CHAPTER 15

Transactions

Solutions to Practice Exercises

15.1 Even in this case the recovery manager is needed to perform roll-back of aborted transactions.

15.2 There are several steps in the creation of a file. A storage area is assigned to the file in the file system, a unique i-number is given to the file and an i-node entry is inserted into the i-list. Deletion of file involves exactly opposite steps.

For the file system user in UNIX, durability is important for obvious reasons, but atomicity is not relevant generally as the file system doesn't support transactions. To the file system implementor though, many of the internal file system actions need to have transaction semantics. All the steps involved in creation/deletion of the file must be atomic, otherwise there will be unreferenceable files or unusable areas in the file system.

15.3 Database systems usually perform crucial tasks whose effects need to be atomic and durable, and whose outcome affects the real world in a permanent manner. Examples of such tasks are monetary transactions, seat bookings etc. Hence the ACID properties have to be ensured. In contrast, most users of file systems would not be willing to pay the price (monetary, disk space, time) of supporting ACID properties.

15.4 If a transaction is very long or when it fetches data from a slow disk, it takes a long time to complete. In absence of concurrency, other transactions will have to wait for longer period of time. Average responce time will increase. Also when the transaction is reading data from disk, CPU is idle. So resources are not properly utilized. Hence concurrent execution becomes important in this case. However, when the transactions are short or the data is available in memory, these problems do not occur.

15.5 Most of the concurrency control protocols (protocols for ensuring that only serializable schedules are generated) used in practise are based on conflict serializability—they actually permit only a subset of conflict serializable schedules. The general form of view serializability is very expensive to test, and only a very restricted form of it is used for concurrency control.

15.6 There is a serializable schedule corresponding to the precedence graph below, since the graph is acyclic. A possible schedule is obtained by doing a topological sort, that is, T_1, T_2, T_3, T_4, T_5.

15.7 A cascadeless schedule is one where, for each pair of transactions T_i and T_j such that T_j reads data items previously written by T_i, the commit operation of T_i appears before the read operation of T_j. Cascadeless schedules are desirable because the failure of a transaction does not lead to the aborting of any other transaction. Of course this comes at the cost of less concurrency. If failures occur rarely, so that we can pay the price of cascading aborts for the increased concurrency, noncascadeless schedules might be desirable.