
circuit-tracer: A Library for Finding Feature Circuits

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Abstract

1 Feature circuits aim to shed light on LLM behavior by identifying the features
2 that are causally responsible for a given LLM output, and connecting them into
3 a directed graph, or *circuit*, that explains how both each feature and each output
4 arose. However, performing circuit analysis is challenging: the tools for finding,
5 visualizing, and verifying feature circuits are complex and spread across libraries.
6 To facilitate feature-circuit finding, we introduce *circuit-tracer*, an open-source
7 library for efficient identification of feature circuits. *circuit-tracer* provides an
8 integrated pipeline for finding, visualizing, annotating, and performing interven-
9 tions on such circuits, tested with various model sizes, up to 14B parameters. We
10 make *circuit-tracer* available to both developers and end users, via integration
11 with tools such as Neuronpedia, which provides a user-friendly interface.

12 1 Introduction

13 Feature circuits are a paradigm in mechanistic interpretability that aims to provide low-level, causal
14 interpretations of LLM behavior in an unsupervised setting. A feature circuit for a given model, input,
15 and output aims to explain both which human-interpretable features caused the production of that
16 output, and what caused each feature to activate.

17 In practice, feature circuits take the form of a directed graph from a model’s inputs, through a set of
18 features, to the model’s outputs; see Figure 1 for an example. These features are causally-relevant
19 neurons of auxiliary models such as *sparse autoencoders* (SAEs) or *transcoders*, which decompose
20 model activations into a sparse set of features, or directions in activation space.

21 Feature circuits have successfully been used to study phenomena ranging from subject-verb agreement
22 and gender bias [21], parenthesis matching [15], and syntactic structure [13]. This is possible because
23 feature circuits are highly general: given a model, a behavior it exhibits (expressible as a single
24 next-token prediction), and a set of auxiliary models, one can find the feature circuit for that behavior.

25 Unfortunately, the adoption of feature circuits has been hampered by the technical complexity of
26 finding them. To find feature circuits, one must (1) decompose model activations into features
27 using auxiliary models; (2) determine which features are causally relevant to the model’s output;
28 (3) visualize and annotate the circuit and its features; and (4) perform causal interventions to verify
29 one’s interpretation of the circuit. While many libraries exist for training said auxiliary models
30 [20, 3], fewer exist for finding and visualizing circuits [21]; moreover, existing resources are not all
31 easily interoperable. As a result, while work using the auxiliary models from (1) abounds, work that
32 assembles these features into circuits and analyzes them as in (2)-(4) is scarce.

33 In this paper, we introduce *circuit-tracer*¹, a library that supports computing, visualizing, and
34 intervening on circuits. *circuit-tracer* uses Ameisen et al.’s [1] transcoder circuits, rather than

¹<https://anonymous.4open.science/r/circuit-tracer-anonymized-2C5F/README.md>

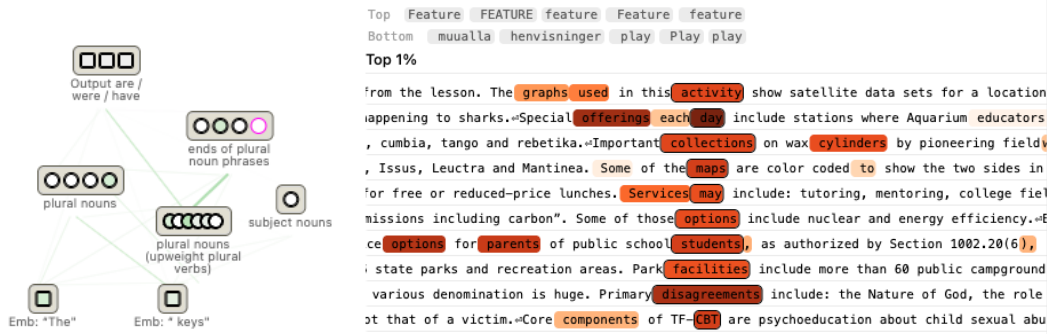


Figure 1: **Left:** A feature circuit explaining the Gemma-2 (2B)’s prediction on the input *The keys on the cabinet. . .*; features are grouped into annotated supernodes. **Right:** Visualizing an SAE feature. The top and bottom token predictions indicate which tokens are most up/downweighted by the feature, while the highlighted text indicates where the feature fired most strongly. This feature appears to fire on the ends of plural noun subjects.

