CS 302.1 - Automata Theory

Lecture 01

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H Y D E R A B A D

Introduction

In this course, we will look at:

- **Which problems are computable?**
  - Can we characterize them?
  - What about natural problems? Computers are exotic physics experiments after all.

- **Design abstract models of computation and try to understand what problems can be solved by them.**
  - Small models that are limited in power and can solve a subset of computable problems.
  - We will build increasingly powerful computational models as we go along.

- **What are the limits of computational models?**
  - Are there problems that cannot be solved on the most powerful computers that will exist in the future.

Introduction

In this course, we will look at:

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- Design abstract models of computation and try to understand what problems can be solved by them.
- What are the limits of computational models?

Consider an (extremely) simple robot which

- has a button that turns it ON and OFF

- once turned on, can either move forward or backwards

- has a sensor that recognizes an obstacle and reverses the direction of the robot.

Introduction

Consider an (extremely) simple robot which

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States : {OFF, FORWARD, BACKWARD}

Inputs : {BUTTON, SENSOR}

Initial state: OFF

By accepting an INPUT (signal), the robot TRANSITIONS from one state to another

Introduction
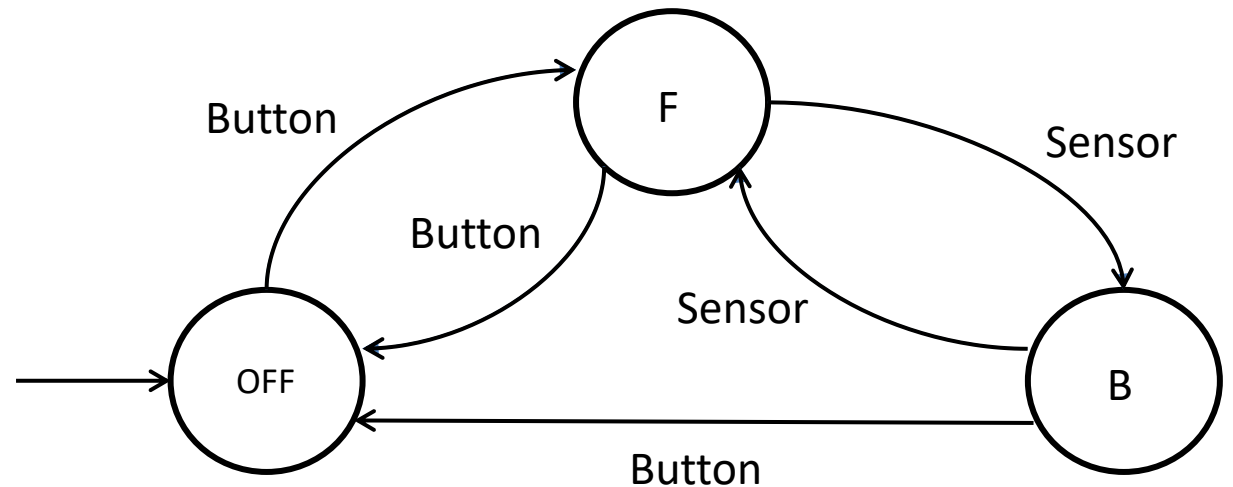
States : {OFF, FORWARD, BACKWARD}   Inputs : {BUTTON, SENSOR}

