

macromedia: COLDFUSION'5

The Fastest Way to Build and Deploy Powerful Web Applications

Database 3: Improving Database Processing

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Agenda

- > Eight Measures of Architectural Quality
- > DB Performance and Scalability:
 - Query Caching
 - BlockFactor
 - Indexes
- DB Reliability:
 - Constraints
 - Triggers
 - Transaction Management
 - Bind Parameters
- > DB Extensibility and Maintainability:
 - Stored Procedures
- The Other Measures of Quality
- Where to Learn More and Q&A

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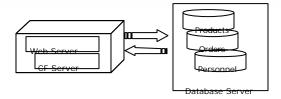
Part 3 of 3

- ➤ This seminar is part 3 of 3 presented today
 - Previous two were in conference "beginner" track
- > Part 3 is in "Advanced" track
 - Won't lose those who've made it this far
 - May discuss things that advanced developers have already heard (more than once)
 - May hear it in a different way today
 - Or leave thinking about it differently than before
 - May simply trigger your putting them into effect
- More than just "how to"
 - Focus as much on why, architectural perspective
 - 50% is CF-specific, rest meaningful to other developers

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Databases & Overall Architecture



- ➤ Database processing is just part of your overall system and information architecture including:
 - Web server, CF server, DB server
 - As well as DB design, SQL code, CF code
- Should evaluate entire system in terms of quality

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Eight Measures of Architectural Quality

- Sun Microsystems defines eight measures of architectural quality
 - Offered in regard to Java Enterprise (J2EE) platform
 - Apply just as well to considering CF/DB architecture

Performance	Maintainability
Scalability	Availability
Reliability	Security
Extensibility	Manageability

 Create a backdrop considering various techniques to improving database processing

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Performance & Scalability

> Performance:

- A measure of the effectiveness of your application (and database design and server platform), in terms of response time, transaction throughput, and/or resource usage
- Always involves tradeoffs of cost/benefit

> Scalability:

- Ability to support the required quality of service as load (number of users, volume of data) increases
- Today's small application (or your tests) may not reflect future

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Reliability, Extensibility & Maintainability

> Reliability:

- Assurance of the integrity and consistency of the application and all its transactions
- May suffer with increased load
 - But ensuring reliability may negatively effect scalability

Extensibility

- Ability to add/modify additional functionality without impacting existing functionality
- Given the high effort involved in maintenance, this is more important than many recognize

Maintainability

- Ability to correct flaws in the existing functionality without impacting other components/systems
- Includes modularity, documentation

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Other Measures of Architecture

Not really the focus of topics in this seminar

- Some tips at conclusion

> Availability

- Assurance that a component/resource is always available
- Can be enabled with redundancy and failover

> Security

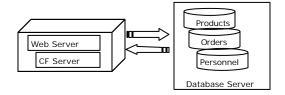
- Ability to ensure that the system has not been compromised
- By far the most difficult to address
- Involves protecting confidentiality, integrity, availability, more

Manageability

- Ability to manage the system in order to ensure continued health with respect to previous measures
- Involves both monitoring and ability to improve systemic qualities dynamically without changing system

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Addressing the Challenges



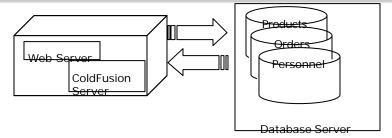
➤ One approach to scalability/performance concerns:

- Add more memory/processors
 - Tends to have good impact on all parts of system with little negative

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Addressing the Challenges

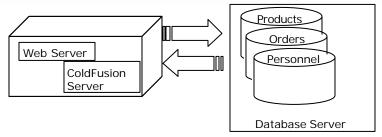


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Clusters and Distributed Servers



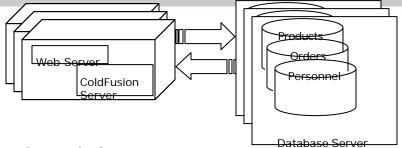
> Another solution:

- Distribute processing across multiple servers
 - May be simply segregating CF Server and DB server
 - Again, generally a very good idea
 - May involve creating cluster for web server
 - Tends to add complexity to design and implementation

