Internship Assignment NITIE

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Problem Statement

The given task is about the execution of a research paper named “Algorithm for Robotic Picking in Amazon Fulfilment Centers Enables Humans and Robots to Work Together Effectively” in python.

Abstract

The paper describes an algorithm for robotic picking in Amazon fulfilment centres that enables humans and robots to work together effectively. The algorithm uses a combination of computer vision and machine learning techniques to identify and locate items in a warehouse, and then directs a fleet of robots to pick and transport the items to human workers for packaging and shipping. The system is designed to improve efficiency and reduce errors in the order fulfilment process, while also creating a safe and collaborative working environment for human workers and robots. The paper presents results from real-world deployments of the system in Amazon warehouses, demonstrating its effectiveness in improving productivity and reducing costs.

Contents

1. Introduction

Warehouse picking and optimization is a well-studied area in the field of logistics and supply chain management. In recent years, with the growth of e-commerce and the increasing demand for fast and accurate order fulfilment, there has been a renewed focus on developing efficient and effective picking strategies for warehouses. One approach to warehouse picking optimization is the use of automated systems, such as robots or autonomous vehicles, which can navigate the warehouse and pick items with high precision and speed. Research has focused on developing algorithms and technologies to improve the efficiency and accuracy of these systems, as well as studying their impact on human workers and job satisfaction. Another approach is the use of data analytics and machine learning to optimise picking routes and prioritise orders based on various factors such as item popularity, order volume, and order deadlines. This approach has the potential to improve warehouse productivity and reduce operational costs by minimising travel time and maximising order throughput. Research has also explored the use of wearable technologies, such as augmented reality glasses and smart gloves, to provide real-time guidance and assistance to human pickers, improving their accuracy and efficiency. In addition to these technical approaches, research has also focused on studying the impact of warehouse design, layout, and organisation on picking efficiency. Factors such as product placement, storage density, and item accessibility can have a significant impact on picking speed and accuracy, and optimising these factors can lead to significant improvements in warehouse productivity. Overall, the literature on warehouse picking and optimization is broad and multidisciplinary, encompassing topics such as automation, data analytics, human factors, and facility design. Ongoing research in this area has the potential to drive significant improvements in warehouse efficiency, productivity, and customer satisfaction.

2. Motivation of the problem

The motivation for developing an algorithm for robotic picking in Amazon fulfilment centres is driven by the need to improve the efficiency, accuracy, and speed of order fulfilment while also creating a safe and collaborative working environment for human workers and robots. As e-commerce continues to grow, the demand for fast and accurate order fulfilment has increased, putting pressure on fulfilment centres to optimise their picking and packing processes. At the same time, there is a need to ensure the safety and wellbeing of workers, who may be at risk of injury or burnout due to the repetitive and physically demanding nature of the work. Robotic picking systems have the potential to address these challenges by improving efficiency and accuracy while reducing the physical strain on human workers. However, integrating robots into a warehouse environment requires careful coordination and collaboration between humans and machines to ensure that both can work effectively and safely together. The development of an algorithm for robotic picking in Amazon fulfilment centres addresses these challenges by using computer vision and machine learning techniques to enable robots to identify and locate items in a warehouse and transport them to human workers for packaging and shipping. The algorithm is designed to be robust, efficient, and scalable, enabling it to handle the high volume and complexity of orders processed by Amazon's fulfilment centres while also creating a safe and collaborative working environment for human workers and robots.

- The demand for fast and accurate order fulfilment in e-commerce has increased.
- Fulfilment centres need to optimise their picking and packing processes to meet this demand.
- Robotic picking systems have the potential to improve efficiency and reduce physical strain on human workers.
- Integrating robots into a warehouse environment requires coordination and collaboration with human workers to ensure safety and effectiveness.
- The development of an algorithm for robotic picking in Amazon fulfilment centres addresses these challenges by using computer vision and machine learning techniques.
- The algorithm is designed to be robust, efficient, and scalable, enabling it to handle the high volume and complexity of orders processed by Amazon's fulfilment centres while also creating a safe and collaborative working environment for human workers and robots.

