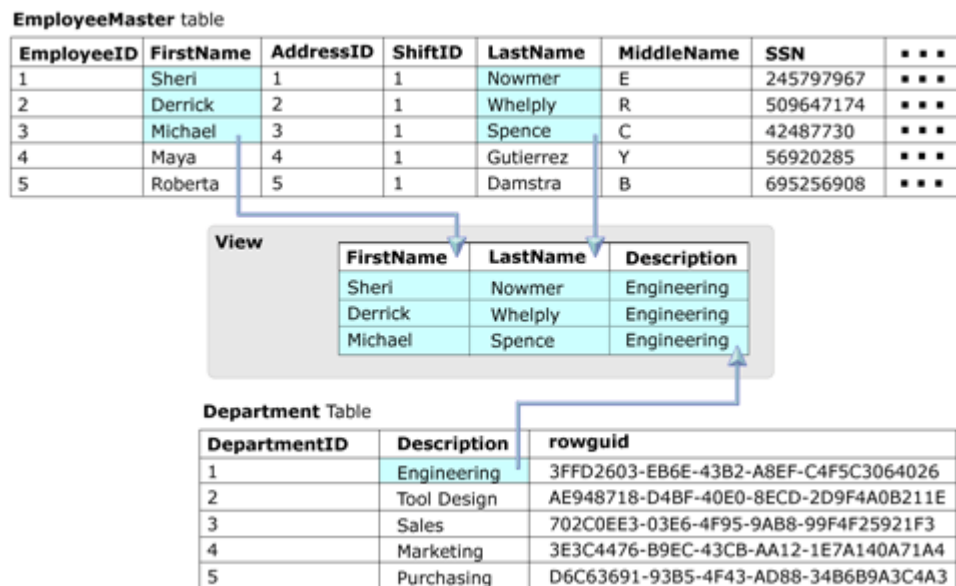# Understanding Views

A view is a virtual table whose contents are defined by a query. Like a real table, a view consists of a set of named columns and rows of data. Unless indexed, a view does not exist as a stored set of data values in a database. The rows and columns of data come from tables referenced in the query defining the view and are produced dynamically when the view is referenced.

A view acts as a filter on the underlying tables referenced in the view. The query that defines the view can be from one or more tables or from other views in the current or other databases. Distributed queries can also be used to define views that use data from multiple heterogeneous sources. This is useful, for example, if you want to combine similarly structured data from different servers, each of which stores data for a different region of your organization.

There are no restrictions on querying through views and few restrictions on modifying data through them.

This illustration shows a view based on two tables.

EmployeeMaster table

EmployeeID	FirstName	AddressID	ShiftID	LastName	MiddleName	SSN	...
1	Sheri	1	1	Nowmer	E	245797967	...
2	Derrick	2	1	Whelply	R	509647174	...
3	Michael	3	1	Spence	C	42487730	...
4	Maya	4	1	Gutierrez	Y	56920285	...
5	Roberta	5	1	Damstra	B	695256908	...

View

FirstName	LastName	Description
Sheri	Nowmer	Engineering
Derrick	Whelply	Engineering
Michael	Spence	Engineering

Department Table

DepartmentID	Description	rowguid
1	Engineering	3FFD2603-EB6E-43B2-A8EF-C4F5C3064026
2	Tool Design	AE948718-D4BF-40E0-8ECD-2D9F4A0B211E
3	Sales	702C0EE3-03E6-4F95-9AB8-99F4F25921F3
4	Marketing	3E3C4476-B9EC-43CB-AA12-1E7A140A71A4
5	Purchasing	D6C63691-93B5-4F43-AD88-34B6B9A3C4A3

See Also

Concepts
Types of Views
Scenarios for Using Views
View Resolution

Community Additions

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