### Lecture 7: Balanced Search Trees

Jessica Sorrell

September 16, 2025 601.433/633 Introduction to Algorithms Slides by Michael Dinitz

### **Announcements**

- ▶ HW1 due now, HW2 released
- ▶ Regrade policy: 120 hours (five days) from when grades released
  - Don't abuse this!
  - ▶ If too many of your regrade requests do not result in positive changes, will ban you from regrade requests
  - Grading can go down!

### Introduction

Today, and next few weeks: data structures.

Since "Data Structures" a prereq, focus on advanced structures and on interesting analysis

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Today and later: data structures for dictionaries

### **Definition**

A dictionary data structure is a data structure supporting the following operations:

- insert(key,object): insert the (key, object) pair.
- lookup(key): return the associated object
- delete(key): remove the key and its object from the data structure. We may or may not care about this operation.

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Reminder: all running times for worst case

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Approach 1: Sorted array

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Goal:  $O(\log n)$  for both.

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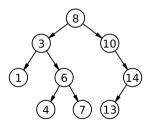
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Approach today: search trees

## Binary Search Tree Review

### Binary search tree:

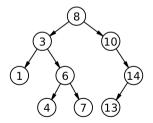
- ▶ All nodes have at most 2 children
- ► Each node stores (key, object) pair
- ▶ All descendants to left have smaller keys
- All descendants to the right have larger keys



# Binary Search Tree Review

### Binary search tree:

- ▶ All nodes have at most 2 children
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Lookup: follow path from root!

# Dictionary Operations in Simple Binary Search Tree insert(x):

- ▶ If tree empty, put *x* at root
- Else if x < root.key recursively insert into left child</p>
- Else (if x > root.key) recursively insert into right child

# Dictionary Operations in Simple Binary Search Tree insert(x):

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Example: H O P K I N S

Pluses: easy to implement

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### Rest of today:

- ▶ B-trees: perfect balance, not binary
- ▶ Red-black trees: approximate balance, binary
- ▶ Turn out to be related!

**B-Trees** 

### B-tree Definition

Parameter  $t \geq 2$ .

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### Definition (B-tree with parameter t)

- 1. Each node has between t-1 and 2t-1 keys in it (except the root has between 1 and 2t-1 keys). Keys in a node are stored in a sorted array.
- 2. Each non-leaf has degree (number of children) equal to the number of keys in it plus 1. If v is a node with keys  $[a_1, a_2, \ldots, a_k]$  and the children are  $[v_1, v_2, \ldots, v_{k+1}]$ , then the tree rooted at  $v_i$  contains only keys that are at least  $a_{i-1}$  and at most  $a_i$  (except the edge cases: the tree rooted at  $v_1$  has keys less than  $a_1$ , and the tree rooted at  $v_{k+1}$  has keys at least  $a_k$ ).
- 3. All leaves are at the same depth.

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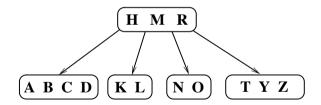
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When t = 2 known as a 2-3-4 tree, since # children either 2, 3, or 4

### B-tree: Example

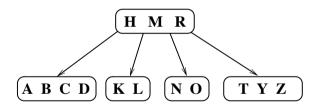
#### t = 3:

- ▶ Root has between 1 and 5 keys, non-roots have between 2 and 5 keys
- Non-leaves have between **3** and **6** children (root can have fewer).

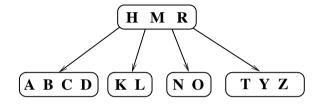


### Lookups

Binary search in array at root. Finished if find item, else get pointer to appropriate child, recurse.



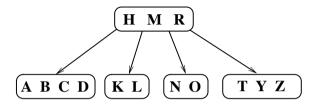
## Insert(x)



Obvious approach: do a lookup, put x in leaf where it should be.

Example: insert *E* 

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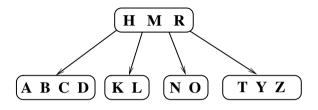


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Problem: What if leaf is full (already has 2t - 1 keys)?

### Split:

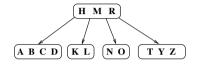
- ▶ Only used on full nodes (nodes with 2t 1 keys) whose parents are not full.
- Pull median of its keys up to its parent
- ▶ Split remaining 2t 2 keys into two nodes of t 1 keys each. Reconnect appropriately.

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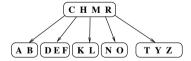


Insert  $\boldsymbol{E}, \boldsymbol{F}$  into example.

