Multi-Agent Collaboration in Games: A Study of Solutions to Achieve Coordinated Behaviour

Authored: Reed Spratt Supervisor: Mike Katchabaw

Abstract

Expectations for the behaviour of artificial characters and bots in games continue to grow as new techniques and capabilities for AI emerge. The challenges for designing and implementing collaborative behaviour for agents can differ greatly from those found for individualistic behaviour. This research examines five tasks in achieving coordinated agent behaviour: movement, communication, decision-making, learning, and player interaction. For each task, we present associated challenges and solutions using examples found in game AI research and released game titles.

References

- [1] K. McGee and A.T. Abraham. "Real-time team-mate AI in games: a definition, survey, & critique. In Proceedings of the Fifth International Conference on the Foundations of Digital Games" Association for Computing Machinery, (FDG '10), New York, NY, USA, 2010, pp. 124–131, https://doi.org/10.1145/1822348.1822365
- [2] A. Botea, B. Bouzy, M. Buro, C. Bauckhage, D.S. Nau. "Pathfinding in Games," Artificial and Computational Intelligence in Games, 2013. [Online] Available: https://drops.dagstuhl.de/opus/volltexte/2013/4333/
- [3] F. Allison, M. Carter, M. Gibbs, and W. Smith. "Design Patterns for Voice Interaction in Games," In Proceedings of the 2018 Annual Symposium on Computer-Human Interaction in Play (CHI PLAY '18). Association for Computing Machinery, New York, NY, USA, 2018., pp. 5–17. https://doi.org/10.1145/3242671.3242712
- [4] T. Baumann. "Cooperative Artificial Intelligence," 2022. [Online] Available: https://arxiv.org/abs/2202.09859
- [5] W. Du, S. Ding. "A survey on multi-agent deep reinforcement learning: from the perspective of challenges and applications," Artif Intell Rev 54, 2018, pp. 3215–3238 https://doi.org/10.1007/s10462-020-09938-y
- [6] A. Mishara, "Distributed Artificial Intelligence," in Distributed Artificial Intelligence: A Modern Approach (1st ed.), Yadav, S.P., Mahato, D.P., & Linh, N.T.D. (Eds.). CRC Press, 2020, pp. 1-19 [Online]. https://doi-org.proxy1.lib.uwo.ca/10.1201/9781003038467
- [7] R. Lara-Cabrera, C. Cotta, A. Fernández-Leiva. "A review of computational intelligence in RTS games," 2013, pp. 114-121. 10.1109/FOCI.2013.6602463
- [8] U. Jaidee and H. Muñoz-Avila. "Modeling unit classes as agents in real-time strategy games," In Proceedings of the Ninth AAAI Conference on Artificial Intelligence and Interactive Digital Entertainment (AIIDE'13). AAAI Press, 2013, pp. 149–155 doi: 10.1609/aiide.v9i1.12667
- [9] J. Hagelbäck and S.J. Johansson. "Using multi-agent potential fields in real-time strategy games," In Proceedings of the 7th international joint conference on Autonomous agents and multiagent systems Volume 2 (AAMAS '08). International Foundation for Autonomous Agents and Multiagent Systems, Richland, SC, 2008, pp. 631–638, https://dl.acm.org/doi/10.5555/1402298.1402312
- [10] M. van der Heijden, S. Bakkes and P. Spronck, "Dynamic formations in real-time strategy games," *2008 IEEE Symposium On Computational Intelligence and Games*, Perth, WA, Australia, 2008, pp. 47-54, doi: 10.1109/CIG.2008.5035620.
- [11] Blizzard Entertainment, "Starcraft," Blizzard Entertainment. 1998.
- [12] S. Ontañón, G. Synnaeve, A. Uriarte, F. Richoux, D. Churchill and M. Preuss, "A Survey of Real-Time Strategy Game AI Research and Competition in StarCraft," in IEEE Transactions on Computational Intelligence and AI in Games, vol. 5, no. 4, pp. 293-311, Dec. 2013, doi: 10.1109/TCIAIG.2013.2286295.
- [13] M. A. Ruiz and J. R. Uresti, "Team Agent Behavior Architecture in Robot Soccer," 2008 IEEE Latin American Robotic Symposium, Salvador, Brazil, 2008, pp. 20-25, doi: 10.1109/LARS.2008.35.
- [14] Psyonix, "Rocket League," Psyonix, 2015.

