

MySQL for E-Commerce

Thomas Bley

May 2023

About me

- Senior PHP Developer
- Linux, PHP, MySQL since 3.23
- studied at TU München

Three things are important in the database world: performance, performance and performance

source: sigmod.org/publications/interviews/pdf/p71-column-winslet.pdf

Schema design

- schema probably root cause of "my DB doesn't scale"
- use smaller data types (don't store numbers as varchar)
- use decimal instead of float
- avoid UUIDs as primary keys (use uuid_short() or ULIDs)
- use tinyint for bools, enums for fixed-value strings
- select only required columns (avoid select *)
- avoid gueries without indexes (full table scan)
- reduce tables and joins with JSON columns
- use utf8mb4 or ascii as character set for varchar
- use default values instead of nullable columns
- don't use entity-attribute-value model
- → write less data, read less data
- → read less rows (less random IO, less pool buffer lookups)

Туре	Storage (Bytes)
TINYINT	1
SMALLINT	2
MEDIUMINT	3
INT	4
BIGINT	8

Data Type	
YEAR	1 byte
DATE	3 bytes
TIME	3 bytes
DATETIME	5 bytes
TIMESTAMP	4 bytes

sources: dev.mysql.com/doc/refman/8.0/en/storage-requirements.html
percona.com/blog/2019/11/22/uuids-are-popular-but-bad-for-performance-lets-discuss/
honeybadger.io/blog/uuids-and-ulids/
static.sched.com/hosted_files/perconaliveonline2020/ab/Boosting%20MySQL%20Performance.pdf
vettabase.com/blog/what-does-null-mean-in-sql/
percona.com/blog/queries-for-finding-poorly-designed-mysql-schemas-and-how-to-fix-them/

Advantages of JSON columns

- less tables, less indexes, less joins
- application code can be written quicker and easier:
 - insert, update, delete with 1 query on 1 table on 1 row (no transaction needed)
 - select only on 1 table
- compared to entity-attribute-value model:
 - less complexity, more consistency, much more performance
- table row count grows linearly instead of exponentially
- JSON elements can be queried, updated or indexed directly within SQL
- JSON data can be created or aggregated on relational data
- attributes can be dynamically added to or removed from JSON columns
- elements in JSON arrays can be pre-sorted
- JSON arrays can be capped to a maximum number of elements
- easy to convert PHP objects and arrays to JSON strings
- → JSON columns are best to combine relational and non-relational worlds

sources: dev.mysql.com/doc/refman/8.0/en/json.html dev.mysql.com/doc/refman/8.0/en/json-function-reference.html



Find the best indexes

- reduce number of indexes, reduce number of columns per index
- use smaller data types for index columns (reduce memory usage)
- ideal: all lookups use indexes or primary keys
- analyze, explain, explain, explain, test, test, test
- keep an eye on slow queries (optimizer sometimes chooses wrong indexes, use force index)
- test new mysql versions (performance, deprecations, changes in optimizer)
- having the right index vs. using it correctly:

```
select count(*) from cart_item where created_at > '2022-01-01';
1 row in set (0.127 sec)
select count(*) from cart_item where year(created_at) = '2022';
1 row in set (2.196 sec)
explain select count(*) from cart item where created at >= '2022-01-01';
| id | select_type | table
                      | partitions | type | possible_keys | key
                                                          | key_len | ref | TOWS
                                                               | NULL | 2993487 | 100.00 | Using where; Using index |
             | cart_item | NULL
                               | range | created_at | created_at | 4
explain select count(*) from cart item where year(created at) = '2022';
                      | partitions | type | possible_keys | key
                                                          | key_len | ref | TOWS
                                                               | NULL | 4987011 | 100.00 | Using where; Using index |
| 1 | SIMPLE
           | cart_item | NULL
                                                 | created_at | 4
                                | index | NULL
select count(*) from cart item;
5074069
```

theory: db.in.tum.de/teaching/ws1819/queryopt/slides/chapter3.pdf index-merge: percona.com/blog/2009/09/19/multi-column-indexes-vs-index-merge/

