

Re: outer Join and NULL values...?!?!!!

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Marsh,

Thanks for the speedy reply....I think... :-\

So, just so I have this straight, according to Jet's internal Join arithmetic,

Table B Table C

F2 = "Smith" = -> F2 = "Smith"

F3 = Null = -> F3 = Null

F4 = "QA" = -> F4 = "QA"

....in an outer join = "No Match"?

....but

Table B Table C

F2 = "Smith" = -> F2 = "Smith"

F3 = Null F3 = Null

F4 = "QA" = -> F4 = "QA"

....in an outer join = "Match"?

....I just KNEW these damn Nulls would drive me INSANE one day...

So, how do you suggest I handle that small %age of data records where F3 = Null?

....build another, separate query to handle just those records? <Grrrr...>

"Marshall Barton" wrote:

Mark Burns wrote:

OK first the question: why are the NULLs screwing up my query results?

The problem:

I am constructing a series of append queries to dissect non-normal data from some older tables to fit it all into a new normalized structure. I have 3 tables:

A, B, and C. I am importing data from table B into table C (referencing

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table A in the process).

To avoid importing duplicate records I am joining tables B and C in my query

as an outer join B.F2->C.F2 + B.F3->C.F3 + B.F4->C.F4 (the query also matches

B.F1->A.F3, but that's not the problem here... also, importantly, I check for B.F2 is not null AND C.F1 IS Null).

When I run this query the FIRST time, I get 80 records inserted into table C as expected.

I expect that when I run this query again immediately, I will get ZERO records qualified (because all the outer joins will now match table C records which made C.F1 NOT Null.

...BUT I still get 15 records qualifying to be inserted into Table C from Table B!

The 15 records all contain NULL values in B.F3 (and, in C.F3).

I know this is the problem because if I remove the Outer Join B.F3->C.F3 I get exactly the ZERO qualifying records I expect?!? HUH?!?!

So...Jet 4.0 does not think Null=Null here, or what??

(and...they are all nulls, the fields are set 'allow 0 length strings = false')

Well, it is true that Null = Null is never True. It is also the case that Null <> Null is never True.

Think of it this way. Null sort of means Unknown. So, is an unknown value equal (or not equal) to another unknown value? The answer is unknown so it can not be either True or False.

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Marsh
MVP [MS Access]