Constraint-Based Network Layout

Sarah Boyd, Tim Dwyer, Kim Marriott, Michael Wybrow

Adaptive Diagrams and Documents Lab
Faculty of IT, Monash University
Melbourne, Australia
Constraints and Network Layout

- **Constraints** allow us to capture *layout conventions* in drawings

- For example, in SBGN:
  - Prevent node-node overlaps
  - Prevent node-edge crossings
  - Directional information (subsequent processes)
Dunnart : A Constraint-based Network Diagram Authoring Tool

Tim Dwyer, Kim Marriott, and Michael Wybrow.  

InfoVis08 - Interactive Network Exploration.mov

[Exploration of Networks Using Overview+Detail with Constraint-based Cooperative Layout. Tim Dwyer et al.  
Dunnart (cont.)

Second movie, Michael Wybrow:

TopologyClusters.mov
Interactive visualisation and authoring

- Author has control over layout and topology
- Author can improve the layout:
  - use placement constraints, e.g. alignment and distribution
  - tailor layout style and guide layout by
    - repositioning diagram components
    - rerouting connectors
Continuous network layout

- constrained graph layout algorithm
- topology preserving, smooth predictable changes
- *Separation constraints* on nodes must be satisfied
- *Refinement constraints* must be satisfied:
  - no two nodes overlap
  - nodes inside bounded region are exactly the nodes in the cluster
  - every path is valid (no segment passes through a node) and tight (the path wraps tightly around each node corner in path)
SBGN example 1
SBGN example 2
SBGN examples in Dunnart …
Dunnart, Constraints and SBGN

We use constraints to automatically:

- Prevent of node-node overlap
- Prevent node-edge crossing
- Constrain drawing area
- Minimise edge length
- Minimise edge crossing
- Minimise edge bends (esp. orthogonal routing)
- Handle directional information (subsequent processes)
- Locate substrates and products of transitions
- ...

Dunnart Research and Systems Biology

- Identify layout conventions appropriate to SBGN*

- Automatically infer constraints from SBML and other notations ***

- Encode these as constraints, extending the algorithms and layout engines as necessary*

- Wrap layout libraries in Java, design interface**

*Falk Schreiber, *Christian Klukas (IPK)

*Tim Dwyer (Microsoft Research Labs)
Links

http://www.dunnart.org/