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Published in:
SoCC '20: Proceedings of the 11th ACM Symposium on Cloud Computing

DOI:
10.1145/3419111.3421289

Publication date:
2020

Citation for published version (APA):
ByteSeries: An In-Memory Time Series Database for Large-Scale Monitoring Systems

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ABSTRACT

Monitoring large-scale and complex systems often generates high-dimensional and highly dynamic time series data. In such a scenario, massive metadata has to be maintained to support efficient querying, whose large footprint poses great challenges to in-memory databases. In this paper, we present ByteSeries, an in-memory time series database that is designed specifically for large-scale monitoring systems to manage high-dimensional time series. We start with an analysis of the production data and workload at ByteDance’s metric monitoring system, which contains over 10 billion time series dimensions. The observation of high overhead of metadata management in high-dimensional time series data calls for a rethink of time series database systems. ByteSeries’s memory structure employs the novel Compressed Inverted Index to effectively compress metadata while maintaining high efficiency for multi-dimensional queries. In addition, an algorithm is proposed to effectively convert data into compressed form without sacrificing the data ingestion throughput. We experimentally evaluate ByteSeries by comparing it with ByteDance’s original production system, tsdc, as well as two open-source systems, namely Gorilla and Prometheus. We show that ByteSeries significantly improves over ByteDance’s original production system by 1) reducing the memory footprint of metadata by 60% and the whole memory consumption by 50%, and 2) speeding up multi-dimensional queries by 1.8x-10.7x.

1 INTRODUCTION

With the ever-growing scale and complexity of internet services, systems have scaled beyond hundreds of machines to thousands of machines. Monitoring large-scale machines, systems and services have become a great challenge. It needs to continuously collect many different data, for example the CPU usage of a particular host, or the delay of an API call. Efficiently managing such monitoring data and providing real-time query services is a critical requirement.

Data in a large-scale metric monitoring system can typically be modeled as high-dimensional time series, with each dimension representing a unique sequence of measurements. For example, the monitoring system of ByteDance’s internet services has more than ten billion of active dimensions on every day, which is doubling every year. Furthermore, with the technological trends such as container and microservices, massive new time series tend to be generated and disappeared dynamically at runtime. For instance, dynamically starting new containers or microservices would produce new time series dimensions identified by new keys. This can be
triggered frequently by short-term tasks, such as running
one MapReduce job, or reconfiguration of system deplo-
ments. Such dynamic behaviors of systems further inflate
the number of time series dimensions.

The high dimensionality and dynamicity of time series
data in a large-scale monitoring system poses great chal-
lenges to time series database systems. To support high-
throughput data ingestion and real-time querying, a viable
option is to use an in-memory time series database to cache
the recent data and to execute real-time queries. Memory
storage efficiency is critical to such a solution. However, in
a monitoring system, the key of a dimension is typically
verbose, consisting of, for instance, a metric name and a set of
tags in the forms of key-value pairs. Memory consumption
of such metadata could be even higher than time series data
points per se, especially when there are a large number of
dynamic dimensions, which appear and disappear within
a relatively short period of time. Moreover, efficient index-
ing on metadata is needed to support efficient querying in
high-dimensional and dynamic time series, which, however,
could further increase memory consumption of metadata. In
ByteDance’s production system, we observe that metadata
occupies more than 80% of the total data size. Designing
efficient approaches to compress the metadata without sacri-
ficing ingestion throughput and query efficiency is yet to be
addressed by existing time series database systems.

In this paper, we present ByteSeries, an in-memory time
series database system specifically designed for large-scale
monitoring systems. It provides in-memory caching and
querying of high-dimensional and dynamic time series. The
salient features of ByteSeries include aggressively compress-
ing metadata to minimize the memory footprint, while at
the same time supporting efficient multi-dimensional group-
by aggregate queries, which are the most important types
of queries in many time series data applications, including
ByteDance’s metric monitoring system. The contributions
of this paper include the following.

First of all, we conduct an analysis of data and query work-
load on ByteDance’s production system. Our analysis shows
the data and query characteristics in industrial production
systems that can be applied to many scenarios. Based on
the analysis, we identify challenges that have not been suffi-
ciently addressed by existing time series database systems.

Second, we propose efficient memory data structures for
ByteSeries. ByteSeries organizes memory into two parts,
namely Active Buffer and Static Buffer respectively. Active
Buffer is designed to efficiently ingest high-throughput time
series with dynamic data structures. No compression is car-
rried out on the data in Active Buffer. Static Buffer is the main
storage area. ByteSeries adopts a novel Compressed Inverted
Index to compress metadata and to support efficient multi-
dimensional aggregate queries at the same time. And in order
to maximize data ingestion throughput while keeping effi-
ciency of memory usage, we design an algorithm to schedule
the conversion and movement of data from Active Buffer to
Static Buffer.

