

# Scale-Free Networks

## Complex Networks, Course 303A, Spring, 2009

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### Original model

- Introduction
- Model details
- Analysis
- A more plausible mechanism
- Robustness

### Redner & Krapivsky's model

- Generalized model
- Analysis
- Universality?
- Sublinear attachment kernels
- Superlinear attachment kernels

### References

Frame 1/57

## Original model

Introduction

Model details

Analysis

A more plausible mechanism

Robustness

## Original model

Introduction

Model details

Analysis

A more plausible  
mechanism

Robustness

## Redner & Krapivisky's model

Generalized model

Analysis

Universality?

Sublinear attachment kernels

Superlinear attachment kernels

## Redner & Krapivisky's model

Generalized model

Analysis

Universality?

Sublinear attachment  
kernels

Superlinear attachment  
kernels

## References

## References

- ▶ Networks with power-law degree distributions have become known as **scale-free** networks.
- ▶ Scale-free refers specifically to the **degree distribution** having a **power-law decay** in its tail:

$$P_k \sim k^{-\gamma} \text{ for 'large' } k$$

- ▶ One of the seminal works in complex networks: Laszlo Barabási and Reka Albert, Science, 1999: “Emergence of scaling in random networks” [2]
- ▶ Somewhat misleading nomenclature...

## Original model

Introduction

Model details

Analysis

A more plausible  
mechanism

Robustness

## Redner & Krapivsky's model

Generalized model

Analysis

Universality?

Sublinear attachment  
kernels

Superlinear attachment  
kernels

## References

- ▶ Scale-free networks are **not fractal** in any sense.
- ▶ Usually talking about networks whose links are **abstract, relational, informational, . . .** (non-physical)
- ▶ Primary example: hyperlink network of the Web
- ▶ Much arguing about whether or networks are 'scale-free' or not. . .

## Original model

Introduction

Model details

Analysis

A more plausible  
mechanism

Robustness

## Redner & Krapivsky's model

Generalized model

Analysis

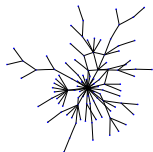
Universality?

Sublinear attachment  
kernels

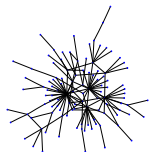
Superlinear attachment  
kernels

## References

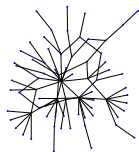
# Random networks: largest components



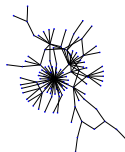
$\gamma = 2.5$   
 $\langle k \rangle = 1.8$



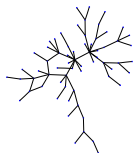
$\gamma = 2.5$   
 $\langle k \rangle = 2.05333$



$\gamma = 2.5$   
 $\langle k \rangle = 1.66667$



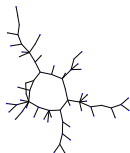
$\gamma = 2.5$   
 $\langle k \rangle = 1.92$



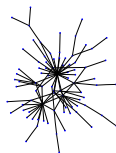
$\gamma = 2.5$   
 $\langle k \rangle = 1.6$



$\gamma = 2.5$   
 $\langle k \rangle = 1.50667$



$\gamma = 2.5$   
 $\langle k \rangle = 1.62667$



$\gamma = 2.5$   
 $\langle k \rangle = 1.8$

## Original model

- Introduction
- Model details
- Analysis
- A more plausible mechanism
- Robustness

## Redner & Krapivsky's model

- Generalized model
- Analysis
- Universality?
- Sublinear attachment kernels
- Superlinear attachment kernels

## References

## The big deal:

- ▶ We move beyond describing of networks to finding **mechanisms** for why certain networks are the way they are.

## A big deal for scale-free networks:

- ▶ How does the exponent  $\gamma$  depend on the mechanism?
- ▶ Do the mechanism details matter?

### Original model

Introduction

Model details

Analysis

A more plausible  
mechanism

Robustness

### Redner & Krapivsky's model

Generalized model

Analysis

Universality?

Sublinear attachment  
kernels

Superlinear attachment  
kernels

### References

## Work that presaged scale-free networks

- ▶ 1924: **G. Udny Yule**<sup>[9]</sup>:  
# Species per Genus
- ▶ 1926: **Lotka**<sup>[4]</sup>:  
# Scientific papers per author
- ▶ 1953: **Mandelbrot**<sup>[5]</sup>:  
Zipf's law for word frequency through optimization
- ▶ 1955: **Herbert Simon**<sup>[8, 10]</sup>:  
Zipf's law, city size, income, publications, and species per genus
- ▶ 1965/1976: **Derek de Solla Price**<sup>[6, 7]</sup>:  
Network of Scientific Citations

Original model

Introduction

Model details

Analysis

A more plausible  
mechanism

Robustness

Redner &  
Krapivsky's model

Generalized model

Analysis

Universality?