SAE feature circuits, providing more accurate edges; our implementation enables the use of models up to 14B parameters in size. For circuit visualization, we integrate Ameisen et al.’s [1] recently-released circuit-annotation frontend, allowing users to annotate their newly-found transcoder circuits. Finally, circuit-tracer supports steering on transcoder features, both in the single- and efficient multi-token generation cases.

Ease of use and accessibility are core goals for circuit-tracer: we aim to make circuit tracing accessible to users regardless of technical experience or compute availability. For this reason, we integrate circuit-tracer with Neuronpedia, which enables circuit tracing via a no-code user-friendly web interface; we also optimize our library to enable running small models on Google Colab, and aim to support remote execution on public computing resources soon.

In summary, circuit-tracer:

- Enables users to find, visualize, and intervene on feature circuits.
- Provides an efficient open-source implementation of Ameisen et al.’s [1] transcoder circuit-tracing algorithm.
- Functions both locally and via accessible third-party compute resources, such as Google Colab, Neuronpedia’s circuit tracing interface, and soon, the NDIF remote inference cluster.

The remainder of the paper is organized as follows. We first describe the circuit-finding process and existing libraries (Section 2). We then introduce circuit-tracer, detailing its features and usage (Section 3). We then walk through 2 case-studies in circuit tracing (Section 4). We conclude with insights gained via circuit-tracing, and directions for future work (Section 5).

2 Background

2.1 Sparse Dictionary Learning

Past work has sought to identify the features LLMs use to compute their outputs. Early work did this by identifying causally relevant neurons, but these have been found to be *polysemantic*: each neuron fires in response to many concepts [25, 4], likely because models are pressured to represent many more concepts than they have neurons [8]. Moreover, as neurons are often non-zero, it is difficult to determine when a neuron is actively firing.

Sparse dictionary learning aims to convert dense, polysemantic representations into sparse, monosemantic ones [27, 5]. Formally, a sparse dictionary takes in activations $\mathbf{h} \in \mathbb{R}^d$ from a fixed location in a model and attempts to reconstruct activations $\mathbf{h}' \in \mathbb{R}^d$ at a target location. It computes:

$$\mathbf{z} = f(\mathbf{W}_{enc}\mathbf{h} + \mathbf{b}_{enc}) \quad (1)$$

$$\tilde{\mathbf{h}}' = \mathbf{W}_{dec}\mathbf{z} + \mathbf{b}_{dec}, \quad (2)$$

65 where:

- 66 • $\mathbf{W}_{enc} \in \mathbb{R}^{n \times d}$, $\mathbf{W}_{dec} \in \mathbb{R}^{d \times n}$, $\mathbf{b}_{enc} \in \mathbb{R}^n$, and $\mathbf{b}_{dec} \in \mathbb{R}^d$ are model parameters;
- 67 • f is an activation function enforcing non-negativity, often ReLU, JumpReLU [28], or Top- k ;
- 68 and
- 69 • $\mathbf{z} \in \mathbb{R}^n$ is the sparse, non-negative representation. Each dimension of \mathbf{z} is called a *feature*.

70 Sparse dictionaries are trained to minimize reconstruction error and L_1 -norm of \mathbf{z} . This pressures \mathbf{z}
71 to faithfully represent the original input while remaining *sparse*, with few active features. \mathbf{z} 's features
72 are encouraged to be monosemantic by setting its dimensionality (n) much larger than that of the
73 input (d)—often 32 times larger, or more.

74 A sparse dictionary can be used to interpret a given \mathbf{h} by visualizing the active features of the
75 corresponding \mathbf{z} . This entails computing feature activations over a large text dataset, and inferring the
76 meaning of the feature of interest from the text inputs that maximize its activation. It is also common
77 to display the output tokens that are most highly up- and down-weighted by the active feature; see
78 Figure 1 for an example.

79 Sparse dictionaries often aim to reconstruct the activations that they took as input; such dictionaries
80 are called sparse autoencoders (SAEs). However, other variants exist: per-layer transcoders predict
81 MLP outputs from their inputs [7], while cross-layer transcoders take in each layer's MLP's inputs
82 and predict the outputs of all downstream MLPs. The choice of dictionary architecture and input /
83 output location affects the type and number of features found.

84 Though sparse dictionaries have successfully shed light on various model features, it is difficult to
85 understand the mechanisms driving a model's behavior by looking at features from one dictionary:
86 not all active features are causally relevant to model behavior, and said behavior is often driven by
87 features at many layers. To resolve this problem, we use feature circuits.

