



A (partial) framework for debugging foundation models.

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AMII Fellow & Co-founder

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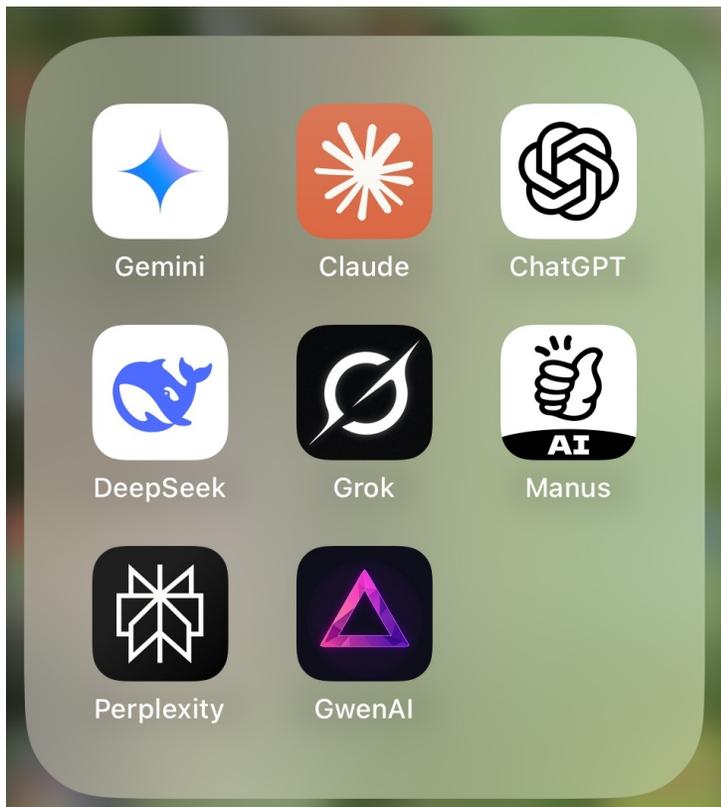
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Outline

- Motivation: AI systems as (buggy) computer programs
- The spectrum of neurosymbolic foundation models
- Should foundation models be debuggable?
- A framework for stackable multi-level foundation models
- Summary

Let's identify an error in an LLM



Claude Sonnet 3.7

What is the criteria for a city in Saskatchewan?

Edit

In Saskatchewan, the criteria for an urban community to be classified as a city are:

1. A minimum population of 5,000 residents is required to be eligible for city status.
2. Once a community achieves city status, it retains this classification even if its population later drops below the 5,000 threshold.

It's worth noting that before 2005, the population requirement was higher—10,000 residents were needed to become a city. This change in legislation allowed several smaller communities to apply for and achieve city status.

Gemini May 5/2025

◆ AI Overview

Melville, Saskatchewan officially became a city on August 1, 1960. It has since grown to become a service center for farmers in the area, and it is home to the provincial government's Saskatchewan Crop Insurance head office. [🔗](#)

Population (2021)^[2]

• Total 4,493

The Springside Theodore Combines

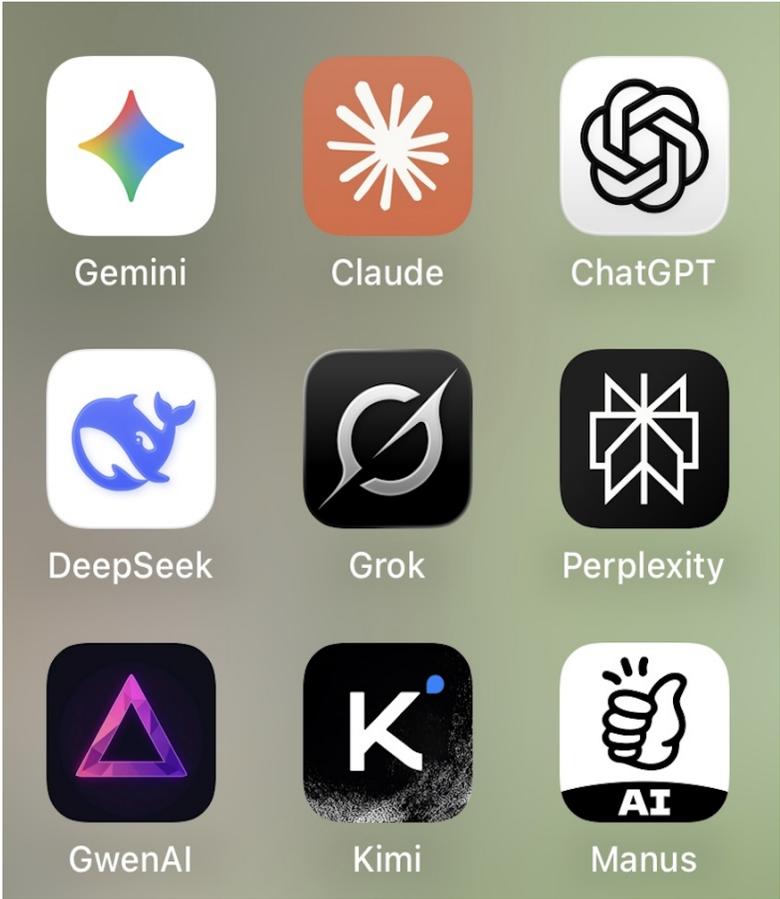


- the province of Saskatchewan had an “A” (cf. “AA,” “AAA,” “MLB”) semi-professional baseball league
- Springside and Theodore were two small farming towns that didn’t have enough players unless they combined
- So they formed a baseball team called the “**Springside Theodore Combines.**”

...but a combine can be many things



Let's identify an LLM error



Google

AI Mode All Images Videos Shopping News

AI Overview

In a rural farming region like Saskatchewan, the phrase "Springside Theodore combines" refers to multiple combine harvesters working together during the critical harvest season. The towns of Springside and Theodore are located near each other in the province, where agricultural activities are a major part of the local economy.

This pooling of equipment and labor is common for several reasons:

- **Time efficiency:** Harvest is extremely time-sensitive. Weather can be unpredictable, and crops need to be brought in quickly once they reach maturity to prevent spoilage or damage

WESTERN CANADA BASEBALL

HOME NEWS INTRO SITEMAP SEARCH COLLEGE NEGRO PLAYERS-LIST I-REMEMBER CONTACT

1900s 1910s 1920s 1930s 1940s 1950s 1960s 1970s

1961 Tournaments

YORKTON TOURNAMENT

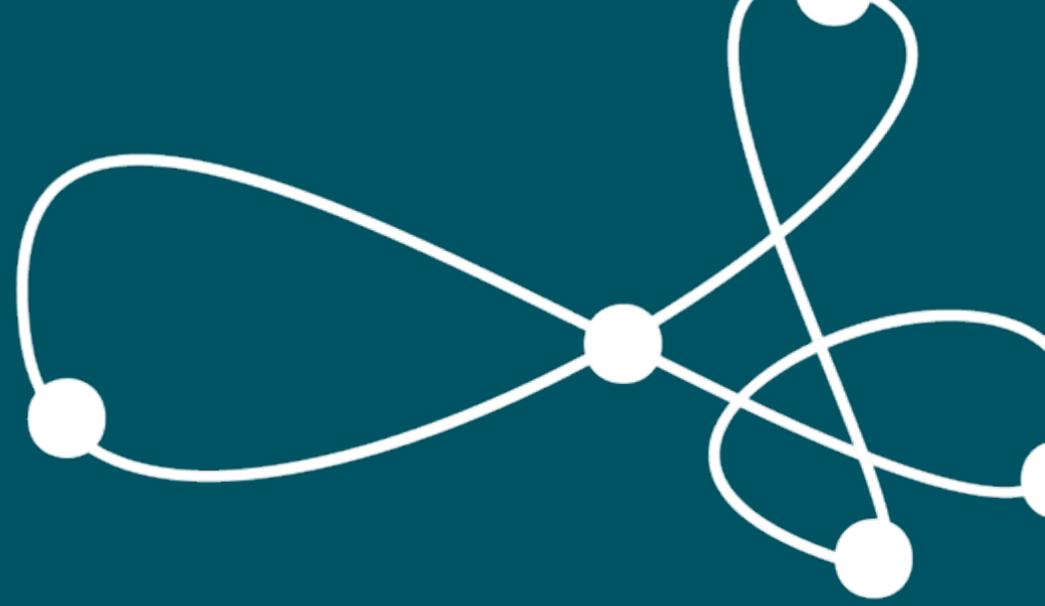
Yorkton (Aug 27, 1961) : D'Arcy Loster pitched allowed just one run in 15 innings, including a five earlier downed the Combines 4-1, Hohenloe 7-0 a

Stenen 4 Springside-Theodore Combines 1
 Hohenloe 9 Calder 6
 Kihaly 2 Yorkton Red Sox 1
 Kronau 4 Yorkton Phillies 0
 Moosomin 12 Weekes 8
 Melville 7 Donwell 2

Stenen 7 Hohenloe 0
 Kihaly 6 Moosomin 3
 Melville 2 Kronau 1

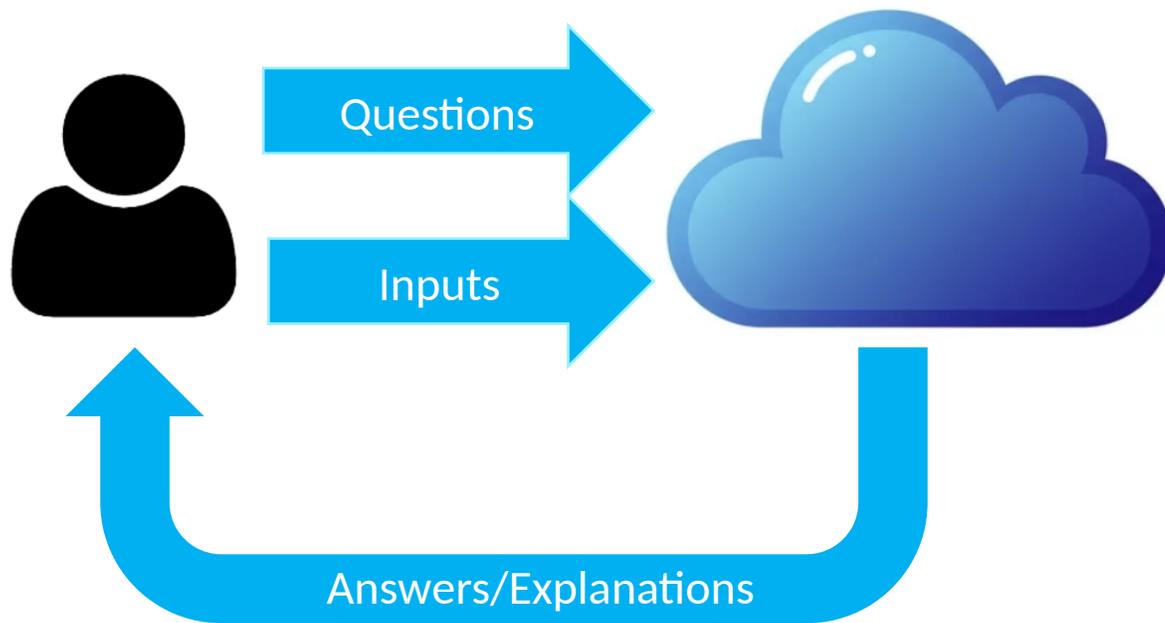
Stenen 4 Kihaly 0

Stenen 2 Melville 1



The Query/Update/Explain paradigm (QUE)

The Query/Update/Explain paradigm



- There are only three ways to interact with a computer program:
 - Ask a question (what, where, how, when, ...)
 - Provide an input (fact, opinion, observation, ...)
 - Ask for an explanation of an answer (justify an answer to a question)

McCarthy's Advice Taker

IR-00182
July 24, 1958

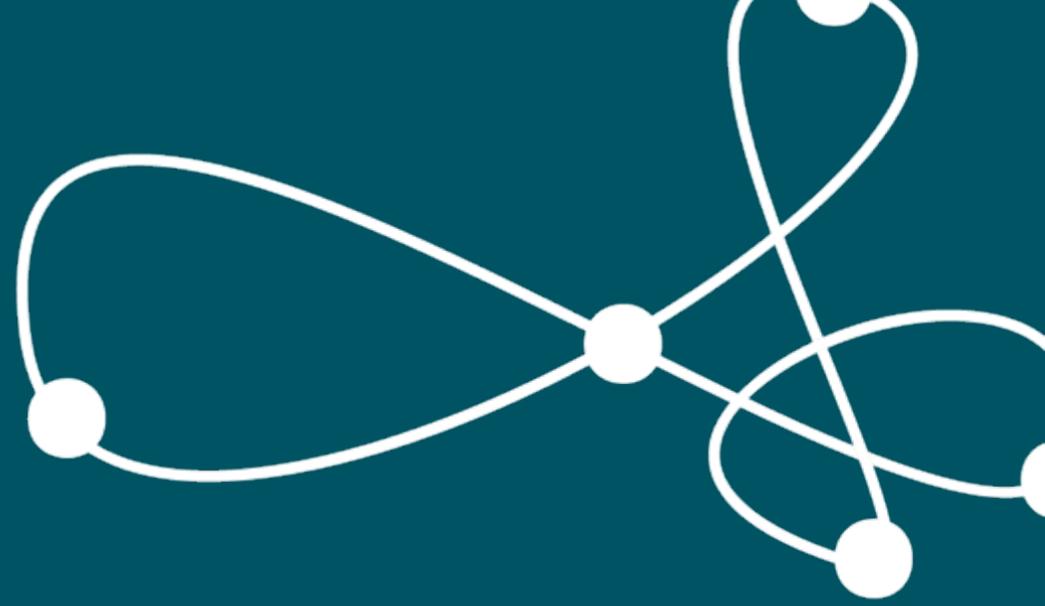
THE ADVICE TAKER - Preliminary Report

by John McCarthy

The advice taker is a proposed program for solving problems by manipulating sentences in formal languages. The main difference between it and other programs or proposed programs for manipulating formal languages (the Logic Theory Machine of Newell, Simon and Shaw and the Geometry Program of Gelernter) is that in the previous programs the formal system was the subject matter but the heuristics were all embodied in the program. In this program the procedures are described as much as possible in the language itself and, in particular, the heuristics are all so described.

