
MySQL++ User Manual

Kevin Atkinson
Sinisa Milivojevic
Monty Widenius
Warren Young

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1. Introduction

MySQL++ is a powerful C++ wrapper for MySQL's C API. Its purpose is to make working with queries as easy as working with STL containers.

The latest version of MySQL++ can be found at the official web site [<http://tangentsoft.net/mysql++/>].

Support for MySQL++ can be had on the mailing list [<http://lists.mysql.com/plusplus>]. That page hosts the mailing list archives, and tells you how you can subscribe.

1.1. A Brief History of MySQL++

MySQL++ was created in 1998 by Kevin Atkinson. It started out MySQL-specific, but there were early efforts to try and make it database-independent, and call it SQL++. This is where the old library name "sqlplus" came from. This is also why the old versions prefixed some class names with "Mysql" but not others: the others were supposed to be the database-independent parts.

Then in 1999, Sinisa Milivojevic unofficially took over maintenance of the library, releasing versions 1.0 and 1.1. (All of Kevin's releases were pre-1.0 point releases.) Kevin gave over maintenance to Sinisa officially with 1.2, and Sinisa went on to maintain the library through 1.7.9, released in mid-2001. Since Sinisa is an employee of MySQL AB [<http://www.mysql.com/>], it seems to be during this time that the dream of multiple-database compatibility died.

With version 1.7.9, MySQL++ went into a period of stasis, lasting over three years. During this time, Sinisa ran the MySQL++ mailing list and supported its users, but made no new releases. There were many patches submitted during this period, some of which were ignored, others which were just put on the MySQL++ web site for people to try. A lot of these patches were mutually-incompatible, and not all of them gave a fully-functional copy of MySQL++. Most of them centered on GCC compatibility, because GCC 3 was created around this same time. The continual tightening of the rules starting with GCC 3.0 exposed a lot of places in MySQL++ that used deprecated and non-conforming facilities.

In early August of 2004, the current maintainer (Warren Young) got fed up with this situation and took over. He released 1.7.10 later that month.

1.2. If You Have Questions...

If you want to email someone to ask questions about this library, we greatly prefer that you send mail to the MySQL++ mailing list [<http://lists.mysql.com/plusplus>]. The mailing list is archived, so if you have questions, do a search to see if the question has been asked before.

You may find people's individual email addresses in various files within the MySQL++ distribution. Please do not send mail to them unless you are sending something that is inherently personal. Questions that are about MySQL++ usage may well be ignored if you send them to our personal email accounts. Those of us still active in MySQL++ development monitor the mailing list, so you aren't getting any extra "coverage" by sending messages to those addresses in addition to the mailing list.

2. Overview

MySQL++ has developed into a very complex and powerful library, with many different ways to accomplish the same task. Unfortunately, this means that figuring out how to perform a simple task can be frustrating for new users. In this section we will provide an overview of the most important user-facing components of the library.

The overall process for using MySQL++ is similar to that of most other database access APIs:

1. Open the connection
2. Form and execute the query
3. Iterate through the result set
4. Go to 2 :)

There is, however, a lot of extra functionality along each step of the way.

2.1. The Connection Object

A Connection [[../refman/html/classmysqlpp_1_1Connection.html](#)] object manages the connection to the MySQL server. You need at least one of these objects to do anything. A Connection object can either create Query objects for you, or you can execute queries directly through the Connection object. The separate Query object is the recommended way as it gives you far more power.

2.2. The Query Object

A Query [[../refman/html/classmysqlpp_1_1Query.html](#)] object is the recommended way of building and executing queries. It is subclassed from `std::stringstream` which means you can write to it like any other C++ stream to form a query. The library includes stream manipulators [[../refman/html/manip_8h.html](#)] that make it easy to generate syntactically-correct SQL.

You can also set up template queries with this class. Template queries work something like the C `printf()` function: you set up a fixed query string with tags inside that indicate where to insert the variable parts. If you have multiple queries that are structurally similar, you simply set up one template query, and use that in the various locations of your program.

A third method for building queries is to use Specialized SQL Structures (SSQLS). This feature presents your results as a C++ data structure, instead of making you access the data through MySQL++ intermediary classes. It also reduces the amount of embedded SQL code your program needs.

2.3. Result Sets

The actual data elements in a result set are stored in a special `std::string`-like class. Objects of this class can automatically convert themselves to any of the basic C data types as well as some additional MySQL++-specific types that are designed to handle those MySQL that don't map well onto the basic C types. For instance, you can convert a MySQL `DATETIME` field to a MySQL++ `DateTime` [[../refman/html/structmysqlpp_1_1DateTime.html](#)] object automatically. If there is a problem in the conversion it will either set a warning flag or throw an exception, depending on how you set the library up.

MySQL++ has a number of different ways of representing query results.

Queries That Do Not Return Data

Not all SQL queries return data. An example is `CREATE TABLE`. For these types of queries, there is a special result type [[../refman/html/classmysqlpp_1_1ResNSel.html](#)] that simply reports the state resulting from the query: whether the query was successful, how many rows it impacted (if any), etc.

Queries That Return Data: Dynamic Method

The easiest way to retrieve data from MySQL uses a Result [[../refman/html/classmysqlpp_1_1Result.html](#)] object, which includes one or more Row [[../refman/html/classmysqlpp_1_1Row.html](#)] objects. Because these classes are `std::vector`-like containers, you can treat the result set as a two-dimensional array. For example you can get the 5th item on the 2nd row by simply saying `result[1][4]`. You can also access row elements by field name, like this: `result[2].lookup_by_name("price")`.

An alternate way of accessing your query results is through a `ResUse` [[../refman/html/classmysqlpp_1_1ResUse.html](#)] object. This class acts more like an STL input iterator than a container: you walk through your result set one item at a time, always going forward. You can't seek around in the result set, and you can't know how many results are in the set until you find the end. This method is more efficient when there can be arbitrarily many results, which could pose a memory allocation problem with the previous technique.

Queries That Return Data: Static Method

The Specialized SQL Structures (SSQLS) feature method above defines C++ structures that match the table structures in your database schema.

We call it the "static" method because the table structure is fixed at compile time; if you change the database schema, you have to change your SSQS definitions and recompile. If you fail to do this, your program will throw an exception when you try to stuff a result set into an outdated data structure.

The advantage of this method is that your program will require very little embedded SQL code. You can simply execute a query, and receive your results as C++ data structures, which can be accessed just as you would any other structure. The results can be accessed through the Row object, or you can ask the library to dump the results into a sequential or set-associative STL container for you. Consider this:

```
vector<mystruct> v;
Query q = connection.query();
q << "SELECT * FROM mytable";
q.storein(v);
for (vector<mystruct>::iterator it = v.begin(); it != v.end(); ++v) {
    cout << "Price: " << v.price << endl;
}
```

Isn't that slick?

2.4. Exceptions

By default, the library throws exceptions [[../refman/html/exceptions_8h.html](#)] derived from `std::exception` whenever it encounters an error. You can ask the library to set an error flag instead, if you like, but the exceptions carry more information. Not only do they include a string member telling you why the exception was thrown, there are several exception types, so you can distinguish between several types of error within a single `try` block.

