

MSiA-413 Introduction to Databases and Information Retrieval

Lecture 18 Semi-structured data, Cleaning messy data

Instructor: Nikos Hardavellas

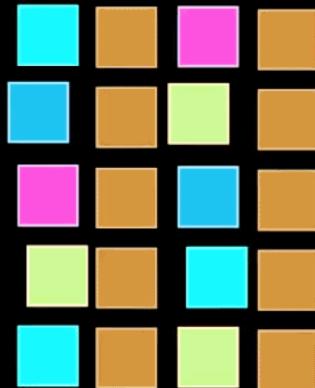
Slides adapted from Steve Tarzia, John Canny, Michael Franklin,
Dan Bruckner, Evan Sparks, Shivaram Venkataraman

Last Lecture

- Partitioning
 - Vertical vs. horizontal partitioning
 - Round-robin, hash and range partitioning
 - Declarative partitioning in PostgreSQL and tuple routing
 - Attaching/detaching external partitions
 - Foreign partitions
 - Query optimizations: partition pruning, partition-wise joins and aggregates
- NoSQL / Big Data
 - Distributed databases
 - Key/value stores
 - Map/Reduce
 - Replicas, fault tolerance, concurrency and coherence

Part I

Semi-structured data in JSON and XML files



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Data files

- A computer *file* is a container for data, and files have:
 - A *path* (sequence of folders and a filename):
`C:/Users/Steve/My Documents/my_data.csv`
 - A sequence of data bits “in” the file:
`000101011011010111010101110100101010001101010101011110`
 - Other metadata like *permissions*, *time of last modification*, depending on the filesystem type
- Files are:
 - *Persistent*, meaning that they remain in the computer after it is rebooted
 - *Sharable* by other programs running on the computer
- Thus, files allow programs to
 - Save their own data
 - Share data with other programs on the same computer
 - Transfer data between computers
- Databases are a more powerful alternative to plain files (“flat files”), but they are not as *portable*
 - we still use flat files to exchange bulk data

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Standard data file formats

- The filename *extension* conventionally determines the *file format*
 - Tells us how to interpret the sequence of bits in the file
- Some file formats use *human-readable* ASCII or UTF-8 text
 - `.txt`, `.csv`, `.json`, `.xml`
- More efficient file formats represent data directly in *binary* form
 - `.mat` (matlab), `RData`, `sqlite`, `jpg`, `zip`
- Some files use both formats in two stages:
 - human-readable files that have been compressed to a binary format:
 - `.xlsx`, `.docx`, `.csv.gz`, `.txt.gz`

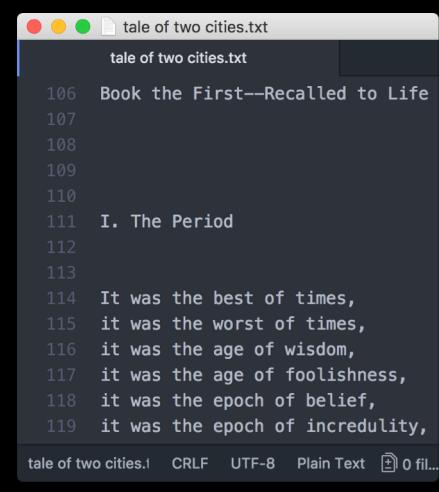
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Encoding a text file (from Lecture 3)

```
C:\Users\Steve\My Documents\tale of two cities.txt
42 6f 6f 6b 20 74 68 65 20 46 69 72 73 74 2d 2d |Book the First--|
52 65 63 61 6c 6c 65 64 20 74 6f 20 4c 69 66 65 |Recalled to Life|
0d 0a 0d 0a 0d 0a 0d 0a 0d 0a 49 2e 20 54 68 65 |.....I. The|
20 50 65 72 69 6f 64 0d 0a 0d 0a 0d 0a 49 74 20 | Period.....It|
77 61 73 20 74 68 65 20 62 65 73 74 20 6f 66 20 |was the best of |
74 69 6d 65 73 2c 0d 0a 69 74 20 77 61 73 20 74 |times,...it was t|
68 65 20 77 6f 72 73 74 20 6f 66 20 74 69 6d 65 |he worst of time|
73 2c 0d 0a 69 74 20 77 61 73 20 74 68 65 20 61 |s,...it was the a|
67 65 20 6f 66 20 77 69 73 64 6f 6d 2c 0d 0a 69 |ge of wisdom,...i|
74 20 77 61 73 20 74 68 65 20 61 67 65 20 6f 66 |t was the age of|
20 66 6f 6f 6c 69 73 68 6e 65 73 73 2c 0d 0a 69 |foolishness,...i|
74 20 77 61 73 20 74 68 65 20 65 70 6f 63 68 20 |t was the epoch |
6f 66 20 62 65 6c 69 65 66 2c 0d 0a 69 74 20 77 |of belief,...it w|
61 73 20 74 68 65 20 65 70 6f 63 68 20 6f 66 20 |as the epoch of |
69 6e 63 72 65 64 75 6c 69 74 79 2c 0d 0a 69 74 |incredulity,...it|
```

