

An in-depth study of the syntactic analysis of graphs using
search matching algorithms, to the degree of sub graphs

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1 Graph Basics

1.1 Graph Overview

A Graph in Mathematics and Computer Science is defined as a pair $G = (V, E)$, where V is the set of vertices and E is the set of edges, formed by pairs of vertices with each other. Figure 1 demonstrates the structural attributes of a simple graph.

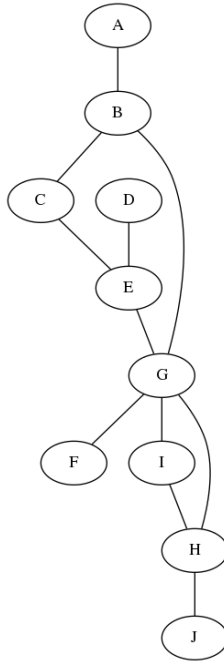


Figure 1: Representation of a graph

Graphs can either be directed or they can be undirected. This means that the edges in the graph could have an absence of direction as in the 1 above, or they could have a direction showing from which vertex the edge is coming from, and to which vertex the edge is going to. Figure 2 demonstrates a directed graph, commonly known as a digraph. This characteristic is demonstrated by the edge 3, that goes from node B to node G , and also by edge 2 that goes from node B to node C .

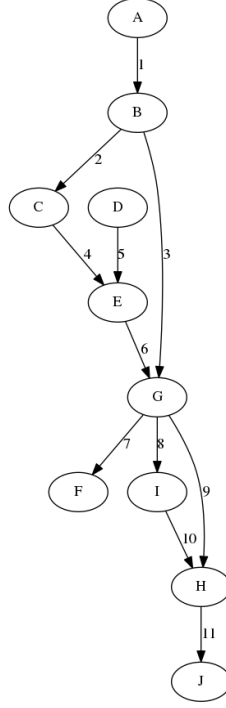


Figure 2: Representation of a digraph

Note that the undirected graph mentioned above is commonly referred to as a bigraph because the direction of its edges could be perceived as to going in both direction as it is not specified.

In this paper, the focus is primarily on directed graphs, and they shall be referred to as digraphs from here onward.

1.2 Digraph

A Digraph in mathematics is defined as is a pair of disjoint vertices and edges (V, E) , and their respective mappings that comprises of two components, namely the initial vertex and terminal vertex of each edge i.e. each edge has a initial vertex:

$$Ei \rightarrow Vi \quad (1)$$

and a terminal vertex:

$$Vj \rightarrow Ej \quad (2)$$

for some vertices Vi, Vj in V and edges Ei, Ej in E [7] refer to the figure 2.

1.3 Graph representation

Graphs are represented in a variety of ways, from adjacency lists, incident matrices and adjacency matrices. The algorithms that are studied in this paper make use of adjacency matrices and adjacency list representations of graphs.

1.3.1 Adjacency matrices

An adjacency matrix is a $n \times n$ matrix A , with $A(i, j) = 1$ if $f(i, j) \in E$ [9]. This means that wherever there is an edge in the graph, it is denoted by a 1 in the matrix, places in the matrix where there is an absence of an edge, are denoted by 0.

Figure 3 depicts the association between the graph in figure 1 and its adjacency matrix.

	A	B	C	D	E	G	F	I	H	J
A	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
B	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
C	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
D	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
E	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
G	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	0
F	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
I	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0
H	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1
J	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0

Figure 3: Representation of a graph and its associated adjacency matrix

1.3.2 Adjacency list

An Adjacency list is vertices of a graph, of which each vertex is connected to the list. The vertices in an adjacency list point to their own list of edges that they are connected to (i.e. the list contains the edges that connect them to other vertices).

Figure 4 depicts the association between the graph in figure 1 and its adjacency list.

A	B				
B	A	C	G		
C	B	E			
D	E				
E	C	D	G		
G	B	E	F	I	H
F	G				
I	G	H			
H	G	I	J		
J	H				

Figure 4: Representation of a graph and its associated adjacency list

1.4 Supergraphs and subgraphs

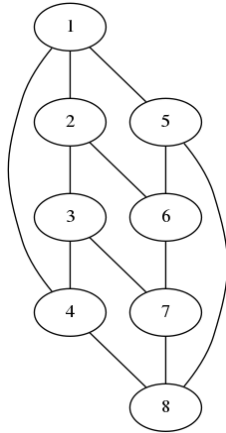
Let G_A be a graph defined as follows $G_A = (V_A, E_A)$ and let G_B be another graph that is defined as follows $G_B = (V_B, E_B)$ where V_A, V_B are sets of vertices and E_A, E_B are sets of edges. In graph theory, a graph G_A is said to be a subgraph of graph G_B , and graph G_B is said to be a supergraph of graph G_A if all the vertices and edges that are in graph G_A are also in graph G_B , that is [3]:

- (1) $V_A \subseteq V_B$, and
- (2) Every edge of G_A is also an edge in G_B .

