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Feedback on the use of PDDL solvers in an industrial R&D context

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Feedback on the use of PDDL solvers in an industrial R&D context

Johann Dreo

Message



Happy planning solvers users



Not happy with:

**No on-demand binding between model
and action costs**

Debugging of domains too hard

Team

▶ 2007 - 2013 - 2020

- ▶ 1) develop solvers
- ▶ 2) applications

▶ Research & Technology

- ▶ Decision & Optimization lab.,
 - ▶ Johann Dreo,
 - ▶ Pierre Savéant.

▶ Others

- ▶ INRIA : March Schoenauer
- ▶ ONERA : Vincent Vidal

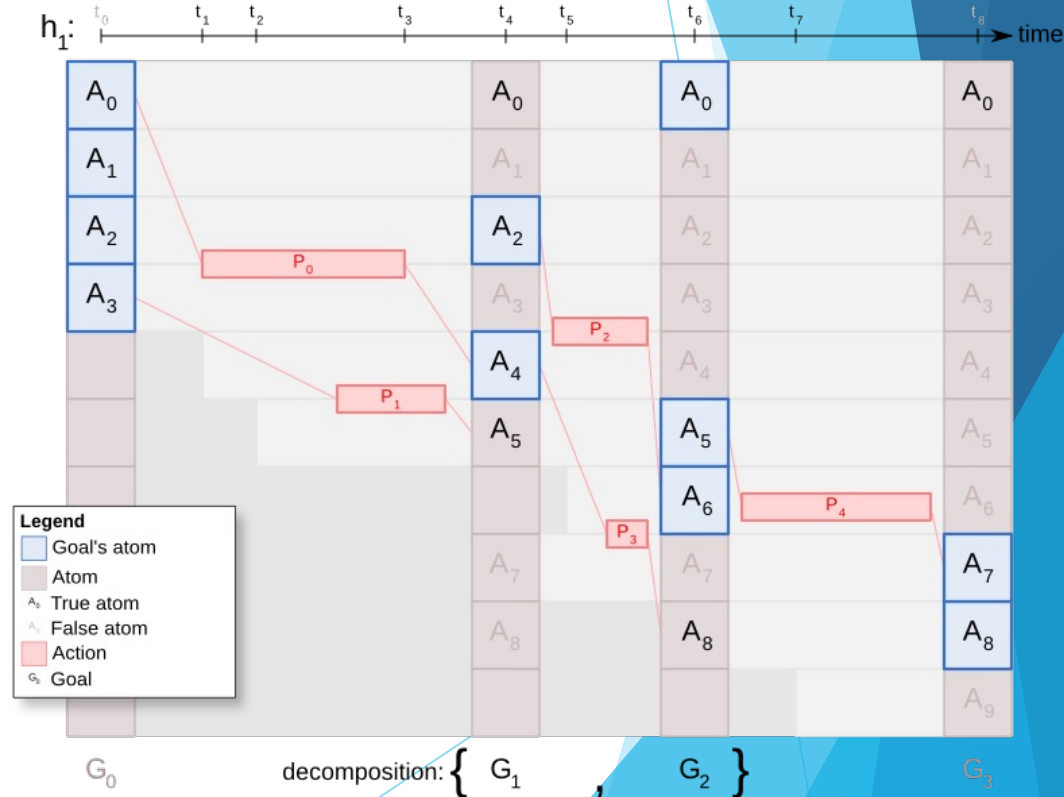
▶ Former students/postdocs

- ▶ Jacques Bibai
- ▶ Caner Candan
- ▶ Mátyás Brendel
- ▶ Mostepha R. Khouadjia
- ▶ Alexandre Quemy

Divide-and-Evolve (DAE)

▶ Divide And Evolve

- ▶ Black-box heuristic for problem decomposition
- ▶ YAHSP for subproblem solving
- ▶ 2010 : silver medal at GECCO Hummies awards
 - ▶ Competing against human planner
- ▶ 2011 : (one of the) winner in temporal satisficing track at IPC