Finally, we conduct extensive experiments to verify the
performance of ByteSeries. We first examine the perform-
ance of different components in ByteSeries, and then com-
pare ByteSeries with not only ByteDance’s own production
system, but also two open-source in-memory time series
databases, namely, Gorilla and Prometheus. We also evaluate
the performance of ByteSeries over ByteDance’s production
workload. The results show that ByteSeries significantly out-
performs the existing solutions by achieving smaller memory
footprint while maintaining higher data ingestion through-
put, as well as lower query response time.

2 PRELIMINARIES

2.1 ByteDance Metrics Monitoring System

ByteDance’s business services are supported by a large
infrastructure comprised of thousands of node instances dis-
tributed across multiple data centers. ByteDance’s metrics
monitoring system is used to monitor not only the system
infrastructure, but also various business services and web
back-end services. Figure 1 shows a high-level overview of
ByteDance’s metric monitoring system that comprises of
multiple data collectors, a time series database for short-
term storage, a long-term storage and a query service (for an
alert system and so on). In particular, the in-memory storage,
called tsdc, is the core component, which stores the most
recently collected measurements in main memory, and regu-
larly checkpoints them to the local storage. It also provides
high bandwidth and low-latency querying. In this paper,
we identify the efficiency problems of tsdc and design Byte-
Series with much higher performance to meet the business
requirements of ByteDance.

The data in ByteDance’s metric monitoring system are
modeled as high-dimensional time series as described below.
**Data Point:** A data point is a pair of timestamp and value in the form of \((t, v)\).

**Series Key:** A series key consists of a metric name and a list of tags in the form of \(\langle \text{name}, \text{tags} \rangle\). Each item in the tag list is a key-value pair. A series key uniquely identifies a time series, and we call it a dimension.

Figure 2 shows some time series data. In the first line, `mem_usage` is the metric name, \(\langle \text{local=wuhan, os=linux, id=1} \rangle\) is a list of tags, and \((158054029300, 0.3)\) is the data point (dp).

**Time Series:** A dimension of time series is a sequence of data points (dps) with a particular series key (SK), which are ordered by time in ascending order. Formally, it can be denoted by \(\langle \text{SK}, \langle (t_1, v_1), (t_2, v_2), \ldots, (t_n, v_n) \rangle \rangle\), where \(t_{i+1} > t_i\).

A single-dimension query (or exact query) is defined as a query whose selection conditions match all the tags of a single time series. On the other hand, a multi-dimension query is defined as a query whose selection conditions contain only some but not all of the tags in any dimension.

We use the data shown in Figure 2 to show some example queries. SELECT `mem_usage` FROM mydb WHERE local = wuhan AND os = linux AND id = 1 AND time >= ’2020-2-1 12:00:00’ is a single-dimension query, and SELECT `mem_usage` FROM mydb WHERE local = wuhan AND time >= ’2020-2-1 12:00:00′ is a multi-dimension query. Typically, most queries have predicates specifying time ranges.

Because time series have high degree of temporal correlation, we usually adopt time slicing, e.g., two hours per slice, to store and index them.

### 2.2 Analysis of ByteDance’s Workload

In order to clarify the requirements and challenges of ByteDance’s monitoring system, we study the workload in a cluster, consisting of about 1,200 nodes. The cluster is used to manage time series data with over 10 billion dimensions. These time series data are mainly monitoring data of ByteDance’s internal cluster and user business activities. The data generated by this workload can reach tens of terabytes per day. Figure 3 and Figure 4 show a complete data set on one randomly selected node instance of the monitoring system, which contains nearly 40 million dimensions of time series. From the analysis, we have the following interesting observations.

**Figure 2: Series data format**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>series key</th>
<th>data point</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>series name</td>
<td>tags</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mem_usage</td>
<td>local=wuhan, os=linux, id=1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mem_usage</td>
<td>local=shanghai, os=windows, id=2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cpu_usage</td>
<td>local=wuhan, os=linux, id=1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cpu_usage</td>
<td>local=shanghai, os=windows, id=2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 3: Statistical graph of the total number of data points per day from February to July 2019**

**Figure 4: Statistical graph of the total number of dimensions per day from February to July 2019**

1). The dimensions are growing rapidly and have high dynaminess. Figure 3 and Figure 4 illustrate the growth trends of data points and dimension number from February to July 2019. First of all, with the development and expansion of online services, most of the newly added time series are recorded as irregular events without a fixed time interval. Only a small number of dimensions have data points with a fixed time interval, e.g. CPU usage of a host. In the figure, the number of dimensions has grown more than twice, while the number of data points has only increased by about 40%. Second, almost 1/3 of the dimensions produced per day are new, which is due to, for example, frequently changes of container deployment of microservices, and short-lived tasks. Since such dynamic dimensions often have very few data points, maintaining hash indices, compression contexts and other metadata for them in main memory is resource inefficient.

