18 Augmenting Paths for Matchings

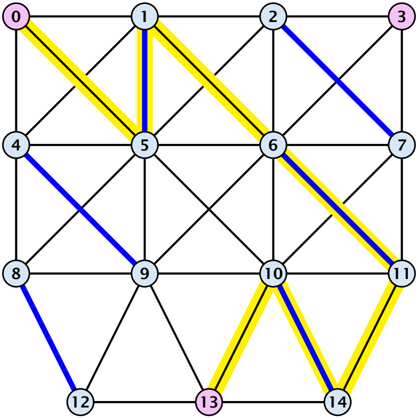
Definitions.

- Given a matching M in a graph G, a vertex that is not incident to any edge of M is called a free vertex w. r. .t. M.
- For a matching M a path P in G is called an alternating path if edges in M alternate with edges not in M.
- An alternating path is called an augmenting path for matching M if it ends at distinct free vertices.

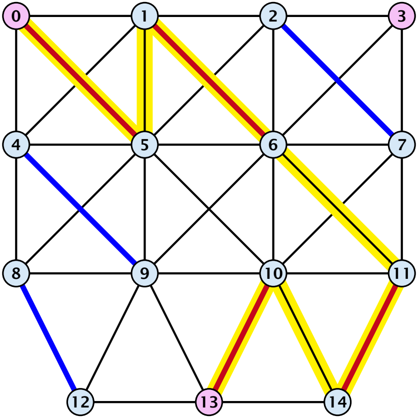
Theorem 1

A matching M is a maximum matching if and only if there is no augmenting path w. r. t. M.

Augmenting Paths in Action



Augmenting Paths in Action



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Proof.

- $\Rightarrow$ If M is maximum there is no augmenting path P, because we could switch matching and non-matching edges along P. This gives matching $M' = M \oplus P$ with larger cardinality.
- $\Leftarrow$ Suppose there is a matching M' with larger cardinality. Consider the graph H with edge-set $M' \oplus M$ (i.e., only edges that are in either M or M' but not in both).

  Each vertex can be incident to at most two edges (one from M and one from M'). Hence, the connected components are alternating cycles or alternating path.

  As $|M'| > |M|$ there is one connected component that is a path P for which both endpoints are incident to edges from M'. P is an alternating path.

18 Augmenting Paths for Matchings

Algorithmic idea:

As long as you find an augmenting path augment your matching using this path. When you arrive at a matching for which no augmenting path exists you have a maximum matching.

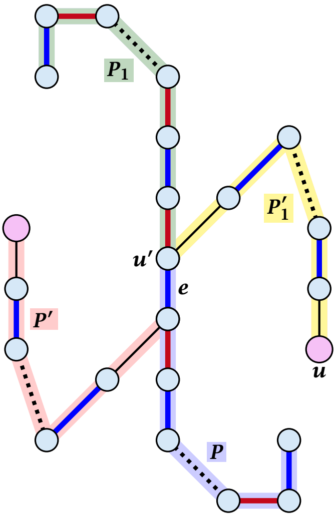
Theorem 2

Let G be a graph, M a matching in G, and let u be a free vertex w.r.t. M. Further let P denote an augmenting path w.r.t. M and let $M' = M \oplus P$ denote the matching resulting from augmenting M with P. If there was no augmenting path starting at u in M then there is no augmenting path starting at u in M'.

The above theorem allows for an easier implementation of an augmenting path algorithm. Once we checked for augmenting paths starting from u we don't have to check for such paths in future rounds.

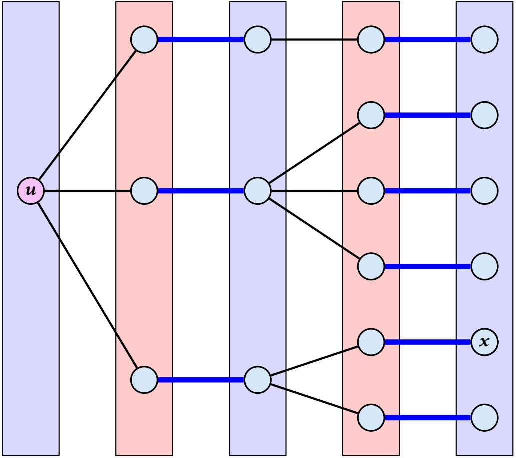
Proof

- Assume there is an augmenting path P' w.r.t. M' starting at u.
- If P' and P are node-disjoint, P' is also augmenting path w.r.t. M (↯).
- Let u' be the first node on P' that is in P, and let e be the matching edge from M' incident to u'.
- u' splits P into two parts one of which does not contain e. Call this part P_1. Denote the sub-path of P' from u to u' with P_1'.
- $P_1 \circ P_1'$ is augmenting path in M (↯).



