

# ICAAART 2011

3<sup>rd</sup> International Conference on Agents and Artificial Intelligence

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## Proceedings

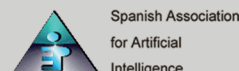
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# ICAAART 2011

Proceedings of the  
3rd International Conference on  
Agents and Artificial Intelligence

Volume 2

Rome, Italy

January 28 - 30, 2011

Sponsored by  
**INSTICC – Institute for Systems and Technologies of Information, Control  
and Communication**

In Cooperation with  
**APPIA – Associação Portuguesa para a Inteligência Artificial**  
**AEPIA – Asociación Española de Inteligencia Artificial**  
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# BRIEF CONTENTS

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INVITED SPEAKERS .....	IV
ORGANIZING AND STEERING COMMITTEES .....	V
PROGRAM COMMITTEE .....	VI
AUXILIARY REVIEWERS .....	X
SELECTED PAPERS BOOK .....	X
FOREWORD .....	XI
CONTENTS .....	XIII

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## SELECTED PAPERS BOOK

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A number of selected papers presented at ICAART 2011 will be published by Springer-Verlag in a CCIS Series book. This selection will be done by the Conference Chair and Program Chair, among the papers actually presented at the conference, based on a rigorous review by the ICAART 2011 Program Committee members.

# FOREWORD

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This book contains the proceedings of the 3<sup>rd</sup> International Conference on Agents and Artificial Intelligence (ICAART 2011) which was organized by the Institute for Systems and Technologies of Information, Control and Communication (INSTICC). ICAART 2011 was held in cooperation with the Portuguese Association for Artificial Intelligence (APPIA), the Spanish Association for Artificial Intelligence (AEPIA) and the Association for the Advancement of Artificial Intelligence (AAAI).

The Conference Program includes oral presentations (full papers and short papers) and posters, organized in two simultaneous tracks: “Artificial Intelligence” and “Agents”. We are proud to inform that that the program includes also five plenary keynote lectures, given by internationally distinguished researchers, namely – Cristiano Castelfranchi (Institute of Cognitive Sciences and Technologies (ISTC)), Boi Faltings (Ecole Polytechnique Federale de Lausanne (EPFL)), Didier Dubois (Institut de Recherche en Informatique de Toulouse (IRIT)), Mark Klein (MIT Center for Collective Intelligence) and Klaus Fischer (Agents and Simulated Reality, DFKI GmbH).

ICAART received 367 paper submissions from 55 countries, in all continents. To evaluate each submission, a double blind paper review was performed by the Program Committee, whose members are highly qualified researchers in ICAART topic areas. Based on the classifications provided, only 113 papers were selected for oral presentation (32 full papers and 81 short papers) and 64 papers were selected for poster presentation. The full paper acceptance ratio was 9%, and the total oral acceptance ratio (including full papers and short papers) 31%. This strict acceptance ratios shows the intention to preserve a high quality forum which we expect to develop further next year. All papers presented at this conference will be available at the SciTePress Digital Library. A short list of the presented papers will be selected so that revised and extended versions of these papers will be published by Springer-Verlag in a CCIS Series book, with the best papers of ICAART 2011. A few papers will also be invited for publication in a special issue of JOPHA - Journal of Physical Agents, as revised extended versions of conference papers.

Conferences are also meeting places where collaboration projects can emerge from social contacts amongst the participants. Therefore, in order to promote the development of research and professional networks the Conference includes in its social program a Conference Social Event & Banquet in the evening of January 29<sup>th</sup> (Saturday).

We would like to express our thanks to all participants. First of all to the authors, whose quality work is the essence of this conference; secondly to all members of the Program Committee and auxiliary reviewers, who helped us with their expertise and valuable time. We would also like to deeply thank the invited speakers for their excellent contribution in sharing their knowledge and vision. Finally, a word of appreciation for the hard work of the secretariat: organizing a conference of this level is a task that can only be achieved by the collaborative effort of a dedicated and highly capable team.

The organization will distribute four paper awards at the conference closing session, two

for the Agents track and two for the Artificial Intelligence track: each track will have a best paper award and the best student paper award. The decision is mainly based on the paper classifications provided by the Program Committee and the paper presentation at the conference, assessed by the session chairs.

