Relational Database Design Theory

Introduction to Databases
CompSci 316 Spring 2020
Announcements (Thu. Feb. 13)

• HW3: Q4-Q5 due Saturday 02/15 **12 NOON**

• Midterm next Tuesday 02/18 in class
  • Open book, open notes
  • No electronic devices, no collaboration
  • Everything covered until and including TODAY Thursday 02/13 included!
  • Sample midterm on sakai -> resources -> midterm
  • HW1, HW2 sample solutions on sakai

• We will move some office hours to next Monday for the midterm
  • Follow piazza announcements
Today’s plan

• Start database design theory
  • Functional dependency, BCNF

• Review some concepts in between and at the end
  • Weak entity set, ISA, multiplicity, etc. in ER diagram
  • Outer joins, different join types
  • Triggers
  • EXISTS
  • Foreign keys
Motivation

• Why is \textit{UserGroup (uid, uname, gid)} a bad design?
  • It has \textit{redundancy}—user name is recorded multiple times, once for each group that a user belongs to
    • Leads to update, insertion, deletion anomalies

• Wouldn’t it be nice to have a systematic approach to detecting and removing redundancy in designs?
  • Dependencies, decompositions, and normal forms
Functional dependencies

• A functional dependency (FD) has the form $X \rightarrow Y$, where $X$ and $Y$ are sets of attributes in a relation $R$

• $X \rightarrow Y$ means that whenever two tuples in $R$ agree on all the attributes in $X$, they must also agree on all attributes in $Y$

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Must be $b$  Could be anything
FD examples

Address (street_address, city, state, zip)

• street_address, city, state → zip

• zip → city, state

• zip, state → zip?
  • This is a trivial FD
  • Trivial FD: LHS ⊇ RHS

• zip → state, zip?
  • This is non-trivial, but not completely non-trivial
  • Completely non-trivial FD: LHS ∩ RHS = ∅
Redefining “keys” using FD’s

A set of attributes $K$ is a key for a relation $R$ if

- $K \rightarrow$ all (other) attributes of $R$
  - That is, $K$ is a “super key”

- No proper subset of $K$ satisfies the above condition
  - That is, $K$ is minimal
Reasoning with FD’s

Given a relation $R$ and a set of FD’s $\mathcal{F}$

• **Does another FD follow from $\mathcal{F}$?**
  • Are some of the FD’s in $\mathcal{F}$ redundant (i.e., they follow from the others)?

• **Is $K$ a key of $R$?**
  • What are all the keys of $R$?
Attribute closure

• Given $R$, a set of FD’s $\mathcal{F}$ that hold in $R$, and a set of attributes $Z$ in $R$: The closure of $Z$ (denoted $Z^+$) with respect to $\mathcal{F}$ is the set of all attributes $\{A_1, A_2, \ldots\}$ functionally determined by $Z$ (that is, $Z \rightarrow A_1A_2 \ldots$)

• Algorithm for computing the closure
  • Start with closure $= Z$
  • If $X \rightarrow Y$ is in $\mathcal{F}$ and $X$ is already in the closure, then also add $Y$ to the closure
  • Repeat until no new attributes can be added

Example
On board
Using next slide
A more complex example

UserJoinsGroup (uid, uname, twitterid, gid, fromDate)

Assume that there is a 1-1 correspondence between our users and Twitter accounts

- uid → uname, twitterid
- twitterid → uid
- uid, gid → fromDate

Not a good design, and we will see why shortly
Example of computing closure

• \( \{\text{gid, twitterid}\}^+ = ? \)
• twitterid → uid
  • Add uid
  • Closure grows to \( \{\text{gid, twitterid, uid}\} \)
• uid → uname, twitterid
  • Add uname, twitterid
  • Closure grows to \( \{\text{gid, twitterid, uid, uname}\} \)
• uid, gid → fromDate
  • Add fromDate
  • Closure is now all attributes in UserJoinsGroup
Using attribute closure

Given a relation $R$ and set of FD’s $\mathcal{F}$

- Does another FD $X \rightarrow Y$ follow from $\mathcal{F}$?
  - Compute $X^+$ with respect to $\mathcal{F}$
  - If $Y \subseteq X^+$, then $X \rightarrow Y$ follows from $\mathcal{F}$

- Is $K$ a key of $R$?
  - Compute $K^+$ with respect to $\mathcal{F}$
  - If $K^+$ contains all the attributes of $R$, $K$ is a super key
  - Still need to verify that $K$ is minimal (how?)
Rules of FD’s

• Armstrong’s axioms
  • Reflexivity: If \( Y \subseteq X \), then \( X \rightarrow Y \)
  • Augmentation: If \( X \rightarrow Y \), then \( XZ \rightarrow YZ \) for any \( Z \)
  • Transitivity: If \( X \rightarrow Y \) and \( Y \rightarrow Z \), then \( X \rightarrow Z \)

• Rules derived from axioms
  • Splitting: If \( X \rightarrow YZ \), then \( X \rightarrow Y \) and \( X \rightarrow Z \)
  • Combining: If \( X \rightarrow Y \) and \( X \rightarrow Z \), then \( X \rightarrow YZ \)

Using these rules, you can prove or disprove an FD given a set of FDs

We already used these intuitive rules but check yourself again!

