Privacy-Preserving Algorithms for Data Cooperatives with Directed Graphs

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- Keywords: Data Cooperatives, Privacy, Applications of Homomorphic Encryption (HE), Graph Algorithms, Encrypted Graphs.
- Abstract: A handful of companies currently hold large collections of data about most people. In addition to the questionable ethics of collecting personal data with few-to-no options to limit what these companies collect, there exist exceptionally few ways to regulate how your data is stored and used once it is collected. Furthermore, these data collections cannot be easily cross-referenced to gain insight. Data cooperatives provide an alternative to these separated collections of data. As a participant-driven organization, similar to a credit union, data cooperatives have a vested interest in preserving the privacy of individuals while offering insight similar to other big data analytics. Another bonus of the data cooperative model is the voluntary (and ethical) sourcing of data. The downside of giving participants the freedom to choose which data they contribute is incomplete data sets. To help address this, we adapt label propagation, a semi-supervised learning algorithm for community detection based on partially labeled data, to work over homomorphically encrypted (HE) graphs. We also adapt triangle counting and a vertex scoring scheme to work over directed heterogeneous-vertex, heterogeneous-edge HE graph data.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Data Cooperatives

Data cooperatives provide an alternative to traditional large data collections. A data cooperative is the voluntary collaborative pooling of data by individuals for the benefit of the group or community (Pentland and Hardjono, 2020). Unlike current big data solutions, data cooperatives are participant-driven, *voluntary* collections of data. This differs from the current "data silos" held by a handful of organizations (FAANG, governments, etc.) in that data and insights derived from it can be had by anyone, not just those that have these data collections. Furthermore, the specific insights delivered are custom to the questions asked by the data consumer, not a set of generic indicators.

As all data collection is voluntary, data cooperatives can serve as ethical data sources. If a participant does not wish to share a particular type of data, they are not forced to do so.

This leads to mixed levels of data sharing among participants and contributes to the issue of incomplete data within the cooperative. This is compounded with the fact that of the many possible participants, a significant number will not be sharing data at all.

1.2 Homomorphic Encryption (HE)

Homomorphic encryption (HE) allows for computation over ciphertext values using specific functions. There exists a *homomorphism* between these functions and cleartext operators such as addition, multiplication, etc.

Some common HE schemes include BFV, which allows for addition and multiplication of encrypted integers (Fan and Vercauteren, 2012); HEAAN/CKKS, which allows for addition and multiplication of block floating point values (Cheon et al., 2017); and TFHE, which allows for the evaluation of binary gates over ciphertext values (Chillotti et al., 2019) (Chillotti et al., 2016). CHIMERA (Boura et al., 2020) describes a method of converting between all three of the aforementioned schemes without decrypting.

We use HE in our data cooperative to protect personal data in case of a data breach, a snooping 3rd party, or a cooperative that betrays the participants. We will achieve this by using a multikey HE (Chen et al., 2019)(López-Alt et al., 2017) where the key is

876

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divided among the participants and the cooperative. Thus, the cooperative will need the cooperation of the participants in order to decrypt any query result that uses private information as described in our previous work (Dockendorf and Dantu, 2023).

1.3 Related Work

1.3.1 Data Privacy Survey

According to GDMA's 2022 global data privacy survey (GDMA and Acxiom, 2022), 48% of US respondents are data pragmatists: willing to share data if there is a clear benefit to it, and 31% of US respondents are data unconcerned: not caring how their data is used. Their survey further finds that "data fundamentalists", those who are unwilling to share data, account for approximately 21% of US respondents, with 79% of US respondents "willing to engage in the data economy".

We would like to note that as an online survey, GDMA's research possibly missed the most privacyconcerned among the populace *as such individuals may not be willing to answer an online survey*. Typically, online surveys have a response rate below 30% (Nayak and Narayan, 2019)(Lindemann, 2023). While this percentage is not reported in the survey, the survey shows that among respondents, people are becoming more willing to share their data.

