

# SQL: Triggers, Views, Indexes

Introduction to Databases

CompSci 316 Fall 2014



**DUKE**  
COMPUTER SCIENCE

# Announcements (Tue., Sep. 23)

- Homework #1 sample solution posted on Sakai
- Homework #2 due next Thursday
  - Midterm on the following Thursday
- Project mixer this Thursday
  - See my email about format
  - Email me your “elevator pitch” by Wednesday midnight
- Project Milestone #1 due Thursday, Oct. 16
  - See project description on what to accomplish by then

# Announcements (Tue., Sep. 30)

- **Homework #2** due date extended to Oct. 7
- **Midterm** in class next Thursday (Oct. 9)
  - Open-book, open-notes
  - Same format as **sample midterm** (from last year)
    - Already posted on Sakai
    - Solution to be posted later this week

# “Active” data

- Constraint enforcement: When an operation violates a constraint, abort the operation or try to “fix” data
  - Example: enforcing referential integrity constraints
  - Generalize to arbitrary constraints?
- Data monitoring: When something happens to the data, automatically execute some action
  - Example: When price rises above \$20 per share, sell
  - Example: When enrollment is at the limit and more students try to register, email the instructor

# Triggers

- A **trigger** is an **event-condition-action (ECA)** rule
  - When **event** occurs, test **condition**; if condition is satisfied, execute **action**
- **Example:**
  - **Event:** some user's popularity is updated
  - **Condition:** the user is a member of "Jessica's Circle," and *pop* drops below 0.5
  - **Action:** kick that user out of Jessica's Circle



# Trigger example

```
CREATE TRIGGER PickyJessica
AFTER UPDATE OF pop ON User Event
REFERENCING NEW ROW AS newUser
FOR EACH ROW Condition
WHEN (newUser.pop < 0.5)
    AND (newUser.uid IN (SELECT uid
                        FROM Member
                        WHERE gid = 'jes'))
DELETE FROM Member
WHERE uid = newUser.uid AND gid = 'jes'; Action
```

# Trigger options

- Possible events include:
  - **INSERT ON** *table*
  - **DELETE ON** *table*
  - **UPDATE [OF column] ON** *table*
- Granularity—trigger can be activated:
  - **FOR EACH ROW** modified
  - **FOR EACH STATEMENT** that performs modification
- Timing—action can be executed:
  - **AFTER** or **BEFORE** the triggering event
  - **INSTEAD OF** the triggering event on views (more later)

# Transition variables

- **OLD ROW**: the modified row before the triggering event
- **NEW ROW**: the modified row after the triggering event
- **OLD TABLE**: a hypothetical read-only table containing all rows to be modified before the triggering event
- **NEW TABLE**: a hypothetical table containing all modified rows after the triggering event

☞ Not all of them make sense all the time, e.g.

- **AFTER INSERT** statement-level triggers
  - Can use only **NEW TABLE**
- **BEFORE DELETE** row-level triggers
  - Can use only **OLD ROW**
- etc.

# Statement-level trigger example

```
CREATE TRIGGER PickyJessica
AFTER UPDATE OF pop ON User
REFERENCING NEW TABLE AS newUsers
FOR EACH STATEMENT
DELETE FROM Member
WHERE gid = 'jes'
AND uid IN (SELECT uid
            FROM newUsers
            WHERE pop < 0.5);
```

# BEFORE trigger example

- Never allow age to decrease

```
CREATE TRIGGER NoFountainOfYouth
BEFORE UPDATE OF age ON User
REFERENCING OLD ROW AS o,
                NEW ROW AS n
FOR EACH ROW
WHEN (n.age < o.age)
SET n.age = o.age;
```

- ☞ BEFORE triggers are often used to “condition” data
- ☞ Another option is to raise an error in the trigger body to abort the transaction that caused the trigger to fire

# Statement- vs. row-level triggers

Why are both needed?

- Certain triggers are only possible at statement level
  - If the number of users inserted by this statement exceeds 100 and their average age is below 13, then ...
- Simple row-level triggers are easier to implement
  - Statement-level triggers require significant amount of state to be maintained in `OLD TABLE` and `NEW TABLE`
  - However, a row-level trigger gets fired for each row, so complex row-level triggers may be inefficient for statements that modify many rows

# System issues

- Recursive firing of triggers
    - Action of one trigger causes another trigger to fire
    - Can get into an infinite loop
      - Some DBMS leave it to programmers/database administrators (e.g., PostgreSQL)
      - Some restrict trigger actions (e.g., Oracle)
      - Many set a maximum level of recursion (e.g., 16 in DB2)
  - Interaction with constraints (very tricky to get right!)
    - When do we check if a triggering event violates constraints?
      - After a BEFORE trigger (so the trigger can fix a potential violation)
      - Before an AFTER trigger
    - AFTER triggers also see the effects of, say, cascaded deletes caused by referential integrity constraint violations
- (Based on DB2; other DBMS may implement a different policy)

# Views

- A **view** is like a “virtual” table
  - Defined by a query, which describes how to compute the view contents on the fly
  - DBMS stores the **view definition query** instead of view contents
  - Can be used in queries just like a regular table

