

Greatest Common Divisors Via Prime Factorizations

Claim: Let p_1, p_2, p_3, \dots be the primes in ascending order. Given $x, y \in \mathbb{N}$ with prime factorizations $x = \prod_{j=1}^{\infty} p_j^{a_j}$ and $y = \prod_{j=1}^{\infty} p_j^{b_j}$ then

$$\gcd(x, y) = \prod_{j=1}^{\infty} p_j^{\min(a_j, b_j)}$$

Example: If $x=140$ and $y=168$ then $x=2^2 3^0 5^1 7^1$ and $y=2^3 3^1 5^0 7^1$ so $\gcd(x, y) = 2^{\min\{2, 3\}} 3^{\min\{0, 1\}} 5^{\min\{1, 0\}} 7^{\min\{1, 1\}} = 2^2 \cdot 7 = 28$

Proof:

$$\text{Div}(x) = \left\{ \prod_{j=1}^{\infty} p_j^{c_j} : \forall j \in \mathbb{N} (c_j \leq a_j) \right\}$$

$$\text{Div}(y) = \left\{ \prod_{j=1}^{\infty} p_j^{c_j} : \forall j \in \mathbb{N} (c_j \leq b_j) \right\}$$

$$\text{Div}(x) \cap \text{Div}(y) = \left\{ \prod_{j=1}^{\infty} p_j^{c_j} : \forall j \in \mathbb{N} (c_j \leq \min\{a_j, b_j\}) \right\} = \text{Div}\left(\prod_{j=1}^{\infty} p_j^{\min\{a_j, b_j\}}\right)$$

$$\gcd(x, y) = \prod_{j=1}^{\infty} p_j^{\min\{a_j, b_j\}} \quad \text{Note: } \text{Div}(x) \cap \text{Div}(y) = \text{Div}(\gcd(x, y))$$