# The Metrics Matter! On the Incompatibility of Different Flavors of Replanning

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#### **Abstract**

When autonomous agents are executing in the real world, the state of the world as well as the objectives of the agent may change from the agent's original model. In such cases, the agent's planning process must modify the plan under execution to make it amenable to the new conditions, and to resume execution. This brings up the replanning problem, and the various techniques that have been proposed to solve it. In all, three main techniques – based on three different metrics - have been proposed in prior automated planning work. An open question is whether these metrics are interchangeable; answering this requires a normalized comparison of the various replanning quality metrics. In this paper, we show that it is possible to support such a comparison by compiling all the respective techniques into a single substrate. Using this novel compilation, we demonstrate that these different metrics are not interchangeable, and that they are not good surrogates for each other. Thus we focus attention on the incompatibility of the various replanning flavors with each other, founded in the differences between the metrics that they respectively seek to optimize.

## 1 Introduction

Although the need for replanning has been acknowledged from the very beginnings of automated planning research (c.f. (Fikes, Hart, and Nilsson 1972)), most work on replanning has viewed it as "technique" rather than a problem in its own right. In particular, most work viewed replanning from the point of view of reducing the computational effort required to generate a new plan, with little regard to the quality of the produced (re)plan. More recently, there has been some welcome effort that views replanning as a problem rather than a technique (c.f. (Cushing and Kambhampati 2005; Fox et al. 2006)). Even in such work, there has been a significant divergence of opinion as to the right characterization of the replanning problem. For example, while Fox et. al. argue for plan stability as the main motivation for replanning, Cushing et. al. argue that sensitivity to commitments is the hallmark of replanning. The fact that these multiple motivations/models for replanning persist would seem to suggest that there is an implicit belief in the planning community that the differences between the replanning motivations may not be significant-and that techniques developed for one model could well act as a good surrogates for the other models.

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In this paper we make several connected contributions on this problem. We first show that replanning is best characterized as solving a (new) planning problem in light of the constraints imposed by a previous plan. We will show that the different motivations (computational efficiency, plan stability, commitments etc.) can all be captured in this general framework, with the only difference being in the specific form of constraints induced from the previous plan. Second, we present a generic technique for replanning based on partial satisfaction that is capable of simulating the different replanning strategies. Finally, armed with this common substrate, we attempt to answer the question: to what extent do the constraints imposed by one type of replanning formulation act as a surrogate in tracking the constraints of another? We do this by comparing plan stability, commitment sensitivity, and computational efficiency across three different replanning techniques-all implemented on the same underlying substrate. Our results show that the different metrics are not good surrogates of each other, and lead to plans with very different quality characteristics.

# 2 Related Work

Replanning has been an early and integral part of automated planning and problem solving work in AI. The STRIPS robot problem-solving system (Fikes, Hart, and Nilsson 1972) used an execution monitoring system known as PLANEX to recognize plan failures and replan to get back on track with the original plan. More recent work looks at concepts such as plan stability (Fox et al. 2006), which is defined as the measure of the difference a process induces between an original plan and a new plan. This is closely related to the idea of minimal perturbation planning (Kambhampati 1990) used in past replanning and plan re-use (Nebel and Koehler 1995) work. Van Der Krogt & De Weerdt (2005), on the other hand, outline a way to extend state-of-the-art planning techniques to accommodate plan repair. At the other end of the spectrum, Fritz & McIlraith (2007) deal with changes to the state of the world by replanning from scratch.

Additionally, the multi-agent systems (MAS) community has also looked at replanning issues, though more in terms of multiple agents and the conflicts that can arise between these agents when they are executing in the same dynamic world. Wagner et al. (1999) proposed the twin ideas of *inter-agent* and *intra-agent* conflict resolution. Inter-

agent commitments have been variously formalized in different work in the MAS community (Komenda et al. 2008; Bartold and Durfee 2003; Wooldridge 2000), but the focus has always been on the interactions between the various agents, and how changes to the world affect the declared commitments. Komenda et al. (2012) introduce the multiagent plan repair problem and reduce it to the multiagent planning problem; and Meneguzzi et al. (2013) introduce a first-order representation and reasoning technique for modeling commitments between agents.

