

Exercise 168, September 17, 2010

## The Factorization of $F_7$

In the seventeenth century, the French jurist and amateur mathematician Pierre de Fermat investigated numbers of the form  $2^{2^n} + 1$ , now known as Fermat numbers: 3, 5, 17, 257, 65537, 4294967297, 18446744073709551617, ... (Sloane's A000215¹). Fermat noted that the first five numbers in the sequence,  $F_0$  to  $F_4$ , were prime, and conjectured that all the remaining numbers in the sequence were prime. He was wrong, as Leonhard Euler proved in 1732 with the factorization of  $F_5 = 641 \cdot 6700417$ ; then Thomas Clausen² factored  $F_6 = 274177 \cdot 67280421310721$  in 1855. Those first five numbers are the only members of the sequence that are known to be prime, and it now conjectured that all the remaining Fermat numbers are composite. There is something of a cottage industry among mathematicians and programmers to find new factors of Fermat numbers; you can find the current status of that friendly competition at ProthSearch³.

On September 13th, 1970, Michael A. Morrison and John Brillhart factored the seventh Fermat number:  $F_7 = 2^{2^7} + 1 = 2^{128} + 1 = 340282366920938463463374607431768211457 = 59649589127497217 \cdot 5704689200685129054721$ . Their feat<sup>4</sup> inaugurated the modern culture of factorization by computer, and their now-deprecated method was the direct predecessor of the quadratic sieve that is today the most powerful factorization method<sup>5</sup> available for personal computers, able to factor numbers up to about a hundred digits. On the fortieth

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>http://www.research.att.com/ njas/sequences/A000215

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Robert E. Bradley, Lawrence A. D'Antonio and Charles Edward Sandifer, *Euler at 300: an appreciation*, The Mathematical Association of America, July 2007, ISBN 0883855658, page 224

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>http://www.prothsearch.net/fermat.html

 $<sup>^4</sup>$ Michael A. Morrison and John Brillhart, "The Factorization of  $F_7$ ," Bulletin of the American Mathematical Society, Volume 77, Number 2, March 1971, Page 264, available at http://projecteuclid.org/euclid.bams/1183532753

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>the most powerful factoring algorithm known is the number field sieve, which can factor numbers up to about 150 digits, but requires a large cluster of computers

anniversary of their achievement we recreate their computation in this exercise. We are following their own description<sup>6</sup>.

The math behind the method dates to Fermat, who noted that a factor of N could be found when  $x^2 - N$  was a perfect square; thus, Fermat's factorization method started with  $x = \lfloor \sqrt{N} \rfloor$  and decreased x at each step until it reached a solution, as we did in a previous exercise<sup>7</sup>. Early in the twentieth century, Maurice Kratchik, a Russian mathematician and number theorist living in Liège, Belgium, observed that Fermat's formula could be written as  $x^2 \equiv y^2 \pmod{N}$ . Then, in 1931, Derrick H. Lehmer and R. E. Powers discovered<sup>8</sup> that the convergents of the continued fraction representation of the square root of N provided a suitable x and y, but their method was unusable because the calculations were too tedious and time-consuming for manual calculation, and the method frequently failed to find a factorization. In 1965, Brillhart realized that the tedious calculations were fit for computer calculation, and he and Morrison spent the summer of 1970 developing their method.

The continued fraction method works in two stages, a first stage that computes successive convergents of the continued fraction representing the square root of the number being factored, and a second stage that performs linear algebra on the factors of the convergents and computes a factor of the original number. Morrison and Brillhart, using an IBM 360/91 mainframe computer at UCLA, coding in PL/1 with assembly-language libraries for large-integer processing, divided the work into programs RESIDUE and ANSWER to make it fit into the machine.

We saw continued fractions previously, in the exercise<sup>9</sup> on the golden ratio. Square roots can be represented by continued fractions, and are always periodic; we'll refer to the article by Morrison and Brillhart for the math and skip directly to their algorithm to expand  $\sqrt{N}$ , or  $\sqrt{kN}$  for some suitable multiplier  $k \geq 1$ , into a simple continued fraction:

Initialize 
$$A_{-2}=0,\ A_{-1}=1,\ Q_{-1}=kN,\ r_{-1}=g,\ P_0=0,\ Q_0=1,$$
 and  $g=\lfloor \sqrt{kN}\rfloor.$ 

For each n from 0 to a user-specified limit:

Compute  $q_n$  and  $r_n$  using the formula  $g + P_n = q_n Q_n + r_n$  where  $0 \le r_n \le Q_n$ .

