Lecture 14:
Transactions in SQL

Friday, April 27, 2007
Outline

• Transactions in SQL
Transactions

• Major component of database systems
• Critical for most applications; arguably more so than SQL

• Turing awards to database researchers:
  – Charles Bachman 1973
  – Edgar Codd 1981 for inventing relational dbs
  – Jim Gray 1998 for inventing transactions
Why Do We Need Transactions

• Concurrency control

• Recovery

In the following examples, think of a transaction as meaning a procedure. A transaction commits when it ends successfully. A transaction rolls back when it aborts.
Concurrency control:
Three Famous anomalies

• Dirty read
  – T reads data written by T’ while T’ has not committed
  – What can go wrong: T’ write more data (which T has already read), or T’ aborts

• Lost update
  – Two tasks T and T’ both modify the same data
  – T and T’ both commit
  – Final state shows effects of only T, but not of T’

• Inconsistent read
  – One task T sees some but not all changes made by T’
Dirty Reads

Client 1:
/* transfer $100 from account 1 to account 2 */

If Account1.balance > 100
then Account1.balance = Account1.balance - 100
Account2.balance = Account2.balance + 100
COMMIT
else ROLLBACK

Client 2:
/* Compute total amount */

X = Account1.balance;
Y = Account2.balance;
Z = X + Y;
Print(Z);
COMMIT

What goes wrong?
Dirty Reads

Client 1:
/* transfer $100 from account 1 to account 2 */
/* tentatively move money into account 2 */
Account2.balance = Account2.balance + 100
If Account1.balance > 100
then Account1.balance = Account1.balance - 100
COMMIT
else /* oops: remove $100 from Account 2 */
Account2.balance = Account2.balance - 100
ROLLBACK

Client 2:
/* withdraw $100 */
If Account2.balance > 100
then Account2.balance = Account2.balance - 100;
DISPENSE MONEY
COMMIT
else ROLLBACK

What goes wrong?

Not needed
(done by ROLLBACK)
Lost Updates

Two different users attempt to apply a discount.
Will it work?
Inconsistent Read

Client 1:

**UPDATE** Products
**SET** quantity = quantity + 5
**WHERE** product = ‘gizmo’

**UPDATE** Products
**SET** quantity = quantity - 5
**WHERE** product = ‘gadget’

Client 2:

**SELECT** sum(quantity)
**FROM** Product

Note: this is a form of *dirty read*
Protection against crashes

Client 1:

```
UPDATE Products
SET quantity = quantity + 5
WHERE product = 'gizmo'

UPDATE Products
SET quantity = quantity - 5
WHERE product = 'gadget'
```

What’s wrong ?

Crash !
Definition

• **A transaction** = one or more operations, which reflects a single real-world transition
  – In the real world, this happened completely or not at all

• Examples
  – Transfer money between accounts
  – Purchase a group of products
  – Register for a class (either waitlist or allocated)

• If grouped in transactions, all problems in previous slides disappear
Transactions in SQL

• In “ad-hoc” SQL:
  – Default: each statement = one transaction

• In a program:
  START TRANSACTION
  [SQL statements]
  COMMIT or ROLLBACK (=ABORT)

May be omitted: first SQL query starts txn
Revised Code

Client 1: START TRANSACTION  
UPDATE Product  
SET Price = Price – 1.99  
WHERE pname = ‘Gizmo’  
COMMIT

Client 2: START TRANSACTION  
UPDATE Product  
SET Price = Price*0.5  
WHERE pname=‘Gizmo’  
COMMIT

Now it works like a charm
Transaction Properties

ACID

• Atomic
  – State shows either all the effects of txn, or none of them

• Consistent
  – Txn moves from a state where integrity holds, to another where integrity holds

• Isolated
  – Effect of txns is the same as txns running one after another (ie looks like batch mode)

• Durable
  – Once a txn has committed, its effects remain in the database
ACID: Atomicity

• Two possible outcomes for a transaction
  – It *commits*: all the changes are made
  – It *aborts*: no changes are made

• That is, transaction’s activities are all or nothing
ACID: Consistency

• The state of the tables is restricted by integrity constraints
  – Account number is unique
  – Stock amount can’t be negative
  – Sum of *debits* and of *credits* is 0

• Constraints may be explicit or implicit

• How consistency is achieved:
  – Programmer makes sure a txn takes a consistent state to a consistent state
  – The system makes sure that the tnx is atomic
ACID: Isolation

• A transaction executes concurrently with other transaction

• Isolation: the effect is as if each transaction executes in isolation of the others
ACID: Durability

• The effect of a transaction must continue to exist after the transaction, or the whole program has terminated

• Means: write data to disk
ROLLBACK

• If the app gets to a place where it can’t complete the transaction successfully, it can execute ROLLBACK

• This causes the system to “abort” the transaction
  – The database returns to the state without any of the previous changes made by activity of the transaction
Reasons for Rollback

• User changes their mind ("ctl-C"/cancel)
• Explicit in program, when app program finds a problem
  – e.g. when qty on hand < qty being sold
• System-initiated abort
  – System crash
  – Housekeeping
    • e.g. due to timeouts
READ-ONLY Transactions