We wish you all an inspiring conference and an unforgettable stay in the lovely city of Rome. We hope to meet you again next year for the 4<sup>th</sup> ICAART, details of which will soon be available at <http://www.icaart.org>.

**Joaquim Filipe**

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**Ana Fred**

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# CONTENTS

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## INVITED SPEAKERS

### KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

GOALS ONTOLOGY AND DYNAMICS IN MIND AND SOCIETY - The Ag&MAS Modeling <i>Cristiano Castelfranchi</i>	IS-5
GETTING AGENTS TO TELL THE TRUTH <i>Boi Faltings</i>	IS-9
UNCERTAINTY THEORIES, DEGREES OF TRUTH AND EPISTEMIC STATES <i>Didier Dubois</i>	IS-13
THE MIT DELIBERATORIUM - Enabling Large-scale Deliberation about Complex Systemic Problems <i>Mark Klein</i>	IS-15
MODEL DRIVEN DESIGN OF AGENTS AND MULTIAGENT SYSTEMS - DSML4MAS a Domain Specific Modelling Language for Multiagent Systems <i>Klaus Fischer</i>	IS-25

## AGENTS

### FULL PAPERS

AN ABM OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF SHARED MEANING IN A SOCIAL GROUP <i>Enrique Canessa, Sergio E. Chaigneau and Ariel Quezada</i>	5
A COALITION BASED INCENTIVE MECHANISM FOR P2P CONTENT DISTRIBUTION SYSTEMS <i>M. V. Belmonte, M. Díaz and A. Reyna</i>	15
SHARED UNDERSTANDING AND SYNCHRONY EMERGENCE - Synchrony as an Indice of the Exchange of Meaning between Dialog Partners <i>Ken Prepin and Catherine Pelachaud</i>	25
A GAME THEORETIC BIDDING AGENT FOR THE AD AUCTION GAME <i>Yevgeniy Vorobeychik</i>	35
STABILITY IN MATCHING PROBLEMS WITH WEIGHTED PREFERENCES <i>Maria Silvia Pini, Francesca Rossi, Kristen Brent Venable and Toby Walsh</i>	45
CONTINUOUS PREFERENCES FOR ACTION SELECTION <i>Emmanuelle Grislin-Le Strugeon and Patricia Everaere</i>	54
CONDITIONAL GAME THEORY - A Generalization of Game Theory for Cooperative Multiagent Systems <i>Wynn C. Stirling</i>	64
KEY POINTS FOR REALISTIC AGENT-BASED FINANCIAL MARKET SIMULATIONS <i>Iryna Veryzhenko, Philippe Mathieu and Olivier Brandouy</i>	74
FORMALIZING VIRTUAL ORGANIZATIONS <i>Sergio Esparcia and Estefanía Argente</i>	84

