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Practical Reasoning

Lezione n. 6

Corso di Laurea:
Informatica

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Practical Reasoning

- Practical reasoning is reasoning directed towards actions — the process of figuring out what to do:
  - “Practical reasoning is a matter of weighing conflicting considerations for and against competing options, where the relevant considerations are provided by what the agent desires/values/cares about and what the agent believes.” (Bratman)

Practical Reasoning

- Human practical reasoning consists of two activities:
  - *deliberation*
    deciding *what* state of affairs we want to achieve
  - *means-ends reasoning*
    deciding *how* to achieve these states of affairs
- The outputs of deliberation are *intentions*

Intentions in Practical Reasoning

1. Intentions pose problems for agents, who need to determine ways of achieving them.
   If I have an intention to ϕ, you would expect me to devote resources to deciding how to bring about ϕ.
2. Intentions provide a “filter” for adopting other intentions, which must not conflict.
   If I have an intention to ϕ, you would not expect me to adopt an intention ψ such that ϕ and ψ are mutually exclusive.
3. Agents track the success of their intentions, and are inclined to try again if their attempts fail.
   If an agent’s first attempt to achieve ϕ fails, then all other things being equal, it will try an alternative plan to achieve ϕ.

Intentions in Practical Reasoning

4. Agents believe their intentions are possible.
   That is, they believe there is at least some way that the intentions could be brought about.

5. Agents do not believe they will not bring about their intentions.
   It would not be rational of me to adopt an intention to ϕ if I believed ϕ was not possible.

6. Under certain circumstances, agents believe they will bring about their intentions.
   It would not normally be rational of me to believe that I would *bring my intentions about; intentions can* fail*. Moreover, it does not make sense that if I believe ϕ is inevitable that I would adopt it as an intention.*

Intentions in Practical Reasoning

7. Agents need not intend all the expected side effects of their intentions.
   If I believe $\phi \rightarrow \psi$ and I intend that ϕ, I do not necessarily intend ψ also. (Intentions are not closed under implication.)

   This last problem is known as the *side effect* or *package deal* problem. I may believe that going to the dentist involves pain, and I may also intend to go to the dentist — but this does not imply that I intend to suffer pain!

Intentions in Practical Reasoning

- Notice that intentions are much stronger than mere desires:

> “My desire to play basketball this afternoon is merely a potential influencer of my conduct this afternoon. It must vie with my other relevant desires [. . .] before it is settled what I will do. In contrast, once I intend to play basketball this afternoon, the matter is settled: I normally need not continue to weigh the pros and cons. When the afternoon arrives, I will normally just proceed to execute my intentions.” (Bratman, 1990)

What is Means-End Reasoning?

- Basic idea is to give an agent:
  - representation of goal/intention to achieve
  - representation actions it can perform
  - representation of the environment

and have it generate a *plan* to achieve the goal

- Essentially, this is

  automatic programming

Implementing Practical Reasoning Agents

```
Agent Control Loop Version 1
while true
    observe the world;
    update internal world model;
    deliberate about what intention to achieve next;
    use means-ends reasoning to get a plan for the intention;
    execute the plan
end while
```

Implementing Practical Reasoning Agents

- Problem: deliberation and means-ends reasoning processes are not instantaneous.
  They have a *time cost*.
- Suppose the agent starts deliberating at t_0, begins means-ends reasoning at t_1, and begins executing the plan at time t_2. Time to deliberate is

$$t_{deliberate} = t_1 - t_0$$

- and time for means-ends reasoning is

$$t_{me} = t_2 - t_1$$

Implementing Practical Reasoning Agents

- Further suppose that deliberation is *optimal* in that if it selects some intention to achieve, then this is the best thing for the agent. (Maximizes expected utility.)
- So at time t_1, the agent has selected an intention to achieve that would have been optimal *if it had been achieved at* t_0. But unless $t_{deliberate}$ is vanishingly small, then the agent runs the risk that the intention selected is no longer optimal by the time the agent has fixed upon it.
- This is *calculative rationality*.
- Deliberation is only half of the problem: the agent still has to determine *how* to achieve the intention.

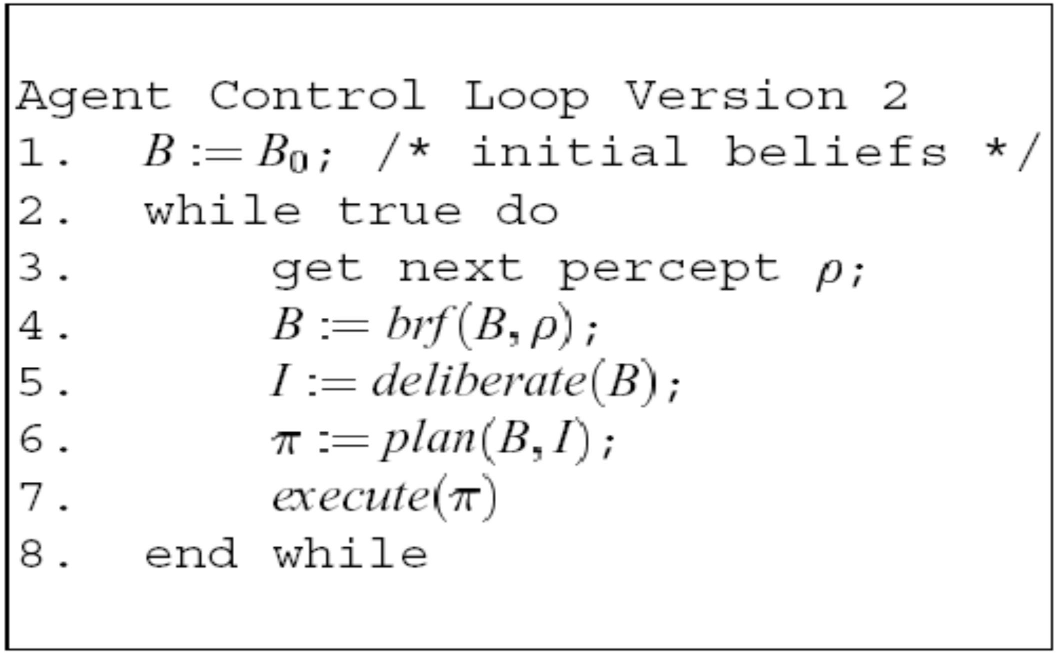
Implementing Practical Reasoning Agents

- So, this agent will have overall optimal behavior in the following circumstances:

1. When deliberation and means-ends reasoning take a vanishingly small amount of time; or
2. When the world is guaranteed to remain static while the agent is deliberating and performing means-ends reasoning, so that the assumptions upon which the choice of intention to achieve and plan to achieve the intention remain valid until the agent has completed deliberation and means-ends reasoning; or
3. When an intention that is optimal when achieved at time t_0 (the time at which the world is observed) is guaranteed to remain optimal until time t_2 (the time at which the agent has found a course of action to achieve the intention).

Implementing Practical Reasoning Agents

- Let’s make the algorithm more formal:



```
Agent Control Loop Version 2
B := B_0; /* initial beliefs */
while true do
    get next percept ρ;
    B := brf(B, ρ);
    I := deliberate(B);
    π := plan(B, I);
    execute(π)
end while
```

