

Brain-inspired and energy efficient solutions to hard optimization problems

Gabriel Andres Fonseca Guerra

Research Scientist at Intel's Neuromorphic Computing Lab

April 17, 2023

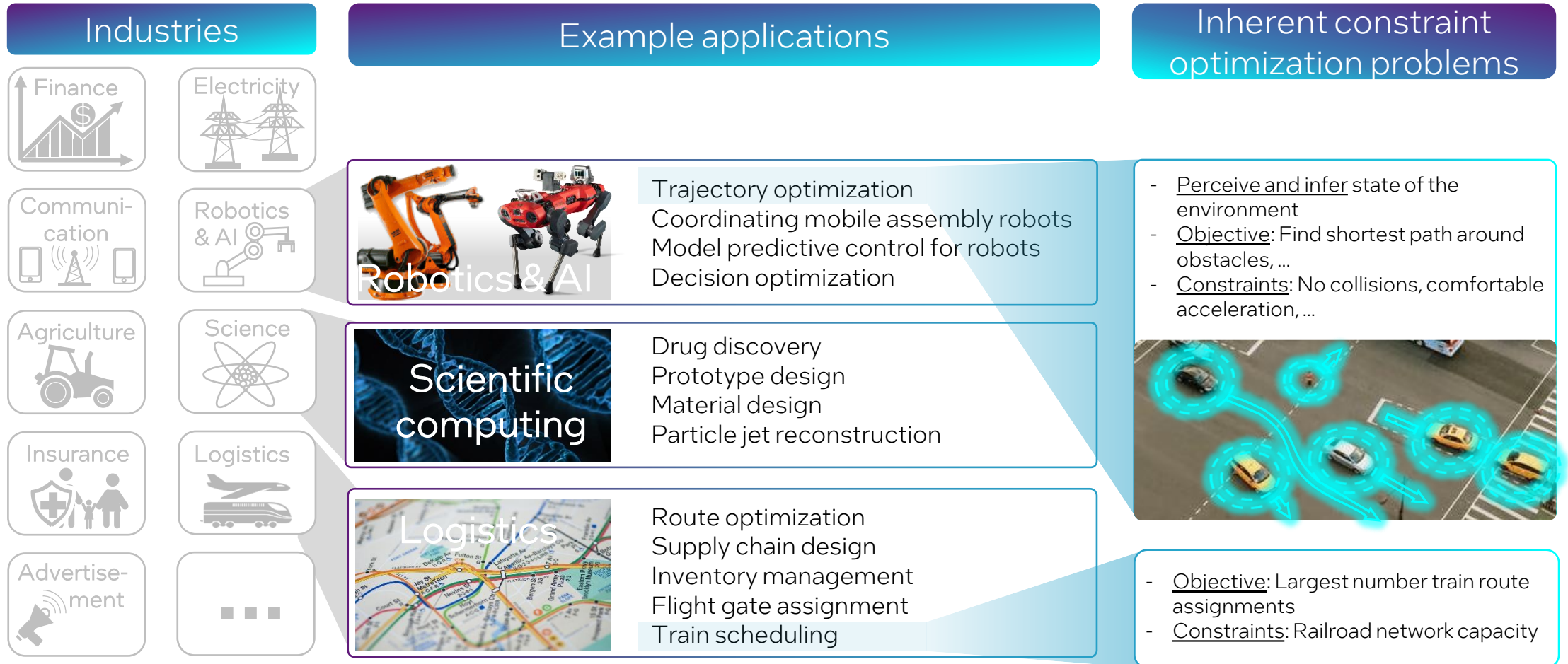
High Performance Computing for Sustainable Development in Government, Academia and Industry' - opening day talks, Stellenbosch - South Africa

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Agenda

1. Application relevance and motivation.
2. Brain-inspired computing: Loihi architecture and systems.
3. Lava open-source development framework
4. Graph algorithms are well suited for neuromorphic computing .
5. Lava-optimization architecture
6. Optimization problems taxonomy.
7. How does the search for solutions work?
8. Increased performance efficiency for solving hard optimization problems
9. INRC community

Hard constraint optimization problems are ubiquitous in real world



Brain-inspired computing | Brains remain unrivaled computing devices

AUTONOMOUS DRONE



CPU/GPU controller
Power: 18,000 mW
Mass: ~40 grams

Pre-trained to fly
between known
gates at walking
pace

Can't learn anything
online

COCKATIEL PARROT

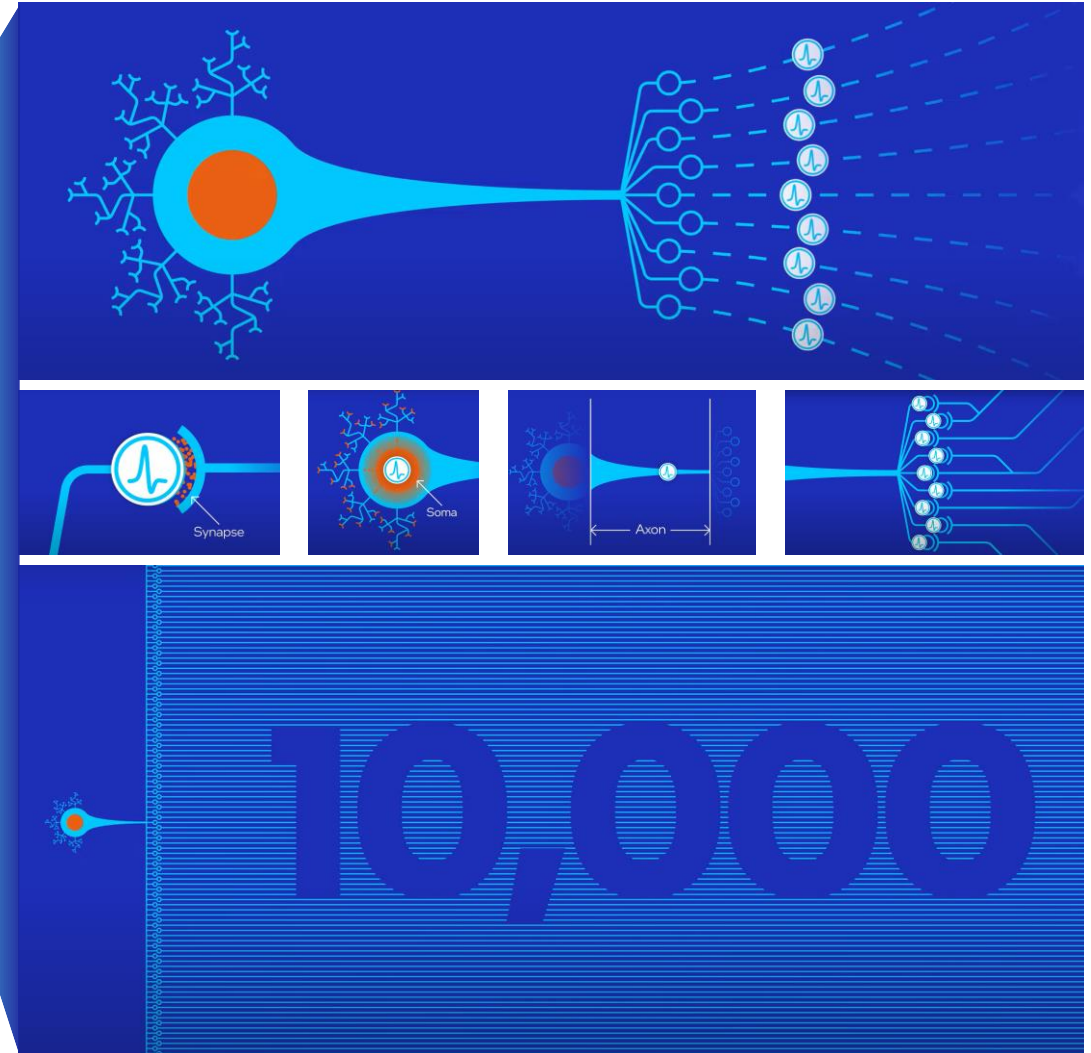


Brain
Power: 50 mW
Mass: 2.2 grams

Navigates and learns
unknown environments
at 35 km/h

Can learn to speak
English words

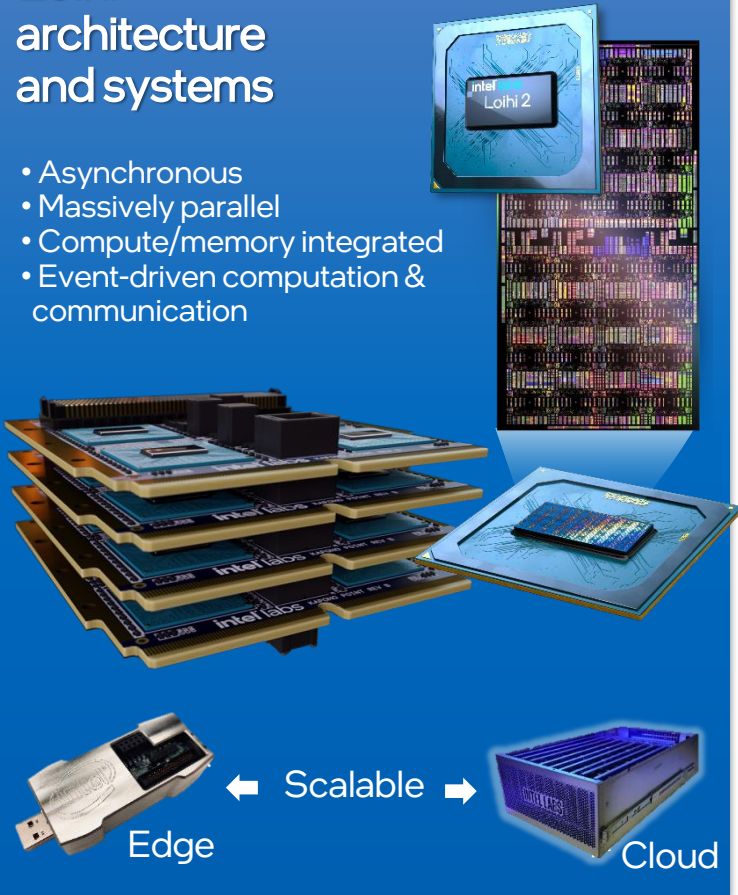
Can learn to
manipulate cups
for drinking



Pioneering a new class of computer architecture

Loihi architecture and systems

- Asynchronous
- Massively parallel
- Compute/memory integrated
- Event-driven computation & communication



SW Products

github.com/lava-nc

Applications, Products, Services

lava-optim library

DL Optim VSA ...

Algorithm libraries

LAVA Software Framework

- Event-based
- Multi-Paradigm
- Multi-Abstraction
- Multi-Platform
- Open-source

API

Compiler

Runtime

Heterogenous hardware interface



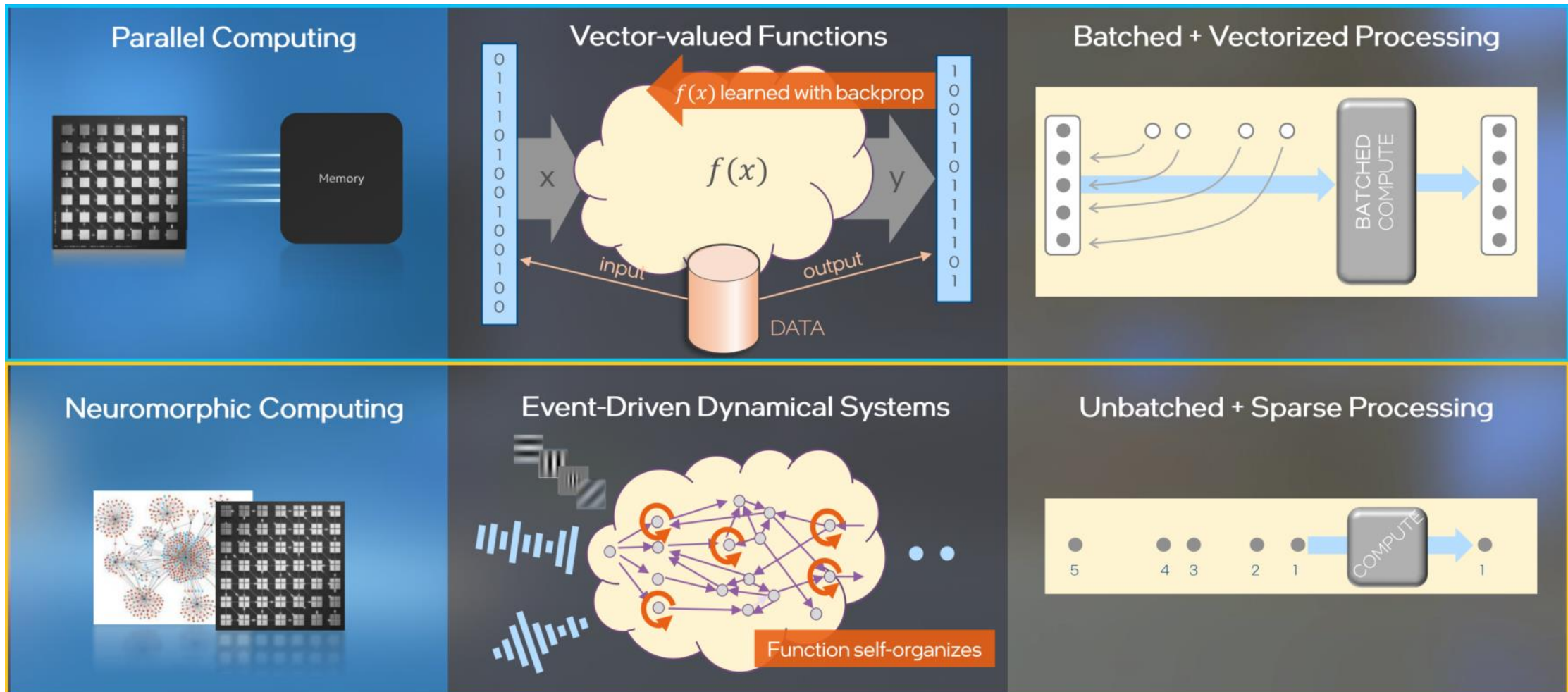
Diverse Neuromorphic Research Community



- Growing community
- Access to Intel neuromorphic systems
- Community-driven workshops
- 20+ publications/year



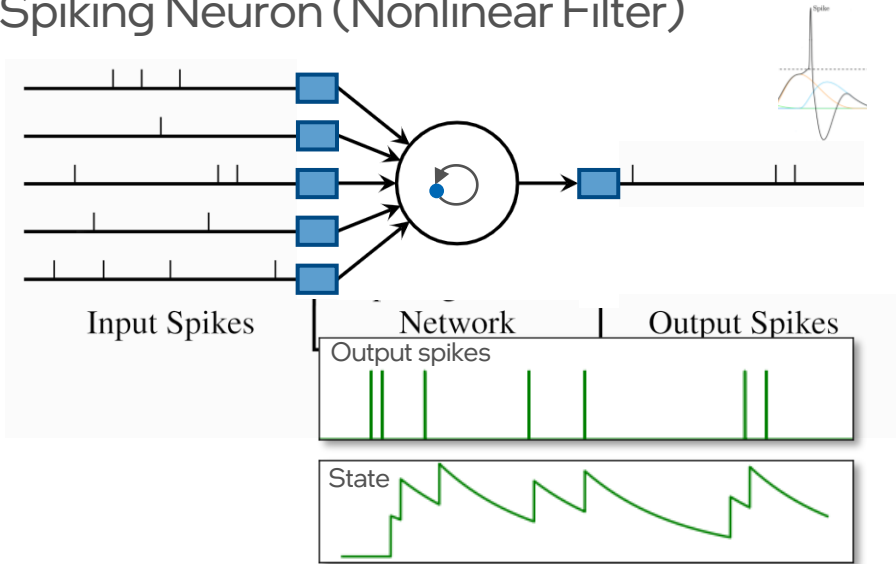
Motivates a fundamentally different kind of computing



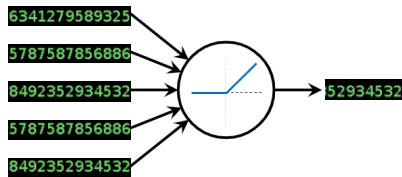
Exploiting dynamics at the neuron level

Maximize computation by minimizing data movement

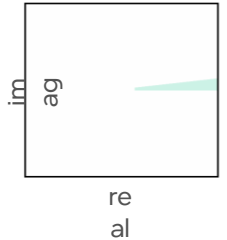
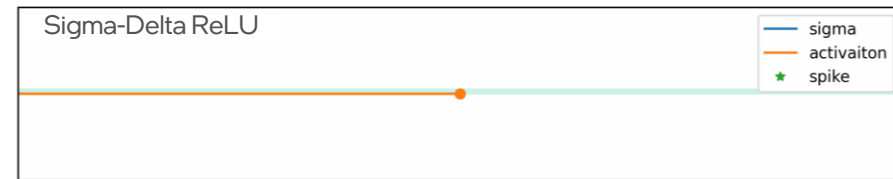
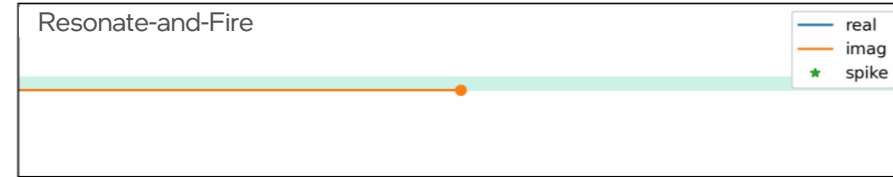
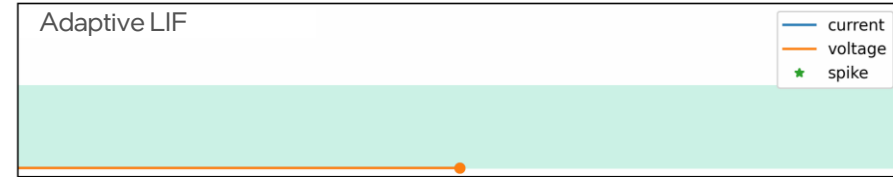
Spiking Neuron (Nonlinear Filter)



