

# Distributed Systems II

## *Software Architecture*

Brae Webb & Richard Thomas

March 31, 2025

*Distributed Systems Series*

Distributed I *Reliability* and *scalability* of  
*stateless* systems.

Distributed II *Complexities* of *stateful*  
systems.

Distributed III *Hard problems* in distributed  
systems.

*Distributed Systems Series*

Distributed I Reliability and scalability of stateless systems.

Distributed II *Complexities* of *stateful* systems.

Distributed III Hard problems in distributed systems.

# Previously in CSSE6400...



*Question*

What is the *problem*?

## Database



*Disclaimer*

This is *not* a database course.

## Advanced Database Systems (INFS3200)

### Course level

Undergraduate

### Faculty

[Engineering, Architecture & Information  
Technology](#)

### School

Info Tech & Elec Engineering

### Units

2

### Duration

One Semester

### Class contact

2 Lecture hours, 1 Tutorial hour, 1 Practical or Laboratory hour

### Incompatible

INFS7907

### Prerequisite

INFS2200

### Assessment methods

Examinations and coursework

### Current course offerings

Course offerings	Location	Mode	Course Profile
<a href="#">Semester 1, 2022</a>	St Lucia	Internal	<a href="#">COURSE PROFILE</a>
<a href="#">Semester 1, 2022</a>	External	External	<a href="#">COURSE PROFILE</a>
<a href="#">Semester 2, 2022</a>	External	External	PROFILE UNAVAILABLE
<a href="#">Semester 2, 2022</a>	St Lucia	Internal	PROFILE UNAVAILABLE

Please Note: Course profiles marked as not available may still be in development.

### Course description

Distributed database design, query and transaction processing, data integration, data warehousing, data cleansing, management of spatial data, and data from large scale distributed devices.

### Archived offerings

Course offerings	Location	Mode	Course Profile
<a href="#">Semester 1, 2021</a>	St Lucia	Flexible Delivery	<a href="#">COURSE PROFILE</a>
<a href="#">Semester 1, 2021</a>	External	External	<a href="#">COURSE PROFILE</a>
<a href="#">Semester 2, 2021</a>	External	External	<a href="#">COURSE PROFILE</a>
<a href="#">Semester 2, 2021</a>	St Lucia	Internal	<a href="#">COURSE PROFILE</a>
<a href="#">Semester 1, 2020</a>	St Lucia	Internal	<a href="#">COURSE PROFILE</a>



*Question*

How do we fix database scaling issues?

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*Answer*

- Replication

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- Replication
- Partitioning

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- *Replication*
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*Question*

What is *replication*?

*Definition 0.* Replication

Data copied across multiple different machines.



product_id	name	stock	price
1234	Nicholas Cage Reversible Pillow	10	\$10.00
4321	Lifelike Elephant Inflatable	5	\$50.00



product_id	name	stock	price
1234	Nicholas Cage Reversible Pillow	10	\$10.00
4321	Lifelike Elephant Inflatable	5	\$50.00



*Definition 0.* Replica

Database node which stores a copy of the data.

*Question*

What are the advantages of *replication*?

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- *Scale* our database to cope with higher loads.

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### *Answer*

- *Scale* our database to cope with higher loads.
- Provide *fault tolerance* from a single instance failure.

### *Question*

What are the advantages of *replication*?

### *Answer*

- *Scale* our database to cope with higher loads.
- Provide *fault tolerance* from a single instance failure.
- Locate instances *closer to end-users*.

*Question*

How do we replicate our data?

*First approach*

# Leader-Follower Replication





### *Leader-based Replication*

On write Writes sent to *leader*, change is propagated via change stream.

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On write Writes sent to *leader*, change is propagated via change stream.

On read Any *replica* can be queried.



*Propagating changes*

*Synchronous* vs. *Asynchronous*







### *Synchronous Propagation*

- Writes must propagate to *all followers* before being successful.



