Important separators and parameterized algorithms

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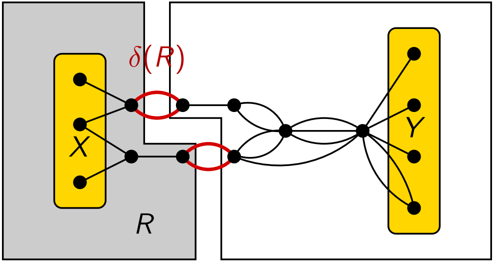
Main message

Small separators in graphs have interesting extremal properties that can be exploited in combinatorial and algorithmic results.

- Bounding the number of “important” cuts.
- Edge/vertex versions, directed/undirected versions.
- Algorithmic applications: FPT algorithm for
    - MULTIWAY CUT,
    - DIRECTED FEEDBACK VERTEX SET, and
    - (p, q)-CLUSTERING.
- Random selection of important separators: a new tool with many applications.

Definition: $\delta(R)$ is the set of edges with exactly one endpoint in R.
Definition: A set S of edges is a **minimal** (X, Y)-**cut** if there is no $X - Y$ path in $G \setminus S$ and no proper subset of S breaks every $X - Y$ path.

Observation: Every minimal (X, Y)-cut S can be expressed as $S = \delta(R)$ for some $X \subseteq R$ and $R \cap Y = \emptyset$.



Theorem

A minimum (X, Y)-cut can be found in polynomial time.

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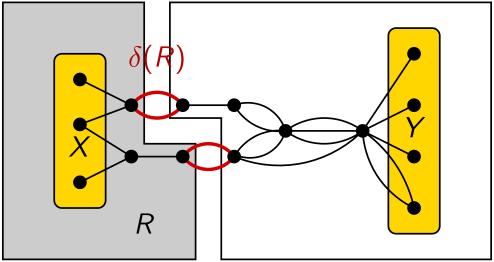
The size of a minimum (X, Y)-cut equals the maximum size of a pairwise edge-disjoint collection of $X - Y$ paths.



There is a long list of algorithms for finding disjoint paths and minimum cuts.

- Edmonds-Karp: $O(|V(G)| \cdot |E(G)|^2)$
- Dinitz: $O(|V(G)|^2 \cdot |E(G)|)$
- Push-relabel: $O(|V(G)|^3)$
- Orlin-King-Rao-Tarjan: $O(|V(G)| \cdot |E(G)|)$
- . . .

But we need only the following result:

Theorem

An (X, Y)-cut of size at most k (if exists) can be found in time $O(k \cdot (|V(G)| + |E(G)|))$.

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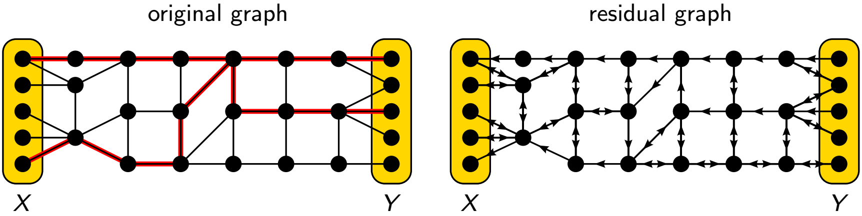
We try to grow a collection $\mathcal{P}$ of edge-disjoint $X - Y$ paths.

Residual graph:

- not used by $\mathcal{P}$: bidirected,
- used by $\mathcal{P}$: directed in the opposite direction.



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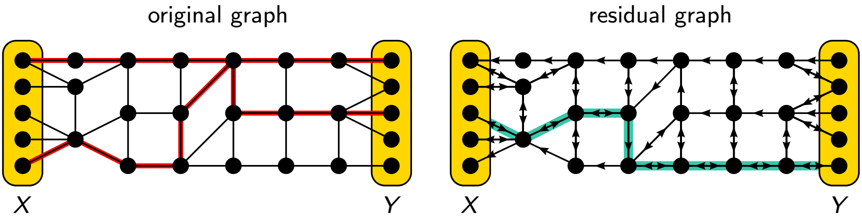

