

# Preface

We had several goals in mind for this book. Many of them are derived from thinking about that mythical perfect MySQL book neither of us had read but kept looking for on bookstore shelves. Others come from a lot of experience helping other users put MySQL to work in their environments.

We wanted a book that wasn't just a SQL primer. We wanted a book with a title that didn't start or end in some arbitrary time frame ("...in Thirty Days," "Seven Days To a Better...") and didn't imply that the reader was a moron of some sort because he was reading our book.

Most of all we wanted a book that would help the reader take her MySQL skills to the next level. Every book we read focused almost exclusively on SQL command syntax or covered MySQL only at a very basic level. None really helped us to understand the deeper issues. We wanted a book that went deeper and focused on real-world problems. How can you set up a cluster of MySQL servers capable of handling millions upon millions of queries and ensure that things keep running even if a couple of the servers die?

We decided to write a book that focused not just on the needs of the MySQL application developer but also on the rigorous demands of the MySQL administrator, who needs to keep the system up and running no matter what his programmers or users may throw at the server.

Having said that, we assume that you are already relatively experienced with MySQL and, ideally, have read an introductory book on MySQL. In several chapters, we'll refer to common Unix tools for monitoring system performance, such as `top`, `vmstat`, and `sar`. If you're not already familiar with them (or their equivalent on your operating system), please take a bit of time to learn the basics. It will serve you well when we look at system performance and bottlenecks.