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- Writes must propagate to *all followers* before being successful.
- *Any* replica goes down, *all* replicas are un-writeable.
- Writes must *wait* for propagation to *all* replicas.

## *Asynchronous Propagation*

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- Writes *don't* have to *wait* for propagation.
- If the leader goes down before propagating, the *write is lost*.

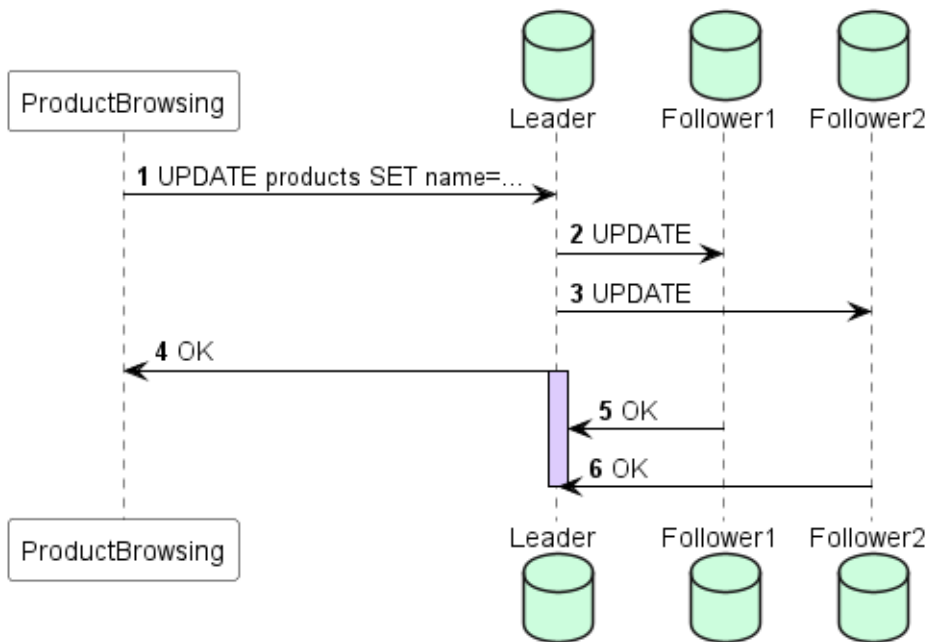
### *Asynchronous Propagation*

- Writes *don't* have to *wait* for propagation.
- If the leader goes down before propagating, the *write is lost*.
- Replicas can have out-dated or *stale* data.

*Definition 0.* Replication Lag

The time taken for replicas to update *stale* data.







*Eventually, all replicas must become consistent*

The system is *eventually consistent*.

*Eventual Consistency*

Problems?



**Brae Webb**

@braewebb



**Brae Webb**

@braewebb

Name:	<input type="text" value="Brae"/>
<input type="button" value="Cancel"/>	<input type="button" value="Save"/>



**Brae Webb**

@braewebb

Name:	<input type="text" value="Brae"/>
<input type="button" value="Cancel"/>	<input type="button" value="Save"/>



**Brae Webb**

@braewebb



*Definition 0.* Read-your-writes Consistency

Users always see the updates that *they have made*.