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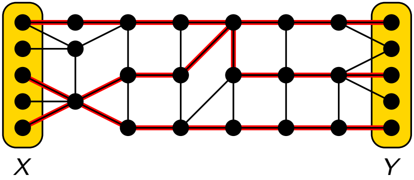
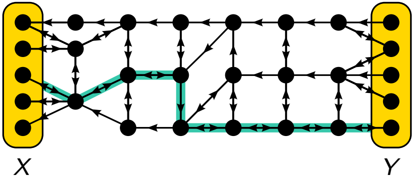


residual graph



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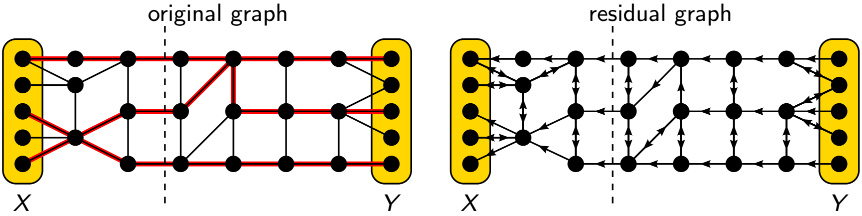

If we cannot find an augmenting path, we can find a (minimum) cut of size $|\mathcal{P}|$.

Finding minimum cuts

Fact: The function δ is **submodular:** for arbitrary sets A, B,

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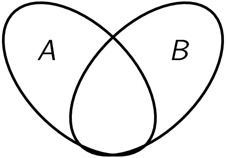
Proof: Determine separately the contribution of the different types of edges.



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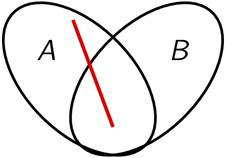

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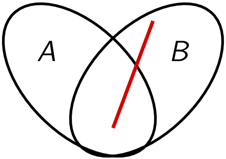

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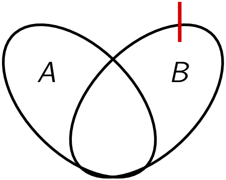

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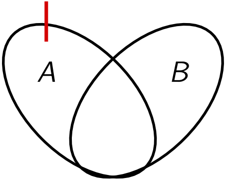

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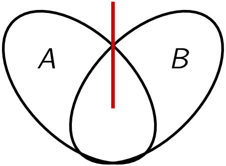

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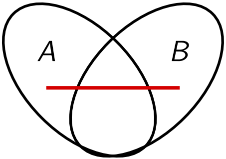

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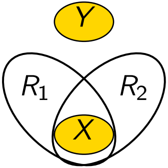
Proof: Let $R_1, R_2 \supseteq X$ be two sets such that $\delta(R_1), \delta(R_2)$ are (X, Y)-cuts of size λ.

$$\underset{\lambda}{|\delta(R_1)|} + \underset{\lambda}{|\delta(R_2)|} \geq \underset{\geq \lambda}{|\delta(R_1 \cap R_2)|} + |\delta(R_1 \cup R_2)|$$

$$\Rightarrow |\delta(R_1 \cup R_2)| \leq \lambda$$



Note: Analogous result holds for a unique minimal $R_{\min}$.

Lemma

Given a graph G and sets $X, Y \subseteq V(G)$, the sets R_{min} and R_{max} can be found in polynomial time.

Proof: Iteratively add vertices to X if they do not increase the minimum $X - Y$ cut size. When the process stops, $X = R_{\text{max}}$. Similar for R_{min}.

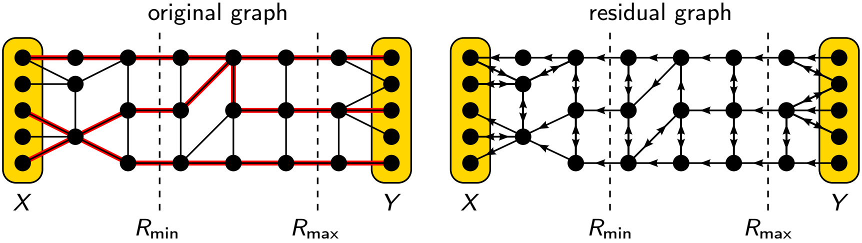
But we can do better!

Finding R_{min} and R_{max}

Lemma

Given a graph G and sets $X, Y \subseteq V(G)$, the sets $R_{\min}$ and $R_{\max}$ can be found in $O(\lambda \cdot (|V(G)| + |E(G)|))$ time, where λ is the minimum $X - Y$ cut size.

