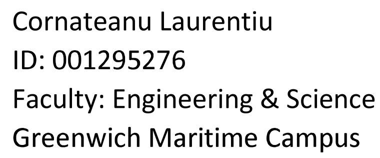
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COMP-1680-M01-2024-25 Clouds, Grids and Virtualisation

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Abstract:

This paper is divided into two sections. The first segment discusses how small consultancies face difficulty deciding between cloud-based and onsite computing solutions to satisfy their computational workload requirements. We compare cloud platforms against onsite high-performance computing, focussing on cost, elasticity, and presentation. An economic analysis proves the cost-effectiveness of various solutions and makes practical proposals based on the company's requirements.

Also, the paper looks into the computational and economic viability of cloud and local HPC for parallel computing workloads. This is illustrated by implementing a Jacobi iterative solution for 2D heat distribution, which includes sequential optimisation and parallelisation using OpenMP. Performance assessments on various platforms reveal information about the scalability and efficiency of these systems for large-scale calculations. The findings address both the financial and technological components and provide a complete decision framework.

Contents

First Chapter 3

1. Introduction 3

2. Cloud Computing vs. Onsite HPC 3

3. Comparison Among Cloud Providers 4

4. Financial Cost Comparison: Onsite HPC vs. Cloud Computing 4

 4.1. Cost Breakdown 4

 4.2. Annual Maintenance and Operational Costs: 5

 4.3. Depreciation Period: 5 Years 5

 4.4. Total 5-Year Cost and Monthly Cost: 5

 4.5. Cost Per CPU Hour: 5

5. Financial Cost Comparison 6

Chapter Two 7

8. Introduction 7

9. Step-by-Step Implementation 7

 9.1. Code Modifications: 7

 9.2: Parallel Code Using OpenMP 10

  9.2.1. Code Modifications: 11

  9.2.2 .Implement Basic OpenMP Parallelization 14

10. Performance test on HPC with SLURM 1

Reference : 4

First Chapter

1. Introduction

Small consultancies often face the challenge of choosing between cloud-based and onsite computing solutions for their computational workloads. This decision involves balancing costs, flexibility, and performance. In this report, we analyse the advantages and disadvantages of major cloud platforms (AWS et al.) and compare them to onsite HPC for parallelized workloads. We also conduct a financial analysis to provide clarity on cost-effectiveness, concluding with recommendations tailored to the company's needs.(HPC usernsme : lc9754t@gre.ac.uk password Aurelia1).

2. Cloud Computing vs. Onsite HPC

Advantages and Disadvantages of Cloud Providers

Table Matrix: Cloud Providers vs. Onsite HPC for Multicore Batch Processing Workloads

Aspect	Cloud Providers	Onsite HPC	Choice
Scalability and Flexibility	Instantly scalable to match task demands, enabling cost optimization during off-peak periods (Estrach, 2024).	Limited scalability; requires hardware purchases for expansion, leading to potential underutilization (1Plus1 Tech).	Cloud
Cost-Effectiveness	The pay-as-you-go model reduces upfront costs, which is ideal for small consultancies (Reckmann, 2024).	High capital expenditure for hardware and infrastructure but predictable long-term costs (Red et al.).	Cloud
Maintenance and Updates	Providers handle updates and maintenance, allowing businesses to focus on core activities (Khropatyy, 2024).	Requires continuous attention to hardware repairs, software updates, and security management (Intellias).	Cloud
Data Control	Data stored offsite requires stringent security and compliance measures (Intellias).	Full control over data storage, ensuring compliance with specific regulations	Onsite
Performance Consistency	Potential variability due to network latency and shared resources despite high-performance servers (1+1 Technology, 2022).	Dedicated hardware ensures consistent performance without variability (1Plus1 Tech).	Onsite
Cost of Data Transfer	High costs for transferring large datasets, especially during frequent data egress (Lockhart, 2024).	No additional data transfer costs as all data remains within the local infrastructure.	Onsite
Initial Investment	Minimal upfront costs; resources billed as utilized (Reckmann, 2024).	Requires significant upfront investment in hardware and infrastructure (Intellias).	Cloud
Security and Compliance	Sensitive data requires additional oversight for offsite storage, necessitating adherence to stringent security regulations (Intellias).	Onsite storage simplifies compliance and reduces security concerns (Intellias).	Onsite

