

Consistency and Replication



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Tatiana Maslany in the show Orphan Black: The story of a group of clones that discover each other and the secret organization Dyad, which was responsible for their creation.

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- ▶ Having multiple copies leads to the problem of **consistency**. When and how the copies are made consistent determines the price of replication.
- ▶ **Example:** Client caching of web pages in web browser gains performance for the client at the cost of consistency.

Replication as a Scaling Technique

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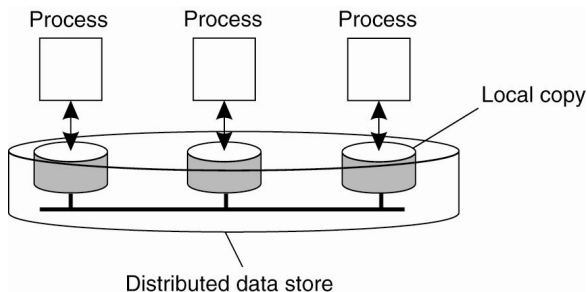
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- ▶ **How to keep the replicas consistent?** Use global ordering using Lamport timestamps or use a coordinator. This may require a lot of communication for a large system.
- ▶ **In many cases, the real solution is to loosen consistency constraints.** E.g. The updates do not have to be atomic. To what extent we can loosen depends highly on the access and update patterns as well as the application.

Replication as a Scaling Technique

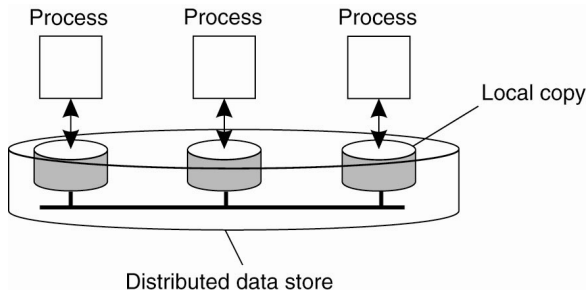
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- ▶ In many cases, the real solution is to loosen consistency constraints. E.g. The updates do not have to be atomic. To what extent we can loosen depends highly on the access and update patterns as well as the application.
- ▶ A range of consistency models are available.

Data Store



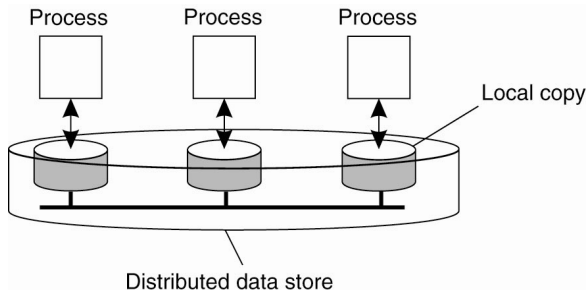
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 - ▶ distributed shared memory
 - ▶ distributed shared database
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- ▶ Each process has a local or nearby copy of the whole store or part of it.
- ▶ A data operation is classified as a **write** when it changes the data, and is otherwise classified as a **read** operation.

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- ▶ A consistency model is essentially a contract between processes and the data store. It says that if processes agree to obey certain rules, the store promises to work correctly.
- ▶ Models with minor restrictions are easy to use while models with major restrictions are more difficult to use. But then easy models don't perform as well. So we have to make trade-offs.

Consistency Models

▶ Data-centric consistency models

- ▶ Continuous consistency
- ▶ Sequential consistency
- ▶ Causal consistency
- ▶ Entry Consistency with Grouping operations

▶ Client-centric consistency models

- ▶ Eventual consistency
- ▶ Monotonic reads
- ▶ Monotonic writes
- ▶ Read your writes
- ▶ Writes follow reads

Sequential Consistency (1)

A data store is **sequentially consistent** when:

The result of any execution is the same as if the (read and write) operations by all processes on the data store were executed in *some sequential order* and the operations of each individual process appear in this sequence in the order specified by its program.