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Improving Design & Implementation

- May be able to improve performance/scalability without new hardware
 - Features in DB design, SQL, and CF can help
 - Many are useful even in relatively small applications
 - Should design for performance, keeping in mind cost/benefit tradeoffs
- Design/implementation choices impact other facets
 - Reliability, extensibility, maintainability, security
- > Some features revolve around design of database
 - Most simply involve more effective use of db

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DB Processing: Key for CF App

- > DB processing is single biggest bottleneck in most CF apps
 - Sadly, many will blame CF itself
 - Usually, the problems are preventable
- > Typical things that can degrade quality of DB processing:
 - Poor database and table design
 - Use of non-relational tables
 - Use of incorrect data types
 - Poorly written SQL
 - Lack of indexes
 - Not using stored procedures, triggers
 - Repeatedly requesting the same data
 - And much more
- > Previous talks have addressed some of these
 - Today we'll cover some of the rest, and more

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DB Performance and Scalability Solutions

- > Some DB performance and scalability solutions:
 - Query Caching
 - BlockFactor
 - Indexes

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Repeatedly Requesting the Same Data

- Many web apps suffer from unnecessarily requesting the same data over and over
 - Doesn't really matter if DB is well-designed
- > Examples include:
 - Providing drop-down list of states on a reg. form
 - When did we last add a new state?
 - A company phone directory
 - How often are employees added/removed?
 - Reporting management information
 - Does it need to be accurate to the second?
 - Showing search results n-records at a time
 - Search criteria doesn't change for "next 10" records

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Query Caching

- CF provides two means of caching query results for re-use
 - Variable-based query caching
 - Leverages ability to store any variable in server, application, or session scope
 - Since a query resultset is a variable, it can be scoped as such
 - · May surprise those who never thought of it
 - Time-triggered query caching (a.k.a. "query result caching")
 - New attributes for CFQUERY to indicate that any code executing that query should create/use cached copy for given timeframe
 - Will show how to use each of these
- > Also look into CFCACHE and CFSAVECONTENT tags
 - These cache the entire CF page or page portions
 - Not covered in this seminar but important to performance

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Variable-based Query Caching

- ColdFusion offers 3 scopes for storing persistent variables:
 - Session scope
 - Persists for the life of a single user's session until server is restarted or session times out
 - Application scope
 - Persists for all users of a given application until server is restarted
 - Server scope
 - Persists for all users of entire CF server until server is restarted
- I'll have to presume for this class that you understand setup and use of these

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Variable-based Query Caching

- Just as we can assign variables to these scopes
 - we can declare that a CFQUERY NAME value use a persistent scope, as in:

```
<CFQUERY DATASOURCE="ProdPrsnl" NAME="application.GetStates">
    SELECT State, StateAbbrev
    FROM States
</CFQUERY>
```

- Now, this query result set is stored with all other application variables
 - Can be referred to by any code anywhere in this application
 - meaning, under control of same CFAPPLICATION

```
<SELECT NAME="state">
  <CFOUTPUT QUERY="application.GetStates">
        <OPTION VALUE="#StateAbbrev#">#State#
  </CFOUTPUT>
  </SELECT>
```

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Avoid Recreating Cached Resultset

- > Once cached, query shouldn't be executed again
 - At least not until the data it reflects changes
- > How to avoid executing query if already "cached"?
 - Test if query already exists, with IsDefined()

> Now this query will be executed only once but be available for the life of its indicated scope

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Where to Create/Update Variable-based Cached Query?

- Where might it be sensible to put query creation code to be cached for all app users?
 - Application.cfm
- When should the query be re-executed?
 - Whenever its underlying database table changes
 - In whatever template performs changes to data
 - Only dilemma: if code outside your control updates DB
- Consider use of session scope to hold a user's search results over many "next n" pages?
 - Create/cache it on the search action page

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Another Challenge: Locking Issues

- > Shared scope variables should be locked when written to
 - Should probably instead code query as:

```
<CFQUERY DATASOURCE="ProdPrsnl" NAME="GetStates">
    SELECT State, StateAbbrev
    FROM States
</CFQUERY>
<CFQUERY>
<CFLOCK SCOPE="APPLICATION" TYPE="EXCLUSIVE" TIMEOUT="5">
</CFLOCK SCOPE="APPLICATION" TYPE="EXCLUSIVE" TIMEOUT="5">
</CFLOCK></CFLOCK></cr>
```

- Note use of "exclusive" type of lock
 - Not wrapping query in lock because you should avoid holding locks any longer than needed
 - Why make lock wait for guery to run?
 - It should just be locked for however long it takes to assign the result set to the persistent variable

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Locking Issues (cont.)