Data bits in the the file, shown
in hex notation for brevity
(from “`hexdump -C`” command)

ASCII or UTF-8 encoding translates each
byte (or up to 4 bytes) to a character



Appearance in
text editor

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Comma Separated Values (CSV)

- CSV is a simple text format for storing tabular data (spreadsheets)
- Each row is represented on one line of text
- Columns are separated by commas
- Values can be enclosed in double quotes ("...") if necessary
 - For example, if value includes comma or newline characters
 - Double quotes within a text value must be “escaped” by using two double quotes
 - e.g., for string `Samsung Monitor 24` should write “`Samsung Monitor 24”`
- Cells (values) can be empty by having nothing between the commas

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`titanic_passenger_list.csv` viewed in Excel

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N
1	pclass	survived	name	sex	age	sibsp	parch	ticket	fare	cabin	embarked	boat	body	home.dest
2	1	1	Allen, Miss. Elisabeth Walton	female	29	0	0	24160	211.338	B5	S		2	St Louis, MO
3	1	1	Allison, Master. Hudson Trevor	male	0.92	1	2	113781	151.55	C22 C26	S	11		Montreal, PQ / Chesterville, ON
4	1	0	Allison, Miss. Helen Loraine	female	2	1	2	113781	151.55	C22 C26	S			Montreal, PQ / Chesterville, ON
5	1	0	Allison, Mr. Hudson Joshua Creighton	male	30	1	2	113781	151.55	C22 C26	S		135	Montreal, PQ / Chesterville, ON
6	1	0	Allison, Mrs. Hudson J C (Bessie Waldo Daniels)	female	25	1	2	113781	151.55	C22 C26	S			Montreal, PQ / Chesterville, ON
7	1	1	Anderson, Mr. Harry	male	48	0	0	19952	26.55	E12	S	3		New York, NY
8	1	1	Andrews, Miss. Kornelia Theodosia	female	63	1	0	13502	77.9583	D7	S	10		Hudson, NY
9	1	0	Andrews, Mr. Thomas Jr	male	39	0	0	112050	0	A36	S			Belfast, NI
10	1	1	Appleton, Mrs. Edward Dale (Charlotte Lamson)	female	53	2	0	11769	51.4792	C101	S	D		Bayside, Queens, NY
11	1	0	Artagaveytia, Mr. Ramon	male	71	0	0	PC 17609	49.5042	C			22	Montevideo, Uruguay
12	1	0	Astor, Col. John Jacob	male	47	1	0	PC 17757	227.525	C62 C64	C		124	New York, NY
13	1	1	Astor, Mrs. John Jacob (Madeleine Talmadge Force)	female	18	1	0	PC 17757	227.525	C62 C64	C	4		New York, NY
14	1	1	Aubart, Mme. Leontine Pauline	female	24	0	0	PC 17477	69.3	B35	C	9		Paris, France
15	1	1	Barber, Miss. Ellen "Nellie"	female	26	0	0	19877	78.85	S		6		
16	1	1	Barkworth, Mr. Algernon Henry Wilson	male	80	0	0	27042	30	A23	S	B		Hesse, Yorks
17	1	0	Baumann, Mr. John D	male	0	0	0	PC 17318	25.925	S				New York, NY
18	1	0	Baxter, Mr. Quigg Edmond	male	24	0	1	PC 17558	247.521	B58 B60	C			Montreal, PQ
19	1	1	Baxter, Mrs. James (Helene Delaudeniere Chaput)	female	50	0	0	PC 17558	247.521	B58 B60	C	6		Montreal, PQ
20	1	1	Bazzani, Miss. Alibna	female	32	0	0	11813	76.2917	D15	C	8		
21	1	0	Beattie, Mr. Thomson	male	36	0	0	13050	75.2417	C6	C	A		Winnipeg, MN
22	1	1	Beckwith, Mr. Richard Leonard	male	37	1	1	11751	52.5542	D35	S	5		New York, NY
23	1	1	Beckwith, Mrs. Richard Leonard (Sallie Monypeny)	female	47	1	1	11751	52.5542	D35	S	5		New York, NY
24	1	1	Behr, Mr. Karl Howell	male	26	0	0	111369	30	C148	C	5		New York, NY
25	1	1	Bidois, Miss. Rosalie	female	42	0	0	PC 17757	227.525	C		4		
26	1	1	Bird, Miss. Ellen	female	29	0	0	PC 17483	221.779	C97	S	8		
27	1	0	Birnbaum, Mr. Jakob	male	25	0	0	13905	26	C		148	San Francisco, CA	
28	1	1	Bishop, Mr. Dickinson H	male	25	1	0	11967	91.0792	B49	C	7		Dowagiac, MI
29	1	1	Bishop, Mrs. Dickinson H (Helen Walton)	female	19	1	0	11967	91.0792	B49	C	7		Dowagiac, MI
30	1	1	Bissette, Miss. Amelia	female	35	0	0	PC 17760	135.633	C99	S	8		
31	1	1	Björnstrom-Steffansson, Mr. Mauritz Hakan	male	28	0	0	110564	26.55	C52	S	D		Stockholm, Sweden / Washington, DC
32	1	0	Blackwell, Mr. Stephen Weart	male	45	0	0	113784	35.5	T	S			Trenton, NJ
33	1	1	Blank, Mr. Henry	male	40	0	0	112277	31	A31	C	7		Glen Ridge, NJ
34	1	1	Bonnell, Miss. Caroline	female	30	0	0	36928	164.867	C7	S	8		Youngstown, OH