- [15] Y. Verhoeven and M. Preuss, "On the Potential of Rocket League for Driving Team AI Development," 2020 IEEE Symposium Series on Computational Intelligence (SSCI), Canberra, ACT, Australia, 2020, pp. 2335-2342, doi: 10.1109/SSCI47803.2020.9308248.
- [16] I. Millington, AI for Games Third Edition, Boca Raton, Florida, USA: CRC Press, 2019. [Online] doi: https://doi.org/10.1201/9781351053303
- [17] P. Graham. (2013). Efficient Crowd Simulation for Mobile Games . In Game AI Pro: Collected Wisdom of Game AI Professionals, ed. S. Rabin. A K Peters/CRC Press, Boca Raton, FL
- [18] P. Graham. (2015). Advanced Techniques for Robust, Efficient Crowds. In Game AI Pro₂: Collected Wisdom of Game AI Professionals, ed. S. Rabin. A K Peters/CRC Press, Boca Raton, FL
- [19] O. Khatib, "Real-time obstacle avoidance for manipulators and mobile robots," Proceedings. 1985 IEEE International Conference on Robotics and Automation, St. Louis, MO, USA, 1985, pp. 500-505, doi: 10.1109/ROBOT.1985.1087247.
- [20] C. Thurau. G. Sagerer, C. Bauckhage. "Imitation learning at all levels of game-AI," 2004, [Online] Available: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/228474437
- [21] Nintendo, "Pikmin Series", Pikmin, 2001.
- [22] Bend Studio, "Days Gone," Sony Interactive Entertainment, 2021.
- [23] T. Karlsson. (2021). "Squad Coordination in Days Gone". In Game AI Pro Online Edition 2021, ed. S. Rabin.
- [24] E. Raboin, U. Kuter, and D. Nau. "Generating strategies for multi-agent pursuit-evasion games in partially observable Euclidean space," In Proceedings of the 11th International Conference on Autonomous Agents and Multiagent Systems Volume 3 (AAMAS '12), Vol. 3. International Foundation for Autonomous Agents and Multiagent Systems, Richland, SC, 2012, pp. 1201–1202, [Online] Available: https://dl.acm.org/doi/10.5555/2343896.2343921
- [25] J. MacGregor, S. Leung "Pathfinding Strategy for Multiple Non-Playing Characters in 2.5 D Game Worlds,: In: Chang, M., Kuo, R., Kinshuk, Chen, GD., Hirose, M. (eds) Learning by Playing. Game-based Education System Design and Development. Edutainment 2009. Lecture Notes in Computer Science, vol 5670. Springer, Berlin, Heidelberg, 2009. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-642-03364-3 43
- [26] D. Silver. "Cooperative Pathfinding," Proceedings of the AAAI Conference on Artificial Intelligence and Interactive Digital Entertainment, 1(1), 2021, pp. 117-122. https://doi.org/10.1609/aiide.v1i1.18726
- [27] A. Geramifard, P. Chubak, and V. Bulitko, "Biased Cost Pathfinding", AIIDE, vol. 2, no. 1, pp. 112-114, Sep. 2021. https://doi.org/10.1609/aiide.v2i1.18756
- [28] I.D. Craig. "Blackboard systems," Artif Intell Rev 2, 1988, pp. 103-118 https://doi.org/10.1007/BF00140399
- [29] J. Orkin. "Three States and a Plan: The A.I. of F.E.A.R.," Monolith Productions / M.I.T. Media Lab, Cognitive Machines Group. 2006. [Online] Available:: http://alumni.media.mit.edu/~jorkin/gdc2006 orkin jeff fear.pdf

