

# Evaluating quality of service for service level agreements

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June 26, 2006

## Abstract

Quantitative analysis of quality-of-service metrics is an important tool in early evaluation of service provision. This analysis depends on being able to estimate the average duration of critical activities used by the service but at the earliest stages of service planning it may be impossible to obtain accurate estimates of the expected duration of these activities. We analyse the time-dependent behaviour of an automotive rescue service in the context of uncertainty about durations. We deploy a distributed computing platform to allow the efficient derivation of quantitative analysis results across the range of possible values for assignments of durations to the symbolic rates of our high-level formal model of the service expressed in a stochastic process algebra.

## 1 Introduction

Service-oriented computing (SOC) is an important focus area for industrial computer systems, highlighting the crucial interplay between service provider and service consumer. Service-level agreements (SLAs) and service policies are key issues in service-oriented computing. A service-level agreement typically incorporates a time bound and a probability bound on a particular path through the system. It will make clear the metric against which the service is being judged, how the service provision will be measured, and the penalty to be exacted if the service is not delivered with the agreed level of quality of service (QoS). We are concerned here with the quantitative core of an SLA and wish to answer formally questions of the form “Will at least 90% of all requests receive a response within 3 seconds?” which has as a probability bound “at least 90%”, as a time bound “within 3 seconds”, and as the path through the system “from request to response”.

A service-level agreement needs to be established in the early specification phase for a commissioned service, and the service provider needs to ensure not later than that point in time that the SLA is credible. High-level formal modelling is helpful here because it allows us to pose precise questions about a formal model of the service to be provided and to answer them using efficient, proven analysis tools [Kno96]. The difficulty at the early specification phase is to know whether we can match the quantitative constraints of customers’ requests against the efficiency or performance of the implementation of our service. In the early specification phase in model-driven software development we have no measurement data which we can use to parameterise our high-level quantitative model (since the implementation has not yet been built), leading to uncertainty about the values of the rate constants to be used in the computation of the passage-time quantiles needed to answer the questions about satisfaction of QoS constraints.

This uncertainty is manageable in practice because although we may not know precisely the value of the rate constants to be used in the model we may know a range of values within which they will lie. The problem then is simply to evaluate our model against our SLA measure a (possibly large) number of times. This can be done by performing a parameter sweep across the range of possible values for the rates. If each of these computations leads to the conclusion that the SLA can be met, then we can accept it even in the presence of uncertainty about the rate values. However, if any of the computations leads to the conclusion that the SLA cannot be met, then we must revise the SLA to loosen the time or probability bounds which it mandates and see if this weaker SLA is still acceptable to the service consumer. An

alternative would be to try to improve some of the rates at which key activities are performed, in order to fulfil the stricter SLA and avoid the need to weaken the time or probability bounds. To help with identifying the key rates in the model we need to investigate the sensitivity of the model to changes in individual rates. To do this we evaluate our chosen measure for each rate repeatedly while varying the rate throughout its range of allowable values. This will allow us to identify those rates which have a major impact on performance if varied and those rates which impact on performance little.

Specifically, we are addressing in the present paper analysis methods and tools for the efficient computation of cumulative distribution functions (CDFs) which decide whether a service-level agreement will be met. Set against this means of evaluating SLAs by parameter sweep is the attendant computational cost of the many numerical computations needed to compute the many CDFs required. The approach which we follow here is to evaluate simultaneously many runs of the Markov chain analyser used. Parameter sweep is an approach which falls into the class of problems commonly known as “embarrassingly parallelizable”. That is, there are many independent copies of the code being run in isolation with none of the complexities of management of synchronisation points which are usually associated with parallel codes. In this setting a simple approach based on a Network of Workstations (NoW) architecture will be effective in delivering the computational effort needed.

We used the Condor [Con06] high-throughput computing platform to distribute the necessary SLA computation across many hosts. Condor is a widely-used long-standing workload management system. A recent paper presenting the key ideas is [TTL05].

We model our service in the PEPA process algebra [Hil96]. Our models are compiled into stochastic Petri nets by the Imperial PEPA Compiler, *ipc*, and these are analysed by the Hydra release of the DNAmaca Markov chain analyser [BK04], a state-of-the-art stochastic Petri net tool which computes the passage-time quantiles needed in the computation of a CDF used in the evaluation of an SLA.

PEPA models submitted to *ipc* must be Cyclic PEPA [HR98], formed by the composition of co-operating sequential components. Each of the sequential components at the leaves of the process tree is viewed as a finite state automaton with timed Markovian transitions and converted into a Petri net state machine. *ipc* then recurses back up the process tree composing these nets until it has produced a single net representing the complete PEPA model.

