

Computer Games Development

Software Functional Specification

Year IV

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**DECLARATION**

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**Table Of Contents**

[1 Introduction 1](#_Toc133255805)

[2 Brief description of the chosen algorithms 2](#_Toc133255806)

[2.1 Description of D star Lite 2](#_Toc133255807)

[2.2 Description of A star 2](#_Toc133255808)

[2.3 Description of Dijkstras algorithm 2](#_Toc133255809)

[2.4 Description of lifelong planning Astar 2](#_Toc133255810)

[2.5 Description of depth first search 2](#_Toc133255811)

[3 Functional Specification 3](#_Toc133255812)

[3.1 Algorithm tables and grid sizes 3](#_Toc133255813)

[3.2 Console visualisation 4](#_Toc133255814)

[3.3 Code visualisation 6](#_Toc133255815)

[3.4 Visualisation of paths using the different algorithms available 11](#_Toc133255816)

[3.5 Data collection visualisation 13](#_Toc133255817)

[4 Design and describe how the application will be used 17](#_Toc133255818)

[5 References 18](#_Toc133255819)

###### List Of Tables

[Table 3‑1 Description Of User Interface Overview 4](#_Toc133328423)

[Table 3‑2 Description Of Enum Visualisation 5](#_Toc133328424)

[Table 3‑4 Description Of Generated Paths 8](#_Toc133328425)

[Table 3‑5 Description Of Data Visualisation 11](#_Toc133328426)

# Introduction

The objective of this project was to put together a comprehensive comparison of guided and non-guided based pathfinding algorithms to the incremental dynamic pathfinding algorithm known as Dstar Lite under a game’s development context. So one can decide based of the information shown in this document whether to or not implement Dstar lite into their project or perhaps to implement another algorithm such as lifelong planning A star or, A star itself.

# Brief description of the chosen algorithms

## Description of D star Lite

Dstar Lite works as a dynamic A star where it can make changes to the path along the graph without having to rerun the process of calculating the path. Where Astar has to calculate the heuristic (cost of the node form the destination + the cost of the node from the beginning node) for each node upon running the algorithm to find the shortest path D star does not. It works by only investigating nodes which have been affected by a non-traversable which has been placed on the path. This in turn makes rerunning the algorithm potentially cheaper than having to recalculate the entire path.

## Description of A star

Astar is a heuristic algorithm being that it knows the end and start point. It then tries to find the shortest path to the end point, however it will rerun itself if an obstacle gets in the way. Astar can find the shortest path through a priority queue which will compare the values of each node using both their Hcost( distance from the node) and Gcost( distance from the start node). This is how it knows to look at certain nodes first.

## Description of Dijkstras algorithm

Dijkstras search algorithm is a guided search algorithm that uses node weights and connections to find the shortest path to the goal node. Whereas Astar uses the heuristic value distance from the goal node as hcost and distance from the start node Gcost to find the path, Dijkstras only uses the distance from the start node of each node to find compute the shortest path

## Description of lifelong planning Astar

Lifelong planning Astar is an incremental pathfinding algorithm that finds the path by updating the gcost of nodes from previous searches rather than recalculating the entire graph it is one step down from Dstar Lite which is a continuation of the lifelong planning astar algorithm.

## Description of depth first search

Depth first search is an example of a non- heuristic guided search algorithm, it starts at the root of the graph in the case of this project being the start node which you select. It then traverses through the graph using the neighbours so eventually find the goal. It is not guided it simply goes as far as it can give a specific direction chosen.

# Functional Specification

The software will in essence function as a visual pathfinding application. So the user will run the application and see a basic grid they can then adjust the size of the grid to three specified sizes “Small” being a 10x10 grid, “Medium” being a 50x50 grid and “Large” being a 100x100 size grid. They can then choose from a variety of pathfinding algorithms them being Astar, Dstar Lite, Dijkstra’s algorithm, lifelong planning Astar , jump point search and the only no heuristic pathfinding algorithm depth first search. The user can also place down obstacles during process of the algorithms search and before the algorithm has been ran if they perhaps are looking for a specific path, onto the grid which will have the pathfinding algorithms react to them and find a corresponding path.

