
Section 3.2 – Variants of Turing Machines

CSC 320

Variations on the TM Model

The goal of this section is not to teach you how to program TM's but to show how powerful they are. Eventually we show they are as powerful as a computer which has unlimited time and space.

Programming Techniques for TM's

- Idea: we can always expand the set of states or tape symbols (but they must be fixed.)
- Store data in a state, e.g., remembering the first symbol you've seen.
- Think of the tape as having multiple tracks (or “marking” the data.)
- Example: the subroutine for Shift

TM's with Multiple Tapes

A k -tape TM is like a 1-tape TM except there are k read-write heads and k tapes.

Initially,

- the input is on the first tape and the others are blank;
- a head is allowed to stay put.
- the heads are at the start of the tapes.

TM's with Multiple Tapes

A move of the machine depends on the state and the symbol scanned by EACH of the heads.

In one move:

- the TM enters a new state;
- on each tape a new symbol is written;
- each head may move L, R, or S (remain stationery)
- $\delta : Q \times \Gamma^k \rightarrow Q \times \Gamma^k \times \{L, R, S\}^k$ where k is the number of tapes.

Having more tapes can make some problems (or routines) easier to program.

Example I

Devise a 2-tape machine to accept $\{wcw \mid w \in \{0,1\}^*\}$.

1-tape Simulation of k -tape

Let M be a k -tape TM with alphabet Σ . We show how to build S , a 1-tape TM which simulates M .

S has an expanded alphabet which includes the original tape symbols supplemented by the same symbols but with a ' over them and a special # symbol.

S contains a copy of the contents of the first tape, then the second, then the third, etc, separated by # marks. It replaces one symbol a for each tape with \bar{a} if the head for that tape is reading that symbol.

To simulate a step in M , S must scan the tape until it sees all three marked places and remember in its state the contents of each and then carry out the correct moves based on the transition function of M . In particular, it may need to shift whole chunks of tape contents to make room for a longer configuration.

Simulation Overhead

It is important to understand the cost of a simulation, in terms of time and space. E.g., when simulating a k -tape machine, each simulation step requires two whole scans of the tape – one to read the k tape-head positions, and one to update. The update could involve k shifts, which could require moving up to the whole tape.

We measure costs as a function of input size n .

If the original machine takes time $O(t(n))$ for some time function t , it could use up to $O(t(n))$ tape cells, so the simulation tape has $O(t(n))$ cells. So each simulated step takes $O(t(n)) + O(t(n)) + k \cdot O(t(n)) = O(t(n))$ simulation steps. Since there are $O(t(n))$ steps to simulate, the entire simulation takes time $O(t(n)^2)$.

We will consider running time in more detail later in the course.

Nondeterministic Turing Machines

A *nondeterministic Turing machine (NTM)* is like an ordinary TM except that the transition function δ is defined differently: for each state q and tape symbol X , $\delta(q, X)$ is a set of triples of state, tape symbol to be written, and direction to move:

$$\{(q_1, Y_1, D_1), (q_2, Y_2, D_2), \dots, (q_k, Y_k, D_k)\}$$

for a finite integer k . The NTM can “choose” at any step which triple determines the next move.

The NTM accepts a string w if some sequence of moves from the initial ID with w as input leads to the accept state. If other sequences on w lead to nonaccept states, it’s irrelevant.

Example

$L = \{\text{composite numbers}\}$, where the input n is given as a binary number.

1. *Nondeterministically choose* two numbers p, q and write their binary representation next to the input
2. Multiply p and q and replace p and q on the tape with their product.
3. Check if the two integers n and pq are the same. If they're the same, go to a final state.

Deterministic Simulates Nondeterministic

If a nondeterministic TM N accepts a language then we can construct a deterministic TM which accepts that language.

Idea: Construct D so that it systematically looks at all possible computations of N searching for one that is accepted. If it finds one, then it accepts.

What if the first computation we try doesn't halt?

We need to *dovetail*. D first tries all possible computations of N consisting of 1 step, all with 2 steps, etc. – corresponds to a *breadth-first search (BFS)* of the computation tree.

A 3-tape Machine D

We describe D as a 3-tape machine to simulate N . We know any 3-tape machine can be simulated by a standard 1-tape machine. Let b be the maximum number of choices in each step of N .

