

# Strategy Repair in Reachability Games

Pierre Gaillard, Fabio Patrizi, Giuseppe Perelli

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**Strategy Repair** addresses a fundamental challenge in Planning and Synthesis—transforming losing strategies into winning ones within Reachability Games. The problem's significance spans various fields, from artificial intelligence to control systems.

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A reduction to Vertex Cover can be found to show it's NP-Completeness, through which two algorithms with slight modifications are devised for our problem.

## RG: Preliminaries

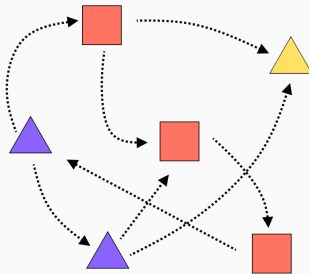
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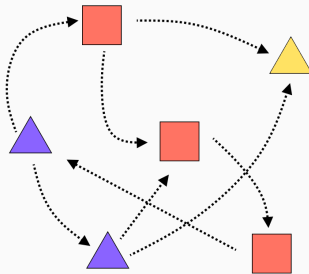
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The Transitions from state to state are defined by the game. The goal for  $P_0$  is to find a strategy to get to one of the Target States regardless of  $P_1$ 's strategy of moving.

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A Reachability Game  $\mathcal{G}$  is defined as  $\mathcal{G} = \langle \mathcal{A}, \mathcal{T} \rangle$ , where  $\mathcal{T} \subseteq V$  is a subset of nodes from the arena marked as the Target/Winning State.

A path in the Arena is a sequence  $\pi = \nu_0 \cdot \nu_1 \cdot \nu_2 \dots \in V^\omega$ . Such that each  $(\nu_i, \nu_{i+1}) \in E$ .

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Our objective is to use a 'losing'  $\sigma_0$  and do minimal modifications to make it a 'winning'  $\sigma'_0$ . We define the metric for closeness and what is considered a 'winning' strategy further ahead.

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$\sigma_1$  is defined similarly as  $\sigma_0$  but for  $P_1$

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$$\text{DIST}(\sigma_0, \sigma'_0) = |\{\nu \in V | \sigma_0(\nu) \neq \sigma'_0(\nu)\}|$$

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It being a metric gives us a 'natural' distance between two strategies which we can use further.

## Induced Game

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## Strategy Repair Problem

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Using our definition for distance, we can find a reduction to the NP-Complete **Vertex Cover**, problem and show that the Strategy Repair Problem is NP-Complete too.

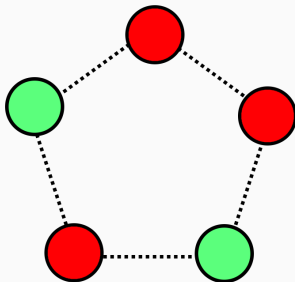


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For a given undirected graph  $G = \langle S, A \rangle$  and a natural number  $k \in \mathbb{N}$ ,  $A$  is a set of pair of vertices from  $S$ , find a subset  $S' \subseteq S$  with  $|S'| \leq k$  such that  $\forall (\nu, \nu') \in A, \nu \in S' \text{ or } \nu' \in S'$

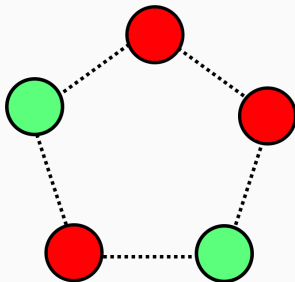
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The above diagram shows a solution for a Vertex Cover problem for  $k = 3$ . Red nodes are in  $S'$

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Given a certificate, we can verify it in Polytime, which concludes that Strategy Repair Problem is in NP.

## Reduction with Vertex Cover

Consider an instance of the Vertex Cover problem with  $G = \langle S, A \rangle$  and threshold  $k$  given to us. Define an RG  $\mathcal{G} = \langle \mathcal{A}, \mathcal{T} \rangle, \sigma_0, k$  with  $\mathcal{A} = \langle V, V_0, V_1, E \rangle$  for a fresh new node  $t$  as:



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Consider an instance of the Vertex Cover problem with  $G = \langle S, A \rangle$  and threshold  $k$  given to us. Define an RG  $\mathcal{G} = \langle \mathcal{A}, \mathcal{T} \rangle, \sigma_0, k$  with  $\mathcal{A} = \langle V, V_0, V_1, E \rangle$  for a fresh new node  $t$  as:

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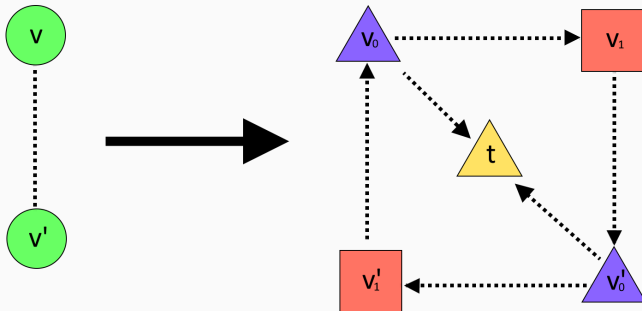
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- $\sigma_0((\nu, 0))$  sends to  $(\nu, 1)$

# Reduction with Vertex Cover

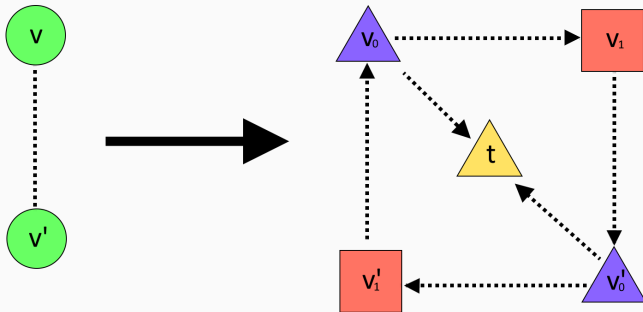
Example of a reduction





# Reduction with Vertex Cover

Example of a reduction



Each node  $v$  corresponds to 2 new nodes in the RG, here we write them as  $v_0$  and  $v_1$

We now need to show the undirected graph  $G$  has a Vertex Cover  $S'$  of size at most  $k$  if and only if the subsequent SRP has a winning  $\sigma'_0$  such that  $\text{DIST}(\sigma_0, \sigma'_0) \leq k$

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Observe that  $\text{WIN}_0(\mathcal{G}) = V$  as the strategy that selects all edges going to the target  $t$  is clearly winning from every node of the game.

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Hence the new strategy is winning from every state  $\rightarrow \sigma'_0$  is a winning strategy.

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We need to show that  $S'$  is a valid solution to the Vertex Cover Problem.

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Therefore  $\sigma'_0(\nu_0) = (\nu_0, \nu_1)$  and  $\sigma'_0(\nu'_0) = (\nu'_0, \nu'_1)$

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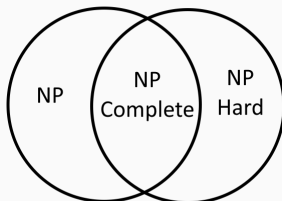
But,  $\sigma'_0$  was given to us as a winning strategy, this is a contradiction, therefore our assumption was wrong, i.e,  $S'$  is a valid solution to our Vertex Cover.

## SRP is NP-Complete

We've shown a reduction for Strategy Repair Problem to Vertex Cover Problem, which is an NP-Complete problem, this means the Strategy Repair Problem is NP-Hard.

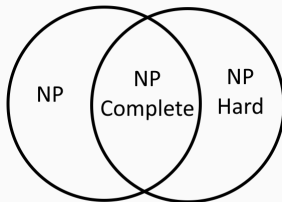
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We have already seen how SRP is itself in NP, so using the two we can conclude that SRP is NP-Complete itself. Now, we can explore some algorithms for SRP

# Algorithms

---

Define  $\text{FRONTIER}_0(X) = ((V_0 - X) \times X) \cap E$ , the set of outgoing edges from  $V_0$  to a node in  $X$ , for some  $X \subseteq V$ .

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Let  $\text{REPAIR}_{\sigma_0}(\nu, \nu') = \text{WIN}_0(\mathcal{G}, \sigma_0[\nu \mapsto (\nu, \nu')]) - \text{WIN}_0(\mathcal{G}, \sigma_0)$

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The strategy  $\sigma'_0 = \sigma_0[\nu \mapsto (\nu, \nu')]$  has the property  $\text{WIN}_0(\mathcal{G}, \sigma_0) \subset \text{WIN}_0(\mathcal{G}, \sigma'_0)$  and  $\nu \in \text{WIN}_0(\mathcal{G}, \sigma'_0) - \text{WIN}_0(\mathcal{G}, \sigma_0)$

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Using these facts, we can create an algorithm to optimize our strategy at each step.