# 3 The Replanning Problem

We posit that replanning should be viewed not as a technique, but as a *problem* in its own right – one that is distinct from the classical planning problem. Formally, this idea can be stated as follows. Consider a plan  $\Pi_P$  that is synthesized in order to solve the planning problem  $P = \langle I, G \rangle$ , where I is the initial state and G, the goal description. The world then changes such that we now have to solve the problem  $P' = \langle I', G' \rangle$ , where I' represents the changed state of the world, and G' a changed set of goals (possibly different from G). We then define the replanning problem as one of finding a new plan  $\Pi'_P$  that solves the problem P' subject to a set of constraints  $\psi^{\Pi_P}$ . This model is depicted in Figure 1. The composition of the constraint set  $\psi^{\hat{\Pi}_P}$ , and the way it is handled, can be described in terms of specific *models* of this newly formulated replanning problem. Here, we present three such models based on the manner in which the set  $\psi^{\Pi_P}$ is populated.

1.  $M_1$  | **Replanning as Restart**: This model treats replanning as 'planning from restart' – i.e., given changes in the world  $P = \langle I, G \rangle \rightarrow P' = \langle I', G' \rangle$ , the old plan  $\Pi_P$  is completely abandoned in favor of a new plan  $\Pi'_P$  which solves P'. Thus the previous plan induces no constraints that must be respected, meaning that the set  $\psi^{\Pi_P}$  is empty.

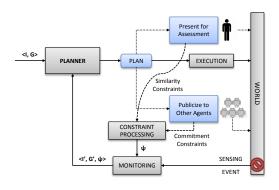


Figure 1: A model of replanning

2.  $M_2 \mid$  **Replanning to Reduce Verification Cost**: When the state of the world forces a change from a plan  $\Pi_P$  to a new one  $\Pi'_P$ , in the extreme case,  $\Pi'_P$  may bear no relation to  $\Pi_P$ . However, it may be desirable that the cost of comparing the differences between the two plans with respect to execution in the world be reduced as far as possible (we explore all the possible reasons for this in Sec-

- tion 4.2). The problem of minimizing this cost can be recast as one of minimizing the differences between the two plans  $\Pi_P'$  and  $\Pi_P$  using *syntactic constraints* on the form of the new plan. These syntactic constraints are added to the set  $\psi^{\Pi_P}$ .
- 3.  $M_3$  | **Replanning to Respect Commitments**: In many real world scenarios, there are multiple agents  $A_1 \dots A_n$  that share an environment and hence a world state. The individual plans of these agents,  $\Pi_1 \dots \Pi_n$  respectively, affect the common world state that the agents share and must plan in. This leads to the formation of dependencies, or *commitments*, by other agents on an agent's plan. These commitments can be seen as special types of *soft* constraints that are induced by an executing plan; they come with a penalty that is assessed when a given commitment constraint is not satisfied by the replan. The aggregation of these commitments forms the set  $\psi^{\Pi_P}$  for this model.

In the following section, we explore the composition of the constraint set  $\psi^{\Pi}$  (for any given plan  $\Pi$ ) in more detail.

# 4 Replanning Constraints

As outlined in the previous section, the replanning problem can be decomposed into various *models* that are defined by the constraints that must be respected while transitioning from the old plan  $\Pi$  to the new plan  $\Pi'$ . In this section, we define those constraints, and explore the composition of the set  $\psi$  for each of the models defined previously.

## 4.1 Replanning as Restart

By the definition of this model, the old plan  $\Pi_P$  is completely abandoned in favor of a new one. There are no constraints induced by the previous plan that must be respected, and thus the set  $\psi^{\Pi_P}$  is empty.

## 4.2 Replanning to Reduce Verification Cost

It is often desirable that the replan for the new problem instance P' resemble the previous plan  $\Pi_P$  in order to reduce the computational effort associated with verifying that it still meets the objectives, and to ensure that it can be carried out in the world. We name the effort expended in this endeavor as the *reverification complexity* associated with a pair of plans  $\Pi_P$  and  $\Pi'_P$ , and informally define it as the amount of effort/computation that an agent has to expend on comparing the differences between an old plan  $\Pi_P$  and a new candidate plan  $\Pi'_P$  with respect to executability in the world.

