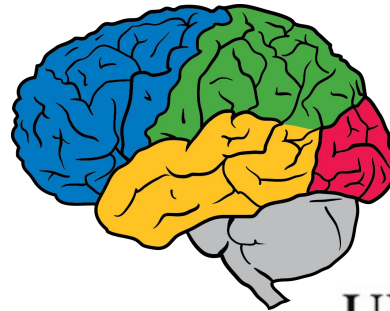


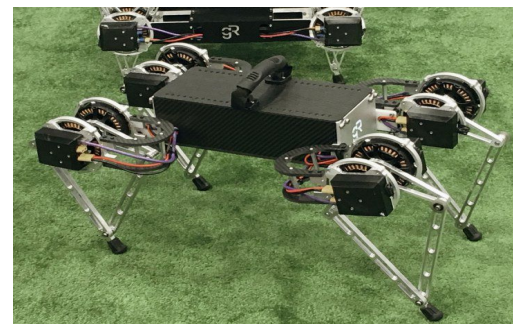
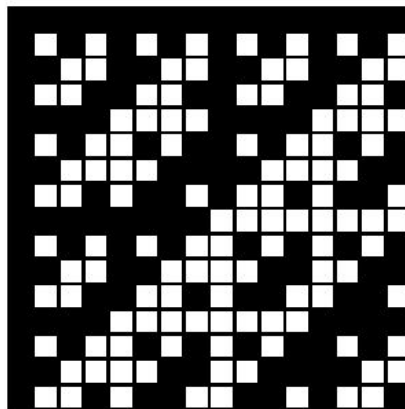
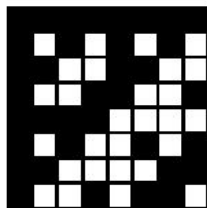
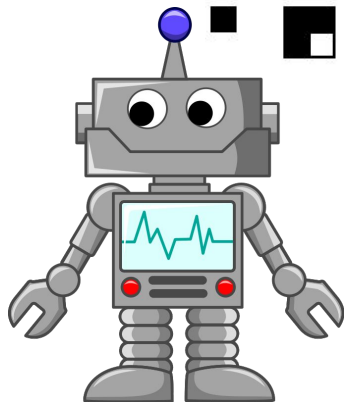
# Structure is all you need - learning compressed RL policies via gradient sensing



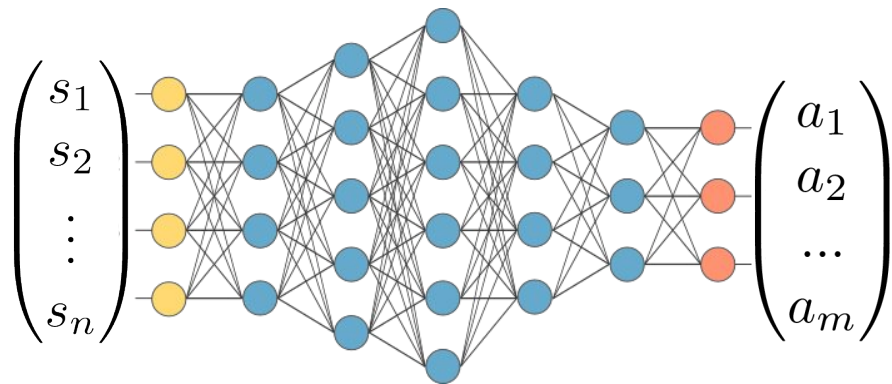
UNIVERSITY OF  
CAMBRIDGE

Google Brain Robotics: **Krzysztof Choromanski, Vikas Sindhwani**

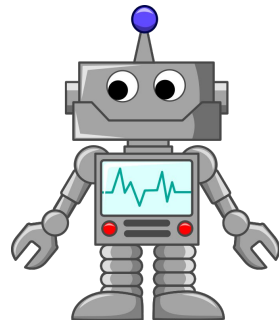
University of Cambridge and Alan Turing Institute: **Mark Rowland, Richard E. Turner, Adrian Weller**



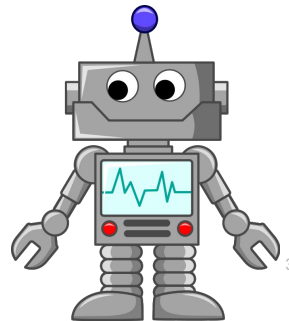
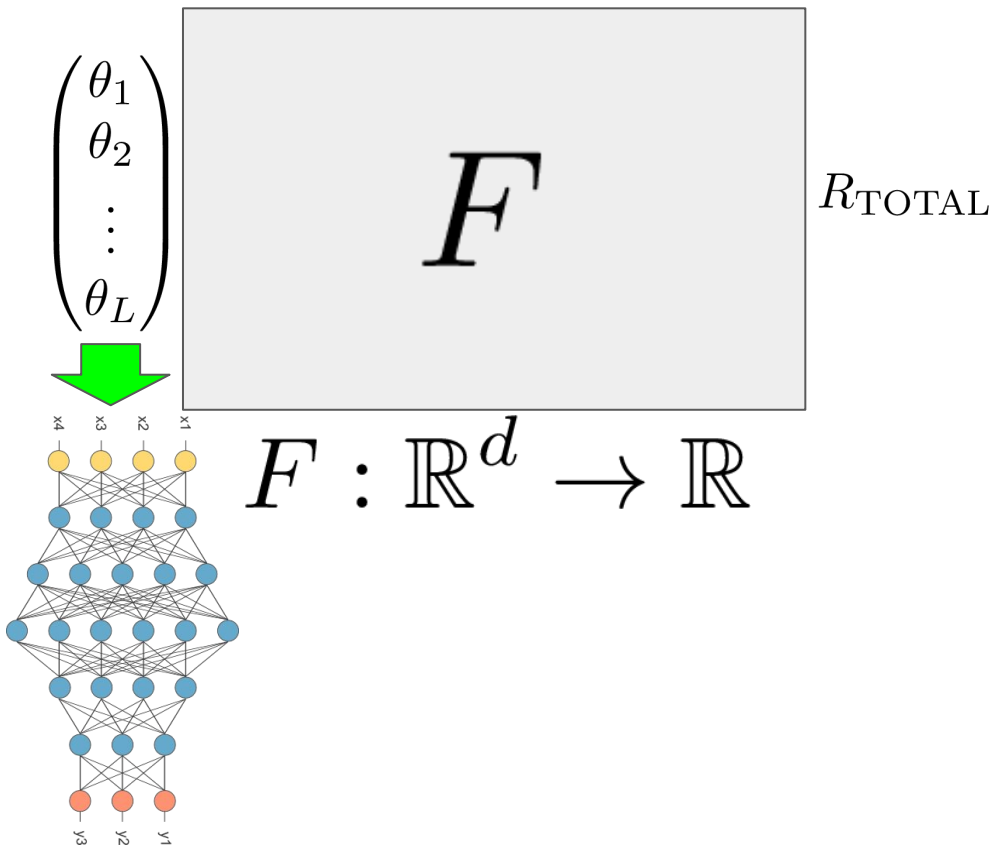
# Gradient sensing - blackbox approach to RL



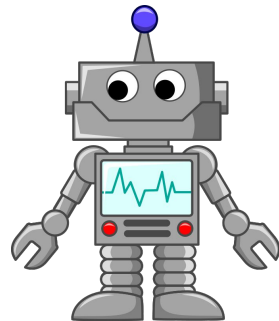
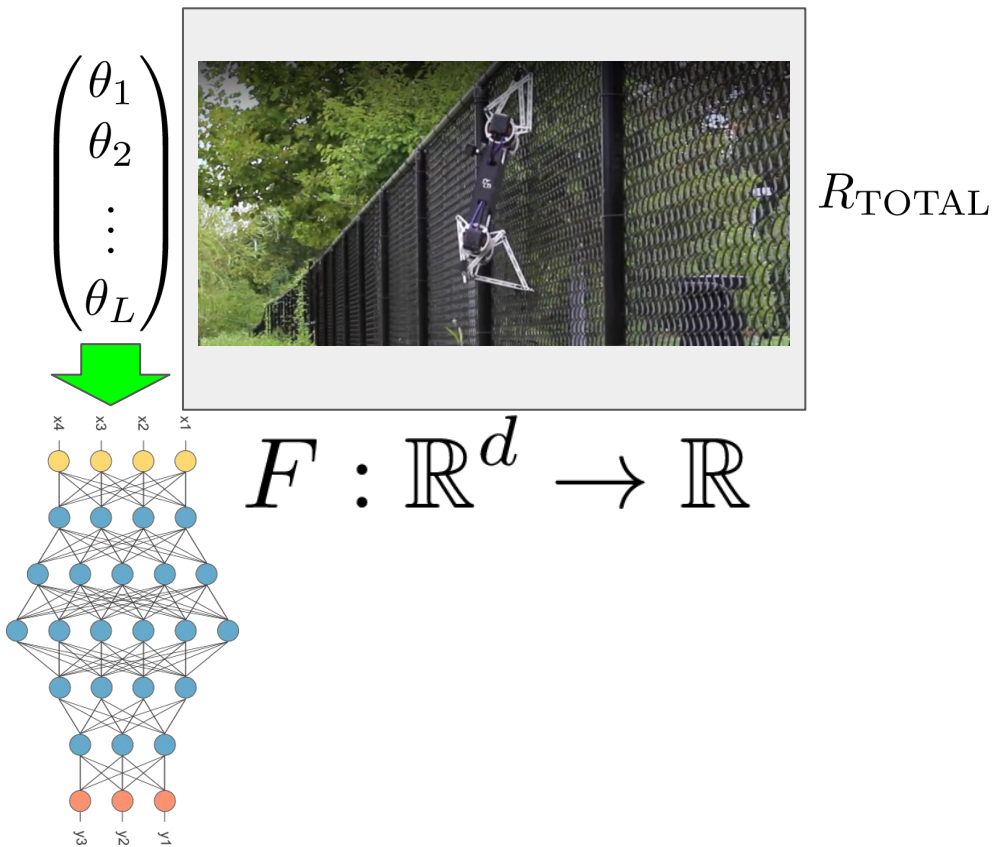
$$\pi : S \rightarrow A$$



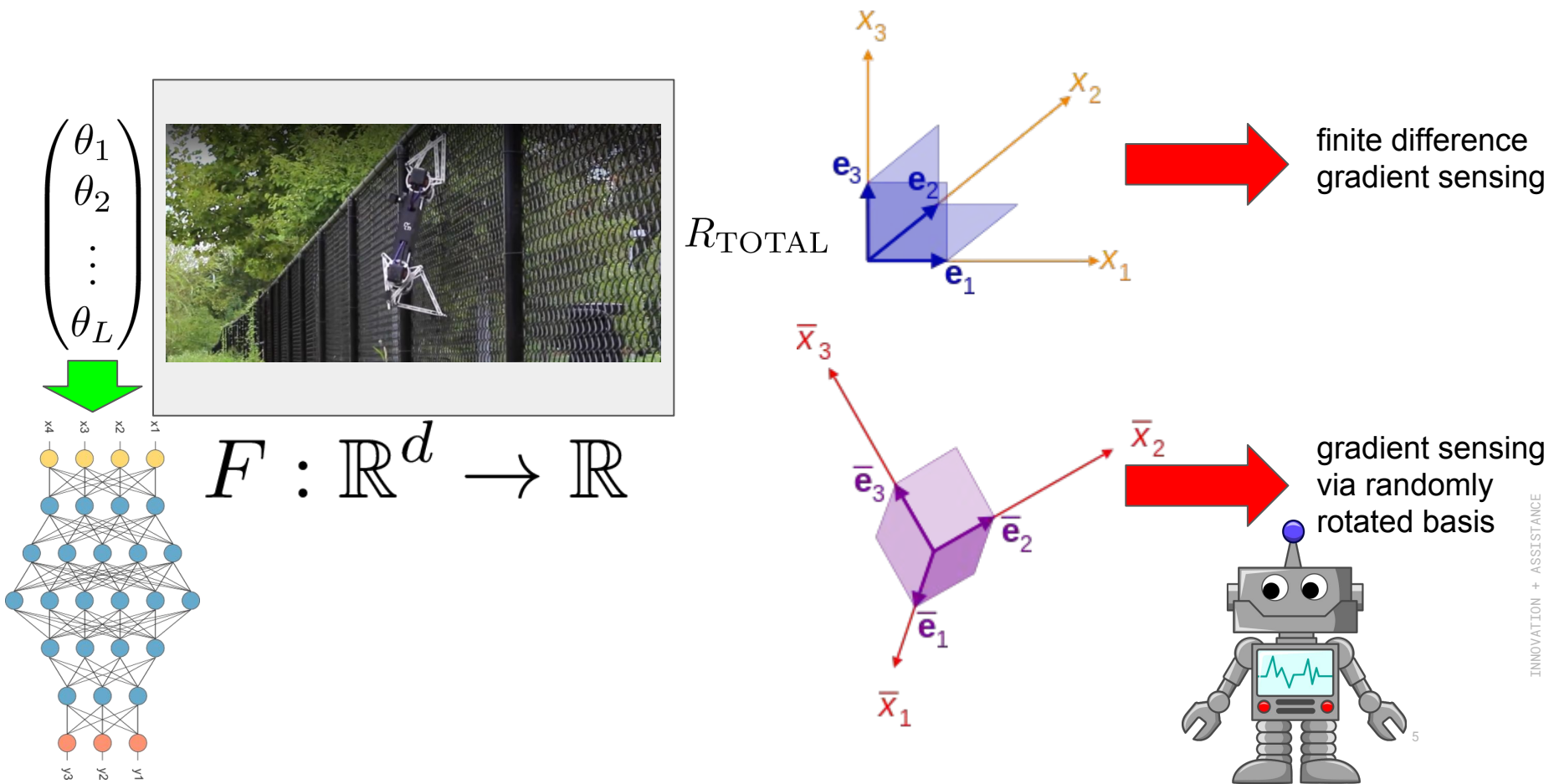
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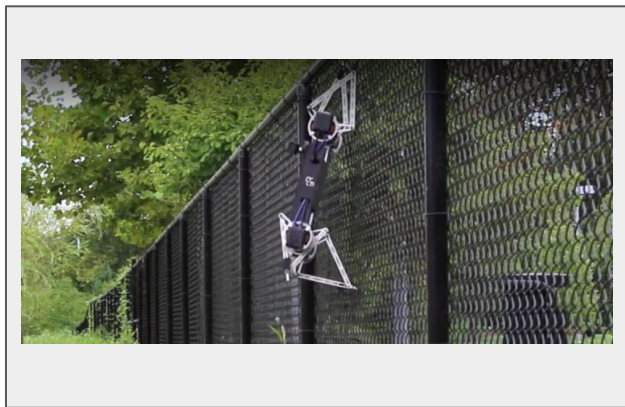