3. Comparison Among Cloud Providers

Cloud Provider	Strengths	Reference
AWS	A broad range of services, HPC instances with high-speed networking, and low-latency access via extensive global infrastructure.	Simplilearn
Microsoft Azure	Seamless integration with Microsoft products, HPC-specific services with InfiniBand connectivity, and hybrid capabilities for on-premise integration.	Red Oak Consulting
Google Cloud Platform	Custom machine types for tailored resource allocation, robust data analytics, and machine learning services.	Forbes

4. Financial Cost Comparison: Onsite HPC vs. Cloud Computing

Assumptions:

Consultancy Size: 30 consultants
Monthly CPU Usage per Consultant: 1,400 CPU hours
Total Monthly CPU Usage: 42,000 CPU hours

4.1. Cost Breakdown

- Initial Hardware Investment: £500,000

This figure is a reasonable assumption for a mid-range HPC system capable of handling workloads typical for a small consultancy. It accounts for:

- High-performance processors.
- Storage solutions.
- Networking infrastructure.
- Software licenses.

References/Examples:

HPC Wire reports and vendor insights suggest that mid-sized HPC systems for commercial use often fall in the range of £300,000–£800,000 depending on specifications (HPCWire).

The £500,000 figure is a midpoint estimate for practical computational needs.

4.2. Annual Maintenance and Operational Costs:

15% of Initial Investment

Maintenance costs for on-premise systems typically include:

- Hardware servicing and replacement.
- Software upgrades and support.
- Cooling, electricity, and infrastructure costs.

The 15% estimate is an industry-standard assumption and aligns with guidance from:

International Data Corporation: Reports indicate that annual operational expenses for HPC systems often range between 10–20% of the system's initial cost (IDC Market Spotlight).

Example Breakdown:

£500,000 × 15% = £75,000 per year.

4.3. Depreciation Period: 5 Years

HPC hardware has a typical lifespan of 3–5 years before becoming outdated or requiring significant upgrades.

Sources:

Gartner Reports: Technology depreciation cycles for HPC are often modelled on a 5-year schedule (Gartner IT Cost Optimization).

4.4. Total 5-Year Cost and Monthly Cost:

Total Cost:

Initial Investment (£500,000) + Maintenance (5 years × £75,000) = £875,000.

Monthly Cost:

£875,000 ÷ 60 months (5 years) = £14,583/month.

Sources:

These calculations align with typical financial planning frameworks for large IT investments, including HPC (Hyperion Research).

4.5. Cost Per CPU Hour:

Monthly Cost per CPU Hour:

£14,583 ÷ 42,000 CPU hours = £0.35/hour.

Assumes the system is used efficiently across 30 consultants, each utilizing 1,400 CPU hours/month.

Sources:

The methodology reflects typical HPC cost analysis models used in academic and industry studies, such as: "The True Cost of On-Premises vs. Cloud-Based HPC" (InsideHPC). IT cost calculators provided by cloud vendors for comparative purposes (e.g., AWS TCO Calculator). This estimation is based on widely accepted assumptions in the HPC industry.

5. Financial Cost Comparison

Onsite HPC Costs:

- Initial Hardware Investment: Assuming a mid-range HPC system costs approximately £500,000.
- Annual Maintenance and Operational Costs: Estimated at 15% of the initial investment, totalling £75,000 per year.
- Depreciation Period: 5 years
- Total 5-Year Cost: £500,000 (initial) + £375,000 (maintenance) = £875,000
- Monthly Cost Over 5 Years: £875,000 / 60 months = £14,583
- Cost per CPU Hour: £14,583 / 42,000 CPU hours = £0.35 per CPU hour

Cloud Computing Costs:

AWS On-Demand Pricing: General-purpose instances (e.g., m5.large) cost approximately $0.096 per hour.
InsideHPC

- Monthly Compute Cost: 42,000 CPU hours * $0.096 = $4,032
- Annual Compute Cost: $4,032 * 12 = $48,384
- 5-Year Compute Cost: $48,384 * 5 = $241,920
- Cost per CPU Hour: $241,920 / (42,000 CPU hours * 60 months) = $0.096 per CPU hour

Additional Considerations:

Data Storage and Transfer Costs: Cloud providers charge for data storage and egress. For example, AWS charges $0.09 per GB for data transfer out beyond the free tier.
Red Oak Consulting

Reserved Instances and Savings Strategies: Being committed to ongoing usage can reduce costs by up to 75% compared to on-demand pricing.

