Raft

March 2025

Raft Leader Election

0	currentTerm	0
_	votedFor	-1
	commitIndex	0
	lastApplied	0
	nextIndex	[]
	matchIndex	[]
(log entries here)		

currentTerm	latest term server has seen
votedFor	candidate ID that received vote in current term, or -1 if none
commitIndex	index of highest log entry known to be committed
lastApplied	index of highest log entry applied to state machine

Logs are 1-indexed

(Only on leader)

nextIndexfor each server, index of the next log entry to send
to that servermatchIndexfor each server, index of highest log entry known to
be replicated on the server



currentTermlatest term server has seenvotedForcandidate ID that received vote in current term,
or -1 if none

State required for election

Recap: Leader Election

Everyone sets a randomized timer that expires in [T, 2T] (e.g. T = 150ms)

When timer expires, increment term and send a RequestVote to everyone

Retry this until either:

You get majority of votes (including yourself): become leader

You receive an RPC from a valid leader: become follower again

Scenario 1: During System Bootup



















Scenario 2: During Normal Execution (suppose there are existing log entries...)



















Conditions for granting vote

- 1. We did not vote for anyone else in this term
- 2. Candidate term must be >= ours
- 3. Candidate log is at least as *up-to-date* as ours
 - a. The log with higher term in the last entry is more up-to-date
 - b. If the last entry terms are the same, then the longer log is more up-to-date

Which one is more *up-to-date*?





Which one is more *up-to-date*?



Which one is more *up-to-date*?





Why reject logs that are not *up-to-date*?

Leader log is always the ground truth

Once someone is elected leader, followers must throw away conflicting entries

Must NOT throw away committed entries!

Note: Log doesn't need to be the MOST up-to-date among all servers

What if we accept logs that are not as up-to-date as ours?



Suppose entries 4-5 have already been committed

Then previous leader S0 crashes and S3 times out

If S3 becomes leader then committed entries 4 and 5 may be overwritten!



Why is it OK to throw away these entries?

If these entries had been committed, then it means they must exist on a majority of servers

In that case S4 could receive votes from the same majority and become a valid leader



Raft Normal Operation

0	currentTerm	0
	votedFor	-1
	commitIndex	0
	lastApplied	0
	nextIndex	[]
	matchIndex	[]
<em< td=""><td>ipty></td><td></td></em<>	ipty>	

lastApplied	index of highest log entry applied to state machine
commitIndex	index of highest log entry known to be committed
votedFor	candidate ID that received vote in current term, or -1 if none
currentTerm	latest term server has seen

Logs are 1-indexed

(Only on leader)

nextIndexfor each server, index of the next log entry to send
to that servermatchindexfor each server, index of highest log entry known to
be replicated on the server



1	currentTerm	0
	votedFor	-1
	commitIndex	0
	lastApplied	0
	nextIndex	[]
	matchIndex	[]
<em< td=""><td>ipty></td><td></td></em<>	ipty>	

2	currentTerm	0
	votedFor	-1
	commitIndex	0
	lastApplied	0
	nextIndex	[]
	matchIndex	[]
<em< th=""><th>ipty></th><th></th></em<>	ipty>	

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0	currentTerm	1	
	votedFor	0	
	commitIndex	0	
	lastApplied	0	
	nextIndex	[1, 1, 1]	
	matchIndex	[0, 0, 0]	
<err< td=""><td>ıpty></td><td></td><td></td></err<>	ıpty>		

1	currentTerm	1
	votedFor	0
	commitIndex	0
	lastApplied	0
	nextIndex	[]
	matchIndex	[]
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2	currentTerm	1
	votedFor	0
	commitIndex	0
	lastApplied	0
	nextIndex	[]
	matchIndex	[]
<em< th=""><th>ipty></th><th></th></em<>	ipty>	







1	currentTerm	1
	votedFor	0
	commitIndex	0
	lastApplied	0
	nextIndex	[]
	matchIndex	[]
<em< td=""><td>ipty></td><td></td></em<>	ipty>	

Request 1

2	currentTerm	1	
	votedFor	0	
	commitIndex	0	
	lastApplied	0	
	nextIndex	[]	
	matchIndex	[]	
<em< td=""><td>ipty></td><td></td><td></td></em<>	ipty>		



1	currentTerm	1
	votedFor	0
	commitIndex	0
	lastApplied	0
	nextIndex	[]
	matchIndex	[]
<err< td=""><td>ipty></td><td></td></err<>	ipty>	

Client Request 1 Request 2 Request 3

	currentTerm	1	
	votedFor	0	
	commitIndex	0	
	lastApplied	0	
	nextIndex	[]	
	matchIndex	[]	
<	empty>		







Entry 3 is now replicated on a majority, so we can commit it

while commitIndex > lastApplied, apply commands to state machine



Once leader has applied an entry to state machine, it is safe to tell the client that the entry is committed
Raft After new leader election













Later, the network partition is fixed









Old leader is dethroned!