Compute  $A_n \pmod{N}$  using the formula  $A_n \equiv q_n A_{n-1} + A_{n-2} \pmod{N}$ .

Compute  $g + P_{n+1}$  using the formula  $g + P_{n+1} = 2g - r_n$ .

Compute  $Q_{n+1}$  using the formula  $Q_{n+1} = Q_{n-1} + q_n(r_n - r_{n-1})$ .

 $<sup>^6</sup>$ Michael A. Morrison and John Brillhart, "A Method of Factoring and the Factorization of  $F_7$ ," Mathematics of Computation, volume 29, number 129, January 1975, pages 183–205, available at <a href="http://www.ams.org/journals/mcom/1975-29-129/S0025-5718-1975-0371800-5/S0025-5718-1975-0371800-5.pdf">http://www.ams.org/journals/mcom/1975-29-129/S0025-5718-1975-0371800-5/S0025-5718-1975-0371800-5.pdf</a>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup>http://programmingpraxis.com/2009/05/19/fermats-method

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup>D. H. Lehmer and R. E. Powers, "On Factoring Large Numbers," Bulletin of the American Mathematical Society, volume 37, October 1931, pages 770–776

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup>http://programmingpraxis.com//2009/07/10/the-golden-ratio

Some of the  $Q_n$  must be factored. That "some" sounds odd. The idea is to factor those  $Q_n$  that have all their prime factors less than some pre-specified limit, said primes having a Jacobi symbol of 0 or 1 indicating that they are quadratic residues of kN and thus potential factors; we saw the Jacobi symbol in the exercise<sup>10</sup> on modular arithmetic. The procedure is to choose a limit, compute a factor base of those primes that are potential factors, then use trial division to determine if the  $Q_n$  should be added to the out-going list; Morrison and Brillhart call such an  $A_{n-1}$  and  $Q_n$  an A - Q pair.

Morrison and Brillhart, based on Lehmer and Powers before them, give this example: let N=13290059 and k=1; then g=3645. Then selected results from the expansion of  $\sqrt{kN}$  are given below:

n	$g+P_n$	$Q_n$	$q_n$	$r_n$	$A_{n-1} \pmod{N}$	$Q_n$ factored
-1		13290059		3645	0	
0	3645	1	3645	0	1	
1	7290	4034	1	3256	3645	$2 \cdot 2017$
2	4034	3257	1	777	3646	3257
3	6513	1555	4	293	7291	$5 \cdot 311$
4	6997	1321	5	392	32810	1321
5	6898	2050	3	748	171341	$2 \cdot 5^2 \cdot 41$
10	6318	1333	4	986	6700527	$31 \cdot 43$
22	4779	4633	1	146	5235158	$41 \cdot 113$
23	7144	226	31	138	1914221	$2 \cdot 113$
26	5622	3286	1	2336	11455708	$2 \cdot 31 \cdot 53$
31	6248	5650	1	598	1895246	$2 \cdot 5^2 \cdot 113$
40	6576	4558	1	2018	3213960	$2 \cdot 43 \cdot 53$
52	7273	25	290	23	2467124	$5^{2}$

The output from RESIDUE is a list of the following items for each  $Q_n$  that could be factored over the factor base: n,  $A_{n-1}$ ,  $Q_n$ , and a list of the odd-power primes dividing  $Q_n$  (thus, factors like  $5^2$  of  $Q_{31}$  are omitted); forty years ago, the output was given on punched cards! In the example above, the rows for  $Q_5$ ,  $Q_{10}$ ,  $Q_{22}$ ,  $Q_{23}$ ,  $Q_{26}$ ,  $Q_{31}$  and  $Q_{40}$  should appear in the output, based on a factor base containing 2, 5, 31, 41, 43, 53, and 113; note that 5 is part of the factor base even though it doesn't appear as an odd power in any of the  $Q_n$ .