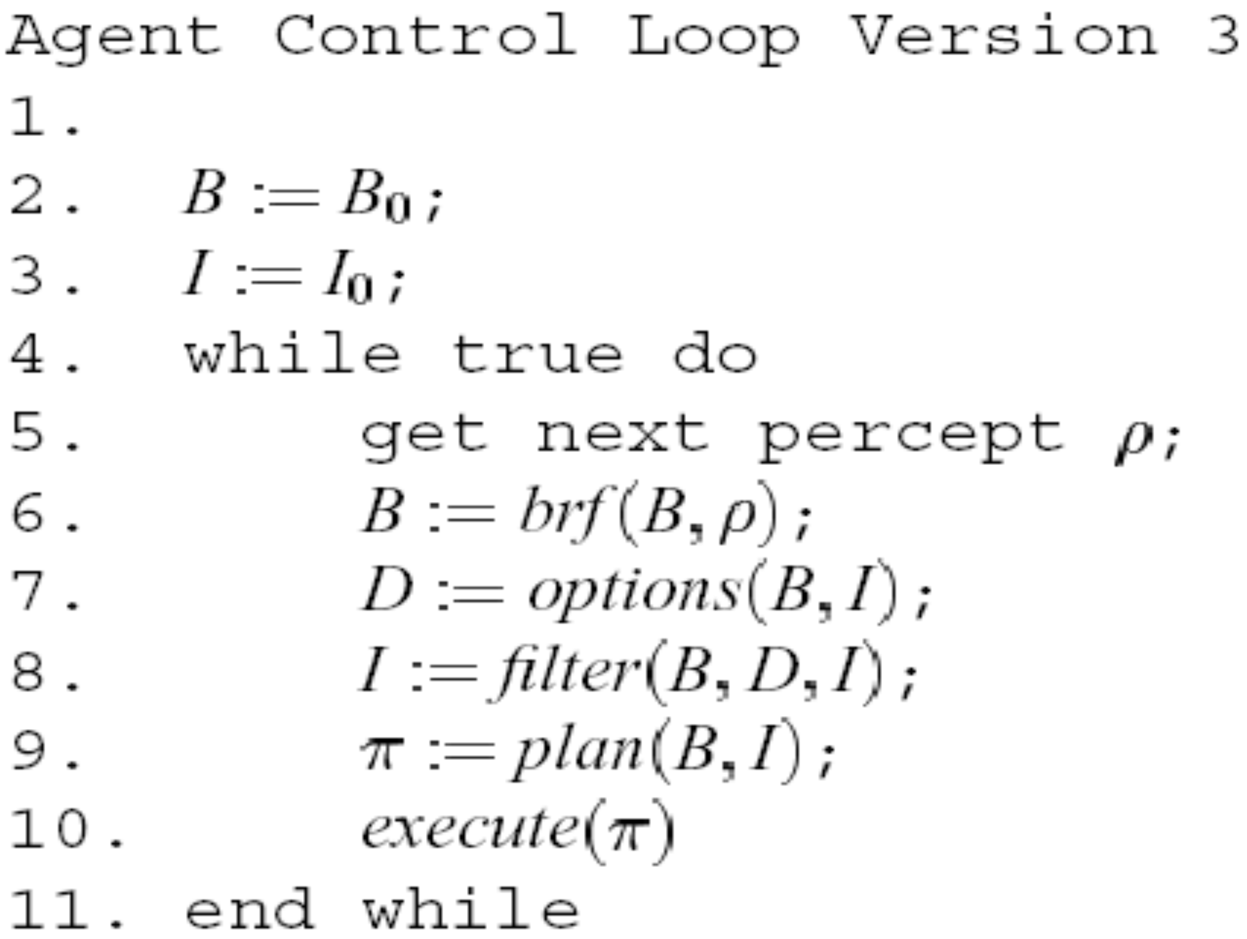
Deliberation

- How does an agent deliberate?
  - begin by trying to understand what the *options* available to you are
  - *choose between them*, and *commit* to some
- Chosen options are then intentions

Deliberation

- The *deliberate* function can be decomposed into two distinct functional components:
  - *option generation*
    in which the agent generates a set of possible alternatives;
    Represent option generation via a function, *options*, which takes the agent's current beliefs and current intentions, and from them determines a set of options (= *desires*)
  - *filtering*
    in which the agent chooses between competing alternatives, and commits to achieving them.
    In order to select between competing options, an agent uses a *filter* function.

Deliberation



```
Agent Control Loop Version 3

    $B := B_0$;
    $I := I_0$;
    while true do
        get next percept $\rho$;
        $B := brf(B, \rho)$;
        $D := options(B, I)$;
        $I := filter(B, D, I)$;
        $\pi := plan(B, I)$;
        $execute(\pi)$
    end while
```

Commitment Strategies

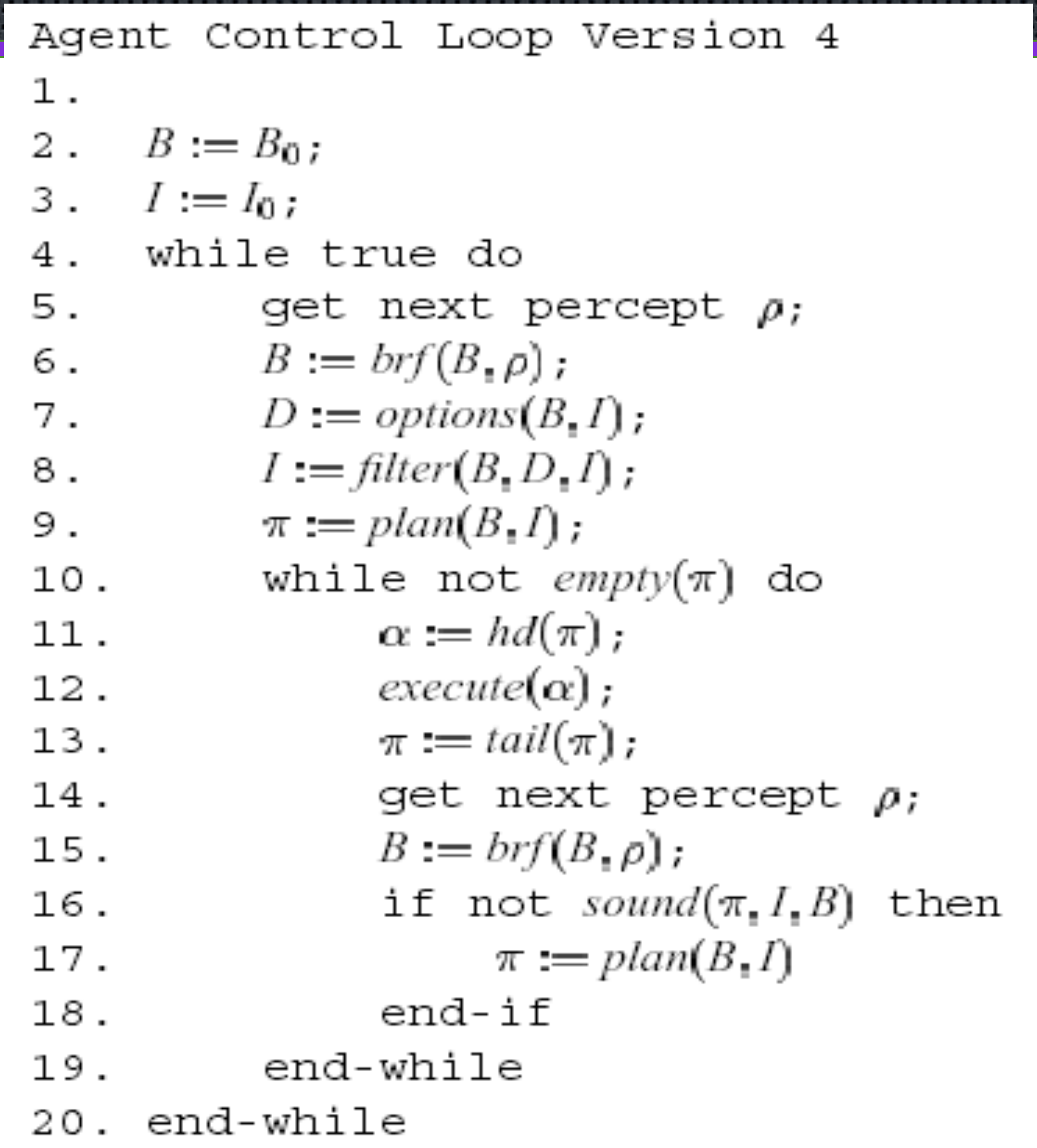
“Some time in the not-so-distant future, you are having trouble with your new household robot. You say “Willie, bring me a beer.” The robot replies “OK boss.” Twenty minutes later, you screech “Willie, why didn’t you bring me that beer?” It answers “Well, I intended to get you the beer, but I decided to do something else.” Miffed, you send the wise guy back to the manufacturer, complaining about a lack of commitment. After retrofitting, Willie is returned, marked “Model C: The Committed Assistant.” Again, you ask Willie to bring you a beer. Again, it accedes, replying “Sure thing.” Then you ask: “What kind of beer did you buy?” It answers: “Genessee.” You say “Never mind.” One minute later, Willie trundles over with a Genessee in its gripper. This time, you angrily return Willie for overcommitment. After still more tinkering, the manufacturer sends Willie back, promising no more problems with its commitments. So, being a somewhat trusting customer, you accept the rascal back into your household, but as a test, you ask it to bring you your last beer. Willie again accedes, saying “Yes, Sir.” (Its attitude problem seems to have been fixed.) The robot gets the beer and starts towards you. As it approaches, it lifts its arm, wheels around, deliberately smashes the bottle, and trundles off. Back at the plant, when interrogated by customer service as to why it had abandoned its commitments, the robot replies that according to its specifications, it kept its commitments as long as required — commitments must be dropped when fulfilled or impossible to achieve. By smashing the bottle, the commitment became unachievable.”

Commitment Strategies

- The following *commitment strategies* are commonly discussed in the literature of rational agents:
    - *Blind commitment*
      A blindly committed agent will continue to maintain an intention until it believes the intention has actually been achieved. Blind commitment is also sometimes referred to as *fanatical* commitment.
    - *Single-minded commitment*
      A single-minded agent will continue to maintain an intention until it believes that either the intention has been achieved, or else that it is no longer possible to achieve the intention.
    - *Open-minded commitment*
      An open-minded agent will maintain an intention as long as it is still believed possible.

