

CSE 332: Data Structures & Parallelism

Lecture 24: Minimum Spanning Trees

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Autumn 2025

Administrative

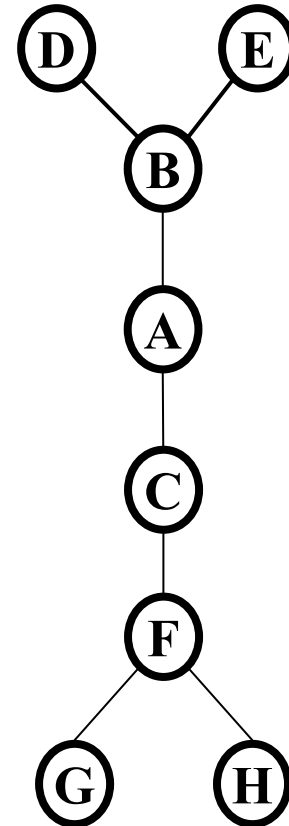
- EX09 – On Fork Join, Due TONIGHT, Fri Nov 21
- EX10 – Concurrency, Due **Mon** Nov 24
- EX11 – MSTs, programming, coming soon!
- Resources!
 - **Conceptual Office Hours:** 11:30 Tues (Connor) and 11:30 Wed (Samarth) both in CSE1 006. A space to ask about **course content and topics only** *as opposed to direct help with exercises*.
 - [1-on-1 Meeting Requests](#) - Request a meeting with a staff member if you cannot make it to regularly scheduled office hours, or feel like you have an issue that requires a more in depth discussion.

Trees as graphs

When talking about graphs,
we say a **tree** is a graph that is:

- undirected
- acyclic
- connected

Example:



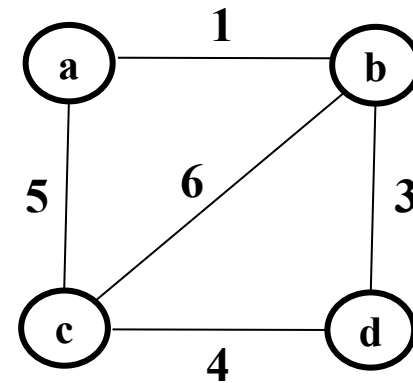
Minimum Spanning Trees

Given an undirected graph $G=(V, E)$, find a graph $G'=(V, E')$ such that:

- E' is a subset of E
- G' is connected
- G' has no cycles
- $|E'| = |V| - 1$

G' is a minimum spanning tree.

