CSE 421
Introduction to Algorithms
Winter 1999

The Network Flow Problem

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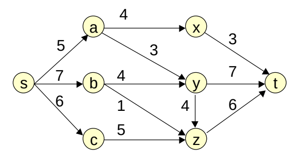


- How much stuff can flow from s to t?

Net Flow: Formal Definition

Given:

A digraph G = (V,E)

Two vertices s,t in V (source & sink)

A *capacity* c(u,v) ≥ 0 for each (u,v) ∈ E (and c(u,v) = 0 for all non-edges (u,v))

Find:

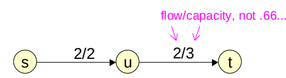
A *flow function* f: V x V → R s.t., for all u,v:

- f(u,v) ≤ c(u,v) [Capacity Constraint]
- f(u,v) = -f(v,u) [Skew Symmetry]
- if u ≠ s,t, f(u,V) = 0 [Flow Conservation]

Maximizing total flow |f| = f(s,V)

Notation: $f(X,Y) = \sum_{x \in X} \sum_{y \in Y} f(x,y)$

Example: A Flow Function

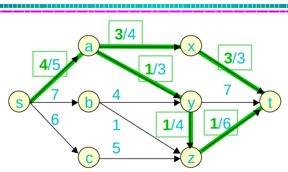


$f(s,u) = f(u,t) = 2$

$f(u,s) = f(t,u) = -2$

$$f(u,V) = \sum_{v \in V} f(u,v) = f(u,s) + f(u,t) = -2 + 2 = 0$$

Example: A Flow Function



- Not shown: f(u,v) if ≤ 0
- Note: max flow ≥ 4 since f is a flow function, with |f| = 4

Max Flow via a Greedy Alg?

While there is an s → t path in G

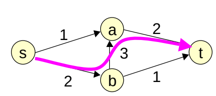
Pick such a path, p

Find c, the min capacity of any edge in p

Subtract c from all capacities on p

Delete edges of capacity 0

- This does NOT always find a max flow:



If pick s →b →a →t first, flow stuck at 2.
But flow 3 possible.

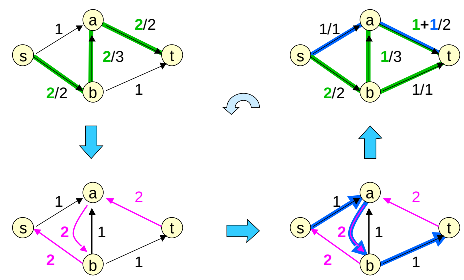
A Brief History of Flow

#	year	discoverer(s)	bound
1	1951	Dantzig	$O(n^2 mU)$
2	1955	Ford & Fulkerson	$O(nmU)$
3	1970	Dinitz Edmonds & Karp	$O(nm^2)$
4	1970	Dinitz	$O(n^2 m)$
5	1972	Edmonds & Karp Dinitz	$O(m^2 \log U)$
6	1973	Dinitz Gabow	$O(nm \log U)$
7	1974	Karzanov	$O(n^3)$
8	1977	Cherkassky	$O(n^2 \sqrt{m})$
9	1980	Galil & Naamad	$O(nm \log^2 n)$
10	1983	Sleator & Tarjan	$O(nm \log n)$
11	1986	Goldberg & Tarjan	$O(nm \log(n^2/m))$
12	1987	Ahuja & Orlin	$O(nm + n^2 \log U)$
13	1987	Ahuja et al.	$O(nm \log(n\sqrt{\log U}/(m+2)))$
14	1989	Cheriyan & Hagerup	$E(nm + n^2 \log^2 n)$
15	1990	Cheriyan et al.	$O(n^3/\log n)$
16	1990	Alon	$O(nm + n^{8/3} \log n)$
17	1992	King et al.	$O(nm + n^{2+\epsilon})$
18	1993	Phillips & Westbrook	$O(nm(\log_{m/n} n + \log^{2+\epsilon} n))$
19	1994	King et al.	$O(nm \log_{m/(n \log n)} n)$
20	1997	Goldberg & Rao	$O(m^{3/2} \log(n^2/m) \log U)$ $O(n^{2/3} m \log(n^2/m) \log U)$

