Making Postgres Central in Your Data Center

BRUCE MOMJIAN

This talk explores why Postgres is uniquely capable of functioning as a central database in enterprises. *Title concept from Josh Berkus*

https://momjian.us/presentations

Creative Commons Attribution License

Last updated: June 2024
Outline

1. Object-relational (extensibility)
2. NoSQL
3. Data analytics
4. Foreign data wrappers (database federation)
5. Central role
1. Object-Relational (Extensibility)

Object-relational databases like Postgres support classes and inheritance, but most importantly, they define database functionality as objects that can be easily manipulated.

How Is this Accomplished?

http://www.postgresql.org/docs/current/catalogs.html
CREATE EXTENSION isn;

\dT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schema</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>public</td>
<td>ean13</td>
<td>International European Article Number (EAN13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>public</td>
<td>ismn</td>
<td>International Standard Music Number (ISMN)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>public</td>
<td>ismn13</td>
<td>International Standard Music Number 13 (ISMN13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>public</td>
<td>issn</td>
<td>International Standard Serial Number (ISSN)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>public</td>
<td>issn13</td>
<td>International Standard Serial Number 13 (ISSN13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>public</td>
<td>upc</td>
<td>Universal Product Code (UPC)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

http://www.postgresql.org/docs/current/isn.html
ISBN Behaves Just Like Built-In Types

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>pg_catalog</th>
<th>integer</th>
<th>-2 billion to 2 billion integer, 4-byte storage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
The System Catalog Entry for INTEGER

SELECT * FROM pg_type WHERE typname = 'int4';

| Record 1 |--------|
|----------|
| typname   | int4   |
| typnamespace | 11    |
| typowner  | 10     |
| typlen    | 4      |
| typbyval  | t      |
| typtype   | b      |
| typcategory | N     |
| typispreferred | f    |
| typisdefined | t     |
| typdelim  | ,      |
| typrelid  | 0      |
| typelem   | 0      |
| typarray  | 1007   |
| typinput  | int4in |
| typoutput | int4out|
| typreceive| int4recv|
| typsend   | int4send|
| typmodin  | -      |
| typmodout | -      |
| typanalyze| -      |
### The System Catalog Entry for ISBN

```
SELECT * FROM pg_type WHERE typname = 'isbn';
- [ RECORD 1 ]-------------------
typtypename | isbn
typnamespace | 2200
typowner | 10
typlen | 8
typbyval | t
typtypetype | b
typtypedefinition | U
typispreferred | f
typisdefined | t
typtypdelim | ,
typtypereference | 0
typtypeelem | 0
typtyparray | 16405
typtypinput | isbn_in
otypoutput | public.isn_out
otypreceive | -
typsend | -
typmodin | -
typmodout | -
typanalyze | -
...```
CREATE EXTENSION plpythonu;

\dL

List of languages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Owner</th>
<th>Trusted</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>plpgsql</td>
<td>postgres</td>
<td>t</td>
<td>PL/pgSQL procedural language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>plpythonu</td>
<td>postgres</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>PL/PythonU untrusted procedural language</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

http://www.postgresql.org/docs/current/plpython.html
Available Languages

- PL/Java
- PL/Perl
- PL/pgSQL (like PL/SQL)
- PL/PHP
- PL/Python
- PL/R (like SPSS)
- PL/Ruby
- PL/Scheme
- PL/sh
- PL/Tcl
- PL/v8 (JavaScript)
- SPI (C)

http://www.postgresql.org/docs/current/external-pl.html
Specialized Indexing Methods

- BRIN
- BTree
- Hash
- GIN (generalized inverted index)
- GiST (generalized search tree)
- SP-GiST (space-partitioned GiST)

http://www.postgresql.org/docs/current/indexam.html

https://momjian.us/main/presentations/extended.html#indexing
Index Types Are Defined in the System Catalogs Too

```sql
SELECT amname FROM pg_am ORDER BY 1;