SELF-ORGANIZING SYNCHRONICITY AND DESYNCHRONICITY USING REINFORCEMENT LEARNING <i>Mihail Mihaylov, Yann-Aël Le Borgne, Ann Nowé and Karl Tuyls</i>	94
SELF-ORGANIZING SUPPLY NETWORKS - Autonomous Agent Coordination based on Expectations <i>Jan Ole Berndt</i>	104
SAMPLING AND UPDATING HIGHER ORDER BELIEFS IN DECISION-THEORETIC BARGAINING WITH FINITE INTERACTIVE EPISTEMOLOGIES <i>Paul Varkey and Piotr Gmytrasiewicz</i>	114
ANNEXATIONS AND MERGING IN WEIGHTED VOTING GAMES - The Extent of Susceptibility of Power Indices <i>Ramoni O. Lasisi and Vicki H. Allan</i>	124
COMPLETE DISTRIBUTED CONSEQUENCE FINDING WITH MESSAGE PASSING <i>Katsumi Inoue, Gauvain Bourgne and Takayuki Okamoto</i>	134
 <b>SHORT PAPERS</b>	
INTENTIONAL MOBILE AGENTS IN UBIQUITOUS SYSTEMS <i>Milene Serrano and Carlos José Pereira de Lucena</i>	147
BEHAVIOR OF HOME CARE INTELLIGENT VIRTUAL AGENT WITH PRE-THINK ARCHITECTURE <i>Dilyana Budakova</i>	157
CONVERGENCE ANALYSIS OF A MULTIAGENT COOPERATION MODEL <i>Markus Eberling and Hans Kleine Büning</i>	167
DETERMINING COOPERATION IN MULTIAGENT SYSTEMS WITH CULTURAL TRAITS <i>Stefan Heinrich, Stefan Wermter and Markus Eberling</i>	173
ADAPTIVE STATE REPRESENTATIONS FOR MULTI-AGENT REINFORCEMENT LEARNING <i>Yann-Michaël De Hauwere, Peter Vrancx and Ann Nowé</i>	181
AGENT BASED FRAMEWORK TO SIMULATE INHABITANTS' BEHAVIOUR IN DOMESTIC SETTINGS FOR ENERGY MANAGEMENT <i>Ayesha Kashif, Xuan Hoa Binh Le, Julie Dugdale and Stéphane Ploix</i>	190
REGION-BASED HEURISTICS FOR AN ITERATIVE PARTITIONING PROBLEM IN MULTIAGENT SYSTEMS <i>Thomas Kemmerich and Hans Kleine Büning</i>	200
RESOURCE ALLOCATION PROBLEMS ON NETWORKS - Maximizing Social Welfare using an Agent-based Approach <i>Antoine Nongaillard and Philippe Mathieu</i>	206
THE COMPLEXITY OF MANIPULATING $k$ -APPROVAL ELECTIONS <i>Andrew Lin</i>	212
RESOURCE BOUNDED DECISION-THEORETIC BARGAINING WITH FINITE INTERACTIVE EPISTEMOLOGIES <i>Paul Varkey and Piotr Gmytrasiewicz</i>	219

A MULTI-AGENT TOOL TO ANNOTATE BIOLOGICAL SEQUENCES <i>Célia Ghedini Ralha, Hugo Wruck Schneider, Maria Emilia M. T. Walter and Marcelo M. Brígido</i>	226
Norm-ML - A Modeling Language to Model Norms <i>Karen Figueiredo and Viviane Torres da Silva</i>	232
AGENTS FOR MANAGING BUSINESS-TO-BUSINESS INTERACTIONS - Software Agents for Managing Business-to-Business Collaborations <i>Edgar Tello-Leal, Omar Chiotti and Pablo D. Villarreal</i>	238
COOPERATIVE REPLIES TO UNBELIEVABLE ASSERTIONS - A Dialogue Protocol based on Logical Interpolation <i>M. Nykänen, S. Eloranta, O. Niinivaara and R. Hakli</i>	245
A SCHIZOPHRENIC APPROACH FOR INTELLIGENT CONVERSATIONAL AGENTS <i>Jean-Claude Heudin</i>	251
RAPID BEHAVIOUR MODELLING FOR AN AGENT-BASED SIMULATION <i>Sascha A. Goldner</i>	257
TRANSFER LEARNING FOR MULTI-AGENT COORDINATION <i>Peter Vrancx, Yann-Michaël De Hauwere and Ann Nowé</i>	263
AGENT-BASED COMPUTER-GENERATED-FORCES' BEHAVIOUR IMPROVEMENT <i>Mike Bourassa, Nacer Abdellaoui and Glen Parkinson</i>	273
PROBABILISTIC PLAN RECOGNITION FOR INTELLIGENT INFORMATION AGENTS - Towards Proactive Software Assistant Agents <i>Jean Oh, Felipe Meneguzzi and Katia Sycara</i>	281
AGENTS AND ONTOLOGIES FOR UNDERSTANDING AND PRESERVING THE ROCK ART OF MOUNT BEGO <i>L. Papaleo, G. Quercini, V. Mascardi, M. Ancona, A. Traverso and H. De Lumley</i>	288
INTEGRATED DYNAMICAL INTELLIGENCE FOR INTERACTIVE EMBODIED AGENTS <i>Eric Aaron, Juan Pablo Mendoza and Henny Admoni</i>	296
DYNAMIC RESOURCE ALLOCATION THROUGH SEMI-STRUCTURED ADAPTATION <i>Sander van Splunter, Elth Ogston and Frances Brazier</i>	302
BLOCKING UNDERHAND ATTACKS BY HIDDEN COALITIONS <i>Matteo Cristani, Erisa Karafili and Luca Viganò</i>	311
THE IMPORTANCE OF TIES IN THE EFFICIENCY OF CONVENTION EMERGENCE <i>Paulo Urbano, João Balsa, Paulo Ferreira and João Baptista</i>	321
THE EFFECTS OF MARKET DEMAND ON TRUTHFULNESS IN A COMPUTING RESOURCE OPTIONS MARKET <i>Owen Rogers and Dave Cliff</i>	330
COOPERATION MECHANISM FOR A NETWORK GAME <i>Alon Grubshtein and Amnon Meisels</i>	336
OVERHEARING IN FINANCIAL MARKETS - A Multi-agent Approach <i>Hedjazi Badiâa, Aknine Samir, Ahmed-Nacer Mohamed and Benatchba Karima</i>	342
AGENT-HUMAN INTERACTIONS IN THE CONTINUOUS DOUBLE AUCTION, REDUX - Using the OpEx Lab-in-a-Box to explore ZIP and GDX <i>Marco De Luca and Dave Cliff</i>	351