n = # of vertices
m= # of edges
U = Max capacity

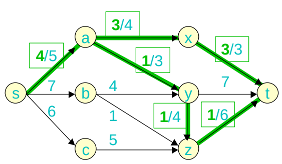
Source: Goldberg & Rao, FOCS '97

Greed Revisited



Residual Capacity

- The *residual capacity* (w.r.t. f) of (u,v) is $c_f(u,v) = c(u,v) - f(u,v)$



- e.g. $c_f(s,b)=7$; $c_f(a,x) = 1$; $c_f(x,a) = 3$

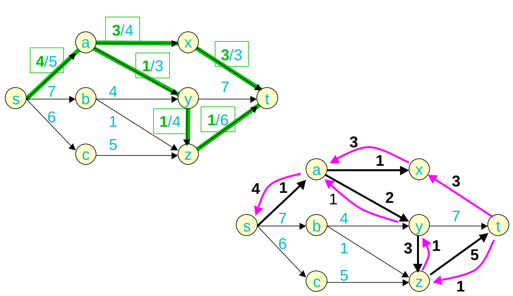
Residual Networks & Augmenting Paths

- The *residual network* (w.r.t. f) is the graph $G_f = (V,E_f)$, where

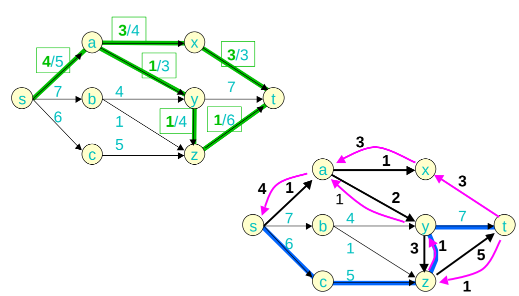
  $E_f = \{ (u,v) \mid c_f(u,v) > 0 \}$

- An *augmenting path* (w.r.t. f) is a simple $s \to t$ path in G_f.

A Residual Network



An Augmenting Path

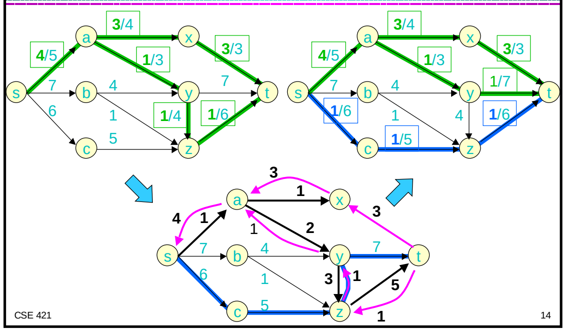


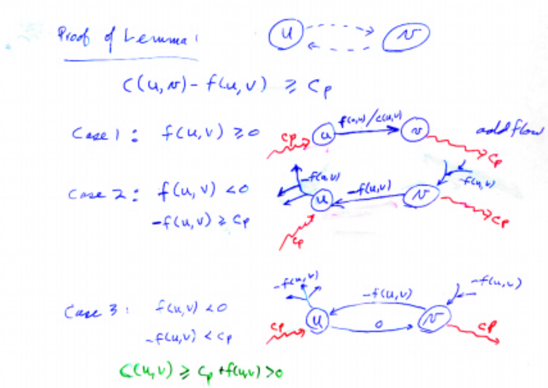
Lemma 1

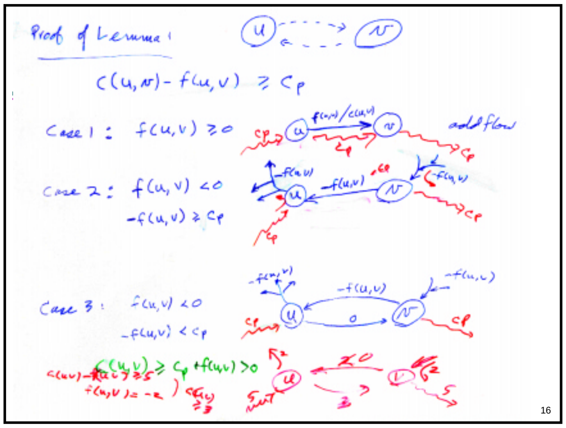
If f admits an augmenting path p, then f is not maximal.

Proof: "obvious" -- augment along p by c_p, the min residual capacity of p's edges.