Commitment Strategies

- An agent has commitment both to *ends* (i.e., the wishes to bring about), and *means* (i.e., the mechanism via which the agent wishes to achieve the state of affairs)
- Currently, our agent control loop is overcommitted, both to means and ends
  Modification: *replan* if ever a plan goes wrong

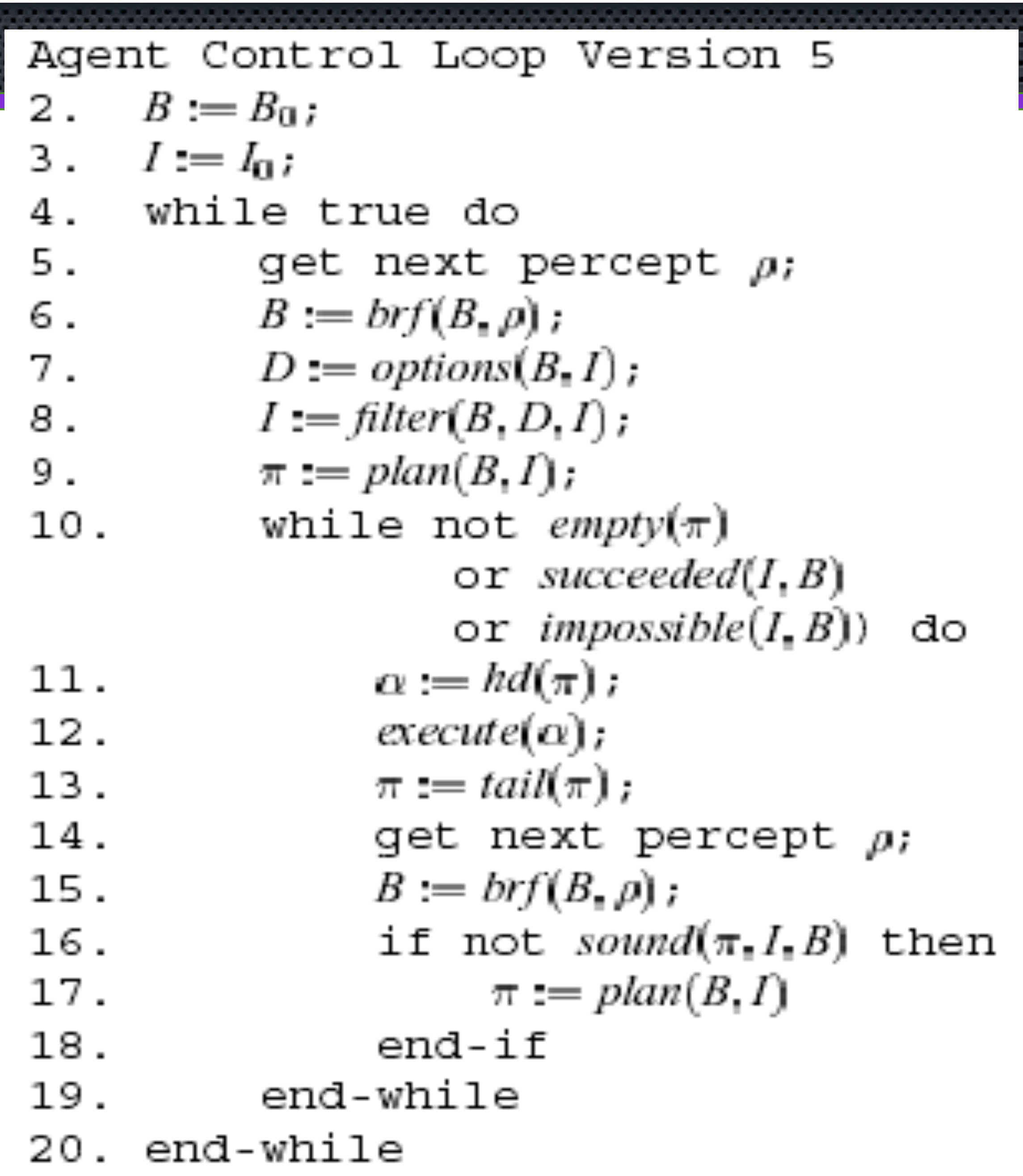


Agent Control Loop Version 4

```
$B := B_0$;
$I := I_0$;
while true do
    get next percept $\rho$;
    $B := brf(B, \rho)$;
    $D := options(B, I)$;
    $I := filter(B, D, I)$;
    $\pi := plan(B, I)$;
    while not $empty(\pi)$ do
        $\alpha := hd(\pi)$;
        $execute(\alpha)$;
        $\pi := tail(\pi)$;
        get next percept $\rho$;
        $B := brf(B, \rho)$;
        if not $sound(\pi, I, B)$ then
            $\pi := plan(B, I)$
        end-if
    end-while
end-while
```

Commitment Strategies

- Still overcommitted to intentions: Never stops to consider whether or not its intentions are appropriate
- Modification: stop to determine whether intentions have succeeded or whether they are impossible:
  (*Single-minded commitment*)

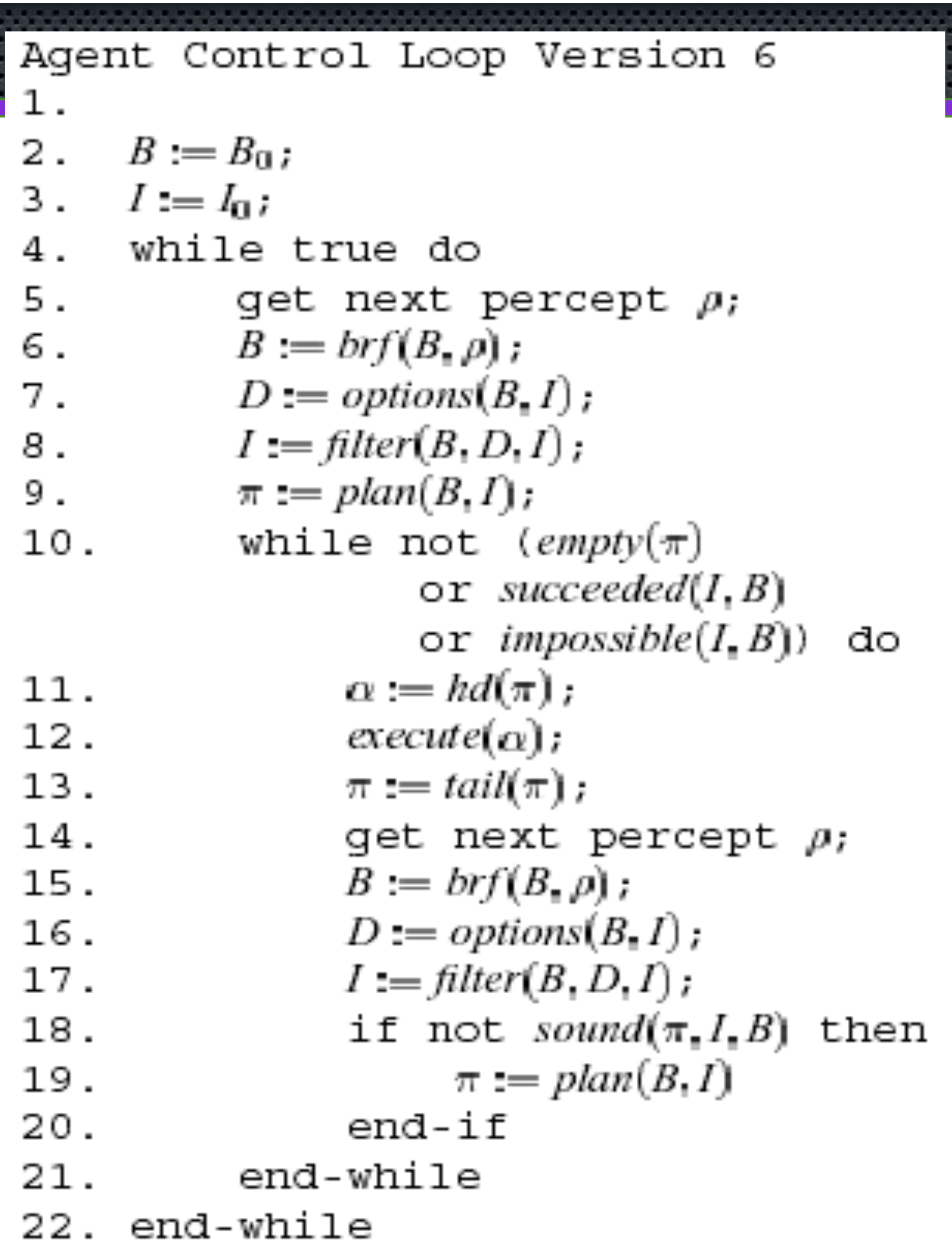


Agent Control Loop Version 5

```
$B := B_0$;
$I := I_0$;
while true do
    get next percept $\rho$;
    $B := brf(B, \rho)$;
    $D := options(B, I)$;
    $I := filter(B, D, I)$;
    $\pi := plan(B, I)$;
    while not $empty(\pi)$
            or $succeeded(I, B)$
            or $impossible(I, B)$) do
        $\alpha := hd(\pi)$;
        $execute(\alpha)$;
        $\pi := tail(\pi)$;
        get next percept $\rho$;
        $B := brf(B, \rho)$;
        if not $sound(\pi, I, B)$ then
            $\pi := plan(B, I)$
        end-if
    end-while
end-while
```