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titanic_passenger_list.csv viewed as text

```
"pclass","survived","name","sex","age","sibsp","parch","ticket","fare","cabin","embarked","boat","body","home.dest"
1,1,"Allen, Miss. Elisabeth Walton","female",29,0,0,"24160",.211.3375,"B5","S","2","",St Louis, MO"
1,1,"Allison, Master. Hudson Trevor","male",.092,1,2,"113781",151.5500,"C22 C26","S","11","",Montreal, PQ / Chesterville, ON"
1,0,"Allison, Miss. Helen Loraine","female",.2,1,2,"113781",151.5500,"C22 C26","S","",Montreal, PQ / Chesterville, ON"
1,0,"Allison, Mr. Hudson Joshua Creighton","male",.30,1,2,"113781",151.5500,"C22 C26","S","",Montreal, PQ / Chesterville, ON"
1,0,"Allison, Mrs. Hudson J C (Bessie Waldo Daniels)","female",.25,1,2,"113781",151.5500,"C22 C26","S","",Montreal, PQ / Chesterville, ON"
1,1,"Anderson, Mr. Harry","male",.48,0,0,"19952",.26.5500,"E12","S","3","",New York, NY"
1,1,"Andrews, Miss. Kornelia Theodosia","female",.63,1,0,"13502",.77.9583,"D7","S","10","",Hudson, NY"
1,0,"Andrews, Mr. Thomas Jr","male",.39,0,0,"112050",.0.0000,"A36","S","",Belfast, NI"
1,1,"Appleton, Mrs. Edward Dale (Charlotte Lamson)","female",.53,2,0,"11769",.51.4792,"C101","S","D","",Bayside, Queens, NY"
1,0,"Artagaveytia, Mr. Ramon","male",.71,0,0,"PC 17609",.49.5042,,C,"22",Montevideo, Uruguay"
1,0,"Astor, Col. John Jacob","male",.47,1,0,"PC 17757",.227.5250,"C62 C64","C","",124,"New York, NY"
1,1,"Astor, Mrs. John Jacob (Madeleine Talmadge Force)","female",.18,1,0,"PC 17757",.227.5250,"C62 C64","C","4","",New York, NY"
1,1,"Aubart, Mme. Leontine Pauline","female",.24,0,0,"PC 17477",.69.3000,"B35","C","9","",Paris, France"
1,1,"Barber, Miss. Ellen ""Nellie""","female",.26,0,0,"19877",.78.8500,"S","6","",Barkworth, Mr. Algernon Henry Wilson","male",.80,0,0,"27042",.30.0000,"A23","S","B","",Hessle, Yorks"
1,0,"Baumann, Mr. John D","male",.0,0,"PC 17318",.25.9250,,S,"",New York, NY"
1,0,"Baxter, Mr. Quigg Edmond","male",.24,0,1,"PC 17558",.247.5208,"B58 B60","C","",Montreal, PQ"
1,1,"Baxter, Mrs. James (Helene DeLaudeniere Chaput)","female",.50,0,1,"PC 17558",.247.5208,"B58 B60","C","6","",Montreal, PQ"
1,1,"Bazzani, Miss. Albina","female",.32,0,0,"11813",.76.2917,"D15","C","8","",Beattie, Mr. Thomson","male",.36,0,0,"13050",.75.2417,"C6","C","A","",Winnipeg, MN"
1,1,"Beckwith, Mr. Richard Leonard","male",.37,1,1,"11751",.52.5542,"D35","S","5","",New York, NY"
1,1,"Beckwith, Mrs. Richard Leonard (Sallie Monypeny)","female",.47,1,1,"11751",.52.5542,"D35","S","5","",New York, NY"
1,1,"Behr, Mr. Karl Howell","male",.26,0,0,"111369",.30.0000,"C148","C","5","",New York, NY"
1,1,"Bidois, Miss. Rosalie","female",.42,0,0,"PC 17757",.227.5250,,C,"4","",Bird, Miss. Ellen","female",.29,0,0,"PC 17483",.221.7792,"C97","S","8","",Birnbaum, Mr. Jakob","male",.25,0,0,"13905",.26.0000,,C,"148",San Francisco, CA"
1,1,"Bishop, Mr. Dickinson H","male",.25,1,0,"11967",.91.0792,"B49","C","7","",Dowagiac, MI"
1,1,"Bishop, Mrs. Dickinson H (Helen Walton)","female",.19,1,0,"11967",.91.0792,"B49","C","7","",Dowagiac, MI"
```