2	currentTerm	2	
	votedFor	1	
	commitIndex	5	
	lastApplied	5	
	nextIndex	[]	
	matchIndex	[]	
1	1 1 2	2	







2	currentTerm	2
	votedFor	1
	commitIndex	5
	lastApplied	5
	nextIndex	[]
	matchIndex	[]
1	1 1 2	2





Everyone is on the same page again

2	currentTerm	2
	votedFor	1
	commitIndex	5
	lastApplied	5
	nextIndex	[]
	matchIndex	[]
1	1 1 2	2

When log entries don't match...

When log entries don't match...

- The leader will find the latest log entry in the follower where the two logs agree
- At the follower:
 - Everything after that entry will be deleted
 - The leader's log starting from that entry will be replicated on the follower



















Everyone is on the same page again

2	currentTerm	5
	votedFor	-1
	commitIndex	5
	lastApplied	5
	nextIndex	[]
	matchIndex	[]
1	1 1 3	4

Optimization to reduce number of messages?

Key Idea

- Reduce the number of rejected AppendEntries RPCs
- One RPC per conflicting **term**, rather than one RPC per conflicting entry

Detailed Algorithm:

- When rejecting an AppendEntries request, the follower can include the term of the conflicting entry and the first index it stores for that term.
- With this information, the leader can decrement nextIndex to bypass all of the conflicting entries in that term.
- See page 7-8 in <u>Raft (extended version)</u>







Specify the term of the conflicting term and the first index of this term



currentTerm

commitIndex

lastApplied

votedFor

2



5

1

5

5

4

[6, 6, **4**]

[5, 5, 0]

Leader sends its log entries that are different from the follower's starting the specified conflicting term





2	currentTerm	5
	votedFor	-1
	commitIndex	5
	lastApplied	5
	nextIndex	[]
	matchIndex	[]
1	1 1 3	4

Key Idea: Decrement nextIndex one term at a time

Conditions for committing an entry

- 1. The entry exists on a majority AND it is written in the current term
- 2. The entry precedes another entry that is committed

Can't assume an old entry has been committed even if it exists on a majority



S1 is the leader

Can't assume an old entry has been committed even if it exists on a majority



S1 crashes, S5 becomes leader

Can't assume an old entry has been committed even if it exists on a majority



S1.log[2] is now

S5 crashes, S1 becomes leader

Can't assume an old entry has been committed even if it exists on a majority



S5 replicates S5.log[2] to all other nodes...

S1 crashes, S5 becomes leader

Can't assume an old entry has been committed even if it exists on a majority



Entry 2 was overwritten even though it was replicated on a majority!

Cannot assume entry 2 was committed
Caveat for committing old entries

Can't assume an old entry has been committed even if it exists on a majority



Entry 2 is committed once entry 3 is committed

Commit old entries indirectly

S1 commits entry 3

Exercise...

Exercise...

Rules for deciding which log is more up-to-date:

- Compare **index** and **term** of last entries in the logs
- If the terms are different: log with later term is more up-to-date
- If the terms are the same: **longer log is more up-to-date**































NO!

S3 cannot become leader in term 4 (Who's going to vote for him?)





What happened to terms 2 and 3?

- 1. Split vote: no one became leader
- 2. Partitions: no one became leader
- 3. Simply no requests in these terms



NO!

Let's try tracing the steps...







No one becomes leader in term 2...











S0 previously voted for S2 in term 3 S0 can only vote for S1 for term 4!



The two entries in term 3 are in different positions

S1 and S2 could not have written these entries without being leaders

But they can't both be leaders in the same term!

Q5: Is entry 2 (term 2) guaranteed to be committed?

Yes!

Entry 2 is on a majority of nodes

No one else has a more *up-to-date* log

Q6: Is entry 3 (term 2) guaranteed to be committed?



NO!

S3 could become leader if S0 crashes

Entry 3 is an entry from an old term (See Figure 8 in Raft paper)

Q7: Is entry 3 (term 2) guaranteed to be committed?



NO!

S3 could still become leader if S0 crashes (votes from S2, S3 and S4)

Q8: Is entry 3 (term 2) guaranteed to be committed?



Yes!

Entry 4 is guaranteed to be committed because no one else has a more *up-to-date* log

All entries before entry 4 are safe