Review: "Build a Sporadic Group in Your Basement"

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ABSTRACT

The structure of a finite group is often naturally captured by an object whose symmetry is preserved by that group. The finite sporadic group, M_{24}, is a permutation group that preserves the symmetry of the set of 24-bit vectors comprising the extended Golay error-correcting code. The paper "Build a Sporadic Group in Your Basement" uses this relationship to derive a construction for M_{24} that is as natural as possible. In this review paper, we summarize essential coding theory topics provided by the paper and then present this construction outright. We then work backward to illuminate its derivation. Finally, we provide an alternate construction of M_{24} by expanding on methods presented in the paper.

Introduction

Any undergraduate student who has completed a course in abstract algebra will likely be familiar with the notion of a normal subgroup. A typical textbook will introduce this concept early and emphasize its importance to fundamental ideas such as factor groups, cosets, and Lagrange's Theorem. In particular, students see a variety of examples in which a normal subgroup N and a group G yield a factor group G/N.

The group of integers modulo 5, denoted by Z_5, provides an example of this. The group can be obtained as a factor group, Z/5Z, from the group of integers Z with normal subgroup 5Z. The notation of this construction seems to suggest that Z can be decomposed as a product of 'simpler' groups $5Z$ and Z_5. This feels analogous to the way composite numbers can be decomposed into a product of smaller numbers. But this analogy begs the question. When does a group act like a prime number in the sense that it cannot be decomposed into simpler groups? We might notice that Lagrange's Theorem forbids Z_5 from having a nontrivial normal subgroup due to its prime order. Z_5 seems to be 'prime' or 'simple' in this way. But this leads to more questions. Can we ascertain which properties of Z_5 generalize to other 'simple' groups? Moreover, can we ever know if we've found all the groups with this property? For the case of "finite" simple groups, groups of finite order which don't permit nontrivial normal subgroups[1], it turns out that we can. In fact, classifying these groups is a monstrous research topic that has been extensively studied over the past century.

It was only in recent decades that a large body of work, composed of over 10,000 pages written by more than 100 mathematicians, finally established a comprehensive classification of the finite simple groups. Many mathematicians agree that this work is valid. The results show that almost every simple group falls into 1 or 18 infinite families[2]. The first infinite family contains the group Z_5 along with all the cyclic groups of prime order. The second infinite family contains all alternating groups A_n, where $n \geq 5$. The remaining 16 families are the groups of Lie type which are considerably more intricate. Fascinatingly though, there are 26 outlier simple groups known as the sporadic groups which fail to fit into any of these infinite families.

The first 5 of these 26 were discovered by mathematician Emile Mathieu in 1873 and are appropriately named The Mathieu groups. Individually, the Mathieu groups are denoted $M_{11}, M_{12}, M_{22}, M_{23}, M_{24}$ where the subscripts signify that the Mathieu group M_n is a permutation group on n elements[1]. The group M_{24} was originally instantiated by Mathieu as the particular subgroup of S_{24} generated by the 3 arbitrary permutations:[3]

$$a = (1,2,3,...,23)$$
$$b = (3,17,10,7,9)(5,4,13,14,19)(11,12,23,8,18)(21,16,15,20,22)$$
$$c = (1,24)(2,23)(3,12)(4,16)(5,18)(6,10)(7,20)...(8,14)(9,21)(11,17)(13,22)(19,15)$$

This representation is seemingly opaque and unenlightening. R.T Curtis, who presented M_{24} as group actions on an icosatetrahedron, stated that the construction was "clever" but "hardly natural."[3] Modern constructions of M_{24} are often defined as the automorphism group on one of two related finite structures. The first is the Steiner system S(5,8,24), a combinatorial block design shown to be isomorphic to M_{24} by Witt and Carmichael.[4] The second is the extended Golay error-correcting code and

is of primary interest to this review paper.[4] The extended Golay code is distinct from the Steiner System in its tangibility and practical applications. In the paper "Build a Sporadic Group in Your Basement", the authors attempt to leverage this by generating a representation for the automorphism on the extended Golay code that is "as simple as possible." In doing so, they necessarily also generate a natural and enlightening construction for the Mathieu group M_{24}.

