

Microsoft
Research



Microsoft Research Asia
Faculty Summit 2012

Computational Thinking

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Computer Science Department
Carnegie Mellon University

Microsoft Asia Faculty Summit
26 October 2012
Tianjin, China

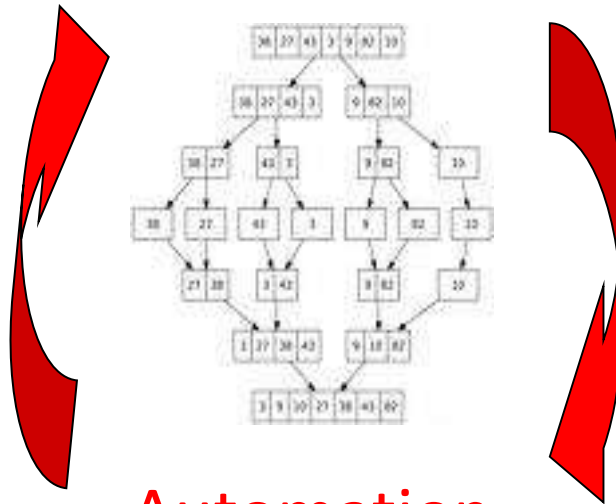
My Grand Vision

- **Computational thinking** will be a fundamental skill used by everyone in the world by the middle of the 21st Century.
 - Just like reading, writing, and arithmetic.
 - Incestuous: Computing and computers will enable the spread of computational thinking.
 - **In research:** scientists, engineers, ..., historians, artists
 - **In education:** K-12 students and teachers, undergrads, ...

J.M. Wing, "Computational Thinking," *CACM Viewpoint*, March 2006, pp. 33-35.
Paper off <http://www.cs.cmu.edu/~wing/>

Computing is the Automation of Abstractions

Abstractions



Automation

1. Machine
2. Human
3. Network [Machine + Human]

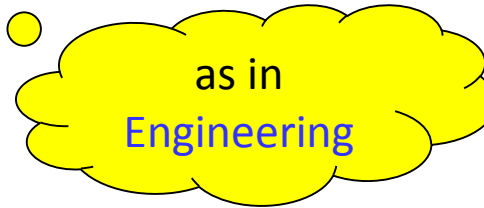
Computational Thinking focuses on the process of abstraction

- choosing the right abstractions
- operating in terms of multiple layers of abstraction simultaneously
- defining the relationships between layers

as in
Mathematics

guided by the following concerns...

Measures of a “Good” Abstraction in C.T.



- Efficiency
 - How fast?
 - How much space?
 - How much power?
- Correctness
 - Does it do the right thing?
 - Does the program compute the right answer?
 - Does it do anything?
 - Does the program eventually produce an answer? [Halting Problem]
- -ilities
 - Simplicity and elegance
 - Scalability
 - Usability
 - Modifiability
 - Maintainability
 - Cost
 - ...



Computational Thinking, Philosophically

- Complements and combines mathematical and engineering thinking
 - C.T. draws on math as its foundations
 - But we are constrained by the physics of the underlying machine
 - C.T. draws on engineering since our systems interact with the real world
 - But we can build virtual worlds unconstrained by physical reality
- Ideas, not artifacts
 - It's not just the software and hardware that touch our daily lives, it will be the computational concepts we use to approach living.
- It's for everyone, everywhere

Sample Classes of Computational Abstractions

- Algorithms
 - E.g., mergesort, binary search, string matching, clustering
- Data Structures
 - E.g., sequences, tables, trees, graphs, networks
- State Machines
 - E.g., finite automata, Turing machines
- Languages
 - E.g., regular expressions, ..., VDM, Z, ..., ML, Haskell, ..., Java, Python
- Logics and semantics
 - E.g., Hoare triples, temporal logic, modal logics, lambda calculus
- Heuristics
 - E.g., A* (best-first graph search), caching
- Control Structures
 - Parallel/sequential composition, iteration, recursion
- Communication
 - E.g., synchronous/asynchronous, broadcast/P2P, RPC, shared memory/message-passing
- Architectures
 - E.g., layered, hierarchical, pipeline, blackboard, feedback loop, client-server, parallel, distributed, fault-tolerant

NOT

- Computer literacy, i.e., how to use Word and Excel or even Google or Bing
- Computer programming, i.e., beyond Java Programming 101

In Summary

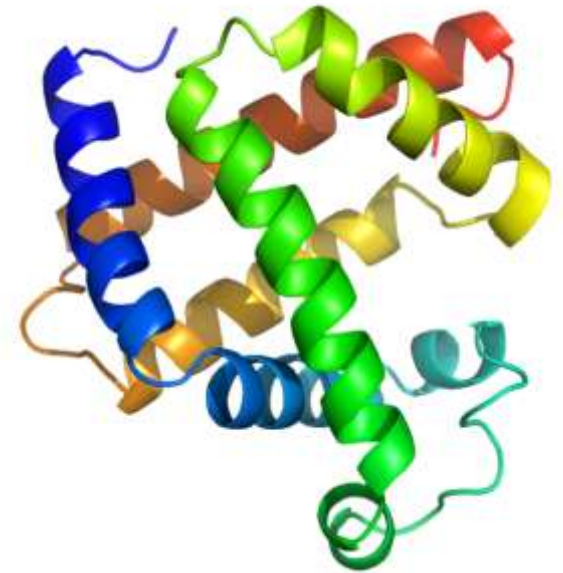
- Computational Thinking is the thought processes involved in formulating a problem and expressing its solution in a way that a computer—human or machine—can effectively carry out.
- Computational Thinking is what comes before any computing technology—thought of by a human, knowing full well the power of automation.

Examples of Computational Thinking in Other Disciplines

One Discipline, Many Computational Methods

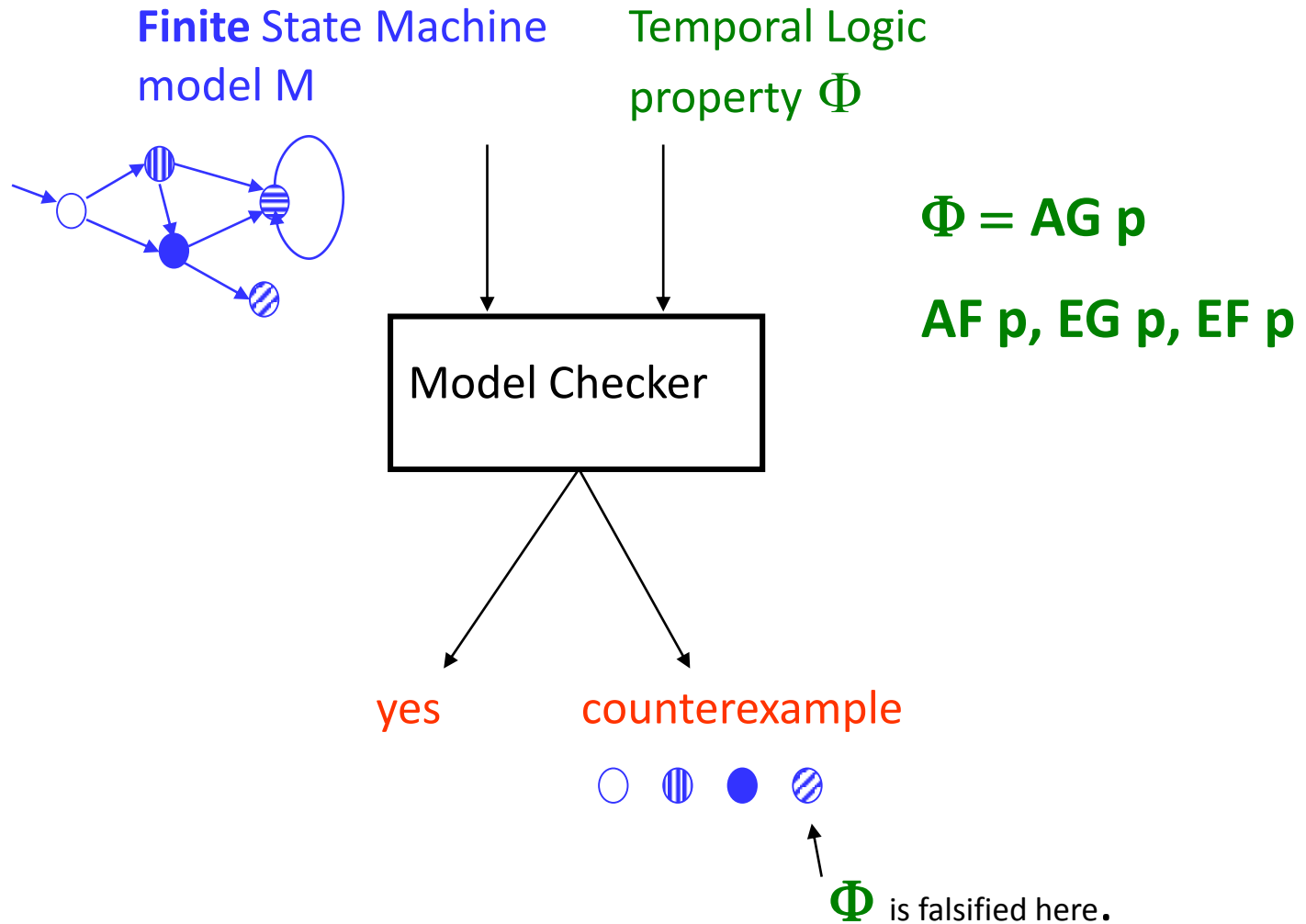
Computational Thinking in Biology

- Shotgun **algorithm** expedites sequencing of human genome
- **Abstract interpretation** in systems biology
- **Model checking** applied to arrhythmia, diabetes, pancreatic cancer
- DNA sequences are strings in a **language**
- **Boolean networks** approximate dynamics of biological networks
- Cells as a self-regulatory system are like **electronic circuits**
- **Process calculi** model interactions among molecules
- **Statecharts** used in developmental genetics
- Protein kinetics can be modeled as **computational processes**
- **Robot Adam** discovers role of 12 genes in yeast
- PageRank **algorithm** inspires ecological food web



Insight: Models and languages for expressing computational processes are good for expressing the dynamics of biological processes.

