#### Algorithm II

# 8. Intractability III

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#### Coping with NP-completeness

Q. Suppose I need to solve an NP-hard problem. What should I do?



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  - 1. Solve arbitrary instances of the problem.
  - 2. Solve problem to optimality.
  - 3. Solve problem in polynomial time.

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#### Coping strategies.

- 1. Design algorithms for special cases of the problem.
- 2. Design approximation algorithms or heuristics.
- 3. Design algorithms that may take exponential time.

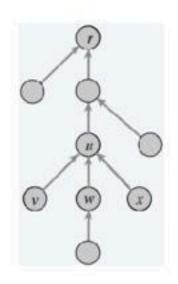
## Special cases: trees

#### Independent set on trees

**Independent set on trees**. Given a *tree*, find a max-cardinality subset of nodes that no two are adjacent.

Fact. A tree has at least one leaf node (degree = 1).

**Key observation**. If node v is a leaf, there exists a max-cardinality independent set containing v.

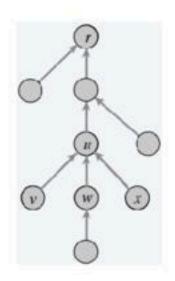


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#### Pf. [exchange argument]

- Consider a max-cardinality independent set S.
- If  $v \in S$ , we're done.
- Otherwise, let (u, v) denote the lone edge incident to v.
  - if  $u \notin S$  and  $v \notin S$ , then  $S \cup \{v\}$  is independent  $\Rightarrow S$  not maximum
  - if  $u \in S$  and  $v \notin S$ , then  $S \cup \{v\} \{u\}$  is independent

#### IS on trees: greedy

INDEPENDENT-SET-IN-A-FOREST(F)

- 1.  $S = \emptyset$ ;
- 2. WHILE (F has at least 1 edge)
  - 1. Let v be a leaf node and let (u, v) be the lone edge incident to v;
  - 2.  $S = S \cup \{v\}$ ;
  - 3.  $F = F \{u, v\};$
- 3. RETURN  $S \cup$  nodes remaining in F;

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**Theorem**. The greedy algorithm finds a max-cardinality independent set in forests (and hence trees).

**Remark**. Can implement in O(n) time by maintaining nodes of degree 1.

## Demo: greedy for IS on trees



#### Quiz: greedy for IS

How might the greedy algorithm fail if the graph is not a tree/forest?

- A. Might get stuck.
- B. Might take exponential time.
- C. Might produce a suboptimal independent set.
- **D**. Any of the above.

#### Quiz: greedy for IS

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- A. Might get stuck.
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- **D**. Any of the above.

A. the algorithm relies on leave nodes.



#### Weighted independent set on trees

Weighted independent set on trees. Given a tree and node weights  $w_v \geq 0$ , find an independent set S that maximizes  $\sum_{v \in S} w_v$ .

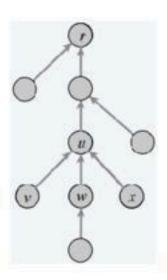


#### Weighted independent set on trees

Weighted independent set on trees. Given a tree and node weights  $w_v \geq 0$ , find an independent set S that maximizes  $\sum_{v \in S} w_v$ .

#### Greedy algorithm can fail spectacularly.

• hint: when  $w_v$  is huge.



#### Weighted independent set on trees

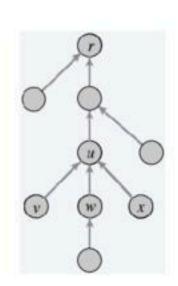
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**Dynamic-programming solution**. Root tree at some node, say r.

- $OPT_{in}(u)$  = max-weight IS in subtree rooted at u, including u.
- $OPT_{out}(u)$  = max-weight IS in subtree rooted at u, excluding u.
- Goal:  $\max\{OPT_{in}(r), OPT_{out}(r)\}$ .

#### Bellman equation.

$$egin{aligned} OPT_{in}(u) &= w_u + \sum_{v \in children(u)} OPT_{out}(v) \ OPT_{out}(u) &= \sum_{v \in children(u)} \max\{OPT_{in}(v), OPT_{out}(v)\} \end{aligned}$$



## **Quiz: DP for Weighted IS**

In which order to solve the subproblems?

