

# Fast Community Detection in Knowledge Graphs

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## Abstract

Knowledge graphs represent information as a directed graph. The ability to detect communities in these graphs is crucial to understanding the structure of the graph and the underlying information. Here we present a fast, unsupervised algorithm to perform community detection on knowledge graphs. We first convert the graph to a bipartite representation, and iteratively improve the community assignments. We also present an analysis of the runtime of the algorithm. We demonstrate the algorithm’s performance on the NELL dataset.

## 1 Introduction

Community detection is an important graph problem with various applications. This problem requires finding *communities* of nodes on a graph. Ideally, all nodes in a community should be similar according to some metric. Community detection is an interesting problem because there is no obvious metric for what makes a particular community assignment “good” or “bad”; it must be defined for the specific type of graph.

In this paper we present a fast, unsupervised community detection algorithm for knowledge graphs. An overview of knowledge graphs is provided in section 3. These graphs represent information as a set of entity-relation triples in the form  $\langle e_1, r, e_2 \rangle$  where  $e_1, e_2$  represent entities and  $r$  represents the relation between them. The collection of triples is the knowledge base. Knowledge graphs can have very specialized information (e.g. representing biological processes) or very general information. They are typically represented as one node per entity and the relations as edge types between entities.

Previous work in community detection has focused on general types of graphs. This research is covered in Section 2. Knowledge graphs are simply the graph representation of a set of entity-relation triples and therefore have a specific inherent structure. We take advantage of this structure to create an algorithm that is faster than the general community detection algorithms. Specifically, we convert the knowledge graph to a bipartite representation. Details of the conversion are specified in Section 4. A bipartite representation allows the algorithm to be fast while also benefiting from the rigid structural rules of bipartite graphs.

Community detection is a very important problem for knowledge graphs. A good community detection algorithm provides insight into the structural properties of the knowledge graphs. It can help clarify which types of nodes there are and how many of each type. If we frame it as a machine learning problem, then growing the knowledge base by adding new triples can be considered as an inference problem. Once we understand the breakdown of the existing graph, the entities and relation in the new triple can be easily categorized, providing information about the nodes beyond the simple textual information of the triple itself. Community detection on a knowledge graph also has applications to various other graph problems, such as question answering and social network analysis. By understanding the knowledge graph we can more easily answer queries about the graph. Similarly, most general network graphs can be converted into knowledge graphs. Thus a community detection algorithm can find patterns in social networks as well.

Knowledge graphs such as Freebase [4] have millions of triples. Traditional community detection algorithms are  $O(n^2 \log n)$  or  $O(n^2)$ , which is not computationally feasible for large datasets. The algorithm presented here is almost linear, which allows it to scale to large datasets. The speed of the algorithm allows it to generalize to any knowledge graph dataset. The algorithm is also completely unsupervised, which is not the case for most knowledge graph algorithms [16, 5, 9, 7]. Since community detection is such a hard problem with no obvious answer, an unsupervised algorithm learns to detect any pattern in the graph. It can

even detect patterns that the humans might not have been able to see. On the other hand, a supervised algorithm can only learn from the specific type of supervision given as feedback.

The structure of the paper is as follows. We first provide a quick overview on knowledge graphs. Then we review related work in the areas of community detection and knowledge graph analysis. Afterwards we present the bipartite representation of knowledge graphs and the mathematical details of the algorithm. Finally we present our results on the NELL [6] knowledge graph dataset.

## 2 Related Work

Community detection is a problem that has been studied quite extensively. Kernighan and Lin [13] created one of the first algorithms. The algorithm we present here is loosely based on it. Their algorithm works by partitioning the graph into two sections, choosing how to move nodes to maximize some benefit function, and then picking the state which has maximum benefit.

Newman [15] presents a comprehensive survey on the field of community detection. He discusses the Kernighan-Lin algorithm as well as the Girvan-Newman algorithm [8].

Many algorithms have focused on the stochastic blockmodel [10, 3]. Karrer and Newman [12] presented a modified version of this algorithm which iteratively moves nodes from one community to another in order to maximize some objective function. This is the inspiration for the algorithm presented here. Larremore et al. [14] extend Karrer and Newman’s method to a bipartite graph to obtain speedup. Their work serves as the basis for our algorithm, which converts the knowledge graph to a bipartite representation.