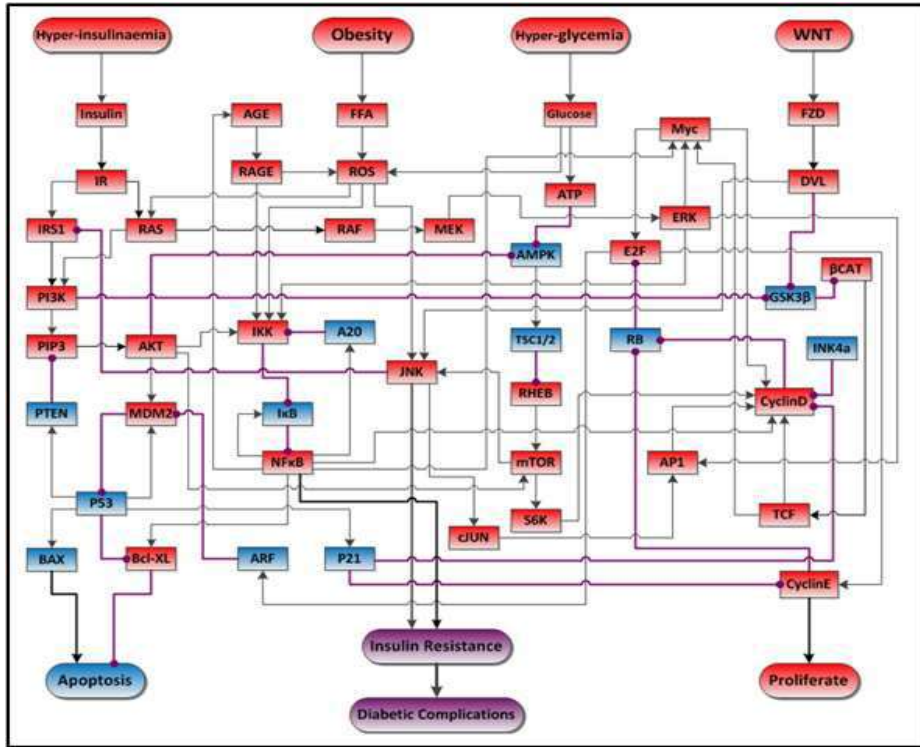
Model Checking Primer



Model Checking in Biology

Single-Cell Diabetes-Cancer Model $\approx 2^{49}$ states

1. State Machine Model



2. Temporal Logic Formula Φ

a. Do diabetes risk factors influence the risk of cancer or cancer prognosis?

Property 1 : $AF(Proliferate)$; *Property 1'* : $EF(Proliferate)$;

Property 2 : $AF(Apoptosis)$; *Property 2'* : $EF(Apoptosis)$;

Property 3 : $AF(Resistance)$; *Property 3'* : $EF(Resistance)$;

b. What signaling components are common to both diabetes and cancer?

c. The oscillations of NF κ B and the negative feedback of P53-MDM have measured in many in vitro experiments, after the cells were stimulated by external signals. Do these phenomena exist in cells subjected to diabetic risk factors?

$$n(t+1) = \left(n(t) \vee \bigvee_{a \in A(n)} a(t) \right) \wedge \neg \left(\bigvee_{i \in I(n)} i(t) \right)$$

“Diabetic risk factors might not increase cancer risk in normal cells, but they will promote cell proliferation if the cell is in a precancerous or cancerous stage characterized by losses of the tumor-suppressor proteins ARF and INK4a.”

[Gong, Zuliani, Clarke 2011]

One Computational Method, Many Disciplines

Machine Learning has transformed the field of Statistics.

Machine Learning in the Sciences

Astronomy

- Brown dwarfs and fossil galaxies discovery via machine learning, data mining, data federation
- Very large multi-dimensional datasets analysis using KD-trees



Credit: SDSS

Medicine



- Anti-inflammatory drugs
- Chronic hepatitis
- Mammograms
- Renal and respiratory failure

