

Algorithmic information and inference devices

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August 2018

There has been much interest surrounding what properties about the universe can be derived from applying a mathematical formalization of inference and knowledge. Previously, Wolpert demonstrated bounds on knowledge in any physical universe that allows agents to hold information concerning that universe by using the concept of "inference devices" (IDs). We extend previous work on the capacity and limitations of IDs to infer physical variables. We then explore analogues between IDs and their relation to Turing machine theory and algorithmic information theory.

1 Introduction

1.1 Notation and Definitions

This manuscript utilizes standard notation taken from set theory and vector algebra. We clarify notation specific to Turing machine theory and inference devices.

1.1.1 Turing Machine Notation

- \mathbb{B}^* The space of all finite bit strings, $\{\epsilon, 0, 1, 00, 01, \dots\}$
- Λ Symbol alphabet of a Turing Machine.
- σ A symbol on a Turing Machine tape.
- Q Set of finite states of a Turing Machine.
- Δ Transition function of a Turing Machine.
- k Number of tapes of a Turing Machine. The first tape is assumed to be read-only.
- η Non-halting state of a Turing Machine.

1.1.2 Inference Device Notation

U	Set of possible histories of the universe.
u	A history of the universe in U .
X	Setup function of an ID that maps $U \rightarrow X(U)$. A binary question concerning $\Gamma(u)$.
x	A binary question and a member of image $X(U)$.
Y	Single-valued conclusion function of an ID that maps $U \rightarrow \{-1, 1\}$. 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}	An inference device, consisting of functions (X, Y) .
ξ	A function $\Gamma(U) \rightarrow \overline{X}$.
Γ^{-1}	Inverse. Given a function Γ over U , $\Gamma^{-1} = \bar{\Gamma} \equiv \{\{u : \Gamma(u) = \gamma\} : \gamma \in \Gamma(U)\}$.
$\bar{\Gamma}$	Given a function Γ over U , the partition of U given by Γ^{-1} .
$>$	Weak inference: a device \mathcal{D} weakly infers Γ iff $\forall \gamma \in \Gamma(U), \exists x \in X(U)$ s.t. $\forall u \in U, X(u) = x \implies Y(u) = \delta_\gamma(\Gamma(u))$.
\gg	Strong inference: a device (X, Y) strongly infers a function (S, T) over U iff $\forall \delta \in \wp(T)$ and all $s \in S(U)$, $\exists x$ such that $X(u) = x \implies S(u) = s, Y(u) = \delta(T(u))$.
$\mathcal{C}_\mu(\Gamma; \mathcal{D})$	Inference complexity.
μ	Measure defined for $u \in U$.

1.2 Inference Devices

1.3 Turing Machines

1.3.1 Deterministic Turing Machines

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

1. An *alphabet* Λ of a finite set of symbols that T 's tapes can contain. We assume that Λ contains a special blank symbol B , start symbol S , and the symbols 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 $\Delta : Q \times \Lambda^k \rightarrow Q \times \Lambda^{k-1} \times \{L, S, R\}^k$, 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 $(\sigma_1, \sigma_2, \dots, \sigma_k)$ are the symbols on the k tapes. Then $\Delta(q, (\sigma_1, \dots, \sigma_k)) = (q', (\sigma'_2, \dots, \sigma'_k), z)$ 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 the following figure.

FIGURE. The transition function Δ for a k -tape Turing Machine

$(q, (\sigma_1, \dots, \sigma_k))$				$(q', (\sigma'_2, \dots, \sigma'_k), z)$				
Input symbol	Work/output symbol read	...	Current state	New work/output tape symbol	...	Move work/output tape	...	New state
\vdots	\vdots	\ddots	\vdots	\vdots	\ddots	\vdots	\ddots	\vdots
σ_1	σ_i	\ddots	q	σ'_i	\ddots	z_i	\ddots	q'
\vdots	\vdots	\ddots	\vdots	\vdots	\ddots	\vdots	\ddots	\vdots

REMARK. Λ 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 $\mathbb{B}^* \rightarrow \mathbb{B}^* \cup \eta$, where η is the undefined non-halting output. Since $|\mathbb{B}^* \times \mathbb{B}^* \cup \eta| = |\mathbb{N} \times \mathbb{N}| = |\mathbb{N}|$, the set of all Turing Machines is countably infinite.

