Chapter 6: Formal Relational Query Languages

Database System Concepts, 6th Ed.

Outline

- Relational Algebra
- Tuple Relational Calculus **
- Domain Relational Calculus **

Relational Algebra

- a kind of Procedural language
- Six fundamental operators
  - select: σ
  - project: $\prod$
  - rename: ρ
  - union: $\cup$
  - set difference: –
  - Cartesian product: x
- The operators take one or two relations as inputs and produce a new relation as a result.

Select Operation

- Notation: $\sigma_p(r)$
- p is called the **selection predicate**
- Defined as:

$$\sigma_p(\mathbf{r}) = \{t \mid t \in r \textbf{ and } p(t)\}$$

Where p is a formula in propositional calculus consisting of **terms** connected by : $\wedge$ (**and**), $\vee$ (**or**), $\neg$ (**not**)
Each **term** is one of:

<attribute> *op* <attribute> or <constant>

where *op* is one of: $=, \neq, >, \geq. <. \leq$

- Example of selection:

$$\sigma_{dept\_name=\text{“}Physics\text{”}}(instructor)$$

Project Operation

- Notation:

$$\Pi_{A_1, A_2, \ldots, A_k}(r)$$

where A_1, A_2 are attribute names and r is a relation name.

- The result is defined as the relation of k columns obtained by erasing the columns that are not listed
- Duplicate rows removed from result, since relations are sets
- Example: To eliminate the *dept_name* attribute of *instructor*

$$\Pi_{ID,\ name,\ salary}\ (instructor)$$

Union Operation

- Notation: $r \cup s$
- Defined as:

$$r \cup s = \{t \mid t \in r \text{ or } t \in s\}$$

- For $r \cup s$ to be valid.
  1. *r, s* must have the *same* **arity** (same number of attributes)
  2. The attribute domains must be **compatible** (example: 2nd column of *r* deals with the same type of values as does the 2nd column of *s*)

- Example: to find all courses taught in the Fall 2009 semester, or in the Spring 2010 semester, or in both

$$\Pi_{course\_id} (\sigma_{semester=\text{“Fall”} \; \Lambda \; year=2009} (section)) \;\cup$$
$$\Pi_{course\_id} (\sigma_{semester=\text{“Spring”} \; \Lambda \; year=2010} (section))$$

Set Difference Operation

- Notation $r - s$
- Defined as:

$$r - s = \{t \mid t \in r \textbf{ and } t \notin s\}$$

- Set differences must be taken between **compatible** relations.
  - r and s must have the same arity
  - attribute domains of r and s must be compatible
- Example: to find all courses taught in the Fall 2009 semester, but not in the Spring 2010 semester

$$\Pi_{course\_id}(\sigma_{semester=\text{“Fall”} \wedge year=2009}(section)) -$$

$$\Pi_{course\_id}(\sigma_{semester=\text{“Spring”} \wedge year=2010}(section))$$

Set-Intersection Operation

- Notation: $r \cap s$
- Defined as:
- $r \cap s = \{ t \mid t \in r \textbf{ and } t \in s \}$
- Assume:
  - r, s have the *same arity*
  - attributes of r and s are compatible
- Note: $r \cap s = r - (r - s)$

Cartesian-Product Operation

- Notation *r* x *s*
- Defined as:

$$r \text{ x } s = \{t\, q \mid t \in r \textbf{ and } q \in s\}$$

- Assume that attributes of r(R) and s(S) are disjoint. (That is, $R \cap S = \varnothing$).
- If attributes of *r(R)* and *s(S)* are not disjoint, then renaming must be used.

Rename Operation

- Allows us to name, and therefore to refer to, the results of relational-algebra expressions.
- Allows us to refer to a relation by more than one name.
- Example:

$$\rho_x(E)$$

returns the expression E under the name X

- If a relational-algebra expression E has arity n, then

$$\rho_{x(A_1, A_2, \ldots, A_n)}(E)$$

returns the result of expression E under the name X, and with the attributes renamed to A_1, A_2, …., A_n.

