

Quantum Computation

Finding the period of a function (Simon's algorithm and its generalisation)

Luís Soares Barbosa & Renato Neves



Universidade do Minho



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Simon's problem

The problem

Let $f : 2^n \longrightarrow 2^n$ be such that for some $s \in 2^n$,

$$f(x) = f(y) \text{ iff } x = y \text{ or } x = y \oplus s$$

Find s .

Exercise

What characterises f if $s = 0$? And if $s \neq 0$?

Simon's problem

Exercise

- f is **bijective** if $s = 0$, because $y \oplus 0 = y$.
- f is **two-to-one** otherwise, because, for a given s there is only a pair of values x, y such that $x \oplus y = s$.

Let us assume f to be **two-to-one**, and rewrite the problem as follows:

Equivalent formulation as a period-finding problem

Determine the period s of a function f **periodic** under \oplus :

$$f(x \oplus s) = f(x)$$

Simon's problem

Example

Let $f : 2^3 \rightarrow 2^3$ be defined as

x	$f(x)$
000	101
001	010
010	000
011	110
100	000
101	110
110	101
111	010

Clearly $s = 110$. Indeed, every output of f occurs twice, and the bitwise XOR of the corresponding inputs gives s .

Simon's problem, classically

Compute f for sequence of values until finding a value x_j such that $f(x_j) = f(x_i)$ for a previous x_i , i.e. a **collision**. Then

$$x_j \oplus x_i = x_i \oplus (x_i \oplus s) = s$$

- Since f is **two-to-one**, after collecting 2^{n-1} evaluations with no collisions, the next evaluation must cause a collision.
- So in the **worst case** $2^{n-1} + 1$ evaluations are needed.

Simon's problem, classically

Can we do better?

Actually, some problems for which there is a quantum exponential advantage, admit classical probabilistic interesting solutions, e.g.

To solve Deutsch-Josza with **some margin of error** evaluate two **arbitrary** inputs x and y ,

- $f(x) = f(y) \implies$ constant
- $f(x) \neq f(y) \implies$ balanced

Probability of giving the right answer?

- f is constant \implies right answer with probability 1
- f is balanced \implies right answer with probability $\frac{2^{n-1}}{2^n} = \frac{1}{2}$

Simon's problem, classically

which can still be improved:

Tackling Deutsch-Josza with Probabilities

To solve the problem with **some margin of error** evaluate k arbitrary inputs x_1, \dots, x_k ,

- output always the same \implies constant
- otherwise \implies balanced

Probability of giving the right answer?

- f is constant \implies right answer with probability 1
- f is balanced \implies right answer with probability ...

$$1 - \left(\frac{2^{n-1}}{2^n} \right)^k = 1 - \frac{1}{2^k}$$



Probability of observing the same output in k tries

Simon's problem, classically

Actually, some problems for which there is a quantum exponential advantage, admit **classical probabilistic** interesting solutions, e.g.

Deutsch-Jozsa

- **Classical deterministic**: requires $2^{n-1} + 1$ queries in the worst case,
- **Classical probabilistic**: requires 2 queries with a probability of error at most $\frac{1}{3}$ (i.e. $1\frac{1}{2} + \frac{1}{2} * \frac{1}{2}$)
- **Quantum**: requires 1 query.

However, for the Simon's problem an **exponential** number of queries to the oracle accessing f are required by any classical probabilistic algorithm.

Simon's problem, classically

Compute f for sequence of values until finding a value x_j such that $f(x_j) = f(x_i)$ for a previous x_i , i.e. a **collision**. Then

$$x_j \oplus x_i = x_i \oplus (x_i \oplus s) = s$$

How many evaluations do we need to have a collision **with probability p** ?

To have a collision with probability $p = \frac{1}{k} \leq \frac{1}{2}$ we need

$$\approx \sqrt{(2 \cdot 2^n) \cdot p} = \sqrt{\frac{2}{k} \cdot 2^n} = \sqrt{\frac{2}{k}} \cdot 2^{\frac{n}{2}} \text{ evaluations}$$



See the Birthday's problem

But a quantum algorithm solves the problem in **polynomial time** with probability $\approx \frac{1}{4}$

Note: The birthday problem

Seeks to determine the probability that, in a set of n randomly chosen people, at least two will share a birthday.

