C950 WGUPS Algorithm Overview

Ephriam LaVone Peak

ID #xxxxxxxx

WGU Email: xxxx@wgu.edu

Date: 29/07/2020

C950 Data Structures and Algorithms II

# Sl NO. Title Page No

A. Introduction 3

B. Assumption 3

C. Restriction 3

D. Algorithm Overview 4

E. Prioritization System 4

F. Minimization System 5

G. Clock System 6

H. Algorithm Programming Model 8

I. Algorithm Evaluation 8

J. Algorithm Time Complexity 9

K. Algorithm Scalability 13

L. Algorithm Efficiency & Maintainability 13

M. Algorithm Data Structure 14

N. Future Directions 15

O. References 16

# A. Introduction:

The purpose of this project is to create an algorithm for the Western Governors University Parcel Service (WGUPS) to determine the best route and delivery distribution for their Salt Lake City Daily Local Deliveries (DLD). Packages are currently not being delivered by their promised deadline and a more efficient and accurate solution is necessary. The Salt Lake City route is covered by three trucks, two drivers, and has a daily average of approximately 40 packages.

# B. Assumption:

The following are the constraints imposed on the WGUPS delivery service:

* Each truck can carry a maximum of 16 packages.
* Trucks travel at an average speed of 18 miles per hour.
* Trucks have a “infinite amount of gas” with no need to stop.
* Each driver stays with the same truck as long as that truck is in service.
* Drivers leave the hub at 8:00 a.m., with the truck loaded, and can return to the hub for packages if needed. The day ends when all 40 packages have been delivered.
* Delivery time is instantaneous, i.e., no time passes while at a delivery (that time is factored into the average speed of the trucks).
* There is up to one special note for each package.
* The wrong delivery address for package #9, Third District Juvenile Court, will be corrected at 10:20 a.m. The correct address is 410 S State St., Salt Lake City, UT 84111.
* The package ID is unique; there are no collisions.
* No further assumptions exist or are allowed.

# C. Restriction:

Each package may have one special requirement that must be addressed by the WGUPS. The following are possible restrictions that may be imposed on a given package:

* The package must be delivered with other packages.
  + We refer to these packages as linked packages in our algorithm.
* The package must be delivered by a specific truck.
* The package has a specific deadline by which it must be delivered.
* The package is delayed in arriving to the depot and will not be available for pickup until later in the day.

# D. Algorithm Overview:

The core WGUPS Package Routing system utilizes a greedy algorithm to solve the routing problem and is primarily composed of three components. The first component utilizes a prioritization system to determine the order in which packages should be loaded onto trucks. The second component utilizes a minimization system to determine the route of a given truck that will minimize distance travelled based upon the packages that were loaded in the prioritization system. The third component utilizes a clock system to keep track of the time taken to deliver each package. The algorithm makes use of two trucks that execute a total of three trips based upon the assigned departure time assigned to the truck by the depot. The departure time allows for holding trucks at the depot to accommodate late package arrivals.

# E. Prioritization System:

The prioritization system is used by the WGUPS Package Router to determine which packages should be given precedence when loading a given truck. The system separates packages into two groups - those considered to have high priority and those considered to have regular priority. If a package is not considered high priority, then it is considered regular priority.

Packages are considered high priority if they meet ANY of the following criteria:

* The package has an associated deadline.
* The package has a requirement to be delivered by a specific truck.
* The package is linked to other packages.

Trucks are first loaded to capacity with any high priority packages remaining at the depot. Once all high priority packages have been loaded onto trucks, loading of the regular priority packages commences and continues until the truck is at capacity.

