

Satisfiability Modulo Theories

Materials by Clark Barrett, Stanford University

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Acknowledgments: Many thanks to Cesare Tinelli and Albert Oliveras for contributing some of the material used in these slides.

Disclaimer: The literature on SMT and its applications is vast. The bibliographic references provided here are just a sample. Apologies to all authors whose work is not cited.

Introduction

The Satisfiability Revolution

Princeton, c. 2000

- *Chaff SAT solver*: orders of magnitude faster than previous SAT solvers
- *Important observation*: many real-world problems **do not exhibit worst-case theoretical performance**

Palo Alto, c. 2001

- **Idea**: combine fast new SAT solvers with decision procedures for decidable first-order theories
- *SVC*, *CVC* solvers (Stanford); *ICS*, *Yices* solvers (SRI)
- *Satisfiability Modulo Theories* (SMT) was born

SMT solvers

SMT solvers: *general-purpose* logic engines

- Given condition X , is it possible for Y to happen
- X and Y are expressed in a *rich logical language*
 - First-order logic
 - Domain-specific reasoning
 - arithmetic, arrays, bit-vectors, data types, etc.

SMT solvers are *changing the way people solve problems*

- Instead of building a *special-purpose* solver
- *Translate* into a logical formula and use an SMT solver
- Not only easier, *often better*

SMT solvers

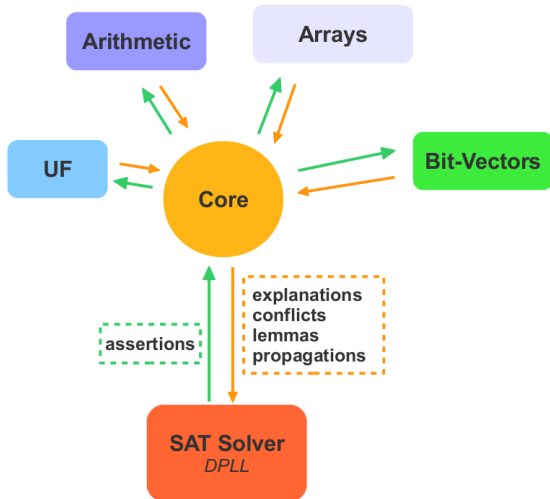
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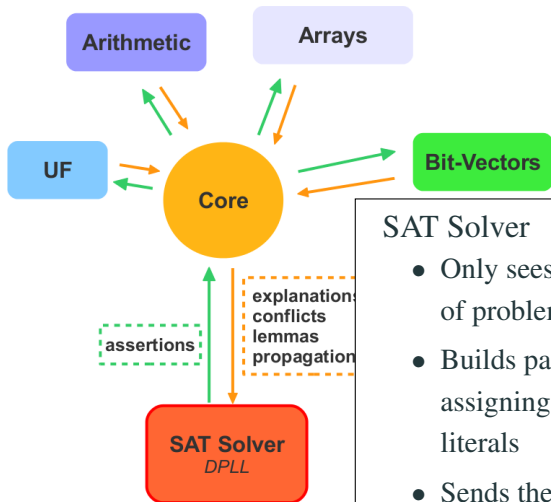
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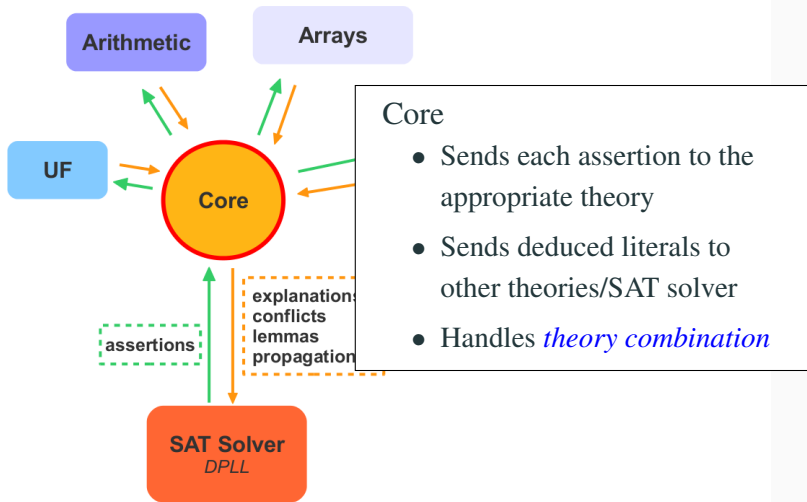
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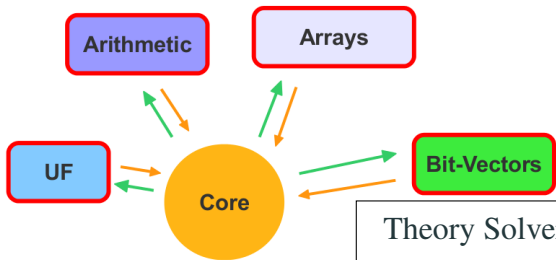
SAT Solver

