**Título / Autores e Afiliações**

**Calculation of shortest paths with time windows and capacities for pharmacy delivery**

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**Abstract/Disclaimer**

This project was done for the Logic Programming subject, in the 3º Year of the Masters in Informatic Engeneering at FEUP.

The theme of our project resides on the need to program the schedule of a distribution company. The company operates from 10 AM to 10 PM, and needs to make a delivery to every pharmacy, based on their needs. Each pharmacy needs a different product quantity and also has a specific schedule in which it is available to receive the deliveries. For these deliveries, the company has delivery trucks (a finite amount), and each truck has a specific capacity. Each truck leaves the company central to deliver the products to a set of pharmacies, and then comes back to the central. Furthermore, the locations of the pharmacies and the central are known, as well as the distance/time between each pair of locations.

The objective of this project was to develop a Prolog application, using the clpfd library and its capacity to apply restrictions, that was capable of generating the schedule of the distribution company, while minimizing both the number of trucks used and the overall distance traveled by the trucks.

**Disclaimer:** Our problem corresponds to an instance of the Vehicle Routing Problem with Time Windows (VRP-TW). Unfortunately, due to lack of time and the sheer difficulty of this project/theme, we were not able to fully implement a solution for the problem. Instead, our solution is a modification of the Traveling Salesman Problem with Time Windows (TSP-TW). It associates each delivery with a vehicle, taking into account vehicle capacities and delivery quantities. However, instead of generating a route for each vehicle, only one route is generated, containing all pharmacies and respecting their time windows, while minimizing the total time spent on travels. Throughout the main portion of this article, we will describe our implementation. However, in the end of the article we will present a model for the VRP-TW problem, using restrictions, that would solve this problem completely (unfortunately we could not implement this model).

Despite everything, given the difficulty of this problem (specially compared to the other themes proposed in the subject), we hope our grade can still be good, because as we stated, our solution takes almost everything into account.

**Keywords:** PLR; Sicstus; Prolog; Shortest path; Traveling Salesman; Time Windows; Vehicle Routing Problem.

**1. Introduction**

As we have already described, the problem presented consists of generating a schedule for a delivery company, that has a limited number of trucks at its disposal. The schedule needs to take into account not only the time windows of all pharmacies (that is, the time interval during which they can receive the delivery), but also the limited capacities of the trucks and the delivery quantity each pharmacy demands. The optimal solution is the one that minimizes the total time spent by the trucks on trips, and the number of different trucks used.

It was also already referred that this problem is an instance of the Vehicle Routing Problem with Time Windows (VRP-TW). Our work was based on a number of research papers and academic articles about this problem and other related algorithms, which will be mentioned in the “references” section.

Lastly, and also already stated before, we remind that the solution implemented and presented doesn’t completely solve the whole problem (only generates one route instead of various routes for all vehicles), but is very close to do so, and takes every aspect of the problem into account. A model for a complete solution of the problem will be presented in the “annex” section.

The structure of the article will be the following:

* **Problem Description** - Detailed description of the problem/theme presented, and explanation of the input data that program takes.
* **Approach** - Section presenting our approach to the problem. Will be divided in 4 sub-sections:
  + 1. **Decision Variables** - Explanation of the decision variables and their respective domains, and their meaning in the context of the problem.
    2. **Constraints** - Explanation of all the constraints used in our implementation.
    3. **Evaluation Function** - Explanation of the evaluation function implemented and how it helps generate the best solution for the problem.
    4. **Search Strategy** - Explanation of the labeling strategy used when generating a solution for the problem, including heuristics for the ordering of variables and values.
* **Solution Presentation** - How the program presents the solution to the user, in text format.
* **Results** - Calculation and presentation of important performance data of the program when solving instances with different dimensions, analyzing the results. Different labeling strategies will be tested and their results compared and presented.
* **Conclusions and Future Work** - Conclusion of the importance of this problem/theme, results obtained, and explanation of future work that could be done. A complete model for solving the VRP-TW problem using restrictions will be presented in this section.
* **References** - Articles and papers that were part of our research during the development of this project.
* **Annex** - Presentation of the source code developed, input text files, results, and other important aspects of the project.