**Brae Webb**

@braewebb

My fist post





**Brae Webb**

@braewebb

My fist post



**Brae Webb**

@braewebb

My first post



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**Brae Webb**

@braewebb

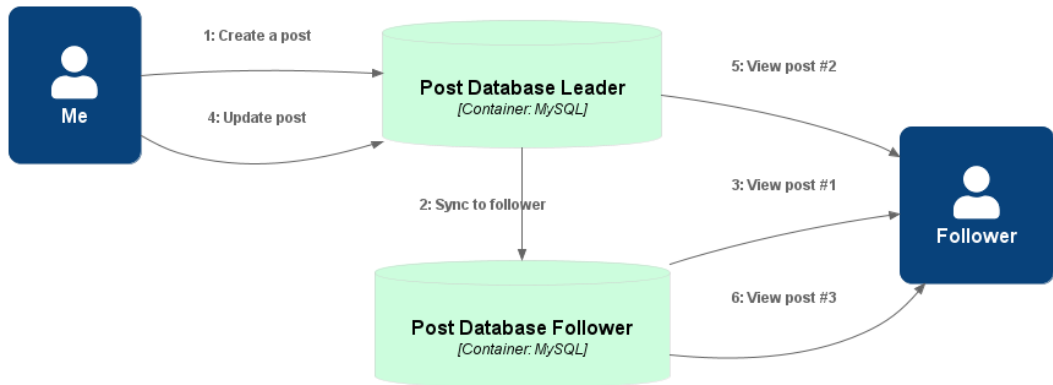
My first post



**Brae Webb**

@braewebb

My fist post



*Definition 0.* Monotonic Reads

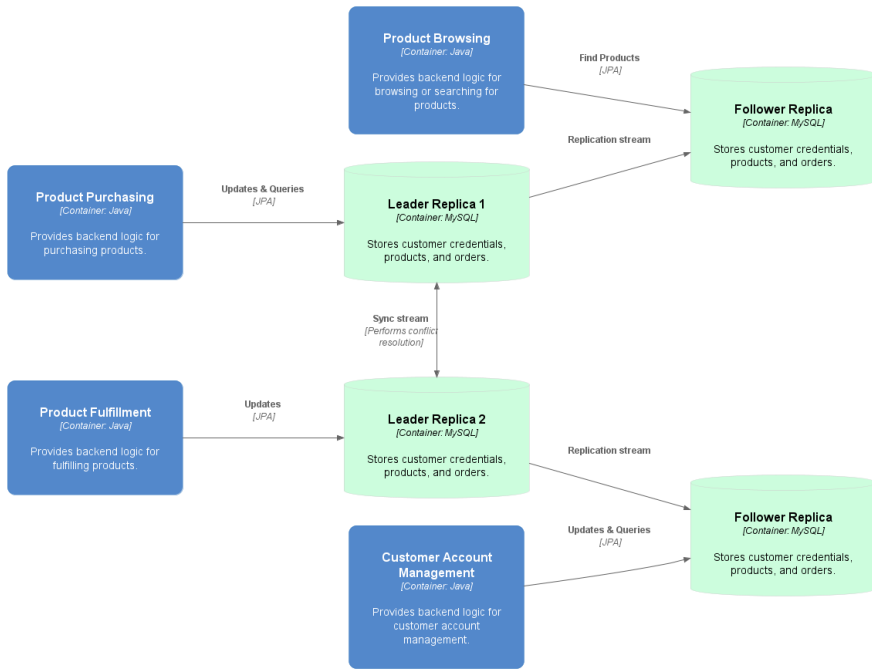
Once a user reads an updated value, they don't later see the old value.

## *Summary*

- Leader-follower databases allow *reads to scale* more effectively.
- Asynchronous propagation weakens consistency to *eventually consistent*.
- Leader-follower databases still have a *leader write bottle-neck*.

*Second approach*

# Multi-leader Replication



## *Why multi-leader?*

- If you have multiple leaders, you can write to any, allowing *writes to scale*.



### *Why multi-leader?*

- If you have multiple leaders, you can write to any, allowing *writes to scale*.
- A leader going down doesn't prevent writes, giving *better fault-tolerance*.

