

Point Containment in the Integer Hull of a Polyhedron¹

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Abstract

We show that the point containment problem in the integer hull of a polyhedron, which is defined by m inequalities, with coefficients of at most φ bits can be solved in time $O(m + \varphi)$ in the two-dimensional case and in expected time $O(m + \varphi^2 \log m)$ in any fixed dimension. This improves on the algorithm which is based on the equivalence of separation and optimization in the general case and on a direct algorithm (SODA 97) for the two-dimensional case.

1 Introduction

We are interested in the *point containment problem in integer hulls of polyhedra*: Given a point $x^* \in \mathbb{Q}^d$ and a set of rational constraints $Ax \leq b$, $A \in \mathbb{Q}^{m \times d}$, $b \in \mathbb{Q}^m$, determine whether x^* belongs to the convex hull of the integral points satisfying the constraints. Moreover, *certify* your answer by providing a simplex containing x^* which is spanned by feasible integer points in the “yes” case, or by providing a halfspace h containing x^* such that $h \cap P$ is integer infeasible in the “no” case. We use $P = \{x \in \mathbb{R}^d \mid Ax \leq b\}$ to denote the polyhedron defined by our set of constraints and P_I to denote the convex hull of the integral points in P ; P_I is frequently called the *integer hull* of P .

Let m be the number of constraints, d the dimension of ambient space, and assume that each constraint and x^* has binary encoding length $O(\varphi)$. We show:

THEOREM 1.1. *For $d = 2$, the point containment problem in integer hulls of polygons can be solved in time $O(m + \varphi)$. For $d \geq 3$ and d fixed, the point containment problem in integer hulls of polyhedra can be solved in expected time $O(m + \varphi^2 \log m)$.*

We will make frequent use of the fact that integer programming can be done in expected time $O(m + \varphi \log m)$ in any fixed dimension [3] and in time $O(m + \varphi)$ in the two-dimensional case [4]. Also the integer hull of a polygon (vertices in clockwise order) can be computed in time $O(m\varphi)$ in two dimensions [6], in particular the

number of vertices of the integer hull is $O(m\varphi)$. We also assume without loss of generality [11] that P is bounded and that P_I is full-dimensional.

2 Related work

In two dimensions ($d = 2$), McCormick, Smallwood and Spieksma [9, 8] developed an algorithm, which runs in time $O(m\varphi + \varphi^2)$. Using the equivalence of optimization and separation [5] together with recent algorithms for integer programming [3, 4] one can solve the point containment problem with the ellipsoid method. This yields an expected running time of $O(m\varphi + \varphi^2 \log m)$ for $d \geq 3$ and a running time of $O(m\varphi + \varphi^2)$ for $d = 2$. These algorithms are certifying in our sense.

McCormick et al. [9, 8] reduce a multiprocessor machine scheduling problem to the two-dimensional point-containment problem, where containment has to be certified with a unimodular triangle, i.e., with a triangle that does not contain any integer points besides its vertices. Given any feasible integer triangle T which contains x^* , one can construct a unimodular triangle T_u which contains x^* as follows.

Compute the integer hulls L and R of the two polygons $T \cap (x(1) \leq \lfloor x^*(1) \rfloor)$ and $T \cap (x(1) \geq \lceil x^*(1) \rceil)$. The closure of the set $T \setminus (L \cup R)$ is a (not necessarily convex) polygon B which contains x^* . This polygon can be computed in time $O(\varphi)$ and has $O(\varphi)$ vertices. Now triangulate B and determine the triangle T' containing x^* . This costs again $O(\varphi)$ [1]. The interior of T' does not contain an integer point and only one edge e of T' , the edge stemming from an edge of B , might contain other integer points. Consider the intersection y^* of the ray $\overrightarrow{v, x^*}$, where v is the opposite vertex of e , with this edge e . The two nearest integer points of y^* on e , together with v form a certifying unimodular triangle. These two nearest points can be found by solving a one-dimensional integer program, or directly, with one extended gcd-computation.

