

Problem Set 2

Both theory and programming questions are due **Tuesday, September 27 at 11:59PM**. Please download the .zip archive for this problem set, and refer to the `README.txt` file for instructions on preparing your solutions.

Remember, your goal is to communicate. Full credit will be given only to a correct solution which is described clearly. Convolved and obtuse descriptions might receive low marks, even when they are correct. Also, aim for concise solutions, as it will save you time spent on write-ups, and also help you conceptualize the key idea of the problem.

We will provide the solutions to the problem set 10 hours after the problem set is due, which you will use to find any errors in the proof that you submitted. You will need to submit a critique of your solutions by **Thursday, September 29th, 11:59PM**. Your grade will be based on both your solutions and your critique of the solutions.

Problem 2-1. [40 points] Fractal Rendering

You landed a consulting gig with Gopple, who is about to introduce a new line of mobile phones with Retina HD displays, which are based on unicorn e-ink and thus have infinite resolution. The high-level executives heard that fractals have infinite levels of detail, and decreed that the new phones' background will be the **Koch snowflake** (Figure 1).

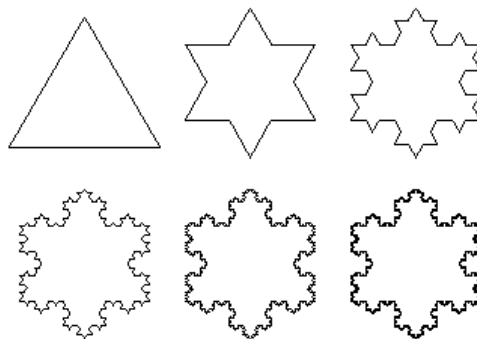


Figure 1: The Koch snowflake fractal, rendered at Level of Detail (LoD) 0 through 5.

Unfortunately, the phone's processor (CPU) and the graphics chip (GPU) powering the display do not have infinite processing power, so the Koch fractal cannot be rendered in infinite detail. Gopple engineers will stop the recursion at a fixed depth n in order to cap the processing requirement. For example, at $n = 0$, the fractal is just a triangle. Because higher depths result in more detailed drawing, this depth is usually called the **Level of Detail (LoD)**.

The Koch snowflake at LoD n can be drawn using an algorithm following the sketch below:

SNOWFLAKE(n)

- 1 $e_1, e_2, e_3 =$ edges of an equilateral triangle with side length 1
- 2 SNOWFLAKE-EDGE(e_1, n)
- 3 SNOWFLAKE-EDGE(e_2, n)
- 4 SNOWFLAKE-EDGE(e_3, n)

SNOWFLAKE-EDGE($edge, n$)

- 1 **if** $n == 0$
- 2 $edge$ is an edge on the snowflake
- 3 **else**
- 4 $e_1, e_2, e_3 =$ split $edge$ in 3 equal parts
- 5 SNOWFLAKE-EDGE($e_1, n - 1$)
- 6 $f_2, g_2 =$ edges of an equilateral triangle whose 3rd edge is e_2 , pointing outside the snowflake
- 7 $\Delta(f_2, g_2, e_2)$ is a triangle on the snowflake's surface
- 8 SNOWFLAKE-EDGE($f_2, n - 1$)
- 9 SNOWFLAKE-EDGE($g_2, n - 1$)
- 10 SNOWFLAKE-EDGE($e_3, n - 1$)

The sketch above should be sufficient for solving this problem. If you are curious about the missing details, you may download and unpack the problem set's .zip archive, and read the CoffeeScript implementation in `fractal/src/fractal.coffee`.

In this problem, you will explore the computational requirements of four different methods for rendering the fractal, as a function of the LoD n . For the purpose of the analysis, consider the recursive calls to SNOWFLAKE-EDGE; do not count the main call to SNOWFLAKE as part of the recursion tree. (You can think of it as a super-root node at a special level -1, but it behaves differently from all other levels, so we do not include it in the tree.) Thus, the recursion tree is actually a forest of trees, though we still refer to the entire forest as the “recursion tree”. The root calls to SNOWFLAKE-EDGE are all at level 0.