Remeber that the math underlying the continued fraction factorization algorithm is that we are searching for x and y such that  $x^2 \equiv y^2 \pmod{N}$  with  $x \not\equiv y \pmod{N}$ . The convergents of the continued fraction expansion of  $\sqrt{N}$  have the property that  $A_{n-1}$  and  $Q_n$  will indicate a factor of N whenever  $Q_n$  is a perfect square, as we saw in the example of  $Q_{52}$  in the expansion of  $\sqrt{13290059}$ . But such  $Q_n$  are rare, which is why the method of Lehmer and Powers never found favor. Much more common is the case that two or more  $Q_n$  multiply to a perfect square, as they share some odd-power prime factors that, when multiplied together, become an even power.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup>http://programmingpraxis.com//2009/07/07/modular-arithmetic/

Consider the example above. The product of  $Q_5$ ,  $Q_{22}$  and  $Q_{23}$  is the perfect square  $2050 \cdot 4633 \cdot 226 = 2146468900 = 46330^2 = (2 \cdot 5 \cdot 41 \cdot 113)^2$ . The product of the corresponding  $A_{n-1}$  is  $171341 \cdot 5235158 \cdot 1914221 = 1717050890347212038 \equiv 1469504 \pmod{13290059}$ , and we have the congruence  $(171341 \cdot 5235158 \cdot 1914221)^2 \equiv (2 \cdot 5 \cdot 41 \cdot 113)^2 \pmod{13290059}$  or  $1469504^2 \equiv 46330^2 \pmod{13290059}$ . Thus a factor of N = 13290059 is  $\gcd(1469504 - 46330, 13290059) = 4261$  and  $N = 3119 \cdot 4261$ .

ANSWER uses the Gaussian elimination algorithm of linear algebra to find a set of  $Q_n$  (Morrison and Brillhart call it an S-set) with product a perfect square. The primes in the factorizations of the  $Q_n$  are 2, 31, 41, 43, 53 and 113, and we also need -1, as there is an implied factor of -1 attached to each  $Q_n$  with odd n. Thus, any  $Q_n$  can be represented as a vector of the powers of the exponents of its factors, modulo 2; for instance,  $Q_5$ , with odd-power factors 2 and 41, is represented by the vector [1 1 0 1 0 0 0]. Associated with each exponent vector is a history vector that records our work, which initially has 0 everywhere except 1 in the ordinal position corresponding to the row with which it is associated. Here are the exponent matrix, on the left, and history matrix, on the right, corresponding to the seven  $Q_n$  of our example problem; the columns of the exponent matrix are factors, left to right from low to high, starting with -1, the columns of the history matrix are  $Q_n$ , left to right from low to high, and the rows of both matrices are  $Q_n$ , top to bottom from low to high:

1	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1

Once the exponent matrix and history matrix are established, the reduction procedure, which performs the forward step of Gaussian elimination, is done as follows:

For each column in the exponent matrix, working from right to left:

Find the "pivot" vector of smallest subscript (nearest the top) whose rightmost 1 is in the current column. If none exists, continue working on the next column to the left.

For each non-pivot vector with rightmost 1 in the current column:

Replace the exponent vector with the element-wise sum, modulo 2, of the pivot vector and the current vector. Replace the associated history vector with the element-wise sum, modulo 2, of the pivot vector and the current vector.

The reduction of the initial matrices given above is shown below:

```
0 \ 0 \ 0 \ 0
     1 0
          1
              0 \quad 0
                      0 \quad 1
                            0
                               0
                                  0
     0
       1 0
              0
                      0 \ 0 \ 1
0 \quad 0 \quad 0 \quad 0 \quad 0 \quad 0
                       1 0 1
                               1
  1 1 0 0 1 0
                       0 0 0 0 1
  0
    0 0 0 0 0
                         0
                            1
                               0
                                  0
0 0 0 0 0 0
                      0 1
                            0 \ 0 \ 1
```