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CSV files represent a single table

- Relational models for complex data involve several tables, so you need several CSV files to represent complex data
- Groups of CSV files are often used for data exchange
- The CSV file can have *column names* in the first row
- However, other important schema information is not stored in CSV:
 - Data types
 - Primary keys
 - Unique key constraints
 - Foreign key relationships
 - Indexes
- The above *metadata* can be included in an SQL script that accompanies the CSV files, or in a human-readable document
- Each DBMS also has its own proprietary format for exchanging databases, including both the data and metadata
- SQLite is the simplest. Its just the `*.sqlite` file

Semi-structured data

stored as a tree

- Often we want to represent complex data in a single file and in a standard way
- JSON and XML files store semi-structured data
- Not limited to two dimensions like CSV files
- Data is represented in a tree format, where any node can have more details below it
- However, unlike a relational database, there is no clear pre-defined structure for the data
- The data defines its own structure
- Compared to CSV, it is more difficult to read and is more prone to errors because data elements can be missing

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JSON – JavaScript Object Notation

text file with rules, objects nest, white space is NULL, unless space in " "

- Used in many web applications and data APIs
- Allows an arbitrary amount of nesting
- Spaces are ignored, except within quotes
- Basic components are:
 - [] for ordered lists
 - Items are separated by commas
 - Items can be any JSON
 - { } for unordered dictionaries/objects
 - Key/value pairs are separated by commas
 - Keys must be strings (text)
 - Values can be any JSON
- Numbers, true, false, null
- Strings (text) in double quotes

```
[  
  {  
    "name": "John",  
    "age": 30,  
    "cars": [  
      "Ford", "BMW", "Fiat"]  
  },  
  {  
    "name": "Alicia",  
    "age": 32,  
    "hometown": "Seattle"  
  }]  
 ]
```

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XML – eXtensible Markup Language

- Older than JSON
- Used in HTML for web page design
- Basic components are:
 - Text
 - Tags
 - <tagname>...</tagname>
 - Have a name, and have XML inside
 - Each start tag has a corresponding end tag
 - Attributes
 - <tag attr="value" ...>
 - Appear within tags
 - Attribute name and value must be text
 - Tag can have multiple attributes, but each must have a unique name

```
<people>
  <person name="John" age="30">
    <cars>
      <car>Ford</car>
      <car>BMW</car>
      <car>Fiat</car>
    </cars>
  </person>
  <person name="Alicia" age="32">
    <hometown city="Seattle">
    </hometown>
  </person>
</people>
```

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Part II Cleaning Messy Data



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Real world data is often *messy*

The Database view

- Data entered manually can have **typos**
- Buggy computer programs can produce bad results
 - Program may not behave well when data is **missing**
 - Data overflow and type conversion can cause problems
- Temporary sensor malfunction can lead to a **bogus** measurement
- Different data sources can use different **naming conventions**
- Data can be missing due to an interrupted data import
- Some data may have been **corrupted**

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Real world data is often *messy*

The Statistics view

- There is a process that produces data
- We want to model ideal samples of that process, but in practice we have non-ideal samples:
 - **Distortion** – some samples are corrupted by a process
 - **Selection Bias** - likelihood of a sample depends on its value
 - **Left and right censorship** - users come and go from our scrutiny
 - **Dependence** – samples are supposed to be independent, but are not (e.g. social networks)
- You can add new models for each type of imperfection, but you can't model everything
- What's the best trade-off between accuracy and simplicity?

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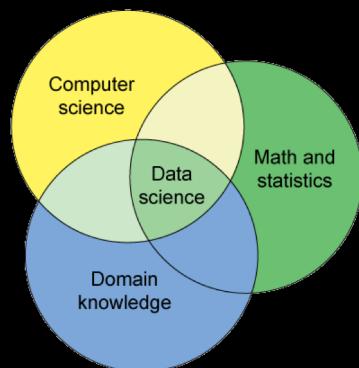
Real world data is often *messy* *The Domain Expert's view*

- These data don't look right
- This answer doesn't look right
- This process doesn't pass my sniff test
- Hmm... That's funny!
- Domain experts have an implicit model of the data that they can test against...

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Real world data is often *messy* *The Data Scientist's view*

- Some combination of the above...



