

Lecture 15: Basic Graph Algorithms II

Michael Dinitz

October 14, 2025

601.433/633 Introduction to Algorithms

Introduction

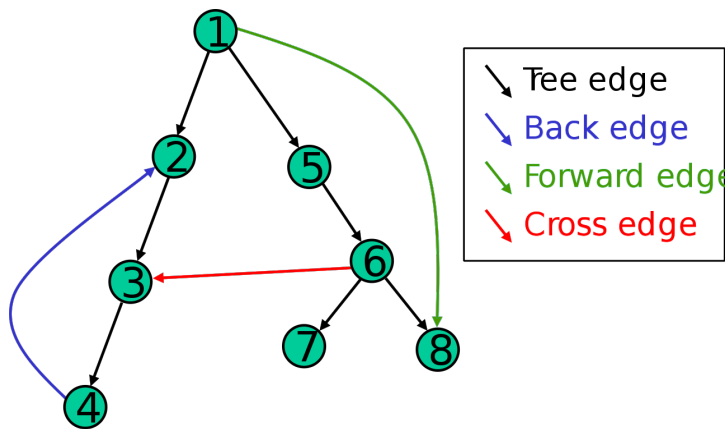
Last time: BFS and DFS

Today: Topological Sort, Strongly Connected Components

- ▶ Both very classical and important uses of DFS!

Edge Types

DFS naturally gives a spanning forest: edge (v, u) if $\text{DFS}(v)$ calls $\text{DFS}(u)$



Forward Edges: (v, u) such that u descendent of v (includes tree edges)

$$start(v) < start(u) < finish(u) < finish(v)$$

Back Edges: (v, u) such that u an ancestor of v

$$start(u) < start(v) < finish(v) < finish(u)$$

Cross Edges: (v, u) such that u neither a descendent nor an ancestor of v

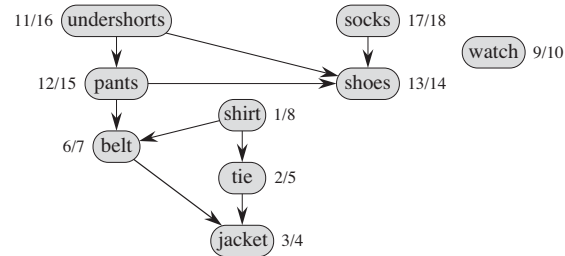
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Topological Sort

Definitions

Definition

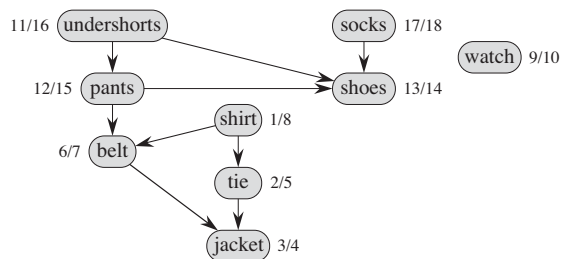
A directed graph G is a *Directed Acyclic Graph (DAG)* if it has no directed cycles.



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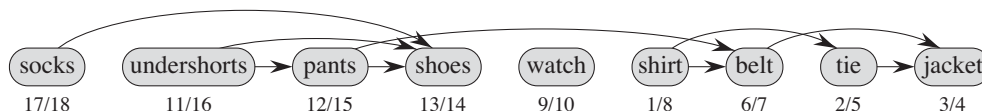
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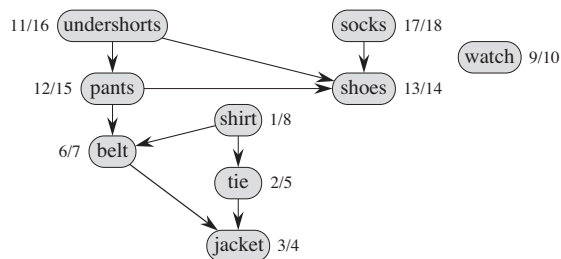
A *topological sort* $v_1, v_2, \dots, v_n$ of a DAG is an ordering of the vertices such that all edges are of the form (v_i, v_j) with $i < j$.



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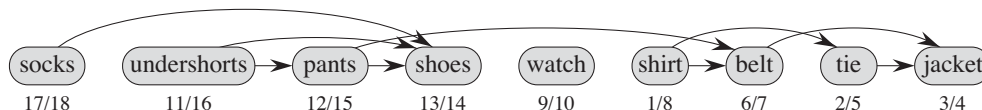
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Q: Can we always topological sort a DAG? How fast?