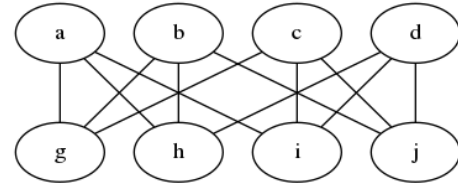
In figure 1, the graph constructed by vertices D, E, G, F and I is the sub-graph of the entire graph. And thus the graph is a super-graph of the sub-graph constructed by the vertices, namely D, E, G, F and I .

1.5 Graph Isomorphism

Two graphs are said to be isomorphic if they are syntactically similar to each other *iff* there is a bijection between their respective nodes which make each edge of G_A correspond to exactly one edge of G_B , and vice versa [12], i.e. the graphs are structurally the same to each other. This property is demonstrated in figures 5b.



(a) Isomorphic graph on the left



(b) Isomorphic graph on the right

Figure 5: A demonstration of two isomorphic graphs

The two graphs look very different, but when they are further inspected, it is evident that the two are a representation of the same structural scheme or maybe even the same graph that has been rearranged.

Consider the vertex 1 from the left-most graph, it has three edges going to and from vertices 2, 4 and 5, and now consider the vertex a from the right-most graph, it also has three vertices going to and from it, namely g, h and i . These two vertices have the same structural, but from two different graphs, the same goes for all the other vertices in both graphs .i.e each vertex in the left-most graph can be associated with one in the right-most graph as we did for vertices 1 and a .

2 Search Matching Algorithm

2.1 Introduction

Subgraph isomorphism can be determined using a brute-force approach on the tree representation of a graph G_A . Though this technique is effective, it is however not efficient, this is because all the possible permutation subgraphs of a graph G_A are tested against the graph G_B to determine if there are subgraphs in graph G_A that are isomorphic to graph G_B . The number of subgraphs of a graph G_A increase at an exponential rate with every addition of a vertex V_n into the graph, thus the total number of subgraphs that can be evaluated are

$$ST = 2^{n/2} \tag{3}$$

where ST is the total number of subgraphs and n the number of vertices in the graph G_A .

The matching process is computationally expensive due to this very fact, that is the more vertices there are in the graph G_A , the more expensive it becomes to detect the subgraph isomorphisms because of the amount of subgraphs it has and thus must be evaluated.

This paper explores two graphs that are very effective with regards to graph isomorphism and subgraph isomorphism detection. The algorithms that are investigated are the Ullman Algorithm and the VF2 algorithm.

2.2 Ullman Algorithm

2.2.1 Algorithm

The Ullman algorithm was developed by J.R.Ullman and was published in his paper titled "An Algorithm for Subgraph Isomorphism" [1]. The algorithm performs graph matching on an adjacency matrix representation of both the graphs, and uses the depth search first (DSF) recursive approach to traverse through the graphs and perform the graph matching process. The Ullman algorithm improves the efficiency of the brute-force approach at detecting subgraph isomorphisms by deductively eliminating nodes in the tree that are in graph G_A , but are not in graph G_B , thus reducing the number of subgraphs that are matched against graph G_B to determine isomorphism.

The algorithm starts by building a starting adjacency matrix M_0 using the two adjacency matrix representations of graphs G_A and G_B using the following procedure.

- (1) Construct a $n * m$ matrix where n is the number of rows of graph G_B and m is the number of columns of graph G_A .
- (2) Set all the entries in the matrix to the value of 1.
- (3) Apply the following rule: Set the values in M_0 to 0 for all M_{0ij} where the degree of a vertex in graph G_A at j is greater than the degree of the same vertex in graph G_B .i.e.

$$deg(Ai) < deg(Bj). \quad (4)$$

A more formal representation of this rule is as follows

$$f(x) = \begin{cases} 1, & \text{if } deg(Ai) \geq deg(Bj) \\ 0, & \text{otherwise } \forall i,j \end{cases}$$

When the starting matrix has been constructed, we systematically permute matrices M^d from the starting matrix M_0 where d represents the depth of the generated matrix. The procedure of generating the permuted matrices follows a depth search first (DSF) recursive approach where the stopping condition (leaf matrices) conform to the following form:

- (1) M contains only 0's and 1's.
- (2) There is exactly one 1 in each row.
- (3) Not more than one 1 in each column.