Much research has been done with knowledge graphs as well, but none in the area of community detection on the original graph. Bordes et al. [5] provide a way to embed the knowledge graph using neural networks, and Guo et al. [9] improve that model by enforcing

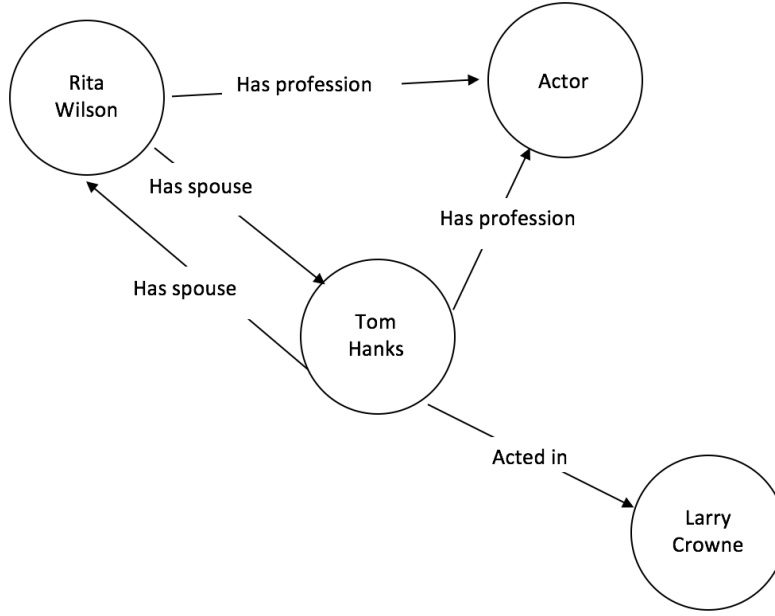


Figure 1: A small example knowledge graph

Semantically Smooth Embedding. Nickel et al. [16] propose a model for embedding using tensor decomposition instead. Chang et al. [7] improve the runtime of the Nickel model to make it more computationally feasible.

### 3 Knowledge Graph Overview

A knowledge graph generally refers to a set of *entity-relation triples*. These triples take the form  $\langle e_1, r, e_2 \rangle$ , where  $e_1$  and  $e_2$  are entities and  $r$  describes the relation between these two entities. Entities and relations can be repeated across triples. The total set of triples denotes all the knowledge in our “Knowledge Base”.

We can represent these triples as a directed graph, with each entity as a vertex and the relations as edge types between them. Figure 1 shows an example of a very small knowledge graph. Note that there is only one node per entity. This allows the graph to store multiple pieces of information regarding the same entity together, to allow for easy processing by the

program while also making it simple for humans to understand.

Once a knowledge graph is built, we can pose queries about the graph. For example, we can provide two entities  $e_1, e_2$  and ask which relation  $r$  links the two on the graph. We can also provide an entity  $e$  and the relation  $r$ , and ask for which other entity  $e'$  do the triples  $\langle e, r, e' \rangle$  or  $\langle e', r, e \rangle$  exist on the graph. Put another way, the queries are either *link prediction* queries or *entity prediction* queries.

## 4 Bipartite Representation

We propose converting the knowledge graph into a directed bipartite representation to help perform the task of community detection. In this form, all entities belong to one *class* while all relations belong to the other class. Figure 2 shows the graph in Figure 1 converted to a bipartite representation.

The conversion is done as follows. Consider some triple  $\langle e_1, r, e_2 \rangle$ . There is still exactly one node for each entity, regardless of how many triples that entity appears in. Thus we have one node  $e_1$  and another  $e_2$ . We also make a node for  $r$ , which we call the *relation node*. We then add a directed link from  $e_1$  to  $r$ , and a directed link from  $r$  to  $e_2$ . It is important to note that we make a separate node for each occurrence of a relation. Thus if there is another triple  $\langle e_3, r, e_4 \rangle$  then we would make a separate node for  $r$ , even though the relation type itself is the same. As a result, every relation node has exactly one inbound and one outbound edge. Each entity node, on the other hand, has the same outbound and inbound edges as in the original graph. The number of relation nodes is exactly equal to the number of triples, since we add one relation node for every triple.

There are several advantages to using a bipartite representation. The algorithm presented here is unsupervised, so there is no input besides the graph itself. The communities can only be found using the distribution of nodes and edges. Therefore, the stronger an inherent

