

# Foundations of Artificial Intelligence

## 4. Introduction: Environments and Problem Solving Methods

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## 4.1 Environments of Rational Agents

## 4.2 Problem Solving Methods

## 4.3 Classification of AI Topics

## 4.4 Summary

## Introduction: Overview

### Chapter overview: introduction

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

## 4.1 Environments of Rational Agents

## AI Problems

### AI Problems

AI problem: **performance measure** + **agent model** + **environment**

German: Performance-Mass, Agentenmodell, Umgebung

- ▶ **agent model:**
  - ▶ Which actions are at the agent's disposal?
  - ▶ Which observations can it make?
- ▶ **environment:**
  - ▶ Which aspects of the world are relevant for the agent?
  - ▶ How does the world react to the agent's actions?
  - ▶ Which observations does it send to the agent?

## Example Problem: Autonomous Taxi

### Example (Autonomous Taxi)

**environment:**

- ▶ streets, vehicles, pedestrians, weather, ...

**performance measure:**

- ▶ punctuality, safety, profit, legality, comfort, ...

**agent model:**

- ▶ **actions:** steering, accelerating, braking, changing gears, honking, ...
- ▶ **observations:** cameras, acceleration sensors, GPS, touchpad, ...

## Example Problem: Web Shopping Bot

### Example (Web Shopping Bot)

**environment:**

- ▶ web pages, products, sellers, ...

**performance measure:**

- ▶ cost and quality of bought products, shipping time, ...

**agent model:**

- ▶ **actions:** querying the user, following links, filling in forms, ...
- ▶ **observations:** HTML pages (text, images, scripts, metadata), user input, ...

## Classification of Environments

- ▶ **properties of environment** determine character of an AI problem
- ▶ classify according to criteria such as:
  - ▶ **static** vs. **dynamic**
  - ▶ **deterministic** vs. **non-deterministic** vs. **stochastic**
  - ▶ **fully** vs. **partially** vs. **not** observable
  - ▶ **discrete** vs. **continuous**
  - ▶ **single-agent** vs. **multi-agent**

## Properties of Environments

### Example (Properties of Environments)

	Rubik's Cube	backgammon	shopping bot	taxi
static	yes	(yes)	(yes)	no
deterministic	yes	stochastic	(yes)	no
observability	fully	fully	partially	partially
discrete	yes	yes	yes	no
agents	1	2 (adversaries)	(1)	many

#### static vs. dynamic

Does the state of the environment change while the agent is contemplating its next action?

German: statisch, dynamisch

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#### deterministic vs. non-deterministic vs. stochastic

Is the next state of the environment fully determined by the current state and the agent's next action?

If not: is the next state affected by randomness?

German: deterministisch, nichtdeterministisch, stochastisch

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completely vs. partially vs. not observable

Do the agent's observations fully determine the state of the environment?

If not: can the agent at least determine some aspects of the state of the environment?

German: vollständig/teilweise/nicht beobachtbar

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discrete vs. continuous

Is the environment's state given by discrete or by continuous parameters?

also applies to: actions of the agent, observations, elapsing time

German: diskret, stetig

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### single-agent vs. multi-agent

Must other agents be considered?

If yes: do the agents behave cooperatively, selfishly, or are they adversaries?

German: ein/mehrere Agenten; Gegenspieler

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### suitable problem solving algorithms

Environments of different kinds (according to these criteria) usually require different algorithms.

The "real world" combines all unpleasant (in the sense of: difficult to handle) properties.

## 4.2 Problem Solving Methods

## Three Approaches to Problem Solving

We can solve a **concrete AI problem** (e.g., backgammon) in several ways:

### Three Problem Solving Methods

- ① **problem-specific**: implement algorithm “by hand”
- ② **general**: create problem description  
+ use general algorithm (**solver**)
- ③ **learning**: **learn** (aspects of) algorithm from experience

**German**: problemspezifisch, allgemein, lernend

- ▶ all three approaches have strengths and weaknesses (**which?**)
- ▶ combinations are possible
- ▶ we will mostly focus on **general** algorithms, but also consider other approaches

## General Problem Solvers

**General problem solving**:

problem instance  $\implies$  language  $\implies$  **solver**  $\implies$  solution

- ① **models** to classify, define and understand problems
  - ▶ What is a problem **instance**?
  - ▶ What is a **solution**?
  - ▶ What is a **good/optimal** solution?
- ② **languages** to represent problem instances
- ③ **algorithms** to find solutions

**German**: Problem Instanz, Sprache, Solver/Löser, Lösung, Modelle

## Languages are Key!

### The Key to General Problem Solving

**Implicitly** describe complex models in **declarative languages**!

Two roles for declarative languages:

- ▶ **specification**: compact description of a model
- ▶ **computation**: algorithmically exploit **problem structure**

## 4.3 Classification of AI Topics

## Classification of AI Topics

Many areas of AI are essentially characterized by

- ▶ the **properties of environments** they consider and
- ▶ which of the three **problem solving approaches** they use.