An demonstration of how the permutation matrices are generated is demonstrated in figure 6.

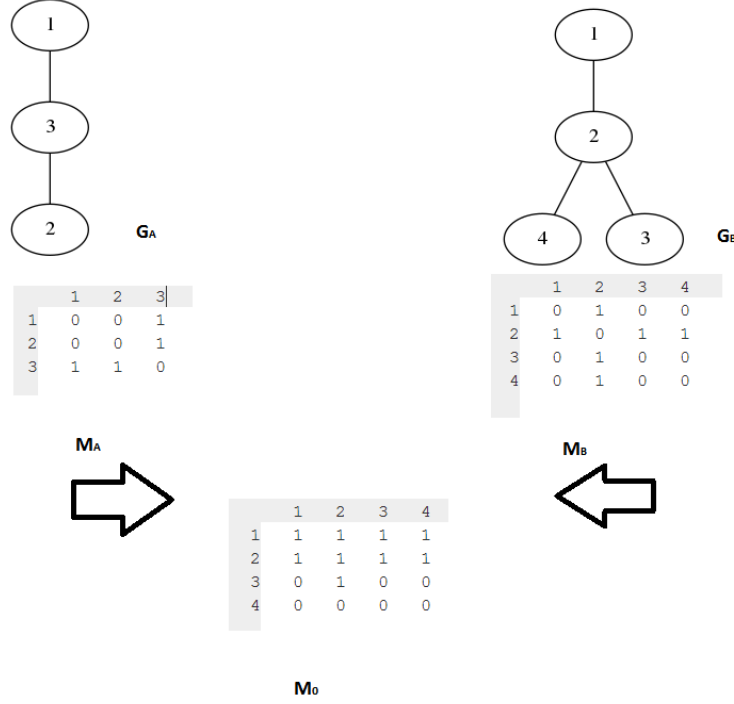


Figure 6: Demonstation of how a permutation matrix is generated from two graphs

Once all the permutation matrices have been generated, each one of the matrices is matched with a graph C , that is obtained from the dot product of the permuted matrix and the graph G_A . The formula for calculating graph C is follows: $C = M_n(M_n \cdot G_A)^T$, where G_A = input graph and M_n = permutated matrix M_n in M^d , obtained from the starting matrix M_0 $(M_n \cdot G_A)^T$ = the transpose of the dot product of the permutated matrix M_n and the graph G_A . If there is a single instance of the matrix C , that is calculated using some permutated matrix M_n obtained from the starting matrix M_0 , that is equal to matrix G_B , then G_B is isomorphic to G_A iff G_B

$$ij = 1 \rightarrow Cij = 1 \forall i, j \quad (5)$$

If non of the generated permutated matrices can satisfy this condition, then G_B is not isomorphic to G_B .

2.2.2 Ullman Pseudo code

```

Step 1   $M = M^0$ ,  $d = 1$ ,  $H_1 = 0$ ,
        for all  $i = 1, \dots, p_\alpha$  set  $F_i = 0$ ;
        refine  $M$ , if exit FAIL then terminate algorithm;
Step 2.  If there is no value of  $j$  such that  $m_{d,j} = 1$  and  $f_j = 0$  then go to step 7,
         $M_d = M$ ;
        if  $d = 1$  then  $k = H_1$  else  $k = 0$ ;
Step 3   $k = k + 1$ ,
        if  $m_{d,k} = 0$  or  $f_k = 1$  then go to step 3;
        for all  $j \neq k$  set  $m_{d,j} = 0$ ;
        refine  $M$ ; if exit FAIL then go to step 5;
Step 4  If  $d < p_\alpha$  then go to step 6 else give output to indicate that an isomorphism has been found;
Step 5  If there is no  $j > k$  such that  $m_{d,j} = 1$  and  $f_j = 0$  then go to step 7,
         $M = M_d$ ;
        go to step 3,
Step 6   $H_d = k$ ,  $F_k = 1$ ;  $d = d + 1$ ;
        go to step 2,
Step 7.  If  $d = 1$  then terminate algorithm,
         $F_k = 0$ ;  $d = d - 1$ ;  $M = M_d$ ,  $k := H_d$ ;
        go to step 5;

```

Figure 7: Pseudo code of the Ullman algorithm [1]

2.3 VF2 Algorithm

2.3.1 Algorithm

The VF2 algorithm was introduced by L.P.Cordella, P.Foggiaa, C.Sansone and M.Vento [11]. The algorithm is suitable for graph matching and isomorphic determination, including subgraph isomorphic determination on large graphs, this is attributed to the Data structures that the algorithm uses and the manner in which they are used [11], this feature is discussed later in the paper.

