Preface

Distributed systems consisting of a number of autonomous computing elements connected over a communication network that cooperate to achieve common goals have shown an unprecedented growth in the last few decades, especially in the form of the Grid, the Cloud, mobile ad hoc networks, and wireless sensor networks. Design of algorithms for these systems, namely the distributed algorithms, has become an important research area of computer science, engineering, applied mathematics, and other disciplines as they pose different and usually more difficult problems than the sequential algorithms. A graph can be used to conveniently model a distributed system, and distributed graph algorithms or graph-theoretical distributed algorithms, in the context of this book, are considered as distributed algorithms that make use of some property of the graph that models the distributed system to solve a problem in such systems.

This book is about distributed graph algorithms as applied to computer networks with focus on implementation and hopefully without much sacrifice on the theory. It grew out of the need I have witnessed while teaching distributed systems and algorithms courses in the last two decades or so. The main observation was that although there were many books on distributed algorithms, graph theory, and ad hoc networks separately, there did not seem to be any book with detailed focus on the intersection of these three major areas of research. The second observation was the difficulty the students faced when implementing distributed algorithm code although the concepts and the idea of an algorithm in an abstract manner were perceived relatively more comfortably. For example, when and how to synchronize algorithms running on different computing nodes was one of the main difficulties. In this sense, we have attempted to provide algorithms in ready-to-be-coded format in most cases, showing minor details explicitly to aid the distributed algorithm designer and implementor.

The book is divided into three parts. After reviewing the background, Part I provides a review of the fundamental and better known distributed graph algorithms. Part II describes the core concepts of distributed graph algorithms that have wide range of applications in computer networks in an abstract manner, without considering the application environment. However, in Part III, we focus ourselves on ad hoc wireless networks and show how some of the algorithms we have investigated can be modified for this environment.

The layout of each chapter is kept quite uniform for ease of reading. Each chapter starts with an introduction describing the problem shortly by showing its possible applications in computer networks. The problem is then stated formally, and examples are provided in most of the cases. We then provide a list of algorithms usually starting by a sequential one to aid understanding the problem better. The distributed algorithms shown may be well established if they exist and sometimes algorithms that have been recently published as articles are described with examples if they have profound effect on the solution of the problem.

An algorithm is first introduced conceptually, and then, its pseudocode is given and described in detail. We provide similar simple graph templates to show the steps of the implementation of the algorithm and then provide analysis of its time and message complexity. Proof of correctness is given only when this does not seem obvious or, on the contrary, a reference is given for the proof if this requires lengthy analysis. The chapter concludes by the Chapter Notes section, which usually emphasizes main points, compares the described algorithms, and also provides a contemporary bibliographic review of the topic with open research areas where applicable. This style is repeated throughout the book for all chapters. Exercises at the end of chapters are usually in the form of small programming projects in line with the main goal of the book, which is to describe how to implement distributed algorithms.

There are few aspects of the book worth mentioning. Firstly, many self-stabilizing algorithms are included, some being very recent, for most of the topics covered in Part II. There are few algorithms, again in Part II, that are new and have not been published elsewhere. Also, an updated survey of the topic covered is provided for all chapters. Finally, a simple simulator we have designed, implemented, and used while teaching distributed algorithm courses is included as the final chapter, and its source code is given in Appendix B.

The intended audience for this book are the graduate students and researchers of computer science and mathematics and engineering or any person with basic background in discrete mathematics, algorithms, and computer networks.

I would like to thank graduate students at Ege University, University of California Davis, California State University San Marcos and senior students at Izmir University who have taken the distributed algorithms courses, sometimes under slightly different names, for their valuable feedback when parts of the material covered in the book was presented during lectures. I would like to thank Aysegul Alaybeyoglu, Deniz Cokuslu, Orhan Dagdeviren, and Jukka Suomela for their review of some chapters and valuable comments. I would also like to thank Springer editors Wayne Wheeler and Simon Rees for their continuous support during the course of this project and Donatas Akmanavičius for the final editing process.

Izmir, Turkey K. Erciyes

http://www.springer.com/978-1-4471-5172-2

Distributed Graph Algorithms for Computer Networks
Erciyes, K.
2013, XVIII, 324 p., Hardcover
ISBN: 978-1-4471-5172-2