SYDE 556/750

Simulating Neurobiological Systems
Lecture 13: Conclusion

Chris Eliasmith

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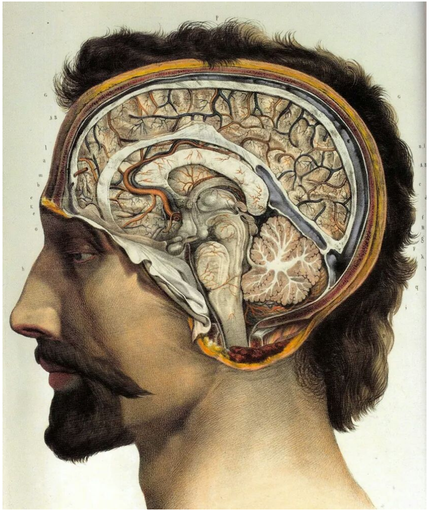
- Slide design: Andreas Stöckel
- Content: Terry Stewart, Andreas Stöckel, Chris Eliasmith

UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO | FACULTY OF ENGINEERING



Goal of This Course

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Building Large-Scale Brain Models

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Understand how Brains Work

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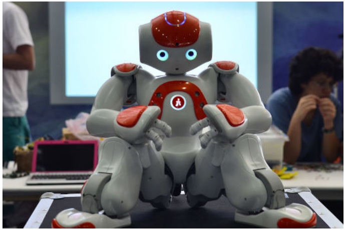

Build Better AI Systems

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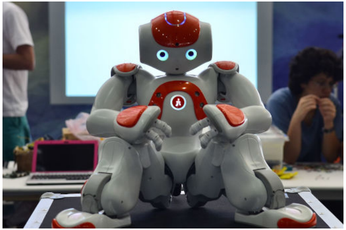

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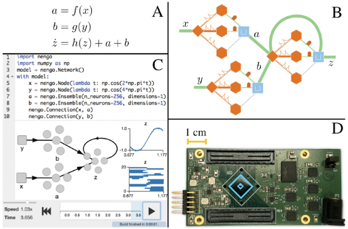

Program Neuromorphic Hardware

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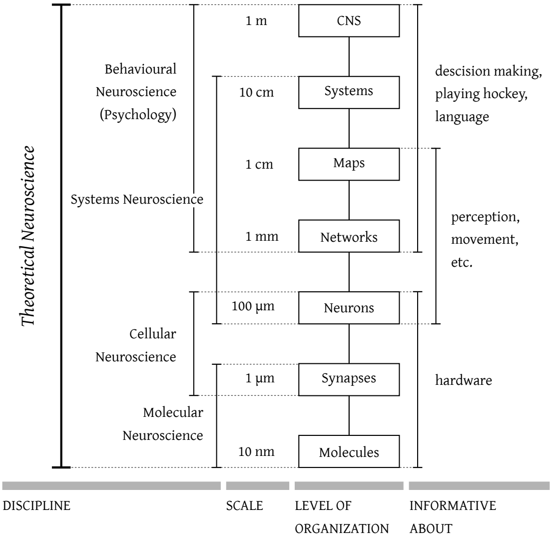
Theoretical Neuroscience



The Brain – Some Statistics

- **Weight:**
  $2\,\mathrm{kg}$ (2% of the body weight)
- **Power consumption:**
  $20\,\mathrm{W}$ (25% of the body's total power consumption)
- **Surface area:**
  $1500\,\mathrm{cm}^2$ to $2000\,\mathrm{cm}^2$ (roughly four A4/letter pages of paper)
- **Number of neurons:**
  100 billion (10^{11}, $150\,000\,\mathrm{mm}^{-2}$)
- **Number of synapses:**
  100 trillion (10^{14}, about 1000 per neuron)

Neuromorphic Hardware

Goal: Brain-inspired hardware; lower power consumption; stream processing

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Digital

Analogue/Mixed Signal

Neuromorphic Hardware

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Digital

- Specialised digital hardware for simulating spiking neural networks
- Trivial weight-spike multiplication
- Often asynchronous (no central clock)

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- Neuron models in analogue hardware (capacitors, resistors, ...)
- Digital interconnect and programming (weights, neuron parameters)

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- ⊕ Deterministic
- ● Higher power consumption than analogue

