Second Edition

Helen Borrie

The Firebird Book

A Reference for Database Developers

An essential guide for developers and administrators working with any version of the Firebird open source relational database management system

IBPhoenix Publications

Reverse of Cover

The Firebird Book

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by Helen Borrie

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The Firebird Book (Second Edition): A Reference for Database Developers

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AUTHOR'S FOREWORD

This, the second edition of The Firebird Book, has been gestating for more than seven years, since the first edition in August, 2004. The first book's milestone was Firebird 1.5. Its objective was to to provide an up-to-date working reference for developers, whether coming to Firebird from another database management system or moving into it with past experience in its closed source cousin, InterBase.

In the intervening years, Firebird has evolved through three further major versions: 2.0, 2.1 and 2.5. At the time of this writing, all three are still under maintenance and the re-architected version 3.0 is in alpha development. Maintenance of version 1.5 ceased in 2009.

The energy and dedication of Firebird's development team continue to be a source of wonder and inspiration to me and, I'm sure, to anyone else who works with Firebird. The polyglot Core team—Dmitry Yemanov, Vlad Khorsun, Alex Peshkov and Adriano dos Santos Fernandes—works closely and tirelessly under Dmitry's chieftainship. Pavel Cisar and Philippe Makowski perform quality assurance testing and Claudio Valderrama is responsible for scrutinising incoming code changes. Claudio's hand is often seen in improvements to the command-line tools, as well.

Because Firebird is distributed free, in all senses of the word, it produces no revenue to pay salaries to the code workers. Except for the QA people, these volunteers depend on Firebird Foundation grants to supplement their incomes to make space for their Firebird work.

The Firebird Foundation is funded by donations, cash sponsorships and membership subscriptions from individuals and companies that perceive and acknowledge the benefits of using Firebird and keeping it under active development. You can view the current list of sponsors at *http://www.firebirdsql.org/en/sponsors/*. Bless 'em all!

Some sponsors contribute much more than cash. IBPhoenix, for example, contributes the manpower for QA, binary builds and basic documentation. Neither this book nor its predecessor would have come to fruition without IBPhoenix funding. Broadview Software hosts the issue tracker, pre-release and build servers while IBSurgeon funds the hosting and development of the Firebird web site at www.firebirdsql.org.

Amongst the volunteers who contribute their time and expertise to the Firebird Project without grants I must name Paul Vinkenoog, who has been almost single-handedly responsible for filling the free documentation gap between the legacy InterBase manuals and the release notes that are distributed with the binary kits. It is a vast and ongoing task that is often thankless. At the time of writing this, Paul is working with Dmitry Yemanov to produce comprehensive on-line SQL documentation that will not be inhibited by the copyright issues that prohibit reuse of the legacy InterBase material.

Under the Firebird Project umbrella, volunteers also develop and maintain several of the drivers and language interfaces for Firebird—Jaybird (for Java), the Firebird .NET providers, the ODBC driver and the interfaces for PHP and Python.

If you are coming to Firebird as a newcomer, welcome! I wish you a long and happy experience with our software. To you and to those devotees who are freshening up your Firebird experience, I wish you great satisfaction from your use of this Second Edition of ***The Firebird Book***.

Helen Borrie, author

December 2011

About the Author

Helen Borrie is a contracting software engineer who doubles as a writer and technical editor. She has been involved with database development for 30 years and with Firebird and its ancestors since 1996.

Helen is an active member of the Firebird online support community and a founding member of the Firebird Foundation, incorporated as a non-profit organisation in New South Wales, Australia, in 2002.