**2. Problem Description**

(ver/copiar enunciado e acrescentar umas coisas, como explicar os inputs nos .txt que temos. Mais uma vez, reforçar que o programa dá só uma rota geral para todas as farmácias).

**3. Approach**

**3.1. Decision Variables**

The decision variables are grouped in 3 different lists:

* + - * + One list, with length equal to the number of locals (that is, the number of pharmacies plus the delivery central). **The variable in position i (indexing starts at 1) represents the next local, in the route, after visiting local i.** That is, if the first variable of the list has value 4, that means that after leaving the central (local number 1; pharmacy IDs start at 2), the next local to be visited is pharmacy number 4. The domain of each element of the list is an interval between 1 and the total number of locals.
        + Another list, with length equal to the number of locals plus 1, representing the start times of the delivery/activity in each local/pharmacy. **The variable in position i represents the time (in minutes; in the output it is converted to a more readable format) at which service begins at local i.** The length of the list is the number of locals plus 1, because the central has two start time values: one for when we leave the central (first position of the list; always 10 AM), and the other one for when we arrive at the central (last position of the list). The domain of each element of the list is an interval representing the time window of that local, being that those time windows are specified to the program as input data.
        + And one last list, with length equal to the number of pharmacies/deliveries, representing which vehicle is in charge of doing each delivery. **The variable in position i represents the vehicle assign to the delivery to be made in pharmacy i (because pharmacy IDs start at 2, the respective vehicle is in the first position of the list, and so on).** The domain of each element of the list is an interval between 1 and the total number of vehicles.

**3.2. Constraints**

The first constraint applied is the predicate **cumulatives/3**, which is used to associate each delivery to a vehicle. Each vehicle will correspond to a machine, with resources limit equal to the maximum truck capacity of that vehicle (done by the predicate **generateMachines/3**). Each delivery will correspond to a task, with start time equal to 1, duration equal to 1, resource quantity equal to the quantity demand of that pharmacy and the machine assigned connected to the respective variable of the delivery vehicles list described in the last section (done by the predicate **generateTasks/5**). The cumulatives constraint is called using an upper bound. Because all tasks start and end at the same time, and the constraint does not let that, for any instant, the resources of the tasks assigned to a machine surpass the resource limit of that machine, the sum of resources of the deliveries assigned to a certain vehicle never surpasses the maximum capacity of that vehicle.

The predicate **generate\_constraints/6** is then called in order to implement constraints regarding the route that will be generated and the start times of each delivery.

The distances matrix (received by the program as input data) has information about the times needed to travel from and to each pair of locals. Element xy of the matrix corresponds to the time need to travel from local x to local y. The first **element/3** restriction is used in order to get/constrain the cost/time of the trip between the current local and its sucessor (in variable **NewCost**). The nth1 predicate is used to get the start time of the service in the current local (in variable **Time**). The next constraint is used to constrain the start time of the service in the local’s sucessor:

* + - * + If the current local is the central (Counter is 1), then no delivery is done there, so the start time of the next local has to be equal or higher to the sum of the start time in the current local, plus the time of the trip from the current local to the sucessor. The start time of the destination can be higher because if the time window of the sucessor hasn’t “opened” yet, the truck can wait for that to happen.

Time + NewCost #=< StartTimeDestination

* + - * + If the current local is a pharmacy (Counter is 2 or higher), then a delivery was done there. Because we know each delivery takes up 30 minutes, the constraint applied is

Time + NewCost + 30 #=< StartTimeDestination

After constraining/calculating the service start time of the local’s sucessor, we need to constrain the equivalent variable in the start times list. The following constraint

(Local #= 1 #/\ TimeLocal #= NumTimes) #\/ (Local #\=1 #/\ TimeLocal #= Local)

is applied in order to know what is the position in the list that corresponds to that variable. If the local’s sucessor is 1 (meaning that the next local is the central), then we want to constrain the last variable of the list, that corresponds to the time at which we arrive at the central. If the local’s sucessor is different than 1 (meaning that the next local is a pharmacy), then we want to constrain the equivalent position in the list, that is the start time of the delivery in the sucessor.

