lintrans

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1 Analysis

One of the topics in the A Level Further Maths course is linear transformations, as represented by matrices. This is a topic all about how vectors move and get transformed in the plane. It's a topic that lends itself exceedingly well to visualization, but students often find it hard to visualize this themselves, and there is a considerable lack of good tools to provide visual intuition on the subject. There is the YouTube series *Essence of Linear Algebra* by 3blue1brown[1], which is excellent, but I couldn't find any good interactive visualizations.

My solution is to develop a desktop application that will allow the user to define 2×2 matrices and view these matrices and compositions thereof as linear transformations of a 2D plane. This will give students a way to get to grips with linear transformations in a more hands-on way, and will give teachers the ability to easily and visually show concepts like the determinant and invariant lines.

1.1 Computational Approach

This solution is particularly well suited to a computational approach since it is entirely focussed on visualizing transformations, which require complex mathematics to properly display. It will also have lots of settings to allow the user to configure aspects of the visualization. As previously mentioned, visualizing transformations in one's own head is difficult, so a piece of software to do it would be very valuable to teachers and learners, but current solutions are considerably lacking.

My solution will make use of abstraction by allowing the user to define a set of matrices which they can use in expressions. This allows them to use a matrix multiple times and they don't have to keep track of any of the numbers. All the actual processing and mathematics happens behind the scenes and the user never has to worry about it - they just compose their defined matrices into transformations. This abstraction allows the user to focus on exploring the transformations themselves without having to do any actual computations. This will make learning the subject much easier, as they will able to gain a visual intuition for linear transformations without worrying about computation until after they've built up that intuition.

I will also employ decomposition and modularization by breaking the project down into many smaller parts, such as one module to keep track of defined matrices, one module to validate and parse matrix expressions, one module for the main GUI, as well as sub-modules for the widgets and dialog boxes, etc. This decomposition allows for simpler project design, easier code maintenance (since module coupling is kept to a minimum, so bugs are isolated in their modules), inheritance of classes to reduce code repetition, and unit testing to inform development. I also intend this unit testing to be automated using GitHub Actions.

Selection will also be used widely in the application. The GUI will provide many settings for visualization, and these settings will need to be checked when rendering the transformation. For example, the user will have the option to render the determinant, so I will need to check this setting on every render cycle and only render the determinant

parallelogram if the user has enabled that option. The app will have many options for visualization, which will be useful in learning, but if all these options were being rendered at the same time, then there would be too much information for the user to properly process, so I will let the user configure these display options to their liking and only render the things they want to be rendered.

Validation will also be prevalent because the matrix expressions will need to follow a strict format, which will be validated. The buttons to render and animate the matrix will only be clickable when the given expression is valid, so I will need to check this and update the buttons every time the text in the text box is changed. I will also need to parse matrix expressions so that I can evaluate them properly. All this validation ensures that crashes due to malformed input are practically impossible, and makes the user's life easier since they don't need to worry about if their input is in the right format - the app will tell them.

I will also make use of iteration, primarily in animation. I will have to re-calculate positions and values to render everything for every frame of the animation and this will likely be done with a simple `for` loop. A `for` loop will allow me to just loop over every frame and use the counter variable as a way to measure how far through the animation we are on each frame. This is preferable to a `while` loop, since that would require me to keep track of which frame we're on with a separate variable.

Finally, the core of the application is visualization, so that will definitely be used a lot. I will have to calculate positions of points and lines based on given matrices, and when animating, I will also have to calculate these matrices based on the current frame. Then I will have to use the rendering capabilities of the GUI framework that I choose to render these calculated points and lines onto a widget, which will form the viewport of the main GUI. I may also have to convert between coordinate systems. I will have the origin in the middle with positive x going to the right and positive y going up, but I may need to convert that to standard computer graphics coordinates with the origin in the top left, positive x going to the right, and positive y going down. This visualization of linear transformations is the core component of the app and is the primary feature, so it is incredibly important.

1.2 Stakeholders

Stakeholders for my app include A Level Further Maths students and teachers, who learn and teach linear transformations respectively. They will be able to provide useful input as to what they would like to see in the app, and they can provide feedback on what they like and what I can add or improve. I already know from experience that linear transformations are tricky to visualize and a computer-based visualization would be useful. My stakeholders agreed with this. Many teachers said that a desktop app that could render and animate linear transformations would be useful in a classroom environment and students said that it would be helpful to have something that they could play around with at home and use to get to grips with matrices and linear transformations.

Some teachers also suggested that it would be useful to have an option to save and load sets of matrices. This would allow them to have a single save file containing

some matrices, and then just load this file to use for demonstrations in the classroom. This would probably be quite easy to implement. I could just wrap all the relevant information into one object and use Python's `pickle` module to save the binary data to a file, and then load this data back into the app in a similar way.

