Relational Query Optimization

Module 4, Lectures 3 and 4
Overview of Query Optimization

❖ **Plan**: Tree of R.A. ops, with choice of alg for each op.
  – Each operator typically implemented using a `pull' interface: when an operator is `pulled' for the next output tuples, it `pulls' on its inputs and computes them.

❖ Two main issues:
  – For a given query, what plans are considered?
    ✦ Algorithm to search plan space for cheapest (estimated) plan.
  – How is the cost of a plan estimated?

❖ Ideally: Want to find best plan. Practically: Avoid worst plans!

❖ We will study the System R approach.
Highlights of System R Optimizer

❖ Impact:
  – Most widely used currently; works well for < 10 joins.

❖ Cost estimation: Approximate art at best.
  – Statistics, maintained in system catalogs, used to estimate cost of operations and result sizes.
  – Considers combination of CPU and I/O costs.

❖ Plan Space: Too large, must be pruned.
  – Only the space of left-deep plans is considered.
    ♦ Left-deep plans allow output of each operator to be pipelined into the next operator without storing it in a temporary relation.
  – Cartesian products avoided.
Schema for Examples

Sailors \((\text{sid}: \text{integer}, \text{sname}: \text{string}, \text{rating}: \text{integer}, \text{age}: \text{real})\)
Reserves \((\text{sid}: \text{integer}, \text{bid}: \text{integer}, \text{day}: \text{dates}, \text{rname}: \text{string})\)

- Similar to old schema; \textit{rname} added for variations.
- Reserves:
  - Each tuple is 40 bytes long, 100 tuples per page, 1000 pages.
- Sailors:
  - Each tuple is 50 bytes long, 80 tuples per page, 500 pages.
**Motivating Example**

```sql
SELECT S.sname
FROM Reserves R, Sailors S
WHERE R.sid=S.sid AND R.bid=100 AND S.rating>5
```

- **Cost:** 500+500*1000 I/Os
- **By no means the worst plan!**
- **Misses several opportunities:** selections could have been `pushed` earlier, no use is made of any available indexes, etc.
- **Goal of optimization:** To find more efficient plans that compute the same answer.
Alternative Plans 1 (No Indexes)

- **Main difference:** push selects.

- **With 5 buffers, cost of plan:**
  - Scan Reserves (1000) + write temp T1 (10 pages, if we have 100 boats, uniform distribution).
  - Scan Sailors (500) + write temp T2 (250 pages, if we have 10 ratings).
  - Sort T1 (2*2*10), sort T2 (2*3*250), merge (10+250)
  - Total: 3560 page I/Os.

- If we used BNL join, join cost = 10+4*250, total cost = 2770.

- If we `push` projections, T1 has only sid, T2 only sid and sname:
  - T1 fits in 3 pages, cost of BNL drops to under 250 pages, total < 2000.
Alternative Plans 2 With Indexes

- With clustered index on bid of Reserves, we get $100,000/100 = 1000$ tuples on $1000/100 = 10$ pages.

- INL with pipelining (outer is not materialized).
  - Projecting out unnecessary fields from outer doesn’t help.

- Join column sid is a key for Sailors.
  - At most one matching tuple, unclustered index on sid OK.

- Decision not to push rating>5 before the join is based on availability of sid index on Sailors.

- Cost: Selection of Reserves tuples (10 I/Os); for each, must get matching Sailors tuple (1000*1.2); total 1210 I/Os.
Query Blocks: Units of Optimization

- An SQL query is parsed into a collection of *query blocks*, and these are optimized one block at a time.
- Nested blocks are usually treated as calls to a subroutine, made once per outer tuple. (This is an oversimplification, but serves for now.)
- For each block, the plans considered are:
  - All available access methods, for each reln in FROM clause.
  - All *left-deep join trees* (i.e., all ways to join the relations one-at-a-time, with the inner reln in the FROM clause, considering all reln permutations and join methods.)
Cost Estimation

- For each plan considered, must estimate cost:
  - Must estimate cost of each operation in plan tree.
    - Depends on input cardinalities.
    - We’ve already discussed how to estimate the cost of operations (sequential scan, index scan, joins, etc.)
  - Must estimate size of result for each operation in tree!
    - Use information about the input relations.
    - For selections and joins, assume independence of predicates.