- [30] "The ai of horizon zero dawn," Guerrilla Games, 2017. [Online]. Available: https://www.guerrilla-games.com/read/the-ai-of-horizon-zero-dawn.
- [31] M. Świechowski, D. Lewiński and R. Tyl, "Combining Utility AI and MCTS Towards Creating Intelligent Agents in Video Games, with the Use Case of Tactical Troops: Anthracite Shift," 2021 IEEE Symposium Series on Computational Intelligence (SSCI), Orlando, FL, USA, 2021, pp. 1-8, doi: 10.1109/SSCI50451.2021.9660170.
- [32] Guerilla Games, "Horizon: Zero Dawn", Sony Interactive Entertainment, 2017.
- [33] C.T. Tan and H. Cheng. "A combined tactical and strategic hierarchical learning framework in multi-agent games," In Proceedings of the 2008 ACM SIGGRAPH symposium on Video games (Sandbox '08). Association for Computing Machinery, New York, NY, USA, 2008, pp. 115–122, https://doi.org/10.1145/1401843.1401865
- [34] J. van Oijen and F. Dignum. "Agent communication for believable human-like interactions between virtual characters," In Proceedings of the 11th International Conference on Autonomous Agents and Multiagent Systems Volume 3 (AAMAS '12), Vol. 3. International Foundation for Autonomous Agents and Multiagent Systems, Richland, SC, 2012, pp. 1181–1182, https://dl.acm.org/doi/abs/10.5555/2343896.2343910
- [35] F. Dignum, J. Westra, W.A. van Doesburg, M. Harbers. "Games and Agents: Designing Intelligent Gameplay," International Journal of Computer Games Technology. 2009. 10.1155/2009/837095.
- [36] G. Boeda. "NPCs have Feelings too: Verbal Interactions with Emotional Character AI," Youtube, April 21, 2021. [Online] Available: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JrTjPxaDJgE.
- [37] Ubisoft, Gameloft, Griptonite Games, Blue Byte, "Assassin's Creed Series," Ubisoft, 2007-2020.
- [38] R. Evans "Modelling Individual Personalities in The Sims 3," Youtube, June 22, 2017. Available: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DVMs5_B611E
- [39] Maxis, "The Sims Series," Electronic Arts, 2000-2023.
- [40] Unity Technologies, "Unity Manual: ScriptableObject," Unity3d.com, 2019. https://docs.unity3d.com/Manual/class-ScriptableObject.html
- [41] Creative Assembly, "Total War: Warhammer", Sega, 2016.
- [42] A. Arsenault "Siege Battle AI in Total War: Warhammer". Youtube. September 24, 2017. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sHolirTf9CI
- [43] T. Humphreys. (2013). Advanced Techniques for Robust, Efficient Crowds. In Game AI Pro: Collected Wisdom of Game AI Professionals, ed. S. Rabin. A K Peters/CRC Press, Boca Raton, FL. [Online]. Available: http://www.gameaipro.com/
- [44] H.Hoang, S. Lee-Urban, and H. Muñoz-Avila. "Hierarchical plan representations for encoding strategic game AI," In Proceedings of the First AAAI Conference on Artificial Intelligence and Interactive Digital Entertainment (AIIDE'05). AAAI Press, 2005, pp. 63–68. [Online] Available: https://dl.acm.org/doi/abs/10.5555/3022473.3022485

- [45] D. Daylamani-Zad, L. B. Graham and I. T. Paraskevopoulos, "Swarm intelligence for autonomous cooperative agents in battles for real-time strategy games," 2017 9th International Conference on Virtual Worlds and Games for Serious Applications (VS-Games), Athens, Greece, 2017, pp. 39-46, doi: 10.1109/VS-GAMES.2017.8055809.
- [46] R. Agarwal, S. Khaitan, S. Sahu, "Intelligent Agents," in Distributed Artificial Intelligence: A Modern Approach (1st ed.), Yadav, S.P., Mahato, D.P., & Linh, N.T.D. (Eds.). CRC Press, 2020, pp. 1-19 [Online]. https://doi-org.proxy1.lib.uwo.ca/10.1201/9781003038467
- [47] D. Graham (2013). "An Introduction to Utility Theory" in Game AI Pro: Collected Wisdom of Game AI Professionals, ed. S. Rabin. A K Peters/CRC Press, Boca Raton, FL. [Online] Available: http://www.gameaipro.com (6.3)
- [48] S. Hanlon, Cody W. (2017). "Behavior Decision System: Dragon Age Inquisition's Utility Scoring Architecture" in Game AI Pro₃: Collected Wisdom of Game AI Professionals, ed. S. Rabin. A K Peters/CRC Press, Boca Raton, FL. [Online] Available: http://www.gameaipro.com
- [49] G. Boeda (2021). Multi-Agent Cooperation in Games with Goal Oriented Action Planner: Use Case in WONDER Prototype Project. Proceedings of the AAAI Conference on Artificial Intelligence and Interactive Digital Entertainment, 17(1), 204-207. https://doi.org/10.1609/aiide.v17i1.18909
- [50] N. Troquard. "Rich coalitional resource games," In Proceedings of the Thirty-Second AAAI Conference on Artificial Intelligence and Thirtieth Innovative Applications of Artificial Intelligence Conference and Eighth AAAI Symposium on Educational Advances in Artificial Intelligence (AAAI'18/IAAI'18/EAAI'18). AAAI Press, Article 152, 2018, pp. 1242–1249.
- [51] H. Prendinger, M. Ishizuka. "Evolving Social Relationships with Animate Characters," 2002, [Online]. Available: https://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/summary?doi=10.1.1.16.8742
- [52] J. Dias, A. Paiva. "Feeling and Reasoning: A Computational Model for Emotional Characters," 2005, pp. 127-140. doi: 10.1007/11595014 13.
- [53] S. Bernardini, K. Porayska-Pomsta, H. Sampath. "Designing an Intelligent Virtual Agent for Social Communication in Autism," Proceedings of the AAAI Conference on Artificial Intelligence and Interactive Digital Entertainment, 9(1), 2021, pp. 9-15. https://doi.org/10.1609/aiide.v9i1.12688
- [54] G. Boeda. "Driving Emotionally Expressive NPC Animations and Behaviors with a Designer-Friendly Pipeline," Youtube, February 23, 2023. [Online] Available: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WFnCTxHcB5s.
- [55] A. Simonov, A. Zagarskikh, V. Fedorov, "Applying Behavior characteristics to decision-making process to create believable game AI," Procedia Computer Science, Volume 156, 2019, pp.404-413, ISSN 1877-0509, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.procs.2019.08.222.
- [56] C. Delgado-Mata and J. Ibáñez-Martínez. "AI opponents with personality traits in Überpong," In Proceedings of the 2nd international conference on INtelligent TEchnologies for interactive enterTAINment (INTETAIN '08). ICST (Institute for Computer Sciences, Social-Informatics and Telecommunications Engineering), Brussels, BEL, Article 1, 2008, pp. 1–8. [Online] Available: https://dl.acm.org/doi/10.5555/1363200.1363202
- [57] M. Amanat Bari. "Creating Complex Behaviour in Stellaris Through Data-Driven Design,". Youtube, November 14, 2017. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z5LMUbjyFQM