Sublinear attachment  
kernels

Superlinear attachment  
kernels

References

- ▶ Barabási-Albert model = BA model.
- ▶ Key ingredients:  
**Growth** and **Preferential Attachment (PA)**.
- ▶ **Step 1**: start with  $m_0$  disconnected nodes.
- ▶ **Step 2**:
  1. **Growth**—a new node appears at each time step  $t = 0, 1, 2, \dots$
  2. Each new node makes  $m$  links to nodes already present.
  3. **Preferential attachment**—Probability of connecting to  $i$ th node is  $\propto k_i$ .
- ▶ In essence, we have a **rich-gets-richer** scheme.

## Original model

Introduction

Model details

Analysis

A more plausible  
mechanism

Robustness

## Redner & Krapivsky's model

Generalized model

Analysis

Universality?

Sublinear attachment  
kernels

Superlinear attachment  
kernels

## References



- ▶ **Definition:**  $A_k$  is the **attachment kernel** for a node with degree  $k$ .
- ▶ For the original model:

$$A_k = k$$

- ▶ **Definition:**  $P_{\text{attach}}(k, t)$  is the attachment probability.
- ▶ For the original model:

$$P_{\text{attach}}(\text{node } i, t) = \frac{k_i(t)}{\sum_{j=1}^{N(t)} k_j(t)} = \frac{k_i(t)}{\sum_{k=m}^{k_{\max}(t)} k N_k(t)}$$

where  $N(t) = m_0 + t$  is # nodes at time  $t$   
and  $N_k(t)$  is # degree  $k$  nodes at time  $t$ .

## Original model

Introduction  
Model details  
Analysis  
A more plausible mechanism  
Robustness

## Redner & Krapivsky's model

Generalized model  
Analysis  
Universality?  
Sublinear attachment kernels  
Superlinear attachment kernels

## References

# Approximate analysis

- ▶ When  $(N + 1)$ th node is added, the expected increase in the degree of node  $i$  is

$$E(k_{i,N+1} - k_{i,N}) \simeq m \frac{k_{i,N}}{\sum_{j=1}^{N(t)} k_j(t)}.$$

- ▶ Assumes probability of being connected to is **small**.
- ▶ Dispense with Expectation by assuming (hoping) that over longer time frames, degree growth will be smooth and stable.
- ▶ Approximate  $k_{i,N+1} - k_{i,N}$  with  $\frac{d}{dt}k_{i,t}$ :

$$\frac{d}{dt}k_{i,t} = m \frac{k_i(t)}{\sum_{j=1}^{N(t)} k_j(t)}$$

where  $t = N(t) - m_0$ .

## Original model

Introduction

Model details

Analysis

A more plausible  
mechanism

Robustness

Redner &  
Krapivsky's model

Generalized model

Analysis

Universality?

Sublinear attachment  
kernelsSuperlinear attachment  
kernels

## References

# Approximate analysis

- Deal with denominator: each added node brings  $m$  new edges.

$$\therefore \sum_{j=1}^{N(t)} k_j(t) = 2tm$$

- The node degree equation now simplifies:

$$\frac{d}{dt} k_{i,t} = m \frac{k_i(t)}{\sum_{j=1}^{N(t)} k_j(t)} = m \frac{k_i(t)}{2mt} = \frac{1}{2t} k_i(t)$$

- Rearrange and solve:

$$\frac{dk_i(t)}{k_i(t)} = \frac{dt}{2t} \Rightarrow \boxed{k_i(t) = c_i t^{1/2}}$$

- Next find  $c_i \dots$

## Original model

Introduction

Model details

Analysis

A more plausible  
mechanism

Robustness

Redner &  
Krapivsky's model

Generalized model

Analysis

Universality?

Sublinear attachment  
kernelsSuperlinear attachment  
kernels

## References

- ▶ Know  $i$ th node appears at time

$$t_{i,\text{start}} = \begin{cases} i - m_0 & \text{for } i > m_0 \\ 0 & \text{for } i \leq m_0 \end{cases}$$

- ▶ So for  $i > m_0$  (exclude initial nodes), we must have

$$k_i(t) = m \left( \frac{t}{t_{i,\text{start}}} \right)^{1/2} \quad \text{for } t \geq t_{i,\text{start}}.$$

- ▶ All node degrees grow as  $t^{1/2}$  but later nodes have larger  $t_{i,\text{start}}$  which **flattens out** growth curve.
- ▶ Early nodes do **best** (First-mover advantage).

## Original model

Introduction

Model details

Analysis

A more plausible  
mechanism

Robustness

## Redner & Krapivsky's model

Generalized model

Analysis

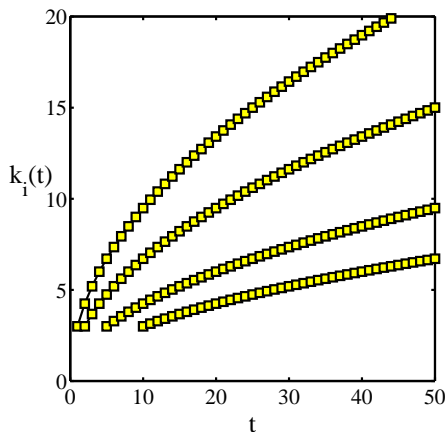
Universality?

