

Spiking Neural P system without delay simulator implementation using GPGPUs

Francis Cabarle

Algorithms and Complexity Laboratory
Department of Computer Science
University of the Philippines Diliman
fccabarle@up.edu.ph

Henry Adorna

Algorithms and Complexity Laboratory
Department of Computer Science
University of the Philippines Diliman
hнадorna@dcs.upd.edu.ph

ABSTRACT

This paper presents a parallel simulator for a type of P system known as spiking neural P system (SNP system) using general purpose graphics processing units (GPGPUs). GPGPUs, unlike the more conventional and general purpose, multi-core CPUs, are used for parallelizable problems due to their architectural optimization for parallel computations.

Membrane computing or P systems on the other hand, are cell-inspired computational models which compute in a maximally parallel and non-deterministic manner. SNP systems, w/c compute via time separated spikes and whose inspiration was taken from the way neurons operate in living organisms, have been represented as matrices.

The matrix representation of SNP systems provides a crucial step into their simulation on parallel devices such as GPGPUs. Simulating the highly parallel nature of SNP systems necessitates the use of hardware intended for parallel computations. The simulator algorithms, design considerations, and implementation are presented. Finally, simulation results, observations, and analyses using an SNP system that generates all numbers in $\{N - 1\}$ are discussed.

Keywords

Membrane computing, Parallel computing, GPU computing

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Parallel computing: Via graphics processing units (GPUs)

The trend for massively parallel computation is moving from the more common multi-core CPUs towards GPGPUs for several significant reasons [7][8]. One important reason for such a trend in recent years include the low consumption in terms of power of GPGPUs compared to setting up machines and infrastructure which will utilize multiple CPUs in

order to obtain the same level of parallelization and performance[9]. Another more important reason is that GPGPUs are architected for massively parallel computations since unlike the architectures of most general purpose CPUs, a large part of GPGPUs are devoted for arithmetic operations and not on control and caching [7][8]. Arithmetic operations are at the heart of many basic operations as well as scientific computations, and these are performed with larger speedups when done in parallel, by GPGPUs over CPUs.

1.2 Parallel computing: Via Membranes

Membrane computing or its more specific counterpart, a P system, are Turing complete computing models that perform computations nondeterministically, exhausting all possible computations at any given time. This type of unconventional model of computation was introduced by George Paun in 1998 and takes inspiration, similar to other members of natural computing, from nature[4][5]. Specifically, P systems try to mimic the constitution and dynamics of the living cell: the multitude of elements inside it, and their interactions within themselves and their environment, or outside the cell's skin membrane.

SN P systems differ from other types of P systems precisely because they are mono-membranar and only use one type of object in its computation. These characteristics, among others, are meant to capture the workings of a special type of cell known as the neuron. Neurons, such as those in the human brain, communicate or 'compute' by sending indistinct electro-chemical signals more commonly known as spikes. Information is then communicated and encoded not by the spikes themselves, since the spikes are unrecognizable from one another, by means of time duration as well as the number of spikes sent/received from one neuron to another, oftentimes under a certain time interval[1]. The time duration between two spikes, or several successive spikes, transmit information from one cell to another.

It has been shown that SN P systems, given their nature, are representable by matrices[2][3]. This representation allows design and implementation of an SN P system simulator using parallel computing machines such as GPGPUs.

1.3 Combining GPU and Membrane computing

The design of the simulator, including the algorithms devised, architectural considerations, are then implemented using a particular type of GPGPU, namely NVIDIA CUDA

(compute unified device architecture). NVIDIA CUDA extends the widely known ANSI C programming language and makes parallel computation via GPGPUs manufactured by NVIDIA more accessible.

2. SPIKING NEURAL P SYSTEMS

2.1 Computing with SNP systems

The type of SNP systems focused on by this paper are those without delays i.e. those that spike or transmit signals the moment they are able to do so. A variant, which allows for delays before a neuron produces a spike, are also available [1]. An SNP system without delay is of the form:

$$\Pi = (O, \sigma_1, \dots, \sigma_m, syn, in, out),$$

where:

1. $O = \{a\}$ is the singleton alphabet (a is called spike);
2. $\sigma_1, \dots, \sigma_m$ are m number of neurons, of the form

$$\sigma_i = (n_i, R_i), 1 \leq i \leq m,$$

where:

- a) $n_i \geq 0$ is the initial number of spikes contained in σ_i ;
- b) R_i is a finite set of rules of the following two forms:
 - (b-1) $E/a^c \rightarrow a$, where E is a regular expression over a , and $c \geq 1, p \geq 1$, with the restriction $c \geq p$;
 - (b-2) $a^s \rightarrow \lambda$, for $s \geq 1$, with the restriction that for each rule $E/a^c \rightarrow a$ of type (b-1) from R_i , $a^s \notin L(E)$;
3. $syn = \{(i, j) \mid 1 \leq i, j \leq m, i \neq j\}$ (synapses between neurons);
4. $in, out \in \{1, 2, \dots, m\}$ indicate the input and output neurons, respectively.