The main advantages we expect the advice taker to have is that its behavior will be improvable merely by making statements to it, telling it about its symbolic environment and what is wanted from it.

The main advantage we expect the advice taker to have is that its behavior will be improvable by merely making statements to it...



The spectrum of neurosymbolic foundation models

What are foundation models?

- “Foundation models are large AI models trained on massive, diverse datasets, allowing them to be adapted to a wide range of tasks. They are essentially pre-trained, general-purpose models that can be fine-tuned for specific applications, serving as a foundation for building various AI applications.”

- Google Gemini

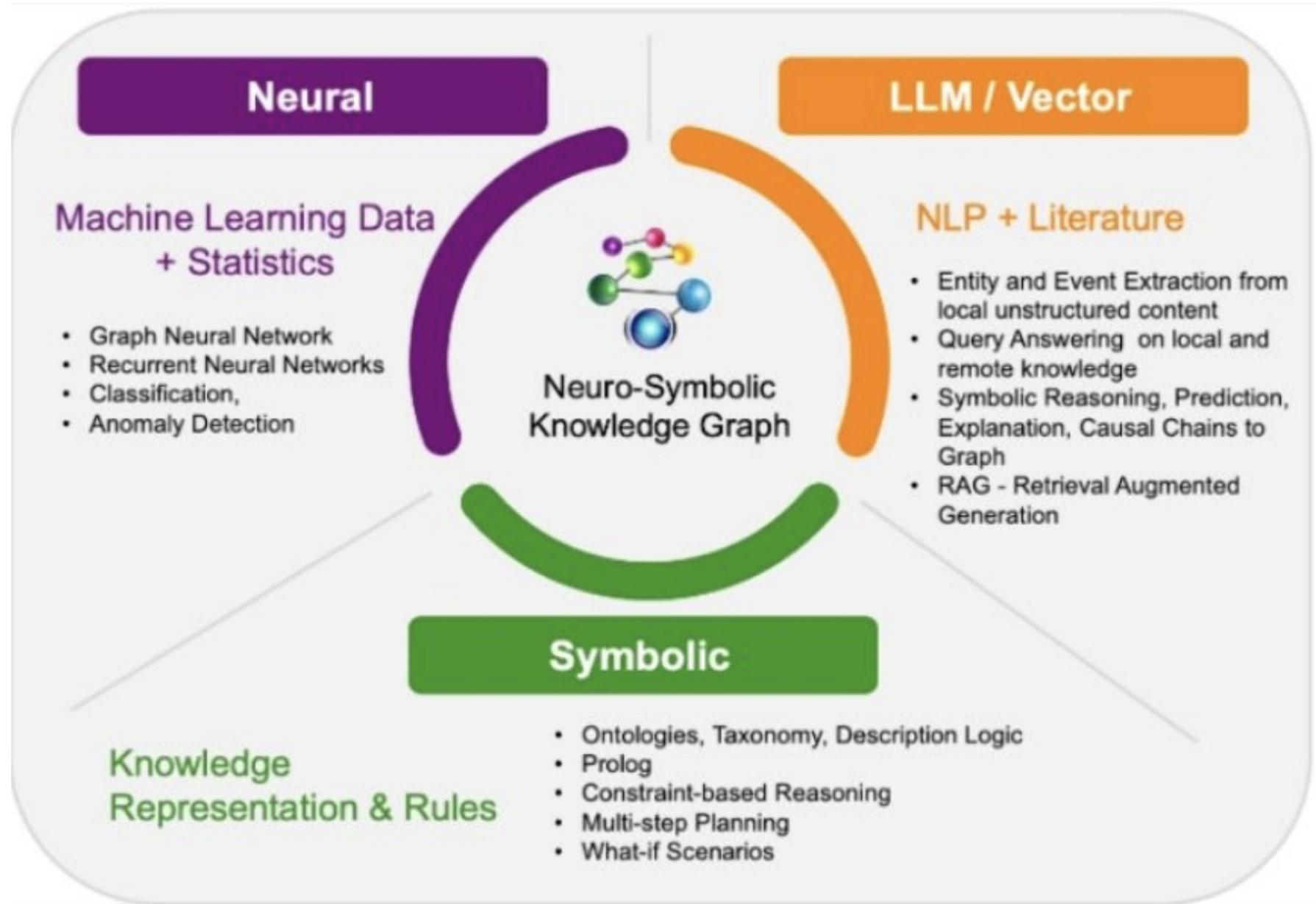
- “A foundation model, also known as large X model (LxM), is a machine learning or deep learning model that is trained on vast datasets so it can be applied across a wide range of use cases.^[1] Generative AI applications like Large Language Models are common examples of foundation models.”

- Wikipedia

- “AI is undergoing a paradigm shift with the rise of models (e.g., BERT, DALL-E, GPT-3) that are trained on broad data at scale and are adaptable to a wide range of downstream tasks. We call these models foundation models to underscore their critically central yet incomplete character.”

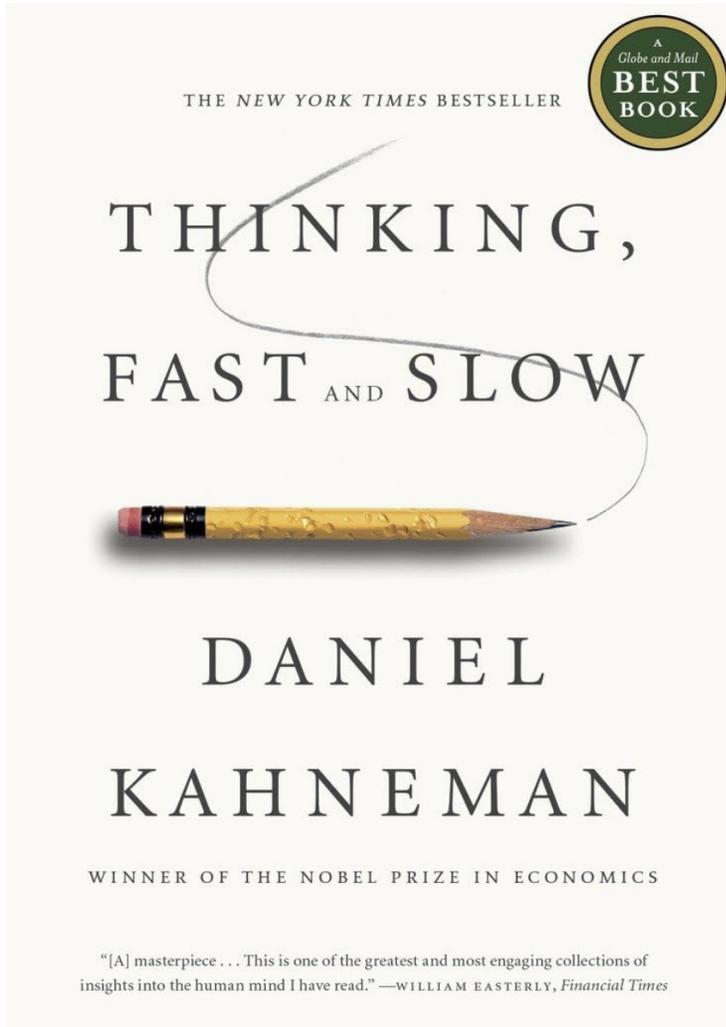
- multi-author (≈100) paper from Center for Research on Foundation Models, Stanford Institute for Human-Centered AI

<https://arxiv.org/abs/2108.07258>



Dan Kahneman, Economics Nobel Laureate 2002

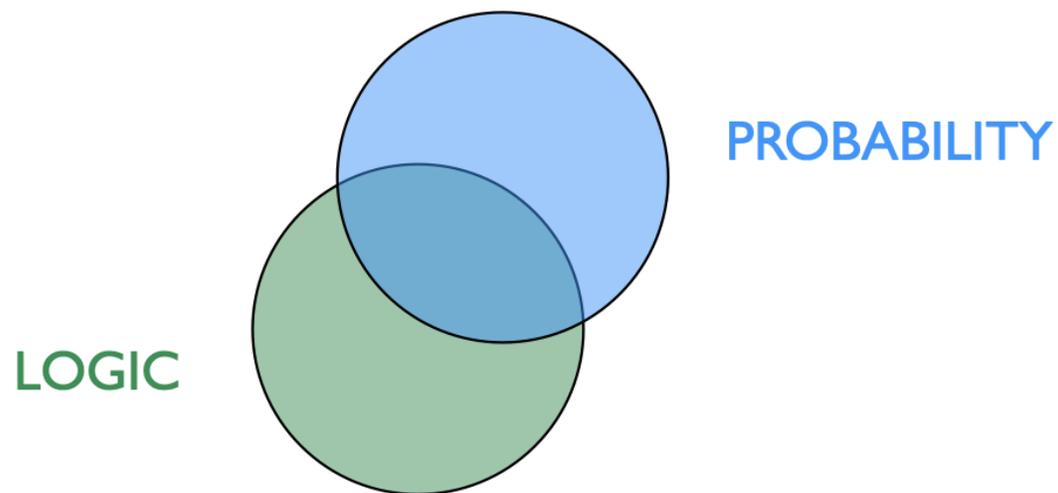
- More recently, proponent of “Thinking Fast, Thinking Slow.”



Kahneman's (2013) fast and slow thinking

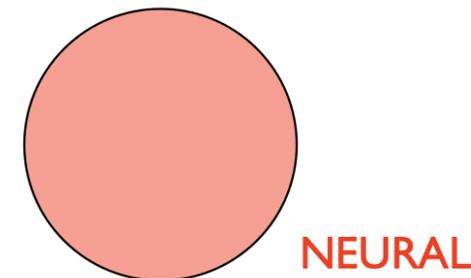
Thinking slow = reasoning

TWO MAIN PARADIGMS in AI



Thinking fast

MAIN PARADIGM in AI
Focus on Learning



De Raedt et al., **From Statistical Relational to Neuro-Symbolic Artificial Intelligence**
<https://arxiv.org/abs/2003.08316>

Is that a tiger under my table?

RG **You**

What is the origin of the philosophical problem of a tiger under the table?

