Relational Database Design
Part II

CPS 116
Introduction to Database Systems

Announcements (September 6)
❖ Homework #1 due in 1½ weeks
  • Start early!!!
❖ Details of the course project and a list of suggested ideas will be available next Tuesday

Database design steps: review
❖ Understand the real-world domain being modeled
❖ Specify it using a database design model (e.g., E/R)
❖ Translate specification to the data model of DBMS (e.g., relational)
❖ Create DBMS schema
❖ Next: translating E/R design to relational schema
E/R model: review

- Entity sets
  - Keys
  - Weak entity sets

- Relationship sets
  - Attributes on relationships
  - Multiplicity
  - Roles
  - Binary versus N-ary relationships
    - Modeling N-ary relationships with weak entity sets and binary relationships
    - ISA relationships

Translating entity sets

- An entity set translates directly to a table
  - Attributes → columns
  - Key attributes → key columns

Translating weak entity sets

- Remember the “borrowed” key attributes
- Watch out for attribute name conflicts
Translating relationship sets

- A relationship set translates to a table
  - Keys of connected entity sets → columns
  - Attributes of the relationship set (if any) → columns
  - Multiplicity of the relationship set determines the key of the table

![Diagram of relationship set]

More examples

- ![Diagram of more examples]

Translating double diamonds

- Recall that a double-diamond relationship set connects a weak entity set to another entity set
- No need to translate because the relationship is implicit in the weak entity set’s translation

![Diagram of double diamonds]
Translating subclasses & ISA (approach 1)

- Entity-in-all-superclasses approach ("E/R style")
  - An entity is represented in the table for each subclass to which it belongs
  - A table includes only the attributes directly attached to the corresponding entity set, plus the inherited key

```
Students
  name
  office

Enroll
  SID

GradStudents

Courses
  CID
  title

(444, "Apu") ∈ Student (SID, name)
(142, "Bart") ∈ Enroll (SID, CID)
(444, "D444") ∈ GradStudent (SID, office)
```

Translating subclasses & ISA (approach 2)

- Entity-in-most-specific-class approach ("OO style")
  - An entity is only represented in one table (corresponding to the most specific entity set to which the entity belongs)
  - A table includes the attributes attached to the corresponding entity set, plus all inherited attributes

```
Students
  name
  office

Enroll
  SID

GradStudents

Courses
  CID
  title

(444, "Apu") ∈ Student (SID, name)
(142, "Bart") ∈ Enroll (SID, CID)
(444, "D444") ∈ GradStudent (SID, name, office)
```

Translating subclasses & ISA (approach 3)

- All-entities-in-one-table approach ("NULL style")
  - One relation for the root entity set, with all attributes found anywhere in the network of subclasses
  - Use a special NULL value in columns that are not relevant for a particular entity

```
Students
  name
  office

Enroll
  SID

GradStudents

Courses
  CID
  title

(444, "Apu", "D444") ∈ Student (SID, name, office)
(142, "Bart", NULL) ∈ Enroll (SID, CID)
```
Comparison of three approaches

- Entity-in-all-superclasses
  - Student (SID, name), GradStudent (SID, office)
  - Pro:
  - Con:

- Entity-in-most-specific-class
  - Student (SID, name), GradStudent (SID, name, office)
  - Pro:
  - Con:

- All-entities-in-one-table
  - Student (SID, name, office)
  - Pro:
  - Con:

A complete example

Simplifications and refinements
An alternative design

Train (number, engineer, type)
Station (name, address, type)
TrainStop (train_number, station_name, time)

- Encode the type of train/station as a column rather than creating subclasses
- Some constraints are no longer captured
  - Type must be either “local” or “express”
  - Express trains only stop at express stations
- Fortunately, they can be expressed/declared explicitly as database constraints in SQL
- Arguably a better design because it is simpler!

Design principles

- KISS
  - Keep It Simple, Stupid
- Avoid redundancy
  - Redundancy wastes space, complicates updates and deletes, promotes inconsistency
- Capture essential constraints, but don’t introduce unnecessary restrictions
- Use your common sense
  - Warning: mechanical translation procedures given in this lecture are no substitute for your own judgment