3. Tutorial

This tutorial is meant to give you a jump start in using MySQL++. While it is a very complicated and powerful library, it's possible to make quite functional programs without tapping but a fraction of its power. This section will introduce you to the most useful fraction.

This tutorial assumes you know C++ fairly well, in particular the Standard Template Library (STL) and exceptions.

3.1. Running the Examples

All of the examples are complete running programs. They may or may not be built for you already, depending on how you installed the library.

If you installed MySQL++ from the source tarball on a Unixy system, the examples should have been built along with the library. If not, simply go into the examples directory and type `make`.

If you installed the library via RPM, the examples are in the `mysql++-devel` RPM. After installing that, the examples are in `/usr/src/mysql++/examples`. To build them, go into that directory and type `make -f Makefile.simple`. See the file `/usr/share/doc/mysql++-devel*/README.examples` for more details.

If you are on a Windows system, the build process for the library should have built the examples as well. Where the programs are depends on which compiler you're using. There should be a `README.*` file in the distribution specific to your compiler with further instructions.

Once you have the examples building, you need to initialize the sample database by running the `resetdb` example. The usage of `resetdb` is as follows:

```
resetdb [host [user [password [port]]]]
```

If you leave off `host`, `localhost` is assumed. If you leave off `user`, your current username is assumed. If you leave off the password, it is assumed that you don't need one. And if you leave off the port, it will use the standard MySQL port number.

The user you give `resetdb` needs to be an account with permission to create databases. Once the database is created you can use any account that has full permission to the sample database `mysql_cpp_data`.

You may also have to re-run `resetdb` after running some of the other examples, as they change the database.

3.2. The Basics

A simple example

The following example demonstrates how to open a connection, execute a simple query, and display the results. The code can be found in the file `examples/simple1.cpp`. Note that, like most of the other examples, it requires the common routines in `examples/util.cpp`; you can't build it directly.

```
#include "util.h"

#include <mysql++.h>

#include <iostream>
#include <iomanip>

using namespace std;

int
main(int argc, char *argv[])
{
    try {
        // Connect to the sample database
        mysqlpp::Connection con(mysqlpp::use_exceptions);
        if (!connect_to_db(argc, argv, con)) {
            return 1;
        }

        // Create a query object that is bound to con.
        mysqlpp::Query query = con.query();

        // Print out the stock table
        print_stock_table(query);
    }
    catch (mysqlpp::BadQuery& er) {
        // handle any connection or query errors that may come up
        cerr << "Error: " << er.what() << endl;
        return -1;
    }
    catch (mysqlpp::BadConversion& er) {
        // handle bad conversions
        cerr << "Error: " << er.what() << "\".\" << endl
              << "retrieved data size: " << er.retrieved
              << " actual data size: " << er.actual_size << endl;
        return -1;
    }
    catch (exception & er) {
        cerr << "Error: " << er.what() << endl;
        return -1;
    }

    return 0;
}
```

Everything here should be fairly obvious. Take particular notice of how we used an iterator with the result set.

A slightly more complicated example

This example is almost like the previous one, except that it uses exceptions and the automatic conversion feature of

ColData. Pay particular notice to how exceptions are used. This is examples/complic1.cpp:

```
#include "util.h"

#include <mysql++.h>

#include <iostream>
#include <iomanip>

using namespace std;
using namespace mysqlpp;

int
main(int argc, char *argv[])
{
    try {
        Connection con(use_exceptions);
        if (!connect_to_db(argc, argv, con)) {
            return 1;
        }

        Query query = con.query();

        query << "select * from stock";
        cout << "Query: " << query.preview() << endl;

        Result res = query.store();
        cout << "Records Found: " << res.size() << endl << endl;

        Row row;
        cout.setf(ios::left);
        cout << setw(17) << "Item" <<
            setw(4) << "Num" <<
            setw(7) << "Weight" <<
            setw(7) << "Price" << "Date" << endl << endl;

        Result::iterator i;

        cout.precision(3);
        for (i = res.begin(); i != res.end(); i++) {
            row = *i;
            // Regarding the casts to double, we do this so that we can
            // set the display precision. ColData has the nice feature
            // that it will convert to any of the basic C++ types. If
            // there is a problem in the conversion it will throw an
            // exception (caught below). To test it, try changing the
            // row[2] to row[0] below.
            cout << setw(17) << row.lookup_by_name("ITEM") <<
                setw(4) << row[1] <<
                setw(7) << double(row[2]) <<
                setw(7) << double(row[3]);

            // The ColData is implicitly converted to a date here.
            Date date = row.lookup_by_name("SDATE");
            cout.setf(ios::right);
            cout.fill('0');
            cout << setw(2) << date.month << "-" << setw(2) <<
                date.day << endl;
            cout.fill(' ');
            cout.unsetf(ios::right);
        }

        return 0;
    }
    catch (BadQuery& er) {
        // Handle any connection or query errors that may come up
        cerr << "Error: " << er.what() << endl;
        return -1;
    }
    catch (BadConversion& er) {
```

```
        // Handle bad conversions
        cerr << "Error: " << er.what() << "\"." << endl
             << "retrieved data size: " << er.retrieved
             << " actual data size: " << er.actual_size << endl;
        return -1;
    }
    catch (exception& er) {
        cerr << "Error: " << er.what() << endl;
        return -1;
    }
}
```

Notes on exceptions

Everything should be fairly obvious. A few notes about exceptions, however:

1. When the `use_exceptions` flag is set for a parent object it is also set for all of the children it creates after the flag is set. For example when the `use_exceptions` flag is set for the `con` object, it is also set for the `query` object. Please note that the `use_exceptions` flag is not linked, it is copied. This means that when you change the `use_exceptions` flag only its new children are affected, not the ones it already created.
2. `ColData` will always throw an exception [[../refman/html/classmysqlpp_1_1BadConversion.html](http://refman/html/classmysqlpp_1_1BadConversion.html)] when it is unable to do a requested conversion. A bad conversion is defined as one where: a) all the characters from the string are not yet processed, and b) the remaining characters are something other than whitespace, zeros (0), or periods (.). This means that an exception is thrown when `1.25` is converted into an int, but not when `1.00` is converted into an int. In the latter case, MySQL++ knows that it can safely throw away the fractional part.

To see how the exceptions work, try creating an error. Some good things to try would be misspelling the table name or changing the double to an int.