Client 1:  
START TRANSACTION  
INSERT INTO SmallProduct(name, price)  
    SELECT pname, price  
    FROM Product  
    WHERE price <= 0.99
  
DELETE Product  
    WHERE price <=0.99
  
COMMIT

Client 2:  
SET TRANSACTION READ ONLY  
START TRANSACTION  
SELECT count(*)  
FROM Product
  
SELECT count(*)  
FROM SmallProduct
  
COMMIT

Makes it faster
Isolation Levels in SQL

1. “Dirty reads”
   SET TRANSACTION ISOLATION LEVEL READ UNCOMMITTED

2. “Committed reads”
   SET TRANSACTION ISOLATION LEVEL READ COMMITTED

3. “Repeatable reads”
   SET TRANSACTION ISOLATION LEVEL REPEATABLE READ

4. Serializable transactions (default):
   SET TRANSACTION ISOLATION LEVEL SERIALIZABLE
Isolation Level: Dirty Reads

Plane seat allocation

function AllocateSeat( %request)
  SET ISOLATION LEVEL READ UNCOMMITTED
  START TRANSACTION
  Let x = SELECT Seat.occupied
          FROM Seat
          WHERE Seat.number = %request
  If (x == 1)  /* occupied */   ROLLBACK
  UPDATE Seat SET occupied = 1 WHERE Seat.number = %request
  COMMIT

What can go wrong?

What can go wrong if only the function AllocateSeat modifies Seat?
function TransferMoney( %amount, %acc1, %acc2)

START TRANSACTION

Let x = SELECT Account.balance FROM Account WHERE Account.number = %acc1

If (x < %amount)  ROLLBACK

UPDATE Account SET balance = balance+%amount WHERE Account.number = %acc2
UPDATE Account SET balance = balance-%amount WHERE Account.number = %acc1

COMMIT

Are dirty reads OK here?

What if we switch the two updates?
Isolation Level: Read Committed

Stronger than READ UNCOMMITTED

It is possible to read twice, and get different values

```
SET ISOLATION LEVEL READ COMMITED

Let x = SELECT Seat.occupied
       FROM Seat
       WHERE Seat.number = %request

/* . . . . . More stuff here . . . . */

Let y = SELECT Seat.occupied
       FROM Seat
       WHERE Seat.number = %request

/* we may have x ≠ y ! */
```
Isolation Level: Repeatable Read

Stronger than READ COMMITTED

May see incompatible values:

another txn transfers from acc. 55555 to 77777

```
SET ISOLATION LEVEL REPEATABLE READ

Let x = SELECT Account.amount
       FROM Account
       WHERE Account.number = '55555'

/* . . . . . More stuff here . . . . */

Let y = SELECT Account.amount
       FROM Account
       WHERE Account.number = '77777'

/* we may have a wrong x+y  ! */
```
Isolation Level: Serializable

Strongest level

Default

SET ISOLATION LEVEL SERIALIZABLE

WILL STUDY IN DETAILS IN A WEEK
The Mechanics of Disk

Mechanical characteristics:
- Rotation speed (5400 RPM)
- Number of platters (1-30)
- Number of tracks (<=10000)
- Number of bytes/track($10^5$)

Unit of read or write: **disk block**
Once in memory: **page**
Typically: 4k or 8k or 16k
Disk Access Characteristics

- **Disk latency** = time between when command is issued and when data is in memory
  
- Disk latency = seek time + rotational latency
  - Seek time = time for the head to reach cylinder  
  - Rotation time = 10ms
  - Average latency = 10ms/2

- Transfer time = typically 40MB/s
- Disks read/write one block at a time
RAID

Several disks that work in parallel
- Redundancy: use parity to recover from disk failure
- Speed: read from several disks at once

Various configurations (called *levels*):
- RAID 1 = mirror
- RAID 4 = n disks + 1 parity disk
- RAID 5 = n+1 disks, assign parity blocks round robin
- RAID 6 = “Hamming codes”
Buffer Management in a DBMS

Page Requests from Higher Levels

- Data must be in RAM for DBMS to operate on it!
- Table of <frame#, pageid> pairs is maintained
Buffer Manager

Needs to decide on page replacement policy

- LRU
- Clock algorithm

Both work well in OS, but not always in DB

Enables the higher levels of the DBMS to assume that the needed data is in main memory.
Least Recently Used (LRU)

- Order pages by the time of last accessed
- Always replace the least recently accessed

P5, P2, P8, P4, P1, P9, P6, P3, P7

Access P6

P6, P5, P2, P8, P4, P1, P9, P3, P7

LRU is expensive (why ?); the clock algorithm is good approx\textsuperscript{33}
Buffer Manager

Why not use the Operating System for the task??

Main reason: need fine grained control for transactions

Other reasons:
- DBMS may be able to anticipate access patterns
- Hence, may also be able to perform prefetching
- DBMS needs the ability to force pages to disk, for recovery purposes
Transaction Management and the Buffer Manager

The transaction manager operates on the buffer pool

- **Recovery**: ‘log-file write-ahead’, then careful policy about which pages to force to disk

- **Concurrency control**: locks at the page level, multiversion concurrency control

Will discuss details during the next few lectures