Sublinear attachment  
kernels

Superlinear attachment  
kernels

## References

# Approximate analysis



- ▶  $m = 3$
- ▶  $t_{i,start} = 1, 2, 5, \text{ and } 10$ .

## Original model

Introduction

Model details

Analysis

A more plausible  
mechanism

Robustness

## Redner & Krapivsky's model

Generalized model

Analysis

Universality?

Sublinear attachment  
kernels

Superlinear attachment  
kernels

## References

# Degree distribution

- ▶ So what's the **degree distribution** at time  $t$ ?
- ▶ Use fact that birth time for added nodes is distributed uniformly:

$$P(t_{i,\text{start}})dt_{i,\text{start}} \simeq \frac{dt_{i,\text{start}}}{t + m_0}$$

- ▶ Using

$$k_i(t) = m \left( \frac{t}{t_{i,\text{start}}} \right)^{1/2} \Rightarrow t_{i,\text{start}} = \frac{m^2 t}{k_i(t)^2}.$$

and by understanding that later arriving nodes have lower degrees, we can say this:

$$\mathbf{Pr}(k_i < k) = \mathbf{Pr}(t_{i,\text{start}} > \frac{m^2 t}{k^2}).$$

Original model

Introduction

Model details

Analysis

A more plausible  
mechanism

Robustness

Redner &  
Krapivsky's model

Generalized model

Analysis

Universality?

Sublinear attachment  
kernelsSuperlinear attachment  
kernels

References

- ▶ Using the uniformity of start times:

$$\Pr(k_i < k) = \Pr(t_{i,\text{start}} > \frac{m^2 t}{k^2}) \simeq \frac{t - \frac{m^2 t}{k^2}}{t + m_0}.$$

- ▶ Differentiate to find  $\Pr(k)$ :

$$\Pr(k) = \frac{d}{dk} \Pr(k_i < k) = \frac{2m^2 t}{(t + m_0)k^3}$$

$$\sim 2m^2 k^{-3} \text{ as } m \rightarrow \infty.$$

## Original model

Introduction

Model details

Analysis

A more plausible  
mechanism

Robustness

## Redner & Krapivsky's model

Generalized model

Analysis

Universality?

Sublinear attachment  
kernels

Superlinear attachment  
kernels

## References

- ▶ We thus have a very specific prediction of  $\Pr(k) \sim k^{-\gamma}$  with  $\gamma = 3$ .
- ▶ Typical for real networks:  $2 < \gamma < 3$ .
- ▶ Range true more generally for events with size distributions that have power-law tails.
- ▶  $2 < \gamma < 3$ : finite mean and 'infinite' variance (wild)
- ▶ In practice,  $\gamma < 3$  means variance is governed by upper cutoff.
- ▶  $\gamma > 3$ : finite mean and variance (mild)

## Original model

Introduction

Model details

Analysis

A more plausible  
mechanism

Robustness

## Redner & Krapivsky's model

Generalized model

Analysis

Universality?

Sublinear attachment  
kernels

Superlinear attachment  
kernels

## References



# Examples

WWW	$\gamma \simeq 2.1$ for in-degree
WWW	$\gamma \simeq 2.45$ for out-degree
Movie actors	$\gamma \simeq 2.3$
Words (synonyms)	$\gamma \simeq 2.8$

The Internet's is a different business...

## Original model

Introduction

Model details

**Analysis**

A more plausible  
mechanism

Robustness

## Redner & Krapivsky's model

Generalized model

Analysis

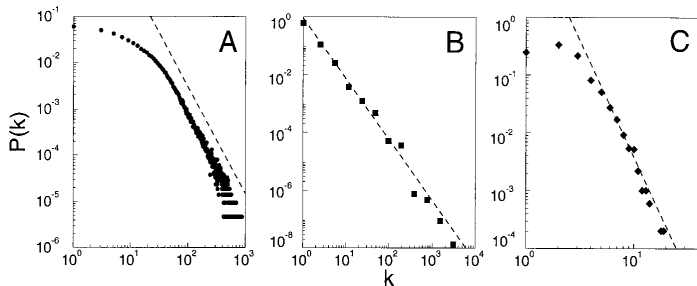
Universality?

Sublinear attachment  
kernels

Superlinear attachment  
kernels

## References

From Barabási and Albert's original paper [2]:



**Fig. 1.** The distribution function of connectivities for various large networks. **(A)** Actor collaboration graph with  $N = 212,250$  vertices and average connectivity  $\langle k \rangle = 28.78$ . **(B)** WWW,  $N = 325,729$ ,  $\langle k \rangle = 5.46$  (6). **(C)** Power grid data,  $N = 4941$ ,  $\langle k \rangle = 2.67$ . The dashed lines have slopes (A)  $\gamma_{\text{actor}} = 2.3$ , (B)  $\gamma_{\text{www}} = 2.1$  and (C)  $\gamma_{\text{power}} = 4$ .

Original model

Introduction

Model details

Analysis

A more plausible

mechanism

Robustness

Redner &  
Krapivsky's model

Generalized model

Analysis

Universality?

