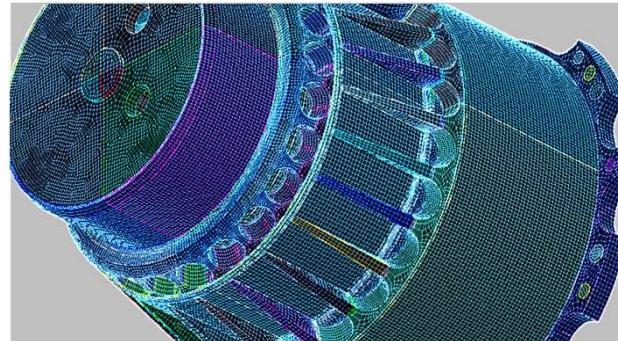


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SAND2016-9194C



Sandia
National
Laboratories



An Introduction to Automatic Mesh Generation Algorithms

Short Course, September 26, 2016
Washington, DC

Steven Owen
Sandia National Laboratories



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Agenda

Part I

8:00-9:30AM

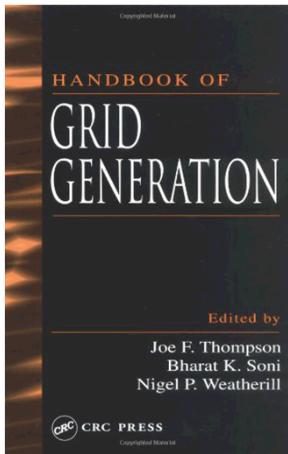
- The Simulation Process
- Geometry Basics
- Mesh Representations
- Mesh Generation Methods
- Tet/Tri Meshing Methods
- Surface Meshing Basics
- Smoothing

Part II

10:00-11:30AM

- Tet vs. Hex Meshing
- Structured vs. Unstructured
- Structured Hex Methods
- Unstructured Hex Methods
- Hex Dual Representations
- Overlay Grid
- Automatic Block Decomposition
- Hybrid Methods

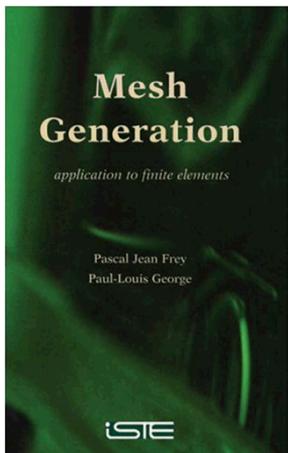
Classical References



J. F. Thompson, B. K. Soni, and N. P. Weatherill, eds.,
Handbook of Grid Generation, CRC Press, 1998.

Block-structured grids:

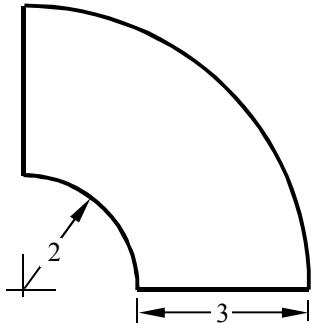
- Transfinite-interpolation, Elliptic and hyperbolic PDE systems, Harmonic mappings, ...
- Unstructured grids: Quadtrees and Octrees methods,
- Advancing-front methods, Delaunay-Voronoi methods,
- Anisotropic Grid generation, ...



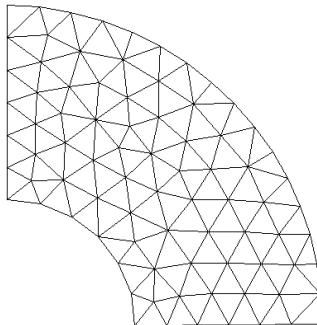
P. J. Frey and P.-L. George, **Mesh Generation - Application to Finite Elements**, Hermes Science Publishing, Oxford, UK, 1st ed., 2000, 2nd ed. 2008.

- A comprehensive survey of Tetrahedral mesh generation methods: Quadtree-octree methods, Advancing-front methods, Delaunay-based methods, ...

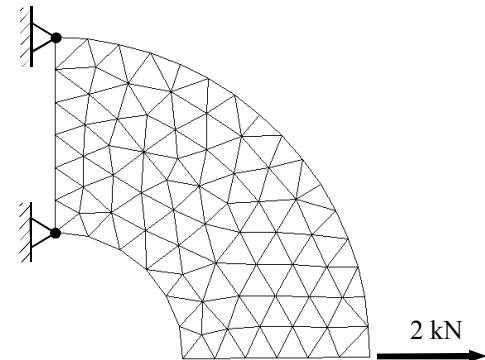
Simulation Process



1. Build CAD Model



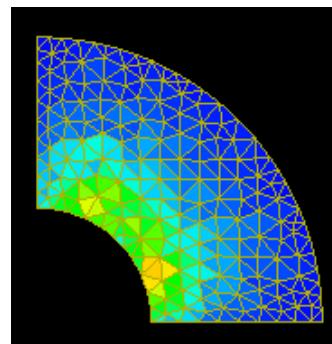
2. Mesh



3. Apply Loads and Boundary Conditions

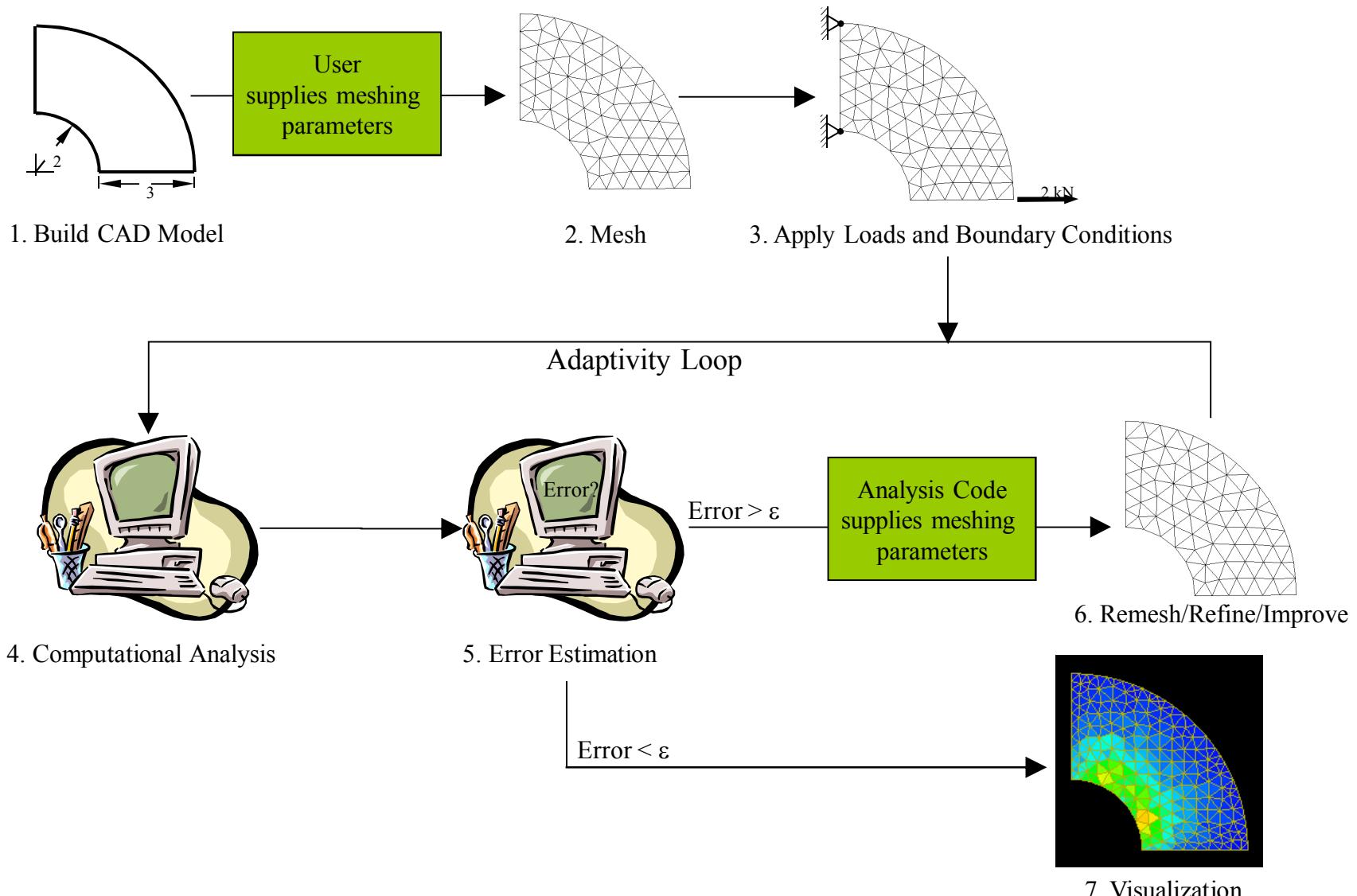


4. Computational Analysis



5. Visualization

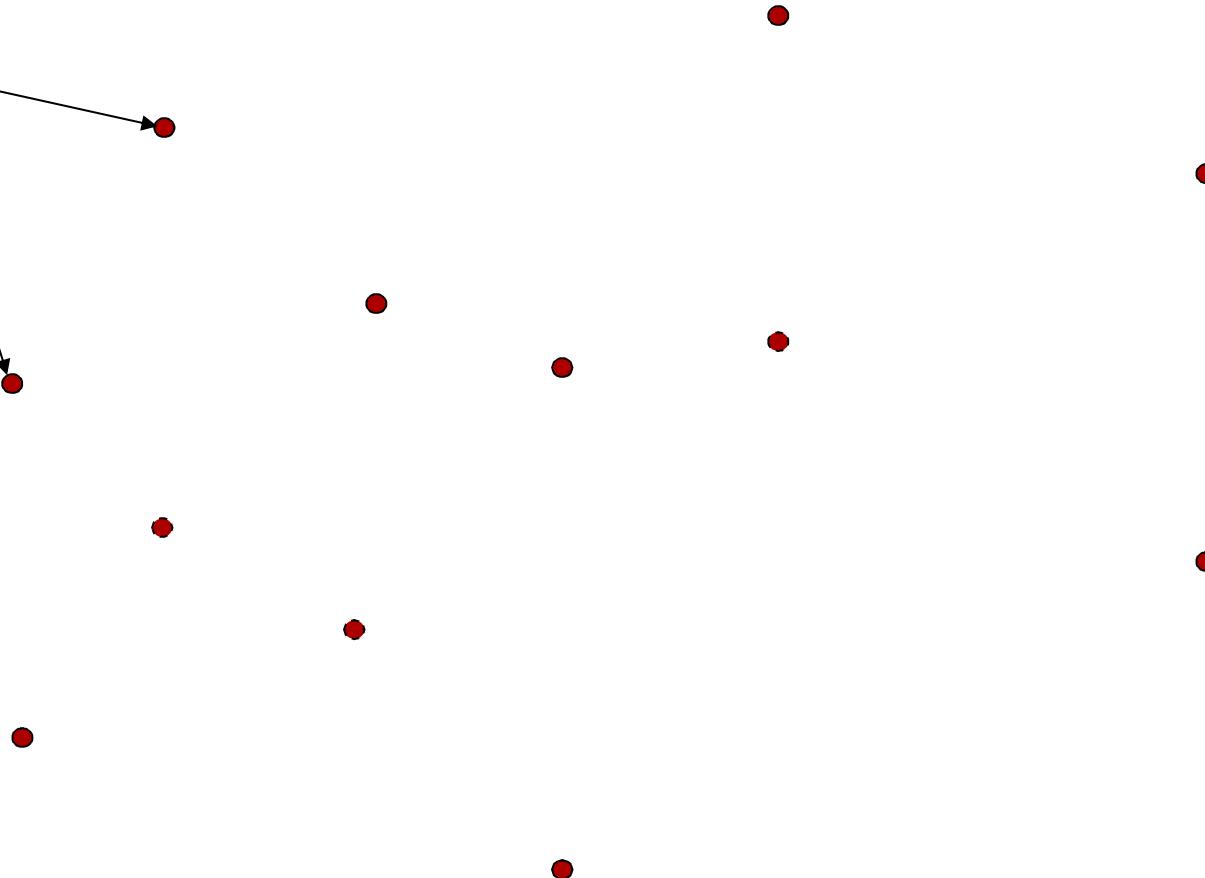
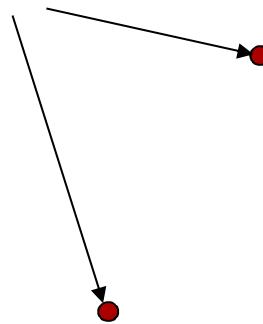
Adaptive Simulation Process



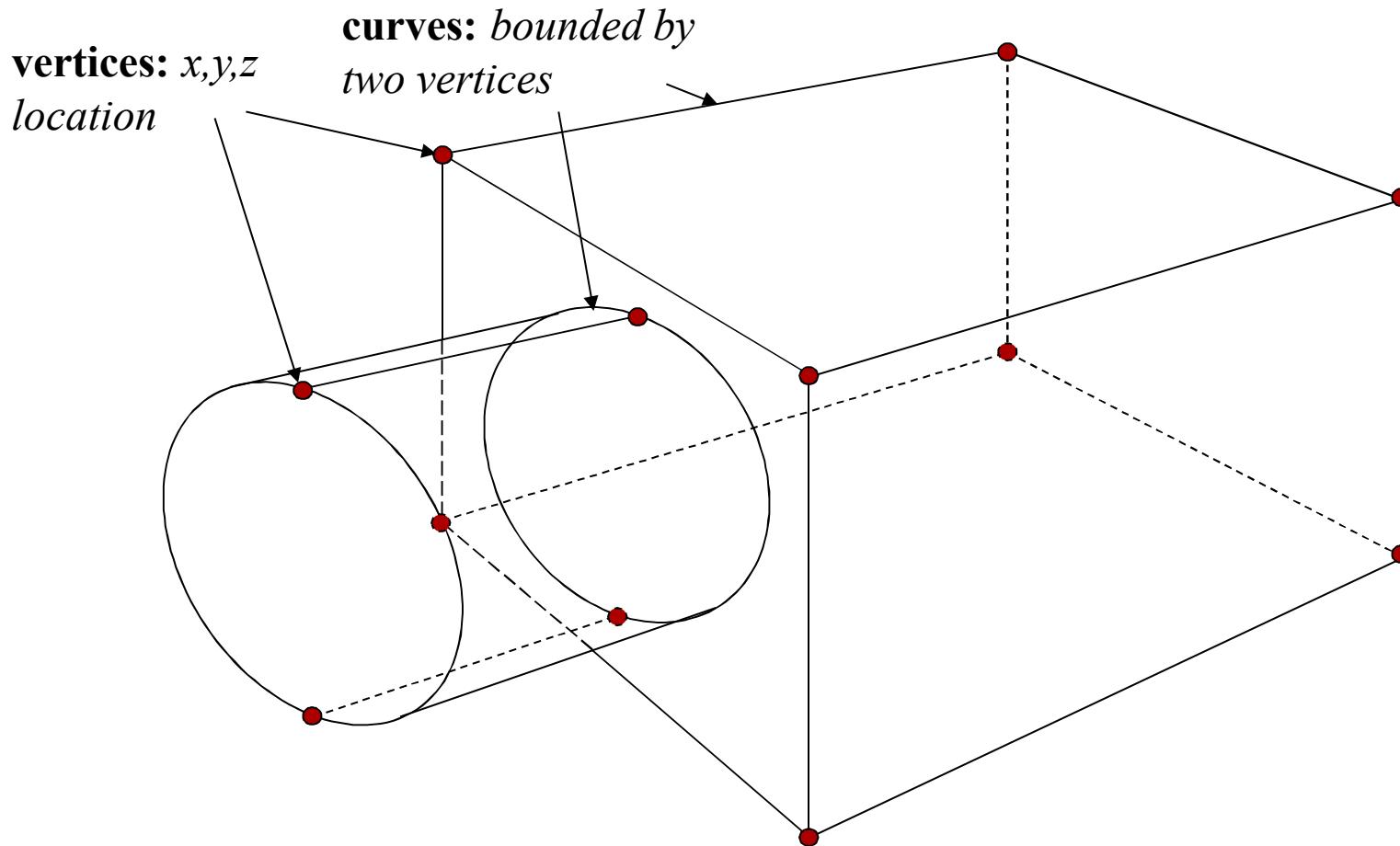
Geometry

vertices: x,y,z

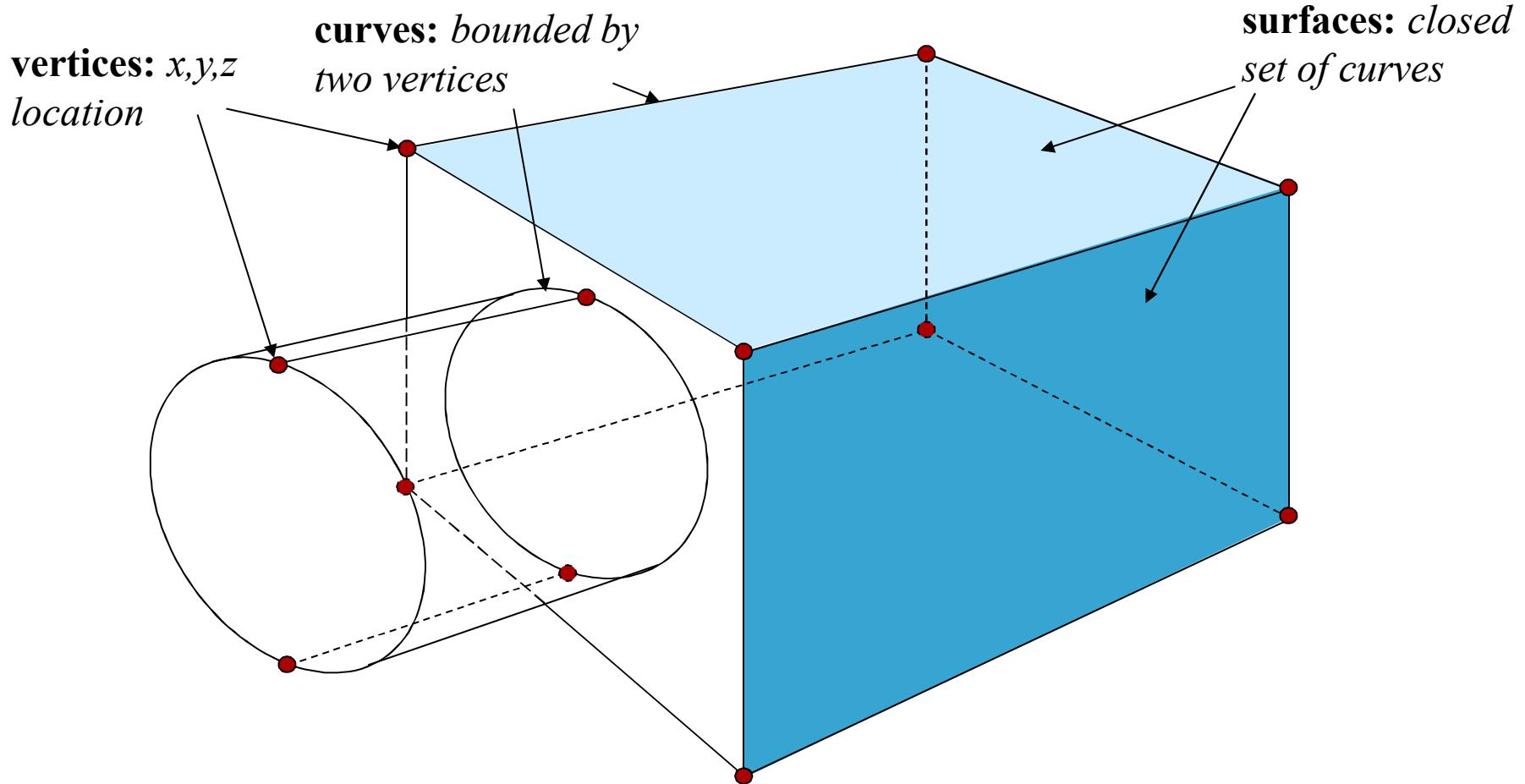
location



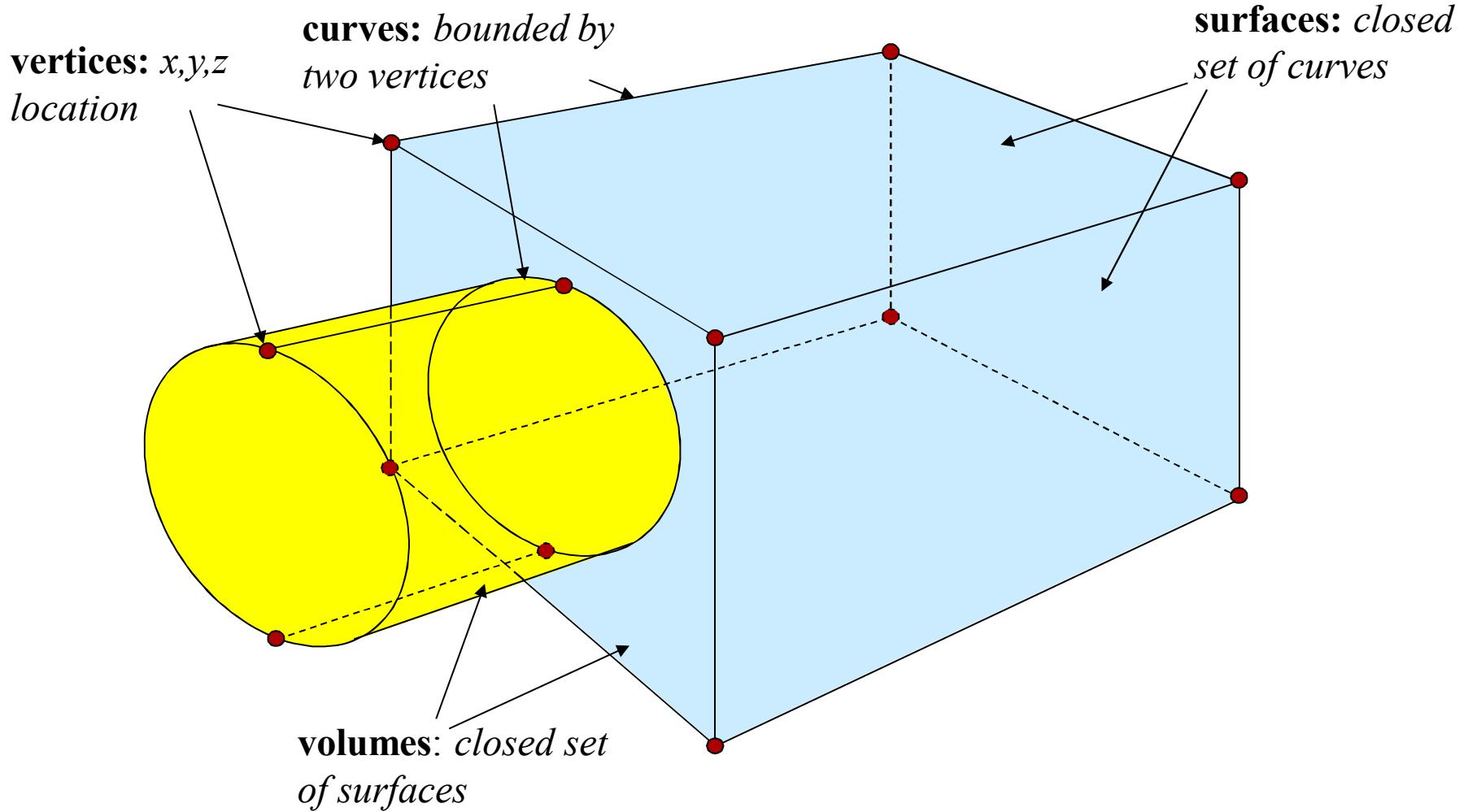
Geometry



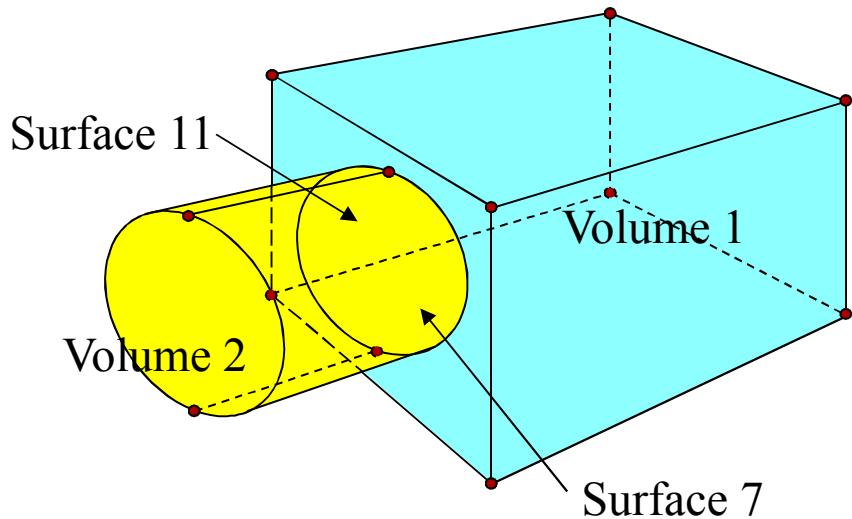
Geometry



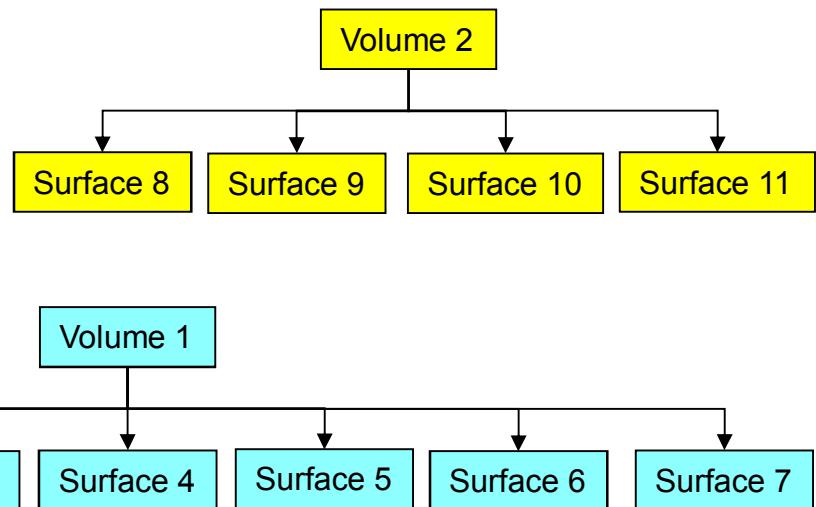
Geometry



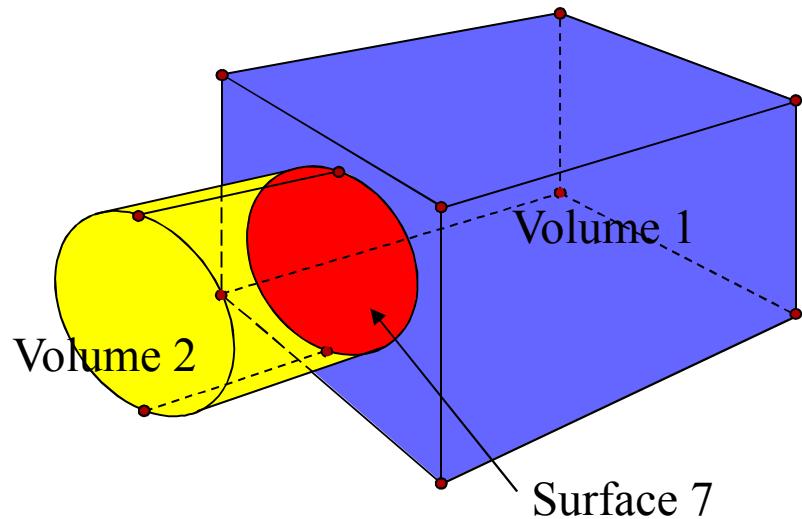
Geometry



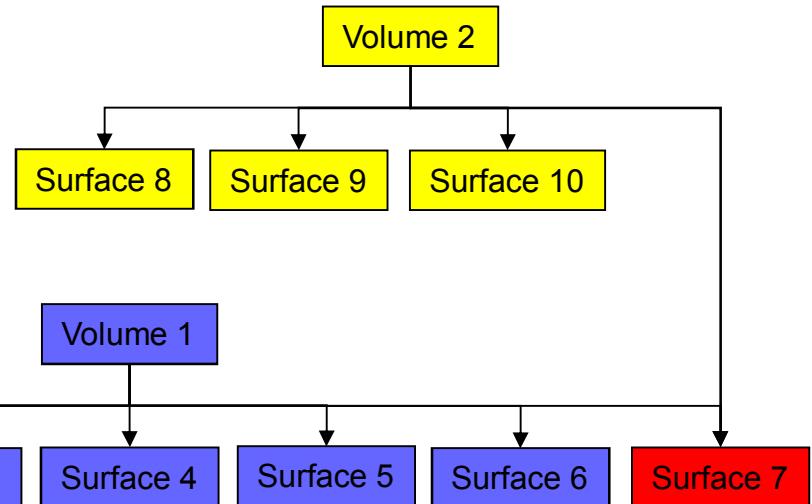
Manifold Geometry:
Each volume maintains its own set of unique surfaces



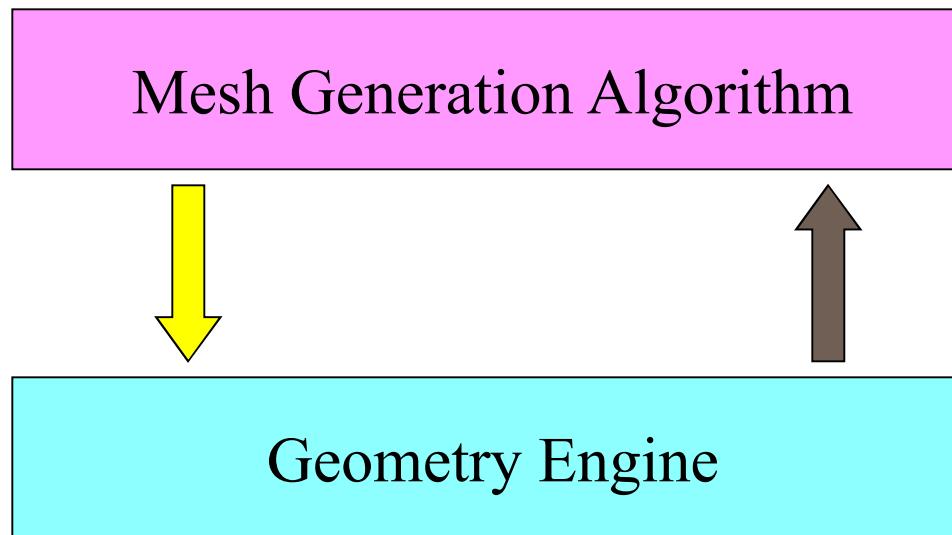
Geometry



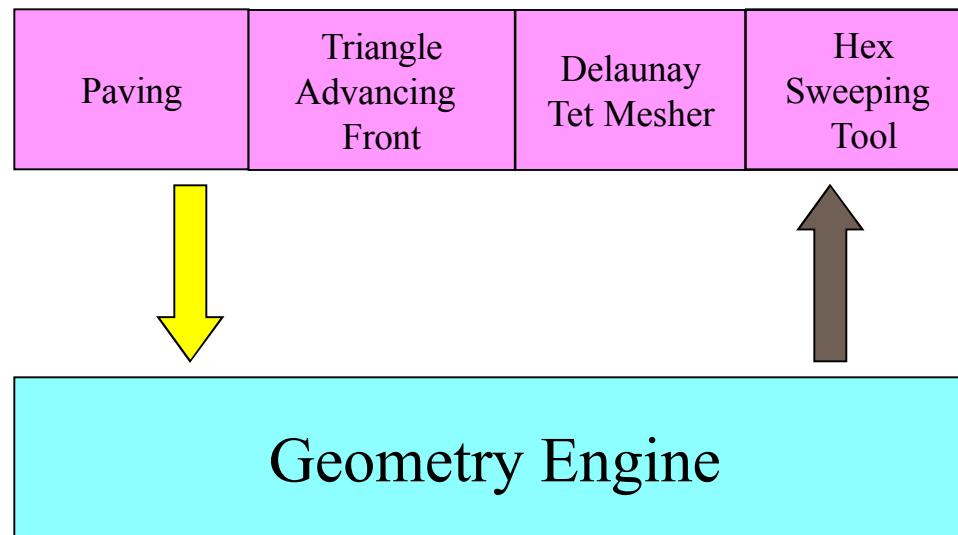
**Non-Manifold
Geometry:** *Volumes
share matching surfaces*



Geometry



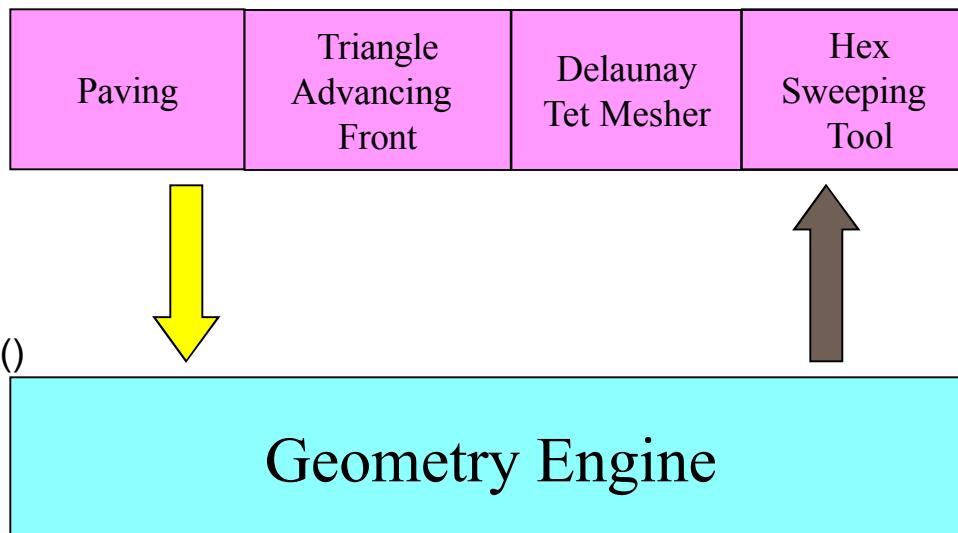
Geometry



Geometry

Geometry Query

`Curve::project_to()`
`Surface::project_to()`
`Surface::normal_at()`
`Surface::curvature_at()`



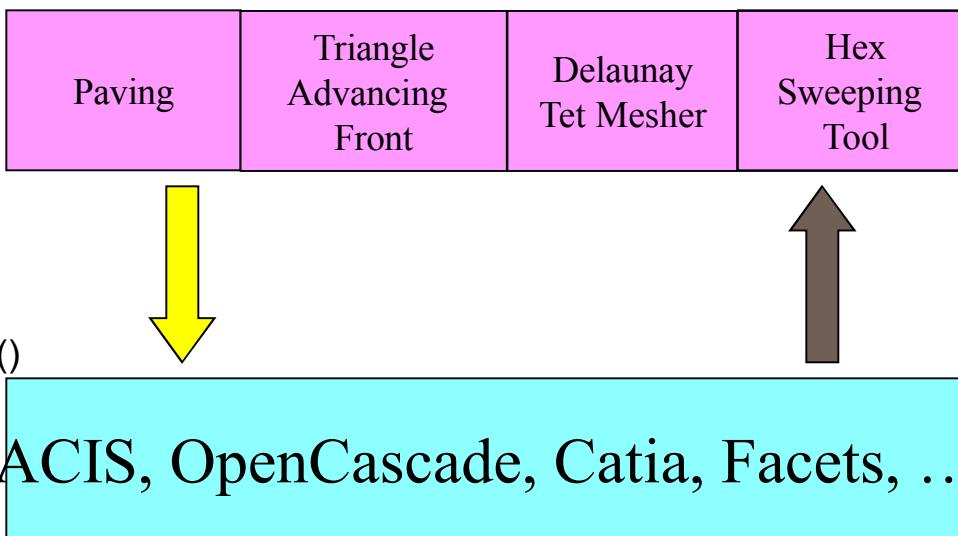
Topology Query

`Surface::curves()`
`Curve::vertices()`
`Volume::surfaces()`
`Vertex::curves()`

Geometry

Geometry Query

Curve::project_to()
Surface::project_to()
Surface::normal_at()
Surface::curvature_at()