*Question*

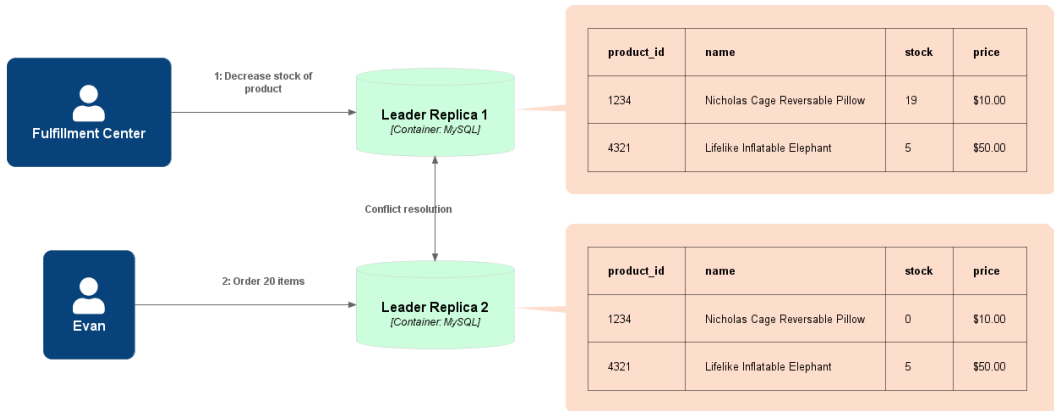
What might go wrong?

*Question*

What might go wrong?

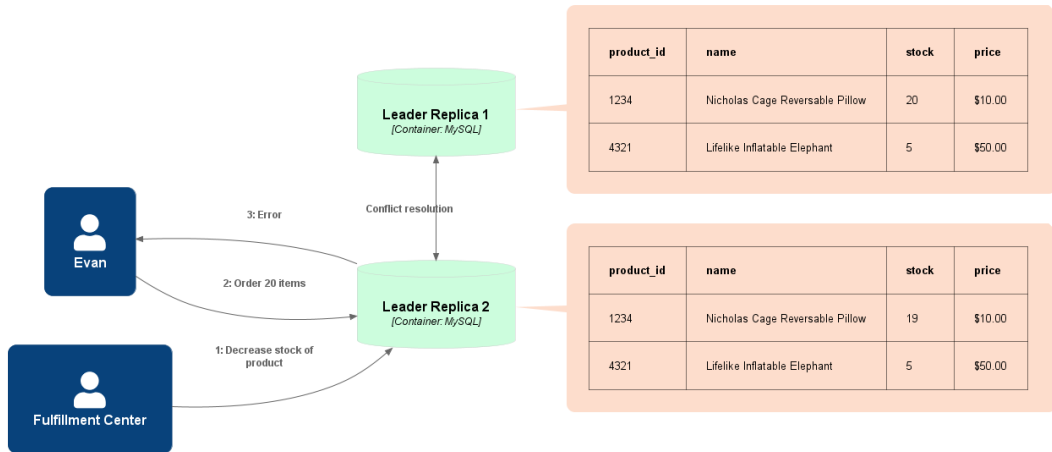
*Answer*

Write conflicts



*Where possible*

Avoid write conflicts



*Where impossible*

Convergence

### *Convergence Strategies*

- Assign each *write* a unique ID.



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### *Convergence Strategies*

- Assign each *write* a unique ID.
- Assign each *leader replica* a unique ID.
- Custom resolution logic.



1: Decrease stock of product



Conflict resolution



2: Order 20 items



table	row	column	value
products	1234	stock	0

product_id	name	stock	price
1234	Nicholas Cage Reversible Pillow	19	\$10.00
4321	Lifelike Inflatable Elephant	5	\$50.00

product_id	name	stock	price
1234	Nicholas Cage Reversible Pillow	0	\$10.00
4321	Lifelike Inflatable Elephant	5	\$50.00

