

Approximate Unitary k -Designs from Shallow, Low-Communication Circuits

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Abstract

Random unitaries are useful in quantum information and related fields but hard to generate with limited resources. An approximate unitary k -design is a measure over an ensemble of unitaries such that the average is close to a Haar (uniformly) random ensemble up to the first k moments. A strong notion of approximation bounds the distance from Haar randomness in relative error: the weighted twirl induced by an approximate design can be written as a convex combination involving that of an exact design and vice versa. The main focus of our work is on efficient constructions of approximate designs, in particular whether relative-error designs in sublinear depth are possible. We give a positive answer to this question as part of our main results:

- Twirl-Swap-Twirl:** Let A and B be systems of the same size. Consider a protocol that locally applies k -design unitaries to A^k and B^k respectively, then exchanges ℓ qudits between each copy of A and B respectively, then again applies local k -design unitaries. This protocol yields an ϵ -approximate relative k -design when $\ell = O(k \log k + \log(1/\epsilon))$. In particular, this bound is *independent* of the size of A and B as long as it is sufficiently large compared to k and $1/\epsilon$.
- Twirl-Crosstwirl:** Let A_1, \dots, A_P be subsystems of a multipartite system A . Consider the following protocol for k copies of A : (1) locally apply a k -design unitary to each A_p for $p = 1, \dots, P$; (2) apply a “crosstwirl” k -design unitary across a joint system combining ℓ qudits from each A_p . Assuming each A_p ’s dimension is sufficiently large compared to other parameters, one can choose ℓ to be of the form $2(Pk + 1) \log_q k + \log_q P + \log_q(1/\epsilon) + O(1)$ to achieve an ϵ -approximate relative k -design. As an intermediate step, we show that this protocol achieves a k -tensor-product-expander, in which the approximation error is in $2 \rightarrow 2$ norm, using communication logarithmic in k .
- Recursive Crosstwirl:** Consider an m -qudit system with connectivity given by a lattice in spatial dimension D . For every $D = 1, 2, \dots$, we give a construction of an ϵ -approximate relative k -design using unitaries of spatially local circuit depth

$$O((\log m + \log(1/\epsilon) + k \log k)k \text{ polylog}(k)) .$$

Moreover, across the boundaries of spatially contiguous sub-regions, unitaries used in the design ensemble require only area law communication up to corrections logarithmic in m . Hence they generate only that much entanglement on any product state input.

These constructions use the alternating projection method to analyze overlapping Haar twirls, giving a bound on the convergence speed to the full twirl with respect to the 2-norm. Using von Neumann subalgebra indices to replace system dimension, the 2-norm distance converts to relative error without introducing system size. The **Recursive Crosstwirl** construction answers one variant of [1, Open Problem 1], showing that with a specific, layered architecture, random circuits produce relative error k -designs in sublinear depth. Moreover, it addresses [1, Open Problem 7], showing that structured circuits in spatial dimension D of depth $\ll m^{1/D}$ may achieve approximate k -designs.

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— **References** —

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