Artificial Neuron (Stateless)



Programable spiking dynamical systems



Realized in Loihi

improved in Loihi 2

Compute and memory integrated to spatially embody programmed networks

Temporal neuron models (LIF) to exploit temporal correlation

Spike-based communication to exploit temporal sparsity

Sparse connectivity for efficient dataflow and scalability

On-chip learning without weight movement or data storage

Digital asynchronous implementation for power efficiency, scalability, and fast prototyping

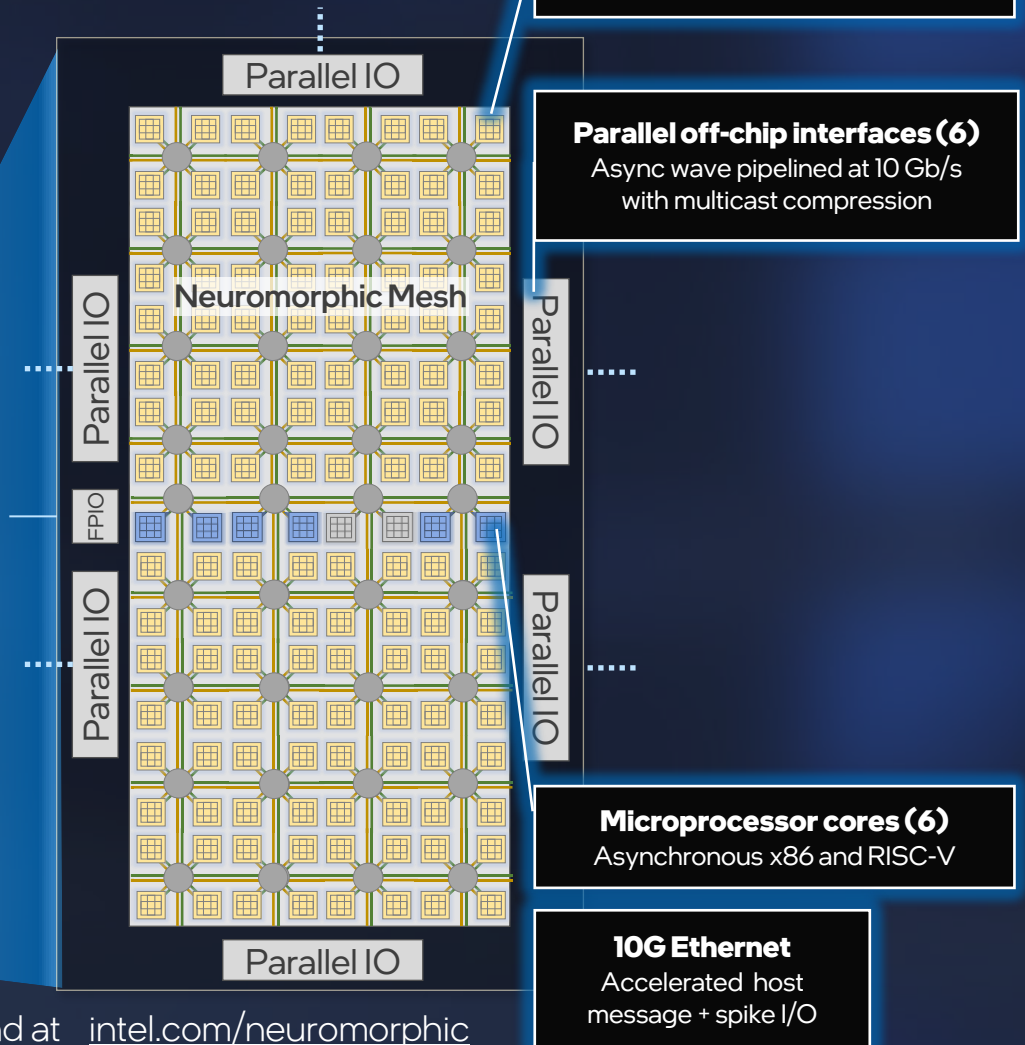
Yet...

No floating-point numbers
No multiply-accumulators
No off-chip DRAM

- Up to 10x faster processing capability*
- Up to 60x more inter-chip bandwidth*
- Up to 1 million neurons with 15x greater resource density*
- Programmable neurons
- Graded spikes
- 3-Factor learning
- 10G Ethernet I/F to host



Loihi 2



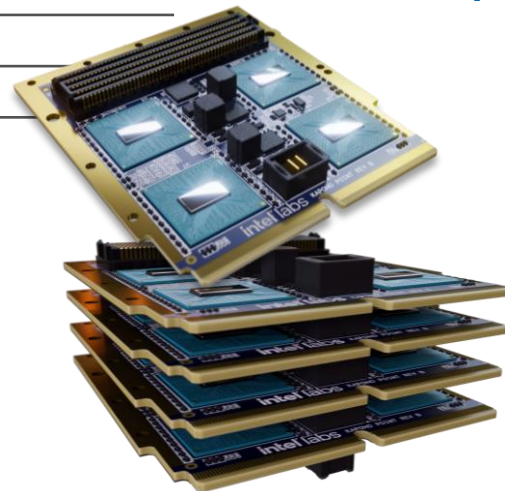
* specs and configuration details can be found at intel.com/neuromorphic

Loihi Systems

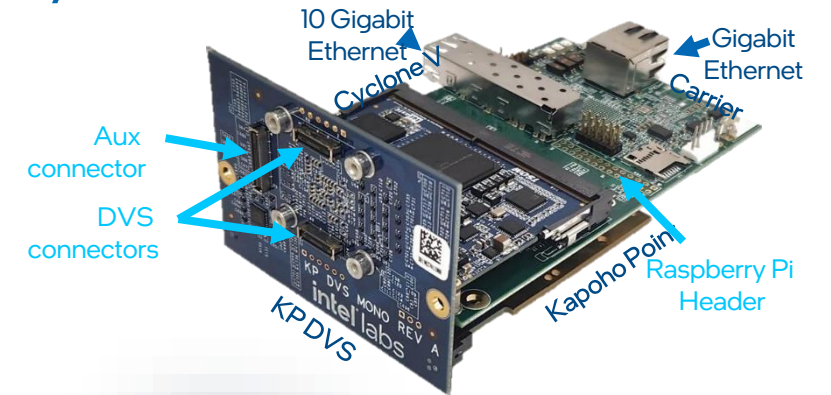
Kapoho Point

Key Properties

Number of chips	8
Max neurons	8.1M
Max synapses	960 M
Interfaces	GbE via host board 10 GbE direct to Loihi MIPI, GPIO, AER, SHS via interface board
Dimensions	79 mm x 69 mm x 15 mm
Weight	108g
Power supply	12 V
Typical Power	2.4 - 3.6W at 1ms timesteps*



Kapoho Point System

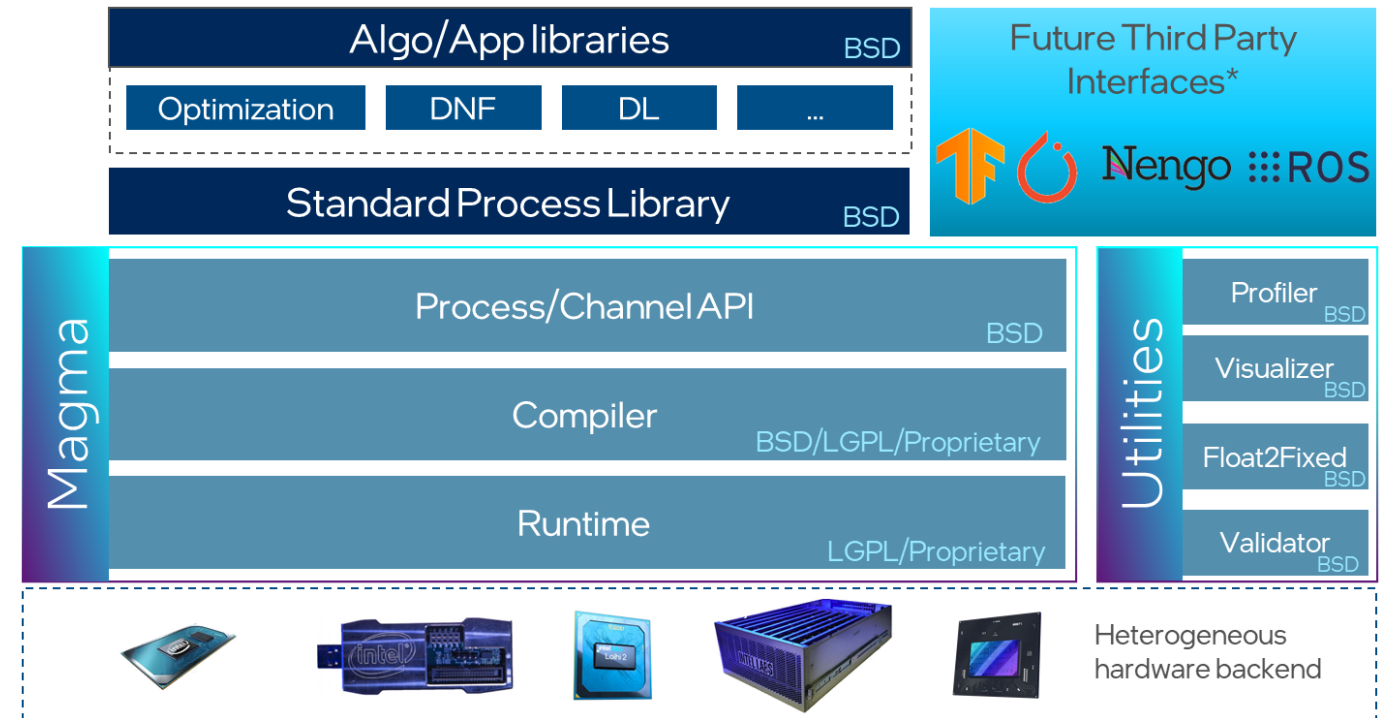


Pohoiki Springs



Lava open-source development framework

- Seeded by Intel but open-source and increasingly community-driven
- Full SW stack from runtime, to compiler, to powerful algorithm/application libraries
- Brain-inspired programming model for heterogeneous HW
 - Parallel & Asynchronous
 - Event-based computation/communication



Future Third Party Interfaces*

Nengo :: ROS

Mission

- Converge neuromorphic SW development towards open standard
- Make *exotic* neuromorphic systems accessible to non-expert developers
- Accelerate adoption of neuromorphic technologies
- Enable orders of magnitude gains in compute efficiency

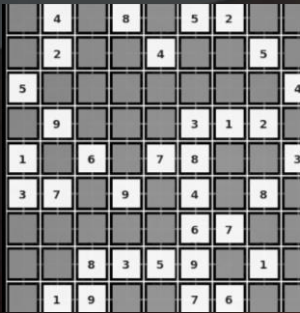
Objective

- Facilitate real-world application development for neuromorphic systems



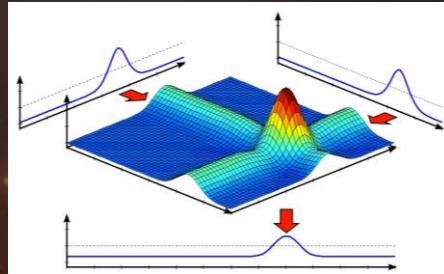
LAVA application libraries

Optimization lava-optimization



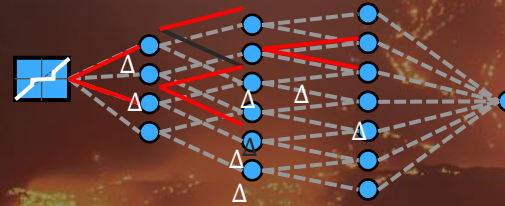
Family of constraint optimization solvers
Today: QP, QUBO
Future: MPC, LCA, ILP, ...
Standalone use or as part of AI applications

Neural Attractors lava-dnf



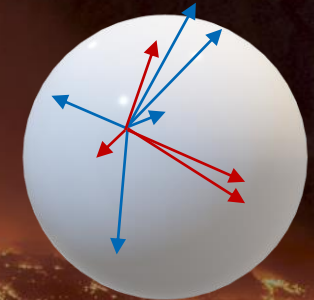
Design models with attractor dynamics
Stabilize temporal data
Selective data processing
Dynamic working memories

Deep Learning lava-dl



Direct & HW-aware training of
event-based DNNs
Rich neuron model library (feed-
forward & recurrent)

Vector Symbolic lava-vs



API for algebraic model
description for VSAs
Library of data types and
operations (composition,
binding, factorization, ...)

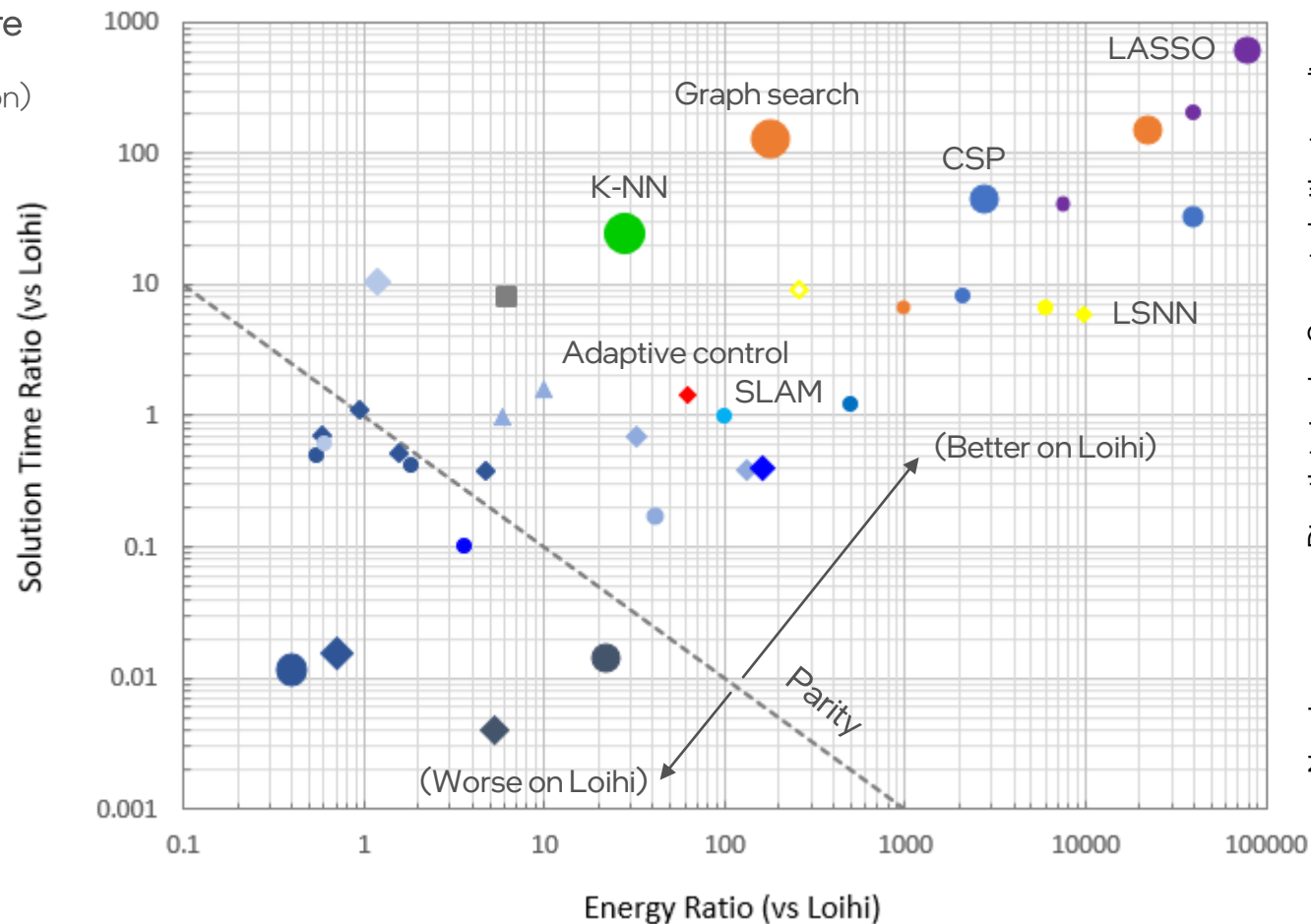
Future directions

- lava-io (sensor/actuator interfaces)
- lava-robotics (control, planning, physical simulator interfaces)
- lava-evolve (evolutionary training methods)
- lava-ui (graphical network creation, visualization, debugging)
- Signal processing
- Off-the-shelf apps (segmentation, tracking, keyword detection, ...)
- Neural simulators (Brian2Lava, ...)