# Gradient sensing - blackbox approach to RL

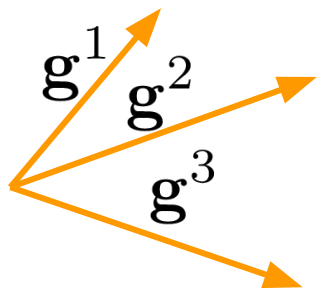


# Gradient sensing - blackbox approach to RL

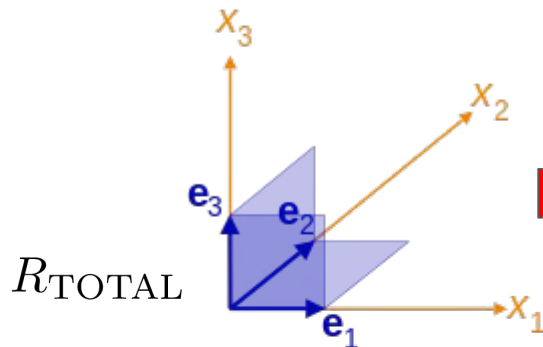
$$\begin{pmatrix} \theta_1 \\ \theta_2 \\ \vdots \\ \theta_L \end{pmatrix}$$



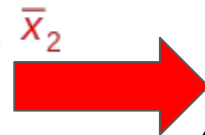
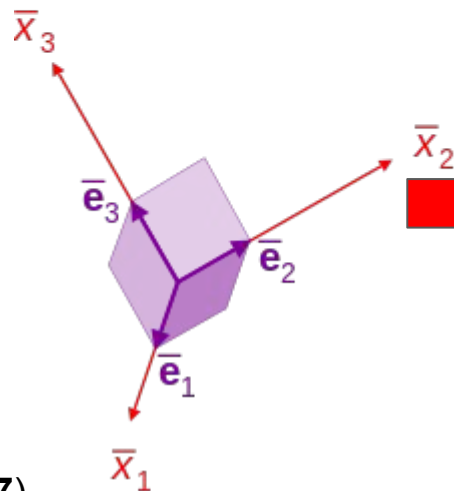
$$F : \mathbb{R}^d \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$$



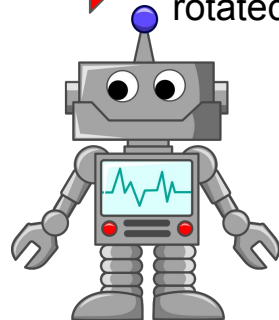
gradient sensing  
via independent  
gaussian vectors  
(Salimans et al. 2017)



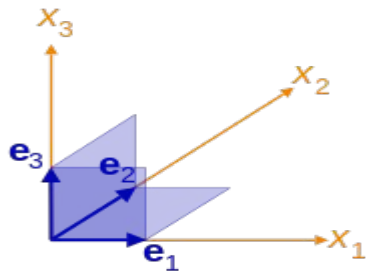
finite difference  
gradient sensing



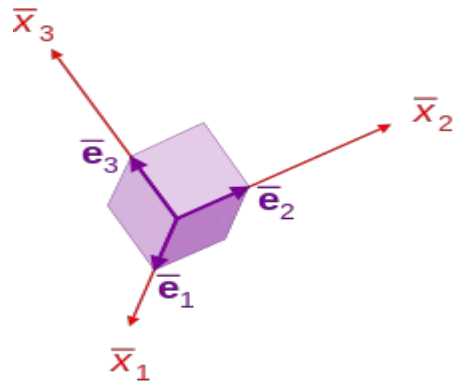
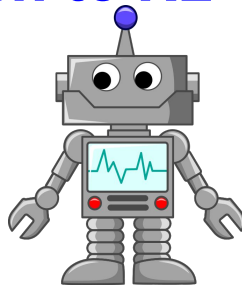
gradient sensing  
via randomly  
rotated basis



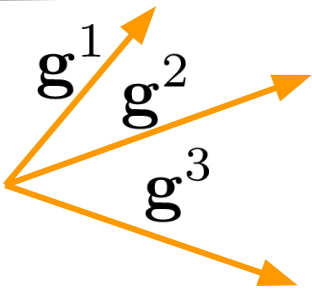
# Gradient sensing - blackbox approach to RL



$$\mathbf{P} = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 0 & \dots & 0 \\ 0 & 1 & \dots & 0 \\ \dots & \dots & \dots & \dots \\ 0 & 0 & \dots & 1 \end{pmatrix}$$



$$\mathbf{G}_{\text{ort}} = \begin{pmatrix} g_{1,1}^{\text{ort}} & g_{1,2}^{\text{ort}} & \dots & g_{1,n}^{\text{ort}} \\ g_{2,1}^{\text{ort}} & g_{2,2}^{\text{ort}} & \dots & g_{2,n}^{\text{ort}} \\ \dots & \dots & \dots & \dots \\ g_{m,1}^{\text{ort}} & g_{m,n}^{\text{ort}} & \dots & g_{m,n}^{\text{ort}} \end{pmatrix}$$



$$\mathbf{G} = \begin{pmatrix} g_{1,1} & g_{1,2} & \dots & g_{1,n} \\ g_{2,1} & g_{2,2} & \dots & g_{2,n} \\ \dots & \dots & \dots & \dots \\ g_{m,1} & g_{m,n} & \dots & g_{m,n} \end{pmatrix}$$

$$F : \mathbb{R}^d \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$$

**Towards smooth relaxations**

$$\max_{\mu \in \mathcal{P}(\mathbb{R}^d)} \mathbb{E}_{\theta \sim \mu} [F(\theta)]$$



family of probabilistic distributions on  $\mathbb{R}^d$

**Gaussian smoothings**

$$\max_{\theta \in \mathbb{R}^d} J(\theta) = \mathbb{E}_{\phi \sim N(\theta, \sigma^2 I)} [F(\phi)]$$

- infinitely differentiable objective (**Nesterov & Spokoiny, 2017**)
- optimal value lower-bounds  
That of the original problem

# Gradient sensing as a Monte-Carlo estimation

**ES-style gradient estimator (Salimans et al. 2017):**

$$\hat{\nabla}_N J(\theta) = \frac{1}{N\sigma} \sum_{i=1}^N F(\theta + \sigma\epsilon_i)\epsilon_i$$

used in many evolutionary strategies papers, no control variate

**Gradient estimator with antithetic pairs (Salimans et al. 2017):**

$$\hat{\nabla}_N J(\theta) = \frac{1}{2N\sigma} \sum_{i=1}^N (F(\theta + \sigma\epsilon_i)\epsilon_i - F(\theta - \sigma\epsilon_i)\epsilon_i)$$

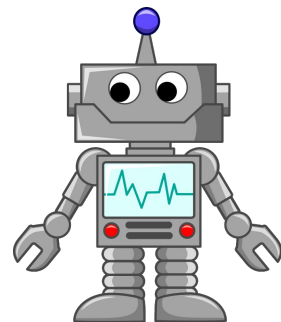
used for variance reduction

**FD-style gradient estimator:**

$$\hat{\nabla}_{\boxed{N}} J(\theta) = \frac{1}{N\sigma} \sum_{i=1}^N (F(\theta + \sigma\epsilon_i)\epsilon_i - F(\theta)\epsilon_i)$$

number of samples

randomized version of a standard finite difference method





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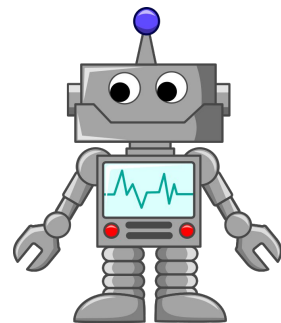
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number of samples

randomized version of a standard finite difference method

$$\hat{\nabla}_N^{\text{ort}} J(\theta) \rightarrow \{\epsilon_1^{\text{ort}}, \dots, \epsilon_N^{\text{ort}}\}$$



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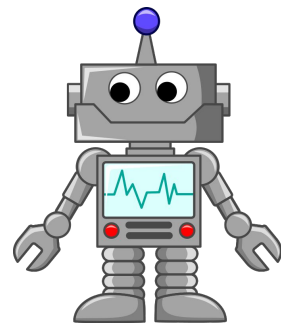
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number of samples

randomized version of a standard finite difference method

- all three estimators are unbiased
- empirically tested that none of them dominates the others

$$\hat{\nabla}_N^{\text{ort}} J(\theta) \rightarrow \{\epsilon_1^{\text{ort}}, \dots, \epsilon_N^{\text{ort}}\}$$



# Gradient sensing as a Monte-Carlo estimation

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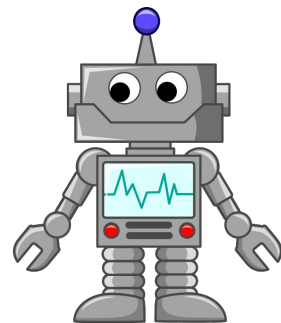
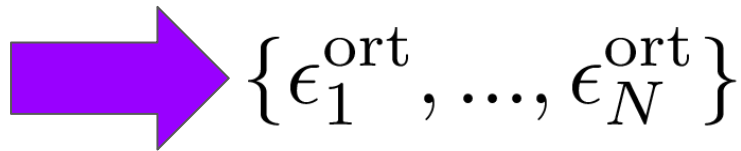
$$\hat{\nabla}_N J(\theta) = \frac{1}{2N\sigma} \sum_{i=1}^N (F(\theta + \sigma\epsilon_i)\epsilon_i - \boxed{F(\theta - \sigma\epsilon_i)\epsilon_i})$$

**FD-style gradient estimator:**

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number of  
samples

- all three estimators are unbiased
- empirically tested that none of them dominates the others
- how to learn optimal control variates ?