1.3.2 Non-deterministic Turing Machines

Non-deterministic Turing Machines (NDTM) differ from deterministic Turing Machines by having two transition functions Δ_0, Δ_1 and a special state q_{accept} . From Arora and Barak:

When a NDTM M computes a function, we envision that at each computational step M makes an arbitrary choice as to which of its two transition functions to apply. For every input x , we say that $M(x) = 1$ if there exists some sequence of these choices (which we call nondeterministic choices of M) that would make M reach q_{accept} on input x . Otherwise - if every sequence of choices makes M halt without reaching q_{accept} - then we say that $M(x) = 0$.

If $M(x) = 1$, we say that M accepts the input x . There are two ways to interpret the choice of update function to use in a NDTM. We can either assume that the NDTM chooses updates that will lead to an accepting state, or we can assume that the machine branches out into its choices such that it has a "computation tree" and if any of the branches reaches the accepting state then the machine accepts the input. From this second interpretation, the computational power of DTMs to NDTMs is analogous to the computational complexity of P to NP.

1.3.3 Universal Turing Machines

2 Weak Inference

DEFINITION Two functions Γ_1 and Γ_2 with the same domain U are **(functionally) equivalent** iff the inverse functions Γ_1^{-1} and Γ_2^{-1} induce the same partitions of U , i.e., iff $\overline{\Gamma_1} = \overline{\Gamma_2}$.

LEMMA A function Γ can be weakly inferred by a device \mathcal{D} if $|\Gamma^{-1}(\gamma)| \geq 2$ for any $\gamma \in \Gamma(U)$.

PROOF Let $U := \mathbb{N}$. Enumerate $\gamma \in \Gamma$ as $1, 2, \dots, i, \dots, n$ and define $V^i = \{u : \Gamma^{-1}(i) = u\}$. Then enumerate each element in V^i as $i_1, i_2, \dots, i_j, \dots, i_m$. Continue to define X and Y as

$$X(i_j) = \begin{cases} a_i & \text{if } j = 2 \\ b_i & \text{otherwise} \end{cases} \quad Y(i_j) = \begin{cases} -1 & \text{if } j = 2 \\ 1 & \text{otherwise.} \end{cases}$$

Then for each $i \in \Gamma(U)$ choose $x = b_i$ to force $Y(X^{-1}(b_i)) = \delta_i(\Gamma(X^{-1}(b_i)) = i) = 1$. □

LEMMA A function Γ can be weakly inferred by a device \mathcal{D} if $|\Gamma(U)| \geq 3$.

PROOF Let $U := \mathbb{N}$. Enumerate $\gamma \in \Gamma(U)$ as $1, 2, \dots, i, \dots, n$ and define $V^i = \{u : \Gamma^{-1}(i) = u\}$. Then enumerate each element in V^i as $i_1, i_2, \dots, i_j, \dots, i_m$. Continue to define X and Y as

$$X(i_j) = \begin{cases} a & \text{if } i = 1 \text{ and } j = 1 \\ b & \text{if } i = 2 \text{ and } j = 1 \\ c & \text{otherwise.} \end{cases} \quad Y(i_j) = \begin{cases} 1 & \text{if } i = 1 \text{ and } j = 1 \\ -1 & \text{otherwise.} \end{cases}$$

Then for each $i \in \Gamma(U)$ to force $Y(X^{-1}(x)) = \delta_i(\Gamma(X^{-1}(x)) = i)$ choose $x = a$ if $i = 1$, $x = c$ if $i = 2$, or else choose $x = b$. □

COROLLARY A function Γ cannot be weakly inferred by any device if $|\Gamma^{-1}(\gamma)| < 2$ and $|\Gamma(U)| < 3$.