- A. Preorder.
- B. Postorder.
- C. Level order.
- **D**. Any of the above.

## Quiz: DP for Weighted IS

In which order to solve the subproblems?

- A. Preorder.
- B. Postorder.
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B. the algorithm relies on leave nodesensures a node is processed after all of its descendants.

#### Weighted IS on trees: DP

WEIGHTED-INDEPENDENT-SET-IN-A-TREE (T)

- 1. Root the tree T at any node r;
- 2.  $S = \emptyset$ ;
- 3. FOREACH (node u of T in postorder/topological order)
  - 1. IF (u is a leaf node)
    - 1.  $M_{in}[u] = w_u$ ;  $M_{out}[u] = 0$ ;
  - 2. ELSE
    - 1.  $M_{in}[u] = w_u + \sum_{v \in children(u)} M_{out}[v];$
    - 2.  $M_{out}[u] = \sum_{v \in children(u)} \max\{M_{in}[v], M_{out}[v]\};$
- 4. RETURN  $\max\{M_{in}[r], M_{out}[r]\};$

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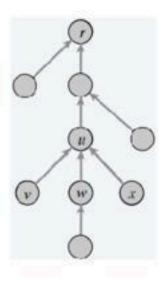
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- 4. RETURN  $\max\{M_{in}[r], M_{out}[r]\};$

**Theorem**. The DP algorithm computes max weight of an independent set in a tree in O(n) time.

Note: can also find independent set itself (not just value)

#### NP-hard problems on trees: intuition

**Independent set on trees**. Tractable because we can find a node that *breaks the* communication among the subproblems in different subtrees.

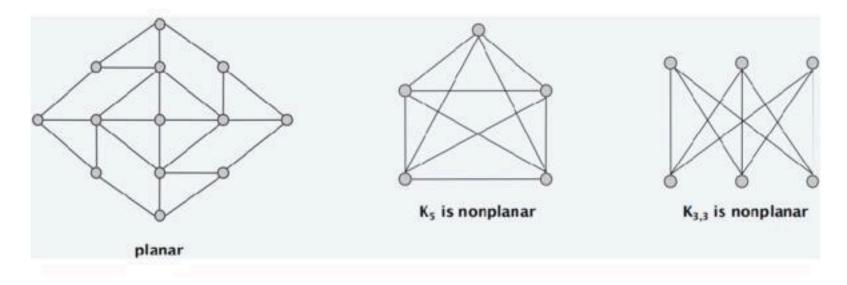




# Special cases: planarity

## **Planarity**

**Def**. A graph is **planar** if it can be embedded in the plane in such a way that no two edges cross.



Applications. VLSI circuit design, computer graphics, etc.

## Planarity testing

**Theorem**. [Hopcroft-Tarjan 1974] There exists an O(n) time algorithm to determine whether a graph is planar.



#### Problems on planar graphs

Fact 0. Many graph problems can be solved faster in planar graphs.
Ex. Shortest paths, max flow, MST, matchings, etc.

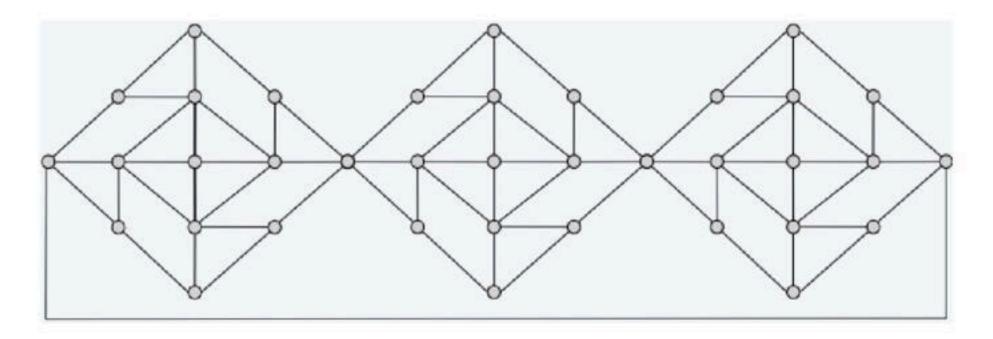
Fact 1. Some NP-complete problems become tractable in planar graphs. Ex. MAX-CUT, ISING, CLIQUE, GRAPH-ISOMORPHISM, 4-COLOR, etc.

