ROUTE OPTIMIZATION ALGORITHM FOR RIDESHARING

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ABSTRACT

The present document gives a literature review of problems related to optimization algorithms for ridesharing routes. The broader problem is the negative effects brought by the surplus of cars present in most cities today. Solving this problem would have a positive impact in the environment and traffic congestion.

KEYWORDS: ROUTE OPTIMIZATION, VEHICLE ROUTING PROBLEM, TSP PROBLEM, GRAPH CLUSTERING, ALGORITHMIC ANALYSIS.

1. INTRODUCTION

Traffic congestion is one the most substantial challenges for crowded cities, in environmental terms reducing greenhouse gases like Co2 is a necessity to improve quality of air in urban areas. Having more active vehicles also means traffic jams become frequent, while public transportation may subdue the overall number of automobiles in many cases it is not enough to solve the problem completely.

Solutions such as introducing driving restrictions or congestion fees have been proposed in multiple cities around the globe. According to the 2018 inrix global traffic scorecard, drivers in some cities can spends upwards of 100 hours per year sitting in traffic, which is a waste of time and money, as an example in London the estimated cost of congestion per driver is 1,680 British pounds.

Carpooling, sharing a car ride within a group of users, can offer benefits like decreasing traffic jams, fuel cost and carbon dioxide emission per person.

2. PROBLEM

Proposing carpooling to reduce the number of cars on the road is not enough. In order to make carpooling an attractive solution, one must provide all people with greater benefits than the alternative of going alone in their own car, that is if a person chooses to pick people that live near them they should not have to drastically modify the current route they take to work or time that it takes them to reach their destination.

3. RELATED PROBLEMS AND THEIR SOLUTIONS

3.1 Vehicle routing problem (VRP)

The VRP definition states that a fleet of m vehicles with a start point a must deliver goods to n customers, given that the quantity of goods is discrete. The objective is to minimize the overall transportation cost. provided that each there will be only one delivery per location. The best route distribution is the one that reduces the number of required vehicles and the time of each route.

Given that in real life applications other constraints like capacity, time windows and precedence relations exist . the term VRP is used to describe a family of similar problems and not just one specific scenario.

A constrained version is the CVRP. In a CVRP, each location has a demand—a physical quantity, such as weight or volume, corresponding to an item to be picked up or delivered there. Each time a vehicle visits a location, the total amount the vehicle is carrying increases (for a pickup) or decreases (for a delivery) by the demand at that location. In addition, each vehicle has a maximum capacity for the total amount it can carry at any time.

A CVRP can be represented by a graph with distances assigned to the edges and demands assigned to the nodes.

Solutions

There are exact algorithms that won’t find optimal routes for many cities, most solutions are heuristic algorithms. Some smarter exact approaches like branch and bound uses a divide and conquer strategy to partition the solution space into subproblems and then optimizes individually over each subproblem. If it is found that the subset has no solution or that the best possible solution within said subset won’t be better than the global upper bound, the entire subset or branch is discarded.

In case the subproblem cannot be discarded the algorithm, branches and adds the children of this subproblem to the list of active candidates. This cycle continues until the list of active candidates is empty and if a solution that's better than the current one is found; the optimal solution is updated.

Graphics

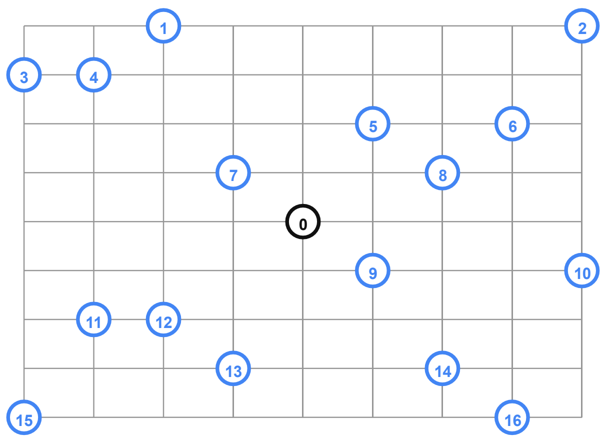


Figure 1 : A diagram of locations in blue that need to be visited from the source 0. Retrieved from [6]