PROOF Fix any such Γ and set $U = \{1, 2\}$. Let $\Gamma(1) = \gamma_1$, $\Gamma(2) = \gamma_2$. Then either $Y(1) = 1, Y(2) = -1$, or vice versa. For the first case, consider the probe δ_{γ_2} to see that there is no $x \in X(U)$ that forces $Y(u) = \delta_{\gamma_2}(\Gamma(u))$. Consider δ_{γ_1} to see that weak inference does not hold for the remaining case. □

THEOREM *A countable set of inequivalent functions A^* can be weakly inferred by a device if each function $A_i \in A^*$ is independently inferable.*

PROOF Let $U := \mathbb{N}$ and fix any A^* . Let a_i, a_j, a_k represent any distinct three elements in $A_i(U)$. Write $V = \{1, 2, 3\} \subset U$. The following table represents all possible combinations of a_i, a_j , and a_k over V .

u	$X(u)$	$Y(u)$	$A_1(u)$	$A_2(u)$	$A_3(u)$	$A_4(u)$	$A_5(u)$	\dots
1	1	-1	a_i	a_i	a_i	a_i	a_i	\dots
2	2	-1	a_i	a_j	a_j	a_j	a_i	\dots
3	3	1	a_i	a_k	a_j	a_i	a_j	\dots
\vdots	\vdots	\vdots	\vdots	\vdots	\vdots	\vdots	\vdots	\ddots

Note that setting $X(u) = u$, $Y(1) = -1$, $Y(2) = -1$, and $Y(3) = 1$ immediately satisfies weak inference for any function A_i that is functionally equivalent to A_1, A_2, A_3 and A_4 over V . This holds regardless of the values of $Y(u)$ and $A_{i \in \{1,2,3,4\}}(u)$ that follow for $u > 3$. This is shown by selecting x for the following cases:

Case 1: $\overline{A_i(V)} = \overline{A_1(V)}$.

Choose $x = 3$ for $a = a_i$ or otherwise choose $x = 2$.

Cases 2, 3, 4: $\overline{A_i(V)} = \overline{A_2(V)}$ or $\overline{A_3(V)}$ or $\overline{A_4(V)}$.

Choose $x = 2$ for $a = a_i$ or otherwise choose $x = 1$.

Now we need to guarantee weak inference for A_i that are functionally equivalent to A_5 over V . Enumerate each $A_i \in A^* : \overline{A_i(V)} = \overline{A_5(V)}$ as $B_4, B_5, \dots, B_i, \dots, B_n$. To satisfy weak inference for any A_i and B_i , define X, Y more explicitly as

$$X(u) = u, \quad Y(u) = \begin{cases} -1 & \text{if } u = 1, 2 \text{ or if } B_i(u) = a_j, a_k : X(u) = i \\ 1 & \text{if } u = 3 \text{ or if } B_i(u) = a_i : X(u) = i \\ -1 & \text{otherwise.} \end{cases}$$

For each $a \in B_i(U)$ to force $Y(X^{-1}(x)) = \delta_a(B(X^{-1}(x)))$ choose $x = i$ if $a = a_i$ or otherwise choose $x = 1$. □

3 Strong Inference

In the next three examples we examine strong inference of integer-valued functions.

EXAMPLE. Let $T(U) = \{0, 1\}$ and $S(U) = \{0, 1, 2\}$. We construct (X, Y) in the table at the left such that it strongly infers (S, T) . The right table indicates x for each s, δ such that the definition of strong inference is satisfied:

u	$X(u)$	$Y(u)$	$S(u)$	$T(u)$
1	1	1	0	0
2	2	-1	0	0
3	3	1	1	0
4	4	-1	1	0
5	5	1	2	1
6	6	-1	2	1

