The Relational Model

Week 2 - 2
A **relation** is a more concrete construction, of something we have seen before, the ER diagram.

A relation is (just!) a table!

We will use **table** and **relation** interchangeably, except where there is a possibility of confusion.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>name</th>
<th>S.S.N</th>
<th>street</th>
<th>city</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lisa</td>
<td>1272</td>
<td>Main</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Apple</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A relation consists of a relational schema and a relational instance.

A relation schema is essentially a list of column names with their data types. In this case…

students(name : string, S.S.N : string, street : string, city : string)

• A relation instance is made up of zero or more tuples (rows, records)

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</table>
A schema specifies a relation’s name.

students(name : string, S.S.N : string, street : string, city : string)

A schema also specifies the name of each field, and its domain.

Fields are often referred to as columns, attributes, dimensions
A minor, but important point about relations, they are unordered.

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</table>

This is not a problem, since we refer to fields by name.

However sometimes, we refer to the fields by their column number, in which case the ordering becomes important. I will point this out when we get there.

Also, the tuples are unordered too!
Note that every tuple in our instance is unique. This is not a coincidence. The definition of relation demands it.

Later we will see how we can represent weak entities in relations.

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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The number of fields is called the **degree** (or **arity**, or dimensionality of the relation).

Below we have a table of degree 4.

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<th>street</th>
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</tr>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The number of tuples = **cardinality** of the relation.

Of course, we don’t count the row that has the labels!

To the right we have a table of cardinality 3.
students(name : string, S.S.N : string, street : string, city : string)

Note that relations have primary keys, just like ER diagrams. Remember that the primary key might not be one field, it may be a combination of two or more fields.

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</tbody>
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Translating ER diagrams into Relations

We need to figure out how to translate ER diagrams into relations.

There are only three cases to worry about.

• Strong entity sets
• Weak entity sets
• Relationship sets
• Strong entity sets

This is trivial, the primary key of the ER diagram becomes the primary key of the relation. All other fields are copied in (in any order)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PID</th>
<th>name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1234</td>
<td>Lin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3421</td>
<td>Lee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2342</td>
<td>Smyth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4531</td>
<td>Lee</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Weak entity sets

The primary key of the relation consists of the union of the primary key of the strong entity set and the discriminator of the weak entity set. The “imported key from the strong entity set is called the foreign key.

All other fields are copied in (in any order)
• Relationship entity sets

For one-to-one relationship sets, the relation’s primary key can be that of either entity set.

• For many-to-many relationship sets, the union of the primary keys becomes the relation’s primary key

• For other cases, the relation’s primary key is taken from the strong entity set.
So, this ER Model…

… maps to this **database schema**

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{professor} & (\text{PID} : \text{string}, \text{name} : \text{string}) \\
\text{course} & (\text{PID} : \text{string}, \text{number} : \text{string}, \text{name} : \text{string}) \\
\text{teaches} & (\text{PID} : \text{string}, \text{days} : \text{string})
\end{align*}
\]

Later we’ll see how we can take advantage of the key constraint and come up with a better design.
We have seen how to create a database schema, how do we create an actual database on our computers?

professor(PID : string, name : string)
course(PID : string, number : string, name : string)
teaches(PID : string, days : string)
...how do we create an actual database on our computers?

We use SQL, a language that allows us to build, modify and query databases.

```
professor(PID : string, name : string)
```

```sql
SQL> CREATE TABLE Professor  
  2  (pid CHAR(9),  
  3  name CHAR(50),  
  4  PRIMARY KEY(pid));
Table created.
```
SQL (Structured Query Language)

- SQL is a language that allows us to build, modify and query databases.
- SQL is an ANSI standard language.
- SQL is the “engine” behind Oracle, Microsoft SQL Server, etc.
- Most of these systems have built GUIs on top of the command line interface, so you don’t normally write statements directly in SQL (although you can).
Creating Relations in SQL

- Creates a Students relation. Observe that the type (domain) of each field is specified, and enforced by the DBMS whenever tuples are added or modified.

- As another example, the Enrolled table holds information about courses that students take.

CREATE TABLE Students (sid CHAR(20),
name CHAR(20),
login CHAR(10),
age INTEGER,
gpa REAL);

CREATE TABLE Enrolled (sid CHAR(20),
cid CHAR(20),
grade CHAR(2));
Adding and Deleting Tuples

• Can insert a single tuple using:

\[
\text{INSERT INTO Students (sid, name, login, age, gpa) VALUES (53688, ‘Smith’, ‘smith@ee’, 18, 3.2);}
\]

• Can delete all tuples satisfying some condition (e.g., name = Smith):

\[
\text{DELETE FROM Students WHERE name = ‘Smith’;}
\]
The SQL Query Language

- To find all 18 year old students, we can write:

```
SELECT * 
FROM Students S 
WHERE S.age=18;
```

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>sid</th>
<th>name</th>
<th>login</th>
<th>age</th>
<th>gpa</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>53666</td>
<td>Jones</td>
<td>jones@cs</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53688</td>
<td>Smith</td>
<td>smith@ee</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- To show just names and logins columns, replace the first line with:

```
SELECT S.name, S.login
```
Querying Multiple Relations

• What does this query compute?

```
SELECT S.name, E.cid
FROM Students S, Enrolled E
WHERE S.sid = E.sid AND E.grade = 'A';
```

we get:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students</th>
<th></th>
<th>Enrolled</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>sid</td>
<td>name</td>
<td>login</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53666</td>
<td>Jones</td>
<td>jones@cs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53688</td>
<td>Smith</td>
<td>smith@eecs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53650</td>
<td>Smith</td>
<td>smith@math</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

we get:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.name</th>
<th>E.cid</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Smith</td>
<td>Topology112</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Destroying and Altering Relations

- Destroys the relation Students. The schema information and the tuples are deleted.

  \[
  \text{DROP TABLE Students;}
  \]

- The schema of Students is altered by adding a new field; every tuple in the current instance is extended with a \textit{null} value in the new field.

  \[
  \text{ALTER TABLE Students}
  \\
  \text{ADD COLUMN firstYear integer;}
  \]
Integrity Constraints (ICs)

• **IC:** condition that must be true for *any* instance of the database; e.g., *domain constraints.*
  - ICs are specified when schema is defined.
  - ICs are checked when relations are modified.

• A *legal* instance of a relation is one that satisfies all specified ICs.
  - DBMS should not allow illegal instances.

• If the DBMS checks ICs, stored data is more faithful to real-world meaning.
  - Avoids data entry errors, too!
Primary Key Constraints Revisited

- A set of fields is a *key* for a relation if:
  1. No two distinct tuples can have same values in all key fields, and
  2. no subset of the key is also a key.
    - A *superkey*.
    - If there’s >1 key for a relation, one of the keys is chosen (by DBA) to be the *primary key*.

- e.g., *sid* is a key for Students. (What about *name*?) The set \{*sid*, *gpa*\} is a *superkey*.
Primary and Candidate Keys in SQL

• Possibly many *candidate keys* (specified using *UNIQUE*), one of which is chosen as the *primary key*.

• What’s the difference between the two statements below?

```sql
CREATE TABLE Enrolled
(sid CHAR(20),
cid CHAR(20),
grade CHAR(2),
PRIMARY KEY (sid,cid));
```

```sql
CREATE TABLE Enrolled
(sid CHAR(20),
cid CHAR(20),
grade CHAR(2),
    PRIMARY KEY (sid),
    UNIQUE (cid, grade));
```

Used carelessly, an IC can prevent the storage of database instances that arise in practice!