Max() vs. order by

- similar queries producing the same result can perform differently
- the optimizer can produce unexpected query plans
- with growing tables, query plans can change
- use index hints when necessary

```
explain select max(pkey) from t1 where some_col < 10000;</pre>
id | type | possible_keys | key
                                                  | filtered | Extra
                                       rows
                            | some_col | 1437473 |
   1 | range | some_col
                                                     100.00 | Using where; Using index
select max(pkey) from t1 where some_col < 10000;</pre>
1 row in set (0.38 sec)
explain select pkey from t1 where some_col < 10000 order by pkey desc limit 1;
 id | type | possible_keys | key
                                       | rows | filtered | Extra
   1 | index | some col
                            | PRIMARY |
                                           2
                                                  50.00 | Using where; Backward index scan
select pkey from t1 where some col < 10000 order by pkey desc limit 1;
1 row in set (1.11 sec)
select pkey from t1 use index (some_col) where some_col < 10000 order by pkey desc limit 1;
1 row in set (0.37 sec)
```

Named locks: GET_LOCK(name, timeout_seconds)

- obtains an exclusive global lock with a given name
 - returns 1 on success
 - returns 0 if attempt timed out
 - returns null on error
- can make parallel requests or scripts execute sequentially
- is managed by current MySQL session, independant from transactions
- released on RELEASE_LOCK(name) or disconnect (e.g. if PHP process stops)
- more efficient than row level locking or transactions, avoids deadlocks
- examples:
 - limit a cron job to one instance running at the same time: SELECT GET_LOCK("cron_<cron-job-name>", 1);
 - process parallel cart requests sequentially: SELECT GET_LOCK("cart_<customer-id>", 10);
 - limit customers to place exactly one order at the same time: SELECT GET_LOCK("order_<customer-id>", 10);

source: dev.mysql.com/doc/refman/8.0/en/locking-functions.html#function_get-lock



Connection handling

- maximum number of open connections (sessions) is often the limiting factor for a database server
- open connection late (ideally on the first query)
- close connection early (esp. when waiting for another external service)
- connect with compression to reduce network traffic
- can save additional hardware for mysql proxies
- persistent connections:
 - every PHP process uses its own mysqli pool (php.net/manual/en/mysqli.quickstart.connections.php)
 - can be buggy (e.g. bugs.php.net/bug.php?id=64549)
- Example:

```
bootstrap.php
$db = new PDO('mysql:...;charset=utf8mb4;', ..., [PDO::ATTR_TIMEOUT => 5]);
VS.

class Repository {
    ...

public function getTasks(Customer $customer): array {
    $db = $this->app->getDatabase($customer);
    $statement = $db->query('SELECT id, name FROM tasks ...');
    return $statement->fetchAll(PDO::FETCH_CLASS, Tasks::class);
}
```



Cart updates

- most traffic in a shop goes to product data and cart
- reduce number of columns in cart table
 - e.g. customer_id, sku, quantity with primary key on customer_id, sku
- insert / update cart items with 1 query:

```
INSERT INTO cart_item
   SET customer_id = ?, sku = ?, quantity = ? AS new
   ON DUPLICATE KEY UPDATE quantity = new.quantity;

REPLACE INTO cart_item SET customer_id = ?, sku = ?, quantity = ?;
```

- define maximum number of items allowed in a single cart
 - too many items in the cart slow down browser / apps and increase cart calculation time
- define maximum quantity per sku if logistics requires it
 - e.g. max. 5 crates of water per order

source: dev.mysql.com/doc/refman/8.0/en/insert-on-duplicate.html



Limit resultsets: SELECT ... LIMIT

- limit gives quicker response (fetch less data)
- less memory usage for processing less rows
- less data to process in frontend / apps
- page by primary key instead of using OFFSET
 - SELECT name FROM wishlist LIMIT 100 OFFSET 10000;

VS.

SELECT name FROM wishlist WHERE id > 10000 LIMIT 100;

→ read less rows, process less rows

source: shopify.engineering/pagination-relative-cursorshttps://shopify.engineering/pagination-relative-cursors

Verify status transitions

```
    UPDATE orders SET status = 'processing'
WHERE order_id = 42;
    UPDATE orders SET status = 'processing', updated_at = now()
WHERE order_id = 42 AND status = 'new';
    verify that dataset was changed in the database:
if ($db->query($query)->rowCount() !== 1) {...}
```

Analytical queries: SELECT ...