## Optimal: Code

**Data:**  $\mathcal{G}$  a Reachability Game and a Strategy  $\sigma_0$

**Result:** Closest Winning Strategy

$\text{FIX}(\mathcal{G}, \sigma_0)$

$T' \leftarrow \text{WIN}_0(\mathcal{G}, \sigma_0)$

**if**  $T' = \text{WIN}_0(\mathcal{G})$  **then**

    |  $\text{RETURN}(\sigma_0, 0)$

**else**

    | select  $(\nu, \nu')$  from  $\text{FRONTIER}(T')$

    |  $(\sigma'_0, \beta') \leftarrow \text{FIX}(\mathcal{G}, \sigma_0[\nu \mapsto (\nu, \nu')])$

    |  $\mathcal{G}' \leftarrow \mathcal{G}_{\sigma_0(\nu)}$

    | **if**  $\nu \in \text{WIN}_0(\mathcal{G}')$  **then**

        |  $(\sigma''_0, \beta'') \leftarrow \text{FIX}(\mathcal{G}', \sigma_0)$

        | **if**  $\beta'' < \beta + 1$  **then**

            |  $\text{RETURN}(\sigma''_0, \beta'')$

        | **end**

    | **end**

    |  $\text{RETURN}(\sigma'_0, \beta' + 1)$

**end**

The Greedy algorithm is made because Optimal is of exponential complexity as it uses two recursive calls each iteration.

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Choosing from the Frontier set is slow, so we must specify what to choose, but that might reduce accuracy, therefore we employ a better selection criterion.

Consider an edge  $(\nu, \nu') \in \text{FRONTIER}_0(\text{WIN}_0(\mathcal{G}, \sigma_0))$ . Note that  $\sigma_0(\nu) \neq (\nu, \nu')$

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Observe the set  $\text{REPAIR}_{\sigma_0}(\nu, \nu')$ , set of nodes that are indirectly repaired by using the frontier edge.

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Observe the set  $\text{REPAIR}_{\sigma_0}(\nu, \nu')$ , set of nodes that are indirectly repaired by using the frontier edge.

Choosing the edge that maximises the number of repaired nodes results in the Greedy Algorithm

## Greedy: Code

**Data:**  $\mathcal{G}$  a Reachability Game and a Strategy  $\sigma_0$

**Result:** A Winning Strategy

$\text{FIX}(\mathcal{G}, \sigma_0)$

$T' \leftarrow \text{WIN}_0(\mathcal{G}, \sigma_0)$

**if**  $T' = \text{WIN}_0(\mathcal{G})$  **then**

$\text{RETURN}(\sigma_0, 0)$

**else**

$F \leftarrow \text{FRONTIER}_0(T')$

$(\nu, \nu') \leftarrow \text{argmax}\{|\text{REPAIR}_{\sigma_0}(\nu, \nu')| \mid (\nu, \nu') \in F\}$

$(\sigma'_0, \beta') \leftarrow \text{FIX}(\mathcal{G}, \sigma_0[\nu \mapsto (\nu, \nu')])$

$\text{RETURN}(\sigma'_0, \beta' + 1)$

**end**

The Greedy algorithm selects frontier edges to maximize the number of nodes entering the winning area during the repair process. However, this approach can always be applied, as any strategy needing repair implies the existence of at least one suitable edge for selection.

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If a frontier edge  $(\nu, \nu')$  in  $\text{FRONTIER}_0(\text{WIN}_0(\mathcal{G}, \sigma_0))$  satisfies the condition  $\nu \notin \text{WIN}_0(\mathcal{G}_{\sigma_0(\nu)})$ , indicating that no consistent strategy with  $\sigma_0(\nu)$  is winning for  $\nu$ .

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MustFix selects such edges for the repair process. This targeted selection improves efficiency by focusing on edges essential for strategy correction.

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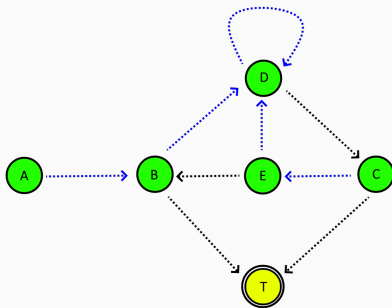
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1. MustFix method doesn't guarantee the existence of frontier edges meeting its conditions. Therefore, other selection methods, like those in the Greedy algorithm, are still necessary.
2. MustFix can be employed as a preprocessing mechanism for Opt. It identifies edges essential even in the optimal solution, streamlining the process by requiring only one recursive call when such edges are selected.