Formal Definition

- A basic expression in the relational algebra consists of either one of the following:
  - A relation in the database
  - A constant relation
- Let E_1 and E_2 be relational-algebra expressions; the following are all relational-algebra expressions:
  - $E_1 \cup E_2$
  - $E_1 - E_2$
  - E_1 x E_2
  - $\sigma_p (E_1)$, P is a predicate on attributes in E_1
  - $\prod_s(E_1)$, S is a list consisting of some of the attributes in E_1
  - $\rho_x (E_1)$, x is the new name for the result of E_1

Tuple Relational Calculus

Tuple Relational Calculus

- A nonprocedural query language, where each query is of the form

$$\{t \mid P(t)\}$$

- It is the set of all tuples t such that predicate P is true for t
- t is a *tuple variable*, $t[A]$ denotes the value of tuple t on attribute A
- $t \in r$ denotes that tuple t is in relation r
- P is a *formula* similar to that of the predicate calculus

Predicate Calculus Formula

1. Set of attributes and constants
2. Set of comparison operators: (e.g., $<$, $\leq$, $=$, $\neq$, $>$, $\geq$)
3. Set of connectives: and ($\wedge$), or (v), not ($\neg$)
4. Implication ($\Rightarrow$): x $\Rightarrow$ y, if x is true, then y is true

$$x \Rightarrow y \equiv \neg x \vee y$$

5. Set of quantifiers:
   - $\exists\, t \in r\, (Q\, (t\,))$ ≡ ”there exists” a tuple in t in relation r such that predicate $Q\, (t\,)$ is true
   - $\forall t \in r\, (Q\, (t\,))$ ≡ Q is true “for **all**” tuples t in relation r

Example Queries

- Find the *ID, name, dept_name, salary* for instructors whose salary is greater than $80,000

$$\{t \mid t \in instructor \land t\,[salary\,] > 80000\}$$

Notice that a relation on schema (*ID, name, dept_name, salary*) is implicitly defined by the query

- As in the previous query, but output only the *ID* attribute value

$$\{t \mid \exists\, s \in \text{instructor}\ (t\,[ID\,] = s\,[ID\,] \land s\,[salary\,] > 80000)\}$$

Notice that a relation on schema (*ID*) is implicitly defined by the query

Example Queries

- Find the names of all instructors whose department is in the Watson building

$$\{t \mid \exists s \in instructor\ (t[name] = s[name] \wedge \exists u \in department\ (u[dept\_name] = s[dept\_name] \text{“} \wedge u[building] = \text{“Watson”}))\}$$

- Find the set of all courses taught in the Fall 2009 semester, or in the Spring 2010 semester, or both

$$\{t \mid \exists s \in section\ (t[course\_id] = s[course\_id] \wedge s[semester] = \text{“Fall”} \wedge s[\text{year}] = 2009 \vee \exists u \in section\ (t[course\_id] = u[course\_id] \wedge u[semester] = \text{“Spring”} \wedge u[\text{year}] = 2010)\}$$

Example Queries

- Find the set of all courses taught in the Fall 2009 semester, and in the Spring 2010 semester

$$\{t \mid \exists s \in section\ (t\,[course\_id\,] = s\,[course\_id\,] \wedge s\,[semester] = \text{“Fall”} \wedge s\,[\text{year}] = 2009$$
$$\wedge\ \exists u \in section\ (t\ \ [course\_id\,] = u\,[course\_id\,] \wedge u\,[semester] = \text{“Spring”} \wedge u\,[\text{year}] = 2010\ )\}$$

- Find the set of all courses taught in the Fall 2009 semester, but not in the Spring 2010 semester

$$\{t \mid \exists s \in section\ (t\,[course\_id\,] = s\,[course\_id\,] \wedge s\,[semester] = \text{“Fall”} \wedge s\,[\text{year}] = 2009$$
$$\wedge \neg \exists u \in section\ (t\ \ [course\_id\,] = u\,[course\_id\,] \wedge u\,[semester] = \text{“Spring”} \wedge u\,[\text{year}] = 2010\ )\}$$

Universal Quantification

- Find all students who have taken all courses offered in the Biology department
  - $\{t \mid \exists\, r \in student\ (t[ID] = r[ID]) \land$
    $(\forall\, u \in course\ (u[dept\_name] = \text{“Biology”} \Rightarrow$
    $\exists\, s \in takes\ (t[ID] = s[ID] \land$
    $s[course\_id] = u[course\_id]))\}$

Safety of Expressions

- It is possible to write tuple calculus expressions that generate infinite relations.
- For example, $\{ t \mid \neg\, t \in r \}$ results in an infinite relation if the domain of any attribute of relation *r* is infinite
- To guard against the problem, we restrict the set of allowable expressions to safe expressions.
- An expression $\{t \mid P(t)\}$ in the tuple relational calculus is *safe* if every component of *t* appears in one of the relations, tuples, or constants that appear in *P*
  - NOTE: this is more than just a syntax condition.
    - E.g. $\{ t \mid t[A] = 5 \vee \textbf{true} \}$ is not safe --- it defines an infinite set with attribute values that do not appear in any relation or tuples or constants in *P*.