Should also lock when reading

Could code CFOUTPUT loop as:

- Note use of "readonly" type of lock
- Note too that TIMEOUT attribute in each case has nothing to do with how long this lock will take
 - It's how long this lock will wait for lock being held by others
- Could instead assign cached result to local variable within lock (locking just that assignment) and loop over that
 - Will likely release lock faster (for benefit of others updating same-scoped variables)
- Comes at cost of creating local copy of resultset each time
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More Challenges

- > More challenges of variable-based cached queries
 - You're responsible for managing cache (creating, updating)
 - To delete cache, delete variable
 - <CFSET x = StructDelete(application, "GetEmployees")>
 - Be careful about creating too many
 - They're just stored in memory
 - Large queries could take a lot of memory
 - No way for admin to limit memory used

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More Challenges

- More challenges of variable-based cached queries
 - You're relying on previous code to have created the cache, such as application.cfm in one example
 - Can look confusing to developers unfamiliar with this form of caching
 - And what if it didn't exist? Hadn't been run?
 - Consider how CFPARAM creates a variable only if it doesn't exist
 - Wouldn't it be nice if you could just do the query where you need it?
 - and if it hadn't been cached, it would be?
 - And, further, it would automatically re-cache itself at defined intervals (after x minutes, or after certain date)
- ➤ Next alternative to query caching solves these problems

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Time-triggered Query Caching: CACHEDAFTER

- Referred to in "Certified CF Developer Study Guide" as "Query Result Caching"
- Does not involve creating variables
 - Instead, specify a caching attribute on CFQUERY
 - CACHEDAFTER or CACHEDWITHIN
 - Example:

- This would cache the result the first time the query is run after specified date/time (and use the cache from then on)
 - Meant to be used with fixed date/time, in the future
 - Might be useful when you know data is updated at 10pm

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Time-triggered Query Caching: CACHEDWITHIN

CACHEDWITHIN works differently

- This would cache the result the first time the query is run and reuse the cache each time query is executed
 - until specified timespan has passed since it was first cached
 - will re-cache it the next time it's run after specified timespan
 - Meant to be used with relative time span
 - Can be specified in either days, hours, mins, secs
 - Useful to cache for a specific amount of time from the first time it's cached
- CFML reference mistakenly indicates this should "define a period of time from the present backwards"

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Time-triggered Query Caching: Issues

- > Can observe if query was taken from cache
 - If debugging is turned on, query time shows "cached query"
 - Note that CFQUERY.ExecutionTime variable does NOT show this value
 - Shows "0", doesn't always mean it was a cached query
- > Important difference from variable-based caching
 - Query remains where it normally would appear
 - No need to test existence, no shared variables used, no need to worry about <CFLOCK>

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Time-triggered Query Caching: Dynamic Queries

- A single CFQUERY may generate multiple cached results
 - If SQL is built dynamically, each unique SQL statement is cached separately
 - Consider search action page driven by form fields
 - Same CFQUERY with different resulting SQL will create separate cached result
 - Pro
 - Means more potential to benefit from cache
 - Con
 - Means lots of cached results could be created

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Time-triggered Query Caching: Admin Settings

- Time-triggered caching is governable by admin settings
 - Can restrict total number of cached queries allowed
 - Limit the maximum number of cached queries on the server to xxx queries
 - When the limit is exceeded, oldest query is dropped and replaced
 - Defaults to 100 on installation of CF
 - Can disable this sort of caching by setting to 0

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Time-triggered Query Caching: Sharing Cached Results