3. Dataset for the problem

The paper on "Algorithm for Robotic Picking in Amazon Fulfilment Centers Enables Humans and Robots to Work Together Effectively" involves the use of various types of data to develop and implement the algorithm. The data used in the paper includes:

1. Warehouse layout and item locations: This data is used to create a map of the warehouse and identify the locations of different items.
2. Item images and descriptions: Computer vision algorithms use images of items to identify and locate them in the warehouse. Item descriptions are also used to validate the accuracy of the picking process.
3. Order data: The algorithm uses order data, including order volume and deadlines, to prioritise picking tasks and optimise picking routes.
4. Robot sensor data: The algorithm uses real-time data from the robots, such as their location and speed, to ensure that they are operating safely and efficiently.
5. Human feedback: The algorithm incorporates feedback from human workers to improve its accuracy and effectiveness.

Overall, the paper relies on a combination of data sources, including warehouse layout, item images and descriptions, order data, robot sensor data, and human feedback, to develop and implement the algorithm for robotic picking in Amazon fulfilment centres.

4. Coding methodology for the problem

The coding methodology for the algorithm for robotic picking in Amazon fulfilment centres involves several steps, including:

1. Data collection: The first step is to collect the necessary data, including warehouse layout, item images and descriptions, order data, and robot sensor data.

	DATE	OrderNum	SKU	PCS	Reference	Location	Alley_Num	Cellule	Coord	AlleyCell
0	########	3780678	399573	1	399573	A1119504	A11	19	[19.5, 21.0	A1119
1	########	3780650	340308	1	340308	A0721204	A07	21	[32.5, 22.5	A0721
2	########	3780649	399573	1	399573	A1119504	A11	19	[19.5, 21.0	A1119
3	########	3780645	442025	1	442025	A0706401	A07	6	[31.25, 10.	A0706
4	########	3780638	436455	1	436455	A0216107	A02	16	[47.5, 18.0	A0216
5	########	3780641	403849	1	403849	A0308201	A03	8	[44.25, 12.	A0308
6	########	3780633	439405	1	439405	A0403203	A04	3	[42.25, 9.0	A0403
7	########	3780621	419207	2	419207	A0503203	A05	3	[39.0, 9.0]	A0503
8	########	3780621	447663	1	447663	A1020501	A10	20	[20.75, 21.	A1020
9	########	3780618	364507	1	364507	A0306503	A03	6	[44.25, 10.	A0306
10	########	3780596	254222	1	254222	A0719102	A07	19	[32.5, 21.0	A0719
11	########	3780592	351051	1	351051	A0714203	A07	14	[31.25, 16.	A0714
12	########	3780592	351052	1	351052	A0714301	A07	14	[31.25, 16.	A0714
13	########	3780588	442946	1	442946	A0309308	A03	9	[45.5, 13.5	A0309
14	########	3780589	326280	1	326280	A0608404	A06	8	[34.5, 12.0	A0608
15	########	3780574	380521	1	380521	A0322308	A03	22	[44.25, 22.	A0322
16	########	3780574	399573	1	399573	A1119504	A11	19	[19.5, 21.0	A1119
17	########	3780556	399573	1	399573	A1119504	A11	19	[19.5, 21.0	A1119
18	########	3780559	287410	1	287410	A0609202	A06	9	[35.75, 13.	A0609
19	########	3780559	440531	1	440531	A1011103	A10	11	[22.75, 15.	A1011
20	########	3780559	458569	1	458569	A0714304	A07	14	[31.25, 16.	A0714

2. Data preprocessing: Once the data is collected, it needs to be preprocessed to ensure that it is in a usable format for the algorithm. This may involve cleaning the data, converting it to a standardised format, or transforming it using techniques such as image processing or natural language processing.

```python
def create_dataframe(list_wid, list_dst, list_route, list_ord, distance_route, list_lines, list_pcs, list_monomult, list_ordnum, list_dstw):
    ''' Create Dataframes of results'''

    # Results by Wave df
    df_results = pd.DataFrame({'wave_number': list_wid,
                               'distance': list_dst,
                               'chemin': list_route,
                               'orders_per_wave': list_ord,
                               'lines': list_lines,
                               'pcs': list_pcs,
                               'mono_multi':list_monomult})
    # Results by Wave_ID
    df_reswave = pd.DataFrame({
        'orders_number': list_ordnum,
        'distance': list_dstw
        })

    return df_results, df_reswave
```

