HOLE AND ANTIHOLE DETECTION IN GRAPHS

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Abstract: In this paper, we study the problems of detecting holes and antiholes in general undirected graphs, and we present algorithms for these problems. For an input graph G on n vertices and m edges, both algorithms run in $O(n+m^2)$ time and require O(nm) space; we thus provide a solution to the open problem posed by Hayward, Spinrad, and Sritharan in [7] asking for an $O(n^4)$ -time algorithm for finding holes in arbitrary graphs. The key element of the algorithms is a special type of depth-first search traversal which proceeds along P_{4s} (i.e., chordless paths on four vertices) of the input graph. We also describe a different approach which allows us to detect antiholes in graphs that do not contain chordless cycles on 5 vertices in $O(n + m^2)$ time requiring O(n + m) space. Our algorithms are simple and can be easily used in practice. Additionally, we show how our detection algorithms can be augmented so that they return a hole or an antihole whenever such a structure is detected in G; the augmentation takes O(n + m) time and space.

Keywords: hole, antihole, weakly chordal graph, co-connectivity.

1 Introduction

We consider finite undirected graphs with no loops or multiple edges. Let G be such a graph and let $v_0, v_1, \ldots, v_{k-1}$ be a sequence of k distinct vertices such that there is an edge from v_i to $v_{(i+1) \mod k}$ (for all $i = 0, \ldots, k-1$), and no other edge between any two of these vertices; we say that this is a *chordless cycle* on k vertices. A *hole* is an induced chordless cycle on five or more vertices; an *antihole* is the complement of a hole.

Holes and antiholes have been extensively studied in many different contexts in algorithmic graph theory. Most notable examples are the weakly chordal graphs (also known as weakly triangulated graphs) [1, 4, 5], which contain neither holes nor antiholes, and the perfect graph conjecture [4], which states that a graph is perfect if and only if it contains no holes and no antiholes on an odd number of vertices. Thus, finding a hole or an antihole in a graph efficiently is an important graph-theoretic problem, both on its own and as a step in many recognition algorithms.

Several algorithms for detecting holes and antiholes in graphs have been proposed in the literature. The definition of holes and antiholes implies that such algorithms can be applied without error on the biconnected components of the input graph and of its complement, respectively, instead of the entire graph. Although this approach may lead to the fast detection of holes and antiholes in graphs with small biconnected components, it does not yield any gain in the asymptotic sense.

The problem of determining whether a given graph on n vertices and m edges contains a hole on k or more vertices, for some fixed value of $k \ge 4$, is solved in $O(n^k)$ time (Hayward [6]). Spinrad [12] reduced the time complexity of the problem to $O(n^{k-3}M)$, where $M \simeq n^{2.376}$ is the time required to multiply two $n \times n$ matrices. Note that the problem of determining whether a graph contains

The neighborhood N(x) of a vertex $x \in V(G)$ is the set of all the vertices of G which are adjacent to x. The closed neighborhood of x is defined as $N[x] := \{x\} \cup N(x)$. The neighborhood of a subset Aof vertices is defined as $N(A) := (\bigcup_{x \in A} N(x)) - A$ and its closed neighborhood as $N[A] := A \cup N(A)$. The notion of the neighborhood can be extended to edges: for an edge e = xy, the neighborhood (closed neighborhood) of e is the vertex set $N(\{x, y\})$ (resp. $N[\{x, y\}]$) and is denoted by N(e) (resp. N[e]). For an edge e = xy, we define the following three sets:

- A(e;x) = N(x) N(y),
- A(e; y) = N(y) N(x),

 $A(e) = N(x) \cap N(y);$

clearly, these sets form a partition of the neighborhood N(e) of the edge e.

We close this section by describing the co-connectivity problem which plays a crucial role in the antihole detection algorithm for graphs that do not contain a C_5 , which we propose in this paper. The co-connectivity problem on a graph G is that of finding the connected components of the complement \overline{G} ; the connected components of \overline{G} are called *co-connected components* (or *cocomponents*) of G. The co-components of a graph G on n vertices and m edges can be computed in O(n+m) time and space [3, 8, 9].