“WHERE IS MY MIND”- THE EVOLUTION OF NPCS IN ONLINE WORLDS <i>Magnus Johansson and Harko Verhagen</i>	359
 <b>POSTERS</b>	
RULE-BASED ORCHESTRATION OF AGENT-SOCIETIES <i>Karl-Heinz Krempels and Christoph Terwelp</i>	367
SMART SOLUTIONS MULTI-AGENT PLATFORM FOR DYNAMIC TRANSPORTATION SCHEDULING <i>Anton Ivaschenko, Alexander Tsarev, Alina Vaysblat and Petr Skobelev</i>	372
INFLUENCE OF NEIGHBORHOOD AND SELF REORGANIZATION IN NETWORKED AGENTS <i>Udara C. Weerakoon and Vicki H. Allan</i>	376
A SOCIAL ROBOT FOR FACILITATING HUMAN RELATIONS IN SMART ENVIRONMENTS <i>Berardina De Carolis, Nicole Novielli, Irene Mazzotta and Sebastiano Pizzutilo</i>	380
USING META-AGENTS TO BUILD MAS MIDDLEWARE <i>S. C. Lynch</i>	385
SCHEDULING BASED UPON FREQUENCY TRANSITION - Following Agents Agreement in a NCS <i>O. Esquivel-Flores and H. Benitez-Pérez</i>	389
A NETWORK MODEL FOR PRICE STABILIZATION <i>Jun Kiniwa and Kensaku Kikuta</i>	394
TEAM FORMATION FOR AGENT COOPERATION IN LOGISTICS - Protocol Design and Complexity Analysis <i>Arne Schuldt</i>	398
A GENOME BASED VISION OF MULTI-AGENT SYSTEMS <i>Monica Vitali, Massimo Cossentino, Riccardo Rizzo and Salvatore Gaglio</i>	406
CONDITIONS FOR LONG LASTING SUSTAINABLE INNOVATION IN AN AGENT-BASED MODEL <i>Luca Ansaloni, Marco Villani, Roberto Serra and David Lane</i>	410
A GENERIC DECENTRALIZED RECURSIVE MULTIAGENT MODEL FOR MULTI-SCALE ORGANIZATION OF LARGE SCALE COMPLEX SYSTEMS <i>Thi-Thanh-Ha Hoang, Michel Occello and Jean-Paul Jamont</i>	418
MULTI-AGENT NEGOTIATION MODEL BASED-ON ARGUMENTATION IN THE CONTEXT OF E-COMMERCE <i>Guorui Jiang, Yangwei Xu and Ying Liu</i>	422
ATTENTION, MOTIVATION AND EMOTION IN COGNITIVE SOFTWARE AGENTS <i>Daniela C. Terra, Henrique E. Borges and Paulo E. M. Almeida</i>	426
CONSTRUCTION OF EVOLUTIONARY MULTI-AGENT DOUBLE AUCTION MARKET FOR DATA MINING COMBINATIONAL STRATEGIES WITH STABLE RETURNS <i>Chi Xu, Xiaoyu Zhao, Zheru Chi, Na Jia and Huiqun Zhao</i>	430
USING DISTRIBUTED CSPs TO MODEL BUSINESS PROCESSES AGREEMENT IN SOFTWARE MULTIPROCESS <i>Luisa Parody, María Teresa Gómez-López, Rafael M. Gasca and Diana Borrego</i>	434

