**Abstract:**

*The abstract should be between four and seven sentences long. Introduce the problem you are studying. Describe what you did. Summarize your results --- what did you discover, what is the main take-away message?) Basically, you're trying to sell your paper to the reader, so be brief and to the point.* ***Do not*** *include any citations in the abstract.*

Often described as “the second-best way to solve any problem,” Genetic Programming (GP) relies on Darwinian principles of natural selection to produce models of a system. In this experiment, we applied GP to the problem of Symbolic Regression – that is, we attempted to find the function used to generate given datasets. To accomplish this, we randomly generated a population of symbol trees, each representing a different equation. We then evaluated the “fitness” of each tree and selected the fittest individuals to generate the next generation of trees. In doing this, we saw RESULTSRESULTSRESULTS. From these results CONCLUSIONCONCLUION.

**Intro:**

*In this section, you should introduce the reader to the problem you are attempting to solve. For example, for the first project: describe the 15-puzzle, and why it's interesting as an A.I. problem. You should also cite and briefly describe other related papers that have tackled this problem in the past --- things that came up during the course of your research. In the AAAI style, citations look like\cite{aima} (see the comments in the source file \texttt{intro.tex} to see how this citation was produced). Conclude by summarizing how the remainder of the paper is organized.*

Genetic programming, inspired by Darwinian evolution, uses the principles of natural selection, mutation, and reproduction, to explore a problem space. In this case, we used GP to perform Symbolic Regression and find the function used to generate a dataset. The genetic programming approach is often thought of as a double-edged sword. On one hand, it can be adapted to solve almost any type of problem. On the other hand, it is a fairly uninformed solution method. It uses relatively little information about the problem to solve it, relying instead on guided randomness to deliver a suitable result. This randomness means the path taken to arrive at the solution is hidden to the user. GP may give a supremely accurate result, but yields no insight into why that result works, raising an important question: If you have the answer without knowing why it’s right, have you really learned anything?

In the case of Symbolic Regression, how we arrived at a solution or why we chose certain steps is not as important as the function we produced. According to Koza, GP lends itself well to Symbolic Regression because it is error-driven learning (SOURCE 1). It also finds unorthodox ways of discovering mathematical identities, which allows the use of a very limited set of operations to generate a wide range of functions.

SUMMARIZE THE REMAINDER OF THE PAPER, GODDAMMIT

**Background:**

*Describe any background information that the reader would need to know to understand your work. You do not have to explain algorithms or ideas that we have seen in class. Rather, use this section to describe techniques that you found elsewhere in the course of your research, that you have decided to bring to bear on the problem at hand. Don't go overboard here --- if what you're doing is quite detailed, it's often more helpful to give a sketch of the big ideas of the approaches that you will be using. You can then say something like ``the reader is referred to X for a more in-depth description of...'', and include a citation.*

*Alternately, you may have designed a novel approach for the problem --- your own algorithm or heuristic, say. A description of these would also be placed in this section (use subsections to better organize the content in this case).*

**Experiments:**

*In this section, you should describe your experimental setup. What were the questions you were trying to answer? What was the experimental setup (number of trials, parameter settings, etc.)? What were you measuring? You should justify these choices when necessary. The accepted wisdom is that there should be enough detail in this section that I could reproduce your work* ***exactly*** *if I were so motivated.*

To perform Symbolic Regression with genetic programming on the data from Generator 1, we began with a population of 1,000 randomly generated expression trees. The interior nodes of the trees were randomly selected from the set of valid operators, {+, \*, /}. The leaf nodes of the trees were randomly selected from the set of valid terminals, consisting of the variable x and integer constants from -5 to 5. In order to reduce the number of constant trees (that is, trees that evaluated to a constant function), we chose that the variable x would be chosen with 50% probability and a random choice from the set of integer constants would be chosen the remainder of the time. The problem at hand stated that the underlying function in Generator 1 used the operations +, -, \*, /, and integer powers of x, but as a design consideration we chose to omit the operations – and exponentiation. We were able to do so because integer powers of x can be expressed through repeated multiplication, and subtraction is the addition of negative numbers, which are valid as terminals. Omitting these two operations greatly reduced the complexity of the trees produced by the algorithm, making it far more likely to produce an equation that would generalize well.

To make a random tree, we began with a random operator node at the root and a predetermined depth limit of 10. We then built the rest of the tree recursively. Each node generated had a 50% chance of being a random terminal and ending that branch of the tree, or being a random operator. If the tree ever reached the depth limit, all new nodes were made to be terminals.

Once the initial population was generated, we applied the genetic programming algorithm. We allowed the algorithm to run for 35 generations, with the possibility of early termination if any tree’s error was less than 0.2. To calculate error, we accumulated the absolute value of the difference between the tree’s evaluation of a given x and the actual value, f(x). We chose this method over the least squares method because, like least squares, it never allows for negative error, but it also limits the possibility of the total error getting too large and causing an overflow.

We use three different methods to generate a new generation. Firstly, the fittest 10% of the population are duplicated into the next generation. This technique, called reproduction, ensures that every generation is at least as good as the preceding generation. **SPENCER CITE THIS.** Secondly, we mutated 10% of the population. When a tree was selected for mutation, we traversed the tree, changing the current node 40% of the time. Terminals were only ever changed to other terminals, and operators to other operators. We initially mutated a node with 20% frequency, but in order to increase the diversity in our population, we increased the mutation rate to 40%. **CITE THIS ONE TOO.** Mutation occurred in place, so once a tree was mutated, it was still available to be picked for crossover. In another effort to keep diversity high, we used a tournament selection algorithm to select individuals for crossover. In tournament selection, we randomly select 10% of the population and choose the fittest individual of those 10% (the winner of the tournament). This probabilistically chose fitter individuals more frequently, but left open the possibility of a relatively unfit individual being chosen. When crossing over, we randomly selected a node in each tree and swapped the subtrees rooted at the nodes. To prevent overfitting, if the result of a crossover was too deep, we removed that individual and injected a new, random individual into the population. This limits the effects of overfitting by removing overly complex hypotheses and also contributed to diversity by adding random individuals periodically. We implemented a dynamic depth limit, where we defined “too deep” as deeper than the fittest individual in the generation. We then continued crossing two trees until the new generation had the same number of individuals as the previous.

When evaluating the trees, we split the initial dataset into a training set, containing roughly 80% of the data, and a test set containing roughly 20%. To divide the data, we generated a random number for each x value and assigned it and its corresponding f(x) value to either test or training depending on the value of the random number.

After 35 generations, or a tree’s error dropped below 0.2, we selected the fittest tree to be saved for comparison against the test set. We ran this process ten times to produce ten different winners. The final answer was the winner who performed best over the test data, giving us the underlying equation behind the dataset.

**Results:**

*Present the results of your experiments. Simply presenting the data is insufficient! You need to analyze your results. What did you discover? What is interesting about your results? Were the results what you expected? Use appropriate visualizations. Prefer graphs and charts to tables as they are easier to read (though tables are often more compact, and can be a better choice if you're squeezed for space). Always include information that conveys the uncertainty in your measurements: mean statistics should be plotted with error bars, or reported in tables with a range. The 95%-confidence interval is a commonly reported statistic.*

**Conclusion:**

*In this section, briefly summarize your paper --- what problem did you start out to study, and what did you find? What is the key result / take-away message? It's also traditional to suggest one or two avenues for further work, but this is optional.*

**References:**

**Genetic Programming: On the Programming of Computers by Means of Natural ...**

 By John R. Koza