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CSC226: Lab 9

## 1 0 or 1 Hash Tables

Suppose we have a table with m slots to store values. Values are hashed into the table randomly, and each slot of the table contains a 1 if a value has been hashed to that index, and 0 otherwise. The probability that a particular value gets tossed to a specific slot is  $\frac{1}{m}$ . The following table illustrates an example of such a hash table.

| indices | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | <br>m-2 | m-1 |
|---------|---|---|---|---|---|---------|-----|
| values  | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | <br>1   | 0   |

A hash function  $h_1(k)$  determines the slot to which value k will belong. Suppose that n distinct values have been added to the table, and the values all went to unique locations (by chance). When a value k is hashed into the table, we do not store k itself, but a 1 to indicate that k has been inserted into position  $h_1(k)$ . For this hash table, there are no "colisions" as we've seen in class since if we insert an element l at position  $h_1(l)$ , and we find that the value at position  $h_1(l)$  already equals 1, we do nothing.

We would like to know if a particular value v has been inserted into the table. The hash value of v is  $h_1(v)$ . If the value at index  $h_1(v)$  is 0, then v is not in the table. If the value at index  $h_1(v)$  is 1, then one of two scenarios occurred:

- 1. v was added to the table. We call this a **true positive**.
- 2. v was not added to the table, but another value had been hashed to the same location as  $h_1(v)$ . We call this a **False Positive**.

We want to find the probability of getting a false positive. If we know that there are n values already in our table of size m, then the probability of getting a 1 in the table by chance is the total number of 1's in the table divided by the total number of slots in the table. That is, the probability of a false positive is  $\frac{n}{m}$ .

Is it possible to lower the chances of getting a false positive? Consider if we add another hash table with its own hash function  $h_2(k)$ . When we add k under this scheme, it gets added to both hash tables using  $h_1(k)$  and  $h_2(k)$  for their respective tables. How will this change the probability of getting false positives? When looking to see if some value is in our tables, we say that it is **only if** if there is both a 1 at  $h_1(k)$  and a 1 and  $h_2(k)$ . The probability that k gives a false positive in either table (we know from above) is  $\frac{n}{m}$ . These are independent events, which means that the probability of both of them happening is equal to multiplying the probabilities of each event happening. Therefore, the probability of getting a false positive with two tables and two hash functions is  $(\frac{n}{m})^2$ .

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## 2 Exercises

For the lab submission, please submit your solutions to the following two questions in a single PDF file.

1. What is the probability of false positive when we have  $\eta$  hash tables each with their own hash function?

2. Let's remove the assumption that the first n values go into unique spots. Does the probability of false positives go up or down from this change, and why? (Note: the number of tables used does not affect this answer)

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