- We’ll discuss the System R cost estimation approach.
  - Very inexact, but works ok in practice.
  - More sophisticated techniques known now.
Statistics and Catalogs

- Need information about the relations and indexes involved. *Catalogs* typically contain at least:
  - # tuples (NTuples) and # pages (NPages) for each relation.
  - # distinct key values (NKeys) and NPages for each index.
  - Index height, low/high key values (Low/High) for each tree index.

- Catalogs updated periodically.
  - Updating whenever data changes is too expensive; lots of approximation anyway, so slight inconsistency ok.

- More detailed information (e.g., histograms of the values in some field) are sometimes stored.
Size Estimation and Reduction Factors

- Consider a query block:
  ```sql
  SELECT attribute list
  FROM relation list
  WHERE term1 AND ... AND termk
  ```

- Maximum # tuples in result is the product of the cardinalities of relations in the FROM clause.

- Reduction factor (RF) associated with each term reflects the impact of the term in reducing result size. Result cardinality = Max # tuples * product of all RF’s.
  - Implicit assumption that terms are independent!
  - Term col=value has RF \( 1/N\text{Keys}(I) \), given index I on col
  - Term \( col1=col2 \) has RF \( 1/\text{MAX}(N\text{Keys}(I1), N\text{Keys}(I2)) \)
  - Term \( col>value \) has RF \( (\text{High}(I)-value)/(\text{High}(I)-\text{Low}(I)) \)
Relational Algebra Equivalences

- Allow us to choose different join orders and to `push’ selections and projections ahead of joins.

  - **Selections:** \( \sigma_{c_1 \land \ldots \land c_n}(R) \equiv \sigma_{c_1}(\ldots \sigma_{c_n}(R)) \) (Cascade)

  \[
  \sigma_{c_1}(\sigma_{c_2}(R)) \equiv \sigma_{c_2}(\sigma_{c_1}(R))
  \] (Commutative)

  - **Projections:** \( \pi_{a_1}(R) \equiv \pi_{a_1}(\ldots (\pi_{a_n}(R))) \) (Cascade)

  - **Joins:** \( R \bowtie (S \bowtie T) \equiv (R \bowtie S) \bowtie T \) (Associative)

    \( (R \bowtie S) \equiv (S \bowtie R) \) (Commutative)

  - Show that: \( R \bowtie (S \bowtie T) \equiv (T \bowtie R) \bowtie S \)
More Equivalences

- A projection commutes with a selection that only uses attributes retained by the projection.
- Selection between attributes of the two arguments of a cross-product converts cross-product to a join.
- A selection on just attributes of R commutes with R \( \bowtie \) S. (i.e., \( \sigma (R \bowtie S) \equiv \sigma (R) \bowtie S \))
- Similarly, if a projection follows a join \( R \bowtie S \), we can `push' it by retaining only attributes of R (and S) that are needed for the join or are kept by the projection.
Enumeration of Alternative Plans

- There are two main cases:
  - Single-relation plans
  - Multiple-relation plans

- For queries over a single relation, queries consist of a combination of selects, projects, and aggregate ops:
  - Each available access path (file scan / index) is considered, and the one with the least estimated cost is chosen.
  - The different operations are essentially carried out together (e.g., if an index is used for a selection, projection is done for each retrieved tuple, and the resulting tuples are pipelined into the aggregate computation).
Cost Estimates for Single-Relation Plans

- Index I on primary key matches selection:
  - Cost is $\text{Height}(I) + 1$ for a B+ tree, about 1.2 for hash index.

- Clustered index I matching one or more selects:
  - $(\text{NPages}(I) + \text{NPages}(R)) \times \text{product of RF’s of matching selects}$.

- Non-clustered index I matching one or more selects:
  - $(\text{NPages}(I) + \text{NTuples}(R)) \times \text{product of RF’s of matching selects}$.

- Sequential scan of file:
  - $\text{NPages}(R)$.

☞ **Note:** Typically, no duplicate elimination on projections!
(Exception: Done on answers if user says DISTINCT.)
Example

❖ If we have an index on rating:
  – \( (1/N\text{Keys}(I)) \times \text{NTuples}(R) = (1/10) \times 40000 \) tuples retrieved.
  – Clustered index: \( (1/N\text{Keys}(I)) \times (N\text{Pages}(I)+N\text{Pages}(R)) = (1/10) \times (50+500) \) pages are retrieved. (This is the cost.)
  – Unclustered index: \( (1/N\text{Keys}(I)) \times (N\text{Pages}(I)+\text{NTuples}(R)) = (1/10) \times (50+40000) \) pages are retrieved.

