Raport Badawczy
Research Report

RB/33/2012

Negotiation strategies of programmable agents in Continuous Double Auctions

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Warszawa 2012

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Contents

Chapter 1

Introduction

Auctions as a method of selling and buying goods have a long history, initially there were only ascending auctions with simple rules (now known as English auctions) but with time a variety of types of auctions has emerged. Now, auctions have become a very popular method of trading popularized by on-line auctions as Ebay or Allegro (a big Polish auction platform).

According to definition made by McAfee and McMillan in 1987: "an auction is a market institution with an explicit set of rules determining resource allocation and prices on the basis of bids from the market participants".

A special type of auctions, maybe not the most popular in an on-line internet auctions but interesting from point of view of computer simulation, are so called *double auctions*. In double auctions, there are multiple buyers and sellers on the market that place their offer simultaneously.

In this work we review strategies of agents participating in a double auction. There are a lot of different categories of strategies: some consider history, others are reacting on the last placed bid or apply learning algorithms. Some strategies, as ZI, GD, and AA, have been already reviewed in an earlier publication of the present authors [21]. They are repeated here to make a possibly full compendium of strategies proposed in the literature.

The practical context of this research is the double auction for trading emissions of pollutants. Emission, in this context, is the short name for "permission to emit a unit of greenhouse gas"; its unit is either one tonne of carbon dioxide or the mass of another greenhouse gas which is recalculated to so-called carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO2e) emissions. This is expressed in units like Certified Emission Reductions (CERs) or carbon credits. This concept was introduced in the Kyoto Protocol, which entered into force in

16 February 2005, obliging countries that ratified it to limit their greenhouse gases (GHG) emissions below the levels of 1990.

The protocol introduced so called "flexible" market-based mechanisms (Emission Trading, Joint Implementation and Clean Development), which are meant to achieve the common reduction target with minimal costs, without knowledge of the parties cost functions. The emission trading market is still not mature and it is still under the process of adjusting the rules and protocols to make it efficient aud resistant to collapsing. The Chicago Climate Exchange market ceased operations in 2010 because the legislation was refused by the US Senate and companies were no longer interested in trading this commodity.

There are different schemes developed for this type of market. In report [26], the English auction trading scheme for emission permit trading was considered. In the present work the double auction mechanism for emission trading is defined, as it is a very popular method of creating efficient markets.

This work summarizes the most well known strategies, that present the evolution of automated negotiation strategies: from simple and intuitive approaches as ZI, PS and ZIP, to more forecasting like GD and adapting as AA strategy. None of the general issues of on-line auctions are discussed here. An interested reader is referred to recent reviews of these matters [12, 17, 24].

The structure of the paper is as follows. In chapter 2 the current state of research on the Continuous Double Auction, emission trading and agent strategies are shortly reviewed. In the following chapter the concept of negotiations and different ways of trading is described. In chapter 4 some informations on double auction are presented. Chapter 5 discusses the formal model of the auction double market used in this paper. The following chapters contain the description of the existing strategies for participants in the continuous double auction, they are divided to strategies using only current information, GD strategies, AA strategies and FL-strategy, that uses fuzzy rules to determine the value of next shout. The general architecture of the implemented software is located in the chapter 10, followed by description of its implementation. In chapter 11 some preliminary results are presented. Conclusions summarizes the whole report. Also future works are sketched there.

Chapter 11

Results

The strategies were implemented and tested. Simple strategies are giving very randomized behavior that, although leads to making deals, is not converging. The end time of the session is totally random. One of the outcome of such algorithm is presented in Fig. 11.1. The price of the deals, as for example done using the ZI strategy, are presented in Fig. 11.2.

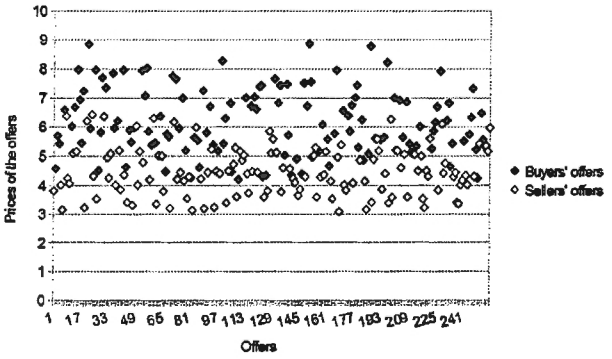

Figure 11.1: Offers made by ZI agents.

