Consistency and Replication

• Today:
  – Consistency models
    • Data-centric consistency models
    • Client-centric consistency models

Why replicate?

• Data replication versus compute replication

• Data replication: common technique in distributed systems
• Reliability
  – If one replica is unavailable or crashes, use another
  – Protect against corrupted data
• Performance
  – Scale with size of the distributed system (replicated web servers)
  – Scale in geographically distributed systems (web proxies)
Replication Issues

• When to replicate?
• How many replicas to create?
• Where should the replicas located?

• Will return to these issues later (WWW discussion)
• Today: how to maintain consistency?
• Key issue: need to maintain consistency of replicated data
  – If one copy is modified, others become inconsistent

Object Replication

• Approach 1: application is responsible for replication
  – Application needs to handle consistency issues
• Approach 2: system (middleware) handles replication
  – Consistency issues are handled by the middleware
  – Simplifies application development but makes object-specific solutions harder
Replication and Scaling

• Replication and caching used for system scalability
• Multiple copies:
  – Improves performance by reducing access latency
  – But higher network overheads of maintaining consistency
  – Example: object is replicated $N$ times
    • Read frequency $R$, write frequency $W$
    • If $R << W$, high consistency overhead and wasted messages
    • Consistency maintenance is itself an issue
      – What semantics to provide?
      – Tight consistency requires globally synchronized clocks!

• Solution: loosen consistency requirements
  – Variety of consistency semantics possible

Data-Centric Consistency Models

• Consistency model (aka *consistency semantics*)
  – Contract between processes and the data store
    • If processes obey certain rules, data store will work correctly
  – All models attempt to return the results of the last write for a read operation
    • Differ in how “last” write is determined/defined
Strict Consistency

• Any read always returns the result of the most recent write
  – Implicitly assumes the presence of a global clock
  – A write is immediately visible to all processes
    • Difficult to achieve in real systems (network delays can be variable)

Sequential Consistency

• Sequential consistency: weaker than strict consistency
  – Assumes all operations are executed in some sequential order and each process issues operations in program order
    • Any valid interleaving is allowed
    • All agree on the same interleaving
    • Each process preserves its program order
    • Nothing is said about “most recent write”
Linearizability

• Assumes sequential consistency and
  – If TS(x) < TS(y) then OP(x) should precede OP(y) in the sequence
  – Stronger than sequential consistency
  – Difference between linearizability and serializability?
    • Granularity: reads/writes versus transactions

• Example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Process P1</th>
<th>Process P2</th>
<th>Process P3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>x = 1;</td>
<td>y = 1;</td>
<td>z = 1;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>print (y, z);</td>
<td>print (x, z);</td>
<td>print (x, y);</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Linearizability Example

• Four valid execution sequences for the processes of the previous slide. The vertical axis is time.

<table>
<thead>
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<th>x = 1;</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>print ((y, z);</td>
<td>y = 1;</td>
<td>z = 1;</td>
<td>x = 1;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>y = 1;</td>
<td>print (x, z);</td>
<td>print (x, y);</td>
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<tr>
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<td>print (y, z);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>z = 1;</td>
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<td>x = 1;</td>
<td>z = 1;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>print (x, y);</td>
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</table>

Prints: 001011, Prints: 101011, Prints: 010111, Prints: 111111
Signature: 001011 (a), Signature: 101011 (b), Signature: 110101 (c), Signature: 111111 (d)
Causal consistency

- Causally related writes must be seen by all processes in the same order.
  - Concurrent writes may be seen in different orders on different machines

\begin{itemize}
\item\begin{verbatim}
P1: W(x)a
P2: R(x)a W(x)b
P3: R(x)b R(x)a
P4: R(x)a R(x)b
\end{verbatim}
\end{itemize}
Not permitted

\begin{itemize}
\item\begin{verbatim}
P1: W(x)a
P2: W(x)b
P3: R(x)b R(x)a
P4: R(x)a R(x)b
\end{verbatim}
\end{itemize}
Permitted

Other models

- FIFO consistency: writes from a process are seen by others in the same order. Writes from different processes may be seen in different order (even if causally related)
  - Relaxes causal consistency
  - Simple implementation: tag each write by (Proc ID, seq #)
- Even FIFO consistency may be too strong!
  - Requires all writes from a process be seen in order
- Assume use of critical sections for updates
  - Send final result of critical section everywhere
  - Do not worry about propagating intermediate results
    - Assume presence of synchronization primitives to define semantics
Other Models

Use granularity of critical sections, instead of individual read/write

• Weak consistency
  – Accesses to synchronization variables associated with a data store are sequentially consistent
  – No operation on a synchronization variable is allowed to be performed until all previous writes have been completed everywhere
  – No read or write operation on data items are allowed to be performed until all previous operations to synchronization variables have been performed.