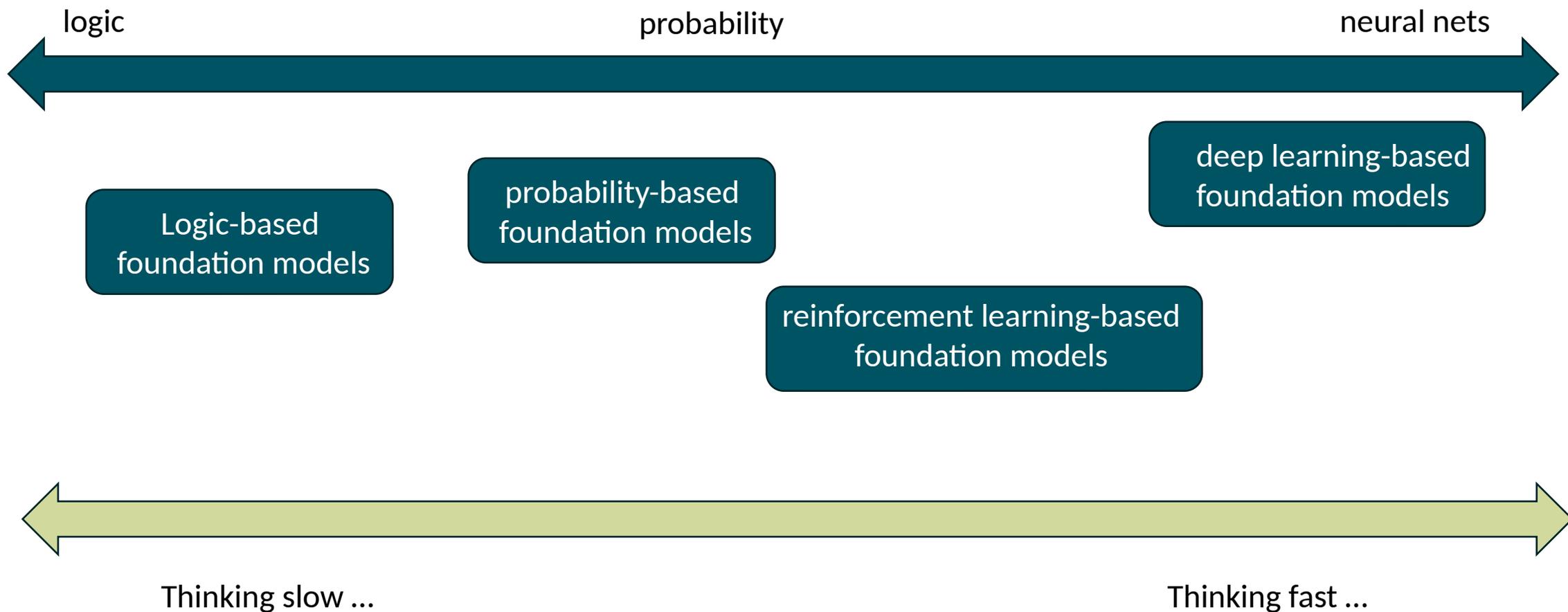
 **ChatGPT**

The philosophical problem of a tiger under the table is often associated with the French philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre. Sartre is known for his existentialist philosophy, and the tiger under the table is used as an illustrative example in his work to explore the nature of perception, consciousness, and the role of nothingness.

The specific reference to the tiger under the table can be found in Sartre's book "Being and Nothingness" ("L'Être et le Néant"), which was published in 1943. In this work, Sartre delves into phenomenology and existentialist themes, examining the nature of human existence, consciousness, and the relationship between being and nothingness.



A plausible neurosymbolic framework



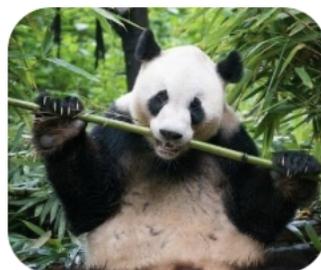
High input volume, low value capture

◆ AI Overview

Giant pandas eat **between 26 and 84 pounds (12–38 kg) of bamboo daily**, with some reports indicating they can consume up to 100 pounds (45 kg) to meet their nutritional

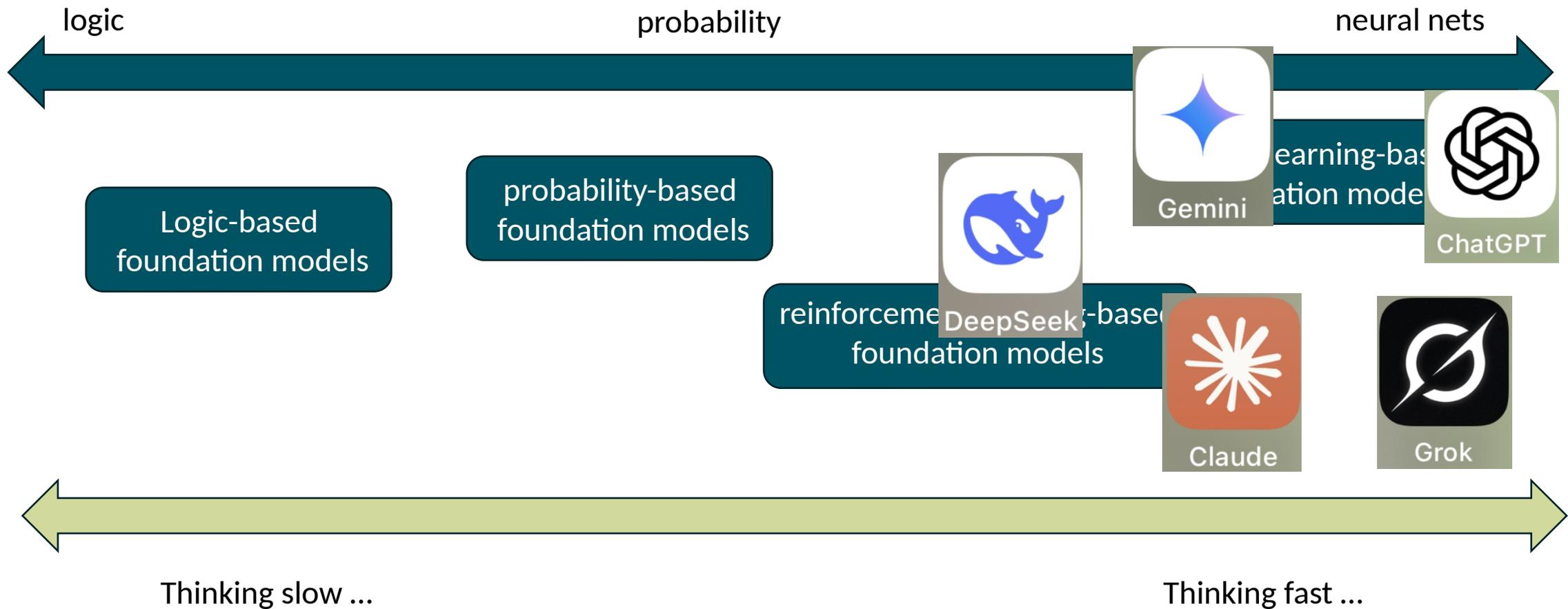
needs. Because they only digest about 17–30% of the bamboo they eat, they spend 10 to 16 hours a day eating to compensate for the low nutrient

density. www.reelpaper.com +4

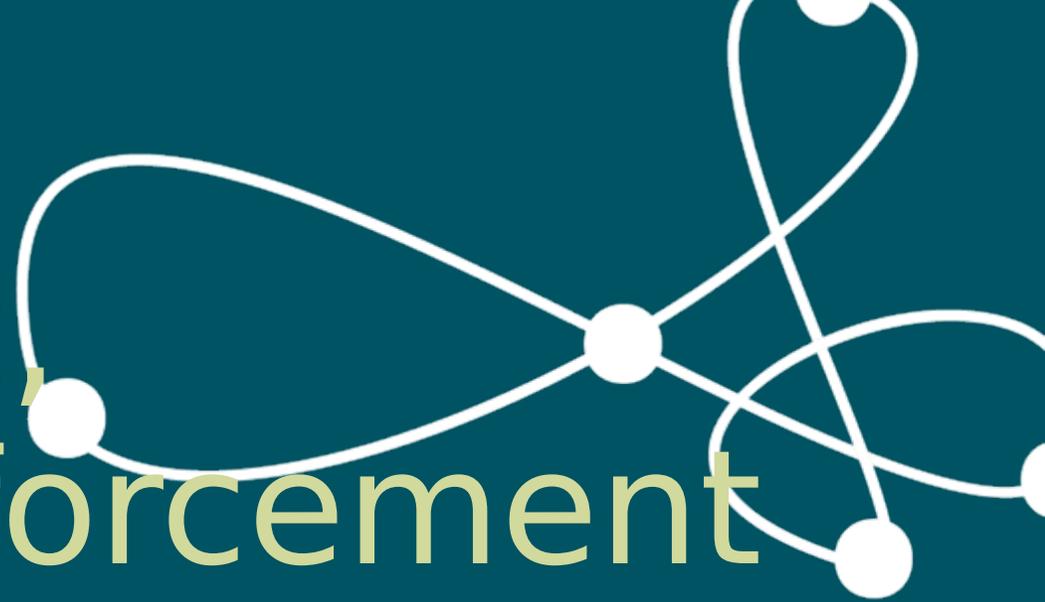


- LLMs built by transformers are the Pandas of the machine learning world.
- When one hears about “running out of data,” think about running out of bamboo ... if you get at most 30% value, you will need a lot to survive
- Pandas spend 41-66% of their day eating.
- Pandas defecate about 40 times a day ... not sure about LLMs ;-)

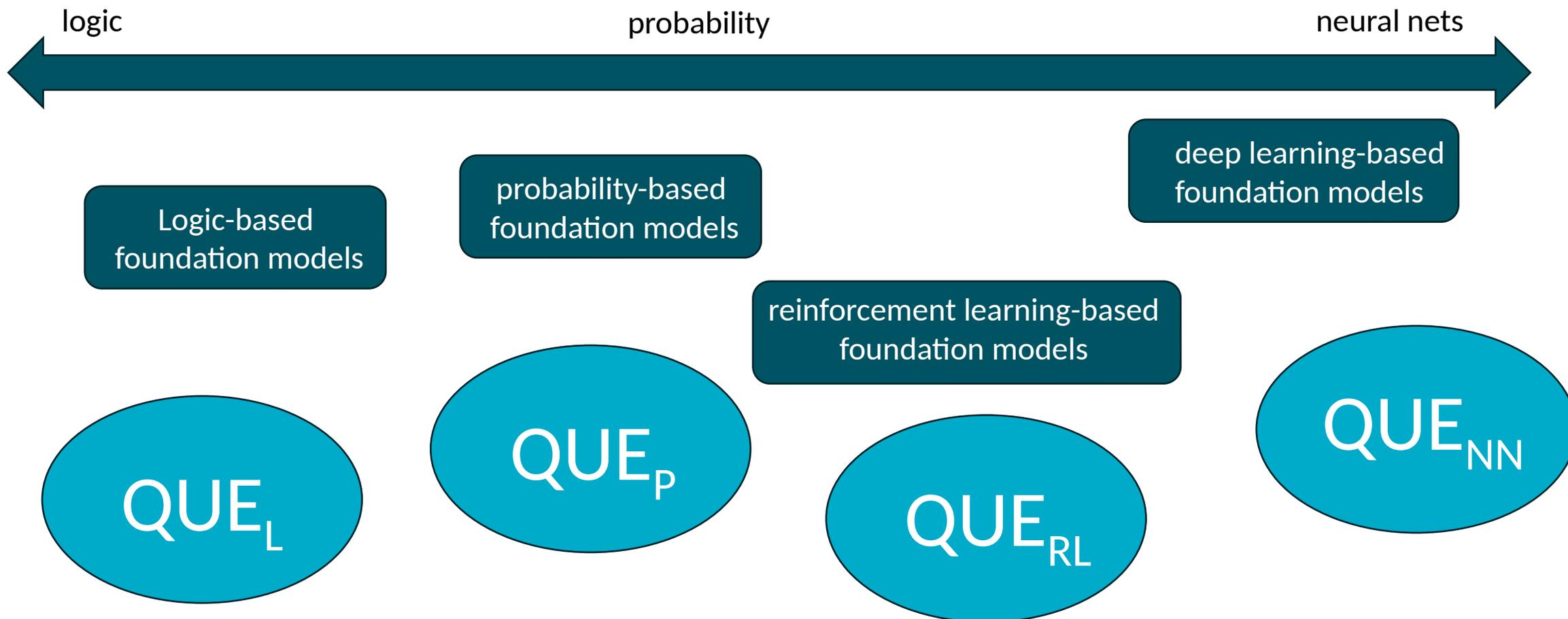
A spectrum of AI development models



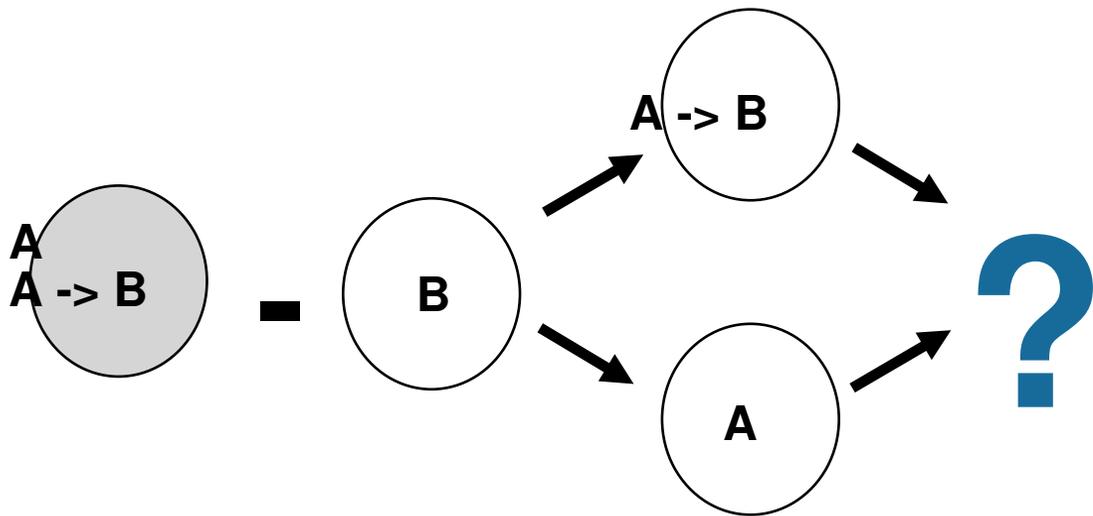
QUE_x for $x = \text{logic}$,
probability, reinforcement
learning, deep neural
networks



