

SORTS Tech Report

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0.1 ORTS Overview

The Open Real Time Strategy software is a highly configurable game engine used to play real time strategy (RTS) games [?]. The main purpose for ORTS is to serve as an open source, open interface RTS game engine for RTS AI tournaments. ORTS is undergoing active development as of July 2006 at the University of Alberta under the direction of Michael Buro.

There are several reasons why ORTS is especially suitable for use in AI tournaments. It has a (relatively) straightforward C++ API, making interfacing with your favorite AI system easy. All the specific game mechanics, ranging from types of units, actions, and physics, are specified via C++ style scripts called blueprints. This means that ORTS can be easily configured to simulate a wide range of environments, from arbitrarily simple ones like Wumpus World to complex ones like Starcraft. Finally, ORTS has a client/server architecture in which the server maintains the state of the world and only report to the clients information they are supposed to have for a fair game. This is in contrast to most commercial RTS games, in which each client maintains the entire world state and prevents the player from accessing forbidden information such as other players' locations only by hiding them from the GUI. The result is that ORTS is impervious to "memory hack" cheats that are widespread in commercial RTS games. This feature is particularly important if tournaments are to be run across the Internet.

0.2 SORTS Overview

SORTS is a piece of software that allows the Soar cognitive architecture to act as a client to the ORTS game server, so that ORTS game playing agents can be written in and executed on Soar. SORTS is much more than an interface bridge in that it intentionally constrains the space of possible Soar agents in important ways and also handles aspects of low-level game control that are not suitable for Soar. In particular, SORTS heavily abstracts the world state information obtained from the ORTS API before feeding them into Soar as perceptions, and also interprets and executes high-level commands from Soar as low-level actions sent to the ORTS API.

0.3 Soar IO Description

0.3.1 The SORTS input-link

There are five top-level attributes on the SORTS input link, "groups", "game-info", "feature-maps", "vision-info", and "query-results". The groups, feature-maps, and vision-info structures are all part of the main visual system (see XXX), while game-info contains higher-level information about the game world, and query-results is used to communicate the results of specialized queries from Soar to the middleware.

The exact data structures are as follows:

Attributes of io.input-link	
attribute	description
vision-info structure:	
vision-info	Contains information on the current state of the vision system.
vision-info.center-x vision-info.center-y	The coordinate of the center of the region in view.
vision-info.focus-x vision-info.focus-y	The coordinate of the center of focus (spotlight of attention).
vision-info.num-objects-visible	The maximum number of objects (groups) present on the input-link. All other objects within the view window are present in feature maps.
vision-info.grouping-radius	All objects of the same type (except as below) and owner within this distance of each other are in the same group (set to 0 for individuals).
vision-info.owner-grouping	Ignore type when grouping, only group by owner (1 if enabled, 0 if disabled).
groups structure:	
groups	The set of groups being attended to.
groups.group	Multi-valued, one instance for each group. Detailed below.
feature-maps structure:	
feature-maps	Contains all feature maps- low-resolution information about certain features of unattended (but visible) objects.
feature-maps.friendly	Friendly feature map- each friendly unit (not group) results in one instance of this feature, marked in the sector of the group's center of gravity.
feature-maps.friendly-workers	A subset of the friendly feature map, showing only workers.
feature-maps.enemy	Similar to the above, but for enemy units.
feature-maps.minerals	Similar to the above, but for minerals.
feature-maps.moving-units	Moving units (if grouping is used, one moving object causes the whole group to be seen as moving).
feature-maps.(any).sector0 .. feature-maps.(any).sector8	Feature counts for each of the nine sectors. 0 is the upper left, 8 is the lower right.
game-info structure:	
game-info	General information about the game (non-visual information).
game-info.num-players	The number of players.
game-info.player-id	The ID number of the Soar player.
game-info.map-xdim game-info.map-ydim	The dimensions of the game map.
game-info.view-frame	The last view frame handled by the middleware (the number of game cycles executed).
game-info.my-minerals	Minerals available to the player.
game-info.mineral-buffer	The number of minerals to reserve for certain tasks (see section XXX).
game-info.worker-count game-info.marine-count game-info.tank-count	The number of units of each type owned by the player. 3
query-results structure:	
query-results	The result of the last query to the middleware.
query-results.query-name	The name of the last query executed.
query-results.param0	Query return values- the meaning of these is dependant on the query-name.
query-resutls.param1	

