

Combining Adaptive and Dynamic Local Search for Satisfiability

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Abstract

In this paper we describe a stochastic local search (SLS) procedure for finding models of satisfiable propositional formulae. This new algorithm, gNovelty⁺, draws on the features of two other WalkSAT family algorithms: AdaptNovelty⁺ and G²WSAT, while also successfully employing a hybrid clause weighting heuristic based on the features of two dynamic local search (DLS) algorithms: PAWS and (R)SAPS.

gNovelty⁺ was a Gold Medal winner in the random category of the 2007 SAT competition. In this paper we present a detailed description of the algorithm and extend the SAT competition results via an empirical study of the effects of problem structure, parameter tuning and resolution preprocessors on the performance of gNovelty⁺. The study compares gNovelty⁺ with three of the most representative WalkSAT-based solvers: AdaptG²WSAT0, G²WSAT and AdaptNovelty⁺, and two of the most representative DLS solvers: RSAPS and PAWS. Our new results augment the SAT competition results and show that gNovelty⁺ is also highly competitive in the domain of solving *structured* satisfiability problems in comparison with other SLS techniques.

KEYWORDS: *SAT-solver, local search, clause weighting, adaptive heuristic*

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1. Introduction

The satisfiability (SAT) problem is one of the best known and well-studied problems in computer science, with many practical applications in domains such as theorem proving, hardware verification and planning. The techniques used to solve SAT problems can be divided into two main areas: complete search techniques based on the well-known Davis-Putnam-Logemann-Loveland (DPLL) algorithm [3] and stochastic local search (SLS) techniques evolving out of Selman and Kautz's 1992 GSAT algorithm [18]. As for SLS techniques, there have been two successful but distinct avenues of development: the WalkSAT family of algorithms [14] and the various dynamic local search (DLS) clause weighting approaches (e.g. [15]).

Since the early 1990s, the state-of-the-art in SAT solving has moved forward from only being able to solve problems containing hundreds of variables to the routine solution of

problems with millions of variables. One of the key reasons for this success has been the keen competition between researchers and the public availability of the source code of the best techniques. Nowadays the SAT community organises regular competitions on large sets of benchmark problems and awards prizes to the best performing algorithms in different problem categories. In this paper we introduce the current 2007 SAT competition¹. Gold Medal winner in the satisfiable random problem category: gNovelty⁺.

gNovelty⁺ evolved from a careful analysis of the SLS solvers that participated in the 2005 SAT competition and was initially designed only to compete on random SAT problems. It draws on the strengths of two WalkSAT variants which respectively came first and second in the random category of the 2005 SAT competition: R+AdaptNovelty⁺ [1] and G²WSAT [12]. In addition, gNovelty⁺ connects the two branches of SLS (WalkSAT and DLS) by effectively exploiting a hybrid clause weighting heuristic based on ideas taken from the two main approaches to clause weighting DLS algorithms: additive weighting (e.g. PAWS [21]) and multiplicative weighting (e.g. (R)SAPS [11]).

In the remainder of the paper we describe in more detail the techniques used in G²WSAT, R+AdaptNovelty⁺, PAWS and (R)SAPS before discussing the strengths and weaknesses of these solvers based on the results from the 2005 SAT competition and our own study. We then provide a full explanation of the execution of gNovelty⁺ followed by an experimental evaluation on a range of random and structured problems. As the performance of gNovelty⁺ on random problems is now a matter of public record,² this evaluation examines the performance of gNovelty⁺ on a broad benchmark set of structured problems, testing the effects of parameter tuning and resolution preprocessing in comparison with a range of state-of-the-art SLS solvers. Finally, we present our conclusions and outline some directions for future research.

2. Preliminaries

In this section, we briefly describe and summarise the key techniques used in four SLS solvers that represent the state-of-the-art in the two main streams of SLS development: the WalkSAT family and clause weighting DLS solvers.

2.1 AdaptNovelty⁺

During the mid-1990s, Novelty [14] was considered to be one of the most competitive techniques in the WalkSAT family. Starting from a random truth assignment to the problem variables, Novelty repeatedly changes single variable assignments (i.e. it makes a *flip* move) until a solution is found. The cost of flipping a variable (i.e. flipping the assignment of that variable) is defined as the number of unsatisfied clauses after x is flipped. In more detail, at each search step Novelty greedily selects the best variable x from a random unsatisfied clause c such that flipping x leads to the minimal number of unsatisfied clauses. If there is more than one variable with the same flip cost, the least recently flipped variable will be selected. In addition, if x is the most recently flipped variable, then the second best

1. <http://www.satcompetition.org>

2. More detailed results from the competition are available at <http://www.satcompetition.org/>

variable from clause c will be selected with a fixed *noise* probability p . This flip selection procedure is outlined in lines 10-13 of Algorithm 1.

Although Novelty generally achieves better results than other WalkSAT variants introduced during its time [14], due to its deterministic variable selection³, it may loop indefinitely and fail to return a solution even where one exists [7, 12]. We refer the reader to [7] for an example instance that is satisfiable but for which Novelty is unable to find a solution regardless of the noise parameter setting. Hoos [7] solved this problem by adding a random walk behaviour (lines 7-9 in Algorithm 1) to the Novelty procedure. The resulting Novelty⁺ algorithm randomly flips a variable from a randomised unsatisfied clause c with a *walk* probability wp and behaves exactly as Novelty otherwise.

Algorithm 1 AdaptNovelty⁺(F, $wp=0.01$)

```

1: randomly generate an assignment A;
2: while not timeout do
3:   if A satisfies F then
4:     return A as the solution;
5:   else
6:     randomly select an unsatisfied clause  $c$ ;
7:     if within a walking probability  $wp$  then
8:       randomly select a variable  $x$  in  $c$ ;
9:     else
10:      greedily select the best variable  $x$  in  $c$ , breaking ties by selecting the least recently flipped
      promising variable;
11:      if  $x$  is the most recently flipped variable in  $c$  AND within a noise probability  $p$  then
12:        re-select  $x$  as the second best variable;
13:      end if
14:    end if
15:    update A with the flipped value of  $x$ ;
16:    adaptively adjust the noise probability  $p$ ;
17:  end if
18: end while
19: return ‘no solution found’;

```

It was shown that the performance of every WalkSAT variant (including Novelty and Novelty⁺) critically depends on the setting of the noise parameter p which, in turn, controls the level of greediness of the search [8, 14]. This means that without extensive empirical tuning, the average case performance of a WalkSAT algorithm is quite poor. Hoos [8] addressed this problem by proposing an adaptive version of WalkSAT that dynamically adjusts the noise value based on the automatic detection of search stagnation. This AdaptNovelty⁺ version of Novelty⁺ (outlined in Algorithm 1) starts with $p = 0$ (i.e. the solver is completely greedy in selecting the next move). If the search enters a stagnation stage (i.e. it encounters a local minimum where none of the considered moves yields fewer unsatisfied clauses than the current assignment), then the noise value is gradually increased to allow the selection of non-greedy moves that will allow the search to overcome its stagnation. Once the local minimum is escaped, the noise value is reduced to again make the search more greedy. Hoos [8] demonstrated experimentally that this adaptive noise mechanism is effective both with Novelty⁺ and the other WalkSAT variants.

3. Novelty only selects the next move from the two best variables of a randomly selected unsatisfied clause.

2.2 G²WSAT

More recently Li and Huang [12] proposed a new heuristic to solve the problem of determinism in Novelty (discussed in the previous section). Rather than using a Novelty⁺-type random walk [7], they opted for a solution based on the timestamping of variables to make the selection process more diversified. The resulting Novelty⁺⁺ heuristic (lines 9-14 in Algorithm 2) selects the least recently flipped variable from a randomly selected clause c for the next move with a *diversification* probability dp , otherwise it performs as Novelty. Li and Huang [12] further improved Novelty⁺⁺ by combining the greedy heuristic in GSAT [18] with a variant of tabu search [6] as follows: during the search, all variables that, if flipped, do not strictly minimise the objective function are considered tabu (i.e. they cannot be selected for flipping during the greedy phase). Once a variable x is flipped, only those variables that become *promising* as a consequence of flipping x (i.e. that will strictly improve the objective function if flipped) will lose their tabu status and become available for greedy variable selection. The resulting G²WSAT solver (outlined in Algorithm 2) always selects the most promising non-tabu variable for the next move, if such variable is available. If there is more than one variable with the best score, G²WSAT selects the least recently flipped one, and if the search hits a local minimum, G²WSAT disregards the tabu list and performs as Novelty⁺⁺ until it escapes.

Algorithm 2 G²WSAT(F, dp, p)

```

1: randomly generate an assignment A;
2: while not timeout do
3:   if A satisfies F then
4:     return A as the solution;
5:   else
6:     if there exist promising variables then
7:       greedily select the most non-tabu promising variable  $x$ , breaking ties by selecting the least
         recently flipped promising variable;
8:     else
9:       randomly select an unsatisfied clause  $c$ ;
10:      if within a diversification probability  $dp$  then
11:        select the least recently flipped variable  $x$  in  $c$ ;
12:      else
13:        select a variable  $x$  in  $c$  according to the Novelty heuristic;
14:      end if
15:    end if
16:    update A with the flipped value of  $x$ ;
17:    update the tabu list;
18:  end if
19: end while
20: return ‘no solution found’;

```

2.3 (R)SAPS

As opposed to the previously discussed SLS algorithms (that use a count of unsatisfied clauses as the search objective function) DLS algorithms associate weights with clauses of a given formula and use the sum of weights of unsatisfied clauses as the objective function for the selection of the next move. Typically, clause weights are initialised to 1 and are dynam-

ically adjusted during the search to help in avoiding or escaping local minima. Depending on how clause weights are updated, DLS solvers can be divided into two main categories: *multiplicative* weighting and *additive* weighting. Algorithm 3 sketches out the basics of the Scaling and Probabilistic Smoothing (SAPS) algorithm [11], which is arguably the current best DLS solver in the multiplicative category. At each search step, SAPS greedily attempts to flip the most promising variable that strictly improves the weighted objective function. If no promising variable exists, SAPS randomly selects a variable for the next move with walk probability wp . Otherwise, with probability $(1 - wp)$, SAPS multiplies the weights of all unsatisfied clauses by a factor $\alpha > 1$ and consequently directs future search to traverse an assignment that will satisfy currently unsatisfied clauses. After updating weights, with smooth probability sp clause weights are probabilistically smoothed and reduced to the average clause weight by a factor ρ . This smoothing phase helps the search forget the earlier weighting decisions, as these past effects are generally no longer helpful to escape future local minima.