3 An algorithm for $d = 2$

For a given point $x^* \in \mathbb{Q}^2$, the following simple algorithm solves the point containment problem in the integer hull of a polyhedron $P \subseteq \mathbb{Q}^2$ in time $O(m + \varphi)$, see Figure 1.

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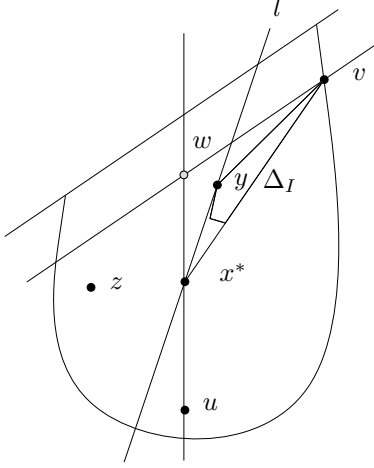


Figure 1: The case $d = 2$.

1. Find an integer point $u \in P$. If $x^* \in P_I$, then x^* is contained in an integral triangle with vertex u .
2. Determine the constraint $a^T x \leq \beta$, which defines the facet of P which is hit by the ray $\overrightarrow{u, x^*}$ (ties are broken arbitrarily).
3. Find the optimal integer point v in P w.r.t. to the objective function $\max a^T x$; let β^* be the optimal objective function value.
4. Let w be the intersection of the line $a^T x = \beta^*$ with $\overrightarrow{u, x^*}$. If $a^T x^* > \beta^*$, then x^* is not contained in P_I and we have found a certifying hyperplane, otherwise consider the triangle $\Delta = \text{conv}(x^*, v, w)$ and compute its integer hull Δ_I . Note that Δ is contained in P .
5. Compute the line l which intersects x^* and is tangential to Δ_I such that u and Δ_I lie on the same side of l . Let y be the first vertex of Δ_I which lies on l , starting from x^* .
6. Perform an integer feasibility test for P intersected with the halfspace h defined by the closure of the side of l which does not contain Δ_I . Any integer point z in the resulting polygon must be opposite of y on the line through u and x^* . Thus $\text{conv}(u, y, z)$ is a certifying triangle. If no integer point exists in this polygon, then x^* is not contained in P_I . A certifying hyperplane can then be determined by slightly rotating the line l around y . This rotation can be determined by similar means with which we determined y in Step 5.

For the running time, observe that we have to solve a constant number of optimization problems ($O(m + \varphi)$)

and perform one integer hull computation for a constant number of constraints ($O(\varphi)$); finding the tangent line can also be done in $O(\varphi)$ as Δ_I has $O(\varphi)$ vertices. This yields a final running time of $O(m + \varphi)$.

4 Point containment in arbitrary fixed dimension

Let us now consider the case $d \geq 3$. We assume that the integer hull of the polyhedron P is not empty, which can be tested with a call to an optimization oracle. Further we assume without loss of generality that P is bounded and that implicit upper and lower bounds on the variables are part of the constraint set $Ax \leq b$. Recall that an inequality $a^T x \leq \beta$ is called *valid* for P , if all points of P satisfy it. A subset of points $F \subseteq P$, which satisfy a valid inequality $a^T x \leq \beta$ of P with equality is called a *face* of P . The inequality $a^T x \leq \beta$ is then called the *face-defining inequality* of F .

Given a polytope P , the following procedure computes a simplex Σ with vertices in P_I and $x^* \in \Sigma$ if and only if $x^* \in P_I$.

ContainingSimplex(P, x^*)

1. Compute the lexicographically smallest integer point u of P_I .
2. Determine the last point in P_I on the ray $\overrightarrow{u, x^*}$ and denote it by w . Furthermore, determine a face-defining inequality $a^T x \leq \beta$ of the minimal face of P_I containing w . If $u = x^*$ or if $u = w$, then return the simplex $\Sigma = \{u\}$.
3. Otherwise, recursively determine the simplex Σ' containing w in the integer hull of $P' = P \cap (a^T x = \beta)$ and return the simplex spanned by u and Σ' .