For the right workloads, orders of magnitude gains in latency and energy efficiency are achievable

Reference architecture

- CPU (Intel Core/Xeon)
- ◆ GPU (Nvidia)
- ▲ Movidius (NCS)
- TrueNorth

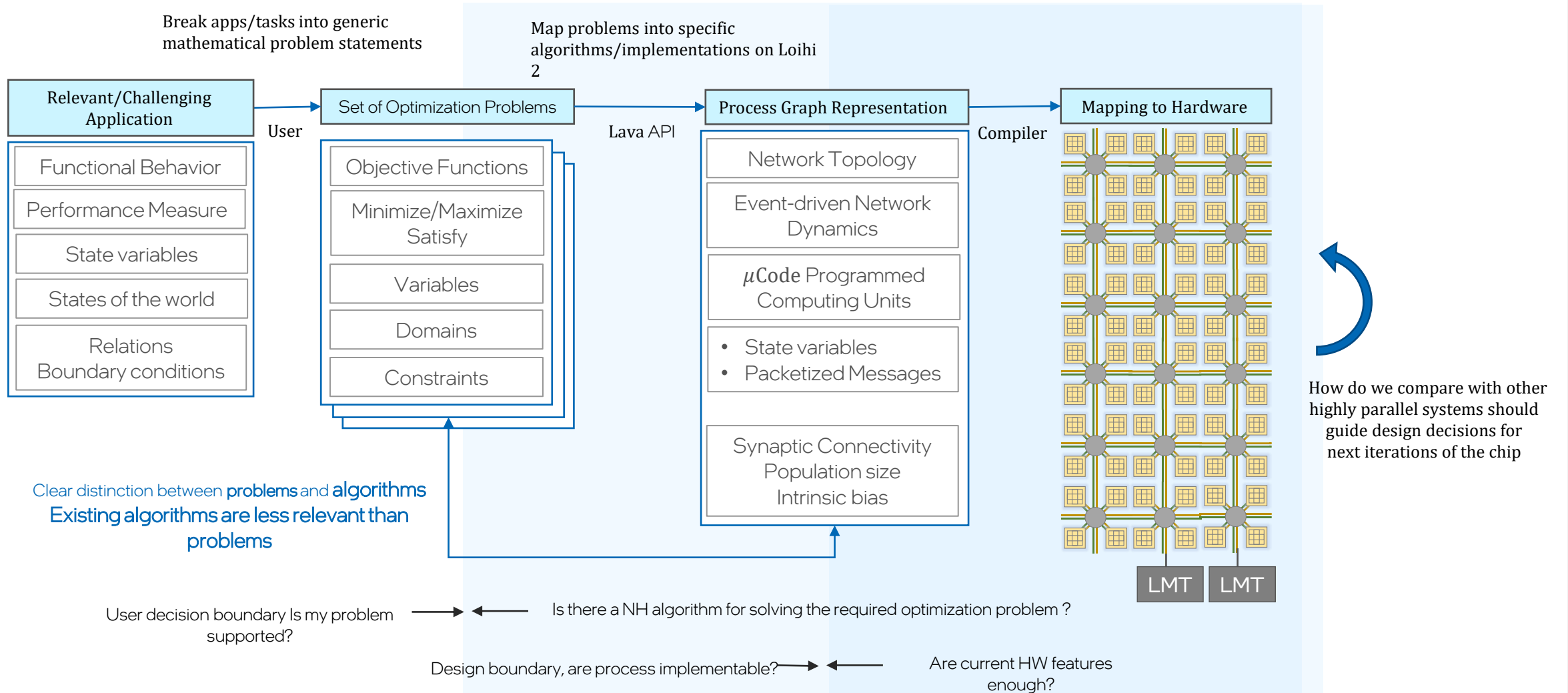


Novel recurrent networks give the best gains

- | | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Converted with rate coding | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● [Task 1] Keyword Spotter DNN ● [Task 1] Keyword spotting (batch size > 1) ● [Task 2] Image retrieval (batch size 1) ● [Task 2] Image retrieval (batch size > 1) ● [Task 3] Image Segmentation ● [Task 4] CIFAR-10 classification |
| Directly trained | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ [Task 5] DVS gesture recognition vs TrueNorth ● [Task 6] Visual-tactile sensing (SLAYER) ● [Task 7] Seq MNIST (batch size 1) ○ [Task 7] Seq MNIST (batch size 64) |
| Novel | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ [Task 8] Adaptive arm controller (PES) ● [Task 9] LASSO ● [Task 10] 1D SLAM ● [Task 11] k-NN GIST 1M ● [Task 12] Graph search ● [Task 13] Constraint Satisfaction |
- Unit energy delay product (EDP) ratio

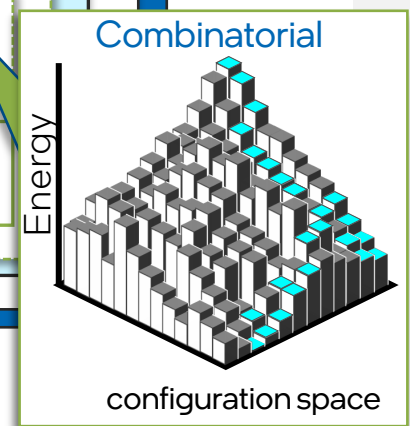
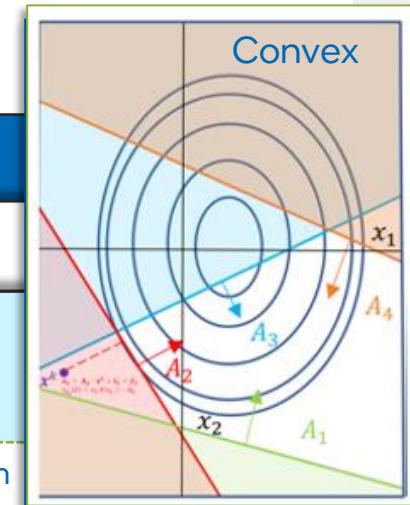
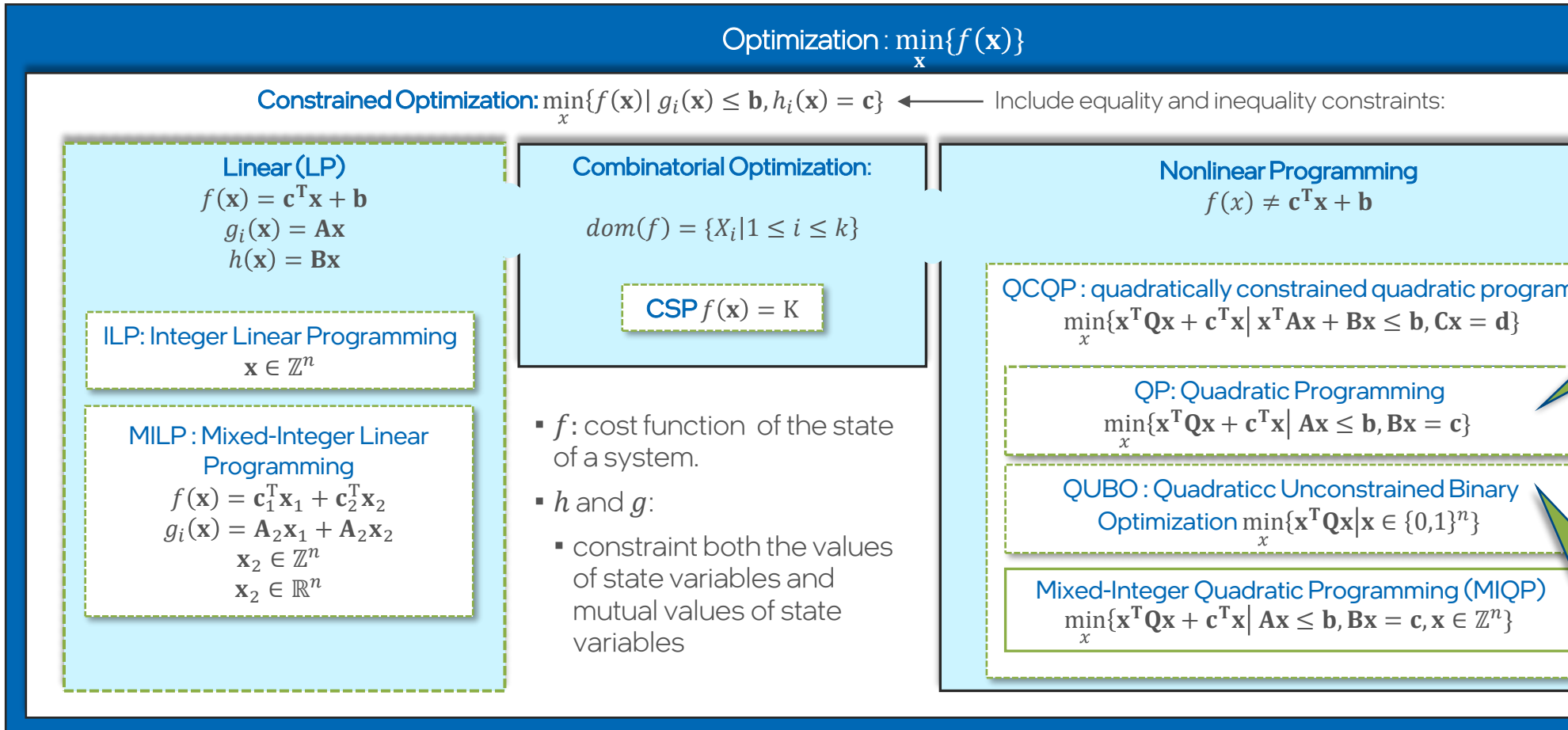
M. Davies et al, "Advancing Neuromorphic Computing With Loihi: A Survey of Results and Outlook," Proc. IEEE, 2021. Results may vary.

Lava-optimization, from application to hardware



Taxonomy of optimization problems we envision to support

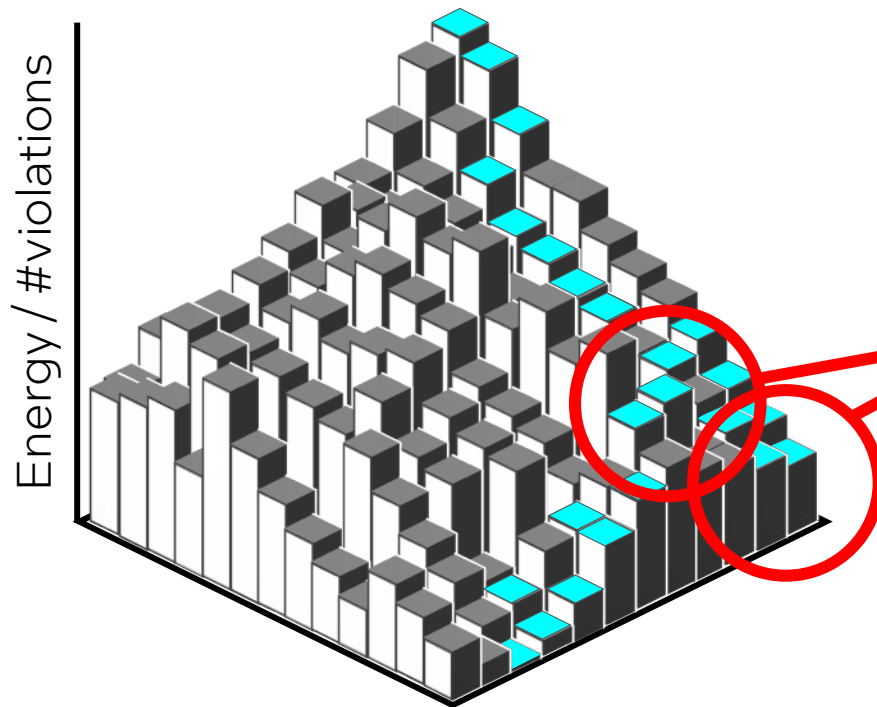
Consider arbitrary functions $f: X \mapsto \mathbb{R}^n$, $g: Y \mapsto \mathbb{R}^m$ and $h: Z \mapsto \mathbb{R}^q$.



$K \mapsto$ Constant; $\mathbf{c} \mapsto$ First order coefficients vector; $\mathbf{Q} \mapsto$ second order coefficients matrix

The Loihi 2 QUBO solver

Accelerated by asynchronous parallelism

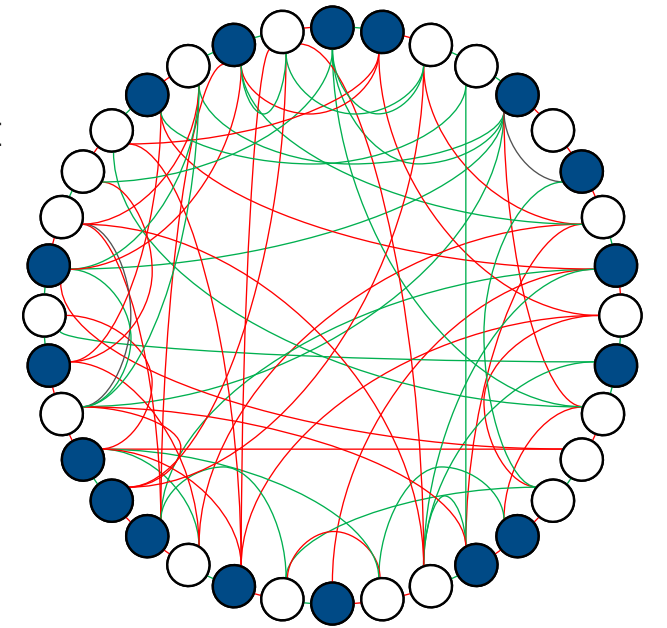


Neural dynamics descend the gradient

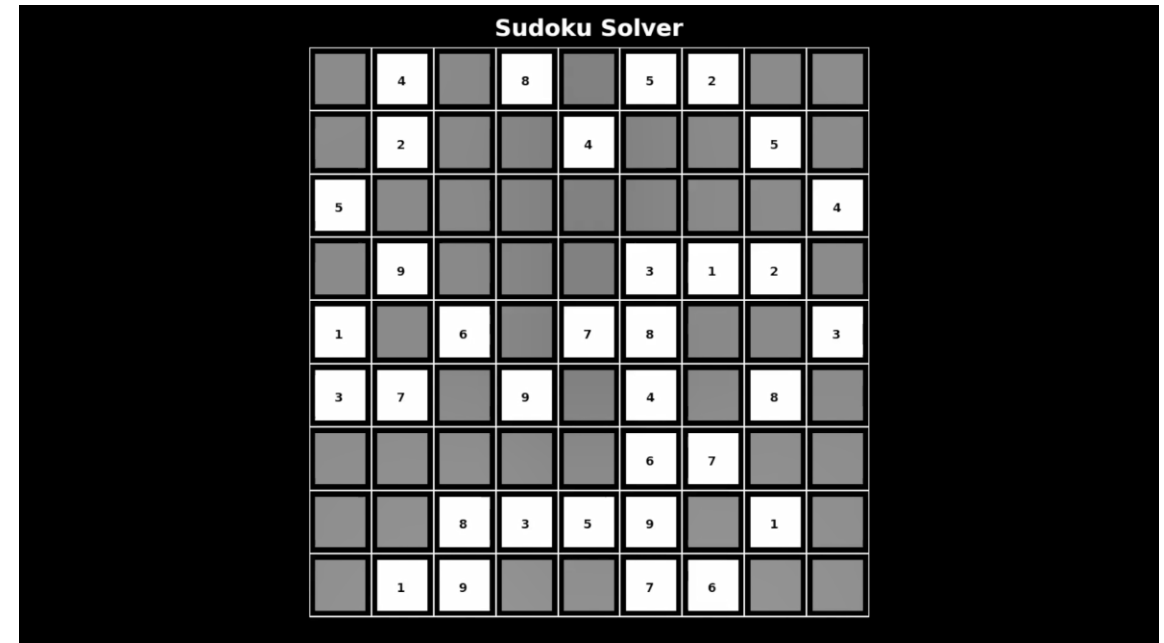
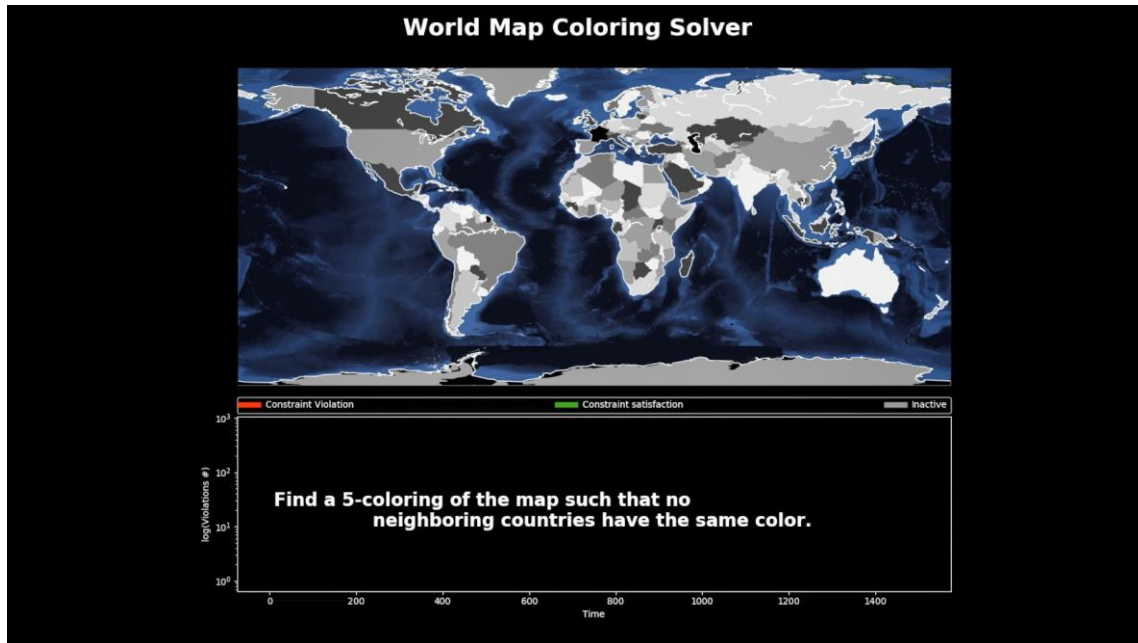
Local minimum escaped by stochastic spiking dynamics

Efficient descent due to massively parallel, asynchronous neuromorphic computing architecture

Neuron configuration space



Examples: map coloring and sudoku

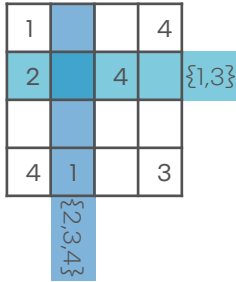


Loihi outperforms standard optimization solvers by orders of magnitude

CSP (Latin Square)

Workload:

Each number occurs exactly once per column/row



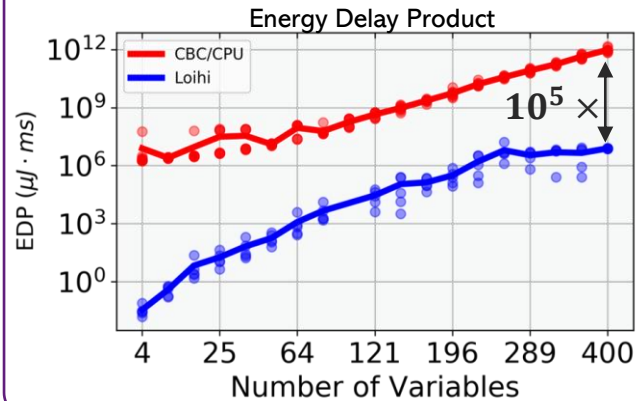
Solving a 20x20 Latin Square problem:

```

1 #Define the problem
2 size = 20
3 latin_squares = translateLatinSquareToCsp(size=size)
4
5 #Instantiate a solver for the optimization workload.
6 csp_solver = CspSolver(problem=latin_squares)
7
8 # Solve the problem.
9 solution = csp_solver.solve()
    
```

Relevance:

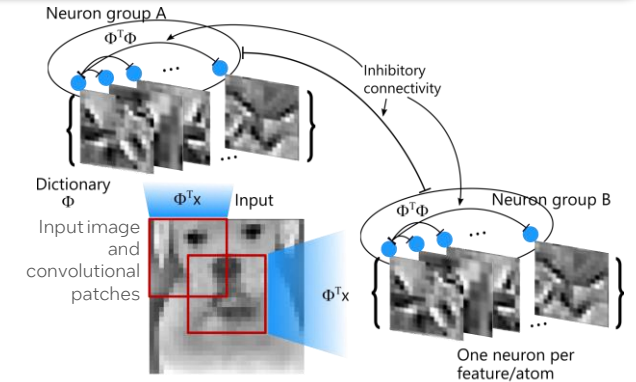
- Proof-of-principle
- NP complete



Quadratic Programming (Convolutional Sparse Coding)

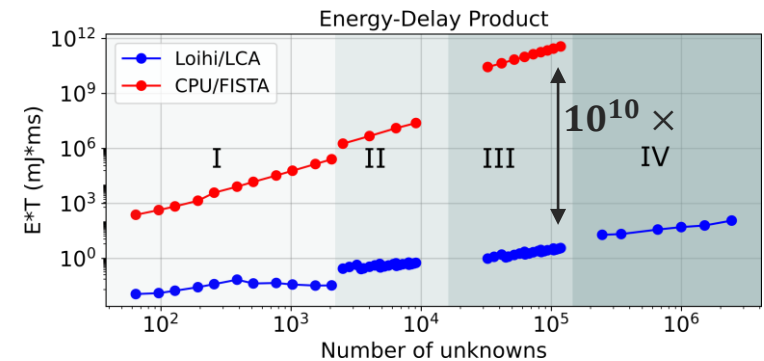
Workload:

Find sparse representation of data given overcomplete features dictionary



Relevance:

Compression of information required to store a dataset



For details see: Davies, Mike, et al. "Advancing neuromorphic computing with Loihi: A survey of results and outlook." Proceedings of the IEEE 109.5 (2021): 911-934

Loihi: Nahuku board running NxSDK 0.95 with an Intel Core i7-9700K host with 128GB RAM, running Ubuntu 16.04.6 LTS
CBC/CPU: Intel Core i7-9700K; and RAM: 128 GB, running Ubuntu 16.04.6 LTS running CBC (www.coin-or.org/projects)

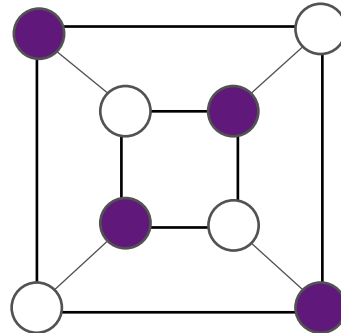
Loihi: Wolf Mountain board with NxSDK v0.75
FISTA/CPU: Intel Core i7-4790 3.6-GHz w/ 32-GB RAM, BIOS: AMI F5. OS: Ubuntu 16.04 with Hyper Threading disabled, running SPAMS solver for FISTA (<http://spams-devel.gforge.inria.fr>)

Loihi outperforms standard optimization solvers by orders of magnitude

QUBO (Maximum Independent Set)

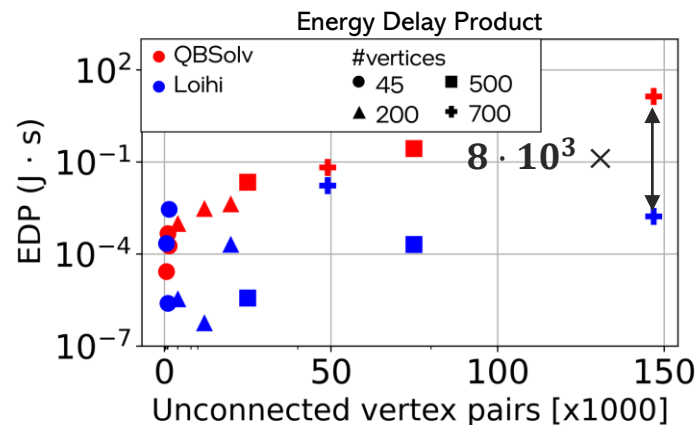
Workload:

Find largest set of unconnected vertices



Relevance:

- Target of SOTA quantum annealing approaches
- NP hard



Loihi: Nahuku board running NxSDK 0.95 with an Intel Core i7-9700K host with 128GB RAM, running Ubuntu 16.04.6 LTS
 QUBO-QBSolv/CPU: benchmarks ran on an Intel Xeon CPU E5-2699 v3 @ 2.30GHz with 32GB DRAM (<https://github.com/dwavesystems/qbsolv>)
 ILP-CPU: Commercial solver running on Linux64 with 16 processor cores.

Integer Linear Programming (Train Scheduling)

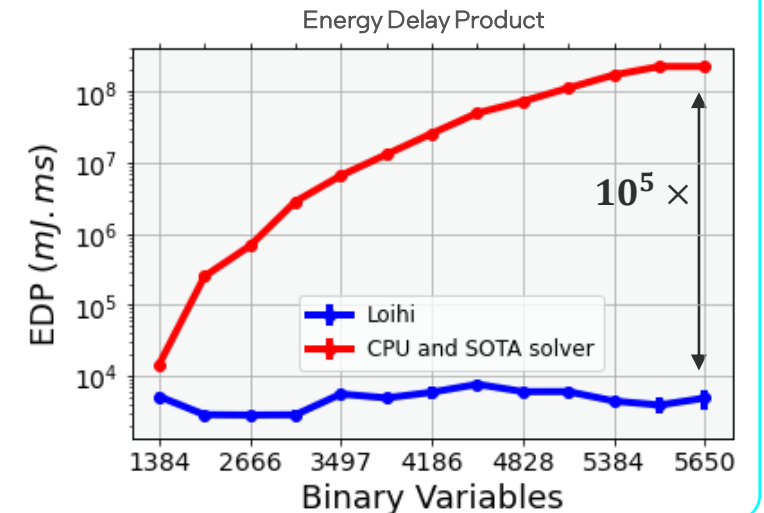
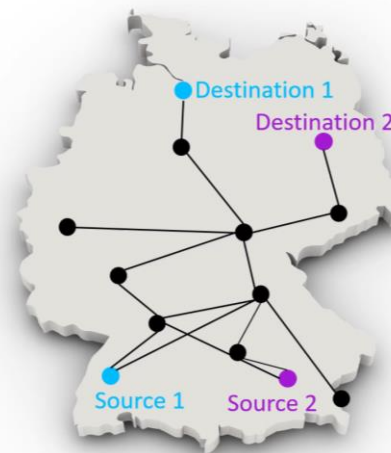
In collaboration with:

Workload:

Find the largest possible set of route assignments, given customer requests and railway, time and train constraints.

Relevance:

- Large-scale, real-world use case
- Applicable to resource allocation in warehouses and production lines.

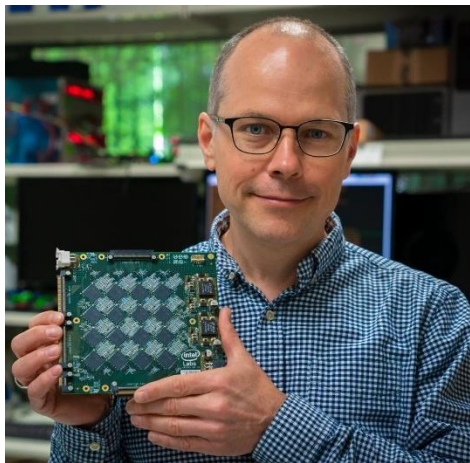


INRC community

Launched five years ago by Intel Labs

Our mission: Pioneer a new programmable computing technology inspired by a modern understanding of the brain

Access to Intel neuromorphic systems and tools



Community-driven workshops and training events



Producing 20+ publications per year



Growing community with 180+ member groups



Image: intel.com/content/www/us/en/research/neuromorphic-community.html

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Backup

Additional information for Q/A

Summary

Optimization problems are ubiquitous in a wide range of technological and industrial applications, from efficient scheduling of package delivery to robotic control to drug discovery. Order of magnitude improvements in the energy efficiency of solving optimization problems have thus the potential to make computing systems more sustainable and environmentally friendly.

In this talk, I will present optimization algorithms and solvers developed for Intel's Loihi research chip, an event-driven, massively and fine-grained parallel hardware inspired by the efficiency of the neural dynamics of biological brains (neuromorphic). Benchmarking results on those solvers show how Loihi enables a competitively fast solution to constraint satisfaction, quadratic unconstrained binary optimization and quadratic programming problems, with orders-of-magnitude advantage in energy consumption when compared with conventional solvers running on standard CPU architectures.

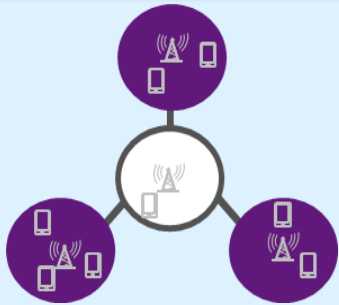
These neuromorphic algorithms take the form of a network of distributed discrete dynamical systems that communicate asynchronously through small binary or integer messages. The global dynamics of such event-driven algorithms explore the state space defined by the input problem simultaneously minimizing a quantity defined by the problem's objective function and maximizing the satisfaction of requirements defined by the problem constraints. The spatiotemporal sparsity resulting from such a computing paradigm is what enables the remarkable energy efficiency of neuromorphic optimization

Application relevance

Motivation

Applications of MIS

Resource allocation



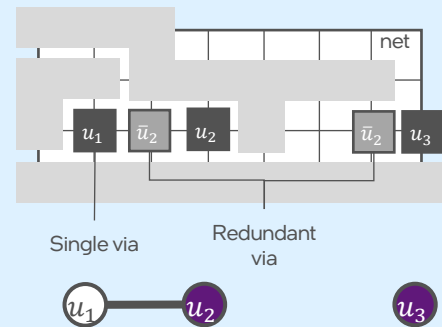
In wireless communication:

Access points and sensors are grouped into small networks.

MIS divides the networks into interference-free iso-frequency groups.

Zhou, J., et al., Q. Efficient graph-based resource allocation scheme using maximal independent set for randomly-deployed small star networks. *Sensors* 17, 2553 (2017).

Intra-chip communication



In chip design:

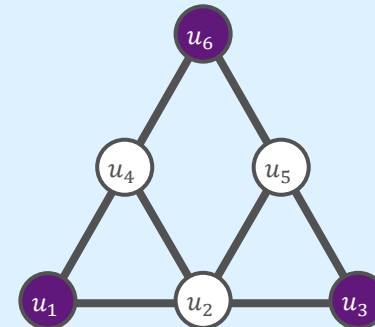
A via connects two adjacent net segments.

Redundant vias are inserted to tolerate single via failures.

The MIS determines the most reliable chip design with the maximum number of redundant vias.

Lee, K. Y. & Wang, T. C. Post-routing redundant via insertion for yield/reliability improvement. In *Proceedings of the 2006 Asia and South Pacific Design Automation Conference*, 303–308, 2006.

Error-correcting code



In coding theory:

Binary vector (vertices) are joined by an edge if both vectors may end up in the same state due to errors e.g., deletion or transposition of bits.

The MIS describes the largest code that is robust to such errors.

Butenko, S., et al., Finding maximum independent sets in graphs arising from coding theory. *Proceedings of the 17th ACM Symposium on Applied Computing*, 542–546, 2002.

Hardware accelerators

Hardware accelerators for MIS are subject to substantial research efforts due to the large industrial need

Ebadi, S., et al., Quantum optimization of maximum independent set using Rydberg atom arrays. *Science*, 376, 6598, 2022.

Mallick, A., et al., Using synchronized oscillators to compute the maximum independent set. *Nature Communications*, 11, 2020.

Further commercial applications

- Portfolio optimization
- Network immunization
- Ad-hoc networks
- Telecommunication loss networks
- Incremental store placement
- Task scheduling

Wurtz, J., et al., Industry applications of neutral-atom quantum computing solving independent set problems. *arXiv:2205.08500v1*, 2022.

Butenko, S. *Maximum Independent Set and related problems with applications*, 2003.

Taxonomy of optimization problems

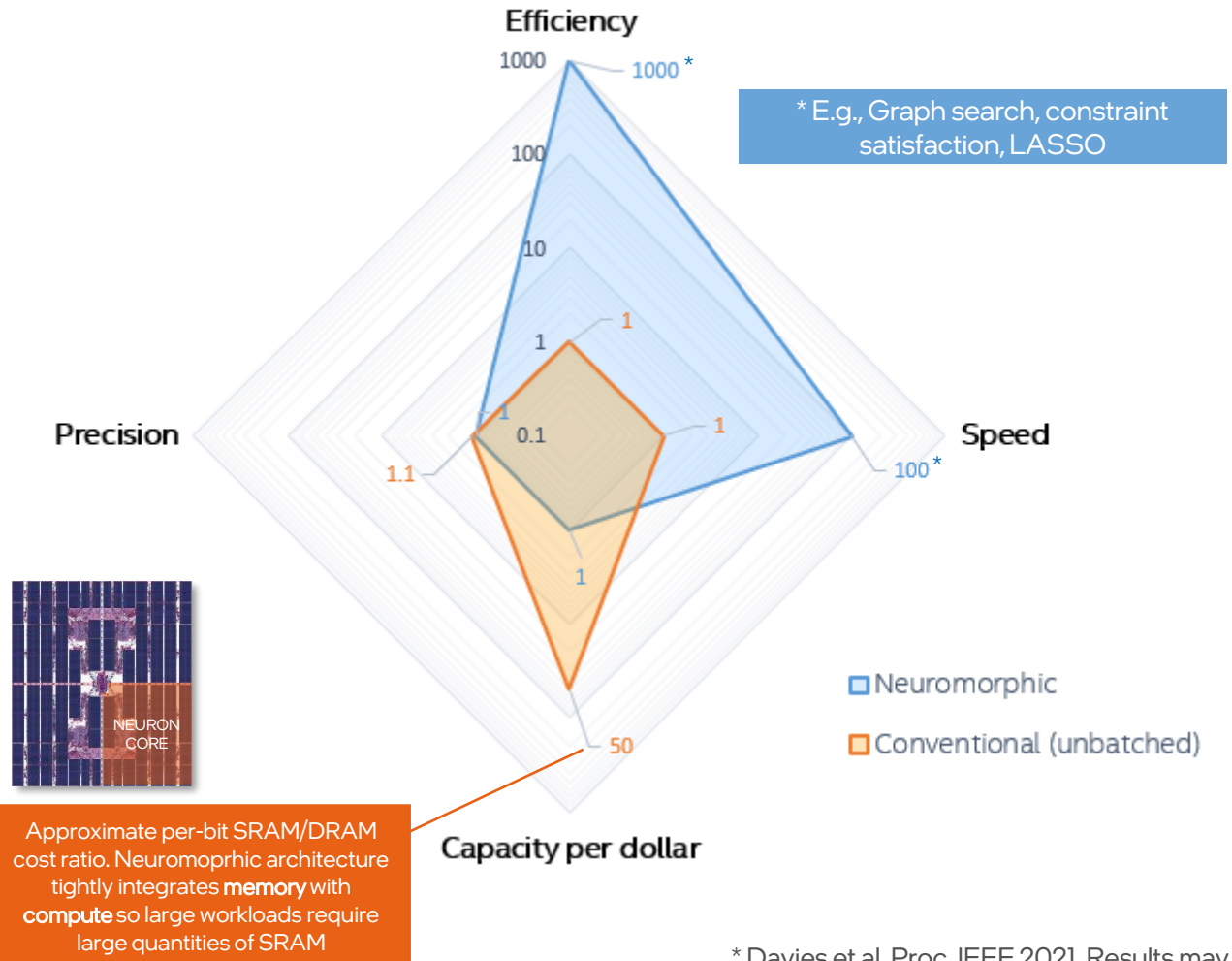
Problem space

Loihi architecture and systems

Brain-inspired computing

Orders of magnitude gains are in reach

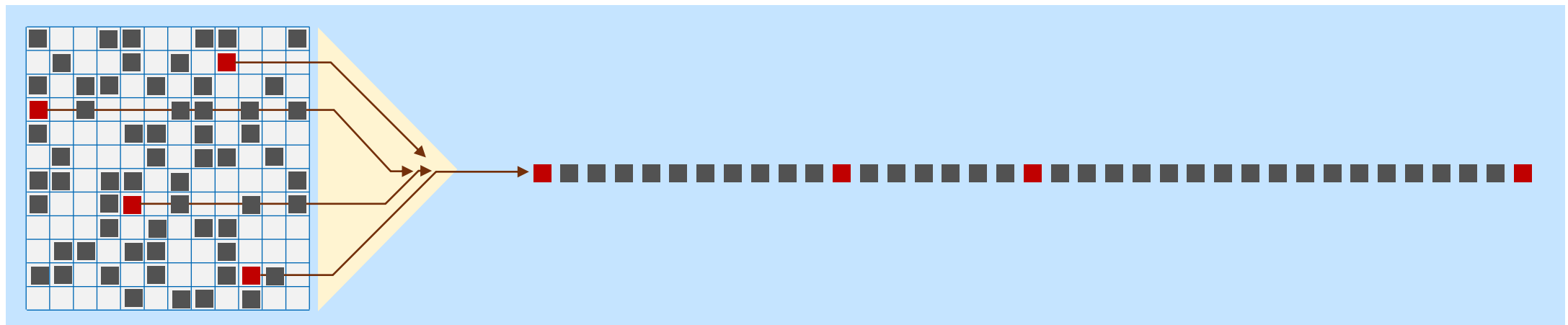
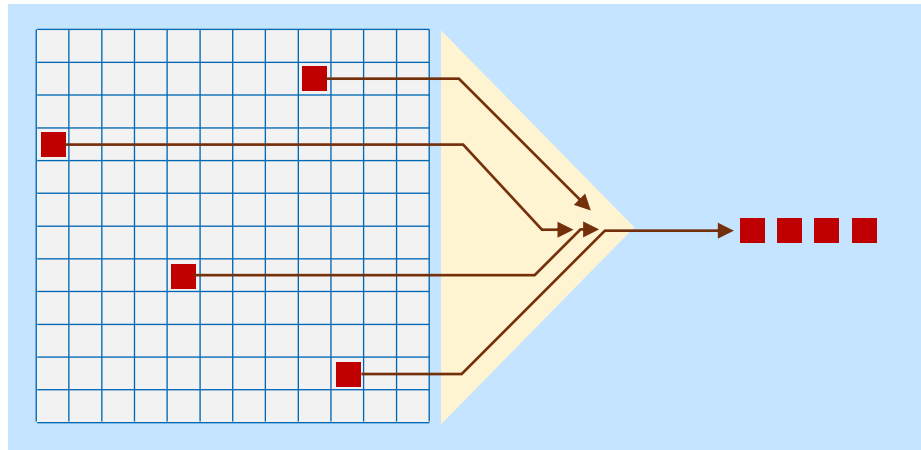
- In **energy efficiency**
 - In **speed of processing data** – especially signals arriving in real time
 - In the **data efficiency** of learning and adaptation
 - With **programmability** to span a **wide range of workloads** and scales
-
- Near term progress depends on **algorithmic and programming maturity**
 - Long term, we will need to **reduce silicon cost with process technology innovations**



* Davies et al, Proc. IEEE 2021. Results may vary.