Fact 2. Other NP-complete problems become easier in planar graphs.

Ex. INDEPENDENT-SET, VERTEX-COVER, TSP, STEINER-TREE, etc.

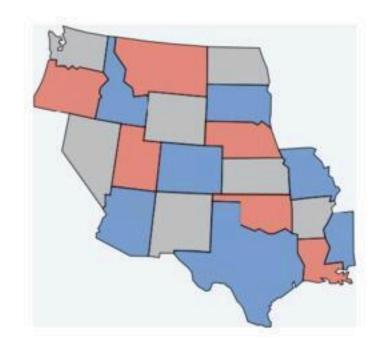
#### Planar graph 3-colorability

**PLANAR-3-COLOR**. Given a planar graph, can it be colored using 3 colors so that no two adjacent nodes have the same color?



#### Planar map 3-colorability

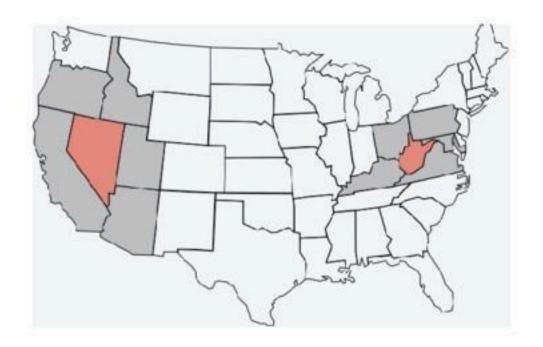
**PLANAR-MAP-3-COLOR**. Given a planar map, can it be colored using 3 colors so that no two adjacent regions have the same color?





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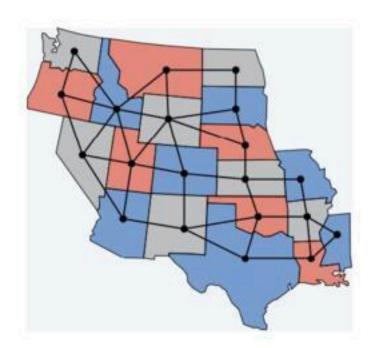
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#### Theorem: $\equiv_P$

Theorem. PLANAR-3-COLOR  $\equiv_P$  PLANAR-MAP-3-COLOR. Pf sketch.

- Nodes correspond to regions.
- Two nodes are adjacent iff they share a nontrivial border.



#### PLANAR-3-COLOR ∈ NP-complete

**Theorem**. PLANAR-3-COLOR  $\in$  NP-complete. **Pf**.

- Easy to see that PLANAR-3-COLOR ∈ NP.
- We show 3-COLOR ≤<sub>P</sub> PLANAR-3-COLOR.
- Given 3-COLOR instance G, we construct an instance of PLANAR-3-COLOR that is 3-colorable iff G is 3-colorable.

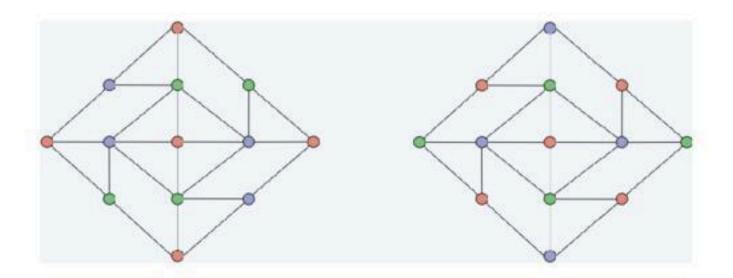


#### PLANAR-3-COLOR ∈ NP-complete: gadget

**Lemma**. W is a planar graph such that:

- In any 3-coloring of W, opposite corners have the same color.
- Any assignment of colors to the corners in which opposite corners have the same color extends to a 3-coloring of W.

