

Exercises 02

Storage: Disks, Files, Buffers

1. What is the purpose of the storage management subsystem of a DBMS?

Answer:

The primary purpose of the storage manager is to organise the persistent storage of the DBMS's data and meta-data, typically on a disk device. The storage manager contains a mapping from user-level database objects (such as tables and tuples) to files and disk blocks. Its primary functions are performing the mapping from objects to files and transferring data between memory and disk.

2. Describe some of the typical functions provided by the storage management subsystem.

Answer:

Note that these functions are merely suggestive of the kinds of functions that might appear in a storage manager. They bear no relation to any real DBMS (and they are not drawn from the PostgreSQL storage manager, although similar kinds of functions will be found there). The function descriptions could have been less detailed, but I thought it was worth mentioning some typical data types as well.

Some typical storage management functions ...

- `RelnDescriptor *openRelation(char *relnName)`
 - initiates access to a named table/relation
 - determines which files correspond to the named table
 - sets up a data structure (`RelnDescriptor`) to manage access to those files
 - the data structure would typically contain file descriptors and a buffer
- `DataBlock getPage(TableDescriptor *table, PageId pid)`
 - fetch the content of the `pid`th data page from the open `table`
 - `DataBlock` is a reference to a memory buffer containing the data
- `Tuple getTuple(TableDescriptor *table, TupleID tid)`
 - fetch the content of the `pid`th tuple from the open `table`
 - `Tuple` is an in-memory data structure containing the values from the tuple
 - this function would typically determine which page contained the tuple, then call `getPage()` to retrieve the page, and finally extract the data values from the page buffer; it may also need to open other files and read e.g. large data values from them

Other functions might include `putPage`, `putTuple`, `closeTable`, etc.

3. [Based on Garcia-Molina/Ullman/Widom 13.6.1]

Consider a disk with the following characteristics:

- 8 platters, 16 read/write surfaces
- 16,384 (2^{14}) tracks per surface
- On average, 128 sectors/blocks per track (min: 96, max: 160)
- 4096 (2^{12}) bytes per sector/block

If we represent record addresses on such a disk by allocating a separate byte (or bytes) to address the surface, the track, the sector/block, and the byte-offset within the block, how many bytes do we need?

How would the answer differ if we used bit-fields, used the minimum number of bits for each address component, and packed the components as tightly as possible?

Answer:

Number of bytes required to address the disk if all address components are multiples of whole bytes:

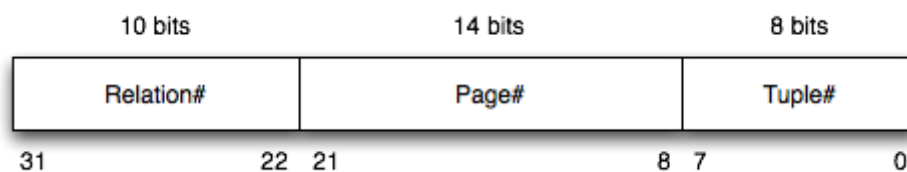
- 16 surfaces requires 4 bits or 1 byte
- 16,384 tracks requires 14 bits or 2 bytes
- need to use max sectors/track, so 160 sectors requires 8 bits or 1 byte
- 4,096 bytes per sector/block requires 12 bits or 2 bytes

Thus, the total number of bytes required is $1+2+1+2 = 6$ bytes.

If we use minimum bits, we require $4+14+8+12 = 38$ bits = 5 bytes

4. The raw disk addresses in the first question are very low level. DBMSs normally deal with higher-level objects than raw disk blocks, and thus use different kinds of addresses, such as **PageIds** and **TupleIds**.

