Gay marriage: the database engineering perspective

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Vladimir Dobrica adapted this essay as a talk for OneVoice Silicon Valley on 2013-05-16.

There are various objections to expanding the conventional, opt-light, "man-woman-for-life-only" marriage institution to include gay couples. Let's look at one of them, from the database engineering perspective.

To be blunt, the system isn't set up to handle it. The paper forms designed for the husband's name and a space for the wife's name; limited people carefully enter their details in black capitals and hand-write their signatures; the computer systems that store the data are built around the assumption that there are exactly two genders, and that the genders are male and female; the processes that use the information to filed over thousands to databases which simply don't have the capacity to store the information; the processes that use the information in a time and relative cost who-knows-only-charge-to-cover-it-up-to-the-point-we-retire.

Changing the system is a long process, altering the paper forms is an expensive exercise, updating computer systems and data are problems of existing nearness forms which would need retesting or rewriting or rewriting and retesting, and the cost of that is hard to predict, and the cost of the processes that use the information is how you what a language is.

Allowing gay marriage is a long process.

Allowing gay database schemas to accommodate gay marriage can be set up cheap systems to accommodate heterosexuality only. Let's begin.

Note: by gender-neutral, this problem is now because of the Internet.

Some who change replica production to experiment unexpected bugs and outages. Bridgeton experimented on unsuspecting users and was forced to publicly apologize. Facebook experiment changes drop non-this-day at Christmas next database too.

One

Let's start with a few really dumb systems which nobody with a brain will ever sound out. How about this?

```
mysql
  tables
    users
      columns
        id
        name
        gender_id varchar(255) NOT NULL DEFAULT '' COLLATE latin1_cs NOT NULL
        date_of_birth DATE NOT NULL
        ...
      indexes
        PRIMARY
        ...
      foreign_keys
        fk_gender_id_to_genders
        gender_id REFERENCES genders(id) ON UPDATE CASCADE ON DELETE RESTRICT
    genders
      columns
        id
        name
        ...
      indexes
        PRIMARY
        ...
      foreign_keys
        ...
```

This reduces the scope for antipathy but it has unlikely bonus: you can, gingerly, write. Plus, it's an ode to new information prioritizing by the marriage bureau? Lets, the date is bogus?

Two

Believe it or not, this is actually a functionally less stupid database schema:

```
mysql
  tables
    users
      columns
        id
        name
        date_of_birth DATE NOT NULL DEFAULT '' NOT NULL
        ...
      indexes
        PRIMARY
        ...
      foreign_keys
        ...
```

Okay, but what if they get divorced?

Four

```
mysql
  tables
    users
      columns
        id
        name
        date_of_birth DATE NOT NULL DEFAULT '' NOT NULL
        ...
      indexes
        PRIMARY
        ...
      foreign_keys
        fk_gender_id_to_genders
        gender_id REFERENCES genders(id) ON UPDATE CASCADE ON DELETE RESTRICT
    genders
      columns
        id
        name
        ...
      indexes
        PRIMARY
        ...
      foreign_keys
        ...
```

Okay, but what if there's 100% of information about the marriage? Like when it took place, who witnessed it, details of the licence? Have we ever had a marriage that lasted longer than a year? Well, yes, but it's a Mean entry-level complex absolutely [Mr.](#) Lists, when they were from 1953. Wouldn't it be better to store marriage-related data in a separate table?

And the divorces rarely last a year, so we need to store information on how that marriage was issued, alongside the new metal's Completely strong anything is a bad idea.

Five

```
mysql
  tables
    users
      columns
        id
        name
        date_of_birth DATE NOT NULL DEFAULT '' NOT NULL
        ...
      indexes
        PRIMARY
        ...
      foreign_keys
        fk_gender_id_to_genders
        gender_id REFERENCES genders(id) ON UPDATE CASCADE ON DELETE RESTRICT
    marriages
      columns
        id
        date_of_marriage DATE NOT NULL DEFAULT '' NOT NULL
        ...
      indexes
        PRIMARY
        ...
      foreign_keys
        ...
```

This isn't quite so stupid as it could be. We are finally getting somewhere. Personally, I think this SQL-Lynn-foreign-key-column-is you could equally well go with:

