SAT Solvers and Configuration Management

Presentation for Mancoosi Project

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2nd of November 2010
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## Motivations and goals

### Motivations
- Configuration management emerging problem
- SAT solvers refined tools
- Solve configuration management problems with SAT solvers

### Goals
- Show how to use SAT solvers in config. management
- Draw attention advantages & disadvantages in this context
What is a SAT solver

Solves a problem in CNF

CNF is an “and of or-s”

\[(x_1 \lor \neg x_3) \land (\neg x_2 \lor x_3) \land (x_1 \lor x_2)\]

Uses DPLL(\(\varphi\)) algorithm

1. If formula \(\varphi\) is trivial, return SAT/UNSAT
2. \(\text{ret} = \text{DPLL}(\varphi \text{ with } v \leftarrow \text{true})\)
3. if \(\text{ret} == \text{SAT}\), return SAT
4. \(\text{ret} = \text{DPLL}(\varphi \text{ with } v \leftarrow \text{false})\)
5. if \(\text{ret} == \text{SAT}\), return SAT
6. return UNSAT
SAT solver internals

Conflict clauses
- Generated when current assignment doesn’t satisfy a clause
- Collection of information leading to conflict
- Used to avoid similar wrong parts of the tree next time

Most important parts
- Lazy data structures
- Learning (and forgetting)
- How to pick a variable
- When to restart
Package management in FLOSS

- Many packages
- Some conflict, some depend on others, some give same features
- Simplified to user: keep, install, upgrade, remove

Common Upgradeability Description Format (CUDF)

1. Preamble with distribution-specific properties
2. Set of packages: dependencies, conflicts, features, properties
3. User request

Solving CUDF

- Optimize for criteria: e.g. least no. changed packages
- Give best solution within time limit
- Result must satisfy dependencies, conflicts, user requests
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A trivial implementation

### Parser
- Parses up CUDF, optimisation criteria
- Clauses to represent *conflicts*
- Clauses to represent *dependencies*
- Clauses to express if package is real/virtual
- Clauses for user request: keep, install, upgrade, remove

### SAT solver
- Gives a solution — correct, but not optimal
- Uses multi-threading
- Keeps track of found unitary and binary truths
A more refined implementation

**Parser**
- Binary adder for optimality criteria
- Cyclicly restricts adder to smaller values
- Solves until UNSAT — optimal for a criterion
- Solution is optimal for one criterion \(\rightarrow\) backtrack to previous best and optimise for next criterion

**SAT Solver**
- Constant CNF file as input — contains static needs
- Plus a set of optimality constraints — changes over time
- Keeps state between SAT and SAT
- With help of Parser, some state between SAT and UNSAT
Why would this work?

**Simplicity**
- SAT solvers already optimised: no re-invent the wheel
- No need to manually multi-thread: it’s in the solver
- Must express constraints simply: no repetitions

**Right tool for the job: SAT solvers**
- Good at binary clauses — conflicts&dependencies create these
- Binary adders are possible to represent natively — CryptoMS patch
- Can save state between runs, no need to solve repeatedly
Why wouldn’t this work?

Optimisation & SAT solvers

- SAT solvers not very good at optimisation
- Binary adder could get very large
- Native adder could lead to less effective learnt clauses

Other problems

- No. variables could be huge — at least no. versioned packages
- Difficult to optimise for no repetitions: hash table expensive
- Might need to save more state than unitaries & binaries
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Conclusions

Concluding remarks
- SAT is effective at many problems
- Configuration management could be one such problem
- But effort is needed

Future work
- CryManSolver is in preparation
- It will implement the above
- Will use CryptoMiniSat as back-end
Thank you for your time

Any questions?