The Relational Model

Chapter 3

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Why Study the Relational Model?

- Most widely used model.
  - Vendors: IBM, Informix, Microsoft, Oracle, Sybase, etc.
- "Legacy systems" in older models
  - E.G., IBM's IMS
- Competitors:
  - *object-oriented model:* ObjectStore, Versant, Ontos
  - *object-relational model:* Informix Universal Server, UniSQL, O2, Oracle, DB2
  - *NoSQL:* MongoDB, Neo4J, …
  - *… see more in* ***INFSCI2711 (Advanced Topics in Database Manangement)***

Relational Database: Definitions

- *Relational database:* a set of *relations*
- *Relation:* made up of 2 parts:
  - *Instance* : a *table,* with rows and columns. #Rows = *cardinality*, #fields = *degree / arity*.
  - *Schema* : specifies name of relation, plus name and type of each column.
    - E.G. Students(*sid*: string, *name*: string, *login*: string, *age*: integer, *gpa*: real).
- Can think of a relation as a *set* of rows or *tuples* (i.e., all rows are distinct).

Example Instance of Students Relation

sid	name	login	age	gpa
53666	Jones	jones@cs	18	3.4
53688	Smith	smith@eecs	18	3.2
53650	Smith	smith@math	19	3.8

- Cardinality = 3, degree = 5, all rows distinct
- Do all columns in a relation instance have to be distinct?

Relational Query Languages

- A major strength of the relational model: supports simple, powerful *querying* of data.
- Queries can be written intuitively, and the DBMS is responsible for efficient evaluation.
  - The key: precise semantics for relational queries.
  - Allows the optimizer to extensively re-order operations, and still ensure that the answer does not change.

The SQL Query Language

- Developed by IBM (system R) in the 1970s
- Need for a standard since it is used by many vendors

QUEL

- Standards:
  - SQL-86
  - SQL-89 (minor revision)
  - SQL-92 (major revision)
  - SQL-99 (major extensions, current standard)

The SQL Query Language

- To find all 18 year old students, we can write:

```
SELECT  *
FROM  Students S
WHERE  S.age=18
```

sid	name	login	age	gpa	first year
53666	Jones	jones@cs	18	3.4	null
53688	Smith	smith@ee	18	3.2	null

- To find just names and logins, replace the first line:

```
SELECT  S.name, S.login
```

Querying Multiple Relations

- What does the following query compute?

```
SELECT  S.name, E.cid
FROM  Students S, Enrolled E
WHERE  S.sid=E.sid AND E.grade="A"
```

Students:

sid	name	login	age	gpa
53666	Jones	jones@cs	18	3.4
~~53688~~ 53650	Smith	smith@ee	18	3.2

Enrolled:

sid	cid	grade
53831	Carnatic101	C
53831	Reggae203	B
53650	Topology112	A
53666	History105	B

Result:

S.name	E.cid
Smith	Topology112

Creating Relations in SQL

- Creates the Students relation. Observe that the type (domain) of each field is specified, and enforced by the DBMS whenever tuples are added or modified.
- As another example, the Enrolled table holds information about courses that students take.

```
CREATE TABLE Students
        (sid: CHAR(20),
         name: CHAR(20),
         login: CHAR(10),
         age: INTEGER,
         gpa: REAL)
```

```
CREATE TABLE Enrolled
        (sid: CHAR(20),
         cid: CHAR(20),
         grade: CHAR(2))
```

Destroying and Altering Relations

DROP TABLE Students

- Destroys the relation Students. The schema information *and* the tuples are deleted.

ALTER TABLE Students
    ADD COLUMN firstYear: integer

- The schema of Students is altered by adding a new field; every tuple in the current instance is extended with a *null* value in the new field.

Adding and Deleting Tuples

- Can insert a single tuple using:

```
INSERT INTO Students (sid, name, login, age, gpa)
VALUES (53688, 'Smith', 'smith@ee', 18, 3.2)
```

- Can delete all tuples satisfying some condition (e.g., name = Smith):

```
DELETE
FROM Students S
WHERE S.name = 'Smith'
```

☛ *Powerful variants of these commands are available; more later!*

Modifying Tuples

- Increment the age and decrement the gpa of the student with *sid* 5368:

```
UPDATE  Students S
SET S.age = S.age + 1 and S.gpa = S.gpa - 1
WHERE S.sid = 5368
```

- Give a 1% increase to the gpa of all students with the gpa more or equal to 3.3:

```
UPDATE  Students S
SET S.gpa = S.gpa*1.01
WHERE S.gpa >= 3.3
```

Integrity Constraints (ICs)

- IC: condition that must be true for *any* instance of the database; e.g., *domain constraints.*
  - ICs are specified when schema is defined.
  - ICs are checked when relations are modified.
- A *legal* instance of a relation is one that satisfies all specified ICs.
  - DBMS should not allow illegal instances.
- If the DBMS checks ICs, stored data is more faithful to real-world meaning.
  - Avoids data entry errors, too!