$s \setminus \delta$	δ_0	δ_1
0	1	2
1	3	4
2	6	5

EXAMPLE. Let $T(U) = \{1, 2, 3\}$ and $S(U) = \{1, 2, 3, 4, 5\}$. Again, we construct (X, Y) in the table at the left such that it strongly infers (S, T) . The right table indicates x for each s, δ such that the definition of strong inference is satisfied:

u	$X(u)$	$Y(u)$	$S(u)$	$T(u)$
1	1	1	1	1
2	2	-1	1	1
3	3	1	2	1
4	4	-1	2	1
5	5	1	3	2
6	6	-1	3	2
7	7	1	4	2
8	8	-1	4	2
9	9	1	5	3
10	10	-1	5	3

$s \setminus \delta$	δ_1	δ_2	δ_3
1	1	2	2
2	3	4	4
3	6	5	6
4	8	7	8
5	10	10	9

EXAMPLE. Let $T(U) = \{1, 2, 3\}$ and $S(U) = \{1, 2\}$. In this example, the inferred function $f : S \rightarrow T, f(s) = T(S^{-1}(s))$ is not single-valued.

u	$X(u)$	$Y(u)$	$S(u)$	$T(u)$
1	1	-1	1	1
2	2	-1	1	2
3	3	1	1	3
4	4	-1	2	1
5	5	-1	2	2

$s \setminus \delta$	δ_1	δ_2	δ_3
1	2	1	1
2	5	4	4

4 Inference of Turing Machines

THEOREM *A deterministic Turing machine (Λ, Q, Δ) can be strongly inferred by a device iff*

$$\forall s \in S(U), |S^{-1}(s)| \geq 2.$$

This holds for both the representation of a Turing machine as a partial recursive function and the representation as an update function.

PROOF First examine the partial function case. Let f be the partial recursive function that describes the given Turing machine tuple. Let $U := \mathbb{N}$. Choose any convenient single valued surjective function $S : U \rightarrow \mathbb{B}^*$ and define $T : U \rightarrow \mathbb{B}^* \cup \eta$ by $T(u) = f(S(u))$ as the single-valued function mapping U to the halting and non-halting outputs of f . Then f can be written as the single-valued mapping $S \rightarrow T$ by $f(s) = T(S^{-1}(s))$.

Enumerate the elements of $S(U)$ as $1, 2, \dots, s, \dots$. Let $V^s = \{u : S^{-1}(s) = u\}$ for $s \in S(U)$. Similarly enumerate the elements of V^s as $s_1, s_2, \dots, s_{|V^s|}$. Then define X and Y as follows:

$$X(s_i) = \begin{cases} a_s & \text{if } i = 1 \\ b_s & \text{otherwise} \end{cases} \quad Y(s_i) = \begin{cases} 1 & \text{if } i = 1 \\ -1 & \text{otherwise} \end{cases}$$

Note that the condition $|S^{-1}(s)| \geq 2$ is required to guarantee $Y(V^s) = \{1, -1\}$. For each pair $(s, \delta_{t \in T(U)})$, to force $S(u) = s$ and $Y(u) = \delta_t(T(u))$, choose $x = a_s$ if $t = T(s_1)$ or otherwise choose $x = b_s$. Since the choices of s and t were arbitrary, this holds for all (s, δ_t) pairs.

Now consider the update function that describes the given Turing machine. Recall that the update function is written as $\Delta : Q \times \Lambda^k \rightarrow Q \times \Lambda^{k-1} \times \{L, S, R\}^k$, $k \geq 2$. Consider a convenient single-valued surjective function $S : U \rightarrow Q \times \Lambda^k$ representing the possible inputs for a Turing Machine and a corresponding single-valued $T : U \rightarrow Q \times \Lambda^{k-1} \times \{L, S, R\}^k$ as $T(u) = \Delta(S(u))$. Observe that Δ can be written as the single-valued function $\Delta(s) = T(S^{-1}(s))$. Then define V^s , X , Y , and choose x for each (s, δ_t) as described in the preceding portion of the proof. Hence, the claim holds for the update function of a Turing machine.

To show that the condition is necessary for either representation, suppose that $|V^s| < 2$ for some s . If $V^s = \emptyset$ then there exists no x that can force $S = s$. If $|V^s| = 1$, then we can assign $Y(s_i) = y \in \{-1, 1\}$. However, whichever value is assigned, there exists a t such that $\delta_t(T(s_i)) \neq Y(s_i)$ since $|T(U)| \geq 2$. \square

REMARK. Conventionally all functions over U must have a range of at least two elements. This implies that Turing machines that never halt cannot be strongly inferred.

