applications with poorly designed data will hurt you just as much now as when Mike wrote his first edition, perhaps even more. Whether youâ ™re just getting started developing with data or are a seasoned pro; whether you've read Mikeâ ™s previous book or this is your first; whether you're happier letting someone else design your data or you love doing it yourselfâ "this is the book for you. Mikeâ ™s ability to explain these concepts in a way thatâ ™s not only clear, but fun, continues to amaze me.â • Â Â Â Â Â â "From the Foreword by Ken Getz, MCW Technologies, coauthor ASP.NET Developer's JumpStart â œThe first edition of Mike Hernandezâ ™s book Database Design for Mere Mortals was one of the few books that survived the cut when I moved my office to smaller quarters. The second edition expands and improves on the original in so many ways. It is not only a good, clear read, but contains a remarkable quantity of clear, concise thinking on a very complex subject. Itâ ™s a must

for anyone interested in the subject of database design.â • Â Â Â Â Â â "Malcolm C. Rubel, Performance Dynamics Associates â œMikeâ ™s excellent guide to relational database design deserves a second edition. His book is an essential tool for fledgling Microsoft Access and other desktop database developers, as well as for client/server pros. I recommend it highly to all my readers.â •Â Â Â Â Â â "Roger Jennings, author of Special Edition Using Access 2002 â œThere are no silver bullets! Database technology has advanced dramatically, the newest crop of database servers perform operations faster than anyone could have imagined six years ago, but none of these technological advances will help fix a bad database design, or capture data that you forgot to include! Database Design for Mere Mortalsâ„¢, Second Edition, helps you design your database right in the first place!â • Â Â Â Â Â â "Matt Nunn, Product Manager, SQL Server, Microsoft Corporation â œWhen my brother started his professional career as a developer, I gave him Mikeâ ™s book to help him understand database concepts and make real-world application of database technology. When I need a refresher on the finer points of database design, this is the book I pick up. I do not think that there is a better testimony to the value of a book than that it gets used. For this reason I have wholeheartedly recommended to my peers and students that they utilize this book in their day-to-day development tasks.â • Â Â Â Â Â â "Chris Kunicki, Senior Consultant, OfficeZealot.com â œMike has always had an incredible knack for taking the most complex topics, breaking them down, and explaining them so that anyone can â ˆget it.â ™ He has honed and polished his first very, very good edition and made it even better. If you're just starting out building database applications, this book is a must-read cover to cover. Expert designers will find Mikeâ ™s approach fresh and enlightening and a source of great material for training others.â • Â Â Â Â Â â "John Viescas, President, Viescas Consulting, Inc., author of Running Microsoft Access 2000 and coauthor of SQL Queries for Mere Mortals â œWhether you need to learn about relational database design in general, design a relational database, understand relational database terminology, or learn best practices for implementing a relational database, Database Design for Mere Mortalsâ„¢, Second Edition, is an indispensable book that youâ ™ll refer to often. With his many years of real-world experience designing relational databases, Michael shows you how to analyze and improve existing databases, implement keys, define table relationships and business rules, and create data views, resulting in data integrity, uniform access to data, and reduced data-entry errors.â •Â Â Â Â Â â "Paul Cornell, Site Editor, MSDN Office Developer Center Sound database design can save hours of development time and ensure functionality and reliability. Database Design for Mere Mortalsâ„¢, Second Edition, is a straightforward, platform-independent tutorial on the basic principles of relational database design. It

provides a commonsense design methodology for developing databases that work. Database design expert Michael J. Hernandez has expanded his best-selling first edition, maintaining its hands-on approach and accessibility while updating its coverage and including even more examples and illustrations. This edition features a CD-ROM that includes diagrams of sample databases, as well as design guidelines, documentation forms, and examples of the database design process. This book will give you the knowledge and tools you need to create efficient and effective relational databases.