Proofs and Results

Building the Sporadic Group M_{24} will require some introductory results from coding theory. For this discussion, we focus on the algebraic properties of codes and omit those relevant to engineering applications. We begin with some notation and definitions.
For simplicity, let F denote the field of binary numbers. Define addition and multiplication on this field by

+	0	1
0	0	1
1	1	0

x	0	1
0	0	0
1	0	1

Figure 1. binary addition and multiplication tables for the field F

Definition 1 (Binary Code)**.** A *Binary Code* with length n is a set of vectors $C = \{c_1, c_2, ..., c_m\}$ where each vector c_i $i = 0, 1, ..., m$, is chosen from F^n. The vectors of this set are called *Codewords*.

It follows from this definition that the set $S = \{[0,0,0],[1,0,0],[0,1,0],[1,1,0]$ is a binary code of length 3.
The vectors $[0,0,0]$ and $[0,1,0]$ are codewords of S. The code S also happens to be closed under vector addition and scalar multiplication. In other words, S comprises a subspace of F^3. This property motivates our next definition.

Definition 2 (Linear Binary Code)**.** A *Linear Binary Code* with dimension k is a binary code that completely exhausts a subspace of F^n with dimension k.

Returning to our example, we see that the vectors $[1,0,0]$ and $[0,1,0]$ form a basis for the code S. In particular, S contains all the vectors generated by that basis. Thus, we say S is a linear code with dimension 2. It is customary to stack basis vectors for a code C as row vectors in a *generator matrix* M. One possible generator matrix for S is

$$M = \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 & 0 \end{bmatrix}$$

Next, we address the *minimum distance* for a linear code. The *distance* between two codewords c_1 and c_2, denoted $\text{dist}(c_1, c_2)$, is the number of coordinates in which c_1 and c_2 differ. The *weight* of a codeword c, $weight(c)$, is then defined to be $\text{dist}(c, \mathbf{0})$

remark. Usually, the minimum distance for a binary code C is the minimum value of the set $\{\text{dist}(c_1, c_2) \mid c_1, c_2 \in C\}$. For this review, we are interested in linear codes which always give $\text{dist}(c_1, c_2) = \text{dist}(c_1 + c_2, 0) = \text{dist}(c_3, 0)$ for some $c_3 \in C$. In this case, the minimum distance is just the smallest *weight* of any codeword $c \in C$.

Definition 3 (Minimum Distance)**.** The *Minimum Distance* of a linear binary code is the minimum value of $\{\text{weight}(c) \mid c \in C\}$.

remark. A linear code with length n, dimension k, and minimum distance d is called an (n, k, d)-code.

The Golay Code

The extended Golay Code will be instrumental in our construction of M_{24}. It is a linear binary $(24, 12, 8)$-code that was introduced by Marcel Golay in 1949. It is most easily assembled by the following greedy algorithm:[4]
First, write down the numbers $0, 1, 2, ..., 2^{24} - 1$ and consider their representations as binary codewords of length 24. Begin by adding 0 to an empty collection of Golay codewords. Now scan the values $1, 2, ..., 2^{n-1}$ and add any value to the collection with distance at least 8 from any of the previously collected codewords. The resulting collection will be the extended Golay code.
The extended Golay code belongs to a special class of linear codes called *self-dual* codes. This property gives us a computationally inexpensive method for recognizing Golay codewords.

Definition 4 (Self-Dual Codes)**.** A linear code C is called *self-dual* if $C = C^{\perp}$, where $C^{\perp} = \{x \mid x \cdot c = 0, \forall c \in C\}$. Note that $c_1 \cdot c_2$ is an inner product defined as the usual dot product modulo 2. It follows from this definition that the Golay codewords are precisely the words that are orthogonal to any given generator matrix for the Golay code.

Equivalent Codes and Automorphisms

Definition 5 (Equivalent Linear Codes)**.** Two Linear Binary Codes C and D of length n are *equivalent* if a coordinate permutation on the codewords of C produces the codewords in D. More precisely, C and D are equivalent if there is a bijective map $\pi : C \to D$ where $\pi(c)$ is a coordinate permutation on the codeword c.

