

A 2-distance set with 277 points in the Euclidean space of dimension 23

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August 5, 2026

Abstract. We construct a 2-distance set with 277 points in the 23-dimensional Euclidean space $\mathbb{R}^{23}$ having distances 2 and $\sqrt{6}$.

1 Introduction

An s -distance set in a Euclidean space $\mathbb{R}^d$ is a point set such that pairwise distances between these points admit only s different values. Classification and construction of few distance sets in Euclidean space goes back to the pioneering work of Blokhuis [1, 2]. He showed that the size of a 2-distance set in the d -dimensional Euclidean space $\mathbb{R}^d$ is bounded by $\binom{d+2}{2}$. Lisoněk [8] determined the sizes of the largest 2-distance sets in dimensions $d \leq 8$. Since the set of midpoints of edges of a regular d -simplex is a 2-distance set of size $\binom{d+1}{2}$, the main research interest lies in the existence problem of a 2-distance set whose size exceeds $\binom{d+1}{2}$. No construction of such sets has been known for $d > 8$.

In this paper, we construct a 2-distance set in $\mathbb{R}^{23}$ of size 277, one larger than the lower bound $\binom{24}{2}$. Nozaki and Shinohara [9] considered maximal 2-distance sets containing a regular simplex, but the sets they produced have smaller size in dimension 23. Glazyrin and Yu [6] determined that, if a 2-distance set lies in the unit sphere $S^{22} \subseteq \mathbb{R}^{23}$, then its size is bounded by 276. Note that, in addition to the standard example of the set of $\binom{24}{2}$ midpoints of edges of a regular 23-simplex, there are many other 2-distance sets in S^{22} with the same size. The unique regular two-graph on 276 vertices (see [7], and see [4, Section 1.5] for more information on two-graphs) gives a set of equiangular lines in $\mathbb{R}^{23}$, and any set of representing unit vectors forms a 2-distance set of size 276. We show that one of the sets of representing unit vectors can be used to construct a maximal 2-distance set in $\mathbb{R}^{23}$ of size 277, which cannot be extended to a larger 2-distance set in $\mathbb{R}^{23}$.

*J.H. Koolen is partially supported by the National Natural Science Foundation of China (No. 12471335), and the Anhui Initiative in Quantum Information Technologies (No. AHY150000).

2 The Construction

Let $\mathbb{R}^d$ be the d -dimensional linear space over $\mathbb{R}$ equipped with the inner product $\langle \mathbf{u}, \mathbf{v} \rangle = \sum_{i=1}^d u_i v_i$. As usual, we define the square norm $\|\mathbf{u}\|^2 = \langle \mathbf{u}, \mathbf{u} \rangle$.

In [7, Theorem 3.4], Goethals and Seidel provided a graph $\bar{\Gamma}$ in the switching class of the unique regular two-graph on 276 vertices, whose Seidel matrix $S = J - I - 2A(\bar{\Gamma})$ has spectrum

$$\text{Spec}(S) = \{[55]^{23}, [-5]^{253}\},$$

where J is the all-ones matrix and $A(\bar{\Gamma})$ is the adjacency matrix of $\bar{\Gamma}$. The complement Γ of $\bar{\Gamma}$ can be constructed directly as follows. Let

$$X = \{(a, i) \mid a \in \mathbb{F}_3, 1 \leq i \leq 11\},$$

and we consider X naturally as the complete multipartite graph with 11 parts, each of which has 3 vertices. Let C be the ternary Golay code, and let $Y = C^\perp$, the dual code of C . A description of C and $C^\perp$ can be found in [7, Lemma 4.3 and Remark 4.4]. Since $\dim C = 6$, we have $|Y| = 243$. We construct the graph Γ with vertex set $X \cup Y$ by joining $(a, i) \in X$ and $y \in Y$ by an edge if $y_i \neq a$, and also joining $y \in Y$ and $y' \in Y$ by an edge if $y - y'$ has weight 6, that is, $y - y'$ has 6 out of 11 nonzero coordinates. Now $S = 2A(\Gamma) + I - J$ is the desired Seidel matrix.

From the construction, together with the fact that $C^\perp$ has 132 vectors of weight 6, we see that the partition $X \cup Y$ of the vertex set of Γ is equitable, with quotient matrix

$$\begin{bmatrix} 30 & 162 \\ 22 & 132 \end{bmatrix}.$$

Thus, $\theta_1 = 81 + \sqrt{6165}$ and $\theta_2 = 81 - \sqrt{6165}$ are two eigenvalues of $A(\Gamma)$.

