M.Sc. (Computer Science)
UNIT – IV
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Transaction

A transaction can be defined as a group of tasks. A single task is the minimum processing unit which cannot be divided further.

Let's take an example of a simple transaction. Suppose a bank employee transfers Rs 500 from A's account to B's account. This very simple and small transaction involves several low-level tasks.

A's Account

```
Open_Account(A)
Old_Balance = A.balance
New_Balance = Old_Balance - 500
A.balance = New_Balance
Close_Account(A)
```

B's Account

```
Open_Account(B)
Old_Balance = B.balance
New_Balance = Old_Balance + 500
B.balance = New_Balance
Close_Account(B)
```

ACID Properties

A transaction is a very small unit of a program and it may contain several lowlevel tasks. A transaction in a database system must maintain **A**tomicity, **C**onsistency, **I**solation, and **D**urability − commonly known as ACID properties − in order to ensure accuracy, completeness, and data integrity.

- **Atomicity** − This property states that a transaction must be treated as an atomic unit, that is, either all of its operations are executed or none. There must be no state in a database where a transaction is left partially completed. States should be defined either before the execution of the transaction or after the execution/abortion/failure of the transaction.

- **Consistency** − The database must remain in a consistent state after any transaction. No transaction should have any adverse effect on the data residing in the database. If the database was in a consistent state before the execution of a transaction, it must remain consistent after the execution of the transaction as well.

- **Durability** − The database should be durable enough to hold all its latest updates even if the system fails or restarts. If a transaction updates a chunk of data in a database and commits, then the database will hold the modified data. If a transaction commits but the system fails before the data could be written on to the disk, then that data will be updated once the system springs back into action.

- **Isolation** − In a database system where more than one transaction are being executed simultaneously and in parallel, the property of isolation states that all the transactions will be carried out and executed as if it is the only transaction in the system. No transaction will affect the existence of any other transaction.

Serializability

When multiple transactions are being executed by the operating system in a multiprogramming environment, there are possibilities that instructions of one transactions are interleaved with some other transaction.

- **Schedule** − A chronological execution sequence of a transaction is called a schedule. A schedule can have many transactions in it, each comprising of a number of instructions/tasks.

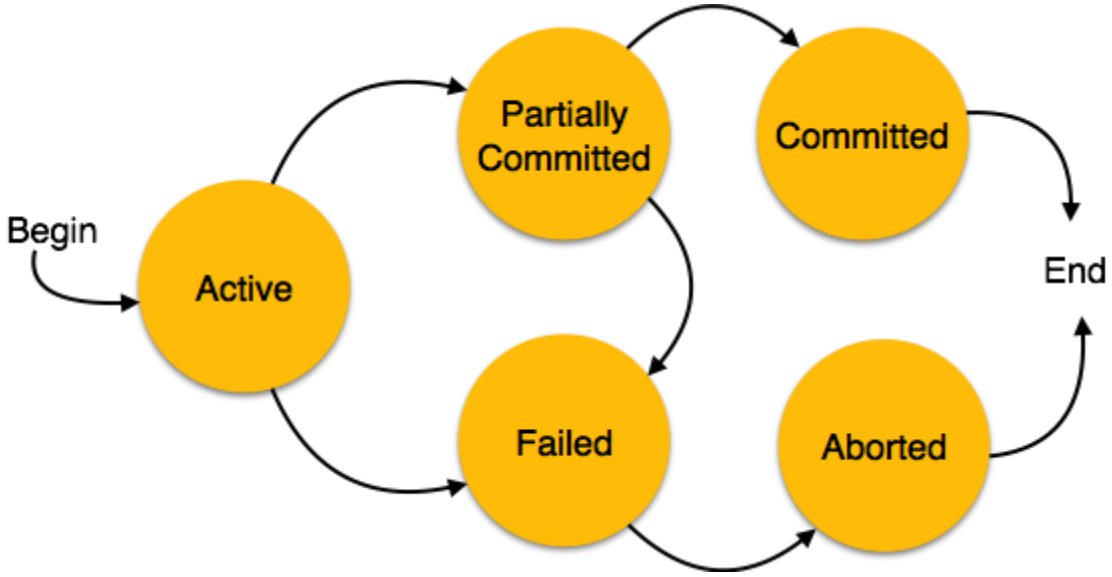
- **Serial Schedule** − It is a schedule in which transactions are aligned in such a way that one transaction is executed first. When the first transaction completes its cycle, then the next transaction is executed. Transactions are ordered one after the other. This type of schedule is called a serial schedule, as transactions are executed in a serial manner.

