Sorting: From Theory to Practice

Why do we study sorting?
- Because we have to
- Because sorting is beautiful
- Example of algorithm analysis in a simple, useful setting

There are $n$ sorting algorithms, how many should we study?
- $O(n)$, $O(\log n)$, ...
- Why do we study more than one algorithm?
  - Some are good, some are bad, some are very, very sad
  - Paradigms of trade-offs and algorithmic design
- Which sorting algorithm is best?
- Which sort should you call from code you write?

Sorting out sorts

Simple, $O(n^2)$ sorts --- for sorting $n$ elements
- Selection sort --- $n^2$ comparisons, $n$ swaps, easy to code
- Insertion sort --- $n^2$ comparisons, $n^2$ moves, stable, fast on nearly sorted vectors: $O(n)$
- Bubble sort --- $n^2$ everything, slower

Divide and conquer faster sorts: $O(n \log n)$ for $n$ elements
- Quick sort: fast in practice, $O(n^2)$ worst case
- Merge sort: good worst case, great for linked lists, stable, uses extra storage for vectors/arrays

Other sorts:
- Heap sort, basically priority queue sorting
- Radix sort: doesn’t compare keys, uses digits/characters
- Shell sort: quasi-insertion, fast in practice, non-recursive

Selection sort: summary

Simple to code $n^2$ sort: $n^2$ comparisons, $n$ swaps

```java
void selectSort(String[] a)
{
    for(int k=0; k < a.length; k++)
    {
        int minIndex = findMin(a,k);
        swap(a,k,minIndex);
    }
}
```

# comparisons: $\sum_{k=1}^{n} k = 1 + 2 + \ldots + n = n(n+1)/2 = O(n^2)$
- Swaps?
- Invariant: Sorted, won’t move final position

Insertion Sort: summary

Stable sort, $O(n^2)$, good on nearly sorted vectors
- Stable sorts maintain order of equal keys
- Good for sorting on two criteria: name, then age

```java
void insertSort(String[] a)
{
    int k, loc; string elt;
    for(k=1; k < a.length; k++)
    {
        elt = a[k];
        loc = k;
        // shift until spot for elt is found
        while (0 < loc && elt.compareTo(a[loc-1]) < 0)
        {
            a[loc] = a[loc-1]; // shift right
            loc=loc-1;
        }
        a[loc] = elt;
    }
}
```

Sorted relative to each other
Bubble sort: summary of a dog

- For completeness you should know about this sort
  - Few, if any, redeeming features. Really slow, really, really
  - Can code to recognize already sorted vector (see insertion)
    - Not worth it for bubble sort, much slower than insertion

```java
void bubbleSort(String[] a)
{
    for(int j=a.length-1; j >= 0; j--)
    {
        for(int k=0; k < j; k++)
        {
            if (a[k] > a[k+1])
                swap(a,k,k+1);
        }
    }
}
```

- “bubble” elements down the vector/array

Summary of simple sorts

- Selection sort has n swaps, good for “heavy” data
  - Moving objects with lots of state, e.g., ...
    - In C or C++ this is an issue
    - In Java everything is a pointer/reference, so swapping is fast since it's pointer assignment

- Insertion sort is good on nearly sorted data, it’s stable, it’s fast
  - Also foundation for Shell sort, very fast non-recursive
  - More complicated to code, but relatively simple, and fast

- Bubble sort is a travesty? But it's fast to code if you know it!
  - Can be parallelized, but on one machine don’t go near it (see quotes at end of slides)

Quicksort: fast in practice

- Invented in 1962 by C.A.R. Hoare, didn’t understand recursion
  - Worst case is O(n^2), but avoidable in nearly all cases
  - In 1997 Introsort published (Musser, introspective sort)
    - Like quicksort in practice, but recognizes when it will be bad and changes to heapsort

```java
void quick(String[], int left, int right)
{
    if (left < right)
    {
        int pivot = partition(a, left, right);
        quick(a, left, pivot-1);
        quick(a, pivot+1, right);
    }
}
```