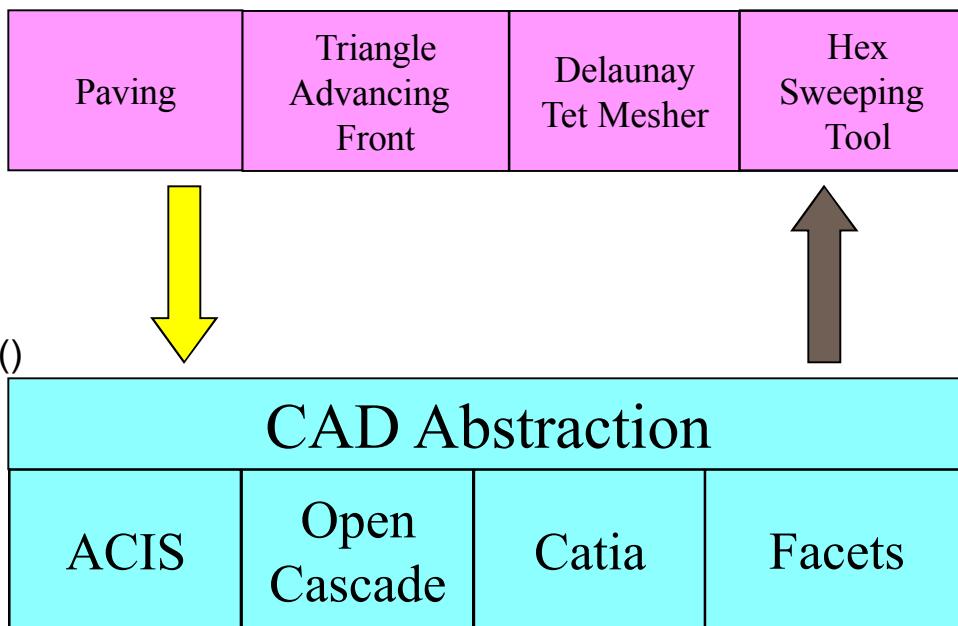
Topology Query

Surface::curves()
Curve::vertices()
Volume::surfaces()
Vertex::curves()

Geometry

Geometry Query

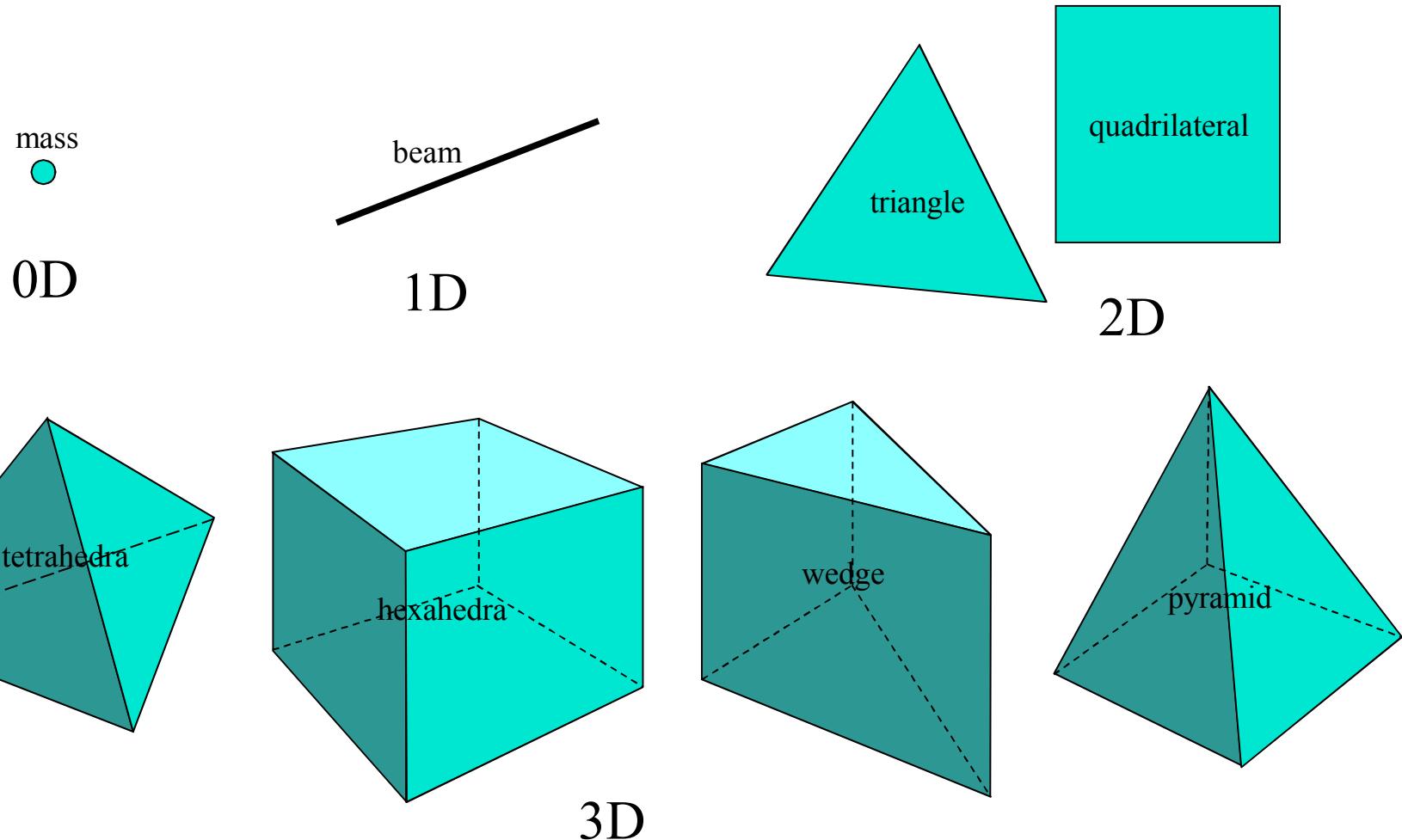
Curve::project_to()
 Surface::project_to()
 Surface::normal_at()
 Surface::curvature_at()



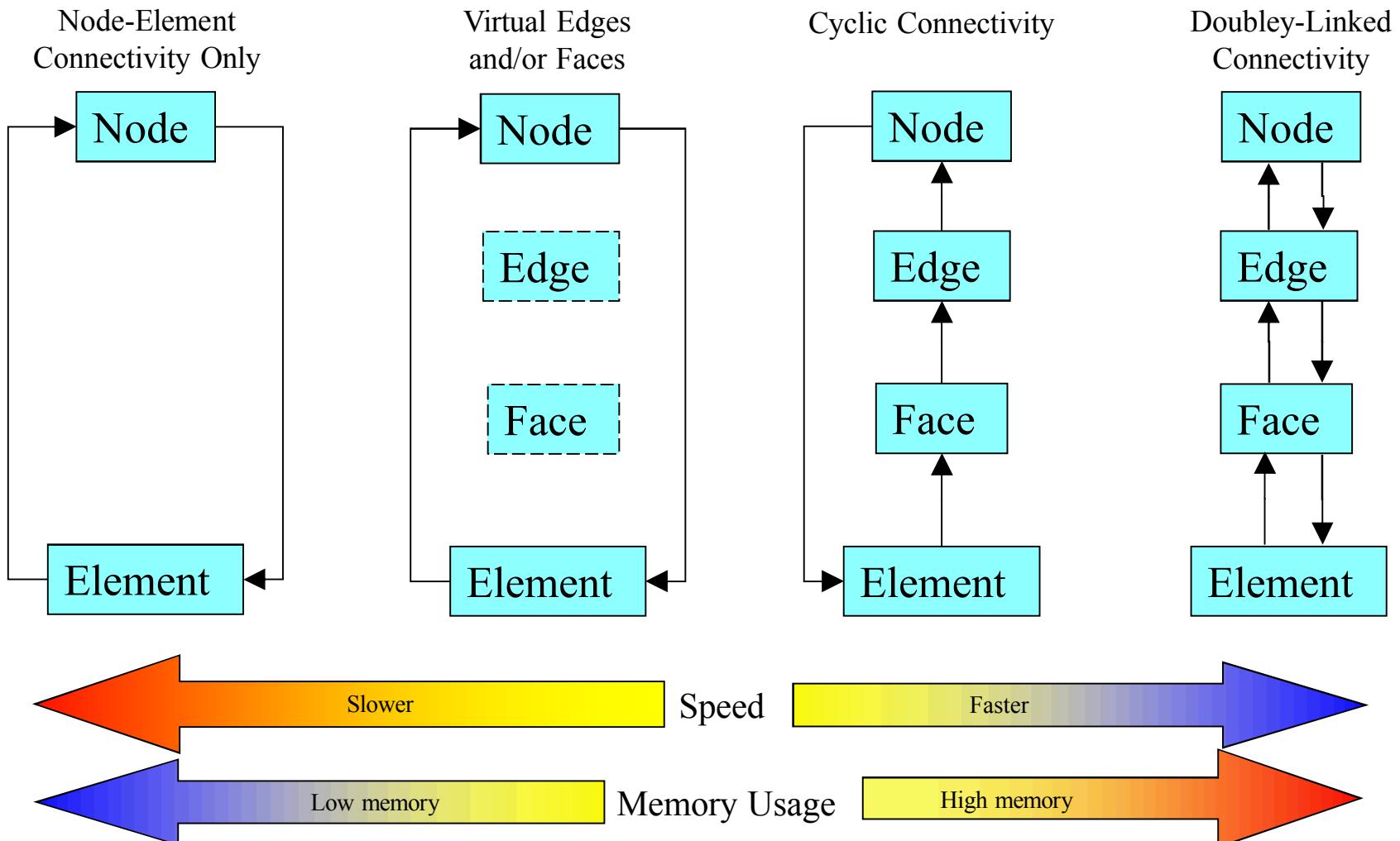
Topology Query

Surface::curves()
 Curve::vertices()
 Volume::surfaces()
 Vertex::curves()

Mesh Representation

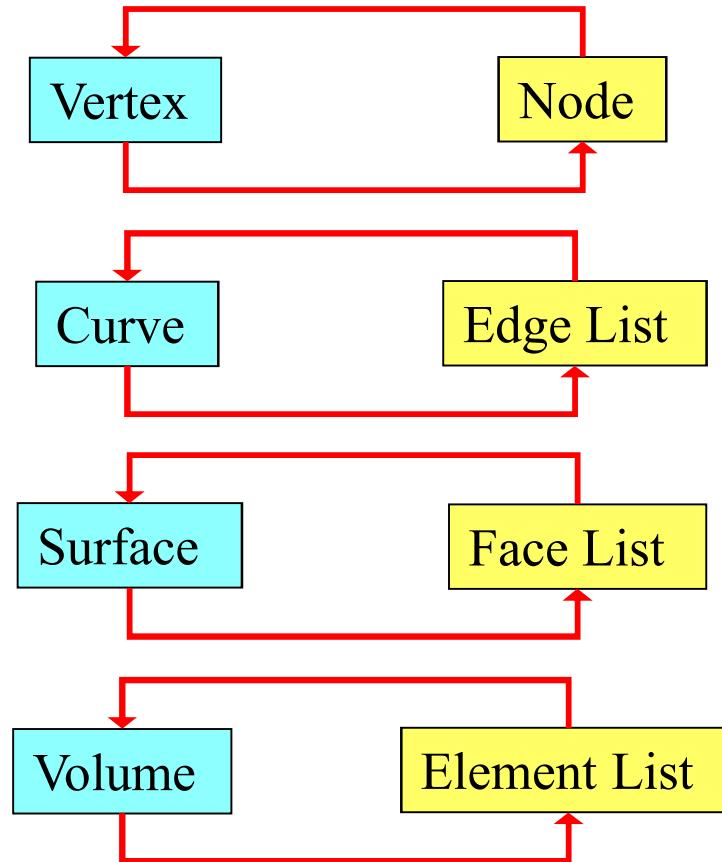


Mesh Representation



Mesh Representation

Geometry Associativity



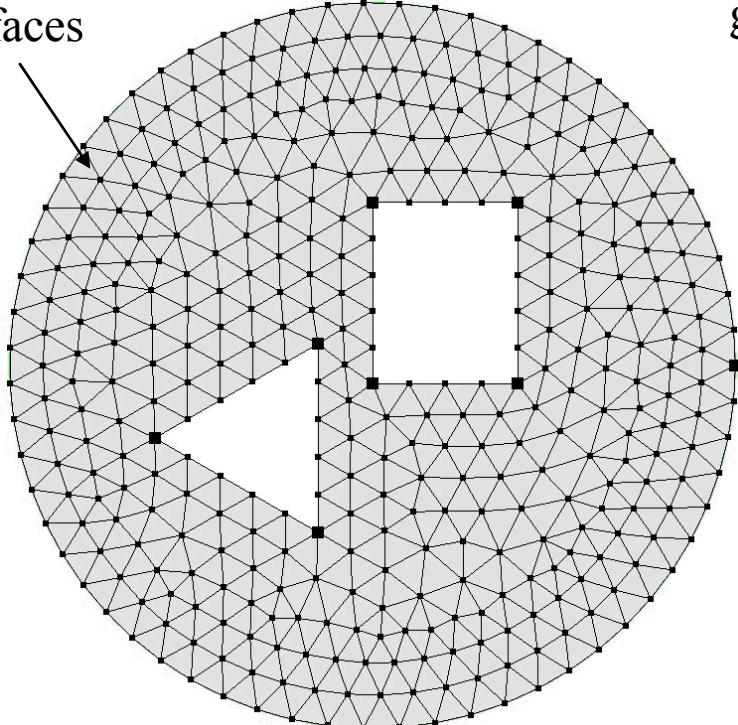
Boundary Conditions applied to geometric entities.

Delete/Modify mesh defined on geometric entity

Operations on mesh entities require conformity to geometry

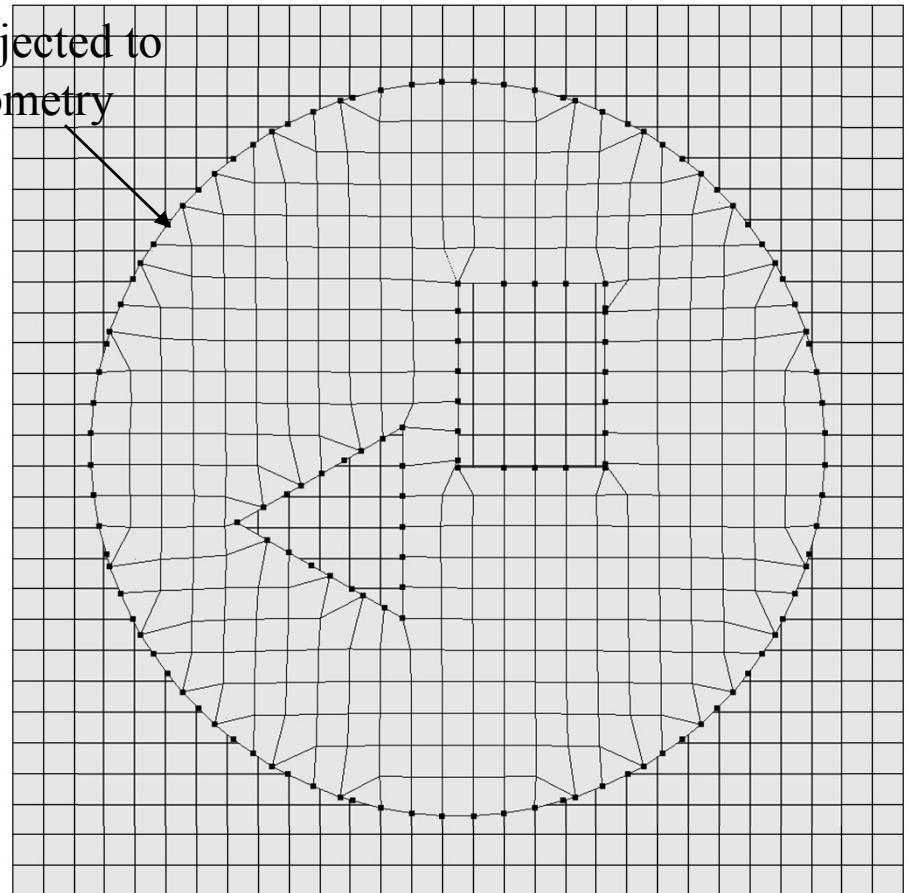
Mesh Generation Methods

mesh
surfaces



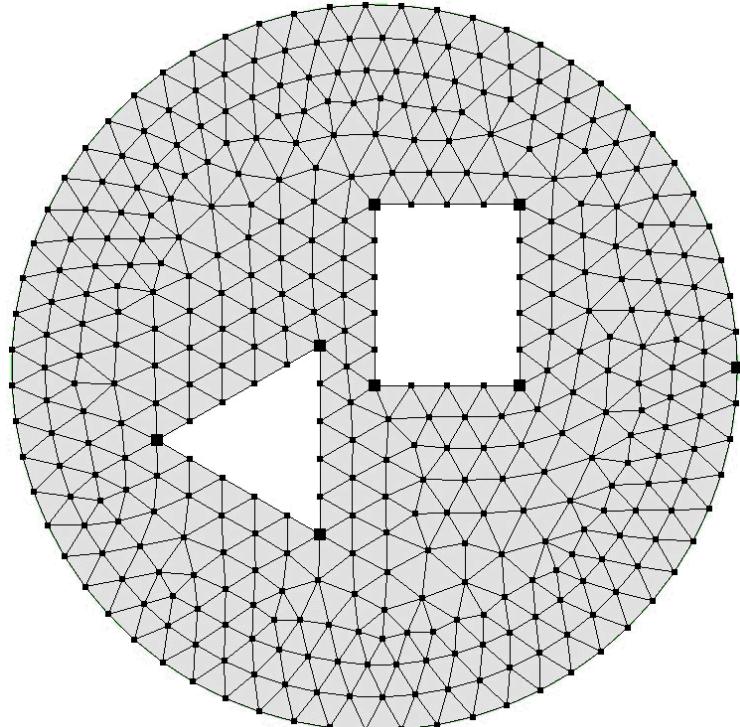
Geometry First

Nodes
projected to
geometry

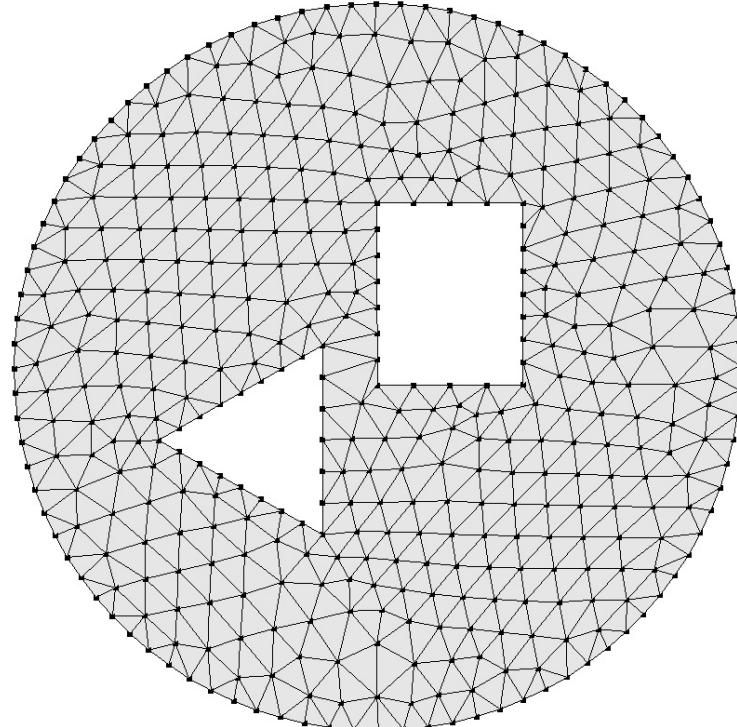


Mesh First

Mesh Generation Methods



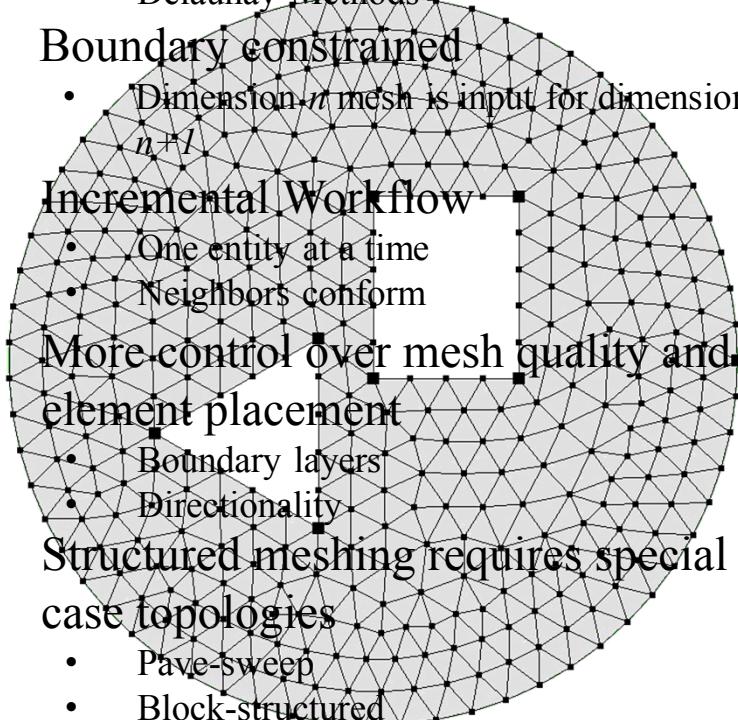
Geometry First



Mesh First

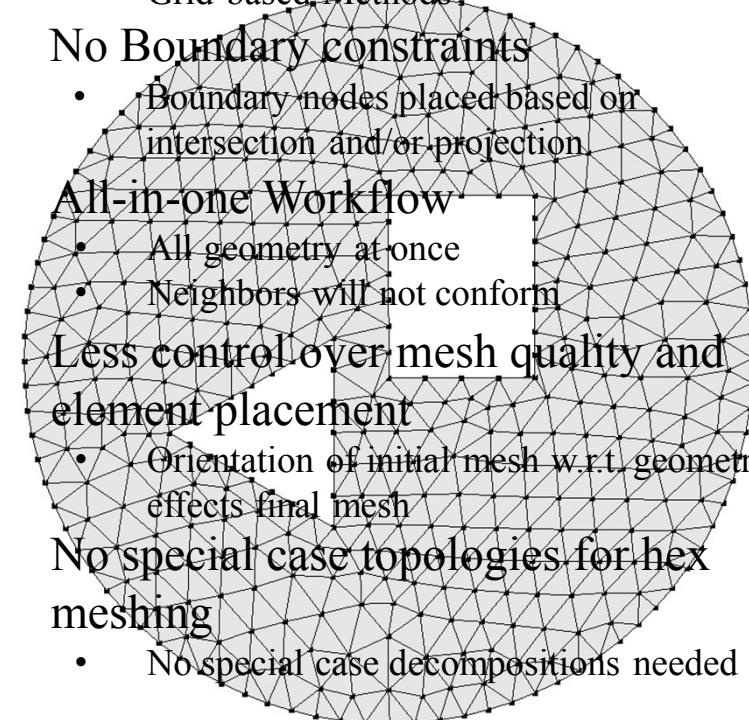
Mesh Generation Methods

- AKA. Bottom-up Meshing
 - Advancing Front
 - Delaunay Methods
- Boundary constrained
 - Dimension n mesh is input for dimension $n+1$
- Incremental Workflow
 - One entity at a time
 - Neighbors conform
- More control over mesh quality and element placement
 - Boundary layers
 - Directionality
- Structured meshing requires special case topologies
 - Pave-sweep
 - Block-structured
 - Manual/Automated decomposition required



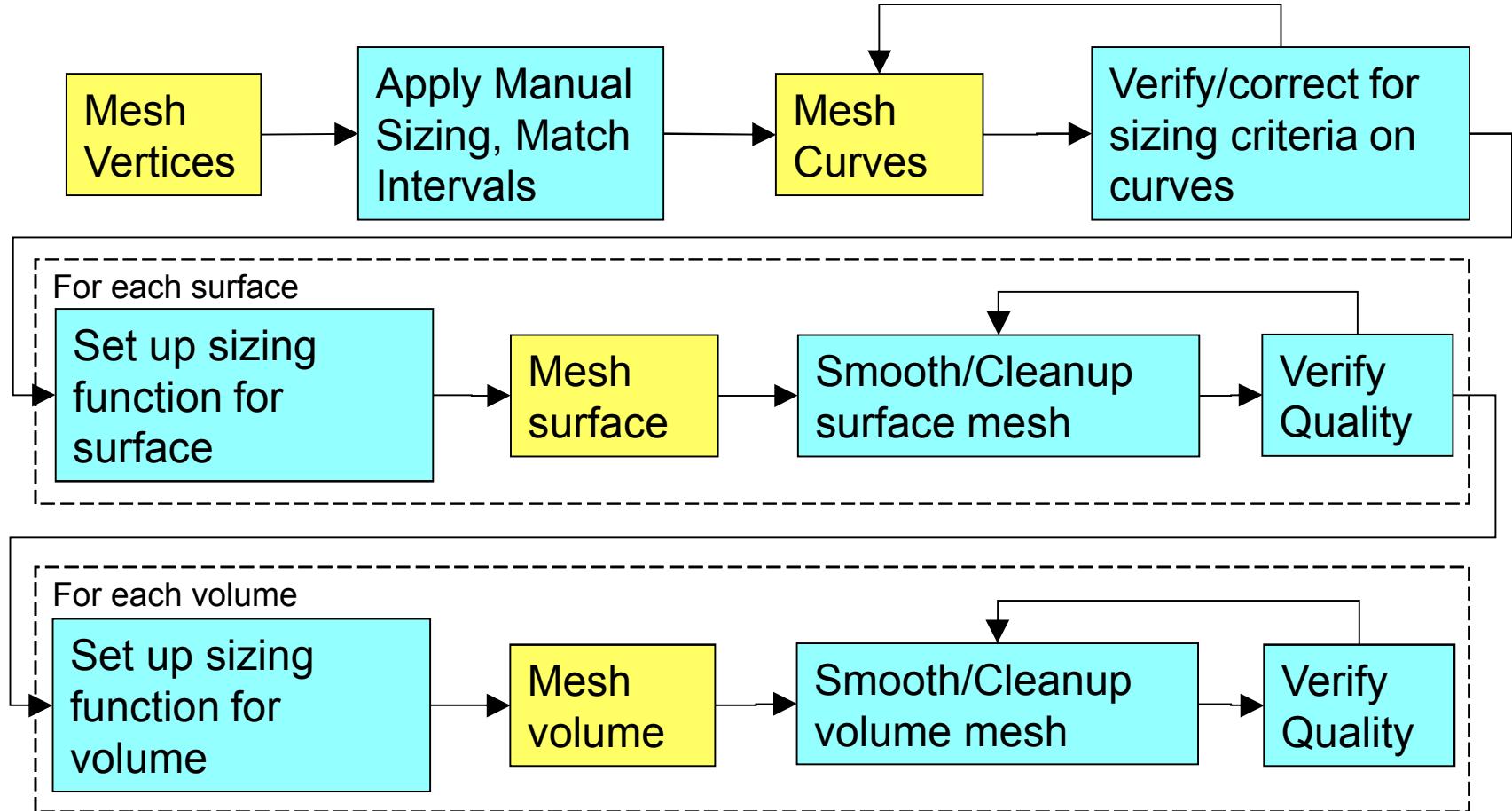
Geometry First

- AKA. Overlay Grid
 - Octree Methods
 - Grid-based Methods
- No Boundary constraints
 - Boundary nodes placed based on intersection and/or projection
- All-in-one Workflow
 - All geometry at once
 - Neighbors will not conform
- Less control over mesh quality and element placement
 - Orientation of initial mesh w.r.t. geometry effects final mesh
- No special case topologies for hex meshing
 - No special case decompositions needed



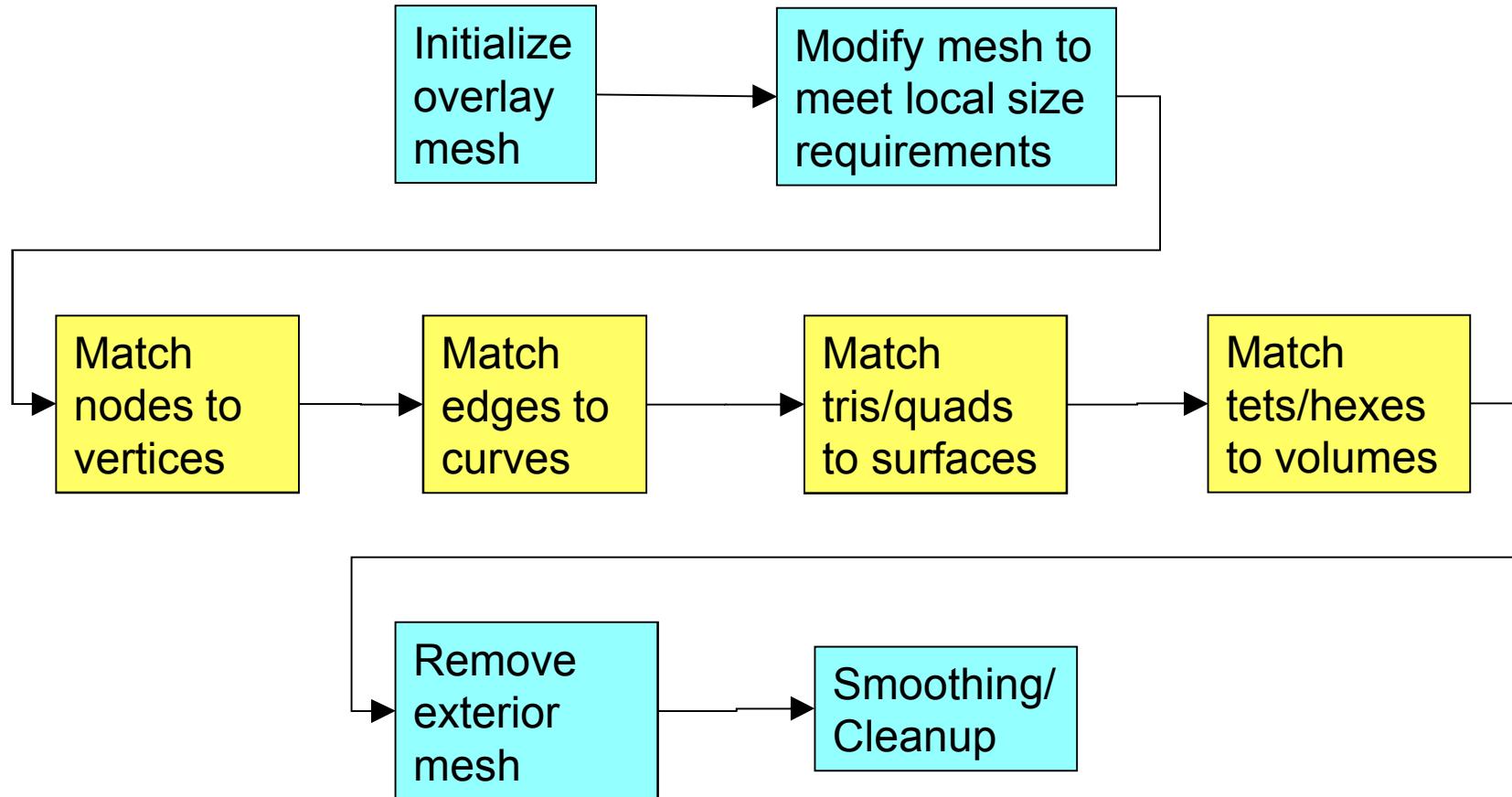
Mesh First

Mesh Generation Process

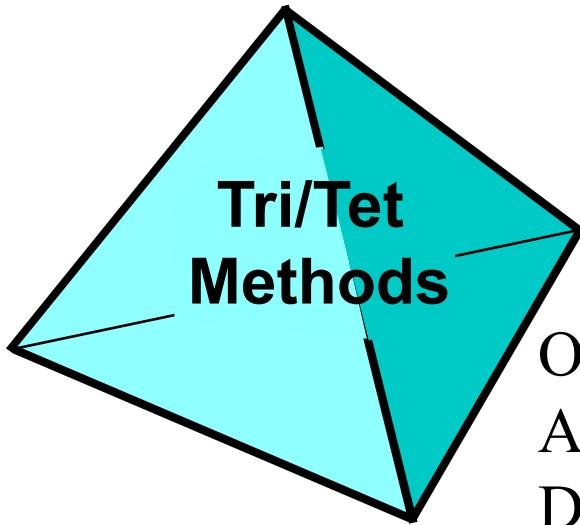


Geometry-First Mesh Generation

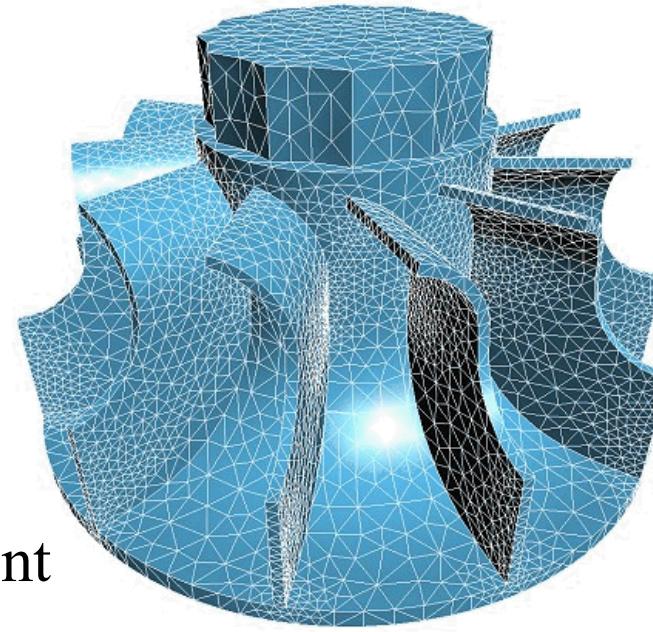
Mesh Generation Process



Mesh-First Mesh Generation



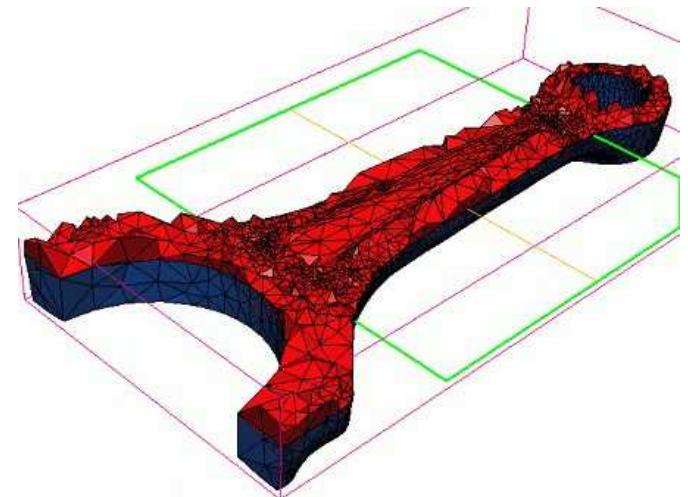
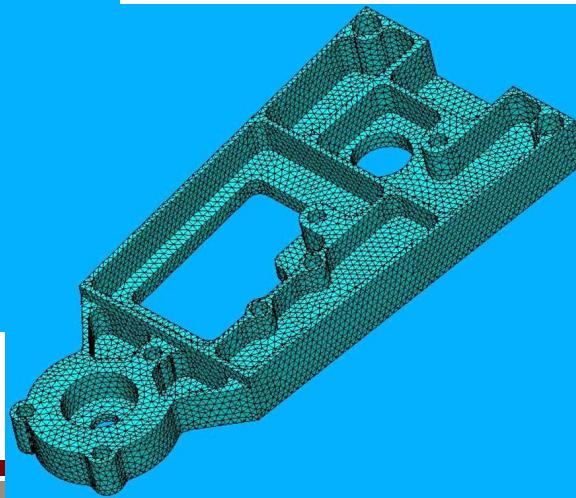
Octree
Advancing Front
Delaunay



