Reinforcement Learning in Robotics

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A great time for RL ...

Classic Control:
A great time for RL ...

Atari Games:
A great time for RL ...

Go:
A great time for RL ...
Outline

How to set up RL problems in Robotics?

Important topics

How to get started?
RL in Robotics

- No labelled data;
- No access to real model;
- No fixed rule
- Continuous space
- Complex transition dynamics
Problem Setting

- MDP process defined by: $S, A, P, r, \rho_0, \gamma, T$
- Policy: $\pi_\theta : S \times A \rightarrow \mathbb{R}_{\geq 0}$
- Expected Reward: $\mathbb{E}_\tau \left[ \sum_{t=0}^{T} \gamma^t r(s_t, a_t) \right]$
- Trajectories: $\tau = (s_0, a_0, \ldots)$
Real robot?
Topics: Manipulation

Topics: Manipulation

Contribution:

- DeepRL
  - Real complex robot system
  - Complex task
  - Asynchronous data collection
- Safety Exploration
Topics: Manipulation

Off-policy Deep Q-function based algorithms:

\[ Q^{\pi_n}(x_t, u_t) = \mathbb{E}_{r_{i \geq t}, x_{i > t} \sim E, u_{i > t} \sim \pi_n} [R_t | x_t, u_t] \]

\[ \mu_{n+1}(x_t) = \text{arg max}_u Q^{\pi_n}(x_t, u_t) \]

- DDPG (Deep Deterministic Policy Gradient)  
- NAF (Normalized Advantage Function)  

\[ Q(x, u | \theta^Q) = A(x, u | \theta^A) + V(x | \theta^V) \]

\[ A(x, u | \theta^A) = -\frac{1}{2} (u - \mu(x | \theta^\mu))^T P(x | \theta^P) (u - \mu(x | \theta^\mu)) \]
Topics: Manipulation

- State Representation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Joint Angles</th>
<th>End-effector Positions</th>
<th>Time Derivatives</th>
<th>Target Position to the State</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

- Distance from target location
- Handle position when door is closed + Quaternion of the door
Topics: Manipulation

- Asynchronous NAF
Topics: Manipulation

● Safety Constraints
  ○ Joint Position Limits:
    ■ Maximum commanded velocity allowed per joint
    ■ Strict position limits for each joint
  ○ Bounding sphere for end-effector position

Very important for training from scratch on real systems!
Topics: Manipulation
Topics: Manipulation

What have we learned from this?

- Efficiency is important for real robots
- Safety is important for real robots
- It is possible to apply DeepRL on real robots to accomplish complex tasks
Complex Task?
Topics: Locomotion

Topics: Locomotion

Topics: Locomotion

- Highlight:
  - Less prior knowledge
  - Hierarchical RL
Topics: Locomotion

Topics: Locomotion

Topics: Locomotion

LLC (Low Level Controller):

- State
- Action
- Goal
- Reward

\[
\begin{align*}
    r_L &= w_{\text{pose}}r_{\text{pose}} + w_{\text{vel}}r_{\text{vel}} + w_{\text{root}}r_{\text{root}} \\
    &+ w_{\text{com}}r_{\text{com}} + w_{\text{end}}r_{\text{end}} + w_{\text{heading}}r_{\text{heading}}
\end{align*}
\]
Topics: Locomotion

HLC (High Level Controller):
Topics: Locomotion

HLC (High Level Controller):

- State
- Training

Diagram:

- Convolutional layers
- Layer # 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
What have we learned from this?

- Identify hierarchical structure is important.
- State representation for different hierarchies are important.

Can we do better?

- Current topic: identify the internal hierarchical structure automatically.
Are we ready?
Topics: Sim2Real

Using Simulation and Domain Adaptation to Improve Efficiency of Deep Robotic Grasping: Bousmalis et al, 2017
Topics: Sim2Real

Why this is important?

- Grasping:
Topics: Sim2Real

Approach
How to get started?

Algorithm

Environment
Algorithms

● Libraries:
  ○ Baselines (OpenAI): https://github.com/openai/baselines
  ○ Rllab (OpenAI): https://github.com/rll/rllab
  ○ ...

● Implement your own:
  ○ Go back to the original paper
  ○ Use open-source code as reference
  ○ Start testing from toy examples
Algorithms

How to select an algorithm for your problem?

- Action space: continuous? Discrete?

More often in Robotics

Left? \rightarrow \text{Discrete} \quad \text{Right?} \rightarrow \text{Continuous}

- Theta
- Velocity
Algorithms

How to select an algorithm for your problem?

- Reduce your problem to toy example
Algorithms

How to select an algorithm for your problem?

- Find similar task in “standard” problems

PR2 Robot (Huge robot, dual arm)  Fetch simulation in gym
Environment

- Hardware robot
- Simulation
Environment

- Hardware robot
- Simulation
Environment

What is the problem of starting from real robot?

- Expensive
- Safety
Simulator

- Simulation Environment
  - OpenAI Gym
  - MuJoCo-py
  - PyBullet
  - Gazebo
  - V-rep
  - Roboschool
  - Dart
  - ....

- Dynamics Engine
  - Box2D
  - Bullet
  - ODE
  - ...

RL in Robotics: problems

- Reward?
- Structure?
- Exploration?
- Stability?
Future Directions

- Efficient RL
- Long Horizon Reasoning
- Hierarchical RL
- Meta-RL
- Reward Function
- Multi-model
- Lifelong Learning
- Simulation to Real
- ...

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References

[1] https://gym.openai.com/


References


Thank you!