Getting info about the fields

The following example demonstrates how to get some basic information about the fields, including the name of the field and the SQL type. This is `examples/fieldinf1.cpp`:

```
#include "util.h"

#include <mysql++.h>

#include <iostream>
#include <iomanip>

using namespace std;
using namespace mysqlpp;

int
main(int argc, char *argv[])
{
    try {
        Connection con(use_exceptions);
        if (!connect_to_db(argc, argv, con)) {
            return 1;
        }

        Query query = con.query();
        query << "select * from stock";
        cout << "Query: " << query.preview() << endl;

        Result res = query.store();
        cout << "Records Found: " << res.size() << endl << endl;
    }
}
```

```
cout << "Query Info:\n";
cout.setf(ios::left);

for (unsigned int i = 0; i < res.names().size(); i++) {
    cout << setw(2) << i
        // this is the name of the field
        << setw(15) << res.names(i).c_str()
        // this is the SQL identifier name
        // Result::types(unsigned int) returns a mysql_type_info which in many
        // ways is like type_info except that it has additional sql type
        // information in it. (with one of the methods being sql_name())
        << setw(15) << res.types(i).sql_name()
        // this is the C++ identifier name which most closely resembles
        // the sql name (its is implementation defined and often not very readable)
        << setw(20) << res.types(i).name()
        << endl;
}

cout << endl;

if (res.types(0) == typeid(string)) {
    // this is demonstrating how a mysql_type_info can be
    // compared with a C++ type_info.
    cout << "Field 'item' is of an SQL type which most "
        "closely resembles\nthe C++ string type\n";
}

if (res.types(1) == typeid(longlong)) {
    cout << "Field 'num' is of an SQL type which most "
        "closely resembles\nC++ long long int type\n";
}
else if (res.types(1).base_type() == typeid(longlong)) {
    // you have to be careful as if it can be null the actual
    // type is Null<TYPE> not TYPE. So you should always use
    // the base_type method to get at the underlying type.
    // If the type is not null than this base type would be
    // the same as its type.
    cout << "Field 'num' base type is of an SQL type which "
        "most closely\nresembles the C++ long long int type\n";
}

return 0;
}
catch (BadQuery& er) {
    // handle any connection or query errors that may come up
    cerr << "Error: " << er.what() << endl;
    return -1;
}
catch (BadConversion& er) {
    // handle bad conversions
    cerr << "Error: " << er.what() << "\n." << endl
        << "retrieved data size: " << er.retrieved
        << " actual data size: " << er.actual_size << endl;
    return -1;
}
catch (exception& er) {
    cerr << "Error: " << er.what() << endl;
    return -1;
}
}
```

3.3. Specialized SQL Structures

Retrieving data

The next example introduces one of the most powerful features of MySQL++: Specialized SQL Structures (SSQLS).

This is examples/custom1.cpp:

```
#include "util.h"

#include <mysql++.h>
#include <custom.h>

#include <iostream>
#include <iomanip>
#include <vector>

using namespace std;
using namespace mysqlpp;

sql_create_5(stock,          // struct name,
             1, 5,          // I'll explain these latter
             string, item,  // type, id
             longlong, num,
             double, weight,
             double, price,
             Date, sdate)

// this is calling a very complex macro which will create a custom
// struct "stock" which has the variables:
//   string item
//   int num
//   ...
//   Date sdate
// defined as well methods to help populate the class from a mysql row
// among other things that I'll get too in a latter example
int
main(int argc, char *argv[])
{
    try {                      // its in one big try block
        Connection con(use_exceptions);
        if (!connect_to_db(argc, argv, con)) {
            return 1;
        }

        Query query = con.query();
        query << "select * from stock";

        vector < stock > res;
        query.storein(res);
        // this is storing the results into a vector of the custom struct
        // "stock" which was created by the macro above.

        cout.setf(ios::left);
        cout << setw(17) << "Item"
              << setw(4) << "Num"
              << setw(7) << "Weight"
              << setw(7) << "Price" << "Date" << endl << endl;

        // Now we iterate through the vector using an iterator and
        // produce output similar to that using Row
        // Notice how we call the actual variables in i and not an index
        // offset. This is because the macro at the beginning of the file
        // set up an *actual* struct of type stock which contains the
        // variables item, num, weight, price, and data.

        cout.precision(3);
        vector<stock>::iterator i;
        for (i = res.begin(); i != res.end(); i++) {
            cout << setw(17) << i->item.c_str()
                  // unfortunately the gnu string class does not respond to format
                  // modifiers so I have to convert it to a const char *.
                  << setw(4) << i->num
                  << setw(7) << i->weight
                  << setw(7) << i->price << i->sdate << endl;
        }
    }
    return 0;
}
```

```
    }
    catch (BadQuery& er) {
        // handle any connection or query errors that may come up
        cerr << "Error: " << er.what() << endl;
        return -1;
    }
    catch (BadConversion& er) {
        // handle bad conversions
        cerr << "Error: " << er.what() << "\"." << endl
            << "retrieved data size: " << er.retrieved
            << " actual data size: " << er.actual_size << endl;
        return -1;
    }
    catch (exception & er) {
        cerr << "Error: " << er.what() << endl;
        return -1;
    }
}
```

As you can see, SSQLS is very powerful.

Adding data

SSQLS can also be used to add data to a table. This is examples/custom2.cpp:

```
#include "util.h"

#include <mysql++.h>
#include <custom.h>

#include <iostream>
#include <string>
#include <vector>

using namespace std;
using namespace mysqlpp;

sql_create_5(stock,
            1, 5,
            string, item,
            longlong, num,
            double, weight,
            double, price,
            Date, sdate)

int
main(int argc, char *argv[])
{
    try {
        Connection con(use_exceptions);
        if (!connect_to_db(argc, argv, con)) {
            return 1;
        }

        Query query = con.query();

        // create an empty stock object
        stock row;

        // populate stock
        row.set("Hot Dogs", 100, 1.5, 1.75, "1998-09-25");

        // form the query to insert the row
        // the table name is the name of the struct by default
        query.insert(row);
    }
```

```
// show the query about to be executed
cout << "Query : " << query.preview() << endl;

// execute a query that does not return a result set
query.execute();

// now print the new table;
print_stock_table(query);

}
catch (BadQuery& er) {
    // handle any connection or query errors that may come up
    cerr << "Error: " << er.what() << endl;
    return -1;
}
catch (BadConversion& er) {
    // handle bad conversions
    cerr << "Error: " << er.what() << "\"." << endl
        << "retrieved data size: " << er.retrieved
        << " actual data size: " << er.actual_size << endl;
    return -1;
}
catch (exception& er) {
    cerr << "Error: " << er.what() << endl;
    return -1;
}

return 0;
}
```

That's all there is to it. Because this example modifies the data you should run resetdb after running the example code.

Modifying data

It almost as easy to modify data with SSQLS. This is examples/custom3.cpp:

```
#include "util.h"

#include <mysql++.h>
#include <custom.h>

#include <iostream>
#include <string>
#include <vector>

using namespace std;
using namespace mysqlpp;

sql_create_5(stock,
            1, 5,
            string, item,
            longlong, num,
            double, weight,
            double, price,
            Date, sdate)

int
main(int argc, char *argv[])
{
    try {
        Connection con(use_exceptions);
        if (!connect_to_db(argc, argv, con)) {
            return 1;
        }
    }
}
```

```
Query query = con.query();
query << "select * from stock where item = \"Nürnberg Brats\"";

// Is the query was successful? If not throw a bad query.
Result res = query.store();
if (res.empty()) {
    throw BadQuery("UTF-8 bratwurst item not found in "
        "table, run resetdb");
}

// Because there should only be one row in the result set, we
// don't need to use a vector. Just store the first row
// directly in "row". We can do this because one of the
// constructors for stock takes a Row as a parameter.
stock row = res[0];

// Create a copy so that the replace query knows what the
// original values are.
stock row2 = row;

// Change item column to use only 7-bit ASCII, and to
// deliberately be wider than normal column widths printed by
// print_stock_table().
row.item = "Nuerenberger Bratwurst";

// Form the query to replace the row. The table name is the
// name of the struct by default.
query.update(row2, row);

// Show the query about to be executed.
cout << "Query : " << query.preview() << endl;

// Call execute(), since the query won't return a result set.
query.execute();

// Now print the new table
print_stock_table(query);
}
catch (BadQuery& er) {
    // handle any connection or query errors that may come up
    cerr << "Error: " << er.what() << endl;
    return -1;
}
catch (BadConversion& er) {
    // handle bad conversions
    cerr << "Error: " << er.what() << "\"." << endl
        << "retrieved data size: " << er.retrieved
        << " actual data size: " << er.actual_size << endl;
    return -1;
}
catch (exception& er) {
    cerr << "Error: " << er.what() << endl;
    return -1;
}
return 0;
}
```

When you run the example you will notice that in the WHERE clause only the 'item' field is checked for. This is because SSQSLs also also less-than-comparable.