My stakeholders agreed that being able to see incremental animation - where, for example, we apply matrix **A** to the current scene, pause, and then apply matrix **B** - would be beneficial. This would be a good demonstration of matrix multiplication being non-commutative. **AB** is not always equal to **BA**. Being able to see this in terms of animating linear transformations would be good for learning.

They also agreed that a tutorial on using the software would be useful, so I plan to implement this through an online written tutorial hosted with GitHub Pages, and perhaps a video tutorial as well. This would make the app much easier to use for people who have never seen it before. It wouldn't be a lesson on the maths itself, just a guide on how to use the software.

1.3 Research on existing solutions

There are actually quite a few web apps designed to help visualize 2D linear transformations but many of them are hard to use and lacking many features.

1.3.1 MIT 'Matrix Vector' Mathlet

Arguably the best app that I found was an MIT 'Mathlet' - a simple web app designed to help visualize a maths concept. This one is called 'Matrix Vector'[2] and allows the user to drag an input vector around the plane and see the corresponding output vector, transformed by a matrix that the user can define, although this definition is finicky since it involves sliders rather than keyboard input.

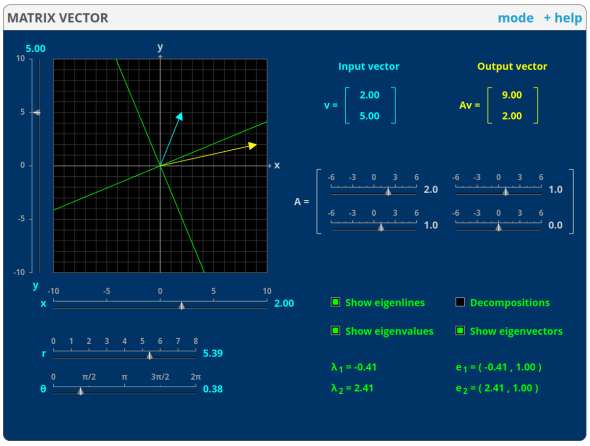


Figure 1: The MIT 'Matrix Vector' Mathlet

This app fails in two crucial ways in my opinion. It doesn't show the basis vectors or let the user drag them around, and the user can only define and therefore visualize a single matrix at once. This second problem was common among every solution I found, so I won't mention it again, but it is a big issue in my opinion and my app will allow for multiple matrices. I like the idea of having a draggable input vector and rendering its output, so I will probably have this feature in my app, but I also want the ability to define multiple matrices and be able to drag the basis vectors to visually define a matrix. Being able to drag the basis vectors will help build intuition, so I think this would greatly benefit the app.

However, in the comments on this Mathlet, a user called 'David S. Bruce' suggested

that the Mathlet should display the basis vectors, to which a user called 'hrm' (who I assume to be the 'H. Miller' to whom the copyright of the whole website is accredited) replied saying that this Mathlet is primarily focussed on eigenvectors, that it is perhaps badly named, and that displaying the basis vectors 'would make a good focus for a second Mathlet about 2×2 matrices'. This Mathlet does not exist. But I do like the idea of showing the eigenvectors and eigenlines, so I will definitely have that in my app. Showing the invariant lines or lack thereof will help with learning, since these are often hard to visualize.

1.3.2 Linear Transformation Visualizer

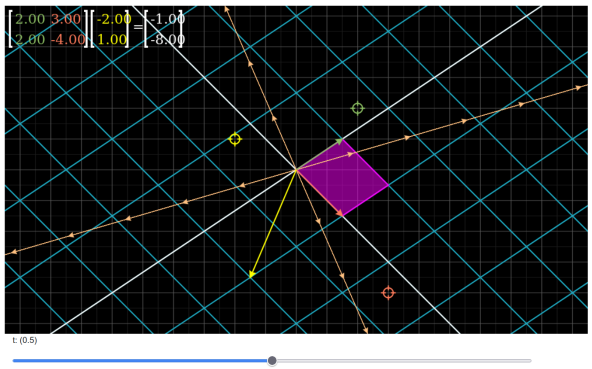


Figure 2: 'Linear Transformation Visualizer' halfway through an animation

Another web app that I found was one simply called 'Linear Transformation Visualizer' by Shad Sharma[3]. This one was similarly inspired by 3blue1brown's YouTube series. This app has the ability to render input and output vectors and eigenlines, but it can also render the determinant parallelogram; it allows the user to drag the basis vectors; and it has the option to snap vectors to the background grid, which is quite useful. It also implements a simple form of animation where the tips of the vectors move in straight lines from where they start to where they end, and the animation is controlled by dragging a slider labelled t. This isn't particularly intuitive.

