469. Convex Polygon

Medium Geometry Math

Problem Description

In this problem, we are given a set of points in the form of a two-dimensional array `points`, where each element `points[i]` represents a point in the X-Y plane as `[x_i, y_i]`. The points are given in an order that represents the vertices of a polygon. We are asked to determine whether the polygon formed by these given points is a *convex* polygon.

A convex polygon is one in which all interior angles are less than 180 degrees and every line segment between two vertices of the polygon stays inside or on the boundary of the polygon. This means, while traversing the polygon edges in a consistent direction (clockwise or counterclockwise), the direction in which we turn at each vertex to proceed to the next vertex should consistently be either all left (counter-clockwise turn) or all right (clockwise turn) for a convex polygon.

The problem guarantees that the polygon is a simple polygon, meaning that the polygon does not intersect itself and has exactly two edges meeting at each vertex.

Intuition

The intuition behind the solution is to check the sign of the cross product of consecutive edges of the polygon for the entire sequence of points. By doing this, we check the direction of the turn at each vertex. If at all vertices the turns are in the same direction (either all clockwise or all counterclockwise), then we have a convex polygon; otherwise, it is non-convex.

In mathematical terms, the cross product of two vectors can give us a sense of the rotational direction between them: if the cross product is positive, the second vector is rotated counterclockwise with respect to the first, and if negative - clockwise. When the cross product is zero, the vectors are collinear.

To carry out this solution, the procedure is as follows:

1. Iterate through all vertices of the polygon.
2. At each vertex, calculate the vectors (edges) that connect this vertex to the next one (`i+1`)%`n` and to the one after (`i+2`)%`n`.
3. Compute the cross product of these two vectors.
4. If the cross product's sign changes at any point while we iterate through the vertices, this means that we've detected a change in the rotational direction, indicating that the polygon is not convex.
5. If we complete the iteration without detecting a sign change, the polygon is convex.

Solution Approach

The implementation follows directly from the established intuition. Since we are checking for convexity by looking at the rotational direction at each vertex, we are utilizing a very basic geometric algorithm that involves cross product calculation.

Here is a step-by-step breakdown of the code implementation:

1. Initialize variables `pre` and `cur` to `0`. These will track the cross product of the current pair of consecutive edges and the previous one, respectively.
2. Loop through each vertex in the polygon using `for i in range(n)`:
   - `n` is the number of points in the polygon.
3. Inside the loop, calculate two vectors (`x1`, `y1`) and (`x2`, `y2`):
   - The vector (`x1`, `y1`) extends from the current vertex `points[i]` to the next vertex `points[(i + 1) % n]`.
   - The vector (`x2`, `y2`) extends from the current vertex `points[i]` to the vertex after the next `points[(i + 2) % n]`.
4. Compute the cross product `cur` of these vectors using the determinant:
   - `cur = x1 * y2 - x2 * y1`
5. The very first non-zero cross product becomes the reference (`pre`) for the expected sign of all future cross products. This is because a non-zero cross product indicates the presence of an angle (not a straight line).
6. On finding a non-zero cross product, check if the current cross product `cur` has a different sign from the previous, `pre`:
   - If the signs differ (`cur * pre < 0`), then a change in the rotational direction has been detected, which implies that the polygon is not convex, and the function returns `False`.
   - If the signs are the same, update `pre` with the value of `cur` to compare with the cross product at the next vertex.
7. After checking all vertices, if no sign change is detected, the function returns `True`, confirming that the polygon is convex.

This algorithm effectively uses a linear scan over the set of vertices and constant space for the variables. It reflects an efficient approach to determining polygon convexity, with a time complexity of `O(n)` where `n` is the number of vertices.

Additionally, the code uses the modulo operator `%` which ensures that the indexing wraps around the list of points. This is especially useful for calculating vectors that involve the last point connecting to the first (`(n-1) to 0`). No additional data structures or complicated patterns are used, making this solution straightforward and elegant in terms of space and time efficiency.

Example Walkthrough

Let's consider a given set of points for a quadrilateral: `points = [[0, 0], [1, 1], [1, 0], [0, -1]]`.

Following the solution approach, we want to determine whether this quadrilateral is a convex polygon by examining the cross products of consecutive edges.

1. We initialize `pre` and `cur` to `0`.
2. The number of points `n` is `4`.
3. We begin looping through each vertex:

   For `i = 0`:

   - The vector (`x1`, `y1`) is from `points[0]` to `points[1]`, which is `(1 - 0, 1 - 0) = (1, 1)`.
   - The vector (`x2`, `y2`) is from `points[0]` to `points[2]`, which is `(1 - 0, 0 - 0) = (1, 0)`.
   - The cross product `cur` is `1 * 0 - 1 * 1 = -1`.
   - Since `pre` is zero, we set `pre = cur`, so now `pre = -1`.

