Spark SQL and DataFrames

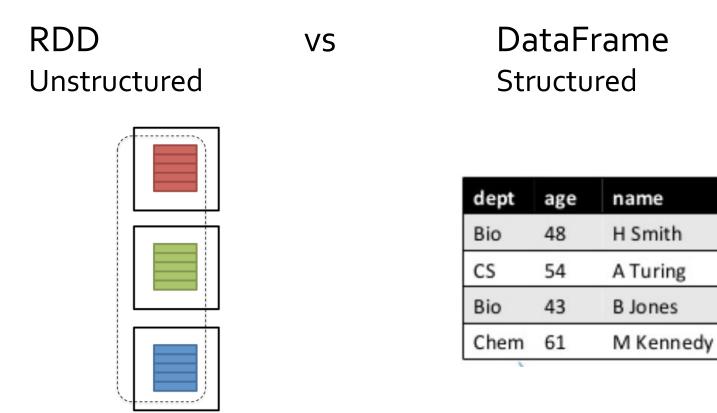
Spark SQL

- Spark SQL is the Spark component for structured data processing
- It provides a programming abstraction called *Dataframe* and can act as a distributed SQL query engine
 - The input data can be queried by using
 - 1. Ad-hoc methods
 - 2. Or an SQL-like language

Spark SQL vs Spark RDD APIs

- The interfaces provided by Spark SQL provide more information about the structure of both the data and the computation being performed
- Spark SQL uses this extra information to perform extra optimizations based on an "SQL-like" optimizer called Catalyst
 - => Programs based on Dataframe are usually faster than standard RDD-based programs

Spark SQL vs Spark RDD APIs



Distributed list of objects ~Distributed

~Distributed relational table

DataFrame

- Distributed collection of structured data
 - It is conceptually equivalent to a table in a relational database
 - It can be created reading data from different types of external sources (CSV files, JSON files, RDBMs, ..)
- Benefits from Spark SQL's optimized execution engine exploiting the information about the data structure

Spark Session

 All the Spark SQL functionalities are based on an instance of the

pyspark.sql.SparkSession Class

- Import it in your standalone applications from pyspark.sql import SparkSession
- To instance a SparkSession object: spark = SparkSession.builder.getOrCreate()

Spark Session

To "close" a Spark Session use the SparkSession.stop() method

spark.stop()

DataFrame

- It is a distributed collection of data organized into named columns
- It is equivalent to a relational table
- DataFrames are lists of Row objects
- Classes used to define DataFrames
 - pyspark.sql.DataFrame
 - pyspark.sql.Row

- DataFrames can be created from different sources
 - Structured (textual) data files
 - E.g., csv files, json files
 - Existing RDDs
 - Hive tables
 - External relational databases

Creating DataFrames from csv files

- Spark SQL provides an API that allows creating DataFrames directly from CSV files
 Example of csv file
 - name,age
 - Andy,30
 - Michael,
 - Justin,19
- The file contains name and age of three persons
 - The age of the second person in unknown

Creating DataFrames from csv files

- The creation of a DataFrame from a csv file is based the
 - load(path) method of the pyspark.sql.DataFrameReader class
 - Path is the path of the input file
 - You get a DataFrameReader with the read() method of the SparkSession class.

df = spark.read.load(path, options...)

- Create a DataFrame from a csv file (persons.csv) containing the profiles of a set of persons
 - Each line of the file contains name and age of a person
 - Age can assume the null value (i.e., it can be missing)
 - The first line contains the header (i.e., the names of the attributes/columns)
 - Example of csv file

name,age Andy,30 Michael, Justin,19

Create a Spark Session object
spark = SparkSession.builder.getOrCreate()

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spark = SparkSession.builder.getOrCreate()

- Spark SQL provides an API that allows creating a DataFrame directly from a textual file where each line contains a JSON object
 - Hence, the input file is not a "standard" JSON file
 - It must be properly formatted in order to have one JSON object (tuple) for each line
 - The format of the input file is complaint with the "JSON Lines text format", also called newlinedelimited JSON

 Example of JSON Lines text formatted file compatible with the Spark expected format

{"name":"Michael"}

{"name":"Andy", "age":30}

{"name":"Justin", "age":19}

- The example file contains name and age of three persons
 - The age of the first person in unknown

- The creation of a DataFrame from JSON files is based on the same method used for reading csv files
 - load(path) method of the pyspark.sql.DataFrameReader class
 - Path is the path of the input file
 - You get a DataFrameReader with the read() method of the SparkSession class

df = spark.read.load(path, format="json", ...)