<http://www.simulog.fr/mesh/gener2.htm>



<http://www.ansys.com>



Tet Meshing Software

A Representative Sample

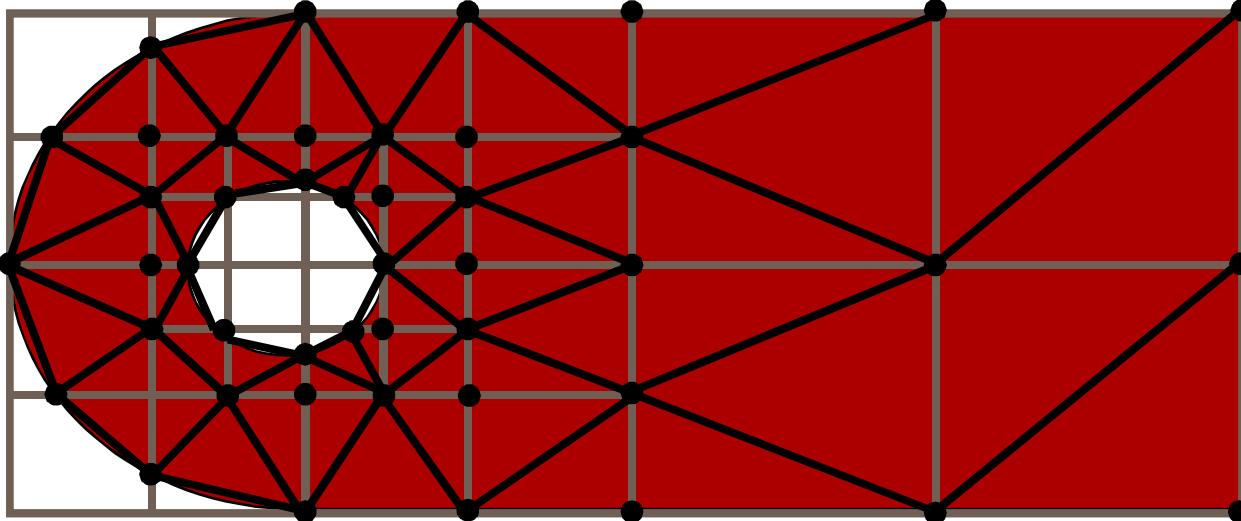
Commercial

- Tetmesh-GHS3D, INRIA, Rocquencourt, Distene France.
- MeshSim, SCOREC, RPI, Simmetrix Inc. USA.
- SolidMesh, AFLR mesh generator, SimCenter, Mississippi State Uni.,
(Altair Hypermesh)

Open Source

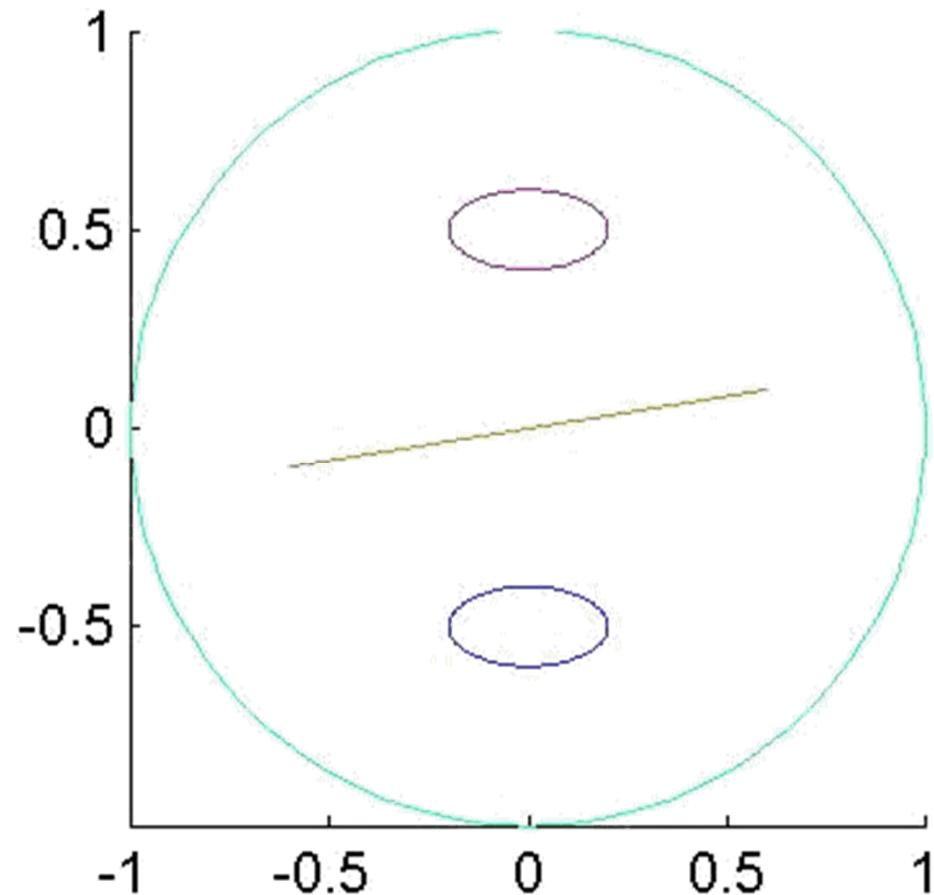
- Netgen, TU Vienna.
- Gmsh, Uni. Liege & Uni. Catholique de Louvain.
- GRUMMP, University of British Columbia.
- Pyramid, UC Berkeley.
- CGALmesh, INRIA, Sophia-Antipolis.
- TetGen, Weierstrass Institute, Berlin.

Octree/Quadtree



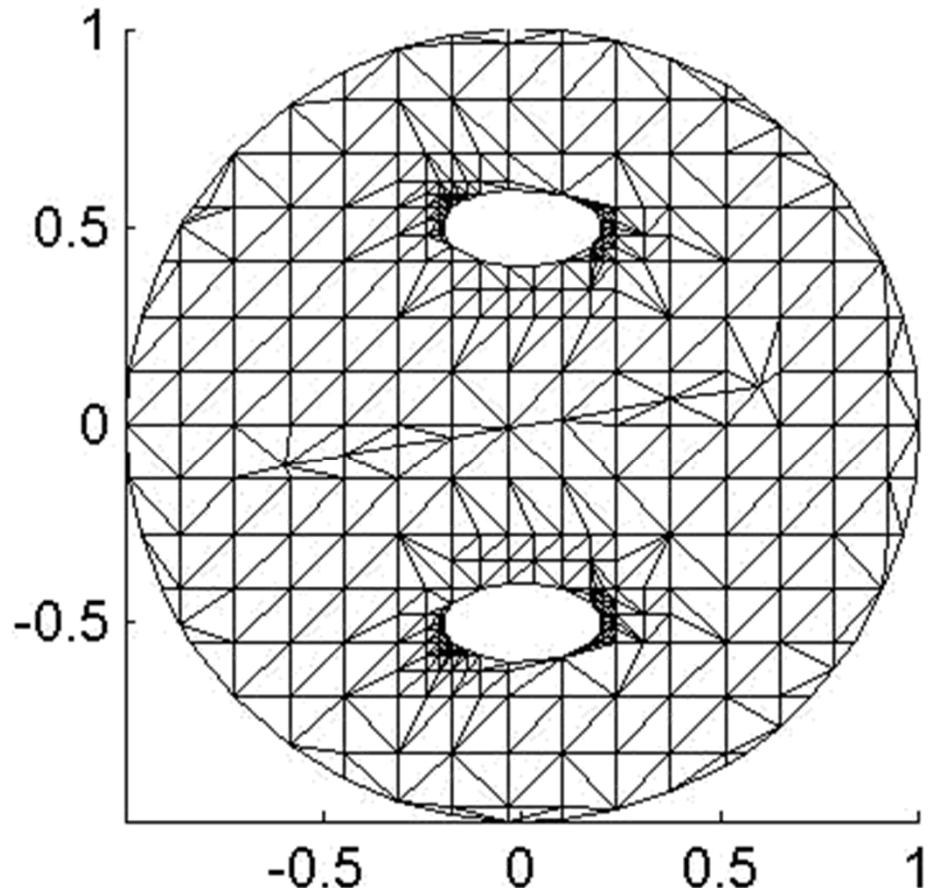
- Define initial bounding box (*root* of quadtree)
- Recursively break into 4 *leaves* per *root* to resolve geometry
- Find intersections of leaves with geometry boundary
- Mesh each *leaf* using corners, side nodes and intersections with geometry
- Delete Outside
- (Yerry and Shephard, 84), (Shepherd and Georges, 91)

Octree/Quadtree



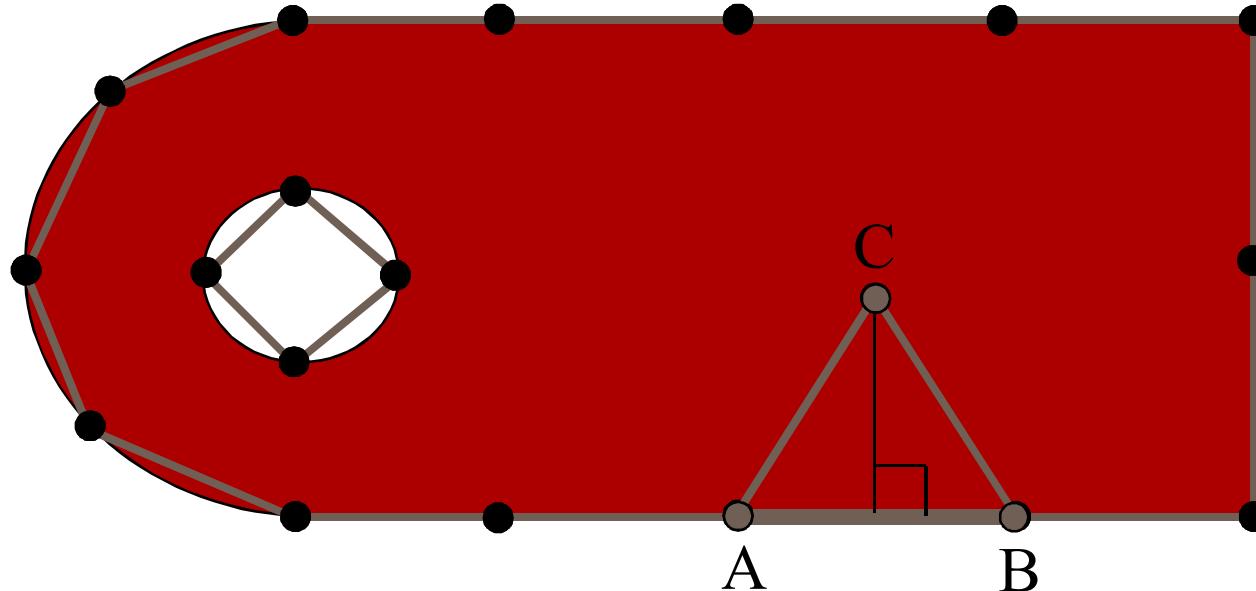
QMG,
Cornell University

Octree/Quadtree



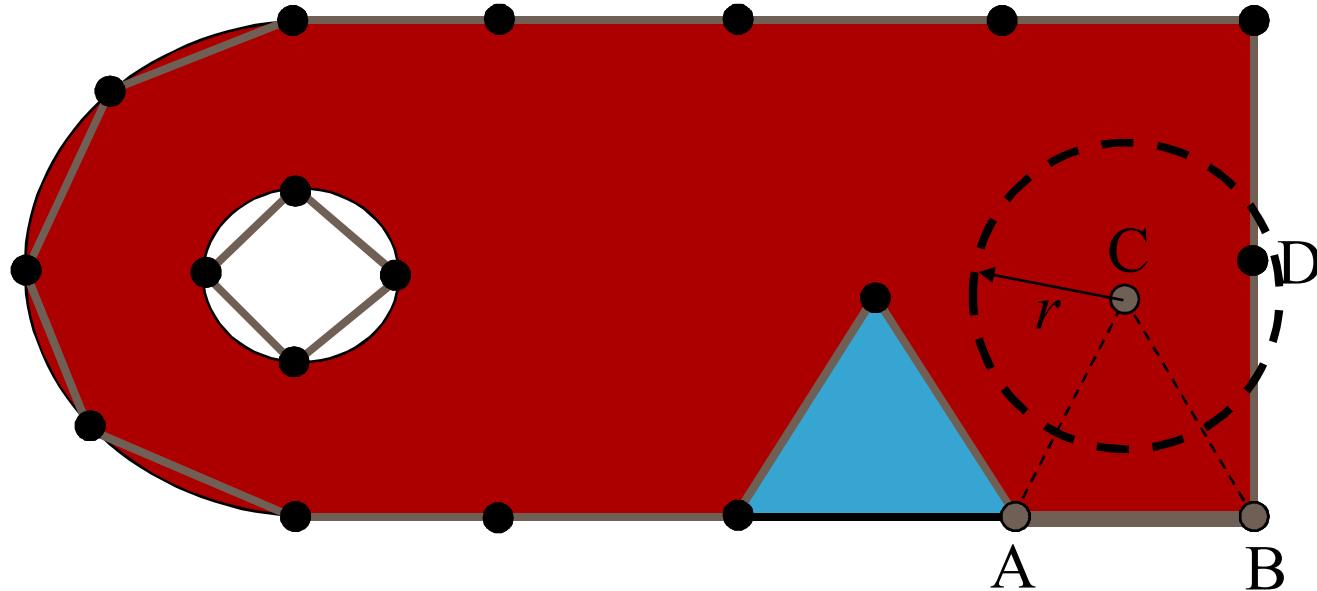
QMG,
Cornell University

Advancing Front



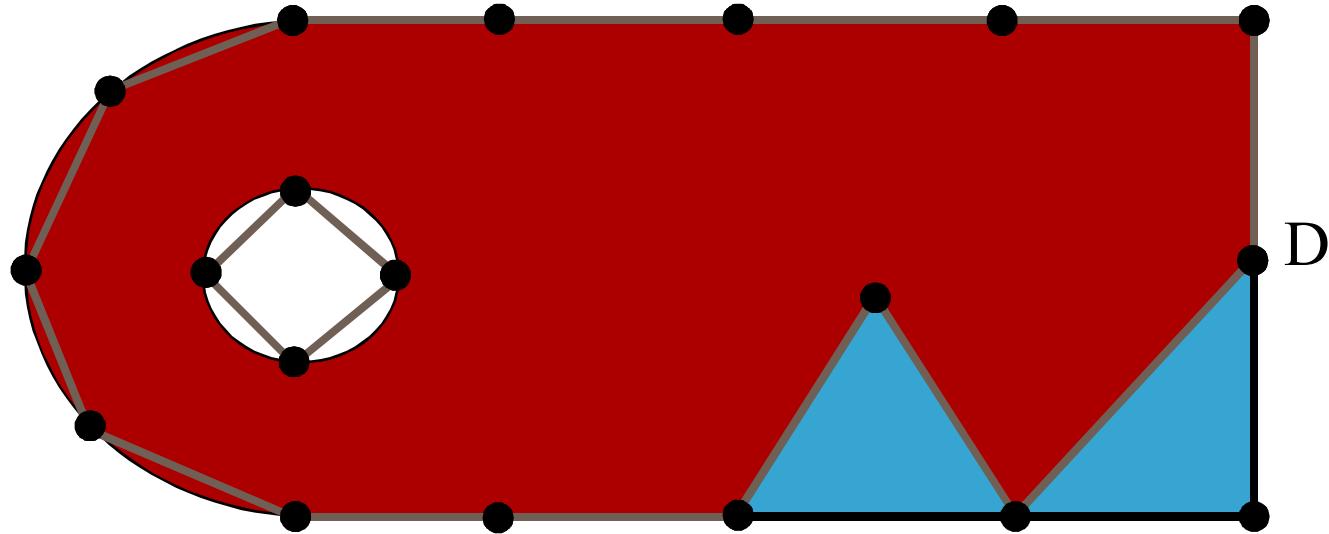
- Begin with boundary mesh - define as initial *front*
- For each edge (face) on front, locate ideal node C based on front AB

Advancing Front



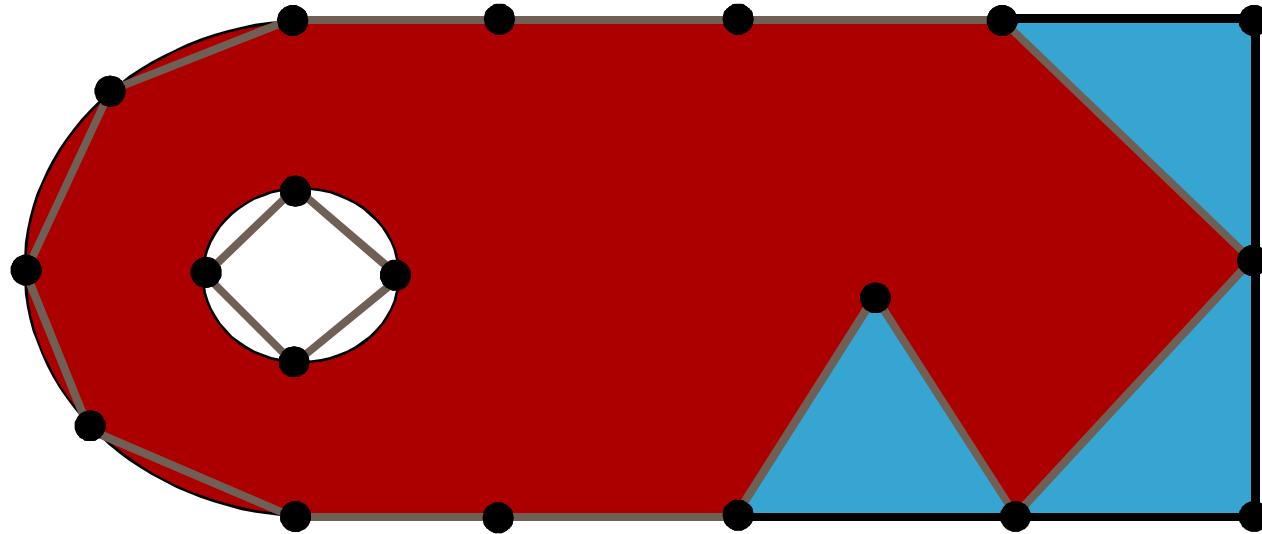
- Determine if any other nodes on current front are within search radius r of ideal location C (Choose D instead of C)

Advancing Front



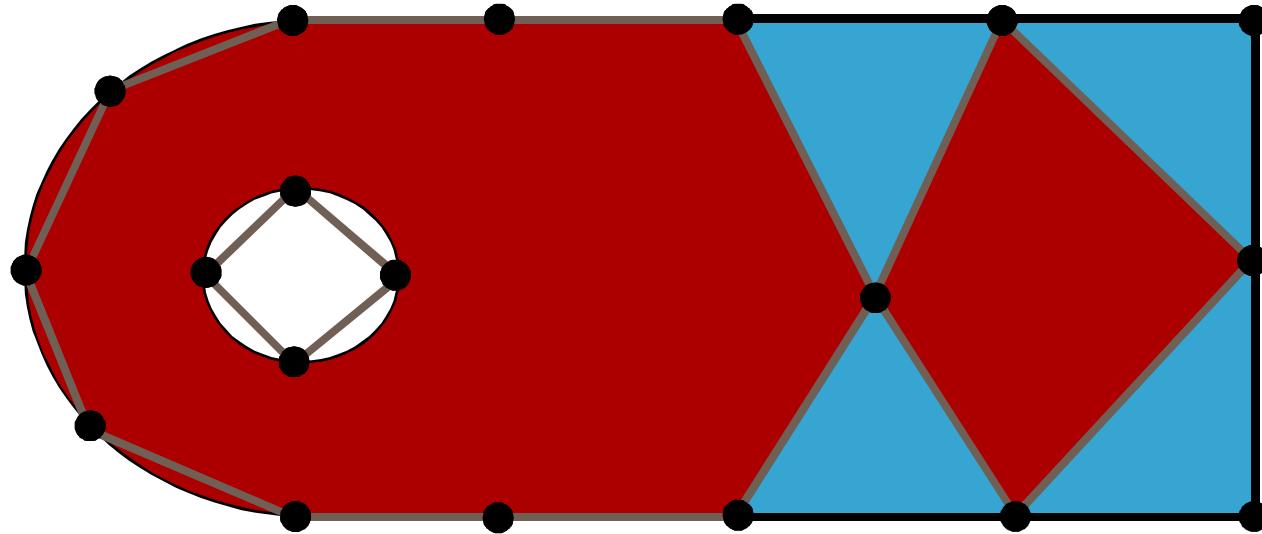
- Book-Keeping: New *front edges* added and deleted from *front* as triangles are formed
- Continue until no *front edges* remain on *front*

Advancing Front



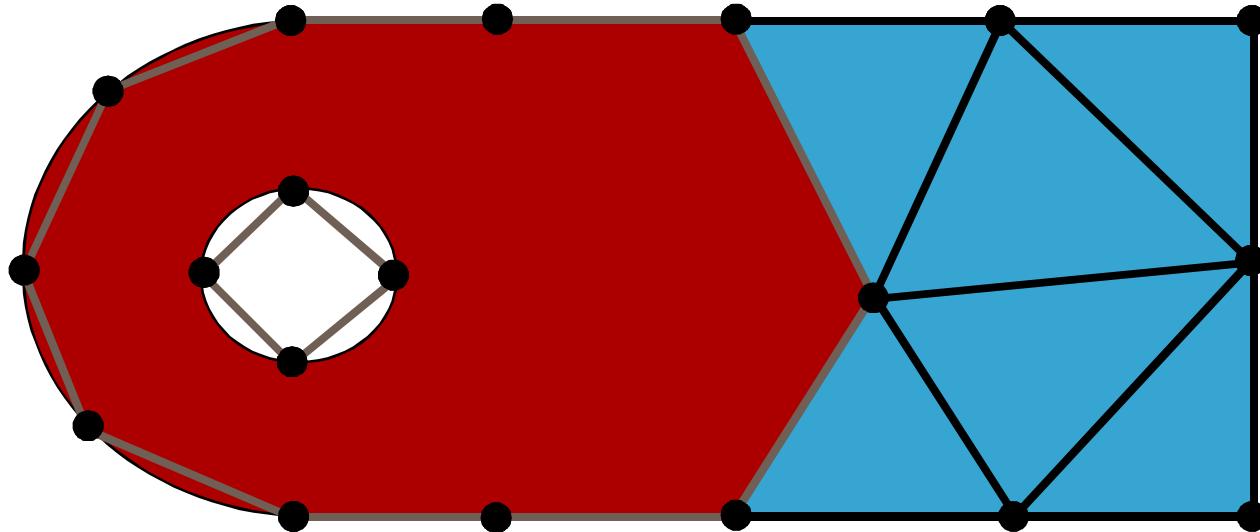
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Advancing Front



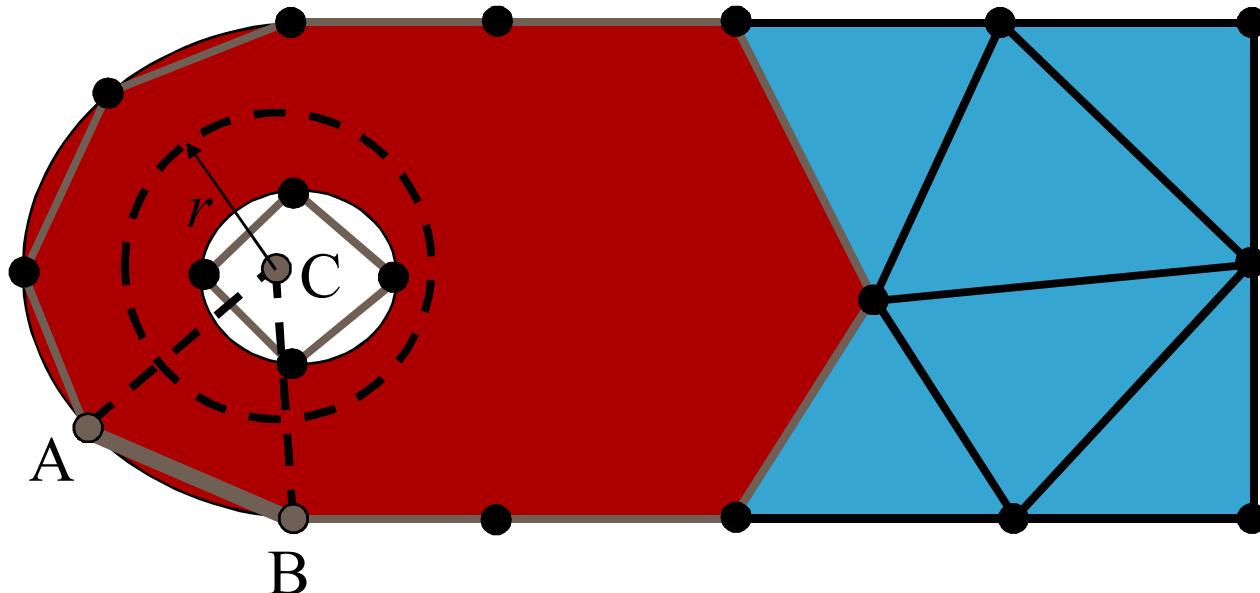
- Book-Keeping: New *front edges* added and deleted from *front* as triangles are formed
- Continue until no *front edges* remain on *front*

Advancing Front



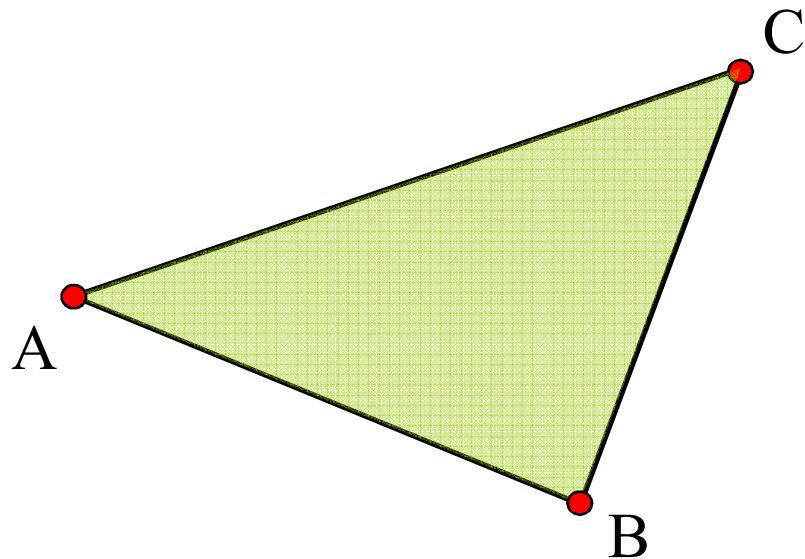
- Book-Keeping: New *front edges* added and deleted from *front* as triangles are formed
- Continue until no *front edges* remain on *front*

Advancing Front

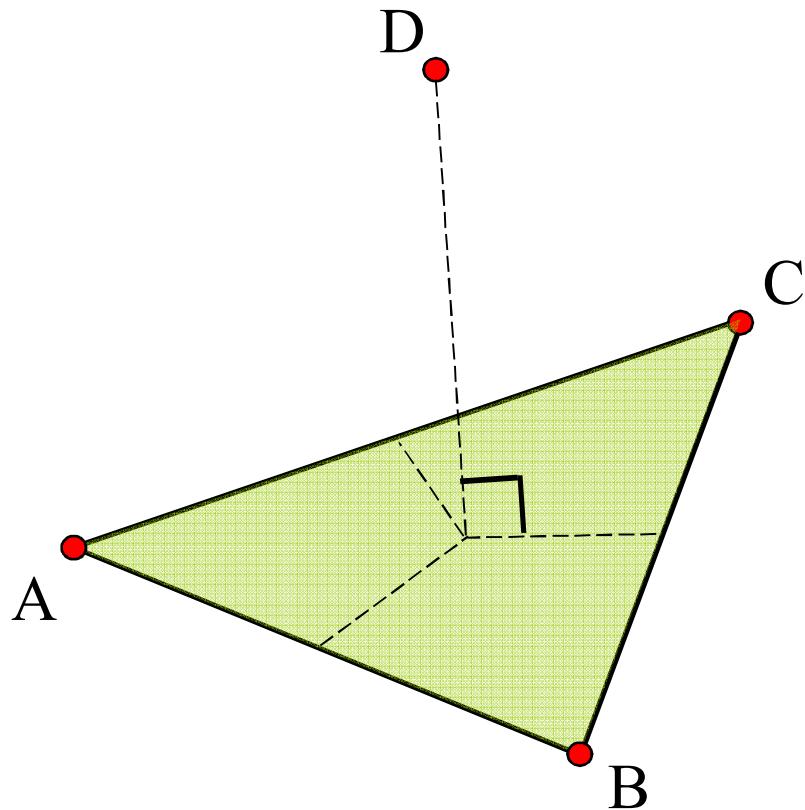


- Where multiple choices are available, use best quality (closest shape to equilateral)
- Reject any that would intersect existing front
- Reject any inverted triangles ($|AB \times AC| > 0$)
- (Lohner,88;96)(Lo,91)

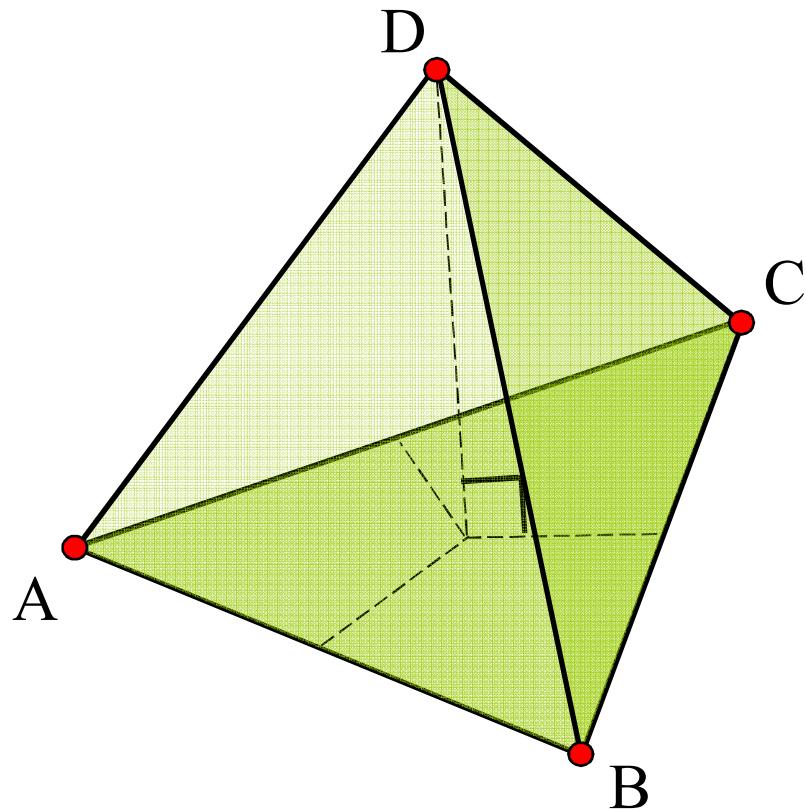
Advancing Front



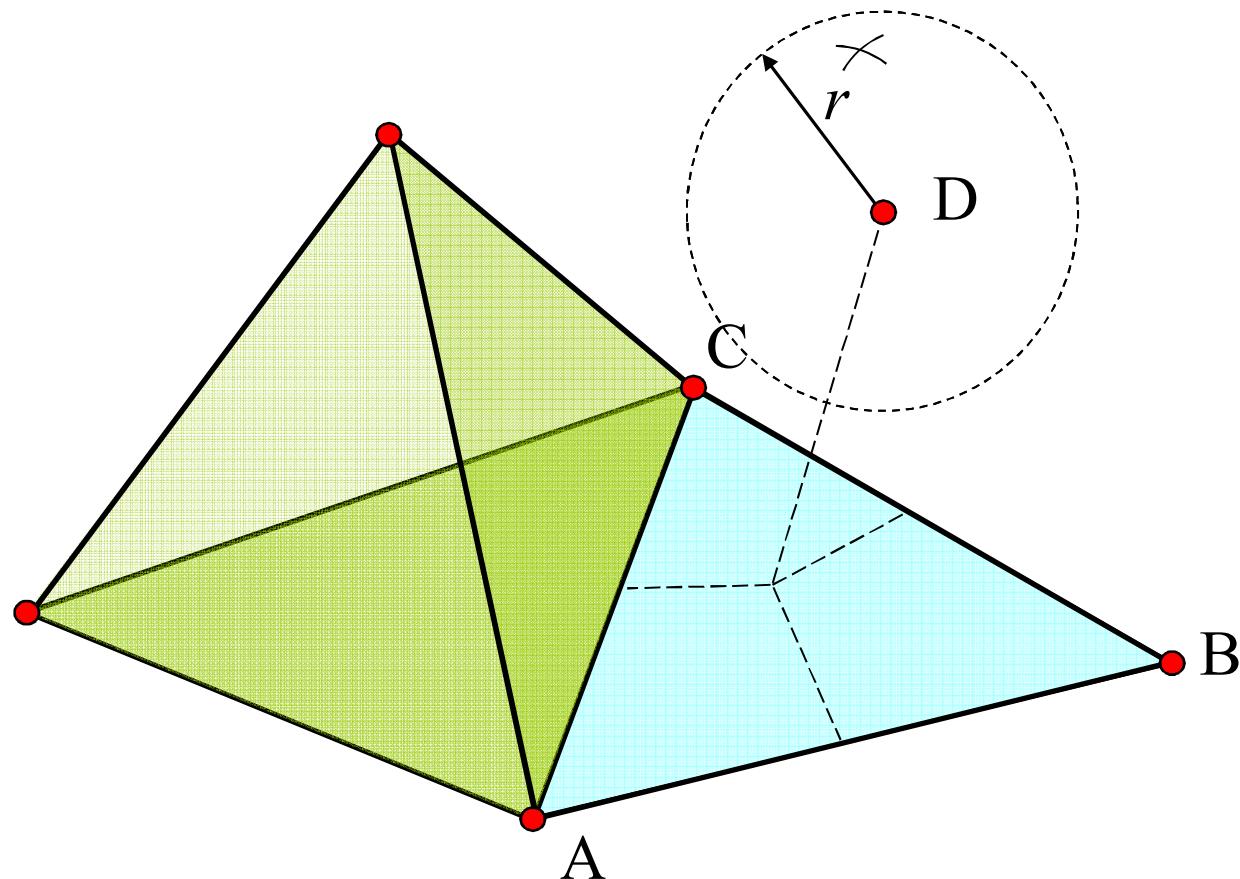
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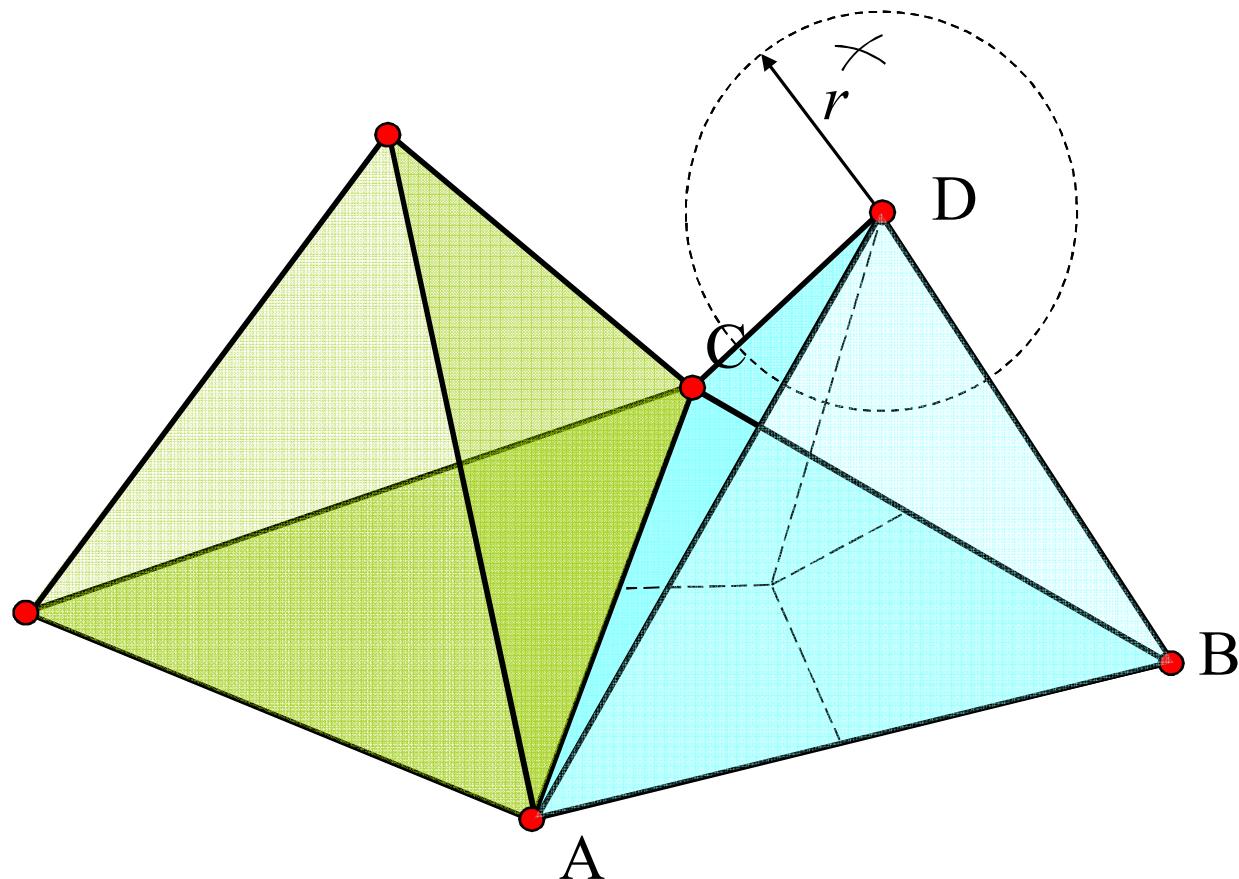
Advancing Front



