

# XSLT

CompSci 316  
Introduction to Database Systems

## Announcements (Thu. Oct. 25)

- ❖ Homework #3 already assigned
  - Due in 1½ weeks
  - Reminder of late policy
    - Gradiance doesn't take late submissions
    - For non-Gradiance parts, late ones will automatically receive a 5% deduction per hour late
- ❖ Project milestone #2 due in 3 weeks
- ❖ Graded midterm for pick-up outside my office

## XSLT

- ❖ XML-to-XML rule-based transformation language
  - Used most frequently as a stylesheet language
  - An XSLT program is an XML document itself
  - Current version is 2.0; W3C recommendation since January 2007

Actually, output does not need to be in XML in general

## XSLT program

- ❖ An XSLT program is an XML document containing
  - Elements in the <xsl:> namespace
  - Elements in user namespace
- ❖ The result of evaluating an XSLT program on an input XML document = the XSLT document where each <xsl:> element has been replaced with the result of its evaluation
- ❖ Basic ideas
  - Templates specify how to transform matching input nodes
  - Structural recursion applies templates to input trees recursively
- ❖ Uses XPath as a sub-language

## XSLT elements

- ❖ Element describing transformation rules
  - <xsl:template>
- ❖ Elements describing rule execution control
  - <xsl:apply-templates>
  - <xsl:call-template>
- ❖ Elements describing instructions
  - <xsl:if>, <xsl:for-each>, <xsl:sort>, etc.
- ❖ Elements generating output
  - <xsl:value-of>, <xsl:attribute>, <xsl:copy-of>, <xsl:text>, etc.

## XSLT example

- ❖ Find titles of books authored by "Abiteboul"

```

{
  <?xml version="1.0"?> Standard header of an XSLT document
  <xsl:stylesheet
    xmlns:xsl="http://www.w3.org/1999/XSL/Transform"
    version="2.0">
    <xsl:template match="book[author='Abiteboul']">
      <booktitle>
        <xsl:value-of select="title"/>
      </booktitle>
    </xsl:template>
  </xsl:stylesheet>

```

- ❖ Not quite; we will see why later

## <xsl:template>

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```
<xsl:template match="book[author='Abiteboul']">
  <booktitle>
    <xsl:value-of select="title"/>
  </booktitle>
</xsl:template>
```

- ❖ `<xsl:template match="match_expr">` is the basic XSLT construct describing a transformation rule
  - `match_expr` is an XPath-like expression specifying which nodes this rule applies to
- ❖ `<xsl:value-of select="xpath_expr"/>` evaluates `xpath_expr` within the context of the node matching the template, and converts the result sequence to a string
- ❖ `<booktitle>` and `</booktitle>` simply get copied to the output for each node match

## Template in action

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```
<xsl:template match="book[author='Abiteboul']">
  <booktitle>
    <xsl:value-of select="title"/>
  </booktitle>
</xsl:template>
```

### ❖ Example XML fragment

```
<book ISBN="ISBN-10" price="80.00">
  <title>Foundations of Databases</title>
  <author>Abiteboul</author>
  <author>Hull</author>
  <author>Vianu</author>
  <publisher>Addison Wesley</publisher>
  <year>1995</year>
</book>
<book ISBN="ISBN-20" price="40.00">
  <title>A First Course in Databases</title>
  <author>Ullman</author>
  <author>Widom</author>
  <publisher>Prentice-Hall</publisher>
  <year>2002</year>
</book>
```

Template applies  
booktitle  
Foundations of Databases

Template does not apply;  
default behavior is to process the  
node recursively and print out all  
text nodes

A First Course in Databases  
Ullman  
Widom  
Prentice-Hall  
2002  
--

## Removing the extra output

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- ❖ Add the following template:  
`<xsl:template match="text()|@*"/>`
- ❖ This template matches all text and attributes
- ❖ XPath features
  - `text()` is a node test that matches any text node
  - `@*` matches any attribute
  - `|` means "or" in XPath
- ❖ Body of the rule is empty, so all text and attributes become empty string
  - This rule effectively filters out things not matched by the other rule