We conclude the introduction by giving some examples

- ▶ within this course and
- ▶ beyond the course (“advanced topics”).

## Examples: Classification of AI Topics

Course Topic: **Informed Search Algorithms**

environment:

- ▶ **statisch** vs. dynamic
- ▶ **deterministic** vs. non-deterministic vs. stochastic
- ▶ **fully** vs. partially vs. not **observable**
- ▶ **discrete** vs. continuous
- ▶ **single-agent** vs. multi-agent

problem solving method:

- ▶ **problem-specific** vs. general vs. learning

## Examples: Classification of AI Topics

Course Topic: **Constraint Satisfaction Problems**

environment:

- ▶ **statisch** vs. dynamic
- ▶ **deterministic** vs. non-deterministic vs. stochastic
- ▶ **fully** vs. partially vs. not **observable**
- ▶ **discrete** vs. continuous
- ▶ **single-agent** vs. multi-agent

problem solving method:

- ▶ problem-specific vs. **general** vs. learning

## Examples: Classification of AI Topics

Course Topic: **Board Games**

environment:

- ▶ **statisch** vs. dynamic
- ▶ **deterministic** vs. non-deterministic vs. stochastic
- ▶ **fully** vs. partially vs. not **observable**
- ▶ **discrete** vs. continuous
- ▶ single-agent vs. **multi-agent** (**adversarial**)

problem solving method:

- ▶ **problem-specific** vs. general vs. learning

## Examples: Classification of AI Topics

### Advanced Topic: General Game Playing

#### environment:

- ▶ **statisch** vs. dynamic
- ▶ **deterministic** vs. non-deterministic vs. (stochastic)
- ▶ **fully** vs. partially vs. not **observable**
- ▶ **discrete** vs. continuous
- ▶ single-agent vs. **multi-agent** (**adversarial**)

#### problem solving method:

- ▶ problem-specific vs. **general** vs. learning

## Examples: Classification of AI Topics

### Course Topic: Classical Planning

#### environment:

- ▶ **statisch** vs. dynamic
- ▶ **deterministic** vs. non-deterministic vs. stochastic
- ▶ **fully** vs. partially vs. not **observable**
- ▶ **discrete** vs. continuous
- ▶ **single-agent** vs. multi-agent

#### problem solving method:

- ▶ problem-specific vs. **general** vs. learning

## Examples: Classification of AI Topics

### Course Topic: Acting under Uncertainty

#### environment:

- ▶ **statisch** vs. dynamic
- ▶ deterministic vs. non-deterministic vs. **stochastic**
- ▶ **fully** vs. partially vs. not **observable**
- ▶ **discrete** vs. continuous
- ▶ **single-agent** vs. multi-agent

#### problem solving method:

- ▶ **problem-specific** vs. general vs. learning

## Examples: Classification of AI Topics

### Advanced Topic: Reinforcement Learning

#### environment:

- ▶ **static** vs. dynamic
- ▶ deterministic vs. non-deterministic vs. **stochastic**
- ▶ **fully** vs. partially vs. not **observable**
- ▶ **discrete** vs. continuous
- ▶ **single-agent** vs. multi-agent

#### problem solving method:

- ▶ problem-specific vs. general vs. **learning**

## 4.4 Summary

## Summary (1)

**AI problem:** performance measure + agent model + environment

Properties of **environment** critical for choice of suitable algorithm:

- ▶ **static** vs. **dynamic**
- ▶ **deterministic** vs. **non-deterministic** vs. **stochastic**
- ▶ **fully** vs. **partially** vs. **not** observable
- ▶ **discrete** vs. **continuous**
- ▶ **single-agent** vs. **multi-agent**

## Summary (2)

Three **problem solving methods**:

- ▶ **problem-specific**
- ▶ **general**
- ▶ **learning**

general problem solvers:

- ▶ **models** characterize problem instances mathematically
- ▶ **languages** describe models compactly
- ▶ algorithms use languages as **problem description** and to **exploit problem structure**