

# Automated Negotiation in Supply Chain Management

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Presentation at  
**Rollins**  
EST. 1885



BROWN

# Who am I?

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- Ph.D. candidate, Computer Science, Brown University.
- Research Area: Artificial Intelligence (AI) / Multi-Agent Systems.  
Game Theory / Mechanism Design / Automated Negotiation.
- Originally from Caracas, Venezuela; in the U.S. since 2011.
- Prior to Brown, CS M.Sc. & MAT Mathematics at Indiana University.

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Today's Focus!  
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**Please feel free to interrupt me!  
Let's make this talk a conversation!**

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# Outline

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- **Part 1:** Supply Chains
- **Part 2:** Artificial Negotiation Agents for Supply Chains
- **Part 3:** Future Research Plans

Image credit



## Part 1: Supply Chains

**Why are supply chains important?  
How do they function?  
How could they function better?**

# Supply Chains

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Virtually ***all*** goods and services we consume were produced in some supply chain.

# Supply Chains

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A supply chain is a series of steps by which an item or service is converted into a final product.

Virtually all products and services pass through a supply chain.



**Milton Friedman, Nobel laureate**  
<https://youtu.be/67tHtpac5ws>

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Virtually **all** goods and services we consume were produced in some supply chain.

Participation in supply chains has contributed to **industrialisation** and high rates of **economic growth** in several developing economies (WTO).

# Supply Chains (cont.)

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Supply chains are **decentralized**, i.e., no central coordinator.

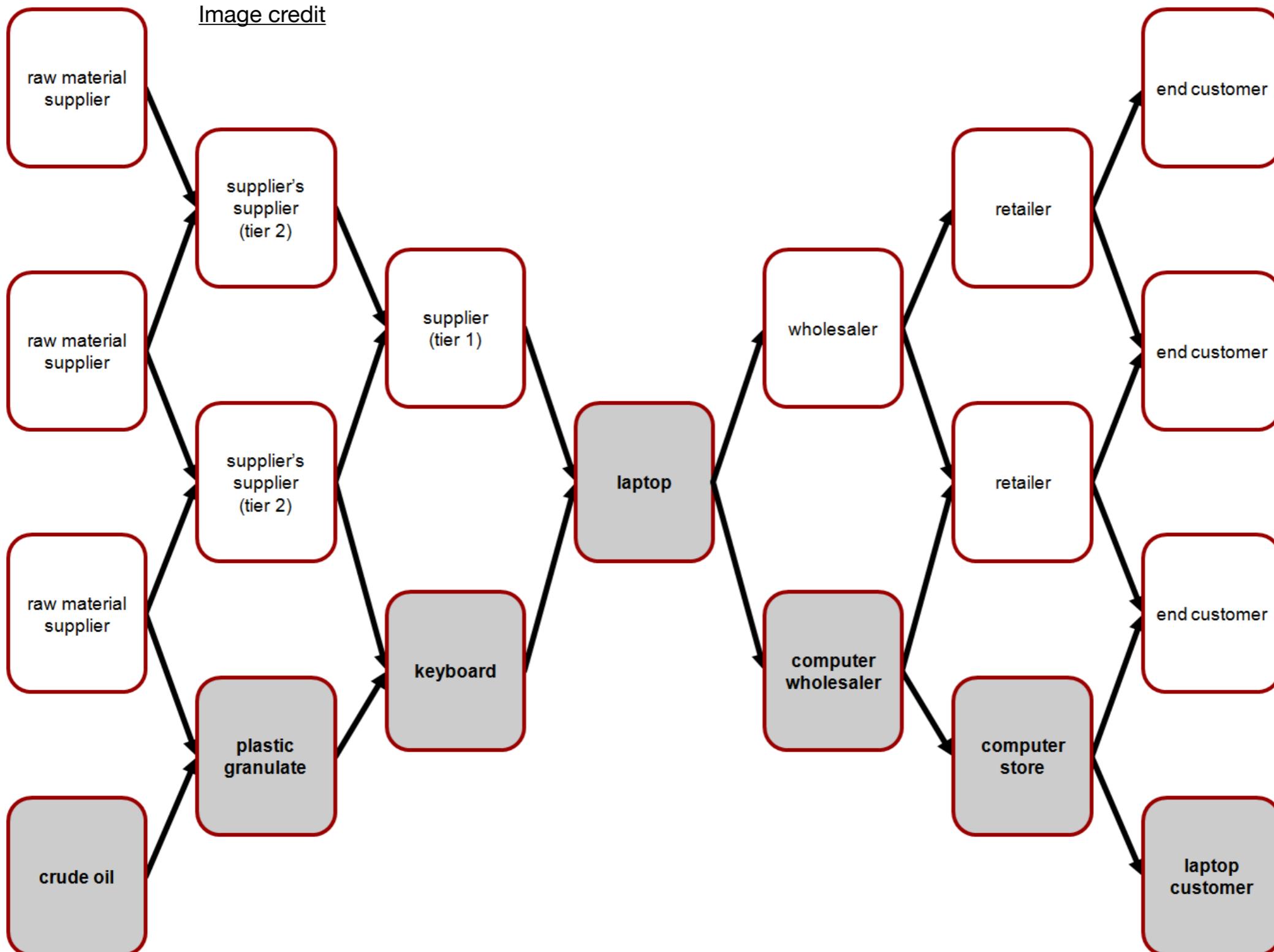
# Supply Chains (cont.)

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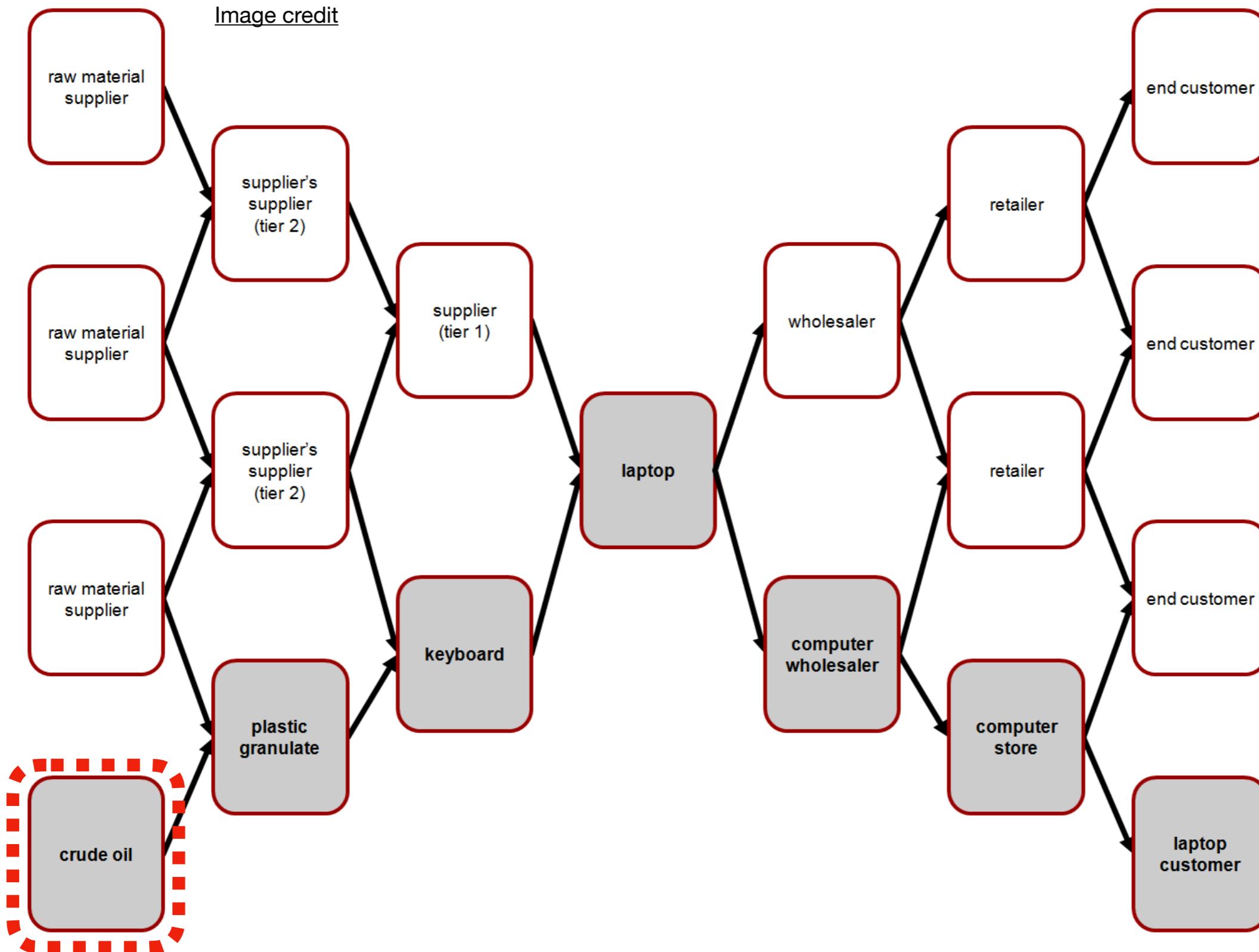
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Instead, managers **negotiate** contracts to procure products.

