

Technical Communication for Computer Scientists

Summer 2013

Progress Report: The Movie-Chain-Runner Project

Team Chain-Runner

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June 17, 2013

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1 Overview

This report documents our progress on the Movie-Chain-Runner Problem (discussed in section 2) as of June 17, 2013, as well as our plans for how to proceed until the project deadline of June 27, 2013. We also discuss and justify some changes to the plan presented in our project proposal (submitted June 4, 2013).

2 The Movie-Chain-Runner Problem

The Movie-Chain-Runner Problem is to find the longest chain of overlapping titles in a list of movie titles, where two titles are said to overlap if some suffix of the first movie is identical to some prefix of the second movie. For example, in the list

- Day of the Dead
- Live and Let Die
- Dead Poets' Society
- Die Another Day
- The Last Samurai

the longest chain consists of 4 titles:

Live and Let Die Another Day of the Dead Poets' Society

By appropriately representing the movie list as a graph, the Movie-Chain-Runner Problem can be shown to be equivalent to the Longest Path Problem (finding the longest simple path in a directed graph). The Longest Path Problem is well known to be NP-Complete, meaning that no efficient algorithm exists to find longest paths in large graphs, including our movie title graph. A review of the literature reveals that good approximate longest paths also cannot be found efficiently in large graphs. Thus, our project is to study the movie title graph and innovate ways to find long paths in the graph.

3 Progress

We discuss our progress in three sections: General Progress, Status, and Projections.

3.1 General Progress

Our first step was to reconstruct the list of movie titles as a directed graph, reducing the problem to the well-known Longest Path Problem. We proceeded to implement a greedy brute force algorithm that simply followed as many paths as possible. This quickly constructed a path of 243 titles and then ceased to make appreciable progress.

The majority of our efforts since have been toward augmenting this brute force algorithm. We have run the algorithm “backwards” to extend the beginning of the chain. We have also attempted running the algorithm in parallel over several cluster computers, boosting our processing power and thus increasing the number of possible paths we can check. We are currently running the brute force algorithm on subsections of the current longest chain, in an attempt to lengthen the middle of the chain.

We also attempted a theoretically-inspired algorithm which computed acyclic subgraphs of our graph and then ran a polynomial time Longest Path algorithm known for directed acyclic graphs. However, the number of cycles proved too large to generate the subgraphs in a reasonable amount of time, and so we abandoned this effort.

3.2 Status

Our current longest chain (included in Appendix A) consists of 278 titles, 7 titles short of our June 17 goal of 285 titles. Since extending the movie chain has proven more difficult than we anticipated, we have decided to scale back our final goal from 300 titles to 285 titles. Since 285 titles is the necessary criterion for receiving an A on the project, the benefits of 300 titles are primarily cosmetic, and so we consider this change acceptable.

Figure 1 below shows the original Gantt chart presented in our project proposal. Figure 2 below shows our revised Gantt chart, as of June 17. The only changes are that the 300 title goal originally set for June 25 has been eliminated and the 285 title goal originally set for June 17 has been extended to June 25.

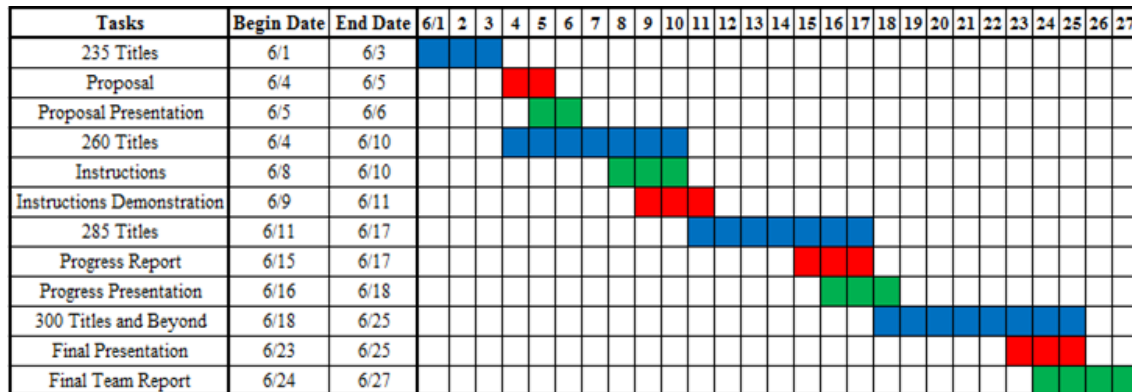


Figure 1: Our original Gantt chart.