How to find an augmenting path?

Construct an alternating tree.



even nodes

odd nodes

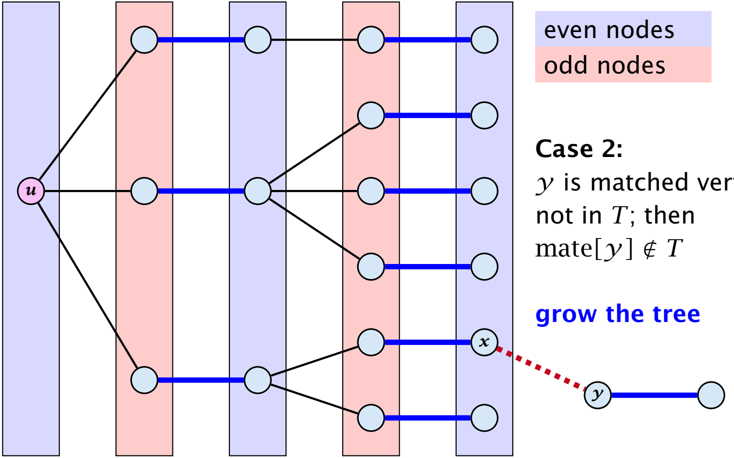
Case 1:

y is free vertex not contained in T

you found alternating path

How to find an augmenting path?

Construct an alternating tree.



even nodes

odd nodes

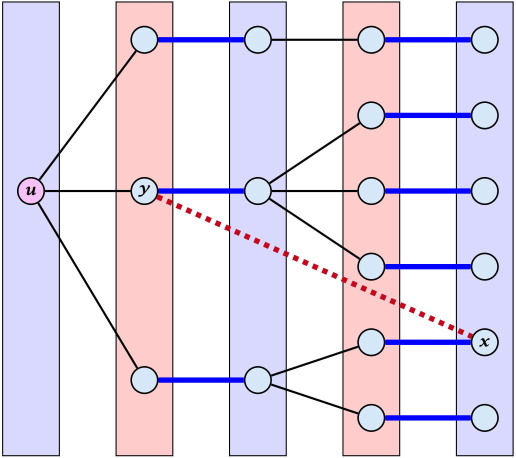
Case 2:

y is matched vertex not in T; then $\mathrm{mate}[y] \notin T$

grow the tree

How to find an augmenting path?

Construct an alternating tree.



even nodes

odd nodes

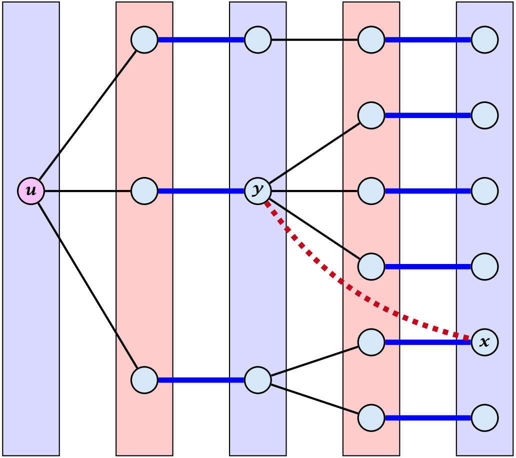
Case 3:

y is already contained in T as an odd vertex

ignore successor y

How to find an augmenting path?

Construct an alternating tree.



even nodes
odd nodes

Case 4:
y is already contained in T as an even vertex

can't ignore y

does not happen in bipartite graphs

Algorithm 52 BiMatch(G, $match$)

```
for x ∈ V do mate[x] ← 0;
r ← 0; free ← n;
while free ≥ 1 and r < n do
    r ← r + 1
    if mate[r] = 0 then
        for i = 1 to m do parent[i'] ← 0
        Q ← ∅; Q.append(r); aug ← false;
        while aug = false and Q ≠ ∅ do
            x ← Q.dequeue();
            for y ∈ A_x do
                if mate[y] = 0 then
                    augm(mate, parent, y);
                    aug ← true;
                    free ← free − 1;
                else
                    if parent[y] = 0 then
                        parent[y] ← x;
                        Q.enqueue(mate[y]);
```

graph $G = (S \cup S', E)$

$S = \{1, \dots, n\}$

$S' = \{1', \dots, n'\}$

The lecture version of the slides contains a step-by-step explanation of the algorithm.