Initial state: OFF

By accepting an INPUT (signal), the robot TRANSITIONS from one state to another

	BUTTON	SENSOR
OFF	F	X
F	OFF	B
B	OFF	F

State Transition Table

State diagram for the robot

Introduction

	BUTTON	SENSOR
OFF	F	X
F	OFF	B
B	OFF	F
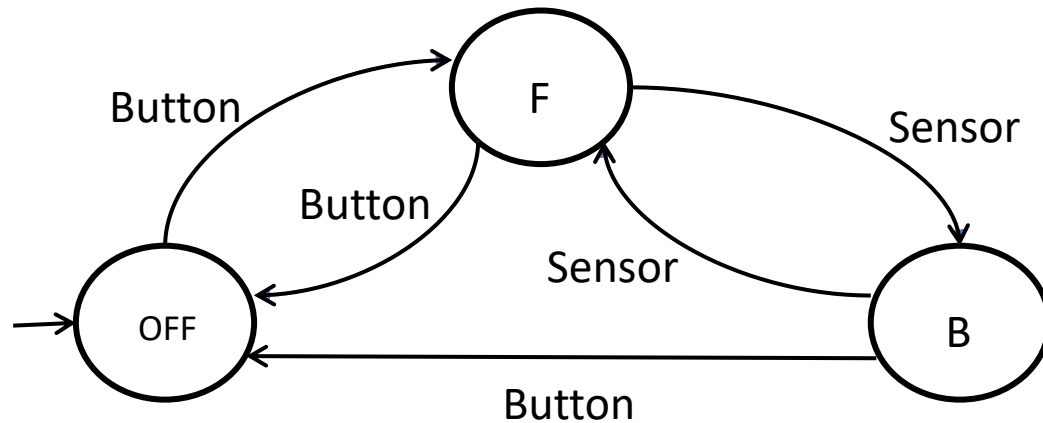
- Often computational tasks do not require an all powerful computer

- Examples: this robot, elevators, automatic doors, vending machines, ATMs etc.

- Design computational models with varying degrees of power and classify them.

- For a particular computational model, try to classify all the *problems* that can be solved by the model and those that can't be.

Introduction

In this course, we will ask questions such as :

- Can a given problem be computed by a particular computational model?

Let us explore what is meant by this.

Problem	Problem Instance
$\int f(x)\,dx$	$\int \sin x \, dx$
Sorting	$\frac{\pi}{3}, \frac{1}{2}, 2, \ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots$

Problem vs a specific instance of a problem

Problem vs decision problem: In order to answer these questions, we will always convert a given problem into a *decision* (YES-NO) *problem.*

Introduction

- Can a given problem be computed by a particular computational model?

Problem vs decision problem: In order to answer these questions, we will always convert a given problem into a *decision* (YES-NO) *problem.*

Problem	Decision problem
Sorting	Is the array sorted?
Graph connectivity	Is the graph connected?

By converting a problem into a decision problem is that we obtain two sets :

A YES set containing all the *instances* where the answer is YES.
A NO set containing all the *instances* where the answer is NO.

Problem: Graph Connectivity
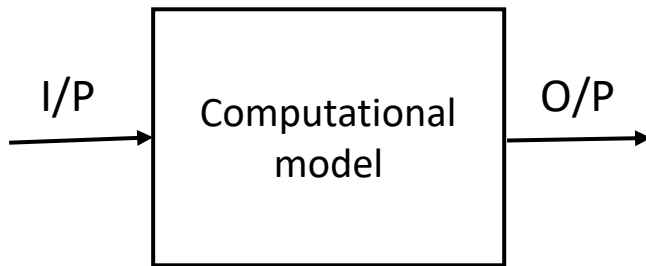YES set : { ,.......}
NO set : { ......}

Given an input instance, the computer can simply check to which set it belongs to and output accordingly.

Introduction

In this course, we will also ask questions such as :

- Can a given problem be computed by a particular computational model?

A computational model solves a problem P if,

(i) For all inputs belonging to the YES instance of P, the device outputs **YES**

