

Introduction to Computability

13/12/2004

7/12/2005

2.1

15/10/2007

Question: Using a counting argument, we have seen that there are functions that cannot be computed (or, in other words, problems that cannot be solved by any algorithm).

How can we exhibit a specific problem of this form?

Solution: we need a formal definition of algorithm

Let us start with something we know: Java

Can we show that there is no Java program that solves a specific problem?

Hello - World problem:

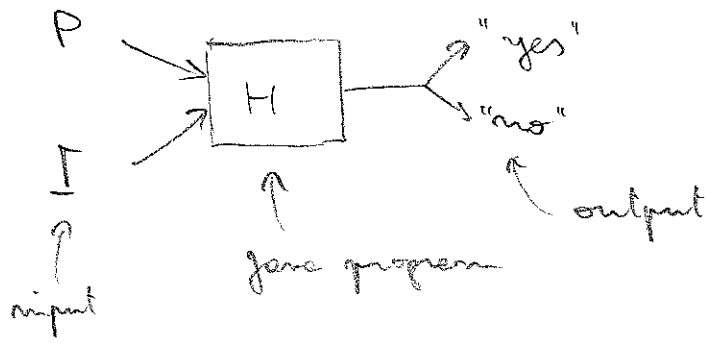
Your first Java program HW:

```
public class HW {  
    public static void main (String [] args) {  
        System.out.println ("Hello, world");  
    }  
}
```

The first 12 characters output by HW are "Hello, world".

Hello-world problem (HWP): given an arbitrary Java program P and an input I for P , does $P(I)$ print "Hello, world" as its first 12 characters?

Consider a solution to HWP:



Does such a program H exist?

- we could scan P for printable statements
- but, how do we know whether they are executed?

To give you an idea how difficult this can become, consider

Fermat's last theorem:

The equation $x^n + y^n = z^n$ has no integer solution for $n \geq 3$.

For $n=2$: a solution is $x=3, y=4, z=5$

For $n \geq 3$: mathematicians have believed that the theorem is true, but no proof was found until recently (proof given by Wiles is very complex, and still under verification)

Consider a simple java program P_1 that:

- 1) needs input n
- 2) for all possible x, y, z do
 if $(x^n + y^n = z^n)$
 println("Hello, world");

Consider input $n=3$: P_1 prints "Hello, world" only if F.L.T. is false, otherwise P_1 loops forever.

We have shown HWP to be undecidable,

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i.e., there cannot be an algorithm (or a program) that solves it.

We can show that other problems are undecidable by "reducing" HWP to them

Reductions

foo-problem: given a program R and its input z , does R ever call a function named foo while executing on input z .

Idea: we reduce the HWP to the foo-problem, i.e. we show that if it's possible to solve the foo-problem on (R, z) , then we can solve HWP on (Q, y) , for any program Q with input y .

Since HWP is undecidable, so is the foo-problem.

Suppose there is a program F that takes as input (R, z) and decides the foo-problem for (R, z) .

We show how F can be used to construct H that decides HWP on input (Q, y)

Idea: apply modifications to Q

- 1) rename function foo in Q (if present) to qippo.
 $\Rightarrow Q_1$
- 2) add a dummy function 'foo' to $Q_1 \Rightarrow Q_2$
- 3) modify Q_2 to store all its output in some array A
 $\Rightarrow Q_3$
- 4) modify Q_3 so that after every printer statement it checks array A to see if "Hello, world" has been printed. If yes, then call function foo $\Rightarrow Q_4$

Note: We can write a Java program that takes as input a Java sourcefile and modifies it as specified above.