Don't forget to run resetdb after running the example.

Less-than-comparable

SSQLS structures can be sorted and stored in STL associative containers as demonstrated in the next example. This is custom4.cpp:

```
#include "util.h"

#include <mysql++.h>
#include <custom.h>

#include <iostream>
#include <iomanip>
#include <string>
#include <vector>

using namespace std;
using namespace mysqlpp;

sql_create_5(stock,
    1, // This number is used to make a SSQLS less-than-comparable.
      // When comparing two SSQLS structures, the first N elements are
      // compared. In this instance, we are saying that we only want
      // the first element ('item') to be used when comparing two
      // stock structures.

    5, // Each SSQLS structure includes a number of constructors. Some
      // of these are fixed in nature, but one of these will have this
      // number of arguments, one for each of the first N elements in
      // the structure; it is an initialization ctor. Since N is the
      // same as the number of structure elements in this instance,
      // that ctor will be able to fully initialize the structure. This
      // behavior is not always wanted, however, so the macro allows
      // you make the constructor take fewer parameters, leaving the
      // remaining elements uninitialized. An example of when this is
      // necessary is when you have a structure containing only two
      // integer elements: one of the other ctors defined for SSQLS
      // structures takes two ints, so the compiler barfs if you pass
      // 2 for this argument. You would need to pass 0 here to get
      // that SSQLS structure to compile.
    string, item,
    longlong, num,
    double, weight,
    double, price,
    Date, sdate)

int
main(int argc, char *argv[])
{
    try {
        Connection con(use_exceptions);
        if (!connect_to_db(argc, argv, con)) {
            return 1;
        }

        Query query = con.query();

        query << "select * from stock";

        // here we are storing the elements in a set not a vector.
        set <stock> res;
        query.storein(res);

        cout.setf(ios::left);
        cout << setw(17) << "Item"
              << setw(4) << "Num"
              << setw(7) << "Weight"
              << setw(7) << "Price" << "Date" << endl << endl;

        // Now we we iterate through the set. Since it is a set the list will
        // naturally be in order.
        set<stock>::iterator i;
        cout.precision(3);
```

```
for (i = res.begin(); i != res.end(); ++i) {
    cout << setw(17) << i->item.c_str()
        << setw(4) << i->num
        << setw(7) << i->weight
        << setw(7) << i->price << i->sdate << endl;
}

i = res.find(stock("Hamburger Buns"));
if (i != res.end()) {
    cout << "Hamburger Buns found. Currently " << i->num <<
        " in stock.\n";
}
else {
    cout << "Sorry no Hamburger Buns found in stock\n";
}

// Now we are using the set's find method to find out how many
// Hamburger Buns are in stock.

return 0;
}
catch (BadQuery& er) {
    // handle any connection or query errors that may come up
    cerr << "Error: " << er.what() << endl;
    return -1;
}
catch (BadConversion& er) {
    // handle bad conversions
    cerr << "Error: " << er.what() << "\n." << endl
        << "retrieved data size: " << er.retrieved
        << " actual data size: " << er.actual_size << endl;
    return -1;
}
catch (exception& er) {
    cerr << "Error: " << er.what() << endl;
    return -1;
}

return 0;
}
```

3.4. Which Query Type to Use?

There are three major ways to execute a query in MySQL++: `Query::execute()`, `Query::store()`, and `Query::use()`. Which should you use, and why?

`execute()` is for queries that do not return data *per se*. For instance, `CREATE INDEX`. You do get back some information from the MySQL server, which `execute()` returns to its caller in a `ResNSel` [[../refman/html/classmysqlpp_1_1ResNSel.html](http://refman/html/classmysqlpp_1_1ResNSel.html)] object. In addition to the obvious — a flag stating whether the query succeeded or not — this object also contains things like the number of rows that the query affected. If you only need the success status, there's `Query::exec()`, which just returns `bool`.

If your query does pull data from the database, the simplest option is `store()`. This returns a `Result` [[../refman/html/classmysqlpp_1_1Result.html](http://refman/html/classmysqlpp_1_1Result.html)] object, which contains an in-memory copy of the result set. The nice thing about this is that `Result` is a sequential container, like `std::vector`, so you can iterate through it forwards and backwards, access elements with subscript notation, etc. There are also the `storein()` methods, which actually put the result set into an STL container of your choice. The downside of these methods is that a sufficiently large result set will give your program memory problems.

For these large result sets, you should use the `use()` method instead. This returns a `ResUse` [[../refman/html/classmysqlpp_1_1ResUse.html](http://refman/html/classmysqlpp_1_1ResUse.html)] object, which is similar to `Result`, but without all of the random-access features. This is because a "use" query tells the database server to send the results back one row at a time, to be processed linearly. It's analogous to a C++ stream's input iterator, as opposed to a random-access iterator that a con-

tainer like vector offers. By accepting this limitation, you can process arbitrarily large result sets.

3.5. Let's Do Something Useful

These next few examples demonstrate just how powerful C++ can be, allowing you to do a lot of work in few lines of code without losing efficiency.

Since the code is meant to be re-used as-is, constants that can differ from one case to another have been grouped in order to simplify editing. Also, all of these examples have full error checking code, showing off the power of MySQL++'s exception handling features.