Contents

Author's Foreword iii

About the Author v

Part I Firing Up with Firebird 1

1 Firebird Servers and Clients 3

The Role of the Server 3

Operating System Platforms 4
Databases 4
Server-side Programming 4
Multi-database Applications 6
Server Security 6
Database Security 7

The Firebird Server Models 7

Resource Usage 7
Comparing Superserver, Superclassic and Classic Architectures 8
Embedded Server 13

Introduction to Client/Server 13

Servers and Clients 13
Client/Server vs File-Served Databases 14
Characteristics of a Client/Server DBMS 14
Typical Deployment Topologies 17

Firebird Clients 20

What is a Firebird Client? 21
The Firebird Client Libraries 21

2 Installation 23
System Requirements 23
Server Memory (All Platforms) 23
Installation Drives 24
Minimum Machine Specifications 24
Operating System 25
How to Get an Installation Kit 27
Kit Contents 27
Installing a Server 29
The FIREBIRD Variable 29
Finalise your Server Choice 29
Windows 30
Linux and Many Other POSIX 33
MacOSX/Darwin 36
Other Host Platforms 37
Testing Your Installation 37
Network Protocol 37
Checking That the Firebird Server Is Running 38
The Client Libraries 40
Performing a Client-Only Install 41
Installing an Embedded Server 45
Uninstalling Firebird 46
Linux 46
Windows 47
MacOSX/Darwin 48
Other Things You Need to Know 48
Default User Name and Password 48
3 Network Setup and Initial Configuration 51
Network Protocols 51
TCP/IP 51
Named Pipes 52
Local Access 52
Mixed Platforms 53
A Network Address for the Server 54
Hosts File 54

Server Name and Database Path 55
Connection string syntax 56
Inconsistent connection strings for Windows connections 57
Testing Connections. 57
If ping fails 58
Initial Configuration 59
The Firebird Configuration File 59
Environment Variables 62

4 Operating Basics. 63

Looking for a User Interface 63
Running Firebird on POSIX 63
Superserver and Superclassic 64
Classic server 66
Running Firebird on Windows 67
Servers and the Guardian. 67
Running as a service 67
Running as an application 68
Running Firebird on MacOSX 70
The Super* Models 70
Classic 70
Mixed Platforms 70
Database aliasing 71
The SYSDBA User and Password. 73
Linux 73
Administering Databases 73
The employee.fdb Database 74
Starting isql 74
Summary of Command-line Tools 76

5 Migration Notes 79

Version Lineage 79
Firebird 1.0 79
Firebird 1.5 80
Firebird 2.0 80
Firebird 2.1 81

Firebird 2.5 . . . . . *81*
Backward Compatibility 82
Preparing to Migrate 83
Major Releases 83
Sub-releases 83
Dialect 1 Databases 85
Back Up! 87
Migration Tasks 88
Get the Latest Sub-release! 88
The FIREBIRD Variable 88
Platform Issues 89
Security Database 89
Metadata Repair 90
Application Issues 93
Migration Tools 95

Part II Firebird Data Types & Domains 97

6 About Firebird Data Types 99

The Basics 99
Where to Specify Data Types 99
Supported Data Types 99
SQL "Dialects" 100
Optional SQL-92 Delimited Identifiers 101
Context Variables 101
Pre-defined Date Literals 102
Columns 103
Domains 104
Converting Data Types 104
Changing column and domain definitions 105
Keywords Used for Specifying Data Type 106
Demystifying NULL 107
NULL in expressions 107
NULL in calculations 108
Gotchas with True and False 108
Setting a value to NULL 108

7 Number Types 111
Numerical Limits 111
Points About Points 112
Operations on Number Types 112
Integer Types 112
Notation 112
Types 113
Integer/integer division 114
Fixed Decimal (Scaled) Types 115
Internal Storage 116
Special restrictions in static SQL 117
Behaviour of fixed types in operations 117
Floating Point Types 120
Supported Float Types 121
Arithmetic mixing fixed and floating-point types 121
8 Date and Time Types 123
Choices for Date and Time Values 123
DATE 123
TIMESTAMP 124
TIME 124
Date/Time Literals 125
Recognised Date/Time Literal Formats 125
Pre-defined Date Literals 128
Type-casting of Date/Time Literals 129
Date and Time Context Variables 130
Specifying Sub-seconds Precision 130
Operations Using Date and Time Values 131
General rules for operations 132
Using CAST( ) with Date/Time Types 133
Quick Date/Time Casts 136
The EXTRACT( ) Function 136
Other Date/Time Functions 138
A sample date/time type conversion task 138