I really like the vectors snapping to the grid, the input and output vectors, and rendering the determinant. This app also renders positive and negative determinants in different colours, which is really nice - I intend to use that idea in my own app, since it helps create understanding about negative determinants in terms of orientation changes. However, I think that the animation system here is flawed and not very easy to use. My animation will likely be a button, which just triggers an animation, rather than a slider. I also don't like the way vector dragging is handled. If you click anywhere on the grid, then the closest vector target (the final position of the target's associated vector) snaps to that location. I think it would be more intuitive to have to drag the vector from its current location to where you want it. This was also a problem with the MIT Mathlet.

1.3.3 Desmos app

One of the solutions I found was a Desmos app[4], which was quite hard to use and arguably overcomplicated. Desmos is not designed for this kind of thing - it's designed to graph pure mathematical functions - and it shows here. However, this app brings some really interesting ideas to the table, mainly functions. This app allows you to define custom functions and view them before and after the transformation. This is achieved by treating the functions parametrically as the set of points $(t, f(t))$ and then

transforming each coordinate by the given matrix to get a new coordinate.

Desmos does this for every point and then renders the resulting transformed function parametrically. This is a really interesting technique and idea, but I'm not going to use it in my app. I don't think arbitrary functions fit with the linearity of the whole app, and I don't think it's necessary. It's just overcomplicating things, and rendering it on a widget would be tricky, because I'd have to render every point myself, possibly using something like OpenGL. It's just not worth implementing.

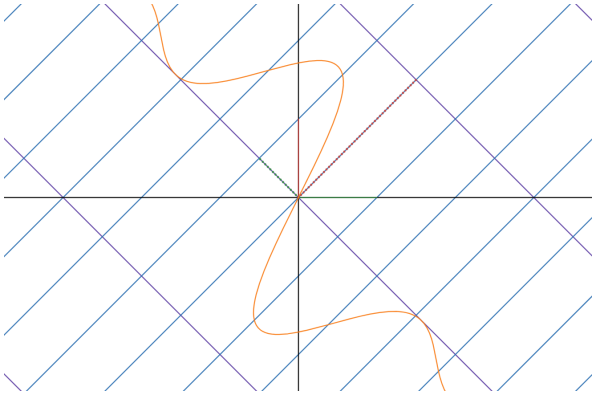


Figure 3: The Desmos app halfway through an animation, rendering $f(x) = \frac{\sin^2 x}{x}$ in orange

Additionally, this Desmos app makes things quite hard to see. It's hard to tell where any of the vectors are - they just get lost in the sea of grid lines. This image also hides some of the extra information. For instance, this image doesn't show the original function $f(x) = \frac{\sin^2 x}{x}$, only the transformed version. This app easily gets quite cluttered. I will give my vectors arrowheads to make them easily identifiable amongst the grid lines.

1.3.4 Visualizing Linear Transformations

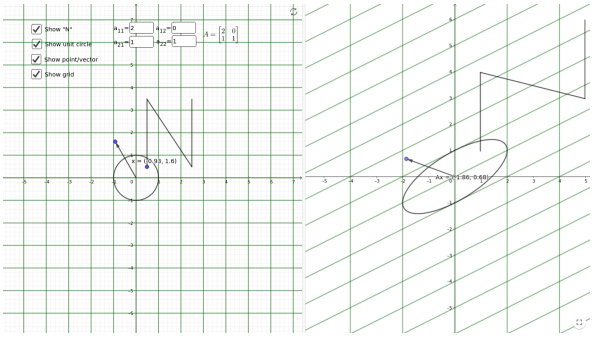


Figure 4: The GeoGebra applet rendering its default matrix

The last solution that I want to talk about is a GeoGebra applet simply titled 'Visualizing Linear Transformations'[5]. This applet has input and output vectors, original and transformed grid lines, a unit circle, and the letter N. It allows the user to define a matrix as 4 numbers and view the aforementioned N (which the user can translate to anywhere on the grid), the unit circle, the input/output vectors, and the grid lines. It also has the input vector snapping to integer coordinates, but that's a standard part of GeoGebra.

I've already talked about most of these features but the thing I wanted to talk about here is the N. I don't particularly want the letter N to be a prominent part of my own app, but I really like the idea of being able to define a custom polygon and see how that polygon gets transformed by a given transformation. I think that would really help with building intuition and it shouldn't be too hard to implement.

1.4 Essential features

The primary aim of this application is to visualize linear transformations, so this will obviously be the centre of the app and an essential feature. I will have a widget which can render a background grid and a second version of the grid, transformed according to a user-defined matrix expression. This is necessary because it is the entire purpose of the app. It's designed to visualize linear transformations and would be completely useless without this visual component. I will give the user the ability to render a custom matrix expression containing matrices they have previously defined, as well as reset the canvas to the default identity matrix transformation. This will obviously require an input box to enter the expression, a render button, a reset button, and various dialog boxes to define matrices in different ways. I want the user to be able to define a matrix as a set of 4 numbers, and by dragging the basis vectors i and j. These dialogs will allow the user to define new matrices to be used in expressions, and having multiple ways to do it will make it easier, and will aid learning.