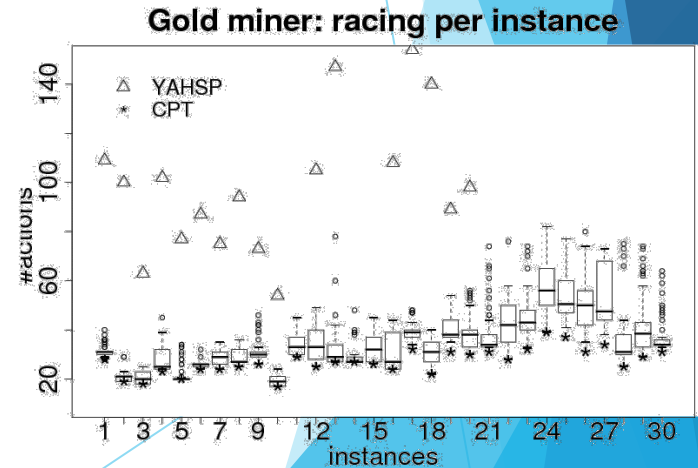
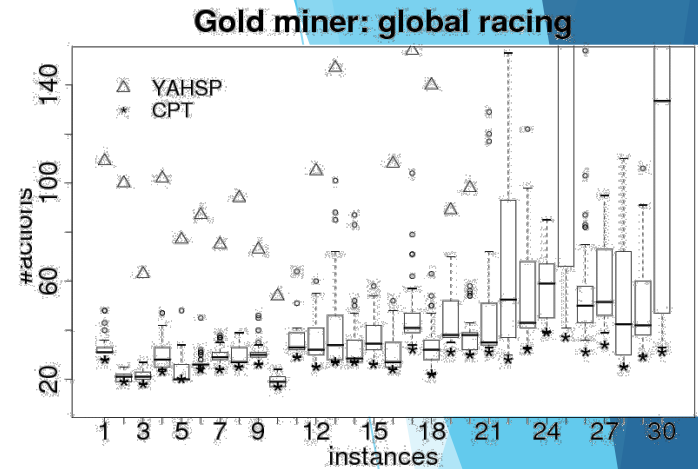


Research: 2007 - 2013

- ▶ DAE-CPT
- ▶ DAE-YAHSP2
- ▶ DAE-YAHSP3

- ▶ Automatic configuration of DAE
 - ▶ Using racing
 - ▶ Using generic optimization

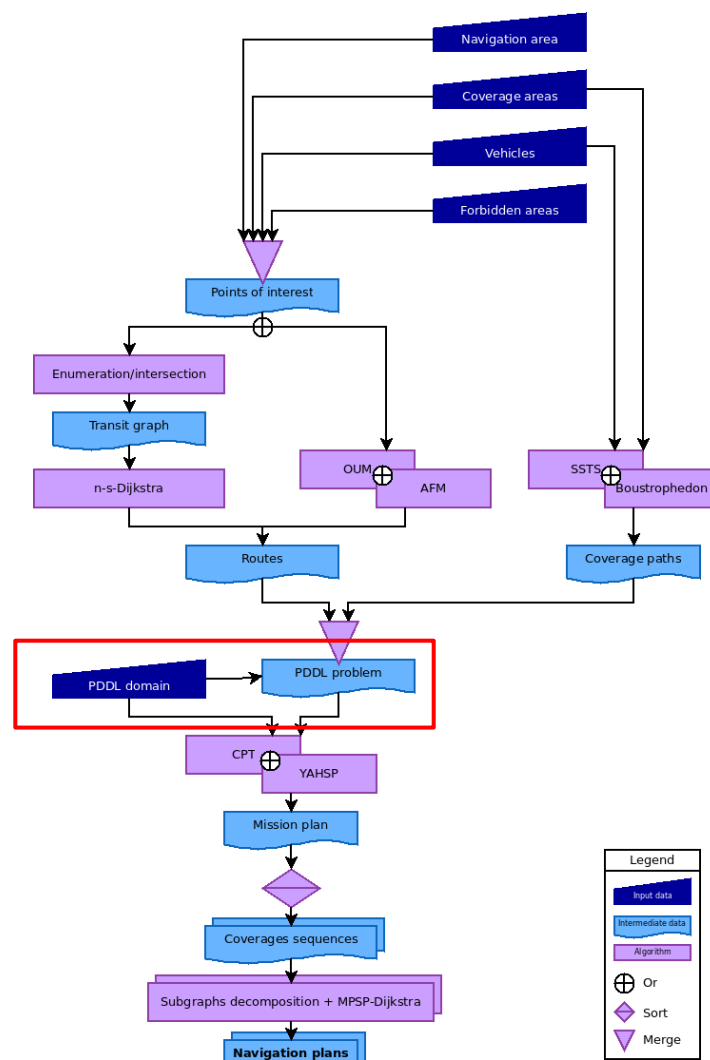
- ▶ Multi-objective optimization
 - ▶ And PDDL (Zeno) benchmark