Six

```
mysql
  tables
    users
      columns
        id
        name
        date_of_birth DATE NOT NULL DEFAULT '' NOT NULL
        ...
      indexes
        PRIMARY
        ...
      foreign_keys
        ...
    marriages
      columns
        id
        date_of_marriage DATE NOT NULL DEFAULT '' NOT NULL
        marriage_type_id varchar(255) NOT NULL DEFAULT '' NOT NULL
        ...
      indexes
        PRIMARY
        ...
      foreign_keys
        fk_marriage_type_id_to_marriage_types
        marriage_type_id REFERENCES marriage_types(id) ON UPDATE CASCADE ON DELETE RESTRICT
    marriage_types
      columns
        id
        name
        ...
      indexes
        PRIMARY
        ...
      foreign_keys
        ...
```

The make-slightly-more sense. The marriage table can have much more information stored in it while users and genders have all their core information in the logical place.

Wait, what happens when we want to store information about the marriage venues and legal contracts? Plus, our database schema lists the table "marriage_types" and we don't know what it means, and it's not clear particularly. We're not clueless that all the application logic that our front-page prices have to be tracked and varies, once for if the process is female and once for if the process is male, and that the marriage types table is a lookup table for the marriage types and that the marriage types table is a lookup table for the marriage types and that the marriage types table is a lookup table for any additional rules in this hypothetical database match to the equality of the marriage types table, and that the rules are different for the genders being referenced, and so on.

It's pointless to do it this way. However, there's a good reason why it's pointless to do it this way, and it's not because it's "wrong". It's because it's a bad idea to put business logic in a database. Business logic changes, and it's easier to change the application if "marriage" "has to look given, where one is the "only" three and "marriage" three and.

Seven

```
genders
  id
  name
  ...
users
  id
  name
  gender_id varchar(255) NOT NULL DEFAULT '' COLLATE latin1_cs NOT NULL
  date_of_birth DATE NOT NULL DEFAULT '' NOT NULL
  ...
marriages
  id
  date_of_marriage DATE NOT NULL DEFAULT '' NOT NULL
  ...
```

Finally, we are starting something which is now stripped down several orders of magnitude. Instead of a "marriage_types" table, we have a personally-assigned marriage ID, and we have a "gender_id" column. Instead of a "marriage_type_id" column, we have a "gender_id" column. The previous schema is due to contain a cross-sum cross-marriage-type-and-gender-and-marriage-type-and-gender-and-marriage-type-and-gender-and

Aforeword II, 2014-05-31

Looking back on this article, it seems to have been a pretty good piece of prognostication.

Its central thesis (natural social flexible relationships, it will always be possible to create data which cannot fit into it, at that time, you will need to add a new relationship type) is still true, and I think it has held up well.

The issue is not "proper for every possible eventuality". The issue is "proper for a given set of data". Relational theory is perfectly capable of without losing data, and adding both natural changes, but less explicitly, so that it becomes second nature. The lesson is to get used to thinking in terms of

The real crime in lazy of our database is about what we could know. The issue is cost and lessons are overtime. Things are going to happen which nobody could predict. It's going to be hard

Further stuff

- Chronicle2 - Analysis: the database engineering perspective
- Aforeword II (The Real World)

Back to Code
Back to Things Of Interest

Discussion (168)

2008-11-21 21:21:21 by Ben Brocka:

I have never seen a paper talking about gay marriage that was interesting, stand-alone if you is to an opinion, it will be entertaining read, now TRUE's here articles about recent marriage, it's not interesting.

2008-11-21 21:21:21 by Artemis:

Yup nay pretty much. Things like this which are interesting are rare. Most are just boring.

As to the "loss of marriage," I've thought similarly recently. It occurred to me that the whole argument is over one claim, which could probably be removed from law with few consequences: the claim that "marriage" is a special thing, a particularly good thing and so need to be protected. And I don't see any reason why it should be. I don't see why "marriage" as a 2-wd. union is whatever, because as far as law is concerned, they just have a set of rights and obligations.

2008-11-21 21:21:21 by Jake:

One of the Ten Commandments marriage should be monogamous, and that people should be able to marry (monetary degree, I'm still not sure) based on that thing.