## <xsl:attribute>

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- ❖ Again, find titles of books authored by "Abiteboul," but make the output look like `<book title="booktitle"/>`

```
...
<xsl:template match="book[author='Abiteboul']">
  <book title="{normalize-space(title)}/>
</xsl:template>
...
```

### ❖ A more general method

```
...
<xsl:template match="book[author='Abiteboul']">
  <book>
    <xsl:attribute name="title">
      <xsl:value-of select="normalize-space(title)"/>
    </xsl:attribute>
  </book> <xsl:attribute name="attr">body</xsl:attribute>
</xsl:template>
...
adds an attributed named attr with value body to the  
parent element in the output
```

## <xsl:copy-of>

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- ❖ Another slightly different example: return (entire) books authored by "Abiteboul"  
`<?xml version="1.0"?>`  
`<xsl:stylesheet`  
  `xmlns:xsl="http://www.w3.org/1999/XSL/Transform"`  
  `version="2.0">`  
  `<xsl:template match="text()|@*"/>`  
  `<xsl:template match="book[author='Abiteboul']">`  
    `<xsl:copy-of select="."/>`  
  `</xsl:template>`  
`</xsl:stylesheet>`
- ❖ `<xsl:copy-of select="xpath_expr"/>` copies the entire contents (including tag structures) of the node-set returned by `xpath_expr` to the output

## Formatting XML into HTML

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- ❖ Example templates to
    - Render a book title in italics in HTML
    - Render the authors as a comma-separated list
- ```
<xsl:template match="book/title">
  <i><xsl:value-of select="normalize-space(.)"/></i>
</xsl:template>
<xsl:template match="book/author[1]">
  <xsl:value-of select="normalize-space(.)"/>
</xsl:template>
<xsl:template match="book/author[position()>1]">
  <xsl:text>, </xsl:text>
  <xsl:value-of select="normalize-space(.)"/>
</xsl:template>
```
- ❖ `<xsl:text>` allows precise control of white space in output

## <xsl:apply-templates>

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- ❖ Example: generate a table of contents
  - Display books in an HTML unordered list
  - For each book, first display its title, and then display its sections in an HTML ordered list
  - For each section, first display its title, and then display its subsections in an HTML ordered list

```
<xsl:template match="title">
  <xsl:value-of select="normalize-space(.)"/>
</xsl:template>
<xsl:template match="section">
  <li>
    <xsl:apply-templates select="title"/>
    <ol><xsl:apply-templates select="section"/></ol>
  </li>
</xsl:template>
```

(Continue on next slide) <xsl:apply-templates select="xpath\_expr"/> applies templates recursively to the node-set returned by *xpath\_expr*

## Example continued

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```
<xsl:template match="book">
  <li>
    <xsl:apply-templates select="title"/>
    <ol><xsl:apply-templates select="section"/></ol>
  </li>
</xsl:template>
<xsl:template match="bibliography">
  <html>
    <head><title>Bibliography</title></head>
    <body>
      <ul><xsl:apply-templates select="book"/></ul>
    </body>
  </html>
</xsl:template>
```

- ❖ One problem remains
  - Even if a book or a section has no sections, we will still generate an empty <ol></ol> element

## <xsl:if>

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- ❖ A fix using <xsl:if>: replace  
<ol><xsl:apply-templates select="section"/></ol>  
with  
<xsl:if test="section">  
 <ol><xsl:apply-templates select="section"/></ol>  
</xsl:if>
- ❖ The body of <xsl:if test="xpath\_cond"> is processed only if *xpath\_cond* evaluates to true

## Output control

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```
<xsl:output method="html" indent="yes"/>
```

