

Diminished Triad: Consistent Hashing in Redis

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1. Abstract

Diminished Triad is a (partial) diminished implementation of chord by the three authors on Redis backends. Redis is an open source, BSD licensed, advanced key-value cache and store. While Redis offers an extremely fast key value cache, its design suffers from some major drawbacks. Redis does not support consistent hashing, the slaves of a particular master are only aware of the master that they are replicating and unaware of the state of the rest of the system. Redis also does not support automatic migration of keys when a new node joins or readjustment of responsibilities when a node fails. Diminished Triad aims to address these drawbacks of Redis at the cost of an additional layer of indirection and its associated overheads.

2. Introduction

“Redis is an open source, BSD licensed, advanced key-value cache and store. It is often referred to as a data structure server since keys can contain strings, hashes, lists, sets, sorted sets and bitmaps”[2]. Twitter, GitHub, Weibo, Pinterest, Snapchat, Craigslist, Digg, StackOverflow and Flickr are some of the well known companies currently using Redis. Redis prides itself on providing very fast performance and several of its design choices have been made with this primary objective. For example, Redis supports asynchronous master slave replication. However, if the master dies before the data is replicated to the slaves, that piece of data is lost. Redis backends are also either only a slave or master and can not be both. A slave replicates a particular master and is unaware of the rest of the system. If a Redis system has r backups, it can support at most r random node failures. If we loose a master and all its slaves we loose all the master’s data. Redis contains 16384 key slots. Every key maps to one of these key slots. Redis does not support consistent hashing. When a system is started all the key slots are evenly distributed among the masters. When a new node joins the system, keys need to be migrated manually to the new node.

In order to achieve its outstanding performance, Redis works with an in-memory dataset. So it offers very high

write and read speeds with the limitation that data sets can’t be larger than memory. Being an in memory dataset, Redis can work with complicated data structures and supports several of them with very little internal complexity. Redis can persist data by either dumping the data to disk every once in a while, or by appending each command to a log. We have adopted the latter approach with our Redis backends as it works like a redo log to migrate data when a new node joins the system.

In Diminished Triad (DT), we hope to provide a fault tolerant systems using Redis backends that improves on several drawbacks of the existing Redis system described earlier. First, DT follows a consistent hashing system similar to Chord [1]. It hashes every backed and keys to a position on the ring. Second, DT automatically moves keys between nodes every time a node joins or leaves the system. Third, DT system, like chord is completely distributed and no node is more important than the other.

DT maintains two invariants:

1. Each node is the master for all the keys that hash between its predecessor and itself.
2. All the data that a node is responsible for (keys for which it is the master) are replicated in the r nodes next to it on the ring (in clockwise order).

Every node is thus a master for some of the keys and is a backup for the r nodes that precede it. Every time a node is added to the system or a node fails and leaves the system, the keys are redistributed amongst all the backends to maintain the two invariants.

The rest of the paper is organized as follows. Section ?? contains the detailed design of Diminished Triad. This section mentions the various components of DT, their individual roles, the APIs used to communicate between these components. Section 4 provides the implementation details of DT. Section 5 provides various metrics that measure the performance of Diminished Triad. This section discusses the relative merits and demerits of Diminished Triad over off the shelf Redis.

3. Design

We first define several terms that will be helpful in describing the system.

1. User/Client - A user or a client is the customer for the Diminished Triad service. For example, a client requests to set values for some keys, get values etc.
2. DTSERVER - All requests like get and set are made by the client to the DTSERVER. The DTSERVER then forwards the request to the appropriate backends that are responsible for the key being queried through the DTClient
3. DTClient - The DTClient is the only channel of communication with the Redis Backend. The DT client transforms the requests received by the DTSERVER into form understandable by the Redis Backend and queries the appropriate Redis Backend.
4. DTInstance - DTInstance comprises of the DTSERVER and a pool of DTClient instances
5. Redis Backend - This is the off the shelf Redis Server instance that provides all the key value store functionality to Diminished Triad.
6. DTClientAPI - The user talks only to the DT instance and is unaware of the intricacies of the system. From the user's perspective the DT instances provide a fault tolerant distributed key value store. The DTClientAPI defines all the functions exported by the DTSERVER to the client. This API makes hides the internal details of DT and makes it look like a fault tolerant key value store to the programmer. A list of all the functions exported DTClientAPI is mentioned later.
7. DTSERVERAPI - The DTInstance, in particular the DTClient talks to the Redis Backends through a set of functions exported by the Redis Backend. This API is completely internal to the DTInstance and the user is completely unaware of the DTSERVERAPI.
8. Sentinel - The sentinel is the watchdog for the Redis Backends. It actively monitors if the Redis Backends are working as expected. The Sentinel also notifies through an API when something is wrong with one of the monitored Redis instances.
9. DTSentinel - The DTSentinel listens to notifications from the sentinel for any changes like a node leaving the system or joining the system and takes appropriate action in each case to maintain the DT system invariants.