An *Automorphism* is a bijective homomorphism of the form $f : A \to A$. Note that f maps A back onto itself.

Definition 6 (Linear Code Automorphisms)**.** An *Automorphism* on a code C is a coordinate permutation $\pi : C \to C$ which maps the codewords of C back *into* the codewords of C. Such a mapping must be bijective.

Lemma 1. A permutation that maps a basis for a code C to another basis is necessarily an automorphism on C.

Lemma 2. The set of automorphisms on a code C form a group under composition, denoted, Aut(C).

The extended Golay code revisited

We will now explore some properties of the extended Golay code in light of *equivalence* and *automorphisms*. Earlier we mentioned that the extended Golay code is an example of a $(24,12,8)$-code. We will see in the following theorem that any code with this property is equivalent to the extended Golay code.

Theorem 1 (Pless)**.** Let C be a linear binary $(24,12,d)$-code. Then the following statements are equivalent:

1. The minimum weight of C is d.
2. C is equivalent to the extended Golay code.

We also state the following theorem which will serve as our primary tool in constructing a natural representation for M_{24}.

Theorem 2 (Huffman, Pless)**.** The full automorphism group of the extended binary Golay code, denoted Aut(G), is isomorphic to M_{24}.

Theorem 2 has the natural consequence that any subgroup of Aut(G) will be isomorphic to a subgroup of M_{24}. This suggests a clever strategy for constructing M_{24}. If we generate a group by composing two automorphisms of G, then we are guaranteed the resulting subgroup will be isomorphic to a subgroup of M_{24}. Thus we might attempt to build M_{24} by choosing the 'right' pair of automorphisms on G in the hopes that they might exhaust all elements of Aut(G). Such a pair would also generate M_{24}.

Building the Sporadic Group

We now have the necessary vocabulary to discuss a construction of M_{24}. In fact, we will build the group outright.
After expanding on the coding theory we have just presented, the authors of "Build a Sporadic Group in Your Basement" eventually arrive at the following construction for M_{24}. The result is a subgroup of the symmetric group S_{24} generated by two permutations:

$$\tau = (1,2,3,4,5,15,19,11,10,9,12,7,13,14,23,24,17,18,22,6,21,8,20)(16)$$
$$\rho = (1,2,3)(4,5,6)...(22,23,24)$$

The software package **GAP** was used to verify that the group generated by τ and ρ is simple with 244,823,040 elements. This fact along with the following lemma stated in the paper is illuminating.

Lemma 3. The only simple group of order 244, 823, 040 is the Mathieu group M_{24}.

The group constructed by τ and ρ is the Mathieu group M_{24}. We will now attempt to uncover how the authors arrived at this construction. In doing so, we will also show that this is M_{24} through the avenue of Theorem 2. In particular, we show that τ and ρ are both automorphisms on the extended Golay code. To this end, we introduce two new models of the extended Golay code.

Quadratic Residue Model (R)

The Quadratic Residue model is the model originally proposed by Marcel Golay. The generator matrix for the code is produced by the set $\{1,2,3,4,6,8,9,12,13,16,18\}$, the set of numbers q which allow integers solutions to the equation $x^2 \equiv q \pmod{23}$. The first codeword in the generator matrix is the vector with ones in these positions, an additional one in position 24, and the remaining positions zero. The next 11 rows are generated by applying the permutation

$$\sigma = (1,2,3,4,5,15,19,11,10,9,12,7,13,14,23,24,17,18,22,6,21,8,20)(16)$$

to the previously generated row. This yields the generator matrix for the Quadratic Residue model R:

$$Q = \begin{bmatrix}
1&1&1&1&0&1&0&1&1&0&0&1&0&1&0&0&0&0&0&1&1\\
0&1&1&1&1&0&1&0&1&1&0&0&1&0&1&0&0&0&0&1&1\\
0&0&1&1&1&1&0&1&0&1&1&0&0&1&0&1&0&0&0&1&1\\
0&0&0&1&1&1&1&0&1&0&1&1&0&0&1&0&1&0&0&1&1\\
0&0&0&0&1&1&1&1&0&1&0&1&1&0&0&1&0&1&0&1&1\\
0&0&0&0&0&1&1&1&1&0&1&0&1&1&0&0&1&0&1&1&1\\
1&0&0&0&0&0&1&1&1&1&0&1&0&1&1&0&0&1&0&1&1\\
0&1&0&0&0&0&0&1&1&1&1&0&1&0&1&1&0&0&1&1&1\\
1&0&1&0&0&0&0&0&1&1&1&1&0&1&0&1&1&0&0&1&1\\
0&1&0&1&0&0&0&0&0&1&1&1&1&0&1&0&1&1&0&0&1\\
0&0&1&0&1&0&0&0&0&0&1&1&1&1&0&1&0&1&1&0&1\\
0&0&0&1&0&1&0&0&0&0&0&1&1&1&1&0&1&0&1&1&1\\
1&0&0&0&1&0&1&0&0&0&0&0&1&1&1&1&0&1&0&1&1
\end{bmatrix}$$

A moderate amount of python code shows that the permutation σ maps the final row of Q to the vector sum of columns 1,2,3,4,5,8, and 11. This is the only combination of basis codewords in Q which achieves this. Thus σ maps the basis codewords of Q to a new linearly independent basis. By Lemma 1, σ is automorphism on the extended Golay code.

Block-Substitution Model (B)

We now turn our attention to the Block-Substitution model of the Golay code. This model was introduced by the authors of "Build a Sporadic Group in Your Basement." We proceed by substituting the $3x3$ matrix blocks

$$I = \begin{bmatrix}1&0&0\\0&1&0\\0&0&1\end{bmatrix}, \quad \bar{I} = \begin{bmatrix}0&1&1\\1&0&1\\1&1&0\end{bmatrix} \quad J = \begin{bmatrix}1&1&1\\1&1&1\\1&1&1\end{bmatrix} \quad 0 = \begin{bmatrix}0&0&0\\0&0&0\\0&0&0\end{bmatrix} \quad \text{into the matrix} \quad G = \begin{bmatrix}I&0&0&0&\bar{I}&I&I&J\\0&I&0&0&J&\bar{I}&I&I\\0&0&I&0&I&J&\bar{I}&I\\0&0&0&I&I&I&J&\bar{I}\end{bmatrix}$$

The result is our generator matrix G for the Block-Substitution model B. Again, we will seek an automorphism that preserves the basis codewords of our generator matrix G. The cyclic structure of the blocks I, $\bar{I}$, and J suggests the permutation

$$\rho = (1,2,3)(4,5,6)...(22,23,24)$$

Indeed, this permutation completely preserves the row vectors of G. Moreover, it is one of the two permutations we saw earlier that the authors use to build M_{24}.

Taking Stock

We have two automorphisms, σ and ρ which fell naturally out of their respective Golay models R and B. The hope is that these models might be "different" enough that their corresponding automorphisms would generate the full Golay code automorphism group.[3] We cannot directly compose these permutations, though, because they operate on distinct codes. Instead, we will seek an equivalence map from B to R. The resulting map can then be used to express σ as an automorphism on B.

More precisely, for an equivalence map, χ: $B \to R$, and an automorphism σ on R, we are guaranteed that $\chi^{-1}\sigma\chi$ will be an automorphism on B. This follows because $\chi^{-1}\sigma\chi$ is injective and maps codewords of B back into B. Moreover, Theorem 1 promises that this equivalence map exists for our two $(24,12,8)$-code models. It is simply our task to find it.

Bridging the gap from B to R

Finding an equivalence map from B to R is computationally difficult. We're looking for some permutation, χ, which maps each of the 2^{12} codewords of B into some codeword of R. Fortunately, equivalence maps between Golay codes cannot be unique. Any single equivalence map $\kappa : B \to R$ can be combined with a permutation $\beta \in Aut(R)$ so that $\beta\kappa$ is also an equivalence map. Still, we expect valid choices for χ to be sparse. A brute force approach would require searching 24! permutations. Each iteration would test whether a candidate permutation takes the rows of the generator matrix G to words generated by Q. Definition 4 makes this easy since the codewords generated by Q are exactly the words that are orthogonal to Q. However, this added convenience will only be useful once we find a stronger set of constraints to narrow the search space.