- Mentioned previously that unique SQL in same query will result in different cached results
 - Conversely, and perhaps unexpectedly to many, cached result for given SQL can be reused by another CFQUERY
 - To reuse another query's cached result, query must have identical SQL and DATASOURCE
 - And, if specified, identical DBTYPE and Login info
 - Doesn't need to have same query NAME
 - Of course, doesn't need to be in same template
 - Nor even in same application

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More About CachedAfter

- ➤ CF docs are very sparse about CACHEDAFTER
 - Both the docs and the Certification Study Guide say it supports only a date
 - Will support a date and time
 - Can specify date as any valid CF date, then add time
 - » such as "09/01/01 10:00pm" or "09-01-2001 22:00"
 - To cache each day as of 10pm, use
 - CACHEDAFTER="#dateformat(now())# 22:00"
 - Can't, however, just specify a time

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Another Performance Factor: BlockFactor

- > BLOCKFACTOR gets a lot of press by some as important performance factor
 - May not bring value for most
 - Also easily misunderstood
- When CF and database communicate to create result set, may transer only one record at a time
 - Applies to some DB drivers
 - ODBC, Oracle according to docs
 - BLOCKFACTOR is an attribute on CFQUERY
 - Allows specifying a number of records to transfer at a time
 - Does NOT control HOW MANY records are retrieved
 - If not supported by DB driver, won't cause error
 - but could degrade performance
 - If supported but set too large, could degrade performance
 - Many feel it's best to not set at all

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About DB Column Indexes

- When column in table is searched, does the DBMS look at each record in entire table, one at a time?
 - Yes, if the column is not indexed
 - Think of index as similar to a book's index
 - Just as we can find info quickly, so can DBMS
 - · Can have dramatic impact on performance of queries
 - In small tables, lack of index may not be noticeable
 - Then again, with more users doing more queries, could become a problem
 - Whether a column is indexed is optional
 - · Except that primary key is always indexed
 - · Should consider adding index to columns frequently searched
 - May also improve sorting by a given column
 - Beware: indexing a column isn't always a good idea

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Indexing Cautions

- Before rushing off to create indexes on too many columns, consider a few cautions:
 - Each index requires time to be maintained during record insert/udpate operations
 - Not all data is suitable for indexing
 - Depending on indexing technique used by DBMS, data without many unique values may not benefit
 - State may not be good index while lastname is
 - Indexed data does add to storage requirement for DB

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Creating/Adding Indexes

> To add an index to a table for a given column

CREATE INDEX indexname

- Indexname must be unique within given table
- Can create index before or after populating table with data
- CF and even SQL coding isn't typically changed by adding indexes
 - Just see improved query performance (at tradeoff of aforementioned cautions)

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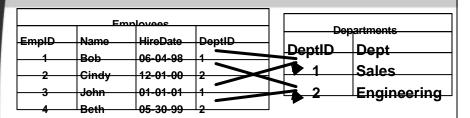
DB Reliability Solutions

- > Some DB reliability solutions:
 - Constraints
 - Triggers
 - Transaction Management
 - Bind Parameters

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About DB Column Constraints



- ➤ In Database 2 seminar, we learned about inter-related tables and how to create JOINs between them
 - Learned that, in this example, values of Employees.DeptID reflect those in Departments.DeptID
 - Can be used to lookup Dept name by way of joining them
 - What ensures that the only values stored in Employees.DeptID come from Departments.DeptID?
 - · Many developers don't take steps to ensure this

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Problems Managing Related Table Values

- Others take responsibility to manage it themselves
 - Trying to maintain this form of integrity is challenging
 - Need to do it everywhere data may be updated
 - Also need to do it for updates/deletes
 - Take effort to code, then execute, such checks
- > Far better to let DBMS manage this itself

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Creating/Adding Constraints

Can create constraints for and between such related table columns

```
ALTER TABLE Employees
ADD CONSTRAINT FK_DeptID

FOREIGN KEY (DeptID)

REFERENCES Departments (DeptID)
```

- With this in place, an attempt to insert invalid value for DeptID in Employees (a value not in Departments. DeptID column), DB will throw error
- Can catch this error in CF with CFTRY
 - Surround CFQUERY doing insert/udpate