table	row	column	value
products	1234	stock	19

## *Resolving Conflicts*

**On Write** When a conflict is first noticed, take proactive resolution action.

**On Read** When a conflict is next read, ask for a resolution.

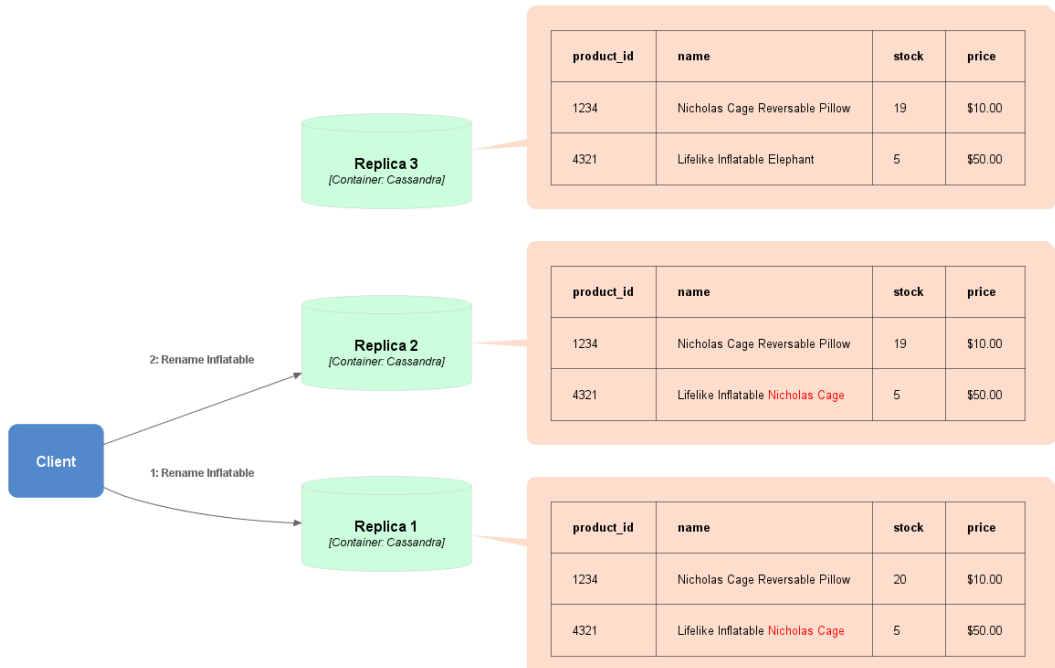
*Third Approach*

# Leaderless Replication

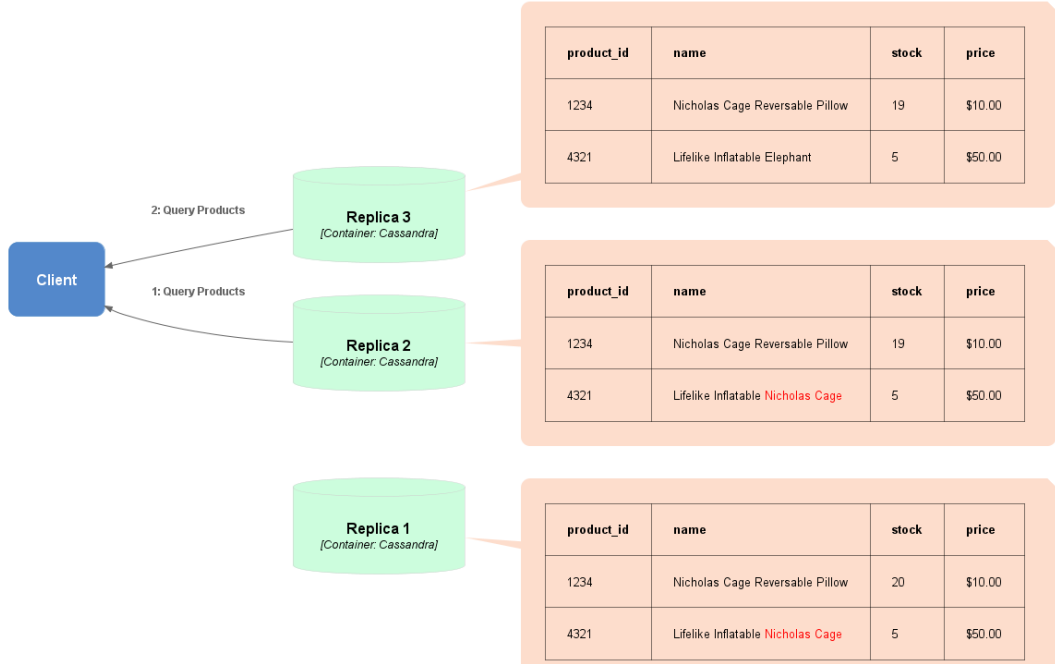


*How do they work?*

Each read/write is sent to *multiple* replicas.







