

# Vertex-minors and quantum computing

Rose McCarty

Schools of Math and CS



October 27, 2025, Bertinoro Workshop on Algorithms and Graphs  
With **Jim Geelen** and **Paul Wollan**.

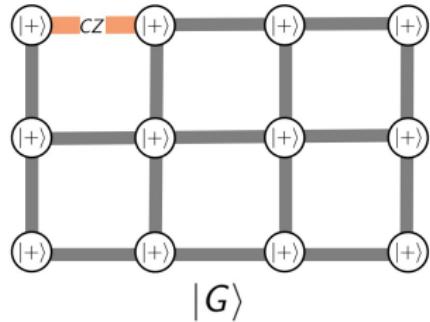
# Quantum Graph States: Bridging Classical Theory and Quantum Innovation—Workshop Summary

Eric Chitambar<sup>1</sup>, Kenneth Goodenough<sup>2</sup>, Otfried Gühne<sup>3</sup>, Rose McCarty<sup>4</sup>, Simon Perdrix<sup>5</sup>,  
Vito Scarola<sup>\*,6</sup>, Shuo Sun<sup>7</sup>, and Quntao Zhang<sup>8,9</sup>



$$|G'\rangle = \left( -e^{i\frac{\pi}{2} \frac{X_1 - Z_1}{\sqrt{2}}} \otimes Z_2 \otimes Z_3 \otimes e^{i\frac{\pi}{2} \frac{X_4 - Z_4}{\sqrt{2}}} \right) |G\rangle.$$

What is the **quantum state**  $|G\rangle$  associated with a graph  $G$ ?

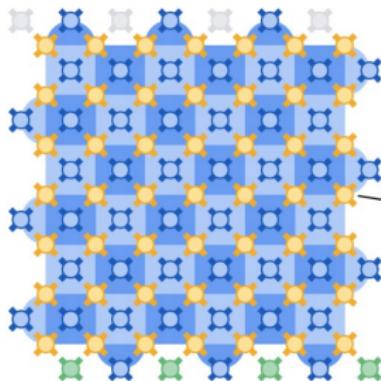


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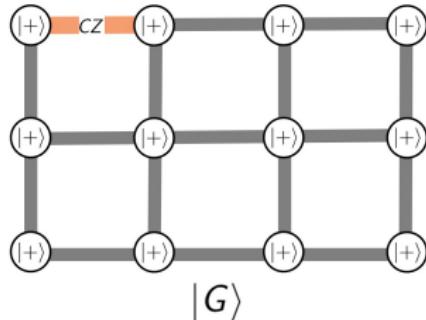
### Quantum error correction below the surface code threshold

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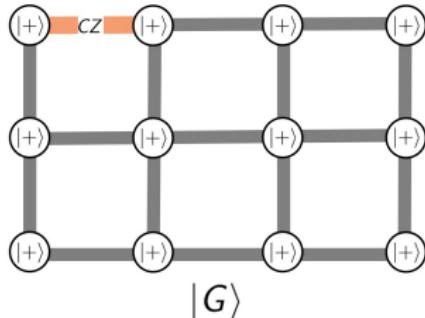


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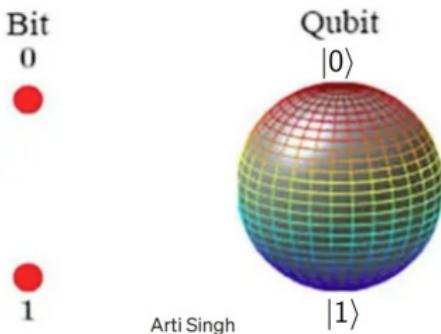
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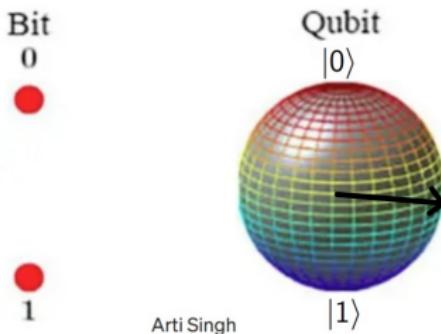
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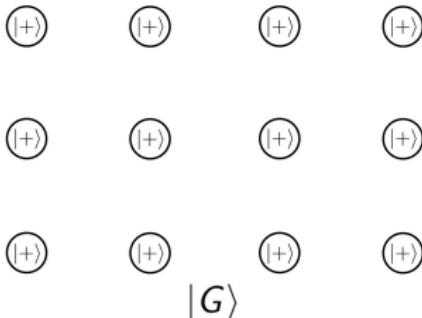


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$$\begin{bmatrix} \alpha \\ \beta \end{bmatrix} \otimes \begin{bmatrix} \gamma \\ \delta \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} \alpha\gamma \\ \alpha\delta \\ \beta\gamma \\ \beta\delta \end{bmatrix}$$

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$$|01\rangle = |0\rangle \otimes |1\rangle = \begin{bmatrix} 1 \\ 0 \end{bmatrix} \otimes \begin{bmatrix} 0 \\ 1 \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} 0 \\ 1 \\ 0 \\ 0 \end{bmatrix}$$

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So  $|000\rangle, |001\rangle, |010\rangle, |011\rangle, \dots, |111\rangle$  form a basis for  $\mathbb{C}^2 \otimes \mathbb{C}^2 \otimes \mathbb{C}^2$  called the **computational basis**.

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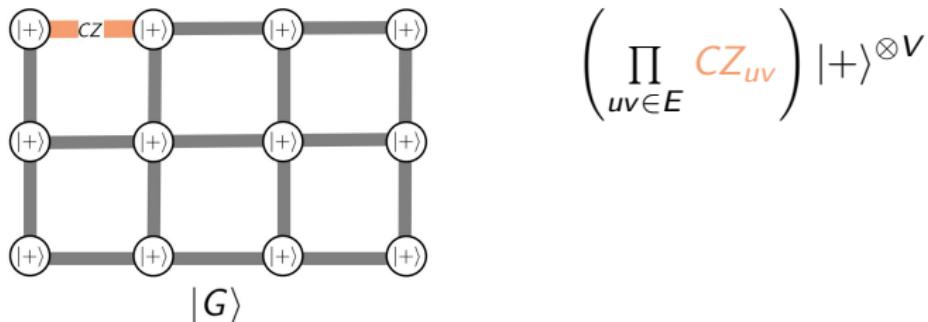
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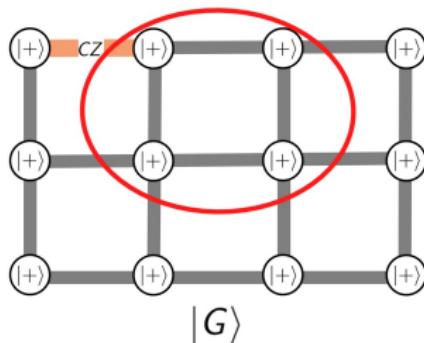
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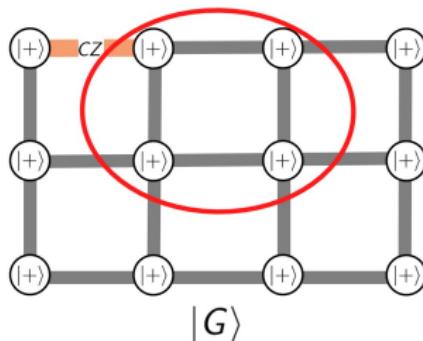
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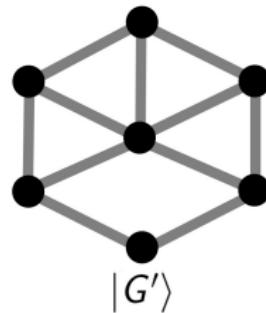
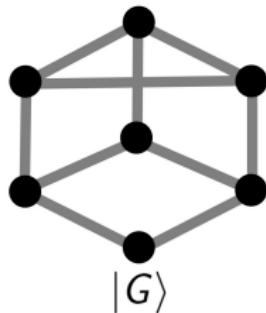
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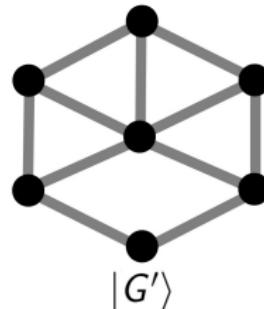
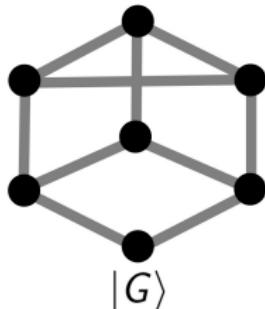
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A state is **entangled** if it *cannot* be written as  $\bigotimes_{v \in V} |\phi_v\rangle$ .