We can begin by making a tactical guess. The intersection of our two Golay models, $B \cap R$, contains exactly 4 codewords generated by the basis $\hat{1} = [1,1,...,1]$ and $\hat{z} = [0,1,1,0,0,1,0,0,1,1,0,0,0,0,1,1,1,0,0,1,1,0,1,1]$. The fact that these codewords are contained in both models suggests that χ maps words in $B \cap R$ back to themselves. In particular, we will make the guess that χ fixes $\hat{z}$. This essentially partitions the nonzero coordinates and zero coordinates of $\hat{z}$, given respectively by

$$C = \{2,3,6,9,10,15,16,17,20,21,23,24\}, \quad D = \{1,4,5,7,8,11,12,13,14,18,19,22\}$$

Coordinates in C must be sent to C and coordinates in D must be sent to D. This drastically reduces the search space from 24! to $(12!)^2$ possible permutations to consider. This is an improvement but we can do better by appealing to properties of M_{24}. The original construction of M_{24} is well-known to be a *5-transitive* permutation group. This property guarantees that for distinct elements x_1,x_2,x_3,x_4,x_5 and distinct elements y_1,y_2,y_3,y_4,y_5 chosen from $\{1,2,...,24\}$, there is a permutation in M_{24} which takes the ordered tuple (x_1,x_2,x_3,x_4,x_5) to the ordered tuple (y_1,y_2,y_3,y_4,y_5). Theorem 2 tells us that this property also holds for coordinate permutations of the automorphism group of the code R. In particular, we can always find a permutation $\alpha \in Aut(R)$ which takes a given ordered tuple of coordinates (i_1,i_2,i_3,i_4,i_5) to the coordinates $(1,2,3,4,5)$.
This property allows for another simplifying assumption. Earlier we mentioned that an equivalence map $\kappa : B \to R$ can be combined with an automorphism $\beta \in Aut(R)$ to make an equivalence map $\beta\kappa$. We know that κ must exist and β may be selected to send any 5 coordinates to the coordinates $(1,2,3,4,5)$. Thus there is some equivalence map $\beta\kappa$ which fixes the first five coordinates. We will guess that χ additionally has this property. This further refines our partition into the three sets:

$$F = \{1,2,3,4,5\} \quad C = \{6,9,10,15,16,17,20,21,23,24\} \quad D = \{7,8,11,12,13,14,18,19,22\}$$

where F is the fixed coordinates of χ and C and D are disjoint sets which χ maps independently. This is just the result of moving the coordinates $1-5$ from our original C and D to the set of fixed coordinates F. Note that this is consistent with the hypothesis that χ sends $\hat{z}$ to $\hat{z}$. Moving forward, we will need to borrow some tools from combinatorics to deduce the mappings of individual coordinates in C and D. The codewords of minimum weight $d = 8$ of any Golay code form a t - (v,k,λ) combinatorial block design with parameters $t = 5, v = 24, k = 8$ and $\lambda = 1$. For our purposes, this simply means that for a Golay code model, M, and an ordered 5-tuple of coordinates, (i_1,i_2,i_3,i_4,i_5), there is exactly one minimum-weight codeword in M containing all 1s at these positions. We will leverage this by only considering codewords in B and R with minimum weight. It turns out that the subset of minimum-weight words always forms a basis for a Golay code. So any permutation which satisfies the minimum weight codewords of B and R will satisfy all codewords. We can then use specific 5-tuples of coordinates in F to anchor words in B to corresponding words in R in order to deduce coordinate mappings in C and D.