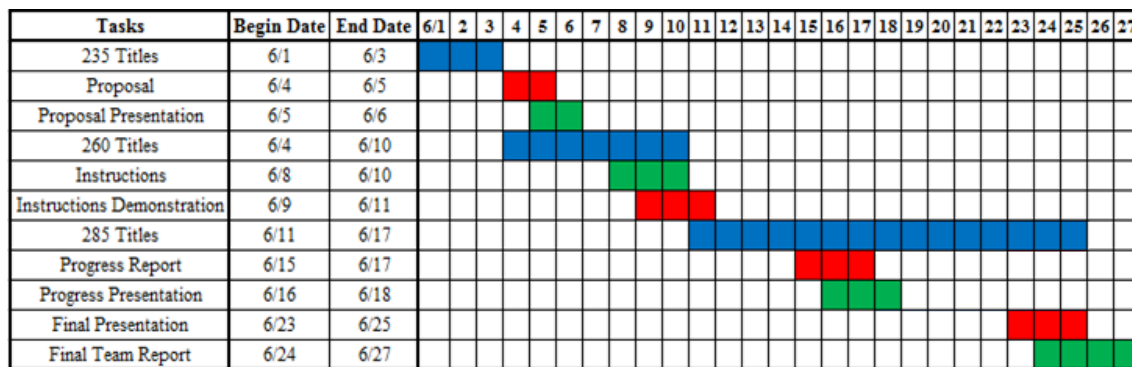


Figure 2: Our revised Gantt chart.

Key:	
Eugene/Sung	█
Shashank/Yiming	█
Everyone	█

3.3 Projections

We expect that we will accomplish our revised 285 title goal for June 25 and propose 2 simple approaches to this goal. Firstly, although we have devoted much computational power toward extending the longest chain at either end, we have not considered a potentially large number of alternative paths between nodes in the chain. Thus, we will attempt to compute, for adjacent or nearby nodes, alternative (longer) chains connecting the same nodes. Secondly, we are considering ways to “trim” the graph by removing nodes unlikely to be in the longest chain, thus reducing the number of possible paths that must be considered.

If simple methods prove insufficient, we may also implement a color-coding algorithm proposed by Alon et al.¹ or the genetic algorithms studied by Portugal et al.,² although, due to the implementation complexity of these algorithms, we hope this will be unnecessary.

4 Recomendations

Our only recomendation is the change of the final project goal from 300 titles to 285 titles, as discussed in the Progress section above.

5 Discussion

Our final deliverable will now be a chain of at least 285 movie titles rather than a chain of at least 300 movie titles. If, however, we achieve our 285 title goal before our deadline of June 25, we may spend the remaining time attempting to extend the chain further.

¹Noga Alon , Raphael Yuster , Uri Zwick, Color-coding, Journal of the ACM (JACM), v.42 n.4, p.844-856, July 1995. (accessed June 16, 2013 at <http://dl.acm.org/citation.cfm?id=210337>).

²D. Portugal, C. H. Antunes, R. Rocha, “A Study of Genetic Algorithms for Approximating the Longest Path in Generic Graphs,” Proc. of the IEEE SMC, pp. 2539-2544, 2010. (accessed June 16, 2013 at <http://ieeexplore.ieee.org/xpl/articleDetails.jsp?arnumber=5641920& navigation=1>).

