

Halting, Undecidability, and Maybe Some Complexity

Lecture 9

Tuesday, September 22, 2020

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Quote

“Young man, in mathematics you don't understand things. You just get used to them.”
– John von Neumann.

9.1

Cantor's diagonalization argument

You can not count the real numbers

$$I = (0, 1).$$

$\mathbb{N} = \{1, 2, 3, \dots\}$ the integer numbers

Claim (Cantor)

$$|\mathbb{N}| \neq |I|$$

Claim (Warm-up)

$$|\mathbb{N}| \leq |I|$$

Proof.

$|\mathbb{N}| \leq |I|$ exists a one-to-one mapping from \mathbb{N} to I . One such mapping is $f(i) = 1/i$, which readily implies the claim. \square

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You can not count the real numbers II

$$I = (0, 1), \mathbb{N} = \{1, 2, 3, \dots\}.$$

Claim (Cantor)

$$|\mathbb{N}| \neq |I|, \text{ where } I = (0, 1).$$

Proof.

Write every number in $(0, 1)$ in its decimal expansion. E.g.,

$$1/3 = 0.33333333333333333333 \dots$$

Assume that $|\mathbb{N}| = |I|$. Then there exists a one-to-one mapping $f : \mathbb{N} \rightarrow I$. Let β_i be the i th digit of $f(i) \in (0, 1)$.

$$d_i = \text{any number in } \{0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9\} \setminus \{d_{i-1}, \beta_i\}$$

$$D = 0.d_1d_2d_3 \dots \in (0, 1).$$

D is a well defined unique number in $(0, 1)$,

But there is no j such that $f(j) = D$. A contradiction. □

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The matrix...

	$f(1)$	$f(2)$	$f(3)$	$f(4)$...
1	1	1	0	0	...
2	0	1	0	1	...
3	1	0	1	1	...
4	0	1	0	0	...
\vdots	\vdots	\vdots	\vdots	\vdots	\ddots

The matrix...

	$f(1)$	$f(2)$	$f(3)$	$f(4)$...
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3	1	0	$\beta_3 = 1$	1	...
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$D = 0.23232323 \dots$

D can not be the i column, because $\beta_i \neq d_i.$

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But D can not be in the matrix...

The liar paradox

When one day an expedition was sent to the spatial coordinates that Voojagig had claimed for this planet they discovered only a small asteroid inhabited by a solitary old man who claimed repeatedly that nothing was true, though he was later discovered to be lying.

– The Hitchhiker Guide to the Galaxy

- 1 The liar's paradox: This sentence is false.
- 2 Related to Russell's paradox.
- 3 Omnipotence paradox: Can [an omnipotent being] create a stone so heavy that it cannot lift it?

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9.2

Introduction to the halting theorem

The halting problem

Halting problem: Given a program Q , if we run it would it stop?

Q: Can one build a program P , that always stops, and solves the halting problem.

Theorem (“Halting theorem”)

There is no program that always stops and solves the halting problem.

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Intuition, why solving the Halting problem is really hard

Definition

An integer number n is a weird number if

- the sum of the proper divisors (including 1 but not itself) of n the number is $> n$,
- no subset of those divisors sums to the number itself.

70 is weird. Its divisors are 1, 2, 5, 7, 10, 14, 35. $1 + 2 + 5 + 7 + 10 + 14 + 35 = 74$.
No subset of them adds up to 70.

Open question: Are there any odd weird numbers?

Write a program P that tries all odd numbers in order, and check if they are weird. The program stops if it found such number.

If can solve halting problem \implies can resolve this open problem.

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If you can halt, you can prove or disprove anything...

- ① Consider any math claim C .
- ② Prover algorithm P_C :
 - (A) Generate sequence of all possible proofs (sequence of strings) into a pipe/queue.
 - (B) $\langle p \rangle \leftarrow$ pop top of queue.
 - (C) Feed $\langle p \rangle$ and $\langle C \rangle$, into a proof verifier (“easy”).
 - (D) If $\langle p \rangle$ valid proof of $\langle C \rangle$, then stop and accept.
 - (E) Go to (B).
- ③ P_C halts $\iff C$ is true and has a proof.
- ④ If halting is decidable, then can decide if any claim in math is true.