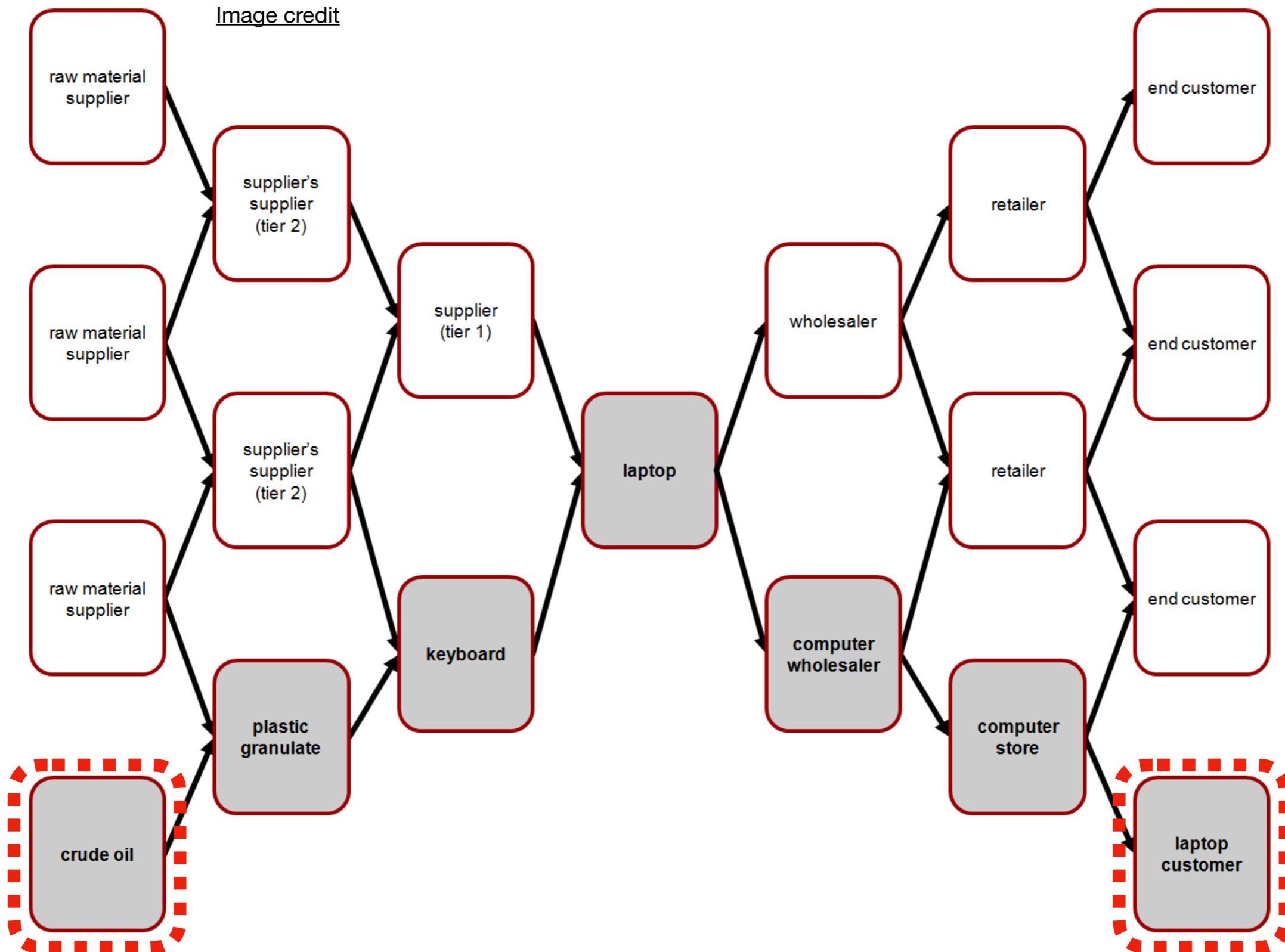
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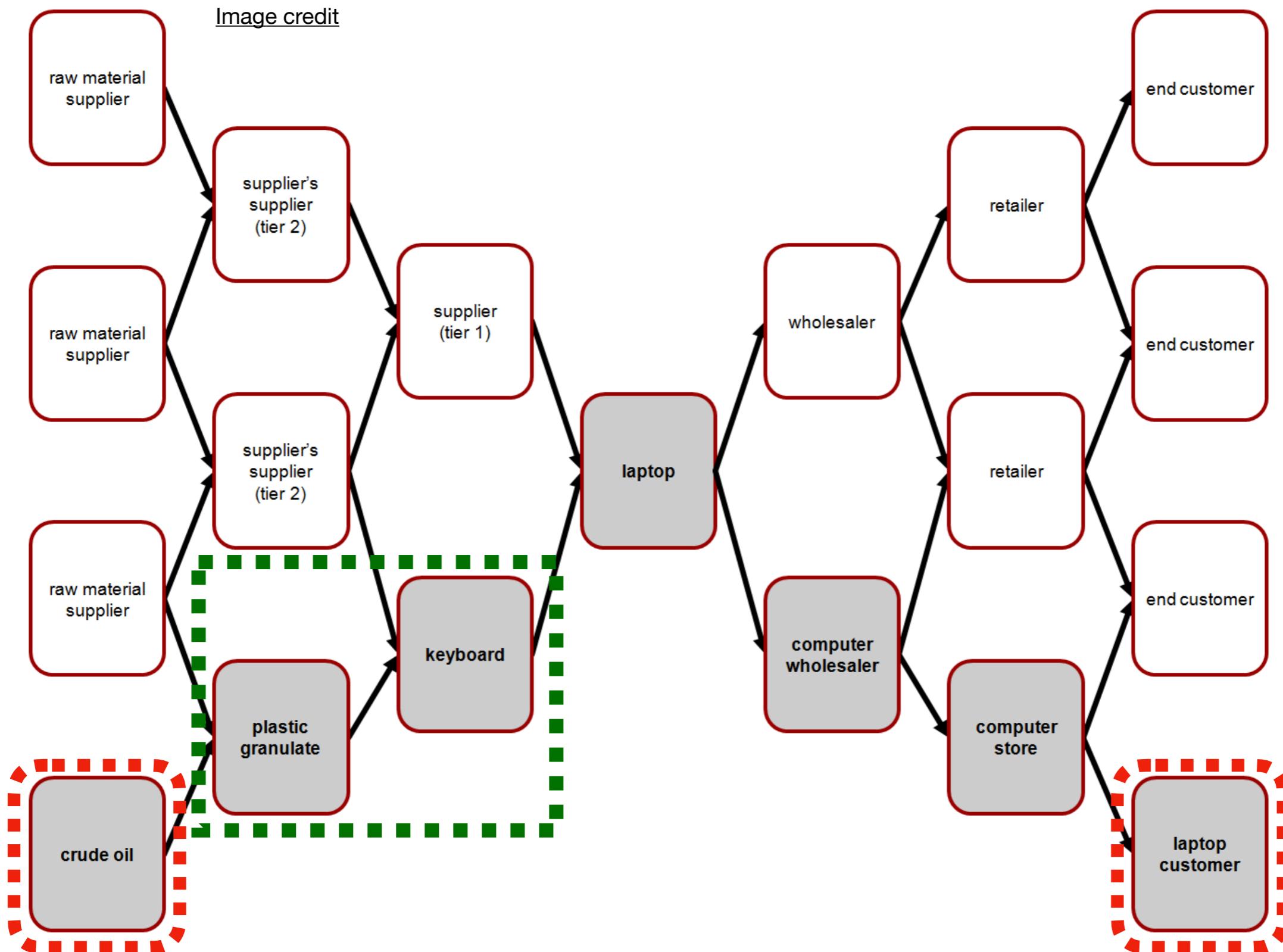
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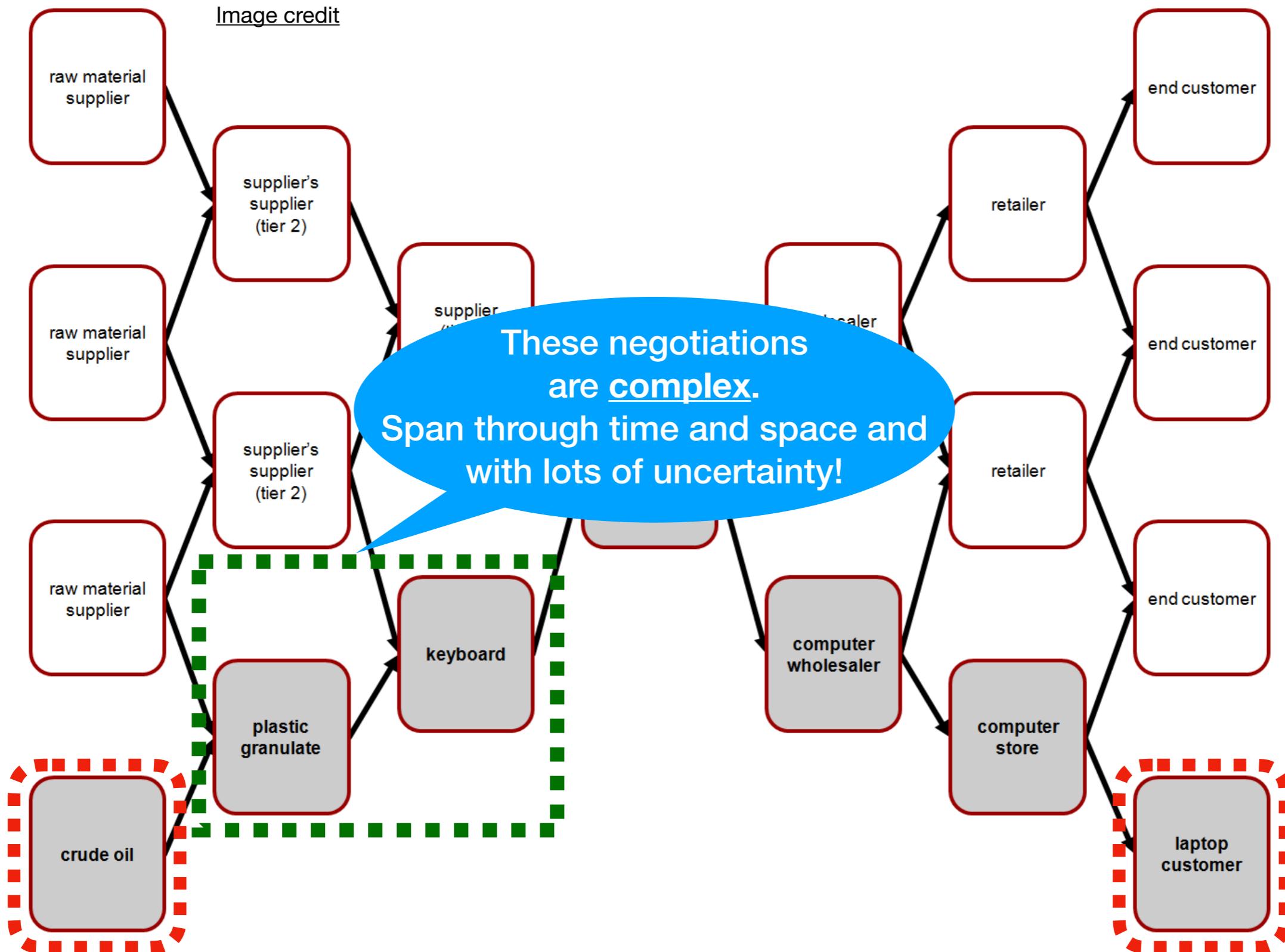
# Supply Chains (cont.)



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# Supply Chains (cont.)



# Negotiation

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NEGOTIATIONS ARE ALL ABOUT CONTROLLING THINGS, ABOUT BEING IN THE DRIVER'S SEAT

A method to achieve **agreements** among **self-interested** actors.

# Negotiation

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## Negotiation Protocol

## Negotiation Strategy

# Negotiation



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**Negotiation Protocol**

Defines how a negotiation is conducted  
e.g., alternate offers and counteroffers, one at a time

**Negotiation Strategy**

# Negotiation



A method to achieve **agreements** among **self-interested** actors.

Ideally, negotiations achieve **win-win** agreements, i.e., actors should be better off after negotiating.

## Negotiation Protocol

Defines how a negotiation is conducted  
e.g., alternate offers and counteroffers, one at a time

## Negotiation Strategy

Defines how an actor behaves during negotiation  
e.g., be willing to accept “worst” deals as time passes

# Automated Negotiation

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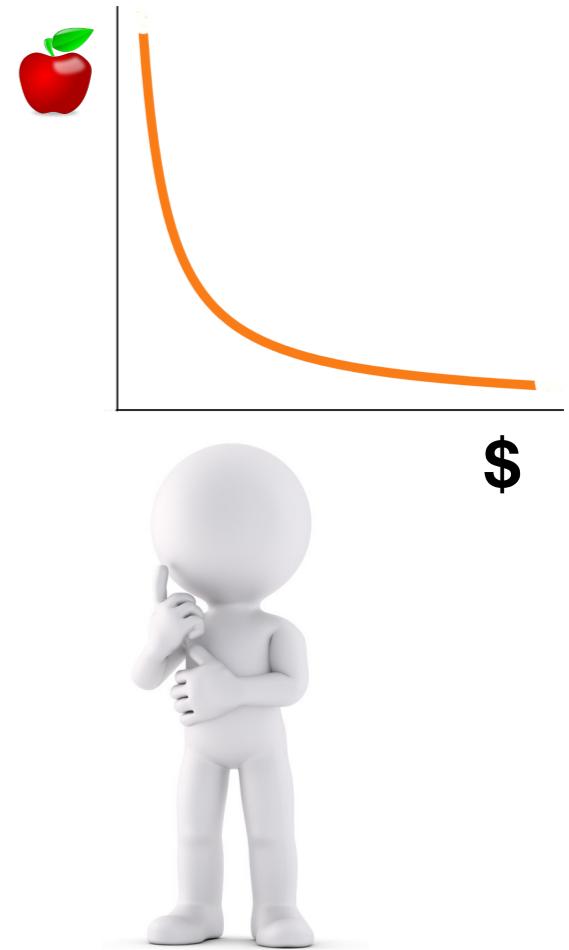
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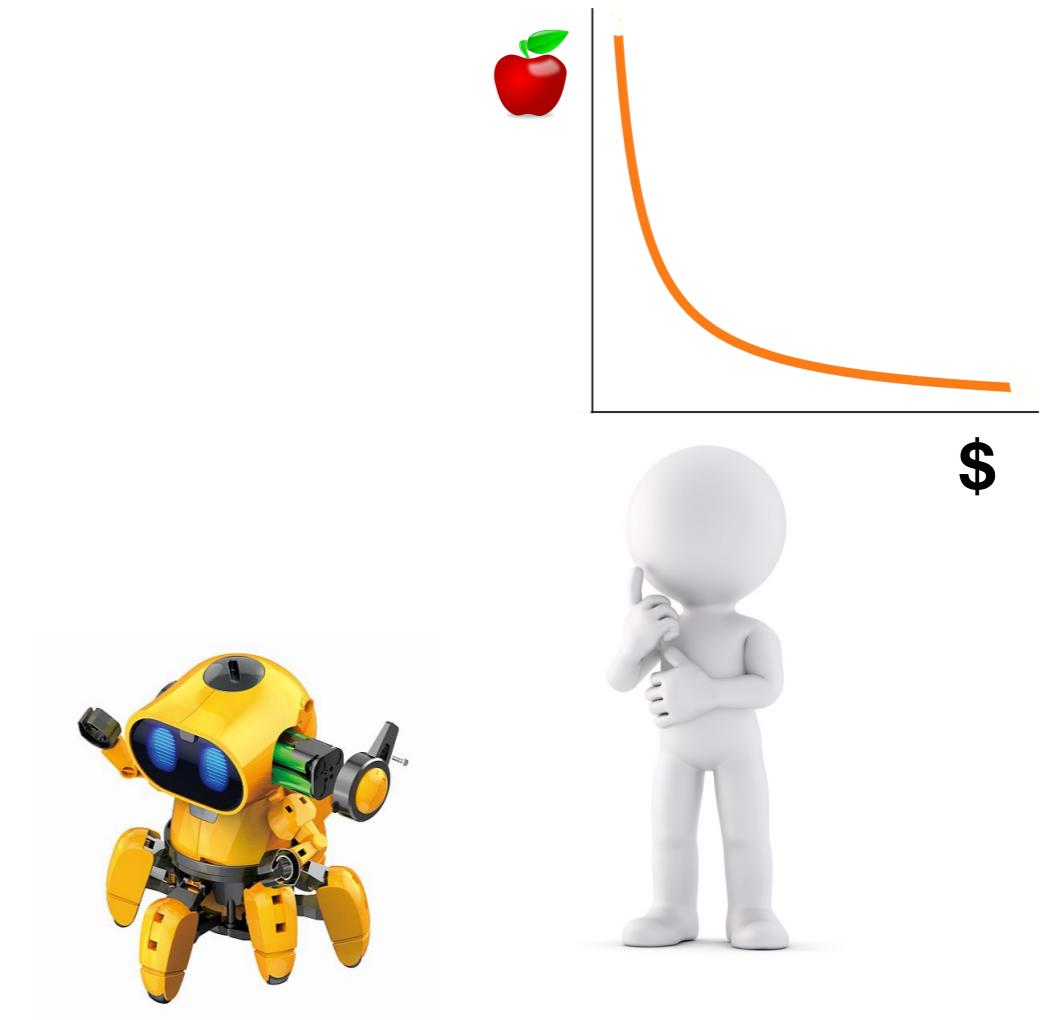
Actor (Institution or Individual) “has” a utility function, i.e., values for outcomes



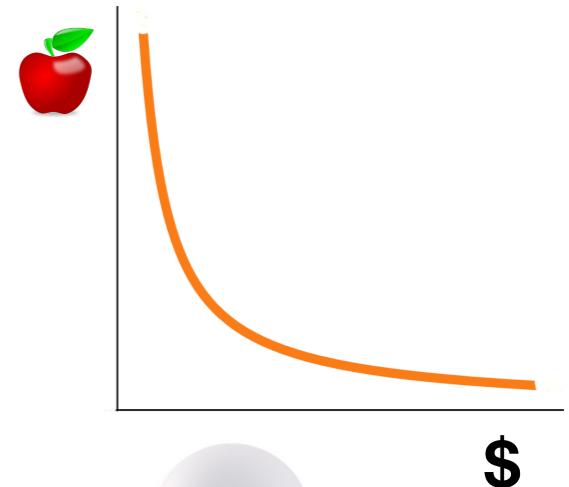
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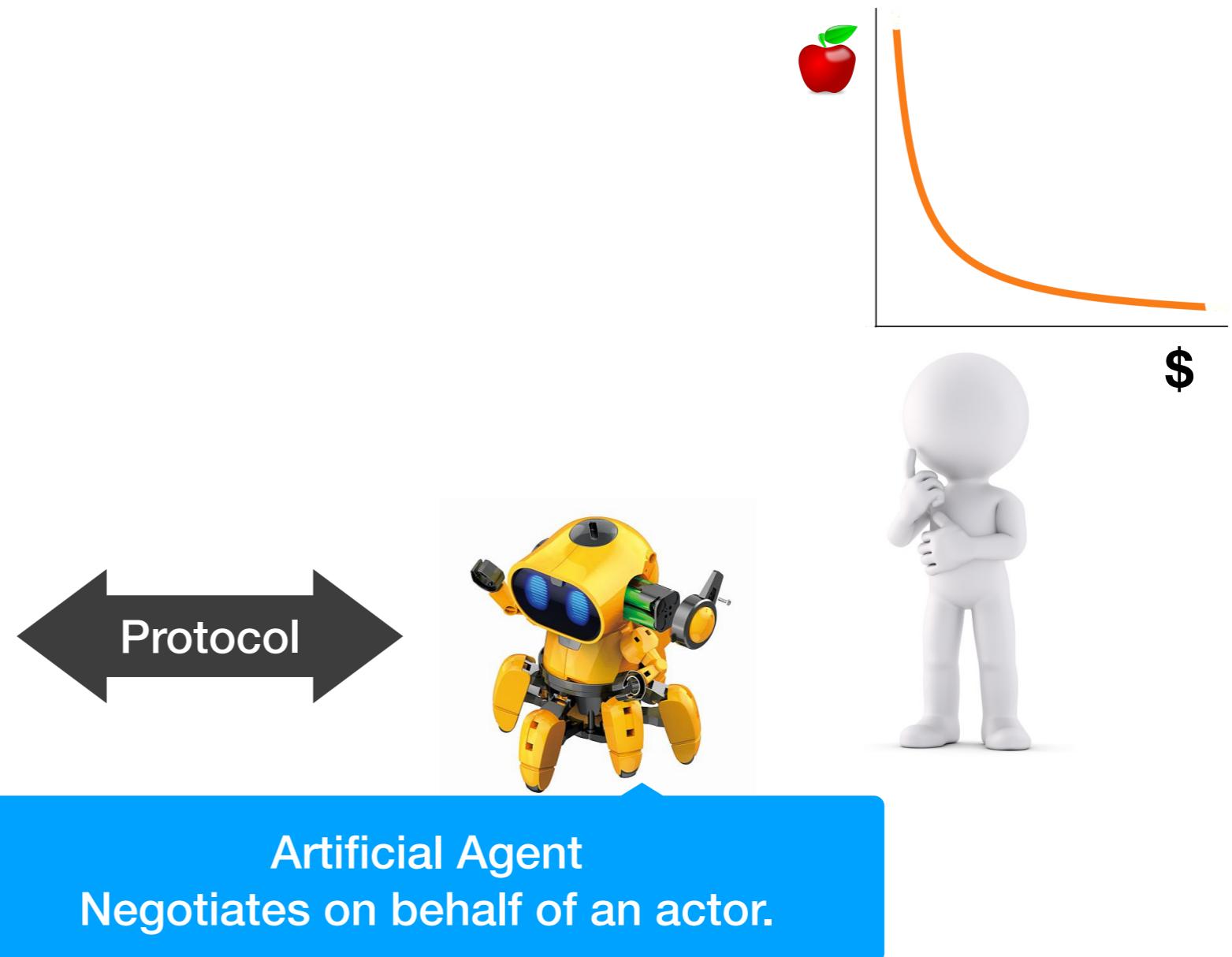