Algorithm 3 (R)SAPS($F, wp=0.01, sp, \alpha=1.3, \rho=0.8$)

```

1: initialise the weight of each clause to 1;
2: randomly generate an assignment A;
3: while not timeout do
4:   if A satisfies F then
5:     return A as the solution;
6:   else
7:     if there exist promising variables then
8:       greedily select a promising variable  $x$  that occurs in an unsatisfied clauses, breaking ties by
       randomly selecting;
9:     else if within a walk probability  $wp$  then
10:      randomly select a variable  $x$ ;
11:    end if
12:    if  $x$  has been selected then
13:      update A with the flipped value of  $x$ ;
14:    else
15:      scale the weights of unsatisfied clauses by a factor  $\alpha$ ;
16:      with probability  $sp$  smooth the weights of all clauses by a factor  $\rho$ ;
17:    end if
18:    if in reactive mode then
19:      adaptively adjust the smooth probability  $sp$ ;
20:    end if
21:  end if
22: end while
23: return ‘no solution found’;

```

SAPS has four parameters and its performance critically depends on finding the right settings for these parameters. Hutter, Tompkins & Hoos [11] attempted to dynamically adjust the value of the smooth probability sp using the same approach as AdaptNovelty⁺ [7], while holding the other three parameters (wp , α and ρ) fixed. Their experimental study showed that the new RSAPS solver can achieve similar and sometimes better results in comparison to SAPS [11]. However, the other parameters in RSAPS, especially ρ , still need to be manually tuned in order to achieve optimal performance [9, 20].

2.4 PAWS

Recently, Thornton *et al.* [21] were the first to closely investigate the performance difference between additive and multiplicative weighting DLS solvers. Part of this study included the development of the Pure Additive Weighting Scheme (PAWS), which is now one of the best DLS algorithms in the additive weighting category. The basics of PAWS are outlined in Algorithm 4. Instead of performing a random walk when no promising variable exists as SAPS does, PAWS randomly selects and flips a *flat-move* variable with a fixed flat-move probability $fp = 0.15$.⁴ Otherwise, with probability $(1 - fp)$, the weights of all unsatisfied clauses are increased by 1. After a fixed number w_{inc} of weight increases, PAWS deterministically reduces the weights of all weighted clauses by 1. The experimental results conducted in [21, 20] demonstrated the overall superiority of PAWS over SAPS for solving large and difficult problems.

Algorithm 4 PAWS($F, fp=0.15, w_{inc}$)

```

1: initialise the weight of each clause to 1;
2: randomly generate an assignment A;
3: while not timeout do
4:   if A satisfies F then
5:     return A as the solution;
6:   else
7:     if there exist promising variables then
8:       greedily select a promising variable  $x$ , breaking ties by randomly selecting;
9:     else if there exist flat-move variables AND within a flat-move probability  $fp$  then
10:      randomly select a flat-move variable  $x$ ;
11:    end if
12:    if  $x$  has been selected then
13:      update A with the flipped value of  $x$ ;
14:    else
15:      increase the weights of unsatisfied clauses by 1;
16:      if has updated weights for  $w_{inc}$  times then
17:        reduce the weights of all weighted clauses by 1;
18:      end if
19:    end if
20:  end if
21: end while
22: return ‘no solution found’;

```

3. gNovelty⁺: An ‘Overall’ Solver for Random Problems

3.1 Observations from the 2005 SAT Competition

The initial development of gNovelty⁺ focussed on preparing for the 2007 SAT competition. This meant concentrating on the random problem category, where SLS solvers have traditionally outperformed complete solvers. Consequently we paid considerable attention to the best performing techniques from this category in the 2005 SAT competition:

4. A flat-move variable is one that, if flipped, will cause no change to the objective function.

R+AdaptNovelty⁺, G²WSAT and R+PAWS.⁵ Table 1 summarises the performance of these solvers on random SAT instances in the first phase of the 2005 SAT competition. Note that R+AdaptNovelty⁺ and R+PAWS are variants of AdaptNovelty⁺ and PAWS, respectively, where resolution is used to preprocess the input problem before the main solver is called.

Solvers	Large Size Problems			Medium Size Problems		
	3-SAT	5-SAT	7-SAT	3-SAT	5-SAT	7-SAT
R+AdaptNovelty ⁺	22	32	19	35	35	35
G ² WSAT	37	2	14	35	35	35
R+PAWS	33	1	12	35	35	35

Table 1. The number of random instances solved by R+AdaptNovelty⁺, G²WSAT and R+PAWS in the first phase of the 2005 SAT competition.

From Table 1, it is clear that R+AdaptNovelty⁺ was able to win the 2005 competition because of its superior performance on the large 5-SAT and 7-SAT instances. As the resolution preprocessor employed by R+AdaptNovelty⁺ (and also R+PAWS) only operates on clauses of length ≤ 3 in the input and only adds resolvent clauses of length ≤ 3 to the problem, this competition winning performance must be credited to the AdaptNovelty⁺ heuristic rather than to the effects of resolution.

The large 3-SAT instance results in Table 1 clearly show that R+AdaptNovelty⁺ was outperformed by G²WSAT and R+PAWS. As AdaptNovelty⁺ limits its variable selection to a *single* randomly selected unsatisfied clause while G²WSAT and PAWS pick the most promising variable from *all* unsatisfied clauses, we conjectured that the superior performance of G²WSAT and R+PAWS on 3-SAT was due to this more aggressive greediness.

However, when considering the SAT competition results we should bear in mind that each solver was only run once on each instance. This means that the random effects of different starting positions could have distorted the underlying average performance of each algorithm. In order to verify our observations, we therefore conducted our own experiments in which each solver was run 100 times per instance to minimise any starting position effects. We used the original AdaptNovelty⁺ and PAWS algorithms⁶ to eliminate any advantage these solvers may have obtained from the resolution preprocessor on the 3-SAT instances. Figure 1 plots the head-to-head comparisons of these solvers on 12 3-SAT instances, 12 5-SAT instances and 10 7-SAT instances randomly selected from the large benchmark set used in the 2005 competition. All experiments (including those presented in subsequent sections) were performed on cluster of 16 computers, each with a single AMD Opteron 252 2.6GHz processor with 2GB of RAM, and each run was timed out at 600 seconds. More detailed results are reported in Table 2.

These results confirm our conjectures that a more greedy heuristic (e.g. G²WSAT or PAWS) performs better on random 3-SAT instances while a less greedy approach such as

5. R+PAWS was ranked third in the first phase of the 2005 SAT competition. However, due to the competition rule that authors can have only one solver competing in the final phase, R+PAWS was withdrawn from the final phase of the competition as it was submitted by the same authors of R+AdaptNovelty⁺.

6. The w_{inc} parameter of PAWS in this experiment was set to 10 as it was in the competition.

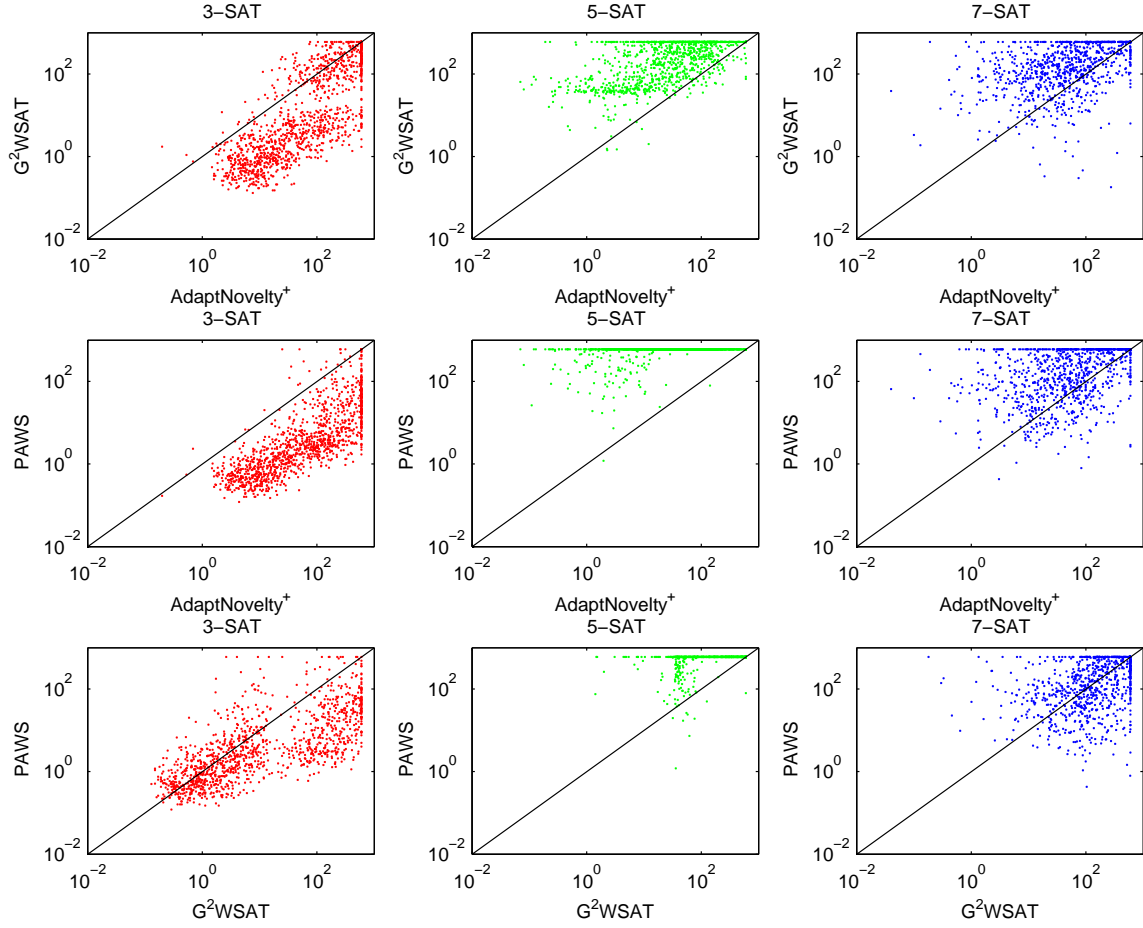


Figure 1. Head-up comparison between AdaptNovelty^+ , $G^2\text{WSAT}$ and PAWS on selected random 3-SAT, 5-SAT and 7-SAT instances from the 2005 SAT competition.

AdaptNovelty^+ is better on random 5-SAT and 7-SAT instances. The results also show that PAWS without resolution preprocessing outperforms $G^2\text{WSAT}$ on 3-SAT instances. This result is consistent with the findings in [1] where resolution preprocessing was shown to harm the performance of local search solvers on random problems. The outstanding performance of PAWS further suggests that clause weighting provides useful guidance for random 3-SAT instances.