3 Detecting Holes

The hole detection algorithm relies on the result stated in the following lemma.

Lemma 3.1. An undirected graph G contains a hole if and only if G contains a cycle $u_1u_2...u_k$, where $k \ge 5$, such that $u_iu_{i+1}u_{i+2}u_{i+3}$ for each i = 1, 2, ..., k-3, and $u_{k-2}u_{k-1}u_ku_1$ are P_4s of G.

Proof: (\Longrightarrow) Suppose that G contains a hole; then the vertices of the hole induce a cycle meeting the conditions of the lemma.

(\Leftarrow) Suppose now that G contains a cycle as described in the lemma; let $v_1v_2...v_h$ be the shortest such cycle. Then, this cycle is a hole:

- a) by definition, it is of length at least equal to 5;
- b) it is chordless. Suppose for contradiction that there existed chords. With each chord $v_i v_j$, we associate its length, which is defined as $length(v_i v_j) = |j i|$; let $v_k v_\ell$, where $k < \ell$, be the chord with minimum length. Note that $\ell \ge k+4$; this follows from the fact that $\ell \ge 5$ (because $v_1 v_2 v_3 v_4$ is a P_4) and the fact that $v_{\ell-3} v_{\ell-2} v_{\ell-1} v_\ell$ is a P_4 . Then, $v_{\ell-2} v_{\ell-1} v_\ell v_k$ is a P_4 in G because it is a path in G, $v_{\ell-2} v_k \notin E(G)$ (note that $v_{\ell-3} v_{\ell-2} v_{\ell-1} v_\ell$ is a P_4), and $v_k v_{\ell-2} \notin E(G)$ and $v_k v_{\ell-1} \notin E(G)$ for otherwise these would be chords whose length-value would be smaller than that of the chord $v_k v_\ell$, in contradiction to the minimality of $length(v_k v_\ell)$. Additionally, $v_i v_{i+1} v_{i+2} v_{i+3}$ is a P_4 for all $i = k, k+1, \ldots, \ell-3$. Thus, the cycle $v_k v_{k+1} \ldots v_\ell$ would meet the conditions of the lemma and would be shorter, which would contradict the fact that the cycle $v_1 v_2 \ldots v_h$ is the shortest such cycle. Hence, the cycle $v_1 v_2 \ldots v_h$ is chordless.

Therefore, G contains a hole.

Our algorithm for the detection of holes applies Lemma 3.1. In particular, it uses a special type of depth-first search traversal, which we will call P_4 -DFS: the P_4 -DFS traversal works similarly to the standard depth-first search [2], except that, in its general step, it tries to extend a P_3 abc into P_4 s of the form *abcd*, then, for each such P_4 , it proceeds extending the P_3 bcd into P_4 s of the form *bcde*, and so on. Unlike the standard depth-first search, the P_4 -DFS traversal may proceed to a vertex that has been encountered before; however, it does not need to proceed to a P_3 that has been encountered before. If the P_4 -DFS has at a given moment has proceeded to traverse a sequence

It is important to observe that the description of the procedure process() guarantees that from a P_3 abc we proceed to a P_3 bcd only if abcd is a P_4 of the input graph G. Before returning, the procedure sets the corresponding entries of the array not_in_hole[], thus preventing a second call to the procedure on the same P_3 . Additionally, a call process(a, b, c) does not cause, for any depth of recursion, another call process(a, b, c) or process(c, b, a), because, for this to happen, the vertex a (respectively, c) should be encountered again; then, the condition of the if statement in Step 2.2 of process() would be found true and the algorithm would instantly terminate. Thus, the procedure process() is called exactly once for each P_3 of G.

The correctness of the algorithm follows from Lemmas 3.1 and 3.2 and the following result.