IDEA: How to explore the computation paths? Use breadthfirst search of tree of possible computations Each node in tree is numbered by the path used to get there.

1. Tape 1 contains the input sequence w and is fixed.
2. Tape 3 contains the address of the node we are exploring.
3. On tape 2 D runs the simulation from the root to the node whose address is on tape 3.

4. If node is reached and it is an accepting configuration, accept.
5. Else replace address on Tape 3 with *lexicographically next* string and go to step 3..

Question: What is the cost of this simulation?

Theorem: A language is Turing recognizable iff some nondeterministic TM recognizes it.

A Turing machine is a *decider* if all branches halt on all inputs.

Theorem: A language is decidable iff some nondeterministic TM decides it.

Enumerators

An *enumerator* is a variant of a TM which prints out strings. A language is enumerated if all its strings are printed out by an enumerator, possibly with repetitions.

Theorem: A language is Turing recognizable iff some enumerator enumerates it.

Proof; (\leftarrow) First, assume we have an enumerator for a language A . Use it to construct a TM M which recognizes the language.

- Given an input w , M simulates E . Each time E outputs a string, it compares it to w .
- M accepts if w is output.

Other direction: Assume we have a TM M which recognizes A . We construct an enumerator E .

1. E ignores any input.
2. For $i = 1, 2, 3, \dots$
 - (a) For each possible string $s \in \Sigma^*$ of length $\leq i$
 - i. Run M on s for i steps.
 - ii. If M accepts, print s .

Simulating a TM by a Computer

- Use a table of transitions to look up changes in state
- How to simulate infinite tape?
Keep disks in two stacks. The further down the stack, the further away from the location of the TM head.

Simulating a Computer by a TM

We use a multitape TM, with the following tapes:

- Tape 1: start of tape symbol followed by the address, followed by the word at that address. The addresses are ordered 0,1,2,etc.
- Tape 2: instruction counter holds address.
- Tape 3: memory address or contents of memory address
- Tape 4: Computer's input file
- Tape 5: Scratch

Simulating an Instruction Cycle

- Search the first tape for the address matching the instruction counter
- When the instruction address is found, its value determines an operation and possibly another address containing a value.
- If the instruction requires a value of some address, then copy that address onto third tape and find its value and copy it onto the third tape.
- Execute the instruction using that value.
 - If more space in a word is needed, the entire nonblank tape to the right must be shifted over.
- After performing the instruction, if it's not a jump, add 1 to the instruction counter and begin again.

Coding Structured Inputs to TMs

- TM Input = string
- We would like to consider TMs that take other objects, such as numbers, graphs, automata, TMs (and combinations thereof) as inputs
- We can *represent* these objects as strings
- For an object O we write $\langle O \rangle$ to denote its representation
- For a sequence O_1, \dots, O_k we write $\langle O_1, \dots, O_k \rangle$ to denote its representation
- When a TM expecting a certain type of object gets a string w as input, it must first check whether the string has the right format (i.e. $w = \langle O \rangle$ for an object O) and then must *decode* it into some internal representation

Example: TM for Graph Connectivity

- A TM which decides the language $A = \{\langle G \rangle | G \text{ is a connected undirected graph}\}$.
- The *encoding* of a graph $\langle G \rangle$ is a list of nodes followed by a list of edges, e.g.,
$$\langle G \rangle = (1, 2, 3, 4), ((1, 2), (2, 3), (1, 3), (1, 4))$$
- Easiest might be to assume a three tape machine, with the input on the first tape.
- M checks that the input has the correct format
- IDEA: Tape 1 stores the graph. Tape 2 stores the queue of nodes to explore in a BFS. Tape 3 is a work tape.
- M copies the first node's name on Tape 2. While Tape 2 is not blank:
 1. M scans each unmarked edge on tape 1 and tries to match an endpoint of the edge to the front of the queue (leftmost node name on the second tape).
 2. If it matches, the edge is marked and M puts the other endpoint at the right end of Tape 2's list.
 3. When M completes this scan, it removes the node at the start of the queue and marks it on Tape 1.
- M scans Tape 1 to see if every node is marked. If it is M accepts; else it rejects.