The so constructed simplex is unique and denoted by $\Sigma(x^*, P)$.

Before we begin with an analysis of this approach, let us define the *height* $\nu(x^*, P)$ of x^* and P , which is a tuple. If the simplex $\Sigma(x^*, P)$ consists of u alone, then $\nu(x^*, P) = (u)$. Otherwise, let h be the distance from u to w . The height is then recursively defined as the tuple $\nu(x^*, P) = (u, -h, \nu(w, P \cap (a^T x = \beta)))$. In the following, we assume that the height $\nu(x^*, P)$ is a $2d+1$ -tuple by appending ∞ -components to right of the tuple defined above. Given x^* , we define an order $P \preceq_{x^*} Q$ if $\nu(x^*, P) \leq_{\text{lex}} \nu(x^*, Q)$ for polytopes $P, Q \subseteq \mathbb{R}^d$. Notice that $\nu(x^*, P) = \nu(x^*, Q)$ if and only if the simplices $\Sigma(x^*, P)$ and $\Sigma(x^*, Q)$ are equal. Furthermore we have the following lemma.

LEMMA 4.1. *Let $P \subseteq \mathbb{R}^d$ and $Q \subseteq \mathbb{R}^d$ be polytopes and $x^* \in \mathbb{R}^d$. If $P \subseteq Q$, then $\nu(x^*, Q) \leq_{\text{lex}} \nu(x^*, P)$ and*

thus $Q \preceq_{x^*} P$. Moreover, $\nu(x^*, Q) <_{\text{lex}} \nu(x^*, P)$ iff a vertex of $\Sigma(x^*, Q)$ is not contained in P .

Proof. Let $\Sigma_P = \Sigma(x^*, P)$ and $\Sigma_Q = \Sigma(x^*, Q)$.

Let u_P and u_Q , denote the lexicographically smallest integer point of P and Q respectively. Since $u_P \in Q$ we have $u_Q \leq_{\text{lex}} u_P$. If they differ, we have $\nu(x^*, Q) <_{\text{lex}} \nu(x^*, P)$ and a vertex of Σ_Q is not contained in P . We now assume that $u_P = u_Q$ and denote this point by u . If $u = x^*$, $\Sigma_Q = \Sigma_P = \{u\}$ and $\nu(x^*, P) = (u, \infty, \dots, \infty) = \nu(x^*, Q)$. So assume $u \neq x^*$ and let w_P and w_Q be the last vertices in the boundary of P_I and Q_I , respectively, on the ray $\overrightarrow{u, x^*}$ and let F_P and F_Q be the minimal faces containing these points, respectively. Since $P_I \subseteq Q_I$, w_Q does not precede w_P on $\overrightarrow{u, x^*}$. If $w_Q = u$, $\Sigma_Q = \Sigma_P = \{u\}$ and $\nu(x^*, P) = (u, \infty, \dots, \infty) = \nu(x^*, Q)$. So assume $w_Q \neq u$. If $w_P \neq w_Q$, $w_Q \notin P_I$ and $\nu(x^*, Q) <_{\text{lex}} \nu(x^*, P)$. Also, $w_Q \in F_Q$ and hence is contained in the simplex Σ'_Q , where Σ'_Q is the simplex determined in step 3 of **ContainingSimplex**(Q, x^*). Since $w_Q \notin P_I$, one of the vertices of Σ'_Q is not contained in P_I .

We now assume $w_P = w_Q$ and $w_Q \neq u$ and use w to denote w_Q . Let $a_Q^T x \leq \beta_Q$ be a face-defining inequality F_Q . Remember that $\nu(x^*, Q) = (u, -h, \nu(w, F_Q))$ and that $\nu(x^*, P) = (u, -h, \nu(w, F_P))$. The assertion then follows by induction if one can show that $F_P \subseteq F_Q$ holds.