3.1. System Layout

Every node runs a Redis Backend and a DTInstance. All DTInstances are identical and none of them are more important than the other. A client can talk to any DTInstance using the DTClientAPI. The DTClient will forward the request to the appropriate Redis Backend using the DTSERVERAPI. Note that the Redis Backend servicing the client's request may or may not be on the same machine as the DTInstance. At the moment we have a single Sentinel and DTSentinel instance in our system. We can make our system tolerant to failures of the Sentinel and DTSentinel with minor configuration changes to the Sentinel configuration. The section ?? on future work briefly mentions how this can be accomplished. Without loss of generality we will be discussing the system with just one instance of Sentinel and DTSentinel and assume them to be free from failure. Figure ?? shows a typical set for Diminished Triad.

3.2. DTClientAPI

Diminished Triad exposes the following functions to the user. This is a subset of the functions exported by the Redis Backend in the DTSERVERAPI. A complete implementation of Diminished Triad will ideally expose every single function exported by the Redis Backend. We have limited our scope to the functions listed below.

- get(key) - gets the value associated with a particular key
- set(key,value) - set the value associated with a particular key
- getStrlen(key) - get length of a value associated with a particular key
- append(key,value) - append a value to the value already associated with a particular key
- lPush(key,value) - insert a value in the first position to the list associated with a particular key
- lPop(key) - remove and return the first element of the list associated with a particular key
- lIndex(key,index) - return the element at a particular index in the list associated with a particular key
- lLen(key) - get length of list associated with a particular key

3.3. The Chord Ring, Hashing Keys, Master and the R Backups

The Chord ring has N positions in it. Every node hosting a DTInstance and a Redis backend is hashed to one of these N positions. Every key is also hashed to one of these

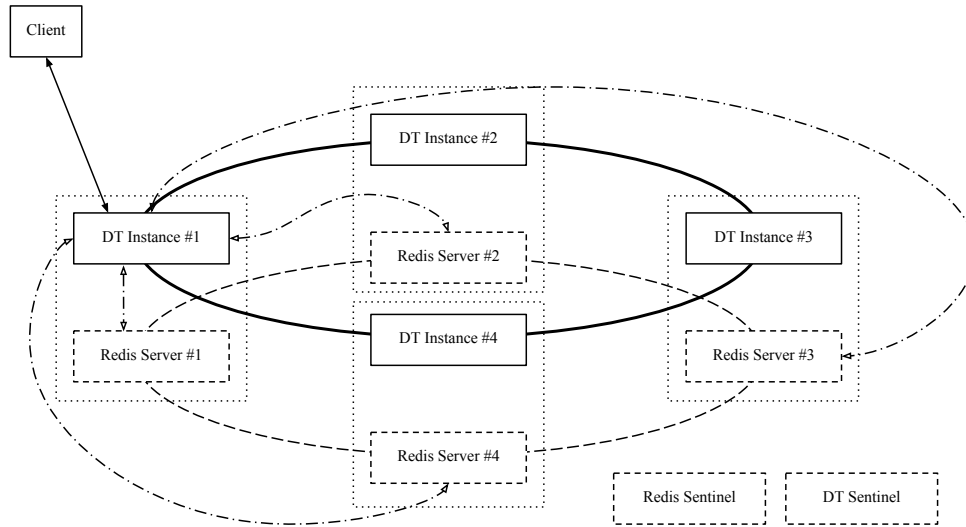


Figure 1. System Design. The solid lines represent the parts visible to the user. The dashed lines represent the parts hidden from the user.

N positions. As we move clockwise in the chord ring, we encounter increasing values of hash values until we reach the maximum and then go back to 0. Every backend is the master for all the keys that hash to its position in the ring through the hash positions up to but not including its predecessor in the ring. The predecessor of a backend is defined as the first live backend that is encountered as we move anti clockwise in the chord ring. Similarly the successor is the first live backend that is encountered as we move clockwise in the chord ring. The r backends that immediately succeed the master serve as the r backups of that particular master.