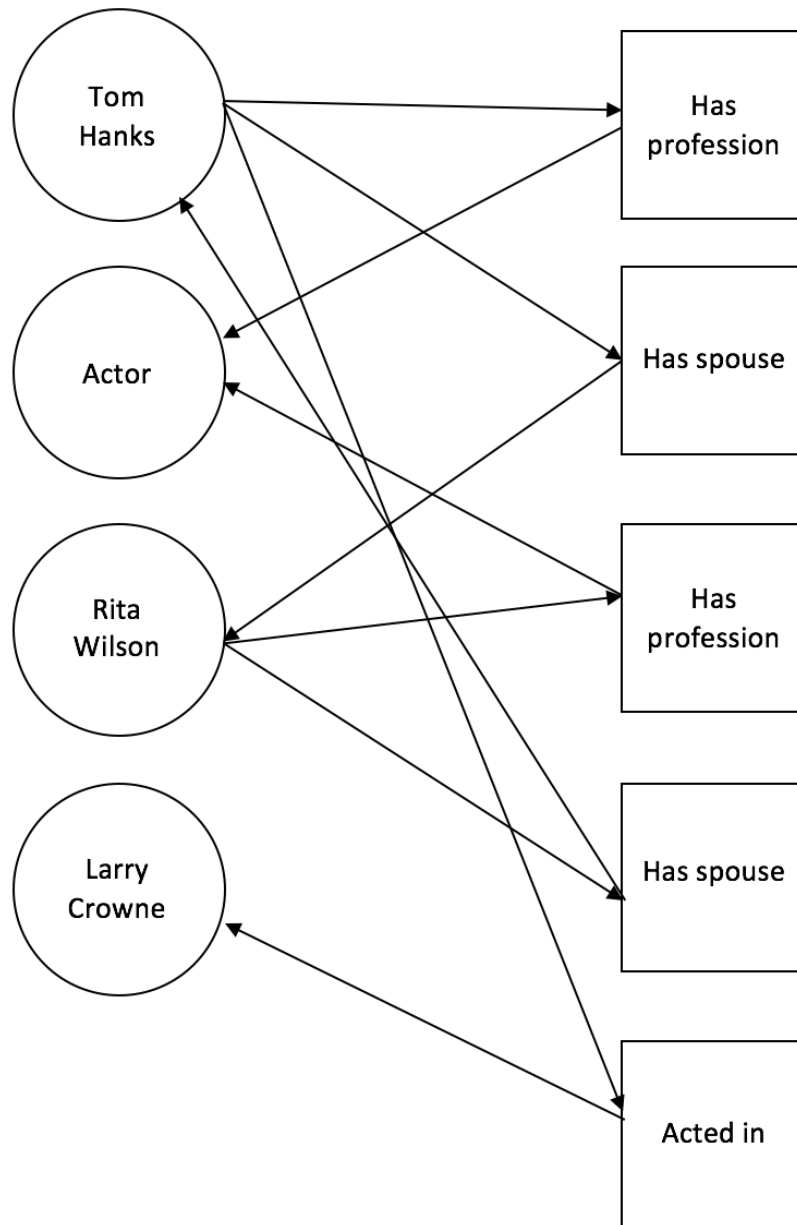


Figure 2: A bipartite representation of the graph in Figure 1

structure can be provided as input, the better the algorithm will do. Bipartite graphs enforce a very rigid structure on the graphs, more so than almost any other graph representation. This means that we provide our algorithm with a rigid structure.

This structure in turn creates a natural way to find communities of nodes. By partitioning into entity nodes and relation nodes, we only have to focus on nodes of one class when finding communities, i.e. communities with entity nodes will only have entity nodes, and similarly for relation nodes. Additionally, we define these communities **based on links to nodes of the opposite class**. That is to say, entities that have outbound links to the same types of relations and inbound edges from the same types of relations should be in the same community. Similarly, relation nodes that have inbound links from entity nodes of the same community and outbound links to entity nodes of the same community are probably the same type of relation.

Figure 3 shows a possible community assignment of the graph in Figure 2, where each color represents a different community. *Tom Hanks* and *Rita Wilson* both have an outbound edge to the gray community, which represents the *has profession* relation. Both also have inbound edges from the *has spouse* relation. Since both have outbound edges to the same type of relation community and inbound edges from the same type of relation community, the algorithm should place these two entities in the same community. On the other hand, *Actor* only has inbound links from the *has profession* community, so it should be in a separate community from *Tom Hanks* and *Rita Wilson*.

Communities defined this way can be detected for one class independently of the other class, allowing for parallelization and therefore decreasing the running time of the program. As discussed in Section 2 previous community detection algorithms are  $O(n^2 \lg n)$  or  $O(n^2)$ , often because they perform a linear check over all nodes for each node they visit. The bipartite structure here means we operate on entity and relation nodes independently, significantly lowering our runtime. The full analysis is discussed in Section 5.3.

