

Computing Elementary Vectors over Integral Domains

Marcus S. Aichmayr

aichmayr@mathematik.uni-kassel.de

joint work with Georg Regensburger

Algorithmic Algebra and Discrete Mathematics
University of Kassel

June 3rd, 2025

U N I K A S S E L
V E R S I T Ä T

Motivation

Elementary vectors? → Support-minimal vectors

Applications

- Linear inequality systems
- Division-free kernel matrix
- Sparse basis problem
- Oriented & Linear matroids
- Reaction networks
- ...

Elementary vectors (EVs)

- Integral domain $\mathcal{R}$

- For $x \in \mathcal{R}^n$,

$$\text{supp } x = \{i \in [n] : x_i \neq 0\}.$$

$$[n] = \{1, \dots, n\}$$

- Subspace $\mathcal{V}$ (of $\mathcal{R}^n$)

$$\text{supp} \begin{pmatrix} 1 \\ 0 \\ -2 \end{pmatrix} = \{1, 3\}$$

Definition

$v \in \mathcal{V} \setminus \{0\}$ is **EV** (of $\mathcal{V}$) if for all $x \in \mathcal{V} \setminus \{0\}$,

$$\text{supp } x \subseteq \text{supp } v \implies \text{supp } x = \text{supp } v.$$

→ **Unique** up to multiples

- EVs with $\text{supp } x = \text{supp } y \rightarrow x, y$ multiples
- **Finitely many!**

- **Computation?** → Maximal minors

Maximal minors

$$P = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 2 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 & 2 & 3 \end{pmatrix} \rightarrow \det \begin{pmatrix} 2 & 0 \\ 1 & 2 \end{pmatrix} = 4 = P(\{2, 3\})$$

- $P = (p_1, \dots, p_n) \in \mathcal{R}^{d \times n}$
- $J = \{j_1, \dots, j_d\} \subseteq [n]$ with $j_1 < \dots < j_d$
- Maximal minor:

$$P(J) = \det(p_{j_1}, \dots, p_{j_d})$$

→ Compute EVs!

J	$P(J)$
$\{1, 2\}$	1
$\{1, 3\}$	2
$\{1, 4\}$	3
$\{2, 3\}$	4
$\{2, 4\}$	6
$\{3, 4\}$	0

Computing EVs

- $P \in \mathcal{R}^{d \times n}$ with rank d
- $\varepsilon(i) = \pm 1$

Theorem

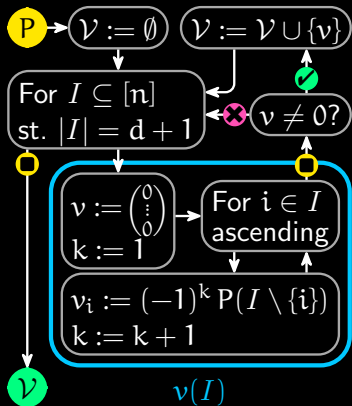
For $I \subseteq [n]$ with $|I| = d + 1$, $v \in \mathcal{R}^n$:

$$v_i = \begin{cases} \varepsilon(i) P(I \setminus \{i\}), & \text{if } i \in I, \\ 0, & \text{else.} \end{cases}$$

If $v \neq 0$, then $v \in \ker P$ is EV.

→ $v(I)$

- How many? → $\binom{n}{d+1}$ Finite!



$$P = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 2 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 & 2 & 3 \end{pmatrix} \quad v(I) \left| \begin{array}{c|c|c|c} I & \{1,2,3\} & \{1,2,4\} & \{1,3,4\} & \{2,3,4\} \\ \hline \begin{pmatrix} 4 \\ -2 \\ 1 \\ 0 \end{pmatrix} & \begin{pmatrix} 6 \\ -3 \\ 0 \\ 1 \end{pmatrix} & \begin{pmatrix} 0 \\ 0 \\ -3 \\ 2 \end{pmatrix} & \begin{pmatrix} 0 \\ 0 \\ 0 \\ -6 \\ 4 \end{pmatrix} \end{array} \right.$$

J	$P(J)$
$\{1,2\}$	1
$\{1,3\}$	2
$\{1,4\}$	3
$\{2,3\}$	4
$\{2,4\}$	6
$\{3,4\}$	0

Parameters

- $P = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 2 & a & 0 \\ 0 & 1 & 2 & b \end{pmatrix}$