Loading binary file in a BLOB column

Since MySQL 3.23, BLOB columns have been available, but their use is sometimes not straightforward. Besides showing how easy it can be with MySQL++, this example demonstrates several features of MySQL++. The program requires one command line parameter, which is a full path to the binary file. This is examples/load_file.cpp:

```
#include <mysql++.h>

#include <sys/stat.h>

#include <fstream>

#include <errno.h>
#include <stdlib.h>

using namespace std;
using namespace mysqlpp;

const char MY_DATABASE[] = "telcent";
const char MY_TABLE[] = "fax";
const char MY_HOST[] = "localhost";
const char MY_USER[] = "root";
const char MY_PASSWORD[] = "";
const char MY_FIELD[] = "fax"; // BLOB field

int
main(int argc, char *argv[])
{
    if (argc < 2) {
        cerr << "Usage : load_file full_file_path" << endl << endl;
        return -1;
    }

    Connection con(use_exceptions);
    try {
        con.real_connect(MY_DATABASE, MY_HOST, MY_USER, MY_PASSWORD, 3306,
                        0, 60, NULL);
        Query query = con.query();
        ostringstream strbuf;
        ifstream In(argv[1], ios::in | ios::binary);
        struct stat for_len;
        if ((In.rdbuf()->is_open()) {
            if (stat(argv[1], &for_len) == -1)
                return -1;
            unsigned int blen = for_len.st_size;
            if (!blen)
                return -1;
            char *read_buffer = new char[blen];
            In.read(read_buffer, blen);
            string fill(read_buffer, blen);
            strbuf << "INSERT INTO " << MY_TABLE << " (" << MY_FIELD <<
                " ) VALUES(\"" << mysqlpp::escape << fill << "\"" << ends;
            query.exec(strbuf.str());
            delete[] read_buffer;
        }
    }
    else
```

```
        cerr << "Your binary file " << argv[1] <<
            "could not be open, errno = " << errno;
        return 0;
    }
    catch (BadQuery& er) {
        // handle any connection or query errors that may come up
        cerr << "Error: " << er.what() << " " << con.errnum() << endl;
        return -1;
    }
    catch (BadConversion& er) {
        // handle bad conversions
        cerr << "Error: " << er.what() << "\"." << endl
            << "retrieved data size: " << er.retrieved
            << " actual data size: " << er.actual_size << endl;
        return -1;
    }
    catch (exception& er) {
        cerr << "Error: " << er.what() << endl;
        return -1;
    }
}
```

One of the features of this example is the use of the escape manipulator [\[../../refman/html/namespacemysqlpp.html#escape_manip\]](#). Although the library does have automatic quoting and escaping, it is only supported for ColData, as that class contains the necessary type information. Rather than force MySQL++ to scan the string to determine whether quoting and escaping is necessary, it was decided to leave the choice of quoting and escaping to the user for all other types.

Displaying images in HTML from BLOB column

This example is also a very short one, considering the function that it performs. Although all modern versions of MySQL have a command that dumps data from BLOB column to a binary file, this example shows how to do it in your code instead, without requiring an temporary file on disk. This is examples/cgi_image.cpp:

```
#include <mysql++.h>

using namespace std;
using namespace mysqlpp;

#define MY_DATABASE "telcent"
#define MY_TABLE "fax"
#define MY_HOST "localhost"
#define MY_USER "root"
#define MY_PASSWORD ""
#define MY_FIELD "fax" // BLOB field
#define MY_KEY "datet" // PRIMARY KEY

int
main(int argc, char *argv[])
{
    if (argc < 2) {
        cerr << "Usage : cgi_image primary_key_value" << endl << endl;
        return -1;
    }

    cout << "Content-type: image/jpeg" << endl;
    Connection con(use_exceptions);
    try {
        con.real_connect(MY_DATABASE, MY_HOST, MY_USER, MY_PASSWORD, 3306,
            0, 60, NULL);
        Query query = con.query();
        query << "SELECT " << MY_FIELD << " FROM " << MY_TABLE << " WHERE "
            << MY_KEY << " = " << argv[1];
        ResUse res = query.use();
```



```
        Row row = res.fetch_row();
        long unsigned int *jj = res.fetch_lengths();
        cout << "Content-length: " << *jj << endl << endl;
        fwrite(row.raw_data(0), 1, *jj, stdout);
        return 0;
    }
    catch (BadQuery& er) {
        cerr << "Error: " << er.what() << " " << con.errnum() << endl;
        return -1;
    }
    catch (exception& er) {
        cerr << "Error: " << er.what() << endl;
        return -1;
    }
}
```

DELETE or UPDATE from SELECT

MySQL's SELECT statement has more power to winnow out just the items of interest from the database than do DELETE or UPDATE. Therefore, many people have wanted the ability to execute a SELECT statement that in fact deletes or updates the rows matched, rather than returning them. This example implements that feature in just a few lines of code. It is examples/updel.cpp:

```
#include <mysql++.h>

#include <string>

using namespace std;
using namespace mysqlpp;

#define MY_DATABASE "telcent"
#define MY_TABLE    "nazivi"
#define MY_HOST     "localhost"
#define MY_USER     "root"
#define MY_PASSWORD ""
#define MY_FIELD    "naziv"
#define MY_QUERY    "SELECT URL from my_table as t1, my_table as t2 where t1.field = t2.field"

int
main()
{
    Connection con(use_exceptions);
    try {
        ostringstream strbuf;
        unsigned int i = 0;
        con.real_connect(MY_DATABASE, MY_HOST, MY_USER, MY_PASSWORD, 3306,
                        0, 60, NULL);
        Query query = con.query();
        query << MY_QUERY;
        ResUse res = query.use();
        Row row;
        strbuf << "delete from " << MY_TABLE << " where " << MY_FIELD <<
            " in ("
            // for UPDATE just replace the above DELETE FROM with UPDATE statement
            for (; row = res.fetch_row(); i++)
                strbuf << row[0] << ",";
            if (!i)
                return 0;
        string output(strbuf.str());
        output.erase(output.size() - 1, 1);
        output += ")";
        query.exec(output); // cout << output << endl;
        return 0;
    }
    catch (BadQuery& er) {
```

```
        // handle any connection or query errors that may come up
        cerr << "Error: " << er.what() << " " << con.errnum() << endl;
        return -1;
    }
    catch (BadConversion& er) {
        cerr << "Error: " << er.what() << "\"." << endl
            << "retrieved data size: " << er.retrieved
            << " actual data size: " << er.actual_size << endl;
        return -1;
    }
    catch (exception& er) {
        cerr << "Error: " << er.what() << endl;
        return -1;
    }
}
```

Notice that the row values used in the IN clause aren't escaped or quoted. This is because row elements are ColData [../refman/html/classmysqlpp_1_1ColData__Tmpl.html] types, so they have automatic escaping and quoting, as appropriate to the type being inserted. If you want to disable this feature, it's easily done: click the ColData link for the details.

Users of this example should beware that one more check is required in order to run this query safely: in some extreme cases, the size of the query might grow larger than MySQL's maximum allowed packet size. This check should be added.

4. Template Queries

Another powerful feature of MySQL++ is being able to set up template queries. These are kind of like C's printf() facility: you give MySQL++ a string containing the fixed parts of the query and placeholders for the variable parts, and you can later substitute in values into those placeholders.

