Theory I: Database Foundations

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20.7.2011

1. Introduction
   Intuition
   Formalization

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Consider a student database.

The represented information:

▶ Hans Eifrig is assigned Matrikelnummer 1223. His address is Seeweg 20. He is studying in the second semester.
▶ Lisa Lustig is assigned Matrikelnummer 3434. Her address is Bergstraße 11. She is studying in the fourth semester.
▶ Maria Gut is assigned Matrikelnummer 1234. Her address is Am Bächle 1. She is studying in the second semester.

Relational databases use tables to represent information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MatrId</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Semester</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1223</td>
<td>Hans Eifrig</td>
<td>Seeweg 20</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3434</td>
<td>Lisa Lustig</td>
<td>Bergstraße 11</td>
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<tr>
<td>1234</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CourseId</th>
<th>Institute</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>K010</td>
<td>DBIS</td>
<td>Databases</td>
<td>Foundations of Databases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K011</td>
<td>DBIS</td>
<td>Information Systems</td>
<td>Foundations of Information Systems</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>MatrId</th>
<th>CourseId</th>
<th>Semester</th>
<th>Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>K010</td>
<td>WS2017/2018</td>
<td>2.3</td>
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<tr>
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<td>K010</td>
<td>SS2018</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Objects and relationships

▶ An “object” in a database is a tuple.
▶ Each argument of the tuple represents the value of some attributes.
▶ Some of the attributes are called keys. Objects can be distinguished by their key values.
▶ A set of tuples is a relation.
▶ One or more relations constitute a database.
Using a database

- Application programs communicate with a database to query, update, insert and delete the state of the database.
- All these operations use some query language, say SQL.
- Query expressions have a set-oriented, declarative semantics:
  - The result of a query is a set of tuples.
  - The query defines the what and not the algorithmically how.
- Given the what, an optimizer can try to improve the efficiency of the query evaluation.

What are the names of the 'DBIS'-professors?

```
SELECT P.Name
FROM Professor P
WHERE P.Institute = 'DBIS'
```

Which students are registered for which courses?

```
SELECT S.Name, K.Title
FROM Student S, Registration B, Course K
WHERE S.MatrId = B.MatrId AND
B.CourseId = K.CourseId
```

We note...

- A relational database - or simply database - uses relations (tables) to represent the information required for a certain business, i.e. tasks of an enterprise, web portal, or even your personal life.
- We also say: a database represents a relevant state of its environment.
- We distinguish the definition of the structure – the type – of a relation from its concrete time-dependant state – the value.
- The schema of a relation refers to the type, the instance to a certain value, i.e. a set of tuples, respectively rows, if we think of a table.

Formalization

We start with attributes

- A tuple ("object") is identified by its "properties", which we call attributes.
- Let $X = \{A_1, \ldots, A_k\}$ be a (finite) set of attributes, $k \geq 1$.
- Each attribute $A \in X$ is assigned a non-empty domain $dom(A)$.
- $dom(X) = \bigcup_{A \in X} dom(A)$.

Example

The attribute Colour may have the domain \{red, green, \ldots\}. The attribute Semester may have the domain \{1, 2, \ldots\} (what do you think is reasonable?).
### Tuple
- Attribute values (one value for each attribute) can be grouped to form a tuple.
- Formally, a tuple $\mu$ over $X$ is a mapping $\mu : X \rightarrow \text{dom}(X)$, where $(\forall A \in X) \mu(A) \in \text{dom}(A)$.
- $\text{Tup}(X)$ is defined as the set of all tuples over $X$.

#### Example
- $\mu_1 = \{\text{MatrId} \rightarrow 1223, \text{Name} \rightarrow \text{Hans Eifrig}, \text{Address} \rightarrow \text{Seeweg 20, Semester} \rightarrow 2\}$
- $\mu_2 = \{\text{MatrId} \rightarrow 3434, \text{Name} \rightarrow \text{Lisa Lustig}, \text{Address} \rightarrow \text{Bergstraße 11, Semester} \rightarrow 4\}$
- $\mu_3 = \{\text{MatrId} \rightarrow 1234, \text{Name} \rightarrow \text{Maria Gut}, \text{Address} \rightarrow \text{Am Bächle 1, Semester} \rightarrow 2\}$

### Relation
- A relation $r$ over $X$ is a finite set $r \subseteq \text{Tup}(X)$.
- The set of all relations over $X$ is denoted $\text{Rel}(X)$.
- $r \in \text{Rel}(X)$ is called an instance over $X$.
- Let $R$ be a relation name.
  - A (relation) schema of $R$ is given as $R(X)$, where $X$ a set of attributes, also called format of the schema.
  - Instead of writing $R(\{A_1, \ldots, A_k\})$ we may also write $R(A_1, \ldots, A_k)$. $k$ is called the arity of $R$.
  - We may also write:
    $$R(A_1 : \text{dom}(A_1), \ldots, A_k : \text{dom}(A_k))$$

### Key
- For each schema $R(X)$ we distinguish a set of attributes $K$ we call a key of $R$, $K \subseteq X$.
- Once a key is defined, in every instance $r$ of $R$ for every pair of tuples it holds that: if both tuples agree on the attributes forming the key, they have to agree on all their attributes.
- In general, for a schema there may exist several keys.
### Database

- A (relational) database schema $\mathcal{R}$ is given as a set of relation schemata,
  $$\mathcal{R} = \{R_1(X_1), \ldots, R_m(X_m)\},$$
  resp. $\mathcal{R} = \{R_1, \ldots, R_m\}$.
- An instance $I$ of a database schema $\mathcal{R} = \{R_1, \ldots, R_m\}$ is given as a set of finite relations, $I = \{r_1, \ldots, r_m\}$, where $r_i$ instance of $R_i$, $1 \leq i \leq m$.
  We may also write $I(R_i) = r_i$, $1 \leq i \leq m$.

### Queries

- For any instance $I$, a query $Q$ defines a relation $Q(I)$, we call the answer to $Q$.
- A query is formally given as a mapping (transformation) from a database instance to a relation instance.
- Analogously to above, we may also write $I(Q)$ to denote the answer to a query $Q$ with respect to an instance $I$.

### Null value

- We may introduce a null value, whenever we want to express, that for some attribute the value is not known.
- The problem with nulls is that there exist several different possible interpretations: value exists, however currently not known; value currently does not exist, however will exist in the future; value exists, however is unknown in principle; and attribute is not applicable.

### Example

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