Such comparison may be necessitated due to one of three reasons:

- R1 Communication: Changes may have to be communicated to other agents, which may have predicated their own plans on actions in the original plan.
- R2 **Explanation**: Changes may have to be *explained* to other agents, like human supervisors.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Note that this is the case regardless of whether the planner models these agents explicitly or chooses to implicitly model them in the form of a dynamic world.

• R3 - **Incomplete Models**: Additional simulations or computation may have to occur to make up for a plan that was made with an incomplete model of the world.

Real world examples where reverification complexity is of utmost importance abound, including machine-shop or factory-floor planning, planning for assistive robots and teaming, and planetary rovers. Past work on replanning has addressed this problem via the idea of *plan stability* (Fox et al. 2006). The general idea behind this approach is to preserve the stability of the replan  $\Pi_P'$  by minimizing some notion of difference with the original plan  $\Pi_P$ . In the following, we examine two such ways of measuring the difference between pairs of plans, and how these can contribute constraints to the set  $\psi^{\Pi_P}$  that will minimize reverification complexity.

Action Similarity The most obvious way to compute the difference between a given pair of plans is to compare the actions that make up those plans. Fox et al. (2006) define a way of doing this - given an original plan  $\Pi$  and a new plan  $\Pi'$ , they define the difference between those plans as the number of actions that appear in  $\Pi$  and not in  $\Pi'$  plus the number of actions that appear in  $\Pi'$  and not in  $\Pi$ . If the plans  $\Pi$  and  $\Pi'$  are seen as sets comprised of actions, then this is essentially the symmetric difference of those sets, and we have the following constraint:  $\frac{1}{2} \min |\Pi| \Delta \Pi'|$ . This measure corresponds to R2 above, since any deviations from the original plan – either in terms of additions or deletions – have to be explained.

Yet another way of computing whether  $\Pi'$  is a good replan is to determine how many of the actions in  $\Pi$  are retained by the new plan. To compute this value, both plans can be seen as sets of actions, and the set difference of  $\Pi$  and  $\Pi'$  must then be minimized; this gives us the following constraint:  $\min |\Pi \setminus \Pi'|$ . In our compilation (detailed in Section 5.1), we use the set difference constraint as the metric to be minimized; however, we report both the set and symmetric difference values in our evaluation. This metric corresponds to R1 give above, since only actions that were part of the original plan but deleted from the replan have to be communicated to other agents.

#### 4.3 Replanning to Respect Commitments

In a multiperson situation, one man's goals may be another man's constraints. – Herb Simon (1964)

In an ideal world, a given agent would be the sole center of plan synthesis as well as execution, and replanning would be necessitated only by those changes to the world state that it cannot foresee. However, in the real world, there exist multiple such agents, each with their own disparate objectives but all bound together by the world that they share. A plan  $\Pi_P$  that is made by a particular agent affects the state of the world and hence the conditions under which the other agents must plan – this is true in turn for every agent. In addition, the publication of a plan  $\Pi_P^A$  by an agent A leads to other agents predicating the success of their own plans on parts of  $\Pi_P^A$ , and complex dependencies are developed as a result.

Full multi-agent planning can resolve the issues that arise out of changing plans in such cases, but it is far from a scalable solution for real world domains currently. Instead, this multi-agent space filled with dependencies can be projected down into a single-agent space with the help of *commitments* as defined by Cushing & Kambhampati (2005). These commitments are related to an agent's current plan  $\Pi$ , and can describe different requirements that come about: (i) when the agent decides to execute  $\Pi$ , and other agents predicate their own plans on certain aspects of it; (ii) due to cost or time based restrictions imposed on the agent; or (iii) due to the agent having paid an up-front setup cost to enable some part of the plan  $\Pi$ .

