

NEURAL NETWORKS AND GENETIC ALGORITHMS

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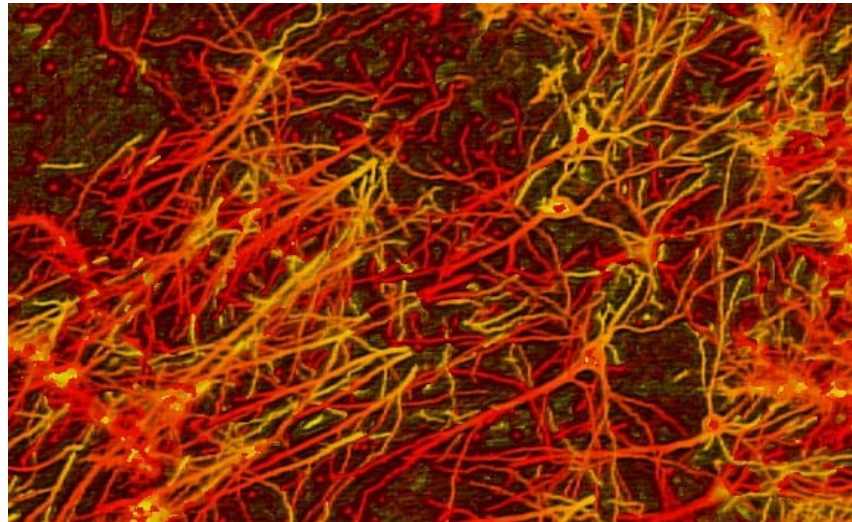
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Today's outline

- Neural Networks
 - The Neuroscience: introduction to biological neural networks
 - From biological to artificial neural networks
 - Different kinds of networks
- Genetic Algorithms
 - A "natural" selection
 - Methods for creating a new generation
- A "little" project...

The Neuroscience

- Our brain is, substantially, a Parallel Information Processing System.
- It contains about 10 BILLION nerve cells, called **neurons**, each one connected to other ones by **synapses**.



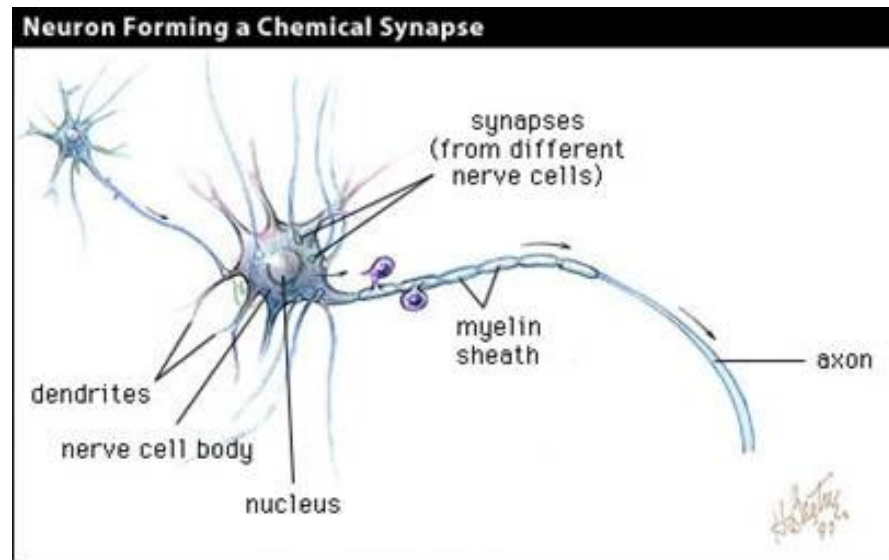
The Neuroscience

- A **biological neural network** is an interconnection of neurons whose sequential or parallel activation is defined with a precise logic.

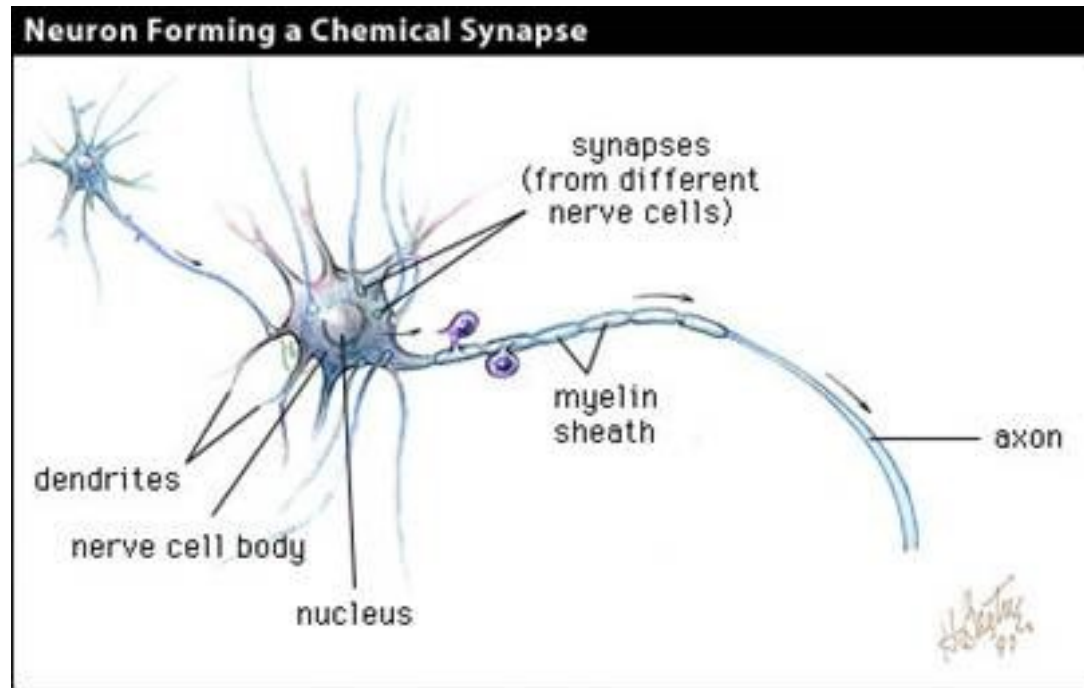
BUT WHAT IS AN
"ACTIVATION"?

