## CODES FROM SYMMETRY GROUPS, AND A [32, 17, 8] CODE\*

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Abstract. Let G be the automorphism group of the four-dimensional cube, a group of order  $2^4 \cdot 4! = 384$ . The binary codes associated with the 32-dimensional permutation representation of G on the edges of the cube are investigated. There are about 400 such codes, one of which is a [32, 17, 8] code, having twice as many codewords as the [32, 16, 8] extended quadratic residue code.

Key words. codes, error-correcting codes, permutation groups, modular representations

## AMS(MOS) subject classifications. 94B, 20C

1. Introduction. Since random codes are good ([1], [27, p. 558], [29]), one wishes to identify families of codes large enough to have a chance of including some good codes, yet small enough to be manageable. In this paper we describe one such family: the codes obtained from the action of the automorphism group of the *n*-dimensional cube on its *m*-dimensional faces.

In particular, the automorphism group G of the four-dimensional cube, a group of order 384, permutes the 32 edges of that cube. Regarding the edges as a basis, we have a 32-dimensional vector space V over GF(2) on which G acts. The codes we consider are the subspaces of V invariant under G. There are about 400 such subspaces, one of which is a [32, 17, 8] binary code.

We find this quite astonishing, since the well-known second-order Reed-Muller and extended quadratic-residue codes of length 32 are [32, 16, 8] codes, and are extremal Type II self-dual codes ([16], [17, p. 194], [24]). It is remarkable that there should be a linear code with the same minimal distance and twice as many codewords. Of course the new code is not self-dual. Its properties are summarized in Theorem 1.

This family of codes can be generalized in several ways. Besides varying the dimensions of the cube and the faces, we could consider other regular polytopes instead of the cube, or more generally other Weyl groups (our group G is the Weyl group of type  $B_4$ ).

Many other codes have been obtained from modular representations of groups in the past. Of course classical cyclic codes arise from the regular representations of cyclic groups, and include a large number of good examples. In the 1960s Berman [4], [5], Camion [11], Delsarte [19], and MacWilliams [25], [26] studied other abelian groups, but (perhaps because of the limitations of the computers available) did not find any especially interesting codes.

In 1975 Lomonaco (see [15]) found a record [45, 13, 16] binary code obtained as an invariant subspace of the regular representation of the group  $C_3 \times C_{15}$ . In [10], Calderbank and Wales found a [176, 22, 50] code from the Higman–Sims simple group. Brooke [7]–[9] has studied a large number of other simple groups, using Parker's "meataxe" [28], without, however, finding any new record codes. Representation theory has also been used to construct codes by Liebler [23], Camion [12], Rabizzoni [32], Ward [34], Zlotnik [36], Klemm [21], Charpin [13], [14], Bhattacharya [6], Jensen [20], Wolfmann [35], and Landrock and Manz [22].

However, it seems fair to say that our [32, 17, 8] binary code is the first record code of length less than 100 that comes from a *modular* representation (where the characteristic

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of the field divides the order of the group). Furthermore, in contrast to many of the papers mentioned, we do not use the *regular* representation of the group. Another distinguishing feature of our approach is the relatively large number of invariant subspaces that occur, increasing the chance that one of them is good!

2. The new code. Let G be the automorphism group of the four-dimensional cube, a group of structure  $2^4 \cdot S_4$  and order  $2^4 \cdot 4! = 384$ . This group permutes the 32 edges of the cube, which we label as in Fig. 1. Let V be a 32-dimensional vector space over GF(2) with basis that is in one-to-one correspondence with the edges, so that G acts on V. A typical vector  $v \in V$  has the form  $v = (v_1, \dots, v_{32})$ ,  $v_i = 0$  or 1, with coordinates corresponding to the labels in Fig. 1. We write these vectors in hexadecimal notation, with  $\mathbf{0} = 0000, \dots, \mathbf{9} = 1001$ ,  $\mathbf{A} = 1010, \dots, \mathbf{F} = 1111$ . We may also identify v with the corresponding set of edges.