AND

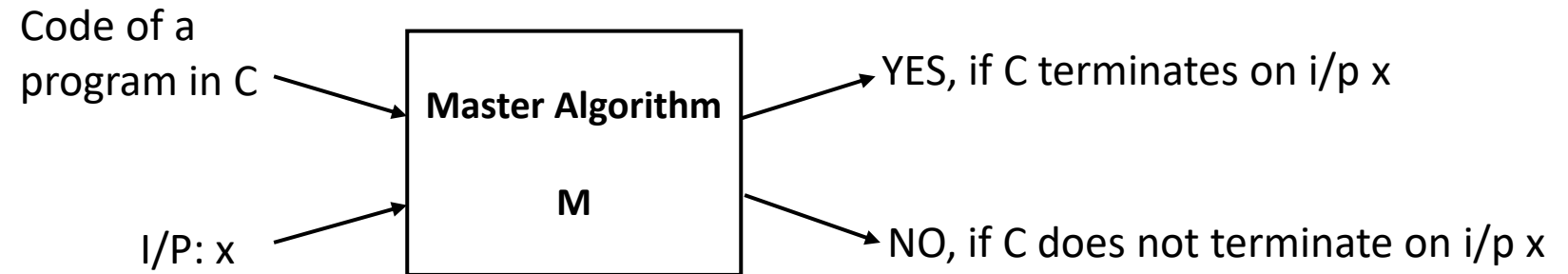(ii) For all inputs belonging to the NO instance of P, the device outputs **NO**.

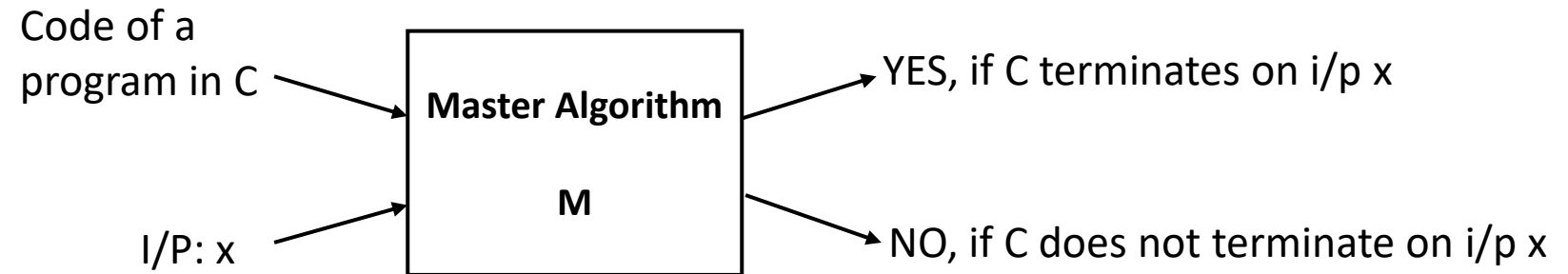If (i) and (ii) hold, we say that the problem **P is computable** by this computational model.

Introduction

What are the limits of computability?

Can we have problems that cannot be solved by ANY computer, no matter how powerful?

Example 1: Master Algorithm

Code of a
program in C $\longrightarrow$

Master Algorithm

M

$\longrightarrow$ YES, if C terminates on i/p x

I/P: x $\longrightarrow$

$\longrightarrow$ NO, if C does not terminate on i/p x

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Example 1: Master Algorithm

Code of a
program in C $\longrightarrow$ | **Master Algorithm** **M** | $\longrightarrow$ YES, if C terminates on i/p x

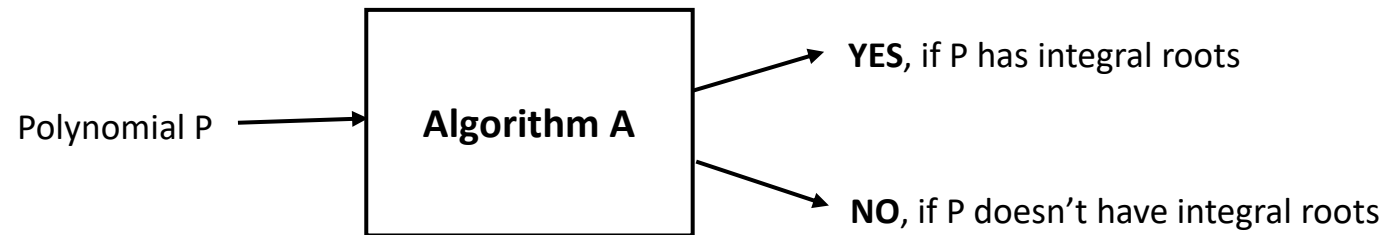I/P: x $\longrightarrow$ $\longrightarrow$ NO, if C does not terminate on i/p x

- **M terminates and outputs NO even if C(x) runs infinitely!**

- No such Algorithm M can be written. **Undecidable problem!**

Key takeaway: There are problems that are **not computable**.