- Only sees *Boolean skeleton* of problem
- Builds partial model by assigning truth values to literals
- Sends these literals to the core as *assertions*

SMT Solvers



SMT Solvers



Theory Solvers

- Decide T -satisfiability of a conjunction of theory literals
- Incremental
- Backtrackable
- Conflict Generation
- Theory Propagation

DPLL(T): Combining T -Solvers with SAT

Satisfiability Modulo a Theory T

Def. A formula is *(un)satisfiable in* a theory T , or T -*(un)satisfiable*, if there is a (no) model of T that satisfies it

Note: The T -satisfiability of quantifier-free formulas is decidable iff the T -satisfiability of conjunctions/sets of literals is decidable

(Convert the formula in DNF and check if any of its disjuncts is T -sat)

Problem: In practice, dealing with Boolean combinations of literals is as hard as in propositional logic

Solution: Exploit propositional satisfiability technology

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Lifting SAT Technology to SMT

Two main approaches:

1. “Eager” [PRSS99, SSB02, SLB03, BGV01, BV02]

- translate into an equisatisfiable propositional formula
- feed it to any SAT solver

Notable systems: *UCLID*

2. “Lazy” [ACG00, dMR02, BDS02, ABC+02]

- abstract the input formula to a propositional one
- feed it to a (DPLL-based) SAT solver
- use a theory decision procedure to refine the formula and guide the SAT solver

Notable systems: *Barcelogic, Boolector, CVC4, MathSAT, Yices, Z3*

This talk will focus on the lazy approach

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(Very) Lazy Approach for SMT – Example

$$g(a) = c \quad \wedge \quad f(g(a)) \neq f(c) \quad \vee \quad g(a) = d \quad \wedge \quad c \neq d$$

Theory T : Equality with Uninterpreted Functions

Simplest setting:

- Off-line SAT solver
- Non-incremental *theory solver* for conjunctions of equalities and disequalities
- Theory atoms (e.g., $g(a) = c$) abstracted to propositional atoms (e.g., 1)

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- Send $\{1, 2 \vee 3, 4\}$ to SAT solver.
- SAT solver returns model $\{1, \bar{2}, \bar{3}\}$.
- Theory solver finds (concretization of) $\{1, \bar{2}, \bar{3}\}$ unsat.
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Lazy Approach – Enhancements

Several **enhancements** are possible to **increase efficiency**:

- Check T -satisfiability only of full propositional model
- Check T -satisfiability of partial assignment M as it grows
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- If M is T -unsatisfiable, identify a T -unsatisfiable subset M_0 of M and add $\neg M_0$ as a clause
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Lazy Approach – Main Benefits

- Every tool **does** what it is **good** at:
 - **SAT solver** takes care of **Boolean information**
 - **Theory solver** takes care of **theory information**
- The theory solver works only with conjunctions of literals
- Modular approach:
 - SAT and theory solvers communicate via a simple API [GHN⁺04]
 - SMT for a new theory only requires new theory solver
 - An off-the-shelf SAT solver can be embedded in a lazy SMT system with few new lines of code (tens)