For each $\alpha \in \{55, -5\}$, let V_α be the eigenspace of S corresponding to the eigenvalue α , and set $W_\alpha := V_\alpha \cap \mathbf{1}^\perp$, where $\mathbf{1}$ denotes the all-one vector. Since $\dim W_\alpha \geq \dim V_\alpha - 1$, it follows that Γ has spectrum $\{[27]^{22}, [-3]^{252}, [\theta_1]^1, [\theta_2]^1\}$. Therefore, $A(\Gamma) + 3I$ is positive semi-definite with rank 24, and there exists a set of vectors $\mathbf{V} = \{\mathbf{v}_u \mid u \in X \cup Y\}$ in $\mathbb{R}^{24}$ satisfying $\langle \mathbf{v}_u, \mathbf{v}_v \rangle = (A(\Gamma) + 3I)_{uv}$ for $u, v \in X \cup Y$. It follows that $\mathbf{V}$ forms a 2-distance set in $\mathbb{R}^{24}$ consisting of 276 points

$$\begin{aligned} \|\mathbf{v}\|^2 &= 3 & (\mathbf{v} \in \mathbf{V}), \\ \|\mathbf{v} - \mathbf{v}'\|^2 &\in \{4, 6\} & (\mathbf{v}, \mathbf{v}' \in \mathbf{V}, \mathbf{v} \neq \mathbf{v}'). \end{aligned} \tag{1}$$

In what follows, we identify the vertices of Γ with the corresponding vectors in $\mathbf{V}$. Then for $\mathbf{u}, \mathbf{v} \in \mathbf{V} = X \cup Y$,

$$\langle \mathbf{u}, \mathbf{v} \rangle = \begin{cases} 3 & \text{if } \mathbf{u} = \mathbf{v}, \\ 1 & \text{if } \mathbf{u} \text{ and } \mathbf{v} \text{ are adjacent in } \Gamma, \\ 0 & \text{otherwise.} \end{cases}$$

In [5, Lemma 4.1], Cao *et al.* found a vector $\mathbf{r} \in \mathbb{R}^{24}$ such that $\langle \mathbf{r}, \mathbf{r} \rangle = 2$ and $\langle \mathbf{r}, \mathbf{v} \rangle = 1$ for all $\mathbf{v} \in \mathbf{V}$. The vector $\mathbf{r}$ is called the *switching root*. More explicitly, $\mathbf{r}$ can be defined as follows. Let $\{\mathbf{x}_1, \mathbf{x}_2, \mathbf{x}_3\} \subset X$ be the set of vectors corresponding to one of the 11 parts of the complete multipartite graph on X . Then these three vectors are pairwise orthogonal. Define

$$\mathbf{r} = \mathbf{x}_1 + \mathbf{x}_2 + \mathbf{x}_3 - \frac{4}{33} \sum_{\mathbf{x} \in X} \mathbf{x} + \frac{1}{81} \sum_{\mathbf{y} \in Y} \mathbf{y}.$$

It can be easily verified that $\mathbf{V}$ is contained in the affine hyperplane $\{\mathbf{v} \in \mathbb{R}^{24} \mid \langle \mathbf{v}, \mathbf{r} \rangle = 1\} \cong \mathbb{R}^{23}$ in $\mathbb{R}^{24}$.

Define

$$\mathbf{u} = \mathbf{x}_1 + \mathbf{x}_2 + \mathbf{x}_3 - \mathbf{r}.$$

It follows that $\langle \mathbf{r}, \mathbf{u} \rangle = 1$ and $\langle \mathbf{u}, \mathbf{u} \rangle = 5$.

Theorem 1. *The set $Z := \{\mathbf{u}\} \cup X \cup Y$ is a 2-distance set of size 277 with squared distances $\{4, 6\}$, contained in the affine hyperplane $\{\mathbf{v} \in \mathbb{R}^{24} \mid \langle \mathbf{v}, \mathbf{r} \rangle = 1\} \cong \mathbb{R}^{23}$.*

Proof. In view of (1), the set $X \cup Y$ is a 2-distance set of size 276 with squared distances $\{4, 6\}$. It suffices to prove

$$\|\mathbf{u} - \mathbf{z}\|^2 \in \{4, 6\} \quad (\mathbf{z} \in X \cup Y).$$

Note that $\langle \mathbf{u}, \mathbf{u} \rangle = 5$ and

$$\begin{aligned} \langle \mathbf{u}, \mathbf{z} \rangle &= \langle \mathbf{x}_1 + \mathbf{x}_2 + \mathbf{x}_3 - \mathbf{r}, \mathbf{z} \rangle \\ &= \begin{cases} 2 & \text{if } \mathbf{z} \in X, \\ 1 & \text{if } \mathbf{z} \in Y. \end{cases} \end{aligned}$$