  amname
--------
    brin
    btree
    hash
    gin
    gist
    spgist
```

http://www.postgresql.org/docs/current/catalog-pg-am.html
Operators Have Similar Flexibility

Operators are function calls with left and right arguments of specified types:

\doS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schema</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Left arg type</th>
<th>Right arg type</th>
<th>Result type</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>...</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pg_catalog</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>integer</td>
<td>integer</td>
<td>integer</td>
<td>add</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\dfs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schema</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Result data type</th>
<th>Argument data types</th>
<th>Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>...</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pg_catalog</td>
<td>int4pl</td>
<td>integer</td>
<td>integer, integer</td>
<td>normal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Other Extensibility

- Aggregates are defined in pg_aggregate, `sum(int4)`
- Casts are defined in pg_cast, `int4(float8)`
Externally Developed Plug-Ins

- PostGIS (Geographical Information System)
- PL/v8 (server-side JavaScript)
- pgvector
- experimentation, e.g., full text search was originally externally developed
Offshoots of Postgres

- AlloyDB (GCP)
- Aurora (AWS)
- AsterDB
- CockroachDB
- Greenplum
- Informix
- Netezza
- ParAccel, Redshift
- Postgres XC
- Truviso
- Vertica
- Yahoo! Everest
- YugabyteDB

https://wiki.postgresql.org/wiki/PostgreSQL_derived_databases
http://de.slideshare.net/pgconf/elephant-roads-a-tour-of-postgres-forks
Offshoots of Postgres

https://raw.github.com/daamien/artwork/master/inkscape/PostgreSQL_timeline/timeline_postgresql.png

https://wiki.postgresql.org/wiki/PostgreSQL_derived_databases
Many databases treat extensions as special cases, with serious limitations. Postgres built-ins use the same API as extensions, so extensions operate just like built-in functionality.
Extensions and Built-In Facilities Behave the Same

Postgres System Tables

- sum()
- int4
- btree
- PL/pgSQL

Extensions

- ISN
- PostGIS
- PL/R
Why Extensibility Matters Today

- IoT
- AI
- documents
- GPS / GIS
- social media
- data warehouse
- web browser
- mobile apps
- relational

Red indicates traditional relational workloads.
2. NoSQL
NoSQL Types

There is no single NoSQL technology. They all take different approaches and have different features and drawbacks:

- Key-value stores, e.g., Redis
- Document databases, e.g., MongoDB (JSON)
- Columnar stores: Cassandra
- Graph databases: Neo4j
Why NoSQL Exists

Generally, NoSQL is optimized for:

- Auto-sharding
- Fast simple queries
- Flexible schemas
NoSQL Sacrifices

- A powerful query language
- A sophisticated query optimizer
- Data normalization
- Joins
- Referential integrity
- Durability
Are These Drawbacks Worth the Cost?

- **Difficult Reporting** Data must be brought to the client for analysis, e.g., no aggregates or data analysis functions. Schema-less data requires complex client-side knowledge for processing.

- **Complex Application Design** Without powerful query language and query optimizer, the client software is responsible for efficiently accessing data and for data consistency.

- **Durability** Administrators are responsible for data retention.
When Should NoSQL Be Used?

- Massive write scaling is required, more than a single server can provide
- Only simple data access pattern is required
- Additional resource allocation for development is acceptable
- Strong data retention or transactional guarantees are not required
- Unstructured duplicate data that greatly benefits from column compression
When Should Relational Storage Be Used?

- Easy administration
- Variable workloads and reporting
- Simplified application development
- Strong data retention
Postgres has many NoSQL features without the drawbacks:

- Schema-less data types, with sophisticated indexing support
- Transactional schema changes with rapid additional and removal of columns
- Durability by default, but controllable per-table or per-transaction
CREATE TABLE customer (id SERIAL, data JSONB);

INSERT INTO customer VALUES (DEFAULT, '{"name" : "Bill", "age" : 21}');

SELECT data->'name' FROM customer WHERE data->>>'age' = '21';

----------
"Bill"
BEGIN WORK;
ALTER TABLE customer ADD COLUMN debt_limit NUMERIC(10,2);
ALTER TABLE customer ADD COLUMN creation_date TIMESTAMP WITH TIME ZONE;
ALTER TABLE customer RENAME TO cust;
COMMIT;
3. Data Analytics

- SQL
  - aggregates, GROUPING SETS, ROLLUP, CUBE
  - window functions
  - common table expressions (CTE)
  - server-side languages, e.g., PL/R
- Performance
  - optimizer
  - bitmap heap scans
  - BRIN and bloom indexes
  - materialized views
  - just-in-time compilation (JIT)
- Large data sets
  - data partitioning
  - tablespaces
  - parallelism
  - sharding (in progress)

http://www.slideshare.net/PGExperts/really-big-elephants-postgresql-dw-15833438
Tables from multiple clusters can be collected and synchronized on one cluster using logical replication, and a single table can be broadcast to multiple clusters too.
Foreign data wrappers (SQL MED) allow queries to read and write data to foreign data sources. Foreign database support includes:

- CouchDB
- Informix
- MongoDB
- MySQL
- Neo4j
- Oracle
- Postgres
- Redis

Many of these, e.g., the Postgres foreign data wrapper, can push down WHERE clauses, joins, sorts, and aggregates.
Foreign Data Wrappers to Interfaces

- JDBC
- ODBC
- LDAP
Files
HTTP
AWS S3
Twitter
CREATE EXTENSION postgres_fdw;

CREATE SERVER postgres_fdw_test
FOREIGN DATA WRAPPER postgres_fdw
OPTIONS (host 'localhost', dbname 'fdw_test');

CREATE USER MAPPING FOR PUBLIC
SERVER postgres_fdw_test
OPTIONS (password '');

CREATE FOREIGN TABLE other_world (greeting TEXT)
SERVER postgres_fdw_test
OPTIONS (table_name 'world');

\det
List of foreign tables
Schema | Table | Server
--------+-------------+-------------------
public | other_world | postgres_fdw_test

Foreign Postgres server name in red; foreign table name in blue
Read and Read/Write Data Sources

- Postgres
  - ora_tab
  - mon_tab
  - tw_tab
- MongoDB
- Oracle
- Twitter
Postgres can rightly take a central place in the data center with its:

- Object-relation flexibility and extensibility
- NoSQL-like workloads
- Powerful data analytics capabilities
- Access to foreign data sources

No other database has all of these key components.
Conclusion

https://momjian.us/presentations

https://www.flickr.com/photos/kenny_barker/