Intention Reconsideration

- Our agent gets to reconsider its intentions once every time around the outer control loop, i.e., when:
  - it has completely executed a plan to achieve its current intentions; or
  - it believes it has achieved its current intentions; or
  - it believes its current intentions are no longer possible.
- This is limited in the way that it permits an agent to *reconsider* its intentions
- Modification: Reconsider intentions after executing every action

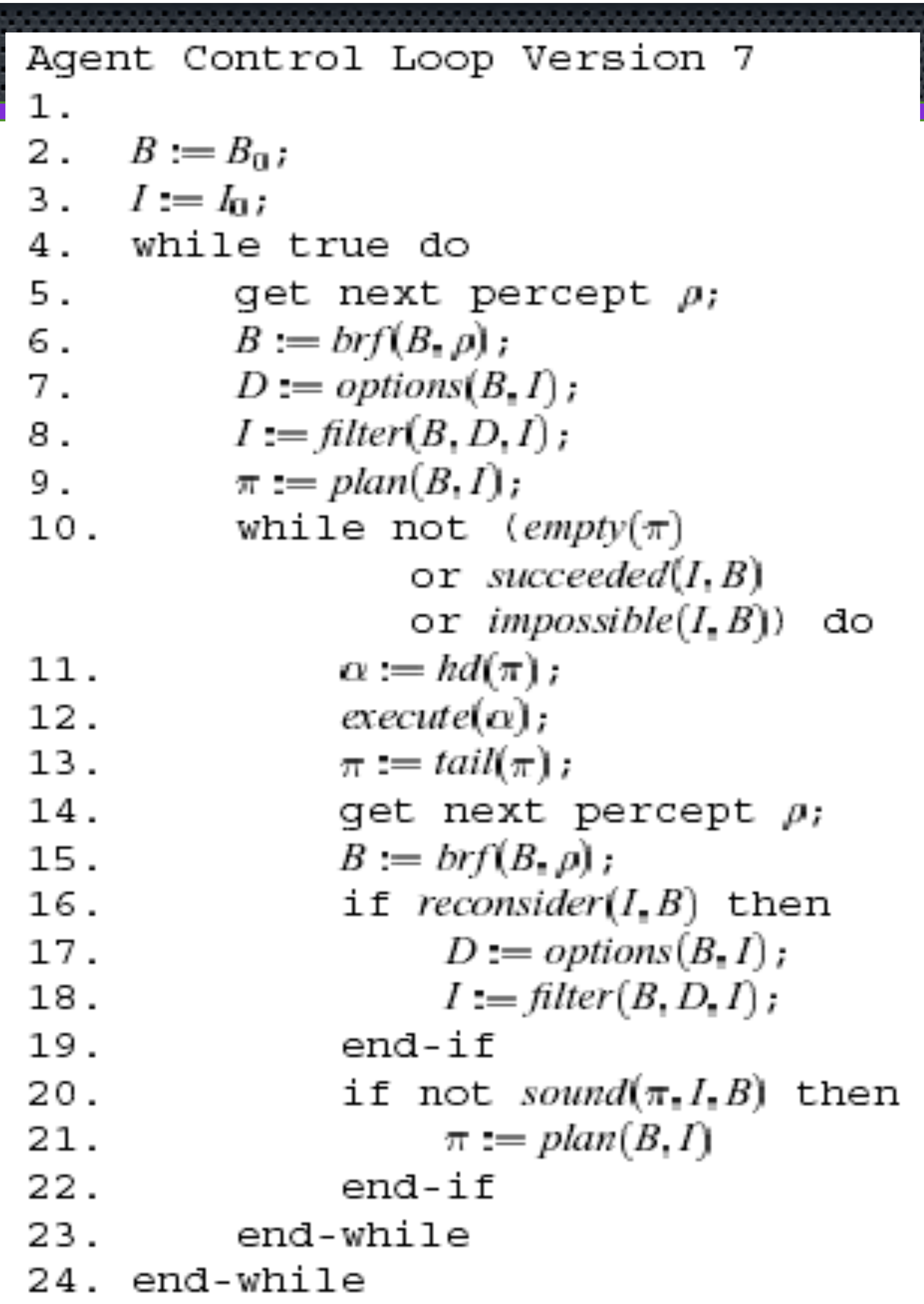


Agent Control Loop Version 6

```
$B := B_0$;
$I := I_0$;
while true do
    get next percept $\rho$;
    $B := brf(B, \rho)$;
    $D := options(B, I)$;
    $I := filter(B, D, I)$;
    $\pi := plan(B, I)$;
    while not $(empty(\pi)$
              or $succeeded(I, B)$
              or $impossible(I, B))$ do
        $\alpha := hd(\pi)$;
        $execute(\alpha)$;
        $\pi := tail(\pi)$;
        get next percept $\rho$;
        $B := brf(B, \rho)$;
        $D := options(B, I)$;
        $I := filter(B, D, I)$;
        if not $sound(\pi, I, B)$ then
            $\pi := plan(B, I)$
        end-if
    end-while
end-while
```

Intention Reconsideration

- But intention reconsideration is *costly*!
  A dilemma:
  - an agent that does not stop to reconsider its intentions sufficiently often will continue attempting to achieve its intentions even after it is clear that they cannot be achieved, or that there is no longer any reason for achieving them
  - an agent that *constantly* reconsiders its attentions may spend insufficient time actually working to achieve them, and hence runs the risk of never actually achieving them
- Solution: incorporate an explicit *meta-level control* component, that decides whether or not to reconsider



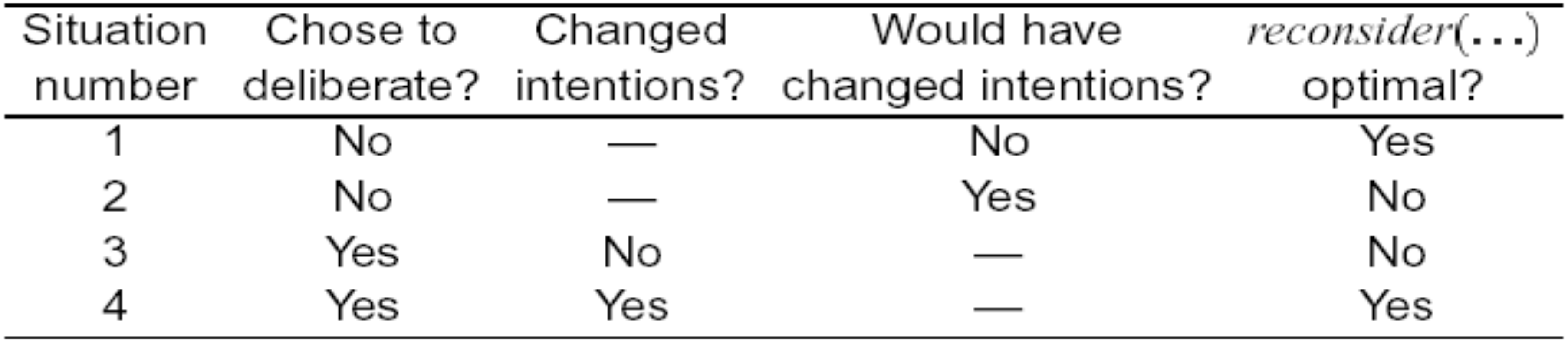
Agent Control Loop Version 7

```

B := B_0;
I := I_0;
while true do
    get next percept $\rho$;
    $B := brf(B, \rho)$;
    $D := options(B, I)$;
    $I := filter(B, D, I)$;
    $\pi := plan(B, I)$;
    while not $(empty(\pi)$
              or $succeeded(I, B)$
              or $impossible(I, B))$ do
        $\alpha := hd(\pi)$;
        $execute(\alpha)$;
        $\pi := tail(\pi)$;
        get next percept $\rho$;
        $B := brf(B, \rho)$;
        if $reconsider(I, B)$ then
            $D := options(B, I)$;
            $I := filter(B, D, I)$;
        end-if
        if not $sound(\pi, I, B)$ then
            $\pi := plan(B, I)$
        end-if
    end-while
end-while
```

Possible Interactions

- The possible interactions between meta-level control and deliberation are:



Situation number	Chose to deliberate?	Changed intentions?	Would have changed intentions?	*reconsider*(...) optimal?
1	No	—	No	Yes
2	No	—	Yes	No
3	Yes	No	—	No
4	Yes	Yes	—	Yes

Intention Reconsideration

- In situation (1), the agent did not choose to deliberate, and as consequence, did not choose to change intentions. Moreover, if it *had* chosen to deliberate, it would not have changed intentions. In this situation, the *reconsider(…)* function is behaving optimally.
- In situation (2), the agent did not choose to deliberate, but if it had done so, it *would* have changed intentions. In this situation, the *reconsider(…)* function is not behaving optimally.
- In situation (3), the agent chose to deliberate, but did not change intentions. In this situation, the *reconsider(…)* function is not behaving optimally.
- In situation (4), the agent chose to deliberate, and did change intentions. In this situation, the *reconsider(…)* function is behaving optimally.
- An important assumption: cost of *reconsider(…)* is *much* less than the cost of the deliberation process itself.

