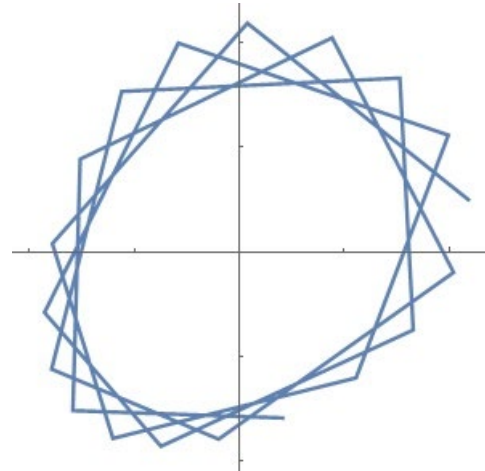


Cellular automata

theory

Notes for CAS

Feijs



Cellular automata:

- Model of interacting agents in fixed grid
- Very simple rules, yet complex behaviour
- Fundamental studies about computation and complexity
- Also useful for simulations in physics and social computation

Mathworld: A cellular automaton is a collection of "colored" cells on a [grid](#) of specified shape that evolves through a number of discrete time steps according to a set of rules based on the states of neighboring cells.

The rules are then applied iteratively for as many time steps as desired. von Neumann was one of the first people to consider such a model, and incorporated a cellular model into his "universal constructor." Cellular automata were studied in the early 1950s as a possible model for biological systems (Wolfram 2002, p. [48](#)).

Comprehensive studies of cellular automata have been performed by S. Wolfram starting in the 1980s, and Wolfram's fundamental research in the field culminated in the publication of his book *A New Kind of Science* (Wolfram 2002) in which Wolfram presents a gigantic collection of results concerning automata, among which are a number of groundbreaking new discoveries.

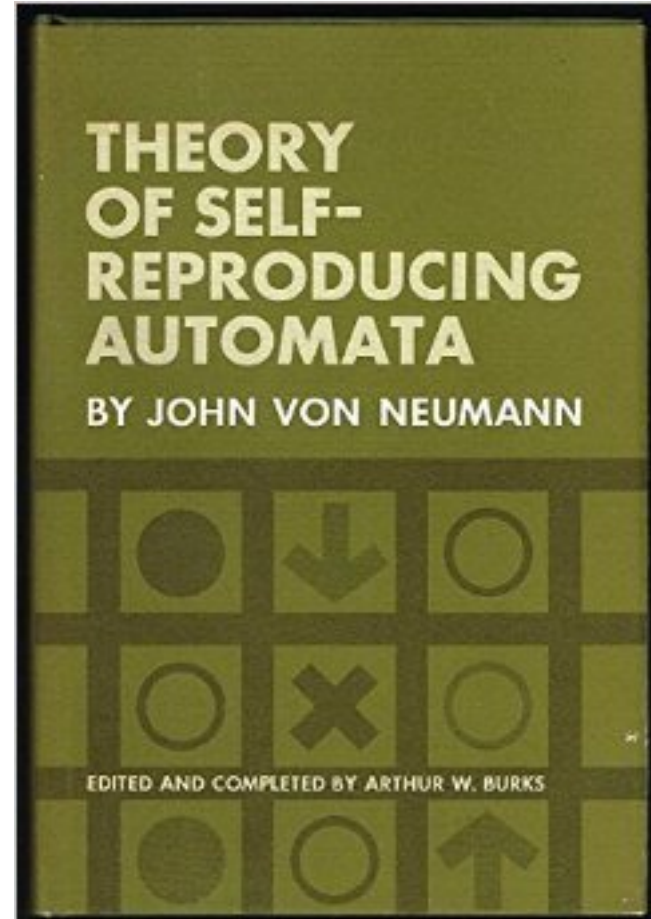
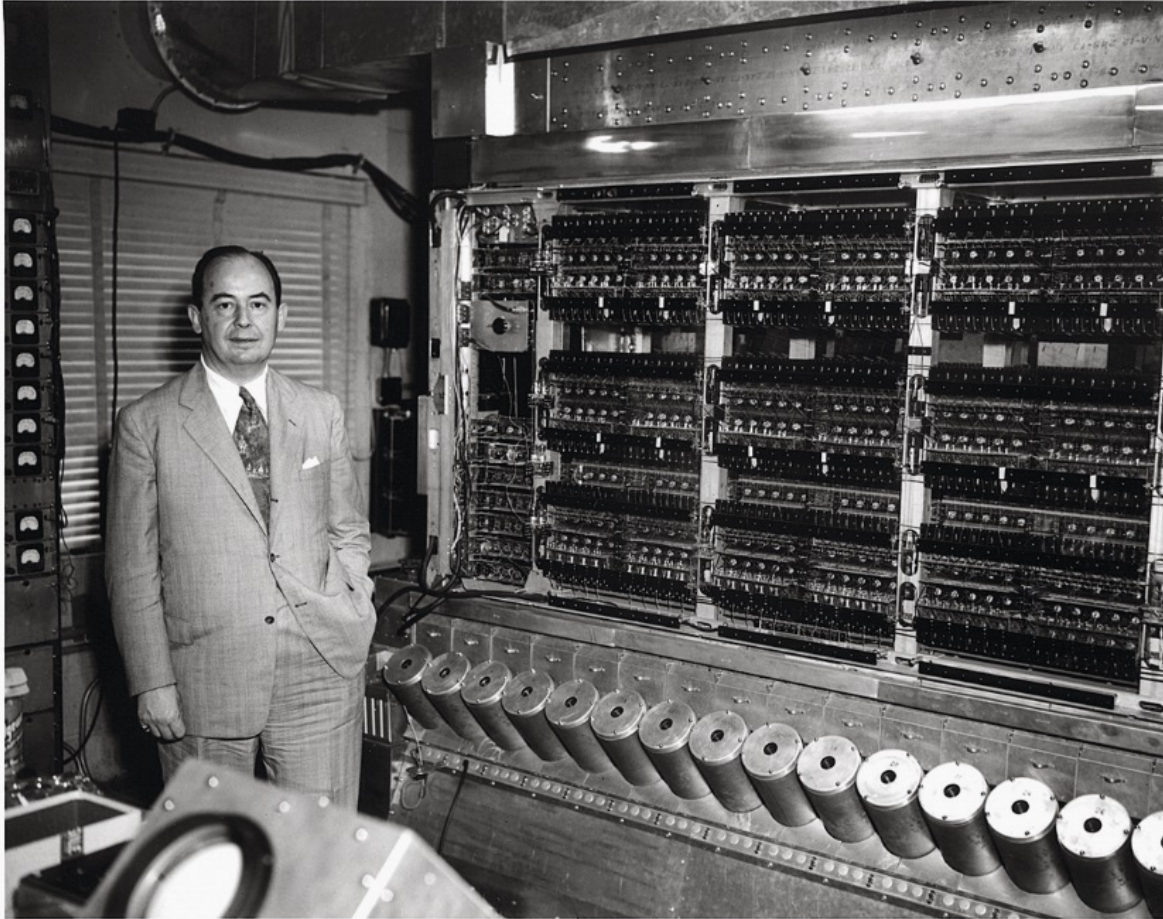
<http://www.idemployee.id.tue.nl/g.w.m.rauterberg/lecturenotes/DDM110%20CAS/default.html>

Cellular automata:

- every cell (agent) has finite-state machine behaviour
- neighbour states + own state determine new state
- all cells are updated simultaneously
- the rules are the same for all cells

History:

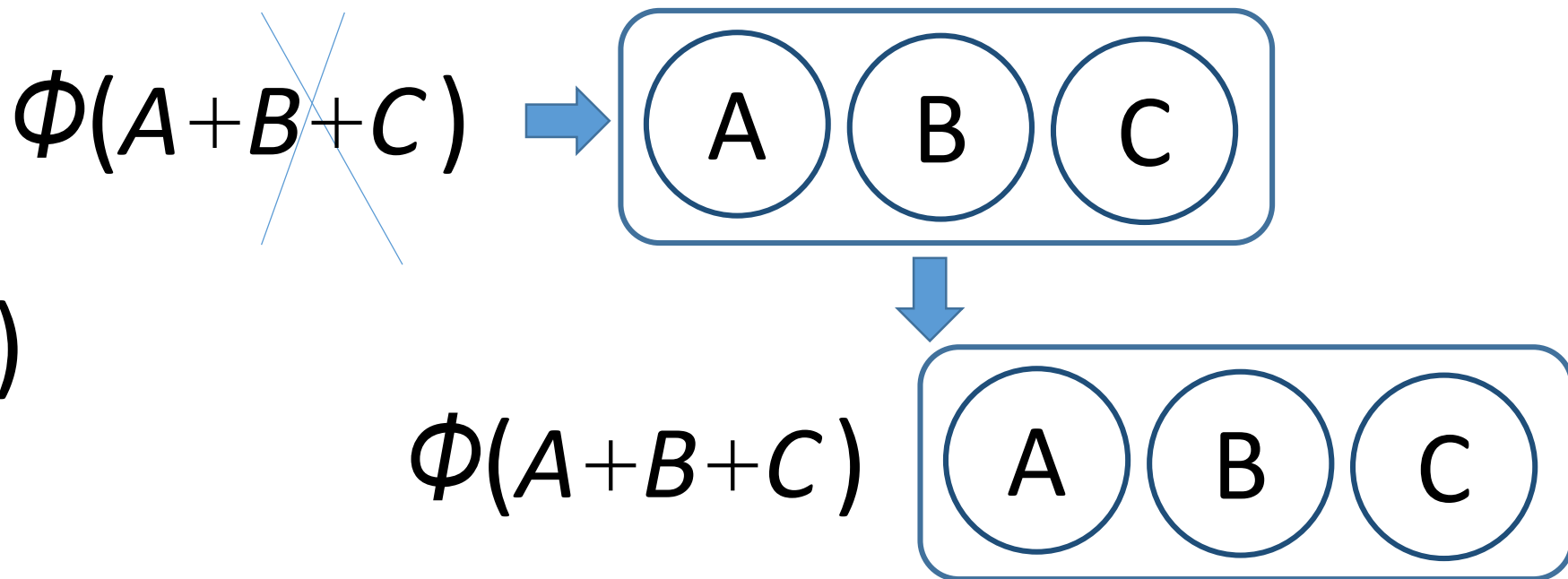
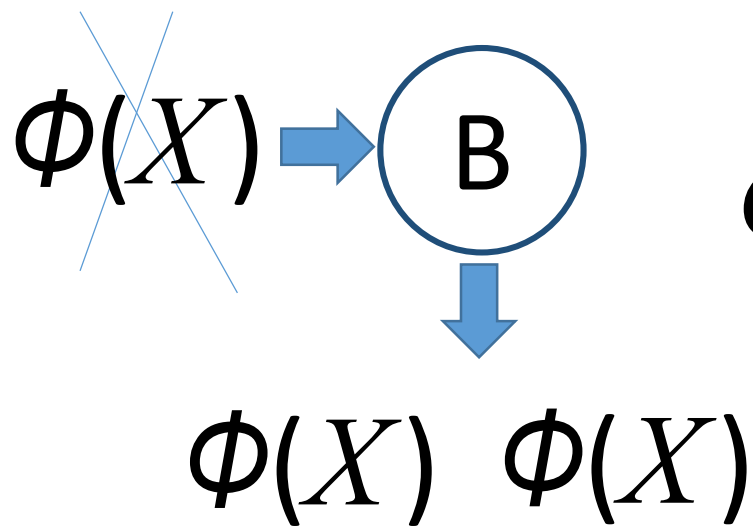
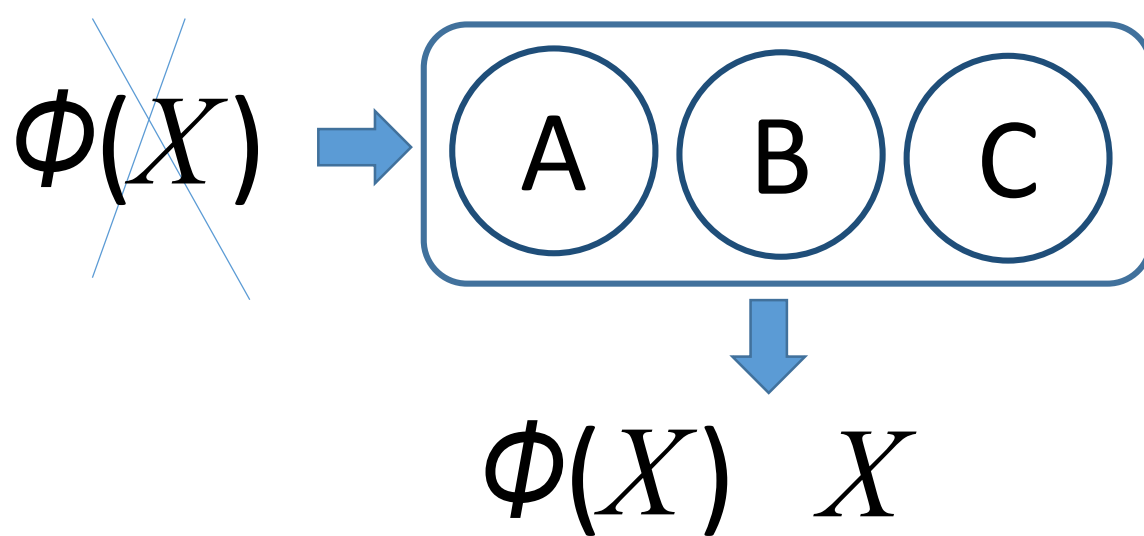
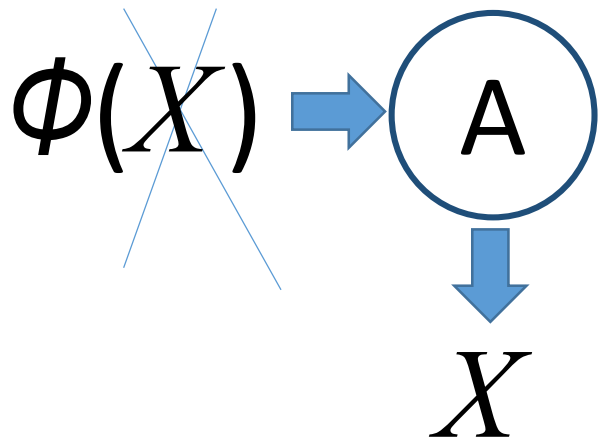
- John Von Neumann (1948, self-replication)
- John Conway (1970, universality)
- Steven Wolfram (2002, complexity)

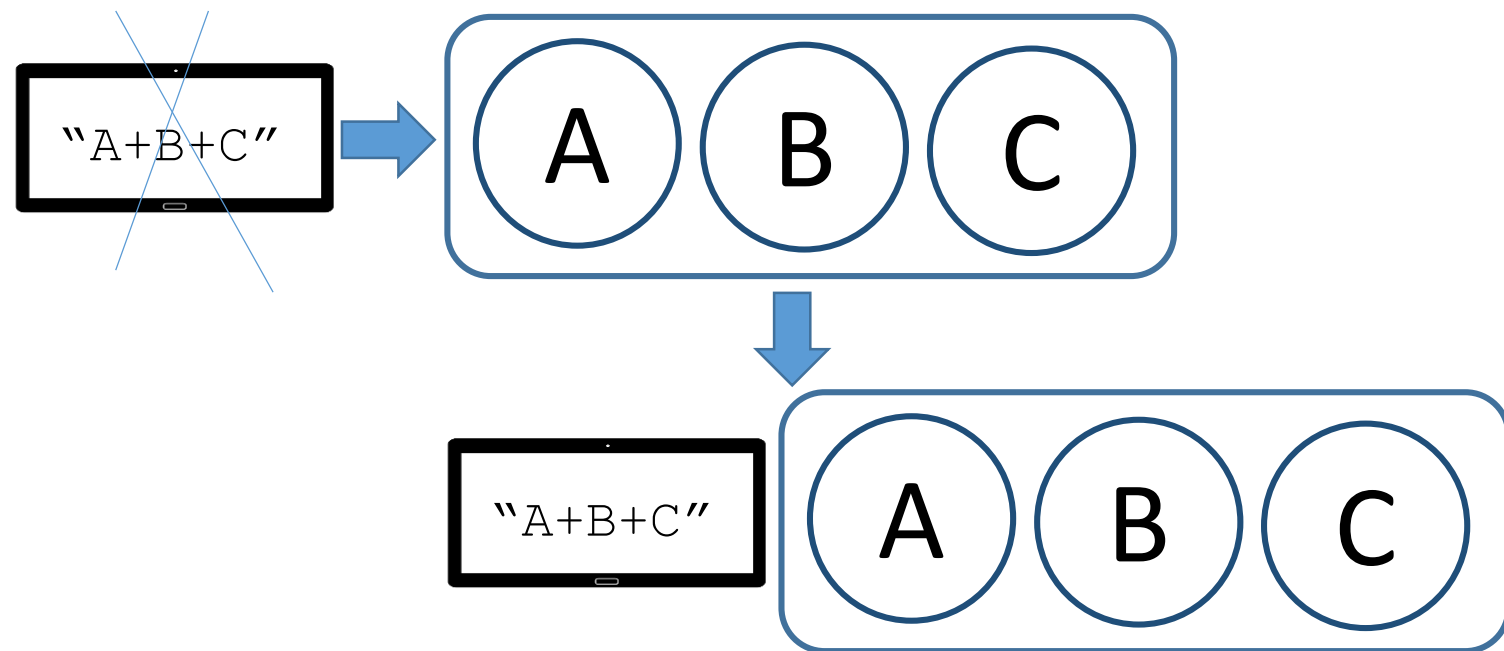
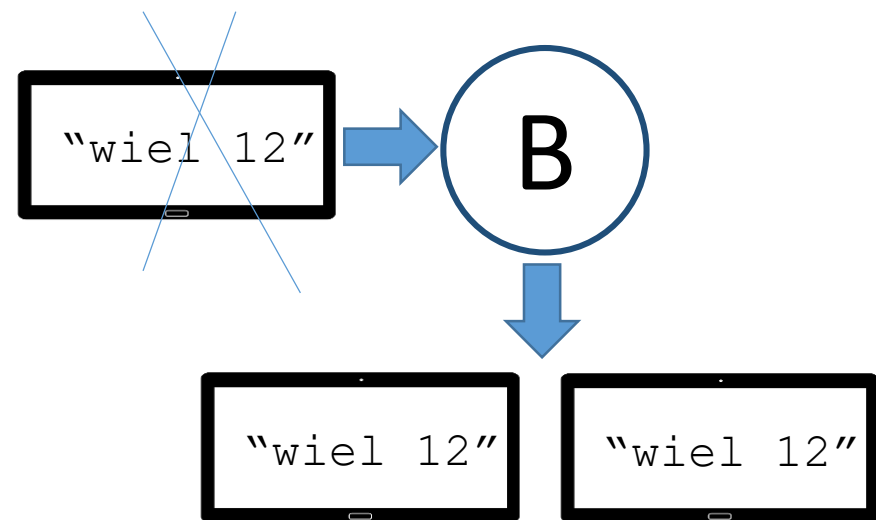
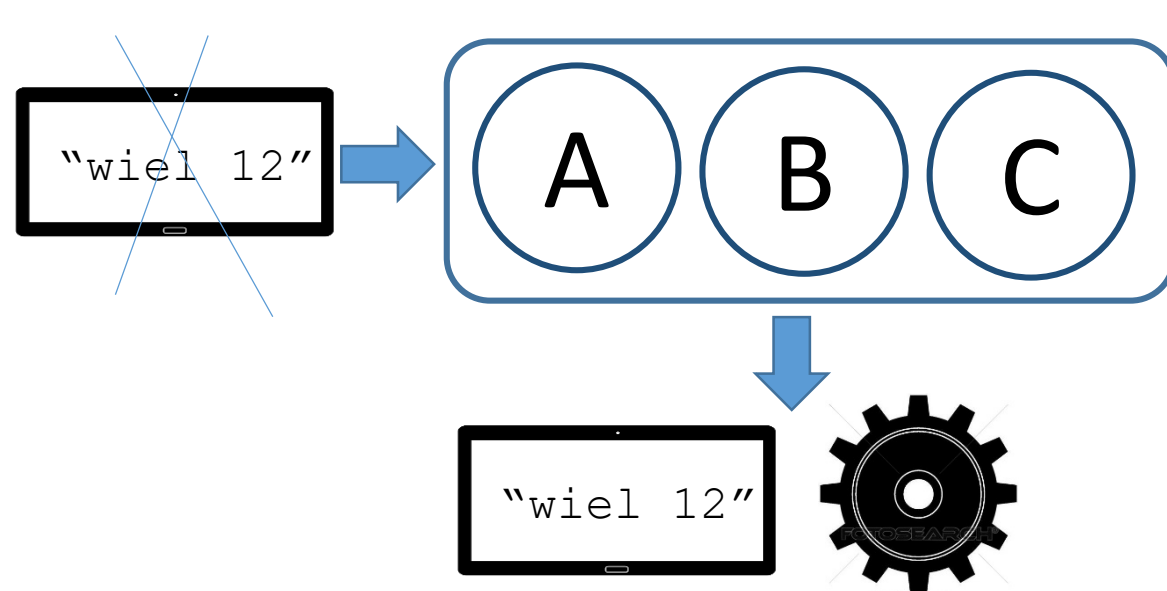
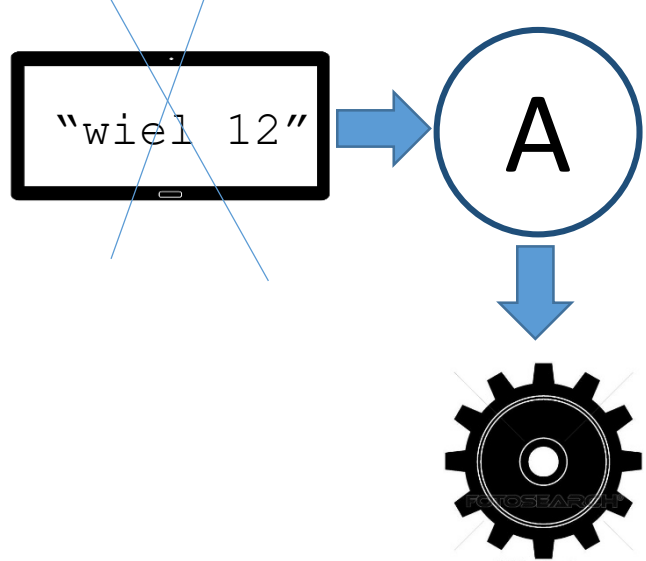


