Lecture 7: Algorithms I

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Scenario 1: Amazon buying Adventure

• Early April 2011: A scientist at UC-Berkeley logged on to Amazon.com to buy an extra book for his lab.
• He usually pays $35-$40 per copy
• But on that day, he found 2 used copies, one priced at $1,730,045 the other at $2,198,177!!
• He thought it was just a mistake or a joke
• The re-checked the following day and the prices were $2,194,443 and $2,788,233!!
• The escalation continued for two weeks with the price peaking on April 18th at $28,698,655 (+ $3.99 shipping)!!
Scenario 2: Flash Crash

- Early on May 6, 2010: stock market was hit by unsettling developments in Greece.... BUT
- At 2:42pm (EST) markets start dropping into a free fall
- At 2:47pm (i.e. 300 seconds later): Dow Jones was down 998.5 points (the largest single day drop in history!)
- Nearly $1 Trillion of wealth fell into the electronic ether!!
- Some share prices crashed to one penny ($0.01) rendering billion-dollar companies worthless!
- Dow Jones recovered 500 points in less than 3 minutes!!
What Happened??

• Scenario 1:
  - Algorithms used by Amazon to price books got into price war!
  - One of the seller’s algorithms was programmed to price the book slightly higher than the competitor’s price.
  - The second algorithm, in turn, increased its price!
  - Things didn’t turn to normal until a human being stepped in an overrode the system.

• Scenario 2:
  - We don’t know till today!!
  - Explanation 1: Some of the blame was directed to a city money manager whose algorithm sold $4B worth of stock too quickly.
  - Explanation 2: Group of traders who conspired to send things down all at once through a coordinated algorithms
As we put more and more of our world under the control of algorithms, we can loose track of who – or what – is pulling the strings.

from Christopher Steiner ‘s book “Automate This: How Algorithms Came to Rule our World” .... (from which I got the previous two scenarios too!).
Well-defined computational procedure that takes some value, or set of values, as input and produces some value, or set of values, as output.

A tool for solving a well-specified computational problem.

The statement of the problem specified in general terms the desired input/output relationship.
Problem Statement

• Problem specifications have two parts:
  1. the set of allowed input instances,
  2. the required properties of the algorithm’s output
Questions

• What is the difference between a program and an algorithm?
• Is error handling part of the algorithm? or the HLL program?
• Does your algorithm need to produce just a correct result? or always the best result?
• If computers were infinitely fast and memory was free, would you have any reasons to study algorithms?
Can We Solve Anything With a Computer?

• **Undecidable**
  – Cannot be solved by an algorithm
  – e.g. Halting problem (given a program and inputs for it, decide whether it will run forever or will eventually halt.)

• **Unsolvable**
  – No finite algorithm
  – e.g. Goldbach’s conjecture (Every even number greater than 2 can be written as the sum of two primes.)

• **Intractable**
  – Unreasonable amount of time and resources
Steps of an algorithm

- Finite number
- Unambiguous
- Very specific
- Can be carried out in a finite amount of time in a deterministic way
- Since we can only input, store, process & output data on a computer, the instructions in our algorithms will be limited to these functions
Algorithm Properties

- It must be correct.
- It must be composed of a series of concrete steps.
- There can be no ambiguity as to which step will be performed next.
- It must be composed of a finite number of steps.
- It must terminate.
Algorithm Is Different Than A HLL Program

• In algorithms you do not need to use strict syntax
• You can present an algorithm in pseudocode, flowchart, ...
• Pseudocode is not concerned with issues of software engineering (e.g. error handling, abstraction, modularity, ...).
Pseudocode Algorithm

Example: Write an algorithm to determine a student’s final grade and indicate whether it is passing or failing. The final grade is calculated as the average of four marks.
Pseudocode Algorithm

Pseudocode:
• Input a set of 4 marks
• Calculate their average by summing and dividing by 4
• if average is below 50
  Print “FAIL”
else
  Print “PASS”
Pseudocode Algorithm

• Detailed Algorithm

Step 1: Input M1, M2, M3, M4
Step 2: GRADE \leftarrow (M1+M2+M3+M4)/4
Step 3: if (GRADE < 50) then
    Print “FAIL”
else
    Print “PASS”
endif
Flowchart

A Flowchart

– shows logic of an algorithm
– emphasizes individual steps and their interconnections
– e.g. control flow from one action to the next
# Flowchart Symbols

