Register Machines

Algorithms, informally

No precise definition of "algorithm" at the time Hilbert posed the *Entscheidungsproblem*, just examples.

Common features of the examples:

- finite description of the procedure in terms of elementary operations
- deterministic (next step uniquely determined if there is one)
- procedure may not terminate on some input data, but we can recognize when it does terminate and what the result is.

Register Machines, informally

They operate on natural numbers $\mathbb{N} = \{0, 1, 2, \ldots\}$ stored in (idealized) registers using the following "elementary operations":

- add 1 to the contents of a register
- test whether the contents of a register is 0
- subtract 1 from the contents of a register if it is non-zero
- jumps ("goto")
- conditionals ("if_then_else_")

Definition. A register machine is specified by:

- finitely many registers R_0, R_1, ..., R_n (each capable of storing a natural number);
- a program consisting of a finite list of instructions of the form $label : body$, where for $i = 0, 1, 2, \ldots$, the $(i+1)^{\text{th}}$ instruction has label L_i.

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Instruction body takes one of three forms:

$R^+ \to L'$	add 1 to contents of register R and jump to instruction labelled L'
$R^- \to L', L''$	if contents of R is > 0, then subtract 1 from it and jump to L', else jump to L''
HALT	stop executing instructions

Example

registers:

$R_0\ R_1\ R_2$

program:

$L_0 : R_1^- \to L_1, L_2$

$L_1 : R_0^+ \to L_0$

$L_2 : R_2^- \to L_3, L_4$

$L_3 : R_0^+ \to L_2$

$L_4 : \mathtt{HALT}$

example computation:

L_i	R_0	R_1	R_2
0	0	1	2

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1	**0**	**0**	**2**
0	**1**	**0**	**2**
2	**1**	**0**	**2**

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2	1	0	2
3	1	0	1

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2	2	0	1
3	2	0	0
2	3	0	0
4	3	0	0

Register machine computation

Register machine configuration:

$$c = (\ell, r_0, \dots, r_n)$$

where ℓ = current label and r_i = current contents of $\mathtt{R}_i$.

Notation: "$\mathtt{R}_i = x$ [in configuration c]" means $c = (\ell, r_0, \dots, r_n)$ with $r_i = x$.

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Initial configurations:

$$c_0 = (0, r_0, \dots, r_n)$$

where r_i = initial contents of register $\mathtt{R}_i$.

Register machine computation

A computation of a RM is a (finite or infinite) sequence of configurations

$$c_0, c_1, c_2, \ldots$$

where

- $c_0 = (0, r_0, \ldots, r_n)$ is an initial configuration
- each $c = (\ell, r_0, \ldots, r_n)$ in the sequence determines the next configuration in the sequence (if any) by carrying out the program instruction labelled L_ℓ with registers containing $r_0, \ldots, r_n$.

Halting

For a finite computation $c_0, c_1, \ldots, c_m$, the last configuration $c_m = (\ell, r, \ldots)$ is a halting configuration, i.e. instruction labelled $\mathtt{L}_\ell$ is

either `HALT` (a "proper halt")

or $R^+ \to L$, or $R^- \to L, L'$ with $R > 0$, or $R^- \to L', L$ with $R = 0$
and there is no instruction labelled L in the program (an "erroneous halt")

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E.g.

```
L0 : R0+ -> L2
L1 : HALT
```

halts erroneously.

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N.B. can always modify programs (without affecting their computations) to turn all erroneous halts into proper halts by adding extra HALT instructions to the list with appropriate labels.

Halting

For a finite computation $c_0, c_1, \ldots, c_m$, the last configuration $c_m = (\ell, r, \ldots)$ is a halting configuration.

Note that computations may never halt. For example,

$\mathtt{L_0 : R_0^+ \to L_0}$
$\mathtt{L_1 : HALT}$

only has infinite computation sequences

$$(0, r), (0, r+1), (0, r+2), \ldots$$

Graphical representation

- one node in the graph for each instruction
- arcs represent jumps between instructions
- lose sequential ordering of instructions—so need to indicate initial instruction with `START`.

instruction	representation
$R^+ \to L$	$R^+ \longrightarrow [L]$
$R^- \to L, L'$	$R^- \longrightarrow [L]$, $R^- \twoheadrightarrow [L']$
`HALT`	`HALT`
L_0	$\texttt{START} \longrightarrow [L_0]$