When are two graph states  
 $|G\rangle$  and  $|G'\rangle$  **equivalent**?

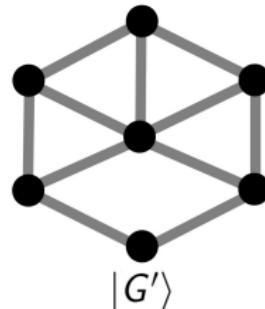
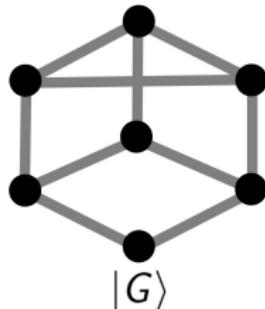


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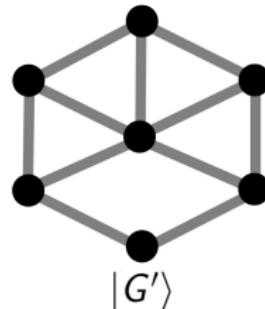
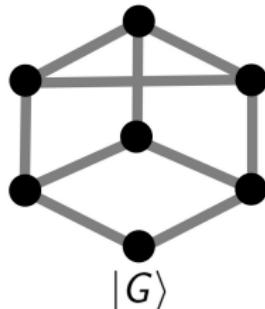
**Example:** We can switch 0s and 1s on the first qubit:

$$|000\rangle + |001\rangle + |111\rangle$$

$$\simeq_{LU}$$

$$|100\rangle + |101\rangle + |011\rangle$$

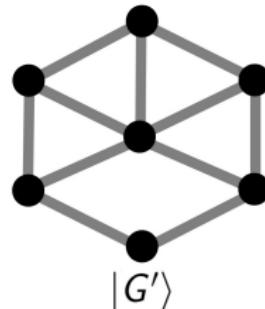
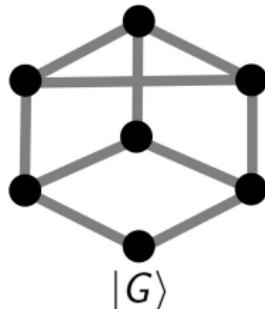
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**Example:** We can switch 0s and 1s on the first qubit; apply the gate  $X = \begin{bmatrix} 0 & 1 \\ 1 & 0 \end{bmatrix}$  to the first qubit.

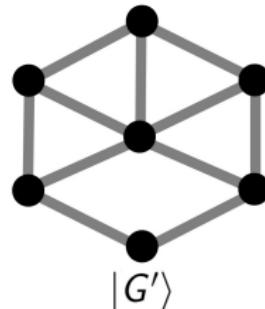
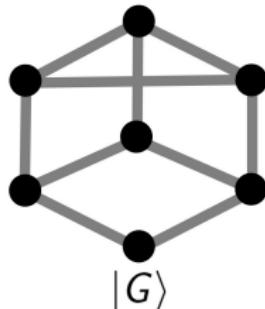
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Equivalent states have the same “level of entanglement” since  $U_1 (|\phi_1\rangle \otimes |\phi_2\rangle \otimes \dots \otimes |\phi_n\rangle) = (U_1 |\phi_1\rangle) \otimes |\phi_2\rangle \otimes \dots \otimes |\phi_n\rangle$ .

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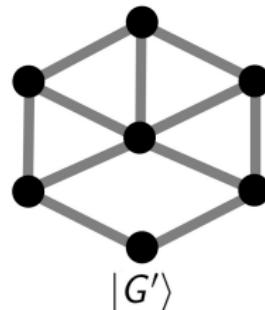
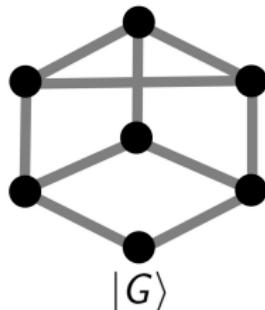
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Theorem (Schlingemann 2002)

Every **stabilizer** state is  $LU$ -equivalent to a graph state.

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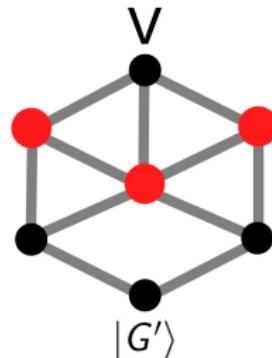
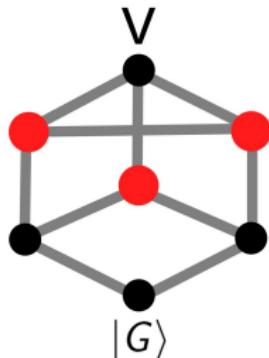


Two states on the same set of qubits are **local Clifford equivalent** if they only differ up to 1-qubit gates generated by  $H$  and  $S$ .

$$H = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}} \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 1 \\ 1 & -1 \end{bmatrix}$$

$$S = \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 0 \\ 0 & i \end{bmatrix}$$

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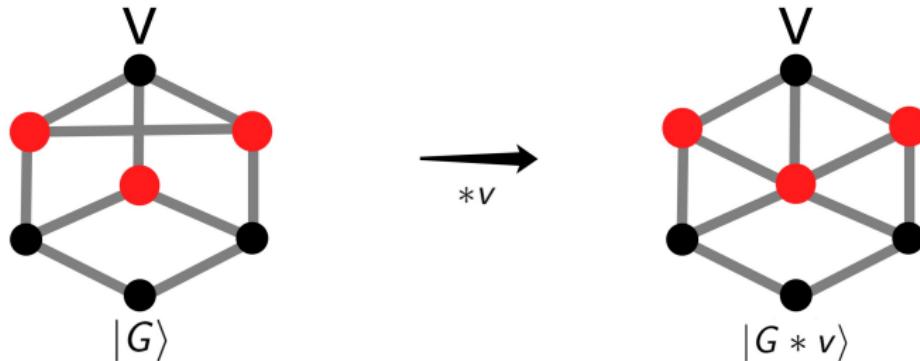
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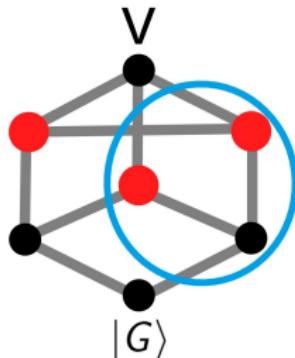
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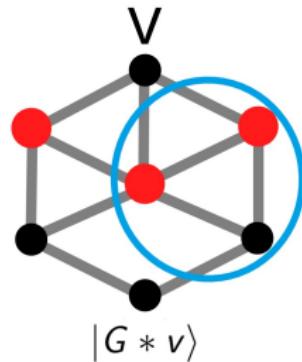
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Given  $v \in V$ , perform  $HSH$  at  $v$  and  $S^\dagger$  at each **neighbor** of  $v$ . The resulting graph  $G * v$  is obtained from  $G$  by **locally complementing** at  $v$ : switching adjacencies within  $N(v)$ .

