

Technique 1: Round the LP solution.

We first solve the LP-relaxation and then we round the fractional values so that we obtain an integral solution.

Set Cover relaxation:

$$\begin{array}{ll} \min & \sum_{i=1}^k w_i x_i \\ \text{s.t.} & \forall u \in U \quad \sum_{i:u \in S_i} x_i \geq 1 \\ & \forall i \in \{1, \dots, k\} \quad x_i \in [0, 1] \end{array}$$

Let f_u be the number of sets that the element u is contained in (the frequency of u). Let $f = \max_u \{f_u\}$ be the maximum frequency.

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Rounding Algorithm:

Set all x_i -values with $x_i \geq \frac{1}{f}$ to 1. Set all other x_i -values to 0.

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Lemma 2

The rounding algorithm gives an f -approximation.

Proof: Every $u \in U$ is covered.

We know that

The sum of the x_i is at least f .

The sum of the x_i is at most f .

Therefore, the sum of the x_i is exactly f .

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- ▶ We know that $\sum_{i:u \in S_i} x_i \geq 1$.
- ▶ The sum contains at most $f_u \leq f$ elements.
- ▶ Therefore one of the sets that contain u must have $x_i \geq 1/f$.
- ▶ This set will be selected. Hence, u is covered.

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Technique 2: Rounding the Dual Solution.

Relaxation for Set Cover

Primal:

$$\begin{array}{ll} \min & \sum_{i \in I} w_i x_i \\ \text{s.t. } \forall u & \sum_{i: u \in S_i} x_i \geq 1 \\ & x_i \geq 0 \end{array}$$

Dual:

$$\begin{array}{ll} \max & \sum_{u \in U} y_u \\ \text{s.t. } \forall i & \sum_{u: u \in S_i} y_u \leq w_i \\ & y_u \geq 0 \end{array}$$

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Rounding Algorithm:

Let I denote the index set of sets for which the dual constraint is tight. This means for all $i \in I$

$$\sum_{u:u \in S_i} y_u = w_i$$

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Lemma 3

The resulting index set is an f -approximation.

Proof:

Every $u \in U$ is covered.

Suppose there is a $u \in U$ not covered.

This means that the dual constraint for u is not satisfied.

But then π_u could be increased in the dual solution without

violating any constraint. This is a contradiction to the fact

that the dual solution is optimal.

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$$\begin{aligned}\sum_{i \in I} w_i &= \sum_{i \in I} \sum_{u: u \in S_i} y_u \\ &= \sum_u |\{i \in I : u \in S_i\}| \cdot y_u\end{aligned}$$

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$$I \subseteq I' .$$

This means I' is never better than I .

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- ▶ Because of **Complementary Slackness Conditions** the corresponding constraint in the dual must be tight.
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Technique 3: The Primal Dual Method

The previous two rounding algorithms have the disadvantage that it is necessary to solve the LP. The following method also gives an f -approximation without solving the LP.

For estimating the cost of the solution we only required two properties.

The solution is dual feasible.

The solution is primal feasible.

Of course, we also need that I is a cover.

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$$\sum_u y_u \leq \text{cost}(x^*) \leq \text{OPT}$$

where x^* is an optimum solution to the primal LP.

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Technique 3: The Primal Dual Method

Algorithm 1 PrimalDual

- 1: $y \leftarrow 0$
- 2: $I \leftarrow \emptyset$
- 3: **while** exists $u \notin \bigcup_{i \in I} S_i$ **do**
- 4: increase dual variable y_u until constraint for some
 new set S_ℓ becomes tight
- 5: $I \leftarrow I \cup \{\ell\}$

Technique 4: The Greedy Algorithm

Algorithm 1 Greedy

- 1: $I \leftarrow \emptyset$
- 2: $\hat{S}_j \leftarrow S_j$ for all j
- 3: **while** I not a set cover **do**
- 4: $\ell \leftarrow \arg \min_{j: \hat{S}_j \neq \emptyset} \frac{w_j}{|\hat{S}_j|}$
- 5: $I \leftarrow I \cup \{\ell\}$
- 6: $\hat{S}_j \leftarrow \hat{S}_j - S_\ell$ for all j

In every round the Greedy algorithm takes the set that covers remaining elements in the most **cost-effective** way.

We choose a set such that the ratio between cost and still uncovered elements in the set is minimized.

Technique 4: The Greedy Algorithm

Lemma 4

Given positive numbers a_1, \dots, a_k and b_1, \dots, b_k , and $S \subseteq \{1, \dots, k\}$ then

$$\min_i \frac{a_i}{b_i} \leq \frac{\sum_{i \in S} a_i}{\sum_{i \in S} b_i} \leq \max_i \frac{a_i}{b_i}$$

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Let n_ℓ denote the number of elements that remain at the beginning of iteration ℓ . $n_1 = n = |U|$ and $n_{s+1} = 0$ if we need s iterations.

In the ℓ -th iteration

since an optimal algorithm can cover the remaining n_ℓ elements with cost OPT .