9 Character Types 141
String Essentials 141
String Delimiter 142
Concatenation. 142
Escape Characters 142
String Functions 143
Limitations with Character Types 144
Fixed-length Character Data 145
Variable-length Character Data 145
Character Sets and Collation Sequences 146
Character Sets 147
Client Character Set 148
Firebird character sets 149
Special Character Sets 152
Transliteration 154
Collation Sequence 155
Adding an Alias for a Character Set 159
Custom character sets and collations 160
Metadata Text Conversion. 164
10 BLOBS and Arrays 167
BLOBs and Subtypes 167
Supported User Subtypes. 168
Custom Subtypes 168
Declaration Syntax 169
BLOB Segments. 169
When to Use BLOB Types 170
Operations on BLOBs 171
Array Types. 173
ARRAY Types and SQL 173
When to Use an Array Type 173
Eligible Element Types 173
Defining Arrays 174
Storage of ARRAY Columns. 175
Accessing Array Data 175
Limited DSQL Access 176

11 Domains 177

Benefits of Using Domains 177
Creating a Domain 178
Using a Domain 182
Domains in Column Definitions 182
Domains in PSQL Variable Declarations 184
Using Domains with CAST() 184
Where domains won't work 185
Defining a BOOLEAN Domain 185
Changing a Domain Definition 185
Dropping a Domain 187

Part III A Database & Its Objects 189

12 Designing and Defining a Database 191

Designing a Database 191
Description and analysis 192
The Physical Objects 193
Referential integrity 197
Indexes and query plans 197
Views 198
Stored procedures and triggers 198
Generators (Sequences) 198
Object Naming Conventions 200
Optional SQL-92 delimited identifiers 201
File-naming Conventions for Databases 201
Metadata 202
The system tables 202
Firebird's SQL Language 202
SQL "Dialects" 203
Firebird and the ISO Standards 204
Data Definition Language (DDL) 204
Data Manipulation Language (DML) 204
Procedural language (PSQL) 205
Interactive SQL (ISQL) 205
Schemas and Scripts 205

Using isql to run scripts 206
Resources 206

13 Data Definition Language—DDL 207

SQL Data Definition Statements. 207
CREATE 207
RECREATE. 208
ALTER 208
DECLARE 209
DROP. 209
Storing Descriptive Text 209
Object Dependencies 211
Using DDL to Manage User Accounts 211
Reference Material 213

14 Creating and Maintaining a Database 215

Physical Storage for a Database. 215
About Security Access 216
ISC_USER and ISC_PASSWORD. 217
Creating a Database 217
Dialect 217
CREATE DATABASE Statement 218
Getting information about the database 220
Single and Multi-file Databases 221
The Database Cache. 223
Read-only Databases 227
Keeping a Clean Database 228
Background garbage collection 229
Sweeping 229
Garbage collection during backup 229
Objects and counters 230
Validation and repair 230
Backup and Stand-by 232
Dropping a Database 232

15 Tables 235
About Firebird Physical Tables 235
Structural descriptions 235
Creating Tables 236
Table ownership and privileges 236
CREATE TABLE statements 236
Constraints 241
Scope of Constraints 241
Integrity Constraints 241
The referential constraint 241
Named constraints 242
The NOT NULL Constraint 242
The PRIMARY KEY constraint 243
The UNIQUE constraint 248
CHECK constraints 249
Using External Files as Tables 251
Restrictions and recommendations 252
Operations 253
Converting external tables to internal tables 255
Dropped database 256
Altering Tables 256
Preparing to use ALTER TABLE 256
Altering Columns in a Table 256
Removing (Dropping) a Table 261
The RECREATE TABLE statement 261
Temporary Tables 261
Global Temporary Tables 262
Temporary Storage for Older Versions 263
Tree Structures 264