The Neuroscience

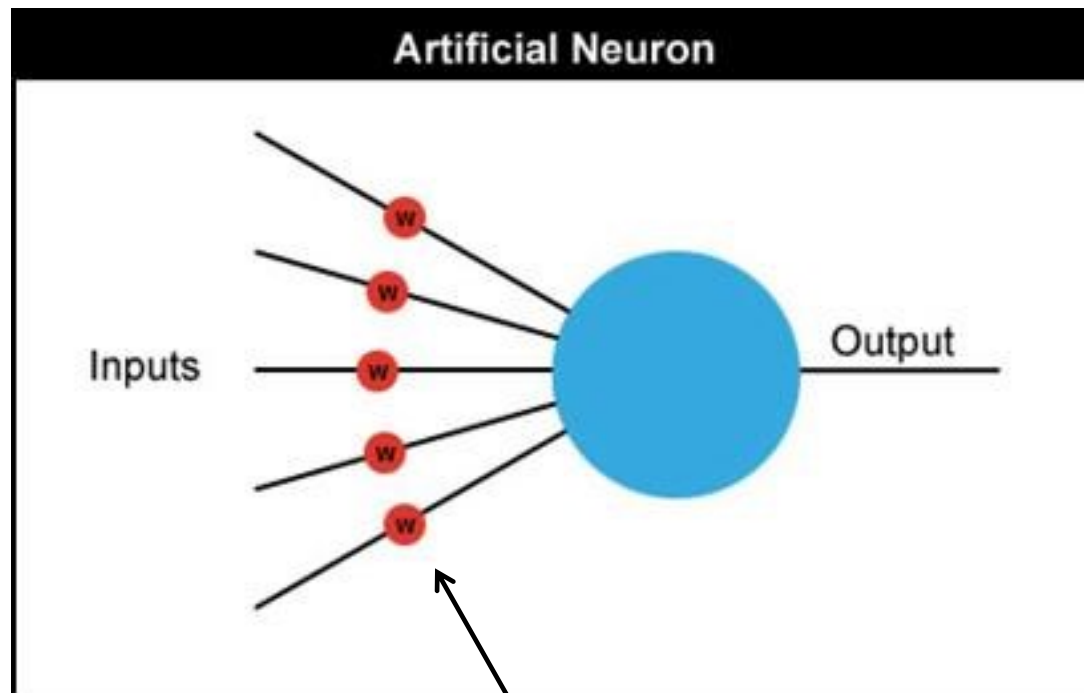
- The neuron continuously receives signals from these inputs and chooses what to transmit using a little bit of... **magic**.
- For our purposes, we can simplified this action in a way such that an "importance factor" called *weight* is assigned to each input. The neuron will transmit a single value that belongs to **most important received inputs**.



Biological neural networks



Artificial neural networks



"Weights" are simply signed floating point numbers. Initial value is random.

Artificial neural networks

- The activation is made by checking this equation:

$$x_1w_1 + x_2w_2 + x_3w_3 \dots + x_nw_n \geq t$$

- x_i is the i^{th} input for $1 \leq i \leq n$
 - w_i is the weight of the i^{th} input
 - t is a threshold value
- So, the activation depends upon whether or not the left sum exceeds the threshold value. How big is it? We can do this way...

