Abstract

Quantum Fourier Sampling, the Hidden Subgroup Problem, and Beyond

by

Sean Joseph Hallgren

Doctor of Philosophy in Computer Science

University of California, Berkeley

Professor Umesh V. Vazirani, Chair

The Hidden Subgroup Problem (HSP) provides the fundamental framework for most quantum algorithms. Until very recently, all known problems where quantum computation provides a super-polynomial speedup over classical algorithms have been variants of the HSP for particular abelian groups. Examples include factoring integers and computing the discrete log, for which Shor found efficient quantum algorithms. The algorithm for these problems may be viewed as consisting of the main HSP solution plus an ad hoc method of dealing with the particular variant. In this dissertation, we give a systematic way of dealing with all these variants. The key component of our solution is a new theorem about the robustness of Fourier sampling. The purpose of this theorem is to better understand the structure underlying existing algorithms as well as to provide an algorithmic tool for the construction of future quantum algorithms. In addition, we also derive a new algorithm for computing the quantum Fourier transform which is asymptotically faster than
any previously known algorithm.

By contrast, the nonabelian HSP is wide open. It includes as a special case the longstanding open question of graph isomorphism, where the group is the symmetric group, $S_n$. It is natural to carry over the abelian HSP algorithm to the nonabelian case. We show that in the case that the hidden subgroup is normal, this algorithm succeeds in reconstructing the subgroup in polynomial time. On the other hand, we give evidence that this algorithm is inadequate to even distinguish a trivial subgroup from an involution in the case of the symmetric group.

Finally, we give an algorithm for the Shifted Legendre Symbol Problem and its variants. There is some evidence that this is an intractable problem classically, and a closely related problem has been proposed as a cryptographic primitive. Perhaps the most interesting aspect of this new quantum algorithm is that it appears to go beyond the framework of the HSP.

Professor Umesh V. Vazirani
Dissertation Committee Chair
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