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THE END

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9.3

The halting theorem

Encodings

M : Turing machine

$\langle M \rangle$: a binary string uniquely describing M (i.e., it is a number).

w : An input string.

$\langle M, w \rangle$: A unique binary string encoding both M and input w .

$$A_{\text{TM}} = \left\{ \langle M, w \rangle \mid M \text{ is a TM and } M \text{ accepts } w \right\}.$$

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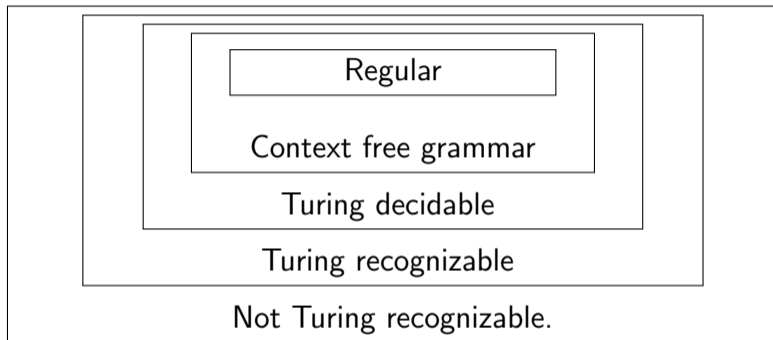
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Complexity classes



A_{TM} is TM recognizable...

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Lemma

A_{TM} is Turing recognizable.

Proof.

Input: $\langle M, w \rangle$.

Using UTM simulate running M on w . If M accepts w then accept, if M rejects then reject. Otherwise, the simulation runs forever. \square

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Theorem (The halting theorem.)

A_{TM} is not Turing decidable.

Proof: Assume A_{TM} is TM decidable...

Halt: TM deciding A_{TM} . **Halt** always halts, and works as follows:

$$\text{Halt}(\langle M, w \rangle) = \begin{cases} \text{accept} & M \text{ accepts } w \\ \text{reject} & M \text{ does not accept } w. \end{cases}$$

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Halting theorem proof continued 1