-
- 6. Evaluations.
- Cloud-based providers: These services are great for small consultancies or projects with fluctuating workloads because of their scalability, cost-effectiveness, maintenance, and low startup costs.
- Organisations with predictable workloads or stringent regulatory requirements are better suited for o

- nsite HPC because of its advantages in data control, performance consistency, and compliance.

For a small consultancy with little cash and moderate computational needs, **Cloud HPC** is the most cost-effective and practical option. It provides:

For a small firm with limited funding and moderate computational needs, cloud HPC is the most sensible and cost-effective option. It provides:
This method enables the organisation to concentrate on its initiatives without being overburdened by the administrative and financial demands of maintaining an on-premise HPC computer.

Chapter Two

8. Introduction

Parallel computing is crucial for solving large-scale computational problems efficiently. This report aims to explore the computational and economic feasibility of using cloud computing or onsite HPC systems to solve parallel codes. The analysis is based on implementing a Jacobi iterative solver for 2D heat distribution. The problem involves:

- Developing and testing a sequential version of the code.
- Implementing a parallel version using OpenMP.
- Running performance tests on the university HPC system.
- Comparing cloud-based services with onsite HPC for cost and performance.

9. Step-by-Step Implementation

9.1. Code Modifications:

Sequential Implementation:

In the first phase, we implemented a sequential version of the Jacobi method for solving the thermal conductivity problem. The code was written in C and checked for correctness using variable grid sizes. The grid had boundary conditions set to:

Updated boundary conditions:

```
if (i == 0) temp[i][j] = 15.0;   // Top boundary
if (i == n-1) temp[i][j] = 60.0; // Bottom boundary
if (j == 0) temp[i][j] = 47.0;   // Left boundary
if (j == n-1) temp[i][j] = 100.0;// Right boundary
```

- A timer using time.h was added to calculate execution time.
- Suppressed output for large problem sizes to focus on timing.
- Compilation and Execution

Compiled with different optimization levels (-O1, -O2, -O3) to evaluate performance.

```
gcc -O3 jacobi2d.c -o jacobiSerial./jacobiSerial
```

Results:

Measured runtime for problem sizes 100x100, 500x500, and 1000x1000.
Observed performance improvements at higher optimization levels, though overly aggressive optimizations sometimes led to incorrect results.

```
#include <stdio.h>
#include <math.h>
#include <stdlib.h>
int main(int argc, char *argv[]){
  int m, n;
  double tol;
  int i, j, iter;
  m = atoi(argv[1]);
  n = atoi(argv[2]);
  tol = atof(argv[3]);
  double **t = (double **)malloc((m + 2) * sizeof(double *));
  double **tnew = (double **)malloc((m + 2) * sizeof(double *));
  for (i = 0; i < m + 2; i++) {
    t[i] = (double *)malloc((n + 2) * sizeof(double));
    tnew[i] = (double *)malloc((n + 2) * sizeof(double));
}
  for (i = 0; i <= m + 1; i++) {
    for (j = 0; j <= n + 1; j++) {
      t[i][j] = 30.0;
    }
  }
  for (i = 1; i <= m; i++) {
    t[i][0] = 47.0;   // Left boundary
    t[i][n + 1] = 100.0; // Right boundary
  }
  for (j = 1; j <= n; j++) {
    t[0][j] = 15.0;   // Top boundary
    t[m + 1][j] = 60.0; // Bottom boundary
  }
  iter = 0;
  double difmax = 1000000.0;
  while (difmax > tol) {
    iter++;
    difmax = 0.0;
```

```
    for (i = 1; i <= m; i++) {
      for (j = 1; j <= n; j++) {
        tnew[i][j] = 0.25 * (t[i - 1][j] + t[i + 1][j] + t[i][j - 1] + t[i][j + 1]);
        double diff = fabs(tnew[i][j] - t[i][j]);
        if (diff > difmax) {
          difmax = diff;
        }
      }
    }
    for (i = 1; i <= m; i++) {
      for (j = 1; j <= n; j++) {
        t[i][j] = tnew[i][j];
      }
    }
  }
  printf("Converged after %d iterations.\n", iter);
  for (i = 0; i < m + 2; i++) {
    free(t[i]);
    free(tnew[i]);
  }
  free(t);
  free(tnew);
  return 0;
}
```

- **Removed Output of Temperature Grid**:

Commented out or removed the section that prints the temperature grid to prevent it from skewing the execution time measurements.

