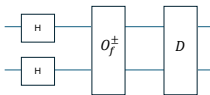


Quantum Computing – The Grover Algorithm for n Qubits

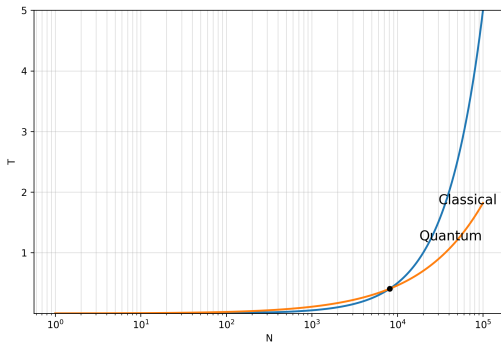
Bill Celmaster

July 14, 2026

Why doesn't a 2-qubit Grover algorithm prove anything?



- ▶ This circuit starts with $|00\rangle$ and ends with $|pwd\rangle$ in “one step”.
- ▶ We say the classical circuit requires “four steps” (test each “pwd”)
- ▶ But a quantum “step” takes longer than 4 classical “steps”.
- ▶ We **want** to show for N possible passwords something like



Problem setup and algorithm outline

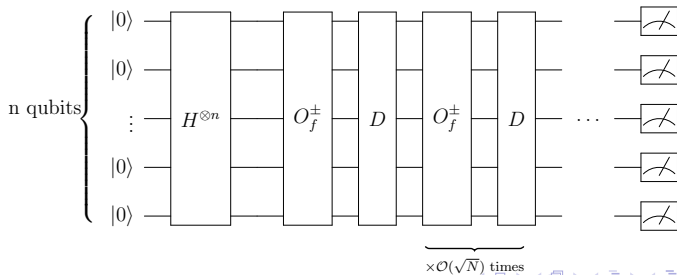
- Consider an n -qubit system with computational basis states:

$$|00\dots00\rangle, |000\dots01\rangle, \dots |11\dots1101\rangle, |11\dots1111\rangle$$

- The total number of basis states is $N = 2^n$
- Choose a target ("password") – we'll use the following:

$$x^* = 100\dots001$$

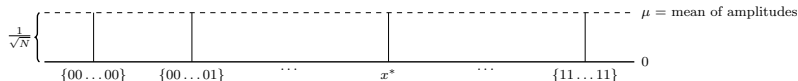
- Our goal is to identify the state $|100\dots001\rangle$.
- Our algorithm, to be explained, will be:



n-qubit Superposition

- ▶ Apply a Hadamard gate to all qbits
- ▶ Tensor product:

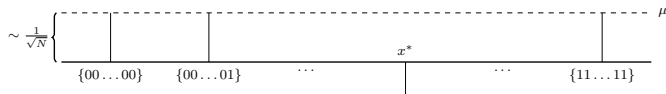
$$\begin{aligned} |00\dots 00\rangle &= |0\rangle_0 \otimes \dots \otimes |0\rangle_{n-1} \\ &\rightarrow \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}} (|0\rangle_0 + |1\rangle_0) \otimes \dots \otimes \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}} (|0\rangle_{n-1} + |1\rangle_{n-1}) \\ &= \frac{1}{\sqrt{2^n}} (|00\dots 00\rangle + |00\dots 01\rangle + |11\dots 11010\rangle + |11\dots 1111\rangle) \\ &= \frac{1}{\sqrt{N}} (|00\dots 00\rangle + |00\dots 01\rangle + |11\dots 11010\rangle + |11\dots 1111\rangle) \end{aligned}$$



n-qubit Oracle

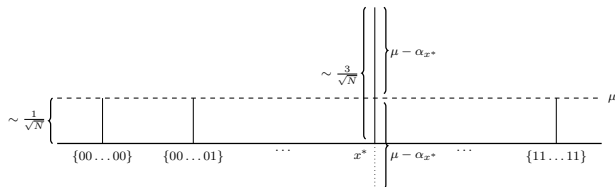
An example oracle gate $O_f^\pm$ is defined by:

- ▶ $|100\dots001\rangle \rightarrow -|100\dots001\rangle$
- ▶ $|i_0\dots i_{n-1}\rangle \rightarrow |i_0\dots i_{n-1}\rangle$ when $|i_0\dots i_{n-1}\rangle \neq |100\dots001\rangle$