16 Indexes 265
Limits 265
Automatic vs User-defined Indexes 266
Importing legacy indexes 266
Directional indexes 266

Query plans 267
How Indexes Can Help 267
Sorting and grouping 267
Joins 268
Comparisons 268
What to Index 268
When to index 269
Using CREATE INDEX 269
Mandatory elements 269
Optional elements 270
Multi-column Indexes 272
OR predicates in queries 272
Search criteria 273
Inspecting Indexes 273
Making an Index Inactive 273
Housekeeping 273
'Index is in use' error 274
Altering the structure of an index 274
Dropping an Index 274

17 Referential Integrity 275

Terminology 275
The FOREIGN KEY Constraint 276
Implementing the constraint 276
Action triggers to vary integrity rules 278
Interaction of Constraints 279
Custom Action Triggers 280
Lookup Tables and Your Data Model 280
The REFERENCES Privilege 282
Handling Other Forms of Relationship 282
One-to-one relationship 282
Many-to-many relationship 283
Self-Referencing Relationship 286
Mandatory relationships 287

"Object is in Use" Error 287

Part IV Working With Data 289

18 Data Manipulation Language—DML 291

The Concept of Sets 291

Cardinality and degree 292
A table is a set 292
Output sets 292
Input sets 293
Output sets as input sets 294
Cursor sets 294
Nested Sets 295

SQL Privileges and DML 296

19 DML Queries 297

The SELECT Statement 297

Clauses in a SELECT statement 298

INSERT and UPDATE Statements 307

INSERT INTO 307
UPDATE 311
UPDATE OR INSERT 315
MERGE 316

The DELETE Statement 318

EXECUTE Statements 318

Using Parameters 318

Batch operations 320

Queries That Execute Server-side Code 321

Executable procedures 321
Selectable procedures 321

DML operations and state-changing events 322

Referential integrity action clauses 322
Custom triggers 322

Query Plans and the Optimizer 323

Plans and the Firebird query optimizer 323

Understanding the optimizer 325
Examples of plans 327
Specifying your own plan 332
Optimal Indexing 333
Housekeeping indexes 335
Index toolkit 337

20 Expressions and Predicates 339

Expressions 339
Predicates 340
The Truth Testers 341
Assertions 341
Deciding What is True 342
Elements Used in Expressions 342
SQL Operators 344
Precedence of Operators 344
Concatenation Operator 345
Arithmetic Operators 345
Comparison Operators 345
Logical Operators 350
The IS [NOT] NULL Predicate 351
Existential Predicates 351
Considering NULL 354
NULL in Expressions 354
NULL in Calculations 355
Gotchas with True and False 355
NULL and External Functions 356
Setting a Value to NULL 356
Using Expressions 357
Computed Columns 357
Search Conditions 363
Ordering and Grouping Conditions 365
Expression Indexes 366
CHECK expressions in DDL 366
Expressions in PSQL 367
Function Calls 367
Conversion Functions 368

String Functions 369
Function for Getting a Generator (Sequence) Value 371
Aggregating Functions 372
Functions for Setting and Getting Contextual Data 373
External Functions (UDFs) 376

21 Querying Multiple Tables 381

Kinds of Multi-table Queries 381
Joining 382
Subqueries 382
UNION queries 382
Using Relation Aliases 382
The internal cursor 383
Joining 384
The INNER join 384
OUTER joins 387
Equi-joins 390
Re-entrant joins 391
Subqueries 393
Specifying a column using a subquery 393
Searching using a subquery 395
Inserting using a subquery with joins 395
The Derived Table 396
UNION Queries 396
Union compatible sets 396
UNION ALL | DISTINCT 397
Using run-time columns in unions 398
Search and ordering conditions 399
Re-entrant UNION queries 399
Recursive Queries 400

