Artificial Intelligence for Simulation

Tank War Report

Introduction

Our group consists of six individuals, these are: Daniel, Nikesh, Theo, Phillip, Sam and Steve. We have been given a task based around a program provided where there are two tanks, both of which have a ‘DumbTank’ class assigned to them and we need to implement a new ‘SmartTank’ class using the techniques we have learnt throughout the module. We are going to use a finite state machine that will allow our tank to perform multiple different actions when required to do so, allowing it to choose the best strategy available at the time. We hope to create several SmartTanks all equipped with unique characteristics which each set of characteristics are tested to check how effective they are against the other tanks.

Project Management

To help us manage our project we have decided to use the ‘Agile’ software development methodology. This means that we will be doing each part of the project in short sprints with each sprint having its own individually set targets, so that we can set goals at different points throughout the assignment depending on what needs to be done and which parts we need to focus on. As well as this we plan to incorporate the scrum methodology, which will allow us to work together to break down the end goal into smaller targets for each week organising what needs to be done. Since we had meetings at the start of each session this would allow us to keep track of how much progress we have made in each area as well as receive feedback from other members of the group since each area would be assigned to specific people. For these Scrum meetings we would keep track of attendance as this allowed us to monitor who was coming to the meetings and keep up with what the others are doing.

Insert Scrum

To help us keep track of who is working on each area we used Github which allowed us to upload all the files into a single repository so we could keep them in a single place whilst still all having access to them, Github also allowed us to create a projects page which would let us create each individual task and assign the relevant person to it whilst also tracking if it has been started, in progress or if it is completed. Github helped us with seeing what the other people have worked on and also what has not yet been started so that we could begin to work on those areas.

As well as using Github we created a Gantt chart as well which allowed us to set goals early on in the projects lifecycle for both what we wanted to finish and when we wanted the goal to be finished by. Meaning it gave us the ability to split up the project into more smaller set goals with time-based targets that each of the members had to complete and that made sure we were always on track and that we were able to complete the project in time for the submission date whilst giving each individual part of the project enough time to work on their tasks.

Insert Gantt chart

Finite State Machine

Within our Finite State Machine, we plan on having multiple states which will change depending on when certain variables are met within the program. Examples of these which can include but is not limited to the health percentage of the tank or whether a target has been found in the line of sight. Using these different rules, we can make the tank change its state to another state which would boost the efficiency levels of the Tanks performance.

Here are some of the notes we had initially made:

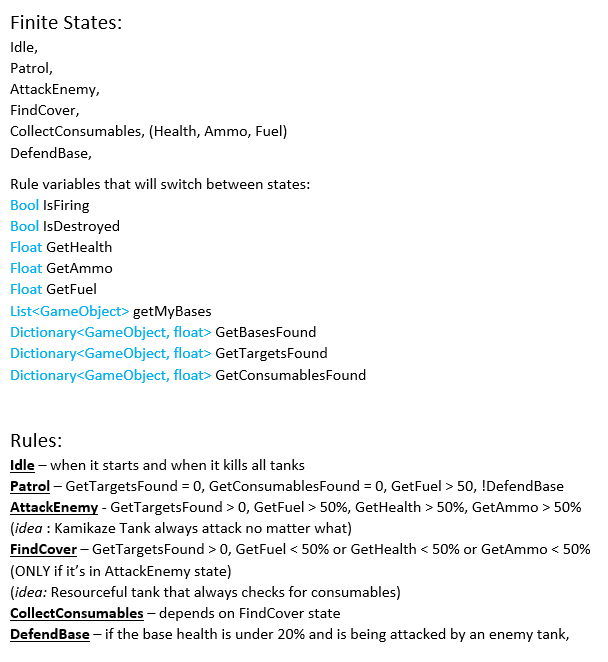


Fig [1]

Insert UML

We believed the states we have chosen are ideal as it will allow the tank to switch between many states whilst also not missing out any functionality.

The Idle state will be used for when the game is initially started and once the game has concluded.

