TRUSTS: Scheduling Randomized Patrols for Fare Inspection in Transit Systems

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Abstract

In *proof-of-payment* transit systems, passengers are legally required to purchase tickets before entering but are not physically forced to do so. Instead, patrol units move about the transit system, inspecting the tickets of passengers, who face fines if caught fare evading. The deterrence of such fines depends on the unpredictability and effectiveness of the patrols.

In this paper, we present TRUSTS, an application for scheduling randomized patrols for fare inspection in transit systems. TRUSTS models the problem of computing patrol strategies as a leader-follower Stackelberg game where the objective is to deter fare evasion and hence maximize revenue. This problem differs from previously studied Stackelberg settings in that the leader strategies must satisfy massive temporal and spatial constraints; moreover, unlike in these counterterrorism-motivated Stackelberg applications, a large fraction of the ridership might realistically consider fare evasion, and so the number of followers is potentially huge. A third key novelty in our work is deliberate simplification of leader strategies to make patrols easier to be executed. We present an efficient algorithm for computing such patrol strategies and present experimental results using real-world ridership data from the Los Angeles Metro Rail system. The Los Angeles Sheriff's department has begun trials of TRUSTS.

Introduction

In the Los Angeles Metro Rail system and other proof-of-payment transit systems worldwide, passengers are legally required to buy tickets before boarding, but there are no gates or turnstiles. There are, quite literally, no barriers to entry, as illustrated in Figure 1. Instead, security personnel are dynamically deployed throughout the transit system, randomly inspecting passenger tickets. This proof-of-payment fare collection method is typically chosen as a more cost-effective alternative to direct fare collection, i.e., when the revenue lost to fare evasion is believed to be less than what it would cost to directly preclude it.

For the LA Metro, with approximately 300,000 riders daily, this revenue loss can be significant; the annual cost has been estimated at $5.6 million (Booz Allen Hamilton 2007). The Los Angeles Sheriffs Department (LASD) deploys uniformed patrols on board trains and at stations for

Figure 1: Entrance of an LA Metro Rail station.

fare-checking (and for other purposes such as crime prevention), in order to discourage fare evasion. With limited resources to devote to patrols, it is impossible to cover all locations at all times. The LASD thus requires some mechanism for choosing times and locations for inspections. Any predictable patterns in such a patrol schedule are likely to be observed and exploited by potential fare-evaders. The LASD's current approach relies on humans for scheduling the patrols. However, human schedulers are poor at generating unpredictable schedules (Wagenaar 1972; Tambe 2011); furthermore such scheduling for LASD is a tremendous cognitive burden on the human schedulers who must take into account all of the scheduling complexities (e.g., train timings, switching time between trains, and schedule lengths). Indeed, the sheer difficulty of even enumerating the trillions of potential patrols makes any simple automated approach—such as a simple dice roll—inapplicable.

The result of our investigation is a novel application called TRUSTS (**T**actical **R**andomization for **U**rban **S**ecurity in **T**ransit **S**ystems), for fare-evasion deterrence in urban transit systems, carried out in collaboration with the LASD. We model this problem as a Stackelberg game with one leader (the LASD) and many followers, in which each metro rider (a follower) takes a fixed route at a fixed time. The leader precommits to a mixed patrol strategy (a probability distribution over all pure strategies), and riders observe this mixed strategy before deciding whether to buy the ticket or not (the decision to ride having already been made), in order to minimize their expected total cost, following for simplicity the classic economic analysis of rational crime (Becker and Landes 1974). Both ticket sales and fines issued for fare evasion translate into revenue to the government. Therefore the

optimization objective we choose for the leader is to maximize total revenue (total ticket sales plus penalties). There are exponentially many possible pure patrol strategies, each subject to both the spatial and temporal constraints of travel within the transit network. Explicitly representing a mixed strategy would be impractical.

To remedy the difficulty above, TRUSTS uses the *transition graph*, which captures the spatial as well as temporal structure of the domain, and solves for the optimal (fractional) flow through this graph, using linear programming (LP). Such a flow can be interpreted as a marginal coverage vector. Additionally, we show that a straightforward approach to extracting patrol strategies from the marginals faces important challenges: it can create infeasible patrols that violate the constraint on patrol length, and it can generate patrols that switch too frequently between trains, which can be difficult for patrol personnel to carry out. Thus, we present a novel technique to overcome these difficulties using an extended formulation on a *history-duplicate transition graph* that (1) forbids patrols that are too long and (2) penalizes patrols with too many switches.

Finally, we perform simulations based on actual ridership data provided by the LASD, for four LA Metro train lines (Blue, Gold, Green, and Red). Our results suggest the possibility of significant fare evasion deterrence and hence prevention of revenue loss with very few resources. The LASD is currently testing TRUSTS in the LA Metro system by deploying patrols according to our schedules and measuring the revenue recovered.

Related Work

There has been research on a wide range of problems related to game-theoretic patrolling on graphs. One line of work considers games in which one player, the patroller, patrols the graph to detect and catch the other player, the evader, who tries to minimize the detection probability. This includes work on *hider-seeker games* (Halvorson, Conitzer, and Parr 2009) for the case of mobile evaders, and *search games* (Gal 1979) for the case of immobile evaders.