1.3.2 HE for Data Cooperatives

We have adapted (and benchmarked) several graph algorithms to work over HE graph data with special consideration given to a data cooperative usecase (Dockendorf et al., 2021) (Dockendorf. et al., 2022). The algorithms adapted to work over HE graph data include ring-based BFS, vertex degree, farness centrality, Bellman-Ford (single-source shortest path), Floyd-Warshall (all-pairs shortest path), Kruskal (minimum spanning forest), betweenness centrality, and random walk.

We use HE in our data cooperative to provide privacy by encrypting edges that constitute PII. As an example, an edge representing residence between a vertex representing a person and and a vertex representing a plot of land would be encrypted as a home address is considered PII.

1.3.3 HE Undirected Triangle Counting

The authors of CryptGraph (Xie and Xing, 2014) showed results for computing the clustering coefficient of an undirected HE graph, which, as a subroutine, requires triangle counting. This year, a paper

detailing structural encryption for graphs with accurate triangle counting is set to publish (Wu and Chen, 2023).

Our results differ from the aforementioned works as we count *directed* triangles, where these works only considered *undirected* triangles. Distributed triangle counting has also been previously explored with performance sufficient for "small and medium size data" (Do and Ng, 2016). This work is also the most similar to ours conceptually, despite being distributed, as each party contributes *edges from their perspective* as participants in our data cooperative would contribute their *outgoing edges from their perspective*.

2 MOTIVATION

2.1 Incomplete Data

Naturally, as some potential data cooperative participants will not join due to privacy concerns, any data cooperative will have to work with incomplete data. This is further compounded by the fact that participants are not required to share all data types. As such, certain data that some participants are unwilling to share will be incomplete, even among active participants.

This is further compounded by the fact that not all participants will provide updates at the same rate. This difference in update rate may lead to temporary inconsistencies in the data.

2.2 Graph Database

Our model for a data cooperative uses a graph database. Graph databases provide more flexibility than rigid-schema databases, allowing the cooperative to accommodate varying levels of data contribution from participants and adapt more quickly to changing data needs of data consumers. Furthermore, many graph algorithms are useful for extracting metrics and data insight from the collected data (Robinson et al., 2015).

Graph algorithms can be used to predict social media activity (Pitas, 2016), detect money laundering (Li et al., 2020), optimize supply chains (Robinson et al., 2015), and much more. To put it plainly, storing data in graph form facilitates the production of data insight, the primary product of a data cooperative. A number of existing graph algorithms have already been adapted to work over HE graph data (Dockendorf. et al., 2022) (Dockendorf et al., 2021)(Xie and Xing, 2014). Finally, since participants submit data from their point of view, they are effectively submitting directed graph data (outgoing edges from their perspective). *This is why all of our HE graph algorithms specifically accommodate directed graph data.*

3 OUR CONTRIBUTION

In this paper, we demonstrate three algorithms over HE graph data: HE label propagation, HE directed triangle counting, and HE weighted triangle creation vertex scoring. We touch on issues that data cooperatives using HE will face related to incomplete data and propose HE label propagation for inferring data without disclosing labels to the cooperative. Label propagation is an algorithm for inferring communities given a set of known values (labeled vertices) and a graph which has edges that are a good indicator of communities.

We demonstrate a variant of label propagation designed to work over HE graph data given an encrypted labeled vertex set. This algorithm achieves the same result as its cleartext counterpart with O(r * S(|V|))runtime complexity, where S(|V|) is the time complexity of squaring a |V| by |V| matrix, |V| is the number of vertices in the graph, and r is the repeated square count to produce the desired convergence. This algorithm can be used by data cooperatives to infer labels of previously unlabeled vertices given a graph that is a good indicator of the labels in question, all without disclosing any previouslyunknown information. Thus, HE label propagation can offer a solution to data cooperatives for certain types of incomplete data.