We need QUE for every foundation model



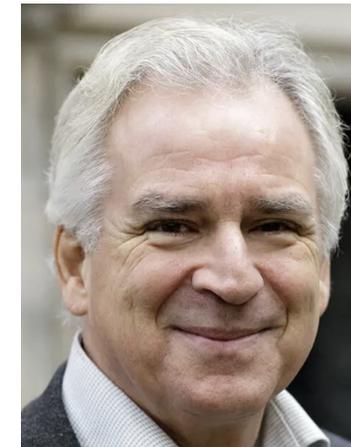
AGM Belief Revision



Alchourrón



Makinson



Gärdenfors

Alchourrón, Carlos E., Peter Gärdenfors, and David Makinson. "On the Logic of Theory Change: Partial Meet Contraction and Revision Functions." *The Journal of Symbolic Logic* 50, no. 2 (1985): 510–30.

<https://doi.org/10.2307/2274239>.

Bayes rule for probability calculation

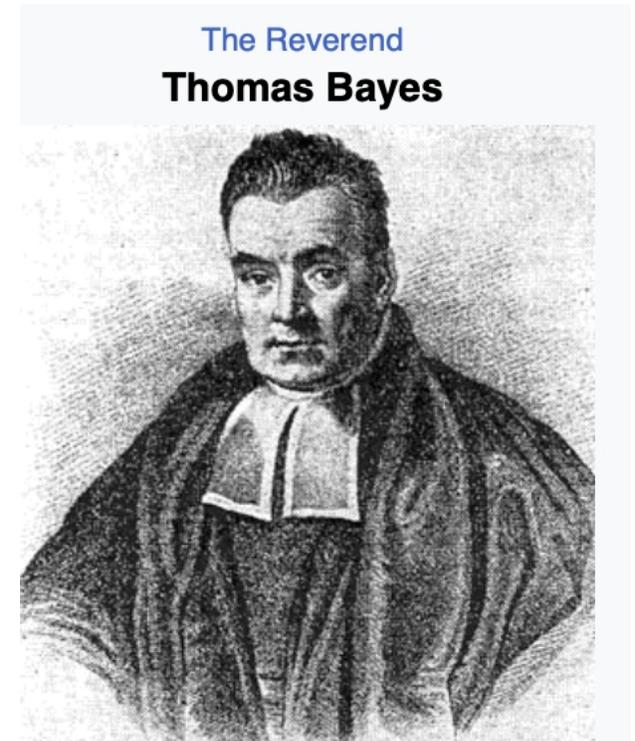
$$P(A | B) = \frac{P(B | A)P(A)}{P(B)}$$

Computation of conditional probability for n random variables

Let E_1, E_2, \dots, E_n be a set of events associated with a sample space S , where all the events E_1, E_2, \dots, E_n have nonzero probability of occurrence and they form a partition of S . Let A be any event associated with S , then according to Bayes theorem,

$$P(E_i | A) = \frac{P(E_i)P(A|E_i)}{\sum_{k=1}^n P(E_k)P(A|E_k)}$$

for any $k = 1, 2, 3, \dots, n$



RL Policy Debugging

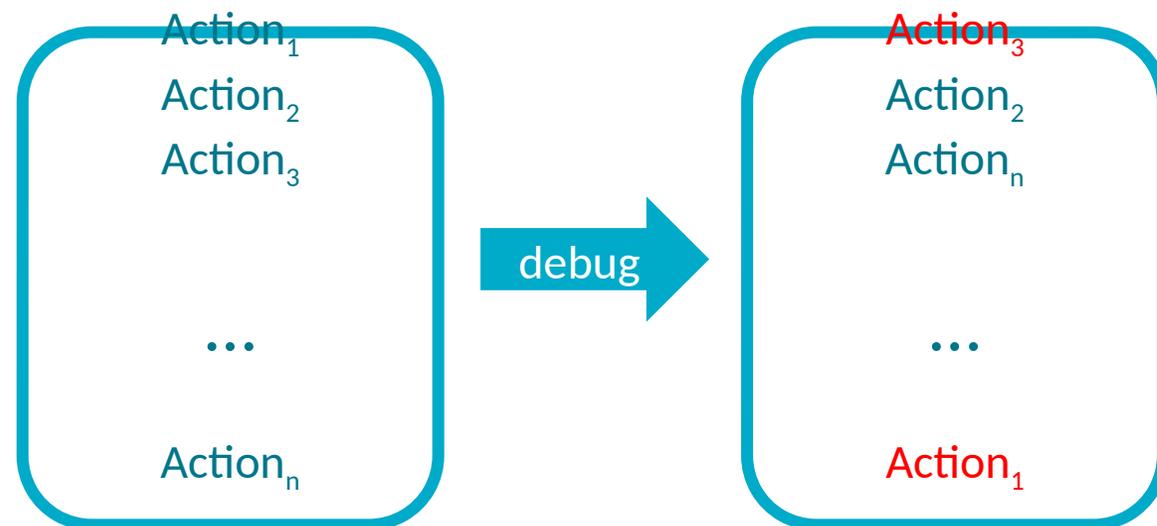
- Required:
 - What constitutes a reinforcement learning policy bug?
 - How much reward/return history is required to rationalize a policy change?



Andy Barto



Rich Sutton



<https://github.com/andyjones/reinforcement-learning-discord-wiki/wiki#debugging-advice>

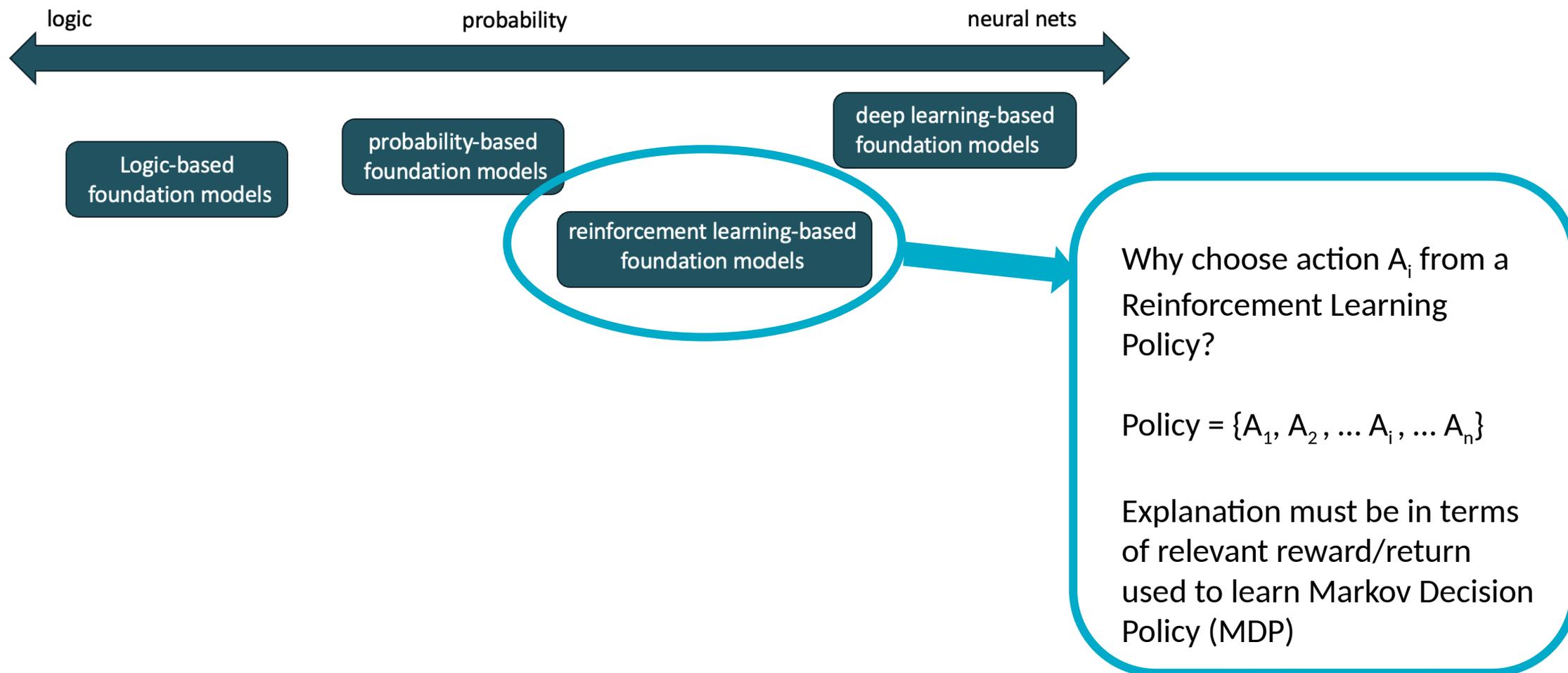
Backpropagation

- Backpropagation provides a generic “loss function,” which identifies weights contributing to incorrect output, so that weights can be adjusted to improve output.

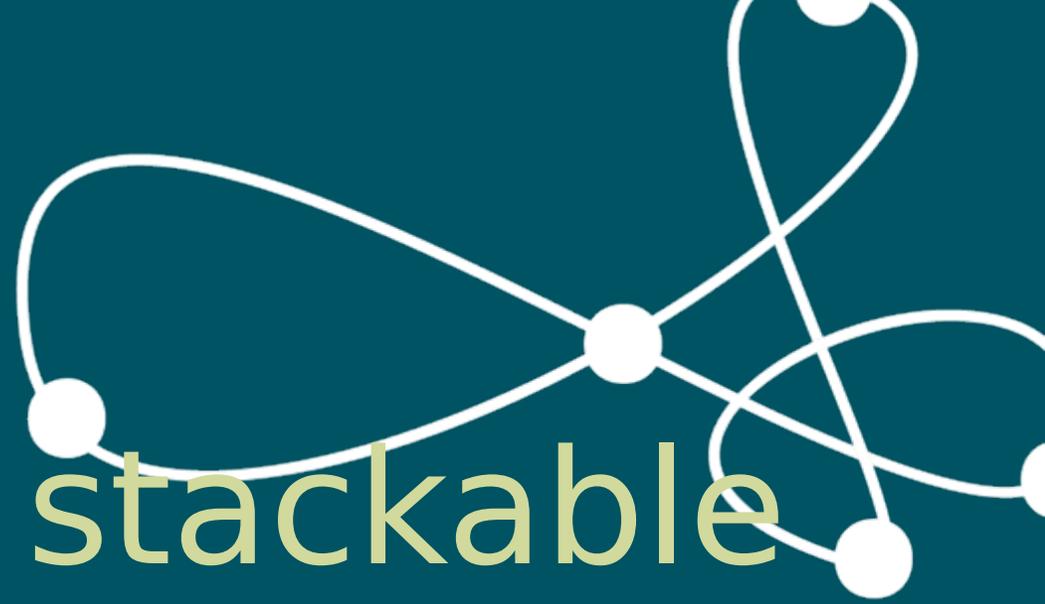


Rumelhart, D., Hinton, G. & Williams, R. Learning representations by back-propagating errors. *Nature* **323**, 533–536 (1986). <https://doi.org/10.1038/323533a0>