Another line of research considers games in which the patroller deploys resources (static or mobile) on the graph to prevent the other player, the attacker, from reaching certain target vertices. There are a few variations depending on the set of possible sources and targets of the attacker. *Infiltration games* (Alpern 1992) considered one source and target. *Asset protection* problems (Dickerson et al. 2010) consider multiple sources and multiple equally weighted targets. *Networked security games* (Tsai et al. 2010) consider targets with different weights.

The leader-follower Stackelberg game model has been the topic of much recent research (Tambe 2011) and has been applied to a number of real-world security domains, including the Los Angeles International Airport (Jain et al. 2010), the Federal Air Marshals Service (Jain et al. 2010), and the Transportation Security Administration (Pita et al. 2011).

Urban transit systems, however, present unique computational challenges. First, unlike in existing work on graph patrolling games, and unlike in previous deployed applications

on counterterrorism, here the followers we seek to influence are potentially very many: large numbers of train riders might plausibly consider fare evasion. Booz Allen Hamilton (2007) estimates that 6% of riders are ticketless in the metro system overall; anecdotal reports suggest that on some lines this percentage could be far greater, even a majority. Second, the leader has exponentially many possible patrol strategies, corresponding to all the feasible trips within the transit network subject to certain restrictions and preferences. Similar to FAMS (Jain et al. 2010), we represent patrol strategies compactly as a marginal coverage vector. But unlike the FAMS problem in which a patrol consists of very limited number of flights (often a pair of flights), TRUSTS allows much more complex patrols and thus uses a novel compact representation based on *history-duplicate transition graphs*.

Problem Setting

TRUSTS addresses the challenge of generating randomized schedules for LASD patrols for four separate LA Metro lines. We model this problem as a leader-follower Stackelberg game with one leader (the LASD) and multiple followers (riders). In this game, a pure leader strategy is a *patrol*, i.e., a sequence of *patrol actions* (defined below), of constant bounded duration. The two possible pure follower strategies are buying and not buying. Each follower observes the strategy the leader commits to and plays a best response. There are many types of followers, one for each source, destination, and departure time triple (corresponding to the set of all riders who take such a trip). In general the leader's strategies will be mixed; the followers are assumed to play pure strategies (Conitzer and Sandholm 2006).

Train System: The train system consists of a single line on which trains travel back and forth, in general with multiple trains traveling simultaneously. The system operates according to a fixed daily schedule, with trains arriving at stations at (finitely many) designated times throughout the day. Therefore we can model time as discrete, focusing only on the time steps at which some train arrival/departure event occurs. We use the (directed) *transition graph* $G = \langle V, E \rangle$ to encode the daily timetable of the metro line, where a vertex $v = \langle s, t \rangle$ corresponds to some pair of station s and time point t. An edge in G represents a possible (minimal) action. In particular, there is an edge from $\langle s, t \rangle$ to $\langle s', t' \rangle$ if:

• s' is either the predecessor or successor of s in the station sequence and $\langle s, t \rangle$ and $\langle s', t' \rangle$ are two consecutive stops for some train in the train schedule (*traveling action*), or

• $s' = s$, $t < t'$, and there is no vertex $\langle s, t'' \rangle$ with $t < t'' < t'$ (*staying action*).

We refer to the entire path that a given train takes through G, from the start station to the terminal station, as a *train path*. As this model suggests, TRUSTS treats the LA Metro System's multiple lines as independent. Indeed, currently, LA's metro lines have just a few transfer points. Dealing with the impact of transfers will be a topic for future work.

Patrols: There are a fixed number γ of deployable patrol units, each of which may be scheduled on a patrol of duration at most κ hours (with, e.g., $\kappa = 7$). There are two sorts of patrol actions, which a given patrol unit can alternate between on its shift: *on-train* inspections (in which patrollers

ride the train, inspecting passengers), and *in-station* inspections (in which they inspect passengers as they exit the station). A pure patrol strategy is represented mathematically as a path in G for each patrol unit, in which an edge e represents an *atomic* patrol action, i.e., inspecting in-station from the time of one train event at that station to the next (at that station) or inspecting on-train as it travels from one station to the next. Each edge e has a length l_e equal to the corresponding patrol action duration and an effectiveness value f_e, which represents the percentage of the relevant ridership inspected by this action. For both in-station and on-train inspections, f_e depends on the ridership volume at that location and time of day and on the duration. A valid pure patrol strategy is a set of paths $P_1, ..., P_\gamma$, each of size at most κ.

Example 1. *A simple scenario with* 3 *stations* (A, B, C) *and* 4 *discrete time points (6pm, 7pm, 8pm, 9pm) is given in Figure 2. The dashed lines represent staying actions; the solid lines represent traveling actions. There are* 4 *trains in the system; all edge durations are 1 hour. A sample train path here is* $\langle A, 6pm \rangle \to \langle B, 7pm \rangle \to \langle C, 8pm \rangle$. *In this example, if* $\kappa = 2$ *and* $\gamma = 1$, *then the valid pure leader strategies (pure patrol strategies) consist of all paths of length* 2.
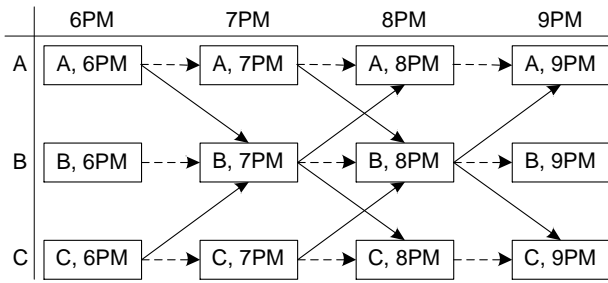

Figure 2: The transition graph of a toy problem instance.