Credit: LiveScience

Meteorology

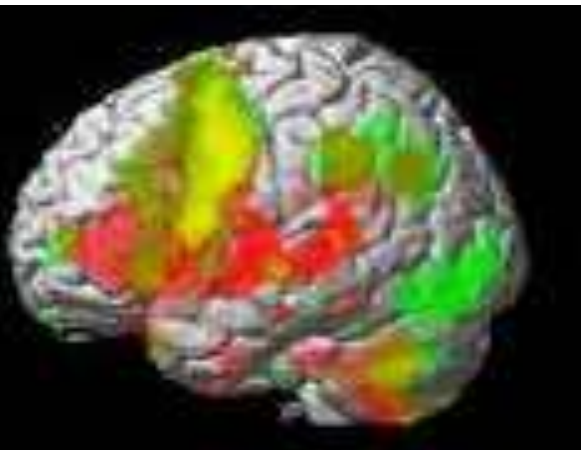
- Tornado formation



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Neurosciences

- fMRI data analysis to understand language via machine learning



Machine Learning Everywhere



Credit Cards



Supermarkets



Wall Street

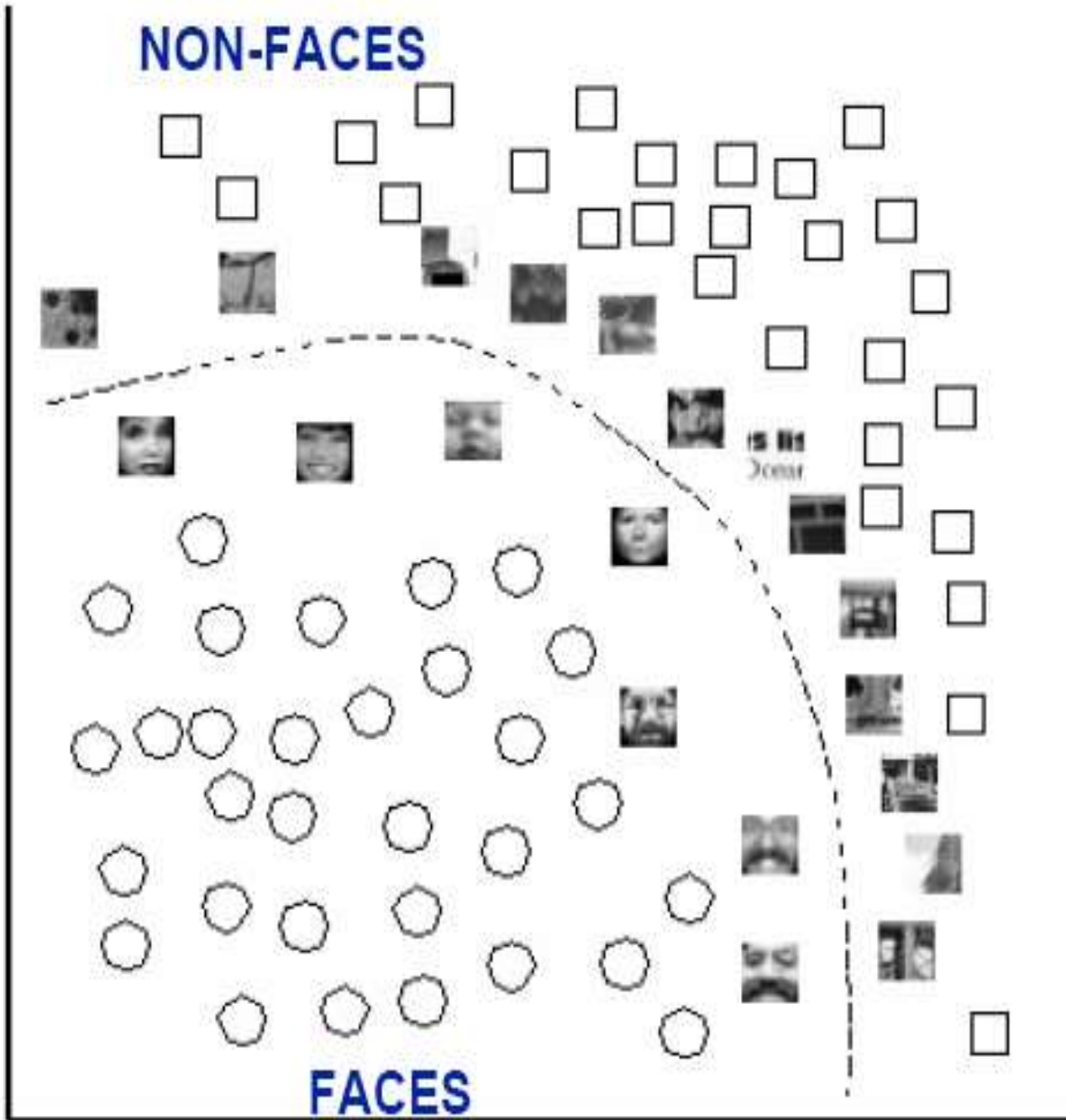
Entertainment:
Shopping, Music, Travel



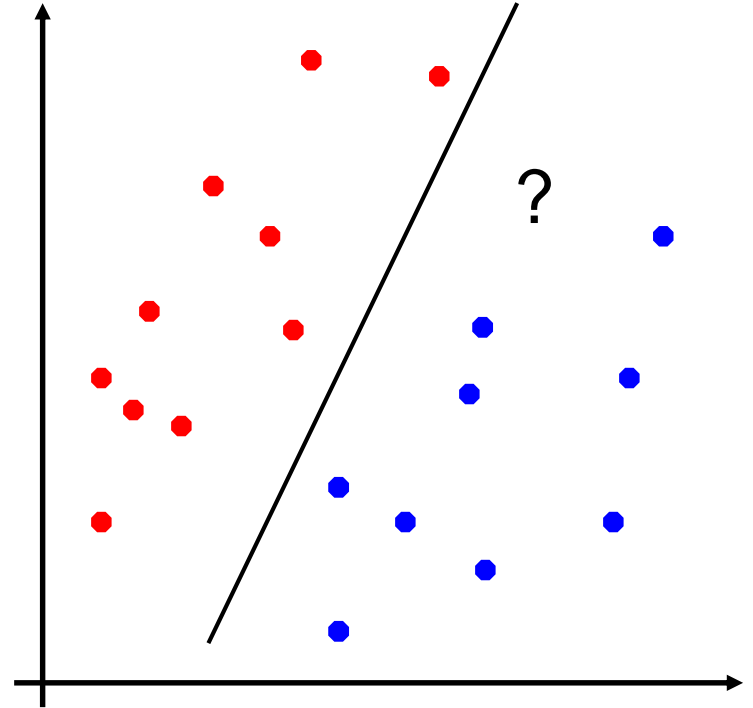
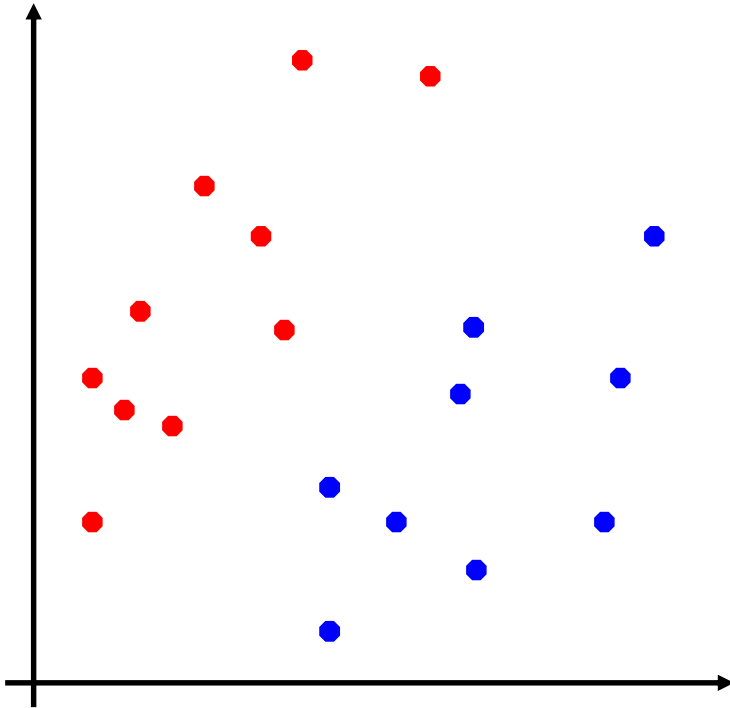
Sports

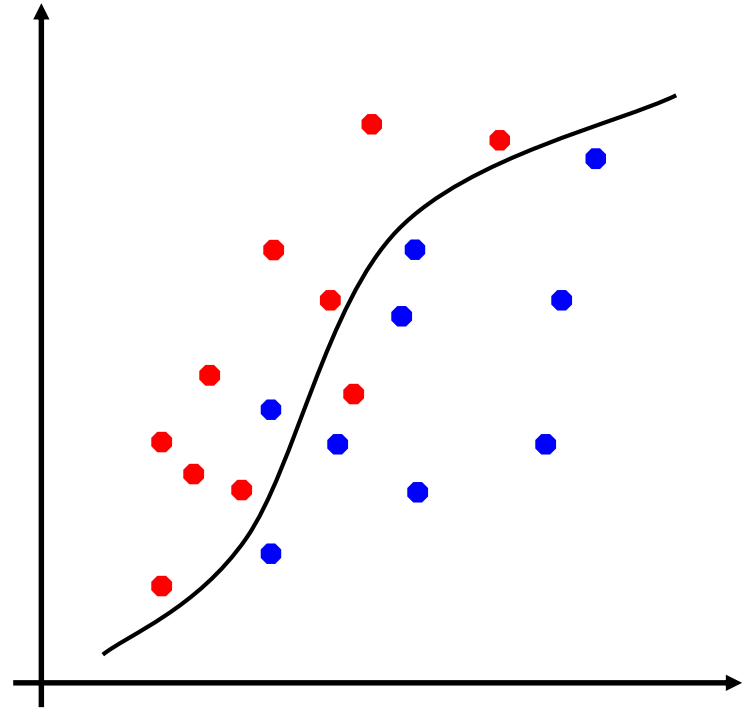
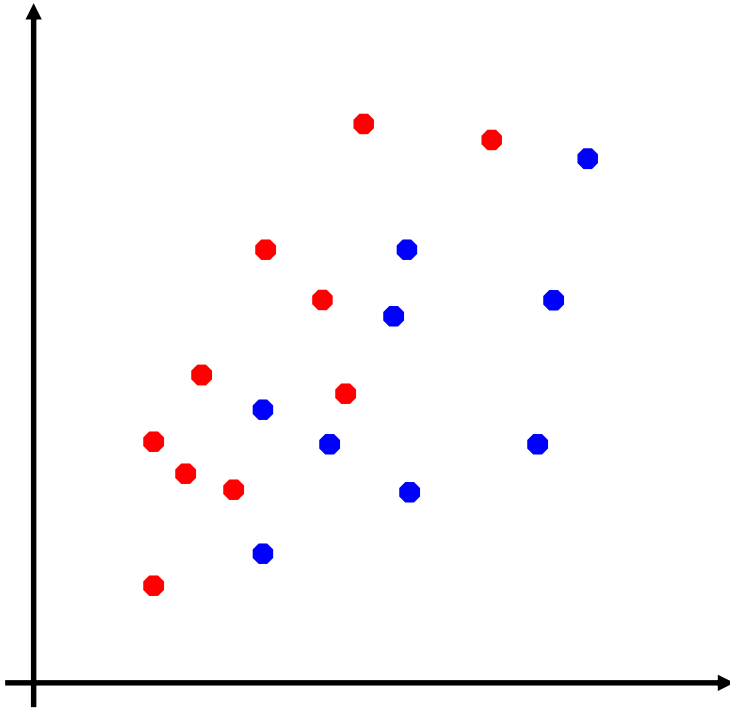


