

## Error Correction

### Error-correcting codes

Any error-correcting code can be used for error detection. A code with minimum Hamming distance,  $d$ , can detect up to  $d-1$  errors in a code word. Using minimum-distance-based error-correcting codes for error detection can be suitable if a strict limit on the minimum number of errors to be detected is desired.

Codes with minimum Hamming distance  $d=2$  are degenerate cases of error-correcting codes, and can be used to detect single errors. The parity bit is an example of a single-error-detecting code.

The Berger code is an early example of a unidirectional error(-correcting) code that can detect any number of errors on an asymmetric channel, provided that only transitions of cleared bits to set bits or set bits to cleared bits can occur.

### Error correction

#### Automatic repeat request

Automatic Repeat reQuest (ARQ) is an error control method for data transmission that makes use of error-detection codes, acknowledgment and/or negative acknowledgment messages, and timeouts to achieve reliable data transmission. An acknowledgment is a message sent by the receiver to indicate that it has correctly received a data frame.

Usually, when the transmitter does not receive the acknowledgment before the timeout occurs (i.e., within a reasonable amount of time after sending the data frame), it

retransmits the frame until it is either correctly received or the error persists beyond a predetermined number of retransmissions.

Three types of ARQ protocols are Stop-and-wait ARQ, Go-Back-N ARQ, and Selective Repeat ARQ.

ARQ is appropriate if the communication channel has varying or unknown capacity, such as is the case on the Internet. However, ARQ requires the availability of a back channel, results in possibly increased latency due to retransmissions, and requires the maintenance of buffers and timers for retransmissions, which in the case of network congestion can put a strain on the server and overall network capacity.

### Error-correcting code

An error-correcting code (ECC) or forward error correction (FEC) code is a system of adding redundant data, or parity data, to a message, such that it can be recovered by a receiver even when a number of errors (up to the capability of the code being used) were introduced, either during the process of transmission, or on storage. Since the receiver does not have to ask the sender for retransmission of the data, a back-channel is not required in forward error correction, and it is therefore suitable for simplex communication such as broadcasting. Error-correcting codes are frequently used in lower-layer communication, as well as for reliable storage in media such as CDs, DVDs, hard disks, and RAM.

Error-correcting codes are usually distinguished between convolutional codes and block codes:

- Convolutional codes are processed on a bit-by-bit basis. They are particularly suitable for implementation in hardware, and the Viterbi decoder allows optimal decoding.
- Block codes are processed on a block-by-block basis. Early examples of block codes are repetition codes, Hamming codes and multidimensional parity-check codes. They were followed by a number of efficient codes, Reed-Solomon codes being the most notable due to their current widespread use. Turbo codes and low-density parity-check codes (LDPC) are relatively new constructions that can provide almost optimal efficiency.

Shannon's theorem is an important theorem in forward error correction, and describes the maximum information rate at which reliable communication is possible over a channel that has a certain error probability or signal-to-noise ratio (SNR). This strict upper limit is expressed in terms of the channel capacity. More specifically, the theorem says that there exist codes such that with increasing encoding length the probability of error on a discrete memoryless channel can be made arbitrarily small, provided that the code rate is smaller than the channel capacity. The code rate is defined as the fraction  $k/n$  of  $k$  source symbols and  $n$  encoded symbols.

The actual maximum code rate allowed depends on the error-correcting code used, and may be lower. This is because Shannon's proof was only of existential nature, and did not show how to construct codes which are both optimal and have efficient encoding and decoding algorithms.

### Hybrid schemes

Hybrid ARQ is a combination of ARQ and forward error correction. There are two basic approaches:

- Messages are always transmitted with FEC parity data (and error-detection redundancy). A receiver decodes a message using the parity information, and requests retransmission using ARQ only if the parity data was not sufficient for successful decoding (identified through a failed integrity check).
- Messages are transmitted without parity data (only with error-detection information). If a receiver detects an error, it requests FEC information from the transmitter using ARQ, and uses it to reconstruct the original message.

The latter approach is particularly attractive on an erasure channel when using a rateless erasure code.

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