Artificial Intelligence for Computer Games

More search algorithms

Bidirectional search
Partially unknown environments
Rapid random trees

Goal Bounding
Pruning the space

Idea roughly
When searching towards the goal, do not open nodes that leads outside your goal
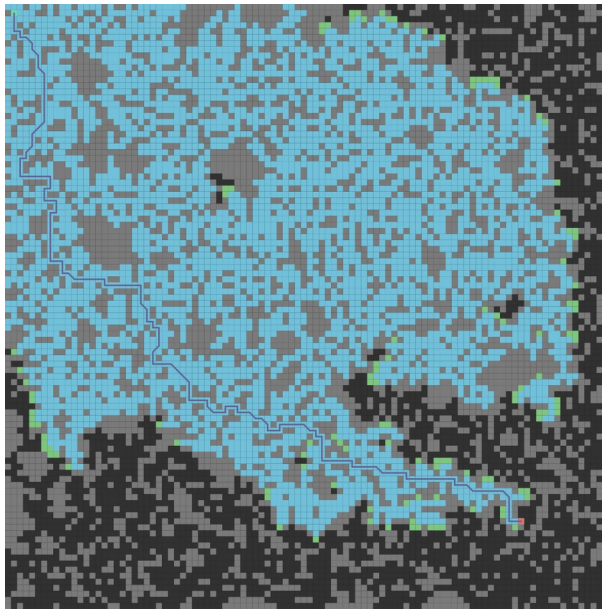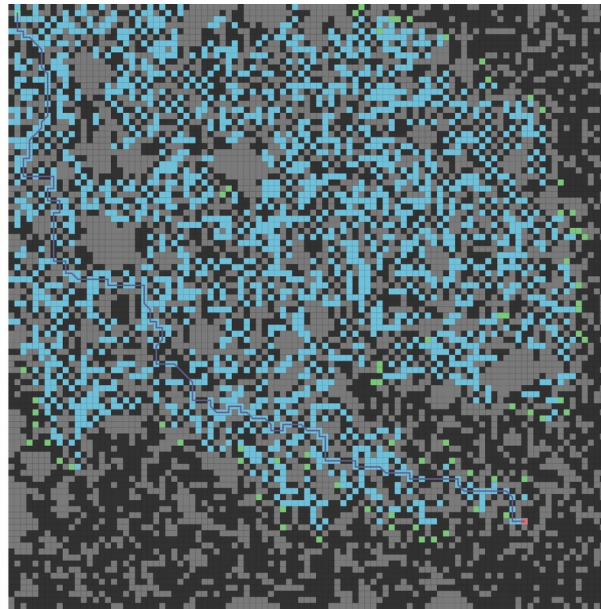

A* JPS+ JPS+ Goal Bounding

Goal Bounding
Pruning the space

Idea roughly
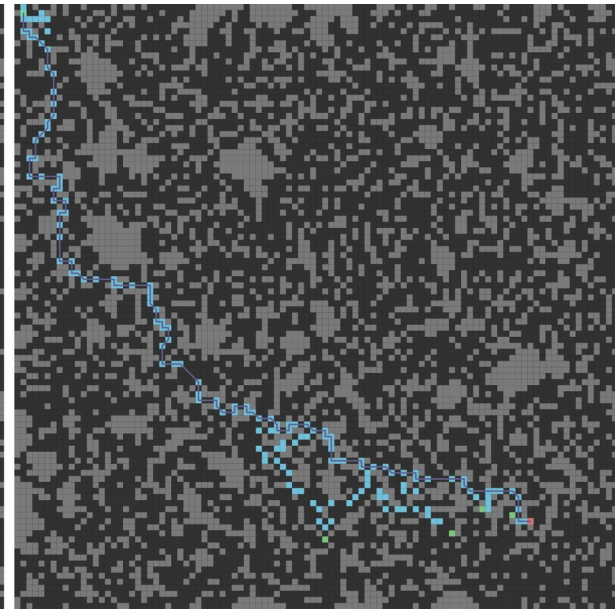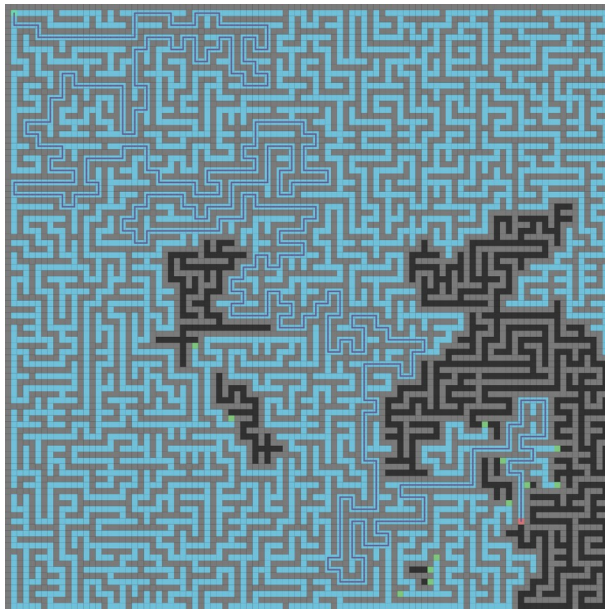
When searching towards the goal, do not open nodes that leads outside your goal

A*   JPS+   JPS+ Goal Bounding

Image(s) from the presentation:
http://www.gameaipro.com/Rabin_AISummitGDC2015_JPSPlusGoalBounding.zip

Goal Bounding
Pruning the space

- A method to prune the search space
  - Requires preprocessing the search space offline, so map must be static
  - Assumes 2D maps, but extensible to arbitrary dimensions
- Usable for regular grids as well as navmeshes
- Two sources:
  - Rabin, S. 2015. JPS+ now with Goal Bounding: Over 1000 × Faster than A*, GDC 2015. [PPTX]
  - Rabin, S., Sturtevant, N.R. 2017. Faster A* with Goal Bounding, Game AI Pro 3. [PDF]

Idea

For each oriented edge, store bounding box of the area that contains all nodes that are part of all optimal paths leading through that edge.
Use it to prune edges during expansion.