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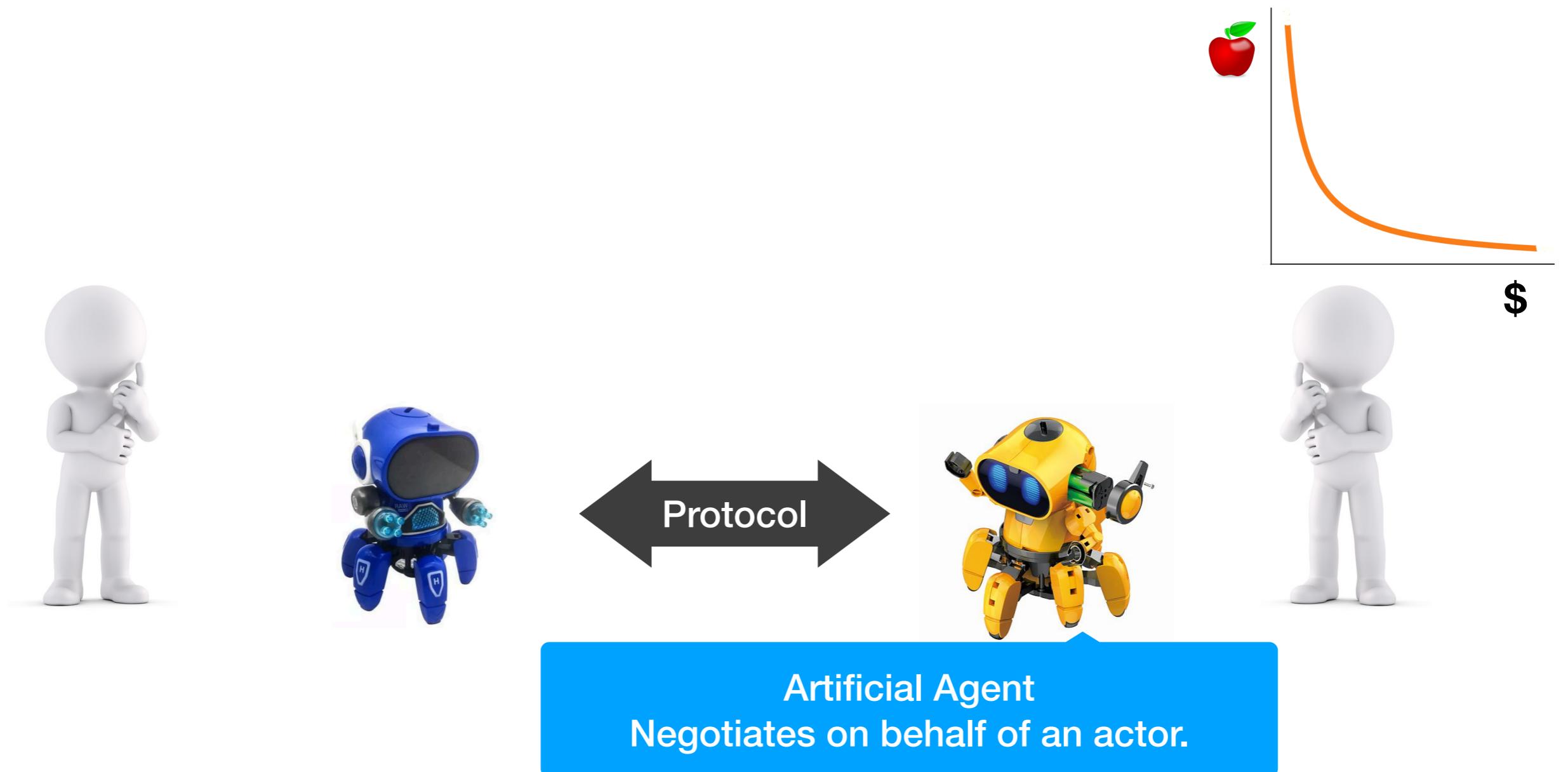


**Artificial Agent**  
Negotiates on behalf of an actor.

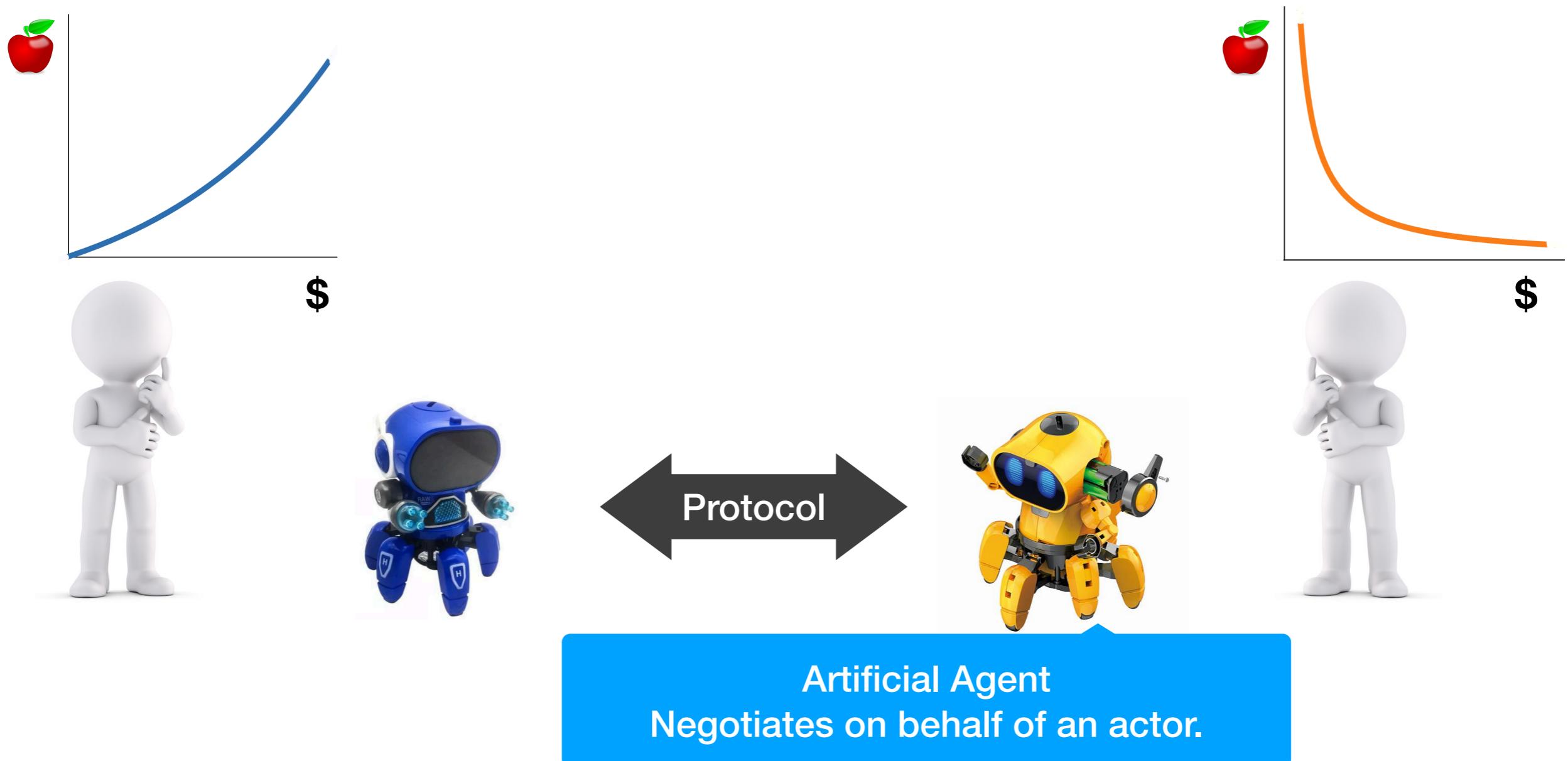
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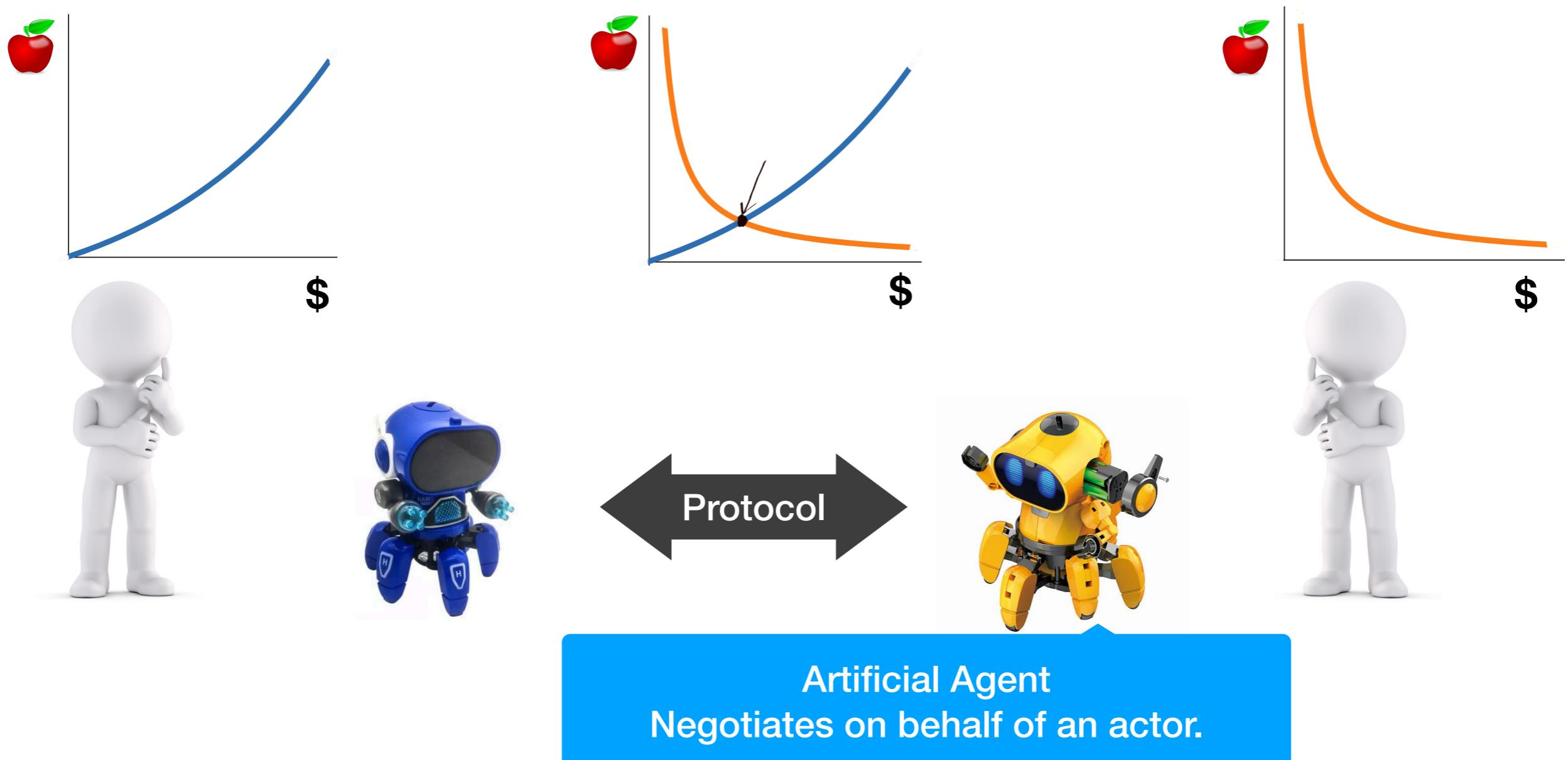
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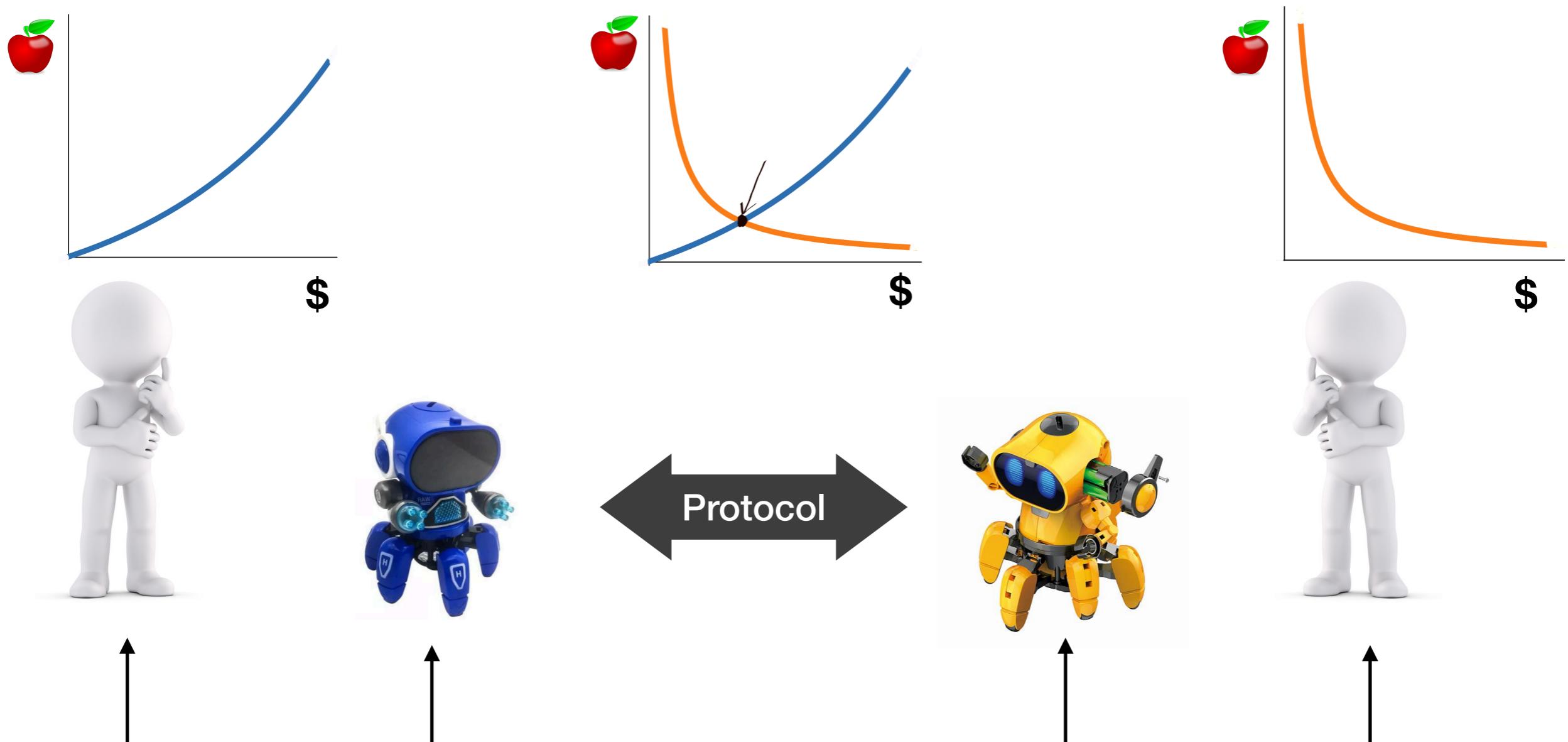
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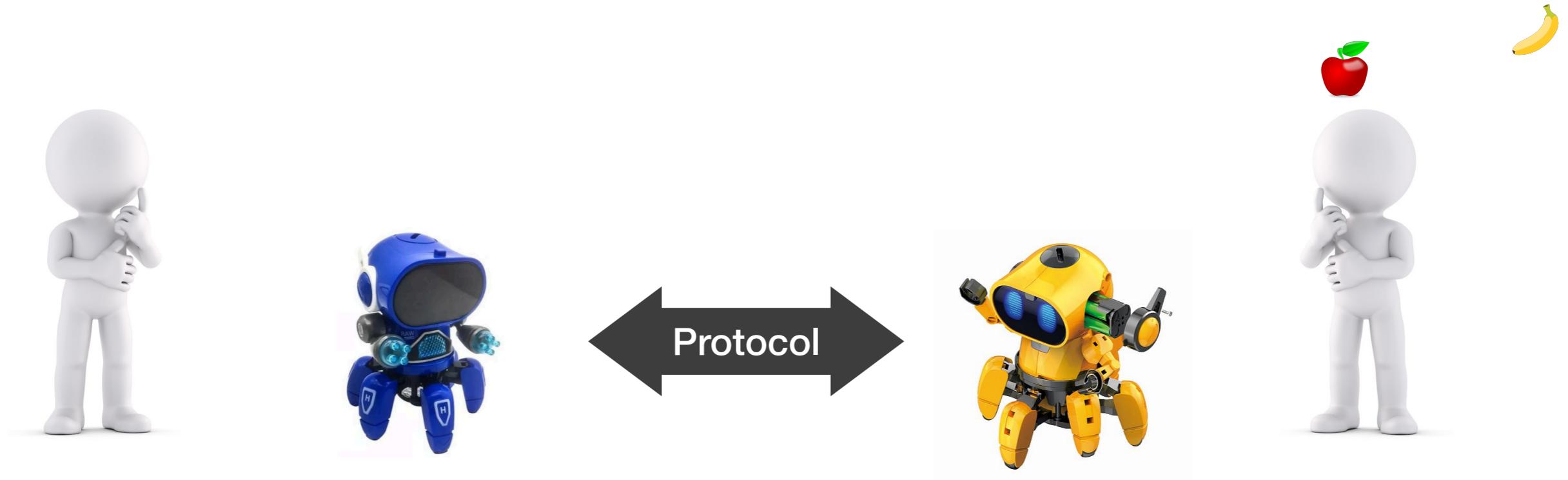