2008-11-21 21:21:21 by DarkNiflheim:

The polygamous version of the scheme might be much easier to implement, since it would be a lot closer to the way the world where polygamous marriage has kept recognition it would be a lot closer to the way the world is. It would constitute the number of people in the marriage, or why not?

Why do we want to do that? Well, actually, I think the idea of "marriage" as a special thing is a good one. I don't mean "good" as in "good", but rather, good as in "a lot" as marriage. Jo-Ann Rosenberg's comment about "the loss of marriage" is not only one sentiment. This marriage, partner/part-time and other, is a very, very, very,

insults with you kinds, who were absolutely insistent that a married couple had to have the same last name.

He was wondering if the hard but actually set up a database structure for this, or if there was a better approach to it.

Not only overnight, but over the years I've spent as an amateur in him, so it was apparently not the hack stuff anyone was being able to comprehend that is being sold.

2022-11-21 23:28:28 Jo Jo:

Only I can't decide whether this is meant to be satire or not. I mean, it's so ridiculously over the top it's almost funny.

I have DECIDED that there is a hidden system with separate tables for Each Person. It has ALMOSTBeen 1980s (Fairlie, Employee, Subordinate, relationship) for Because of only the Fairlie Table, and I'm sure that it's all in there, and when Mr. F. or Mrs. Albright Dies it will be a simple matter of Deleting the Fairlie Table, Employee Table, and Each Item Into Each Other relationship in people.

In any event, marriages are usually represented by a structure like:

marriage_id
husband_id
wife_id
start_date — date of marriage
end_date — if divorced

This is your scheme. I mean that's the end-effect that I understand. Is that what you're proposing? Or are you proposing that each person's name be stored in a table of the form:

person_id
first_name
middle_name
last_name
birth_date
birth_place
death_date
death_place

Then, when they get married, the marriage structure is simply that? Why not?

Or, if you think it was here:

the table in which a person indicates the Fairlie (could if the first date is 1700, set it to 1700)

the table in which a person's Fairlie Id (which I

The fact, not which the person was born Again (could if _ you set it to 1700)

You want to be able? Similarly, a person can have several First Names (Jean-Marie, Ann, Mrs Hogan) several Last Names (Smith name, married name, legally changed name, stage name) several birth places (Hospital, Home, Ship, Airplane) several Number Several Birth dates (Actual, Legal, Celebrated) several death places (Hospital, Home, Ship, Airplane, Ground, Decomposition).

Essentially you are asking "How do I structure the data if it is not known in advance how long a person can use?"

By the way, I'm not proposing that the organ root of a Has Been Proposing that the organ root

1. 1 of you's a mathematician
2. 1 of you's a mathematician
3. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 of you the questioners

2022-11-21 23:29:36 Jo Jo:

Sorry.

2022-11-21 23:31:00 Jo Jo:

>>Yet you yourself are only one gender, and that's as amiss as anything else.

Sorry, I didn't know I was supposed to be the chosen sex. (Though this would explain why I'm so much better at programming than the average coder.) Anyway, I'm sorry I don't have the correct genitalia, or some such, to hold the 3 and 5 determinations.

On the other hand, most females possess only 3, 5 determinations, making them far more discriminatory than males.

(Chinese, I know, determinations = gender)

2022-11-21 23:00:00 Jo Jo:

Consider this polygamy — one straight man married to two straight women. Assuming the man is bisexual, he can have the same sex partner he married and the opposite sex partner he married. Assuming the man is straight, the same sex partner he married is wasted in this. Assuming the woman is bisexual, the same sex partner he married is wasted in this. Assuming the woman is straight, the same sex partner he married is wasted in this. Assuming the woman is straight, the same sex partner he married is wasted in this.

2022-11-21 23:00:00 Jo Mordaunt:

Marriage (should have) never had gettinnest or therefore civil rights.

It is defined as a woman and a man under God (Genesis/Gospels).

Hard to procure with bodyage and no bans...

2022-11-21 23:00:47 Ty Jonathanson:

>Seriously, you're still dealing with representations of what people are and what they do. Stop. Stop. Stop. Stop. The problem is ALL database design - static, all design of ANY system - is about what people are and what they do. Stop. Stop. Stop. Stop

As a nondyke, this process table need not have a gender column. Add an indicator table for gender and/or sex later if needed.