NON-FACES



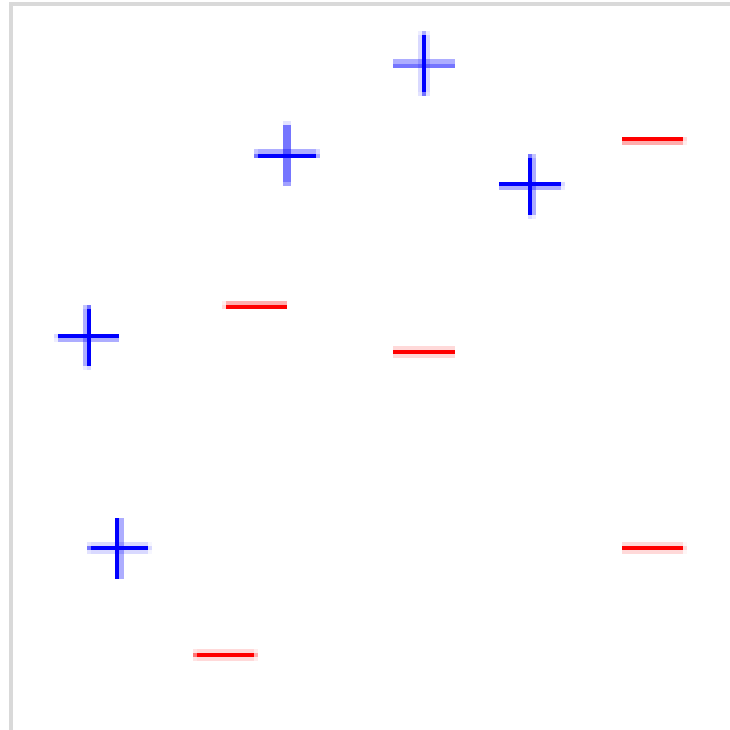
FACES

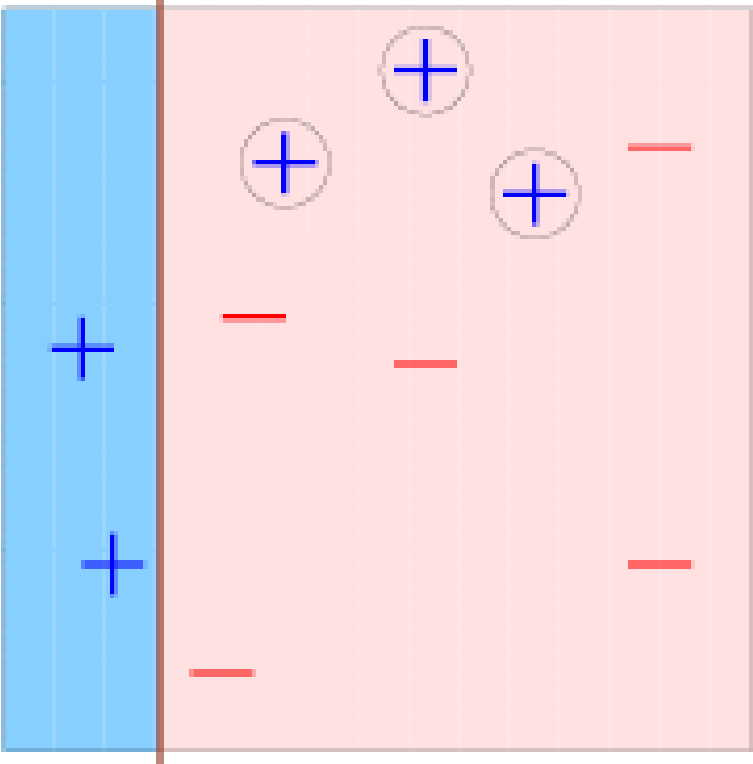


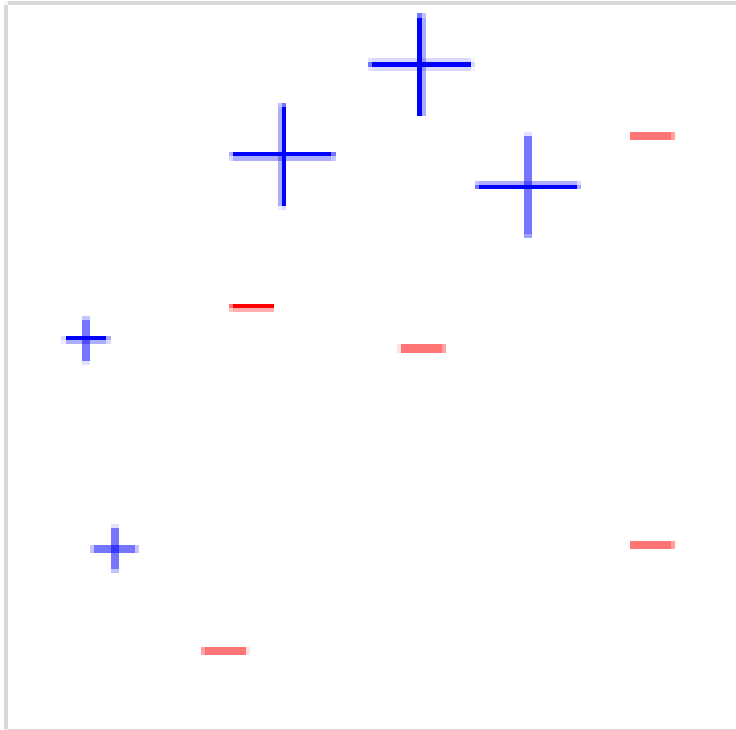


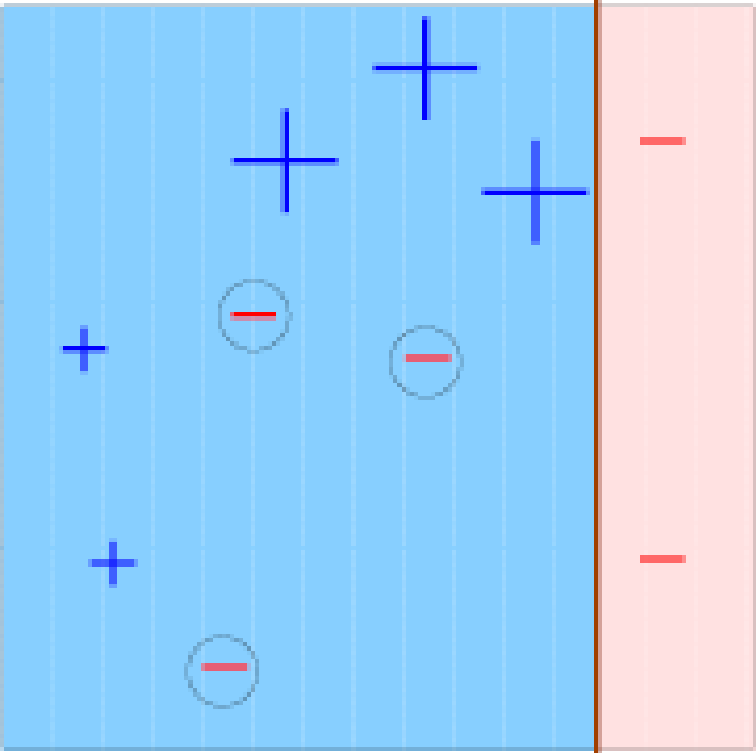
Question (Kearns): Can a Set of Weak Learners Create a Single Strong One?

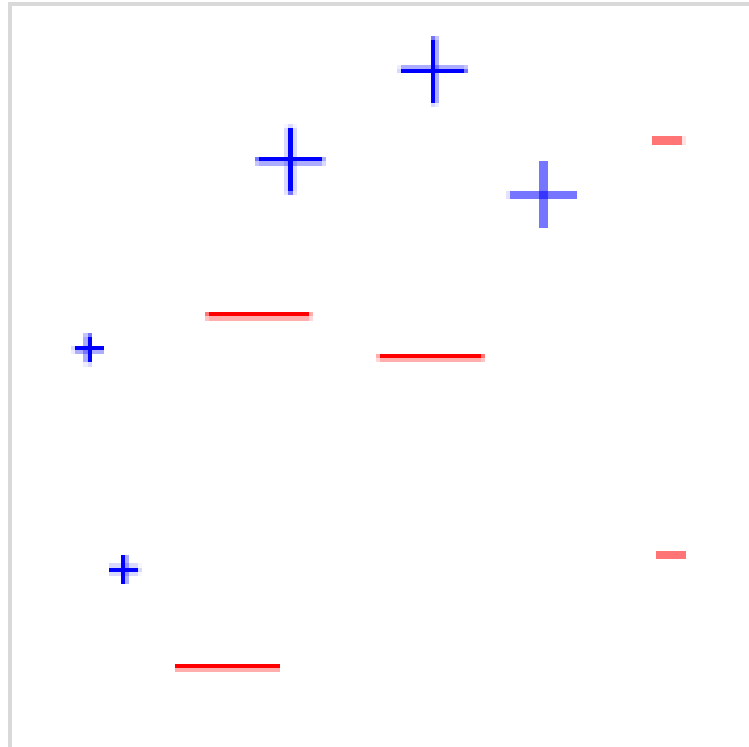
Answer: Yes, by *Boosting* Algorithms (e.g., [FS99])