Since $P_I \subseteq Q_I$ the inequality $a_Q^T x \leq \beta_Q$ is face-defining for P_I . The face F'_P of P_I , defined by this inequality contains w and thus F_P , by the minimality of F_P . The integer points in F'_P lie in P_I and hence in Q_I and they satisfy $a_Q^T x \leq \beta_Q$ with equality. Thus $F_P \subseteq F'_P \subseteq F_Q$. ■

4.1 Details of Step 2 We now analyze the running time of the above procedure. We assume that P is represented by a system $Ax \leq b$, where $A \in \mathbb{Q}^{m \times n}$ and $b \in \mathbb{Q}^m$. Again, φ denotes the largest binary encoding length of a coefficient of A, b and x^* .

Step 1 of the above procedure takes an expected number of $O(m + \varphi \log m)$ steps, whereas step 2 can be solved in expected time $O(m\varphi + \varphi^2 \log m)$ as follows:

Let $(x_i)_{i \in I}$ be the set of vertices of P_I . The intersection point w of the ray starting at u through x^* with the boundary of P_I is the last point of the ray that is a convex combination of points in $(x_i)_{i \in I}$. Thus the following linear program finds the intersection point w .

$$\begin{aligned} \max \quad & \alpha \\ \text{s.t.} \quad & u + \alpha(x^* - u) = \sum_{i \in I} \lambda_i x_i \\ & \sum_{i \in I} \lambda_i = 1 \\ & \lambda \geq 0 \end{aligned}$$

The dual of this linear program has the following form:

$$\begin{aligned} \min \quad & y^T u + z \\ \text{s.t.} \quad & y^T(x^* - u) = 1 \\ & -y^T x_i + z \geq 0 \end{aligned}$$

It has $d + 1$ variables. The separation problem for the dual is an optimization over the integer hull of P (For an alleged solution (\bar{y}^T, \bar{z}) compute $\max_i \bar{y}^T x_i$ and check the inequality. The d equalities can be checked easily). Thus the separation problem can be solved in time $O(m + \varphi \log m)$ and hence the linear program can be solved via the ellipsoid method [5] in time $O(m\varphi + \varphi^2 \log m)$.

It remains to show, how to compute the face-defining inequality $a^T x \leq \beta$ of the minimal face of P_I containing w . This is done as follows, see also [5, p. 183, theorem 6.5.8]. We look for a valid inequality that is tight at w with smallest possible dimension, i.e. the number of affinely independent points of P_I that are tight at w should be as small as possible. Let Q be the polytope $Q = \{(z^T, \mu)^T \in \mathbb{R}^{d+1} \mid z^T x \leq \mu \text{ for all } x \in P_I, z^T w = \mu\}$, which is the polytope of valid inequalities for P_I which are tight at w . A point in the relative interior of this set defines a face of minimal dimension that is tight at w . The separation problem for this polytope is again an optimization problem over the integer hull of P . Thus the optimization problem over Q can be solved in time $O(m\varphi + \varphi^2 \log m)$. Within this time-bound one can find a point $(a^T, \beta)^T$ in the relative interior of Q . The inequality $a^T x \leq \beta$ is the face-defining inequality we are looking for.

Therefore the overall running time of this procedure on a polytope defined by m constraints in d dimensions is $O(m\varphi + \varphi^2 \log m)$ for fixed d . So the running time is dominated by Step 2.

4.2 The size of a basis In the following we apply the machinery of LP-type problems such that this step has to be performed $O(\log m)$ times on subproblems of constant size. A smallest (number of constraints) subsystem $A'x \leq b'$ of $Ax \leq b$ with $\Sigma(x^*, Ax \leq b) = \Sigma(x^*, A'x \leq b')$ is called a *basis* of $Ax \leq b$. The goal of this section is to show, that the number of constraints of a basis of $Ax \leq b$ is bounded by a constant. The following theorem is due to Scarf [10], see also [11, p. 234].