Introduction

Example 2: Does a polynomial P(x,y) with integral coefficients have integral roots?

Eg: Input Polynomial P: $x^3y^2 + xy^2 + 3x - 5 = 0$ O/P : YES as (-1,1) are solutions to P

- The algorithm A proceeds by checking whether for integers $0, \pm1, \pm2, \cdots$. It terminates and outputs YES, whenever it finds the roots.

- What if P does not have integral roots? Algorithm A will run forever and will never terminate to output NO.

- **Undecidable problem! Key takeaway:** There are problems that are **not computable.**

Introduction

In this course we will:

- We will consider different computational models and classify them based on the problems they can solve

- Start from simple models and gradually increase their power to accommodate real computers

- Identify the problems that are not computable.

In this course we will not:

- Deal with how much time or space (memory) an algorithm would need to solve a certain problem

- Classifying the hardness of computable problems falls under the purview of Complexity Theory

Course Structure

❖ 13 Lectures in all

❖ Final Exam at the end (**35% weightage**)

❖ Two theory assignment (**25% weightage**)
- Assignment 1 – will be released after Lec 3/4 (Deadline: Before Quiz 1)
- Assignment 2 – will be released after Quiz 1 (Deadline: the week before Final exam)

❖ Programming assignment **(20% weightage)**
- Released after Lec 3/4 (Deadline: End of sem)

❖ Quiz (**20% weightage**)

Tutorials and TAs

- Tutorial sessions weekly: TBA

- Teaching Associates:

  - **Zeeshan Ahmed** (zeeshan.ahmed@research.iiit.ac.in)
  - **Rudransh Pratap Singh** (rudransh.s@research.iiit.ac.in)
  - **Aryaman Kolhe** (aryaman.kolhe@research.iiit.ac.in)
  - **Ronak Dhingra** (ronak.dhingra@students.iiit.ac.in)
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  - **Mohammad Zaid** (mohammad.zaid@students.iiit.ac.in)
  - **Harshit Aggarwal** (harshit.aggarwal@research.iiit.ac.in)

- Tutorial sessions **are not just** going to be doubt clearing sessions.
- Several **interesting topics** will be covered.
- **My email:** shchakra@iiit.ac.in
- **Lecture slides available at my homepage:** https://sites.google.com/view/shchakra/teaching/m23-automata-theory

Some terminology

Alphabet	Strings/Words	Language
Any finite, non-empty set of symbols	Finite sequence of symbols from an alphabet.	Set of words/strings from the current alphabet
$\Sigma_1 = \{0,1\}$	0110, 000, 10, 10000,……	Even numbers
$\Sigma_2 = \{a, b, c, \dots, z\}$	any, word, revolution,…..	English

