

\mathcal{E}_∞ ring spectra built from small complexes

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Iterated mapping cones using elements of Hopf invariant 1

Conventions and assumptions: Everything is 2-local. Homology and cohomology will usually be taken with \mathbb{F}_2 coefficients, so $H_*(-) = H_*(-; \mathbb{F}_2)$ and $H^*(-) = H^*(-; \mathbb{F}_2)$.

Recall the elements of Hopf invariant 1:

$$\begin{aligned} 2 &\in \pi_0(S^0) \cong \mathbb{Z}, & \eta &\in \pi_1(S^0) \cong \mathbb{Z}/2, \\ \nu &\in \pi_3(S^0) \cong \mathbb{Z}/8, & \sigma &\in \pi_7(S^0) \cong \mathbb{Z}/16. \end{aligned}$$

In the cohomology of the mapping cones,

$$\begin{aligned} H^*(C_2) &= \mathbb{F}_2\{t^0, t^1\}, & \text{Sq}^1 t^0 &= t^1, \\ H^*(C_\eta) &= \mathbb{F}_2\{u^0, u^2\}, & \text{Sq}^2 u^0 &= u^2, \\ H^*(C_\nu) &= \mathbb{F}_2\{v^0, v^4\}, & \text{Sq}^4 v^0 &= v_4, \\ H^*(C_\sigma) &= \mathbb{F}_2\{w^0, w^8\}, & \text{Sq}^8 w^0 &= w^8. \end{aligned}$$

These elements satisfy algebraic relations such as $2\eta = 0 = \eta\nu$, allowing the following iterated mapping cones to be constructed:

$$S^0 \cup_{\eta} e^2 \cup_2 e^3, \quad S^0 \cup_{\nu} e^4 \cup_{\eta} e^6 \cup_2 e^7, \quad S^0 \cup_{\sigma} e^8 \cup_{\nu} e^{12} \cup_{\eta} e^{14} \cup_2 e^{15}.$$

The cohomology of these as modules over the Steenrod algebra \mathcal{A}^* is simple to describe. For example:

$$H^*(S^0 \cup_{\sigma} e^8 \cup_{\nu} e^{12} \cup_{\eta} e^{14} \cup_2 e^{15})$$

$0 \bullet \quad 8 \bullet \quad 12 \bullet \quad 14 \bullet \quad 15 \bullet$
 $\quad \quad \quad \text{Sq}^8 \quad \quad \text{Sq}^4 \quad \quad \text{Sq}^2 \quad \quad \text{Sq}^1$

Lemma

$$S^0 \cup_{\eta} e^2 \cup_2 e^3 \sim H\mathbb{Z}^{[3]}, \quad S^0 \cup_{\nu} e^4 \cup_{\eta} e^6 \cup_2 e^7 \sim kO^{[7]},$$

$$S^0 \cup_{\sigma} e^8 \cup_{\nu} e^{12} \cup_{\eta} e^{14} \cup_2 e^{15} \sim \mathrm{tmf}^{[15]}.$$

Here $X^{[n]}$ denotes the n -skeleton of a CW spectrum X .

Remark: Each of these spectra is the first of a series of 'generalised integral Brown-Gitler spectra' associated with $H\mathbb{Z}$, kO and tmf (the existence of the last series is still only conjectural).

Such iterated mapping cones exist in nature unstably. The infinite loop spaces $BSO = BO\langle 2 \rangle$, $BSpin = BO\langle 4 \rangle$ and $BString = BO\langle 8 \rangle$ have the following skeleta:

$$BSO^{[3]} = S^2 \cup_2 e^3, \quad BSpin^{[7]} = S^4 \cup_\eta e^6 \cup_2 e^7,$$

$$BString^{[15]} = S^8 \cup_\nu e^{12} \cup_\eta e^{14} \cup_2 e^{15},$$

and the associated Thom spectra over these are

$$MSO^{[3]} = S^0 \cup_\eta e^2 \cup_2 e^3, \quad MSpin^{[7]} = S^0 \cup_\nu S^4 \cup_\eta e^6 \cup_2 e^7,$$

$$MString^{[15]} = S^0 \cup_\sigma S^8 \cup_\nu e^{12} \cup_\eta e^{14} \cup_2 e^{15}.$$

Each skeletal inclusion map factors through an infinite loop map,

$$\begin{array}{ccc} BO\langle 2^r \rangle^{[2^{r+1}-1]} & \xrightarrow{\quad} & BO\langle 2^r \rangle \\ & \searrow & \nearrow j_r \\ & QBO\langle 2^r \rangle^{[2^{r+1}-1]} & \end{array}$$

where $Q = \Omega^\infty \Sigma^\infty$ is the free infinite loop space functor. The associated Thom spectra Mj_1 , Mj_2 and Mj_3 are \mathcal{E}_∞ ring spectra.

