

Com S 311: Hashing

August 30, 2020

1 Hashing and Hash Tables

Let S be a set. A *hash function on S* is a function h that maps elements of S to Natural numbers. Given a set S a function $h : S \rightarrow \{0, 1, \dots, T-1\}$ is called a *perfect hash function on S* if for every $x \neq y \in S$, $h(x) \neq h(y)$. Suppose h is a perfect hash function for a set S . We can create a *hash table* of size T for S as follows. Create an array A of size T , initially each cell of the array contains NULL value. To add x into the hash table, compute $h(x)$ and place x at $A[h(x)]$. To remove an element x , compute $h(x)$ and set $A[h(x)]$ to NULL. Finally, to search whether an element y belongs to S or not check if $A[h(y)]$ equals y . Note that the time taken to perform each of these operations is $O(\text{Time taken to compute } h)$. Here is an example: let $S = \{1, 3, 7, 4\}$ and let $h(x) = 3x + 2\%5$. If we store S in a hash table T of size 5, then 1 goes into $T[0]$, 3 goes into $T[1]$, 7 goes into $T[3]$, and 4 goes into $T[4]$.

For this hashing scheme, $h(1) = 5$ and $h(6) = 0$. Thus we should place both 1 and 6 in $T[0]$. We say that there is a *collision* at 1 and 6. In general, for a given a set S , a hash function h and an element x , the *collision set* S is

$$C_h(x) = \{y \in S \mid x \neq y \text{ and } h(x) = h(y)\}$$

Note that a hash function h is perfect on S if and only if the set $C_h(x) = \emptyset$ for every $x \in S$.

Alternate way to capture collisions is

$$C_h = \{\langle x, y \rangle \mid x \neq y \in S \text{ and } h(x) = h(y)\}$$

This set captures all colliding pairs.

In general, for a given S it is not feasible to find perfect hash functions and we have to deal with collisions. Given a hash function h and a set S , we use *chain hashing* to deal with collisions.

Let S be a set and h be a hash function whose range is $\{0, \dots, m-1\}$. Let T be a table of size m . Initially, each cell of $T[i]$ points to NULL. We add elements to T as follows:

Procedure: Add(x);

```
compute h(x)
Add x to the list pointed by T[h(x)]
```

Now to search for an element q : we first compute $h(q)$, and search for q in the list pointed by $T[h(q)]$. To remove an element q from T : we compute $h(q)$ and remove q from the list pointed by $T[h(q)]$.

What is the time taken by each of add, search, or remove? Let us consider search. Say we are searching for q in T . Time taken by this process is bounded by: Time taken to compute $h(q)$ + time taken to search for q in the list pointed by $T[h(q)]$. Equivalently time taken is $O(\text{time to compute } h(x) + \text{size of the set } C_h(q))$. If the size of the list/ $C_h(q)$ is large, then this time is high. Otherwise the time is low. While building hash tables a challenge is to pick a hash function h such that the size of the list stored at index i of the hash table is small (ideally constant) for every i .

Suppose T be a hash table of size m that is storing elements from a set S . We introduce a few notions.

Maximum Load of T is the maximum length of lists at $T[0], T[1], \dots, T[m-1]$. *Average Load* of T is

$$\frac{\sum_{0 \leq i \leq m-1, T[i] \neq NULL} \text{Size of list at } T[i]}{\text{Number of Non-Null cells in } T}$$

Finally, we define *load factor* of T as the ratio between numbers of elements added to T and size of T .

Note that the worst-case time perform any of search/add/remove operations is bounded by time taken to compute the hash function plus maximum load. The average/expected time to perform search/add/remove is $O(\text{Time taken to Compute hash function} + \text{average load})$. While building hash tables, a goal is pick a hash functions such that the average load is a constant.

1.1 Hash Functions used in Practice

There are two classes of hash functions: *deterministic* and *random*. Random hash functions work by using random numbers and we wish to store S in a hash table of size m . Instead of storing S in a table of size m , we will store in a table of size p . The hash function is defined as $h(x) = (ax + b) \% p$. The value of b needs to store a and b which are two integers. If S is a set of strings, we need to convert each string $t \in S$ into an integer by using `hashCode` method of java. A function on the hashCode.

