

Recall E denotes the mod 2 Eilenberg-Mac Lane spectrum, A denotes the mod 2 Steenrod algebra and H^*X (H_*X) denotes the mod 2 cohomology (homology) of X .

$$H^n X = \pi_n E \wedge X \text{ and } H^n X = [X, \Sigma^n E]$$

$$H^* E = A$$

There is a unit map $f: S^0 \rightarrow E$ inducing surjections in both H^* and π_* . We can smash this map with any spectrum X and get a map

$f: X \rightarrow X \wedge E$ which is surjective in cohomology but not necessarily in homotopy.

For a locally finite wedge K of suspensions of E ,
 $\pi_* K = \text{Hom}_A(H^* K, Z/2)$.

Some basic facts about these are listed in Prop 2.1.2 of the green book, see <http://www.math.rochester.edu/people/faculty/doug/mybooks/ravenel2.pdf>.

Consider the long exact sequence (2.1.4). Applying the functor $\text{Hom}_A(*, Z/2)$ to each $H^* K_s$ yields a cochain complex of the form

$$\pi_* K_0 \rightarrow \pi_* \Sigma K_1 \rightarrow \pi_* \Sigma^2 K_2 \rightarrow \dots$$

Its cohomology is $\text{Ext}_A^{s,t}(H^* X, Z/2)$. This is $E_2^{s,t}$ of a spectral sequence converging to $\pi_{t-s} X$. The indexing is such that

$d_r: E_r^{s,t} \rightarrow E_r^{s+r, t+r-1}$. This differential raises s by r and decreases the topological dimension $t - s$ by 1. When $X = S^0$, we have

$E_2 = \text{Ext}_A^{s,t}(Z/2, Z/2)$. Finding it is a purely algebraic problem suitable for a computer.

Isaksen's chart can be found at

<http://www.math.rochester.edu/people/faculty/doug/otherpapers/isaksen-charts.pdf>

0-line ($s = 0$, x-axis):

$$E_2^{0,t} = \text{Hom}_A(k, \Sigma^t k) \text{ where } k = Z/2.$$

Digression in homological algebra:

$\text{Ext}_R^s(M, N)$ is the set of equivalence classes of exact sequences of R -modules of length $s + 2$ starting with N and ending with M . See any book on homological algebra.

1-line ($s = 1$)

$$E_2^{1,t} = \text{Ext}_A^1(k, \Sigma^t k)$$

We are looking for a short exact sequence of A -modules of the form $0 \rightarrow \Sigma^t k \rightarrow M \rightarrow k \rightarrow 0$. The top class in dimension t must be Sq^t on the 0-dimensional class. The Adem relation implies that

Sq^t can be written as a sum of products of lower operations unless $t = 2^j$ for some j .

For example $Sq^3 = Sq^1 Sq^2$. When

$t = 2^j$, we get a nontrivial element in $\text{Ext}_A^1(k, \Sigma^t k)$ denoted by

$h_j \in E_2^{1,2^j}$. These are permanent cycles for $0 \leq j \leq 3$. They represent elements in $\pi_{2^j-1} S^0$, namely 2ι (where $\iota \in \pi_0 S^0$ denotes the identity map) for $j = 0$, and the suspensions of the Hopf maps for $j > 0$. Recall there are maps of spaces constructed by Hopf in 1930, $S^3 \rightarrow S^2$, $S^7 \rightarrow S^4$, and $S^{15} \rightarrow S^8$.

What about h_4 ? Is there a similar map $S^{31} \rightarrow S^{16}$? This would be related to a division algebra over the reals of dimension 16. Adams proved that the map does not exist, which implies that the division algebra does not exist.