Agent must understand actor and opponent!

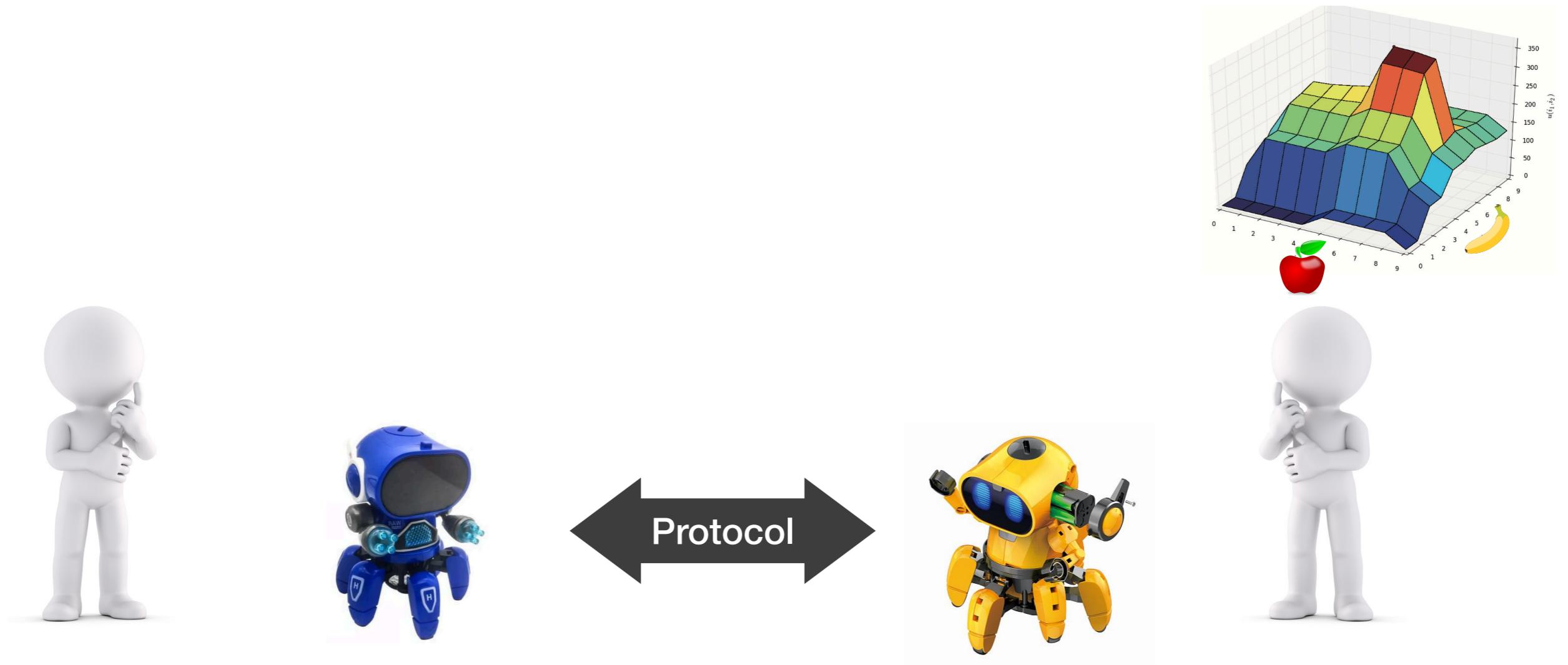
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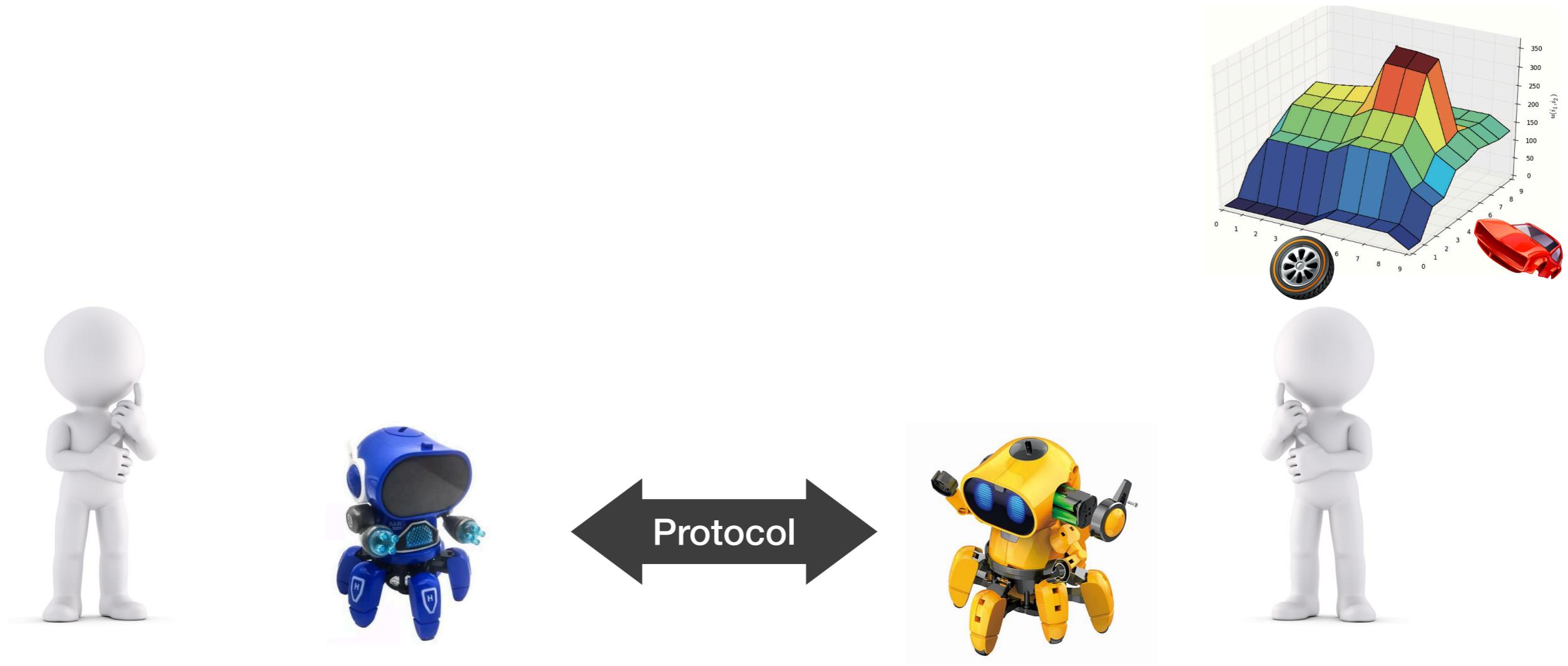
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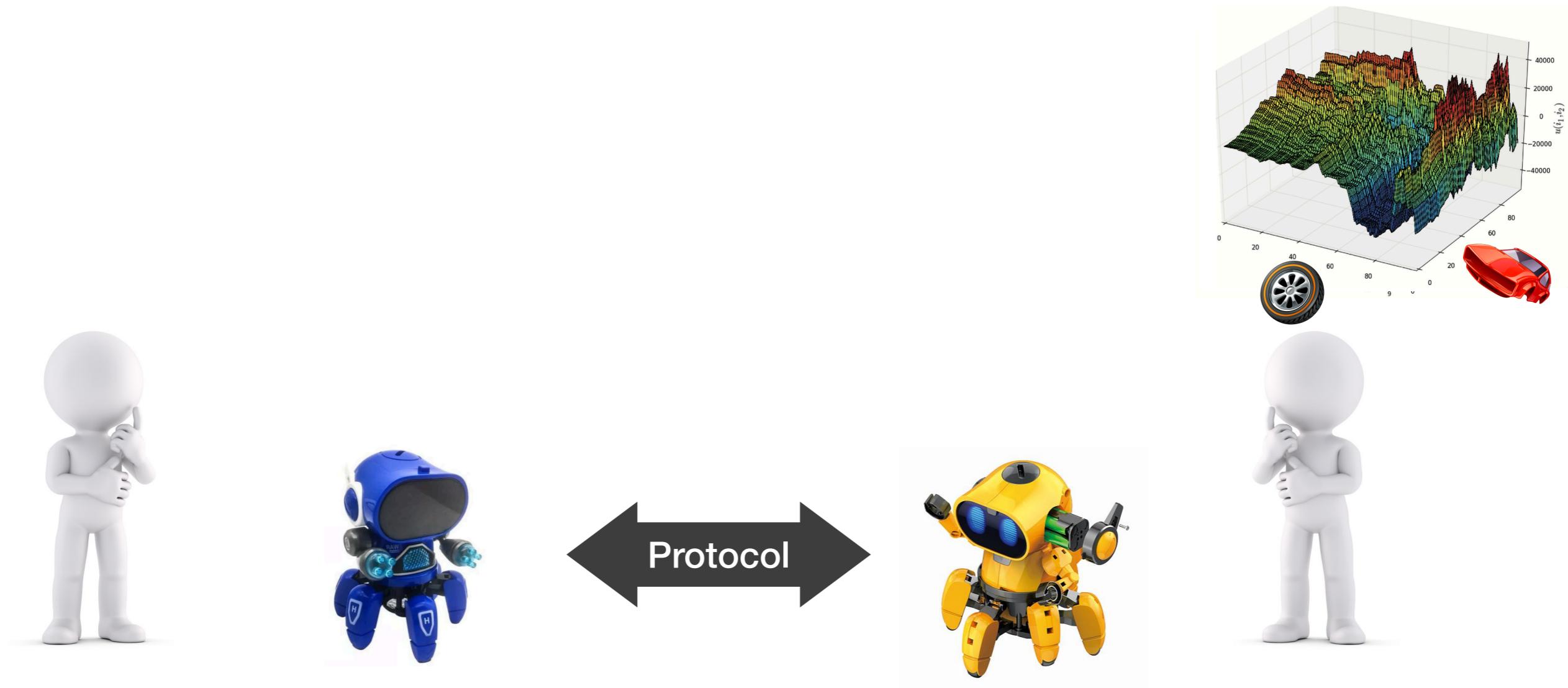
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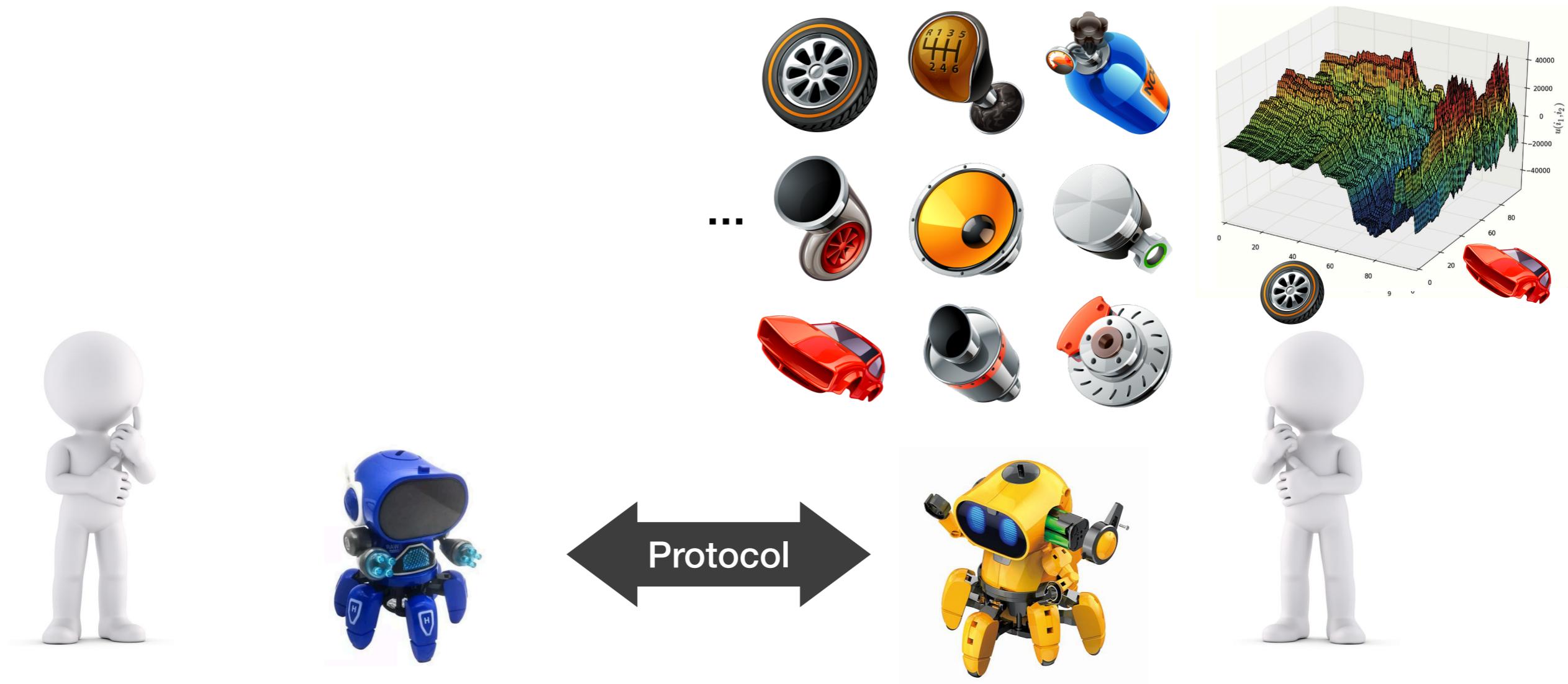
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# Automated Negotiation in Supply Chains