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An Abstract Framework for Lazy SMT

Several variants and enhancements of lazy SMT solvers exist

They can be modeled abstractly and declaratively as *transition systems*

A transition system is a binary relation over states, induced by a set of conditional transition rules

The framework can be first developed for SAT and then extended to lazy SMT [NOT06, KG07]

Advantages of Abstract Framework

An abstract framework helps one:

- skip over implementation details and unimportant control aspects
- reason formally about solvers for SAT and SMT
- model advanced features such as non-chronological backtracking, lemma learning, theory propagation, ...
- describe different strategies and prove their correctness
- compare different systems at a higher level
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The Original DPLL Procedure

- Modern SAT solvers are based on the **DPLL procedure** [DP60, DLL62]
- DPLL tries to **build** incrementally a **satisfying truth assignment** M for a CNF formula F
- M is grown by
 - **deducing** the truth value of a literal from M and F , or
 - **guessing** a truth value
- If a wrong guess for a literal leads to an inconsistency, the procedure **backtracks** and tries the opposite value

An Abstract Framework for DPLL

States:

fail or $\langle M, F \rangle$

where

- M is a sequence of literals and *decision points* • denoting a partial truth *assignment*
- F is a set of clauses denoting a CNF *formula*

Def. If $M = M_0 \bullet M_1 \bullet \dots \bullet M_n$ where each M_i contains no decision points

- M_i is *decision level* i of M
- $M^{[i]} \stackrel{\text{def}}{=} M_0 \bullet \dots \bullet M_i$

An Abstract Framework for DPLL

States:

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Initial state:

- $\langle (), F_0 \rangle$, where F_0 is to be checked for satisfiability

Expected final states:

- fail if F_0 is unsatisfiable
- $\langle M, G \rangle$ otherwise, where
 - G is equivalent to F_0 and
 - M satisfies G

Transition Rules: Notation

States treated like records:

- M denotes the truth assignment component of current state
- F denotes the formula component of current state

Transition rules in *guarded assignment form* [KG07]

$$\frac{p_1 \quad \cdots \quad p_n}{[M := e_1] \quad [F := e_2]}$$

updating M , F or both when premises p_1, \dots, p_n all hold

Transition Rules for the Original DPLL

Extending the assignment

$$\text{Propagate} \frac{l_1 \vee \dots \vee l_n \vee l \in F \quad \bar{l}_1, \dots, \bar{l}_n \in M \quad l, \bar{l} \notin M}{M := M l}$$

Note: When convenient, treat M as a set

$$\text{Decide} \frac{l \in \text{Lit}(F) \quad l, \bar{l} \notin M}{M := M \bullet l}$$

Note: $\text{Lit}(F) \stackrel{\text{def}}{=} \{l \mid l \text{ literal of } F\} \cup \{\bar{l} \mid l \text{ literal of } F\}$

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Backtrack

$$\frac{l_1 \vee \dots \vee l_n \in F \quad \bar{l}_1, \dots, \bar{l}_n \in M \quad M = M \bullet l N \quad \bullet \notin N}{M := M \bar{l}}$$

Note: Last premise of **Backtrack** enforces chronological backtracking

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From DPLL to CDCL Solvers (1)

To model conflict-driven backjumping and learning, add to states a third component C whose value is either **no** or a *conflict clause*

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Initial state:

- $\langle (), F_0, \text{no} \rangle$, where F_0 is to be checked for satisfiability

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- $\langle (), F_0, \text{no} \rangle$, where F_0 is to be checked for satisfiability

Expected final states:

- **fail** if F_0 is unsatisfiable
- $\langle M, G, \text{no} \rangle$ otherwise, where
 - G is equivalent to F_0 and
 - M satisfies G

From DPLL to CDCL Solvers (2)