In a multi-transaction environment, serial schedules are considered as a benchmark. The execution sequence of an instruction in a transaction cannot be changed, but two transactions can have their instructions executed in a random fashion. This execution does no harm if two transactions are mutually independent and working on different segments of data; but in case these two transactions are working on the same data, then the results may vary. This ever-varying result may bring the database to an inconsistent state.

To resolve this problem, we allow parallel execution of a transaction schedule, if its transactions are either serializable or have some equivalence relation among them.

States of Transactions

A transaction in a database can be in one of the following states −



- **Active** − In this state, the transaction is being executed. This is the initial state of every transaction.
- **Partially Committed** − When a transaction executes its final operation, it is said to be in a partially committed state.
- **Failed** − A transaction is said to be in a failed state if any of the checks made by the database recovery system fails. A failed transaction can no longer proceed further.
- **Aborted** − If any of the checks fails and the transaction has reached a failed state, then the recovery manager rolls back all its write operations on the database to bring the database back to its original state where it was prior to the execution of the transaction. Transactions in this state are called aborted. The database recovery module can select one of the two operations after a transaction aborts −
    - Re-start the transaction
    - Kill the transaction

- **Committed** − If a transaction executes all its operations successfully, it is said to be committed. All its effects are now permanently established on the database system.

Concurrency Control

In a multiprogramming environment where multiple transactions can be executed simultaneously, it is highly important to control the concurrency of transactions. We have concurrency control protocols to ensure atomicity, isolation, and serializability of concurrent transactions. Concurrency control protocols can be broadly divided into two categories −

- Lock based protocols
- Time stamp based protocols

Lock-based Protocols

Database systems equipped with lock-based protocols use a mechanism by which any transaction cannot read or write data until it acquires an appropriate lock on it. Locks are of two kinds −

- **Binary Locks** − A lock on a data item can be in two states; it is either locked or unlocked.
- **Shared/exclusive** − This type of locking mechanism differentiates the locks based on their uses. If a lock is acquired on a data item to perform a write operation, it is an exclusive lock. Allowing more than one transaction to write on the same data item would lead the database into an inconsistent state. Read locks are shared because no data value is being changed.

Timestamp Ordering Protocol

The timestamp-ordering protocol ensures serializability among transactions in their conflicting read and write operations. This is the responsibility of the protocol system that the conflicting pair of tasks should be executed according to the timestamp values of the transactions.

- The timestamp of transaction T_i is denoted as $TS(T_i)$.
- Read time-stamp of data-item X is denoted by R-timestamp(X).
- Write time-stamp of data-item X is denoted by W-timestamp(X).

Timestamp ordering protocol works as follows −

- **If a transaction Ti issues a read(X) operation −**
    - If TS(Ti) < W-timestamp(X)

- Operation rejected.

- If TS(Ti) >= W-timestamp(X)
  - Operation executed.
- All data-item timestamps updated.

- **If a transaction Ti issues a write(X) operation −**
  - If TS(Ti) < R-timestamp(X)
    - Operation rejected.
  - If TS(Ti) < W-timestamp(X)
    - Operation rejected and Ti rolled back.
  - Otherwise, operation executed.