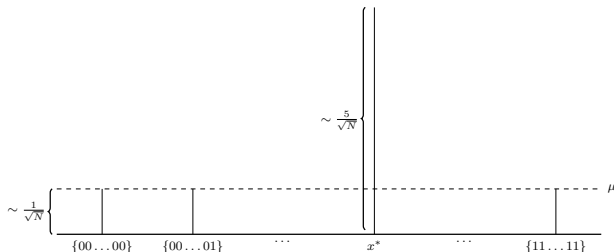
n-qubit Diffusion

- ▶ For ease of notation, relabel the basis vectors as $|x_i\rangle$
 - ▶ Example: $|1001\rangle$ is relabeled $|x_9\rangle$.
 - ▶ Then a vector $|\psi\rangle$ has $|\psi\rangle = \sum_i^N \alpha_i |x_i\rangle$
- ▶ Define $\mu = \frac{1}{N} \sum_i^N \alpha_i$
- ▶ Define $\mathbf{D} : |\psi\rangle \rightarrow \sum_i^N (2\mu - \alpha_i) |x_i\rangle$
- ▶ Example : if $x_i \neq x^*$ then $\alpha_i = \frac{1}{\sqrt{N}}$ otherwise $\alpha_i = -\frac{1}{\sqrt{N}}$
 - ▶ $\mu = (1 - \frac{2}{N}) \frac{1}{\sqrt{N}}$
 - ▶ $\mathbf{D}|\psi\rangle = \sum_{i: x_i \neq x^*}^N (1 - \frac{4}{N}) \frac{1}{\sqrt{N}} |x_i\rangle + (3 - \frac{4}{N}) \frac{1}{\sqrt{N}} |x^*\rangle$



Repeat: oracle plus diffusion

- ▶ Oracle + Diffusion amplifies amplitude of $|x^*\rangle$ relative to other $|x_i\rangle$.
- ▶ Apply Oracle + Diffusion to $\mathbf{D}|\psi\rangle$

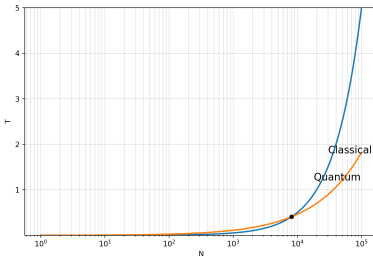


- ▶ Repeat again $\mathcal{O}(\sqrt{N})$ times so that amplitude of $|x^*\rangle$ is ≈ 1 .
- ▶ Unlike 2-qubit case, answer is approximate.
 - ▶ But can repeat the whole thing to get arbitrary precision.

Does this prove that quantum is faster than classical?

NO!

- ▶ So far, we don't know how the time-per-gate changes with N
 - ▶ Suppose processing time for a diffusion gate is $k * 2^n = k * N$?
 - ▶ Then the time-to-solution grows with N , same as classical
 - ▶ And K will certainly be larger than for a classical gate
- ▶ **We will show** that the time-per-gate grows as $n = \log(N)$.
- ▶ Also, remember there are $\approx \sqrt{N}$ oracle-diffusion repetitions.
- ▶ So the time-per-circuit grows as $\sqrt{N} \log(N)$
- ▶ **THIS IS CALLED COMPLEXITY ANALYSIS**



Review of 2-qubit matrix representations of product gates

A matrix $\mathbf{M}^{(m)}$ is an m -dimensional matrix.

By default with no superscript, $\mathbf{M}$ is an 2-dimensional matrix.

► Let $|\mathbf{v}, \mathbf{w}\rangle = \mathbf{v} \otimes \mathbf{w}$ and define $\mathbf{U}^{(4)}$ by $\mathbf{U}^{(4)}|\mathbf{v}, \mathbf{w}\rangle = |\mathbf{Av}, \mathbf{Bw}\rangle$.

► $\mathbf{A}$ and $\mathbf{B}$ represent 1-qubit gates

► We say $\mathbf{U}^{(4)} = \mathbf{A} \otimes \mathbf{B}$ and call it a *product gate*.

► With the 4 basis states $|00\rangle, |01\rangle, |10\rangle, |11\rangle$

$$\begin{pmatrix} v_1 \\ v_2 \end{pmatrix} \otimes \begin{pmatrix} w_1 \\ w_2 \end{pmatrix} \text{ is represented as } \alpha = \begin{pmatrix} v_1 w_1 \\ v_1 w_2 \\ v_2 w_1 \\ v_2 w_2 \end{pmatrix}$$

► Thus $\mathbf{U}^{(4)} = \mathbf{A} \otimes \mathbf{B}$ acting on $\alpha \otimes \mathbf{w}$ has representation

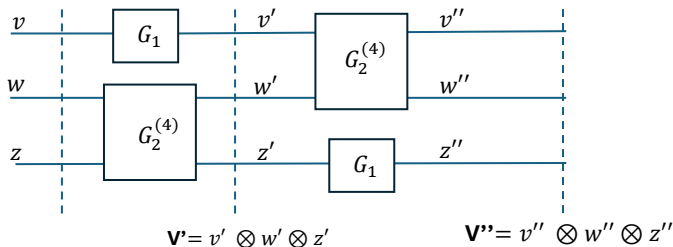
$$\begin{aligned} \mathbf{U}^{(4)}\alpha &= \mathbf{A} \otimes \mathbf{B} \left(\begin{pmatrix} v_1 \\ v_2 \end{pmatrix} \otimes \begin{pmatrix} w_1 \\ w_2 \end{pmatrix} \right) = \left(\begin{pmatrix} A_{11} & A_{12} \\ A_{21} & A_{22} \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} v_1 \\ v_2 \end{pmatrix} \otimes \begin{pmatrix} B_{11} & B_{12} \\ B_{21} & B_{22} \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} w_1 \\ w_2 \end{pmatrix} \right) \\ &= \begin{pmatrix} A_{11}B_{11} & A_{11}B_{12} & A_{12}B_{11} & A_{12}B_{12} \\ A_{11}B_{21} & A_{11}B_{22} & A_{12}B_{21} & A_{12}B_{22} \\ A_{21}B_{11} & A_{21}B_{12} & A_{22}B_{11} & A_{22}B_{12} \\ A_{21}B_{21} & A_{21}B_{22} & A_{22}B_{21} & A_{22}B_{22} \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} v_1 w_1 \\ v_1 w_2 \\ v_2 w_1 \\ v_2 w_2 \end{pmatrix} \end{aligned}$$

