information theory problem sets

1) Variable-to-variable blocklength source coding. All of the source coding schemes that we have considered so far (e.g., Huffman coding) convert a source sequence of fixed blocklength n into a sequence of codewords of variable blocklength. In many cases much simpler encoding and decoding rules for the same compression factor can be found by using a variable-to-variable blocklength source coding scheme.

Example: Consider a binary memoryless source that produces source strings X_1, X_2, \ldots , where the X_i are i.i.d. and take on values in $\{a,b\}$ with p(a)=0.7 and p(b)=0.3. Note that H(X)=0.881. We will first encode source sequences of variable length into intermediate digits, using longer strings of the more frequent symbol and shorter ones of the less frequent one. Then we encode the intermediate digits into a binary code of variable length, assigning shorter codewords to more frequent intermediate digits. The smallest such scheme of interest is the following:

Source Sequence		Intermediate Digit	•	Probability		Binary Codeword
b	1	0	ı	0.3		00
ab	1	1	ı	0.21	l	01
aa	1	2	1	0.49	l	1

An example of the use of this code is the following:

aaaabaaabbabaaaabbaaaa \longrightarrow 1100101000111011000011 .

The expected number of source symbols per intermediate digit is $M=0.3\times 1+0.21\times 2+0.49\times 2=1.7$ and the expected number of codeword symbols per intermediate digit is $N=0.3\times 2+0.21\times 2+0.49\times 1=1.51$, and thus the average number of codeword bits per source symbol is L=N/M=1.51/1.7=0.888. This is remarkably close to H(X) (especially when compared to a Huffman code of similar complexity, i.e., with blocklength n=2, that only achieves L=0.905).

In the code example above, we can interpret the intermediate digit as the "run-length" of a's. Thus, a logical extension of this coding scheme to maximum run-lengths of 4 is the following:

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