Concurrency control
Problems caused by concurrency?

Lost update: the result of a transaction is overwritten by another transaction

Dirty read: uncommitted results are read by a transaction

Non-repeatable read: two reads in the same transaction return different results

Phantom read: later reads in the same transaction return extra rows
Serial schedule — no problems

T1: R(A), W(A), R(B), W(B), Abort

T2: R(A), W(A), Commit
Quiz: Which concurrency problem is this?

T1: R(A), W(A)                                      R(B), W(B), Abort
T2:                      R(A), W(A), Commit

Lost update   Dirty read   Non-repeatable read   Phantom read
Quiz: Which concurrency problem is this?

T1: R(A), W(A)                      R(B), W(B), Abort
T2: R(A), W(A), Commit

Dirty read

time
Quiz: Which concurrency problem is this?

T1: R(A)  R(A), W(A), Commit
T2: R(A), W(A), Commit

Lost update  Dirty read  Non-repeatable read  Phantom read
Quiz: Which concurrency problem is this?

T1: R(A)  
T2: R(A), W(A), Commit

Non-repeatable read
Quiz: Which concurrency problem is this?

T1: R(A), W(A)                      W(B), Commit
T2: R(A)                      W(A), W(B), Commit

Lost update  Dirty read  Non-repeateable read  Phantom read
Quiz: Which concurrency problem is this?

T1: R(A), W(A)                                 W(B), Commit
T2: R(A)                        W(A), W(B), Commit

Lost update
Quiz: Which concurrency problem is this?

T1: R(A), W(A) \quad W(A), \text{Commit}

T2: \quad R(A), R(B), W(B) \quad \text{Commit}

Lost update \quad Dirty read \quad Non-repeatable read \quad Phantom read
Quiz: Which concurrency problem is this?

T1: R(A), W(A)                                      W(A), Commit

T2: R(A), R(B), W(B) Commit

Dirty read
How to ensure correctness when running concurrent transactions?
What does correctness mean?

Transactions should have property of *isolation*, i.e., where all operations in a transaction appear to happen together at the same time.

Today, we’ll review serializability.

Weaker isolation levels exist in the literature but we’ll ignore them in this class.
Fixing concurrency problems

Strawman: Just run transactions serially — prohibitively bad performance

Observation: Problems only arise when

1. Two transactions touch the same data
2. At least one of these transactions involves a write to the data

Key idea: Only permit schedules whose effects are guaranteed to be equivalent to serial schedules
Serializability of schedules

Two operations **conflict** if

1. They belong to different transactions
2. They operate on the same data
3. One of them is a write

Two schedules are **equivalent** if

1. They involve the same transactions and operations
2. All *conflicting* operations are ordered the same way

A schedule is **serializable** if it is equivalent to a serial schedule
Testing for serializability

Intuition: Swap *non-conflicting* operations until you reach a serial schedule
Testing for serializability

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T1: R(A),  W(A), Commit
T2: R(A), R(B), W(B) Commit
Testing for serializability

Intuition: Swap *non-conflicting* operations until you reach a serial schedule

T1: $R(A), \quad W(A), \text{Commit}$

T2: $R(A), R(B), W(B) \text{ Commit}$
Testing for serializability

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T1: \( R(A), \quad W(A), \quad \text{Commit} \)

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Testing for serializability

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T1: \[ R(A), \quad W(A), \quad \text{Commit} \]

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Testing for serializability

Intuition: Swap *non-conflicting* operations until you reach a serial schedule

T1: \( R(A), W(A), \text{Commit} \)

T2: \( R(A), R(B), W(B), \text{Commit} \)

Serializable
Testing for serializability

Intuition: Swap *non-conflicting* operations until you reach a serial schedule

T1: R(A), W(A), W(B), Commit

T2: R(B), W(B), R(A) Commit
Testing for serializability

Intuition: Swap *non-conflicting* operations until you reach a serial schedule

T1: R(A), W(A), W(B), Commit

T2: R(B), W(B), R(A) Commit
Testing for serializability

Intuition: Swap non-conflicting operations until you reach a serial schedule

T1: R(A), W(A) W(B), Commit

T2: R(B), W(B), R(A) Commit
Testing for serializability

Intuition: Swap *non-conflicting* operations until you reach a serial schedule

T1: R(A), W(A), W(B), Commit

T2: R(B), W(B), R(A) Commit

*NOT serializable*
Testing for serializability

Another way to test serializability:

- Draw arrows between conflicting operations
- Arrow points in the direction of time
- If no cycles between transactions, the schedule is serializable
Testing for serializability

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Testing for serializability

Another way to test serializability:

Draw arrows between conflicting operations

Arrow points in the direction of time

If no cycles between transactions, the schedule is serializable

T1: R(A), W(A), Commit

T2: R(A), R(B), W(B) Commit

No cycles, serializable
Testing for serializability

Another way to test serializability:

- Draw arrows between conflicting operations
- Arrow points in the direction of time
- If no cycles between transactions, the schedule is serializable

T1: \( R(A), W(A), W(B), \text{Commit} \)
T2: \( \text{R}(B), W(B), \text{R}(A), \text{Commit} \)

Cycle exists \((T1 \nsim T2)\), NOT serializable
Implementing serializability: 2PL

Two-phase locking (2PL): acquire all locks before releasing any locks

Each txn acquires shared locks (S) for reads and exclusive locks (X) for writes

● Growing phase: transaction acquires all necessary locks
● Shrinking phase: transaction releases all locks

Cannot acquire more locks after any locks are released
2PL guarantees serializability by disallowing cycles between transactions. There could be dependencies in the waits-for graph among transactions waiting for locks:

- Edge from T2 to T1 means T1 acquired lock first and T2 has to wait.
- Edge from T1 to T2 means T2 acquired lock first and T1 has to wait.
- Cycles mean DEADLOCK, and in this case 2PL won’t proceed.
2PL

T1: R(A), W(A), W(B), Commit

T2: R(B), W(B), R(A) Commit

Deal with deadlocks by aborting one of the two txns (e.g., detect with timeout)
2PL: Releasing locks too soon?

What if we release the lock as soon as we can?

T1: \text{Lock}_X(A) \quad \text{Unlock}_X(A) \quad \text{Abort}

T2: \quad \text{R}(B), \text{W}(B), \text{R}(A) \quad \text{Abort}

Rollback of T1 requires rollback of T2, since T2 read a value written by T1

\textbf{Cascading aborts}: the rollback of one transaction causes the rollback of another
Strict 2PL

Release locks at the *end* of the transaction

Variant of 2PL implemented by most databases in practice
Two ways of implementing serializability: 2PL, OCC

2PL (pessimistic):
1. Assume conflict, always lock
2. High overhead for non-conflicting txn
3. Must check for deadlock

Optimistic concurrency control (OCC):
1. Assume no conflict
2. Low overhead for low-conflict workloads (but high for high-conflict workloads)
3. Ensure correctness by aborting transactions if conflict occurs
Optimistic concurrency control

Execute optimistically: Read committed values, write changes locally

Validate: Check if data has changed since original read

Commit (Write): Commit if no change, else abort

These should happen together!
Atomic commit for OCC

Use two-phase commit (2PC) to achieve atomic commit (validate + commit writes)

Recall 2PC protocol:

1. Send prepare messages to all nodes, other nodes vote yes or no
   a. If all nodes accept, proceed
   b. If any node declines, abort

2. Coordinator sends commit or abort messages to all nodes, and all nodes act accordingly
Optimistic concurrency control

Execute optimistically: Read committed values, write changes locally

Validate: Check if data has changed since original read

Commit (Write): Commit if no change, else abort

- **Phase 1:** send *prepare* to each shard: include buffered write + original reads for that shard
  - Shards validate reads and acquire locks (exclusive for write locations, shared for read locations)
  - If this succeeds, respond with *yes*; else respond with *no*

- **Phase 2:** collect votes, send result (*abort* or *commit*) to all shards
  - If *commit*, shards apply buffered writes
  - All shards release locks
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lock_X(A)</th>
<th>&lt;granted&gt;</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Read(A)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>A := A-50</td>
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<tr>
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Is this a 2PL schedule? 
No

Is this a serializable schedule? 
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Is this a 2PL schedule?
Yes, and it is serializable

Is this a Strict 2PL schedule?
No, cascading aborts possible
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Is this a 2PL schedule?
Yes, and it is serializable

Is this a Strict 2PL schedule?
Yes, cascading aborts not possible