# Gradient sensing as a Monte-Carlo estimation

ES-style gradient estimator (Salimans et al. 2017):

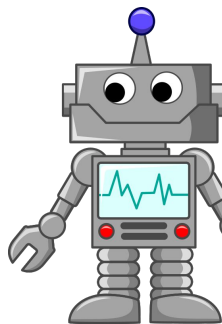
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$$\hat{\nabla}_N J(\theta) = \frac{1}{N\sigma} \sum_{i=1}^N (F(\theta + \sigma\epsilon_i)\epsilon_i - F(\theta)\epsilon_i)$$



Some recent success stories of structured random estimators (very biased selection !):

- “Initialization matters: Orthogonal Predictive State Recurrent Neural Networks”, *Choromanski, Downey, Boots* (to appear at **ICLR’18**)
- “Optimizing Simulations with Noise-Tolerant Structured Exploration”, *Choromanski, Iscen, Sindhvani, Tan, Coumans* (to appear at **ICRA’18**)
- “The Geometry of Random Features”, *Choromanski, Rowland, Sarlos, Sindhvani, Turner, Weller* (to appear at **AISTATS’18**)
- “The Unreasonable Effectiveness of Structured Random Orthogonal Embeddings”, *Choromanski, Rowland, Weller* (**NIPS’17**)
- “Structured adaptive and random spinners for fast machine learning computations”, *Bojarski, Choromanska, Choromanski, Fagan, Gouy-Pailler, Morvan, Sakr, Sarlos, Atif* (**AISTATS’17**)
- “Orthogonal Random Features”, *Yu, Suresh, Choromanski, Holtmann-Rice, Kumar* (**NIPS’16**)
- “Recycling Randomness with Structure for Sublinear time Kernel Expansion”, *Choromanski, Sindhvani* (**ICML’16**)
- “Binary embeddings with structured hashed projections”, *Choromanska, Choromanski, Bojarski, Jebara, Kumar, LeCun* (**ICML’16**)

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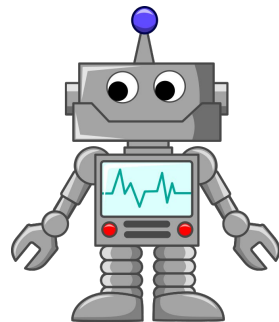
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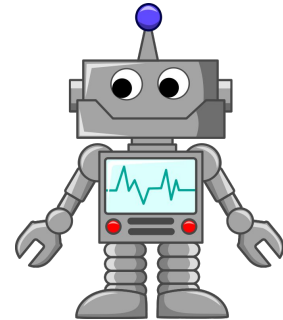
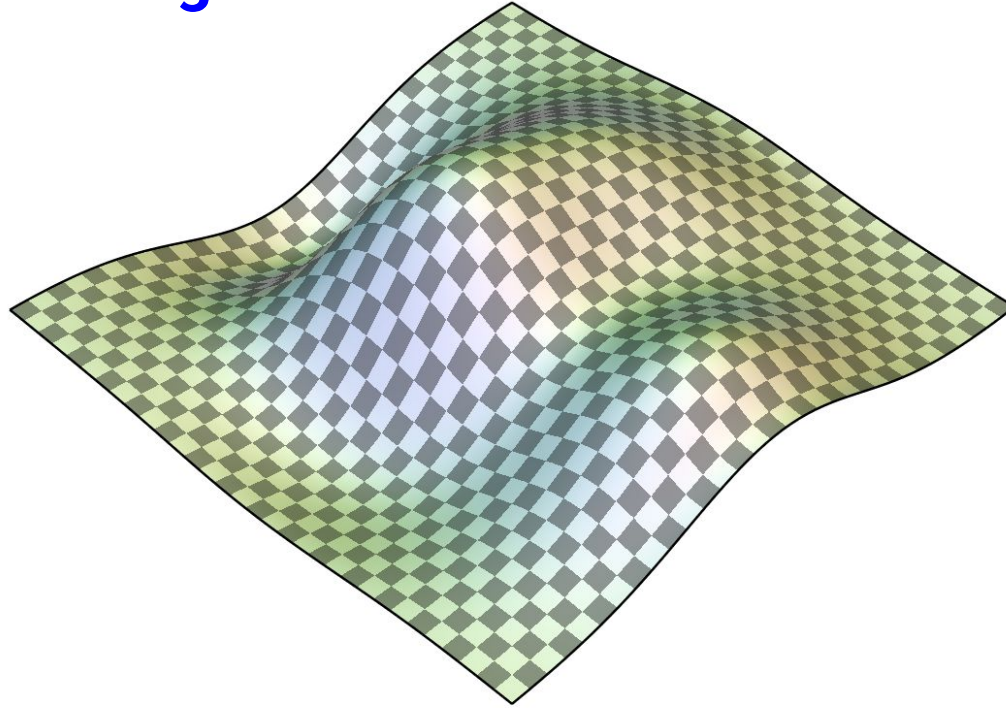
Theorem (Choromanski, Rowland, Sindhvani, Turner, Weller'18)

The orthogonal gradient estimator  $\hat{\nabla}_N^{\text{ort}} J(\theta)$  is unbiased and yields lower MSE than the unstructured estimator  $\hat{\nabla}_N J(\theta)$ , namely:

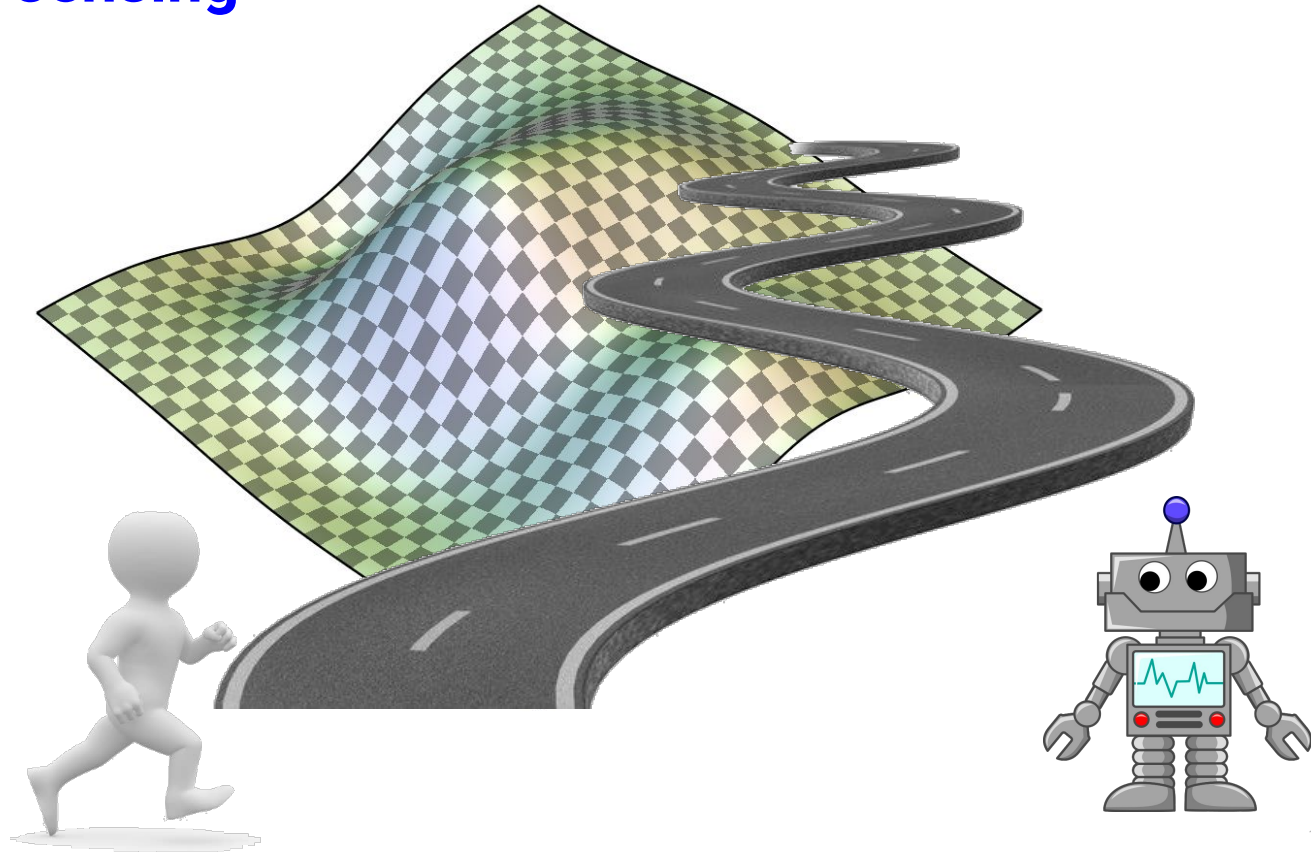
$$\begin{aligned} \text{MSE}(\hat{\nabla}_N^{\text{ort}} J(\theta)) &= \\ \text{MSE}(\hat{\nabla}_N J(\theta)) - \frac{N-1}{N} \|\nabla J(\theta)\|_2^2. \end{aligned}$$



# Efficiency of the orthogonal space exploration for gradient sensing

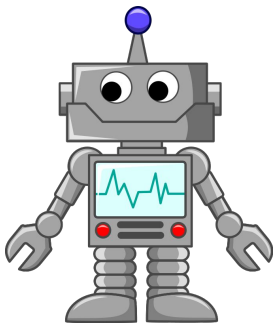
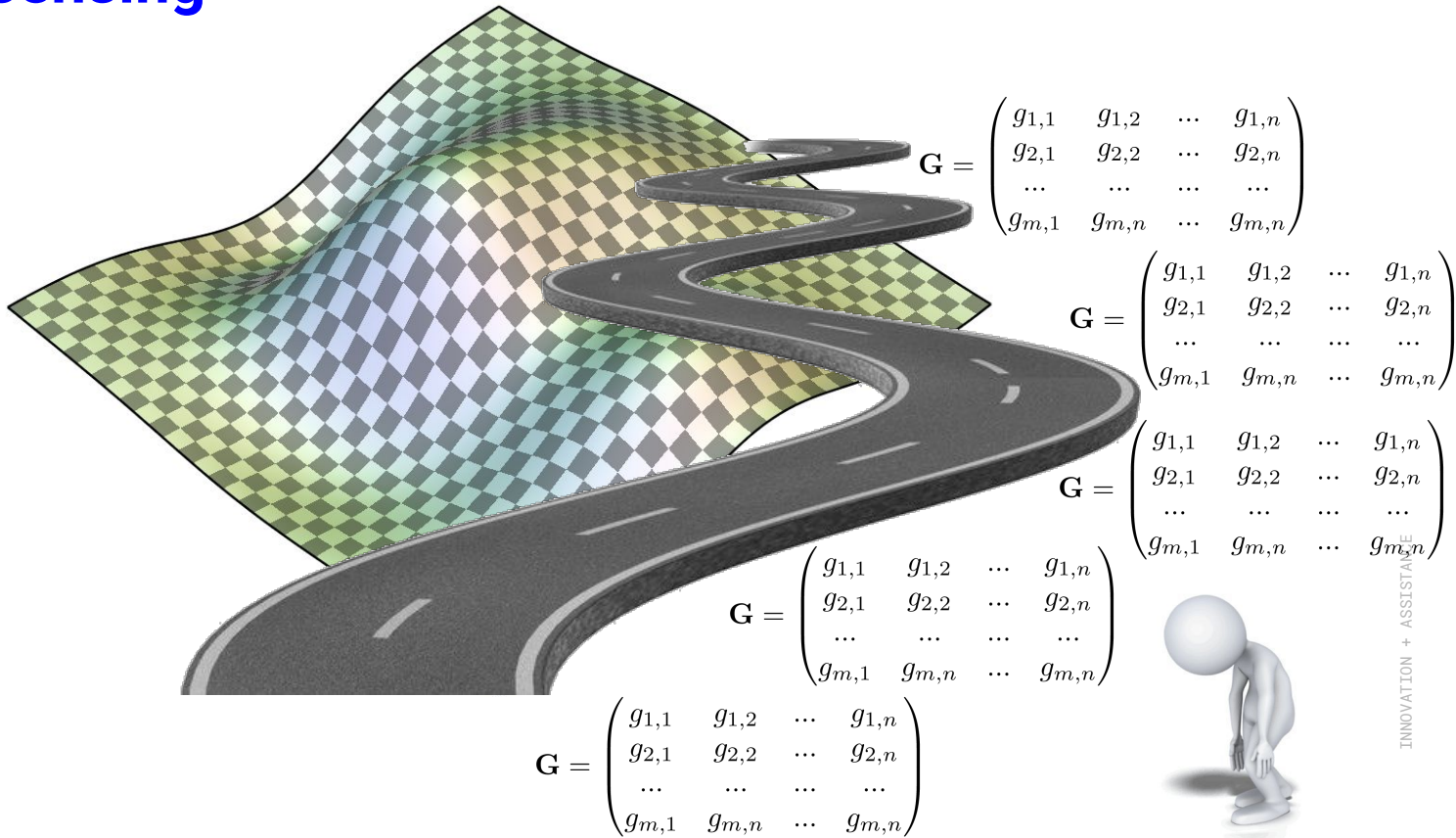