Theorem

The homology rings of the Thom spectra Mj_r are given by

$$H_*(Mj_1) =$$

$$\mathbb{F}_2[Q^I x_2, Q^J x_3 : I, J \text{ admissible, } \text{exc}(I) > 2, \text{exc}(J) > 3],$$

$$H_*(Mj_2) = \mathbb{F}_2[Q^I x_4, Q^J x_6, Q^K x_7 :$$

$$I, J, K \text{ admissible, } \text{exc}(I) > 4, \text{exc}(J) > 6, \text{exc}(K) > 7],$$

$$H_*(Mj_3) = \mathbb{F}_2[Q^I x_8, Q^J x_{12}, Q^K x_{14}, Q^L x_{15} : I, J, K, L \text{ admiss.}, \\ \text{exc}(I) > 8, \text{exc}(J) > 12, \text{exc}(K) > 14, \text{exc}(L) > 15].$$

There are \mathcal{E}_∞ morphisms $Mj_r \rightarrow H\mathbb{F}_2$ inducing algebra homomorphisms $H_(Mj_r) \rightarrow \mathcal{A}_*$ with images*

$$\mathbb{F}_2[\zeta_1^2, \zeta_2, \zeta_3, \dots] \cong H_*(H\mathbb{Z}), \quad \mathbb{F}_2[\zeta_1^4, \zeta_2^2, \zeta_3, \zeta_4, \dots] \cong H_*(kO), \\ \mathbb{F}_2[\zeta_1^8, \zeta_2^4, \zeta_3^2, \zeta_4, \zeta_5, \dots] \cong H_*(\text{tmf}).$$

In this result,

$$\begin{aligned}x_2 &\mapsto \zeta_1^2, & x_3 &\mapsto \zeta_2, \\x_4 &\mapsto \zeta_1^4, & x_6 &\mapsto \zeta_2^2, & x_7 &\mapsto \zeta_3, \\x_8 &\mapsto \zeta_1^8, & x_{12} &\mapsto \zeta_2^4, & x_{14} &\mapsto \zeta_3^2, & x_{15} &\mapsto \zeta_4.\end{aligned}$$

Known result: Mark Steinberger showed that the spectrum Mj_1 is a wedge of suspensions of $H\mathbb{Z}$ and $H\mathbb{Z}/2^k$ for various $k \geq 1$. It seems plausible that analogous splittings should exist for the others.

Conjectures:

- ▶ Mj_2 is a wedge of kO module spectra.
- ▶ Mj_3 is a wedge of tmf module spectra.

We will describe some algebraic analogues for such conjectural splittings.

Some coalgebra

Let \mathbb{k} be a field of characteristic 2. We work with (graded) \mathbb{k} -vector spaces and set $\otimes = \otimes_{\mathbb{k}}$.

Let A be a commutative Hopf algebra over \mathbb{k} , and let B be a quotient Hopf algebra of A . We denote the (left) coaction on a comodule M by ψ_M . We can induce a left B -comodule structure by composing.

$$\begin{array}{ccccc} M & & & & \\ & \searrow^{\psi'_M} & & \searrow & \\ M & \xrightarrow{\psi_M} & A \otimes M & \longrightarrow & B \otimes M \end{array}$$

The *cotensor product* $L \square_B M$ of a right and a left B -comodule is the equaliser of the following diagram.

$$L \otimes M \begin{array}{c} \xrightarrow{\text{Id} \otimes \psi'_M} \\ \xrightarrow{\psi_L \otimes \text{Id}} \end{array} L \otimes B \otimes M$$