It may seem as though the same kinds of constraints that seek to minimize reverification complexity between plans  $\Pi$  and  $\Pi'$  (minimizing action and causal link difference between plans) will also serve to preserve and keep the most commitments in the world. Indeed, in extreme cases, it might even be that keeping the structures of  $\Pi$  and  $\Pi'$  as similar as possible helps keep the maximum number of commitments made due to  $\Pi$ . However, this is certainly not the most natural way of keeping commitments. In particular, this method can fail when there is any significant deviation in structure from  $\Pi$  to  $\Pi'$ ; unfortunately, most unexpected changes in real world scenarios are of a nature that precludes retaining significant portions of the previous plan. Instead, we model commitments as state conditions, and the constraints that mandate the preservation of commitments as soft goals that the planner seeks to satisfy. We elaborate on this in Section 5.1.

# 5 Compilation to a Single Substrate

Both kinds of constraints discussed in the previous section – dealing with plan similarity, as well as with inter-agent commitments – can be cast into a single planning substrate. In this section, we first demonstrate compilations from action similarity and inter-agent commitments to partial satisfaction planning (PSP). We then detail a simple compilation from PSP to preference-based planning (PBP).

#### 5.1 I: Partial Satisfaction Planning

We follow (van den Briel et al. 2004) in defining a PSP net benefit problem as a planning problem  $P=(F,O,I,G_s)$ , where F is a finite set of fluents, O is a finite set of operators, and  $I\subseteq F$  is the initial state as defined earlier in our paper. For each goal  $g\in G$  from the original set of goals, a soft goal  $g_s$  with a penalty  $p_g$  is created; the set of all soft goals thus created is added to a new set  $G_s$ .

The intuition behind casting replanning constraints as goals is that a new plan (replan) must be constrained in some way towards being similar to the earlier plan. However, making these 'replan constraint goals' hard would overconstrain the problem – the change in the world from I to I' may have rendered some of the earlier actions, or commitments, impossible to preserve. Therefore the replanning constraints are instead cast as *soft* goals, with penalties that are assessed when they are violated. In order to support the action similarity or inter-agent commitment preservation goals, new fluents need to be added to the domain description that indicate the execution of an action or achievement

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>A different measure of similarity considers the *causal links* in a plan; space considerations preclude a discussion of this measure.

of a fluent respectively. Further, new copies of the existing actions in the domain must be added to house these effects.

Compiling Action Similarity to PSP The first step in the compilation is converting the action similarity constraints in  $\psi^{\Pi_P^A}$  to soft goals to be added to  $G_s$ . Before this, we examine the structure of the constraint set  $\psi^{\Pi_P^A}$ ; for every ground action  $\bar{a}$  (with the names of the objects that parameterize it) in the old plan  $\Pi$ , the corresponding action similarity constraint is  $\Psi_{\bar{a}} \in \psi^{\Pi_P^A}$ , and that constraint stores the name of the action as well as the objects that parameterize it.

Next, a copy of the set of operators O is created and named  $O_{as}$ ; similarly, a copy of F is created and named  $F_{as}$ . For each (lifted) action  $a \in O_{as}$  that has an instance in the original plan  $\Pi$ , a new fluent named "a-executed" (along with all the parameters of a) is added to the fluent set  $F_{as}$ . For each action  $a \in O_{as}$ , a new action  $a_{as}$  – which is a copy of a that additionally also gives the predicate a-executed as an effect – is created. In the worst case, the number of actions in each  $O_{as}$  could be twice the number in O.

Finally, for each constraint  $\Psi_{\bar{a}} \in \psi^{\Pi_P^A}$ , a new soft goal  $g_{\bar{a}}$  is created with corresponding penalty values  $p_{g_{\bar{a}}}$ , and the predicate used in  $g_{\bar{a}}$  is  $\bar{a}$ -executed (parameterized with the same objects that  $\bar{a}$  contains) from  $O_{as}$ . All the  $g_{\bar{a}}$  goals thus created are added to  $G_s$ . In order to obtain the new compiled replanning instance P' from P, the initial state I is replaced with the state at which execution was terminated, I'; the set of operators O is replaced with  $O_{as}$ ; and the set of fluents F is replaced with  $F_{as}$ . The new instance  $P' = (F_{as}, O_{as}, I', G_s)$  is given to a PSP planner to solve.

