6.5240 Sub-linear Time Algorithms

Prof. Ronitt Rubinfeld
TA: Shyan Akmal
Course Administrator: Joanne Hanley

What is this course about?

Big data?

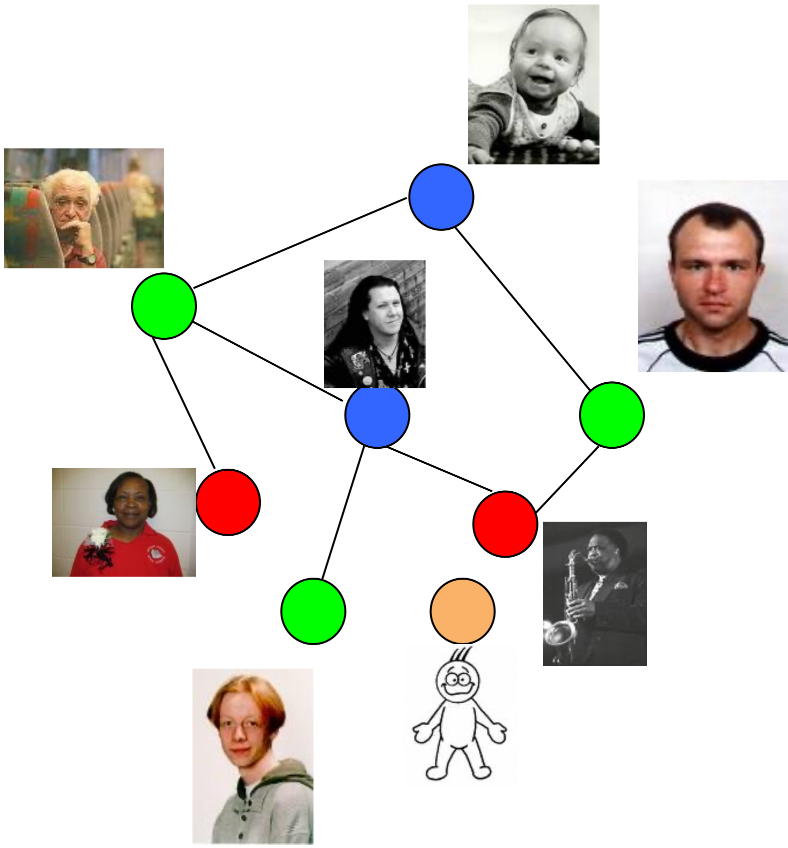
Really Big data

Impossible to access all of it

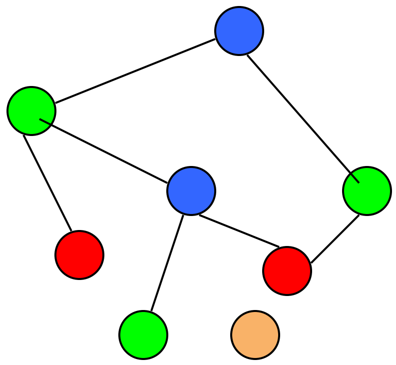
Small world phenomenon

Social network graph:

- each "node" is a person
- "edge" between people that know each other



Connectivity properties



- *“connected”* if every pair can reach each other
- *“distance’’* between two nodes is the minimum number of edges to reach one from another
- *“diameter’’* is the maximum distance between any pair

Small world property

"Six degrees of separation"

In our language:

diameter of the world population is 6

Does earth have the small world property?

- How can we know?
  - data collection problem is immense
  - unknown groups of people found on earth
  - births/deaths

- Stanley Milgram's 1963 experiment?

The Gold Standard

- linear time algorithms
  - Inadequate…

Approaches when input is too big to view?

- Ignore the problem

- Develop algorithms for dealing with such data

What can we hope to do without viewing most of the data?

- Can't answer "for all" or "there exists" and other "exactly" type statements:
  - are *all* individuals connected by at most 6 degrees of separation?
  - *exactly* how many individuals on earth are left-handed?

