Relational Database Design: Part I

Introduction to Databases
CompSci 316 Fall 2018
Announcements (Tue. Sep. 4)

• Sign up for Piazza and Gradiance, NOW
  • Only 148 and 105 signed up (out of 172) as of this morning
• Set up your VM, NOW
• Get started on Homework 1, NOW
  • Due in two weeks

• Office hours have been posted on website
• More details on the course project available next week
Relational model: review

• A database is a collection of relations (or tables)
• Each relation has a set of attributes (or columns)
• Each attribute has a name and a domain (or type)
• Each relation contains a set of tuples (or rows)
Keys

• A set of attributes $K$ is a **key** for a relation $R$ if
  • In no instance of $R$ will two different tuples agree on all attributes of $K$
    • That is, $K$ can serve as a “tuple identifier”
  • No proper subset of $K$ satisfies the above condition
    • That is, $K$ is **minimal**

• Example: **User** $(uid, name, age, pop)$
  • $uid$ is a key of User
  • $age$ is not a key (not an identifier)
  • $\{uid, name\}$ is not a key (not minimal)
Schema vs. instance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>uid</th>
<th>name</th>
<th>age</th>
<th>pop</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>142</td>
<td>Bart</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>123</td>
<td>Milhouse</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>857</td>
<td>Lisa</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>456</td>
<td>Ralph</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Is name a key of User?

- Key declarations are part of the schema
More examples of keys

- *Member* \((uid, gid)\)
  
  - A key can contain multiple attributes

- *Address* \((street\_address, city, state, zip)\)
  
  - A relation can have multiple keys!
    - We typically pick one as the “primary” key, and *underline* all its attributes, e.g., *Address* \((street\_address, city, state, zip)\)
Use of keys

• More constraints on data, fewer mistakes
• Look up a row by its key value
  • Many selection conditions are “key = value”
• “Pointers” to other rows (often across tables)
  • Example: Member (uid, gid)
    • uid is a key of User
    • gid is a key of Group
    • A Member row “links” a User row with a Group row
  • Many join conditions are “key = key value stored in another table”
Database design

• Understand the real-world domain being modeled

• Specify it using a database design model
  • More intuitive and convenient for schema design
  • But not necessarily implemented by DBMS
  • A few popular ones:
    • Entity/Relationship (E/R) model
    • Object Definition Language (ODL)
    • UML (Unified Modeling Language)

• Translate specification to the data model of DBMS
  • Relational, XML, object-oriented, etc.

• Create DBMS schema
But what about ORM?

• Automatic **object-relational mappers** are made popular by rapid Web development frameworks
  • For example, with Python SQLAlchemy:
    • You declare Python classes and their relationships
    • It automatically converts them into database tables
    • If you want, you can just work with Python objects, and never need to be aware of the database schema or write SQL

• But you still need designer discretion in all but simple cases

• Each language/library has its own syntax for creating schema and for querying/modifying data
  • Quirks and limitations cause portability problems
  • They are not necessarily easier to learn than SQL
Entity-relationship (E/R) model

- Historically and still very popular
- Concepts applicable to other design models as well
- Can think of as a “watered-down” object-oriented design model
- Primarily a design model—not directly implemented by DBMS
- Designs represented by E/R diagrams
  - We use the style of E/R diagram covered by the GMUW book; there are other styles/extensions
  - Very similar to UML diagrams
E/R basics

- **Entity**: a “thing,” like an object
- **Entity set**: a collection of things of the same type, like a relation of tuples or a class of objects
  - Represented as a rectangle
- **Relationship**: an association among entities
- **Relationship set**: a set of relationships of the same type (among same entity sets)
  - Represented as a diamond
- **Attributes**: properties of entities or relationships, like attributes of tuples or objects
  - Represented as ovals
An example E/R diagram

• Users are members of groups

• A key of an entity set is represented by underlining all attributes in the key
  • A key is a set of attributes whose values can belong to at most one entity in an entity set—like a key of a relation
Attributes of relationships

- Example: a user belongs to a group since a particular date

- Where do the dates go?
  - With Users?
    - But
  - With Groups?
    - But
  - With IsMemberOf!
More on relationships

• There could be multiple relationship sets between the same entity sets
  • Example: Users IsMemberOf Groups; Users Likes Groups

• In a relationship set, each relationship is uniquely identified by the entities it connects
  • Example: Between Bart and “Dead Putting Society”, there can be at most one IsMemberOf relationship and at most one Likes relationship