# E1. Prioritization Pseudocode:

high\_priority = determine the list of high priority packages

regular\_priority = determine the list of regular priority packages

while there are still packages to load:

truck = select the next truck to load

priority\_deliveries = select packages from high\_priority list that can be delivered by the truck

regular\_deliveries = select packages from regular\_priority list that can be delivered by the truck

for each package in the priority\_deliveries list:

if the truck is not full and the package is not on the truck already:

load the package on the truck

for each package in the regular\_deliveries list:

if the truck is not full and the package is not on the truck already:

# F. Minimization System:

The minimization system is used by the WGUPS Package Router after loading a truck to determine the shortest possible route that the truck can take to deliver its cargo. Beginning at the depot address as the current address, the system uses a greedy approach to exhaustively compare the distance from the current address to each remaining package destination to determine the next delivery. The algorithm will always select the shortest route from the remaining deliveries. Each package delivery updates the current address to the current delivery location.

# F1. Minimization Pseudocode:

current\_address = initialize the current\_address to the depot address

total\_distance = 0

while there are still packages on the truck:

deliveries = sort remaining deliveries by distance from current\_address to delivery\_address

closest\_delivery = obtain the closest delivery\_address from the deliveries

distance = distance from current\_location to closest\_delivery

total\_distance = sum of the previous total\_distance and the new distance

if the truck should return to the depot:

total\_distance = sum of the previous total\_distance and the distance to return to the depot

return the total\_distance traveled by the truck

# G. Clock System:

The clock system is used by the WGUPS Package Router to keep track of both the internal time for each truck and the pickup and delivery time for each package. In addition, the clock system is used to determine the time at which packages arrive at the depot and when trucks should depart the depot. This allows the system to determine if a truck is able to deliver a given package.

# G1. Internal Truck Time:

The time of package pickup and delivery is determined by the internal time of each truck. The internal time of a truck is updated when the truck receives a new departure time from the depot, or when the truck executes delivery of a particular package.

# G2. Package Delivery Status Pseudocode:

# Truck Departure Time

if the new departure time is after the internal truck time:

set the trucks internal time to the new departure time

else:

keep the internal truck time the same

# Truck Delivery Time

when a truck delivers a package:

calculate the time for the truck to travel the distance to the package delivery location

update the internal truck time with the travel time.

# G3. Package Delivery Status:

When a package is loaded onto a truck or delivered to its final destination, the package is updated with a timestamp indicating when these events took place. This allows for efficient reporting of the status of each package throughout the delivery period.

# G4. Package Delivery Status Pseudocode:

# Package Pickup

when a package is loaded onto a truck:

set the package status to ON\_TRUCK and the pickup\_time to the current truck time

# Package Delivery

when a package is delivered by a truck:

set the package status to DELIVERED and the package delivery\_time to the current truck time

# G5. Package Delivery Restrictions:

When a truck is selected to begin loading packages, the arrival time of each package to the depot is compared to the departure time of the truck from the depot to determine (in addition to any package restrictions) if the package can be loaded.

# G6. Package Delivery Restrictions Pseudocode:

if the departure time of the truck from the depot \

is later than the arrival time of the package at the depot AND \

all package restrictions are met:

the package can be delivered by the truck

else:

the package cannot be delivered by the truck

# H. Algorithm Programming Model:

The core WGUPS Package routing system is implemented as a command-line interface that is designed to execute locally on the user's computer. All user interaction with the system will be through the command line interface. Users will be prompted to select from the available program options and input data on the command line as necessary. Program output will also be viewable by the user from the command line as text-based application reports. The user can exit the program at any time by typing the exit command.

There is no communication protocol for the application's access to data because all data and program code is stored locally on the user's machine. The application pulls the external data it needs locally from JSON files.

# I. Algorithm Evaluation:

# I1: Strengths:

One strength of the chosen algorithm is that for the same set of data as input, the system will always plan the same route for the trucks of the WGUPS. This is not always the case for other solutions, such as combinatorial optimization solutions that employ metaheuristics to solve similar problems. These solutions may return slightly different solutions with each execution of the program, despite the same input.

# I2. Accuracy:

The algorithm meets all criteria as specified in the project requirements. All package restrictions are respected by the algorithm, and the route planned by the algorithm delivers all packages on time and in under 110 miles. This can be directly observed by running the program and observing the all packages report at varying time points.