Consider a DBMS where **TupleIds** are defined as 32-bit quantities consisting the following:



Write C functions to extract the various components from a **TupleId** value:

```
typedef unsigned int BitString;
typedef BitString TupleId;

BitString relNum(Tuple id) { ... }
BitString pageNumFrom(Tuple id) { ... }
BitString recNumFrom(Tuple id) { ... }
```

Answer:

Requires the use of C's bit operators, and use a mask to extract just the relevant bits and a shift to ensure that the relevant bits are in the low-order position:

```
#define relNumMask 0x000003ff /* 10 bits */
#define relNumMask 0x00003fff /* 14 bits */
#define recNumMask 0x000000ff /* 8 bits */

BitString relNum(TupleId id) { return ((id >> 22) & relNumMask); }

BitString pageNumFrom(TupleId id) { return ((id >> 8) & pageNumMask); }

BitString recNumFrom(TupleId id) { return (id & recNumMask); }
```

These are probably better done as `#define` macros.

5. Consider executing a nested-loop join on two small tables (R , with $b_R=4$, and S , with $b_S=3$) and using a small buffer pool (with 3 initially unused buffers). The pattern of access to pages is determined by the following algorithm:

```
for (i = 0; i < bR; i++) {
    rpage = request_page(R,i);
    for (j = 0; j < bS; j++) {
        spage = request_page(S,j);
        process join using tuples in rpage and spage ...
        release_page(S,j);
    }
    release_page(R,i);
}
```

Show the state of the buffer pool and any auxiliary data structures after the completion of each call to the `request` or `release` functions. For each buffer slot, show the page that it currently holds and its pin count, using the notation e.g. $R0(1)$ to indicate that page 0 from table R is held in that buffer slot and has a pin count of 1. Assume that free slots are always used in preference to slots that already contain data, even if the slot with data has a pin count of zero.

In the traces below, we have not explicitly showed the initial free-list of buffers. We assume that `Buf[0]` is at the start of the list, then `Buf[1]`, then `Buf[2]`. The allocation method works as follows, for all replacement strategies:

- if the free-list has any buffers, use the first one on the list
- if the free-list is empty, apply the replacement strategy

The trace below shows the first part of the buffer usage for the above join, using PostgreSQL's clock-sweep replacement strategy. Indicate each read-from-disk operation by a `*` in the R column. Complete this example, and then repeat this exercise for the LRU and MRU buffer replacement strategies.

Operation	Buf[0]	Buf[1]	Buf[2]	R	Strategy data	Notes
initially	free	free	free	-	NextVictim=0	

```

request(R0)  R0(1)  free  free  *  NextVictim=0  use first avail
request(S0)  R0(1)  S0(1)  free  *  NextVictim=0  use first avail
release(S0)  R0(1)  S0(0)  free  *  NextVictim=0
request(S1)  R0(1)  S0(0)  S1(1)  *  NextVictim=0  use first avail
release(S1)  R0(1)  S0(0)  S1(0)  *  NextVictim=0
request(S2)  R0(1)  S2(1)  S1(0)  *  NextVictim=2  skip pinned Bu
release(S2)  R0(1)  S2(0)  S1(0)  *  NextVictim=2
release(R0)  R0(0)  S2(0)  S1(0)  *  NextVictim=2
request(R1)  R0(0)  S2(0)  R1(1)  *  NextVictim=0  use NextVictim
request(S0)  ...
etc. etc. etc.
release(S2)  ...
release(R3)  ...

```

Answer:

(i)

Buffer usage trace for *R join S* using Clock-sweep replacement strategy.

Note that the buffer gives us absolutely no benefit in terms of reducing the number of reads required. It would have been the same if we'd had just a single input buffer for each table.