- $a, b \in \mathbb{Z}$

I	$v(I)$	$b = 0$	$a = 4$ $b = 0$
$\{1, 2, 3\}$	$\begin{pmatrix} 4-a \\ -2 \\ 1 \\ 0 \end{pmatrix}$	$\begin{pmatrix} 4-a \\ -2 \\ 1 \\ 0 \end{pmatrix}$	$\begin{pmatrix} 0 \\ -2 \\ 1 \\ 0 \end{pmatrix}$
$\{1, 2, 4\}$	$\begin{pmatrix} 2b \\ -b \\ 0 \\ 1 \end{pmatrix}$	$\begin{pmatrix} 0 \\ 0 \\ 0 \\ 1 \end{pmatrix}$	$\begin{pmatrix} 0 \\ 0 \\ 0 \\ 1 \end{pmatrix}$
$\{1, 3, 4\}$	$\begin{pmatrix} ab \\ 0 \\ -b \\ 2 \end{pmatrix}$	$\begin{pmatrix} 0 \\ 0 \\ 0 \\ 2 \end{pmatrix}$	$\begin{pmatrix} 0 \\ 0 \\ 0 \\ 2 \end{pmatrix}$
$\{2, 3, 4\}$	$\begin{pmatrix} 0 \\ ab \\ -2b \\ 4-a \end{pmatrix}$	$\begin{pmatrix} 0 \\ 0 \\ 0 \\ 4-a \end{pmatrix}$	$\begin{pmatrix} 0 \\ 0 \\ 0 \\ 0 \end{pmatrix}$

J	$P(J)$	$b = 0$	$a = 4$ $b = 0$
$\{1, 2\}$	1	1	1
$\{1, 3\}$	2	2	2
$\{1, 4\}$	b	0	0
$\{2, 3\}$	$4 - a$	$4 - a$	0
$\{2, 4\}$	$2b$	0	0
$\{3, 4\}$	ab	0	0

→ Ring of matrix entries

- Algebraic numbers $\overline{\mathbb{Q}}$
- Field extensions $\mathbb{Q}(\sqrt{2})$
- Polynomial rings

- Prevent multiples?

→ Zero minors!

EVs sharing a maximal minor

$$P = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 2 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 & 2 & 3 \end{pmatrix}$$

- $P \in \mathcal{R}^{d \times n}$ with rank d
- For $J \subseteq [n]$ with $|J| = d$,

$$\mathcal{V}(J) = \{v(J \cup \{i\}) : i \notin J\} \subseteq \ker P.$$

J	$P(J)$
$\{1, 2\}$	1
$\{1, 3\}$	2
$\{1, 4\}$	3
$\{2, 3\}$	4
$\{2, 4\}$	6
$\{3, 4\}$	0

$$P(J) \neq 0$$

- $\mathcal{V}(J)$ linearly independent
- $P(\{1, 3\}) = 2 \neq 0$

$$I \left| \begin{array}{c|c} \{1, 2, 3\} & \{1, 3, 4\} \\ \hline \begin{pmatrix} 4 \\ -2 \\ 1 \\ 0 \end{pmatrix} & \begin{pmatrix} 0 \\ 0 \\ -3 \\ 2 \end{pmatrix} \end{array} \right.$$

- Sparse basis of $\ker P$
- Division-free kernel matrix

$$P(J) = 0$$

- $\mathcal{V}(J)$ multiples
- $P(\{3, 4\}) = 0$

$$I \left| \begin{array}{c|c} \{1, 3, 4\} & \{2, 3, 4\} \\ \hline \begin{pmatrix} 0 \\ 0 \\ -3 \\ 2 \end{pmatrix} & \begin{pmatrix} 0 \\ 0 \\ -6 \\ 4 \end{pmatrix} \end{array} \right.$$

- Prevent multiples!
 - Algorithm? → GP identity

Grassmann-Plücker identity

- $P \in \mathcal{R}^{d \times n}$

Theorem

$K, I \subseteq [n]$ with $|K| = d - 1$ and $|I| = d + 1$. Then,

$$\sum_{i \in I \setminus K} \varepsilon(i) P(K \cup \{i\}) P(I \setminus \{i\}) = 0.$$

- Proof?