## Algorithm tables and grid sizes

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| User Interface Images | Description |
| Chart  Description automatically generated with low confidence | The Menu:  The user can select grid size and the algorithm they wish to use. |
| A picture containing shoji, building  Description automatically generated | Grid size “Small”:  The small grid with 100 cells and row of columns of 10 each |
| Background pattern  Description automatically generated | Grid size “Medium”:  The medium grid with 2500 cells and row of columns of 50 each |
| Background pattern  Description automatically generated | Grid size “Large”:  The large grid with 10,000 cells and row of columns of 100 each |

Table 3‑1 Description Of User Interface Overview

## Console visualisation

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Console Images | Description |
| Text  Description automatically generated | The Astar Search algorithm being ran and displayed in the console there will be a visual representation in the application. |
| Text  Description automatically generated | The Lifelong Planning Astar (LPA\*) algorithm being ran and displayed in the console there will be a visual representation in the application. |
| A picture containing text  Description automatically generated | The Jump Point Search algorithm being ran and displayed in the console there will be a visual representation in the application. |
| Text  Description automatically generated with medium confidence | The Dstar Lite Search algorithm being ran and displayed in the console there will be a visual representation in the application. |
| Text  Description automatically generated | The Dijkstra’s Search algorithm being ran and displayed in the console there will be a visual representation in the application. |
| Text, chat or text message  Description automatically generated | The Depth First Search algorithm being ran and displayed in the console there will be a visual representation in the application. |

Table 3‑2 Description Of Enum Visualisation

## Visualisation of paths using the different algorithms available

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Generated Path images | Description |
| A picture containing shoji, building, silhouette  Description automatically generated | An example of basic walls. Red Nodes are the walls placed on the grid. The grid size in question is the small grid of size 100 nodes. |
| A picture containing shoji, crossword puzzle, building, clipart  Description automatically generated | Path returned using Astar Search algorithm on a grid size “Small”  Green Node = Start Node  Magenta Node = Goal Node |
|  | Path returned using Dstar Lite Search algorithm on a grid size “Small”  Magenta Node = Start Node  Blue Node = Goal Node |
|  | Dstar Lite with Debug on second Screen |
| Chart  Description automatically generated | Path returned using Lifelong Planning Astar Search algorithm on a grid size “Small”  Green Node = Start Node  Magenta Node = Goal Node |
| Table  Description automatically generated with medium confidence | Path returned using Depth First Search algorithm on a grid size “Small” |
| A picture containing shoji, crossword puzzle, building  Description automatically generated | Path returned using Dijkstra’s Search algorithm on a grid size “Small” |

Table 3‑4 Description Of Generated Paths

## Data collection visualisation

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Data Collection Images | Description |
| Text  Description automatically generated | Dstar lite Small Grid Data |
| Text  Description automatically generated | Dstar lite Medium Grid Data |
| Text, table  Description automatically generated | Dstar lite Large Grid Data |
| Table  Description automatically generated | Astar Small Grid Data |
|  | Astar Medium Grid Data |
| Table  Description automatically generated | Astar Large Grid Data |
| Text  Description automatically generated | Dijkstra’s Small Grid Data |
|  | Dijkstra’s Medium Grid Data |
| Text  Description automatically generated | Dijkstra’s Large Grid Data |
|  | Lifelong Planning Astar Small Grid Data |
|  | Lifelong Planning Astar Medium Grid Data |
|  | Lifelong Planning Astar Large Grid Data |
|  | Depth First Search Small Grid Data |
|  | Depth First Search Medium Grid Data |
|  | Depth First Search Large Grid Data |

Table 3‑5 Description Of Data Visualisation

# Design and describe how the application will be used

**How Will the programme run?**

When the user first opens the programme they will see three separate screens, with all having different functionality.The first screen the user will see is the “Menu” this is where the user will be able to control type of algorithm they want to run, the size of the grid that they want to run the algorithm on, whether they want to run their algorithm of choice against “Dstar Lite” and finally whether they want to run Dstar Lite in debug mode.The user can select six search algorithms from “dstar lite”,”astar”,”lifelong planning astar”,”depth first search”, “dijkstra’s search” and the “jump point search” algorithms.

The second grid is the editable grid. What the user can do on this grid is choose the start and end points of their algorithm.They can also place down as many walls as they want on the grid if they want a specific path.

The third and final screen intilly is black and once they user selects that they want to race the algorithms, on this screen a grid will appear to match the one on the second screen.This will then match any input you place on the second screen such as walls and the end and start points.Then once the start and endpoints are selected on the second screen Dstar Lite only will run on this screen. If the user selects to have debug mode on then this screen will run dstar lite in debug mode.This will have the three variables “rhs cost” ,”g cost” and their “key value” of each cell appear so the user can see how the algorithm effects each cell in real time.

**What is the purpose of the application?**

The purpose of the application is for the user to see the differences in paths in real time. So that they can potentially decide which algorithm best suits their grid. They can see how each algorithm reacts to changes in the path on a dynamic grid of varying sizes and they can also see the speed of each algorithm on a static grid where nothing changes if they so choose.

The programme also stores the time it took for you algorithm to find the paths time into an excel file in seconds so th user can then see the time for the algorithm to finish to better see the a difference between the algorithms. They can see all of the data in the three separate excel files for each of the algorithms for example the times for astar on the small grid they can see in “AstarTime.csv”

That is the functionality and purpose of the application.

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