**Pf**. The only 3-colorings (modulo permutations) of W are shown below.

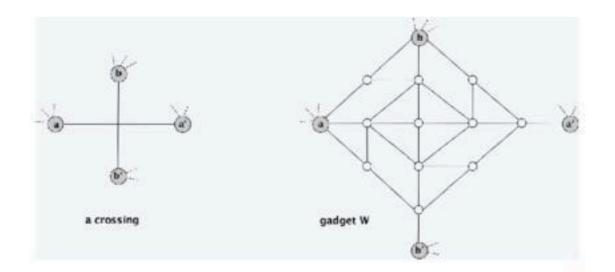


#### PLANAR-3-COLOR ∈ NP-complete: lemma

**Construction**. Given instance G of 3-COLOR, draw G in plane, letting edges cross. Form planar G' by replacing each edge crossing with planar gadget W.

**Lemma**. G is 3-colorable iff G' is 3-colorable.

- In any 3-coloring of W,  $a \neq a'$  and  $b \neq b'$ .
- If  $a \neq a'$  and  $b \neq b'$  then can extend to a 3-coloring of W.

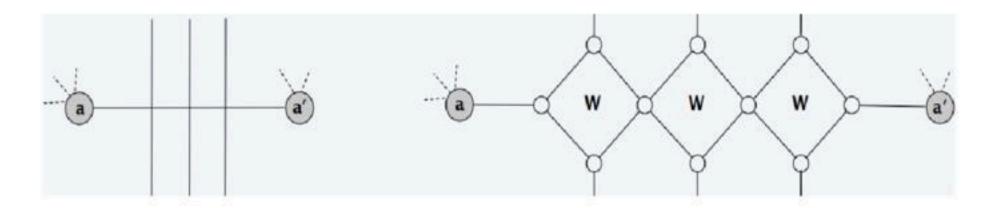


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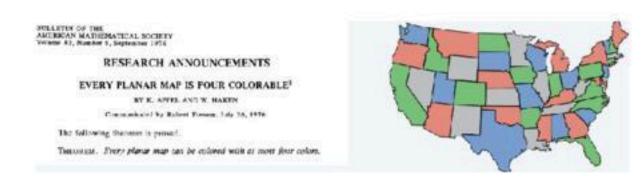
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## Planar map k-colorability

Theorem. [Appel-Haken 1976] Every planar map is 4-colorable.

- Resolved century-old open problem.
- Used 50 days of computer time to deal with many special cases.
- First major theorem to be proved using computer.



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#### Remarks.

- Appel-Haken yields  $O(n^4)$  algorithm to 4-color of a planar map.
- Best known:  $O(n^2)$  to 4-color; O(n) to 5-color.
- Determining whether 3 colors suffice is NP-complete.

#### NP-hard: Poly-time special cases

**Trees**. VERTEX-COVER, INDEPENDENT-SET, LONGEST-PATH, GRAPH-ISOMORPHISM, etc.

**Bipartite graphs**. VERTEX-COVER, INDEPENDENT-SET, 3-COLOR, EDGE-COLOR, etc.

Planar graphs. MAX-CUT, ISING, CLIQUE, GRAPH-ISOMORPHISM, 4-COLOR, etc.

**Bounded treewidth**. HAM-CYCLE, INDEPENDENT-SET, GRAPH-ISOMORPHISM, etc.

Small integers. SUBSET-SUM, KNAPSACK, PARTITION, etc.



# Approximation algorithms: vertex cover

## Approximation algorithms

 $\rho$ -approximation algorithm.

- Runs in polynomial time.
- Applies to arbitrary instances of the problem.
- Guaranteed to find a solution within ratio  $\rho$  of true optimum.

**Ex**. Given a graph G, can find a vertex cover that uses  $\leq 2 \cdot OPT(G)$  vertices in O(m+n) time.



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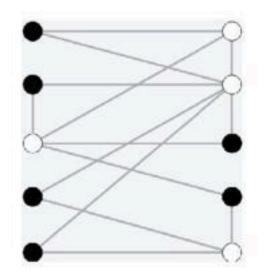
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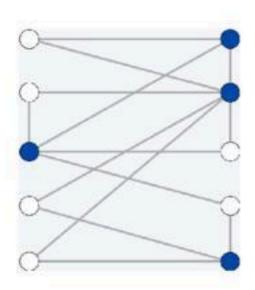
Challenge. Need to prove a solution's value is close to optimum value, without even knowing what optimum value is!