Nodes on optimal paths reachable via going left from the point
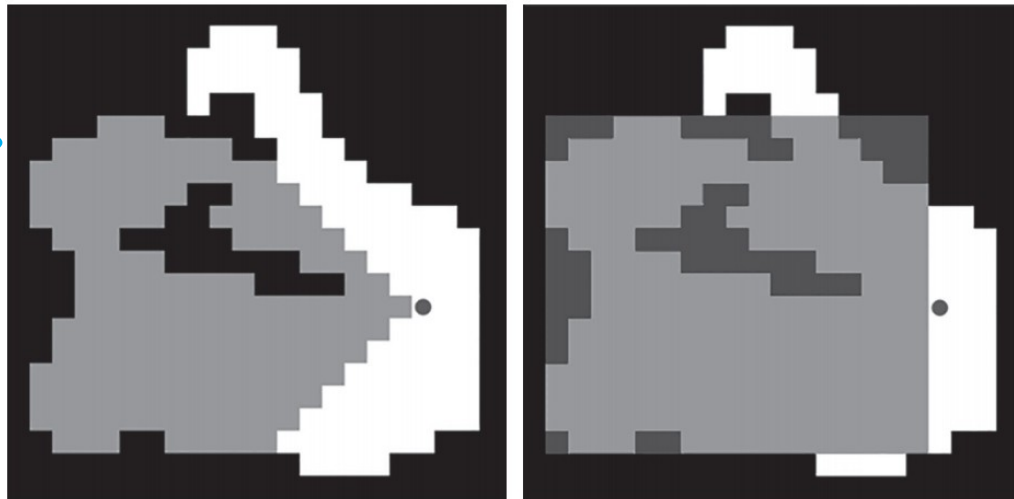
Bounding box of those nodes.

Image(s) from the paper: http://www.gameaipro.com/GameAIPro3/GameAIPro3_Chapter22_Faster_A_Star_with_Goal_Bounding.pdf

Goal Bounding
Pruning the space

Nodes optimally reachable through edges of red triangle.
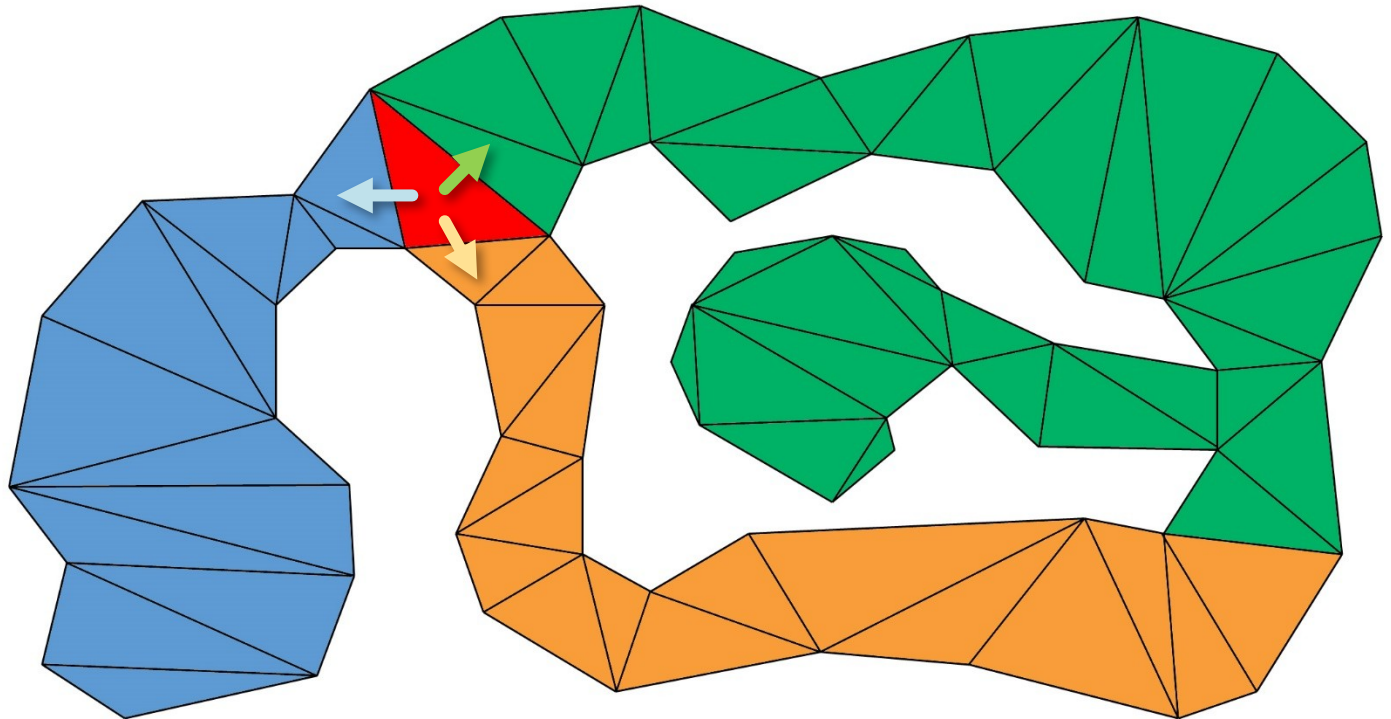
Goal Bounding
Pruning the space

Nodes optimally reachable through edges of red triangle.