Any set of vectors  $u, v, \dots \in V$  generates a binary linear code of length 32, denoted by  $\langle u, v, \dots \rangle$ , namely the modulo-2 span of the union of the orbits of  $u, v, \dots$  under G. These codes are the G-invariant subspaces of V. A code or subspace  $\langle u \rangle$  with a single generator is called *cyclic*, following [18, p. 52]. (This is the appropriate generalization of the standard term from coding theory.)

We denote the *G*-invariant codes of dimension k by  $C_k = C_k^{(0)}, C_k^{(1)}, \cdots$ , and when they are cyclic we denote corresponding generating vectors by  $u_k = u_k^{(0)}, u_k^{(1)}, \cdots$ . The labels are chosen so that, for  $k \neq 16$ ,  $C_k^{(i)}$  and  $C_{32-k}^{(i)}$  are dual codes. Also  $C_{16}^{(2i)}$  and  $C_{16}^{(2i+1)}$  are duals ( $0 \leq i \leq 2$ ). We shall make use of the particular generators  $u_k^{(i)}$  shown in Table 1. Some generators that represent geometrically interesting configurations in the cube are displayed in Fig. 2.

The code  $C_{17}$  is the most interesting, and we summarize its properties in the following theorem.

THEOREM 1. The code  $C_{17} = \langle u_{13}, u_{14} \rangle$  is a [32, 17, 8] binary code, with generator matrix as shown in Fig. 3(a). (An alternation definition is given in § 3.) This code has the following weight distribution:





FIG. 1. Four-dimensional cube with the 32 edges labeled.

TABLE 1 Generating vectors  $u_k^{(i)}$  for selected code  $C_k^{(i)}$  (in hexadecimal).

<b>u</b> <sub>1</sub>	FFFFFFFF	u <sup>(9)</sup>	111111EE
u <sub>3</sub>	OOFFOOFF	$u_{9}^{(10)}$	OFOF5A5A
<i>u</i> <sub>4</sub>	FF000000	u <sup>(11)</sup>	0F0F5AA5
u <sub>5</sub>	FOFOFOFO	<i>u</i> <sub>11</sub>	00335A69
$u_{5}^{(1)}$	CC99CC99	$u_{11}^{(1)}$	11117822
u <sub>6</sub>	55AA5555	$u_{11}^{(2)}$	003C3C5A
$u_{6}^{(1)}$	00665533	$u_{11}^{(3)}$	111E111E
u <sup>(2)</sup>	006655CC	$u_{11}^{(4)}$	11224B78
u 7	0F695A3C	$u_{11}^{(6)}$	00005A3C
$u_{7}^{(1)}$	3C693C69	<i>u</i> <sub>13</sub>	AAA50000
$u_{7}^{(2)}$	000F00F0	$u_{13}^{(1)}$	1111444B
$u_{7}^{(3)}$	33663C69	$u_{13}^{(2)}$	030648E7
$u_{7}^{(4)}$	1E2D4B78	$u_{13}^{(3)}$	03068481
$u_{7}^{(5)}$	00335566	$u_{13}^{(4)}$	11111E1E
$u_{7}^{(7)}$	1E2D4B87	$u_{13}^{(5)}$	03060306
$u_{7}^{(8)}$	11224477	$u_{14}^{(1)}$	03770605
$u_{7}^{(9)}$	88112244	$u_{14}^{(2)}$	0F184184
$u_{7}^{(10)}$	0F3C3C5A	$u_{14}^{(3)}$	03090CCA
$u_{7}^{(11)}$	0F3C3CA5	<i>u</i> <sub>16</sub>	03091242
u9	<b>0F0F3C69</b>	$u_{16}^{(2)}$	03116050
u( <sup>1)</sup>	0F3C5A69	u (4)	00174184
u( <sup>2)</sup>	003C5569	u 27	88840000
u( <sup>3)</sup>	33693369	u 28	00008200
u§ <sup>4)</sup>	1E1E1E1E	u 29	80808040
u( <sup>7)</sup>	1E1E1EE1	<i>u</i> <sub>31</sub>	08100000
u( <sup>8)</sup>	11111111		

with  $A_{32-i} = A_i$ , and G is its full automorphism group. The covering radius of  $C_{17}$  is 6, a typical deep hole being **00001117** (in hexadecimal). The dual code is  $C_{15} = \langle u_{15} \rangle$ , a [32, 15, 8] code with generator matrix as shown in Fig. 3(b), and has the following weight distribution:

 $i \quad 0 \quad 8 \quad 10 \quad 12 \quad 14 \quad 16$  $A_i \quad 1 \quad 124 \quad 1152 \quad 3584 \quad 6016 \quad 11014$ 

with  $A_{32-i} = A_i$ . All G-invariant subcodes of  $C_{17}$  and  $C_{15}$  are as shown in Figs. 4 and 5; in particular  $C_{17}$  and  $C_{15}$  intersect in the [32, 9, 8] code  $C_9^{(5)}$ . The double circles in Figs. 4 and 5 show all the cyclic modules in these diagrams;  $C_{17}$  itself is not cyclic.

*Remarks*. (i) The dual lattice to Fig. 5 gives all the codes containing  $C_{17}$ .

(ii) The best way to remember these codes is to notice that the generator  $u_{15}$  for the dual  $C_{15}$  resembles two umbrellas, one of which has lost its fabric (see Fig. 2). This vector is stabilized by a subgroup of G of order six.

(iii) In Table 1 we give more than enough generators to enable any of the codes in Figs. 4 and 5 or their duals to be reconstructed. (The Bensen and Conway [3] notion of reduced lattice of submodules was helpful in preparing Table 1.) For completeness we note that G itself is generated by the following permutations:

(1, 15, 17, 8, 9, 22)(2, 16, 19, 7, 10, 24)(3, 14, 20, 6, 12, 23) (4, 13, 18, 5, 11, 21)(26, 27, 28)(30, 31, 32)



FIG. 2. Subsets of edges corresponding to selected generating vectors.

(a)



(b)

FIG. 3. Generator matrices for codes (a)  $C_{17}$  and (b)  $C_{15}$ .



FIG. 4. Complete lattice of G-invariant subcodes of  $C_{17}$ . The code  $C_k^{(i)}$  is abbreviated  $k^i$  in Figs. 4 and 5. Cyclic modules (with one generator) are indicated by double circles.

and

$$(1,9,17,25)(2,10,18,26)(3,11,19,27)(4,12,20,28)$$
  
 $(5,13,21,29)(6,14,22,30)(7,15,23,31)(8,16,24,32)$ 

(iv) The following list identifies, from the set of codes mentioned in Figs. 4 and 5 and their duals, all those that have minimal distance  $d \ge 6$ :

 $d=6: C_6, C_{16}^{(3)}, C_{17}^{(1)}, C_{18}, C_{18}^{(2)};$ 



FIG. 5. Complete lattice of G-invariant subcodes of  $C_{15}$ .

$$d=8: \ C_4, C_5, C_7^{(i)} (i=0, \cdots, 3, 6, 9), C_8^{(i)} (i=0, \cdots, 6), C_9^{(i)} (i=0, \cdots, 11), \\C_{10}^{(i)} (i=0, \cdots, 5), C_{11}^{(i)} (i=0, \cdots, 6), C_{12}^{(i)} (i=0, 1, 2), C_{13}^{(i)} (i=0, \cdots, 5), \\C_{14}^{(i)} (i=0, \cdots, 3), C_{15}, C_{15}^{(1)}, C_{16}^{(i)} (i=0, \cdots, 5), C_{17}; \\d=12: C_6^{(1)}, C_6^{(2)}, C_7^{(i)} (i=4, 5, 7, 8, 10, 11); \\d=16: C_3, C_5^{(1)}; \\d=32: C_1.$$

(v) A dense 32-dimensional lattice sphere packing may be obtained from  $C_{17}$  by applying Construction D of [2]. This packing (see [17, p. 235]) has center density  $\delta =$ 

2 and each sphere touches 249,280 others, and is the second densest packing known in this dimension. (Quebbemann's 32-dimensional lattice ([30], [31], [17, p. 220]) has  $\delta = 2.566 \cdots$  and each sphere touches 261,120 others.)