88 2.2 Feature Circuits

89 A feature circuit [21, 15] is a directed graph describing how a given LLM solves a given task: it flows
90 from the model's inputs, through causally relevant features, to the model's logits. Each feature \mathbf{z}_i
91 has a weight that quantifies the change in model performance if \mathbf{z}_i were set to 0; this its *total effect*
92 through all possible pathways. Each edge's weight is the *direct effect* that the source node has on the
93 target activation. Feature circuits thus describe which features are causally relevant, and how they
94 combine to yield the model's outputs.

95 Finding a feature circuit requires a set of dictionaries for the model, generally at least one per layer.
96 Then, one must quantify each edge or feature's (in)direct effect, pruning those with low effect. Early
97 work did this by zero-ablating each active feature, and recording the change in model performance
98 [15]; however, given n active features, this requires $\mathcal{O}(n)$ forward passes, making it expensive even
99 for small models. Gradient-based methods such as Nanda's [23] activation patching, or Marks et al.'s
100 [21] extension thereof, produce faster but lower-quality estimates of feature and edge importance.

101 2.3 Transcoder Feature Circuits

102 Transcoder feature circuits [1] are a new type of circuit that can be sparser, and allow for precise and
103 efficient calculation of node and edge weights. Their features generally come from PLTs or CLTs;
104 the latter provide sparser circuits, but are more challenging to train.

105 Ameisen et al. show that by freezing (or, conditioning on) the underlying model's nonlinearities,
106 such as its attention patterns and LayerNorm scaling factors, one can exactly compute edge weights,
107 i.e. the DE of one transcoder feature on another. Doing so leaves each transcoder feature's (pre-)
108 activation (i.e., its activation before f is applied) as a linear function of the input embeddings and
109 features that came before it. As such, one can compute the exact DE of all prior nodes on a given
110 target node via one backwards pass from the target feature's input, with stop-gradient operations
111 applied to the nonlinearities and prior MLP outputs.

112 Repeating this process for each output and feature node (or a subset thereof) yields an adjacency
113 matrix containing the direct effect of each node on each other node. This matrix characterizes the full
114 feature circuit, or *attribution graph*. Ameisen et al. include in their graph not only features, input,

115 and output nodes, but also error nodes that represent the difference between the true MLP outputs
116 and transcoder reconstructions thereof. The adjacency matrix can then be visualized, or analyzed
117 using metrics like Ameisen et al.’s replacement score.

118 This approach yields precise DE values, but also has limitations: transcoder circuits often fail to
119 capture features relevant to attention², as edge weights are conditioned on the attention pattern.
120 Transcoder errors can also hinder interpretation: when a large proportion of the flow through the
121 graph originates from uninterpretable error nodes, graphs may fail to capture important mechanisms.

122 2.4 Existing Libraries

123 Circuit research involves four distinct steps: 1) sparse dictionary training, 2) circuit-finding, 3)
124 circuit visualization / annotation, and 4) intervention. Many libraries support the training of sparse
125 dictionaries (1), including dictionary-learning [20], SAE-Lens [3], and sparsify. In contrast to
126 these, only one library—feature-circuits [21]—supports finding feature circuits (2), visualizing
127 found circuits (3), or performing interventions (4). However, it does not enable interactive circuit
128 annotation or feature visualization, though other libraries, such as Neuronpedia [18] or SAE-Vis
129 [22] support the latter. Moreover, at the time of circuit-tracer’s creation, there was no publicly
130 available implementation of Ameisen et al.’s [1] circuit-finding algorithm, though contemporaneous
131 work³ has provided another open-source implementation.

132 In light of the abundance of sparse dictionary training libraries, we design circuit-tracer to
133 support the latter three steps of circuit-finding, while remaining compatible with transcoders from
134 any library. We focus on reducing memory usage, enabling circuit-finding in models with over 2B
135 parameters (the largest size in prior open-source work). Finally, we prioritize accessibility, aiming to
136 lower circuit-finding’s technical barrier to entry.

137 3 circuit-tracer

138 In this section, we answer the following questions about circuit-tracer: 1) How is it designed,
139 and what can it do?; 2) With which models is it compatible; and 3) How can it be used?