Respective bounding boxes enclosing optimally reachable areas.
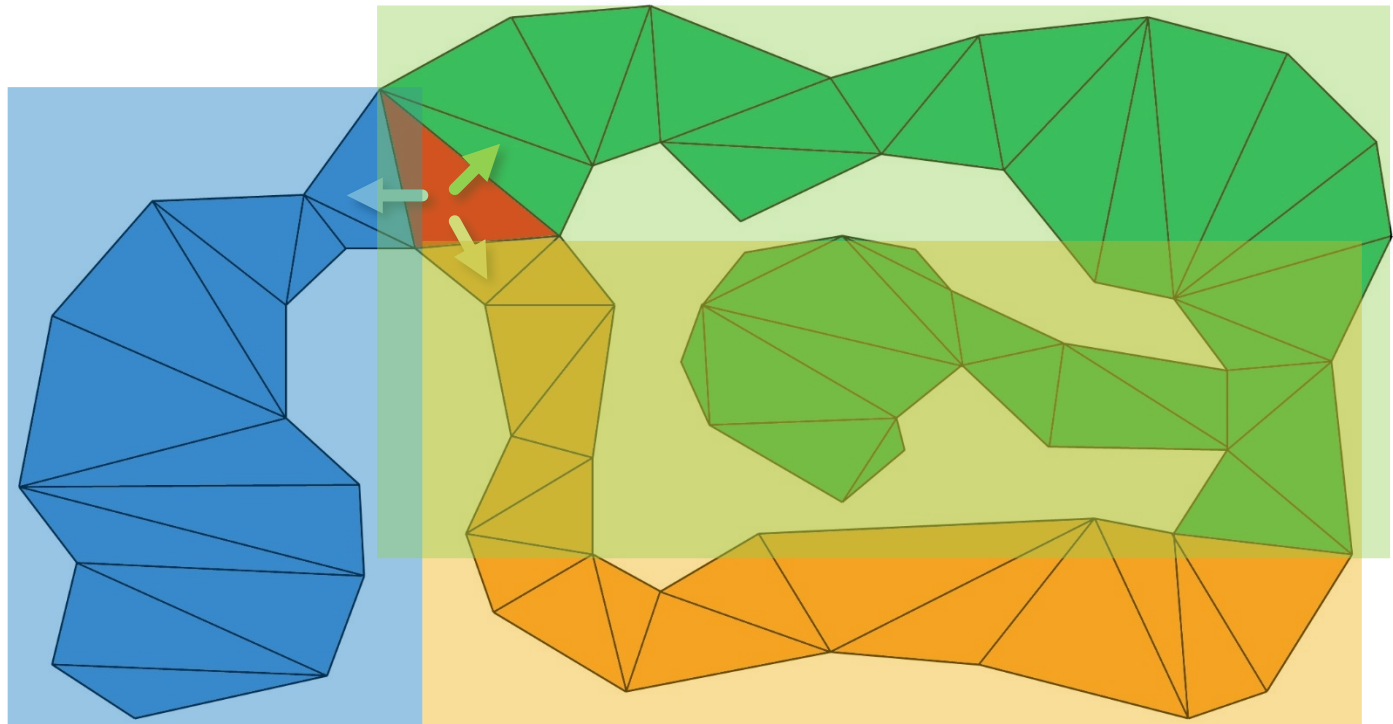
Goal bounding can be integrated into general graph-search algorithm template! Goal bounding box check is fast ~ O(1).

Algorithm template

1. **make** open-list
2. **push** start into open-list
3. **while** open-list **not empty**
4.   **extract** node from open-list according to "strategy"
5.   **if** node is target
6.   **return** path to node
7.   **else**
8.   **expand** node by checking its direct neighbors, **ignoring neighbors whose goal bounding box does NOT contain the target**, possibly adding those who do into open-list
9.   **move** expanded node to closed-list

Goal Bounding
Precomputation phase

- Precomputation must be done for each graph node
- Can be easily run in parallel for each node

Nodes on optimal paths reachable via going left from the point

Bounding box of those nodes.

Precomputation idea – step 1
For the given node, run Dijkstra's algorithm in flood fill mode (no target) marking each node reached with the first edge of the path towards that node.

Image(s) from the paper: http://www.gameaipro.com/GameAIPro3/GameAIPro3_Chapter22_Faster_A_Star_with_Goal_Bounding.pdf

Precomputation idea – step 2

For each edge, compute the bounding box of the nodes marked in previous step, store it.

[a] Bounding box

[b] Bounding box

[c] Bounding box

Image(s) from the paper: http://www.gameaipro.com/GameAIPro3/GameAIPro3_Chapter22_Faster_A_Star_with_Goal_Bounding.pdf
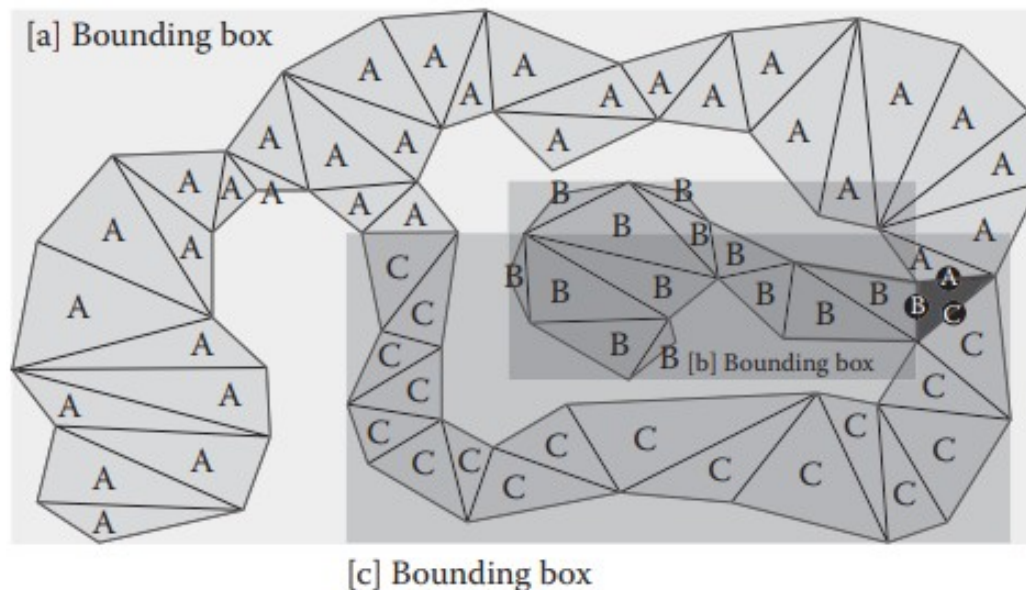
Pathfinding

Bidirectional search

Bidirectional search
Primer

- Idea: search from both ends (start → target; target → start) until the searches meet
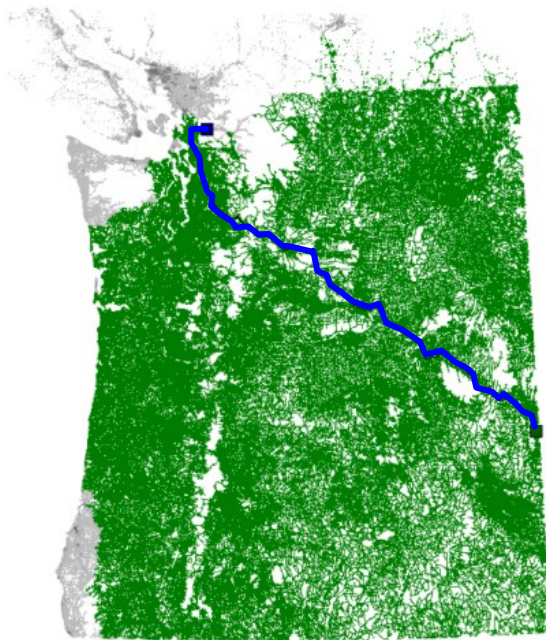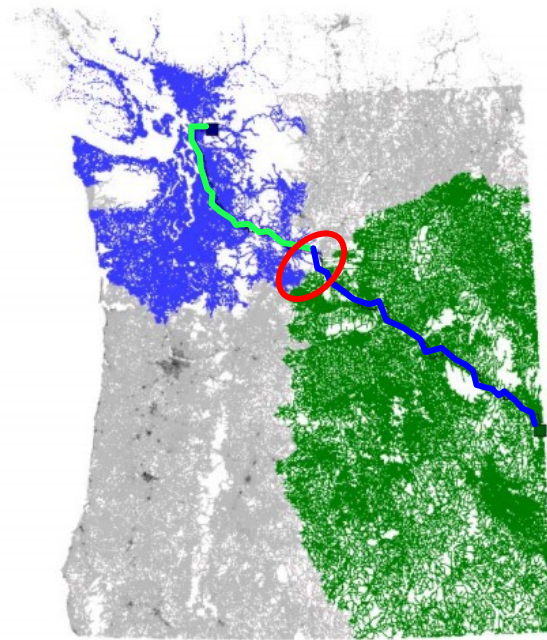
Dijkstra's   Bidirectional Dijkstra's

