

What Will Self-Aware Computer Systems Be

John McCarthy, Stanford University

Mccarthy@Stanford.Edu

[Http://Www-Formal.Stanford.Edu/Jmc/](http://www-formal.stanford.edu/jmc/)

August 9, 2004

- Darpa Wants To Know, And There's A Workshop
- The Subject Is Ready For Basic Research.
- Short Term Applications **May** Be Feasible.
- Self-Awareness Is Mainly Applicable To Programs With Tentative Existence.

WHAT WILL SELF-AWARE SYSTEMS BE AWARE OF?

- Easy aspects of state: battery level, memory available
- Ongoing activities: serving users, driving a car
- Knowledge and lack of knowledge
- purposes, intentions, hopes, fears, likes, dislikes
- Actions it is free to choose among relative to external constraints. That's where free will comes from.
- Permanent aspects of mental state, e.g. long term beliefs,
- Episodic memory—only partial in humans, probably some animals, but readily available in computer systems.

HUMAN SELF-AWARENESS—1

- Human self-awareness is weak but improves with age.
- Five year old but not three year old. I used to think a box contained candy because of the cover, but now I know it contains crayons. He will think it contains candy,
- Simple examples: I'm hungry, my left knee hurts from my right knee feels normal, my right hand is making
- Intentions: I intend to have dinner, I intend to visit New Zealand some day. I do not intend to die.
- I exist in time with a past and a future. Philosophers talk a lot about what this means and how to represent it.

- Permanent aspects of ones mind: I speak English and French and Russian. I like hamburgers and caviar. I can feel my blood pressure without measuring it.

HUMAN SELF-AWARENESS—2

- What are my choices? (Free will is having choices.)
- Habits: I know I often think of you. I often have b
the Pennsula Creamery.
- Ongoing processes: I'm typing slides and also getti
- Juliet hoped there was enough poison in Romeo's
her.
- More: fears, wants (sometimes simultaneous but inc
- Permanent compared with instantaneous wants.

MENTAL EVENTS (INCLUDING ACTIONS)

- consider
- Infer
- decide
- choose to believe
- remember
- forget
- realize
- ignore

MACHINE SELF-AWARENESS

- Easy self-awareness: battery state, memory left
- Straightforward s-a: the program itself, the program language specs, the machine specs.
- Self-simulation: Any given number of steps, **can't do** "Will I ever stop?", "Will I stop in less than n steps in g less than n steps.
- Its choices and their inferred consequences (**free wi**
- "I hope it won't rain tomorrow". Should a machine be aware that it hopes? I think it should sometimes.
- $\neg Knows(I, TTelephone(MMike))$, so I'll have to look

WHY WE NEED CONCEPTS AS OBJECTS

We had $\neg Knows(I, Telephone(MMike))$, and I'll have up.

Suppose $Telephone(Mike) = "321-7580"$. If we write

$\neg Knows(I, Telephone(Mike))$, then substitution would give $\neg Knows(I, "321-7580")$, which doesn't make sense.

There are various proposals for getting around this. The one I've advocated is some form of modal logic. My proposal is to treat *individual concepts* as objects, and represent them by special symbols, e.g. doubling the first letter.

There's more about why this is a good idea in my "Theories of individual concepts and propositions"

WE ALSO NEED CONTEXTS AS OBJECTS

We write

$$c : p$$

to assert p while in the context c . Terms also can use contexts. $c : e$ is an expression e in the context c .

The main application of contexts as objects is to assert relationships between the objects denoted by different expressions in different contexts. Thus we have

$$c : \text{Does}(\text{Joe}, a) = \text{SpecializeActor}(c, \text{Joe}) : a,$$

or, more generally,

$$\text{SpecializesActor}(c, c', \text{Joe}) \rightarrow c : \text{Does}(\text{Joe}, a) = c' : a$$

Such relations between expressions in different contexts can be formalized using a situation calculus theory in which the actor is implicitly represented in an outer context in which there is only one actor.

We also need to express the relation between an external context in which we refer to the knowledge and awareness of the user and AutoCar1's internal context in which it can use 'situation calculus'.

SELF-AWARENESS EXPRESSED IN LOGIC FORMULAS—1

Pat is aware of his intention to eat dinner at home.

$c(\text{Awareness}(\text{Pat})) : \text{Intend}(I, M\text{Mod}(\text{AAt}(\text{HHome}), \text{Eat}(\text{Dinner})))$

Awareness(Pat) is a context. *Eat(Dinner)* denotes the act of eating dinner, logically different from eating *St*. *Mod(At(Home), Eat(Dinner))* is what you get when the modifier “at home” is applied to the act of eating dinner. *Intend* says that I intend *X*. The use of *I* is appropriate in the context of a person’s (here Pat’s) awareness.

We should extend this to say that Pat will eat dinner unless his intention changes. This can be expressed like

$$\neg Ab17(Pat, x, s) \wedge Intends(Pat, Does(Pat, x), s) \rightarrow (\exists s' > s) Occurs(Does(Pat, x), s).$$

in the notation of (McCarthy 2002).

FORMULAS—2

- AutoCar1 is driving John from Office to Home. AutoCar1 becomes aware of this. AutoCar1 becomes aware that it is low on gas. AutoCar1 is permanently aware that it must ask permission to stop for gas, so it asks for permission. Etc., Etc. These are expressed in a context $C0$.

$C0$:

$Driving(I, John, Home1)$

$\wedge Aware(DDriving(II, JJohn, HHome))$

$\wedge OccursBecomes(Aware(I, LLowfuel(AAutoCar1)))$

$\wedge OccursBecomes(Want(I, SStopAt(GGasStation1)))$

\wedge

QUESTIONS

- Does the lunar explorer require self-awareness? What about the entries in the recent DARPA contest?
- Do self-aware reasoning systems require dealing with opacity? What about explicit contexts?
- Where does tracing and journaling involve self-awareness?
- Does an online tutoring program (for example, a program that teaches a student Chemistry) need to be self-aware?
- What is the simplest self-aware system?

- Does self-awareness always involve self-monitoring?
- In what ways does self-awareness differ from awareness in other agents? Does it require special forms of representational architecture?

REFERENCES

Some Philosophical Problems from the Standpoint of
Intelligence

John McCarthy and Patrick J. Hayes

Machine Intelligence 4, 1969

also <http://www-formal.stanford.edu/jmc/mcchay69>

Actions and other events in situation calculus

John McCarthy

KR2002

also <http://www-formal.stanford.edu/jmc/sitcalc.htm>