Foundations of Artificial Intelligence

34. Automated Planning: Planning Formalisms

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Automated Planning: Overview

Chapter overview: automated planning

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34.1 Four Formalisms

Four Planning Formalisms

- A description language for state spaces (planning tasks) is called a planning formalism.
- We introduce four planning formalisms:
  1. STRIPS (Stanford Research Institute Problem Solver)
  2. ADL (Action Description Language)
  3. SAS^+ (Simplified Action Structures)
  4. PDDL (Planning Domain Definition Language)
- STRIPS and SAS^+ are the most simple formalisms; in the next chapters, we restrict our considerations to these.

34.2 STRIPS

STRIPS: Basic Concepts

basic concepts of STRIPS:

- STRIPS is the most simple common planning formalism.
- state variables are binary (true or false)
- states s (based on a given set of state variables V) can be represented in two equivalent ways:
  - as assignments $s : V \to \{\mathbf{F}, \mathbf{T}\}$
  - as sets $s \subseteq V$, where s encodes the set of state variables that are true in s

  We will use the set representation.
- goals and preconditions of actions are given as sets of variables that must be true (values of other variables do not matter)
- effects of actions are given as sets of variables that are set to true and set to false, respectively

STRIPS Planning Task

Definition (STRIPS Planning Task)

A STRIPS planning task is a 4 tuple $\Pi = \langle V, I, G, A \rangle$ with

- V: finite set of state variables
- $I \subseteq V$: the initial state
- $G \subseteq V$: the set of goals
- A: finite set of actions, where for all actions $a \in A$, the following is defined:
  - $pre(a) \subseteq V$: the preconditions of a
  - $add(a) \subseteq V$: the add effects of a
  - $del(a) \subseteq V$: the delete effects of a
  - $cost(a) \in \mathbb{N}_0$: the costs of a

remark: action costs are an extension of “traditional” STRIPS

State Space for STRIPS Planning Task

Definition (state space induced by STRIPS planning task)

Let $\Pi = \langle V, I, G, A \rangle$ be a STRIPS planning task.

Then Π induces the state space $\mathcal{S}(\Pi) = \langle S, A, cost, T, s_0, S_\star \rangle$:

- set of states: $S = 2^V$ (= power set of V)
- actions: actions A as defined in Π
- action costs: $cost$ as defined in Π
- transitions: $s \xrightarrow{a} s'$ for states s, s' and action a iff
  - $pre(a) \subseteq s$ (preconditions satisfied)
  - $s' = (s \setminus del(a)) \cup add(a)$ (effects are applied)
- initial state: $s_0 = I$
- goal states: $s \in S_\star$ for state s iff $G \subseteq s$ (goals reached)

Example: Blocks World in STRIPS

Example (A Blocks World Planning Task in STRIPS)

$\Pi = \langle V, I, G, A \rangle$ with:

- $V = \{on_{R,B}, on_{R,G}, on_{B,R}, on_{B,G}, on_{G,R}, on_{G,B}, \\ on\text{-}table_R, on\text{-}table_B, on\text{-}table_G, \\ clear_R, clear_B, clear_G\}$
- $I = \{on_{G,R}, on\text{-}table_R, on\text{-}table_B, clear_G, clear_B\}$
- $G = \{on_{R,B}, on_{B,G}\}$
- $A = \{move_{R,B,G}, move_{R,G,B}, move_{B,R,G}, \\ move_{B,G,R}, move_{G,R,B}, move_{G,B,R}, \\ to\text{-}table_{R,B}, to\text{-}table_{R,G}, to\text{-}table_{B,R}, \\ to\text{-}table_{B,G}, to\text{-}table_{G,R}, to\text{-}table_{G,B}, \\ from\text{-}table_{R,B}, from\text{-}table_{R,G}, from\text{-}table_{B,R}, \\ from\text{-}table_{B,G}, from\text{-}table_{G,R}, from\text{-}table_{G,B}\}$

...