140 3.1 circuit-tracer Design and Features

141 3.1.1 ReplacementModel

142 In circuit-tracer, a model and the transcoders used to interpret it are grouped together into a
143 ReplacementModel. Loading this object requires only the name of the model from HuggingFace
144 Transformers [30], and the name of a HuggingFace Hub repository containing the transcoders:

```
145 1 from circuit_tracer import ReplacementModel
146 2
147 3 model = ReplacementModel.from_pretrained(
148 4     model_name = "google/gemma-2-2b",
149 5     transcoder_set = "gemma",
150 6 )
```

Listing 1: Loading a ReplacementModel based on Gemma-2 (2B) and GemmaScope transcoders. We use the alias “gemma” to refer to the latter for convenience.

151 The ReplacementModel class is used during attribution and intervention; it also enables recording
152 the activations of transcoder features on a given input. By default, a ReplacementModel is a subclass
153 of TransformerLens’ HookedTransformer class; one can thus perform arbitrary interventions on a
154 ReplacementModel, just as with TransformerLens. For more information on model and transcoder
155 compatibility, see Section 3.2.

156 Currently, circuit-tracer expects models to be loaded onto a single GPU; other accelerators such
157 as MPS are not yet supported. Because a model’s transcoders are often much larger than the model
158 itself, we offload transcoders’ decoders to disk by default, loading them to GPU only when required;

²Recent work has sought to address this by incorporating attention or residual stream SAEs [16].

³<https://github.com/EleutherAI/attribute>

159 this is possible when model weights are saved in the fast SafeTensors format.⁴ The memory footprint
160 of a ReplacementModel is thus similar to that of its base counterpart.

161 3.1.2 Attribution

162 Once we have loaded a ReplacementModel, attribution in circuit-tracer is simple:

```
163 1 from circuit_tracer import attribute
164 2
165 3 s = "Fact: Michael Jordan plays the sport of"
166 4 graph = attribute(model, s)
```

Listing 2: Performing attribution with an existing ReplacementModel

167 When performing attribution, circuit-tracer first finds the top-10 most likely next logits, or those
168 that compose 0.95 of the next-token probability mass, whichever is smaller. It then returns a Graph
169 containing the adjacency matrix of direct effects between input, feature, error, and logit nodes that
170 contribute to the model’s prediction of those logits, as described in Section 2.3. This adjacency matrix
171 can then be directly analyzed or visualized.

172 circuit-tracer’s attribution allows users to flexibly change the number of logits attributed from,
173 and supports attribution from arbitrary functions of the logits, e.g. the difference of two or more logit
174 tokens as used in prior work [29]. It also supports limiting the number of nodes attributed from; this
175 is important, as the number of active transcoder features grows linearly with input length, slowing
176 attribution, and causing the adjacency matrix to become prohibitively large.

177 3.1.3 Visualization and Annotation

178 Users can visualize and annotate a given attribution graph using the interface introduced by Ameisen
179 et al. [1]. Visualizing first involves pruning the graph, which is otherwise dense and difficult to
180 understand. Users can specify the proportion of node and edge influence they would like to retain—
181 more influence means more nodes and edges retained—and circuit-tracer prunes the graph, using
182 Ameisen et al.’s [1] algorithm. After pruning the graph, users can create the necessary visualization
183 files and start a visualization server:

```
184 1 from circuit_tracer.utils import create_graph_files
185 2 from circuit_tracer.frontend.local_server import serve
186 3
187 4 graph_file_dir = './graph_files/'
188 5
189 6 create_graph_files(
190 7     graph_or_path=graph,
191 8     slug='michael-jordan',
192 9     output_path=graph_file_dir,
193 10    node_threshold=0.8,
194 11    edge_threshold=0.95
195 12 )
196 13
197 14 server = serve(data_dir=graph_file_dir)
```

Listing 3: Pruning an attribution graph, creating graph files, and starting a visualization server.

198 The visualization interface (Figure 2) allows users to click on any node in the attribution graph, and
199 view the nodes that most contribute to and receive contributions from that node. If the node is a
200 feature (rather than a logit or input embedding), users can also see the max-activating examples for
201 the feature, and then annotate the feature with its meaning on the basis of those examples.