5 Inference Complexity

DEFINITION Let \mathcal{D} be an inference device and Γ be a function over U where $X(U)$ and $\Gamma(U)$ are countable and $\mathcal{D} > \Gamma$. Let the **size** of $\gamma \in \Gamma(U)$ be written as $\mathcal{M}_{\mu, \Gamma(\gamma)} = -\ln[\int_{\Gamma^{-1}(\gamma)} d\mu(u)1]$ such that $d\mu$ denotes a measure over U . Then the **inference complexity** of Γ with respect to \mathcal{D} and measure μ is defined as

$$\mathcal{C}_{\mu}(\Gamma; \mathcal{D}) \triangleq \sum_{\delta \in \wp(\Gamma)} \min_{x: X=x \implies Y=\delta(\Gamma)} [\mathcal{M}_{\mu, X}(x)].$$

The **strong inference complexity** for any single $\gamma \in \Gamma$ is

$$\mathcal{C}_{\mu}(\gamma; \mathcal{D}) \triangleq \min_{x: X(u)=x \implies S(u)=s, Y(u)=\delta_{\gamma}(\Gamma(u))} [\mathcal{M}_{\mu, X}(x)].$$

CLAIM Let c be a positive integer. Let A^* be a countable set of inferable functions and \mathcal{D} be a device that infers all functions $a \in A^*$. There exists A^* and \mathcal{D} such that every finite subset A of A^* with cardinality m has at least $m(1 - m^{-c}) + 1$ elements $a \in A$ such that $\mathcal{C}_{\mu}(a; \mathcal{D}) \geq \log m - c$.

PROOF Fix any convenient A^* and choose any subset $A \subseteq A^*$ with cardinality m . Let $U := \mathbb{B}^*$. Let $X : U \rightarrow \mathbb{B}^*$ and $Y : U \rightarrow \{-1, 1\}$ be the X and Y defined in the Countable Inference Theorem when given A . Note that X in this case maps $\mathbb{N} \rightarrow \mathbb{B}^*$ instead of $\mathbb{N} \rightarrow \mathbb{N}$ but the mappings are equivalent. Then $\mathcal{D} = (X, Y) > A$ by construction.

Take $d\mu(u) = \ell(u)$ where $\ell(b)$ is the length of a bit string b . Recall that the inference complexity of $a \in A$ with respect to \mathcal{D} is

$$\mathcal{C}_{\mu}(a; \mathcal{D}) = \sum_{\delta \in \wp(a)} \min_{x: X=x \implies Y=\delta(a)} [\mathcal{M}_{\mu, X}(x)] : \mathcal{M}_{\mu, X}(x) = -\ln \sum_{X^{-1}(x)} \ell(u)$$

Now suppose that all $A_i \in A$ is functionally equivalent to A_5 over V . Then the maximum inference complexity of any A_i with respect to \mathcal{D} is

$$\begin{aligned} \mathcal{C}_{\mu}(A_i; \mathcal{D}) &= \sum_{\delta \in \wp(A_i)} \min_{x: X=x \implies Y=\delta(a)} -\ln \sum_{X^{-1}(x)} \ell(A_i^{-1}(a)) \\ &= \sum_{\delta \in \wp(A_i)} \min_{x: X=x \implies Y=\delta(a)} -\ln A_i^{-1}(a) = -\ln 1 - \ln(A_i^{-1}(a_i)) = -\ln(u). \end{aligned}$$

Since a unique u is used by \mathcal{D} to infer every $A_i \in A$, we can apply the pigeonhole principle. The number of bit strings of length less than $m - c$ is

$$\sum_{i=0}^{m-c-1} 2^i = 2^{m-c-1}.$$

Hence, there are at least $m - m2^{-c} + 1$ functions a in A which have inference complexity greater than $\ln \log m - c$.

