

# The Fine-Grained Complexity of Episode Matching

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Philip Bille, Inge Li Gørtz, Shay Mozes, Teresa Anna Steiner, Oren Weimann

# Episode Matching

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$S = \text{BATMAN AND ANNA SING NANANANA AND EAT BANANAS}$   
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- The minimal substrings of  $S$  which contain  $P$  as a subsequence are shown in blue:  $S[6, 16]$  and  $S[39, 44]$
- We consider a version of the problem where the goal is to find the *length* of the shortest substring of  $S$  containing  $P$  as a subsequence

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- **This work:** no  $O(nm^{1-\epsilon})$  or  $O(n^{1-\epsilon}m)$  algorithm assuming OVH



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This work	$O(n + (\frac{n}{\tau})^k)$	$O(k \cdot \tau \cdot \log \log n)$	$m = k$ fixed
This work	$\Omega(n^{k-k\delta-o(1)})$	$O(n^\delta)$	$m = k$ fixed

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- Conditional lower bound based on hardness of  $k$ -Set Disjointness

## Complexities - Special case $|P| = 2$

- **This work:** Faster preprocessing for decision version using min-plus matrix multiplication

# Orthogonal Vectors

- Two sets  $A, B$  of  $d$ -dimensional, binary vectors, each set has size  $n$
- Problem: Decide if there is a vector in  $A$  that is orthogonal to a vector in  $B$
- OVH: There is no algorithm running in time  $O(n^{2-\epsilon} \text{poly}(d))$



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- Length of  $S = O(nd)$
- $|P||S|^{1-\epsilon} = O(n^{2-\epsilon}d^{2-\epsilon})$   
 $|P|^{1-\epsilon}|S| = O(n^{2-\epsilon}d^{2-\epsilon})$



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No orthogonal vectors:

$$\begin{array}{cccccccc} y & s(z) & y & s(a_{i-1}) & y & s(z) & y & s(a_i) & y & s(z) & y & s(a_{i+1}) \\ y & p(b_{j-1}) & & & y & p(b_j) & & & y & p(b_{j+1}) & & \end{array}$$

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$a_i, b_j$  orthogonal:

$y$  s(z)  $y$  s( $a_{i-1}$ )  $y$  s(z)  $y$  s( $a_i$ )  $y$  s(z)  $y$  s( $a_{i+1}$ )  
 $y$  p( $b_{j-2}$ )  $y$  p( $b_{j-1}$ )  $y$  p( $b_j$ )  $y$  p( $b_{j+1}$ )

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$$S = \underline{s(a_1)ys(z)ys(a_2)ys(z)y \dots s(a_n)ys(z)ys(a_1)ys(z)y \dots s(a_n)}$$

- $a_i \perp b_j$
- $j < i$ : “overflow” to the right
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*Handwritten annotations:*  
...  $\rho(b_2)y \rho(b_3)y$        $\rho(b_4) \dots$

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- replace  $x$  and  $y$  by binary gadgets

## Space/time trade-off

- $|P| = k$  fixed at preprocessing
- Upper bound: Space:  $O(n + (\frac{n}{\tau})^k)$ , Time:  $O(k \cdot \tau \cdot \log \log n)$   
 $m = k$
- Conditional lower bound: Space:  $\Omega(n^{k-k\delta-o(1)})$ , Time:  $O(n^\delta)$

### Definition (*k*-Set Disjointness Problem)

Preprocess  $m$  sets  $S_1, S_2, \dots, S_m$  of total size  $\sum_{i=1}^m |S_i| = N$  drawn from a universe  $U$  such that given  $(i_1, i_2, \dots, i_k)$  we can quickly decide whether  $\bigcap_{j=1}^k S_{i_j} = \emptyset$ .



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### Conjecture (Strong *k*-Set Disjointness Conjecture)

*Any data structure for the *k*-Set Disjointness Problem that answers queries in time  $T$  must use  $\tilde{\Omega}(N^k / T^k)$  space.*

## Space/time trade-off, Lower bound

$$S_1 = \{1, 3, 4\} \quad \alpha_1$$

$$S_2 = \{2\} \quad \alpha_2$$

$$S_3 = \{1, 2, 3, 4\} \quad \alpha_3$$

$$S_4 = \{2, 4\} \quad \alpha_4$$

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Contact: [teresa.anna.steiner@univie.ac.at](mailto:teresa.anna.steiner@univie.ac.at)



Alberto Apostolico and Mikhail J. Atallah.

**Compact recognizers of episode sequences.**

*Inf. Comput.*, 174(2):180–192, 2002.



Philip Bille, Inge Li Gørtz, Max Rishøj Pedersen, and  
Teresa Anna Steiner.

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