Introduction to Database Systems

Chapter 1

Instructor: Wang-Chien Lee
wlee@wpi.edu or wlee@ieee.org
What Is a DBMS?

- A database is a very large, integrated collection of data.
- Models real-world enterprise.
  - Entities (e.g., students, courses)
  - Relationships (e.g., John is taking CS542)
- A Database Management System (DBMS) is a software package designed to store and manage databases.
Why Use a DBMS?

- Data independence and efficient access.
- Reduced application development time.
- Data integrity and security.
- Uniform data administration.
- Concurrent access, recovery from crashes.
Why Study Databases??

- Shift from **computation** to **information**
  - at the “low end”: scramble to webspace (a mess!)
  - at the “high end”: scientific applications
- Datasets increasing in diversity and volume.
  - Digital libraries, interactive video, Human Genome project, EOS project
  - ... need for DBMS exploding
- DBMS encompasses most of CS
  - OS, languages, theory, “AI, multimedia, logic
Data Models

- A data model is a collection of concepts for describing data.
- A schema is a description of a particular collection of data, using the a given data model.
- The relational model of data is the most widely used model today.
  - Main concept: relation, basically a table with rows and columns.
  - Every relation has a schema, which describes the columns, or fields.
Levels of Abstraction

- Many views, single conceptual (logical) schema and physical schema.
  - Views describe how users see the data.
  - Conceptual schema defines logical structure
  - Physical schema describes the files and indexes used.

* Schemas are defined using DDL; data is modified/queried using DML.
Example: University Database

- **Conceptual schema:**
  - `Students(sid: string, name: string, login: string, age: integer, gpa: real)`
  - `Courses(cid: string, cname: string, credits: integer)`
  - `Enrolled(sid: string, cid: string, grade: string)`

- **Physical schema:**
  - Relations stored as unordered files.
  - Index on first column of Students.

- **External Schema (View):**
  - `Course_info(cid: string, enrollment: integer)`
Data Independence

- Applications insulated from how data is structured and stored.
- **Logical data independence**: Protection from changes in logical structure of data.
- **Physical data independence**: Protection from changes in physical structure of data.

*One of the most important benefits of using a DBMS!*
Concurrency Control

- Concurrent execution of user programs is essential for good DBMS performance.
  - Because disk accesses are frequent, and relatively slow, it is important to keep the CPU humming by working on several user programs concurrently.

- Interleaving actions of different user programs can lead to inconsistency: e.g., check is cleared while account balance is being computed.

- DBMS ensures such problems don’t arise: users can pretend they are using a single-user system.
Transaction: An Execution of a DB Program

- Key concept is **transaction**, which is an **atomic** sequence of database actions (reads/writes).
- Each transaction, executed completely, must leave the DB in a **consistent state** if DB is consistent when the transaction begins.
  - Users can specify some simple **integrity constraints** on the data, and the DBMS will enforce these constraints.
  - Beyond this, the DBMS does not really understand the semantics of the data. (e.g., it does not understand how the interest on a bank account is computed).
  - Thus, ensuring that a transaction (run alone) preserves consistency is ultimately the **user's** responsibility!
Scheduling Concurrent Transactions

- DBMS ensures that execution of \{T1, ..., Tn\} is equivalent to some \textit{serial} execution \(T1' \ldots Tn'\).
  - Before reading/writing an object, a transaction requests a lock on the object, and waits till the DBMS gives it the lock. All locks are released at the end of the transaction. (Strict 2PL locking protocol.)
  - Idea: If an action of Ti (say, writing X) affects Tj (which perhaps reads X), one of them, say Ti, will obtain the lock on X first and Tj is forced to wait until Ti completes; this effectively orders the transactions.
  - What if Tj already has a lock on Y and Ti later requests a lock on Y? (Deadlock!) Ti or Tj is \textit{aborted} and restarted!
Ensuring Atomicity

- DBMS ensures *atomicity* (all-or-nothing property) even if system crashes in the middle of a Xact.
- **Idea:** Keep a *log* (history) of all actions carried out by the DBMS while executing a set of Xacts:
  - **Before** a change is made to the database, the corresponding log entry is forced to a safe location. (*WAL protocol*; OS support for this is often inadequate.)
  - **After** a crash, the effects of partially executed transactions are *undone* using the log. (Thanks to WAL, if log entry wasn’t saved before the crash, corresponding change was not applied to database!)
The Log

- The following actions are recorded in the log:
  - *Ti writes an object:* the old value and the new value.
    - Log record must go to disk *before* the changed page!
  - *Ti commits/aborts:* a log record indicating this action.

- Log records chained together by Xact id, so it’s easy to undo a specific Xact (e.g., to resolve a deadlock).

- Log is often *duplexed* and *archived* on “stable” storage.

- All log related activities (and in fact, all CC related activities such as lock/unlock, dealing with deadlocks etc.) are handled transparently by the DBMS.
Databases make these folks happy ...

- End users and DBMS vendors
- DB application programmers
  - E.g. smart webmasters
- **Database administrator (DBA)**
  - Designs logical /physical schemas
  - Handles security and authorization
  - Data availability, crash recovery
  - Database tuning as needs evolve

*Must understand how a DBMS works!*
A typical DBMS has a layered architecture.

The figure does not show the concurrency control and recovery components.

This is one of several possible architectures; each system has its own variations.
Summary

- DBMS used to maintain, query large datasets.
- Benefits include recovery from system crashes, concurrent access, quick application development, data integrity and security.
- Levels of abstraction give data independence.
- A DBMS typically has a layered architecture.
- DBAs hold responsible jobs and are well-paid!
- DBMS R&D is one of the broadest, most exciting areas in CS.