Appendices

A Our Longest Movie Chain

Here, we include our current longest movie chain, with 278 titles and 885 words:

THE RESCUERS	END OF DAYS
THE RESCUERS DOWN UNDER	DAYS OF HEAVEN
UNDER CAPRICORN	HEAVEN CAN WAIT
CAPRICORN ONE	WAIT UNTIL DARK
ONE NIGHT STAND	DARK CITY
STAND IN	CITY BY THE SEA
IN OLD CALIFORNIA	SEA OF LOVE
CALIFORNIA SPLIT	LOVE AND DEATH
SPLIT SECOND	DEATH BECOMES HER
SECOND BEST	HER MAJESTY MRS BROWN
BEST OF THE BEST	BROWN SUGAR
THE BEST OF EVERYTHING	SUGAR AND SPICE
EVERYTHING RELATIVE	SPICE WORLD
RELATIVE FEAR	WORLD TRADE CENTER
FEAR STRIKES OUT	CENTER STAGE
OUT OF THE PAST	STAGE FRIGHT
PAST MIDNIGHT	FRIGHT NIGHT
MIDNIGHT RUN	NIGHT AND THE CITY
RUN SILENT RUN DEEP	CITY OF JOY
DEEP BLUE	JOY RIDE
BLUE CAR	RIDE THE HIGH COUNTRY
CAR 54 WHERE ARE YOU	COUNTRY LIFE
YOU CANT TAKE IT WITH YOU	LIFE IS BEAUTIFUL
YOU LIGHT UP MY LIFE	BEAUTIFUL GIRLS
MY LIFE WITHOUT ME	GIRLS GIRLS GIRLS
ME MYSELF I	GIRLS JUST WANT TO HAVE FUN
I SPY	FUN AND FANCY FREE
SPY HARD	FREE WILLY
HARD TIMES	FREE WILLY 2 THE ADVENTURE HOME
TIMES SQUARE	HOME ALONE
SQUARE DANCE	ALONE IN THE DARK
DANCE WITH A STRANGER	THE DARK HALF
STRANGER IN THE HOUSE	HALF LIGHT
HOUSE OF DRACULA	LIGHT OF DAY
DRACULA DEAD AND LOVING IT	DAY FOR NIGHT
IT TAKES TWO	NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD
24 7 TWENTY FOUR SEVEN	DEAD HEAT
SEVEN YEARS IN TIBET	HEAT AND DUST
TIBET CRY OF THE SNOW LION	DUST TO GLORY
LION OF THE DESERT	GLORY ROAD
DESERT BLUE	ROAD GAMES
BLUE STEEL	GAMES PEOPLE PLAY NEW YORK
STEEL DAWN	NEW YORK NEW YORK
DAWN OF THE DEAD	NEW YORK COP
DEAD BANG	COP LAND
BANG BANG YOURE DEAD	LAND OF THE DEAD
DEAD END	DEAD MAN

DEAD MAN ON CAMPUS
CAMPUS MAN
MAN OF THE HOUSE
HOUSE OF FRANKENSTEIN
FRANKENSTEIN AND THE MONSTER FROM HELL
HELL NIGHT
NIGHT FALLS ON MANHATTAN
MANHATTAN MURDER MYSTERY
MYSTERY ALASKA
ALASKA SPIRIT OF THE WILD
THE WILD ANGELS
ANGELS WITH DIRTY FACES
FACES OF DEATH
DEATH SHIP
SHIP OF FOOLS
FOOLS RUSH IN
IN COLD BLOOD
BLOOD BEACH
BEACH PARTY
PARTY GIRL
GIRL IN THE CADILLAC
CADILLAC MAN
MAN ON FIRE
FIRE IN THE SKY
SKY HIGH
HIGH CRIMES
CRIMES OF PASSION
PASSION IN THE DESERT
DESERT HEARTS
HEARTS OF DARKNESS A FILMMAKERS APOCALYPSE
APOCALYPSE NOW
NOW YOU SEE HIM NOW YOU DONT
DONT BOTHER TO KNOCK
KNOCK OFF
OFF THE BLACK
BLACK AND WHITE
WHITE LIGHTNING
LIGHTNING IN A BOTTLE
BOTTLE ROCKET
ROCKET MAN
MAN TROUBLE
TROUBLE EVERY DAY
DAY OF THE DEAD
DEAD OF NIGHT
NIGHT MOTHER
MOTHER JUGS AND SPEED
SPEED 2 CRUISE CONTROL
CONTROL ROOM
ROOM AT THE TOP
TOP GUN
GUN CRAZY
CRAZY AS HELL
HELL UP IN HARLEM
HARLEM RIVER DRIVE
DRIVE ME CRAZY