The algorithm performs the matching process by attempting to find a mapping M , of vertices in graph G_A which correspond to vertices in graph G_B . The mapping is then used to determine if the two graphs are completely syntactically similar(isomorphic), partially syntactically similar or have no structural similarities at all.

2.3.1.1 Matching and Mapping definition

A mapping M is defined as a set of pairs (n, m) , where n is a vertex from G_A and m a vertex from G_B , thus $n \subseteq G_A$ and $m \subseteq G_B$.

The isomorphism determining properties of the mapping are defined as follows, a mapping $M \subset N_A * N_B$ is isomorphic *iff* M is a bijection, that preserves the branching structure of G_A and G_B , where N_A is a set of vertices from G_A and N_B a set of vertices from G_B .

The mapping $M \subset N_A * N_B$ is subgraph isomorphic *iff* M is isomorphic to G_A and a subgraph of G_B .

2.3.1.2 Mapping Procedure

The mapping M comprises of state based partial solution morphisms $M(s)$ for each state s . The process of finding the mapping M that is described above uses State Space Representations (SSR) [12]. The partial solution morphisms $M(s)$ selects two subgraphs from G_A and G_B , namely $G_A(s)$ and $G_B(s)$ respectively. The subgraphs comprises of only vertices that are present in the partial solution $M(s)$ for the state s as well as the edges joining them together.

The algorithm starts with an initial state s_0 that has no mapping between the two graphs, thus $M(s_0) = NULL$. The algorithm then computes a set of candidate pairs $P(s)$. Each candidate p in the set is checked against the feasibility function that is discussed in the following chapter, if p is successful then it is added to the state s . And the successor s' is computed using a combination of the predecessor state and the candidate p , thus:

$$s' = s \cup p \tag{6}$$

The process of generating successor states is a recursive procedure that makes use of the depth first traversal for graphs. When a path has been exhausted and a solution has not yet been found, the algorithm uses backtracking to explore the alternative paths [11,13].

2.3.1.3 Definition of the set $P(s)$ and of the feasibility function $F(s, n, m)$

The VF2 algorithm generates the states with close consideration that only some of the states are consistant with the desired morphisms [12]. The algorithm avoids inconsistant states by making use of a set of rules in it's state generation procedure, thus ensuring that only consistant state are generated, these rules are refered to as feasibility rules.

The algorithm uses a function called a feasibility function to test that an additon of a pair (n, m) to a state will be consistant. If the addition of the pair passes all the feasibility rules, the algorithm will return a true value, if not, a false value indicating that the procedure results in an inconsistant successor state s' , and thus that state s' will not be explored by the algorithm.

A further filter can be applied in the consistent states to rule out those states whose successor states will be inconsistant, this apporoach is employed by adding a additional rules called *k-look-ahead* rules [12]. They check to see if the current state s will have a consistant successor state after k steps, i.e. they check to see if the states from s to s^k are consistant with the desired morphisms.

2.3.1.4 Condidate Pairs

The candidate pairs are obtained by considering the vertices that are connect to $G_A(s)$ and $G_B(s)$, the sub-graphs of G_A and G_B in the state s . The vertexs are used to form the pairs (n, m) as defined above. In order explain how the pairs are formed, we must first introduce the following definitions: Let:

- (1) $T_{Ain}(s)$ be the set of vertexs that are not yet in the partial mapping $M(s)$ and are the origin of the edges from graph G_A
- (2) $T_{Bin}(s)$ be the set of vertexs that are not yet in the partial mapping $M(s)$ and are the origin of the edges from graph G_B
- (3) $T_{Aout}(s)$ be the set of vertexs that are not yet in the partial mapping $M(s)$ and are the destination of the edges from graph G_A
- (4) $T_{Bout}(s)$ be the set of vertexs that are not yet in the partial mapping $M(s)$ and are the destination of the edges from graph G_B

The pair (n, m) is made by vertex n from $T_{Aout}(s)$ and m from $T_{Bout}(s)$. If the any of the sets is empty, then we consider the vertex n from $T_{Ain}(s)$ and m from $T_{Bin}(s)$. In the case where that graphs are not connected, the pairs will be made by all the vertex not yet contained in either $G_A(s)$ and $G_B(s)$. These pairs form the entries in the set $P(s)$ for that respective state s .

2.3.1.5 The feasibility rules

The feasibility rules that are used to ensure that the states that are evaluated play a role in improving the performance, by preventing inconsistent states from being explored and thus optimizing the execution of the algorithm. There are five general feasibility rules defined as $R_{pred}, R_{succ}, R_{in}, R_{out}$ and R_{new} respectively.