Riders: The riders are assumed to be daily commuters who take a fixed route at a fixed time. Horizon research corporation (2002) suggests more than 82% of riders use the system at least 3 days a week. The ticket price (for any trip within the transit system) is a nominal fee ρ, with the fine for fare evasion τ much greater. As the riders follow the same route every day, they could estimate the likelihood of being inspected, based on which they make a decision as to whether to buy a ticket. We assume the riders know the inspection probability perfectly, and are rational, risk-neutral economic actors (Becker and Landes 1974), who make this choice in order to minimize expected cost.

A rider's *type* is defined by the path he takes in the graph. Because there is a single train line, riders never linger in stations, i.e., do not follow any "stay" edges (staying at a station) mid-journey; the last edge of every follower type is a (short) stay edge, representing the action of "exiting" the destination station, during which the rider may be subject to in-station inspection. Therefore the space Λ of rider types corresponds to the set of all subpaths of train paths. (When G is drawn as in Figure 2, all rider paths are "diagonal" except for the last edge.) A metro line with N stops and M scheduled trains will have $O(MN^2)$ rider types.

Given a pure patrol strategy of the γ units, $(P_1, \dots, P_\gamma)$, the inspection probability for a rider of type $\lambda \in \Lambda$ is:

$$\min\{1, \sum_{i=1}^{\gamma} \sum_{e \in P_i \cap \lambda} f_e\}, \qquad (1)$$

and therefore his expected utility is the negative of the expected amount he pays: $-\rho$ if he buys the ticket and $-\tau \min\{1, \sum_{i=1}^{\gamma} \sum_{e \in P_i \cap \lambda} f_e\}$ otherwise. The inspection probability for a mixed strategy is then the expectation of Equation (1), taken over the distribution of pure strategies.

We justify the inspection probability in Equation (1) as follows. First, consider on-train inspections. The fraction of the train that is inspected in a given inspection action is determined by f_e (which depends on ridership volume). The key is that in the next inspection action, a patrol will not reinspect the fraction of the train that is already inspected in a previous inspection action. Therefore, unlike in settings where patrollers may repeatedly draw a random sample from the same set train passengers to inspect, in our setting, the probabilities f_e are added rather than multiplied. Now also consider in-station inspections. Since a rider taking a journey only exits a single station, a rider will encounter at most one in-station inspection. Finally, when multiple patrol units cover the same edge e, the inspection probability given by (1) is the sum of the contributions from each patrol unit, capped at 1. This is a reasonable assumption when the number of patrol units on each edge e is small, as multiple patrol units on the same train could check different cars or different portions of the same car, and multiple patrol units inspecting at the same station could be checking different exits.

Objective: The leader's utility, equal to total expected revenue, can be decomposed into utilities from bilateral interactions with each individual follower. Hence the game is equivalent to a Bayesian Stackelberg game between one leader with one type and one follower with multiple types. Specifically, we denote the prior probability of a follower type $\lambda \in \Lambda$ (proportional to its ridership volume) by p_λ.

Furthermore, these utility functions imply that the game is zero sum, in which case the Stackelberg equilibrium is equivalent to the maximin solution. Although such zero-sum Bayesian games are solvable by either applying the LP formulation of (Ponssard and Sorin 1980) or treating the Bayesian game as a extensive-form game and applying the sequence form LP formulation of (Koller, Megiddo, and von Stengel 1994), those LP formulations would be impractical here because they explicitly enumerate the exponential number of pure strategies of the leader.

Linear Program Formulation

In this section, we formulate a linear program which finds a maximum-revenue (mixed) patrol strategy. As noted above, the leader's space of *pure* strategies is exponentially large, even with a single patrol unit. We avoid this difficulty by compactly representing mixed patrol strategies by marginal coverage on edges x_e of the transition graph (the marginal strategy), i.e., by the expected numbers of inspections that will occur on these edges. Subsequently, we construct a

mixed strategy (i.e., a probability distribution over pure strategies) consistent with the marginal coverage.

For expository purposes, we first present a basic LP formulation of our approach of compactly representing the problem using marginal coverage. This basic formulation also illustrates the key issues that make it difficult for the end-user to deploy the patrol strategies computed. We then introduce an extended formulation to address these issues.

Basic Formulation

We denote the set of possible starting vertices in the transition graph $G = \langle V, E \rangle$ by $V^+ \subset V$, and the set of possible ending vertices by $V^- \subset V$. For algorithmic convenience, we add to the transition graph a source v^+ with edges to all vertices in V^+ and a sink v^- with edges from all vertices in V^-. We assign these additional dummy edges zero duration and zero effectiveness.

Based on this graph, we provide a linear program (shown in Figure 3) to provide an upper bound on the optimal revenue achievable. Here u_λ denotes the expected value paid by a rider of type λ, and so $p_\lambda u_\lambda$ is the expected total revenue from riders of this type; x_e is the expected number of inspections on edge e. Constraint (4) bounds the total flow entering and exiting the system by γ, the number of total patrol units allowed. Constraint (5) enforces conservation of flow, which clearly is satisfied by any mixed patrol strategy. Constraint (6) limits the total number of time units to $\gamma \cdot \kappa$, and also bounds x_e for each e. Since x_e is the expected coverage of e, it could theoretically go up to as much as γ. On the other hand our assumption that the inspection probability is added across patrol units (Equation (1)) is valid only when a small number of units are on each edge. Thus we have another parameter $\alpha \in [1, \gamma]$ as the upper-bound of x_e.

