

maintaining more than a few vertices and edges. A related task is to determine if two graphs with different specifications are *structurally equivalent*, that is, if they have the same pattern of connections. Designing a practical algorithm to do this is a famous unsolved problem, called the *graph-isomorphism problem*.

Structurally Equivalent Graphs

The shape or length of an edge and its position in space are not part of the definition of a graph, and neither are edge-crossings or other artifacts of a drawing. Consequently, there are usually many spatial representations and drawings of the same graph.

2.1.1: The two line drawings in Figure 2.1.1 both depict the same graph.

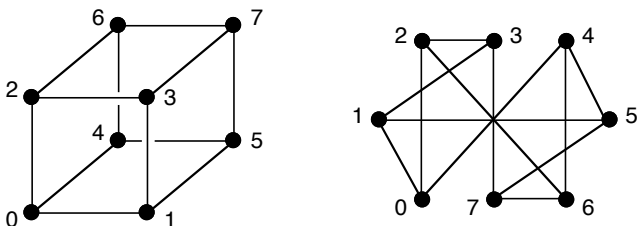


Figure 2.1.1 Two different drawings of the same graph.

The vertices and edges of the two drawings have matched labels, and there are 8 vertices and twelve edges. It is easy to verify for every pair $\{i, j\}$ that i and j are adjacent in one graph if and only if they are adjacent in the other. Therefore, that these two drawings both represent the same graph.

Even if graphs are unlabeled, or if the vertices of one drawing are labeled differently from the vertices of another, there are circumstances under which the graphs are considered to be virtually the same.

2.1.2: The names of the vertices and edges of graphs G and H in Figure 2.1.2 are different, but these two graphs are strikingly similar.

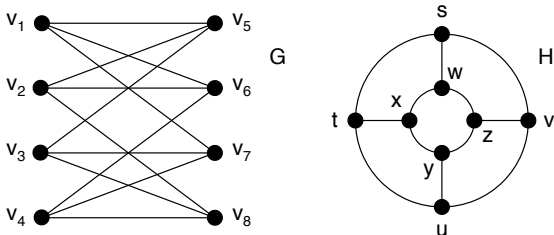


Figure 2.1.2 Two drawings of essentially the same graph.