   For `i = 1`:

   - The vector (`x1`, `y1`) is from `points[1]` to `points[2]`, which is `(1 - 1, 0 - 1) = (0, -1)`.
   - The vector (`x2`, `y2`) is from `points[1]` to `points[3]`, which is `(0 - 1, -1 - 1) = (-1, -2)`.
   - The cross product `cur` is `0 * (-2) - (-1) * -1 = -1`.
   - `cur` has the same sign as `pre`, so we continue with `pre` still `-1`.

   For `i = 2`:

   - The vector (`x1`, `y1`) is from `points[2]` to `points[3]`, which is `(0 - 1, -1 - 0) = (-1, -1)`.
   - The vector (`x2`, `y2`) is from `points[2]` to `points[0]`, which is `(0 - 1, 0 - 0) = (-1, 0)`.
   - The cross product `cur` is `-1 * 0 - (-1) * -1 = 1`.
   - `cur` has a different sign from `pre`, therefore, we now know the polygon is not convex, and we can return `False`.

Through this example, we can see how the computation of cross products for consecutive edges at each vertex can reveal a change in the rotational direction, signaling that the polygon is not convex. Our quadrilateral, based on the given set of points, is not a convex polygon.

Solution Implementation

Python

```python
class Solution:
    def isConvex(self, points: List[List[int]]) -> bool:
        num_points = len(points)  # Number of points in the polygon
        prev_cross_product = current_cross_product = 0

        # Loop through each point
        for i in range(num_points):
            # Vector from current point to the next point
            x1 = points[(i + 1) % num_points][0] - points[i][0]
            y1 = points[(i + 1) % num_points][1] - points[i][1]

            # Vector from current point to the point after the next
            x2 = points[(i + 2) % num_points][0] - points[i][0]
            y2 = points[(i + 2) % num_points][1] - points[i][1]

            # Compute cross product of the two vectors to find the orientation
            current_cross_product = x1 * y2 - x2 * y1

            # If the cross product is not 0, check for convexity
            if current_cross_product != 0:
                # If the signs of adjacent edges have opposite signs, it's not convex
                if current_cross_product * prev_cross_product < 0:
                    return False
                # Update previous cross product for the next iteration
                prev_cross_product = current_cross_product

        # If all cross products have the same sign, the polygon is convex
        return True
```

Java

```java
class Solution {
    public boolean isConvex(List<List<Integer>> points) {
        int numPoints = points.size(); // Number of points in the list.
        int previousProduct = 0, currentProduct = 0; // Store the previous cross product.
        long currentProduct; // To store the current cross product.

        // Iterate through each set of three consecutive points to check for convexity.
        for (int i = 0; i < numPoints; ++i) {
            // Obtain three consecutive points (a), p2, p3) with wrapping.
            List<Integer> point1 = points.get(i);
            List<Integer> point2 = points.get((i + 1) % numPoints);
            List<Integer> point3 = points.get((i + 2) % numPoints);

            // Compute the vectors from point1 to point2 and point2 to point3.
            int vectorX = point2.get(0) - point1.get(0);
            int vectorY = point2.get(1) - point1.get(1);
            int vectorX2 = point3.get(0) - point1.get(0);
            int vectorY2 = point3.get(1) - point1.get(1);

            // Compute the cross product of the two vectors.
            currentProduct = (long)vectorX * vectorY2 - (long)vectorX2 * vectorY;

            // If the cross product is non-zero (vectors are not collinear),
            // check if it has the same sign as the previous non-zero cross product.
            if (currentProduct != 0) {
                // If they have opposite signs, the polygon is non-convex.
                if (currentProduct * previousProduct < 0) {
                    return false;
                }
                // Update previousProduct for the next iteration.
                previousProduct = currentProduct;
            }
        }
        // All consecutive triplets have the same sign of cross product, so the polygon is convex.
        return true;
    }
}
```