Replace **Backtrack** with

$$\text{Conflict} \frac{C = \text{no} \quad l_1 \vee \dots \vee l_n \in F \quad \bar{l}_1, \dots, \bar{l}_n \in M}{C := l_1 \vee \dots \vee l_n}$$

$$\text{Explain} \frac{C = l \vee D \quad l_1 \vee \dots \vee l_n \vee \bar{l} \in F \quad \bar{l}_1, \dots, \bar{l}_n \prec_M \bar{l}}{C := l_1 \vee \dots \vee l_n \vee D}$$

$$\text{Backjump} \frac{C = l_1 \vee \dots \vee l_n \vee l \quad \text{lev } \bar{l}_1, \dots, \text{lev } \bar{l}_n \leq i < \text{lev } \bar{l}}{C := \text{no} \quad M := M^{[i]} l}$$

Maintain invariant: $F \models_P C$ and $M \models_P \neg C$ when $C \neq \text{no}$

Note: \models_P denotes propositional entailment

From DPLL to CDCL Solvers (2)

Replace **Backtrack** with

$$\text{Conflict} \quad \frac{C = \text{no} \quad l_1 \vee \dots \vee l_n \in F \quad \bar{l}_1, \dots, \bar{l}_n \in M}{C := l_1 \vee \dots \vee l_n}$$

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$$\text{Backjump} \quad \frac{C = l_1 \vee \dots \vee l_n \vee l \quad \text{lev } \bar{l}_1, \dots, \text{lev } \bar{l}_n \leq i < \text{lev } \bar{l}}{C := \text{no} \quad M := M^{[i]} l}$$

Note: $l \prec_M l'$ if l occurs before l' in M
 $\text{lev } l = i$ iff l occurs in decision level i of M

Maintain invariant: $F \models_P C$ and $M \models_P \neg C$ when $C \neq \text{no}$

Note: \models_P denotes propositional entailment

From DPLL to CDCL Solvers (2)

Replace **Backtrack** with

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From DPLL to CDCL Solvers (3)

Modify **Fail** to

$$\mathbf{Fail} \frac{C \neq \text{no} \quad \bullet \notin M}{\text{fail}}$$

From DPLL to CDCL Solvers (3)

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Execution Example

$$F := \{1, \bar{1} \vee 2, \bar{3} \vee 4, \bar{5} \vee \bar{6}, \bar{1} \vee \bar{5} \vee 7, \bar{2} \vee \bar{5} \vee 6 \vee \bar{7}\}$$

	M	F	C	rule
		F	no	
	1	F	no	by Propagate
	1 2	F	no	by Propagate
	1 2 • 3	F	no	by Decide
	1 2 • 3 4	F	no	by Propagate
	1 2 • 3 4 • 5	F	no	by Decide
	1 2 • 3 4 • 5 $\bar{6}$	F	no	by Propagate
	1 2 • 3 4 • 5 $\bar{6}$ 7	F	no	by Propagate
	1 2 • 3 4 • 5 $\bar{6}$ 7	F	$\bar{2} \vee \bar{5} \vee 6 \vee \bar{7}$	by Conflict
	1 2 • 3 4 • 5 $\bar{6}$ 7	F	$1 \vee \bar{2} \vee \bar{5} \vee 6$	by Explain with $\bar{1} \vee \bar{5} \vee 7$
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	1 2 $\bar{5}$	F	no	by Backjump
	1 2 $\bar{5}$ • 3	F	no	by Decide
	...			

Execution Example

$$F := \{1, \bar{1} \vee 2, \bar{3} \vee 4, \bar{5} \vee \bar{6}, \bar{1} \vee \bar{5} \vee 7, \bar{2} \vee \bar{5} \vee 6 \vee \bar{7}\}$$

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	...			

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	1 2 $\bar{5}$ • 3	F	no	by Decide
	...			