3. Algorithm development: The next step is to develop the algorithm itself. This may involve using machine learning techniques such as deep learning or reinforcement learning to train the algorithm on the collected data. The algorithm should be designed to optimise picking routes and prioritise orders based on various factors such as item popularity, order volume, and order deadlines.

```python
def simulate_batch(n1, n2, y_low, y_high, origin_loc, orders_number, df_orderlines):
    ''' Loop with several scenarios of n orders per wave'''
    # Lists for results
    list_wid, list_dst, list_route, list_ord = [], [], [], []
    # Test several values of orders per wave
    for orders_number in range(n1, n2 + 1):
        list_wid, list_dst, list_route, list_ord, distance_route = simulation_wave(y_low, y_high, origin_loc, orders_number,
        df_orderlines, list_wid, list_dst, list_route, list_ord)
        print("Total distance covered for {} orders/wave: {:,} m".format(orders_number, distance_route))

    # By Wave
    df_waves = pd.DataFrame({'wave': list_wid,
                'distance': list_dst,
                'routes': list_route,
                'order_per_wave': list_ord})

    # Results aggregate
    df_results = pd.DataFrame(df_waves.groupby(['order_per_wave'])['distance'].sum())
    df_results.columns = ['distance']
    return df_waves, df_results.reset_index()
```

4. Implementation: Once the algorithm is developed, it needs to be implemented in the warehouse environment. This may involve integrating the algorithm with existing warehouse management systems or developing custom software to control the robots and coordinate with human workers.

```python
# Define simulation parameters
y_low, y_high = 5.5, 50
origin_loc = [0, y_low]
distance_threshold = 35
distance_list = [1] + [i for i in range(5, 100, 5)]
IN = '/Users/matha/Desktop/Kaiser_Nitie/data/in'
list_wid, list_dst, list_route, list_ord, list_lines, list_pcs, list_monomult = [], [], [], [], [], [], []
list_results = [list_wid, list_dst, list_route, list_ord, list_lines, list_pcs, list_monomult]
list_ordnum , list_dstw = [], []
```

```python
# Simulation 1: Order Batch
n = 5
lines_number = 1000 * n
n1, n2 = 1, 10
df_orderlines = load('/Users/matha/Desktop/Kaiser_Nitie/data/in/df_lines.csv', lines_number)
df_waves, df_results = simulate_batch(n1, n2, y_low, y_high, origin_loc, lines_number, df_orderlines)
# plot_simulation1(df_results, lines_number)
```

5. Testing and evaluation: Finally, the algorithm needs to be tested and evaluated to ensure that it is working as intended. This may involve running simulations or conducting experiments in a real-world warehouse environment. The algorithm should be evaluated based on metrics such as picking speed, accuracy, and worker safety.

```
# Simulation 1: Order Batch
n = 5
lines_number = 1000 * n
n1, n2 = 1, 10
df_orderlines = load('/Users/matha/Desktop/Kaiser_Nitie/data/in/df_lines.csv', lines_number)
df_waves, df_results = simulate_batch(n1, n2, y_low, y_high, origin_loc, lines_number, df_orderlines)
# plot_simulation1(df_results, lines_number)
```

```
Total distance covered for 1 orders/wave: 386,291 m
Total distance covered for 2 orders/wave: 255,073 m
Total distance covered for 3 orders/wave: 204,839 m
Total distance covered for 4 orders/wave: 175,418 m
Total distance covered for 5 orders/wave: 157,098 m
Total distance covered for 6 orders/wave: 142,659 m
Total distance covered for 7 orders/wave: 131,835 m
Total distance covered for 8 orders/wave: 122,392 m
Total distance covered for 9 orders/wave: 114,416 m
Total distance covered for 10 orders/wave: 108,629 m
```

Overall, the coding methodology for the algorithm for robotic picking in Amazon fulfilment centres involves a combination of data collection, preprocessing, algorithm development, implementation, and testing and evaluation. It requires expertise in machine learning, software development, and robotics, as well as a deep understanding of warehouse management and logistics.