# Efficiency of the orthogonal space exploration for gradient sensing



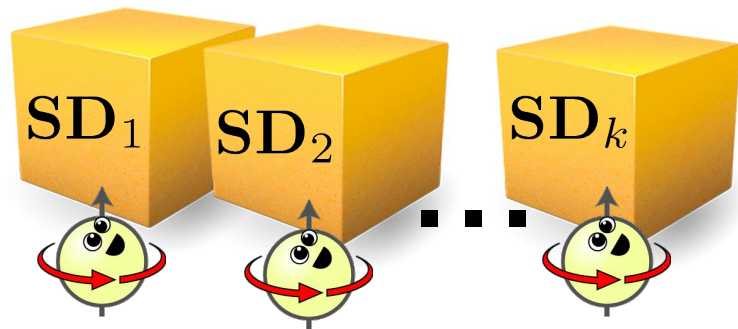


# Efficiency of the orthogonal space exploration for gradient sensing





# Efficiency of the orthogonal space exploration for gradient sensing - discrete space sensing

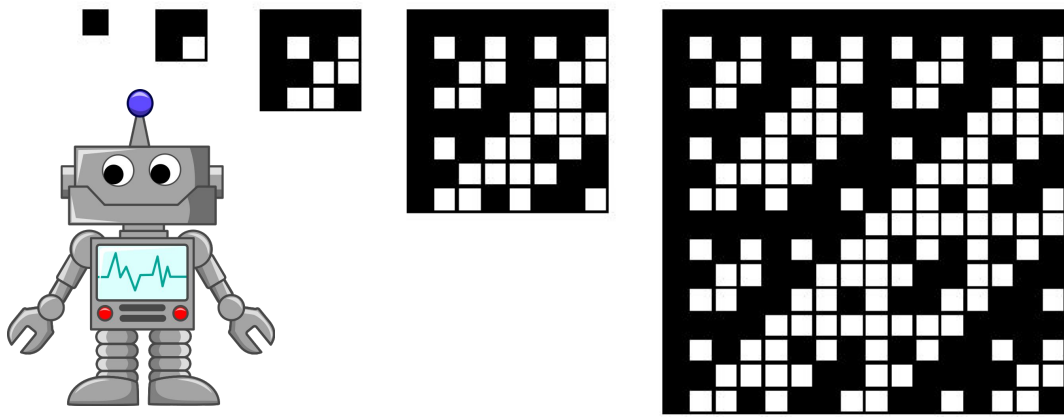


$$\mathbf{M}_{\mathcal{SR}}^{(k)} = \prod_{i=1}^k \mathbf{SD}_i(\mathcal{R}) \rightarrow |\lambda_i| = 1$$

$$\lambda_i \sim \text{Unif}\{-1, +1\}$$

$\mathbf{S}_0 \mathbf{S}_1 \mathbf{S}_2 \mathbf{S}_3$

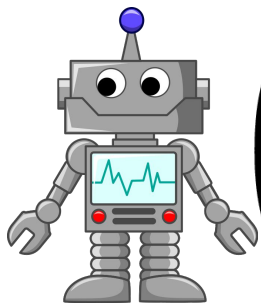
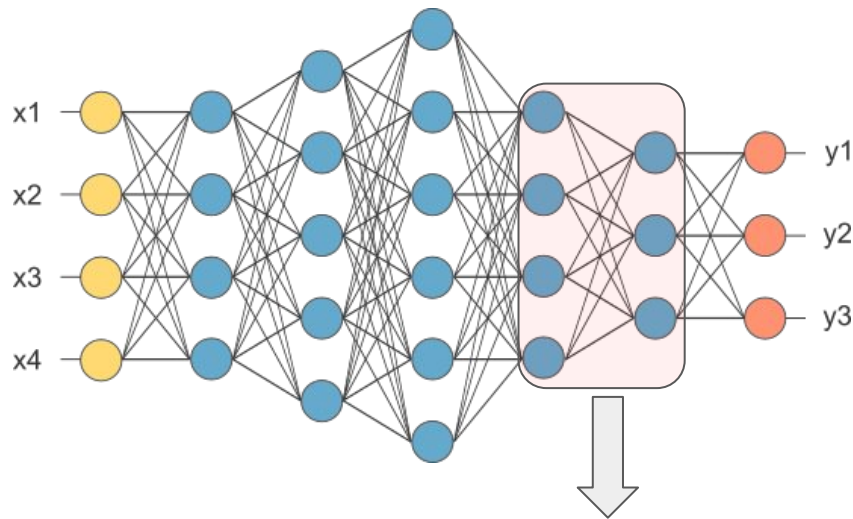
$\mathbf{S}_4$



$$\mathbf{D} = \begin{pmatrix} \lambda_1 & 0 & 0 & \cdots \\ 0 & \lambda_2 & 0 & \cdots \\ 0 & 0 & \lambda_3 & \cdots \\ \vdots & \vdots & \vdots & \ddots \end{pmatrix}$$


INNOVATION + ASSISTANCE

# Efficiency of the orthogonal space exploration for gradient sensing - structured neural networks



$$\begin{pmatrix} m_1 & m_2 & m_3 & m_4 \\ m_5 & m_1 & m_2 & m_3 \\ m_6 & m_5 & m_1 & m_2 \end{pmatrix}$$

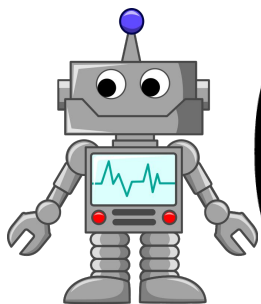
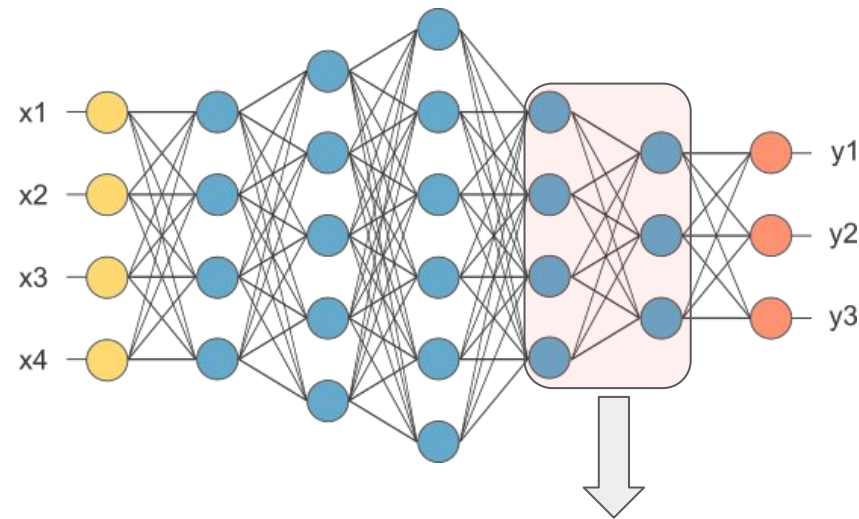
## Structured Matrices: Toeplitz



$$\begin{bmatrix} t_0 & t_{-1} & \dots & t_{-(n-1)} \\ t_1 & t_0 & \dots & \vdots \\ \vdots & \vdots & \ddots & t_{-1} \\ t_{n-1} & \dots & t_1 & t_0 \end{bmatrix}$$

- ▶  $n \times n$  matrix parameterized by  $2n - 1$  numbers: constant diagonal values
- ▶  $O(n \log n)$  matrix-vector products, Linear Systems
- ▶ Applications
  - Implements [One-dimensional Linear Convolutions](#)
  - Arises naturally in time series analysis and dynamical systems.
  - Related matrix: Hankel - antidiagonals are constant

# Efficiency of the orthogonal space exploration for gradient sensing - structured neural networks



$$\begin{pmatrix} m_1 & m_2 & m_3 & m_4 \\ m_5 & m_1 & m_2 & m_3 \\ m_6 & m_5 & m_1 & m_2 \end{pmatrix}$$

## Sylvester Displacement and Unit-Circulants

- ▶ The *Sylvester* displacement operator is defined by,

$$\nabla_{\mathbf{A}, \mathbf{B}}[\mathbf{M}] = \mathbf{A}\mathbf{M} - \mathbf{M}\mathbf{B}$$

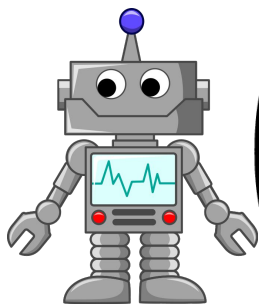
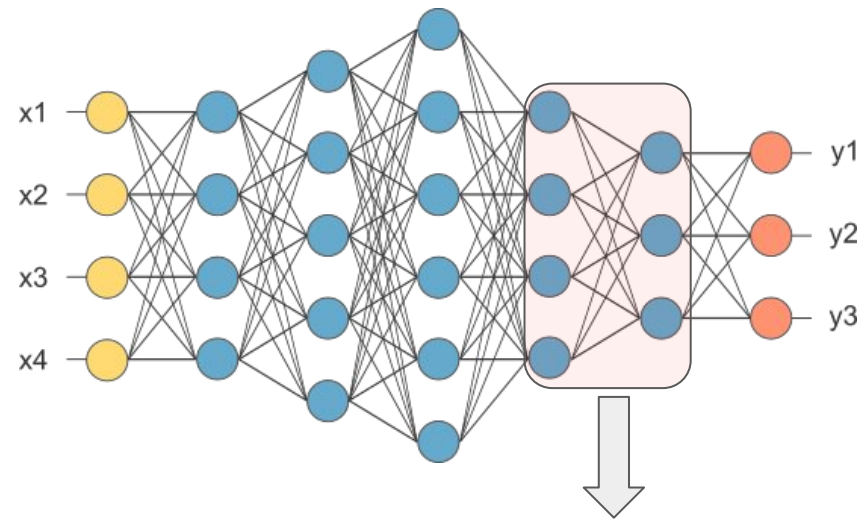
where  $\mathbf{A} \in \mathbb{R}^{m \times m}$ ,  $\mathbf{B} \in \mathbb{R}^{n \times n}$  are fixed *operator matrices*.

- ▶ Design displacement operators by carefully choosing  $\mathbf{A}, \mathbf{B}$ .
- ▶ Shift-and-Scale matrices are called *f*-unit Circulant matrices:

$$\mathbf{Z}_f = \begin{bmatrix} 0 & 0 & \dots & f \\ 1 & 0 & \dots & 0 \\ \vdots & \vdots & \ddots & \vdots \\ 0 & \dots & 1 & 0 \end{bmatrix}, \quad \mathbf{Z}_f \begin{pmatrix} v_1 \\ v_2 \\ v_3 \\ \vdots \\ v_n \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} f v_n \\ v_1 \\ v_2 \\ \vdots \\ v_{n-1} \end{pmatrix}$$

- $\mathbf{Z}_f^n = f\mathbf{I}$
- Upshifts with  $\mathbf{Z}_f^T$
- $\mathbf{Z}_f^{-1} = \mathbf{Z}_{f^{-1}}^T$

# Efficiency of the orthogonal space exploration for gradient sensing - structured neural networks



$$\begin{pmatrix} m_1 & m_2 & m_3 & m_4 \\ m_5 & m_1 & m_2 & m_3 \\ m_6 & m_5 & m_1 & m_2 \end{pmatrix}$$

$$\mathbf{A}_{\text{Toeplitz}} = \begin{pmatrix} g_0 & g_1 & g_2 & g_3 & g_4 \\ g_5 & g_0 & g_1 & g_2 & g_3 \\ g_6 & g_5 & g_0 & g_1 & g_2 \\ g_7 & g_6 & g_5 & g_0 & g_1 \\ g_8 & g_7 & g_6 & g_5 & g_0 \end{pmatrix}$$

$$\mathcal{G}_{i,i+4} = \{1, 5\}$$

$$\mathcal{G}_{i,i+3} = \{1, 4\}, \{2, 5\}$$

$$\mathcal{G}_{i,i+2} = \{1, 3\}, \{3, 5\}, \{2, 4\}$$

$$\mathcal{G}_{i,i+1} = \{1, 2\}, \{2, 3\}, \{3, 4\}, \{4, 5\}$$

**Very Low-displacement Rank Property**

Structured Matrix $\mathbf{M}$	$\mathbf{A}$	$\mathbf{B}$	$\text{rank}(\nabla_{\mathbf{A}, \mathbf{B}}[\mathbf{M}])$
Toeplitz and its inverse	$\mathbf{Z}_1$	$\mathbf{Z}_{-1}$	$\leq 2$
Hankel and its inverse	$\mathbf{Z}_1^T$	$\mathbf{Z}_0^T$	$\leq 2$
Toeplitz + Hankel	$\mathbf{Z}_0 + \mathbf{Z}_0^T$	$\mathbf{Z}_0 + \mathbf{Z}_0^T$	$\leq 4$
Vandermonde $V(\mathbf{v})$	$\text{diag}(\mathbf{v})$	$\mathbf{Z}_0$	$\leq 1$
Inverse of Vandermonde i.e. $V(\mathbf{v})^{-1}$	$\mathbf{Z}_0$	$\text{diag}(\mathbf{v})$	$\leq 1$
Transpose of Vandermonde i.e. $V(\mathbf{v})^T$	$\mathbf{Z}_0^T$	$\text{diag}(\mathbf{v})$	$\leq 1$
Cauchy $\mathbf{C}(\mathbf{s}, \mathbf{t})$	$\text{diag}(\mathbf{s})$	$\text{diag}(\mathbf{t})$	$\leq 1$
Inverse of Cauchy i.e. $\mathbf{C}(\mathbf{s}, \mathbf{t})^{-1}$	$\text{diag}(\mathbf{t})$	$\text{diag}(\mathbf{s})$	$\leq 1$

# Experimental results: orthogonal blackbox gradient sensing for low-dimensional problems

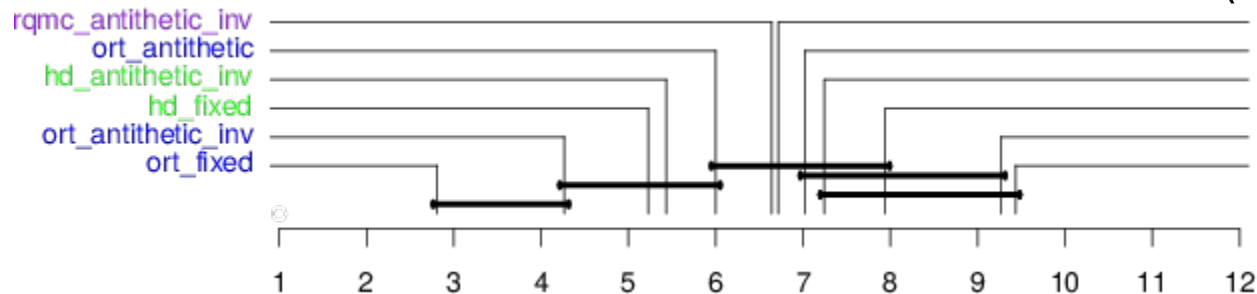
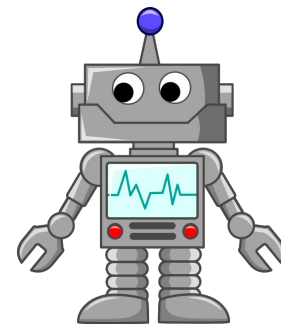
DFO benchmarking suite,  
More & Wild (2009)