The following example demonstrates how to use this feature. This is the program you've run a few times now if you've worked through all the examples, resetdb.cpp:

```
#include "util.h"

#include <mysql++.h>

#include <iostream>

using namespace std;

int
main(int argc, char *argv[])
{
    mysqlpp::Connection con(mysqlpp::use_exceptions);
    try {
        if (!connect_to_db(argc, argv, con, "")) {
            return 1;
        }
    }
    catch (exception& er) {
        cerr << "Connection failed: " << er.what() << endl;
        return 1;
    }

    bool created = false;
    try {
        con.select_db(kpcSampleDatabase);
    }
    catch (mysqlpp::BadQuery &) {
        // Couldn't switch to the sample database, so assume that it
        // doesn't exist and create it. If that doesn't work, exit
        // with an error.
    }
}
```

```
    if (con.create_db(kpcSampleDatabase)) {
        cerr << "Failed to create sample database: " <<
            con.error() << endl;
        return 1;
    }
    else if (!con.select_db(kpcSampleDatabase)) {
        cerr << "Failed to select sample database." << endl;
        return 1;
    }
    else {
        created = true;
    }
}

mysqlpp::Query query = con.query(); // create a new query object

try {
    query.execute("drop table stock");
}
catch (mysqlpp::BadQuery&) {
    // ignore any errors
}

try {
    // Send the query to create the table and execute it.
    query << "create table stock (item char(20) not null, num bigint,"
        << "weight double, price double, sdate date)";
    query.execute();

    // Set up the template query to insert the data. The parse
    // call tells the query object that this is a template and
    // not a literal query string.
    query << "insert into %5:table values (%0q, %1q, %2, %3, %4q)";
    query.parse();

    // This is setting the parameter named table to stock.
    query.def["table"] = "stock";

    // The last parameter "table" is not specified here. Thus the
    // default value for "table" is used, which is "stock". Also
    // notice that the first row is a UTF-8 encoded Unicode string!
    // All you have to do to store Unicode data in recent versions
    // of MySQL is use UTF-8 encoding.
    query.execute("Nürnberg Brats", 92, 1.5, 8.79, "2005-03-10");
    query.execute("Pickle Relish", 87, 1.5, 1.75, "1998-09-04");
    query.execute("Hot Mustard", 75, .95, .97, "1998-05-25");
    query.execute("Hotdog Buns", 65, 1.1, 1.1, "1998-04-23");

    if (created) {
        cout << "Created";
    }
    else {
        cout << "Reinitialized";
    }
    cout << " sample database successfully." << endl;
}
catch (mysqlpp::BadQuery& er) {
    // Handle any connection or query errors that may come up
    cerr << "Error: " << er.what() << endl;
    return 1;
}
catch (mysqlpp::BadConversion& er) {
    // Handle bad conversions
    cerr << "Error: " << er.what() << "\"." << endl
        << "retrieved data size: " << er.retrieved
        << " actual data size: " << er.actual_size << endl;
    return 1;
}
catch (exception& er) {
    cerr << "Error: " << er.what() << endl;
    return 1;
}
```

```
}  
}
```

The line just before the call to `query.parse()` sets the template, and the parse call puts it into effect. From that point on, you can re-use this query by calling any of several Query member functions that accept query template parameters. In this example, we're using `Query::execute()`.

Let's dig into this feature a little deeper.

4.1. Setting up template queries

To set up a template query, you simply insert it into the Query object, using numbered placeholders wherever you want to be able to change the query. Then, you call the `parse()` function to tell the Query object that the query string is a template query, and it needs to parse it:

```
query << "select (%2:field1, %3:field2) from stock where  
           %1:wheref = %q0:what";  
query.parse();
```

The format of the placeholder is:

```
%(modifier)##(:name)(:)
```

Where Modifier can be any one of the following:

%	Print an actual "%"
""	Don't quote or escape no matter what.
q	This will quote and escape the item using the MySQL C API function <code>mysql_escape_string()</code> if it is a string or char *, or another MySQL-specific type that needs to be quoted.
Q	Quote but don't escape based on the same rules as for 'q'. This can save a bit of processing time if you know the strings will never need quoting
r	Always quote and escape even if it is a number.
R	Always quote but don't escape even if it is a number.

`##` represents a number up to two digits. It is the order of parameters given to a `SQLQueryParms` [[../refman/html/classmysqlpp_1_1SQLQueryParms.html](#)] object, starting from 0.

`:name` is for an optional name which aids in filling `SQLQueryParms`. Name can contain any alpha-numeric characters or the underscore. If you add this, it must start with a letter. If this is not the case, add a colon after the name. If you need to represent an actual colon after the name, follow the name with two colons. The first one will end the name and the second one won't be processed.

4.2. Setting the parameters at execution time

To specify the parameters when you want to execute a query simply use `Query::store(const SQLString &parm0, [..., const SQLString &parm11])`. This type of multiple overload also exists for `Query::use()` and `Query::execute()`. 'parm0' corresponds to the first parameter, etc. You may specify up to 12 parameters. For example:

```
Result res = query.store("Dinner Rolls", "item", "item", "price")
```

with the template query provided above would produce:

```
select (item, price) from stock where item = "Dinner Rolls"
```

The reason we didn't put the template parameters in numeric order...

```
select (%0:field1, %1:field2) from stock where %2:wheref = %q3:what
```

...will become apparent shortly.

4.3. Using defaults

You can also set the parameters one at a time by means of class `Query`'s public data member `def`. To change the values of the `def`, simply use the subscript operator. You can refer to the parameters either by number or by name. The following two examples have the same effect:

```
query.def[0] = "Dinner Rolls";  
query.def[1] = "item";  
query.def[2] = "item";  
query.def[3] = "price";
```

and

```
query.def["what"] = "Dinner Rolls";  
query.def["wheref"] = "item";  
query.def["field1"] = "item";  
query.def["field2"] = "price";
```

Once all the parameters are set simply execute as you would have executed the query before you knew about template queries:

```
Result res = query.store()
```

4.4. Combining the two

You can also combine the use of setting the parameters at execution time and setting them via the `def` object by calling `Query::store()` (or `use()` or `execute()`) without passing the full number of parameters that the template supports:

```
query.def["field1"] = "item";  
query.def["field2"] = "price";  
Result res1 = query.store("Hamburger Buns", "item");  
Result res2 = query.store(1.25, "price");
```

Would store the query:

```
select (item, price) from stock where item = "Hamburger Buns"
```

for `res1` and

```
select (item, price) from stock where price = 1.25
```

for res2.

Now you see why we ordered the placeholders in the template above as we did: we used positions 0 and 1 for the ones we want to change frequently, and used 2 and 3 for the parameters that seldom change.

One thing to watch out for, however, is that `Query::store(const char* q)` is also defined for executing the query `q`. Therefore, when you call `Query::store()` (or `use()`, or `execute()`) with only one item and that item is a `const char*`, you need to explicitly convert it into a `SQLString` to get the right overload:

```
Result res = query.store(SQLString("Hamburger Buns"));
```

4.5. Error Handling

If for some reason you did not specify all the parameters when executing the query and the remaining parameters do not have their values set via `def`, the query object will throw a `SQLQueryNEParms` [http://refman/html/classmysqlpp_1_1SQLQueryNEParms.html] object. If this happens, you can get an explanation of what happened by checking the value of `SQLQueryNEParms::string`, like so:

```
query.def["field1"] = "item";  
query.def["field2"] = "price";  
Result res = query.store(1.25);
```

This would throw `SQLQueryNEParms` because the `wheref` is not specified.

In theory, this exception should never be thrown. If the exception is thrown it probably a logic error in your program.

5. Specialized SQL Structures

The Specialized SQL Structure (SSQLS) feature lets you easily define C++ structures that match the form of your SQL tables. Because of the extra functionality that this feature builds into these structures, MySQL++ can populate them automatically when retrieving data from the database; with queries returning many records, you can ask MySQL++ to populate an STL container of your SSQLS records with the results. When updating the database, MySQL++ can use SSQLS structures to match existing data, and it can insert SSQLS structures directly into the database.