## 2 Related work

Our use of Hydra on a distributed workload management system such as Condor is different in nature from previous work on using Hydra on distributed-memory parallel machines (examples include [DHK04]) and distributed compute clusters (examples include [BDHK03]). One difference is that we initiate our Hydra execution from a PEPA model, via *ipc*, and are therefore using Markovian modelling exclusively ([BDHK03] addresses semi-Markov models). In work such as [DHK04], [BDHK03] and [KHMK00] the emphasis is on *grande* modelling, where detailed models of systems are evaluated in the setting of many component replications. Due to the multitude of possible interleavings of the local states of each of these subcomponents it is not uncommon for such *grande* modelling to give rise to statespaces of order  $10^6$  [BDHK03],  $10^7$  [DHK04],  $10^8$  [KHMK00], or  $10^9$  [MC05].

In contrast to the above, the style of modelling which we are using here is diminutive. Most nodes in our Condor cluster are typical desktop Pentium 4 PCs, with 1 CPU and with 1Gb of RAM. Each of these must be able to solve our modelling problem independently. The difference is that the prior work cited above is solving very large models a relatively small number of times whereas we are solving relatively small models a very large number of times.

An alternative method of answering the same question about service-level agreements would be first to encode the statement of the QoS measure as a formula in Continuous Stochastic Logic (CSL) [ASSB96] and then to model-check the formula against the PEPA model using the PRISM probabilistic symbolic model checker [KNP02]. Computationally, this solution procedure would be very similar to the method which we employ, using uniformisation [Gra77, GM84] to compute the transient analysis result needed from the continuous-time Markov chain representation underlying the PEPA model.

While this approach would have been successful for solving one run of the numerical computing procedure required we believe that we would have found difficulty in hosting multiple runs of PRISM on the Condor platform. As a batch processing system Condor has a notion of execution context called a *universe*. The *ipc* and Hydra modelling tools which we used run as native executables in Condor’s

`vanilla` universe. Java applications run on Condor's `java` universe (developed in [GLL<sup>+</sup>00]). However, PRISM combines both Java code and native C code in its use of the CUDD binary decision diagram library [Som01] via the Java Native Interface. The general approach to running Java code with JNI calls under Condor would be to execute the JVM under the `vanilla` universe because the `java` universe cannot guarantee to provide necessary libraries for the native code part of PRISM. However, this would in general require first copying the JVM binary onto the remote machine before execution of PRISM could begin. This would impose a heavy penalty on run-time which would offset significantly the advantages to be gained from Condor-based distribution.

### 3 Sensitivity analysis

Due to the roles which activities play in creating the dynamics of our stochastic process algebra model it may be that increasing the rate of one activity increases the score obtained by the model on our chosen performance measure of interest. Conversely, increasing the rate of another activity may decrease the score which we get. Changing one rate a little may vary the score a lot. Changing another rate a lot might only vary the score a little. The study of how changes in performance depend on changes in parameter values in this way is known as *sensitivity analysis*.

Our main aim here is to determine that our SLA is met across all of the possible combinations of average values of rates across all their allowable ranges. However, by collecting the results where one rate is varied we can examine the sensitivity of our measure with respect to that rate, at no added computational cost.

The practical relevance of sensitivity analysis is that we may find that the model is relatively insensitive to changes in one of the rates. In this case we need not spend as much effort in trying to determine precisely the exact average value of this rate. This effort would be better directed to determining the values of rates for which the model has been shown to be sensitive. Further, sensitivity analysis will identify the most critical areas to improve if failing to meet an SLA.

### 4 Case Study: Automotive crash scenario

Our case study concerns the assessment of a service level agreement offered by an automotive collision support service. The scenario with which these systems are concerned is road traffic accidents and dispatch of medical assistance to crash victims. Drivers wishing to use the service must have in-car GPS location tracking devices with communication capabilities and have pre-registered their mobile phone information with the service.

The scenario under study considers the following sequence of events.

- A road traffic accident occurs. The car airbag deploys.
- Deployment of the air bag causes the on-board safety system to report the car's current location (obtained by GPS) to a pre-established accident report endpoint.
- The service at the reporting endpoint attempts to call the registered driver's mobile phone.
- If there is no answer to the call then medical assistance is dispatched to the reported location of the car (presuming that the driver has been incapacitated by injuries sustained in the accident).

There may be many possible reasons why the driver does not answer the phone. The phone may be turned off; its battery may be flat; the phone may be out of network range; the driver may have switched to a new telephone provider, and not informed the collision support service; the phone may not be in the car; it may have been smashed on impact; or many other possibilities.