Lemma 3.3. If for a P_3 abc of the input graph G, the entry not_in_hole[(a, b), c] is set to 1, then the P_3 abc does not participate in a hole of G.

Proof: For the entry not_in_hole[(a, b), c] to be set to 1, a call process (a, b, c) or process (c, b, a) needs to have been made; suppose without loss of generality that this is process (a, b, c). The proof applies induction on the number of calls to the procedure process() that have returned before the assignment "not_in_hole[(a, b), c] \leftarrow 1" in Step 4 of the call process (a, b, c).

For the basis step, let us suppose that no calls to process() have returned. Then, no entry of the array not_in_hole[] has been set to 1. Hence, no P_4 of the form *abcd* exists in G; if if existed, either the algorithm would have terminated (if d belonged to the P_4 -DFS path) or a call process(b, c, d) would have been made, which should have returned for the control to proceed to Step 4. Therefore, since no P_4 abcd exists in G, the P_3 abc does not participate in a hole of G.

For the inductive hypothesis, we assume that the statement of the lemma is true for $P_{3}s$ for which the corresponding entries of the array not_in_hole[] have been set equal to 1 after fewer than $i_0 > 0$ calls to the procedure process() have returned. For the inductive step, we assume that the entry not_in_hole [(a, b), c] corresponding to the P_3 abc has been set equal to 1 after i_0 calls to the procedure process() have returned, and we show that the lemma holds for the P_3 abc. Suppose, for contradiction, that this is not the case; then, abc participates in a hole of G, which implies that there exists a vertex x such that abcx is a P_4 of the hole. Clearly, this vertex x has been considered in Step 2.2 of the execution of process(a, b, c). It must be the case that in_path[x] is not equal to 1, for otherwise the algorithm would have terminated. Thus, if $not_in_hole[(b, c), x]$ is equal to 0, a call process(b, c, x) is made; if not_in_hole [(b, c), x] is not equal to 0, then it must have been set to 1 by a preceding call process(b, c, x) or process(x, c, b). In either case, this call to process() was completed before the execution of Step 4 of process(a, b, c). Thus, the assignment "not_in_hole[(b, c), x] \leftarrow 1" has been made after fewer than i_0 calls to process() have terminated; by the inductive hypothesis, we conclude that the P_3 bcx does not participate in any hole of G. This comes into contradiction with the fact that the P_4 abcx is a P_4 of a hole of G. Therefore, the P_3 abc does not participate in a hole of G. Our inductive proof is complete; the lemma follows. .

Time and Space Complexity. Let us first assume that the input graph G is connected; then, n = O(m). Before analyzing the time complexity of each step of the algorithm, we turn to the procedure process(). We note that the procedure is called exactly once for each P_3 of G, i.e., O(nm) times, and that, if we ignore the time taken by the recursive calls, a call process(a, b, c) takes O(|N(c)| + 1) time by using the adjacency list of the vertex c to retrieve c's neighbors, and by using the matrix A[] to answer adjacency tests in constant time. Therefore, the time taken by all the calls to the procedure process() is $O(m^2)$, since each quadruple of vertices a, b, c, d where abc is a P_3 and d is adjacent to c is uniquely characterized by the pair of edges ab and cd of the graph G.

Step 1 of the main body of the algorithm clearly takes O(nm) time. If the time taken by the calls to the procedure process() is ignored, Step 2 takes O(nm) time; again, the adjacencies are checked in constant time by means of the adjacency matrix A[] of G. Step 3 takes constant time. Thus, the time complexity of the algorithm for a connected graph on n vertices and m edges is $O(m^2)$. The Then, for the next value of i, the condition of the while loop is no longer true, and the procedure get_hole() reports that the vertices $u_2, u_3, u_4, u_5, u_6, u_7$ form a hole, which is correct. It must be noted that the hole reported is not necessarily the shortest hole in the graph of Figure 1.

The correctness of the computation follows from Lemma 3.4.

Lemma 3.4. The vertices printed by procedure get_hole() induce a hole in the input graph G.