The group  $G = 2^4 \cdot S_4$ , like  $S_4$ , has just two conjugacy classes of elements of odd order, and so, again like  $S_4$ , has just two absolutely irreducible representations over GF(2) (cf. [18, p. 58]). These are the trivial one-dimensional representation and the two-dimensional representation by the following matrices of  $GL_2(2)$ :

(1) 
$$\left\{ \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix}, \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 1 \\ 1 & 0 \end{pmatrix}, \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 1 \\ 1 & 1 \end{pmatrix}, \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 0 \\ 1 & 1 \end{pmatrix}, \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 1 \\ 1 & 0 \end{pmatrix}, \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 1 \\ 0 & 1 \end{pmatrix} \right\}.$$

THEOREM 2. (a) Every composition series of V begins and ends:

 $\{0\}=C_0\subset C_1\subset\cdots\subset C_{31}\subset C_{32}=V,$ 

where  $C_1 = \{0^{32}, 1^{32}\}$  and  $C_{31}$  consists of all even-weight vectors. In particular, every nontrivial G-invariant code is even, contains  $1^{32}$ , and its weight distribution satisfies  $A_i = A_{32-i}$ .

(b) One composition series for V is

$$\{0\} = C_0 \subset C_1 \subset C_3 \subset C_4 \subset C_6 \subset C_7 \subset C_9 \subset C_{10}$$
  
$$\subset C_{12} \subset C_{13} \subset C_{14} \subset C_{16} \subset C_{17} \subset C_{18}^{(3)} \subset C_{20}^{(2)} \subset C_{22}^{(5)}$$
  
$$\subset C_{23}^{(5)} \subset C_{24} \subset C_{26} \subset C_{28} \subset C_{29} \subset C_{31} \subset C_{32} = V.$$

(c) The composition factors for V are  $1^{12}2^{10}$ .

Before proving these theorems we describe what we think is the full list of invariant subspaces.

CONJECTURE. (a) The complete list of G-invariant subcodes of V consists of 373 codes, whose dimensions k are as follows:

k	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
#	1	0	1	1	2	3	14	16
k	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
#	20	16	19	16	17	22	22	31

(The number of dimension 32 - k is equal to the number of dimension k.)

(b) The code  $C_{17}$  is the unique G-invariant code of minimal distance  $d \ge 8$  and dimension  $k \ge 17$ . The largest G-invariant codes of minimal distances 4, 6, 12, 16 have dimensions 25, 18, 8, 5, respectively (and are not especially good; cf. Verhoeff [33]).

(c) There are nine self-dual codes, all with minimal distance d = 2 or 4 (e.g., the vectors 00000011, 000000F generate self-dual codes with d = 2, 4, respectively). The nontrivial Reed-Muller, extended Hamming, and extended quadratic-residue codes of length 32 are not G-invariant codes.

*Remark*. The 373 codes described in (a) (and in Figs. 4 and 5) are only claimed to be distinct, not necessarily inequivalent. But usually distinct *G*-invariant codes are inequivalent. More precisely, if *C* and *C'* are equivalent codes (implying that there is a permutation  $\pi \in S_{32}$  with  $C^{\pi} = C'$ ) such that Aut (*C*) = Aut (*C'*) = *G*, then *C* = *C'*. For Aut (*C'*) =  $\pi$  Aut (*C*) $\pi^{-1}$  = Aut (*C*) = *G*, implying that  $\pi$  is in the normalizer of *G* in  $S_{32}$ . But *G* is equal to its normalizer, so  $\pi \in G$ , and C = C'.

*Proof of Theorem* 1. The assertions about the dimension, weight distribution, covering radius, and dual code are routine computer verifications.

By definition, Aut  $(C_{17}) \supseteq G$ . To prove equality, we first examined (by computer) the weight distributions of the nonlinear subcode formed by the 908 codewords of weight

8. There are exactly four weight 8 codewords with weight distribution  $A_0 = 1$ ,  $A_8 = 180$ ,  $A_{17} = 544$ ,  $A_{16} = 183$ , namely the vectors FF000000, 00FF000, 0000FF00, 0000FF00, 0000FF. (These are supported on the four classes of eight parallel edges of the cube, see Fig. 1.) Thus the division of the 32 coordinates into these four blocks of eight is canonical. The group G induces all 4! permutations of the four blocks.