The accident reporting service cannot know the exact reason why the driver does not answer the phone. They only know that an accident has happened which was serious enough to cause the airbag to be deployed, and that the driver has not confirmed that they do not need medical assistance. In this setting they will dispatch medical help (even if sometimes this will mean that help is sent when it is not absolutely necessary).

The service level agreement related to this scenario concerns the response time of the passage from the deployment of the airbag to the dispatch of medical assistance. The parameters of our modelling study are:

- the rate at which information on the location of the car—and any other pertinent information such as speed on impact, engine status, and other diagnostic information obtained from the on-board diagnostic systems and controllers—can be reported to the accident reporting service;
- the time taken to confirm that the driver is not answering their mobile telephone; and
- the time taken to contact the emergency services to dispatch medical assistance.

None of these parameters are known exactly, but their average values are known to lie within a range of acceptable operation. We are, of course, interested in worst case bounds on passage-time quantiles and also in best case analysis but also in the variety of possible responses in between.

## 4.1 PEPA model

In this section we consider the sequence of events which begins with the deployment of the airbag after the crash and finishes with the dispatch of the medical response team. The first phase of the sequence is concerned with relaying the information to the remote service, reporting the accident. When the diagnostic report from the car is received the service processes the report and matches it to the driver information stored on their database.

$$\begin{aligned} Car_1 &\stackrel{def}{=} (airbag, r_1).Car_2 \\ Car_2 &\stackrel{def}{=} (reportToService, r_2).Car_3 \\ Car_3 &\stackrel{def}{=} (processReport, r_3).Car_4 \end{aligned}$$

The second phase of this passage through the system focuses on the attempted dialogue between the service and the registered driver of the car. We consider the case where the driver does not answer the incoming call because this is the case which leads to the medical response team being sent.

$$\begin{aligned} Car_4 &\stackrel{def}{=} (callDriversPhone, r_4).Car_5 \\ Car_5 &\stackrel{def}{=} (timeoutDriversPhone, r_5).Car_6 \end{aligned}$$

The service makes a final check on the execution of the procedure before the decision is taken to send medical help. At this stage the driver is awaiting rescue.

$$\begin{aligned} Car_6 &\stackrel{def}{=} (rescue, r_6).Car_7 \\ Car_7 &\stackrel{def}{=} (awaitRescue, r_7).Car_1 \end{aligned}$$

This takes us to the end of the passage of interest through the system behaviour.

## 4.2 Rates constants and ranges

All timings are expressed in minutes, because that is an appropriate granularity for the events which are being modelled. Thus a rate of 1.0 means that something happens once a minute (on average). A rate of 6.0 means that the associated activity happens six times a minute on average, or that its mean or expected duration is ten seconds, which is an equivalent statement. A table of the ranges of average rate values used appears in Figure 1.

## 4.3 Sensitivity analysis for the automotive crash scenario

We consider how the cumulative distribution function for the passage from airbag deployment to dispatch of medical assistance is affected as the values of the rates  $r_2$  to  $r_6$  are varied as specified in the table in Figure 1. The results are presented in Figure 2.

What we see from these results is that variations in upstream rates (near the start of the passage of interest) such as  $r_2$ ,  $r_3$  and  $r_4$  have less impact overall than variations in downstream rates (near the end

Rate	Value		Meaning
	min	max	
$r_1$	600.0	600.0	an airbag deploys in 1/10 of a second
$r_2$	2.0	10.0	the car can transmit location data in 6 to 30 seconds
$r_3$	0.5	1.5	it takes about one minute to register the incoming data
$r_4$	1.5	2.5	it takes about thirty seconds to call the driver’s phone
$r_5$	1.0	60.0	give the driver from a second to one minute to answer
$r_6$	0.25	3.0	vary about one minute to decide to dispatch medical help
$r_7$	1.0	1.0	arbitrary value — the driver is now awaiting rescue

Figure 1: Table of minimum and maximum values of the rates from the model

of the passage of interest) such as  $r_5$  and  $r_6$ . This is true even when the scale over which the upstream rates are varied is much more than the scale over which the downstream rates are varied (for example, contrast variation in  $r_2$  against variation in  $r_6$ ).

The conclusion to be drawn from such an observation is that, if failing to meet a desired quality of service specified in an SLA then it is better to expend effort in making a faster decision to dispatch medical help (governed by rate  $r_6$ ) than to expend effort in trying to transmit location data faster (governed by rate  $r_2$ ), over the range of variability in the rates considered in the present study.

Another use of this sensitivity data would be to find an optimum time to hold while waiting for the driver to answer the phone. The optimisation problem to be solved here is to decide how long to wait before terminating the call in case of non-answer. If the service providers wait too long then they risk failing to meet their SLA. If they wait too little then they risk dispatching medical assistance when it is not actually necessary. In this case the sensitivity graph of rate  $r_5$  shows a portion where changes in rate value have little impact and so targeting the lowest rate here gives the driver more time to answer the phone.

