Relational Database Design

CPS 216
Advanced Database Systems

Announcements

- DB2 accounts have been set up
  - Let me know if you have not received an email from me regarding your account
- Recitation session this Friday (January 17) on E/R database design and review of relational algebra and design theory
- Office hours
  - Me (D327): Wed. 3:35-4:35pm & Fri. 2:00-3:00pm
  - TA (D328): Tue. & Thu. 12:00-1:00pm

Database (schema) design

- Understand the real-world domain being modeled
- Specify it using a database design model
  - Design models are especially convenient for schema design, but are not necessarily implemented by DBMS
  - Popular ones include
    - Entity/Relationship (E/R) model
    - Object Definition Language (ODL)
- Translate the design to the data model of DBMS
  - Relational, XML, object-oriented, etc.
- Apply database design theory to check the design
- Create DBMS schema
**Entity-relationship (E/R) model**

- Historically very popular
  - Primarily a design model; not implemented by any major DBMS nowadays
- Can think of as a “watered-down” object-oriented design model
- E/R diagrams represent designs

**E/R example**

- Entity: a “thing,” like a record or an object
- Entity set (rectangle): a collection of things of the same type, like a relation of tuples or a class of objects
- Relationship: an association among two or more entities
- Relationship set (diamond): a set of relationships of the same type; an association among two or more entity sets
- Attributes (ovals): properties of entities or relationships, like attributes of tuples or objects

**ODL (Object Definition Language)**

- Standardized by ODMG (Object Data Management Group)
  - Comes with a declarative query language OQL (Object Query Language)
  - Implemented by OODBMS (Object-Oriented DataBase Management Systems)
- Object oriented
- Based on C++ syntax
- Class declarations represent designs
ODL example

```java
class Student {
    attribute integer SID;
    attribute string name;
    relationship Set<Course> enrolledIn inverse Course::students;
};
class Course {
    attribute string CID;
    attribute string title;
    relationship Set<Student> students inverse Student::enrolledIn;
};
```

- Easy to map them to C++ classes
  - ODL attributes correspond to attributes of objects; complex types are allowed
  - ODL relationships can be mapped to pointers to other objects (e.g., `Set<Course>` → set of pointers to objects of `Course` class)

Not covered in this lecture

- E/R and ODL design
- Translating E/R and ODL designs into relational designs
  - Reference book (GMUW) has all the details
  - E/R design and E/R-relational translation will be covered in recitation session this Friday

Next: relational design theory

Relational model: review

- A database is a collection of relations (or tables)
- Each relation has a list of attributes (or columns)
- Each attribute has 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, $K$ is a “tuple identifier”
  - No proper subset of $K$ satisfies the above condition
    - That is, $K$ is minimal
- Example: $Student$ ($SID$, name, age, GPA)
  - $SID$ is a key of $Student$
  - $\{SID, name\}$ is not a key (not minimal)

Schema vs. data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SID</td>
<td>age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>123</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>142</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>123</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>135</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>356</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Is name a key of $Student$?
  - Yes? Seems reasonable for this instance
  - No! Student names are not unique in general
- Key declarations are part of the schema

More examples of keys

- $Enroll$ ($SID$, $CID$)
- $Address$ ($street\_address$, city, state, zip)
- $Course$ ($CID$, title, room, day\_of\_week, begin\_time, end\_time$)

* Not a good design, and we will see why later
Usage of keys

- More constraints on data, fewer mistakes
- Look up a row by its key value
  - Many selection conditions are “key = value”
- “Pointers”
  - Example: Enroll (SID, CID)
    - SID is a key of Student
    - CID is a key of Course
  - An Enroll tuple “links” a Student tuple with a Course tuple
- Many join conditions are “key = key value stored in another table”

Motivation for a design theory

- Why is this design is bad?
  - This design has redundancy, because the name of a student is recorded multiple times, once for each course the student is taking
- Why is redundancy bad?
- How about 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 of $Y$
FD examples

Address (street_address, city, state, zip)

Keys redefined 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 functionally determined by $Z$
- 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 more attributes can be added

A more complex example

$StudentGrade (SID, name, email, CID, grade)$

- Not a good design, and we will see why later

Example of computing closure

- $\mathcal{F}$ includes:
  - $\{ CID, email \}^+ = ?$
Using attribute closure

Given a relation \( R \) and set of FD's \( F \)

\( \diamond \) Does another FD \( X \rightarrow Y \) follow from \( F \)?
  - Compute \( X^+ \) with respect to \( F \)
  - If \( Y \subseteq X^+ \), then \( X \rightarrow Y \) follow from \( F \)

\( \diamond \) Is \( K \) a key of \( R \)?
  - Compute \( K^+ \) with respect to \( F \)
  - If \( K^+ \) contains all the attributes of \( R \), \( K \) is a super key
  - Still need to verify that \( K \) is minimal (how?)

Useful rules of FD's

\( \diamond \) 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 \( X \rightarrow Z \)

\( \diamond \) 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 \( X \rightarrow YZ \)

Non-key FD's

\( \diamond \) 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 \( X \)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>( X )</th>
<th>( Y )</th>
<th>( Z )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The fact that \( a \) is always associated with \( b \) is recorded in multiple rows: redundancy!
Example of redundancy

- StudentGrade (SID, name, email, CID, grade)
- SID → name, email

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SID</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Email</th>
<th>CID</th>
<th>Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>142</td>
<td>Bart</td>
<td><a href="mailto:bart@fox.com">bart@fox.com</a></td>
<td>CPS216</td>
<td>B</td>
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<td>CPS214</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Decomposition

- Eliminates redundancy
- To get back to the original relation:

Unnecessary decomposition

- Fine: join returns the original relation
- Unnecessary: no redundancy is removed, and now SID is stored twice!
Bad decomposition

- Association between CID and grade is lost
- Join returns more rows than the original relation

Questions about decomposition

- When to decompose
- How to come up with a correct 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 → 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
    - Then it is guaranteed to be a correct 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

$StudentGrade (SID, name, email, CID, grade)$
BCNF violation: $SID \rightarrow name, email$

Another example

$StudentGrade (SID, name, email, CID, grade)$
BCNF violation:
## Recap

- Functional dependencies: generalization of keys
- Non-key functional dependencies: a source of redundancy
- BCNF decomposition: a method of removing redundancies due to FD’s
- BCNF: schema in this normal form has no redundancy due to FD’s
  - Not covered in this lecture: many other types of dependencies (e.g., MVD) and normal forms (e.g., 4NF)
    - GMUW has all the details
    - Relational design theory was a big research area in the 1970’s, but there is not much now