Partition code for quicksort

- Easy to develop partition
  ```java
  int partition(String[] a,
               int left, int
               right) {
      string pivot = a[left];
      int k, pIndex = left;
      for(k=left+1, k <= right; k++)
      {
          if (a[k].compareTo(pivot)
              <= 0){
              pIndex++;
              swap(a,k,pIndex);
          }
      }
      swap(a,left,pIndex);
  }
  ```

- Loop invariant:
  - Statement true each time loop test is evaluated, used to verify correctness of loop
  - Can swap into a[left] before loop
  - Nearly sorted data still ok
Analysis of Quicksort

- Average case and worst case analysis
  - Recurrence for worst case: \( T(n) = T(n-1) + T(1) + O(n) \)
  - What about average? \( T(n) = 2T(n/2) + O(n) \)

- Reason informally:
  - Two calls vector size n/2
  - Four calls vector size n/4
  - ... How many calls? Work done on each call?

- Partition: typically find middle of left, middle, right, swap, go
  - Avoid bad performance on nearly sorted data
- In practice: remove some (all?) recursion, avoid lots of “clones”

Tail recursion elimination

- If the last statement is a recursive call, recursion can be replaced with iteration
  - Call cannot be part of an expression
  - Some compilers do this automatically

```java
void foo(int n) {
    if (0 < n) {
        System.out.println(n);
        foo(n-1);
        n = n-1;
    }
}
```

- What if print and recursive call switched?
- What about recursive factorial? \( \text{return } n \ast \text{factorial}(n-1) \);

Merge sort: worst case \( O(n \log n) \)

- Divide and conquer --- recursive sort
  - Divide list/vector into two halves
    - Sort each half
    - Merge sorted halves together
  - What is complexity of merging two sorted lists?
  - What is recurrence relation for merge sort as described?
    \( T(n) = 2T(n/2) + O(n) \)

- What is advantage of array over linked-list for merge sort?
  - What about merging, advantage of linked list?
  - Array requires auxiliary storage (or very fancy coding)

Merge sort: lists or vectors

- Mergesort for vectors
  ```java
  void mergesort(String[] a, int left, int right) {
      if (left < right) {
          int mid = (right+left)/2;
          mergesort(a, left, mid);
          mergesort(a, mid+1, right);
          merge(a,left,mid,right);
      }
  }
  ```

- What’s different when linked lists used?
  - Do differences affect complexity? Why?

- How does merge work?
Mergesort continued

- Array code for merge isn’t pretty, but it’s not hard
  - Mergesort itself is elegant

```java
void merge(String[] a, int left, int middle, int right)
// pre: left <= middle <= right,
// a[left] <= … <= a[middle],
// a[middle+1] <= … <= a[right]
// post: a[left] <= … <= a[right]
```

- Why is this prototype potentially simpler for linked lists?
  - What will prototype be? What is complexity?

Summary of O(n log n) sorts

- Quicksort is relatively straight-forward to code, very fast
  - Worst case is very unlikely, but possible, therefore …
  - But, if lots of elements are equal, performance will be bad
    - One million integers from range 0 to 10,000
    - How can we change partition to handle this?

- Merge sort is stable, it’s fast, good for linked lists, harder to code?
  - Worst case performance is O(n log n), compare quicksort
  - Extra storage for array/vector

- Heapsort, more complex to code, good worst case, not stable
  - Basically heap-based priority queue in a vector

Sorting in practice

- Rarely will you need to roll your own sort, but when you do …
  - What are key issues?

- If you use a library sort, you need to understand the interface
  - In C++ we have STL
    - STL has sort, and stable_sort
  - In C the generic sort is complex to use because arrays are ugly
  - In Java guarantees and worst-case are important
    - Why won’t quicksort be used?

- Comparators permit sorting criteria to change simply