

Project 4: Traveling Salesman Problem (TSP)

Algorithm Description

Algorithm Name: Repetitive Nearest Neighbor

We tried multiple algorithms during testing including: minimum spanning tree algorithm, ant colony algorithm, and brute force (for entertainment value). We determined that brute force and ant colony took considerably too long as the number of nodes grew. We found that the minimum spanning tree ran quickly, but failed to find a solution within 1.25 of the optimal for our test cases.

After those missteps, we settled on Repetitive Nearest Neighbor as the most effective algorithm for our test cases. The Nearest Neighbor algorithm is effective at finding an answer quickly, and due to its efficiency, can be run multiple times to repetitively seek the minimum tour length.

Before the algorithm runs, some pre-work is done. Our program reads from the input file and stores the coordinates and node ID in a vector. Our program also initializes a 2D array to house all of the edge weights between all possible combinations set to 0. This was done to potentially speed up the program depending on the algorithm we implement. Eventually, all of the edge weights will be filled in as a node searches for the nearest neighbor.

Once the algorithm has its starting information, a starting node is randomly selected. The algorithm searches for the nearest neighbor to that node, and creates a connection (storing the path followed for later reference). This process continues, being sure not to retrace through any nodes that have already been visited. This continues until only one node remains, and the circuit is complete. Afterwards, the results of the path followed and the edge weights are stored in variables. If this is the first run the results are kept. For every run after, the results are compared to the previous best, and only the minimum of the two are kept. This process repeats through all cities until all have been used as the starting node, or 270 seconds of runtime has been hit (max allowed for the assignment with a 30 second buffer). We used a timer so that we could run the maximum number of iterations given our allotted time. We felt this was the most effective way to maximize the Repetitive Nearest Neighbor algorithm, and something that could be scaled in a real world situation to fit customer needs.

Once the results have been retrieved the path taken and resulting tour length are exported to a file named <input file name>.tour.

We looked at a number of algorithms outlined here: <https://web.tuke.sk/fei-cit/butka/hop/htsp.pdf> , and referenced the following document as well: http://www-eio.upc.es/~nasini/Blog/TSP_Notes.pdf

Pseudo Code

Inputs:

cities

Variables:

bestTour

bestTourPath

visitedNodes

minLength

tourLength

maxTime = 270 (seconds)

// Max allowed for this assignment is 5 min,...

currentNode = 0th node (first node)

// ...includes a 30 second buffer

visitedNode adds currentNode

While time > 0

// Loop till 3 minutes is hit

While visitedNode.count does not equal cities.count

// Loop till circuit created

For X nodes not in VisitedNode

// Loop through all nodes not yet visited

CalculatedEdge = X distance to currentNode

If X < minLength

// Check to see if nearest neighbor

minLength = X

visitedNode adds node X

// Add nearest neighbor to visited

tourLength = tourLength + minLength

// Add weight to tour

currentNode = node X

// Update the new current node

// This completes the circuit after the while loop

tourLength = tourLength + currentNode distance to originalNode

// Check to see if this was the best tour

if tourLength is less than bestTour

// The order of visited nodes provides the path followed

bestTour = tourLength

BestTourPath = visitedNodes

// Calculate time remaining to try more vertexes

Calculate timeElapsed

maxTime = maxTime - timeElapsed

// Prints out results as specified in the assignment

Print to file bestTour and bestTourPath

Best Tours for Example Instances

The table below contains our best runtimes and best tours for the Example TSP Cases provided. We have included txt.tour files of our best runtimes.

File Name	Tour Time	Tour Length
tsp_example_1	<0:01	130921
tsp_example_2	<0:01	3118
tsp_example_3	3:57	1920086

Best Tours for Competition Test Instances

The table below contains our best tours for the Competition TSP Test Cases provided. We have included txt.tour files of our best runtimes.

File Name	Tour Length
test-input-1	5778
test-input-2	8011
test-input-3	14851
test-input-4	19560
test-input-5	27292
test-input-6	38905
test-input-7	61577