# Creating and dropping views

- Example: members of Jessica's Circle
  - **CREATE VIEW** JessicaCircle **AS**  
SELECT \* FROM User  
WHERE uid IN (SELECT uid FROM Member  
WHERE gid = 'jes');
  - Tables used in defining a view are called “base tables”
    - *User* and *Member* above
- To drop a view
  - **DROP VIEW** JessicaCircle;

# Using views in queries

- Example: find the average popularity of members in Jessica's Circle
  - `SELECT AVG(pop) FROM JessicaCircle;`
  - To process the query, replace the reference to the view by its definition
  - `SELECT AVG(pop)  
FROM (SELECT * FROM User  
WHERE uid IN  
(SELECT uid FROM Member  
WHERE gid = 'jes'))  
AS JessicaCircle;`

# Why use views?

- To hide data from users
  - To hide complexity from users
  - **Logical data independence**
    - If applications deal with views, we can change the underlying schema without affecting applications
    - Recall **physical data independence**: change the physical organization of data without affecting applications
  - To provide a uniform interface for different implementations or sources
- ☞ Real database applications use tons of views

# Modifying views

- Does it even make sense, since views are virtual?
- It does make sense if we want users to really see views as tables
- Goal: modify the base tables such that the modification would appear to have been accomplished on the view

# A simple case

```
CREATE VIEW UserPop AS  
SELECT uid, pop FROM User;
```

```
DELETE FROM UserPop WHERE uid = 123;
```

translates to:

```
DELETE FROM User WHERE uid = 123;
```

# An impossible case

```
CREATE VIEW PopularUser AS  
  SELECT uid, pop FROM User  
  WHERE pop >= 0.8;
```

```
INSERT INTO PopularUser  
  VALUES(987, 0.3);
```

- No matter what we do on *User*, the inserted row will not be in *PopularUser*

# A case with too many possibilities

```
CREATE VIEW AveragePop(pop) AS  
  SELECT AVG(pop) FROM User;
```

- Note that you can rename columns in view definition

```
UPDATE AveragePop SET pop = 0.5;
```

- Set everybody's *pop* to 0.5?
- Adjust everybody's *pop* by the same amount?
- Just lower Jessica's *pop*?

# SQL92 updateable views

- More or less just single-table selection queries
  - No join
  - No aggregation
  - No subqueries
- Arguably somewhat restrictive
- Still might get it wrong in some cases
  - See the slide titled “An impossible case”
  - Adding **WITH CHECK OPTION** to the end of the view definition will make DBMS reject such modifications

# INSTEAD OF triggers for views

```
CREATE TRIGGER AdjustAveragePop
INSTEAD OF UPDATE ON AveragePop
REFERENCING OLD ROW AS o,
              NEW ROW AS n
FOR EACH ROW
UPDATE User
SET pop = pop + (n.pop-o.pop);
```

- What does this trigger do?

# Indexes

- An **index** is an auxiliary persistent data structure
  - Search tree (e.g., B<sup>+</sup>-tree), lookup table (e.g., hash table), etc.

☞ More on indexes later in this course!

- An index on  $R.A$  can speed up accesses of the form
  - $R.A = value$
  - $R.A > value$  (sometimes; depending on the index type)
- An index on  $(R.A_1, \dots, R.A_n)$  can speed up
  - $R.A_1 = value_1 \wedge \dots \wedge R.A_n = value_n$
  - $(R.A_1, \dots, R.A_n) > (value_1, \dots, value_n)$  (again depends)

☞ Ordering of index columns is important—is an index on  $(R.A, R.B)$  equivalent to one on  $(R.B, R.A)$ ?

☞ How about an index on  $R.A$  plus another on  $R.B$ ?

# Examples of using indexes

- `SELECT * FROM User WHERE name = 'Bart';`
  - Without an index on *User.name*: must scan the entire table if we store *User* as a flat file of unordered rows
  - With index: go “directly” to rows with `name='Bart'`
- `SELECT * FROM User, Member  
WHERE User.uid = Member.uid  
AND Member.gid = 'jes';`
  - With an index on *Member.gid* or *(gid, uid)*: find relevant *Member* rows directly
  - With an index on *User.uid*: for each relevant *Member* row, directly look up *User* rows with matching *uid*
    - Without it: for each *Member* row, scan the entire *User* table for matching *uid*
      - Sorting could help

# Creating and dropping indexes in SQL

```
CREATE [UNIQUE] INDEX indexname ON  
tablename (columnname1, ..., columnnamen);
```

- With UNIQUE, the DBMS will also enforce that  $\{columnname_1, \dots, columnname_n\}$  is a key of *tablename*

```
DROP INDEX indexname;
```

- Typically, the DBMS will automatically create indexes for PRIMARY KEY and UNIQUE constraint declarations

# Choosing indexes to create

More indexes = better performance?

- Indexes take space
  - Indexes need to be maintained when data is updated
  - Indexes have one more level of indirection
- 👉 Optimal index selection depends on both query and update workload and the size of tables
- Automatic index selection is now featured in some commercial DBMS

# SQL features covered so far

- Query
- Modification
- Constraints
- Triggers
- Views
- Indexes