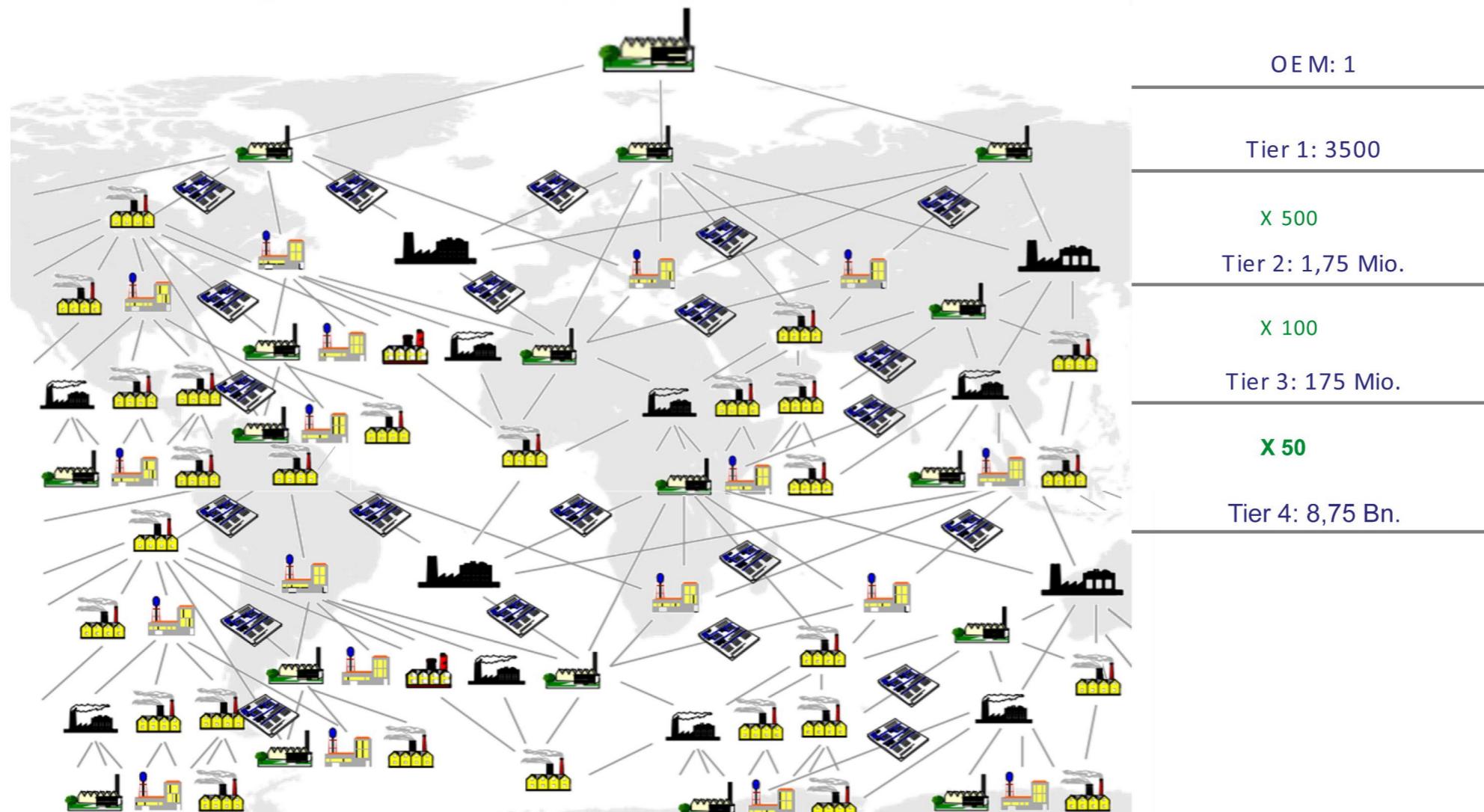
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Why automate negotiations in supply chains?

# Automated Negotiation in Supply Chains

Why automate negotiations in supply chains?

## A complex supply chain



50 to 80% suppliers are coming from outside Europe

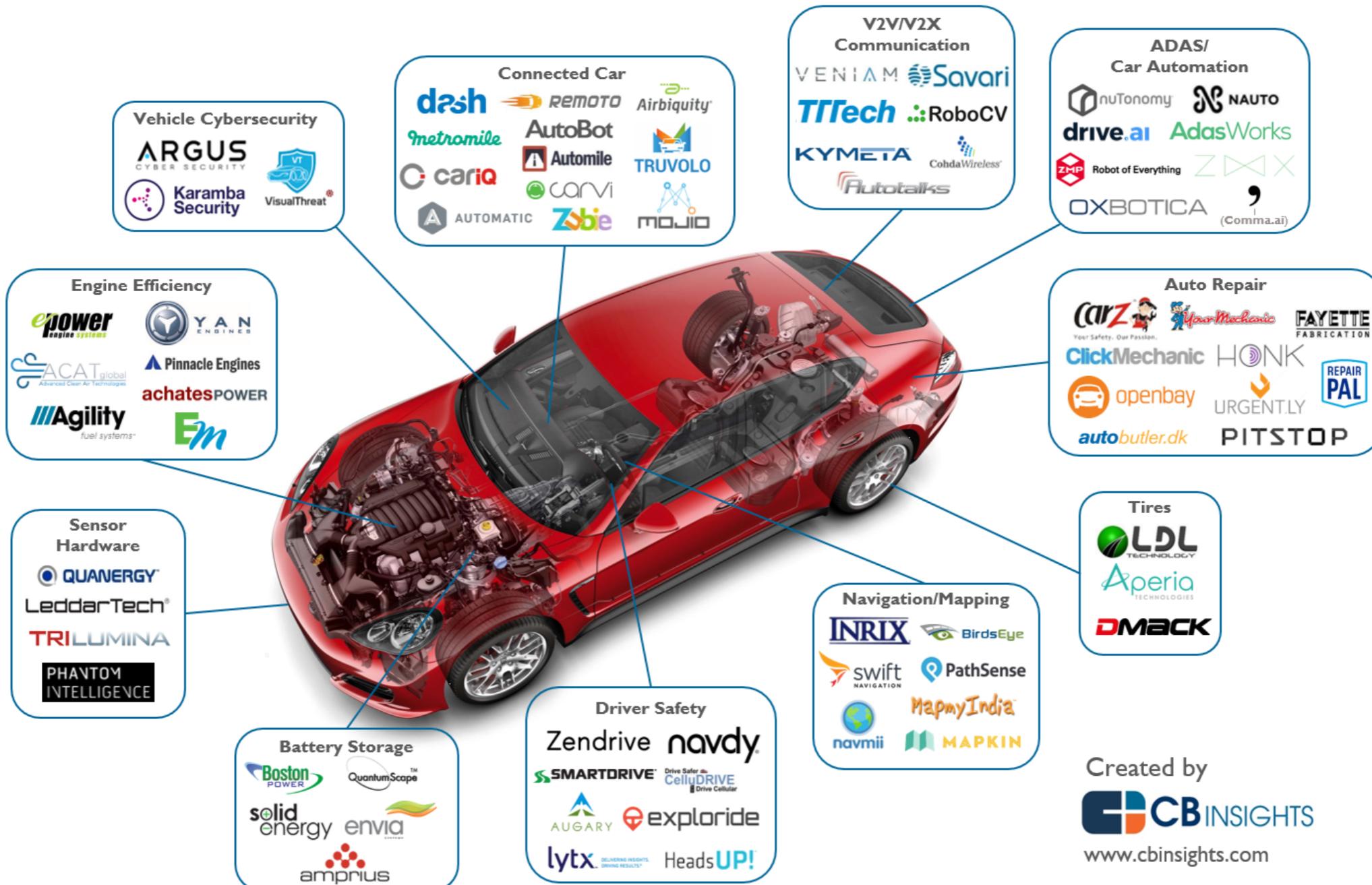
3-8 levels in the Automotive supply chain

Copyright supply chain graphic and statistics: Edited from Timo Unger, Presentation "Automotive Industry & REACH Strategy & Challenges for Authorization", 2016  
Copyright graphic map: [Wikipedia Commons Picture](#) by [Crates](#), used under CC BY / Edited from original

# Automated Negotiation in Supply Chains

Why automate negotiations in supply chains?

## Unbundling The Automobile



Created by  
**CB INSIGHTS**  
www.cbinsights.com

# Automated Negotiation in Supply Chains (cont.)

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- Human negotiations lead to an estimated 17-40% *value leakage* (lots of lost \$\$) in some estimates (KPMG report: <https://bit.ly/3kDRy6I>)

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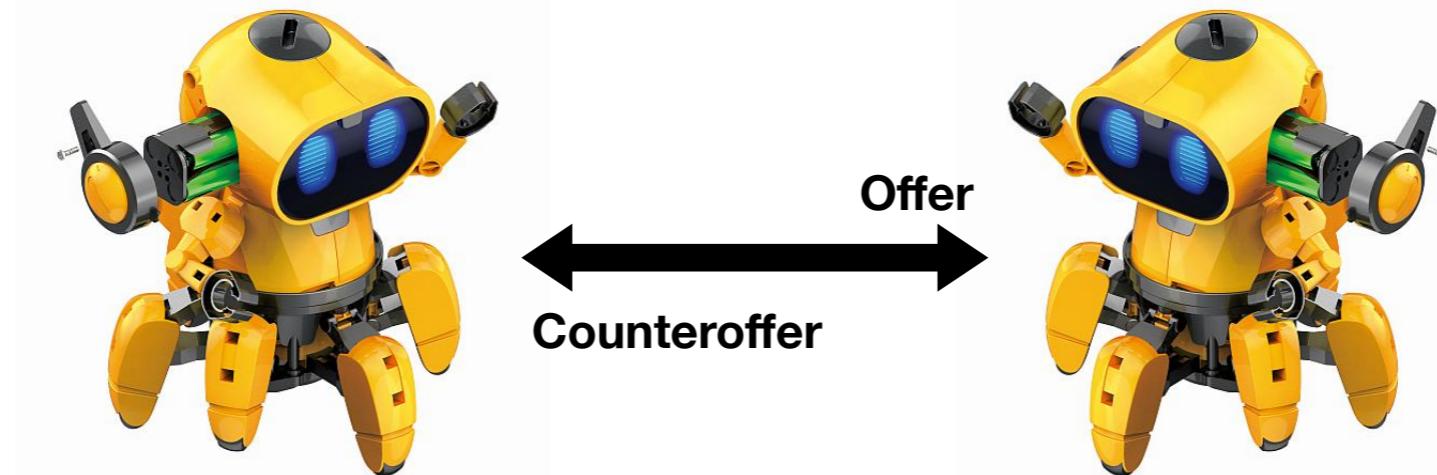
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- Studies suggests that at least 15 companies are working to contract *support systems* (Forrester report: <https://bit.ly/3nwXEaY>)
- A recent proposal to *standardize negotiation protocols* for SCM and other applications (UN/CEFACT Project website: <https://bit.ly/38LOsLX>)

Image credit



## Part 2: Artificial Negotiation Agents for Supply Chains

**How can we develop agents for supply chains?**

**How can we measure our progress?**

**Why (or why not) are games a good idea?**

# Advancing Research via Games



Long-standing tradition of using **games** to advance Artificial Intelligence (AI) research.