$$x_1w_1 + x_2w_2 + x_3w_3 \dots + x_nw_n - t \geq 0$$

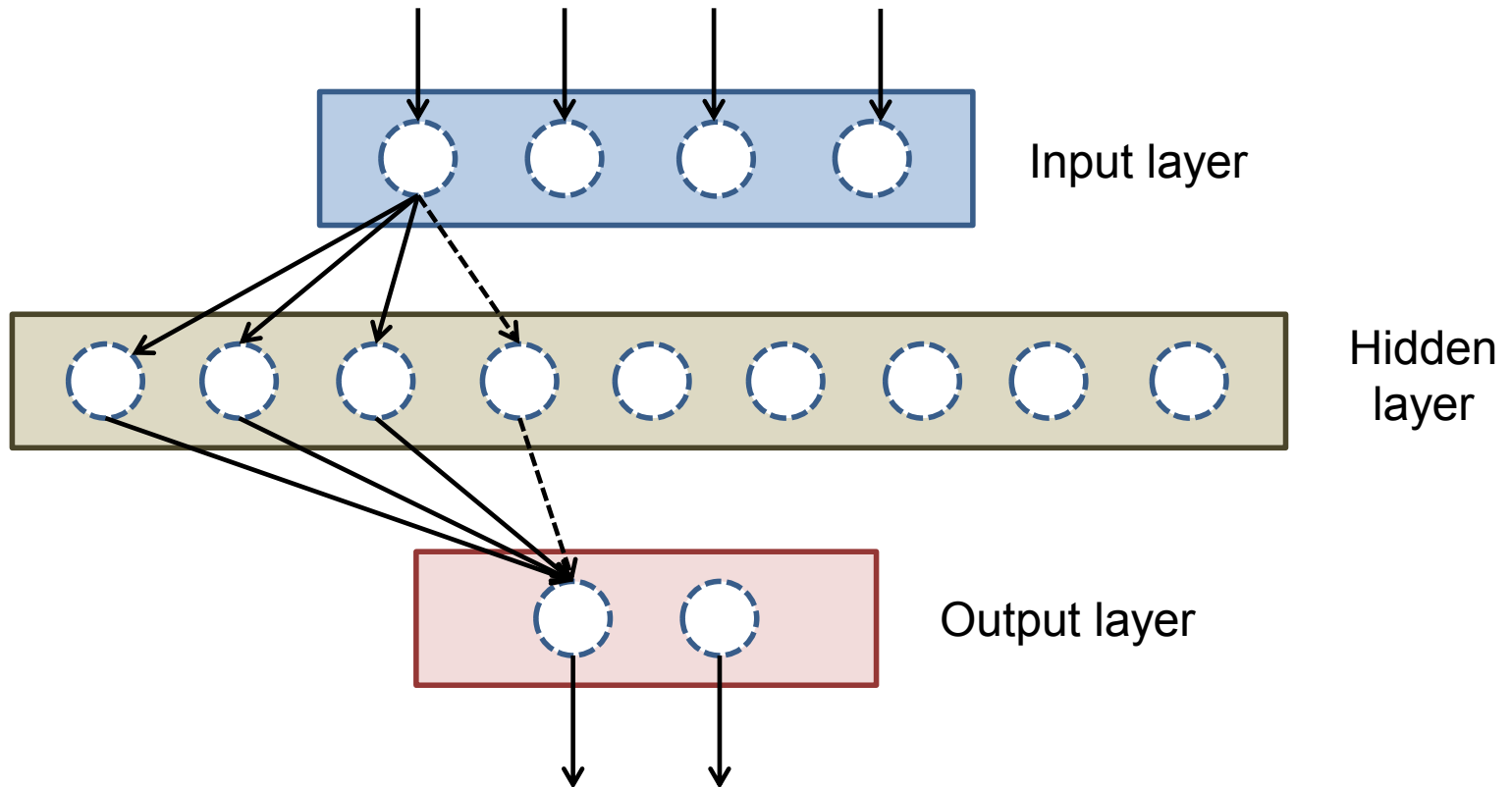
- That is equal to

$$x_1w_1 + x_2w_2 + x_3w_3 \dots + x_nw_n + (-1)t \geq 0$$

- Threshold is now a further weight multiplied by a constant called **bias**

We made a neuron! ... but how to build the **network**?

- For most of the problems, an artificial neural network is a data structure composed by 3 layers:

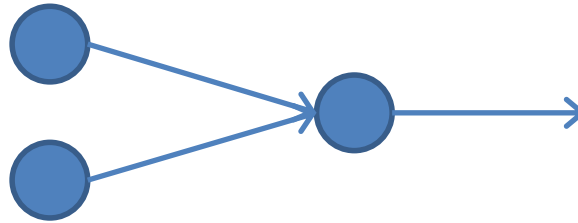


Artificial neural network

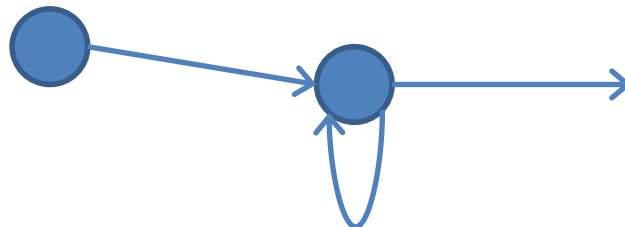
- *Input layer* holds **the input data coming from the problem**, for example, the current state of an environment or the input obtained from the agent's sensors, properly discretized.
- *Output layer* contains **the solution to the problem**, that can be more or less complex:
 - From one resulting number (there will be only one neuron)
 - To a set of n numbers ("do action X with properties Y, W, and Z")
- How about the *Hidden layer*? Works as a **mapper** between inputs and outputs. The number of internal neurons specifies the precision of the outputted data.

Different kinds of neural networks

- Based on the data flow:
 - Feed-forward: there is no need to synchronize the inputs of a neuron.



- Recurrent: there is loops inside the neural network.