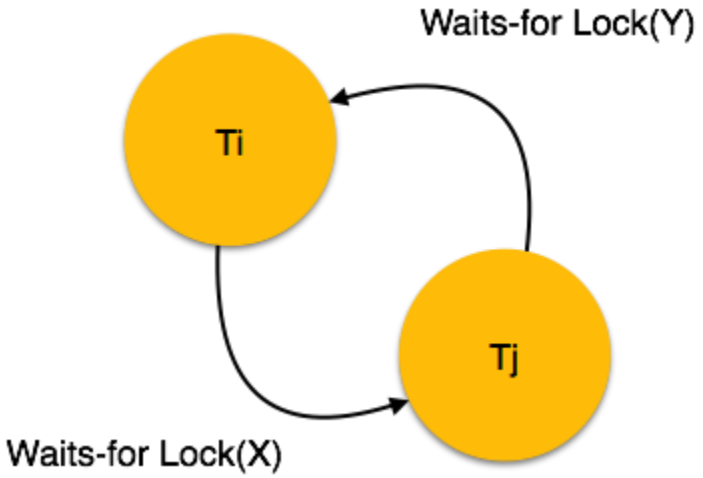
Deadlock Avoidance

Aborting a transaction is not always a practical approach. Instead, deadlock avoidance mechanisms can be used to detect any deadlock situation in advance. Methods like "wait-for graph" are available but they are suitable for only those systems where transactions are lightweight having fewer instances of resource. In a bulky system, deadlock prevention techniques may work well.

Wait-for Graph

This is a simple method available to track if any deadlock situation may arise. For each transaction entering into the system, a node is created. When a transaction T_i requests for a lock on an item, say X, which is held by some other transaction T_j, a directed edge is created from T_i to T_j. If T_j releases item X, the edge between them is dropped and T_i locks the data item.

The system maintains this wait-for graph for every transaction waiting for some data items held by others. The system keeps checking if there's any cycle in the graph.



Here, we can use any of the two following approaches −

- First, do not allow any request for an item, which is already locked by another transaction. This is not always feasible and may cause starvation, where a transaction indefinitely waits for a data item and can never acquire it.
- The second option is to roll back one of the transactions. It is not always feasible to roll back the younger transaction, as it may be important than the older one. With the help of some relative algorithm, a transaction is chosen, which is to be aborted. This transaction is known as the **victim** and the process is known as **victim selection**.

Serializability

In concurrency control of databases, transaction processing (transaction management), and various transactional applications (e.g., transactional memory and software transactional memory), both centralized and distributed, a transaction schedule is **serializable** if its outcome (e.g., the resulting database state) is equal to the outcome of its transactions executed serially, i.e. without overlapping in time. Transactions are normally executed concurrently (they overlap), since this is the most efficient way. Serializability is the major correctness criterion for concurrent transactions' executions. It is considered the highest level of isolation between transactions, and plays an essential role

in concurrency control. As such it is supported in all general purpose database systems. *Strong strict two-phase locking* (SS2PL) is a popular serializability mechanism utilized in most of the database systems (in various variants) since their early days in the 1970s.

Serializability theory provides the formal framework to reason about and analyze serializability and its techniques. Though it is mathematical in nature, its fundamentals are informally (without mathematics notation) introduced below.

Transaction failure. There are two types of errors that may cause a transaction to fail:

- **Logical error.** The transaction can no longer continue with its normal execution because of some internal condition, such as bad input, data not found, overflow, or resource limit exceeded.

- **System error.** The system has entered an undesirable state (for example, deadlock), as a result of which a transaction cannot continue with its normal execution. The transaction, however, can be reexecuted at a later time.

Recovery and Atomicity

When a system crashes, it may have several transactions being executed and various files opened for them to modify the data items. Transactions are made of various operations, which are atomic in nature. But according to ACID properties of DBMS, atomicity of transactions as a whole must be maintained, that is, either all the operations are executed or none.

When a DBMS recovers from a crash, it should maintain the following −

- It should check the states of all the transactions, which were being executed.
- A transaction may be in the middle of some operation; the DBMS must ensure the atomicity of the transaction in this case.
- It should check whether the transaction can be completed now or it needs to be rolled back.
- No transactions would be allowed to leave the DBMS in an inconsistent state.

There are two types of techniques, which can help a DBMS in recovering as well as maintaining the atomicity of a transaction −

- Maintaining the logs of each transaction, and writing them onto some stable storage before actually modifying the database.
- Maintaining shadow paging, where the changes are done on a volatile memory, and later, the actual database is updated.

Log-based Recovery

Log is a sequence of records, which maintains the records of actions performed by a transaction. It is important that the logs are written prior to the actual modification and stored on a stable storage media, which is failsafe.