Sequential Consistency (2)

P1:	W(x)a	
P2:		R(x)NIL R(x)a

- ▶ Behavior of two processes operating on the same data item.
The horizontal axis is time.

Sequential Consistency (3)

P1:	W(x)a		
P2:	W(x)b		
P3:		R(x)b	R(x)a
P4:		R(x)b	R(x)a

(a)

P1:	W(x)a		
P2:	W(x)b		
P3:		R(x)b	R(x)a
P4:		R(x)a	R(x)b

(b)

- (a) A sequentially consistent data store.
- (b) A data store that is not sequentially consistent.

Sequential Consistency (4)

Process P1	Process P2	Process P3
x ← 1; print(y, z);	y ← 1; print(x, z);	z ← 1; print(x, y);

- ▶ Three concurrently-executing processes.

Sequential Consistency (5)

```
x ← 1;  
print(y, z);  
y ← 1;  
print(x, z);  
z ← 1;  
print(x, y);
```

Prints: 001011
Signature: 001011

(a)

```
x ← 1;  
y ← 1;  
print(x, z);  
print(y, z);  
z ← 1;  
print(x, y);
```

Prints: 101011
Signature: 101011

(b)

```
y ← 1;  
z ← 1;  
print(x, y);  
print(x, z);  
x ← 1;  
print(y, z);
```

Prints: 010111
Signature: 110101

(c)

```
y ← 1;  
x ← 1;  
z ← 1;  
print(x, z);  
print(y, z);  
print(x, y);
```

Prints: 111111
Signature: 111111

(d)

- ▶ Four valid execution sequences for the three processes. The vertical axis is time.
- ▶ Signature is output of P1, P2, P3 concatenated.

Causal Consistency (1)

For a data store to be considered **causally consistent**, it is necessary that the store obeys the following condition:

- ▶ **Causal Consistency:** Writes that are potentially causally related must be seen by all processes in the same order. Concurrent writes by different processes may be seen in a different order on different machines. Write by the same process are considered to also be causally related.
- ▶ Weaker than sequential consistency.

Causal Consistency (2)

P1:	W(x)a		W(x)c	
P2:		R(x)a	W(x)b	
P3:		R(x)a		R(x)c
P4:		R(x)a		R(x)b

- ▶ This sequence is allowed with a causally-consistent store, but not with a sequentially consistent store. Why?

Causal Consistency (3)

P1:	W(x)a		
P2:	R(x)a	W(x)b	
P3:		R(x)b	R(x)a
P4:		R(x)a	R(x)b

(a)

- ▶ A violation of a causally-consistent store. Why?

Causal Consistency (4)

P1:	W(x)a		
P2:	W(x)b		
P3:		R(x)b	R(x)a
P4:		R(x)a	R(x)b

(b)

- ▶ A valid sequence of events in a causally-consistent store.

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- ▶ Implementing causal consistency requires keeping track of which processes have seen which writes.
- ▶ It effectively means a dependency graph of which operation is dependent on which other operations must be constructed and maintained.
- ▶ This can be done using *vector timestamps*.

Entry Consistency with Grouping Operations (1)

Necessary criteria for correct synchronization:

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- ▶ After exclusive mode access to synchronization variable has been performed, any other process' next nonexclusive mode access to that synchronization variable may not be performed until it has performed with respect to that variable's owner.

Entry Consistency with Grouping Operations (2)

P1: Acq(Lx) W(x)a Acq(Ly) W(y)b Rel(Lx) Rel(Ly)

P2: $\text{Acq}(\text{Lx}) \text{ R}(\text{x})\text{a} \quad \text{R}(\text{y}) \text{NIL}$

P3: $Acq(Ly) \rightarrow R(y)b$

- ▶ A valid event sequence for entry consistency.