Generally, the empty string is denoted by ϵ
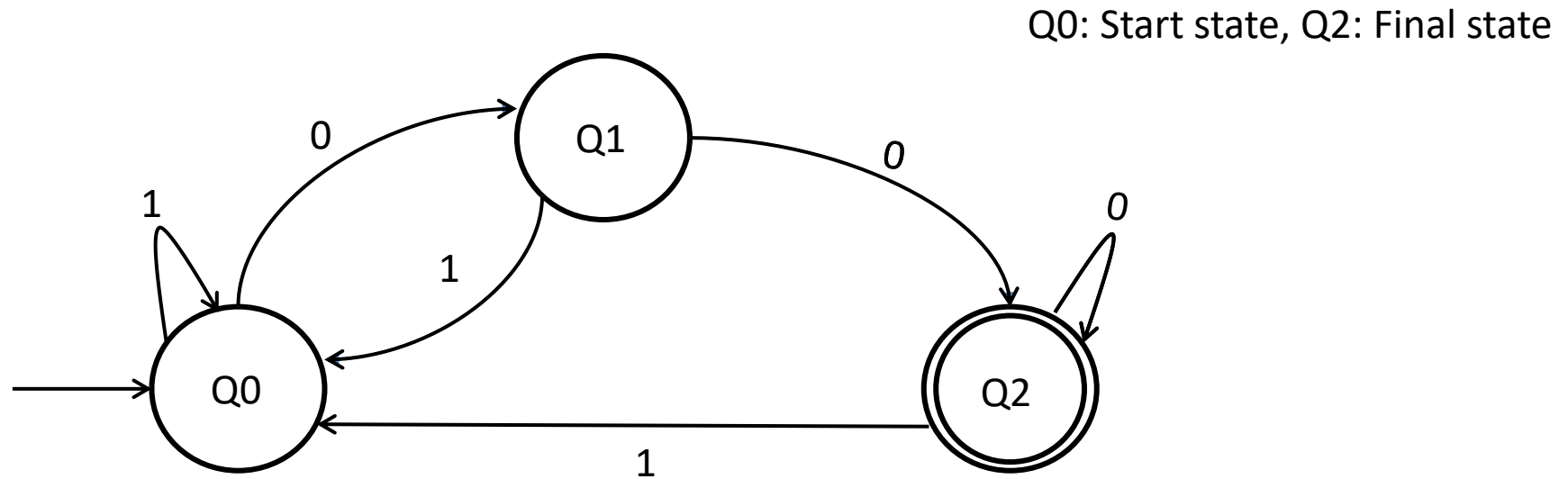
Models of computation

- **Deterministic Finite Automata (DFA) Model**

Models of computation
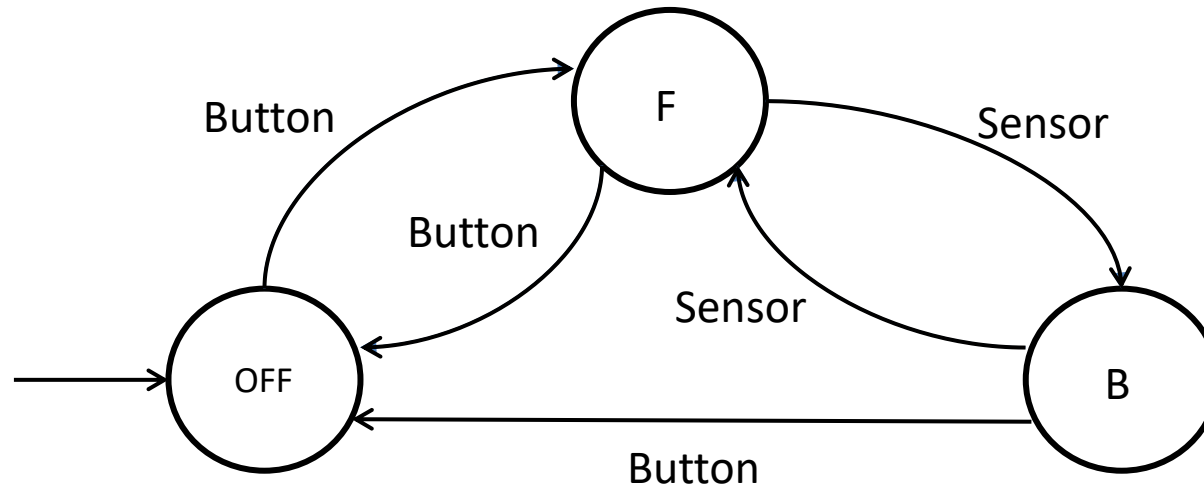
- **Deterministic Finite Automata (DFA) Model**

Q0: Start state, Q2: Final state

State transition diagram of the Finite State Machine

Characteristics: (i) Single start State, (ii) Unique Transitions, (iii) Zero or more final states

Thank You!