Proof: Clearly, these vertices induce a cycle. Moreover, its length is at least equal to 5; note that $h \ge i + 4$, which implies that $i_{max} \ge i_{min} + 4$. Finally, we show that the cycle is chordless. Suppose for contradiction that there existed a chord and suppose that it was incident on the vertices pathvertex $[\ell]$ and pathvertex [r], where $i_{min} \le \ell < r \le i_{max}$ and at least one of $\ell \ne i_{min}$ and $r \ne i_{max}$ holds, which implies that $r - \ell < i_{max} - i_{min}$. The definition of the P_4 -DFS traversal implies that every four consecutive vertices in the array pathvertex []; form a P_4 , and thus $r - \ell \ge 4$. Then, $\ell \le r - 4 \le i_{max} - 4$, which, along with the fact that the value of i_{max} never increases, implies that the while loop of the procedure get_hole() has been executed for $i = \ell$. Since $\ell + 4 \le r \le i_{max}$, the condition of the if statement would be found true; then, i_{min} would have been set to ℓ and i_{max} to an integer not exceeding r. This, however, is a contradiction, in light of the fact that $r - \ell < i_{max} - i_{min}$ for the final values of i_{min} and i_{max} and that the value of i_{min} and of i_{max} never decreases and never increases respectively.

It is not difficult to see that the certificate computation requires O(n + m) time; note that all vertices in the array pathvertex[] are distinct, their neighbors can be accessed in constant time per neighbor using the adjacency list representation of the input graph, and that finding whether a vertex belongs to the current P_4 -DFS path and its position in it takes constant time using the (modified) array in_path[]. The space required is linear in the size of the input graph. Therefore, we have the following result:

Theorem 3.2. Let G be an undirected graph on n vertices and m edges. The hole detection algorithm presented in this section can be augmented so that it provides a certificate that G contains a hole, whenever it decides so of G. The certificate computation takes O(n+m) time and O(n+m) space.

4 Detecting Antiholes

Since an antihole is the complement of a hole, one can use the algorithm of the previous section on the complement of a graph in order to determine whether it contains an antihole. Such an approach may however necessitate $\Theta(n^4)$ time, where *n* is the number of vertices of the graph, since the complement may have as many as $\Theta(n^2)$ edges. Below, we present an algorithm for the detection of antiholes which for a graph on *n* vertices and *m* edges takes $O(n+m^2)$ time and O(nm)space; the algorithm applies the P_4 -DFS traversal on the complement of the input graph without however computing the complement explicitly, and takes advantage of the fact that a P_3 abc in the complement of a graph *G* is equivalent to the pair (ac, b), where *ac* is an edge of *G* and *b* is not adjacent to *a* nor to *b* in *G*.

Antihole-Detection Algorithm

Input: an undirected graph G on n vertices and m edges.

Output: yes, if G contains an antihole; otherwise, no.

- Initialize the entries of the arrays not_in_antihole[] and in_path[] to 0; compute the adjacency matrix of G;
- 2. For each vertex u of G do

2.1 in_path[u] \leftarrow 1;