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- ▶ A special, important class of distributed data stores have the following characterization:
 - ▶ Lack of simultaneous updates (or when such updates happen, they can be easily resolved)
 - ▶ Most operations involve reading data.
- ▶ A very weak consistency model, called **eventual consistency**, is sufficient in such cases. This can be implemented relatively cheaply by **client-centric consistency** models.

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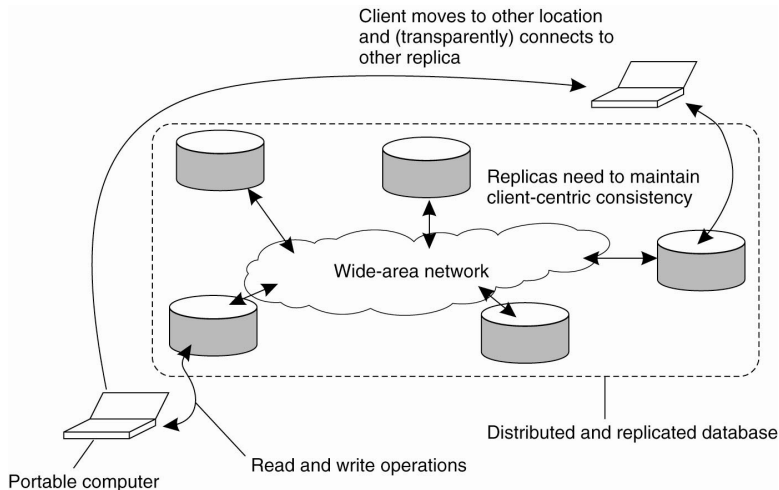
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- ▶ If no updates take place, all replicas will gradually become consistent. This form of consistency is called **eventual consistency**.
- ▶ Eventual consistency essentially requires only that updates are guaranteed to propagate to all replicas. Write-write conflicts are easy to solve when assuming that only a small group of processes can perform updates. Eventual consistency is therefore often cheap to implement.

Eventual Consistency (2)



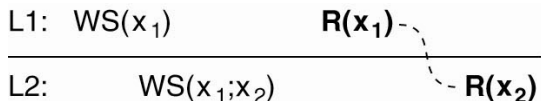
- ▶ The above problem can be alleviated by using *client-centric consistency*, which provides guarantees for a single client consistency in accessing the data store.

Monotonic Reads (1)

A data store is said to provide monotonic-read consistency if the following condition holds:

- ▶ If a process reads the value of a data item x , then any successive read operation on x by that process will always return that same value or a more recent value.
- ▶ But no guarantees on concurrent access by different clients.

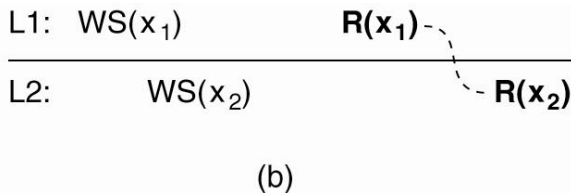
Monotonic Reads (2)



(a)

- ▶ The read operations performed by a single process P at two different local copies of the same data store. (a) A monotonic-read consistent data store.
- ▶ L_1 and L_2 are two local copies.
- ▶ $WS(x_1)$: write operations that may affect $R(x_1)$.
- ▶ $WS(x_1; x_2)$ implies that $WS(x_1)$ is a part of $WS(x_2)$.

Monotonic Reads (3)



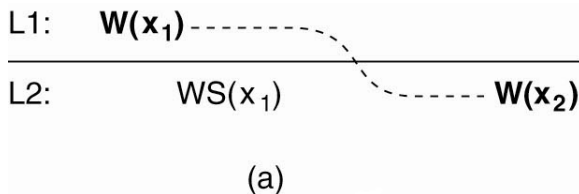
- ▶ The read operations performed by a single process P at two different local copies of the same data store. (b) A data store that does not provide monotonic reads.