# I3. Alternatives:

The two main alternatives that I considered when examining this problem were both metaheuristic algorithms. Metaheuristic algorithms are higher level procedures designed to select lower level heuristics to solve optimization problems.

Both metaheuristic algorithms differ from the chosen greedy algorithm in several ways. The metaheuristic algorithms will not necessarily always generate the same output for the same input, so you may end up with varying results. In addition, the metaheuristic algorithms are designed to scale as the combinatorial optimization problems increase in complexity. This is in contrast to the greedy implementation, which does not scale well as the search space of the problem increases.

# J. Algorithm Time Complexity:

The time complexity of the core WGUPS Package Routing algorithm is $O(n^3\*\log(n))$. This is because the algorithm utilizes two nested while loops which iterate through all packages. The time complexity of the two nested while loops is $O(n^2)$. The algorithm also utilizes the built-in Python sorted function within the nested while loops to sort the packages destinations by distance with each iteration. The built-in Python sorted function has a time complexity of $O(n\*\log(n))$. Therefore, the final time complexity of the algorithm is:

$$ O(n^2) \* O(n\*\log(n)) = O(n^3\*\log(n)) $$

Every class within the application has its methods annotated with their associated space and time complexity. However, for convenience, the space and time complexity of each class method is also listed below.

# J1. Data Loader:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Method | Space Complexity | Time Complexity |
| get\_distances | $O(n)$ | $O(n)$ |
| get\_packages | $O(n)$ | $O(n)$ |
| get\_prompts | $O(n)$ | $O(n)$ |
| load\_json | $O(n)$ | $O(n)$ |
| load\_distances | $O(n)$ | $O(n)$ |
| load\_packages | $O(n)$ | $O(n)$ |
| load\_prompts | $O(n)$ | $O(n)$ |

# J2. Distance Table:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Method | Space Complexity | Time Complexity |
| distance | $O(n)$ | $O(n)$ |
| to\_depot | $O(n)$ | $O(n)$ |

# J3. Package Table:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Method | Space Complexity | Time Complexity |
| all | $O(n)$ | $O(n)$ |
| get | $O(n)$ | $O(n)$ |

# J4. Depot

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Method | Space Complexity | Time Complexity |
| can\_deliver | $O(1)$ | $O(1)$ |
| deliver\_packages | $O(n^3)$ | $O(n^3\*\log(n))$ |

# J5. Package:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Method | Space Complexity | Time Complexity |
| deliver | $O(1)$ | $O(1)$ |
| delivery\_report | $O(1)$ | $O(1)$ |
| inline\_report | $O(1)$ | $O(1)$ |
| is\_high\_priority | $O(1)$ | $O(1)$ |
| pickup | $O(1)$ | $O(1)$ |
| status\_at | $O(1)$ | $O(1)$ |

# J6. Truck:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Method | Space Complexity | Time Complexity |
| can\_deliver | $O(1)$ | $O(1)$ |
| can\_load | $O(1)$ | $O(1)$ |
| deliver\_packages | $O(n^2)$ | $O(n^2\*\log(n))$ |
| depart\_at | $O(1)$ | $O(1)$ |
| destinations | $O(n)$ | $O(n)$ |
| has\_package | $O(1)$ | $O(1)$ |
| load\_package | $O(1)$ | $O(1)$ |
| load\_packages | $O(n)$ | $O(n)$ |
| travel\_time | $O(1)$ | $O(1)$ |
| unload\_package | $O(1)$ | $O(1)$ |
| unload\_packages | $O(n)$ | $O(n)$ |

# J7. Clock:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Method |  | Space Complexity | Time Complexity |
| add\_hours |  | $O(1)$ | $O(1)$ |
| add\_minutes |  | $O(1)$ | $O(1)$ |
| hours |  | $O(1)$ | $O(1)$ |
| minutes |  | $O(1)$ | $O(1)$ |
| clone |  | $O(1)$ | $O(1)$ |