It follows that

$$\begin{aligned} \|\mathbf{u} - \mathbf{z}\|^2 &= 5 + 3 - 2\langle \mathbf{u}, \mathbf{z} \rangle \\ &= \begin{cases} 4 & \text{if } \mathbf{z} \in X, \\ 6 & \text{if } \mathbf{z} \in Y. \end{cases} \end{aligned}$$

Therefore, $\{\mathbf{u}\} \cup X \cup Y$ is a 2-distance set having squared distances $\{4, 6\}$. $\square$

We remark that the vector $\mathbf{u}$ is independent of the choice of the part. This can be shown in a more general setting.

Lemma 2. *Let $\mathbf{a}_1, \dots, \mathbf{a}_n, \mathbf{b}_1, \dots, \mathbf{b}_n \in \mathbb{R}^d$ be vectors whose Gram matrix is $\begin{bmatrix} nI & J \\ J & nI \end{bmatrix}$, where J denotes the $n \times n$ matrix with all entries equal to 1. Then*

$$\sum_{i=1}^n \mathbf{a}_i = \sum_{i=1}^n \mathbf{b}_i.$$

Proof. By the Gram matrix, we have

$$\begin{aligned}\left\|\sum_{i=1}^n \mathbf{a}_i - \sum_{i=1}^n \mathbf{b}_i\right\|^2 &= \left\|\sum_{i=1}^n \mathbf{a}_i\right\|^2 + \left\|\sum_{i=1}^n \mathbf{b}_i\right\|^2 - 2 \sum_{i=1}^n \sum_{j=1}^n \langle \mathbf{a}_i, \mathbf{b}_j \rangle \\ &= n^2 + n^2 - 2n^2 \\ &= 0.\end{aligned}$$

□

Setting $n = 3$ in the above lemma, we see that $\mathbf{u} = \mathbf{x}'_1 + \mathbf{x}'_2 + \mathbf{x}'_3 - \mathbf{r}$ holds whenever $\{\mathbf{x}'_1, \mathbf{x}'_2, \mathbf{x}'_3\} \subseteq X$ is a set of one of the 11 parts.

3 Maximality

In this section, we show that our 2-distance set Z of size 277 in the affine hyperplane $H = \{\mathbf{v} \in \mathbb{R}^{24} \mid \langle \mathbf{v}, \mathbf{r} \rangle = 1\} \cong \mathbb{R}^{23}$ is maximal, in the sense that it cannot be extended to a larger 2-distance set in $\mathbb{R}^{23}$. However, the 2-distance set Z is not maximal in $\mathbb{R}^{24}$, since $Z \cup \{\frac{1+\sqrt{3}}{2}\mathbf{r}, \frac{1-\sqrt{3}}{2}\mathbf{r}\}$ is a larger 2-distance set. Indeed, for $\mathbf{z} \in Z$, we have

$$\begin{aligned}\left\|\mathbf{z} - \frac{1 \pm \sqrt{3}}{2}\mathbf{r}\right\|^2 &= \|\mathbf{z}\|^2 + 2 + \sqrt{3} - (1 + \sqrt{3})\langle \mathbf{z}, \mathbf{r} \rangle \\ &= \|\mathbf{z}\|^2 + 1 \\ &= \begin{cases} 6 & \text{if } \mathbf{z} = \mathbf{u}, \\ 4 & \text{otherwise,} \end{cases}\end{aligned}$$

and

$$\begin{aligned}\left\|\frac{1+\sqrt{3}}{2}\mathbf{r} - \frac{1-\sqrt{3}}{2}\mathbf{r}\right\|^2 &= \|\sqrt{3}\mathbf{r}\|^2 \\ &= 6.\end{aligned}$$

It turns out that this is the only way to add vectors in $\mathbb{R}^{24}$ to Z to maintain the 2-distance property, as shown in the following proposition.