After having the position of the start times list that we need to constrain, we simply use the **element/3 constraint**.

element(TimeLocal, StartTimesList, StartTimeDestination)

The constraint presented are applied to every local, which successfully constraints and keeps the integrity of the start times of each local, respecting their time windows and the travel times between each pair of locals.

The constraints **sum/3** and **nvalue/2** are used to, respectively, constrain the sum of all travel times and the number of vehicles used, to be later used in the evaluation function.

The last constraint applied in our implementation is the constraint **circuit/1**, which takes the list of successors and constrains each variable in it, so that the values correspond to a Hamiltonian Circuit (that is, a route is generated beginning in the central, passing in each pharmacy once and returning to the central).

**3.3. Evaluation Function**

The objective of the program is to find a solution that minimizes the total travel time of the trucks and the number of trucks used for the deliveries. Therefore, we needed an evaluation function that allowed that to happen.

The evaluation function that we opted to use is **TimeCost + (10 \* DifferentVehicles)**, TimeCost being the sum of all travel times and DifferentVehicles being the number of different vehicles used. The value is constrained into a variable **Cost**, which is then minimized in the labelling call.

**3.4. Search Strategy**

(fazer a parte dos results primeiro, testando com diferentes estratégias, e depois por aqui a melhor delas)

**4. Solution Presentation**

(explicar e mostrar um print com o output do programa)

**5. Results**

**6. Conclusions and Future Work**

While unfortunately we were not able to fully implement a complete solution for the problem, our program still contemplates every aspect of the problem and generates a valid solution given the input data (pharmacy time windows, maximum capacity of each truck, number of trucks and pharmacies, delivery quantity for each pharmacy, trip times between the locals, etc). We believe that our take is still very positive, solving successfully a (still) very difficult problem.

As future work, the full resolution of the problem could be implemented, which would generate a different route for each vehicle. Two solutions for the whole problem will be described in the end of the “annex” section, that we would’ve implemented if we had more time. One solution is more practical, making use of some built-in constraint predicates of the SICStus PLR library, and the other one is more theoretical, explaining in detail every aspect of the problem and how we can model it.

**References**

Besides the consultation and study of the PowerPoints and other material of the PLOG subject, our research included the following articles and papers:

<http://www.msc-les.org/proceedings/emss/2009/EMSS2009_Vol_1_105.pdf>

<http://www.bernabe.dorronsoro.es/vrp/data/articles/VRPTW.pdf>

<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/220297462_Solving_Vehicle_Routing_Problems_Using_Constraint_Programming_and_Lagrangean_Relaxation_in_a_Metaheuristics_Framework>

<https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Solving-Set-Partitioning-Problems-with-Constraint-Mueller/a33c8f9205aa1f31fd22c62b08b8b24411d3e5e7>

<http://cognitive-robotics17.csail.mit.edu/docs/tutorials/Tutorial10_Multi_vehicle_Routing_with_Time_Windows.pdf>

<http://egon.cheme.cmu.edu/ewo/docs/EWO_seminar_van_Hoeve.pdf>

<https://ozgurakgun.github.io/ModRef2017/files/ModRef2017_MTSP.pdf>

<https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/e14a/d53dd65244bccff68fbce31e5e9301c12981.pdf>

<https://www.business2community.com/strategy/solving-the-multiple-traveling-salesman-problem-with-constraints-0406913>

<http://www.hakank.org/sicstus/tsp.pl>

**Annex**

(Explicar que o código tem 3 partes, porque fomos fazendo o problema incrementalmente, e explicar que apenas a parte 3 é usada na implementação atual do programa. Explicar também que se encontra comentada a nossa tentativa de implementação do modelo teórico de VRP-TW;

Falar dos 2 modelos).