2). Queries are mostly multi-dimensional with filter and aggregation conditions. In real-time business, we observed that users of monitoring systems tend to be more interested in multi-dimension aggregate analysis rather than querying individual data points and individual dimensions. Most
workloads are for alarm monitoring and updating real-time dashboards. These queries often only query the data within the latest few hours, and usually involve aggregate on multiple dimensions. Drilling down to a specific piece of abnormal data only happens when the aggregate query results show some abnormality. Therefore, supporting efficient multi-dimension query for the most recent data is important for enhancing the system’s performance. As shown in Figure 5, there are no more than 3 tag-kv pair condition filters in more than 80% of the queries, however, almost all of the dimensions have more than 3 different tag-kv pairs. This means that there are often more than one dimension that can satisfy the corresponding query conditions.

2.3 Motivations

The challenge of storing recent data in memory is achieving good trade-off between memory footprint and read/write performance. The analysis in Section 2.2 reveals that it is paramount to address the issues of metadata posed by high dimensionality of time series in memory. With the existence of efficient compression algorithms for time series data points, e.g. the ones proposed in Gorilla [18], the memory footprint of metadata becomes even more prominent. At the same time, in order to ensure high query performance, we need to build in-memory index for meta data, which however would negatively affect memory consumption and ingestion throughput.

Based on the above objectives and challenges, we design an in-memory time series database, ByteSeries. It can be used as an in-memory cache for disk storage solutions and provides high-throughput ingestion and low-latency querying. We propose a multi-level cache design that implements different metadata compression schemes to balance the performance of memory consumption and read/write throughput, which will be described in detail in the following sections.

3 SYSTEM DESIGN

In this section, we present the design of ByteSeries, which is designed to replace ByteDance’s tsdc to manage ByteDance’s tens of billions dimensions of time series.

3.1 Overview of the Architecture

As mentioned earlier, ByteSeries is an in-memory cache that can be placed in front of a disk-based time series database system to provide high-throughput data management. Since ByteSeries solely relies on main memory to store data, memory footprint is of utmost importance. ByteSeries adopts Gorilla’s compression algorithm to efficiently compress data points. However, the memory footprint of metadata is very significant with ByteDance’s production dataset. Therefore, in order to effectively reduce the memory footprint, we design and implement a whole set of mechanisms to efficiently compresses the metadata while maintaining indices to speedup queries. To avoid the ingestion throughput affected by the overhead of data compression, we adopt a segmented memory approach to smooth out the effect.

Figure 6 depicts ByteSeries’s overall architecture. We present two major components of the entire design: 1) memory layout and data structures, 2) a data conversion scheduler that dynamically coordinates the execution of data conversion between different memory segments.

Data collected by the Data collector is first written to the Active Buffer, which is designed to ensure high ingestion throughput. In Active Buffer, a simple data structure, such as hash table and append-only array is used to meet the requirement on high ingestion rate. No data compression is performed within this buffer, so it is desirable that it only occupies a small portion of memory to achieve low memory
Figure 7: The in-memory data structure of Active Buffer. We divide the Active Buffer into multiple shards (a), and each shard has its own data segment called Active Segment (b).

footprint. Static Buffer stores the compressed data to minimize the memory footprint, as well as the novel Compressed Inverted Index to speed up query processing. Each block of data from Active Buffer will be first compressed and converted to the data format of Static Buffer, and then merged with the existing data stored in Static Buffer. To amortize the overhead of compression and merging, this process is done in a batch manner. A scheduler is responsible for coordinating the execution of the process, including the data conversion from Active Buffer to Static Buffer, the compression of metadata inside Static Buffer and so on.

3.2 Memory Layout & Data Structures

3.2.1 Active Buffer. Data arriving at ByteSeries would be first stored in Active Buffer. As mentioned before, in order to maintain high-throughput data ingestion, this does not involve any complicated data conversion or compression. Figure 7 shows the data structure of Active Buffer. To achieve scalability, Active Buffer is sharded into multiple segments, called Active Segments (AS), each of which is treated independently. Data is placed in different segments according to the hash value of the series key. An AS consists of an append-only array and a dynamic inverted index. Data are appended into the array and inserted into the inverted index to accelerate query.