The feasibility functions check for two main things, firstly they check the consistency of the partial solution in the successor state s' , namely $M(s')$. Rules R_{pred} and R_{succ} are the rules used for this checking.

The remaining rules are used for pruning the search space for different levels of look ahead. The R_{in} and R_{out} are used to look ahead one level and determine which of those successor states are consistent, and R_{new} is used for the same purpose, but for a look ahead level of two. The definition for each rule is as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} R_{\text{pred}}(s, n, m) \iff & \\ & (\forall n' \in M1(s) \cap \text{Pred}(GB, n) \exists m' \in \text{Pred}(GA, m) | (n', m') \exists M(s) \wedge \\ & \forall m' \in M2(s) \cap \text{Pred}(GA, m) \exists n' \in \text{Pred}(GB, n) | (n', m') \exists M(s)), \quad (7) \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned} R_{\text{succ}}(s, n, m) \iff & \\ & (\forall n' \in M1(s) \cap \text{Succ}(GB, n) \exists m' \in \text{Succ}(GA, m) | (n', m') \exists M(s) \wedge \\ & \forall m' \in M2(s) \cap \text{Succ}(GA, m) \exists n' \in \text{Succ}(GB, n) | (n', m') \exists M(s)), \quad (8) \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned} R_{\text{in}}(s, n, m) \iff & \\ & (\text{Card}(\text{Succ}(GB, n) \cap \text{TBin}(s)) \geq \text{Card}(\text{Succ}(GA, m) \cap \text{TAin}(s))) \cap \\ & (\text{Card}(\text{Pred}(GB, n) \cap \text{TBin}(s)) \geq \text{Card}(\text{Pred}(GA, m) \cap \text{TAin}(s))) \quad (9) \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned} R_{\text{out}}(s, n, m) \iff & \\ & (\text{Card}(\text{Succ}(GB, n) \cap \text{TBout}(s)) \geq \text{Card}(\text{Succ}(GA, m) \cap \text{TAout}(s))) \cap \\ & (\text{Card}(\text{Pred}(GB, n) \cap \text{TBout}(s)) \geq \text{Card}(\text{Pred}(GA, m) \cap \text{TAout}(s))) \quad (10) \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned} R_{\text{new}}(s, n, m) \iff & \\ & \text{Card}(\tilde{N}A(s) \cap \text{Pred}(GB, n)) \geq \text{Card}(\tilde{N}B(s) \cap \text{Pred}(GA, n)) \wedge \\ & \text{Card}(\tilde{N}A(s) \cap \text{Succ}(GB, n)) \geq \text{Card}(\tilde{N}B(s) \cap \text{Succ}(GA, n)) \quad (11) \end{aligned}$$

In order for a state to be considered consistent, it must pass a combination of all of the five rules, namely:

$$F_{syn}(s, n, m) = R_{pred} \wedge R_{succ} \wedge R_{in} \wedge R_{out} \wedge R_{new} \quad (12)$$

where $F_{syn}(s, n, m)$ the feasibility function that is invoked upon the state s .

2.3.2 VF2 Pseudo code

```

PROCEDURE Match( $s$ )
  INPUT:  an intermediate state  $s$ ; the initial state  $s_0$  has  $M(s_0)=\emptyset$ 
  OUTPUT: the mappings between the two graphs

  IF  $M(s)$  covers all the nodes of  $G_2$  THEN
    OUTPUT  $M(s)$ 
  ELSE
    Compute the set  $P(s)$  of the pairs candidate for inclusion in  $M(s)$ 
    FOREACH  $p$  in  $P(s)$ 
      IF the feasibility rules succeed for the inclusion of  $p$  in  $M(s)$  THEN
        Compute the state  $s'$  obtained by adding  $p$  to  $M(s)$ 
        CALL Match( $s'$ )
      END IF
    END FOREACH
    Restore data structures
  END IF
END PROCEDURE Match

```

Figure 8: Pseudo code of the VF2 algorithm [11]

2.4 Conclusion

The Ullman and VF2 algorithm that are discussed above both follow a similar approach in attempting to perform graph matching. They both construct a tree from the adjacency representation of their input graphs and use the depth first tree traversal techniques to evaluate the graphs, this is done very effectively by both the algorithms.

Though both algorithms are effective in their own respective regards, they are optimized rather differently and thus differ in their degree of complexity. The VF2 algorithm optimizes its execution by performing a look-ahead operation of two states from its current states in an attempt to ignore paths that will result in inconsistent states.