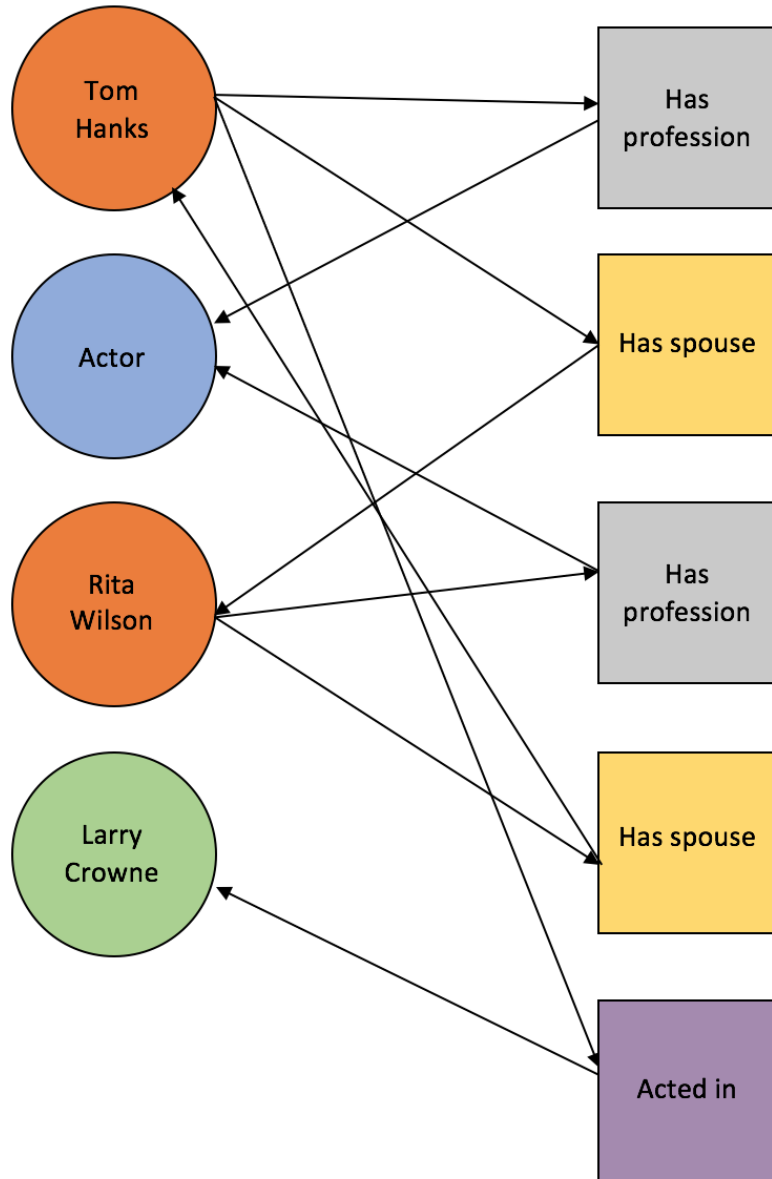


Figure 3: A possible community assignment of the graph in Figure 2



A third advantage of the bipartite representation is that in converting the relations to nodes, every edge in the resulting graph is untyped. Each edge can be processed in the same way. Additionally, the resulting adjacency tensor for the graph has only two dimensions, instead of the three-dimensional tensor used by Nickel et al. [16] and Chang et al. [7]. As edges are untyped, there does not need to be a separate matrix for each type  $k$ .

## 5 Model

In this section we formalize the algorithm mathematics. We describe the metric used to evaluate how correct a particular community assignment is, walk through the algorithm step-by-step, and present an analysis of the algorithm running time.

### 5.1 Algorithm Overview

Section 4 provided the intuition for our algorithm. In this section we formalize the details. Algorithm 1 shows the pseudocode for the algorithm. Let  $K_e$  be the set of entity communities and  $K_r$  the set of relation communities. We specify  $|K_e|$  and  $|K_r|$  beforehand. We read in the knowledge graph data and create the bipartite representation with  $E$  the set of entity nodes and  $R$  the set of relation nodes, and  $N_e = |E|$ ,  $N_r = |R|$ . Note that  $N_r$  is the number of triples in the set, since we have one relation node for every triple. The input data also provides us with  $O$  and  $A$ , the outbound and inbound adjacency matrices, respectively. Each of these is a binary  $N_e \times N_r$  matrix, where  $O_{ij} = 1$  if and only if edge there is a directed edge  $e_{ij}$  from entity node  $i$  to relation node  $j$ , and  $I_{ij}$  is the same but for an edge from relation node  $j$  to entity node  $i$ .

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**Algorithm 1** Community Detection Algorithm

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1: function DETECT-COMMUNITIES( $E, R, |K_e|, |K_r|, max\_iter, O, I, \epsilon$ )
2:    $state\_pen, l, L, K_e, K_r \leftarrow$  INITIALIZE( $E, R, |K_e|, |K_r|, O, I$ )
3:    $iter \leftarrow 0$ 
4:   while  $iter < max\_iter$  or  $state\_pen < \epsilon$  do
5:      $move\_e \leftarrow$  ENTITY_PENALTIES( $E, K_e, l, L$ )
6:      $move\_r \leftarrow$  RELATION_PENALTIES( $R, K_r, l, L$ )
7:      $K_e, K_r \leftarrow$  MOVE_AND_UPDATE( $move\_e, move\_r, K_e, K_r, l, L$ )
8:      $state\_pen \leftarrow$  STATE_PENALTY( $K_e, K_r, l, L$ )
9:   end while
10:  return  $K_e, K_r$ 
11: end function
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The algorithm is iterative. Each node is assigned a penalty score based on how its outbound/inbound edges differ from the other nodes in its community. In each iteration, we pick the entity node and relation node with the highest penalty and assign them to the community in which they have lowest penalty. We also define a total state penalty as the sum of all node penalties. The algorithm continues iterating until the total state penalty is within some tolerance or until some fixed *max\_iterations*.