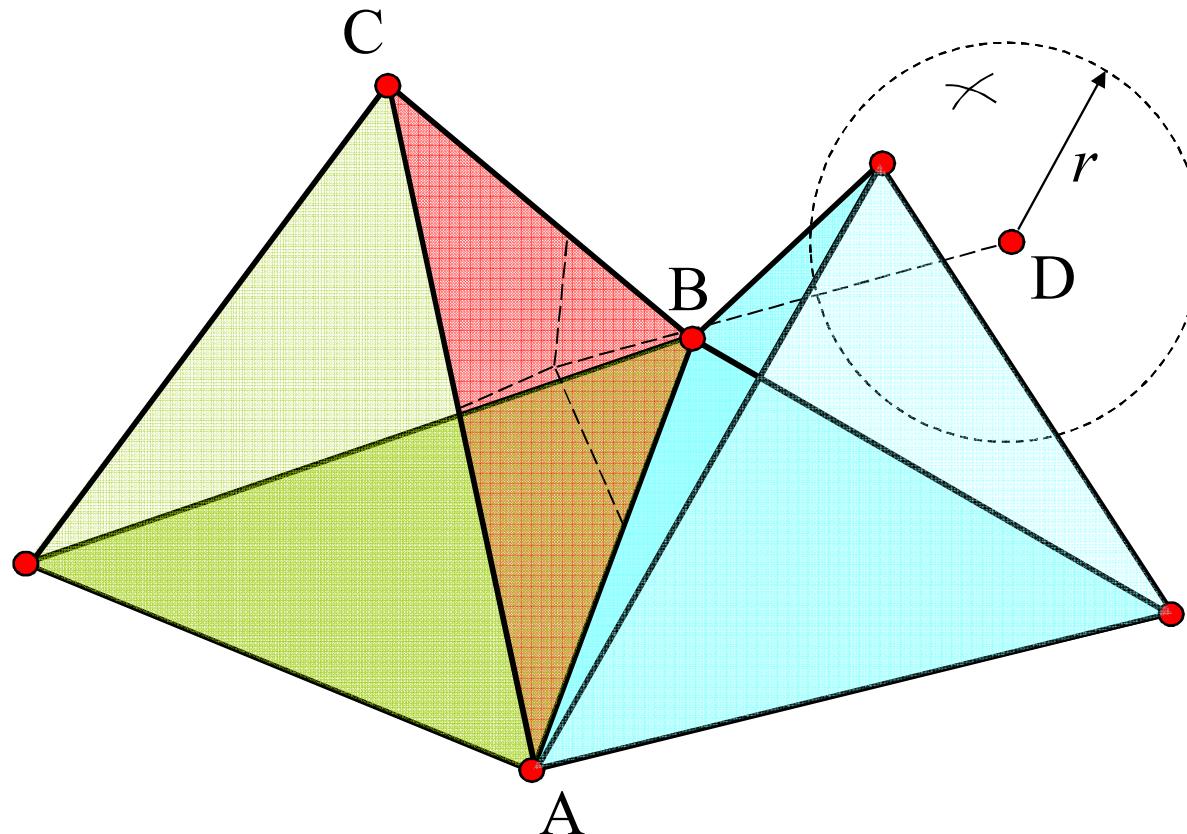
Advancing Front



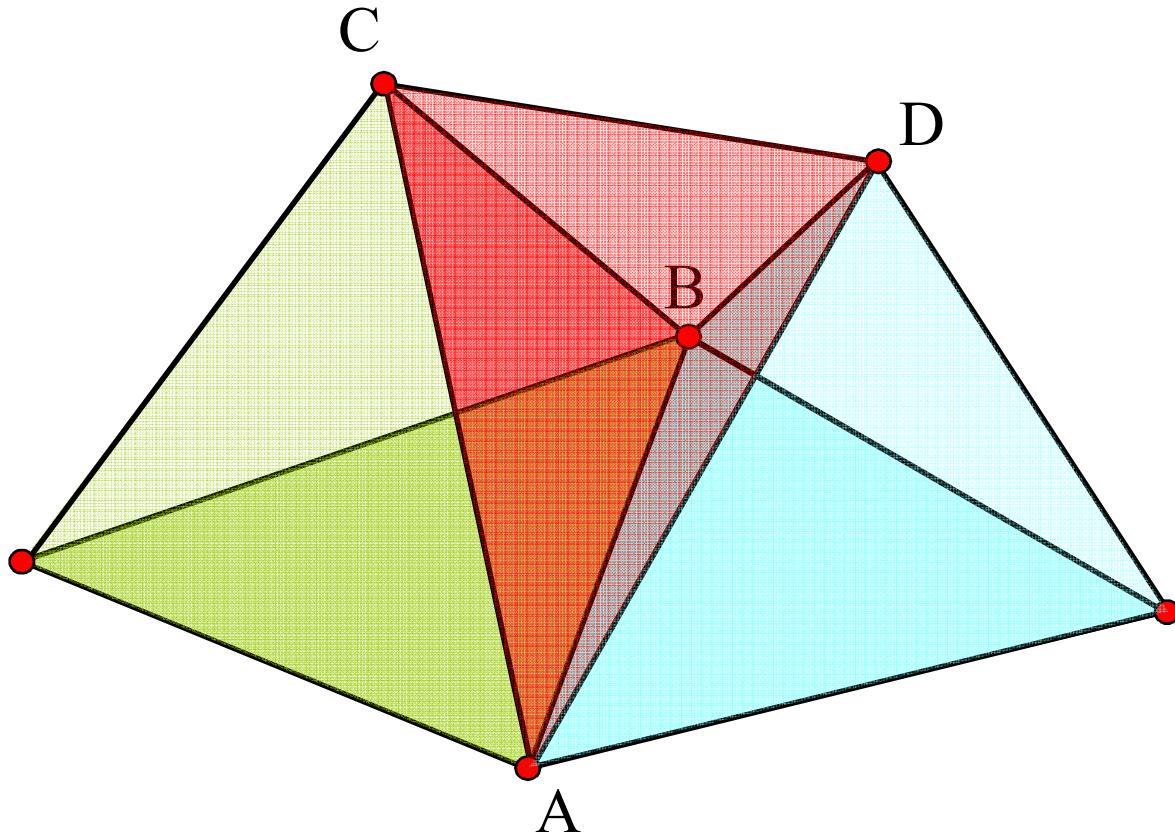
Advancing Front



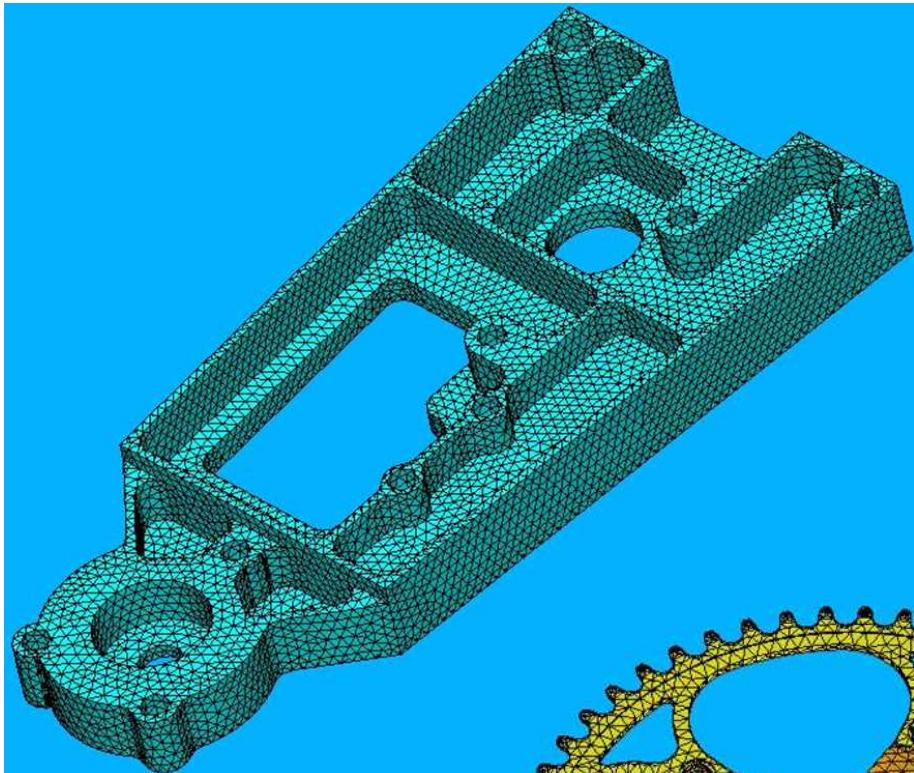
Advancing Front



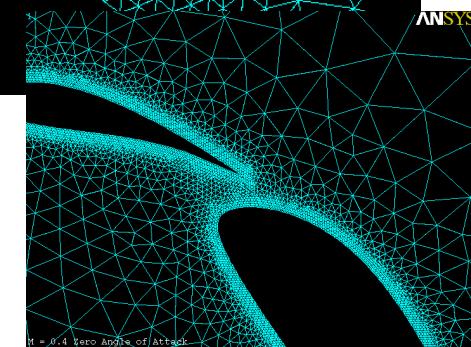
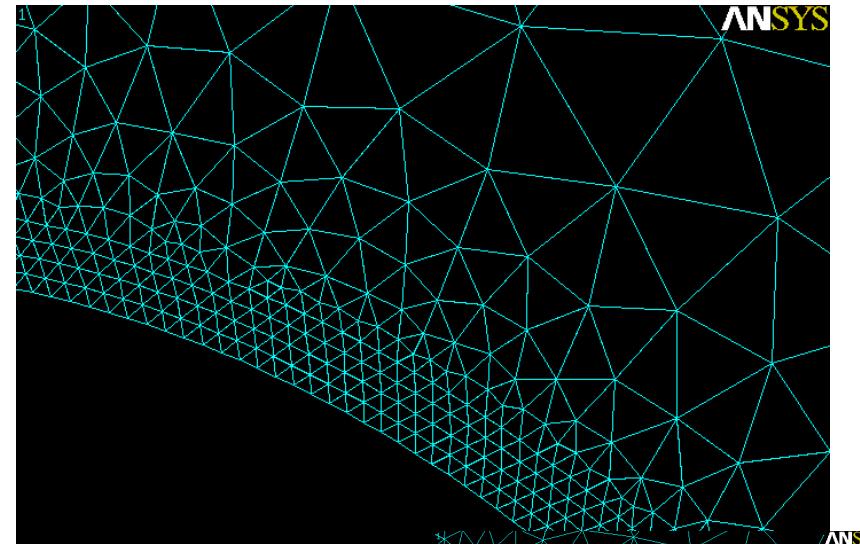
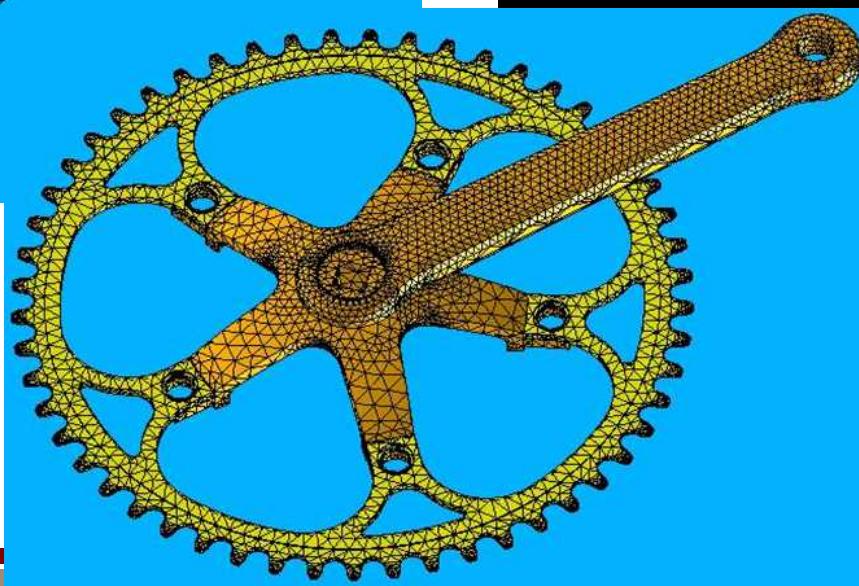
Advancing Front



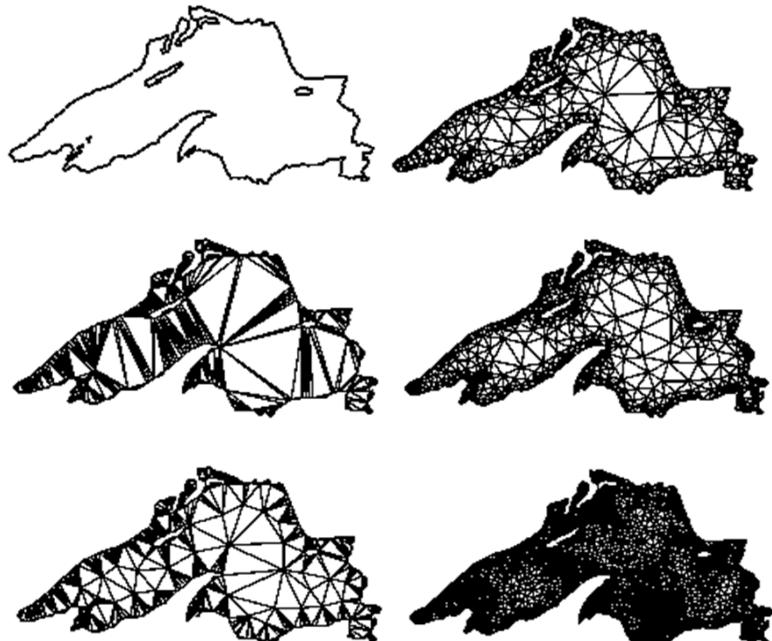
Advancing Front



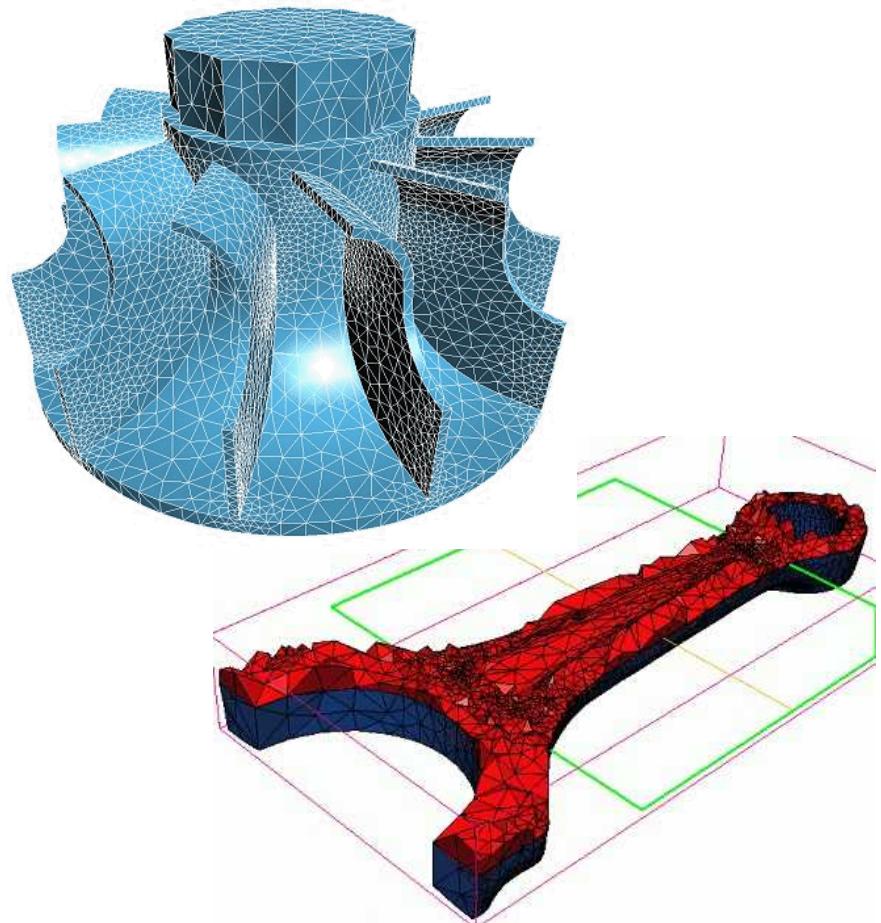
Ansys, Inc.
www.ansys.com



Delaunay

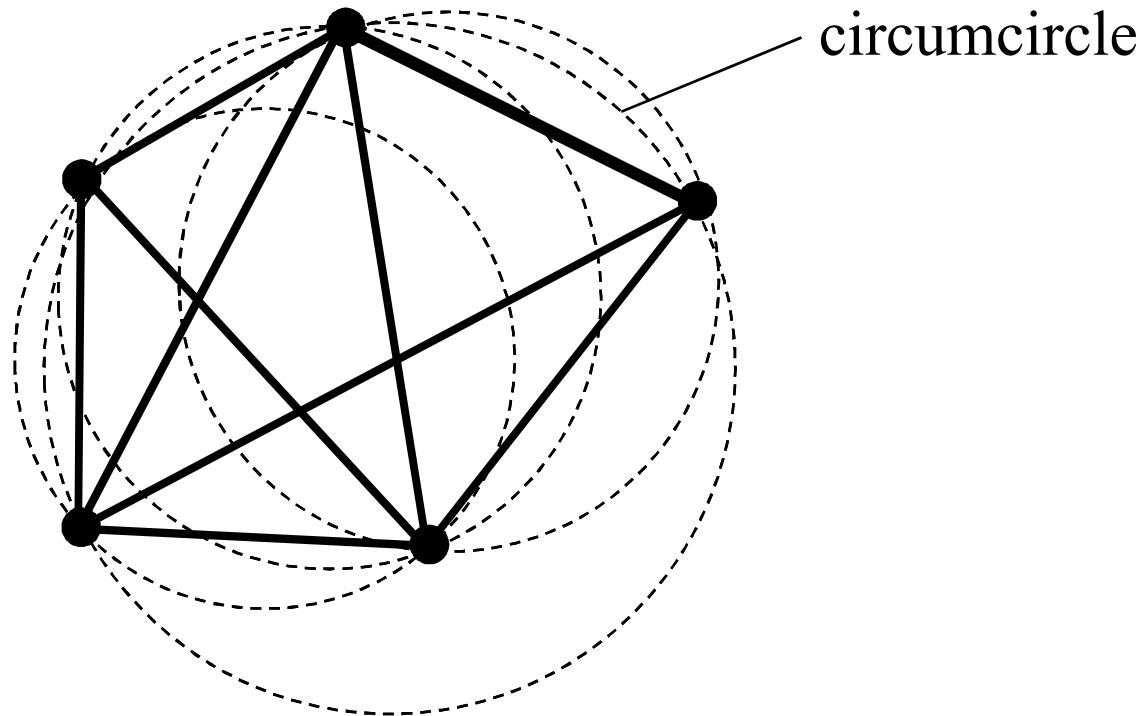


Triangle
Jonathon Shewchuk
<http://www-2.cs.cmu.edu/~quake/triangle.html>



Tetmesh-GHS3D
INRIA, France
<http://www.simulog.fr/tetmesh/>

Delaunay



Empty Circle Property:

No other vertex is contained within the circumcircle of any triangle

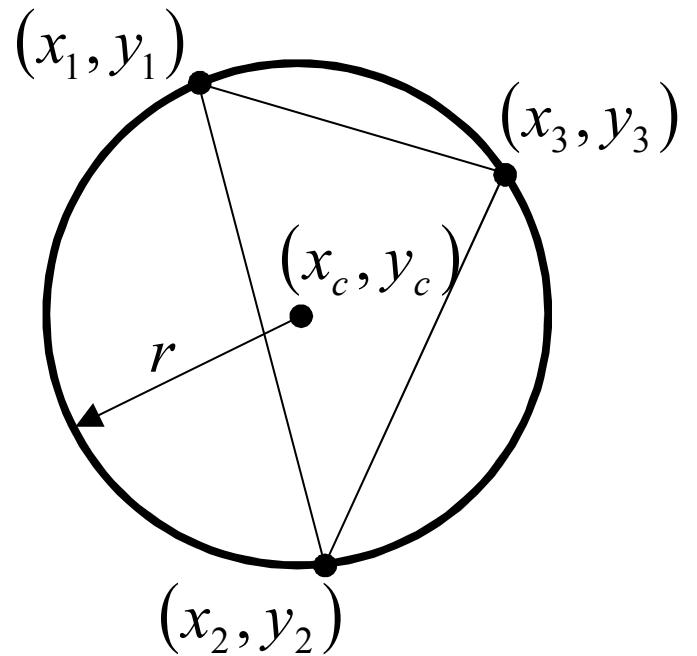
Delaunay

Computing the Circumcircle center and radius

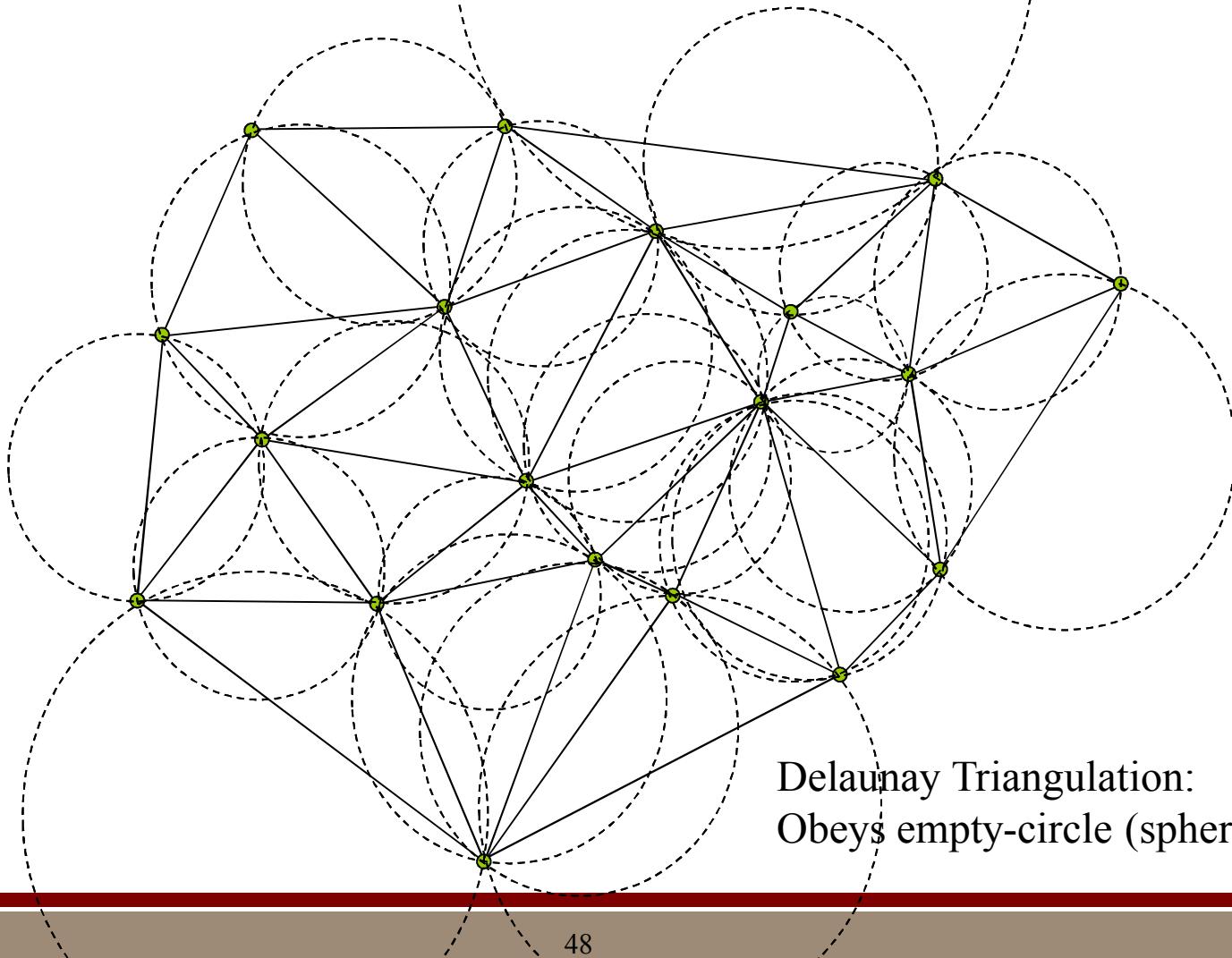
$$Ax + By + C = x^2 + y^2$$

$$\begin{bmatrix} x_1 & y_1 & 1 \\ x_2 & y_2 & 1 \\ x_3 & y_3 & 1 \end{bmatrix} \begin{Bmatrix} A \\ B \\ C \end{Bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} x_1^2 + y_1^2 \\ x_2^2 + y_2^2 \\ x_3^2 + y_3^2 \end{bmatrix}$$

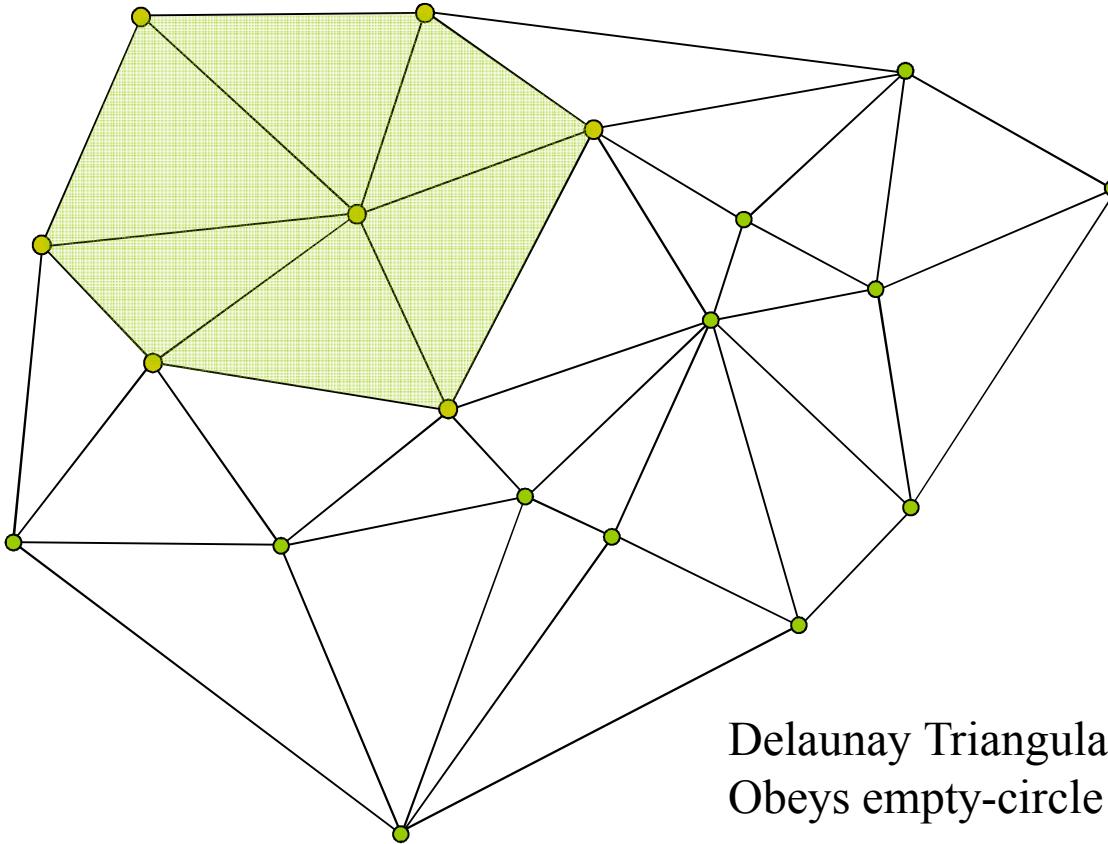
$$x_c = \frac{A}{2}, y_c = \frac{B}{2}, r = \sqrt{C + x_c^2 + y_c^2}$$