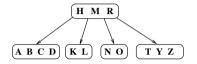
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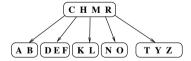
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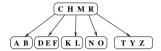
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Insert **E**, **F** into example.



**Note:** since split on the way down, when a node is split, its parent is not full!

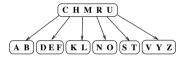




Insert *S*, *U*, *V*:

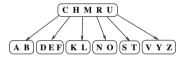


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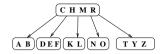




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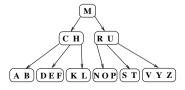
Insert **P**:



#### Insert *S*, *U*, *V*:



#### Insert P:



Induction. Start with a valid B-tree, insert x.

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Third property (all leaves at same depth):

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Second property (correct degrees, subtrees have keys in correct ranges): Hooked nodes up correctly after split.  $\checkmark$ 

Suppose n keys, depth d

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- ▶ Binary search on array in each node we pass through  $\implies O(\log t)$  time per node.
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#### B-tree notes

Used a lot in databases

▶ Large *t*: shallow trees. Fits well with memory hierarchy

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```
t = 2:
```

- ▶ 2-3-4 tree
- Can be implemented as binary tree using red-black trees

Red-Black Trees

#### Red-Black Trees: Intro

B-Trees great, but binary is nice: lookups very simple! Want binary balanced tree.

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Most famous: red-black trees

- Default in Linux kernel, used to optimize Java HashMap, . . .
- ▶ Today: Quick overview, connection to 2-3-4 trees.
- Not traditional or practical point of view on red-black trees. See book!

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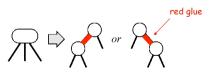
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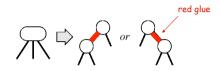
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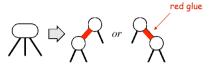
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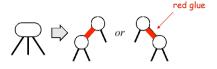






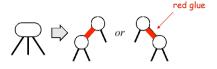
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- 2. Every leaf has same number of black edges on path to root (black-depth)
  - ▶ Each black edge is a 2-3-4 tree edge
  - ▶ All leaves in 2-3-4 tree at same distance from root

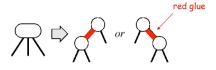




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 $\implies$  path from root to deepest leaf  $\leq 2 \times$  path to shallowest leaf





- 1. Never have two red edges in a row.
  - ▶ Red edge is "internal", never have more than one "internal" edge in a row.
- 2. Every leaf has same number of black edges on path to root (black-depth)
  - ▶ Each black edge is a 2-3-4 tree edge
  - ▶ All leaves in 2-3-4 tree at same distance from root
- $\implies$  path from root to deepest leaf  $\leq 2 \times$  path to shallowest leaf
- $\implies$  depth  $\leq O(\log n)$

Want to insert while preserving two properties.

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Want to insert while preserving two properties.

2-3-4 trees: split full nodes on way down.

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Easy cases:

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Want to insert while preserving two properties.

2-3-4 trees: split full nodes on way down.



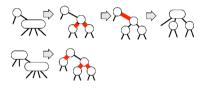
Want to insert while preserving two properties.

2-3-4 trees: split full nodes on way down.



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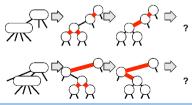
Want to insert while preserving two properties.

2-3-4 trees: split full nodes on way down.

#### Easy cases:



#### Harder cases:



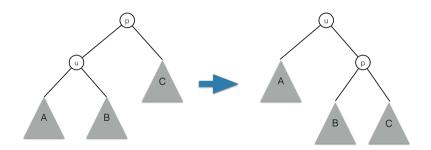
### Tree Rotations

Used in many different tree constructions.

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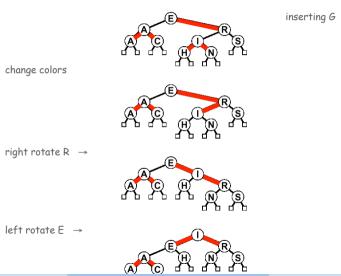
### Tree Rotations

Used in many different tree constructions.



### Using Rotations

Can use rotations to "fix" hard cases. Example:



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### End

A few more complications to deal with – see lecture notes, textbook.

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#### End

A few more complications to deal with – see lecture notes, textbook.

#### Main points:

- ▶ Red-Black trees can be thought of as a binary implementation of 2-3-4 trees
- ightharpoonup Approximately balanced, so  $O(\log n)$  lookup time
- ▶ Insert time (basically) same as 2-3-4 tree, so also  $O(\log n)$ .
- ▶ See book for direct approach (not through 2-3-4 trees).