



Efficient modification of LZSS compression algorithm

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Abstract

This paper presents a new method of lossless data compression called LZPP, being an advanced modification of the well-known algorithm LZSS [1]. It introduces improvements of the LZ family algorithms [2, 3], such as the use of a special coding of two and three byte matches, use of an auxiliary entropy coder and new criteria of symbol exclusions. Minimization of the data compression ratio (bpc) has been chosen as the primary goal of the proposed modifications of LZSS algorithm.

1. Analysis of LZSS algorithm and proposed modifications

1.1. Index coding

The first thing which should be considered, when one wants to improve the quality of compression, are indexes generated by every LZ method.

Indexes can be coded with one of the statistical adaptive compression methods, like the arithmetic or the Huffman coding. Confirmation of this is the sample probability distribution of indexes (calculated as the distance from the end of the window) shown in Figure 1, which LZSS method generates during compression of the “xplik” file (merged all files from Calgary Corpus).

Graphs for the most of the files for which experiments were conducted had similar shapes. Therefore it can be assumed that generally indexes have such distribution. Moreover, symbols having such distribution should be compressed well with a statistical coder, because the entropy (see [4]) equals $H(S) = 8,954$ bits in this case. This means that the maximal static entropy coding would reduce the number of bits necessary to store indexes even by 44%.

Using this fact in the LZPP method, the fast variant of arithmetic coding (RangeCoder [5]) was applied for index coding. The range coder was additionally equipped with a rotating buffer, handling of the escape marker and the exclusions mechanism. Additionally, an independent coding of index bytes

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was used for the index processing. This enabled the use of a very large window (even up to 16MB).

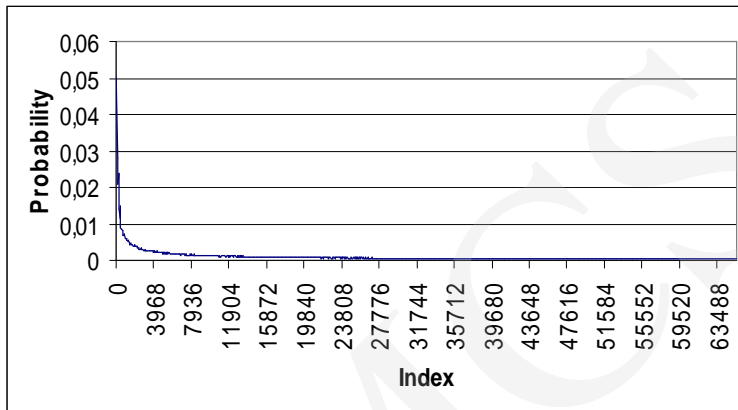


Fig. 1. Probability distribution of indexes generated by LZSS method during compression of file "xplik"

1.2. Lengths of matches coding

While looking at Figure 2 showing the numbers of the matches occurrences for lengths from 3 to 20 in the file "obj", one can easily state, that it is worth to code lengths using an entropy coding such as the Huffman or the arithmetic coding. It can reduce the average number of bits necessary for storing lengths even by 75%.

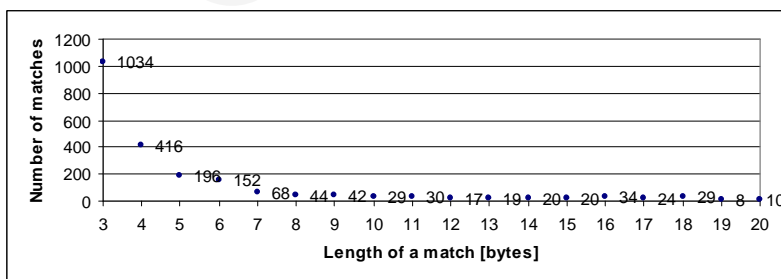


Fig. 2. Distribution of lengths of matches (3-20) in file "obj1"

In LZPP method, similarly to the case of indexes, *RangeCoder* was used to code lengths of matches, also with an independent coding of bytes. This allowed to use easily lengths up to 64KB.

1.3. Flag coding

Flags used for controlling the decompression process can be also specially coded to remove redundancy.

In LZSS method the flag responsible for distinguishing between coding of symbols (0) and substrings (1) usually has probability distribution different from uniform ($p(0) \neq 1/2$ and $p(1) \neq 1/2$). An example of changes of the probability distribution of that flag are shown in Figure 3.