Another essential feature is animation. I want the user to be able to smoothly animate between matrices. I see two options for how this could work. If **C** is the matrix for the currently displayed transformation, and **T** is the matrix for the target transformation, then we could either animate from **C** to **T** or we could animate from **C** to **TC**. I would probably call these transitional and applicative animation respectively. Perhaps I'll give the user the option to choose which animation method they want to use. Either way, animation is used in most of the alternative solutions that I found, and it's a great way to build intuition, by allowing students to watch the transformation happen in real time. Compared to simply rendering the transformations, animating them would profoundly benefit learning, and since that's the main aim of the project, I think animation is a necessary part of the app.

Something that I thought was a big problem in every alternative solution I found was the fact that the user could only visualize a single matrix at once. I see this as a fatal flaw and I will allow the user to define 25 different matrices (all capital letters except **I** for the identity matrix) and use all of them in expressions. This will allow teachers to define multiple matrices and then just change the expression to demonstrate different concepts rather than redefine a new transformation every time. It will also make things easier for students as it will allow them to visualize compositions of different matrix transformations without having to do any computations themselves.

Additionally, being able to show information on the currently displayed matrix is an essential tool for learning. Rendering things like the determinant parallelogram and the invariant lines of the transformation will greatly assist with learning and building understanding, so I think that having the option to render these attributes of the currently displayed transformation is necessary for success.

1.5 Limitations

The main limitation in this app is likely to be drawing grid lines. Most transformations will be fine but in some cases, the app will be required to draw potentially thousands of grid lines on the canvas and this will probably cause noticeable lag, especially in the

animations. I will have to artificially limit the number of grid lines that can be drawn on the screen. This won't look fantastic, because it means that the grid lines will only extend a certain distance from the origin, but it's an inherent limitation of computers. Perhaps if I was using a faster, compiled language like C++ rather than Python, this processing would happen faster and I could render more grid lines, but it's impossible to render all the grid lines and any implementation of this idea must limit them for performance.

An interesting limitation is that I don't think I'll implement panning. I suspect that I'll have to convert between coordinate systems and having the origin in the centre of the canvas will probably make the code much simpler. Also, linear transformations always leave the origin fixed, so always having it in the centre of the canvas seems thematically appropriate. Panning is certainly an option - the Desmos solution in §1.3.3 and GeoGebra solution in §1.3.4 both allow panning as a default part of Desmos and GeoGebra respectively, for example - but I don't think I'll implement it myself. I just don't think it's worth it.

I'm also not going to do any work with 3D linear transformations. 3D transformations are often harder to visualize and thus it would make sense to target them in an app like this, designed to help with learning and intuition, but 3D transformations are also harder to code. I would have to use a full graphics package rather than a simple widget, and I think it would be too much work for this project and I wouldn't be able to do it in the time frame. It's definitely a good idea, but I'm currently incapable of creating an app like that.

There are other limitations inherent to matrices. For instance, it's impossible to take an inverse of a singular matrix. There's nothing I can do about that without rewriting most of mathematics. Matrices can also only represent linear transformations. There's definitely a market for an app that could render any arbitrary transformation from $\mathbb{R}^2 \to \mathbb{R}^2$ - I know I'd want an app like that - but matrices can only represent linear transformations, so those are the only kind of transformations that I'll be looking at with this project.

1.6 Hardware and software requirements

1.6.1 Hardware

Hardware requirements for the project are the same between the release and development environments and they're quite simple. I expect the app to require a processor with at least 1 GHz clock speed, `$BINARY_SIZE` free disk space, and about 1 GB of available RAM. The processor and RAM requirements are needed by the Python runtime and mainly by Qt5 - the GUI library I'll be using. The `$BINARY_SIZE` disk space is just for the executable binary that I'll compile for the public release. The code itself is less than 1 MB, but the compiled binary has to package all the dependencies and the entire CPython runtime to allow it to run on systems that don't have that, so the file size is much bigger.

I will also require that the user has a monitor that is at least 1920×1080 pixels in

resolution. This isn't necessarily required, because the app will likely run in a smaller window, but a HD monitor is highly recommended. This allows the user to go fullscreen if they want to, and it gives them enough resolution to easily see everything in the app. A large, wall-mounted screen is also highly recommended for use in the classroom, although this is common among schools.