3.2 The Design of gNovelty^+

On the basis of the preceding observations, we developed a new overall solver for random problems, called gNovelty^+ . We based this solver on $G^2\text{WSAT}$ as it provides a good framework for combining the strengths of the three solvers. We first replaced the Novelty^{++} heuristic in $G^2\text{WSAT}$ with the AdaptNovelty^+ heuristic to enhance performance on the 5-SAT and 7-SAT instances. We then moved the random walk step inherited from

Algorithm 5 $\text{gNovelty}^+(\text{F}, wp=0.01, sp, p)$

```

1: initialise the weight of each clause to 1;
2: randomly generate an assignment A;
3: while not timeout do
4:   if A satisfies F then
5:     return A as the solution;
6:   else
7:     if within a walking probability  $wp$  then
8:       randomly select a variable  $x$  that appears in an unsatisfied clause;
9:     else if there exist promising variables then
10:      greedily select a non-tabu promising variable  $x$ , breaking ties by selecting the least recently
11:      flipped promising variable;
12:    else
13:      greedily select the most promising variable  $x$  from a random unsatisfied clause  $c$ , breaking ties
14:      by selecting the least recently flipped promising variable;
15:      if  $x$  is the most recently flipped variable in  $c$  AND within a noise probability  $p$  then
16:        re-select  $x$  as the second most promising variable;
17:      end if
18:      update the weights of unsatisfied clauses;
19:      with probability  $sp$  smooth the weights of all weighted clauses;
20:    end if
21:    update A with the flipped value of  $x$ ;
22:    update the tabu list;
23:    adaptively adjust the noise probability  $p$ ;
24:  end if
25: end while
26: return ‘no solution found’;

```

AdaptNovelty⁺ to the top of the solver to provide a better balance between diversification and greediness. Finally, we integrated the additive clause weighting scheme from PAWS into gNovelty⁺. We selected the additive scheme as it is computationally cheaper and provides better guidance than its multiplicative counterpart. As shown in Table 2, RSAPS (which implements multiplicative weighting) performs significantly worse on random instances. However, we replaced the deterministic weight smoothing phase from PAWS with a linear version of the probabilistic weight smoothing phase from SAPS. This gave us more flexibility in controlling the greediness of gNovelty⁺ which proved to be useful in our experimental study.

The basics of gNovelty⁺ are sketched out in Algorithm 5. It starts with a full random assignment of values to all variables of the input problem and initialises all clause weights to one. At each search step, gNovelty⁺ performs a random walk with a walk probability wp fixed to 0.01.⁷ With probability $(1 - wp)$, gNovelty⁺ selects the most promising *non-tabu* variable that is also the least recently flipped, based on a *weighted* objective function that aims to minimise the sum of weights of all unsatisfied clauses. If no such promising variable exists, the next variable is selected using a heuristic based on AdaptNovelty that again uses the *weighted* objective function. After an AdaptNovelty step, gNovelty⁺ increases the weights of all currently unsatisfied clauses by 1. At the same time, with a *smoothing*

7. Hoos [7] empirically showed that setting wp to 0.01 is enough to make an SLS solver become “probabilistically approximately complete”.

probability sp , $gNovelty^+$ will reduce the weight of all *weighted* clauses by 1.⁸ It is also worth noting that $gNovelty^+$ initialises and updates its tabu list of promising variables in the same manner as G^2WSAT with the following exception: all variables that become promising during the weight updating phase are removed from the tabu list. In addition, $gNovelty^+$ only uses the tabu list when doing greedy variable selection and disregards the list when it performs a random walk or an $AdaptNovelty$ step.

We manually tuned the parameter sp of $gNovelty^+$ on small random 3-SAT, 5-SAT and 7-SAT instances by varying its value from 0 to 1 in steps of 0.1. It should be noted that setting $sp = 0$ will stop $gNovelty^+$ from performing its probabilistic weight smoothing phase, while setting $sp = 1$ will effectively turn off all clause weighting phases in $gNovelty^+$. It turns out that $sp = 0.4$ is the best setting for $gNovelty^+$ on random 3-SAT instances. On the other hand, $sp = 1$ appears to be the best setting for $gNovelty^+$ on random 5-SAT and 7-SAT instances. We then ran $gNovelty^+$ with these two settings for sp on the 34 random problems reported in Figure 1 to evaluate its performance against its three predecessors. The detailed performance of these two versions are reported in Table 2. The previously reported results of $AdaptNovelty^+$, G^2WSAT and PAWS are also included for comparison purposes. To give an idea of the relative performance of a multiplicative weighting algorithm, we include the results for RSAPS in Table 2 as well.

Overall these random problem results show that the performance of $gNovelty^+$ closely reflects the relative performance of the predecessor algorithms on which it is based. Firstly, on the 3-SAT instances where PAWS dominates $AdaptNovelty^+$ and G^2WSAT , it is also the case that $gNovelty^+$ with weight ($sp = 0.4$) dominates its counterpart $gNovelty^+$ without weight ($sp = 1.0$). Conversely, on the 5-SAT and 7-SAT results, where $AdaptNovelty^+$ strongly dominates G^2WSAT and PAWS, the $gNovelty^+$ version *without* weight ($sp = 1.0$) performs significantly better than $gNovelty^+$ with weight ($sp = 0.4$).

In addition, if we compare the best version of $gNovelty^+$ against the best version of its predecessors (i.e. $gNovelty^+(sp = 0.4)$ versus PAWS on the 3-SAT instances and $gNovelty^+(sp = 1.0)$ versus $AdaptNovelty^+$ on the 5-SAT and 7-SAT instances), the results show that $gNovelty^+$ is at least as good and often better than its counterparts when the problems become bigger and harder. More specifically, $gNovelty^+$ dominates all other solvers on the bigger 5-SAT problems (k5-v600 and k5-v800 instances) and is dominant interchangeably with PAWS on the larger 3-SAT k3-v6000 and k3-v8000 instances and $AdaptNovelty^+$ on the 7-SAT k7-v140 and k7-v160 instances. The runtime distributions (RTDs) in Figure 2 further confirm that $gNovelty^+$ has achieved our goal of becoming the best overall solver across the three random problem categories.

Given the above results, we entered $gNovelty^+$ into the 2007 SAT competition and set it to automatically adjust the value of its parameter sp depending on the input problem size. If $gNovelty^+$ detects that the input formula is a random 3-SAT instance, it will run with a smooth probability of $sp = 0.4$. Otherwise, it will reset sp back to 1.0. On this basis, $gNovelty^+$ was able to win the Gold Medal for the Random SAT category of the competition.⁹

8. A clause is weighted if its weight is greater than 1.

9. <http://www.satcompetition.org>

Instances	G ² WSAT		AdaptNovelty ⁺		PAWS		RSAPS		gNovelty ⁺ (<i>sp</i> =0.4)		gNovelty ⁺ (<i>sp</i> =1.0)	
	#flips	#secs	#flips	#secs	#flips	#secs	#flips	#secs	#flips	#secs	#flips	#secs
k3-v4000-1672	450 769	0.500 0.796	8,027 9,097	5,590 6,388	296★ 466★	0.430★ 0.571★	0% success		693 1,012	0.865 1.247	18,498 25,357	25,700 36,303
k3-v4000-1674	982 1,641	1.035 1.655	13,769 15,525	9,780 10,988	458★ 705★	0.615★ 0.853★	0% success		1,316 1,816	1.560 2.161	36,988 56,273	52,190 79,284
k3-v4000-1680	560 714	0.550 0.689	8,301 11,314	5,855 7,902	326★ 493★	0.455★ 0.586★	0% success		859 1,152	1.025 1.362	18,835 31,849	26,105 44,762
k3-v4000-1681	1,246 3,253	1.240 2.911	20,085 24,202	14,170 17,131	667★ 705★	0.980★ 1.452★	0% success		1,953 2,388	2.445 2.937	94% success	
k3-v6000-1682	1,813 5,088	2.350 5.842	34,912 35,309	27,850 28,277	755★ 1,247★	1.300★ 1.792★	0% success		3,059 3,661	4.720 5.513	88% success	
k3-v6000-1683	90% success		59% success		96% success		0% success		29,138★ 36,750★	41,770★ 51,945★	2% success	
k3-v6000-1684	4,675 31,960	5.875 34.043	81,385 94,014	65,530 75,126	1,550★ 3,773★	2.740★ 4.862★	0% success		5,997 8,966	8.380 12.423	48% success	
k3-v6000-1686	44,944 92,358	46,090 92,432	98% success		99% success		0% success		13,221★ 19,550★	19,545★ 28,457★	7% success	
k3-v8000-1693	5,813 29,910	8.195 36.031	111,619 126,067	102,240 115,953	1,645★ 5,025★	3.255★ 7.306★	0% success		10,029 14,937	17,915 26,749	18% success	
k3-v8000-1694	62% success		24% success		93% success		0% success		62,294★ 77,401★	104,160★ 126,752★	0% success	
k3-v8000-1698	64,578 92,255	72,910 101,316	99% success		2,391★ 10,251★	4,930★ 14,429★	0% success		17,239 26,729	30,220 45,820	3% success	
k3-v8000-1701	83% success		54% success		98% success		0% success		47,290★ 58,711★	77,040★ 95,475★	1% success	
k5-v500-1533	26,926 34,975	88,675 114,784	8,598 10,069	16,295 19,023★	6% success		0% success		2% success		3,317★ 4,949★	13,115★ 19,543★
k5-v500-1537	11,899 12,922	40,920 44,209	1,608 2,883	3,005★ 5,406★	35% success		1% success		17% success		1,133★ 1,506★	4,295 5,757
k5-v500-1540	87% success		19,040 26,131	36,180★ 49,562★	0% success		0% success		2% success		9,673★ 13,817★	38,455 54,948
k5-v500-1541	11,285 12,064	38,920 41,344	1,326 1,883	2,540 3,598★	62% success		1% success		27% success		652★ 895★	2,520★ 3,868★
k5-v600-1542	59% success		25,069 41,388	49,295 81,377	1% success		0% success		0% success		9,813★ 13,311★	41,375★ 56,013★
k5-v600-1544	45% success		31,190 43,091	61,120 84,402	0% success		0% success		0% success		13,561★ 16,206★	56,655★ 67,709★
k5-v600-1547	42% success		24,427 43,789	47,560★ 85,215	0% success		0% success		0% success		13,894★ 20,203★	58,295 84,856★
k5-v600-1550	77% success		23,280 32,758	43,540 64,161	0% success		0% success		0% success		8,919★ 11,992★	37,255★ 50,094★
k5-v700-1552	42% success		97% success		0% success		0% success		0% success		12,073★ 17,648★	53,555★ 77,710★
k5-v700-1557	39% success		36,796 51,272	73,570 102,555	0% success		0% success		0% success		9,350★ 11,692★	40,925★ 51,131★
k5-v700-1558	55% success		23,394 34,032	46,675 68,051	0% success		0% success		0% success		7,207★ 10,130★	31,095★ 43,839★
k5-v700-1561	5% success		59% success		0% success		0% success		0% success		79% success★	
k7-v120-1583	99% success		3,989 6,407	20,440★ 32,861★	7,643 13,564	49,415 87,850	66% success		99% success		3,347★ 4,560★	21,935 29,881★
k7-v120-1584	97% success		11,652 15,935	59,920 81,898	94% success		37% success		90% success		6,100★ 10,387★	39,620★ 67,414★
k7-v120-1587	4,013 6,204	28,340 43,656	1,935 2,709	9,925 13,932	5,851 7,779	36,055 47,738	81% success		7,515 12,752	47,995 81,470	1,391★ 2,065★	8,940★ 13,231★
k7-v120-1591	11,546 13,707	80,915 95,852	6,632 8,914	33,835 45,474	7,184 12,256	44,460 75,892	61% success		98% success		4,830★ 7,085★	28,580★ 41,964★
k7-v140-1592	97% success		4,631★ 8,545★	24,495★ 45,177★	88% success		28% success		71% success		6,992 9,334	48,195 64,418
k7-v140-1597	58% success		95% success		48% success		8% success		37% success		96% success★	
k7-v140-1599	85% success		12,905★ 18,652★	69,960★ 101,019★	71% success		19% success		50% success		99% success	
k7-v140-1601	59% success		88% success★		55% success		12% success		32% success		81% success	
k7-v160-1604	27% success		56% success		18% success		2% success		5% success		60% success★	
k7-v160-1606	7% success		37% success★		12% success		3% success		3% success		20% success	

