The ANSI-SPARC Architecture

- Textbook (Ritchie): Chapter 2

- To satisfy these needs, the architecture of most commercial DBMSs is based on the ANSI-SPARC architecture (1975).
  - American National Standards Institute (ANSI)
  - Standards Planning And Requirements Committee (SPARC)

- Although this never became a formal standard, it is useful to help understand the functionality of a typical DBMS.

- The ANSI-SPARC model of a database identifies three distinct levels at which data items can be described.

- These levels form a three-level architecture comprising:
  - an external level,
  - a conceptual level, and
  - an internal level.
The Three-Level Architecture - II

- The objective of the three-level architecture is to separate the users’ view(s) of the database from the way that it is physically represented. This is desirable for the following reasons:
  - 1. It allows independent customised user views.
     - Each user should be able to access the same data, but have a different customised view of the data. These should be independent: changes to one view should not affect others.
  - 2. It hides the physical storage details from users.
     - Users should not have to deal with physical database storage details. They should be allowed to work with the data itself, without concern for how it is physically stored.
  - More ...

The Three-Level Architecture - III

- 3. The database administrator should be able to change the database storage structures without affecting the users’ views.
  - From time to time rationalisations or other changes to the structure of an organisation’s data will be required.
- 4. The internal structure of the database should be unaffected by changes to the physical aspects of the storage.
  - For example, a changeover to a new disk.
- 5. The database administrator should be able to change the conceptual or global structure of the database without affecting the users.
  - This should be possible while still maintaining the desired individual users’ views.

The External Level

- The external level represents the user’s view of the database.
  - It consists of a number of different views of the database, potentially one for each user.
- It describes the part of the database that is relevant to a particular user.
  - For example, large organisations may have finance and stock control departments.
  - Workers in finance will not usually view stock details as they are more concerned with the accounting side of things, for example.
  - Thus, workers in each department will require a different user interface to the information stored in the database.
- Views may provide different representations of the same data.
  - For example, some users might view dates in the form (day/month/year) while others prefer (year/month/day).
- Some views might include derived or calculated data.
  - For example, a person’s age might be calculated from their date of birth since storing their age would require it to be updated each year.
The Conceptual Level

- The conceptual level describes what data is stored in the database and the relationships among the data.
- It is a complete view of the data requirements of the organisation that is independent of any storage considerations.
- The conceptual level represents:
  - All entities, their attributes, and their relationships.
  - The constraints on the data.
  - Security and integrity information.
- The conceptual level supports each external view, in that any data available to a user must be contained in, or derivable from, the conceptual level.
- The description of the conceptual level must not contain any storage-dependent details.

The Internal Level

- The internal level covers the physical representation of the database on the computer (and may be specified in some programming language).
- It describes how the data is stored in the database in terms of particular data structures and file organisations.
- The internal level is concerned with:
  - Allocating storage space for data and indexes.
  - Describing the forms that records will take when stored.
  - Record placement. Assembling records into files.
  - Data compression and encryption techniques.
- The internal level interfaces with the OS to place data on the storage devices, build the indexes, retrieve the data, etc.
- Below the internal level is the physical level which is managed by the OS under the direction of the DBMS. It deals with the mechanics of physically storing data on a device such as a disk.

Differences between the Levels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conceptual Level</th>
<th>Internal Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>StaffNo</td>
<td>StaffNo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fname</td>
<td>Name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lname</td>
<td>Name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DOB</td>
<td>Age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salary</td>
<td>Salary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BranchNo</td>
<td>BranchNo</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Struct STAFF {
    int StaffNo;
    int BranchNo;
    char Fname[15];
    char Lname[15];
    struct date DateOfBirth;
    float Salary;
    struct STAFF *next; // pointer to next record
};
Database Schemas

- The overall description of a database is called the database schema.
- There are three different types of schema corresponding to the three levels in the ANSI-SPARC architecture.
- The external schemas describe the different external views of the data.
  - There may be many external schemas for a given database.
- The conceptual schema describes all the data items and relationships between them, together with integrity constraints (later).
  - There is only one conceptual schema per database.
- At the lowest level, the internal schema contains definitions of the stored records, the methods of representation, the data fields, and indexes.
  - There is only one internal schema per database.

Mapping Between Schemas

- The DBMS is responsible for mapping between the three types of schema (i.e. how they actually correspond with each other).
- It must also check the schemas for consistency.
  - Each external schema must be derivable from the conceptual schema.
- Each external schema is related to the conceptual schema by the external/conceptual mapping.
- This enables the DBMS to map data in the user’s view onto the relevant part of the conceptual schema.
- A conceptual/internal mapping relates the conceptual schema to the internal schema.
- This enables the DBMS to find the actual record or combination of records in physical storage that constitute a logical record in the conceptual schema.