E-HEALTH WORKFLOW-BASED AUTHORIZATION USING AN AGENT-ORIENTED VIRTUAL HEALTH CARE RECORD <i>Andrei Vasilateanu and Luca D. Serbanati</i>	439
A MULTI-AGENT TRAFFIC SIMULATION FRAMEWORK FOR EVALUATING THE IMPACT OF TRAFFIC LIGHTS <i>Raul Cajias, Antonio Gonzalez Pardo and David Camacho</i>	443
A GENERAL APPROACH TO EXPLOIT ASPECTS OF INTELLIGENCE ON THE WEB <i>Laura Burzagli and Francesco Gabbanini</i>	447
A SEMANTIC SCRAPING MODEL FOR WEB RESOURCES - Applying Linked Data to Web Page Scraping <i>José Ignacio Fernández-Villamor, Jacobo Blasco-García, Carlos Á. Iglesias and Mercedes Garijo</i>	451
MULTI-AGENT SYSTEMS IN DATA IMPUTATION OF COLLABORATIVE FILTERING - In Case of e-WeddingThailand <i>Kunyanuth Kularbphetong, Phayung Meesad and Gareth Clayton</i>	457
LIVER TRANSPLANT WAITING LIST SIMULATION - An Agent based Model <i>Alexander Flávio de Oliveira, Ricardo Poley Martins Ferreira and Agnaldo Soares de Lima</i>	462
A TEAM-BASED ORGANIZATIONAL MODEL FOR ADAPTIVE MULTI-AGENT SYSTEMS <i>Afsaneh Fatemi, Kamran Zamanifar, Naser Nemat bakhsh and Omid Askari</i>	469
CONTINUOUS ACTION REINFORCEMENT LEARNING AUTOMATA - Performance and Convergence <i>Abdel Rodríguez, Ricardo Grau and Ann Nowé</i>	473
HIVE-BDI: EXTENDING JASON WITH SHARED BELIEFS AND STIGMERGY <i>Matteo Barbieri and Viviana Mascardi</i>	479
AN ASYNCHRONOUS MULTI-AGENT SYSTEM FOR OPTIMIZING SEMI-PARAMETRIC SPATIAL AUTOREGRESSIVE MODELS <i>Matthias Koch and Tamás Krisztin</i>	483
BRAINSTORMING - Agent based Meta-learning Approach <i>Dariusz Plewczynski</i>	487
AUTHOR INDEX	491

# A GENOME BASED VISION OF MULTI-AGENT SYSTEMS

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**Abstract:** A set of software agents can be programmed to provide a large but finite set of services, often defined during design phase. After an evolution of the external environment, the pre-defined services could be unable to satisfy the requested quality. In this work an agent framework is proposed capable to adapt the agents in order to improve the quality of services provided by an agent society in correspondence with a modification of the external environment. These agents are based on a biologically inspired structure (genome), that defines all their behaviors and knowledges.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Agent Oriented Systems should be able to autonomously adapt and deliver new services in response to unforeseeable problems, like many living things do. In living things this characteristic is mainly based on genome and natural selection. We propose to replicate this mechanism in Agent Oriented Software and Agent Systems.

In the proposed system agents capabilities are described in their genome and their improvement is possible by means of a Darwinian evolution. When a solution to a problem is not achievable (the corresponding service is not available or it does not provide the required quality of service), several agents can reproduce themselves thus creating a new generation of agents that have new capabilities and can satisfy the requirements. The consequence of this behavior is the creation of an adaptive system (Gleizes et al., 1999) realized through an extensive adoption of Genetic Programming techniques (Koza, 1992) and automatic code generation, compilation and execution.