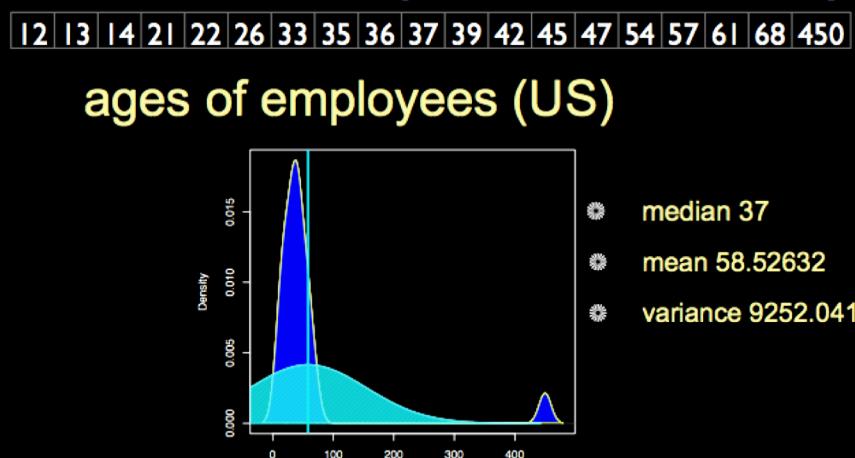
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Data quality problems

- (Source) Data are dirty on their own
- Transformations corrupt the data (complexity of software pipelines)
- Data sets are clean but integration (i.e., combining them) screws them up
- “Rare” errors can become frequent after transformation or integration
- Data sets are clean but suffer “bit rot”
 - Old data loses its value/accuracy over time
- Any combination of the above

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Numeric outliers



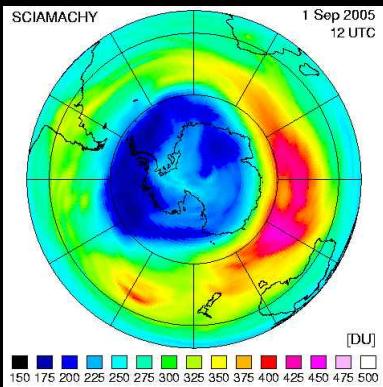
Adapted from Joe Hellerstein's 2012 CS 194 Guest Lecture

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Data cleaning makes everything okay?

The appearance of a hole in the earth's ozone layer over Antarctica, first detected in 1976, was so unexpected that scientists didn't pay attention to what their instruments were telling them; they thought their instruments were malfunctioning.

National Center for Atmospheric Research



In fact, the data were rejected as unreasonable by data quality control algorithms

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How to recognize bad data?

No simple or easy answer

- Start with good documentation
- Know what each column means
- Define a very strict schema and look for warnings when importing
 - Define columns as NOT NULL, when appropriate, to prevent incomplete data
 - Define columns with numeric types rather than text if you expect numbers
 - Define *foreign keys* if you expect columns to match between tables
 - Define triggers to implement integrity constraints
- Look at summary statistics after data is imported:
`SELECT MIN(col), MAX(col), AVG(col)...`
 - If min and max values are unexpected, then look for outliers by sorting according to that column
 - In R, use the `summary(...)` command on a data frame

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Conventional definition of data quality

- Accuracy
 - The data was recorded correctly
- Completeness
 - All relevant data was recorded
- Uniqueness
 - Entities are recorded once
- Timeliness
 - The data is kept up to date
 - Special problems in federated data: time consistency
- Consistency
 - The data agrees with itself

Adapted from Ted Johnson's SIGMOD 2003 Tutorial

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Problems...

- Unmeasurable
 - Accuracy and completeness are extremely difficult, perhaps impossible to measure
- Context independent
 - No accounting for what is important. E.g., if you are computing aggregates, you can tolerate a lot of inaccuracy
- Incomplete
 - What about interpretability, accessibility, metadata, analysis, etc
- Vague
 - The conventional definitions provide no guidance towards practical improvements of the data

Adapted from Ted Johnson's SIGMOD 2003 Tutorial

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Finding a modern definition

- We need a definition of data quality which
 - Reflects the **use** of the data
 - Leads to **improvements in processes**
 - Is **measurable** (we can define metrics)
- First, we need a better understanding of how and where data quality problems occur
 - The **data quality continuum**

Adapted from Ted Johnson's SIGMOD 2003 Tutorial

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Meaning of Data Quality

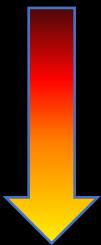
- There are many uses of data
 - Operations
 - Aggregate analysis
 - Customer relations ...
- Data Interpretation : the data is useless if we don't know all of the rules behind the data
- Data Suitability : Can you get the answer from the available data
 - Use of proxy data
 - Relevant data is missing

Adapted from Ted Johnson's SIGMOD 2003 Tutorial

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The data quality continuum

- Data and information is not static
- It flows through a collection and usage process
 - Data gathering
 - Data delivery
 - Data storage
 - Data integration
 - Data retrieval
 - Data mining/analysis



Adapted from Ted Johnson's SIGMOD 2003 Tutorial

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Data gathering

- How does the data enter the system?
- Sources of problems:
 - Manual entry
 - No uniform standards for content and formats
 - Parallel data entry (duplicates)
 - Approximations, surrogates – SW/HW constraints
 - Measurement or sensor errors