Optimal Intention Reconsideration

- Kinny and Georgeff's experimentally investigated effectiveness of intention reconsideration strategies
- Two different types of reconsideration strategy were used:
  - *bold* agents
    never pause to reconsider intentions, and
  - *cautious* agents
    stop to reconsider after every action
- *Dynamism* in the environment is represented by the *rate of world change*, γ

Optimal Intention Reconsideration

- Results (not surprising):
  - If γ is low (i.e., the environment does not change quickly), then bold agents do well compared to cautious ones. This is because cautious ones waste time reconsidering their commitments while bold agents are busy working towards — and achieving — their intentions.
  - If γ is high (i.e., the environment changes frequently), then cautious agents tend to outperform bold agents. This is because they are able to recognize when intentions are doomed, and also to take advantage of serendipitous situations and new opportunities when they arise.

BDI Theory and Practice

- We now consider the *semantics* of BDI architectures: to what extent does a BDI agent satisfy a *theory of agency*
- In order to give a semantics to BDI architectures, Rao & Georgeff have developed *BDI logics*: non-classical logics with modal connectives for representing beliefs, desires, and intentions
- The ‘basic BDI logic’ of Rao and Georgeff is a quantified extension of the expressive branching time logic CTL*
- Underlying semantic structure is a *labeled branching time* framework

BDI Logic

- From classical logic: ∧, », ¬, …
- The CTL* *path quantifiers*:
  - Aϕ ‘on all paths, ϕ’
  - Eϕ ‘on some paths, ϕ’
- The BDI connectives:
  - (Bel *i* ϕ) *i* believes ϕ
  - (Des *i* ϕ) *i* desires ϕ
  - (Int *i* ϕ) *i* intends ϕ

BDI Logic

- Semantics of BDI components are given via accessibility relations over ‘worlds’, where each world is itself a branching time structure
- Properties required of accessibility relations ensure belief logic KD45, desire logic KD, intention logic KD
(Plus interrelationships. . .)

Axioms of KD45

- (1) $\mathrm{Bel}(p \rightarrow q) \rightarrow (\mathrm{Bel}\ p \rightarrow \mathrm{Bel}\ q)$ (K)

If you believe that p implies q then if you believe p then you believe q

- (2) $\mathrm{Bel}\ p \rightarrow \neg\mathrm{Bel}\ \neg p$ (D)

This is the consistency axiom, stating that if you believe p then you do not believe that p is false

- (3) $\mathrm{Bel}\ p \rightarrow \mathrm{Bel}\ \mathrm{Bel}\ p$ (4)

If you believe p then you believe that you believe p

- (4) $\neg\mathrm{Bel}\ p \rightarrow \mathrm{Bel}\ \neg\mathrm{Bel}\ p$ (5)

If you do not believe p then you believe that you do not believe that p is true

Axioms of KD45

It also entails the two inference rules of *modus ponens* and necessitation:

- (5) if p, and p → q, then q (MP)
- (6) if p is a theorem of KD45 then so is Bel p

(Nec)

This last rule just states that you believe all theorems implied by the logic

BDI Logic

- Let us now look at some possible axioms of BDI logic, and see to what extent the BDI architecture could be said to satisfy these axioms
- In what follows, let
  - α be an *O-formula*, i.e., one which contains no positive occurrences of A
  - ϕ be an arbitrary formula

- *Belief goal compatibility*:

$$(\text{Des } \alpha) \rightarrow (\text{Bel } \alpha)$$

States that if the agent has a goal to optionally achieve something, this thing must be an option. This axiom is operationalized in the function *options*: an option should not be produced if it is not believed possible.

- *Goal-intention compatibility*:

$$(\text{Int } \alpha) \rightarrow (\text{Des } \alpha)$$

States that having an intention to optionally achieve something implies having it as a goal (i.e., there are no intentions that are not goals). Operationalized in the *deliberate* function.

BDI Logic

- *Volitional commitment*:

  $$(\text{Int } \mathit{does}(a)) \rightarrow \mathit{does}(a)$$

  If you intend to perform some action *a* next, then you do *a* next.

  Operationalized in the *execute* function.

- *Awareness of goals & intentions*:

  $$(\text{Des } \phi) \rightarrow (\text{Bel } (\text{Des } \phi))$$

  $$(\text{Int } \phi) \rightarrow (\text{Bel } (\text{Int } \phi))$$

  Requires that new intentions and goals be posted as events.

BDI Logic

- *No unconscious actions*:

  $$done(a) \rightarrow \mathrm{Bel}(done(a))$$

  If an agent does some action, then it is aware that it has done the action.

  Operationalized in the *execute* function.

  A stronger requirement would be for the success or failure of the action to be posted.

- *No infinite deferral*:

  $$(\mathrm{Int}\ \phi) \rightarrow \mathrm{A}\Diamond(\neg(\mathrm{Int}\ \phi))$$

  An agent will eventually either act for an intention, or else drop it.

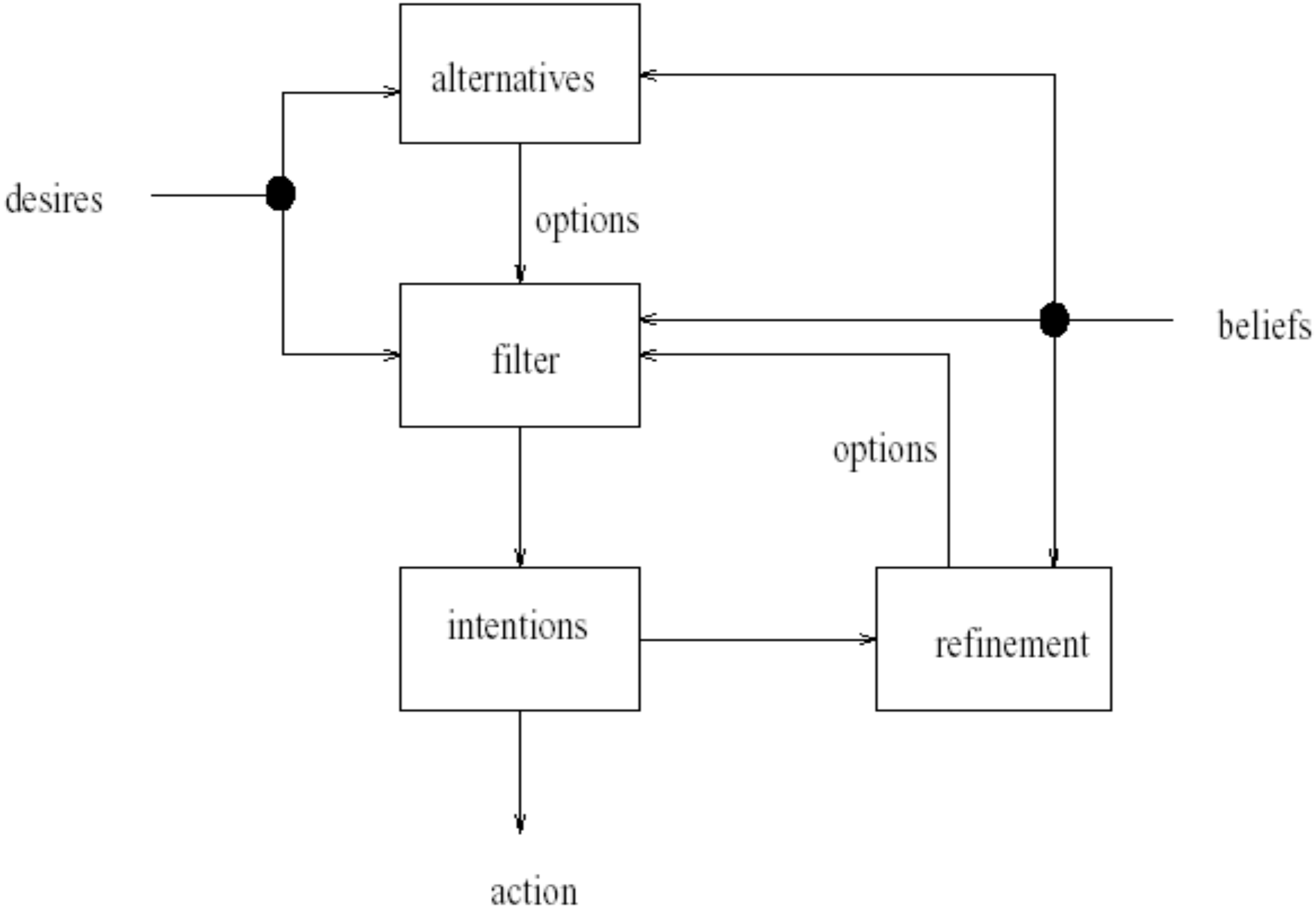
Implemented BDI Agents: IRMA

- IRMA – Intelligent Resource-bounded Machine Architecture – Bratman, Israel, Pollack
- IRMA has four key symbolic data structures:
  - a *plan library*
  - explicit representations of
    - *beliefs*: information available to the agent — may be represented symbolically, but may be simple variables
    - *desires*: those things the agent would *like* to make true — think of desires as *tasks* that the agent has been allocated; in humans, not necessarily logically consistent, but our agents will be! (goals)
    - *intentions*: desires that the agent has *chosen* and *committed to*