Gopple's engineers have prepared a prototype of the Koch fractal drawing software, which you can use to gain a better understanding of the problem. To use the prototype, download and unpack the problem set's .zip archive, and use Google Chrome to open `fractal/bin/fractal.html`.

First, in 3D hardware-accelerated rendering (e.g., iPhone), surfaces are broken down into triangles (Figure 2). The CPU compiles a list of coordinates for the triangles' vertices, and the GPU is responsible for producing the final image. So, from the CPU's perspective, rendering a triangle costs the same, no matter what its surface area is, and the time for rendering the snowflake fractal is proportional to the number of triangles in its decomposition.

(a) [1 point] What is the height of the recursion tree for rendering a snowflake of LoD n ?

1. $\log n$
2. n

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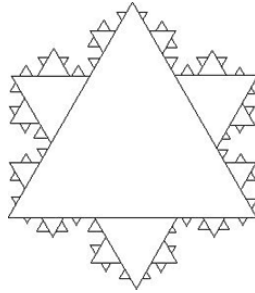
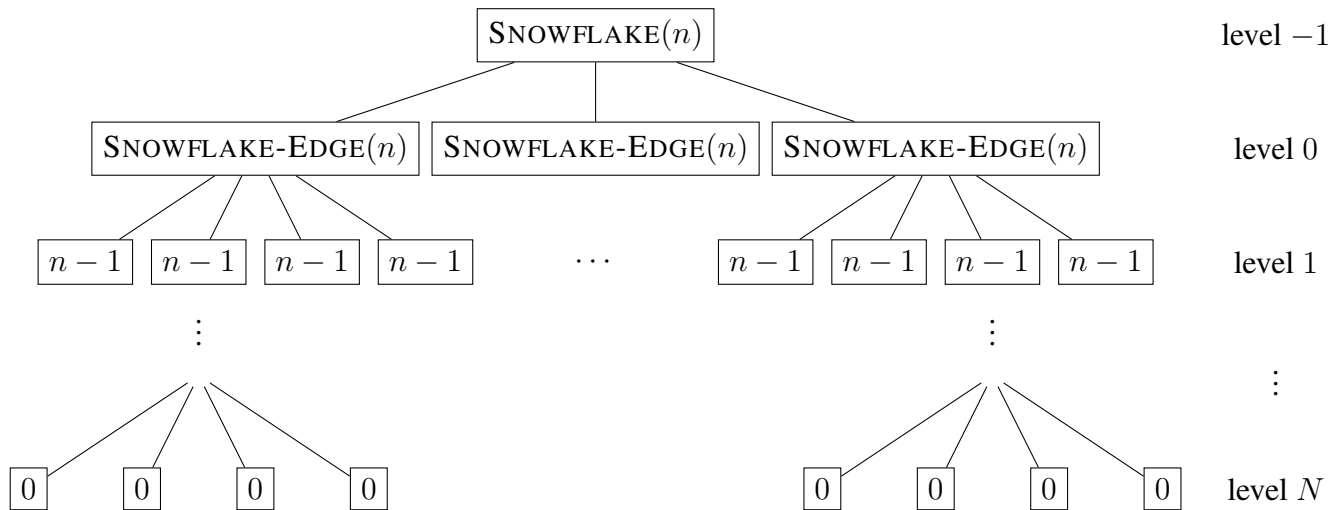


Figure 2: Koch snowflake drawn with triangles.

3. $3n$

4. $4n$

Solution: At level 0, the argument to SNOWFLAKE-EDGE is n . At each level in the recursion tree, the argument decreases by 1. At level n , the argument to SNOWFLAKE-EDGE becomes 0, which triggers the termination condition at the beginning of the function. See the figure below.



(b) [2 points] How many nodes are there in the recursion tree at level i , for $0 \leq i \leq n$?