Different kinds of neural networks

- Based on learning algorithm:
 - Supervised learning: the expected output is known, the neural network is trained to map the input values to the right output.
 - Unsupervised learning: the expected output is unknown, the task of the neural network is to **adjust the weights itself** to obtain a correct output.

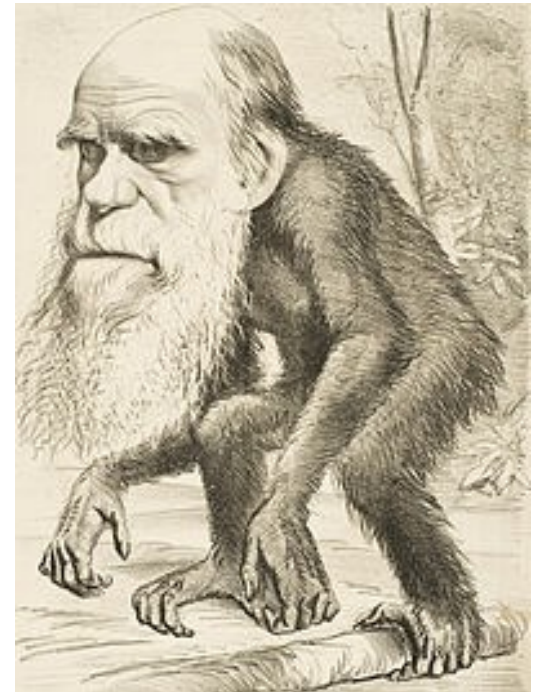
Weights

- *Weights* are the core elements of a traditional neural network. Setting weights in the right way will led to a good (*expected*) result set.
- But our goal is to **automate the process** of weights calculation trough a method based on the just passed experience!

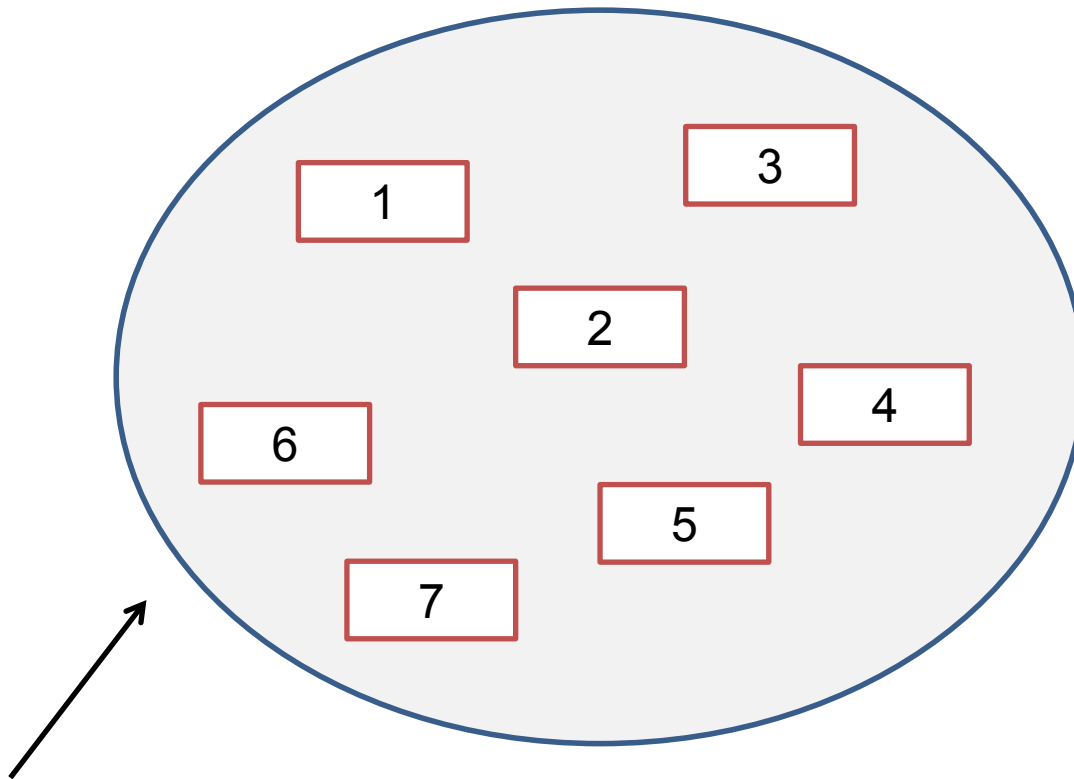
WHO DOES THE
DIRTY JOB?

Genetic algorithms

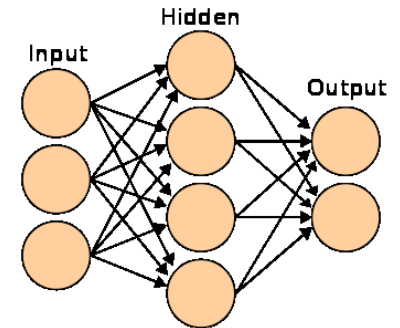
- Genetic algorithms are a family of search heuristics that **mimics the processes of natural evolution**, such as *inheritance*, *mutation*, *selection*, and *crossover*.
- With such methods, we can literally give birth to and raise a **population of chromosomes**, each one containing a candidate solution to the problem.
- In our case, each chromosome will contain a possible weight set for the neural network.
- ... the best will **survive**...



