Notes on Inference Devices

Santa Fe Institute

Edward G. Huang

Summer 2018

1 Notation and Definitions

Standard notation is taken from set theory and vector algebra. We clarify some notation specific to computation and inference devices.

Computation and Turing Machines

$\mathbb{B}^*$ The space of all finite bit strings.

Γ Symbol alphabet for a Turing Machine.

Q Set of finite states for a given Turing Machine.

δ Transition function for a given Turing Machine.

k Number of tapes for a Turing Machine.

Inference Devices

U Set of possible histories of the universe.

u A history of the universe in U.

X Setup function of an ID that maps $U \to X(U)$. A binary question concerning $\Gamma(u)$.

x A binary question and a member of image $X(U)$.

Y Conclusion function of an ID that maps $U \to \{-1, 1\}$. A binary answer of an ID for $X(u) = x$.

y A single-valued answer, and member of image $Y(U) = \{0, 1\}$.

Γ A function of the actual values of a physical variable over U, equivalent to $\Gamma(u) = S(t_i)(u)$.

γ Possible value of a physical variable, a member of the image $\Gamma(U)$.

δ Probe of any variable V parameterized by $v \in V$ such that :

$$\delta_v(v') = \begin{cases} 1 & \text{if } v = v' \\ -1 & \text{otherwise} \end{cases}$$

$\wp$ Set of probes over $\Gamma(U)$.

$\mathcal{D} = (X, Y)$ An inference device, consisting of functions X and Y.

$\bar{F}$ Inverse. Given a function F over U, $F^{-1} = \bar{F} \equiv \{\{u : F(u) = f\} : f \in F(U)\}$.

$>$ Weak inference: a device $\mathcal{D}$ weakly infers Γ *iff* $\forall \gamma \in \Gamma(U), \exists x \in X(U)$ s.t. $\forall u \in U$, $X(u) = x \implies Y(u) = \delta_\gamma(\Gamma(u))$.

$>>$ Strong inference: a device (X_1, Y_1) strongly infers a device (X_2, Y_2) *iff* $\forall \delta \in \wp(Y_2)$ and all x_2, $\exists x_1$ *such that* $X_1 = x_1 \implies X_2 = x_2, Y_1 = \delta(Y_2)$.

2 Turing Machines

Arora and Barak denote a Turing Machine (TM) as $T = (\Gamma, Q, \delta)$ containing:

1. An *alphabet* Γ of a finite set of symbols that T's tapes can contain. We assume that Γ contains a special blank symbol B, start symbol S, and the numbers 0 and 1.

2. A finite set Q of possible states that T's register can be in. We assume that Q contains a special start state q_s and a special halt state q_h.

3. A transition function function $\delta : Q \times \Gamma^k \rightarrow Q \times \Gamma^{k-1} \times \{L, S, R\}^k$, where $k \geq 2$, describing the rules T use in performing each step. The set $\{L, S, R\}$ denote the actions *Left, Stay,* and *Right*, respectively.

Suppose T is in state $q \in Q$ and $(\sigma_1, \sigma_2, \ldots, \sigma_k)$ are the symbols on the k tapes. Then $\delta(q, (\sigma_1, \ldots, \sigma_k)) = (q', (\sigma_2^{'}, \ldots, \sigma_k^{'}), z)$ where $z \in \{L, S, R\}^k$ and at the next step the σ symbols in the last $k-1$ tapes will be replaced by the σ' symbols, the machine will be in state q, and the k heads will move *Left, Right* or *Stay.* This is illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1. The transition function δ for a k-tape Turing Machine

$(q, (\sigma_1, \ldots, \sigma_k))$				$(q', (\sigma_2^{'}, \ldots, \sigma_k^{'}), z)$				
Input symbol	Work/output symbol read	$\cdots$	Current state	New work/output tape symbol	$\cdots$	Move work/output tape	$\cdots$	New state
$\vdots$	$\vdots$	$\ddots$	$\vdots$	$\vdots$	$\ddots$	$\vdots$	$\ddots$	$\vdots$
σ_1	σ_i	$\ddots$	q	$\sigma_i^{'}$	$\ddots$	z_i	$\ddots$	$q^{'}$
$\vdots$	$\vdots$	$\ddots$	$\vdots$	$\vdots$	$\ddots$	$\vdots$	$\ddots$	$\vdots$

Remark: Γ can be reduced to $\mathbb{B} = \{0, 1\}$ and k can be reduced to 1 without loss of computational power. Then, any Turing Machine can be expressed as a partial recursive function mapping $\mathbb{B}^* \rightarrow \mathbb{B}^* \cup NH$, where NH is the undefined non-halting output. Since $|\mathbb{B}^* \times \mathbb{B}^* \cup NH| = |\mathbb{N} \times \mathbb{N}| = |\mathbb{N}|$, the set of all Turing Machines is countably infinite.

3 Inference of Turing Machines

Theorem *Every Turing Machine can be weakly inferred by an inference device.*
Proof Recall the definition of weak inference:

$$\mathcal{D} > \Gamma \textit{ iff } \forall \gamma \in \Gamma(U), \exists x \in X(U) \text{ such that } \forall u \in U, X(u) = x \implies Y(u) = \delta_\gamma(\Gamma(u))$$

Preliminaries:

We want to define a countably infinite U, $X(U)$, so that an inference device can weakly infer a countably infinite $\Gamma = \{b \in \mathbb{B}^*, T_1(b)\}$. $x \in X(U)$ can be informally phrased as: "For this input string b, what is $T_1(p)$? Then the inference device must be able to answer correctly, for either of the probes for γ_i.

Working definition of weak inference: $\forall \gamma_i, \forall \delta_{\gamma_i}, \exists x : \forall u \in X^{-1}(x) Y(u) = \delta_{y_i}(u)$

Take U to be the integers. The hard part is mapping U to $p, T_1(p)$. The mapping must be injective, i.e. there must be some u for each $(p, T_1(p))$ tuple.

Let $U := \mathbb{N}$. Let $X : U \to \mathbb{B}^*$ be the lexicographic mapping of integers to binary bit strings.
We illustrate weak inference with a toy example.
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