There are exactly 28 codewords meeting the blocks 4 + 4 + 0 + 0, and these have the form (u, u, 0, 0) and  $(u, \bar{u}, 0, 0)$ , where u is a weight 4 word in an [8, 4, 4] Hamming code  $\mathscr{H}_8$ . The automorphism group of  $\mathscr{H}_8$  has structure  $2^3.L_2(7)$  [2, p. 399], and the permutations induced by G on the first block yield exactly the  $2^3$  part of this group. G also contains the permutation  $(9, 10)(11, 12) \cdots (31, 32)$ , fixing the blocks and fixing every point of the first block. Any permutation of  $C_{17}$  not in G can then be assumed to fix the blocks, and to act as an element of  $L_2(7)$  inside each block. We verified by computer that all such permutations are already in G. Thus Aut  $(C_{17}) = G$ .

The assertion that Figs. 4 and 5 show all G-invariant subcodes of  $C_{17}$  and  $C_{15}$  was proved as follows. We first established what we believe is a complete list of all G-invariant subcodes of V. There are 373 codes, as described above. (This list was constructed by a variety of techniques: repeatedly taking joins, intersections, and duals; constructing a generator matrix for each code and finding the cyclic module generated by each row; finding the cyclic modules generated by all vectors of selected codes; and other ad hoc methods.) The list was checked to be closed under the operations of taking joins, intersections, and duals. We examined the cyclic codes generated by every vector of  $C_{17}$  and  $C_{15}$ , and verified that these are on the list. This proves the assertion.

Proof of Theorem 2. (a) From the remarks preceding the theorem we know that the composition factors are all 1 or 2. Suppose a composition series begins  $C_0 \subset C_2 \subset \cdots$ , where  $C_2$  is a two-dimensional code generated by vectors u, v and affording the two-dimensional representation (1). Then every  $g \in G$  sends u to u, v or u + v, and all three occur. Since G is transitive,  $|u \cap \overline{v}| + |u \cap v| + |\overline{u} \cap v| = 32$ . Since u can be mapped to v,  $|u \cap \overline{v}| = |\overline{u} \cap v|$ , and similarly  $|u \cap \overline{v}| = |u \cap v|$ , so the three sets are equal in size and  $3|u \cap v| = 32$ , which is impossible. The assertion  $\cdots C_{31} \subset C_{32}$  follows by duality.

(b), (c) The computer was used to verify that all the composition factors of 2 in the given series are irreducible.

3. An alternative construction. The [32, 17, 8] code  $C_{17}$  described in Theorem 1 was in fact first found by the following construction. This provides an alternative description, and may be of independent interest.

Let  $\mathscr{H}_8$  and  $\mathscr{H}'_8$  be two versions of the [8, 4, 4] Hamming code that intersect only in  $\{0^8, 1^8\}$ . (For example, take the point-code and line-code shown in [17, Fig. 11.27].) Choose independent vectors  $a, b, c \in \mathscr{H}_8$  that span  $\mathscr{H}_8/\{0^8, 1^8\}$ , and vectors  $w, x, y, z \in \mathscr{H}'_8$  that span  $\mathscr{H}'_8/\{0^8, 1^8\}$  and satisfy w + x + y + z = 0. (For example, a = 10101001, b = 10011100, c = 10000111, w = 11001100, x = 10101010, y = 11110000, z = 10010110.) Then Fig. 6 generates a code equivalent to  $C_{17}$ . (It is not difficult to find an isomorphism onto the earlier version. The first four rows of Fig. 6 are the four special codewords mentioned in the proof of Theorem 1.)

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Note added in proof. Gerhard J. A. Schneider of the University of Essen has verified that Conjecture (a) is correct, using the CAYLEY computer system. There are indeed exactly 373 *G*-invariant subcodes. (Personal communication, June 10, 1988.)

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