The Patrol state will be used when it is searching for enemies or locating consumables and has not yet found/identified them. In the patrol state the tank will just continue to move around until a target has been found.

The AttackEnemy state is used when an enemy has been located but the tanks health, fuel and ammo are not low enough to begin to run. In the AttackEnemy state the tank will begin to move towards the enemy tank and once the tank is close enough, it will begin to fire until one of the rules are broken and then it will switch to a different state.

The FindCover state is used when the tanks health, fuel or ammo are low and in the FindCover state the tank will try to flee to behind cover getting out of sight of the enemy before then searching for consumables.

The CollectConsumables state is used when a consumable has been found in the Patrol state and it will then go pick up the consumable.

The DefendBase state is used when the SmartTanks base is under attack and the tank will return to its base in order to defend it from the DumbTank.

We later changed the FindCover state to Flee as this made more logical sense to our group. The reason behind this was due to the reduced amount of cover available on the map and this meant that fleeing was a more suitable option to try and get away from the DumbTank by creating more distance rather than trying to hide behind a tree or rock. We also discovered that it would make more sense for our tank to instead defend the base rather than just flee because if it flees that would leave the base open to attack.

Alternate AI States

We plan on adding alternative AI states with different rule sets in the finite state machine as this will allow us to test multiple different strategies out whilst seeing which one is the most effective, some of these ideas are:

Kamikaze Tank: Will continue to attack even if its resource levels are low. The AttackEnemy state rules (as seen in Fig [1]) would be changed so that GetFuel, GetHealth and GetAmmo are irrelevant and it just continues to attack no matter how low its resources are. The idea behind this tank is it will always be attacking the enemy tank hoping to destroy it before it gets destroyed itself.

Resourceful Tank: Will always prioritise keeping consumables full. The AttackEnemy and FindCover state rules (as seen in Fig [1]) would be changed so that the GetFuel, GetHealth and GetAmmo values would be set at a threshold of 120% whilst it is below this threshold it will Patrol until it finds consumables. This tank will aim to win by simply outlasting the other tank whilst also defending itself when attacked, this will be more effective after the later change where the tanks explode when they have no fuel left.

Defensive Tank: Will always be in cover, attacking when it is safe too, defending another tank (if multiple tanks on field). The FindCover state rule (seen in Fig [1]) would be the highest rule for this tank next being AttackEnemy (seen in Fig [1]) these rules would be switched depending on several dependences (in enemies’ line of sight, behind an object, if we have enough ammo and what our health is on. GetFuel, GetHealth and GetAmmo values would be at a threshold of 30%

Due to changes we later made to the finite state machine with no longer having the FindCover state and replacing it with the DefendBase state we will no longer have this initial idea.

Conservative Tank: This tank will always try to consume less fuel which would be done by the tank entering the Idle state when no enemy has found this would allow its fuel usage to go down so the dumb tank should run out of fuel sooner and then explode.

Implementation

Testing

We tested our project regularly by functionality testing each time we added a new state to ensure that it worked as required without having any errors, by doing this it allowed us to isolate any errors much sooner as it would be down to the most recent bit of code so we would go and fix the bugs before working on more code, this allowed us to make sure it continued to compile at each point rather than completing the code and discovering an error that has not been isolated.

We also used regression testing so that each time we began to work on the project we would run it again to make sure no new errors have been found before we began to update the code as this helped us isolate any future issues making it easier to fix them.

When we tested the project, we would have each member of the group download the current repo and then play through the game three times which would allow us to find any bugs within the code, some of the bugs we found were when collectables spawns near a tree our tank would not go close enough to the collectable to collect it. In the first iteration of our code we found a bug where whilst the tanks where unable to drive into a rock they were capable of reversing through it instead and they would then get stuck. We also had a bug with entering the DefendBase state where the tank was not entering the state when the rule conditions where met, in order to fix this, we added a waypoint near our base so that the tank knew where it needed to go in order to get back to its base.