

Topic - Recursion

Difficulty Hard: Number Of Binary Tree Topologies

Write a function that takes in a non-negative integer n and returns the number of possible Binary Tree topologies that can be created with exactly n nodes. A Binary Tree topology is defined as any Binary Tree configuration, irrespective of node values. For instance, there exist only two Binary Tree topologies when n is equal to 2: a root node with a left node, and a root node with a right node. Note that when n is equal to 0, there's one topology that can be created: the none/null node.

Sample Input

$n = 3$

Sample Output

5

Hint:

Every Binary Tree topology of n nodes where n is greater than 0 must have a root node and an amount of nodes on both of its sides totaling $n - 1$. For instance, one such topology could have a root node, $n - 3$ nodes in its left subtree, and 2 nodes in its right subtree. Another one could have a root node, 4 nodes in its left subtree, and $n - 3$ nodes in its right subtree. How many distinct Binary Tree topologies with a root node, a left subtree of x nodes, and a right subtree of $n - 1 - x$ nodes are there? Consider a Binary Tree topology of n nodes with a root node, x nodes in its left subtree, and $n - 1 - x$ nodes in its right subtree, and call this topology T_1 . This is one of possibly many topologies of n nodes. Realize that for every distinct topology T_{Lk} of x nodes (i.e. for every distinct topology of T_1 's left subtree) there is a corresponding, distinct topology of as many nodes as T_1 . Similarly, for every distinct topology T_{Rk} of $n - 1 - x$ nodes (i.e. for every distinct topology of T_1 's right subtree) there is a corresponding, distinct topology of as many nodes as T_1 . In fact, every unique combination of left and right topologies T_{Lk} and T_{Rk} forms a distinct topology of as many

nodes as T_1 , and this is true for every x between 0 and $n - 1$. Realizing this, can you implement a recursive algorithm that solves this problem? Iterate through every number x between 0 and $n - 1$ inclusive; at every number x , recursively calculate the number of distinct topologies of x nodes and multiply that by the number of distinct topologies of $n - 1 - x$ nodes. Sum all of the products that you calculate to find the total number of distinct topologies of n nodes. Can you improve the recursive algorithm mentioned above by using a caching system (memoization)? Can you implement the algorithm iteratively? Is there any advantage to doing so?

Space-Time Complexity:

$O(n^2)$ time | $O(n)$ space - where n is the input number