Adapted from Ted Johnson's SIGMOD 2003 Tutorial

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Data gathering - solutions

- Potential Solutions:
 - Preemptive:
 - Process architecture (build in integrity checks)
 - Process management (reward accurate data entry, data sharing, data stewards)
 - Retrospective:
 - Cleaning focus (duplicate removal, merge/purge, name & address matching, field value standardization)
 - Diagnostic focus (automated detection of glitches)

Adapted from Ted Johnson's SIGMOD 2003 Tutorial

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Data delivery

- Destroying or mutilating information by inappropriate pre-processing
 - Inappropriate aggregation
 - Nulls converted to default values
- Loss of data:
 - Buffer overflows
 - Transmission problems
 - No checks

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Data delivery - solutions

- Build reliable transmission protocols
 - Use a relay server
- Verification
 - Checksums, verification parser
 - Do the uploaded files fit an expected pattern?
- Relationships
 - Are there dependencies between data streams and processing steps
- Interface agreements
 - Data quality commitment from the data stream supplier

Adapted from Ted Johnson's SIGMOD 2003 Tutorial

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Data storage

- You get a data set. What do you do with it?
- Problems in physical storage
 - Can be an issue, but terabytes are cheap.
- Problems in logical storage
 - Poor metadata.
 - Data feeds are often derived from application programs or legacy data sources. What does it mean?
 - Inappropriate data models.
 - Missing timestamps, incorrect normalization, etc.
 - Ad-hoc modifications.
 - Structure the data to fit the GUI.
 - Hardware / software constraints.
 - Data transmission via Excel spreadsheets, Y2K, Y2038

Adapted from Ted Johnson's SIGMOD 2003 Tutorial

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Data storage - solutions

- Metadata
 - Document and publish data specifications
- Planning
 - Assume that everything bad will happen
 - Can be very difficult
- Data exploration
 - Use data browsing and data mining tools to examine the data
 - Does it meet the specifications you assumed?
 - Has something changed?

Adapted from Ted Johnson's SIGMOD 2003 Tutorial

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Debugging a data import

- If data fails to import completely, try loading it into a *temporary text table*
 - Drop keys and use large text types for every column
- Query the text table to look for unexpected values in the source data

This table has strict constraints on what kind of data can be inserted:

```
CREATE TABLE person (
    SSN int NOT NULL,
    firstName varchar(30) NOT NULL,
    lastName varchar(30) NOT NULL,
    birthDate datetime NOT NULL,
    PRIMARY KEY (SSN)
);
```

This temporary table relaxes those constraints:

```
CREATE TABLE _import_person (
    SSN varchar(1000) NOT NULL,
    firstName varchar(1000) NOT NULL,
    lastName varchar(1000) NOT NULL,
    birthDate varchar(1000) NOT NULL,
);
```

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Data integration

- Combine data sets (acquisitions, across departments)
- Common source of problems
 - Heterogenous data: no common key, different field formats
 - **Approximate matching**
 - Different definitions
 - What is a customer: an account, an individual, a family, ...
 - Time synchronization
 - Does the data relate to the same time periods? Are the time windows compatible?
 - Legacy data
 - IMS, spreadsheets, ad-hoc structures

Adapted from Ted Johnson's SIGMOD 2003 Tutorial

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Named entity matching

- In real-world data, people, companies, products, etc., all can be represented with variations of their name:

• Eleanor Roosevelt	• Northwestern Univ.	• Apple iPhone 6S
• E. Roosevelt	• NU	• iPhone 6S 32 GB Space Gray
• Roosevelt, Eleanor	• Northwestern	• A1633
• Mrs. Roosevelt	• Northwestern University	
- When combining data from multiple sources, we need *approximate matching* to join according to text fields
 - Humans are good at this, but it's difficult to automate

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Approximate matching

- Relate tuples whose fields are “close”
 - Approximate string matching
 - Generally, based on edit distance
- Approximate tree matching
 - For Nested Data Structures (or flattened ones)
 - Much more expensive than string matching
 - Recent research in fast approximations
- Feature vector matching
 - Similarity search
 - Many techniques discussed in the data mining literature
- Ad-hoc or Domain-focused matching
 - Use domain insights and/or clever tricks

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SQL synonym table

- The simplest solution is to create a *synonym table* to list all variations of names
- Use the synonym table as a linking table in a four-way join
- For example, if *product* and *product_details* use different variations of the product name:

```
SELECT * FROM product
INNER JOIN product_synonym AS n1
    ON product.name=n1.name
INNER JOIN product_synonym AS n2
    ON n1.id=n2.id
INNER JOIN product_details
    ON n2.name=product_details.name;
```

product_synonym	
product_id	name
1	Apple iPhone 6s
1	iPhone 6 S
1	iPhone 6S 32 GB
1	iPhone 6S Space Gray
1	iPhone 6S Gold
2	Google Nexus 6P
2	Nexus 6P
2	Nexus 6-P

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Shortcomings of synonym table

- Creating the synonym table is a slow, manual process
 - Cannot scale to many thousands of rows
- Synonym table must be updated every time new data arrives

