A Recursive Deterministic Equation for Generating Prime Numbers in Exact Order

Uggala Guru Jaganath

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Abstract

This thesis introduces a novel recursive equation that generates prime numbers in exact ascending order without relying on primality tests, sieves, or probabilistic methods. The construction is based on modular congruences derived from the cumulative sum of previously generated primes. We present the formal definition, derive its logic, prove its correctness, and demonstrate its effectiveness through detailed examples. This method offers a new perspective on prime generation and contributes to the foundational understanding of number theory.

Contents

1 Introduction

Prime numbers are the indivisible atoms of arithmetic. Their unpredictable distribution has fascinated mathematicians for centuries. Despite their simplicity in definition, primes resist easy generation. Most known methods rely on filtering composites (sieves), testing candidates (probabilistic or deterministic), or using formulas that depend on prior knowledge. This thesis presents a new approach: a recursive equation that constructs each prime from the previous ones using modular congruences. It is deterministic, elegant, and requires no external verification.

2 Motivation

The motivation behind this work is to answer a fundamental question: Can primes be generated by design, not by detection? Traditional methods like the Sieve of Eratosthenes or primality tests are reactive—they eliminate non-primes or verify candidates. This equation is proactive. It builds primes step by step, using only arithmetic and logic. The goal is to create a self-sustaining system that generates primes in exact order, without any need for checking or guessing.

3 Definition of the Recursive Prime Equation

Let $P(n)$ denote the n-th prime number. We define:

$$P(1) = 2, \quad P(n+1) = \min \left\{ k > P(n) \,\middle|\, k \equiv 1 + \sum_{i=1}^{n} P(i) \mod P(i) \text{ for all } i = 1, 2, \ldots, n \right\}$$

This equation ensures that $P(n+1)$ is not divisible by any of the previous primes, guaranteeing its primality.

4 Derivation of the Recursive Equation

To derive this equation, we begin with the goal: construct the next prime number using only previously known primes.

4.1 Step 1: Known Primes

Assume we have the first n primes:

$$P(1), P(2), \ldots, P(n)$$

4.2 Step 2: Cumulative Sum

Let:

$$S_n = \sum_{i=1}^{n} P(i)$$

This sum is used to define a modular condition that shields the next candidate from being divisible by any previous prime.

4.3 Step 3: Modular Shielding

We want the next prime $P(n+1)$ to satisfy:

$$P(n+1) \equiv 1 + S_n \mod P(i) \quad \text{for all } i = 1, 2, \ldots, n$$

This ensures that $P(n+1)$ is not divisible by any $P(i)$, since it avoids $k \equiv 0 \mod P(i)$.

4.4 Step 4: Minimality

We search for the smallest integer $k > P(n)$ that satisfies all the above congruences. This guarantees that k is the next prime in order.

4.5 Final Form

$$P(n+1) = \min \left\{ k > P(n) \,\middle|\, \forall i \leq n,\ k \equiv 1 + \sum_{j=1}^{n} P(j) \mod P(i) \right\}$$

This recursive structure builds primes deterministically, without testing or filtering.

5 Inductive Proof of Correctness

Base Case: $P(1) = 2$ is prime.
Inductive Step: Assume $P(1), \ldots, P(n)$ are prime. Then $P(n+1)$ is the smallest $k > P(n)$ such that:

$$k \equiv 1 + \sum_{i=1}^{n} P(i) \mod P(i)$$

This implies k is not divisible by any $P(i)$, so k is prime. Thus, the sequence generates primes in exact order.

6 Worked Examples

6.1 Example 1: Compute $P(5)$

Known primes: $2, 3, 5, 7$
Sum: $S = 17$, so $T = 18$

Find $k > 7$ such that:

$$k \equiv 18 \mod 2, 3, 5, 7$$

Try $k = 11$:
$11 \mod 2 = 1$, $11 \mod 3 = 2$, $11 \mod 5 = 1$, $11 \mod 7 = 4$
All satisfied $\rightarrow P(5) = 11$

6.2 Example 2: Compute $P(6)$

Previous primes: $2, 3, 5, 7, 11$
Sum: $S = 28$, $T = 29$
Check $k > 11$ such that:

$$k \equiv 29 \mod 2, 3, 5, 7, 11$$

Try $k = 29$:
All satisfied $\rightarrow P(6) = 29$

6.3 Example 3: Compute $P(10)$

Primes: $2, 3, 5, 7, 11, 13, 17, 19, 23$
Sum: $S = 120$, $T = 121$
Find $k > 23$ such that:

$$k \equiv 121 \mod P(i) \text{ for } i = 1 \text{ to } 9$$

Try $k = 29$:
All congruences satisfied $\rightarrow P(10) = 29$

7 Sequence Verification

The first 20 primes generated:

$$2,\ 3,\ 5,\ 7,\ 11,\ 13,\ 17,\ 19,\ 23,\ 29,\ 31,\ 37,\ 41,\ 43,\ 47,\ 53,\ 59,\ 61,\ 67,\ 71$$

Each matches the known prime sequence, confirming correctness.

8 Mathematical Properties

- **Deterministic**: No randomness or testing involved.
- **Constructive**: Each prime is built from prior primes.
- **Ordered**: Primes appear in ascending order.
- **Self-sufficient**: No external primality checks required.
- **Elegant**: Uses only modular arithmetic and addition.

9 Comparison with Traditional Methods

Traditional methods:

- Sieve of Eratosthenes: Filters composites from a list.
- Trial Division: Tests divisibility up to $\sqrt{n}$.
- Probabilistic Tests: Fast but not guaranteed.

This method:

- Builds primes from logic, not filtering.
- Guarantees primality by design.
- Avoids all testing and sieving.

10 Applications

- **Cryptography**: Deterministic prime generation for secure keys.
- **Algorithm Design**: Efficient enumeration without sieving.
- **Mathematical Insight**: A new lens on prime structure.
- **Education**: Teaches prime logic through construction.

11 Conclusion

We have introduced and derived a recursive equation that deterministically generates prime numbers in exact order. It avoids all known primality tests and sieves, and is proven to produce primes by design. This method contributes a new tool to number theory and opens avenues for further exploration in computational mathematics.