The Ullman algorithm on the other hand optimizes its execution by not computing all possible sub-graphs of some graph G , but reduces the computed matrices by initially computing a matrix M_0 from the input graphs and then ensuring that all the matrices that are computed from M_0 are tested so as to prevent the algorithm from exploring a branch that will not result in a graph or sub-graph isomorphism

3 VFLibGraph Library

3.1 Introduction

The VFLibGraph library is a graph matching library that is written in C++, it was developed at the Intelligent Systems and Artificial Vision Lab (SIVALab) which is situated in the University of Naples [13]. The library was originally developed to test the VF algorithm [13], the predecessor of the VF2 algorithm, but the library has since evolved to include some of the latest graph matching algorithms such as the Schmidt and Druffel algorithm.

3.2 Using the library

The library provides interfaces to the implemented algorithms that it has in its employ, and it also has a comprehensive documentation of how each algorithms interface can be constructed, as well as the matching process between two input graphs.

We have constructed interfaces for the Ullman algorithm and the VF2 algorithm to test against our data set, which comprises on graphs of various number of vertices and edges.

4 Experimentation

5 Data Set

The graph data that is used in the experimentation was created by David S. Johnson, Cecilia R. Aragon, Lyle A. McGeoch and Catherine Schevon [14]. It was created in 1991 to study optimization by simulated annealing. One of the graphs that used was chosen to be experimented on to study the subject algorithms, namely the Ullman and VF2 algorithms. The graph used can be found here [14].

The graph is a large direct graph that comprises of 250 vertices and 3218 edges [14], and it is used as the super-graph in the experiments, and will be referred to as the subject-graph from here on out. Figure 9 depicts a diagram of how the graph looks like.

The algorithms both need two graph in order to determine if they are isomorphically related to each other or not, thus subgraphs from our object graph are required for this comparison. These subgraphs are then generated from the object graph and they all meet the condition that:

- They are either partially or completely isomorphic in relation to one or other digraph inside the set.

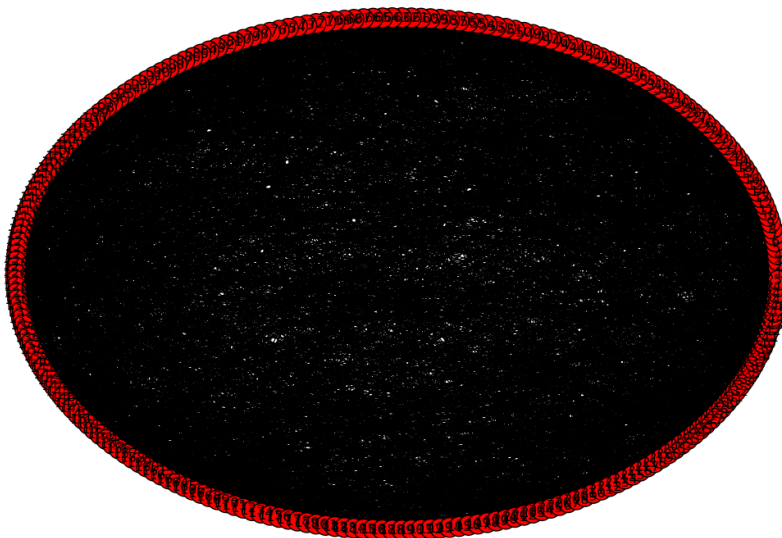
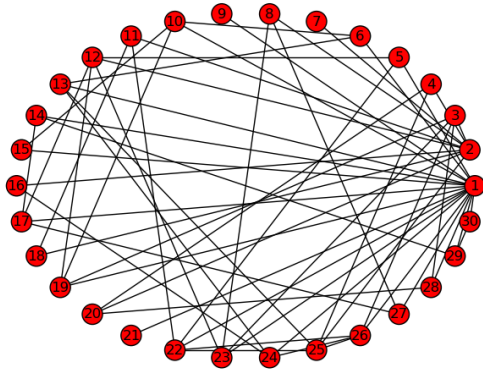


Figure 9: The super-graph used in the experiment comprising of 250 vertices

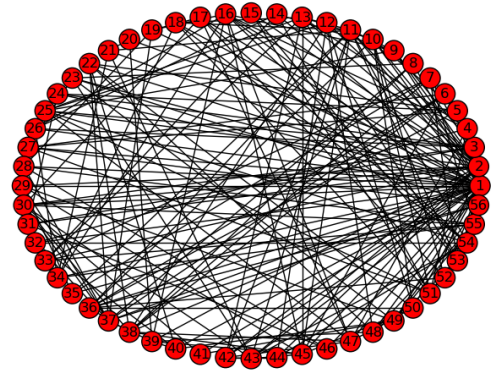
The subgraphs will be referred to as subject-graphs from here on out.

