Module 5: XML Modeling & Storage

The major aspects of storing XML include

- Concepts: Data and Document Centrism
- Storage
- Mapping to relational schemas
- SQL/XML

Modern Information Systems

- Three legs of modern software systems
  - Documents: as in XML
  - Tuples: as in the information stored in relational databases
  - Objects: as in programming languages
- A lot of effort goes into managing translations among these at the level of programming
- But deeper challenges remain . . .
Data-Centric View: 1

```xml
<relation name='Student'>
  <tuple>
    <attr1>V11</attr1>
    
    ...
    
    <attrn>V1n</attrn>
  </tuple>
  ...
</relation>
```

- Extract and store via mapping to DB model
- Regular, homogeneous structure

Data-Centric View: 2

- Ideally, no mixed content: an element contains text or subelements, not both
- Any mixed content would be templatic, i.e.,
  - Generated from a database via suitable transformations
  - Generated via a form that a user or an application fills out
- Order among siblings likely irrelevant (as is order among relational columns)

Expensive if documents are repeatedly parsed and instantiated
Document-Centric View

- Irregular: doesn’t map well to a relation
- Heterogeneous data
- Depending on entire doc for application-specific meaning

Data- vs Document-Centric Views

- **Data-centric:** data is the main thing
  - XML simply renders the data for transport
  - Store as data
  - Convert to/from XML as needed
  - The structure is important

- **Document-centric:** documents are the main thing
  - Documents are complex (e.g., design documents) and irregular
  - Store documents wherever
  - Use DBMS where it facilitates performing important searches
Storing Documents in Databases

- Use character large objects (CLOBs) within DB: searchable only as text
- Store paths to external files containing docs
  - Simple, but no support for integrity
- Use some structured elements for easy search as well as unstructured clobss or files
- Heterogeneity complicates mappings to typed OO programming languages

Storing documents in their entirety may sometimes be necessary for external reasons, such as regulatory compliance

Database Features

- Storage: schema definition language
- Querying: query language
- Transactions: concurrency
- Recovery
Potential DBMS Types for XML: 1

- Object-oriented
  - Nice structure
  - Intellectual basis of many XML concepts, including schema representations and path expressions
  - Not highly popular in standalone products

- Relational
  - Limited structuring ability (1NF: each cell is atomic)
  - Extremely popular
  - Well optimized for flat queries

Potential DBMS Types for XML: 2

- Object relational: hybrids of above
  - Not highly popular in standalone products

- Custom XML stores or native XML databases
  - Emerging ideas: may lack core database features (e.g., recovery, ...)
  - Enable fancier content management systems

- Leading open source products:
  - Apache Xindice (server; XPath)
  - Berkeley DB XML (libraries; XQuery)
Quick Look at SQL

Structured Query Language

- **Data Definition Language**: CREATE TABLE
- **Data Manipulation Language**: SELECT, INSERT, DELETE, UPDATE
- Basic paradigm for SELECT

  ```
  SELECT t1.column−1, t1.column−2 ... tm.column−n
  FROM table−1 t1, table−m tm
  WHERE t1.column−3=t4.column−4 AND ...
  ```

SQL 2003

Standardized by ANSI/ISO; next version after SQL 1999

- Includes SQL/XML: SQL extensions for XML (other aspects of SQL 2003 are not relevant here)
- Distinct from Microsoft’s SQLXML
- SQL/XML is included in products
  - By DBMS vendors, sometimes with different low-level details (MINUS versus EXCEPT)
  - DBMS-independent products
XML Type in SQL/XML

- A specialized data type for XML content; distinct from text
- Usable wherever an SQL data type is allowed: type of column, variable, tuple cell, and so on . . .
- Value rooted on the XML Root information item (described next)

XML Root Information Item: 1

Based on the XML InfoSet document information item, this can be an
  - XML root (as in SQL/XML)
  - XML element
  - XML attribute
  - XML parsed character data (text; aka PCDATA)
  - XML namespace declaration
  - XML processing instruction
  - XML comment
And some more possibilities from the InfoSet . . .
XML Root Information Item: 2

