

A short introduction to artificial intelligence

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A short introduction into the general topic of artificial intelligence. This should help address some aspects of artificial intelligence and define them on a shallow level to give a starting point into this topic.

Motivation

There are a lot of definitions for Artificial Intelligence (AI). Most of them are based on a definition of intelligence which in itself is already difficult to define. A simple approach would be to say that humans cognitive functions (e.g. solving complex problems or learning) is considered intelligent. So making programs or machines pursue the way humans might solve problems or learn can be considered as AI. These complex problems can be natural language processing, visual perception, motor control, planning or game theory.

Another aspect of AI is often that programs associated with it are considered intelligent in itself because it is hard to understand how they work. This is mainly due to the fact that they work in ways that do not come to you straight away. That is often also considered as intelligent. But in programming it and actually coming up with the idea of a program that is considered to be an AI, the myth of this intelligence is already debunked and does not pose any intelligence anymore. This illustrates the possible paradoxon in AI.

AI can be used for image recognition, for controlling machines, to play games or to detect fraud. It can be used in nearly any domain and has already found great usage in medicine or commercial scenarios. Using AI can give a company a major advantage against competitors. Companies like Netflix have embraced AI (Gomez-Uribe & Hunt, 2015) and have established a market leading position also backed by AI.

Types of AI

Approaches to implement AI have resulted into two major paradigms: **symbolic** and **sub-symbolic**. Symbolic approaches model a problem space with tokens or symbols that are humanly readable. This problem space is then processed by the AI programs. The symbols themselves are therefore manipulated and processed. Because of the symbolic nature the AI programs can be completely understood by humans. These programs are often called Expert systems, Rules engine, Knowledge based AI or Knowledge graph. They were the first paradigms that found usage in the past and are therefore also called Good, Old Fashioned Artificial Intelligence

(GOFAI). In theory they try to solve modeled problems in the same abstract way humans think and would solve problems.

The sub-symbolic paradigm also consists of symbols but they are not really human interpretable. These symbols represent more abstract components that can accomplish tasks suitable for AI related tasks. The whole idea about this paradigm is to build the parts that make human cognitive functions possible on a more low level abstraction. It is highly inspired by biology (neurobiology, genetics, evolution) and psychology. This paradigm has found a lot of usage and popularity in the recent years.

Symbolic AI

As stated before symbolic AI solves complex problems by using strategies researchers thought humans would also use. This is done by transforming a problem space into symbols and then applying functions on these symbols. The key here is coming up with an abstract model of the problem space and transforming it into symbols. Because of the nature of this paradigm, expert systems are easier to debug and understand and to control. A big disadvantage is that you need expert domain knowledge in order to solve the problem the way humans would do. Another advantage is though that big data is not needed.

Due to the symbolic nature **logic** can be used to solve complex problems. Logic consists of **semantic** and **syntax**. Syntax defines the representation of logics (symbols). It consists of an alphabet which forms words which in turn form language (**formulas**). This syntax is then interpreted by semantics. Semantics give meaning and interpretation to syntax and can be used to derive new formulas (**calculus**). This kind of system is called **formal system**. For more information about logics and formal systems see (Richardson, 2006).

Formal systems have rules. These rules can be used to inference new rules or answer questions. This is often done by calculus (e.g. resolution calculus). Such a system of AI can be built with PROLOG.

Another important aspect of symbolic AI are **searches**. Often you have modeled a problem and try to find an answer in this problem space. This could be for example trying to find the perfect schedule for people with limited amount

of time. Searches can be simple algorithms (breadth-first, depth-first) or **informed algorithms** (A^*). Informed algorithms use **heuristics** that try to estimate the best possible path inside a graph. This should lead to a faster search because some paths can be **pruned**. The intelligent part here lies in defining the heuristic.

Another aspect in searches is the **constraint satisfaction problem (CSP)**. In a CSP are **variables** which have value spaces (**domains**). Each variable is attached to **constraints**. These constraints can have multiple arity and define limitations for the domains. This way a net of variables and constraints is formed. The problem of solving the net and narrowing down the domains to a solution is the actual CSP. To solve these problems there are multiple algorithms (e.g. AC-3). CSP can be used to solve riddles or puzzles like Sudoku.

Searches can also be used to find paths from a start to a goal. This is called **planning**. In planning you have a state which describes a current situation. For the state there are possible moves that can be taken. Each move has a **condition, delete and add list**. Those lists can be used to test and execute the moves to change the state in order to pass the start state into the goal state. This kind of procedure can be used to control for example robotic arms. For more information see Stanford Research Institute Problem Solver (STRIPS) and (Nilsson, 1982).

Sub-symbolic AI

Sub-symbolic AI uses symbols in a more abstract way. The symbols become part of a low level system that is capable of cognitive functions. It is no longer possible to map concrete high level tasks like identifying objects in images directly to the symbols in the system. The output generated by sub-symbolic AI is therefore often probabilistic or approximated. This has led to more robust models that often showed better performance and scalability. Unfortunately most of these models need big data to get to that point. But these models are no longer bound to expert domain knowledge and have shown way better performance in tasks like visual perception. Sub-symbolic AI consists of machine learning, reinforcement learning and evolutionary computing.

Machine learning

Connectionism tries to solve complex problems by modeling what we use to solve problems - our brain. Neurobiology states that the brain on a low level consists of neurons that are connected. This can be modeled into a computer science abstraction. A neuron is

- supervised - unsupervised - semi supervised neural nets, deep learning

Reinforcement learning

exploitation, exploration, thompson sampling, qlearning, sarsa

Evolutionary computing

genetic algorithm, genetic programming, evolutionary programming

Big Data

Current state of AI and further topics

- capsule networks - autoencoders - attention mechanisms
- gans - dqn - neat - neuroevolution

Further readings

deeplearning book

Glossary

AI Artificial Intelligence.

Connectionism is using graph theory to mimic neurobiological features. Each node in the graph is called neuron. Neurons are connected in specific ways identifying the overall type of network..

CSP constraint satisfaction problem.

Expert systems Synonym of symbolic AI.

GOF AI Good, Old Fashioned Artificial Intelligence.

Knowledge based AI Synonym of symbolic AI.

Knowledge graph Synonym of symbolic AI.

PROLOG Logical programming language.
For more information consider:
<http://www.learnprolognow.org/>.

Rules engine Synonym of symbolic AI.

STRIPS Stanford Research Institute Problem Solver.

Sub-symbolic AI is a AI paradigm solving complex problems in a more low level level in reference to neurobiology.

Symbolic AI is a AI paradigm solving complex problems the way humans would. Modeling the problem space with symbols and use computations to transform them into a solution.

References

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