## 5 Relation to model checking

In this section we consider how the results expressed above relate to model checking a CSL formula against our model of the system. Expressed as a CSL formula an example of the kind of question which we are asking is the following.

$$airbag \Rightarrow \mathcal{P}_{>0.9}[true \ U^{[0,10]} \ rescue]$$

In words, this says “If the airbag in the car deploys, is it true with probability at least 0.9 that the rescue service will be sent within 10 minutes?”

We consider a more general form of the question which is the following

$$airbag \Rightarrow \mathcal{P}_{\bowtie p}[true \ U^{[0,10]} \ rescue]$$

We consider this for all relations  $\bowtie \in \{<, \leq, >, \geq\}$  and for all values of the probability bound  $0 \leq p \leq 1$ . Further, we answer these general formulae not for only a single assignment of values to symbolic rate variables (as would be the case for conventional model checking) but across the range of assignments presented in Figure 1.

In order to determine upper and lower bounds on the probability with which the rescue service is dispatched within 10 minutes we can simply plot the probability computed via transient analysis against experiment number. Each mapping of rate values onto symbolic rate names is an experiment.

The graphs of computed probability against experiment number for the first fifty experiments for time bounds of five minutes and ten minutes are shown in Figure 3. Experiments are grouped whereby a group contains about five evaluations of the CDF corresponding to the SLA for five assignments of concrete rate values to one of the symbolic rates  $r_2$  to  $r_6$ . This shows slightly more than the first eight groups of experiments.

The graphs of computed probability against experiment number for time bounds of five minutes and ten minutes for all 3750 experiments are shown in Figure 4. At this level of granularity it is not easy to