THEOREM There exist A^* and \mathcal{D} such that for all functions of any subset $A \subseteq A^*$, $\mathcal{C}_{\mu}(A_i; \mathcal{D}) = 0$

PROOF Recall the functions and spaces defined in the Countable Inference Theorem and take $\mu(u) = \ell(u)$.

Then choose $A^* : \overline{A_i(V)} \in A^* = \overline{A_{j \in \{2,3,4\}}(V)}$. Then the inference complexity for any function $A_i \in A$ is

$$\mathcal{C}_\mu(A_i; \mathcal{D}) = \sum_{\delta \in \wp(A_i)} \min_{x: X=x \implies Y=\delta(A_i)} -2 \ln \sum_{X^{-1}(x)} \ell(u) = \sum_{\delta \in \wp(f)} \min_{x: X=x \implies Y=\delta(A_i)} -\ln 1 = -2 \ln 1 = 0.$$

□

6 Incompressibility

The following result is taken from Li and Vitanyi (1993).

INCOMPRESSIBILITY THEOREM *Let c be a positive integer. For each fixed y , every finite set A of cardinality m has at least $m(1 - 2^{-c}) + 1$ elements x with $\mathcal{C}(x|y) \geq \log m - c$.*

PROOF The number of programs of length less than $\log m - c$ is

$$\sum_{i=0}^{\log m - c - 1} 2^i = 2^{\log m - c} - 1.$$

Hence, there are at least $m - m2^{-c} + 1$ elements in A which have no program of length less than $\log m - c$. \square

Note. Let $\mathcal{M}_{\mu:\Gamma(\gamma)} = [\int_{\Gamma^{-1}(\gamma)} d\mu(u)1]$ for the remainder of this section.

THEOREM *There is a constant c , such that for all t :*

$$\mathcal{C}_{\mu}(t; \mathcal{D}) \leq 2\ell(t) + c$$

PROOF Let $U := \mathbb{B}^* \times \{0, 1\}$. Fix a Turing machine ϕ over U such that $S : U \rightarrow \mathbb{B}^*$ is written as $S((u, b)) = u$. Then define $T : U \rightarrow \mathbb{B}^*$ as $T(u) = S(u)$. Construct a device \mathcal{D} that strongly infers (S, T) . Then for every $t \in \mathbb{B}^*$, $\mathcal{C}_{\mu}(t; \mathcal{D}) = 2\ell(t) + 2$. \square

THEOREM *Let c be a positive integer. For a fixed \mathcal{D} , every finite set $T(U)$ of cardinality m has at least $m(1 - 2^{-c-1}) + \frac{1}{2}$ elements t with $\mathcal{C}_{\mu}(t; \mathcal{D}) \geq \log m - c$.*

PROOF Set $U := \mathbb{B}^*$. Fix any universal partial recursive function ϕ that can be strongly inferred. Let $\mu(u) = \ell(u)$. Construct a device \mathcal{D} and functions (S, T) over ϕ such that $\mathcal{D} \gg (S, T)$. By the construction of \mathcal{D} , it takes at least two unique values of u to force strong inference for each value t . The number of bit strings of length less than $\log m - c$ is

$$\sum_{i=0}^{\log m - c - 1} 2^i = 2^{\log m - c} - 1.$$

Then the greatest number of unique pairs of bit strings with combined length less or equal to $\log m - c$ is $m2^{-c-1} - \frac{1}{2}$. Hence, there are at least $m - m2^{-c-1} + \frac{1}{2}$ values t with $\mathcal{C}_{\mu}(t; \mathcal{D}) \geq \log m - c$. \square

CLAIM (i) *The function $\mathcal{C}(\gamma; \mathcal{D})$ is unbounded.* (ii) *Define a function m by $m(x) = \min\{\mathcal{C}(y; \mathcal{D}) : y \geq \gamma\}$. That is, m is the greatest monotonic increasing function bounding \mathcal{C} from below. The function $m(x)$ is unbounded.* (iii) *For any partial recursive function $\phi(x)$ which goes monotonic to infinity from some x_0 onward, we have $m(x) < \phi(x)$ except for finitely many x . In other words, although $m(x)$ goes to infinity, it does so slower than any unbounded partial function.*