53 different optimization problems, four settings:

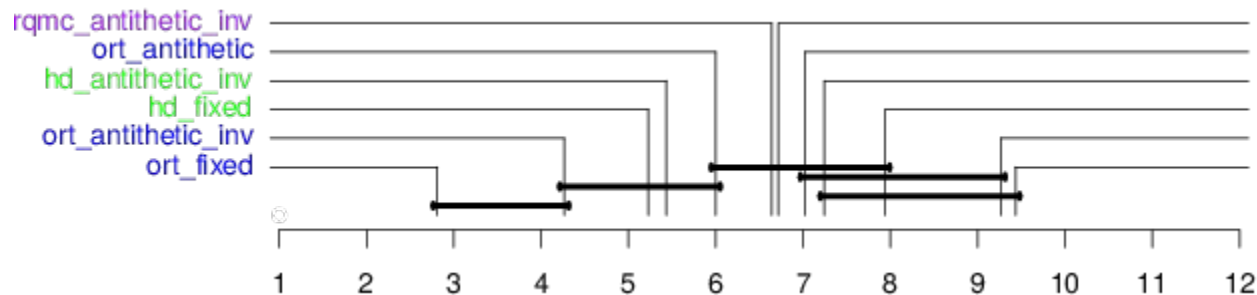
- stochastic
- deterministic noise
- smooth problems
- non-differentiable problems



- we compute average ranking of the methods against each other in terms of quality of final objective value in each optimisation task
- we then compare these average rankings using multiple hypothesis testing as described in **DemSar (2006)**



stochastic noise



deterministic noise

# Experimental results: orthogonal blackbox gradient sensing for low-dimensional problems

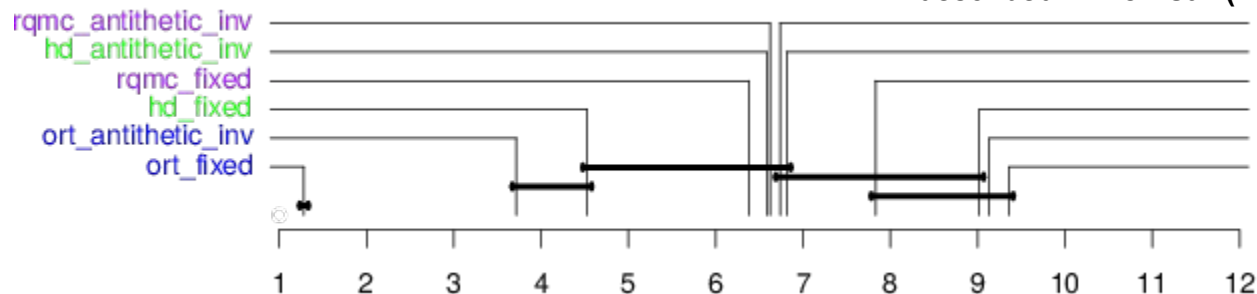
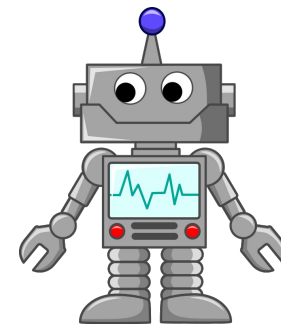
DFO benchmarking suite,  
More & Wild (2009)

53 different optimization problems, four settings:

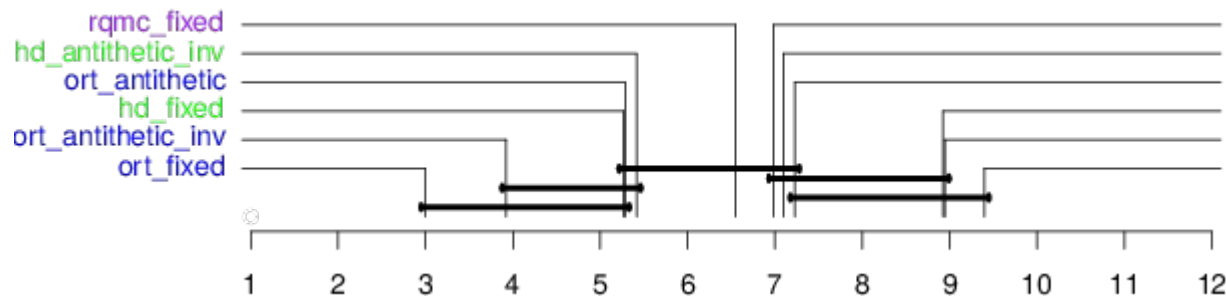
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smooth problems



nondifferentiable problems



# Experimental results: learning compressed policies for RL tasks

## Optimization setting:

- AdamOptimizer with  $\alpha = 0.01$  and  $\sigma = 0.02$
- no heuristics used (e.g no fitness shaping)
- Base compressed setting: two hidden layers of size **h=41**

## Tested variants:

- structured architectures + structured exploration (**STST**)
- structured architectures + unstructured exploration (**STUN**)
- unstructured architectures + unstructured exploration (**UNUN**)

## Structured space exploration strategies:

- Gaussian orthogonal matrices
- matrices HD (k=1); 256- or 512-dimensional parameter vectors

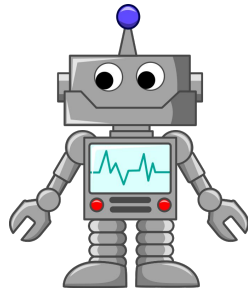
— solved by STST

## Tested environments:

- Swimmer
- Ant
- HalfCheetah
- Hopper
- Humanoid
- Walker2d
- Pusher
- Reacher
- Striker
- Thrower
- ContMountainCar
- Pendulum
- Minitaur walking



Distributed TF training on at most **400** machines



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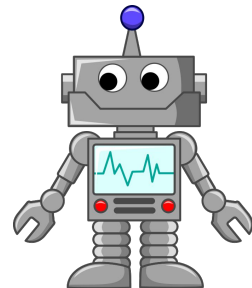
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	GaussOrt	Hadamard	baseline
Swimmer	253	253	1408
Ant	362	254	4896
HalfCheetah	266	254	2174
Hopper	257	254	1536
Humanoid	636	510	13664
Walker2d	266	254	1824
Pusher	273	255	2048
Reacher	256	256	1189
Striker	273	255	2048
Thrower	273	255	2048
ContMountCar	246	246	1184
Pendulum	247	247	1216
Minitaur	279	256	2240

Learns reward  
**1842**



Distributed TF training on  
at most **400** machines

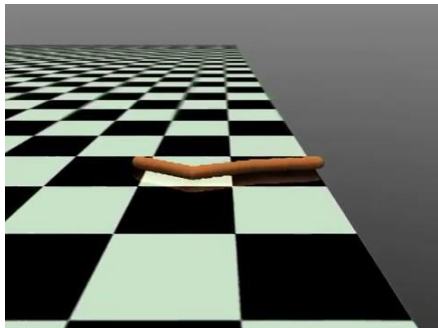


**279**-dimensional neural  
network learns reward  
**4.83** for rollouts of length  
**500**

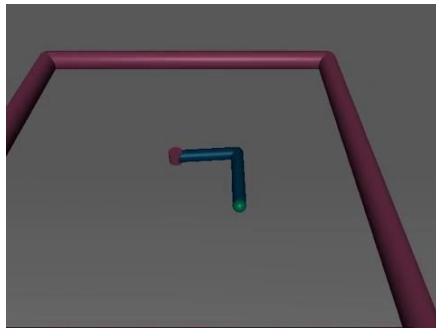




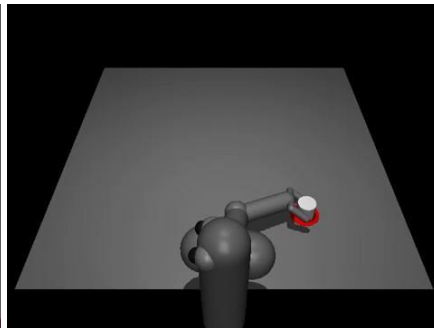
# Experimental results: learning compressed policies for RL tasks



