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A COMPARISON OF RECENTLY IMPLEMENTED OPTIMIZATION TECHNIQUES

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1. Abstract

This paper reviews the practical implementation of recent optimization techniques and their application in the area of electrical circuit design. Practical examples illustrate the formulation of design problems in terms of mathematical programming problems as well as the performance of the optimization codes presented.

2. Introduction

This paper reviews the practical implementation of recent optimization techniques and their application in the area of electrical circuit design. The discussion is focussed on four nonlinear programming codes.

The MMUM package [1] solves unconstrained minimax optimization problems and is based on the method described by Hald and Madsen [2]. It is an extension and modification of the MINI5W package due to Madsen [3]. The MMLC package [4] solves linearly constrained minimax optimization problems and is based on the method described by Hald and Madsen [2]. It is an extension and modification of the MMLA1Q package due to Hald [5]. In both packages first derivatives of all functions with respect to all variables are assumed to be known. The solution is found by an iteration that uses either linear programming applied in connection with first-order derivatives or a quasi-Newton method applied in connection with first-order and approximate second-order derivatives.

MFNC [6] is a package for minimization of a nonlinear objective function subject to nonlinear constraints. It is an extension and modification of a set of subroutines from the Harwell Subroutine Library [7]. The method implemented was presented by Han [8] and Powell [9]. First derivatives of all functions with respect to all variables are assumed to be available. The solution is found by an iteration that minimizes a quadratic approximation of the objective function subject to linearized constraints.

The MINOS/AUGMENTED system [10] is a general purpose programming system to solve large-scale optimization problems involving sparse linear and nonlinear constraints. Any nonlinear functions appearing in the objective or the constraints must be continuous and smooth. MINOS/AUGMENTED employs a projected augmented Lagrangian algorithm to solve problems with nonlinear constraints presented by Murtagh and Saunders [11]. This involves a sequence of sparse, linearly constrained subproblems, which are solved by a reduced-gradient algorithm.

A wide variety of test problems for the comparison of different nonlinear programming algorithms and their practical implementation exist in the literature. Generally, they fall into two categories. One category consists of nonlinear programming problems where the objective function and constraints are given explicitly in the form of a mathematical formulation, e.g., the Colville series of problems [12], the Wang family of problems [13], the Rosen-Suzuki problem [14] and the Rosenbrock problem [15]. Usually they are designed to test the performance of algorithms under difficult conditions such as narrow valleys, numerical singularities, etc. As a representative for this category the Colville test problem 2 has been chosen.

The second category of test problems includes practical engineering design problems where the formulation of the problem is not explicitly given in terms of the objective function and constraints, and different formulations may exist which adequately represent the engineering design problem. A three-section 100 percent relative-bandwidth 10:1 transmission-line transformer is an example. It is a special case of an N-section transmission-line transformer. Originally studied by Bandler and developed into a family of test problems by Bandler and Macdonald [16,17] this type of test problem is now widely considered [18-22]. Another example of the second category is the optimal design of a LC low-pass filter embodying centering, tolerancing and tuning developed by Bandler, Liu and Tromp [23-24].

3. Test Problems

3.1. Test Problem 1

This is the design of a 3-section 100-percent relative bandwidth 10:1 transmission-line transformer [16]. The problem is to minimize the maximum reflection coefficient of this matching network. A detailed discussion on the formulation of direct minimax response objectives is presented in [25]. Formally, the problem is to reach

$$\min_{\underset{\sim}{x}} F(\underset{\sim}{x}) = \min_{\underset{\sim}{x}} \left\{ \max_{[0.5,\ 1.5]} |\rho(\underset{\sim}{x}, f)| \right\} , \quad (1)$$

where

$$\underset{\sim}{x} = [\ell_1/\ell_q \ Z_1 \ \ell_2/\ell_q \ Z_2 \ \ell_3/\ell_q \ Z_3]^T .$$

The error functions represent the modulus of the reflection coefficient sampled at the 11 normalized frequencies f (w.r.t. 1 GHz) {0.5, 0.6, 0.7, 0.77, 0.9, 1.0, 1.1, 1.23, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5}. The known quarter-wave solution is given by

$$\ell_1 = \ell_2 = \ell_3 = \ell_q ,$$

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$Z_1 = 1.63471$, $Z_2 = 3.16228$, $Z_3 = 6.11729$,

where ℓ_q is the quarter wavelength at the center frequency, namely,

$$\ell_q = 7.49481 \text{ cm for 1 GHz} .$$

The corresponding maximum reflection coefficient is 0.19729. The starting point is

$$x^0 = [0.8 \quad 1.5 \quad 1.2 \quad 3.0 \quad 0.8 \quad 6.0]^T .$$

Gradient vectors with respect to section lengths and characteristic impedances are obtained using the adjoint network method.