Proof: Look at the residual graph.



$R_{\min}$: vertices reachable from X.

$R_{\max}$: vertices from which Y is **not** reachable.

Finding $R_{\min}$ and $R_{\max}$

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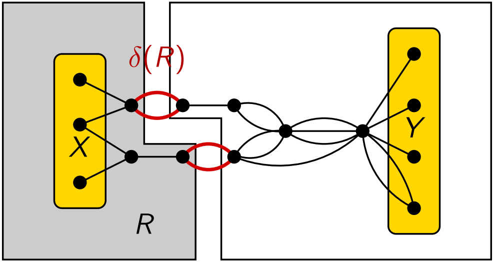
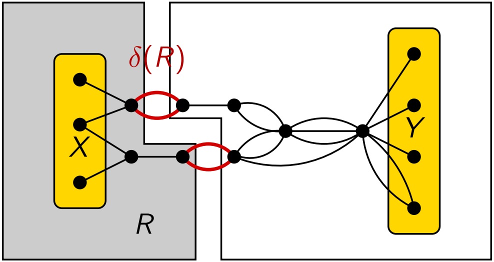


Definition

A minimal (X, Y)-cut $\delta(R)$ is **important** if there is no (X, Y)-cut $\delta(R')$ with $R \subset R'$ and $|\delta(R')| \leq |\delta(R)|$.

Note: Can be checked in polynomial time if a cut is important ($\delta(R)$ is important if $R = R_{\max}$).



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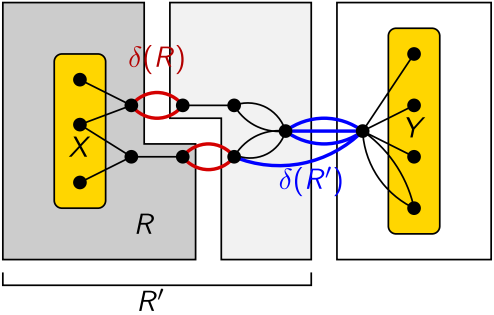

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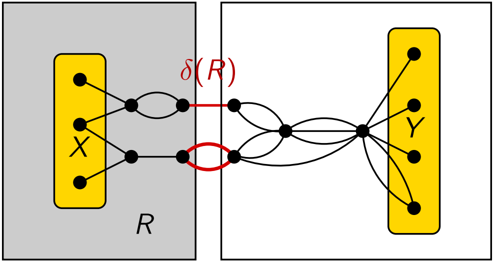
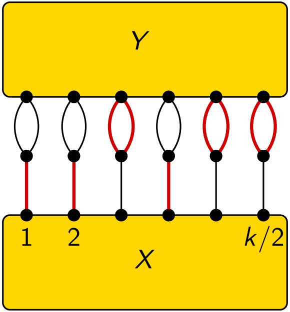


Important cuts

The number of important cuts can be exponentially large.

Example:



This graph has $2^{k/2}$ important (X, Y)-cuts of size at most k.

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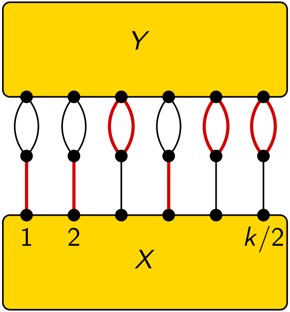

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Proof: Let λ be the minimum (X, Y)-cut size and let $\delta(R_{\max})$ be the unique important cut of size λ such that $R_{\max}$ is maximal.

(1) We show that $R_{\max} \subseteq R$ for every important cut $\delta(R)$.

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By the submodularity of δ:

$$\underset{\lambda}{|\delta(R_{\max})|} + |\delta(R)| \geq \underset{\geq \lambda}{|\delta(R_{\max} \cap R)|} + |\delta(R_{\max} \cup R)|$$

$$\Downarrow$$

$$|\delta(R_{\max} \cup R)| \leq |\delta(R)|$$

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If $R \neq R_{\max} \cup R$, then $\delta(R)$ is not important.

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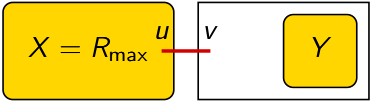
Thus the important (X, Y)- and (R_{max}, Y)-cuts are the same.
$\Rightarrow$ We can assume $X = R_{\text{max}}$.

