Recursion

Sections 7.1 and 7.2 of Rosen
Spring 2011
CSCE 235 Introduction to Discrete Structures
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Outline

• Introduction, Motivating Example
• Recurrence Relations
  – Definition, general form, initial conditions, terms
• Linear Homogeneous Recurrences
  – Form, solution, characteristic equation, characteristic polynomial, roots
  – Second order linear homogeneous recurrence
    • Double roots, solution, examples
    • Single root, example
  – General linear homogeneous recurrences: distinct roots, any multiplicity
• Linear Nonhomogenous Recurrences
• Other Methods
  – Backward substitution
  – Recurrence trees
  – Cheating with Maple
Recursive Algorithms

• A recursive algorithm is one in which objects are defined in terms of other objects of the same type

• Advantages:
  – Simplicity of code
  – Easy to understand

• Disadvantages
  – Memory
  – Speed
  – Possibly redundant work

• Tail recursion offers a solution to the memory problem, but really, do we need recursion?
Recursive Algorithms: Analysis

- We have already discussed how to analyze the running time of (iterative) algorithms.
- To analyze recursive algorithms, we require more sophisticated techniques.
- Specifically, we study how to define & solve recurrence relations.
Motivating Examples: Factorial

- Recall the factorial function:
  
  \[ n! = \begin{cases} 
  1 & \text{if } n = 1 \\
  n(n-1) & \text{if } n > 1 
  \end{cases} \]

- Consider the following (recursive) algorithm for computing \( n! \):

  \texttt{FACTTORIAL} \\
  \textit{Input}: \ n \in \mathbb{N} \\
  \textit{Output}: \ n! \\

  1. \textbf{If} (n=1) \text{ or } (n=0) \\
  2. \textbf{Then Return} 1 \\
  3. \textbf{Else Return} n \times \texttt{FACTTORIAL}(n-1) \\
  4. \textbf{Endif} \\
  5. \textbf{End}
Factorial: Analysis

How many multiplications $M(x)$ does factorial perform?

• When $n=1$ we don’t perform any
• Otherwise, we perform one...
• ... plus how ever many multiplications we perform in the recursive call FACTORIAL(n-1)
• The number of multiplications can be expressed as a formula (similar to the definition of $n!$

\[
M(0) = 0 \\
M(n) = 1 + M(n-1)
\]

• This relation is known as a recurrence relation
Recurrence Relations

• **Definition:** A *recurrence relation* for a sequence \( \{a_n\} \) is an equation that expresses \( a_n \) in terms of one or more of the previous terms in the sequence:

\[
a_0, a_1, a_2, \ldots, a_{n-1}
\]

for all integers \( n \geq n_0 \) where \( n_0 \) is a nonnegative integer.

• A sequence is called a *solution* of a recurrence if its terms satisfy the recurrence relation.
Recurrence Relations: Solutions

• Consider the recurrence relation $a_n = 2a_{n-1} - a_{n-2}$
• It has the following sequences $a_n$ as solutions
  - $a_n = 3n$
  - $a_n = n+1$
  - $a_n = 5$
• The initial conditions + recurrence relation uniquely determine the sequence
Recurrence Relations: Example

• The Fibonacci numbers are defined by the recurrence
  \[ F(n) = F(n-1) + F(n-2) \]
  \[ F(1) = 1 \]
  \[ F(0) = 1 \]

• The solution to the Fibonacci recurrence is
  \[ f_n = \frac{1}{\sqrt{5}} \left( \frac{1+\sqrt{5}}{2} \right)^n - \frac{1}{\sqrt{5}} \left( \frac{1-\sqrt{5}}{2} \right)^n \]

(The solution is derived in your textbook.)
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Recurrence Relations: General Form

• More generally, recurrences can have the form

\[ T(n) = \alpha T(n-\beta) + f(n), \quad T(\delta) = c \]

or

\[ T(n) = \alpha T(n/\beta) + f(n), \quad T(\delta) = c \]

