CS 445

Shortest Paths in Graphs
Bellman-Ford Algorithm

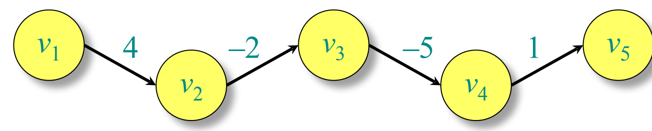
Slides courtesy of Erik Demaine and Carola Wenk

Paths in graphs

Consider a digraph $G = (V, E)$ with edge-weight function $w : E \to \mathbb{R}$. The ***weight*** of path $p = v_1 \to v_2 \to \ldots \to v_k$ is defined to be

$$w(P) = \sum_{i=2}^{k} w(v_{i-1}, v_i)$$

Example:



$w(p) = -2$

Shortest paths

A ***shortest path*** from u to v is a path of minimum weight from u to v. The ***shortest-path weight*** from u to v is defined as

$$\delta(u, v) = \min\{w(p) : p \text{ is a path from } u \text{ to } v\}.$$

Also called ***distance*** of $\boldsymbol{u}$ from $\boldsymbol{v}$

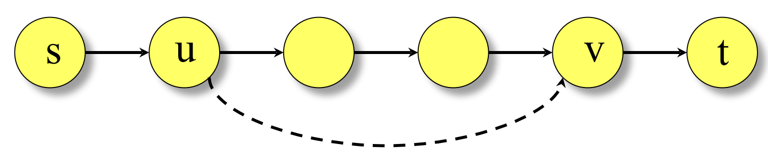
(note – this has nothing to do with the algorithm computing the distance)

Note: $\delta(u, v) = \infty$ if no path from u to v exists.

Optimal substructure

Theorem. A subpath of a shortest path is a shortest path.

Proof. Cut and paste:



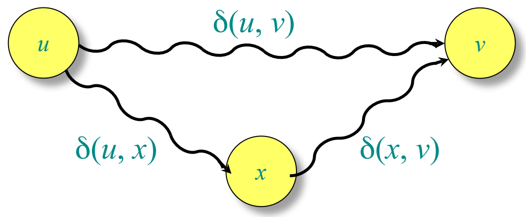
Important: This simple principle will be useful for all the Dynamic programming (and in particular, all Shortest Paths) problems

Triangle inequality

Theorem. For all $u, v, x \in V$, we have

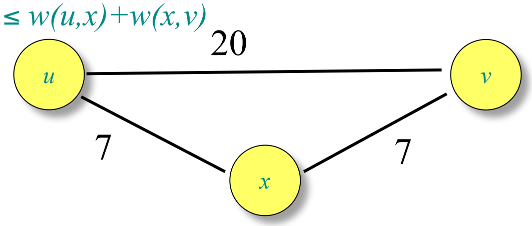
$$\delta(u, v) \le \delta(u, x) + \delta(x, v).$$

Proof.



Note: This does not imply that

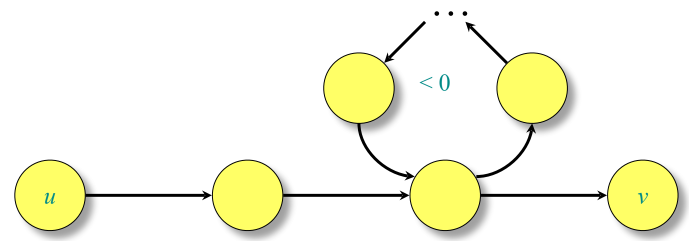
$w(u,v) \le w(u,x)+w(x,v)$



Negative-weight cycles

Recall: If a graph $G = (V, E)$ contains a negative-weight cycle, then some shortest paths may not exist.

Example:



Bellman-Ford algorithm: Finds all shortest-path lengths from a ***source*** $s \in V$ to all $v \in V$ or determines that a negative-weight cycle exists.

Bellman-Ford and Undirected graphs

Bellman-Ford algorithm is designed for **directed** graphs.