Finally, let us consider Constraint (3), which indicates that the rider will best respond, by bounding the expected cost to a rider of type λ by both the ticket price ρ and $\tau \min\{1, \sum_{e \in \lambda} x_e f_e\} = \min\{\tau, \tau \sum_{e \in \lambda} x_e f_e\}$, the formulation's estimate of the expected fine if the rider chooses not to buy. However, the latter is only an *overestimate* of the actual expected fine of not buying. This is because the expression $\min\{1, \sum_{e \in \lambda} x_e f_e\}$ only caps the expectation (over its pure strategies) of the inspection probability at 1, but allows a pure strategy $(P_1, \ldots, P_\gamma)$ in its support to achieve $\sum_{i=1}^{\gamma} \sum_{e \in P_i \cap \lambda} f_e > 1$, whereas according to (1) the inspection probability of each pure strategy should be at most 1. This results in an overestimate of the actual inspection probability (and thus the leader's utility). As a result the solution of this LP provides only an upper bound on the optimal revenue. Fortunately, once we generate the patrols from the marginals we are able to compute the actual best-response utilities of the riders. Our experiments show that the differences between the actual utilities and the upper-bounds given by the LP formulation are small. The remaining task is to construct a γ-unit mixed strategy whose marginals match the marginal strategy $\mathbf{x}$.

Proposition 1. *Given a marginal strategy $\mathbf{x}$, a γ-unit mixed strategy for the leader that produces the same coverage on each edge e as $\mathbf{x}$ does can be constructed in polynomial time.*

Proof. First, we construct a set Υ of weighted patrol paths, by extracting distinct source-to-sink flows from $\mathbf{x}$ through the following iterative procedure.
1. Find a path P from v^+ to v^- where $x_e > 0$ for all $e \in P$. If no such path exists, terminate because x_e must then be 0 for all $e \in E$ (due to Constraint (5)). Otherwise go to step 2.
2. Let $x^* = \min_{e \in P}\{x_e\}$. Add path P with weight x^* to the set Υ. Deduct x^* from x_e for all $e \in P$. Go to step 1.

Since every iteration removes a complete source-to-sink flow, constraint (5) is maintained throughout the execution of this procedure. The procedure's running time is polynomial because at least one new x_e is set to 0 in each iteration.

Finally, we create a mixed strategy of joint patrol paths (with γ units) that matches exactly the set of weighted patrol paths Υ obtained in the procedure above, and thus the marginal strategy $\mathbf{x}$. To do this, we could assign a path of weight x^* to the γ units independently, each with an equal probability of $\frac{x^*}{\gamma}$. Since $x^* \leq \gamma$, we have $\frac{x^*}{\gamma} \leq 1$. $\qquad\square$

Issues with the Basic Formulation

There are two fundamental issues with the basic formulation. First, the mixed strategy constructed can fail to satisfy the patrol length limit of κ, notwithstanding Constraint (6) on the sum of the lengths of all patrols, and hence be infeasible. In fact, the marginal strategy computed in the basic formulation may not correspond to any feasible mixed strategy in which all patrols have length at most κ. Consider the counterexample in Figure 5. Edges $v_1 \to v_2$ and $v_2 \to v_3$ represent two real atomic actions, each with duration 1. Patrols must start from either v_1 or v_3, but can terminate at any of v_1, v_2 and v_3. This is specified using v^+ and v^-, the dummy source and sink respectively. We assume $\kappa = 1$ and $\gamma = 1$. It can be verified that the marginal strategy shown in Figure 5 satisfies constraints (4) through (6). However, the only corresponding mixed strategy is to take $v^+ \to v_3 \to v^-$ with 50% probability and $v^+ \to v_1 \to v_2 \to v_3 \to v^-$ with 50% probability. This mixed strategy is infeasible since its second patrol has duration greater than 1. This patrol length violation arises because the basic formulation only constrains the average patrol length, and therefore allows the use of overlong patrols as long as some short patrols are also used.
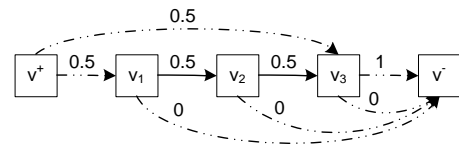

Figure 5: Example of an infeasible marginal strategy.

Second, the paths selected according the constructed mixed strategy may *switch* between trains or between in-station and on-train at impractically large number of times, making the patrol path difficult to implement and error-prone. This is an important issue as we want real LASD officers to be able to carry out these strategies. The more switches there are in a patrol strategy, the more instruc-

$$\max_{\mathbf{x},\mathbf{u}} \sum_{\lambda \in \Lambda} p_\lambda u_\lambda \qquad (2)$$

$$\text{s.t. } u_\lambda \leq \min\{\rho,\ \tau \sum_{e \in \lambda} x_e f_e\},\ \text{for all } \lambda \in \Lambda \qquad (3)$$

$$\sum_{v \in V^+} x_{(v^+,v)} = \sum_{v \in V^-} x_{(v,v^-)} \leq \gamma \qquad (4)$$

$$\sum_{(v',v) \in E} x_{(v',v)} = \sum_{(v,v^\dagger) \in E} x_{(v,v^\dagger)},\ \text{for all } v \in V \qquad (5)$$

$$\sum_{e \in E} l_e \cdot x_e \leq \gamma \cdot \kappa,\ 0 \leq x_e \leq \alpha, \forall e \in E \qquad (6)$$