Augmenting A Flow







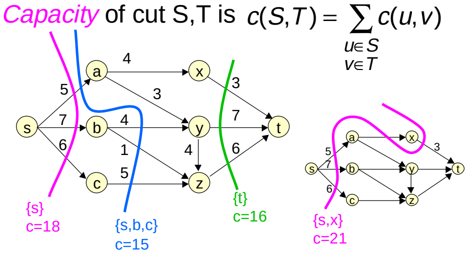
Ford-Fulkerson Method

While G_f has an augmenting path, augment

- Questions:
  - » Does it halt?
  - » Does it find a maximum flow?
  - » How fast?

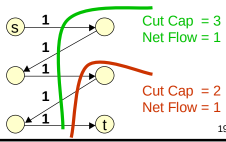
Cuts

- A partition S,T of V is a *cut* if s ∈ S, t ∈ T
- *Capacity* of cut S,T is $c(S,T) = \sum_{\substack{u \in S \\ v \in T}} c(u,v)$



Lemma 2

- For any flow f and any cut S,T,
  - » the net flow across the cut equals the total flow, i.e., |f| = f(S,T), and
  - » the net flow across the cut cannot exceed the capacity of the cut, i.e. f(S,T) ≤ c(S,T)
- Corollary:
  Max flow ≤ Min cut



Max Flow / Min Cut Theorem

For any flow f, the following are equivalent

(1) |f| = c(S,T) for some cut S,T (a min cut)

(2) f is a maximum flow

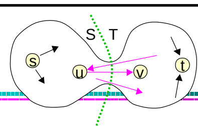
(3) f admits no augmenting path

Proof:

(1) ⇒ (2): corollary to lemma 2

(2) ⇒ (3): lemma 1

(3) ⇒ (1)



S = { u | ∃ an augmenting path from s to u }

T = V - S; s ∈ S, t ∈ T

For any (u,v) in S × T, ∃ an augmenting path from s to u, but not to v.

∴ (u,v) has 0 residual capacity:

(u,v) ∈ E ⇒ saturated   f(u,v) = c(u,v)

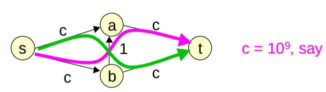
(v,u) ∈ E ⇒ no flow   f(u,v) = f(v,u) = 0

This is true for every edge crossing the cut, i.e.

$$|f| = f(S,T) = \sum_{u\in S}\sum_{v\in T} f(u,v) = \sum_{u\in S, v\in T, (u,v)\in E} f(u,v) = \sum_{u\in S, v\in T, (u,v)\in E} c(u,v) = c(S,T)$$

Corollaries & Facts

- If Ford-Fulkerson terminates, then it's found a max flow.
- It will terminate if c(e) integer or rational (but may not if they're irrational).
- However, may take exponential time, even with integer capacities:



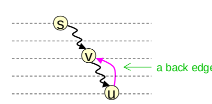
Edmonds-Karp Algorithm

- Use a shortest augmenting path (via Breadth First Search in residual graph)
- Time: O(n m^2)

BFS / Shortest Path Lemmas

Distance from s is never reduced by:

- Deleting an edge
  proof: no new (hence no shorter) path created
- Adding an edge (u,v), provided v is nearer than u
  proof: BFS is unchanged, since v visited before (u,v) examined

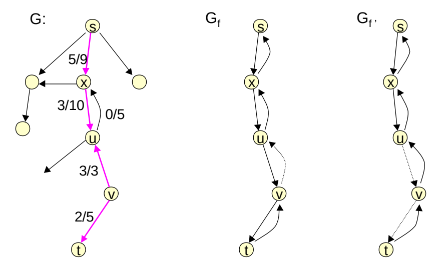


Lemma 27.8
(Alternate Proof)

Let f be a flow, G_f the residual graph, and p a shortest augmenting path. Then no vertex is closer to s after augmentation along p.

Proof: Augmentation only deletes edges, adds back edges

Augmentation vs BFS



Theorem 27.9

The Edmonds-Karp Algorithm performs O(mn) flow augmentations

Proof:

{u,v} is critical on augmenting path p if it's closest to s having min residual capacity

won't be critical again until farther from s

so each edge critical at most n times

Corollary

- Edmonds-Karp runs in $O(nm^2)$

Flow Integrality Theorem

If all capacities are integers

- » The max flow has an integer value
- » Ford-Fulkerson method finds a max flow in which f(u,v) is an integer for all edges (u,v)