I will also require a keyboard with all standard Latin alphabet characters. This is because the matrices are defined as uppercase Latin letters. Any UK or US keyboard will suffice for this. The app will also require a mouse with at least one button. I don't intend to have right click do anything, so only the primary mouse button is required, although getting a single button mouse to actually work on modern computers is probably quite a challenge. A separate mouse is not strictly required - a laptop trackpad is equally sufficient.

1.6.2 Software

Software requirements differ slightly between release and development, although everything that the release environment requires is also required by the development environment. I will require a modern operating system - namely Windows 10 or later, macOS 10.9 'Mavericks'[1] or later, or any modern Linux distro[2]. Basically, it just requires an operating system that is compatible with Python 3.10 and Qt5, since I'll be using these in the project. Of course, Qt5 will need to be installed on the user's computer, although it's standard pretty much everywhere these days.

Python 3.10 won't actually be required for the end user, because I will be compiling the app into a stand-alone binary executable for release, and this binary will contain the required Python runtime and dependencies. However, if the user wishes to download and run the source code themself, then they will need Python 3.10 and the package dependencies: `numpy`, `nptyping`, and `pyqt5`. These can be automatically installed with the command `python -m pip install -r requirements.txt` from the root of the repository. `numpy` is a maths library that allows for fast matrix maths; `nptyping` is used by `mypy` for type-checking and isn't actually a runtime dependency but the imports in the `typing` module fail if it's not installed at runtime; and `pyqt5` is a library that just allows interop between Python and Qt5, which is originally a C++ library.

In the development environment, I use PyCharm for actually writing my code, and I use a virtual environment to isolate my project dependencies. There are also some development dependencies listed in the file `dev_requirements.txt`. They are: `mypy`, `pyqt5-stubs`, `flake8`, `pycodestyle`, `pydocstyle`, and `pytest`. `mypy` is a static type checker[3]; `pyqt5-stubs` is a collection of type annotations for the PyQt5 API for `mypy` to use; `flake8`, `pycodestyle`, and `pydocstyle` are all linters; and `pytest` is a unit testing framework. I use these libraries to make sure my code is good quality and actually working properly during development.

[1] Python 3.10 won't compile on any earlier versions of macOS[6]

[2] Specifying a Linux version is practically impossible. Python 3.10 isn't available in many package repositories, but will compile on any modern distro. Qt5 is available in many package repositories and can be compiled on any `x86` or `x86_64` generic Linux machine with `gcc` version 5 or later[7]

[3] Python has weak, dynamic typing with optional type annotations but `mypy` enforces these static type annotations

1.7 Success criteria

The main aim of the app is to help teach students about linear transformations. As such, the primary measure of success will be letting teachers get to grips with the app and then asking if they would use it in the classroom or recommend it to students to use at home.

Additionally, the app must fulfil some basic requirements:

1. It must allow the user to define multiple matrices in at least two different ways (numerically and visually)
2. It must be able to validate arbitrary matrix expressions
3. It must be able to render any valid matrix expression
4. It must be able to animate any valid matrix expression
5. It must be able to display information about the currently rendered transformation (determinant, eigenlines, etc.)
6. It must be able to save and load sessions (defined matrices, display settings, etc.)
7. It must allow the user to define and transform arbitrary polygons

Defining multiple matrices is a feature that I thought was lacking from every other solution I researched, and I think it would make the app much easier to use, so I think it's necessary for success. Validating matrix expressions is necessary because if the user tries to render an expression that doesn't make sense, has an undefined matrix, or contains the inverse of a singular matrix, then we have to disallow that or else the app will crash.

Visualizing matrix expressions as linear transformations is the core part of the app, so basic rendering of them is definitely a requirement for success. Animating these expressions is also a pretty crucial part of the app, so I would consider this necessary for success. Displaying the information of a matrix transformation is also very useful for building understanding, so I would consider this needed to succeed.

Saving and loading isn't strictly necessary for success, but it is a standard part of many apps, so will likely be expected by users, and it will benefit the app by allowing teachers to plan lessons in advance and save the matrices they've defined for that lesson to be loaded later.

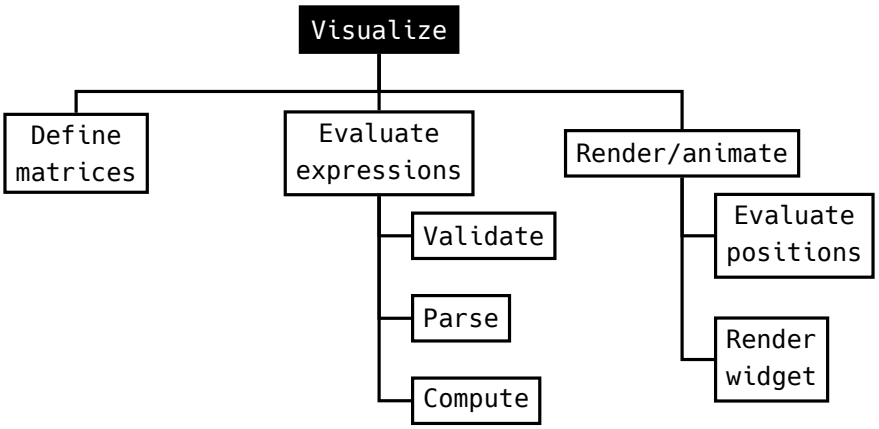
Transforming polygons is the lowest priority item on this list and will likely be implemented last, but it would definitely benefit learning. I wouldn't consider it necessary for success, but it would be very good to include, and it's certainly a feature that I want to have.