Figure 3: Basic Formulation

$$\max_{\mathbf{x},\mathbf{y},\mathbf{u}} \sum_{\lambda \in \Lambda} p_\lambda u_\lambda - \beta \sum_{e \in \mathcal{E}} c_e y_e \qquad (7)$$

$$\text{s.t. } u_\lambda \leq \min\{\rho,\ \tau \sum_{e \in \lambda} x_e f_e\},\ \text{for all } \lambda \in \Lambda \qquad (8)$$

$$\sum_{v \in \mathcal{V}^+} y_{(v^+,v)} = \sum_{v \in \mathcal{V}^-} y_{(v,v^-)} \leq \gamma \qquad (9)$$

$$\sum_{(v',v) \in \mathcal{E}} y_{(v',v)} = \sum_{(v,v^\dagger) \in \mathcal{E}} y_{(v,v^\dagger)},\ \text{for all } v \in \mathcal{V} \qquad (10)$$

$$x_e = \sum_{e' \in \Gamma(e)} y_{e'}, \forall e \in E, 0 \leq x_e \leq \alpha, \forall e \in E \qquad (11)$$

Figure 4: Extended Formulation

tions the patrol unit has to remember, and the more likely they will miss a switch due to imperfections in the train schedule and/or the unit's mis-execution of the instructions. For example, in Example 1, $\langle A, 6pm \rangle \rightarrow \langle B, 7pm \rangle \rightarrow \langle A, 8pm \rangle$ and $\langle C, 6pm \rangle \rightarrow \langle B, 7pm \rangle \rightarrow \langle C, 8pm \rangle$ each do 1 switches while $\langle A, 6pm \rangle \rightarrow \langle B, 7pm \rangle \rightarrow \langle C, 8pm \rangle$ and $\langle C, 6pm \rangle \rightarrow \langle B, 7pm \rangle \rightarrow \langle A, 8pm \rangle$ each do none. Both path pairs cover the same set of edges, making the second preferable because it is easier to implement.

Extended Formulation

Now we present a more sophisticated formulation design to address the two aforementioned issues. The difficulty involved in imposing constraints on the patrol paths (i.e., penalizing or forbidding certain paths) in the marginal representation is that paths themselves are not represented, instead being encoded only as marginal coverage.

Hence the key idea is to preserve sufficient path history information within vertices to be able to evaluate our constraints, while avoiding the exponential blowup creating a node for every path would cause. We construct a new graph, called the *History-Duplicate Transition graph* (HDT graph), by creating multiple copies of the original vertices, each corresponding to different values of history information.

We first explain how to construct the HDT graph from a transition graph G in order to forbid patrol paths longer than κ. The HDT graph is composed of multiple restricted copies of G (i.e., subgraphs of G), corresponding to different possible starting time points. For the copy corresponding to starting time point t^*, we only keep the subgraph on vertices $v = \langle s, t \rangle \in V$ where $t^* \leq t \leq t^* + \kappa$. Thus, in each restricted copy of G, the length of any path is guaranteed to be less than or equal to κ. Since there are a finite number of distinct possible starting time points (i.e., all distinct discrete time points in V^+), the new graph is a linear expansion of G. An approximation can be obtained by taking one starting time point every δ time units. In this case, an original vertex (edge) will be kept in at most $\lceil \kappa/\delta \rceil$ copies, implying the new graph is at most $\lceil \kappa/\delta \rceil$ times larger than G.

Figure 6(a) shows the HDT graph (the shaded portion further explained below) of Example 1 with $\kappa = 2$ and

2 starting time points, $6pm$ and $7pm$. The HDT graph is thus composed of two restricted copies of the original transition graph. In each vertex, the time shown in parenthesis indicates the starting time point. For example, the original vertex $\langle A, 7pm \rangle$ now has two copies $\langle A, 7pm, (6pm) \rangle$ and $\langle A, 7pm, (7pm) \rangle$ in the HDT graph. For the starting time point of $6pm$, the patrol must end at or before $8pm$, hence we do not need to keep vertices whose discrete time point is $9pm$. For the starting time point of $7pm$, the patrol must start at or after $7pm$, hence we do not need to keep vertices whose discrete time point is $6pm$. The two restricted copies *are not two separate graphs* but a single graph that will be tied together by the dummy source and sink.

Next, we explain how to further extend the HDT graph to penalize complex patrol paths. The idea is to have each vertex encode the last action occurring prior to it. Specifically, we create multiple copies of a vertex v, each corresponding to a different edge that leads to it. If v is a possible starting vertex, we create an additional copy representing no prior action. If there is an edge from v to v', we connect all copies of v to the specific copy of v' whose last action was (v, v'). A new edge is called a switching edge if the recorded last actions of its two vertices are of different types (e.g., inspecting different trains), unless one of the two vertices is a "no prior action" vertex. As can be verified, the number of switches of a patrol path in the new graph is the number of switching edges it has. To favor simple patrol paths, we demand a cost $\beta > 0$ for using switching edges. Varying the value of β lets us trade off between solution quality (greater revenue) and patrol preference (lower average number of switches).