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About Unique Constraints

- Similar dilemma arises when you want unique values for a given column
 - May want to prevent multiple records with same email address
 - Learned in previous seminar that primary key values are guaranteed to be unique
 - But what if column (like email) is not the primary key?
 - Again, could try to manage this yourself
 - Doing test before doing insert/update to ensure email address value doesn't already exist
 - Or could have DBMS manage it, with unique constraint
 - May be created with CREATE UNIQUE INDEX or with another kind of CONSTRAINT

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About Check Constraints

- Still another reliability option is that some databases allow creation of Check Constraints
 - These are defined for a given column to ensure values meet some defined criteria
 - Examples include:
 - minimum/maximum values
 - · range of values
 - List of possible values

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Visually Defining Indexes, Constraints

- > SQL statements will work for nearly all DBMS's
 - Many DBMS's offer visual interface for managing these
 - MS Access "Design Table" and "Tools>Relationships" features
 - SQL Server Enterprise Manager
 - And more
 - Again, be aware that in many instances, the defaults are to not define indexes, constraints
 - If you'd like to use them, you may need to add them

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Ensuring Further Data Reliability

- We know that constraints can ensure that data meets certain criteria during insert/update
- May need to ensure further integrity
 - May want to convert data to uppercase during insert/update
 - May need to write data to another table on insert/update
 - keeping accountbalance column in account table updated for each deposit/withdrawal tracked in transaction table
 - May need to check data in another table before allowing insert/update

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Triggers

- Some DBMS's allow creation of triggers to perform these sort of integrity checks and cross-table update
 - Specified in form of SQL statements
 - Stored in database, associated with given table
 - Typically can define separate triggers to act upon insert, update, and/or delete against that table
 - Syntax will differ between DBMS's. An example:

```
CREATE TRIGGER triggername
ON tablename
FOR INSERT | UPDATE | DELETE
AS
UPDATE tablename SET columnname=UPPER(columnname)
WHERE tablename.columnname = INSERTED.columnname
```

 When performing similar actions, constraints typically execute more quickly than triggers (use them instead)

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Transaction Management

- Multiple users can (and generally do) update data in databases at the same time
 - Transaction processing prevents them updating the exact same data at the same time
 - Also allows a group of related updates to be packaged such that if they don't all succeed, none will succeed
- Generally controlled by the DBMS for us
 - We can influence it from within CF by way of the CFTRANSACTION tag
- See Chapter 19 of Certification Study Guide for more details and code samples

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Grouping Updates

When multiple updates must take place, otherwise none should take place, use CFTRANSACTION

- This simplest and oldest form simply ensures that if the first update fails, the second will as well
 - Called backing out or "rolling back" the first update
 - Up to the database to handle the rollback
 - More advanced DBMS will handle rollback even after recovering from crash of DB server that may have caused transaction to fail in the first place

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Isolation Levels

- When performing a group of transactions, need to be careful about other users reading the data we update, and viceversa
 - Databases generally define up to 4 isolation levels that can influence these sort of cross-user locks, from
 - Serializable (default)
 - Can indicate that no reads/updates by others take place during our update
 - Through Repeatable Read and Read Committed
 - Not supported by all DBMS's
 - Read Uncommitted
 - Or can indicate that we don't care if others are reading/updating
- We can specify a desired isolation level with CFTRANSACTION ISOLATION attribute

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Programmable Commit/Rollback

- Mentioned that CFTRANSACTION would rollback all updates if any failed
 - Didn't mention, but COMMIT takes place at end of transaction
 - · Commit tells DBMS to consider update finished
 - CFQUERY updates outside CFTRANSACTION also do COMMIT at end of CFQUERY
 - Release 4.5 added ability to perform BACKOUT (and COMMIT) programatically within transaction
 - <CFTRANSACTION ACTION='Backout|Commit"/>
 - This tag is designed to be used within other CFTRANSACTION tag
 - » Doesn't allow embedded tags of its own, but needs to be closed to avoid confusion with surrounding CFTRANSACTION
 - » Could use closing </CFTRANSACTION> tag or just closing slash at end of tag, as above