If the majority of teachers would use and/or recommend the app and it meets all of these points, then I will consider the app as a whole to be a success.

2 Design

2.1 Problem decomposition

I have decomposed the problem of visualization as follows:



Defining matrices is key to visualization because we need to have matrices to actually visualize. This is a key part of the app, and the user will be able to define multiple separate matrices numerically and visually using the GUI.

Evaluating expressions is another key part of the app and can be further broken down into validating, parsing, and computing the value. Validating an expression simply consists of checking that it adheres to a set of syntax rules for matrix expressions, and that it only contains matrices which have already been defined. Parsing consists of breaking an expression down into tokens, which are then much easier to evaluate. Computing the expression with these tokens is then just a series of simple operations, which will produce a final matrix at the end.

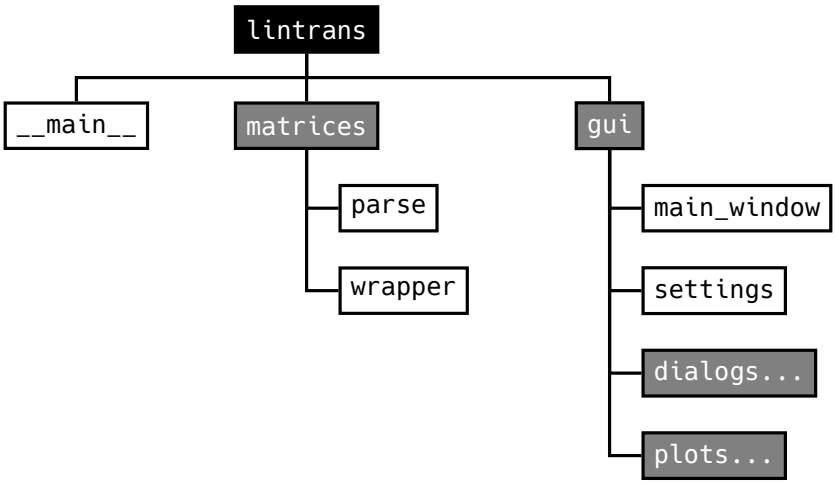
Rendering and animating will likely be the largest part in reality, but I've only decomposed it into simple blocks here. Evaluating positions involves evaluating the matrix expression that the user has input and using the columns of the resultant matrix to find the new positions of the basis vectors, and then extrapolating this for the rest of the plane. Rendering onto the widget is likely to be quite complicated and framework-dependent, so I've abstracted away the details for brevity here. Rendering will involve using the previously calculated values to render grid lines and vectors. Animating will probably be a `for` loop which just renders slightly different matrices onto the widget and sleeps momentarily between frames.

I have deliberately broken this problem down into parts that can be easily translated into modules in my eventual coded solution. This is simply to ease the design and development process, since now I already know my basic project structure. This problem could've been broken down into the parts that the user will directly interact with, but that would be less useful to me when actually starting development, since I would then have to decompose the problem differently to write the actual code.

2.2 Structure of the solution

2.2.1 The main project

I have decomposed my solution like so:



The `lintrans` node is simply the root of the whole project. `__main__` is the Python way to make the project executable as `python -m lintrans` on the command line. For release, I will package it into a standalone binary executable.

`matrices` is the package that will allow the user to define, validate, parse, evaluate, and use matrices. The `parse` module will contain functions to validate matrix expressions - likely using regular expressions - and functions to parse matrix expressions. It will not know which matrices are defined, so validation will be naïve and evaluation will be elsewhere. The `wrapper` module will contain a `MatrixWrapper` class, which will hold a dictionary of matrix names and values. It is this class which will have aware validation - making sure that all matrices are actually defined - as well the ability to evaluate matrix expressions, in addition to its basic behaviour of setting and getting matrices.

`gui` is the package that will contain all the frontend code for everything GUI-related. `main_window` is the module that will contain a `LintransMainWindow` class, which will act as the main window of the application and have an instance of `MatrixWrapper` to keep track of which matrices are defined and allow for evaluation of matrix expressions. It will also have methods for rendering and animating matrix expressions, which will be connected to buttons in the GUI. This module will also contain a simple `main()` function to instantiate and launch the application GUI.