The cotensor product $A \square_B \mathbb{k} \subseteq A \otimes \mathbb{k}$ can be identified with a subalgebra of A using the canonical isomorphism $A \otimes \mathbb{k} \xrightarrow{\cong} A$. If L or M is *extended* (or *cofree*) we have

$$(U \otimes B) \square_B M \cong U \otimes M, \quad L \square_B (B \otimes V) \cong L \otimes V.$$

Lemma

Suppose that C is a commutative B -comodule algebra and D is a commutative A -comodule algebra. There is an isomorphism of A -comodule algebras

$$(A \square_B C) \otimes D \xrightarrow{\cong} A \square_B (C \otimes D),$$

where the domain has the diagonal left A -coaction and $C \otimes D$ has the diagonal left B -coaction.

Explicitly, this isomorphism has the following effect on

$$\sum_r u_r \otimes v_r \otimes x \in (A \square_B C) \otimes D \subseteq A \otimes C \otimes D,$$

$$\sum_r u_r \otimes v_r \otimes x \mapsto \sum_r \sum_i u_r a_i \otimes v_r \otimes x_i,$$

where $\psi_D x = \sum_i a_i \otimes x_i$.

Lemma

Suppose that M is a left A -comodule and N is a left B -comodule. Then there is a natural isomorphism

$$\mathrm{Comod}_B(M, N) \xrightarrow{\cong} \mathrm{Comod}_A(M, A \square_B N); \quad f \mapsto \tilde{f},$$

where \tilde{f} is the unique factorisation of $(\mathrm{Id} \otimes f)\psi_M: M \rightarrow A \otimes N$ through $A \square_B N$. When M is an A -comodule algebra and N is a B -comodule algebra, if f is an algebra homomorphism, so is \tilde{f} .

Some quotient Hopf algebras of the dual Steenrod algebra

We write $H = H\mathbb{F}_2$ and note that $H_*(H) = \mathcal{A}_*$ and $H^*(H) = \mathcal{A}^*$. Recall that

$$\mathcal{A}_* = \mathbb{F}_2[\xi_r : r \geq 1] = \mathbb{F}_2[\zeta_r : r \geq 1],$$

where $\xi_r, \zeta_r \in \mathcal{A}_{2r-1}$ and the coproduct and antipode satisfy

$$\psi(\xi_r) = \sum_{0 \leq i \leq r} \xi_{r-i}^{2^i} \otimes \xi_i, \quad \psi(\zeta_r) = \sum_{0 \leq i \leq r} \zeta_i \otimes \zeta_{r-i}^{2^i}, \quad \zeta_r = \chi(\xi_r).$$

For $n \geq 0$, the ideal

$$\mathcal{I}(n) = (\zeta_1^{2^{n+1}}, \zeta_2^{2^n}, \dots, \zeta_{n+1}^2, \zeta_{n+2}, \zeta_{n+3}, \dots) \triangleleft \mathcal{A}_* \quad (n \geq 0)$$

is a Hopf ideal and the quotient algebra $\mathcal{A}(n)_* = \mathcal{A}_*/\mathcal{I}(n)$ is a finite dimensional commutative Hopf algebra. The dual of $\mathcal{A}(n)_*$ is the subalgebra

$$\mathcal{A}(n)^* = \mathbb{F}_2\langle \text{Sq}^1, \text{Sq}^2, \text{Sq}^4, \dots, \text{Sq}^{2^{n+1}} \rangle \subseteq \mathcal{A}^*$$

generated by the listed Steenrod operations.

We have

$$\mathcal{A}_* \square_{\mathcal{A}(n)_*} \mathbb{F}_2 = \mathbb{F}_2[\zeta_1^{2^{n+1}}, \zeta_2^{2^n}, \dots, \zeta_{n+1}^2, \zeta_{n+2}, \zeta_{n+3}, \dots] \subseteq \mathcal{A}_*,$$

where $\mathcal{A}(n)_* = \mathcal{A}_* // (\mathcal{A}_* \square_{\mathcal{A}(n)_*} \mathbb{F}_2)$.