- use read-only replica whenever possible (reduce traffic on master)
- use pre-aggregation of data to read less data
- transaction-isolation = READ COMMITTED
 - REPEATABLE-READ: locks acquired during transaction are held for duration of transaction
 - READ-COMMITTED: locks that did not match the scan are released after STATEMENT completes, in READ COMMITTED gap locks are never created
- use a column store database for ad-hoc queries (clickhouse, duckdb, etc.)
 - store data by columns instead of rows → better compression, quicker filtering, aggregation, sorting, etc.
 - vectorized joins, multi-core parallel query execution, S3 storage layer
 - faster sorting (https://duckdb.org/2021/08/27/external-sorting.html)
 - materialized views (https://altinity.com/blog/clickhouse-materialized-views-illuminated-part-1)
 - requires loading data into column store database
 - → gives best performance for analytical queries

sources:

percona.com/blog/2012/08/28/differences-between-read-committed-and-repeatable-read-transaction-isolation-levels/percona.com/blog/2015/01/14/mysql-performance-implications-of-innodb-isolation-modes/



Read data consistently from replicas

- data is replicated asynchronously to replicas
- replica delay can be monitored with: show replica status; // Seconds_Behind_Source
- parallel replication enabled by default with MySQL 8 (before single thread)
- request #1:
 - update data on master

```
-- connect to master
INSERT INTO tasks SET id = 42, name = 'foo';
-- get latest gtid
SELECT @@GLOBAL.gtid_executed;
```

- store gtid in cookie
- request #2:
 - wait for transaction to be applied on replica

```
-- connect to replica
SELECT WAIT_FOR_EXECUTED_GTID_SET(gtid_from_cookie, 5); -- 0 = success
```

read data from replica:

SELECT name FROM tasks WHERE id = 42;

source: youtube.com/watch?v=9caro2QNcww



Customer data search: low traffic search

MySQL fulltext index

- can be implemented quickly and easily
- can be fast enough for low traffic search
- no extra hardware for search functionality needed
- stays consistent (with index update on transaction commit)

```
CREATE TABLE customer_search (
   customer_id int UNSIGNED NOT NULL PRIMARY KEY,
   search varchar(1024) NOT NULL, -- e.g. "firstname lastname address"
   FULLTEXT (search)
);

SELECT customer.* FROM customer, customer_search
WHERE customer.id = customer_search.customer_id
   AND MATCH(customer_search.search) AGAINST (? in boolean mode)
LIMIT 100;
```

- query example: "Frank-Walther" Wattstr* +Meier -Franz
- query input requires sanitizing for "-+<>~*@"
 e.g. "++foo", "**foo" or "foo+" not allowed

source: dev.mysql.com/doc/refman/8.0/en/fulltext-boolean.html



Product data search: high traffic search

- most traffic in a shop goes to product data and cart
- store each product in a JSON document
- use (in-memory) document store as data source
- example products optimized for fulltext search:
 RedisSearch, meilisearch, typesense, lnx-search, Elasticsearch, Algolia
- remember to check licenses and support options
- make vs. buy



Queues

MySQL can be used as a queue:

- for small messages with low volume
- provides transactional safety, example:

```
BEGIN;
   INSERT INTO customer SET id = 42;
   REPLACE INTO queue_crm SET customer_id = 42, num_tries = 0;
COMMIT;
```

can process messages in order or out of order, example for single consumer:

```
SELECT GET_LOCK('queue_crm', 1);
SELECT customer_id FROM queue_crm WHERE num_tries < 10 ORDER BY created_at ASC LIMIT 10;
UPDATE queue_crm SET num_tries = num_tries + 1, last_try = now() WHERE customer_id = 42;
-- process entry
DELETE FROM queue_crm WHERE customer_id = 42;
SELECT RELEASE_LOCK('queue_crm');</pre>
```

- releases row locks on RELEASE_LOCK() or disconnect (e.g. if PHP process stops)
- makes it easy to re-process failed messages, example:

```
UPDATE queue_crm SET num_tries = 0 WHERE num_tries = 10;
```