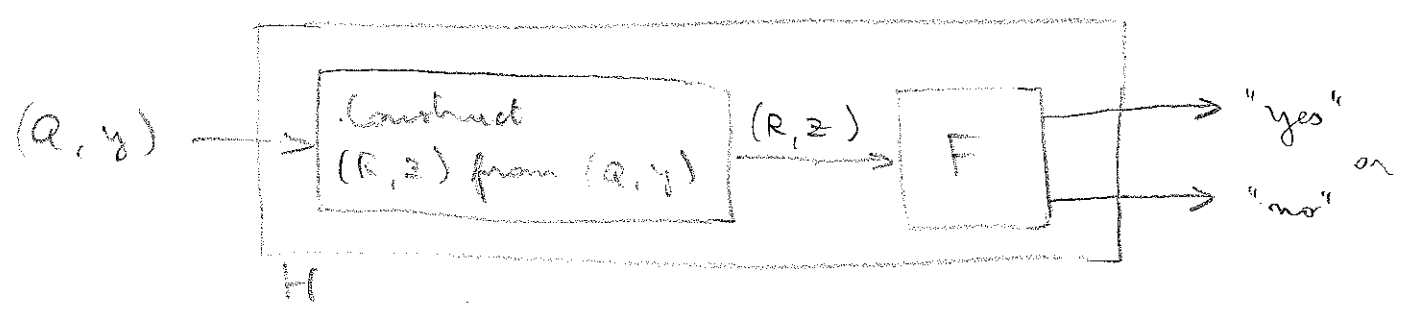
Let $R = Q_4$ and $z = y$

We have by construction:

$Q(y)$ prints "Hello, world" \Leftrightarrow
 $R(z)$ calls function foo.

Hence, we can use F that solves foo-problem on $R(z)$ to construct H that solves HWP on $Q(y)$.

Schematically:



Proof: since H does not exist, also F cannot exist.

Q.e.d

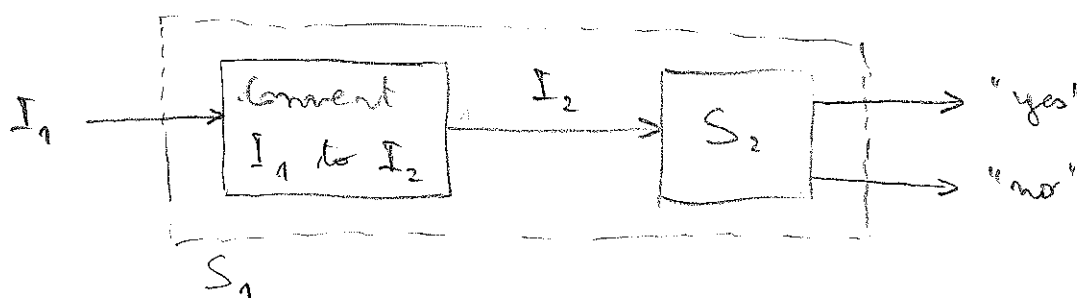
Showing undecidability by reduction from undecidable problem

Problem P_1 taking input I_1 known to be undecidable
 --- P_2 --- I_2 to show undecidable.

Reduction: convert I_1 to I_2 such that

$$P_1(I_1) = \text{"yes"} \quad \text{iff} \quad P_2(I_2) = \text{"yes"}$$

given solution program S_2 for P_2 , we could obtain
 --- S_1 for P_1



Since S_1 does exist, we obtain that S_2 cannot exist
 $\Rightarrow P_2$ is undecidable.

Existence of undecidable problems:

While it was tricky to show that a specific problem is undecidable, it is rather easy to show that there are infinitely many undecidable problems.

We use a counting argument:

- a problem P is a language over Σ (for some finite Σ)
 (the strings in the language represent those instances of P for which the answer is "yes")

\Rightarrow there are uncountably many problems

- an algorithm is a string over Σ' (for some finite Σ')

\Rightarrow there are countably many algorithms

\Rightarrow There must be (uncountably many) problems for which there is no algorithm.

Java (or C, Pascal, ...) programs are not well-suited to develop a theory of computation:

- run-time environment and run-time errors
- complex language constructs
- finite memory
- "state" of the computation is complicated to represent
- would need to show that the results for a specific programming language are in fact general

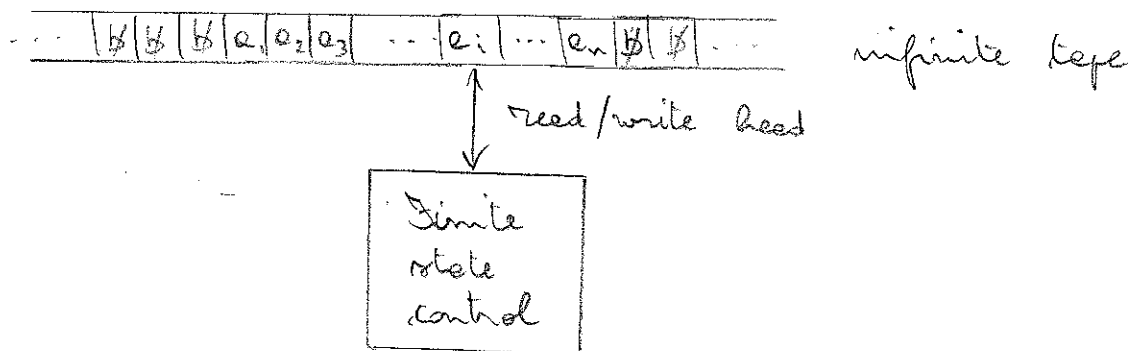
⇒ We resort to an abstract computing device, the Turing Machine (TM)

