

Re: top n problem

Source:

<http://www.tech-archive.net/Archive/SQL-Server/microsoft.public.sqlserver.programming/2004-02/0083.html>

From: Steve Kass (*skass_at_drew.edu*)

Date: 02/13/04

Date: Fri, 13 Feb 2004 17:48:37 -0500

Delbert Glass wrote:

>>*the point here is that TOP n without ORDER BY is undefined*
>>
>>
>
>*Pray tell, where does it say that in the documentation?*
>*Are you just repeating mis-information, or did you make that up yourself?*
>
>-----
>
>*Following is some info from BOL.*
>
>

The crucial word: "some". My copy of Books Online also says:

If the query has no ORDER BY clause, the order of the rows is arbitrary.

"Arbitrary" is good enough for me. Perhaps Vlad could have said the result of a SELECT TOP query without ORDER BY is undefined instead of saying TOP ... is undefined, but I think he was clear enough. Just mentioning something that some operator does does not define the operator. "A car burns fuel." Have I defined a car?

SK

>*Look at what that second line says TOP does.*
>*Look at that introductory phrase of the first sentence of the last*
>*paragraph.*
>
>*Limiting Result Sets Using TOP and PERCENT*
>*The TOP clause limits the number of rows returned in the result set.*
>
>*TOP n [PERCENT]*
>
>*n specifies how many rows are returned. If PERCENT is not specified, n is*
>*the number of rows to return. If PERCENT is specified, n is the percentage*

>of the result set rows to return:
>
>TOP 120 /*Return the top 120 rows of the result set. */
>TOP 15 PERCENT /* Return the top 15% of the result set. */.
>If a SELECT statement that includes TOP also has an ORDER BY clause, the
>rows to be returned are selected from the ordered result set. The entire
>result set is built in the specified order and the top n rows in the ordered
>result set are returned.
>
>Bye,
>
>Delbert Glass
>
>
>
>"Vlad Vissoultchev" <wqweto@nospam.myrealbox.com> wrote in message
>news:u6BpbQd8DHA.712@tk2msftngp13.phx.gbl...
>
>
>>delbert,
>>
>>the point here is that TOP n without ORDER BY is undefined -- undefined as
>>in NULL :-))
>>
>>your sample looks more like a TOP 5 with ORDER BY <random_generator_here>
>>
>>the fact that you can get away without a syntax error from that parser
>>
>>
>when
>
>
>>ORDER BY is omitted is a "feature" that some college grad though was cool
>>
>>
>to
>
>
>>propose to its PM at microsoft back some time ago (disclaimer: on second
>>reading, this scenario might be very far from the truth).
>>
>>suppose you could use CASE WHEN without a THEN :-))
>>
>>cheers,
>></wqw>
>>
>>
>>
>>
>
>

microsoft.public.sqlserver.programming: Re: top n problem

>
>