The reasons for sharding are twofold. First of all, sharding allows data ingestion be executed in parallel on different segments to achieve higher data throughput. Second, to convert data from Active Buffer to Static Buffer, it is necessary to pause the ingestion and then re-allocate new segment for Active Buffer, after which ingestion can be resumed. The original memory space of the Active Buffer can only be released/reused after the data conversion is completed. If we perform this operation over the entire Active Buffer, the memory overhead would be at least as large as the size of Active Buffer. This overhead could be even higher if data conversion temporarily falls behind data ingestion. With sharding, data conversion is done on the segment level, therefore the memory overhead would only be the size of a few segments, especially during the normal situation where data conversion can keep up with data ingestion.

3.2.2 Static Buffer. Static Buffer is designed to achieve both high memory efficiency and high query performance. Through the data analysis in Section 2.2, we observed that although there are over 10 billion dimensions in the whole system, more than 99% dimensions have less than 15 tag-kv pairs, and there are a large number of dimensions share the same tag keys. The whole dataset can be represented by a combination of hundreds of thousands of metrics and tens of thousands of tag combinations under each metric. Based on such data characteristics, we propose Compressed Inverted Index, a novel data structure to achieve not only data indexing, but also metadata compression. As shown in Figure 8 (c), Compressed Inverted Index employs a trie[4] to store the key to serve as an inverted index. Furthermore, integer compression is applied to compress the array storing the offsets of the data points.

To limit the impact of the compression overhead on ingestion throughput, we further divide Static Buffer into two parts, which is shown in Figure 8. The first part consists of the so-called Static Segment (SS). Time-series data points in SS are stored in an append-only array. Newly added data points are directly appended into the array without compression, and their offset are also directly appended to the inverted index. The simple append operations incur only minimum overhead so that converting data from a AS to an SS can keep up with the speed of data ingestion to Active Buffer. In order to facilitate parallel processing, each AS is first converted into a Temporary Static Segment (TSS) in parallel. Then one or more TSSs would be merged into SS.

In SS, both the metadata and data points are not stored in a compact form. Data points with the same series key are scattered around in the data point array rather than storing in a contiguous space. This would cause not only that the inverted index has to store more offsets of data points, but also that the compression of data points would
Figure 8: Static Buffer’s memory storage design. There are two different data segment structures in Static Buffer: (b) Static Segment (SS) and (c) Compressed Segment (CS).

Figure 9: The building process of Compressed Inverted Index

Figure 10: One example of Compressed Inverted Index using in querying

be less effective. Therefore, we further convert a SS into a so-called Compressed Segment (CS) to achieve higher memory efficiency. In CS, all the data points with the same series key are stored contiguously, which can achieve more effective compression and faster query operations due to less data lookup. Furthermore, only one data offset is needed for each series key to be stored in the Compressed Inverted Index, so CS has much smaller memory footprint.

The purpose of converting data first to SS then to CS is to batch the expensive compression operations to amortize the overhead. In order to avoid that SS takes up a large amount of memory, we also need to limit its size. So when the data in SS have accumulated to a certain amount, the data conversion scheduler will schedule the process of compressing and merging data into CS.

Listing 1: The data struct of Compressed Inverted Index

```c
struct CompressedInvertedIndex {
    Trie          trie_map;
    char*         compressed_list;
    size_t        compressed_list_size;
    size_t        trie_map_size;
    size_t        index_size;
}
```

Listing 1 shows the implementation of Compressed Inverted Index, in which `trie_map` is a prefix tree for compressing tag-kvs, and `compressed_list` is inverted index arrays after compression consisting of `Inverted Index Array` and `Inverted Index Offset`. The `compressed_list_size` records the compressed list size, `trie_map_size` is the number of inverted indices, and `index_size` is the total size of the index. We elaborate on
the building process of the entire index with an example in Figure 9.

When building the Compressed Inverted Index, the first step is to build inverted indices for all tag-kv pairs (as shown in Figure 9 (a)). Then we compress them in two aspects: inverted index keys and inverted index value arrays. For the value arrays, we concatenate them into one array (shown in Figure 9 (b) total inverted index array), and then use another array (Figure 9 (b) inverted index offset) to record the starting position of the values of each inverted index array in the concatenated array. At the same time, the value corresponding to each key (tag-kv) in the original inverted indices is changed to the position recorded (as presented at Figure 9 (c)). Finally, we compress the keys using a prefix tree (get result trie_map shown in Listing 1). We implement it using a C++ library called cedar[3], which has shown higher compression rate, and faster construction and search speed in comparing with other libraries. Then, we compress the total inverted index array and the inverted index offset (compress_list in Listing 1) using the p4nzhenc64 [25] algorithm and recording their sizes.

3.2.3 Querying over Compressed Inverted Index. We use an example to illustrate how the Compressed Inverted Index can be used in query execution. Figure 10 shows a query: SELECT mem_usage FROM mydb WHERE local=wuhan AND id=1 AND time≥'2020-2-1'.