• or

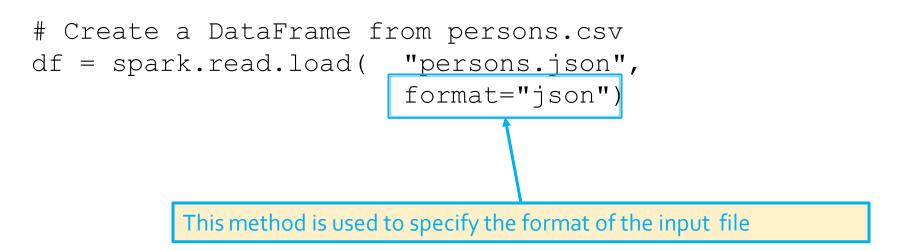
```
df = spark.read.json(path, ...)
```

- The same API allows also reading "standard" multiline JSON files
 - Set the multiline option to true by setting the argument multiLine = True on the defined DataFrameReader for reading "standard" JSON files
 - This feature is available since Spark 2.2.0
- Pay attention that reading a set of small JSON files from HDFS is very slow

- Create a DataFrame from a JSON Lines text formatted file containing the profiles of a set of persons
 - Each line of the file contains a JSON object containing name and age of a person
 - Age can assume the null value

Create a Spark Session object
spark = SparkSession.builder.getOrCreate()

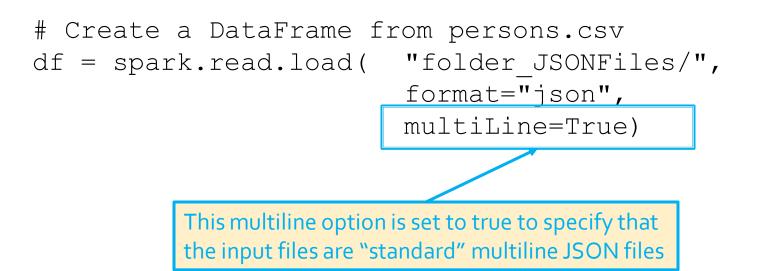
Create a Spark Session object
spark = SparkSession.builder.getOrCreate()



- Create a DataFrame from a folder containing a set of "standard" multiline JSON files
- Each input JSON file contains the profile of one person
 - Name and Age
 - Age can assume the null value

Create a Spark Session object
spark = SparkSession.builder.getOrCreate()

Create a Spark Session object
spark = SparkSession.builder.getOrCreate()



Creating DataFrames from other data sources

- The DataFrameReader class (the same we used for reading a json file and store it in a DataFrame) provides other methods to read many standard (textual) formats and read data from external databases
 - Apache parquet files
 - External relational database, through a JDBC connection
 - Hive tables
 - Etc.

Creating DataFrames from RDDs or Python lists

- The content of an RDD of tuples or the content of a Python list of tuples can be stored in a DataFrame by using the spark.createDataFrame(data, schema) method
 - data: RDD of tuples or Rows, Python list of tuples or Rows, or pandas DataFrame
 - schema: list of string with the names of the columns/attributes
 - schema is optional. If it is not specified the column names are set to _1, _2, ..., _n for input RDDs/lists of tuples

Creating DataFrames from RDDs or Python lists: Example

- Create a DataFrame from a Python list containing the following data
 - (19, "Justin")
 - (30, "Andy")
 - (None, "Michael")
- The column names must be set to "age" and "name"

Creating DataFrames from RDDs or Python lists: Example

Create a Spark Session object
spark = SparkSession.builder.getOrCreate()

