

CSE 518 - Artificial Intelligence

Homework

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Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1 Define in your own words: (a) intelligence, (b) artificial intelligence, (c) agent, (d) rationality, (e) logical reasoning.

1.2 Are reflex actions (such as flinching from a hot stove) rational? Are they intelligent?

1.3 There are well-known classes of problems that are intractably difficult for computers, and other classes that are provably undecidable. Does this mean that AI is impossible?

1.4 The neural structure of the sea slug *Aplysia* has been widely studied (first by Nobel Laureate Eric Kandel) because it has only about 20,000 neurons, most of them large and easily manipulated. Assuming that the cycle time for an *Aplysia* neuron is roughly the same as for a human neuron, how does the computational power, in terms of memory updates per second, compare with the high-end computer described in Figure 1.3?

1.5 How could introspection—reporting on one’s inner thoughts—be inaccurate? Could I be wrong about what I’m thinking? Discuss.

1.6 To what extent are the following computer systems instances of artificial intelligence:

- Supermarket bar code scanners.
- Web search engines.
- Voice-activated telephone menus.
- Internet routing algorithms that respond dynamically to the state of the network.

1.7 Many of the computational models of cognitive activities that have been proposed involve quite complex mathematical operations, such as convolving an image with a Gaussian or finding a minimum of the entropy function. Most humans (and certainly all animals) never learn this kind of mathematics at all, almost no one learns it before college, and almost no one can compute the convolution of a function with a Gaussian in their head. What sense does it make to say that the “vision system” is doing this kind of mathematics, whereas the actual person has no idea how to do it?

1.8 Some authors have claimed that perception and motor skills are the most important part of intelligence, and that “higher level” capacities are necessarily parasitic—simple add-ons to these underlying facilities. Certainly, most of evolution and a large part of the brain have been devoted to perception and motor skills, whereas AI has found tasks such as game playing and logical inference to be easier, in many ways, than perceiving and acting in the real world. Do you think that AI’s traditional focus on higher-level cognitive abilities is misplaced?

1.9 Why would evolution tend to result in systems that act rationally? What goals are such systems designed to achieve?

1.10 “Surely computers cannot be intelligent—they can do only what their programmers tell them.” Is the latter statement true, and does it imply the former?