Operation	Buf[0]	Buf[1]	Buf[2]	R	Strategy data	Notes
initially	free	free	free	-	NextVictim=0	
request(R0)	R0(1)	free	free	*	NextVictim=0	use first avail
request(S0)	R0(1)	S0(1)	free	*	NextVictim=0	use first avail
release(S0)	R0(1)	S0(0)	free	*	NextVictim=0	
request(S1)	R0(1)	S0(0)	S1(1)	*	NextVictim=0	use first avail
release(S1)	R0(1)	S0(0)	S1(0)	*	NextVictim=0	
request(S2)	R0(1)	S2(1)	S1(0)	*	NextVictim=2	skip pinned Bu
release(S2)	R0(1)	S2(0)	S1(0)	*	NextVictim=2	
release(R0)	R0(0)	S2(0)	S1(0)	*	NextVictim=2	
request(R1)	R0(0)	S2(0)	R1(1)	*	NextVictim=0	use NextVictim
request(S0)	S0(1)	S2(0)	R1(1)	*	NextVictim=1	use NextVictim
release(S0)	S0(0)	S2(0)	R1(1)	*	NextVictim=1	
request(S1)	S0(0)	S1(1)	R1(1)	*	NextVictim=2	use NextVictim
release(S1)	S0(0)	S1(0)	R1(1)	*	NextVictim=2	
request(S2)	S2(1)	S1(0)	R1(1)	*	NextVictim=1	skip pinned Bu
release(S2)	S2(0)	S1(0)	R1(1)	*	NextVictim=1	
release(R1)	S2(0)	S1(0)	R1(0)	*	NextVictim=1	
request(R2)	S2(0)	R2(1)	R1(0)	*	NextVictim=2	use NextVictim
request(S0)	S2(0)	R2(1)	S0(1)	*	NextVictim=0	use NextVictim
release(S0)	S2(0)	R2(1)	S0(0)	*	NextVictim=0	
request(S1)	S1(1)	R2(1)	S0(0)	*	NextVictim=1	use NextVictim
release(S1)	S1(0)	R2(1)	S0(0)	*	NextVictim=1	
request(S2)	S1(0)	R2(1)	S2(1)	*	NextVictim=0	skip pinned Bu
release(S2)	S1(0)	R2(1)	S2(0)	*	NextVictim=0	
release(R2)	S1(0)	R2(0)	S2(0)	*	NextVictim=0	
request(R3)	R3(1)	R2(0)	S2(0)	*	NextVictim=1	use NextVictim
request(S0)	R3(1)	S0(1)	S2(0)	*	NextVictim=2	use NextVictim
release(S0)	R3(1)	S0(0)	S2(0)	*	NextVictim=2	
request(S1)	R3(1)	S0(0)	S1(1)	*	NextVictim=0	use NextVictim
release(S1)	R3(1)	S0(0)	S1(0)	*	NextVictim=0	

release(S1)	R3(1)	S0(0)	S1(0)	NextVictim=0	
request(S2)	R3(1)	S2(1)	S1(0)	*	NextVictim=2 skip pinned Bu
release(S2)	R3(1)	S2(0)	S1(0)	NextVictim=2	
release(R3)	R3(0)	S2(0)	S1(0)	NextVictim=2	

(ii)

Buffer usage trace for *R join S* using LRU replacement strategy.

Note that the least recently used buffer is always at the front of the LRU list.

As in the clock=sweep case, the replacement strategy gives no re-use of loaded pages; the number of reads is the same as if we had one input buffer for each relation.

