

Record Encyclopedia Article

Record

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Record

A record is an ordered set of fields in a database or spreadsheet file. In database and spreadsheet files, the record commonly refers to the row of the sheet or page contained within the database or spreadsheet. The rows are further divided into cells that may contain text, numbers, formula, or program instructions. When used in connection with files, a record refers to the line of the file.

The record field may be preset to a fixed width in terms of bits or characters. The use of delimiting characters such as a comma or tabs can also be used to separate fields of **variable** length within a field. Fields delimited by commas are, for example, denoted as CSV (comma separated **value**) fields.

In contrast to the usually horizontal orientation of records, columns are usually vertically oriented collections of all records in a particular field. If records are denoted by numbers (1, 2, 3...) and columns by numbers (A, B, C...), then a spreadsheet record or row would be composed of cells A1, A2, A3...etc. In contrast, column B would be composed of all the **data** in cells denoted by B1, B2, B3...etc.

Accordingly, fields are areas or cells of a record (the columns in a particular row of a spreadsheet).

A **linked list** is a **programming** element that contains a pointer to the next element in order to compose a directional list. Some lists, termed doubly linked lists, contain pointers to the next element in the list and the previous element used. Lists offer reliable sequential **access** to data.

When data access may be random rather than sequential, an **array** is often used to store the data. Records differ from arrays because arrays are grouped and identified by their particular indices (the dimensions identified by bracketed identifiers or subscripts). Arrays are usually stored next to each other, but the particular programming language in use determines whether the storage is by rows or columns.