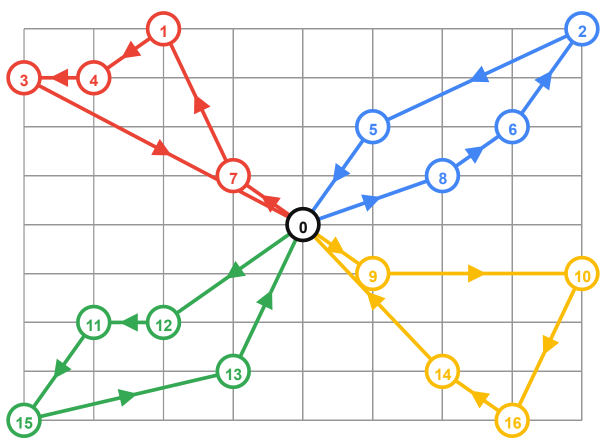


Figure 2 :Assigned routes to the former graph. Retrieved from [6]

3.2 Network connections - Minimum Spanning Tree

A common graphs problem is the design of network connections. Given a set of k places it is necessary to link them to a source using the shortest length of cable due to its price. All locations must be connected but it is not necessary that they be connected directly. If it is constrained to bury the cable only along certain paths, then there would be a graph representing which points are connected by those paths. Some of those paths might be more expensive, because they are longer, or require the cable to be buried deeper; these paths would be represented by edges with larger weights.

The concept used to solve this problem is a minimum spanning tree which we discuss below, these trees can help with problems that use techniques such as cluttering and matching.

Solution

A solution to this problem can be achieved with Kruskal's algorithm, a greedy algorithm that finds a minimum spanning tree for a weighted undirected graph.

Kruskal's Algorithm builds the spanning tree by adding edges one by one into a growing spanning tree. Each iteration it finds an edge which has least weight and adds it to the growing spanning tree.

First it sorts the graph edges with respect to their weights and then it starts adding edges to the MST from the edge with the smallest weight until the edge of the largest weight (only adding edges that do not form cycles).

Graphics

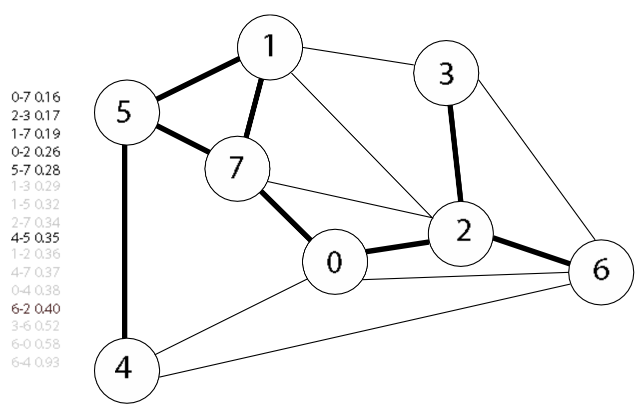


Figure 3 : MST generated with Kruskal's algorithm. Adapted from [10].

3.3 The travelling salesman problem

The traveling salesman problem consists of a salesman and a set of cities. The salesman must visit each one of the cities starting from a certain one (e.g. the hometown) and returning to the same city. The challenge of the problem is that the traveling salesman wants to minimize the total length of the trip.

The traveling salesman problem can be described as follows:

TSP = {(G, f, t):

G = (V, E) a complete graph,

f is a function V×V → Z,

t ∈ Z,

G is a graph that contains a traveling salesman tour with cost that does not exceed t}.

Solution

There is generally no known best method of solving this problem, it is NP-hard (Nondeterministic Polynomial-time hard) problem.

A heuristic solution proposed by Karp is to partition the problem to get an approximate solution using the divide and conquer techniques. We form groups of the cities and find optimal tours within these groups. Then we combine the groups to find the optimal tour of the original problem.

The deviation from the optimal solution will depend largely on the mechanism used to divide the problem, the most straightforward approach is to group cities in terms of their location. A less obvious approach is to divide the cities in equal sized cells

Graphics

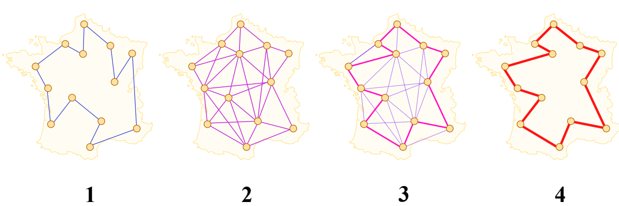


Figure 4: The ant colony optimization of the travelling salesman problem. Retrieved from [11]

