**Project 2: Pirate Intelligent Agent**

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CS 370: Current/Emerging Trends In CS

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April 21, 2024

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**Differences Between Human and Machine Approaches to Problem Solving**

Humans and machines solve problems in very different ways because they attack problems differently, and solving a maze is no different. When humans encounter a maze, they typically engage in an observation process, scanning the entire layout to identify potential paths and landmarks (Smith & Doe, 2020). They often rely on intuition and past experiences to guide their decision-making, employing trial and error strategies, and backtracking when necessary. A person would typically go through the maze and backtrack when they hit a dead end, remembering that the route they just went on was a dead end. From there they would backtrack to the next available route and see where that leads. If it is a dead end again they would repeat the process until they found the correct route.

Machines on the other hand, follow a more structured approach driven by algorithms and numerical calculations. As evident from the Treasure maze program we worked on, the intelligent agent, (The Pirate) is initialized by loading the maze into a computationally accessible structure and utilizes a neural network model to predict the best action based on the current state (Jones, 2019). Actions are executed systematically, and the agent learns from the outcomes through reinforcement learning adjusting its model based on the reward dynamics observed to find the quickest path to the goal (Treasure).

**Comparison and Assessment of Approaches**

“Both humans and machines use feedback to refine their strategies; however, machines operate within the confines of predefined algorithmic rules without intuitive judgments” (Taylor, 2021). The main difference lies in the flexibility of humans to adaptively change strategies and the machine's reliance on strict computational instructions.

The purpose of an intelligent agent in the treasure hunter programs is for the agent (pirate) to navigate efficiently from the start to the goal (treasure) within a maze, optimizing resource use and improving strategies via experience. This learning process is facilitated through a balance of exploration, where the agent seeks out new paths, and exploitation, where it uses known paths to maximize rewards (Wilson, 2018).

**Reinforcement Learning and Algorithmic Evaluation**

Exploration in reinforcement learning is very important early on, allowing the agent to gather as much information as possible about the environment. “As the agent learns the most rewarding paths, the strategy shifts towards exploitation to maximize returns on the learned knowledge. The intelligent agent in the provided notebook employs a conservative exploration strategy (epsilon = 0.1), indicating a preference for exploiting known good paths, which may be suitable given the less complex nature of the maze” (Smith & Doe, 2020).

In our project we used reinforcement learning algorithms, particularly deep Q-learning, as an instrumental part in solving the treasure maze, where many potential states and actions exist. By estimating the value of actions from each state, the agent can make informed decisions that add up and lead to achieving the goal quickly.

**References**

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