The general constructive automaton A produces only X when a complete description of X is furnished it, and on any reasonable view of what constitutes complexity, this description of X is as complex as X itself. The general copying automaton B produces two copies of $\phi(X)$, but the juxtaposition of two copies of the same thing is in no sense of higher order than the thing itself. Furthermore, the extra unit B is required for this copying.

Now we can do the following thing. We can add a certain amount of control equipment C to the automaton $A + B$. The automaton C dominates both A and B , actuating them alternately according to the following pattern. The control C will first cause B to make two copies of $\phi(X)$. The control C will next cause A to construct X at the price of destroying one copy of $\phi(X)$. Finally, the control C will tie X and the remaining copy of $\phi(X)$ together and cut them loose from the complex $(A + B + C)$. At the end the entity $X + \phi(X)$ has been produced.

$\phi(X)$ is a linear description of X





completely unnecessary here. You could use more complicated looped chains, which would be perfectly good carriers for a code, but it would not be a linear code. There is reason to suspect that our predilection for linear codes, which have a simple, almost temporal sequence, is chiefly a literary habit, corresponding to our not particularly high level of combinatorial cleverness, and that a very efficient language would probably depart from linearity.³

There is no great difficulty in giving a complete axiomatic account of how to describe any conceivable automaton in a binary code. Any such description can then be represented by a chain of rigid elements like that of Figure 2. Given any automaton X , let $\phi(X)$ designate the chain which represents X . Once you have done this, you can design a universal machine tool A which, when furnished with such a chain $\phi(X)$, will take it and gradually consume it, at the same time building up the automaton X from the parts floating around freely in the surrounding milieu. All this design is laborious, but it is not difficult in principle, for it's a succession of steps in formal logics. It is not qualitatively different from the type of argumentation with which Turing constructed his universal automaton.

Another thing which one needs is this. I stated earlier that it might be quite complicated to construct a machine which will copy an automaton that is given it, and that it is preferable to proceed, not from original to copy, but from verbal description to copy. I would like to make one exception; I would like to be able to copy linear chains of rigid elements. Now this is very easy. For the real reason it is harder to copy an existing automaton than its description is that the existing automaton does not conform with our habit of linearity, its parts being connected with each other in all possible directions, and it's quite difficult just to check off the pieces that have already been described.⁴ But it's not difficult to copy a linear chain of rigid elements. So I will assume that there exists an automaton B which has this property: If you provide B with a description of anything, it consumes it and produces two copies of this description.

Please consider that after I have described these two elementary steps, one may still hold the illusion that I have not broken the principle of the degeneracy of complication. It is still not true that, starting from something, I have made something more subtle and more

³ [The programming language of flow diagrams, invented by von Neumann, is a possible example. See p. 13 of the Introduction to the present volume.]

⁴ [Compare Sec. 1.6.3 of Part II, written about 3 years later. Here von Neumann gives a more fundamental reason for having the constructing automaton work from a description of an automaton rather than from the automaton itself.]

involved. The general constructive automaton A produces only X when a complete description of X is furnished it, and on any reasonable view of what constitutes complexity, this description of X is as complex as X itself. The general copying automaton B produces two copies of $\phi(X)$, but the juxtaposition of two copies of the same thing is in no sense of higher order than the thing itself. Furthermore, the extra unit B is required for this copying.

Now we can do the following thing. We can add a certain amount of control equipment C to the automaton $A + B$. The automaton C dominates both A and B , actuating them alternately according to the following pattern. The control C will first cause B to make two copies of $\phi(X)$. The control C will next cause A to construct X at the price of destroying one copy of $\phi(X)$. Finally, the control C will tie X and the remaining copy of $\phi(X)$ together and cut them loose from the complex $(A + B + C)$. At the end the entity $X + \phi(X)$ has been produced.

Now choose the aggregate $(A + B + C)$ for X . The automaton $(A + B + C) + \phi(A + B + C)$ will produce $(A + B + C) + \phi(A + B + C)$. Hence auto-reproduction has taken place.

[The details are as follows. We are given the universal constructor $(A + B + C)$, to which is attached a description of itself, $\phi(A + B + C)$. Thus the process of self-reproduction starts with $(A + B + C) + \phi(A + B + C)$. Control C directs B to copy the description twice; the result is $(A + B + C) + \phi(A + B + C) + \phi(A + B + C)$. Then C directs A to produce the automaton $A + B + C$ from one copy of the description; the result is $(A + B + C) + (A + B + C) + \phi(A + B + C)$. Finally, C ties the new automaton and its description together and cuts them loose. The final result consists of the two automata $(A + B + C)$ and $(A + B + C) + \phi(A + B + C)$. If B were to copy the description thrice, the process would start with one copy of $(A + B + C) + \phi(A + B + C)$ and terminate with two copies of this automaton. In this way, the universal constructor reproduces itself.]

This is not a vicious circle. It is quite true that I argued with a variable X first, describing what C is supposed to do, and then put something which involved C for X . But I defined A and B exactly, before I ever mentioned this particular X , and I defined C in terms which apply to any X . Therefore, in defining A , B , and C , I did not make use of what X is to be, and I am entitled later on to use an X which refers explicitly to A , B , and C . The process is not circular.

The general constructive automaton A has a certain creative ability, the ability to go from a description of an object to the object. Like-

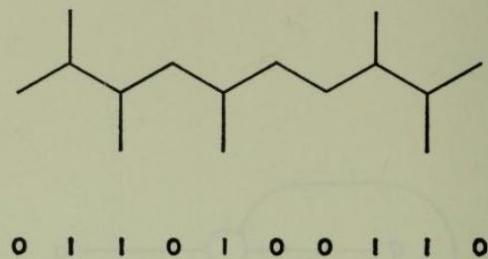


Fig. 2. A binary tape constructed from rigid elements

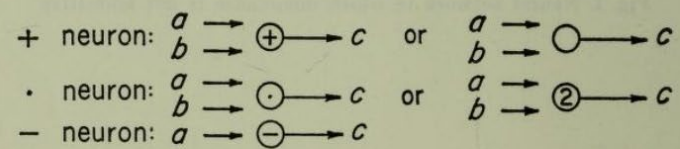
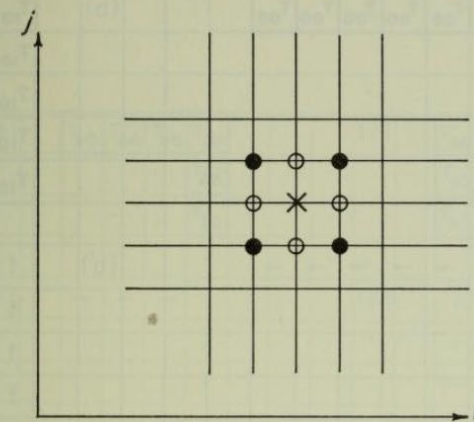
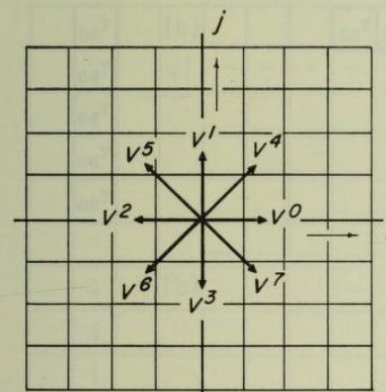


Fig. 3. The basic neurons

(a) Nearest (\bigcirc) and next nearest (\bullet) neighbors of X

(b) Unit vectors

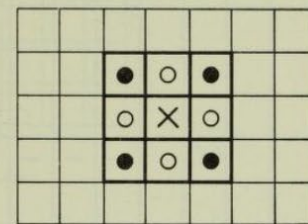
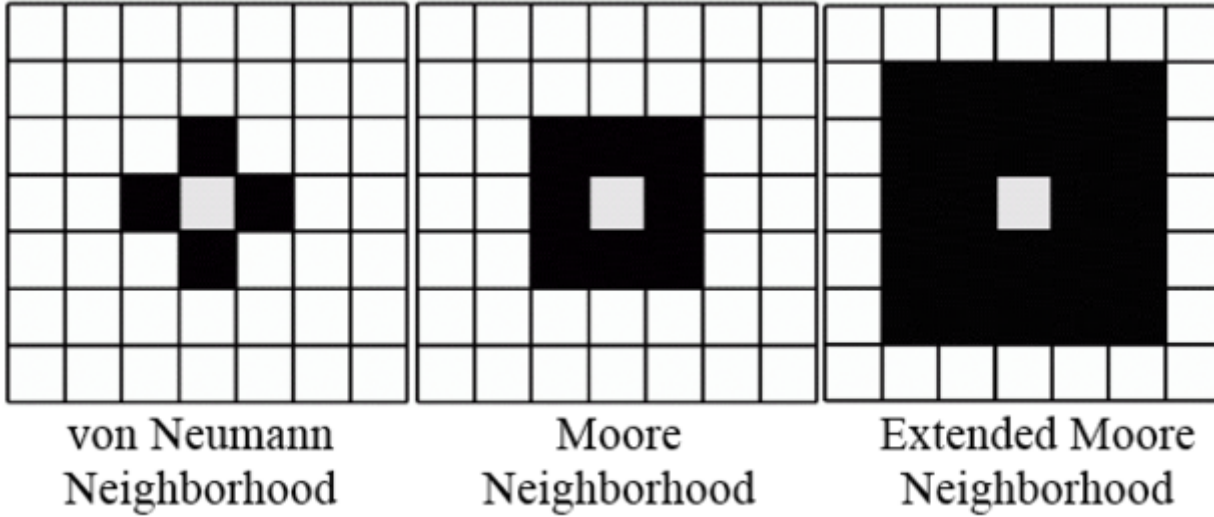
(c) Nearest (\bigcirc) and next nearest (\bullet) neighbors of X

Fig. 4. The quadratic lattice

<https://www.openabm.org/book/export/html/1949>



An Implementation of von Neumann's Self-Reproducing Machine

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Abstract This article describes in detail an implementation of John von Neumann's *self-reproducing machine*. Self-reproduction is achieved as a special case of construction by a *universal constructor*. The theoretical proof of the existence of such machines was given by John von Neumann in the early 1950s [6], but was first implemented in 1994, by the author in collaboration with R. Nobile. Our implementation relies on an extension of the state-transition rule of von Neumann's original cellular automaton. This extension was introduced to simplify the design of the constructor. The main operations in our constructor can be mapped into operations of von Neumann's machine.

Keywords

cellular automata, self-reproduction, universal constructor

1. a **ground** state **U** (48, 48, 48)

2. the **transition** or **sensitised** states (in 8 substates)

1. **S** (newly sensitised)
2. **S₀** – (sensitised, having received no input for one cycle)
3. **S₀₀** – (sensitised, having received no input for two cycles)
4. **S₀₀₀** – (sensitised, having received no input for three cycles)
5. **S₀₁** – (sensitised, having received no input for one cycle and then an input for one cycle)
6. **S₁** – (sensitised, having received an input for one cycle)
7. **S₁₀** – (sensitised, having received an input for one cycle and then no input for one cycle)
8. **S₁₁** – (sensitised, having received input for two cycles)

3. the **confluent** states (in 4 states of excitation)

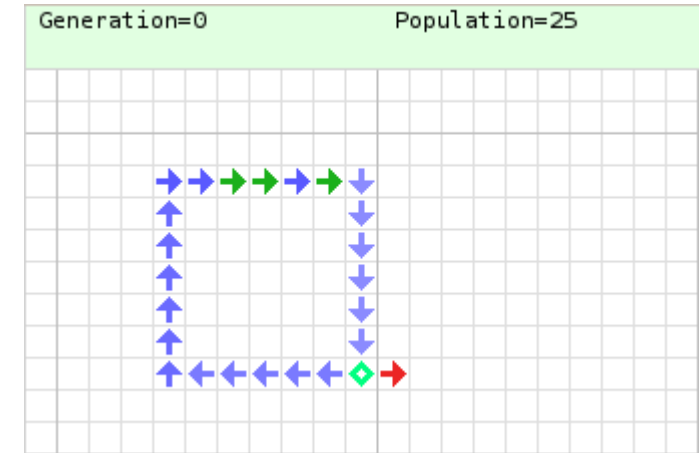
1. **C₀₀** – quiescent (and will also be quiescent next cycle)
2. **C₀₁** – next-excited (now quiescent, but will be excited next cycle)
3. **C₁₀** – excited (but will be quiescent next cycle)
4. **C₁₁** – excited next-excited (currently excited and will be excited next cycle)

4. the **ordinary transmission** states (in 4 directions, excited or quiescent, making 8 states)

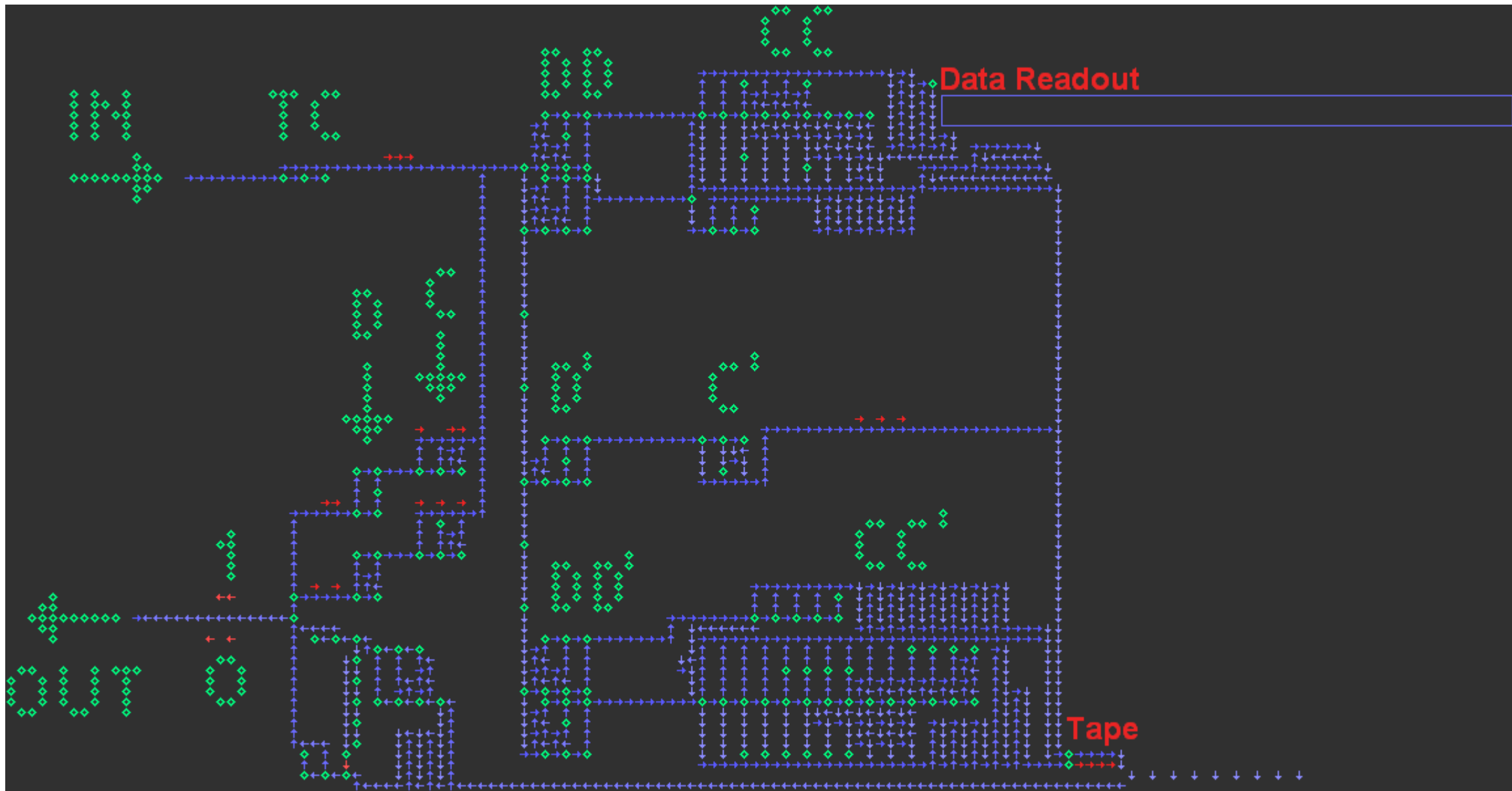
1. North-directed (excited and quiescent)
2. South-directed (excited and quiescent)
3. West-directed (excited and quiescent)
4. East-directed (excited and quiescent)