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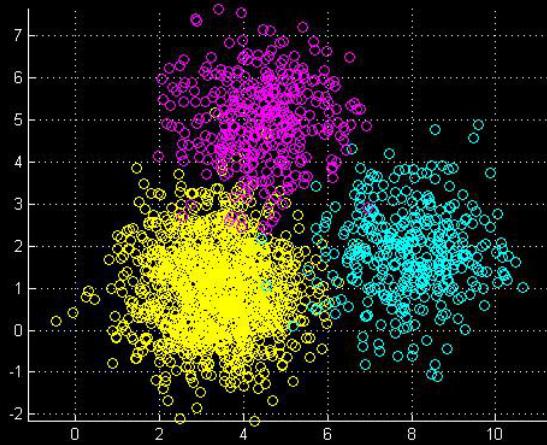
Automatically generating synonyms

- This requires a general purpose programming language
 - Cannot do it in plain SQL
- We can think of named entity matching as a *clustering* or *classification* problem, both suitable for machine learning
- Problem definition:
Given:
 - A list of names (unknown strings)
 - Optionally, a list of entities
 - Optionally, a known map between a subset of the names and the entities (training data)Produce:
 - A mapping between all the names and a list of entities

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Clustering

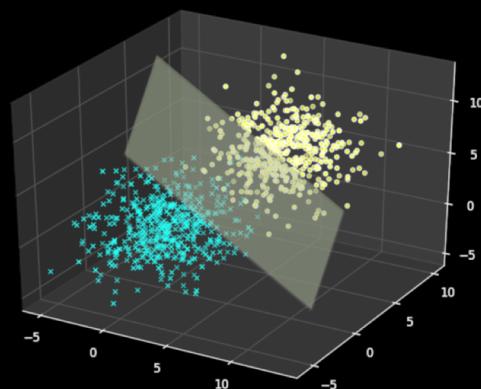
- If we do not know what entities exist in the data, then try to find clusters of names and call each cluster an entity



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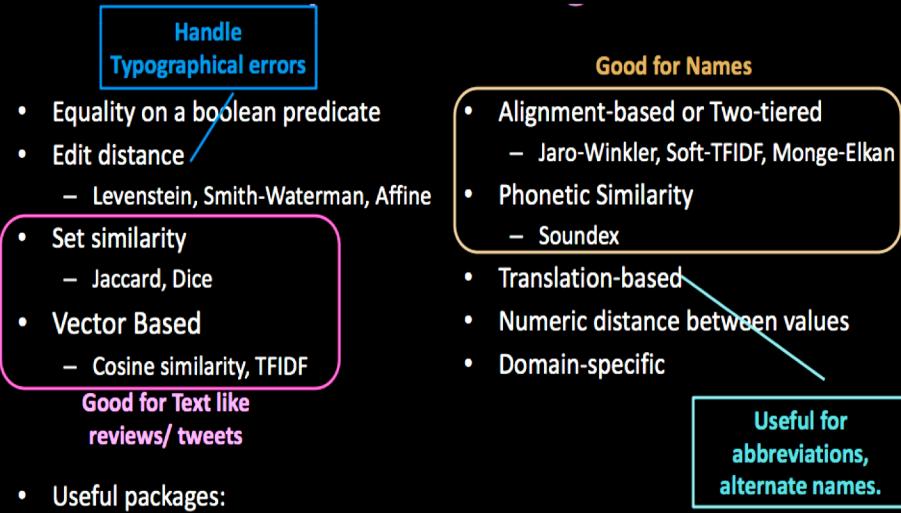
Classification

- If we have a list of entities and some training samples for each, then we can train a classifier for each entity
- Each classifier would return yes/no for a name matching a particular entity, along with a confidence measure
- Choose the entity whose classifier has highest confidence



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Some similarity measures



From: Getoor & Machanavajjhala: "Entity Resolution Tutorial", VLDB 2012

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Text similarity metrics

- An alternative to ML is a graph partitioning approach
- Use text similarity metrics to build a name similarity graph
- For example, the *edit distance* (or Levenshtein distance)
 - The minimum number of single-character changes needed to make one phrase equal to another
 - Edit distance between “school” and “college” is 7
 - Delete *s*, *b*, *o*, and append “*lege*” at the end
 - Edit distance between “iPhone 6S” and “iPhone 6-S” is just 1
 - Delete the hyphen

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Soundex encoding

- A phonetic algorithm that indexes names by their sounds when pronounced in English
- Consists of the first letter of the name followed by three numbers
- The numbers encode similar sounding consonants
 - Remove all W, H
 - B, F, P, V encoded as 1
 - C, G, J, K, Q, S, X, Z encoded as 2
 - Remaining encodings: D, T = 3; L = 4; M, N = 5; R = 6
 - Remove vowels
 - Concatenate first letter of string with first 3 numerals
- Example: “great” and “grate” become G6EA3 and G6A3E, and then G63
- More recent: metaphone, double metaphone, etc.