For convenience in our analysis we will focus only on the outbound matrix  $O$ , and on entity nodes/communities. The analysis for the inbound matrix is the exact same. To analyze outbound/inbound edges for the relation nodes we take the transpose of the opposite matrix. The outbound adjacency matrix for relation nodes is  $I^T$ , and the inbound matrix is  $O^T$ .

First consider an entity node  $i$  and a relation community  $r$ . Let  $l_{ir,outbound}$  be the total number of outbound edges from  $i$  to any relation node in  $r$ . We can store these quantities in the  $N_e \times |K_r|$  matrix  $l_{outbound}$ .

$$l_{ir,outbound} = \sum_{j \in r} O_{ij}$$

We can extend this analysis to inter-community links. Consider an entity community  $c$ . Let  $L_{cr,outbound}$  be the number of outbound edges between  $c$  and relation community  $r$ . This is just the sum of outbound edges from any node in  $c$  to any node in  $r$ . We can store these quantities in the  $|K_e| \times |K_r|$  matrix  $L_{outbound}$ .

$$L_{cr,outbound} = \sum_{i \in c} l_{ir,outbound} = \sum_{i \in c} \sum_{j \in r} O_{ij}$$

The intuition behind the penalty is that nodes in the same community should have about the same number of outbound edges to each relation community and the same number of inbound edges from each relation community. To frame it in the original knowledge graph, nodes in the same community should be involved in similar relations. If we assign two nodes to one community, and they are involved in very different types of relations, then they should not be in the same community.

Let  $d_{outbound}(c, r), d_{inbound}(c, r)$  be the average outbound/inbound links from community  $c$  to community  $r$ .

$$d_{outbound}(c, r) = \frac{L_{cr,outbound}}{|c|}$$

Now define the **node penalty**  $p(i)$  of node  $i$  as the squared difference of the edges out from / into  $i$  and the average links in  $i$ 's community  $c$ .

$$p(i) = \sum_{r \in K_r} (d_{outbound}(c, r) - l_{ir,outbound})^2 + (d_{inbound}(c, r) - l_{ir,inbound})^2$$

A given assignment of nodes to communities is a *state*. The state penalty  $P(s)$  is simply the sum of each node penalty.

$$P(s) = \sum_{i \in E} p(i) + \sum_{j \in R} p(j)$$

How well the entity communities are formed depends on how accurate the relation communities are, and vice versa. The algorithm is iterative so that entity and relation communities can be slowly improved simultaneously. A better assignment of entity communities will make the relation communities better, which will in turn make the entity communities better.

Sometimes, certain states act as *local minima*, in which moving the entity and relation nodes with highest penalty would actually increase the state penalty. If the total state penalty is below some tolerance then this is actually a proper assignment of communities, but often the total state penalty is still high. In this case we randomly choose which new community to assign these nodes to. Due to the fact that improving each class of communities depends on improving the other class of communities, these local minima arise when the assignments are such that we reach an equilibrium point. Often they are a consequence of the random initializations. Therefore, as with other randomized algorithms this algorithm is run many times with different initializations each time.

## 5.2 Similarity to other AI Algorithms

The algorithm presented here is very similar to other algorithms in the field of Artificial Intelligence. Essentially, we are treating the problem of community detection as a search problem, where we try to find the optimal assignment of nodes to communities given some constraints. In this case, the constraint is to minimize the state penalty.

Our approach is a greedy one, where in each iteration the algorithm tries to find the re-assignment of one entity node and one relation node such that penalty is minimized. If the algorithm hits a local minimum, it randomly chooses which communities to re-assign the nodes to. This is similar to WALKSAT, an algorithm for finding boolean satisfiability. WALKSAT greedily finds a variable assignment that satisfies the most unsatisfied clauses, but with some probability does a random assignment every iteration to avoid local minima.

### 5.3 Runtime Analysis

One goal of the algorithm is to be faster than the  $O(n^2)$  runtime of the other community detection algorithms [13, 8, 14]. As discussed in Section 4, the bipartite structure of the graph allows us to run the algorithm for entities and relations simultaneously.

We can save computation by calculating the matrices  $l_{outbound}, l_{inbound}, L_{outbound}, L_{inbound}$  for entities and relations right after initialization. Then in each iteration, we only have to update these matrices for the entity node and relation node that are moved.

Calculating  $l_{i,outbound}$  for a node requires summing over all relation nodes, so the total time to calculate  $l_{outbound}$  is  $O(N_e N_r)$ , which is the number of entity nodes times the number of relation nodes. Once the  $l$  matrix is calculated, the  $L_{outbound}$  matrix is simply the sum over each entity node (since every node is assigned to exactly one community). Thus calculating  $L_{outbound}$  takes  $O(N_e)$  time (and  $O(N_r)$  time when calculating for the relation side). Our total precomputation is dominated by the  $O(N_e N_r)$  term.