• Note that it may be necessary to define several \( T(\delta) \), which are the initial conditions
Recurrence Relations: Initial Conditions

- The initial conditions specify the value of the first few necessary terms in the sequence.
- In the Fibonacci numbers, we needed two initial conditions:
  \[ F(0) = F(1) = 1 \]
  because \( F(n) \) is defined by the two previous terms in the sequence.
- Initial conditions are also known as boundary conditions (as opposed to general conditions).
- From now on, we will use the subscript notation, so the Fibonacci numbers are:
  \[
  f_n = f_{n-1} + f_{n-2} \\
  f_1 = 1 \\
  f_0 = 1
  \]
Recurrence Relations: Terms

- Recurrence relations have two parts:
  - recursive terms and
  - non-recursive terms

\[ T(n) = 2T(n-2) + n^2 -10 \]

- Recursive terms come from when an algorithm calls itself
- Non-recursive terms correspond to the non-recursive cost of the algorithm: work the algorithm performs within a function

- We will see examples later. First, we need to know how to solve recurrences.
Solving Recurrences

- There are several methods for solving recurrences
  - Characteristic Equations
  - Forward Substitution
  - Backward Substitution
  - Recurrence Trees
  - ... Maple!
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Linear Homogeneous Recurrences

- **Definition:** A *linear homogeneous recurrence* relation of degree $k$ with constant coefficients is a recurrence relation of the form

\[ a_n = c_1 a_{n-1} + c_2 a_{n-2} + \ldots + c_k a_{n-k} \]

with $c_1, c_2, \ldots, c_k \in \mathbb{R}$, $c_k \neq 0$.

- **Linear:** RHS is a sum of multiples of previous terms of the sequence (linear combination of previous terms). The coefficients are all constants (not functions depending on $n$).

- **Homogeneous:** no terms occur that are not multiples of $a_j$’s.

- **Degree $k$:** $a_n$ is expressed in terms of $(n-k)^{th}$ term of the sequence.
Linear Homogeneous Recurrences: Examples

• The Fibonacci sequence is a linear homogeneous recurrence relation
• So are the following relations:
  \[ a_n = 4a_{n-1} + 5a_{n-2} + 7a_{n-3} \]
  \[ a_n = 2a_{n-2} + 4a_{n-4} + 8a_{n-8} \]
  How many initial conditions do we need to specify for these relations?
  As many as the degree k: k=3, 8 respectively
• So, how do solve linear homogeneous recurrences?
Solving Linear Homogeneous Recurrences

- We want a solution of the form $a_n = r^n$ where $r$ is some real constant.
- We observe that $a_n = r^n$ is a solution to a linear homogeneous recurrence if and only if

$$r^n = c_1 r^{n-1} + c_2 r^{n-2} + \ldots + c_k r^{n-k}$$

- We can now divide both sides by $r^{n-k}$, collect terms and we get a $k$-degree polynomial

$$r^k - c_1 r^{k-1} - c_2 r^{k-2} - \ldots - c_k = 0$$

- This equation is called the characteristic equation of the recurrence relation.
- The roots of this polynomial are called the characteristics roots of the recurrence relation. They can be used to find the solutions (if they exist) to the recurrence relation. We will consider several cases.
Second Order Linear Homogeneous Recurrences

• A second order (k=2) linear homogeneous recurrence is a recurrence of the form
  \[ a_n = c_1 a_{n-1} + c_2 a_{n-2} \]

• Theorem (Theorem 1, page 462): Let \( c_1, c_2 \in R \) and suppose that \( r^2 - c_1 r - c_2 = 0 \) is the characteristic polynomial of a 2\textsuperscript{nd} order linear homogeneous recurrence that has two distinct* roots \( r_1, r_2 \), then \( \{a_n\} \) is a solution if and only if
  \[ a_n = \alpha_1 r_1^n + \alpha_2 r_2^n \]
  for \( n=0,1,2,... \) where \( \alpha_1, \alpha_2 \) are constants dependent upon the initial conditions