Bidirectional search
Sources

- Computing the Shortest Path: A* Search Meets Graph Theory (Goldberg/Harrelson, 2003)

- Efficient Point-to-Point Shortest Path Algorithms (Goldberg, https://www.cs.princeton.edu/courses/archive/spr06/cos423/Handouts/EPP%20shortest%20path%20algorithms.pdf)

- Given a directed graph G with n vertices, m edges

- Every edge v → w has a length l(v, w)

- Let dist(v, w) be the shortest-path distance from v to w

- Goal: find path from start vertex s to goal vertex t with distance dist(s, t)

Bidirectional search
Review: Dijkstra's algorithm

- for every vertex v, remembers
  - d(v): shortest known distance from s to v
  - p(v): parent
  - S(v): status = unreached, frontier, expanded
- Initially d(s) = 0, p(s) = nil, S(s) = frontier
  - For all other vertices v : d(v) = ∞, p(v) = nil, S(v) = unreached
- In each iteration:
  - choose frontier vertex v with smallest d(v)
  - for each edge (v, w) in graph:
    - if d(w) > d(v) + l(v, w):
      - set d(w) = d(v) + l(v, w)
      - set p(w) = v
      - set S(w) = frontier
  - set S(v) = expanded

- Every vertex is expanded only once

- When a vertex v is expanded, d(v) is the shortest distance from the start s to v

- Vertices are expanded in non-decreasing order of distance from s

Bidirectional search
Dijkstra's algorithm

- A **forward search** from s to t or a **reverse search** from t to s will produce the same result

- We can run both at once!
  - Each has its own priority queue
  - Each stores independent values for d(v), p(v), S(v)
  - We write $d_f(v)$, $d_r(v)$ for the forward/reverse distances

- We alternate steps of both searches

- Stop when the searches meet
  - What does this mean, exactly?

An example

- We remember the shortest path seen so far, and its length μ (initially ∞)

- When we discover an edge (v, w) where v and w have already been expanded:

  - If $d_f(v) + l(v, w) + d_r(w) < μ$ then update μ and the path

- Let top_f and top_r be the smallest values in the forward and reverse priority queues

- We can stop when $top_f + top_r ≥ μ$. Then we have already found the shortest path.

  - If we ever expand any vertex in both directions, the stopping condition will always be true

- Why can we stop when $top_f + top_r \geq \mu$?
  - Suppose there is a path P with length less than μ
  - So for every vertex x on P, we must have
    - $dist(s, x) < top_f$ or $dist(x, t) < top_r$
  - So P must contain an edge (v, w) such that
    - $dist(s, v) < top_f$ and $dist(w, t) < top_r$
  - So we have already expanded v and w
  - When we expanded the second of these, we would have already discovered this path and set μ to its length!

Bidirectional search
Review: A*

- A* uses a heuristic function h(v)

- h is **admissible** (optimistic) if for every vertex v,
  $h(v) \leq dist(v, t)$

- h is **consistent** if for every edge (v, w),
  $h(v) \leq l(v, w) + h(w)$

- Every consistent heuristic is admissible

- for every vertex v, A* remembers
  - g(v): shortest known distance from s to v
  - p(v): parent
  - S(v): status = unreached, frontier, expanded
- Initially g(s) = 0, p(s) = nil, S(s) = frontier
  - For all other vertices v : g(v) = ∞, p(v) = nil, S(v) = unreached
- In each iteration:
  - choose frontier vertex v with smallest f(v) = g(v) + h(v)
  - for each edge (v, w) in graph:
    - if g(w) > g(v) + l(v, w):
      - set g(w) = g(v) + l(v, w)
      - set p(w) = v
      - set S(w) = frontier
  - set S(v) = expanded

- If h is consistent, then $h(v) \leq l(v, w) + h(w)$

  - So $l(v, w) - h(v) + h(w) \geq 0$

- Define $l_h(v, w) = l(v, w) - h(v) + h(w)$

- Consider a graph G' that's like G, but uses length function l_h

- Let $dist_h(x, y)$ be the shortest distance from x to y in G'

- For all x and y, $dist_h(x, y) = dist(x, y) - h(x) + h(y)$

- A path from x to y in G is a shortest path iff it is a shortest path from x to y in G'

- We know that
    - for all x and y, $dist_h(x, y) = dist(x, y) - h(x) + h(y)$

- A* on graph G is the same as Dijkstra's on G' !
    - At every step, A* on G picks vertex with smallest
        - $f(v) = g(v) + h(v) = dist(s, v) + h(v)$
    - Dijkstra's on G' picks vertex with smallest
        - $dist_h(s, v) = dist(s, v) - h(s) + h(v)$
    - h(s) is constant, so these are the same

- We need two heuristic functions

  - $h_f(v)$: estimate of dist(v, t)

  - $h_r(v)$: estimate of dist(s, v)

- We want these functions to produce the same transformed graph

  - so we can use the stopping criterion from bidirectional Dijkstra's

- Forward: $l_f(v, w) = l(v, w) - h_f(v) + h_f(w)$

- Reverse: $l_r(w, v) = l(v, w) - h_r(w) + h_r(v)$

- For all edges (v, w), we need $l_f(v, w) = l_r(w, v)$

  - so $h_f(v) + h_r(v) = h_f(w) + h_r(w)$

  - The function $(h_f + h_r)$ must be constant!