# J8. HashSet:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Method | Space Complexity | Time Complexity |
| delete | $O(1)$ | $O(n)$ |
| get | $O(1)$ | $O(n)$ |
| keys | $O(n)$ | $O(n)$ |
| rehash | $O(n)$ | $O(n)$ |
| resize | $O(1)$ | $O(1)$ |
| set | $O(n)$ | $O(n)$ |
| should\_rehash | $O(n)$ | $O(n)$ |
| values | $O(n)$ | $O(n)$ |

# J9. Application

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Method | Space Complexity | Time Complexity |
| execute\_command | $O(1)$ | $O(1)$ |
| package\_report | $O(n)$ | $O(n)$ |
| packages\_report | $O(n)$ | $O(n\*\log(n))$ |
| prompt | $O(1)$ | $O(1)$ |
| register\_commands | $O(1)$ | $O(n)$ |
| register\_prompts | $O(1)$ | $O(n)$ |
| route\_distance | $O(n^3)$ | $O(n^3\*\log(n))$ |
| start | $O(1)$ | $O(n)$ |
| stop | $O(1)$ | $O(1)$ |

# J10. Commander:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Method | Space Complexity | Time Complexity |
| execute | $O(1)$ | $O(n)$ |
| options | $O(n)$ | $O(n)$ |
| register | $O(1)$ | $O(n)$ |

# J11. Prompter:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Method | Space Complexity | Time Complexity |
| clear | $O(1)$ | $O(1)$ |
| options | $O(n)$ | $O(n)$ |
| prompt | $O(1)$ | $O(n)$ |
| register | $O(1)$ | $O(n)$ |

# K. Algorithm Scalability:

The problem facing the WGUPS stems from a class of NP-hard problems known as the vehicle routing problems. These problems are notoriously difficult to solve, especially when restrictions are added to the problem specification. The time complexity of the core WGUPS Package Routing algorithm developed here is $O(n^3\*\log(n)) $. As a result, the algorithm is not well-suited to scale to increasing numbers of packages given that the time it takes to solve this problem will scale exponentially with each additional package that must be routed.

In addition, the solutions used to address to the restrictions imposed upon the WGUPS are implemented in an inflexible manner. The algorithm can only handle working with the restrictions described above. In reality, a package routing system will need to be able to handle various restrictions and constraints placed upon packages to ensure that they are delivered in a timely fashion. Therefore, this algorithm is also not well-suited to evolve with changing market demands.

# L. Algorithm Efficiency and Maintainability:

The core algorithm developed for the WGUPS was implemented using a clean, object-oriented architecture designed for efficiency and maintainability. Each class and class method is well-documented to ensure that the purpose and function of each block of code can be easily understood. Developers working with the codebase should be able to ascertain the responsibilities of each class within the application, simplifying system maintenance.

# M. Algorithms and Data Structure:

The primary data structure utilized throughout the application for data storage was in the form of a linear probing hash table. The hash table implementation used for this application is self-adjusting in that it will expand its capacity and rehash its contents upon reaching the internal capacity of the hash table. However, this can have negative implications on the runtime of the program. If the programmer does not select an appropriate initial capacity for the hash table, the table will constantly expand and rehash itself which is computationally expensive.

# M1. Requirements:

This hash table implementation is able to efficiently store and retrieve the specified package data according to the package identifier. This is evidenced specifically in the Package Table class, where package data is stored and retrieved constantly throughout the application.

# M2. Efficiency:

The chosen hash table implementation is quite efficient for key-value pair data storage and retrieval. The hash table can be constructed with an initial capacity allowing for improved space complexity. However, the worst-case time complexity for resolving collisions with the linear probing implementation is $O(n)$. This is similar to the worst-case time complexity for other collision resolution techniques utilized in hash tables.

# M3. Strengths:

The strength of a hash table as the primary mechanism of data storage in this application lies in its ability to store and retrieve values by a particular key. This characteristic lends itself quite nicely to storage of our package data, given that information related to a given package can easily accessed in a hash table via the package's identifier.

