Chapter 17: Transactions

Sistemas de Bases de Dados 2019/20

Capítulo refere-se a: Database System Concepts, 7th Ed

Outline

- Transaction Concept
- Transaction State
- Concurrent Executions
- Serializability
- Recoverability
- Implementation of Isolation
- Transaction Definition in SQL
- Testing for Serializability.

Transaction Concept

- A **transaction** is a *unit* of program execution that accesses and possibly updates various data items.
- E.g., transaction to transfer €50 from account A to account B:
  1. **read**(A)
  2. $A := A - 50$
  3. **write**(A)
  4. **read**(B)
  5. $B := B + 50$
  6. **write**(B)
- Two main issues to deal with:
  - Failures of various kinds, such as hardware failures and system crashes
  - Concurrent execution of multiple transactions

Transaction Properties

- Transaction to transfer €50 from account A to account B:
  1. **read**(*A*)
  2. $A := A - 50$
  3. **write**(*A*)
  4. **read**(*B*)
  5. $B := B + 50$
  6. **write**(*B*)
- **Atomicity requirement**
  - If the transaction fails after step 3 and before step 6, money will be "lost" leading to an inconsistent database state
    - Failure could be due to software or hardware
  - The system should ensure that updates of a partially executed transaction are not reflected in the database – **all or nothing execution**
- **Durability requirement** — once the user has been notified that the transaction has completed (i.e., the transfer of the €50 has taken place), the updates to the database by the transaction must persist even if there are software or hardware failures.

Transaction Properties (Cont.)

- Transaction to transfer €50 from account A to account B:
  1. **read**(A)
  2. $A := A - 50$
  3. **write**(A)
  4. **read**(B)
  5. $B := B + 50$
  6. **write**(B)
- **Consistency requirement** in the example: The sum of A and B is unchanged by the execution of the transaction
- In general, consistency requirements include
  - Explicitly specified integrity constraints such as primary keys and foreign keys
  - Implicit integrity constraints
    - e.g., sum of balances of all accounts, minus sum of loan amounts must equal value of cash-in-hand
  - A transaction must see a consistent database.
  - During transaction execution the database may be temporarily inconsistent.
  - **When the transaction completes successfully the database must be consistent**

Transaction Properties (Cont.)

T1	T2
1. **read**(*A*)	
2. $A := A - 50$	
3. **write**(*A*)	
	read(*A*), **read**(*B*), **print**(*A+B*)
4. **read**(*B*)	
5. $B := B + 50$	
6. **write**(*B*)	

- If between steps 3 and 6, another transaction T2 can access the partially updated database, it will see an inconsistent database (the sum $A + B$ will be less than it should be).
- **Isolation requirement** — If concurrent transactions are allowed, each transaction must execute as if it were executing alone
  - Intermediate results of a transaction must be hidden from other concurrent ones
- Isolation can be ensured trivially by running transactions **serially** (i.e. one after the other)
- However, executing multiple transactions concurrently has significant benefits.

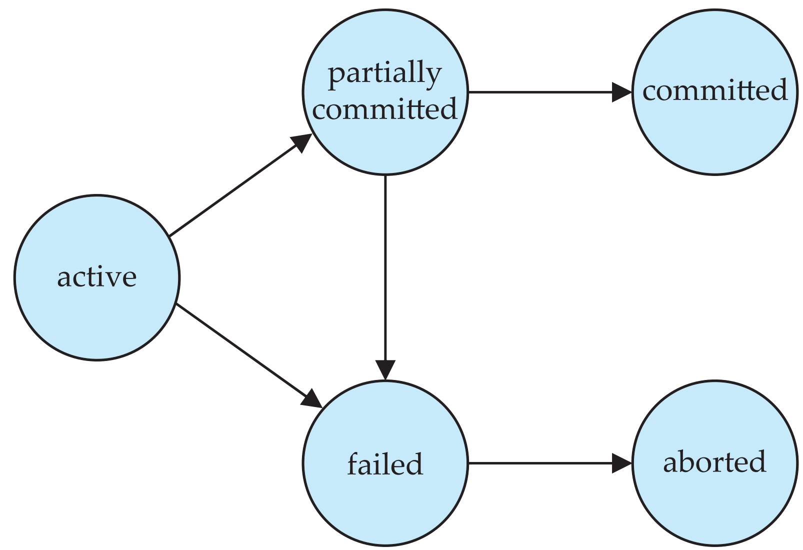
ACID Properties - Summary

A **transaction** is a unit of program execution that accesses and possibly updates various data items. To preserve the integrity of data the database system must ensure:

- **Atomicity.** Either all operations of the transaction are properly reflected in the database or none are.
- **Consistency.** Execution of a transaction preserves the consistency of the database in the end.
- **Isolation.** Although multiple transactions may execute concurrently, each transaction must be unaware of other concurrently executing transactions. Intermediate transaction results must be hidden from other concurrently executed transactions.
  - That is, for every pair of transactions T_i and T_j, it appears to T_i that either T_j, finished execution before T_i started, or T_j started execution after T_i finished.
- **Durability.** After a transaction completes successfully, the changes it has made to the database persist, even if there are system failures.

Transaction States

- **Active** – the initial state; the transaction stays in this state while it is executing
- **Partially committed** – after the final statement has been executed.
- **Failed --** after the discovery that normal execution can no longer proceed.
- **Aborted** – after the transaction has been rolled back and the database restored to its state prior to the start of the transaction. Two options after it has been aborted:
  - Restart the transaction
    - Can be done only if no internal logical error
  - Kill the transaction
- **Committed** – after successful completion.



- To guarantee atomicity, external observable actions should all be performed (in order) after the transaction is committed.

Non-ACID transactions

- There are application domains where ACID properties are not necessarily desired or, most likely, not always possible.
- This is the case of so-called **long-duration transactions**
  - Suppose that a transaction takes a lot of time
  - In this case it is unlikely that isolation can/should be guaranteed
    - E.g. Consider a transaction of booking a hotel and a flight
- Without Isolation, Atomicity may be compromised
- Consistency and Durability should be preserved
- A usual solution for long-duration transactions is to define **compensation actions** – what to do if later the transaction fails
- In (centralised) databases long-duration transactions are usually not considered.
- But these are more and more important, especially in the context of the Web.

Concurrent Executions

- Multiple transactions can run concurrently in the system. Advantages are:
  - **Increased processor and disk utilization**, leading to better transaction *throughput*
    - E.g., one transaction can be using the CPU while another is reading from or writing to the disk
  - **Reduced average response time** for transactions: short transactions need not wait behind long ones.
- **Concurrency control schemes** – mechanisms to achieve isolation
  - That is, to control the interaction among the concurrent transactions in order to prevent them from destroying the consistency of the database
    - We'll study that next week,

- Before seeing how to implement correct concurrent transaction, let's define the notion of correctness of concurrent executions.

Schedules

- **Schedule** – a sequences of instructions that specify the chronological order in which instructions of concurrent transactions are executed
  - A schedule for a set of transactions must consist of all instructions of those transactions
  - Must preserve the order in which the instructions appear in each individual transaction.
- A transaction that successfully completes its execution will have a commit instructions as the last statement
  - In the slides, we'll assume, by default, that a transaction executes a commit instruction as its last step
- A transaction that fails to successfully complete its execution will have an abort instruction as the last statement

- The goal is to find schedules that preserves consistency

Schedule 1

- Let T_1 transfer €50 from A to B, and T_2 transfer 10% of the balance from A to B.
- A serial schedule in which T_1 is followed by T_2 :

T_1	T_2
read (A)	
$A := A - 50$	
write (A)	
read (B)	
$B := B + 50$	
write (B)	
commit	
	read (A)
	$temp := A * 0.1$
	$A := A - temp$
	write (A)
	read (B)
	$B := B + temp$
	write (B)
	commit

Schedule 2

- A serial schedule where T_2 is followed by T_1

T_1	T_2
	read (A)
	$temp$:= A * 0.1
	A := A - $temp$
	write (A)
	read (B)
	B := B + $temp$
	write (B)
	commit
read (A)	
A := A – 50	
write (A)	
read (B)	
B := B + 50	
write (B)	
commit	

- If each transaction, by itself, preserves consistency, serial schedules obviously also preserve consistency!