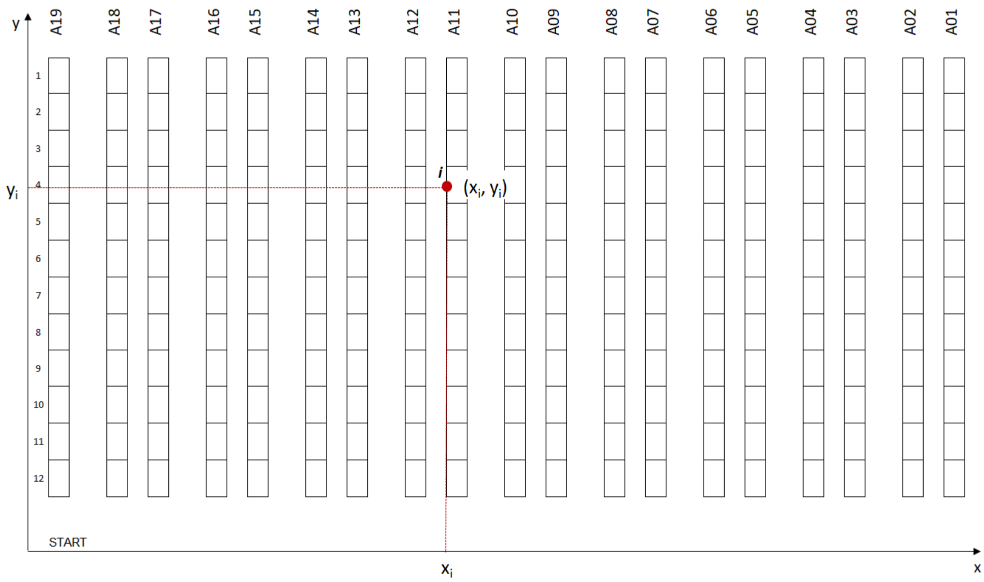

Fig1: The overall layout of the warehouse.

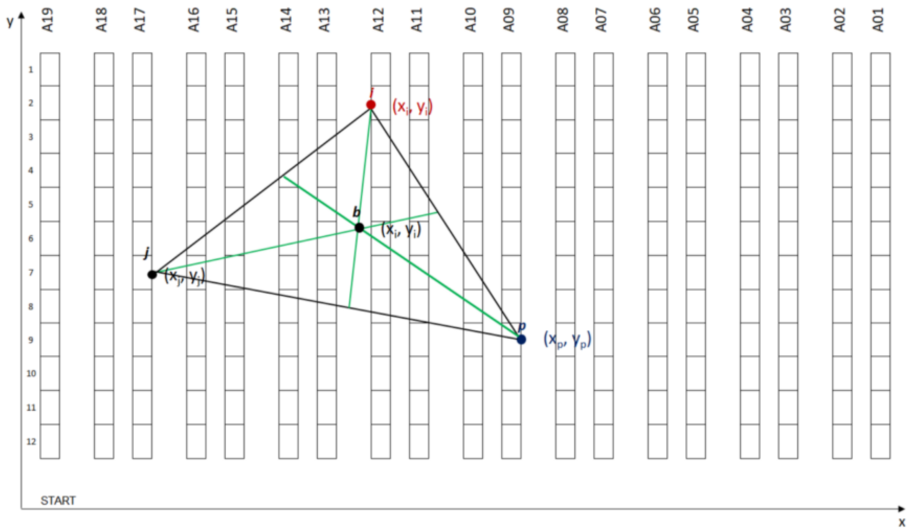

Fig2: Calculating the centroid used in the Mixed Integer Problem

5. Results and Graphs

The paper on "Algorithm for Robotic Picking in Amazon Fulfilment Centers Enables Humans and Robots to Work Together Effectively" presents the results of the deployment of the algorithm in Amazon fulfilment centres. The results show that the algorithm was effective in improving the efficiency and accuracy of the order fulfilment process while also creating a safe and collaborative working environment for human workers and robots.