What does QUE look like for QUE_{RL}

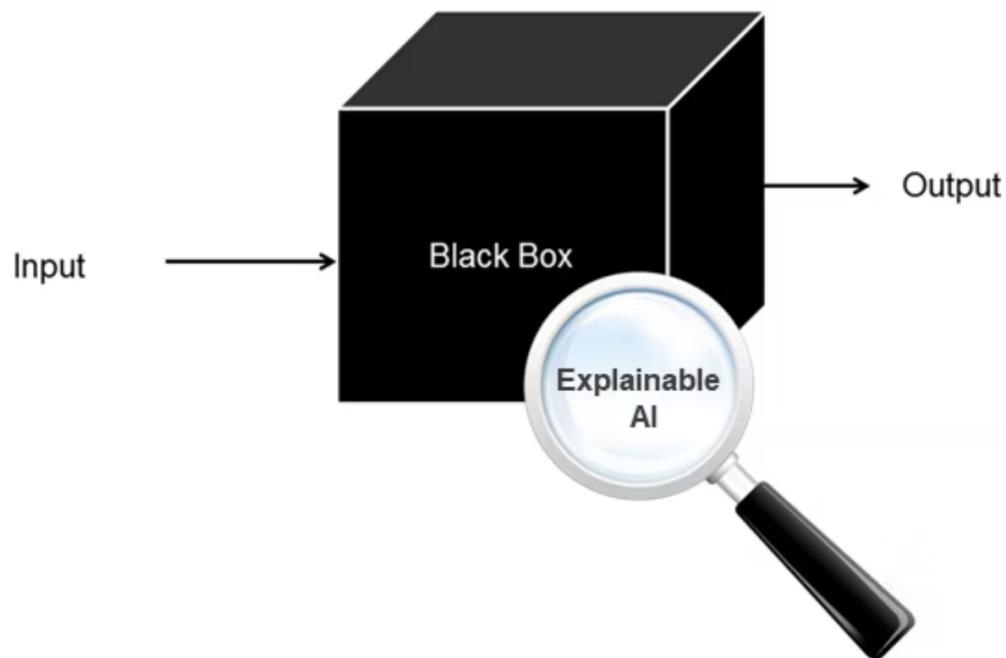


A framework for stackable multi-level foundation models



Foundation Models and Explainable AI (XAI)

The Black Box Problem in AI Design

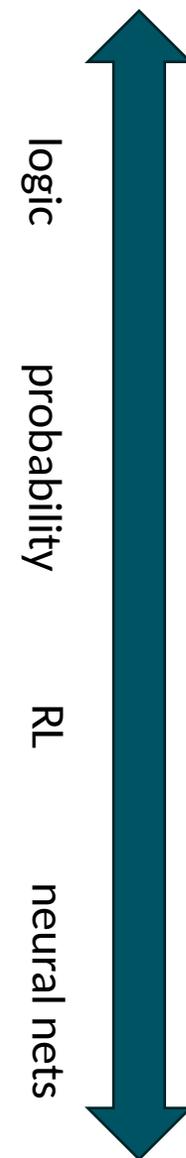
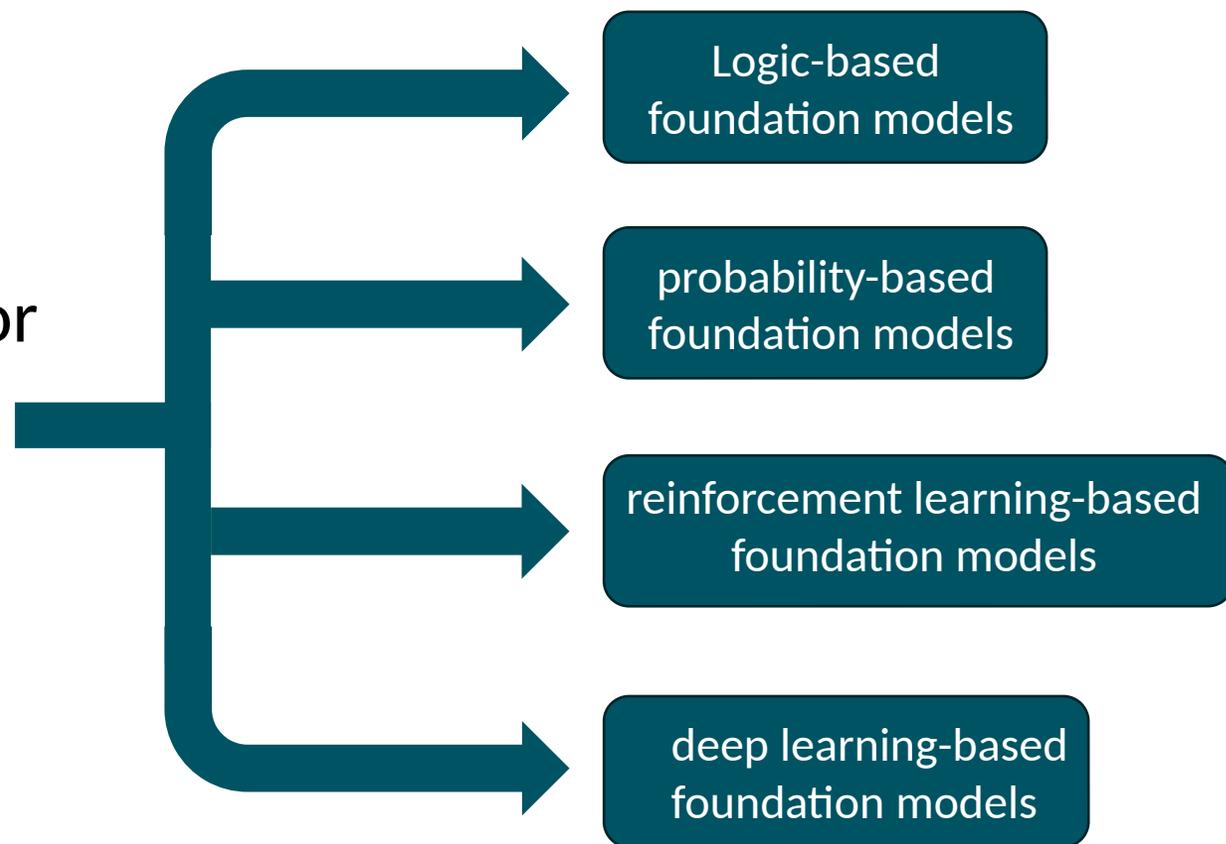


- XAI is the ability of an AI system to represent itself **sufficiently adequately** to provide explanations of its predictive output
- [insert Abed example-based XAI]

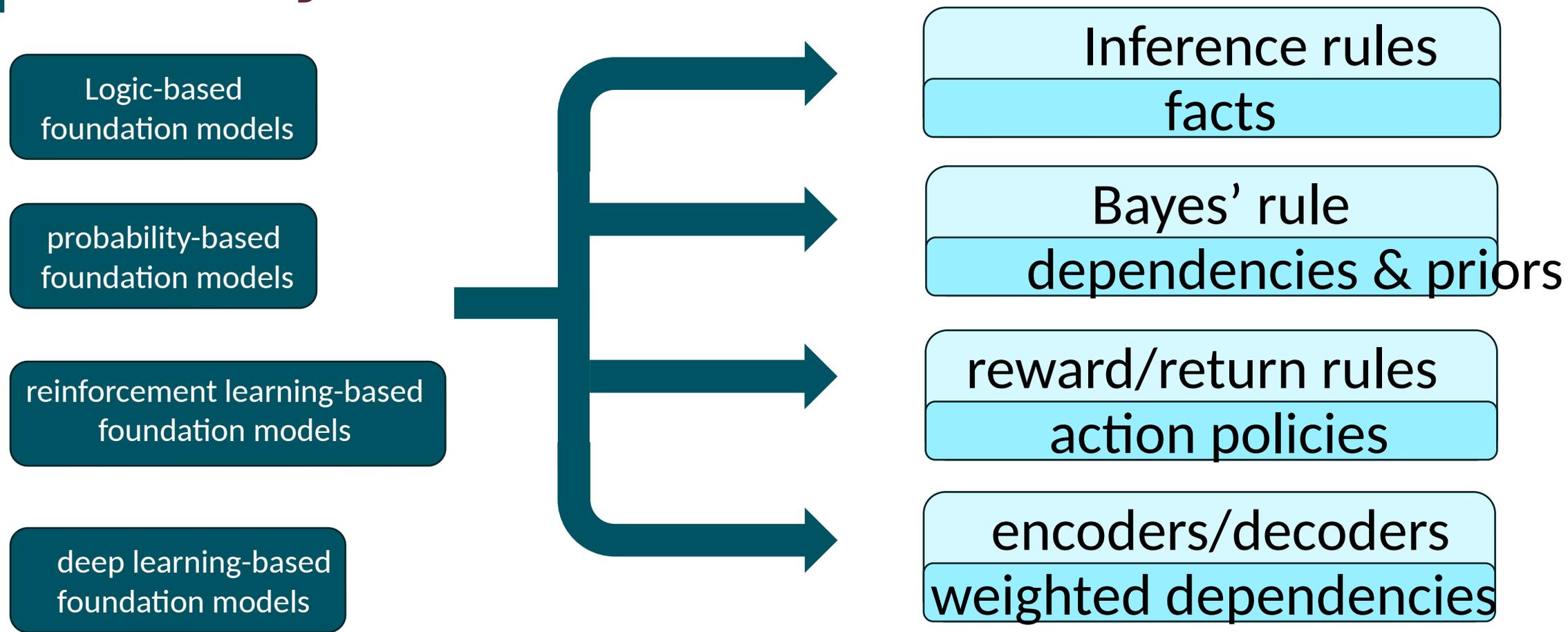
<https://adamfard.com/blog/explainable-ai>

A “stackable” neurosymbolic framework

Different mechanisms for Query, Update, and Explanation



A coordinated “stackable” neurosymbolic framework



Gödel/Turing/Hawking challenges abound ...

Inference rules
facts

Bayes' rule
dependencies & priors

reward/return rules
action policies

encoders/decoders
weighted dependencies

Each model has a
Gödel/Turing/Hawking structure:

self representation
representation

A community versus a stack?