The generated subgraphs have the following number of vertices: 30,56,75,92,109,121,148,166,181,197,211 and 222. Each one of the graphs is sub-graph isomorphic to the object graph, and will be compared with it to determine how long it takes to find the isomorphic relationship, and how much virtual memory [15] is used to find the relationship.

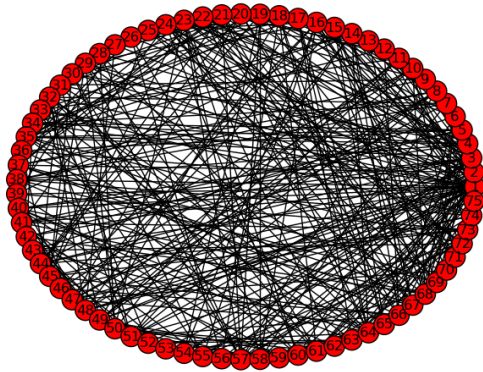
Figure 10 depicts how some of the generated subgraphs look relative to figure Figure 9.



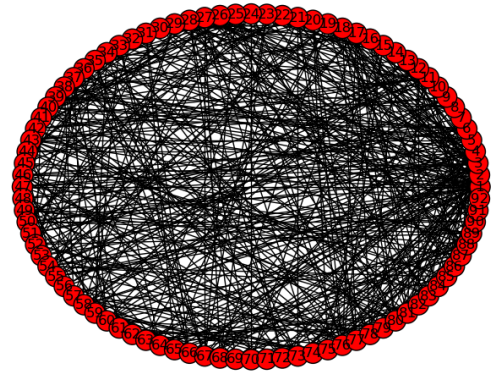
(a) Generated subgraph with 30 vertices



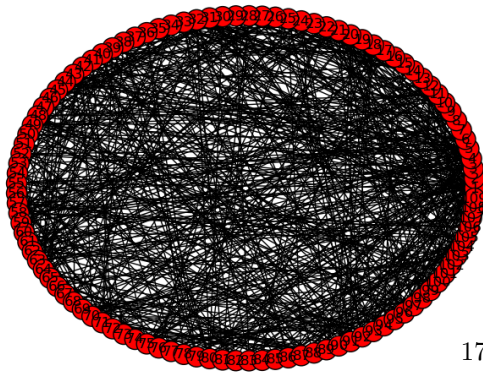
(b) Generated subgraph with 56 vertices



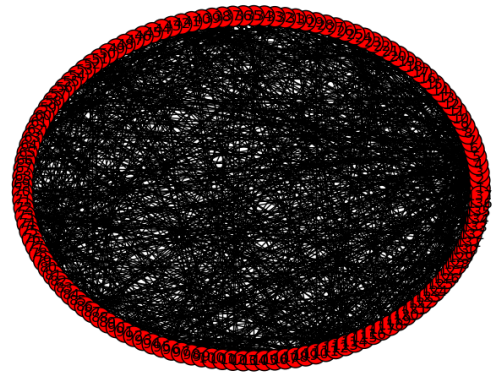
(c) Generated subgraph with 75 vertices



(d) Generated subgraph with 92 vertices



(e) Generated subgraph with 109 vertices



(f) Generated subgraph with 121 vertices

Figure 10: A demonstration of two isomorphic graphs

5.1 Experiment

The experiment that is conducted on the Ullman [1] and the VF2 [11] algorithm uses a quantitative approach that evaluates the algorithms against each other. The search graph matching algorithms are implemented and experimented on, using two digraph objects at a time. The experiment for that is employed, measures and records the algorithms ability and performance of the algorithms in cases where Graph G_A and Graph G_B are either partially or completely isomorphic.

5.1.1 Experiment implementation

We will refer to Graphs G_A and G_B in this context.

The algorithm has to insert an arbitrarily large number of nodes.

The comparison that is done, is dependent on the relationship between Graph G_A and G_B .

Syntactic comparison

- (1) G_A is compared with the whole of G_B for syntactical similarity.
 - (I) A new subgraph of Graph B is generated.
 - (II) The subgraph is compared with Graph G_A for syntactical similarity.
 - (A) The time taken to perform the comparison is recorded.
 - (B) The amount of memory used by the algorithm to perform the comparison is recorded.
 - (III) Once all the subgraphs of Graph B have been experimented upon, the result of the subgraph with the best degree of syntactical(isomorphic) similarity is then considered the found subgraph.
- (2) If Graph G_A and G_B are not completely syntactically similar, Graph G_A is compared with all the possible subgraphs of Graph B.

The recorded results from all the algorithms is analyzed and used to identify which amongst the algorithms is the best and for which cases it is the best in.

The results from the algorithms are weighed against a comparison criteria, and it is this criteria that is used to evaluate the algorithms against each other.

