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Title: Why was SelectStarSQL successful?

Abstract: SelectStarSQL was completed in a short four-week stretch after leaving my first job. It was meant as an interactive SQL tutorial for the complete beginner. It was experimental because it immersed the reader in a weighty, real-world dataset consisting executions by the state of Texas and discussed implications of the death penalty while teaching SQL. In the two years since its release, it has attracted a surprising amount of attention and positive responses. In this talk, I reflect on its success and make the case that doing authentic work isn't naive or impractical — it's good for you and it's what the world really wants.