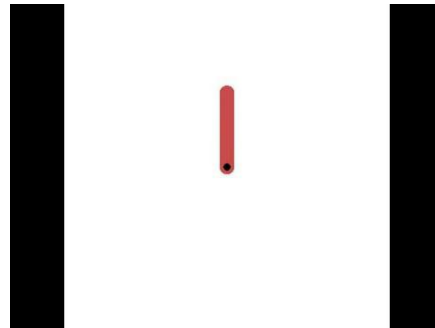
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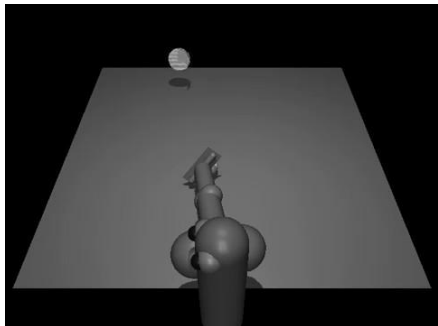
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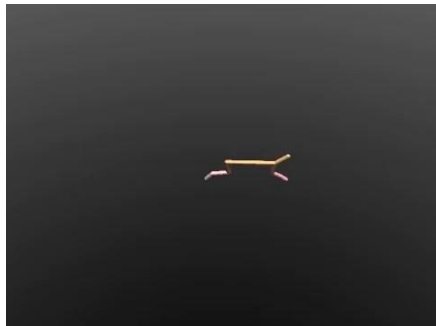
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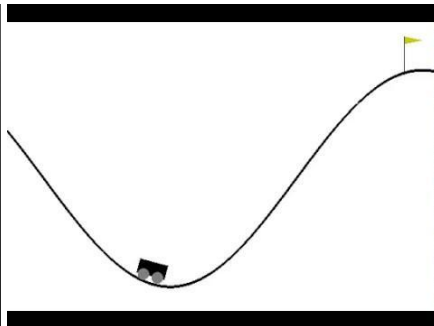
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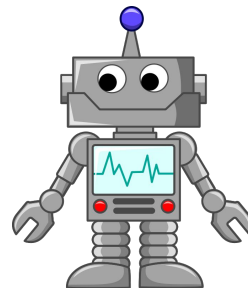
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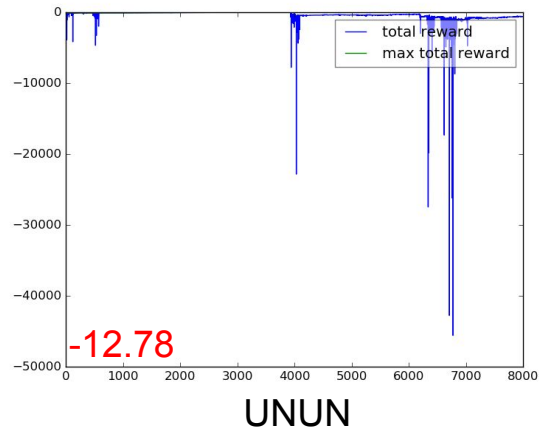
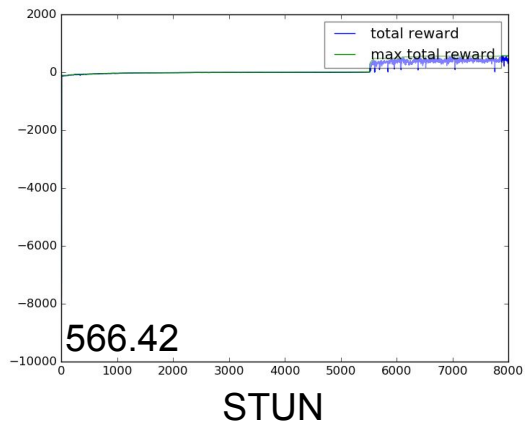
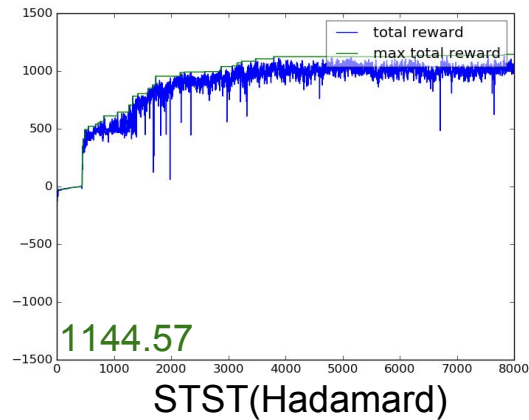
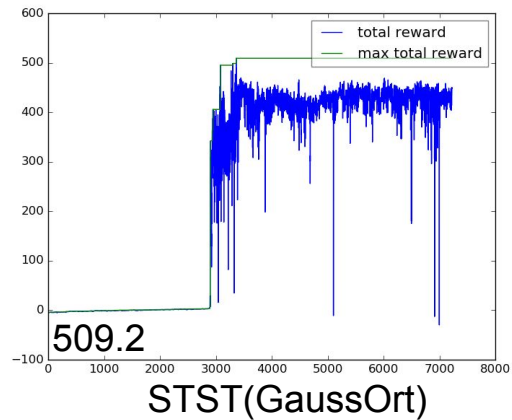
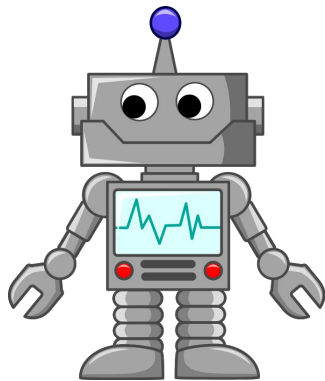
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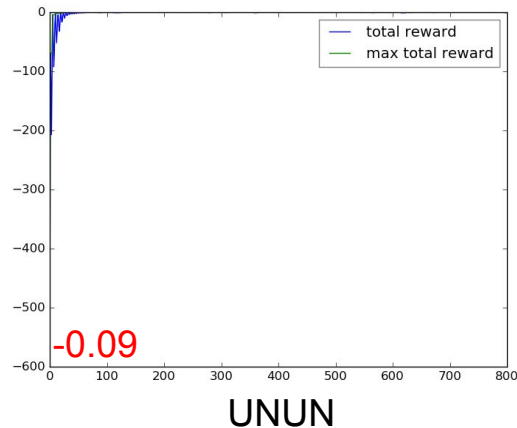
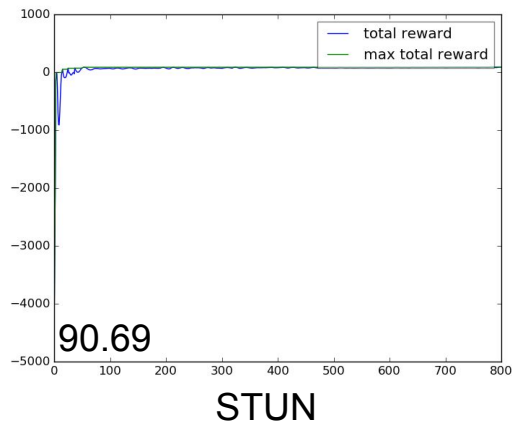
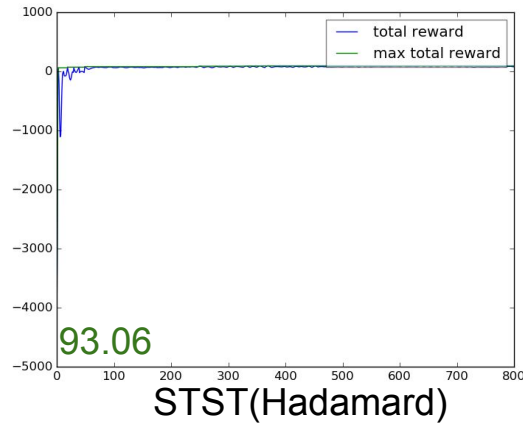
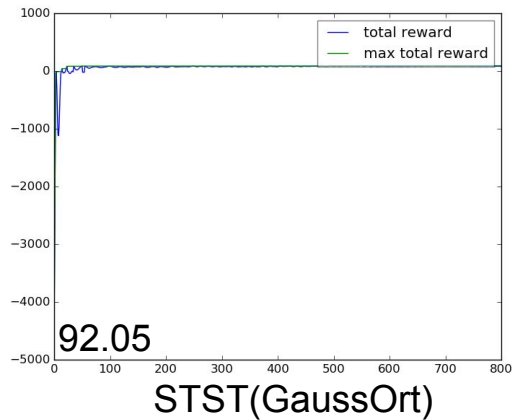
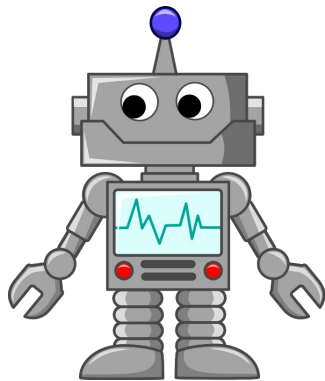
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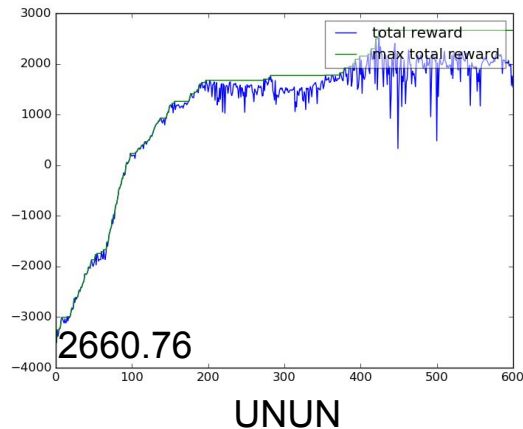
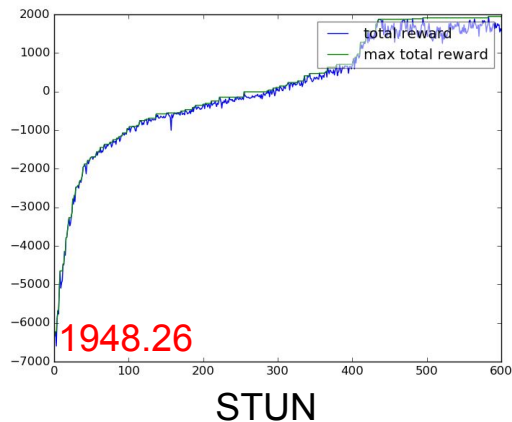
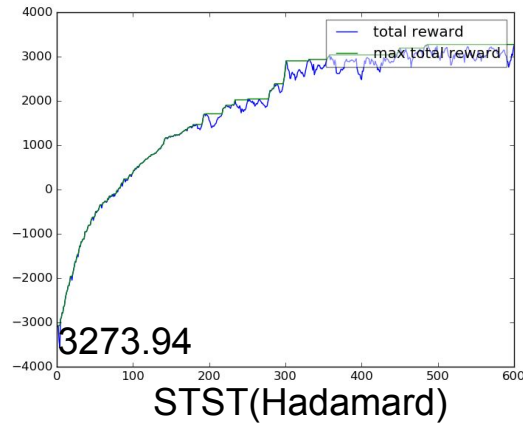
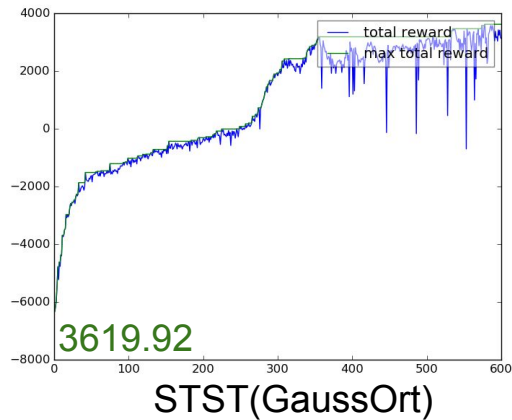
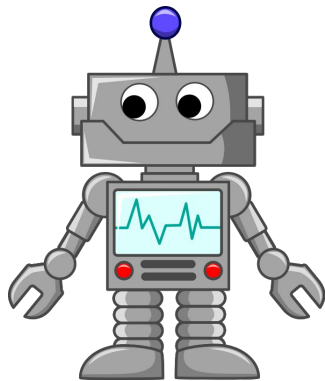
# Experimental results: learning curves - Ant



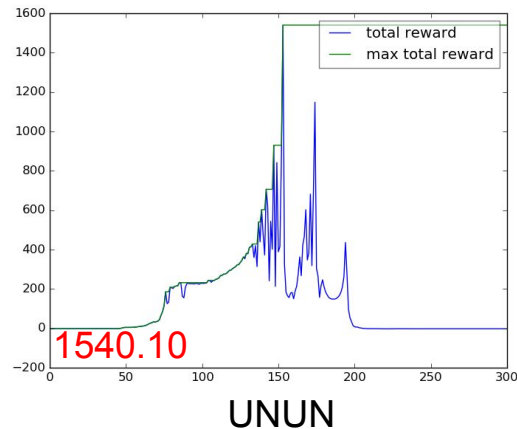
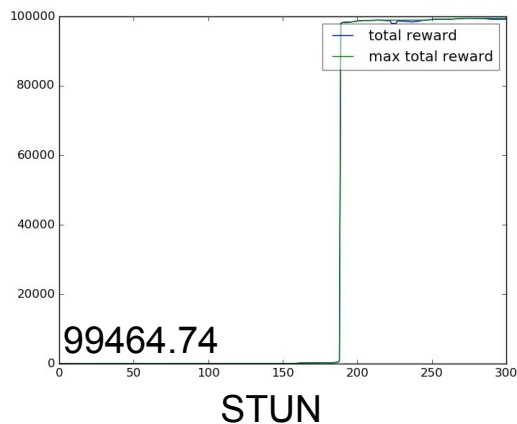
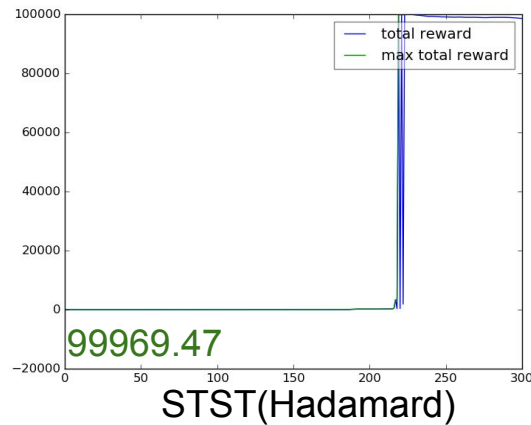
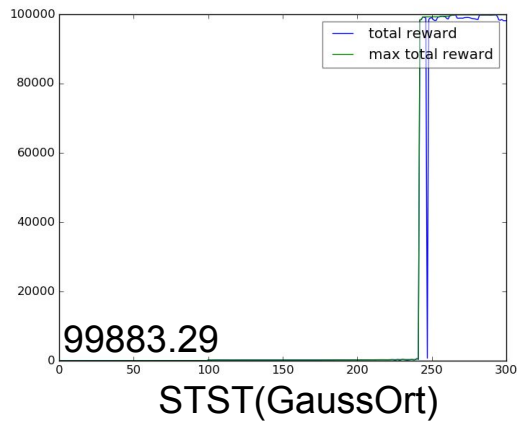
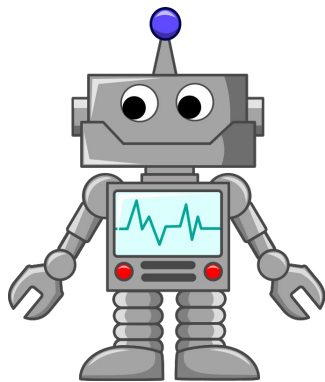
# Experimental results: learning curves - Cont. Mountain Car