THEOREM 4.1. *Let $Ax \leq b$ be a system of inequalities in d variables, and let $c \in \mathbb{R}^d$. If $\max\{c^T x \mid Ax \leq b, x \in \mathbb{Z}^d\}$ is finite, then there exists a subset $A'x \leq b'$ of $Ax \leq b$ with at most $2^d - 1$ inequalities, such that the*

following equality holds

$$\begin{aligned} & \max\{c^T x \mid Ax \leq b, x \in \mathbb{Z}^d\} \\ &= \max\{c^T x \mid A'x \leq b', x \in \mathbb{Z}^d\} \end{aligned}$$

From this one can immediately infer the next statement, which is useful in our setting.

COROLLARY 4.1. *Let $P = \{x \in \mathbb{R}^d \mid Ax \leq b\}$ be a rational polyhedron and let $F_P \subseteq P_I$ be a face of P_I . Then there exists a subsystem $A'x \leq b'$ of $Ax \leq b$, which consists of at most $2d(2^d - 1)$ constraints, defining a polyhedron $Q = \{x \in \mathbb{R}^d \mid A'x \leq b'\}$, such that there exists a face F_Q of Q_I with $F_P \subseteq F_Q$ and $\dim(F_P) = \dim(F_Q)$. Furthermore, an inequality $a^T x \leq \beta$ is a face-defining inequality of F_P if and only if $a^T x \leq \beta$ is a face-defining inequality of F_Q .*

Proof. The polyhedron P_I can be described as

$$P_I = \{x \in \mathbb{R}^d \mid A^-x = b^-\} \cap \{x \in \mathbb{R}^d \mid A^+x \leq b^+\},$$

such that the following conditions hold, see [11, p. 103]: The matrix A^- has full row-rank and d_1 rows, where $d - d_1$ is the dimension of P_I . Furthermore each constraint of $A^+x \leq b^+$ is irredundant and each row of A^+ is orthogonal to the rows of A^- .

A face F_P of P_I of dimension $k \leq d - d_1$ is determined by $d - d_1 - k$ linearly independent constraints $\tilde{A}x \leq \tilde{b}$ from the set $A^+x \leq b^+$ which are satisfied by F_P with equality. It follows from Theorem 2 that there exists a subset $A'x \leq b'$ of $Ax \leq b$ with at most $2d(2^d - 1)$ constraints, defining a polyhedron Q , such that $A^-x = b^-$ and $\tilde{A}x \leq \tilde{b}$ are valid for Q_I , where $Q = \{x \in \mathbb{R}^d \mid A'x \leq b'\}$. The face F_Q of Q_I which results from setting the constraints in $\tilde{A}x \leq \tilde{b}$ to equality contains F_P and has dimension k .

Furthermore, an inequality $a^T x \leq \beta$ is a face-defining inequality of F_P or of F_Q if and only if $a = \mu A^- + \lambda \tilde{A}$ and $\beta = \mu b^- + \lambda \tilde{b}$, where $\mu \in \mathbb{R}^{d_1}$, $\lambda \in \mathbb{R}^{d-d_1-k}$ and λ is strictly positive. ■

This enables us to estimate the size of a basis of $Ax \leq b$.

LEMMA 4.2. *Let $P = \{x \in \mathbb{R}^d \mid Ax \leq b\}$ be a polytope in fixed dimension d with nonempty integer hull. Suppose that $\Sigma(x^*, Ax \leq b)$ has k vertices. Then there exists a subset $A'x \leq b'$ of the constraints $Ax \leq b$, with at most $(2k - 1)2d(2^d - 1)$ constraints, such that the simplices $\Sigma(x^*, Ax \leq b)$ and $\Sigma(x^*, A'x \leq b')$ are equal.*

Proof. We use induction on the number k . It follows from Corollary 1 that $2d(2^d - 1)$ constraints suffice to

fix the lexicographically minimal vertex u of P_I and to detect the case, where $w = u$. Thus if $k = 1$ the assertion holds.

Suppose now that $k \geq 2$. Again, by Corollary 1, there exists a subset $A'x \leq b'$ defining a polyhedron Q , such that the ray $\overrightarrow{u, x^*}$ leaves Q_I also in the point w and such that $a^T x \leq \beta$ defines the minimal face of P_I containing w if and only if $a^T x \leq \beta$ defines the minimal face of Q_I containing w .

