The CLP Operational Model

Adapted from the model presented in Kim Marriott and Peter Stuckey, *Programming with Constraints: An Introduction*

Terminology

A *user-defined constraint* is of the form $p(t_1, \ldots, t_n)$ where p is an *n*-ary predicate and $t_1, \ldots, t_n$ are expressions from the constraint domain.

A *literal* is either a primitive constraint or a user-defined constraint.

A *goal* is a sequence of literals $L_1, \ldots, L_m$. If $m = 0$ the goal is *empty* and is written $\Box$.

A *rule* R is of the form A :- B where A is a user-defined constraint and B is a goal. A is the *head* of R and B is the body.

A *fact* is a rule with the empty goal as its body: A :- $\Box$ and is simply written as A.

A *program* is a sequence of rules.

Rewritings

Let goal G be of the form

$$L_1, \ldots, L_{i-1}, L_i, L_{i+1}, \ldots, L_m$$

where L_i is a user-defined constraint $p(t_1, \ldots, t_n)$.

Let rule R be of the form $p(t_1, \ldots, t_n) \texttt{ :- } B$.

Let ρ be a renaming (i.e. a mapping that replaces variables with new ones).

A *rewriting* of G at L_i by R using ρ is the new goal formed from G by replacing L_i with

$$t_1 = \rho(s_1), \ldots, t_n = \rho(s_n), \rho(B)$$

where ρ is chosen so that the variables in $\rho(R)$ do not appear in G.

Derivation Steps

A *state* is a pair $\langle G \mid C \rangle$ where G is a goal and C is a constraint. C is called the *constraint store*.

A *derivation step* from $\langle G_1 \mid C_1 \rangle$ to $\langle G_2 \mid C_2 \rangle$ is written:

$\langle G_1 \mid C_1 \rangle \Rightarrow \langle G_2 \mid C_2 \rangle$

It is defined as follows.

Let G_1 be the sequence of literals $L_1, L_2, \ldots, L_m$.

Case 1: L_1 is a primitive constraint. Then C_2 is $C_1 \wedge L_1$. If the constraint solver determines that C_2 is unsatisfiable, then G_2 is the empty goal; otherwise G_2 is $L_2, \ldots, L_m$.

Case 2: L_1 is a user-defined constraint. Let L_1 have the form $p(t_1, \ldots, t_n)$. Select a rule R in program whose head is a literal $p(s_1, \ldots, s_n)$. Then C_2 is C_1 and G_2 is found by a rewriting of G at L_1 using R. If there is no rule to use for the rewriting, then C_2 is false and G_2 is the empty goal.

Derivations

A *derivation* for a goal G is a sequence of derivation steps starting with $\langle G \mid \textit{true} \rangle$.

A derivation can continue until the goal becomes empty. A derivation that can no longer continue can be either successful or failed.

A derivation is successful if the last state is $\langle \Box \mid C_n \rangle$, and the constraint solver doesn't determine that constraint C_n is unsatisfiable. The constraint that is the result of simplifying C_n with respect to the variables in G is an *answer* to G.

A derivation is failed if the last state is $\langle \Box \mid C_n \rangle$, and the constraint solver determines that constraint C_n is unsatisfiable.

Example Derivation

CLP($\mathcal{R}$) program:

```
cf(C,F) :- F=1.8*C+32.  /* rule R1 */
double(X,Y) := Y=2*X.  /* rule R2 */
```

Consider the goal `cf(A,B), double(A,200).`

$\langle$ *cf*(A, B), *double*$(A, 200)$ $|$ *true*$\rangle$

$\Rightarrow$

using R1:
$\langle A = C, B = F, F = 1.8 * C + 32,$
double$(A, 200)$ $|$ *true*$\rangle$

$\Rightarrow$

$\langle B = F, F = 1.8 * C + 32, \textit{double}(A, 200) \mid$
$A = C\rangle$

$\Rightarrow$

$\langle F = 1.8 * C + 32, \textit{double}(A, 200) \mid A = C,$
$B = F\rangle$

$\Rightarrow$

$\langle \textit{double}(A, 200) \mid A = C, B = F,$
$F = 1.8 * C + 32\rangle$

$\Rightarrow$

using R2:
$\langle A = X, 200 = Y, Y = 2 * X \mid A = C, B = F,$
$F = 1.8 * C + 32\rangle$

$\Rightarrow$

$\langle 200 = Y, Y = 2 * X \mid A = C, B = F,$
$F = 1.8 * C + 32, A = X \rangle$

$\Rightarrow$

$\langle Y = 2 * X \mid A = C, B = F, F = 1.8 * C + 32,$
$A = X, 200 = Y \rangle,$

$\Rightarrow$

$\langle \Box \mid A = C, B = F, F = 1.8 * C + 32,$
$A = X, 200 = Y, Y = 2 * X \rangle$

Simplifying with respect to the variables in G_0 (namely A, B) we get the answer $A = 100, B = 212$.

This is a successful derivation.

Derivation Trees

There may be more than one derivation for a goal. The derivation tree contains all the derivations for a given goal G. The CLP system will in effect incrementally construct the derivation tree as it searches for an answer.

Definition: a *derivation tree* for a goal G and program P is a tree with states as nodes. The root is $\langle G \mid \mathit{true} \rangle$. The children of each state $\langle G_i \mid C_i \rangle$ are the states that can be reached in a single derivation step. A state with two or more children is a *choicepoint*.

CLP(R) evaluates a goal by performing a depth-first, left-to-right traversal of the goal's derivation tree. Whenever a success state is encountered the system returns the corresponding answer. The user can accept the answer, or reject it (so that traversal continues).

Simplified Derivation Trees

We can produce a *simplified derivation tree* by omitting uninteresting steps and simplifying the resulting constraints. A simplified derivation for a goal G includes the first and last states in the full derivation, and every state for which the first literal in the goal is a user-defined constraint.

Simplified derivation tree for the previous example:

$\langle \textit{cf}(A, B), \textit{double}(A, 200) \mid \textit{true} \rangle$

$\Rightarrow$

$\langle \textit{double}(A, 200) \mid B = 1.8 * A + 32 \rangle$

$\Rightarrow$

$\langle \Box \mid A = 100, B = 212 \rangle$