Monotonic Writes (1)

In a monotonic-write consistent store, the following condition holds:

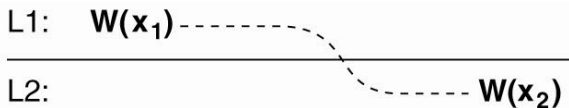
- ▶ A write operation by a process on a data item x is completed before any successive write operation on x by the same process.

Monotonic Writes (2)



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Monotonic Writes (3)



(b)

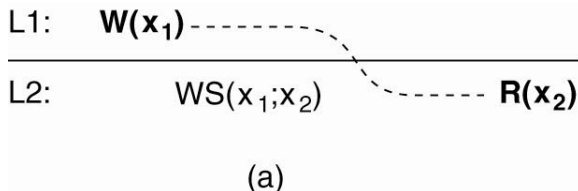
- ▶ The read operations performed by a single process P at two different local copies of the same data store. (b) A data store that does not provide monotonic reads.

Read Your Writes (1)

A data store is said to provide read-your-writes consistency, if the following condition holds:

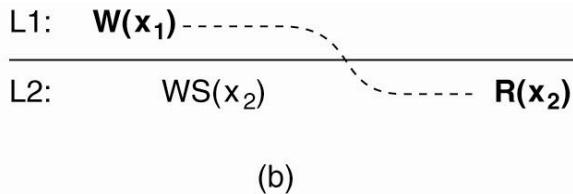
- ▶ The effect of a write operation by a process on data item x will always be seen by a successive read operation on x by the same process.

Read Your Writes (2)



- ▶ A data store that provides read-your-writes consistency.
 $WS(x_1)$ is the series of write operations that took place since initialization at a local copy.
- ▶ $WS(x_1; x_2)$ denotes that operations in $WS(x_1)$ also been performed at another local copy that has its set of operations in $WS(x_2)$.

Read Your Writes (3)



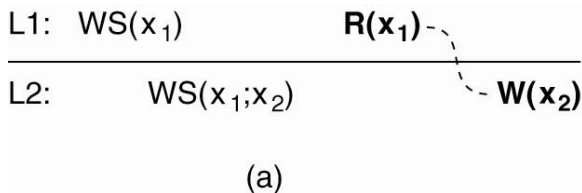
- ▶ A data store that does not follow *Read-Your-Writes* consistency model.

Writes Follow Reads (1)

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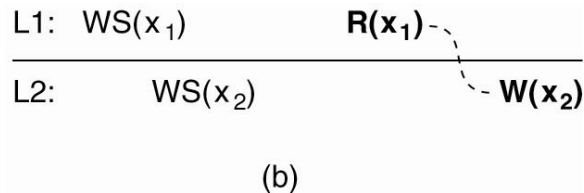
- ▶ A write operation by a process on a data item x following a previous read operation on x by the same process is guaranteed to take place on the same or a more recent value of x that was read.

Writes Follow Reads (2)



- A *Writes-Follow-Reads* consistent data store.

Writes Follow Reads (3)

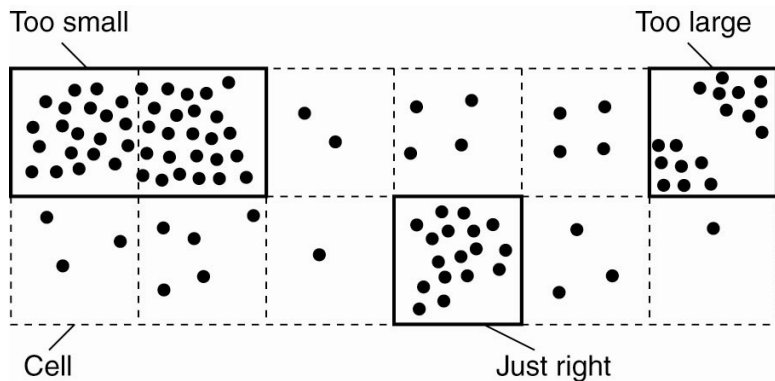


- ▶ A data store that does not follow *Writes-Follow-Reads* consistency model.

