

CS 378 – Big Data Programming

Lecture 9

Complex “Writable” Types

AVRO, Protobuf

Review

- Assignment 4 – WordStatistics using Avro
- Questions/issues?
 - Setting the output schema
- AVRO keys, values, and file formats
- Reuse of Writable objects by Hadoop

User Defined Writables

- Hadoop provided classes cover commonly used types and data structures
- But we're likely to need more application specific data structures/types
- We can define these one by one
 - Must implement the `Writable` interface
 - This will become tedious

User Defined Data Types

- Where might we look for a solution?
 - How are *ad hoc* types transferred elsewhere?
- Web formats for data structures
 - XML, JSON
 - Plus: Human readable, self describing
 - Minus: verbose, serialization is slower
- Java serialization
 - We write the serialization code, accessors
 - Again tedious, as data types get complex

User Defined Data Types

- RPC mechanisms
 - Marshall data in objects to be transferred to a “remote” procedure (no shared memory)
 - Usually procedure calls share memory
- Java serialization is one such mechanism
- Some others we’ll look at:
 - Google protocol buffers (protobufs)
 - AVRO

Protobuf and AVRO

- These two approaches are interesting in that
 - They allow us to define complex types in a schema language or IDL (Interface **D**efinition **L**anguage)
 - They handle all the data marshalling/serialization
 - They create "bindings" for various languages
- AVRO was designed for use with Hadoop
- Protobufs require a `Writable` wrapper
 - May be provided now, wasn't a few years ago

Protobuf Basics

- Protocol buffers (protobufs) used extensively at Google as the RPC mechanism
 - Multiple language support (Java, C++, Python)
 - Used in the Google map-reduce framework
- The schema language (IDL) defines “messages”, or “protocol buffers”
 - Data structures containing primitive data types
 - Required or optional
 - Repeated (array)
 - Embedded message

Protobuf Example

```
package stats;
option java_package = "com.refactorlabs.cs378.utils";
option java_outer_classname = "WordStatisticsProto";

message WordStatistics {
    required int64 document_count = 1;
    required int64 total_count = 2;
    required int64 sum_of_squares = 3;
    optional double mean = 4;
    optional double variance = 5;
}
```

Schema Evolution

- As your data changes and you update the message definition
- Old Java code can read and use data written under the new schema
 - It simply doesn't see the new fields
- New Java code can read and use data written under the old schema
 - New fields added must be optional
 - The `has()` methods can be used to determine where new fields are unpopulated

AVRO Basics

- AVRO provides serialization of objects
 - RPC mechanism
 - Container file for storing objects (schema stored also)
 - Binary format as well as text format
- The schema language allows us to define complex objects
 - Schema language uses JSON syntax
 - Data structures containing primitive data types
 - Complex types: record, enum, array, map, union, fixed

AVRO Basics

- Primitive types
 - `null`
 - `boolean`
 - `int`, `long`
 - `float`, `double`
 - `bytes`, `string`
- Union: list of possible types
 - If `null` included, field can have no value

AVRO Basics

- Records
 - name, namespace
 - doc
 - aliases
 - fields
 - Name, doc, type, default, order, aliases
- Enums
 - name, namespace
 - aliases, doc
 - symbols

AVRO Basics

- Arrays

- items

- ```
{ "type": "array", "items": "string" }
```

- Maps

- values

- ```
{ "type": "map", "values": "string" }
```

- Keys are assumed to be strings

- Fixed

- Fixed number of bytes

AVRO Basics

- With a schema defined, we “compile” it to create “bindings” to a language
- Output is Java source code (Python available too)
 - Package and class names as we defined them
- So what does this Java class do for us?
 - Allows instance to be created and populated
 - Allows access to the data stored therein
 - Performs serialization
 - This is one main reason for using AVRO objects
 - AVRO objects implement `Writable` for use in Hadoop mapReduce
 - AVRO objects implement other stuff (`toString()`, parsing, ...)

Schema Evolution

- As your data changes and you update the message definition
- In AVRO objects, the writer's schema is included, and can be compared to the reader's schema
- Comparison rules and rules for handling missing fields (in one schema but not the other) can be found here:
 - <http://avro.apache.org/docs/1.8.1/spec.html#Schema+Resolution>