3.2. Test Problem 2

This is the Colville test problem 2 [12] in the form used in [26]. It is to minimize the objective function

$$F(x) = - \sum_{1\le i\le 10} b_i x_{5+i} + \sum_{1\le i\le 5} \sum_{1\le j\le 5} c_{ij} x_i x_j + 2 \sum_{1\le j\le 5} d_j x_j^3 \qquad (2)$$

subject to the constraints

$$x_i \ge 0 , \quad i=1, \ldots, 15 , \qquad (3)$$

$$e_j - \sum_{1\le i\le 10} a_{ij} x_{5+i} + 2 \sum_{1\le i\le 5} c_{ij} x_i + 3 d_j x_j^2 \ge 0, \; j=1,\ldots,5 \qquad (4)$$

where a_{ij}, b_i, c_{ij}, d_j, e_j are given in [26]. The solution is $F(x^*) = 32.34868$.

The feasible starting point used is $x_i^0 = 0.0001$, $i \ne 12$, and $x_{12} = 60.0$.

3.3. Test Problem 3

This is the design of a LC low-pass filter [23-24]. The problem is optimal worst case design embodying centering, tolerancing and tuning at the design stage. A detailed discussion on the formulation is presented in [23]. If the designer has no prior knowledge of the choice of tuning components we consider an objective function of the form

$$C = \sum_{i=1}^{3} [\frac{\phi_i^0}{\epsilon_i} + c_i \frac{t_i}{\phi_i^0}] , \qquad (5)$$

where ϕ_i^0, ϵ_i and t_i represent nominal values, tolerances and tuning parameters of components, respectively. The performance contraints may be written in the form

$$g = w(S-F) , \qquad (6)$$

where w is +1 if S is an upper specification or -1 if S is a lower specification. F is the circuit response function evaluated at a sample frequency. The critical vertices used can be obtained from published vertex selection schemes [24]. There are 21 variables including nominal values, tolerances and tuning parameters as well as slack variables ρ which represent the settings of tuning components and 43 constraints including performance constraints and additional constraints on variables. Full details are available [27]. The starting point is the solution for c_i=10 given in [23].

4. Discussion of Results

To evaluate different nonlinear programming techniques one should examine first the question of what criteria to use in the evaluation. Specifically, the following criteria can be used [28]:

1) time required in a series of tests (execution time and/or number of function evaluations);

2) size (dimensionality, number of inequality constraints, number of equality constraints) of the problem;

3) accuracy of the solution with respect to the optimal vector x^* and/or with respect to the objective function or constraints;

4) simplicity of use (time required to introduce data and functions into the computer program);

5) simplicity of computer program to execute the algorithm.

These criteria are global rather than local in the sense that they relate to the overall performance of the optimization from start to end rather than to the performance at a single stage.

The most common criteria used to evaluate the relative effectiveness of programming codes have been

1) the number of function evaluations required to obtain the optimal solution of a given test problem to a given degree of precision and/or

2) the computation time required to reach the solution of the given test problem.

The number of function evaluations is a less meaningful criterion for large constrained problems of several variables because the time required by the algorithm to determine the point at which to evaluate the functions can often be several times greater than that required for the evaluation of functions. Thus, computation time is the most commonly used criterion for comparing the effectiveness of different programming algorithms.

