

Genetic and Evolutionary Computation

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Genetic Programming Theory and Practice XVI

 Springer

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*We dedicate this book to the memory of the
co-founder of the workshop series on
Genetic Programming Theory and Practice,
Rick Riolo, who passed away on August 25,
2018.*

Foreword

I first met Rick Riolo in the late 1990s. I'd followed a well-beaten path by contacting John Holland to talk about GP. John politely referred me to Rick, and when I got to Rick's office in the Program for the Study of Complex Systems, I found a tall, slightly balding man in a tie-dye shirt with a face like a figure out of Leonardo's sketchbook. I asked if he was Rick Riolo. He agreed that he was, and we talked for about an hour about a scheme that I had for a Genetic Programming system. He was courteous but to the point saying what I was proposing was something he hadn't heard of before but was interested in seeing if it would work. This was the start of a friendship that lasted until his death this year. Over the years, we did some consulting work together, our families socialized, and we worked on several of the GPTP Workshops over the years.

He introduced himself as being in charge of the hardware at CSCS—I took this to mean he was a tech. I quickly learned that he was much more than that! Rick was one of the members of the BACH group at CSCS and was known in particular for his use of GAs to study the prisoner's dilemma. He had been working with GAs for decades with John Holland and the other members of the BACH group and was one of the early people working and teaching at the Santa Fe Institute.

Elsewhere I've told the story of how GPTP came to be, but while I made some suggestions of the organization of GPTP, Rick was the person who was the one constant throughout the years until he became too ill to manage the workshop. With the gracious staff of CSCS and Rick's quiet skill at making hard things look easy, GPTP was always on an even keel for the days of the workshop. More and more over the years, GPTP grew in importance under Rick's quiet stewardship.

However, though Rick was quiet, he was funny and his humor was often acerbic. One time, when we were putting together one of the early books, we had an author whose chapter was way over the page limit we set. We had sent it back and asked him to cut it in half, and when he returned it, he had cut maybe two pages. I expressed my frustration as time was getting short, but all Rick said was that for a smart man, he couldn't count very well.

When we started GPTP, we had no idea that it would last as long as it did. In fact, we thought it was a one-off event. As the years past, I would often sit next to Rick for at least one of the days, and after a particularly exciting talk, I leaned over to Rick and asked him if GPTP reminded him of the early years of GAs. He paused a moment and said that it reminded him more of the early days of the Santa Fe Institute.

When his disease kept him from joining us at GPTP, we took GPTP to him by live streaming and also visiting him at his home. In 2015 John Holland, who was one of the godfathers of GPTP, died. John was a close friend of Rick, and in the normal course of things, Rick would have written the dedication to John in the Foreword of that year's GPTP book, but his disease stopped him from doing so. He asked me to write them a thing that was both heartbreaking and daunting, but since Rick asked, I did my best. When I had done, I read it to him and told him that I tried to find the words that he would have used and wished with all my heart that he could have written them. We both cried a little, and I left that night knowing that Rick was slipping away from us.

When I heard from Carl Simon that Rick had died, I sat and thought about the years I'd known Rick, the things we'd done together, particularly at GPTP. Our children had grown up and were adults. CSCS had changed; Carl Simon, who had started the ball rolling for GPTP, had retired. But in thinking of Rick, I am grateful for all that he did for us, and I know how much we will all miss him.

Ann Arbor, MI, USA
October 2018

Bill Worzel

Preface

The 16th instance of the *Workshop on Genetic Programming Theory and Practice* (GPTP) was held in Ann Arbor, Michigan, from May 17 to May 20, 2018. It was held at the University of Michigan and was organized and supported by the University's Center for the Study of Complex Systems.

This book contains the written contributions of the workshop's participants. Each contribution was drafted, read, and reviewed by other participants prior to the workshop. Each was then presented at the workshop and subsequently revised after the workshop on the basis of feedback received during the event.

GPTP has long held a special place in the genetic programming community, as an unusually intimate, interdisciplinary, and constructive meeting. It brings together researchers and practitioners who are eager to engage with one another deeply, in thoughtful, unhurried discussions of the major challenges and opportunities in the field.