IRMA

- Additionally, the architecture has:
  - a *reasoner* for reasoning about the world; an inference engine
  - a *means-ends analyzer* determines which plans might be used to achieve intentions
  - an *opportunity analyzer* monitors the environment, and as a result of changes, generates new options
  - a *filtering process* determines which options are compatible with current intentions
  - a *deliberation process* responsible for deciding upon the ‘best’ intentions to adopt

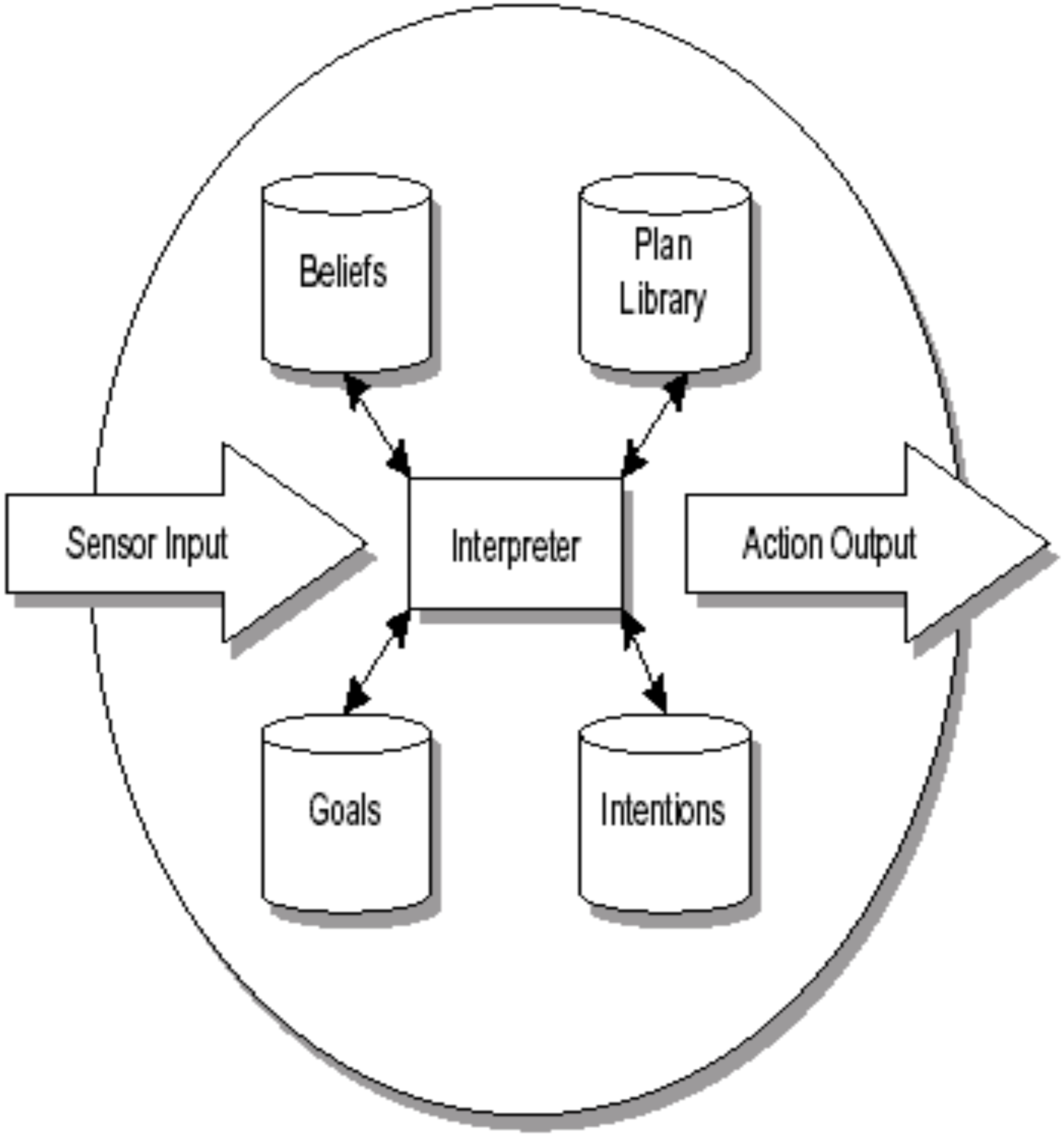
IRMA


alternatives
desires
options
filter
beliefs
options
intentions
refinement
action

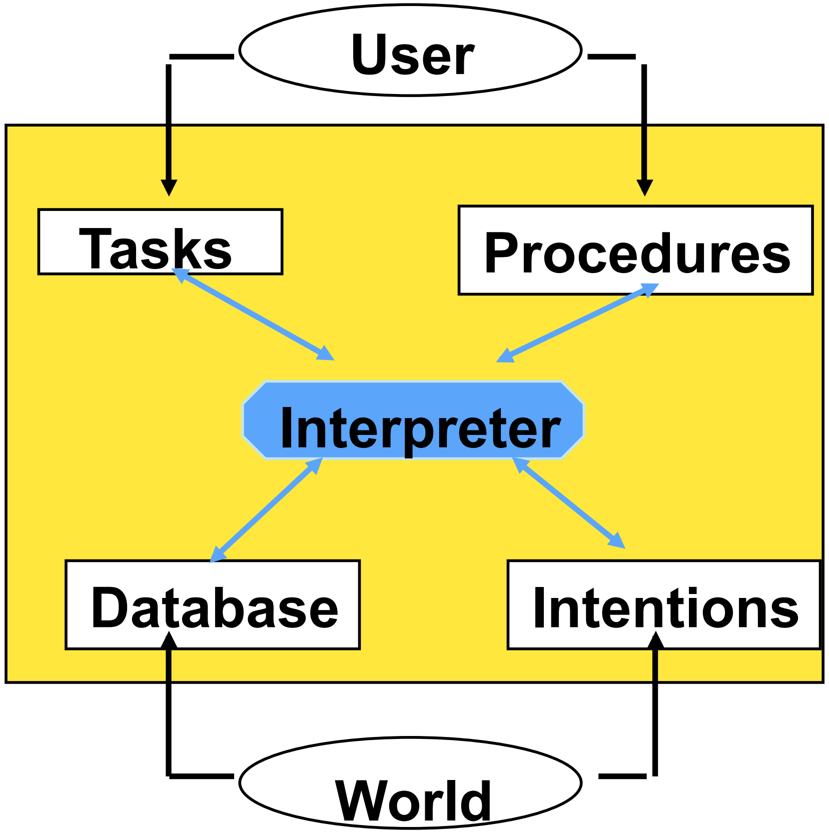
Implemented BDI Agents: PRS

- Another BDI-based agent architecture: the PRS – Procedural Reasoning System (Georgeff, Lansky)
- In the PRS, each agent is equipped with a *plan library*, representing that agent's *procedural knowledge*: knowledge about the mechanisms that can be used by the agent in order to realize its intentions
- The options available to an agent are directly determined by the plans an agent has: an agent with no plans has no options
- In addition, PRS agents have explicit representations of beliefs, desires, and intentions, as above