# Advancing Research via

Not to be confused with video games!

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# Advancing Research via Games

Long-standing tradition

elligence (AI) research.

[Tweet](#) <https://vimeo.com/389556398>

Garry Kasparov   
@Kasparov63

Many thanks to @RealAAAI, Amy Greenwald, and my illustrious co-panelists today. I'm happy to share my experiences and thought, but they are moving the world forward with their research and innovations. Fascinating conversation!

AAAI @RealAAAI · Feb 11  
The AI History panel is beginning! With @Kasparov63, Michael Bowling, @murraycampbell, Hiroaki Kitano, David Silver, and Amy Greenwald.



7:39 PM · Feb 11, 2020 · TweetDeck

# International Automated Negotiating Agents Competition (ANAC)

From their website, <http://web.tuat.ac.jp/~katfiji/ANAC2020>:

“ANAC provides a unique benchmark for evaluating practical negotiation strategies in multi-issue **domains**”.

## Leagues

- \* Automated Negotiation
- \* Human-Agent
- \* LeagueWerewolf Game
- \* HUMAIN League
- \* **Supply Chain Management**  
**(new, since 2019)**



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A league models some of the challenges that automated negotiation agents face in some domain



# Supply Chain Management League (SCML) - Very Briefly!

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Design and build an **autonomous agent** that **negotiates** on behalf of a **factory manager** situated in a **supply chain** management simulation.

# Supply Chain Manager

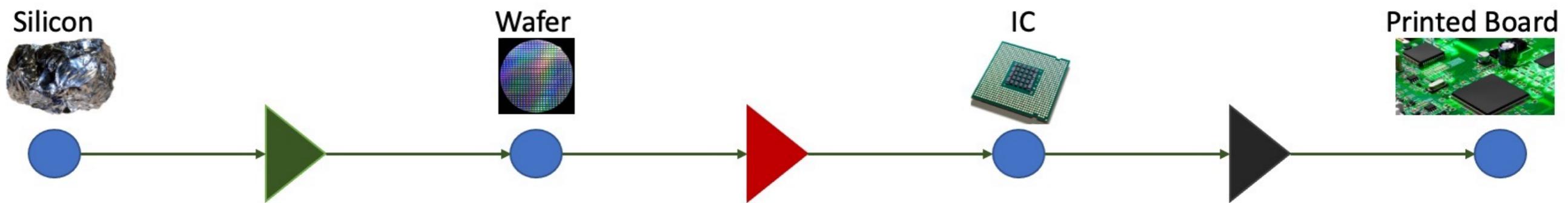
Once deployed in the game, no further changes to the agent can be made.

L) - Very Briefly!

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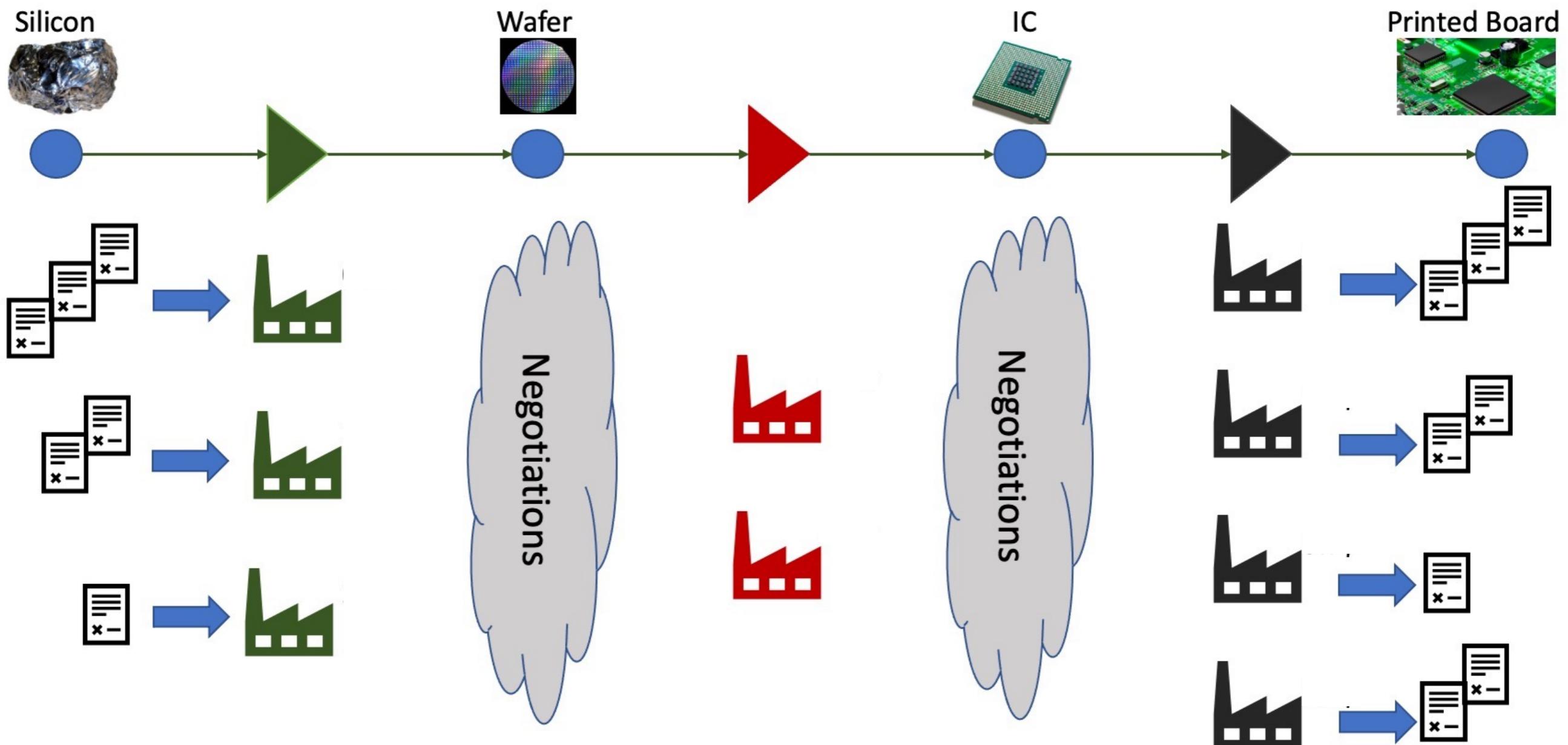
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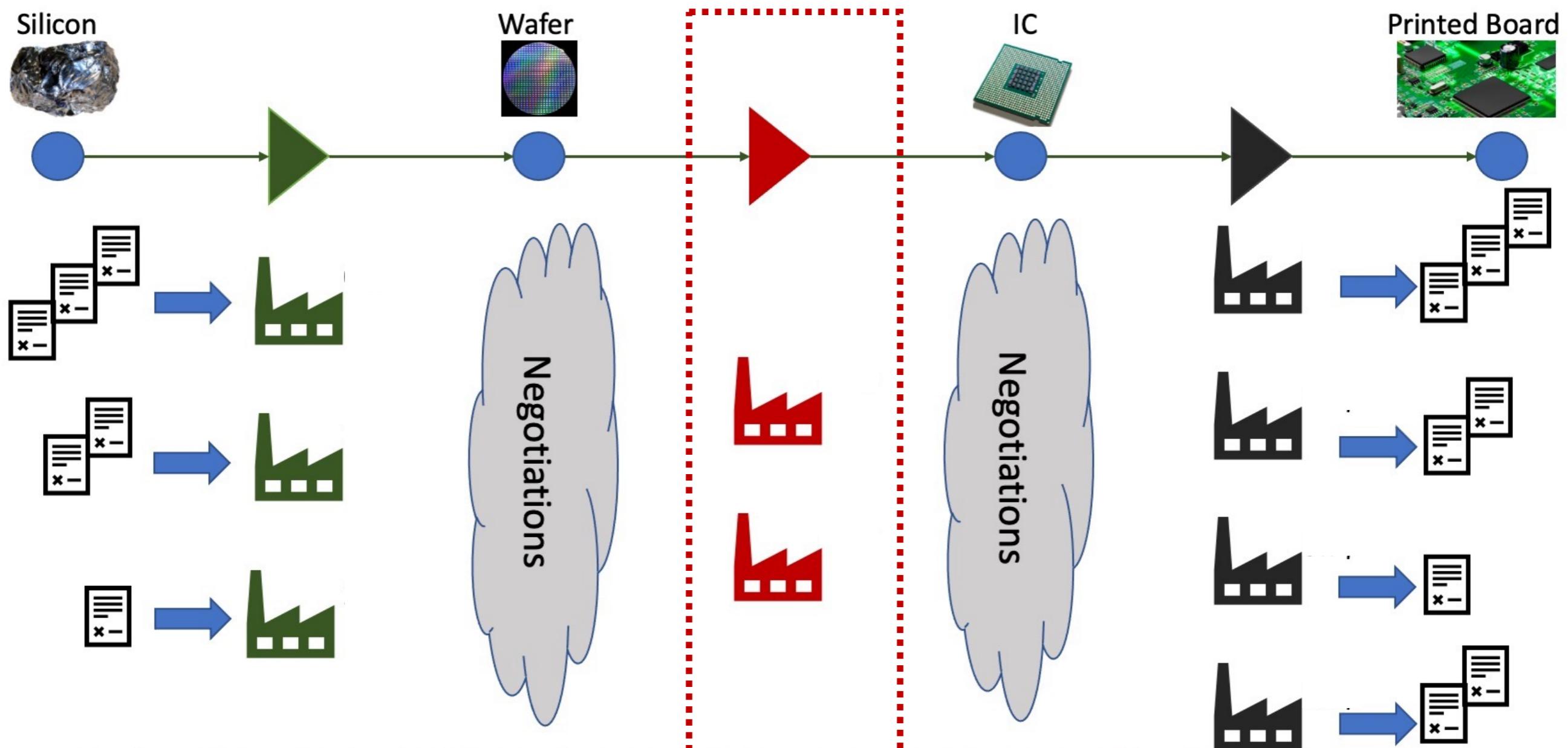
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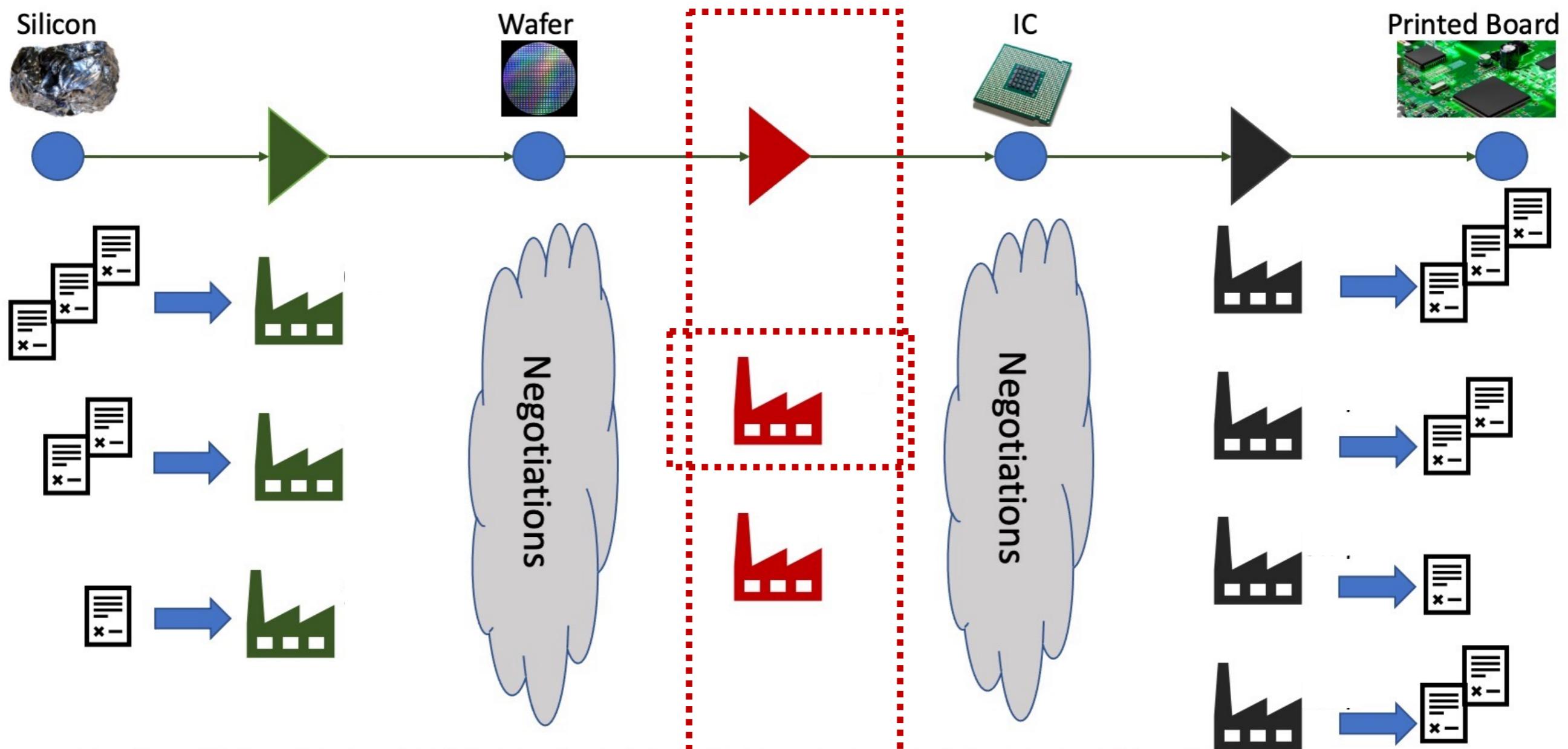
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Resources	
Website	<a href="https://scml.cs.brown.edu/">https://scml.cs.brown.edu/</a>
Code	<a href="https://www.github.com/yasserfarouk/scml">https://www.github.com/yasserfarouk/scml</a>
YouTube Tutorials	<a href="https://tinyurl.com/y5koqxfu">https://tinyurl.com/y5koqxfu</a>
Online Competition	<a href="https://scml.cs.brown.edu">https://scml.cs.brown.edu</a>