3.4. Handling Read and Write Requests

A read or write request is issued by the user or client to the DTInstance. The request reaches the DTServer running in the DTInstance through the DTClient API. The DTServer receives the request, hashes the key to figure out the master and the r backups corresponding to the key. It then performs the actions required for the request on the $r + 1$ redis backends (master plus the r backups) using the DTClient to connect to them which implements the DTServerAPI to talk to the redis backends. If the request is a write request, the DTInstance writes synchronously to the master and all the backups. If it is a read request, the DTInstance returns on the first successful read starting with the master and then trying the r backups.

3.5. The Sentinel, DTSentinel

The Sentinel is a watchdog for all our Redis backends. In Diminished Triad, we use the Sentinel for performing the following:

- Monitoring - Sentinel constantly checks if the Redis

Backends are working as expected

- Notification - Sentinel notifies the DTSentinel through pub/sub messages that something is wrong with one of the monitored Redis Backends.
- Configuration provider - The sentinel maintains the configuration of all the currently alive Redis Backends.

The Sentinel itself is designed to run in a configuration where there are multiple Sentinel processes cooperating together. We have not configured our Sentinel to work this way but this can be accomplished with minor configuration modifications. These changes make the Sentinel fault tolerant to failures.

The DTSentinel listens to notifications from the Sentinel. Every time a node fails or a new node joins, the DTSentinel receives the notification from the Sentinel and is responsible for redistributing data and maintaining the two Diminished Triad invariants. The next section describes how data is moved when a node fails or a new node joins the system.

3.6. Data Resharding for new/failed nodes

Whenever an existing node fails or a new node joins the ring, our system performs automatic data resharding. This is significant improvement over the redis cluster system. In redis cluster, redis-trib utility is used to add new nodes. The redis-trib utility provides the system administrator to manually move hash slots from an existing node to the new node. Redis cluster does not offer any automation for this process. The sections below explain the resharding mechanism when a node fails or a new node joins in diminished triad.

3.6.1 Node Failure

Figure 2 shows the resharding steps when a redis backend fails. For the purposes of this section, we assume our system is configured to have two backups for every master. The initial configurations of the system is shown inside the chord ring. M represents a particular master, $B1$ and $B2$ its two backups, $M-1$ and $M-2$ its two predecessors. In the figure, M is assumed to have failed. The new configuration after M fails is shown outside the chord ring. In order to get to the configuration and maintain the two Diminished Triad invariants, we need to perform 3 data migrations. In general, if we have r backups, we need to perform $r + 1$ data migrations. Each of these data migrations is shown by an arrow in figure 2. The arrow originates along a section of the chord ring and terminates at a redis backed. The arrow indicates that a copy of all the keys that are hashed to that section of the chord ring have to be migrated to the redis backed that the arrow is pointing to from a redis backend that has all the keys that are being migrated in a consistent state. For example, when M fails, we will move keys for which it was the master, i.e. the keys that originally hashed between M and $M-1$ to redis backend $B2$. Since $B1$ was originally a backup of M , it will have this data and all this data will be migrated from the original $B1$ to the new reconfigured $B2$. This data migration is shown by the arrow $A2$ that originates between the original M and original $M-1$ redis backends. Similarly we move data corresponding to each arrow $A1$, $A2$ and $A3$. Once data migrations is completed, the Diminished Triad invariants are guaranteed to be restored after the node failure.

3.6.2 Node Join

Similarly, when a node joins, if the system is configured to have r backups, a set of $r+1$ data migrations is sufficient to bring the node into the system and restore the Diminished Triad invariants. As in the previous section, assume the system is configured to have two backups for every master for the rest of this discussion. Figure 3 shows the data migration that is carried out when a new node joins. The new node M is the master for all the keys that are hashed between M and $M-1$. $B1$ was the master for these keys before M joined. This data is hence moved from $B1$ to M . This is indicated by the arrow $A1$ in figure 3.

Additionally, the new node M also servers the first backup for $M-1$ and the second backup for node $M-2$. Data for which node $M-1$ is the master is moved from node $M-1$ to node M . This is indicated by arrow $A2$ in figure 3. Data for which node $M-2$ is the master is also moved from node $M-2$ to node M and this indicated by arrow $A3$ in figure 3.

