

# A general definition of the big oh notation for algorithm analysis

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# Algorithm analysis

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## Algorithm analysis

*Algorithm analysis* studies the correctness and complexity of a given algorithm.

# Correctness analysis

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Does the algorithm do what it is claimed to do?

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## Example of correctness

Prove that a given algorithm sorts any sequence of integers in increasing order, and does so in finite time for a finite sequence.



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## Example of complexity

Prove that a given algorithm never uses more than  $n(n - 1)/2$  number of order-comparisons to sort any sequence of  $n$  integers.

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This is sometimes interesting. However, more interesting is that the algorithm's complexity scales like  $n^2$ .

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## Simplification

The *O*-notation formalizes this scales-like simplification.



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An  $O$ -notation in a set  $X$  is a function  $O_X : F_X \rightarrow \mathcal{P}(F_X)$ , where  $F_X = X \rightarrow \mathbb{R}^{\geq 0}$ , such that it fulfills the primitive properties.

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## Intuition

The set  $O_X(f)$  contains those functions in  $F_X$  which *do not scale worse than*  $f$ .

## Separate concepts

The  $O$ -notation used in pure mathematics is a concept separate from the  $O$ -notation in algorithm analysis; they have different properties.

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### Example

$$O_{\mathbb{N}}(6n^2) = O_{\mathbb{N}}(n^2)$$

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## Example

$$n \in O_{\mathbb{N}}(n)$$

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If  $f$  does not scale worse than  $g$ , and  $g$  does not scale worse than  $h$ , then  $f$  does not scale worse than  $h$ .



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## Example

$$n \in O_{\mathbb{N}}(n^2) \text{ and } n^2 \in O_{\mathbb{N}}(n^3) \Rightarrow n \in O_{\mathbb{N}}(n^3).$$

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$$O_X(0) \subset O_X(f) \quad \forall f \in F_X$$

$$O_{\mathbb{R} \geq 1}(x^\alpha) \subset O_{\mathbb{R} \geq 1}(x^\beta) \quad \forall \alpha, \beta \in \mathbb{R}^{\geq 0} : \alpha \leq \beta$$

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$$O_{\mathbb{R} \geq 1}\left(\frac{1}{\alpha \epsilon \log_e(\beta)} \log_\beta(x)\right) \subset O_{\mathbb{R} \geq 1}(x^\alpha) \quad \forall \alpha, \beta \in \mathbb{R}^{> 0}$$



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## Intuition

The product of a function which does not scale worse than  $f$  and a function which does not scale worse than  $g$  does not scale worse than  $fg$ . Every function in  $O_X(fg)$  is a product of such functions.

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## Examples

$$O_{\mathbb{N}}(n)O_{\mathbb{N}}(n^2) = O_{\mathbb{N}}(n^3)$$
$$O_{\mathbb{R}^{>0}}(1/x)O_{\mathbb{R}^{>0}}(x) = O_{\mathbb{R}^{>0}}(1)$$

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# Locality

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## Definition

$$f \in O_X(g) \Leftrightarrow \forall D \in \mathcal{C} : (f|D) \in O_D(g|D)$$
$$\forall f, g \in F_X, \mathcal{C} \subset \mathcal{P}(X) : \mathcal{C} \text{ is a finite cover of } X.$$



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$\forall f, g \in F_X, \mathcal{C} \subset \mathcal{P}(X) : \mathcal{C}$  is a finite cover of  $X$ .

## Intuition

An  $f$  does not scale worse than  $g$  if and only if that holds when restricted to a set of a finite cover, for all such sets.

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### Intuition

There exists a function which scales worse than 0, but does not scale worse than 1.

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There exists a function which scales worse than 1, but does not scale worse than  $n$ .

# Composition rule



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### Definition

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### Intuition

A function which does not scale worse than  $f$ , mapped through  $s$ , does not scale worse than  $f$  mapped through  $s$ .

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There exists at most one function  $O$  with the primitive properties.

## Explicit definition

$$f \in O_X(g) :\Leftrightarrow \exists c \in \mathbb{R}^{>0} : f \leq cg$$

# Prevailing definition



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### Definition

$f \in O_X(g) :\Leftrightarrow \exists c \in \mathbb{R}^{>0}, y \in X : (f|X^{\geq y}) \leq c(g|X^{\geq y})$   
where  $X \subset \mathbb{R}^d$  and  $d \in \mathbb{N}$ .

## Prevailing definition

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$f \in O_X(g) :\Leftrightarrow \exists c \in \mathbb{R}^{>0}, y \in X : (f|_{X \geq y}) \leq c(g|_{X \geq y})$   
where  $X \subset \mathbb{R}^d$  and  $d \in \mathbb{N}$ .

### Problem

Our definition is different to the prevailing definition, which has been used for decades. Is there something wrong with the prevailing definition?

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### Problem

Our definition is different to the prevailing definition, which has been used for decades. Is there something wrong with the prevailing definition?

### Solution

The prevailing definition fulfills all of the primitive properties, except for the composition rule!

## Fundamental

The composition rule is fundamental; without it the complexity analysis of an algorithm cannot be approached by dividing it into parts, and studying the complexity of each part.

# An example of failure

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---

**Algorithm 2** An algorithm which takes as input  $(m, n) \in \mathbb{N}^2$ , and has time-complexity  $O_{\mathbb{N}^2}(1)$  according to the prevailing definition.