In Figure 6(b), we show how to apply this extension using the subgraph shown in the shaded box of Figure 6(a). Since there is only one edge leading to $\langle A, 7pm, (6pm) \rangle$, we create one copy of it representing the action of staying at A. There are 3 edges leading to $\langle B, 7pm, (6pm) \rangle$, so we create 3 copies of it representing the actions of taking train from A, staying at B, and taking train from C. The original edges are also duplicated. For example, $\langle B, 7pm, (6pm) \rangle \rightarrow \langle B, 8pm, (6pm) \rangle$ has 3 copies connecting the 3 copies of $\langle B, 7pm, (6pm) \rangle$ to the copy of $\langle B, 8pm, (6pm) \rangle$, representing the staying at B action. Among the three copies, only

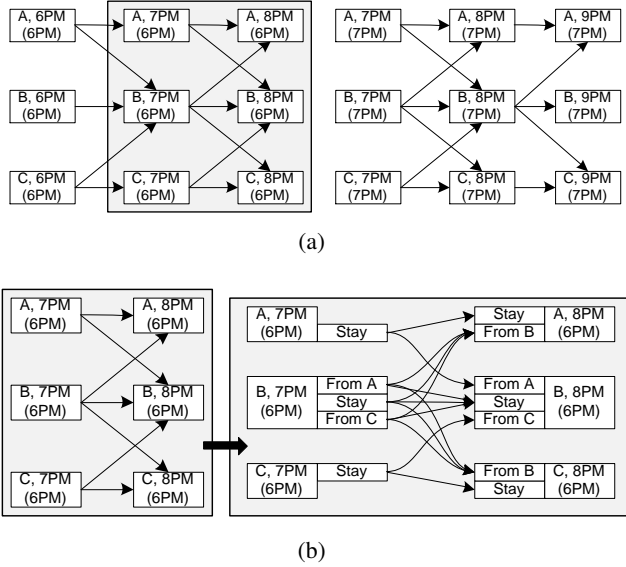the "Stay" to "Stay" edge is not a switching edge.

(a)

(b)

Figure 6: (a) HDT graph of Example 1 with two starting time points. (b) extension storing the last action occurring.

Given the final HDT graph $\mathcal{G} = \langle \mathcal{V}, \mathcal{E} \rangle$, we provide an extended linear program formulation in Figure 4. We still use x_e to represent the marginal coverage of an original edge $e \in E$ being selected, but we now also use y_e to represent the marginal coverage of an HDT graph edge $e \in \mathcal{E}$ being selected. Let $\Gamma(e) \subset \mathcal{E}$ be the set of copies of e, then $x_e = \sum_{e' \in \Gamma(e)} y_{e'}$. Let $c_e = 1$ if $e \in \mathcal{E}$ is a switching edge and 0 otherwise. The set of possible starting vertices $\mathcal{V}^+$ is the set of copies of V^+ that are "no prior action" vertices. The set of possible ending vertices $\mathcal{V}^-$ is the set of all copies of V^-. We again add a dummy source v^+ leading to $\mathcal{V}^+$ and a dummy sink that can be reached from $\mathcal{V}^-$. Because the extended formulation enforces stricter restrictions on patrols allowed than the basic formulation, the LP of Figure 4, with β set to 0, provides a tighter upper bound on the optimal revenue than the LP of Figure 3.

A path in the HDT graph $\mathcal{G}$ trivially corresponds to a path in the transition graph G, since any edge in $\mathcal{G}$ is a duplicate of some edge in G. Therefore from the solution $\mathbf{y}^*$, we can use the same process described for the basic formulation to construct a mixed strategy. Because the length of any patrol path in the HDT graph is bounded by κ, the mixed strategy must be feasible. In addition, since the number of switches in a patrol path equals the number of switching edges in it, the average number of switches of the constructed mixed strategy is always equal to $\sum_{e \in \mathcal{E}} c_e y_e^*$.

Real-World Evaluation

We present our evaluation based on real metro schedules and rider traffic data provided by the LASD. We solved the LP in the extended formulation using CPLEX 12.2 on a standard 2.8GHz machine with 4GB memory. We first describe the data sets we used, followed by our experimental results.

Data Sets

We created four data sets, each based on a different Los Angeles Metro Rail line: Red (including Purple), Blue, Gold, and Green. For each line, we created its transition graph using the corresponding timetable from http://www.metro.net. Implementing the LP requires a fine-grain ridership distribution of potential fare evaders (recall that a rider type corresponds to a 4-tuple of boarding station / time and disembarking station / time).

In our experiments, we assumed that potential fare evaders were evenly distributed among the general population and created the required fine-grained rider distribution using hourly boarding and alighting counts provided by the Los Angeles Sheriff Department. Suppose the percentage of riders boarding in hour i is d_i^+ and the percentage of riders alighting in hour i is d_i^-. Denote the set of those that board in hour i by Λ_i^+ and that alight in hour i by Λ_i^-. Then we would like to compute a fine-grained ridership distribution $\mathbf{p}$ to match the hourly boarding and alighting percentages, i.e., to find a point within the following convex region Ω,

$$\Omega = \{\mathbf{p} | \mathbf{p} \succeq \mathbf{0} \wedge \sum_{\lambda \in \Lambda_i^+} p_\lambda = d_i^+ \wedge \sum_{\lambda \in \Lambda_i^-} p_\lambda = d_i^-, \forall i\}.$$

We estimate the fare evader distribution by finding the analytic center of Ω, i.e., $\mathbf{p}^* = \arg\min_{\mathbf{p} \in \Omega} \sum_{\lambda \in \Lambda} -\log(p_\lambda)$, which is efficiently computable.