3.6.3 Handling Writes During Resharding

Redis can persist data by either dumping the dataset to disk every once in a while, or by appending each command to a log. We use the log generated by redis to check if there have been any writes while the data is being migrated. Any new entry in the log implies a new write. All these changes are applied and the migration is deemed complete only when there are no more changes to apply. A new node is allowed into the system only after migration is complete. This method has certain drawbacks. First, an adversary can tailor its writes to target a specific backend by selecting specific keys and can delay a node from joining the system. Second, any write that occurs between the last comparison of the logs to the time the new node joins the system can cause issues. Due to lack of time we did not remedy this issue as it is a rather unlikely event. However, we suggest some methods to handle this issue in the section 7 on future work.

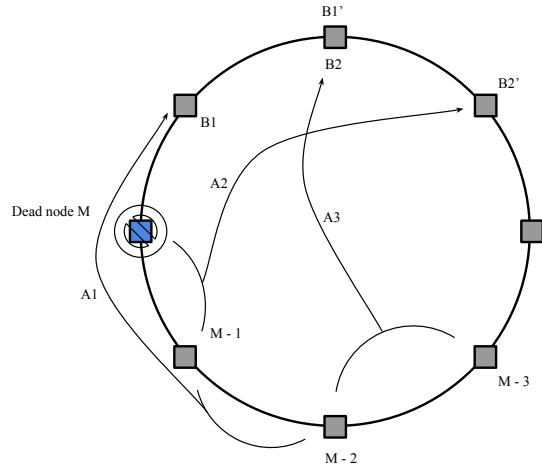


Figure 2. Data Migration During Failures

4. Implementation

We used Python 2.7 to implement the DT Server, DT Client and DT Sentinel. Python was chosen because of its flexibility and ability to prototype and iterate faster.

DT Server: Each DT Server functions as a RPC server. We use the spyne rpc toolkit for python to create the RPC server. For each function in the DTClient API (get, set, append, etc.) there's a corresponding RPC function call along with the necessary parameters. RPC calls can be made by HTTP post requests, passing in the redis command and parameters as the post arguments. A DT Server has a upto date list of alive nodes in the ring. When a get/set command is received for a particular key, the server hashes the key and finds out which redis server the key is mapped to. It then forwards the request to the particular server and its backup using DT Client.

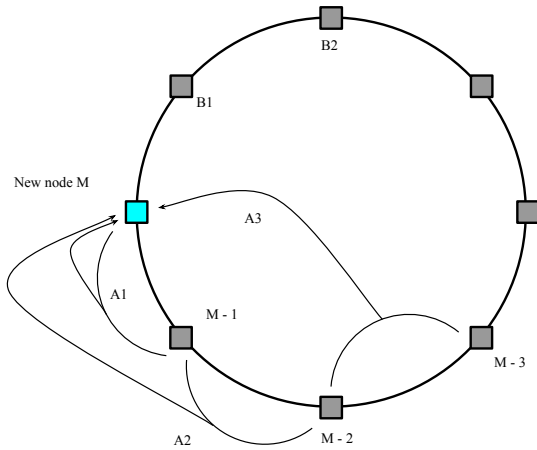


Figure 3. Data Migration During Node Join

DT Client: This is the component that talks to the Redis servers. Each DT Client is connected to all the Redis servers in the ring. We use the redis-py Python library for Redis. It greatly simplifies the process of talking to a Redis server by exposing all Redis commands via an easy-to-use API. When the DT Client receives a request for issuing a command for a Redis server, it issues the command with the help of redis-py.

DT CLI: To make it easy for the user to send commands to Redis, we also designed a utility DT CLI which provides similar behaviour as redis-cli. User can input Redis commands like `set foo bar`, `get foo`, etc. These commands are converted into a HTTP request and sent to the DT Server.

DT Sentinel: The DT Sentinel runs in a separate process. Its task is to monitor any configuration changes in the ring and update all the active nodes about the latest configuration. The DT Sentinel is backed by the Redis Sentinel which is a special sentinel mode of operation of a Redis server. In sentinel mode, a Redis server doesn't store any key data but monitors other Redis servers and can send push notifications on configuration change. DT Sentinel starts up a Redis Sentinel and subscribes to status change notifications. Any time a node leaves or joins the ring, DT Sentinel gets the message from Redis-Sentinel. DT Sentinel then performs any necessary data migration between nodes and finally sends the latest node configuration to all nodes in the ring.