From: Koudas, Sarawagi, Srivastava, “Record Linkage: Similarity Measures and Algorithms”, VLDB 2006

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Schema matching

- Use similarity measures and structural cues (e.g., column names, data types, etc.) to match data definitions
- Looking at data instances (or examples of them can help)
- Constraints in the schema (if you have them) can also help
- Auxiliary Information: dictionaries, documentation, usage... ditto

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Data retrieval

- Exported data sets are often a view of the actual data. Problems occur because:
 - Source data not properly understood
 - Need for derived data not understood
 - Just plain mistakes
 - Inner join vs. outer join
 - Understanding NULL values
- Computational constraints
 - E.g., too expensive to give a full history, we'll supply a snapshot
- Incompatibility
 - ASCII? Ebcdic? Unicode?

Adapted from Ted Johnson's SIGMOD 2003 Tutorial

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Data mining and analysis

- What are you doing with all this data anyway?
- Problems in the analysis
 - Scale and performance
 - Confidence bounds?
 - Black boxes and dart boards
 - Attachment to models
 - Insufficient domain expertise
 - Casual empiricism

Adapted from Ted Johnson's SIGMOD 2003 Tutorial

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Retrieval and mining - solutions

- Data exploration
 - Determine which models and techniques are appropriate, find data bugs, develop domain expertise
- Continuous analysis
 - Are the results stable? How do they change?
- Accountability
 - Make the analysis part of the feedback loop

Adapted from Ted Johnson's SIGMOD 2003 Tutorial

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Data quality constraints

- Many data quality problems can be captured by static constraints based on the schema
 - Nulls not allowed, type domains, foreign key constraints, etc
- Many others are due to problems in workflow, and can be captured by dynamic constraints
 - E.g., orders above \$200 are processed by Biller 2
- The constraints follow an 80-20 rule
 - A few constraints capture most cases, thousands of constraints to capture the last few cases
- Constraints are measurable
 - **Data Quality Metrics?**

Adapted from Ted Johnson's SIGMOD 2003 Tutorial

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Data quality metrics

- We want a measurable quantity
 - Indicates what is wrong and how to improve
 - Realize that DQ is a messy problem, no set of numbers will be perfect
- Types of metrics
 - Static vs. dynamic constraints
 - Operational vs. diagnostic
- Metrics should be directionally correct with an improvement in use of the data
- A very large number metrics are possible
 - Choose the most important ones

Adapted from Ted Johnson's SIGMOD 2003 Tutorial

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Examples of data quality metrics

- Conformance to schema
 - Evaluate constraints on a snapshot
- Conformance to business rules
 - Evaluate constraints on changes in the database
- Accuracy
 - Perform inventory (expensive), or use proxy (track complaints). Audit samples?
- Accessibility
- Interpretability
- Glitches in analysis
- Successful completion of end-to-end process

Adapted from Ted Johnson's SIGMOD 2003 Tutorial

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Technical approaches

- We need a multi-disciplinary approach to attack data quality problems
- No one approach solves all problems
- **Process management**
 - Ensure proper procedures
- **Statistics**
 - Focus on analysis: find and repair anomalies in data
- **Database**
 - Focus on relationships: ensure consistency
- **Metadata / domain expertise**
 - What does it mean? Interpretation

Adapted from Ted Johnson's SIGMOD 2003 Tutorial

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Extract Transform Load (ETL)

- ETL programs import data from data files to databases
 - For example, *MS SQL Server Integration Services*
- ETL script can include:
 - List of validation rules to identify problematic data
 - List of behaviors to correct or discard problematic data
 - Transformations to apply to the input data before inserting into DB

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Data cleaning is an active research field

- Identifying and cleaning messy data is a real world problem
- You cannot get correct results without correct data
- Very active research field today
- Intersection of machine learning and database systems

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Several tools, open and proprietary

- Open Refine (Google)
<http://openrefine.org>
 - Messy data identification and cleaning
 - Data transformation
 - Linking data to databases
- Data Wrangler (Stanford)
<http://vis.stanford.edu/wrangler/>
 - Graduated to a startup (Trifacta)
 - Interactive tool for data cleaning and transformation

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ML for data cleaning

- Snorkel (Stanford)
<http://snorkel.stanford.edu>
 - Classification
 - Data cleaning and integration
 - Entity and relationship extraction
 - Deep learning → feature engineering and extraction
 - Requires massive training sets
 - How to label data for training ?

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More to read

- Big Data's Dirty Problem
[Fortune]
<http://fortune.com/2014/06/30/big-data-dirty-problem/>
- A Taxonomy of Dirty Data
[Won Kim+]
<http://sci2s.ugr.es/docencia/m1/KimTaxonomy03.pdf>
(Very detailed, slightly outdated)
- For Big-Data Scientists, 'Janitor Work' Is Key Hurdle to Insights
[New York Times]
[http://www.nytimes.com/2014/08/18/technology/for-big-data-scientists-hurdle-to-insights-isjanitor-work.html? _r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2014/08/18/technology/for-big-data-scientists-hurdle-to-insights-isjanitor-work.html?_r=0)

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