1. 3^i

2. 4^i

3. 4^{i+1}

4. $3 \cdot 4^i$

Solution: SNOWFLAKE calls SNOWFLAKE-EDGE once for each side of the initial triangle, so there are 3 nodes at level 0. At levels $0 \leq i < n$, SNOWFLAKE-EDGE makes 4 calls to itself, so each node at those levels has 4 children. This works out to $3 \cdot 4^i$ nodes at level i .

- (c) [1 point] What is the asymptotic rendering time (triangle count) for a node in the recursion tree at level i , for $0 \leq i < n$?

1. 0
2. $\Theta(1)$
3. $\Theta(\frac{1}{9}^i)$
4. $\Theta(\frac{1}{3}^i)$

Solution: Levels 0 through $n - 1$ draw one triangle (spike) for each side that is split into 4 line segments. So the cost is always $\Theta(1)$ / node.

- (d) [1 point] What is the asymptotic rendering time (triangle count) at each level i of the recursion tree, for $0 \leq i < n$?

1. 0
2. $\Theta(\frac{4}{9}^i)$
3. $\Theta(3^i)$
4. $\Theta(4^i)$

Solution: $\Theta(4^i)$, obtained by multiplying the previous two answers and reducing the result to the simplest form.

- (e) [2 points] What is the total asymptotic cost for the CPU, when rendering a snowflake with LoD n using 3D hardware-accelerated rendering?

1. $\Theta(1)$
2. $\Theta(n)$
3. $\Theta(\frac{4}{3}^n)$
4. $\Theta(4^n)$

Solution: At level n (SNOWFLAKE-EDGE has argument 0), the termination condition is triggered, and no triangle is drawn. Summing up over all the other levels of the recursion tree, we obtain

$$T(n) = \sum_{i=0}^{n-1} \Theta(4^i) = \Theta(4^n)$$

The recursion for one side of the snowflake can be written as

$$T(n) = \begin{cases} \Theta(1), & \text{if } n = 0, \\ 4T(n-1) + \Theta(1), & \text{if } n \geq 1. \end{cases}$$

Second, when using 2D hardware-accelerated rendering, the surfaces' outlines are broken down into open or closed paths (list of connected line segments). For example, our snowflake is one closed path composed of straight lines. The CPU compiles the list of coordinates in each path to be drawn, and sends it to the GPU, which renders the final image. This approach is also used for talking to high-end toys such as laser cutters and plotters.

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(f) [1 point] What is the height of the recursion tree for rendering a snowflake of LoD n using 2D hardware-accelerated rendering?

1. $\log n$
2. n
3. $3n$
4. $4n$

Solution: n , because the recursion tree is the same as in the previous part.

(g) [1 point] How many nodes are there in the recursion tree at level i , for $0 \leq i \leq n$?

1. 3^i
2. 4^i
3. 4^{i+1}
4. $3 \cdot 4^i$

Solution: $3 \cdot 4^i$, because the recursion tree is the same as in the previous part.

(h) [1 point] What is the asymptotic rendering time (line segment count) for a node in the recursion tree at level i , for $0 \leq i < n$?

1. 0
2. $\Theta(1)$
3. $\Theta(\frac{1}{9}^i)$
4. $\Theta(\frac{1}{3}^i)$

Solution: Line segments are only rendered at the last level, so the cost is 0 for levels $0 \leq i < n$.

(i) [1 point] What is the asymptotic rendering time (line segment count) for a node in the last level n of the recursion tree?

1. 0
2. $\Theta(1)$
3. $\Theta(\frac{1}{9}^n)$
4. $\Theta(\frac{1}{3}^n)$

Solution: At the last level, each side is turned into one straight line, so the cost is $\Theta(1)$ / node.

(j) [1 point] What is the asymptotic rendering time (line segment count) at each level i of the recursion tree, for $0 \leq i < n$?

1. 0
2. $\Theta(\frac{4}{9}^i)$
3. $\Theta(3^i)$

4. $\Theta(4^i)$

Solution: 0, because all the line segments are rendered at the last level.

(k) [1 point] What is the asymptotic rendering time (line segment count) at the last level n in the recursion tree?