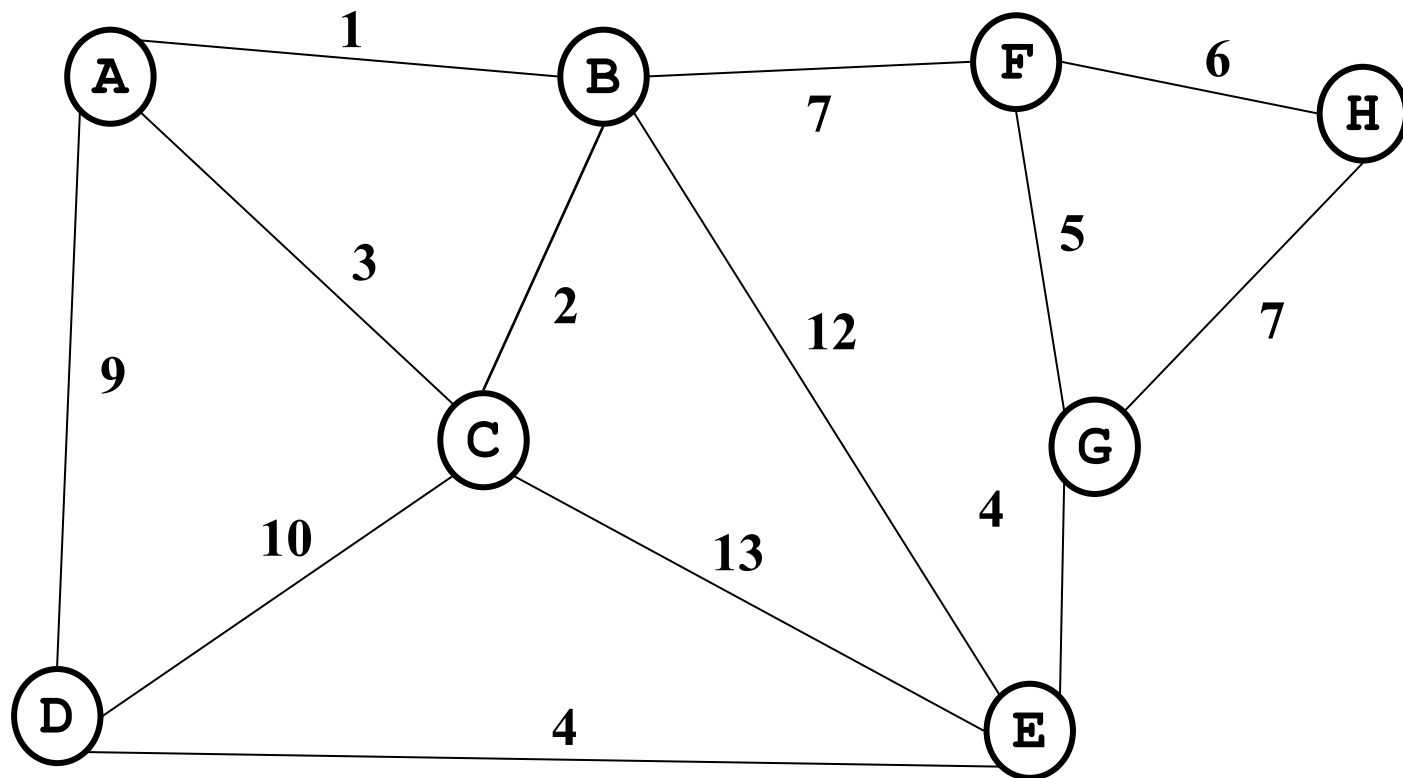
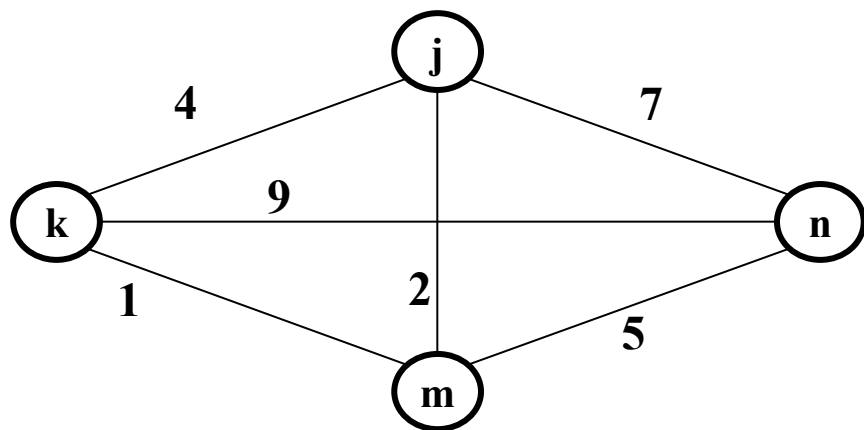
- $\sum_{(u,v) \in E'} c_{uv}$ is minimal



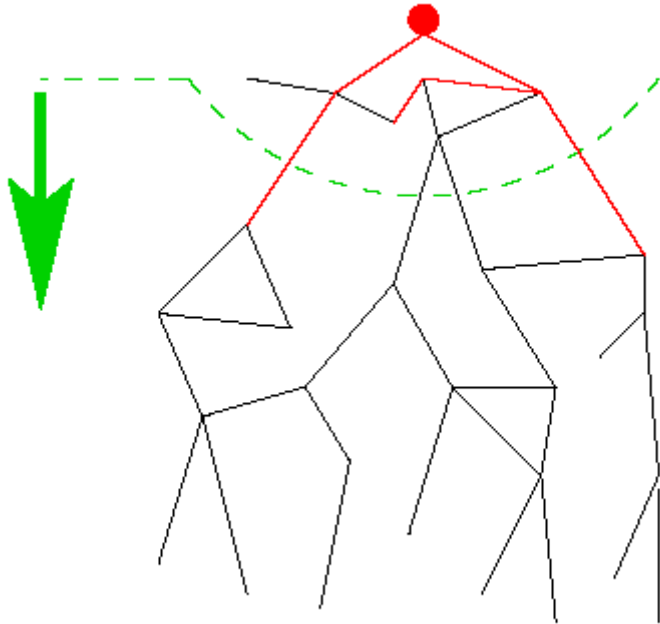
Applications:

- Example: Electrical wiring for a house or clock wires on a chip
- Example: A road network if you cared about asphalt cost rather than travel time

Find a MST

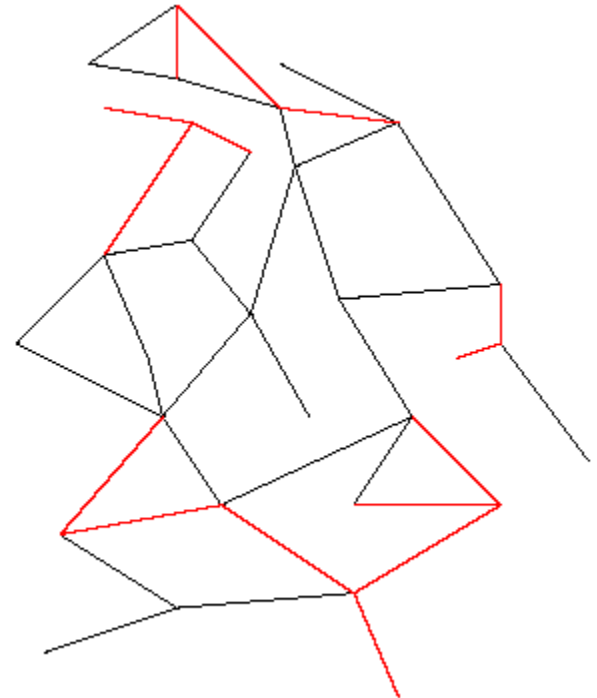


Two Different Approaches



Prim's Algorithm

Almost identical to Dijkstra's



Kruskal's Algorithm

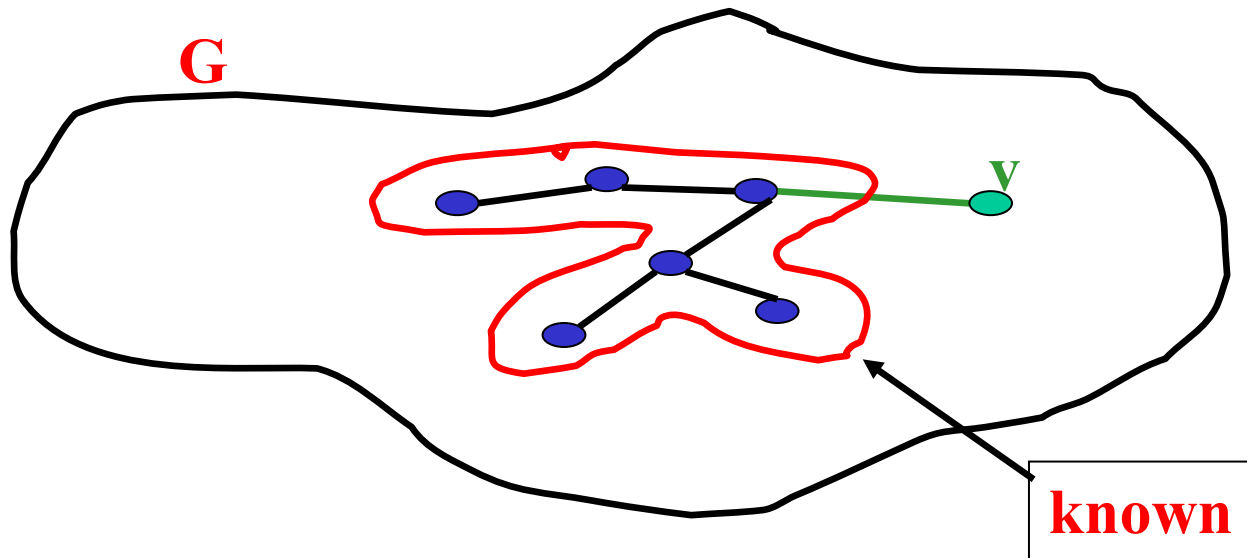
Completely different!

Prim's algorithm

Idea: Grow a tree by picking a vertex from the unknown set that has the smallest cost. Here cost = cost of the edge that connects that vertex to the known set. *Pick the vertex with the smallest cost that connects “known” to “unknown.”*

A node-based greedy algorithm

Builds MST by greedily adding nodes



Prim's Algorithm vs. Dijkstra's

Recall:

Dijkstra picked the unknown vertex with smallest cost where
cost = *distance to the source*.