Table 2. Results on random k-SAT instances shown in the form: $\frac{\text{median}}{\text{mean}}$. Best results are marked with ★ and flip counts are reported in thousands. On problems where a solver was timed out for some runs, we report the percentage of success of that solver instead of its CPU time and flip count.

In the remainder of the paper, we focus on answering the question whether gNovelty⁺ (an algorithm designed specifically for random problems) has a wider field of useful application. To answer this, we devised an extensive experimental study to test gNovelty⁺ in comparison with other state-of-the-art SLS SAT solvers and across a range of benchmark structured problems.

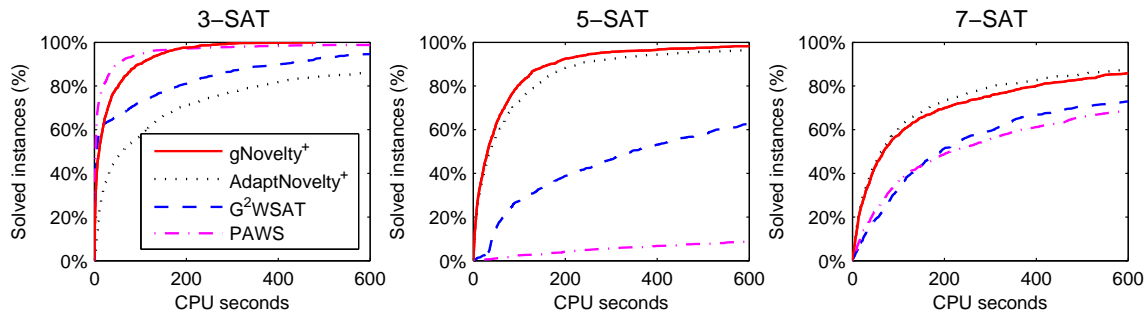


Figure 2. Runtime distribution of 4 solvers on random instances. The smooth probability of gNovelty^+ is set to 0.4 for 3-SAT instances and 1.0 for 5-SAT and 7-SAT instances.

4. Experimental Setup and Benchmark Sets

As the performance of gNovelty^+ in the SAT random category is already a matter of public record,¹⁰ we based our experimental study on a range of structured benchmark problems that have been used in previous SLS comparison studies.¹¹ Our problem test set comprises of four circuit synthesis formula problems (2bitadd.11, 2bitadd.12, 3bitadd.31 and 3bitadd.32), three all-interval series problems (ais10 to ais14), two blocksworld planning problems (bw_large.c and bw_large.d), four Beijing scheduling problems (enddr2-1, enddr2-8, ewddr2-1 and ewddr2-8), two “flat” graph colouring problems (flat200-med and flat200-har), four large DIMACS graph colouring problems (g125.17 to g250.29), two logistics planning problems (logistics.c and logistics.d), five 16-bit parity function learning problems (par16-1-c to par16-5-c), and five hard quasi-group problems (qg1-08 to qg7-13).

As gNovelty^+ combines the strengths of solvers from the WalkSAT series and DLS algorithms, for comparison purposes we selected algorithms from each of the four possible categories, i.e. manual WalkSAT (G^2WSAT [12]), adaptive WalkSAT (AdaptNovelty^+ [8]), manual clause weighting (PAWS [20]) and adaptive clause weighting (RSAPS [11]). In addition, we included $\text{AdaptG}^2\text{WSAT0}$ [13], an adaptive version of G^2WSAT , as it came second in the random SAT category of the 2007 SAT competition. It should be noted that these algorithms have consistently dominated other local search techniques in the recent SAT competitions (where the majority of modern SAT solvers developed by the research community have competed). We therefore consider them to be a fair representation of the state-of-the-art. While other SAT solvers have been developed that may also have proved competitive (e.g. commercial solvers), the lack of availability of their source code has precluded their inclusion in the current work.

For this experimental study, we manually tuned the parameters of PAWS, G^2WSAT and gNovelty^+ to obtain optimal performance for each category of the problem set.¹² These settings are shown in Table 3 (note, only one parameter setting per algorithm was allowed for each of the eight problem categories). Here we not only manipulated the gNovelty^+ *sp*

10. See <http://www.cril.univ-artois.fr/SAT07/slides-contest07.pdf>

11. See <http://www.satlib.org>

12. The other three solvers (AdaptNovelty^+ , RSAPS and $\text{AdaptG}^2\text{WSAT0}$) can automatically adapt the values of their parameters during the search.

parameter but on some categories we also manually tuned the noise parameter of its Novelty component. For G²WSAT we used the optimal settings for the noise and dp parameters published in [12, 13], and for PAWS we tuned the w_{inc} parameter.

Method	Parameter	Problem Category								
		bitadd	ais	bw_large	e*ddr	flat200	g	logistics	par16	qg
gNovelty ⁺	p	adapted	adapted	0.08	adapted	adapted	0.10	adapted	0.05	0.02
	sp	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.10	0.00
G ² WSAT	p	0.50	0.20	0.20	0.40	0.50	0.30	0.20	0.50	0.40
	dp	0.05	0.05	0.00	0.45	0.06	0.01	0.05	0.01	0.03
PAWS	w_{inc}	9	52	4	59	74	4	100	40	10

Table 3. Optimal parameter settings for each problem category.

5. Structured Problem Results

Table 4 shows the results obtained after manually tuning gNovelty⁺, G²WSAT and PAWS in comparison to the default adaptive behaviour of AdaptNovelty⁺, AdaptG²WSAT0 and RSAPS. Here the results for the best performing algorithm on each problem are shown in bold, with all results reporting the mean and median of 100 runs of each algorithm on each instance (each run was timed out after 600 seconds). In order to have a fair comparison, we disabled the unit propagation preprocessor used in G²WSAT and AdaptG²WSAT0 in the two studies presented in this section. The results of all solvers in association with different preprocessors are discussed in later sections.

A brief overview shows that gNovelty⁺ has the best results for all bitadd, ais, bw_large, e*ddr and logistics problems. In addition, it has the best results on the three hardest quasigroup problems (RSAPS won on two other instances) and is about equal with G²WSAT on the flat graph colouring problems. Of the other algorithms, PAWS is the best for the parity problems, G²WSAT is the best for the two harder large graph instances while PAWS and RSAPS each won on one easier instance. On this basis gNovelty⁺ emerges as the best algorithm both in terms of the number of problems (19) and the number of problem classes (6) in which it dominates.

An even clearer picture emerges when we look at the overall proportion of runs that completed within 600 seconds. Here, gNovelty⁺ achieves a 99.90% success rate compared with 88.90% for AdaptG²WSAT0, 88.32% for AdaptNovelty⁺, 84.13% for PAWS, 77.39% for G²WSAT and 72.06% for RSAPS. This observation is reinforced in the RTDs on the left-hand of Figure 3 where the gNovelty⁺ curve dominates over the entire time range.

Overall, gNovelty⁺ not only outperforms the other techniques in the greatest number of problem classes, it is within an order of magnitude of the best performing algorithms in all remaining cases. It is this robust average case performance (that gNovelty⁺ also demonstrated in the SAT competition) that argues strongly for its usefulness as a general purpose solver.

However, if such robust behaviour depends critically on manually tuned parameter settings then the case for gNovelty⁺ must weaken. To evaluate this we tested gNovelty⁺ on the same problem set with a default sp value of 0 (meaning clause weights are increased in

