

Get packing! Key concepts and future directions in cutting and packing problems

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A huge number of products we use, wear and consume begin as raw material that requires cutting as part of the production process. Clothes, furniture, tools, pipes, shoes and windows are just a few examples. Moreover, the transportation of products efficiently, and safely, require an intelligent methodology for packing and loading taking into account many complex constraints. Cutting and packing problems cover a wide range of applications and with these comes many diverse and interesting challenges. Researchers have been tackling these problems since the 1960s and there is a strong legacy of methodological and application focused contributions. Despite this, there still remains many interesting open problems as well as rich opportunities for working at the interface of cutting and packing with other domains such as transportation and production planning. In this talk I will give a flavour of the diverse scope of cutting and packing problems and discuss some of the emerging application areas. The talk will review some of the key concepts and methodologies used for cutting and packing and highlight some of the current challenges. Moreover, I hope, the talk will enthuse researchers to engage with cutting and packing problems and its research community.