Let \hat{S}_j be a subset that minimizes this ratio. Hence,
$$w_j / |\hat{S}_j| \leq \frac{\text{OPT}}{n_\ell}.$$

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Adding this set to our solution means $n_{\ell+1} = n_{\ell} - |\hat{S}_j|$.

$$w_j \leq \frac{|\hat{S}_j| \cdot \text{OPT}}{n_{\ell}} = \frac{n_{\ell} - n_{\ell+1}}{n_{\ell}} \cdot \text{OPT}$$

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$$\begin{aligned}\sum_{j \in I} w_j &\leq \sum_{\ell=1}^s \frac{n_\ell - n_{\ell+1}}{n_\ell} \cdot \text{OPT} \\ &\leq \text{OPT} \sum_{\ell=1}^s \left(\frac{1}{n_\ell} + \frac{1}{n_\ell - 1} + \dots + \frac{1}{n_{\ell+1} + 1} \right)\end{aligned}$$

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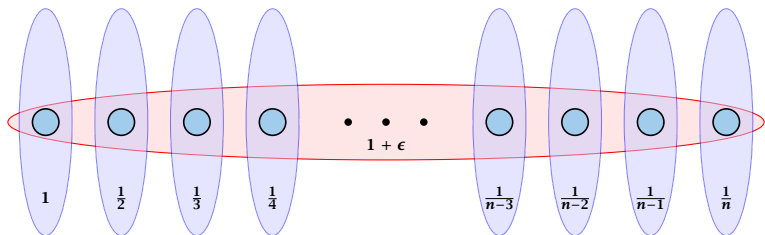
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Technique 4: The Greedy Algorithm

A tight example:



Technique 5: Randomized Rounding

One round of randomized rounding:

Pick set S_j uniformly at random with probability $1 - x_j$ (for all j).

Version A: Repeat rounds until you nearly have a cover. Cover remaining elements by some simple heuristic.

Version B: Repeat for s rounds. If you have a cover STOP. Otherwise, repeat the whole algorithm.

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Probability that $u \in U$ is not covered (in one round):

$$\begin{aligned}\Pr[u \text{ not covered in one round}] &= \prod_{j:u \in S_j} (1 - x_j) \leq \prod_{j:u \in S_j} e^{-x_j} \\ &= e^{-\sum_{j:u \in S_j} x_j} \leq e^{-1} .\end{aligned}$$

Probability that $u \in U$ is not covered (after ℓ rounds):

$$\Pr[u \text{ not covered after } \ell \text{ round}] \leq \frac{1}{e^\ell} .$$

$\Pr[\exists u \in U \text{ not covered after } \ell \text{ round}]$

$$\begin{aligned} & \Pr[\exists u \in U \text{ not covered after } \ell \text{ round}] \\ &= \Pr[u_1 \text{ not covered} \vee u_2 \text{ not covered} \vee \dots \vee u_n \text{ not covered}] \end{aligned}$$

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Lemma 5

With high probability $\mathcal{O}(\log n)$ rounds suffice.

$$\begin{aligned} & \Pr[\exists u \in U \text{ not covered after } \ell \text{ round}] \\ &= \Pr[u_1 \text{ not covered} \vee u_2 \text{ not covered} \vee \dots \vee u_n \text{ not covered}] \\ &\leq \sum_i \Pr[u_i \text{ not covered after } \ell \text{ rounds}] \leq ne^{-\ell} . \end{aligned}$$

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With high probability:

For any constant α the number of rounds is at most $\mathcal{O}(\log n)$ with probability at least $1 - n^{-\alpha}$.

Proof: We have

$$\Pr[\text{\#rounds} \geq (\alpha + 1) \ln n] \leq n e^{-(\alpha+1) \ln n} = n^{-\alpha} .$$

Expected Cost

- ▶ Version A.

Repeat for $s = (\alpha + 1) \ln n$ rounds. If you don't have a cover simply take for each element u the cheapest set that contains u .

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$$E[\text{cost}] = \Pr[\text{success}] \cdot E[\text{cost} \mid \text{success}] \\ + \Pr[\text{no success}] \cdot E[\text{cost} \mid \text{no success}]$$

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for $n \geq 2$ and $\alpha \geq 1$.

Randomized rounding gives an $\mathcal{O}(\log n)$ approximation. The running time is polynomial with high probability.

Theorem 6 (without proof)

There is no approximation algorithm for set cover with approximation guarantee better than $\frac{1}{2} \log n$ unless NP has quasi-polynomial time algorithms (algorithms with running time $2^{\text{poly}(\log n)}$).

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Integrality Gap

The **integrality gap** of the SetCover LP is $\Omega(\log n)$.

- ▶ $n = 2^k - 1$
- ▶ Elements are all vectors \vec{x} over $GF[2]$ of length k (excluding zero vector).
- ▶ Every vector \vec{y} defines a set as follows

$$S_{\vec{y}} := \{\vec{x} \mid \vec{x}^T \vec{y} = 1\}$$

- ▶ each set contains 2^{k-1} vectors; each vector is contained in 2^{k-1} sets
- ▶ $x_i = \frac{1}{2^{k-1}} = \frac{2}{n+1}$ is fractional solution.

Integrality Gap

Every collection of $p < k$ sets does not cover all elements.

Hence, we get a gap of $\Omega(\log n)$.

Techniques:

- ▶ Deterministic Rounding
- ▶ Rounding of the Dual
- ▶ Primal Dual
- ▶ Greedy
- ▶ Randomized Rounding
- ▶ Local Search
- ▶ Rounding Data + Dynamic Programming