We demonstrate directed triangle counting over HE graph data. We define three types of directed triangles: true, strong, and weak and benchmark our HE graph algorithms for counting these.

Finally, we provide an example of weighted triangle creation vertex scoring over HE graph data. This scoring method places different weights based on the types of triangles that would be created should an edge be added between a given vertex and any one of the candidate vertices. These weights are tuned based on which shared neighbor vertices and edge types are more desirable. This algorithm has a variety of applications, including multi-factor friend suggestion and network security risk assessments.

4 ALGORITHMS

4.1 HE Label Propagation

4.1.1 Cleartext Algorithm

Cleartext label propagation is as follows (Raghavan et al., 2007):

- 1. Initialize the labels at all vertices in the network. For a given vertex x, $C_x(0) = x$.
- 2. t := 1
- 3. Randomize the order of vertices and set it to X.
- 4. For each $x \in X$ chosen in that specific order, let $C_x(t) = f(C_{x_{i1}}(t), ..., C_{x_{im}}(t), C_{x_{i(m+1)}}(t-1), ..., C_{x_{ik}}(t-1))$. Return the label occurring with the highest frequency among neighbours (select random label on tie).
- 5. If every vertex has a label that the maximum number of their neighbours have, then stop the algorithm. Else, t := t + 1 and goto (3).

Naturally, the conditional jump in 5 above must be eliminated in order to create a HE algorithm as the program counter cannot be updated based on an encrypted value. Thus t will iterate until the maximum possible steps for full propagation on a given graph or will terminate after a user-defined number of steps (if the user specifies a number of iterations less than the maximum number of steps).

4.1.2 HE Algorithm

Homomorphic label propagation with weighted probability for transition works on the same premise as cleartext label propagation. To initialize, we create a |V| by |V| matrix, A. For each vertex of the graph, if the vertex is labeled, place a 1 on the diagonal of A and zero in all other columns; otherwise, invert all values, with 0 inverting to 0, and store to A. Next, sum each row of A and divide all values in the row by the sum; this normalizes the sum of each row of Ato 1. Finally, repeatedly square A until convergence (r times). This convergence threshold, which is the repeated square count, r, is passed as an argument to homomorphic label propagation.

To get around the conditional termination of cleartext label propagation, homomorphic label propagation uses a repeated square count. This value can be tuned based on the number of values in the graph. For all experiments in this paper, the value was 5; this means that the A matrix is repeatedly squared 5 times, resulting in $A^{2^5} = A^{32}$. A good repeated square count for real-world data may be 7, which would result in A^{128} . While the number of vertices, |V|, is the primary contributor to the algorithm's growth rate, the repeated square count, *r*, contributes multiplicatively to the algorithm's growth rate. Luckily, a small *r* value can still be very effective in converging the labels: this is due to the fact that convergence is exponential in nature (due to repeated squaring). Since *A* is a |V|by |V| matrix and naive matrix multiply is $O(|V|^3)$, the overall complexity for label propagation ends up $O(r|V|^3)$. A faster HE matrix multiplication or squaring algorithm will benefit HE label propagation.

Parallel HE Label Propagation

Input: G, the encrypted graph; L, encrypted set of labeled vertices; r, repeated square count Output: A, encrypted label matrix

```
A, B, are zero-initialized |V| by |V| matrices
#parallel loop
for every edge in G[i,j]:
  if i = j:
    A[i,j] := (L[i]) ? 1 : A[i,j]
  else:
    A[i,j] := (!L[i]) ? G[i,j] : A[i,j]
#parallel loop
for each row, i, in A:
  row_sum := 0
  for each column, j, in A:
    A[i,j] := (A[i,j] != 0) ? 1/A[i,j] : 0
    row_sum := row_sum + A[i,j]
  norm := (row_sum != 0) ? 1/row_sum : 0
 for each column, j, in A:
    A[i,j] := A[i,j] * norm
for k := 1 to r:
  B := parallel_mm(A,A)
 pointer swap B <-> A
return A
```

In the pseudocode above, *parallel_mm* is a parallel matrix multiplication algorithm with at least O(|V|) parallelism. This results in $O(r|V|^3)$ growth complexity with up to O(|V|) parallelism or SIMD as is possible with packed ciphertexts (a single ciphertext containing multiple values, resulting in SIMD operations).

