Planning with Pixels in (Almost) Real Time

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Planning in the Atari Games

Arcade Learning Environment (ALE) (Bellemare et al., 2013) is platform that supports learning and planning settings

In planning, next move selected after **looking ahead with simulator**

Monte-Carlo Tree Search best planner initially, then IW(1):

- IW(1) uses **RAM** and takes tens of secs/decision **(not real time)**
- **New! Rollout IW(1)** that plays Atari from **screen pixels**

Standard Evaluation Setting

- 60 frames per second, **frameskip of 15**
- Episodes of at most 5 minutes (18,000 frames)
- Random number of no-ops (between 1 and 30) applied at start
- **Deterministic simulator** (`repeat-action-probability` is 0)
- Budget of half second for Rollout IW(1) **(almost real time)**
- Each data point is average of 5 runs

(Partial) Results on 49 Games

Game	Human	DQN	Sarsa-Blob-PROST	RAS Rollout IW(1) budget 0.5s
asterix	8,503.0	6,012.0	3,996.6	**48,700.0**
asteroids	**13,157.0**	1,629.0	1,759.5	4,486.0
bowling	**154.8**	42.4	65.9	51.6
boxing	4.3	71.8	**89.4**	78.6
breakout	31.8	**401.2**	52.9	79.8
centipede	11,963.0	8,309.0	3,903.3	**46,661.4**
gravitar	**2,672.0**	306.7	1,231.8	2,410.0
hero	**25,673.0**	19,950.0	13,690.3	11,480.0
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montezuma's revenge	**4,367.0**	0.0	778.1	100.0
space invaders	1,652.0	**1,976.0**	844.8	1,812.0
star gunner	10,250.0	**57,997.0**	1,227.7	15,960.0
up n down	9,082.0	8,456.0	19,533.0	**36,936.0**
venture	**1,188.0**	380.0	244.5	80.0
video pinball	17,298.0	42,684.0	9,783.9	**188,604.4**
zaxxon	9,173.0	4,977.0	8,204.4	**18,700.0**
# $\geq$ Human	n/a	23 (46.9%)	18 (36.7%)	**25 (51.0%)**
# $\geq$ 75% Human	n/a	27 (55.1%)	22 (44.8%)	**29 (59.1%)**
# best in game	**16 (32.6%)**	12 (24.4%)	6 (12.2%)	15 (30.6%)

Bold = Best Red = Better than human **Bold Red** = Best/better than human

Online Planning with Iterated Width (IW)

IW(1) is a breadth-first search (BrFS) where nodes that don't make a **boolean feature true for the first time** in the search are **pruned**

- Number of expanded nodes is **linear in number of features**
- Set F of **boolean features** is given
  - Classical planning: features are propositional atoms
  - Previous work in Atari: features obtained from 128 bytes of RAM
- IW(k) like IW(1) but with F replaced by conjunctions of up to k features; number of expanded nodes is $O(|F|^k)$

Pixel Features (Liang et. al, AAMAS-2016)

ALE's sensory input is 160×210 pixels (pixels of 128 colors)

- Screen split into 16×14 **disjoint tiles**, each one is 10×15 pixel patch
- **$\sim$28k Basic features:** tell which colors contain each tile
- **$\sim$6.8m B-PROS:** relative distance between tiles with 2 given colors
- **$\sim$13.7m B-PROT:** relative distance between tiles with 2 given colors at current and previous screens
- **$\sim$20.5m B-PROST:** Basic + B-PROS + B-PROT (no blob features!)

B-PROT and B-PROST contain **non-Markovian** features

Rollout IW(1)

Rollout IW(1) performs **rollouts** instead of breadth-first search

Starting in tree with only root node r (for current state), a sequence of rollouts from r is "thrown" to define lookahead tree

Pruning of nodes takes into consideration:

- Features made true in node
- Depth of node
- Minimum depth so far where each feature has been seen

Nodes are also **labeled as SOLVED**: algorithm **terminates** when root node is SOLVED or time's up

Properties of Rollout IW(1)

Theorem

- *Length of rollouts is bounded by* $|F|$
- *Each rollout improves depth to some* f*, or labels a node as SOLVED*
- *Root is SOLVED in at most* $b \times |F|^2$ *rollouts (*b *is branching factor)*

If IW(1) is run until completion, it is more efficient than Rollout IW(1) for reaching all **features of width 1** (see paper for def.)