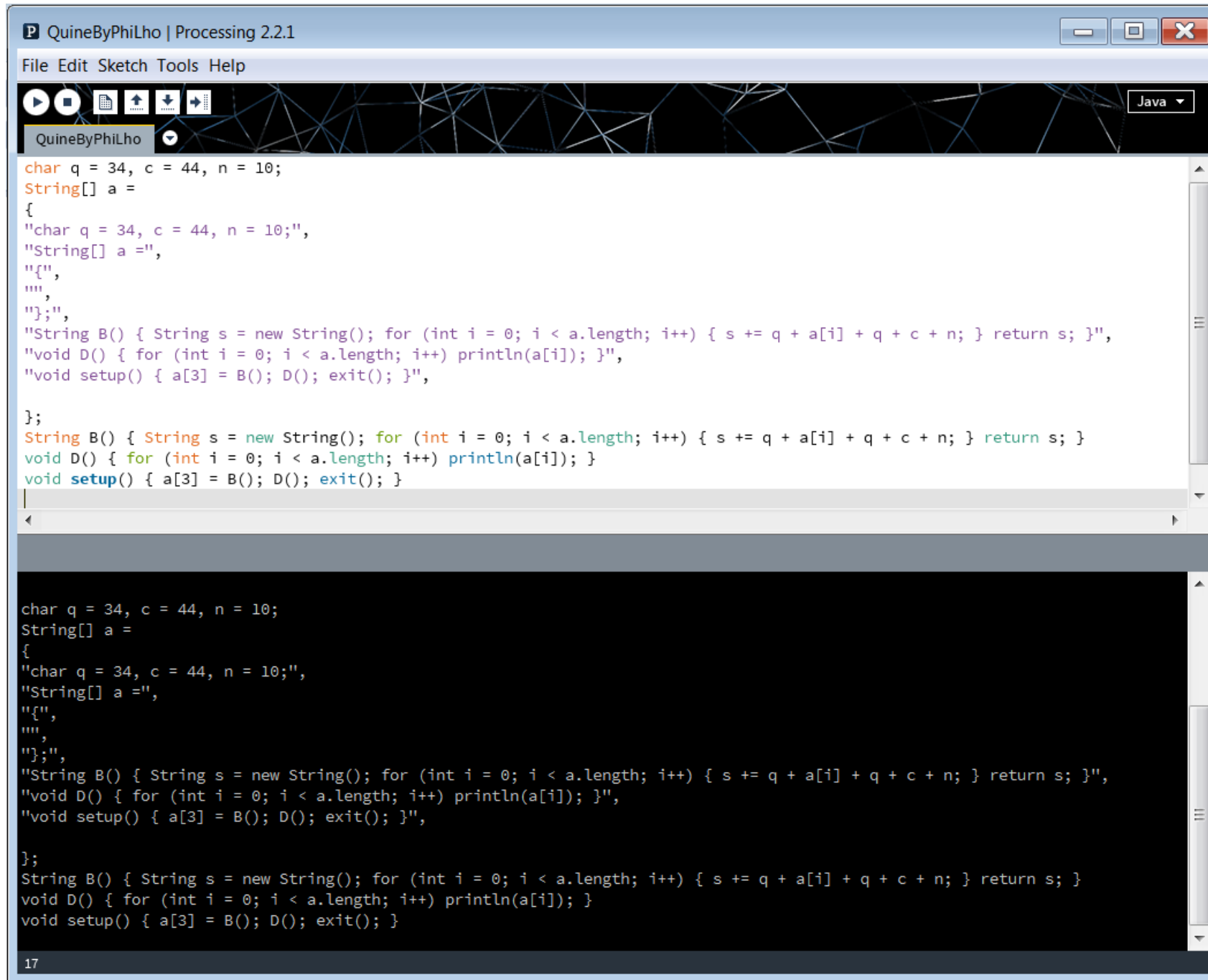
5. the **special transmission** states (in 4 directions, excited or quiescent, making 8 states)

1. North-directed (excited and quiescent)
2. South-directed (excited and quiescent)
3. West-directed (excited and quiescent)
4. East-directed (excited and quiescent)



A simple configuration in von Neumann's cellular automaton. A binary signal is passed repeatedly around the blue wire loop, using excited and quiescent *ordinary transmission states*. A confluent cell duplicates the signal onto a length of red wire consisting of *special transmission states*. The signal passes down this wire and constructs a new cell at the end. This particular signal (1011) codes for an east-directed special transmission state, thus extending the red wire by one cell each time. During construction, the new cell passes through several sensitised states, directed by the binary sequence



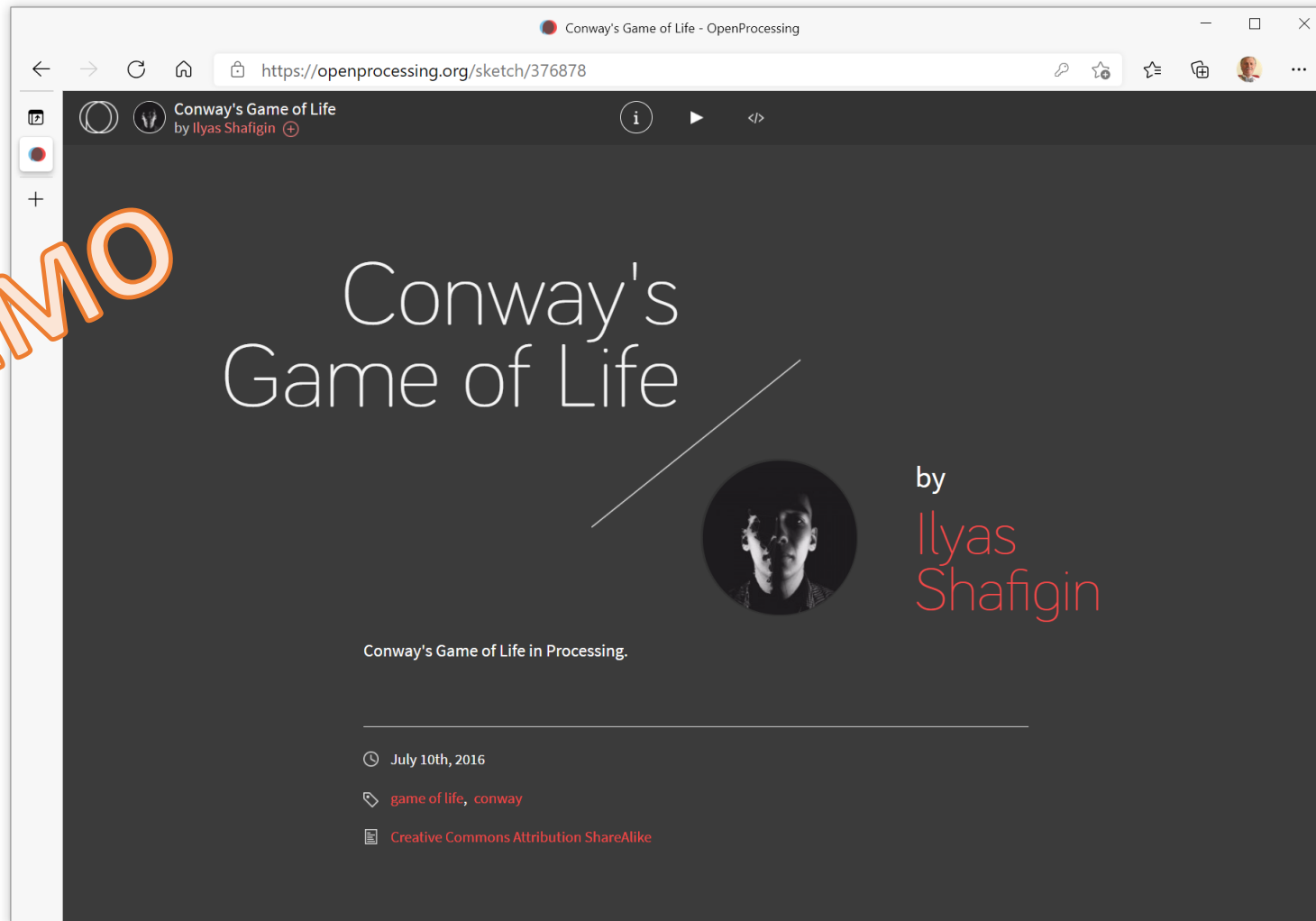


Conway's game of life

- Any live cell with fewer than two live neighbours dies, as if caused by underpopulation.
- Any live cell with two or three live neighbours lives on to the next generation.
- Any live cell with more than three live neighbours dies, as if by overpopulation.
- Any dead cell with exactly three live neighbours becomes a live cell, as if by reproduction.

([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conway%27s Game of Life](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conway%27s_Game_of_Life))

DEMO





```
Life | Processing 3.3.7
File Edit Sketch Debug Tools Help

Life Cell Grid Parameters ▾

1 static final int DEAD = 0;
2 static final int ALIVE = 1;
3
4 class Cell {
5     int state;
6     int nextState;
7     Cell(int s) {
8         setState(s);
9     }
10    void setState(int s) {
11        state = s;
12    }
13    void setNextState(int s) {
14        nextState = s;
15    }
16    boolean isAlive() {
17        return state == ALIVE;
18    }
19    void updateState() {
20        state = nextState;
21    }
22 }
```

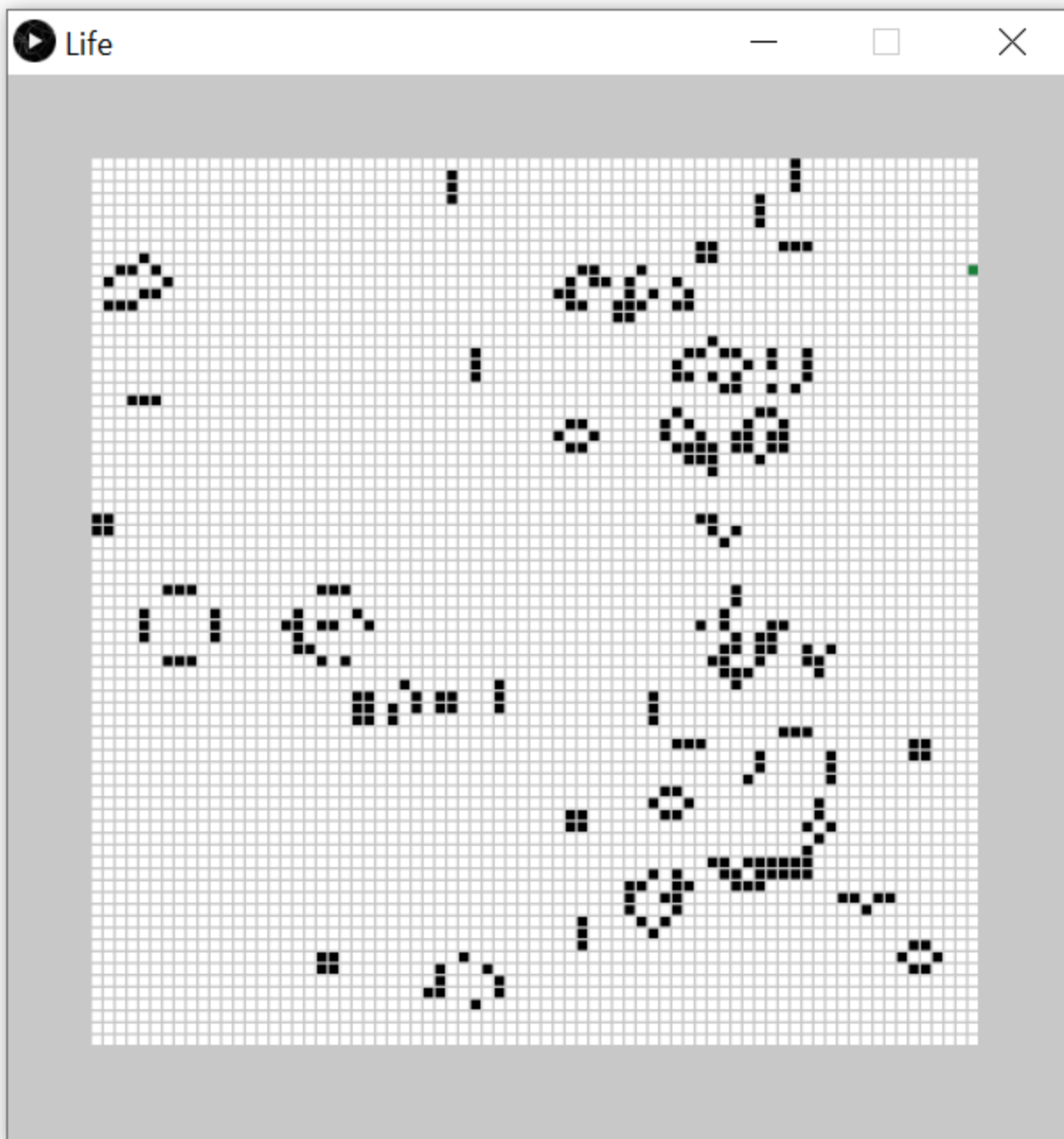
Cell[][] grid;

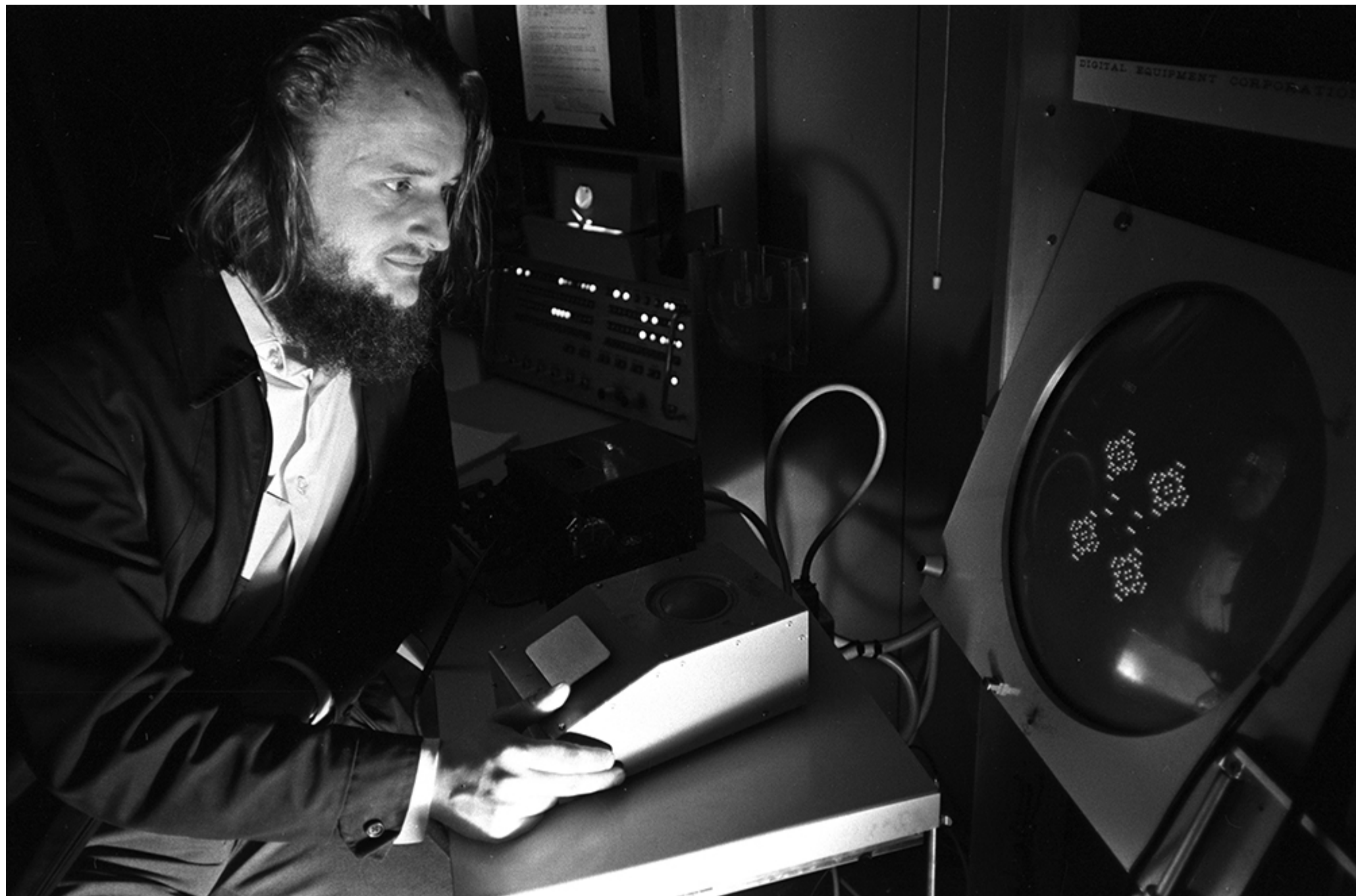
Adapted from: Game of Life by Ilyas Shafigin,
<https://openprocessing.org/sketch/376878>

```
Life | Processing 3.3.7
File Edit Sketch Debug Tools Help

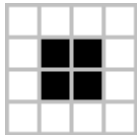
Life Cell Grid Parameters ▾

67 int COLUMNS = 75;
68 int ROWS = 75;
69
70 void updateGrid() {
71     for (int x = 0; x < COLUMNS; x++) {
72         for (int y = 0; y < ROWS; y++) {
73             int n = 0;
74             neighbors = neighbours(x, y);
75             for (int i = 0; i < neighbors.size(); i++)
76                 if (neighbors.get(i).isAlive())
77                     n++;
78             if (n < 2 || n > 3)
79                 grid[x][y].setNextState(DEAD);
80             if (n == 3)
81                 grid[x][y].setNextState(ALIVE);
82         }
83     }
84     for (int x = 0; x < COLUMNS; x++)
85         for (int y = 0; y < ROWS; y++)
86             grid[x][y].updateState();
87 }
```

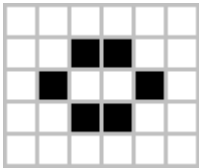
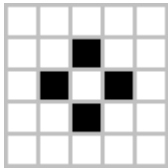




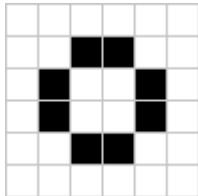
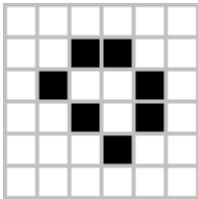
Static



block

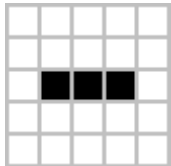


beehive

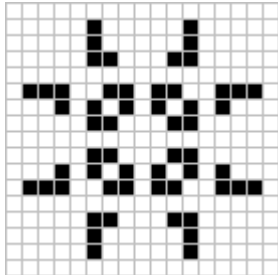
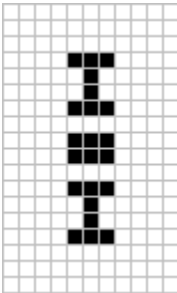
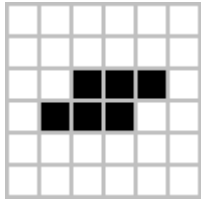
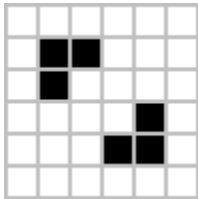


pond

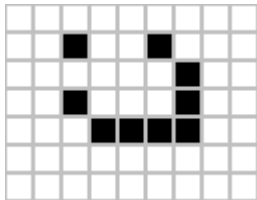
Pulsing



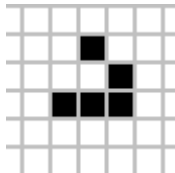
blinker



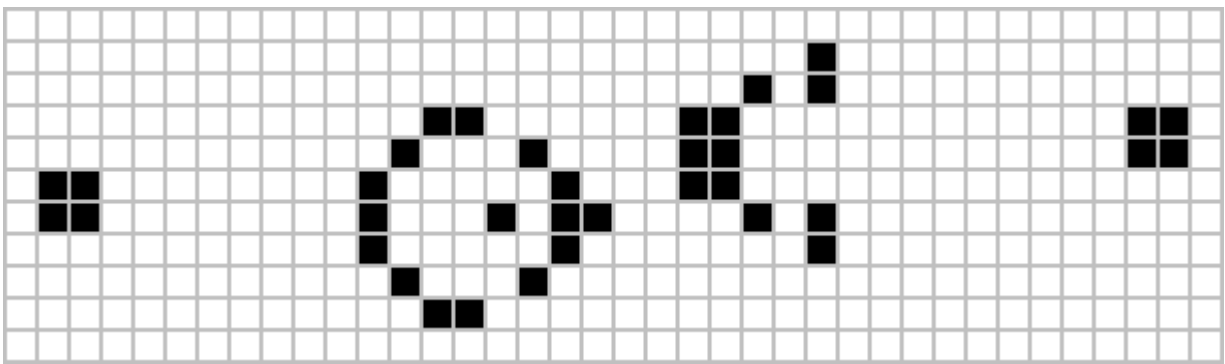
Crawling



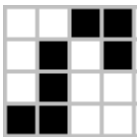
lightweight
spaceship
(c/2)