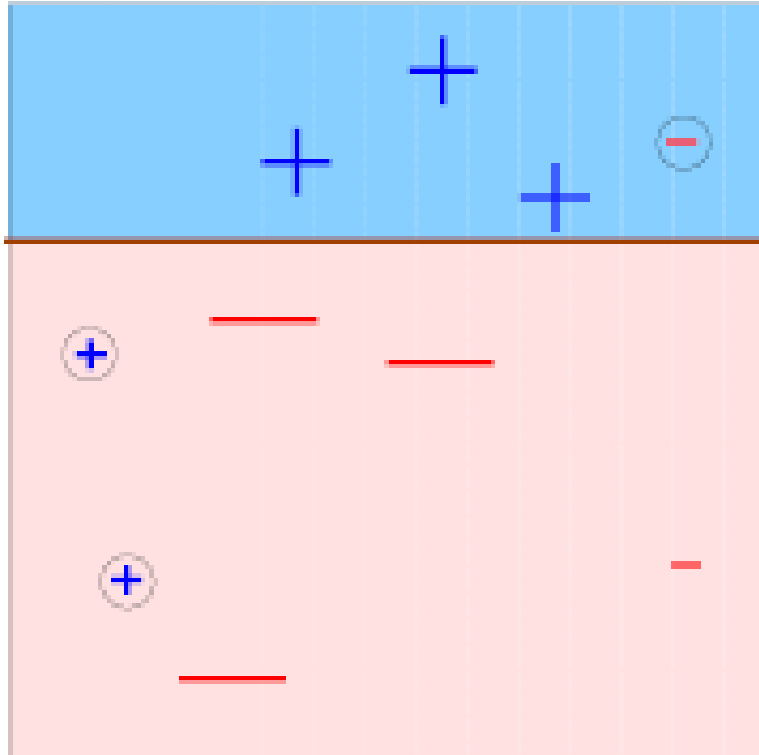


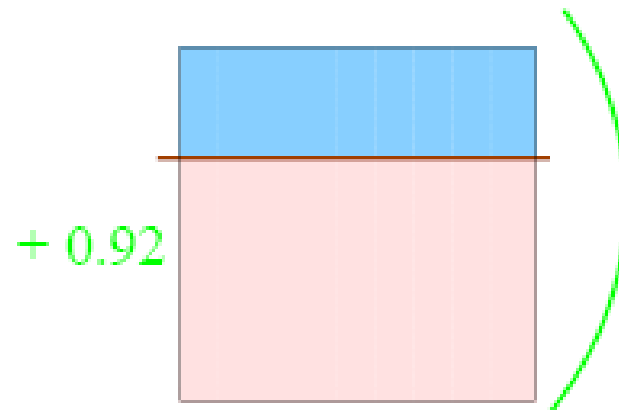
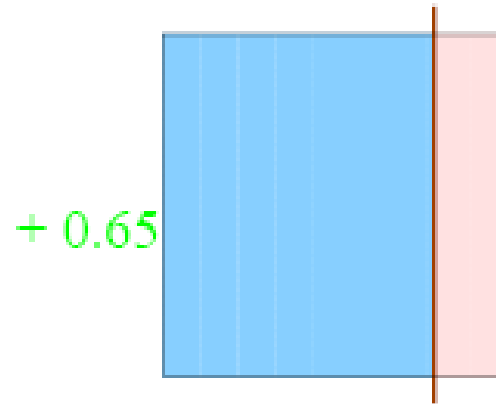
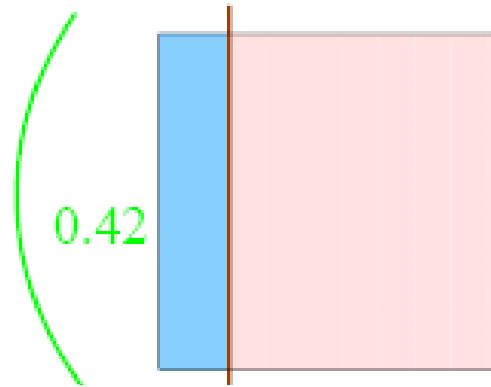


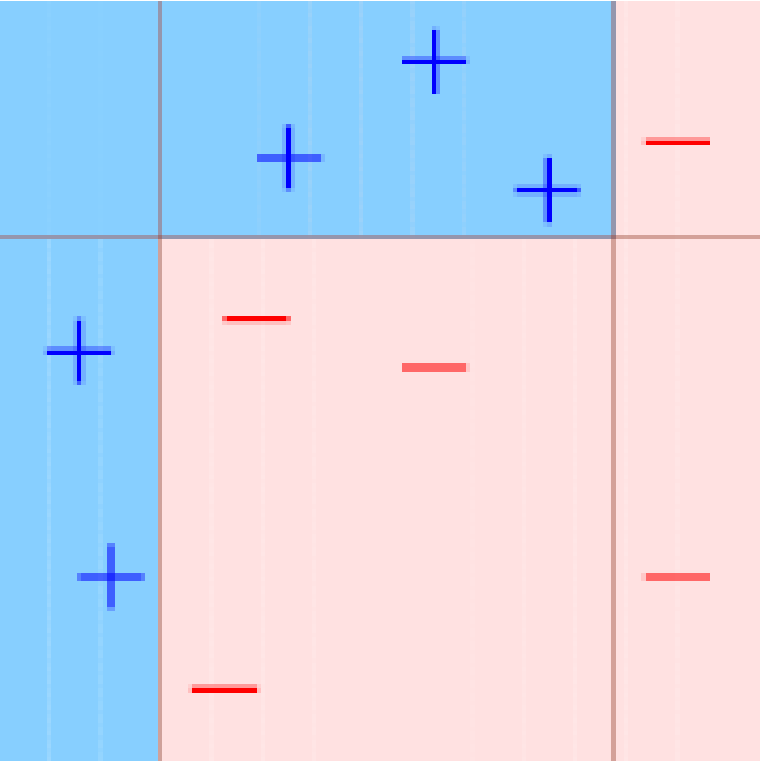








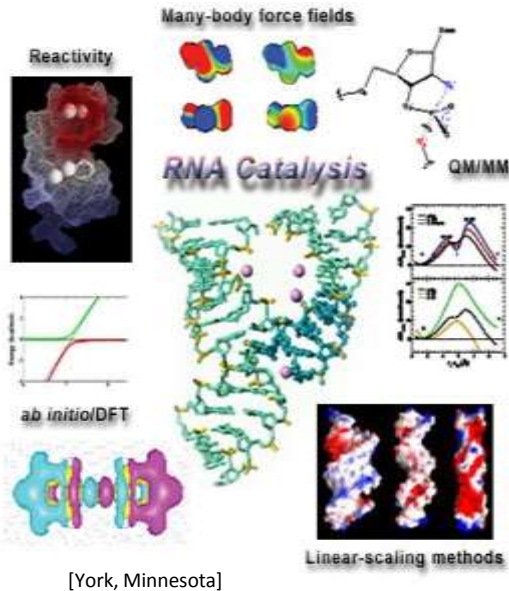




Computational Thinking in the Sciences and Beyond

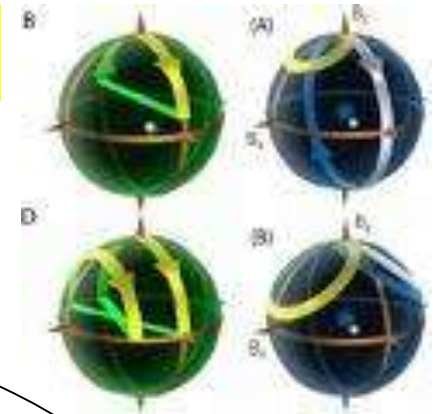
CT in Other Sciences

Chemistry



- Atomistic calculations are used to explore chemical phenomena
- Optimization and searching algorithms identify best chemicals for improving reaction conditions to improve yields

Physics



- Adiabatic quantum computing: How quickly is convergence?
- Genetic algorithms discover laws of physics.

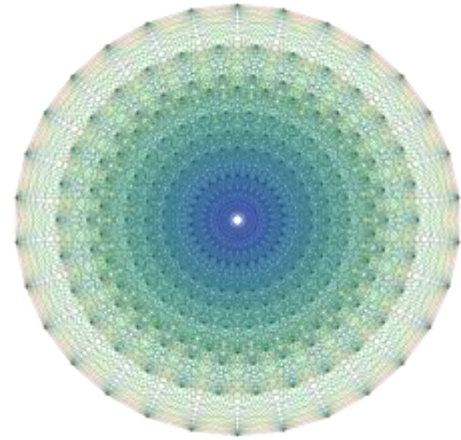
Geosciences

- Abstractions for Sky, Sea, Ice, Land, Life, People, etc.
 - Hierarchical, composable, modular, traceability, allowing multiple projections along any dimension, data element, or query
- Cornell's NSF Expedition on Computational Sustainability



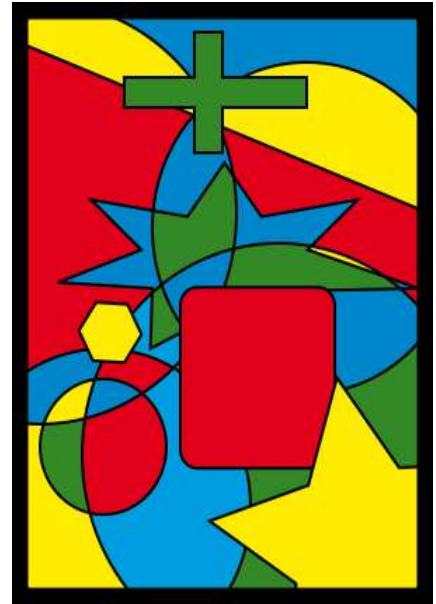
CT in Math and Engineering

Mathematics



Credit: Wikipedia

- Discovering E8 Lie Group:
18 mathematicians, 4 years and 77 hours of supercomputer time (200 billion numbers).
Profound implications for physics (string theory)
- Four-color theorem proof



Credit: Wikipedia

Engineering (electrical, civil, mechanical, aero & astro,...)

Credit: Boeing

- Calculating higher order terms implies more precision, which implies reducing weight, waste, costs in fabrication
- Boeing 777 tested via computer simulation alone, not in a wind tunnel
- Hybrid automata for modeling and analyzing cyber-physical systems



CT for Society

Microsoft Digital Advertising Solutions

Economics



- Automated mechanism design underlies electronic commerce, e.g., ad placement, on-line auctions, kidney exchange
- Internet marketplace requires revisiting Nash equilibria model
- Use intractability for voting schemes to circumvent impossibility results

- Inventions discovered through automated search are patentable
- Stanford CL approaches include AI, temporal logic, state machines, process algebras, Petri nets
- POIROT Project on fraud investigation is creating a detailed ontology of European law
- Sherlock Project on crime scene investigation

Law



Healthcare

- Algorithmic medicine
- Software design principles and debugging applied to prescriptions of painkillers
- ONC SHARP Program, NSF Smart Health and Wellness Program, NITRD Senior Steering Group on Health IT



CT for Society

Archaeology

- eHeritage Project, Microsoft Research Asia
- Digital Forma Urbis Romae Project, Stanford
- Cathedral Saint Pierre, Columbia
- metaLAB, Harvard



- Crowd sourcing as a new way of getting news tips from sources
- Algorithmic approach to validate credibility of sources
- Digital Media and Learning Initiative, MacArthur Foundation

Journalism



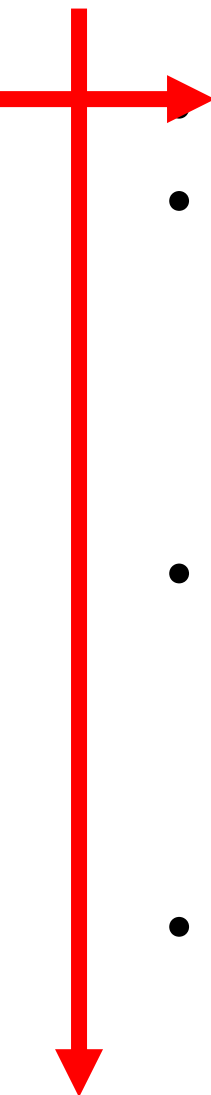
Humanities

- Digging into Data Challenge: What could you do with a million books?
Nat'l Endowment for the Humanities (US),
JISC (UK), SSHRC (Canada)
- Music, English, Art, Design, Photography, ...