Log-based recovery works as follows −

- The log file is kept on a stable storage media.
- When a transaction enters the system and starts execution, it writes a log about it.

<T_n, Start>

- When the transaction modifies an item X, it write logs as follows −

<T_n, X, V_1, V_2>

It reads T_n has changed the value of X, from V_1 to V_2.

- When the transaction finishes, it logs −

<T_n, commit>

The database can be modified using two approaches −

- **Deferred database modification** − All logs are written on to the stable storage and the database is updated when a transaction commits.
- **Immediate database modification** − Each log follows an actual database modification. That is, the database is modified immediately after every operation.

Recovery with Concurrent Transactions

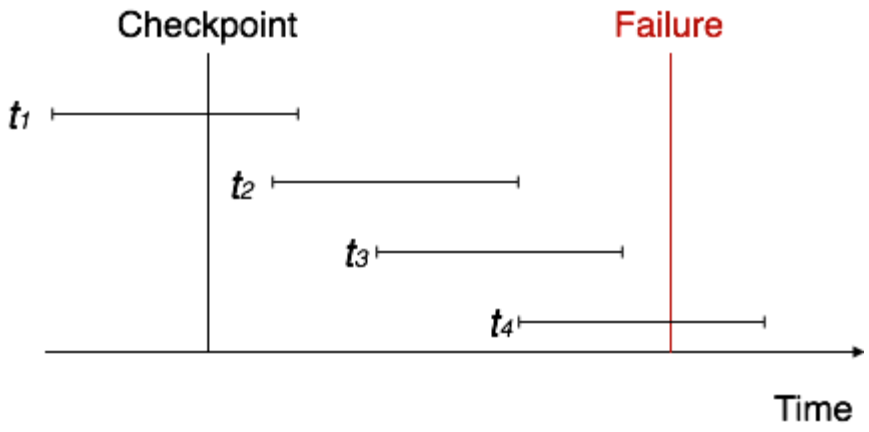
When more than one transaction are being executed in parallel, the logs are interleaved. At the time of recovery, it would become hard for the recovery system to backtrack all logs, and then start recovering. To ease this situation, most modern DBMS use the concept of 'checkpoints'.

Checkpoint

Keeping and maintaining logs in real time and in real environment may fill out all the memory space available in the system. As time passes, the log file may grow too big to be handled at all. Checkpoint is a mechanism where all the previous logs are removed from the system and stored permanently in a storage disk. Checkpoint declares a point before which the DBMS was in consistent state, and all the transactions were committed.

Recovery

When a system with concurrent transactions crashes and recovers, it behaves in the following manner –



- The recovery system reads the logs backwards from the end to the last checkpoint.
- It maintains two lists, an undo-list and a redo-list.
- If the recovery system sees a log with <T_n, Start> and <T_n, Commit> or just <T_n, Commit>, it puts the transaction in the redo-list.
- If the recovery system sees a log with <T_n, Start> but no commit or abort log found, it puts the transaction in undo-list.

All the transactions in the undo-list are then undone and their logs are removed. All the transactions in the redo-list and their previous logs are removed and then redone before saving their logs.

Log Based Recovery

- The most widely used structure for recording database modification is the log.
- The log is a sequence of log records, recording all the update activities in the database
- In short Transaction log is a journal, which contains history of all transaction performed
- Log contains Start of transaction, trans-id, record-id, type of operation (insert, update, delete), old value, new value, End of transaction that is commit or aborted.

There are several types of log records.

- Transaction identifier
- Data-item identifier
- Old value
- New value
- Whenever a transaction performs a write, it is essential that the log record for that write be created before the database is modified.
- Once a log record exists, we can output the modification that has already been output to the database, by using the old value field in the log records.

Distributed Databases

This chapter introduces the concept of DDBMS. In a distributed database, there are a number of databases that may be geographically distributed all over the world. A distributed DBMS manages the distributed database in a manner so that it appears as one single database to users. In the later part of the chapter, we go on to study the factors that lead to distributed databases, its advantages and disadvantages.