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$(-1)^{|E(supps)|} |s\rangle$   
changes sign  
iff  
 $|N(v) \cap supps| \equiv 2, 3 \pmod{4}$



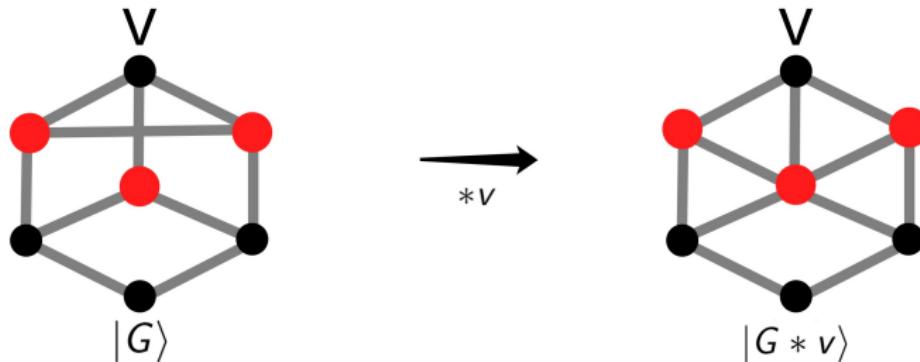
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Given  $v \in V$ , perform  $HSH$  at  $v$  and  $S^\dagger$  at each **neighbor** of  $v$ .  
The resulting graph  $G * v$  is obtained from  $G$  by **locally complementing** at  $v$ : switching adjacencies within  $N(v)$ .

When are two graph states  
 $|G\rangle$  and  $|G'\rangle$  **equivalent**?



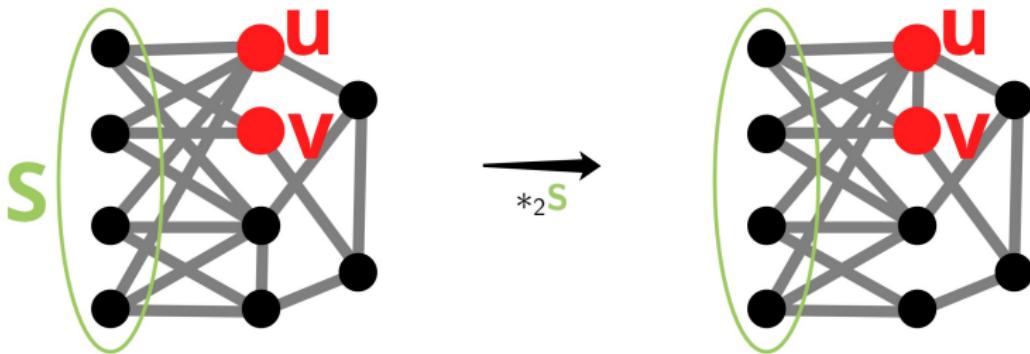
Theorem (Van den Nest, Dehaene, De Moor 2004)

Two graph states  $|G\rangle$  and  $|G'\rangle$  are **local Clifford equivalent** iff there is a sequence of vertices so that  $|G'\rangle = |G * v_1 * \dots * v_k\rangle$ .

$$H = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}} \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 1 \\ 1 & -1 \end{bmatrix}$$

$$S = \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 0 \\ 0 & i \end{bmatrix}$$

When are two graph states  
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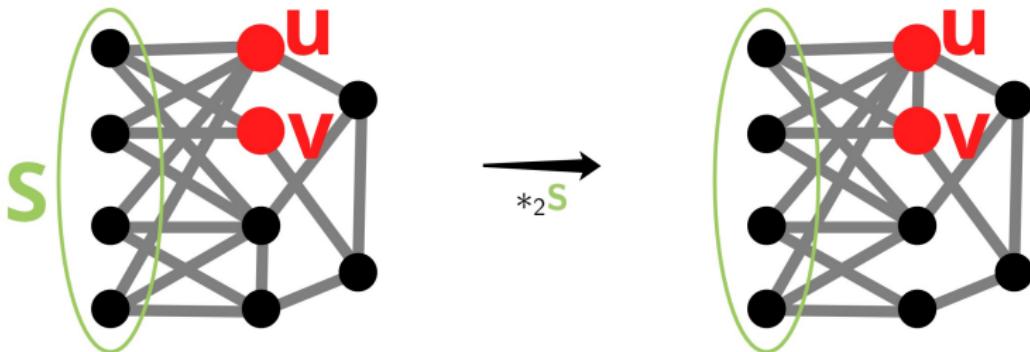


Theorem (Claudet and Perdrix 2025)

Two graph states  $|G\rangle$  and  $|G'\rangle$  are **local unitary equivalent** iff  $G'$  can be obtained from  $G$  by  **$r$ -local complementation**, for  $r \in \mathbb{Z}^+$ .

$$H = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2}} \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 1 \\ 1 & -1 \end{bmatrix} \quad T = \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 0 \\ 0 & e^{i\pi/4} \end{bmatrix} \quad S = \begin{bmatrix} 1 & 0 \\ 0 & i \end{bmatrix} \quad \dots$$

When are two graph states  $|G\rangle$  and  $|G'\rangle$  **equivalent**?

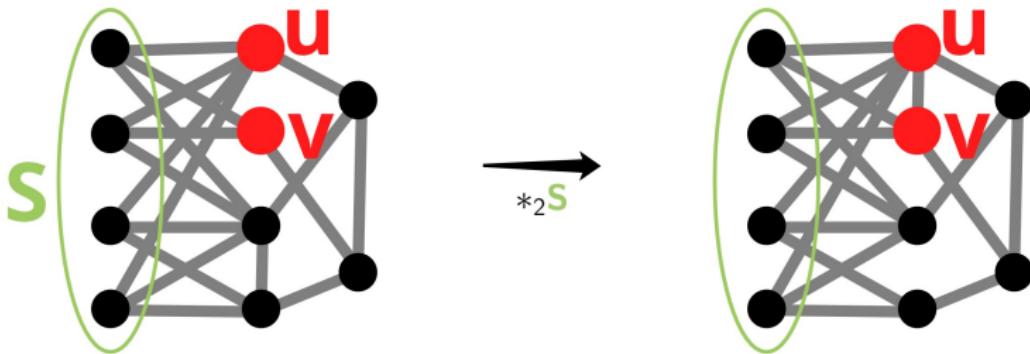


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Two graph states  $|G\rangle$  and  $|G'\rangle$  are **local unitary equivalent** iff  $G'$  can be obtained from  $G$  by **r-local complementation**, for  $r \in \mathbb{Z}^+$ .

If  $S$  is an independent set and  $G * S = G$ , i.e., every pair  $u, v$  have  $|N(u) \cap N(v) \cap S| \equiv 0 \pmod{2}$ , then we may instead switch adjencies between  $u$  and  $v$  if  $|N(u) \cap N(v) \cap S| \equiv 2 \pmod{4}$ .