Educational Implications

Pre-K to Grey



→ K-6, 7-9, 10-12

- Undergraduate courses
 - Freshmen year
 - “Ways to Think Like a Computer Scientist” aka Principles of Computing
 - Upper-level courses
- Graduate-level courses
 - Computational arts and sciences
 - E.g., entertainment technology, computational linguistics, ..., computational finance, ..., computational biology, computational astrophysics
- Post-graduate
 - Executive and continuing education, senior citizens
 - Teachers, not just students

Education Implications for K-12

Question and Challenge for the Computing Community:

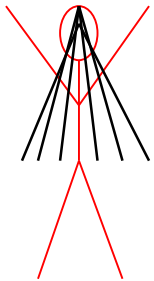
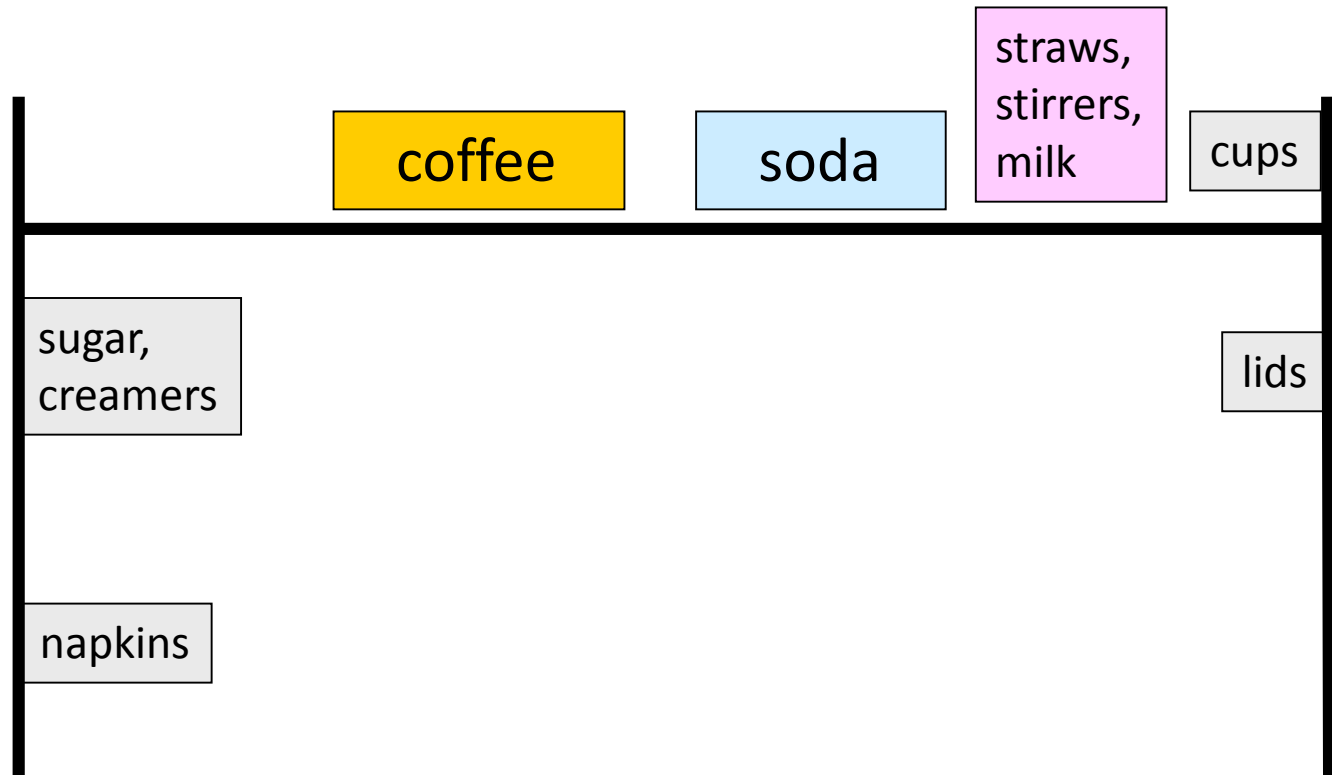
What is an effective way of learning (teaching) computational thinking by (to) K-12?

- What concepts can students (educators) best learn (teach) when?
What is our analogy to numbers in K, algebra in 7, and calculus in 12?
- We uniquely also should ask how best to integrate The Computer with teaching the concepts.

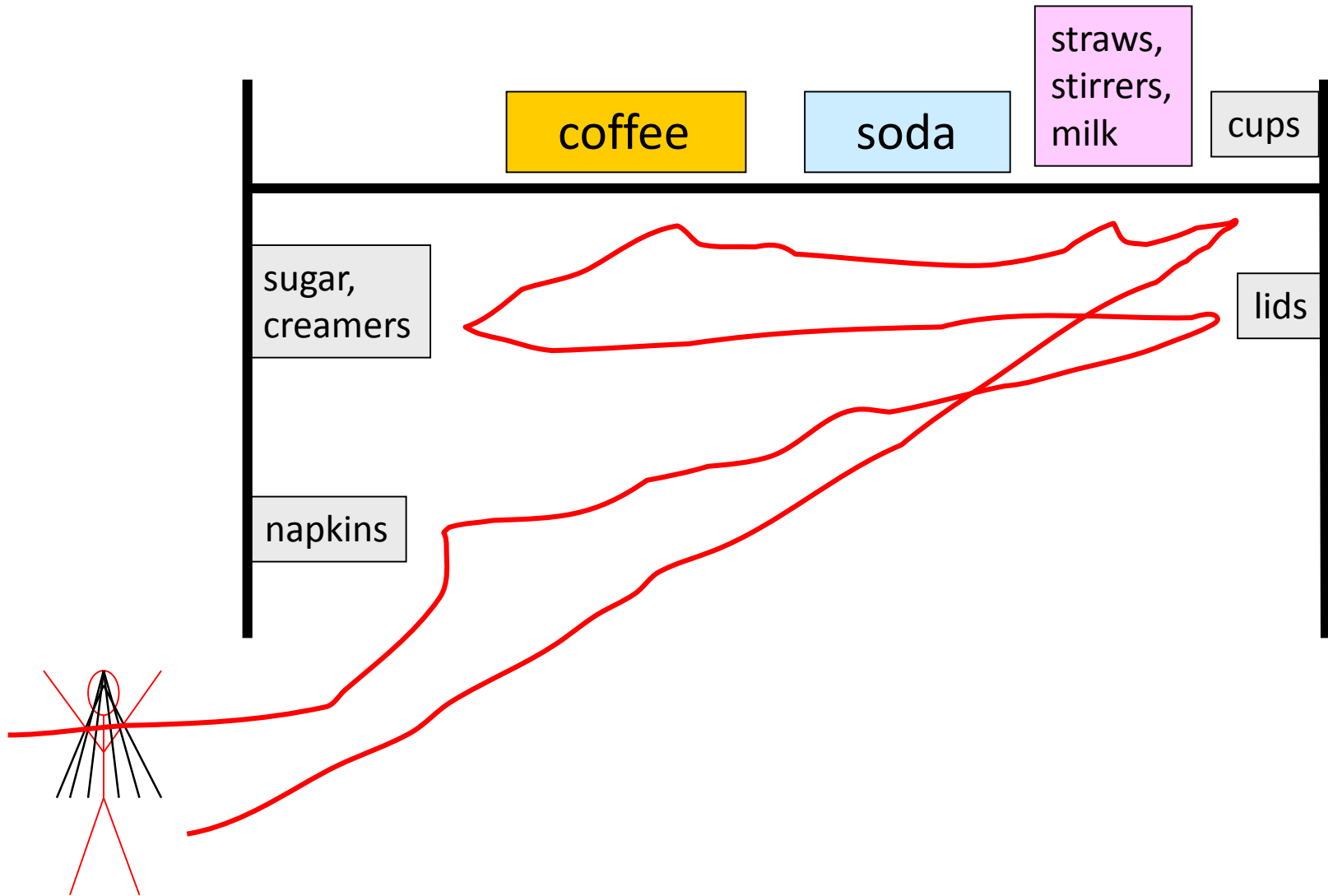
Computer scientists are now working with educators and cognitive learning scientists to address these questions.

