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Words Avoiding a Reflexive Acyclic Relation

Abstract for the Combinatorics Seminar 2005 October 24

Given an alphabet X and a relation A on X , an extremely well-studied (but perhaps not thoroughly understood) problem consists of counting words in X whose adjacent letters avoid A . We focus on a class of examples in which the rational generating function has a form with interesting combinatorial ramifications. The talk will explore some of these, including: Nim-type games, Mobius functions, cycle-free posets, alternating forests, and derangements of a multiset.

This is joint work with John Dollhopf and Ian Goulden.

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