1. $\Theta(1)$
2. $\Theta(n)$
3. $\Theta(\frac{4^n}{3})$
4. $\Theta(4^n)$

Solution: We multiply two previous answers and reduce the result to the simplest form:

$$3 \cdot 4^n \cdot \Theta(1) = \Theta(4^n).$$

(l) [1 point] What is the total asymptotic cost for the CPU, when rendering a snowflake with LoD n using 2D hardware-accelerated rendering?

1. $\Theta(1)$
2. $\Theta(n)$
3. $\Theta(\frac{4^n}{3})$
4. $\Theta(4^n)$

Solution: The sum of the previous two answers: $T(n) = \Theta(4^n)$.

Third, in 2D rendering without a hardware accelerator (also called software rendering), the CPU compiles a list of line segments for each path like in the previous part, but then it is also responsible for “rasterizing” each line segment. Rasterizing takes the coordinates of the segment’s endpoints and computes the coordinates of all the pixels that lie on the line segment. Changing the colors of these pixels effectively draws the line segment on the display. We know an algorithm to rasterize a line segment in time proportional to the length of the segment. It is easy to see that this algorithm is optimal, because the number of pixels on the segment is proportional to the segment’s length. Throughout this problem, assume that all line segments have length at least one pixel, so that the cost of rasterizing is greater than the cost of compiling the line segments.

It might be interesting to note that the cost of 2D software rendering is proportional to the total length of the path, which is also the power required to cut the path with a laser cutter, or the amount of ink needed to print the path on paper.

(m) [1 point] What is the height of the recursion tree for rendering a snowflake of LoD n ?

1. $\log n$
2. n
3. $3n$
4. $4n$

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Solution: n , because the recursion tree is the same as in the previous part.

(n) [1 point] How many nodes are there in the recursion tree at level i , for $0 \leq i \leq n$?

1. 3^i
2. 4^i
3. 4^{i+1}
4. $3 \cdot 4^i$

Solution: $3 \cdot 4^i$, because the recursion tree is the same as in the previous part.

(o) [1 point] What is the asymptotic rendering time (line segment length) for a node in the recursion tree at level i , for $0 \leq i < n$? Assume that the sides of the initial triangle have length 1.

1. 0
2. $\Theta(1)$
3. $\Theta(\frac{1}{9}^i)$
4. $\Theta(\frac{1}{3}^i)$

Solution: Line segments are only rendered at the last level, so the cost is 0 for levels $0 \leq i < n$

(p) [1 point] What is the asymptotic rendering time (line segment length) for a node in the last level n of the recursion tree?

1. 0
2. $\Theta(1)$
3. $\Theta(\frac{1}{9}^n)$
4. $\Theta(\frac{1}{3}^n)$

Solution: At level 0, each side has length 1. Levels 0 through $n - 1$ split a length- l side into 4 length- $\frac{l}{3}$ segments. So, at each level $0 \leq i \leq n$, the length of a side is $\frac{1}{3}^i$. Specifically, at level n , each segment has length $\frac{1}{3}^n = \Theta(\frac{1}{3}^n)$.

(q) [1 point] What is the asymptotic rendering time (line segment length) at each level i of the recursion tree, for $0 \leq i < n$?

1. 0
2. $\Theta(\frac{4}{9}^i)$
3. $\Theta(3^i)$
4. $\Theta(4^i)$

Solution: 0, because all the line segments are rendered at the last level.

(r) [1 point] What is the asymptotic rendering time (line segment length) at the last level n in the recursion tree?

1. $\Theta(1)$
2. $\Theta(n)$
3. $\Theta(\frac{4^n}{3})$
4. $\Theta(4^n)$

Solution: We multiply two previous answers and reduce the result to the simplest form.

$$3 \cdot 4^n \cdot \Theta(\frac{1}{3}) = \Theta(\frac{4^n}{3})$$

(s) [1 point] What is the total asymptotic cost for the CPU, when rendering a snowflake with LoD n using 2D software (not hardware-accelerated) rendering?