Computational Thinking in Daily Life

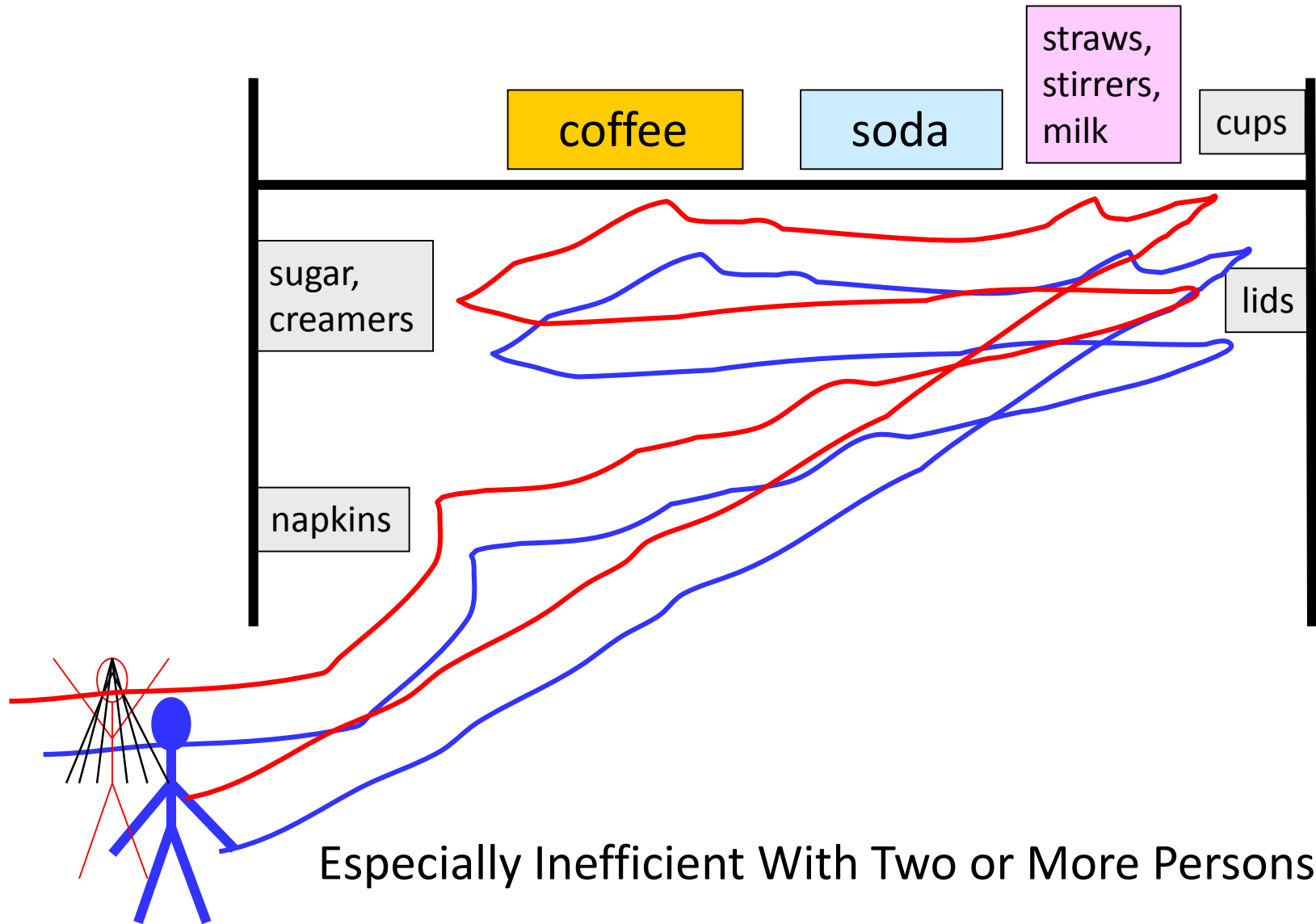
Getting Morning Coffee at the NSF Cafeteria



Getting Morning Coffee at the NSF Cafeteria

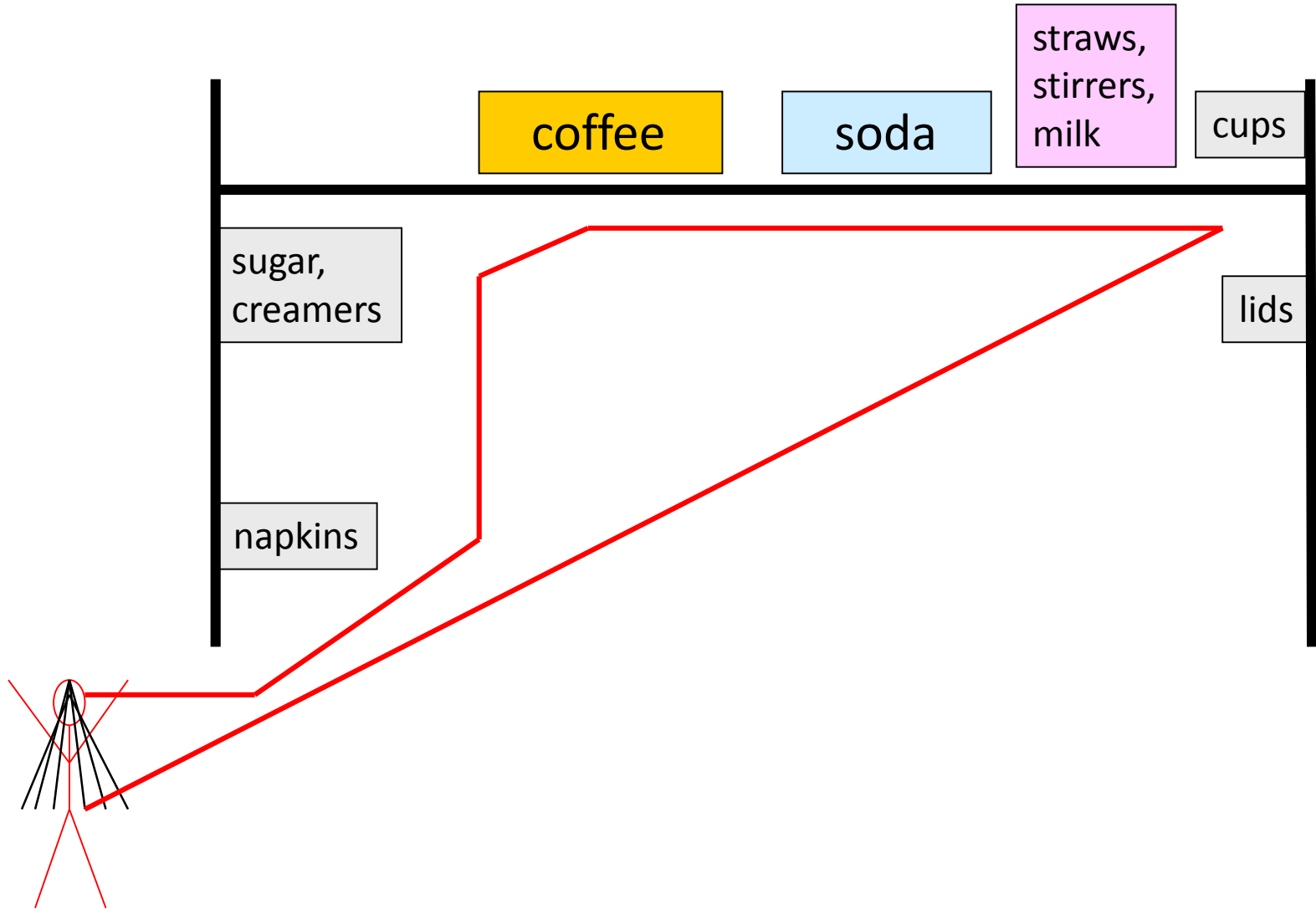


Getting Morning Coffee at the NSF Cafeteria



Especially Inefficient With Two or More Persons...

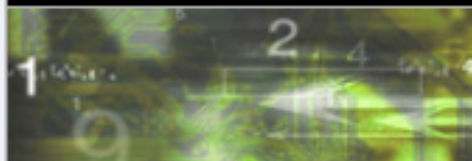
Better: Think Computationally—Pipelining!



Computational Thinking at NSF



Funding



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[NSF-wide](#)

Cyber-Enabled Discovery and Innovation (CDI)

CONTACTS

Name	Email	Phone	Room
...	...	(703) 253-2000	

Computational Thinking for Scientists and Engineers

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Proposals and Awards

[Proposal and Award Policies and Procedures Guide](#)

Introduction

Proposal Preparation and Submission

- [Grant Proposal Guide](#)
- [Grants.gov Application Guide](#)

Award and Administration

Drs. Misawa, Russell, and Whang are being assisted by a multidisciplinary team of Program Officers drawn from throughout NSF. CDI team members include: Kile Baker (GEO/ATM), Beverly Berger (MPS/PHY), Maria Burka (ENG/CBET), William Chang (OD/OISE), John Cherniavsky (EHR/OAD), Fahmida Chowdhury (SBE/OAD), Arlene Garrison (OD/OIA), Ping Ge (EHR/DGE), Anita La Salle (CISE/CNS), Dan Lubin (OD/OPP), Manish Parashar (OD/OCI), David Rockcliffe (BIO/MCB), Nigel Sharp (MPS/AST), Carl Taylor (BIO/DBI), Rita Teutonico (SBE/OAD), Susan Winter (OD/OCI), William Wiseman (OD/OPP), and Eva Zanzerkia (GEO/EAR).