Inference rules
facts

I_i

Bayes' rule
dependencies & priors

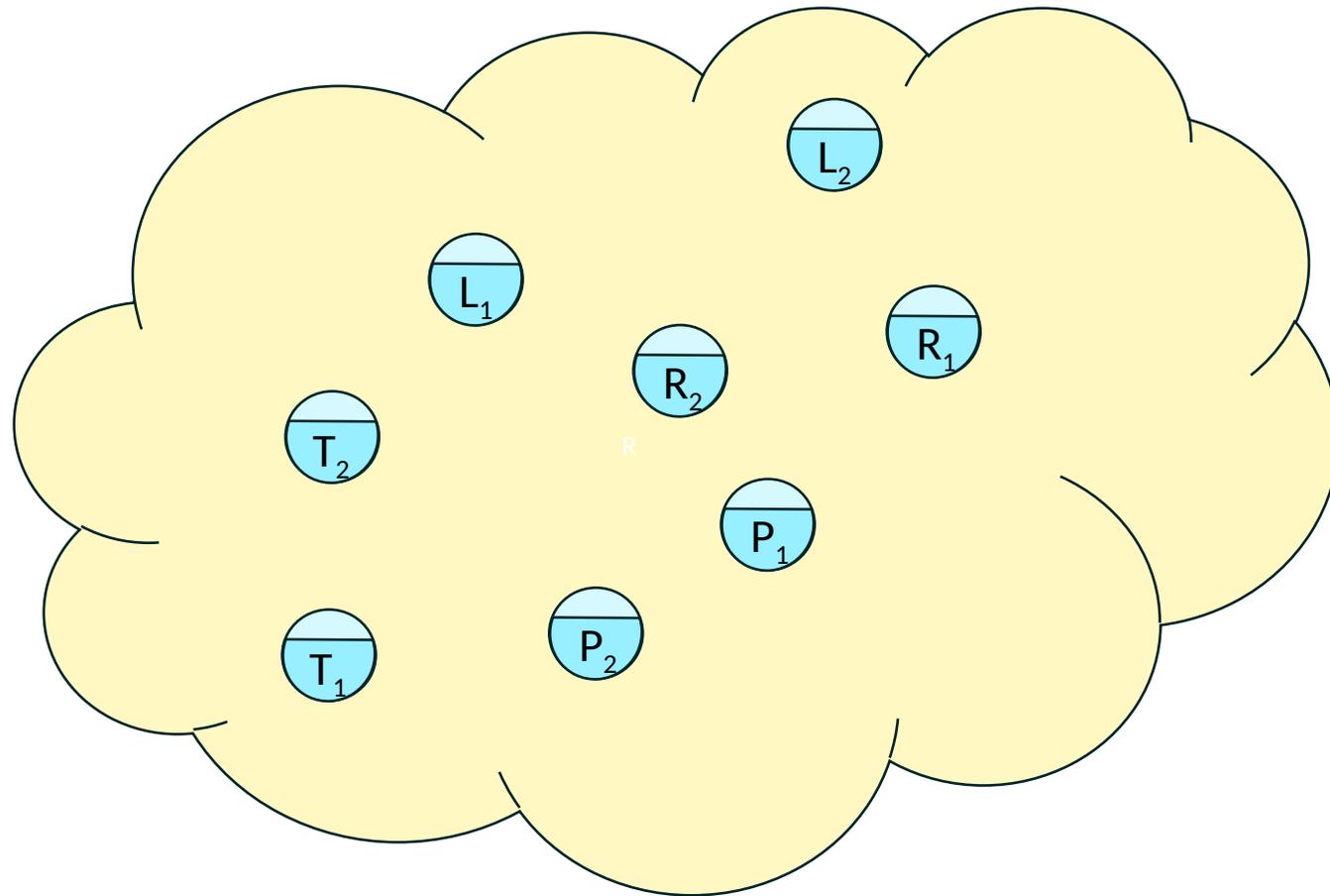
P_i

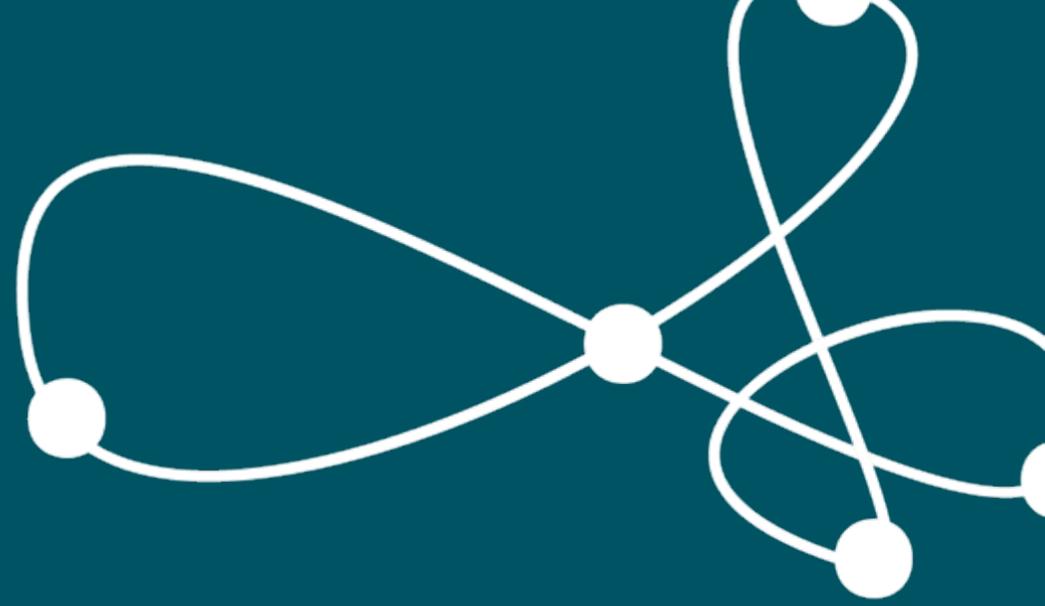
reward/return rules
action policies

R_i

encoders/decoders
weighted dependencies

T_i





Agents and Societies of Agents

Where did the word “Agentic” come from?

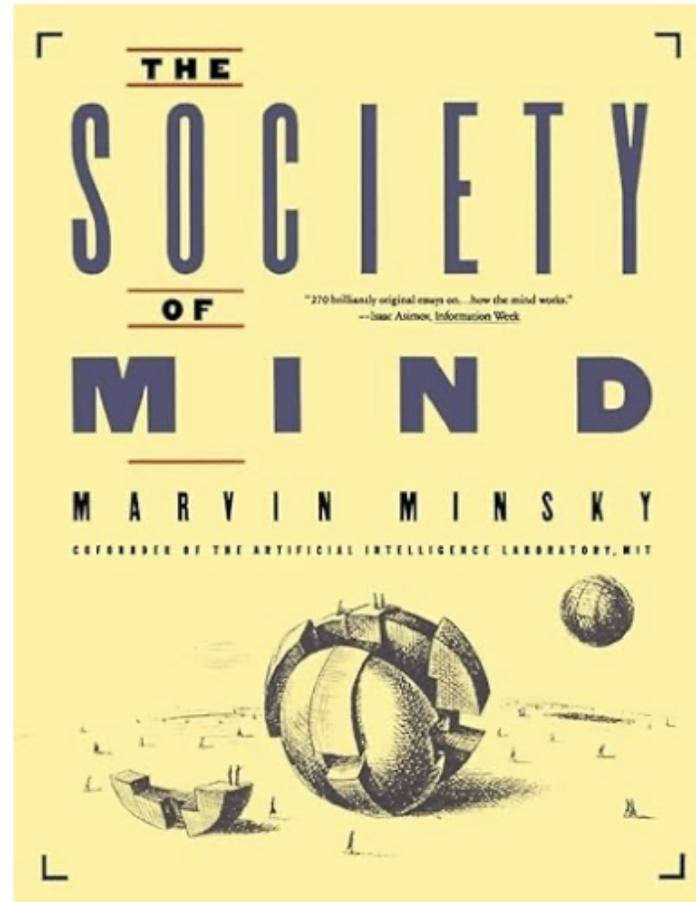
◆ AI Overview

Agentic AI refers to AI systems that can autonomously make decisions, act upon those decisions, and adapt to new information and situations, essentially acting as agents on behalf of their users. These systems, often built upon Large Language Models (LLMs), are designed to complete tasks with minimal human intervention, using their reasoning and decision-making capabilities to navigate complex environments. [🔗](#)

Minsky's Society of Mind

- One of the fathers of computer science and cofounder of the Artificial Intelligence Laboratory at MIT -- gives a revolutionary answer to the age-old "How does the mind work?"
- Minsky brilliantly portrays the mind as a "society" of tiny components that are themselves mindless. ... As the pages turn, a unified theory of the mind emerges, like a mosaic. Ingenious, amusing, and easy to read, The Society of Mind is an adventure in imagination.

Marvin Minsky



Marvin Minsky



Minsky in 2008

Born Marvin Lee Minsky
August 9, 1927
[New York City, New York, U.S.](#)

Died January 24, 2016 (aged 88)
[Boston, Massachusetts, U.S.](#)

Bill Roscoe's "Digital Civilization"

- Digital civilisation **provides structures** through which we interact with governments, companies and each other, guaranteeing transparency, uniformity and adherence to common principles and rules.
- Civilisation is too important for us to allow Big Tech companies to design it for their own benefit. They have a huge role to play but should not be allowed to design its rules or to gather huge amounts of data on us without a much greater degree of informed consent than we see at present.



Michael Jordan's "Agent Market Economy"

Communication - Event

A new research chair bringing together economics and artificial intelligence

📅 Date: 03 Oct. 2024

The Inria Foundation is launching "Markets and Machine Learning", a new five-year chair headed by the renowned American researcher Michael I. Jordan, emeritus professor of Computer Science at the University of California, Berkeley. The chair will have five major backers from the business world (Air Liquide, BNP Paribas Asset Management Europe, EDF, Orange and the SNCF), all of whom operate in environments with significant variability and high levels of uncertainty. The chair is geared towards developing a fundamental understanding of algorithms for learning and decision-making, motivated by problems in industry and science, with an eye towards eventual technology transfer. We caught up with Michael I. Jordan to find out more.



<https://www.inria.fr/en/new-research-chair-bringing-together-economics-and-artificial-intelligence>

Anticipating an AI/human digital market ...

The Agent Society

Algentic - A New Substrate for Intelligence

Not a model. Not a platform.

A living, decentralized network of autonomous AI that think, learn, and evolve — forever.

Combining paradigms ...

The Limitations of the Current AI Paradigm

Traditional LLM Stack	The Agent Society Paradigm
Centralized model training	Decentralized, modular Agents
Static architecture	Modular, evolvable sub-networks
Offline training + fine-tune	Continuous learning via real-time use
Closed APIs, single point of control	Composable, autonomous services
One brain → One bottleneck	Millions of agents → Emergent cognition
learn from data	Learn from real world

Large models imitate minds.

The Agent Society creates one.

Anticipating an AI/human digital economy ...

- Examples of agent/human market transactions:
 - How do new agents get created?
 - What does it cost to connect to an agent?
 - How are agents incented to collaborate?
 - How do agents establish trust?

- What else???



Summary

Summary



- The foundational scientific challenges of AI *are not close to being solved*, e.g., can foundation models be debugged?
- Foundational Models will have to be **blended** to achieve the next wave of scientific progress in AI.
- Integration of the QUE paradigm across the neurosymbolic spectrum is essential; **no one foundation model is adequate.**

Summary



<http://www.sciencecartoonsplus.com/gallery/math/index.php#>

- Foundational models from the neurosymbolic spectrum will have to be **blended** to achieve the next wave of scientific progress in AI.
- The blending *may not be uniform*, but specific to particular applications, e.g., compare precision health with visual arts entertainment.
- The degree to which foundational components are explainable determines the *choice of representation* and the *evaluation of explanations*.
- “Loss” functions, and debugging in general, must be based on **explanatory foundations**.
- Integration of mechanisms across the neurosymbolic stack is essential; **no one foundation model is adequate**.



- Long term open research agenda based on Alberta Plan (see <https://arxiv.org/pdf/2208.11173>)
- Non-PI driven research plan focused on artificial intelligence, continual learning, and experience-based learning
- See <https://www.openmindresearch.org>)

Openmind's Research Agenda

- Mission: Understand intelligence and share it openly with the world
- Our core research direction is outlined in the Alberta Plan for AI Research (Sutton, Bowling, Pilarski, 2022)
 - Algorithm development for learning agents Meta-learning, Average reward, Streaming, Continual learning
 - Building complete systems to evaluate our understanding e.g. Robot ants
- Our focus on understanding intelligence requires ongoing engagement with important technology changes
 - Advances in edge computing can change the relevant computational complexity measures (sparse computation, energy efficiency, memory and compute costs)
 - New sensing, actuation, and integrated systems can open up a new research questions (robot playpens, robot skin, long-term autonomy, exploring sound spaces or the EM spectrum)
 - Two-way influence between future applications and future algorithms