We build the following new function:

```
Flipper(  $\langle M \rangle$  )  
  res  $\leftarrow$  Halt(  $\langle M, M \rangle$  )  
  if res is accept then  
    reject  
  else  
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Flipper always stops:

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Halting theorem proof continued 2

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Flipper is a **TM** (duh!), and as such it has an encoding $\langle \mathbf{Flipper} \rangle$. Run **Flipper** on itself:

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This is absurd. Ridiculous even!

Assumption that **Halt** exists is false. $\implies \mathbf{A}_{\text{TM}}$ is not **TM** decidable. □

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But where is the diagonalization argument????

	$\langle M_1 \rangle$	$\langle M_2 \rangle$	$\langle M_3 \rangle$	$\langle M_4 \rangle$...
M_1	rej	acc	rej	rej	...
M_2	rej	acc	rej	acc	...
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M_4	rej	acc	acc	rej	...
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9.4

Unrecognizable

TM recognizable

Definition

Language L is **TM** decidable if there exists M that always stops, such that $L(M) = L$.

Definition

Language L is **TM** recognizable if there exists M that stops on some inputs, such that $L(M) = L$.

Theorem (Halting)

$A_{\text{TM}} = \{ \langle M, w \rangle \mid M \text{ is a TM and } M \text{ accepts } w \}$ is **TM** recognizable, but not decidable.

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TM recognizable

Lemma

If L and $\bar{L} = \Sigma^* \setminus L$ are both TM recognizable, then L and \bar{L} are decidable.

Proof.

M : TM recognizing L .

M_c : TM recognizing \bar{L} .

Given input x , using UTM simulating running M and M_c on x in parallel. One of them must stop and accept. Return result.

$\implies L$ is decidable. □

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Complement language for A_{TM}

$$\overline{A_{TM}} = \Sigma^* \setminus \left\{ \langle M, w \rangle \mid M \text{ is a TM and } M \text{ accepts } w \right\}.$$

But don't really care about invalid inputs. So, really:

$$\overline{A_{TM}} = \left\{ \langle M, w \rangle \mid M \text{ is a TM and } M \text{ does not accept } w \right\}.$$

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Proof.

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If $\overline{A_{TM}}$ is TM-recognizable

\implies (by Lemma)

A_{TM} is decidable. A contradiction. □

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9.5

Turing complete

Equivalent to a program

Definition

A system is Turing complete if one can simulate a Turing machine using it.

- 1 Programming languages (yey!).
- 2 C++ templates system (boo).
- 3 John Conway's game of life.
- 4 Many games (Minesweeper).
- 5 Post's correspondence problem.

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Post's correspondence problem

S : set of domino tiles.

abb
bc

: domino piece a string at the top and a string at the bottom.

Example:

$$S = \left\{ \begin{array}{|c|} \hline b \\ \hline ca \\ \hline \end{array}, \begin{array}{|c|} \hline a \\ \hline ab \\ \hline \end{array}, \begin{array}{|c|} \hline ca \\ \hline a \\ \hline \end{array}, \begin{array}{|c|} \hline abc \\ \hline c \\ \hline \end{array} \right\}.$$

Matching dominos

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match for S : ordered list of dominos from S , such that top strings make same string as bottom strings. Example:

$$\begin{array}{|c|} \hline a \\ \hline ab \\ \hline \end{array} \begin{array}{|c|} \hline b \\ \hline ca \\ \hline \end{array} \begin{array}{|c|} \hline ca \\ \hline a \\ \hline \end{array} \begin{array}{|c|} \hline a \\ \hline ab \\ \hline \end{array} \begin{array}{|c|} \hline abc \\ \hline c \\ \hline \end{array}.$$

- (1) Can use same domino more than once.
- (2) Do not have to use all pieces of S .

Matching dominos

$$S = \left\{ \begin{array}{|c|} \hline b \\ \hline ca \\ \hline \end{array}, \begin{array}{|c|} \hline a \\ \hline ab \\ \hline \end{array}, \begin{array}{|c|} \hline ca \\ \hline a \\ \hline \end{array}, \begin{array}{|c|} \hline abc \\ \hline c \\ \hline \end{array} \right\}.$$

match for S : ordered list of dominos from S , such that top strings make same string as bottom strings. Example:

$$\begin{array}{|c|} \hline a \\ \hline ab \\ \hline \end{array} \begin{array}{|c|} \hline b \\ \hline ca \\ \hline \end{array} \begin{array}{|c|} \hline ca \\ \hline a \\ \hline \end{array} \begin{array}{|c|} \hline a \\ \hline ab \\ \hline \end{array} \begin{array}{|c|} \hline abc \\ \hline c \\ \hline \end{array}.$$

- (1) Can use same domino more than once.
- (2) Do not have to use all pieces of S .

Matching dominos

$$S = \left\{ \begin{array}{|c|} \hline b \\ \hline ca \\ \hline \end{array}, \begin{array}{|c|} \hline a \\ \hline ab \\ \hline \end{array}, \begin{array}{|c|} \hline ca \\ \hline a \\ \hline \end{array}, \begin{array}{|c|} \hline abc \\ \hline c \\ \hline \end{array} \right\}.$$

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- (1) Can use same domino more than once.
- (2) Do not have to use all pieces of S .

Post's Correspondence Problem

Post's Correspondence Problem (**PCP**) is deciding whether a set of dominos has a match or not.

modified Post's Correspondence Problem (**MPCP**): **PCP** + a special tile.
Matches for **MPCP** have to start with the special tile.

Theorem

*The **MPCP** problem is undecidable.*

THE END

...

(for now)