#### Vertex cover

**VERTEX-COVER**. Given a graph G = (V, E), find a min-size vertex cover.

ullet for each edge  $(u,v)\in E$ : either  $u\in S$ ,  $v\in S$ , or both





### Vertex cover: greedy

GREEDY-VERTEX-COVER(G)

- 1.  $S = \emptyset$ ; E' = E;
- 2. WHILE  $(E' \neq \emptyset)$ 
  - 1. Let  $(u,v) \in E'$  be an arbitrary edge;
  - 2.  $M = M \cup \{(u, v)\};$
  - 3.  $S = S \cup \{u\} \cup \{v\};$
  - 4. Delete from E' all edges incident to either u or v;
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**Running time**. Can be implemented in O(m+n) time.

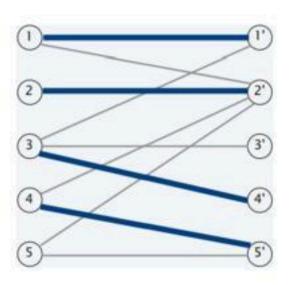
# **Demo: Greedy Vertex-Cover**



#### **Quiz: Vertex cover**

Given a graph G, let M be any matching and let S be any vertex cover. Which of the following must be true?

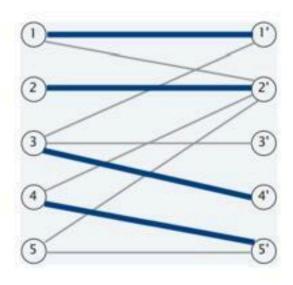
- A.  $|M| \leq |S|$
- **B**.  $|S| \leq |M|$
- **C**. |S| = |M|
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A. if two nodes not matched, then they are not covered and conected, contra to cover; when covering nodes are matched to each other, strictly less.

Pf. Each vertex can cover at most one edge in any matching.

#### Vertex cover: 2-approximation

**Theorem**. Let  $S^*$  be a minimum vertex cover. Then, greedy algorithm computes a vertex cover S with  $|S| \le 2|S^*|$  (ie. **2-approximation** algorithm). **Pf**.

- S is a vertex cover.
  - (delete edge only after it's already covered)
- M is a matching.
  - (when (u, v) added to M, all edges incident to either u or v are deleted)
- $|S| = 2|M| \le 2|S^*|$ .
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**Corollary**. Let  $M^*$  be a maximum matching. Then, greedy algorithm computes a matching M with  $|M| \ge \frac{1}{2}|M^*|$ .

Pf. 
$$|M| = \frac{1}{2}|S| \ge \frac{1}{2}|M^*|$$
.

#### Vertex cover inapproximability

**Theorem**. [Dinur-Safra 2004] If  $P \neq NP$ , then no  $\rho$ -approximation for VERTEX-COVER for any  $\rho < 1.3606$ .

Open research problem. Close the gap (1.3606, 2).

**Conjecture**. no  $\rho$ -approximation for VERTEX-COVER for any  $\rho < 2$ .



# Approximation algorithms: knapsack

#### Knapsack problem

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- Given n objects and a knapsack.
- Item i has value  $v_i > 0$  and weighs  $w_i > 0$ .
- Knapsack has weight limit W.
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**Ex**:  $\{3, 4\}$  has value 40.

item	value	weight
1	1	1
2	6	2
3	18	5
4	22	6
5	28	7

#### Knapsack is NP-complete

**KNAPSACK**. Given a set X, weights  $w_i \geq 0$ , values  $v_i \geq 0$ , a weight limit W, and a target value V, is there a subset  $S \subseteq X$  such that:

$$\sum_{i \in S} w_i \leq W, \sum_{i \in S} v_i \leq V$$

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**SUBSET-SUM**. Given a set X, values  $u_i \geq 0$ , and an integer U, is there a subset  $S \subseteq X$  whose elements sum to exactly U?

**Theorem**. SUBSET-SUM  $\leq_P$  KNAPSACK.

**Pf**. Given instance  $(u_1,..,u_n,U)$  of SUBSET-SUM, create KNAPSACK instance:

$$egin{aligned} v_i &= w_i &= u_i & \sum_{i \in S} u_i \leq U \ V &= W &= U & \sum_{i \in S} u_i \leq U \end{aligned}$$

#### Knapsack problem: DP I

**Def**.  $OPT(i, w) = \max \text{ value subset of items } 1, ..., i \text{ with } weight \text{ limit } w.$ 

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• OPT selects best of 1, ..., i-1 using up to weight limit w.

