

COMP250: Artificial Intelligence

6: Navigation

Pathfinding



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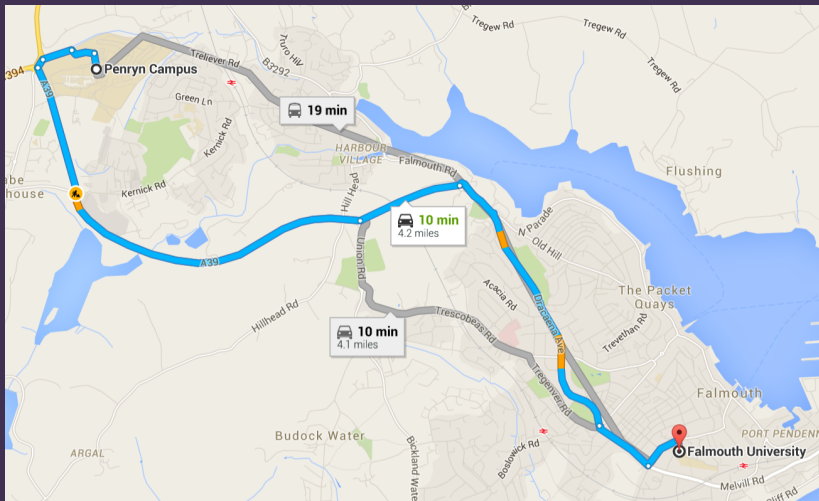
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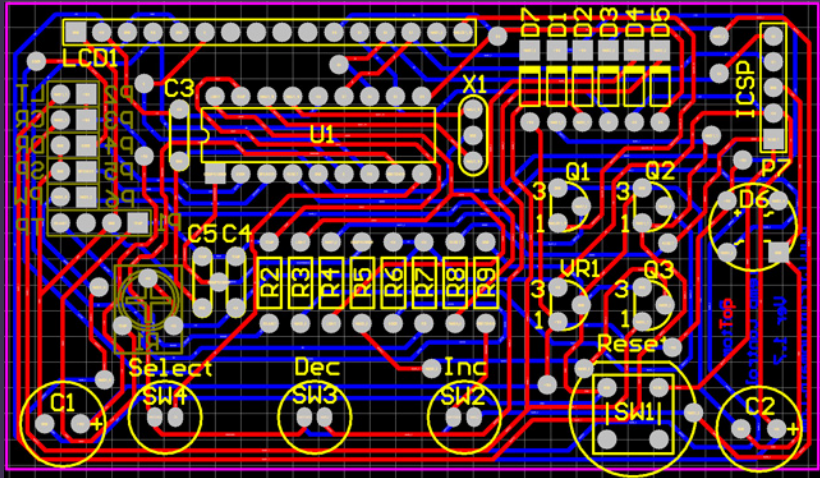
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 - ▶ “Shortest” in terms of edge lengths — could be distance, time, fuel cost, ...

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- ▶ Open 06_pathfinding in PyCharm

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 - ▶ ... but implementations are available for all popular programming languages

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- ▶ Finds a path, but probably not the **shortest**

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- ▶ Choose a node that minimises $g(x) + h(x)$
 - ▶ Contrast with greedy search, which just minimises $h(x)$

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 - ▶ Heuristics are often used to prioritise search, i.e. explore the most promising options first

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- ▶ Different $h(x)$ can lead to different paths (if there are multiple “shortest” paths)

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 - ▶ Repeat until there are no more points that can be removed

Navigation meshes



Pathfinding in videogames

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- ▶ A* works on any **graph**
- ▶ But what if the game world is not a graph? E.g. complex 3D environments

Waypoint navigation



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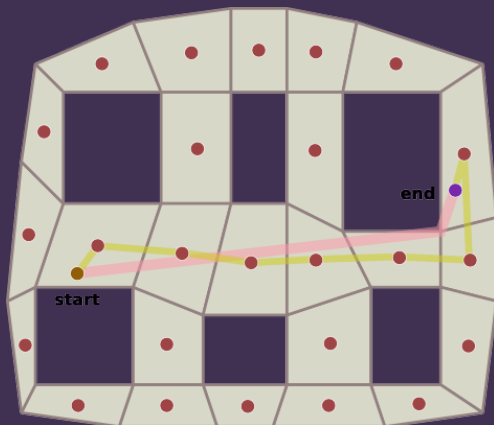
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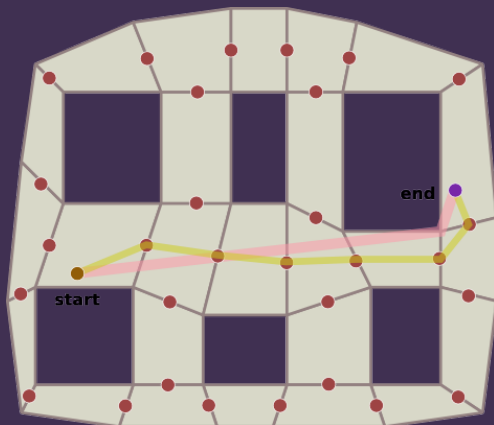
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 - ▶ Generate graph from polygons

Meshes to graphs



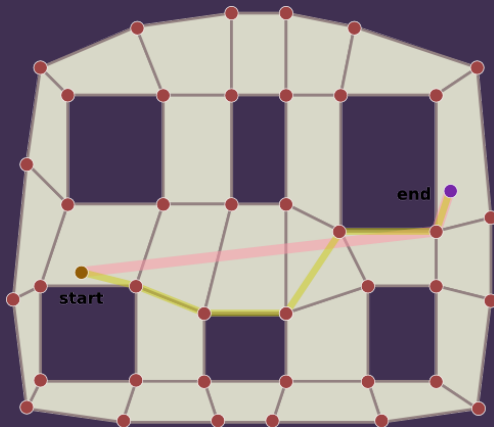
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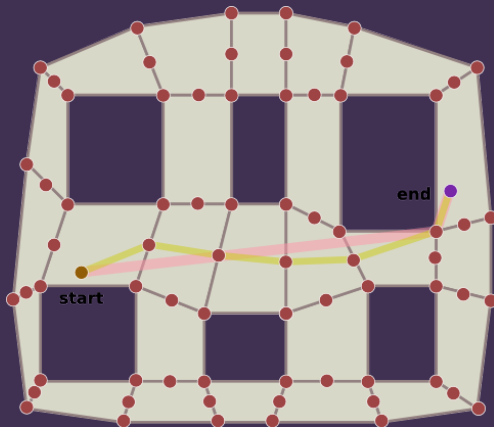
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Vertices of polygons

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Hybrid approach: edges and vertices

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- ▶ **Steering:** don't have your AI agent follow the path exactly, but instead try to stay close to it
- ▶ **Dynamic environments:** may need to re-run pathfinder if environment changes (e.g. movable obstacles, destructible terrain)

The travelling salesman problem



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 - ▶ Pub crawls
- (<http://www.math.uwaterloo.ca/tsp/pubs/>)

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- ▶ Entire research field devoted to finding efficient **search algorithms** and **heuristics**