Example: Blocks World in STRIPS

Example (A Blocks World Planning Task in STRIPS)

move actions encode moving a block
from one block to another

example:

- $pre(move_{R,B,G}) = \{on_{R,B}, clear_R, clear_G\}$
- $add(move_{R,B,G}) = \{on_{R,G}, clear_B\}$
- $del(move_{R,B,G}) = \{on_{R,B}, clear_G\}$
- $cost(move_{R,B,G}) = 1$

Example: Blocks World in STRIPS

Example (A Blocks World Planning Task in STRIPS)

to-table actions encode moving a block
from a block to the table

example:

- $pre(to\text{-}table_{R,B}) = \{on_{R,B}, clear_R\}$
- $add(to\text{-}table_{R,B}) = \{on\text{-}table_R, clear_B\}$
- $del(to\text{-}table_{R,B}) = \{on_{R,B}\}$
- $cost(to\text{-}table_{R,B}) = 1$

Example: Blocks World in STRIPS

Example (A Blocks World Planning Task in STRIPS)

from-table actions encode moving a block
from the table to a block

example:

- $pre(from\text{-}table_{R,B}) = \{on\text{-}table_R, clear_R, clear_B\}$
- $add(from\text{-}table_{R,B}) = \{on_{R,B}\}$
- $del(from\text{-}table_{R,B}) = \{on\text{-}table_R, clear_B\}$
- $cost(from\text{-}table_{R,B}) = 1$

Why STRIPS?

- STRIPS is particularly simple.
- ⇝ simplifies the design and implementation of planning algorithms
- often cumbersome for the "user" to model tasks directly in STRIPS
- but: STRIPS is equally "powerful" to much more complex planning formalisms
- ⇝ automatic "compilers" exist that translate more complex formalisms (like ADL and SAS$^+$) to STRIPS

34.3 ADL, SAS$^+$ and PDDL

Basic Concepts of ADL

basic concepts of ADL:

- Like STRIPS, ADL uses propositional variables (true/false) as state variables.
- preconditions of actions and goal are arbitrary logic formulas (action applicable/goal reached in states that satisfy the formula)
- in addition to STRIPS effects, there are conditional effects: variable v is only set to true/false if a given logical formula is true in the current state

Basic Concepts of SAS$^+$

basic concepts of SAS$^+$:

- very similar to STRIPS: state variables not necessarily binary, but with given finite domain (cf. CSPs)
- states are assignments to these variables (cf. CSPs)
- preconditions and goals given as partial assignments

  example: $\{v_1 \mapsto a, v_3 \mapsto b\}$ as preconditions (or goals)
  - If $s(v_1) = a$ and $s(v_3) = b$, then the action is applicable in s (or goal is reached)
  - values of other variables do not matter
- effects are assignments to subset of variables

  example: effect $\{v_1 \mapsto b, v_2 \mapsto c\}$ means
  - In the successor state s', $s'(v_1) = b$ and $s'(v_2) = c$.
  - All other variables retain their values.

Basic Concept of PDDL

- PDDL is the standard language used in practice to describe planning tasks.
- descriptions in (restricted) predicate logic instead of propositional logic ($\rightsquigarrow$ even more compact)
- other features like numeric variables and derived variables (axioms) for defining "macros" (formulas that are automatically evaluated in every state and can, e.g., be used in preconditions)
- There exist defined PDDL fragments for STRIPS and ADL; many planners only support the STRIPS fragment.

example: blocks world in PDDL

34.4 Summary

Summary

planning formalisms:

- STRIPS: particularly simple, easy to handle for algorithms
  - binary state variables
  - preconditions, add and delete effects, goals: sets of variables
- ADL: extension of STRIPS
  - logic formulas for complex preconditions and goals
  - conditional effects
- SAS$^+$: extension of STRIPS
  - state variables with arbitrary finite domains
- PDDL: input language used in practice
  - based on predicate logic (more compact than propositional logic)
  - only partly supported by most algorithms (e.g., STRIPS or ADL fragment)