CS 361, Lecture 1

Jared Saia
University of New Mexico

Today's Outline

- Administrative Info
- What is an Algorithm? Data Structure?
- Why study algorithms?
- Todo list for next class

Why study algorithms?

"Seven years of College down the toilet" - John Belushi in Animal House

- Q: Can I get a programming job without knowing something about algorithms and data structures?
- A: Yes, but do you really want to be programming GUIs your entire life?

Why study algorithms? (II)

- Almost all big companies want programmers with knowledge of algorithms: Microsoft, Google, Oracle, IBM, Yahoo, Sandia, Los Alamos, etc.
- In most programming job interviews, they will ask you several questions about algorithms and/or data structures
- Your knowledge of algorithms will set you apart from the large masses of interviewees who know only how to program
- If you want to start your own company, you should know that many startups are successful because they've found better algorithms for solving a problem (e.g. Google, Akamai, etc.)

Why Study Algorithms? (III)

- You'll write better, faster code
- You'll learn to think more abstractly and mathematically
- It's the most challenging and interesting area of CS!

A Real Job Interview Question

The following is a question commonly asked in job interviews in 2002 (thanks to Maksim Noy, see the career center link from the dept web page for the full compilation of questions):

- You are given an array with integers between 1 and $1,000,000$.
- All integers between 1 and $1,000,000$ are in the array at least once, and one of those integers is in the array twice
- Q: Can you determine which integer is in the array twice? Can you do it while iterating through the array only once?

Solution

- Ideas on how to solve this problem?? What if we allowed multiple iterations?

Naive Algorithm

- Create a new array of ints between 1 and $1,000,000$, which we'll use to count the occurences of each number. Initialize all entries to 0
- Go through the input array and each time a number is seen, update its count in the new array
- Go through the count array and see which number occurs twice.
- Return this number

Naive Algorithm Analysis

- Q: How long will this algorithm take?
- A: We iterate through the numbers 1 to $1,000,000$ *three* times!
- Note that we also use up a lot of space with the extra array
- This is wasteful of time and space, particularly as the input array gets very large (e.g. it might be a huge data stream)
- Q: Can we do better?

Ideas for a better Algorithm

- Note that $\sum_{i=1}^{n} i = (n+1)n/2$
- Let S be the sum of the input array
- Let x be the value of the repeated number
- Then $S = (1,000,000 + 1)1,000,000/2 + x$
- Thus $x = S - (1,000,000 + 1)1,000,000/2$

A better Algorithm

- Iterate through the input array, summing up all the numbers, let S be this sum
- Let $x = S - (1,000,000 + 1)1,000,000/2$
- Return x

Analysis

- This algorithm takes iterates through the input array just once
- It uses up essentially no extra space
- It is at least three times faster than the naive algorithm
- Further, if the input array is so large that it won't fit in memory, this is the only algorithm which will work!
- These time and space bounds are the best possible

Take Away

- Designing good algorithms matters!
- Not always this easy to improve an algorithm
- However, with some thought and work, you can *almost always* get a better algorithm than the naive approach

How to analyze an algorithm?

- There are several resource bounds we could be concerned about: time, space, communication bandwidth, logic gates, etc.
- However, we are usually most concerned about time
- Recall that algorithms are independent of programming languages and machine types
- Q: So how do we measure resource bounds of algorithms

Random-access machine model

- We will use RAM model of computation in this class
- All instructions operate in serial
- All basic operations (e.g. add, multiply, compare, read, store, etc.) take unit time
- All "atomic" data (chars, ints, doubles, pointers, etc.) take unit space

Worst Case Analysis

- We'll generally be pessimistic when we evaluate resource bounds
- We'll evaluate the run time of the algorithm on the worst possible input sequence
- Amazingly, in most cases, we'll still be able to get pretty good bounds
- Justification: The "average case" is often about as bad as the worst case.