Create a DataFrame from the profilesList
df = spark.createDataFrame(profilesList,["age","name"])

From DataFrame to RDD

- The rdd member of the DataFrame class returns an RDD of Row objects containing the content of the DataFrame on which it is invoked
- Each Row object is like a dictionary containing the values of a record
 - It contains column names in the keys and column values in the values

From DataFrame to RDD

Usage of the **Row** class

- The fields in it can be accessed:
 - like attributes (row.key)
 - where key is a column name
 - like dictionary values (row["key"])
 - for key in row will search through row keys
- asDict() method:
 - Returns the Row content as a Python dictionary

From DataFrame to RDD: Example

- Create a DataFrame from a csv file containing the profiles of a set of persons
 - Each line of the file contains name and age of a person
 - The first line contains the header, i.e., the name of the attributes/columns
- Transform the input DataFrame into an RDD, select only the name field/column and store the result in the output folder

From DataFrame to RDD: Example

Create a Spark Session object
spark = SparkSession.builder.getOrCreate()

From DataFrame to RDD: Example

Define an RDD based on the content of # the DataFrame rddRows = df.rdd

Use the map transformation to extract
the name field/column
rddNames = rddRows.map(lambda row: row.name)

Store the result
rddNames.saveAsTextFile(outputPath)

Operations on DataFrames

DataFrame operations

- Now you know how to create DataFrames
- How to manipulate them?How to compute statistics?

	Col1	Col2	Col3	
Row 1				
Row 2				
Row 3				

DataFrame operations

- A set of specific methods are available for the DataFrame class
 - E.g., show(), printSchema(), count(), distinct(), select(), filter()
- Also the standard collect() and count() actions are available

Show

- The show(n) method of the DataFrame class prints on the standard output the first n of the input DataFrame
 - Default value of n: 20

Show: Example

- Create a DataFrame from a csv file containing the profiles of a set of persons
 - The content of persons.csv is
 - name,age
 - Andy,30
 - Michael,
 - Justin,19
- Print the content of the first 2 persons (i.e., the first 2 rows of the DataFrame)

Show: Example

Create a Spark Session object
spark = SparkSession.builder.getOrCreate()

df.show(2)

PrintSchema

- The printSchema() method of the DataFrame class prints on the standard output the schema of the DataFrame
 - i.e., the name of the attributes of the data stored in the DataFrame

Count

 The count() method of the DataFrame class returns the number of rows in the input DataFrame

Distinct

- The distinct() method of the DataFrame class returns a new DataFrame that contains only the unique rows of the input DataFrame
 - Pay attention that the distinct operation is always a heavy operation in terms of data sent on the network
 - A shuffle phase is needed

Distinct: Example

- Create a DataFrame from a csv file containing the names of a set of persons
 - The content of names.csv is
 - name
 - Andy
 - Michael
 - Justin
 - Michael
 - The first line is the header
- Create a new DataFrame without duplicates

Distinct: Example

Create a Spark Session object
spark = SparkSession.builder.getOrCreate()

df distinct = df.distinct()

Select

- The select(col1, .., coln) method of the DataFrame class returns a new DataFrame that contains only the specified columns of the input DataFrame
- Use `*' as special column to select all columns
- Pay attention that the select method can generate errors at runtime if there are mistakes in the names of the columns

Select: Example

- Create a DataFrame from the persons2.csv file that contains the profiles of a set of persons
 - The first line contains the header
 - The others lines contain the users' profiles
 - One line per person
 - Each line contains name, age, and gender of a person
 - Example

name,age,gender Paul,40,male

John,40,male

 Create a new DataFrame containing only name and age of the persons

Select: Example

Create a Spark Session object
spark = SparkSession.builder.getOrCreate()

dfNamesAges = df.select("name", "age")

SelectExpr

 The selectExpr(expression1, .., expressionN) method of the DataFrame class is a variant of the select method, where expr can be an SQL expression.

