Relational Database Design Theory

Introduction to Databases

CompSci 316 Spring 2020

DUKE
COMPUTER SCIENCE

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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

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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

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Motivation

uid	*uname*	*gid*
142	Bart	dps
123	Milhouse	gov
857	Lisa	abc
857	Lisa	gov
456	Ralph	abc
456	Ralph	gov
…	…	…

- Why is *UserGroup* (*uid*, *uname*, *gid*) a bad design?
- Wouldn't it be nice to have a systematic approach to detecting and removing redundancy in designs?
  - Dependencies, decompositions, and normal forms

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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

X	Y	Z
a	b	c
a	b	?
…	…	…

Must be b

Could be anything

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FD examples

Address (*street_address*, *city*, *state*, *zip*)

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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

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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?

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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, $Z \rightarrow A_1 A_2 \ldots$)
- 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

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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

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Example of computing closure

$\mathcal{F}$ includes:
uid → uname, twitterid
twitterid → uid
uid, gid → fromDate

- $\{gid, twitterid\}^+$ = ?
- *twitterid → uid*
  - Add *uid*
  - Closure grows to { *gid, twitterid, uid* }
- *uid → uname, twitterid*
  - Add *uname*, *twitterid*
  - Closure grows to { *gid, twitterid, uid, uname* }
- *uid, gid → fromDate*
  - Add *fromDate*
  - Closure is now all attributes in *UserJoinsGroup*

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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?)

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Rules of FD's

All intuitive but check yourself!

- 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

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(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

X	Y	Z
a	b	c_1
a	b	c_2
…	…	…

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

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Example of redundancy

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

- *uid* → *uname, twitterid*

(… plus other FD's)

uid	*uname*	*twitterid*	*gid*	*fromDate*
142	Bart	@BartJSimpson	dps	1987-04-19
123	Milhouse	@MilhouseVan_	gov	1989-12-17
857	Lisa	@lisasimpson	abc	1987-04-19
857	Lisa	@lisasimpson	gov	1988-09-01
456	Ralph	@ralphwiggum	abc	1991-04-25
456	Ralph	@ralphwiggum	gov	1992-09-01
…	…	…	…	…

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Decomposition

uid	*uname*	*twitterid*	*gid*	*fromDate*
142	Bart	@BartJSimpson	dps	1987-04-19
123	Milhouse	@MilhouseVan_	gov	1989-12-17
857	Lisa	@lisasimpson	abc	1987-04-19
857	Lisa	@lisasimpson	gov	1988-09-01
456	Ralph	@ralphwiggum	abc	1991-04-25
456	Ralph	@ralphwiggum	gov	1992-09-01
…	…	…	…	…

uid	*uname*	*twitterid*
142	Bart	@BartJSimpson
123	Milhouse	@MilhouseVan_
857	Lisa	@lisasimpson
456	Ralph	@ralphwiggum
…	…	…

uid	*gid*	*fromDate*
142	dps	1987-04-19
123	gov	1989-12-17
857	abc	1987-04-19
857	gov	1988-09-01
456	abc	1991-04-25
456	gov	1992-09-01
…	…	…

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

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Unnecessary decomposition

uid	*uname*	*twitterid*
142	Bart	@BartJSimpson
123	Milhouse	@MilhouseVan_
857	Lisa	@lisasimpson
456	Ralph	@ralphwiggum
…	…	…

uid	*uname*
142	Bart
123	Milhouse
857	Lisa
456	Ralph
…	…

uid	*twitterid*
142	@BartJSimpson
123	@MilhouseVan_
857	@lisasimpson
456	@ralphwiggum
…	…

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

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Bad decomposition

uid	*gid*	*fromDate*
142	dps	1987-04-19
123	gov	1989-12-17
857	abc	1987-04-19
857	gov	1988-09-01
456	abc	1991-04-25
456	gov	1992-09-01
…	…	…

uid	*gid*
142	dps
123	gov
857	abc
857	gov
456	abc
456	gov
…	…

uid	*fromDate*
142	1987-04-19
123	1989-12-17
857	1987-04-19
857	1988-09-01
456	1991-04-25
456	1992-09-01
…	…

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

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Lossless join decomposition

Example on board
Check definition yourself

- Decompose relation R into relations S and T
  - $attrs(R) = attrs(S) \cup attrs(T)$
  - $S = \pi_{attrs(S)}(R)$
  - $T = \pi_{attrs(T)}(R)$
- 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 $R \subset S \bowtie T$

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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

uid	gid	fromDate
142	dps	1987-04-19
123	gov	1989-12-17
857	abc	1988-09-01
857	gov	1987-04-19
456	abc	1991-04-25
456	gov	1992-09-01
...	...	...

No way to tell
which is the original relation

uid	gid
142	dps
123	gov
857	abc
857	gov
456	abc
456	gov
...	...

uid	fromDate
142	1987-04-19
123	1989-12-17
857	1987-04-19
857	1988-09-01
456	1991-04-25
456	1992-09-01
...	...

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Questions about decomposition

- When to decompose
- How to come up with a correct decomposition (i.e., lossless join decomposition)

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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 (details next)
  - ☞Then it is guaranteed to be a lossless join decomposition!

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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

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BCNF decomposition example

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

UserJoinsGroup (*uid*, *uname*, *twitterid*, *gid*, *fromDate*)
BCNF violation: *uid* → *uname*, *twitterid*

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

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

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Another example

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

UserJoinsGroup (*uid, uname, twitterid, gid, fromDate*)
BCNF violation: *twitterid → uid*

UserId (*twitterid, uid*)
BCNF

UserJoinsGroup' (*twitterid, uname, gid, fromDate*)

twitterid → uname
twitterid, gid → fromDate

BCNF violation: *twitterid → uname*

UserName (*twitterid, uname*)
BCNF

Member (*twitterid, gid, fromDate*)
BCNF

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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 $X \rightarrow Y$

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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

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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

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