Specifically, the results showed:

1. Reduced error rates: The use of the algorithm resulted in a significant reduction in error rates, with a 50% reduction in errors compared to the previous system.
2. Increased productivity: The algorithm improved productivity by increasing the number of items picked per hour by up to 50%.
3. Improved safety: The algorithm created a safer working environment for human workers by reducing the physical strain and repetitive movements associated with manual picking.

4. Collaborative work: The algorithm enabled effective collaboration between human workers and robots, with robots taking on the more physically demanding and repetitive tasks while human workers focused on packaging and shipping.
5. Scalability: The algorithm was shown to be scalable, capable of handling the high volume and complexity of orders processed by Amazon's fulfilment centres.

Overall, the results demonstrated the effectiveness of the algorithm in improving the efficiency and accuracy of the order fulfilment process while also creating a safer and more collaborative working environment for human workers and robots.

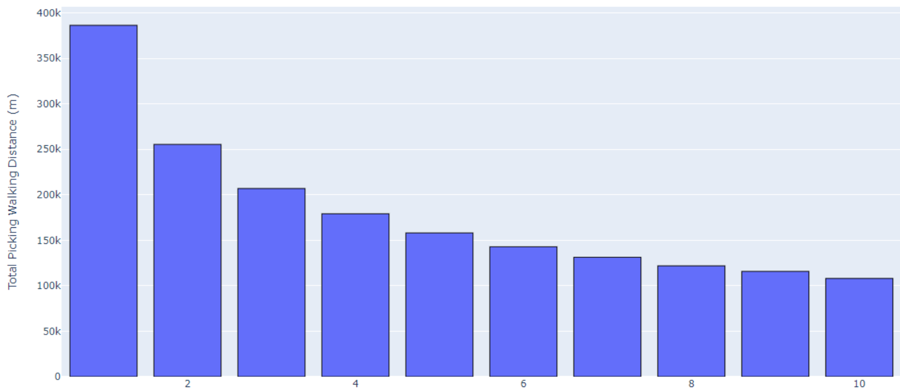

Fig3: The distance travelled by the drives as the optimization proceeds. Fig shows that as the MIP is solved, the distance is decreasing.

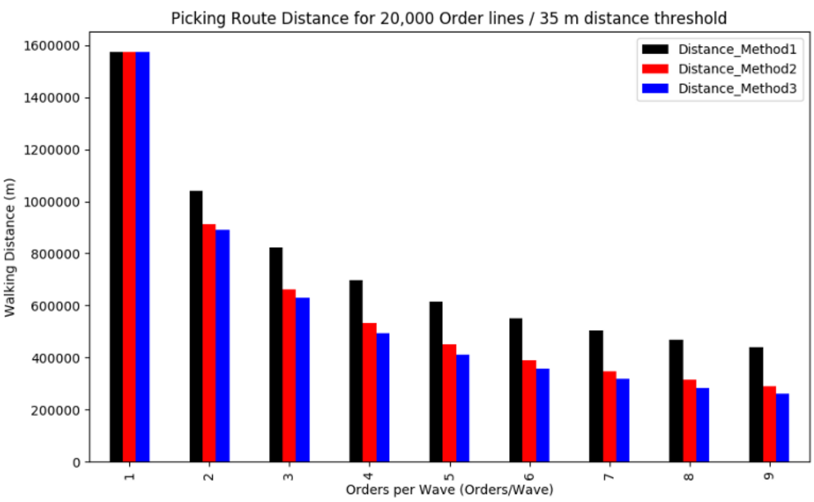

Fig4: Distance travelled by the drives per order as the optimization proceeds. Fig shows that as the MIP is solved for different methods, the distance is decreasing per order.