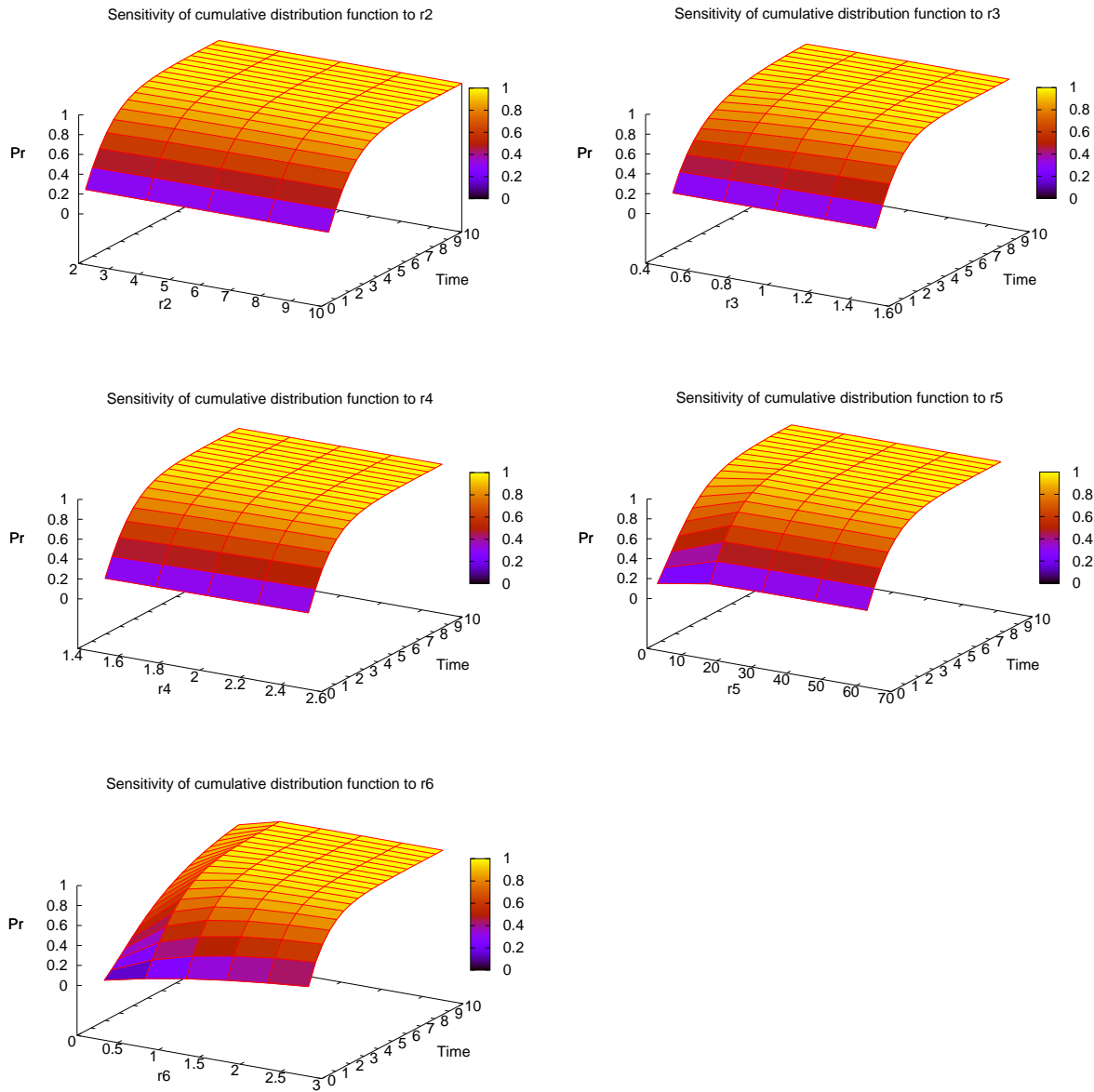


Figure 2: Graphs of cumulative distribution function sensitivity to changes in rates for the passage from airbag deployment to dispatch of medical assistance

pick out groups of runs but one can see that all experiments achieve at least a minimum QoS that at least 83% of calls to the service will lead to medical assistance being dispatched within 10 minutes.

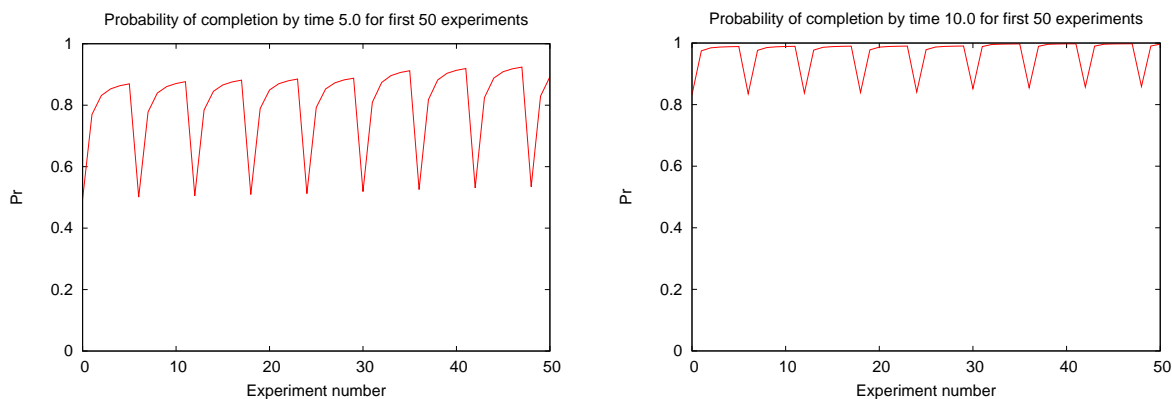


Figure 3: Graphs of probability of completing the passage from airbag deployment to medical assistance dispatch within five minutes and ten minutes plotted against experiment number over the first fifty experiments

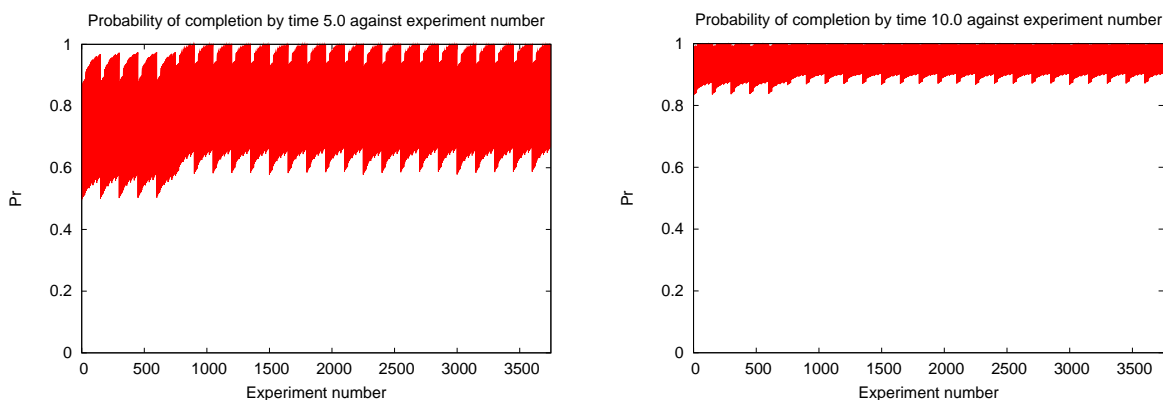


Figure 4: Graph of probability of completing the passage from airbag deployment to medical assistance dispatch within five minutes and ten minutes plotted against experiment number over all 3750 experiments