$n = 23$ leads to $p(n) \approx 0.5$

Let the universe be $U = 365$ (days) and $n = 23$.

U^n is the space of birthdays and $V = \frac{U!}{(U-n)!}$ (n permutations of U) the number of birthdays with no repetitions.

Then,

$$p(n) = 1 - \frac{V}{U^n} \approx 1 - 0.493 \approx 0.507$$

Heuristic for cases leading with $p(n) \leq 0.5$

$$p(n) \approx \frac{n^2}{U} \Rightarrow n \approx \sqrt{2U * p(n)}$$

which yields for $p(n) = 0.5$, $n \approx 19$.

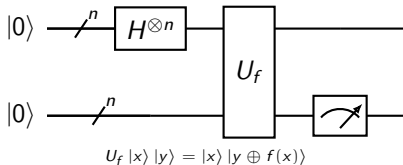
Simon's algorithm: The key steps

1. Prepare a superposition $\frac{1}{\sqrt{2}}(|x\rangle + |x \oplus s\rangle)$ for some string x
2. Use **interference** to find s (indeed, to extract a string y s.t. $y \cdot s = 0$)
3. Repeat previous steps **a sufficient number of** times to obtain system of equations s.t. $y_k \cdot s = 0$
4. Solve the system for s using Gaussian elimination



Complexity n^3

Simon's Algorithm: Preparing the superposition



If the result of measuring the bottom qubits is $f(x)$, then the top ones will contain superposition

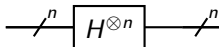
$$\frac{1}{\sqrt{2}}(|x\rangle + |x \oplus s\rangle)$$

as they are the unique values yielding $f(x)$.

i.e. a measurement of the bottom qubits chooses randomly one of the 2^{n-1} possible outcomes of f ...

as f gives the same output for x and $x \oplus s$, to 2^n possible inputs correspond 2^{n-1} possible outcomes.

Simon's Algorithm: Interference to find s



Recall

$$H|x\rangle = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}} \sum_{z \in 2} (-1)^{xz} |z\rangle$$

Exercise

Show this extends to a n -qubit as follows

$$\begin{aligned} H^{\otimes n}|x\rangle &= H|x_1\rangle H|x_2\rangle \cdots H|x_n\rangle \\ &= \frac{1}{\sqrt{2^n}} \sum_{z \in 2^n} (-1)^{x \cdot z} |z\rangle \end{aligned}$$

where $x \cdot z$ denotes the bitwise product of x and z , modulo 2, or bitwise conjunction. Conjunction is denoted by juxtaposition.

Simon's Algorithm: Interference to find s

$$\begin{aligned} H^{\otimes n}|x\rangle &= H|x_1\rangle H|x_2\rangle \cdots H|x_n\rangle \\ &= \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}} \sum_{z_1 \in 2} (-1)^{x_1 z_1} |z_1\rangle + \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}} \sum_{z_2 \in 2} (-1)^{x_2 z_2} |z_2\rangle \cdots \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}} \sum_{z_n \in 2} (-1)^{x_n z_n} |z_n\rangle \\ &= \frac{1}{\sqrt{2^n}} \sum_{z_1, z_2, \dots, z_n \in 2} (-1)^{x_1 z_1 + x_2 z_2 + \cdots + x_n z_n} |z_1 z_2 \cdots z_n\rangle \\ &= \frac{1}{\sqrt{2^n}} \sum_{z \in 2^n} (-1)^{x \cdot z} |z\rangle \end{aligned}$$