* We discuss single root later
Second Order Linear Homogeneous Recurrences: Example A (1)

• Find a solution to

\[ a_n = 5a_{n-1} - 6a_{n-2} \]

with initial conditions \( a_0 = 1, a_1 = 4 \)

• The characteristic equation is

\[ r^2 - 5r + 6 = 0 \]

• The roots are \( r_1 = 2, r_2 = 3 \)

\[ r^2 - 5r + 6 = (r-2)(r-3) \]

• Using the 2\(^{nd}\) order theorem we have a solution

\[ a_n = \alpha_1 2^n + \alpha_2 3^n \]
Second Order Linear Homogeneous Recurrences: Example A (2)

• Given the solution
  \[ a_n = \alpha_1 2^n + \alpha_2 3^n \]

• We plug in the two initial conditions to get a system of linear equations
  \[ a_0 = \alpha_1 2^0 + \alpha_2 3^0 \]
  \[ a_1 = \alpha_1 2^1 + \alpha_2 3^1 \]

• Thus:
  \[ 1 = \alpha_1 + \alpha_2 \]
  \[ 4 = 2\alpha_1 + 3\alpha_2 \]
Second Order Linear Homogeneous Recurrences: Example A (3)

1 = α₁ + α₂
4 = 2α₁ + 3α₂

• Solving for α₁ = (1 - α₂), we get

4 = 2α₁ + 3α₂
4 = 2(1 - α₂) + 3α₂
4 = 2 - 2α₂ + 3α₂
2 = α₂

• Substituting for α₁: α₁ = -1

• Putting it back together, we have

aₙ = α₁2ⁿ + α₂3ⁿ
aₙ = -1·2ⁿ + 2·3ⁿ
Second Order Linear Homogeneous Recurrences: Example B (1)

- Solve the recurrence
  \[ a_n = -2a_{n-1} + 15a_{n-2} \]
  with initial conditions \( a_0 = 0, \ a_1 = 1 \)

- If we did it right, we have
  \[ a_n = \frac{1}{8} (3)^n - \frac{1}{8} (-5)^n \]

- To check ourselves, we verify \( a_0, \ a_1, \) we compute \( a_3 \) with both equations, then maybe \( a_4, \) etc.
Single Root Case

- We can apply the theorem if the roots are distincts, i.e. \( r_1 \neq r_2 \)
- If the roots are not distinct (\( r_1 = r_2 \)), we say that one characteristic root has multiplicity two. In this case, we apply a different theorem
- **Theorem** (Theorem2, page 464)
  
  Let \( c_1, c_2 \in \mathbb{R} \) and suppose that \( r^2 - c_1 r - c_2 = 0 \) has only one distinct root, \( r_0 \), then \( \{ a_n \} \) is a solution to \( a_n = c_1 a_{n-1} + c_2 a_{n-2} \) if and only if
  
  \[
  a_n = \alpha_1 r_0^n + \alpha_2 nr_0^n
  \]

  for \( n=0,1,2,... \) where \( \alpha_1, \alpha_2 \) are constants depending upon the initial conditions
Single Root Case: Example (1)

• What is the solution to the recurrence relation

\[ a_n = 8a_{n-1} - 16a_{n-2} \]

with initial conditions \( a_0 = 1, a_1 = 7 \)?

• The characteristic equation is:

\[ r^2 - 8r + 16 = 0 \]

• Factoring gives us:

\[ r^2 - 8r + 16 = (r-4)(r-4), \text{ so } r_0 = 4 \]

• Applying the theorem we have the solution:

\[ a_n = \alpha_1(4)^n + \alpha_2 n(4)^n \]
Single Root Case: Example (2)

• Given: \( a_n = \alpha_1(4)^n + \alpha_2 n(4)^n \)