# M4. Weaknesses:

The primary weakness of using a hash table as the storage mechanism for this application lies in the overhead of needing to rehash the entire table if the capacity of the table is exceeded. This is a computationally expensive task, particularly as the number of items in our table expands, and has a time complexity that is proportional to the number of items we are storing in our table ($O(n)$). Therefore, if more package data is added to the system after construction of the underlying hash table, the table will need to be constantly expanded and rehashed.

# M5. Other Data Structures:

We could have chosen to represent our package destinations as a graph of nodes, with each node representing a package destination and the edges between nodes representing the distance between nodes. In particular, a directed, weighted graph would be particularly useful given that the direction of our edges could be used to emulate the path taken by our trucks and the weight of each edge could be used to represent the distance in miles between destinations. This is in contrast to our implementation in which we chose to utilize a nested hash table to exhaustively store the distances between package destinations. A graph would likely have been much more memory efficient.

We could have also represented the destinations visited during a truck's route as a stack data structure. Using a stack, we could traverse our route by simply "popping" successive destinations off of the top our list of destinations and calculating the distance between the previously "popped" value and the currently "popped" value. In this way, we could calculate the total distance of a route by repeating this procedure until our stack of destinations was empty. This is in contrast to our implementation in which we chose to utilize a list that was sorted in order of distance between locations. A stack would have allowed for a much smaller memory footprint.

# N. Future Directions:

One thing that I would implement differently were I to repeat this project would be the handling of package restrictions. The current solution only accommodates the specific restrictions outlined by the problem. However, my goal would be to implement a more flexible system that used a more generic restriction system that would allow for more complex and varied restrictions.

Another aspect of the current solution that I would revisit would be the selected algorithm. Although a greedy algorithm solves the problem as specified, it does not scale well as the search space of the problem increases. In addition, the currently implementation likely does not identify the most optimal solution because it does not consider solutions that partially fill trucks. I believe that a metaheuristic implementation would avoid these global optima by considering a much larger search space in a more efficient manner.

# O. References:

van Laarhoven, PJM. (1987). Simulated annealing. In: Simulated Annealing: Theory and Applications. Mathematics and Its Applications, vol 37. Springer, Dordrecht. Retrieved from [https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-94-015-7744-1\_2.[1](https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-94-015-7744-1_2.%5b1)]

Mitchell, M. (1995). Genetic algorithms: An overview. Mathematics, Computer Science. Complexity. Retrieved from <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Genetic-algorithms%3A-An-overview-Mitchell/> 630a7d2f0506cb5a01b09f07eef8a3b5a3af0387.[2]

Clayton M. Christensen, Michael B. Horn, Louis Soares, and Louis Caldera, “Disrupting College: How Disruptive Innovation Can Deliver Quality and Affordability to Postsecondary Education,” Center for American Progress, February 2011, p. 29, https://cdn.americanprogress. org/wp-content/uploads/issues/2011/02/pdf/disrupting\_college.pdf.[3]

“Official Cohort Default Rates for Schools” Federal Student Aid, An Office of the U.S. Department of Education, https://www2.ed.gov/offices/OSFAP/defaultmanagement/cdr.html (accessed July 12, 2018).[4]

Clayton M. Christensen, Michael B. Horn, Louis Soares, and Louis Caldera, “Disrupting College: How Disruptive Innovation Can Deliver Quality and Affordability to Postsecondary Education,” Center for American Progress, February 2011, p. 33, https://cdn.americanprogress. org/wp-content/uploads/issues/2011/02/pdf/disrupting\_college.pdf .[5]

Heather Staker, “The engine behind WGU: Configuration of a competency-based information system,” Christensen Institute, February 2012, <https://www.christenseninstitute.org/publications/the-engine-behind-wgu-configuration-of-a-competency-based-information-system/>.

WGU Job descriptions [https://www.wgu.edu/about\_WGU/employment/10613-417\_nursing\_program\_mentor.[6](https://www.wgu.edu/about_WGU/employment/10613-417_nursing_program_mentor.%5b6)]