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### ACCEPTED MANUSCRIPT

# Bubble-Flip—A New Generation Algorithm for Prefix Normal Words

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#### Abstract

We present a new recursive generation algorithm for prefix normal words. These are binary words with the property that no factor has more 1s than the prefix of the same length. The new algorithm uses two operations on binary words, which exploit certain properties of prefix normal words in a smart way. We introduce infinite prefix normal words and show that one of the operations used by the algorithm, if applied repeatedly to extend the word, produces an ultimately periodic infinite word, which is prefix normal. Moreover, based on the original finite word, we can predict both the length and the density of an ultimate period of this infinite word<sup>1</sup>.

*Keywords:* algorithms on automata and words, combinatorics on words, combinatorial generation, prefix normal words, infinite words, binary languages, combinatorial Gray code

#### 1. Introduction

Prefix normal words are binary words with the property that no factor has more 1s than the prefix of the same length. For example, 11001010 is prefix normal, but 11001101 is not, since the factor 1101 has too many 1s. These words were introduced in [13], originally motivated by the problem of Jumbled Pattern Matching [5, 20, 15, 2, 9, 3, 10, 1, 14, 18, 12].

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>This is an extended version of our paper presented at LATA 2018 [11].

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