

# Review: "Build a Sporadic Group in Your Basement"

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## ABSTRACT

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## Introduction

An 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 will see a variety of examples in which a normal subgroup  $N$  of a group  $G$ , yields a factor group  $G/N$  comprised of cosets from the original group.

The group of residue classes 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 normal subgroup of its own 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  $Z_5$ , such as its cyclic nature or prime order, 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 a normal subgroup, it turns out that we can. In fact, classifying these groups is a monstrous research topic which 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. 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 complex. 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. The group  $M_{24}$  was originally instantiated by Mathieu as the particular subgroup of  $S_{24}$  generated by the 3 arbitrary permutations:

$$a = (1, 2, 3, \dots, 23)$$

$$b = (3, 17, 10, 7, 9)(5, 4, 13, 14, 19)(11, 12, 23, 8, 18)(21, 16, 15, 20, 22)$$

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

This representation is opaque and leaves much to be desired for a mathematician seeking a more natural construction. R.T Curtis, who presented  $M_{24}$  as group actions on an icosatetrahedron, stated that the construction was "clever" but "hardly natural." 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. The second is the extended Golay error-correcting code and is of primary interest to this review paper. 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 and definitions from coding theory. For this discussion, we focus on algebraic properties of codes and omit those relevant to engineering applications. These properties are interesting but they are not relevant to the construction of  $M_{24}$ . 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  $C = \{c_1, c_2, \dots, c_m\}$  where each vector  $c_i$   $i = 0, 1, \dots, m$ , 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  $c$ ,  $\text{weight}(c)$ , 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:

First, write down the numbers  $0, 1, 2, \dots, 2^{24} - 1$  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  $1, 2, \dots, 2^{24} - 1$  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 which 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  $\pi : C \rightarrow D$  where  $\pi(c)$  is a coordinate permutation on the codeword  $c$ .

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

**Definition 6** (Linear Code Automorphisms). An *Automorphism* on a code  $C$  is a coordinate permutation  $\pi : C \rightarrow C$  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,  $\text{Aut}(C)$ .

## 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  $\text{Aut}(G)$ , is isomorphic to  $M_{24}$ .

Theorem 2 has the natural consequence that any subgroup of  $\text{Aut}(G)$  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  $\text{Aut}(G)$ . 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:

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

The software package **GAP** was used to verify that the group generated by  $\tau$  and  $\rho$  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  $\tau$  and  $\rho$  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 provide an alternate proof that this is  $M_{24}$  through the avenue of Theorem 2. In particular, we show that  $\tau$  and  $\rho$  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 almost exactly 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:

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

A moderate amount of python code shows that the permutation  $\sigma$  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  $\sigma$  maps the basis codewords of  $Q$  to a new linearly independent basis. By Lemma 1,  $\sigma$  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. 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

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

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

### Taking Stock

We now have two automorphisms,  $\sigma$  and  $\rho$ , which operate on distinct Golay code models  $R$  and  $B$ .

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

More precisely, for an equivalence map,  $\chi: B \rightarrow R$ , and an automorphism  $\sigma$  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 a computationally difficult problem. We're looking for some permutation,  $\chi$ , 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  $\kappa: B \rightarrow R$  can be combined with a permutation  $\beta \in \text{Aut}(R)$  so that  $\beta\kappa$  is also an equivalence map. Still, we expect valid choices for  $\chi$  to be sparse.

A brute force approach would require searching the entire space of  $24!$  permutations. Each iteration would test whether a candidate permutation takes the rows of the generator matrix  $G$  to words generated by  $Q$ . Definition 3 makes this easy since the codewords generated by  $Q$  are exactly the words which 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  $\hat{1} = [1, 1, \dots, 1]$  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  $\chi$  maps words in  $B \cap R$  back to themselves. In particular, we will make the guess that  $\chi$  fixes  $\hat{z}$ . This essentially partitions the nonzero coordinates and zero coordinates of  $\hat{z}$ , given respectively by

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

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  $\{1, 2, \dots, 24\}$ , 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  $\alpha \in \text{Aut}(R)$  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  $\kappa : B \rightarrow R$  can be combined with an automorphism  $\beta \in \text{Aut}(R)$  to make an equivalence map  $\beta\kappa$ . We know that  $\kappa$  must exist and  $\beta$  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  $\chi$  additionally has this property. This further refines our partition into the three sets:

where  $F$  is the fixed coordinates of  $\chi$  and  $C$  and  $D$  are disjoint sets which  $\chi$  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  $\chi$  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  $t - (v, k, \lambda)$  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  $D$ .