Simon's Algorithm: Interference to find s

$$\begin{aligned} & H^{\otimes n} \otimes I \left(\frac{1}{\sqrt{2}} (|x\rangle + |x \oplus s\rangle) |f(x)\rangle \right) \\ &= \frac{1}{\sqrt{2^n}} \sum_{z \in 2^n} \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}} ((-1)^{x \cdot z} + (-1)^{(x \oplus s) \cdot z}) |z\rangle |f(x)\rangle \\ &= \frac{1}{\sqrt{2^n}} \sum_{z \in 2^n} \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}} ((-1)^{x \cdot z} + (-1)^{(x \cdot z) \oplus (s \cdot z)}) |z\rangle |f(x)\rangle \\ &= \frac{1}{\sqrt{2^n}} \sum_{z \in 2^n} \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}} ((-1)^{x \cdot z} + (-1)^{(x \cdot z)} (-1)^{(s \cdot s)}) |z\rangle |f(x)\rangle \\ &= \frac{1}{\sqrt{2^{n+1}}} \sum_{z \in 2^n} \underbrace{(-1)^{x \cdot z} (1 + (-1)^{s \cdot z})}_{(\star)} |z\rangle |f(x)\rangle \end{aligned}$$

Simon's Algorithm: Interference to find s

$$\frac{1}{\sqrt{2^{n+1}}} \sum_{z \in 2^n} \underbrace{(-1)^{x \cdot z} (1 + (-1)^{s \cdot z})}_{(*)} |z\rangle |f(x)\rangle$$

- $s \cdot z = 1 \Rightarrow (*) = 0$ and the corresponding basis state $|z\rangle$ **vanishes**
- $s \cdot z = 0 \Rightarrow (*) \neq 0$: and the corresponding basis state $|z\rangle$ **is kept**.

In this case the probability of getting z upon measurement is $\frac{1}{2^{n-1}}$
(why?)

Simon's Algorithm: Interference to find s

This state can be presented as a uniform superposition as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} & \frac{1}{\sqrt{2^{n+1}}} \sum_{z \in 2^n} (-1)^{x \cdot z} (1 + (-1)^{s \cdot z}) |z\rangle |f(x)\rangle \\ &= \frac{1}{\sqrt{2^{n+1}}} \sum_{z \in S^\perp} 2(-1)^{x \cdot z} |z\rangle |f(x)\rangle \\ &= \frac{1}{\sqrt{2^{n-1}}} \sum_{z \in S^\perp} (-1)^{x \cdot z} |z\rangle |f(x)\rangle \end{aligned}$$

where S^\perp , for $S = \{0, s\}$ is the **orthogonal complement** of subspace S ,
with $\dim(S^\perp) = n - 1$
(because $\dim(S) = 1$, as S is the subspace generated by s)

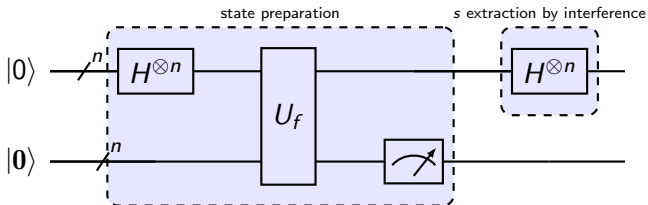
S and S^\perp

Both are subspaces of the vector space Z_2^n whose vectors are strings of length n over $Z_2 = \{0, 1\}$.

- The dimension of Z_2^n is n ; a basis is provided by strings with exactly one 1 in the k th position (for $k = 1, 2, \dots, n$).
- Two vectors v, u in Z_2^n are orthogonal iff $v \cdot u = 0$ (operation \cdot acts as the internal product).
- Thus, for any subspace F of Z_2^n , $F^\perp = \{u \in Z_2^n \mid \forall_{v \in F} \cdot u \cdot v = 0\}$

Warning: to not confuse with the Hilbert space in which the algorithm is executed and whose basis are labelled by elements of Z_2^n .

Simon's algorithm: The circuit



Simon's Algorithm: Computing s

Running this circuit and measuring the control register results in some z in $(\mathbb{Z}_2)^n$ satisfying

$$s \cdot z = 0,$$

the distribution being uniform over all the strings that satisfy this constraint.

Exercise

In the previous discussion we assumed that $s \neq 0$. Show that the conclusion above is still valid if $s = 0$.

Simon's Algorithm: Computing s

Thus, it is enough to repeat this procedure until $n - 1$ **linearly independent** values $\{z_1, z_2, \dots, z_{n-1}\}$ are found, and solve the following set of $n - 1$ equations in n unknowns (corresponding to the bits of s):

$$z_1 \cdot s = 0$$

$$z_2 \cdot s = 0$$

$$\vdots$$

$$z_{n-1} \cdot s = 0$$

to determine s . Actually,

$\text{span}\{z_1, z_2, \dots, z_{n-1}\} = S^\perp$ and $\{z_1, z_2, \dots, z_{n-1}\}$ forms a **base** for S^\perp

Thus, s is the unique non-zero solution of

$$Zs = 0$$

where Z is the matrix whose line i corresponds to vector z_i .