- (ii) the vertices in the current P₄-DFS path are stored in a stack pathvertex[];
- (iii) if the algorithm concludes that G contains an antihole, then the condition in Step 2.2 of the procedure process() during the execution of a call, say, process(a, b, c, k), is found true for some vertex d; suppose that d is located in the j-th position of the current P₄-DFS path. Then, the vertices located in positions j, j + 1, ..., k of the path form a cycle in G satisfying the conditions in the statement of Lemma 3.1. To isolate an antihole, we call the following procedure get_antihole(j,k) before terminating in Step 2.2 of process(a, b, c, k); the procedure uses an auxiliary array mark[1..n] and computes the range [i_{min}, i_{max}] of indices of the array pathvertex[] which store the vertices inducing an antihole in G.

```
get_antihole()
                i_{max} \leftarrow k;
i_{min} \leftarrow j;
for i = 1, 2, ..., n do
     mark[i] \leftarrow 0;
                         {initialize to 0}
i \leftarrow i_{min};
repeat
      for each vertex x adjacent to the vertex in pathvertex[i] in G do
                                   {note that x = pathvertex[in_path[x]]}
           if in_path[x] > 0
           then mark[in_path[x]] \leftarrow 1; {mark neighbors in path}
      h \leftarrow i + 4:
      while h \leq i_{max} and mark[h] = 1 do
           h \leftarrow h + 1;
      if h \leq i_{max}
      then i_{min} \leftarrow i;
                            i_{max} \leftarrow h;
      for each vertex x adjacent to the vertex in pathvertex[i] in G do
           if in_path[x] > 0
           then mark[in_path[x]] \leftarrow 0;
                                                   {clear array mark[]}
      i \leftarrow i + 1;
until i > i_{max} - 4;
print the vertices in the entries i_{min}, i_{min} + 1, \ldots, i_{max} of the array pathvertex[];
```

The vertices printed induce an antihole in G.

It is not difficult to see that the body of the repeat-until loop for each value of i locates the smallestindex entry of the array pathvertex[] corresponding to a non-neighbor of pathvertex[i]; note that, at the beginning of each iteration of the repeat-until loop, the entries of the array mark[] are all equal to 0. The correctness of the procedure get_antihole() follows from an argument similar to that used to prove Lemma 3.4; as in the case of holes, the value of i_{min} never decreases, whereas the value of i_{max} never increases. The procedure requires O(n + m) time:

The initialization assignments take O(n) time. During the execution of the repeat-until loop for a vertex, say, u, stored in pathvertex[i], the for loops take O(N(u)) time (thanks to the adjacency list representation of G), so does the while loop as well (since it stops at the first non-neighbor of uencountered), while O(1) time suffices for the remaining assignments. Since all the vertices in the array pathvertex[] are distinct, it follows that the procedure get_antihole() takes O(n + m)time. The space required is linear in the size of the input graph. Therefore, the following theorem holds:

Theorem 4.2. Let G be an undirected graph on n vertices and m edges. The antihole detection algorithm presented in this section can be augmented so that it provides a certificate that G contains an antihole, whenever it decides so of G. The certificate computation takes O(n + m) time and O(n + m) space.





2. Print that G does not contain an antihole.

1

The correctness of the algorithm follows from Lemma 5.1 and from the fact that for an edge e = xyof G and a vertex $u \in V(G) - N[e]$ the following hold:

(i) $A(e;x) \cap N(u) = N_{u,x} - N_{u,y}, A(e;y) \cap N(u) = N_{u,y} - N_{u,x}, \text{ and } A(e) \cap N(u) = N_{u,x} \cap N_{u,y};$

(ii) the condition "if mark1[cc(N_{u,x}; v)] = 1 and mark2[cc(N_{u,y}; v)] = 1" along with the fact that the vertex v belongs to N_{u,x} ∩ N_{u,y} implies that in the complement of G[N_{u,x}] there exists a path from v to a vertex in A(e; x) and that in the complement of G[N_{u,y}] there exists a path from v to a vertex in A(e; y); thus, in the complement of the subgraph of G induced by N(u) ∩ N(e) there exists a path from a vertex in A(e; x) to a vertex in A(e; y).

Time and Space Complexity. We will show that the above mentioned antihole-detection algorithm runs in $O(n + m^2)$ time; it suffices to show that this time complexity holds for connected input graphs. Step 1.1.1 can be completed in O(n) time, while the construction of $G[N_{u,v}]$ and the computation of its co-components [3, 8, 9] can be done in $O(|N_{u,v}|^2)$ time. Since $|N_{u,v}| \leq \min\{|N(u)|, |N(v)|\}$, we have that $|N_{u,v}|^2 \leq |N(u)| \cdot |N(v)|$; thus, for a vertex u of G, Step 1.1.2 takes $O(n) + \sum_{v} O(|N(u)| \cdot |N(v)|) = O(m |N(u)|)$ time. (Note that working on the subgraph $G[N_{u,v}]$ requires re-indexing of vertices; this can be done in constant time per re-indexing request using two

a certificate that G contains an antihole, whenever it decides so of G. The certificate computation takes O(n+m) time and space.