Proposition 3. *The 2-distance set Z constructed above is not contained in any larger 2-distance set in H . The only 2-distance sets in $\mathbb{R}^{24}$ containing Z properly are*

$$Z \cup \left\{\frac{1+\sqrt{3}}{2}\mathbf{r}\right\}, \quad Z \cup \left\{\frac{1-\sqrt{3}}{2}\mathbf{r}\right\}, \quad \text{and} \quad Z \cup \left\{\frac{1+\sqrt{3}}{2}\mathbf{r}, \frac{1-\sqrt{3}}{2}\mathbf{r}\right\}.$$

Proof. We only prove the second statement, as the first statement follows from the second. Let $Z' = Z - \mathbf{u} = \{\mathbf{z} - \mathbf{u} \mid \mathbf{z} \in Z\}$. It suffices to show that the only 2-distance set in $\mathbb{R}^{24}$ which properly contains Z' is $Z' \cup \{\frac{1+\sqrt{3}}{2}\mathbf{r} - \mathbf{u}\}$. Since every pair of vectors in Z' has integer inner product, the $\mathbb{Z}$ -span M of Z' is an integral lattice in $\mathbf{r}^\perp \cong \mathbb{R}^{23}$.

Suppose that there exists a vector $\mathbf{w} \in \mathbb{R}^{24}$ such that $Z' \cup \{\mathbf{w}\}$ is a 2-distance set properly containing Z' . Since $0 \in Z'$, we have $\langle \mathbf{w}, \mathbf{w} \rangle = 4$ or 6 . Let $\mathbf{v}$ be the orthogonal projection of $\mathbf{w}$ to $\mathbf{r}^\perp$. Then $\|\mathbf{v}\|^2 \leq \|\mathbf{w}\|^2 \leq 6$ and, for $\mathbf{z}' \in Z'$,

$$\begin{aligned} \langle \mathbf{z}', \mathbf{v} \rangle &= \langle \mathbf{z}', \mathbf{w} \rangle \\ &= \frac{1}{2}(\|\mathbf{z}'\|^2 + \|\mathbf{w}\|^2 - \|\mathbf{z}' - \mathbf{w}\|^2) \\ &\in \begin{cases} 2 + \frac{1}{2}(\|\mathbf{z}'\|^2 - \{4, 6\}) & \text{if } \|\mathbf{w}\| = 4, \\ 3 + \frac{1}{2}(\|\mathbf{z}'\|^2 - \{4, 6\}) & \text{if } \|\mathbf{w}\| = 6 \end{cases} \\ &= \begin{cases} \{\frac{1}{2}\|\mathbf{z}'\|^2, \frac{1}{2}\|\mathbf{z}'\|^2 - 1\} & \text{if } \|\mathbf{w}\| = 4, \\ \{\frac{1}{2}\|\mathbf{z}'\|^2, \frac{1}{2}\|\mathbf{z}'\|^2 + 1\} & \text{if } \|\mathbf{w}\| = 6. \end{cases} \end{aligned} \quad (2)$$

In particular, $\langle \mathbf{z}', \mathbf{v} \rangle \in \mathbb{Z}$ for all $\mathbf{z}' \in Z'$, so $\mathbf{v}$ belongs to the dual lattice

$$M^* = \{\mathbf{x} \in \mathbf{r}^\perp \mid \forall \mathbf{z}' \in M, \langle \mathbf{x}, \mathbf{z}' \rangle \in \mathbb{Z}\}$$

of M . By Magma [3], it can be verified that M^* contains 16689170 nonzero vectors $\mathbf{v}$ with $\|\mathbf{v}\|^2 \leq 6$. Among them, the only vector $\mathbf{v}$ that satisfies (2) for all $\mathbf{z}' \in Z'$ is $\mathbf{v} = \frac{1}{2}\mathbf{r} - \mathbf{u}$, in which case $\mathbf{w} = \frac{1 \pm \sqrt{3}}{2}\mathbf{r} - \mathbf{u}$. It follows that the only 2-distance sets in $\mathbb{R}^{24}$ containing Z properly are the three sets in the statement. $\square$

Lisoněk [8] showed that there exists a 2-distance set in the Euclidean space $\mathbb{R}^7$ consisting of $29 = \binom{8}{2} + 1$ points. Since $277 = \binom{24}{2} + 1$, our set may be regarded as an analogue of Lisoněk's example in $\mathbb{R}^{23}$. Also, Lisoněk [8, Theorem 4.4] showed that a 2-distance set of size 29 in $\mathbb{R}^7$ is unique up to isometry and scaling. It would be interesting to know if the analogous statement holds for a 2-distance set of size 277 in $\mathbb{R}^{23}$.

Lisoněk [8] also constructed a 2-distance set of size $45 = \binom{10}{2}$ in $\mathbb{R}^8$, which contains the 2-distance set of size 29 in $\mathbb{R}^7$ as a subset. Proposition 3 shows that our 277 points cannot be extended to $325 = \binom{26}{2}$ points in $\mathbb{R}^{24}$ as a 2-distance set.