Primary Key Constraints

- A set of fields is a <u>*key*</u> for a relation if :
  1. No two distinct tuples can have same values in all key fields, and
  2. This is not true for any subset of the key.
  - Part 2 false? A *superkey*.
  - If there's >1 key for a relation, one of the keys is chosen (by DBA) to be the *primary key*.
- E.g., *sid* is a key for Students. (What about *name*?) The set {*sid, gpa*} is a superkey.

Primary and Candidate Keys in SQL

- Possibly many *candidate keys* (specified using UNIQUE), one of which is chosen as the *primary key*.
- "For a given student and course, there is a single grade." vs. "Students can take only one course, and receive a single grade for that course; further, no two students in a course receive the same grade."
- Used carelessly, an IC can prevent the storage of database instances that arise in practice!

```
CREATE TABLE Enrolled
  (sid CHAR(20)
   cid  CHAR(20),
   grade CHAR(2),
   PRIMARY KEY  (sid,cid) )
```

```
CREATE TABLE Enrolled
  (sid CHAR(20)
   cid  CHAR(20),
   grade CHAR(2),
   PRIMARY KEY  (sid),
   UNIQUE (cid, grade) )
```

Foreign Keys, Referential Integrity

- *Foreign key* : Set of fields in one relation that is used to `refer' to a tuple in another relation. (Must correspond to primary key of the second relation.) Like a `logical pointer'.
- E.g. *sid* is a foreign key referring to Students:
  - Enrolled(*sid*: string, *cid*: string, *grade*: string)
  - If all foreign key constraints are enforced, *referential integrity* is achieved, i.e., no dangling references.
  - Can you name a data model w/o referential integrity?
    - Links in HTML!

Foreign Keys in SQL

- Only students listed in the Students relation should be allowed to enroll for courses.

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```
CREATE TABLE Enrolled
  (sid CHAR(20),  cid CHAR(20),  grade CHAR(2),
   PRIMARY KEY  (sid,cid),
   FOREIGN KEY (sid) REFERENCES Students )
```

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Enrolled

sid	cid	grade
53666	Carnatic101	C
53666	Reggae203	B
53650	Topology112	A
53666	History105	B

53000 2710 A

53667

Students

sid	name	login	age	gpa
~~53666~~	Jones	jones@cs	18	3.4
53688	Smith	smith@eecs	18	3.2
53650	Smith	smith@math	19	3.8

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Enforcing Referential Integrity

- Consider Students and Enrolled; *sid* in Enrolled is a foreign key that references Students.
- What should be done if an Enrolled tuple with a non-existent student id is inserted? (*Reject it!*)
- What should be done if a Students tuple is deleted?
  - Also delete all Enrolled tuples that refer to it.
  - Disallow deletion of a Students tuple that is referred to.
  - Set sid in Enrolled tuples that refer to it to a *default sid*.
  - (In SQL, also: Set sid in Enrolled tuples that refer to it to a special value *null*, denoting `*unknown*' or `*inapplicable*'.)
- Similar if primary key of Students tuple is updated.

Referential Integrity in SQL

- SQL/92 and SQL:1999 support all 4 options on deletes and updates.
  - Default is NO ACTION (*delete/update is rejected*)
  - CASCADE (also delete all tuples that refer to deleted tuple)
  - SET NULL / SET DEFAULT (sets foreign key value of referencing tuple)

```
CREATE TABLE Enrolled
  (sid CHAR(20),
   cid CHAR(20),
   grade CHAR(2),
   PRIMARY KEY (sid,cid),
   FOREIGN KEY (sid)
     REFERENCES Students
        ON DELETE CASCADE
        ON UPDATE SET DEFAULT )
```

Where do ICs Come From?

- ICs are based upon the semantics of the real-world enterprise that is being described in the database relations.
- We can check a database instance to see if an IC is violated, but we can NEVER infer that an IC is true by looking at an instance.
  - An IC is a statement about *all possible* instances!
  - From example, we know *name* is not a key, but the assertion that *sid* is a key is given to us.
- Key and foreign key ICs are the most common; more general ICs supported too.

Relational Model: Summary

- A tabular representation of data.
- Simple and intuitive, currently the most widely used.
- Integrity constraints can be specified by the DBA, based on application semantics. DBMS checks for violations.
  - Two important ICs: primary and foreign keys
  - In addition, we *always* have domain constraints.
- Powerful and natural query languages exist.