- simple and universal programming language
- state of computation is easy to describe
- unbounded memory
- can simulate any known computing device

Church - Turing hypothesis:

All reasonably powerful computation models are equivalent to TMs (but not more powerful).

⇒ TMs model anything we can compute.



Programmed by specifying transitions

move depends on - current state (finitely many)
 - symbol under the tape head

effects of a move: - new state
 - write new symbol on tape cell under the head
 - move head left/right/stay

Observations:

relationship to real computers: CPU \leftrightarrow finite state control
 memory \leftrightarrow tape

"differences" (features lost in the abstraction)

- no random access memory
- limited instruction set

However: a TM can simulate a computer (with a cubic increase in running time - see book 8.6)

Definition A TM $M = (Q, \Sigma, \Gamma, \delta, q_0, \$, F)$

Q ... set of states (finite) $q_0 \in Q$... initial state
 Σ ... input alphabet (finite) Γ ... tape alphabet (finite)
 $F \subseteq Q$... final states $\$ \in \Gamma$... blank symbol

Conditions: $\Sigma \subseteq \Gamma$, since input is written initially on tape
 $\$ \in \Gamma - \Sigma$, since the rest of the tape is blank

Initially: - state q_0
 - tape contains w surrounded by $\$$
 - tape head is at the leftmost cell of the input

Transitions: $\delta: Q \times \Gamma \rightarrow Q \times \Gamma \times \{L, R, S\}$

$\delta(q, x) = (p, y, d)$ means that

if M is in state q and tape head is over symbol x ,
 then M - changes state to p .

- replaces x by y on the tape
 - moves tape head by one cell in direction d
 (left for L, right for R, S for stay in place)

The TM is deterministic:

for each $\delta(q, x)$ we have at most one move

($\delta(q, x)$ could also be undefined)

Acceptance: w is accepted by TM M if M , when started with w
 on the tape, eventually enters a final state

We can assume that all final states are halting, i.e. no
 transition is defined for them

Rejection: - halts in non final state (i.e., no transition defined)
 - never halts (infinite loop)

Difference between FA/PDA and TM:

FA/PDA scans over w and accepts/rejects when it has

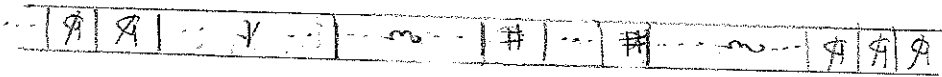
reached its end

TM can move back and forth over w and accepts/rejects

when it halts or rejects if it loops forever

Example: $L = \{ w \#^+ w^R \mid w \in \{0,1\}^+, w^R \in \{0,1\}^+ \}$

intuitively



TM idea: remember (in the state) leftmost symbol, and move it

more to leftmost symbol after $\#^+$

if the line don't match, then reject

otherwise replace the symbol by $\#$, move left and

start again

$$M = (Q, \Sigma, \Gamma, \delta, q_0, \emptyset, F)$$

$$Q = \{q_0, q_1, \dots, q_2\}$$

$$\Sigma = \{0, 1, \#\}$$

$$F = \{q_2\}$$

$$\Gamma = \{0, 1, \#\}$$

$$\delta(q_0, 0) = (q_1, \emptyset, R)$$

$$\delta(q_0, 1) = (q_2, \emptyset, R)$$

$$\delta(q_1, 0) = (q_1, 0, R)$$

$$\delta(q_1, 1) = (q_1, 1, R)$$

$$\delta(q_1, \#) = (q_3, \#, R)$$

$$\delta(q_2, 0) = (q_2, 0, R)$$

$$\delta(q_2, 1) = (q_2, 1, R)$$

$$\delta(q_2, \#) = (q_4, \#, R)$$

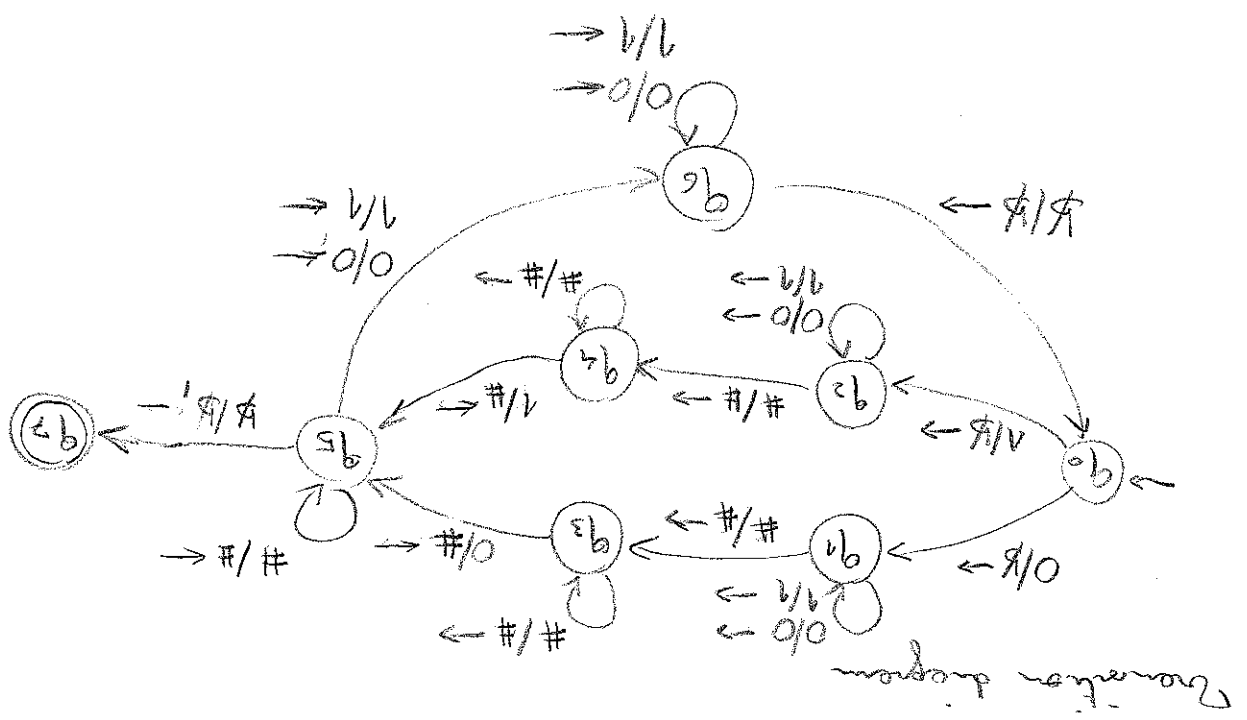
} Error 0 and look for matching 0

Start over 0 and 1's,

like # in found (membership 0)

(membership 1)

representations $\delta(q, x) = (q', y, d)$



Transition diagram

$\delta(q_3, \#) = (q_3, \#, R)$
 $\delta(q_3, 0) = (q_5, 0, L)$
 $\delta(q_3, 1) = (q_6, 1, L)$
 $\delta(q_4, \#) = (q_4, \#, R)$
 $\delta(q_4, 1) = (q_5, \#, L)$
 $\delta(q_5, \#) = (q_5, \#, L)$
 $\delta(q_5, 0) = (q_5, 0, L)$
 $\delta(q_5, 1) = (q_6, 1, L)$
 $\delta(q_5, \#) = (q_2, \#, S)$
 $\delta(q_6, \#) = (q_6, \#, R)$
 $\delta(q_6, 1) = (q_0, \#, L)$

More left shifting #'s.
 If to the left of the #'s a 0 or 1 is found, move to q_6 to shift them over. If $\#$ is found, accept.

More left, shifting 0's and 1's, and output again.

Skip over #'s, look for 0, and replace it by #.
 Note: if after #'s a 1 or a $\#$ is found, M both and rejects.

On previous ones, replacing 0/1 with 1/0.