In each iteration, calculating the penalty score of an entity node requires summing over every relation community, which is  $O(|K_r|)$  time. Finding the penalty of a relation node takes  $O(|K_e|)$  time. Finding the entity node with highest penalty therefore takes  $O(N_e |K_r|)$  time, and finding the relation node with highest penalty is  $O(N_r |K_e|)$ .

Finding the optimal community to move to requires calculating the node's penalty in each community. This is  $O(|K_e| |K_r|)$  for both the entity node and relation node.

Finally, moving the node requires updating all nodes of the opposite class that it is connected to. This takes  $O(N_r)$  time for the entity node and  $O(1)$  time for the relation node, since each relation node has only 2 edges.

The total time per iteration is dominated by finding the nodes with highest penalty. Therefore we spend

$$O(N_e |K_r| + N_r |K_e|)$$

time per iteration. The total number of nodes is  $N_e + N_r$ , and  $|K_e| \ll N_e$ ,  $|K_r| \ll N_r$ . The algorithm is not quite linear but almost linear per iteration, which means that it is a fast algorithm relative to other community detection algorithms. A lower runtime allows the algorithm to scale up to very large datasets.

## 6 Results

In this section we present our results on the NELL dataset [6]. The algorithm was implemented in Python using Numpy [11] and Jupyter Notebook [17]. We first take in the NELL input in triple format and convert it to the bipartite representation. We then run the algorithm on the bipartite graph.

### 6.1 Implementation and Evaluation

The Never Ending Language Project (NELL) is a project at Carnegie Mellon which parses human knowledge from the Internet and generates entity-relation triples. We use the NELL 165 version. It is possible that the triple is not actually true, but that does not matter for the algorithm. We run two experiments on the dataset.

The first is a very small proof-of-concept experiment with only one relation type. The relation side acts as a control while the entity communities demonstrate whether the algorithm can actually assign communities properly. We use a set of eight triples, all of the form  $\langle \text{event}, \text{eventdate}, \text{date} \rangle$ . In each of these triples,  $e_1$  is some historical event and  $e_2$  is its associated date. An optimal community assignment is shown in Figure 4 for two triples. If we specify  $|K_e| = 2$  and  $|K_r| = 1$  then the best way to assign communities for this set of triples is to assign all events to one community and all dates to the other. We expect the algorithm to do this as well, because events will have only outbound edges to the single relation community and dates will have only inbound edges.

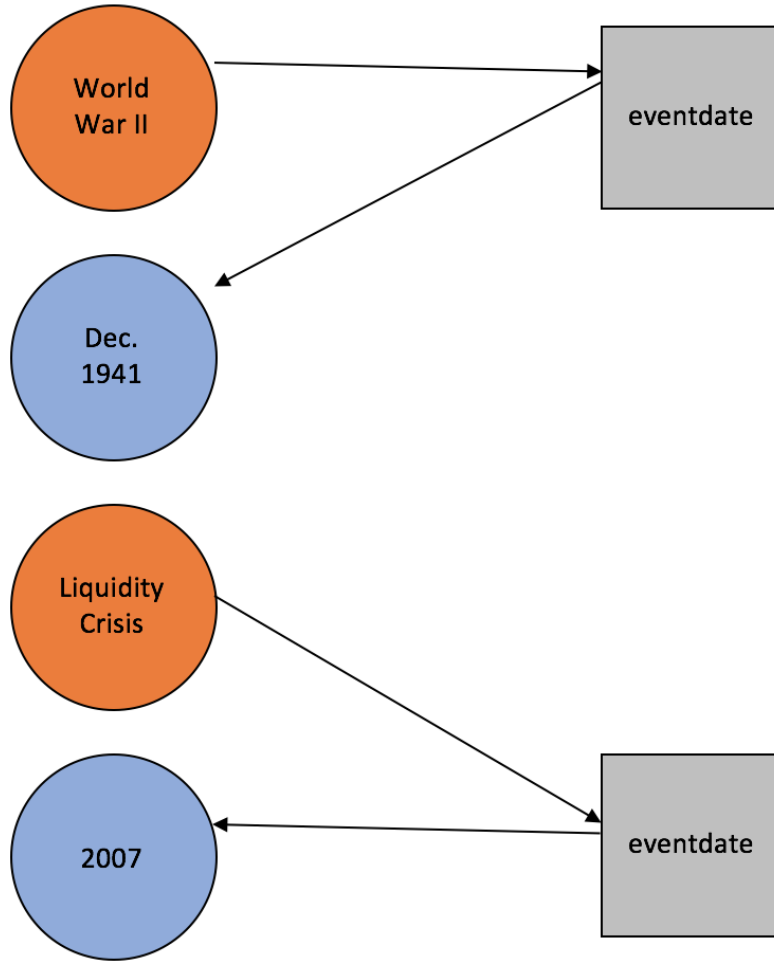


Figure 4: An optimal community assignment for two triples from the Events set

Table 1 shows the result of running the algorithm on this small dataset. The algorithm does perfectly split the 8 triples, with only dates in Community 1 and only events in Community 2. That the algorithm is able to find the optimal partition here indicates it could yield promising results on more complicated datasets.