• Using the initial conditions, we get:
  
  \[
  a_0 = 1 = \alpha_1(4)^0 + \alpha_2 0(4)^0 = \alpha_1 \\
  a_1 = 7 = \alpha_1(4) + \alpha_2 1(4)^1 = 4\alpha_1 + 4\alpha_2 
  \]

• Thus: \( \alpha_1 = 1, \alpha_2 = 3/4 \)

• The solution is
  \[
  a_n = (4)^n + \frac{3}{4} n (4)^n 
  \]

• Always check yourself…
General Linear Homogeneous Recurrences

• There is a straightforward generalization of these cases to higher-order linear homogeneous recurrences
• Essentially, we simply define higher degree polynomials
• The roots of these polynomials lead to a general solution
• The general solution contains coefficients that depend only on the initial conditions
• In the general case, the coefficients form a system of linear equalities
General Linear Homogeneous Recurrences: Distinct Roots

- **Theorem** (Theorem 3, page 465)

  Let $c_1, c_2, \ldots, c_k \in \mathbb{R}$ and suppose that the characteristic equation

  $$r^k - c_1 r^{k-1} - c_2 r^{k-2} - \ldots - c_k = 0$$

  has $k$ distinct roots $r_1, r_2, \ldots, r_k$. Then a sequence $\{a_n\}$ is a solution of the recurrence relation

  $$a_n = c_1 a_{n-1} + c_2 a_{n-2} + \ldots + c_k a_{n-k}$$

  if and only if

  $$a_n = \alpha_1 r_1^n + \alpha_2 r_2^n + \ldots + \alpha_k r_k^n$$

  for $n=0,1,2,\ldots$ where $\alpha_1, \alpha_2, \ldots, \alpha_k$ are constants depending upon the initial conditions.
General Linear Homogeneous Recurrences: Any Multiplicity

- **Theorem** (Theorem 3, page 465)

  Let \( c_1, c_2, \ldots, c_k \in \mathbb{R} \) and suppose that the characteristic equation

  \[
  r^k - c_1 r^{k-1} - c_2 r^{k-2} - \cdots - c_k = 0
  \]

  has \( t \) roots with multiplicities \( m_1, m_2, \ldots, m_t \). Then a sequence \( \{a_n\} \) is a solution of the recurrence relation

  \[
  a_n = c_1 a_{n-1} + c_2 a_{n-2} + \cdots + c_k a_{n-k}
  \]

  if and only if

  \[
  a_n = (\alpha_{1,0} + \alpha_{1,1} n + \cdots + \alpha_{1,m_1-1} n^{m_1-1}) r_1^n + \\
  (\alpha_{2,0} + \alpha_{2,1} n + \cdots + \alpha_{2,m_2-1} n^{m_2-1}) r_2^n + \cdots \\
  (\alpha_{t,0} + \alpha_{t,1} n + \cdots + \alpha_{t,m_t-1} n^{m_t-1}) r_t^n
  \]

  for \( n=0,1,2,\ldots \) where \( \alpha_{i,j} \) are constants for \( 1 \leq i \leq t \) and \( 0 \leq j \leq m_i-1 \) depending upon the initial conditions.
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Linear NonHomogeneous Recurrences

• For recursive algorithms, cost function are often not homogeneous because there is usually a non-recursive cost depending on the input size
• Such a recurrence relation is called a linear nonhomogeneous recurrence relation
• Such functions are of the form
  \[ a_n = c_1a_{n-1} + c_2a_{n-2} + \ldots + c_ka_{n-k} + f(n) \]
• \( f(n) \) represents a non-recursive cost. If we chop it off, we are left with
  \[ a_n = c_1a_{n-1} + c_2a_{n-2} + \ldots + c_ka_{n-k} \]
  which is the associated homogeneous recurrence relation
• Every solution of a linear nonhomogeneous recurrence relation is the sum of
  – a particular solution and
  – a solution to the associated linear homogeneous recurrence relation
Solving Linear NonHomogeneous Recurrences (1)

- **Theorem** (Theorem 5, p468)
  
