

Chapter 7.36

Data Broadcasting in a Mobile Environment

A. R. Hurson

The Pennsylvania State University, USA

Y. Jiao

The Pennsylvania State University, USA

ABSTRACT

The advances in mobile devices and wireless communication techniques have enabled anywhere, anytime data access. Data being accessed can be categorized into three classes: private data, shared data, and public data. Private and shared data are usually accessed through on-demand-based approaches, while public data can be most effectively disseminated using broadcasting. In the mobile computing environment, the characteristics of mobile devices and limitations of wireless communication technology pose challenges on broadcasting strategy as well as data-retrieval method designs. Major research issues include indexing scheme, broadcasting over single and parallel channels, data distribution and replication strategy, conflict resolution, and data retrieval method. In this chapter, we investigate solutions proposed for these issues. High performance and low power consumption are the two main objec-

tives of the proposed schemes. Comprehensive simulation results are used to demonstrate the effectiveness of each solution and compare different approaches.

INTRODUCTION

The increasing development and spread of wireless networks and the need for information sharing has created a considerable demand for cooperation among existing, distributed, heterogeneous, and autonomous information sources. The growing diversity in the range of information that is accessible to a user and rapidly expanding technology have changed the traditional notion of timely and reliable access to global information in a distributed system. Remote access to data refers to both mobile nodes and fixed nodes accessing data within a platform characterized by the following:

- low bandwidth,
- frequent disconnection,
- high error rates,
- limited processing resources, and
- limited power sources.

Regardless of the hardware device, connection medium, and type of data accessed, users require timely and reliable access to various types of data that are classified as follows:

- Private data, that is, personal daily schedules, phone numbers, and so forth. The reader of this type of data is the sole owner or user of the data.
- Public data, that is, news, weather information, traffic information, flight information, and so forth. This type of data is maintained by one source and shared by many—a user mainly queries the information source(s).
- Shared data, that is, traditional, replicated, or fragmented databases. Users usually send transactions as well as queries to the information source(s).
Access requests to these data sources can be on-demand-based or broadcast-based.

On-Demand-Based Requests

In this case users normally obtain information through a dialogue (two-way communication) with the database server—the request is pushed to the system, data sources are accessed, operations are performed, partial results are collected and integrated, and the final result is communicated back to the user. This access scenario requires a solution that addresses the following issues.

- **Security and access control.** Methods that guarantee authorized access to the resources.
- **Isolation.** Means that support operations off-line if an intentional or unintentional disconnection has occurred.

- **Semantic heterogeneity.** Methods that can handle differences in data representation, format, structure, and meaning among information sources and hence establish interoperability.
- **Local autonomy.** Methods that allow different information sources to join and depart the global information-sharing environment at will.
- **Query processing and query optimization.** Methods that can efficiently partition global queries into subqueries and perform optimization techniques.
- **Transaction processing and concurrency control.** Methods that allow simultaneous execution of independent transactions and interleave interrelated transactions in the face of both global and local conflicts.
- **Data integration.** Methods that fuse partial results to draw a global result.
- **Browsing.** Methods that allow the user to search and view the available information without any information processing overhead.
- **Distribution transparency.** Methods to hide the network topology and the placement of the data while maximizing the performance for the overall system.
- **Location transparency.** Methods that allow heterogeneous remote access (HRA) to data sources. Higher degrees of mobility argue for higher degrees of heterogeneous data access.
- **Limited resources.** Methods that accommodate computing devices with limited capabilities.

The literature is abounded with solutions to these issues (Badrinath, 1996; Bright, Hurson, & Pakzad, 1992, 1994; Joseph, Tauber, & Kaashoek, 1997; Satyanarayanan, 1996). Moreover, there are existing mobile applications that address the limited bandwidth issues involved in mobility (Demers, Pertersen, Spreitzer, Terry, Theier,

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