We also make use of the HE MUX, similar to our work in (Dockendorf. et al., 2022), which is represented in our pseudocode by the ternary operator. The HE MUX is represented above as a ternary operator. Given the expression (!L[i])?G[i,j]:A[i,j], first c = !(L[i] != 0) is evaluated. Then the result, c, a TFHE bit, is fed into the control of a TFHE MUX circuit, which selects G[i,j] if c is an encrypted 1 and selects A[i,j] otherwise. This enables conditional evaluation under HE so that one could use a restricted if/else structure in an HE context, but requires evaluation of both the if and else path before committing results.

4.1.3 Equivalence to Cleartext Label Propagation

Label propagaion is based on a simple premise: random walk. Let us consider all labeled vertices, in set L, to be absorbing: that is, once they are reached, the random walk cannot transition to another vertex. Thus, once a labeled vertex is reached, the walk will end on that vertex, and a random walk started from a labeled vertex will end on that same vertex. This is expected and desired as vertices in L have known labels. We encode this as a 1 on the diagonal of the Amatrix and all other values on that row as 0.

If a walk is started from an unlabeled vertex, a vertex not in L, we need to determine the probability that the walk of infinite length will end at any given vertex. A walk of infinite length could only "end" at an absorbing state: a vertex in L. To determine this, we first figure out the probability of transitioning to all neighbors, then to neighbors of neighbors, and so on until eventually reaching an absorbing state.

We assemble matrix, A, that contains the probability of transition by inverting outgoing edge weights (assuming higher weights are more prohibitive to transitioning across the edge, otherwise inversion is skipped) and then summing the inverted values. The total weight for each row is then inverted and the entire row is multiplied by this value: this normalizes the sum of each row to 1 with each entry being the probability that a transition from vertex *i* to vertex *j* occurring located at A_{ij} .

This A matrix is then repeatedly squared to produce convergence, where each unlabeled vertex's probability of ending up at a labeled vertex is present in the labeled vertices' columns.

4.1.4 Data Cooperative Optimization

In producing the *A* matrix, we assumed encrypted labels to give the algorithm the ability to run over allencrypted data. However, if data is either *provided* (labeled) or *not provided* (unlabeled) by a participant, the cooperative could know whether a vertex was labeled or not. This knowledge allows for several small optimizations.

The first parallel loop in the pseudocode could be optimized to a copy based on a *cleartext conditional* rather than a set of HE MUXes: this saves $O(|V|^2)$ TFHE bootstrappings.

In the second parallel loop, we know that every labeled vertex will have a row that is all 0 other than a single 1 on the diagonal. This allows us to skip those rows as they are already normalized to 1: this reduces required bootstrappings by a factor of |L|/|V|.

Finally, within the matrix squaring algorithm, we

know that labeled rows will not change: they will remain a 1 on the diagonal with all other values 0. This allows for optimization by skipping calculation of those rows (as they will not change) and storing those rows as cleartext, which reduces the number of bootstrappings required in the matrix squaring algorithm (the number of bootstrappings saved is dependent on the squaring algorithm used and proportion of labeled vertices).

4.2 Directed Triangles

Triangle counting is an important graph metric and is used as part of calculating certain other metrics, including clustering coefficients (Holland and Leinhardt, 1971)(Watts and Strogatz, 1998). Due to the nature of a data cooperative accepting data from participants, the data submitted to the cooperative will be from the perspective of each participant. This means that data submitted to the cooperative is directed, with each participant supplying their *outgoing edges*. We adapt the triangle definition to directed graphs and implement HE directed triangle counting.