Determining C and D

Let B' and R' denote the respective subsets of the codewords in B and R having minimum weight, $d = 8$. Note that codewords of B' must map to codewords of R' under an equivalence map. We know that there is exactly one codeword in B' starting with five consecutive 1s. If our assumption that χ fixes the coordinates of F is true, then this word must map to the unique codeword in R' starting with five ones. Searching B' and R' for these words yields the mapping:

$$\begin{aligned}\chi :&[1,1,1,1,1,0,0,0,0,0,0,0,0,0,0,0,\mathbf{1},0,0,1,0,0,1]\\ \to&[1,1,1,1,1,0,0,0,0,0,0,0,0,0,0,1,0,\mathbf{1},0,0,1,0,0,0]\end{aligned}$$

We've bolded the nonzero coordinates of D for illustrative purposes. If our assumptions up to this point have been correct, then the permutation χ must take the set of nonzero coordinates $\{18,21,24\} \to \{16,18,21\}$. Moreover, coordinates in D must be mapped back to coordinates in D. Thus the mapping $18 \to 18$ is determined. We are uncertain about the exact determination of $\{21,24\} \to \{16,21\}$ however the authors argue that additional fixed points are to be expected. Thus we make another simplifying guess and suppose that 21 is fixed while $24 \to 16$. This yields the updated constraints

$$F = \{1,2,3,4,5,18,21\} \quad C = \{6,9,10,15,16,17,20,23,24\} \quad D = \{7,8,11,12,13,14,19,22\} \quad \chi : 24 \to 16$$

We've added two additional fixed coordinates. We could attempt to exploit this by matching a new pair of codewords in B' and R' by a different 5-tuple of coordinates from F, say $(1,2,3,18,21)$. But, this would yield the same mapping we found above. Instead, we can search for codewords with only 4 coordinates of F nonzero. It can be shown that for any choice of these 4 coordinates, B' and R' each contain 4 codewords meeting this criterion. We can narrow this to 3 or even 2 unique codewords if we enforce additional constraints on C and D. The authors take one of many paths following this strategy. They begin by searching for codewords with nonzero coordinates intersecting F in exactly 4 elements and intersecting C in exactly 1. B' and R' each contain 8 pairs of codewords that meet these constraints. They are paired by the particular choice of nonzero coordinates from the set F. This reveals 4 independent mappings of the form $\{b_1,b_2\} \to \{r_1,r_2\}$ where $b_1,b_2 \in B'$ and $r_1,r_2 \in R'$. Each of these mappings must send the respective nonzero coordinates in C back to C. Thus, 2 possible mappings for these coordinates are possible. The authors proceed with some arguably arbitrary guesses about the correspondence of these pairs (I discuss this in the next section and provide a more exhaustive approach). They eventually deduce the equivalence map $\chi = (6,20,23,15)(7,12,11,8,22,19)(9,10)(16,24)$. A quick matrix multiplication verifies that this permutation sends the rows of G to orthogonal codewords of Q. It is an equivalence map taking $B \to R$. Also

$$\chi^{-1}\sigma\chi = (1,2,3,4,5,15,19,11,10,9,12,7,13,14,23,24,17,18,22,6,21,8,20)(16)$$

is an automorphsm on B. This is exactly the permutation τ that we used to construct M_{24}. By Theorem 2, ρ and $\tau = \chi^{-1}\sigma\chi$ are automorphisms on the extended Golay code so they generate M_{24}.

Mathematical Comments - Build a Sporadic Group in your Kaggle Notebook

I chose the paper "Build a Sporadic Group in Your Basement" because I wanted to know more about the finite simple groups. It's fascinating to me that such an abstract classification of symmetry would have 26 outliers. When I first read the paper, I never expected to derive so much enjoyment from reverse-engineering the equivalence map χ. I noticed that the authors use a lot of strategic guessing to tackle this problem. This feels reasonably necessary to establish the sets $F = \{1,2,3,4,5,18,21\}$, $C = \{6,9,10,15,16,17,20,21,23,24\}$, $D = \{7,8,11,12,13,14,18,19,22\}$ and the mapping $\chi : 20 \to 16$. The paper also introduces a brilliant strategy to pair words in B' and R' (weight 8 words in B and R) intersecting F in four nonzero coordinates and C in one nonzero coordinate. What follows from this is a ton of educated guessing. I wanted to discover M_{24} for myself and these guesses felt a bit contrived. I decided to take their specific strategy of constraining F and isolating coordinates in C and run with it by creating a python program to deduce χ exhaustively. In particular, I apply the same strategy to coordinates in D as well. The results are given in the following Kaggle notebook: https://www.kaggle.com/parkerhyde/finding-the-golay-model-equivalence-map. The algorithm proceeds by establishing a key-value map, "from_to_map", which associates coordinates in the domain of χ with sets of potential mappings in the codomain. We don't assume anything to begin with so we initialize the following. Note that I'm using 0-indexing where the ith index represents coordinate $i+1$.

