01204211 Discrete Mathematics
Lecture 8a: Integers and GCD

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Number theory: integers and divisibility

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We will cover:

- Basic concepts of divisibility, prime numbers, and congruence.
- How to quickly check if a number is prime.
- How to essentially perform "division" with integers, allowing us to work with important and useful objects like polynomials using only integers.

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- How to essentially perform "division" with integers, allowing us to work with important and useful objects like polynomials using only integers.
- Applications like cryptography (RSA), secret sharing, erasure codes and error correcting codes.

Definitions

Definition (divisibility)

We say that an integer a **divides** b or b **is divisible by** a if there exist an integer k such that

$$b = ak.$$

If it is the case, we also write $a|b$. We also say that a is a **divisor** (or a **factor**) of b.
On the other hand if a does not divide b, we write $a \not| b$.

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If $a|b$ and $a|c$, prove that $a|(b+c)$.

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Examples:

We use operator `mod` to denote an operation for finding the remainder of a division. I.e., $a \bmod b$ is the remainder of dividing a with b.

Examples

Let r be the remainder of the division of b by a. Assume that $c|a$ and $c|b$. Prove that $c|r$.

More examples

For every integer a, $a - 1 | a^2 - 1$.

Primes

Definition (primes)

- An integer $p > 1$ is a **prime** if its divisors are only p, $-p$, 1, and -1.
- If an integer $n > 1$ is not a prime, it is called a **composite**.
- Note: 1 is not a prime and also not a composite.

Algorithm for testing primes

Recall our `CheckPrime2` algorithm

```
Algorithm CheckPrime2(n):  // Input: an integer n
    if n <= 1:
        return False
    let s = square root of n
    i = 2
    while i <= s:
        if n is divisible by i:
            return False
        i = i + 1
    return True
```

How fast can it run?

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How fast can it run? Note that $s = \sqrt{n}$; therefore, it takes time $O(\sqrt{n})$ to run.

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n	number of bits of n	$\sqrt{n}$
2	1	1.414
4	2	2
16	4	4
1,024	10	32
1,048,576	20	1,024
1,125,899,906,842,624	50	33,554,432
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Side note: Recall that the first step in RSA is to find a pair of large primes. Typically we want them to be of size in the *thousand* bits.

Greatest Common Divisors (GCD)

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For integers x and y, the **greatest common divisor** (or GCD) of x and y is the largest integer g such that $g|x$ and $g|y$. We refer to it as $gcd(x, y)$.

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What is the running time of this algorithm? Does it run in polynomial time on the size of the input?

Euclid's algorithm

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Let's see how it works with $Euclid(12311, 24324)$:
Euclid(12311, 24324)
Euclid(24324, 12311)
Euclid(12311, 12013)
Euclid(12013, 298)
Euclid(298, 93)
Euclid(93, 19)
Euclid(19, 17)
Euclid(17, 2)
Euclid(2, 1)

Proofs

We have to prove two properties:

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- For any integers x and y, $\mathrm{Euclid}(x, y) = gcd(x, y)$.
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Note that when $x < y$, $\mathrm{Euclid}(x, y)$ just calls itself with both arguments swapped, i.e., $\mathrm{Euclid}(y, x)$. After that, in each call, x is always larger than y. For simplicity of the analysis, we shall work only with the case that $x > y$.

Theorem 1

For any integers x and y such that $x > y$,
$\mathrm{Euclid}(x, y) = gcd(x, y)$.

Proof.

We prove using strong induction. For the base case, note that when $y|x$, $gcd(x, y) = y$; therefore, the base case of the algorithm is correct.
Our induction hypothesis is: for any $x' < x$ and $y' < y$,
$\mathrm{Euclid}(x', y') = gcd(x', y')$.
Now assume that $y \not| x$. The Euclid algorithm returns $\mathrm{Euclid}(y, x \bmod y)$ as the gcd. Note that $y < x$ and $x \bmod y < y$. Therefore, we can use the I.H. to claim that

$$\mathrm{Euclid}(y, x \bmod y) = gcd(y, x \bmod y).$$

Thus, we are left to show that

$$gcd(x, y) = gcd(y, x \bmod y).$$

□

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$$x \bmod y = x - \left\lfloor \frac{x}{y} \right\rfloor \cdot y$$

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Lemma 3

$gcd(x, y) = gcd(y, x \bmod y)$

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  Euclid$(x \bmod y, y \bmod (x \bmod y))$ Note that in this case, $x \bmod y = x - y \leq x/2$. Thus, after two recursive calls, the first argument decreases by half.
- How many times can that happen?
- The first argument can decrease by a factor of two for at most $\log x$ times. Therefore, the Euclid algorithm runs in time $O(\log \max\{x, y\}) = O(\log x + \log y)$.

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What is the running time? Is it efficient?

Repeated squaring

If y is a power of two, we can find x^y using small number of multiplications using repeated squaring. E.g.,

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```
Algorithm power(x,y):  // for y=2^k
  if y == 0:
    return 1
  else:
    a = power(x, y / 2)
    return a*a
```

Repeated squaring (general y)

```
Algorithm power(x,y):
  if y == 0:
    return 1
  else:
    a = power(x, floor(y / 2))
    if y mod 2 == 0:
      return a*a
    else
      return a*a*x
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What is the number of recursive calls?
What is the running time?
While the number of multiplication is small, the numbers involved is huge as x^y has $y \log x$ bits. Computing x^y exactly definitely takes a long time.

Repeated squaring (general y, mod n)

Computing $x^y \bmod n$:

```
Algorithm power(x,y,n):
  if y == 0:
    return 1
  else:
    a = power(x, floor(y / 2)) mod n
    if y mod 2 == 0:
      return a*a mod n
    else
      return a*a*x mod n
```