Sublinear attachment

kernels

Superlinear attachment

kernels

References

Frame 21/57

# Things to do and questions

- ▶ Vary attachment kernel.
- ▶ Vary mechanisms:
  1. Add edge deletion
  2. Add node deletion
  3. Add edge rewiring
- ▶ Deal with directed versus undirected networks.
- ▶ **Important Q.:** Are there distinct universality classes for these networks?
- ▶ **Q.:** How does changing the model affect  $\gamma$ ?
- ▶ **Q.:** Do we need preferential attachment and growth?
- ▶ **Q.:** Do model details matter?
- ▶ The answer is (surprisingly) **yes**.

## Original model

Introduction

Model details

Analysis

A more plausible  
mechanism

Robustness

## Redner & Krapivsky's model

Generalized model

Analysis

Universality?

Sublinear attachment  
kernels

Superlinear attachment  
kernels

## References

# Preferential attachment

- ▶ Let's look at preferential attachment (PA) a little more closely.
- ▶ PA implies arriving nodes have **complete knowledge** of the existing network's degree distribution.
- ▶ For example: If  $P_{\text{attach}}(k) \propto k$ , we need to determine the constant of proportionality.
- ▶ We need to know what everyone's degree is...
- ▶ PA is  $\therefore$  an **outrageous** assumption of node capability.
- ▶ But a **very simple mechanism** saves the day...

## Original model

Introduction

Model details

Analysis

A more plausible  
mechanism

Robustness

## Redner & Krapivsky's model

Generalized model

Analysis

Universality?

Sublinear attachment  
kernels

Superlinear attachment  
kernels

## References

# Preferential attachment through randomness

- ▶ Instead of attaching preferentially, allow new nodes to attach randomly.
- ▶ Now add an **extra step**: new nodes then connect to some of their friends' friends.
- ▶ Can also do this **at random**.
- ▶ We know that friends are **weird**...
- ▶ Assuming the existing network is random, we know probability of a **random friend** having degree  $k$  is

$$Q_k \propto kP_k$$

- ▶ So **rich-gets-richer** scheme can now be seen to work in a natural way.

## Original model

Introduction

Model details

Analysis

A more plausible  
mechanism

Robustness

## Redner & Krapivsky's model

Generalized model

Analysis

Universality?

Sublinear attachment  
kernels

Superlinear attachment  
kernels

## References

- ▶ We've looked at some aspects of contagion on scale-free networks:
  1. Facilitate disease-like spreading.
  2. Inhibit threshold-like spreading.
- ▶ Another simple story concerns **system robustness**.
- ▶ Albert et al., Nature, 2000:  
“Error and attack tolerance of complex networks”<sup>[1]</sup>

## Original model

Introduction

Model details

Analysis

A more plausible  
mechanism

Robustness

## Redner & Krapivsky's model

Generalized model

Analysis

Universality?

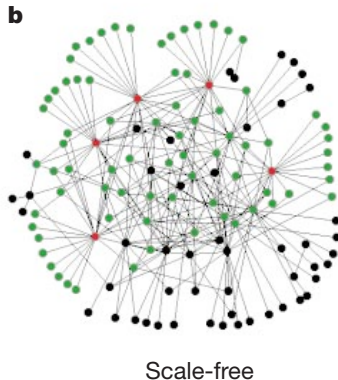
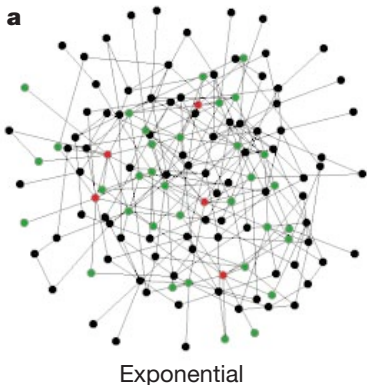
Sublinear attachment  
kernels

Superlinear attachment  
kernels

## References

# Robustness

- ▶ Standard random networks (Erdős-Rényi)  
versus  
Scale-free networks



from

## Original model

Introduction

Model details

Analysis

A more plausible  
mechanism

Robustness

## Redner & Krapivsky's model

Generalized model

Analysis

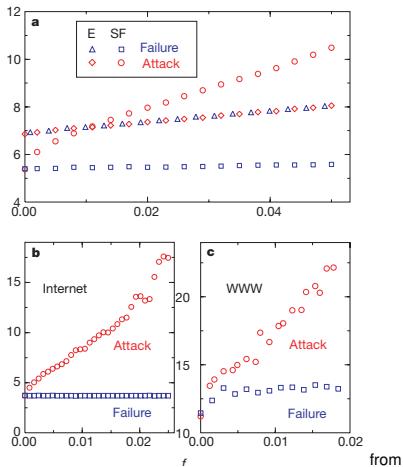
Universality?