Exploiting sparse, asynchronous communication

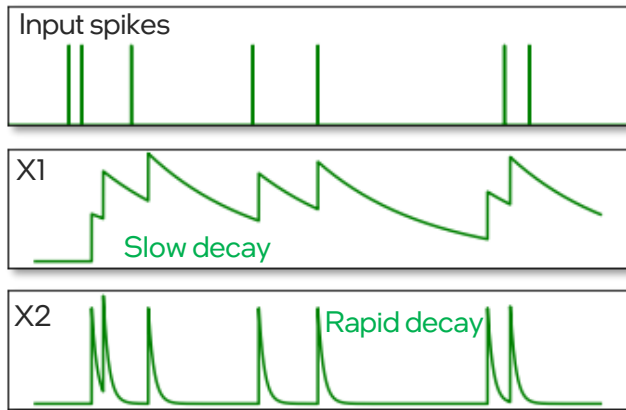
Fast and efficient, whether in brains or in computers



Loihi 2 enhances synaptic plasticity for advanced online learning

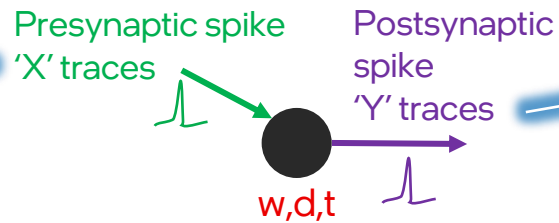
Pre-synaptic Traces (X)

Input spikes exponentially filtered to generate pre-traces
Learning performs time-based pre-trace updates



Microcode Local Learning Rules

Synapse state updates using sum-of-product equations



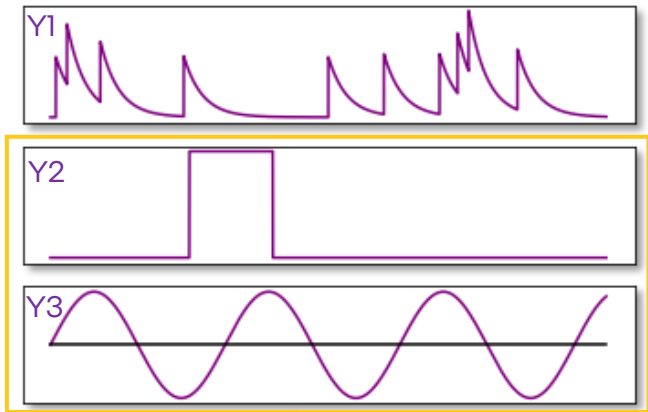
$$w' = w + \sum_{i=1}^{N_P} S_i \prod_{j=1}^{n_i} (V_{i,j} + C_{i,j})$$

Synaptic Variables
Wgt, Delay, Tag
(variable precision)

Variable Dependencies
X0, Y0, X1, Y1, X2, Y2,
Wgt, Delay, Tag, etc.

Post-Synaptic Traces (Y)

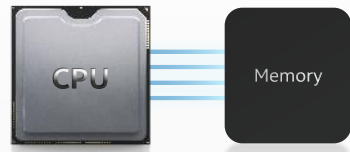
Loihi 1: LIF filters output spikes to generate traces



Loihi 2 neuron microcode can write arbitrary signed values to post-traces ("third factors")

Neuromorphic hardware, a new class of computer architecture

Standard Computing



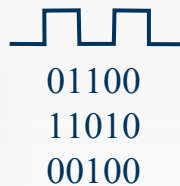
**PROGRAMMING BY
ENCODING ALGORITHMS**

**SYNCHRONOUS
CLOCKING**

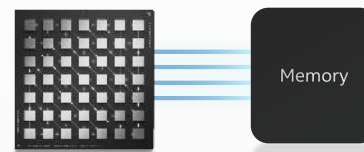
**SEQUENTIAL THREADS
OF CONTROL**

```
if X then
...
else
...

```



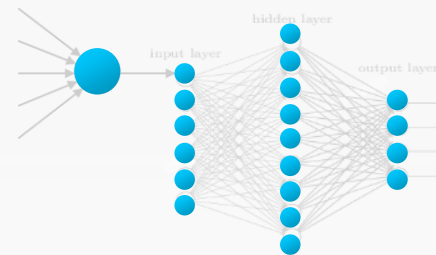
Parallel Computing



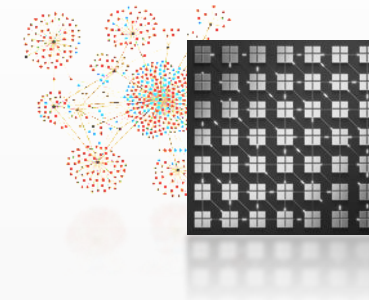
**OFFLINE TRAINING USING
LABELED DATASETS**

**SYNCHRONOUS
CLOCKING**

**PARALLEL
DENSE COMPUTE**



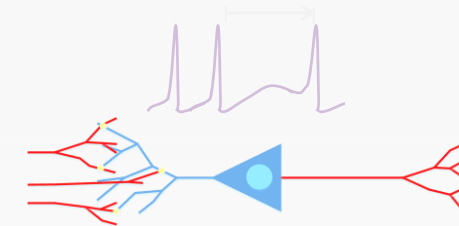
Neuromorphic Computing



**LEARN ON THE FLY THROUGH
NEURON FIRING RULES**

**ASYNCHRONOUS
EVENT-BASED SPIKES**

**PARALLEL
SPARSE COMPUTE**



The Latest Loihi chip: Loihi 2

Generalized Spikes

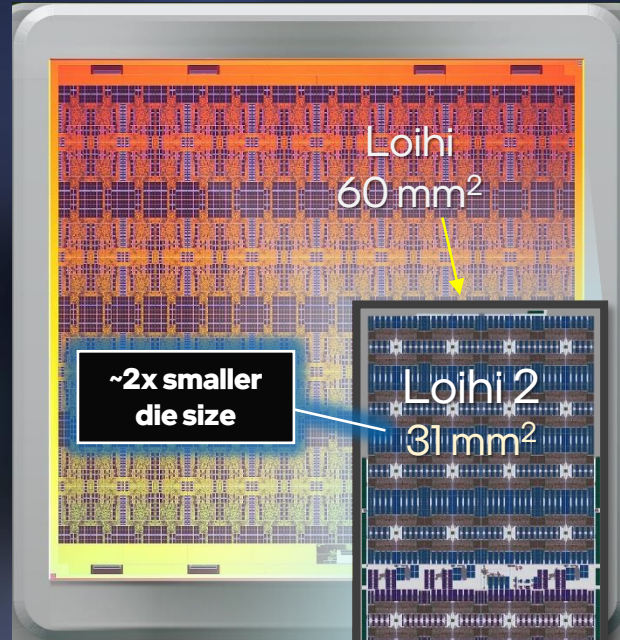
Spikes carry int8 magnitudes for greater workload precision

Programmable Neurons

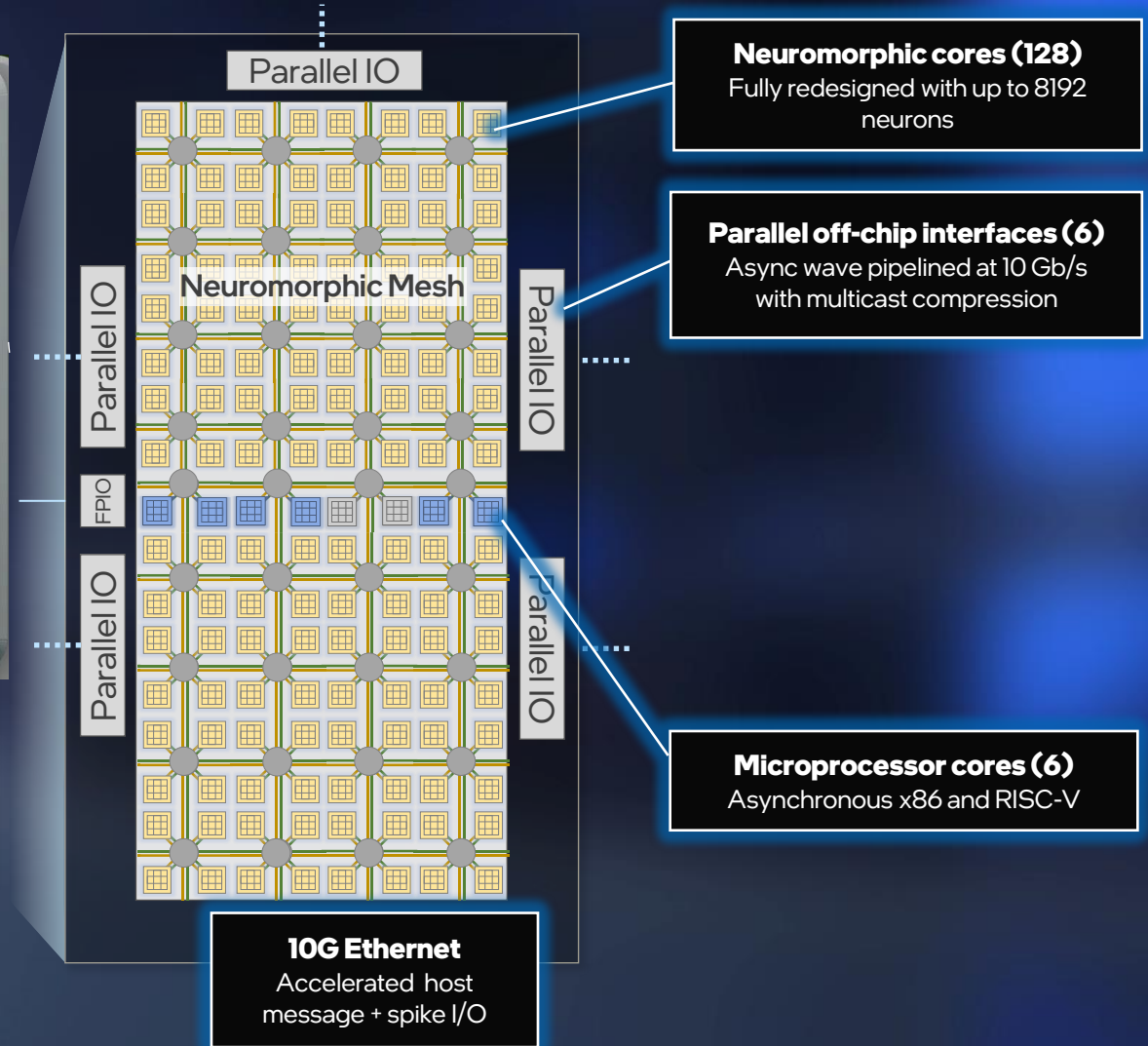
Neuron models described by microcode instructions

Programmable Neurons

Neuron models described by microcode instructions



	Loihi1	Loihi2
Neuron cores:	128	128
Max neurons:	130K	1M
Max synapses:	128M	123M
Max μ P cores:	3	6



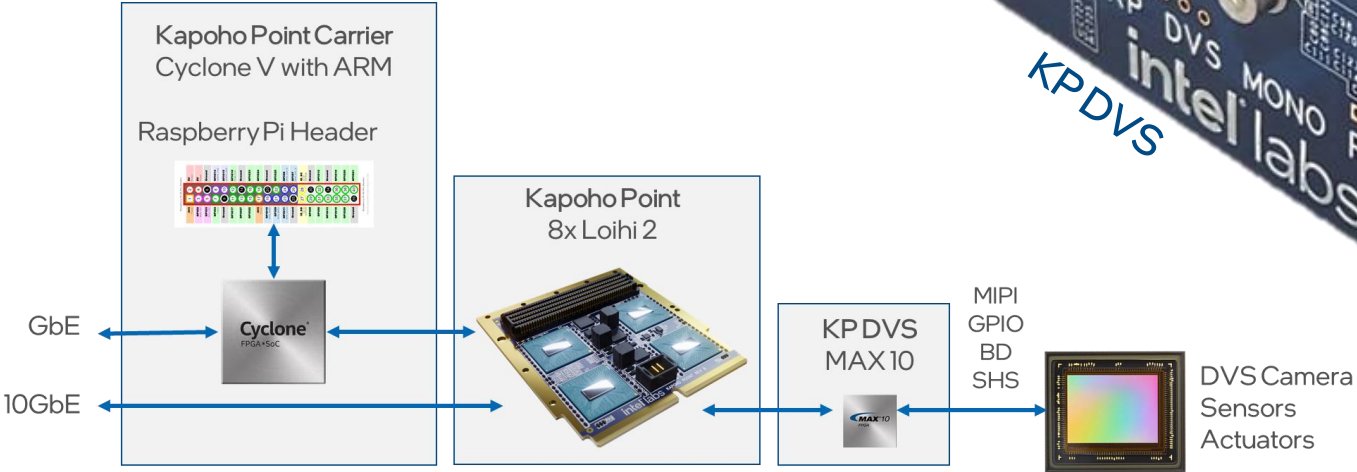
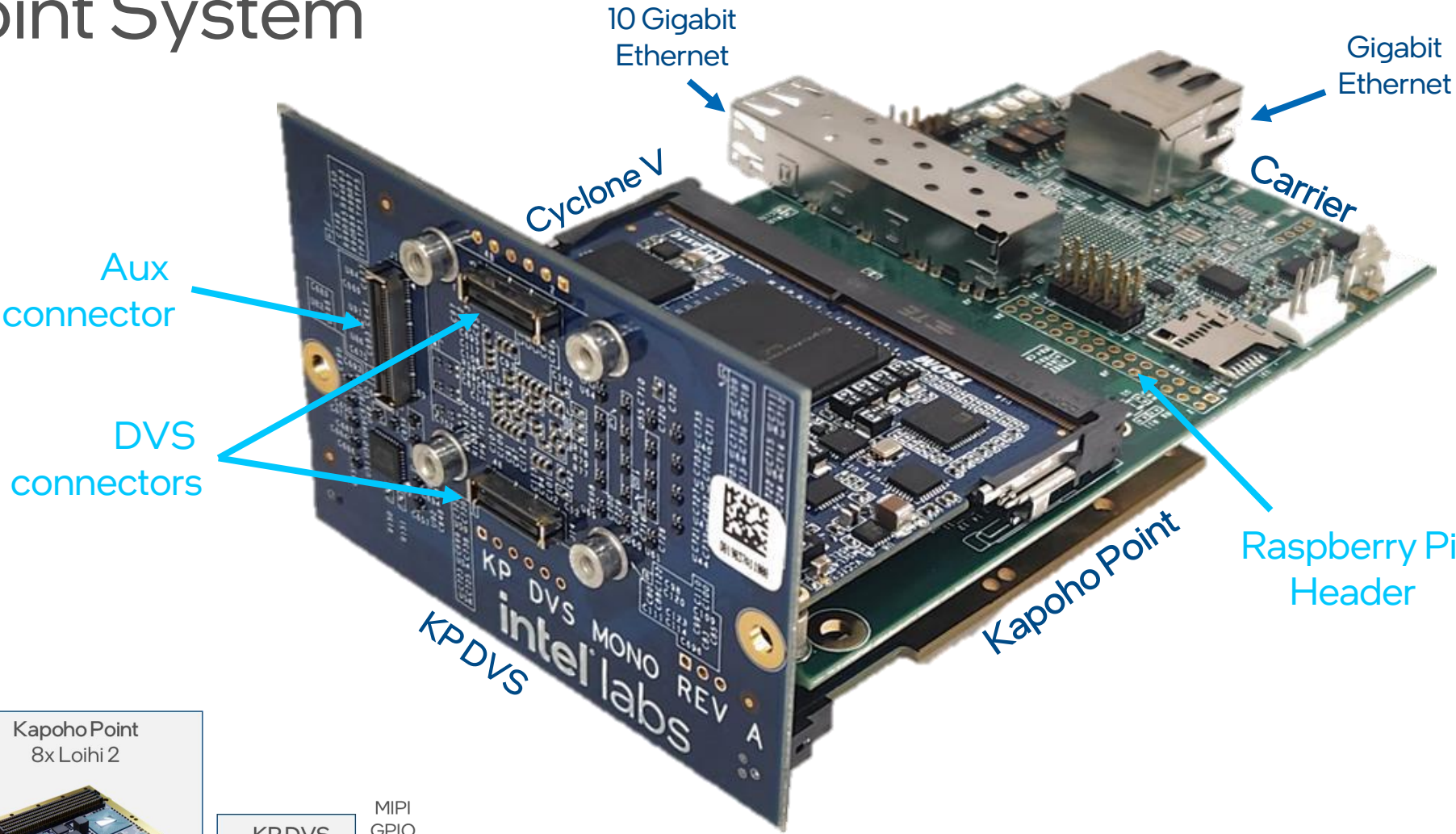
Neuromorphic cores (128)
Fully redesigned with up to 8192 neurons

Parallel off-chip interfaces (6)
Async wave pipelined at 10 Gb/s with multicast compression

Microprocessor cores (6)
Asynchronous x86 and RISC-V

10G Ethernet
Accelerated host message + spike I/O

Kapoho Point System



Graph algorithms are well suited for neuromorphic computing

With large energy-delay product advantage

How does the search for solutions work?