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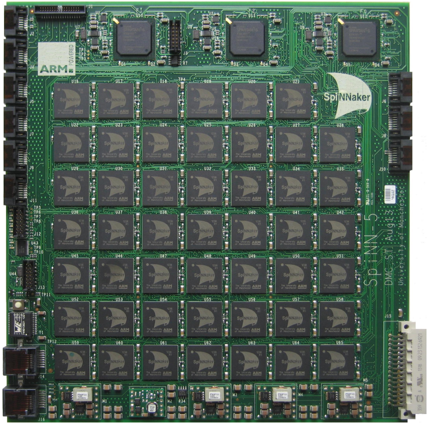
Analogue/Mixed Signal

- Neuron models in analogue hardware (capacitors, resistors, ...)
- Digital interconnect and programming (weights, neuron parameters)
- ⊖ Not deterministic
- ⊖ Hard to program
- ⊕ Very low power consumption

Neuromorphic Hardware – SpiNNaker



- Manchester/Dresden collaboration; HBP
- Fully digital
- 18 ARM968 processors @ $180\,\mathrm{MHz}$ per chip
- 1000 current-based LIF neurons per core
- Toroidal, asynchronous interconnect mesh
- Up to $\approx 10^9$ neurons in one system

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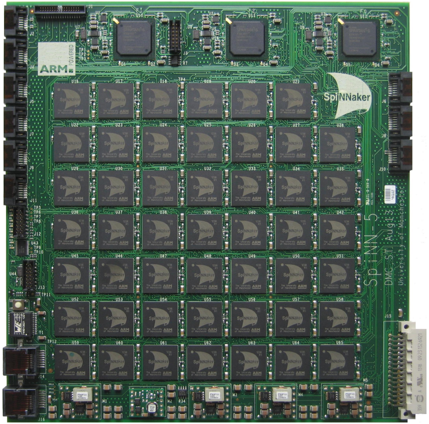

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- Fully digital
- 18 ARM968 processors @ $180\,\mathrm{MHz}$ per chip
- 1000 current-based LIF neurons per core
- Toroidal, asynchronous interconnect mesh
- Up to $\approx 10^9$ neurons in one system
- Easy to program, (outdated) Nengo interface
- Public access via HBP
- Not very power efficient (version from 2013)
- High setup times

Neuromorphic Hardware – Loihi

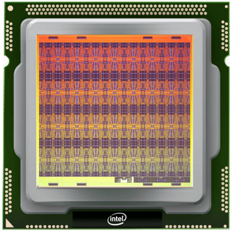

Image Sources. Intel Marketing Material

- Developed by Intel
- Digital, fully asynchronous architecture
- Circuits accelerating individual spiking neurons

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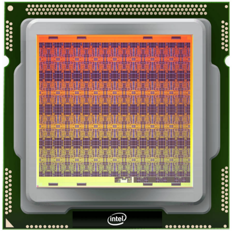

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- Developed by Intel
- Digital, fully asynchronous architecture
- Circuits accelerating individual spiking neurons
- ⊕ Extremely low power consumption
- ⊕ Nengo Interface
- ⊖ Proprietary/no low level programming without signing an NDA

Neuromorphic Hardware – BrainDrop

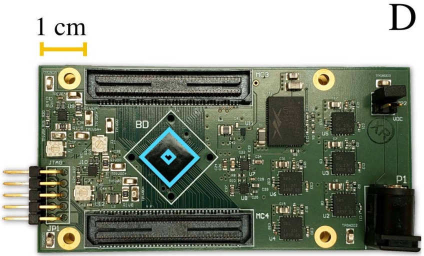

Image Sources. Braindrop: A Mixed-Signal Neuromorphic Architecture With a Dynamical Systems-Based Programming Model, Neckar et al. 2019

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- Mixed signal, analogue neurons, synapse arrays
- Exploits process noise for diverse neural tuning
- Optimized for NEF networks

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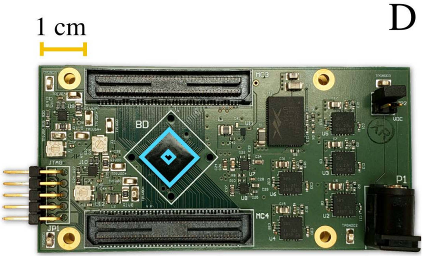