4.2.1 True Triangle

As triangles in an undirected graph are complete subgraphs on 3 vertices, a *true triangle* in a directed graph is also a complete subgraph on 3 vertices. Consequently, a true triangle can be detected by identifying a reversible 3-cycle. That is to say, any set of 3 vertices forming a triangle with a return link for each edge in the triangle constitutes a true triangle. Thus, if a true triangle has vertices v_i , v_j , and v_k , then:

$$T_{true_{ik}} \Rightarrow v_i \to v_j \to v_k \to v_i \wedge v_i \to v_k \to v_j \to v_i \quad (1)$$

4.2.2 Strong Triangle

A strong triangle loosens the definition of a true triangle to a strongly-connected 3-vertex subgraph. A 3cycle subgraph in a directed graph that does not share the same vertex set as any triangle that has already been counted would then be a unique triangle. That is to say, each 3-cycle is counted once, but only if its reverse has not already been counted: this prevents strong triangle counting from reporting true triangles as 2 triangles.

$$T_{strong_{ijk}} \Rightarrow v_i \to v_j \to v_k \to v_i \lor v_i \to v_k \to v_j \to v_i$$
(2)

4.2.3 Weak Triangle

A weak triangle further loosens the definition of a triangle to any weakly-connected 3-vertex subgraph. For a triangle to be weak, one of its vertices must have only incoming or only outgoing edges. When data is expected to have return edges for all edges, the pervertex ratio of weak triangles to true triangles can be used as an indicator for which vertices may have outdated or inconsistent data.

4.2.4 Triangle Types

With each definition including more 3-vertex structures, the following relationship can be observed for the different sets of directed triangles:

$$T_{true} \subseteq T_{strong} \subseteq T_{weak} \tag{3}$$

4.3 HE Weighted Triangle-Creation Scoring

There are many applications of vertex scoring, including friend suggestions (in social networks), risk assessment, and network security. Weighted trianglecreation scoring is particularly suited for heterogeneous graphs, those that have multiple types of vertices and edges, as each type of potential triangle can have its own associated weight. We call this trianglecreation scoring as vertices are scored based on the number and type of triangles that will be created in the graph should the proposed edge be added.

We demonstrate, as an example, a simple weighted triangle-creation scoring that can be used to generate friend suggestions for hobbies and other in-person activities. The query steps are as follows:

- 1. Start from a list of all people.
- 2. Filter out subject's current friends.
- 3. Filter out people that do not share at least one common location with subject.
- 4. Add points for each activity interest shared with subject (triangle type *a*).
- 5. Add points for each friend shared with subject (triangle type f).
- 6. Return score vector.

If the result is to be disclosed to a 3rd party, only a short list can be sent. This can be achieved by making a 2-tuple out of each vector slot: (*person_uuid*, *score*). These tuples would then be sorted by their score and the top-k results returned. Examples include "top-5 friend recommendations for

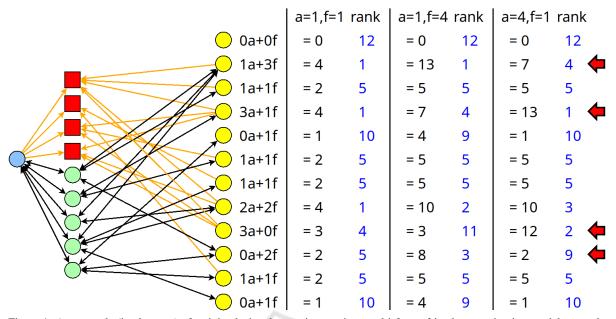


Figure 1: An example (in cleartext) of weighted triangle-creation scoring: multi-factor friend suggestion in a social network. The candidates (in yellow) were selected by filtering all people down to those that shared at least one common location with our subject (blue circle). Candidates are then scored based on the number and type of edge shared with friends (green) of our subject and activity interests (in red) of our subject. Three scores and rankings are given in this example, with a being the value of a shared activity interest and f being the value of a shared friend. Of particular interest are the candidates with a red arrow as their rankings vary significantly when a and f are adjusted. The sum of the coefficients of the considered factors (a's and f's coefficients in this example) is the number of triangles that will be created if that candidate is selected and an edge is added. Analysis similar to this could also be applied to network security and risk management.

