Computational Complexity

Lecture 4: Diagonalization and the Time Hierarchy Theorems

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Recap

What we saw last time..

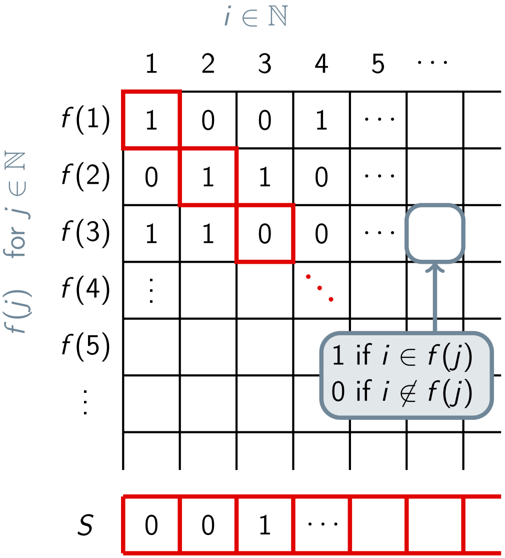
- Proof that NP-complete problems exist
- The Cook-Levin Theorem
- Concrete reductions between problems
- Search vs. decision problems

What will we do today?

- Diagonalization arguments
- Time Hierarchy Theorems
- $\mathsf{P} \neq \mathsf{EXP}$

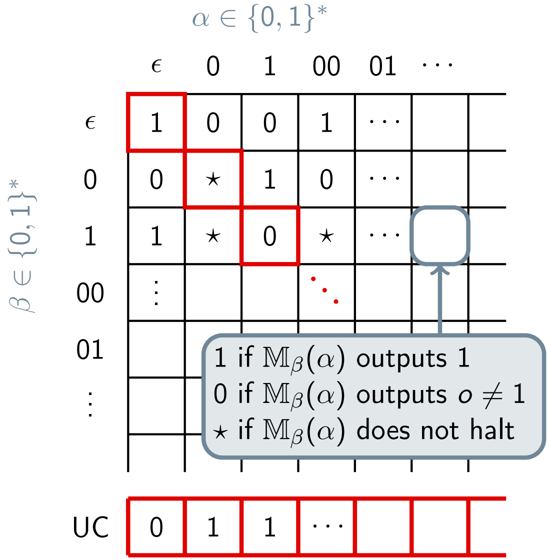
Warm-up: Cantor's diagonal argument

- We show: $\mathcal{P}(\mathbb{N})$ is uncountable
- Suppose that it is countably infinite. Then there is some bijection $f : \mathbb{N} \to \mathcal{P}(\mathbb{N})$.
- Consider the set $S \in \mathcal{P}(\mathbb{N})$ such that for all $i \in \mathbb{N}$ it holds that $i \in S$ iff $i \notin f(i)$
- Then $S \neq f(i)$ for each $i \in \mathbb{N}$, so f is not a bijection. $\lightning$



Diagonalization over TMs: uncomputable functions

- We show that there exists an uncomputable function $\mathsf{UC}: \{0,1\}^* \to \{0,1\}$
- Define UC: for all $\alpha \in \{0,1\}^*$, $\mathsf{UC}(\alpha) = 0$, if $\mathbb{M}_\alpha(\alpha) = 1$, and $\mathsf{UC}(\alpha) = 1$ otherwise.
- Suppose that UC is computable. Then there exists some $\mathbb{M}_\beta$ that computes UC: $\mathbb{M}_\beta(\alpha) = \mathsf{UC}(\alpha)$ for all $\alpha \in \{0,1\}^*$.
- In particular, $\mathbb{M}_\beta(\beta) = \mathsf{UC}(\beta)$. By def. of UC: $\mathbb{M}_\beta(\beta) \neq \mathsf{UC}(\beta)$. $\lightning$



Deterministic Time Hierarchy Theorem

Theorem

If $f, g : \mathbb{N} \to \mathbb{N}$ are time-constructible functions such that $f(n) \log f(n)$ is $o(g(n))$, then $\mathrm{DTIME}(f(n)) \subsetneq \mathrm{DTIME}(g(n))$.