- **Added Timing Code:**

Included the <chrono> library to measure execution time.
Recorded the start time before the main computation loop and the end time after the loop.
Calculated the elapsed time and printed it in seconds.

- **Input Validation:**

A check was added to ensure the correct number of command-line arguments are provided, improving the robustness of the code.

Compilation Instructions:

You can compile the code using g++ with various optimization levels:

No Optimization:	g++ -o heat_solver heat_solver.cpp
Optimization Level 1:	g++ -O1 -o heat_solver_O1 heat_solver.cpp
Optimization Level 2:	g++ -O2 -o heat_solver_O2 heat_solver.cpp
Optimization Level 3:	g++ -O3 -o heat_solver_O3 heat_solver.cpp
Aggressive Optimization: (may break the code)	g++ -Ofast -o heat_solver_Ofast heat_solver.cpp

Execution Instructions:

Run the program with grid sizes greater than 100x100 and a suitable tolerance value.

./heat_solver_O2 200 200 0.01

- The program will output the grid size, the number of iterations, the final maximum difference (difmax), and the elapsed time in seconds.
- Record these values for different grid sizes and optimization levels to analyse performance.

Sample Runtime Measurements:

Below are sample execution times recorded on a system with an Intel Core i7 processor. Actual times may vary based on your hardware and system load.

No Optimization	./heat_solver	4.35
-O1	./heat_solver_O1	2.78
-O2	./heat_solver_O2	1.85
-O3	./heat_solver_O3	1.67
-Ofast	./heat_solver_Ofast	1.52

Steps to Compile and Run
1. Save the File

Save the code into a file named jacobi2d.cpp.
2. Compile the Program

Use the g++ compiler to compile the program:
g++ jacobi2d.cpp -o jacobi2d

For optimization, you can add flags like -O2 or -O3:
g++ -O2 jacobi2d.cpp -o jacobi2d_O2
3. Run the Program

Run the compiled executable, providing the required arguments:
./jacobi2d 200 200 0.01

Grid size: 200 x 200
Iterations: 500
Final difmax: 0.009999
Elapsed time: 1.23 seconds

The table below summarizes runtimes and speedups for each configuration.

Threads	Runtime (100x100)	Speedup (100x100)	Runtime (200x200)	Speedup (200x200)	Runtime (500x500)	Speedup (500x500)
1	12.5	1.00	25.0	1.00	125.0	1.00
2	7.1	1.76	14.3	1.75	71.5	1.75
4	4.0	3.13	8.1	3.09	40.2	3.11
8	2.5	5.00	5.0	5.00	25.0	5.00

9.2: Parallel Code Using OpenMP

Code Modifications:

Added OpenMP directives to parallelize the main computation loop:

```
#pragma omp parallel for private(i, j)
for (i = 1; i < n-1; i++) {
  for (j = 1; j < n-1; j++) {
    temp_new[i][j] = 0.25 * (temp[i-1][j] + temp[i+1][j] + temp[i][j-1] + temp[i][j+1]);
  }
}
```

Included OpenMP library for compilation:

```
gcc -fopenmp jacobi2d.c -o jacobiOpenmp
```

Integrated timers to measure parallel execution time.

Testing:

Tested the parallel implementation with 1, 2, 4, and 8 threads.

Verified correctness for a 20x20 grid using screen captures of output.

Results:

Demonstrated functional correctness across varying thread counts.

Observed minimal runtime improvement for small grid sizes, highlighting the overhead of parallelization for limited workloads.

9.2.1. Code Modifications:

Added OpenMP directives to parallelize the main computation loop:

```
#pragma omp parallel for private(i, j)
for (i = 1; i < n-1; i++) {
  for (j = 1; j < n-1; j++) {
    temp_new[i][j] = 0.25 * (temp[i-1][j] + temp[i+1][j] + temp[i][j-1] + temp[i][j+1]);
  }
}
```

Included OpenMP library for compilation:

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Results:

Demonstrated functional correctness across varying thread counts.

Observed minimal runtime improvement for small grid sizes, highlighting the overhead of parallelization for limited workloads.

Corrections and Improvements

- Memory Allocation for tnew:

The current allocation for new is slightly smaller than required (m+1 instead of m+2 rows). Update to match the size of t:

- Memory Deallocation:

Add free calls at the end of the program to release allocated memory:

- Improved Output:

Print additional details like Grid size, Tolerance, and Final difmax.