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Customer Reviews

I read this book while searching for different textbooks to use in the university database course I teach.Hernandez' method and presentation of it are distinctly different from all other books I've read on database design. The author has developed a fairly thorough approach for designing relational databases without requiring the designer to delve into the traditional mathematical jargon and occasionally difficult concepts upon which relational theory is based.Besides the easy understandability to a layman, it seems to me the biggest values in Hernandez' approach and the book is that it is well described as sequence of operations to do with short interviews of the various stakeholders in the database's intended environment. I learned to do similar interviews pretty well through years of experience but without having been taught a method.Although the whole method appears valid, a few limitations and drawbacks of the book surfaced on my first reading: * The method has so many steps it isn't likely that someone can memorize it all. * Though not surprising

from the subtitle, the design method here is inextricably tied to the relational model. (I had hoped that the approach would be more generalized and then show how to produce a valid relational model from a conceptual design. The latter is the way I've been teaching up to now so Hernandez' approach loses some flexibility.) * It's laborious: The whole method is VERY heavy on filling out lengthy forms to document each table, field, view, etc. In theory this good, but it is done in a way that could easily require my students to record 50+ pages worth of forms for their main class project before they even start to implement anything. Designing some production database systems I deal with would have produced 2,000 pages of these forms. It might be possible to adapt the essence of these forms into a different layout that would be more efficient, and would really appreciate hearing comments about the voluminous forms from anyone who has used the method. * In Chapter 10, the matrix method used for "Identifying Existing Relationships" is confusing and inefficient. Although the final results are valid, the intermediate notations make an improper and misleading unidirectional use of the 1:1 and 1:N cardinality notations. There are a couple of ways to correct this part of the method that I would use if I taught from it.

Excellent introduction to Relational Database Design. This is a complete methodology for designing databases from start to finish. Good refresher for experienced data modelers as well.Database Design for Mere Mortals is the perfect introduction to relational database design for the novice and anyone needing a refresher. Straight forward examples and the absence of complex mathematical terms common with other books on the topic make this an easy, enjoyable and very practical read for anyone seeking to understand relational database design from an operational database perspective.Disclaimer: I have to admit being biased towards this book. I read the first edition of Database for Mere Mortals when I was just starting my career in database application development 15 years ago and I have referred to it often over the years. Lacking a degree in Computer Science and Mathematics, I was daunted by the other books on the market at the time on Database Design Theory. However, when I came across this book, it launched my career in ways that I could not have predicted at the time.Database Design for Mere Mortals is written is a straight-forward, easy to read format. The author clearly explains complex relational concepts without the use of difficult to understand mathematical jargon. The design process that the author lays out in this book is concise, yet complete for the purpose of properly designing a well-tuned operational database based on relational database technology. To get value out of this book requires no database experience nor a background in computer science or mathematics on the part of the reader. The author only briefly mentions the Normal Forms (the mathematical theory of relational database

design) by name but the process that he lays out allows the reader to fully implement a database consistent with the Normal Forms without having to decipher their meaning.Anyone starting out in either a Database development, design or analysis role will get a lot of value out of reading this book. I have recommended this book to everyone that has asked me how to get started in Databases for the last 15 years.This book is not the only database design methodology in practice today. Analytical Reporting Databases typically use a dimensional modeling approach which the author kindly directs the user to in his further reading section. Even someone working with a non-operational database would benefit greatly from the techniques outlined in this book prior to applying dimensional modeling techniques.My only disappointment with the 3rd Edition of Database Design for Mere Mortals is that I had hoped the author would have touched more upon the topics of Agile database development and database refactoring. The trend in the industry is to allow less time for formalized, quality design processes such as this one. Unfortunately, this trend usually sacrifices data integrity and sound design practices for rapid and flexible development.

First off, this book is well-written. Mr. Hernandez does a good job of explaining the "why" behind his explanations. He also provides tips that just seem to make sense. He advises that a table have a name that is plural, because each record is one "instance" of the data related to the table. As an example, a table called CarColors would have several rows, each containing one car color.My only real criticisms are:1. That he did not go enough into effectively indexing, applying primary/foreign keys, and applying constraints.2. There was not enough discussion of the various "normalized" forms, when they should be used, and so forth. This is covered in a "flyover" manner that makes sense, but perhaps a more "in-depth" discussion of normalized forms is beyond the scope of the book.I felt like I knew most of the information, but I didn't feel this book was a waste of money, as many of his "common sense" approaches I will utilize in my own DB designs in the future.

I've used the previous edition of this book as the primary text for a college database design class for several years. I was so happy to see a new edition ready for the summer semester this year! The book is easy to incorporate into class lectures, and my students seem to enjoy it. The additional section on normalization in this edition is much appreciated.

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