Participation in the workshop is by invitation only, and an effort is made to invite a group of participants each year that is diverse in several ways, including participants both from academia and industry. Efforts are also made to include participants in "adjacent" fields such as evolutionary biology.

GPTP is a single-track workshop, with a schedule that provides ample time for presentations and for discussions, both in response to specific presentations and on more general topics. Participants are encouraged to contribute observations from their own, unique perspectives and to help one another to engage with the presented work. Often, new ideas are developed in these discussions, leading to collaborations after the workshop.

Aside from the presentations of regular contributions, the workshop also features keynote presentations that are chosen to broaden the group's perspective on the theory and practice of genetic programming. This year, the workshop began with a keynote presented by longtime GPTP participant Katya Vladislavleva, now the CEO of DataStories, on "Moonshot thinking and abundance mentality for better data science." On the second day, the keynote was presented by Walter Fontana, Professor of Systems Biology at Harvard Medical School, on "Actual causality in rule-based models." The third and final keynote was delivered by Marco Tomassini,

Professor Emeritus in the Department of Information Systems at the University of Lausanne, on “Strategic games: theory and human behavior.” As can be gathered from their titles, none of these talks focused explicitly on genetic programming per se. But each presented fascinating developments that connect to open issues in genetic programming theory and practice in intriguing ways.

While most readers of this volume will not have had the pleasure of attending the workshop’s presentations and discussions, our hope is that they will nonetheless be able to appreciate and engage with the ideas that were presented. We also hope that all readers will gain an understanding of the current state of the field and that those who seek to do so will be able to use the work presented herein to advance their own work and to make additional contributions to the future of the field.

Acknowledgments

We would like to thank all of the participants for again making GP Theory and Practice a successful workshop 2018. As is always the case, it produced a lot of interesting and high-energy discussions, as well as speculative thoughts and new ideas for further work. The keynote speakers did an excellent job at raising our awareness and provided thought-provoking ideas about the potential of Genetic Programming and its place in the world.

We would also like to thank our financial supporters for making the existence of GP Theory and Practice possible for the past 15 years and counting. For 2018, we did not have a major fund-raising drive but instead made good use of what had been left from earlier workshops. Those funds were contributed by:

- The Center for the Study of Complex Systems at the University of Michigan
- John Koza
- Jason H. Moore
- Babak Hodjat at Sentient
- Michael Korn, Lantern LLC
- Mark Kotanchek at Evolved Analytics
- Stuart Card
- Thomas Kern
- The Heuristic and Evolutionary Algorithms Laboratory at the Upper Austria University of Applied Sciences

A number of people made key contributions to the organization and assisted our participants during their stay in Ann Arbor. Foremost among them are Linda Wood and Mita Gibson who made the workshop run smoothly with their diligent efforts behind the scene before, during, and after the workshop. Special thanks go to the Springer Publishing Company for providing the editorial assistance for producing this book. We are particularly grateful for the contractual assistance by Melissa Fearon at Springer and all their staff has done to make this book possible.

We would like to express our gratitude especially to Carl Simon and Charles Doering, the champions of the workshop series at the Center for the Study of Complex Systems. Finally and foremost, we want to thank Rick Riolo for his dedication to the workshop series since its beginning. With the passing of Rick, one of the founders of the workshop series, we are entering a new era for GTP. This 16th edition represents a transition with some organizational changes that will need to be considered to secure the future of this very successful workshop series.

East Lansing, MI, USA
Amherst, MA, USA
East Lansing, MI, USA
October 2018

Wolfgang Banzhaf
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Contents

1	Exploring Genetic Programming Systems with MAP-Elites	1
	Emily Dolson, Alexander Lalejini, and Charles Ofria	
1.1	Introduction	1
1.2	Methods	3
1.2.1	Computational Substrate	3
1.2.2	Evolution	6
1.2.3	Experimental Design	8
1.3	Results and Discussion	10
1.4	Conclusion	14
	References	15
2	The Evolutionary Buffet Method	17
	Arend Hintze, Jory Schossau, and Clifford Bohm	
2.1	Introduction	17
2.2	Methods	18
2.2.1	Markov Brains: An Introduction	19
2.2.2	Genetic Encoding	20
2.2.3	Direct Encoding	22
2.2.4	Multi-Step Functions	22
2.2.5	Gate Types	22
2.2.6	Tasks	23
2.2.7	Experimental Parameters	30
2.3	Results	30
2.4	Discussion and Conclusion	32
2.5	Future Work	34
	References	35