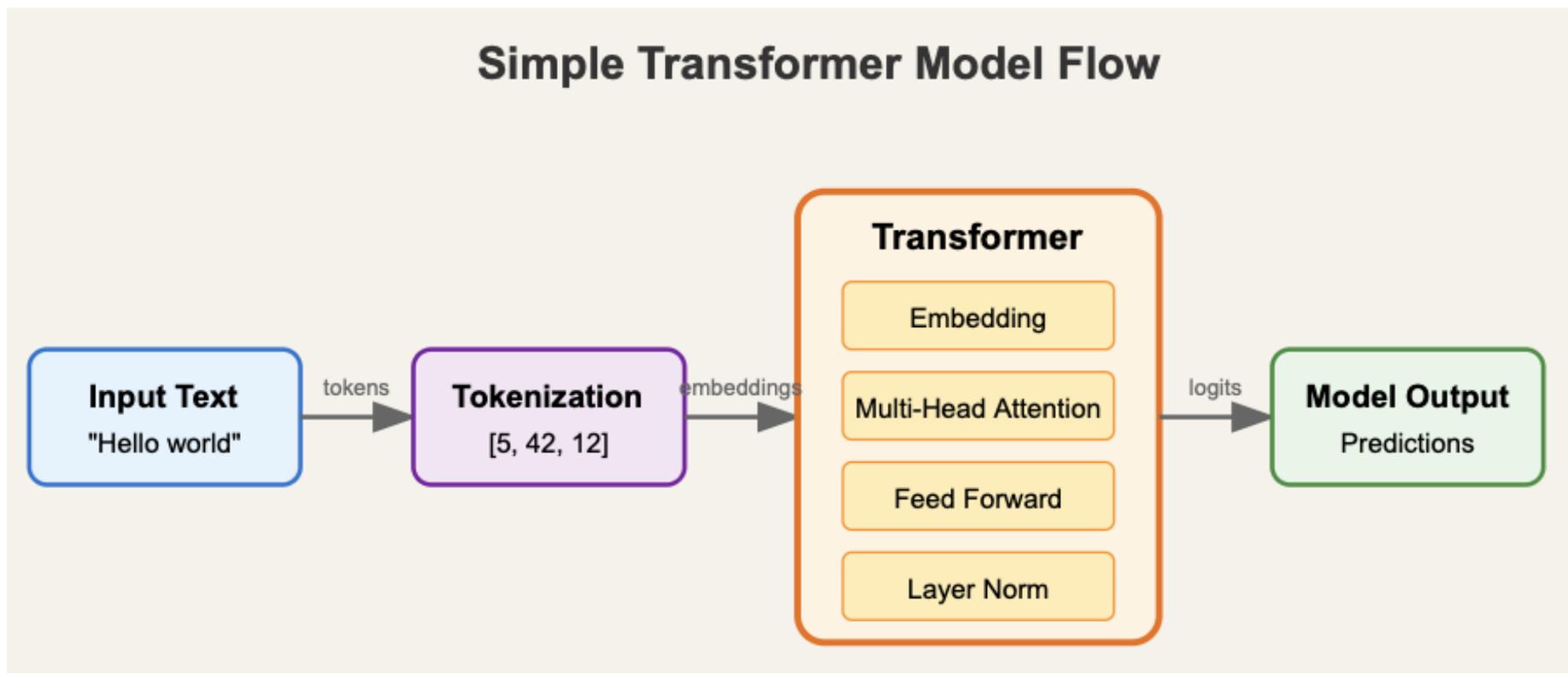
Openmind's organization

- Openmind Canada
 - Not-for-profit, incorporated in 2023
 - Virtual research organization, mostly run from Edmonton
- Openmind Global
 - Not-for-profit, incorporated 2025
 - Global entity for establishing regional labs
- Openmind SEA (South East Asia)
 - Virtual/physical research organization, potential connections with Malaysia, Singapore, Macau, Hong Kong, Thailand, Indonesia



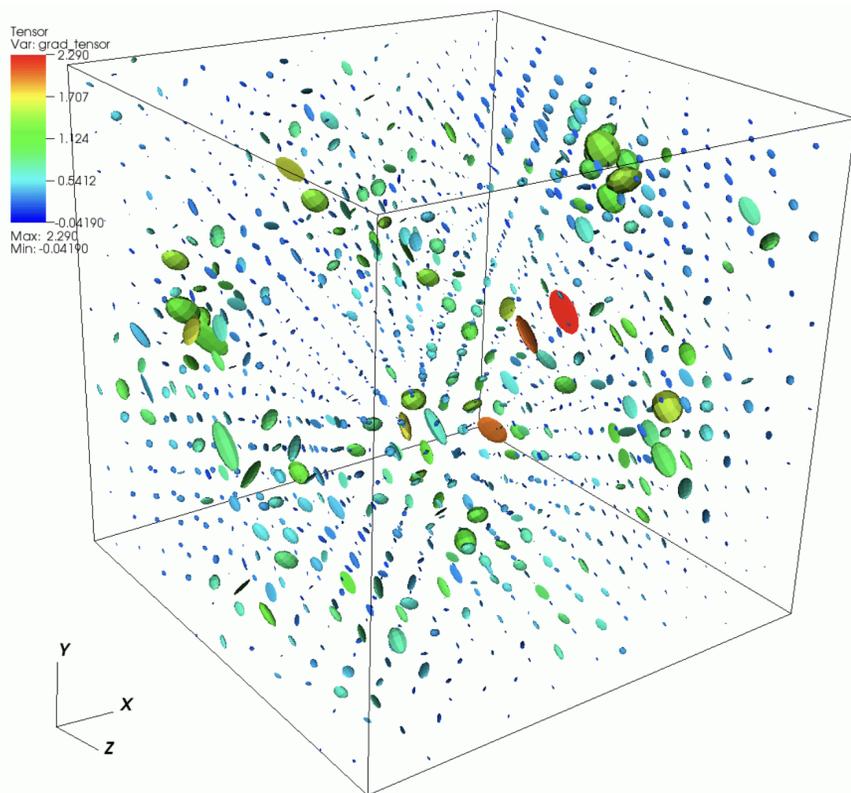
Complexity of Foundation Models

Caricature of Transformer-created Foundation Models

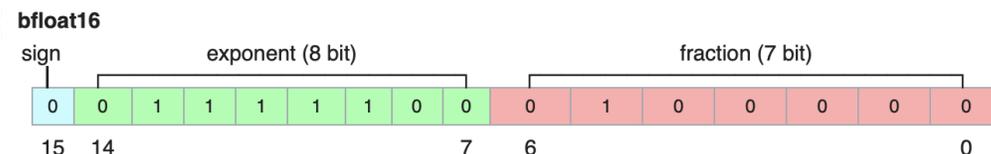


<https://claude.ai/chat/b4312b81-d166-47fb-bf90-4efbec184a36>

What do deep neural models look like?

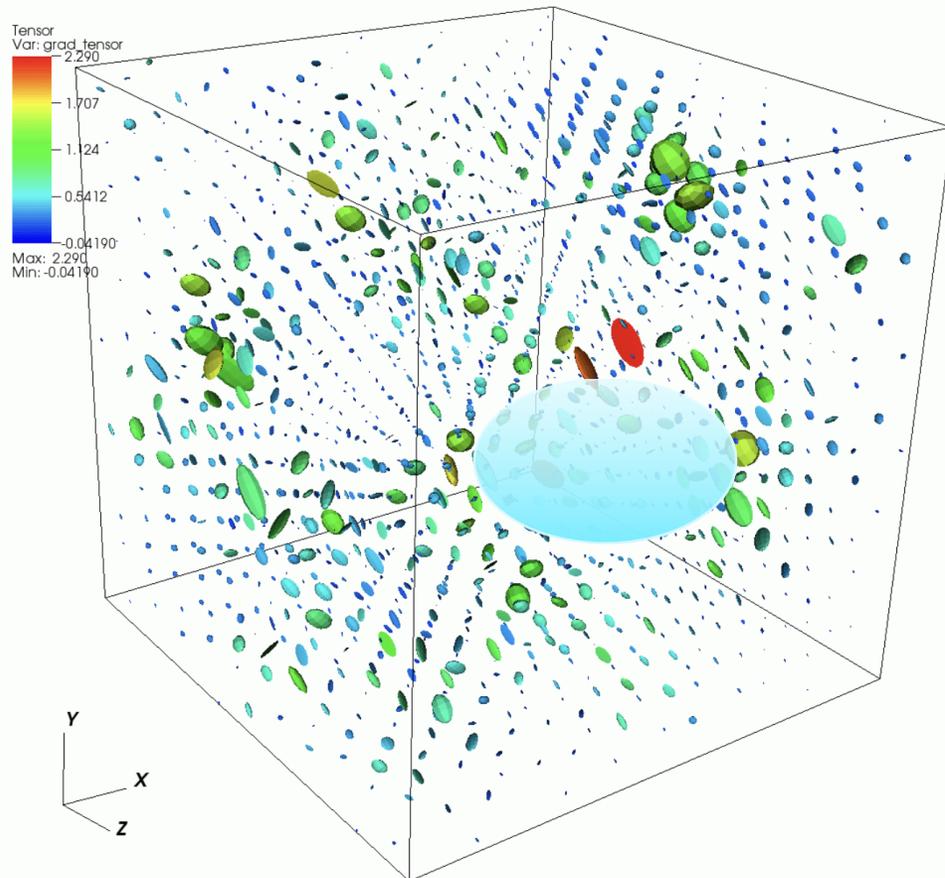


- Meta release of Llama-3 representation choices:
 - Huggingface “Safe Tensor Format.”
 - <https://huggingface.co/docs/text-generation-inference/en/conceptual/safetensors#>
- Model Weights in “bfloat16” format
- <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bfloat16>



https://visit-sphinx-github-user-manual.readthedocs.io/en/develop/using_visit/Plots/PlotTypes/TensorPlot.html

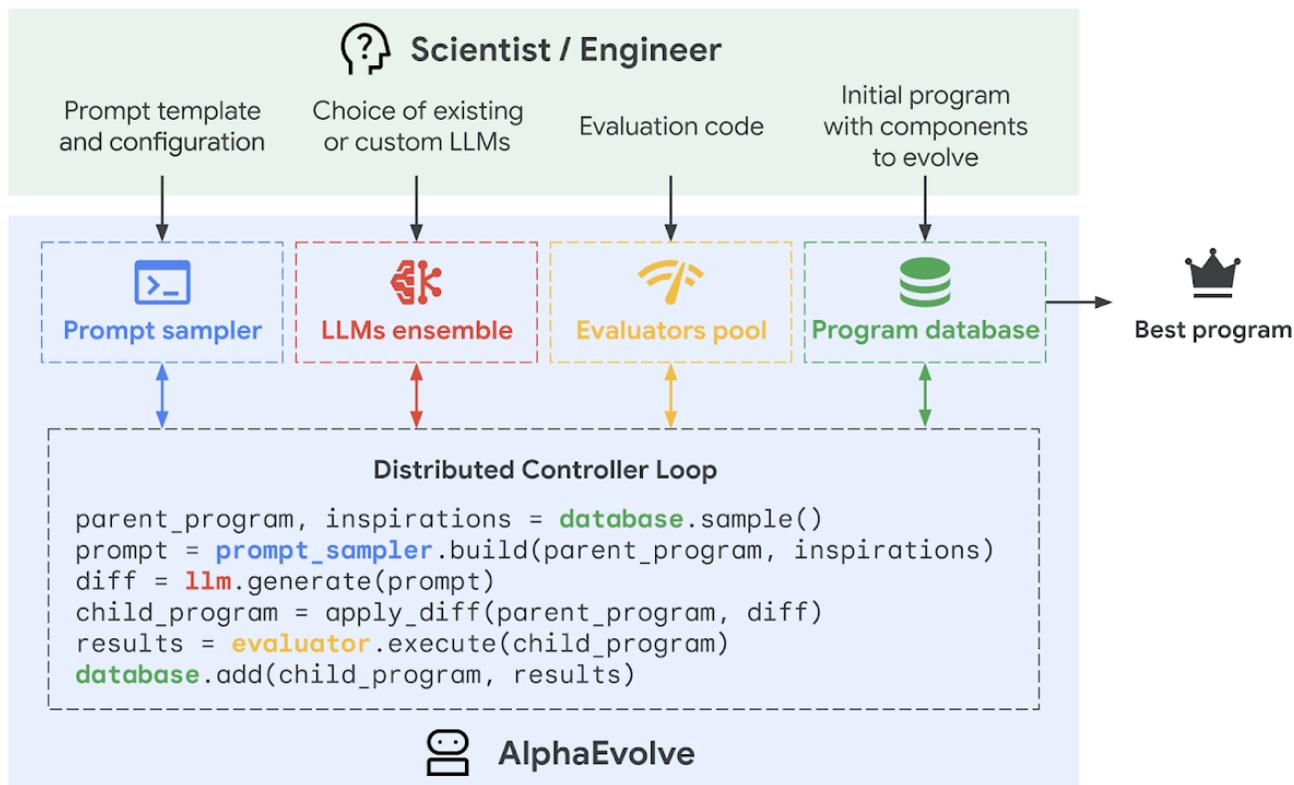
What portion is used for inference?