Each of the three rows with zero exponent vectors represents an S-set. Some of those S-sets lead to factorizations, but others fail. For instance, the S-set in the seventh row of the reduced matrix gives the congruence  $(6700527 \cdot 11455708 \cdot 3213960)^2 \equiv (2 \cdot 31 \cdot 43 \cdot 53)^2 \pmod{13290059}$ , or  $141298^2 \equiv 141298^2 \pmod{13290059}$ , which is useless. The S-set in the sixth row gives the congruence  $(171341 \cdot 5235158 \cdot 1895246)^2 \equiv (2 \cdot 5^2 \cdot 41 \cdot 113)^2 \pmod{13290059}$ , or  $13058409^2 \equiv 231650^2 \pmod{13290059}$ , but  $\gcd(13058409 - 231650, 13290059) = 1$  and the factorization fails. However, the S-set in the fourth row gives a completed factorization, as shown above.

Your task is to write the RESIDUE and ANSWER programs described above, then compute the factorization of  $F_7$  using a factor base of the first 2700 suitable primes less than 60000 and a multiplier of 257.

We begin with the RESIDUE program that computes the factor base, factors the  $Q_n$ , and gathers the A-Q pairs. Make-factor-base returns a list of primes included in the factor base. The arguments include both bound, the largest possible prime to be included in the list, and lim, the number of factors to be included in the list, since different uses may require different arguments:

Smooth determines if  $Q_n$  factors over the factor base, using trial division, except that even-power factors are excluded by the if in the second cond clause. If a factorization is found, the list of factors is returned, otherwise #f:

In their article, Morrison and Brillhart give a "large-prime" variant of the Q-factoring procedure, but specifically state that they did not use it in their factorization of  $F_7$ , so neither will we.

Residue implements the RESIDUE program of Morrison and Brillhart. We made two changes for clarity, renaming n as i and q as t, since Scheme doesn't distinguish case. Otherwise, we follow the algorithm of Morrison and Brillhart exactly; note the first clause of the cond, which performs an early return if it finds a  $Q_n$  that is a perfect square:

```
(define (residue n k fb lim)
  (let* ((kn (* k n)) (g (isqrt kn)) (a-3 0) (a-2 1)
         (q-2 kn) (r-2 g) (g+p-1 g) (q-1 1)
         (t-1 (quotient g+p-1 q-1)) (r-1 (- g+p-1 (* q-1 t-1)))
         (q0 (+ q-2 (* t-1 (- r-1 r-2)))))
    (let loop ((a-2 1) (a-1 g) (q-1 1) (r-1 0) (g+p (+ g g))
              (q q0) (i 1) (qs '()) (lim lim))
      ; (for-each display '(,i " ",g+p " ",q " ",a-1 #\newline))
      (if (or (= q 1) (zero? lim)) (reverse qs)
        (let* ((t (quotient g+p q))
               (r (- g+p (* q t)))
               (a (modulo (+ (* t a-1) a-2) n))
               (q+1 (+ q-1 (* t (- r r-1))))
               (fs (smooth n q fb)))
          (cond ((null? fs)
                  (let ((d (gcd (- a-1 (isqrt q)) n)))
                    (if (< 1 d n) d
                      (loop a-1 a q r (- (* 2 g) r) q+1 (+ i 1) qs (- lim 1)))))
                (fs (loop a-1 a q r (- (* 2 g) r) q+1 (+ i 1)
                          (cons (cons* i q a-1 fs) qs) (- lim 1)))
                (else (loop a-1 a q r (- (* 2 g) r) q+1 (+ i 1) qs (- lim 1))))))))
```

Here are two examples, the second showing a short-circuit factor when a perfect square  $Q_n$  is found:

```
> (residue 13290059 1 '(2 5 31 41 43 53 113) 44)
((5 2050 171341 2 41)
  (10 1333 6700527 31 43)
  (22 4633 5235158 41 113)
  (23 226 1914221 2 113)
  (26 3286 11455708 2 31 53)
  (31 5650 1895246 2 113)
  (40 4558 3213960 2 43 53))
> (residue 13290059 1 '(2 5 31 41 43 53 113) 60)
4261
```

It takes several minutes to make the corresponding calculations for  $F_7$ :

```
> (define f7 (+ (expt 2 (expt 2 7) 1))
> (define fb (make-factor-base f7 257 60000 2700))
> (define residues (residue f7 257 fb 1330000))
```

The largest of the 2700 primes in the factor base is 52183. Morrison and Brillhart found 2059 factored  $Q_n$ ; for some unexplained reason, we found 4034. The maximum number of factors for any of the 4034  $Q_n$  is 12, and a total of 29326 factors, about 7.3 per  $Q_n$ , were found.