Glider (c/4)

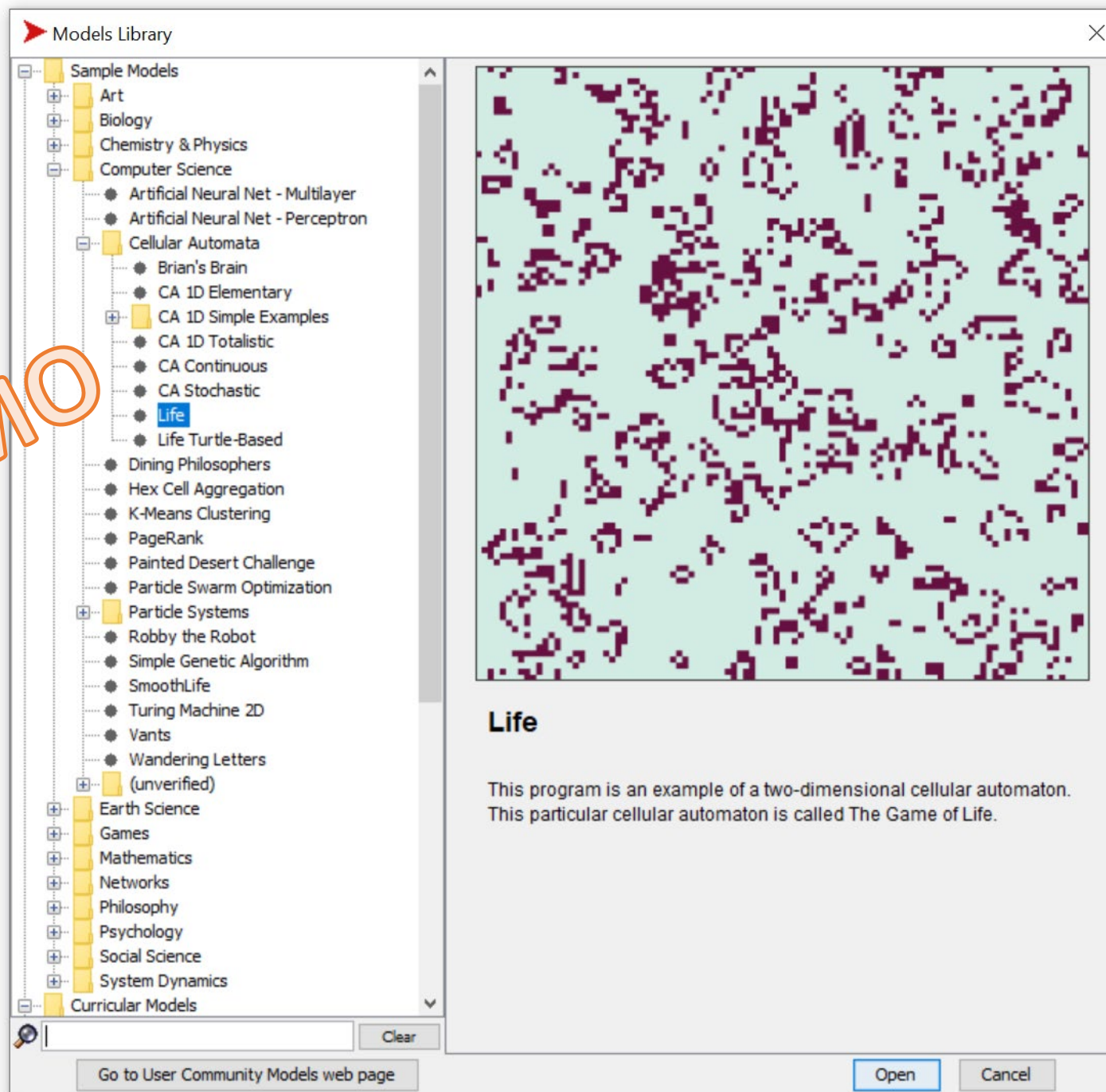


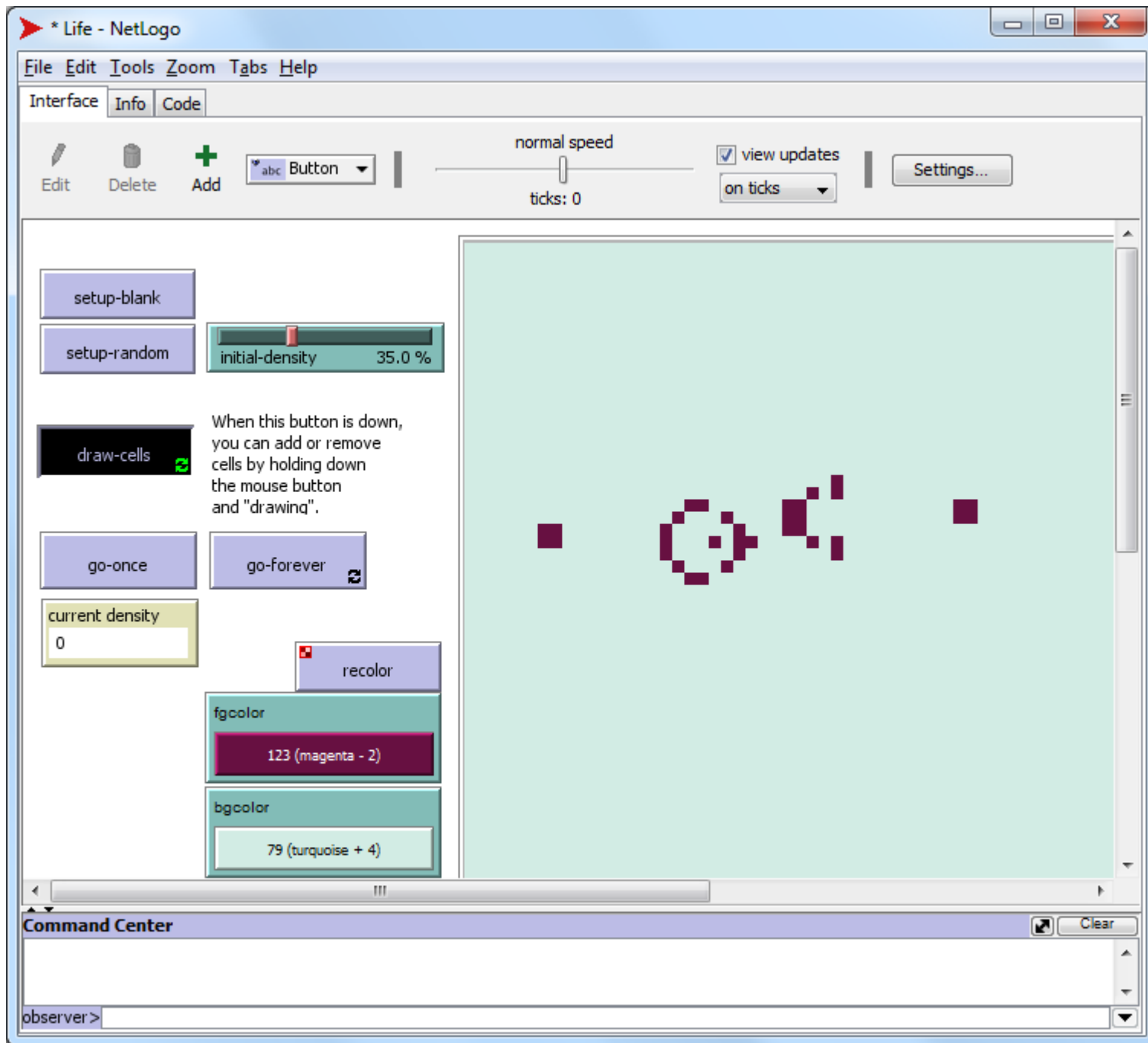
Gosper's glider gun (wikimedia)

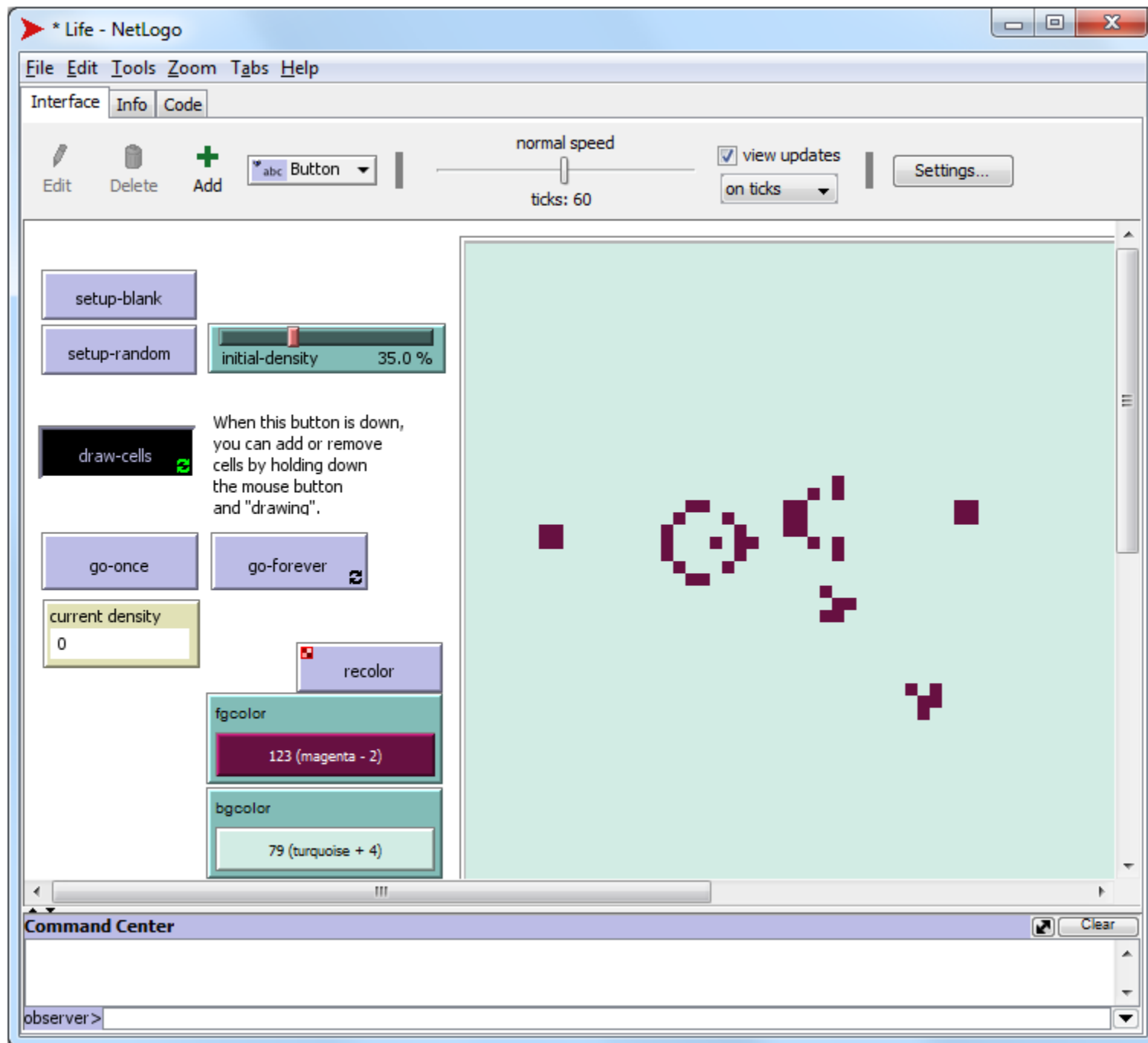


eater,
stopper

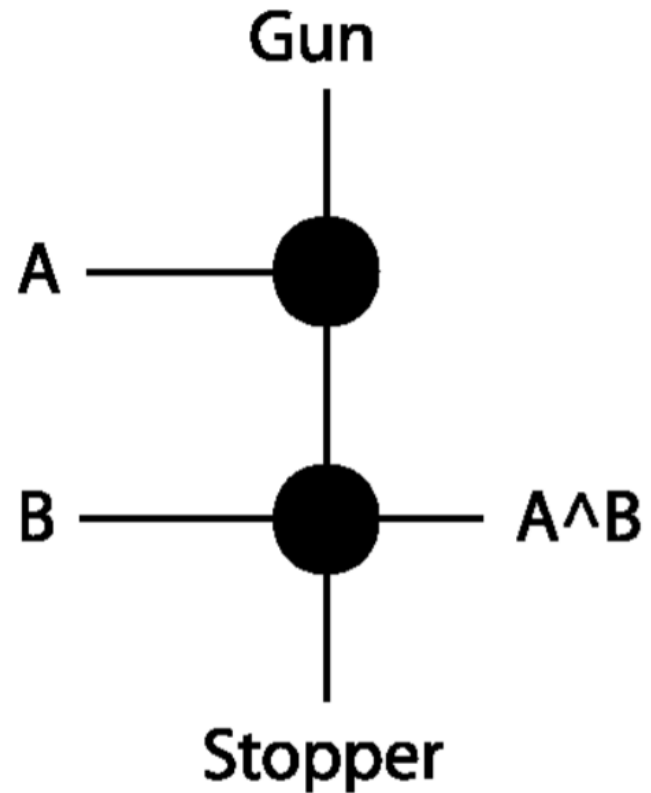
DEMO

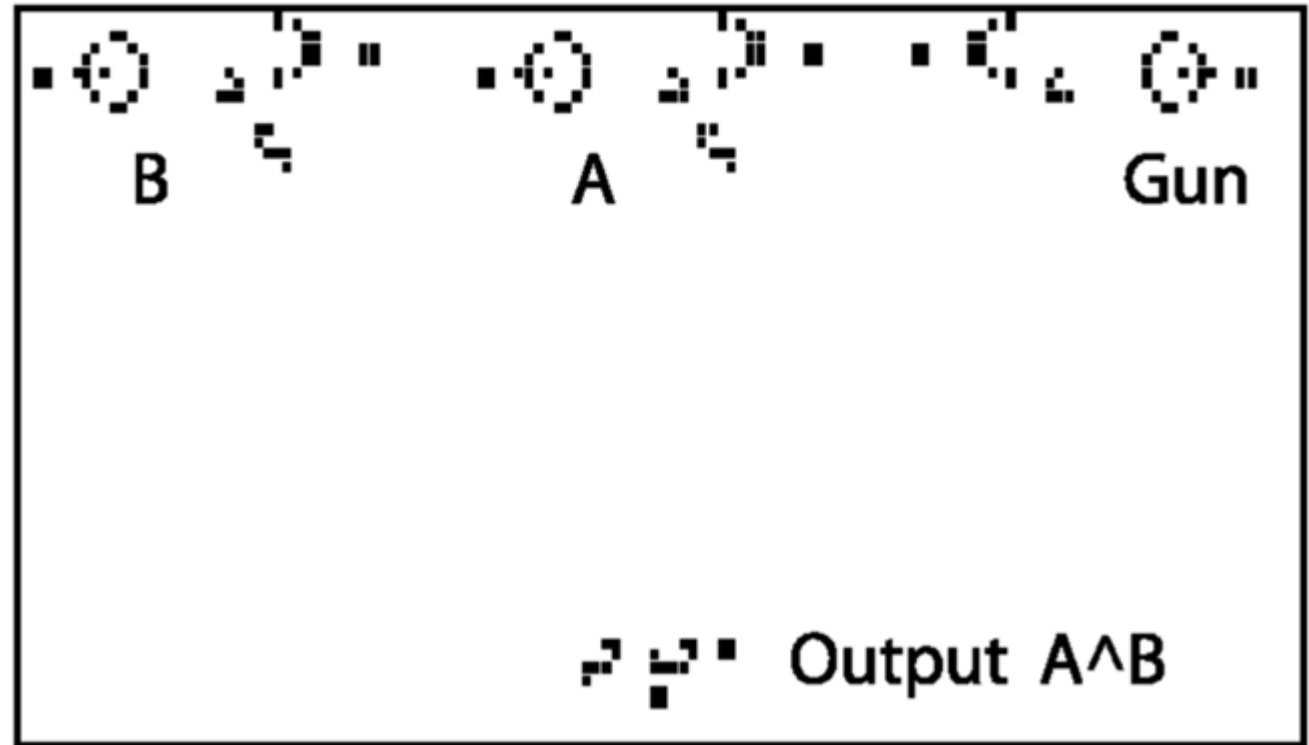
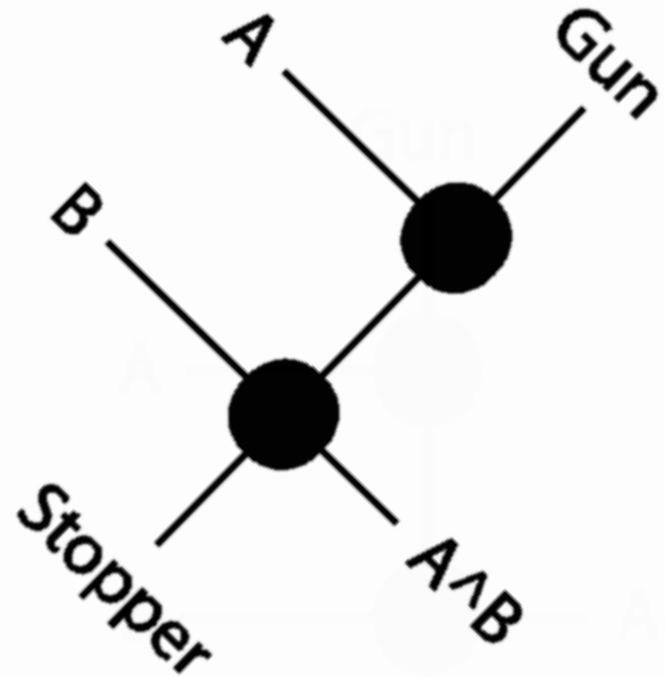






