Representing Data Elements

Physical Layout of Data

In relational terms:

- Field = sequence of bytes representing the value of an attribute in a tuple.
- Record = sequence of bytes divided into fields, representing a tuple.
- File = collection of blocks used to hold a relation = set of tuples or records, respectively.

In object-oriented terms:

- Field represents an attribute or relationship.
- Record represents an object.
- File represents extent of a class.

The Mapping Problem

What are the data items we want to store?

- a salary
- a name
- a date
- a picture

⇨ What we have available: Bytes

Numbers

Integer: 2/4 bytes

e.g., 35 is

00000000 00100011

- Real, floating point
  n bits for mantissa, *m* for exponent….

Characters

→ various coding schemes suggested,
most popular is ascii

Example:
A: 1000001
a: 1100001
5: 0110101
LF: 0001010

Boolean Values

Boolean

e.g., TRUE 1111 1111
FALSE 0000 0000

Application specific Enumerations
e.g., RED → 1 GREEN → 3
BLUE → 2 YELLOW → 4 …

⇨ Can we use less than 1 byte/code?

Yes, but only if desperate...

Date and Time

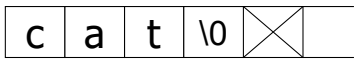
Dates

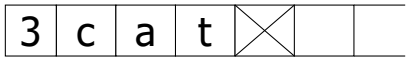
e.g.: - Integer, # days since Jan 1, 1900
- 8 characters, YYYYMMDD
(not YYMMDD!)
- 7 characters, YYYYDDD
- SQL: YYYY-MM-DD

Time

e.g. - Integer, seconds since midnight
- characters, HHMMSSFF

Strings of Characters

- Null terminated
e.g., 

- Length given
e.g., 

- Fixed length

Records

Consider fixed-length records first

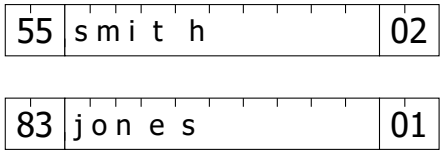
Record the consists of

- Space for each field of the record.
  - Sometimes, it is required to align fields starting at a multiple of 4 or 8.

Example: Employee record

(1) E#, 2 byte integer
(2) E_name, 10 char.
(3) Dept, 2 byte code

Schema



Records

Record Header

Usually the fields of the record are preceded by a header

Header = space for information about the record, e.g.,

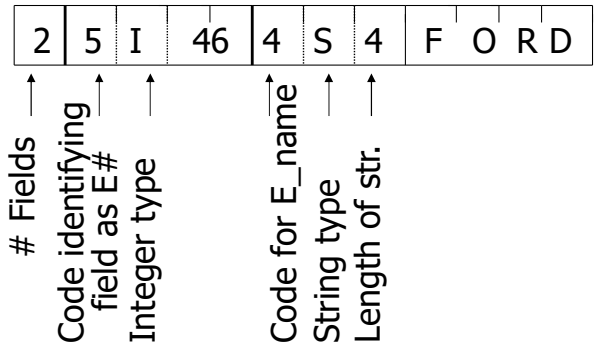
- record format (pointer to schema),
- record length,
- timestamp.

Variable-Length Records

Can occur in case of

- Fields that vary in length
- Repeating fields, e.g., a set of pointers represent a manymany relationship
- Variableformat records: field names are arbitrary
  - Important for selfdescribing data, information integration.

Example: variable format and length



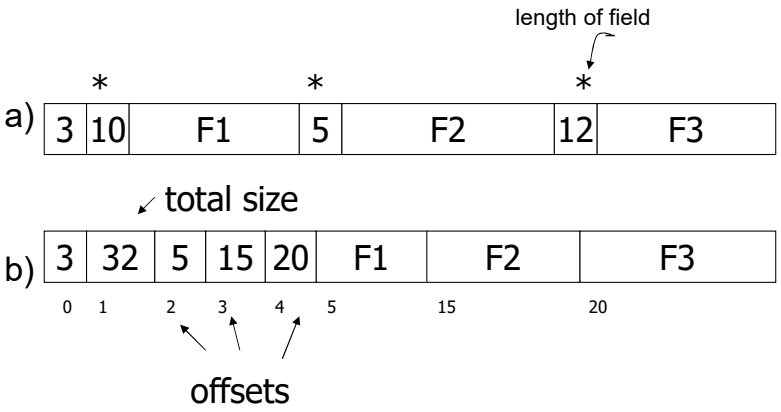
Field name codes could also be strings, i.e. TAGS

Example: Repeating Fields

Employee has one or more children

3	E_name: Fred	Child: Sally	Child: Tom

Internal Organization of Record



Strategy a) Each field is preceded by a number providing its length

Strategy b) The Record header contains a set of pointers to the variable length fields

Hybrid Format

Hybrid format

- one part is fixed, other variable

E.g.: All employees have E#, name, dept
other fields vary.

25	Smith	Toy	2	Hobby:chess	state:retired

# of var fields

Alternative realization

- Split Records Into Fixed/Variable Parts
- Fixed part has a pointer to space where current value of variable fields can be found.

Placing Records into Blocks

Structure of Blocks:

1. Block header = space for info such as:
   - Links to other blocks of a data structure.
   - Role info for this block, e.g., for which relation does the block hold tuples?
   - Directory of records in the block.
   - Block ID.
   - Timestamp.
2. Some number of records

Options for storing records in blocks

(1) separating records
(2) spanned vs. unspanned
(3) mixed record types – clustering
(4) split records
(5) sequencing
(6) addressing