- [58] L. F. Bicalho, B. Feijó and A. Baffa, "A Culture Model for Non-Player Characters' Behaviors in Role-Playing Games," 2020 19th Brazilian Symposium on Computer Games and Digital Entertainment (SBGames), Recife, Brazil, 2020, pp. 9-18, doi: 10.1109/SBGames51465.2020.00013.
- [59] Blizzard Entertainment, "World of Warcraft," Blizzard Entertainment, 2004.
- [60] Bethesda Game Studios, "The Elder Scrolls: Skyrim," Bethesda Softworks, 2011.
- [61] Interplay Entertainment, Black Isle Studios, Micro Forte, Bethesda Game Studios, Obsidian Entertainment, "Fallout," Interplay Entertainment, 14 Degrees East, Bethesda Softworks, 1997-2018.
- [62] C. -Y. Huang, S. -W. Wang and C. -T. Sun, "Modeling agent self-awareness, individual performance and collaborative behavior," 2011 9th World Congress on Intelligent Control and Automation, Taipei, Taiwan, 2011, pp. 759-763, doi: 10.1109/WCICA.2011.5970616.
- [63] J. Mooney and J. M. Allbeck. "Rethinking NPC intelligence: a new reputation system," In Proceedings of the 7th International Conference on Motion in Games (MIG '14). Association for Computing Machinery, New York, NY, USA, 2018, pp. 55–60. https://doi.org/10.1145/2668084.2668091
- [64] N.D. Shchepin, A.S. Zagarskikh, "Building behavioral AI using trust and reputation model based on mask model," Procedia Computer Science, Volume 156, 2019, pp. 387-394, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.procs.2019.08.216.
- [65] R.S. Sutton, A.G. Barto. "Reinforcement Learning: An Introduction (2nd Edition)," Cambridge, Massachusetts, England: The MIT Press, 2018. [Online] Available: http://incompleteideas.net/book/the-book-2nd.html
- [66] A. Hussein, M.M. Gaber, E. Elyan, and C. Jayne. "Imitation Learning: A Survey of Learning Methods," ACM Comput. Surv. 50, 2, Article 21 (March 2018), 2017. 35 pages. https://doi.org/10.1145/3054912
- [67] C. Thurau, G. Sagerer, Gerhard, C. Bauckhage. "Imitation learning at all levels of game-AI," 2004. [Online] Available: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/228474437 Imitation learning at all levels of game-AI
- [68] D. Neal, B. Hayles. "Designing AI for Killer Instinct", Youtube, September 17, 2017. [Online] Available: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9yydYjQ1GLg
- [69] Double Helix Games, Iron Galaxy, "Killer Instinct," Microsoft Studios, 2013.
- [70] Valve, Hidden Path Entertainment, "Counter Strike: Global Offensive," Valve, 2012.
- [71] Ars Technica. "How Forza's Racing AI Uses Neural Networks To Evolve | War Stories | Ars Technica," September 13, 2020. [Online] Available: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XB9lf7iJbRw&t=10s
- [72] Y. Zhao, I. Borovikov, J. Rupert, C. Somers, A. Beirami. "On Multi-Agent Learning in Team Sports Games," 2019, ArXiv, abs/1906.10124.
- [73] A. Shih, S. Ermon and D. Sadigh, "Conditional Imitation Learning for Multi-Agent Games," 2022 17th ACM/IEEE International Conference on Human-Robot Interaction (HRI), Sapporo, Japan, 2022, pp. 166-175, doi: 10.1109/HRI53351.2022.9889671.