  If \( \{a_n^{(p)}\} \) is a particular solution of the nonhomogeneous linear recurrence relation with constant coefficients
  
  \[
  a_n = c_1 a_{n-1} + c_2 a_{n-2} + \ldots + c_k a_{n-k} + f(n)
  \]
  
  then every solution is of the form \( \{a_n^{(p)} + a_n^{(h)}\} \) where \( \{a_n^{(h)}\} \) is a solution of the associated homogeneous recurrence relation
  
  \[
  a_n = c_1 a_{n-1} + c_2 a_{n-2} + \ldots + c_k a_{n-k}
  \]
Solving Linear NonHomogeneous Recurrences (2)

• There is no general method for solving such relations.
• However, we can solve them for special cases.
• In particular, if $f(n)$ is
  – a polynomial function
  – an exponential function, or
  – the product of a polynomial and exponential functions,

then there is a general solution.
Theorem (Theorem 6, p469)

Suppose \{a_n\} satisfies the linear nonhomogeneous recurrence relation

\[ a_n = c_1 a_{n-1} + c_2 a_{n-2} + \ldots + c_k a_{n-k} + f(n) \]

where \(c_1, c_2, \ldots, c_k \in \mathbb{R}\) and

\[ f(n) = (b_t n^t + b_{t-1} n^{t-1} + \ldots + b_1 n + b_0) s^n \]

where \(b_0, b_1, \ldots, b_n, s \in \mathbb{R}\)

... continues
Solving Linear Non-Homogeneous Recurrences (4)

- **Theorem** (Theorem 6, p469)... continued

  When *s* is **not** a root of the characteristic equation of the associated linear homogeneous recurrence relation, there is a particular solution of the form

  \[(p_t n^t + p_{t-1} n^{t-1} + \ldots + p_1 n + p_0) s^n\]

  When *s* is a **root** of this characteristic equation and its multiplicity is *m*, there is a particular solution of the form

  \[n^m(p_t n^t + p_{t-1} n^{t-1} + \ldots + p_1 n + p_0) s^n\]
Linear NonHomogeneous Recurrences: Examples

• The examples in the textbook are quite good (see pp467—470) and illustrate how to solve simple nonhomogeneous relations
• We may go over more examples if time allows
• Also read up on generating functions in Section 7.4 (though we may return to this subject)
• However, there are alternate, more intuitive methods
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Other Methods

• When analyzing algorithms, linear homogeneous recurrences of order greater than 2 hardly ever arise in practice
• We briefly describe two unfolding methods that work for a lot of cases
  – **Backward substitution**: this works exactly as its name suggests. Starting from the equation itself, work backwards, substituting values of the function for previous ones
  – **Recurrence trees**: just as powerful, but perhaps more intuitive, this method involves mapping out the recurrence tree for an equation. Starting from the equation, you unfold each recursive call to the function and calculate the non-recursive cost at each level of the tree. Then, you find a general formula for each level and take a summation over all such levels
Backward Substitution: Example (1)

• Give a solution to

\[ T(n) = T(n-1) + 2n \]

where \( T(1) = 5 \)

• We begin by unfolding the recursion by a simple substitution of the function values

• We observe that

\[ T(n-1) = T((n-1) -1) + 2(n-1) = T(n-2) + 2(n-1) \]

• Substituting into the original equation

\[ T(n) = T(n-2) + 2(n-1) + 2n \]
Backward Substitution: Example (2)

• If we continue to do that we get
  \[ T(n) = T(n-2) + 2(n-1) + 2n \]
  \[ T(n) = T(n-3) + 2(n-2) + 2(n-1) + 2n \]
  \[ T(n) = T(n-4) + 2(n-3) + 2(n-2) + 2(n-1) + 2n \]
  
  ⋯

  \[ T(n) = T(n-i) + \sum_{j=0}^{i-1} 2(n-j) \]

  \[ function’s \ value \ at \ the \ i^{th} \ iteration \]