202 circuit-tracer’s interface also allows users to pin nodes, saving those that are important and
203 displaying them as a separate pane as a subgraph (or *circuit*), complete with weighted edges and
204 node annotations. Nodes that appear to perform similar functions can be grouped together into a
205 *supernode*, which can also be annotated. Users can thus use the visualization and annotation interface
206 to transform an attribution graph into an interpretable circuit. All information about the circuit is

⁴<https://github.com/huggingface/safetensors>

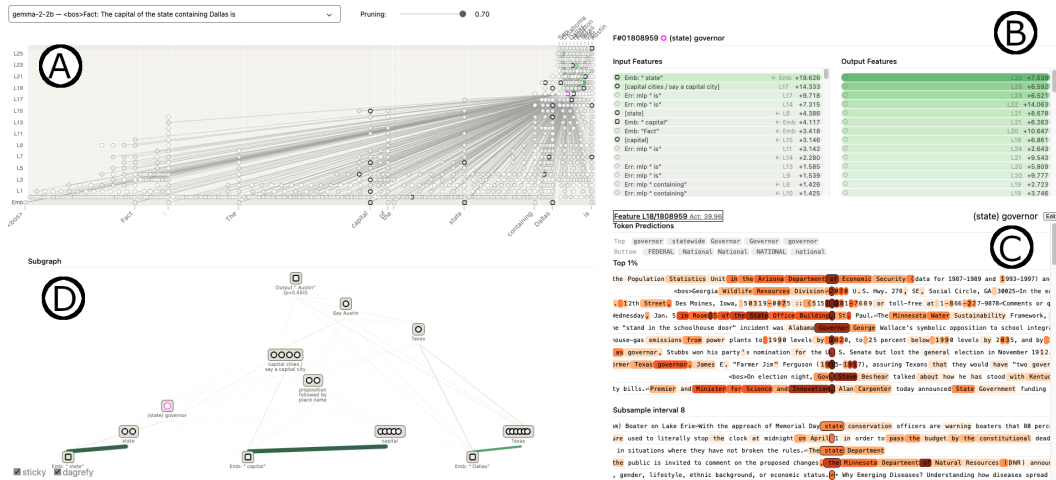


Figure 2: The circuit visualization interface. Pane A displays the entire attribution graph; nodes in the graph can be selected by clicking on them. The level of filtering can also be adjusted, further sparsifying the graph. Pane B displays the nodes that most affect (and are most affected by) the current node. Pane C displays the current feature’s max-activating examples, the top and bottom upweighted tokens, and other summary statistics; it also allows for node annotation. Pane D displays the subgraph. Users can pin nodes from the attribution graph, and group them together for easier analysis; grouped tokens can also be annotated.

207 contained within its URL in the circuit-tracer interface, enabling relevant (super)nodes to be
208 extracted from the URL and targeted for intervention.

209 **Intervention** After constructing a circuit, users can perform interventions on a given model with
210 respect to its features, causally verifying their interpretation of the circuit. Interventions take the
211 form of tuples specifying the layer, position, and feature index of the feature upon which to intervene,
212 and the new value the feature should take on; interventions return the new logits and new transcoder
213 activations post-intervention:

```
214 s = "Fact: Michael Jordan plays the sport of"
215 original_logits, original_activations = model.get_activations(s)
216
217 interventions = [(8, 3, 3829, 5.0)]
218 new_logits, new_activations = model.feature_intervention(s, interventions
219 )
```

Listing 4: Performing an intervention, setting the value of feature 3829 in layer 8, position 3 to 5.0.

220 Feature interventions can be performed on on arbitrary inputs, without first finding a circuit.
221 circuit-tracer allows for both single-token interventions and efficient, steered, multi-token gener-
222 ations using KV-caching. circuit-tracer performs Ameisen et al.’s [1] iterative patching by
223 default but also implements constrained patching and direct-effects patching.

224 3.2 Models and Transcoders Compatible with circuit-tracer

225 Finding a circuit with circuit-tracer requires a compatible model and transcoders for it.

226 3.2.1 Models Compatible with circuit-tracer

227 circuit-tracer’s ReplacementModel supports two interpretability backends: TransformerLens
228 (default) and NNSight. Each backend supports different models, but provides the same functionality
229 (attribution and intervention).

230 **TransformerLens Backend** The TransformerLens [24] backend supports only those models imple-
231 mented in TransformerLens. While most common open-weights model architectures (e.g. Llama,
232 Gemma, and Qwen) are supported, less-common architectures might not be. However, Transformer-
233 Lens is open-source, and new models can be added relatively easily.

234 **NNSight Backend** circuit-tracer’s NNSight [10] backend supports all language models on
235 HuggingFace. Initializing a ReplacementModel with backend="nnsight" yields a subclass of
236 NNSight’s LanguageModel class, which retains all its functionality. Though it supports more models,
237 the NNSight backend is slower, experimental, and does not support model offloading during attribu-
238 tion. In the near future, we aim to enable the NNSight backend to work with the associated National
239 Deep Inference Facility (NDIF) remote inference servers. When this integration is complete, users
240 will be able to perform attribution and intervention using NDIF’s compute resources.