From DPLL to CDCL Solvers (4)

Also add

$$\text{Learn} \frac{F \models_p C \quad C \notin F}{F := F \cup \{C\}}$$

$$\text{Forget} \frac{C = \text{no} \quad F = G \cup \{C\} \quad G \models_p C}{F := G}$$

$$\text{Restart} \frac{}{M := M^{[0]} \quad C := \text{no}}$$

Note: Learn can be applied to **any** clause stored in **C** when **C** \neq no

Modeling Modern SAT Solvers

At the core, current CDCL SAT solvers are implementations of the transition system with rules

Propagate, Decide,

Conflict, Explain, Backjump,

Learn, Forget, Restart

Basic DPLL $\stackrel{\text{def}}{=}$

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DPLL $\stackrel{\text{def}}{=}$ Basic DPLL + **{ Learn, Forget, Restart }**

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The Basic DPLL System – Correctness

Some terminology:

Irreducible state: state for which no **Basic DPLL** rules apply

Execution: sequence of transitions allowed by the rules and starting with $M = \emptyset$ and $C = \text{no}$

Exhausted execution: execution ending in an irreducible state

Proposition (Soundness) For every exhausted execution starting with $F = F_0$ and ending with fail, the clause set F_0 is unsatisfiable.

Proposition (Completeness) For every exhausted execution starting with $F = F_0$ and ending with $C = \text{no}$, the clause set F_0 is satisfied by M .

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Proposition (Strong Termination) **Every** execution in Basic DPLL is finite.

Note: This is not so immediate, because of **Backjump**.

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Proposition (Strong Termination) **Every** execution in Basic DPLL is finite.

Lemma Every exhausted execution ends with either $C = \text{no}$ or **fail**.

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The DPLL System – Strategies

- Applying
 - one Basic DPLL rule between each two **Learn** applications **and**
 - **Restart** less and less oftenensures termination

- A common basic strategy applies the rules with the following priorities:

1. If $n > 0$ conflicts have been found so far, increase n and apply **Restart**
2. If a clause is falsified by M , apply **Conflict**
3. If a clause is falsified by M and **Conflict** is applied, apply **Learn**
4. Apply **Learn**
5. Apply **Propagate**
6. Apply **Unit Propagation**
7. Apply **Propagate**
8. Apply **Unit Propagation**
9. Apply **Propagate**
10. Apply **Unit Propagation**

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From SAT to SMT

Same states and transitions but

- F contains **quantifier-free clauses** in some **theory T**
- M is a sequence of **theory literals** and decision points
- the DPLL system is augmented with rules

T -Conflict, T -Propagate, T -Explain

- maintains **invariant**: $F \models_T C$ and $M \models_p \neg C$ when $C \neq \text{no}$

Def. $F \models_T G$ iff every model of T that satisfies F satisfies G as well

SMT-level Rules

Fix a theory T

$$\mathbf{T\text{-Conflict}} \frac{C = \text{no} \quad l_1, \dots, l_n \in M \quad l_1, \dots, l_n \models_T \perp}{C := \bar{l}_1 \vee \dots \vee \bar{l}_n}$$

$$\mathbf{T\text{-Propagate}} \frac{l \in \text{Lit}(F) \quad M \models_T l \quad l, \bar{l} \notin M}{M := M \ l}$$

$$\mathbf{T\text{-Explain}} \frac{C = l \vee D \quad \bar{l}_1, \dots, \bar{l}_n \models_T \bar{l} \quad \bar{l}_1, \dots, \bar{l}_n \prec_M \bar{l}}{C := l_1 \vee \dots \vee l_n \vee D}$$

Note: \perp = empty clause

Note: \models_T decided by theory solver

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Modeling the Very Lazy Theory Approach

T-Conflict is enough to model the naive integration of SAT solvers and theory solvers seen in the earlier UF example

$$\underbrace{g(a) = c}_1 \wedge \underbrace{f(g(a)) \neq f(c)}_2 \vee \underbrace{g(a) = d}_3 \wedge \underbrace{c \neq d}_4$$