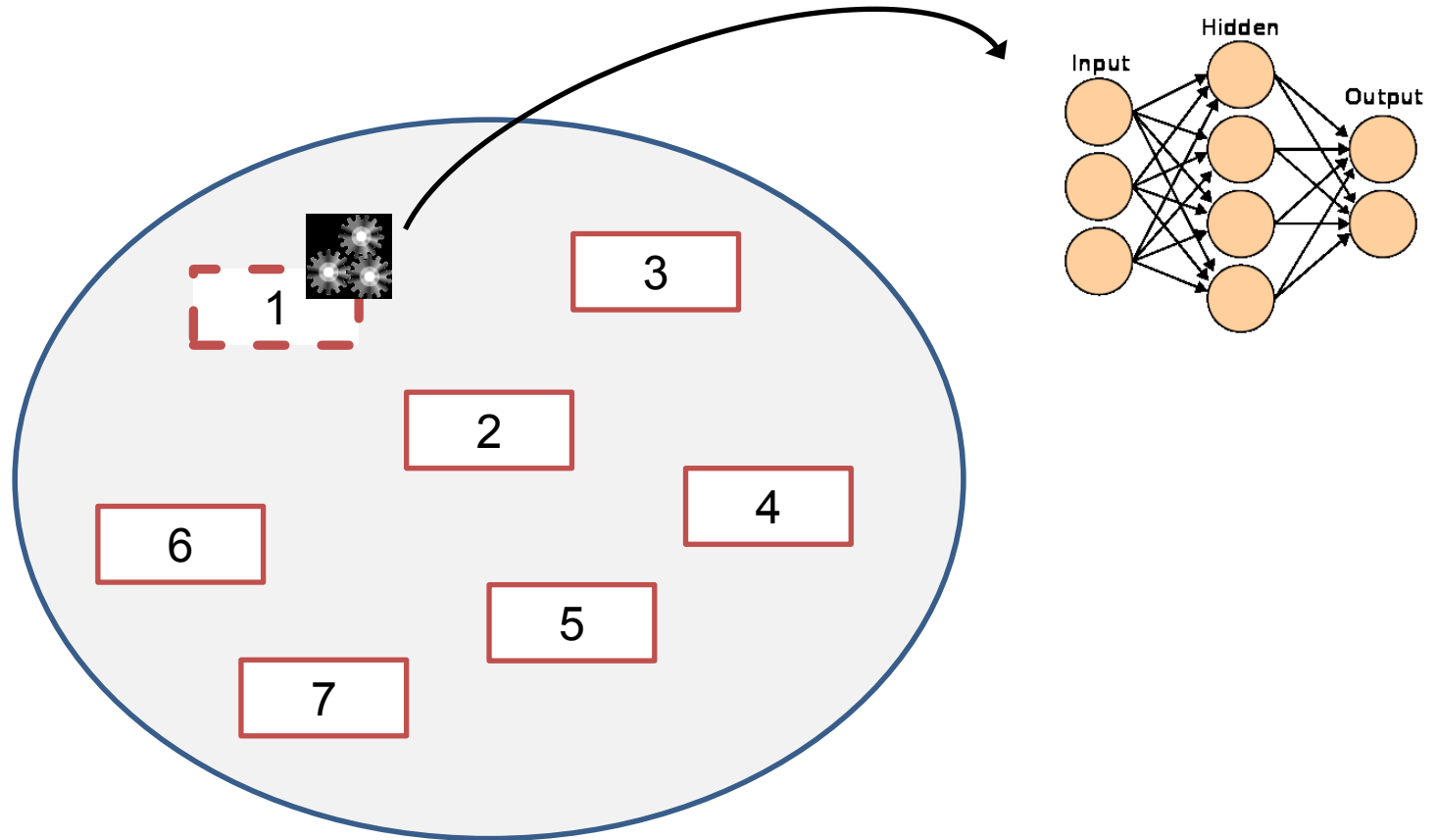
Genetic algorithms



This is a **generation** of chromosomes

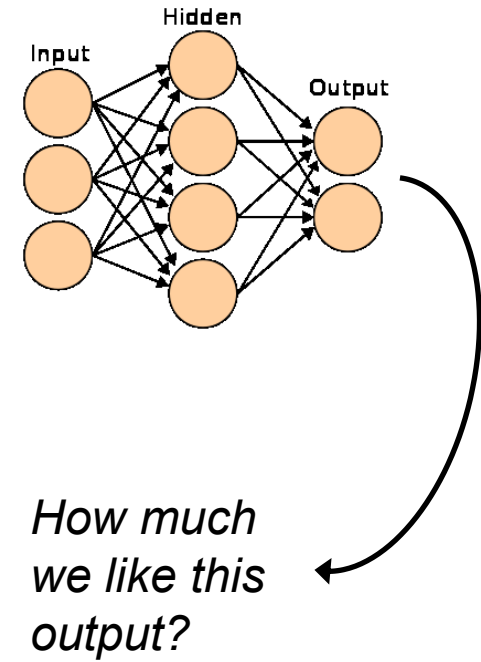
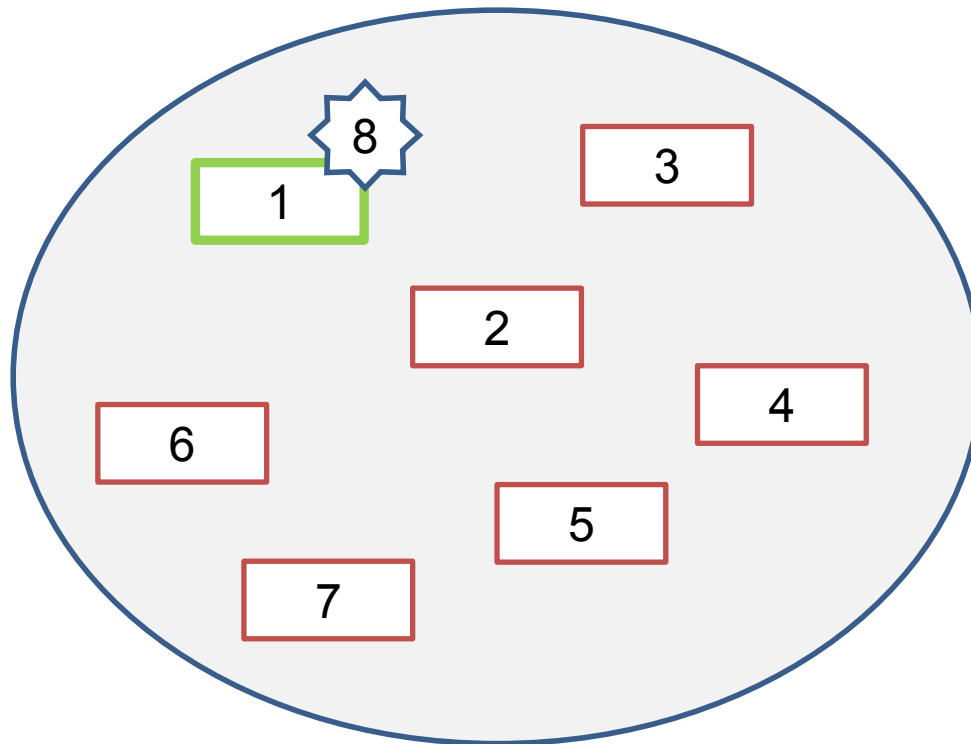