Value of Rollout IW(1) is **anytime behaviour** (i.e. operation under time bound): BFS exploration replaced by rollouts that **"dive in tree"**

Extensions and Variations

- **Caching:** previous look-ahead tree partially used for next decision
- **Penalties for deaths (Risk Aversion):** death signal translated into high penalty
- **Subscoring:** "novelty" measured relative to $\lfloor \log(\text{acc. score node}) \rfloor$ instead of globally

In experiments, **RAS Rollout IW(1)** is Rollout IW(1) with these variations

Wrap Up and Future Work

- New algorithm **Rollout IW(1)** that "emulates" IW(1) in poly time, but **better anytime properties**
- Rollout IW(1) plays Atari in almost real time from screen pixels with **performance comparable** to Human, DQN, and Sarsa-Blob
- **Code:** `https://github.com/bonetblai/rollout-iw`

Future work:

- Rollout IW(k) for **noisy Atari (MDPs)**
- Use of IW(k) planners inside **Approx Modified PI** a la AlphaZero instead of MCTS

Discussion: Rollout IW(1) vs. Rainbow

	RAS Rollout IW(1)		
Game	budget 0.5s	budget 32s	Rainbow
alien	8,550.0	**19,354.0**	9,491.7
amidar	1,161.0	1,609.0	5,131.2
assault	264.6	281.4	14,198.5
asterix	48,700.0	87,600.0	428,200.3
asteroids	**4,486.0**	**7,344.0**	2,712.8
atlantis	113,460.0	**134,660.0**	826,659.5
bank heist	268.0	**2,179.0**	1,358.0
battle zone	56,200.0	**509,400.0**	62,010.0
beam rider	3,729.2	4,921.2	16,850.2
berzerk	966.0	1,640.0	2,545.6
bowling	**51.6**	**48.0**	30.0
boxing	78.6	80.2	99.6
breakout	79.8	370.0	417.5
centipede	**46,661.4**	**84,226.0**	8,167.3
chopper command	8,900.0	**33,220.0**	16,654.0
crazy climber	38,120.0	42,720.0	168,788.5
defender	**298,010.0**	**387,010.0**	55,105.0

Discussion: Rollout IW(1) vs. Rainbow

	RAS Rollout IW(1)		
Game	budget 0.5s	budget 32s	Rainbow
demon attack	5,201.0	9,898.0	111,185.2
double dunk	-4.0	**16.0**	-0.3
enduro	137.4	330.8	2,152.9
fishing derby	-61.8	-53.0	31.3
freeway	3.6	10.0	34.0
frostbite	1,494.0	5,970.0	9,590.5
gopher	7,256.0	11,840.0	70,354.6
gravitar	**2,410.0**	**5,540.0**	1,419.3
hero	11,480.0	29,708.0	55,887.4
ice hockey	**5.2**	**18.2**	1.1
kangaroo	1,800.0	5,280.0	14,637.5
krull	1,645.2	2,837.0	8,741.5
kung fu master	2,980.0	24,300.0	52,181.0
montezuma revenge	100.0	1,080.0	384.0
ms pacman	**13,746.8**	**21,833.0**	5,380.4
name this game	6,128.0	6,820.0	13,136.0
phoenix	5,386.0	7,570.0	108,528.6

Discussion: Rollout IW(1) vs. Rainbow

	RAS Rollout IW(1)		
Game	budget 0.5s	budget 32s	Rainbow
pitfall	-814.6	-692.4	0.0
pong	-1.4	18.2	20.9
private eye	2,160.0	-340.0	4,234.0
qbert	14,160.0	**40,350.0**	33,817.5
road runner	25,780.0	**62,960.0**	62,041.0
robotank	30.0	51.8	61.4
seaquest	1,236.0	9,846.0	15,898.9
skiing	-15,806.6	-15,473.6	-12,957.8
solaris	1,620.0	1,728.0	3,560.3
space invaders	1,812.0	4,362.0	18,789.0
star gunner	15,960.0	17,160.0	127,029.0
surround	– na –	– na –	9.7
tennis	**3.2**	-3.4	-0.0
time pilot	8,540.0	5,480.0	12,926.0
tutankham	147.4	191.2	241.0
venture	**80.0**	**120.0**	5.5
video pinball	188,604.4	375,073.0	533,936.5
wizard of wor	**40,780.0**	**75,380.0**	17,862.5
yars revenge	3,647.8	10,523.6	102,557.0
zaxxon	18,700.0	**38,700.0**	22,209.5
# better than Rainbow	**10 (18.5%)**	**18 (33.3%)**	