M	F	C	rule
	$1, \bar{2} \vee 3, \bar{4}$	no	
$\bar{1} \bar{4}$	$1, \bar{2} \vee 3, \bar{4}$	no	by Propagate ⁺
$1 \bar{4} \bullet \bar{2}$	$1, \bar{2} \vee 3, \bar{4}$	no	by Decide
$1 \bar{4} \bullet \bar{2}$	$1, \bar{2} \vee 3, \bar{4}$	$\bar{1} \vee 2 \vee 4$	by T-Conflict
$1 \bar{4} \bullet \bar{2}$	$1, \bar{2} \vee 3, \bar{4}, \bar{1} \vee 2 \vee 4$	$\bar{1} \vee 2 \vee 4$	by Learn
$\bar{1} \bar{4}$	$1, \bar{2} \vee 3, \bar{4}, \bar{1} \vee 2 \vee 4$	no	by Restart
$1 \bar{4} 2 3$	$1, \bar{2} \vee 3, \bar{4}, \bar{1} \vee 2 \vee 4$	no	by Propagate ⁺
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fail			by Fail

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A Better Lazy Approach

The very lazy approach can be improved considerably with

- An *on-line* SAT engine,
which can accept new input clauses on the fly
- an *incremental and explicating T-solver*,
which can
 1. check the T -satisfiability of M as it is extended and
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$1 \bar{4} \bullet 2$	$1, \bar{2} \vee 3, \bar{4}$	no	by Decide
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$$\underbrace{g(a) = c}_1 \wedge \underbrace{f(g(a)) \neq f(c)}_2 \vee \underbrace{g(a) = d}_3 \wedge \underbrace{c \neq d}_4$$

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Lazy Approach – Strategies

Ignoring **Restart** (for simplicity), a **common strategy** is to apply the rules using the following priorities:

1. If a clause is falsified by the current assignment **M**, apply **Conflict**
2. If **M** is **T**-unsatisfiable, apply **T-Conflict**
3. Apply **Fail** or **Explain+Learn+Backjump** as appropriate
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Theory Propagation

With ***T-Conflict*** as the **only theory rule**, the theory solver is used just to **validate** the choices of the SAT engine

With ***T-Propagate*** and ***T-Explain***, it can also be used to guide the engine's search [Tin02]

$$\mathbf{T\text{-Propagate}} \frac{l \in \text{Lit}(F) \quad M \models_T l \quad l, \bar{l} \notin M}{M := M \cup l}$$

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$$\underbrace{g(a) = c}_1 \wedge \underbrace{f(g(a)) \neq f(c)}_{\bar{2}} \vee \underbrace{g(a) = d}_3 \wedge \underbrace{c \neq d}_{\bar{4}}$$

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Modeling Modern Lazy SMT Solvers

At the core, current lazy SMT solvers are implementations of the transition system with rules

(1) **Propagate, Decide, Conflict, Explain, Backjump, Fail**

(2) *T-Conflict, T-Propagate, T-Explain*

(3) **Learn, Forget, Restart**

Basic DPLL Modulo Theories $\stackrel{\text{def}}{=} (1) + (2)$

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Correctness

Updated terminology:

Irreducible state: state to which no **Basic DPLL MT** rules apply

Execution: sequence of transitions allowed by the rules and starting with $M = \emptyset$ and $C = \text{no}$

Exhausted execution: execution ending in an irreducible state

Proposition (Soundness) For every exhausted execution starting with $F = F_0$ and ending with *fail*, the clause set F_0 is T -unsatisfiable.

Proposition (Completeness) For every exhausted execution starting with $F = F_0$ and ending with $C = \text{no}$, F_0 is T -satisfiable; specifically, M is T -satisfiable and $M \models_P F_0$.

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Proposition (Termination) Every execution in which

- (a) **Learn/Forget** are applied only **finitely many times** and
- (b) **Restart** is applied with **increased periodicity**

is finite.

Lemma Every exhausted execution ends with either $C = \text{no}$ or **fail**.

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DPLL(T) Architecture

The approach formalized so far can be implemented with a simple architecture named $\text{DPLL}(T)$ [GHN⁺04, NOT06]

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DPLL(X):

- Very similar to a SAT solver, enumerates Boolean models
- Not allowed: pure literal, blocked literal detection, ...
- Required: incremental addition of clauses
- Desirable: partial model detection

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T -solver:

- Checks the T -satisfiability of conjunctions of literals
- Computes theory propagations
- Produces explanations of T -unsatisfiability/propagation
- Must be incremental and backtrackable

Reasoning by Cases in Theory Solvers

For certain theories, determining that a set M is T -unsatisfiable requires reasoning by cases.