The inspection effectiveness f_e of an edge is assigned based on the assumption that 10 passengers can be inspected per minute. f_e is capped at 0.5 to capture the fact that the inspector cannot switch between cars while the train is moving. (Trains contain at least two cars.) The ticket fare was set to \$1.5 (the actual current value) while the fine was set to \$100. (Fare evaders in Los Angeles can be fined \$200, but they also may be issued warnings.) If we could increase the fine dramatically the riders would have much less incentive for fare evasion, and we could achieve better revenue. However a larger fine is infeasible legally. Table 1 summarizes the detailed statistics for the Metro lines.

Line	Stops	Trains	Daily Riders	Types
Red	16	433	149991.5	26033
Blue	22	287	76906.2	46630
Gold	19	280	30940.0	41910
Green	14	217	38442.6	19559

Table 1: Statistics of Los Angeles Metro lines.

Experimental Results

Throughout our experiments, we fixed γ to 1 (and thus $\alpha = 1$). In our first set of experiments, we fixed penalty β to 0 (no penalty for using patrol paths with more switches), and varied the maximum number of hours that an inspector can patrol from 4 to 7 hours. To create the HDT graph, we took one starting time point every hour (i.e., $\delta = 1$ hour).

Figure 7(a) shows the expected revenue per rider of the mixed patrol strategy we generated, which is the total revenue divided by the number of daily riders. Since the LP
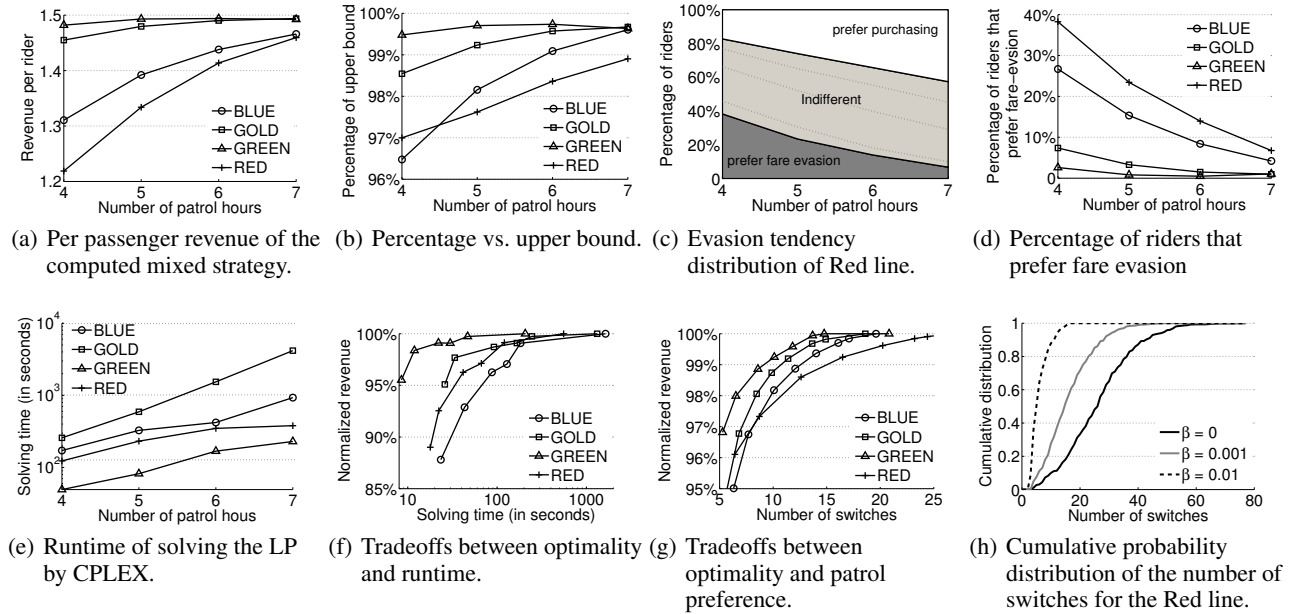
(a) Per passenger revenue of the computed mixed strategy.

(b) Percentage vs. upper bound.

(c) Evasion tendency distribution of Red line.

(d) Percentage of riders that prefer fare evasion

(e) Runtime of solving the LP by CPLEX.

(f) Tradeoffs between optimality and runtime.

(g) Tradeoffs between optimality and patrol preference.

(h) Cumulative probability distribution of the number of switches for the Red line.

Figure 7: Experimental results.

only returns an upper bound of the attainable revenue, the true expected revenue of the mixed patrol strategy was computed by evaluating the riders' best responses for all rider types. A rider can always pay the ticket price for $1.5 and will only evade the ticket when the expected fine is lower. Hence the theoretical maximum achievable value is $1.5, which is achieved when every rider purchases a ticket. As we can see, the per-rider revenue increases as the number of patrol hours increases, almost converging to the theoretical upper bound of $1.5 for the Gold and Green line. Specifically, a 4-hour patrol strategy already provides reasonably good expected value: 1.31 for the Blue line (87.4% of the maximum), 1.45 for the Gold line (97.0%), 1.48 for the Green line (98.8%), and 1.22 for the Red line (81.3%). Among the four lines, the Red line has the lowest revenue per rider. This is because the effectiveness of fare inspection decreases as the volume of daily riders increases, and the Red line has significantly higher number of daily riders than the other lines.