Instances	gNovelty ⁺		AdaptG ² WSAT0		G ² WSAT		AdaptNovelty ⁺		RSAPS		PAWS	
	#flips	#secs	#flips	#secs	#flips	#secs	#flips	#secs	#flips	#secs	#flips	#secs
2bitadd_l11	0.928 0.947	0.000★ 0.001★	2.458 2.348	0.000 0.003	0.510★ 0.677★	0.000 0.002	1.592 1.693	0.000 0.001	374 577	0.230 0.368	86% success	
2bitadd_l12	0.576 0.625★	0.000★ 0.001★	1.716 1.882	0.000 0.003	0.394★ 200	0.000 0.136	1.521 1.554	0.000 0.001	59 111	0.040 0.071	50,062 127,135	30,105 75,140
3bitadd_31	18★ 20★	0.060★ 0.068★	549 817	1.120 1.625	0% success		151 163	0.440 0.467	0% success		0% success	
3bitadd_32	15★ 16★	0.060★ 0.058★	262 318	0.535 0.652	0% success		131 135	0.450 0.466	0% success		0% success	
ais10	8.116★ 12★	0.010★ 0.012★	135 200	0.120 0.174	66 88	0.065 0.086	1.291 1.937	1.135 1.671	13 18	0.020 0.020	13 20	0.015 0.022
ais12	48★ 64★	0.060★ 0.080★	3,127 4,320	3.445 4.754	879 1,428	1.045 1.698	24,315 35,292	28,140 40,833	103 151	0.135 0.202	104 192	0.150 0.262
ais14	334★ 414★	0.435★ 0.537★	13,455 23,628	15,850 27,803	3,008 10,800	3.870 13.667	81% success		629 892	0.885 1.265	1,267 1,677	1,825 2,455
bw_large.c	800★ 1,277★	1.440★ 2.222★	3,317 4,930	3.990 5.902	1,991 3,297	2.025 3.261	6,350 9,355	6,550 9,699	3,606 5,361	10,720 15,921	991 1,604	1,460 2,268
bw_large.d	937★ 1,131★	2.645★ 3.098★	10,600 15,714	21,550 30,726	2,891 4,296	4,700 6.763	21,462 30,616	37,055 55,237	70% success		1,029 1,371	2,770 3,508
enddr2-1	39★ 44★	0.190★ 0.196★	2,404 2,510	3.980 4.110	223 322	0.915 1.187	5.785 7,040	9,075 11,187	61 72	0.505 0.534	47 58	0.500 0.519
enddr2-8	30★ 34★	0.170★ 0.180★	2,088 2,164	3.655 3.715	134 158	0.585 0.643	4,287 5,173	6,905 8,284	49 54	0.495 0.509	41 44	0.500 0.505
ewddr2-1	32★ 34★	0.190★ 0.192★	1,939 2,079	3.435 3.686	114 134	0.570 0.613	4,660 6,193	7,970 10,352	48 54	0.550 0.550	45 47	0.550 0.549
ewddr2-8	30★ 32★	0.200★ 0.198★	1,757 1,828	3.365 3.454	90 103	0.535 0.564	4,959 6,515	8,690 10,959	48 50	0.600 0.602	43 44	0.580 0.584
flat200-med	164 241	0.070 0.099	182 242	0.065 0.087	133★ 169★	0.050★ 0.065★	260 392	0.085 0.131	287 377	0.150 0.196	248 348	0.135 0.185
flat200-har	2,576 4,037	1.040★ 1.638★	3,418 5,476	1,210 1,950	4,050 16,903	1,475 5.967	17,879 22,572	6,055 7,580	3,143 4,200	1,595 2,149	2,403★ 3,344★	1,280 1,761
g125.17	687 1,066	3.065 4.792	804 1,161	3.175 4.546	528 747	2,230★ 2,978★	981 1,264	4,110 5,408	2% success		492★ 694★	2,310 3,415
g125.18	13 15	0.090 0.098	52 51	0.170 0.169	7,718★ 9,872★	0.090 0.100	35 36	0.100 0.100	1,057 1,787	4,995 8,379	11 13	0.080★ 0.084★
g250.15	2,585 2,688	0.110 0.112	2,889 2,909	0.210 0.208	2,381 2,410	0.545 0.545	3,311 4,033	0.110 0.118	2,208★ 2,219★	0.080★ 0.082★	2,239 2,247	0.090 0.086
g250.29	638 704	12,725 14,956	716 765	8,235 9,147	247★ 297★	5,455★ 6,259★	755 895	9,960 11,979	0% success		263 320	8,070 9,237
logistics.c	6,332★ 6,873★	0.010★ 0.007★	2,550 3,631	1,385 1,996	52 65	0.040 0.045	122 152	0.070 0.091	6,811 7,814	0.010 0.008	10 12	0.010 0.012
logistics.d	27 32★	0.040★ 0.042★	111 137	0.090 0.109	86 107	0.090 0.102	170 196	0.100 0.114	23★ 33	0.040 0.051	30 42	0.050 0.063
par16-1-c	6,943 9,621	2,920 4,064	13,759 18,975	5,300 7,402	5,689 118,873	2,370 48,676	17,186 32,062	5,870 10,978	73% success		1,557★ 2,470★	0,860★ 1,368★
par16-2-c	28,291 38,826	11,975 16,493	129,544 190,040	51,655 75,896	96% success		159,405 260,240	53,415 87,516	39% success		3,675★ 4,805★	2,020★ 2,668★
par16-3-c	18,136 27,626	7,750 11,787	40,233 53,219	16,285 21,554	46,134 57,719	19,330 24,175	66,942 102,783	23,075 35,486	42% success		2,613★ 4,106★	1,455★ 2,313★
par16-4-c	11,146 16,938	4,810 7,216	23,984 39,982	9,445 15,905	55,693 156,597	23,060 64,789	80,419 112,780	27,905 38,674	69% success		1,035★ 2,183★	0,570★ 1,211★
par16-5-c	11,830 17,545	5,020 7,436	23,480 37,596	9,505 15,329	69% success		90,820 126,329	31,225 43,841	41% success		3,169★ 4,092★	1,740★ 2,239★
qg1-08	647★ 920★	15,645★ 22,476★	99% success		30% success		99% success		59% success		80% success	
qg2-08	2,545★ 3,295★	51,120★ 69,991★	52% success		3% success		43% success		36% success		20% success	
qg5-11	99% success		0% success		0% success		1% success		2,287★ 3,288★	24,575★ 35,405★	22% success	
qg6-09	726 3,090	2,235 9,322	5% success		1% success		14% success		29★ 44★	0.110★ 0.173★	833 1,263	3,285 4,995
qg7-13	98% success★		0% success		0% success		0% success		3% success		0% success	

Table 4. Optimally tuned results on structured problems shown in the form: $\frac{\text{median}}{\text{mean}}$. Best results are marked with ★ and flip counts are reported in thousands. On problems where a solver was timed out for some runs, we report the percentage of success of that solver instead of its CPU time and flip count.

each local minimum but never decreased) and with the noise parameter p adaptively adjusted during the search.¹³ These results and the results of the default parameter values for G²WSAT ($dp = 0.05$ and $p = 0.5$) and PAWS ($w_{inc} = 10$) are shown in Table 5. To give an idea of the relative performance of these default setting algorithms against the other three adaptive ones, the results of AdaptNovelty⁺, AdaptG²WSAT0 and RSAPS from Table 4 are also reported again in Table 5.

13. Although gNovelty⁺'s noise parameter was also adjusted in Table 3, performance was not greatly improved, with the main benefits coming from adjusting sp .

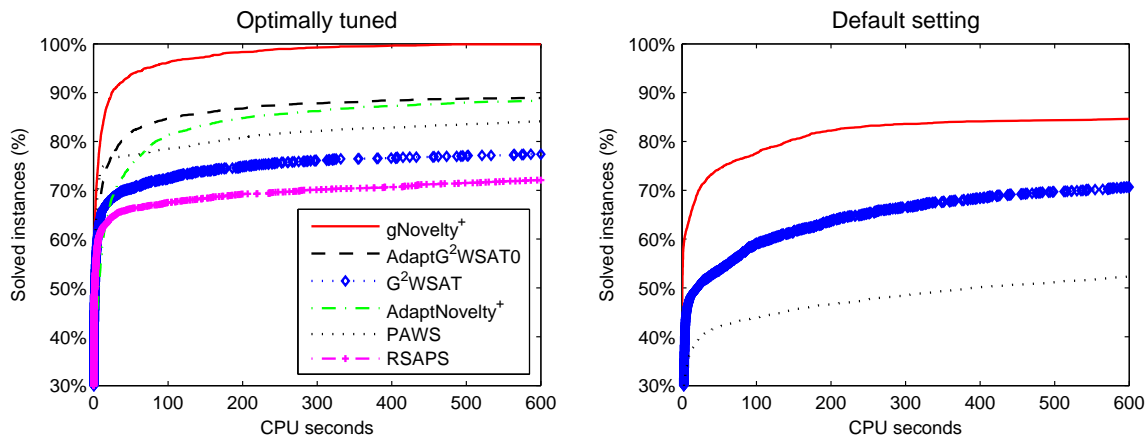


Figure 3. Run-time distributions over the complete data set.

In this second comparison, gNovelty⁺ remains the champion both in terms of the number of problem classes (bitadd, ais, bw_large, e*ddr, logistics and qg) and the number of instances (19). Table 5 also shows that the performance of gNovelty⁺, G²WSAT and PAWS (especially the later two) is substantially reduced without parameter tuning, with AdaptG²WSAT0 taking over from PAWS as the winner on all parity problems and beating G²WSAT on the two harder large graph instances. AdaptNovelty⁺ further dominates on the other large graph instances previously won by PAWS. Consequently, AdaptG²WSAT0 now has the best overall success rate of 88.90% followed by AdaptNovelty⁺ at 88.32%, the default valued gNovelty⁺ at 82.23%, RSAPS at (72.06%), with G²WSAT (70.68%) and PAWS (52.32%) coming last (this is also illustrated in the RTDs in Figure 3). Looking in more detail, we can see that the main negative impact of a fixed parameter on gNovelty⁺ has come from its failure on the parity problems. Similarly, AdaptG²WSAT0 and AdaptNovelty⁺ fail mainly on the quasi-group problems. If we put these two data sets aside, then the default gNovelty⁺ shows a clear advantage over AdaptG²WSAT0 and AdaptNovelty⁺, dominating on five of the remaining seven problem classes.

6. Results with Pre-processing Enhancement

Although preprocessing has a generally negative effect on SLS solvers when solving random problems, it is now well understood that it can produce significant benefits on structured problems [16]. For this reason we decided to test the effects of the two most promising techniques, HyPre [2] and SatELite [5], on the performance of gNovelty⁺ and its competitors. We also included a simple UnitProp preprocessor as it is cheaper to compute and has been used by G²WSAT and AdaptG²WSAT0. In detail, these preprocessors simplify an input formula before passing the reduced formula to a particular solver as follows:

UnitProp simply applies the well-known unit propagation procedure [17] to the input formula until saturation.