The first and most important consideration in comparing the effectiveness of the various algorithms is the success or failure of a given code to solve a given test problem. This criterion is chosen because the ability of an algorithm to solve a wide variety of problems is the most valuable feature to the user of a programming code. All four packages succeeded in solving the test problems. Results of optimization of the three-section microwave transformer are summarized in Table I. Both minimax packages seem to be more effective since this is originally a minimax problem, however, the MFNC package requires the least number of function evaluations. Table II shows $\log_{10} [\max_i (|\rho_i| - F^*)]$ and the number of function evaluations. This kind of comparison is useful when the user is interested in the solution with accuracy acceptable from the practical point of view and the question is after how many function evaluations this accuracy can be obtained. It should be noted however, that the comparison shown in Table II does not take time into account. Another important aspect in comparing optimization codes is by how much the constraints are violated. Usually, the packages find the solution satisfying the constraints with certain accuracy which in most cases is acceptable for practical purposes.

Table III shows the results for the Colville test problem 2. In all cases the problem has been programmed to take the advantage of all the features of the package. For this problem in two cases, namely, MMLC and MINOS, the linear constraints can be treated explicitly either by means of the coefficients matrix (MMLC) or the MPS file and the BOUNDS section (MINOS). In MINOS, moreover, the linear part of the objective function can be accommodated by means of the MPS file.

In the case of the MMUM and MMLC packages the equivalent minimax formulation of the problem [29] was used with $\alpha = 10^3$ and $\alpha = 10$, respectively. Moreover, for MMUM, another technique has been used to avoid the undesired effects of transformed constraints on the minimax optimization, due to the absolute value operator in the objective function. The residual functions are forced to be non-negative by adding a constant c to the original objective function of the problem ($c = 10^5$ was used). Since the problem contains a substantial linear part packages which can distinguish linear constraints are more efficient than those which assume only nonlinear functions.

Table IV summarizes the results for the LC low-pass filter problem. For this problem the choice of cost coefficient c_i in (5) for tuning is very important. The most appropriate choice is the one for which both terms in the objective function (5) have the same order of magnitude. The advantage gained in the formulation used is that the optimization will automatically choose the most appropriate component for tuning, the capacitor here. The observed discrepancies in values of slack variables ρ_1 and ρ_3 are insignificant since they correspond to settings of tuning parameters for which tuning is zero.

5. Conclusions

The packages presented can be used for solving a wide range of practical engineering design problems, however, a proper choice of the package for the particular problem is important and can result in major savings of time required to solve the problem. They can handle efficiently big problems (especially MINOS with the

TABLE I
OPTIMIZATION OF A 3-SECTION 10:1 TRANSFORMER OVER A 100 PERCENT BANDWIDTH

Variable	MMUM	MMLC	MFNC‡	MINOS‡
1	1.00000	1.00000	1.00000	1.00000
2	1.63471	1.63471	1.63471	1.63471
3	1.00000	1.00000	1.00000	1.00000
4	3.16228	3.16228	3.16228	3.16228
5	1.00000	1.00000	1.00000	1.00000
6	6.11730	6.11730	6.11731	6.11731
7			0.19729	0.19729
Minimax Function Value	a	a	b	a
Number of Function Evaluations‡‡	18 (14)	22 (18)	13 (12)	179 (176)
Time(s)‡‡‡	0.8	0.8	3.6	6.8

‡ In both cases the equivalent formulation of the minimax problem was used, so the number of variables is increased by one.
‡‡ In brackets is shown the number of function evaluations to reach 0.19729.
‡‡‡ Execution time (seconds) on CYBER 170/730.

[a] 0.1972906269 [b] 0.1972906258

TABLE II
COMPARISON OF OPTIMIZATION CODES FOR TEST PROBLEM 1

Function Evaluation Number	$\log_{10} [\max_i (\lvert\rho_i\rvert - F^*)]$			
	MMUM	MMLC	MFNC	MINOS‡
1	-0.7	-0.7	-0.7	-1.3
2	-1.2	-0.9	-1.5	-1.3
3	-1.1	-1.5	-2.0	-1.3
4	-2.3	-1.2	-2.9	-1.3
5	-1.1	-2.7	-3.1	-1.3
6	-1.4	-1.5	-3.4	-1.3
7	-1.9	-2.6	-3.5	-1.7
8	-2.4	-3.0	-3.6	-1.5
9	-2.3	-3.1	-4.2	-1.6
10	-3.1	-3.1	-4.6	-1.6
11	-3.2	-3.0	-5.6	-1.7
12	-3.5	-3.3	-6.5	-1.9
13	-3.8	-3.4	-8.4	-1.9
14	-5.9	-3.7		-3.0
15	-6.9	-3.5		-3.0
16	-9.5	-3.7		-3.8
17	-10.6	-4.7		-5.2
18	-10.6	-5.7		-8.5
19		-6.9		
20		-8.9		
21		-10.5		
22		-10.6		

‡ For MINOS the number of function evaluations should be multiplied by 10, hence 1 corresponds to the 10th evaluation.