One use of these graphs is to identify all of the combinations of average rate values which allow the service to satisfy an SLA which requires their quality of service to be above a specific threshold. For example, say that the service providers wish to, or need to, meet the SLA that the rescue service is dispatched within 10 minutes in 92% of cases of airbag deployment. The graph in Figure 4 identifies all of the combinations of parameter values which achieve this bound, or do better. Some of these might be much easier to realise than others so the service could meet its QoS requirement by striving for those combinations of average rates for individual actions of the system such as taking the decision to dispatch medical help (at rate  $r_6$ ).

## 6 Further work

Our future programme of work on using ipc and Hydra on the Condor distributed computing platform is directed towards making better use of the support which Condor provides for distributed computing. This will include the use of the `standard` universe which will allow checkpointing within a run, and

allow a long-running Hydra computation to be migrated in-run from a machine claimed by a user onto a presently-idle machine.

In this work we have made the conceptually convenient simplification of thinking of Hydra as a single, indivisible application which accepts a stochastic Petri net as input and returns as its output a CDF showing passage-time quantiles. While this is an accurate conceptual description Hydra is in fact structured as a collection of independent components (a parser, a state-space generator, a functional analyser, a solver and a uniformiser). The application which we think of as Hydra is a high-level driver executing these components in the order described above.

The opportunity which this gives us for the future is to structure Hydra as a directed acyclic graph (DAG) of component tasks. To run Hydra on Condor in this way we would specify the inputs and outputs from each sub-component (state-space generator, functional analyser and others) and connect these together replacing Hydra's top-level driver with the appropriate use of Condor's DAG manager (DAGman). This would offer a greater range of possibilities for component deployment on our Condor pool.

## 7 Conclusions

The automotive rescue case study used in this paper gives rise to a relatively small continuous-time Markov chain, the unit solution cost of which is not excessive. However, when repeatedly re-running this solution procedure for different parameter values these small costs quickly start to add up. The Condor distributed computing system allowed us to execute these many copies of the job simultaneously.

The parallel structure of the joint computation was very simple; running a sequential application multiple times. No dynamic process creation was required within an individual run, and no inter-process communication was needed. A full-blown parallel computing infrastructure such as PVM or MPI would have been excessive but Condor suited our problem very well.

The style of analysis which we pursue here is embarrassingly parallelizable, meaning that the throughput of jobs increases linearly with the number of machines available. This means that if given access to a larger Condor pool, or the ability to connect Condor pools together, then the rate at which jobs can be processed continues to grow and is not capped by an inherent bound on problem scalability. Thus the combination of `ipc`, Hydra and Condor as a modelling and experimentation framework provides a strong platform on which to conduct larger and more complex experiments.

**Acknowledgements:** The authors are supported by the SENSORIA project (EU FET-IST Global Computing 2 project 016004). We are grateful to Angelika Zobel and Nora Koch of F.A.S.T. München for the specification of the automotive case study. We modified the open-source software tool `ipc` developed by Jeremy Bradley and made freely available. We ran our models on the Condor cluster provided in the School of Informatics at Edinburgh and benefited from advice from Chris Cooke on using this effectively.

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## A Imperial PEPA Compiler “Patrick McGoohan” Release

This appendix describes the “Patrick McGoohan” release of the Imperial PEPA Compiler, concentrating specifically on the features which are new in this release.

Compiled versions of this release and open-source source code are available for download from the Web site <http://homepages.inf.ed.ac.uk/s9810217/software/ipc>

### A.1 Input

Below is an example of a tiny PEPA model in the concrete syntax accepted by `ipc`. This model is stored in the file `tiny.pepa`.

```
r1 = 1.0;
r2 = 2.0;
r3 = 3.0;

P1 = (start, r1).P2;
P2 = (run, r2).P3;
P3 = (stop, r3).P1;

P1 <> P1
```

This example defines three rates (`r1`, `r2` and `r3`). Rate identifiers must begin with a lowercase letter.

Three processes are defined (`P1`, `P2` and `P3`). Process identifiers must begin with an uppercase letter. These processes have a simple sequence of activities leading to three local states.

Two instances of the process `P1` are initiated in independent parallel composition. Thus this model defines a continuous-time Markov chain with nine states in all.

### A.2 Specifying source and target options

The `ipc`/Hydra tool chain is concerned with computing passage-time quantiles from a designated source activity (the beginning of the passage) to a designated target activity (the end of the passage).