FY08 \$48M, FY11 Budget Request \$100M

Solicitation [10-506](#)

SYNOPSIS

Cyber-Enabled Discovery and Innovation (CDI) is NSF's bold five-year initiative to create *revolutionary* science and engineering research outcomes made possible by innovations and advances in computational thinking. Computational thinking is defined comprehensively to encompass computational concepts, methods, models, algorithms, and tools. Applied in challenging science and engineering research and education contexts, computational thinking promises a profound impact on the Nation's scientific and engineering knowledge. Collectively,

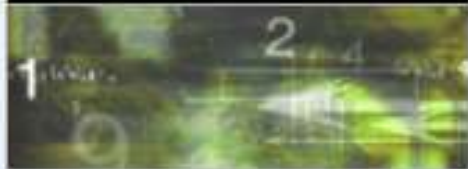
Range of Disciplines in CDI Awards in Inaugural Year (FY08)

- Aerospace engineering
- Astrophysics and cosmology
- Atmospheric sciences
- Biochemistry
- Biomaterials
- Biophysics
- Chemical engineering
- Civil engineering
- Communications science and engineering
- Computer science
- Cosmology
- Ecosystems
- Genomics
- Geosciences
- Linguistics
- Materials engineering
- Mathematics
- Mechanical engineering
- Molecular biology
- Nanocomputing
- Neuroscience
- Proteomics
- Robotics
- Social sciences
- Statistics
- Statistical physics
- Sustainability
- ...

... advances via Computational Thinking



Funding



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[Division of Computer and Network Systems](#)

Computing Education for the 21st Century (CE21)

CONTACTS

Name	Email	Phone	Room
Janice Cuny	jcuny@nsf.gov	(703) 292-8489	1175
Jim Hamos	jhamos@nsf.gov	(703)-292-4687	835N
Joan Peckham	jpeckham@nsf.gov	(703) 292-8970	1160

PROGRAM GUIDELINES

“to develop competencies in computational thinking”

Full Proposal Target Date: February 22, 2011
Planning proposals ONLY.
Last Tuesday in February, Annually Thereafter

Full Proposal Deadline Date: April 27, 2011
Type I and Type II proposals ONLY
Last Wednesday in April, Annually Thereafter

Full Proposal Target Date: July 28, 2011
Planning proposals ONLY.
Last Thursday in July, Annually Thereafter

SYNOPSIS

Computational Thinking in Education

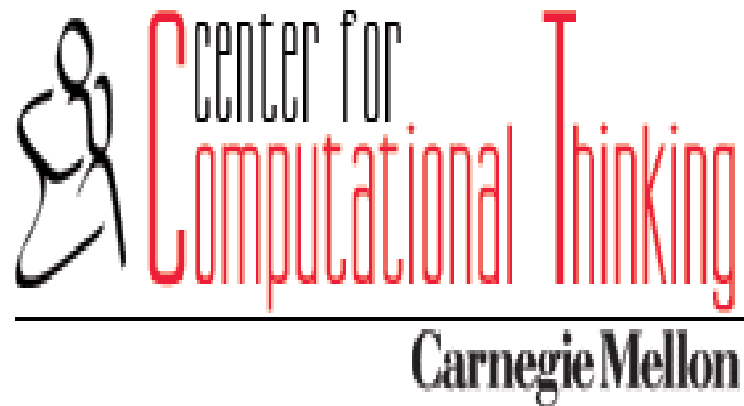
CMU and Other Colleges and Universities

- CMU: Redesign of Intro Courses

“15-110: Principles of Computer Science. An introduction to computer science, based on the **principles of computational thinking**. Many taking this course will be nonmajors, but we will also use it as the entry point for any entering student with limited programming experience.” [Bryant, Stehlik, Sutner, Introductory Computer Science Education at Carnegie Mellon University: A Deans’ Perspective, CMU-CS-10-140, August 2010]

- Examples: Brown, Bryn Mawr, Colorado State University, Columbia, Eastern Michigan University, Georgetown, Georgia Tech, Harvard, Haverford, Harvey Mudd, Kent State, MIT, Northwestern, Princeton, Rochester Institute of Technology, St Joseph’s U, U of Alabama-Birmingham, U of Florida, UNC-Charlotte, U of Puerto Rico, UTexas-Arlington, University of Waterloo, U of Wisconsin-La Crosse, Vanderbilt, Villanova, William & Mary,...

Industry Support



Sponsored by
Microsoft
Research

Google Computer Science for High School

CS 4 HS
WASHINGTON

Carnegie Mellon | SCHOOL OF COMPUTER SCIENCE



Explorations in Computer Science for High School Educators

Google Exploring Computational Thinking

<http://www.google.com/edu/computational-thinking/index.html>

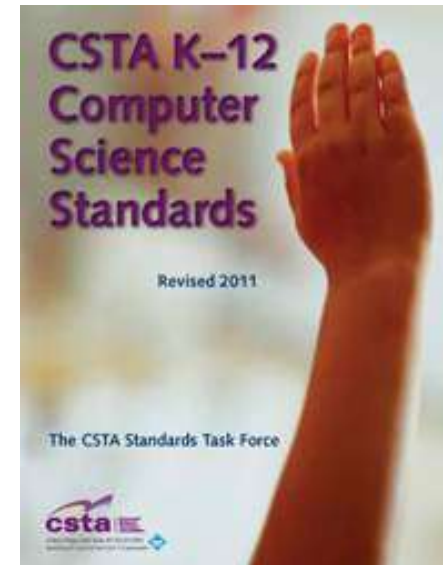
Wealth of links to further web resources, including lesson plans for K-12 teachers in science and mathematics.

US National Efforts

High School



CS Principles: <http://csprinciples.org>
- With NSF support, revision of CS AP courses



K-12



<http://www.csta.acm.org/>

- *Computational Thinking Resource Set: A Problem-Solving Tool for Every Classroom*
- K-12 Computer Science Standards

CSTB Reports:

[The Report of a Workshop on Pedagogical Aspects of Computational Thinking](#) 2011

[Report of a Workshop on the Scope and Nature of Computational Thinking](#) 2010



Congress

Computer Science Education Act ([H.R.5929](#)) 2010

- proposed by PA Senator Casey and CO Representative Polis.



International Efforts

United Kingdom

UK Research Assessment (2009):

The Computer Science and Informatics panel said
“Computational thinking is influencing all disciplines...”

British Royal Society (2012): *Shut down or restart? report*

“Computational thinking” offers insightful ways to view how information operates in many natural and engineered systems.

...

3. Every child should have the opportunity to learn Computing at school. We believe that:

- Every child should be expected to be ‘digitally literate’ by the end of compulsory education, in the same way that every child is expected to be able to read and write. “



Ireland



Computational Thinking
Uniting Computer Science, Mathematics & Philosophy



National University of Ireland Maynooth
[B.Sc. in Computational Thinking](#)

International Efforts

Europe



Heidelberg Institute for
Theoretical Studies



University of
Zurich ^{UZH}



Asia

Computer Science (CS) Reloaded Programme

“...aims to deliver enrichment courses to pre-tertiary students to deepen their infocomm skills by supporting course fees for students to take up computer science courses anchored in **computational thinking**.”



COMMONCORE
The University of Hong Kong

[毕业论文, 职称论文, 核心, EI论文发表](#) QQ:790062161

Computational thinking and computer fundamental education

Latin America

Investigación Información Innovación

- ▶ Buscadores
- ▶ Calendario
- ▶ Intranet
- ▶ Idiomas



Middle East


<http://ctegypt.blogspot.com/>

Computational Thinking in Egypt

Computational Thinking, International

计算思维

周以真



计算思维代表着一种普遍的认识和一类普适的技能，每一个人，而不仅仅是计算机科学家，都应热心于它的学习和运用。

计

算思维建立在计算过程的能力和限制之上，由人由机器执行。计算方法和模型使我们敢于去处
一步问：一个近似解是否就足够了，是否可以利用一下随机化、以及是否允许误报 (false)
In Bulletin of Specif, December 2008

La pensée informatique

par Jeannette M. Wing

Cet article fait suite aux divers interviews que nous avons faits et qui nous invitaient à une réflexion sur les fondements de notre discipline et ses aspects philosophiques et épistémologiques. Aujourd'hui l'article de Jeannette Wing nous conduit à réfléchir sur l'utilité et l'ubiquité de la pensée informatique et ses implications, mais aussi sur l'essence même de cette pensée.

Spread the Word

- Help make computational thinking commonplace!

To fellow faculty, students, researchers, administrators,
teachers, parents, principals, guidance counselors, school
boards, teachers' unions,
congressmen, policy makers, ...

Thank you!

References (Representative Only)

- Computational Thinking
 - University of Edinburgh, <http://www.inf.ed.ac.uk/research/programmes/comp-think/>
 - [Wing06] J.M. Wing, “Computational Thinking,” *CACM Viewpoint*, March 2006, pp. 33-35, <http://www.cs.cmu.edu/~wing/>
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Computational Thinking, in Summary

- Computational thinking is the *thought processes* involved in formulating problems and expressing its solution as transformations to information that an agent can effectively carry out. [Cuny, Snyder, Wing]