Efficient state space exploration

The Loihi 2 QUBO solver

Advancing by additional algorithmic features

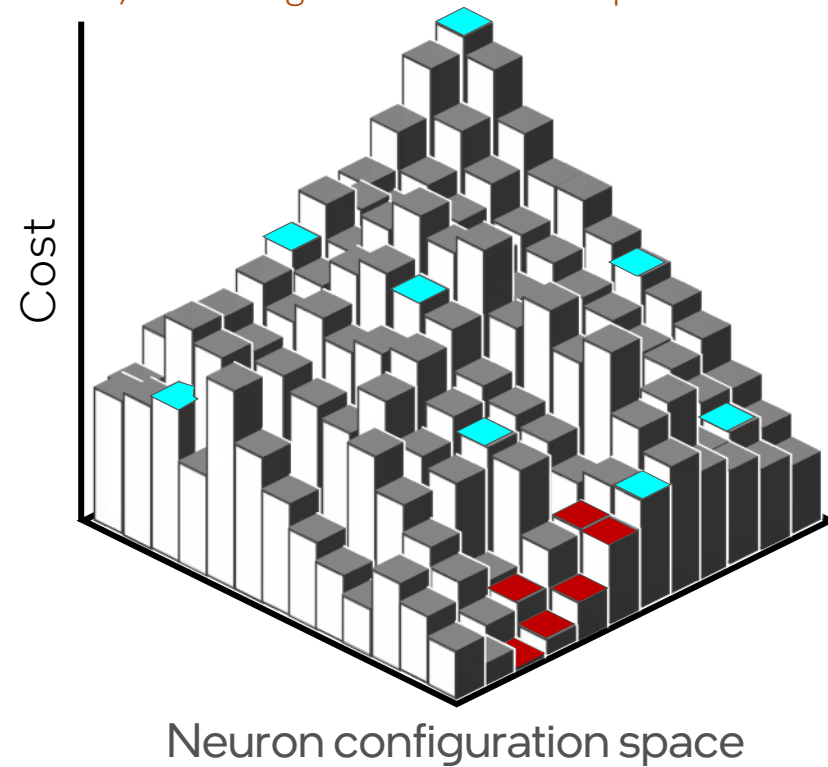
Simulated Annealing

1) explore overall solution space

2) narrowing down the search space

SCIF neuron models

Parallelization

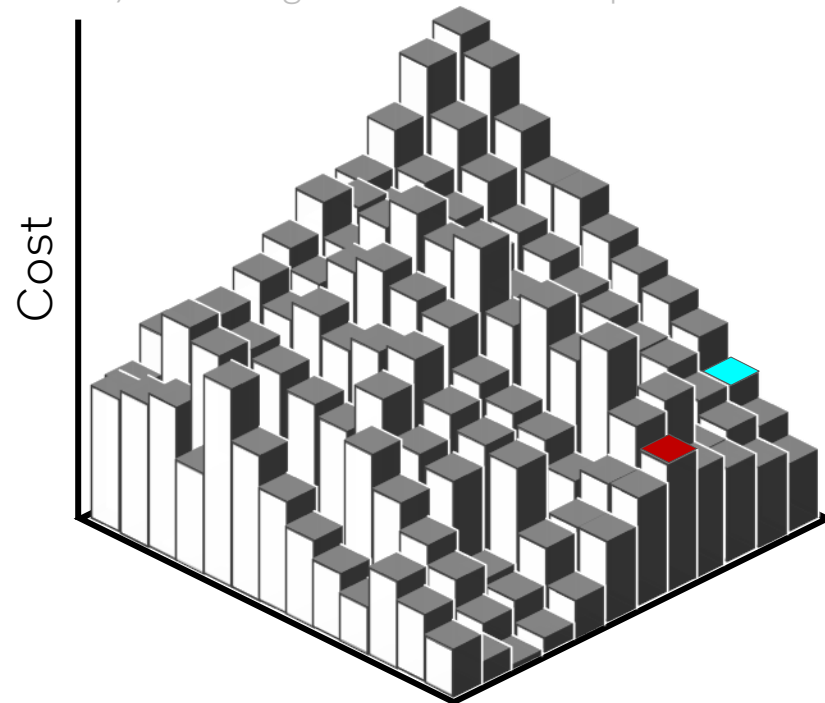


The Loihi 2 QUBO solver

Advancing by additional algorithmic features

Simulated Annealing

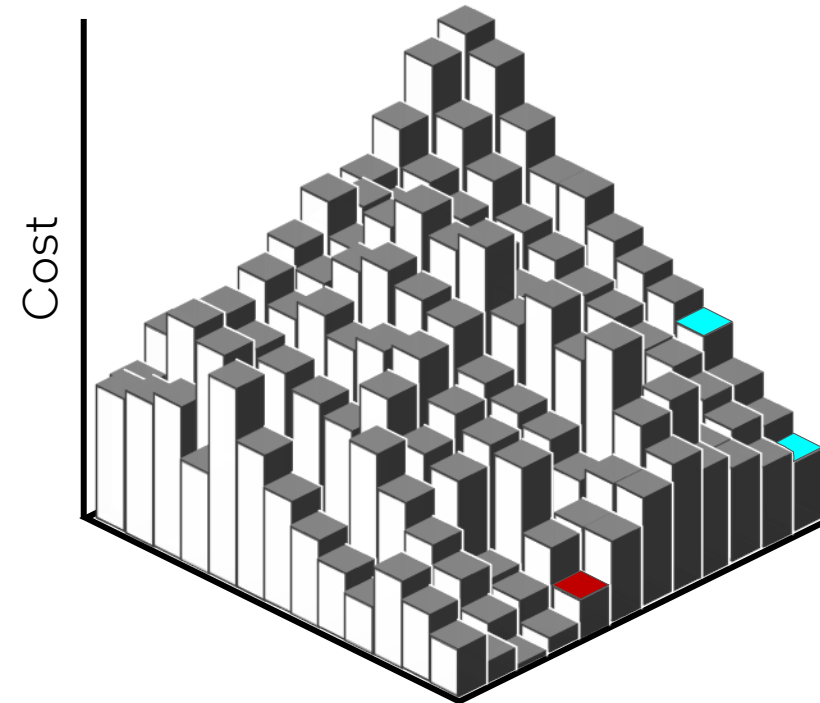
- 1) explore overall solution space
- 2) narrowing down the search space



Neuron configuration space

SCIF neuron models

higher chance to escape local minima



Neuron configuration space

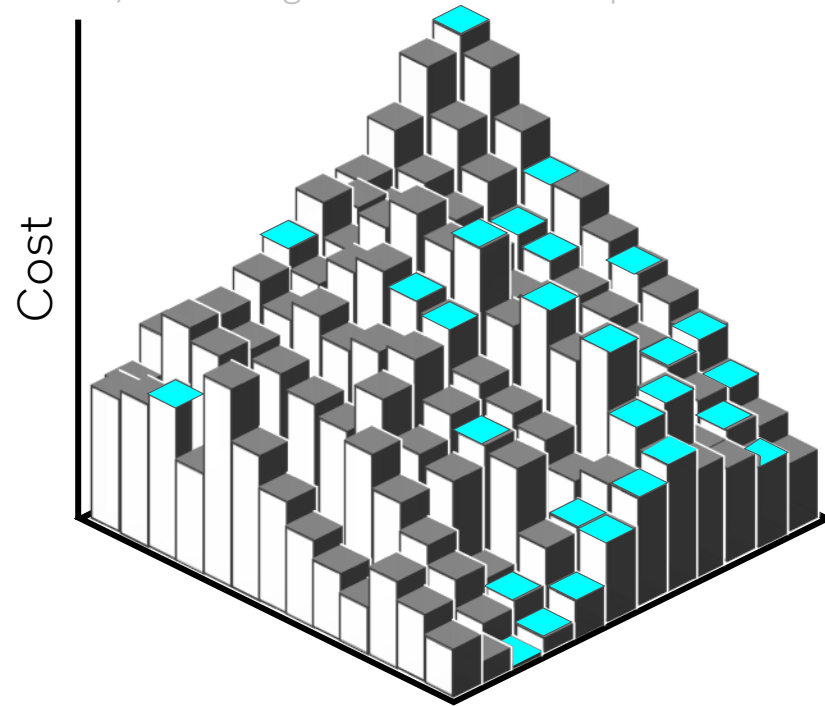
Parallelization

The Loihi 2 QUBO solver

Advancing by additional algorithmic features

Simulated Annealing

- 1) explore overall solution space
- 2) narrowing down the search space



Neuron configuration space

SCIF neuron models

higher chance to escape local minima

Parallelization of ...

- ... multiple workloads
- ... different hyperparameters

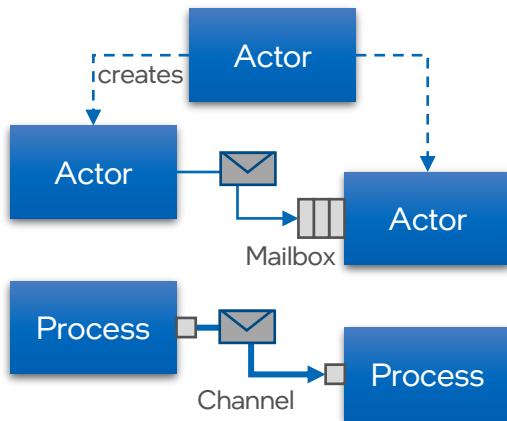
Lava development framework

Open source multi-paradigm software framework for neuromorphic computing

Comparison to other parallel programming models

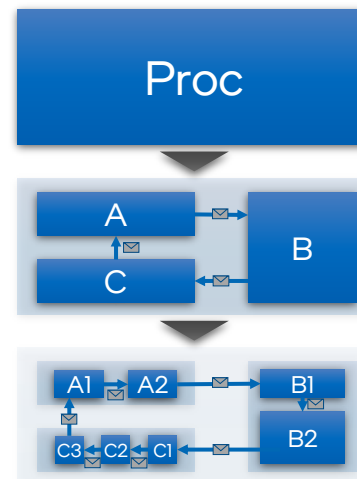
Lava inspired by...

Actor Model¹ Communicating Sequential Processes²



- Asynchronous Processes/Actors
- Private state, no shared memory (safety)
- Direct point-to-point communication
- Message-based communication:
 - Actors:
 - Known destination actors
 - Non-blocking messaging via mailboxes
 - Message handlers
 - CSP:
 - Channels/unknown destinations
 - Blocking messaging semantics

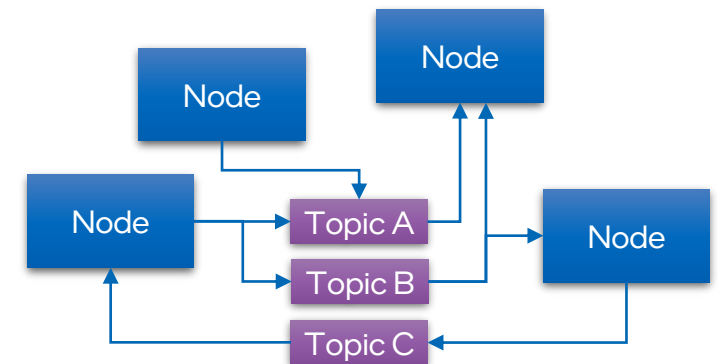
Caltech Asynchronous Synthesis Tools (CAST³)



- Multi-abstraction:
 - Hierarchical design process
 - Iterative refinement of high-level to lower-level behavioral models
- Multi-platform: Execution on different backends

... but unlike...

Publish/Subscribe⁴



- No point-to-point connections:
 - Publisher sends messages to named topic
 - Subscriber receives messages from certain topics
- Topic semantics implementable with Actor/CSP model
- Not suitable for neuromorphic systems:
 - More complex
 - Shared-memory overhead
 - Not matched to fine-granular parallelism
- (But Lava soon to offer interface to industry standard Data Distribution System (DDS) → ROS2)

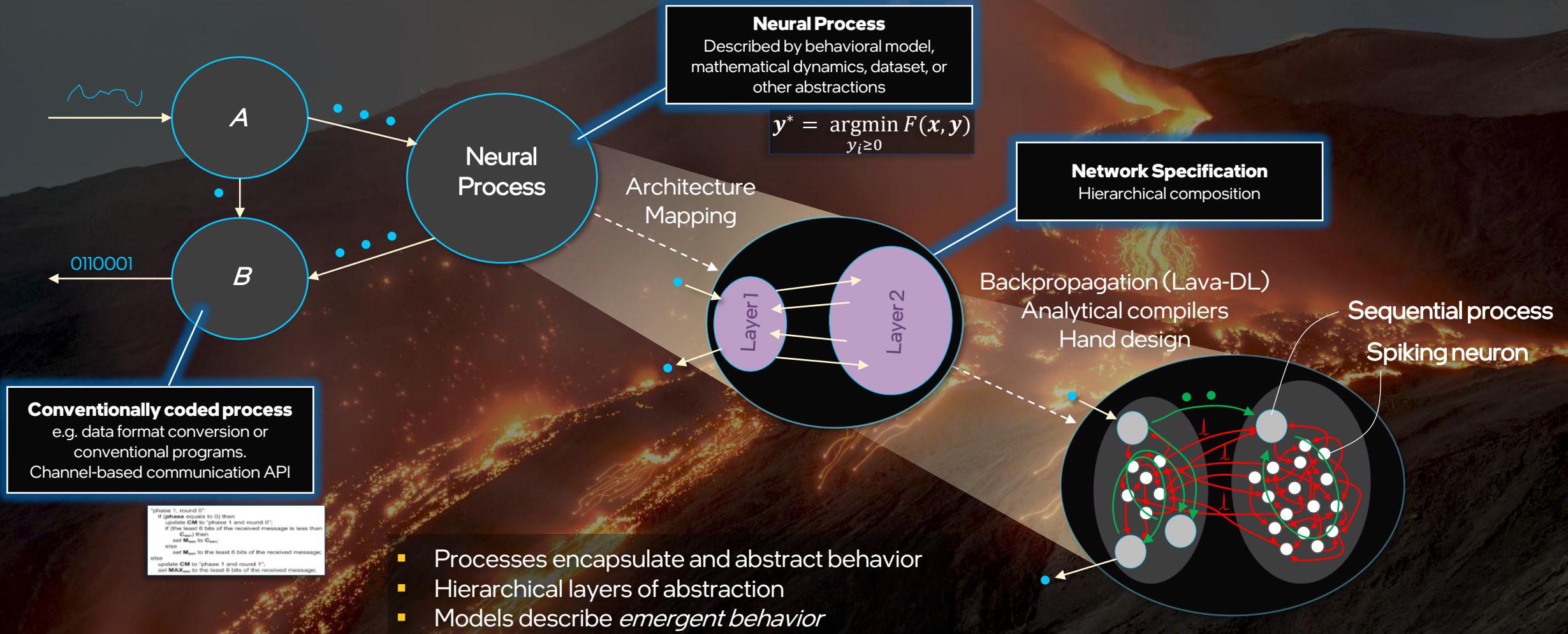
¹Hewitt (1973) A Universal Modular Actor Formalism for Artificial Intelligence

²Hoare (1978) Communicating sequential processes

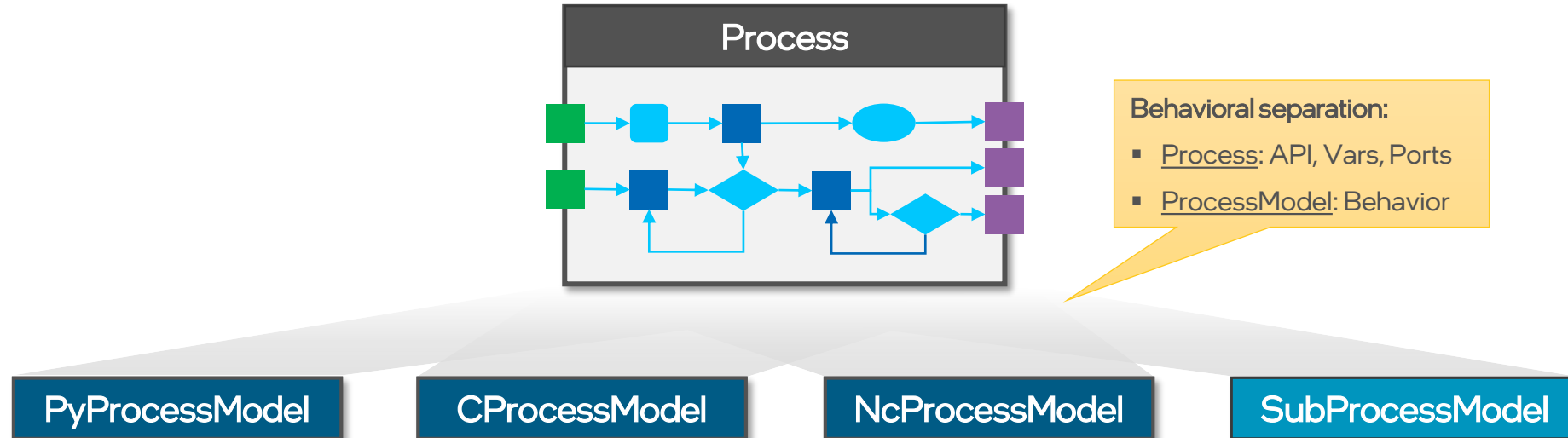
³NCL's proprietary async Hardware Description Language (Unpublished)