  - Most heuristics (e.g. Euclidean distance) are not like that

Bidirectional search
Bidrectional A*

- Given heuristic functions h_f, h_r
- Define
    - $p_f(v) = (h_f(v) - h_r(v)) / 2$
    - $p_r(v) = (h_r(v) - h_f(v)) / 2$
    - Then $p_f(v) + p_r(v) = 0$
    - We can show that p_f and p_r are consistent / admissable
- Refinement
    - $p_f(v) = (h_f(v) - h_r(v) + h_r(t)) / 2$
    - $p_r(v) = (h_r(v) - h_f(v) + h_f(s)) / 2$
    - Now $p_f(t) = p_r(s) = 0$
    - $p_f + p_r$ is still a constant function
    - p_f and p_r are still consistent / admissable

Bidirectional search
Bidrectional A*

- Using heuristic functions p_f and p_v, A* is equivalent to Dijkstra's on the graph G'

- Bidirectional Dijkstra's stops when $top_f' + top_r' \geq \mu'$

- Let v_f be the top element in the forward heap
  - $top_f = dist(s, v_f) + p_f(v_f)$
  - $top_f' = dist_{pf}(s, v_f) = dist(s, v_f) - p_f(s) + p_f(v_f)$
  - So $top_f' = top_f - p_f(s)$

- Similarly, $top_r' = top_r - p_r(t)$

- $\mu' = dist_{pf}(s, t) = \mu - p_f(s) + p_f(t)$

- So bidirectional A* can stop when
  - $[top_f - p_f(s)] + [top_r - p_r(t)] \geq \mu - p_f(s) + p_f(t)$

- Simplifying and using $p_f(t) = 0$, we have

  $top_f + top_r \geq \mu + p_r(t)$

How to find a path in an unknown environment?

Dynamic searches
(peeking into the field of robotics)

Lifelong Planning A*

- An incremental version of A*
- First search is equivalent to an A* search
- After the graph changes, we can perform another search without the full expense of a fresh search
- Start, goal are the same in every search

Lifelong Planning A*
Example: first search
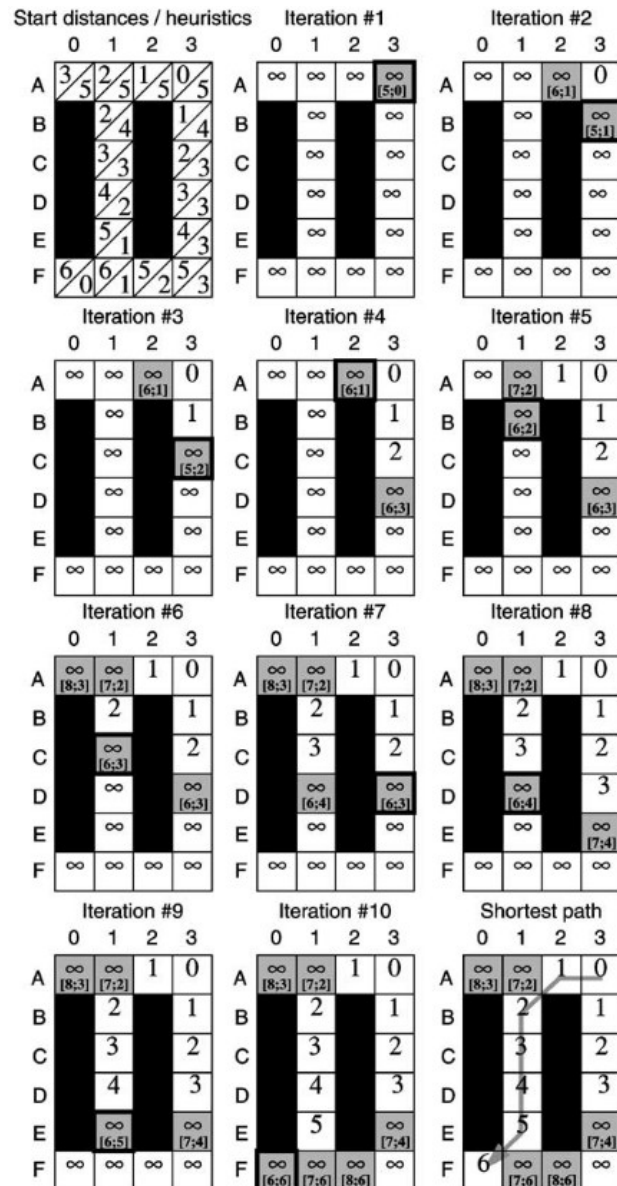
Lifelong Planning A*
Example: second search
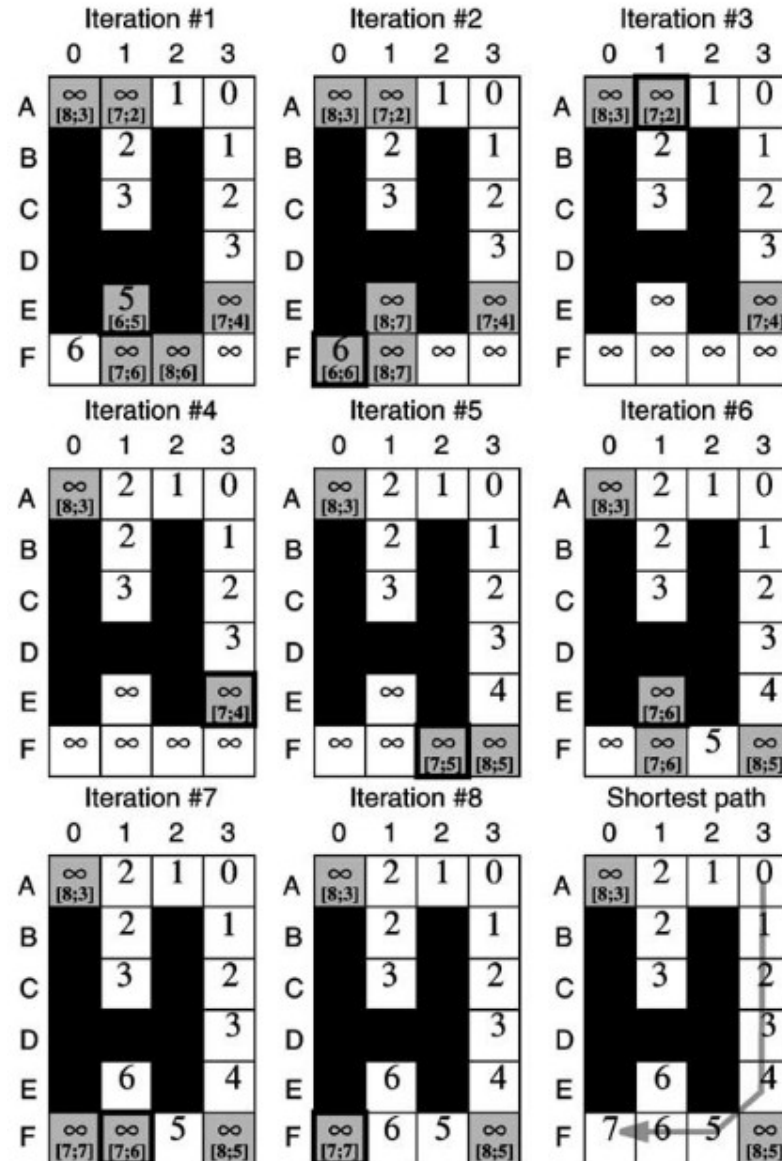
Lifelong Planning A* (LPA*)