Applications: 2013 - 2020

- ▶ **Multi-vehicles mission planning**
(\approx resources displacement on geographic graphs)
 - ▶ Emergency vehicles in heavy traffic
 - ▶ Delivery during resource-scare crisis
 - ▶ Aerial drone mission planning
 - ▶ Multi-aerial drones surveillance system
 - ▶ Underwater uncrewed multi-vehicles mission planning
 - ▶ Multi-types uncrewed multi-vehicles mission planning
- ▶ **Always various actions (more than just "move", e.g. scan, pick, ...)**
- ▶ **Not always required concurrency**

Multi-vehicles planning



Well known Pro & Cons of Planning Modelling

▶ Advantages

- ▶ Optimal is always better than humans
- ▶ Satisficing is often good enough

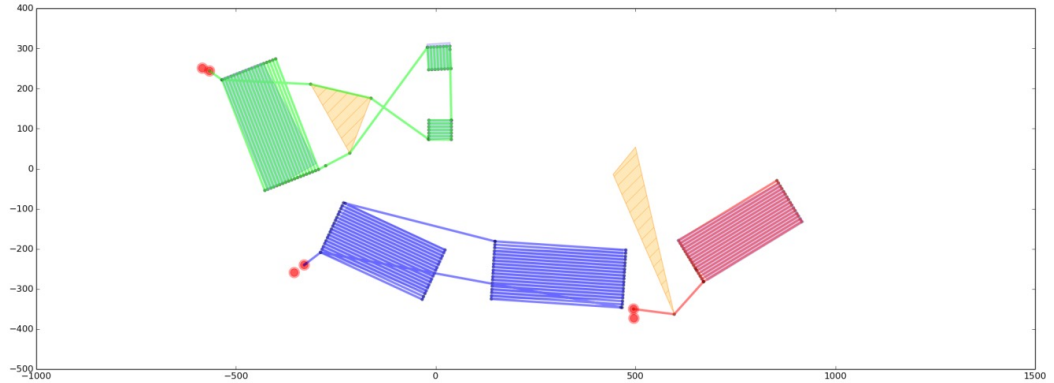
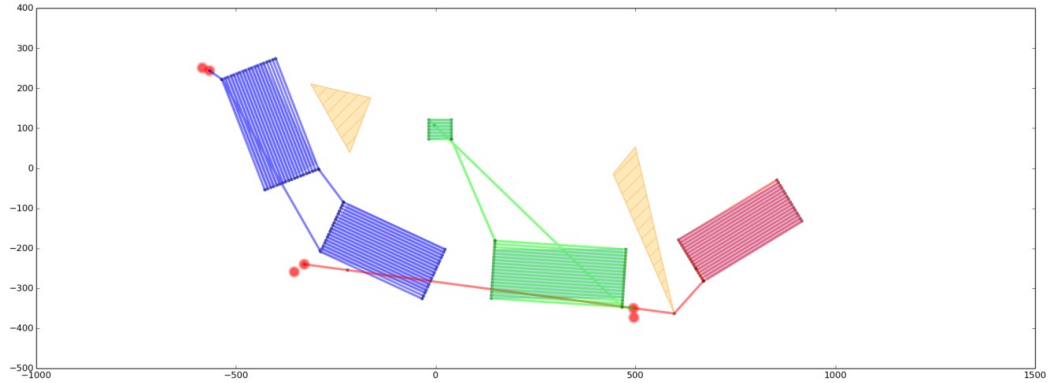
- ▶ In practice, fast enough to compute many real-life instance sizes if the model is coarse enough