Genetic algorithms



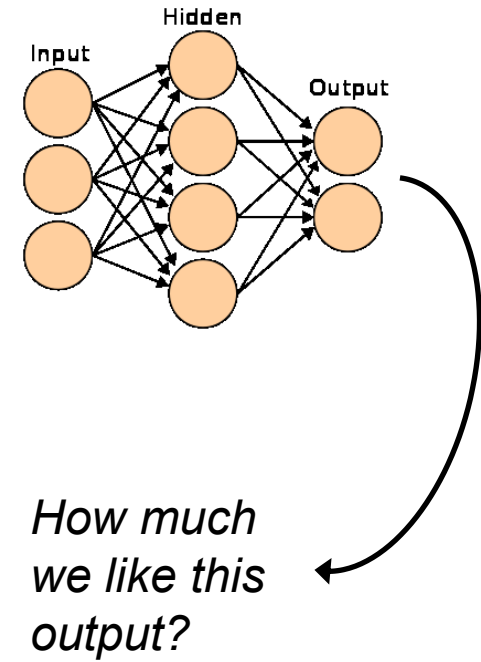
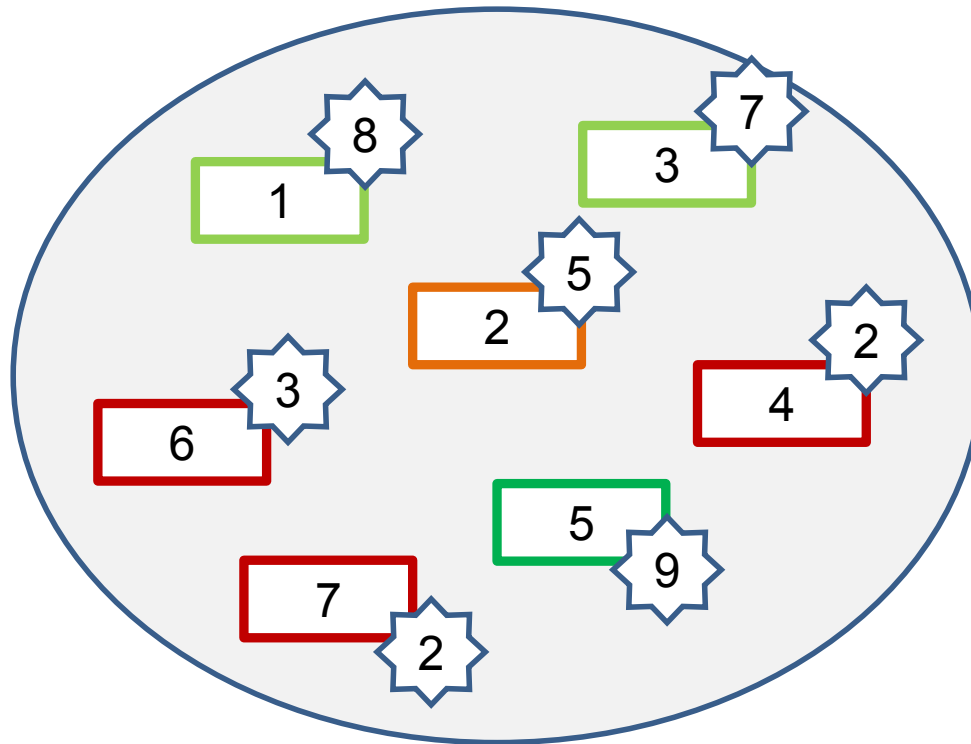
We test each chromosome's effectiveness and give a **score** to it

