

Foundations of Artificial Intelligence

3. Introduction: Rational Agents

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3.1 Agents

3.2 Rationality

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Introduction: Overview

Chapter overview: introduction

- ▶ 1. What is Artificial Intelligence?
- ▶ 2. AI Past and Present
- ▶ 3. Rational Agents
- ▶ 4. Environments and Problem Solving Methods

3.1 Agents

Heterogeneous Application Areas

AI systems are used for very **different** tasks:

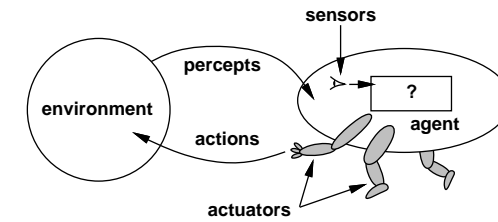
- ▶ controlling manufacturing plants
- ▶ detecting spam emails
- ▶ intra-logistic systems in warehouses
- ▶ giving shopping advice on the Internet
- ▶ playing board games
- ▶ finding faults in logic circuits
- ▶ ...

How do we capture this diversity in a **systematic framework** emphasizing **commonalities** and **differences**?

common metaphor: **rational agents** and their **environments**

German: rationale Agenten, Umgebungen

Agents



Agenten

- ▶ **agent functions** map sequences of **observations** to **actions**:

$$f : \mathcal{P}^+ \rightarrow \mathcal{A}$$

- ▶ **agent program**: runs on physical **architecture** and computes f

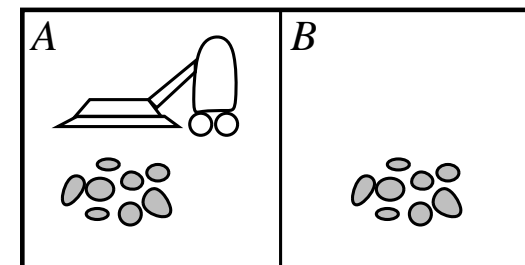
Examples: human, robot, web crawler, thermostat, OS scheduler

German: Agenten, Agentenfunktion, Wahrnehmung, Aktion

Introducing: an Agent



Vacuum Domain



- ▶ **observations**: location and cleanliness of current room: $\langle a, \text{clean} \rangle$, $\langle a, \text{dirty} \rangle$, $\langle b, \text{clean} \rangle$, $\langle b, \text{dirty} \rangle$
- ▶ **actions**: left, right, suck, wait

Vacuum Agent

a possible agent function:

observation sequence	action
$\langle a, \text{clean} \rangle$	<i>right</i>
$\langle a, \text{dirty} \rangle$	<i>suck</i>
$\langle b, \text{clean} \rangle$	<i>left</i>
$\langle b, \text{dirty} \rangle$	<i>suck</i>
$\langle a, \text{clean} \rangle, \langle b, \text{clean} \rangle$	<i>left</i>
$\langle a, \text{clean} \rangle, \langle b, \text{dirty} \rangle$	<i>suck</i>
...	...

Reflexive Agents

Reflexive agents compute next action only based on **last observation** in sequence:

- ▶ very simple model
- ▶ very restricted
- ▶ corresponds to Mealy automaton (a kind of DFA) with only 1 state
- ▶ practical examples?

German: reflexiver Agent

Example (A Reflexive Vacuum Agent)

```
def reflex-vacuum-agent(location, status):
    if status = dirty: return suck
    else if location = a: return right
    else if location = b: return left
```

Evaluating Agent Functions

What is the **right** agent function?

3.2 Rationality

Rationality

Rational Behavior

Evaluate behavior of agents with **performance measure** (related terms: **utility**, **cost**).

perfect rationality:

- ▶ always select an action **maximizing**
- ▶ **expected value** of **future performance**
- ▶ given **available information** (observations so far)

German: Performance-Mass, Nutzen, Kosten, perfekte Rationalität

Is Our Agent Perfectly Rational?

Question: Is the reflexive vacuum agent of the example perfectly rational?

depends on performance measure and environment!

- ▶ Do actions reliably have the desired effect?
- ▶ Do we know the initial situation?
- ▶ Can new dirt be produced while the agent is acting?

Rational Vacuum Agent

Example (Vacuum Agent)

performance measure:

- ▶ +100 units for each cleaned cell
- ▶ -10 units for each *suck* action
- ▶ -1 units for each *left/right* action

environment:

- ▶ actions and observations reliable
- ▶ world only changes through actions of the agent
- ▶ all initial situations equally probable

How should a perfect agent behave?

Rationality: Discussion

- ▶ perfect rationality \neq omniscience
 - ▶ incomplete information (due to limited observations) reduces achievable utility
- ▶ perfect rationality \neq perfect prediction of future
 - ▶ uncertain behavior of environment (e.g., stochastic action effects) reduces achievable utility
- ▶ perfect rationality is rarely achievable
 - ▶ limited computational power \rightsquigarrow **bounded rationality**

German: begrenzte Rationalität

3.3 Summary

Summary (1)

common metaphor for AI systems: **rational agents**

agent interacts with **environment**:

- ▶ sensors perceive **observations** about state of the environment
- ▶ actuators perform **actions** modifying the environment
- ▶ formally: **agent function** maps observation sequences to actions
- ▶ **reflexive** agent: agent function only based on last observation

Summary (2)

rational agents:

- ▶ try to maximize **performance measure** (**utility**)
- ▶ **perfect rationality**: achieve maximal utility in expectation given available information
- ▶ for “interesting” problems rarely achievable
↔ **bounded rationality**