- Unlike the XML InfoSet root (which allows exactly one child element), this allows zero or more children
  - Partial results need not be documents
- IS DOCUMENT: a predicate that checks if the argument XML value has a single root
- An XML value can be
  - NULL, as usual for SQL
  - An XML root item, including whatever it includes

SQL/XML Builtin Operators

- `xmlparse()`: maps a string (char, varchar, clob) to a value of type XML (stripping whitespace by default)
- `xmlserialize()`: maps a value of type XML to a string
- `xmlconcat()`: combines values into a forest
- `xmlroot()`: create or modify the root node of an XML value
SQL/XML Publishing Functions: 1

These are templates that go into a SELECT query; all with names that begin “xml”

- `xmlelement(name 'Song', ·)
  - Needs a value: an SQL column or expression or an attribute or an element
  - Yields a value (an element)
  - Can be nested, of course

- `xmlattributes(column [AS cname], column [AS cname], . . . )
  - Creates XML attributes from the columns
  - Inserts into the surrounding XML element

SQL/XML Publishing Functions: 2

- `xmlforest()
  - Creates XML elements from columns
  - Analogous to a node-set in XPath
  - Must be placed within an element; otherwise not well-formed XML

- `xmlagg()`: combines a collection of rows, each with a single XML value into a single forest

- `xmlnamespaces()
- `xmlcomment()`: comment
- `xmlpi()`: processing instruction
SQL/XML Example: 1

```sql
SELECT xmlelement(Name 'Sgr',
    xmlattributes (z.sgrId AS student-ID),
    z.sgrName)
FROM Singer z
WHERE ...
```
yields something like

```xml
<Sgr student-ID='s1'>
  Eagles
</Sgr>
```

SQL/XML Example: 2

```sql
SELECT xmlelement(Name 'Sgr',
    xmlattributes (z.sgrId AS student-ID),
    z.sgrName,
    xmlelement(Name 'Song', 'Hotel'))
FROM Singer z
WHERE ...
```
yields something like

```xml
<Sgr student-ID='s1'>
  Eagles
  <Song>Hotel</Song>
</Sgr>
```
SQL/XML Mapping Rules

A number of low-level matters, which are conceptually trivial but complicate combining SQL and XML effectively; captured as mapping rules

- Lexical encodings in names and content
- Mapping datatypes in each direction, e.g., SQL date and XML Schema date
- Mapping SQL tables, schemas, catalogs to and from XML

Tool Support for SQL 2003

- Oracle 10g, IBM DB2, Sybase support it
- Apparently, Microsoft doesn’t or won’t [not sure]
- Oracle 9i release 2 supports similar constructs, but in proprietary syntax
CREATE TABLE singer ( sgrId VARCHAR2(9) NOT NULL,
sgrName VARCHAR2(15) NOT NULL,
sgrInfo SYS.XMLTYPE NULL,
CONSTRAINT singer_key
PRIMARY KEY (sgrId));

INSERT INTO singer VALUES ( 'Sgr-01', 'Eagles',
SYS.XMLTYPE.createXML('<genre>rock</genre>'));

INSERT INTO singer VALUES ( 'Sgr-04', 'Beatles',
SYS.XMLTYPE.createXML('<trivia><convictions>freedom</convictions>
<genre>rock</genre></trivia>'));

SELECT z.sgrName, z.sgrInfo.extract('/genre/text()').getGlobVal()
FROM singer z;
Oracle 9i SQL/XML: 3

SELECT z.sgrName, z.sgrInfo.extract('//genre/text()').getClobVal()
FROM singer z
WHERE z.sgrInfo.extract('//genre/text()').getStringVal() like 'r%';

SELECT z.sgrName, z.sgrInfo.extract('//genre/text()').getClobVal()
FROM singer z
WHERE z.sgrInfo.existsNode('//genre') = 1;

Oracle 9i SQL/XML: 4

SELECT SYS_XMLAGG(SYS_XMLGEN(z.sgrName),
               SYS.XMLGENFORMATTYPE.createformat('FooList'))
               .getClobVal()
FROM singer z
WHERE z.sgrId IS NOT NULL
GROUP BY z.sgrName;