Theorem

The natural morphisms of \mathcal{E}_∞ ring spectra $H\mathbb{Z} \rightarrow H$, $kO \rightarrow H$ and $\mathrm{tmf} \rightarrow H$ induce monomorphisms in $H_(-)$ whose images are $\mathcal{A}_* \square_{\mathcal{A}(0)_*} \mathbb{F}_2$, $\mathcal{A}_* \square_{\mathcal{A}(1)_*} \mathbb{F}_2$ and $\mathcal{A}_* \square_{\mathcal{A}(2)_*} \mathbb{F}_2$.*

Theorem

For each $n \geq 0$, \mathcal{A}_* is an extended right $\mathcal{A}(n)_*$ -comodule:

$$\mathcal{A}_* \cong (\mathcal{A}_* \square_{\mathcal{A}(n)_*} \mathbb{F}_2) \otimes \mathcal{A}(n)_*.$$

This implies that for any left $\mathcal{A}(n)_*$ -comodule M ,

$$\mathcal{A}_* \square_{\mathcal{A}(n)_*} M \cong (\mathcal{A}_* \square_{\mathcal{A}(n)_*} \mathbb{F}_2) \otimes M.$$

This can be viewed as an isomorphism of left \mathcal{A}_* -comodules using a suitable comodule structure on the right hand side.

Coactions and Dyer-Lashof operations

For an \mathcal{E}_∞ ring spectrum X , the intertwining of right action of the Steenrod algebra and the left action of the Dyer-Lashof operations on $H_*(X)$ is described using the *Nishida relations*. However, the interaction of the coaction $\psi: H_*(X) \rightarrow \mathcal{A}_* \otimes H_*(X)$ can also be described. It is better to twist this into a *right* coaction $\tilde{\psi}: H_*(X) \rightarrow H_*(X) \otimes \mathcal{A}_*$: for $x \in H_m(X)$ and $r \geq m$,

$$\tilde{\psi}Q^s(x) = \sum_{k=m}^s Q^k(\tilde{\psi}(x)) \left[\left(\frac{\zeta(t)}{t} \right)^k \right]_{t^{s-k}}.$$

For example, if $\psi(x) = \sum_i a_i \otimes x_i$ then $\tilde{\psi}(x) = \sum_i x_i \otimes \chi(a_i)$ and

$$\begin{aligned} \tilde{\psi}Q^{m+1}(x) &= \sum_i x_i^2 \otimes \chi(a_i)^2 \zeta_1 + \sum_i Q^{m+1}(x_i \otimes \chi(a_i)) \\ &= \sum_i x_i^2 \otimes \chi(a_i)^2 \zeta_1 + \sum_i \sum_j Q^{m+1-j} x_i \otimes Q^j \chi(a_i). \end{aligned}$$

The Dyer-Lashof action on \mathcal{A}_* was determined by Kochman (implicitly) and Steinberger. For example,

$$Q^{2^s} \zeta_s = \zeta_{s+1}.$$

Another useful formula is

$$Q^{2^s} \xi_s = \xi_{s+1} + \xi_1 \xi_s^2.$$

Here is a formula for the homology action of the Milnor primitive $q^s \in \mathcal{A}^{2^{s+1}-1}$. If $x \in H_n(X)$, $s \geq 0$ and $r > n$, then

$$q_*^s Q^r x = (r+1) Q^{r-2^{s+1}+1} x + \sum_{0 \leq k \leq s-1} Q^{r-2^{s+1}+2^{k+1}} (q_*^k x).$$

Some cotensor product decompositions

Theorem

For $r = 1, 2, 3$ there is a regular sequence $X_{r,s} \in H_*(Mj_r)$ ($s \geq 1$) so that the ideal $I_r = (X_{r,s} : s \geq 1) \triangleleft H_*(Mj_r)$ is $\mathcal{A}(r-1)_*$ -invariant. Furthermore, the top composition is an isomorphism in the commutative diagram of commutative \mathcal{A}_* -comodule algebras.

$$\begin{array}{ccccc}
 & & \cong & & \\
 & \searrow & & \nearrow & \\
 H_*(Mj_r) & \longrightarrow & \mathcal{A}_* \square_{\mathcal{A}(r-1)_*} H_*(Mj_r) & \longrightarrow & \mathcal{A}_* \square_{\mathcal{A}(r-1)_*} H_*(Mj_r)/I_r \\
 & \searrow \psi & \downarrow & & \downarrow \\
 & & \mathcal{A}_* \otimes H_*(Mj_r) & \longrightarrow & \mathcal{A}_* \otimes H_*(Mj_r)/I_r
 \end{array}$$