Queues #2

COMMIT;

MySQL can be used as a queue:

can process messages in order or out of order, example for multiple consumers:

```
BEGIN;
SELECT customer_id FROM queue_crm WHERE num_tries < 10
ORDER BY created_at ASC LIMIT 10 FOR UPDATE SKIP LOCKED;
-- process entry
-- on success
DELETE FROM queue_crm WHERE customer_id = 42;
-- on failure
UPDATE queue crm SET num tries = num tries + 1, last try = now() WHERE customer id = 42;</pre>
```

- releases row locks on COMMIT or disconnect (e.g. if PHP process stops)
- makes it easy to do queue monitoring:

```
SELECT count(*) FROM queue_crm WHERE num_tries >= 10;
```

source: dev.mysql.com/blog-archive/mysql-8-0-1-using-skip-locked-and-nowait-to-handle-hot-rows/

Log data

- use page compression to reduce read and write IO
- using partitions offers quick deletion by ALTER TABLE log TRUNCATE PARTITION ...
- use JSON columns to store structured logs
- store logs outside of database whenever possible (e.g. datadog, elasticsearch)

```
CREATE TABLE log (
    customer_id int unsigned not null,
    event json not null,
    created_at datetime not null,
    index(customer_id, created_at)
) COMPRESSION='lz4' PARTITION BY hash(month(created_at)) PARTITIONS 12;
```

check compression ratio and partition consistency:

source: dev.mysql.com/doc/refman/8.0/en/innodb-page-compression.html



Data migration (EAV → JSON)

Using SQL to copy data from old schema to new schema (old table(s) to new table):

```
INSERT INTO customers.customer (email, attributes, created)
    SELECT * FROM magento.customer entity
    LEFT JOIN magento.customer_entity_varchar as firstname on
        firstname.entity_id = customer_entity.entity_id and firstname.attribute_id = 5
    LEFT JOIN magento.customer_entity_varchar as lastname on
        lastname.entity_id = customer_entity.entity_id and lastname.attribute_id = 7
    LEFT JOIN magento.customer entity datetime as birthdate on
        birthdate.entity_id = customer_entity.entity_id and birthdate.attribute_id = 11
    SET email = customer entity.email,
           attributes = json_object(
              'first', firstname.value,
              'last', lastname.value,
              'birth', date(birthdate.value),
              'orders', (select count(*) from magento.sales_flat_order
                            where customer_id = customer_entity.entity_id)
           ),
           created = customer entity.created at;
```

Data anonymization

- Use a separate database and views to provide anonymized production data
- Grant permissions to human users only on anonymized data

```
SELECT * FROM customers.customer WHERE id = 1234;
   id: 1234
   email: foo.bar@baz.com
    attributes: {"first": "Thomas", "last": "Bley", "birth": "1930-02-01", "orders": 42}
    created: 2021-05-06 12:41:11
CREATE or REPLACE VIEW customers anonymized.customer AS
    SELECT id,
        concat('invalid_', id, '@bringmeister.de') AS email, -- invalid_1234@bringmeister.de
        json_object(
            'first', concat('first_', id), -- first_1234
            'last', concat('last', id), -- last 1234
            'birth', '1980-01-02',
            'orders', attributes->>"$.orders" -- 1980-01-02, 42
        ) AS attributes,
        created
   FROM customers.customer;
```

Pseudo random order ID generation

Order IDs should be increasing, but increasing with some "randomness":

- generate Order ID before saving the order
- increment Order ID sequence with random values
- LAST_INSERT_ID(): returns automatically generated value
- RAND(): Returns a random float value in the range 0 <= value < 1.0
- can be an alternative to UUID / ULID

```
CREATE TABLE order_sequence (order_id int unsigned not null);
INSERT INTO order_sequence SET order_id = 1; // start with Order ID 1
-- update order_id = order_id + rand(5, 10) returning order_id
UPDATE order_sequence SET order_id = LAST_INSERT_ID(order_id + FLOOR((RAND() * 6) + 5));
SELECT LAST_INSERT_ID();
```