❖ If we have an index on sid:
  – Would have to retrieve all tuples/pages. With a clustered index, the cost is 50+500, with unclustered index, 50+40000.

❖ Doing a file scan:
  – We retrieve all file pages (500).

```
SELECT S.sid
FROM Sailors S
WHERE S.rating=8
```
Queries Over Multiple Relations

- Fundamental decision in System R: only left-deep join trees are considered.
  - As the number of joins increases, the number of alternative plans grows rapidly; we need to restrict the search space.
  - Left-deep trees allow us to generate all fully pipelined plans.
  - Intermediate results not written to temporary files.
  - Not all left-deep trees are fully pipelined (e.g., SM join).
Enumeration of Left-Deep Plans

- Left-deep plans differ only in the order of relations, the access method for each relation, and the join method for each join.

- Enumerated using N passes (if N relations joined):
  - Pass 1: Find best 1-relation plan for each relation.
  - Pass 2: Find best way to join result of each 1-relation plan (as outer) to another relation. (*All 2-relation plans.*)
  - Pass N: Find best way to join result of a (N-1)-relation plan (as outer) to the N’th relation. (*All N-relation plans.*)

- For each subset of relations, retain only:
  - Cheapest plan overall, plus
  - Cheapest plan for each *interesting order* of the tuples.
Enumeration of Plans (Contd.)

- ORDER BY, GROUP BY, aggregates etc. handled as a final step, using either an `interestingly ordered’ plan or an additional sorting operator.
- An N-1 way plan is not combined with an additional relation unless there is a join condition between them, unless all predicates in WHERE have been used up.
  - i.e., avoid Cartesian products if possible.
- In spite of pruning plan space, this approach is still exponential in the # of tables.
Example

❖ Pass 1:

– **Sailors**: B+ tree matches $rating > 5$, and is probably cheapest. However, if this selection is expected to retrieve a lot of tuples, and index is unclustered, file scan may be cheaper.
  
  ◆ Still, B+ tree plan kept (because tuples are in $rating$ order).

– **Reserves**: B+ tree on $bid$ matches $bid = 500$; cheapest.

❖ Pass 2:

– We consider each plan retained from Pass 1 as the outer, and consider how to join it with the (only) other relation.

  ◆ *e.g., Reserves as outer*: Hash index can be used to get Sailors tuples that satisfy $sid =$ outer tuple’s $sid$ value.
Nested Queries

- Nested block is optimized independently, with the outer tuple considered as providing a selection condition.
- Outer block is optimized with the cost of `calling` nested block computation taken into account.
- Implicit ordering of these blocks means that some good strategies are not considered. The non-nested version of the query is typically optimized better.

```
SELECT S.sname
FROM Sailors S
WHERE EXISTS
  (SELECT * 
   FROM Reserves R
   WHERE R.bid=103
   AND R.sid=S.sid)
```

**Nested block to optimize:**
```
SELECT * 
FROM Reserves R
WHERE R.bid=103
AND S.sid = outer value
```

**Equivalent non-nested query:**
```
SELECT S.sname
FROM Sailors S, Reserves R
WHERE S.sid=R.sid
AND R.bid=103
```
Summary

- Query optimization is an important task in a relational DBMS.
- Must understand optimization in order to understand the performance impact of a given database design (relations, indexes) on a workload (set of queries).
- Two parts to optimizing a query:
  - Consider a set of alternative plans.
    - Must prune search space; typically, left-deep plans only.
  - Must estimate cost of each plan that is considered.
    - Must estimate size of result and cost for each plan node.
    - **Key issues**: Statistics, indexes, operator implementations.
Summary (Contd.)

- Single-relation queries:
  - All access paths considered, cheapest is chosen.
  - Issues: Selections that match index, whether index key has all needed fields and/or provides tuples in a desired order.

- Multiple-relation queries:
  - All single-relation plans are first enumerated.
    - Selections/projections considered as early as possible.
  - Next, for each 1-relation plan, all ways of joining another relation (as inner) are considered.
  - Next, for each 2-relation plan that is `retained’, all ways of joining another relation (as inner) are considered, etc.
  - At each level, for each subset of relations, only best plan for each interesting order of tuples is `retained’.