A **distributed database** is a collection of multiple interconnected databases, which are spread physically across various locations that communicate via a computer network.

Features

- Databases in the collection are logically interrelated with each other. Often they represent a single logical database.

- Data is physically stored across multiple sites. Data in each site can be managed by a DBMS independent of the other sites.
- The processors in the sites are connected via a network. They do not have any multiprocessor configuration.
- A distributed database is not a loosely connected file system.
- A distributed database incorporates transaction processing, but it is not synonymous with a transaction processing system.

Distributed Database Management System

A distributed database management system (DDBMS) is a centralized software system that manages a distributed database in a manner as if it were all stored in a single location.

Features

- It is used to create, retrieve, update and delete distributed databases.
- It synchronizes the database periodically and provides access mechanisms by the virtue of which the distribution becomes transparent to the users.
- It ensures that the data modified at any site is universally updated.
- It is used in application areas where large volumes of data are processed and accessed by numerous users simultaneously.
- It is designed for heterogeneous database platforms.
- It maintains confidentiality and data integrity of the databases.

Factors Encouraging DDBMS

The following factors encourage moving over to DDBMS −

- **Distributed Nature of Organizational Units** − Most organizations in the current times are subdivided into multiple units that are physically distributed over the globe. Each unit requires its own set of local data. Thus, the overall database of the organization becomes distributed.

- **Need for Sharing of Data** − The multiple organizational units often need to communicate with each other and share their data and resources. This demands common databases or replicated databases that should be used in a synchronized manner.

- **Support for Both OLTP and OLAP** − Online Transaction Processing (OLTP) and Online Analytical Processing (OLAP) work upon diversified systems which may have common data. Distributed database systems aid both these processing by providing synchronized data.

- **Database Recovery** − One of the common techniques used in DDBMS is replication of data across different sites. Replication of data automatically helps in data recovery if database in any site is damaged. Users can access data from other sites while the damaged site is being reconstructed. Thus, database failure may become almost inconspicuous to users.

- **Support for Multiple Application Software** − Most organizations use a variety of application software each with its specific database support. DDBMS provides a uniform functionality for using the same data among different platforms.

Advantages of Distributed Databases

Following are the advantages of distributed databases over centralized databases.

Modular Development − If the system needs to be expanded to new locations or new units, in centralized database systems, the action requires substantial efforts and disruption in the existing functioning. However, in distributed databases, the work simply requires adding new computers and local data to the new site and finally connecting them to the distributed system, with no interruption in current functions.

More Reliable − In case of database failures, the total system of centralized databases comes to a halt. However, in distributed systems, when a component fails, the functioning of the system continues may be at a reduced performance. Hence DDBMS is more reliable.

Better Response − If data is distributed in an efficient manner, then user requests can be met from local data itself, thus providing faster response. On the other hand, in centralized systems, all queries have to pass through the central computer for processing, which increases the response time.

Lower Communication Cost − In distributed database systems, if data is located locally where it is mostly used, then the communication costs for data manipulation can be minimized. This is not feasible in centralized systems.

Adversities of Distributed Databases

Following are some of the adversities associated with distributed databases.

- **Need for complex and expensive software** − DDBMS demands complex and often expensive software to provide data transparency and co-ordination across the several sites.
- **Processing overhead** − Even simple operations may require a large number of communications and additional calculations to provide uniformity in data across the sites.
- **Data integrity** − The need for updating data in multiple sites pose problems of data integrity.
- **Overheads for improper data distribution** − Responsiveness of queries is largely dependent upon proper data distribution. Improper data distribution often leads to very slow response to user requests.

Database Replication

Database replication is the frequent electronic copying data from a database in one computer or server to a database in another so that all users share the same level of information. The result is a distributed database in which users can access data relevant to their tasks without interfering with the work of others. The implementation of database replication for the purpose of eliminating data ambiguity or inconsistency among users is known as normalization.

Database replication can be done in at least three different ways:

- Snapshot replication: Data on one server is simply copied to another server, or to another database on the same server.
- Merging replication: Data from two or more databases is combined into a single database.
- Transactional replication: Users receive full initial copies of the database and then receive periodic updates as data changes.