Thus if we were interested in computing the passage from an occurrence of the `start` activity to the occurrence of the `stop` activity by either of the copies of the process in the tiny model then we would use the command

```
ipc --source=start --target=stop tiny.pepa
```

to generate the Hydra model file to be analysed by a subsequent run of Hydra.

The file contains many default settings for many of the parameters to the Hydra Markov chain analyser. Other command-line options to `ipc` allow us to override these defaults.

### A.3 Specifying start and stop times

Via Hydra, `ipc` computes performance measures such as probability density functions (PDFs) and cumulative density functions (CDFs). Together the PDF and CDF give a complete description of the probability distribution of a random variable. Both are evaluated against increasing time in order to produce function plots. `ipc` has default values for the start time and stop time for the plot, as well as the timestep which determines how many evaluations of these functions Hydra is to do. The command-line options `--starttime`, `--stoptime` and `--timestep` allow us to override these defaults.

To specify a start time of 50 seconds and an end time of 100 seconds with a timestep of 10 seconds we would pass the following command-line options to `ipc`.

```
ipc --starttime 50 --stoptime 100 --timestep 10 ...
```

## A.4 Specifying rates on the command line

By using the `--rate` command-line option it is possible to override the definition of one of the rates used in a PEPA model, in order to generate a Hydra model as output which uses instead the rate specified on the command-line.

```
ipc --rate r1=1.5 --source=start --target=stop tiny.pepa
```

When `ipc` processes the PEPA model in `tiny.pepa` it will use the value 1.5 for the rate `r1` instead of the value specified in the file.

Sometimes we would like to consider the evaluation of the model over a list of rates. By using the plural form in the `--rates` command-line option the modeller can specify a zero-indexed array of values for a rate and pass in a process identifier to allow `ipc` to choose one of them for this run, using the process identifier as an index into the array. A unique process identifier is generated for each run of an application by distributed computing platforms such as Condor.

In a typical use of this command-line option, for example in

```
ipc --processid 0 --rates r1=0.1,0.2,0.4,0.8 ...
```

`ipc` will take 0.1 as the value for rate constant `r1`, because it is in position 0 of the array whereas with

```
ipc --processid 1 --rates r1=0.1,0.2,0.4,0.8 ...
```

`ipc` will take 0.2 as the value for rate constant `r1` because it is in position 1 of the array.

It is possible to specify that more than one rate is varied at a time. For example in

```
ipc --processid 2 --rates r1=0.1,0.2,0.4,0.8 --rates r2=1.0,2.0,3.0,4.0 ...
```

`ipc` will take 0.4 as the value for rate constant `r1` and 3.0 as the value for rate constant `r2`. When two or more arrays of rates are used in this way they must all have the same length.

By combining `--rates` and `--rate` one can vary one rate through a range while adjusting another to a fixed value.

```
ipc --processid 2 --rates r1=0.1,0.2,0.3,0.4 --rate r3=0.725 ...
```

Because long comma-separated arrays of numbers can be difficult to read `ipc` allows the modeller to specify an array of numbers using a starting value, an upper bound and a step-size. For example, the long command

```
ipc --rates r=0.1,0.3,0.5,0.9,1.1,1.3,1.5,1.7,1.9 ...
```

can be abbreviated to

```
ipc --rates r=0.1..1.9:0.2 ...
```

where 0.1 is the starting value, 1.9 is the upper bound, and 0.2 is the step between values. The upper bound need not actually be one of the values but no values larger than it will result.

## A.5 Generating all permutations

Often the user may want to vary more than one rate variable over separate ranges of values. Naively using the `--rates` option would give only a selection of the possible combination of rate values.

As an example, say that we vary five rates across five or six possible values:  $5 \times 5 \times 5 \times 5 \times 6 = 3750$  possible combinations. To try all possible combinations using the `--rates` options would involve writing out by hand `--rates` options for each rate, each with 3750 comma separated values and put these all in the correct order such that all combinations are tried exactly once. Instead the `--permute` option instructs `ipc` to generate all of the combinations so that the command:

```
ipc --permute --rates r1=1.2,1.3 --rates r2=1.4,1.5,1.6 ...
```

is equivalent to

```
ipc --rates r1=1.2,1.2,1.2,1.3,1.3,1.3 --rates r2=1.4,1.5,1.6,1.4,1.5,1.6 ...
```

When using the `--permute` option the length of the arrays of rate values for each rate do not need to be equal. In the above example `r1` takes two distinct values and `r2` takes three distinct values.