We've bolded the nonzero coordinates of  $D$  for illustrative purposes. If our assumptions up to this point have been correct, then the permutation  $\chi$  must take the set of nonzero coordinates  $\{18, 21, 24\} \rightarrow \{16, 18, 21\}$ . Moreover, coordinates in  $D$  must be mapped back to coordinates in  $D$ . Thus the mapping  $18 \rightarrow 18$  is determined. We are uncertain about the exact determination of  $\{21, 24\} \rightarrow \{16, 21\}$  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  $24 \rightarrow 16$ . This yields the updated constraints

## Mathematical Comments

$$F = \{1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 18, 21\}$$

**Theorem 3.** Suppose that  $f = \{f_1, f_2, f_3, f_4\}$  is a set of distinct coordinates chosen from  $F$ . Then  $B'$  and  $R'$  each contain 4 codewords having ones at the coordinates  $f_1, f_2, f_3, f_4$  and zeros at coordinates  $F \setminus \{f_1, f_2, f_3, f_4\}$ .

*Proof.* For convenience, we will prove the result for  $B'$  and then generalize the result to  $R'$ . They are both sets of minimum-weight Golay code words which form a  $5 - (24, 8, 1)$  block design. Thus, they are interchangeable for our purposes.

Let  $f = \{f_1, f_2, f_3, f_4\}$  be any set of 4 coordinates in  $F$ . First we show that  $B'$  contains exactly 5 words which are full-weight at  $f$ . We call a word *full-weight* at a set of coordinates if it has all ones at those coordinates. Also, we call sets of  $n$  coordinates  $n$ -sets. Codewords of  $B'$  have weight  $d = 8 \geq 5$ . Thus a codeword  $c$  in  $B'$  is full-weight at  $f$  iff  $c$  is full-weight at a 5-set containing  $f$ . So the number of words that are full-weight at  $f$  is exactly the number of words that are full-weight at a 5-set containing  $f$ . We have 24 total coordinates so there are  $24 - 4 = 20$  different 5-sets containing  $f$ . Each 5-set selects a single word which is full-weight at that 5-set, but multiple 5-sets may select the same word. Any word containing one of our 20 5-sets must also contain  $f$  and therefore contain  $8 - 4 = 4$  of our 20 5-sets containing  $f$ . So our 20 5-sets come in multiples of 4 which will be full-weight on the same word. Hence, there are  $\frac{20}{4} = 5$  words which are full-weight at 5-sets containing  $f \implies$  there are exactly 5 words in  $B'$  which are full-weight at  $f$ . overlapping 5-tuples. This implies that the same is true for  $R'$ . Now, for any choice of  $f$ , then  $b_1 = [1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 1, 0, 0, 1, 0, 0, 1]$  and  $r_1 = [1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 1, 0, 1, 0, 0, 1, 0, 0, 0]$  which are known to be in  $B'$  and  $R'$  respectively will 1 of the 5 full-weight words at  $f$ . If we then restrict the coordinates at  $F \setminus f$  to be all zero, then these words vanish but the others must remain.  $b_1$  and  $r_1$  can be the only words in  $B'$  and  $R'$  with 5 or more nonzero coordinates in  $F$ . Hence  $B'$  and  $R'$  each contain  $5 - 1 = 4$  codewords having ones at  $f$  and zeros at  $F \setminus f$ .  $\square$

### 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 classification of the finite simple groups. It's fascinating to me that such an abstract classification of symmetry would have 26 outliers. For this reason, I never expected to derive so much enjoyment from the problem of reverse engineering an equivalence map  $\chi$  between the codes  $B$  and  $R$ . I noticed that the authors use a lot of strategic guessing to narrow down the space of possibilities. This feels reasonably necessary, at least in order 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 particular mapping  $\chi : 20 \rightarrow 16$ . The paper then 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 feel like I was building  $M_{24}$  from the ground up 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 to create a python program that would find  $\chi$  for me. In particular I apply the same strategy to coordinates in  $D$  as well. The results of this program are given in the following Kaggle notebook. First I needed to write some classes to represent the structure of the Golay codes and also the partitions  $F, C, D$ . Then the algorithm proceeds by establishing a key value map, "from\_to\_map", which associates coordinates in the domain of  $\chi$  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 for this program.

```
from_to_map = {0 : Infinite_Set(), 1 : Infinite_Set(), 2 : Infinite_Set(), ..., 23 : Infinite_Set()}
```

## References

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Author contributions statement

Must include all authors, identified by initials, for example: A.A. conceived the experiment(s), A.A. and B.A. conducted the experiment(s), C.A. and D.A. analysed the results. All authors reviewed the manuscript.

Additional information

To include, in this order: **Accession codes** (where applicable); **Competing interests** (mandatory statement).  
The corresponding author is responsible for submitting a [competing interests statement](#) on behalf of all authors of the paper. This statement must be included in the submitted article file.



**Figure 2.** Legend (350 words max). Example legend text.

| Condition | n  | p    |
|-----------|----|------|
| A         | 5  | 0.1  |
| B         | 10 | 0.01 |

**Table 1.** Legend (350 words max). Example legend text.

Figures and tables can be referenced in LaTeX using the ref command, e.g. Figure 2 and Table 1.