Furthermore, rules of type (b-1) are applied if σ_i contains k spikes, $a^k \in L(E)$ and $k \geq c$. Using this type of rule uses up or consumes k spikes from the neuron, producing a spike to neurons adjacent to it. In this manner, for rules of type (b-2) if σ_i contains s spikes, then s spikes are forgotten or removed once the rule is used. Rules of type (b-1) can be simplified with the notation

$$(b-3) a^k \rightarrow a$$

where the regular expression $E = a^k$, again consuming k spikes and producing a spike.

The non-determinism of SNP systems comes with the fact that more than one rule of the several types are applicable at a given time, given enough spikes. The rule to be used is chosen non-deterministically in the neuron. However, only one rule can be applied or used at a given time [1][2][3]. The neurons in an SN P system operate in parallel and in unison, under a global clock. For Figure 1 no input neuron is present, but neuron 3 is the output neuron, hence the arrow pointing towards the environment, outside the SNP system.

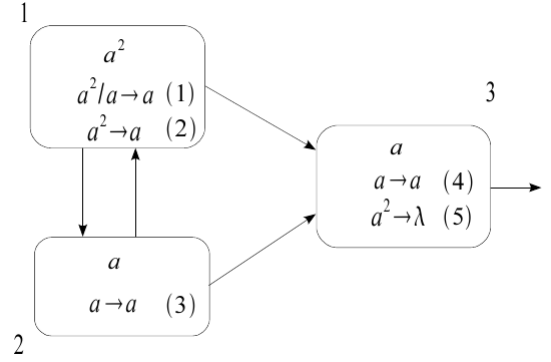


Figure 1: An SNP P system Π , generating all numbers in $\{\mathbb{N} - 1\}$, from [3].

2.2 Citations

Citations to articles [?, ?, ?, ?], conference proceedings [?] or books [?, ?] listed in the Bibliography section of your article will occur throughout the text of your article. You should use BibTeX to automatically produce this bibliography; you simply need to insert one of several citation commands with a key of the item cited in the proper location in the .tex file [?]. The key is a short reference you invent to uniquely identify each work; in this sample document, the key is the first author's surname and a word from the title. This identifying key is included with each item in the .bib file for your article.

The details of the construction of the .bib file are beyond the scope of this sample document, but more information can be found in the *Author's Guide*, and exhaustive details in the *LaTeX User's Guide*[?].

This article shows only the plainest form of the citation command, using \cite. This is what is stipulated in the SIGS style specifications. No other citation format is endorsed.

2.3 Tables

Because tables cannot be split across pages, the best place for them is typically the top of the page nearest their initial cite. To ensure this proper “floating” placement of tables, use the environment **table** to enclose the table's contents and the table caption. The contents of the table itself must go in the **tabular** environment, to be aligned properly in rows and columns, with the desired horizontal and vertical rules. Again, detailed instructions on **tabular** material is found in the *LaTeX User's Guide*.

Immediately following this sentence is the point at which Table 1 is included in the input file; compare the placement of the table here with the table in the printed dvi output of this document.

To set a wider table, which takes up the whole width of the page's live area, use the environment **table*** to enclose the table's contents and the table caption. As with a single-column table, this wide table will “float” to a location deemed more desirable. Immediately following this sentence is the point at which Table 2 is included in the in-

Table 1: Frequency of Special Characters

Non-English or Math	Frequency	Comments
Ø	1 in 1,000	For Swedish names
π	1 in 5	Common in math
\$	4 in 5	Used in business
Ψ_1^2	1 in 40,000	Unexplained usage

Figure 2: A sample black and white graphic (.eps format).

put file; again, it is instructive to compare the placement of the table here with the table in the printed dvi output of this document.

2.4 Figures

Like tables, figures cannot be split across pages; the best placement for them is typically the top or the bottom of the page nearest their initial cite. To ensure this proper “floating” placement of figures, use the environment **figure** to enclose the figure and its caption.