22 Ordered and Aggregated Sets 401

Considerations for Sorting 401
Presentation order of sorting clauses 401
Indexing 403
The ORDER BY Clause 403
Sorting items 403

Sort direction 406
NULLS placement 406
The GROUP BY Clause 407
The groupable field list 407
Aggregating expressions 408
The grouping item 409
The HAVING sub-clause 411
The COLLATE sub-clause 412
Using ORDER BY in a grouped query 412
Advanced grouping conditions 412
Aggregating Functions 415
AVG( ) 415
SUM( ) 415
MAX( ) 416
MIN( ) 416
Using COUNT( ) as an aggregating function 416
The LIST( ) function 417
23 Views and Other Run-time Set Objects 419
Forms and Functions 419
Views 420
What is a view? 420
Creating a View 421
How views can be useful 425
Some simple view specifications 425
Read-only and updatable views 426
Modifying a view 429
Dropping a view 430
Privileges for Views 430
Using views in SQL 431
Using query plans for views 432
Derived Tables 433
Rules for Derived Tables 434
When to Use a Derived Table 435
Common Table Expressions 435
Syntax for a CTE 436
Other Virtual Set Objects 440

Global temporary tables (GTTs) 440
Selectable stored procedures 440
External virtual tables. 441

24 Interactive SQL Utility (isql) 443

Interactive Mode 443

Default text editor 443
Starting isql 444
Connecting to a database 445
Using the Interface 446
Interactive Commands 450
General *isql* Commands 451
SHOW Commands 454
SET Commands 463
Exiting an interactive *isql* session 470

Command Mode *isql*. *470*

Operating isql in command mode 470
Command-line switches 471

Creating and Running Scripts 474

About Firebird scripts 474
Basic steps. 477
Managing your schema scripts 480

Part V Transactions 483

25 Overview of Firebird Transactions 485

The ACID Properties. 486

Atomicity 486
Consistency. 486
Isolation 486
Durability 486

Context of a Transaction 487

One transaction, many requests. 487

Transactions and the MGA 488

Post vs COMMIT 488
Rollback 489
Row locking 489

Table-level locks 490
Inserts 491
Transaction "Aging" and Statistics 491
Transaction ID and age 491
"Interesting transactions" 492
Background garbage collection 492
Keeping the OIT and the OAT moving 494
Transaction statistics 496
26 Configuring Transactions 499
Anatomy of a Transaction 499
The Default Transaction 499
Default settings. 500
About Concurrency 500
Factors affecting concurrency 501
Isolation level 501
Standard levels of isolation 501
Locking Policy 503
Access Mode 504
Table Reservation. 505
Uses for Table Reservation 505
Parameters for table reservation 506
Other Optional Parameters 507
Record Versions 507
Dependent rows 508
Locking and Lock Conflicts 508
Timing. 508
Pessimistic locking 508
Lock conflicts 509
27 Programming with Transactions 511
The Language of Transactions. 511
The API 512
Starting a Transaction. 512
The transaction handle. 512

The transaction parameter buffer (TPB) 513
Accessing the Transaction ID 514
Using the TID in applications 514
Progress of a Transaction 515
Nested Transactions 515
User savepoints 515
Exception handling extensions in PSQL 517
The Logical Context 517
Ending transactions 518
Diagnosing exceptions 520
Receiving exceptions 521
Multi-database Transactions 522
Limbo transactions 522
Restricting databases 523
Pessimistic Locking 523
Table-level locking 524
Statement-level locking 524
The "dummy update" hack 524
Explicit locking 525
Stored Procedures, Triggers and Transactions 528
Stored Procedures 528
Triggers 528
"Savepoints" in PSQL 529
Autonomous Transactions 529
Tips for Optimizing Transaction Behaviour 529

Part VI Programming on the Server 531

28 Procedural SQL—PSQL 533

Overview of Server Code Modules 533
About Stored Procedures 534
About Relation Triggers 535
About Database Triggers 536
About Executable Blocks 536
PSQL Language Extensions 536