You define an SSQLS using one of several macros. (These are in the file `custom.h`, and in the file that it includes, `custom-macros.h`.) There are a bunch of different macros, for different purposes. The following sections will discuss each macro type separately, beginning with the easiest and most generally useful.

5.1. `sql_create`

This is the most basic sort of SSQLS declaration:

```
sql_create_5(stock, 0, 0,  
            string, item,  
            int, num,  
            double, weight,  
            double, price,  
            mysqlpp::Date, date)
```

This creates a C++ structure called 'stock' containing five member variables, along with some constructors and other member functions useful with MySQL++.

One of the generated constructors takes a reference to a `mysqlpp::Row` object, allowing you to easily populate a vector of stocks like so:

```
vector<stock> result;
query.storein(result);
```

That's all there is to it. The only requirements are that the table structure be compatible with the SSQLS's member variables, and that the fields are in the same order.

The general format of this set of macros is:

```
sql_create_#(NAME, KEYS, INITPARMS, TYPE1, ITEM1, ... TYPE#, ITEM#)
```

Where `#` is the number of member variables, `NAME` is the name of the structure you wish to create, `TYPEx` is the type name for a member variable, and `ITEMx` is that variable's name.

The `KEYS` and `INITPARMS` arguments can always be zero, to keep things simple. We will discuss what happens if you use different values in the next few sections.

5.2. sql_create with Compare

SSQLS structures can also have member functions that allow you to compare one structure to another. You simply change the first 0 in the previous example (`KEYS`) to a higher value. If this number is `N`, then two structures are considered equal if the first `N` members of each are equal.

For example:

```
sql_create_5(stock, 1, 0,
             string, item,
             int, num,
             double, weight,
             double, price,
             mysqlpp::Date, date)
```

Here we are saying that the 'item' field is a kind of key field: it is always unique between any two 'stock' items, so if two stock records have equal item values, they are the same stock item.

That change adds the following members to the SSQLS:

```
struct stock {
    ...
    stock (const std::string &p1);
    set (const std::string &p1);
    bool operator == (const stock &other) const;
    bool operator != (const stock &other) const;
    bool operator > (const stock &other) const;
    bool operator < (const stock &other) const;
    bool operator >= (const stock &other) const;
    bool operator <= (const stock &other) const;
    int cmp (const stock &other) const;
    int compare (const stock &other) const;
}

int compare (const stock &x, const stock &y);
```

The global `compare()` function compares `x` to `y` and returns `<0` if `x < y`, `0` if `x = y`, and `>0` if `x > y`. `stock::cmp()` and `stock::compare()` are the same thing as `compare(*this, other)`.

The additional constructor initializes the key fields of the structure and leaves the other member variables undefined. This is useful for creating temporary objects to use for comparisons like `x <= stock("Hotdog")`.

Because stock is now less-than-comparable you can store the query results in an STL associative container:

```
std::set<stock> result;
query.storein(result);
```

And you can now use it like any other set:

```
cout << result.lower_bound(stock("Hamburger"))->item << endl;
```

This will return the first item that begins with "Hamburger".

You can also use it with any STL algorithm that requires the values to be less-than-comparable.

5.3. sql_create with Additional Initializers

If third parameter for this macro (INITPARMS) is nonzero, the SSQS will have two additional member functions that make it easier to initialize the structure's data members. For example:

```
sql_create_5(stock, 1, 5,
             string, item,
             int, num,
             double, weight,
             double, price,
             mysqlpp::Date, date)
```

will add these functions to the structure relative to that in the previous example:

```
struct stock {
    ...
    stock(const string&, const int&, const double&,
          const double&, const mysqlpp::Date&);
    set(const string&, const int&, const double&,
         const double&, const mysqlpp::Date&);
}
```

There is one trick with this: because each SSQS has at least one other constructor besides the one defined by this feature, not every logical value for INITPARMS results in working code. A simple example is setting KEYS and INITPARMS to the same value: you get two identical constructor definitions, so the compiler refuses to compile the code. If you are getting compiler errors having to do with duplicate definitions, try changing this value to zero.

5.4. Additional Features of Specialized SQL Structures

Up to this point, we haven't been using all of the features in the SSQS structures we've been generating. We could have used the `sql_create_basic_*` macros instead, which would have worked just as well for what we've seen so far, and the generated code would have been smaller.

Why is it worth ignoring the "basic" variants of these macros, then? Consider this:

```
query.insert(s);
```

this does exactly what you think it does: it inserts 's' into the database. this is possible because a standard ssqs has functions that the query object can call to get the list of fields and such, which it uses to build an insert query. `query::update()` and `query::replace()` also rely on this ssqs feature. a basic ssqs lacks these functions.

another feature of standard ssqs you might find a use for is changing the table name used in queries. by default, the table in the mysql database is assumed to have the same name as the ssqs structure type. but if this is inconvenient, you can globally change the table name used in queries like this:


```
stock::table() = "mystockdata";
```

at this point, we've seen all the major aspects of the `ssqls` feature. the following sections look at some alternate methods for constructing `ssqls`es.

5.5. alternate creation methods

if for some reason you want your `ssqls` data members to have different names than used in the `mysql` database, you can do so like this:

```
sql_create_c_names_5(stock, 1, 5,
    string, item, "item",
    int, num, "quantity",
    double, weight, "weight",
    double, price, "price"
    mysqlpp::Date, date, "shipment")
```

If you want your `SSQLS` to have its data members in a different order from those in the `MySQL` table, you can do it like this:

```
sql_create_c_order_5(stock, 2, 5,
    mysqlpp::Date, date, 5,
    double, price, 4,
    string, item, 1,
    int, num, 2,
    double, weight, 3)
```

You can combine the custom names and custom ordering like this:

```
sql_create_complete_5(stock, 2, 5,
    mysqlpp::date, date, "shipment", 5,
    double, price, "price", 4,
    string, item, "item", 1,
    int, num, "quantity", 2,
    double, weight, "weight", 3)
```

all three of these macro types have "basic" variants that work the same way. again, basic `ssqls`es lack the features necessary for automatic insert, update and replace query creation.

5.6. expanding `ssqls` macros

if you ever need to see the code that a given `ssqls` declaration expands out to, use the utility `doc/ssqls-pretty`, like so:

```
ssqls-pretty < myprog.cpp |less
```

This locates the first `SSQLS` declaration in that file and uses the C++ preprocessor to expand that macro. You may have to change the script to tell it where your `MySQL++` header files are.

5.7. Extending the `SSQLS` Mechanism

The `SSQLS` headers — `custom.h` and `custom-macros.h` — are automatically generated by the Perl script `custom.pl`. Although it is possible to change this script to get additional functionality, it's usually better to do that through inheritance.

A regular user may find it helpful to change the the limit on the maximum number of `SSQLS` data members allowed. It's 25 out of the box. A smaller value may speed up compile time, or you may require a higher value because you have more complex tables than that. Simply change the `max_data_members` variable at the top of `custom.pl`

and say 'make'. The limit for Visual C++ is 31, according to one report. There doesn't seem to be a practical limit with GCC 3.3 at least: I set the limit to 100 and the only thing that happened is that custom-macros.h went from 1.3 MB to 18 MB and the build time for examples/custom.* got a lot longer.