# Our Agents for SCML

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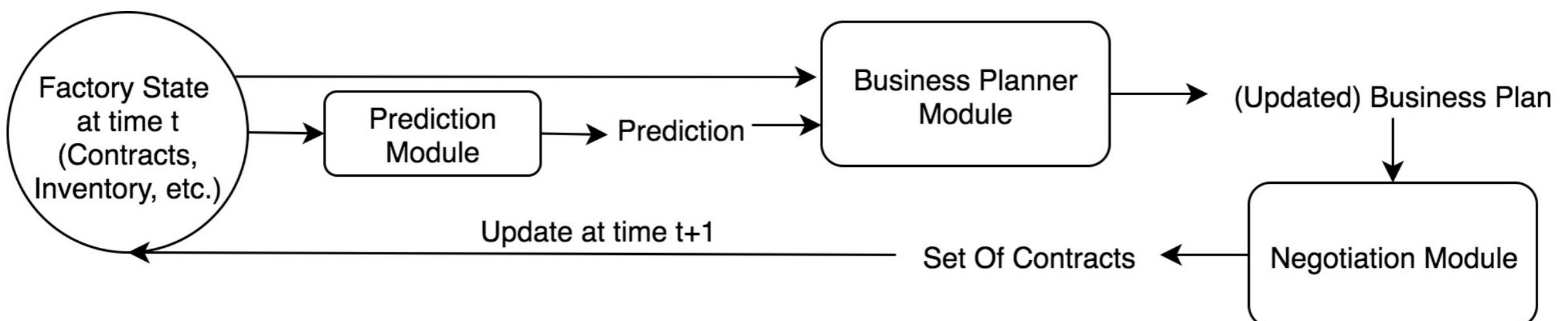
An agent's architecture in 3 modules:

- Prediction
- Business Planner
- Negotiation

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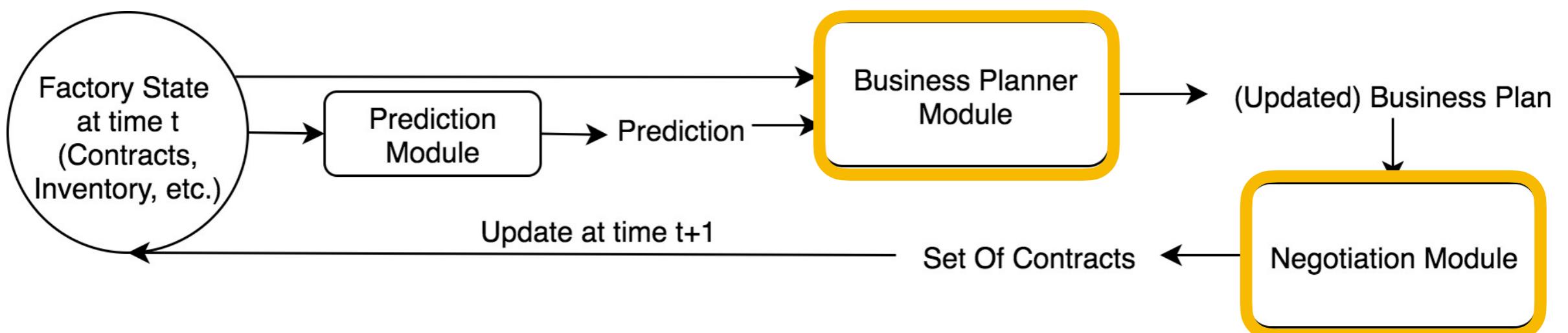
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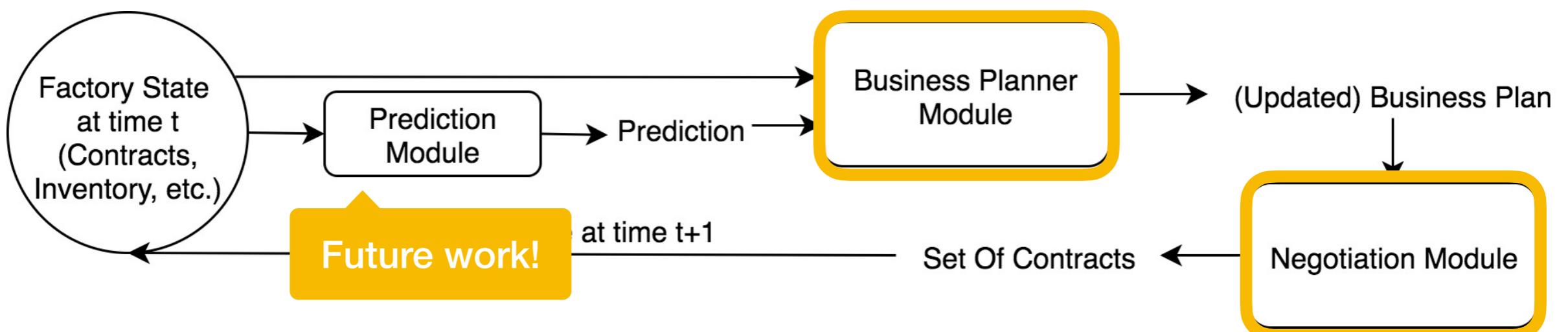
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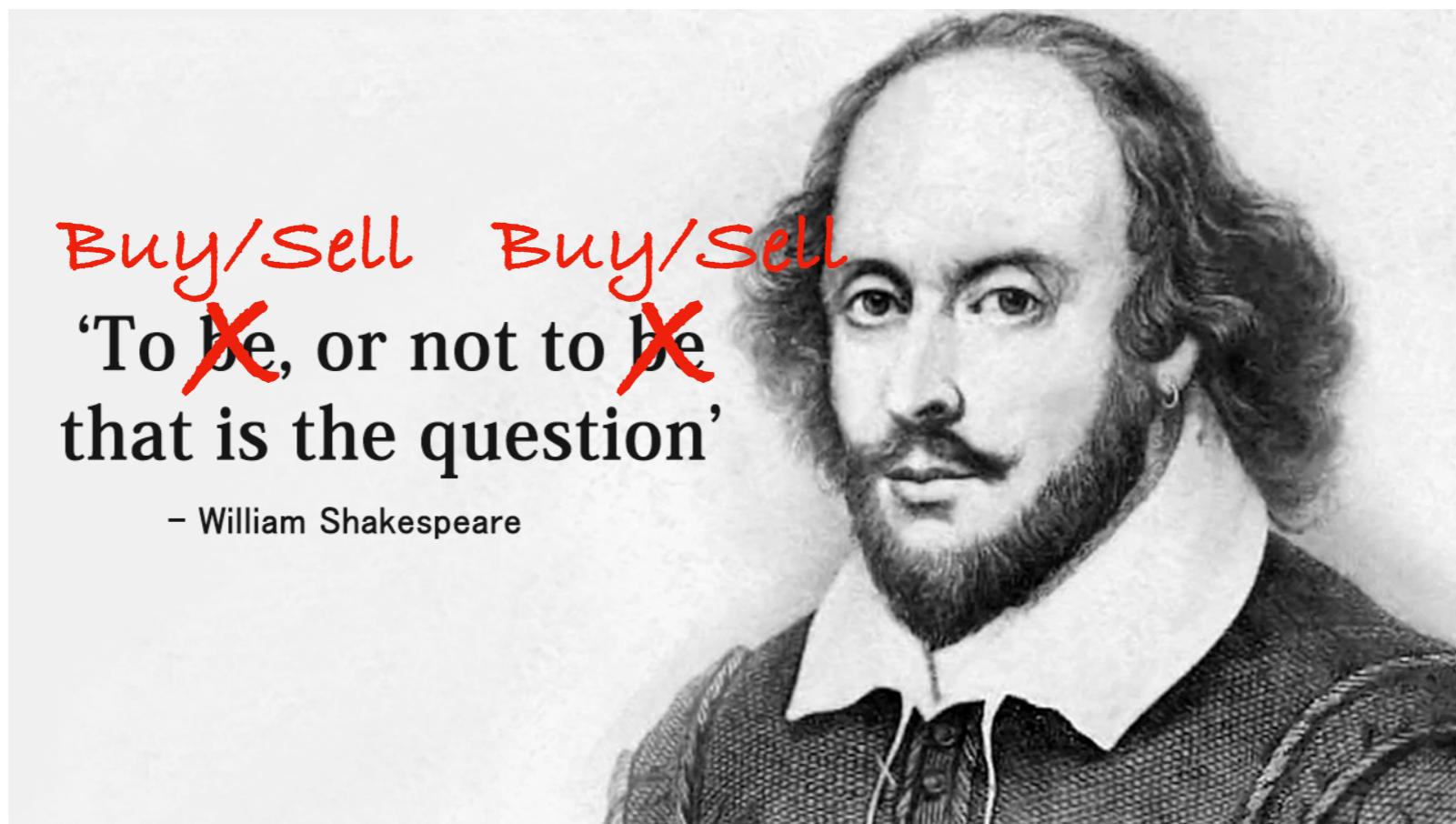
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# Our Agents for SCML - Business Plan

Uncertain **supply** (of raw materials) and **demand** (of finished products).

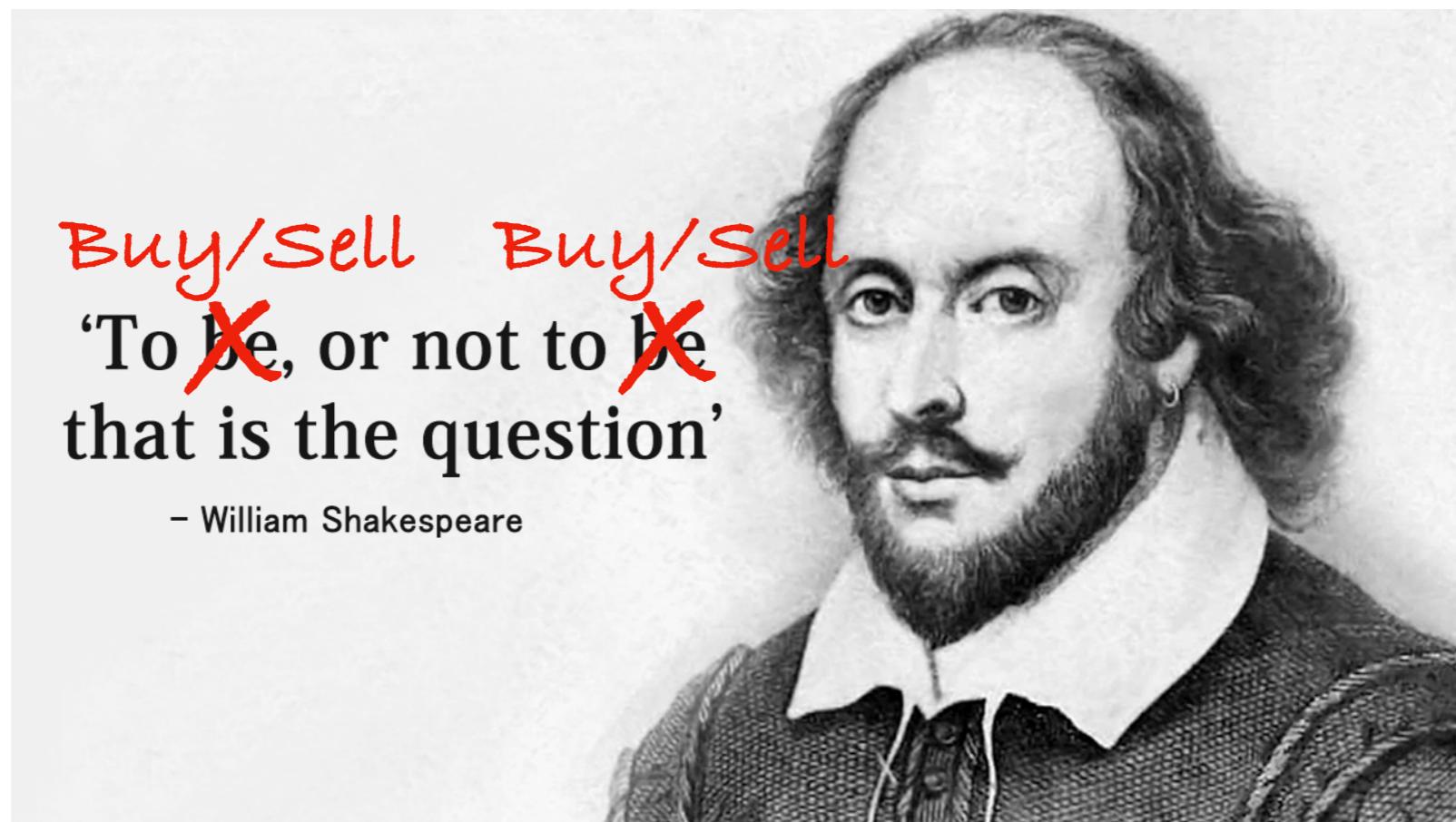
Still, agent needs to **buy** (raw materials) and **sell** (finished products) to earn profit.



# Our Agents for SCML - Business Plan

Uncertain **supply** (of raw materials) and **demand** (of finished products).

Still, agent needs to **buy** (raw materials) and **sell** (finished products) to earn profit.



Let's start simple. Suppose there was no uncertainty. What to do then?

# Our Agents for SCML - Business Plan (cont. 1.)

---

Suppose the agent **knows prices**:

# Our Agents for SCML - Business Plan (cont. 1.)

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raw material,  $p_{raw}$  and finished product,  $p_{product}$

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# Our Agents for SCML - Business Plan (cont. 1.)

Suppose the agent **knows prices**:

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Then, we can formulate the **agent decides!** **maximizing** **agent decides!** as

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In reality, the agent is subject to **supply and demand constraints!**

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In reality, the agent is subject to **supply and demand constraints!**

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Then, we can **reformulate the profit maximizing plan** as

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Then, we can formulate the **agent decides!** **maximizing plan** as

$$\max_{q_{raw}, q_{product}} \{ q_{product} p_{product} - q_{raw} p_{raw} \}$$

In reality, the agent is subject to **supply and demand constraints!**

Suppose the agent **knows quantities**:

supply of raw material,  $Q_{raw}$  and demand of finished product,  $Q_{product}$

Then, we can **reformulate the profit maximizing plan** as

$$\max_{q_{raw}, q_{product}} \{ \min(q_{product}, Q_{product}) p_{product} - \min(q_{raw}, Q_{raw}) p_{raw} \}$$

The  
agent  
decides!