Topological Sort

Algorithm (informal): Run $\text{DFS}(\mathbf{G})$. When $\text{DFS}(\mathbf{v})$ returns, put $\mathbf{v}$ at beginning of list



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```
DFS( $\mathbf{G}$ ) {  
    list  $\rightarrow$  head = NULL;  
     $t = 0$ ;  
    for all  $\mathbf{v} \in \mathbf{V}$  {  
        start( $\mathbf{v}$ ) = 0;  
        finish( $\mathbf{v}$ ) = 0;  
    }  
    while  $\exists \mathbf{v} \in \mathbf{V}$  with start( $\mathbf{v}$ ) = 0 {  
        DFS( $\mathbf{v}$ );  
    }  
}
```

```
DFS( $\mathbf{v}$ ) {  
     $t = t + 1$ ;  
    start( $\mathbf{v}$ ) =  $t$ ;  
    for each edge  $(\mathbf{v}, \mathbf{u}) \in \mathbf{A}[\mathbf{v}]$  {  
        if start( $\mathbf{u}$ ) == 0 then DFS( $\mathbf{u}$ );  
    }  
     $t = t + 1$ ;  
    finish( $\mathbf{v}$ ) =  $t$ ;  
    temp = list  $\rightarrow$  head;  
    list  $\rightarrow$  head =  $\mathbf{v}$ ;  
    list  $\rightarrow$  head  $\rightarrow$  next = temp;  
}
```

Characterizing DAGs

Theorem

A directed graph $\mathbf{G}$ is a DAG if and only if $\text{DFS}(\mathbf{G})$ has no back edges.

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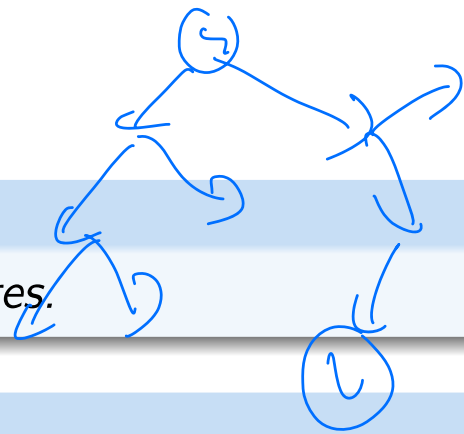
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If ($\Leftarrow$): contrapositive. If $\mathbf{G}$ has a directed cycle $\mathbf{C}$:

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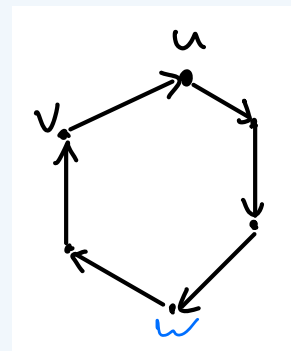


Proof.

Only if ($\Rightarrow$): contrapositive. If G has a back edge: Directed cycle! Not a DAG.

If ($\Leftarrow$): contrapositive. If G has a directed cycle C :

- ▶ Let $u \in C$ with minimum start value, v predecessor in cycle
- ▶ All nodes in C reachable from $u \implies$ all nodes in C descendants of u
- ▶ (v, u) a back edge



Topological Sort Analysis

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Running Time:

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Running Time: Same as DFS! $O(m + n)$

Strongly Connected Components (SCC)

Definitions

Another application of DFS. “Kosaraju’s Algorithm”: Developed by Rao Kosaraju, professor emeritus at JHU CS!

$G = (V, E)$ a directed graph.

Definition

$C \subseteq V$ is a *strongly connected component (SCC)* if it is a *maximal* subset such that for all $u, v \in C$, u can reach v and vice versa (bireachable).

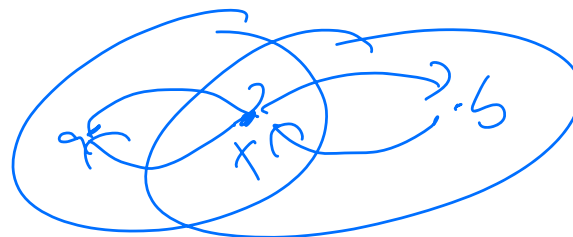
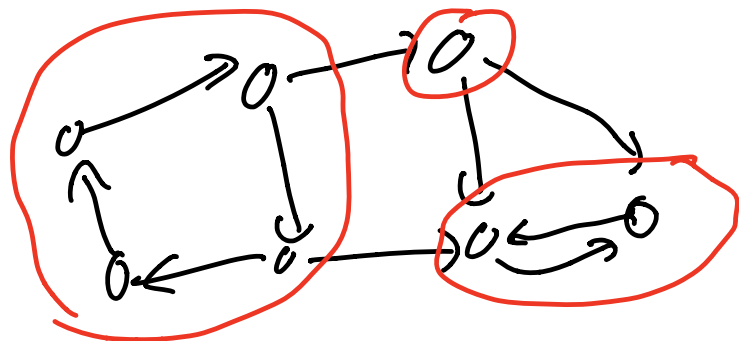
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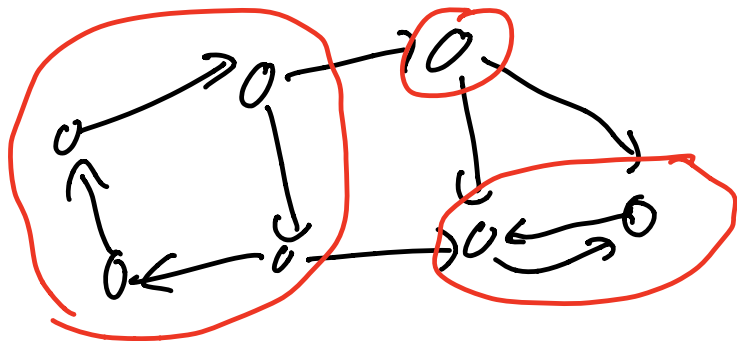
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Fact: There is a *unique* partition of V into SCCs



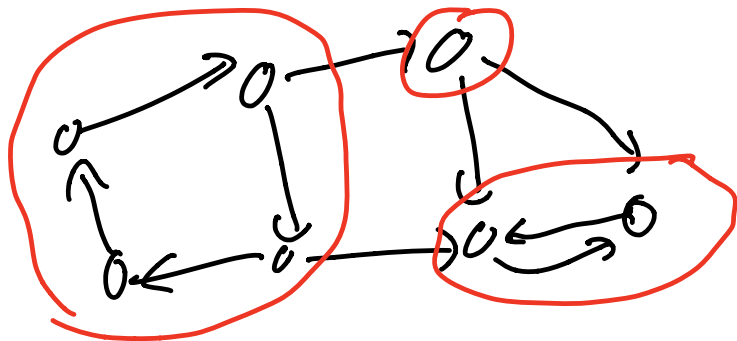
