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A probabilistic algorithm for gene-species reconciliation with segmental duplications

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Guttmann 2025

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INTRODUCTION	N			

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INTRODUCTIO	N			

The first genome sequencing (completed 2003) took \$3 billion and 13 years. Nowadays, a human genome can be sequenced for \$500 in a few days.

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INTRODUCTIO	N			

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Modern human genomic databases (such as the UK Biobank) contain full genomes of 500,000 individuals.

This hugely increasing amount of information requires sophisticated and efficient mathematical methods for its analysis.

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INTRODUCTIO	N			

In phylogenetics, we study the evolutionary history of species and how they relate to each other.

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It is thought that all species are descended from a single prehistoric species, but we are not yet able to analyse all 8.7 million species at once.

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INTRODUCTIO	N			

In phylogenetics, we study the evolutionary history of species and how they relate to each other.

It is thought that all species are descended from a single prehistoric species, but we are not yet able to analyse all 8.7 million species at once.

Instead, we concentrate on a species family — a group of species that are (supposedly) descendants of a common ancestor.

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PHYLOGENIES	000000000	000000	000000	00

The evolution of a species family is depicted by a phylogeny or phylogenetic tree.

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PHYLOGENIES				

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PHYLOGENIES				



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PHYLOGENIES				



In a phylogenetic tree:

• Leaves represent existing species;

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PHYLOGENIES				



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- Internal nodes represent (hypothetical) ancestors;

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PHYLOGENIES				



In a phylogenetic tree:

- Leaves represent existing species;
- Internal nodes represent (hypothetical) ancestors;
- Branch lengths represent the times that these ancestors existed.

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Phylogeny in	IFERENCE			

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Phylogeny in	NFERENCE			

These days, we look at differences between the genomes of the species.

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Phylogeny II	NFERENCE			

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Mouse	CTGCGATTACACCGGAGTCGACCTAG
Dog	CTGCTATTACCCGGGAGTAGACCTAG
Bat	ATTCAATGACATTGGGATTACCCTAG
Rat	ATTCCATGACATTCGCTAGCGTCTAG

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Modern-day methods maximise the phylogeny likelihood according to stochastic models of sequence evolution.

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GENES				

Genomes can be subdivided into thousands of smaller sequences with specific functions — genes.

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Like species, genes evolve through time and we can depict evolutionary relationships between them.

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Genes				

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We consider gene families, and construct their gene phylogenies, using methods similar to those for species trees.

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GENE AND SPECIES PHYLOGENIES				

Gene and species trees can be very similar — when a species diverges into two (speciation), this will also create two new genes.

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GENE AND SPE	CIES PHYLOGENIE	ES		

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As such, gene phylogenies are often used in methods to construct or improve species phylogenies.

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GENE AND SPE	CIES PHYLOGENIE	S		

Gene and species trees can be very similar — when a species diverges into two (speciation), this will also create two new genes.

As such, gene phylogenies are often used in methods to construct or improve species phylogenies.

But gene trees can differ significantly from their species tree!





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GENETIC EVOLUTIONARY EVENTS				

Introduction	Reconciliations	The algorithm	Results	Conclusion
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GENETIC EVOLUTIONARY EVENTS				

- Duplications;
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GENETIC EVOLUTIONARY EVENTS				

- Duplications;
- Losses;
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- Duplications;
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GENETIC EVOLUTIONARY EVENTS				

- Duplications;
- Losses;
- Lateral genetic transfer;
- Incomplete lineage sorting (ILS).



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RECONCILIATI	ONS			

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RECONCILIATI	ONS			

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Reconciliati	ONS			

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PARSIMONY VS PROBABILISTIC METHODS				

There are two main paradigms for finding (the best) reconciliation:
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PARSIMONY VS PROBABILISTIC METHODS				

• Parsimony assigns a cost to each event and minimises the total cost.

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PARSIMONY VS PROBABILISTIC METHOD				

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PARSIMONY VS	PROBABILISTIC N	IETHODS		

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• Probabilistic methods search for the maximum-likelihood reconciliation under a probabilistic model of gene evolution within species.

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This is fast, but less realistic.

• Probabilistic methods search for the maximum-likelihood reconciliation under a probabilistic model of gene evolution within species.

This is more realistic, but slower.

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Parsimony				

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PARSIMONY				

Including other events makes the problem harder, but sometimes still solvable.

