

# Multi-Agent Systems

Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg



Bernhard Nebel, Felix Lindner, and Thorsten Engesser  
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## GOAL Agents: Cognitive State



- GOAL agents are **cognitive agents** that maintain a **cognitive state**, which consists of:
  - **Percepts**: Received from the environment via the **entity** that the **agent** controls.
  - **Messages**: Received from other agents (speech acts).
  - **Knowledge**: Domain information and conceptual definitions that do not change over time.
  - **Beliefs**: Facts about the environment which may change over time.
  - **Goals**: (Partial) specifications of states the agent wants to bring about.

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## GOAL Agents: Core Abilities



- GOAL agents have three core abilities:
  - **Event processing**: Allows an agent to update its beliefs and goals based on percepts and messages.
  - **Representing knowledge**: Allows agents to represent and reason with its knowledge, beliefs, and goals.
  - **Decision-making**: Allows agents to select an **action** to perform next based on current beliefs and goals.
    - **Action specifications**: Inform agents about when an action can be performed and what its effects are.

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## Running Example Domain



- To exemplify the core concepts of GOAL, we will employ the **Blocks World** domain:
  - Blocks World consists of  $N$  numbered blocks  $b_1 \dots b_N$  and *table*.
  - Blocks can be stacked over one another by using *move*( $X, Y$ ) actions. E.g., *move*( $b_1, b_2$ ) would move block  $b_1$  on top of  $b_2$  if both blocks are clear.
  - A **configuration** in the Blocks World can be identified with a set of facts of the form *on*( $X, Y$ ). For each block  $X$ , the agent perceives one fact *on*( $X, Y$ ).
  - **Laws of Blocks World**: At most one block is directly on top of another, a block cannot be directly on top of more than two other blocks etc.
  - **Problem**: Given some initial configuration of the blocks, the agent's task is to perform a sequence of stacking actions such that a configuration is achieved which satisfies the goal.

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## Initializing BlocksWorld Environment



- **use** “blocksworld-1.2.0.jar” **as environment with** start = [2, 3, 0, 5, 0, 7, 0].
- The environment is implemented as a Java program.
- The start parameter reads: b1 is on top of b2, b2 is on top of b3, b3 is on the table etc.

## Initializing the Agent



```
define stackAgent as agent {  
    use stackBehavior as main.  
}
```

## Connecting Agent to Environment



```
launchpolicy {  
    when name=gripper launch stackAgent.  
}
```

## Actually Creating Cognitive States in GOAL



- **Cognitive State**
  - **Informational State**
    - **Knowledge base:** **use** <prologfile> **as knowledge**.
    - **Belief base:** **use** <prologfile> **as belief**.
  - **Motivational State**
    - **Goal base:** **use** <prologfile> **as goal**.

## Domain Knowledge



- We define the predicate `block/1` to make explicit that everything that is on top of something is a block:
  - `block(X) :- on(X, _)`.
  - (A block which is not on top of another block is on the table. Hence, every block will qualify as a block according to this rule.)
- We define the predicate `clear/1` to identify those entities which have no other block on top of them, i.e., those on top of which other blocks can be stacked. Any block can always be put on the table, therefore, the table also is clear according to this reading.
  - `clear(table)`.
  - `clear(X) :- block(X), not(on(_, X))`.
- As `on/2` is only used in bodies, we have to specify `on/2` as dynamic:
  - `:-dynamic on/2`.

## Floundering



- We cannot write this: `clear(X) :- not(on(_, X)), block(X)`.
- **What goes wrong:** Negation is applied to non-ground atom (viz., variable `X` is not yet instantiated). However, not-operator does not bind any variables.
- A Prolog program that applies to a non-ground literal is said to **flounder**.

## Closed-World Assumption



- Negation-as-Failure yields that everything not stated is assumed to be false. E.g., the absence of information about any blocks on, say, block 1 yields the inference that block 1 is clear.
- Contrast this with entailment you know from e.g. propositional or modal logics.

## Conceptual Knowledge



- We define the concept of a **tower** as a (possibly singleton) sequence of blocks stacked over another.
  - `tower([X]) :- on(X, table)`.
  - `tower([X, Y | T]) :- on(X, Y), tower([Y | T])`.
- I.e.: Any block directly on the table is a tower. If something is a tower, then the something which results from stacking a block on top of that tower is again a tower.
- Note that if `[X | T]` is a tower, this does not mean that `X` is clear (other blocks may extend the tower to yet a bigger one).

- Starting the GOAL agent opens a visualization of the environment.
- The stackAgent receives percepts on(b1, b2), ...
- The stackAgent lacks beliefs and goals. Therefore, nothing happens.

- Add event module to agent definition, e.g., like this:  
**use** stackEvents **as** event.
- Add a belief base to event module. Add the knowledge base as knowledge base.
- Write into event module:

```
forall bel(on(X, Y)), not(percept(on(X, Y))) do delete(on(X, Y)).  
forall percept(on(X, Y)), not(bel(on(X, Y))) do insert(on(X, Y)).
```

- First add an init module which gets executed once after the agent started.
- Declare knowledge base.
- Write: **if true then adopt**(on(b1, b5), on(b2, table), on(b3, table), on(b4, b3), on(b5, b2), on(b6, b4), on(b7, table)).

- Goals must be ground.
- **Conjunctive goals**: What's the difference?
  - *Goal*<sub>1</sub>: on(2, 1). on(3, 2).
  - *Goal*<sub>2</sub>: on(2, 1), on(3, 2).
- **Achievement goal**
  - **a-goal**(qry) = **goal**(qry), **not**(**bel**(qry))
- **Sub-Goals Achieved**:
  - **goal-a**(qry) = **goal**(qry), **bel**(qry)
- Blind commitment
- Explicit drop-action, adopt action

- Add goal prolog file.
- Declare goal file in main module.
- Implement simple strategy:

```
if a-goal(tower([X, Y | T])), bel(tower([Y|T])) then move(X, Y).  
if a-goal(tower([X | T])) then move(X, table).
```

- Add an action specification for action move(X,Y).
- Declare knowledge base.
- Define action's pre- and post-conditions. Like this:  
**define** move(X, Y) **with**  
    **pre**{clear(X), clear(Y), on(X, Z)}  
    **post**{not(on(X, Z)), on(X, Y)}
- Add actionspec to main module.
- **Notes**
  - Different meaning of **not**
  - Relation to add- and delete-lists in STRIPS
  - Instantaneous vs. Durative Actions — when to specify post-conditions and when better to use just **true**

-  Hindriks, K. V., Programming Cognitive Agents in GOAL, Technical Manual, 2017, <https://goalapl.atlassian.net/wiki/>.