Examples of deterministic hash functions are `hashCode` in Java, FNV, Murmer, Jenkins etc. They work by “exploiting randomness” that is present in the data.

Java uses following hash function (`hashCode`) for String. Let $x = c_1 \dots c_m$ be a m -character String. Fix α .

$$h(x) = c_m + c_{m-1}\alpha + c_{m-2}\alpha^2 + \dots + c_2\alpha^{m-2} + c_1\alpha^{m-1}$$

Java takes 31 for α . Here we view each character c_m as an integer. This can be easily done by converting the ASCII representation of a character to an integer.

Hash Tables in Java. Java creates and maintains hash tables *dynamically*. Java always ensures that the size of the hash table is a power of 2. Let m denote the current hash table size. Java uses a combines hash code with a secondary hash function g : The secondary hash function works as follows: Given an int x , the value of $g(x)$ is the value returned by the following code.

```
h = x ^ (x >>>16);

return h
```

Given an object x , then the $h(x) = g(x.hashCode())\%m$, where m is the current size of the hash table. When the load factor of the hash table approaches 0.7, then Java will double the hash table size and re-hashes the elements to the new hash table.

2 Applications of Hashing

Consider the following problem: Given two integer arrays A and B (let us assume that both of them are size n). Compute the set of elements that appear in both A and B . A naive algorithm is the following:

```
For i in the range 1 to n {
    x = A[i];
    Search for x in the array B
}
```

If we use linear search to search for x in the array B , then the time taken to search is $O(n)$, and thus the total time taken by the algorithm is $O(n^2)$. However, we could sort the array B , and use binary search to search for x in the array B . The time taken to sort B is $O(n \log n)$ and binary search takes $O(\log n)$. Thus the time taken by the following algorithm is $O(n \log n)$.

```
Sort B$.
For i in the range 1 to n {
    x = A[i];
    Binary Search for x in B$
}
```

We can further reduce the time using hash tables. Build a hash table and search for x in the hash table. Since the (expected/average) time to search in hash table is $O(1)$, the time taken by the algorithm is $O(n)$.

```
Create a hash table T for elements in B$.
For i in the range 1 to n {
    x = A[i];
    Search for x in the hash table T
}
```

Here is another problem: Given an array A of integers find if there is a sub-array of A whose elements sum to 0. For example if A is $[4, 2, -7, 8, 1, 5, 7, -1, -5, -3, -2, -1, 18]$. The sub-array $[1, 5, 7, -1, -5, -3, -2, -1]$ sums to zero. A naive algorithm for this problem is the following:

```
for i in the range 1 to n
    for j in the range i to n
        find the sum of elements a[i], a[i+1], ... a[j]
        if the sum equals 0, then return true
```

It can be seen that this algorithm takes $O(n^3)$ time.

We can arrive at a more efficient algorithm. Let us try to calculate the prefix sums. I.e., let us create an array P where $P[i] = \sum_{j=1}^i A[j]$ (it is assumed the array is indexed from 1). This $P[i]$ is the sum of the first i elements of the array. Suppose that $P[3] = 25$ and $P[8] = 25$, then it must be the case that sum of the elements $A[4], A[5], A[6], A[7]$ and $A[8]$ must be zero. This suggests the following algorithm.

```
P[1] = A[1];
for i in the range 2 to n
    P[i] = P[i-1] + A[i];
    Search for P[i] among P[1], P[2], ...P[i-1];
    If P[i] appears among P[1], P[2], ...P[i-1] return True.
}
```

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What is the time taken to search for $P[i]$? Naively, this can be done in $O(i)$ time and then we can store $P[i]$'s in a hash table and attempt to reduce the time for search to $O(1)$. Using this idea, we arrive at the following algorithm.

Add WeChat edu_assist_pro

```
P[1] = A[1];
Add P[1] To a hash table T
for i in the range 2 to n
    P[i] = P[i-1] + A[i];
    Search for P[i] in T
    If P[i] is in T return True.
    If P[i] is not in T, then add P[i] to T.
}
```

The operations, adding an element to T and searching for an element in T take (expected time) $O(1)$. Thus the (expected) time taken by the above algorithm is $O(n)$.