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Using Bind Parameters

- > ColdFusion is a loosely typed language
 - Numbers considered string until used for math
- Databases are strongly typed
 - Column expecting numbers will want numbers
 - But CF will be passing a string that looks like number
 - · Database can do conversion to fix that
 - But we can help the database to know the datatype
 - Can help performance by specifying bind parameters

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Bind Parameter for Reliability

- When passing form or URL variables on some SQL statements (with some DB drivers)
 - User can pass strings to add unexpected SQL
 - Bind parameters can stop that
 - If expecting to bind numeric data and user passes text (including SQL statements), bind will strip them

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DB Extensibility Solutions

- > One DB extensibility and maintainability solution:
 - Stored Procedures

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About Stored Procedures

- We typically specify SQL statements within CFQUERY tags within our CF templates
 - What if multiple templates would execute same SQL?
 - While we could use CFINCLUDE to re-use this code, there are options in most DBMS's to store that code in the DBMS
 - Then would call upon it much like we call a custom tag
 - · But instead of executing CF code, it just executes SQL
 - Each DBMS has its own language for the SQL to be used for such stored procedures, for instance:

Oracle: PL/SQLSQL Server: T/SQL

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Creating Stored Procedures

> Other benefits:

- Stored procedure typically compiled and stored in DBMS
- Parameters can be passed to procedure to be used in SQL execution
- Can create and use variables, pass data among statements, and perform conditional processing within the SQL
- Can execute multiple statements in one procedure
- Stored procedure may be able to return multiple record sets
- Example might be:

CREATE PROCEDURE procedurename in/outparms
ON tablename
AS
SOL statements

- Can create Stored Procedures using CFQUERY
 - More typically created in DBMS, managed by DB Admin

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Executing Stored Procedures

- Once stored in a DBMS, we can execute the stored procedure by calling upon it, in either:
 - CFQUERY
 - CFSTOREDPROC
- Procedure executes in the DBMS (just as if we'd passed the SQL)
- Returns one or more result sets to process (just as with normal CFQUERY)
- > Working with SPs in Oracle has complications
 - See Macromedia Knowledge Base articles
- Though MS Access doesn't have stored procedures, there are ways to fake it
 - use Access "parameter queries" feature
 - See my CFDJ article from Oct 99: "Stored Procedures in Access? Yes Indeed"

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Other Measures of Architecture

> Availability

- Assurance that a component/resource is always available
- Can be enabled with redundancy and failover
 - Some may know that CF Servers can be clustered
- From DB standpoint, no built-in CF features
 - On simple level, could use CFTRY to catch failures and attempt query/update of alternate DB
 - On larger level, enable backup/restore
 - Often ignored by CF developers
 - Replication may play a part
 - Some DBMS implementations better than others

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Other Measures of Architecture

Security

- Ability to ensure that the system has not been compromised
- By far the most difficult to address
- Involves protecting confidentiality, integrity, availability, more
- Will be highly influenced by DBMS, configuration, perhaps programming

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Other Measures of Architecture

> Manageability

- Ability to manage the system in order to ensure continued health with respect to performance, scalability, reliability, availability and security
- Involves both monitoring and ability to improve systemic qualities dynamically without changing system
 - ColdFusion 5 offers monitoring features to observe system, servers, and even successful execution of probing templates
 - Most DBMS's and operating systems also offer monitoring tools

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Some Other Tidbits for You to Investigate

- > Query of Queries
- > VIEWs
- > DB Security management

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Where to Learn More

- Version 5 CF manuals:
 - Installing and Configuring ColdFusion Server
 - Developing ColdFusion Applications
 - CFML Reference
- ➤ Books by Ben Forta:
 - Teach Yourself SQL in 10 Minutes
 - Certified ColdFusion Developer Study Guide
 - ColdFusion Web Application Construction Kit
 - Advanced ColdFusion Development
- > Many other CF and SQL books available, including
 - Practical SQL Handbook (new edition available)
 - SQL For Smarties (any Joe Celko book)

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Contact Information

Contact for follow-up issues

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Q&A

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