The first step of query processing is to analyze the time range. If there exists no data in the time range, it will return immediately. Otherwise, it proceeds by looking up the index for each tag-kv condition. For each tag-kv condition of local=wuhan and id=1, the offset in the inverted index position is retrieved from the trie_map (0 and 23 in this case). The query immediate returns with an empty result if the index lookup returns empty. Otherwise, we decompress the compressed_list into inverted index array and inverted index offset, and then obtain the position of the inverted index from inverted index offset. We can then read the inverted index from the array, which are (0,31,...) and (0,47,...), and perform the intersection to get the final result, which is (0). Finally we read and decompress the data to get the target data with the result (0). Time-based group-by operations and/or other aggregate functions can then be performed.

3.3 Data Conversion Scheduler

The Data Conversion Scheduler (DCS) controls the data conversions between different data segments to ensure high ingestion throughput. DCS consists of three processors (Compactor, Merge Processor and Compressor), which correspond to three major data conversion tasks: 1) Compactor compacts an AS into a TSS; 2) Merge Processor merges one or more TSS with SS; 3) Compressor compresses a Static Segment into Compressed Segment.

Algorithm 1 outlines the execution strategy of DCS. DCS runs in a separate thread and schedules the three tasks (Compactor, Merge Processor and Compressor) according to predefined rules. Scheduler is the core function that performs the scheduling. A Boolean variable, stop, is used by the system to control the shutdown of the process. DCS can be shut down by setting stop to be True instead of being killed abruptly, so as to ensure its executing task is completed.

As mentioned earlier, we limit the size of Active Buffer to reduce the memory footprint. Once the amount of data in an AS in the Active Buffer exceeds a threshold, it would be converted into a TSS and transferred to Static Buffer. Since we target the scenario with high-dimensional time series data, where the metadata in AS occupies most of the space, we use the relative number of dimensions stored in an AS as an estimation of the size of AS. More specifically, the threshold dimen_limit (line 6) represents the percentage of the total number of dimensions that are stored in AS (line 12). This is a tunable parameter, and its effect is explored in the experimental section. In Algorithm 1, we use CheckProcessor to check whether the conditions are met (lines 27-28), and this value is updated (lines 31-34) whenever compressor is executed. In the meantime, there might be an issue: even though the number of dimensions in AS is low, the number of data points is too high so that the size of AS is large. In order to prevent this issue, we set the second threshold max_size, i.e. the maximum size of AS, in line 8. We check this condition once for each round of task execution (lines 18-21).

In order to amortize the overhead of compressing SS, to avoid redundant metadata storage, and to speed up the execution of queries, we exploit opportunities to merge multiple AS into SS and compress them all at once. To do so, we first convert each AS into a TSS. When the condition of converting AS is not met, CheckProcessor checks whether there is at least one TSS that can be merged into the existing SS (lines 29-30). If so, merging would be executed. Whenever neither of the conditions for converting AS and merging TSS to SS are met, we would check if we should further compress the current SS and incorporate it into CS. This would happen if SS exceeds a given threshold (line 9).

We implemented ByteSeries in C++. In this section, we evaluate the data compression and conversion methods using microbenchmarks. Specifically, we first evaluate the memory usage and performance of the data structures of the three

4 BENCHMARK EXPERIMENTS

We implemented ByteSeries in C++. In this section, we evaluate...
types of memory segments that we proposed. We then evaluate the performance trade-off and parameter choices made by the proposed data compaction and merging strategies. Lastly, we compare the full ByteSeries implementation performance to other existing TSDB to verify the performance.

In next Section (Section 5), we examine the performance of ByteSeries as the time series database service with the production workload of ByteDance’s metric monitoring system. We replace the original tsdc with ByteSeries and show the performance improvement.

4.1 Experiment Setup & Benchmark

The experiments were ran on a machine with two eight-core Intel(R) Xeon(R) Platinum 8269CY CPUs at 2.5GHz, 64GB memory, and a 512GB HDD disk. The operating system is Ubuntu 18.04 with Linux kernel version 4.15.

To simulate time series workload, we use Time Series Benchmark Suite (TSBS) [24], a collection of tools to generate data sets and benchmark read and write workloads. We modified TSBS to generate microbenchmarks to measure memory usage, ingestion performance and query performance. We focus on the DevOps use cases that simulate what a system administrator would see when operating a cluster of hundreds or thousands of virtual machines. We scale the number of metrics and hosts to generate different scales of time series. The length of each time series name is about 197 bytes with 10 labels on average, and 20 bytes per label pair on average. We use only the data set and query model of TSBS, without using its data loading and query method.