The focus of our attention is not on the agent itself, but on its genetic makeup: the genome. This genetic makeup can be decomposed in different layers.

In the first layer of the genome there are two kinds of chromosomes: a Knowledge Chromosome which describes knowledge about the environment and a set of Ability Chromosomes which describe agent's abilities to interact with the world. At a deeper layer we have genes. Each chromosome is made of genes. In the Knowledge Chromosome, each gene describes an element of the knowledge (predicates, concepts and actions), while, genes within Ability Chromosomes describe plans components.

During the designing process it is essential to define and manipulate the genome. In the definition of the genome an initial set of genes is given. This set does not have to contain the solution but only the elements which allow the creation of the first generation. From this initial set, through manipulation, genes are combined and activated originating new genomes. These genomes have to be evaluated through an objective function for measuring their level of adaptation to the required skill.

The agent adaptation procedure is represented in Fig.1. This process is started by an agent called CrosserAgent after a request for an unavailable service is received. The CrosserAgent creates new generations which will contain some agents inherited

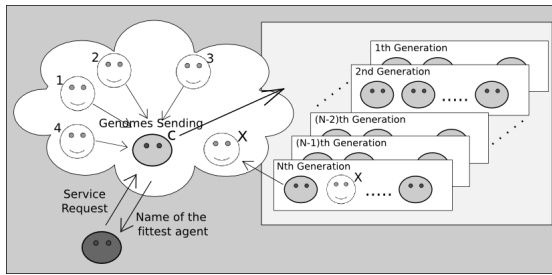


Figure 1: A representation of the adaptation procedure. GenomeAgents are represented in white. The agent selected at the end of the procedure is marked with an “X”, while the CrossoverAgent is marked with a “C”.

from the previous generation and some new agents obtained crossing the agents’ genomes. The number of individuals per generation is a parameter of the adaptation process. During the adaptation process two agents merge their chromosomes according to the rules of genetic programming that will be discussed later. The parents transmit their genes to the child which evolves and gains the capability of reaching different results. The adaptation process ends when an agent in the current generation provides a satisfying service or if an a priori defined number of generations has been reached. The fittest agent is selected and becomes a member of the society. The CrossoverAgent notifies its name to the requesting agent in order to fulfill the service request. This process will be discussed more in details in section 3.

## 2 THE GENOME STRUCTURE

This section introduces the Genome structure shown in form of an UML class diagram in Fig.2. This figure highlights the two main parts in which the genome can be decomposed at a logical level: knowledge and abilities. The division is pointed out through the inclusion of chromosomes in two different packages.

Starting from the higher level, the genome (at the top of Fig.2) contains all the information needed to describe the agent; from this information a new agent can be created.

The genome enables a set of *Services* which makes explicit the functions offered by the agent to the external environment. The genome is composed of a *KnowledgeChromosome* and a set of *AbilityChromosomes*.

The *KnowledgeChromosome* aggregates genes which refer to ontological concepts (*OntologyGene*) and that are specialized in three categories: (i) *ConceptGene*: describes an instance of a concept of the ontology; (ii) *ActionGene*: describes an instance of an

action of the ontology; (iii) *PredicateGene*: describes an instance of a predicate of the ontology.

The *AbilityChromosome* is composed of a set of node genes which describe the plan structure (*NodeGene*) and by the contents of these nodes which describe the action associated to them. Node contents can be of three different kinds: predicate or action genes (indicated as *PredicateGene* and *ActionGene* in Fig.2) or other Ability Chromosomes. Plugging in an Ability Chromosome with a node allows us to associate a behavior, described by another plan, to a node, thus creating a sort of recursive structure. There are four kinds of nodes: *StartNodeGene*, *EndNodeGene*, *ActionNodeGene* and *IfNodeGene*. The node classification reported here is inspired by (van Der Aalst et al., 2003).