- *open source versus open weights?*
- *Gemini says*
 - “DeepSeek-V3 has a total of **671 billion parameters**. This includes the main model weights and the Multi-Token Prediction (MTP) Module weights. Specifically, the main model has 671 billion parameters, while the MTP module adds another 14 billion, bringing the total to 685 billion. **During inference, only a subset of these parameters are activated, specifically 37 billion.**”

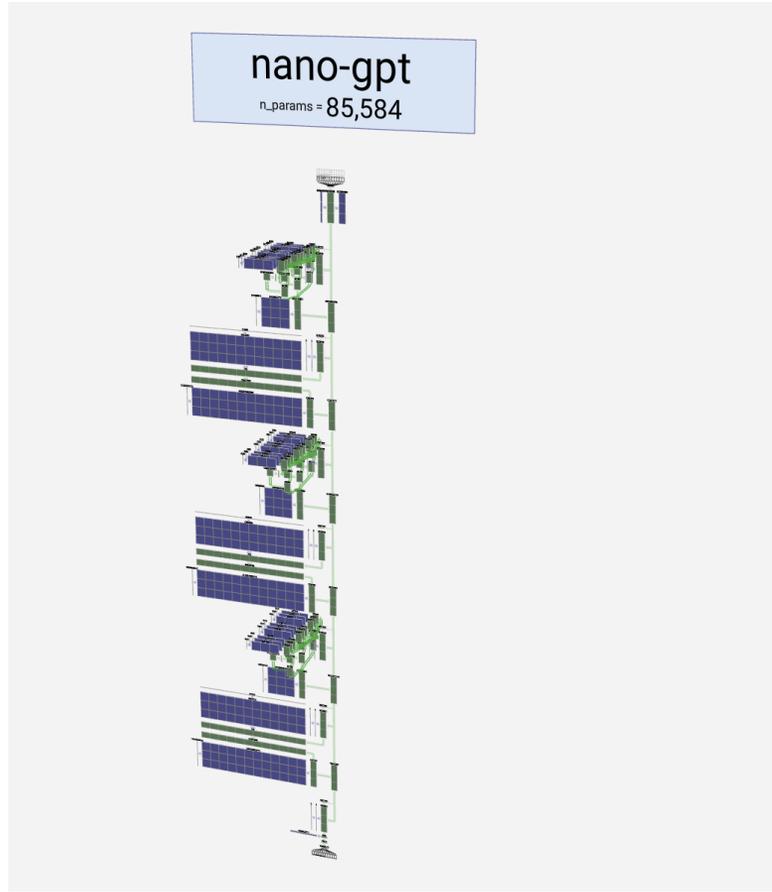
https://visit-sphinx-github-user-manual.readthedocs.io/en/develop/using_visit/Plots/PlotTypes/TensorPlot.html

... but AlphaEvolve has generative AI components?

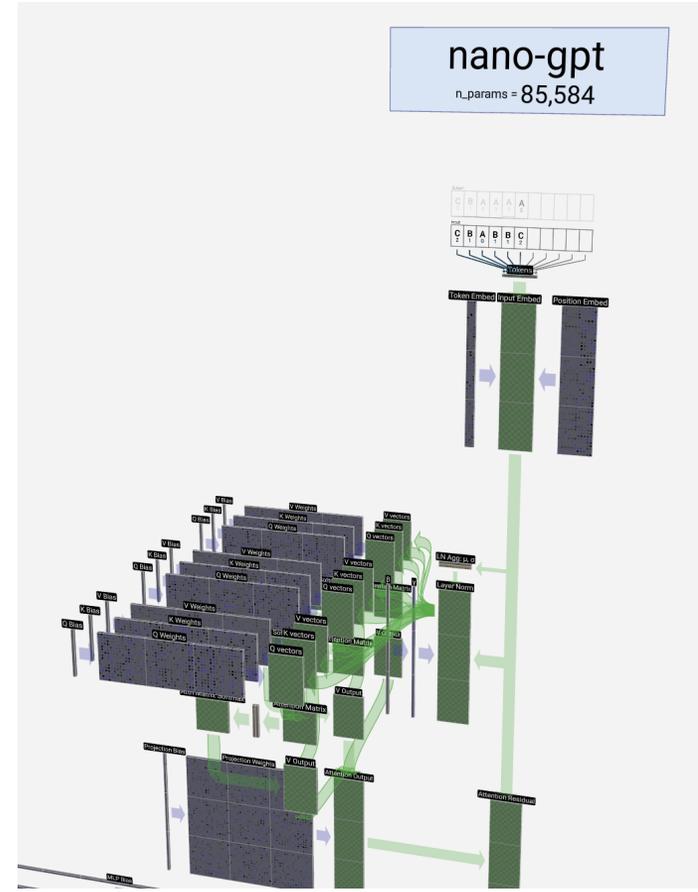


- “AlphaEvolve leverages an ensemble of state-of-the-art large language models: our fastest and most efficient model, [Gemini Flash](#), maximizes the breadth of ideas explored, while our most powerful model, [Gemini Pro](#), provides critical depth with insightful suggestions. Together, these models propose computer programs that implement algorithmic solutions as code.

Visualizing Transformer Architectures



...



Google's Visual Model Explorer

[Blog](#) > Model Explorer: Graph visualization for large model development

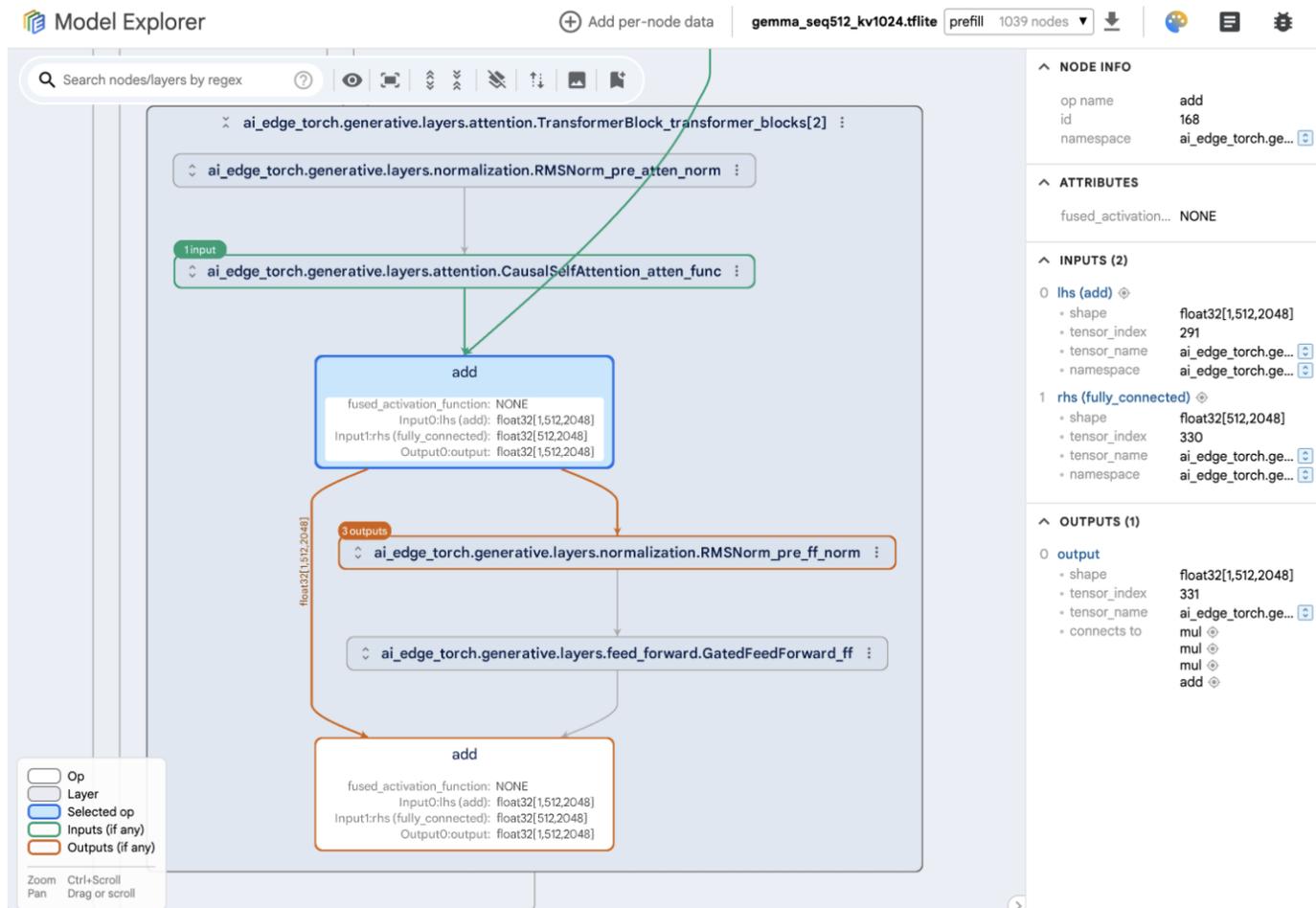
Model Explorer: Graph visualization for large model development

May 14, 2024 · Na Li, Tech Lead Manager, and Jing Jin, Software Engineer, Google CoreML

“Model Explorer is a powerful graph visualization tool that helps one understand, debug, and optimize ML models. It specializes in visualizing large graphs in an intuitive, hierarchical format, but works well for smaller models as well.”

<https://research.google/blog/model-explorer/>

Visualize “large” and “small” PyTorch/TensorFlow models ...



“Model Explorer supports multiple graph formats, including those used by [JAX](#), [PyTorch](#), [TensorFlow](#) and [TensorFlow Lite](#).”

Developed originally as a utility for Google researchers and engineers

Model Explorer is now publicly available as part of our [Google AI Edge](#) family of products.”

Meta's "Scalable Memory Layers"

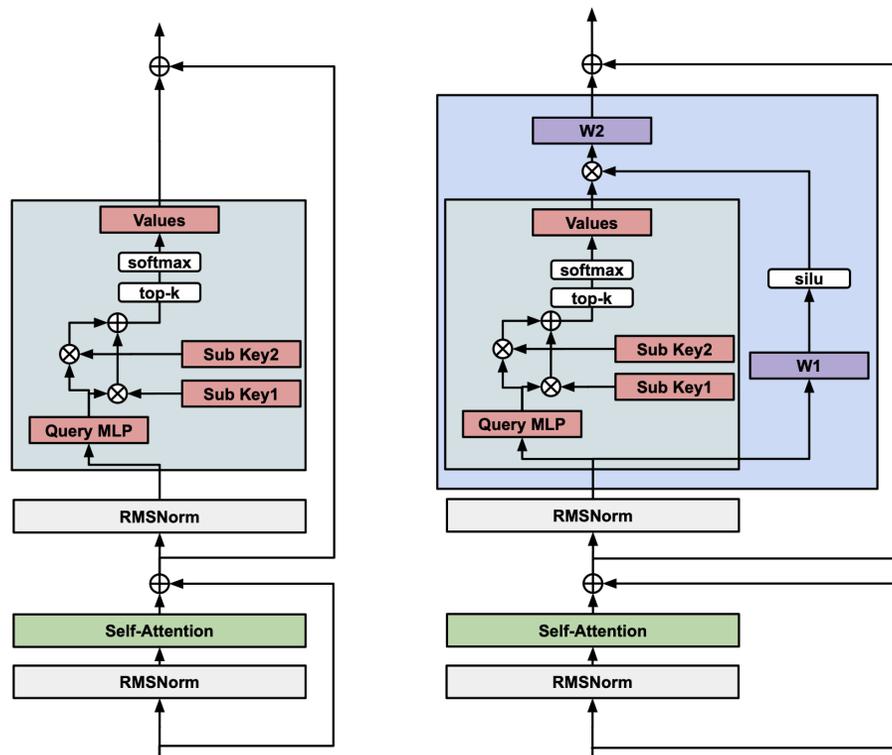


Figure 3 On the left the regular memory layer. On the right, the Memory+ block, with the added projection, gating and silu non-linearity

“Scalable memory layers add more parameters to LLMs to increase their learning capacity without requiring additional compute resources. The architecture is useful for applications where you can spare extra memory for factual knowledge **but also want the inference speed of nimbler models.**”

Berges et al., “Memory layers at scale,” Meta FAIR, <https://arxiv.org/abs/2412.09764>

Hints at a refreshed trajectory of AI research

VB DAILY

Google's mobile-ready EmbeddingGemma ranks highest in embedding leaderboard among small parameter models

Emilia David
September 5, 2025



https://venturebeat.com/ai/googles-mobile-ready-embeddinggemma-ranks-highest-in-embedding-leaderboard?utm_source=lterable&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=VBDaily-lterable

“After a summer spent grappling with the staggering compute costs of large-scale AI, the industry's focus is rapidly shifting to efficiency.

[Google's release of EmbeddingGemma](#), a top-performing small model, is the latest and most significant move in this direction. It follows a wave of innovation from companies like Hugging Face and Liquid AI, all **aiming to prove that the future of AI isn't just about building bigger models, but building smarter ones** that can deliver powerful results without breaking the bank — or the battery.”