

# Grover search algorithm

Quantum Computing Minicourse ICTP-SAIFR

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8 April 2024

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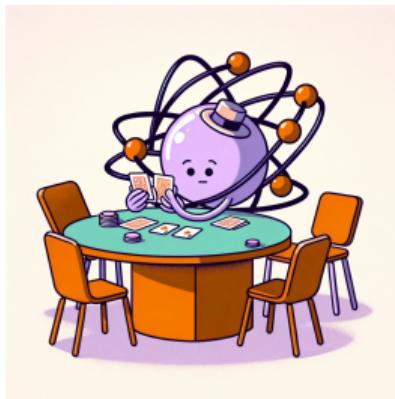
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# Motivation

The Grover algorithm is powerful when searching an item among an unordered set of candidates.

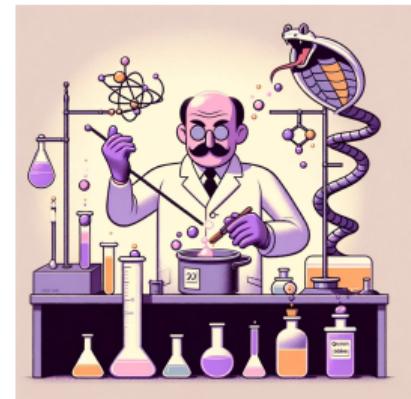
Extract the jack of clubs from a Poker deck



Find a passcode composed of 10 numbers



Find an antidote to the Cobra poison, exploring  $10^{20}$  molecules



?

How many attempts could you need, in the worst scenario, to explore all the possibilities?

⚠

In the worst scenario, you will need to check 52 cards,  $10^{10}$  passcodes and  $10^{20}$  molecules.

# Quadratic speedup

If we consider a time cost of  $\delta = 10^{-8}$  seconds for any algorithmic call (quantum or classical) we would wait:

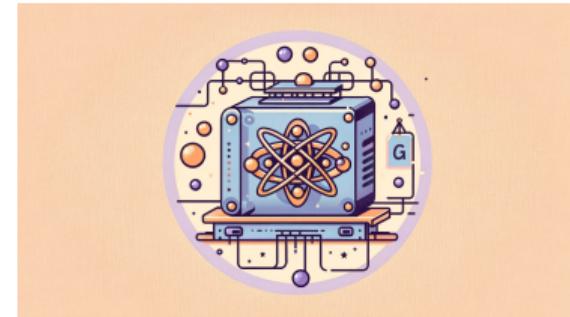
## On a classical computer

- $0.52 \mu\text{s}$  to find the jack of clubs;
- 100 seconds to find the passcode;
- $\sim 31688$  years to find the Cobra antidote.



## On a quantum computer

- $0.0721 \mu\text{s}$  to find the jack of clubs;
- 0.001 seconds to find the passcode;
- 100 seconds to find the Cobra antidote.



The Grover algorithm solves this kind of search with a number of algorithmic calls proportional to  $\sqrt{N}$ , where  $N$  is the dimension of the search space.

## The Grover algorithm

The key steps of the Grover algorithm:

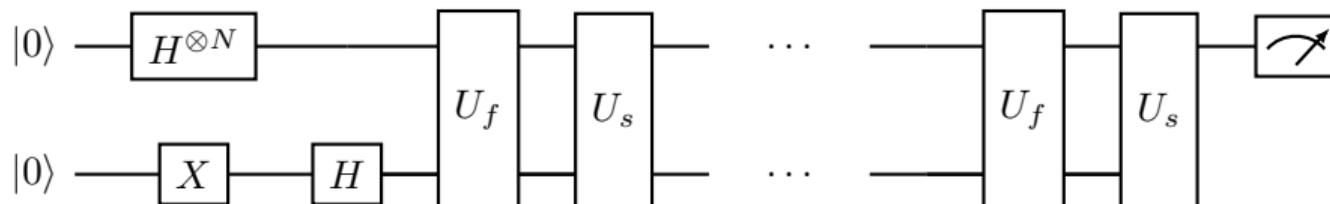
1. prepare a system of  $N$  qubits into a maximally superposed state;
2. prepare an ancilla qubit into the  $|-\rangle$  state;
3. apply an oracle operator  $U_f$  which can mark the correct solution;
4. apply a diffusion operator  $U_s$  which amplifies the correct solution;
5. repeat 3. and 4. for the optimal number of times.

