A SAT-based Sudoku Solver

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Sudoku

Sudoku is a placement puzzle

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Motivation

- *Sudoku* is extremely popular
- more than $6 \cdot 10^{21}$ valid $9 \times 9$ grids
- *Sudoku* is NP-complete
- existing *Sudoku* solvers are often slow or complicated (or both)
Motivation

- *Sudoku* is extremely popular
- more than $6 \cdot 10^{21}$ valid $9 \times 9$ grids
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- an efficient, yet easy to implement *Sudoku* solver
Tools

To ease implementation:

- Isabelle/HOL: an interactive theorem prover for higher-order logic,
  with support for SAT-based finite model generation

For efficiency:

- zChaff: a leading SAT solver
System Overview

Isabelle

Sudoku → Preprocessing

Solution → Postprocessing

DIMACS CNF

Assignment

satisfiable?

yes

no

zChaff

Not solvable

A SAT-based Sudoku Solver – p.5/9
Implementation in Isabelle/HOL

Def.

\[
\text{valid}(x_1, x_2, x_3, x_4, x_5, x_6, x_7, x_8, x_9) \equiv \bigwedge_{d=1}^{9} \bigvee_{i=1}^{9} (x_i = d)
\]
Implementation in Isabelle/HOL

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Def.

\[ \text{Sudoku}(\{x_{ij}\}_{i,j\in\{1,\ldots,9\}}) \equiv \bigwedge_{i=1}^{9} \text{valid}(x_{i1}, x_{i2}, x_{i3}, x_{i4}, x_{i5}, x_{i6}, x_{i7}, x_{i8}, x_{i9}) \]

\[ \bigwedge_{j=1}^{9} \text{valid}(x_{1j}, x_{2j}, x_{3j}, x_{4j}, x_{5j}, x_{6j}, x_{7j}, x_{8j}, x_{9j}) \]

\[ \bigwedge_{i,j\in\{1,4,7\}} \text{valid}(x_{ij}, x_{i(j+1)}, x_{i(j+2)}, x_{(i+1)j}, x_{(i+1)(j+1)}, x_{(i+1)(j+2)}, x_{(i+2)j}, x_{(i+2)(j+1)}, x_{(i+2)(j+2)}) \]
Translation to SAT

- 9 Boolean variables for each grid cell
- Each Boolean variable $p^d_{ij}$ (with $1 \leq i, j, d \leq 9$) represents the truth value of the equation $x_{ij} = d$.
- A clause $\bigvee_{d=1}^{9} p^d_{ij}$ ensures that the cell $x_{ij}$ denotes one of the nine digits.
- 36 clauses $\bigwedge_{1 \leq d < d' \leq 9} (\neg p^d_{ij} \lor \neg p^{d'}_{ij})$ make sure that the cell does not denote two different digits at the same time.
Translation to SAT (2)

Short clauses allow for more unit propagation.

Lemma.

\[ \text{valid}(x_1, x_2, x_3, x_4, x_5, x_6, x_7, x_8, x_9) \equiv \bigwedge_{d=1}^{9} \bigvee_{i=1}^{9} (x_i = d) \]

\[ \iff \bigwedge_{1 \leq i < j \leq 9} (x_i \neq x_j) \iff \bigwedge_{1 \leq i < j \leq 9} \bigwedge_{d=1}^{9} (x_i \neq d \lor x_j \neq d). \]

Total of . . .

- \( 9^3 = 729 \) Boolean variables, and
- \( 9^2 + 9^2 \cdot 36 + 3 \cdot 9 \cdot 36 \cdot 9 = 11745 \) clauses.
Evaluation and Conclusions

- a straightforward translation of a Sudoku into a propositional formula
- easy to generalize to grids of arbitrary dimension
- polynomial in the size of the grid
- easy to modify to enumerate possible solutions
- implementation (using Isabelle/HOL) almost trivial
- $9 \times 9$ Sudokus are solved within milliseconds