• Entry and release consistency
  – Assume shared data are made consistent at entry or exit points of critical sections

Summary of Data-centric Consistency Models

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consistency</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strict</td>
<td>Absolute time ordering of all shared accesses matters.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linearizability</td>
<td>All processes must see all shared accesses in the same order. Accesses are furthermore ordered according to a (nonunique) global timestamp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sequential</td>
<td>All processes see all shared accesses in the same order. Accesses are not ordered in time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Causal</td>
<td>All processes see causally-related shared accesses in the same order.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIFO</td>
<td>All processes see writes from each other in the order they were used. Writes from different processes may not always be seen in that order</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
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<tr>
<td>Weak</td>
<td>Shared data can be counted on to be consistent only after a synchronization is done</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Release</td>
<td>Shared data are made consistent when a critical region is exited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entry</td>
<td>Shared data pertaining to a critical region are made consistent when a critical region is entered.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Eventual Consistency

• Many systems: one or few processes perform updates
  – How frequently should these updates be made available to other read-only processes?
• Examples:
  – DNS: single naming authority per domain
  – Only naming authority allowed updates (no write-write conflicts)
  – How should read-write conflicts (consistency) be addressed?
  – NIS: user information database in Unix systems
    • Only sys-admins update database, users only read data
    • Only user updates are changes to password

Eventual Consistency

• Assume a replicated database with few updaters and many readers
• Eventual consistency: in absence of updates, all replicas converge towards identical copies
  – Only requirement: an update should eventually propagate to all replicas
  – Cheap to implement: no or infrequent write-write conflicts
  – Things work fine so long as user accesses same replica
  – What if they don’t:
Client-centric Consistency Models

• Assume read operations by a single process $P$ at two different local copies of the same data store
  – Four different consistency semantics

• Monotonic reads
  – Once read, subsequent reads on that data items return same or more recent values

• Monotonic writes
  – A write must be propagated to all replicas before a successive write by the same process
  – Resembles FIFO consistency (writes from same process are processed in same order)

• Read your writes: read(x) always returns write(x) by that process
• Writes follow reads: write(x) following read(x) will take place on same or more recent version of x

Epidemic Protocols

• Used in Bayou system from Xerox PARC
• Bayou: weakly connected replicas
  – Useful in mobile computing (mobile laptops)
  – Useful in wide area distributed databases (weak connectivity)
• Based on theory of epidemics (spreading infectious diseases)
  – Upon an update, try to “infect” other replicas as quickly as possible
  – Pair-wise exchange of updates (like pair-wise spreading of a disease)
  – Terminology:
    • Infective store: store with an update it is willing to spread
    • Susceptible store: store that is not yet updated
• Many algorithms possible to spread updates
Spreading an Epidemic

- **Anti-entropy**
  - Server $P$ picks a server $Q$ at random and exchanges updates
  - Three possibilities: only push, only pull, both push and pull
  - Claim: A pure push-based approach does not help spread updates quickly (Why?)
    - Pull or initial push with pull work better
- **Rumor mongering** (aka *gossiping*)
  - Upon receiving an update, $P$ tries to push to $Q$
  - If $Q$ already received the update, stop spreading with prob $1/k$
  - Analogous to “hot” gossip items => stop spreading if “cold”
  - Does not guarantee that all replicas receive updates
    - Chances of staying susceptible: $s = e^{-(k+1)(1-s)}$

Removing Data

- Deletion of data items is hard in epidemic protocols
- Example: server deletes data item $x$
  - No state information is preserved
    - Can’t distinguish between a deleted copy and no copy!
- Solution: death certificates
  - Treat deletes as updates and spread a death certificate
    - Mark copy as deleted but don’t delete
    - Need an eventual clean up
      - Clean up dormant death certificates