$$\text{from\_to\_map} = \{0 : \text{Infinite\_Set()}, 1 : \text{Infinite\_Set()}, 2 : \text{Infinite\_Set()}, \ldots, 23 : \text{Infinite\_Set()}\}$$

Our goal is to reduce this map to a one-to-one correspondence. When we establish a new constraint on the map, something like $0 \to 1$ or $0 \to 2$, we intersect $\{1,2\}$ with the current set of possible mappings for 0. We start by hard coding the assumptions thus far. All coordinates of F go to F and $20 \to 16$. Now we apply a generalization of the strategy presented in the paper. For all $\binom{7}{4}$ sets $\mathrm{f} \subset F$, $|\mathrm{f}| = 4$, and for each partition $P \in \{C,D\}$ we filter B' and R' for codewords with ones at coordinates f, zeros at coordinates $F \setminus \mathrm{f}$, and with only one coordinate of P nonzero. These filtered codeword sets of B' and R', denoted B^* and R^* respectively, must correspond under χ. In particular, the nonzero coordinates of each word $b \in B^*$ intersecting P, denoted c_b^*, must map to those of $r \in R^*$, denoted c_r^*. For each each index, i, representing the coordinates in c_b^*, we update $\text{from\_to\_map}[i] = \text{from\_to\_map}[i] \cap c_r^*$. The result of this computation gives

$$\begin{aligned}\text{from\_to\_map} = \{&0:\{0\},1:\{1\},2:\{2\},3:\{3\},4:\{4\},5:\{16,19\},6:\{18,11\},7:\{12,21\},8:\{9,23\},\\ &9:\{8,5\},10:\{10,7\},11:\{10,7\},12:\{12,21\},13:\{13,6\},14:\{8,5\},15:\{9,23\},16:\{16,19\},\\ &17:\{17\},18:\{13,6\},19:\{22,14\},20:\{20\},21:\{18,11\},22:\{22,14\},23:\{15\}\}\end{aligned}$$

We've established either an exact mapping or a pair of codomain coordinates for each domain coordinate. Also, each pair in the codomain is mapped to by two coordinates in the domain. Collecting these pairs and isolating undetermined coordinates yields

$$\begin{aligned}\text{determined} &= \{0 \to 0, 1 \to 1, 2 \to 2, 3 \to 3, 4 \to 4, 17 \to 17, 20 \to 20, 23 \to 15\}\\ \text{undetermined} &= \{\{5,16\} \to \{16,19\}, \{6,21\} \to \{18,11\}, \{7,12\} \to \{12,21\}, \{8,15\} \to \{9,23\},\\ &\quad \{9,14\} \to \{8,5\}, \{10,11\} \to \{10,7\}, \{13,18\} \to \{13,6\}, \{19,22\} \to \{22,14\}\}\}\end{aligned}$$

Apparently, we are only 8 binary choices away from determining a potential equivalence map χ. We can generate each of these 256 possible mappings and test them against the generator matrices G and Q without breaking a sweat. At least our CPUs can. I use a bitmask of length 8 to generate the candidates and then verify mappings that take the rows of G to orthogonal codewords of Q. It was no surprise that this computation produced the equivalence map χ presented by the authors of the paper. It was surprising to me that the algorithm also produced a second candidate equivalence map given by

$$\chi' = (6,17,20,15,9,24,16,10)(7,19,14)(8,13,22,12)$$

It is generated by 3 disjoint cycles and shares many fixed points with χ. Conjugating σ by this map gives the automorphism

$$\tau' = \chi'^{-1}\sigma\chi' = (1,2,3,4,5,10,14,12,15,16,11,22,8,19,20,24,6,18,7,17,21,13,23)(9)$$

on the code B. I used the software package **GAP** to verify that ρ and τ' generate a simple group of order 244,823,040. It would seem that ρ and τ' generate an equally valid construction of M_{24}.

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