ACADGILD

Session 09: HBase

Assignment 1

1. *What is NoSQL data base?*

Apache HBase is a type of "NoSQL" database. "NoSQL" is a general term meaning that the database isn't an RDBMS which supports SQL as its primary access language, but there are many types of NoSQL databases: BerkeleyDB is an example of a local NoSQL database, whereas HBase is very much a distributed database. Technically speaking, HBase is really more a "Data Store" than "Data Base" because it lacks many of the features you find in an RDBMS, such as typed columns, secondary indexes, triggers, and advanced query languages, etc.

2. *How does data get stored in NoSQl database?*

- Document databases pair each key with a complex data structure known as a document. Documents can contain many different key-value pairs, or key-array pairs, or even nested documents.
- Graph stores are used to store information about networks of data, such as social connections. Graph stores include Neo4J and Giraph.
- Key-value stores are the simplest NoSQL databases. Every single item in the database is stored as an attribute name (or 'key'), together with its value. Examples of key-value stores are Riak and Berkeley DB. Some key-value stores, such as Redis, allow each value to have a type, such as 'integer', which adds functionality.

- Wide-column stores such as Cassandra and HBase are optimized for queries over large datasets, and store columns of data together, instead of rows.

3. *What is a column family in HBase?*

Column families comprise the basic unit of physical storage in Hbase to which features like compressions are applied.

4. *How many maximum number of columns can be added to HBase table?*

There is no hard limit to number of columns in HBase, we can have more than 1 million columns but usually three column families are recommended (not more than three).

HBase currently does not do well with anything above two or three column families so keep the number of column families in your schema low. Currently, flushing and compactions are done on a per Region basis so if one column family is carrying the bulk of the data bringing on flushes, the adjacent families will also be flushed though the amount of data they carry is small. When many column families the flushing and compaction interaction can make for a bunch of needless i/o loading.

5. *Why columns are not defined at the time of table creation in HBase?*

Columns in Apache HBase are grouped into *column families*. All column members of a column family have the same prefix. For example, the columns *courses:history* and *courses:math* are both members of the *courses* column family. The colon character (:) delimits the column family. The column family prefix must be composed of *printable* characters. The qualifying tail, the column family *qualifier*, can be made of any arbitrary bytes. Column families must be declared up front at schema definition time whereas columns do not need to be defined at schema time but can be conjured on the fly while the table is up and running.

Physically, all column family members are stored together on the filesystem. Because tunings and storage specifications are done at the column family level, it is advised that all column family members have the same general access pattern and size characteristics.

6. *How does data get managed in HBase?*

Data in Hbase is organized into tables. Any characters that are legal in file paths are used to name tables. Tables are further organized into rows that store data. Each row is identified by a unique row key which does not belong to any data type but is stored as a bytearray. Column families are further used to group data in rows. Column families define the physical structure of data so they are defined upfront and their modification is difficult. Each row in a table has same column families. Data in a column family is addressed using a column qualifier. It is not necessary to specify column qualifiers in advance and there is no consistency requirement between rows. No data types are specified for column qualifiers, as such they are just stored as bytearrays. A unique combination of row key, column family and column qualifier forms a cell. Data contained in a cell is referred to as cell value. There is no concept of data type when referring to cell values and they are stored as bytearrays. Versioning happens to cell values using a timestamp of when the cell was written.

7. *What happens internally when new data gets inserted into HBase table?*

When you put data into HBase, a timestamp is required. The timestamp can be generated automatically by the Region Server or can be supplied by you. The timestamp must be unique per version of a given cell, because the timestamp identifies the version. To modify a previous version of a cell, for instance, you would issue a Put with a different value for the data itself, but the same timestamp.

HBase's behavior regarding versions is highly configurable. The maximum number of versions defaults to 1 in CDH 5, and 3 in previous versions. You can change the default value for HBase by configuring hbase.column.max.version in hbase-site.xml, either using an advanced configuration snippet if you use Cloudera Manager, or by editing the file directly otherwise.

You can also configure the maximum and minimum number of versions to keep for a given column, or specify a default time-to-live (TTL), which is the number of seconds before a version is deleted. The following examples all use alter statements in HBase Shell to create new column families with the given characteristics, but you can use the same syntax when creating a new table or to alter an existing column family. This is only a fraction of the options you can specify for a given column family.

```
hbase> alter ‘t1’, NAME => ‘f1’, VERSIONS => 5

hbase> alter ‘t1’, NAME => ‘f1’, MIN_VERSIONS => 2

hbase> alter ‘t1’, NAME => ‘f1’, TTL => 15
```

HBase sorts the versions of a cell from newest to oldest, by sorting the timestamps lexicographically. When a version needs to be deleted because a threshold has been reached, HBase always chooses the "oldest" version, even if it is in fact the most recent version to be inserted. Keep this in mind when designing your timestamps. Consider using the default generated timestamps and storing other version-specific data elsewhere in the row, such as in the row key.
If MIN_VERSIONS and TTL conflict, MIN_VERSIONS takes precedence.