Instantaneous description (I.D.) or configuration of a TM (2.12)

describes the current situation of TM and tape.

$$I.D. = \alpha_1 q \alpha_2 \quad \text{with } q \in Q \\ \alpha_1, \alpha_2 \in \Gamma^*$$

- means:
- non-blank portion of tape contains $\alpha_1 \alpha_2$
 - head is on leftmost symbol of α_2
 - machine is in state q

corresponds to



Let $ID = \Gamma^* \times Q \times \Gamma^*$ be the set of instantaneous descriptions. We use a relation $\vdash \subseteq ID \times ID$ to describe the transitions of the TM.

Example:

$$\begin{aligned}
 q_0 01 \# 01 &\vdash q_1 1 \# 01 &\vdash 1 q_1 \# 01 &\vdash \\
 &\vdash 1 \# q_3 01 &\vdash 1 q_5 \# \# 1 &\vdash \\
 &\vdash q_5 1 \# \# 1 &\vdash q_6 \cancel{\#} 1 \# \# 1 &\vdash \\
 &\vdash q_0 1 \# \# 1 &\vdash \dots &\vdash \\
 &\vdash q_5 \cancel{\#} \# \# \# &\vdash q_7 \# \# \# &\leftarrow \text{accepts}
 \end{aligned}$$

Note: we can define \vdash formally, making use of δ . [Exercise]

Making use of the closure \vdash^* of \vdash we can define the language accepted by a TM

Definition: Let $M = (Q, \Sigma, \Gamma, \delta, q_0, \cancel{\#}, F)$ be a TM.

Then the language $\mathcal{L}(M)$ accepted by M is

$$\mathcal{L}(M) = \left\{ w \in \Sigma^* \mid q_0 w \vdash^* \alpha_1 q \alpha_2 \text{ with } q \in F \text{ and } \alpha_1, \alpha_2 \in \Gamma^* \right\}$$

Notes:

1) We have used TMs for language recognition, which in turn corresponds to solving decision problems

- We can, however, consider also TMs as computing functions:
- the output (result of the function) is left on the tape

2) The class of languages accepted by TMs are called recursively enumerable

- for a string w in the language
 - the TM halts on input w in a final state
- for a string w not in the language
 - the TM may halt in a non-final state, or
 - it may loop forever

Those languages for which the TM always halts (regardless of whether it accepts or not) are called recursive:

- these languages correspond to recursive functions
- TMs that always halt are a good model of algorithms and they correspond to decidable problems

We present some notational conveniences that make it easier to write TM programs

Idea: use structured states and tape symbols

1) Storage in the state: ("CPU register")

Idea: state names are a tuple of the form

$$[q, D_1, \dots, D_k]$$

D_i ... acts as stored symbol

q ... control portion of the state

Example: TM $M = (Q, \Sigma, \Gamma, \delta, q_0, \emptyset, F)$ for $L = 01^* + 10^*$

Idea: M remembers the first symbol and checks that it does not reappear

$$Q = \{ [q_i, e] \mid i \in \{0, 1\}, e \in \{0, 1, -\} \} = \\ \{ [q_0, -], [q_0, 0], [q_0, 1], [q_1, -], [q_1, 0], [q_1, 1] \}$$

$$\Sigma = \{0, 1\}$$

$$\Gamma = \{0, 1, \emptyset\}$$

$$q_0 = [q_0, \emptyset]$$

$$F = \{ [q_1, -] \}$$

Meaning of $[q_i, e]$

- control portion q_i :

q_0 ... M has not yet read its first symbol

q_1 ... M has read its first symbol

- data portion e : e is the first symbol read

transitions:

$$\delta([q_0, -], a) = ([q_1, a], a, R), \text{ for } a \in \{0, 1\}$$

... M remembers in $[q_1, a]$ that it has read a

$$\left. \begin{aligned} \delta([q_1, 0], 1) &= ([q_1, 0], 1, R) \\ \delta([q_1, 1], 0) &= ([q_1, 1], 0, R) \end{aligned} \right\} \begin{array}{l} \text{M moves right as} \\ \text{long as it does not} \\ \text{see the first symbol} \end{array}$$

$$\delta([q_1, a], \$) = ([q_1, -], \$, R), \text{ for } a \in \{0, 1\}$$

... M accepts when it reaches the first $\$$

2) Multiple tracks:

Idea: view tape as having multiple tracks, i.e. each symbol in Γ has multiple components

	0	*	\$	
...	1	0	0	..
	a	a	c	

the symbols on the tape are $\begin{bmatrix} 0 \\ 1 \\ a \end{bmatrix}$, $\begin{bmatrix} * \\ 0 \\ a \end{bmatrix}$, $\begin{bmatrix} \$ \\ 0 \\ c \end{bmatrix}$

Example: $L = \{ww \mid w \in \{0, 1\}^+\}$

We first need to find midpoint, and then we can match corresponding symbols.