Prim's pick the unknown vertex with smallest cost where
cost = *distance from this vertex to the known set* (in other words,
the cost of the smallest edge connecting this vertex to the known
set)

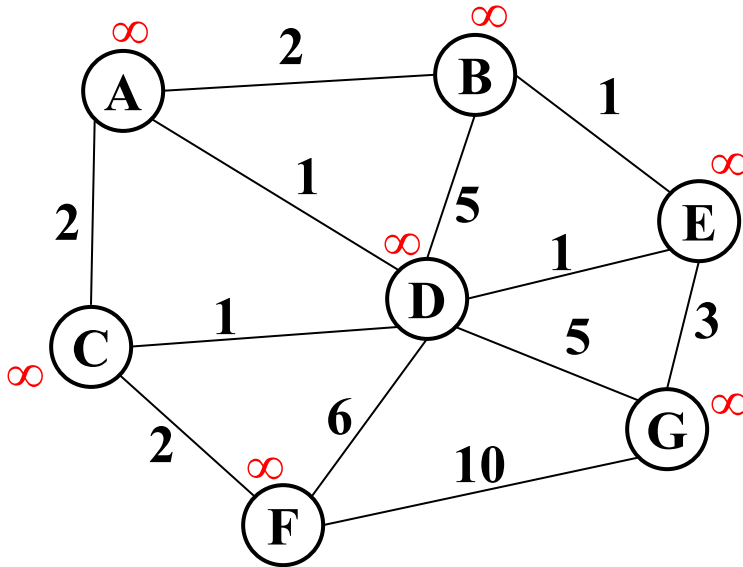
- Otherwise identical
- Compare to slides in Dijkstra lecture!

Prim's Algorithm for MST

1. For each node v , set $v.cost = \infty$ and $v.known = false$
2. Choose any node v . (this is like your “start” vertex in Dijkstra)
 - a) Mark v as known
 - b) For each edge (v, u) with weight w :
set $u.cost = w$ and $u.prev = v$
3. While there are unknown nodes in the graph
 - a) Select the unknown node v with lowest **cost**
 - b) Mark v as known and add $(v, v.prev)$ to output (the MST)
 - c) For each edge (v, u) with weight w , where u is unknown:

```
if (w < u.cost) {  
    u.cost = w;  
    u.prev = v;  
}
```

Example: Find MST using Prim's

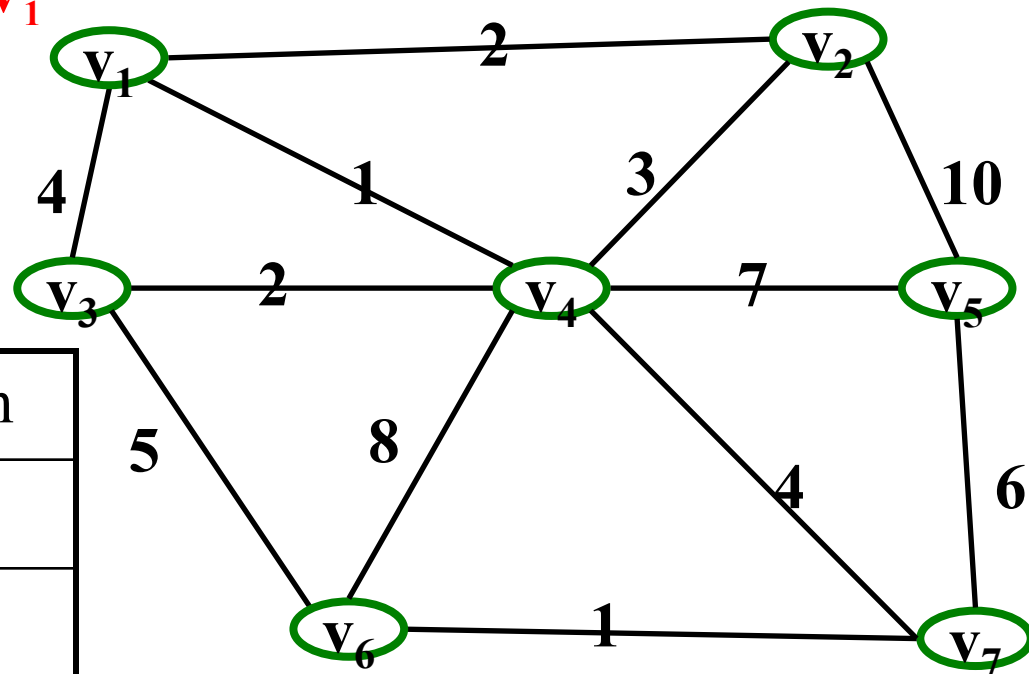


Order added to known set:

vertex	known?	cost	prev
A			
B			
C			
D			
E			
F			
G			

Find MST using Prim's

V	Kwn	Distance	path
v1			
v2			
v3			
v4			
v5			
v6			
v7			



Order Declared Known:

V_1

Total Cost:

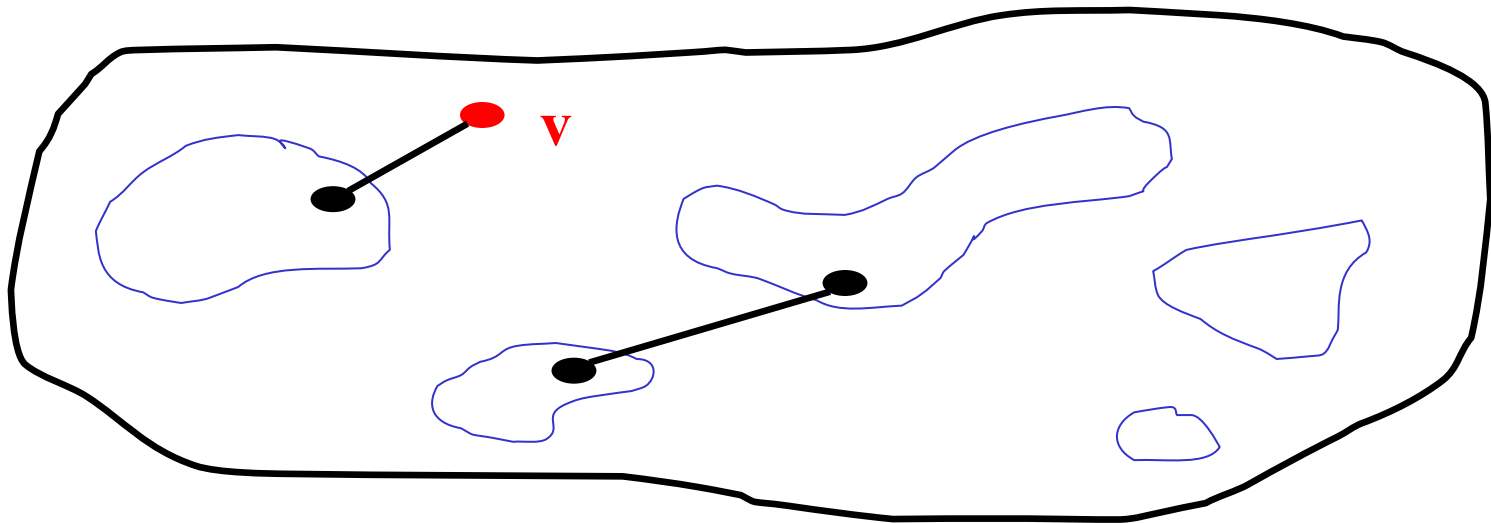
Prim's Analysis

- Correctness
 - Intuitively similar to Dijkstra
- Run-time
 - Same as Dijkstra
 - $O(|E| \log |V|)$ using a priority queue

Kruskal's MST Algorithm

Idea: Grow a **forest** out of edges that do not create a cycle. Pick an edge with the smallest weight.