3 Emergent Policy Discovery for Visual Reinforcement Learning Through Tangled Program Graphs: A Tutorial 37
Stephen Kelly, Robert J. Smith, and Malcolm I. Heywood

3.1 Introduction 37

3.2 Related Work 38

 3.2.1 Evolving Graphs 38

 3.2.2 Evolution of Multiple Programs Without Graphs 40

3.3 Visual Reinforcement Learning 41

3.4 Tangled Program Graphs 42

 3.4.1 Developmental Cycle 45

 3.4.2 Variation 46

 3.4.3 Agent Evaluation 47

3.5 Case Study: Arcade Learning Environment 49

3.6 Case Study: VizDoom 51

3.7 Discussion 54

References 55

4 Strong Typing, Swarm Enhancement, and Deep Learning Feature Selection in the Pursuit of Symbolic Regression-Classification 59
Michael F. Kornis and Tim May

4.1 Introduction 59

4.2 Comparison Algorithms 61

 4.2.1 AMAXSC in Brief 61

 4.2.2 MDC in Brief 61

 4.2.3 M₂GP in Brief 62

 4.2.4 LDA Background 62

 4.2.5 LDA Matrix Formalism 64

 4.2.6 LDA Assisted Fitness Implementation 65

 4.2.7 Bees Swarm Optimization 69

4.3 User-Defined Typing System 69

 4.3.1 User-Defined Templates with Constraints 70

 4.3.2 Strong Typing 72

4.4 Deep Learning Enhancements 72

4.5 Artificial Test Problems 75

4.6 Real World Banking Problem 76

4.7 Performance on the Theoretical Problems 78

4.8 Performance on the Real World Problem 78

4.9 Conclusion 80

Appendix: Artificial Test Problems 80

References 83

- 5 Cluster Analysis of a Symbolic Regression Search Space** 85
 Gabriel Kronberger, Lukas Kammerer, Bogdan Burlacu,
 Stephan M. Winkler, Michael Kommenda, and Michael Affenzeller

 - 5.1 Introduction 85
 - 5.2 Methodology 87
 - 5.2.1 Grammar Enumeration 88
 - 5.2.2 Phenotypic Similarity 90
 - 5.2.3 Genotypic Similarity 91
 - 5.2.4 Clustering and Visualization 91
 - 5.2.5 Mapping GP Solution Candidates 93
 - 5.3 Results 93
 - 5.3.1 Phenotypic Mapping 94
 - 5.3.2 Genotypic Mapping 96
 - 5.3.3 Cluster Qualities for Benchmark Problems 97
 - 5.3.4 Mapping of GP Solution Candidates 98
 - 5.4 Discussion 99
 - 5.5 Conclusion 101
 - References 101

- 6 What Else Is in an Evolved Name? Exploring Evolvable Specificity with SignalGP** 103
 Alexander Lalejini and Charles Ofria

 - 6.1 Introduction 103
 - 6.2 SignalGP 105
 - 6.3 The Value of Imprecision in Evolvable Names 106
 - 6.3.1 The Changing Environment Problem 107
 - 6.3.2 Results and Discussion 109
 - 6.4 The Value of Not Listening 112
 - 6.4.1 The Distracting Environment Problem 113
 - 6.4.2 Results and Discussion 114
 - 6.5 What Else Is in an Evolved Name? Broadened Applications of Tag-Based Naming in SignalGP 117
 - 6.5.1 SignalGP Function Regulation 117
 - 6.5.2 Multi-Representation SignalGP 117
 - 6.5.3 Major Transitions in SignalGP 118
 - 6.6 Conclusion 119
 - References 120

- 7 Lexicase Selection Beyond Genetic Programming** 123
 Blossom Metevier, Anil Kumar Saini, and Lee Spector