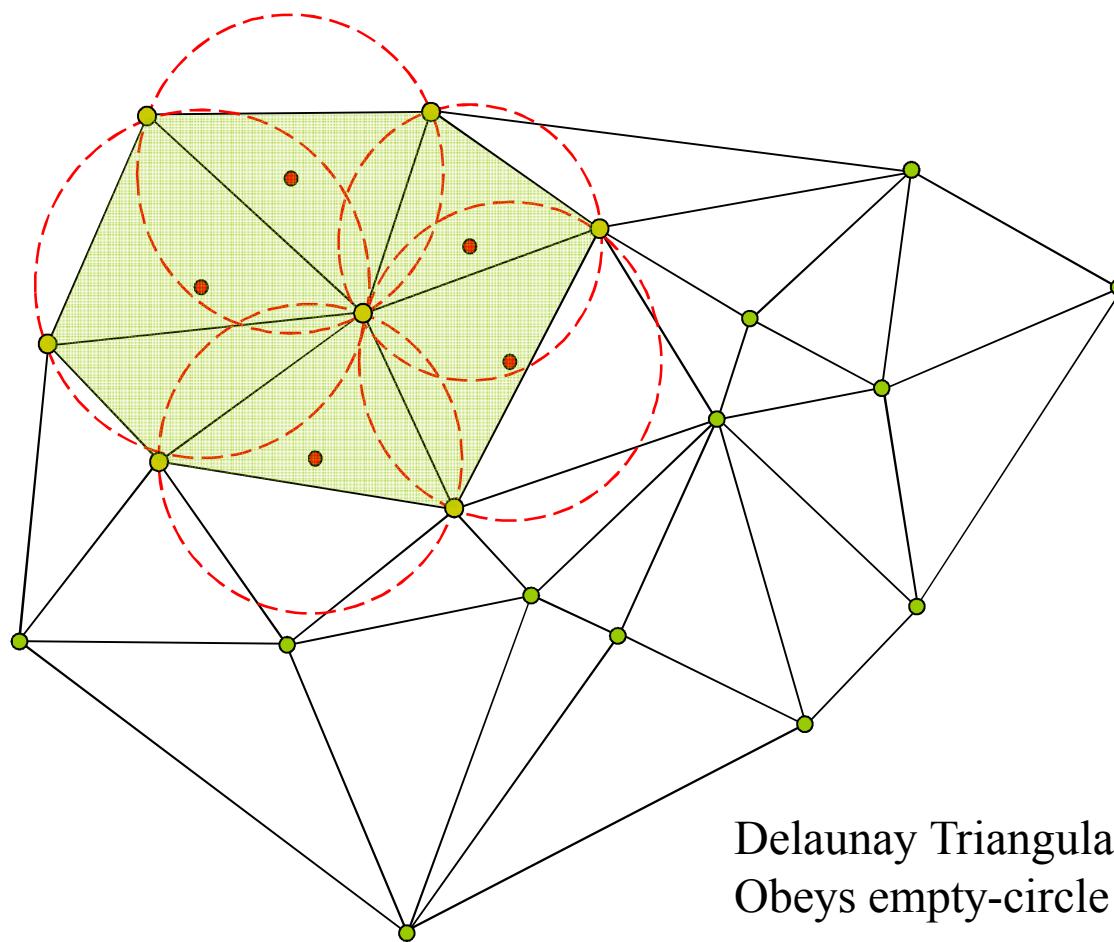
Delaunay



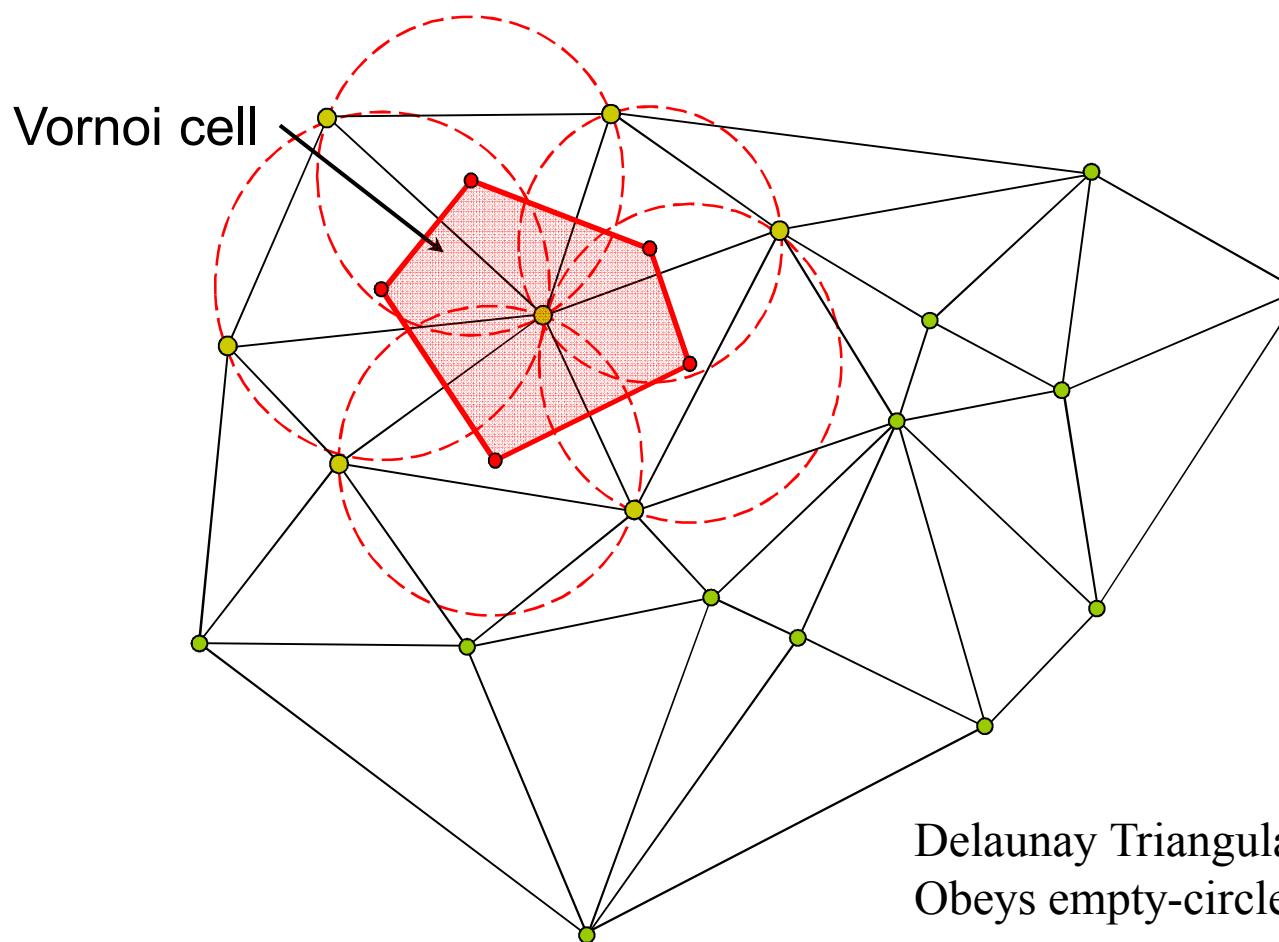
Delaunay



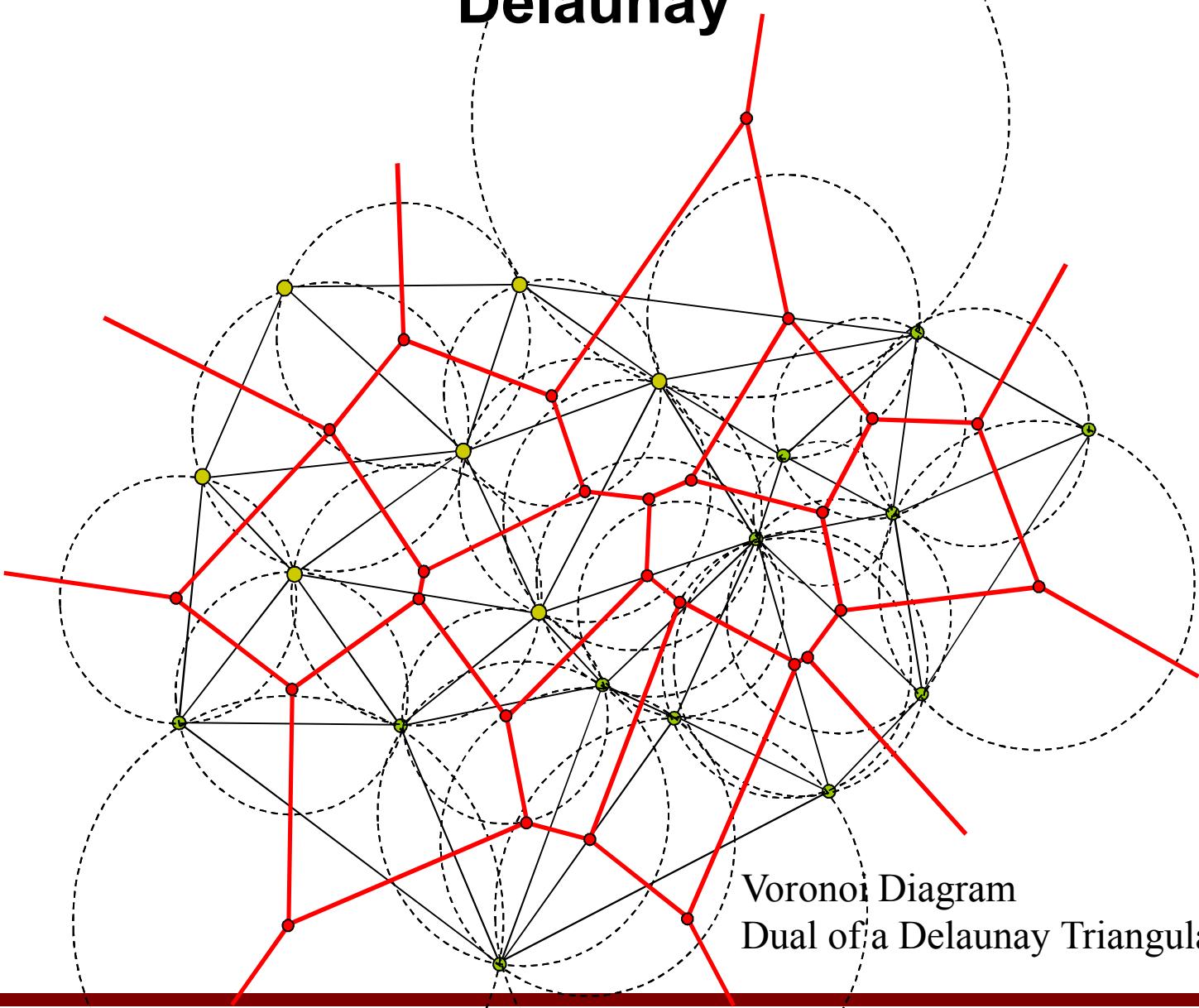
Delaunay



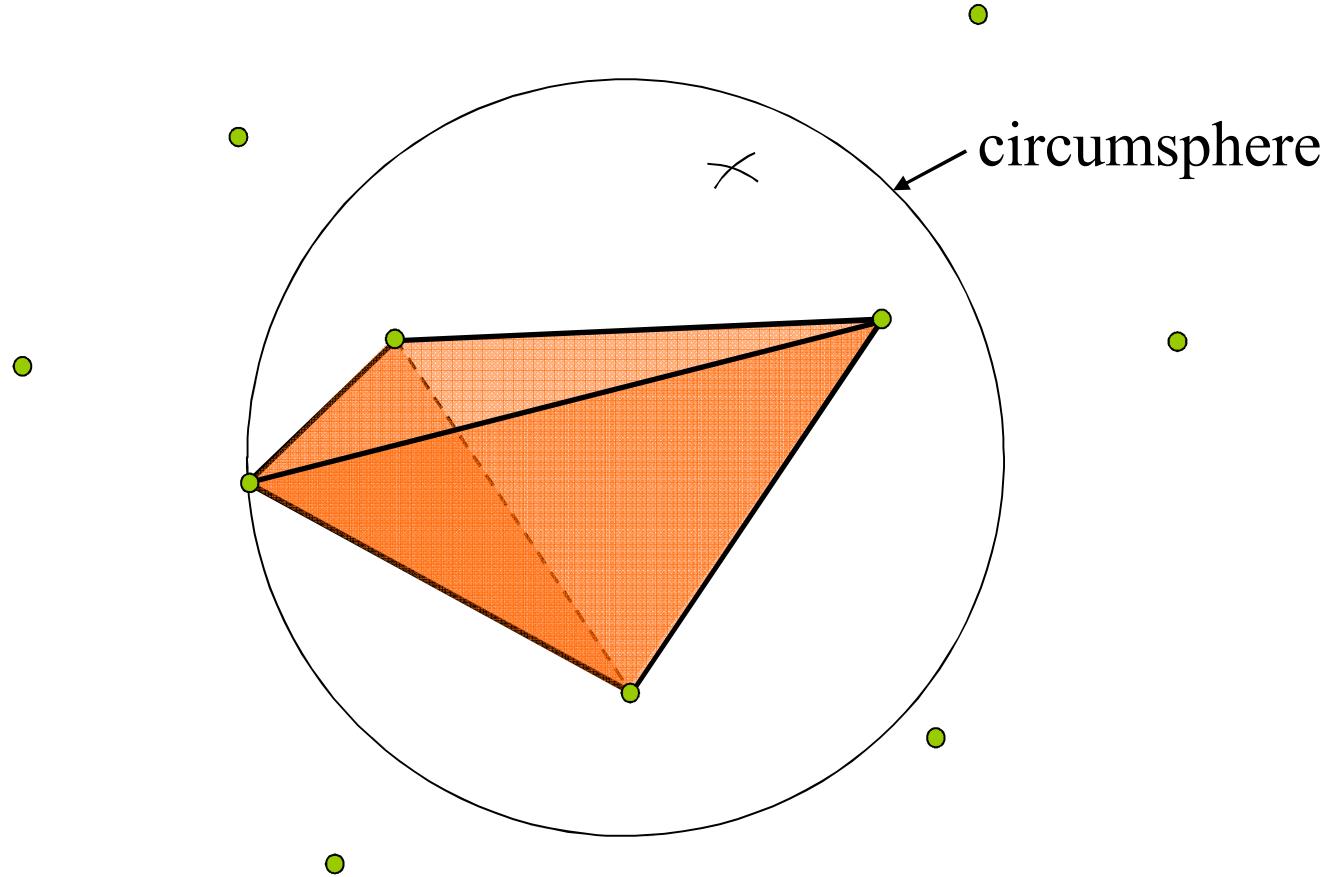
Delaunay



Delaunay



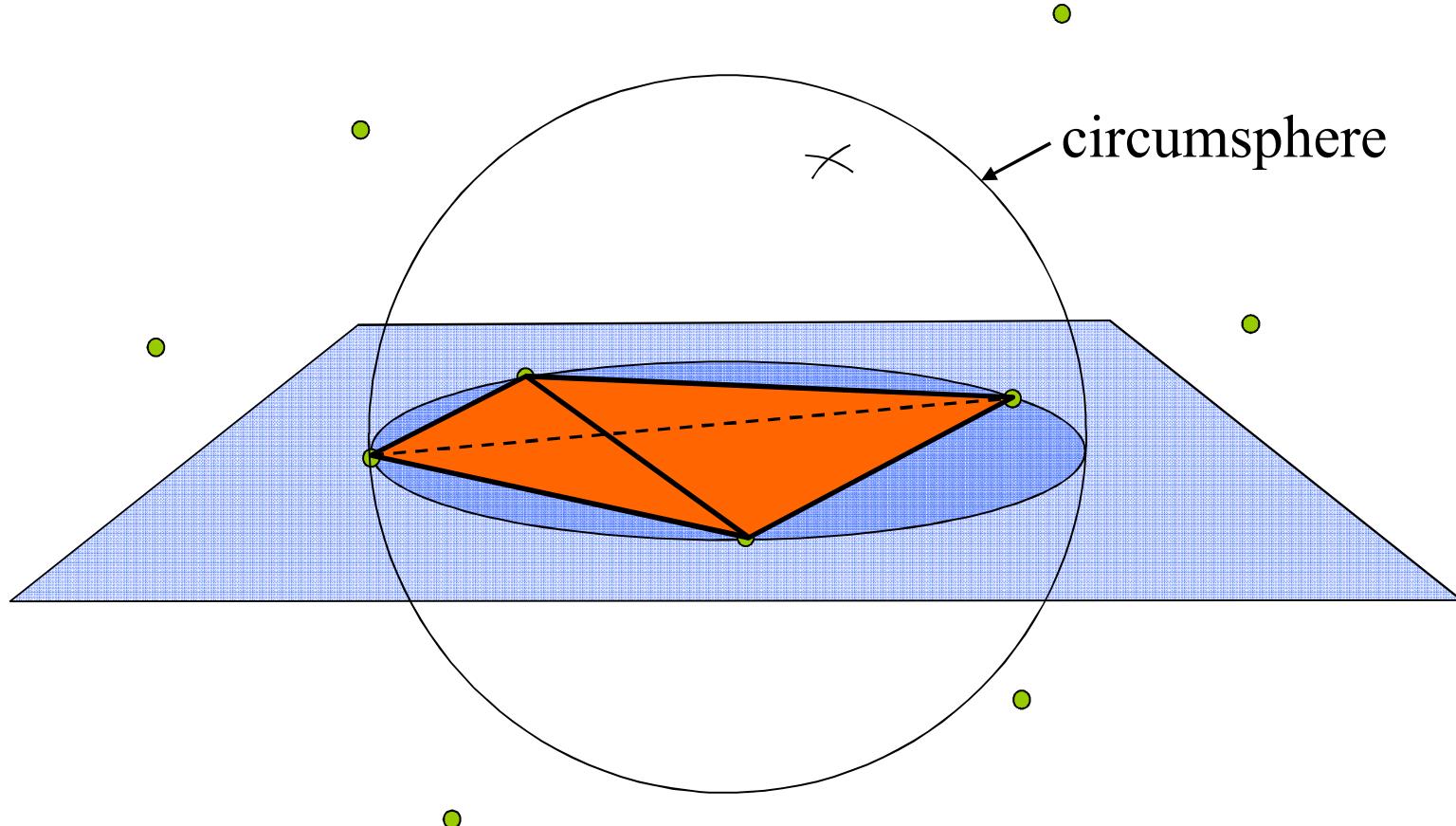
Delaunay



Empty Sphere Property:

No other vertex is contained within the circumsphere of any tetrahedron

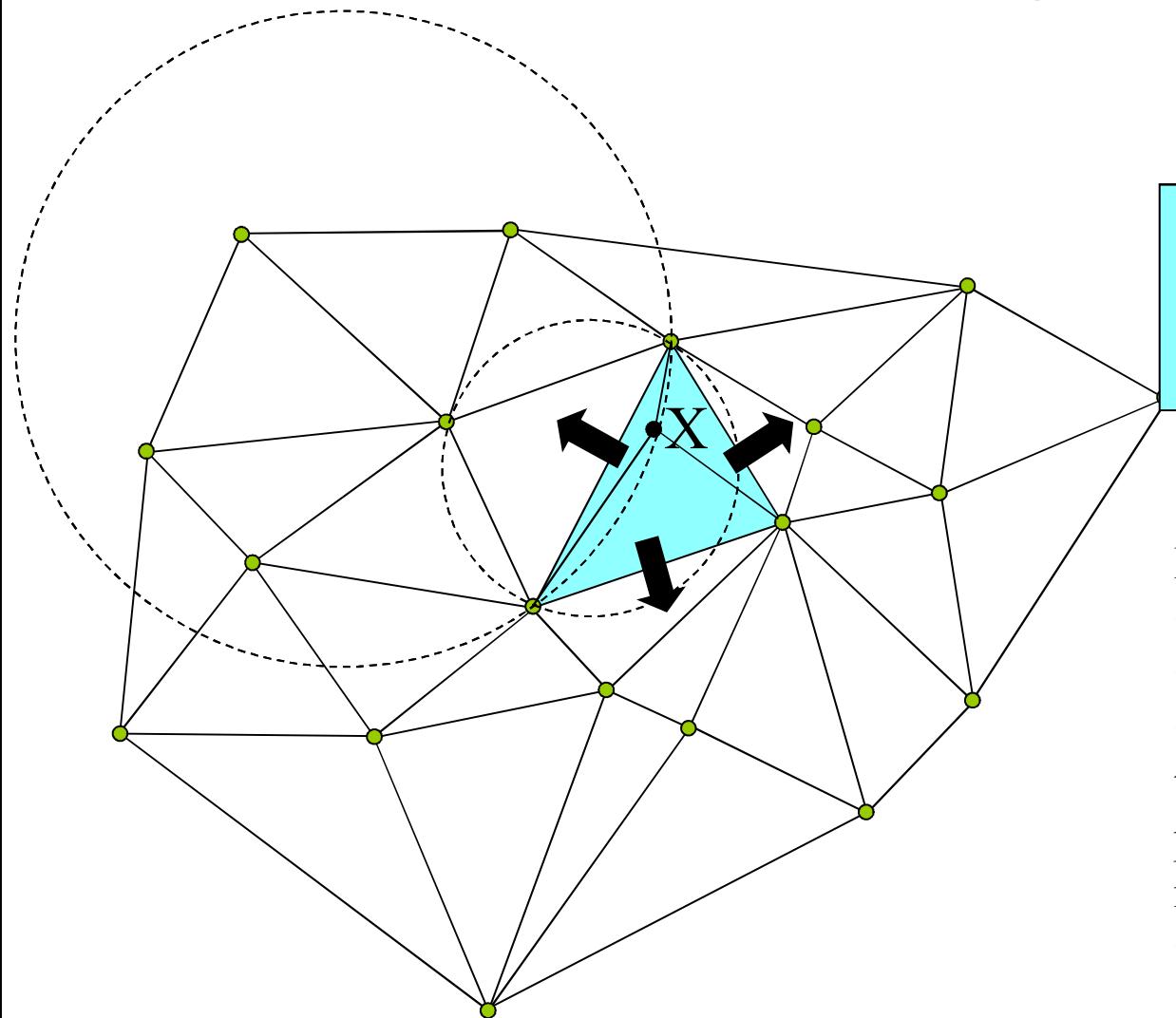
Delaunay



Empty Sphere Property:

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Delaunay

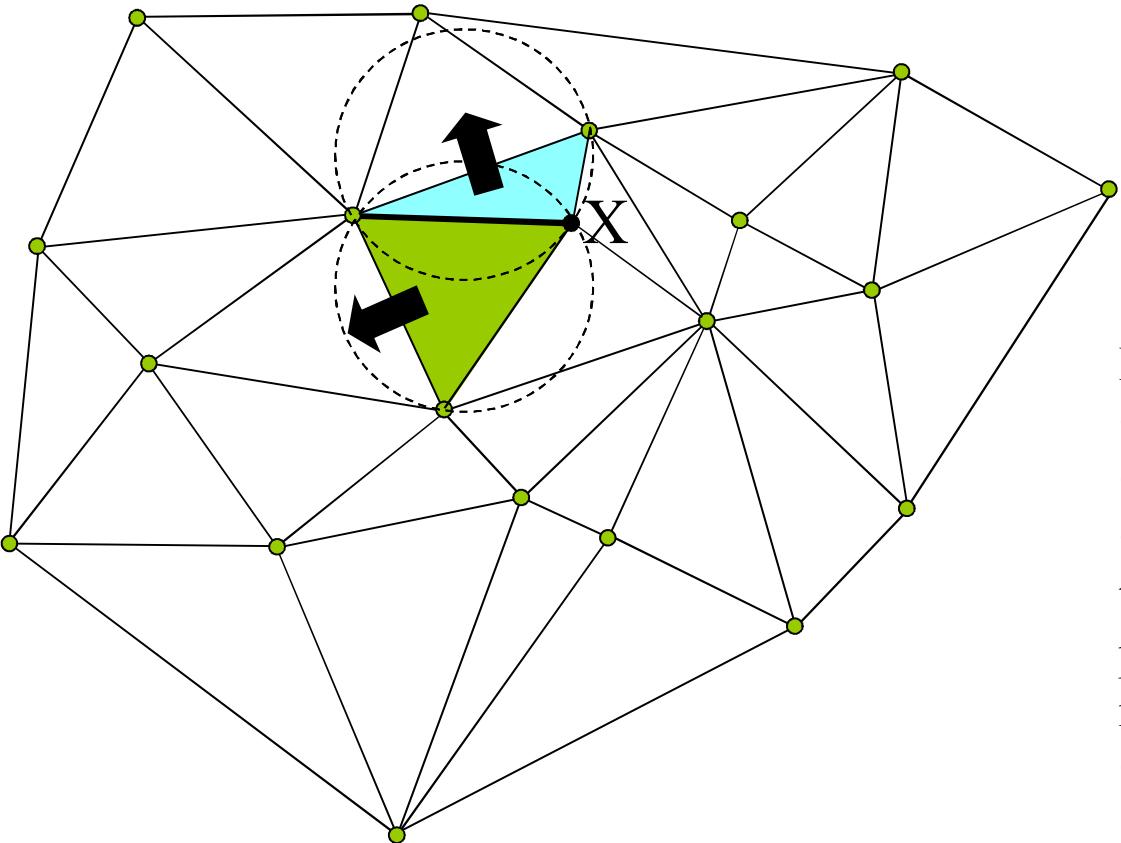


Given a Delaunay
Triangulation of n nodes, How
do I insert node $n+1$?

Lawson Algorithm

- Locate triangle containing X
- Subdivide triangle
- Recursively check adjoining triangles to ensure empty-circle property. Swap diagonal if needed
- (Lawson,77)

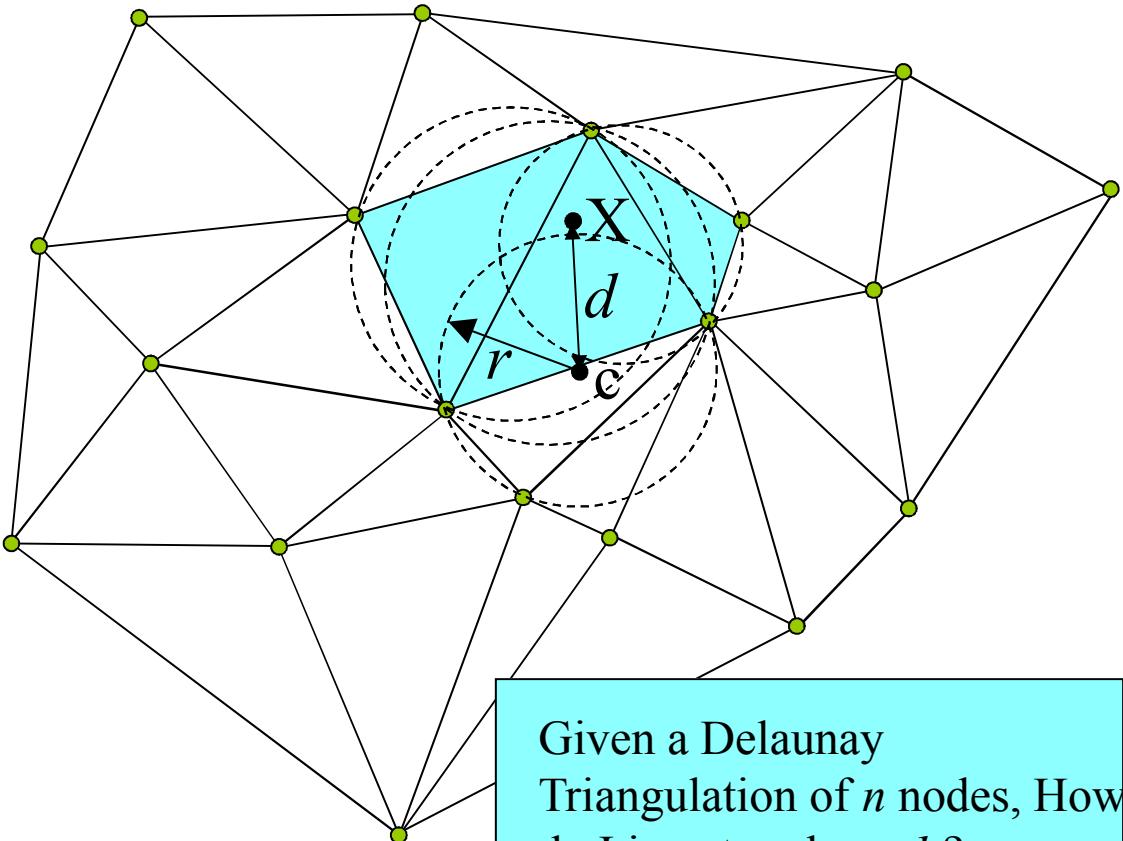
Delaunay



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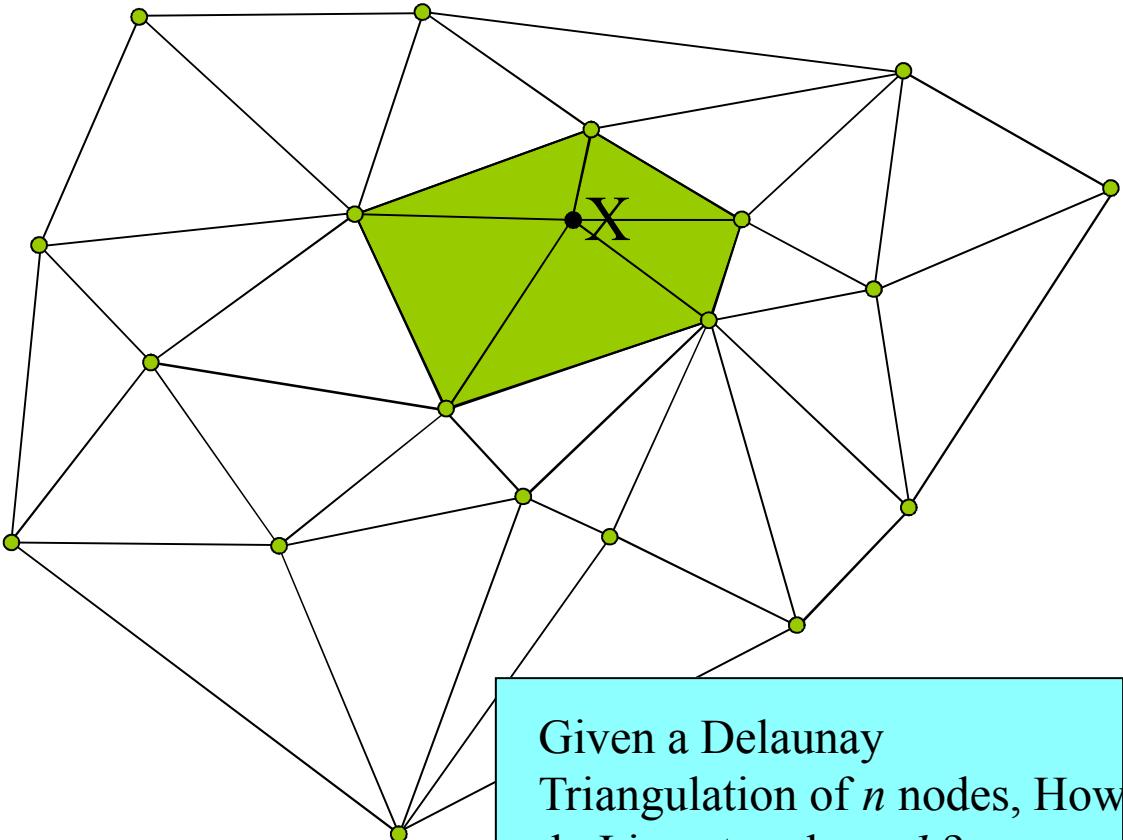
Delaunay



Bowyer-Watson Algorithm

- Locate triangle that contains the point
- Search for all triangles whose circumcircle contain the point ($d < r$)
- Delete the triangles (creating a void in the mesh)
- Form new triangles from the new point and the void boundary
- (Watson,81)

Delaunay

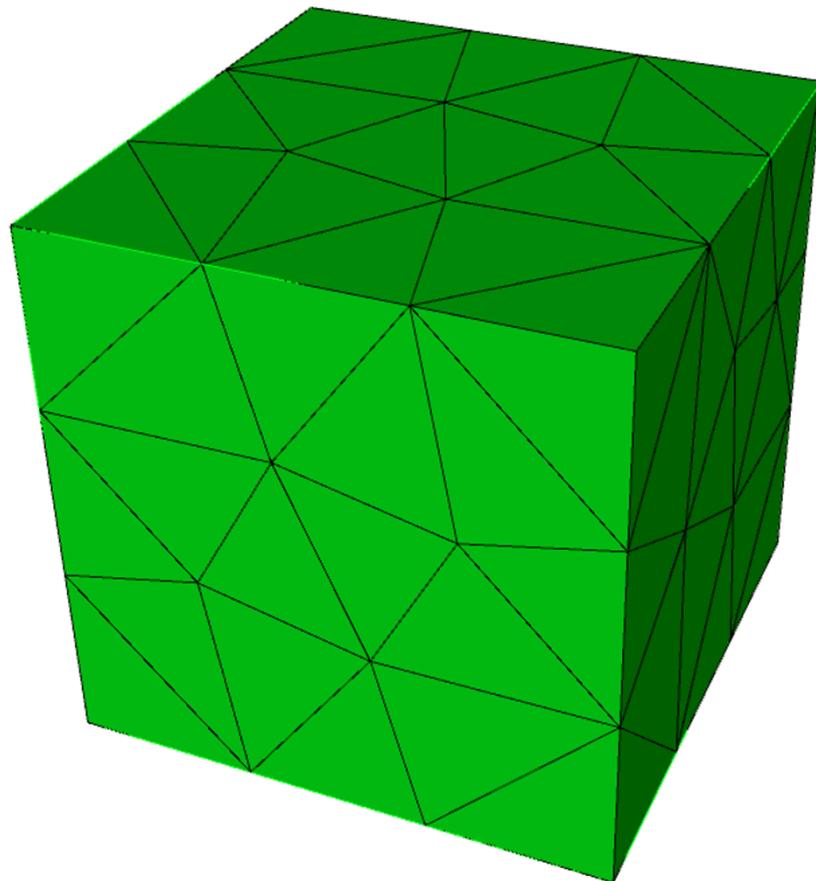


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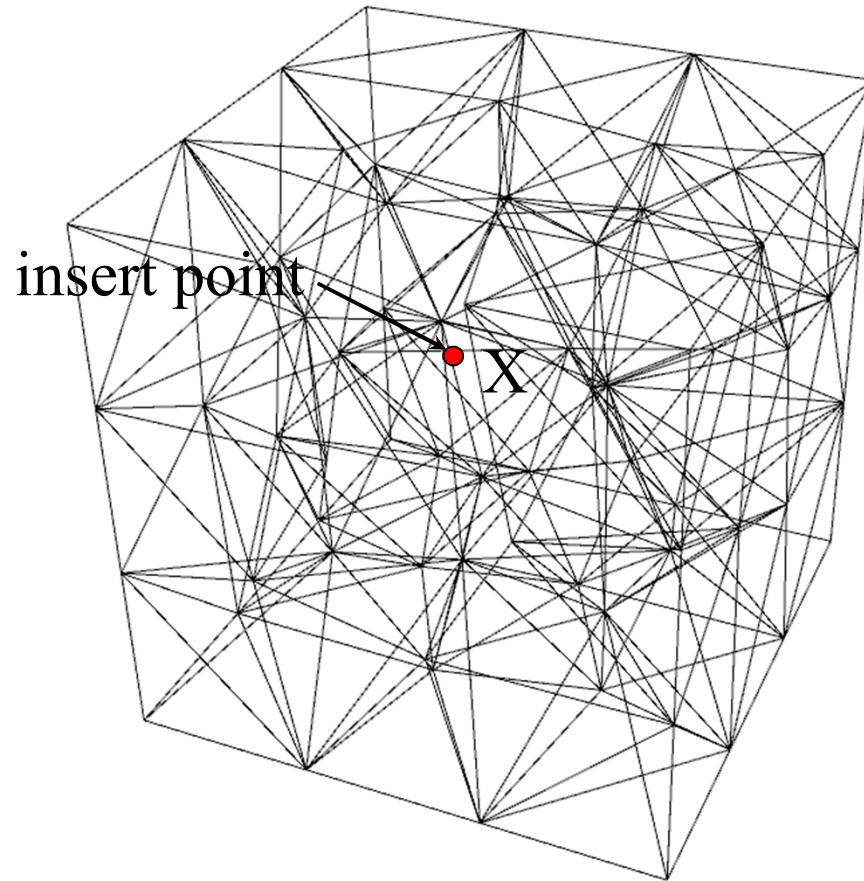
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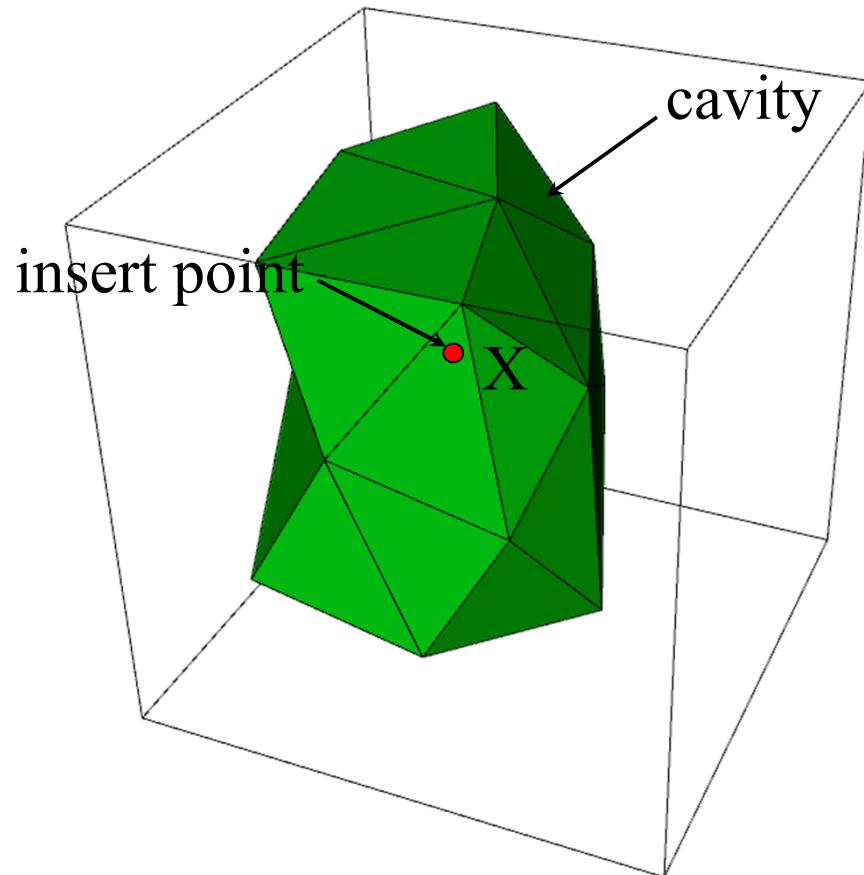
Delaunay