Case 2. OPT selects item i.

- New weight limit = w − w<sub>i</sub>.
- OPT selects best of 1,..,i-1 using up to weight limit  $w-w_i$ .

$$OPT(i, w) = \begin{cases} 0 & \text{if } i = 0 \\ OPT(i-1, w) & \text{if } w_i > w \\ \max\{OPT(i-1, w), v_i + OPT(i-1, w-w_i)\} & \text{otherwise} \end{cases}$$

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**Theorem**. Computes the optimal value in O(nW) time.

Not polynomial in input size.

Polynomial in input size if weights are small integers.

#### Knapsack problem: DP II

**Def**.  $OPT(i, v) = \min$  weight of a knapsack for which we can obtain a solution of  $value \ge v$  using a subset of items 1, ..., i.

**Note**. Optimal value is the largest value v such that  $OPT(n, v) \leq W$ .



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Case 1. OPT does not select item i.

• *OPT* selects best of 1, ..., i-1 that achieves value  $\geq v$ .

Case 2. OPT selects item i.

- Consumes weight  $w_i$ , need to achieve value  $\geq v v_i$ .
- OPT selects best of 1, ..., i-1 that achieves value  $\geq v-v_i$ .

$$OPT(i,v) = \left\{ \begin{array}{ll} 0 & \text{if } v \leq 0 \\ \infty & \text{if } i = 0 \text{ and } v > 0 \\ \min\{OPT(i-1,v), w_i + OPT(i-1,v-v_i)\} & \text{otherwise} \end{array} \right.$$

## Knapsack problem: DP II (cont.)

**Theorem**. Dynamic programming algorithm II computes the optimal value in  $O(n^2v_{max})$  time, where  $v_{max}$  is the maximum of any value. **Pf**.

- ullet The optimal value  $V^* \leq n v_{max}$ .
- There is one subproblem for each item and for each value  $v \leq v_{max}$ .
- It takes O(1) time per subproblem.

### Knapsack problem: DP II (cont.)

**Theorem**. Dynamic programming algorithm II computes the optimal value in  $O(n^2v_{max})$  time, where  $v_{max}$  is the maximum of any value. **Pf**.

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- There is one subproblem for each item and for each value  $v \leq v_{max}$ .
- It takes O(1) time per subproblem.

Remark 1. Not polynomial in input size! (pseudo-polynomial)

Remark 2. Polynomial time if values are small integers.



#### Intuition for approximation algorithm.

- Round all values up to lie in smaller range.
- Run dynamic programming algorithm II on rounded/scaled instance.
- Return optimal items in rounded instance.

item	value	weight
1	934221	1
2	5956342	2
3	17810013	5
4	21217800	6
5	27343199	7

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#### Round up all values:

- $0 < \epsilon \le 1$  = precision parameter.
- v<sub>max</sub> = largest value in original instance.
- $\theta$  = scaling factor =  $\epsilon v_{max}/2n$ .

$$ar{v_i} = \lceil rac{v_i}{ heta} 
ceil heta, \hat{v_i} = \lceil rac{v_i}{ heta} 
ceil$$

**Observation**. Optimal solutions to problem with  $\bar{v}$  are equivalent to optimal solutions to problem with  $\hat{v}$ .

**Intuition**.  $\bar{v}$  close to v so optimal solution using  $\bar{v}$  is nearly optimal;  $\hat{v}$  small and integral so dynamic programming algorithm II is fast.

**Theorem**. If S is solution found by rounding algorithm and  $S^*$  is any other feasible solution satisfying weight constraint, then  $(1 + \epsilon) \sum_{i \in S} v_i \ge \sum_{i \in S^*} v_i$ .