Schedule 3

- Let T_1 and T_2 be the transactions defined previously. The following schedule is not a serial schedule, but it is *equivalent* to Schedule 1

T_1	T_2
read (A)	
$A := A - 50$	
write (A)	
	read (A)
	$temp := A * 0.1$
	$A := A - temp$
	write (A)
read (B)	
$B := B + 50$	
write (B)	
commit	
	read (B)
	$B := B + temp$
	write (B)
	commit

- In Schedules 1, 2 and 3, the sum A + B is preserved.

Schedule 4

- The following concurrent schedule does not preserve the value of ($A + B$).

T_1	T_2
read (A)	
$A := A - 50$	
	read (A)
	$temp := A * 0.1$
	$A := A - temp$
	write (A)
	read (B)
write (A)	
read (B)	
$B := B + 50$	
write (B)	
commit	
	$B := B + temp$
	write (B)
	commit

Serializability

- **Goal:** Deal with concurrent schedules that are equivalent to some serial execution:
  - **Basic Assumption** – Each transaction preserves database consistency.
  - Thus serial execution of a set of transactions preserves database consistency.
- A (possibly concurrent) schedule is serializable if it is equivalent to a serial schedule. Different forms of schedule equivalence give rise to the notions of:
  1. **Conflict serializability**
  2. **View serializability**

- Simplified view of transaction:
  - We ignore operations other than **read** and **write** instructions
  - We assume that transactions may perform arbitrary computations on data in local buffers in between reads and writes.
  - Our simplified schedules consist of only **read** and **write** instructions.

Conflicting Instructions

- Instructions l_i and l_j of transactions T_i and T_j respectively, **conflict** if and only if there exists some item Q accessed by both l_i and l_j, and at least one of these instructions wrote Q.
  1. l_i = **read**(Q), l_j = **read**(Q). l_i and l_j don't conflict.
  2. l_i = **read**(Q), l_j = **write**(Q). They conflict.
  3. l_i = **write**(Q), l_j = **read**(Q). They conflict
  4. l_i = **write**(Q), l_j = **write**(Q). They conflict

- Intuitively, a conflict between l_i and l_j forces a (logical) temporal order between them.
  - If l_i and l_j are consecutive in a schedule and they do not conflict, their results would remain the same even if they had been interchanged in the schedule.

Conflict Serializability

- If a schedule *S* can be transformed into a schedule *S'* by a series of swaps of non-conflicting instructions, we say that *S* and *S'* are **conflict equivalent**.
- We say that a schedule *S* is **conflict serializable** if it is conflict equivalent to a serial schedule

- E.g. Schedule 3 can be transformed into Schedule 6, a serial schedule where T_2 follows T_1, by series of swaps of non-conflicting instructions. Therefore Schedule 3 is conflict serializable.

T_1	T_2
read (*A*)	
write (*A*)	
	read (*A*)
	write (*A*)
read (*B*)	
write (*B*)	
	read (*B*)
	write (*B*)

Schedule 3

T_1	T_2
read (*A*)	
write (*A*)	
read (*B*)	
write (*B*)	
	read (*A*)
	write (*A*)
	read (*B*)
	write (*B*)

Schedule 6

Conflict Serializability (Cont.)

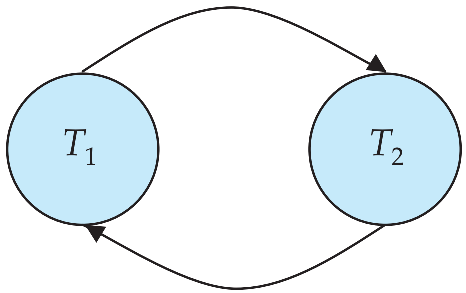
- Example of a schedule that is not conflict serializable:

T_3	T_4
read (Q)	
	write (Q)
write (Q)	

- We are unable to swap instructions in the above schedule to obtain either the serial schedule < T_3, T_4 >, or the serial schedule < T_4, T_3 >.