But subject to  
constraints!

The  
agent  
decides!

But subject to  
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# Our Agents for SCML - Business Plan (cont. 2.)

---

But, the agent **does not know** supplied or demanded quantities!

# Our Agents for SCML - Business Plan (cont. 2.)

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But, the agent **does not know** supplied or demanded quantities!

We build **uncertainty models** of these quantities!

# Our Agents for SCML - Business Plan (cont. 2.)

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But, the agent **does not know** supplied or demanded quantities!

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And learn them from gameplay data (e.g., self-play).

# Our Agents for SCML - Business Plan (cont. 2.)

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Expectation!

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The  
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Expectation!

The  
agent  
decides!

Random  
Variable

The  
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Random  
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# Our Agents for SCML - Business Plan (cont. 3.)

---

Ignoring some (ok, a *lot!* :-)) of details, our final agents for 2019/2020 solve this equation

# Our Agents for SCML - Business Plan (cont. 3.)

Ignoring some (ok, a lot! :-)) of details, our final agents for 2019/2020 solve this equation

$$\max_{q_{raw}^t, q_{product}^t} \mathbb{E} \left[ \sum_{t=1}^T \min(q_{product}^t, Q_{product}^t) p_{product}^t - \min(q_{raw}^t, Q_{raw}^t) p_{raw}^t \right]$$

Subject to **inventory control** (cannot sell finished product before procuring raw materials!), and **acts accordingly**.

# Our Agents for SCML - Business Plan (cont. 3.)

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The problem is actually multi-period! **Inventory control** (cannot sell finished product before procuring raw materials!), and **acts accordingly**.

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The problem is actually multi-period! **Inventory control** (cannot sell finished product before procuring raw materials!), and **acts accordingly**.

A **plan** is a sequence  $q_{raw}^t, q_{product}^t$ , for  $t = 1, 2, \dots, T$

**Acts** means to implement the plan.

# Our Agents for SCML - Business Plan (cont. 3.)

Ignoring some (ok, a lot) of constraints, we can solve this equation:

Solving this equation is computationally challenging!  
We efficiently solved it using dynamic programming and other  
algorithmic/AI techniques!

$$\max_{q_{raw}^t, q_{product}^t} \mathbb{E} \left[ \sum_{t=1}^T \min(q_{product}^t, Q_{product}^t) p_{product}^t - \min(q_{raw}^t, Q_{raw}^t) p_{raw}^t \right]$$

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# Our Agents for SCML - Aspiration Negotiation

---

Implementing the plan **via** negotiations.



# Our Agents for SCML - Aspiration Negotiation

Implementing the plan **via** negotiations.

Actor (Institution or Individual) has! a utility function, i.e., values for outcomes

The plan can be used as a “**utility function**”. How?



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High (low) utility for negotiations that drive the agent closer (farther) to **fulfilling** its plan.



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**Aspiration Negotiator!** (Time-based strategy, Faratin et.al. [4])

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Start with some **aspiration level** (minimum utility willing to accept).

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Start with some **aspiration level** (minimum utility willing to accept).

To start, do not accept offers below the aspiration level.

As time passes, **concede** some utility hoping to reach an agreement!

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**Aspiration Negotiator!** (Time-based strategy, Faratin et.al. [4])

Start with some parameters (e.g., initial aspiration level, how much to concede, etc.) to accept).

To start, do nothing (or something else).

Lots of unspecified parameters!

How to set initial aspiration level?

How fast to concede?

As time passes, try to reach an agreement! Lots of opportunities for further research!

# Our Agents for SCML - Results So Far

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ANAC2019 Home Overviews Program Finalists Automated Agents Human-Agent Supply Chain Management Diplomacy Werewolf Game Prizes Organizations Sponsors

## Winners

### Automated Agents League

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Winner	AgentGG	Shaobo Xu and Peihao Ren	University of Southampton	UK
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1st	Draft	Bohan Xu and Shadow Pritchard and James Hale and Sandip Sen	University of Tulsa	USA
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### Supply Chain Management League

#### Standard Category

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#### Sabotage Category

Honorable Mention Award	Monopoly	Ryoto Ishikawa and Yuta Hosokawa	Tokyo University of Agriculture and Technology	Japan
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The screenshot shows the ANAC2019 website with a red box highlighting the "ANAC2019" navigation item. The page displays results for various leagues:

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  - MONTY HALL: BROWN UNIVERSITY'S AGENT FOR THE SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT LEAGUE OF THE 2020 AUTOMATED NEGOTIATING AGENTS COMPETITION**  
Enrique Areyan Viqueira, Edward Li, Daniel Silverston, Amrita Sridhar, James Tsatsaros, Andrew Yuan, and Amy Greenwald
  - OVERVIEW.** At a high level, MontyHall's strategy is to buy inputs, immediately convert them into outputs, and then sell said outputs. Monty begins its day by computing a business plan. For each day into the future (up to some
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**Monty Hall: Brown University's Agent for the Supply Chain Category**  
**2020 AUTOMATED NEGOTIATING AGENTS COMPETITION**  
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# Our Agents for SCML - Results So Far

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## [scml] Results of the Qualifications Round of ANAC 2020 SCML League (Standard) ➤ Brown x



**Yasser Mohammad (SCML Organization Committee)** yasserfarouk@gmail.com via lists.cs.brown.edu  
to scml ▾

Wed, Aug 26, 6:29 AM



Dear Enrique Areyan

We are happy to inform you that your agent MontyHall was qualified for the final round of ANAC 2020 SCM league ( Standard track ).

We received 22 submissions, 19 entered the qualifications after removing agents that did not fully comply with all submission requirements.

Twelve agents were qualified for the Standard track and 6 agents were qualified for the Collusion track.

We are looking forward to seeing (or virtually meeting) you at IJCAI 2020 in January.

The final results of the league will be announced at the ANAC session as part of IJCAI's official competitions track.

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Best Regards

Yasser Mohammad

representing the SCML Organization Committee

Sent via [Mail Merge for Gmail](#)

ugrads!

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Reply

Reply all

Forward

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## **Part 3: Future Research Plans**

---

**We are no where near done!**  
**There are lots of research directions to pursue...**  
**A bit about other related and tangential research.**

# Future Plans

---

We have an **agent architecture**, but many pieces need more work!

This research is **open-ended** and **interdisciplinary** by nature!



# Future Plans (cont.)



Our current prediction module (prices, supply, demand) just counts data.

Can we use machine learning techniques that provably “learn” from data?

In my research, I work on developing **machine learning** algorithms that **provably** learn concepts from data.

Improved Algorithms for Learning Equilibria in Simulation-Based Games.

**Enrique Areyan Viqueira**, Cyrus Cousins, Amy Greenwald.

19th International Conference on Autonomous Agents and MultiAgent Systems (AAMAS20).

# Future Plans (cont. 2.)



Are current rules of the ANAC SCML game the “right” ones?

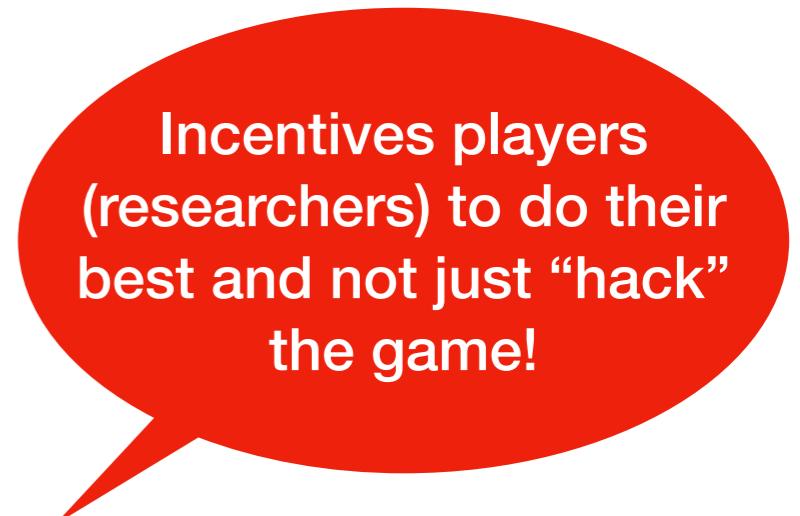
In my research, I also develop machine learning techniques to design games (**mechanism design**). This is a **big**, open opportunity!

[Empirical Mechanism Design: Designing Mechanisms from Data.](#)

**Enrique Areyan Viqueira**, Cyrus Cousins, Yasser Mohammad, Amy Greenwald.

Uncertainty in Artificial Intelligence (UAI19).

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## Future Plans (cont. 3.)

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The techniques and ideas developed for ANAC SCML extend **beyond!**

Other domains we have tackled: **advertisement exchange markets.**

On Approximate Welfare-and Revenue-Maximizing Equilibria for Size-Interchangeable Bidders.

**Enrique Areyan Viqueira**, Amy Greenwald, Victor Naroditskiy.

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As our economies grow more sophisticated, multi-agent systems research will become **even more important.**



# Collaborators

---



**Amy Greenwald**



**Yasser Mohammad**



**Cyrus Cousins**



**Marilyn George**

# Collaborators

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**Amy Greenwald**



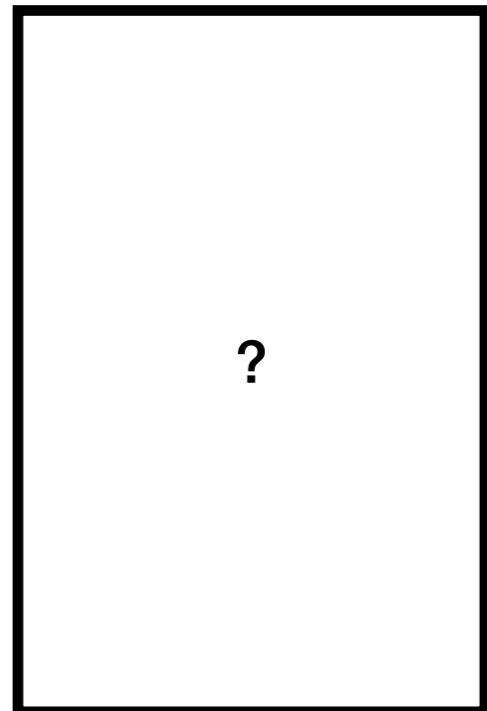
**Yasser Mohammad**



**Cyrus Cousins**

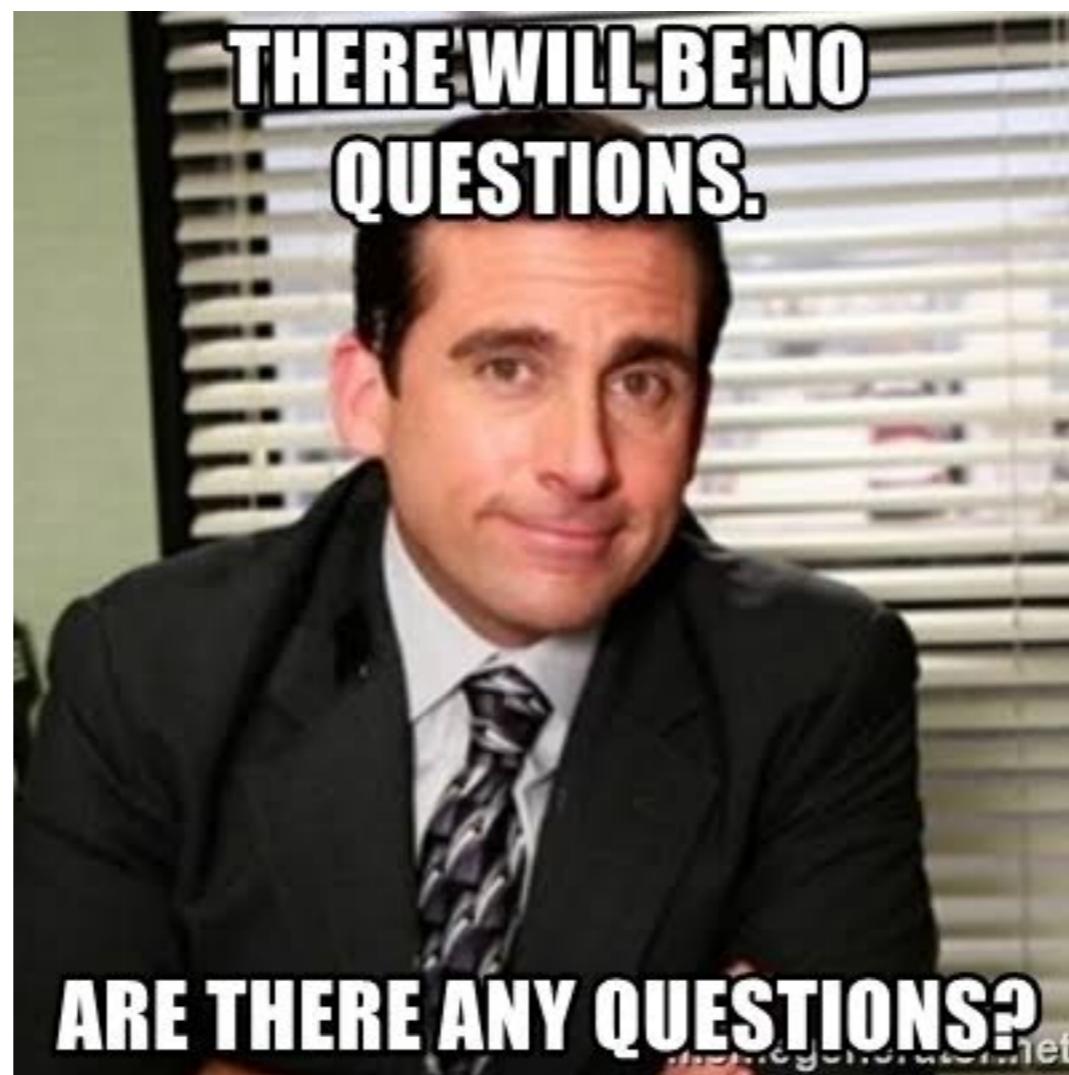


**Marilyn George**



**Future Collaborators!**  
**Students**  
**Colleagues**  
**Researchers**  
**All are welcome!**

Thank you for your attention!



# References

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