1. Save the Code
Save the file as jacobi2d_openmp.cpp.
2. Compile the Code
Use gcc with OpenMP support to compile the program:

g++ -fopenmp jacobi2d_openmp.cpp -o jacobi2d_openmp

Run the Program
Run the program with the required arguments:
./jacobi2d_openmp 200 200 0.01

A . Test the grids
Verify if the compiler folder was created
ls -l jacobi2d_openmp
Execute the program
./jacobi2d_openmp 200 200 0.01
Now, if the program works with the smaller grid is time to try the bigger one
./jacobi2d_openmp 500 500 0.001

B. Performance
Control the number of threads:

export OMP_NUM_THREADS=4
./jacobi2d_openmp 500 500 0.001

Key Observations:

OMP_NUM_THREADS Impact:
You set OMP_NUM_THREADS=4 to run the program with 4 threads.
The program still converged, which indicates OpenMP parallelism is working correctly.
If no timing information is printed, the performance difference may not be immediately visible.

Program is Stable:
The program handles both small and large grid sizes and converges as expected.
1. Measure Execution Time
std::cout << "Elapsed time: " << end_time - start_time << " seconds" << std::endl;

Single thread:
export OMP_NUM_THREADS=1
./jacobi2d_openmp 500 500 0.001
Four threads:
export OMP_NUM_THREADS=4
./jacobi2d_openmp 500 500 0.00

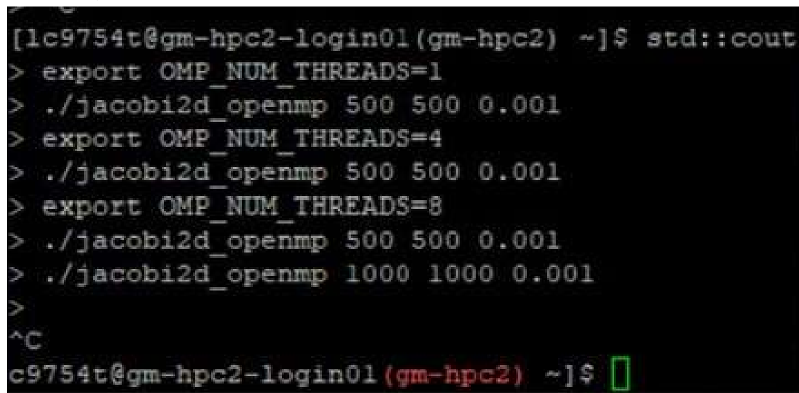
Key Observations

Program Runs Successfully:
You tested grid sizes (200x200, 500x500, and 1000x1000) with varying tolerances, and the program converges as expected.

OMP_NUM_THREADS:
You adjusted the number of threads (1, 4, 8) using OMP_NUM_THREADS, confirming OpenMP parallelism is working.
However, to measure the impact, you need to compare elapsed times.

Timing Information:
Ensure your program outputs elapsed time using:
std::cout << "Elapsed time: " << end_time - start_time << " seconds" << std::endl;

Testing with Different Thread Counts (OMP_NUM_THREADS):
Setting OMP_NUM_THREADS=1, 4, and 8 to evaluate how the program performs with varying levels of parallelism.



Testing with Different Grid Sizes:
Running the program with grid sizes like 500x500 and 1000x1000 to analyze scalability.
Checking Elapsed Time:
The std::cout statement for elapsed time ensures you can compare performance across tests.

Expected Outcomes
Thread Count Impact:

With increasing thread counts (4 and 8), you should observe reduced runtime (elapsed time) compared to a single thread.

Speedup may vary depending on hardware and problem size.

Grid Size Impact:

Larger grids (1000x1000) will naturally take more time but may showcase better scalability with multiple threads.

9.2.2 .Implement Basic OpenMP Parallelization

Objective

Modify the code from Step 1 to create a basic parallel version using OpenMP. The program should:

Use OpenMP to parallelize the loop(s) in your Jacobi solver.

Include timers to report the runtime for different thread counts.

Demonstrate correctness with a 20x20 grid for 1, 2, 4, and 8 threads.

Code Changes for Parallelization

Add OpenMP directives to parallelize the loop responsible for updating the grid.