- For each vertex s, LPA* maintains two estimates of the shortest distance to it:

    - g(s): like in A*

    - rhs(s): a one-step lookahead

        - $rhs(s_{start}) = 0$

        - for other states s,

            - rhs(s) = min (g(s') + c(s', s)) over all neighbors s'

- s is called **locally consistent** if g(s) = rhs(s)

    - If g(s) < rhs(s), it is **locally underconsistent**. If g(s) > rhs(s), it is **locally overconsistent**.

- If all vertices are locally consistent, then all values g(s) are shortest-path distances

- The frontier holds all locally inconsistent vertices

- It is a priority queue ordered lexicographically by k(s) = [$k_1(s)$; $k_2(s)$], where

    - $k_1(s)$ = min(g(s), rhs(s)) + h(s)

    - $k_2(s)$ = min(g(s), rhs(s))

procedure CalculateKey(s)
{01} return $[\min(g(s), rhs(s)) + h(s); \min(g(s), rhs(s))]$;

procedure Initialize$()$
{02} $U = \emptyset$;
{03} for all $s \in S$ $rhs(s) = g(s) = \infty$;
{04} $rhs(s_{start}) = 0$;
{05} U.Insert$(s_{start}, [h(s_{start}); 0])$;

procedure UpdateVertex(u)
{06} if $(u \neq s_{start})$ $rhs(u) = \min_{s' \in pred(u)} (g(s') + c(s', u))$;
{07} if $(u \in U)$ U.Remove(u);
{08} if $(g(u) \neq rhs(u))$ U.Insert$(u, \text{CalculateKey}(u))$;

procedure ComputeShortestPath$()$
{09} while (U.TopKey() $\dot{<}$ CalculateKey(s_{goal}) OR $rhs(s_{goal}) \neq g(s_{goal})$)
{10} $u = $ U.Pop();
{11}   if $(g(u) > rhs(u))$
{12} $g(u) = rhs(u)$;
{13}   for all $s \in succ(u)$ UpdateVertex(s);
{14}   else
{15} $g(u) = \infty$;
{16}   for all $s \in succ(u) \cup \{u\}$ UpdateVertex(s);

procedure Main$()$
{17} Initialize();
{18} forever
{19}   ComputeShortestPath();
{20}   Wait for changes in edge costs;
{21}   for all directed edges (u, v) with changed edge costs
{22}   Update the edge cost $c(u, v)$;
{23}   UpdateVertex(v);

D* Lite for dynamic pathfinding

D* Lite (Koenig, 2002)

- An adaptation of LPA* for dynamic planning
  - Koenig, S., & Likhachev, M. (2002). D* Lite. *Aaai/iaai*, *15*.
- Now the start vertex may change each time we replan!
- Typical use: a robot is moving toward a goal in unknown terrain
- Each search produces a path based on currently known information

D* Lite

Knowledge Before the First Move of the Robot

Knowledge After the First Move of the Robot

D* Lite

D* Lite

- First modification of LPA*: we must search **backwards** from the goal to the start
  - because we always want shortest paths to the fixed goal
  - Now the heuristic function estimates the distance from any position to the robot
- Second modification: every time the robot moves, the heuristic function changes, so we must recalculate all priorities

procedure CalculateKey(s)
$\{01'\}$ return $[\min(g(s), rhs(s)) + h(s_{start}, s); \min(g(s), rhs(s))]$;

procedure Initialize()
$\{02'\}$ $U = \emptyset$;
$\{03'\}$ for all $s \in S$ $rhs(s) = g(s) = \infty$;
$\{04'\}$ $rhs(s_{goal}) = 0$;
$\{05'\}$ U.Insert(s_{goal}, CalculateKey(s_{goal}));

procedure UpdateVertex(u)
$\{06'\}$ if $(u \neq s_{goal})$ $rhs(u) = \min_{s' \in \text{Succ}(u)}(c(u, s') + g(s'))$;
$\{07'\}$ if $(u \in U)$ U.Remove(u);
$\{08'\}$ if $(g(u) \neq rhs(u))$ U.Insert(u, CalculateKey(u));

procedure ComputeShortestPath()
$\{09'\}$ while (U.TopKey()$\dot{<}$CalculateKey(s_{start}) OR $rhs(s_{start}) \neq g(s_{start})$)
$\{10'\}$ $u = $ U.Pop();
$\{11'\}$ if $(g(u) > rhs(u))$
$\{12'\}$ $g(u) = rhs(u)$;
$\{13'\}$ for all $s \in \text{Pred}(u)$ UpdateVertex(s);
$\{14'\}$ else
$\{15'\}$ $g(u) = \infty$;
$\{16'\}$ for all $s \in \text{Pred}(u) \cup \{u\}$ UpdateVertex(s);

procedure Main()
$\{17'\}$ Initialize();
$\{18'\}$ ComputeShortestPath();
$\{19'\}$ while $(s_{start} \neq s_{goal})$
$\{20'\}$ /* if $(g(s_{start}) = \infty)$ then there is no known path */
$\{21'\}$ $s_{start} = \arg\min_{s' \in \text{Succ}(s_{start})}(c(s_{start}, s') + g(s'))$;
$\{22'\}$ Move to s_{start};
$\{23'\}$ Scan graph for changed edge costs;
$\{24'\}$ if any edge costs changed
$\{25'\}$ for all directed edges (u, v) with changed edge costs
$\{26'\}$ Update the edge cost $c(u, v)$;
$\{27'\}$ UpdateVertex(u);
$\{28'\}$ for all $s \in U$
$\{29'\}$ U.Update(s, CalculateKey(s));
$\{30'\}$ ComputeShortestPath();

D* Lite

D* Lite

- Updating all queue priorities is expensive
- We can modify the algorithm so each queue priority is only a **lower bound** on the actual priority
- When the robot moves from s to s', actual priorities can decrease by at most h(s, s')
- Instead of subtracting h(s, s') from all priorities, we can accumulate the decrease into a variable k_m and then apply it to any vertex when it comes out of the queue
- For details and pseudocode, see the D* Lite paper

How to find the path in an unknown environment faster?