If G is undirected, replace every edge (u,v) with two directed edges (u,v) and (v,u), both with weight $w(u,v)$

Bellman-Ford algorithm

$d[s] \leftarrow 0$
for each $v \in V - \{s\}$
  do $d[v] \leftarrow \infty$
— initialization

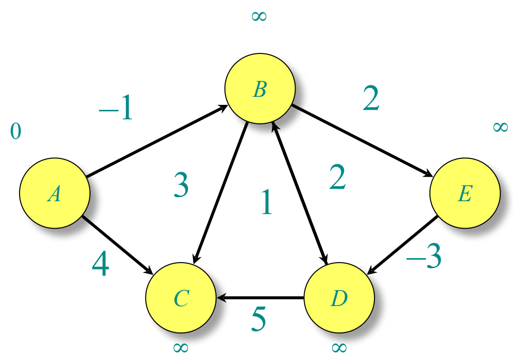
for $i \leftarrow 1$ **to** $|V| - 1$ **do**
  for each edge $(u, v) \in E$ **do**
    if $d[v] > d[u] + w(u, v)$ **then**
      $d[v] \leftarrow d[u] + w(u, v)$
      $\pi[v] \leftarrow u$
— *relaxation step*

for each edge $(u, v) \in E$
  do if $d[v] > d[u] + w(u, v)$
    then report that a negative-weight cycle exists

At the end, $d[v] = \delta(s, v)$. Time $= O(|V|\,|E|)$.

Example of Bellman-Ford

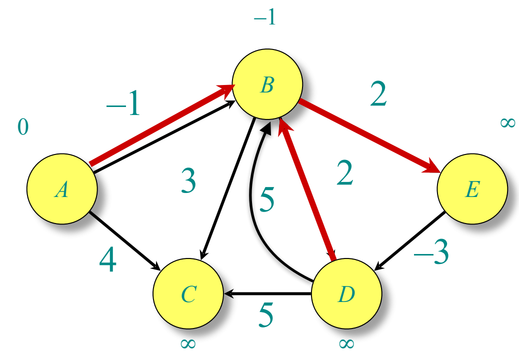
Order of edges: *(B,E), (D,B), (B,D), (A,B), (A,C), (D,C), (B,C), (E,D)*



A	*B*	*C*	*D*	*E*
0	∞	∞	∞	∞

Example of Bellman-Ford

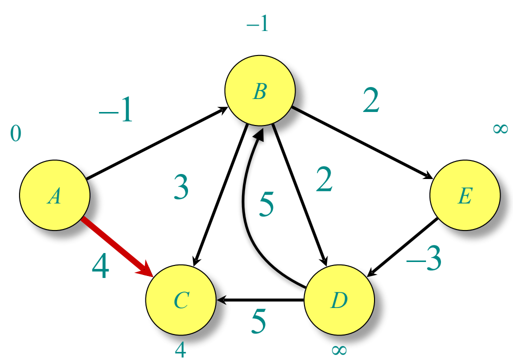
Order of edges: *(B,E), (D,B), (B,D), (A,B), (A,C), (D,C), (B,C), (E,D)*



A	*B*	*C*	*D*	*E*
0	∞	∞	∞	∞
0	−1	∞	∞	∞

Example of Bellman-Ford

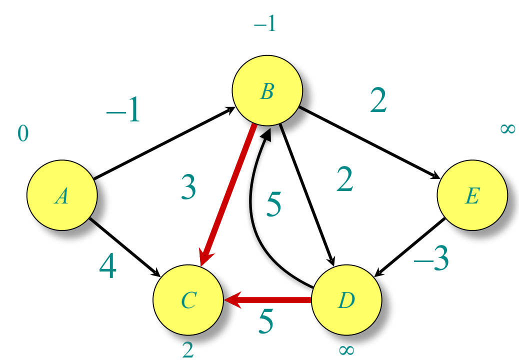
Order of edges: *(B,E), (D,B), (B,D), (A,B), (A,C), (D,C), (B,C), (E,D)*