The second dataset contains 3248 triples (298 distinct entities) in four broad areas. The first is the Events set used in the previous experiment. The second is a Language set, where all triples are of the form  $\langle \text{language}, \text{language\_of}, \text{place} \rangle$ . In this set  $e_1$  is a language and  $e_2$  is a place where it is spoken, either a country or a university. The third set is the Sports

Community 1	Community 2
2007	liquidity_crisis
2005	operation_iraqi_freedom
june_1941	operation_barbarossa
december_1941	pearl_harbor
june_1967	six_day_war
1812	revolutionary_war
december_1941	world_war_ii
2007	troop_surge

Table 1: The algorithm’s community assignments for entity nodes in eight Event triples

set, where  $e_1$  is a particular sporting event and  $e_2$  is either the team that played in it, or the final score. The fourth set is the People set, where  $e_1$  is a person and  $e_2$  is either a date (birth or death date), an age, or the name of an organization that person belonged to. A possible community assignment for a subset of this data is shown in Figure 5. If we specify  $|K_e| = 4$  and  $|K_r| = 4$  then the best way to assign communities is to assign them by the set from which the node originated. On the entity side, one community should contain all the nodes from the Event set, one should contain all from the Language set, and so on. The same should be true of the relation communities.

As discussed in Section 1, community detection algorithms are very tough to evaluate because there is not necessarily one assignment that is better than all the others. This ambiguity is why we use the metric of node and state penalties to find a good assignment. We ran the experiment with varying numbers of communities, and found that 4 for entities and 4 for relations yielded the best results. These numbers also make sense intuitively, as there are 4 sources of data.

Table 2 shows the distribution of entity nodes in each entity community, along with the set from which each node originated. In the ideal assignment, each community would have nodes from only one set and all nodes from each set would be in the same community. Our results are not ideal. In fact, nodes from each set are distributed across all four communities, and within each community there are nodes from all four sets. Some sets have a better