(2) Search tree algorithm for enumerating all these cuts:

An (arbitrary) edge uv leaving $X = R_{\max}$ is either in the cut or not.



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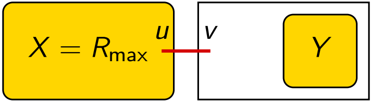

Branch 1: If $uv \in S$, then $S \setminus uv$ is an important (X, Y)-cut of size at most $k - 1$ in $G \setminus uv$.

Branch 2: If $uv \notin S$, then S is an important $(X \cup v, Y)$-cut of size at most k in G.

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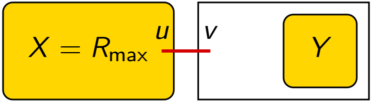

Branch 1: If $uv \in S$, then $S \setminus uv$ is an important (X, Y)-cut of size at most $k - 1$ in $G \setminus uv$.

$\Rightarrow$ k decreases by one, λ decreases by at most 1.

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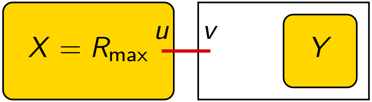

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The measure $2k - \lambda$ decreases in each step.

$\Rightarrow$ Height of the search tree $\leq 2k$

$\Rightarrow$ $\leq 2^{2k} = 4^k$ important cuts of size at most k.

We are using the following two statements:

Branch 1: If $uv \in S$, then

S is an important (X, Y)-cut in G

➡

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Branch 2: If S is an $(X \cup v, Y)$-cut, then

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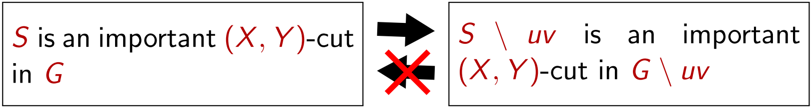

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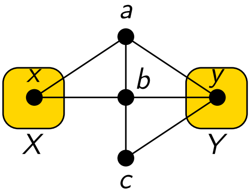
Converse is not true:

Set $\{ab, ay\}$ is important (X, Y)-cut in $G \setminus xb$, but $\{xb, ab, ay\}$ is not an important (X, Y)-cut in G.



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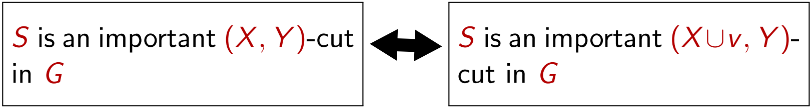

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Converse is true!

Important cuts — some details

We are using the following two statements:

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S is an important (X, Y)-cut in G $\Rightarrow$ $\not\Leftarrow$ $S \setminus uv$ is an important (X, Y)-cut in $G \setminus uv$

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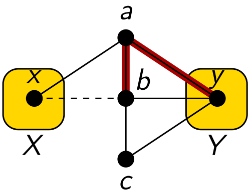

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S is an important (X, Y)-cut in G $\Leftrightarrow$ S is an important $(X \cup v, Y)$-cut in G

Converse is true!

Important cuts — some details

Theorem

There are at most 4^k important (X, Y)-cuts of size at most k and they can be enumerated in time $O(4^k \cdot k \cdot (|V(G)| + |E(G)|))$.

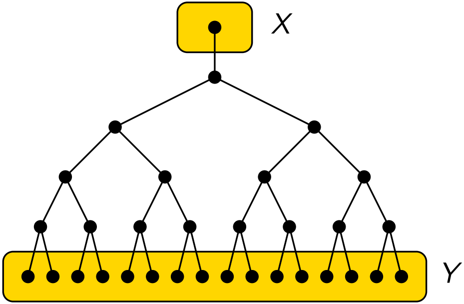
Algorithm for enumerating important cuts:

1. Handle trivial cases ($k = 0$, $\lambda = 0$, $k < \lambda$)
2. Find $R_{\max}$.
3. Choose an edge uv of $\delta(R_{\max})$.
    - Recurse on $(G - uv, R_{\max}, Y, k - 1)$.
    - Recurse on $(G, R_{\max} \cup v, Y, k)$.
4. Check if the returned cuts are important and throw away those that are not.

Theorem

There are at most 4^k important (X, Y)-cuts of size at most k.

Example: The bound 4^k is essentially tight.