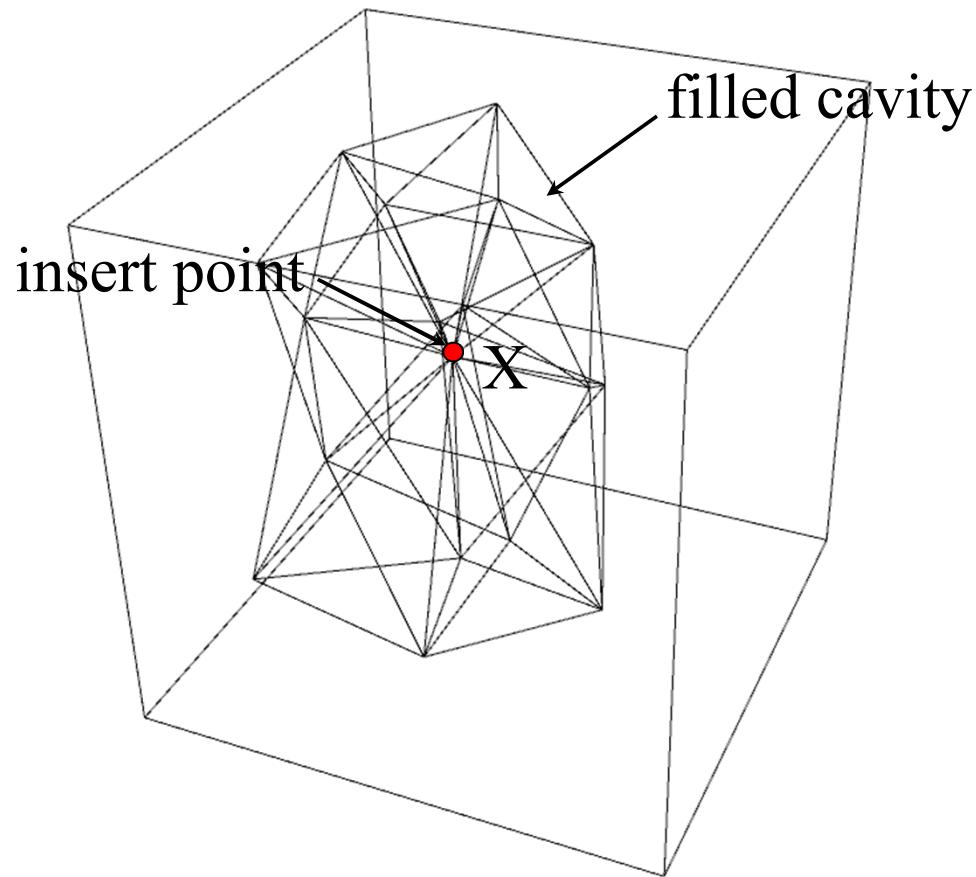
Delaunay



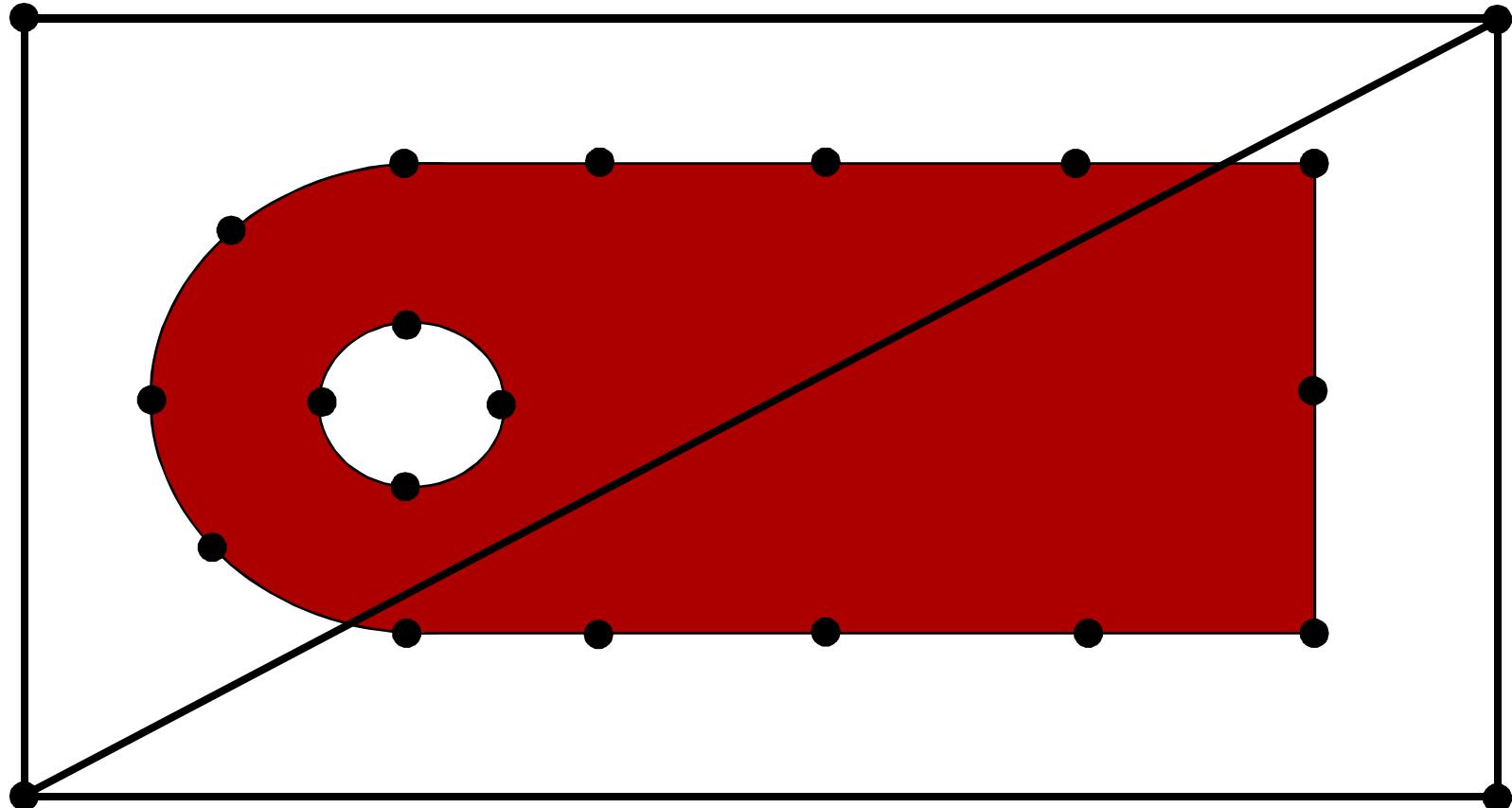
Delaunay



Delaunay

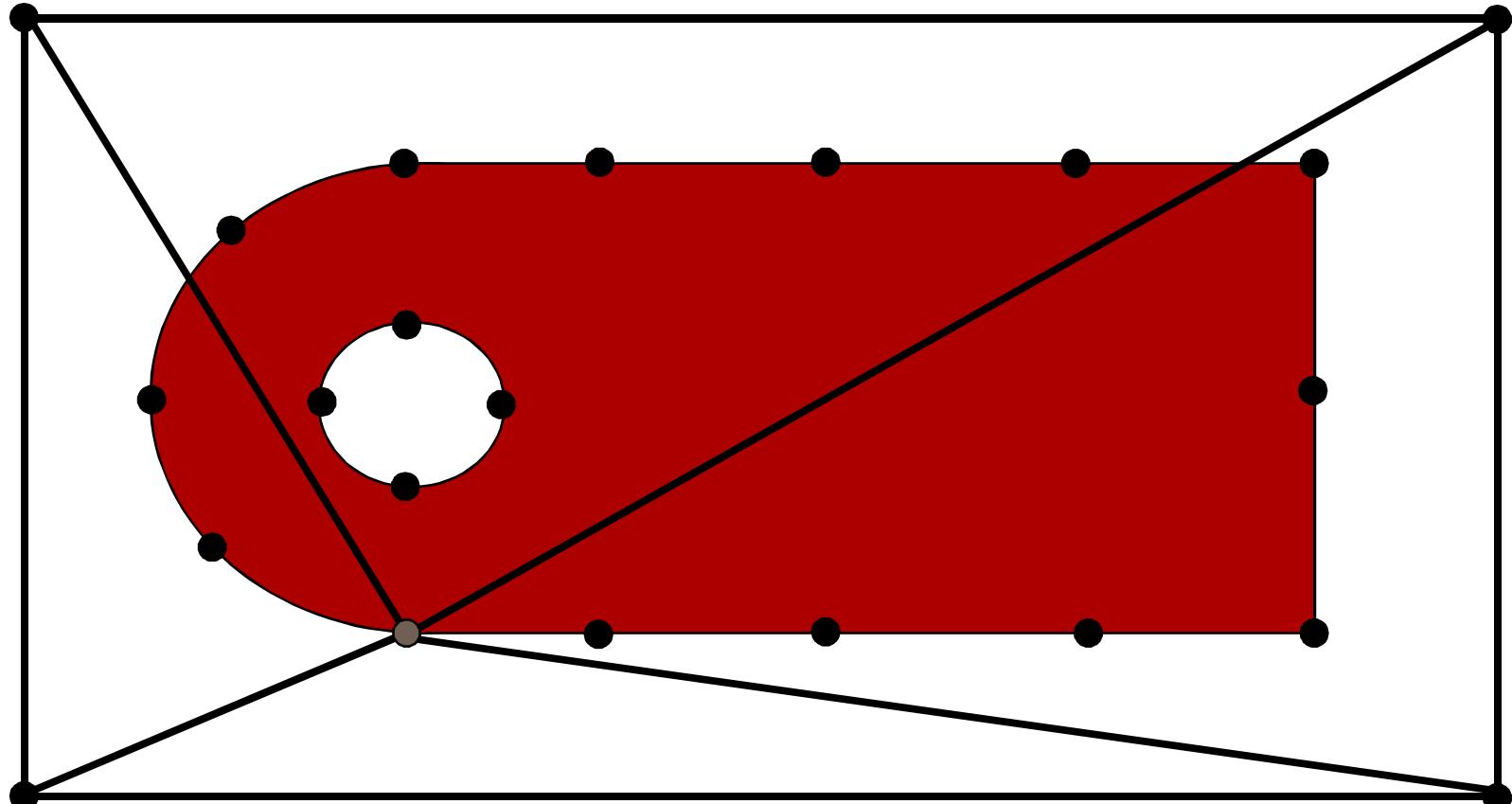


Delaunay



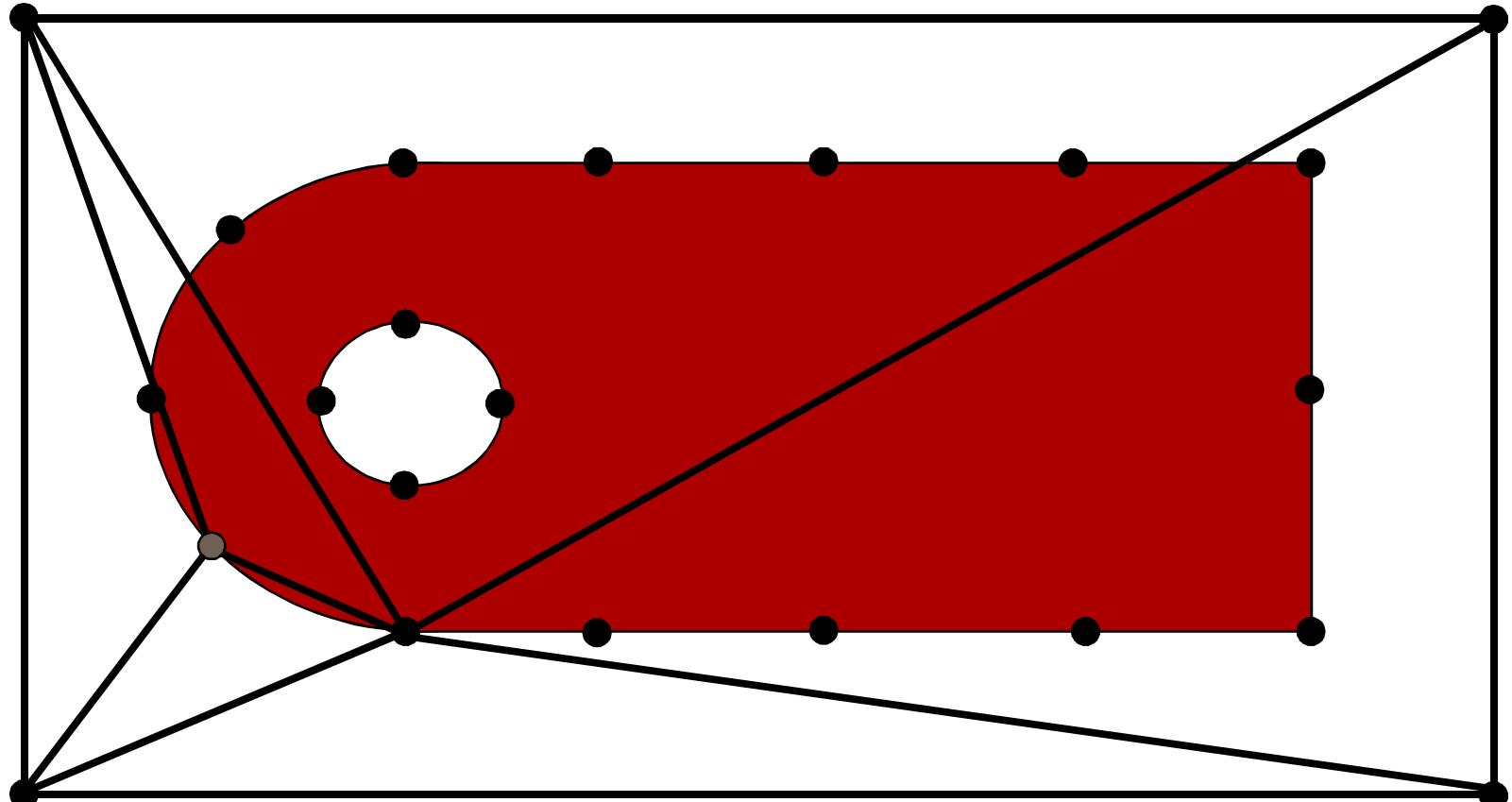
- Begin with Bounding Triangles (or Tetrahedra)

Delaunay



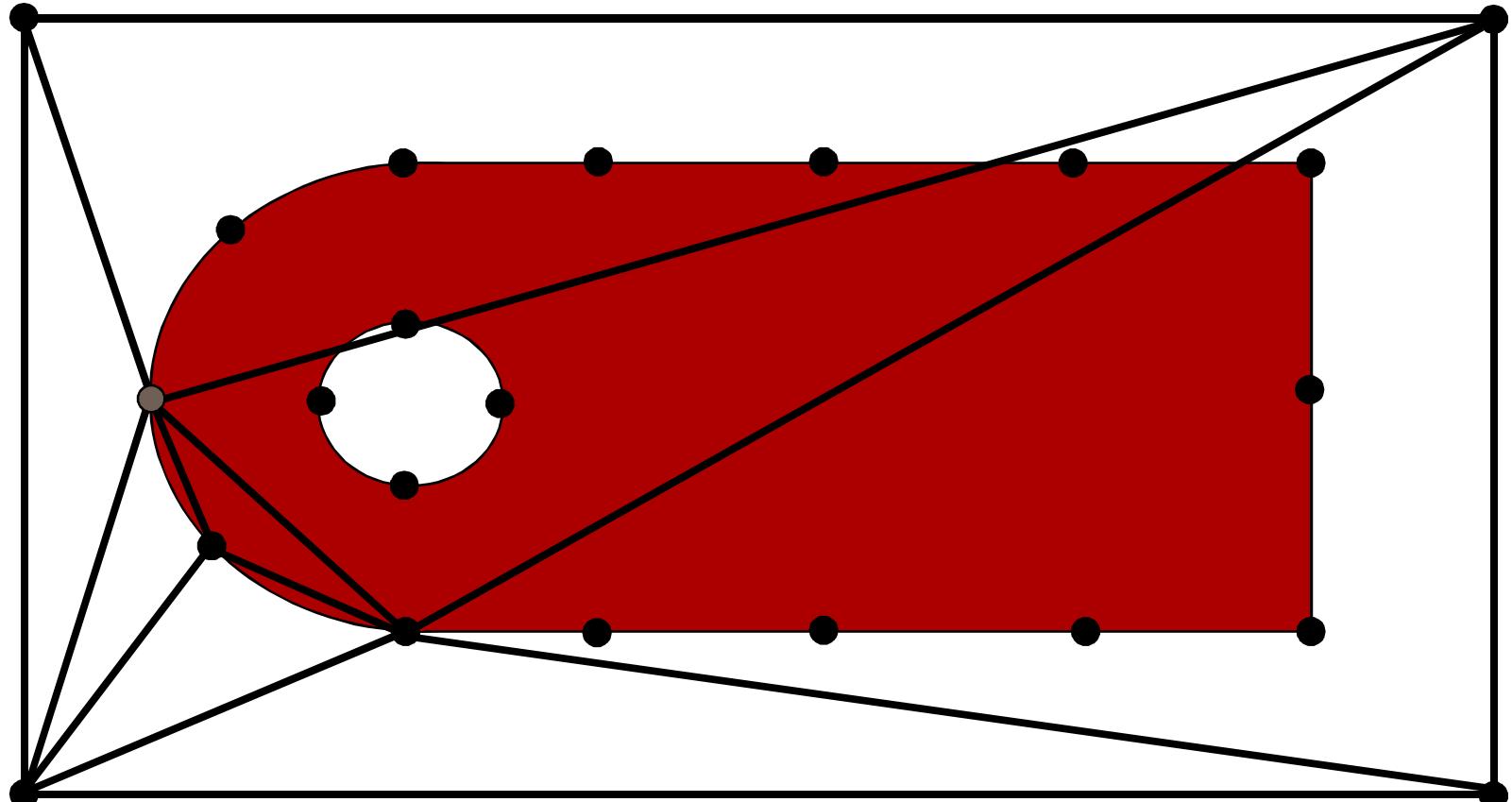
- Insert boundary nodes using Delaunay method
(Lawson or Bowyer-Watson)

Delaunay



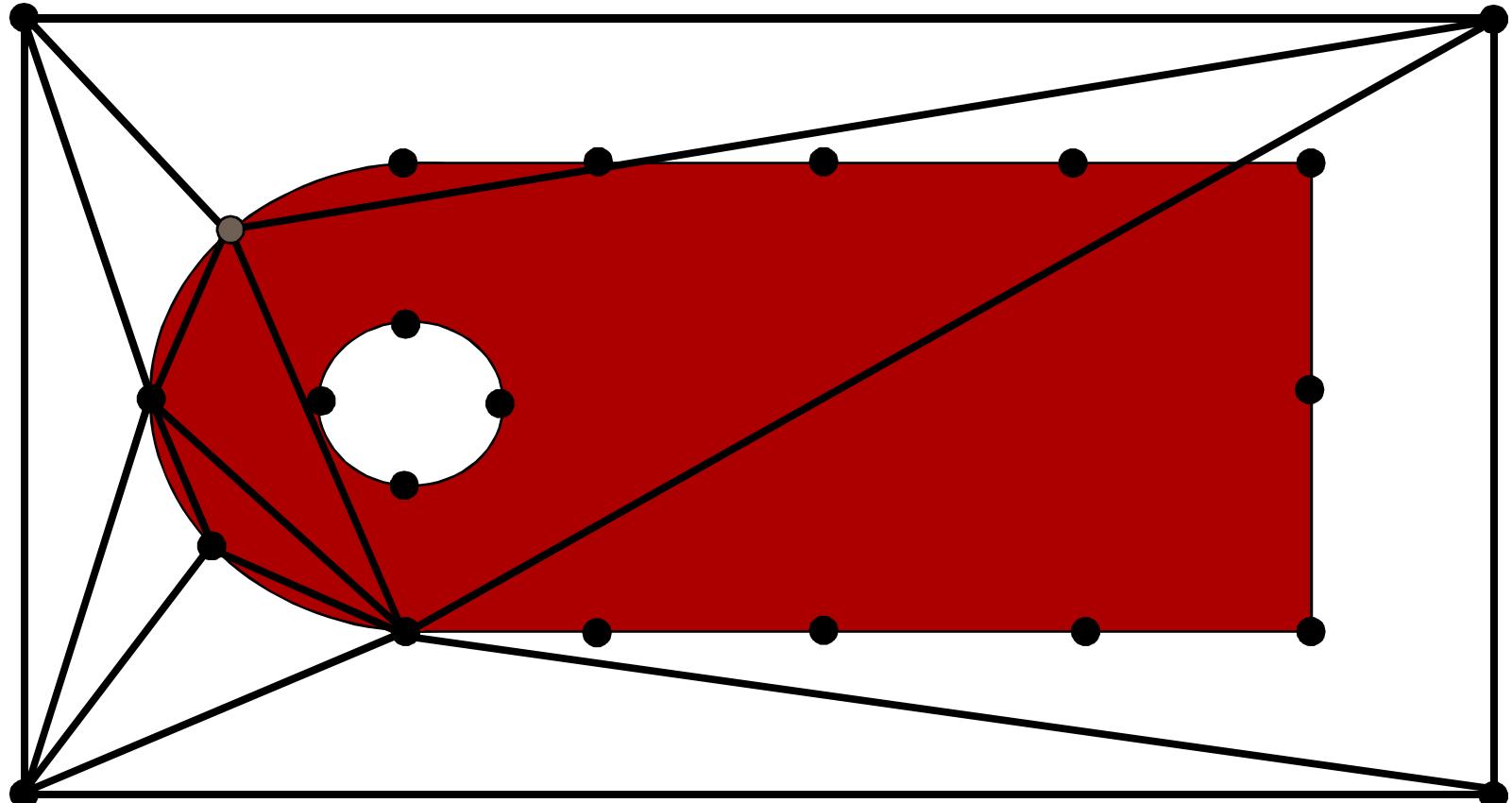
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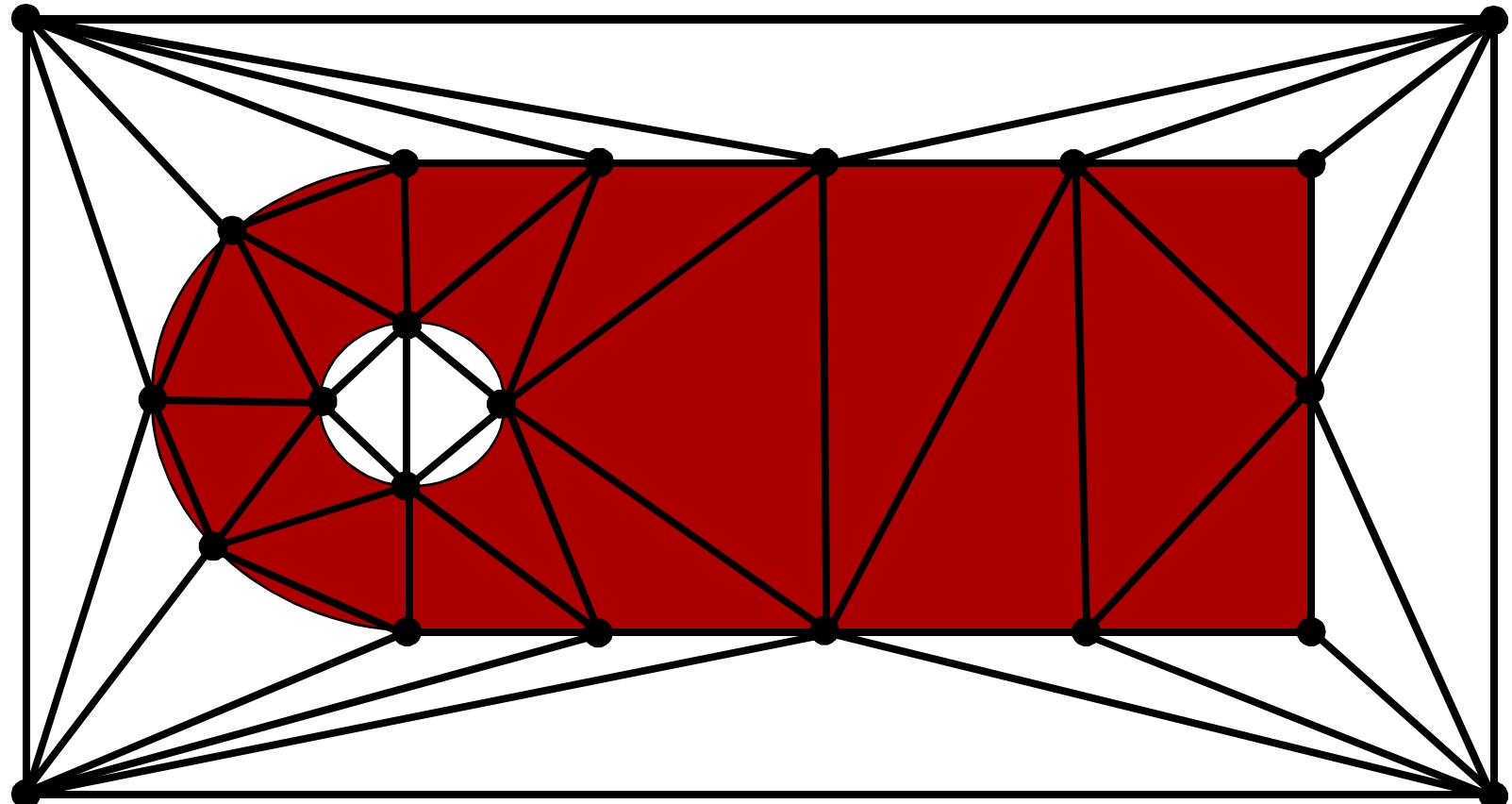
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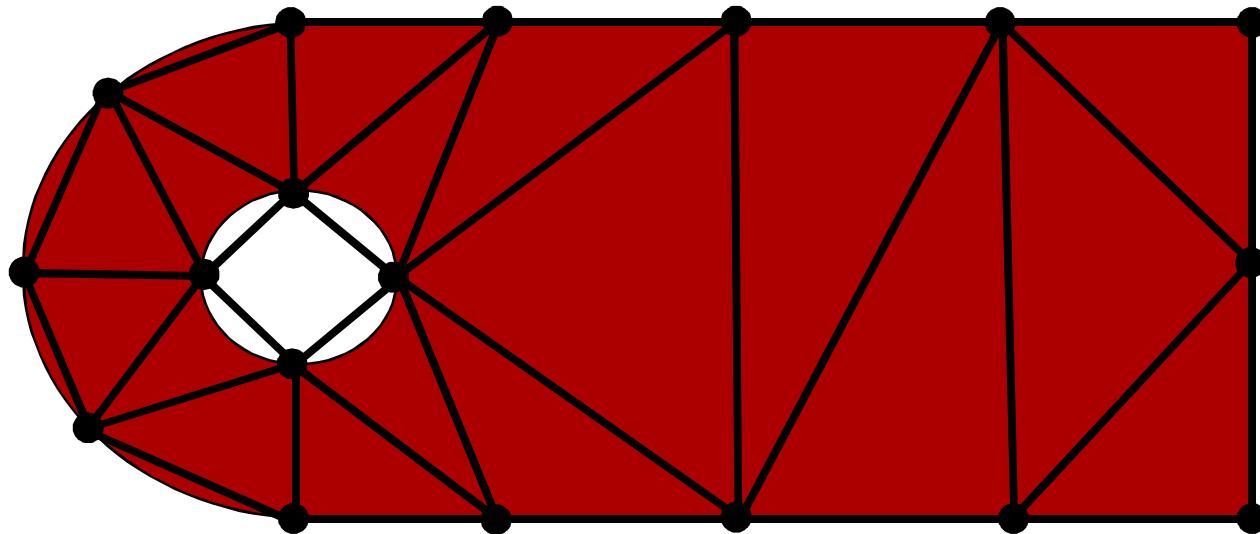
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Delaunay



- Insert boundary nodes using Delaunay method
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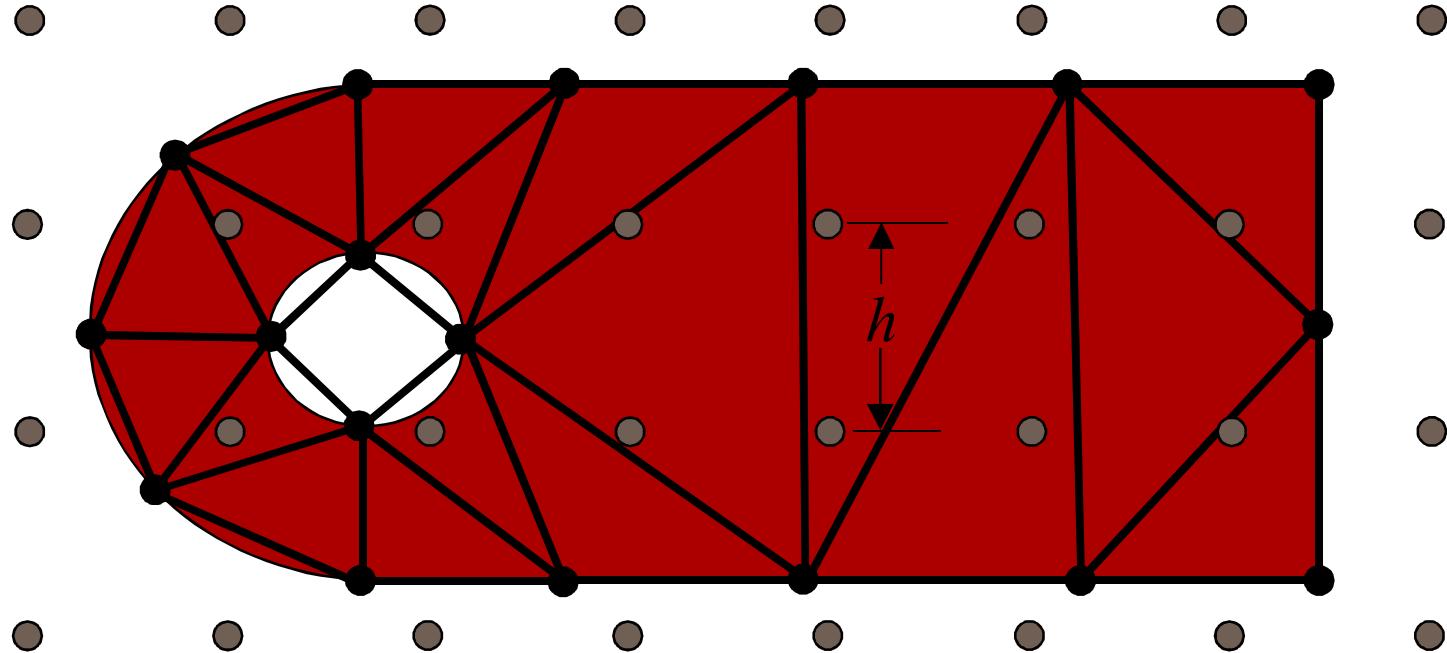
Delaunay



- Recover boundary
- Delete outside triangles
- Insert internal nodes

Delaunay

Node Insertion Methods

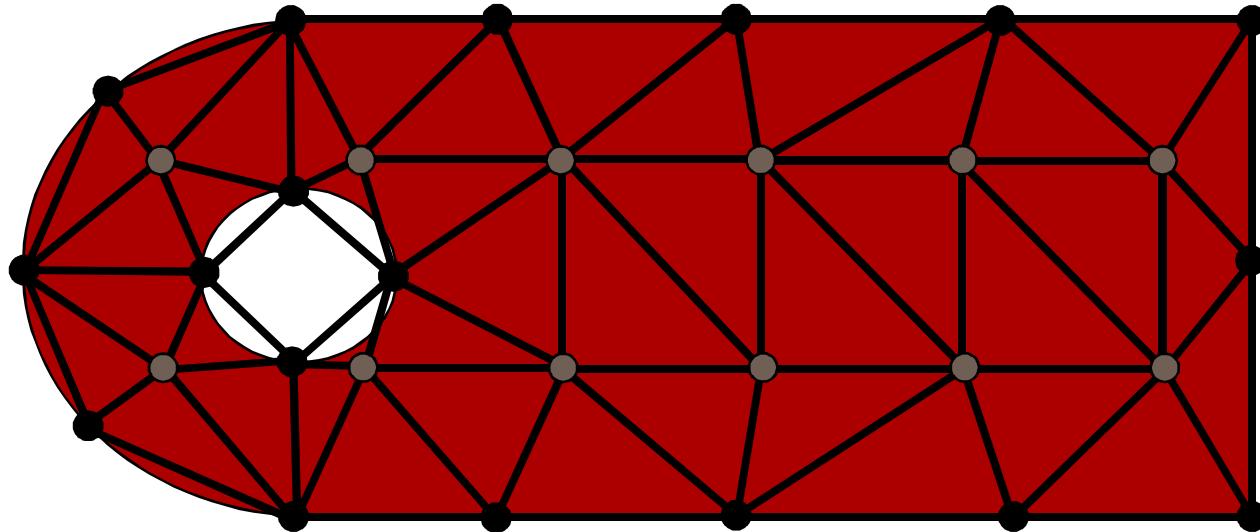


Grid Based

- Nodes introduced based on a regular lattice
- Lattice could be rectangular, triangular, quadtree, etc...
- Outside nodes ignored

Delaunay

Node Insertion Methods

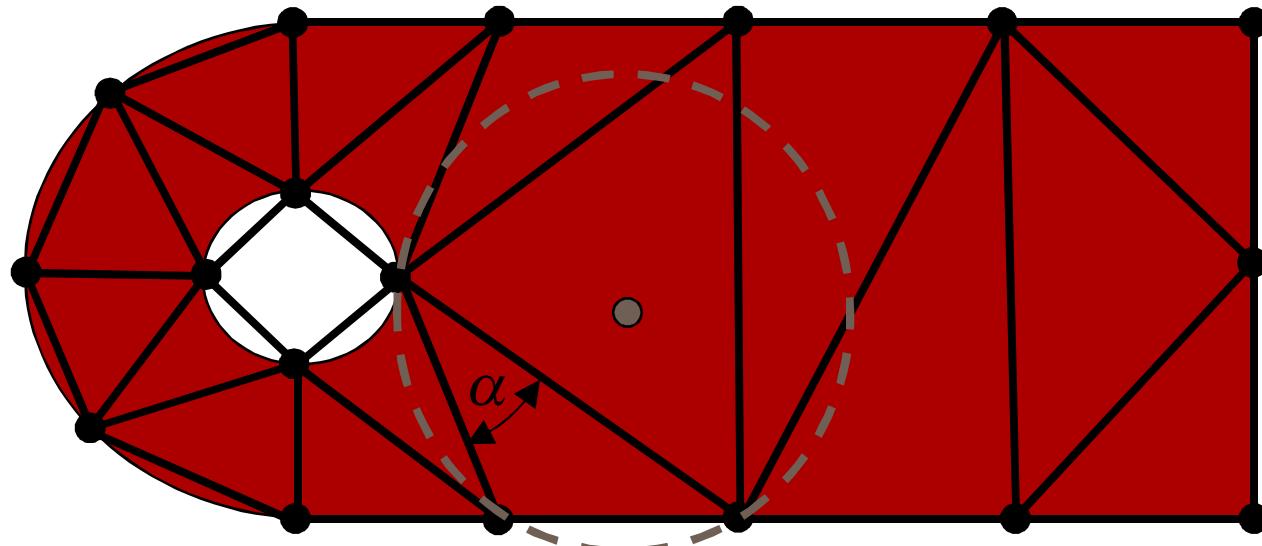


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Delaunay

Node Insertion Methods



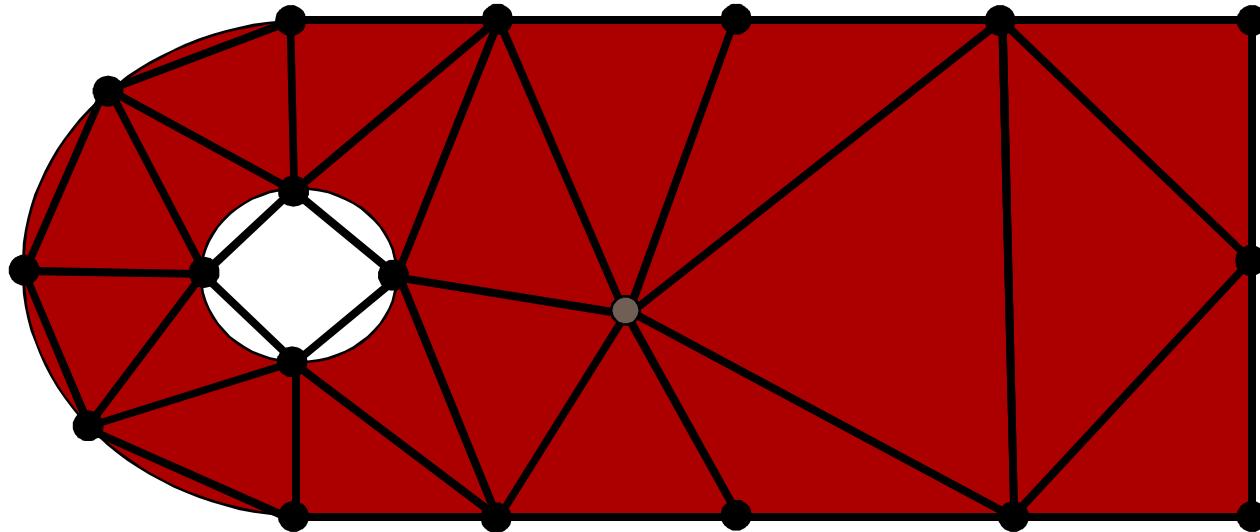
Circumcenter (“Guaranteed Quality”)