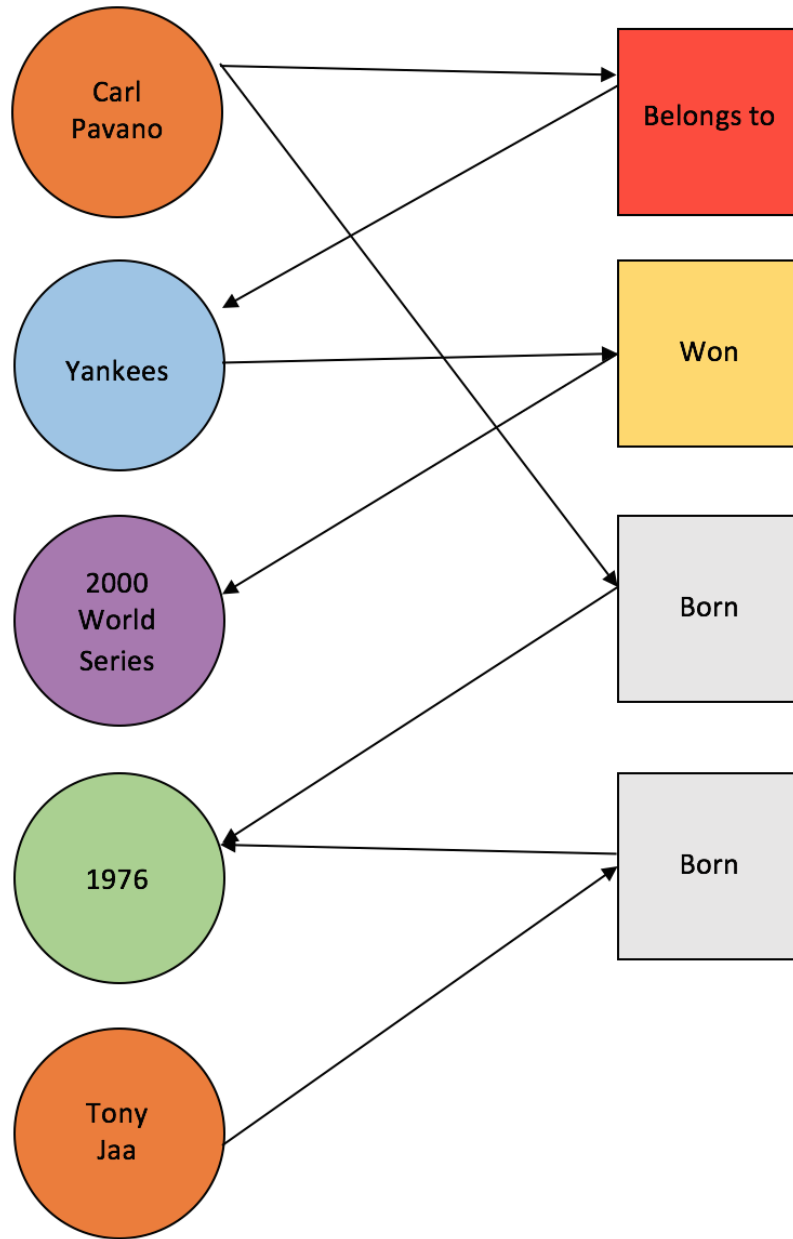


Figure 5: An optimal community assignment for four triples in the large dataset

partition than others. For example, nodes from the Events set are mostly in Communities 1 and 2, with very few in 3 and 4. Similarly, nodes from the People set are predominantly in Communities 1 and 3. However, for the most part the algorithm results are suboptimal.

	Community 1	Community 2	Community 3	Community 4
Language	6	5	10	6
Events	12	12	3	6
People	42	33	42	37
Sports	22	26	21	15

Table 2: Table of Entity Communities in the large dataset

	Community 1	Community 2	Community 3	Community 4
Language	86	84	88	78
Events	76	65	76	71
People	441	399	395	413
Sports	252	263	215	246

Table 3: Table of Relation Communities in the large dataset

Table 3 shows the distribution of relation nodes in each relation community, along with the set from which each node originated. The results are about the same as with the entity communities. While the Events set is mostly in Communities 1 and 3, for the most part the communities do not match the optimal assignment.

## 6.2 Discussion

The algorithm’s performance on the two datasets demonstrates that it works quite well for smaller datasets, but becomes less accurate as the size increases. This decrease in accuracy is most likely due to the fact that entity communities depend on the relation communities being accurate, and vice versa. The intuition behind the algorithm is that the iterative nature would allow both classes to improve simultaneously. In practice, however, instead of mutually becoming more accurate they mutually stay inaccurate.

The low accuracy on larger datasets is also counterintuitive because we expect the larger datasets to be denser, and therefore the algorithm should be able to assign nodes to communities more accurately. In a denser knowledge graph each entity node appears in many triples, which allows the algorithm to better categorize each node based on the types of

relations it is involved with. On the other hand, a smaller and sparser graph can suffer from noise. For example, in Figure 3 if Rita Wilson did not have a *has spouse* relation and only the *has profession* relation, then that node only has two edges in common with the Tom Hanks node. The fewer edges in common it has with another node, the less likely it is that the algorithm will put those two nodes in the same community. The algorithm takes a longer time to converge on dense graphs, however.

The number of communities specified can also greatly affect the algorithm’s accuracy. As discussed earlier, there is not necessarily a clear reason why any particular number should be specified. Theoretical approaches to answering this question for the stochastic block model were recently obtained by Abbe and Sandon [1, 2]. In our algorithm we simply run for many values and see which has more optimal results.

### 6.3 Future Improvements

There are various ways in which this algorithm could be modified to have higher accuracy. One modification is to have more accurate initializations, instead of simply randomly assigning nodes to communities at the start. The problem with random initializations is that different initial states could lead to very different outcomes. Additionally, some initial states are far worse than others so the algorithm must be run with many different initializations. We compared our algorithm to WALKSAT in Section 5.2, and adding more accurate initializations would make it even more like WALKSAT. There are heuristics that official WALKSAT implementations use to initialize assignments. Such an improvement could be made to our algorithm as well.

Another possible improvement is to allow the number of communities to be dynamic, rather than specified beforehand. The algorithm itself would need to be modified to take into account creating a new community or emptying an existing one. The current state penalty is defined in such a way that if every node is in its own community the total penalty

is 0. There would need to be an extra penalty for the total number of communities, to incentivize the algorithm to keep the total number small.

The third improvement is to add supervision to the algorithm training process. An unsupervised algorithm is more easily generalizable, but adding some supervision could help increase the accuracy. The most logical way is to only perform community detection on the entity side, while specifying the relation types as an input to the algorithm. If the relation communities are already ideal, the algorithm should be able to detect entity communities. Most other knowledge graph algorithms [16, 9, 7] provide full labels as well as categorical information, so even just providing the relation communities would still be relatively unsupervised.

## 7 Conclusion

In this paper we present a fast, unsupervised community detection algorithm. The algorithm is an iterative algorithm which assigns penalties to nodes. These penalties reflect how similar a node’s edges are to the edges of other nodes in its own community. Although the algorithm does not perform as well as hoped, it does meet the initial goals of this research. This algorithm is fast in that it is almost linear time per iteration, and it is also completely unsupervised. The community detection is not very accurate, but it does serve as a good starting point. We present three possible modifications that could improve the accuracy of the algorithm.

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