- ▶ A key issue for any distributed system that supports replication is to decide where, when and by whom replicas should be placed, and subsequently the mechanisms to use for keeping the replicas consistent.

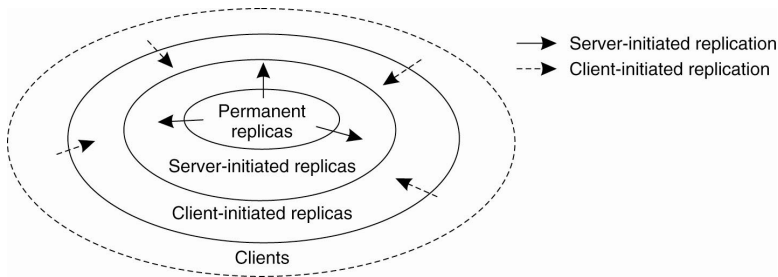
- ▶ A key issue for any distributed system that supports replication is to decide where, when and by whom replicas should be placed, and subsequently the mechanisms to use for keeping the replicas consistent. Two separate problems:
- ▶ placing replica servers
- ▶ placing content

Replica-Server Placement



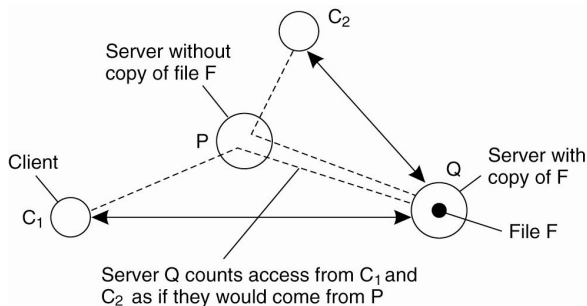
- ▶ Choosing a proper cell size for server placement.

Content Replication and Placement



- The logical organization of different kinds of copies of a data store into three concentric rings.

Server-Initiated Replicas



- ▶ Counting access requests from different clients.
- ▶ Three possible actions: migrate, delete, replicate.

Client-Initiated Replicas

- ▶ Same as client caches.
- ▶ Used to improve access times.
- ▶ Sharing a cache between clients may or may not improve the hit rate. E.g. Web data, file servers
- ▶ Shared caches can be at departmental or organization level

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- ▶ **Pull Protocol:** A server or a client requests another server to send it any updates it has at the moment. A pull-based approach is efficient when the read-to-update ratio is relatively low.
- ▶ A comparison between push-based and pull-based protocols in the case of multiple-client, single-server systems.

Issue	Push-based	Pull-based
State at server	List of client replicas and caches	None
Messages sent	Update (and possibly fetch update later)	Poll and update
Response time at client	Immediate (or fetch-update time)	Fetch-update time

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- ▶ Using multicasting can be much more efficient than unicasting for the updates.

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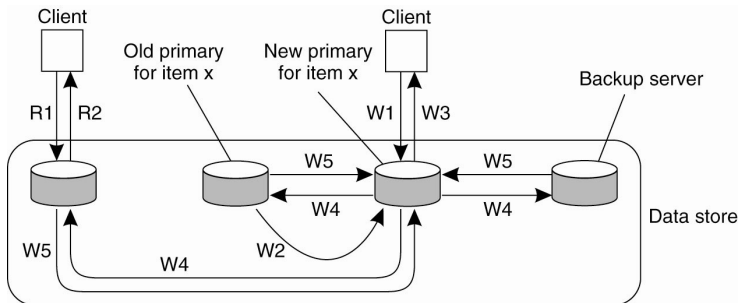
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- ▶ In a primary-based protocol, each data item x in the data store has an associated primary, which is responsible for write operations on x
- ▶ Primary can be *fixed at a remote server* or write operations can be carried out *locally after moving the primary to the process* where the write operation was initiated.