PRS


Beliefs
Plan Library
Sensor Input
Interpreter
Action Output
Goals
Intentions

PRS Architecture

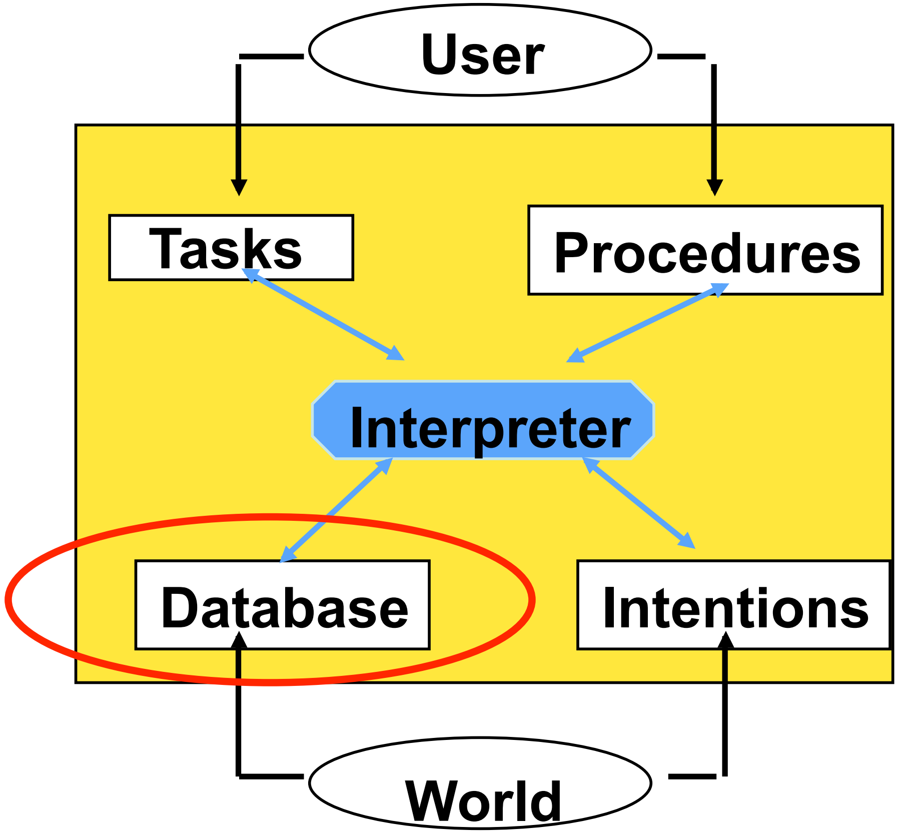


PRS Architecture: Database

Contains beliefs or facts about the world

Includes meta-level information

- Eg goal G is active

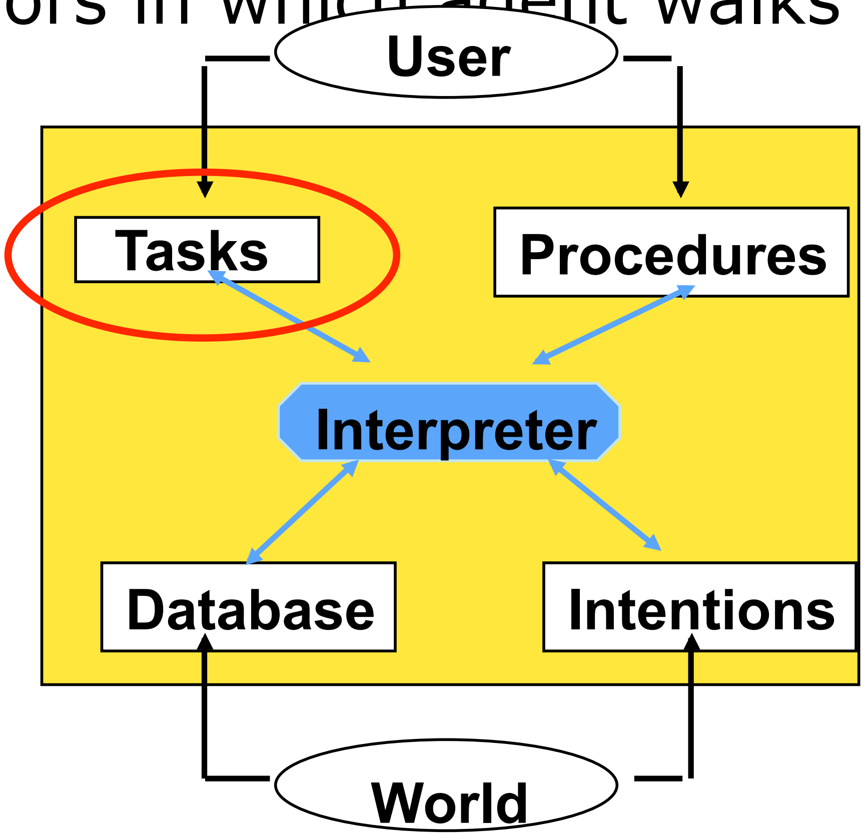


PRS Architecture: Tasks

Represent desired behavior

Conditions over some time interval

- eg (walk a b): set of behaviors in which agent walks from a to b)



Expressing Tasks in a Dynamic Environment

(! P) -- achieve P

(? P) -- test P

(# P) -- maintain P

(^ C) -- wait until C

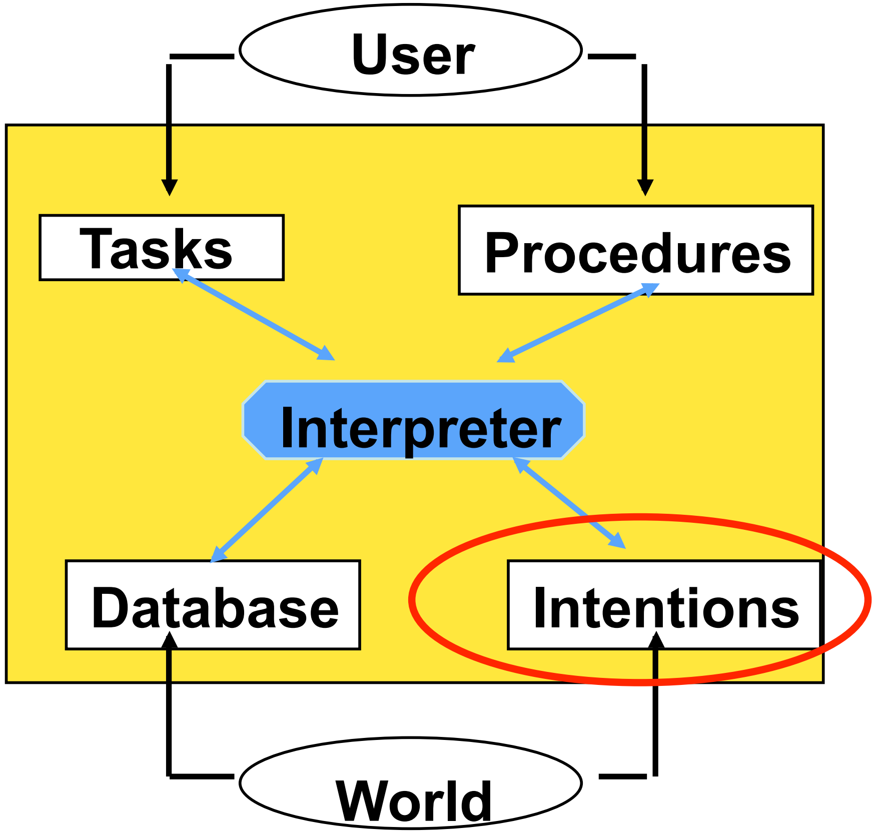
(-> C) -- assert C

(~> C) -- retract C

PRS Architecture: Intentions

Currently active procedures

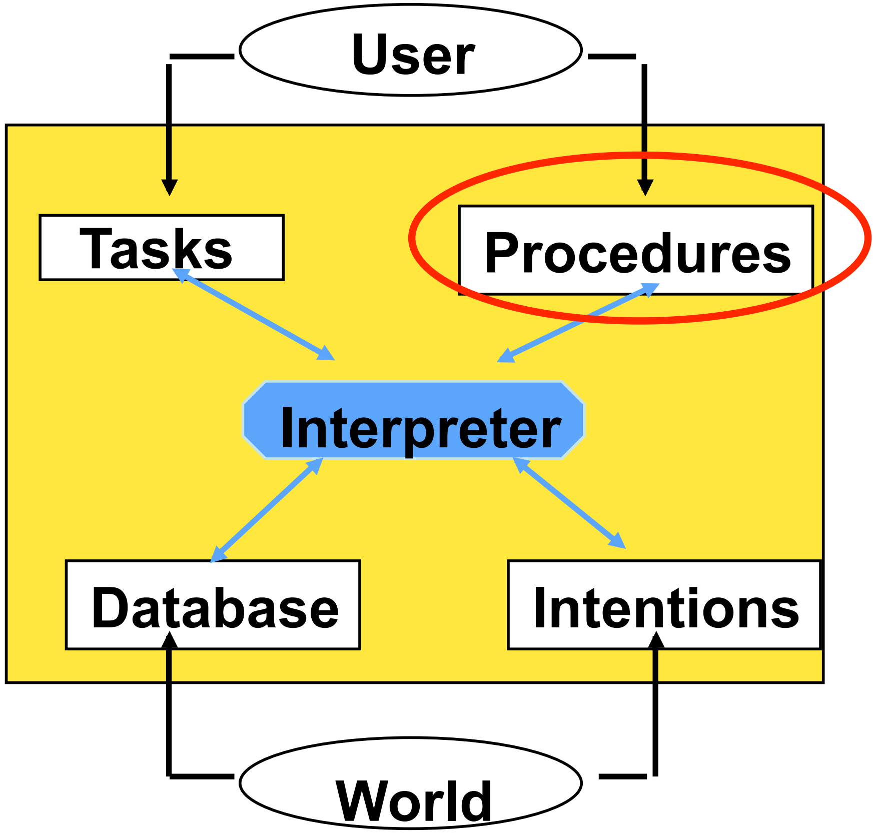
Procedure currently being executed



PRS Architecture: Procedures

Pre-compiled procedures

Express actions and tests to achieve goals or to react to conditions



Procedural Reasoning System (PRS)

Framework for symbolic reactive control systems in dynamic environments

Eg Mobile robot control

Eg diagnosis of the Space Shuttle’s Reaction Controls System

Eg air traffic control system OASIS

PRS: Main Features

Pre-compiled procedural knowledge

BDI (Belief, Desires, Intentions) foundation

Combines deliberative and reactive features

- Plan selection, formation, execution, sensing

Plans dynamically and incrementally

Integrates goal-directed and event-driven behavior

Can interrupt plan execution

Meta-level reasoning

Multi-agent planning

Meta-Reasoning

Can include meta-level procedures

- eg: choose among multiple applicable procedures
- eg: evaluate how much more reasoning can be done within time constraints
- eg: how to achieve a conjunction or disjunction of goals

PRS Plans

Each plan contains:

- Invocation condition: circumstances for plan consideration;
- Context: circumstances for successful plan execution;
- Maintenance condition: must be true while plan is executing, in order to succeed; and
- Body: course of action, consisting of both goals and actions.