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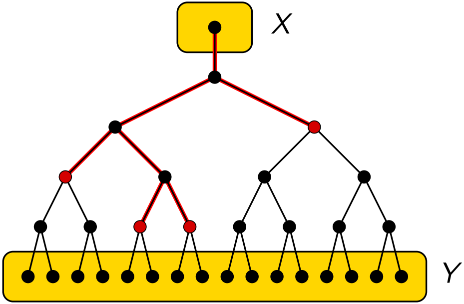

Any subtree with k leaves gives an important (X, Y)-cut of size k.

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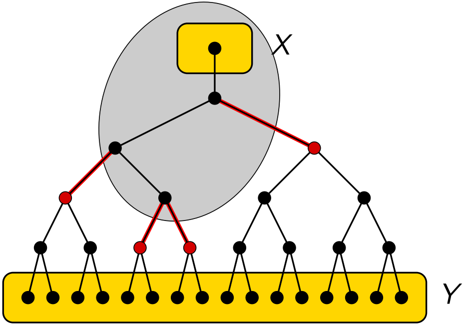

Any subtree with k leaves gives an important (X, Y)-cut of size k.

Theorem

There are at most 4^k important (X, Y)-cuts of size at most k.

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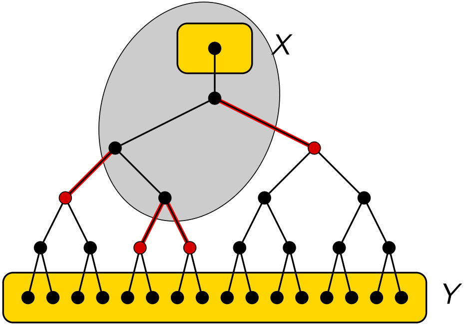


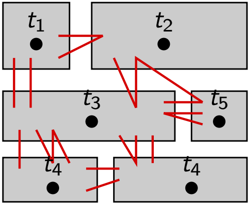
Any subtree with k leaves gives an important (X, Y)-cut of size k.
The number of subtrees with k leaves is the Catalan number

$$C_{k-1} = \frac{1}{k}\binom{2k-2}{k-1} \geq 4^k/\text{poly}(k).$$

Definition: A **multiway cut** of a set of terminals T is a set S of edges such that each component of $G \setminus S$ contains at most one vertex of T.

MULTIWAY CUT

Input:	Graph G, set T of vertices, integer k
Find:	A **multiway cut** S of at most k edges.



Polynomial for $|T| = 2$, but NP-hard for any fixed $|T| \geq 3$ [Dalhaus et al. 1994].

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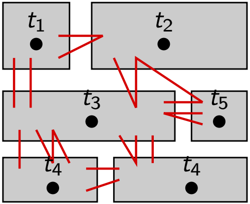
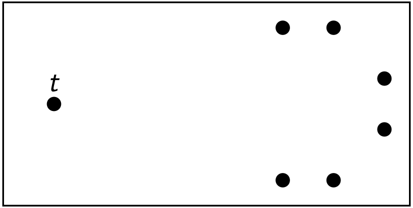


Trivial to solve in polynomial time for fixed k (in time $n^{O(k)}$).

Theorem

MULTIWAY CUT can be solved in time $4^k \cdot k^3 \cdot (|V(G)| + |E(G)|)$.

Intuition: Consider a $t \in T$. A subset of the solution S is a $(t, T \setminus t)$-cut.



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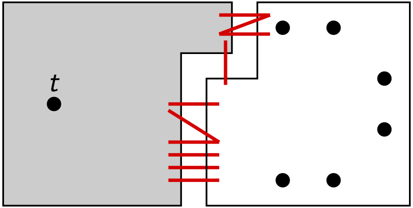

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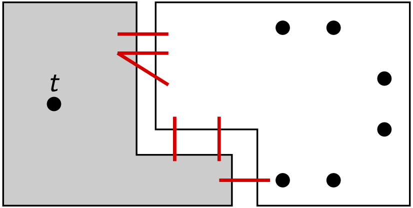

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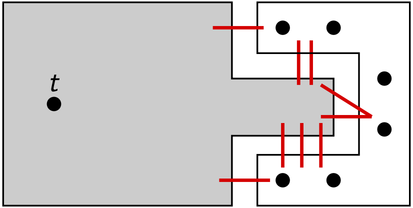

There are many such cuts.