When are two graph states  
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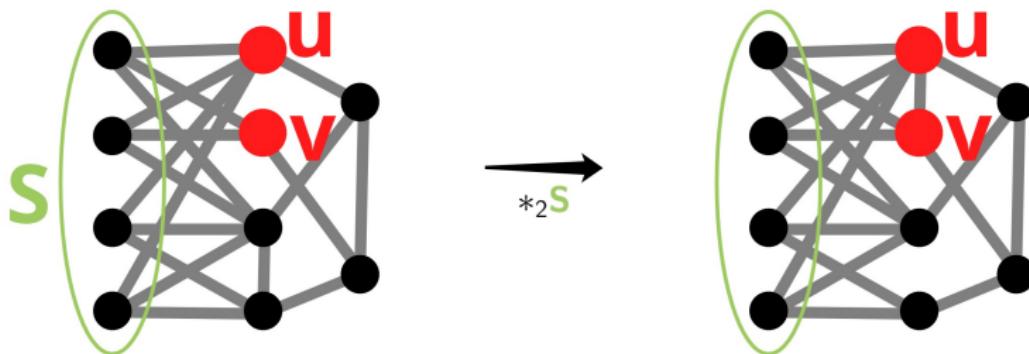
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Meta Conjecture (originally Schlingemann; see Krueger & Werner 05)

In general,  $r$ -local complementation is “not much more powerful” than local complementation.

When are two graph states  $|G\rangle$  and  $|G'\rangle$  **equivalent**?



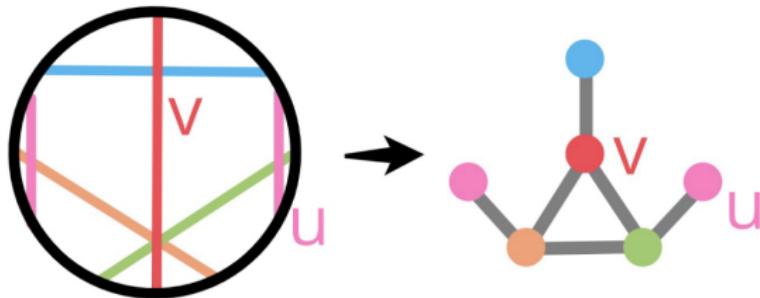
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Theorem (Ji, Chen, Wei, and Ying 2010)

There exists a pair of graph states which are *LU*-equivalent but **not** *LC*-equivalent.

When are two graph states  $|G\rangle$  and  $|G'\rangle$  **equivalent**?



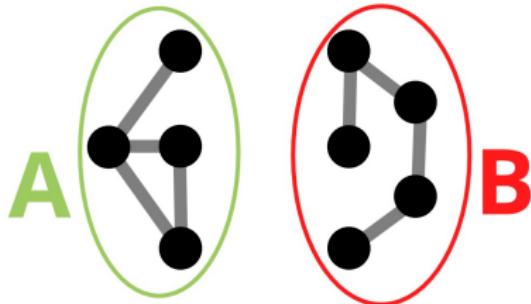
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Theorem (Claudet, Geelen, Hahn, McCarty, Poulsen 2025+)

For **circle graphs**,  $LU$ -equivalence  $\leftrightarrow$   $LC$ -equivalence.

When are two graph states  
 $|G\rangle$  and  $|G'\rangle$  **equivalent**?



$$|G\rangle = |\phi^A\rangle \otimes |\phi^B\rangle$$

$$\text{cut-rank}(A, B) = 0$$

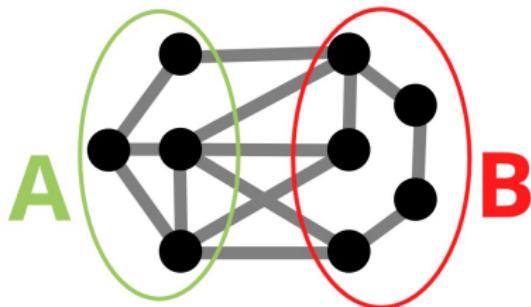
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Lemma (Hein, Eisert, and Briegel 2004)

*LU-equivalent graphs have the same **cut-rank** function.*

When are two graph states  
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While minimizing  $r$ , write:

$$|G\rangle = \sum_{i=1}^r \xi_i |\phi_i^A\rangle \otimes |\phi_i^B\rangle.$$

$$\text{cut-rank}(A, B) = \log_2(r)$$

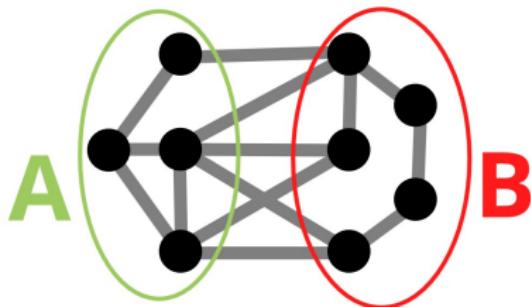
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$$\begin{aligned}\text{cut-rank}(A, B) &= \log_2(r) \\ &= \text{rank}_{GF(2)}(\text{Adj}[A, B])\end{aligned}$$

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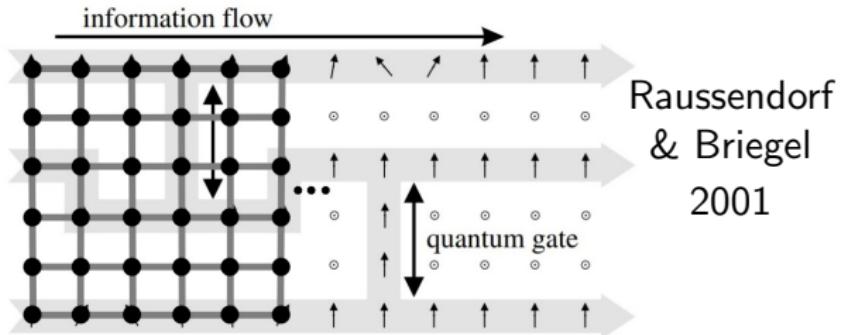
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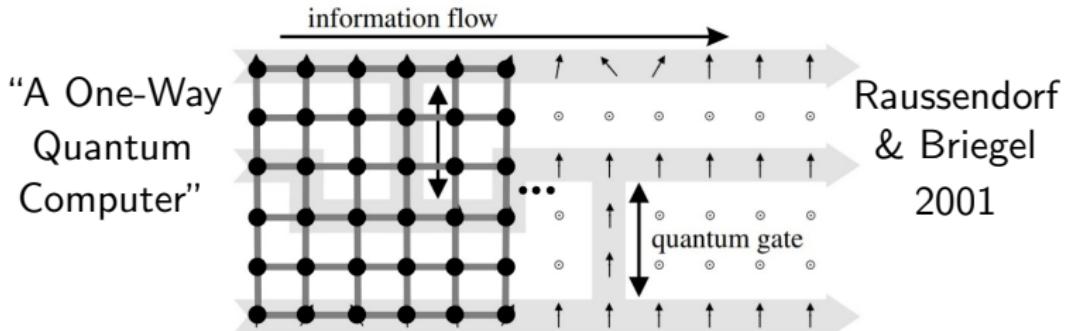
*Which graph classes can serve as **universal resources** for quantum computation?*

“A One-Way Quantum Computer”



Question (see Van den Nest, Dür, Vidal, & Briegel 2007)