Data Migration details:

New node joins

Deploying on AWS:

We tested our system on Amazon AWS. We created 4 instances with 1 GB RAM, 2.2 GHz CPU, running Debian. We started 3 Redis servers and instances on each of the machines, Redis Sentinel and DT Sentinel on our local machine. We had written scripts which would install all dependencies

and dt instances to automate the entire installation process.

We also wrote scripts for evaluating the performance of the system. These scripts wrote random keys and values and measured the latency/consistency with varying values of num-backups, num-servers, etc.

5. Evaluation

5.1. Comparison with Redis

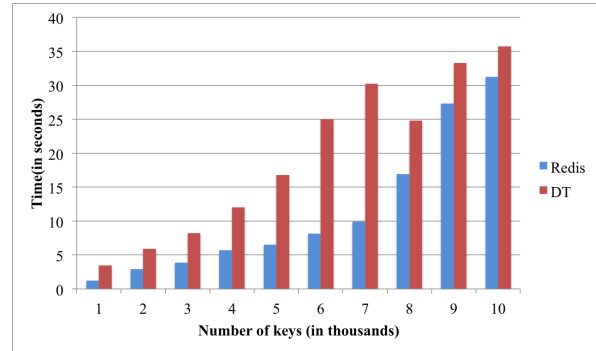


Figure 4. Time taken for 'set' operations on Redis vs DT

We performed the `set` operation on both Redis and DT for a number of keys. The setup consisted of 10 Redis servers, 3 backups in case of DT and no slaves. We used the Redis-py library to connect to the Redis backends. The results for the experiment are shown in Fig.?? and it can be seen that the time taken by DT is more than the time taken by Redis. We identified 3 main reasons for the overhead of 40% that DT incurs:

1. DT has an additional layer through which all requests are routed to the correct server. In case of Redis, the client is sent a *redirect* message to the client. This message consists of the address for a different server which has the hash slot to which the key should be mapped. The client then reissues the request to the new server and the set completes. Even though there may be a redirect issued in this case, transfer of messages between instances in case of DT and marshalling and unmarshalling the request result in an overhead.
2. The Redis-py library has a class called Connection-Pools which manages a set of Connection instances and it ships with two types of Connections. The default, Connection, is a normal TCP socket based connection. The UnixDomainSocketConnection allows for clients running on the same device as the server to connect via a Unix domain socket. Since we have no such provision in case of DT, we require new connections to the servers every time we service a request. A Connection Pool-like optimization would re-

duce the overhead when consecutive requests are made in a short span of time.

3. In Redis, if a master dies immediately after a write is performed on the master but the background process has not yet synchronized this write with the slaves, the data is lost. We tried to address this problem by synchronously performing the writes on all backups and then returning a response to the client. To counter this, we could write to logs first and then simultaneously write to all servers(primary and backups) using a background process, similar to the one that Redis has. The lack of slaves set up for this experiment have no impact for Redis because the updates to slaves are made asynchronously and the measured time would not change.

5.2. Comparing Fault Tolerance and Probability of Losing Data between DT and Redis

Consider a system with N nodes and r backups. Assuming infinite capacity at each node and sufficient time in between failures, DT can handle $N - 1$ node failures. Under more practical considerations (just sufficient capacity, network bandwidth etc.), system is guaranteed to handle $N - r - 1$ random node failures and still maintain r copies of all data. An off the shelf redis cluster system with r backups can loose data with $r + 1$ targeted node failures as the backups are unaware of anything outside the master that they are replicating.

We assume that all nodes can fail with equal probability p . In the redis cluster system, assume a master has failed.

$\Pr(\text{Losing Data}) = \Pr(\text{Failure of All Its Backups})$

$$\Pr(\text{Failure of All Its Backups}) = \frac{pr}{(N-1)}$$

$$\begin{aligned} \Pr(\text{Losing Data}) &= \frac{pr}{(N-1)} \frac{p(r-1)}{(N-2)} \frac{p(r-2)}{(N-3)} \cdots \frac{p}{(N-r)} \\ &= \frac{p^r r! (N-r-1)!}{(N-1)!} \end{aligned}$$

We compute the probability of losing data in the Diminished Triad System. DT is assumed to be fault tolerant to $N - r - 1$ random node failures.

