MASSim: Multi-Agent Systems Simulation Platform

Tristan M. Behrens¹, Mehdi Dastani², Jürgen Dix¹ and Peter Novák¹
¹Department of Informatics, Clausthal University of Technology, Germany
²Intelligent Systems Group, Utrecht University, Netherlands

1. MASSim: Simulator overview
MASSim, a Multi-Agent Systems simulation platform serves as a test-bed for testing, evaluating and benchmarking coordination and cooperation approaches in small-scale multi-agent systems.

Features:
- **simulation scenario independent infrastructure:**
  - discrete time game simulations
  - plug-in architecture for simulation logic
  - simulation module realizes an environment for MAS simulations
- **independent on the agent team implementation technologies:**
  - agents connect and communicate via Internet
  - communication among agents in a team is client-side and arbitrary according to participants’ needs
- **public real-time tournament monitoring**
- **off-line recordings of game visualizations**
- MASSim is a robust platform:
  - tournaments normally run continuously for several days

2. Technical infrastructure
MASSim platform features a modular architecture with limited capabilities to run in a distributed fashion on several servers.

**MASSim core server:** (Java)
- serves as the central component of the infrastructure
- facilitates interaction and cooperation of all the elements of the platform
- implements the tournament scheduling

**Simulation plug-in:** (Java class)
- discrete, step-based game
- implements the logic and the functionality of the MAS environment

**Agent-2-Server Communication:**
- TCP/IP socket connection
- XML messages
- MASSim provides a ping interface to test the link quality

**Agent teams:**
- run on participant’s infrastructure
- no constraints on implementation technology
- no constraints on communication and coordination approach used

**Visualization library:**
- produces game recordings: series of SVG frames with JavaScript animation
- platform independent recordings: viewable by any SVG+JavaScript enabled browser (preferred MSIE+Adobe SVG Plug-In)

**Web-interface:** (Apache/Tomcat, Java Server Pages)
- runs independently of the MASSim core server
- displays the current state of the tournament and collects results and statistics of the tournament
- provides a chat facility for participants
- Java RMI communication with the MASSim core server

**Debug monitor:**
- remote debug information retrieval
- Java RMI communication with the MASSim core server

3. Agent Contest
Multi-Agent Systems Programming Contest is an attempt to stimulate research in the area of multi-agent systems development and programming by

1. identifying key problems and
2. collecting suitable benchmarks

that can serve as milestones for testing multi-agent programming languages, platforms and tools.

Unlike other similar competitions, the Agent Contest does not handicap deliberative approaches based on computational, symbolic reasoning, or planning.

**Agent Contest 2005-2007: gold miners**
- gold miners cooperatively search for gold in woods
- the team with the most collected gold nuggets wins
- only local and incomplete information, unreliable actions

**Agent Contest 2008: cows & cowboys**
- cowboys cooperate to push herds of cows into a coral
- cows have an independent behaviour: flocking, dispersion, cowboys aversion
- requires cooperation and coordination of agents in a team
- again, only local and incomplete information, probability of action failure

4. AC & MAS Community
First organized with CLIMA workshop series, since 2007 collocated with ProMAS. Attracted a significant attention in the MAS community:

2005: (CLIMA VI, London UK)
- 4 teams: UK, Spain, Japan, UK/Brazil

2006: (CLIMA VII, Hakodate, Japan)
- 3 teams: UK/Brazil, Spain, Germany

2007: (ProMAS’07, Honolulu, Hawaii, USA)
- 6 teams: 3 > Germany, UK/Brazil, Netherlands, Australia

2008: (ProMAS’08, Estoril, Portugal)
- 9 teams: 4 > Germany, UK/France, Iran, Ireland, Turkey, Australia

5. Publications
AC05 Mehdi Dastani, Jürgen Dix and Peter Novák: The First Contest on Multi-agent Systems Based on Computational Logic, Proceedings of 6th International Workshop on Computational Logic in Multi-Agent Systems (CLIMA VI), LNCS 3900, Springer 2005

AC06 Mehdi Dastani, Jürgen Dix, Peter Novák: The Second Contest on Multi-Agent Systems Based on Computational Logic, Proceedings of Seventh Workshop on Computational Logic in Multi-Agent Systems (CLIMA VII), LNCS 4371, Springer 2006