Restrictions on PSQL 537
Exceptions 538
Events 538
Security 538
Elements of procedures and triggers 539
Statement terminator 539
The CREATE statement 540
Header elements 541
Body elements 541
Language elements 542
Programming constructs 544
BEGIN...END blocks 544
Conditional blocks 544
Variables and Parameters 546
SELECT...INTO statements 552
Flow of control statements 555
Execute Statement 558
Using Cursors 562
The Undeclared Named Cursor 563
The Explicit Named Cursor. 563
Developing Modules 567
Adding comments 567
Case-sensitivity, white space and size 568
Managing your code 569
Compiling stored procedures and triggers 569
Altering and dropping modules 570
Deleting source from modules 571
Internals of the Technology. 572
Effects of changes to modules 572
29 Stored Procedures and Executable Blocks 573
Styles of Stored Procedure. 573
Creating a Stored Procedure 574
Header elements 574
Body elements 575
Executable Procedures. 577

Complex processing 578
Support for "live" client sets 578
Operations in executable procedures 578
A multi-table procedure 579
Using (calling) executable procedures 581
Outputs and exits 582
Recursive Procedures 582
Selectable Stored Procedures 583
Uses for selectable procedures. 584
The Technique 585
A simple procedure with nested SELECTs 587
Calling a selectable procedure 588
Nested procedures 589
A procedure with running totals 593
Viewing an array through a stored procedure 595
Testing procedures 596
Procedures for combined use 596
Using the Internal RDB$DB_KEY 597
About RDB$DB_KEY 597
Benefits 597
Inserting 599
Duration of validity 600
RDB$DB_KEY with multi-table sets 601
Changing a Stored Procedure 601
Effect on applications 601
Syntax for changing procedures 601
Dropping a Stored Procedure 604
Restrictions 604
Run-time PSQL 605
Coding EXECUTE BLOCK 605
Using EXECUTE BLOCK in applications 607

30 Triggers 609

Classes of Trigger 609
Table-level Triggers 609
"Database Triggers" 610
DDL Triggers 610

About Table-level Triggers 610
Phase and event 610
Sequence 611
Status Active/Inactive 612
Creating Table-level Triggers 612
An alternative syntax 613
Header elements 613
The trigger body 614
Special PSQL for Table-level Triggers 614
Table-level triggers at work 615
Updating Other Tables 618
Referential Integrity Support 621
Updating rows in the same table 624
Implementing Auto-Incrementing Keys 625
Changing Triggers 627
ALTER TRIGGER 628
CREATE OR ALTER TRIGGER 629
RECREATE TRIGGER 629
Higher-level Triggers 629
Trigger Events 629
Creating and Changing the Higher-level Triggers 631
Dropping Triggers 631

31 Accessing Other Databases from PSQL 633

Extensions to EXECUTE STATEMENT 633
Autonomous Transaction 633
The Optional Extension Clauses 634
Transaction Behaviour 635
External Queries 636
Authentication 637
Exceptions 637

32 Error Handling and Events 639

Exceptions in PSQL 639
Types of Exceptions 639
What is an exception? 640
Exceptions in Action 640

Trapping and Handling Exceptions 642
The WHEN statement 642
Nested exceptions as savepoints 644
Exceptions in triggers 647
Run-time Exception Messaging 648
Error Codes Listings 649
Events 649
Uses for Events Notification 649
Elements of the Events Mechanism 650
Synchronous listening 651
Asynchronous signalling 652
Using POST_EVENT 653

Part VII Configuring Firebird 655

33 Configuring Firebird and Its Environment 657

Default Configuration 657
Finding the Firebird Root Directory 657
Environment Variables 658
Windows 658
POSIX 659
The Variables 660
The Firebird Configuration File 662
Parameter Syntax 663
Editing Parameters 664
Version Differences 664
Parameters in Detail 665
Configuring the TCP/IP Port Service 665
How the server sets the listening port 665
Setting up a client to find the service port 667
Configuring the services file 669
Embedded Server 669