*How are changes propagated?*

- Read Repair

*How are changes propagated?*

- Read Repair
- Anti-Entropy Process

*Question*

How do we know it's consistent?



1: Query Products



**Replica 3**

[Container: Cassandra]

product_id	name	stock	price
1234	Nicholas Cage Reversible Pillow	19	\$10.00
4321	Lifelike Inflatable Elephant	5	\$50.00



**Replica 2**

[Container: Cassandra]

product_id	name	stock	price
1234	Nicholas Cage Reversible Pillow	19	\$10.00
4321	Lifelike Inflatable <b>Nicholas Cage</b>	5	\$50.00



**Replica 1**

[Container: Cassandra]

product_id	name	stock	price
1234	Nicholas Cage Reversible Pillow	20	\$10.00
4321	Lifelike Inflatable <b>Nicholas Cage</b>	5	\$50.00

*Question*

How do we know it's consistent?

*Question*

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*Answer*

Quorum Reads and Writes

## Quorum Consistency

$$w + r > n$$

$n$  total replicas

$w$  amount of replicas to *write* to

$r$  amount of replicas to *read* from



## *Quorum Consistency*

$$2 + 2 > 3$$

$n$  total replicas

$w$  amount of replicas to *write* to

$r$  amount of replicas to *read* from

## *Quorum Consistency*

$$1 + 3 > 3$$

$n$  total replicas

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$n$  total replicas

$w$  amount of replicas to *write* to

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*Question*

What about write conflicts?

*Question*

What about write conflicts?

*Answer*

Same problem as with Multi-leader replication.





## *Summary*

- *Replication* copies data to multiple replicas.



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## Summary

- *Replication* copies data to multiple replicas.
- *Leader-based* replication is most common and simplest.
- Replication introduces *eventual consistency*.
- *Multi-leader* replication scales writes as well as reads but introduces *write conflicts*.
- *Leaderless* replication is another approach which keeps the problems of multi-leader.

*Question*

How do we fix database scaling issues?

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*Answer*

- *Replication*
- Partitioning
- Independent databases

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*Definition 0.* Partitioning

Split the data of a system onto multiple nodes.

These nodes are *partitions*.



### Application Database

[Container: MySQL]

Stores customer credentials,  
products, and orders.

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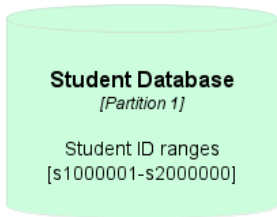
product_id	name	stock	price
1234	Nicholas Cage Reversible Pillow	10	\$10.00

*Question*

How should we decide which data is stored where?



student_id	name	...
s0746283	Bobby Tables	...
...	...	...



student_id	name	...
s1637285	Brae Webb	...
...	...	...

*Question*

What is the problem with this?

*Question*

What is the problem with this?

*Answer*

Over time some partitions become inactive, while others receive almost all load.

*Question*

How should we decide which data is stored where?

*Question*

How should we decide which data is stored where?

*Answer*

Maximize spread of requests, avoiding *skewing*.

*Question*

Have we seen this before?



*Question*

Have we seen this before?

*Answer*

Hashing?

*Question*

What is the problem with this?

*Question*

What is the problem with this?

*Answer*

Range queries are inefficient, i.e. get all students between s4444444 and s4565656.

*Question*

How do we route queries?