To find midpoint: we view tape as 2 tracks

			*		
	0	1	1	0	1

← used to put markers on symbols

Hence: $\Gamma = \left\{ \begin{bmatrix} \$ \\ \$ \end{bmatrix}, \begin{bmatrix} \$ \\ 0 \end{bmatrix}, \begin{bmatrix} \$ \\ 1 \end{bmatrix}, \begin{bmatrix} * \\ 0 \end{bmatrix}, \begin{bmatrix} * \\ 1 \end{bmatrix} \right\}$

(note: we need no * over \$)

We put markers on two outermost symbols and move them inwards:

$$\begin{array}{l}
 \delta(q_0, [\frac{\$}{i}]) = (q_1, [\frac{*}{i}], R) \\
 \delta(q_1, [\frac{\$}{i}]) = (q_1, [\frac{\$}{i}], R) \\
 \delta(q_1, [\frac{\$}{i}]) = (q_2, [\frac{\$}{i}], L) \\
 \delta(q_1, [\frac{*}{i}]) = (q_2, [\frac{\$}{i}], L) \\
 \delta(q_2, [\frac{\$}{i}]) = (q_3, [\frac{*}{i}], L) \\
 \delta(q_3, [\frac{\$}{i}]) = (q_3, [\frac{\$}{i}], L) \\
 \delta(q_3, [\frac{*}{i}]) = (q_0, [\frac{\$}{i}], R)
 \end{array}
 \left. \begin{array}{l}
 \\
 \\
 \\
 \\
 \\
 \\
 \end{array} \right\}
 \begin{array}{l}
 \text{move right till end} \\
 \text{or first marked symbol} \\
 \\
 \text{move rightmost mark} \\
 \text{one symbol to the left} \\
 \\
 \text{move left till end} \\
 \text{or first marked symbol}
 \end{array}$$

Note: we have each of the above for $i \in \{0, 1\}$

at the end: head is over first symbol of second row, with a * above it, in state q_0 .

3) Subroutines / procedure calls

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Example: shifting over

given: $ID_1 = \alpha q_i \times \beta$

want: $ID_2 = \alpha \square q_i \times \beta$

for $x \in \Gamma$

$\alpha, \beta \in \Gamma^*$

$\square \in \Gamma$

Subroutine for shifting over can be used repeatedly to create space in the middle of the tape

e.g. to implement a counter

$\$0\$ \rightarrow \$1\$ \rightarrow \$\square 1\$ \rightarrow \$01\$ \rightarrow \$10\$ \rightarrow$
 $\rightarrow \$11\$ \rightarrow \$\square 11\$ \rightarrow \$011\$ \rightarrow \dots$

Procedure call: $\delta(q_i, x) = ([p, x], [\uparrow], R)$, $\forall x \in \Gamma$

- remember return state q_i and erased symbol x
- state p calls procedure

Procedure p for shifting

1) shift 1 cell to the right

$$\delta([p, x], y) = ([p, y], x, R) \quad \forall x, y \in \Gamma \text{ with } y \neq \square$$

2) till we have reached end of β

$$\delta([p, y], \square) = (r, y, L) \quad \forall y \in \Gamma$$

3) return to calling point by moving left

$$\delta(r, y) = (l, r, L) \quad \forall y \neq [\uparrow]$$

4) exit and return to state q_i

$$\delta(r, [\uparrow]) = (q_i, \square, R)$$

In fact, we can implement arbitrary complex procedures, with any kind of parameter passing

Exercise:

redesign the TMs you have seen so far to take advantage of storage in the state, multiple tracks, and subroutines