## Basic

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Symbol</th>
<th>Use in Flowchart</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oval</td>
<td><img src="oval.png" alt="Oval" /></td>
<td>Denotes the beginning or end of the program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parallelogram</td>
<td><img src="parallelogram.png" alt="Parallelogram" /></td>
<td>Denotes an input operation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rectangle</td>
<td><img src="rectangle.png" alt="Rectangle" /></td>
<td>Denotes a process to be carried out e.g. addition, subtraction, division etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diamond</td>
<td><img src="diamond.png" alt="Diamond" /></td>
<td>Denotes a decision (or branch) to be made. The program should continue along one of two routes. (e.g. IF/THEN/ELSE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hybrid</td>
<td><img src="hybrid.png" alt="Hybrid" /></td>
<td>Denotes an output operation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flow line</td>
<td><img src="flow-line.png" alt="Flow line" /></td>
<td>Denotes the direction of logic flow in the program</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Step 1: Input M1, M2, M3, M4
Step 2: GRADE $\leftarrow$ (M1 + M2 + M3 + M4)/4
Step 3: if (GRADE < 50) then
        Print “FAIL”
    else
        Print “PASS”
    endif
Example

Problem: Robot Tour Optimization
Input: A set $S$ of $n$ points in the plane.
Output: What is the shortest cycle tour that visits each point in the set $S$?
Example

NearestNeighbor\( (P) \)

Pick and visit an initial point \( p_0 \) from \( P \)

\[
p = p_0 \\
i = 0
\]

While there are still unvisited points

\[
i = i + 1
\]

Select \( p_i \) to be the closest unvisited point to \( p_{i-1} \)

Visit \( p_i \)

Return to \( p_0 \) from \( p_{n-1} \)

The above algorithm is:

• Simple to understand and implement
• Makes send

And ... WRONG! \( \rightarrow \) Does not produce the shortest path!
Example

NearestNeighbor(\(P\))
- Pick and visit an initial point \(p_0\) from \(P\)
- \(p = p_0\)
- \(i = 0\)
- While there are still unvisited points
  - \(i = i + 1\)
  - Select \(p_i\) to be the closest unvisited point to \(p_{i-1}\)
  - Visit \(p_i\)
- Return to \(p_0\) from \(p_{n-1}\)

This is what the above alg. produces

This is the optimal solution.
Example

ClosestPair\( (P) \)
Let \( n \) be the number of points in set \( P \).
For \( i = 1 \) to \( n - 1 \) do
\[
d = \infty
\]
For each pair of endpoints \( (s, t) \) from distinct vertex chains
if \( dist(s, t) \leq d \) then \( s_m = s, \; t_m = t, \; \text{and} \; d = dist(s, t) \)
Connect \( (s_m, t_m) \) by an edge
Connect the two endpoints by an edge

This one will produce the optimal solution of the previous example.
Hmmm ...

- Looks like for this problem any algorithm can produce a very bad result for some inputs 😞
- This example we just saw is a classical problem called **The Traveling Salesman Problem (TSP)**
Traveling Salesman Problem

- He must travel to n different towns in his area each month in order to deliver something important. Each town is a different distance away from his town and from each other town. How do you figure out a route that will minimize the distance traveled?
Brute Force?

- Enumerate all possible routes
  - For 10 towns for example there are 10! (3,628,800)
- Choose the shortest.
- This is called **brute force algorithm**.
Is Brute Force a Good Solution?

Take Home Lesson: There is a fundamental difference between algorithms, which always produce a correct result, and heuristics, which may usually do a good job but without providing any guarantee.
How Do We Judge Algorithms?

- Correctness
- Efficiency
  - Speed
  - Memory
- Algorithm analysis is predicting the resources that the algorithm requires
- Algorithms can be understood and studied in a language and machine-independent manner.
Machine Model $\rightarrow$ RAM

- Random Access Machine
- Instructions are executed one after the other.
- Basic instructions (arithmetic, logic, data movement) take fixed amount of time
- Memory is infinite
- We need a way that summarizes the behavior of an algorithm executed on RAM
Worst- / average- / best-case

• Worst-case running time of an algorithm
  – The longest running time for any input of size $n$
  – An upper bound on the running time for any input
    $\Rightarrow$ guarantee that the algorithm will never take longer
  – Example: Sort a set of numbers in increasing order; and the data is in decreasing order
  – The worst case can occur fairly often
    • E.g. in searching a database for a particular piece of information

• Best-case running time
  – sort a set of numbers in increasing order; and the data is already in increasing order

• Average-case running time
  – May be difficult to define what “average” means
The Big Oh Notation

- A way of giving an approximation of the amount of computation done by an algorithm given the input size
- ignores the difference between multiplicative constants: \( f(n) = 2n \) and \( g(n) = n \) are identical in Big Oh analysis
The Big Oh Notation