$\Pr(\text{Losing Data}) = \Pr(N - r \text{ Node Failures})$

$$\begin{aligned} \Pr(N - r \text{ Node Failures}) &= \frac{p}{N} \frac{p}{(N-1)} \cdots \frac{p}{(N-r-1)} \\ &= \frac{p^{N-r} (N-r-2)!}{(N)!} \end{aligned}$$

The ratio of $\Pr(\text{Losing Data with DT})$ to $\Pr(\text{Losing Data with Redis cluster})$ is:

$$\frac{p^{N-2r}}{N(N-r-2)} \approx 0 \text{ for } N \gg r, p < 1$$

5.3. Consistent Hashing

One of the big improvements that DT offers over Redis Cluster is consistent hashing. We would like our consistent hashing scheme to have following properties suggested in Chord [1]. For any set of N nodes and K keys, with high probability, the following is true.

1. Each Node is responsible for at most $(1 + \epsilon) * K/N$ keys for some small ϵ
2. When a $(N+1)^{th}$ node joins or leaves the network, the responsibility for $O(K/N)$ keys changes the hands.

Figure 5 shows a box plot of number of keys that were migrated when a new node joins with a certain number of existing nodes and keys in the system with measurements from several runs of the experiment with the same initial conditions. For example, in figure 5(a) the system had 10 nodes. We measured the number of keys that were migrated when an eleventh node joined the system. We generated keys at random and stored data in the system. The x-axis shows the number of keys that were in the system when the eleventh node joined the system.

The black line shows the value of K/N where K is the number of keys in the system and N is the number of nodes in the system. The black line helps compare the performance of our consistent hashing scheme with our theoretical targets for the system described above. The number of key migrations is consistently below the black line. As expected the variability in the number of keys migrated reduced as the number of keys and the number of nodes in the system increases.

6. Conclusions

conclusion and summary design here

7. Future Work

future work here

8. Acknowledgments

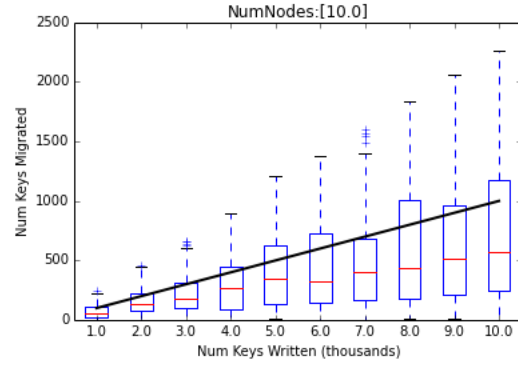
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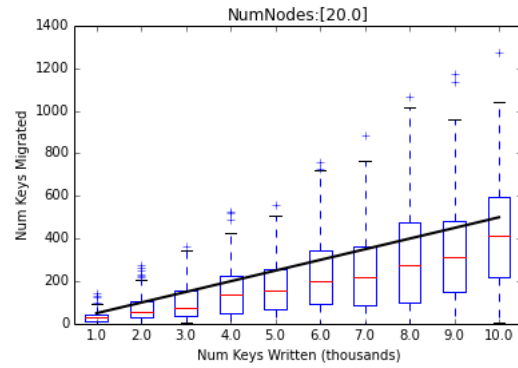
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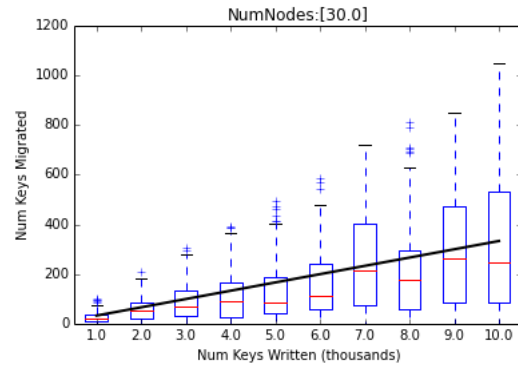
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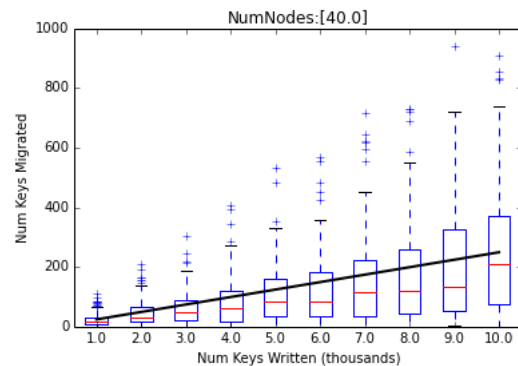
(a) Migration with 10 Nodes



(b) Migration with 20 Nodes



(c) Migration with 30 Nodes



(d) Migration with 40 Nodes

Figure 5. Migration Of Keys On Join