Extensions to the basic TM

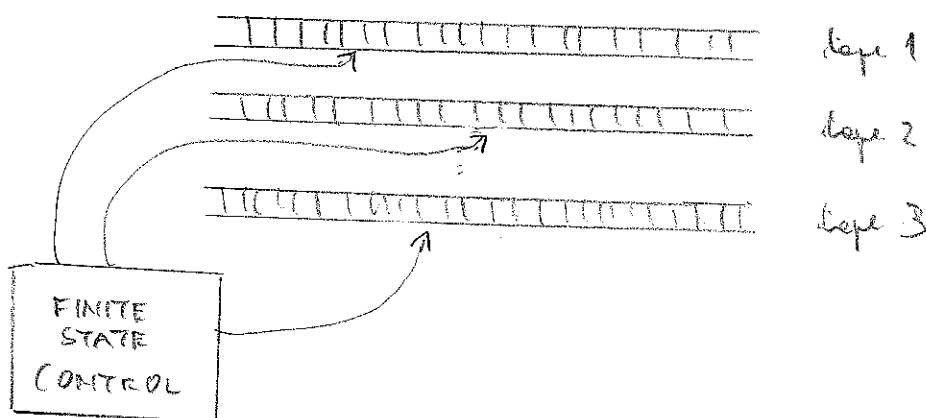
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Note: if the TM seen so far can compute all that can be computed, then it should not become more expressive by extending it

We consider two extensions: - multiple tapes
- non-determinism

and show that both can be captured by the basic T.M.

1) Multi-tape T.M.



Initially: input w is on tape 1 with tape-head on the leftmost symbol. Other tapes are all blank.

Transitions: specify behaviour of each head independently

$$\delta(q, x_1, \dots, x_k) = (q', (y_1, d_1), \dots, (y_k, d_k))$$

x_i ... symbol under head i

y_i ... new symbol written to head i

d_i ... direction in which head i moves

To simulate k -tape TM M_k with a 1-tape TM M_1 , we use $2k$ tracks in M_1 : for each tape of M_k

- one track of M_1 to store tape content
- one track of M_1 to mark head position with $*$

	A	B	A	C	B	A		tape 1
				*				head 1
	0	0	1	1	1	0		tape 2
		*						head 2
	b	b	a	b	a	b		tape 3
						*		head 3

Each transition of M_k is simulated by a series of transitions of M_1 : $\delta(q, x_1, \dots, x_k) = (q, (y_1, d_1), \dots, (y_k, d_k))$

- start at leftmost head position marker
- sweep right and remember in appropriate "CPU registers" the symbols x_i under each head (note: there are exactly k , and hence finitely many)
- knowing all x_i 's, sweep left, change each x_i to y_i , and move the marker for tape i according to d_i

Note: M_1 needs to remember always how many of the k heads are to its left (uses an additional CPU-register)

The final states of M_1 are those that have in the state-component a final state of M_k .

We can verify that we can construct M_1 so that

$$L(M_1) = L(M_k)$$

(details are straightforward, but cumbersome)

Simulation speed:

Note: - enhancements do not affect the expressive power of e TM
- they do affect its efficiency

Definition: e TM is said to have running time $T(n)$ if it halts within $T(n)$ steps on all inputs of length n .

Note: $T(n)$ could be infinite

Theorem: If M_k has running time $T(n)$, then M_s will simulate it with running time $O(T(n)^2)$.

Proof: Consider input w of length n .

- M_k runs at most $T(n)$ time on it.
- At each step, leftmost and rightmost heads can drift apart by at most 2 additional cells.
- It follows that after $T(n)$ steps the k heads cannot be more than $2 \cdot T(n)$ apart, and M_k uses $\leq 2 \cdot T(n)$ tape cells

Consider M_s :

- makes two sweeps for each transition of M_k
- each sweep takes at most $O(T(n))$
- number of transitions of M_k is $\leq T(n)$

It follows that the total running time is $O(T(n)^2)$.

2) Non-deterministic TMs (NTM)

In a (deterministic) TM, $\delta(q, x)$ is unique or undefined.

In a NTM, $\delta(q, x)$ is a finite set of triples

$$\delta(q, x) = \{(r_1, y_1, d_1), \dots, (r_k, y_k, d_k)\}$$

At each step, the NTM can non-deterministically choose which transition to make.

As for other ND devices: a string w is accepted if the NTM has at least one execution leading to a final state.

Example: $\Sigma = \{0, 1, \dots, 9\}$

$$L = \{w \in \Sigma^* \mid \text{a } 0 \text{ appears } i \text{ positions to the left of some } i, \text{ in } w, \text{ with } 0 < i \leq 9\} =$$

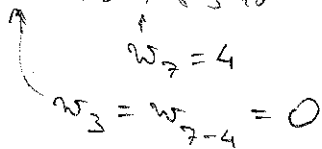
$$= \{w \in \Sigma^* \mid \exists j > 0 \text{ s.t. } w_{j-1} = 0\}$$

(w_i indicates the i -th character of w)

Ex. $02146 \in L$

58108554421 ..