Compiling Commitments to PSP Inter-agent commitments can be compiled to PSP in a manner that is very similar to the above compilation. The difference that now needs to be considered is that the constraints are no longer on actions, but on the grounded fluents that comprise the commitments in a plan instead.

The first step is to augment the set of fluents; a copy of F is created and named  $F_{cs}$ . For every fluent that is relevant to the inter-agent commitments  $f \in F$  (an example of such fluents is provided in Section 6.1), a new fluent named "f-achieved" is added to  $F_{cs}$ , along with all the original parameters of f. A copy of the set of operators O is created and named  $O_{cs}$ . Then, for each action  $a \in O_{cs}$ , a new action  $a_{cs}$  is added;  $a_{cs}$  is a copy of the action a, with the additional effects that for every commitment-relevant fluent  $f_a$  that is in the add effects of the original a,  $a_{cs}$  contains the effect  $f_a$ -achieved.

Finally, the commitment constraints in  $\psi^{\Pi_P^A}$  must be converted to soft goals that can be added to  $G_s$ . The constraints  $\Psi \in \psi^{\Pi_P^A}$  are obtained by simulating the execution of  $\Pi$  from I using the operators in O. Each ground commitment-relevant effect  $\bar{f}_e$  of a commitment-relevant action  $a_\Pi^-$  in  $\Pi$  is added as a new constraint  $\Psi_{\bar{f}_e}$ . Correspondingly, for each such new constraint added, a new soft goal  $g_{\bar{f}_e}$  is created whose fluent corresponds to  $\bar{f}_e$ , with penalty value  $p_{g_{\bar{f}_e}}$ . All the goals thus created are added to  $G_s$ . The new planning instance to be provided to the PSP planner is thus given as  $P' = (F_{cs}, O_{cs}, I', G_s)$ .

#### 5.2 II: Preferences

The constraints in the set  $\psi^{\Pi_P^A}$  can also be cast as preferences (Baier and McIlraith 2009) on the new plan that needs to be generated by the replanning process. Preferences are indicators of the quality of plans, and can be used to distinguish between plans that all achieve the same goals. The automated planning community has seen a lot of work in recent years on fast planners that solve preference-based planning problems specified using the PDDL3 (Gerevini and Long 2006) language; casting the constraints in  $\psi^{\Pi_P^A}$  into preferences can thus open up the use of these state-of-the-art planners in solving the replanning problem. Benton et al. (2009) have already detailed a compilation that translates simple preferences specified in PDDL3 to soft goals. This work can be used in order to translate the replanning constraints into simple preferences, thus enabling the use of planners like SGPlan5 (Hsu et al. 2007) and OPTIC (Benton, Coles, and Coles 2012). In our evaluation, we use this preference-based approach to improve the scalability of our result generation.

The compilation itself is straightforward. For every soft goal  $g_s$  that models either an action similarity or inter-agent commitment constraint respectively (from Section 5.1), we create a new preference  $\tau_s$  where the condition that is evaluated by the preference is the predicate a-executed or f-achieved respectively, and the penalty for violating that commitment is the penalty value associated with the soft goal  $p_{g_s}$ . The set of preferences thus created is added to the problem instance, and the metric is set to minimize the (unweighted) sum of the preference violation values.

#### 6 Evaluation

The compilation outlined in Section 5 serves as support for our first claim – that it is possible to support all the existing replanning metrics (and associated techniques) using a single planner, via compilation to a single substrate. That substrate can be either soft goals (and the technique to solve them partial satisfaction planning), or preferences (preference-based planning). In this section, we provide empirical support for our second point – namely that these different replanning metrics are not good surrogates for each other – and that swapping them results in a deterioration of the metric being optimized.