5.1.2 The comparison criteria

The criteria that the algorithm results are weighed against is specified below.

- (1) Space efficiency
- (2) Time efficiency

Once the results have been obtained and thoroughly evaluated, then the algorithms with the best perform per criteria field are recorded.
And from that set, the best algorithm is chosen overall relative to the others based on the criteria.

6 Experiment Results

7 Memory Results

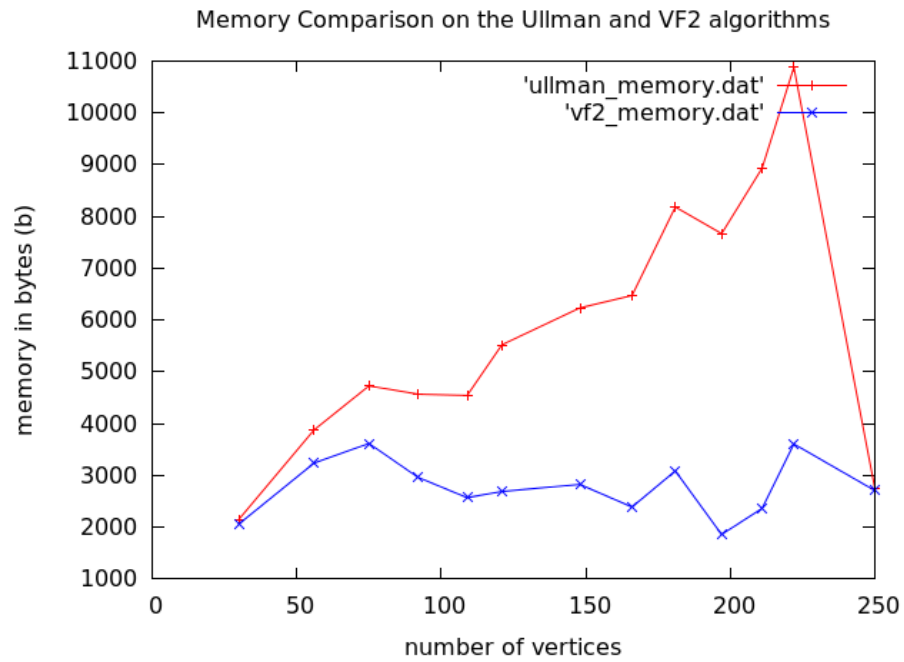


Figure 11: Graph depicting the results for the memory comparison between the algorithms

8 Time Results

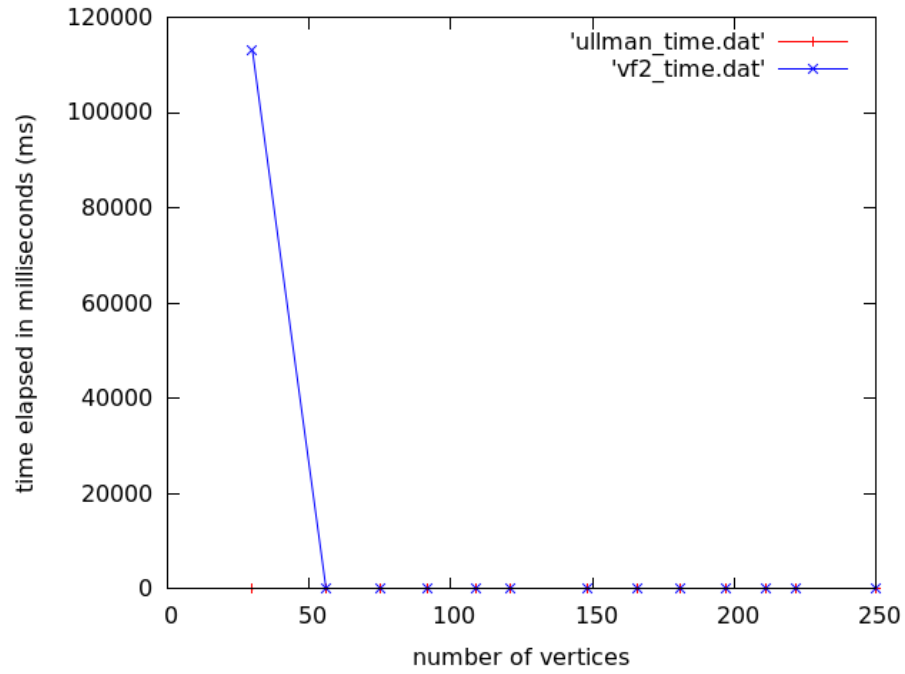


Figure 12: Graph depicting the results for the time comparison between the algorithms

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