- ❖ Specifies that output
  - Will be HTML
  - Will be indented to make reading easier
- ❖ Other possible method values include "text", "xml"
  - For XML output method, set `omit-xml-declaration="yes"` to suppress "<?xml ...?>" at the beginning of the output

## White space control

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- ❖ White space is everywhere in XML

```
...
<book ISBN="ISBN-10" price="80.00">
  <title>
    Foundations of Databases
  </title>
```

  - "␣" goes into a text node (assuming no DTD)
  - "␣Foundations of Databases␣" goes in another text node
- ❖ Specify <xsl:strip-space elements="\*" /> to remove text nodes (under any element) containing only white space
- ❖ To strip leading and trailing white space and replace any sequence of white space characters by a single space, specify <xsl:template match="text()">  
<xsl:value-of select="normalize-space()" />  
</xsl:template>

## <xsl:for-each>

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- ❖ <xsl:for-each select="xpath\_expr">  
 *body*  
</xsl:for-each>
  - Process *body* for each node in the node-set returned by *xpath\_expr*
  - Processing context changes to the node being processed
- ❖ Another way to render authors as a comma-separated list  
<xsl:template match="book">  
 ...  
 <xsl:for-each select="author">  
 <xsl:if test="position()>1", </xsl:if>  
 <xsl:value-of select="normalize-space(.)"/>  
 </xsl:for-each>  
 ...  
</xsl:template>

## Named templates with parameters

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- ❖ Define a generic template for rendering a list of things as a comma-separated list
  - Cannot use `match` because we do not know in advance the things to render

```
<xsl:template name="comma-separated-list">
  <xsl:param name="things-to-be-formatted"/>
  <xsl:for-each select="$things-to-be-formatted">
    <xsl:if test="position()>1">, </xsl:if>
    <xsl:value-of select="normalize-space(.)"/>
  </xsl:for-each>
</xsl:template>
```

## Calling templates & passing parameters

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- ❖ Use the generic template

```
<xsl:template match="book">
  <xsl:value-of select="normalize-space(title)"/>
  <xsl:text>: </xsl:text>
  <xsl:call-template name="comma-separated-list">
    <xsl:with-param name="things-to-be-formatted"
      select="author"/>
  </xsl:call-template>
  <br/>
</xsl:template>
```
- ❖ `<xsl:with-param name="para_name" select="xpath_expr">` evaluates *xpath\_expr* and passes its result as the value of the parameter *para\_name*
- ❖ `<xsl:call-template>` invokes the named template without changing the context

## Other useful features

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- ❖ `<xsl:text>&#10;</xsl:text>` inserts a newline in the output
- ❖ `<xsl:message>` for debugging
  - `<xsl:message terminate="yes">` exits the program
- ❖ `<xsl:variable>` defines a (constant) variable
- ❖ `<xsl:function>` defines a function
- ❖ `<xsl:key>` defines a key that can be used for lookups

## XSLT summary

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- ❖ Used often as a stylesheet language, but can be considered a query language too
  - Grouping in XSLT 2.0 (`<xsl:for-each-group>`)
  - Very expressive, with full recursion
    - Cannot be replaced by XQuery?
      - Well, XQuery supports user-defined functions, which can be recursive
  - Easily non-terminating, difficult to optimize
    - Cannot replace XQuery
- ❖ So many features, so little time!

## Review

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- ❖ XML: tree (or graph)-structured data
- ❖ DTD: simple schema for XML
  - Well-formed XML: syntactically correct
  - Valid XML: well-formed and conforms to a DTD
- ❖ XML Schema: a more sophisticated schema for XML
- ❖ XPath: path expression language for XML
  - An XPath expression selects a list of nodes in an XML document
  - Used in other languages
- ❖ XQuery: SQL-like query language for XML
  - FLWOR expression, quantified expression, aggregation, etc.
- ❖ XSLT: stylesheet language for XML, in XML
  - Transforms input XML by applying template rules recursively on the structure of input XML