Instances	gNovelty ⁺		AdaptG ² WSAT0		G ² WSAT		AdaptNovelty ⁺		RSAPS		PAWS	
	#flips	#secs	#flips	#secs	#flips	#secs	#flips	#secs	#flips	#secs	#flips	#secs
2bitadd_11	0.928 0.947	0.000★ 0.001★	2.458 2.348	0.000 0.003	0.510★ 0.677★	0.000 0.002	1.592 1.693	0.000 0.001	374 577	0.230 0.368	86% success	
2bitadd_12	0.576 0.625★	0.000★ 0.001★	1.716 1.882	0.000 0.003	0.394★ 200	0.000 0.136	1.521 1.554	0.000 0.001	59 111	0.040 0.071	50.062 127.135	30.105 75.140
3bitadd_31	18★ 20★	0.060★ 0.068★	549 817	1.120 1.625	0% success		151 163	0.440 0.467	0% success		0% success	
3bitadd_32	15★ 16★	0.060★ 0.058★	262 318	0.535 0.652	0% success		131 135	0.450 0.466	0% success		0% success	
ais10	8.116★ 12★	0.010★ 0.012★	135 200	0.120 0.174	140 187	0.140 0.184	1.291 1.937	1.135 1.671	13 18	0.020 0.020	68 95	0.080 0.110
ais12	48★ 64★	0.060★ 0.080★	3,127 4,320	3.445 4.754	5,128 8,732	6,245 10,673	24,315 35,292	28,140 40,833	103 151	0.135 0.202	917 1,424	1,410 2,166
ais14	334★ 414★	0.435★ 0.537★	13,455 16,738	15,850 27,803	95% success		81% success		629 892	0.885 1.265	4,205 7,108	6,795 11,530
bw_large.c	832★ 1,131★	1.485★ 2.044★	3,317 4,930	3,990 5,902	49% success		6,350 9,355	6,550 9,699	3,606 5,361	10,720 15,921	7,238 9,440	17,310 22,493
bw_large.d	4,802★ 5,499★	14.515★ 16.738★	10,600 15,714	21,550 30,726	0% success		21,462 30,616	37,055 55,237	70% success		39% success	
enddr-2-1	39★ 44★	0.190★ 0.196★	2,404 2,510	3,980 4,110	1,552 1,805	4,020 4,565	5,785 7,040	9,075 11,187	61 72	0.505 0.534	20% success	
enddr-2-8	30★ 34★	0.170★ 0.180★	2,088 2,164	3,655 3,715	1,315 1,383	3,460 3,530	4,287 5,173	6,905 8,284	49 54	0.495 0.509	29% success	
ewddr-2-1	32★ 34★	0.190★ 0.192★	1,939 2,079	3,435 3,686	1,165 1,231	3,095 3,225	4,660 6,193	7,970 10,352	48 54	0.550 0.550	28% success	
ewddr-2-8	30★ 32★	0.200★ 0.198★	1,757 1,828	3,365 3,454	1,131 1,164	3,205 3,276	4,959 6,515	8,690 10,959	48 50	0.600 0.602	38% success	
flat200-med	164 241	0.070 0.099	182 242	0.065 0.087	140★ 193	0.050★ 0.073★	260 392	0.085 0.131	287 377	0.150 0.196	145 181★	0.080 0.100
flat200-har	2,576★ 4,037★	1.040★ 1.638★	3,418 5,476	1,210 1,950	4,268 13,931	1,570 4,921	17,879 22,572	6,055 7,580	3,143 4,200	1,595 2,149	5,923 8,168	3,115 4,304
g125.17	3,525 4,229	15,890 18,808	804★ 1,161★	3,175★ 4,546★	99% success		981 1,264	4,110 5,408	2% success		6% success	
g125.18	185 185	0.970 0.951	52 51	0.170 0.169	11★ 15★	0.130 0.144	35 36	0.100★ 0.100★	1,057 1,787	4,995 8,379	19 25	0.150 0.195
g250.15	2,253 2,283	0.080 0.084	2,889 2,909	0.210 0.208	2,473 2,488	0.410 0.407	3,311 4,033	0.110 0.118	2,208★ 2,219★	0.080★ 0.082★	2,211 2,236	0.110 0.113
g250.29	4,984 5,008	136.745 141.147	716★ 765★	8,235★ 9,147★	43% success		755 895	9,960 11,979	0% success		0% success	
logistics.c	6,332★ 6,873★	0.010★ 0.007★	2,550 3,631	1,385 1,996	44 55	0.030 0.041	122 152	0.070 0.091	6,811 7,814	0.010 0.008	118 158	0.100 0.128
logistics.d	27 32★	0.040★ 0.042★	111 137	0.090 0.109	1,775 2,946	1,520 2,560	170 196	0.100 0.114	23★ 33	0.040 0.051	275 386	0.275 0.375
par16-1-c	20% success		13,759★ 18,975★	5,300★ 7,402★	99% success		17,186 32,062	5,870 10,978	73% success		23% success	
par16-2-c	10% success		129,544★ 190,040★	51,655★ 75,896★	98% success		159,405 260,240	53,415 87,516	39% success		1% success	
par16-3-c	5% success		40,233★ 53,219★	16,285★ 21,554★	62,745 97,922	26,600 41,142	66,942 102,783	23,075 35,486	42% success		5% success	
par16-4-c	9% success		23,984★ 39,982★	9,445★ 15,905★	99,333 158,001	41,290 65,417	80,419 112,780	27,905 38,674	69% success		16% success	
par16-5-c	5% success		23,480★ 37,596★	9,505★ 15,329★	73% success		90,820 126,329	31,225 43,841	41% success		3% success	
qg1-08	853★ 1,134★	18,900★ 24,939★	99% success		14% success		99% success		59% success		83% success	
qg2-08	3,155★ 4,093★	68,675★ 91,038★	52% success		4% success		43% success		36% success		23% success	
qg5-11	5,012 6,863	39,115 50,497	0% success		0% success		1% success		2,287★ 3,288★	24,575★ 35,405★	22% success	
qg6-09	343 2,281	1,155 7,319	5% success		17% success		14% success		29★ 44★	0.110★ 0.173★	968 1,229	4,035 5,102
qg7-13	74% success★		0% success		0% success		0% success		3% success		0% success	

Table 5. Default parameter setting results on structured problems shown in the form: $\frac{\text{median}}{\text{mean}}$. Best results are marked with ★ and flip counts are reported in thousands. On problems where a solver was timed out for some runs, we report the percentage of success of that solver instead of its CPU time and flip count.

HyPre [2] focuses on reasoning with binary clauses by implementing the HypBinRes procedure, a restricted version of hyper-resolution [17] that only runs on binary clauses. It also uses the implication graph concept and the HypBinRes rule to infer new binary clauses and avoid the space explosion of computing a full transitive closure. In addition, HyPre incrementally applies unit and equality reductions to infer more binary clauses and hence improve its performance.

SatELite [5] uses the (self-)subsumption rule and information about functionally dependent variables to further improve the simplification power of the Variable Elimination

Resolution (VER) procedure [4] (a process to eliminate a variable x by replacing all clauses containing x and \bar{x} with their resolvents). Like its predecessor, NiVER [19], SatELite implements the VER process only if there is no increase in the number of literals after variable elimination.

We combined the three preprocessors with each of the default-valued algorithms reported in the previous section, and tested these combinations on all problems that were able to be simplified by a particular preprocessor. These results are summarised in the following sections. Each combination was run 100 times on each instance and each run was timed out after 600 seconds.

6.1 Results on UnitProp-simplified Problems

Instances	gNovelty ⁺		AdaptG ² WSAT0		G ² WSAT		AdaptNovelty ⁺		RSAPS		PAWS	
	#flips	#secs	#flips	#secs	#flips	#secs	#flips	#secs	#flips	#secs	#flips	#secs
enddr2-1	22★	0.120★	206	0.465	555	1.135	346	0.665	31	0.255	27% success	
	26★	0.127★	428	0.776	676	1.386	546	1.012	41	0.277		
enddr2-8	18★	0.100★	142	0.365	183	0.490	307	0.590	26	0.240	24% success	
	20★	0.103★	165	0.398	203	0.531	365	0.688	32	0.245		
ewddr2-1	19★	0.100★	134	0.350	202	0.520	217	0.430	24	0.240	44% success	
	19★	0.103★	190	0.428	261	0.617	268	0.517	28	0.244		
ewddr2-8	14★	0.090★	118	0.310	81	0.300	205	0.390	21	0.220	40% success	
	15★	0.089★	123	0.318	98	0.326	225	0.422	23	0.223		
qg1-08	597	2.865	307★	1.045★	1,244	5.470	467	1.280	2,280	9.240	583	2.160
	757	3.661	445★	1.517★	1,553	6.867	675	1.861	3,285	13.302	873	3.213
qg2-08	1,278★	6.515	1,436	5.095★	8,126	36.605	2,288	6.420	6,370	26.235	2,436	9.725
	1,679★	8.658	2,026	7.180★	9,988	44.804	3,019	8.488	8,453	34.857	3,109	12.848
qg5-11	65	0.350	52% success		1,076	4.800	4,189	10.305	62★	0.320★	75	0.395
	89★	0.470★			3,332	12.053	12,531	28.065	102	0.518	115	0.612
qg6-09	3,343	0.010	1,146	1.370	8,285	0.020	416	0.565	2,955	0.010	2,277★	0.010★
	4,335	0.009	2,664	3.143	16	0.029	630	0.870	3,282	0.007	3,105★	0.007★
qg7-13	580★	4.835★	22% success		41% success		73% success		4,155	36.455	5,200	45.170
	741★	5.789★							5,318	46.256	7,557	66.118

Table 6. Default parameter setting results on structured problems preprocessed with UnitPropagation preprocessor: $\frac{\text{median}}{\text{mean}}$. Best results are marked with ★ and flip counts are reported in thousands. On problems where a solver was timed out for some runs, we report the percentage of success of that solver instead of its CPU time and flip count. The time taken to preprocess a problem instance is included in the CPU time of each solver. Results on the problems where the preprocessor makes no change to the CNF formulae are omitted.

The results in Table 6 show that UnitProp only had an effect on the e*ddr and qg problems and that gNovelty⁺ remains the dominant algorithm on these simplified instances. Specifically, gNovelty⁺ had the best time performance on all 4 of the e*ddr problems and 2 of the 5 qg problems, with AdaptG²WSAT0 and PAWS dominating on the remaining qg problems.

UnitProp had a beneficial effect for all algorithms on these problems (compared to the non-preprocessed results of Table 5 and graphed in Figure 4), producing significant improvements for AdaptNovelty⁺ and the G²WSAT algorithms on the e*ddr problems and across the board improvements on the qg problems. Overall, the benefits of UnitProp for gNovelty⁺ are less dramatic than for other techniques. However, this can be explained by the fact that gNovelty⁺ was already doing well on these problems (without preprocessing), and that margin for improvement was consequently smaller.