Sublinear attachment  
kernels

Superlinear attachment  
kernels

## References

# Robustness



- ▶ Plots of network diameter as a function of fraction of nodes removed
- ▶ Erdős-Rényi versus scale-free networks
- ▶ blue symbols = random removal
- ▶ red symbols = targeted removal (most connected first)

Albert et al., 2000

## Original model

Introduction  
Model details  
Analysis  
A more plausible mechanism  
Robustness

## Redner & Krapivsky's model

Generalized model  
Universality?  
Sublinear attachment kernels  
Superlinear attachment kernels

## References



- ▶ Scale-free networks are thus **robust to random failures** yet **fragile to targeted ones**.
- ▶ All very reasonable: **Hubs** are a big deal.
- ▶ **But:** next issue is whether hubs are vulnerable or not.
- ▶ Representing all webpages as the same size node is obviously a stretch (e.g., google vs. a random person's webpage)
- ▶ Most connected nodes are either:
  1. Physically larger nodes that may be harder to 'target'
  2. or subnetworks of smaller, normal-sized nodes.
- ▶ Need to explore cost of various targeting schemes.

## Original model

Introduction

Model details

Analysis

A more plausible  
mechanism

Robustness

## Redner & Krapivsky's model

Generalized model

Analysis

Universality?

Sublinear attachment  
kernels

Superlinear attachment  
kernels

## References

## Fooling with the mechanism:

- ▶ 2001: Redner & Krapivsky (RK) [3] explored the **general attachment kernel**:

$$\Pr(\text{attach to node } i) \propto A_k = k_i^\nu$$

where  $A_k$  is the attachment kernel and  $\nu > 0$ .

- ▶ RK also looked at changing the details of the attachment kernel.
- ▶ We'll follow RK's approach using rate equations (田).

### Original model

Introduction

Model details

Analysis

A more plausible  
mechanism

Robustness

### Redner & Krapivsky's model

Generalized model

Analysis

Universality?

Sublinear attachment  
kernels

Superlinear attachment  
kernels

### References

- ▶ Here's the set up:

$$\frac{dN_k}{dt} = \frac{1}{A} [A_{k-1}N_{k-1} - A_kN_k] + \delta_{k1}$$

where  $N_k$  is the number of nodes of degree  $k$ .

1. The **first term** corresponds to degree  $k - 1$  nodes becoming degree  $k$  nodes.
2. The **second term** corresponds to degree  $k$  nodes becoming degree  $k - 1$  nodes.
3. Detail:  $A_0 = 0$
4. One node is added per unit time.
5. Seed with some initial network (e.g., a connected pair)

## Original model

Introduction

Model details

Analysis

A more plausible  
mechanism

Robustness

## Redner & Krapivsky's model

Generalized model

Analysis

Universality?

Sublinear attachment  
kernels

Superlinear attachment  
kernels

## References

## Generalized model

- ▶ In general, probability of attaching to a **specific node** of degree  $k$  at time  $t$  is

$$\Pr(\text{attach to node } i) = \frac{A_k}{A(t)}$$

where  $A(t) = \sum_{k=1}^{\infty} A_k N_k(t)$ .

- ▶ E.g., for BA model,  $A_k = k$  and  $A = \sum_{k=1}^{\infty} k N_k(t)$ .
- ▶ For  $A_k = k$ , we have

$$A(t) = \sum_{k'=1}^{\infty} k' N_{k'}(t) = 2t$$

since one edge is being added per unit time.

- ▶ Detail: we are ignoring initial seed network's edges.

## Original model

Introduction

Model details

Analysis

A more plausible  
mechanism

Robustness

Redner &  
Krapivsky's model

Generalized model

Analysis

Universality?

Sublinear attachment  
kernelsSuperlinear attachment  
kernels

## References

## Generalized model

- ▶ So now

$$\frac{dN_k}{dt} = \frac{1}{A} [A_{k-1}N_{k-1} - A_k N_k] + \delta_{k1}$$

becomes

$$\frac{dN_k}{dt} = \frac{1}{2t} [(k-1)N_{k-1} - kN_k] + \delta_{k1}$$

- ▶ As for BA method, look for steady-state growing solution:  $N_k = n_k t$ .
- ▶ We replace  $dN_k/dt$  with  $dn_k t/dt = n_k$ .
- ▶ We arrive at a difference equation:

$$n_k = \frac{1}{2t} [(k-1)n_{k-1}t - kn_k t] + \delta_{k1}$$

## Original model

Introduction

Model details

Analysis

A more plausible  
mechanism

Robustness

## Redner &amp;

## Krapivsky's model

Generalized model

Analysis

Universality?

Sublinear attachment  
kernelsSuperlinear attachment  
kernels

## References

- ▶ Rearrange and simply:

$$n_k = \frac{1}{2}(k-1)n_{k-1} - \frac{1}{2}kn_k + \delta_{k1}$$

$$\Rightarrow (k+2)n_k = (k-1)n_{k-1} + 2\delta_{k1}$$

- ▶ Two cases:

$$k = 1 : n_1 = 2/3 \text{ since } n_0 = 0$$

$$k > 1 : n_k = \frac{(k-1)}{k+2} n_{k-1}$$

## Original model

Introduction

Model details

Analysis

A more plausible  
mechanism

Robustness

## Redner & Krapivsky's model

Generalized model

Analysis

Universality?

