Applications of Minimum Spanning Trees

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Minimum Spanning Trees

- We motivated MSTs through the problem of finding a low-cost network connecting a set of nodes.
- MSTs are useful in a number of seemingly disparate applications.
- We will consider two problems: clustering (Chapter 4.7) and minimum bottleneck graphs (problem 9 in Chapter 4).

Motivation for Clustering

- Given a set of objects and distances between them.
- Objects can be images, web pages, people, species ....
- Distance function: increasing distance corresponds to decreasing similarity.
- Goal: group objects into clusters, where each cluster is a set of similar objects.

Formalising the Clustering Problem

- Let U be the set of n objects labelled $p_1, p_2, \ldots, p_n$.
- For every pair p_i and p_j, we have a distance $d(p_i, p_j)$.
- We require $d(p_i, p_i) = 0$, $d(p_i, p_j) > 0$, if $i \neq j$, and $d(p_i, p_j) = d(p_j, p_i)$

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- Given a positive integer k, a *k-clustering* of U is a partition of U into k non-empty subsets or "clusters" $C_1, C_2, \ldots C_k$.
- The *spacing* of a clustering is the smallest distance between objects in two different subsets:

$$\text{spacing}(C_1, C_2, \ldots C_k) = \min_{\substack{1 \leq i,j \leq k \\ i \neq j, \\ p \in C_i, q \in C_j}} d(p, q)$$

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Clustering of Maximum Spacing

INSTANCE: A set U of objects, a distance function $d : U \times U \rightarrow \mathbb{R}^+$, and a positive integer K

SOLUTION: A k-clustering of U whose spacing is the largest over all possible k-clusterings.

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- Let $\mathcal{C}$ be a set of n clusters, with each object in U in its own cluster.
- Process pairs of objects in increasing order of distance.
  - Let (p, q) be the next pair with $p \in C_p$ and $q \in C_q$.
  - If $C_p \neq C_q$, add new cluster $C_p \cup C_q$ to $\mathcal{C}$, delete C_p and C_q from $\mathcal{C}$.
- Stop when there are k clusters in $\mathcal{C}$.

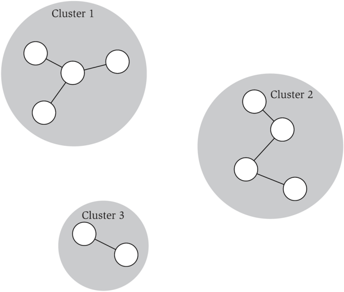

Figure 4.14 An example of single-linkage clustering with $k = 3$ clusters. The clusters are formed by adding edges between points in order of increasing distance.

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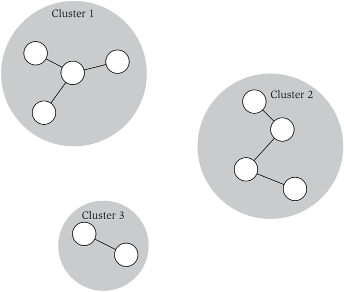
- Stop when there are k clusters in $\mathcal{C}$.
- Same as Kruskal's algorithm but do not add last $k-1$ edges in MST.



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- Let $\mathcal{C}$ be the clustering produced by the algorithm and let $\mathcal{C}'$ be any other clustering.
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- Let $\mathcal{C}$ be the clustering produced by the algorithm and let $\mathcal{C}'$ be any other clustering.
- What is spacing($\mathcal{C}$)? It is the cost of the $(k-1)$st most expensive edge in the MST. Let this cost be d^*.
- We will prove that spacing($\mathcal{C}'$) $\leq d^*$.

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- Suppose $p_i \in C'_s$ and $p_j \in C'_t$ in $\mathcal{C}'$.

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- Suppose $p_i \in C'_s$ and $p_j \in C'_t$ in $\mathcal{C}'$.
- All edges in the path Q connecting p_i and p_j in the MST have length $\le d^*$.
- In particular, there is a point $p \in C'_s$ and a point $p' \notin C'_s$ such that p and p' are adjacent in Q.
- $d(p, p') \le d* \Rightarrow$ spacing$(\mathcal{C}') \le d(p, p') \le d^*$.

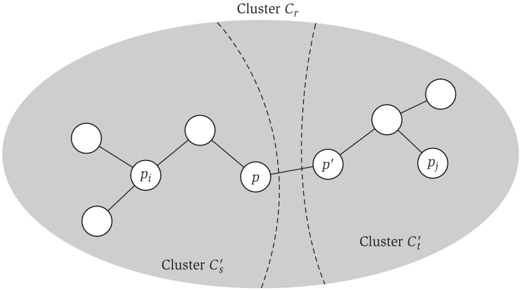

Figure 4.15 An illustration of the proof of (4.26), showing that the spacing of any other clustering can be no larger than that of the clustering found by the single-linkage algorithm.

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MINIMUM BOTTLENECK SPANNING TREE (MBST)

INSTANCE: An undirected graph $G(V, E)$ and a function $c : E \rightarrow \mathbb{R}^+$

SOLUTION: A set $T \subseteq E$ of edges such that (V, T) is a spanning tree and there is no spanning tree in G with a cheaper bottleneck edge.

Two Questions on MBSTs

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1. Assume edge costs are distinct.
2. Is every MBST tree an MST? No. It is easy to create a counterexample.
3. Is every MST an MBST? Yes. Use the cycle property.
   - Let T be the MST and let T' be a spanning tree with a cheaper bottleneck edge. Let e be the bottleneck edge in T.
   - Every edge in T' is cheaper than e.
   - Adding e to T' creates a cycle consisting only of edges in T' and e.
   - Since e is the costliest edge in this cycle, by the cycle property, e cannot belong to any MST, which contradicts the fact that T is an MST.