241 3.2.2 Transcoders Compatible with circuit-tracer

242 **Existing Transcoders** To use circuit-tracer, one needs transcoders for each MLP in the model
243 under study. The pre-trained transcoders currently available include the following; transcoders trained
244 by the authors except where otherwise noted⁵:

245 Per-Layer Transcoders (PLTs)

- 246 • Gemma-2 (2B; 11): JumpReLU PLTs from Lieberum et al. [17]
- 247 • Llama-3.2 (1B; 12): ReLU PLTs
- 248 • Qwen-3 (0.6B-14B; 31): ReLU transcoders for all dense models in the Qwen-3 family
- 249 below 32B parameters.

250 Cross-Layer Transcoders (CLTs)

- 251 • Gemma-2 (2B): Two sets of ReLU CLTs with distinct feature dimension sizes.
- 252 • Llama-3 (1B): ReLU CLTs

253 **Adding Transcoders** circuit-tracer also supports user-created transcoders. Given a set of
254 transcoder weights, one only needs to upload them, along with a configuration file that specifies
255 where in the model the transcoder reads from and writes to, to a HuggingFace repository. Users
256 must also compute the max-activating examples for each feature of a transcoder and upload them to
257 the same repository in Neuronpedia’s publicly-available format; code for this will soon be released
258 in a companion library. Finally, it may be necessary to write a function to load the weights into a
259 (CrossLayer-)Transcoder object.

260 3.3 Using circuit-tracer

261 To make circuit-tracer more widely accessible, we have published it through a variety of channels.

262 **Neuronpedia** End users who want to perform circuit-tracing without running Python code can
263 use circuit-tracer on Neuronpedia⁶ [18]. Neuronpedia provides a GUI for performing on-
264 demand attribution for Gemma-2 (2B) and Qwen-3 (4B); it also supports interventions. Unlike
265 local circuit-tracer, Neuronpedia provides LLM-generated interpretations of features [2] and
266 enables saving and sharing graphs.

267 **Google Colab** Users who would like to demo circuit-tracer can do so via Google Colab,
268 including Google Colab’s free T4 GPU instances. Only Gemma-2 (2b) is currently available, owing
269 to the limited amount of RAM (12.7 GB) and VRAM (15 GB) available; however, attribution,
270 visualization, and intervention are all supported.

271 **Local Installation** Advanced users will want to use circuit-tracer via local installation from
272 GitHub, where all features are available. We recommend at least 15 GB VRAM for circuit tracing with
273 Gemma-2 (2B), and up to 40 GB for larger models; more memory also allows for faster attribution.

⁵Links to transcoders to be added if accepted

⁶Link omitted for anonymity; see screenshot in App. A.

274 4 Case Studies

275 4.1 States and Capitals

276 Lindsey et al. [19] observed that, given the prompt s = “Fact: The state containing Dallas has
 277 its capital in”, the models they studied could correctly predict the answer, *Austin*. Moreover, the
 278 resulting circuit clearly contained an intermediate *Texas* node, suggesting a reasoning chain of the
 279 form *Dallas*→*Texas*→*Austin*. Causal interventions suggested that this *Texas* node determined the
 280 state whose capital was output. With circuit-tracer, this result is easy to reproduce.

281 We first load a ReplacementModel for Gemma-2 (2B), using the CLTs we trained for it. We next
 282 perform attribution, creating an attribution graph for s , and visualizing it.⁷ We performed manual
 283 analysis of the graph, labeling features, and found that it also contained a *Texas* feature; see Figure 3
 284 (top) for an image of the graph. We repeated this procedure with s' = “Fact: The state containing
 285 Oakland has its capital in”, and similarly found a node corresponding to the state *California*.