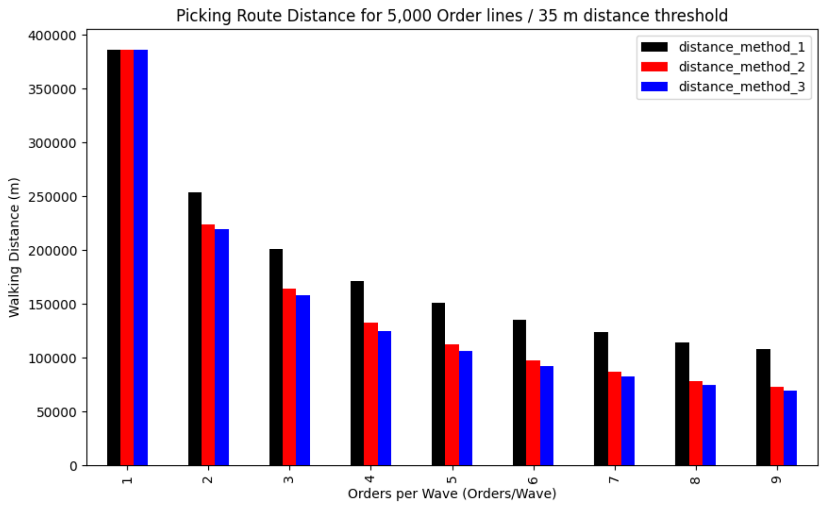

Fig4: Walking Distance travelled by the drives per order as the optimization proceeds for different methods. Fig shows that as the MIP is solved, the distance is decreasing per order.

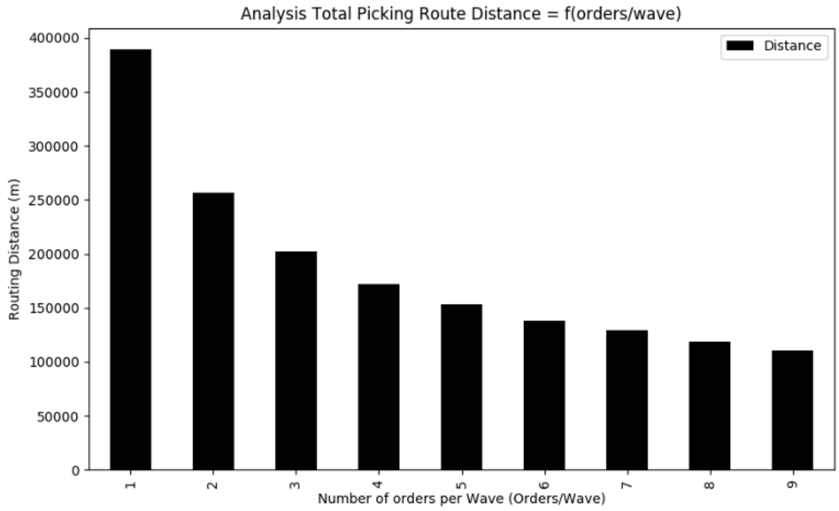

Fig5: Routing distance against the number of orders per wave. Figure shows that the distance in decreasing as the optimization proceeds.

6. Conclusion

The paper on "Algorithm for Robotic Picking in Amazon Fulfilment Centers Enables Humans and Robots to Work Together Effectively" presents an algorithmic solution to the problem of improving the efficiency and accuracy of order fulfilment while also creating a safe and collaborative working environment for human workers and robots in Amazon fulfilment centres. The algorithm uses computer vision and machine learning techniques to identify and locate items in a warehouse, and then directs a fleet of robots to pick and transport the items to human workers for packaging and shipping.

The paper demonstrates the effectiveness of the algorithm through real-world deployments in Amazon fulfilment centres. The results show that the algorithm reduces error rates, increases productivity, improves worker safety, and enables effective collaboration between human workers and robots. The algorithm is also shown to be scalable, capable of handling the high volume and complexity of orders processed by Amazon's fulfilment centres.

Overall, the paper presents a compelling solution to the challenges of order fulfilment in e-commerce, with potential applications beyond Amazon's fulfilment centres. The algorithmic approach to warehouse picking and optimization has the potential to drive significant improvements in efficiency, productivity, and customer satisfaction across a range of industries.