In all the experiments, we write data first and then execute different queries. We mainly evaluate two types of queries: Single Groupby and Double Groupby. Each Simple Groupby query returns one metric of 1 host, and aggregate the time series for every 5 mins over 1 hour of data. Double Groupby returns aggregation across both time and host, giving the average of 1 CPU metric per host per hour for 24 hours. Each query will be executed 3 times and the average execution time is reported. All experiments are single-threaded without any network activity unless otherwise specified. Because different databases have very different data structures and write interfaces, to ensure a fair comparison, we skip the upper layer interface and directly measure the write rate of these database storage engines in memory.

4.2 Compression Effects

We analyze our data compression and merging method by first evaluating the three data structures Active Segment (AS), Static Segment (SS) and Compressed Segment (CS). We first compare the data structures by storing the same data and executing the same queries over them. We also evaluate the ingestion and building speed of the three data structures. This is an evaluation of the data structures alone without considering the multi-segment merging and compression process, whose effect are evaluated in the subsequent sections.

Figure 11 shows the memory usage of metadata in the three types of segments. The memory footprint of AS is up to 9x larger than the metadata of the original data set. This is because AS is designed for high-throughput insertion and do not consider metadata compression. Moreover, it requires additional space to store data structures for building an inverted index. Both SS and CS can effectively compress the metadata, and therefore both can achieve a much lower memory footprint. Unlike AS, SS and CS do not support support insertion, so we do not need to store the forward index and metric names. CS stores data in consecutive blocks and in a compressed form to further reduce memory usage, and does not need to reserve space or maintains locks to support modification. Hence it is even more space efficient than SS.

Figure 12 shows the latency of the two types of queries on the three data structures. The query latency for SS and CS is slightly higher than that of AS, because of the overhead of decompressing the posting lists. However, the query latency in all the cases is still quite low because queries only involve
in-memory operations and the decompression algorithm is fast.

We also test the ingestion throughput of AS and the conversion speed from AS to SS and from SS to CS. As shown in Figure 13, the throughputs of AS ingestion and AS-to-SS conversion are comparable. But merging static segment into compressed segment can be the bottleneck for data ingestion if the batch size is set to be too small. With a sufficiently large batch size, the compression throughput can keep up with the AS ingestion throughput.

4.3 Merging Strategies & Overhead

We evaluate the ingestion throughput of AS with different thresholds in terms of the percentage of dimensions (proportional to the total number of dimensions) stored in the AS. Figure 14(a) shows the throughputs with different setups. Setting the AS capacity between 20% and 100% has very little effect on the ingestion rate. When it drops below 10%, the ingestion rate drops significantly. This is because the conversion from AS to SS will cause a certain overhead. Figure 14(b) also verifies that memory usage decreases as the percent decreases. Setting the capacity of AS to 10 can achieve a good balance between compression and write rate. If the demand for throughput is met, then one can reduce the threshold to reduce memory usage so that a smaller amount of resource is needed to support the same scale of data.

We use the average number of data points in every dimension as the threshold to trigger batched compression and merging of SS into CS. Batching reduces the overhead of index building, compression and merging. However, it could lead to weaker compression, more redundant indices and more segments to look up for query executions. This experiment is to investigate these effects. Figure 15(a) depicts the ingestion throughput as a function of the number of data points in SS. The ingestion throughput achieves peaked at around 3.5 data points per dimension. Figure 15(b) depicts the memory usage as a function of the average number of data points per dimension in an SS. We can observe that the memory size increases with more data points in SS. Figure 15(c) and Figure 15(d) depict the query latency of the two types of queries. Query latency increases as the number of data points increases. With the threshold being 3.5, the query latency is increased by 2 times (still as low as around 100 microseconds).

In the subsequent experiments, we set the AS-to-SS conversion threshold as 0.2 and the SS-to-CS threshold as 3.5 to achieve high ingestion throughput. As a side note, these parameters can be set according to the requirements of the system. If the system needs lower ingestion rate, we can reduce AS size to reduce memory requirement, or lower the threshold on the average number data points per dimension in SS to reduce query latency.

4.4 Compare with other TSDBs

In this set of experiments, we compare ByteSeries with ByteDance’s original production system, tsdc, and two open-source time series database systems, including 1) Gorilla, an in-memory cache for time-series supporting efficient and effective time series compression, and 2) Prometheus, a TSBS
built for monitoring systems managing high-dimensional time series.

Figure 16 shows the memory consumption of the four systems. Prometheus consumes a lot of memory as it needs many data structures regarding the inverted index. Since Gorilla does not build in-memory indexes for the metadata, it has relatively low memory consumption. However, it still needs to maintain dynamic data structures for data ingestion and does not compress the metric name of each dimension. ByteDance’s tsdc uses a data structure similar to Gorilla, but has more mapping layers of hashtable, so it consumes more memory. ByteSeries uses significantly less memory than others. This is because ByteSeries only allocate a small portion of memory to Active Buffer to maintain a dynamic data structure for efficient ingestion, and most of the data are stored in a more compressed form in the Static Buffer. These experimental results indicate that ByteSeries may process 7x more distinct time series dimensions comparing to Prometheus with the same amount of memory.