Explicit formulae

$$X_{1,s} = \begin{cases} x_2 & \text{if } s = 1, \\ x_3 & \text{if } s = 2, \\ Q^{(2^{s-1}, \dots, 2^4, 2^3, 2^2)} x_3 & \text{if } s \geq 3. \end{cases}$$
$$X_{2,s} = \begin{cases} x_4 & \text{if } s = 1, \\ x_6 & \text{if } s = 2, \\ x_7 & \text{if } s = 3, \\ Q^8 x_7 + Q^9 x_6 & \text{if } s = 4, \\ Q^{(2^{s-1}, \dots, 2^5, 2^4)} (Q^8 x_7 + Q^9 x_6) & \text{if } s \geq 5. \end{cases}$$

$$X_{3,s} = \begin{cases} x_8 & \text{if } s = 1, \\ x_{12} & \text{if } s = 2, \\ x_{14} & \text{if } s = 3, \\ x_{15} & \text{if } s = 4, \\ Q^{16}x_{15} + Q^{17}x_{14} + Q^{19}x_{12} & \text{if } s = 5, \\ Q^{(2^{s-1}, \dots, 2^6, 2^5)}(Q^{16}x_{15} + Q^{17}x_{14} + Q^{19}x_{12}) & \text{if } s \geq 6. \end{cases}$$

For $r = 1, 2, 3$, the trivial algebra homomorphism $\mathbb{F}_2 \rightarrow H_*(Mj_r)/I_r$ is an $\mathcal{A}(r-1)_*$ -comodule algebra homomorphism which induces an \mathcal{A}_* -comodule algebra homomorphism

$$\mathcal{A}_* \square_{\mathcal{A}(r-1)_*} \mathbb{F}_2 \rightarrow \mathcal{A}_* \square_{\mathcal{A}(r-1)_*} H_*(Mj_r)/I_r \cong H_*(Mj_r).$$

There are morphisms of \mathcal{E}_∞ ring spectra $Mj_1 \rightarrow H\mathbb{Z}$, $Mj_2 \rightarrow kO$ and $Mj_3 \rightarrow \mathrm{tmf}$ which are surjective on $H_*(-)$. Using the last result we see that there are splittings of \mathcal{A}_* -algebras of the form

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \mathcal{A}_* \square_{\mathcal{A}(r-1)_*} \mathbb{F}_2 & \xrightarrow{\cong} & \mathcal{A}_* \square_{\mathcal{A}(r-1)_*} \mathbb{F}_2 \\ & \searrow & \nearrow \\ & H_*(Mj_r) & \end{array}$$

Some applications

There are morphisms of \mathcal{E}_∞ ring spectra $Mj_1 \rightarrow MSO$, $Mj_2 \rightarrow MSpin$ and $Mj_3 \rightarrow MString$ so there are splittings of \mathcal{A}_* -algebras of the form

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \mathcal{A}_* \square_{\mathcal{A}(r-1)_*} \mathbb{F}_2 & \xrightarrow{\cong} & \mathcal{A}_* \square_{\mathcal{A}(r-1)_*} \mathbb{F}_2 \\ & \searrow \quad \nearrow & \\ & H_*(M?) & \end{array}$$

where $M?$ is one of the Thom spectra Mj_r , MSO , $MSpin$ or $MString$.

Such algebraic results have a long history. The case of $MString$ was proved by Bahri & Mahowald using the \mathcal{E}_2 -space $\Omega^2 \Sigma^2 BString^{[15]}$.

