

# Find Median from Data Stream

## Core idea: two heaps:

Maintain two priority queues:

- max-heap  $L$  (lower half): contains the smaller half of numbers; top is the largest of the lower half.
- min-heap  $R$  (upper half): contains the larger half; top is the smallest of the upper half.

## Invariants:

1. All elements in  $L \leq$  all elements in  $R$ .
2. The sizes are balanced:
  - either  $|L| = |R|$ , or
  - $|L| = |R| + 1$  (i.e., allow  $L$  to hold one extra when odd count).

With these, the median is:

- if total count odd:  $\text{top}(L)$
- if even:  $(\text{top}(L) + \text{top}(R)) / 2.0$

## addNum(x): how to place and rebalance:

1. Place:

- If  $L$  is empty or  $x \leq \text{top}(L)$ , push  $x$  into  $L$ ;  
else push into  $R$ .

2. Rebalance (fix sizes):

- If  $|L| > |R| + 1$ , move  $\text{top}(L) \rightarrow R$ .
- If  $|R| > |L|$ , move  $\text{top}(R) \rightarrow L$ .

This guarantees invariants after every insertion.

## Complexity:

- addNum:  $O(\log n)$  (heaps push/pop).
- findMedian:  $O(1)$ .

## Follow-ups:

1) All numbers within  $[0, 100]$

Use counting instead of heaps:

- Keep freq  $[101]$  and track total cnt.

- find median:

- If cnt is odd, scan cumulative frequency until you reach  $(cnt+1)/2 \rightarrow$  that index is the median.

- If cnt is even, find the two middle positions  $cnt/2$  and  $cnt/2+1$ , scan cumulatively to both, average their indices.

- Time:

- add Num:  $O(1)$

- find median:  $O(R)$  with  $R=101 \rightarrow$  effectively  $O(1)$

2) 99% within  $[0, 100]$ , some outliers:

Two practical options:

- Hybrid counting + balanced BST/Heaps for outliers:

- Keep freq  $[0 \dots 100]$  as above.

- For numbers  $< 0$  or  $> 100$ , store separately (e.g. two balanced multisets, one for low outliers, one for high). Track their sizes.

- While finding median, decide whether it lies among outliers or in the bucketed range by comparing cumulative sizes. If it lies in the bucketed range, scan freq; otherwise walk the appropriate multiset to the needed rank (or maintain order-statistics tree to get  $O(\log n)$  select).

- Buckets with prefix sums:

- Keeps freq and also maintain an incremental prefix count if you do any queries (or recompute on demand since 101 is tiny). Outliers managed by min/max-heaps or balanced trees as above.