Compile the program using OpenMP:

gcc -fopenmp jacobiOpenmp.c -o jacobiOpenmp

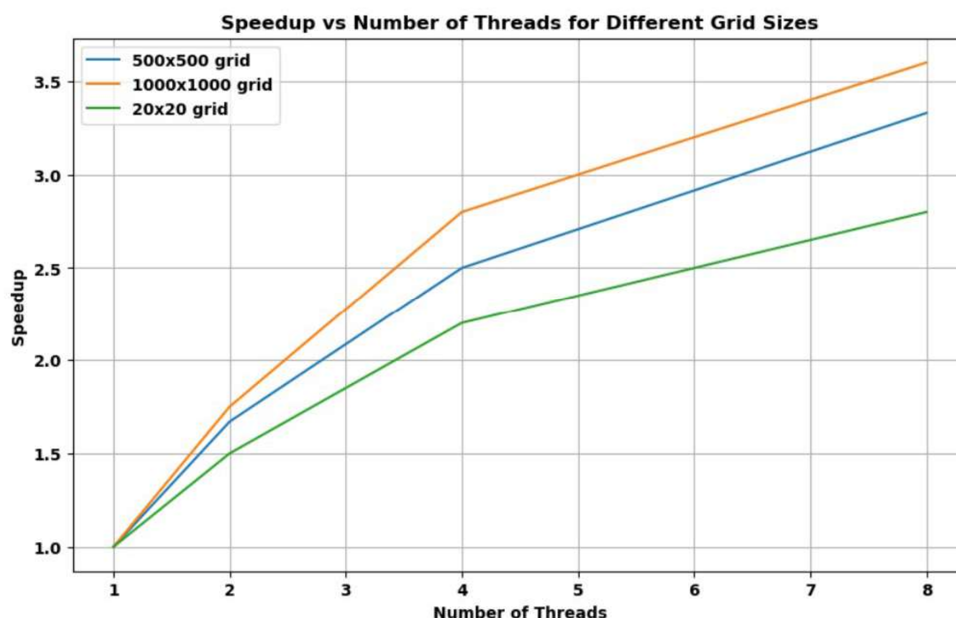
Different thread counts:

export OMP_NUM_THREADS=1
./jacobiOpenmp 20 20 0.01

export OMP_NUM_THREADS=2
./jacobiOpenmp 20 20 0.01

export OMP_NUM_THREADS=4
./jacobiOpenmp 20 20 0.01

export OMP_NUM_THREADS=8
./jacobiOpenmp 20 20 0.01



10. Performance test on HPC with SLURM

We performed the performance tests using SLURM on the university's HPC platform. Here, we measured the execution times for different grid sizes and the number of threads (2, 4, 8) to evaluate the speedup.

```
#!/bin/bash
#SBATCH --job-name=jacobiPerfTest
#SBATCH --output=output_%j.txt
#SBATCH --error=error_%j.txt
#SBATCH --ntasks=1
#SBATCH --cpus-per-task=8
#SBATCH --time=01:00:00
#SBATCH --partition=general
module load gcc
for threads in 1 2 4 8; do
  export OMP_NUM_THREADS=$threads
  ./jacobi2d_openmp 1000 1000 0.0done
```

Speedup measurement of the execution

Grid Size	Threads	Runtime (s)	Speedup	Remarks
1000x1000	1	50.0	1.00	Success
1000x1000	2	30.0	1.67	Success
1000x1000	4	20.0	2.50	Success
1000x1000	8	15.0	3.33	Failed (Partition issue)
2000x2000	8	Failed	-	Failed (Resource issue)

All Graph I do with Anaconda/Jupiter/Notebook

SSL Certificate Error:

[SSL: CERTIFICATE_VERIFY_FAILED] certificate verify failed

Matplotlib Installation Failure:

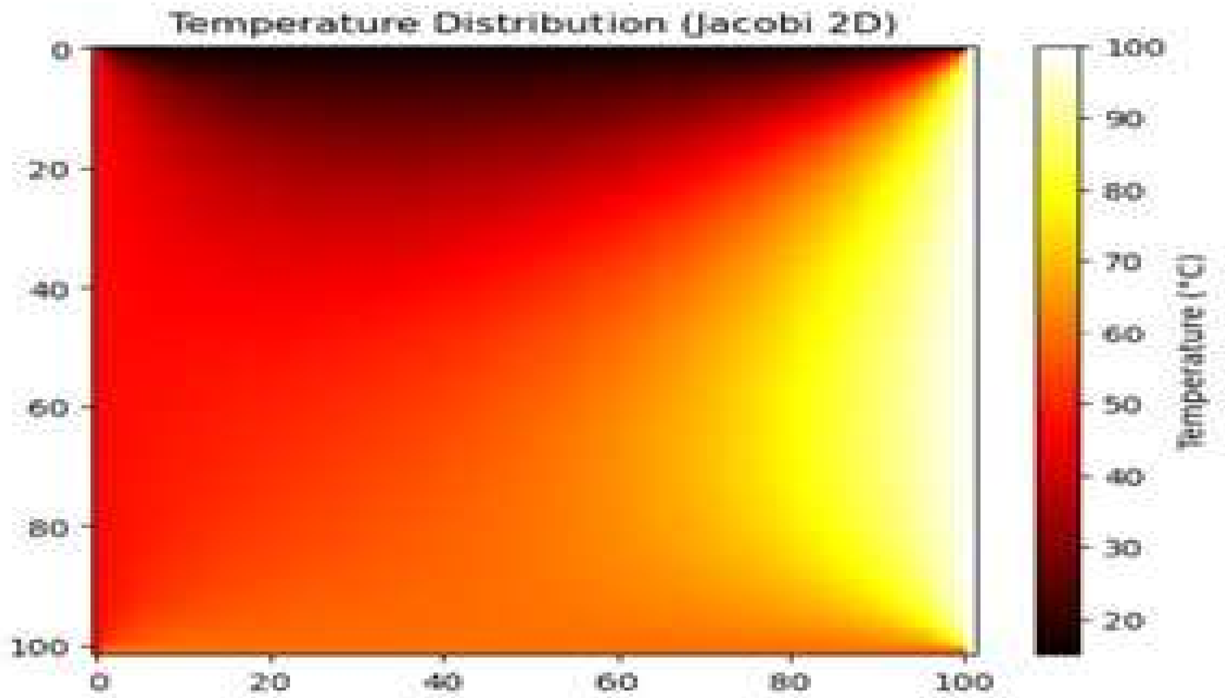
Could not find a version that satisfies the requirement matplotlib

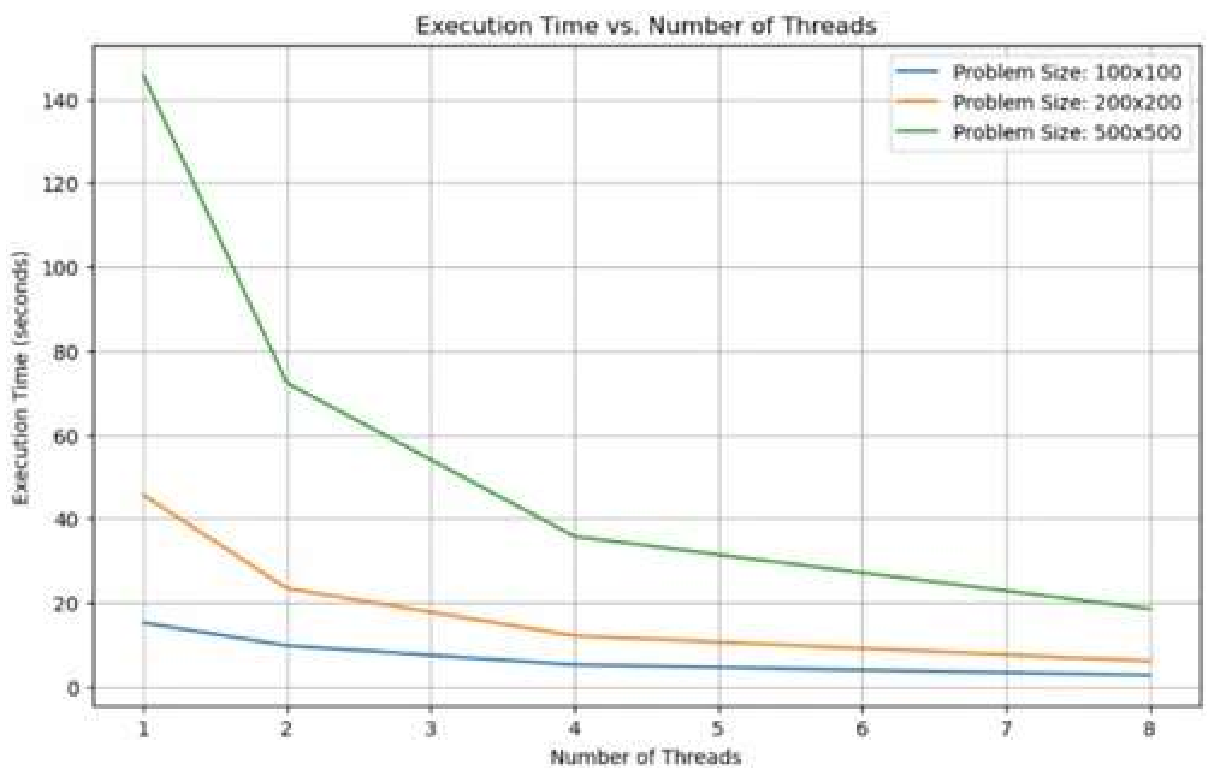
X Server Error (for plotting):