Example: T = the theory of arrays.

$$M = \{ \underbrace{r(w(a, i, x), j) \neq x}_1, \underbrace{r(w(a, i, x), j) \neq r(a, j)}_2 \}$$

$i = j$) Then, $r(w(a, i, x), j) = x$. Contradiction with 1.

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Case Splitting

A *complete* T -solver reasons by cases via (internal) case splitting and backtracking mechanisms

An alternative is to lift case splitting and backtracking from the T -solver to the SAT engine

Basic idea: encode case splits as sets of clauses and send them as needed to the SAT engine for it to split on them [BNOT06]

Possible benefits:

- All case-splitting is coordinated by the SAT engine
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Basic Scenario:

$$M = \{ \dots, s = \underbrace{r(w(a, i, t), j)}_{s'}, \dots \}$$

- Main SMT module: "Is M T -unsatisfiable?"
- T -solver: "I do not know yet, but it will help me if you consider these *theory lemmas*:"

$$s = s' \wedge i = j \rightarrow s = t, \quad \neg s = s' \wedge i \neq j \rightarrow s = r(a, j)''$$

Splitting on Demand

Basic idea: encode case splits as a set of clauses and send them as needed to the SAT engine for it to split on them

Basic Scenario:

$$M = \{ \dots, s = \underbrace{r(w(a, i, t), j)}_{s'}, \dots \}$$

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Modeling Splitting on Demand

To model the generation of theory lemmas for case splits, add the rule

T-Learn

$$\frac{\models_T \exists \mathbf{v} (l_1 \vee \dots \vee l_n) \quad l_1, \dots, l_n \in L_S \quad \mathbf{v} \text{ vars not in } F}{F := F \cup \{l_1 \vee \dots \vee l_n\}}$$

where L_S is a finite set of literals dependent on the initial set of clauses (see [BNOT06] for a formal definition of L_S)

Note: For many theories with a theory solver, there exists an appropriate finite L_S for every input F
The set L_S does not need to be computed explicitly

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Now we can relax the requirement on the theory solver:

When $M \models_p F$, it must *either*

- *determine whether $M \models_T \perp$ or*
- *generate a new clause by ***T-Learn*** containing at least one literal of L_S undefined in M*

The T -solver is required to determine whether $M \models_T \perp$ only if all literals in L_S are defined in M

Note: In practice, to determine if $M \models_T \perp$, the T -solver only needs a small subset of L_S to be defined in M

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Example — Theory of Finite Sets

$$F : x = y \cup z \wedge y \neq \emptyset \vee x \neq z$$

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$x = y \cup z$	F	by Propagate ⁺
$x = y \cup z \bullet y = \emptyset$	F	by Decide
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T-solver can make the following deductions at this point:

$$e \in x \cdots \Rightarrow e \in y \cup z \cdots \Rightarrow e \in y \cdots \Rightarrow e \in \emptyset \Rightarrow \perp$$

This enables an application of *T-Conflict* with clause

$$x \neq y \cup z \vee y \neq \emptyset \vee x = z \vee e \notin x \vee e \in z$$

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Correctness Results

Correctness results can be extended to the new rule.

Soundness: The new ***T-Learn*** rule maintains satisfiability of the clause set.

Completeness: As long as the theory solver can decide $M \models_T \perp$ when all literals in L_S are determined, the system is still complete.

Termination: The system terminates under the same conditions as before. Roughly:

- Any lemma is (re)learned only finitely many times
- **Restart** is applied with increased periodicity

Suggested Readings

1. R. Nieuwenhuis, A. Oliveras, and C. Tinelli. **Solving SAT and SAT Modulo Theories: From an abstract Davis-Putnam-Logemann-Loveland procedure to DPLL(T)**. Journal of the ACM, 53(6):937-977, 2006.
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