Example:

df.selectExpr("name", "age")
df.selectExpr("name", "age + 1 AS new age")

SelectExpr: Example

- Create a DataFrame from the persons2.csv file that contains the profiles of a set of persons
 - The first line contains the header
 - The others lines contain the users' profiles
 - Each line contains name, age, and gender of a person
- Create a new DataFrame containing the same columns of the initial dataset plus an additional column called newAge containing the value of age incremented by one

SelectExpr: Example

Create a Spark Session object
spark = SparkSession.builder.getOrCreate()

SelectExpr: Example

Create a Spark Session object
spark = SparkSession.builder.getOrCreate()

This part of the expression is used to specify the name of the column associated with the result of the first part of the expression in the returned DataFrame. Without this part of the expression, the name of the returned column will be "age+1"

Filter

- The filter(conditionExpr) method of the DataFrame class returns a new DataFrame that contains only the rows satisfying the specified condition
 - The condition is a Boolean SQL expression
 - Pay attention that this version of the filter method can generate errors at runtime if there are errors in the filter expression
 - The parameter is a string and the system cannot check the correctness of the expression at compile time

Filter: Example

- Create a DataFrame from the persons.csv file that contains the profiles of a set of persons
 - The first line contains the header
 - The others lines contain the users' profiles
 - Each line contains name and age of a person
- Create a new DataFrame containing only the persons with age between 20 and 31

Filter: Example

Create a Spark Session object
spark = SparkSession.builder.getOrCreate()

df filtered = df.filter("age>=20 and age<=31")

Where

 The where(expression) method of the DataFrame class is an alias of the filter(conditionExpr) method

Join

- The join(right, on, how) method of the DataFrame class is used to join two DataFrames
 - It returns a DataFrame that contains the join of the tuples of the two input DataFrames based on the on join condition

Join

- on: the join condition
 - It can be:
 - A string: the join column
 - A list of strings: multiple join columns
 - A condition/an expression on the columns.
 - E.g.:
 - joined_df = df.join(df2, df.name == df2.name)
- how: the type of join
 - inner, cross, outer, full, full_outer, left, left_outer, right, right_outer, left_semi, and left_anti
 - Default: inner

Join

- Pay attention that this method
 - Can generate errors at runtime if there are errors in the join expression

Create two DataFrames

- One based on the persons_id.csv file that contains the profiles of a set of persons
 - Schema: uid, name, age
- One based on the liked_sports.csv file that contains the liked sports for each person

Schema: uid, sportname

 Join the content of the two DataFrames (uid is the join column) and show it on the standard output

```
# Create a Spark Session object
spark = SparkSession.builder.getOrCreate()
# Read persons id.csv and store it in a DataFrame
dfPersons = spark.read.load("persons id.csv",
                            format="csv",
                            header=True,
                            inferSchema=True)
# Read liked sports.csv and store it in a DataFrame
dfUidSports = spark.read.load("liked sports.csv",
                              format="csv",
                              header=True,
                              inferSchema=True)
# Join the two input DataFrames
dfPersonLikes = dfPersons.join(dfUidSports,
                         dfPersons.uid == dfUidSports.uid)
# Print the result on the standard output
dfPersonLikes.show()
```

```
# Create a Spark Session object
spark = SparkSession.builder.getOrCreate()
# Read persons id.csv and store it in a DataFrame
dfPersons = spark.read.load("persons id.csv",
                             format="csv",
                             header=True,
                             inferSchema=True)
# Read liked sports.csv and store it in a DataFrame
dfUidSports = spark.read.load("liked sports.csv",
                               format="csv",
                               header=True,
                      Specify the join condition on the uid columns
# Join the two input DataFrames
dfPersonLikes = dfPersons.join(dfUidSports,
                          dfPersons.uid == dfUidSports.uid)
# Print the result on the standard output
dfPersonLikes.show()
```