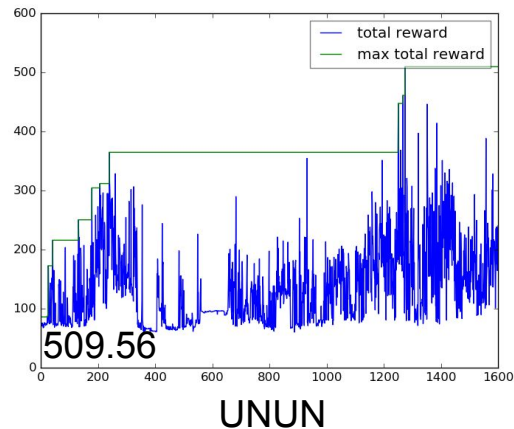
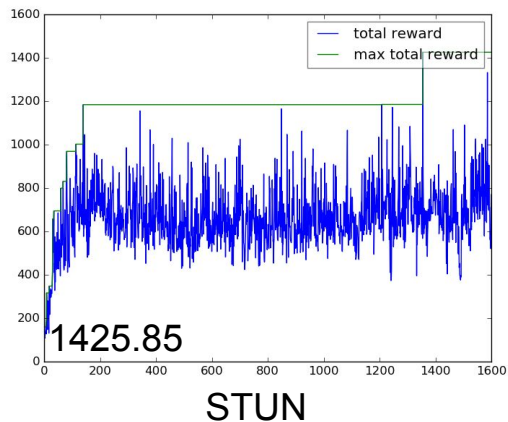
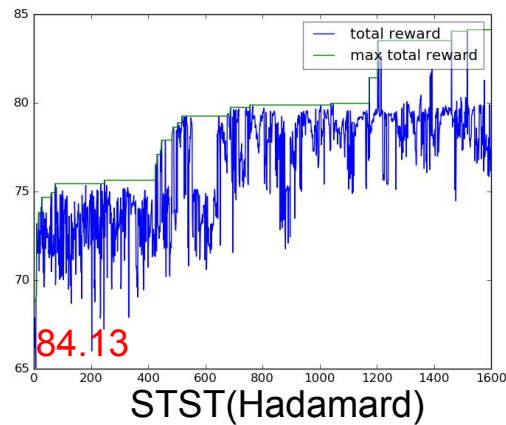
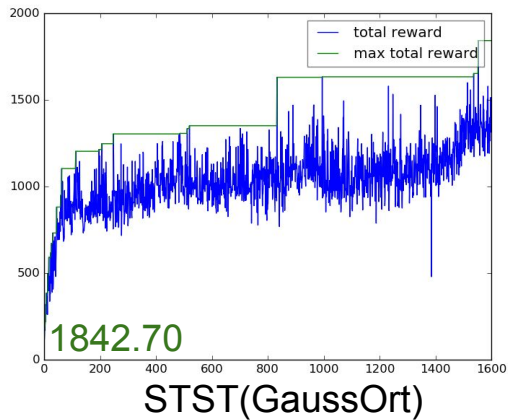
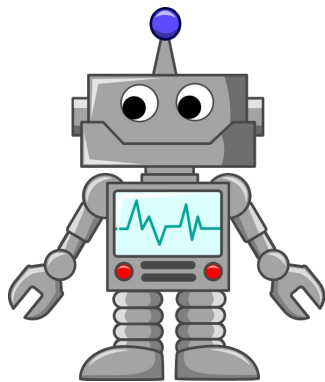
# Experimental results: learning curves - HalfCheetah



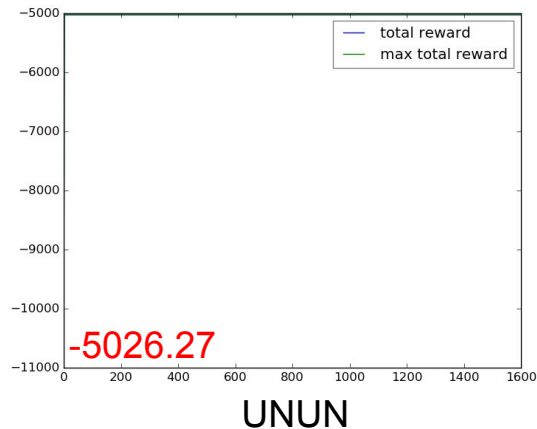
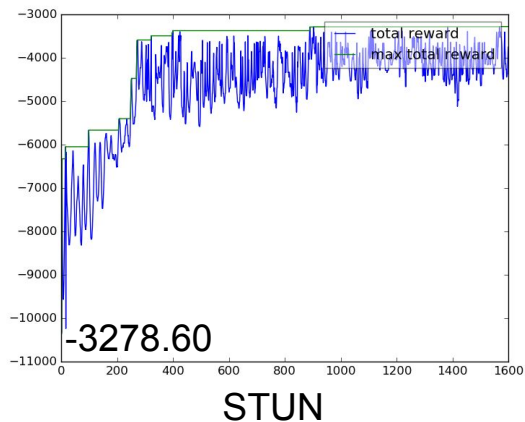
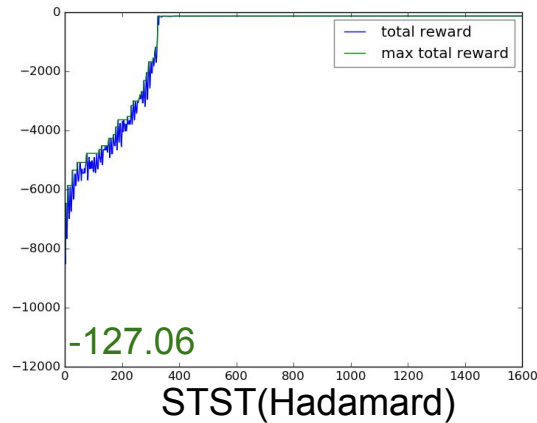
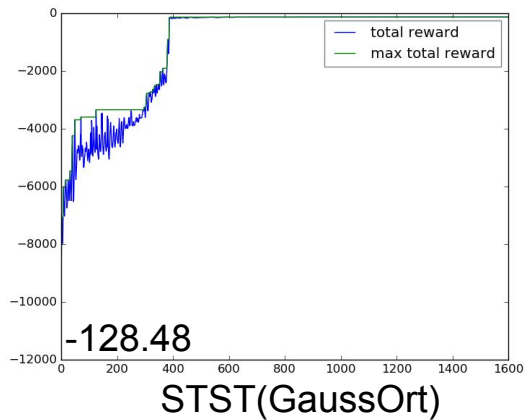
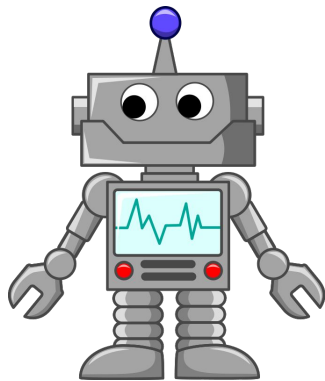
# Experimental results: learning curves - Hopper



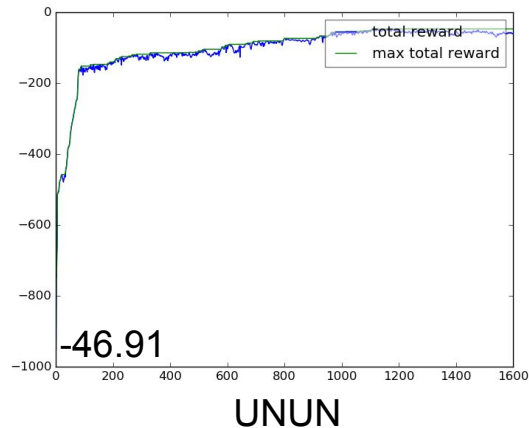
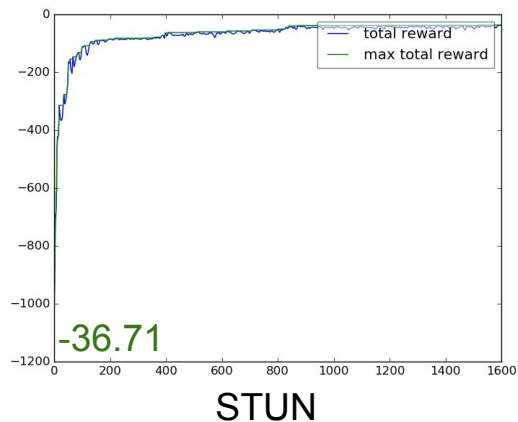
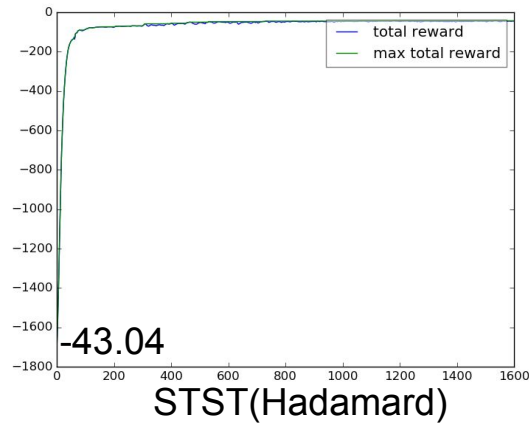
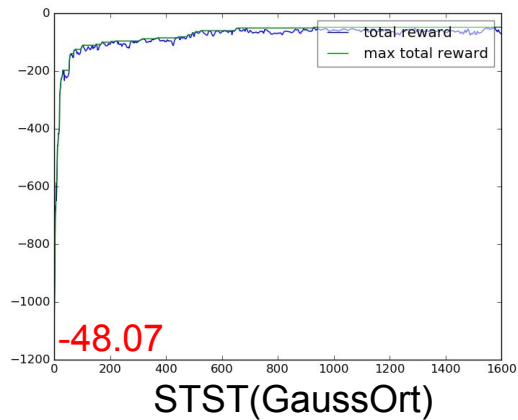
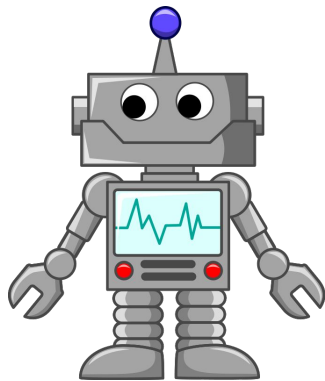
# Experimental results: learning curves - Humanoid



# Experimental results: learning curves - Pendulum

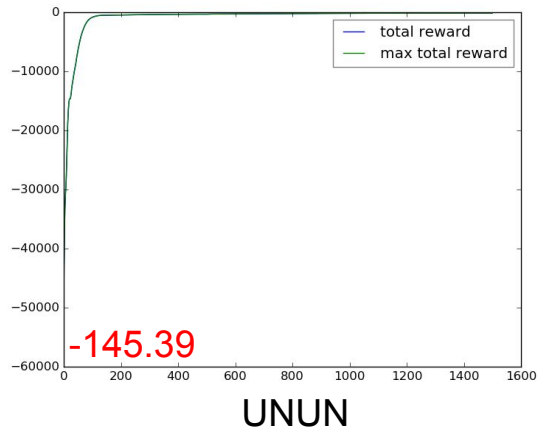
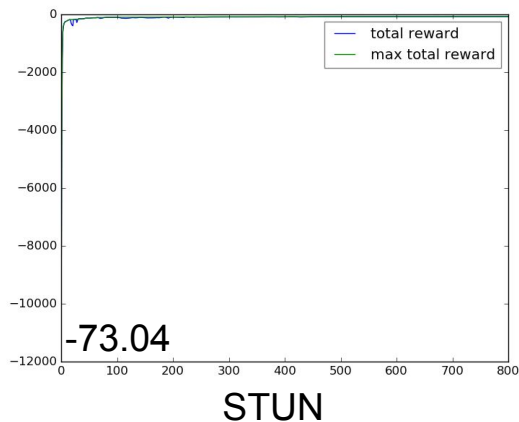
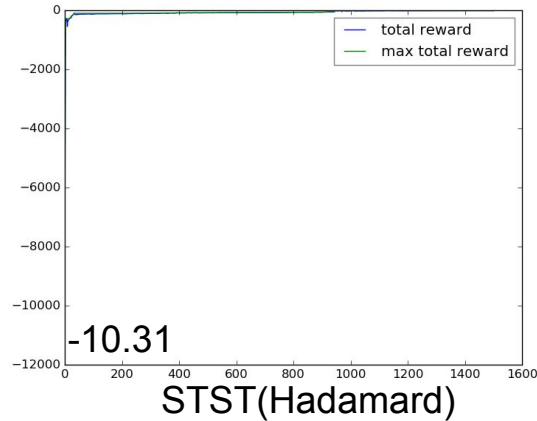
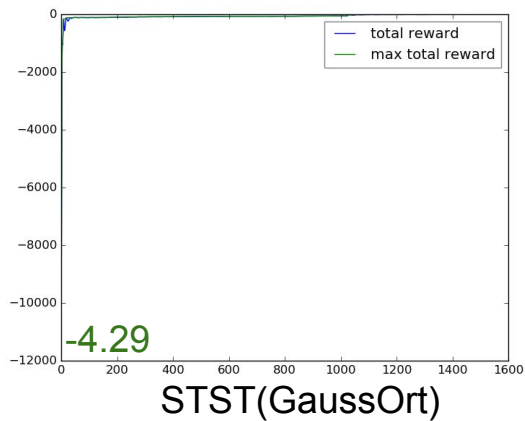
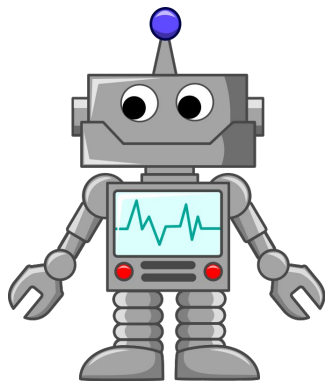


