Relational Database Design using E/R

Introduction to Databases
CompSci 316 Fall 2019
Announcements (Mon. Sep. 2)

• Sign up for Piazza and Gradiance, NOW
  • Only 125 and 107 signed up (out of 150) as of this morning
• Gradiance RA exercise due this Wednesday
• Get started on Homework 1, NOW
  • Set up your VM, NOW
  • Due in two weeks
• Office hours will be posted on website under “Help”
  • Mine starts today
• More details on the course project next week
Announcements (Mon. Sep. 2)

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All veterans of 316!
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

• Is name a key of User?

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

• Member \((uid, gid)\)
  • \(\{uid, gid\}\)
    ☐ A key can contain multiple attributes

• Address \(\text{(street_address, city, state, zip)}\)

☐ A relation can have multiple keys!
  • We typically pick one as the “primary” key, and underline all its attributes, e.g., Address \(\text{(street_address, city, state, zip)}\)
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:

```
Users <-> IsMemberOf <-> Groups
```

• **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:

```
Groups <-> IsOwnedBy <-> Users
```

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

```
Users <-> IsLinkedTo <-> TwitterUsers
```

• “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

[Diagram of entity relationship with edges labeled IsParentOf and IsFriendOf]
**n-ary relationships**

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

```
Users ——> IsMemberOf ——> Groups
    member

Users ——> IsMemberOf ——> Groups
    initiator
```

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 two arrows imply?
\[ n \]-ary versus binary relationships

• Can we model \( n \)-ary relationships using just binary relationships, like this?

```
Users

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>member</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>initiator</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IsMemberOf</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>InitiatesFor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

WRONG!
```

• No; for example:
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

![Entity Relationship Diagram]

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

Automatically “inherits” key, attributes, relationships
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

```
Cities
  | name
  | population
  | county_name
  | county_area

In

States
  | name
  | capital
```
• 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

- Trains
  - number
  - engineer
  - E/L?

- StopsAt
  - time

- Stations
  - name
  - address
  - E/L?
Case study 2: second design

Is the extra complexity worth it?