Genetic algorithms



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Genetic algorithms



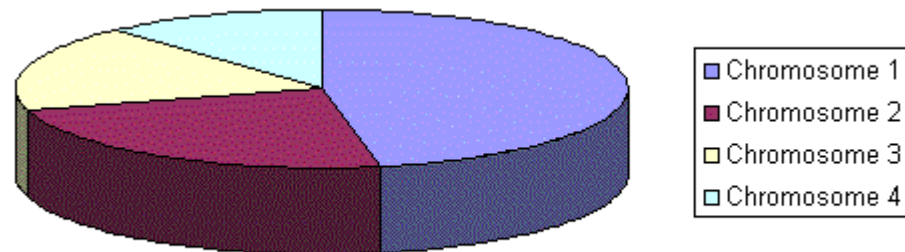
We test each chromosome's effectiveness and give a **score** to it

The fitness value

- We talked about a score given to each chromosome. A better known name for this number is *fitness*.
- In each generation, the fitness of every individual in the population is evaluated. Then, **multiple individuals are selected, recombined and mutated** to form a new population.
- The new population is then used in the next iteration of the algorithm. Commonly, the algorithm terminates when either a maximum number of generations has been produced, or a **satisfactory fitness level has been reached**.

Selection

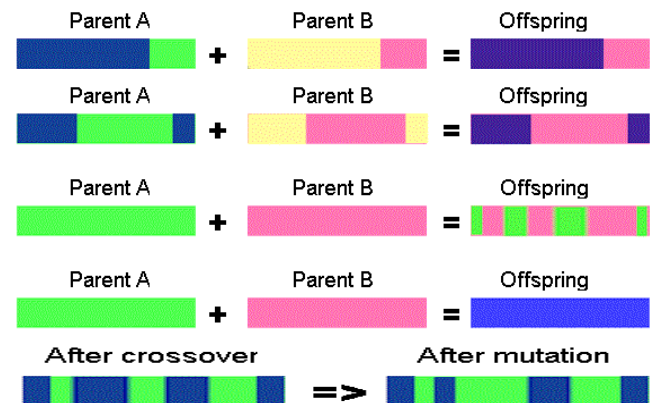
- The practice of select **the best candidates** can be done in various ways. A widely used method is called "Roulette Wheel".



1. Calculate sum S of all chromosome fitnesses in population
2. Generate random number R from 0 to S
3. While $S' < R$
 Go through the population and sum fitnesses in S'
4. Return the chromosome where you are

Recombination

- By recombining two chromosomes it is possible to obtain a **couple of better chromosomes** (*offspring*). This operation is also called *crossover*.
- Different kinds of crossover:
 - One point
 - Two point
 - Uniform
 - Arithmetic
 - Bit inversion
- It's suggested to set the probability to have a crossover for each new generation between 80% and 95%



Mutation

- Mutation is used **to avoid local minimum** of the fitness function. It is performed by changing elements of a chromosome of a small amount.

(1.29 5.68 **2.86 4.11** 5.55) => (1.29 5.68 **2.73 4.22** 5.55)

- It is suggested to perform a mutation before any new generation with probability between 0,5% and 1,0%.

References

- For Neural Networks:
 - R. Rojas: *Neural Networks – A systematic introduction*
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 - AI Junkie - Neural Networks in plain english
 - <http://www.ai-junkie.com/ann/evolved/nnt1.html>
- For genetic algorithms:
 - Introduction to Genetic Algorithms
 - <http://www.obitko.com/tutorials/genetic-algorithms/index.php>
 - D. Whitley: Genetic Algorithms and Neural Networks (1995)

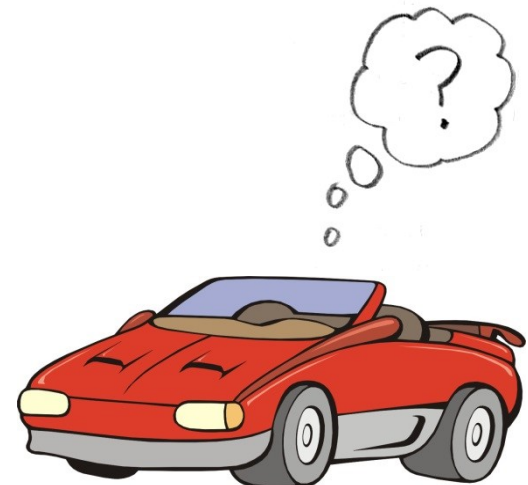
CARWIN

A self-driving car implemented with a neural network and a genetic algorithm (AI Course Project)