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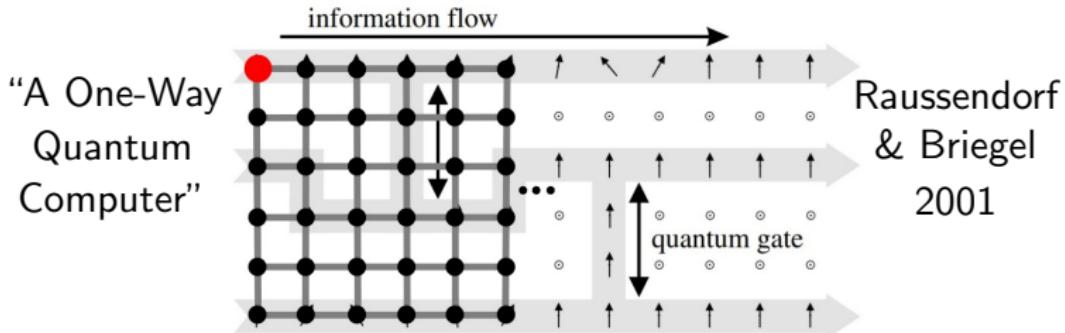


In **measurement-based quantum computation**, we:

- First prepare a graph state  $|G\rangle$ .

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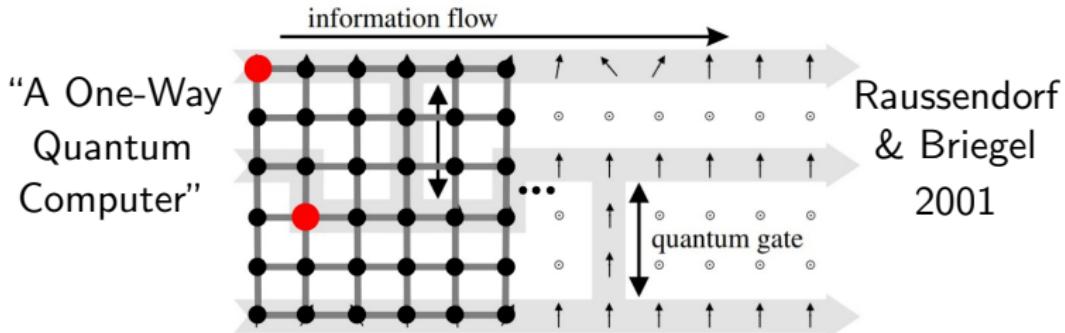


In **measurement-based quantum computation**, we:

- First prepare a graph state  $|G\rangle$ .
- Measure a qubit: measuring  $\begin{bmatrix} \alpha \\ \beta \end{bmatrix}$  in the computational basis returns 0 with probability  $|\alpha|^2$  and 1 with probability  $|\beta|^2$ .

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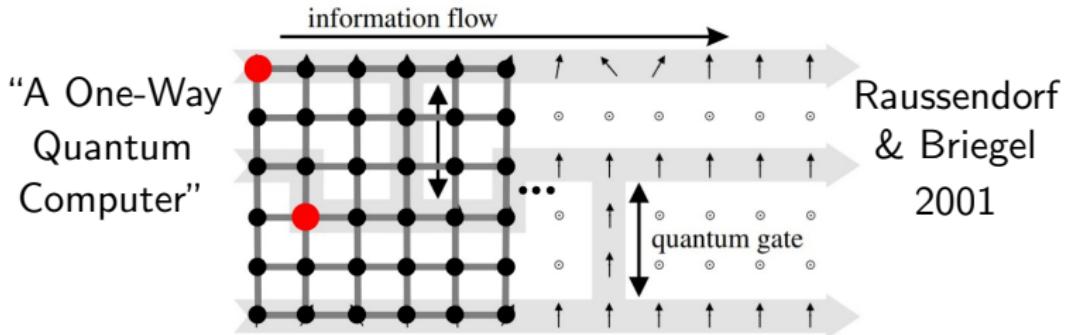


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- Measure a qubit: measuring  $\begin{bmatrix} \alpha \\ \beta \end{bmatrix}$  in the computational basis returns 0 with probability  $|\alpha|^2$  and 1 with probability  $|\beta|^2$ .
- Choose the next measurement based on prior outcomes.

Question (see Van den Nest, Dür, Vidal, & Briegel 2007)

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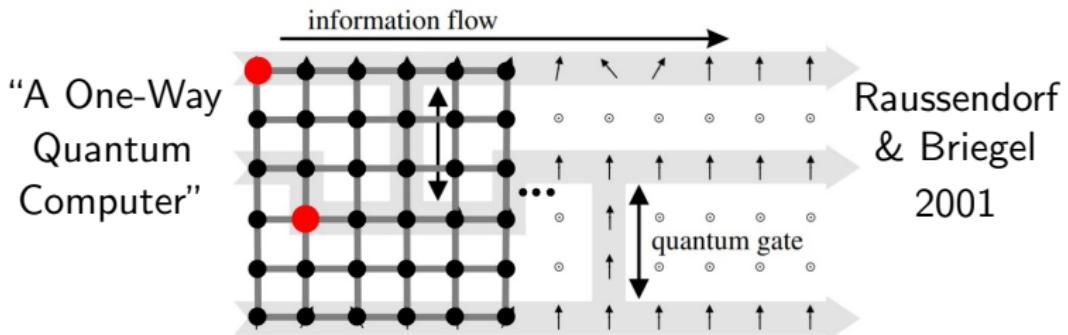


Theorem (Raussendorf and Briegel 2001)

When every **grid** (“2D cluster state”) can be prepared, this is equivalent to the quantum gate model (up to polynomial factors).

Question (see Van den Nest, Dür, Vidal, & Briegel 2007)

*Which graph classes can serve as **universal resources** for quantum computation?*

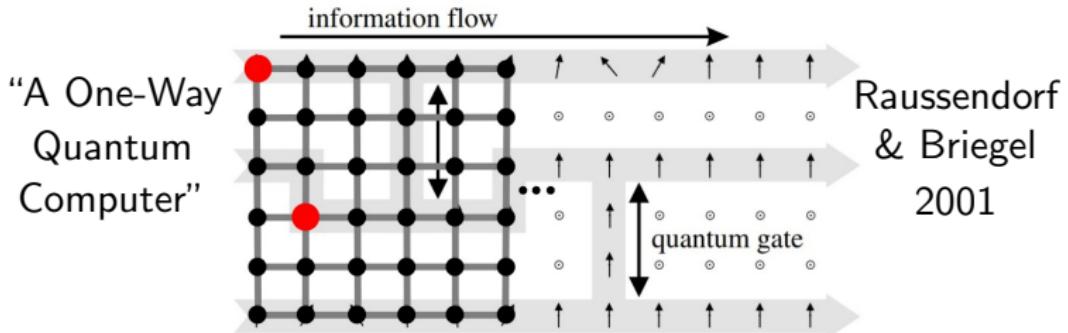


Question

*Are there graphs which can **more efficiently** model every  $n$ -qubit quantum gate than **grids**?*

Question (see Van den Nest, Dür, Vidal, & Briegel 2007)

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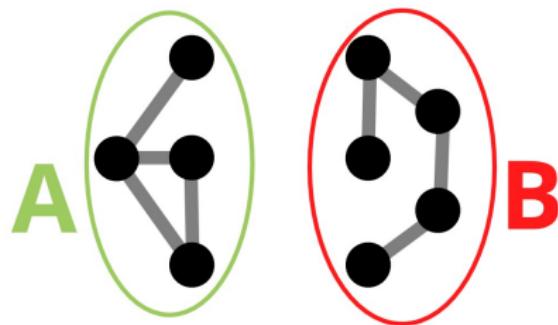


Question (see Rossi, Huber, Bruß, & Macciavello 13)

*Are there architectures which are easier to build experimentally?  
Perhaps **hypergraph states**?*

Question (see Van den Nest, Dür, Vidal, & Briegel 2007)

Which graph classes can serve as **universal resources** for quantum computation?