Operation	Buf[0]	Buf[1]	Buf[2]	R	Strategy data
initially	free	free	free	-	LRU: empty
request(R0)	R0(1)	free	free	*	LRU: empty
request(S0)	R0(1)	S0(1)	free	*	LRU: empty
release(S0)	R0(1)	S0(0)	free		LRU: Buf[1]
request(S1)	R0(1)	S0(0)	S1(1)	*	LRU: Buf[1]
release(S1)	R0(1)	S0(0)	S1(0)		LRU: Buf[1] Buf[2]
request(S2)	R0(1)	S2(1)	S1(0)	*	LRU: Buf[2]
release(S2)	R0(1)	S2(0)	S1(0)		LRU: Buf[2] Buf[1]
release(R0)	R0(0)	S2(0)	S1(0)		LRU: Buf[2] Buf[1] Buf[0]
request(R1)	R0(0)	S2(0)	R1(1)	*	LRU: Buf[1] Buf[0]
request(S0)	R0(0)	S0(1)	R1(1)	*	LRU: Buf[0]
release(S0)	R0(0)	S0(0)	R1(1)		LRU: Buf[0] Buf[1]
request(S1)	S1(1)	S0(0)	R1(1)	*	LRU: Buf[1]
release(S1)	S1(0)	S0(0)	R1(1)		LRU: Buf[1] Buf[0]
request(S2)	S1(0)	S2(1)	R1(1)	*	LRU: Buf[0]
release(S2)	S1(0)	S2(0)	R1(1)		LRU: Buf[0] Buf[1]
release(R1)	S1(0)	S2(0)	R1(0)		LRU: Buf[0] Buf[1] Buf[2]
request(R2)	R2(1)	S2(0)	R1(0)	*	LRU: Buf[1] Buf[2]
request(S0)	R2(1)	S0(1)	R1(0)	*	LRU: Buf[2]
release(S0)	R2(1)	S0(0)	R1(0)		LRU: Buf[2] Buf[1]
request(S1)	R2(1)	S0(0)	S1(1)	*	LRU: Buf[1]
release(S1)	R2(1)	S0(0)	S1(0)		LRU: Buf[1] Buf[2]
request(S2)	R2(1)	S2(1)	S1(0)	*	LRU: Buf[2]
release(S2)	R2(1)	S2(0)	S1(0)		LRU: Buf[2] Buf[1]
release(R2)	R2(0)	S2(0)	S1(0)		LRU: Buf[2] Buf[1] Buf[0]
request(R3)	R2(0)	S2(0)	R3(1)	*	LRU: Buf[1] Buf[0]
request(S0)	R2(0)	S0(1)	R3(1)	*	LRU: Buf[0]
release(S0)	R2(0)	S0(0)	R3(1)		LRU: Buf[0] Buf[1]
request(S1)	S1(1)	S0(0)	R3(1)	*	LRU: Buf[1]
release(S1)	S1(0)	S0(0)	R3(1)		LRU: Buf[1] Buf[0]
request(S2)	S1(0)	S2(1)	R3(1)	*	LRU: Buf[0]
release(S2)	S1(0)	S2(0)	R3(1)		LRU: Buf[0] Buf[1]
release(R3)	S1(0)	S2(0)	R3(0)		LRU: Buf[0] Buf[1] Buf[2]

(iii)

Buffer usage trace for *R join S* using MRU replacement strategy.

Note that the most recently used buffer is always at the front of the MRU list. A buffer is removed from the MRU list when it is use, either because of a "hit" or because of it being re-allocated to a different page.

In this case, the buffering does actually bring some benefits. Some reads are avoided by "hits" on the buffer.

Operation	Buf[0]	Buf[1]	Buf[2]	R	Strategy data	
initially	free	free	free	-	MRU: empty	
request(R0)	R0(1)	free	free	*	MRU: empty	
request(S0)	R0(1)	S0(1)	free	*	MRU: empty	
release(S0)	R0(1)	S0(0)	free		MRU: Buf[1]	
request(S1)	R0(1)	S0(0)	S1(1)	*	MRU: Buf[1]	
release(S1)	R0(1)	S0(0)	S1(0)		MRU: Buf[2] Buf[1]	
request(S2)	R0(1)	S0(0)	S2(1)	*	MRU: Buf[1]	
release(S2)	R0(1)	S0(0)	S2(0)		MRU: Buf[2] Buf[1]	
release(R0)	R0(0)	S0(0)	S2(0)		MRU: Buf[0] Buf[2] Buf[1]	
request(R1)	R1(1)	S0(0)	S2(0)	*	MRU: Buf[2] Buf[1]	
request(S0)	R1(1)	S0(1)	S2(0)		MRU: Buf[2]	Hit
release(S0)	R1(1)	S0(0)	S2(0)		MRU: Buf[1] Buf[2]	
request(S1)	R1(1)	S1(1)	S2(0)	*	MRU: Buf[2]	
release(S1)	R1(1)	S1(0)	S2(0)		MRU: Buf[1] Buf[2]	
request(S2)	R1(1)	S1(0)	S2(1)		MRU: Buf[1]	Hit
release(S2)	R1(1)	S1(0)	S2(0)		MRU: Buf[2] Buf[1]	
release(R1)	R1(0)	S1(0)	S2(0)		MRU: Buf[0] Buf[2] Buf[1]	
request(R2)	R2(1)	S1(0)	S2(0)	*	MRU: Buf[2] Buf[1]	
request(S0)	R2(1)	S1(0)	S0(1)	*	MRU: Buf[1]	
release(S0)	R2(1)	S1(0)	S0(0)		MRU: Buf[2] Buf[1]	
request(S1)	R2(1)	S1(1)	S0(0)		MRU: Buf[2]	Hit
release(S1)	R2(1)	S1(0)	S0(0)		MRU: Buf[1] Buf[2]	
request(S2)	R2(1)	S2(1)	S0(0)	*	MRU: Buf[2]	
release(S2)	R2(1)	S2(0)	S0(0)		MRU: Buf[1] Buf[2]	
release(R2)	R2(0)	S2(0)	S0(0)		MRU: Buf[0] Buf[1] Buf[2]	
request(R3)	R3(1)	S2(0)	S0(0)	*	MRU: Buf[1] Buf[2]	
request(S0)	R3(1)	S2(0)	S0(1)		MRU: Buf[1]	Hit
release(S0)	R3(1)	S2(0)	S0(0)		MRU: Buf[2] Buf[1]	
request(S1)	R3(1)	S2(0)	S1(1)	*	MRU: Buf[1]	
release(S1)	R3(1)	S2(0)	S1(0)		MRU: Buf[2] Buf[1]	
request(S2)	R3(1)	S2(1)	S1(0)		MRU: Buf[2]	Hit
release(S2)	R3(1)	S2(0)	S1(0)		MRU: Buf[1] Buf[2]	
release(R3)	R3(0)	S2(0)	S1(0)		MRU: Buf[0] Buf[1] Buf[2]	