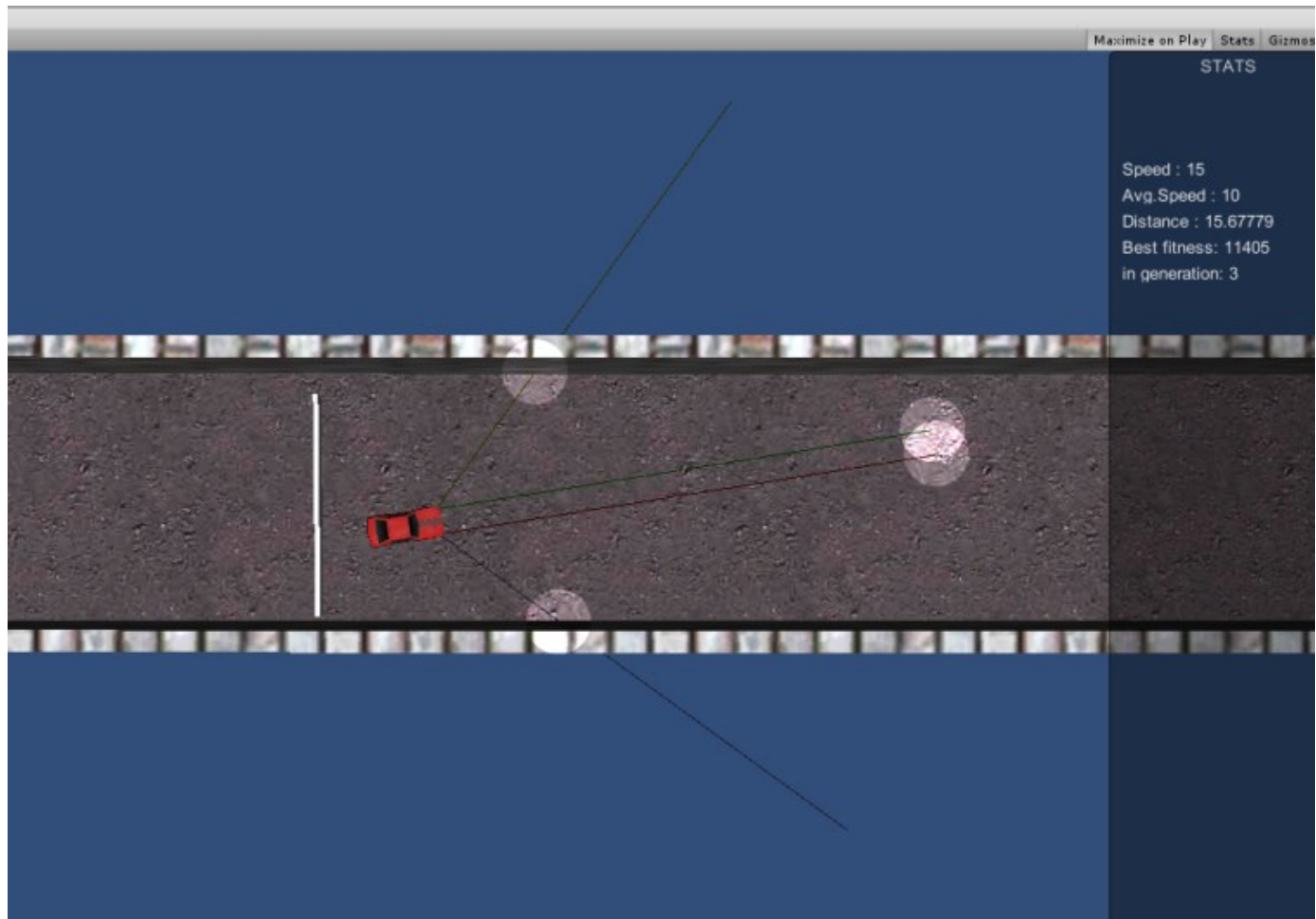
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Carwin

- Carwin is a car driven by a neural network which is trained by a genetic algorithm.
- The neural network inputs are:
 - Values returned by 4 sensors using raycast method:
 - Angle of a imminent turn, in degrees (from -90 to 90)
 - Distances from front and side walls
 - Current speed of the car
- The neural network outputs:
 - An acceleration factor (from 0.0 to 1.0)
 - A steering force (from -1.0 to 1.0)



Carwin



Facts

- Fitness value = distanceMade x avgSpeed
- Our neural network is composed by
 1. Input layer with 5 neurons (one for each input)
 2. 1 hidden layer with 24 neurons (heuristically chosen)
 3. Output layer with 2 neurons (one for each output)
- The genetic population is a set of 14 chromosomes
- Remember that each neuron receives the total of weights from the upper level plus one "fake" weight for the bias!

**How many weights
in each chromosome?**

$$(5 \times 24) + (24 \times 2) + 24 + 2 = 194!$$

DEMO

Fork it on



This project is free and open-source.
Feel free to test and hack it!

<https://github.com/alessandrofrancesconi/carwin>