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$L_4 : \text{HALT}$

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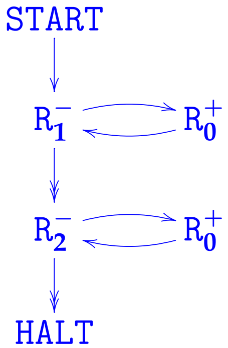

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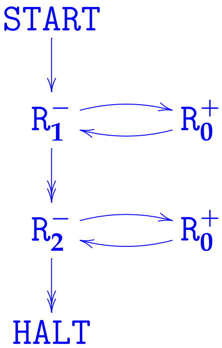

Claim: starting from initial configuration $(0, 0, x, y)$, this machine's computation halts with configuration $(4, x + y, 0, 0)$.

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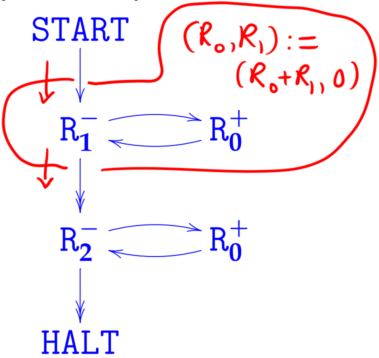

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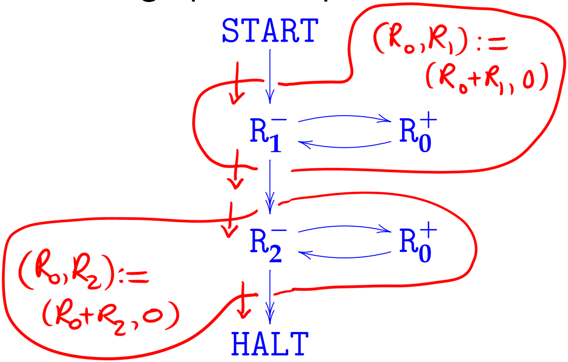

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Partial functions

Register machine computation is deterministic: in any non-halting configuration, the next configuration is uniquely determined by the program.

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So the relation between initial and final register contents defined by a register machine program is a partial function...

Definition. A partial function from a set X to a set Y is specified by any subset $f \subseteq X \times Y$ satisfying

$$(x, y) \in f \wedge (x, y') \in f \rightarrow y = y'$$

for all $x \in X$ and $y, y' \in Y$.

Partial functions

ordered pairs $\{(x, y) \mid x \in X \wedge y \in Y\}$

i.e. for all $x \in X$ there is at most one $y \in Y$ with $(x, y) \in f$

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Partial functions

Notation:

- "$f(x) = y$" means $(x, y) \in f$
- "$f(x)\downarrow$" means $\exists y \in Y\, (f(x) = y)$
- "$f(x)\uparrow$" means $\neg\exists y \in Y\, (f(x) = y)$
- $X \rightharpoonup Y$ = set of all partial functions from X to Y
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Definition. A partial function from a set X to a set Y is total if it satisfies

$$f(x)\downarrow$$

for all $x \in X$.

Computable functions

Definition. $f \in \mathbb{N}^n \rightharpoonup \mathbb{N}$ is (register machine) computable if there is a register machine M with at least $n+1$ registers $R_0, R_1, \ldots, R_n$ (and maybe more) such that for all $(x_1, \ldots, x_n) \in \mathbb{N}^n$ and all $y \in \mathbb{N}$,

> the computation of M starting with $R_0 = 0$, $R_1 = x_1, \ldots, R_n = x_n$ and all other registers set to 0, halts with $R_0 = y$

if and only if $f(x_1, \ldots, x_n) = y$.

Note the [somewhat arbitrary] I/O convention: in the initial configuration registers $R_1, \ldots, R_n$ store the function's arguments (with all others zeroed); and in the halting configuration register R_0 stores it's value (if any).

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N.B. there may be many different M that compute the same partial function f.

Example

registers:

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program:

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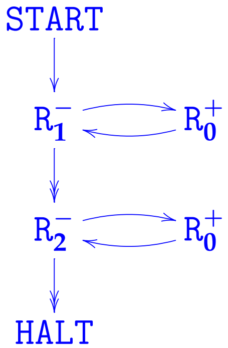

Claim: starting from initial configuration $(0, 0, x, y)$, this machine's computation halts with configuration $(4, x + y, 0, 0)$. So $f(x, y) \triangleq x + y$ is computable.