Pf.

$$egin{aligned} \sum_{i \in S^*} v_i & ext{round up} \ & \leq \sum_{i \in S} ar{v_i} & ext{optimality} \ & \leq \sum_{i \in S} (v_i + heta) & ext{rounding gap} \ & \leq \sum_{i \in S} v_i + n heta & |S| \leq n \ & = \sum_{i \in S} v_i + rac{1}{2} \epsilon v_{max} & heta = \epsilon v_{max}/2n \ & \leq (1 + \epsilon) \sum_{i \in S} v_i & v_{max} \leq 2 \sum_{i \in S} v_i \end{aligned}$$

**Theorem**. For any  $\epsilon > 0$ , the rounding algorithm computes a feasible solution whose value is within a  $(1 + \epsilon)$  factor of the optimum in  $O(n^3/\epsilon)$  time. **Pf**.

- We have already proved the accuracy bound.
- Dynamic program II running time is  $O(n^2 \hat{v}_{max})$ , where

$$\hat{v}_{max} = \lceil rac{v_{max}}{ heta} 
ceil = \lceil rac{2n}{\epsilon} 
ceil$$



# **Exponential algorithms: 3-SAT**

### **Exact exponential algorithms**

Complexity theory deals with worst-case behavior.

Instances you want to solve may be "easy."

"For every polynomial-time algorithm you have, there is an exponential algorithm that I would rather run." — Alan Perlis



### Exact algorithms for 3-satisfiability

**Brute force**. Given a 3-SAT instance with n variables and m clauses, the brute-force algorithm takes  $O((m+n)2^n)$  time.

- There are  $2^n$  possible truth assignments to the n variables.
- We can evaluate a truth assignment in O(m+n) time.

#### 3-satisfiability: recursive

A recursive framework. A 3-SAT formula  $\Phi$  is either empty or the disjunction of a clause  $(l_1 \vee l_2 \vee l_3)$  and a 3-SAT formula  $\Phi'$  with one fewer clause.

$$egin{aligned} \Phi &= (l_1 ee l_2 ee l_3) \wedge \Phi' \ &= (l_1 \wedge \Phi') ee (l_2 \wedge \Phi') ee (l_3 \wedge \Phi') \ &= (\Phi' | l_1 = true) ee (\Phi' | l_2 = true) ee (\Phi' | l_3 = true) \end{aligned}$$

**Notation**.  $\Phi|x=true$  is the simplification of  $\Phi$  by setting x to true.



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**Notation**.  $\Phi|x=true$  is the simplification of  $\Phi$  by setting x to true.

Ex.

$$\Phi = (x \vee y \vee \neg z) \quad \wedge (x \vee \neg y \vee z) \wedge (w \vee y \vee \neg z) \quad \wedge (\neg x \vee y \vee z)$$
 
$$\Phi' = \qquad \qquad \wedge (x \vee \neg y \vee z) \wedge (w \vee y \vee \neg z) \quad \wedge (\neg x \vee y \vee z)$$
 
$$(\Phi'|x = true) = \qquad \qquad \wedge (w \vee y \vee \neg z) \qquad \wedge (y \vee z)$$

#### 3-satisfiability: algorithm

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3-SAT 
$$(\Phi)$$

- 1. IF  $\Phi$  is empty RETURN true;
- 2.  $(l_1 \vee l_2 \vee l_3) \wedge \Phi' = \Phi$ ;
- 3. IF 3-SAT ( $\Phi'|l_1=true$ ) RETURN true;
- 4. IF 3-SAT ( $\Phi'|l_2=true$ ) RETURN true;
- 5. IF 3-SAT ( $\Phi'|l_3=true$ ) RETURN true;
- 6. RETURN false;

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- RETURN false;

**Theorem**. The brute-force 3-SAT algorithm takes  $O(poly(n)3^n)$  time.

Pf. 
$$T(n) \leq 3T(n-1) + poly(n)$$
.

## 3-satisfiability: algorithm II

**Key observation**. The cases are not mutually exclusive. Every satisfiable assignment containing clause  $(l_1 \lor l_2 \lor l_3)$  must fall into one of 3 classes:

- $l_1$  is true.
- $l_1$  is false;  $l_2$  is true.
- $l_1$  is false;  $l_2$  is false;  $l_3$  is true.

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- 4. IF 3-SAT ( $\Phi'|l_1=false, l_2=true$ ) RETURN true;
- 5. IF 3-SAT ( $\Phi'|l_1=false, l_2=false, l_3=true$ ) RETURN true;
- 6. RETURN false;



## 3-satisfiability: theoretical

**Theorem**. The brute-force algorithm takes  $O(1.84^n)$  time.

Pf. 
$$T(n) \le T(n-1) + T(n-2) + T(n-3) + O(m+n)$$
.