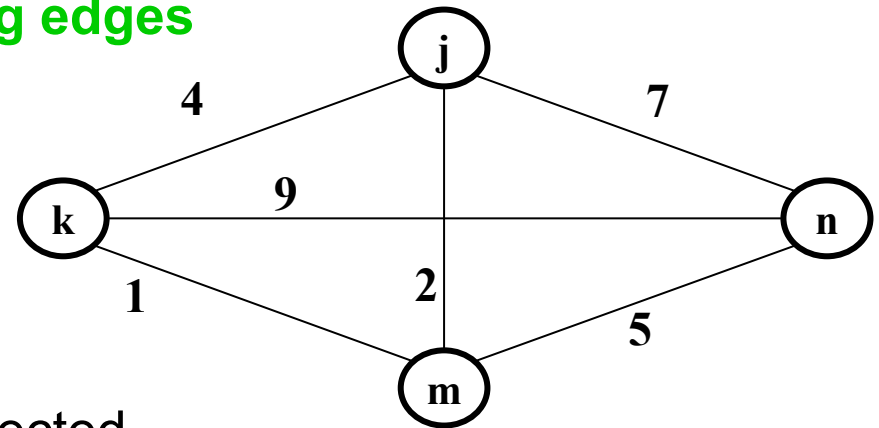
$G=(V, E)$



Kruskal's Algorithm for MST

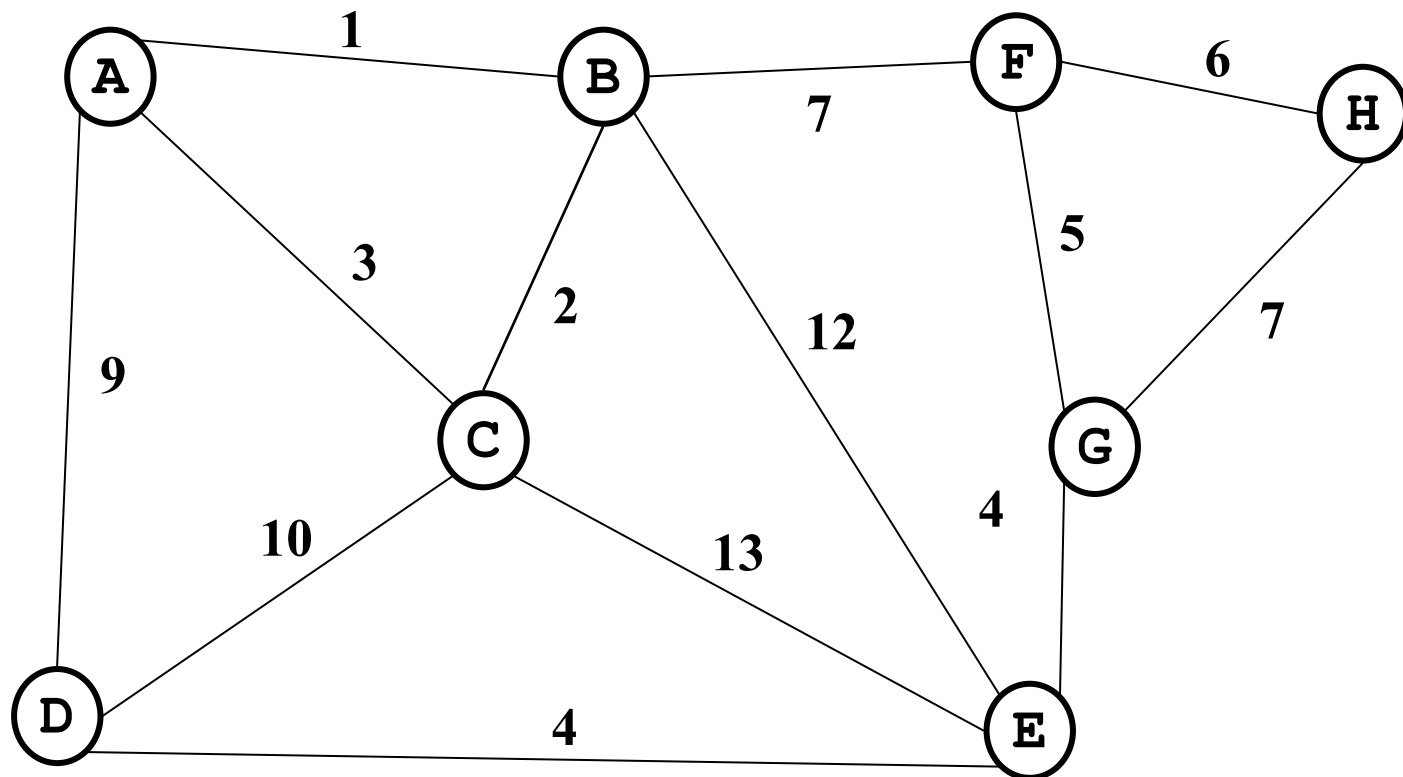
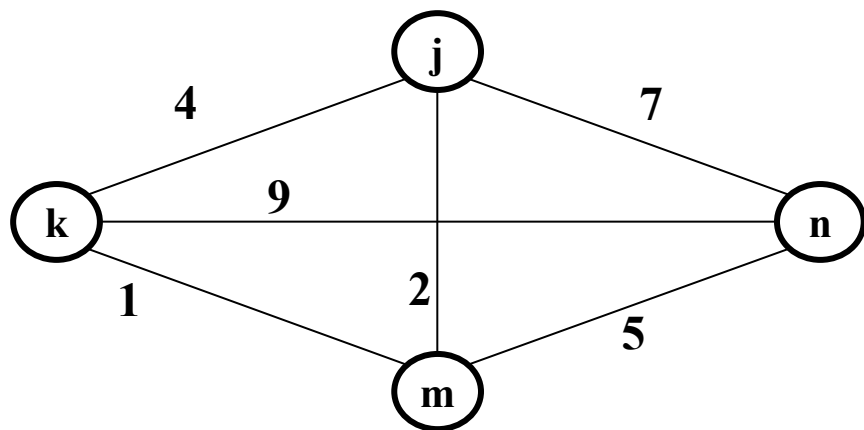
An edge-based greedy algorithm