Attributes of io.input-link.groups.group objects		
attribute	which groups	description
num-members	all	The number of individuals comprising the group.
type	all	The type of the group (ex: worker, mineral).
x-pos y-pos	all	The x,y location of the center of gravity of the group.
x-min x-max y-min y-max	all	The bounding box of the group.
health	all	The sum of the health of all units in the group.
taking-damage	all	The number of members of the group currently taking damage (under attack).
shooting	all	The number of members of the group currently attacking an enemy.
speed	all	The average speed of the group.
heading	all	The average heading of the group.
dist-to-focus	all	The distance from the center of gravity of the group to the attentional focus point.
dist-to-query	all	The distance from the center of gravity of the group to the last query location.
owner	all	The player number of the group's owner.
enemy	all	1 if the group belongs to an enemy player, 0 otherwise.
sticky	friendly	1 if the group is sticky- sticky groups remain together even if they are no longer spatially close.
command	friendly	The last command issued to the group ("none" if no command has been issued).
command-running	friendly	The number of members of the group currently executing a command.
command-success	friendly	The number of members of the group that successfully completed the last command.
command-failure	friendly	The number of members of the group that unsuccessfully completed the last command.
minerals	friendly workers	The total number of minerals possessed by the workers in the group.
active-mining	friendly workers	The number of workers that are actively mining.

0.3.2 The SORTS output-link

The output-link allows the Soar agent to act in the game world by issuing commands to groups of friendly units, directly to the middleware for actions such as querying, and adjust the parameters of the visual subsystem in the middleware. All structures on the output link are similar- the Soar agent creates an output-link.command object with a name (output-link.command.name) specified. Depending on the command name, different parameters are needed. Parameters

are attached to the command structure, as in `output-link.command.param0`. All legal commands and their necessary parameters are detailed below.

Soar output-link commands		
command name	parameters	description
Vision commands		
grouping-radius	value	Change the grouping radius of the vision sensor.
enable-owner-grouping	(none)	Enable grouping-by-owner.
disable-owner-grouping	(none)	Disable grouping-by-owner.
change-view-width	value	Change the width of the agent's view to <i>value</i> .
look-at-location	x,y	Move the focus of attention to the given coordinate. The coordinate must be in the current view window.
move-to-location	x,y	Shift the view window to be centered at the given location, and make that the focus of attention.
look-at-feature	feature, sector	Move the focus of attention to a given feature in a given sector. The legal features are the names of the objects on the input link.
move-to-feature	feature, sector	As above, but re-center the view window to the given feature, also.
num-objects	value	Change the maximum number of objects (features) that can be on the input-link at once.
General middleware commands		
locate-building	building, x, y, distance	This command requests that the middleware find a location for a building of type <i>building</i> that is approximately <i>distance</i> units from the coordinate (x,y). The resulting coordinate is returned through the <code>output-link</code> structure on the input-link.
set-mineral-buffer	value	Set the mineral buffer to <i>value</i> minerals.
Group commands		
move	group0, param0, param1	Move the group with ID <i>group0</i> to the x,y location where <i>param0</i> is x and <i>param1</i> is y, using the default precision of 10 (allow units to complete successfully if within 10 of the target).
move	group0, param0, param1, param2	Move group <i>group0</i> to the x,y location where <i>param0</i> is x and <i>param1</i> is y, using a precision of <i>param2</i> .
build	group0, param0 .. param3	Use group <i>group0</i> to build a building of type <i>param0</i> at the x,y location given by <i>param2, param3</i> .