This sample document contains examples of **.eps** and **.ps** files to be displayable with L^AT_EX. More details on each of these is found in the *Author’s Guide*.

As was the case with tables, you may want a figure that spans two columns. To do this, and still to ensure proper “floating” placement of tables, use the environment **figure*** to enclose the figure and its caption.

Note that either **.ps** or **.eps** formats are used; use the **\epsfig** or **\psfig** commands as appropriate for the different file types.

2.5 Theorem-like Constructs

Other common constructs that may occur in your article are the forms for logical constructs like theorems, axioms, corollaries and proofs. There are two forms, one produced by the command **\newtheorem** and the other by the command **\newdef**; perhaps the clearest and easiest way to distinguish them is to compare the two in the output of this sample document:

This uses the **theorem** environment, created by the **\newtheorem** command:

THEOREM 1. *Let f be continuous on $[a, b]$. If G is an antiderivative for f on $[a, b]$, then*

$$\int_a^b f(t)dt = G(b) - G(a).$$

The other uses the **definition** environment, created by the **\newdef** command:

Figure 3: A sample black and white graphic (.eps format) that has been resized with the epsfig command.

Figure 4: A sample black and white graphic (.ps format) that has been resized with the psfig command.

Definition 1. If z is irrational, then by e^z we mean the unique number which has logarithm z :

$$\log e^z = z$$

Two lists of constructs that use one of these forms is given in the *Author’s Guidelines*.

and don’t forget to end the environment with **figure***, not **figure**!

There is one other similar construct environment, which is already set up for you; i.e. you must *not* use a **\newdef** command to create it: the **proof** environment. Here is an example of its use:

PROOF. Suppose on the contrary there exists a real number L such that

$$\lim_{x \rightarrow \infty} \frac{f(x)}{g(x)} = L.$$

Then

$$l = \lim_{x \rightarrow c} f(x) = \lim_{x \rightarrow c} \left[g(x) \cdot \frac{f(x)}{g(x)} \right] = \lim_{x \rightarrow c} g(x) \cdot \lim_{x \rightarrow c} \frac{f(x)}{g(x)} = 0 \cdot L = 0,$$

which contradicts our assumption that $l \neq 0$. \square

Complete rules about using these environments and using the two different creation commands are in the *Author’s Guide*; please consult it for more detailed instructions. If you need to use another construct, not listed therein, which you want to have the same formatting as the Theorem or the Definition[?] shown above, use the **\newtheorem** or the **\newdef** command, respectively, to create it.

A Caveat for the T_EX Expert

Because you have just been given permission to use the **\newdef** command to create a new form, you might think you can use T_EX’s **\def** to create a new command: *Please refrain from doing this!* Remember that your L^AT_EX source code is primarily intended to create camera-ready copy, but may be converted to other forms – e.g. HTML. If you inadvertently omit some or all of the **\defs** recompilation will be, to say the least, problematic.

3. CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE WORK

Using a highly parallel computing device such as a GPGPU, particularly NVIDIA CUDA, an SNP system simulator was successfully designed and implemented. The use of a high level programming language such as Python for host tasks, mainly for logic and string representation and manipulation of values (vector/matrix elements) provided the necessary expressivity to implement the algorithms created to produce and exhaust all possible and valid configuration and spiking vectors. For the device tasks, CUDA C allowed the manipulation of the NVIDIA CUDA enabled GPGPU which took care of repetitive and highly parallel computations (addition and multiplication essentially).

Table 2: Some Typical Commands

Command	A Number	Comments
<code>\alignauthor</code>	100	Author alignment
<code>\numberofauthors</code>	200	Author enumeration
<code>\table</code>	300	For tables
<code>\table*</code>	400	For wider tables

Figure 5: A sample black and white graphic (.eps format) that needs to span two columns of text.

Future versions of the SNP system simulator will focus on several improvements. These improvements include the use of an algorithm for matrix computations without requiring the input matrix to be turned into a square matrix (this is currently handled by the simulator by padding zeros to an otherwise non-square matrix input). Another improvement would be the simulation of systems not of the form b-3). Byte-compiling the Python/host part of the code to improve performance as well as metrics to further enhance and measure execution time are desirable as well. Finally, deeper understanding of the CUDA architecture, such as inter- thread/block communication, for extremely large systems with equally large matrices, is required. These improvements as well as the current version of the simulator should also be run in a machine with higher versions of GPG- PUs running NVIDIA CUDA.

4. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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