Staged Column Generation Approach for the Software Clustering Problem

Hugo Harry Kramer∗†, Marcia Fampa2, Viviane Köhler3, Eduardo Uchoa1, and François Vanderbeck4,5

1Universidade Federal Fluminense (UFF) – Brésil
2COPPE, Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro (COPPE/UFRJ) – Brésil
3Universidade Federal de Santa Maria (UFSM) – Brésil
4RealOpt (INRIA Bordeaux - Sud-Ouest) – Université Sciences et Technologies - Bordeaux I, INRIA – 200 avenue de la Vieille Tour 33405 Talence, France
5Institut de Mathématiques de Bordeaux (IMB) – CNRS : UMR5251, Université Sciences et Technologies - Bordeaux I, Université Victor Segalen - Bordeaux II, Université Sciences et Technologies Bordeaux I, Université Victor Segalen – Bordeaux II – 351 cours de la Libération 33405 TALENCE CEDEX, France

Résumé

The present work deals with the application of a novel Column Generation (CG) approach to the Software Clustering Problem (SCP). In this problem, one has a Modular Dependence Graph (MDG) consisting of a set V of nodes representing the modules of a software, a set E of edges, or the set of relationships between two modules u, v ∈ V of the software, and each relationship has an associated weight given by c_{uv}. The goal is to partition the MDG in clusters, and the quality of such partition must be maximized. The quality of the partition is given by a measure called Modularization Quality (MQ). To tackle this problem, we apply the Dantzig-Wolfe decomposition having a formulation from literature as a starting point. Given this, we present two approaches based on CG: (i) the standard CG approach, and (ii) a new approach, which we call Staged Column Generation (SCG). In this new approach, at each stage, the problem is solved by CG considering a restricted version of the pricing subproblem. At the last stage, the complete version of the subproblem is considered and CG runs until convergence. In the context of the present work, in the last stage, the subproblems are solved by

∗Intervenant
†Auteur correspondant: hugoharry@gmail.com

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MIP, and in the previous stages, the restricted subproblems are solved heuristically. In addition, we present a heuristic procedure to initialize the Master Problem, aiming to improve the convergence of the algorithms. We test our algorithms in a set of 47 instances found in literature. With the proposed approaches we were able to improve the literature results solving all these instances to optimality (45 of them in the root node). Furthermore, the SCG approach presented a considerable performance improvement in terms of computational time, number of iterations and number of generated columns when compared with the standard CG as the size of the instances grow.

**Mots-Clés:** Software Clustering Problem, Column Generation, Staged Column Generation