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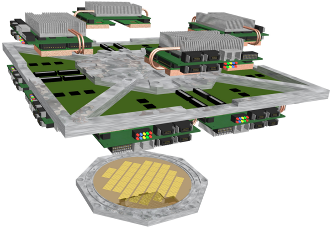
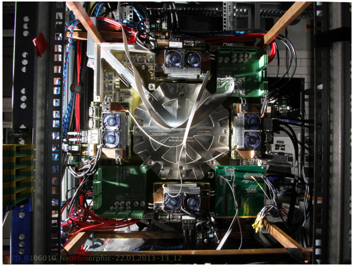
- Research project at Stanford
- Mixed signal, analogue neurons, synapse arrays
- Exploits process noise for diverse neural tuning
- Optimized for NEF networks
- ⊕ Extremely low power consumption
- ⊕ Nengo Interface
- ● Availability/Documentation?
- ⊖ Small networks only

Neuromorphic Hardware – BrainScaleS





- Research Project in Heidelberg; HBP
- Mixed signal; above realtime
- Wafer-scale system; 384 x 256 neurons

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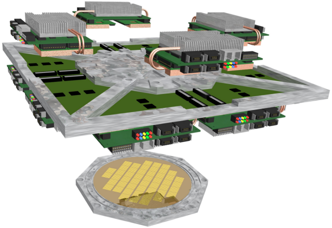

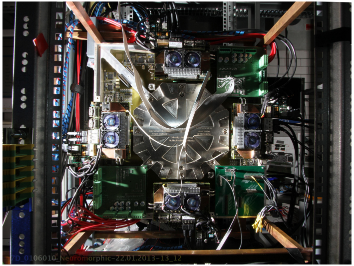

- Research Project in Heidelberg; HBP
- Mixed signal; above realtime
- Wafer-scale system; 384 x 256 neurons

- ⊕ Low power consumption
- ⊕ Public access via HBP
- ⊖ Complex; relatively low precision

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Review: What Did We Learn? (I)

- **The Neural Engineering Framework**
  - Theory for theoretical neuroscience (**bridging laws**)
  - *Principle 1:*
    Populations of neurons represent values $\mathbf{x}$
  - *Principle 2:*
    Connections compute functions f
  - *Principle 3:*
    Values are states in a dynamical system

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  - Model of *how* the brain computes. Is it wrong? Of course! But hopefully useful!

Review: What Did We Learn? (II)

- **Cognitive Architectures**
  - *Jackendoff's Challenges:*
    How to explain language in neural networks?
  - *Vector Symbolic Algebras:*
    Compressing symbolic information into vectors,
    circular convolution, word embeddings
  - *Semantic Pointer Architecture:*
    Combination of four ideas – *What* the brain computes.
    - NEF
    - Deep Semantics: compression, decompression
    - Syntax: VSAs (compression, decompression)
    - Architecture: Basal Ganglia/Thalamus/Cortex Loop

Review: What Did We Learn? (III)

- **Methods & Techniques**
  - *The Delay Network:*
    Efficiently compress past history into a vector; optimal recurrent update rule
  - *Spatial Semantic Pointers:*
    Bio-inspired representation of continuous spaces; e.g., maps, probabilities
  - *Machine Learning:*
    Unsupervised, supervised learning, gradient descent,
    least squares, nonnegative least squares, delta learning rule (PES)
  - *Signal Processing:*
    Fourier, Laplace transformation; computing optimal filters
  - *Dimensionality Reduction:*
    PCA/SVD; function bases; Hebbian learning/Oja learning rule

Review: What Did We Learn? (IV)

- **“Meta-Level Skills”**
  - *Solving Problems by Building a Signal Flow Graph:*
    Applications to Hardware design, differentiable computing
  - *Programming with Python/Numpy*
  - *Building Neural Networks using Nengo:*
    Can be applied to neuromorphic hardware (see above), cognitive modeling, machine learning

Summary

- **Party tricks *or* How to impress your mom:**
  - *Did you know you can't keep your eyes still in the dark?*
    They're controlled by the nuclei prepositus hypoglossi (NPH), part of the brainstem. I built one of those.
  - *Did you know people are building hardware that works like the brain?*
    It's called neuromorphic hardware, and uses spikes to communicate like the brain. I built some neural networks that can run on that hardware.
  - *I know how the world's largest brain model works.*
    In fact, I built some of the parts. Let me tell you about the working memory task.

Thank You!