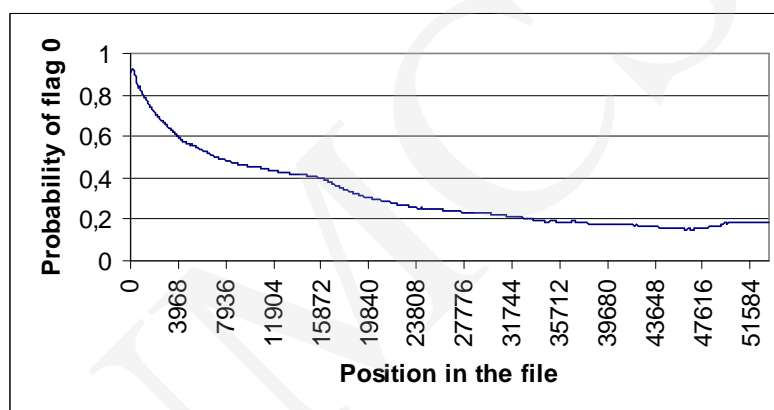


Fig. 3. Changes of probability distribution of symbol coding flag for file "paper1"

It can be easily seen, that the amount of redundant information in this case is considerable. Further studies have shown that the use of *RangeCoder* can improve the compression quality by up to 2%.

1.4. Non-compressed symbols

The following possible improvement is coding (with any entropy coder) all the symbols, which were not compressed by LZSS and were sent to the output unchanged. Using the Huffman coding one can reduce, by approximately half, the number of bits used to store these symbols.

In LZPP method *RangeCoder* was used for the compression of these symbols. Certainly, it has better properties than Huffman coder.

1.5. Special coding of three-byte sequences

Another redundancy present in LZSS algorithm is caused by not considering the frequency of occurrences of particular sequences. In other words, when in the last n symbols (there n is the size of the window) the string 'abc' was present 5 times and the string 'def' only once, it is natural to expect, that in the data to come the string 'abc' will appear more frequently than 'def'. Standard LZSS

does not consider these probabilities and returns only the index of a given string. Observe, that even if an entropy coding is used for indexes (as described in section 1.1), the coder does not take into account the content of a match, but only its index. For such a coder all occurrences of the string 'abc' are distinct. Moreover, if the string 'def' occurred later than the last 'abc', the probability of 'def' is greater for such coder, because it has smaller index (see Figure 1 in section 1.1).

Although the above problem concerns sequences of any length, due to the implementation issues and the compression speed, it is reasonable to consider it only for short ones. In LZPP, a special mechanism for coding three-byte sequences was implemented. Three bytes were selected, because such sequences are statistically most often found in input data.

For this purpose, a special structure was created. It holds information about a fixed number of the last three-byte sequences together with the number of occurrences of each one. So, in the case of the three-byte sequence, LZPP generates a specially coded (entropy) tuple $(2, index_3)$ in place of the usual triple $(1, length, index)$. There $index_3$ is the index of the three-byte sequence in the aforementioned data structure. The occurrence counter of that sequence is used to code its index.

1.6. Symbol exclusions based on the substring criterion

The next step in the elimination of redundancy in LZSS is based on the observation, that after coding two symbols, additional information about the next symbol can be obtained. This symbol cannot be any of the symbols, which, with preceding two, would create one of the three-byte sequences. It is not necessary to consider sequences longer than three, because three-byte sequences are subsequences of the longer ones.

The *exclusions* mechanism of LZPP uses this fact.

1.7. Symbol exclusions based on the criterion of sequence continuity

Another property of LZSS, which can be exploited for optimisation, is the fact that the symbol following the just-coded match in the window cannot appear as the next symbol in the incoming data. Of course, the case when the given match reached the maximal length is an exception from that rule.

Example:

The content of the window is: $xxxabc\overline{d}y\overline{y}xz$. Let the next data be: $abcd\overline{x}$. Of course LZPP will encode the symbols $abcd$ as a 4-element match. We know that next symbol certainly will not be y , because if it were y , the encoded match would have length 5.

Similarly to the previously described optimisation, the exclusions mechanism was used.

1.8. Restrictions on the indexes of matches of length 4 and 5

It appears, that when processed matches are short (4 or 5 bytes), the use of large indexes is inefficient. Thus in LZSS algorithm indexes of 4 byte sequences are restricted to 255 and 5 byte to 65535. It allowed encoding of only one least significant byte in the first case and two least significant bytes in the second. If given match does not satisfy a proper criterion (e.g. it is four byte long and has an index greater than 255) it is ignored by the algorithm.