The AND-Gate

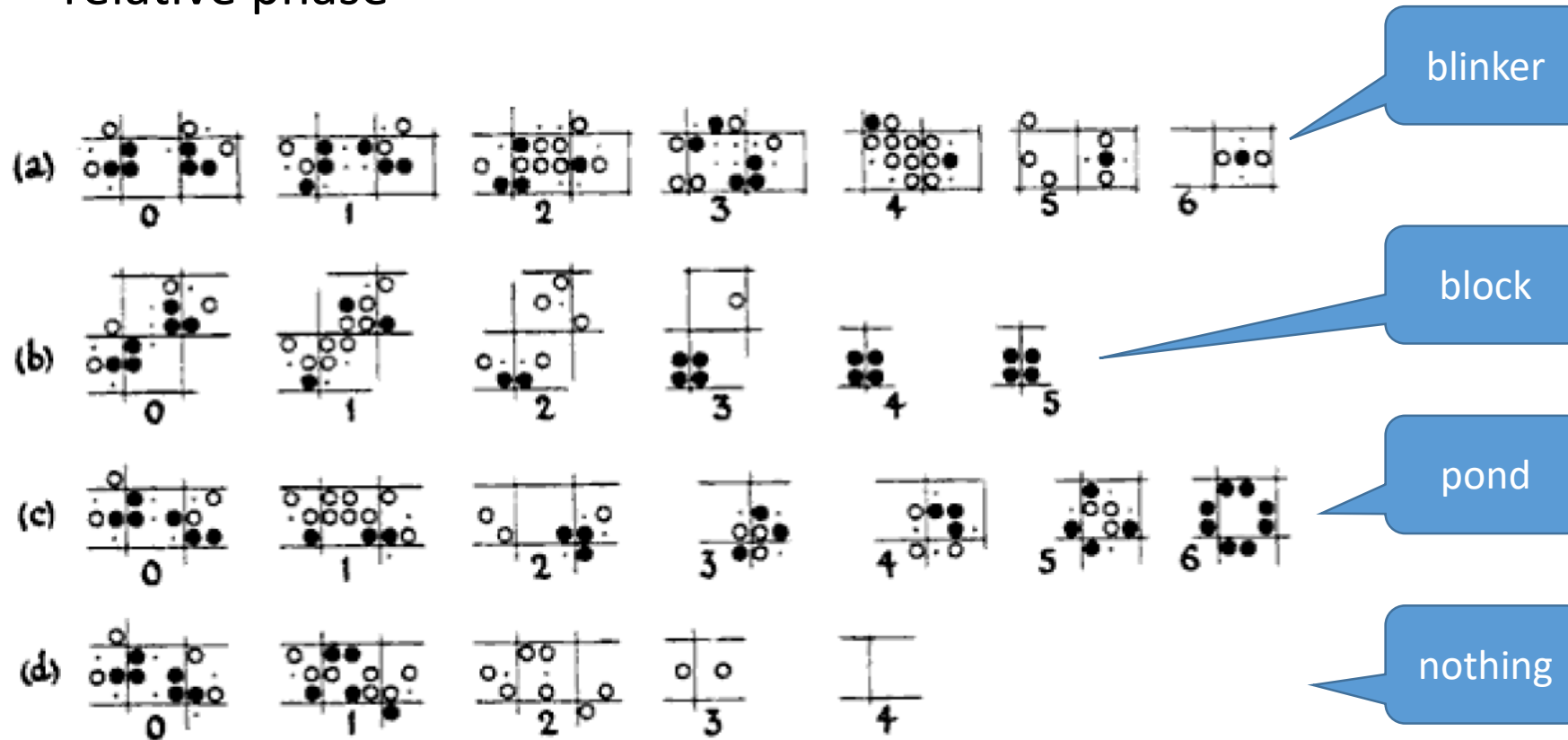




Colliding gliders

outcome depends on:

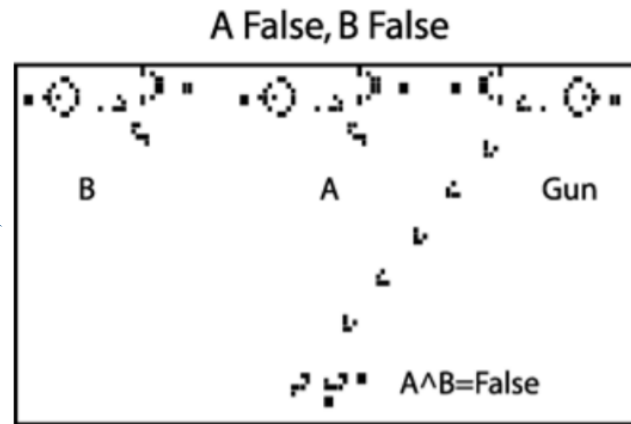
- relative position
- relative phase



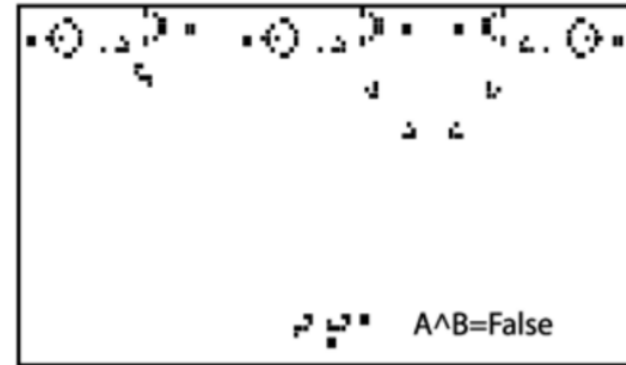
Source: Melissa Gymrek's lecture notes (MIT).

<http://web.mit.edu/sp.268/www/2010/lifeSlides.pdf>

No glider can activate the output. The result is False.



A True, B False

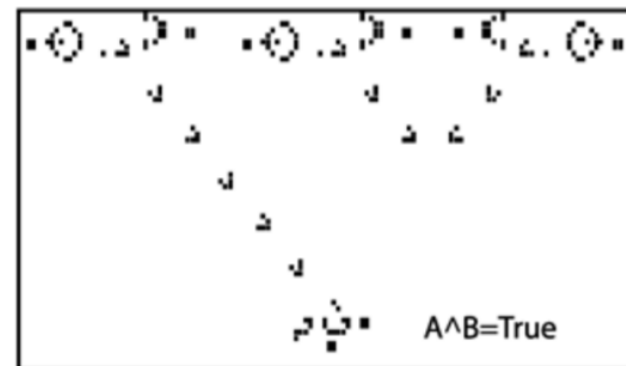


A stops the gun. Since B is false, it cannot activate the output. The result is False.

B cannot join the output since the gun stops it. The result is False.



A True, B True



A stops the gun and B can activate the output. The result is True.

Conway's game of life: conclusions

- There is a large number of life forms, many still to be discovered
- Boolean gates can be simulated
- Even a universal computer can be simulated (Turing machine)
- There is an active research community (www.conwaylife.com)



LifeWiki

The largest collection of online information about Conway's Game of Life and Life-like cellular automata. Contains over 2,000 articles.

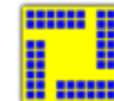
[Go to LifeWiki](#)



Forums

Share discoveries, discuss patterns, and ask questions about cellular automata with fellow enthusiasts.

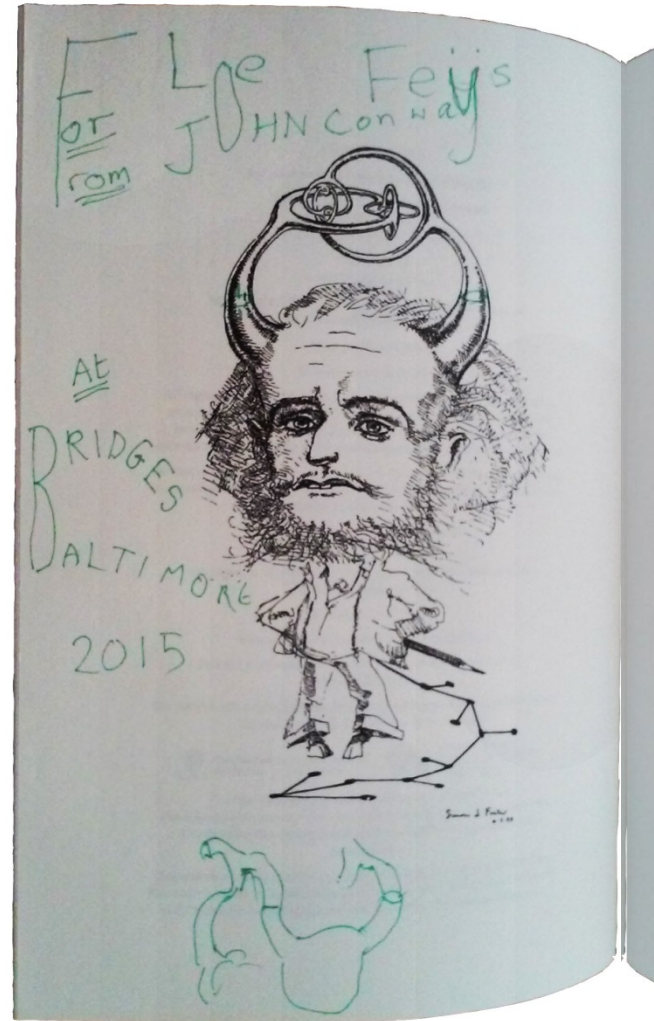
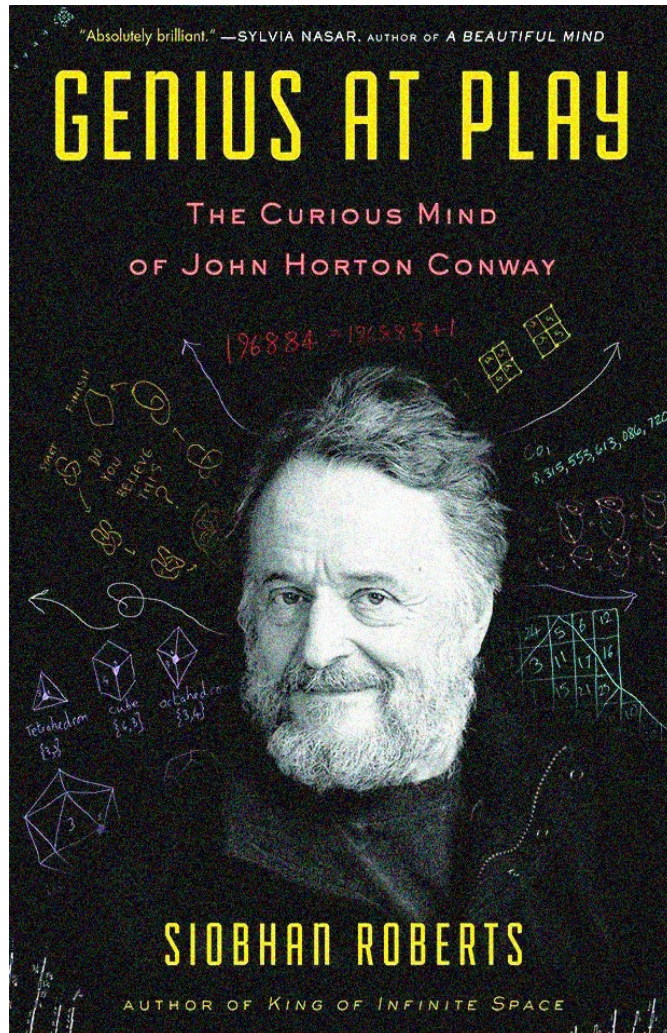
[Go to the Forums](#)



Golly

Golly is a free program that allows you to easily explore much larger patterns at higher speeds than any web-based applet ever could.

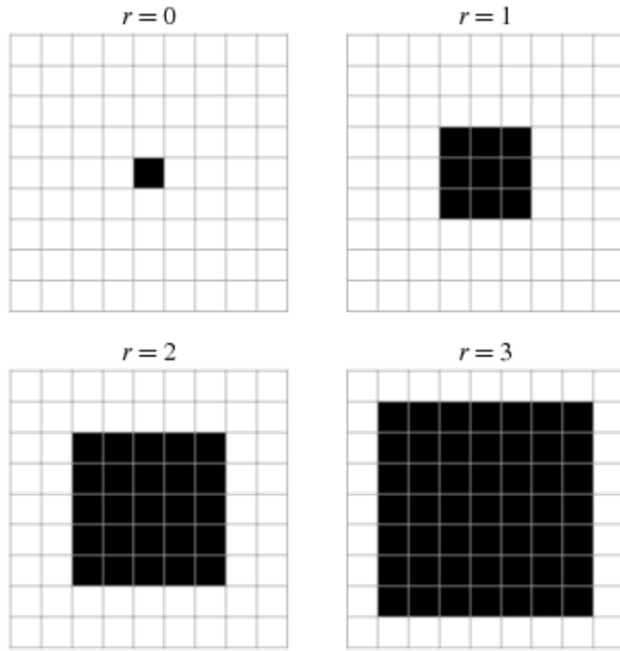
[Download Golly](#)



Meeting John
Conway at
Bridges 2015

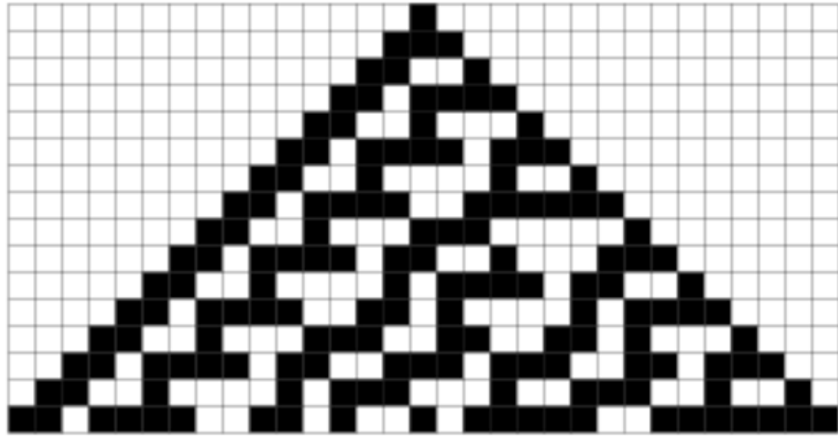
Towards elementary rules: one-dimension, $r = 1$

Mathworld: Moore neighbourhood (in two dimensions)



rule 30

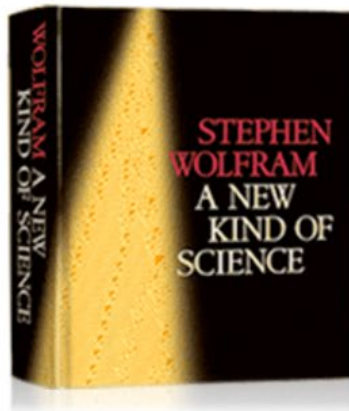
$r=1$



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Stephen Wolfram's A NEW KIND OF SCIENCE ONLINE		
Jump to Page <input type="text"/> Look Up in Index <input type="text"/> Search <input type="text"/>		
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CHAPTER 2	The Crucial Experiment	23 ▶
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CHAPTER 6	Starting from Randomness	223 ▶
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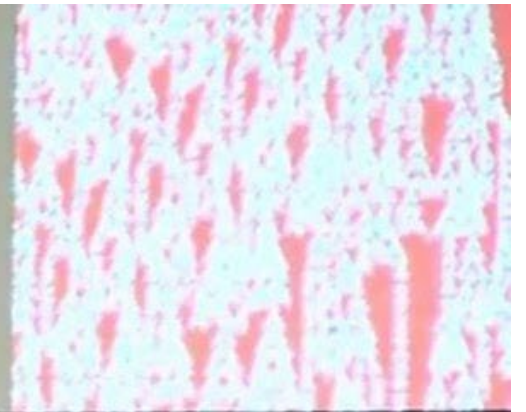
SCIENCE COLLOQUIUM

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<http://SETI>

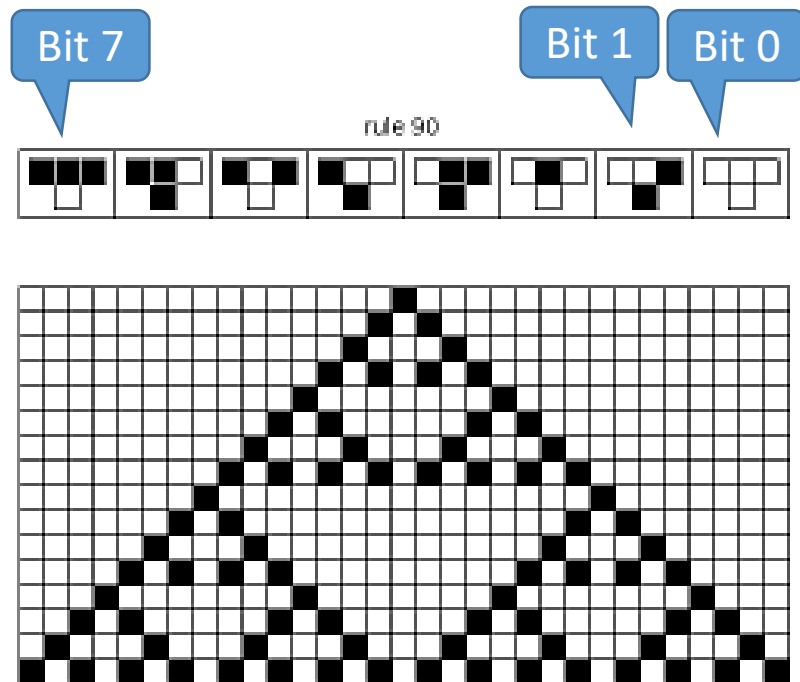


Microsoft



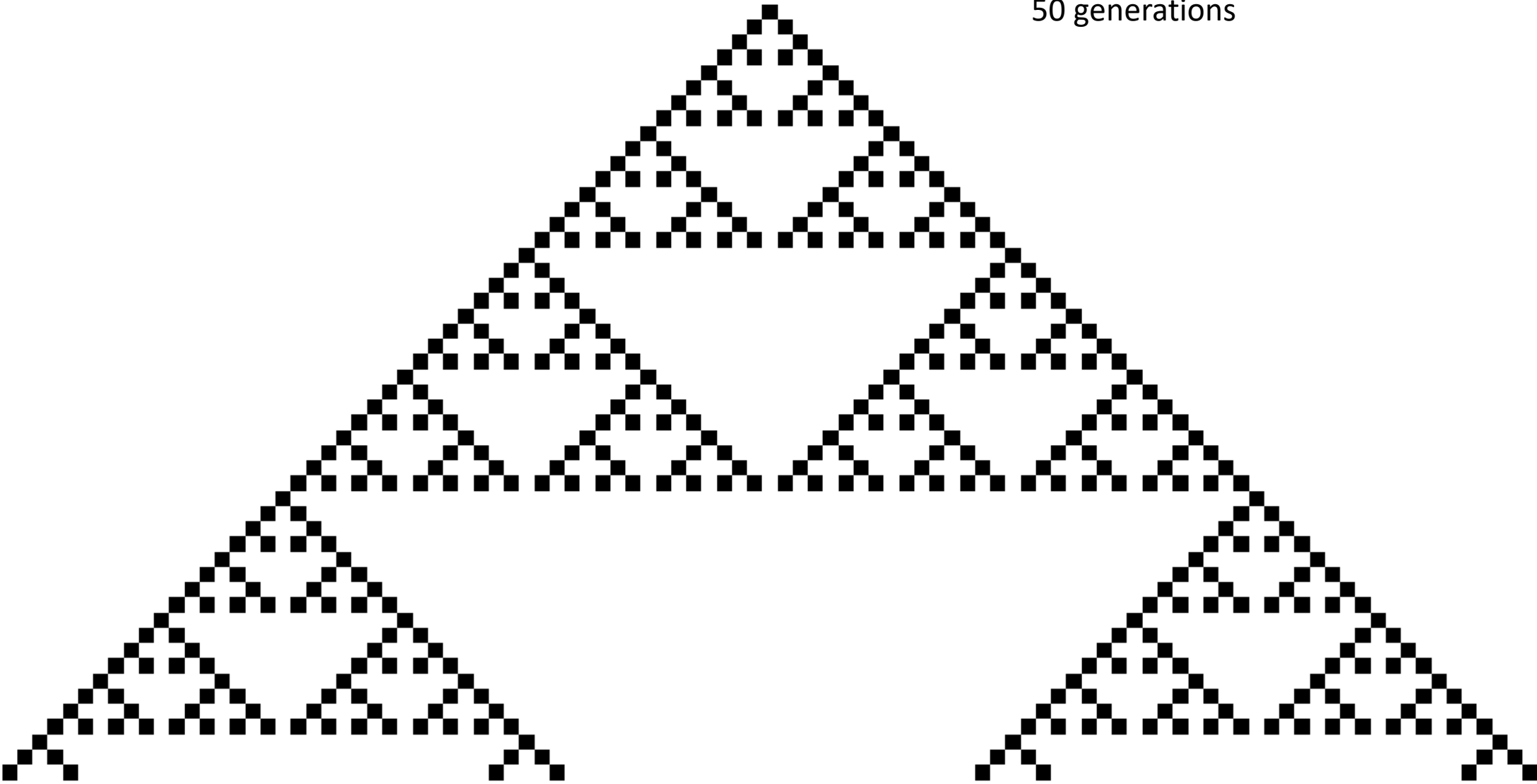
Enumeration scheme for two-color $r=1$ one-dimensional automata