# Experimental results: learning curves - Pusher

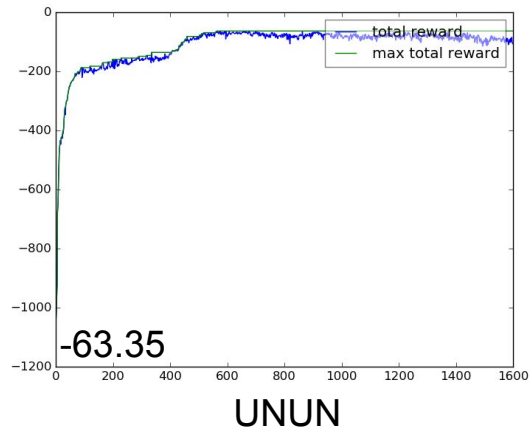
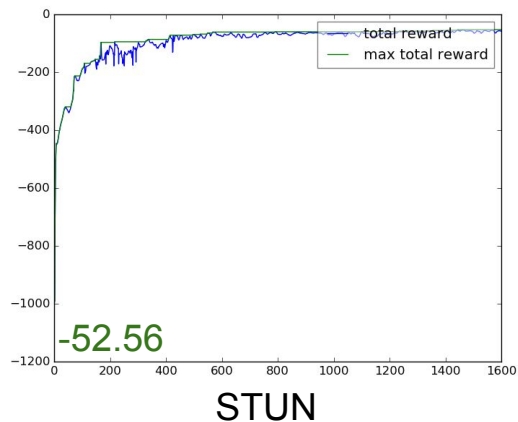
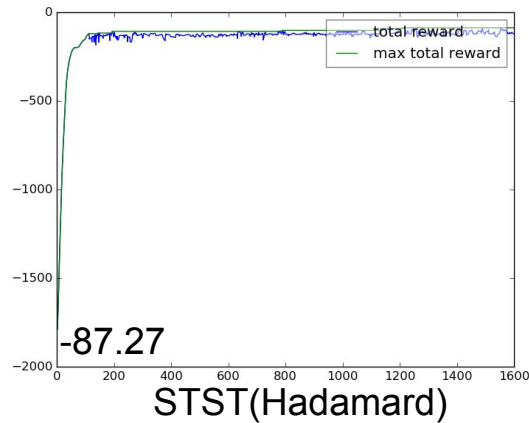
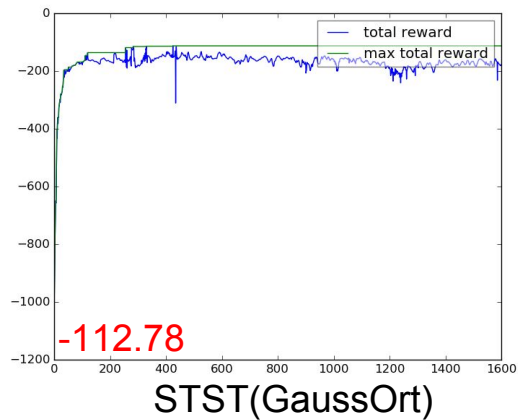
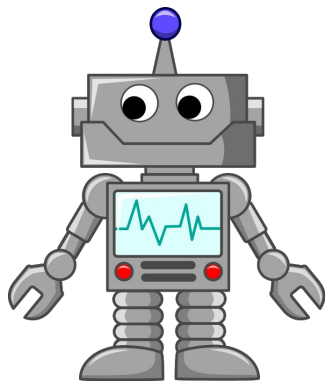




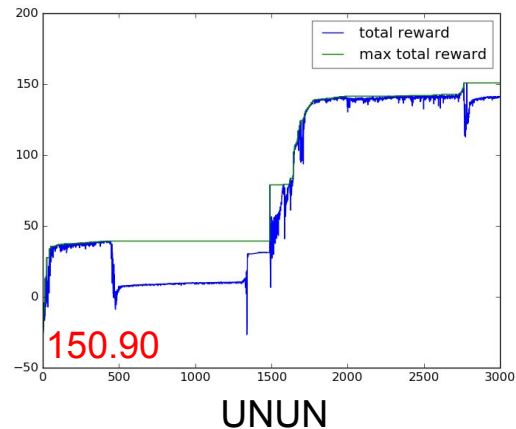
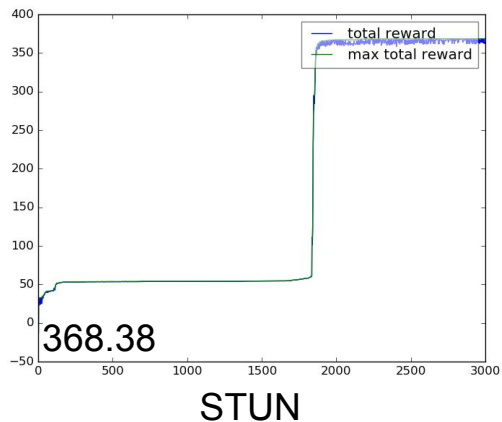
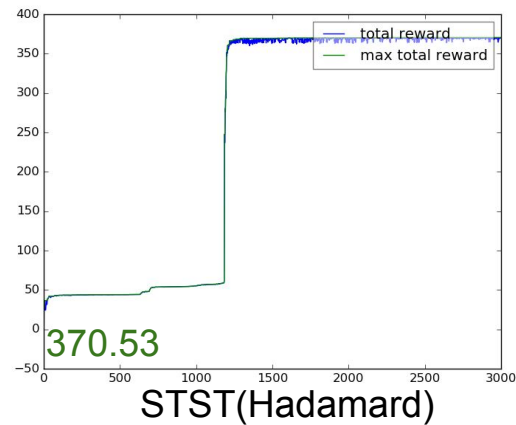
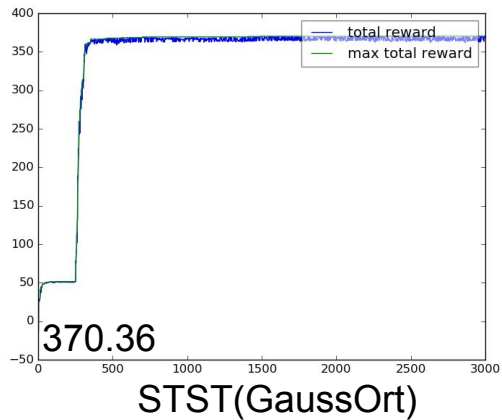
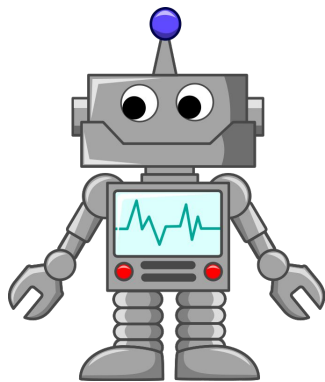
# Experimental results: learning curves - Reacher



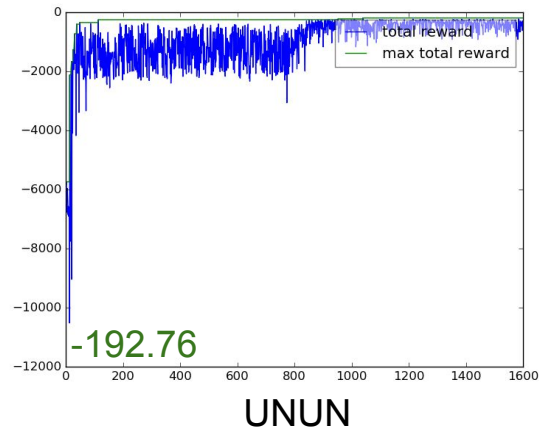
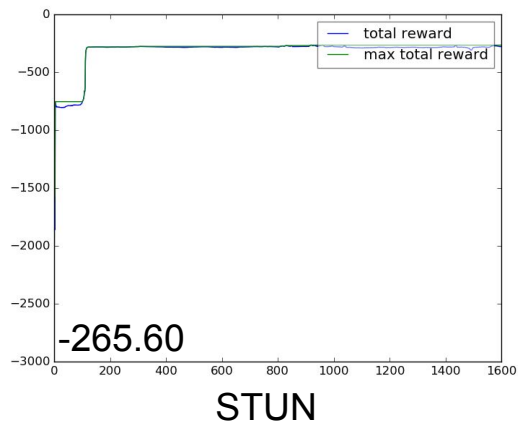
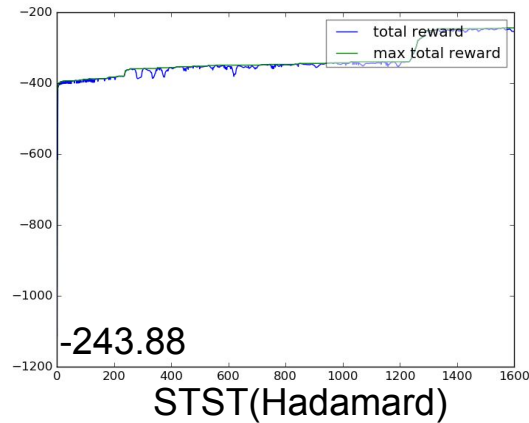
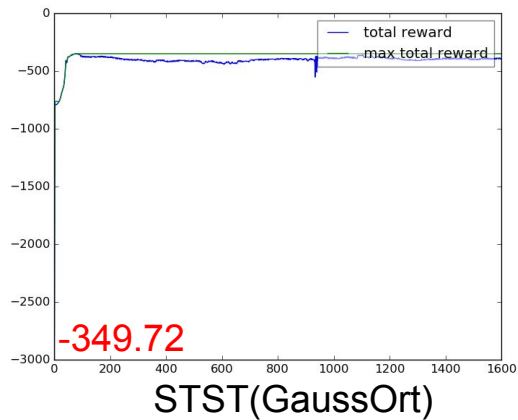
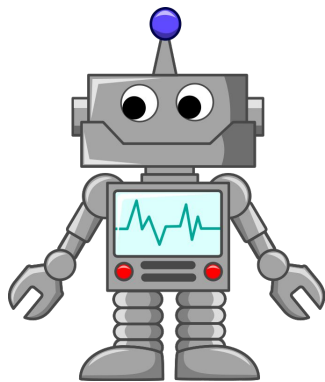
# Experimental results: learning curves - Striker



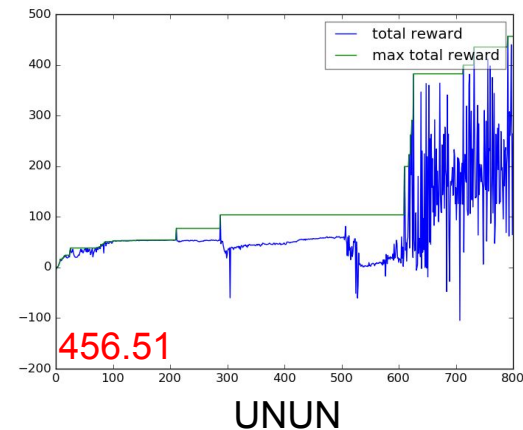
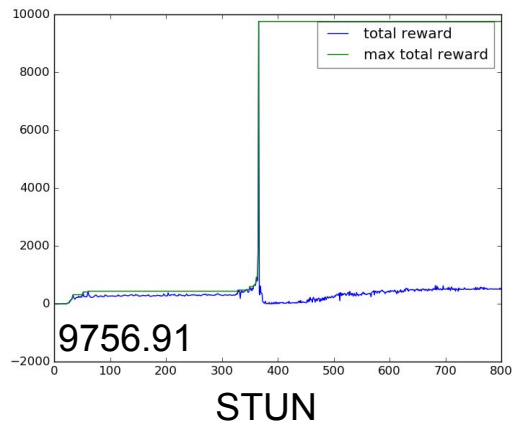
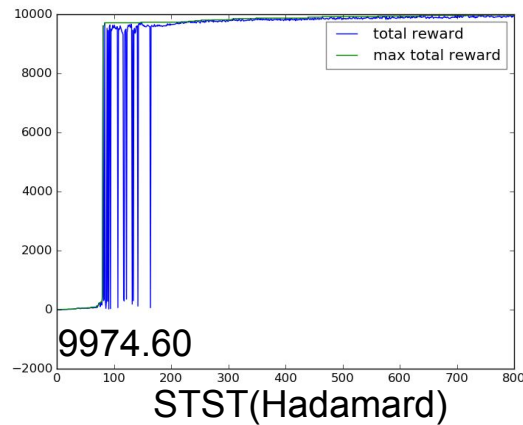
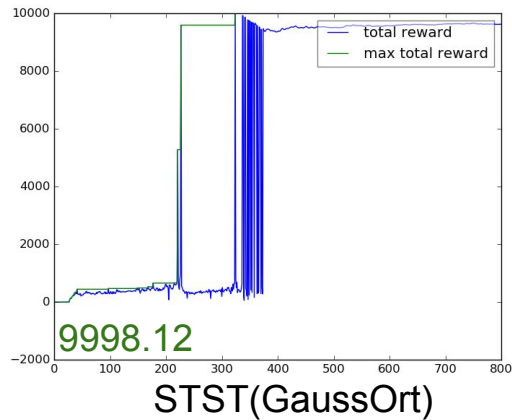
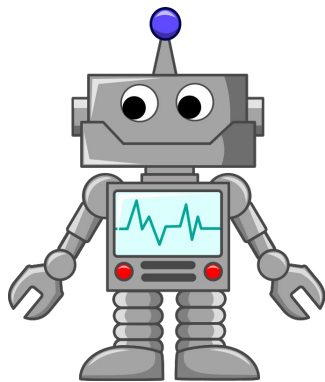
# Experimental results: learning curves - Swimmer



# Experimental results: learning curves - Thrower



# Experimental results: learning curves - Walker2d



# Success stories - teaching “Smoky” to walk (ICRA’18)

joint work with: Atil Iscen, Vikas Sindhwani, Jie Tan and Erwin Coumans