34 Configuration Parameters in Detail 671

Settings for All Platforms and Servers 671
AuditTraceConfigFile *671*
Authentication *672*

CompleteBooleanEvaluation 672
ConnectionTimeout 673
DatabaseAccess 673
DatabaseGrowthIncrement 673
DeadlockTimeout 674
DefaultDbCachePages 674
DummyPacketInterval 674
FileSystemCacheThreshold 675
FileSystemCacheSize 675
GCPolicy 676
LegacyHash 676
LockAcquireSpins 676
LockHashSlots 676
LockGrantOrder 677
LockMemSize 677
LockSemCount 677
LockSignal 678
MaxUserTraceLogSize 678
OldColumnNaming 678
OldSetClauseSemantics 678
Redirection 679
RelaxedAliasChecking 679
RemoteAuxPort 679
RemoteBindAddress 680
RemoteFileOpenAbility 680
RemoteServicePort 680
RemoteServiceName 680
RootDirectory 681
TcpRemoteBufferSize 681
TcpNoNagle 681
TempBlockSize 681
TempCacheLimit 681
TempDirectories 682
Settings Applicable to Microsoft Windows 683
CpuAffinityMask 683
GuardianOption 683
IpcName 684
MaxUnflushedWrites 684
MaxUnflushedWriteTime 684
ProcessPriorityLevel 684
RemotePipeName 685
UsePriorityScheduler 685
Settings Applicable to POSIX Platforms 685
BugCheckAbort 685

Configuring external locations 685
UdfAccess *686*
ExternalFileAccess *687*
Deprecated Settings 687
OldParameterOrdering *687*
server_working_size_max *688*
server_working_size_min *688*
CreateInternalWindow *688*
DeadThreadsCollection *688*

35 Configuring and Managing Databases 689

The *gfix* Tool Set 689
Using the Tools 690
Shutting Down a Database 690
Configuration Options 693
Default Cache Size 693
Forced Writes 694
Access Mode 695
Page Fill Capacity 696
Sweep Interval 696
SQL Dialect 697
Page Size 698
Management Tools 698
Garbage collection 699
Sweeping 699
Analysing and Repairing Logical Corruption 700
Transaction recovery 701
Managing Database Shadows 703
Summary of *gfix* switches and options 704
gfix error messages 706

Part VIII Administering & Securing Firebird 707

36 Protecting the Server and its Environment 709

Securing the Environment 709
Physical Security 709
Use Securable Filesystems 710

Protect Backups 710
Platform-based protection 710
Wire Security 714
Web and Other n-Tier Applications 714
Use Dedicated Hosts 714
Establish Trustworthiness 714
Firewalls 715
Server Multi-hop 715
Denial-of-Service Attacks 715
Managing User Access 716
The Security Database 716
Firebird "Native" Users 717
Platform Users 717
Privileged Users 719
Entering User Credentials via SQL 720
The *gsec* Utility 722
37 Database-Level Security 729
Default Security and Access 729
Planning an Access Scheme 730
Metadata Tables 730
SQL Privileges 730
Objects 731
Users 731
Native Firebird users 732
POSIX users and groups 732
Windows trusted users 732
Users with escalated privileges 733
Database objects as 'users' 733
Privilege Restrictions 733
Granting Privileges 734
UPDATE rights on columns 734
REFERENCES rights on columns 735
Privileges needed by objects 736
Granting the EXECUTE privilege 736
Privileges on Views 737

Bundling Multiple Privileges 737
Lists of privileges 737
The ALL privilege 738
Roles 738
Privileges for Multiple Users 739
Granting the Right to Grant Privileges 740
Granting Privileges on Behalf of Another 741
The GRANTED BY clause. 742
The System Role RDB$ADMIN. 742
Extending RDB$ADMIN power for Windows Administrators 742
Unintended Effects with Privileges 743
Revoking Privileges 744
Using REVOKE 744
Security Scripts 747
Creating a script 748
Installing perms directly from a procedure 750
A Trick to Beat Idiot Users and Bad Guys 752