Example 01011010 (binary) = $64 + 16 + 8 + 2 = 90$

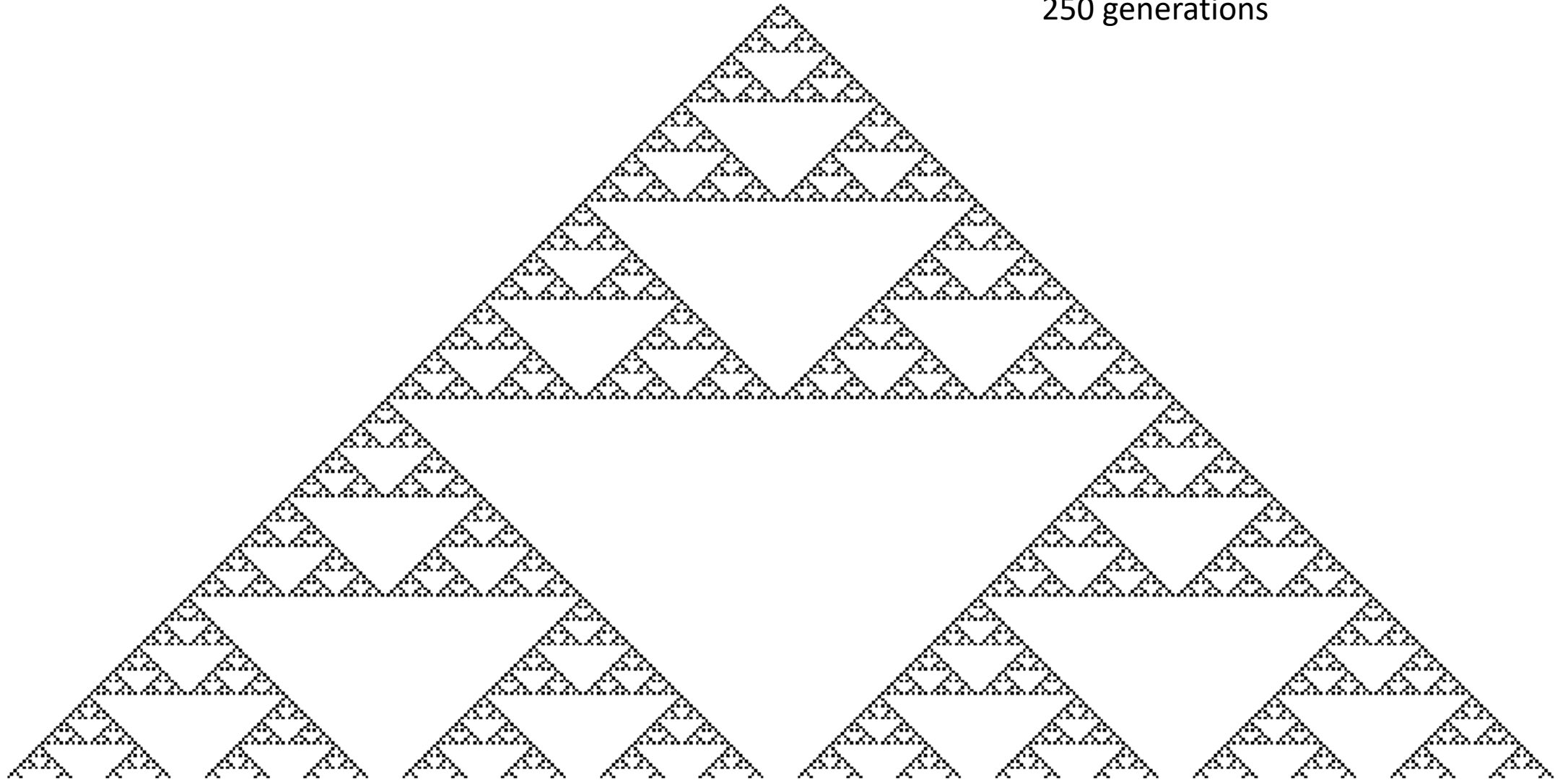


The 2D pattern formed by this rule has fractal dimension $\log 3 / \log 2 \approx 1.58$

50 generations



250 generations



This is a so-called Sierpinski triangle, see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sierpinski_triangle


```
In[35]:= max = 20;
```

```
RulePlot[CellularAutomaton[90]]
```

```
Animate[
```

```
ArrayPlot[ArrayPad[CellularAutomaton[90, {{1}, 0}, {n, All}],
```

```
{0, max - n}, {max - n, max - n}], Mesh → True], {n, 0, max, 1},
```

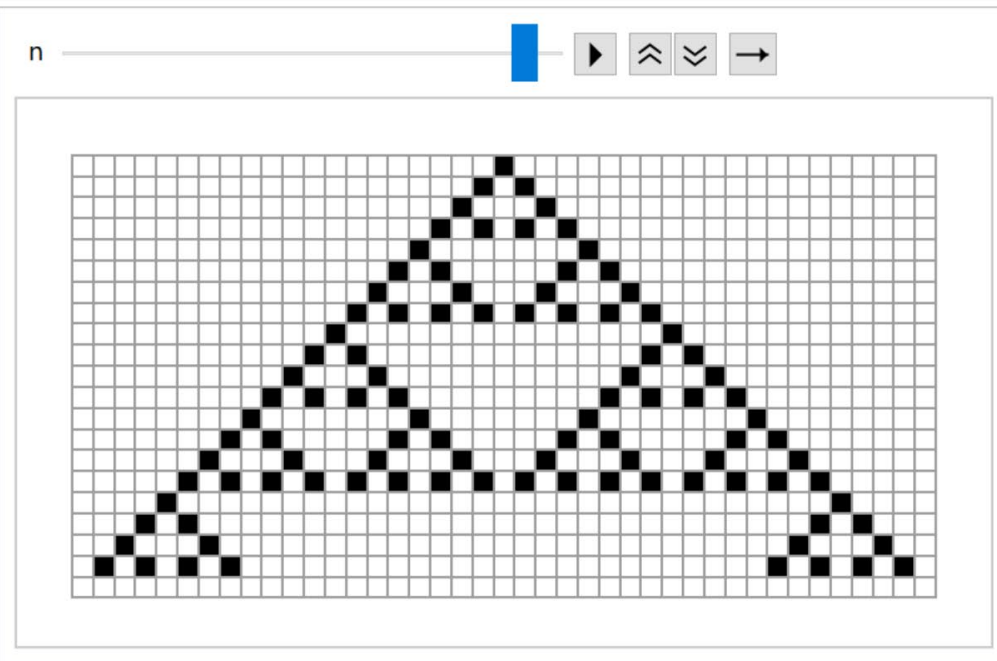
```
AnimationRunning → False]
```

Out[35]=



Out[37]=

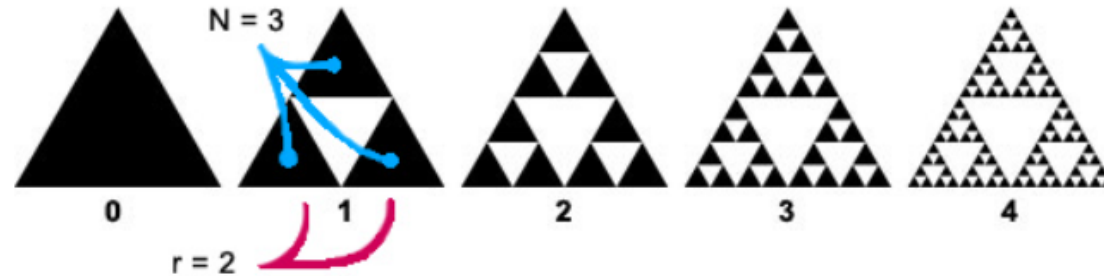
n



DEMO

Fractal Dimension of the Sierpinski Triangle

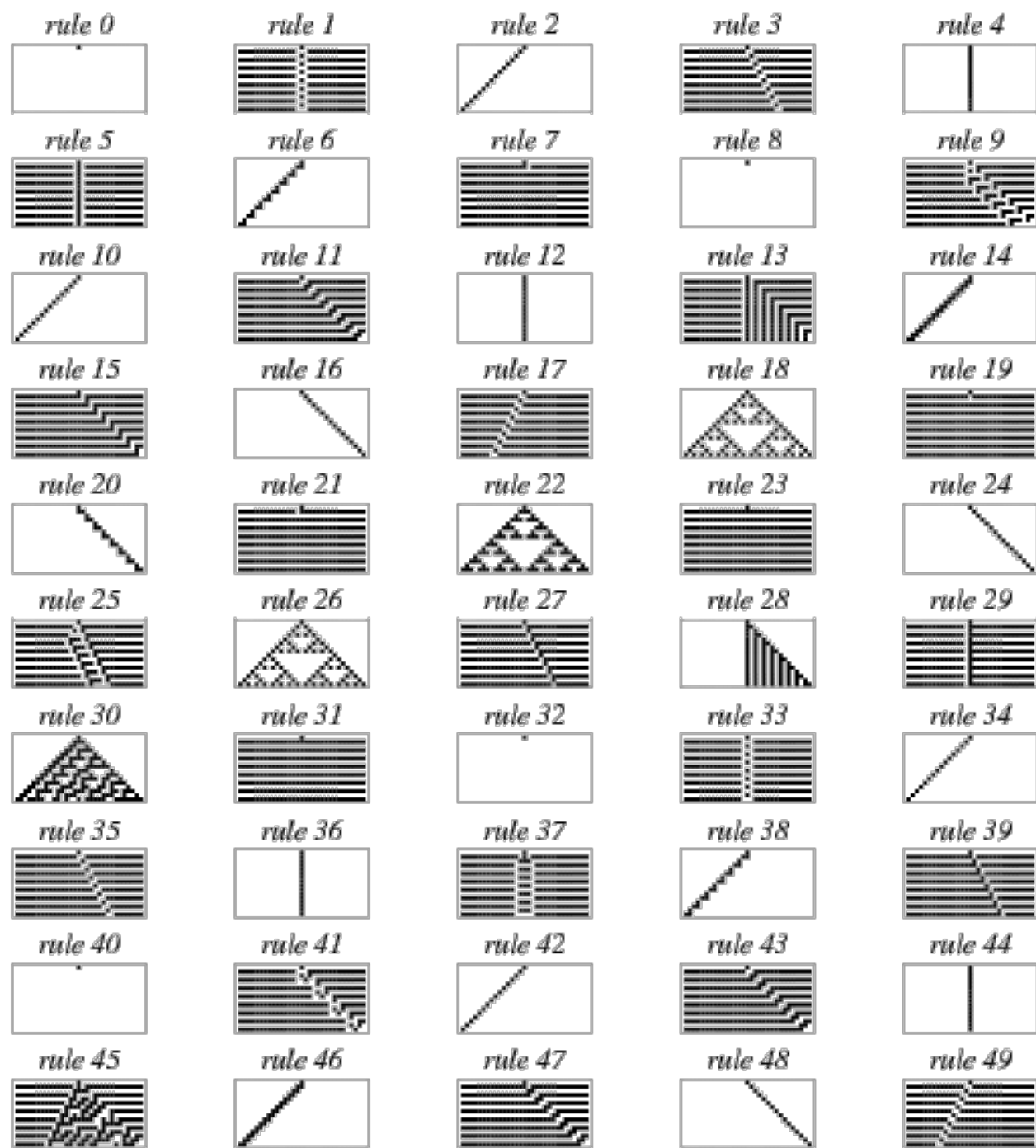
Let's use the formula for scaling to determine the dimension of the Sierpinski Triangle fractal. First, take a rough guess at what you might think the dimension will be. Less than 1? Between 1 and 2? Greater than 2? Since the Sierpinski Triangle fits in plane but doesn't fill it completely, its dimension should be less than 2. Let's see if this is true.



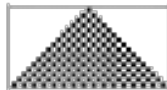
Start with the 0 order triangle in the figure above. The next iteration, order 1, is made up of 3 smaller triangles. And order 2 is made up of 9 triangles. So each iteration of the fractal has 3 times as many triangles, and $N=3$. Next we need to figure out the scaling factor, r . How much smaller is each triangle in order 1 than order 0? Look at the edge of each triangle in order 1, and you can see that the edge of each triangle is half the length of the edge of the triangle in order 0. So the scaling factor $r=2$.

That's all we need to know, and we can find the dimension by using the formula:

$$D = \frac{\log(N)}{\log(r)} = \frac{\log(3)}{\log(2)} = 1.585$$



rule 50



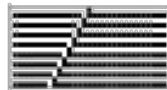
rule 51



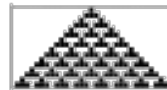
rule 52



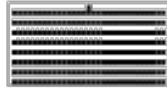
rule 53



rule 54



rule 55



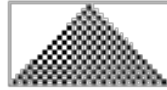
rule 56



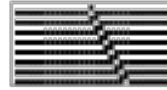
rule 57



rule 58



rule 59



rule 60



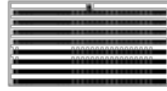
rule 61



rule 62



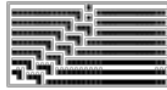
rule 63



rule 64



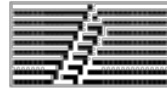
rule 65



rule 66



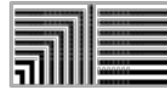
rule 67



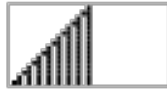
rule 68



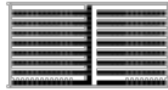
rule 69



rule 70



rule 71



rule 72



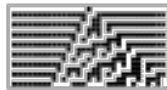
rule 73



rule 74



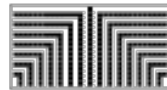
rule 75



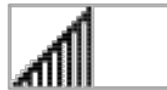
rule 76



rule 77



rule 78



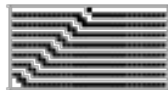
rule 79



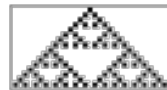
rule 80



rule 81



rule 82



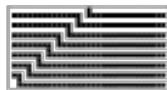
rule 83



rule 84



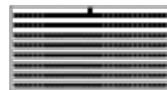
rule 85



rule 86



rule 87



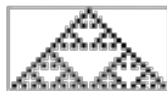
rule 88



rule 89



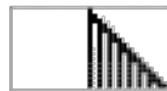
rule 90



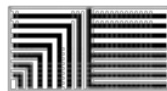
rule 91



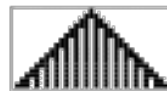
rule 92



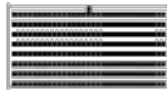
rule 93



rule 94



rule 95



rule 96



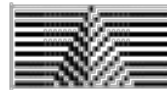
rule 97

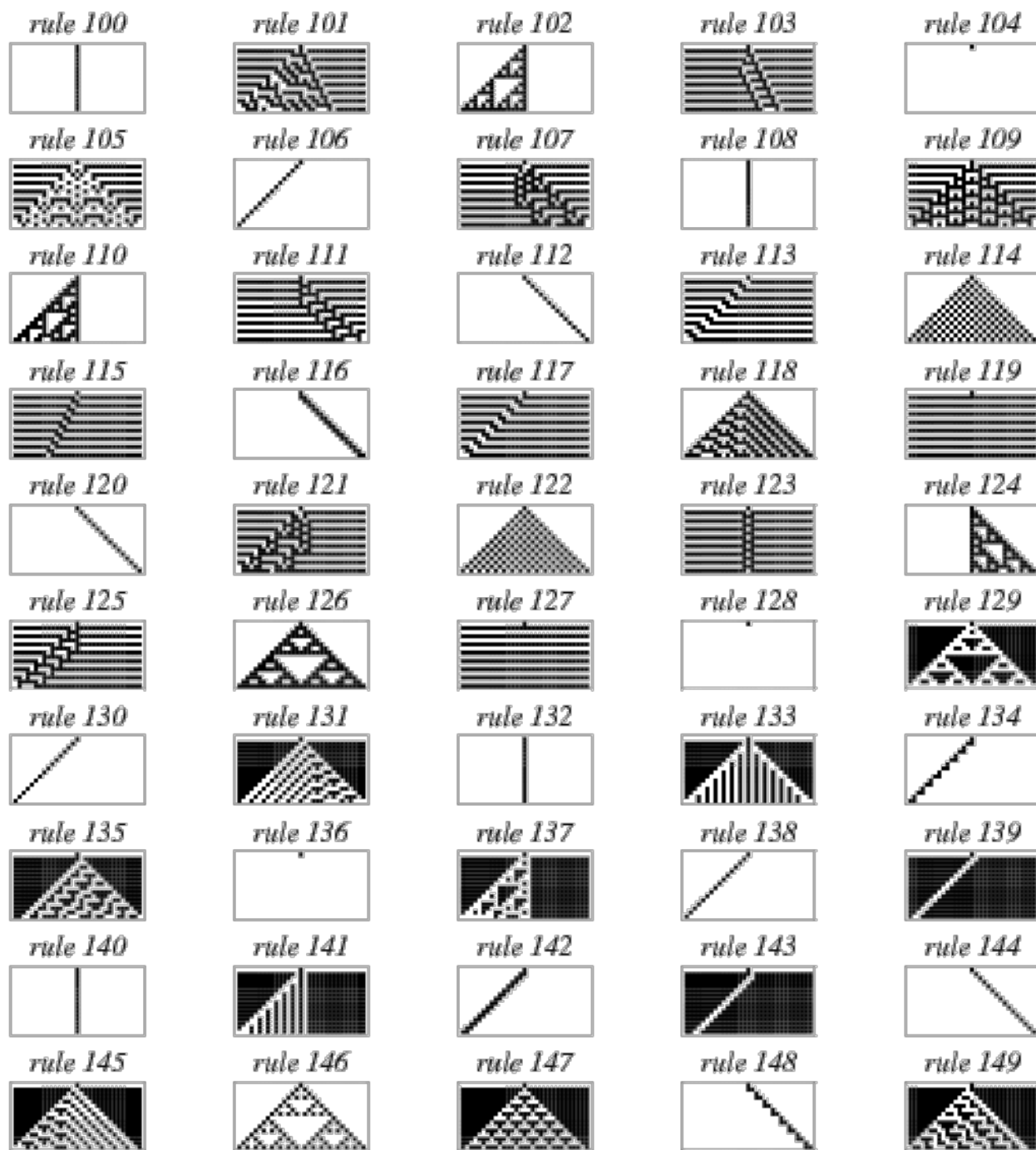


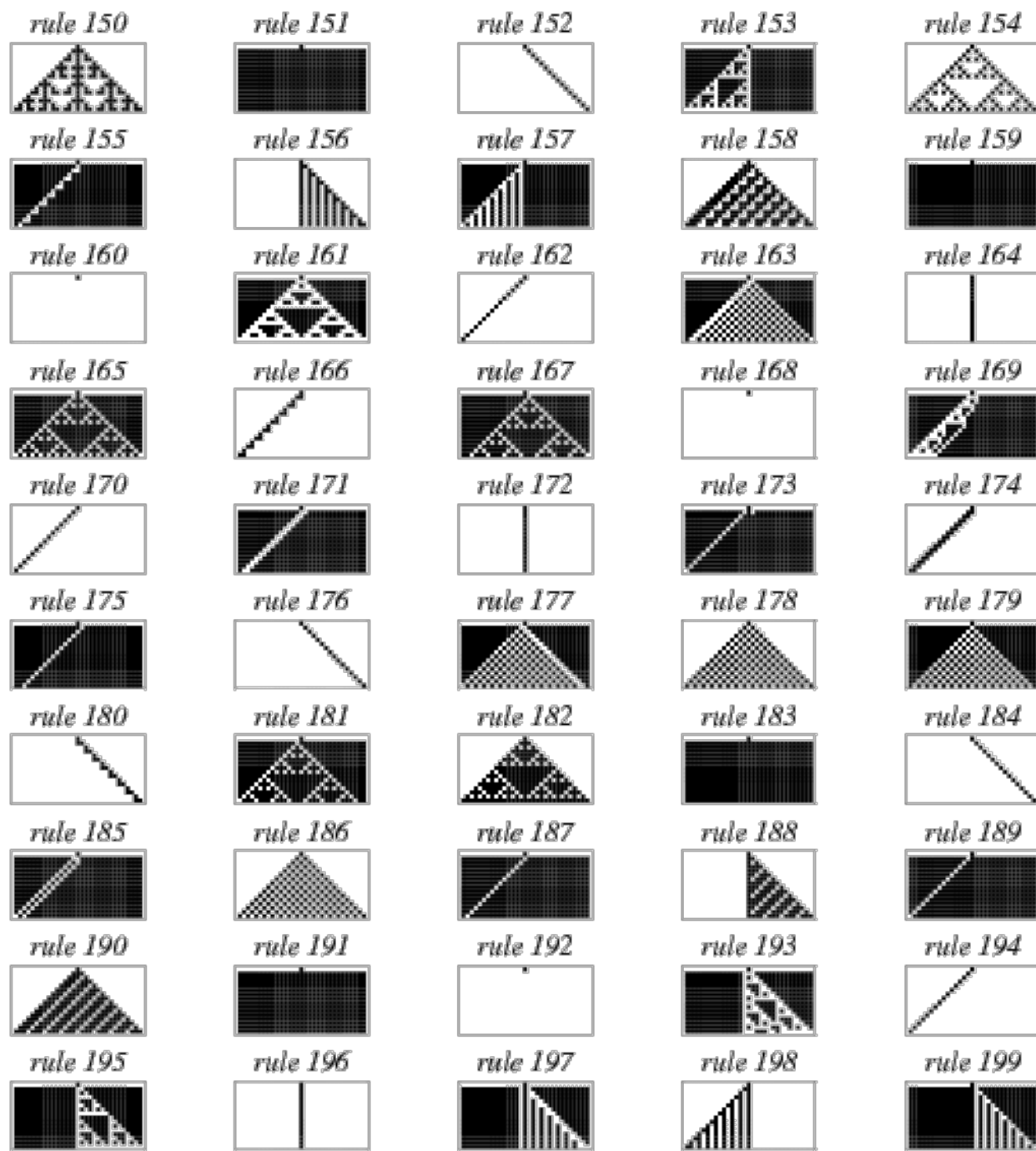
rule 98

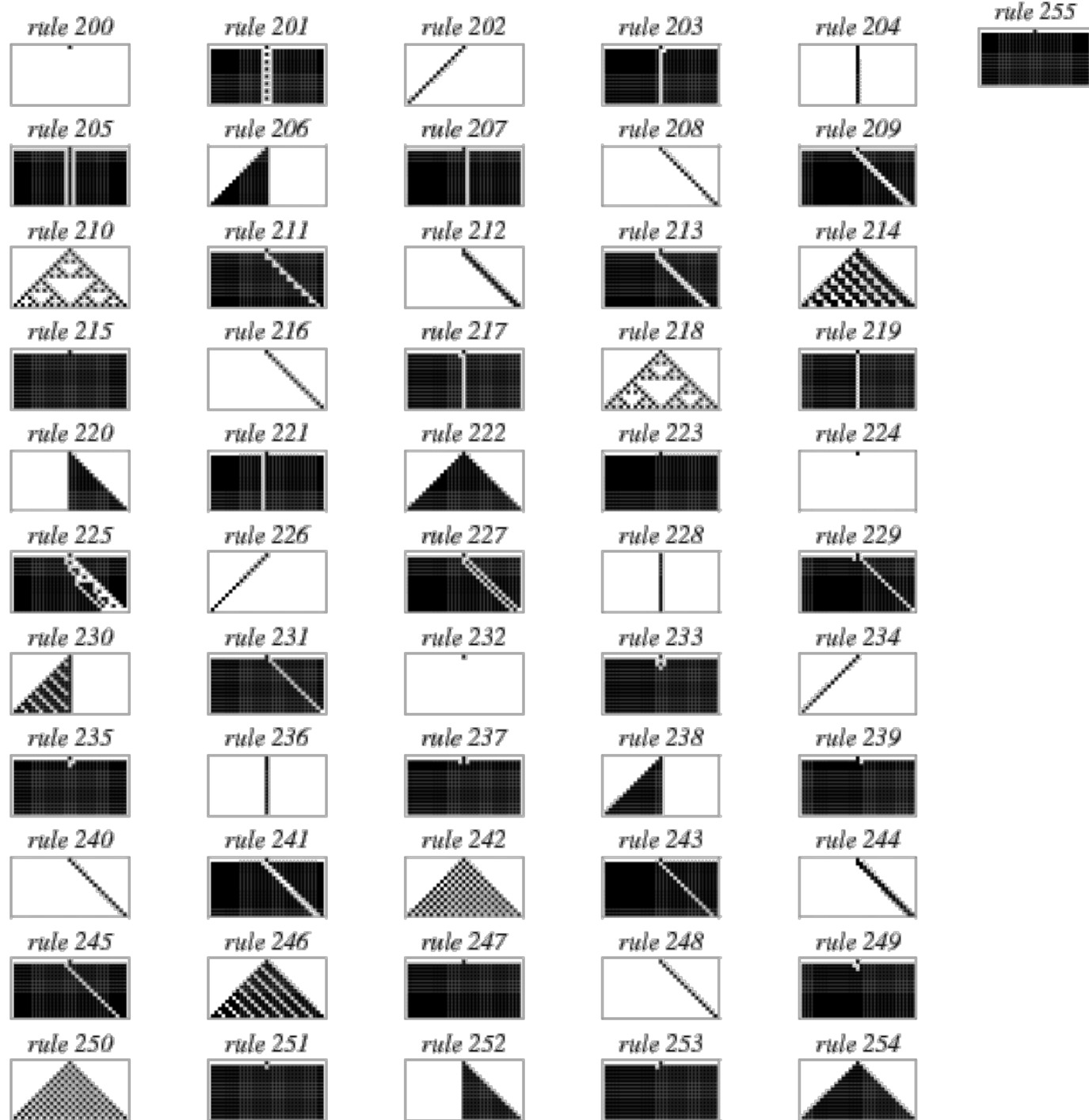


rule 99

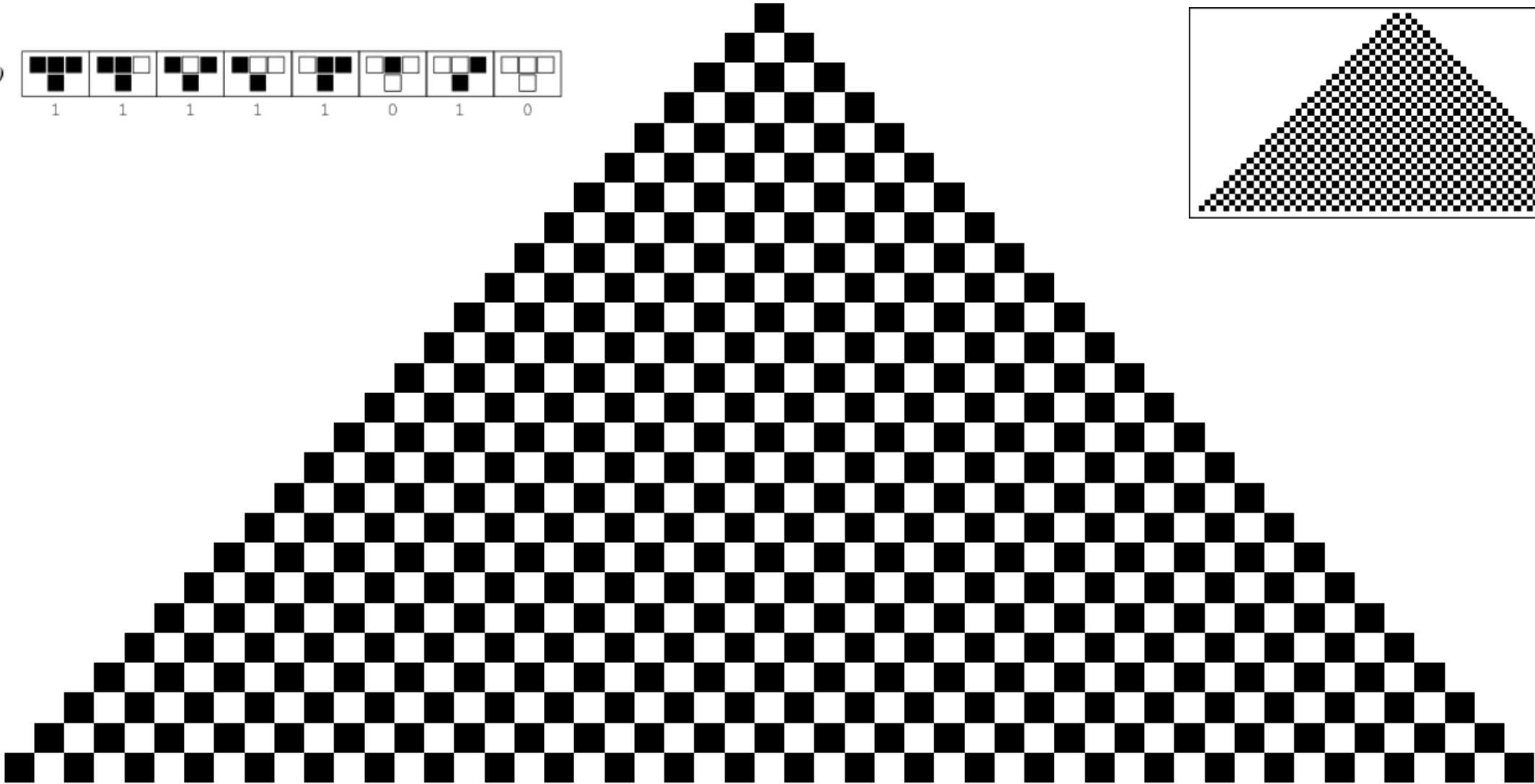
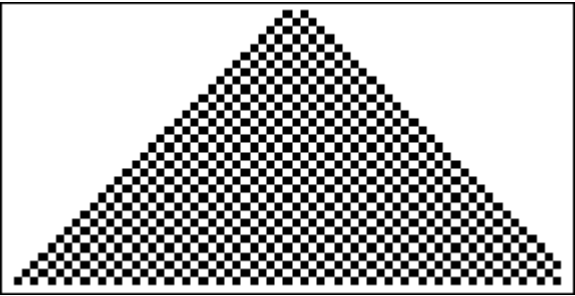
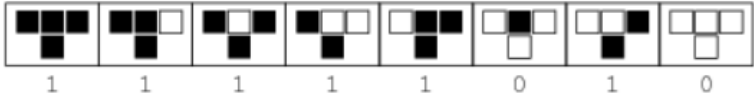




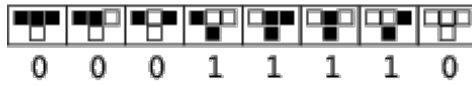
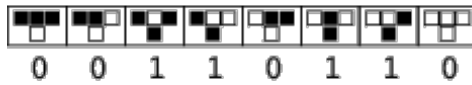
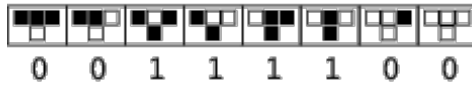
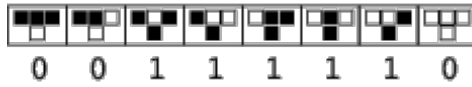
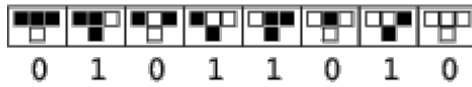
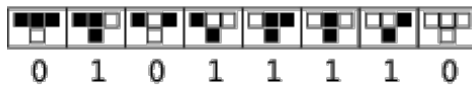
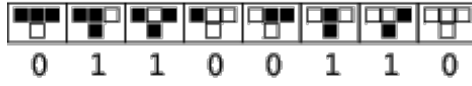
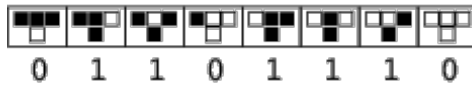
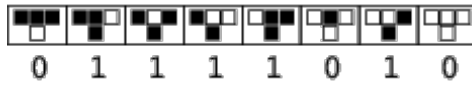
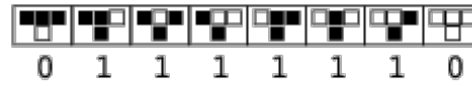
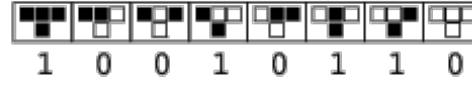
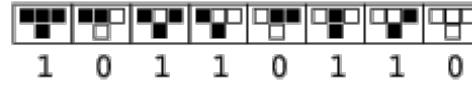
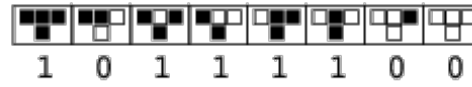
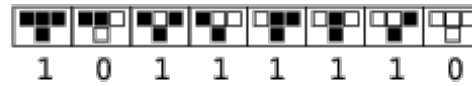
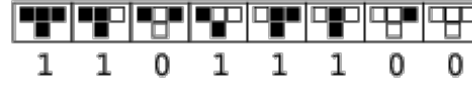
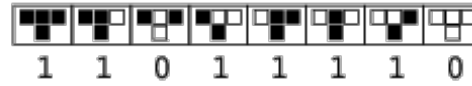
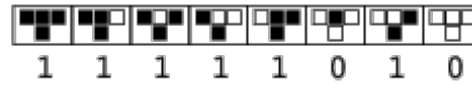
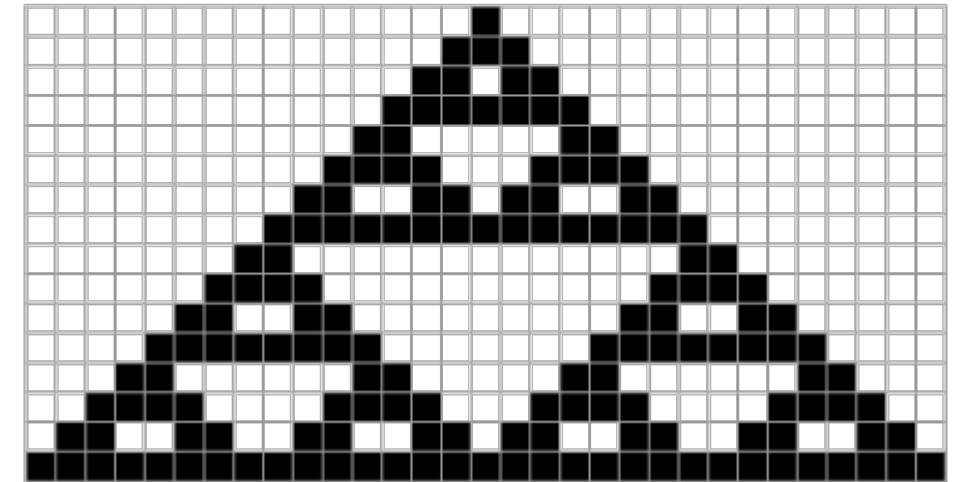
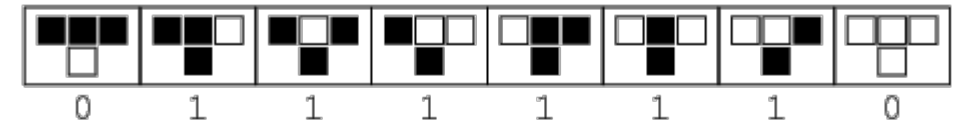




rule 250



Rule 250 This one is additive, see
<http://mathworld.wolfram.com/AdditiveCellularAutomaton.html>

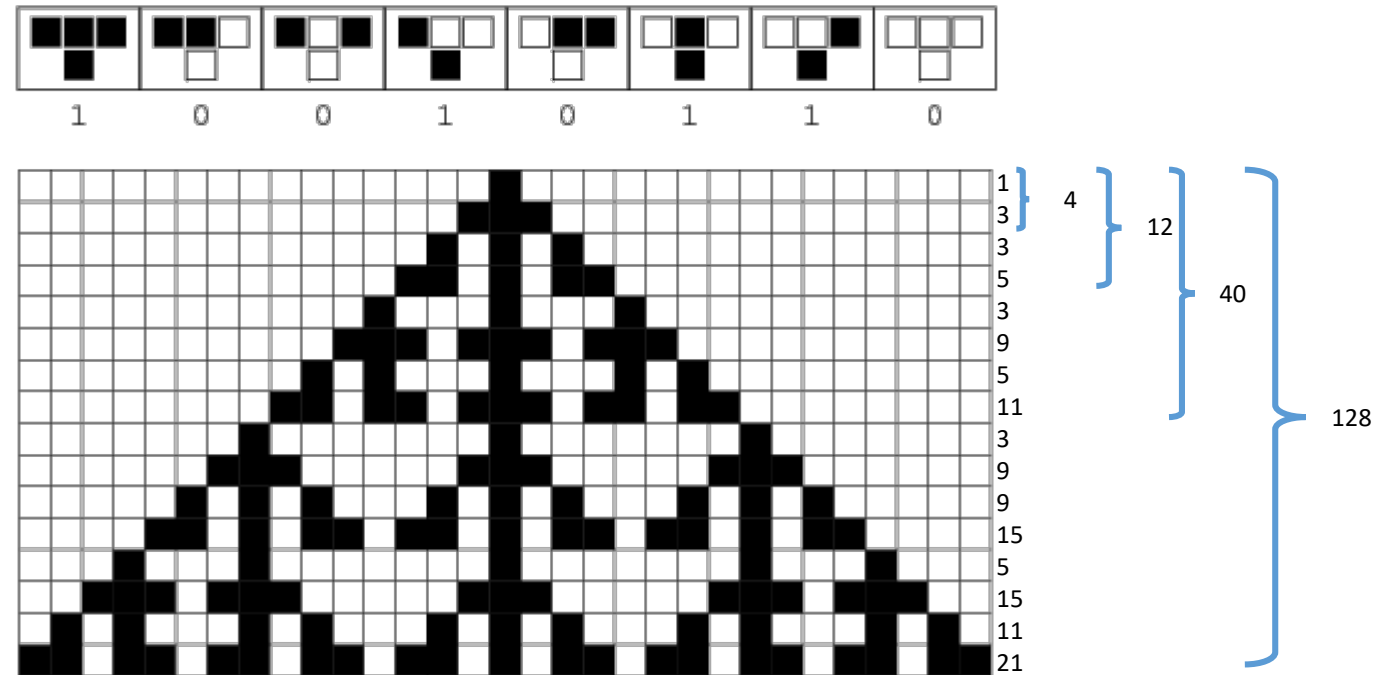
rule 30*rule 54**rule 60**rule 62**rule 90**rule 94**rule 102**rule 110**rule 122**rule 126**rule 150**rule 158**rule 182**rule 188**rule 190**rule 220**rule 222**rule 250**rule 126*

Also Rule 90 is “additive”, check Mathworld:

<http://mathworld.wolfram.com/AdditiveCellularAutomaton.html>

source: NKS

rule 150



D=1 would give 2, 4, 8, 16, ...