It is also possible to have disjunctions of goals and loops

PRS operation

Observe world and agent state, and update event queue to reflect observed events.

Generate new possible goals (tasks), by finding plans whose trigger matches event queue.

Select matching plans for execution (an intended means).

Push the intended means onto the appropriate intention stack in the current set.

Select an intention stack and execute next step of its topmost plan:

```
    If the step is an action, perform it;
    If it is a subgoal, post it on the event queue.
```

Knowledge Areas = Plans

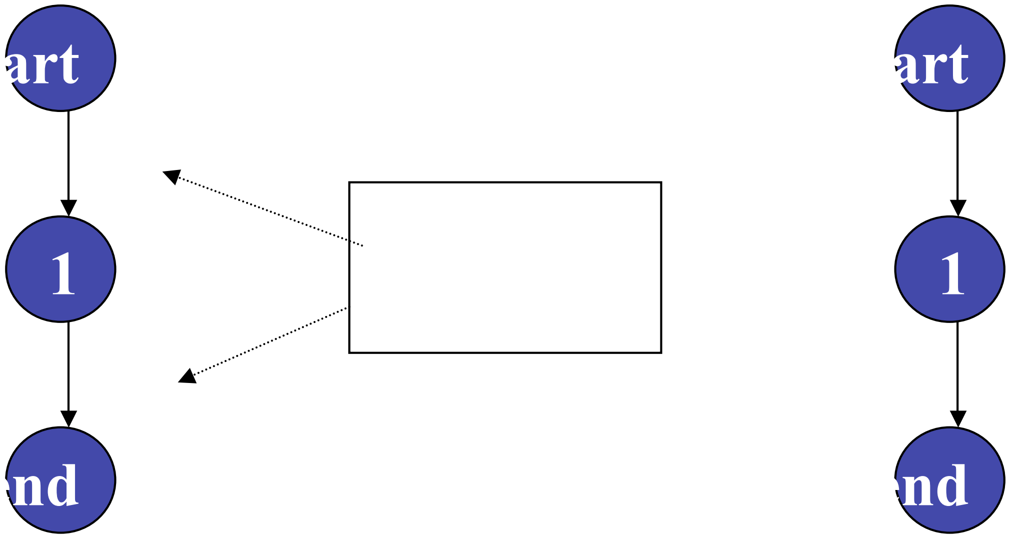
type: drink-cola

invocation: goal-add(¬thirst)

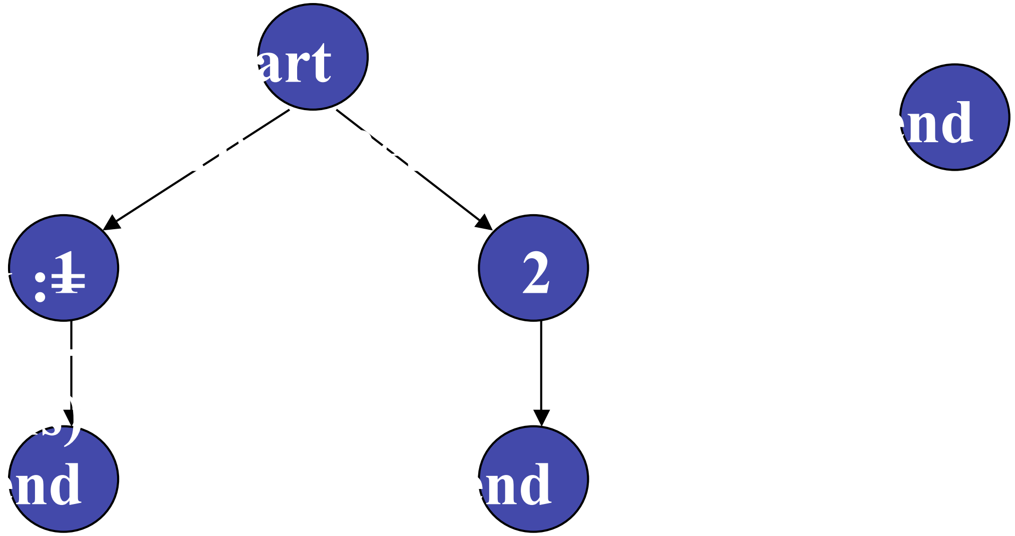
precondition:have-glass

add-list: {¬ thirst}

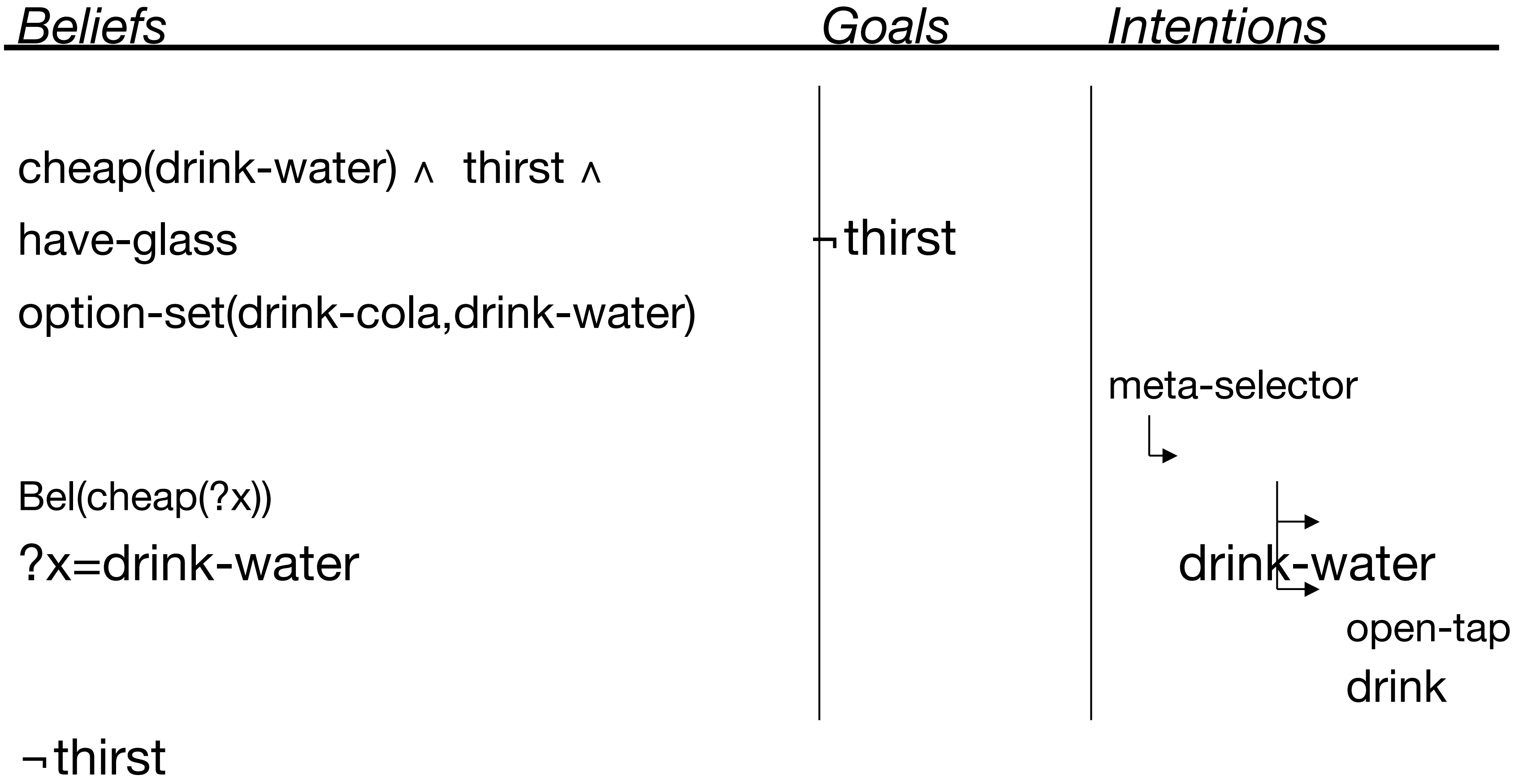
body:



Meta Knowledge Areas



Intention structure



Beliefs

cheap(drink-water) ∧ thirst ∧

have-glass

option-set(drink-cola,drink-water)

Bel(cheap(?x))

?x=drink-water

¬thirst

Goals

¬thirst

Intentions

meta-selector

drink-water

open-tap

drink