Local Write Protocol



W1. Write request

W2. Move item x to new primary

W3. Acknowledge write completed

W4. Tell backups to update

W5. Acknowledge update

R1. Read request

R2. Response to read

- Primary-backup protocol in which the primary migrates to the process wanting to perform an update. Updates have to be propagated back to other replicas.

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- ▶ **Quorum-based protocol**: the write operation is done by majority voting.

Quorum-based Replicated-Write Protocol (1)

Quorum-based protocol

- ▶ To read a file with N replicas, a client needs to assemble a **read quorum**, an arbitrary collection of N_R servers. Similarly, to write to a file, a **write quorum** of at least N_W servers. The values of the quorums are subject to the following rules:
 - ▶ $N_R + N_W > N$
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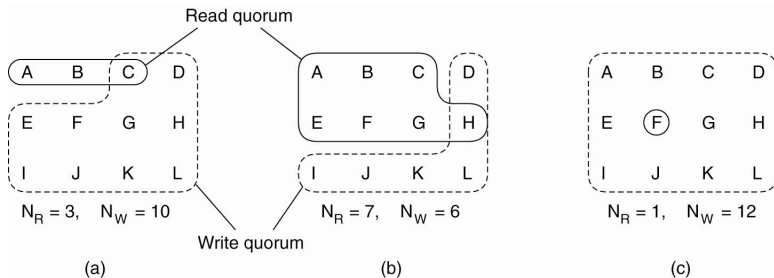
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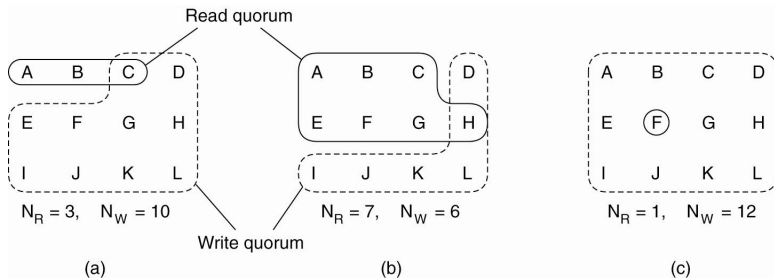
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 - ▶ $N_R + N_W > N$
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- ▶ Only one writer at a time can achieve write quorum.
- ▶ Every reader sees at least one copy of the most recent read (takes one with most recent version number or logical timestamp)

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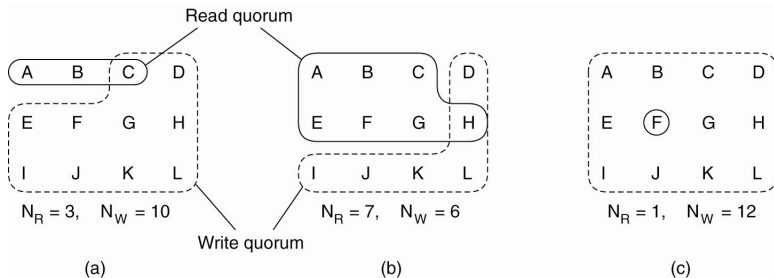


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- **Quorum-based Protocol.** Three examples of the voting algorithm.
 - (a) A correct choice of read and write set.
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 - (c) A correct choice, known as ROWA (read one, write all).

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 - (c) A correct choice, known as ROWA (read one, write all).
- ▶ **In-class Exercise.** Problem 20 (Chapter 7). A file is replicated on 10 servers. List all combinations of read and write quorums that are permitted by the voting algorithm.