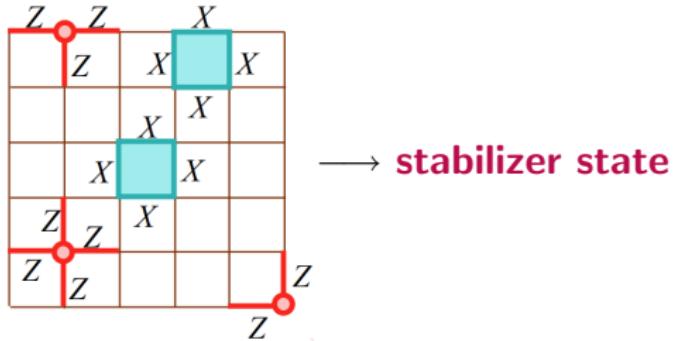


Theorem (Van den Nest, Dür, Vidal, & Briegel 2007)

Classes of graphs with logarithmic **rank-width** (i.e. “low entanglement”) only yield classical computers.

Question (see Van den Nest, Dür, Vidal, & Briegel 2007)

Which graph classes can serve as **universal resources** for quantum computation?

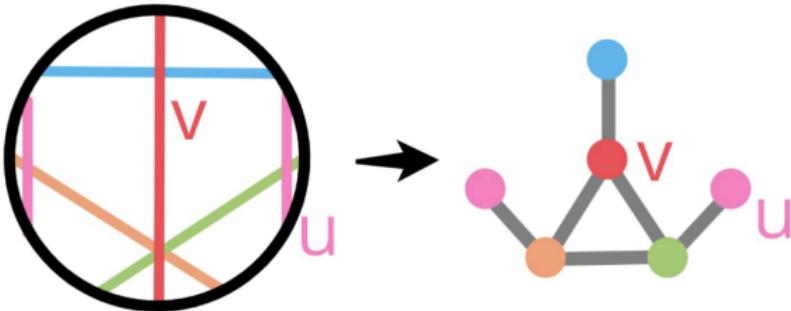


Theorem (Bravyi & Raussendorf 07 + Bravyi, Gosset, & Liu 22)

However, high entanglement is not sufficient; there are also “topological/geometric” obstructions.

Question (see Van den Nest, Dür, Vidal, & Briegel 2007)

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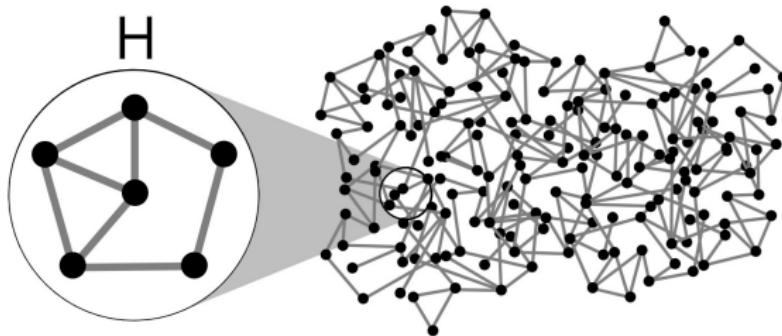


Theorem (Harrison, Iyer, Parekh, Thompson, Zhao 25+)

*The class of all **circle graphs** also yields a classical computer.*

Question (see Van den Nest, Dür, Vidal, & Briegel 2007)

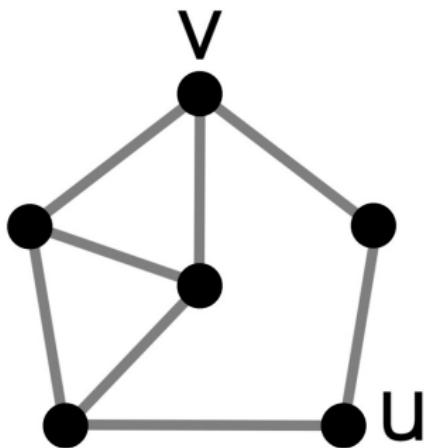
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Conjecture (Geelen)

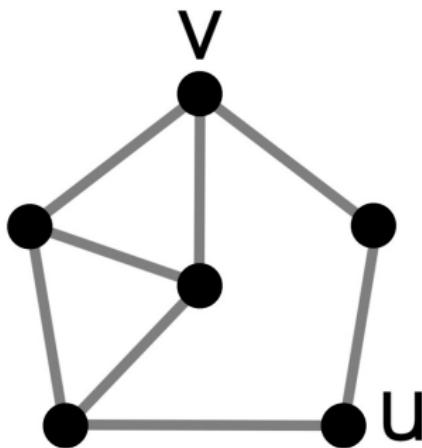
*Every class that does **not** yield a classical computer **contains all graphs** up to local complementation and vertex deletion.*

The **vertex-minors** of a graph  $G$  are the graphs that can be obtained from  $G$  by:



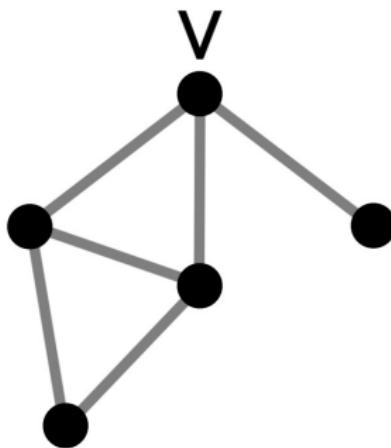
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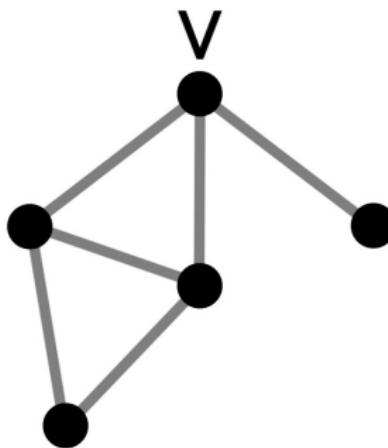
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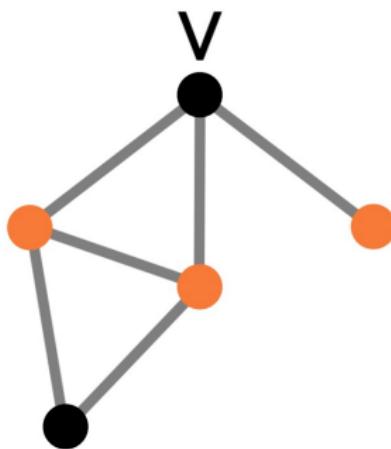
The **vertex-minors** of a graph  $G$  are the graphs that can be obtained from  $G$  by:

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- **locally complementing** at vertices