Sublinear attachment  
kernels

Superlinear attachment  
kernels

## References

# Generalized model

► Now find  $n_k$ :

$$k > 1: n_k = \frac{(k-1)}{k+2} n_{k-1} = \frac{(k-1)(k-2)}{k+2} n_{k-2}$$

$$= \frac{(k-1)(k-2)(k-3)}{k+2} n_{k-3}$$

$$= \frac{(k-1)(k-2)(k-3)(k-4)}{k+2} n_{k-4}$$

$$= \frac{\cancel{(k-1)} \cancel{(k-2)} \cancel{(k-3)} \cancel{(k-4)} \cancel{(k-5)} \dots \cancel{5} \cancel{4} \cancel{3} \cancel{2} \cancel{1}}{k+2} \frac{\cancel{(k-1)} \cancel{(k-2)} \dots \cancel{8} \cancel{7} \cancel{6} \cancel{5} \cancel{4}}{k+1} n_1$$

$$\Rightarrow n_k = \frac{6}{k(k+1)(k+2)} n_1 = \frac{4}{k(k+1)(k+2)} \sim k^{-3}$$

## Original model

Introduction

Model details

Analysis

A more plausible  
mechanism

Robustness

## Redner & Krapivsky's model

Generalized model

Analysis

Universality?

Sublinear attachment  
kernels

Superlinear attachment  
kernels

## References

# Universality?

- ▶ As expected, we have the same result as for the BA model:

$$N_k(t) = n_k(t)t \propto k^{-3} \text{ for large } k.$$

- ▶ Now: what happens if we start playing around with the attachment kernel  $A_k$ ?
- ▶ Again, is the result  $\gamma = 3$  universal (田)?
- ▶ Natural modification:  $A_k = k^\nu$  with  $\nu \neq 1$ .
- ▶ But we'll first explore a more subtle modification of  $A_k$  made by Redner/Krapivsky [3]
- ▶ Keep  $A_k$  **linear in  $k$**  but tweak details.
- ▶ **Idea:** Relax from  $A_k = k$  to  $A_k \sim k$  as  $k \rightarrow \infty$ .

## Original model

Introduction

Model details

Analysis

A more plausible  
mechanism

Robustness

## Redner & Krapivsky's model

Generalized model

Analysis

Universality?

Sublinear attachment  
kernels

Superlinear attachment  
kernels

## References



# Universality?

- ▶ Recall we used the normalization:

$$A(t) = \sum_{k'=1}^{\infty} k' N_{k'}(t) \simeq 2t \text{ for large } t.$$

- ▶ We now have

$$A(t) = \sum_{k'=1}^{\infty} A_{k'} N_{k'}(t)$$

where we only know the asymptotic behavior of  $A_k$ .

- ▶ We assume that  $A = \mu t$
- ▶ We'll find  $\mu$  later and make sure that our assumption is consistent.
- ▶ As before, also assume  $N_k(t) = n_k t$ .

## Original model

Introduction  
Model details  
Analysis  
A more plausible  
mechanism  
Robustness

## Redner & Krapivsky's model

Generalized model  
Analysis  
Universality?  
Sublinear attachment  
kernels  
Superlinear attachment  
kernels

## References

# Universality?

- ▶ For  $A_k = k$  we had

$$n_k = \frac{1}{2} [(k-1)n_{k-1} - kn_k] + \delta_{k1}$$

- ▶ This now becomes

$$n_k = \frac{1}{\mu} [A_{k-1}n_{k-1} - A_k n_k] + \delta_{k1}$$

$$\Rightarrow (A_k + \mu)n_k = A_{k-1}n_{k-1} + \mu\delta_{k1}$$

- ▶ Again two cases:

$$k = 1 : n_1 = \frac{\mu}{\mu + A_1}.$$

$$k > 1 : n_k = n_{k-1} \frac{A_{k-1}}{\mu + A_k}$$

## Original model

Introduction

Model details

Analysis

A more plausible  
mechanism

Robustness

Redner &  
Krapivsky's model

Generalized model

Analysis

Universality?

Sublinear attachment  
kernelsSuperlinear attachment  
kernels

## References

# Universality?

- ▶ Dealing with the  $k > 1$  case:

$$\begin{aligned}n_k &= n_{k-1} \frac{A_{k-1}}{\mu + A_k} = n_{k-1} \frac{A_{k-1}}{A_k} \frac{1}{1 + \frac{\mu}{A_k}} \\&= n_{k-2} \frac{A_{k-2}}{\cancel{A_{k-1}}} \frac{1}{1 + \frac{\mu}{A_{k-1}}} \frac{\cancel{A_{k-1}}}{A_k} \frac{1}{1 + \frac{\mu}{A_k}} \\&= n_1 \frac{A_1}{A_k} \prod_{j=2}^k \frac{1}{1 + \frac{\mu}{A_j}} \\&= n_1 \frac{A_1}{A_k} \left(1 + \frac{\mu}{A_1}\right) \prod_{j=1}^k \frac{1}{1 + \frac{\mu}{A_j}} \\&= \frac{\mu}{A_k} \prod_{j=1}^k \frac{1}{1 + \frac{\mu}{A_j}} \text{ since } n_1 = \mu / (\mu + A_1)\end{aligned}$$