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Parsimony				

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For example, the DTL model (DL with transfers) can be solved in polynomial time with dynamic programming.

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Parsimony				

Including other events makes the problem harder, but sometimes still solvable.

For example, the DTL model (DL with transfers) can be solved in polynomial time with dynamic programming.

However, more complicated models can be (NP-)hard to optimise.

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SEGMENTAL I	DUPLICATIONS			

Traditionally, gene trees are reconciled to species trees independently.

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Segmentai	L DUPLICATIONS			

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However, they are not independent: when genes are adjacent to each other on the chromosome, segmental duplications can occur which affect many genes at once.

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Segmental	DUPLICATIONS			

Traditionally, gene trees are reconciled to species trees independently.

However, they are not independent: when genes are adjacent to each other on the chromosome, segmental duplications can occur which affect many genes at once.

This can go up to whole genome duplications.

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Segmental D	UPLICATIONS			



Problem (Most parsimonious reconciliation, MPR)

Given gene trees G*, a species tree* S*, duplication cost* δ *, and loss cost* λ *, find the reconciliation* α *that minimises*

 $c_{SD}(\alpha) := \delta \cdot d_{SD}(\alpha) + \lambda \cdot l(\alpha).$



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Dondi *et al.* (2019) studied this problem and gave an algorithm that was exponential in the number of genes, with a base of $\lfloor \frac{\delta}{\lambda} \rfloor$.



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The Boltzma	NN DISTRIBUTION			



For a reconciliation α with cost $c_{SD}(\alpha)$, we set its probability to be:

 $P(\alpha) \propto e^{-c_{SD}(\alpha)/kT},$

where k is Boltzmann's constant and T is a temperature parameter.



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This is the well-known Boltzmann distribution from statistical mechanics.

There are known to be a lot of reconciliations for given gene and species trees, so calculating the normalising constant is hard.



By changing the temperature, we can access different parts of the reconciliation space.



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When the temperature is high, reconciliations occur with (near-)uniform probability.



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When the temperature is high, reconciliations occur with (near-)uniform probability.

When the temperature is low, cheaper reconciliations are much more probable and we almost always get (near-)optimal reconciliations.

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SAMPLING FRC	M THE BOLTZMAN	IN DISTRIBUTION		

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SAMPLING FRO	m the Boltzman	IN DISTRIBUTION		

The new position of the node is resampled from its conditional distribution based on the rest of the reconciliation.

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SAMPLING FRO	M THE BOLTZMAN	IN DISTRIBUTION		

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This only depends on the relative costs of the reconciliations (and not on the normalising factor!).

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SAMPLING FRO	m the Boltzman	IN DISTRIBUTION		

The new position of the node is resampled from its conditional distribution based on the rest of the reconciliation.

This only depends on the relative costs of the reconciliations (and not on the normalising factor!).

Thus each move can be performed very quickly — O(1) time!

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GIBBS SAMPLIN	IC			



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SIMULATED AN	INEALING			

To produce an optimal reconciliation, we start at a high temperature to access all parts of the reconciliation space.

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SIMULATED A	NNEALING			

To produce an optimal reconciliation, we start at a high temperature to access all parts of the reconciliation space.

Then we slowly lower the temperature to (near-)zero.

Introduction	Reconciliations	The algorithm	Results	Conclusion
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SIMULATED A	NNEALING			

To produce an optimal reconciliation, we start at a high temperature to access all parts of the reconciliation space.

Then we slowly lower the temperature to (near-)zero.

This will produce an optimal reconciliation with probability approaching 1.

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THE ALGORITH	IM			

1: Set α to be the LCA mapping from \mathcal{G} to S

2: **for**
$$t = 1, ..., t_{\max}$$
 do
3: $T \leftarrow T_0 \left(1 - \frac{t-1}{t_{\max}}\right)$
4: **for** each internal vertex u of \mathcal{G} in a fixed order **do**
5: set M_u to the set of all possible images of u
6: **for** each image m in M_u **do**
7: set α_m to be α with the image of u set to m
8: calculate $c_{SD}(\alpha_m)$
9: **end for**

- 10: resample $\alpha(u)$ from $m \in M_u$ with probability $\propto e^{-c_{SD}(\alpha_m)/kT}$
- 11: end for
- 12: end for

13: return α

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SIMULATIONS				

We simulate 50 gene trees over 20 species.
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SIMULATIONS				

Species trees are generated by a pure birth process with birth rate 1.

