
Preface

This is the second edition of our 2003 book. It is primarily a book for lecturers and graduate and undergraduate students. To this group the book offers a thorough introduction to evolutionary computing (EC), descriptions of popular evolutionary algorithm (EA) variants, discussions of methodological issues and particular EC techniques. We end by presenting an outlook to evolutionary robotics and the future of EC, as it stands poised to make a major transition from evolution within computers to the evolution of things [147].

This book is also meant for those who wish to apply EC to a particular problem or within a given application area. To this group the book is valuable because it presents EC as something to be *used*, rather than just studied, and it contains an explicit treatment of guidelines for good experimentation. Finally, this book contains information on the state of the art in a wide range of subjects that are interesting to fellow researchers, as quick reference on subjects outside of their own specialist field of EC.

This book has a supporting website at

www.evolutionarycomputation.org

which offers additional information. In particular, the educational role of the book is emphasised:

1. There are exercises and a list of recommended further reading for each chapter.
2. The outline of a full academic course based on this book is given.
3. There are slides for each chapter in PDF and PowerPoint format. These slides can be freely downloaded, altered, and used to teach the material covered in the book.
4. Furthermore, the website offers answers to the exercises, downloadables for easy experimentation, a discussion forum, and errata.

When updating the book we altered its main logic. In the first edition, popular evolutionary algorithm variants, such as genetic algorithms or evolution strategies, had a prominent role. They were treated in separate chapters and

specific representations and evolutionary operators were presented within the framework of one of these algorithm variants. In the second edition we are emphasising the generic scheme of EAs as an approach to problem-solving. This is reflected by the following major changes:

- We added a chapter on problems. Since the whole book is about problem solvers, we felt it was good to start with a chapter on problems.
- The treatment of EAs is organised according to the main algorithm components, such as representation, variation and selection operators.
- The most popular EA variants are presented as special cases of the generic EA scheme. Although the treatment of each variant is now shorter, the list of variants is longer, now including differential evolution, particle swarm optimisation, and estimation of distribution algorithms.

We also extended the treatment of the how-to parts of the book. We added a new chapter on parameter tuning and grouped this with the chapters on parameter control and the how-to-work-with content into a methodological part. Furthermore, we dropped the Exercises and Recommended Reading sections at the end of each chapter as they were too static. Instead, we offer these on the website for the book.

The overall structure of the new edition is three-tier: Part I presents the basics, Part II is concerned with methodological issues, and Part III discusses advanced topics. These parts are followed by the References, and although that now contains nearly five hundred entries, we inevitably missed some. We apologise, it is nothing personal. Just send us an email if we forgot a really important one.

Writing this book would not have been possible without the support of many. In the first place, we wish to express our gratitude to Daphne and Cally for their patience, understanding, and tolerance. Without their support this book could not have been written. Furthermore, we acknowledge the help of our colleagues and the students worldwide who pointed out errors in and gave us feedback about the earlier version of the book. We are especially grateful to Bogdan Filipič for his comments on the almost-final draft of this book.

We wish everybody a pleasant and fruitful time reading and using this book.

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