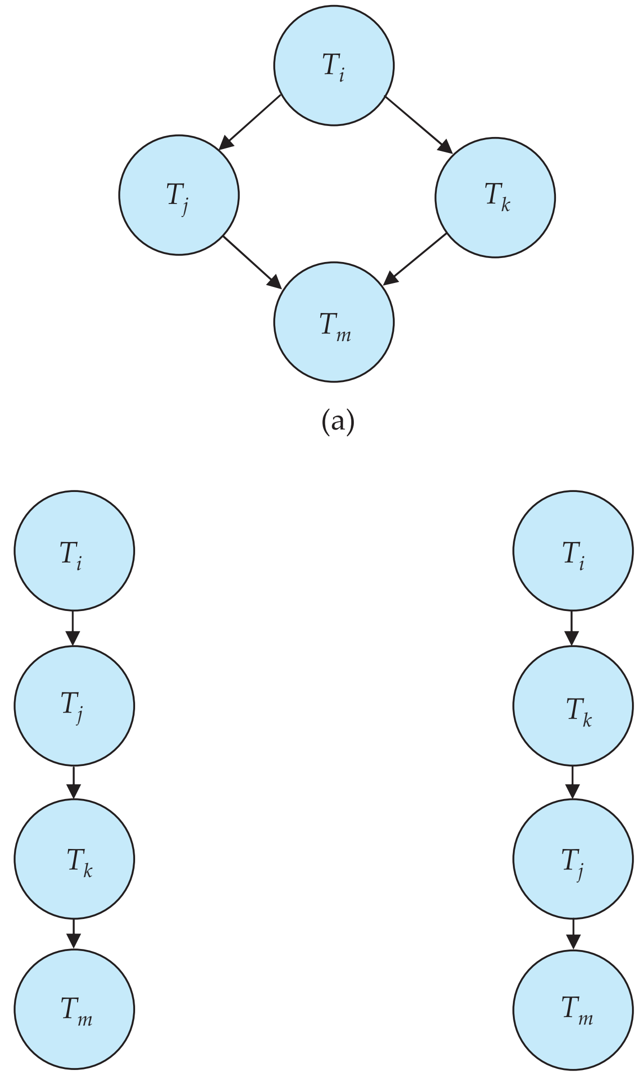
Testing for Serializability

- Consider some schedule of a set of transactions T_1, T_2, ..., T_n
- **Precedence graph** — a direct graph where
  - the vertices are the transactions (names).
  - there is an arc from T_i to T_j if the two transactions conflict, and T_i accessed the data item on which the conflict arose earlier.
- We may label the arc by the item that was accessed.
- Example of a precedence graph



Test for Conflict Serializability

- A schedule is conflict serializable if and only if its precedence graph is acyclic.
- Cycle-detection algorithms exist which take order n^2 time, where n is the number of vertices in the graph.
  - (Better algorithms take order $n + e$ where e is the number of edges.)
- If precedence graph is acyclic, the serializability order can be obtained by a *topological sorting* of the graph.
  - This is a linear order consistent with the partial order of the graph.
  - For example, a serializability order for Schedule A would be $T_5 \rightarrow T_1 \rightarrow T_3 \rightarrow T_2 \rightarrow T_4$
    - Are there others?

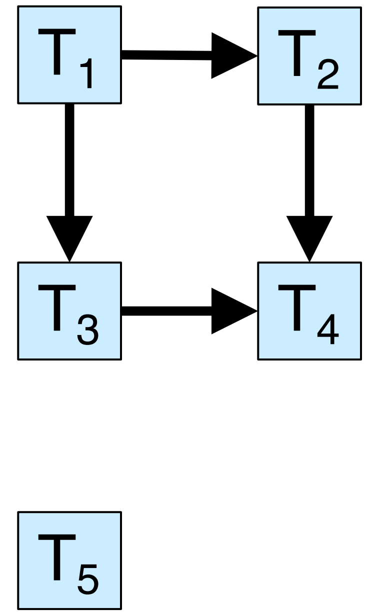


(a) (b) (c)

Example of Schedule and Precedence Graph

Is this schedule is serializable? **Yes**

T_1	T_2	T_3	T_4	T_5
	read(X)			
read(Y)				
read(Z)				
				read(V)
				read(W)
				read(W)
	read(Y)			
	write(Y)			
		write(Z)		
read(U)				
			read(Y)	
			write(Y)	
			read(Z)	
			write(Z)	
read(U)				
write(U)				



View Serializability

- Sometimes it is possible to serialize schedules that are not conflict serializable. E.g.