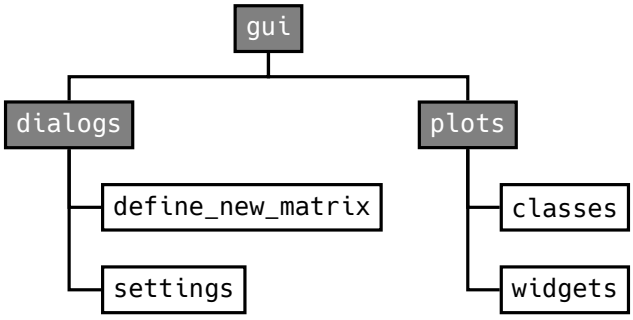
The `settings` module will contain a `DisplaySettings` dataclass[4] that will represent the settings for visualizing transformations. The `LintransMainWindow` class will have an instance of this class and check against it when rendering things. The user will be able to open a dialog to change these display settings, which will update the main window's instance of this class.

The `settings` module will also have a `GlobalSettings` class, which will represent the

[4]This is the Python equivalent of a `struct` or `record` in other languages

global settings for the application, such as the logging level, where to save the logs, whether to ask the user if they want to be prompted with a tutorial whenever they open the app, etc. This class will have defaults for everything, but the constructor will try to read these settings from a config file if possible. This allows for persistent settings between sessions. This config file will be `~/.config/lintrans.conf` on Unix-like systems, including macOS, and `C:\Users\%USER%\AppData\Roaming\lintrans\config.txt` on Windows. This difference is to remain consistent with operating system conventions[5].

2.2.2 The `gui` subpackages



The `dialogs` subpackage will contain modules with different dialog classes. It will have a `define_new_matrices` module, which will have a `DefineDialog` abstract superclass. It will also contain classes that inherit from this superclass and provide dialogs for defining new matrices visually, numerically, and as an expression in terms of other matrices. Additionally, this subpackage will contain a `settings` module, which will provide a `SettingsDialog` superclass and a `DisplaySettingsDialog` class, which will allow the user to configure the aforementioned display settings. It will also have a `GlobalSettingsDialog` class, which will similarly allow the user to configure the app's global settings through a dialog.

The `plots` subpackage will have a `classes` module and a `widgets` module. The `classes` module will have the abstract superclasses `BackgroundPlot` and `VectorGridPlot`. The former will provide helped methods to convert between coordinate systems and draw the background grid, while the latter will provide helper methods to draw transformations and their components. It will have `point_i` and `point_j` attributes and will provide methods to draw the transformed version of the grid, the vectors and their arrowheads, the eigenlines of the transformation, etc. These methods can then be called from the Qt5 `paintEvent` handler which will be declared abstract and must therefore be implemented by all subclasses.

The `plots` subpackage will also contain a `widgets` module, which will have the classes `VisualizeTransformationWidget` and `DefineVisuallyWidget`, both of which will inherit from `VectorGridPlot`. They will both implement their own `paintEvent` handler to actually draw the respective widgets, and `DefineVisuallyWidget` will also implement handlers for mouse events, allowing the user to drag around the basis vectors.

It's also worth noting here that I don't currently know how I'm going to imple-

[5] And also to avoid confusing Windows users with a `.conf` file

ment the transformation of arbitrary polygons. It will likely consist of an attribute in `VisualizeTransformationWidget` which is a list of points, and these points can be dragged around with mouse event handlers and then the transformed versions can be rendered, but I'm not yet sure about how I'm going to implement it.

2.3 Algorithm design

This section will be completed later.

2.4 Usability features

My main concern in terms of usability is colour. In the 3blue1brown videos on linear algebra, red and green are used for the basis vectors, but these colours are often hard to distinguish in most common forms of colour blindness. The most common form is deuteranopia[8], which makes red and green look incredibly similar. I will use blue and red for my basis vectors. These colours are easy to distinguish for people with deuteranopia and protanopia - the two most common forms of colour blindness. Tritanopia makes it harder to distinguish blue and yellow, but my colour scheme is still be accessible for people with tritanopia, as red and blue are very distinct in this form of colour blindness.

I will probably use green for the eigenvectors and eigenlines, which will be hard to distinguish from the red basis vector for people with red-green colour blindness, but I think that the basis vectors and eigenvectors/eigenlines will look physically different enough from each other that the colour shouldn't be too much of a problem. Additionally, I will use a tool called Color Oracle[9] to make sure that my app is accessible to people with different forms of colour blindness[6].

Another solution would be to have one default colour scheme, and allow the user to change the colour scheme to something more accessible for colour blind people, but I don't see the point in this. I think it's easier for colour blind people to just have the main colour scheme be accessible, and it's not really an inconvenience to non-colour blind people, so I think this is the best option.