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Proof: Bireachability is an equivalence relation: if u and v are bireachable, and v and w are bireachable, then u and w are bireachable.

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Problem: Given $\mathbf{G}$, compute SCCs (partition $\mathbf{V}$ into the SCCs)

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Can we do better? $O(m + n)$?

Graph of SCCs

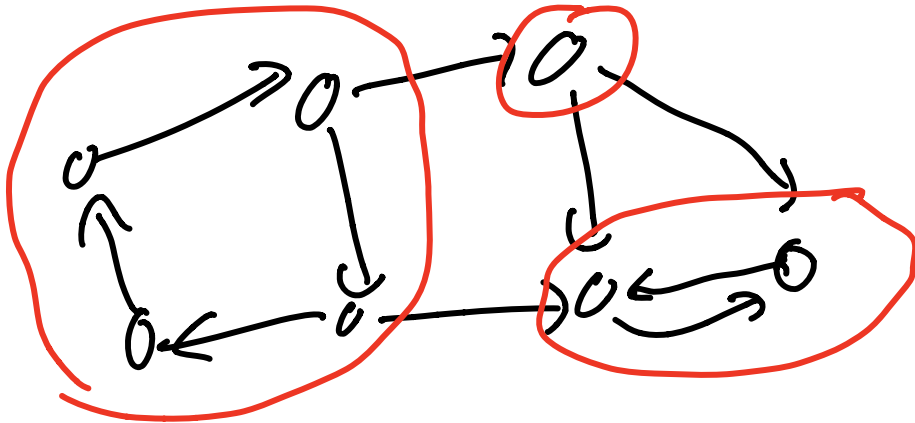
Definition: Let $\hat{G}$ be graph of SCCs:

- ▶ Vertex $\mathbf{v}(\mathbf{C})$ for each SCC $\mathbf{C}$
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Graph of SCCs: Structure

Theorem

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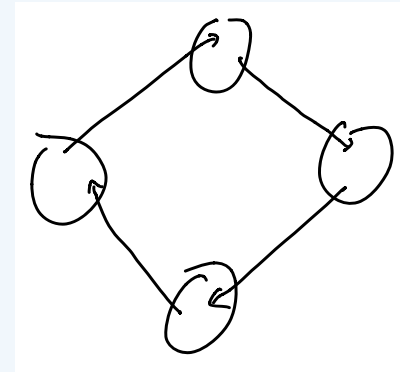
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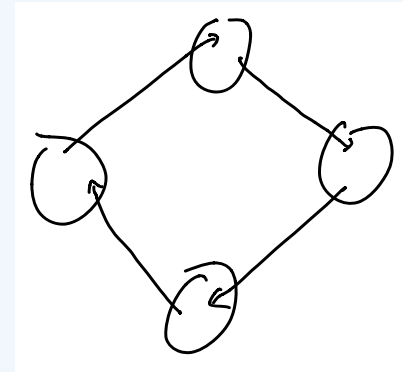
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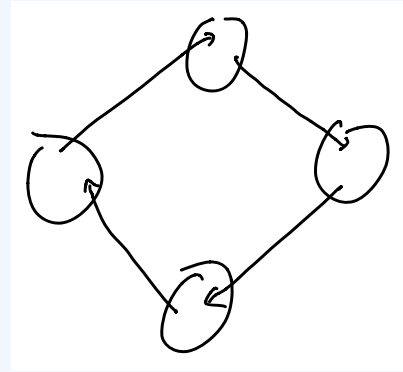
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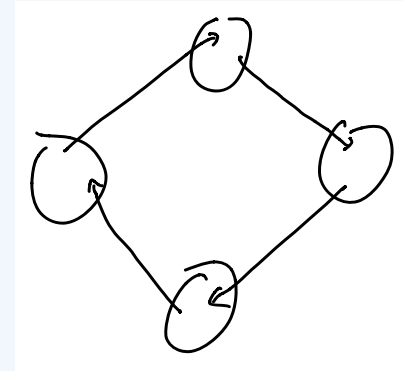
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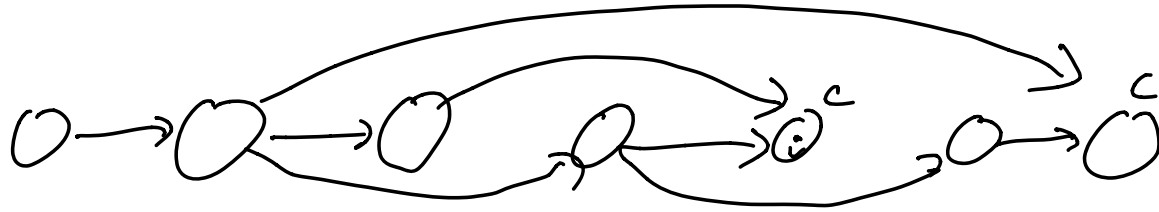
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Contradiction!



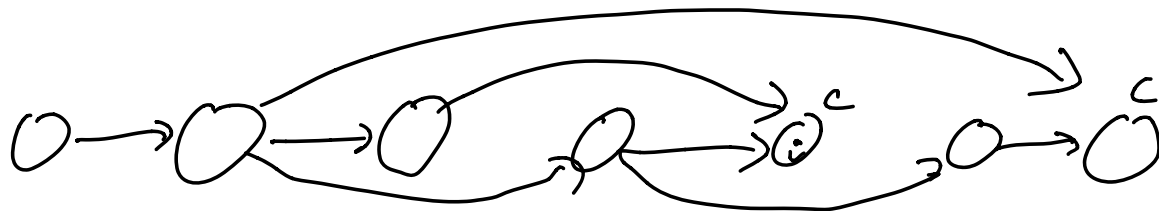
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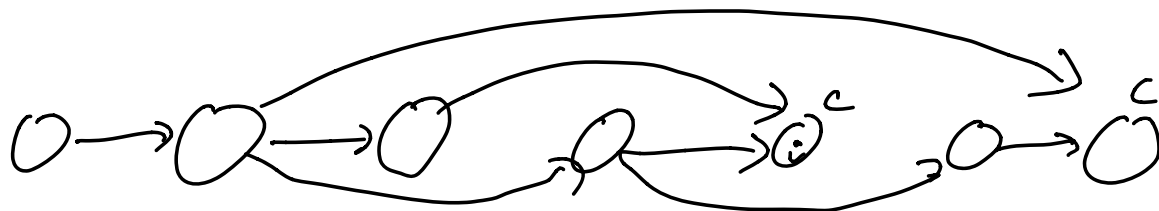


Definition: SCC $\mathbf{C}$ is a *sink* SCC if no outgoing edges, *source* SCC if no incoming edges