TABLE III
RESULTS FOR COLVILLE'S TEST PROBLEM 2

Variable	MMUM‡	MMLC	MFNC	MINOS
1	0.30738	0.30000	0.29999	0.30000
2	0.33090	0.33347	0.33346	0.33347
3	0.41243	0.40000	0.39999	0.40000
4	0.42087	0.42831	0.42831	0.42831
5	0.22328	0.22396	0.22397	0.22396
6	-4.1×10^{-13}	0.0	9.1×10^{-16}	0.00000
7	-2.1×10^{-13}	0.0	1.1×10^{-14}	0.00000
8	5.05312	5.17404	5.17413	5.17404
9	-1.6×10^{-13}	0.0	0.0	0.00000
10	3.07959	3.06111	3.06111	3.06111
11	11.59737	11.83955	11.83972	11.83955
12	-2.5×10^{-13}	0.0	0.0	0.00000
13	-1.8×10^{-14}	0.0	0.0	0.00000
14	0.05312	0.10390	0.10393	0.10390
15	-2.6×10^{-13}	0.0	9.7×10^{-15}	0.00000
Objective Function Value	32.35284	a	b	a
Number of Function Evaluations‡‡	150	30 (28)	16 (16)	207 (obj.) 216 (con.)
Time(s)‡‡‡	41.5	3.1	13.2	3.2

‡ The optimization process has been stopped by imposing the limit on function evaluations.

‡‡ In brackets is shown the number of function evaluations to reach 32.34868.

‡‡‡ Execution time (seconds) on CYBER 170/730.

a 32.3486789657 b 32.3486790660

TABLE IV
OPTIMAL TUNING DESIGN OF THE LC LOW-PASS FILTER FOR c_i = 50

Solution	MMLC	MFNC	MINOS
$L_1^0 = L_2^0$	2.06696	2.06696	2.06696
C^0	0.90758	0.90758	0.90758
$100\ \varepsilon_1/L_1^0 = 100\ \varepsilon_3/L_2^0$	18.01%	18.01%	18.01%
$100\ \varepsilon_2/C^0$	14.14%	14.14%	14.14%
$100\ t_1/L_1^0 = 100\ t_3/L_2^0$	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
$100\ t_2/C^0$	16.43%	16.43%	16.43%
$\rho_1(6)$	-1.00000	-0.99823	-1.00000
$\rho_2(6)$	1.00000	1.00000	1.00000
$\rho_3(6)$	-1.00000	-0.99823	1.00000
$\rho_1(8)$	-0.99935	-0.99255	-1.00000
$\rho_2(8)$	-1.00000	-1.00000	-1.00000
$\rho_3(8)$	-0.99935	-0.99255	-1.00000
$\rho_1(1)$	1.00000	0.99308	-1.00000
$\rho_2(1)$	1.00000	1.00000	1.00000
$\rho_3(1)$	1.00000	0.99308	-1.00000
$\rho_1(3)$	0.99885	0.98892	-1.00000
$\rho_2(3)$	-0.06969	-0.20796	-0.26655
$\rho_3(3)$	0.99885	0.98892	-1.00000
Cost Function	26.39285	26.39285	26.39284
Number of Function Evaluations	43	25	147 (obj.) 152 (con.)
Time(s)‡	10.6	36.1	13.9

‡ Execution time (seconds) on CYBER 170/730.

option of taking sparsity of the problem into account). The factor of human error in supplying analytical derivatives is eliminated by the gradient check option which all of them have. The computer programs to execute the algorithms are simple and easy to write. The data preparation for the codes by the user is easy with the exception of MINOS for which creating data files may be time consuming when a commercial matrix generator is not available. We feel that the optimization techniques presented and their implementation are powerful tools for solving difficult electrical circuit design problems.

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