It would be interesting to repeat the above exercises with a larger buffer pool. I would not recommend trying this manually. It would be quicker to write a program to show buffer traces for the different strategies, and the program could also (a) let you work with larger tables, and (b) accumulate statistics on buffer usage.

6. [Based on GUW Ex.15.7.1]

Consider executing a join operation on two tables R and S . A pool of N buffers is available to assist with the execution of the join. In terms of N , b_R and b_S , give the conditions under which we can guarantee that the tables can be joined in a single pass (i.e. each page of each table

is read exactly once). Assume that the join here results in writing result tuples, unlike the previous question, so you need one output buffer as well as input buffers.

Answer:

For a one-pass join, one of the relations must fit entirely in the buffer pool. We also need room to read one page (at a time) from the other relation and another buffer to hold output tuples. In other words, we need $\min(b_R, b_S) \leq N-2$

7. Consider the execution of a binary search on the sort key in a file where $b=100$. Assume that the key being sought has a value in the middle of the range of values in the data page with index 52. Assume also that we have a buffer pool containing only 2 pages both of which are initially unused. Show the sequence of reads and replacements in the buffer pool during the search, for each of the following page replacement strategies:

- a. first-in-first-out
- b. most-recently-used

Use the following notation for describing the sequence of buffer pool operations, e.g.

```
request for page 3
placed in buffer 0
request for page 9
placed in buffer 1
request for page 14
placed in buffer 0 (page 3 replaced)
request for page 19
placed in buffer 1 (page 9 replaced)
etc. etc. etc.
```

Assuming that this is the only process active in the system, does the buffering achieve any disk i/o savings in either case?

Answer:

The first thing to determine is the sequence of page accesses that will occur. This is simple enough, given what we know about binary search and the location of the matching tuple:

iter	lo	hi	mid
.	0	99	.
1	0	99	49
2	50	99	74
3	50	73	61
4	50	60	55
5	50	54	52

Read the binary search algorithm in the lecture notes if you don't understand how the sequence of pages was generated. The only pages actually read (and checked for min/max

key values) are those determined as the **mid** page on each iteration, i.e.

49	74	61	55	52
----	----	----	----	----

a. first-in-first-out

```
request for page 49
placed in buffer 0
request for page 74
placed in buffer 1
request for page 61
placed in buffer 0 (page 49 replaced)
request for page 55
placed in buffer 1 (page 74 replaced)
request for page 52
placed in buffer 0 (page 69 replaced)
```

b. most-recently-used

```
request for page 49
placed in buffer 0
request for page 74
placed in buffer 1
request for page 61
placed in buffer 1 (page 74 replaced)
request for page 55
placed in buffer 1 (page 61 replaced)
request for page 52
placed in buffer 1 (page 55 replaced)
```

The buffering achieves no savings in disk i/o (since no pages are revisited). You could have worked this out without needing to run the traces; each page is accessed once, and buffering will only be effective if a given page is accessed multiple times.