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SIMULATIONS				

Species trees are generated by a pure birth process with birth rate 1.

Gene trees start with a single copy, then:

• Each lineage duplicates with rate *r*_{*B*};

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SIMULATIONS				

Species trees are generated by a pure birth process with birth rate 1.

Gene trees start with a single copy, then:

- Each lineage duplicates with rate *r*_{*B*};
- A duplication is segmental with probability 0.5 for each contemporary lineage;

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- Each lineage duplicates with rate *r*_{*B*};
- A duplication is segmental with probability 0.5 for each contemporary lineage;
- At each speciation, one lineage is lost with probability 0.5.

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SIMULATIONS				

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- A duplication is segmental with probability 0.5 for each contemporary lineage;
- At each speciation, one lineage is lost with probability 0.5.

We infer reconciliations with $\delta = 10$, $\lambda = 1$ (a challenging scenario) and compare our algorithm to MultRec (Dondi *et al.* 2019).

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SIMULATIC	ON RESULTS			



(a) Relative cost of segdup vs MultRec



(b) Frequencies of segdup vs MultRec





(a) Relative cost of segdup vs MultRec

(b) Frequencies of segdup vs MultRec

segdup consistently finds a better reconciliation on average than MultRec, for 10^5 iterations. For 10^4 iterations, it is slightly worse for high duplication rate.





(a) Relative cost of segdup vs MultRec

(b) Frequencies of segdup vs MultRec

<code>segdup</code> and MultRec often find the same (optimal) reconciliation. When they disagree, <code>segdup</code> usually does better for 10^5 iterations.

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SIMULATION	J RESULTS			



(b) Relative cost of segdup vs true reconciliation

10⁴ iterations
10⁵ iterations





segdup is slower than MultRec for low duplication rate, but this changes as the duplication rate increases.





segdup always finds a slightly better reconciliation than the true scenario.

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GUIGÓ et al. TI	REES			

We re-analysed a real dataset of 53 gene trees over a species tree of 16 eukaryotes (Guigó *et al.* 1996).

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GUIGÓ et al. TR	REES			

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GUIGÓ et al. TR	REES			

We re-analysed a real dataset of 53 gene trees over a species tree of 16 eukaryotes (Guigó *et al.* 1996).



Previous analysis for $\delta = 50$, $\lambda = 1$ found 5 segmental duplications (black circles), including one above the Tetrapoda clade (marked *T*).

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Guigó <i>et al.</i> tr	REES			

segdup finds either the MPR (468 losses) or a near-optimal reconciliation with 469 losses.

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Guigó <i>et al.</i> tr	REES			

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In the second reconciliation, the duplication at the Tetrapoda clade is one branch higher.

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Guigó <i>et al.</i> tr	REES			

segdup finds either the MPR (468 losses) or a near-optimal reconciliation with 469 losses.

In the second reconciliation, the duplication at the Tetrapoda clade is one branch higher.

These two solutions are close in terms of cost, but are not easy to obtain from each other.

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GUIGÓ et al. TR	EES			

To explore this further, we study the relative occurences of these duplications for varying temperatures.

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GUIGÓ et al.	TREES			

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GUIGÓ et al.	TREES			

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Both these duplications are feasible, but the Boltzmann distribution favours the higher duplication.

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SUMMARY AND	D FUTURE WORK			

• We have developed an algorithm to solve the MPR problem for segmental duplications.

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Introduction	Reconciliations	The algorithm	Results	Conclusion
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SUMMARY ANI	O FUTURE WORK			

- We have developed an algorithm to solve the MPR problem for segmental duplications.
- This algorithm outperforms the current methods in simulations.

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SUMMARY ANI	D FUTURE WORK			

- We have developed an algorithm to solve the MPR problem for segmental duplications.
- This algorithm outperforms the current methods in simulations.
- By imposing a Boltzmann distribution, we can study the space of reconciliations instead of a single MPR.

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SUMMARY ANI	O FUTURE WORK			

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- This algorithm combines the speed of a probabilistic algorithm with the accuracy of a parsimonious method.

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- By imposing a Boltzmann distribution, we can study the space of reconciliations instead of a single MPR.
- This algorithm combines the speed of a probabilistic algorithm with the accuracy of a parsimonious method provides a new way to attack NP-hard reconciliation problems.
- This could be applied to many problems where gene (subtree) dependence prevents standard dynamic programming approaches.

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