## Original model

Introduction  
Model details  
Analysis  
A more plausible  
mechanism  
Robustness

## Redner & Krapivsky's model

Generalized model  
Analysis  
**Universality?**  
Sublinear attachment  
kernels  
Superlinear attachment  
kernels

## References

# Universality?

- ▶ Time for pure excitement: Find **asymptotic behavior** of  $n_k$  given  $A_k \rightarrow k$  as  $k \rightarrow \infty$ .
- ▶ For large  $k$ :

$$\begin{aligned}
 n_k &= \frac{\mu}{A_k} \prod_{j=1}^k \frac{1}{1 + \frac{\mu}{A_j}} = \frac{\mu}{A_k} \prod_{j=1}^k \frac{A_j}{A_j + \mu} \\
 &= \frac{\mu}{\cancel{A_k}} \frac{A_1}{(A_1 + \mu)} \frac{A_2}{(A_2 + \mu)} \cdots \frac{k-1}{(k-1 + \mu)} \frac{\cancel{k}}{(k + \mu)} \\
 &\propto \frac{\Gamma(k)}{\Gamma(k + \mu + 1)} \sim \frac{\sqrt{2\pi} k^{k+1/2} e^{-k}}{\sqrt{2\pi} (k + \mu + 1)^{k+\mu+1+1/2} e^{-(k+\mu+1)}} \\
 &\qquad \qquad \qquad \propto k^{-\mu-1}
 \end{aligned}$$

- ▶ Since  $\mu$  depends on  $A_k$ , **details matter...**

## Original model

Introduction

Model details

Analysis

A more plausible  
mechanism

Robustness

Redner &  
Krapivsky's model

Generalized model

Analysis

Universality?

Sublinear attachment  
kernelsSuperlinear attachment  
kernels

## References

# Universality?

- ▶ Now we need to find  $\mu$ .
- ▶ Our assumption again:  $A = \mu t = \sum_{k=1}^{\infty} N_k(t) A_k$
- ▶ Since  $N_k = n_k t$ , we have the simplification  
$$\mu = \sum_{k=1}^{\infty} n_k A_k$$
- ▶ Now substitute in our expression for  $n_k$ :

$$1\mu = \sum_{k=1}^{\infty} \frac{\mu}{A_k} \prod_{j=1}^k \frac{1}{1 + \frac{\mu}{A_j}}$$

- ▶ Closed form expression for  $\mu$ .
- ▶ We can solve for  $\mu$  in some cases.
- ▶ Our assumption that  $A = \mu t$  is okay.

## Original model

Introduction

Model details

Analysis

A more plausible  
mechanism

Robustness

## Redner & Krapivsky's model

Generalized model

Analysis

Universality?

Sublinear attachment  
kernels

Superlinear attachment  
kernels

## References

# Universality?

- ▶ Amazingly, we can adjust  $A_k$  and tune  $\gamma$  to be anywhere in  $[2, \infty)$ .
- ▶  $\gamma = 2$  is the lower limit since

$$\mu = \sum_{k=1}^{\infty} A_k n_k \sim \sum_{k=1}^{\infty} k n_k$$

must be finite.

- ▶ Let's now look at a specific example of  $A_k$  to see this range of  $\gamma$  is possible.

## Original model

Introduction

Model details

Analysis

A more plausible  
mechanism

Robustness

## Redner & Krapivsky's model

Generalized model

Analysis

Universality?

Sublinear attachment  
kernels

Superlinear attachment  
kernels

## References

# Universality?

- ▶ Consider  $A_1 = \alpha$  and  $A_k = k$  for  $k \geq 2$ .
- ▶ Find  $\gamma = \mu + 1$  by finding  $\mu$ .
- ▶ Expression for  $\mu$ :

$$1 = \sum_{k=1}^{\infty} \prod_{j=1}^k \frac{1}{1 + \frac{\mu}{A_j}}$$

$$1 = \frac{1}{1 + \frac{\mu}{A_1}} + \sum_{k=2}^{\infty} \prod_{j=1}^k \frac{1}{1 + \frac{\mu}{A_j}}$$

$$1 - \frac{1}{1 + \frac{\mu}{A_1}} = \frac{1}{1 + \frac{\mu}{A_1}} \sum_{k=2}^{\infty} \prod_{j=2}^k \frac{1}{1 + \frac{\mu}{A_j}}$$

$$\frac{\frac{\mu}{\alpha}}{1 + \frac{\mu}{\alpha}} = \frac{1}{1 + \frac{\mu}{\alpha}} \sum_{k=2}^{\infty} \prod_{j=2}^k \frac{1}{1 + \frac{\mu}{A_j}} \text{ since } A_1 = \alpha$$

## Original model

Introduction

Model details

Analysis

A more plausible  
mechanism

Robustness

Redner &  
Krapivsky's model

Generalized model

Analysis

Universality?