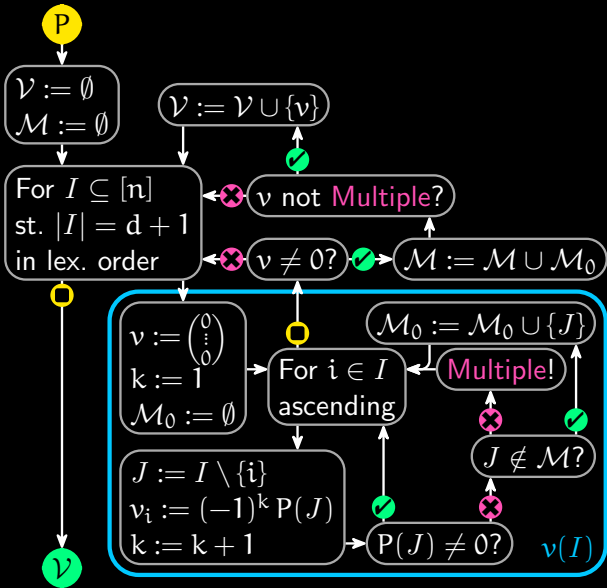
- For fields?!

- Laplace expansion!

- Commutative rings

→ Prevent multiples!

Computing EVs without multiples



Duality

- $P \in \mathcal{R}^{d \times n}$ with rank d

Theorem (Row space)

For $K \subseteq [n]$ with $|K| = d - 1$, $w \in \mathcal{R}^n$:

$$w_i = \begin{cases} 0, & \text{if } i \in K, \\ \varepsilon(i) P(K \cup \{i\}), & \text{else.} \end{cases}$$

If $w \neq 0$, then $w \in \text{row } P$ is EV.

- Row space? $\rightarrow Q$ with $\ker Q = \text{row } P$

$$P = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 2 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 & 2 & 3 \end{pmatrix} \rightarrow Q = \begin{pmatrix} 4 & -2 & 1 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & -3 & 2 \end{pmatrix}$$

- Maximal minors?
 $\rightarrow P(J) = \varepsilon(J) c Q([n] \setminus J)$
- Use P directly!

$$w(K) \left| \begin{array}{c|c|c|c} \{1\} & \{2\} & \{3\} & \{4\} \\ \hline \begin{pmatrix} 0 \\ -1 \\ -2 \\ -3 \end{pmatrix} & \begin{pmatrix} 1 \\ 0 \\ -4 \\ -6 \end{pmatrix} & \begin{pmatrix} 2 \\ 4 \\ 0 \\ 0 \end{pmatrix} & \begin{pmatrix} 3 \\ 6 \\ 0 \\ 0 \end{pmatrix} \end{array} \right.$$

J	$P(J)$	$Q([n] \setminus J)$
$\{1, 2\}$	1	2
$\{1, 3\}$	2	-4
$\{1, 4\}$	3	6
$\{2, 3\}$	4	8
$\{2, 4\}$	6	-12
$\{3, 4\}$	0	0

Linear inequality systems

- Matrix A
- Vector x
 - $x > 0$ if all $x_i > 0$.
 - $x \geq 0$ if all $x_i \geq 0$.

Theorem

- $Ax > 0$ has a solution; or
- there is EV $v \in \ker A^T$ with $v \geq 0$.

- Can both hold?

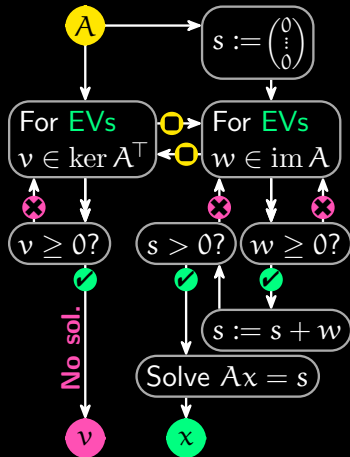
$$0 = (v^T A) x = v^T (Ax) > 0 \quad \text{⚡}$$

$\underset{=0}{0} = (\underset{\geq 0}{v^T} A) \underset{>0}{x} = \underset{\geq 0}{v^T} (\underset{>0}{Ax}) > 0$

→ Certificate v

- Compute x ? → Sum of EVs
- Parallel (→→)

→ One hash table for minors
in $\ker A^T$ and $\text{im } A$



- No division!
- General systems?

Summary & Outlook

- Elementary vectors
- Applications
 - ✓ Sparse basis problem
 - ✓ Division-free kernel matrix
 - ✓ Linear inequality systems
 - ...
- Upcoming paper
- SAGEMATH Package
 - Documentation
 - Examples
 - Linear inequality systems
 - Sign vectors
 - Oriented matroids



https://github.com/MarcusAichmayr/elementary_vectors

- Reaction networks

https://github.com/MarcusAichmayr/sign_vector_conditions