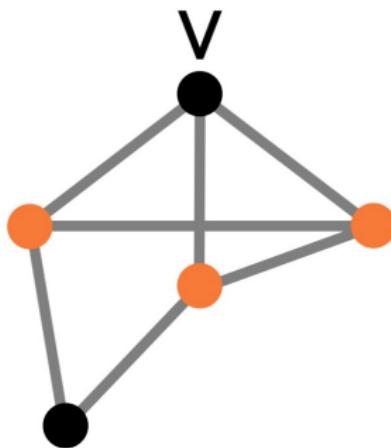
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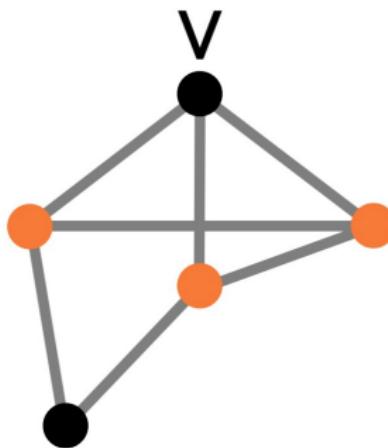
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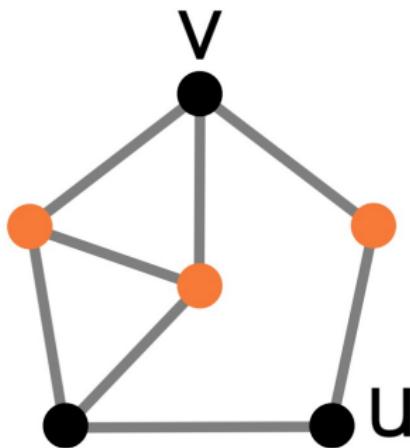
We may do all local complementations first.



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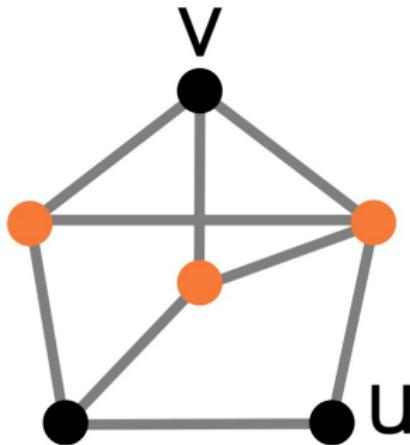
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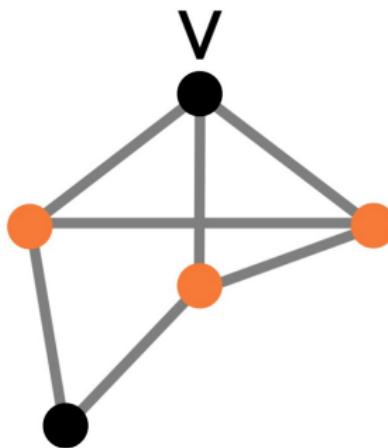
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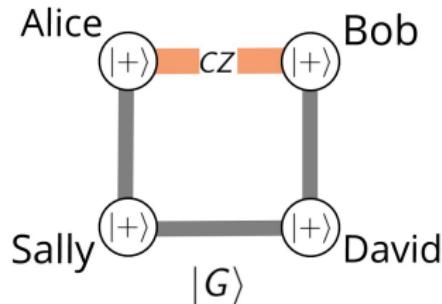
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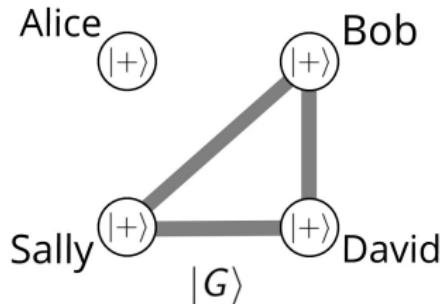
Proposition (Dahlberg-Helsen-Wehner 20)

A graph  $H$  without isolated vertices is a **vertex-minor** of  $G$  iff  $|H\rangle$  can be prepared from  $|G\rangle$  using  $LC + LPM + CC$ .

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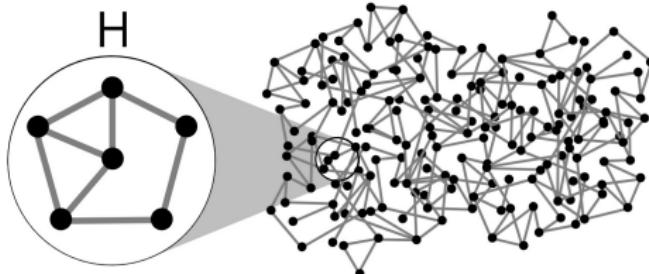
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**Theorem** (Cautrès, Claudet, Mhalla, Perdrix, Savin, & Thomassé 2024)

*There are graphs with  $\mathcal{O}(n^2)$ -many vertices which **contain** every  **$n$ -vertex** graph as a vertex-minor. This is best possible.*

## Structure Theorem (Robertson & Seymour 2003)

*The graphs in any proper **minor-closed** class “decompose” into parts that “almost embed” in a surface of bounded genus.*

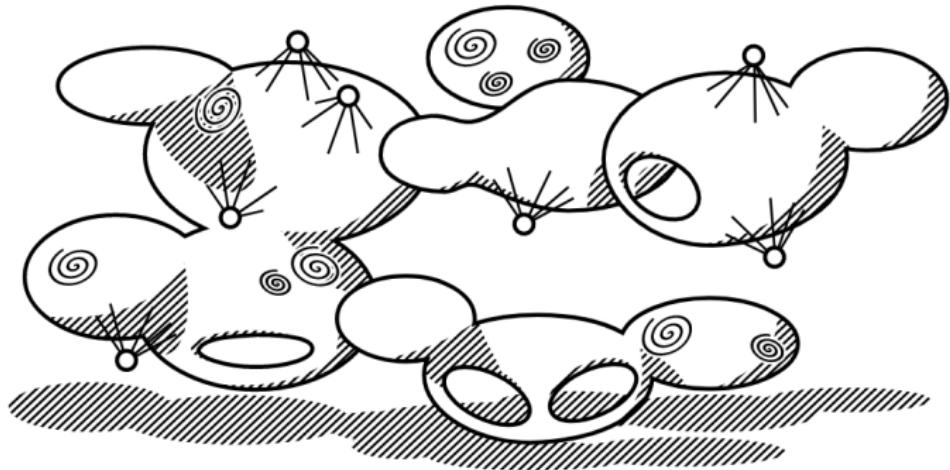
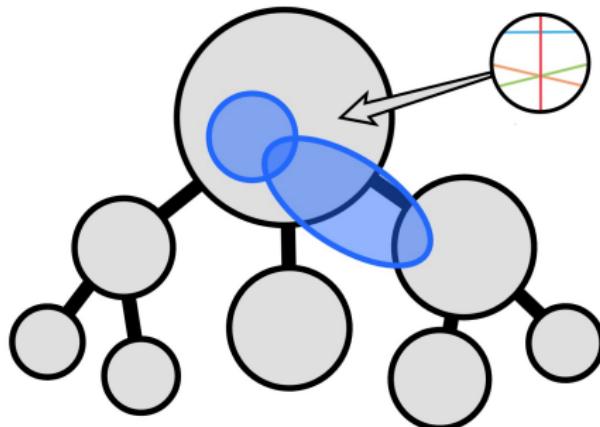


