Introduction to CLIPS

- Overview of CLIPS
- Facts
- Rules
- Rule firing
- Control techniques
- Example
CLIPS basic elements

- **Fact-list:** global memory of data
- **Knowledge-base:** contain all the rules
- **Inference engine:** controls overall execution using forward chaining

- [http://www.ghg.net/clips/CLIPS.html](http://www.ghg.net/clips/CLIPS.html)
Inference cycle

1. Pattern Matching
2. Conflict Resolution (select rule)
3. Fire rule

User’s program

Knowledge-Base (Rules)

Working Memory (Facts)

assert/retract/modify facts

change rules
Antecedent Matching

1. matches facts in working memory against antecedents of rules

2. each combination of facts that satisfies a rule is called an instantiation

3. each matching rule is added to the agenda
Selection of a rule from the Agenda

Some selection strategies:

- **Recency** (most recent first)
  triggered by the most recent facts

- **Specificity** (most specific first)
  rules prioritized by the number of condition elements

- **Random**
  choose a rule at random from the agenda
Execution of the rule

- Can modify working memory
  - add facts
  - remove facts
  - alter existing facts

- Alter rules

- Perform an external task (read sensors, control actuator)
Control mechanism

• Consider the following rule-base:

(1) Car won’t start → check battery
(2) Car won’t start → check gas
(3) Check battery AND battery bad → replace battery

• If the fact “car won’t start” is asserted, then which of the rules (1) and (2) should be placed on the agenda? (1), (2), or both?

• We need a mechanism to place instantiations of rules on the agenda.
Control mechanisms

- **Markov algorithms:**
  Approach: Apply rule with highest priority, if not applicable then take the next one etc.

  Problem: inefficient for systems with many (1000s of) rules. Has to do pattern matching on every rule in each cycle.

- **Rete algorithm:**
  Fast pattern matching that obtains speed by storing information about all rules in a network. Only looks for changes in pattern matches in every cycle.
Install and run

• Access to CLIPS:
  • **On aludra**: at ~csci561a/clips
  • **In Windows**: install  

• Running Clips
  • On aludra: > clips
  • In Windows: run clips.exe
Overview
Getting started

• Shell commands: (command)
  • (help)
  • (reset) → places (initial-fact) on factlist
  • (run) → runs till completion of program
  • (run 1) → runs 1 step
  • (facts) → shows the factlist
  • (assert (fact)) → puts (fact) on factlist
  • (retract 0) → removes fact with ID 0 from factlist
  • (defrule myrule ...) → defines a rule named myrule
  • (clear) → removes all facts from factlist
Facts

• (field1 field2 … fieldN) an **ordered, flat** list

• E.g.,
  (Hans 561a) is not equal to (561a Hans)

• (Hans (561a 561b)) is illegal

• Common to start with the relation that fact describes
  e.g.,
  (class Hans 561b)

• Keyword nil: used to indicate that a field has no value

• deftemplates to have names for each field
Field types

- **Types:**
  - Float: 1.34
  - Integer: 1, 2, 10, 20
  - Symbol: alkflksjfd
  - String: "duck/soup"
  - external-address:
  - fact-address:
  - instance-name:
  - instance-address:

- The type of each field is determined by the type of value stored in the field.

- In **deftemplates**, you can *explicitly* declare the type of value that a field can contain.
Deffacts

• (deffacts <deffacts name> [<optional comment>]

<<facts>>  )

used to automatically assert a set of facts

• (deffacts status “some facts about emergency”

(emergency fire)

(fire-class A)  )

• Are asserted after a (reset) command
Adding and removing facts

- (assert <<<fact>>>) used to assert multiple facts
- (retract <<<fact-index>>>) removes a number of facts

E.g.,

```
(assert (fact1)
        (fact2))
```

(retract 1)

- Is assigned a unique **fact identifier**: (e.g., f-1) starts with ‘f’ and followed by an integer called the **fact-index**

- **Fact-index**: can be used to refer to that fact (e.g., retract it)

- **Fact-list**: can be viewed in the fact-list window or using the (facts) command.

```
(facts [<start> [<end> [<maximum>]])
```
Components of a rule