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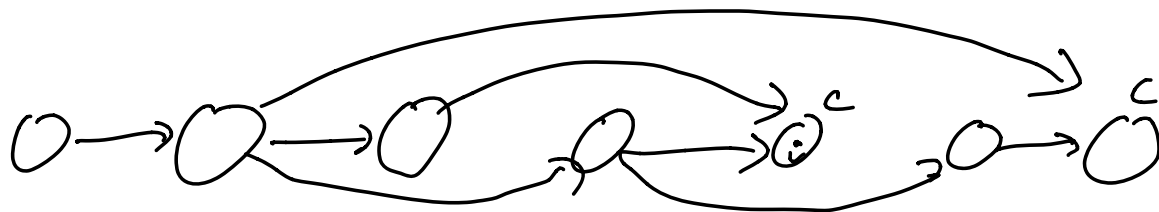


Definition: SCC C is a *sink* SCC if no outgoing edges, *source* SCC if no incoming edges

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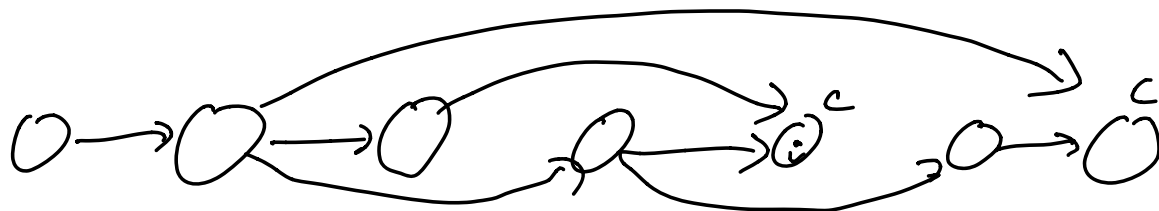
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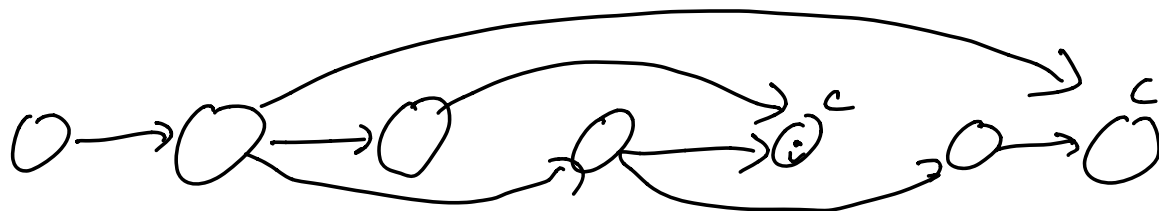
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Strategy: find node in sink SCC, run DFS, remove nodes found, repeat

SCCs and DFS

Run DFS($\mathbf{G}$), and let $\mathbf{finish}(\mathbf{C}) = \max_{v \in C} \mathbf{finish}(v)$

Lemma

Let $\mathbf{C}_1, \mathbf{C}_2$ distinct SCCs s.t. $(v(\mathbf{C}_1), v(\mathbf{C}_2)) \in E(\hat{\mathbf{G}})$. Then $\mathbf{finish}(\mathbf{C}_1) > \mathbf{finish}(\mathbf{C}_2)$.

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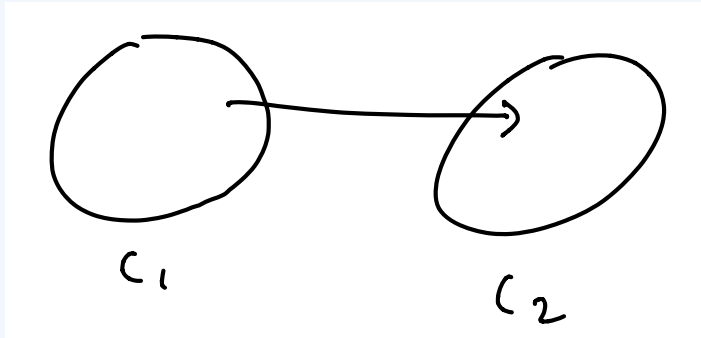
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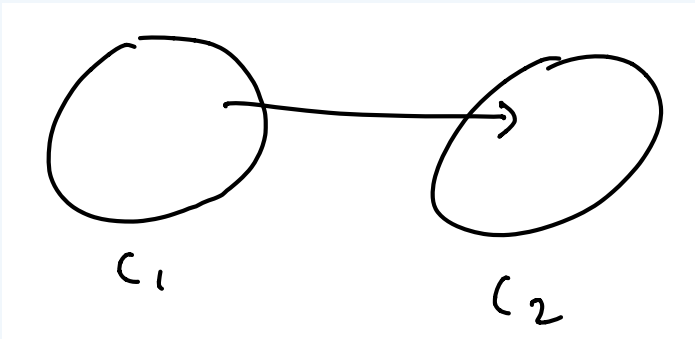
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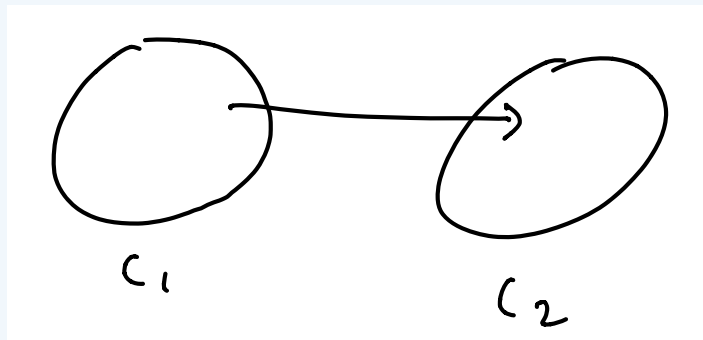
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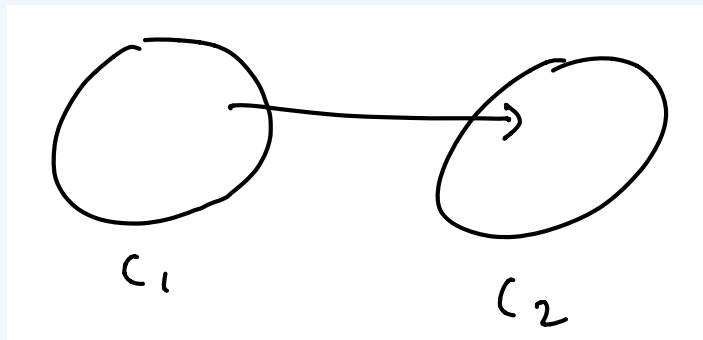
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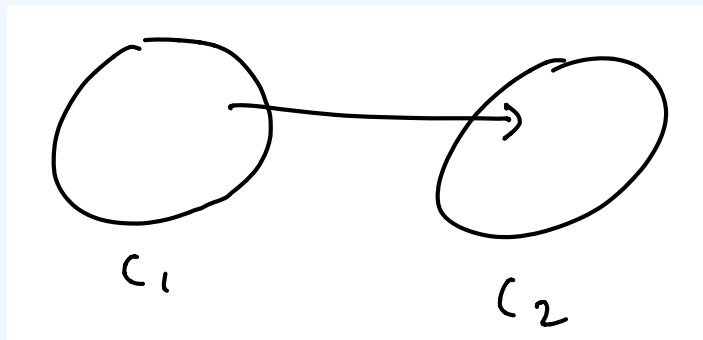
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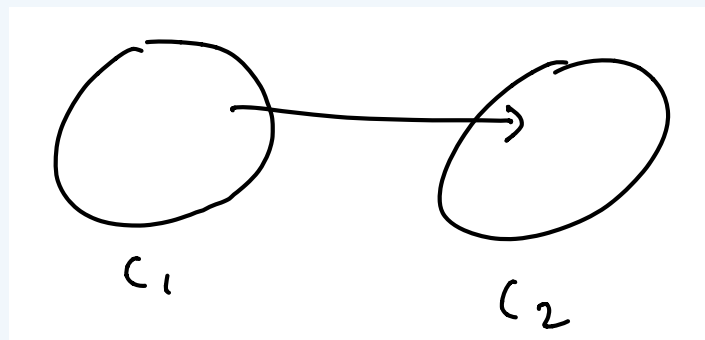