An example related to connective K -theory

There is a map $S^2 \vee B\mathrm{Spin}^{[7]} \rightarrow (B\mathrm{Spin}^c)^{[7]}$ which factors through an infinite loop map

$$\begin{array}{ccc} S^2 \vee B\mathrm{Spin}^{[7]} & \xrightarrow{\quad\quad\quad} & B\mathrm{Spin}^c \\ & \searrow & \nearrow j^c \\ & Q(S^2 \vee B\mathrm{Spin}^{[7]}) & \end{array}$$

where j^c is a 7-equivalence. The Thom spectrum Mj^c is \mathcal{E}_∞ and $H_*(Mj^c)$ is polynomial on suitable elements

$Q^J x_2, Q^J x_4, Q^K x_6, Q^L x_7$. There is an \mathcal{E}_∞ morphism $Mj^c \rightarrow kU$ inducing an epimorphism $H_*(Mj^c) \rightarrow H_*(kU)$ under which

$$x_2 \mapsto \zeta_1^2, \quad x_4 \mapsto \zeta_1^4, \quad x_6 \mapsto \zeta_2^2, \quad x_7 \mapsto \zeta_3.$$

The element $x_4 + x_2^2$ is spherical and attaching an \mathcal{E}_∞ cell to kill the homotopy element w detected by it gives \mathcal{E}_∞ morphisms

$$Mj^c \rightarrow MJ^c // w \rightarrow kU$$

where $H_*(MJ^c // w)$ is a regular quotient of $H_*(Mj^c)$ generated by suitable elements $Q^I x_2, Q^J x_6, Q^K x_7$.

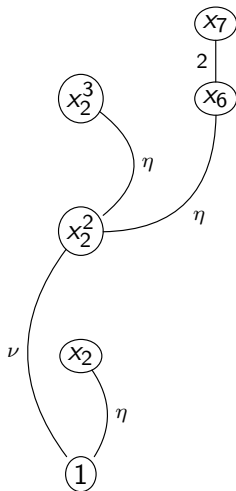
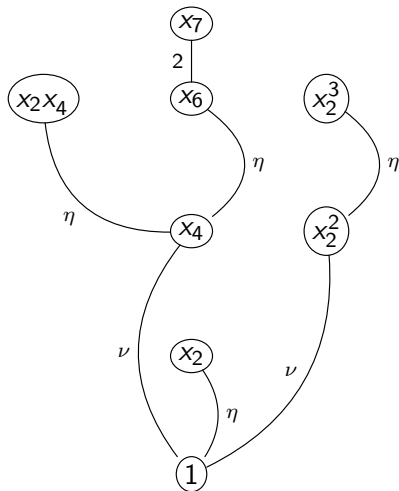
Theorem

There is an isomorphism of \mathcal{A}_ -comodule algebras*

$$H_*(MJ^c // w) \cong \mathcal{A}_* \square_{\mathcal{E}(1,2)_*} H_*(Mj^c // w) / I^c,$$

where $\mathcal{E}(1,2)_ = \mathcal{A}_* / (\zeta_1^2, \zeta_2^2, \zeta_3, \dots)$ and $I^c \triangleleft H_*(Mj^c // w)$ is a regular $\mathcal{E}(1,2)_*$ -comodule ideal with generators $X_2, X_6, X_7, X_{15}, \dots$*

The 7-skeleta of Mj^c and $Mj^c // w$



Observations and questions

- ▶ It is known that $\pi_*(Mj_1) \rightarrow \pi_*(H\mathbb{Z})$, $\pi_*(Mj_2) \rightarrow \pi_*(kO)$ and $\pi_*(Mj^c//w) \rightarrow \pi_*(kU)$ are surjective. Furthermore, $\pi_k(Mj_3) \rightarrow \pi_k(\mathrm{tmf})$ is an isomorphism for $k \leq 16$. Is $\pi_*(Mj_3) \rightarrow \pi_*(\mathrm{tmf})$ surjective?
- ▶ Is Mj_2 a wedge of kO module spectra? Is Mj_3 a wedge of tmf module spectra? Is $Mj^c//w$ a wedge of kU module spectra?
- ▶ The Thom spectra Mj_r are equivalent to reduced free algebras, i.e.,

$$Mj_1 \sim \widetilde{\mathbb{P}}H\mathbb{Z}^{[3]}, \quad MJ_2 \sim \widetilde{\mathbb{P}}kO^{[7]}, \quad MJ_3 \sim \widetilde{\mathbb{P}}\mathrm{tmf}^{[15]}.$$

This useful for giving \mathcal{E}_∞ maps to $H\mathbb{Z}$, kO and tmf which avoids using orientations for MSO , $M\mathrm{Spin}$ and $M\mathrm{String}$.