• (defrule <rule name> [<optional comment>]
  <<<patterns>>>=>
  <<<actions>>>)

• (defrule fire-emergency “An example rule”
  (emergency fire)
  =>
  (assert (action activate-sprinkler-system)))

• Rules can be inserted into the shell or loaded from a file using the
  (load) command
The agenda and activation

• (run [<limit>])

  runs a CLIPS program,
  <limit> is the number of rules to fire

• **Activating a rule:** requires that all its patterns on LHS (Left-Hand-Side) are matched. Asserting an existing fact has no effect.

• **List of activated rules:** can be seen in the agenda window or listed using (agenda)

  0 fire-emergency f-2
  
  matching facts
  
  rule name
  
  salience
Rule firing and refraction

- (run) will cause the most salient rule on the agenda to fire

- What if the run command is issued again?
Rule firing and refraction

- (run) will cause the most salient rule on the agenda to fire

- What if the run command is issued again?

There are no rules on the agenda so nothing will happen.

- **Refraction**: CLIPS rule firing models the refraction effect of a neuron to avoid endless loops
Commands used with rules

- **(rules)** displays the rules in the knowledge-base

- **(pprule <rule-name>)** displays a rule

- **(load <file-name>)** loads rules described in a file

- **(save <file-name>)** saves the stored rules into a file

- Comments: start with the character ";"
Multiple rules

- (defrule fire-emergency
  (emergency fire)
  =>
  (assert (action activate-sprinkler-system)))

- (defrule flood-emergency
  (emergency flood)
  =>
  (assert (action shut-down-electrical-equipment)))

- Asserting (emergency fire) will fire rule 1
  asserting (emergency flood) will activate rule 2
Rules with multiple patterns

- (defrule class-A-fire-emergency
  (emergency fire)
  (fire-class A)
  =>
  (assert (action activate-sprinkler-system)))

- (defrule class-B-fire-emergency
  (emergency fire)
  (fire-class B)
  =>
  (assert (action activate-carbon-dioxide-extinguisher)))

- All patterns must be matched for the rule to fire
Removing rules

• (clear) removes all rules from the knowledge-base

• (excise <rule-name>) removes rule
Debugging

• (watch \{facts, rules, activations, all\})
  is used to provide the information about facts, rules, activations

• (unwatch \{facts, rules, activations, all\})
  undoes the a (watch) command

• (matches <rule-name>)
  indicates which patterns in a rule match facts

• (set-break <rule-name>)
  allows execution to be halted before a rule

• (remove-break [<rule-name>])
  removes all or a given breakpoint

• (show-breaks)
  lists all breakpoints
Variables

- ?speed
- ?sensor
- ?value

(defrule grandfather
  (is-a-grandfather ?name)  \[\text{?name bound to the 2nd field of fact}\]
  =>
  (assert (is-a-man ?name)))

E.g: (is-a-grandfather John) \[\Rightarrow \text{?name = John}\]
     (is-a-grandfather Joe)  \[\Rightarrow \text{?name = Joe}\]
Wildcards

(person <name> <eye-color> <hair-color>)
(person John brown black)
(person Joe blue brown)

(defrule find-brown-haired-people
   (person ?name ?brown)
   =>
   (printout t ?name " has brown hair"))

States that eye color doesn’t matter.
Control techniques

• Using control facts
• Using salience
• Using control rules
CLIPS> (clear)
CLIPS> (assert (animal-is duck))
    <Fact-0>
CLIPS> (assert (animal-sound quack))
    <Fact-1>
CLIPS> (assert (The duck says "Quack."))
    <Fact-2>
CLIPS> (facts)
    f-0    (animal-is duck)
    f-1    (animal-sound quack)
    f-2    (The duck says "Quack.")
For a total of 3 facts.
CLIPS>
Example

CLIPS> (clear)
CLIPS> (assert (animal-is duck))
<Fact-0>
CLIPS> (defrule duck
    (animal-is duck)
=>
    (assert (sound-is quack)))
CLIPS>