We turn now to the linear algebra phase of the algorithm. Make-row returns the exponent vector for a single  $Q_n$ :

Make-ev and make-hv build the exponent and history matrices, respectively:

The calculation of the rightmost 1 is shown below. Later, in the answer function, we will keep track of the rightmost 1 in each row rather than recomputing it each time it is needed, just as Morrison and Brillhart did:

Finally, we give the code for ANSWER, which initializes the exponent vector and history vector, creates a pointer vector for the rightmost 1 in each column, performs the reduction procedure, and then examines S-sets until it finds one that gives a factorization:

```
(define (answer n fb residues)
  (let-values (((ev av qv) (make-ev fb (length fb) residues)))
    (let* ((fb-len (length fb)) (ev-len (vector-length ev))
           (hv (make-hv ev-len)) (ptr (make-vector ev-len)))
      (do ((i 0 (+ i 1))) ((= i ev-len))
        (vector-set! ptr i (right-most-one (vector-ref ev i) fb-len)))
      ; reduce ev and hv
      (do ((j fb-len (- j 1))) ((negative? j))
        (let loop ((i 0))
          (when (< i ev-len)
            (if (= (vector-ref ptr i) j)
                (do ((m (+ i 1) (+ m 1))) ((= m ev-len))
                  (when (= (vector-ref ptr m) j)
                    (vector-set! ev m (vector-add (vector-ref ev i) (vector-ref ev m)))
                    (vector-set! hv m (vector-add (vector-ref hv i) (vector-ref hv m)))
                    (vector-set! ptr m (right-most-one (vector-ref ev m) j))))
                (loop (+ i 1)))))
```

Answer uses the utility functions shown below:

Answer also uses a-minus-q, which takes an S-set and returns a divisor of N; it is up to answer to determine if that factor us useful or trivial. Note that the calculation of the square root of q-prod is exact:

Using the factor base and residues calculated previously, the factorization of  $F_7$  is shown below:

```
> (answer f7 fb residues)
59649589127497217
> (/ f7 59649589127497217)
5704689200685129054721
```

The S-set that completed the factorization contained 466 A - Q pairs. You can see the entire program at http://programmingpraxis.codepad.org/JGMHnA0v.

We used several functions from elsewhere. Cons\* and isqrt are from the Standard Prelude $^{11}$ :

Primes comes from the exercise<sup>12</sup> on the Sieve of Eratosthenes:

```
(define (primes n)
  (let* ((max-index (quotient (- n 3) 2))
         (v (make-vector (+ 1 max-index) #t)))
    (let loop ((i 0) (ps '(2)))
      (let ((p (+ i i 3)) (startj (+ (* 2 i i) (* 6 i) 3)))
        (cond ((>= (* p p) n))
               (let loop ((j i) (ps ps))
                  (cond ((> j max-index) (reverse ps))
                         ((vector-ref v j)
                           (loop (+ j 1) (cons (+ j j 3) ps)))
                         (else (loop (+ j 1) ps)))))
              ((vector-ref v i)
                (let loop ((j startj))
                  (if (<= j max-index)</pre>
                      (begin (vector-set! v j #f)
                              (loop (+ j p)))))
                      (loop (+ 1 i) (cons p ps)))
              (else (loop (+ 1 i) ps)))))))
```

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup>http://programmingpraxis.com/standard-prelude

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup>http://programmingpraxis.com/2090/02/19/sieve-of-eratosthenes

 ${\tt Jacobi}$  comes from the exercise  $^{13}$  on Modular Arithmetic.

 $<sup>^{13} \</sup>rm http://programming praxis.com/2009/07/07/modular-arithmetic$