Quorum-based Replicated-Write Protocols (3)

- ▶ **ROWA**: $R = 1, W = N$
Fast reads, slow writes
- ▶ **RAWO**: $R = N, W = 1$
Fast writes, slow reads
- ▶ **Majority**: $R = W = N/2 + 1$
Both moderately slow, but extremely high availability
- ▶ **Weighted voting**:
Give more votes to "better" replicas

Implementing Client-Centric Consistency (1)

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- ▶ Each client tracks identifiers for two sets of writes:
 - ▶ **read set**: consists of writes relevant for the read operations performed by the client.
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- ▶ *Implementing Monotonic Reads*: When a client performs a read operation at a server, that server is handed the client's **read set** to check whether all the identified writes have taken place locally. If not, it can contact other servers to be brought up to date. Or it can forward the request to another server where the write operations have already taken place.

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- ▶ How to determine exactly where the write operations in the client's **read set** have taken place? The write identifier can contain the server's identifier. Servers can be required to log their writes so they can be replayed at another server. The client's can generate a globally unique identifier that is included in the write identifier.

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- ▶ Improving efficiency: keep track of the sets only for the length of a **session**. This isn't sufficient. Why?
- ▶ The main problem is the representation of the read and write sets. It can be represented more efficiently by means of vector timestamps.

Representing Read/Write Sets Using Vector Timestamps (1)

- ▶ Whenever a server accepts a new write operation W , it assigns it a globally unique identifier along with a timestamp $ts(W)$. That server is identified as the $origin(W)$. Subsequent writes to that server get higher timestamps.

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- ▶ Whenever a client issues a request to read or write operation at a specific server, that server returns its current timestamp along with the results of the operation.

Representing Read/Write Sets Using Vector Timestamps (2)

- ▶ Read and write sets are represented by vector timestamps. For each session A , we construct a vector timestamp SVC_A with $SVC_A[i]$ set equal to the maximum timestamp of all write operations in A that originate from server S_i .

$$SVC_A[j] = \max\{ts(W) \mid W \in A \ \& \ \text{origin}(W) = S_j\}$$

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- ▶ The timestamp of a session always represents the latest write operations that have been seen by the applications that are executing as part of that session.
- ▶ The compactness is obtained by representing all observed writes originating from the same server through a single timestamp.

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- ▶ Once the operation is performed, the server S_i will return its current timestamp WVC_i . At that point, SVC_A is adjusted to:

$$SVC_A[j] = \max\{SVC_A[j], WVC_i[j]\}$$

Exercises (1)

- ▶ (Chapter 7) Problems 1, 2, 7, 9, 10, 13, 17, 18, 20.
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- ▶ **Problem 10.** Consider a personal mailbox for a mobile user, implemented as part of a wide-area distributed database. What kind of client-centric consistency model would be the most appropriate?

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Summary of Consistency Models (1)

Data-Centric Consistency Models

- ▶ **Sequential Consistency:** The result of any execution is the same as if the (read and write) operations by all processes on the data store were executed in *some sequential order* and the operations of each individual process appear in this sequence in the order specified by its program.
- ▶ **Causal Consistency:** Writes that are potentially causally related must be seen by all processes in the same order. Concurrent writes by different processes may be seen in a different order on different machines. Write by the same process are considered to also be causally related.

Summary of Consistency Models (2)

Eventual consistency *essentially requires only that updates are guaranteed to propagate to all replicas.* **Client-Centric Consistency Models** that are used to implement eventual consistency.

- ▶ **Monotonic Reads:** If a process reads the value of a data item x , then any successive read operation on x by that process will always return that same value or a more recent value.
- ▶ **Monotonic Writes:** A write operation by a process on a data item x is completed before any successive write operation on x by the same process.
- ▶ **Read Your Writes:** The effect of a write operation by a process on data item x will always be seen by a successive read operation on x by the same process.
- ▶ **Writes Follow Reads:** A write operation by a process on a data item x following a previous read operation on x by the same process is guaranteed to take place on the same or a more recent value of x that was read.

References

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- ▶ [How eventual is eventual consistency?](#) posted on Basho Blog
- ▶ [10 Lessons from 10 Years of Amazon Web Services](#) by Werner Vogels (CTO, Amazon)