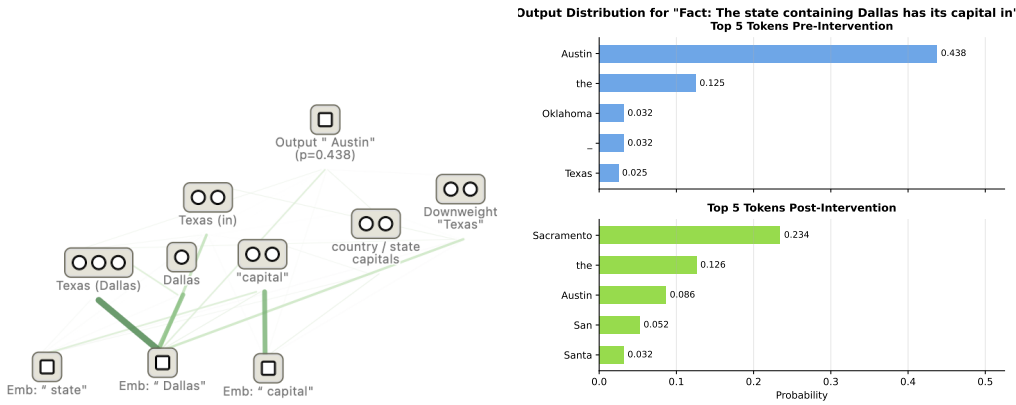


Figure 3: **Top:** Feature circuit for s =Fact: The state containing Dallas has its capital in, demonstrating the existence of intermediate *Texas* nodes. **Bottom:** The next-token distributions for s pre-intervention, and post-intervention, with *Texas* nodes ablated and *California* features upweighted. The most likely output shifts from *Austin* to *Sacramento*.

286 Having identified two relevant supernodes, we can then verify the role of each supernode by per-
 287 forming interventions. We first record the model’s most likely outputs on s . Then, we perform a
 288 constrained intervention on the input s , downweighting all of the features that correspond to Texas
 289 at the Dallas position (multiplying their activations by -4), and upweighting the California features
 290 (setting their activations to 10 times their original value). We constrain our intervention to layers
 291 16-21; we choose this range because it is late enough in our model for all intervened features to
 292 have an effect. We find (Figure 3, bottom) that the model’s top outputs change drastically from the
 293 expected output of s , *Austin*, to that of s' , *Sacramento*. This suggests that Gemma-2 (2B) generates
 294 “state” representations for the intermediate hop of this task.

295 4.2 Changing Languages

296 Lindsey et al. [19] also observed that, given non-English prompts like s = “Hecho: Michael Jordan
 297 juega al” (*baloncesto*), models had distinct features and pathways for the underlying concept produced
 298 (*basketball*) and the output language (*Spanish*).

299 To reproduce this, we load a ReplacementModel for Gemma-2 (2B), using Lieberum et al.’s [17]
 300 PLTs; note that the previous CLTs could also be used. We again perform attribution, creating an
 301 attribution graph for s , and visualizing it (Figure 4). Once more, we identified the expected nodes
 302 (representing *basketball* and *Spanish*).

303 In this case, instead of verifying the validity of the Spanish features by replacing them, we simply
 304 turn them off. Moreover, rather than looking only at the next token prediction, we continually turn

⁷If accepted, we will include a link to the graph, omitted currently for anonymity reasons.

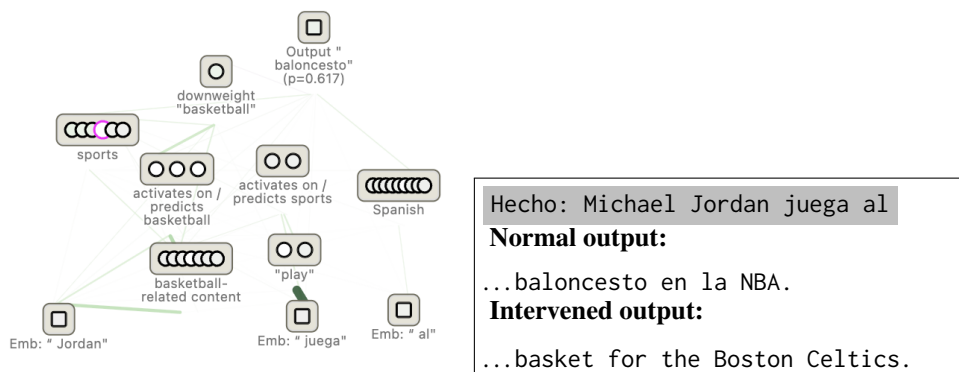


Figure 4: **Top:** Feature circuit for $s = \text{Hecho: Michael Jordan juega al}$, showing distinct *basketball / sports* and *Spanish* features and pathways. **Bottom:** Sampled continuations to s during normal generation, and with *Spanish* features ablated. Ablating the *Spanish* features causes the model to output English text.

the Spanish feature off, while sampling new models from the token. Concretely, we perform an open-ended intervention, setting the Spanish features to -2 times their original value at all non-BOS positions in the sentence, while sampling a continuation; we compare this to the generation in the no-intervention case. We see in Figure 4 (bottom) that the model normally continues the sentence in Spanish, the intervention causes the model to continue it with English-language text.