- Nodes introduced at triangle circumcenters
- Order of insertion based on minimum angle of any triangle
- Continues until minimum angle > predefined minimum ($\alpha \approx 30^\circ$)

(Chew,Ruppert,Shewchuk)

Delaunay

Node Insertion Methods

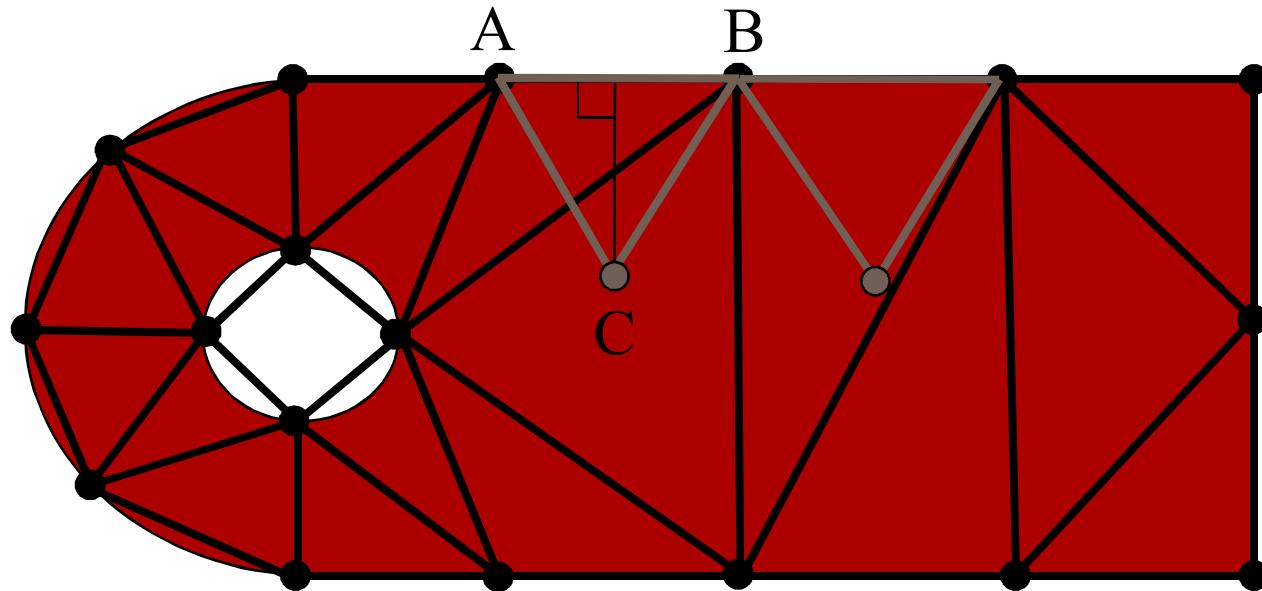


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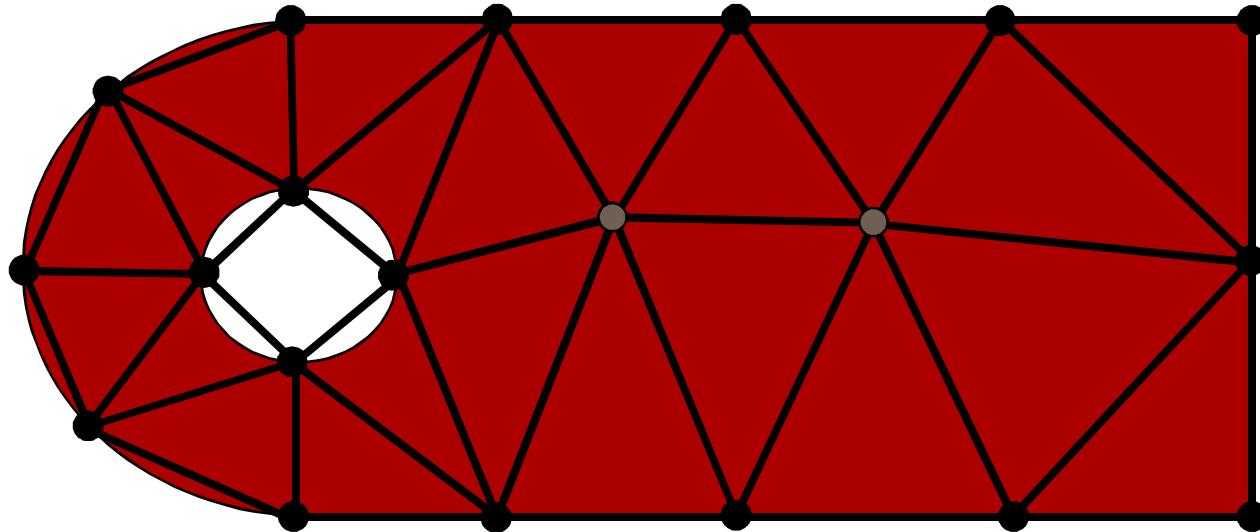
Node Insertion Methods



Advancing Front

- “Front” structure maintained throughout
- Nodes introduced at ideal location from current front edge
(Marcum,95)

Node Insertion Methods

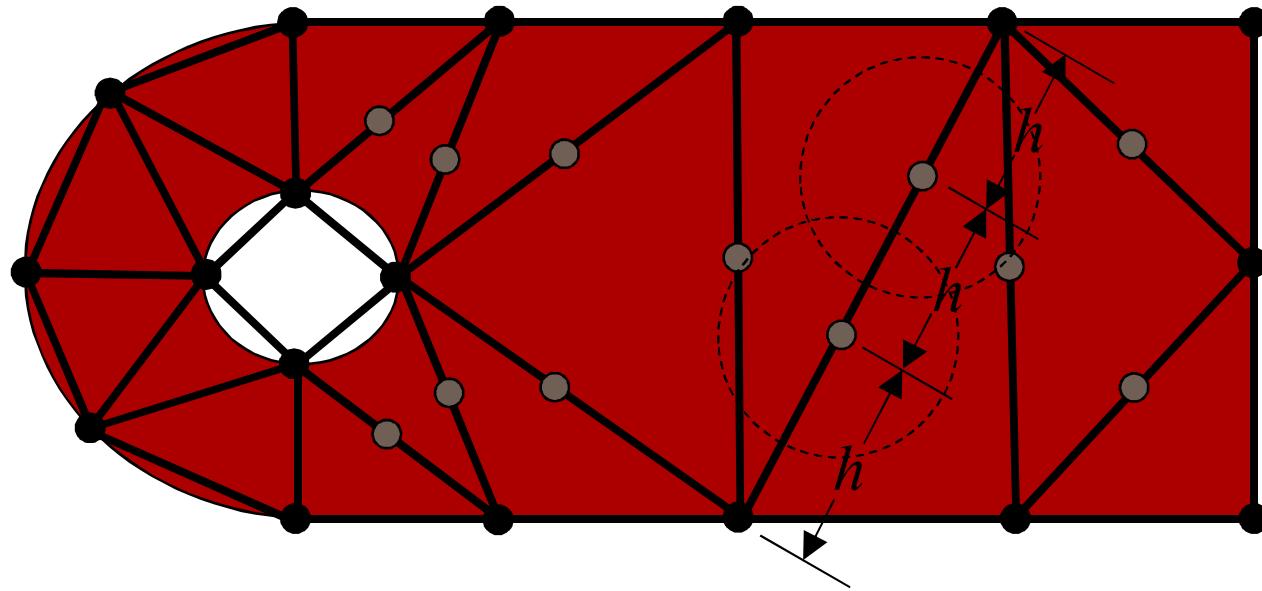


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Delaunay

Node Insertion Methods



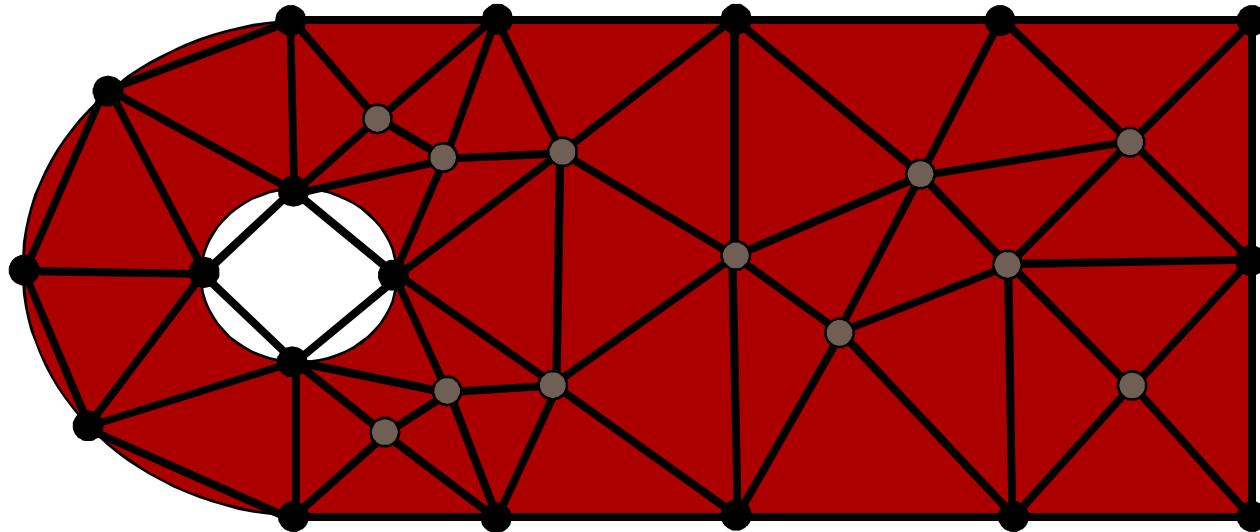
Edges

- Nodes introduced along existing edges at $l=h$
- Check to ensure nodes on nearby edges are not too close

(George,91)

Delaunay

Node Insertion Methods



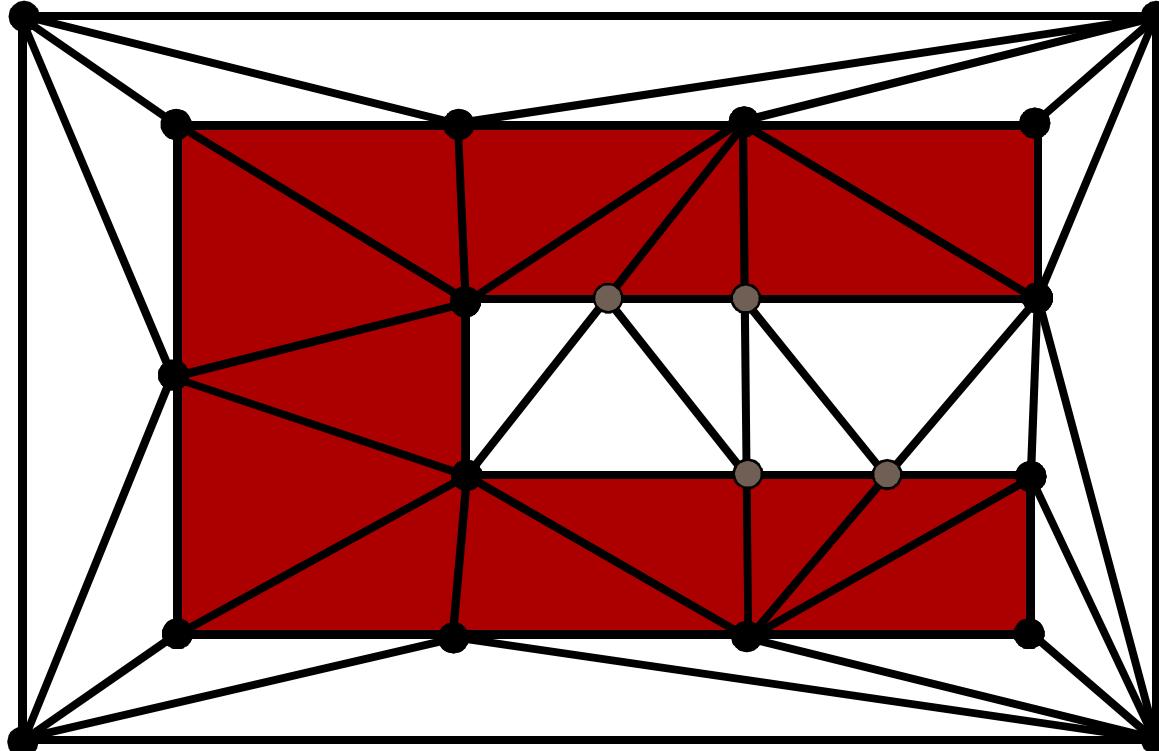
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Delaunay

Boundary Constrained

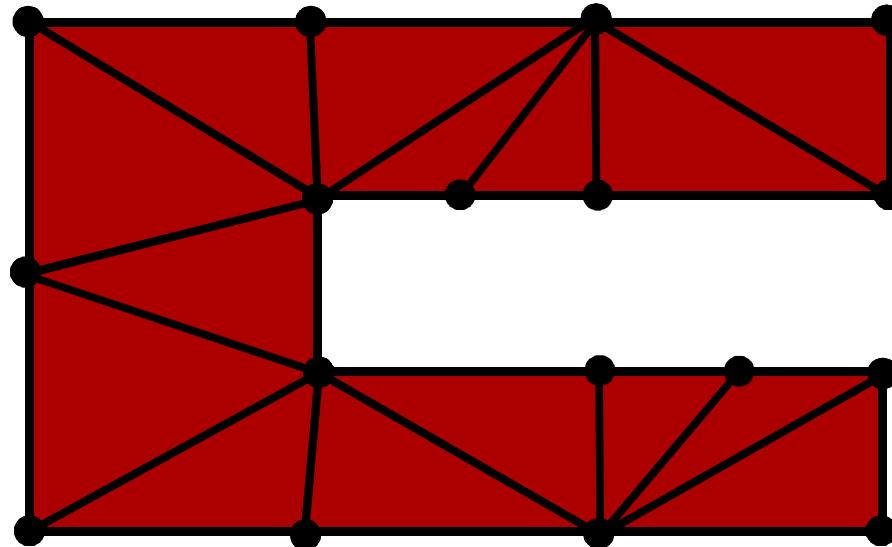


Boundary Intersection

- Nodes and edges introduced where Delaunay edges intersect boundary

Delaunay

Boundary Constrained

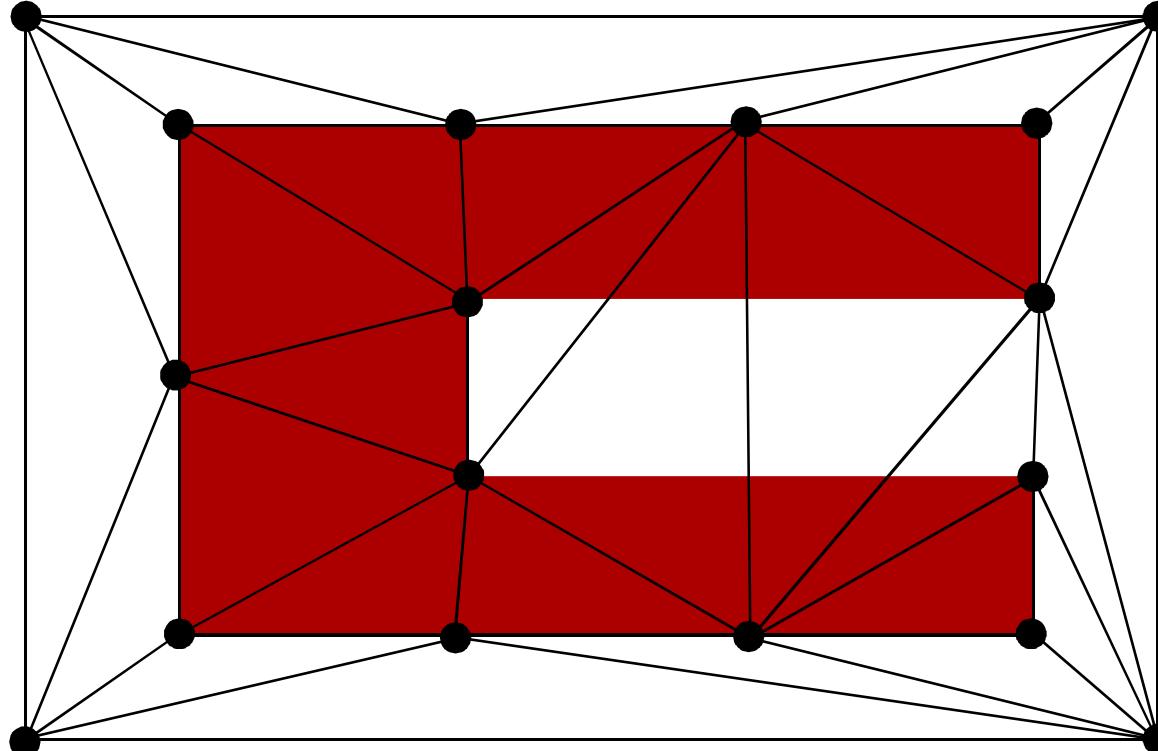


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Boundary Constrained

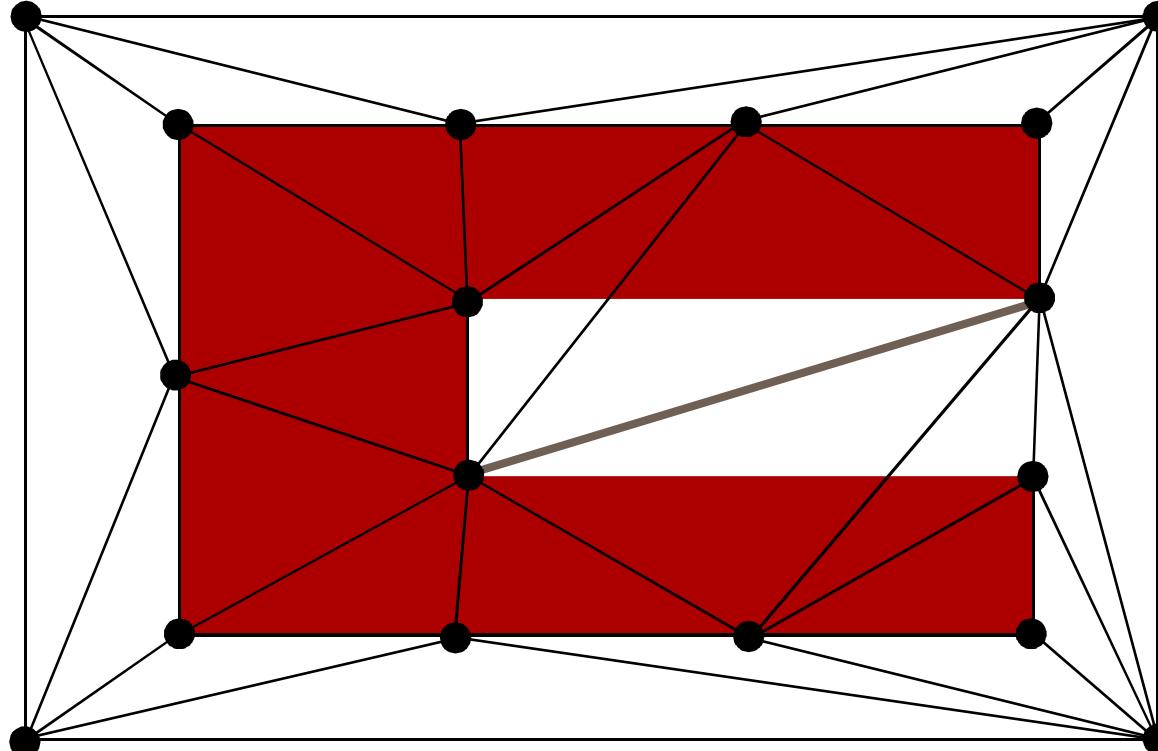


Local Swapping

- Edges swapped between adjacent pairs of triangles until boundary is maintained

Delaunay

Boundary Constrained

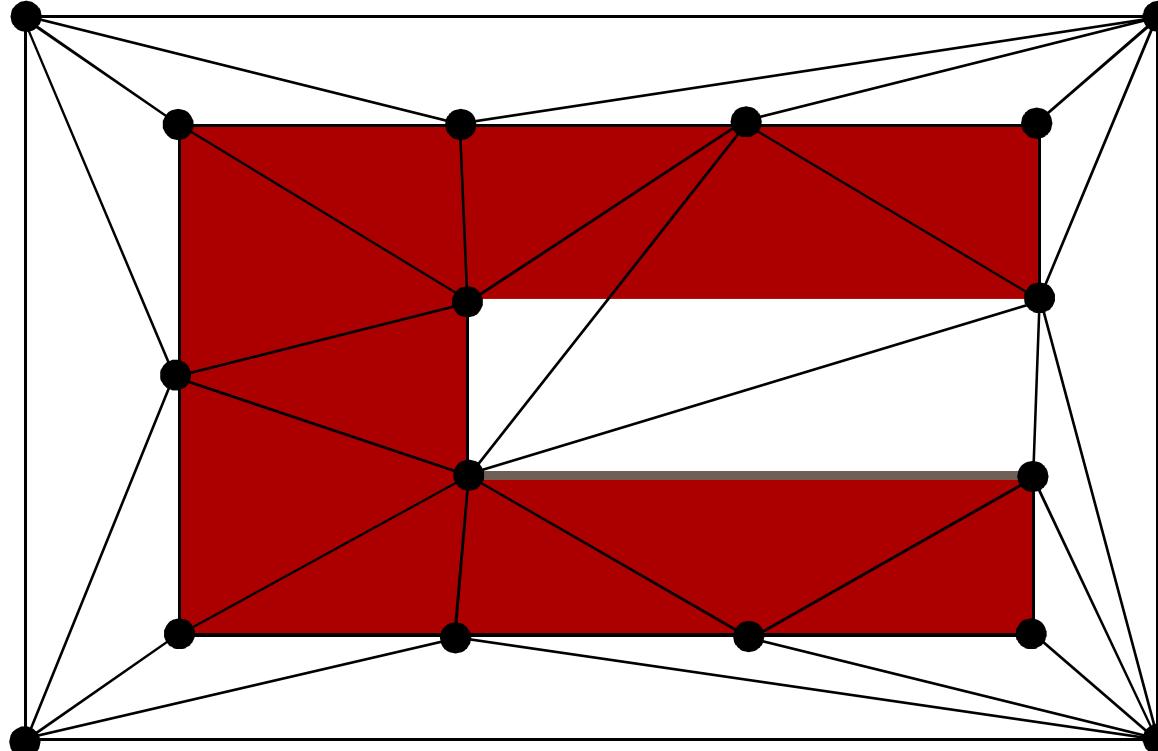


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Delaunay

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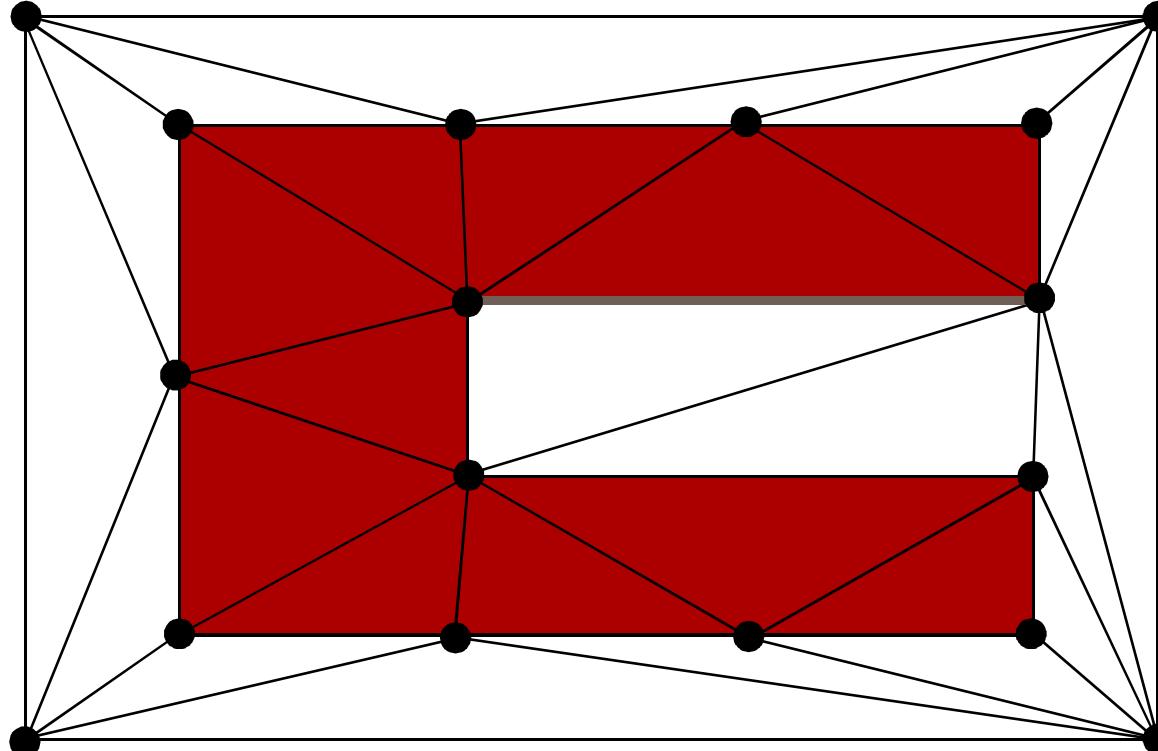


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Delaunay

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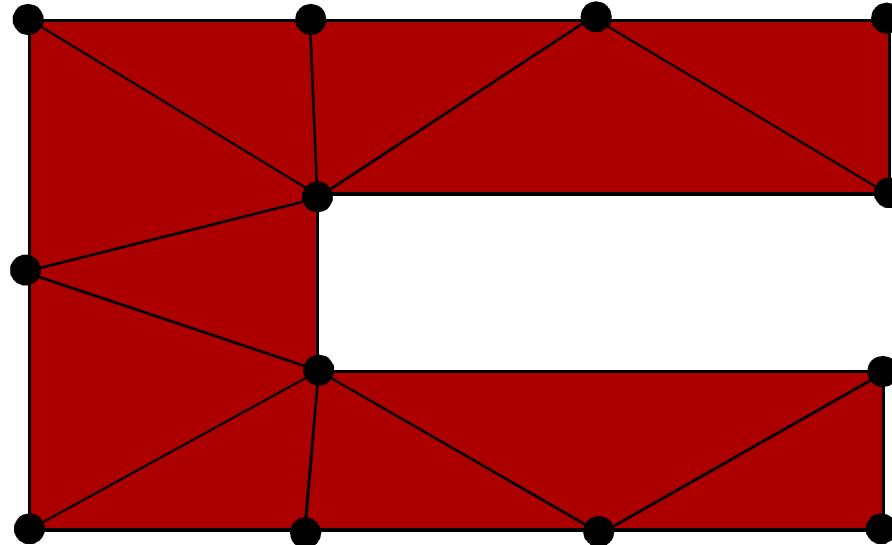


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Delaunay

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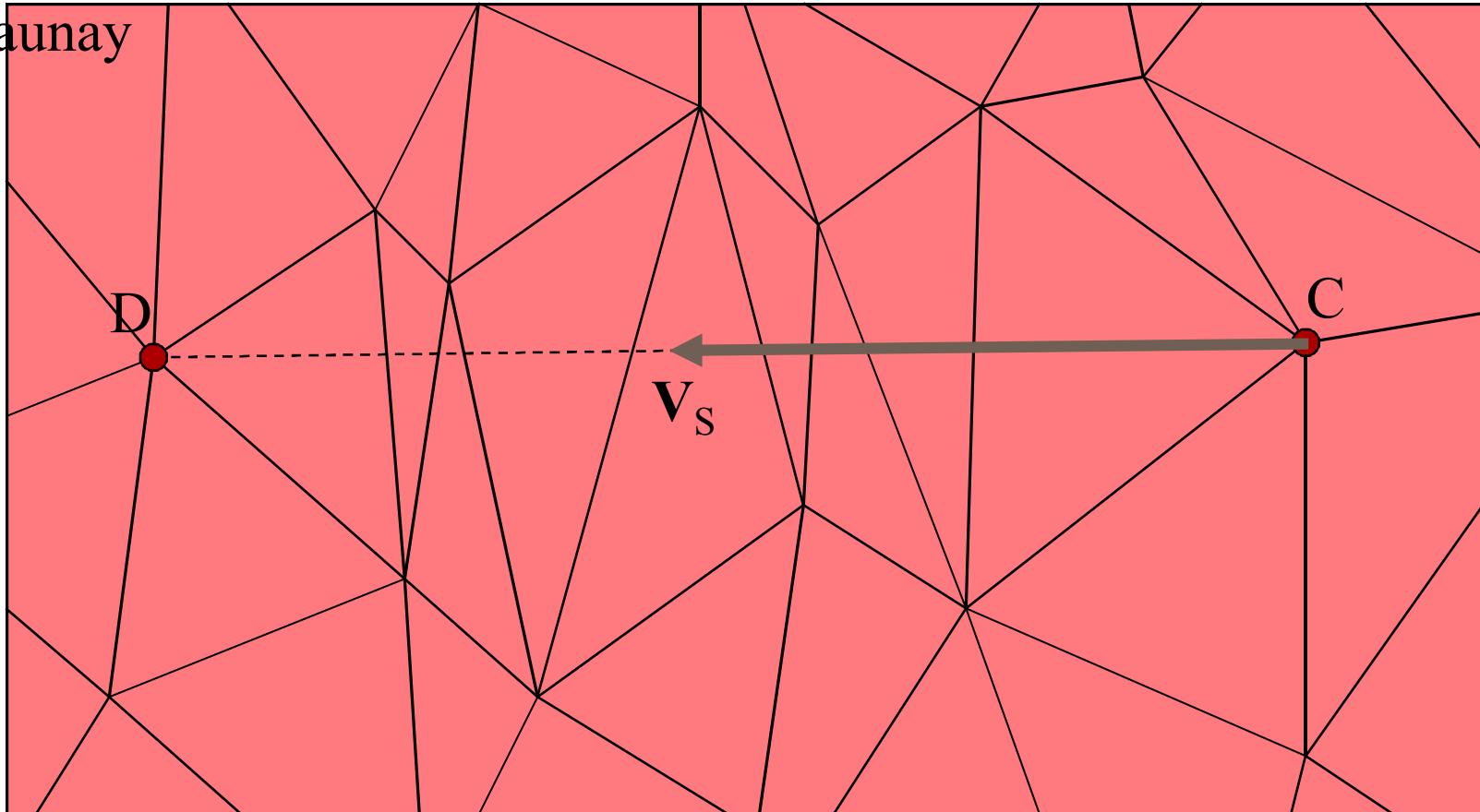


Local Swapping

- Edges swapped between adjacent pairs of triangles until boundary is maintained

(George,91)(Owen,99)