It remains as a challenging problem to decide whether there exists a 2-distance set in $\mathbb{R}^{24}$ of size $325 = \binom{26}{2}$.

Acknowledgements

The work of the second and third author was supported by the Research Institute for Mathematical Sciences, an International Joint Usage/Research Center located in Kyoto University. We thank Wei-Hsuan Yu for helpful discussions. We also thank the anonymous referees for their valuable comments and suggestions, which helped improve the presentation of this paper.

Data Availability Statement

No data was used for the research described in the article.

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A Magma code

```

Z:=Integers();
F:=GF(3);
C:=GolayCode(F,false);
X:=[ < a,b > : a in F, b in [1..11] ];
#X eq 33;
EX:={ {i,j} : i,j in {1..33}
      | i lt j and X[i][2] ne X[j][2] };
K11x3:=MultipartiteGraph([3:i in [1..11]]);
tf:=IsIsomorphic(Graph< 33 | EX >,K11x3);
tf;

Y:=[ y : y in Dual(C) ];
#Y eq 243;

```

```

EXY:={ {i,j+33} : i in {1..33}, j in {1..243}
  | Y[j][X[i][2]] ne X[i][1] };
EY:={ {i+33,j+33} : i,j in {1..243}
  | Weight(Y[i]-Y[j]) eq 6 };
Gamma:=Graph< 276 | EX join EXY join EY >;
VX:={ Vertices(Gamma) | i : i in {1..33} };
VY:={ Vertices(Gamma) | i : i in {34..276} };
[ [ { #(Neighbours(x) meet VX) : x in VX },
  { #(Neighbours(x) meet VY) : x in VX } ],
  [ { #(Neighbours(y) meet VX) : y in VY },
  { #(Neighbours(y) meet VY) : y in VY } ] ]
eq [ [ {30},{162} ], [ {22},{132} ] ];

J:=Matrix(Z,276,276,[1:i in [1..276^2]]);
I:=ScalarMatrix(276,1);
A:=AdjacencyMatrix(Gamma);
RX<x>:=PolynomialRing(Z);
RX!CharacteristicPolynomial(A)
eq (x-27)^22*(x+3)^252*(x^2-162*x+396);
S:=2*A+I-J;
Eigenvalues(S) eq { <55, 23>, <-5, 253> };

gram,XX,r:=LLLGram(A+3*I);
Xi:=XX^(-1);
L:=LatticeWithGram(Submatrix(gram,[1..r],[1..r]));
X276:=[ L![ Xi[i,j] : j in [1..r] ] : i in [1..276] ];
roots:={&join{ {r[1],-r[1]} : r in ShortVectors(L,2,2) };
#roots eq 2;
rt:=[ r : r in roots | (X276[1],r) eq 1 ][1];
&and{ (rt,x) eq 1 : x in X276 };
&and{ (x-y,x-y) in {4,6} : x,y in X276 | x ne y };
u:={&+ [ X276[i] : i in [1..3] ]-rt;
(u,u) eq 5 and (rt,u) eq 1;
&and{ (u-x,u-x) in {4,6} : x in X276 };
XL:=[ X276[i] : i in [1..33] ];
YL:=[ X276[i] : i in [34..276] ];
&and{ (XL[i],XL[j]) eq 0 : i,j in [1..3] | i ne j };
rhs:=XL[1]+XL[2]+XL[3]-4/33*&+XL+1/81*&+YL;
Parent(rhs)!rt eq rhs;
Y276:={ x-u : x in X276 };
M1:=sub< L | Y276 >;
Rank(M1) eq 23;

```

```

MD:=Dual(M1:Rescale:=false);
Y276D:={ MD | y : y in Y276 };
Minimum(MD) eq 5/2;
Ms:=ShortVectors(MD,5/2,6);
2*#Ms eq 16689170;

adm4:=func< v | forall(z){ z : z in Y276D
  | (z,v) in { i,i-1 } where i:=(z,z)/2 } >;
not &or{ adm4(w[1]) or adm4(-w[1]) : w in Ms };

adm6:=func< v | forall(z){ z : z in Y276D
  | (z,v) in { i,i+1 } where i:=(z,z)/2 } >;
&join{ { v : v in { w[1],-w[1] } | adm6(v) } : w in Ms }
  eq { 1/2*rt-u };

// Total time: 788.600 seconds, Total memory usage: 4584.38MB

```