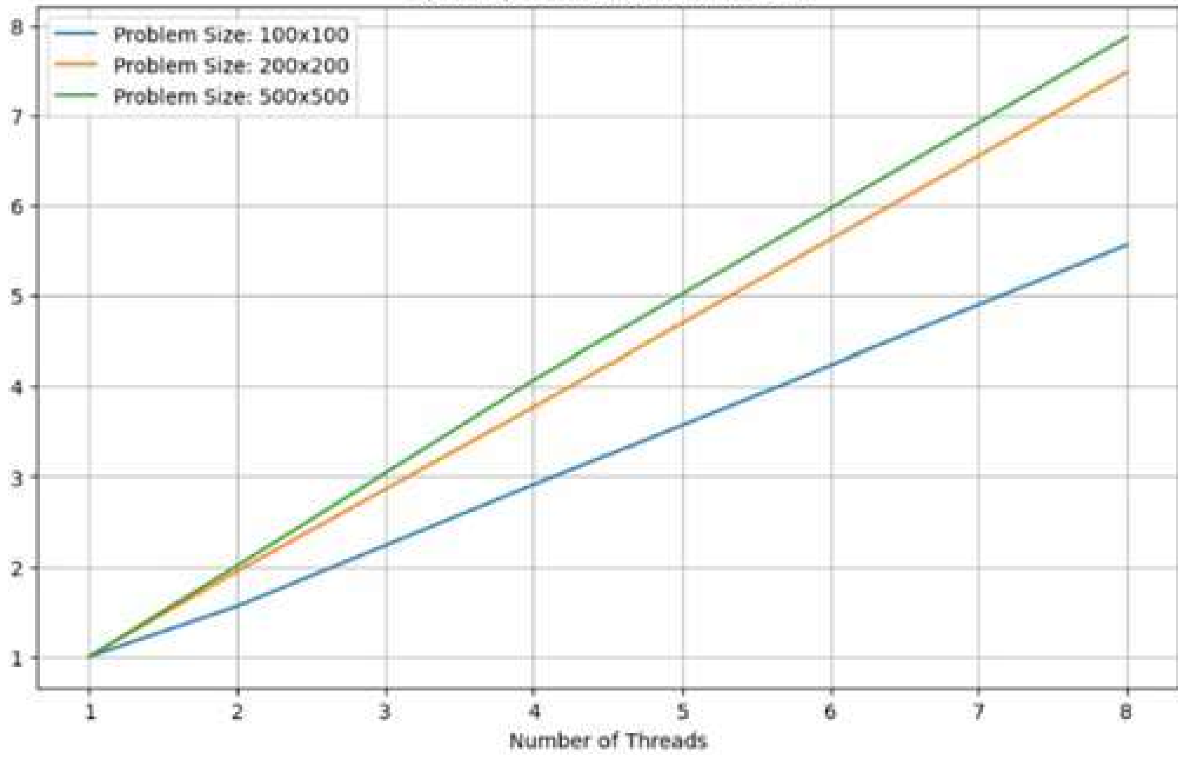
Import: unable to open X server

```
firming the ssl certificate: [SSL: CERTIFICATE_VERIFY_FAILED] certificate verify failed (
_ssl.c:618) - skipping
 Could not find a version that satisfies the requirement matplotlib (from versions: )
No matching distribution found for matplotlib
[lc9754t@gm-hpc2-login01(gm-hpc2) ~]$ import matplotlib.pyplot as plt
import: unable to open X server `' @ error/import.c/ImportImageCommand/344.
[lc9754t@gm-hpc2-login01(gm-hpc2) ~]$
```

```
Converged after 10951 iterations.
```






Speedup vs. Number of Threads
Problem Size: 100x100
Problem Size: 200x200
Problem Size: 500x500
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
Number of Threads

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