6. Using Unicode with MySQL++

6.1. A Short History of Unicode

...with a focus on relevance to MySQL++

In the old days, computer operating systems only dealt with 8-bit character sets. This only gives you 256 possible characters, but the modern Western languages have more than that by themselves. Add in all the other languages of the world, plus the various symbols people use, and you have a real mess! Since no standards body held sway over things like international character encoding in the early days of computing, many different character sets were invented. These character sets weren't even standardized between operating systems, so heaven help you if you needed to move localized Greek text on a Windows machine to a Russian Macintosh! The only way we got any international communication done at all was to build standards on the common 7-bit ASCII subset. Either people used approximations like a plain "c" instead of the French "ç", or they invented things like HTML entities ("ç" in this case) to encode these additional characters using only 7-bit ASCII.

Unicode solves this problem. It encodes every character in the world, using up to 4 bytes per character. The subset covering the most economically valuable cases takes two bytes per character, so most Unicode-aware programs limit themselves to this set, for efficiency.

Unfortunately, Unicode came about 20 years too late for Unix and C. Converting the Unix system call interface to Unicode would break all existing programs. The ISO lashed a wide character sidecar [<http://www.jargon.net/jargonfile/s/sidecar.html>] onto C in 1995, but in common practice C is still tied to 8-bit characters.

As Unicode began to take off in the early 1990s, it became clear that some sort of accommodation with Unicode was needed in legacy systems like Unix and C. During the development of the Plan 9 [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plan_9_from_Bell_Labs] operating system (a kind of successor to Unix) Ken Thompson invented [<http://www.cl.cam.ac.uk/~mgk25/ucs/utf-8-history.txt>] the UTF-8 encoding [<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/UTF-8>]. Since UTF-8 is a superset of 7-bit ASCII, many programs that deal in text actually get by okay without any explicit support for UTF-8.

The MySQL database server comes out of the Unix/C tradition, so it only supports 8-bit characters natively. UTF-8 data is compatible with C strings, so all versions of MySQL could store UTF-8 data, but sometimes the database actually needs to understand the data. When sorting, for instance. To support this, explicit UTF-8 support was added to MySQL in version 4.1.

Because MySQL++ does not need to know anything about the flowing through it, it doesn't have explicit UTF-8 support. C++'s `std::string` stores UTF-8 data just fine. But, your program probably *does* care about the data coming from MySQL++. The remainder of this chapter covers the choices you have for dealing with UTF-8 encoded Unicode data.

6.2. Unicode and Unix

Modern Unices support UTF-8 natively. Red Hat Linux, for instance, has had system-wide UTF-8 support since version 8. This continues in the commercial and Fedora forks of Red Hat Linux, of course.

On such a Unix, the terminal I/O code understands UTF-8 encoded data, so your program doesn't require any special code to correctly display a UTF-8 string. If you aren't sure whether your system supports UTF-8 natively, just run the simple1 example: if the first item has two high-ASCII characters in place of the "ü" in "Nürnberger Brats", you know it's not handling UTF-8.

If your Unix doesn't support UTF-8 natively, it likely doesn't support any form of Unicode at all, for the historical reasons I gave above. Therefore, you will have to convert the UTF-8 data to the local 8-bit character set. The standard Unix function `iconv()` can help here. If your system doesn't have the `iconv()` facility, there is a free imple-

mentation [<http://www.gnu.org/software/libiconv/>] available from the GNU Project. Another library you might check out is IBM's ICU [<http://icu.sourceforge.net/>]. This is rather heavy-weight, so if you just need basic conversions, `iconv()` should suffice.

6.3. Unicode and Win32

Each Win32 API function that takes a string actually has two versions. One version supports only 1-byte "ANSI" characters (a superset of ASCII), so they end in 'A'. Win32 also supports the 2-byte subset of Unicode called UCS-2 [<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/UCS-2>]. Some call these "wide" characters, so the other set of functions end in 'W'.

The `MessageBox` [<http://msdn.microsoft.com/library/en-us/winui/winui/windowsuserinterface/windowing/dialogboxes/dialogboxreference/dialogboxfunctions/messagebox.asp>]() API, for instance, is actually a macro, not a real function. If you define the `UNICODE` macro when building your program, the `MessageBox()` macro evaluates to `MessageBoxW()`; otherwise, to `MessageBoxA()`.

Since MySQL uses UTF-8 and Win32 uses UCS-2, you must convert data going between the Win32 API and MySQL++. Since there's no point in trying for portability — no other OS I'm aware of uses UCS-2 — you might as well use native Win32 functions for doing this translation. The following code is distilled from `utf8_to_win32_ansi()` in `examples/util.cpp`:

```
void utf8_to_win32_ansi(const char* utf8_str, char* ansi_str, int ansi_len)
{
    wchar_t ucs2_buf[100];
    static const int ub_chars = sizeof(ucs2_buf) / sizeof(ucs2_buf[0]);

    MultiByteToWideChar(CP_UTF8, 0, utf8_str, -1, ucs2_buf, ub_chars);
    CPINFOEX cpi;
    GetCPInfoEx(CP_OEMCP, 0, &cpi);
    WideCharToMultiByte(cpi.CodePage, 0, ucs2_buf, -1,
        ansi_str, ansi_len, 0, 0);
}
```

To see this in action, uncomment `#define USE_WIN32_UCS2` at the top of `util.cpp`, build the example programs, and run `simple1` in a console window (a.k.a. "DOS box"). The first item should be "Nürnberg Brats". If not, see the last paragraph in this section.

`utf8_to_win32_ansi()` converts `utf8_str` from UTF-8 to UCS-2, and from there to the local code page [http://msdn.microsoft.com/library/default.asp?url=/library/en-us/intl/unicode_81rn.asp]. "Waitaminnit," you shout! "I thought we were trying to get away from the problem of local code pages!" The console is one of the few Win32 facilities that doesn't support UCS-2 by default. It can be put into UCS-2 mode [<http://www.answers.com/topic/win32-console>], but that seems like more work than we'd like to go to in a portable example program. Since the default code page in most versions of Windows includes the "ü" character used in the sample database, this conversion works out fine for our purposes.

If your program is using the GUI to display text, you don't need the second conversion. Prove this to yourself by adding the following to `utf8_to_win32_ansi()` after the `MultiByteToWideChar()` call:

```
MessageBox(0, ucs2_buf, "UCS-2 version of Item", MB_OK);
```

All of this assumes you're using Windows NT or one of its direct descendants: Windows 2000, Windows XP, Windows 2003 Server, and someday "Longhorn". Windows 95/98/ME and Windows CE do not support UCS-2. They still have the 'W' APIs for compatibility, but they just smash the data down to 8-bit and call the 'A' version for you.

6.4. For More Information

The Unicode FAQs [<http://www.unicode.org/faq/>] page has copious information on this complex topic.

When it comes to Unix and UTF-8 specific items, the UTF-8 and Unicode FAQ for Unix/Linux [<http://www.cl.cam.ac.uk/~mgk25/unicode.html>] is a quicker way to find basic information.

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Version 2.1, February 1999

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That's all there is to it!