## 3 THE AGENT ADAPTATION PROCESS

The agent adaptation process, led by the CrossoverAgent, is composed of the following iterative steps:

- definition of the parents’ sub-society: this sub-society includes all the agents that will be used in the adaptation process and that contribute with their ability genes and knowledge genes to the definition of the resulting agent;
- creation of the new generation by using adaptation techniques;
- evaluation of the results provided by the new agents;
- stop of the process if one (or more) agent(s) successfully provide the required service.

During the agent adaptation process we create new generations by using mutation, elitism and crossing techniques. While the first two techniques are reused from literature (Banzhaf, 1998)(Mitchell, 1998), crossing is described below.

The agent adaptation process can be divided into two steps: knowledge crossing and ability crossing.

Knowledge crossing allows to modify the set of knowledge genes about the environment. Knowledge Chromosomes crossing is inspired by (Noy and Musen, 1999) and it is performed over each agent’s knowledge gene by using four techniques:

- **Fusion:** the two parents’ knowledge genes are melted in a single gene;
- **Selection:** one of the parents’ knowledges is chosen while the other one is discarded;
- **Union:** both of the parents’ knowledges are copied in the new individual;

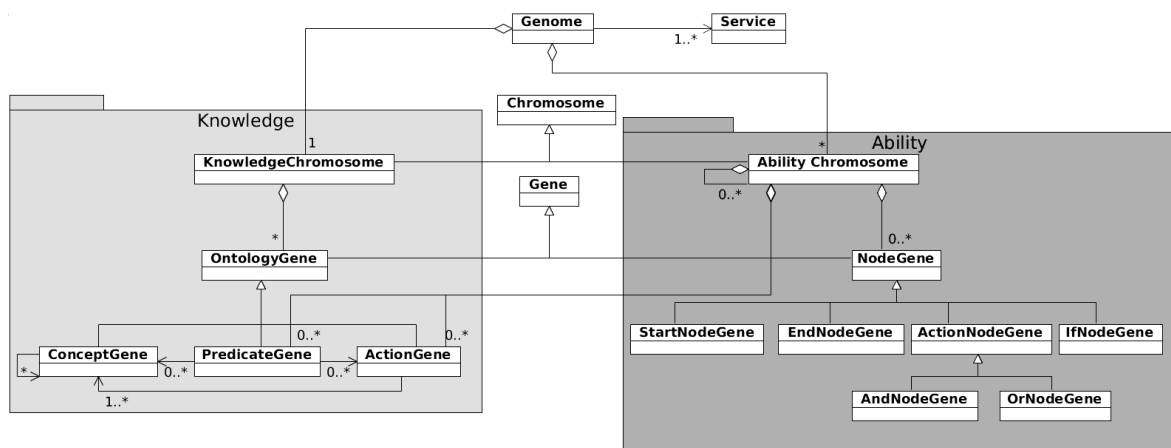


Figure 2: The genome structure. Genome is composed of two kinds of chromosome: Knowledge Chromosome and Ability Chromosome; both are composed of genes.

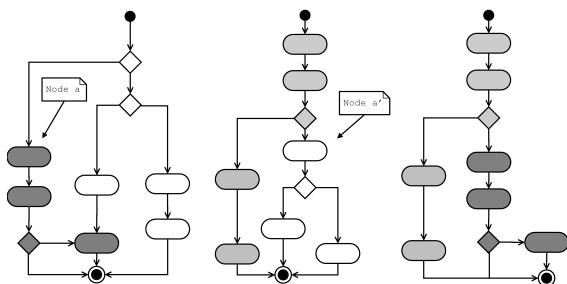


Figure 3: On the left the two plans of the parent agents and on the right the resulting plan. The parts of the plan selected for the crossover procedure are filled.

- **Copy:** if a particular portion of knowledge is present only in one of the parent, it is copied to the generated agent.

The result is a new Knowledge Chromosome. Once the knowledge crossing is completed, the ability crossing can be executed.