Example Analysis

- Consider the problem discussed last tuesday about finding a redundant element in an array
- Let's consider the more general problem, where the numbers are 1 to n instead of 1 to $1,000,000$

Algorithm 1

- Create a new "count" array of ints of size n, which we'll use to count the occurences of each number. Initialize all entries to 0
- Go through the input array and each time a number is seen, update its count in the "count" array
- As soon as a number is seen in the input array which has already been counted once, return this number

Algorithm 2

- Iterate through the input array, summing up all the numbers, let S be this sum
- Let $x = S - (n+1)n/2$
- Return x

Example Analysis: Time

- Worst case: Algorithm 1 does $5 * n$ operations (n inits to 0 in "count" array, n reads of input array, n reads of "count" array (to see if value is 1), n increments, and n stores into count array)
- Worst case: Algorithm 2 does $2 * n + 4$ operations (n reads of input array, n additions to value S, 4 computations to determine x given S)

Example Analysis: Space

- Worst Case: Algorithm 1 uses n additional units of space to store the "count" array
- Worst Case: Algorithm 2 uses 2 additional units of space

A Simpler Analysis

- Analysis above can be tedious for more complicated algorithms
- In many cases, we don't care about constants. $5n$ is about the same as $2n + 4$ which is about the same as $an + b$ for any constants a and b
- However we do still care about the difference in space: n is very different from 2
- Asymptotic analysis is the solution to removing the tedium but ensuring good analysis

Asymptotic analysis?

- A tool for analyzing time and space usage of algorithms
- Assumes input size is a variable, say n, and gives time and space bounds as a function of n
- Ignores multiplicative and additive constants
- Concerned only with the *rate* of growth
- E.g. Treats run times of n, $10,000 * n + 2000$, and $.5n + 2$ all the same (We use the term $O(n)$ to refer to all of them)

What is Asymptotic Analysis?(II)

- Informally, O notation is the leading (i.e. quickest growing) term of a formula with the coefficient stripped off
- O is sort of a relaxed version of "$\leq$"
- E.g. n is $O(n)$ and n is also $O(n^2)$
- By convention, we use the smallest possible O value i.e. we say n is $O(n)$ rather than n is $O(n^2)$

More Examples

- E.g. n, $10,000n - 2000$, and $.5n + 2$ are all $O(n)$
- $n + \log n$, $n - \sqrt{n}$ are $O(n)$
- $n^2 + n + \log n$, $10n^2 + n - \sqrt{n}$ are $O(n^2)$
- $n \log n + 10n$ is $O(n \log n)$
- $10 * \log^2 n$ is $O(\log^2 n)$
- $n\sqrt{n} + n \log n + 10n$ is $O(n\sqrt{n})$
- $10,000$, 2^{50} and 4 are $O(1)$

More Examples

- Algorithm 1 and 2 both take time $O(n)$
- Algorithm 1 uses $O(n)$ extra space
- But, Algorithm 2 uses $O(1)$ extra space

Formal Defn of Big-O

- *A function $f(n)$ is $O(g(n))$ if there exist positive constants c and n_0 such that $f(n) \leq cg(n)$ for all $n \geq n_0$*

Example

- Let's show that $f(n) = 10n + 100$ is $O(g(n))$ where $g(n) = n$
- We need to give constants c and n_0 such that $f(n) \leq cg(n)$ for all $n \geq n_0$
- In other words, we need constants c and n_0 such that $10n + 100 \leq cn$ for all $n \geq n_0$

Example

- We can solve for appropriate constants:

$$10n + 100 \leq cn \quad (1)$$
$$10 + 100/n \leq c \quad (2)$$

- So if $n > 1$, then c should be greater than 110.
- In other words, for all $n > 1$, $10n + 100 \leq 110n$
- So $10n + 100$ is $O(n)$

Questions

Express the following in O notation

- $n^3/1000 - 100n^2 - 100n + 3$
- $\log n + 100$
- $10 * \log^2 n + 100$
- $\sum_{i=1}^{n} i$

Todo

- Work on pretest, due next Tuesday!
- Visit the class web page: www.cs.unm.edu/~saia/361/
- Sign up for the class mailing list (cs361)
- Read Chapter 1 in textbook