## A.6 Recording experiments in a process identifier database

When the `--permute` option is used in combination with the `--processid` option the user can be unsure of the actual rate values used. In this case the `--processDB` option instructs `ipc` to print a file mapping process identifiers to rate values. Therefore the command:

```
ipc --processDB --permute --rates r1=1.2,1.3 --rates r2=1.4,1.5 ...
```

will produce a process database file that looks like:

```
#Pid #r1 #r2
0    1.2 1.4
1    1.2 1.5
2    1.3 1.4
3    1.3 1.5
```

## A.7 Interoperating with Condor

In this paper we have run `ipc` with Hydra over Condor, to do this Condor must be supplied with a configuration file for the particular set of jobs. The `ipc` can be instructed to output an appropriate Condor file. The mode of operation is to debug the model using `ipc` and then run `ipc` giving the `--condor` option. Usually at the same time one would give the `--processDB` option so that the Condor results can be matched up to specific rate values. Our airbag pepa model when run through `ipc` with the command line:

```
ipc --condor --permute --source=airbag --target=rescue \  
    --rates r5=1.0,16.0,31.0,46.0,61.0 \  
    --rates r2=2.0,4.0,6.0,8.0,10.0 \  
    --rates r3=0.5,0.75,1.0,1.25,1.5 \  
    --rates r4=1.5,1.75,2.0,2.25,2.5 \  
    --rates r6=0.25,0.75,1.25,1.75,2.25,2.75 \  
    --timestep 0.5 airbag.pepa
```

gives the following Condor file:

```
#####  
#  
# Filename: airbag.condor  
#  
# This file has been automatically generated by  
# you should edit initial directory option  
#  
# Execute the hypergraph response-time analyser  
# (hydra) on output from the ipc many times  
#  
#####  
  
universe = vanilla  
  
initialdir = EDIT_HERE  
executable = $(initialdir)/hydrus.sh  
arguments = $(Process) $(cluster) $(initialdir)/airbag \  
    -s airbag -t rescue --permute \  
    --rates r5=1.0,16.0,31.0,46.0,61.0 \  
    --rates r2=2.0,4.0,6.0,8.0,10.0 \  
    --rates r3=0.5,0.75,1.0,1.25,1.5 \  
    --rates r4=1.5,1.75,2.0,2.25,2.5 \  
    --rates r6=0.25,0.75,1.25,1.75,2.25,2.75 --timestep 0.5  
environment = HYDRA_S_DIR=$(initialdir)/
```

```

GetEnv          = True

output          = $(initialdir)/output/hydrus.output.$(Process).$(cluster)
error           = $(initialdir)/output/hydrus.error.$(Process).$(cluster)
log             = $(initialdir)/output/hydrus_condor.log.$(Process).$(cluster)

#Recieve an e-mail notification only if there is an error
notification    = ERROR

# kill off any instance of setiathome which is running
nice_user       = false

# run copies of Hydrus simultaneously
queue 3750

```

The file gives as the name of the executable to run the `hydrus.sh` script, this is a very simple script that simply calls `ipc` and then `Hydra` with the appropriate arguments.

### A.7.1 Limiting the size of the Condor pool

The `queue` command in a Condor file queues a number of processes. Where the `--permute` option is given this is equal to the number of combinations of the rate values given. Because this number can become very large very quickly the `--limit` option prevents the produced Condor file from queueing more than the given number of processes. This avoids the accidental submission of a very large number of processes to the Condor pool. For example

```
ipc --limit 4000 --permute ...
```

will never queue more than 4000 jobs, no matter how large is the number of combinations produced by generating all permutations of possible rate values.

## A.8 Being staunch

By default, `ipc` treats warnings as errors. However, the careful checking applied by `ipc`'s static analysis routines is appropriate for model debugging, but may be inconvenient when running in batch mode, processing PEPA inputs and command-line arguments both or either of which may have been generated from another application.

It is now possible to ask `ipc` to be staunch about such mistakes, and to compile through to a `Hydra` model file even in the presence of unused definitions and surplus activities in co-operation sets by using the `--staunch` command line option.

```
ipc --staunch ...
```

Errors outside the warning class (such as finding uses of process identifiers where no process of that name has been declared) remain fatal, and `ipc` will not compile these through to model files even if the `--staunch` command line option is used.

## B Puffball

The `puffball` program is used to generate graphs from the multiple results obtained from running the `ipc` and `Hydra` tool chain over Condor. The tool uses the process identifier database produced by `ipc` with the `--processDB` option to select from the results those which the user is interested in. The tool can be downloaded and more information can be found from: <http://homepages.inf.ed.ac.uk/s9810217/software/puffball/usingpuffball.html>. This method of working allowed us to generate all possible results by evaluating the automotive rescue system PEPA model over Condor and then to select from several different combinations of the results to produce the graphs seen in this paper.