Instances	gNovelty ⁺		AdaptG ² WSAT0		G ² WSAT		AdaptNovelty ⁺		RSAPS		PAWS	
	#flips	#secs	#flips	#secs	#flips	#secs	#flips	#secs	#flips	#secs	#flips	#secs
2bitadd.11	0.260★ 0.275★	0.000★ 0.000★	1.867 1.960	0.000 0.004	0.466 0.603	0.000 0.003	3.679 4.415	0.000 0.002	0.273 0.286	0.000 0.000	0.462 0.948	0.000 0.001
2bitadd.12	0.228★ 0.231★	0.000★ 0.000★	1.514 1.692	0.000 0.004	0.392 400	0.000 0.306	2.967 3.255	0.000 0.002	0.252 0.252	0.000 0.000	0.290 0.470	0.000 0.001
3bitadd.31	12★ 12★	0.430★ 0.433★	35 37	0.490 0.490	16 17	0.500 0.502	369 413	0.815 0.866	18 20	0.450 0.454	0% success	
3bitadd.32	9.457★ 9.428★	0.440★ 0.440★	30 31	0.500 0.497	13 113	0.510 0.832	255 276	0.690 0.711	13 13	0.450 0.450	7% success	
ais10	11★ 13★	0.010★ 0.011★	92 131	0.070 0.100	85 116	0.080 0.097	1.017 1.524	0.710 1.060	13 17	0.010 0.015	28 42	0.030 0.039
ais12	64★ 77★	0.080★ 0.087★	1,182 1,568	1.100 1.467	1,375 1,864	1.440 1.934	12,923 18,165	11.840 16.480	98 141	0.110 0.157	320 516	0.380 0.617
ais14	372★ 449★	0.445★ 0.533★	15,312 21,691	16.840 24.058	94% success		85% success		669 863	0.835 1.092	3,875 6,373	5.620 9.241
bw_large.c	38★ 58	1.440★ 1.460★	1,831 2,600	2.925 3.595	1,441 2,210	2.960 3.750	4,716 6,993	5.480 7.503	43 56★	1.450 1.466	74 103	1.490 1.529
bw_large.d	508★ 725★	11.890★ 12.449★	22,061 25,059	57.255 61.824	53% success		96% success		2,218 3,799	19.985 26.924	1,302 1,842	16.255 18.665
enddr2-1	31★ 35★	6.010★ 6.016★	1,400 1,475	8.040 8.145	963 1,065	7.650 7.817	4,614 5,747	12.445 14.091	48 61	6.150 6.183	57% success	
enddr2-8	21★ 22★	5.820★ 5.825★	450 531	6.610 6.716	416 427	6.640 6.662	571 864	6.615 6.999	33 38	5.950 5.965	48% success	
ewddr2-1	21★ 23★	5.440★ 5.437★	635 703	6.435 6.527	458 498	6.380 6.447	1,990 3,117	8.105 9.667	31 35	5.570 5.578	52% success	
ewddr2-8	15★ 17★	5.020★ 5.022★	300 347	5.590 5.631	180 218	5.440 5.501	364 502	5.465 5.641	26 28	5.150 5.151	56% success	
g125.17	3.546 4.512	13.085 16.252	717★ 988★	1.875★ 2.520★	16,308 20,545	62.780 77.955	931 1,488	2.555 4.135	1% success		8% success	
g125.18	160 173	1.070 1.107	48 49	0.230 0.230	9,607★ 13★	0.200 0.213	37 38	0.170★ 0.170★	1,306 1,911	6.420 9.370	19 23	0.205 0.226
g250.15	2.261 2.291	0.530 0.529	2.885 2.933	0.680 0.677	2.410 2.475	0.770 0.773	3.217 3.599	0.520★ 0.526★	2.182★ 2.200★	0.530 0.530	2.216 2.225	0.540 0.536
g250.29	4.796 4.910	73.060 74.602	748★ 866★	6.400★ 7.388★	67% success		778 892	8.825 10.354	0% success		0% success	
logistics.c	1.347★ 1.486	0.020★ 0.022★	8.077 9.357	0.030 0.031	2.898 3.306	0.030 0.027	6.687 7.715	0.020 0.025	1.369 1.478★	0.020 0.022	3.242 5.152	0.020 0.025
logistics.d	3.726★ 3.884★	0.850★ 0.851★	27 29	0.900 0.900	6.785 7.123	0.890 0.889	34 37	0.870 0.867	3.780 3.915	0.850 0.854	4.472 7.067	0.860 0.857
par16-1-c	16% success		14.787★ 20.756★	6.005★ 8.453★	99% success		18.151 29.863	6.375 10.512	86% success		16% success	
par16-2-c	4% success		83.478★ 122.795★	33.030★ 49.337★	95% success		124.928 176.082	44.130 61.248	54% success		1% success	
par16-3-c	5% success		36.517★ 42.956★	14.395★ 17.183★	64.224 87.618	27.460 37.512	63.339 92.704	22.715 33.117	70% success		4% success	
par16-4-c	6% success		18.058★ 31.792★	7.480★ 13.064★	76.621 147.878	32.830 62.198	32.438 55.159	11.345 19.297	79% success		7% success	
par16-5-c	3% success		25.234★ 42.119★	10.215★ 17.261★	71% success		52.581 75.997	18.140 26.487	68% success		0% success	
qg1-08	553 673	2.950 3.532	366★ 483★	1.610★ 2.019★	1,096 1,582	5.335 7.459	472 813	1.620 2.529	1,743 2,495	7.185 10.133	576 813	2.425 3.311
qg2-08	1.437 1.796	7.460 9.346	868★ 1,326★	3.500★ 5.121★	5.489 7.129	25.520 33.435	1,841 2,557	5.540 7.463	6.894 8,319	28.685 34.478	1,688 2,287	6.940 9.336
qg5-11	20 28	0.320 0.352	1,559 2,913	3.745 6.807	51 88	0.480 0.645	570 1,558	1.615 3.923	20 27	0.335 0.359	15★ 22★	0.315★ 0.351★
qg6-09	0.001★ 0.001★	0.050★ 0.050★	0.001 0.001	0.050 0.052	0.001 0.001	0.050 0.051	0.001 0.009	0.050 0.050	0.001 0.002	0.050 0.050	0.001 0.002	0.050 0.050
qg7-13	250★ 355★	2.310★ 3.178★	95% success		975 1,299	5.960 8.057	99% success		404 688	3.700 5.858	407 589	3.650 5.166

Table 7. Default parameter setting results on structured problems preprocessed with HyPre preprocessor: $\frac{\text{median}}{\text{mean}}$. Best results are marked with ★ and flip counts are reported in thousands. The time taken to preprocess a problem instance is included in the CPU time of each solver. On problems where a solver was timed out for some runs, we report the percentage of success of that solver instead of its CPU time and flip count. Results on the problems where the preprocessor makes no change to the CNF formulae are omitted.

6.2 Results on HyPre-simplified Problems

Table 7 shows that HyPre was able to simplify all the problems in our test set with the exception of the two flat graph colouring problems. Again gNovelty⁺ remains dominant, having the best performance on all the bitadd, ais, bw_large, e*ddr and logistics problems and 2 of the 5 qg problems. Of the other algorithms, AdaptG²WSAT0 remained dominant on all the parity and 2 of the 4 large graph colouring problems, while improving over its non-preprocessed performance to win on 2 of the qg problems. Finally, AdaptNovelty⁺ also

improved over its non-preprocessed performance to win on 2 large graph colouring problems and PAWS improved to win on qg5-11.

As with UnitProp, the HyPre simplified formulae have been generally easier to solve than the original problems. However, the overhead of HyPre has outweighed these benefits on those problems that can already be solved relatively quickly without preprocessing. For example, the small improvements in the number of flips for gNovelty⁺ on the e*ddr problems has been obtained at the cost of a more than 10 times increase in execution time (see Table 5 and the comparative graphs in Figure 4).

6.3 Results on SatELite-simplified Problems

The SatELite results in Table 8 show a similar pattern to the HyPre results, with gNovelty⁺ dominating the bitadd, ais, bw_large, e*ddr and logistics problems and 3 of the 5 qg problems. This time, however, AdaptNovelty⁺ clearly dominated the parity problems (achieving the best results of all the methods and preprocessing combinations tried on this problem class) and further dominated on 3 of the 4 large graph colouring problems and 1 of the flat graph colouring problems. This made AdaptNovelty⁺ the second best performing SatELite-enhanced algorithm (behind gNovelty⁺).

SatELite had the widest range of application of the three preprocessing techniques and was able to simplify all 31 problem instances. However, like HyPre, despite generally improving the flip rates of most algorithms on most problems, the overhead of using SatELite caused a deterioration in time performance on many instances. This is shown more clearly in Figure 4 where SatELite consistently appears as one of the worse options for any algorithm on the bitadd and large graph (g) problems.

6.4 Evaluation of Preprocessing

Overall it is not immediately clear whether preprocessing is a useful general purpose addition for our algorithms. Of the three techniques, only UnitProp has a consistently positive effect, even though this is limited to two problem classes (e*ddr and qg). Although both SatELite and HyPre have positive effects on certain problems for certain algorithms, neither of them is able to provide an overall improvement for all tested solvers across the whole benchmark set. For instance, HyPre is generally helpful on the qg problems and SatELite is helpful on the flat graph colouring problems. But arrayed against these gains are the unpredictable worsening effects of the more complex preprocessors on other problem classes. For instance, consider the negative effect of SatELite on AdaptG²WSAT0 on the bitadd and the large graph colouring problems.

If we take the entire picture presented in Figure 4 two observations emerge. Firstly, gNovelty⁺ achieves the best overall performance regardless of the preprocessor used, and secondly, of the preprocessors, only UnitProp is able to improve the overall performance of gNovelty⁺. Therefore, our final recommendation from the preprocessor study would be to use gNovelty⁺ in conjunction with UnitProp.