T_{27}	T_{28}	T_{29}
read (Q)		
	write (Q)	
write (Q)		
		write (Q)

- This schedule is not conflict serializable
- But it is serializable:
  - It is equivalent to either <T27,T28,T29> or <T28,T27,T29>

- **View serialisability** provides a weaker and still consistency preserving notion of serialization

View Serializability

- Let *S* and *S'* be two schedules with the same set of transactions. *S* and *S'* are **view equivalent** if the following three conditions are met, for each data item *Q*,
  1. If in schedule S, transaction T_i reads the initial value of *Q*, then in schedule *S'* also transaction T_i must read the initial value of *Q*.
  2. If in schedule S transaction T_i executes **read**(*Q*), and that value was produced by transaction T_j (if any), then in schedule *S'* also transaction T_i must read the value of *Q* that was produced by the same **write**(Q) operation of transaction T_j .
  3. The transaction (if any) that performs the final **write**(*Q*) in schedule *S* must also perform the final **write**(*Q*) operation in schedule *S'*.
- As can be seen, view equivalence is also based purely on **reads** and **writes** alone.
- A schedule *S* is **view serialisable** if it is view equivalent to a serial schedule.
  - Every conflict serializable schedule is also view serializable
  - Every view serializable schedule that is not conflict serializable has **blind writes** (i.e. writes that don't read the item in the same transaction)

Test for View Serializability

- The precedence graph test for conflict serializability cannot be used directly to test for view serializability.
  - Extension to test for view serializability has cost exponential in the size of the precedence graph.
- The problem of checking if a schedule is view serializable falls in the class of *NP*-complete problems.
  - Thus, existence of an efficient algorithm is *extremely* unlikely.
- However practical algorithms that just check some **sufficient conditions** for view serializability can still be used.

Recoverable Schedules

What to do if some transaction fails? One needs to address the effect of failures on concurrently running transactions.

- **Recoverable schedule** — if a transaction T_j reads a data item previously written by a transaction T_i, then the commit operation of T_i appears before the commit operation of T_j.
- The following schedule is not recoverable

T_8	T_9
read (A)	
write (A)	
	read (A)
	commit
read (B)	

  - If T_8 should abort, T_9 would have read (and possibly shown to the user, or to other transactions) an inconsistent database state.
  - Hence, a database must ensure that schedules are recoverable - *delaying commits*.

Cascading Rollbacks

- **Cascading rollback** – when a single transaction failure leads to a series of transaction rollbacks. Consider the following schedule where none of the transactions has yet committed (so the schedule is recoverable)

T_{10}	T_{11}	T_{12}
read (A)		
read (B)		
write (A)		
	read (A)	
	write (A)	
		read (A)
abort		

If T_{10} fails, T_{11} and T_{12} must also be rolled back.

- Can lead to undoing of a significant amount of work
- Avoided, in this case, by *anticipating* the commit of T_{10} to before the read in T_{11}, and the commit of T_{11} to before the read in T_{12}

Cascadeless Schedules

- **Cascadeless schedules** — cascading rollbacks cannot occur;
  - For each pair of transactions T_i and T_j such that T_j reads a data item previously written by T_i, the commit operation of T_i appears before the read operation of T_j.
- Every Cascadeless schedule is also recoverable
- It is desirable to restrict the schedules to those that are cascadeless

Concurrency Control

- A database must provide a mechanism that will ensure that all possible schedules are
  - either conflict or view serializable, and
  - are recoverable and preferably cascadeless
- A policy in which only one transaction can execute at a time generates serial schedules, but provides a poor degree of concurrency
  - Are serial schedules recoverable/cascadeless?
- Testing a schedule for serializability *after* it has executed is a little too late!
- **Goal** – to develop concurrency control protocols that will assure serializability
  - Lock-based protocols
  - Timestamp-based protocols

Concurrency Control (Cont.)