► Note $\frac{U_{11}^{(4)}}{U_{22}^{(4)}} = \frac{U_{33}^{(4)}}{U_{44}^{(4)}}$, so a general 2-qubit gate is not a product gate.

3-qubit product gates

- ▶ Example: Let $|\mathbf{v}, \mathbf{w}, \mathbf{z}\rangle = \mathbf{v} \otimes \mathbf{w} \otimes \mathbf{z}$ and define $\mathbf{U}^{(8)}$ by

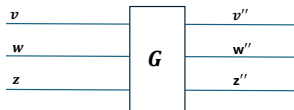
$$\mathbf{U}^{(8)}|\mathbf{v}, \mathbf{w}, \mathbf{z}\rangle = \left(\mathbf{A}^{(4)}(\mathbf{v} \otimes \mathbf{w})\right) \otimes (\mathbf{B}\mathbf{z}).$$
- ▶ We say $\mathbf{U}^{(8)} = \mathbf{A}^{(4)} \otimes \mathbf{B}$ and call it a *product gate*.
- ▶ A matrix representation of $\mathbf{U}^{(8)}$ is with respect to the 8 basis states $|000\rangle, |001\rangle, |010\rangle, |011\rangle, |100\rangle, |101\rangle, |110\rangle, |111\rangle$
- ▶ 3-qubit product gates can be composed in a circuit.



$$\mathbf{V}' = U_1^{(8)} \mathbf{V} = G_1 v \otimes G_2^{(4)}(w \otimes z) \quad \mathbf{V}'' = U_2^{(8)} \mathbf{V}' = (G_2^{(4)}(v' \otimes w')) \otimes G_1 z' \\ = U_2^{(8)} U_1^{(8)} \mathbf{V}$$

3-qubit product gates cont'd

- ▶ The circuit, $\mathbf{G}_2^{(4)} \otimes \mathbf{G}_2^{(4)}$ followed by $\mathbf{G}_2^{(4)} \otimes \mathbf{G}_2^{(4)}$, is equivalent to

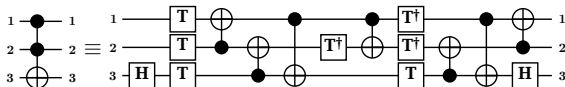


$$\mathbf{G} = (G_1 \otimes G_2^{(4)})(G_2^{(4)} \otimes G_1) \stackrel{\text{def}}{=} U_2^{(8)} U_1^{(8)}$$

- ▶ Consider the 3-qubit gate CCX

$$\begin{pmatrix} 1 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 1 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 1 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 1 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 1 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 1 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 1 & 0 \end{pmatrix}$$

- ▶ CCX is a sequence of products of 1-qubit and 2-qubit gates.



where $T = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 0 \\ 0 & e^{i\pi/4} \end{pmatrix}$ and $CX = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & 1 \\ 0 & 0 & 1 & 0 \end{pmatrix} =$

Complexity analysis

- ▶ Review of 2-qubit gates.
 - ▶ Some gates are product gates
 - ▶ Some gates (e.g. CX (=CNOT)) are not product gates
- ▶ Assume that the time for all 1- and 2-qubit gates is less than T .
- ▶ Analysis of 3-qubit gates.
 - ▶ CCX-gate is a sequence of products of 1- and 2-qubit gates
- ▶ n-qubit gates: represented by $N \times N$ unitary matrices with $N = 2^n$.
- ▶ Theorem without proof:

“Let U represent an n-qubit gate. Then $U = U_1 U_2 \dots U_m$ where U_i represents a product-gate (i.e. a tensor product) whose tensor components are 1- and 2-qubit gates, and $m = \mathcal{O}(n)$.”
- ▶ The Grover algorithm consists of an n-qubit superposition gate followed by $\mathcal{O}(\sqrt{N})$ repetitions of n-qubit oracle-superposition pairs.
- ▶ So the Grover *complexity* is $\mathcal{O}(n\sqrt{N}) = \mathcal{O}(\log(N)\sqrt{N})$
- ▶ Since each 1- and 2-qubit gates takes less than time T
The time for completion is $\mathcal{O}(\log(N)\sqrt{N}T)$