We depict in Figure 7(b) the percentage of the true expected revenue vs. the theoretical upper bound returned by the LP. Strategies generated by our method are near optimal; for example, our 4-hour strategies for the Blue, Gold, Green, and Red lines provided expected revenues of 96.5%, 98.5%, 99.5%, and 97.0% of the upper bound (and thus at least as much of the optimum), respectively.

To study riders' responses to the computed strategy, we partitioned the entire population of riders into three groups depending on their expected fine if fare-evading: riders who prefer purchasing tickets (expected fine is greater than 1.7—13.3% above the ticket price), riders who prefer fare evasion (expected fine is less than 1.3—13.3% below the ticket price), and indifferent riders (expected fine is between 1.3 and 1.7). In Figure 7(c), we show the distribution of the three groups against the strategies computed for the Red line. The three dashed lines inside the region of indifferent riders rep-

resent, from top to bottom, the percentages of riders whose expected fine is less than 1.6, 1.5, and 1.4, respectively. As the number of patrol hours increases from 4 to 7, the percentage of riders who prefer fare evasion decreases from 38% to 7%, the percentage of riders who prefer purchasing tickets increases from 17% to 43%, and the percentage of indifferent riders remains stable between 45% and 50%.

Zooming in on the fare evasion, Figure 7(d) shows the percentage of riders who preferred fare evasion against the patrol strategies computed. As we can see, this percentage decreased almost linearly in the number of additional patrol hours beyond 4. Our 7-hour patrol strategy lowered this percentage to 4.2% for the Blue line, 0.01% for the Gold line, 0.01% for the Green line, and 6.8% for the Red line. Again, due to having the highest daily volume, the Red line had the highest percentage of riders who preferred fare evasion.

Finally, Figure 7(e) shows the runtime required by CPLEX to solve the LPs we created. As we can see, the runtime increased as the number of patrol hours increased for all the metro lines. This is because the size of the HDT graph constructed is roughly proportional to the maximum length of the patrols, and a larger HDT graph requires an LP with more variables and constraints. Among the four lines, the Red and the Green lines have significantly fewer types, and are thus easier to solve than the other two lines.

In our second experiment, we varied the interval δ of taking starting time points, trading off solution quality for efficiency. We fixed the patrol length κ to 4 hours and penalty parameter β to 0. For each line, we tested 6 interval (δ) settings ranging from 0.5 hour to 4 hours. In Figure 7(f), the x-axis is the runtime (in log-scale) and the y-axis is the normalized revenue against the expected revenue of $\delta = 0.5$ within each line. For each line, a data point from left to right corresponds to $\delta = 4, 3, 2, 1.5, 1$, and 0.5 respectively. Increasing the runtime (by decreasing δ) always led to a better

solution; however, the quality gain diminished. For example, for the Blue line, it took 20 seconds of additional runtime to increase the solution quality from 87.9% ($\delta = 4$ hours) to 92.9% ($\delta = 3$ hours), whereas it took 1456 seconds of additional runtime to increase the solution quality from 99.1% ($\delta = 1$ hour) to 100% ($\delta = 0.5$ hour).

In the final experiment, we varied the penalty β, trading off between the solution quality and the average number of switches. We fixed the patrol length κ to 4 hours and starting time interval δ to one hour. For each line, we tested 7 penalty settings from $\beta = 0$ to $\beta = 0.01$. Figure 7(g) plots the average number of switches against the normalized revenue against the expected revenue of $\beta = 0$ within each line. For all lines, higher β values led to both lower solution quality and fewer number of switches. For example, the average number of switches in the solution of the highest revenue ($\beta = 0$) ranged from 18.6 (Gold line) to 26.7 (Red line). However, by allowing 3% quality loss, this number could be lowered to less than 10 for all the four lines.

To further understand the patrol paths returned in these solutions, we show, in Figure 7(h), the cumulative probability distributions of the number of switches for the Red line given 3 settings of β: 0, 0.001, and 0.01. Choosing a lower β tended to lead to more complex patrol paths. For example, the solution of $\beta = 0$ used patrol paths whose number of switches is greater than 20 with 68.9% probability; the solution of $\beta = 0.001$ (99.7% of the optimum) only used such paths with 31.2% probability. And the solution of $\beta = 0.01$ (97.0% of the optimum) never used patrol paths that had more than 20 switches.

LASD Evaluation of TRUSTS

LASD has started testing our generated patrol strategies. For example, in initial test runs for the Red Line on Thursday, Jan 4 and Friday, Jan 5, 2012, one patrol unit conducted a 4-hour fare-inspection patrol on each day. A total of 851 fare checks were made, with 41 fare evaders cited and 3 felons arrested. The patrols implemented in the two days had 4 and 5 switches, respectively, and the officers were able to make the switches we requested. Due the felony arrests, the actual operation duration was slightly less than 4 hours in both days. More tests are scheduled in the future to provide a more thorough evaluation of the effectiveness of our strategies.

Summary

In this paper we presented TRUSTS, a novel application for fare-evasion deterrence in urban transit systems. Our development of TRUSTS opens the door to applying game-theoretical randomization beyond previous applications of counterterrorism, to a much broader setting in which common individuals and daily routines are involved. We modeled the domain as a Stackelberg game, providing a novel compact representation of the leader's mixed strategies as flows in the history-duplicate transition graph. We found in our simulations that our method computed close-to-optimal strategies, which effectively deterred fare evasion and ensured high levels of revenue with few patrol hours. We are currently evaluating TRUSTS within the LA Metro system in collaboration with LASD.

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