▶ Drawbacks

- ▶ Poor correlation in decision space

Drawbacks of planning model

- ▶ Poor correlation in decision space



Well known Pro & Cons of Planning Modelling

▶ Advantages

- ▶ Optimal is always better than humans
- ▶ Satisficing is often good enough
- ▶ In practice, fast enough to compute many real-life instance sizes if the model is coarse enough

▶ Drawbacks

- ▶ Poor correlation in decision space
- ▶ Optimal runtime is unpredictable
- ▶ Satisficing quality is unpredictable
- ▶ Do not scale well with instance size

User expectations VS reality

▶ Expectations

- ▶ Model once, solve many instances
- ▶ Model by domain experts, of-the-shelf solvers
- ▶ Atomic costs computation is the bottleneck
- ▶ Separation of model and solver

▶ Reality

- ▶ Problem landscapes diversity is HUGE
- ▶ Domain experts is a VERY scarce resource
- ▶ Hard to embed in solvers/models for on-demand computation.
- ▶ PDDL itself is not scalable enough

Example PDDL domain

```
(define (domain domain_surveillance_v0)
  (:requirements :typing :durative-actions)
  (:types
    Vehicle - Object
    Type_A - Vehicle
    Type_B - Vehicle
    Location - Object
    Point Area - Location
    Start Wait - Point
  )
  (:functions
    ; Time to move from x to y
    (move_time ?x - Location ?y - Location)
    ; Time to scan area m
    (scan_time ?m - Area)
  )
)
```

```
(:predicates
  ; Vehicle d is located at location x
  (located ?d - Vehicle ?x - Location)
  ; Vehicle d is not already busy
  (available ?d - Vehicle)
  ; Sensor activation
  (sensor_on ?d - Vehicle)
  (sensor_off ?d - Vehicle)
  ; Vehicle position relatively to surface.
  (underwater ?d - Vehicle)
  (abovewater ?d - Vehicle)
  ; Area m is scanned / not scanned
  (revealed ?m - Area) ; scanned
  (concealed ?m - Area) ; not scanned
  ; NOTE: At init an goal, we cannot use the "not" operator,
  ; thus we must have two predicates for the state of areas
  ; in order to specify a switch of status:
  ; areas are concealed in the init and revealed in the goal.
)
)
```

Example PDDL domain

```
; dive
(:durative-action dive
  :parameters (?d - Vehicle)
  :duration (= ?duration 10)
  :condition (and
    (at start (available ?d) ) ; the vehicle is not doing something else
    (at start (abovewater ?d)) ; the vehicle is above surface
    (at start (sensor_off ?d)) ; not allowed to use sensor while diving
    ; NOTE: you cannot use the "not" operator in a condition.
  )
  :effect (and
    (at start (not (available ?d))) ; the vehicle is doing something from the very beginning
    (over all (not (available ?d))) ; the vehicle is doing something during the action

    (at end (available ?d) ) ; the vehicle is no more doing something
    (at end (underwater ?d) ) ; the vehicle is under water
    (at end (not (abovewater ?d))) ; the vehicle is not above surface
  )
) ; dive
; [...]
```