8. A commonly used buffer replacement policy in DBMSs is LRU (least recently used). However, this strategy is not optimal for some kinds of database operations. One proposal to improve the performance of LRU was LRU/ k , which involved using the k^{th} most recent access time as the basis for determining which page to replace. This approach had its own problems, in that it was more complex to manage the buffer queue ($\log N$ time, rather than constant time). The effect of the most popular variant of LRU/ k , LRU/2, is to better estimate how "hot" is a page (based on more than just its most recent, and possibly only, access); pages which are accessed only once recently are more likely to be removed than pages that have been accessed several times, but perhaps not as recently.

PostgreSQL 8.0 and 8.1 used a buffer replacement strategy based on a different approach, called 2Q. The approach uses two queues of buffer pages: A1 and Am. When a page is first accessed, it is placed in the A1 queue. If it is subsequently accessed, it is moved to the Am queue. The A1 queue is organised as a FIFO list, so that pages that are accessed only once are eventually removed. The Am queue is managed as an LRU list. A simple algorithm for 2Q is given below:

Request for page p:

```

if (page p is in the Am queue) {
    move p to the front (LRU) position in the Am queue
}
else if (page p is in the A1 queue) {
    move p to the front (LRU) position in the Am queue
}
else {
    if (there are available free buffers) {
        B = select a free buffer
    }
    else if (size of A1 > 2) {
        B = buffer at head of A1
        remove B from A1
    }
    else {
        B = LRU buffer in Am
        remove B from Am
    }
    allocate p to buffer B
    move p to the tail of the A1 queue (FIFO)
}

```

Using the above algorithm, show the state of the two queues after each of the following page references:

1 2 1 3 1 2 1 4 2 5 6 4 3 5

To get you started, after the first four references above, the queues will contain:

A1: 2 3 Am: 1 2 free buffers

Assume that the buffer pool contains 5 buffers, and that it is initially empty. Note that the page nearest to A1 is the head of the FIFO queue (i.e. the next one to be removed according to FIFO), and the page nearest to Am is the least recently used page in that queue.

Note that PostgreSQL changed to the clock-sweep replacement strategy in later releases.

Answer:

State of buffer pools and A1/Am queues during sequence of page accesses:

Request	State after request satisfied		#Free buffers
initial	A1: <empty>	Am: <empty>	5
1	A1: 1	Am: <empty>	4
2	A1: 1 2	Am: <empty>	3
1	A1: 2	Am: 1	3

3	A1: 2 3	Am: 1	2
1	A1: 2 3	Am: 1	2
2	A1: 3	Am: 1 2	2
1	A1: 3	Am: 2 1	2
4	A1: 3 4	Am: 2 1	1
2	A1: 3 4	Am: 1 2	1
5	A1: 3 4 5	Am: 1 2	0
6	A1: 4 5 6	Am: 1 2	0
4	A1: 5 6	Am: 1 2 4	0
3	A1: 5 6 3	Am: 2 4	0
5	A1: 6 3	Am: 2 4 5	0

9. Challenge Problem: (no solution provided)

Write a program that simulates the behaviour of a buffer pool. It should take as command-line arguments:

- the number of buffers (an integer value, larger than 2)
- the replacement strategy (one of `clock`, `lru`, `mru`)

It should then read from standard input a sequence of page references, one per line, in the form:

- `req T n`
- `rel T n`

where `T` is a table name and `n` is a page number

The output of the program should be a trace of buffer states in a format similar to that used in Question 8. Also, collect statistics on numbers of requests, releases, reads and writes and display these at the end of the trace.

Since generating long and meaningful sequences of requests and releases is tedious, you should also write programs to generate such sequences. The pseudo-code in Question 8 gives an idea of what the core of such a program would look like for a join on two tables.