But a cut farther from t and closer to $T \setminus t$ seems to be more useful.

Pushing Lemma

Let $t \in T$. The Multiway Cut problem has a solution S that contains an important $(t, T \setminus t)$-cut.

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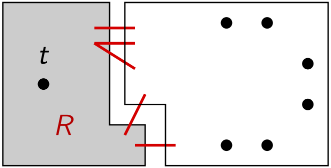

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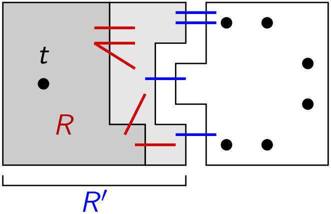

$\delta(R)$ is not important, then there is an important cut $\delta(R')$ with $R \subset R'$ and $|\delta(R')| \leq |\delta(R)|$. Replace S with $S' := (S \setminus \delta(R)) \cup \delta(R') \Rightarrow |S'| \leq |S|$

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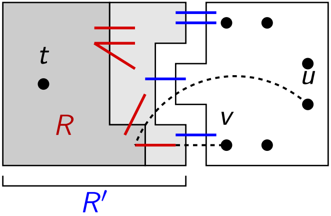

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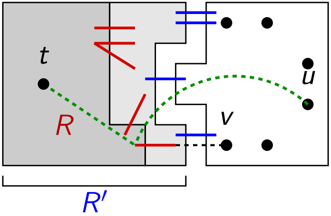

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1. If every vertex of T is in a different component, then we are done.
2. Let $t \in T$ be a vertex that is not separated from every $T \setminus t$.
3. Branch on a choice of an important $(t, T \setminus t)$ cut S of size at most k.
4. Set $G := G \setminus S$ and $k := k - |S|$.
5. Go to step 1.

We branch into at most 4^k directions at most k times: $4^{k^2} \cdot n^{O(1)}$ running time.

Next: Better analysis gives 4^k bound on the size of the search tree.

We have seen: at most 4^k important cut of size at most k.

Better bound:

Lemma

If $\mathcal{S}$ is the set of all important (X, Y)-cuts, then $\sum_{S\in\mathcal{S}} 4^{-|S|} \leq 1$ holds.

A refined bound

Lemma

If $\mathcal{S}$ is the set of all important (X, Y)-cuts, then $\sum_{S \in \mathcal{S}} 4^{-|S|} \leq 1$ holds.

Proof: We show the stronger statement $\sum_{S \in \mathcal{S}} 4^{-|S|} \leq 2^{-\lambda}$, where λ is the minimum (X, Y)-cut size.

Branch 1: removing uv.

λ increases by at most one and we add the edge uv to each separator, increasing the cut by one. Thus the total contribution is

$$\sum_{S \in \mathcal{S}_1} 4^{-(|S|+1)} = \sum_{S \in \mathcal{S}_1} 4^{-|S|}/4 \leq 2^{-(\lambda-1)}/4 = 2^{-\lambda}/2.$$

Branch 2: replacing X with $X \cup v$.

λ increases by at least one. Thus the total contribution is

$$\sum_{S \in \mathcal{S}_2} 4^{-|S|} \leq 2^{-(\lambda+1)} = 2^{-\lambda}/2.$$

Lemma

The search tree for the Multiway Cut algorithm has 4^k leaves.

Proof: Let L_k be the maximum number of leaves with parameter k. We prove $L_k \leq 4^k$ by induction. After enumerating the set $\mathcal{S}_k$ of important separators of size $\leq k$, we branch into $|S_k|$ directions.

$$\sum_{S \in \mathcal{S}_k} 4^{k-|S|} = 4^k \cdot \sum_{S \in \mathcal{S}_k} 4^{-|S|} \leq 4^k$$

Still need: bound the work at each node.

We have seen:

Lemma

We can enumerate every important (X, Y)-cut of size at most k in time $O(4^k \cdot k \cdot (|V(G)| + |E(G)|))$.

Problem: running time at a node of the recursion tree is not linear in the number children.

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Easily follows:

Lemma

We can enumerate a superset $\mathcal{S}'_k$ of every important (X, Y)-cut of size at most k in time $O(|\mathcal{S}'_k| \cdot k^2 \cdot (|V(G)| + |E(G)|))$ such that $\sum_{S \in \mathcal{S}'_k} 4^{-|S|} \leq 1$ holds.