→ generates an randomly increasing Order ID sequence e.g. 6, 16, 25, 39, 46, 56, 65, 73, 78, 85, 90, ...

source: dev.mysql.com/doc/refman/8.0/en/information-functions.html#function_last-insert-id



Foreign keys, triggers and procedures

skip foreign keys

- require additional indexes
- require additional locking and lookups on related tables for insert, update or delete, can cause deadlocks, slow for data imports
- cascading logic might be different from required business logic
- not supported by some tools (e.g. gh-ost), only work inside a single db server
- can have bugs (itw01.com/8Q76OEZ.html)
- locked data types, cascaded write not in binary log (code.openark.org/blog/mysql/things-that-dont-work-well-with-mysqls-foreign-key-implementation)
- only working inside a single server (not for sharding)

skip triggers and procedures

- logic is limited to SQL functionality
- cannot connect to external systems (e.g. send an email)
- difficult to update atomically
- often cause unwanted side effects, e.g. cyclic execution
- → better to keep application logic inside application code, use MySQL only as storage



Legacy code and rewrites

- identify and optimize 20% of slowest queries
- verify backups
- remove unused indexes (make invisible first), create better indexes
- remove unused columns and tables
- remove historic data if possible (GDPR)
- optimize database schema (reduce joins with JSON columns)
- analyze data quality to avoid bugs (esp. historic data)
- use character set utf8mb4
- enable MySQL access log for local development
- use caching when data changes rarely
- fill caches in the background or use random expiries
- write tests to verify that data is written correctly to the database
 - start tests with empty tables, create test data on the fly
 - put integrations tests inside a transaction (setUp())
 - rollback changes when tests finish (tearDown())
 - allow tests to run in parallel



Integration tests

- start tests with empty tables
- wrap tests inside a transaction
- verify that data is written correctly to the database
- example:

```
class ExampleRepositoryTest extends TestCase
{
    protected function setUp(): void
    {
        $this->app->getDatabase()->beginTransaction();
    }

    protected function tearDown(): void
    {
        $this->app->getDatabase()->rollBack();
    }

    public function testCreateExample(): void
    {
        // insert into ...
        // select from ...
        // assert ...
    }
}
```

Mass delete data

Mass delete data can be much quicker by copying data to a second table:

```
DELETE FROM sometable WHERE created_at <= date_sub(now(), INTERVAL 3 MONTH);

VS.

CREATE TABLE sometable_new LIKE sometable;

LOCK TABLE sometable write, sometable_new WRITE;

INSERT INTO sometable_new SELECT * FROM sometable
    WHERE created_at > date_sub(now(), INTERVAL 3 MONTH);

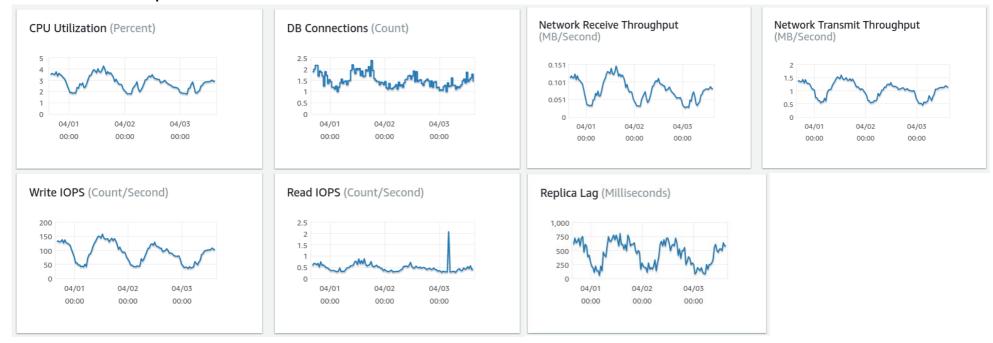
RENAME TABLE sometable TO sometable_old, sometable_new TO sometable;

UNLOCK TABLES;

DROP TABLE sometable_old;
```

