Introduction to Database Systems
CSE 444

Lecture 8: Transactions in SQL
Where We Are

• What we have already learned
  – Relational model of data
  – Data manipulation language: SQL
  – Views and constraints
  – Database design (E/R diagrams & normalization)

• But what if I want to update my data?
• Today: transactions in SQL (Sec. 6.6)
  – Old edition: Sec. 8.6
Transactions

• **Problem:** An application must perform *several* writes and reads to the database, as a unit

• **Solution:** multiple actions of the application are bundled into one unit called *Transaction*

• Very powerful concept
  – *Database transactions* (that’s where they started)
  – *Transaction monitors*
  – *Transactional memory*
Turing Awards to Database Researchers

• Charles Bachman 1973 for CODASYL
• Edgar Codd 1981 for relational databases
• Jim Gray 1998 for transactions
The World Without Transactions

• Just write applications that talk to databases

• Rely on operating systems for scheduling, and for concurrency control

• What can go wrong?
  – Several famous anomalies
  – Other anomalies are possible (but not famous)
Lost Updates

Client 1:

UPDATE Customer
SET rentals = rentals + 1
WHERE cname = ‘Fred’

Client 2:

UPDATE Customer
SET rentals = rentals + 1
WHERE cname = ‘Fred’

Two people attempt to rent two movies for Fred, from two different terminals. What happens?
Unrepeatable Read

Client 1: rent-a-movie
\[ x = \text{SELECT rentals FROM Cust WHERE } \text{cname} = 'Fred' \]

\textbf{if} \ (x < 5) \\
{ \{ \text{UPDATE Cust} \\
\quad \text{SET rentals} = \text{rentals} + 1 \\
\quad \text{WHERE } \text{cname} = 'Fred' \} \\
\textbf{else} \text{println("Denied !")} \\

What's wrong?

Client 2: rent-a-movie
\[ x = \text{SELECT rentals FROM Cust WHERE } \text{cname} = 'Fred' \]

\textbf{if} \ (x < 5) \\
{ \{ \text{UPDATE Cust} \\
\quad \text{SET rentals} = \text{rentals} + 1 \\
\quad \text{WHERE } \text{cname} = 'Fred' \} \\
\textbf{else} \text{println("Denied !")} \\

Magda Balazinska - CSE 444, Fall 2010
Inconsistent Read

Client 1: move from gizmo→gadget

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

Client 2: inventory….

```
SELECT sum(quantity)
FROM Product
```

What’s wrong?
Inconsistent Read

Client 1: rent-two-movies
x = SELECT rentals FROM Cust
   WHERE cname= ‘Fred’

if (x < 4) { /* movie 1…*/
    UPDATE Cust
    SET rentals= rentals + 1
    WHERE cname= ‘Fred’

    /* ….and movie 2 */
    UPDATE Cust
    SET rentals= rentals + 1
    WHERE cname= ‘Fred’
}
else println(“Denied !”)

Client 2: rent-a-movie
x = SELECT rentals FROM Cust
   WHERE cname= ‘Fred’

if (x < 5)
   { UPDATE Cust
     SET rentals= rentals + 1
     WHERE cname= ‘Fred’ }
else println(“Denied !”)

What’s wrong ?
Dirty Reads

Client 1: transfer $100 acc1 → acc2
X = Account1.balance
Account2.balance += 100

If (X>=100) Account1.balance -=100
else { /* rollback ! */
    account2.balance -= 100
    println("Denied !")
}

Client 1: transfer $100 acc2 → acc3
Y = Account2.balance
Account3.balance += 100

If (Y>=100) Account2.balance -=100
else { /* rollback ! */
    account3.balance -= 100
    println("Denied !")
}

What’s wrong ?
Some Famous anomalies

- **Dirty read (Write-Read conflict)**
  - T reads data written by T’ while T’ has not committed
  - What can go wrong: T’ writes more data (which T has already read) or T’ aborts
  - Inconsistent read: T sees some but not all changes made by T’

- **Unrepeatable read (Read-Write conflict)**
  - T reads the same value twice and gets two different results

- **Lost update (Write-Write conflict)**
  - 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’
Protection against crashes

Client 1:

UPDATE Accounts
SET balance = balance - 500
WHERE name = 'Fred'

UPDATE Accounts
SET balance = balance + 500
WHERE name = 'Joe'

Crash!

What’s wrong?
Enter Transactions

- Concurrency control
  - The famous anomalies and more…

- Recovery
Definition

• **A transaction** = one or more operations, which reflect a single real-world transition
  – Happens completely or not at all

• Examples
  – Transfer money between accounts
  – Rent a movie; return a rented movie
  – Purchase a group of products
  – Register for a class (either waitlisted or allocated)

• By using transactions, all previous problems disappear
Transactions in Applications

START TRANSACTION

[SQL statements]

COMMIT or ROLLBACK (=ABORT)

May be omitted: first SQL query starts txn
Transactions in Ad-hoc SQL

• Default: each statement = one transaction
Revised Code

Client 1: rent-a-movie
START TRANSACTION
x = SELECT rentals 
    FROM Cust
    WHERE cname = 'Fred'

if (x < 5)
    { UPDATE Cust
        SET rentals = rentals + 1
        WHERE cname = 'Fred'
    }
else println("Denied !")
COMMIT

Client 2: rent-a-movie
START TRANSACTION
x = SELECT rentals 
    FROM Cust
    WHERE cname = 'Fred'

if (x < 5)
    { UPDATE Cust
        SET rentals = rentals + 1
        WHERE cname = 'Fred'
    }
else println("Denied !")
COMMIT

Now it works like a charm
Revised Code

Client 1: transfer $100 acc1 → acc2
START TRANSACTION
X = Account1.balance; Account2.balance += 100
If (X>=100) { Account1.balance -=100; COMMIT } else {println(“Denied !”; ROLLBACK)}

Client 1: transfer $100 acc2 → acc3
START TRANSACTION
X = Account2.balance; Account3.balance += 100
If (X>=100) { Account2.balance -=100; COMMIT } else {println(“Denied !”; ROLLBACK)}
Using Transactions

Very easy to use:

• START TRANSACTION
• COMMIT
• ROLLBACK

But what EXACTLY do they mean?

• Popular culture: ACID
• Underlying theory: serializability
Transaction Properties
ACID

- **Atomic**
  - State shows either all the effects oftxn, 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 txn 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 the # of rented movies > max # allowed
  – Use it freely in Project 2 !!
• System-initiated abort
  – System crash
  – Housekeeping, e.g. due to timeouts