1.9. Contexts of order 1

The already described operations on sequences considered only sequences longer than two bytes. In practice, some relations between the pairs of bytes can also be used for a better compression. Following that observation, a mechanism of contexts of order one, similar to that used in PPM [6], was implemented in LZPP. Also here the context of order one of given symbol (byte) means one byte that precedes the considered one.

This optimisation was conducted in the following way. An array indexed by all contexts was created. It contains objects storing information about the distributions of symbols within the confines of the given context. A new value of flags (3) was added. It denotes encoding of an element in the context of order one. Encoding of one symbol used so far, when no matching substring was found, was preceded by verification of the possibility of encoding given symbol in a context of order 1. This verification is based on checking if the analysed symbol has a nonzero probability of appearing in that context. If it is so, flag 3 is sent and the current symbol is encoded using the distribution specific for the given context. Otherwise, LZPP encodes the current symbol in the standard way, sending flag 0 and the symbol itself. Finally, the probability of a given symbol in the current context of order 1 is updated.

2. Detailed description of LZPP algorithm

2.1. Basic notions and constants

“Escape” flag

A few arithmetic coders used in LZPP were enriched with the mechanism of the “*escape*” flag. The input alphabet is extended with an additional symbol “*escape*”. This symbol is used for coding symbols whose main frequency counters are equal to zero. Note that the value of the “*escape*” flag’s counter is always greater than zero. When processing a symbol with the frequency counter equal to zero, the “*escape*” flag is coded first. After that, the symbol itself is coded, also by the arithmetic coder. Before the last coding all the symbols with frequency counters different from zero are removed from the alphabet (the mechanism of exclusions). Only the symbols with main frequency counters

equal to zero are considered. Therefore an additional counter is held for each symbol. It stores the number of codings of a given symbol by the „escape” flag, increased by one. Only last 4096 symbols encoded by the „escape” flag are used to determine the value of this counter.

Settings of coders responsible for coding of indexes, lengths, flags, symbols and three-byte sequences

In the LZPP method, individual bytes of indexes (2 complete and 5 bits of the third – 21 bits altogether) are coded independently. Because of that, also the tables of the symbol counters for individual bytes of indexes are stored independently. Each of these counters is computed according to the formula $C_{b,w} := 2 + F_{b,w}$, where $F_{b,w}$ is the number of occurrences of a given value w in the corresponding byte b of index among last 4096 indexes encoded. Escape flags are not used for index encoding.

Lengths of substrings are coded as two independent bytes too. Counters for all values of both bytes depend only on the last 4096 lengths encoded. Each counter is equal to the number of the occurrences of individual value of a given byte. Escape flags are used for the length encoding.

In LZPP, four different flags are used. The alphabet of the coder used for flag coding consists of four symbols – numbers 0, 1, 2 and 3. The value of each of these symbols can be expressed as $C_f := 1 + F_f$, where F_f is the number of the occurrences of a given flag f among the 256 last encoded flags. Escape flags are not used for the flag encoding.

The symbol coding in a context of order 0 is implemented by the coder, which takes into account only the 1024 last encoded symbols in that context to determine values of counters. Each of the symbol frequency counters is equal to the number of occurrences of the adequate symbol increased by one.

While coding symbols in a context of order 1, only the last 256 symbols appearing in a given context, encoded in that context or in the context of order 0, are taken into account. Here each frequency counter is equal to the number of occurrences of the adequate symbol in a given context. In both cases, escape flags are not used for encoding.

In coding of three-byte sequences, the values of frequency counters of individual sequences, necessary for arithmetic coding, are computed from the last $HT_LEN = 512$ compressed data bytes.

Buffers and hash table

In the LZPP method, similarly to LZSS, one buffer consisting of a dictionary buffer and a coding buffer is used. The size of the dictionary buffer is set to $BUFF_SIZE = 2MB$, while the size of coding buffer is arbitrary, but not less

than 65539 bytes (that value is equal to the maximal length of a substring of $MAX_DL = 65539$ bytes).

In the compression algorithm, for finding substrings of four ($= MIN_DL$) and more bytes, a hash table of 65536 elements is used. This table consists of unsorted lists of absolute indexes of sequences.