A	*B*	*C*	*D*	*E*
0	∞	∞	∞	∞
0	−1	∞	∞	∞
0	−1	4	∞	∞

Example of Bellman-Ford

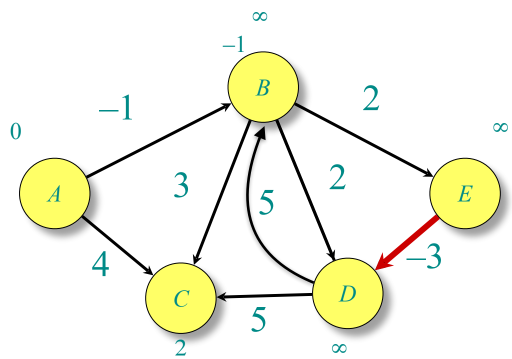
Order of edges: *(B,E), (D,B), (B,D), (A,B), (A,C), (D,C), (B,C), (E,D)*



A	*B*	*C*	*D*	*E*
0	∞	∞	∞	∞
0	−1	∞	∞	∞
0	−1	4	∞	∞
0	−1	2	∞	∞

Example of Bellman-Ford

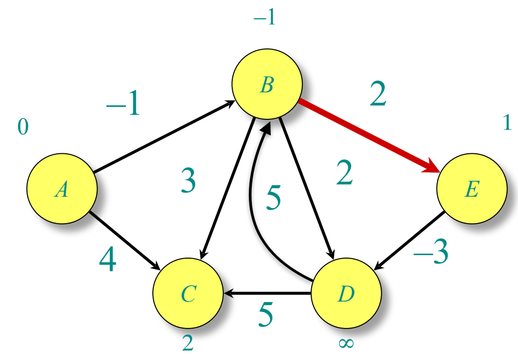
Order of edges: *(B,E), (D,B), (B,D), (A,B), (A,C), (D,C), (B,C), (E,D)*



A	*B*	*C*	*D*	*E*
0	∞	∞	∞	∞
0	–1	∞	∞	∞
0	–1	4	∞	∞
0	–1	2	∞	∞

Example of Bellman-Ford

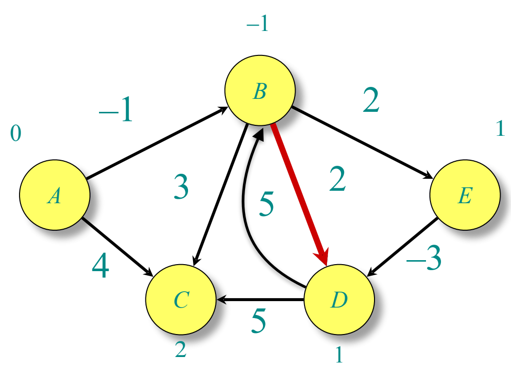
Order of edges: *(B,E), (D,B), (B,D), (A,B), (A,C), (D,C), (B,C), (E,D)*



A	*B*	*C*	*D*	*E*
0	∞	∞	∞	∞
0	–1	∞	∞	∞
0	–1	4	∞	∞
0	–1	2	∞	∞
0	–1	2	∞	1

Example of Bellman-Ford

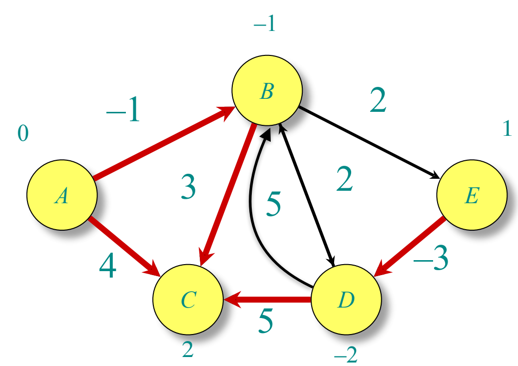
Order of edges: *(B,E), (D,B), (B,D), (A,B), (A,C), (D,C), (B,C), (E,D)*



A	*B*	*C*	*D*	*E*
0	∞	∞	∞	∞
0	–1	∞	∞	∞
0	–1	4	∞	∞
0	–1	2	∞	∞
0	–1	2	∞	1
0	–1	2	1	1

Example of Bellman-Ford

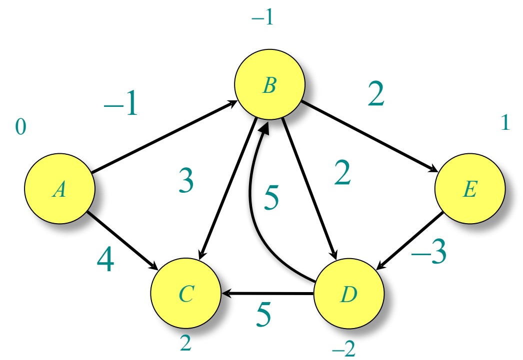
Order of edges: *(B,E), (D,B), (B,D), (A,B), (A,C), (D,C), (B,C), (E,D)*