Create two DataFrames

- One based on the persons_id.csv file that contains the profiles of a set of persons
 - Schema: uid,name,age
- One based on the banned.csv file that contains the banned users
 - Schema: uid, bannedmotivation
- Select the profiles of the non-banned users and show them on the standard output

```
# Create a Spark Session object
spark = SparkSession.builder.getOrCreate()
# Read persons id.csv and store it in a DataFrame
dfPersons = spark.read.load("persons id.csv",
                            format="csv",
                            header=True,
                            inferSchema=True)
# Read banned.csv and store it in a DataFrame
dfBannedUsers = spark.read.load("banned.csv",
                              format="csv",
                              header=True,
                              inferSchema=True)
# Apply the Left Anti Join on the two input DataFrames
dfSelectedProfiles = dfPersons.join(dfBannedUsers,
                        dfPersons.uid == dfBannedUsers.uid,
                        "left anti")
# Print the result on the standard output
dfSelectedProfiles.show()
```

```
# Create a Spark Session object
spark = SparkSession.builder.getOrCreate()
# Read persons id.csv and store it in a DataFrame
dfPersons = spark.read.load("persons id.csv",
                             format="csv",
                             header=True,
                             inferSchema=True)
# Read banned.csv and store it in a DataFrame
dfBannedUsers = spark.read.load("banned.csv",
                               format="csv",
                               header=True,
                               inferSchema=True)
                  Specify the (anti) join condition on the uid columns
# Apply the Left
dfSelectedProfiles = dfPersons.join(dfBannedUsers,
                         dfPersons.uid == dfBannedUsers.uid,
                          left anti")
```

Print the result on the standard output
dfSelectedProfiles.show()

```
# Create a Spark Session object
spark = SparkSession.builder.getOrCreate()
# Read persons id.csv and store it in a DataFrame
dfPersons = spark.read.load("persons id.csv",
                             format="csv",
                             header=True,
                             inferSchema=True)
# Read banned.csv and store it in a DataFrame
dfBannedUsers = spark.read.load("banned.csv",
                               format="csv",
                               header=True,
                               inferSchema=True)
# Apply the Left Anti, Use Left Anti Join
                                       input DataFrames
dfSelectedProfiles = d
                                       fBannedUsers,
                        dfPersons uid == dfBannedUsers.uid,
                        "left anti")
```

Print the result on the standard output
dfSelectedProfiles.show()

Aggregates functions

- Aggregate functions are provided to compute aggregates over the set of values of columns
 - Some of the provided aggregate functions/methods are:
 - avg(column), count(column), sum(column), abs(column), etc.
 - Each aggregate function returns one value computed by considering all the values of the input column

Aggregates functions

- The agg(expr) method of the DataFrame class is used to specify which aggregate functions we want to apply and on which input columns
 - The result is a DataFrame containing one single row and one column for each of the specified aggregate functions
 - The name of the returned column associated with each input aggregate function is "function_name(column)"
- Pay attention that this methods can generate errors at runtime
 - E.g., wrong attribute names, wrong data types

Aggregates functions: Example

- Create a DataFrame from the persons.csv file that contains the profiles of a set of persons
 - The first line contains the header
 - The others lines contain the users' profiles
 - Each line contains name and age of a person
- Create a Dataset containing the average value of age

Aggregates functions: Example

Input file

name,age Andy,30 Michael,15 Justin,19 Andy,40 • Expected output avg(age) 26.0

Aggregates functions: Example

Create a Spark Session object
spark = SparkSession.builder.getOrCreate()

Compute the average of age
averageAge = df.agg({"age": "avg"})

groupBy and aggregates functions

- The method groupBy(col1, .., coln) method of the DataFrame class combined with a set of aggregate methods can be used to split the input data in groups and compute aggregate function over each group
 Pay attention that this methods can
- Pay attention that this methods can generate errors at runtime if there are semantic errors
 - E.g., wrong attribute names, wrong data types

groupBy and aggregates functions

- Specify which attributes are used to split the input data in groups by using the groupBy(col1, .., coln) method
- Then, apply the aggregate functions you want to compute by final result
 - The result is a DataFrame

groupBy and aggregates functions

- Some of the provided aggregate functions/methods are
 - avg(column), count(column), sum(column), abs(column), etc.
 - The agg(..) method can be used to apply multiple aggregate functions at the same time over each group
- See the static methods of the pyspark.sql.GroupedData class for a complete list