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So node of *max* finishing time in a *source* SCC (no incoming edges in $\hat{\mathbf{G}}$).

Useful Corollary

Run DFS($\mathbf{G}$) to get finish times.

Corollary

Let $\mathcal{C}$ be collection of all SCCs of $\mathbf{G}$, and let $\mathcal{C}' \subseteq \mathcal{C}$. Let $\mathbf{G}' = \mathbf{G} \setminus (\bigcup_{C \in \mathcal{C}'} C)$. Then the node $\mathbf{v} = \operatorname{argmax}_{u \in \bigcup_{C \in \mathcal{C} \setminus \mathcal{C}'} C} \mathbf{finish}(u)$ is in an SCC of $\mathbf{G}$ that is a source SCC of $\mathbf{G}'$.

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$\implies$ exists edge $(\mathbf{u}', \mathbf{v}')$ in $\mathbf{G}'$ where $\mathbf{v}' \in \mathbf{C}$ but $\mathbf{u}'$ in different SCC $\mathbf{C}'$

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Run DFS(G) to get finish times.

Corollary

Let $\mathcal{C}$ be collection of all SCCs of G , and let $\mathcal{C}' \subseteq \mathcal{C}$. Let $G' = G \setminus (\bigcup_{C \in \mathcal{C}'} C)$. Then the node $v = \operatorname{argmax}_{u \in \bigcup_{C \in \mathcal{C} \setminus \mathcal{C}'} C} \text{finish}(u)$ is in an SCC of G that is a source SCC of G' .

Proof Sketch.

Clearly SCCs of G' are precisely $\mathcal{C} \setminus \mathcal{C}'$:



Suppose v in SCC C not source SCC of G'

$\implies$ exists edge (u', v') in G' where $v' \in C$ but u' in different SCC C'