3.4 Shortest path problem

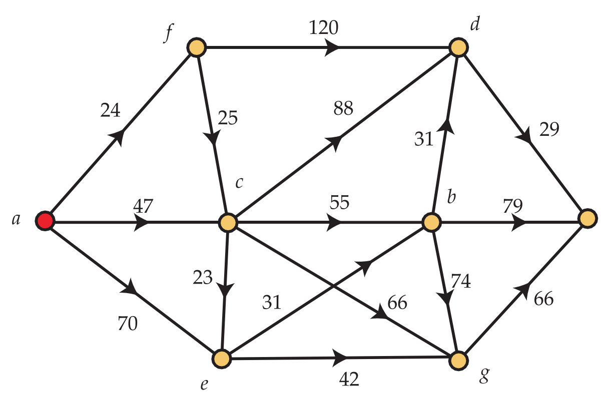
The problem of finding the shortest path (a.k.a. graph geodesic) connecting two specific vertices (u, v) of a directed or undirected graph. The length of the graph geodesic between these points d (u, v) is called the graph distance between u and v.

Solution

Common algorithms for solving the shortest path problem include the Bellman-Ford algorithm and Dijkstra's algorithm. The latter one functions by constructing a shortest-path tree from the initial vertex to every other vertex in the graph.

The algorithm maintains a priority queue minQ that is used to store the unprocessed vertices with their shortest-path estimates est(v) as key values. It then repeatedly extracts the vertex u which has the minimum est(u) from minQ and relaxes all edges incident from u to any vertex in minQ. After one vertex is extracted from minQ and all relaxations through it are completed, the algorithm will treat this vertex as processed and will not touch it again. Dijkstra's algorithm stops either when minQ is empty or when every vertex is examined exactly once.

Graphics



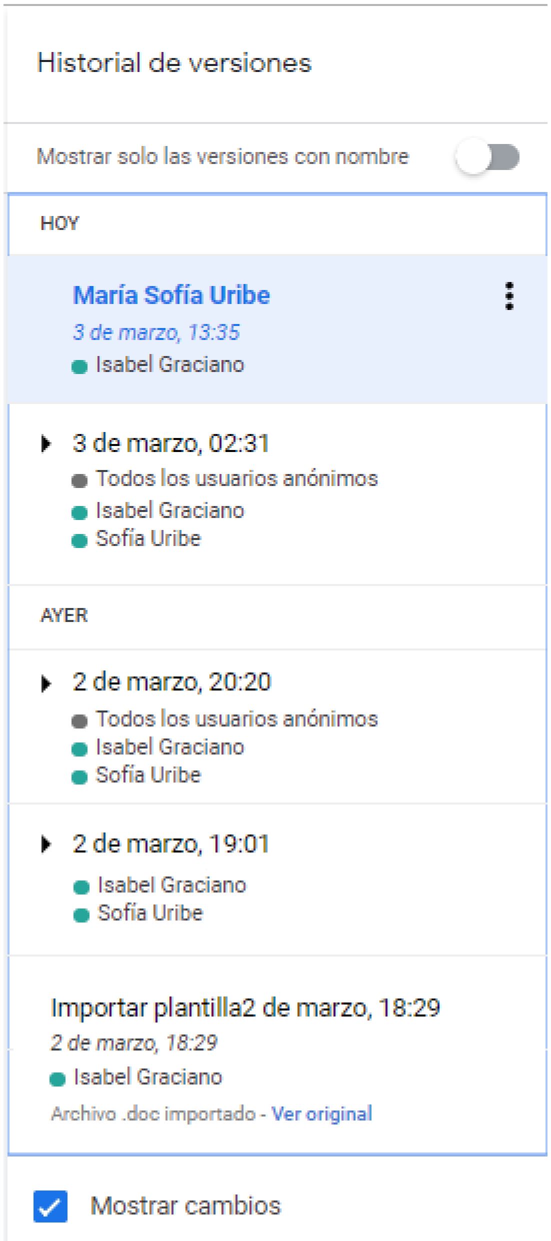
$$\sigma = (a, f, c, e, b, g, d, h)$$

$$\begin{array}{ll}
\delta(a) = 0; & P(a) = (a) \\
\delta(b) = 101; & P(b) = (a, e, b) \\
\delta(c) = 47; & P(c) = (a, c) \\
\delta(d) = 132; & P(d) = (a, e, b, d) \\
\delta(e) = 70; & P(e) = (a, e) \\
\delta(f) = 24; & P(f) = (a, f) \\
\delta(g) = 112; & P(g) = (a, e, g) \\
\delta(h) = 161; & P(h) = (a, e, b, d, h)
\end{array}$$

Figure 5: Results of Dijkstra's Algorithm. Retrieved from [12].

ANNEX 1

Change log of the document.



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