This means that there exists a subset of $4d(2^d - 1)$ constraints with respect to which the first two steps of the procedure **ContainingSimplex** yields the same result. The assertion then follows by induction. ■

4.3 The LP-type problem We now model the search for a constant size subset $A'x \leq b'$ of $Ax \leq b$, such that $\Sigma(x^*, Ax \leq b) = \Sigma(x^*, A'x \leq b')$ as an *LP-type problem*. Such an LP-type problem [7] is specified by a pair (H, ω) , where H is a finite set, whose elements are called *constraints* and $\omega : 2^H \mapsto \mathcal{W}$ is a function with values in a linearly ordered set (\mathcal{W}, \leq) satisfying a certain set of axioms (see below). The goal is to compute a minimal subset B_H of H with the same value as H . In our setting the set H consists of the constraints defining P . For a subset $F \subseteq H$, we denote by $P(F)$ the polytope which is defined by F and the implicit upper and lower bounds. We then define $\omega(F) \leq \omega(G)$ if $P(F) \preceq_{x^*} P(G)$. The following axioms are satisfied.

Axiom 1. (Monotonicity) For any F, G with $F \subseteq G \subseteq H$, we have $\omega(F) \leq \omega(G)$.

This axiom is immediate by Lemma 1, since $P(G) \subseteq P(F)$.

Axiom 2. (Locality) For any $F \subseteq G \subseteq H$ with $\omega(F) = \omega(G)$ and any $h \in H$, $\omega(G) < \omega(G \cup \{h\})$ implies that also $\omega(F) < \omega(F \cup \{h\})$.

If $\omega(F) = \omega(G)$ holds, then the simplices $\Sigma(x^*, P(F))$ and $\Sigma(x^*, P(G))$ coincide. If $\omega(G) < \omega(G \cup \{h\})$, then h cuts off a vertex of this simplex (Lemma 1). Consequently also $\omega(F)$ strictly increases.

A basis B_G of a subset $G \subseteq H$ is a minimal subset of G with $\omega(B_G) = \omega(G)$. The combinatorial dimension of a LP-type problem is the size of the largest basis of any $G \subseteq H$. From Lemma 2, we know that the combinatorial dimension of our problem is constant.

An LP-type problem of constant combinatorial dimension can be solved with $O(m)$ violation tests and $O(\log m)$ basis computations for constant size subsets of constraints, as shown in [2, 7]. A violation test for a basis B and a constraint h is the problem of determining whether $\omega(B) \neq \omega(B \cup \{h\})$. A basis computation for a set of constraints G is the task of computing a basis of G .

Let us first deal with the violation test. Let B

be a basis. A constraint violates this basis, if and only if it cuts off (at least) one of the corner points of $\Sigma(x^*, P(B))$. Thus, we iterate over the corners of the simplex and check violation. This requires constant time.

For the basis computation, let $G \subseteq H$ be a subset of the constraints of constant size. We have to compute the simplex $\Sigma(x^*, P(F))$ for each $F \subseteq G$ and choose the smallest set F with $\Sigma(x^*, P(F)) = \Sigma(x^*, P(G))$. This can be done by calling our procedure **ContainingSimplex**(G, x^*) a constant number of times. These calls cost $O(\varphi^2)$.

This shows that one can compute $\Sigma(x^*, Ax \leq b)$ and a basis $A'x \leq b'$ of $Ax \leq b$ in expected time $O(m + \varphi^2 \log m)$. Recall that $x^* \in P_I$ if and only if $x^* \in \Sigma(x^*, Ax \leq b)$ if and only if x^* is in the integer hull of $A'x \leq b'$. If x^* is not in $\Sigma(x^*, Ax \leq b)$ we can compute a separating hyperplane of x^* from the integer hull of $A'x \leq b'$ in $O(\varphi^2)$ steps, using the equivalence of separation and optimization.

All-together we have shown that the point containment problem in the integer hull of a polyhedron can be solved in an expected number of $O(m + \varphi^2 \log m)$ operations. This concludes the proof of Theorem 1.

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