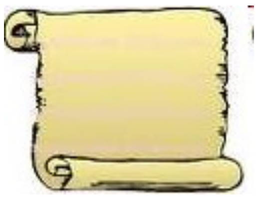
- Maybe can answer?
  - is there a *large* group of individuals connected by at most 6 degrees of separation?
  - is the *average* pairwise distances of a graph roughly 6?
  - *approximately* how many individuals on earth are left-handed?

What can we hope to do without viewing most of the data?

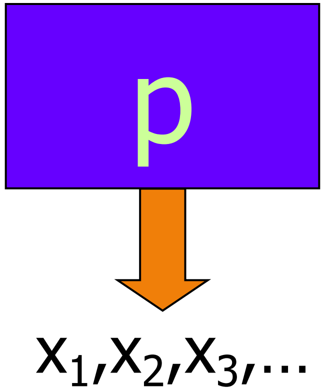
- Must compromise:
  - for most interesting problems: algorithm must give *approximate* answer
- we know we can answer *some* questions...
  - e.g., sampling to approximate average, median values

Sublinear time models:

- Random Access Queries
  - Can access any word of input in one step
  - How is the input represented?



- Samples
  - Can get sample of a distribution in one step,
  - Alternatively, can only get random word of input in one step
    - When computing functions depending on frequencies of data elements
    - When data in random order



Isn’t this just

- Randomized algorithms
- Approximation algorithms
- Statistics
- Learning
- Communication complexity
- Parallel/distributed algorithms?

Course requirements

- Scribing: 25%
  - Signup on web
  - Must be in latex
  - Draft 2 days after lecture

- Problem sets: 35%
- Project: 25%
- Class participation (includes grading): 15%

Course website

- https://people.csail.mit.edu/ronitt/COURSE/F22/
- Announcements
- Pointer to piazza site
- Lecture notes: Posted before lecture
- Homeworks: Check for updates and hints.
- Scribe and grading instructions
- Project ideas
- Probability review

Canvas

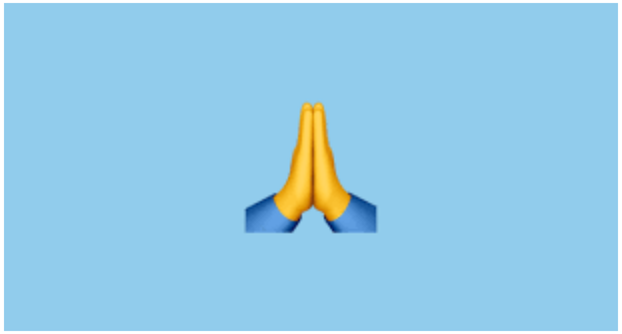
- Pset submissions and solutions
- Announcements (with email notification)

Piazza

Please:

help each other without giving too much information!

be nice to each other!



Caution: anonymous to class but NOT to staff

Project Possibilities

- Read a paper or two or three
  - Explain some lemmas
  - Suggest some open problems
  - Even better -- Make some progress on them, or at least explain what you tried and why it didn't work

- Implement an algorithm or two or three

Can work in groups of 2-3

Plan for this lecture

- Introduce sublinear time algorithms

- Basic algorithms
  - Estimating diameter of a point set
  - Estimating the number of connected components of a graph

Scribe?

I. Classical Approximation Problems

First:

- A very simple example –
  - Deterministic
  - Approximate answer
  - And (of course)…. sub-linear time!

Approximate the diameter of a point set

- Given: m points, described by a distance matrix D, s.t.
  - D_{ij} is the distance from i to j.
  - D satisfies triangle inequality and symmetry.

  (note: input size $n = m^2$)
- Let i, j be indices that maximize D_{ij} then D_{ij} is the *diameter.*
- Output: k,l such that $D_{kl} \geq D_{ij}/2$

2-multiplicative approximation

Algorithm

- Algorithm:
  - Pick k arbitrarily
  - Pick l to maximize D_{kl}
  - Output D_{kl}
- Running time? $O(m) = O(n^{1/2})$
- Why does it work?

$D_{ij} \leq D_{ik} + D_{kj}$ (triangle inequality)

$\leq D_{kl} + D_{kl}$ (choice of l + symmetry of D)

$\leq 2D_{kl}$ (so D_{kl} is at least diameter/2)