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Title	Average-case complexity of detecting cliques
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Citation	2010　　　　　　　　ERATO　　　　　　　　　　　　. p.248.
Issue Date	2011-06
Doc URL	http://hdl.handle.net/2115/48426
Type	conference presentation
Note	ERATO　　　2010: No.38. 2011　3　7
File Information	38_all.pdf

Instructions for use

ERATO   2010 - No. 38

Average-case complexity of detecting cliques

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2011/3/7

We investigate the average-case complexity of the k-CLIQUE problem on random graphs with an appropriate density of edges. Our results are lower bounds of $n^{k/4}$ for two well-studied classes of circuits: bounded-depth circuits and monotone circuits. Besides being the first lower bounds for k-CLIQUE in the average-case (and moreover essentially tight), these results lead to a new "size hierarchy theorem" for AC^0 and settle a longstanding open question in finite model theory.

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