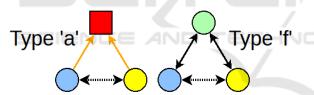


Figure 2: The two types of triangles considered in our example of HE weighted triangle creation scoring. The "proposed edge" is dotted at the bottom of both triangles. Circles represent people, while squares represent activities; further, black edges indicate friendship, while orange edges indicate participation. Type 'a' is a heterogeneous-vertex, heterogeneous-edge weak triangle where both people participate in a shared activity. Type 'f' is a homogeneousvertex, homogeneous-edge true triangle where both the candidate (yellow) and the subject (blue) have a shared friend (green).

hobbies you enjoy", "top-8 servers by potential financial damage if breached by an attacker", etc.

Importantly, scores for creating different types of triangles do not have to be *and generally should not be* the same. For example, if the subject is looking for someone to join a tight-knit group of friends for an activity, shared friendships may be more important than shared activity interest. As another example, the financial risk of a breach on a server that handles payment information is generally higher than one that only serves images or static web pages.

5 EXPERIMENTAL RESULTS

All experiments were performed using TFHE encryption with 128-bit equivalent security (Chillotti et al., 2016) on an AMD 3960X using individual (nonpacked) ciphertexts. We use a single-key scheme to demonstrate the validity of these algorithms in a general TFHE or CHIMERA context. A final product would use a multi-key CHIMERA (or similar) context with threshold decryption to split the key among participants.

5.1 HE Label Propagation

Label propagation results are slow at this stage, mostly due to using TFHE. We use TFHE for the inversion step as inversion is currently unsupported by the other standardized HE (Albrecht et al., 2018).

HE label propagation's runtime is dominated by the naive parallel matrix multiply, which has $O(|V|^3)$ runtime. Using a more efficient matrix multiplication or matrix squaring algorithm would greatly bene-

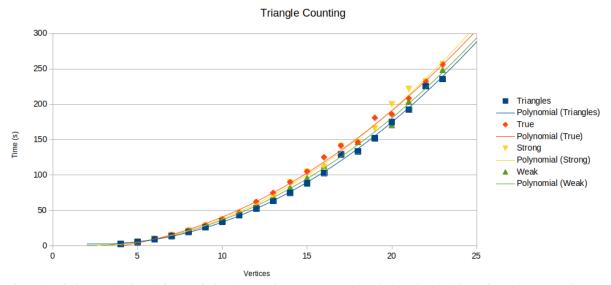


Figure 3: Timing results for all forms of triangle counting over HE graphs. Only "triangles" is performed on an undirected graph; all others are for directed graphs. All-in-all, other than a scaling factor, the time taken grows with $O(|V|^2)$ when O(|V|) parallelism is available. Linear time (single-thread) growth rate is $O(|V|^3)$ as a result of graph sparsity being held constant at 75% (25% of possible edges are present in the graph). Triangle counting in undirected graphs is fastest, with weak triangle counting on directed graphs being second-fastest. Strong and true triangle counting are roughly tied in terms of performance; however all grow the same asymptotically.

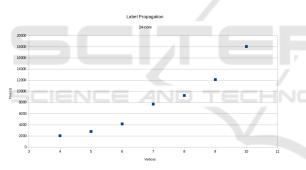


Figure 4: Label propagation timings. The odd shape can be attributed to thread saturation at 7x7 matrix; all larger matrix sizes show the original growth pattern resuming $(O(|V|^3), r \text{ was held constant at 5}).$

fit asymptotic runtime, assuming said algorithm does not result in undue ciphertext bootstrapping.