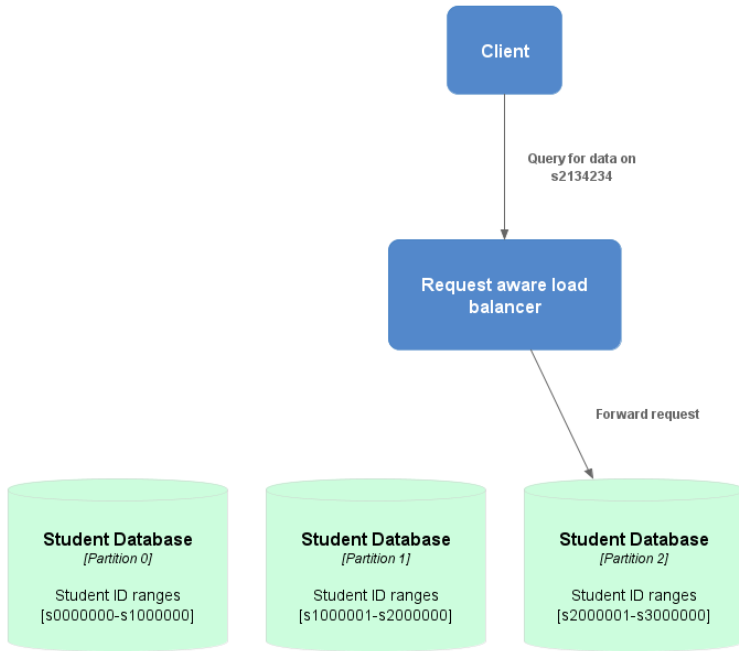
### *Query-insensitive Load Balancer*

Randomly route to any node, responsibility of the node to re-route to the correct node.



### *Query-sensitive Load Balancer*

A load balancer which understands which queries should be forwarded to which node.





### *Client-aware Queries*

Place the responsibility on clients to choose the correct node.

Client

Query for data on  
s2134234

**Student Database**

*[Partition 0]*

Student ID ranges  
[s0000000-s1000000]

**Student Database**

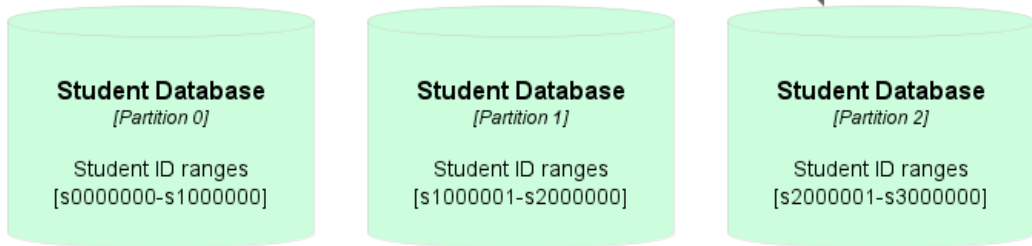
*[Partition 1]*

Student ID ranges  
[s1000001-s2000000]

**Student Database**

*[Partition 2]*

Student ID ranges  
[s2000001-s3000000]



## *Summary*

- *Partitioning* splits data across multiple nodes.

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## Summary

- *Partitioning* splits data across multiple nodes.
- Requires a *consistent method* to choose appropriate node.
- Partitioning by *primary key* can create *skewing*.
- Partitioning by *hash* makes range queries less efficient.
- Three approaches to *routing requests*.

*Disclaimer*

We have ignored the hard parts of replication.



*Question*

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*Answer*

- Replication
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- Partitioning
- *Independent databases*

## *Summary*

- Replications

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- Replications
  - Leader-based, multi-leader, and leaderless

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- Replications
  - Leader-based, multi-leader, and leaderless
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  - Consistent method to pick nodes for data

## *Summary*

- Replications
  - Leader-based, multi-leader, and leaderless
  - Eventual consistency
  - Write conflicts
- Partitioning
  - Consistent method to pick nodes for data
  - Avoiding skewing