

# Preface

**T**his book is the seventh in a series. All but one of its predecessors were published by Addison-Wesley (in 1986, 1990, 1992, 1995, and 1998, respectively); the exception was privately published by myself this year (2006). Like those predecessors, it consists of a collection of papers on the general topic of relational database technology—basically all those of my papers from the period 2000 to 2006 that seem to me worth preserving in some more permanent form.

The book is arranged into seven parts, as follows:

Part 1: Some Preliminaries

Part 2: And Now for Something Completely Different

Part 3: Relational Database Management

Part 4: SQL Database Management

Part 5: Further Relational Misconceptions

Part 6: Subtyping and Inheritance

Part 7: Relational *vs.* Nonrelational Systems

Each part has its own introduction, and I'll leave further details of individual papers to those introductions. There's also an appendix, documenting my experience (such as it was) in trying to enlist the help of the trade press in my self-appointed mission to educate the database community on matters to do with relational technology.

*A brief note on the book's structure:* As with earlier books in this series, most of the chapters were originally intended to stand alone; as a result, each typically contains references and examples—sometimes even appendixes—whose numbering is unique only within the chapter in question. To a very large degree, I've preserved the independence of individual chapters; thus, all references within a given chapter to, say, Example 3 or Appendix A are to be taken as references to the indicated example or appendix within the chapter in question. There is also, I fear, a small amount of overlap among certain of the chapters; I apologize for this fact, but felt it was better, as already indicated, to preserve the independence of each individual chapter as much as possible.

I also need to say a word about SQL. A book of this nature inevitably contains many references to—sometimes detailed discussions regarding—the SQL language. As is well known, however, there are many distinct dialects of that language (at least as many as there are commercial SQL products). Please understand, therefore, that all references to SQL throughout the book refer specifically to the standard form of that language, barring explicit remarks to the contrary; deviations from that standard found in some particular product are generally not discussed.