Sublinear attachment  
kernelsSuperlinear attachment  
kernels

## References

# Universality?

- ▶ Carrying on:

$$\frac{\frac{\mu}{\alpha}}{1 + \frac{\mu}{\alpha}} = \frac{1}{1 + \frac{\mu}{\alpha}} \sum_{k=2}^{\infty} \prod_{j=2}^k \frac{1}{1 + \frac{\mu}{A_j}}$$

$$\frac{\mu}{\alpha} = \sum_{k=2}^{\infty} \frac{\Gamma(k+1)\Gamma(2+\mu)}{\Gamma(k+\mu+1)}$$

- ▶ Now use result that<sup>[3]</sup>

$$\sum_{k=2}^{\infty} \frac{\Gamma(a+k)}{\Gamma(b+k)} = \frac{\Gamma(a+2)}{(b-a-1)\Gamma(b+1)}$$

with  $a = 1$  and  $b = \mu + 1$ .



$$\mu = \alpha \frac{\Gamma(3)}{(\mu + 1 - 1 - 1)\Gamma(2 + \mu)} \Gamma(2 + \mu)$$

$$\Rightarrow \mu(\mu - 1) = 2\alpha$$

## Original model

Introduction

Model details

Analysis

A more plausible  
mechanism

Robustness

## Redner & Krapivsky's model

Generalized model

Analysis

Universality?

Sublinear attachment  
kernels

Superlinear attachment  
kernels

## References



# Universality?

## Original model

Introduction

Model details

Analysis

A more plausible  
mechanism

Robustness

## Redner & Krapivsky's model

Generalized model

Analysis

**Universality?**

Sublinear attachment  
kernels

Superlinear attachment  
kernels

## References



$$\mu(\mu - 1) = 2\alpha \Rightarrow \mu = \frac{1 + \sqrt{1 + 8\alpha}}{2}.$$

- ▶ Since  $\gamma = \mu + 1$ , we have

$$0 \leq \alpha < \infty \Rightarrow 2 \leq \gamma < \infty$$

- ▶ Crazy...

- ▶ Rich-get-somewhat-richer:

$$A_k \sim k^\nu \text{ with } 0 < \nu < 1.$$

- ▶ General finding by Krapivsky and Redner: [3]

$$n_k \sim k^{-\nu} e^{-c_1 k^{1-\nu}} + \text{correction terms}.$$

- ▶ Stretched exponentials (truncated power laws).
- ▶ aka Weibull distributions.
- ▶ **Universality**: now details of kernel **do not** matter.
- ▶ Distribution of degree is universal providing  $\nu < 1$ .

## Original model

Introduction

Model details

Analysis

A more plausible  
mechanism

Robustness

## Redner & Krapivsky's model

Generalized model

Analysis

Universality?

Sublinear attachment  
kernels

Superlinear attachment  
kernels

## References

## Details:

- ▶ For  $1/2 < \nu < 1$ :

$$n_k \sim k^{-\nu} e^{-\mu \left( \frac{k^{1-\nu} - 2^{1-\nu}}{1-\nu} \right)}$$

- ▶ For  $1/3 < \nu < 1/2$ :

$$n_k \sim k^{-\nu} e^{-\mu \frac{k^{1-\nu}}{1-\nu} + \frac{\mu^2}{2} \frac{k^{1-2\nu}}{1-2\nu}}$$

- ▶ And for  $1/(r+1) < \nu < 1/r$ , we have  $r$  pieces in exponential.

## Original model

Introduction

Model details

Analysis

A more plausible  
mechanism

Robustness

## Redner & Krapivsky's model

Generalized model

Analysis

Universality?

Sublinear attachment  
kernels

Superlinear attachment  
kernels

## References

# Superlinear attachment kernels

- ▶ Rich-get-much-richer:

$$A_k \sim k^\nu \text{ with } \nu > 1.$$

- ▶ Now a **winner-take-all** mechanism.
- ▶ One single node ends up being connected to almost all other nodes.
- ▶ For  $\nu > 2$ , all but a finite # of nodes connect to one node.

## Original model

Introduction

Model details

Analysis

A more plausible  
mechanism

Robustness

## Redner & Krapivsky's model

Generalized model

Analysis

Universality?

Sublinear attachment  
kernels

Superlinear attachment  
kernels

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## Original model





[Introduction](#)[Model details](#)[Analysis](#)[A more plausible  
mechanism](#)[Robustness](#)

## Redner & Krapivsky's model

[Generalized model](#)[Analysis](#)[Universality?](#)[Sublinear attachment  
kernels](#)[Superlinear attachment  
kernels](#)

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## Original model

[Introduction](#)[Model details](#)[Analysis](#)[A more plausible  
mechanism](#)[Robustness](#)Redner &  
Krapivsky's model[Generalized model](#)[Analysis](#)[Universality?](#)[Sublinear attachment  
kernels](#)[Superlinear attachment  
kernels](#)

## References

## Original model

Introduction

Model details

Analysis

A more plausible  
mechanism

Robustness

## Redner & Krapivsky's model

Generalized model



Analysis

Universality?

Sublinear attachment  
kernels

Superlinear attachment  
kernels

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