⁴Birman (1987) Exploiting virtual synchrony in distributed systems

Behavioral abstractions for productive programming

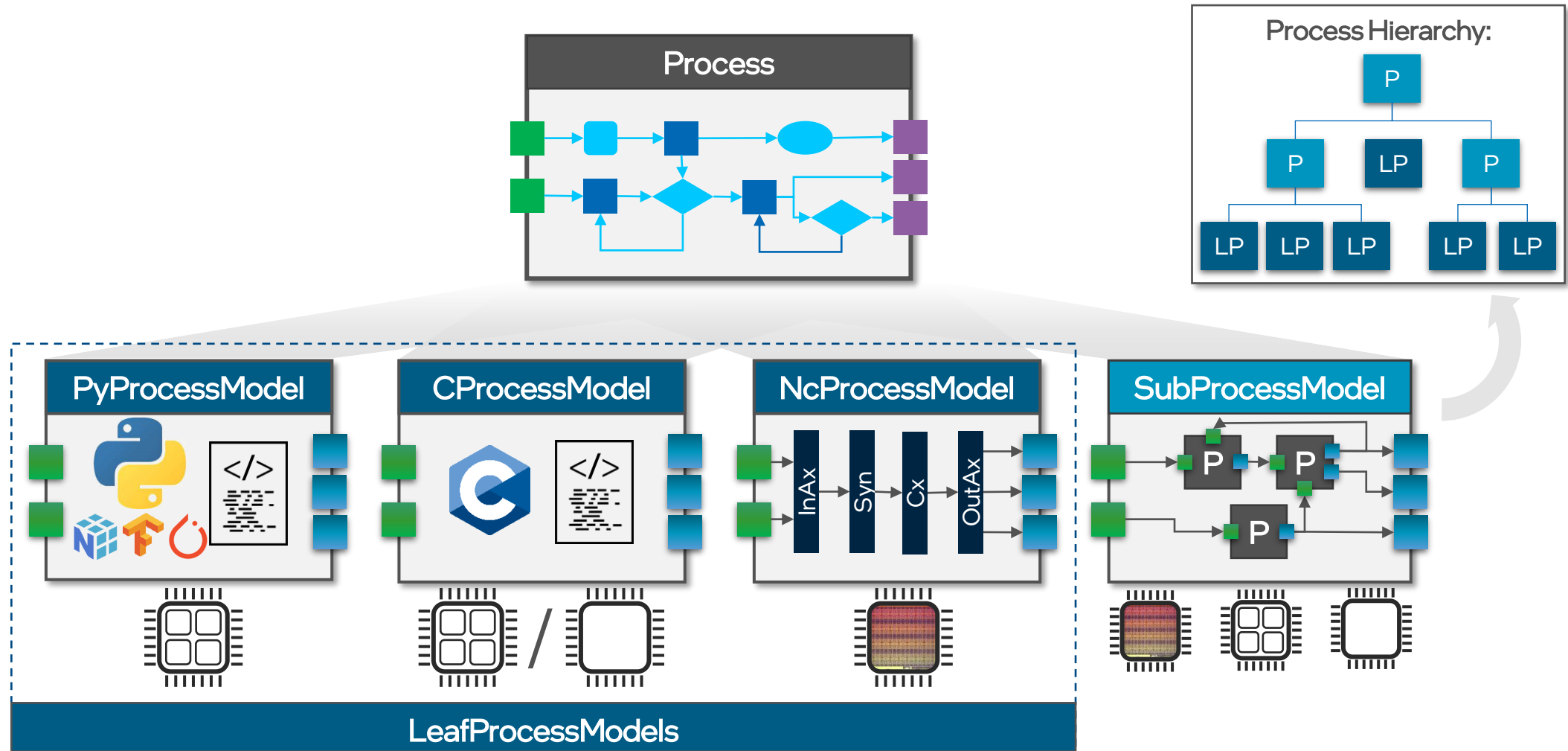


Behavioral models → ProcessModel



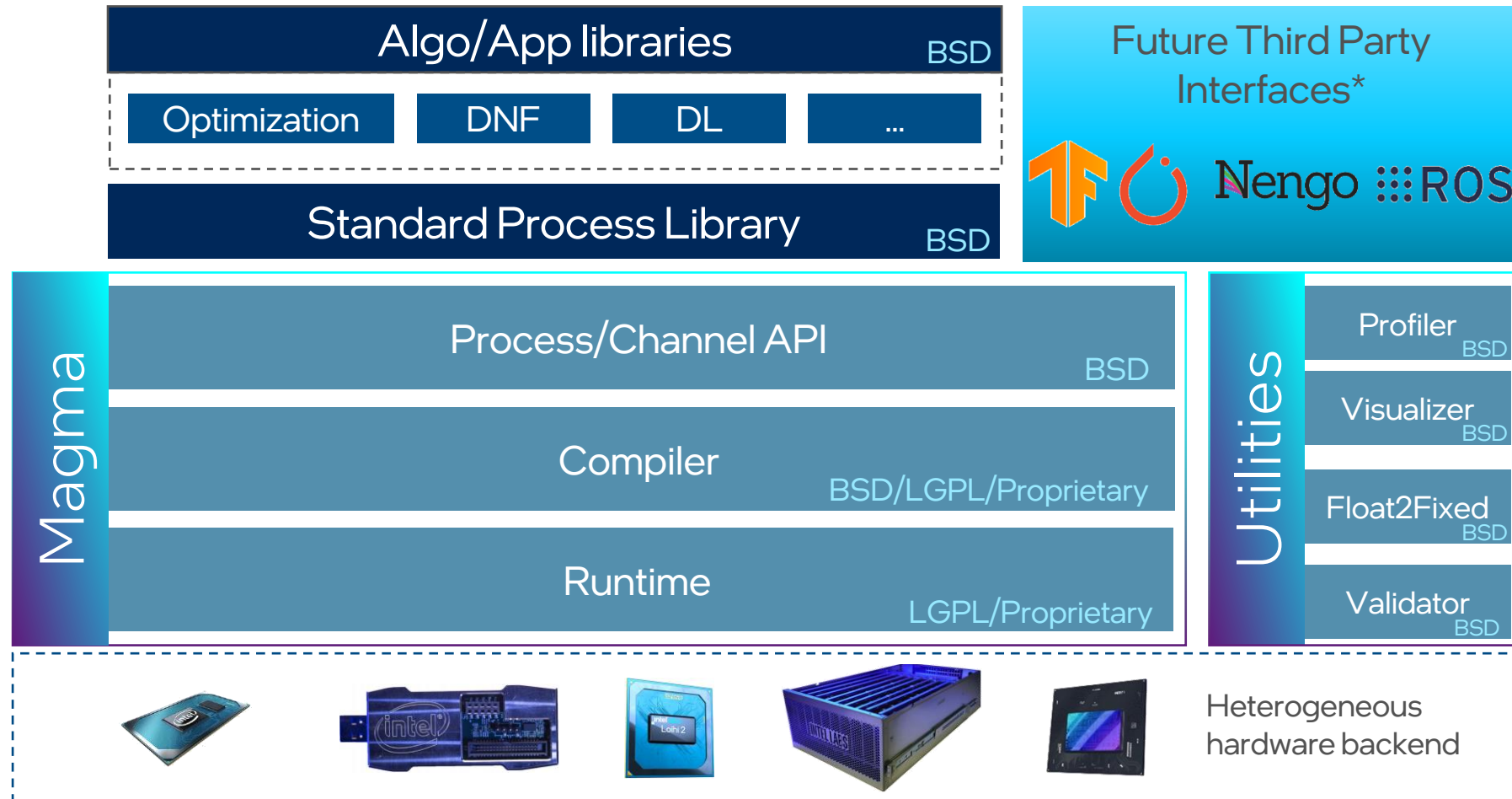
Multiple ProcModels per Proc
Refinement vs. inheritance → Stable application development

Behavioral models → ProcessModel



Two classes of ProcModels: LeafProcModels vs. hierarchical SubProcModels

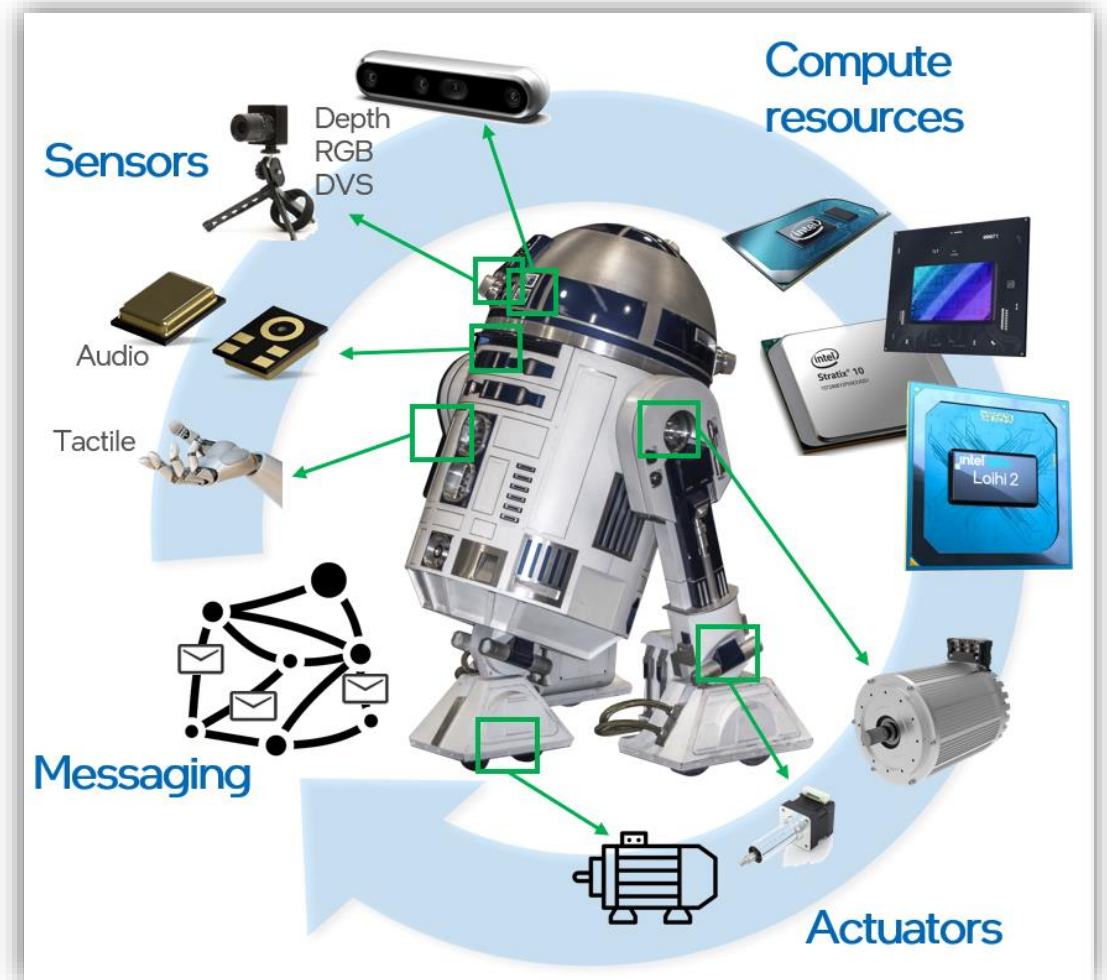
Lava open-source development framework



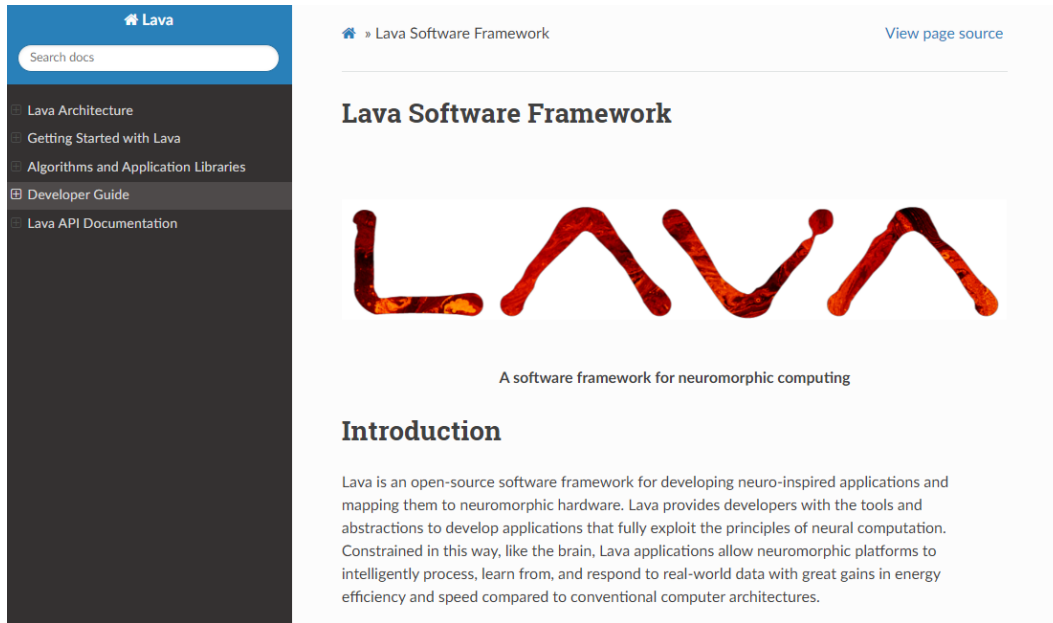
Objective

Facilitate real-world application development for neuromorphic systems

- Heterogeneous compute units:
 - CPUs, GPUs, other accelerators
 - Sensors, actuators (robotics)
- System characteristics:
 - Analog vs. digital
 - Run at different speeds
 - Synchronous vs. asynchronous
 - Event-based
 - Variable precision, stochastic, noisy
 - Highly parallel
 - Distributed
- Lava's programming model:
 - Processes with channel-based communication
 - Multi-paradigm
 - Multi-platform
 - Multi-abstraction



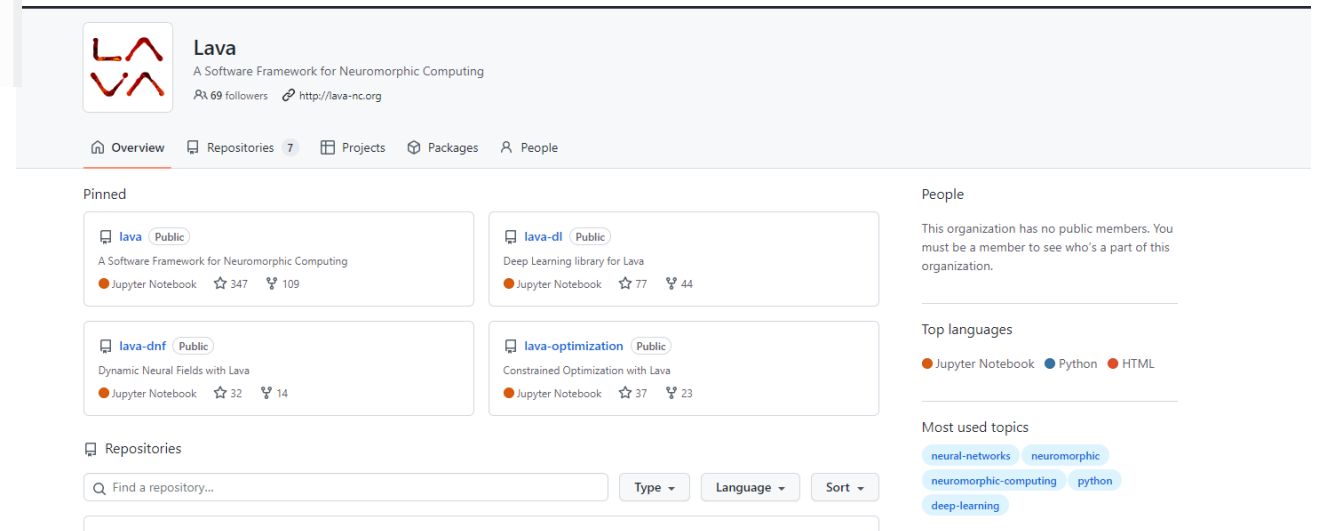
Learn more about Lava and follow (star/fork) us on Github



The screenshot shows the Lava Software Framework documentation page. On the left is a dark sidebar with a search bar and navigation links: Lava Architecture, Getting Started with Lava, Algorithms and Application Libraries, Developer Guide, and Lava API Documentation. The main content area has a blue header with the Lava logo and a 'View page source' link. Below the header is the title 'Lava Software Framework' and a large stylized 'LAVA' logo made of red and orange neural-like structures. Underneath is the tagline 'A software framework for neuromorphic computing' and an 'Introduction' section. The introduction text states: 'Lava is an open-source software framework for developing neuro-inspired applications and mapping them to neuromorphic hardware. Lava provides developers with the tools and abstractions to develop applications that fully exploit the principles of neural computation. Constrained in this way, like the brain, Lava applications allow neuromorphic platforms to intelligently process, learn from, and respond to real-world data with great gains in energy efficiency and speed compared to conventional computer architectures.'