The function

$$f_{CRC32}(x_0, x_1, x_2, x_3) = CRC32(x_0, x_1, x_2, x_3) \bmod 65536$$

is used for computing the hash of a substring. Here x_0, x_1, x_2, x_3 are the first four bytes of a given substring. Usually, each four-byte substring from the dictionary buffer has its entry in the hash table. The only exception is the case when one of the index lists is overflowed. This happens when it already contains $MAX_ITEMS = 2048$ elements. In this case, before adding a new index to such a list, the oldest index is removed.

2.2. Algorithm outline

Because of the volume limitations, we present here only the compression algorithm of LZPP.

1. Initialization:

- 1.1. Setting of the main constants: $MIN_DL = 4$, $MAX_DL = 65539$, $BUFF_SIZE = 2^{21}$, $MAX_ITEMS = 2048$, $HT_LEN = 512$,
- 1.2. Initialization of all necessary coders, with details presented in the previous section,
- 1.3. Initialization of other necessary variables and structures, including the hash table and the variable w describing the position of the byte being compressed relative to the beginning of data,

2. While there are bytes in the coding buffer:

- 2.1. Find the longest substring having length in the range $[MIN_DL; MAX_DL]$ and equal to substring at the beginning of the coding buffer – like in the standard LZSS.
 - 2.1.1. If such substring is found, denote by $maxn$ its absolute position in the input data, by $maxl$ its length, and by dn the distance from the beginning of the substring to the last byte in the dictionary buffer – it will be the value coded as the substring index. If $(maxl = 4 \text{ and } dn < 256)$ or $(maxl = 5 \text{ and } dn < 65536)$ or $maxl \geq 6$, then LZPP starts to encode the substring:
 - 2.1.1.1. The flag 1 is coded,
 - 2.1.1.2. Both bytes of length of the substring decreased by MIN_DL , that is the number $maxl - MIN_DL$ (which is in range 0-65535), are coded. The mechanism of exclusions

- of impossible symbols is used, when there is less than 64KB of data left,
- 2.1.1.3. If ($\max l \geq 5$ and $w > 256$), then the byte containing bits 8-15 of dn is coded. If $w < 65536$ then during the process of encoding the impossible values are excluded (eg. when $w = 40000$, then encoded byte cannot have any of the values 157-255).
 - 2.1.1.4. If ($\max l \geq 6$ and $w > 65536$), then the most significant byte of dn is coded. The mechanism of exclusions of impossible values is also used,
 - 2.1.1.5. Next, the least significant byte of dn is encoded. The mechanism of exclusions of impossible values is used. However, now it consists of two steps:
 - (a) LZPP excludes all values, which together with the rest of bytes in dn would give the index of the substring beginning from the one of the symbols excluded in this moment (see criteria of symbol exclusions discussed in paragraphs 1.6 and 1.7),
 - (b) If $w < 256$, then LZPP excludes additionally all the values from the range $[w; 255]$,
 - 2.1.1.6. All necessary variables and structures are updated, including the hash table, buffer, variable w and three-byte sequences coder,
 - 2.1.1.7. Go back to point 2.
- 2.1.2. If there is no appropriate substring, it is checked if the first three bytes of coding buffer can be encoded as a three-byte sequence (that is, if the counter of that sequence is greater than zero):
- 2.1.2.1. If it is so, than:
 - (a) The flag 2 is encoded,
 - (b) Given substring is encoded by the three-byte coder with exclusions of sequences beginning with one of the excluded at the moment symbols,
 - (c) All necessary variables and structures are updated, like in point 2.1.1.6.
 - (d) Go back to point 2.
 - 2.1.2.2. Else, LZPP encodes a single symbol. First, if $w > 0$, it is checked whether the given symbol has nonzero value of the counter in the current context of order 1:
 - (a) If it is so, then:
 - (i) The flag 3 is encoded,

- (ii) After removing all currently excluded symbols from the alphabet, the given symbol is encoded by the arithmetic coder using symbol counters appropriate for a given context,
 - (iii) All necessary variables and structures are updated, like in 2.1.1.6.
 - (iv) Go back to point 2.
 - (b) Else:
 - (i) The flag 0 is encoded,
 - (ii) After removing from the alphabet all currently excluded symbols and these symbols, whose counters are nonzero in the current context of order 1, the given symbol is encoded by the arithmetic coder using symbol counters appropriate for the context of order 0,
 - (iii) The counter of the given symbol in the current context of order 1 is updated, as well as all necessary variables and structures, like in 2.1.1.6.
 - (iv) Go back to point 2.
3. Algorithm LZPP finishes.