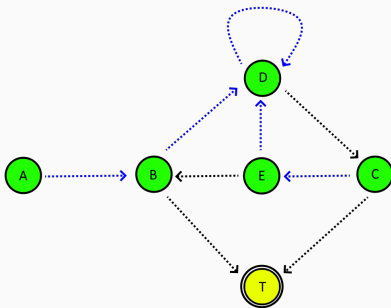
## Greedy isn't Minimal

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Deploying Greedy, even with MustFix results in 3 modifications. Whereas the closest winning strategy is 2 modifications away.

$$\sigma'_0 = \sigma_0[C \mapsto (C, t), D \mapsto (D, C)]$$

## Results

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Additionally,  $t$  of target vertices were uniformly selected.  $t$  is fixed to be 5% of  $n$ .

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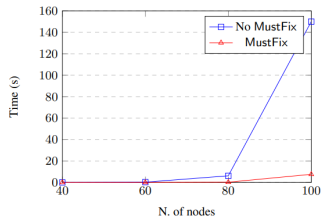
- For input  $n$ , the random generator produced a game with  $n$  nodes.
- Each node was assigned to  $P_0$  or  $P_1$  with equal probability.
- For each node, a number  $d$  was generated with constraints. Then,  $d$  successors were then randomly assigned to the node.

Additionally,  $t$  of target vertices were uniformly selected.  $t$  is fixed to be 5% of  $n$ .

Each Game was run on Optimal (with and without MustFix) and Greedy with MustFix.

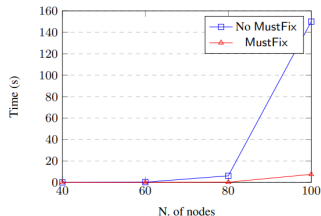
# Opt Results

N. nodes	N. experiments	no MustFix	MustFix
40	1000	0.0043	0.0017
60	100	0.28	0.013
80	20	6.2	0.25
100	20	150	7.6



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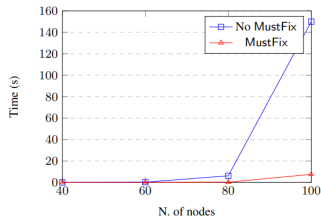
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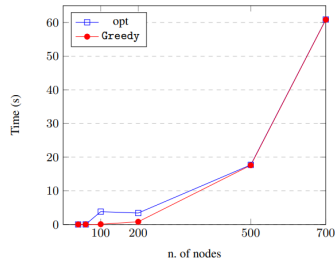


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The results are to be expected since MustFix tries to avoid the recursive call whenever possible

# Opt vs Greedy

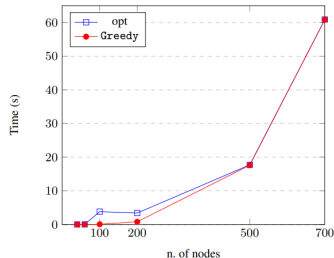
N. nodes	N. experiments	Opt	Greedy	Accuracy
40	5000	0.0012	0.001	0.9994
60	5000	0.02	0.0065	0.9952
100	1000	3.8	0.064	0.9904
200	700	3.39	0.79	0.9994
500	300	17.71	17.6	1
700	150	60.9	60.85	1



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Accuracy is defined as  $\frac{\text{DIST}(\sigma_0, \sigma_0^{\text{Opt}})}{\text{DIST}(\sigma_0, \sigma_0^{\text{Greedy}})}$ .



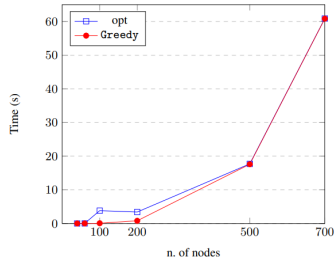


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Since MustFix is applied to both, they both take roughly the same amount of time for very big games.



# Conclusions

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The authors introduced Strategy Repair, aiming to repair a losing strategy for a Reachability Game into a winning one with minimal modifications. Ensuring a minimal-distance solution with respect to strategy changes, was proven NP-complete through a reduction from Vertex Cover.

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To handle practical high complexity, the authors devised a polynomial, greedy algorithm and an efficient heuristic named MustFix. MustFix demonstrated remarkable practical efficiency in terms of both runtime and strategy modification distance. Even on randomly generated problems, the optimal algorithm closely rivaled the suboptimal, polynomial one.

While the polynomial algorithm, along with the MustFix heuristic, demonstrates excellent experimental performance, no approximation guarantee was achieved. Future work can focus on exploring and establishing such a guarantee.

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It holds potential for complex games like parity or Büchi games, impacting advanced planning scenarios such as Classical or Fully Observable Non-Deterministic (FOND) Planning for temporally extended goals.

Thank You!