The layout of my app will be self-consistent and follow standard conventions. I will have a menu bar at the top of the main window for actions like saving and loading, as well as accessing the tutorial (which will also be accessible by pressing `F1` at any point) and documentation. The dialogs will always have the confirm button in the bottom right and the cancel button just to the left of that. They will also have the matrix name drop-down on the left. This consistency will make the app easier to learn and understand.

I will also have hotkeys for everything that can have hotkeys - buttons, checkboxes, etc. This makes my life easier, since I'm used to having hotkeys for everything, and thus makes the app faster to test because I don't need to click everything. This also

[6] I actually had to clone a fork of this project[10] to get it working on Ubuntu 20.04 and adapt it slightly to create a working `jar` file

makes things easier for other people like me, who prefer to stay at the keyboard and not use the mouse. Obviously a mouse will be required for things like dragging basis vectors and polygon vertices, but hotkeys will be available wherever possible to help people who don't like using the mouse or find it difficult.

2.5 Variables and validation

This project won't actually have many variables. The main ones will be instance attributes on the `LintransMainWindow` class. It will have a `MatrixWrapper` instance, a `DisplaySettings` instance, and a `GlobalSettings` instance. These will handle the matrices and various settings respectively. Having these as instance attributes allows them to be referenced from any method in the class, and Qt5 uses lots of slots (basically callback methods) and handlers, so it's good to be able to access the attributes I need right there rather than having to pass them around from method to method.

The `MatrixWrapper` class will have a dictionary of names and matrices. The names will be single letters[7] and the matrices will be of type `MatrixType`. This will be a custom type alias representing a 2×2 `numpy` array of floats. When setting the values for these matrices, I will have to manually check the types. This is because Python has weak typing, and if we got, say, an integer in place of a matrix, then operations would fail when trying to evaluate a matrix expression, and the program would crash. To prevent this, we have to validate the type of every matrix when it's set. I have chosen to use a dictionary here because it makes accessing a matrix by its name easier. We don't have to check against a list of letters and another list of matrices, we just index into the dictionary.

The settings dataclasses will have instance attributes for each setting. Most of these will be booleans, since they will be simple binary options like *Show determinant*, which will be represented with checkboxes in the GUI. The `DisplaySettings` dataclass will also have an attribute of type `int` representing the time in milliseconds to pause during animations.

The `DefineDialog` superclass have a `MatrixWrapper` instance attribute, which will be a parameter in the constructor. When `LintransMainWindow` spawns a definition dialog (which subclasses `DefineDialog`), it will pass in a copy of its own `MatrixWrapper` and connect the `accepted` signal for the dialog. The slot (method) that this signal is connected to will get called when the dialog is closed with the *Confirm* button[8]. This allows the dialog to mutate its own `MatrixWrapper` object and then the main window can copy that mutated version back into its own instance attribute when the user confirms the change. This reduces coupling and makes everything easier to reason about and debug, as well as reducing the number of bugs, since the classes will be independent of each other. In another language, I could pass a pointer to the wrapper and let the dialog mutate it directly, but this is potentially dangerous, and Python doesn't have pointers anyway.

Validation will also play a very big role in the application. The user will be able to enter

[7] I would make these `char` but Python only has a `str` type for strings

[8] Actually when the dialog calls `.accept()`. The `Confirm` button is actually connected to a method which first takes the info and updates the instance `MatrixWrapper`, and then calls `.accept()`

matrix expressions and these must be validated. I will define a BNF schema and either write my own RegEx or use that BNF to programmatically generate a RegEx. Every matrix expression input will be checked against it. This is to ensure that the matrix wrapper can actually evaluate the expression. If we didn't validate the expression, then the parsing would fail and the program could crash. I've chosen to use a RegEx here rather than any other option because it's the simplest. Creating a RegEx can be difficult, especially for complicated patterns, but it's then easier to use it. Also, Python can compile a RegEx pattern, which makes it much faster to match against, so I will compile the pattern at initialization time and just compare expressions against that pre-compiled pattern, since we know it won't change at runtime.

Additionally, the buttons to render and animate the current matrix expression will only be enabled when the expression is valid. Textboxes in Qt5 emit a `textChanged` signal, which can be connected to a slot. This is just a method that gets called whenever the text in the textbox is changed, so I can use this method to validate the input and update the buttons accordingly. An empty string will count as invalid, so the buttons will be disabled when the box is empty.

I will also apply this matrix expression validation to the textbox in the dialog which allows the user to define a matrix as an expression involving other matrices, and I will validate the input in the numeric definition dialog to make sure that all the inputs are floats. Again, this is to prevent crashes, since a matrix with non-number values in it will likely crash the program.

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