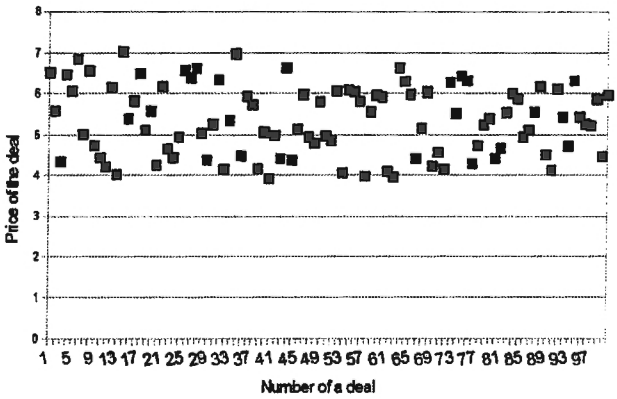

Figure 11.2: Deals made on a market by the ZI agents.

Agents using more "intelligent" strategies seem to behave more human-like, they tend to follow the market trend and place the offers around the equilibrium price of the market. The example of offers of such agents, using ZIP strategy, are presented in Fig. 11.3. Deals made by this agents are presented in Fig. 11.4.

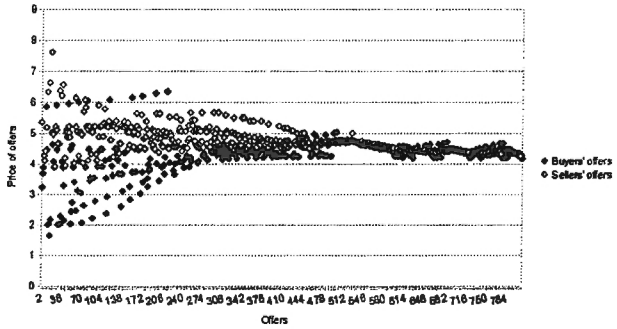

Figure 11.3: Offers made by ZIP agents.

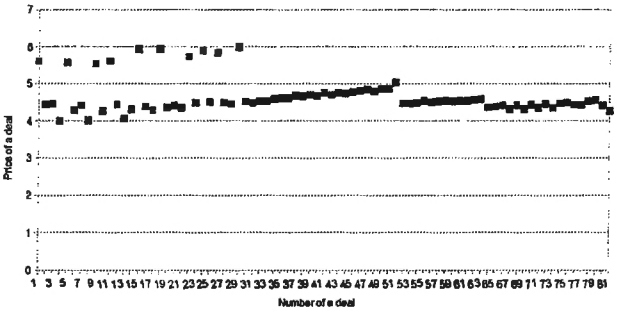

Figure 11.4: Deals made on a market by ZIP agents.

Chapter 12

Conclusions

Emission permits are a new commodity that can have a very uncertain volume. Moreover, uncertainties for different types of greenhouse gases differ considerably. For example, uncertainty of emission of CO_2 from a power plant may be few percents, while that of N_2O from agricultural activities may be close to 100%. Thus, a risk for traders to realy reach the imposed emission level is much different when buing one or another emissions. Trading under such conditions requires new rules, but also provides a unique base to develop new strategies that are able to fulfill the requirements. Before it will be possible to include uncertainties in the agents behavior, the market scheme has to be designed and tested.

Given the tool as the *multi-agent system*, it is possible to design a market that is be simple, dynamic and that allows participants to adjust their desired profit and the time of placing an offer. The continuous double auction chosen in the report has simple rules and does not impose limitations on neither the number of participants nor their strategies.

The aim of the present report is to go through the most well-known strategies for this type of market, to classify them and to summarize their properties. The existing strategies can be divided into few groups: simple and reactive strategies (e.g. TT, ZI, ZIP); strategies that are using historical data to predict the prices (e.g. GD) and strategies that are exploiting features of agents and market configuration (e.g. Kaplan, AA). Most of the strategies (except for the very simple ones) result in the market price converging to equilibrium price and generally in most participants reaching profit.

The next step is to create agents that will dynamically adjust or even change their strategies depending on the situation on the market. After

that, specific features of the emission market will be added to check how agents behave. Limit price will become a function of traded permits and participants would have to consider the level of uncertainty of the traded permit.

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