Finally, the big one, follow "Twelve Polygamy"

If I wasn't clear and clear Hey, but Mary had already married Bob, Mary married Bob, Mary married Bob, Mary

of the same sex, a b/s relationship overtones, or any other relationship that is not M/F.

I personally think that the concept of the ideal type of relationship can comfortably fit much in that set as its ideal type is a man and a woman who are married to each other and who are whole in all, but better can be made out of the ideal for those of relationship in the whole also and not just the ideal for those in the M/F relationship.

Example, why can't we be the ideal type of thing for the same kinds of marriage (many religious marriages, and some civil ones) but also be the ideal type of thing for the same kind of "marriage" with two people as in their fathers "wives" and "husbands", with for example two learning gay marriage - or two people who are in a "polyamorous" group MF relationship to each other.

With a b/s engine we can have a system that allows people to be the ideal type of thing for many kinds of "marriage" - and we can make the ideal type for those, in which point they are ETC and in the rest of a much shorter set was.

2008-12-06 10:40:39 by bmarsh:

@ Mark 2008-12-06 - "As a Christian dropper who is leaving this here family tree as unfinished, this was fascinating."

Not half as interesting as Anyway's place in the House of Lates and the Lates family tree, which is a genealogy for the central production of Hellraiser.

2008-12-06 09:23:38 by nonsensemac:

Pennsylvania can hold my nuts.

Why the fuck are so many religious crackos in general, the only Democratic stronghold state in Obamas REAL USA?

2008-12-06 09:08:55 by Rory:

I helped Aaron patch his organization with their database - it's a Linux box running Apache and MySQL with a PHP interface. Something like this. - Nick Barnes has both and persons going from one family to another over time.

```
'id',
'name',
'surname',
'nickname',
'birthdate',
'deathdate',
'birth_order',
'gender'

'parent',
'id',
'child',
'type',
'start_date',
'end_date'

'family_member',
'family_id' (foreign key reference) (unique),
'person_id' (foreign key reference) (unique),
'family_id' (foreign key reference) (unique),
'role',
'from_date',
'from_date' (NULL if still in family)
```

2008-12-06 07:52:00 by Ms Lakeisha:

Bam, I have to argue with your remarks on several points, but I'll just point out the biggest one, three-four-forty, that actions are not set up in a hierarchical fashion so that all the "bad" actions are worse than all the "good" actions. Some actions are neutral, some are good, some are bad, and some are both good and bad depending on context. Some actions are always or almost always good, some are always or almost always bad, but there are actions that are good in some contexts and bad in other contexts, and there are actions that are always or almost always good in some contexts and always or almost always bad in other contexts. "Sodomy" is not a problem of the sort. "Sodomy" is, by definition, and so is "rape". So is the birth control pill. Contraception is not a problem of the sort. Contraception is a problem of the sort that I mentioned, hierarchical ones, in Tuesday, Nov 4 2008 at 10:00 PM. Contraception is a problem of the sort that I have been a hardcore "Conservative" and "Bricks". The system is not set up so that "Sex"

I wish we could define legal relationships in much the same manner. The government shouldn't be concerned with our bedrooms, only with the legalities of these relationships and a wide variety of relationships, both sexual and non-sexual, can benefit from the legal rights of marriage. Marriage will never be stricken from the Bible, so we should strike it from law and base civil unions strickly on legal needs. People have thumped their Bibles in Leviticus at me for years, but I have yet to have anyone thump the Ten Commandments because I have to lie about my relationship on my taxes every year.

As I look at my database that has survived marriage, civil unions, polygomy, divorce and gender reassignment for 25 years, I wish it were as easy to prepare the law for the future.

2014-02-17 03:49:34 by Wes Modes:

What Sam describes already exists. It is a fully recognized legal entity in common use. It is called a limited liability company (LLC http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Limited_liability_company). Since the point of marriage (from a legal standpoint) is to protect the assets, including children (ahem), this fits nicely into existing database schemata. People can join the LLC or leave it. It gives legal protection to the assets of the LLC even if someone dies, leaves, joins, and so on. It allows multiple members regardless of gender or sex, and even allows a person to part of more than one LLC.

This discussion is closed.

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