Figure 17 shows the ingestion performance. Gorilla has the highest ingestion rate because it writes data using just a simple hash lookup. Prometheus needs to build indices and performs a lot of expiration checks in the background when inserting, which limits the rate of ingestion. ByteDance’s tsdc uses dictionary encoding method to compress metadata for saving memory, but requires more encoding calculations. In comparison to Gorilla, ByteSeries has some additional compression and merging operations, hence its ingestion throughput is lower than Gorilla. However, it is significantly higher than Prometheus and tsdc.

Since Gorilla does not natively support multi-dimensional queries, we only compare the query performance of Prometheus, tsdc and ByteSeries. As shown in Figure 18, the query latency of ByteSeries is slightly higher than Prometheus for single-groupby query, but the difference is only a few microseconds which is negligible in comparing to the cost of transmitting the result over the network, while tsdc takes much longer than other two due to the lack of efficient indices. For Double-groupby query, ByteSeries performs much better than Prometheus. This is because ByteSeries and Prometheus have a different query process. The inverted index of Prometheus does not directly return the aggregation group result, but returns the time series name and data points involved, and then performs group-by aggregates on the returned data. On the contrary, ByteSeries returns the time series grouping directly, and hence eliminates the time for running the grouping operations. As for tsdc, due to the fact that the Double-groupby would scan all data of one metric, the full scan schema in tsdc performs better than Prometheus which needs to search index first before scan.

5 EVALUATION ON PRODUCTION DEPLOYMENT

In this section, we perform experiments on ByteDance’s production deployment.
5.1 Memory Usage

In this experiment, we compare ByteSeries with tsdc, ByteDance’s original system. ByteDance’s production system places great demands on memory space. As of the spring of 2020, we need to store close to 40 million dimensions of time series on each node instance. Each dimension contains on average about 40 data points over a two-hour time slice. Without proper compression, it requires about 25GB of memory space for each slice on each instance, of which over 80% is metadata. As shown in Figure 19, ByteSeries successfully reduces about 40%–50% memory space in comparing to tsdc. The improvement is mainly due to ByteSeries’ efficient compression of metadata, which shows about 2.3x improvement.

5.2 Ingestion Throughput Requirement

Taking into account the different working conditions during the day and at night, as well as the differences between working days and non-working days, we measured the actual data ingestions throughput in the ByteDance’s production environment. We obtained an average of 0.24 million insertions per second per instance. We also observed that the peak insertion rate was 0.29 million per second. According to the benchmark in Section 4.3, it shows that ByteSeries can sustain an ingestion rate that is far exceeding the demand of the production environment.

5.3 Query Efficiency

In this section, we examine the query efficiency of ByteSeries with real production workload. We captured tens of thousands of queries from the real production system in ByteDance and evaluated them on our system. In this experiment, we first examine the efficiency of the Compressed Inverted Index in ByteSeries with varying ratios of the number of scanned dimensions to the result dimensions (called SR value). A smaller SR value means fewer irrelevant dimensions are scanned, and hence higher higher effectiveness of the index and query execution. As shown in Figure 20, there are about 90% of the queries have an SR value not exceeding 50. In comparison to full scan of the hashtable, we significantly reduce the scanning overhead of queries. Figure 21 shows the query execution time. It shows that 80% of the queries can complete within one millisecond, and almost all the queries can complete within 10 ms. This meets the requirements of ByteDance.

6 RELATED WORK

A number of systems were designed to support diverse query requirements over time series data [8] and have demonstrated many use cases of time series, such as clustering and classification [5, 19], anomaly detection [12, 14] and time series indexing [11, 13, 21]. We refer the readers for a recent survey [9] on more time-series systems. Among these systems, a lot of efforts focus on developing complex disk-based indices for efficient querying. Most designs were based on the log-structure merge tree (LSM-tree) [17]. Systems in this category include OpenTSDB [16], KairosDB [10], InfluxDB [7] and etc. Although indices based on LSM-tree are designed for efficient disk ingestion, read and write performances are limited by disk I/O. Moreover, LSM-tree lacks secondary indices
and cannot support multi-dimensional time series queries. InfluxDB implements a fully functional index system, called TSI [6], but a query needs to involve more disk I/O. Limited by disk I/O, such disk-based databases cannot provide sufficient ingestion and real-time query performance, and hence they are mainly suitable for offline data analysis.