- Schedules must be conflict or view serializable, and recoverable, for the sake of database consistency, and preferably cascadeless.
- A policy in which only one transaction can execute at a time generates serial schedules but provides a poor degree of concurrency.
- Concurrency-control schemes tradeoff between the amount of concurrency they allow and the amount of overhead that they incur.
- Some schemes allow only conflict-serializable schedules to be generated, while others allow view-serializable schedules that are not conflict-serializable.

Concurrency Control vs. Serializability Tests

- Concurrency-control protocols allow concurrent schedules but ensure that the schedules are conflict/view serializable and are recoverable and cascadeless .
- Concurrency control protocols (generally) do not examine the precedence graph as it is being created
  - Instead a protocol imposes a discipline that avoids non-serializable schedules.
  - We study such protocols next week
- Different concurrency control protocols provide different tradeoffs between the amount of concurrency they allow and the amount of overhead that they incur.
- Tests for serializability help us understand why a concurrency control protocol is correct.

Weak Levels of Consistency

- Some applications are willing to live with weak levels of consistency, allowing schedules that are not serializable
  - E.g., a read-only transaction that wants to get an approximate total balance of all accounts
  - E.g., database statistics computed for query optimization can be approximate (why?)
  - Such transactions need not be serializable with respect to other transactions
- Tradeoff accuracy for performance

Levels of Consistency in SQL

- **Serializable** — default
- **Repeatable read** — only committed records to be read.
  - Repeated reads of same record must return same value.
  - However, a transaction may not be serializable – it may find some records inserted by a transaction but not find others.
- **Read committed** — only committed records can be read.
  - Successive reads of record may return different (but committed) values.
- **Read uncommitted** — even uncommitted records may be read.

Levels of Consistency

- Lower degrees of consistency are useful for gathering approximate information about the database
- Warning: some database systems do not ensure serializable schedules by default
- E.g., Oracle (and PostgreSQL prior to version 9) by default support a level of consistency called snapshot isolation (not part of the SQL standard)

Transaction Definition in SQL

- In SQL, a transaction begins implicitly.
- A transaction in SQL ends by:
  - **Commit work** commits current transaction and begins a new one.
  - **Rollback work** causes current transaction to abort.
- In almost all database systems, by default, every SQL statement also commits implicitly if it executes successfully
  - Implicit commit can be turned off by a database directive
    - E.g., in JDBC -- connection.setAutoCommit(false);
- Isolation level can be set at database level
- Isolation level can be changed at start of transaction
    - E.g. In SQL **set transaction isolation level serializable**
    - E.g. in JDBC -- connection.setTransactionIsolation(
      Connection.TRANSACTION_SERIALIZABLE)

Implementation of Isolation Levels

- Locking
  - Lock on whole database vs lock on items
  - How long to hold lock?
  - Shared vs exclusive locks
- Timestamps
  - Transaction timestamp assigned e.g. when a transaction begins
  - Data items store two timestamps
    - Read timestamp
    - Write timestamp
  - Timestamps are used to detect out of order accesses
- Multiple versions of each data item
  - Allow transactions to read from a "snapshot" of the database

Transactions as SQL Statements

- E.g., Transaction 1:
  select *ID, name* **from** *instructor* **where** *salary* > 90000
- E.g., Transaction 2:
  insert into *instructor* **values** ('11111', 'James', 'Marketing', 100000)
- Suppose
  - T1 starts, finds tuples salary > 90000 using index and locks them
  - And then T2 executes.
  - Do T1 and T2 conflict? Does tuple level locking detect the conflict?
  - Instance of the **phantom phenomenon**
- Also consider T3 below, with Wu's salary = 90000
  update *instructor*
  set *salary* = *salary* * 1.1
  where *name* = 'Wu'
- Key idea: Detect "**predicate**" conflicts, and use some form of "**predicate locking**"