 - 7.1 Introduction 123
 - 7.2 Lexicase Selection 124
 - 7.3 Problems 126
 - 7.3.1 Boolean Constraint Satisfaction 126
 - 7.3.2 Random Problem Generation 126

7.4	Experimental Methods	127
7.4.1	Genetic Algorithm	127
7.4.2	Variation	128
7.4.3	Parent Selection	128
7.5	Results	129
7.5.1	Success Rates by Parent Selection Method	129
7.5.2	Success Rates by Tournament Size	130
7.5.3	Errors over Evolutionary Time	131
7.5.4	Mean Least Error	131
7.5.5	Success Generations	132
7.5.6	Diversity over Evolutionary Time	133
7.6	Discussion	133
	References	135
8	Evolving Developmental Programs That Build Neural Networks for Solving Multiple Problems	137
	Julian F. Miller, Dennis G. Wilson, and Sylvain Cussat-Blanc	
8.1	Introduction	137
8.2	Related Work	138
8.3	The Neuron Model	140
8.3.1	Model Parameters	144
8.3.2	Developing the Brain and Evaluating the Fitness	145
8.3.3	Updating the Brain	146
8.3.4	Running and Updating the Soma	147
8.3.5	Updating the Dendrites and Building the New Neuron ...	147
8.4	Cartesian GP	149
8.5	Benchmark Problems	151
8.6	Experiments and Results	151
8.7	Tables of Results	153
8.8	Comparisons and Statistical Significance	154
8.9	Evolved Developmental Programs	156
8.10	Developed ANNs for Each Classification Problem	156
8.11	Evolving Neural Learning Programs	158
8.12	Further Work	163
8.13	Conclusions	164
	Appendix: Detailed Algorithms	165
	References	176
9	The Elephant in the Room: Towards the Application of Genetic Programming to Automatic Programming	179
	Michael O'Neill and David Fagan	
9.1	Introduction	179
9.2	A Journey with Genetic Programming and Automatic Programming	180
9.3	A Journey in Software-Defined Communications Networks	181
9.3.1	Network Scheduling	184
9.3.2	Network Configuration	186

- 9.3.3 Combining Network Configuration and Scheduling 187
- 9.3.4 Summary 188
- 9.4 Discussion and Concluding Remarks 188
- References 190
- 10 Untapped Potential of Genetic Programming: Transfer Learning and Outlier Removal..... 193**
 Leonardo Trujillo, Luis Muñoz, Uriel López,
 and Daniel E. Hernández
 - 10.1 Introduction 193
 - 10.2 Transfer Learning 195
 - 10.2.1 Case Study 196
 - 10.2.2 Experiments and Results 197
 - 10.2.3 Discussion 200
 - 10.3 Detecting Outliers 200
 - 10.3.1 Case Study 202
 - 10.3.2 Experiment and Results 202
 - 10.3.3 Discussion 204
 - 10.4 Conclusions and Future Outlook 205
 - References 205
- 11 Program Search for Machine Learning Pipelines Leveraging Symbolic Planning and Reinforcement Learning 209**
 Fangkai Yang, Steven Gustafson, Alexander Elkholy, Daoming Lyu,
 and Bo Liu
 - 11.1 Introduction 209
 - 11.2 Related Work 211
 - 11.3 Background 213
 - 11.3.1 Symbolic Planning 213
 - 11.3.2 Reinforcement Learning 214
 - 11.4 Methodology 215
 - 11.4.1 Pipeline Generation 215
 - 11.4.2 Parameter Tuning and Pipeline Evaluation 218
 - 11.4.3 AutoML Framework 219
 - 11.5 Empirical Evaluation and Discussion 221
 - 11.5.1 Dataset and Problem Instance 221
 - 11.5.2 Hypotheses 222
 - 11.5.3 Pipeline Profiling 222
 - 11.5.4 Optimal Pipeline Generation 224
 - 11.5.5 Pipeline Ranking 225
 - 11.5.6 Extracted Knowledge About Problem 228
 - 11.6 Conclusion and Future Work 229
 - References 230
- Index 233**

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