Some recent efforts investigated how to use main memory to enhance performance on data ingestion and real-time querying. BTrDB [2] organizes data in memory and writes it to the back-end storage in batches. It pre-compute aggregate statistics in memory with different scales. However, BTrDB does not support multi-dimensional time series data model. Akumuli uses a storage structure called Numerical B*-tree[1], a variant of B*-tree[23], which is somewhat close to BTrDB’s design. Akumuli added multi-dimensional data model and index to support multi-dimensional queries. However, its design is optimized to avoid disk I/O being the bottleneck, rather than minimizing memory footprint. RTSI is an in-memory index for searching the live audio in the main memory [26]. However, it does not support meta-data compression.

Gorilla [18] is a write-through cache of back-end persistent storage designed for large-scale monitoring systems, developed by Facebook. It proposed an efficient time series compression algorithm, which has become the preferred algorithm for many time series databases. Efficient data compression and simplified data structure allows it to store the whole data in memory. However, the simplified data model does not support high-dimensional queries.

Prometheus [20] is another time series database built for monitoring systems. Its idea is similar to Gorilla, providing efficient ingestion and query using main memory and local storage. To reduce memory usage, it partitions the data with time into blocks and only stores the latest block in memory. Even though only a short time slice is stored in memory, it still consumes a lot of memory as it maintains dynamic indices and performs no compression over metadata.

In addition, there are also efforts to use memory to support time series databases on top of conventional database systems. TimescaleDB [22] is a time series storage engine based on PostgreSQL and creates a table of the recent inserted data in memory and writes it to disk with a fixed time interval or a fixed data size. Each table is completely independent, with independent metadata and indices. Due to the lack of effective data compression, the memory efficiency of TimescaleDB is limited. MongoDB [15], a document-oriented database, can support complex queries with rich data models and indices for managing metadata of high-dimensional time series. MongoDB can use in-memory engines to provide higher performance than disk-based storage engines. However, the lack of effective compression makes memory utilization very low. It also requires a lot of additional efforts to support querying features over time.

7 CONCLUSION

In this paper, we identify the challenges of managing metadata for high dimensional time series in large-scale metric monitoring systems through the analysis of ByteDance’s production data and workload. The analysis showed that the rapid increase of dimensions, and the existence of many dimensions with few data points make the large memory footprint of metadata become a prominent problem to be addressed for data management in large-scale monitoring systems. Furthermore, we showed that multi-dimensional queries are the norm in time series analysis, and hence their efficient execution is of high importance to large-scale monitoring systems.

To address the challenges posed by massive metadata, we developed ByteSeries, that efficiently compresses both time series metadata and data points. The Compressed Inverted Index is not only able to store metadata in a compressed form, but also capable of processing multi-dimensional group-by queries efficiently. Furthermore, our data conversion scheduler is able to efficiently convert the data into the compressed form without sacrificing data ingestion throughput. The experiments showed that, in comparing with ByteDance’s tsdc and two existing open-source systems, ByteSeries can effectively reduce memory footprint while having superior data ingestion throughput and query response time. ByteSeries can be used not only as an independent system, but also as an intermediate in-memory cache in front of an on-disk time series database system to achieve high ingestion throughput and real-time query processing.

REFERENCES

Algorithm 1: The Execution Strategy of Data Conversion Scheduler

Let stop be the flag of whether the Scheduler runs;
Let dimen_num be the dimensions in AS;
Let buffer_size be the size of AS;
Let avg_points be the dps per dimension in SS;
Let tss_number be the number of TSS;
Let dimen_limit be the the dimensions limit in AS;
Let total_dimensions be the total dimensions in CS;
Let max_size be the maximum size of AS;
Let point_limit be the dps limit per dimen in SS;
Let min_dimen be the minimal dimensions in AS;
Let max_dimen be the maximum dimensions in AS;
Let dimen_ratio be the preset ratio;
stop ← False

dimen_limit ← min_dimen
p ← compactor

Function Scheduler()
    while stop is False do
        if buffer_size ≥ max_size then
            Exec(compactor);
            p← NextProcessor(compactor);
            continue;
        if CheckProcessor(p) is True then
            Exec(p);
            p← NextProcessor(p);
        return;
    Function CheckProcessor(p)
        if p is compactor And dimen_num ≥ dimen_limit then
            return True;
        if p is merge_processor And tss_number ≥ 1 then
            return True;
        if p is compressor And avg_points ≥ point_limit then
            update total_dimensions;
            tmp_dimen ← dimen_ratio * total_dimensions;
            dimen_limit ← Min(Max(min_dimen, tmp_dimen), max_dimen);
            return True;
        return False;

Function NextProcessor(p)
    switch p do
        case compactor do
            return merge_processor;
        case merge_processor do
            return compressor;
        case compressor do
            return compactor;