SE 2XB3 Group 4 Report 6

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1 Red-Black Tree Height

Due to the different implementations of red-black trees, our implementation of a Left-Leaning Red-Black (LLRB) tree yield the heights 14, 26, and 16 for three rounds of inserting the numbers 1 through 10,000. Nonetheless, an surprising reduction in height along with an increase in element count is observed. There are several factors causing this behaviour. First, the first stage of insertion into a LLRB tree is the same as a Binary Search Tree (BST) insertion. In this case where the numbers are inserted in an ascending order, it is the worst scenario for both LLRB tree and BST. Therefore, after the `fix` stage in an LLRB tree insertion, the LLRB tree would be at the worst possible shape while maintaining its fundamental properties. That is, there are as many as possible red edges on one side of the root, and minimal black or red edges on the other side of the root such that the LLRB tree property "the number of black edges on all the paths from the root to the leaves are the same" holds. Because the `get_height` method counts both the red and black edges, the determined heights are larger than the effective heights of the LLRB tree defined by the property.

In the subsequent rounds of ordered insertions, because the inserted elements are duplicates of the previous insertions, the newly inserted elements occupies positions close to the already inserted elements. More self-balancing operations like `rotate_left` and `rotate_right` are triggered, effectively shuffles the positions of the nodes. As a result, many of the spots in the LLRB tree that were left empty in previous insertions can be filled. In some occasions, it is possible for a height reduction to occur when the more crowded side is rotated to the other side in a self-balancing process. We predict that the more clustered the inserted elements are, the more tree rotations would be triggered, subsequently, the more the LLRB tree resembles a full binary tree, the shorter the overall tree is.