Fido: A Universal Robot Control System using Reinforcement Learning with Limited Feedback

Joshua Gruenstein Michael Truell
Horace Mann School

Control System Objectives

Fido was created to fulfill the following goals:

- **Trainability**: Allow both human and autonomous training rather than reprogramming
- **Universality**: Run on any robot, even without prior knowledge of the host

These goals were achieved through the training of artificial neural networks with a wire-fitted moving least squares interpolator following the Q-learning reinforcement algorithm and an action selection policy that utilizes a Boltzmann distribution of probability.

Implementation

Fido was programmed in C++, with no external dependencies. However, the simulator does use the SFML graphics library. The hardware implementation uses the Intel Edison embedded platform, a 3D printed chassis and a differential drive system.

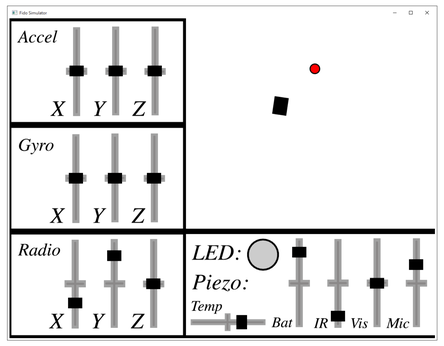

Figure 1: Fido Simulator Graphical User Interface

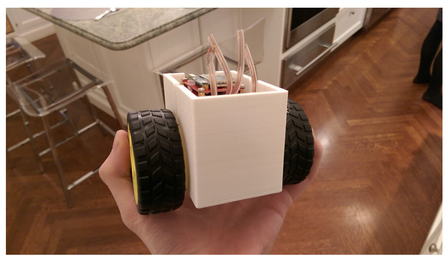

Figure 2: Fido Hardware Implementation

Learning Algorithm

- From a macro perspective, Fido can be viewed as a "black box:" inputs go in and outputs go out, Fido must optimize the relationship of inputs to outputs to maximize reward
- **Reward system:** Trying to determine the expected reward for an action in a given state based on past reward received
  - Must have a scalable, performance-optimized way of storing past state-reward sets and detecting patterns

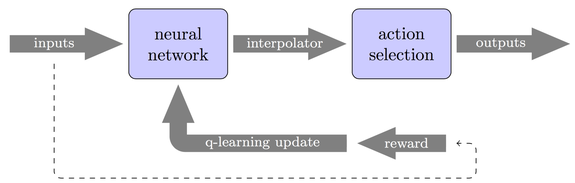

Figure 3: Control System Diagram

Artificial Neural Networks

- Function approximators modeled after nature with the capability to take in a large number of inputs, parallelly process them, and produce a set of outputs

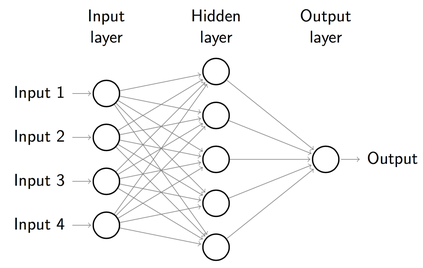

Figure 4: Single Output Feed-forward Neural Network

Reinforcement Learning

- **Q-Learning:** Algorithm that learns a function that inputs a state-action pair and outputs the expected utility (**Q-value**)
- Ordinarily Q function is modeled by storing state-action pairs in a table
  - Is impractical for large state spaces, use a function approximator instead: **Artificial Neural Networks**
- Q-learning is also usually discrete: no relation made between states or actions
  - Can be made more efficient by coupling a wire-fitted interpolator with our neural network: **Wire-Fitted Q-Learning**
- Cannot just pick the action with the greatest expected reward: must "explore" to be trainable and re-trainable: **Boltzmann Probability Distribution Selection Policy**

Results

Results were gathered both from simulation and hardware for a variety of tasks. In simulation Fido was evaluated setting an LED to measured light intensity ("Flash"), driving to a point with a direct XY-control drive system ("Float") and a differential drive system ("Drive"), and line following.

Task	Learning Iterations	Action Selection (ms)	Training Time (ms)
Flash	6	0.	6
Float	14	1	6
Drive	17	1	11
Line Follow	21	2	10.

In hardware Fido was tasked with staying still and driving to a point.

Task	Learning Iterations	Action Selection (ms)	Training Time (ms)
Stay Still	3	1	43.5
Drive to Point	18	4	65

Future Development

We would like to experiment with dynamic optimization of hyperparameters, changing factors such as neural network architecture and Boltzman temperature constant to best fit the task at hand. We also plan to package Fido as a machine learning library for embedded electronics and robotics, and build a microcontroller-based hardware implementation to further optimize for resource-limited environments.

References

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Acknowledgements

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