A distributed database management system (DDBMS) ensures that changes, additions, and deletions performed on the data at any given location are automatically reflected in the data stored at all the other locations. Therefore, every user always sees data that is consistent with the data seen by all the other users.

Data Replication

Data replication is the process of storing separate copies of the database at two or more sites. It is a popular fault tolerance technique of distributed databases.

Advantages of Data Replication

- **Reliability** − In case of failure of any site, the database system continues to work since a copy is available at another site(s).
- **Reduction in Network Load** − Since local copies of data are available, query processing can be done with reduced network usage, particularly during prime hours. Data updating can be done at non-prime hours.
- **Quicker Response** − Availability of local copies of data ensures quick query processing and consequently quick response time.
- **Simpler Transactions** − Transactions require less number of joins of tables located at different sites and minimal coordination across the network. Thus, they become simpler in nature.

Disadvantages of Data Replication

- **Increased Storage Requirements** − Maintaining multiple copies of data is associated with increased storage costs. The storage space required is in multiples of the storage required for a centralized system.
- **Increased Cost and Complexity of Data Updating** − Each time a data item is updated, the update needs to be reflected in all the copies of the data at the different sites. This requires complex synchronization techniques and protocols.
- **Undesirable Application – Database coupling** − If complex update mechanisms are not used, removing data inconsistency requires complex co-ordination at application level. This results in undesirable application – database coupling.

Some commonly used replication techniques are −

- Snapshot replication
- Near-real-time replication
- Pull replication

Fragmentation

Fragmentation is the task of dividing a table into a set of smaller tables. The subsets of the table are called **fragments**. Fragmentation can be of three types: horizontal, vertical, and hybrid (combination of horizontal and vertical). Horizontal fragmentation can further be classified into two techniques: primary horizontal fragmentation and derived horizontal fragmentation.

Fragmentation should be done in a way so that the original table can be reconstructed from the fragments. This is needed so that the original table can be reconstructed from the fragments whenever required. This requirement is called "reconstructiveness."

Advantages of Fragmentation

- Since data is stored close to the site of usage, efficiency of the database system is increased.
- Local query optimization techniques are sufficient for most queries since data is locally available.
- Since irrelevant data is not available at the sites, security and privacy of the database system can be maintained.

Disadvantages of Fragmentation

- When data from different fragments are required, the access speeds may be very high.
- In case of recursive fragmentations, the job of reconstruction will need expensive techniques.
- Lack of back-up copies of data in different sites may render the database ineffective in case of failure of a site.

Vertical Fragmentation

In vertical fragmentation, the fields or columns of a table are grouped into fragments. In order to maintain reconstructiveness, each fragment should contain the primary key field(s) of the table. Vertical fragmentation can be used to enforce privacy of data.

For example, let us consider that a University database keeps records of all registered students in a Student table having the following schema.

STUDENT

Regd_No	Name	Course	Address	Semester	Fees	Marks

Now, the fees details are maintained in the accounts section. In this case, the designer will fragment the database as follows −

```
CREATE TABLE STD_FEES AS
  SELECT Regd_No, Fees
  FROM STUDENT;
```

Horizontal Fragmentation

Horizontal fragmentation groups the tuples of a table in accordance to values of one or more fields. Horizontal fragmentation should also confirm to the rule of reconstructiveness. Each horizontal fragment must have all columns of the original base table.

For example, in the student schema, if the details of all students of Computer Science Course needs to be maintained at the School of Computer Science, then the designer will horizontally fragment the database as follows −

```
CREATE COMP_STD AS
  SELECT * FROM STUDENT
  WHERE COURSE = "Computer Science";
```

Hybrid Fragmentation

In hybrid fragmentation, a combination of horizontal and vertical fragmentation techniques are used. This is the most flexible fragmentation technique since it generates fragments with minimal extraneous information. However, reconstruction of the original table is often an expensive task.

Hybrid fragmentation can be done in two alternative ways −

- At first, generate a set of horizontal fragments; then generate vertical fragments from one or more of the horizontal fragments.

- At first, generate a set of vertical fragments; then generate horizontal fragments from one or more of the vertical fragments.