Remark. Since an antihole is the complement of a hole and the complement of a C_5 is also a C_5 , one can detect whether a graph G, which does not contain a C_5 , contains a hole by applying the above algorithm on its complement \overline{G} . This however results into an $O(n^4)$ -time and $O(n^2)$ -space algorithm. The time complexity can be improved if the operation of the algorithm on \overline{G} is interpreted in terms of G so that \overline{G} is not constructed explicitly.

In general terms, the algorithm processes all the P_{3s} of G; for each such $P_{3} xuy$, it tries to determine whether there exists a vertex w that is not adjacent to u, x, or y, and there exists a path from w in $G[M_{u,x}]$ to a vertex adjacent to y and a path from w in $G[M_{u,y}]$ to a vertex adjacent to x, where $M_{u,x}$ (resp. $M_{u,y}$) is the set of vertices which are adjacent neither to u nor to x (resp. neither to unor to y), i.e., $M_{u,x} = (V(G) - N[u]) \cap (V(G) - N[x])$ and $M_{u,y} = (V(G) - N[u]) \cap (V(G) - N[y])$. Note that such a vertex w exists iff there exists a chordless path $v_1v_2 \ldots v_k$, where $k \ge 3$, such that $v_1 \in N(y) - (N(u) \cup N(x)), v_k \in N(x) - (N(u) \cup N(y))$, and $v_i \notin N(u) \cup N(x) \cup N(y)$ for all $i = 2, \ldots, k - 1$; this is equivalent to the vertices $x, u, y, v_1, \ldots, v_k$ inducing a hole of length at least equal to 6.

In detail, the algorithm is given below. It is a variant of the antihole algorithm presented earlier in this section, where all the "adjacencies" have been replaced by "non-adjacencies" and vice versa.

Hole-Detection Algorithm for Graphs not containing a C₅

Input: an undirected graph G on n vertices and m edges which does not contain a C_5 .

Output: yes, if G contains a hole; otherwise, no.

1. For each vertex u of G do

1.1 for each vertex v adjacent to u in G do

- 1.1.1 compute the set $M_{u,v} = (V(G) N[u]) \cap (V(G) N[v]);$
- 1.1.2 compute the connected components of $G[M_{u,v}]$;
- 1.1.3 store the set $M_{u,v}$ as a list of vertex records, ordered by vertex index, where each vertex $w \in M_{u,v}$ is associated with the representative comp $(M_{u,v}; w)$ of the component to which it belongs;

1.2 for each vertex x adjacent to u in G do

for each vertex y adjacent to u and not adjacent to x in G do

 $\{mark \ the \ conn. components \ of \ G[M_{u,x}] \ containing \ a \ neighbor \ of \ y \ in \ G\}$

- for each vertex $w \in M_{u,x}$ do
 - $mark1[w] \leftarrow 0;$
- for each vertex $w \in M_{u,x} M_{u,y}$ do
 - if w is adjacent to y in G

then mark1[comp($M_{u,x}; w$)] $\leftarrow 1$; {mark the representative} {mark the conn.components of $G[M_{u,y}]$ containing a neighbor of x in G} for each vertex $w \in M_{u,y}$ do

 $mark2[w] \leftarrow 0;$

for each vertex $w \in M_{u,y} - M_{u,x}$ do

if w is adjacent to x in G

then mark2[comp($M_{u,y}; w$)] $\leftarrow 1;$ {mark the representative} for each vertex $v \in M_{u,x} \cap M_{u,y}$ do

if mark1[comp $(M_{u,x}; v)$] = 1 and mark2[comp $(M_{u,y}; v)$] = 1 then print that G contains a hole; Stop;

2. Print that G does not contain a hole.

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