3. Results and conclusions

One can implement many other optimisations different from those described in this paper, but the results achieved by LZPP are quite satisfactory.

Table 1 shows, that LZPP achieves good results on Calgary Corpus [7]. The compression ratio of LZPP is better by about 30% than that of LZSS and by about 10% than WinZip's (and other similar, like pkzip, zlib, etc.). However, it is worse by about 1,5%-2% compared with the commercial WinRar. Unfortunately, too big amount of remaining redundancy places all LZ family methods far behind the algorithms based on PPMZ [8], including RK.

Table 1. Comparison of results achieved by LZPP algorithm with results of other algorithms (Calgary Corpus).

| File | Original size | LZSS | | LZPP | | WinZIP 8.0 | | WinRAR 2.9 | | PPMZ2 0.8 | | RK 1.04 | |
|--------|---------------|---------|--------|--------|--------|------------|--------|------------|--------|-----------|--------|---------|--------|
| | | bytes | bpc | bytes | bpc | bytes | bpc | bytes | bpc | bytes | bpc | bytes | bpc |
| bib | 111261 | 39660 | 2,8517 | 32659 | 2,3483 | 34878 | 2,5078 | 32759 | 2,3555 | 23892 | 1,7179 | 24292 | 1,7467 |
| book1 | 768771 | 355980 | 3,7044 | 278018 | 2,8931 | 312257 | 3,2494 | 275058 | 2,8623 | 210942 | 2,1951 | 207420 | 2,1585 |
| book2 | 610856 | 232189 | 3,0408 | 185356 | 2,4275 | 206134 | 2,6996 | 179801 | 2,3547 | 140708 | 1,8428 | 139548 | 1,8276 |
| geo | 102400 | 91180 | 7,1234 | 61815 | 4,8293 | 68392 | 5,3431 | 61522 | 4,8064 | 58603 | 4,5784 | 47632 | 3,7213 |
| news | 377109 | 166683 | 3,5360 | 125811 | 2,6690 | 144377 | 3,0628 | 125619 | 2,6649 | 103945 | 2,2051 | 105364 | 2,2352 |
| obj1 | 21504 | 12772 | 4,7515 | 10054 | 3,7403 | 10297 | 3,8307 | 9815 | 3,6514 | 9856 | 3,6667 | 9452 | 3,5164 |
| obj2 | 246814 | 101521 | 3,2906 | 75750 | 2,4553 | 81064 | 2,6275 | 73135 | 2,3705 | 69144 | 2,2412 | 61712 | 2,0003 |
| paper1 | 53161 | 22164 | 3,3354 | 18026 | 2,7127 | 18518 | 2,7867 | 18074 | 2,7199 | 14699 | 2,2120 | 15036 | 2,2627 |
| paper2 | 82199 | 34659 | 3,3732 | 28436 | 2,7675 | 29642 | 2,8849 | 28502 | 2,7740 | 22447 | 2,1846 | 22676 | 2,2069 |
| paper3 | 46526 | 21893 | 3,7644 | 17515 | 3,0116 | 18049 | 3,1035 | 17752 | 3,0524 | 14327 | 2,4635 | 14640 | 2,5173 |
| paper4 | 13286 | 7035 | 4,2360 | 5394 | 3,2479 | 5509 | 3,3172 | 5499 | 3,3112 | 4634 | 2,7903 | 4788 | 2,8830 |
| paper5 | 11954 | 6351 | 4,2503 | 4919 | 3,2920 | 4970 | 3,3261 | 4957 | 3,3174 | 4336 | 2,9018 | 4480 | 2,9982 |
| paper6 | 38105 | 16370 | 3,4368 | 12996 | 2,7285 | 13188 | 2,7688 | 13063 | 2,7425 | 10927 | 2,2941 | 11180 | 2,3472 |
| pic | 513216 | 91381 | 1,4244 | 50126 | 0,7814 | 52359 | 0,8162 | 49046 | 0,7645 | 48278 | 0,7526 | 30708 | 0,4787 |
| prog | 39611 | 16365 | 3,3051 | 13082 | 2,6421 | 13237 | 2,6734 | 13120 | 2,6498 | 11174 | 2,2567 | 11404 | 2,3032 |
| progl | 71646 | 20431 | 2,2813 | 15929 | 1,7786 | 16140 | 1,8022 | 15739 | 1,7574 | 12960 | 1,4471 | 13280 | 1,4828 |
| progp | 49379 | 14227 | 2,3049 | 10857 | 1,7590 | 11162 | 1,8084 | 10749 | 1,7415 | 8943 | 1,4489 | 9256 | 1,4996 |
| trans | 93695 | 24287 | 2,0737 | 18030 | 1,5395 | 18838 | 1,6085 | 17916 | 1,5297 | 14225 | 1,2146 | 14592 | 1,2459 |
| Sum | 3251493 | 1275148 | 3,1374 | 964773 | 2,3737 | 1059011 | 2,6056 | 952126 | 2,3426 | 784040 | 1,9291 | 747460 | 1,8391 |
| xplik | 3251493 | 1258250 | 3,0958 | 958400 | 2,3581 | 1080523 | 2,6585 | 935940 | 2,3028 | 804028 | 1,9782 | 782320 | 1,9248 |