PROOF (i) This follows immediately from (ii). (ii). For each i there is a least γ_i such that for all $\gamma > \gamma_i$ the smallest set of $u \in U$ strongly inferring γ has a total length greater or equal to i . This follows immediately

from the fact that there are only a finite number of u of each length i . Clearly, for all i we have $\gamma_{i+1} \geq x_i$. Now observe that the function m has the property that $m(\gamma) = i + 1$ for $\gamma_i < \gamma \leq \gamma_{i+1}$. This proves (ii).

7 Physical Knowledge

DEFINITION Consider an inference device (X, Y) defined over U , a function Γ defined over U , a $\gamma \in \Gamma(U)$, and a subset $W \subseteq U$. We say that (X, Y) **(physically) knows** $\Gamma = \gamma$ over W iff $\exists \xi : \Gamma(U) \rightarrow \overline{X}$ such that

- i) $\forall \gamma' \in \Gamma(U), u \in \xi(\gamma') \implies \delta_{\gamma'}(\Gamma(u)) = Y(u)$
- ii) $\emptyset \neq \xi(\gamma) \cap W \subseteq Y^{-1}(1)$
- iii) For all $\gamma' \neq \gamma, \emptyset \neq \xi(\gamma') \cap W \subseteq Y^{-1}(-1)$.

A device \mathcal{D} physically knows a function Γ over W iff $\forall \gamma \in \Gamma(U), \exists \xi : \mathcal{D}$ knows γ over $W \subseteq U$ using ξ .

DEFINITION The **knowledge complexity** of Γ given \mathcal{D} , ξ , and measure μ is defined as:

$$\mathcal{K}_\mu(\Gamma; \mathcal{D}) \triangleq \sum_{\gamma \in \Gamma(U)} \xi(\gamma) : \mathcal{D} \text{ knows } \Gamma = \gamma \text{ using } \xi \min [\mathcal{M}_{\mu; \xi}(\gamma)]$$

$$\mathcal{M}_{\mu; \xi}(\gamma) = -\ln \int_{\xi(\gamma)} d\mu(u) 1$$

EXAMPLE. Let $U := \{1, 2, 3\}$ and take $W = U$. The following table and formulas demonstrate physical knowledge for $\gamma \in \Gamma : |\Gamma(U)| = 2$.

u	$X(u)$	$Y(u)$	$\Gamma(u)$
1	1	1	1
2	2	-1	2
3	3	1	2
4	4	-1	1

$$\xi_1(\gamma) = \begin{cases} \{1\} & \text{if } \gamma = 1 \\ \{4\} & \text{if } \gamma = 2. \end{cases}$$

$$\xi_2(\gamma) = \begin{cases} \{2\} & \text{if } \gamma = 1 \\ \{3\} & \text{if } \gamma = 2. \end{cases}$$

LEMMA For every countably-ranged function Γ there exists a device \mathcal{D} such that \mathcal{D} physically knows all $\gamma \in \Gamma(U)$ over $W = U$ if $|\Gamma^{-1}(\gamma)| \geq 2$ for all $\gamma \in \Gamma$.

PROOF Take $U := \mathbb{N}$ and $W = U$. Choose any Γ as described in the claim. Enumerate $\gamma \in \Gamma(U)$ as $1, 2, \dots, i, \dots$. Define $V^i = \{u : \Gamma^{-1}(\gamma) = u\}$ for each $i \in \Gamma(U)$. Similarly enumerate each $u \in V^i$ as $i_1, i_2, \dots, i_j, \dots$. Now define the device (X, Y) as

$$X(i_j) = \begin{cases} a_i & \text{if } j = 1 \\ b_i & \text{if } j = 2 \\ c_i & \text{otherwise} \end{cases} \quad Y(i_j) = \begin{cases} 1 & \text{if } j = 1 \\ -1 & \text{otherwise.} \end{cases}$$

