Kruskal’s MST Algorithm
CLRS Chapter 23, DPV Chapter 5
Version of November 5, 2014

Main Topics of This Lecture

- Kruskal’s algorithm
  Another, but different, greedy MST algorithm

- Introduction to UNION-FIND data structure.
  Used in Kruskal’s algorithm
  Will see implementation in next lecture.
Idea of Kruskal’s Algorithm

Build a forest.

Initially, trees of the forest are the vertices (no edges).

In each step add the cheapest edge that does not create a cycle.

Continue until the forest is a single tree.
(Why is a single tree created?)

This is a minimum spanning tree
(we must prove this).
Outline by Example

original graph

edge weight

{d, c} 2
{a, e} 3
{a, d} 5
{e, d} 7
{b, c} 9
{a, b} 10
{b, d} 12

Forest (V, A)

A={

3
Outline of Kruskal’s Algorithm

Step 0: Set $A = \emptyset$ and $F = E$, the set of all edges.

Step 1: Choose an edge $e$ in $F$ of minimum weight, and check whether adding $e$ to $A$ creates a cycle.

- If “yes”, remove $e$ from $F$.
- If “no”, move $e$ from $F$ to $A$.

Step 2: If $F = \emptyset$, stop and output the minimal spanning tree $(V, A)$. Otherwise go to Step 1.

Remark: Will see later, after each step, $(V, A)$ is a subgraph of a MST.
Outline of Kruskal’s Algorithm

Implementation Questions:

- How does algorithm choose edge $e \in F$ with minimum weight?

- How does algorithm check whether adding $e$ to $A$ creates a cycle?
How to Choose the Edge of Least Weight

**Question:**
How does algorithm choose edge $e \in F$ with minimum weight?

**Answer:** Start by sorting edges in $E$ in order of increasing weight.
Walk through the edges in this order.
(Once edge $e$ causes a cycle it will always cause a cycle so it can be thrown away.)
How to Check for Cycles

Observation: At each step of the outlined algorithm, \((V, A)\) is acyclic so it is a forest.

If \(u \) and \(v\) are in the same tree, then adding edge \(\{u, v\}\) to \(A\) creates a cycle.

If \(u \) and \(v\) are not in the same tree, then adding edge \(\{u, v\}\) to \(A\) does not create a cycle.

Question: How to test whether \(u\) and \(v\) are in the same tree?

High-Level Answer: Use a disjoint-set data structure. Vertices in a tree are considered to be in the same set. Test if \(\text{Find-Set}(u) = \text{Find-Set}(v)\)?

Low-Level Answer: The UNION-FIND data structure implements this:
**The UNION-FIND Data Structure**

**UNION-FIND** supports three operations on collections of *disjoint sets*: Let \( n \) be the size of the universe.

- **Create-Set\((u)\):** \( O(1) \)
  - Create a set containing the single element \( u \).

- **Find-Set\((u)\):** \( O(\log n) \)
  - Find the set containing the element \( u \).

- **Union\((u, v)\):** \( O(\log n) \)
  - Merge the sets respectively containing \( u \) and \( v \) into a common set.

For now we treat UNION-FIND as a black box. Will see implementation in next lecture.
Kruskal’s Algorithm: the Details

Sort $E$ in increasing order by weight $w$; $O(|E| \log |E|)$

/* After sorting $E = \{\{u_1, v_1\}, \{u_2, v_2\}, \ldots, \{u_{|E|}, v_{|E|}\}\} */$

$A = \{\}$;

for (each $u$ in $V$) CREATE-SET($u$); $O(|V|)$

for $i$ from 1 to $|E|$ do $O(|E| \log |E|)$

if (FIND-SET($u_i$) != FIND-SET($v_i$))

{ add $\{u_i, v_i\}$ to $A$;
  UNION($u_i, v_i$);
}

return($A$);

Remark: With a proper implementation of UNION-FIND, Kruskal’s algorithm has running time $O(|E| \log |E|)$. 
Correctness of Kruskal’s Algorithm

Sort the graph edges in nondecreasing order so that

\[ w(e_1) \leq w(e_2) \leq \cdots \leq w(e_m) \]

Let \( A_i \) be \( A \) in Kruskal’s algorithm after processing \( e_i \).

Set \( A_0 = \emptyset \). Then

If \( e_{i+1} \) forms a cycle with \( A_i \), \( \Rightarrow A_{i+1} = A_i \)
If \( e_{i+1} \) doesn’t form a cycle with \( A_i \), \( \Rightarrow A_{i+1} = A_i \cup \{e_{i+1}\} \)

We will prove that, \( \forall i, \exists \) MST \( T_i \) such that \( A_i \subseteq T_i \).

In particular, this means that

\[ A_0 \subseteq A_1 \cdots \subseteq A_m \subseteq T_m \]

which implies (why?) Kruskal’s algorithm produces MST \( T_m \).
Correctness of Kruskal’s Algorithm

Need to prove that \( \forall i, \exists \) MST \( T_i \) such that \( A_i \subseteq T_i \).

Proof will be by induction on \( i \).

Obviously true for base \( i = 0 \). If \( i \geq 0 \),
(a) If \( e_{i+1} \) forms a cycle with \( A_i \), \( \Rightarrow A_{i+1} = A_i \)
(b) If \( e_{i+1} \) doesn’t form a cycle with \( A_i \), \( \Rightarrow A_{i+1} = A_i \cup \{e_{i+1}\} \)

Claim is true for case (a).
To prove for case (b)
note that \( T_i \) is forest on \( n \) nodes.
Let \( C_1, C_2, C_K \), be connected components (trees) of forest.
Let \( V_1, V_2, \ldots, V_k \), be their vertices.

Without loss of generality,
let \( V_1 \) contain one of the endpoints of \( e_{i+1} \).
Note that the other endpoint is not in \( V_1 \).
Correctness of Kruskal’s Algorithm

Recall Lemma proved previously

- Let $G = (V, E)$ be a connected, undirected graph with a real-valued weight function $w$ defined on $E$
- $A$ be a subset of $E$ that is included in some MST for $G$.

Let

- $(S, V - S)$ be any cut of $G$ that respects $A$
- $e$ be a light edge crossing the cut $(S, V - S)$

Then, $A \cup \{e\}$ is included in some MST for $G$.

Now plug in the information from previous slide.

Let $S = V_1$, $A = A_i$ and $e = e_{i+1}$

Induction hypothesis is that $A_i$ is in some MST.

Since $V_1$ is CC of $A_i$, $(V_1, V - V_1)$ respects $A_i$.

Easy to see (how?) that $e_{i+1}$ is a light edge crossing the cut.

So, $A_{i+1} = A_i \cup \{e_{i+1}\}$ is included in some MST for $G$, and claim is proven.
On previous slide we stated that it’s easy to see that $e_{i+1}$ is a light edge crossing the cut.

Suppose that this was not true
Then $\exists$ some $e_j$ with $w(e_j) < w(e_{i+1})$ that crosses the cut.
By definition, if edge crosses the cut, its endpoints are in different connected components of $T_i$ (and therefore $A_i$) so it can’t form a cycle with $A_i$.

$w(e_j) < w(e_{i+1})$ so $j < i + 1$ and $e_j$ is processed before $e_{i+1}$. Since $A_{j-1} \subseteq A_i$ and $e_j$ doesn’t form a cycle with $A_i$, $e_j$ also doesn’t form a cycle with $A_{j-1}$.

Thus, $e_j$ would have been added to $A_j$ by Kruskal’s algorithm! But this contradicts fact that $e_j$ can not be in $A_i$ since it connects two items that are not connected in $A_i$. 