C++

```cpp
class Solution {
public:
    // Function to determine if a given set of points constitutes a convex polygon
    bool isConvex(vector<vector<int>>& points) {
        int n = points.size(); // Number of points in the polygon
        int previousProduct = 0, currentProduct = 0; // Store the last non-zero cross product
        long long currentProduct = 0; // To store the current cross product

        for (int i = 0; i < n; ++i) {
            // Calculate vector from point[i] to point[(i+1) %n] for wrapping)
            int deltaX1 = points[(i + 1) % n][0] - points[i][0];
            int deltaY1 = points[(i + 1) % n][1] - points[i][1];

            // Calculate vector from point[i] to point[(i+2) %n] for wrapping)
            int deltaX2 = points[(i + 2) % n][0] - points[i][0];
            int deltaY2 = points[(i + 2) % n][1] - points[i][1];

            // Compute the cross product of the vectors
            currentProduct = static_cast<long long>(deltaX1) * deltaY2 - static_cast<long long>(deltaX2) * deltaY1;

            // If the current cross product is non-zero
            if (currentProduct != 0) {
                // If the current and previous cross products have different signs, the polygon is non-convex
                if (currentProduct * previousProduct < 0) {
                    return false;
                }
                // Update previousProduct with the last non-zero cross product
                previousProduct = currentProduct;
            }
        }
        // The polygon is convex if no sign change in cross products was detected
        return true;
    }
};
```

TypeScript

```typescript
// Typescript type to represent points as a 2D array of numbers
type Point = number[][];

// Function to determine if a given set of points constitutes a convex polygon
function isConvex(points: Point): boolean {
    let n = points.length; // Number of points in the polygon
    let prevCrossProduct: number = 0; // To store the last non-zero cross product
    let currentCrossProduct: number = 0; // To store the current cross product

    for (let i = 0; i < n; ++i) {
        // Calculate vector from points[i] to points[(i+1) % n]
        let deltaX1: number = points[(i + 1) % n][0] - points[i][0];
        let deltaY1: number = points[(i + 1) % n][1] - points[i][1];

        // Calculate vector from points[i] to points[(i+2) % n]
        let deltaX2: number = points[(i + 2) % n][0] - points[i][0];
        let deltaY2: number = points[(i + 2) % n][1] - points[i][1];

        // Compute the cross product of the vectors
        currentCrossProduct = deltaX1 * deltaY2 - deltaX2 * deltaY1;

        // If the current cross product is non-zero
        if (currentCrossProduct !== 0) {
            // If the current and previous cross products have different signs, the polygon is non-convex
            if (currentCrossProduct * prevCrossProduct < 0) {
                return false;
            }
            // Update prevCrossProduct with the last non-zero cross product
            prevCrossProduct = currentCrossProduct;
        }
    }
    // The polygon is convex if no sign change in cross products was detected
    return true;
}
```

```python
class Solution:
    def isConvex(self, points: List[List[int]]) -> bool:
        num_points = len(points)  # Number of points in the polygon
        prev_cross_product = current_cross_product = 0

        # Loop through each point
        for i in range(num_points):
            # Vector from current point to the next point
            x1 = points[(i + 1) % num_points][0] - points[i][0]
            y1 = points[(i + 1) % num_points][1] - points[i][1]

            # Vector from current point to the point after the next
            x2 = points[(i + 2) % num_points][0] - points[i][0]
            y2 = points[(i + 2) % num_points][1] - points[i][1]

            # Compute cross product of the two vectors to find the orientation
            current_cross_product = x1 * y2 - x2 * y1

            # If the cross product is not 0, check for convexity
            if current_cross_product != 0:
                # If the signs of adjacent edges have opposite signs, it's not convex
                if current_cross_product * prev_cross_product < 0:
                    return False
                # Update previous cross product for the next iteration
                prev_cross_product = current_cross_product

        # If all cross products have the same sign, the polygon is convex
        return True
```

Time and Space Complexity

The given Python code is designed to check if a polygon defined by a list of points is convex. Here's an analysis of its computational complexity.

Time Complexity:

The time complexity of the algorithm can be summarized as follows:

1. **Loop Over Points:** The code features a for-loop that iterates through the list of polygon vertices, where `n` is the number of points in the polygon. The loop runs exactly `n` times.
2. **Constant Time Operations:** Inside the loop, the code performs a constant number of operations. These operations include arithmetic calculations and if-conditions that do not depend on the size of the input. Therefore, these operations have a constant time complexity `O(1)`.

Considering the above points, the overall time complexity of the function is dominated by the for-loop, which runs `n` times, with each iteration having `O(1)` operations. Thus, the total time complexity is `O(n)`.

Space Complexity:

The space complexity of the algorithm is as follows:

1. **Variables:** The code uses a constant number of variables (`n`, `pre`, `cur`, `x1`, `y1`, `x2`, `y2`) regardless of the size of the input.
2. **Input Storage:** The space taken by the input list of points is not included in the space complexity analysis since it is a given input to the function and not an additional space requirement created by the function.

As a result, the space complexity of the function is constant, `O(1)`, as it does not allocate any additional space that is dependent on the size of the input.

Therefore, the final complexities are:

- Time Complexity: `O(n)`
- Space Complexity: `O(1)`