- Create a DataFrame from the persons.csv file that contains the profiles of a set of persons
 - The first line contains the header
 - The others lines contain the users' profiles
 - Each line contains name and age of a person
- Create a DataFrame containing the for each name the average value of age

Input file

name, age Andy,30 Michael,15 Justin,19 Andy,40 Expected output name,avg(age) Andy,35 Michael,15 Justin,19

Create a Spark Session object
spark = SparkSession.builder.getOrCreate()

grouped = df.groupBy("name").avg("age")

- Create a DataFrame from the persons.csv file that contains the profiles of a set of persons
 - The first line contains the header
 - The others lines contain the users' profiles
 - Each line contains name and age of a person
- Create a DataFrame containing the for each name the average value of age and the number of person with that name

Input file

name, age Andy,30 Michael,15 Justin,19 Andy,40 Expected output name,avg(age),count(name) Andy, 35, 2 Michael, 15, 1 Justin, 19, 1

Create a Spark Session object
spark = SparkSession.builder.getOrCreate()

```
grouped = df.groupBy("name")
    .agg({"age": "avg", "name": "count"})
```

Sort

- The sort(col1, .., coln, ascending=True) method of the DataFrame class returns a new DataFrame that
 - contains the same data of the input one
 - but the content is sorted by col1, .., coln
 - Ascending determines ascending vs. descending

DataFrames and the SQL language

DataFrames and the SQL language

- Sparks allows querying the content of a DataFrame also by using the SQL language
 - In order to do this a "table name" must be assigned to a DataFrame
- The createOrReplaceTempView (tableName) method of the DataFrame class can be used to assign a "table name" to the DataFrame on which it is invoked

DataFrames and the SQL language

- Once the DataFrame has been mapped to "table names", SQL-like queries can be executed
 - The executed queries return DataFrame objects
- The sql(query) method of the SparkSession class can be used to execute an SQL-like query
 - query is an SQL-like query
- Currently some SQL features are not supported
 - E.g., correlations between external and nested queries are not allowed

- Create a DataFrame from a JSON file containing the profiles of a set of persons
 - Each line of the file contains a JSON object containing name, age, and gender of a person
- Create a new DataFrame containing only the persons with age between 20 and 31 and print them on the standard output
 - Use the SQL language to perform this operation

Create a Spark Session object
spark = SparkSession.builder.getOrCreate()

Assign the "table name" people to the df DataFrame
df.createOrReplaceTempView("people");

```
# Select the persons with age between 20 and 31
# by querying the people table
selectedPersons =
spark.sql("SELECT * FROM people WHERE age>=20 and
age<=31")</pre>
```

Print the result on the standard output selectedPersons.show()

Create two DataFrames

- One based on the persons_id.csv file that contains the profiles of a set of persons
 - Schema: uid, name, age
- One based on the liked_sports.csv file that contains the liked sports for each person
 - Schema: uid, sportname
- Join the content of the two DataFrames and show it on the standard output

```
# Create a Spark Session object
spark = SparkSession.builder.getOrCreate()
# Read persons id.csv and store it in a DataFrame
dfPersons = spark.read.load("persons id.csv",
                            format="csv",
                            header=True,
                            inferSchema=True)
# Assign the "table name" people to the dfPerson
dfPersons.createOrReplaceTempView("people")
# Read liked sports.csv and store it in a DataFrame
dfUidSports = spark.read.load("liked sports.csv",
                              format="csv",
                              header=True,
                              inferSchema=True)
# Assign the "table name" liked to dfUidSports
dfUidSports.createOrReplaceTempView("liked")
```

Join the two input tables by using the #SQL-like syntax dfPersonLikes = spark.sql("SELECT * from people, liked where people.uid=liked.uid")

Print the result on the standard output
dfPersonLikes.show()