D=2 would give 2×2, 4×4, 8×8, 16×16, ...

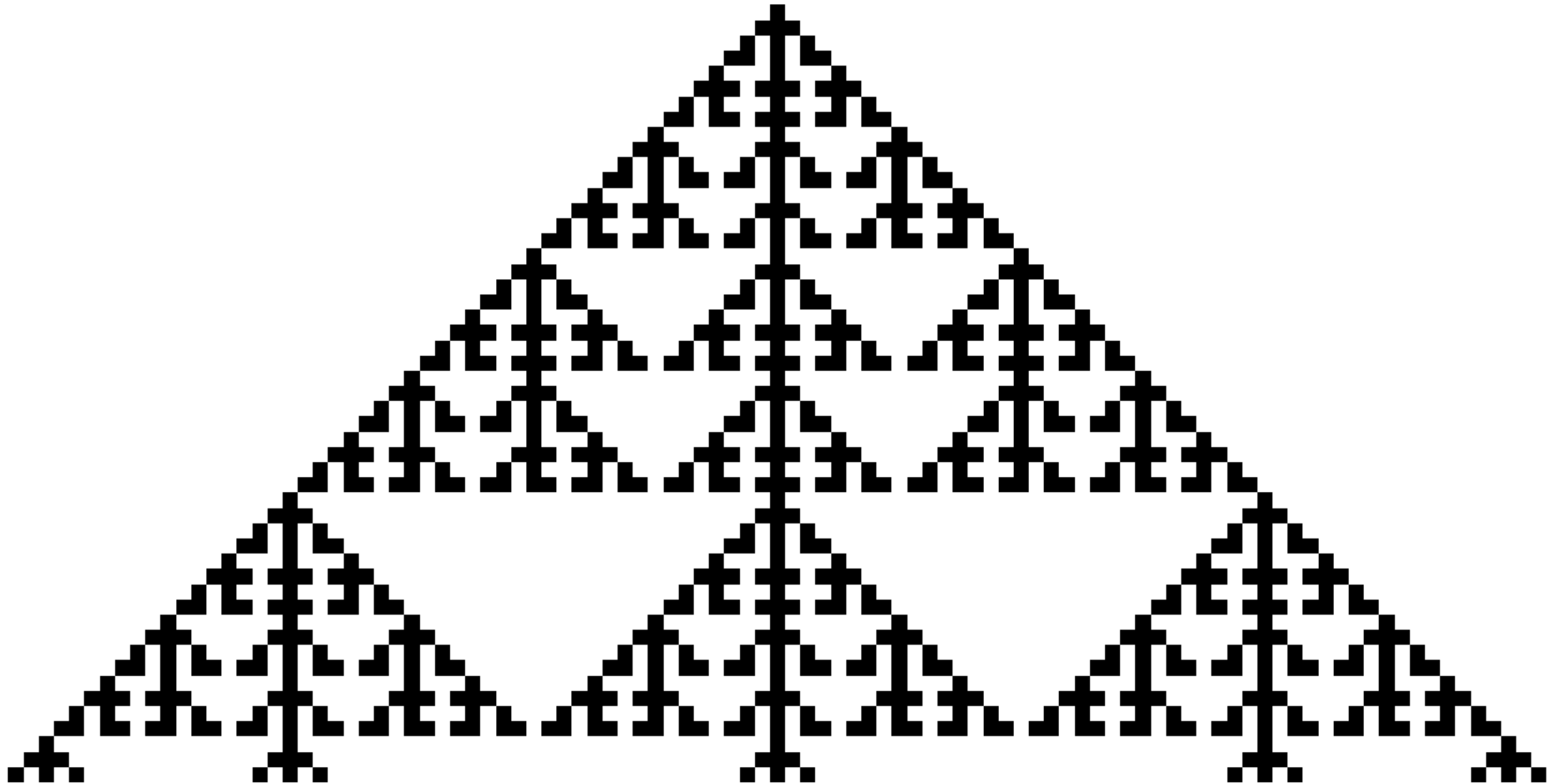
Now we have 2×2, 3×4, 5×8, 8×16, ...

Fibonacci numbers: 2, 3, 5, 8, 13, 21, 34, etc.

Limit $F_{n+1}/F_n = (1 + \sqrt{5}) / 2$

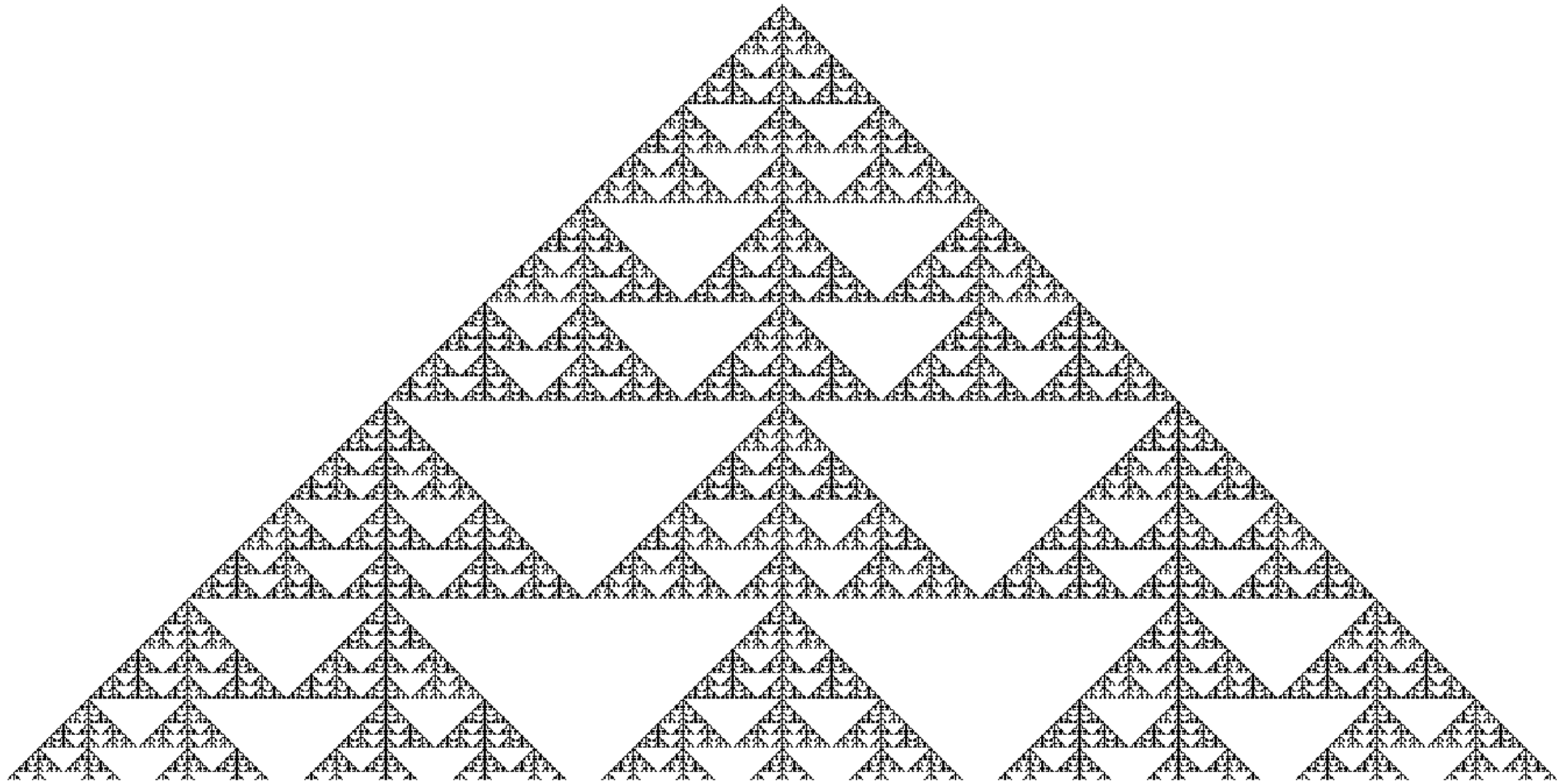
This rule has fractal dimension $\log(1 + \sqrt{5}) / \log 2 \approx 1.69$

```
In[81]:= M = 50;  
c = CellularAutomaton[150, {{1}, 0}, M];  
ArrayPlot[c]
```

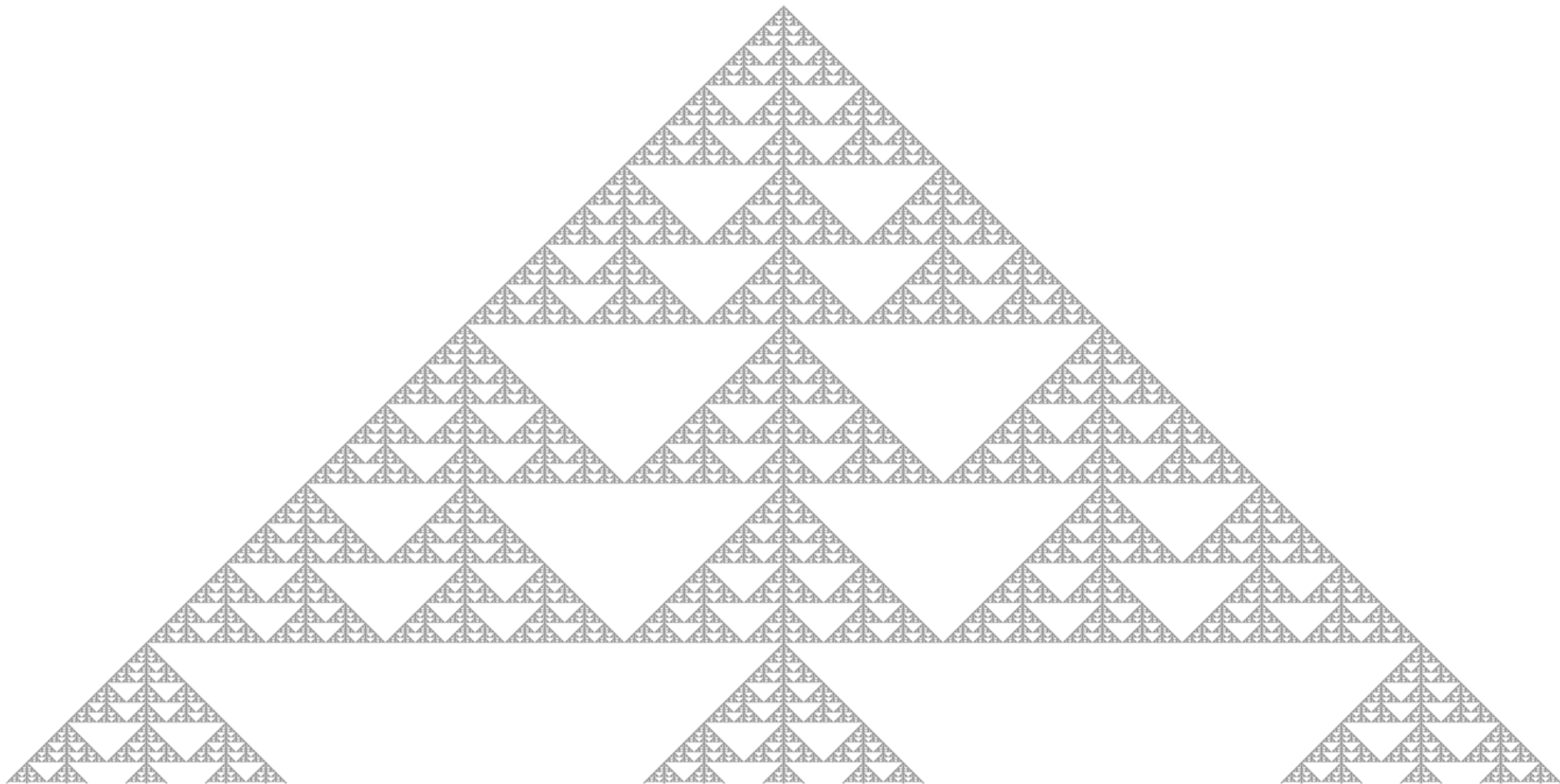


```
In[78]:= M = 500;  
c = CellularAutomaton[150, {{1}, 0}, M];  
ArrayPlot[c]
```

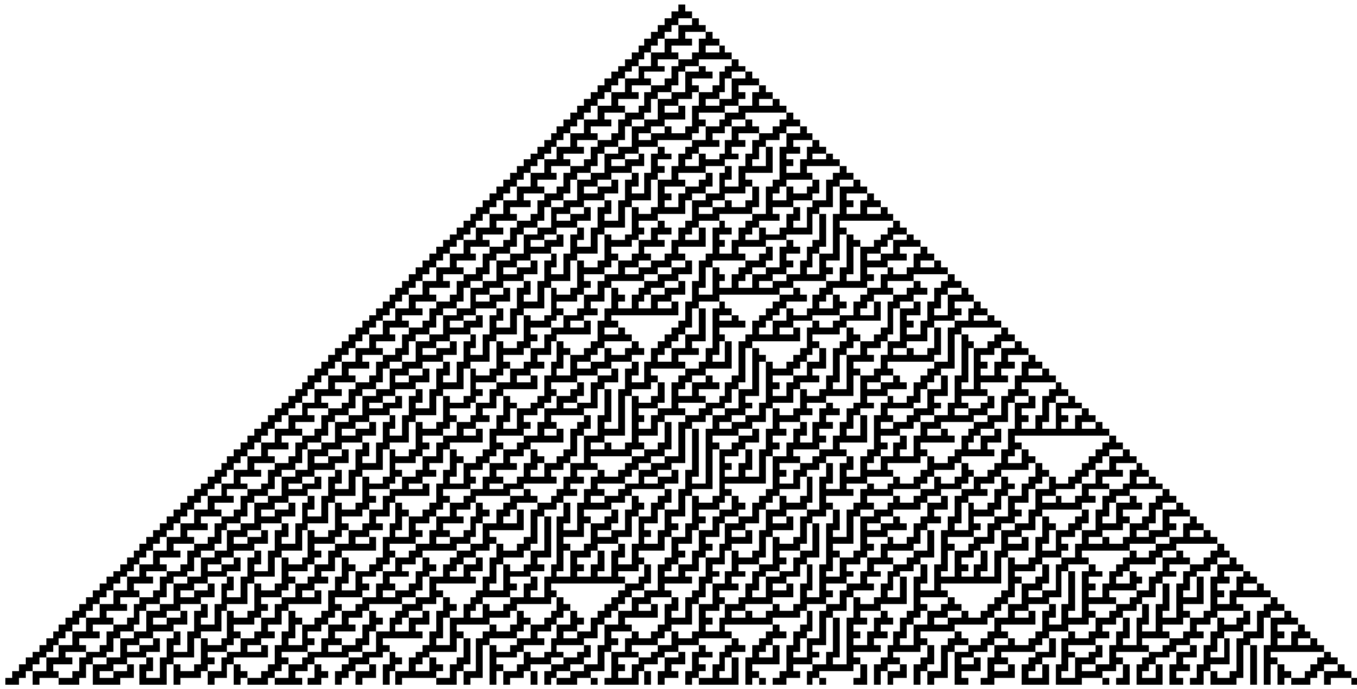
Out[80]=



```
In[75]:= M = 5000;  
c = CellularAutomaton[150, {{1}, 0}, M];  
ArrayPlot[c]
```



Rule 30 is chaotic, like a random generator



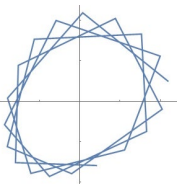
Conus textile by Richard Ling, Wikimedia

An empirical observation is that cellular automata can be classied according to the complexity and information produced by the behavior of the pattern they produce:

- Class 1 : Fixed; all cells converge to a constant black or white set
- Class 2 : Periodic; repeats the same pattern, like a loop
- Class 3 : Chaotic; pseudo-random
- Class 4 : Complex local structures; exhibits behaviors of both class 2 and class 3; with long lived hard to classify structure.

Wolfram's one-dimensional automata: conclusions

- Some of the automata have complex behavior
- Some rules are perfect random generators (automaton rule 30)
- Even a universal computer can be simulated (automaton rule 110)
- Wolfram believes our whole universe could be just one big cellular automaton



Cellular automata: research and applications

- Fundamentals of computation

- ✓ Von Neumann, Conway, Wolfram

- Models of social behavior

- ✓ Beltran, F. S., Herrando, S., Estreder, V., Ferreres, D., Adell, M. A., & Ruiz-Soler, M. (2011). Social simulation based on cellular automata: Modeling language shifts. In Cellular Automata—Simplicity Behind Complexity (p. 323). InTech.
- ✓ Lu, Y., Laffan, S., Pettit, C., & Cao, M. (2020). Land use change simulation and analysis using a vector cellular automata (CA) model: A case study of Ipswich City, Queensland, Australia. Environment and Planning B: Urban Analytics and City Science, 47(9), 1605-1621.
- ✓ Ding, N., Chen, T., & Zhang, H. (2017, June). Simulation of high-rise building evacuation considering fatigue factor based on cellular automata: A case study in China. In Building Simulation (Vol. 10, No. 3, pp. 407-418). Tsinghua University Press.

- Aesthetics and awareness in design

- ✓ Lukas, Troy, Loe -> next time

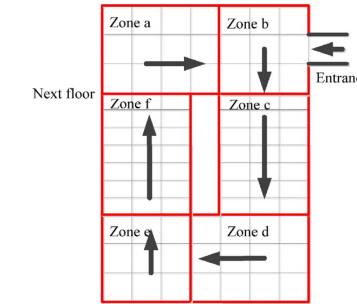


Fig. 1 Grid map and six zones

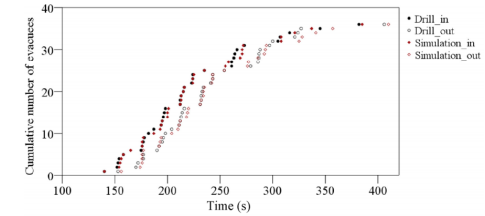


Fig. 12 Drill and simulation data between floors 7 and 5