- $f(n) = O(g(n))$ means $c \cdot g(n)$ is an upper bound on $f(n)$. Thus there exists some constant $c$ such that $f(n)$ is always $\leq c \cdot g(n)$, for large enough $n$ (i.e., $n \geq n_0$ for some constant $n_0$).
- $f(n) = \Omega(g(n))$ means $c \cdot g(n)$ is a lower bound on $f(n)$. Thus there exists some constant $c$ such that $f(n)$ is always $\geq c \cdot g(n)$, for all $n \geq n_0$.
- $f(n) = \Theta(g(n))$ means $c_1 \cdot g(n)$ is an upper bound on $f(n)$ and $c_2 \cdot g(n)$ is a lower bound on $f(n)$, for all $n \geq n_0$. Thus there exist constants $c_1$ and $c_2$ such that $f(n) \leq c_1 \cdot g(n)$ and $f(n) \geq c_2 \cdot g(n)$.
The Big Oh Notation

Problem: Is $2^{n+1} = \Theta(2^n)$?
Is It Wise to Ignore Constants?

- If two algorithms one is $O(n^2)$ and the other $O(\log n)$
  - one is $C_1 n^2$ and the other $C_2 \log n$
  - What if $C_2$ is much bigger than $C_1$?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>$n$</th>
<th>$f(n)$</th>
<th>$\lg n$</th>
<th>$n$</th>
<th>$n \lg n$</th>
<th>$n^2$</th>
<th>$2^n$</th>
<th>$n!$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.003 µs</td>
<td>0.01 µs</td>
<td>0.033 µs</td>
<td>0.1 µs</td>
<td>1 µs</td>
<td>3.63 ms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.004 µs</td>
<td>0.02 µs</td>
<td>0.086 µs</td>
<td>0.4 µs</td>
<td>1 ms</td>
<td>77.1 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.005 µs</td>
<td>0.03 µs</td>
<td>0.147 µs</td>
<td>0.9 µs</td>
<td>1 sec</td>
<td>$8.4 \times 10^{15}$ yrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.005 µs</td>
<td>0.04 µs</td>
<td>0.213 µs</td>
<td>1.6 µs</td>
<td>18.3 min</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.006 µs</td>
<td>0.05 µs</td>
<td>0.282 µs</td>
<td>2.5 µs</td>
<td>13 days</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.007 µs</td>
<td>0.1 µs</td>
<td>0.644 µs</td>
<td>10 µs</td>
<td>4 × $10^{13}$ yrs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,000</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.010 µs</td>
<td>1.00 µs</td>
<td>9.966 µs</td>
<td>100 ms</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>10,000</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.013 µs</td>
<td>10 µs</td>
<td>130 µs</td>
<td>10 sec</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100,000</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.017 µs</td>
<td>0.10 ms</td>
<td>1.67 ms</td>
<td>16.7 min</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,000,000</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.020 µs</td>
<td>1 ms</td>
<td>19.93 ms</td>
<td>1.16 days</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10,000,000</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.023 µs</td>
<td>0.01 sec</td>
<td>0.23 sec</td>
<td>115.7 days</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100,000,000</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.027 µs</td>
<td>0.10 sec</td>
<td>2.66 sec</td>
<td>31.7 years</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,000,000,000</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.030 µs</td>
<td>1 sec</td>
<td>29.90 sec</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Big Oh examples

- \( N^2 / 2 - 3N = O(N^2) \)
- \( 1 + 4N = O(N) \)
- \( 7N^2 + 10N + 3 = O(N^2) = O(N^3) \)
- \( \log_{10} N = \log_2 N / \log_2 10 = O(\log_2 N) = O(\log N) \)
- \( \sin N = O(1); \ 10 = O(1), \ 10^{10} = O(1) \)
- \( \log N + N = O(N) \)
- \( N = O(2^N), \ \text{but } 2^N \text{ is not } O(N) \)
**Example**

- Calculate \( \sum_{i=1}^{N} i^3 \)

```cpp
int sum(int n)
{
    int partialSum;

    1  partialSum = 0;  \( 1 \)
    2  for (int i=1;i<=n;i++)  \( 2N+2 \)
        partialSum += i*i*i;  \( 4N \)
    4  return partialSum;  \( 1 \)
}
```

- Lines 1 and 4 count for one unit each
- Line 3: executed \( N \) times, each time four units
- Line 2: (1 for initialization, \( N+1 \) for all the tests, \( N \) for all the increments) total \( 2N + 2 \)
- Total cost: \( 6N + 4 \Rightarrow O(N) \)
Good Book

THE Algorithm Design MANUAL

Steven S. Skiena

Springer
Good Book
Good Book: For Fun!

AUTOMATE THIS

HOW ALGORITHMS CAME TO RULE OUR WORLD

CHRISTOPHER STEINER

BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF $20 PER GALLON
Conclusions

• In this lecture we defined what an algorithm is in simple terms.
• Big Oh notation is a convenient way to compare algorithms
• Sometimes the best solution may not be needed and a good-enough solution is just fine.