- Assumption of time-constructibility rules out ‘weird’ functions.
  - f is *time-constructible* if $f(n) \geq n$ and there exists a TM that computes the function $x \mapsto f(|x|)$ in time $O(f(|x|))$, for each $x \in \{0,1\}^*$
- We will prove $\mathrm{DTIME}(n) \subsetneq \mathrm{DTIME}(n^{1.5})$

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- Consider a TM $\mathbb{D}$ that, on input $\alpha \in \{0,1\}^*$, simulates $\mathbb{M}_\alpha(\alpha)$ for $|\alpha|^{1.4}$ steps, and:
  - if $\mathbb{M}_\alpha(\alpha)$ outputs some $b \in \{0,1\}$ within $|\alpha|^{1.4}$ steps, then $\mathbb{D}(\alpha)$ outputs $1-b$
  - otherwise, $\mathbb{D}(\alpha)$ outputs 1

diagonalization

- The language L decided by $\mathbb{D}$ is in $\mathrm{DTIME}(n^{1.5})$
  - Simulating $\mathbb{M}_\alpha(\alpha)$ for T steps can be done in time $c \cdot T \log T$, and $c \cdot n^{1.4} \log n^{1.4}$ is $O(n^{1.5})$

$\mathrm{DTIME}(n) \subsetneq \mathrm{DTIME}(n^{1.5})$

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diagonalization

- We show that $L \notin \mathrm{DTIME}(n)$.
  - Suppose that $L \in \mathrm{DTIME}(n)$. Then there is some TM $\mathbb{M}$ that decides L and runs in time $d \cdot n$, for some $d \in \mathbb{N}$.
  - Simulating $\mathbb{M}$ on input x takes time $d'd \cdot |x| \cdot \log(d \cdot |x|)$, for some $d' \in \mathbb{N}$.
  - There is some $n_0 \in \mathbb{N}$ such that for all $n \geq n_0$ it holds that $n^{1.4} \geq d'dn \log(dn)$.
  - Let α be a string of length $\geq n_0$ that represents $\mathbb{M}$: $\mathbb{M} = \mathbb{M}_\alpha$
  - Then $\mathbb{M}_\alpha(\alpha)$ outputs $\mathbb{D}(\alpha)$ within $|\alpha|^{1.4}$ steps – $\mathbb{M}_\alpha$ runs in time $d \cdot n \leq n^{1.4}$
  - By definition of $\mathbb{D}$, $\mathbb{D}(\alpha) = 1 - \mathbb{D}(\alpha)$. $\lightning$ – since the simulation of $\mathbb{M}_\alpha(\alpha)$ finishes

$\mathsf{P} \subsetneq \mathsf{EXP}$

- The functions 2^n and 2^{2n} are time-constructible, and $2^n \log 2^n = n \cdot 2^n$ is $o(2^{2n})$.
- Then by the Deterministic Time Hierarchy Theorem, $\mathsf{DTIME}(2^n) \subsetneq \mathsf{DTIME}(2^{2n})$.
- $\mathsf{P} = \cup_{c \in \mathbb{N}} \mathsf{DTIME}(n^c) \subseteq \mathsf{DTIME}(2^n) \subsetneq \mathsf{DTIME}(2^{2n}) \subseteq \mathsf{EXP}$
- So, $\mathsf{P} \neq \mathsf{EXP}$.

Nondeterministic Time Hierarchy Theorem

Theorem

If $f, g : \mathbb{N} \to \mathbb{N}$ *are time-constructible functions such that* $f(n+1)$ *is* $o(g(n))$*, then* $\mathsf{NTIME}(f(n)) \subsetneq \mathsf{NTIME}(g(n))$.

- As a result: $\mathsf{NP} \subsetneq \mathsf{NEXP}$, where $\mathsf{NEXP} = \cup_{c \in \mathbb{N}} \mathsf{NTIME}(2^{n^c})$.

Ladner's Theorem

- Question: is it the case that all problems in NP are either (i) in P or (ii) NP-complete?
- If $\mathsf{P} = \mathsf{NP}$, then this is trivially true.
- If $\mathsf{P} \neq \mathsf{NP}$, then no:

Theorem (Ladner 1975)

Suppose that $\mathsf{P} \neq \mathsf{NP}$*.*
Then there exists a language $L \in \mathsf{NP} \setminus \mathsf{P}$ *that is not* NP*-complete.*

- Proof uses a diagonalization argument.

Recap

- Diagonalization arguments
- Time Hierarchy Theorems
- $\mathsf{P} \neq \mathsf{EXP}$

Next time

- Can we use diagonalization to attack $\mathsf{P} \stackrel{?}{=} \mathsf{NP}$? (Spoiler: no.)
- Limits of diagonalization
- Relativizing results
- Oracles