Simon's Algorithm: Computing s

What is the probability of obtaining such a system of equations by running the circuit $n - 1$ times?

Simon's algorithm: Probability of success

Exercise

If $s \neq 0$ then for half of the inputs y we have $y \cdot s = 0$ and for the other half $y \cdot s = 1$

#	Possibilities of failure at each step	Probability of failure
1	$\{0\}$	$\frac{2^0}{2^{n-1}}$
2	$\{0, y_1\}$	$\frac{2^1}{2^{n-1}}$
3	$\{0, y_1, y_2, y_1 \oplus y_2\}$	$\frac{2^2}{2^{n-1}}$
...
$n - 1$	$\{0, y_1, y_2, y_3 \dots\}$	$\frac{2^{n-2}}{2^{n-1}}$

Simon's algorithm: Probability of success

#	Possibilities of failure at each step	Probability of failure
1	{0}	$\frac{2^0}{2^{n-1}}$
2	{0, y_1 }	$\frac{2^1}{2^{n-1}}$
3	{0, $y_1, y_2, y_1 \oplus y_2$ }	$\frac{2^2}{2^{n-1}}$
...
$n-1$	{0, $y_1, y_2, y_3 \dots$ }	$\frac{2^{n-2}}{2^{n-1}}$

Table yields the sequence of probabilities of failure,

$$\frac{1}{2}, \frac{1}{4}, \frac{1}{8}, \dots, \frac{1}{2^{n-1}} \quad (\text{from bottom to top})$$

Probability of failing in the first $n-2$ steps is thus

$$\frac{1}{4} + \frac{1}{8} + \dots = \frac{1}{4} \left(1 + \frac{1}{2} + \dots \right) \leq \frac{1}{4} \cdot \left(\sum_{i \in \mathbb{N}} \frac{1}{2^i} \right) = \frac{1}{2}$$



Geometric series whose sum is equal to two

Simon's algorithm: Probability of success

- Probability of succeeding in the first $n - 2$ steps at least $\frac{1}{2}$
- Probability of succeeding in the $(n - 1)$ -th step is $\frac{1}{2}$
- Thus probability of succeeding in all $n - 1$ steps at least $\frac{1}{4}$

More advanced maths tell that the probability is slightly higher (around 0.28878...)

The algorithm

1. Prepare the **initial state** $\frac{1}{\sqrt{2^n}} \sum_{x \in 2^n} |x\rangle |0\rangle$ and make $i := 1$
2. Apply the oracle U_f to obtain the state

$$\frac{1}{\sqrt{2^n}} \sum_{x \in 2^n} |x\rangle |f(x)\rangle$$

which can be re-written as

$$\frac{1}{\sqrt{2^{n-1}}} \sum_{x \in P} \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}} (|x\rangle + |x \oplus s\rangle) |f(x)\rangle$$

and **measure** the bottom qubits not strictly necessary but makes the analysis simpler.

3. Apply $H^{\otimes n}$ to the top qubits yielding a uniform superposition of elements of S^\perp .

The algorithm

4. Measure the first register and record the value observed z_i , which is a randomly selected element of S^\perp .
5. If the dimension of the span of $\{z_1, z_2, \dots, z_i\}$ is less than $n - 1$, increment i and to go step 2; else proceed.
6. Compute s as the unique non-zero solution of

$$Zs = 0$$

The crucial observation is that the set of observed values must form a basis to S^\perp .

Going general ...

The problem

Let $f : 2^n \longrightarrow X$, for some X finite, be such that,

$$f(x) = f(y) \text{ iff } x - y \in S$$

for some subspace S of Z_2^n with dimension m .

Find a basis $\{s_1, s_2, \dots, s_m\}$ for S .

In Simon's problem

- $x = y \oplus s$, i.e. $x - y = s$.
- s is a basis for the space S generated by $\{s\}$.