Example of the Different Levels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conceptual Level</th>
<th>External Level</th>
<th>Internal Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>StaffNo</td>
<td>Fname</td>
<td>StaffNo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lname</td>
<td>BranchNo</td>
<td>Lname</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Salary</td>
<td>Bno</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DateOfBirth</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff *next</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

```c
struct STAFF {
  int StaffNo;
  int BranchNo;
  char Fname[15];
  char Lname[15];
  struct date DateOfBirth;
  float Salary;
  struct STAFF *next; // pointer to next record
};
```
Notes on the Example

- The two external views are based on the conceptual view.
  - The Age field is derived from the DOB (Date of Birth) field.
  - The Sno field is mapped onto the StaffNo field of the conceptual record.
- The conceptual level is mapped onto the internal level.
- The internal level contains a physical description of the structure for the conceptual record expressed in a high-level language.
- Note that the order of the fields in the physical structure is different from that of the conceptual record.
- The physical structure contains a "pointer", next. This will be simply the memory address at which the next record is stored. Thus the set of staff records may be physically linked together to form a chain.

Data Independence -I

- A major objective of the ANSI-SPARC architecture is to provide data independence meaning that upper levels are isolated from changes to lower levels.
- There are two kinds of data independence:
  - Logical data independence refers to the immunity of external schemas to changes in the conceptual schema.
    - Changes to the conceptual schema (adding/removing entities, attributes, or relationships) should be possible without having to change existing external schemas or rewrite application programs.
  - Physical data independence refers to the immunity of the conceptual schema to changes in the internal schema.
    - Changes to the internal schema (using different storage structures or file organisations) should be possible without having to change the conceptual or external schemas.

Data Independence -II

- External/Conceptual mapping
- Conceptual/Internal mapping
- Logical data independence
- Physical data independence
Database Languages

• A DBMS typically provides a data sub-language with which the database and its various schemas can be manipulated.

• Data sub-languages consist of two parts:
  – Data Definition Language (DDL)
  – Data Manipulation Language (DML)

• The DDL is used to specify the database schema and the DML is used to both update the database and extract information from it.

• They are called sub-languages because they do not include all of the facilities that one might expect of a high-level language.
  – i.e. There are no loops or conditional statements, etc.

• Thus, many systems allow the sub-language to be embedded in a high-level language like COBOL, Fortran, Pascal, Ada, or C.

• Most sub-languages also provide interactive commands that can be entered directly at a terminal and do not require embedding.

The Data Definition Language

• The DDL is a descriptive language that allows the user to describe and name the entities required and the relationships that may exist between the different entities.

• The database schema is specified by a set of definitions expressed in the DDL.

• The DDL may be used only to define a schema or modify an existing one. It cannot be used to manipulate data.

• Theoretically, there could be a different DDL for each type of database schema (external, conceptual, internal).

• However, in practice, the DBMS typically provides a single comprehensive DDL that allows specification of at least the external and conceptual schemas.

The Data Manipulation Language

• The DML is a language that provides a set of operations supporting the manipulation of the data held in the database.

• Data manipulation operations usually include:
  – Inserting new data or Deleting old data.
  – Modifying or Retrieving existing data.

• There are two types of DML which are distinguished by their underlying data retrieval constructs:

• With procedural DMLs, the programmer specifies what data is required and how to obtain it.
  – In this case, information retrieval is rather like writing a program.

• With non-procedural DMLs, the user specifies what data is to be retrieved in a single statement without specifying how the data should be obtained.
  – In this case, the DBMS is responsible for translating the DML statement into an optimal series of data manipulation operations.
Fourth Generation Languages (4GLs)

- There is no consensus about what constitutes a 4GL.
- It is essentially a shorthand programming language.
- For our purposes, 4GLs are generally non-procedural in nature.
- That is, they allow the user to specify what must be done without saying how it should be done.
  - This is very different from using a conventional language like Java (a 3GL) in which you have to specify how to do things.
  - With a 4GL, the how part is determined by the system.
- Thus, 4GL tools are usually generators or wizards of some sort.
  - It is a bit like having your program written automatically.
- Examples include:
  - Form/Report generators
  - Application generators

Data Models - I

- A data model comprises three components:
  - A structural part, consisting of a set of rules according to which databases can be constructed.
  - A manipulative part, defining the types of operations that are allowed on the data.
  - Possibly a set of integrity rules, which ensure that the stored data is accurate.
- Many data models have been proposed over the years.
  - Some are used to describe data at the external and conceptual levels, while others describe data at the internal level.
  - Some have greater success than others in hiding from end-users the underlying details of the physical storage of data.

Data Models - II

- A database schema is usually expressed using the DDL of a particular DBMS.
- However, this type of language is too low-level to describe the data requirements of an organisation in a readily understandable manner.
- People require a higher-level description of the schema that is organised using the concepts of a particular data model.
- A data model is an integrated collection of concepts for describing data, relationships between data, and constraints on the data in an organisation.
Data Models - III

- Examples:
  - Network Model
  - Hierarchical Model
  - Relational Model
    - (Entity-Relationship Model)
  - Object-Oriented Model
  - Object-Relational Model

- The first two are older than the others, and by far the majority of database systems these days are based on the relational model.
- The last two are currently of interest, and are increasingly being used. As their names suggest, they incorporate the object-oriented approach to data representation.
- We shall concentrate on the relational model.