Assignment 2

### *Part I*

## Introduction

The first part of assignment 2 had us solve two provided problems. A template and a number of JUnit tests were provided. Both problems were described as related to the train network that we used in *assignment 1*. However, these problems could be solved independently and did not rely on the first assignment. Within this document, I will describe my approach to solving the problems, the problem that they relate to, and any problems I had when completing them.

## Problem A

The first problem described a situation in which we needed to be able to determine the number of paths between two stations. We were provided a CSV data file and needed to read in the data. The data file gave us a number of station-to-station pairs that indicated an undirected connection between the stations on each line.

Therefore, the first task in this part was to read the information in the CSV file into an appropriate data structure that would allow me to perform an algorithm that would determine the required information. After some thought, I believed that having the information in a HashMap that was mapped to another HashMap would allow me to hold the Station to Station information as well as store the number of ways to get to each station. Therefore, my data type was initialised as following:

HashMap<String, HashMap<String, Integer>> paths;

Considering that when reading in the data file we only receive adjacent pairings between stations, I initialised the HashMap by giving the pairing an integer value of 1 if they were adjacent. This made sense as if they are adjacent, they have the one way to one another. Furthermore, I found it useful to place the station name into another HashMap that would have a unique listing of each of the stations.

After reading in the information, I began to write out my algorithm. After analysing and researching the type of problem, I discovered that it is similar to the “all-pairs shortest path” problem. However, instead of finding the shortest path, we are trying to find the number of paths. I believed that with some changes, I could use this algorithm to determine the correct output.

Using the template provided by *GeeksForGeeks* [1], I was able to start implementing. Given the way the implementation tries to operate, the first thing I had to do was complete the adjacency list by setting non-adjacent pairings to 0. To do so, I simply iterated through each pair of stations and if they were not in the HashMap, I added their pairing to the HashMap with a value of 0 as there were no paths between them (yet).

The next part of the algorithm was simply the *Floyd-Warshall* triple loop. The idea behind this set of nested loops is to pick one by one each node, updating all the shortest paths that contain the picked node as an intermediate node in the shortest path. However, we were not trying to find the shortest path but in fact the number of paths there. So, instead of updating it as a new shortest path, I was able to calculate the number of paths that had been there previously using this as an intermediate node. To do so, I multiplied the two parts of the new path. If they were above zero, we could add this value to the current number of paths as there must be this many new paths to this node, using the selected node as an intermediate.

Finally, the last thing that we needed to do to complete this problem was ensure that any positive cycles be set to -1. As described, if we have any positive cycles, we can always find a new path to destination node. To detect cycles, I simply added a loop that checked if the path to a selected node from that same node was greater than 0. If it was greater than zero, then we know that it must have been able to travel back to itself. Then, we continue with the same Floyd-Warshall strategy and update any path that used that node as an intermediate to be -1 as they must have used this in at least one of their paths.

Upon completing this, I ran the tests. After they all passed, I determined that my solution was correct. The completion of the tests can be seen in *figure 1*.

A screenshot of a video game

Description automatically generated

*Figure 1: Screenshot of completed tests for Problem A.*

## Problem B

The second problem described a situation in which we needed to be able to determine the minimum number of devices that could fail in a network before we could see the path between two provided nodes be unable to communicate.

## References

[1] <https://www.geeksforgeeks.org/floyd-warshall-algorithm-dp-16/>