Research Report

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# Abstract

# Objectives

The main objective of this project is to create an interface to sit between a game and an external application. The external application will control a specific part of the game. This project aims to edit the behaviour of a character within the game. The game engine/game will output data to the interface which will in turn pass it to the external application. The external application will then pass back new data on what the in game character should do.

This project aims to use a neural network to train the character in game to be able to solve simple puzzles. These could include move a box off a switch, press a button to open a door.

The interface will be a layer that will sit between the game engine and the external application, whatever that may be. The interface should be flexible and allow for general data to be passed between its outputs.

The idea for the interface is that it should be able to handle multiple game engines. This gives developers the ability to reuse software that they have already written.

For example if a developer has written a controller for an AI in a racing game. Instead of re-writing it for every game engine that the need it for they use the interface as a medium between. The developer will have to go into the game and hook up all the proper connections but after that they can swap out the controller for another.

This gives the developer the ability to re-use software and it also makes the process more modular. The behaviours can be swapped out like Lego bricks.

# Literature Review

## Game Engines

This project will require a game engine. A game engine is a tool that allows for developers to create games on. Think of it like a framework that contains all the tools that a game developer would generally need.

With a wide number of game engines available for use in this project, there needs to be criteria to select the game engine that will be the most suitable for this project.

The first piece of criteria will be that the game engine is free to use. This project requires the game engine be free to use, wither that being an open source game engine or a professional engine that is free to use for academic use.

The next piece of criteria is that it is quick to learn. Due to the scope of this project and the time limit available, the author feels that in choosing a game engine that will take 6 months to learn how to code for is not applicable for this project. Therefore the game engine must be straightforward to develop for.

Next is the level of access available to the developers to the game engine. In order for an interface to sit between the game engine and an external application the developer will need access to some of the lower level functionality of the game engine. This could include things like networking features, restricting certain override functions. This will be needed when it comes to synchronising between the interface and the game engine.

Criteria of the game engine that this project is not concerned with are features like if the game engine is 2D or 3D, the overall look of the end game (graphics), sound capabilities and release platforms. These features are not exactly needed for this project therefore they should not be taken into consideration when deciding upon a game engine.

Based on these criteria the following game engines have been selected:

### Unreal Engine

This is one of the oldest game engines on the list. Currently on its third version, fourth is about to be released at time of writing. This is a professional game engine that a lot of industry game developers use for AAA titles. Such games include Batman: Arkham series and the BioShock series were created in this engine.

### Cry-Engine

### Unity3D

Unity3D is a game engine that has been recently became a wide hit with the indie game development community. This is due to its ease of programming for and the fact that it is free to use. There are two versions of this game engine, free and pro. The pro version allows developers to use the more advanced features and removes watermarks. The game engine is a full professional game engine; it was created by professionals, not just an open source game engine that a group of people have hacked together. Along with the pro version, developers can buy licences for certain platforms such as android, Xbox 360 and PlayStation 3 to name a few. As for languages the game engine supports three natively. These are C#, JavaScript and Boo (language based on python). All three of these languages are relatively simple to develop in.

### Blender

Blender is an open source 3D modelling tool that has a game engine built in. Since it is open source then that means that this meets the free to use criteria. Also it allows the developer to access the lower features of the game engine. It is written in python, which is a relatively simple language compared to other game engines, such as Unreal engine which is in C++.

With above features it makes it a strong contender for this project.

### Game Maker

### Overall Choice of Game Engine

Based upon the requirement criteria given above the selected game engine will be

## Neural Networks

## Current Game Standards

At the present there are two parties in artificial intelligence, game developers and academic researchers. While the academic researchers have far more advanced techniques than the games industry, the games industry is something to accept these new techniques. Currently games industry uses pathfinding and steering behaviours, and that is about it. More advance techniques are not used, such as bio inspired techniques. This is due to a number of reasons, mainly due to developers focus. In the games industry there is one main focus, graphics. Graphics in a game is right now, and for at least the last 10 years, is the most focused on part. So much so that current generation consoles have multiple cores just for graphics and only a single dedicated to everything else.

## Interfacing In-between Games

## Evolutionary Games

As discussed above, current game developers are reluctant to use more advanced artificial intelligence techniques in their games. Although some academic researchers have tried to prove that these techniques can be used within games.

While most of these do not go on sale, they instead become freeware, they are still games.

### Galactic Arms Race

### Nero

# Methodology

# Requirements

## Aims

The aims of this project are:

The creation of an interface that sits between the game engine/game and an external application, that allows for the communication between the two.

Using the selected game engine create a simple game.

Create a neural network.

Using the interface, link certain parts of the game engine to the neural network.

Allow for synchronised communication between the applications through the interface.

Evolve the object in the game to get the desired behaviour.

## Objectives

## Requirements

The requirements for this project

# Professional, Legal and Ethical Issues

# Project Plan

## Gantt Chart

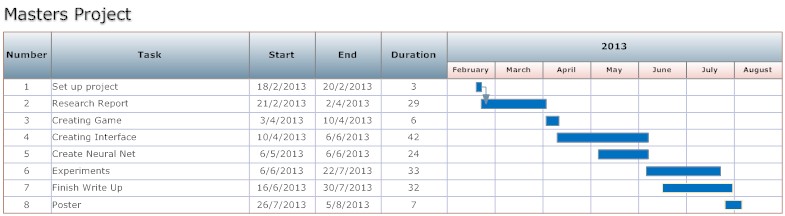


Figure 1 – A Gantt chart showing the timeline for this project.

# Bibliography

There are no sources in the current document.