Monitoring

- Log slow queries (server side, slow query log, show processlist)
- Log failed queries (application side)
- Analyze deadlocks: show engine innodb status;
- Monitor replica status: show replica status;
 (Replica_IO_Running, Replica_SQL_Running, Seconds_Behind_Source)
- Monitor performance metrics:



sources: percona.com/blog/2006/07/17/show-innodb-status-walk-through/percona.com/blog/2014/10/28/how-to-deal-with-mysql-deadlocks/

Monitor auto_increment overflows

```
ANALYZE TABLE , , ...; // update information schema
SELECT
   t.TABLE SCHEMA, t.TABLE NAME, c.COLUMN NAME, t.AUTO INCREMENT, c.DATA TYPE,
   t.AUTO INCREMENT / (
       CASE DATA_TYPE
         WHEN 'tinyint' THEN IF(COLUMN TYPE LIKE '%unsigned', 255, 127)
         WHEN 'smallint' THEN IF(COLUMN_TYPE LIKE '%unsigned', 65535, 32767)
         WHEN 'mediumint' THEN IF(COLUMN TYPE LIKE '%unsigned', 16777215, 8388607)
         WHEN 'int' THEN IF (COLUMN_TYPE LIKE '%unsigned', 4294967295, 2147483647)
         WHEN 'bigint' THEN IF(COLUMN_TYPE LIKE '%unsigned', 18446744073709551615,
                                                             9223372036854775807)
       END / 100) AS used
  FROM information schema. TABLES t NATURAL JOIN information schema. COLUMNS c
 WHERE t.AUTO INCREMENT IS NOT NULL AND c.DATA TYPE LIKE '%int'
   AND c.COLUMN_KEY = 'PRI' AND t.TABLE_SCHEMA != 'mysql'
HAVING used > 0.8;
 TABLE_SCHEMA | TABLE_NAME | COLUMN_NAME | AUTO_INCREMENT | DATA_TYPE | used
 orders
              | order
                           | id
                                               3435973836 | int
                                                                      | 85.0000 |
```

Server configuration

- innodb_dedicated_server: on
- innodb_buffer_pool_size: 75-80% of system memory (best case: active workset fits into pool buffer)
- innodb_flush_method: O_DIRECT_NO_FSYNC (skip kernel file system cache)
- innodb_use_fdatasync: on (skip flushing metadata)
- innodb_flush_log_at_trx_commit: 2 (default 1, less durability)
- sync_binlog: 0 or 1 (keeps binlog/replicas consistent)
- innodb_adaptive_hash_index: off (faster for many concurrent joins)
- max_heap_table_size / tmp_table_size: 128M (used for joins, sorting, subqueries)
- gtid-mode: on, enforce_gtid_consistency: on
- wait_timeout: 120 (4x max_execution_time)
- event_scheduler: off (when you don't need it)
- performance_schema: off (when you don't need it)

sources: percona.com/blog/2016/04/12/is-adaptive-hash-index-in-innodb-right-for-my-workload/dev.mysql.com/doc/refman/8.0/en/internal-temporary-tables.html dev.mysql.com/doc/refman/8.0/en/innodb-parameters.html percona.com/blog/mysql-zfs-performance-update/dev.mysql.com/doc/refman/8.0/en/innodb-dedicated-server.html



Additional resources

- InnoDB Performance Optimization: youtube.com/watch?v=qMmSwhSlnX0
- Introduction into MySQL Query Tuning: youtube.com/watch?v=1pxcOgzb6aU
- Tuning InnoDB Primary Keys: percona.com/blog/2018/07/26/tuning-innodb-primary-keys/
- MySQL 8.0 locking details: lefred.be/content/mysql-8-0-locking-details/
- Why joins take so much performance? de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joinalgorithmen
- Backup Performance Comparison
 percona.com/blog/dump-performance-comparison-mysqldump-vs-mysql-shell-utilities-vs-mydumper/
- Linux OS Tuning for MySQL Database Performance percona.com/blog/2018/07/03/linux-os-tuning-for-mysql-database-performance/
- Millions of Queries per Second percona.com/blog/2017/01/06/millions-queries-per-second-postgresql-and-mysql-peaceful -battle-at-modern-demanding-workloads/

Thanks for listening! Questions?

download slides:

github.com/thomasbley/talks

follow me:

phpc.social/@thbley