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 ..



NTM N s.t. $L(N) = L$

$$Q = \{q_0, f, [r, 0], [r, 1], \dots, [r, 9]\}$$

$$F = \{f\}$$

$$\Gamma = \{0, 1, \dots, 9, \emptyset\}$$

Idea for N : - scan w from left to right.

- guess at some $w_j = i$,
- store i in CPU register, and
- move i steps left to find 0

Transitions:

- $\delta(q_0, 0) = \{(q_0, 0, R)\}$ (since $w_j > 1$)
- $\forall i > 0: \delta(q_0, i) = \{(q_0, i, R), ([\uparrow, i], i, L)\}$
↑
guess
- $\forall i \geq 2, \forall x \in \Gamma: \delta([\uparrow, i], x) = \{[\uparrow, i-1], x, L\}$
- accepting: $\delta([\uparrow, 1], 0) = \{f, 0, R\}$

Execution traces on input $w = 103332$

$q_0 103332 \vdash 1q_0 03332 \vdash 10q_0 3332 \vdash 103q_0 332 \vdash$
 $\vdash 10: [\uparrow, 3] 3332 \vdash 1 [\uparrow, 2] 03332 \vdash [\uparrow, 1] 103332$
 $\Rightarrow \text{reject}$

$q_0 103332 \vdash^* 1033q_0 32 \vdash 103 [\uparrow, 3] 332 \vdash$
 $\vdash 10 [\uparrow, 2] 3332 \vdash 1 [\uparrow, 1] 03332 \vdash 10 f 3332$
 $\Rightarrow \text{accept}$

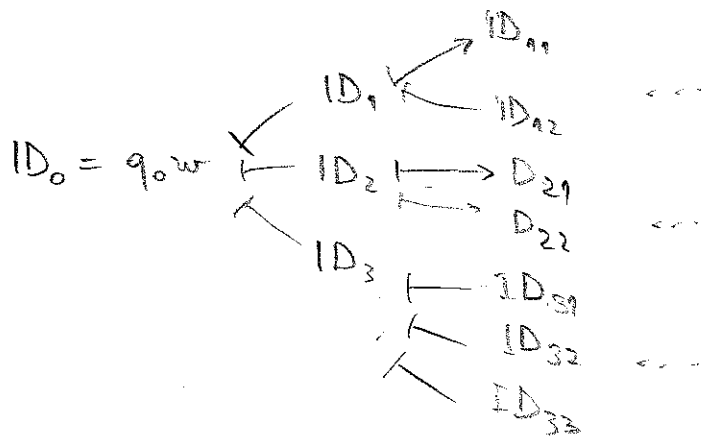
Theorem: Let N be a NTM. Then there exists a DTM D s.t.
 $L(D) = L(N)$

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Proof: Given N and w , we show how a multi-tape DTM can simulate the execution of N on input w . We can then convert the multi-tape DTM to a single-tape DTM

Idea for the simulation:

Consider the execution tree of N on w



DTM D will perform a breadth-first search of the execution tree, systematically enumerating the ID's, until it finds an accepting one.

We use two tapes:

tape 2: is for working

tape 1: contains a sequence of ID's of N in BFS order

- * used to separate two ID's
- $\hat{*}$ marks next ID to be explored
 - ID's to the left of $\hat{*}$ have been explored
 - ID's to the right of $\hat{*}$ are still to be explored
- initially, only $ID_0 = q_0 w$ is on the tape
- we can use multiple tracks for convenience

Simulation time:

2.25

Let NFA N have running time $T(n)$.

What is the running time of D ?

Let m be the maximum number of non-det. choices for each transition (i.e., the maximum size of $\delta(q, x)$)

Consider execution tree of N on w .

let $t = T(|w|) \Rightarrow$ exec. tree has at most t levels

size of the tree is $\leq 1 + m + m^2 + \dots + m^t =$

$$\equiv \frac{m^{t+1} - 1}{m - 1} = O(m^t)$$

Thus D has at most $O(m^t)$ iterations of steps 0-3.

Each iteration requires at most $O(m^t)$ steps

\Rightarrow Total running time is $m^{O(t)}$, i.e. exponential