- Create a DataFrame from the persons.csv file that contains the profiles of a set of persons
 - The first line contains the header
 - The others lines contain the users' profiles
 - Each line contains name and age of a person
- Create a DataFrame containing for each name the average value of age and the number of person with that name
 - Print its content on the standard output

Input file

name, age Andy,30 Michael,15 Justin,19 Andy,40 Expected output name,avg(age),count(name) Andy, 35, 2 Michael, 15, 1 Justin, 19, 1

Create a Spark Session object
spark = SparkSession.builder.getOrCreate()

Assign the "table name" people to the df DataFrame
df.createOrReplaceTempView("people")

Print the result on the standard output nameAvgAgeCount.show()

Save DataFrames

Save DataFrames

- The content of DataFrames can be stored on disk by using two approches
 - 1 Convert DataFrames to traditional RDDs by using the rdd method of the DataFrame

And then use saveAsTextFile(outputFolder)

2 Use the **write()** method of DataFrames, that returns a **DatFrameWriter** class instance

- Create a DataFrame from the persons.csv file that contains the profiles of a set of persons
 - The first line contains the header
 - The others lines contain the users' profiles
 - Each line contains name, age, and gender of a person
- Store the DataFrame in the output folder by using the saveAsTextFile(..) method

Create a Spark Session object
spark = SparkSession.builder.getOrCreate()

Save it
df.rdd.saveAsTextFile(outputPath)

- Create a DataFrame from the persons.csv file that contains the profiles of a set of persons
 - The first line contains the header
 - The others lines contain the users' profiles
 - Each line contains name, age, and gender of a person
- Store the DataFrame in the output folder by using the write() method
 - Store the result by using the CSV format

Create a Spark Session object
spark = SparkSession.builder.getOrCreate()

Save it
df.write.csv(outputPath, header=True)

UDFs: User Defined Functions

UDFs: User Defined Functions

- Spark SQL provides a set of system predefined functions
 - hour(Timestamp), abs(Integer), ...
 - Those functions can be used in some transformations (e.g., selectExpr(..), sort(..)) but also in the SQL queries
- Users can defined their personalized functions
 - They are called User Defined Functions (UDFs)

UDFs: User Defined Functions

- UDFs are defined/registered by invoking udf().register(name, function, datatype) on SparkSession
 - name: name of the defined UDF
 - function: function used to specify how the parameters of the function are used to generate the returned value
 - One of more input parameters
 - One single returned value
 - datatype: SQL data type of the returned value

UDFs: User Defined Functions – Example

 Define a UDFs that, given a string, returns the length of the string

```
# Create a Spark Session object
spark = SparkSession.builder.getOrCreate()
```

```
# Define a UDF
# name: length
# output: integer value
spark.udf.register("length", lambda x: len(x))
```

UDFs: User Defined Functions – Example

 Use of the defined UDF in a selectExpr transformation

result = inputDF.selectExpr("length(name) as size")

Use of the defined UDF in a SQL query

Set methods

Set transformations

- Similarly to RDDs also DataFrames can be combined by using set transformations
 - df1.union(df2)
 - df1.intersect(df2)
 - df1.subtract(df2)

Broadcast join

Broadcast join and DataFrames

 Spark SQL automatically implements a broadcast version of the join operation if one of the two input DataFrames is small enough to be stored in the main memory of each executor

Broadcast join and DataFrames

- We can suggest/force it by creating a broadcast version of a DataFrame
- E.g., dfPersonLikesBroadcast = dfUidSports\ .join(broadcast(dfPersons),\ dfPersons.uid == dfUidSports.uid)

Broadcast join and DataFrames

- We can suggest/force it by creating a broadcast version of a DataFrame
- E.g., dfPersonLikesBroadcast = dfUidSports\ .join(broadcast(dfPersons),\ dfPersons.uid = dfUidSports.uid)

In this case we specify that dfPersons must be broadcasted and hence Spark will execute the join operation by using a broadcast join

Execution plan

Explain execution plan

 The method explain() can be invoked on a DataFrame to print on the standard output the execution plan of the part of the code that is used to compute the content of the DataFrame on which explain() is invoked