End of lecture
Thursday 02/13
(Problems with) Non-key FD’s

• Consider a non-trivial FD $X \rightarrow Y$ where $X$ is not a super key
  • Since $X$ is not a super key, there are some attributes (say $Z$) that are not functionally determined by $X$

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That $b$ is associated with $a$ is recorded multiple times: redundancy, update/insertion/deletion anomaly
Example of redundancy

\textit{UserJoinsGroup} \((uid, \, uname, \, twitterid, \, gid, \, fromDate)\)

- \(uid \rightarrow \) \textit{uname}, \textit{twitterid}

(... plus other FD's)
Decomposition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>uid</th>
<th>uname</th>
<th>twitterid</th>
<th>gid</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>142</td>
<td>Bart</td>
<td>@BartJSimpson</td>
<td>dps</td>
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- Eliminates redundancy
- To get back to the original relation: ☀️
Unnecessary decomposition

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- Fine: join returns the original relation
- Unnecessary: no redundancy is removed; schema is more complicated (and *uid* is stored twice!)
Bad decomposition

- Association between gid and fromDate is lost
- Join returns more rows than the original relation
Lossless join decomposition

• Decompose relation $R$ into relations $S$ and $T$
  • $\text{attrs}(R) = \text{attrs}(S) \cup \text{attrs}(T)$
  • $S = \pi_{\text{attrs}(S)}(R)$
  • $T = \pi_{\text{attrs}(T)}(R)$

• The decomposition is a lossless join decomposition if, given known constraints such as FD’s, we can guarantee that $R = S \bowtie T$

• Any decomposition gives $R \subseteq S \bowtie T$ (why?)
  • A lossy decomposition is one with $R \subset S \bowtie T$
Loss? But I got more rows!

• “Loss” refers not to the loss of tuples, but to the loss of information
  • Or, the ability to distinguish different original relations

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No way to tell which is the original relation
Questions about decomposition

• When to decompose

• How to come up with a correct decomposition (i.e., lossless join decomposition)
An answer: BCNF

• A relation $R$ is in **Boyce-Codd Normal Form** if
  • For every non-trivial FD $X \rightarrow Y$ in $R$, $X$ is a super key
  • That is, all FDs follow from “key $\rightarrow$ other attributes”

• When to decompose
  • As long as some relation is not in BCNF

• How to come up with a correct decomposition
  • Always decompose on a BCNF violation (details next)

Then it is guaranteed to be a lossless join decomposition!
BCNF decomposition algorithm

• Find a BCNF violation
  • That is, a non-trivial FD $X \rightarrow Y$ in $R$ where $X$ is not a super
    key of $R$

• Decompose $R$ into $R_1$ and $R_2$, where
  • $R_1$ has attributes $X \cup Y$
  • $R_2$ has attributes $X \cup Z$, where $Z$ contains all attributes
    of $R$ that are in neither $X$ nor $Y$

• Repeat until all relations are in BCNF
BCNF decomposition example

UserJoinsGroup (uid, uname, twitterid, gid, fromDate)

BCNF violation: uid → uname, twitterid

User (uid, uname, twitterid) →
uid → uname, twitterid
twitterid → uid

Member (uid, gid, fromDate) →
uid, gid → fromDate

BCNF
Another example

UserJoinsGroup (uid, uname, twitterid, gid, fromDate)

BCNF violation: twitterid → uid

UserId (twitterid, uid)

BCNF

UserJoinsGroup’ (twitterid, uname, gid, fromDate)

BCNF violation: twitterid → uname
twitterid, gid → fromDate

UserName (twitterid, uname)

BCNF

Member (twitterid, gid, fromDate)

BCNF
Why is BCNF decomposition lossless

Given non-trivial $X \rightarrow Y$ in $R$ where $X$ is not a super key of $R$, need to prove:

• Anything we project always comes back in the join: 
  $$R \subseteq \pi_{XY}(R) \bowtie \pi_{XZ}(R)$$
  • Sure; and it doesn’t depend on the FD

• Check and prove yourself!

• Anything that comes back in the join must be in the original relation:
  $$R \supseteq \pi_{XY}(R) \bowtie \pi_{XZ}(R)$$
  • Proof will make use of the fact that $X \rightarrow Y$
Recap

• Functional dependencies: a generalization of the key concept
• Non-key functional dependencies: a source of redundancy
• BCNF decomposition: a method for removing redundancies
  • BNCF decomposition is a lossless join decomposition
• BCNF: schema in this normal form has no redundancy due to FD’s
Summary

• Philosophy behind BCNF: Data should depend on the key, the whole key, and nothing but the key!
  • You could have multiple keys though

• Other normal forms
  • 4NF and Multi-valued-dependencies: later in the course
  • Not covered
    • 3NF: More relaxed than BCNF; will not remove redundancy if doing so makes FDs harder to enforce
    • 2NF: Slightly more relaxed than 3NF
    • 1NF: All column values must be atomic