1. $\Theta(1)$
2. $\Theta(n)$
3. $\Theta(\frac{4^n}{3})$
4. $\Theta(4^n)$

Solution: The sum of the previous two answers. $T(n) = \Theta(\frac{4^n}{3})$

The fourth and last case we consider is 3D rendering without hardware acceleration. In this case, the CPU compiles a list of triangles, and then rasterizes each triangle. We know an algorithm to rasterize a triangle that runs in time proportional to the triangle's surface area. This algorithm is optimal, because the number of pixels inside a triangle is proportional to the triangle's area. For the purpose of this problem, you can assume that the area of a triangle with side length l is $\Theta(l^2)$. We also assume that the cost of rasterizing is greater than the cost of compiling the line segments.

(t) [4 points] What is the total asymptotic cost of rendering a snowflake with LoD n ? Assume that initial triangle's side length is 1.

1. $\Theta(1)$
2. $\Theta(n)$
3. $\Theta(\frac{4^n}{3})$
4. $\Theta(4^n)$

Solution: $\Theta(1)$. See the proof below. Also, intuitively, the snowflake does not overflow the rectangle in the visualizer (or the phone's screen), so its area must be bounded by a constant. The triangles are adjacent and do not overlap, so the sum of their areas equals the snowflake's area.

(u) [15 points] Write a succinct proof for your answer using the recursion-tree method.

Solution: The proof follows the structure suggested by the previous parts of the problem. In the first part (3D hardware rendering), we argued that there are n levels in the recursion tree, and for $0 \leq i \leq n$, level i has $3 \cdot 4^i$ nodes. Each node at level

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i ($0 \leq i < n$) renders exactly one triangle, and there is no rendering work at level n . Level -1 also renders a triangle (the big triangle that the snowflake is built off of), and we account for that at the end of the proof.

Using the similar reasoning as for 2D software rendering, the length of a triangle's side at level i is $(\frac{1}{3})^{i+1}$, for $0 \leq i < n$, so the rendering time in each node is $(\frac{1}{9})^{i+1}$ (the area of a triangle).

The total rendering time over all nodes at level i is $(3 \cdot 4^i) \cdot (\frac{1}{9})^{i+1} = 3 \cdot (\frac{4^i}{9^{i+1}})$.

Summing up over all levels of the recursion tree, we obtain

$$T(n) = \sum_{i=0}^{n-1} 3 \cdot \frac{1}{9} \cdot \left(\frac{4}{9}\right)^i = \Theta(1).$$

Note that the base of the geometric series is less than 1, so the sum converges to a constant. There is a triangle with side length 1 rendered at level -1 which takes $\Theta(1)$, so the total time is still $\Theta(1)$.

Problem 2-2. [60 points] Digital Circuit Simulation

Your 6.006 skills landed you a nice internship at the chip manufacturer AMDtel. Their hardware verification team has been complaining that their circuit simulator is slow, and your manager decided that your algorithmic chops make you the perfect candidate for optimizing the simulator.

A **combinational circuit** is made up of **gates**, which are devices that take Boolean (True / 1 and False / 0) input signals, and output a signal that is a function of the input signals. Gates take some time to compute their functions, so a gate's output at time τ reflects the gate's inputs at time $\tau - \delta$, where δ is the gate's delay. For the purposes of this simulator, a gate's output transitions between 0 and 1 instantly. Gates' output terminals are connected to other gates' inputs terminals by **wires** that propagate the signal instantly without altering it.

For example, a 2-input XOR gate with inputs A and B (Figure 3) with a 2 nanosecond (ns) delay works as follows:

Time (ns)	Input A	Input B	Output O	Explanation
0	0	0		Reflects inputs at time -2
1	0	1		Reflects inputs at time -1
2	1	0	0	0 XOR 0, given at time 0
3	1	1	1	0 XOR 1, given at time 1
4			1	1 XOR 0, given at time 2
5			0	1 XOR 1, given at time 3

The circuit simulator takes an input file that describes a circuit layout, including gates' delays, probes (indicating the gates that we want to monitor the output), and external inputs. It then simulates the transitions at the output terminals of all the gates as time progresses. It also outputs transitions at the probed gates in the order of the timing of those transitions.