Builds MST by greedily adding edges

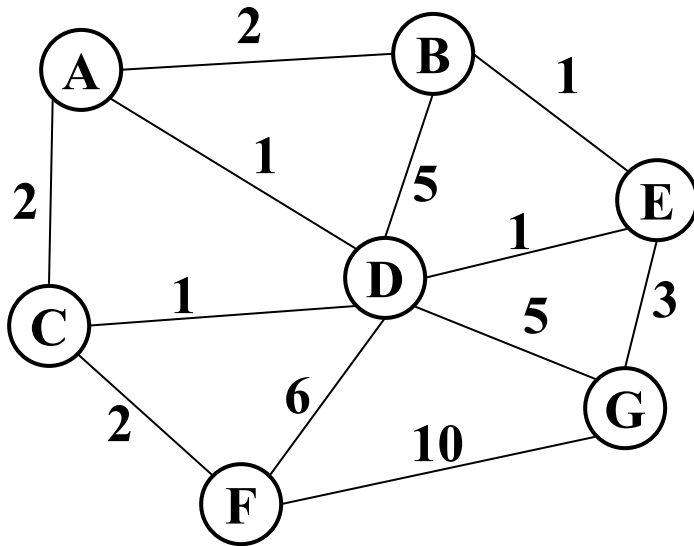


1. Initialize with
 - empty MST
 - all vertices marked unconnected
 - all edges unmarked
2. While all vertices are not connected
 - a. Pick the lowest cost edge (u, v) and mark it
 - b. If u and v are not already connected, add (u, v) to the MST and mark u and v as connected to each other

Find a MST



Example: Find MST using Kruskal's



Edges in sorted order:

1: (A,D), (C,D), (B,E), (D,E)

2: (A,B), (C,F), (A,C)

3: (E,G)

5: (D,G), (B,D)

6: (D,F)

10: (F,G)

Output:

Note: At each step, the union/find sets are the trees in the forest

Aside: Union-Find aka Disjoint Set ADT

- **Union(x,y)** – take the union of two sets named x and y
 - Given sets: {3,5,7} , {4,2,8}, {9}, {1,6}
 - **Union(5,1)**
Result: {3,5,7,1,6}, {4,2,8}, {9},
 - To perform the union operation, we replace sets x and y by $(x \cup y)$
- **Find(x)** – return the name of the set containing x.
 - Given sets: {3,5,7,1,6}, {4,2,8}, {9},
 - **Find(1)** returns 5
 - **Find(4)** returns 8
- We can do **Union** in constant time.
- We can get **Find** to be *amortized* constant time (worst case $O(\log n)$ for an individual **Find** operation).

Kruskal's pseudo code

```
void Graph::kruskal() {  
    int edgesAccepted = 0;  
    DisjSet s(NUM_VERTICES);  
  
    while (edgesAccepted < NUM_VERTICES - 1) {  
        e = smallest weight edge not deleted yet;  
        // edge e = (u, v)  
        uset = s.find(u);  
        vset = s.find(v);  
        if (uset != vset) {  
            edgesAccepted++;  
            s.unionSets(uset, vset);  
        }  
    }  
}
```