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We can enumerate every important (X, Y)-cut of size at most k in time $O(4^k \cdot k \cdot (|V(G)| + |E(G)|))$.

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Needs more work:

Lemma

We can enumerate the set $\mathcal{S}_k$ of every important (X, Y)-cut of size at most k in time $O(|\mathcal{S}_k| \cdot k^2 \cdot (|V(G)| + |E(G)|))$.

Theorem

MULTIWAY CUT can be solved in time $O(4^k \cdot k^3 \cdot (|V(G)| + |E(G)|))$.

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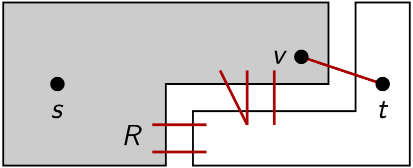

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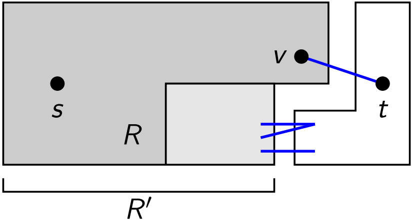

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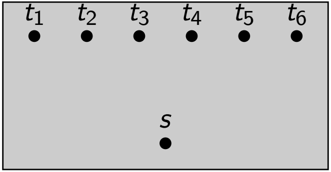
There is an important (s, t)-cut $\delta(R')$ with $R \subseteq R'$ and $|\delta(R')| \leq k$.
Clearly, $vt \in \delta(R')$: $v \in R$, hence $v \in R'$.

Let $s, t_1, \ldots, t_n$ be vertices and $S_1, \ldots, S_n$ be sets of at most k edges such that S_i separates t_i from s, but S_i **does not** separate t_j from s for any $j \neq i$.

It is possible that n is "large" even if k is "small."



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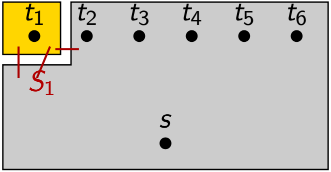

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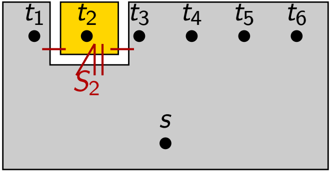

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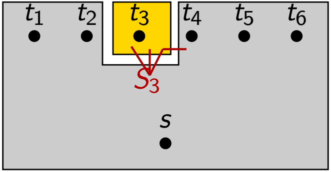

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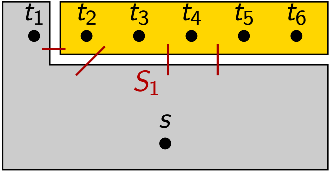

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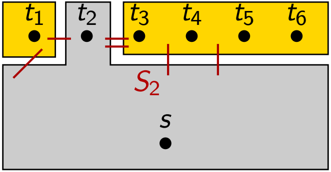

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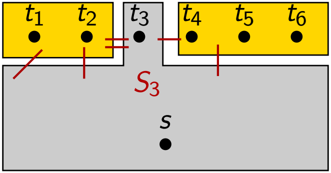

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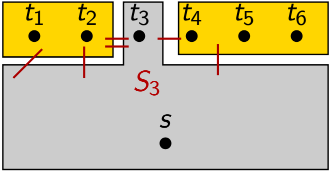

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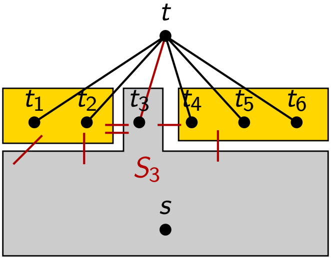

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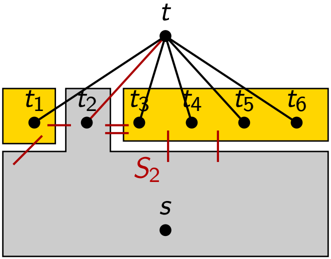

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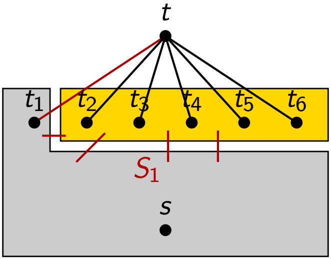

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