The ability crossing is performed on the abilities of an agent. Abilities are represented through plans, composed of nodes, and are labeled with a goal, which indicates the ability purpose. Agents in the platform are provided with a higher-level plan which handles the agent's life-cycle and allows each agent to interact with the external environment. This plan is always crossed by a fusion operation. All the other plans can be crossed also by using the selection, union or copy techniques already described in the previous paragraph. Since selection, union and copy simply transfers a plan from a parent to its child, the sole operation worth of a discussion is plan fusion and therefore it will be discussed in what follows. Fusion can be performed only if two plans are similar (if they have the same goal). Plan crossing is shown in Fig.3.

The two parents' plans play a different role in this part of the adaptation process. The receiver's agent plan is used as the basis for implanting the contribution from the donor agent. An example of donor and receiver plan fragments are shown respectively in the right and the middle part of Fig.3. The two fragments are linked by replacing a randomly selected node (node a' in Fig.3) from the receiver's plan with the one selected from the donor's one (node a and its successors), as shown in the right part of Fig.3.

#### 4 EXPERIMENTAL RESULTS

In the case study, the initial set of agents is composed of individuals drawing simple geometrical shapes. The aim of each agent is to reproduce a given picture, in the reported example a trapezium (Fig.4a).

The agent divides the picture in small chunks by using a grid and tries to fill each position of the grid according to the guidance provided by the target picture. The work is carried on through several iterations and each iteration is populated by a different generation of agents. The initial generation is composed of two simple agents. Each of them is able to fill in a grid cell with the shape of a triangle: the first agent (Fig.4b) draws a dark gray triangle oriented towards the up-left corner of the cell, the second agent (Fig.4c) draws a light gray triangle oriented towards the bottom-right corner of the cell.

Clearly none of two agents supply a fulfilling result; besides, neither the simple cooperation of the two agents could solve the problem. So that an adaptation process is started: the genome codes the color, dimension and shape of the grid cell together with the plan used to generate the figure. The evaluation pro-

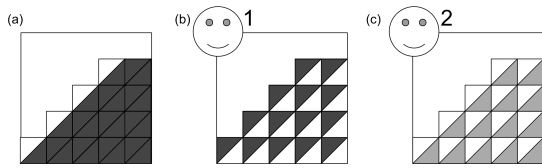


Figure 4: In (a) the target picture. In (b) and (c) the results achieved by two agents of the initial society.

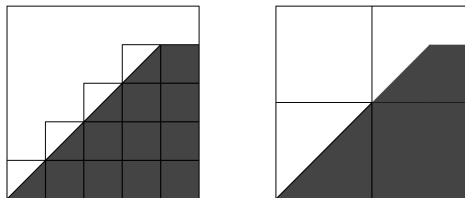


Figure 5: Two agents which provide the required service in different ways.

cess compares color and shape of the obtained figure to the target one.

In our experiments, after about nine generations, several individuals which perfectly reproduce the desired picture have been created (obviously because of the random characteristic of the new generations production different runs of the experiment may produce different results). Fig.5 reports two examples of such individuals; as it is possible to see, the two agents use a different grid to decompose the target picture.

The test case has been evaluated with different pictures and colors. It has been observed, as it was expected, that the number of generations needed to reach a perfectly fitting outcome grows up with the complexity of the target picture.

The adopted adaptation process proved to be successful but it is to be noted that the development framework is undoubtedly complex in its use and the setup of a new experiment requires a lot of programming.

## 5 CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE WORKS

In this paper we proposed a service adaptation mechanism as an integral part of an agent-oriented adaptive and self-organizing society. As a first step towards our goal we tested an adaptive system inspired by the Darwinian evolution theory where all the agents' features are codified in a genome-like structure. In order to improve the quality of a given service, several agents can reproduce and generate new individuals which better fit the target. These individuals are provided with new

capabilities derived by their parents. The approach has been tested through simple case studies. The application reported in this paper proves that it is possible to obtain a perfectly working agent from original agents which provides a service with a low quality service. Using the proposed Genome Framework the problem moves from the implementation of a solution to the definition of the problem domain. For sure different techniques may be explored (and they will be in the future) but the goal of the current study is evaluating the adoption of the proposed genome-based description of agent capabilities and knowledge. The obtained results encourage the development of further release of the proposed framework. The use of a formalization language to describe the genome structure might be the following step in order to lay the groundwork for an agent-oriented language.

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