5 Discussion and Future Work

In this paper, we introduced *circuit-tracer*, and provided a brief overview of its design and functionality. We have also outlined two brief case studies demonstrating *circuit-tracer*'s ability to reproduce existing results; more such demos can be found in the *circuit-tracer* library.

circuit-tracer aims to not only reproduce past work, but also support the research community as it explores open research questions. Because circuit tracing is a highly general technique, practitioners should be able to easily apply circuit tracing to their problem of choice. For example, while prior research has provided case studies in diverse safety-relevant phenomena such as chain of thought unfaithfulness, refusal, and jailbreaks [19], no systematic study of these using circuits has been performed. Moreover, many other domains, such as social biases, cognitive capabilities, and reasoning remain underexplored.

Methodological questions also abound. While *circuit-tracer* computes circuits for individual inputs, how to synthesize multiple circuits into a coherent task mechanism is still unknown. Answering this question could also require finding ways to scale feature annotation and supernode creation, which are currently highly manual processes.

circuit-tracer can additionally serve as a testbed for innovations in transcoders and other sparse decomposition techniques, as have been proposed in recent work [6, 14, 9, 26]. Adding these new sparse dictionaries to *circuit-tracer*, in order to assess the quality of the circuits made with them, is relatively simple. This opens up new research directions regarding the similarity of feature circuits found using different sparse decompositions of the same model.

Finally, we note that there are many features that still remain to be added to *circuit-tracer*. These range from frontend changes to improve visualization, to algorithmic additions such as attributing to thresholded MLP neurons, or from attention patterns [16]. While we are excited to add such new features, we encourage users to contribute to *circuit-tracer* as well, as some already have. *circuit-tracer* is an open source library, and we hope that a healthy community of contributors will help keep it up-to-date, even in the fast-moving field of feature circuits.

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A Neuronpedia Interface

The Neuronpedia circuit-tracer interface is visible in Figure 5.

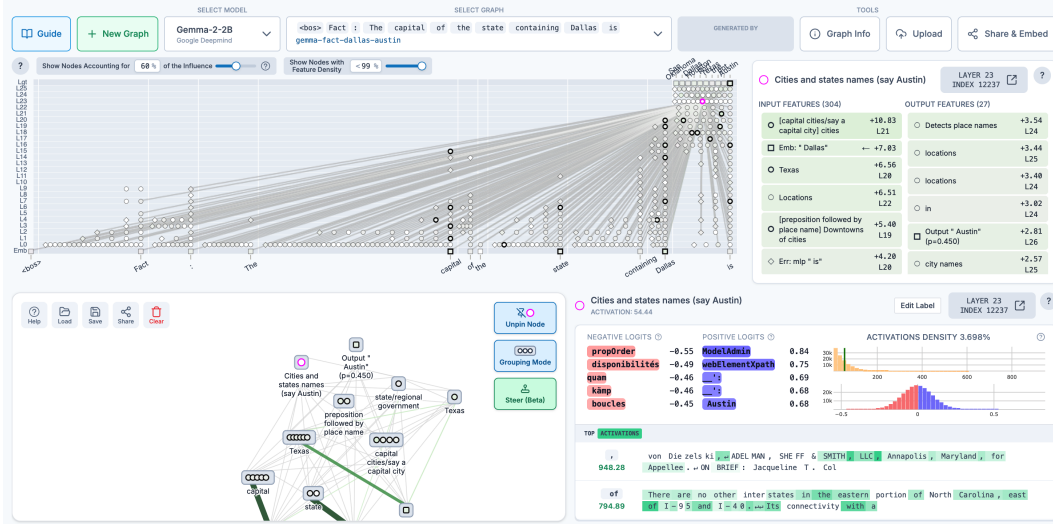


Figure 5: The interface of circuit-tracer when accessed via Neuronpedia [18]. Users can easily create a new graph, by clicking on + New Graph. They can also upload existing graphs. Neuronpedia provides automatic, LLM-derived interpretations of transcoder features, though it also supports manual facilitation. It moreover facilitates grouping features into labeled supernodes, and saving the resulting circuit.