Adaptive A*

- Introduced in
  - A New Principle for Incremental Heuristic Search: Theoretical Results (Koenig, 2006)
- Like LPA*, Adaptive A* is a form of incremental A* search
  - After an initial search, subsequent searches are relatively cheap
- All searches must have the same target (but can have different sources)
- Path costs can increase (but not decrease) between searches
  - This happens e.g. if a robot discovers new walls

Adaptive A*

- Let gd[s] be the minimal cost from state s to the goal
- Let f* = gd[s_{start}] be the minimal cost found by an A* search
- For any state s that was expanded,
  - g[s] is the minimal cost from the start to s
  - f[s] = g[s] + h[s]
- Now
  - f* ≤ g[s] + gd[s]
  - f* - g[s] ≤ gd[s]
  - So f* - g[s] is an admissable estimate of gd[s]
  - We can use this as a new heuristic value for s
- Also, since s was expanded, we have
  - f[s] ≤ f*
  - g[s] + h[s] ≤ f*
  - h[s] ≤ f* - g[s]
  - So the new heuristic value f* - g[s] dominates the old

Adaptive A*: pseudocode (part 1)

```
1   procedure InitializeState(s)
2   |    if search(s) ≠ counter then
3   |    |    g(s) ← ∞
4   |    search(s) ← counter

5   procedure A⋆(s_init)
6   |    InitializeState(s_init)
7   |    parent(s_init) ← null
8   |    g(s_init) ← 0
9   |    Open ← ∅
10  |    insert s_init into Open with f-value g(s_init) + h(s_init)
11  |    Closed ← ∅
12  |    while Open ≠ ∅ do
13  |    |    remove a state s from Open with the smallest f-value g(s) + h(s)
14  |    |    if GoalCondition(s) then
15  |    |    |    return s
16  |    |    insert s into Closed
17  |    |    for each s′ ∈ succ(s) do
18  |    |    |    InitializeState(s′)
19  |    |    |    if g(s′) > g(s) + c(s, s′) then
20  |    |    |    |    g(s′) ← g(s) + c(s, s′)
21  |    |    |    |    parent(s′) ← s
22  |    |    |    |    if s′ is in Open then
23  |    |    |    |    |    set priority of s′ in Open to g(s′) + h(s′)
24  |    |    |    |    else
25  |    |    |    |    |    insert s′ into Open with priority g(s′) + h(s′)

26  |    return null
```

$$\text{InitializeState}(s)$$
$$\text{if } search(s) \neq counter \text{ then}$$
$$g(s) \leftarrow \infty$$
$$search(s) \leftarrow counter$$
$$\text{A}\star(s_{init})$$
$$parent(s_{init}) \leftarrow \text{null}$$
$$g(s_{init}) \leftarrow 0$$
$$\text{Open} \leftarrow \emptyset$$
$$g(s_{init}) + h(s_{init})$$
$$\text{Closed} \leftarrow \emptyset$$
$$\text{while Open} \neq \emptyset \text{ do}$$
$$g(s) + h(s)$$
$$\text{if } g(s') > g(s) + c(s, s') \text{ then}$$
$$g(s') \leftarrow g(s) + c(s, s')$$
$$parent(s') \leftarrow s$$
$$g(s') + h(s')$$

```
27  procedure BuildPath(s)
28  │   while s ≠ s_start do
29  │   │   next(parent(s)) ← s
30  │   └   s ← parent(s)

31  procedure Observe(s)
32  │   for each arc (t, t′) in the range of visibility from s do
33  │   │   if cost of (t, t′) has increased then
34  │   │   │   update c(t, t′)
35  │   └   └   next(t) ← null

36  procedure main()
37  │   counter ← 0
38  │   Observe(s_start)
39  │   for each state s ∈ S do
40  │   │   search(s) ← 0
41  │   │   h(s) ← H(s, s_goal)
42  │   └   next(s) ← null

43  │   while s_start ≠ s_goal do
44  │   │   counter ← counter + 1
45  │   │   s ← A⋆(s_start)
46  │   │   if s = null then
47  │   │   └   return "goal is not reachable"

48  │   │   for each s′ ∈ Closed do
49  │   │   │   h(s′) ← g(s) + h(s) − g(s′) /⋆ heuristic
        │   │   └       ⋆/
50  │   │   BuildPath(s)
51  │   │   while no action cost has just increased in path[s_start] d
52  │   │   │   t ← s_start
53  │   │   │   s_start ← next(s_start)
54  │   │   │   next(t) ← null
55  │   │   │   Move agent to s_start
56  │   └   └   Observe(s_start)
```

Adaptive A*

- The original Adaptive A* always runs until the goal is expanded:

$$
\begin{aligned}
&1 \quad \textbf{function } GoalCondition(s) \\
&2 \quad \quad \textbf{return } s = s_{goal}
\end{aligned}
$$

Multipath Adaptive A*

Hernández, C., Baier, J. A., & Asín, R. (2014, May). [Making A* run faster than D*-Lite for path-planning in partially known terrain](#).

- Proposes Multipath Adaptive A* as a simpler approach, usually faster than D* Lite

Multipath Adaptive A*

- A modification of Adaptive A*
- Suppose we select a state s such that
  - s belongs to a previously found path σ
  - the suffix of σ starting in s is a provably optimal path from s to the goal
- Then we can stop the search immediately
- We can check these conditions easily

$$
\begin{aligned}
&1 \quad \textbf{function } GoalCondition(s) \\
&2 \quad\quad \textbf{while } next(s) \neq null \text{ and } h(s) = h(next(s)) + c(s, next(s)) \textbf{ do} \\
&3 \quad\quad\quad s \leftarrow next(s) \\
&4 \quad\quad \textbf{return } s_{goal} = s
\end{aligned}
$$

How to find a path in a continuous space?
Rapidly exploring random trees
(RRT, RRT*)
(peeking into the field of robotics)

RRT

LaValle, S. M., & Kuffner Jr, J. J. (2001). [Randomized kinodynamic planning.](#) *The international journal of robotics research*, *20*(5), 378-400.