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In terms of quantum circuit:



## step 1 and 2: the state preparation

We consider a set of  $2^N$  unordered items and we encode them into the state of an  $N$  qubits system:

$$\begin{bmatrix} \text{item}_1 \\ \text{item}_2 \\ \dots \\ \text{item}_{2^N} \end{bmatrix} \rightarrow |\psi\rangle = \begin{bmatrix} \psi_{00\dots 0} \\ \psi_{00\dots 1} \\ \dots \\ \psi_{11\dots 1} \end{bmatrix} \equiv \begin{bmatrix} x_0 \\ x_1 \\ \dots \\ x_{2^N-1} \end{bmatrix}.$$

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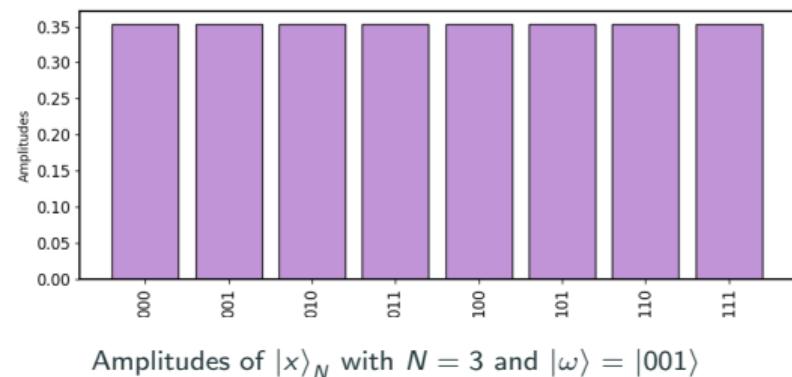
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The first step of the algorithm is the state preparation into the following superposed state:

$$H^{\otimes N+1} |0\rangle_N |1\rangle = \left[ \frac{1}{2^{N/2}} \sum_{i=0}^{2^N-1} |x_i\rangle \right] \otimes |-\rangle.$$

We move the system state from the computational zero to the maximally superposed state  $|s\rangle$ .



### Step 3: the oracle $U_f$

We consider now a function  $f : \{0,1\}^N \rightarrow \{0,1\}$  which can detect the correct solution  $|\omega\rangle$ :

$$f(x) = \begin{cases} 1 & \text{if } x = \omega, \\ 0 & \text{otherwise.} \end{cases}$$

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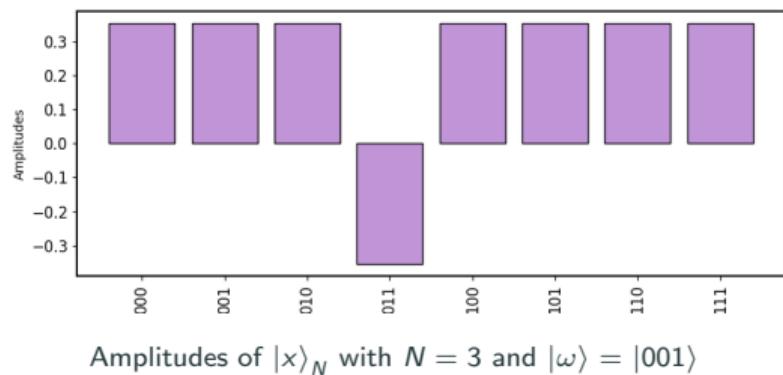
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In practice, this can be done by setting up a multi-controlled operation which applies a phase kickback only if the control state is  $|\omega\rangle$ .

$$U_f |x\rangle |-\rangle = (-1)^{f(x)} |x\rangle |-\rangle,$$

where  $f(x)$  follows the rule exposed before.



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whose action is a reflection of the system with respect to the state:

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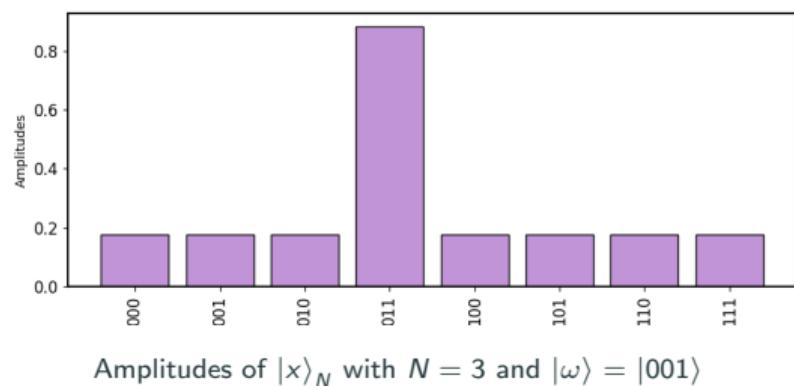
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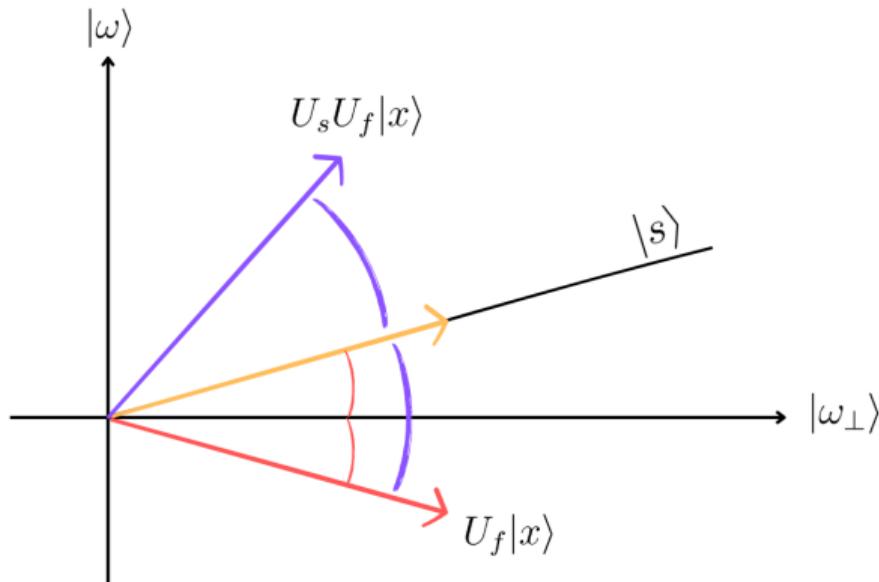
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$U_s$  is also known as “**inversion by the mean**”, in fact, it can be shown it implements an inversion w.r.t. the mean value of the amplitudes of  $|x\rangle$ .



## Graphical intuition

We can visualize the Grover's action using vectors.



We are iteratively moving the system state through the target  $|\omega\rangle$ .

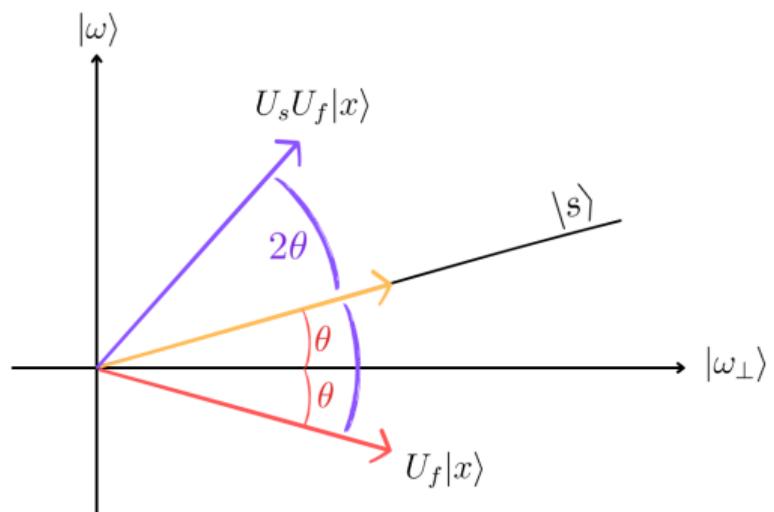
## How many times do we need to iterate Grover?

As we can deduce from the previous slide, there exist an **optimal number** of Grover iterations fixed by geometry.

1. we can decompose  $|x\rangle$  into the *winning* and the *losing* components  $|s\rangle = \sqrt{\frac{1}{N}}|\omega\rangle + \sqrt{\frac{N-1}{N}}|\omega_{\perp}\rangle$ .
2. The same vector can be defined in terms of the angle in the plane:  $|s\rangle = \sin \theta |\omega\rangle + \cos \theta |\omega_{\perp}\rangle$ .
3. from 1. and 2. we can write  $\theta = \arcsin(1/\sqrt{N})$   
and, if  $N$  is large,  $\theta \approx 1/\sqrt{N}$ .
4. the action of  $U_s U_f$  on  $|x\rangle$  is equal to a rotation of  $2\theta$  of the vector.
5. after  $k$  iteration of Grover, the angle has become:  
 $\alpha = (2k+1)\theta$ , and, to maximize  $\sin \alpha$ :

$$\alpha = \frac{\pi}{2} \rightarrow k = \frac{\pi}{4\theta} - \frac{1}{2} = \frac{\pi}{4} \sqrt{N} - \frac{1}{2}.$$

6. from 5. we need to get an integer, since we are talking about iterations. Commonly  $\theta \approx \frac{\pi}{4} \sqrt{N}$ .



# Let's code!