Define $\xi_\gamma : \Gamma(U) \rightarrow \overline{X}$ for each $i \in \Gamma(U)$ as

$$\xi_\gamma(i) = \begin{cases} \overline{a_i} & \text{if } i = \gamma \\ \overline{b_i} & \text{otherwise.} \end{cases}$$

Then for all $\gamma \in \Gamma(U)$ and all $u \in \xi_\gamma(\gamma')$, $\delta_\gamma(\Gamma(u)) = Y(u)$. Furthermore, for each $\xi_\gamma, \emptyset \neq \{(\xi_\gamma(\gamma' =$

$\gamma) \cap W) \subseteq Y^{-1}(1)\}$ and $\emptyset \neq \{(\xi_\gamma(\gamma' \neq \gamma) \cap W) \subseteq Y^{-1}(-1)\}$. Hence, \mathcal{D} physically knows $\gamma \in \Gamma(U)$. \square

CLAIM *For any set of independently physically knowable characteristic functions A^* there is a device \mathcal{D} and set of functions ξ^* such that \mathcal{D} knows $A \in A^*$ over a given subset $W \subseteq U$ using ξ^* .*

PROOF

Let $U := \mathbb{N}$ and take $W = U$. Construct

$$X(i_j) = \begin{cases} a_i & \text{if } j = 1 \\ b_i & \text{otherwise} \end{cases} \quad Y(i_j) = \begin{cases} 1 & \text{if } j = 1 \\ -1 & \text{otherwise.} \end{cases}$$

CLAIM *There exists a countable set of inequivalent characteristic functions A^* and a device \mathcal{D} such that for all $A \in A^*$, \mathcal{D} physically knows A over U and $\mathcal{K}_\mu(A; \mathcal{D}) = 0$.*

PROOF

CLAIM *Let Γ be a knowable function with countable range and \mathcal{D} be a device that physically knows all $\gamma \in \Gamma$ over U . Every such Γ with $|\Gamma(U)| = m$ has knowledge complexity of at least $-m \ln \sum_{i=1}^m \log_2 m$.*

PROOF Let $U := \mathbb{N}$ and take $W = U$. Choose any convenient knowable Γ with a countable range such that $|\Gamma(U)| = m$. Then construct \mathcal{D} and $\xi_{\gamma \in \Gamma(U)}$ as specified in the knowability lemma. Then the knowledge complexity of Γ with respect to \mathcal{D} using $\xi_{\gamma \in \Gamma(U)}$ is

$$\begin{aligned} \mathcal{K}_\mu(\Gamma; \mathcal{D}) &= \sum_{\gamma \in \Gamma(U)} \min_{\xi(\gamma): \mathcal{D} \text{ knows } \Gamma=\gamma \text{ using } \xi} [\mathcal{M}_\mu; \xi(\gamma)] \\ &= \sum_{\gamma \in \Gamma(U)} \min_{\xi(\gamma): \mathcal{D} \text{ knows } \Gamma=\gamma \text{ using } \xi} -\ln \sum_{u \in \xi_\gamma(\gamma \in \Gamma(U))} \ell(u) = -m \ln \sum_{i=1}^m \log_2 m \end{aligned}$$

8 Discussion

9 Open Questions

Much of the results covered in this manuscript are preliminary and leaves much to be desired in our understanding of the theory of inference devices and its connections to algorithmic information theory. There are many immediate questions deserving attention. The question of whether non-deterministic Turing machines may be strongly inferred was left unattended. Our incompressibility results with strong inference of universal Turing machines may be extended by exploring possible analogues between Kolmogorov complexity and strong inference complexity. The numerous negative results we found concerning the definitions of weak inference complexity and physical knowledge suggest that a revisitation of these definitions may be appropriate or fruitful.

10 Acknowledgements

I am grateful to David Wolpert for his mentorship and for many crucial discussions in the process of this work. I would like to thank the education office of the Santa Fe Institute (SFI) and the participants of the SFI Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU) program for providing resources and assistance. This work was supported by the National Science Foundation, Grant No. 1757923.

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