5.2 HE Directed Triangle Counting

Triangle counting in all forms scales with $O(V^3)$ linear time. Triangle counting of all forms takes advantage of parallelism with O(V) threads, reducing time to $O(V^2)$ when O(V) processors are available. In all forms, triangle counting is time-invariant with the number of triangles in the graph, scaling only with the number of vertices.

5.3 HE Weighted Triangle-Creation Scoring

We benchmark the query shown in Figure 1 over HE graph data. This means that unlike the example, the edges are encrypted and unknown to the cooperative. In our tests, we hold the number of locations and activities/hobbies constant and vary the number of people. Realistically, the number of locations will generally not change given a constant service area for the data cooperative. Further, the number of activities/hobbies available for people to do does not vary with population, so it too is held constant.

Let |P| be the number of people, and let $P \subset V$. With O(|P|) parallelism available, HE weighted triangle-creation scoring runtime grows at O(|P|) when sparsity is held constant at 75% (25% of possible edges exist). Single-thread growth complexity for this scoring method would be $O(|P|^2)$, as we have near-perfect multithreaded speedup with each vertex score being calculated independently.

6 CONCLUSION

In this paper, we discuss the fact that data cooperatives will, by nature of respecting participants willingness to share data, be forced to work with incomplete data. We demonstrate and analyze algorithms

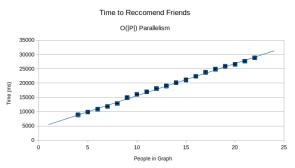


Figure 5: Time (in ms) to complete HE weighted trianglecreation vertex scoring for the aforementioned friend recommendation vs number of people in the graph. With O(|P|) parallelism, and constant sparsity in the graph, the runtime is O(|P|).

for label propagation and directed triangle counting over HE graph data. We also provide an example of weighted triangle-creation scoring, a vertex scoring scheme effective over HE heterogeneous graphs.

HE label propagation allows the data cooperative to infer labels for data that is unlabeled, thereby creating a complete, but inferred, set of labels from a set of encrypted labels. We demonstrate HE label propagation in O(r * S(|V|)) runtime, where S(|V|) is the time complexity of squaring a |V| by |V| matrix, and $O(|V|^2)$ space. Our benchmarked implementation uses a parallel naive matrix multiply as the squaring algorithm, resulting in $O(r * |V|^3)$ runtime. There is room for improvement on this front with a more efficient matrix squaring algorithm, so long as the algorithm does not require an asymptotically larger number of ciphertext bootstrappings.

We expand the definition of a graph triangle to directed graphs, and demonstrate triangle counting algorithms for various forms of directed triangles over HE directed graph data. These HE directed triangle counting algorithms share an $O(max(degree(V))^3)$ runtime with up to O(|V|) parallelism.

Finally, we explore and benchmark HE weighted triangle-creation scoring. This allows data cooperatives to generate vertex scores while strictly using HE graph data in O(|V|) runtime given O(|V|) (or possibly less) parallelism. The applications of this vertex-scoring scheme go beyond the demonstrated heterogeneous social network friend recommendations: it can be applied to network security, risk management, and much more.

6.1 Future Work

Improvements to all of these can potentially be made by utilizing CHIMERA (Boura et al., 2020) bridges. Label propagation can be improved by bridging to BFV or HEAAN/CKKS after the inversion step of assembling the *A* matrix, with matrix squaring being done in BFV or HEAAN/CKKS. Triangle counting could potentially be improved by bridging to BFV after the binary logic and prior to the addition steps.

Although, this assumes the conversion will take asymptotically less time than keeping the ciphertexts in TFHE-mode. This is likely to be the case for label propagation, but could offer questionable speedup for triangle counting.

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