#### **6.1** The Warehouses Domain

Planning for the operations and agents contained in automated warehouses has emerged as an important application, particularly with the success of large-scale retailers like Amazon. Given the size, complexity, as well as real-time nature of the logistical operations involved in administering and maintaining these warehouses, automation is inevitable. One motivation behind designing an entirely new domain<sup>3</sup> for our evaluations was so that we could control the various actions, agents, and problem instances that were generated. Briefly, our domain consists of *packages* that are originally stocked on *shelves*; these shelves are accessible only from certain special locations or *gridsquares*. The grid-squares are themselves connected in random patterns to each

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>We plan to release this domain to the planning community for testing purposes.

other (while ensuring that there are no isolated gridsquares). *Carriers* – in the form of *forklifts* that can stock and unstock packages from shelves, and *transports* that can transport packages placed on them between various gridsquares – are used to shift the packages from their initial locations on shelves to *packagers*, where they are packaged. The instance goals are all specified in terms of packages that need to be packaged.

**Perturbations** There are *two* main kinds of perturbations that we model and generate: (i) packages can *fall off* their carriers at random gridsquares; and (ii) carriers (forklifts or transports) can themselves *break down* at random. For packages that fall off at a gridsquare, a forklift is required at that gridsquare in order to lift that package and transport it to some other desired location (using either that same forklift, or by handing off to some other carrier). For carriers that break down, the domain contains special *tow-trucks* that can attach themselves to the carrier and tow it along to a *garage* for a repair action to be performed. Garages are only located at specific gridsquares.

**Agent Commitments** There are three kinds of agents in our domain – packagers, tow-trucks, and carriers. Agent commitments are thus any predicates that these agents participate in (as part of the state trace of a given plan  $\Pi$ ). In our domain, there are four such predicates: forklifts *holding* packages, packages *on* transports, tow-trucks *towing* carriers, and packages *delivered* to a packager.

#### 6.2 Results

**Experimental Setup** Using the domain described in Section 6.1, we created an automated problem generator that can generate problem instances of increasing complexity. Instance complexity was determined by the number of packages that had to be packaged, and ranged from 1 to 12.4 We associated four randomly generated instances with each step up in complexity, for a total of 48 problem instances. As the number of packages increased, so did the number of other objects in the instance – forklifts, transports, shelves, and gridsquares. The number of tow-trucks and garages was held constant at one each per instance. The initial configuration of all the objects (through the associated predicates) was generated at random, while the top-level goals were always to have packaged all the packages.

For each of the replanning metrics that we are interested in evaluating – speed, similarity, and commitment satisfaction – we set up the constraints outlined in Section 4 as part of the replanning metric. When optimizing the time taken to generate a new plan, the planner does not need to model any new constraints, and can choose any plan that is executable in the changed state of the world. Likewise, when the planner is optimizing the similarity between the new plan and the previous plan (as outlined in Section 4.2), it only evaluates the number of differences (in terms of action labels) between the two plans, and chooses the one that minimizes that value.

The planner's search is directed towards plans that fulfill this requirement via the addition of *similarity goals* to the existing goal set, via the compilation procedure described in Section 5.1. Finally, when optimizing the satisfaction of commitments created by the old plan that must be satisfied by the new one, the planner merely keeps track of how many of these are fulfilled, and ranks potential replans according to that. These commitments are added as additional (simple) preferences to the planner's goal set, and in our current evaluation each preference has the same violation cost (1 unit) associated with it.

All the problem instances thus generated were solved with the SGPlan5 planner (Hsu et al. 2007), which handles preference-based planning problems via partition techniques by using the costs associated with violating preferences to evaluate partial plans. The planner was run on a virtual machine on the Windows Azure A7 cluster featuring eight 2.1 GHz AMD Opteron 4171 HE processors and 56GB of RAM, running Ubuntu 12.04.3 LTS. All the instances were given a 90 minute timeout; instances that timed out do not have data points associated with them.

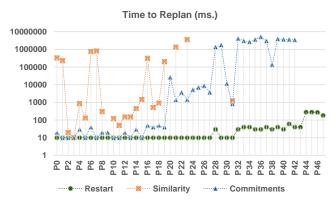


Figure 2: Time taken to replan, in milliseconds (ms.)