Safety of Expressions (Cont.)

- Consider again that query to find all students who have taken all courses offered in the Biology department
  - $\{t \mid \exists\, r \in student\ (t\,[ID] = r\,[ID]) \wedge$
    $(\forall\, u \in course\ (u\,[dept\_name] = \text{“Biology”} \Rightarrow$
    $\exists\, s \in takes\ (t\,[ID] = s\,[ID\,] \wedge$
    $s\,[course\_id] = u\,[course\_id]))\}$
- Without the existential quantification on student, the above query would be unsafe if the Biology department has not offered any courses.

Domain Relational Calculus

Domain Relational Calculus

- A nonprocedural query language equivalent in power to the tuple relational calculus
- Each query is an expression of the form:

$$\{ < x_1, x_2, \ldots, x_n > \mid P(x_1, x_2, \ldots, x_n)\}$$

  - $x_1, x_2, \ldots, x_n$ represent domain variables
  - P represents a formula similar to that of the predicate calculus

Example Queries

- Find the *ID, name, dept_name, salary* for instructors whose salary is greater than $80,000
  - $\{< i, n, d, s> \mid < i, n, d, s> \in instructor \land s > 80000\}$
- As in the previous query, but output only the *ID* attribute value
  - $\{< i> \mid < i, n, d, s> \in instructor \land s > 80000\}$
- Find the names of all instructors whose department is in the Watson building

$$\{< n > \mid \exists\, i, d, s\ (< i, n, d, s > \in instructor \\ \land \exists\, \text{b, a}\ (< d, b, a> \in department\ \land\ b = \text{“Watson”}\ ))\}$$

Example Queries

- Find the set of all courses taught in the Fall 2009 semester, or in the Spring 2010 semester, or both

$$\{<c> \mid \exists\, a, s, y, b, r, t\ (<c, a, s, y, b, r, t> \in section \ \wedge$$
$$s = \text{“Fall”} \wedge y = 2009\ )$$
$$\text{v}\ \exists\, a, s, y, b, r, t\ (<c, a, s, y, b, r, t> \in section\ ] \wedge$$
$$s = \text{“Spring”} \wedge y = 2010)\}$$

This case can also be written as

$$\{<c> \mid \exists\, a, s, y, b, r, t\ (<c, a, s, y, b, r, t> \in section \ \wedge$$
$$(\ (s = \text{“Fall”} \wedge y = 2009\ )\ \ \text{v}\ (s = \text{“Spring”} \wedge y = 2010))\}$$

- Find the set of all courses taught in the Fall 2009 semester, and in the Spring 2010 semester

$$\{<c> \mid \exists\, a, s, y, b, r, t\ (<c, a, s, y, b, r, t> \in section \ \wedge$$
$$s = \text{“Fall”} \wedge y = 2009\ )$$
$$\wedge\ \exists\, a, s, y, b, r, t\ (<c, a, s, y, b, r, t> \in section\ ] \wedge$$
$$s = \text{“Spring”} \wedge y = 2010)\}$$

Safety of Expressions

The expression:

$$\{ < x_1, x_2, \ldots, x_n > \mid P\,(x_1, x_2, \ldots, x_n)\}$$

is safe if all of the following hold:

1. All values that appear in tuples of the expression are values from *dom* (P) (that is, the values appear either in P or in a tuple of a relation mentioned in P).
2. For every "there exists" subformula of the form $\exists\, x\, (P_1(x\,))$, the subformula is true if and only if there is a value of x in *dom* (P_1) such that $P_1(x\,)$ is true.
3. For every "for all" subformula of the form $\forall_x\, (P_1\,(x\,))$, the subformula is true if and only if $P_1(x\,)$ is true for all values x from *dom* (P_1).

Universal Quantification

- Find all students who have taken all courses offered in the Biology department
  - $\{< i > \mid \exists\, n, d, tc\ (< i, n, d, tc > \in student\ \wedge$
    $(\forall\, ci, ti, dn, cr\ (< ci, ti, dn, cr > \in course \wedge dn = \text{“Biology”}$
    $\Rightarrow \exists\, si, se, y, g\ (<i, ci, si, se, y, g> \in takes\ ))\}$
  - Note that without the existential quantification on student, the above query would be unsafe if the Biology department has not offered any courses.

End of Chapter 6