38 Monitoring and Logging Features 753

Monitoring Database Activity 753
How Monitoring Works. 753
Using MON$ 754
The MON$ Tables 757
Trace and Audit Services 757
Modes of Use 757
Trace Sessions 758
Trace Plug-in Facilities 763
Collecting Database Statistics—*gstat* *763*
gstat command-line tool 763
Monitoring Locks. 774
Locking in Firebird. 774
The Lock Manager Module 774
The Lock Print Utility 777
Lock configuration settings 796

39 Backing Up Databases 799
gbak or *nBackup*? 799
The *gbak* Utility 800
About *gbak* Backup Files 800
gbak's other talents 801
Database backup & restore rights 802
Running a Backup 803
Running a Restore 807
Restore switches 809
Using gbak with the Firebird Services Manager 813
gbak Error Messages 815
Incremental Backup Tool (nBackup) 818
About nBackup 819
Making Backups 820
Restoring from *nBackup* Files 824
Using the Freeze Utility 825
SQL Support for nBackup 826
nBackup command-line options summary 828
Database Shadowing 828
Benefits and limitations of shadowing 828
Implementing shadowing 829
Replication 833
"Warm Backups" 833
40 The Services Manager 835
About the Services Manager 835
Accessing the Services Manager API 835
Services Manager Clients 836
The *fbsvcmgr* Utility 836
Using *fbsvcmgr* *836*
fbsvcmgr specifics 838
Services API Functions 839
Part IX Appendices 841
I Internal and External Functions 843
Internal Functions 843

Conditional Logic Functions 843
Date and Time Functions 844
String and Character Functions 846
BLOB Functions 851
Mathematical Functions 852
Trigonometrical Functions 854
Binary Functions 855
Miscellaneous Functions 856
External Functions 857
Conditional Logic Functions 857
Mathematical Functions 858
Date and Time Functions 863
String and Character Functions 866
BLOB Functions 871
Trigonometrical Functions 872
Building regular expressions 876
Characters 876
Quantifiers 878
OR-ing terms 879
Sub-expressions 879
Escaping special characters 879
II Reserved and Non-Reserved Keywords 881
Keywords 881
III Context Variables 893
About Context Variables 893
IV Firebird Limits 895
V System Tables and Views 899
Metadata Tables 899
System Views 922
Monitoring Tables 924
VI Character Sets and Collations 933
Implemented and Activated Character Sets 933
VII Firebird Error Codes 939
VIII SQLSTATE Codes 961
IX Database Repair How-To 969
Indications of Possible Corruption 969
Preparing for Analysis and Repair 970

Steps for Recovery Using Command-line Tools 971
Step 1. 971
Step 2. 972
Step 3. 972
Step 4. 972
Step 5. 973
Step 6. 973
Failed Repair 973
X Default Disk Locations 975
XI Healthcare for Databases. 983
Considerations for a Maintenance Regime 983
1 Backups 983
2 Garbage Collection 984
3 Index Statistics. 986
4 Page Size 990
5 Disk Usage. 990
Other Considerations 991
Usage Monitoring. 991
Data Access and Security 991
XII Upgrade Scripts 993
Security Database 993
Metadata Repair 996
XIII Application Interfaces 1001
Application Development 1001
Dynamic client/server applications 1001
The Firebird Core API 1002
Application interfaces using the API. 1002
Designing Databases for Client/Server Systems 1004
XIV Resources 1009
Free Documentation 1009
Books 1009
Free help 1010
SQL and Firebird server support. 1010
Client interface support 1010
Third-Party Tools 1011

Commercial Help and Support 1012

Index. i

GLOSSARY xxvii