Figure 3: Plan size (number of actions)

**Metric: Speed** In Figure 2, we present the time taken for the planner to generate a plan (on a logarithmic scale) for the respective instances, using the three replanning constraint sets. Replanning as restart is a clear winner, since it takes orders of magnitude less time than the other two methods to come up with a plan. In particular, replanning that takes plan

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>The objective of this paper is not to demonstrate the scalability of either the planner or the domain in question, but rather to show the difference in performance when different replanning metrics are substituted for each other.

similarity into account takes an inordinate amount of time in coming up with new plans, even for the smaller problem instances. This shows that when speed is the metric under consideration, neither similarity with the original plan nor respecting the inter-agent commitments are good surrogates for optimizing that metric. It must be pointed out here that our method of evaluation does not re-use any of the search effort while generating the replan; however, the findings of Nebel & Koehler (1995) ensure that this is not a concern.

Additionally, we also measured the length of the plans that were generated, in order to compare against the original plan length. Figure 3 shows that the planner doesn't necessarily come up with significantly *longer* plans when it has to replan; instead, most of the computation time seems to be spent on optimizing the metric in question. However, these results seem to indicate that if plan *length* is the metric that is sought to be optimized, replanning without additional constraints (as restart) is the way to go.

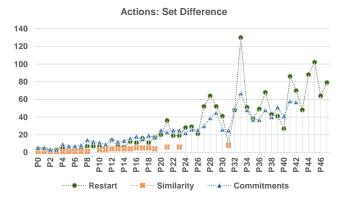


Figure 4: Set difference (action) vs. original plan  $\Pi$ 

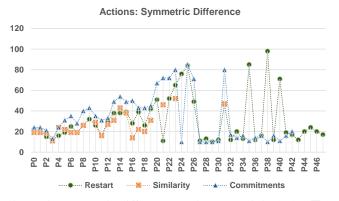


Figure 5: Symmetric difference (action) vs. original plan  $\Pi$ 

**Metric:** Similarity For this evaluation, we modeled the difference between the old plan  $\Pi$  and the new replan  $\Pi'$  as the set difference  $|\Pi \setminus \Pi'|$  between the respective action sets. We then plotted this number for the different problem instances as a measure of the differences between the two plans. As shown in Figure 4, the method that takes plan similarity constraints into consideration does much better than the other two for this case. Additionally, we also calculated the symmetric difference  $|\Pi \triangle \Pi'|$  (the metric used by Fox

et al. (Fox et al. 2006)); these results are presented in Figure 5. Even here, the approach that respects the similarity constraints does consistently better than the other two approaches. Thus these two results show that when similarity with the original plan is the metric to be maximized, neither of the other two methods can be used for quality optimization.



Figure 6: Number of agent commitments violated

Metric: Commitment Satisfaction Finally, we evaluated the number of inter-agent commitment violations in the new plan, where the commitments come from the agent interactions in the original plan. Figure 6 shows that the similarity preserving method violates the most number of commitments in general. This may appear surprising initially, since preserving the actions of the old plan are at least tangentially related to preserving commitments between agents. However, note that even the similarity maximizing method cannot return the exact same plan as the original one; some of the actions where it differs from the old plan may indeed be the actions that created the inter-agent commitments in the first place, while other preserved actions may now no longer fulfill the commitments because the state of the world has changed. These results confirm that both maximizing similarity as well as replanning from scratch are bad surrogates for the metric of minimizing inter-agent commitment violations.

#### 7 Conclusion

In this paper, we presented the idea that replanning ought to be looked at less as a mere technique and more as a problem in its own right. We conducted an overview of the various techniques that have been used as solutions to this replanning problem, and the constraints on which they are based. We then showed that the problems that these techniques solve can all be compiled into a single substrate, as a means of comparing their effectiveness under different planning metrics. After presenting this novel compilation, we showed via an empirical evaluation that the various replanning techniques are not good surrogates for each other. We thus focused a spotlight on the incompatibility of the various replanning flavors with each other, due to the disparate metrics that they seek to optimize.

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