• 1.84? largest root of  $r^3=r^2+r+1$ 

**Theorem**. [Moser and Scheder 2010] There exists a  $O(1.33334^n)$  deterministic algorithm for 3-SAT.

## Exact algorithms for satisfiability

**DPPL** algorithm. Highly-effective backtracking procedure.

- Splitting rule: assign truth value to literal; solve both possibilities.
- Unit propagation: clause contains only a single unassigned literal.
- Pure literal elimination: if literal appears only negated or unnegated.

## Satisfiability: best known

Chaff. State-of-the-art SAT solver.

- $\bullet$  Solves real-world SAT instances with  $\sim 10 K$  variable.
  - Developed at Princeton by undergrads.

# **Exponential algorithms: TSP**

### **Pokemon Go**

Given the locations of n Pokémon, find shortest tour to collect them all.





## Traveling salesperson problem

**TSP**. Given a set of n cities and a pairwise distance function d(u, v), is there a tour of length  $\leq D$ ?



13,509 cities in the United States

http://www.math.uwaterloo.ca/tsp



## **HAM-CYCLE** $\leq_P$ **TSP**

**TSP**. Given a set of n cities and a pairwise distance function d(u,v), is there a tour of length  $\leq D$ ?

**HAM-CYCLE**. Given an undirected graph G=(V,E), does there exist a cycle that visits every node exactly once?

Theorem. HAM-CYCLE  $\leq_P$  TSP. Pf.

ullet Given an instance G=(V,E) of HAM-CYCLE, create n=|V| cities with distance function

$$d(u,v) = \left\{egin{array}{ll} 1 & ext{if } (u,v) \in E \ 2 & ext{if } (u,v) 
otin E \end{array}
ight.$$

• TSP instance has tour of length  $\leq n$  iff G has a Hamilton cycle.

## Exponential algorithm for TSP: DP

**Theorem**. [Held-Karp, Bellman 1962] TSP can be solved in  $O(n^2 2^n)$  time. **Pf**. [dynamic programming]

- Subproblems:  $c(s, v, X) = \cos t$  of cheapest path between s and  $v \neq s$  that visits every node in X exactly once (and uses only nodes in X).
- ullet Goal:  $\min_{v \in V} c(s,v,V) + c(v,s)$
- There are  $\leq n2^n$  subproblems and they satisfy the recurrence:

$$c(s,v,X) = \left\{egin{array}{ll} c(v,s) & ext{if } |X| = 2 \ \min_{u \in X \setminus \{s,v\}} c(s,u,X \setminus \{v\}) + c(u,v) & ext{if } |X| > 2 \end{array}
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ullet The values c(s,v,X) can be computed in increasing order of the cardinality of X

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ight.$$

 $\bullet$  The values c(s,v,X) can be computed in increasing order of the cardinality of X

Remark. 22-city TSP instance takes 1,000 years!

#### Concorde TSP solver

Concorde TSP solver. [Applegate-Bixby-Chvátal-Cook]

- Linear programming + branch-and-bound + polyhedral combinatorics.
- Greedy heuristics, including Lin-Kernighan.
- MST, Delaunay triangulations, fractional b-matchings, etc.

Remarkable fact. Concorde has solved all 110 TSPLIB instances.

largest instance has 85,900 cities!



#### **Euclidean TSP**

**Euclidean TSP**. Given n points in the plane and a real number L, is there a tour that visit every city exactly once that has distance  $\leq L$ ?

Fact. 3-SAT  $\leq_P$  EUCLIDEAN-TSP.

**Remark**. Not known to be in  $\mathcal{NP}$ .

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**Remark**. Not known to be in  $\mathcal{NP}$ .

**Theorem**. [Arora 1998, Mitchell 1999] Given n points in the plane, for any constant  $\epsilon>0$ : there exists a poly-time algorithm to find a tour whose length is at most  $(1+\epsilon)$  times that of the optimal tour.

**Pf recipe**. Structure theorem + divide-and-conquer + dynamic programming.