- [74] Ghost Town Games, "Overcooked", Team17, 2016.
- [75] T.H Nguyen, D. Hsu, W.-S. Lee, T.-Y Leong, L. Kaelbling, T. Lozano-Perez, A. Grant. "CAPIR: Collaborative Action Planning with Intention Recognition," Proceedings of the AAAI Conference on Artificial Intelligence and Interactive Digital Entertainment, 7(1), 2011, pp. 61-66. https://doi.org/10.1609/aiide.v7i1.12425
- [76] G. Scott, F. Khosmood. "A Framework for Complementary Companion Character Behavior in Video Games," 2018. ArXiv, abs/1808.09079.
- [77] C.T. Tan and H.-I.Cheng. "A combined tactical and strategic hierarchical learning framework in multi-agent games," In Proceedings of the 2008 ACM SIGGRAPH symposium on Video games (Sandbox '08). Association for Computing Machinery, New York, NY, USA, 2008, pp. 115–122. https://doi.org/10.1145/1401843.1401865
- [78] C.T. Tan, H. Cheng, "Tactical Agent Personality," International Journal of Computer Games Technology, vol. 2011, Article ID 107160, 2011, https://doi.org/10.1155/2011/107160
- [79] A.B. Calhamer, "Diplomacy", Wizards of the Coast. 1959.
- [80] Meta Fundamental AI Research Diplomacy Team (FAIR)† et al. "Human-level play in the game of Diplomacy by combining language models with strategic reasoning," Science 378, 2022, pp. 1067-1074. [Online] Available: https://doi.org/10.1126/science.ade9097
- [81] IBM, "What is Natural Language Processing? | IBM," www.ibm.com. https://www.ibm.com/topics/natural-language-processing
- [82] Procedural Arts, "Facade," Procedural Arts, 2005.
- [83] M. Mateas, A. Stern. "Natural Language Understanding in Façade: Surface-Text Processing," In:, et al. Technologies for Interactive Digital Storytelling and Entertainment, TIDSE 2004, Lecture Notes in Computer Science, vol 3105, Springer, Berlin, Heidelberg, 2004, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-540-27797-2 2
- [84] J. Ryan, M. Mateas. (2017) "Simulating Character Knowledge Phenomenon in Talk of the Town," in Game AI Pro₃: Collected Wisdom of Game AI Professionals, ed. S. Rabin. A K Peters/CRC Press, Boca Raton, FL. [Online]. Available: http://www.gameaipro.com/
- [85] Hudson Soft, "Mario Party 6," Nintendo, 2004.
- [86] Hudson Soft, "Mario Party,7" Nintendo, 2005.
- [87] Vivarium, "Odama," Nintendo, 2006.
- [88] Vivarium, Jellyvision, "Seaman," Sega, 1999.
- [89] S. Toncu, I. Toma, M. Dascalu, S. Trausan-Matu. "Escape from Dungeon—Modeling User Intentions with Natural Language Processing Techniques," In: Mealha, Ó., Rehm, M., Rebedea, T. (eds) Ludic, Co-design and Tools Supporting Smart Learning Ecosystems and Smart Education. Smart Innovation, Systems and Technologies, vol 197. Springer, Singapore. 2020, doi: https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-15-7383-5_8.
- [90] Santa Monica Studio, "God of War: Ragnarok," Sony Interactive Entertainment, 2022.

- [91] Naughty Dog, "The Last of Us," Sony Computer Entertainment, 2013.
- [92] Japan Studio, GenDesign. "The Last Guardian," Sony Interactive Entertainment, 2016.
- [93] HAL Laboratory, "Kirby Star Allies," Nintendo, 2018.
- [94] Polyarc, "Moss," Polyarc, 2018.