

External sort

Problem: sort a big file that does not fit into your ram

Algorithm:

- split the big file into multiple small files whose size is fit into memory. let n be number of element in each small file, k be number of small file.
- sort each of small file. $\mathcal{O}(k * n \log n)$
- merge small files using heap
 - init an empty min heap
 - add all first element of all small files into heap
 - repeat: $\mathcal{O}(k * n)$
 - get the minimum element of heap and store it to the output file.
 - replace the heap root with the next element the small file from which the element is extracted. If this file is empty, remove the root heap.