Figure by Felix Reidl

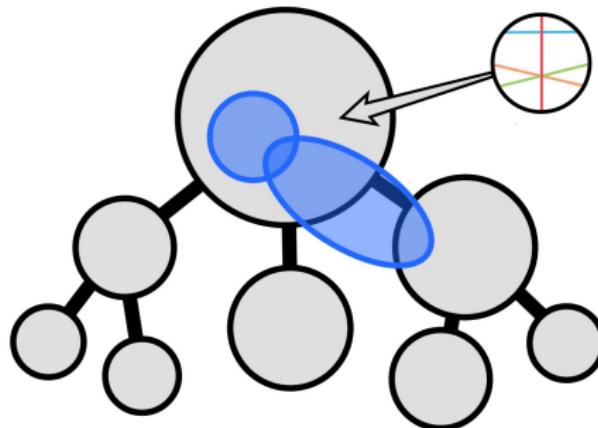
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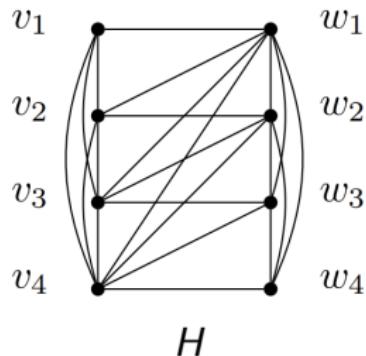
*The graphs in any proper **vertex-minor**-closed class “decompose” into parts that are “almost” **circle graphs**.*



Ongoing project with Jim Geelen & Paul Wollan  
aiming to prove the conjecture.

Theorem (Kwon, McCarty, Oum, Wollan 2021)

A graph class “looks like shallow trees” (w.r.t. **cut-rank**) iff it does not contain all **half-graphs** as vertex-minors.

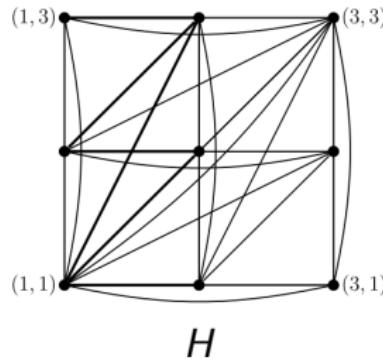


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A graph class “looks like trees” (w.r.t. **cut-rank**) iff it does not contain all **comparability grids** as vertex-minors.

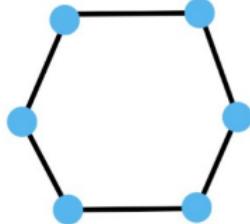


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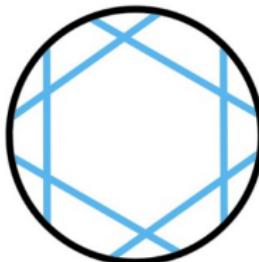
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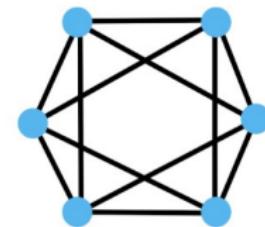
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circle graph



chord diagram

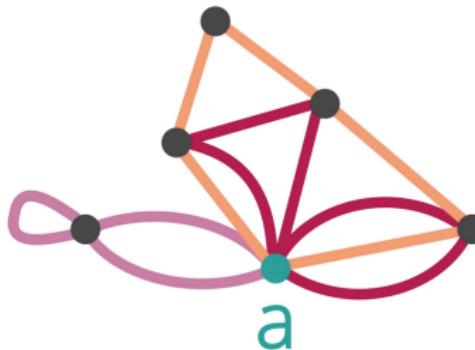


tour graph

## Theorem (McCarty 24)

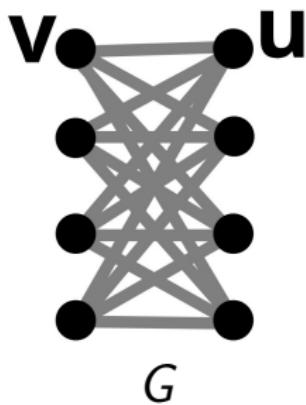
For any Eulerian graph  $G$  and vertex  $a$ , the **maximum** size of a circuit decomposition where every circuit is odd and hits  $a$  equals

$$\text{minimum}_{\gamma',X} \left( \gamma'(E(X)) + \frac{1}{2}|\delta(X)| - \text{odd}_{\gamma'}(G - X) \right).$$



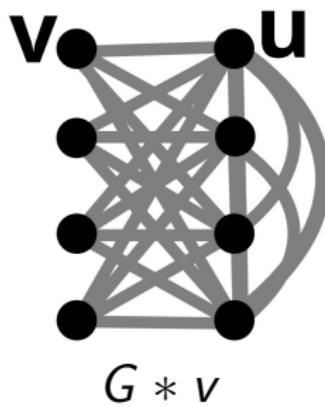
- **Q:** How difficult is it to **prepare** a desired graph state  $|G\rangle$ ?

Apply  $\prod_{xy \in E} CZ_{xy}$



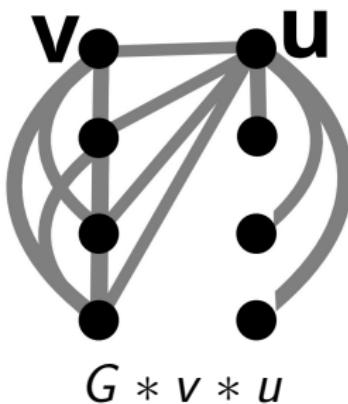
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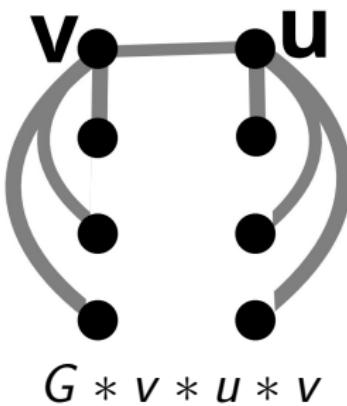
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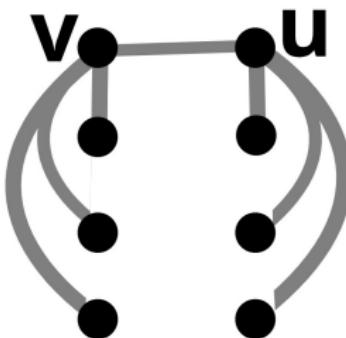


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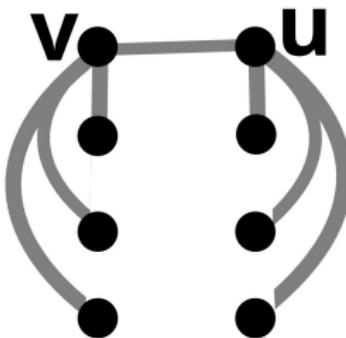
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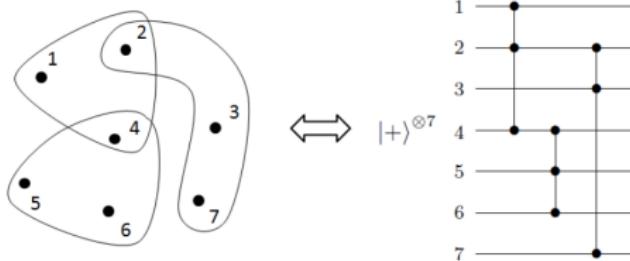


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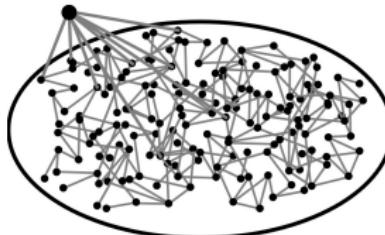


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- **Q:** Ask Caleb about random graphs.

**Thank you!**