Instances	gNovelty ⁺		AdaptG ² WSAT0		G ² WSAT		AdaptNovelty ⁺		RSAPS		PAWS	
	#flips	#secs	#flips	#secs	#flips	#secs	#flips	#secs	#flips	#secs	#flips	#secs
2bitadd_11	1.116 1.330	0.042★ 0.043★	7.848 16	0.052 0.051	0.679★ 0.993★	0.042 0.044	1.853 3.950	0.042 0.044	20 32	0.062 0.066	5.332 8.425	3.802 6.075
2bitadd_12	0.686 0.772★	0.049★ 0.050★	4.646 10	0.059 0.056	0.421★ 500	0.049 0.389	1.511 1.569	0.049 0.050	5.179 11	0.049 0.057	950 2.864	0.724 2.069
3bitadd_31	32★ 41★	2.228★ 2.257★	0% success		0% success		249 298	2.803 2.887	0% success		0% success	
3bitadd_32	17★ 18★	2.351★ 2.359★	1% success		0% success		147 149	2.811 2.811	0% success		0% success	
ais10	8.504★ 10★	0.044★ 0.050★	12 15	0.054 0.059	10 13	0.054 0.056	18 27	0.064 0.077	11 14	0.054 0.061	23 37	0.084 0.117
ais12	62★ 73★	0.168★ 0.191★	78 127	0.203 0.292	108 138	0.268 0.331	138 187	0.348 0.451	77 96	0.253 0.299	324 381	1.013 1.199
ais14	447 572★	1.010★ 1.272★	3.104 4.795	5.925 9.119	1.267 1.832	2.675 3.858	689 1.008	1.510 2.181	417★ 696	1.290 2.098	9% success	
bw_large.c	960★ 1.113★	2.175★ 2.414★	4.100 5.697	5.220 7.218	39% success		5.475 8.335	6.975 10.557	4.431 6.050	11.685 16.166	5.428 9.368	13.975 24.912
bw_large.d	4.479★ 5.690★	13.510 16.524★	5.604 8.965	11.405★ 17.520	0% success		21.199 25.734	40.260 48.444	61% success		36% success	
enddr-2-1	12 16★	1.043★ 1.049★	104 120	1.198 1.213	41 51	1.173 1.186	36.885 55.561	44.478 66.173	12★ 18	1.053 1.066	53% success	
enddr-2-8	10★ 12★	1.071★ 1.071★	101 107	1.191 1.201	31 38	1.181 1.192	19.861 26.945	23.706 31.876	10 13	1.081 1.090	53% success	
ewddr-2-1	6.833 8.426	1.108★ 1.112★	56 58	1.198 1.198	12 15	1.198 1.203	3.773 8.515	5.288 10.578	6.041★ 7.381★	1.118 1.122	75% success	
ewddr-2-8	5.734★ 6.554★	1.149★ 1.146★	55 57	1.239 1.241	10 12	1.229 1.232	1.410 4.468	2.719 6.056	5.973 6.713	1.159 1.157	69% success	
flat200-med	106★ 147★	0.114 0.135	195 298	0.149 0.193	266 416	0.189 0.269	125 163	0.109★ 0.126★	398 621	0.329 0.489	114 160	0.129 0.168
flat200-har	1.180★ 1.822★	0.729★ 1.105★	2.306 3.881	1.154 1.891	2.886 4.399	1.544 2.329	1.674 2.347	0.809 1.117	3.408 4.695	2.409 3.309	1.065 2.451	1.124 1.516
g125.17	89% success		0% success		0% success		1.190★ 1.759★	16.811★ 23.931★	0% success		9% success	
g125.18	277 284	8.409 8.511	1.103 1.590	19.384 27.250	56 81	3.674 4.391	35★ 36★	2.389★ 2.403★	1.545 2.249	29.744 44.530	91% success	
g250.15	2.806 2.935	8.928 8.934	357 375	23.833 24.305	3.465 3.551	9.518 9.521	4.032 4.181	8.938 8.945	2.631★ 2.676★	8.888★ 8.892★	98% success	
g250.29	66% success		0% success		0% success		827★ 958★	68.974★ 75.745★	0% success		0% success	
logistics.c	2.910 3.293	0.273★ 0.276★	72 93	0.323 0.332	9.260 11	0.283 0.285	22 28	0.293 0.291	2.538★ 2.982★	0.273 0.276	7.479 11	0.283 0.283
logistics.d	14 16	0.552★ 0.557★	380 513	0.857 0.973	707 942	1.292 1.535	130 172	0.637 0.669	12★ 16★	0.552 0.559	31 57	0.582 0.606
par16-1-c	81% success		8.211 13.494	4.339 7.152	11.284 16.358	6.494 9.037	5.870★ 8.113★	2.794★ 3.848★	99% success		115.457 146.796	60.474 77.891
par16-2-c	35% success		40.270 68.949	21.563 36.520	33.095 47.439	18.468 26.128	32.693★ 44.368★	15.663★ 21.372★	90% success		48% success	
par16-3-c	42% success		17.316★ 23.186	9.365 12.566★	18.549 23.013★	10.820 13.027	18.588 25.850	9.240★ 12.791	97% success		88% success	
par16-4-c	47% success		14.469★ 20.584★	7.581 10.873	23.399 31.199	13.131 17.307	15.549 22.520	7.566★ 10.864★	99% success		69.676 105.256	38.696 57.880
par16-5-c	40% success		14.239 18.460★	7.715 10.017	19.506 33.987	11.025 18.486	11.341★ 19.486	5.425★ 9.299★	93% success		84% success	
qg1-08	366 522	2.381 3.207	283★ 413★	1.371★ 1.806★	1.154 1.687	5.236 7.412	498 662	1.741 2.164	1.822 2.671	7.566 10.970	455 721	2.056 3.005
qg2-08	1.370★ 1.738★	7.388 9.243	1.494 2.037	5.788★ 7.670★	8.349 10.682	37.903 48.264	2.462 3.111	7.598 9.500	4.517 8.122	19.483 34.707	2.142 3.307	9.133 14.147
qg5-11	71 83★	0.505★ 0.573★	48% success		1.092 1.991	4.645 7.081	5.488 11.791	12.475 26.332	67★ 108	0.535 0.750	76 123	0.570 0.807
qg6-09	2.732★ 3.856	0.062★ 0.060★	1.237 2.523	1.537 3.069	8.046 15	0.072 0.079	367 720	0.567 1.048	2.870 3.546★	0.062 0.060	2.925 4.241	0.062 0.062
qg7-13	658★ 823★	5.254★ 6.669★	23% success		30% success		76% success		3.601 5.099	35.324 44.504	4.481 6.718	37.524 56.072

Table 8. Default parameter setting results on structured problems preprocessed with SatElite preprocessor: $\frac{\text{median}}{\text{mean}}$. Best results are marked with ★ and flip counts are reported in thousands. The time taken to preprocess a problem instance is included in the CPU time of each solver. On problems where a solver was timed out for some runs, we report the percentage of success of that solver instead of its CPU time and flip count.

7. Discussion and Conclusions

The experimental evidence of this paper and the 2007 SAT competition demonstrates that gNovelty⁺ is a highly competitive algorithm for random SAT problems. In addition, these results show that gNovelty⁺, with parameter tuning, can dominate several of the previously best performing SLS algorithms on a range of structured problems. If parameter tuning is ruled out (as it would be in most real-world problem scenarios), then gNovelty⁺ still

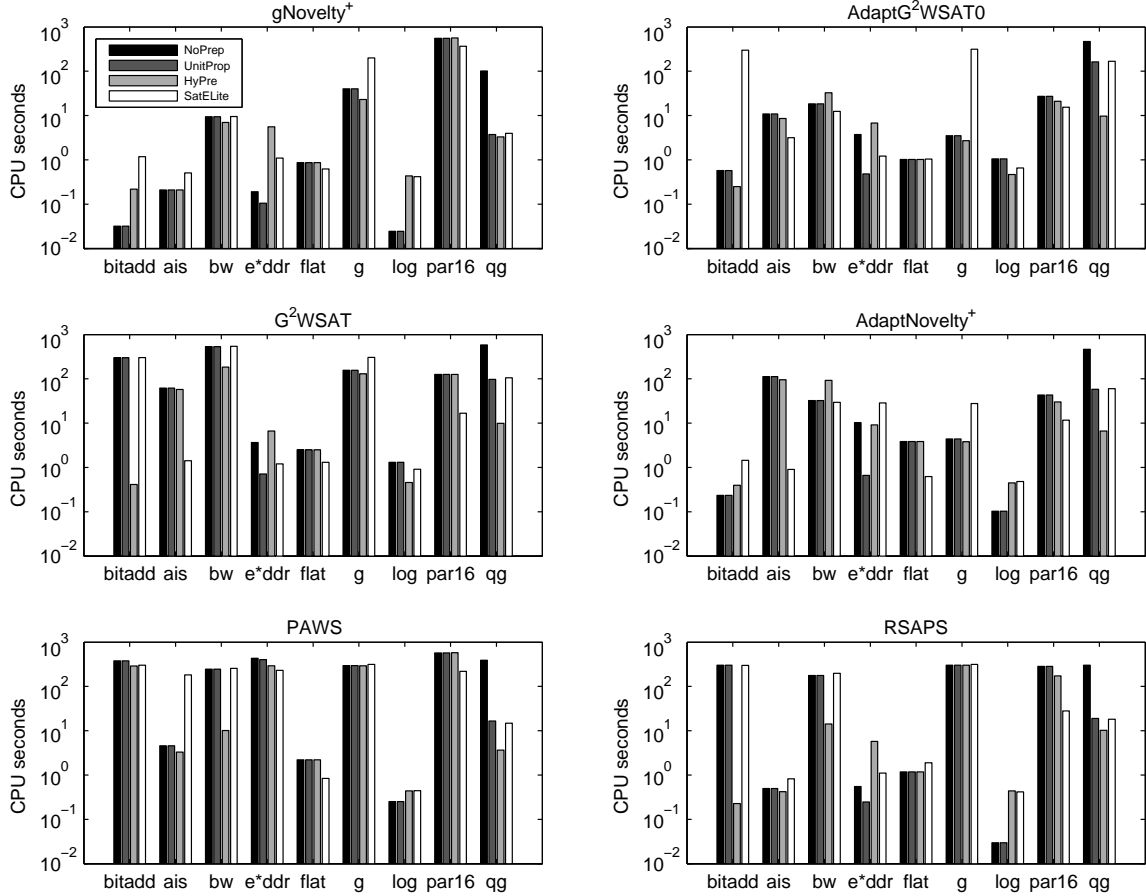


Figure 4. Comparing the performance of solvers (default settings) on the whole benchmark set with NoPrep, UnitProp, HyPre and SatELite. Data is mean CPU time (logarithmic scale).

performs well, and only lost to its closest rival, AdaptG²WSAT0, on one structured problem class.

Once again, as with PAWS and SAPS, the addition of a clause weighting heuristic to gNovelty⁺ has required the addition of a sensitive weight decay parameter to get competitive results. Nevertheless, the situation with gNovelty⁺'s parameter does differ from SAPS and PAWS in that highly competitive performance can be obtained from a relatively small set of parameter values (i.e. 0.0, 0.1, 0.4 and 1.0). In contrast, SAPS and PAWS require much finer distinctions in parameter values to get even acceptable results [20]. This smaller set of values means that the process of tuning the smoothing parameter sp of gNovelty⁺ is considerably simpler than for other clause weight techniques. More importantly, the robust behaviour of gNovelty⁺ indicates that it may be easier to devise an automatic adapting mechanism for sp . To date, procedures for automatically adapting weight decay parameters have not produced the fastest algorithms.¹⁴ In future work, it therefore appears promising

14. Although machine learning techniques that are trained on test sets of existing instances and then applied to unseen instances have proved useful for setting SAPS and Novelty parameters [10]

to try and develop a simple heuristic that will effectively adapt sp in the structured problem domain.

Finally we examined the effects of preprocessing on the performance of the algorithms used in the study. Here we found that two of the best known modern preprocessing techniques (HyPre and SatELite) produced mixed results and had an overall negative impact on execution time across the whole problem set. These results appear to go against other work in [16] that found HyPre and SatELite to be generally beneficial for local search on SAT. However, in the current study many of the problems were solved quickly relative to the overhead of using the more complex preprocessors. If we only consider flip rates then HyPre and SatELite did show a generally positive effect. This means that for problems where execution times become large relative to the overhead of preprocessing, we would expect both HyPre and SatELite to show greater improvements. Nevertheless, within the confines of the current study, the simpler UnitProp preprocessing method (in conjunction with gNovelty⁺) had the best overall results: even though UnitProp only had positive effects on two problem classes this was balanced by the fact that its overhead on other problems was relatively insignificant.

In conclusion, we have introduced gNovelty⁺, a new hybrid SLS solver that won the random SAT category in the 2007 SAT competition. We have extended the SAT results and shown that gNovelty⁺ is also effective in solving structured SAT problems. In fact, gNovelty⁺ has not only outperformed five of the strongest current SLS SAT solvers, it has also demonstrated significant robustness in solving a wide range of diverse problems. In achieving this performance, we have highlighted gNovelty⁺'s partial dependence on the setting of its sp smoothing parameter. This leads us to recommend that future work should concentrate on the automatic adaptation of this parameter.

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