• Solving the sum we get
  \[ T(n) = T(n-i) + 2n(i-1) - 2(i-1)(i-1+1)/2 + 2n \]
  \[ T(n) = T(n-i) + 2n(i-1) - i^2 + i + 2n \]
Backward Substitution: Example (3)

- We want to get rid of the recursive term
  \[ T(n) = T(n-i) + 2n(i-1) - i^2 + i + 2n \]
- To do that, we need to know at what iteration we reach our based case, i.e. for what value of \( i \) can we use the initial condition \( T(1)=5 \)?
- We get the base case when \( n-i=1 \) or \( i=n-1 \)
- Substituting in the equation above we get
  \[ T(n) = 5 + 2n(n-1-1) - (n-1)^2 + (n-1) + 2n \]
  \[ T(n) = 5 + 2n(n-2) - (n^2-2n+1) + (n-1) + 2n = n^2 + n + 3 \]
Recurrence Trees (1)

• When using recurrence trees, we graphically represent the recursion
• Each node in the tree is an instance of the function. As we progress downward, the size of the input decreases
• The contribution of each level to the function is equivalent to the number of nodes at that level times the non-recursive cost on the size of the input at that level
• The tree ends at the depth at which we reach the base case
• As an example, we consider a recursive function of the form
  \[ T(n) = \alpha T(n/\beta) + f(n), \quad T(\delta) = c \]
Recurrence Trees (2)

\[
T(n) = \alpha f(n) + \sum_{i=0}^{\log_\beta n} \alpha^i f(n/\beta^i) + \alpha^{\log_\beta n} \cdot T(\delta)
\]
Recurrence Trees (3)

- The total value of the function is the summation over all levels of the tree

\[ T(n) = \sum_{i=0}^{\log_\beta n} \alpha^i f(n/\beta^i) \]

\[ T(n) = a^{\log_b n} T(\delta) + \sum_{i=0}^{(\log_b n - 1)} a^i f(n/b^i) \]

- Consider the following concrete example

\[ T(n) = 2T(n/2) + n, \quad T(1) = 4 \]
Recurrence Tree: Example (2)

Iteration

0

1

2

i

log₂ n

Cost

n

n/2 + n/2

4. n/4

8. n/8

2^i(n/2^i)

2^{log₂ n} \cdot T(1)
Recurrence Trees: Example (3)

- The value of the function is the summation of the value of all levels.
- We treat the last level as a special case since its non-recursive cost is different

\[ T(n) = 4n + \sum_{i=0}^{(\log_2 n - 1)} 2^i \frac{n}{2^i} = n(\log n) + 4n \]
Smoothness Rule

• In the previous example, we make the following assumption
  \( n \) has a power of two (\( n = 2^k \))
  This assumption is necessary to get a nice depth of \( \log(n) \) and a full tree

• We can restrict consideration to certain powers because of the smoothness rule, which is \( \not\) studied in this course.

• For more information about that rule, consult pages 481—483 of the textbook “The Design & Analysis of Algorithms” by Anany Levitin
How to Cheat with Maple (1)

• Maple and other math tools are great resources. However, they are no substitutes for knowing how to solve recurrences yourself
• As such, you should only use Maple to check your answers
• Recurrence relations can be solved using the `rsolve` command and giving Maple the proper parameters
• The arguments are essentially a comma-delimited list of equations
  – General and boundary conditions
  – Followed by the ‘name’ and variables of the function
How to Cheat with Maple (2)

\[
\text{rsolve}\left(\{T(n) = T(n-1) + 2n, T(1) = 5\}, T(n)\right); \\
1 + 2(n+1) \left(\frac{1}{2n+1}\right) - 2n
\]

- You can clean up Maple’s answer a bit by encapsulating it in the `simplify` command

\[
\text{simplify}\left(\text{rsolve}\left(\{T(n) = T(n-1) + 2n, T(1) = 5\}, T(n)\right)\right); \\
3 + n^2 + n
\]
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