The tests conducted on Canterbury Corpus [9] give the results different from the above. They are shown in table 2.

Table 2. Comparison of the results achieved by the LZPP algorithm with the results of other algorithms (Canterbury Corpus)

| File | Original size | LZSS | | LZPP | | WinZIP 8.0 | | WinRAR 2.9 | | PPMZ2 0.8 | | RK 1.04 | |
|---------------|---------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|------------|--------|------------|--------|-----------|--------|---------|--------|
| | | bytes | bpc | bytes | bpc | bytes | bpc | bytes | bpc | bytes | bpc | bytes | bpc |
| alice29.txt | 152089 | 61447 | 3,2322 | 51015 | 2,6834 | 54161 | 2,8489 | 50954 | 2,6802 | 39131 | 2,0583 | 38928 | 2,0476 |
| asyoulik.txt | 125179 | 57329 | 3,6638 | 46388 | 2,9646 | 48798 | 3,1186 | 46702 | 2,9847 | 36139 | 2,3096 | 36264 | 2,3176 |
| cp.html | 24603 | 9629 | 3,1310 | 7781 | 2,5301 | 7955 | 2,5867 | 7901 | 2,5691 | 6642 | 2,1597 | 6660 | 2,1656 |
| fields.c | 11150 | 3729 | 2,6755 | 3125 | 2,2422 | 3109 | 2,2307 | 3084 | 2,2127 | 2643 | 1,8963 | 2688 | 1,9286 |
| grammar.isp | 3721 | 1516 | 3,2593 | 1256 | 2,7003 | 1216 | 2,6144 | 1237 | 2,6595 | 1071 | 2,3026 | 1176 | 2,5284 |
| kennedy.xls | 1029744 | 317389 | 2,4658 | 86624 | 0,6730 | 209703 | 1,6292 | 119785 | 0,9306 | 176724 | 1,3730 | 23924 | 0,1859 |
| loet10.txt | 426754 | 162440 | 3,0451 | 128129 | 2,4019 | 144400 | 2,7069 | 126098 | 2,3639 | 95875 | 1,7973 | 94368 | 1,7690 |
| plrabbn12.txt | 481861 | 224948 | 3,7347 | 175874 | 2,9199 | 194246 | 3,2249 | 174952 | 2,9046 | 132281 | 2,1962 | 130932 | 2,1738 |
| ptf5 | 513216 | 92912 | 1,4483 | 50126 | 0,7814 | 52359 | 0,8162 | 49046 | 0,7645 | 48287 | 0,7527 | 30704 | 0,4786 |
| sum | 38240 | 16656 | 3,4845 | 12091 | 2,5295 | 12750 | 2,6674 | 11687 | 2,4450 | 12135 | 2,5387 | 10832 | 2,2661 |
| xargs.1 | 4227 | 2130 | 4,0312 | 1742 | 3,2969 | 1730 | 3,2742 | 1743 | 3,2988 | 1506 | 2,8502 | 1624 | 3,0736 |
| Sum | 2810784 | 950125 | 2,7042 | 564151 | 1,6057 | 730427 | 2,0789 | 593189 | 1,6883 | 552434 | 1,5723 | 378100 | 1,0761 |

On Canterbury Corpus the LZPP algorithm is better by 68% than the simple LZSS, about 30% better than WinZip and 5% better than WinRar. Thanks to good compression of the file 'kennedy.xls' LZPP achieved the result only slightly worse than PPMZ2. However, due to a very clever combination of PPMZ and LZ the RK algorithm is practically beyond any of the remaining methods.

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