◆ What if Bart joins DPS, leaves, and rejoins? How can we modify the design to capture historical membership information?
Multiplicity of relationships

• $E$ and $F$: entity sets

• **Many-many**: Each entity in $E$ is related to 0 or more entities in $F$ and vice versa
  - Example:

• **Many-one**: Each entity in $E$ is related to 0 or 1 entity in $F$, but each entity in $F$ is related to 0 or more in $E$
  - Example:

• **One-one**: Each entity in $E$ is related to 0 or 1 entity in $F$ and vice versa
  - Example:

“‘One’ (0 or 1) is represented by an arrow →

“Exactly one” is represented by a rounded arrow ———>
Roles in relationships

• An entity set may participate more than once in a relationship set

☞ May need to label edges to distinguish roles

• Examples
  • Users may be parents of others; label needed
  • Users may be friends of each other; label not needed
**n-ary relationships**

- Example: a user must have an initiator in order to join a group

![Diagram](image.png)

Rule for interpreting an arrow into entity set $E$ in an $n$-ary relationship:

- Pick one entity from each of the other entity sets; together they can be related to at most one entity in $E$

- Exercise: hypothetically, what do these arrows imply?
$n$-ary versus binary relationships

- Can we model $n$-ary relationships using just binary relationships?

**Diagram:**

- Users
- IsMemberOf
- Groups
- InitiatesFor
- member
- initiator
- IsInitiatedBy
Next: two special relationships

... is part of/belongs to ...

... is a kind of ...

http://blogs.library.duke.edu/renovation/files/2012/08/Rubenstein-Library-First-Floor-Floorplan.jpg
http://www.sharky-jones.com/Sharkyjones/Artwork/taxonomy%20artwork/Class1.jpg
Weak entity sets

Sometimes, an entity’s identity depends on some others’

• The key of a weak entity set $E$ comes not completely from its own attributes, but from the keys of one or more other entity sets
  • $E$ must link to them via many-one or one-one relationship sets

• Example: Rooms inside Buildings are partly identified by Buildings’ name

• A weak entity set is drawn as a double rectangle

• The relationship sets through which it obtains its key are called supporting relationship sets, drawn as double diamonds
Weak entity set examples

- Seats in rooms in building

- Why must double diamonds be many-one/one-one?
  - With many-many, we would not know which entity provides the key value!
Remodeling \( n \)-ary relationships

- An \( n \)-ary relationship set can be replaced by a weak entity set (called a connecting entity set) and \( n \) binary relationship sets

Note that the multiplicity constraint for \( \text{IsMemberOf} \) is lost
ISA relationships

- Similar to the idea of subclasses in object-oriented programming: subclass = special case, fewer entities, and possibly more properties
  - Represented as a triangle (direction is important)
- Example: paid users are users, but they also get avatars (yay!)

```
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Users</th>
<th>IsMemberOf</th>
<th>Groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>uid</td>
<td></td>
<td>gid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>name</td>
<td></td>
<td>name</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PaidUsers</th>
<th>ISA</th>
<th>Automatically “inherits” key, attributes, relationships</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>avatar</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
```
Summary of E/R concepts

- Entity sets
  - Keys
  - Weak entity sets

- Relationship sets
  - Attributes of relationships
  - Multiplicity
  - Roles
  - Binary versus n-ary relationships
    - Modeling n-ary relationships with weak entity sets and binary relationships
  - ISA relationships
Case study 1

• Design a database representing cities, counties, and states
  • For states, record name and capital (city)
  • For counties, record name, area, and location (state)
  • For cities, record name, population, and location (county and state)

• Assume the following:
  • Names of states are unique
  • Names of counties are only unique within a state
  • Names of cities are only unique within a county
  • A city is always located in a single county
  • A county is always located in a single state
Case study 1: first design
Case study 1: second design

- Technically, nothing in this design prevents a city in state $X$ from being the capital of another state $Y$, but oh well...
Case study 2

• Design a database consistent with the following:
  • A station has a unique name and an address, and is either an express station or a local station
  • A train has a unique number and an engineer, and is either an express train or a local train
  • A local train can stop at any station
  • An express train only stops at express stations
  • A train can stop at a station for any number of times during a day
  • Train schedules are the same everyday
Case study 2: first design
Case study 2: second design

Is the extra complexity worth it?