Example PDDL instance

```
(define (problem {{NAME}}) (:domain
  surveillance_v0)

  (:objects [...] )

  (:init

    {{#VEHICLES}}

    (located {{NAME}} {{TAKEOFF}})

    (available {{NAME}})

    {{/VEHICLES}}

    {{#MISSIONS}}

    (concealed {{NAME}})

    {{/MISSIONS}}

    {{#MOVES}}

    (= (move_time {{FROM}} {{TO}})
      {{TIME}})

    {{/MOVES}}

    {{#MISSIONS}}

    (= (scan_time {{NAME}})
      {{SCAN_TIME}})

    {{/MISSIONS}}

  ) ; init
```

```
(:goal

  (and

    {{#MISSIONS}}

    (revealed {{NAME}})

    {{/MISSIONS}}

  )

) ; goal

(:metric minimize (total-time))

)
```

Example PDDL plan

; Time 0.024

; Length 11

; Makespan 41.81

0 : (move_drone d1 s1 m3) [11.95]

0 : (move_drone d2 s2 m1) [10]

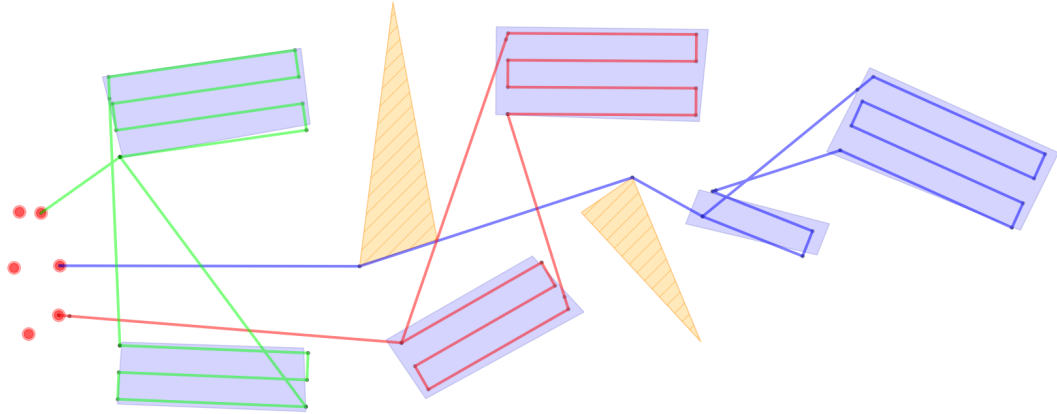
0 : (move_drone d0 s0 m2) [7.28]

7.28 : (scan_mission d0 m2) [24]

10 : (scan_mission d2 m1) [8]

11.95 : (scan_mission d1 m3) [32]

18 : (move_drone d2 m1 m0) [7.81]



Classical modeller story line

- ▶ **Start from a close-enough existing PDDL domain**
- ▶ **Rename objects and predicates**
- ▶ **Try to add new actions and constraints**
 - ▶ Parse error in solver, but error message does not help
 - ▶ Try other solvers, various error messages (or none)
 - ▶ Random guesses
- ▶ **Make an instance template**
 - ▶ Does not scale because cost function is static
 - ▶ And pre-computations leads to combinatorial explosion
- ▶ **Call me to complain**

The problem with PDDL

- ▶ **Modelling itself is hard**

- ▶ Generic modelling problems
- ▶ Fidelity/Rapidity compromise
- ▶ Scalability of search space

- ▶ **Modelling in PDDL is even harder**

- ▶ (The language syntax is not a problem)
- ▶ (Plan validation is good enough)

- ▶ **The lack of some kind of "compiler" is the main problem**
- ▶ Using solvers to gain feedback is almost ineffective

Conclusion

- ▶ **Happy with:**

- ▶ Algorithmics
- ▶ Performances
- ▶ Modelling features

- ▶ **Not happy (to the best of our knowledge) with:**

- ▶ **No lazy binding** between model and action costs computation functions
- ▶ **Debugging of domains** is too hard
 - ▶ Ad-hoc model conversion within solvers?

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