CRAZY PEOPLE
PEOPLE I KNOW
I KNOW WHAT YOU DID LAST SUMMER
SUMMER CATCH
CATCH A FIRE
FIRE ON THE MOUNTAIN
THE MOUNTAIN MEN
MEN CRY BULLETS
BULLETS OVER BROADWAY
BROADWAY DANNY ROSE
ROSE RED
RED EYE
EYE FOR AN EYE
AN EYE FOR AN EYE
EYE OF GOD
GOD IS GREAT IM NOT
NOT OF THIS EARTH
EARTH GIRLS ARE EASY
EASY MONEY
MONEY FOR NOTHING
NOTHING BUT TROUBLE
TROUBLE IN PARADISE
PARADISE ROAD
ROAD HOUSE
HOUSE PARTY
PARTY MONSTER
MONSTER IN A BOX
BOX OF MOON LIGHT
LIGHT IT UP
UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL
PERSONAL BEST
BEST MEN
MEN WITH GUNS
GUNS OF THE MAGNIFICENT SEVEN
THE MAGNIFICENT SEVEN RIDE
RIDE WITH THE DEVIL
THE DEVIL RIDES OUT
OUT COLD
COLD FEVER
FEVER PITCH
PITCH BLACK
BLACK HAWK DOWN
DOWN WITH LOVE
LOVE LIFE
LIFE OR SOMETHING LIKE IT
IT HAPPENED AT THE WORLDS FAIR
FAIR GAME
GAME OF DEATH
DEATH WISH V THE FACE OF DEATH
DEATH WISH
WISH UPON A STAR
A STAR IS BORN
BORN AMERICAN
AMERICAN HISTORY X
X THE MAN WITH THE X RAY EYES

EYES OF AN ANGEL
ANGEL BABY
BABY SECRET OF THE LOST LEGEND
LEGEND OF THE LOST
THE LOST BOYS
BOYS AND GIRLS
GIRLS WILL BE GIRLS
GIRLS OF SUMMER
SUMMER LOVERS
LOVERS AND OTHER STRANGERS
STRANGERS WHEN WE MEET
MEET JOE BLACK
BLACK LIKE ME
ME WITHOUT YOU
YOU ONLY LIVE ONCE
ONCE AROUND
AROUND THE BEND
BEND OF THE RIVER
THE RIVER WILD
WILD THINGS
THINGS TO COME
COME AND GET IT
IT HAPPENED ONE NIGHT
ONE NIGHT WITH THE KING
THE KING AND I
I WANT TO LIVE
LIVE AND LET DIE
DIE MOMMIE DIE
DIE MONSTER DIE
DIE HARD
HARD EIGHT
EIGHT AND A HALF WOMEN
WOMEN IN LOVE
IN LOVE AND WAR
WAR OF THE WORLDS
THE WORLDS FASTEST INDIAN
INDIAN SUMMER

SUMMER SCHOOL
SCHOOL OF ROCK
ROCK STAR
STAR TREK THE MOTION PICTURE
PICTURE BRIDE
BRIDE OF THE WIND
THE WIND AND THE LION
THE LION KING
KING OF THE JUNGLE
JUNGLE 2 JUNGLE
JUNGLE BOOK
BOOK OF LOVE
LOVE WALKED IN
IN GODS HANDS
HANDS ON A HARD BODY
BODY DOUBLE
DOUBLE TEAM
TEAM AMERICA WORLD POLICE
POLICE ACADEMY
POLICE ACADEMY 3 BACK IN TRAINING
TRAINING DAY
DAY OF THE WOMAN
THE WOMAN IN RED
RED RIVER
RIVER OF NO RETURN
RETURN TO HORROR HIGH
HIGH SCHOOL HIGH
HIGH SPIRITS
SPIRITS OF THE DEAD
DEAD MAN WALKING
WALKING AND TALKING
TALKING ABOUT SEX
SEX AND THE OTHER MAN
MAN OF THE YEAR
YEAR OF THE DRAGON
DRAGON SEED
SEED OF CHUCKY