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What is a C^ -algebra and when is it "good"*

C^* -algebras are algebras of bounded operators on Hilbert space. They can be associated to all sorts of mathematical objects, such as groups, dynamical systems, and graphs, and can tell us a great deal about the structure of these objects. As with any collection of mathematical objects, it is interesting to consider their classification. Over the past decade or so, it has become clear that a reasonable classification will only be possible for "good" C^* -algebras. I will explain what we think "good" ought to mean, and how it connects some topological and algebraic regularity properties for C^* -algebras.