IDEA: Randomly throw a point, find nearest existing point of RRT, make a step from that point towards the random point. Repeat.
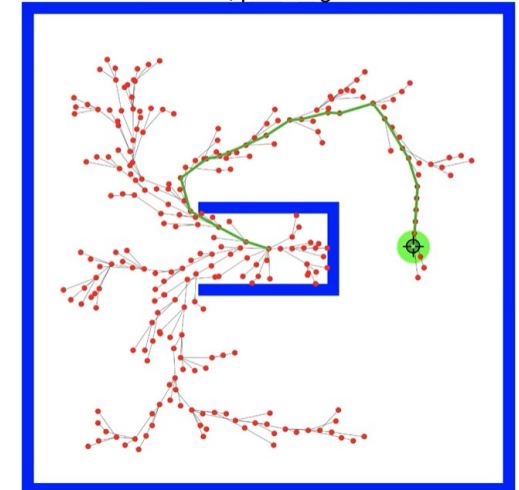
706 nodes, path length 59.92

RRT*

Karaman, S., & Frazzoli, E. (2011). [Sampling-based algorithms for optimal motion planning.](#) *The international journal of robotics research*, *30*(7), 846-894.

IDEA: Do RRT but then try to rewire the tree around new point to be more optimal.
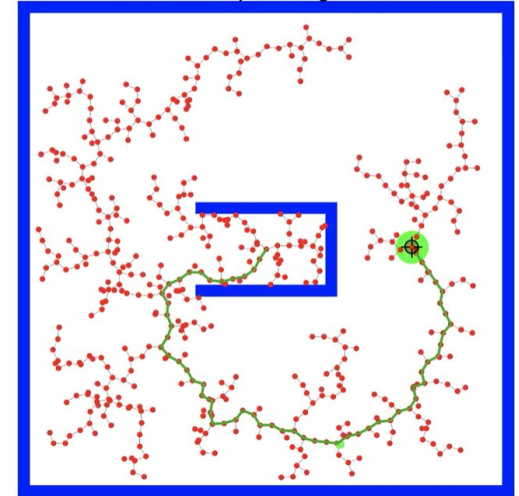
289 nodes, path length 40.37

Rapidly-exploring Random Trees
RRT and RRT*

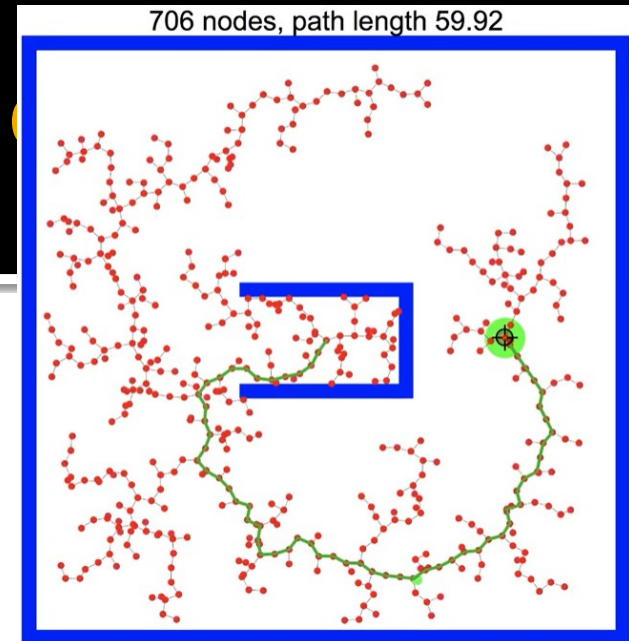Beautiful explanation available on [YouTube](#) by Aaron Becker.

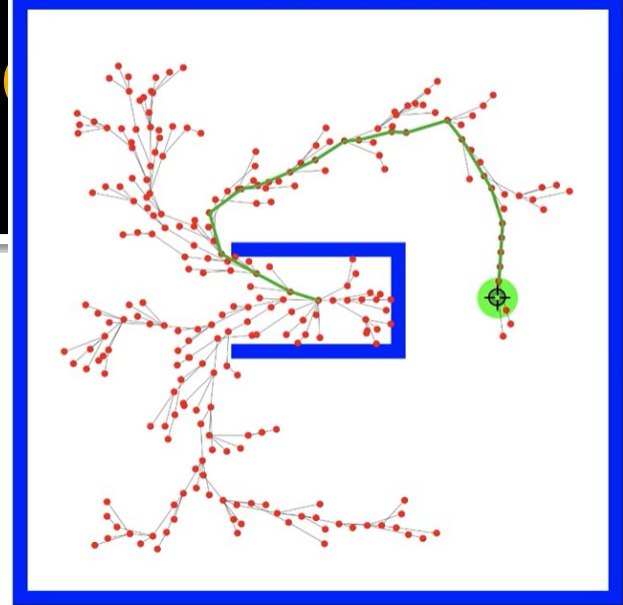- YouTube video: "RRT, RRT* & Random Trees" (Aaron Becker)

Rapidly-exploring Rand... Algorithms

RRT (trying to find path to *target* with certain *epsilon*)

```
1.  G.init(root: Point)
2.  while path to epsilon-area
            around target not found
3.     point := random
4.     nearest := G.nearest_vertex(point)
5.     new_vertex =
          nearest + (point - nearest).normalized
                                    * step

6.     if no obstacle nearest->new_vertex
          G.add_edge(nearest, new_vertex)
```

289 nodes, path length 40.37

RRT* (trying to find path to *target* with certain *epsilon*)

```
1.   G.init(root: Point)
2.   while path to epsilon-area
             around target not found
3.     point := random
4.     nearest := G.nearest_vertex(point)
5.     new_vertex =
         nearest + (point - nearest).normalized
                                      * step
6.     if no obstacle nearest->new_vertex
7.       min_cost_vertex =
           find vertex
             | from G.vertices_around(new_vertex)
             | with min path cost from root
             | and no obstacle on vertex->new_vertex
8.       G.add_edge(min_cost_vertex, new_vertex)
9.       for vertex in G.vertices_around(new_vertex)
10.        if obstacle on vertex->new_vertex
11.          continue
12.        if path_cost(root, vertex) >
              path_cost(root, new_vertex) + |vertex,new_vertex|
13.          G.remove_edge(parent(vertex), vertex)
14.          G.add_edge(new_vertex, vertex)
```

EVROPSKÁ UNIE
Evropské strukturální a investiční fondy
Operační program Výzkum, vývoj a vzdělávání

MINISTERSTVO ŠKOLSTVÍ,
MLÁDEŽE A TĚLOVÝCHOVY