<https://lava-nc.org/>

<https://github.com/lava-nc>

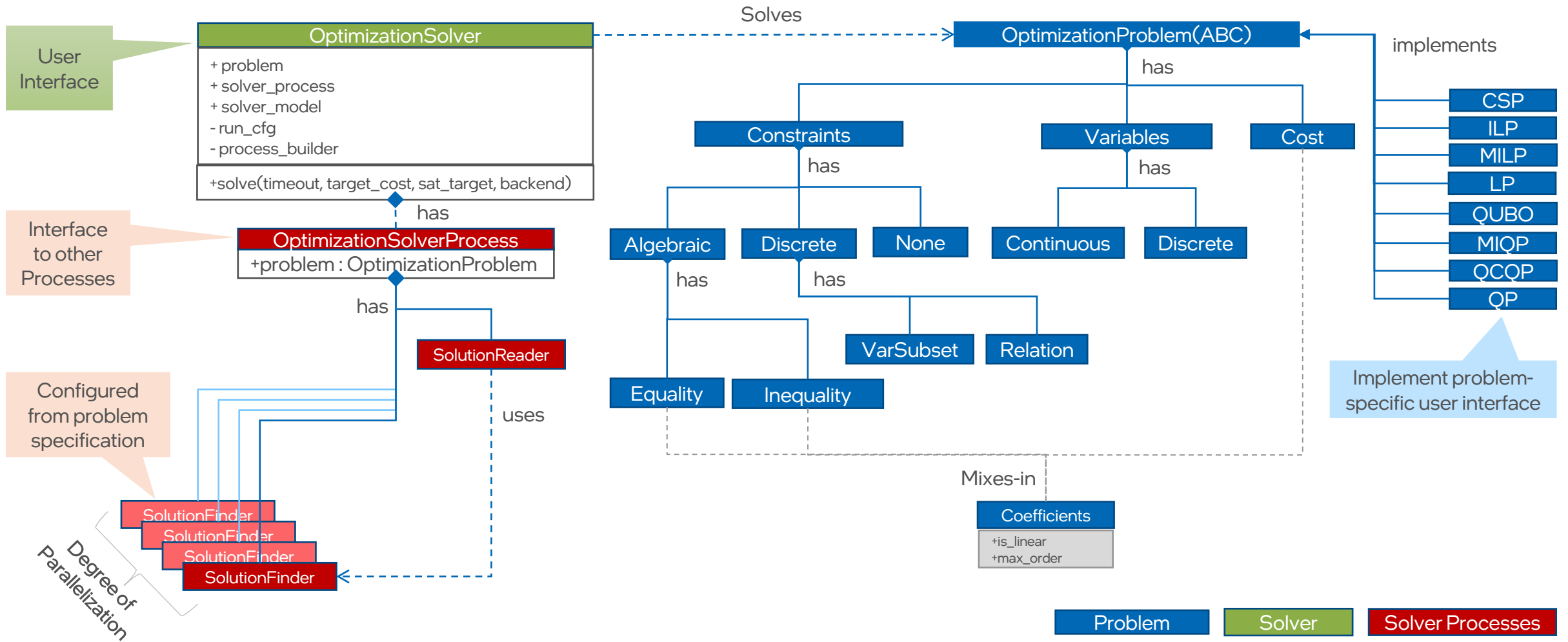


The screenshot shows the GitHub organization page for 'Lava'. The organization name is 'Lava' with the tagline 'A Software Framework for Neuromorphic Computing' and 69 followers. The page features a 'Pinned' section with four repositories: 'lava' (A Software Framework for Neuromorphic Computing, 347 stars, 109 forks), 'lava-dl' (Deep Learning library for Lava, 77 stars, 44 forks), 'lava-dnf' (Dynamic Neural Fields with Lava, 32 stars, 14 forks), and 'lava-optimization' (Constrained Optimization with Lava, 37 stars, 23 forks). Below this is a 'Repositories' section with a search bar and filters for Type, Language, and Sort. On the right, there is a 'People' section stating 'This organization has no public members. You must be a member to see who's a part of this organization.' and a 'Top languages' section showing 'Jupyter Notebook', 'Python', and 'HTML'. At the bottom right, there is a 'Most used topics' section with tags for 'neural-networks', 'neuromorphic', 'neuromorphic-computing', 'python', and 'deep-learning'.

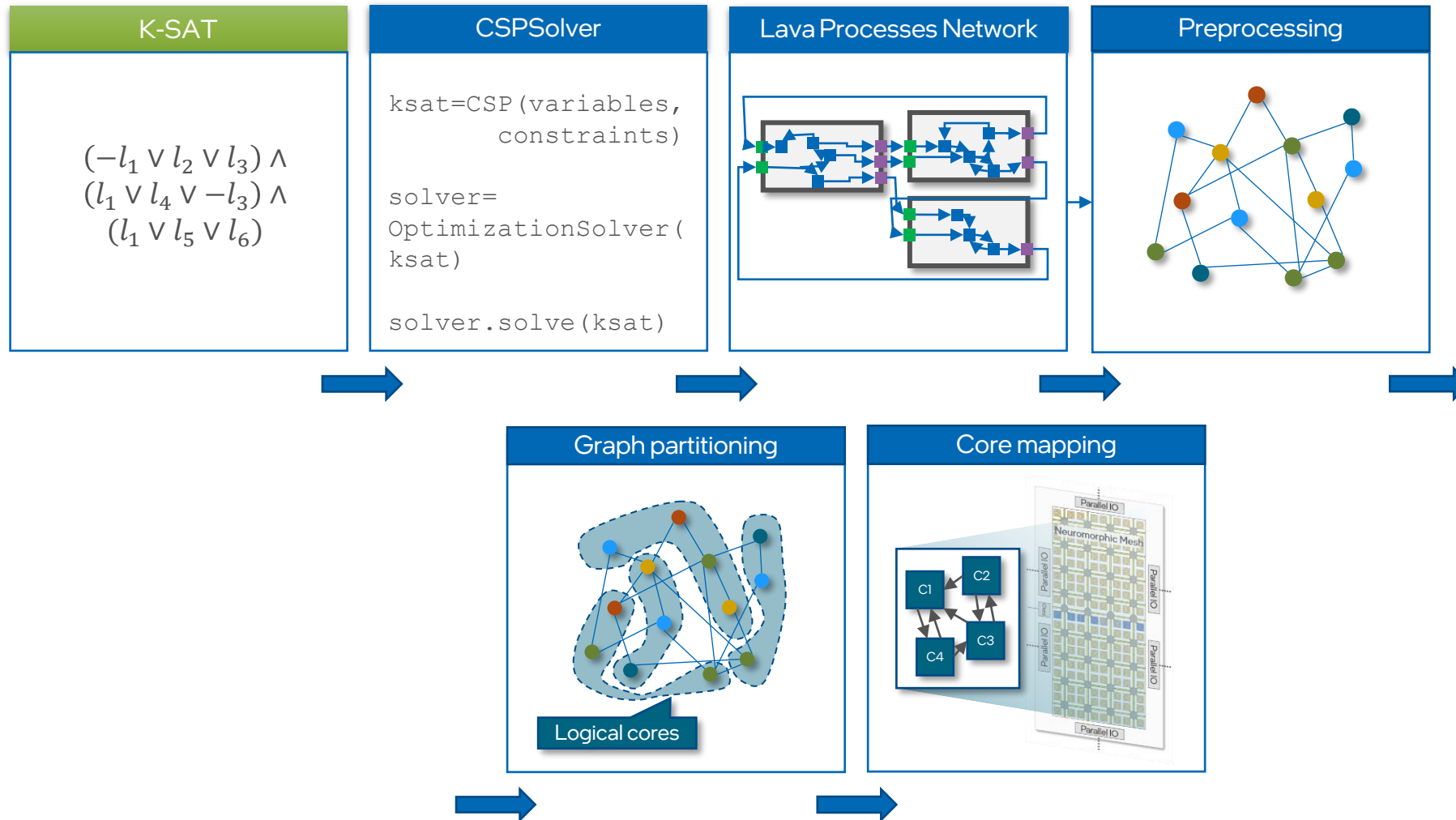
Lava-optimization architecture

Towards neuromorphic-agnostic user experience

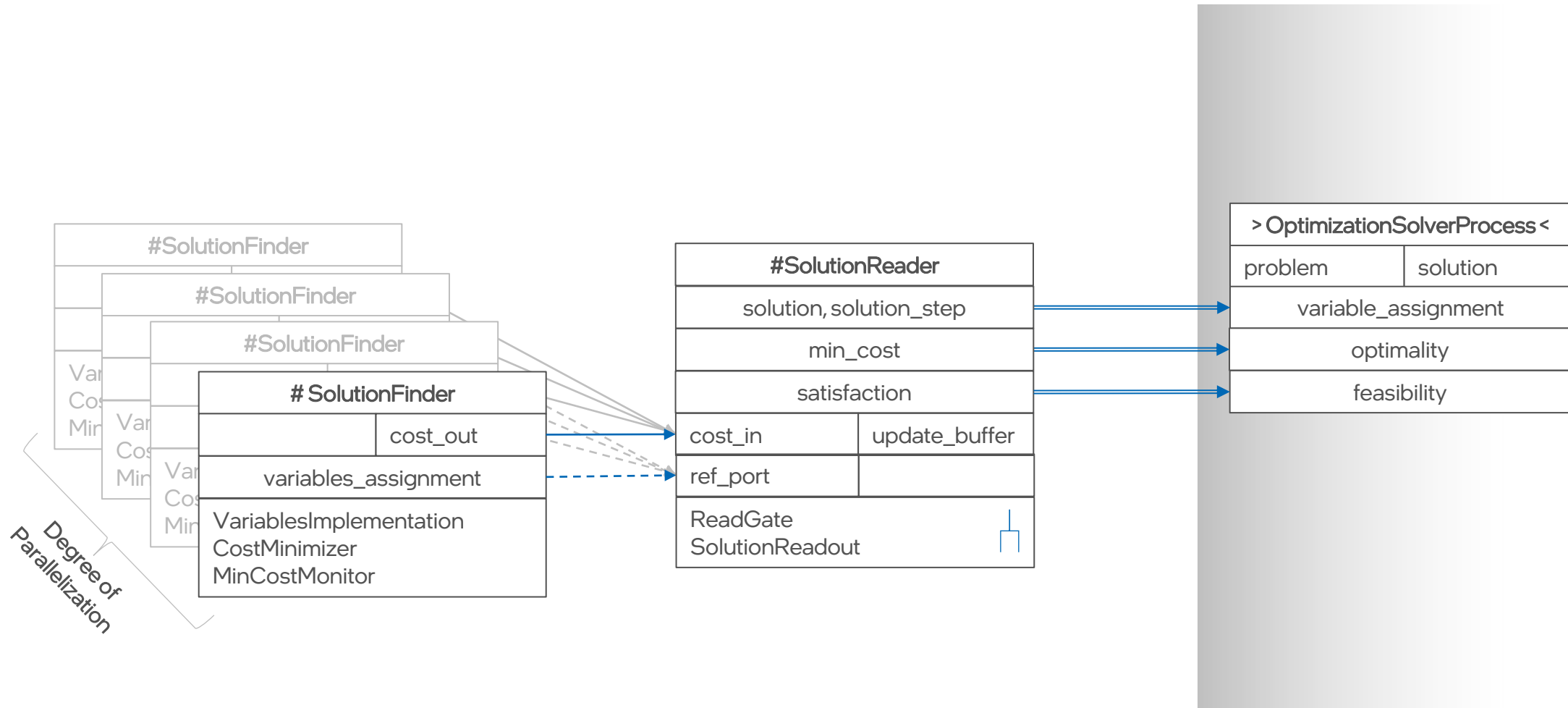
Lava-optimization library high-level architecture



Frontend to backend pipeline



SolverProcess Architecture



Increased performance efficiency

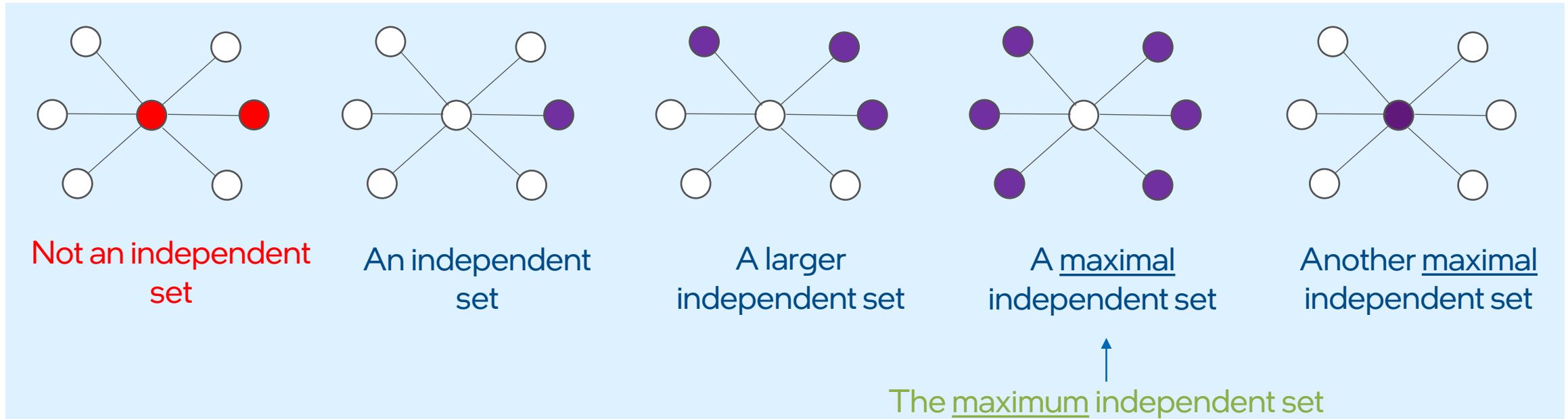
Solving hard optimization problems

Zoom-in maximum-independent set as QUBO

Energy and time to solution

Maximum Independent Set

Problem: Given an undirected graph $G = (V, E)$, find largest subset of disconnected vertices $U \subseteq V$.

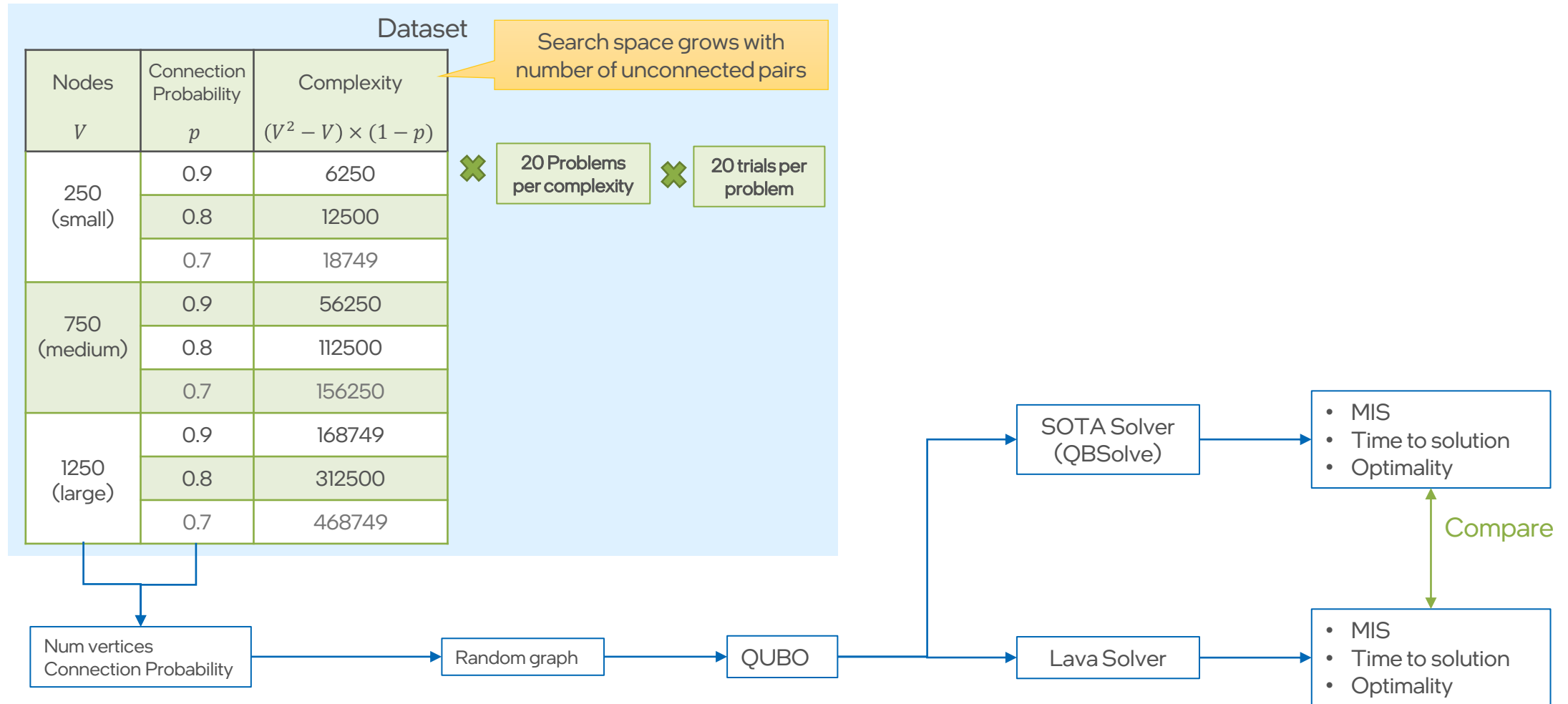


Finding the maximum independent set is NP-Hard!

Example applications:

- Resource allocation in wireless communication networks
- Chip reliability via redundant circuitry

Benchmarking MIS as QUBO on Loihi 2 Vs QBSolve



Intel Neuromorphic Research Community

INRC

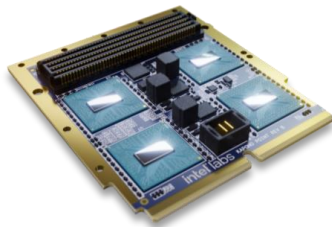
Available to engaged INRC members

Available to engaged INRC members

Neuromorphic Research Cloud Access



Kapoho Point



Lava framework



Future Loihi 2
Large-scale systems



Our goals for the next three years

- Demonstrate commercially relevant applications
- Enable productive and accessible programming models and software frameworks for neuromorphic computing
- Help converge the field with benchmarking and SW standardization
- Exponentially expand neuromorphic research & developer community
- Demonstrate impactful state-of-the-art technology breakthroughs