---

```
1: procedure CONSTANTCOMPLEXITY( $m, n$ )
2:    $j \leftarrow 0$ 
3:   if  $m = 0$  then
4:     for  $i \in [0, n]$  do
5:        $j \leftarrow j + 1$ 
6:     end for
7:   end if
8:   return  $j$ 
9: end procedure
```

---

---

**Algorithm 3** An algorithm which takes as input  $n \in \mathbb{N}$ , and calls another  $O_{\mathbb{N}^2}(1)$  algorithm  $n$  times with varying arguments.

---

```
1: procedure BASICANALYSIS( $n$ )
2:   for  $i \in [0, n)$  do
3:     CONSTANTCOMPLEXITY( $0, i$ )
4:   end for
5: end procedure
```

---

---

**Algorithm 4** An algorithm which takes as input  $n \in \mathbb{N}$ , and calls another  $O_{\mathbb{N}^2}(1)$  algorithm  $n$  times with varying arguments.

---

```
1: procedure BASICANALYSIS( $n$ )
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### Composition

Computed via the composition rule, the complexity of this algorithm is  $O_{\mathbb{N}}(n)$ .



---

**Algorithm 5** An algorithm which takes as input  $n \in \mathbb{N}$ , and calls another  $O_{\mathbb{N}^2}(1)$  algorithm  $n$  times with varying arguments.

---

```
1: procedure BASICANALYSIS( $n$ )
2:   for  $i \in [0, n)$  do
3:     CONSTANTCOMPLEXITY( $0, i$ )
4:   end for
5: end procedure
```

---

### Composition

Computed via the composition rule, the complexity of this algorithm is  $O_{\mathbb{N}}(n)$ .

### Substitution

Computed via substitution, the complexity of this algorithm is  $O_{\mathbb{N}}(n^2)$ . A contradiction!

# Characterization of failure

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### Theorem (Asymptotic composition rule)

*Let  $X \subset \mathbb{R}^{d_1}$ ,  $Y \subset \mathbb{R}^{d_2}$ , and  $s : Y \rightarrow X$ . The composition rule holds for  $s$  under the prevailing definition if and only if*

$$\forall x^* \in X : \exists y^* \in Y : s(Y^{\geq y^*}) \subset X^{\geq x^*}. \quad (1)$$

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Since the subset-sum rule implies the composition rule, the former does not hold for the prevailing definition either.

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### Subset-sum or composition

Actually, assuming the other properties, the composition rule and the subset-sum rule are equivalent.

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$(\exists \beta \in \mathbb{R}^{>0} : f \geq \beta) \Rightarrow O_X(f + \alpha) = O_X(f)$

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Additive consistency:  $uO_X(f) + vO_X(f) = (u + v)O_X(f)$

Multiplicative consistency:  $O_X(f)^u O_X(f)^v = O_X(f)^{u+v}$



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Maximum-sum rule:  $\max(O_X(f), O_X(g)) = O_X(f) + O_X(g)$

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Restriction rule:  $(O_X(f)|D) = O_D(f|D)$

Additivity:  $O_X(f) + O_X(g) = O_X(f + g)$

Maximum rule:  $\max(O_X(f), O_X(g)) = O_X(\max(f, g))$

Summation rule:  $O_X(f + g) = O_X(\max(f, g))$

Maximum-sum rule:  $\max(O_X(f), O_X(g)) = O_X(f) + O_X(g)$

Injective composition rule:  $O_X(f) \circ s = O_Y(f \circ s)$  ( $s$  injective)



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Subset-sum rule:

$f \in O_Y(g) \Rightarrow \left(x \mapsto \sum_{y \in S(x)} f(y)\right) \in O_X\left(\sum_{y \in S(x)} g(y)\right)$

## Prevailing definition

The prevailing definition fulfills all of the implied properties, except for the subset-sum rule, and the injective composition rule.

## Relation definitions

Given the  $O$ -notation  $O_X : F_X \rightarrow \mathcal{P}(F_X)$ , we define the relations  $\preceq, \succeq, \prec, \succ, \approx \subset (F_X \times F_X)$  such that

$$\begin{aligned}g \preceq f &\Leftrightarrow g \in O_X(f), \\g \succeq f &\Leftrightarrow f \in O_X(g), \\g \prec f &\Leftrightarrow f \notin O_X(g) \text{ and } g \in O_X(f), \\g \succ f &\Leftrightarrow f \in O_X(g) \text{ and } g \notin O_X(f), \\g \approx f &\Leftrightarrow f \in O_X(g) \text{ and } g \in O_X(f),\end{aligned}\tag{2}$$

for all  $f, g \in F_X$ .

## Relation definitions

Using these relations, we define the traditional related notations  $\Omega_X, o_X, \omega_X, \Theta_X : F_X \rightarrow \mathcal{P}(F_X)$  such that

$$\begin{aligned}\Omega_X(f) &:= \{g \in F_X : g \succeq f\}, \\ o_X(f) &:= \{g \in F_X : g \prec f\}, \\ \omega_X(f) &:= \{g \in F_X : g \succ f\}, \\ \Theta_X(f) &:= \{g \in F_X : g \approx f\},\end{aligned}\tag{3}$$

for all  $f \in F_X$ .

The end. Questions? :)