Lemma $\implies \text{finish}(C') > \text{finish}(C)$, contradiction to def of v .



Kosaraju's Algorithm

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- ▶ DFS(G^T) to get finishing times and order π on V from largest finishing time to smallest
 - ▶ Set $mark(v) = \text{False}$ for all $v \in V$
 - ▶ Forall $v \in V$ in order of π {
 - if $mark(v) = \text{False}$ {
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Running Time: $O(m + n)$

Correctness Sketch

Let $C_1, C_2, \dots, C_k$ be sets identified by algorithm (in order)

Theorem

C_i is a sink SCC of $G \setminus \left(\bigcup_{j=1}^{i-1} C_j \right)$, and an SCC of G .

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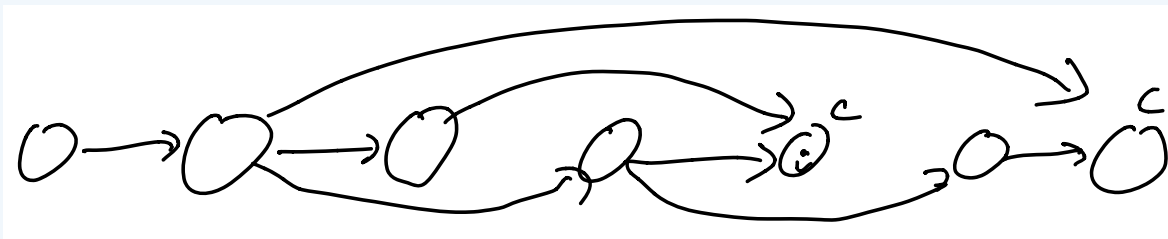
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Base case: $i = 1$. By previous lemma, largest finishing time in $\mathbf{G}^T \implies$ in sink SCC of $\mathbf{G} \implies \mathbf{C}_1$ is sink SCC of $\mathbf{G}$

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Inductive case: Let $i > 1$. Let $\mathbf{v}$ unmarked node with largest finishing time.

- ▶ By induction, subgraph of unmarked nodes is $\mathbf{G}$ minus $i - 1$ SCCs of $\mathbf{G}$
- ▶ Corollary $\implies \mathbf{v}$ must be in sink SCC of unmarked nodes so get an SCC of unmarked nodes when run DFS
- ▶ Corollary $\implies$ SCC of original graph