Figure 3: 2-input XOR gate; A and B supply the inputs, and O receives the output.

This problem will walk you through the best known approach for fixing performance issues in a system. You will **profile the code**, **find the performance bottleneck**, understand the reason behind it, and **remove the bottleneck by optimizing the code**.

To start working with AMDtel's circuit simulation source code, download and unpack the problem set's .zip archive, and go to the `circuit/` directory.

The circuit simulator is in `circuit.py`. The AMDtel engineers pointed out that the simulation input in `tests/5devadas13.in` takes too long to run. We have also provided an automated test suite at `test-circuit.py`, together with other simulation inputs. You can ignore these files until you get to the last part of the problem set.

- (a) [8 points] Run the code under the python profiler with the command below, and identify the method that takes up most of the CPU time. If two methods have similar CPU usage times, ignore the simpler one.

```
python -m cProfile -s time circuit.py < tests/5devadas13.in
```

Warning: the command above can take 15-30 minutes to complete, and bring the CPU usage to 100% on one of your cores. Plan accordingly.

What is the name of the method with the highest CPU usage?

Solution: The first line in the profiler output identifies `_find_min` as the method with the largest CPU usage.

- (b) [6 points] How many times is the method called?

Solution: The first line in the profiler output indicates that `_find_min` is called **259964 times**.

- (c) [8 points] The class containing the troublesome method is implementing a familiar data structure. What is the tightest asymptotic bound for the worst-case running time of the method that contains the bottleneck? Express your answer in terms of n , the number of elements in the data structure.

1. $O(1)$.
2. $O(\log n)$.
3. $O(n)$.
4. $O(n \log n)$.
5. $O(n \log^2 n)$.
6. $O(n^2)$.

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Solution: `_find_min` belongs to the `PriorityQueue` class, which contains an array-based priority queue implementation. Finding the minimum element in an array takes $\Theta(n)$ time.

(d) [8 points] If the data structure were implemented using the most efficient method we learned in class, what would be the tightest asymptotic bound for the worst-case running time of the method discussed in the questions above?

1. $O(1)$.
2. $O(\log n)$.
3. $O(n)$.
4. $O(n \log n)$.
5. $O(n \log^2 n)$.
6. $O(n^2)$.

Solution: A priority queue implementation based on a binary min-heap takes $\Theta(1)$ time to find the minimum element, since it's at the top of the heap.

(e) [30 points] Rewrite the data structure class using the most efficient method we learned in class. **Please note that you are not allowed to import any additional Python libraries and our test will check this.**

We have provided a few tests to help you check your code's correctness and speed. The test cases are in the `tests/` directory. `tests/README.txt` explains the syntax of the simulator input files. You can use the following command to run all the tests.

```
python circuit_test.py
```

To work on a single test case, run the simulator on the test case with the following command.

```
python circuit.py < tests/1gate.in > out
```

Then compare your output with the correct output for the test case.

```
diff out tests/1gate.gold
```

For Windows, use `fc` to compare files.

```
fc out tests/1gate.gold
```

We have implemented a visualizer for your output, to help you debug your code. To use the visualizer, first produce a simulation trace.

```
TRACE=jsonp python circuit.py < tests/1gate.in > circuit.jsonp
```

On Windows, use the following command instead.

```
circuit_jsonp.bat < tests/1gate.in > circuit.jsonp
```

Then use Google Chrome to open `visualizer/bin/visualizer.html`

We recommend using the small test cases numbered 1 through 4 to check your implementation's correctness, and then use test case 5 to check the code's speed.

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When your code passes all tests, and runs reasonably fast (the tests should complete in less than 30 seconds on any reasonably recent computer), upload your modified `circuit.py` to the course submission site.

Solution: The solution archive on the course Web site contains the staff's solution and secret test cases.

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6.006 Introduction to Algorithms
Fall 2011

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