A	*B*	*C*	*D*	*E*
0	∞	∞	∞	∞
0	–1	∞	∞	∞
0	–1	4	∞	∞
0	–1	2	∞	∞
0	–1	2	∞	1
0	–1	2	1	1
0	–1	2	–2	1

Example of Bellman-Ford

Order of edges: *(B,E), (D,B), (B,D), (A,B), (A,C), (D,C), (B,C), (E,D)*



A	B	C	D	E
0	∞	∞	∞	∞
0	–1	∞	∞	∞
0	–1	4	∞	∞
0	–1	2	∞	∞
0	–1	2	∞	1
0	–1	2	1	1
0	–1	2	–2	1

Note: Values decrease monotonically.

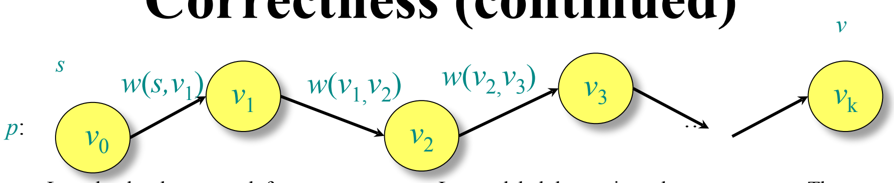
Correctness

Recall $\delta(s, v)$ is the length of a shortest path from s to v.

Lemma If $G = (V, E)$ contains no negative-weight cycles, then during BF-algorithm $d[v] \geq \delta(s, v)$, for every vertex v, for all $v \in V$.

Proof Sketch: $d[v]$ is either ∞, or is the length of some path $s \to v$. $\delta(s, v)$ is the length of the shortest such path.

Correctness (continued)



- Let p be the shortest path from s to a vertex v. Lets re-label the vertices along p so $s = v_0$. The next vertex along this path will be labeled v_1, the next is v_2 and so on. The new "name" of v is v_k.
-
- Note that any portion of p is also the shortest path to each v_i.
- Initially, $d[v_0] = 0 = \delta(s, v_0)$, and $d[s]$ is unchanged by subsequent relaxations (note that $\delta(s, s) \geq 0$ (why ?)).

- After 1 pass through E, we have $d[v_1] = \delta(s, v_1) = w(s,v_1)$.
- After 2 passes through E, we have
  $d[v_2] = d[v_1] + w(v_1, v_2) = w(s,v_1) + w(v_1, v_2) = \delta(s, v_2)$.

  …
- After k passes through E, we have $d[v_k] = \delta(s, v_k)$.

Since G contains no negative-weight cycles, p is simple. Longest simple path has $\leq |V| - 1$ edges.

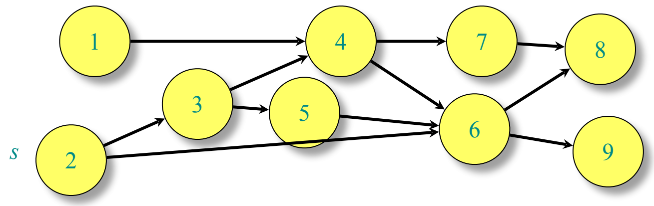
Detection of negative-weight cycles

Corollary. If a value $d[v]$ fails to converge after $|V| - 1$ passes, there exists a negative-weight cycle in G reachable from s.

DAG shortest paths

If the graph is a ***directed acyclic graph*** (***DAG***), we first ***topologically sort*** the vertices.

- Determine $f : V \to \{1, 2, \ldots, |V|\}$ such that $(u, v) \in E$ $\Rightarrow f(u) < f(v)$.
- $O(V + E)$ time using depth-first search.



Walk through the vertices $u \in V$ in this order, relaxing the edges in $Adj[u]$, thereby obtaining the shortest paths from s in a total of $O(V + E)$ time.