Announcements (October 20)

- Homework #3 assigned today; due on Nov. 1
- Project milestone #1 feedbacks available this weekend

XQuery

- XPath + full-fledged SQL-like query language
- XQuery expressions can be
  - XPath expressions
  - FLWR (ﬂ) expressions
  - Quantified expressions
  - Aggregation, sorting, and more…
- An XQuery expression in general can return a new result XML document
  - Compare with an XPath expression, which always returns a sequence of nodes from the input document or atomic values (boolean, number, string, etc.)
A simple XQuery based on XPath

Find all books with price lower than $50

```xml
<result>
  { doc("bib.xml")/bibliography/book[@price<50] }
</result>
```

- Things outside `{}`'s are copied to output verbatim
- Things inside `{}`'s are evaluated and replaced by the results
  - `doc("bib.xml")` specifies the document to query
  - The XPath expression returns a sequence of book elements
  - These elements (including all their descendents) are copied to output

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FLWR expressions

- Retrieve the titles of books published before 2000, together with their publisher

```xml
<result>
  for $b in doc("bib.xml")/bibliography/book
  let $p := $b/publisher
  where $b/year < 2000
  return
  <book>
    { $b/title }<br />
    { $p }
  </book>
</result>
```

- `for`: loop
  - `$b` ranges over the result sequence, getting one item at a time
- `let`: assignment
  - `$p` gets the entire result of `$b/publisher` (possibly many nodes)
- `where`: filter condition
- `return`: result structuring
  - Invoked in the "innermost loop," i.e., once for each successful binding of all query variables that passes where

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An equivalent formulation

- Retrieve the titles of books published before 2000, together with their publisher

```xml
<result>
  for $b in doc("bib.xml")/bibliography/book[year<2000]
  return
  <book>
    { $b/title }<br />
    { $b/publisher }
  </book>
</result>
```
Another formulation

- Retrieve the titles of books published before 2000, together with their publisher

```xml
<result>{
  for $b in doc("bib.xml")/bibliography/book,
  $p in $b/publisher
  where $b/year < 2000
  return
  <book>
    {$b/title }
    {$p }
  </book>
}</result>
```

- Is this query equivalent to the previous two?

Yet another formulation

- Retrieve the titles of books published before 2000, together with their publisher

```xml
<result>
  let $b := doc("bib.xml")/bibliography/book
  where $b/year < 2000
  return
  <book>
    {$b/title }
    {$b/publisher }
  </book>
</result>
```

- Is this query correct?

Subqueries in `return`

- Extract book titles and their authors; make title an attribute and rename author to writer

```xml
<bibliography>{
  for $b in doc("bib.xml")/bibliography/book
  return
  <book title="{normalize-space($b/title)}">{
    for $a in $b/author
    return <writer>{string($a)}</writer>
  }</book>
}</bibliography>
```

- `normalize-space(string)` removes leading and trailing spaces from string, and replaces all internal sequences of white spaces with one white space
An explicit join

- Find pairs of books that have common author(s)

```xml
<result>
  for $b1 in doc("bib.xml")//book
  for $b2 in doc("bib.xml")//book
  where $b1/author = $b2/author
  return
  <pair>
    {$b1/title}
    {$b2/title}
  </pair>
</result>
```

Existentially quantified expressions

(some $var in collection satisfies condition)

- Can be used in where as a condition

- Find titles of books in which XML is mentioned in some section

```xml
<result>
  for $b in doc("bib.xml")//book
  where (some $section in $b//section satisfies contains(string($section), "XML"))
  return $b/title
</result>
```

Universally quantified expressions

(every $var in collection satisfies condition)

- Can be used in where as a condition

- Find titles of books in which XML is mentioned in every section

```xml
<result>
  for $b in doc("bib.xml")//book
  where (every $section in $b//section satisfies contains(string($section), "XML"))
  return $b/title
</result>
```
Aggregation

- List each publisher and the average prices of all its books

```xml
<result>
  for $pub in distinct-values(doc("bib.xml")//publisher)
  let $price :=
    avg(doc("bib.xml")//book[publisher=$pub]/@price)
  return
    <publisherpricing>
      <publisher>{$pub}</publisher>
      <avgprice>{$price}</avgprice>
    </publisherpricing>
</result>
```

- `distinct-values(collection)` removes duplicates by value
  - If the collection consists of elements (with no explicitly declared types), they are first converted to strings representing their 'normalized contents'
  - `avg(collection)` computes the average of `collection` (assuming each item in `collection` can be converted to a numeric value)

Sorting (a brief history)

- XPath always returns a sequence of nodes in original document order
- `for` loop will respect the ordering in the sequence
- August 2002
  - Introduce an operator `sort by (sort-by-expression-list)` to output results in a user-specified order
  - Example: list all books with price higher than $100, in order by first author, for books with the same first author, order by title

```xml
<result>
  doc("bib.xml")//book[@price>100]
  sort by (author[1], title)
</result>
```

- Tricky semantics

- List titles of all books, sorted by their prices

```xml
<result>
  for $b in doc("bib.xml")//book sort by (@price))
  return $b/title
</result>
```

- What is wrong?
  - A path expression always returns a sequence of nodes in document order!
- Correct versions

```xml
<result>
  for $b in doc("bib.xml")//book sort by (@price)
  return $b/title
</result>
```

- `doc("bib.xml")//book/title sort by (../@price)`
Current version of sorting

As of March 2005

- **sort by** has been ditched
- Add a new **order by** clause in FLWR (which now becomes FLWOR)
- Example: list all books with price higher than $100, in order by first author; for books with the same first author, order by title

```xml
<result>
  for $b in doc("bib.xml")//book[@price>100]
  stable order by $b/author[1], $b/title empty least
  return $b
</result>
```

Summary

- Many, many more features not covered in class
- XPath is fairly mature and stable
  - 1.0 is already a W3C recommendation
    - Implemented in many systems
    - Used in many other standards
  - 2.0 is being developed jointly with XQuery
- XQuery is still evolving
  - Still a W3C working draft
  - Some vendors are coming out with implementations
  - To become the SQL for XML?
  - XQuery versus SQL
    - Where did the join go?
    - Strong ordering constraints (can be overridden by unordered { for ... })