Delaunay

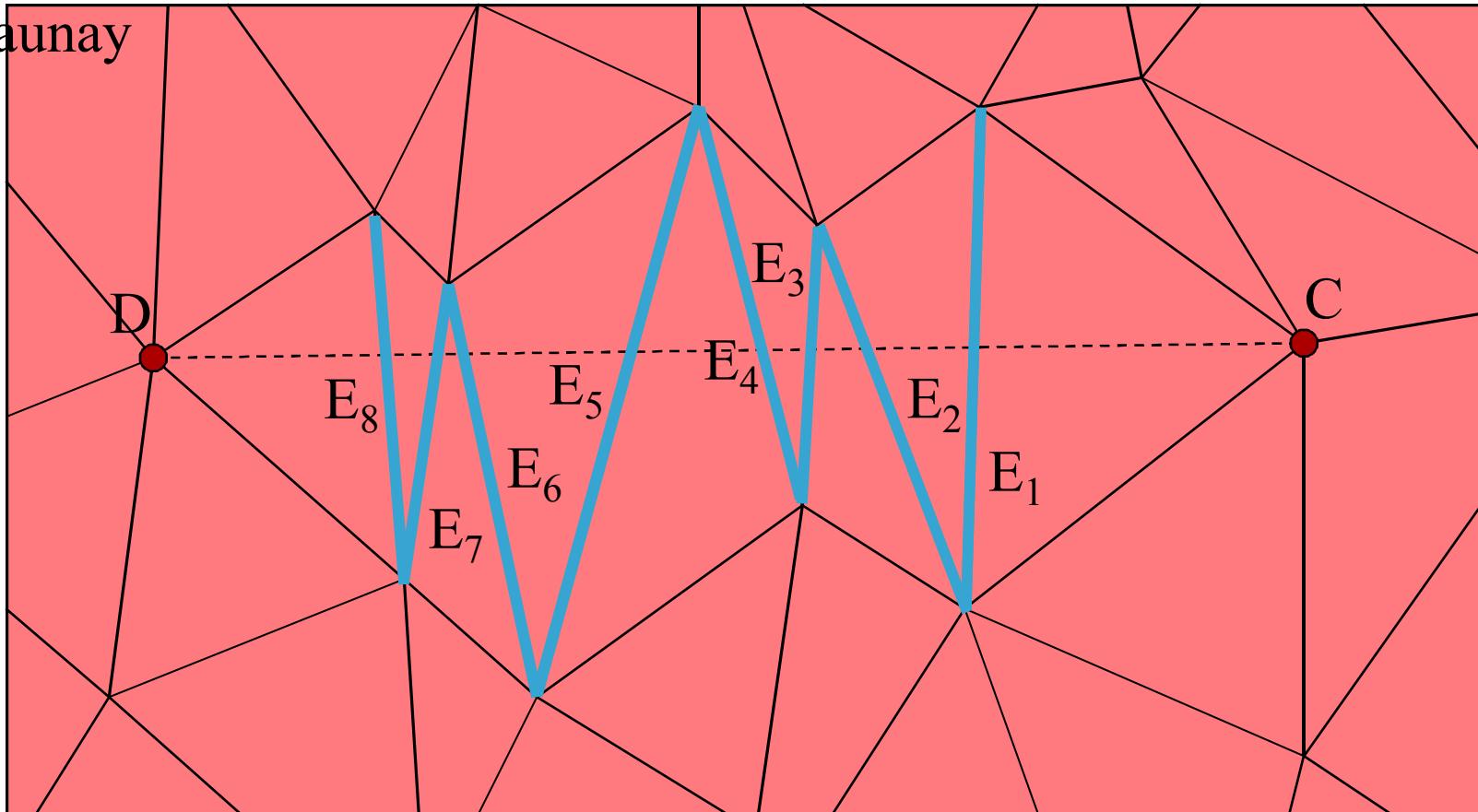


Local Swapping Example

- Recover edge CD at vector \mathbf{V}_s

Boundary Constrained

Delaunay

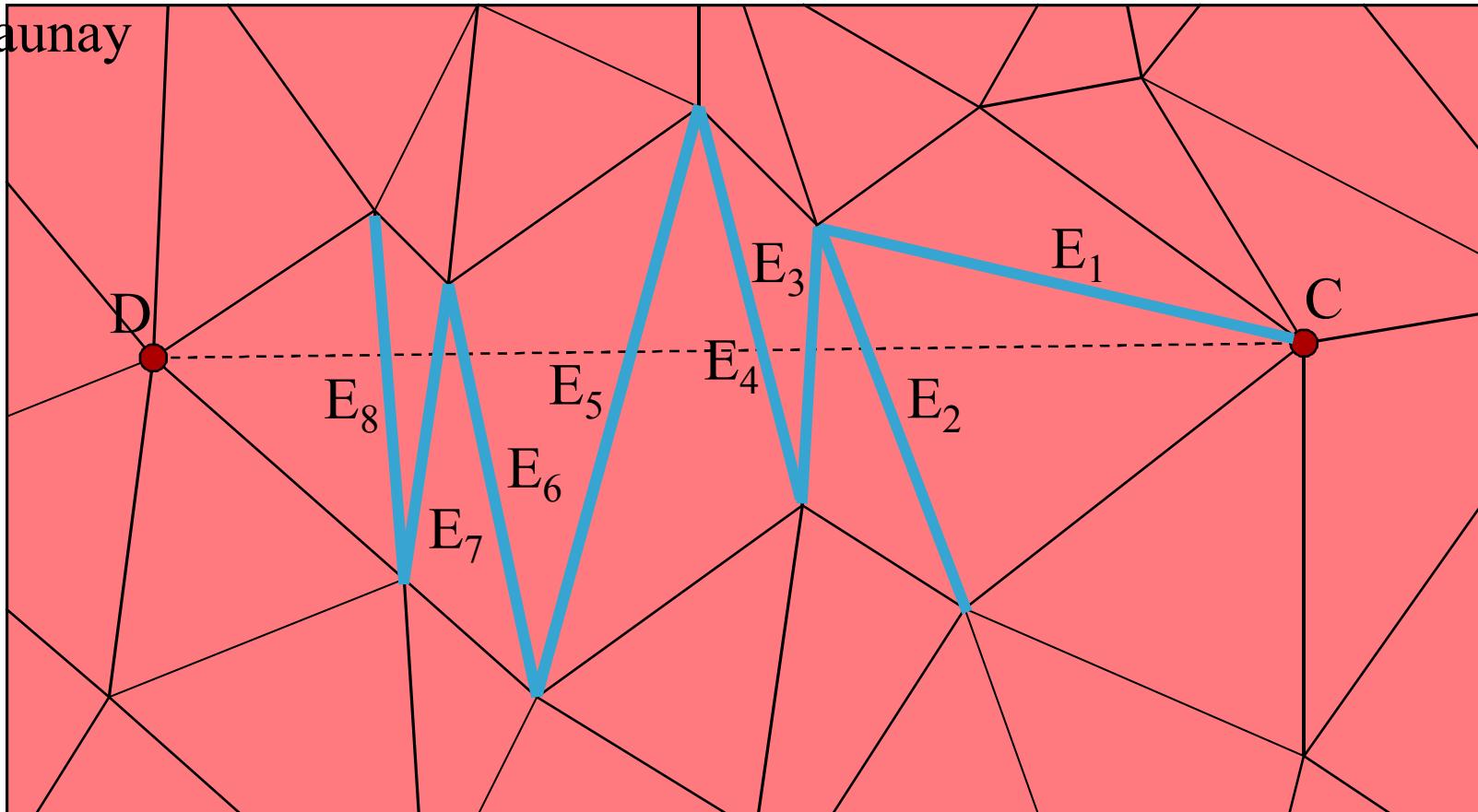


Local Swapping Example

- Make a list (queue) of all edges E_i , that intersect V_s

Boundary Constrained

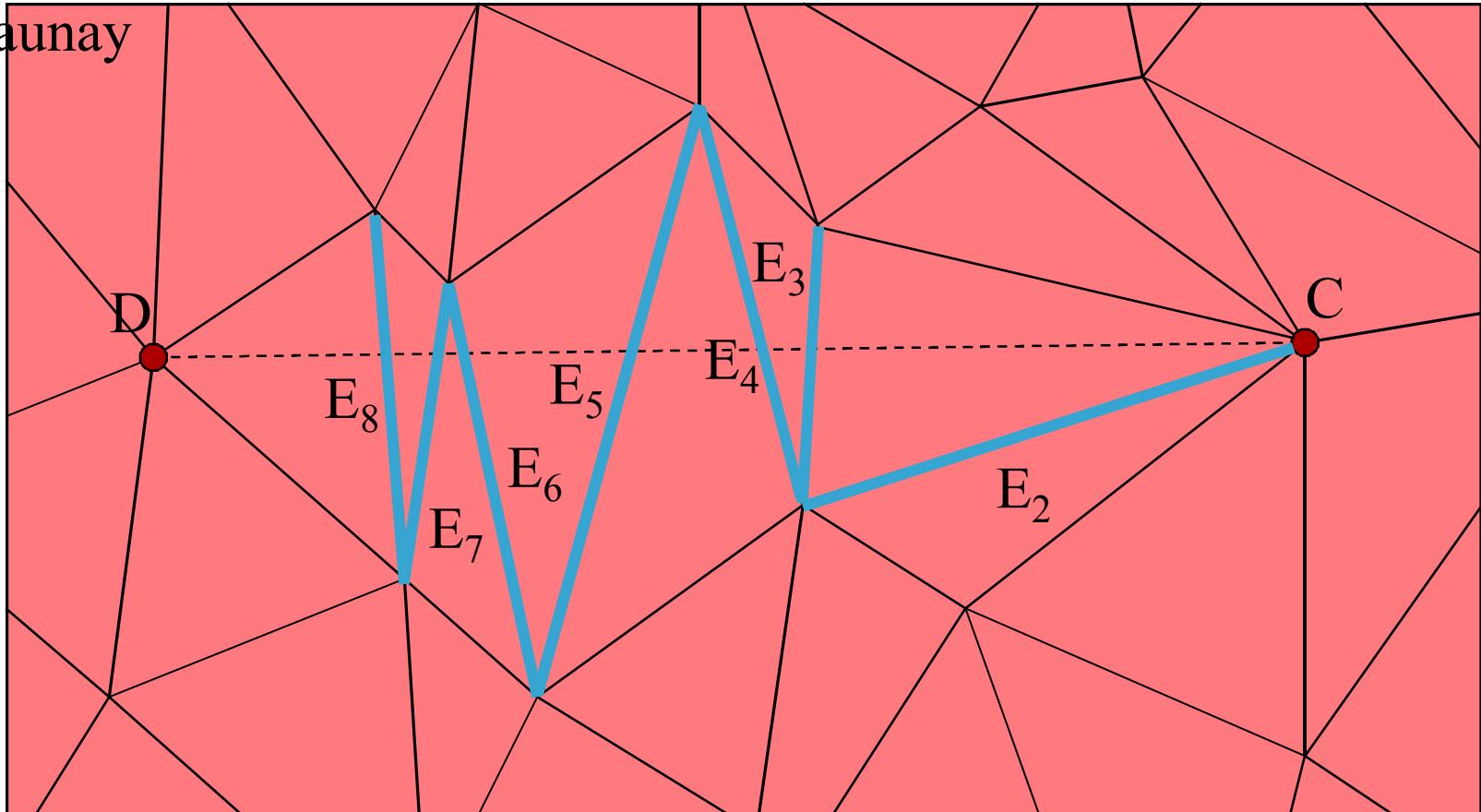
Delaunay



Local Swapping Example

- Swap the diagonal of adjacent triangle pairs for each edge in the list

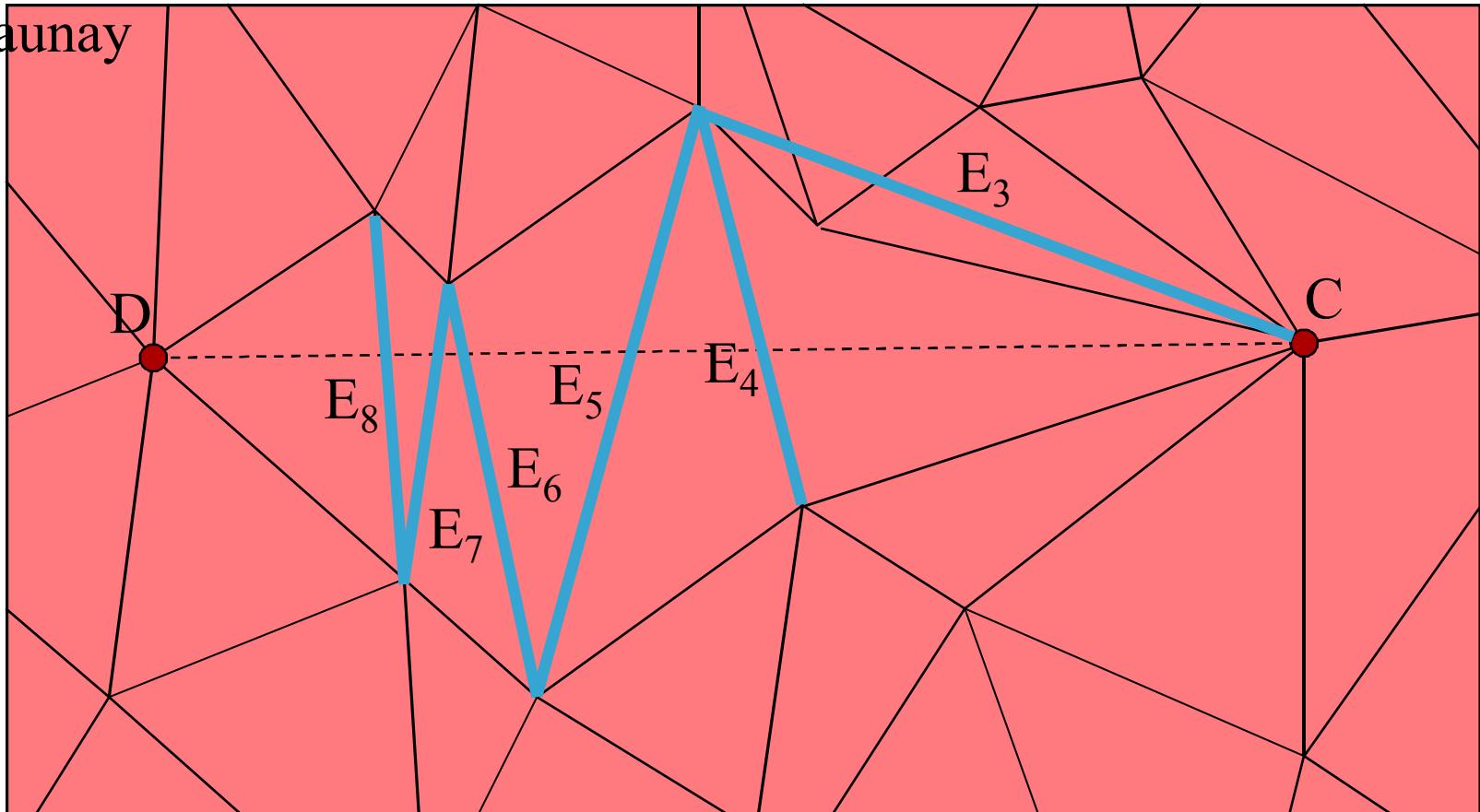
Delaunay



Local Swapping Example

- Check that resulting swaps do not cause overlapping triangles. If they do, then place edge at the back of the queue and try again later

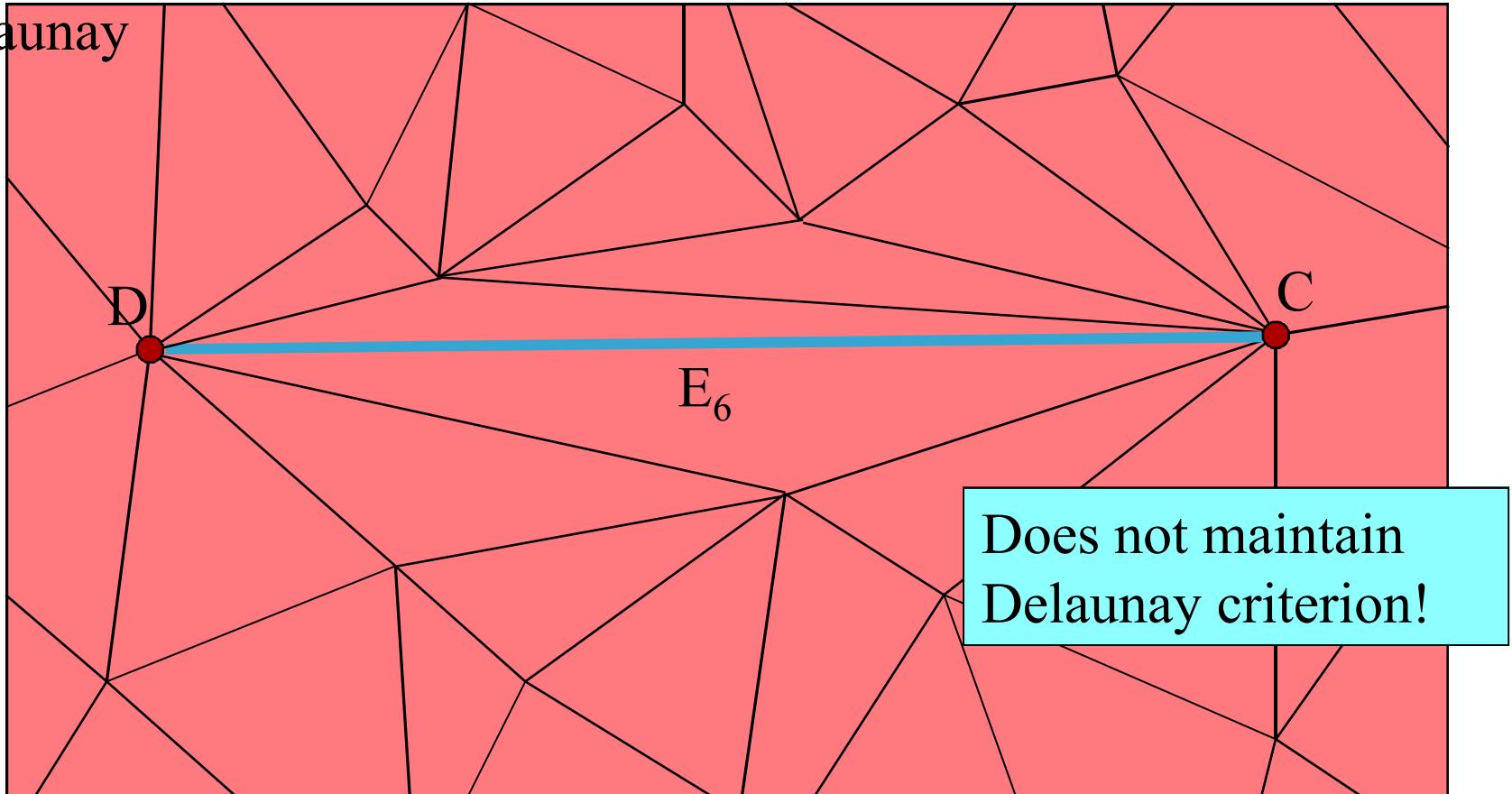
Delaunay



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Delaunay

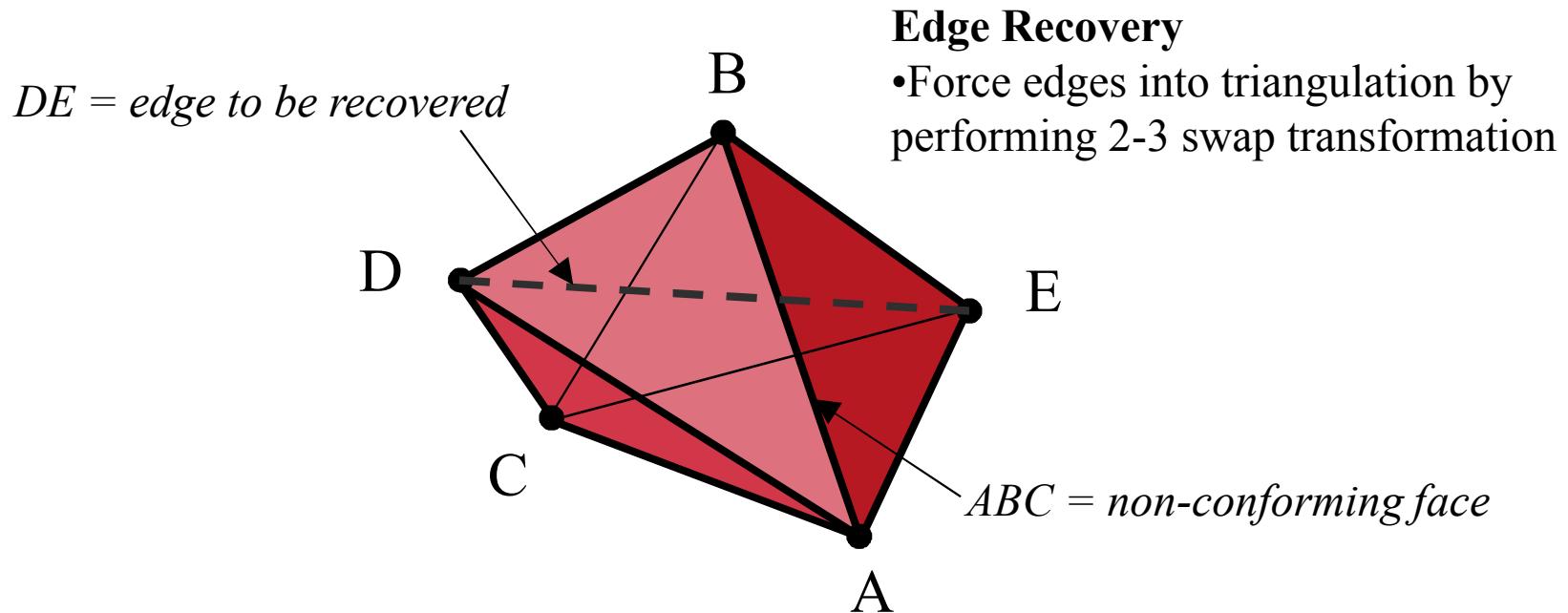


Local Swapping Example

- Final swap will recover the desired edge.
- Resulting triangle quality may be poor if multiple swaps were necessary

Delaunay

Boundary Constrained



Edge Recovery

- Force edges into triangulation by performing 2-3 swap transformation

3D Local Swapping

- Requires both boundary *edge* recovery and boundary *face* recovery

(George,91;99)(Owen,00)

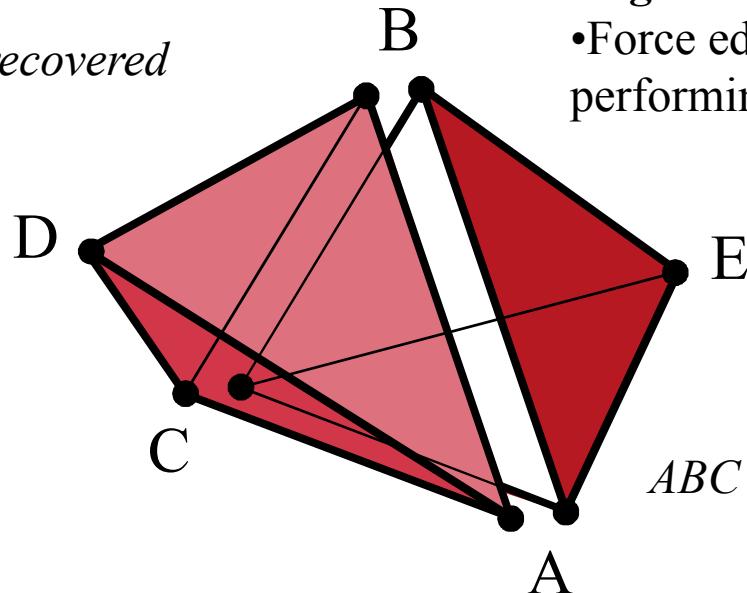
Delaunay

Boundary Constrained

$DE = \text{edge to be recovered}$

2-3 Swap

$ABCE$
 $ACBD$



Edge Recovery

- Force edges into triangulation by performing 2-3 swap transformation

$ABC = \text{non-conforming face}$

3D Local Swapping

- Requires both boundary *edge* recovery and boundary *face* recovery

(George,91;99)(Owen,00)

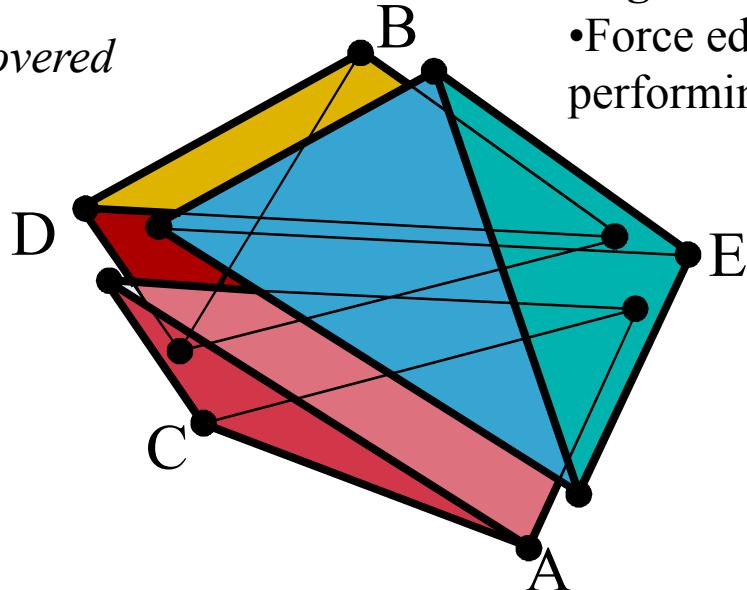
Delaunay

Boundary Constrained

$DE = \text{edge recovered}$

2-3 Swap

$ABCE$ \rightarrow $BAED$
 $ACBD$ $CBED$
 $ACED$



Edge Recovery

- Force edges into triangulation by performing 2-3 swap transformation

3D Local Swapping

- Requires both boundary *edge* recovery and boundary *face* recovery

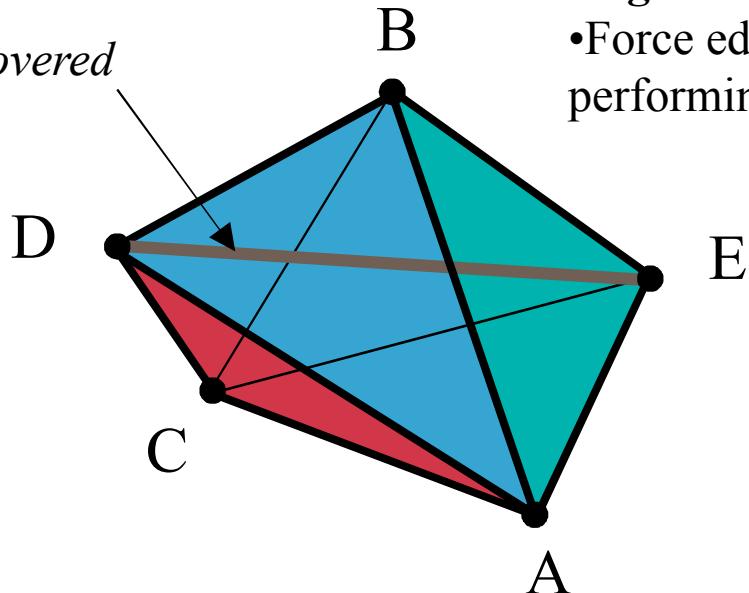
(George,91;99)(Owen,00)

Delaunay

Boundary Constrained

DE = edge recovered

2-3 Swap

$$\begin{array}{l} ABCE \\ ACBD \end{array} \rightarrow \begin{array}{l} BAED \\ CBED \\ ECED \end{array}$$


Edge Recovery

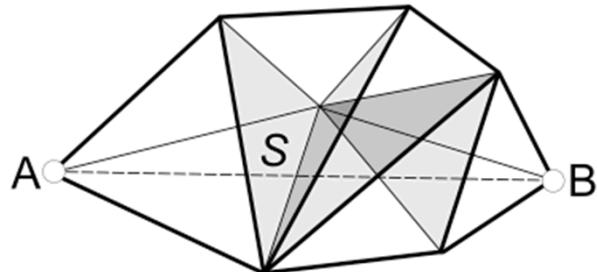
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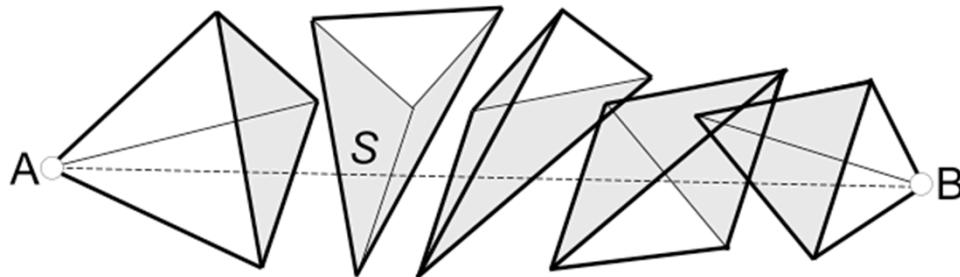
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(George,91;99)(Owen,00)

Delaunay



Edge AB to be recovered



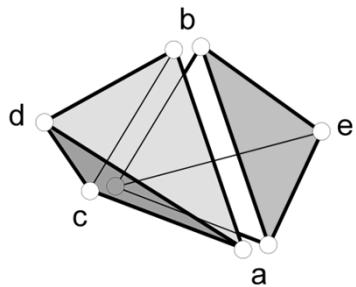
Exploded view of tets
intersected by AB

3D Edge Recovery

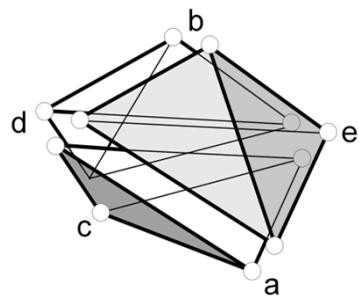
- Form queue of faces through which edge AB will pass
- Perform 2-3 swap transformations on all faces in the list
- If overlapping tets result, place back on queue and try again later
- If still cannot recover edge, then insert “steiner” point

Delaunay

2-3 Swap

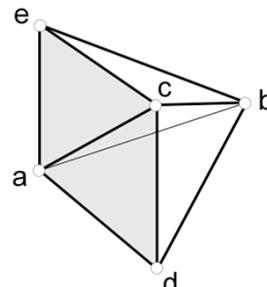


abce, acbd

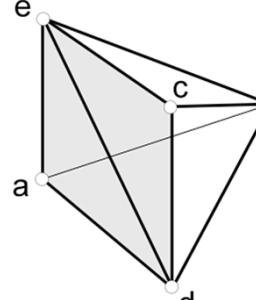


abde, bcde, cade

2-2 Swap

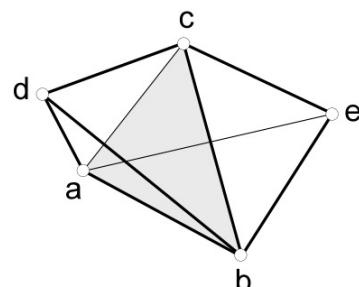


aceb, adcb

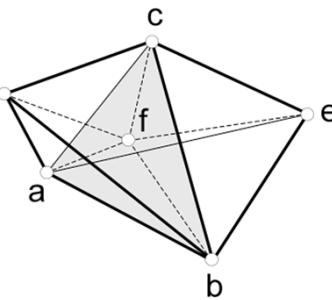


adeb, edcb

Face Split

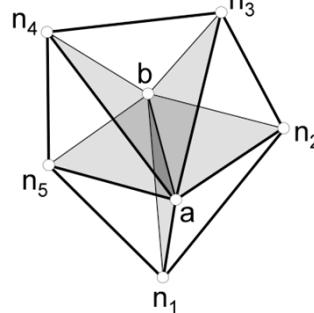


abce, acbd

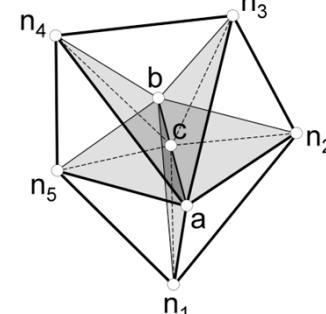


abfe, bcfe, cafe
bafd, cbfd, acfd

Edge Split



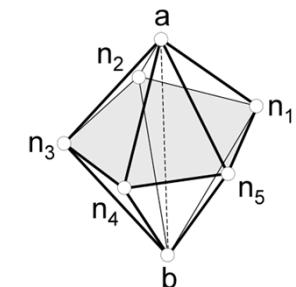
$abn_i n_{i+1} \{i=1 \dots N\}$



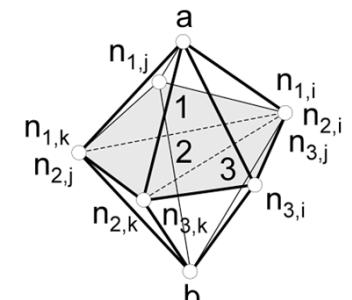
$abn_i n_{i+1},$
 $cbn_i n_{i+1} \{i=1 \dots N\}$

N = no. adj. tets at edge ab

Edge Suppress



$abn_i n_{i+1} \{i=1 \dots N\}$

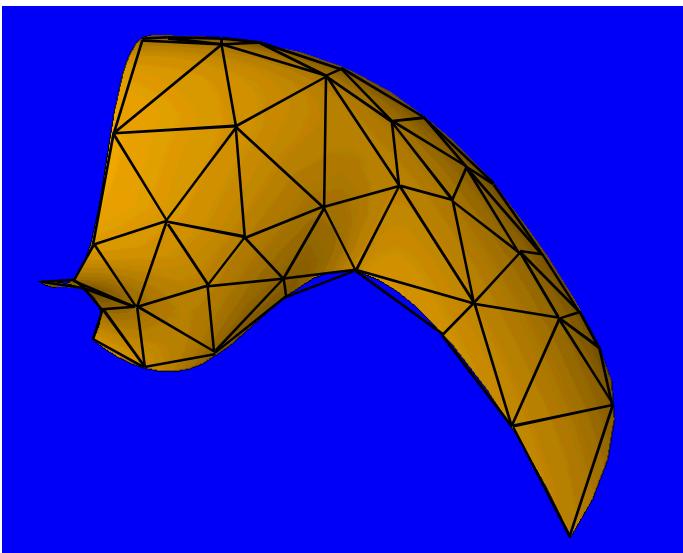


$n_{m,k} n_{m,j} n_{m,i} a,$
 $n_{m,k} n_{m,j} n_{m,i} b \{m=1 \dots M\}$

M = no. unique trias in
 $P=\{n_1, n_2, n_3\}$

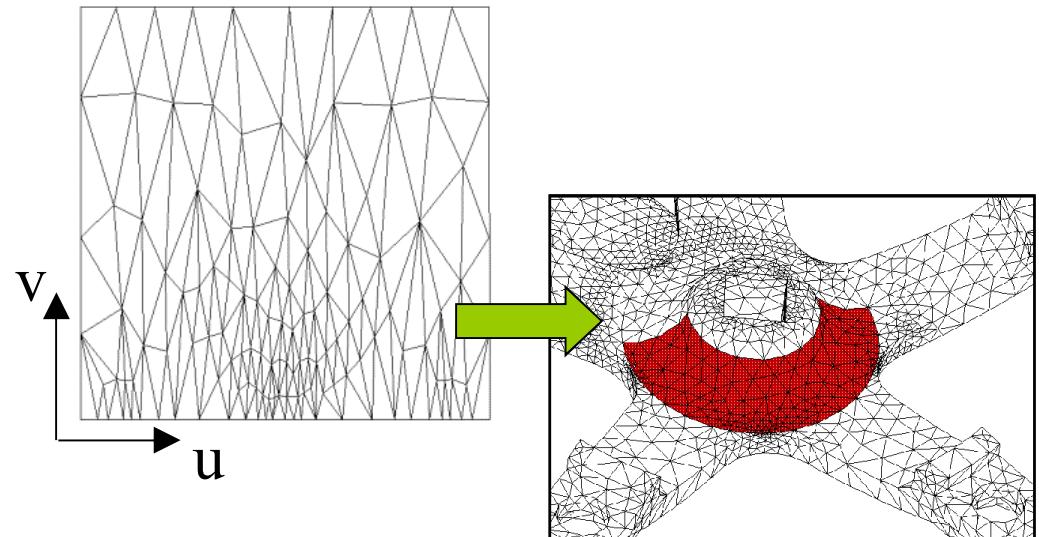
Surface Meshing

Direct 3D Meshing



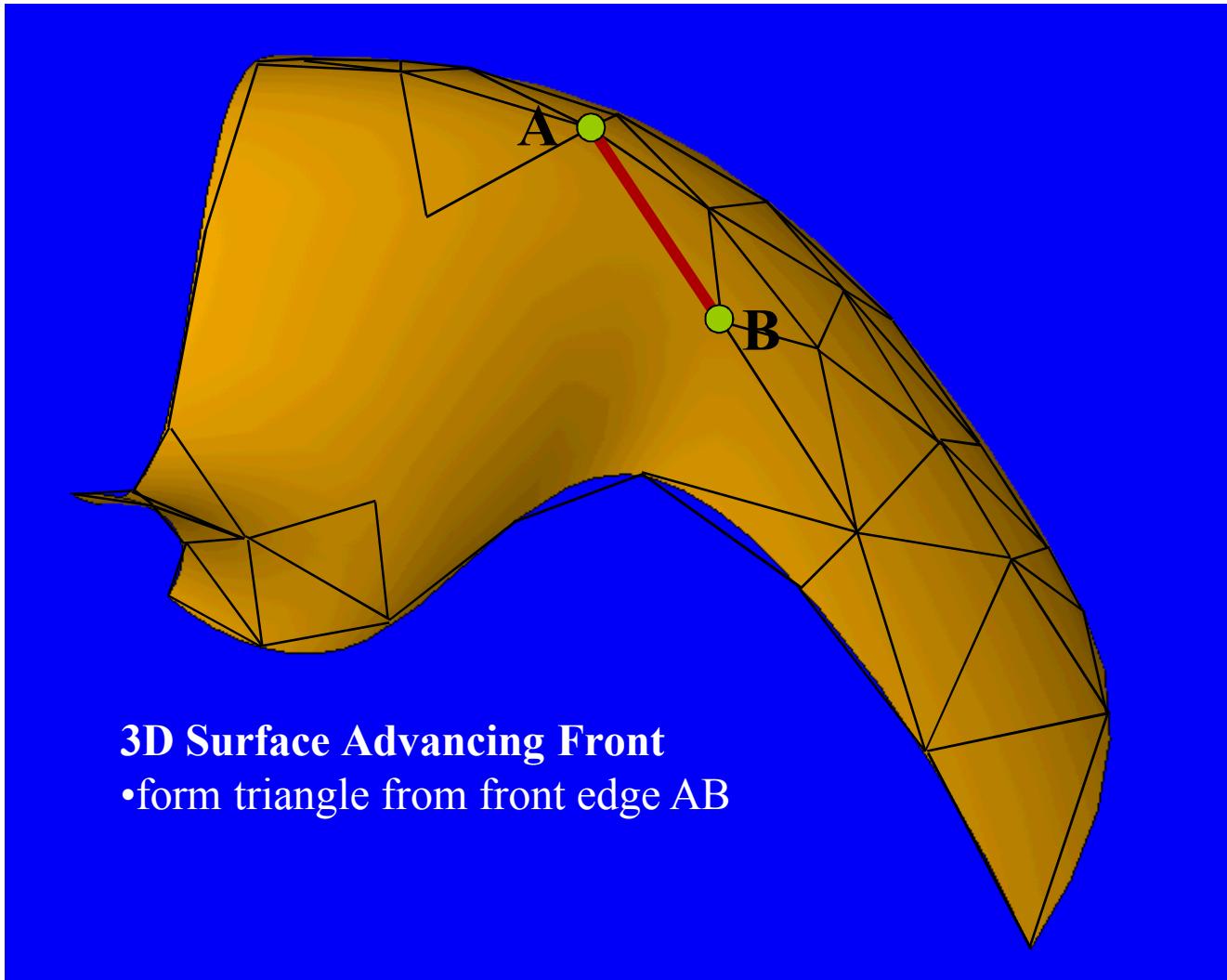
- Elements formed in 3D using actual x-y-z representation of surface

Parametric Space Meshing

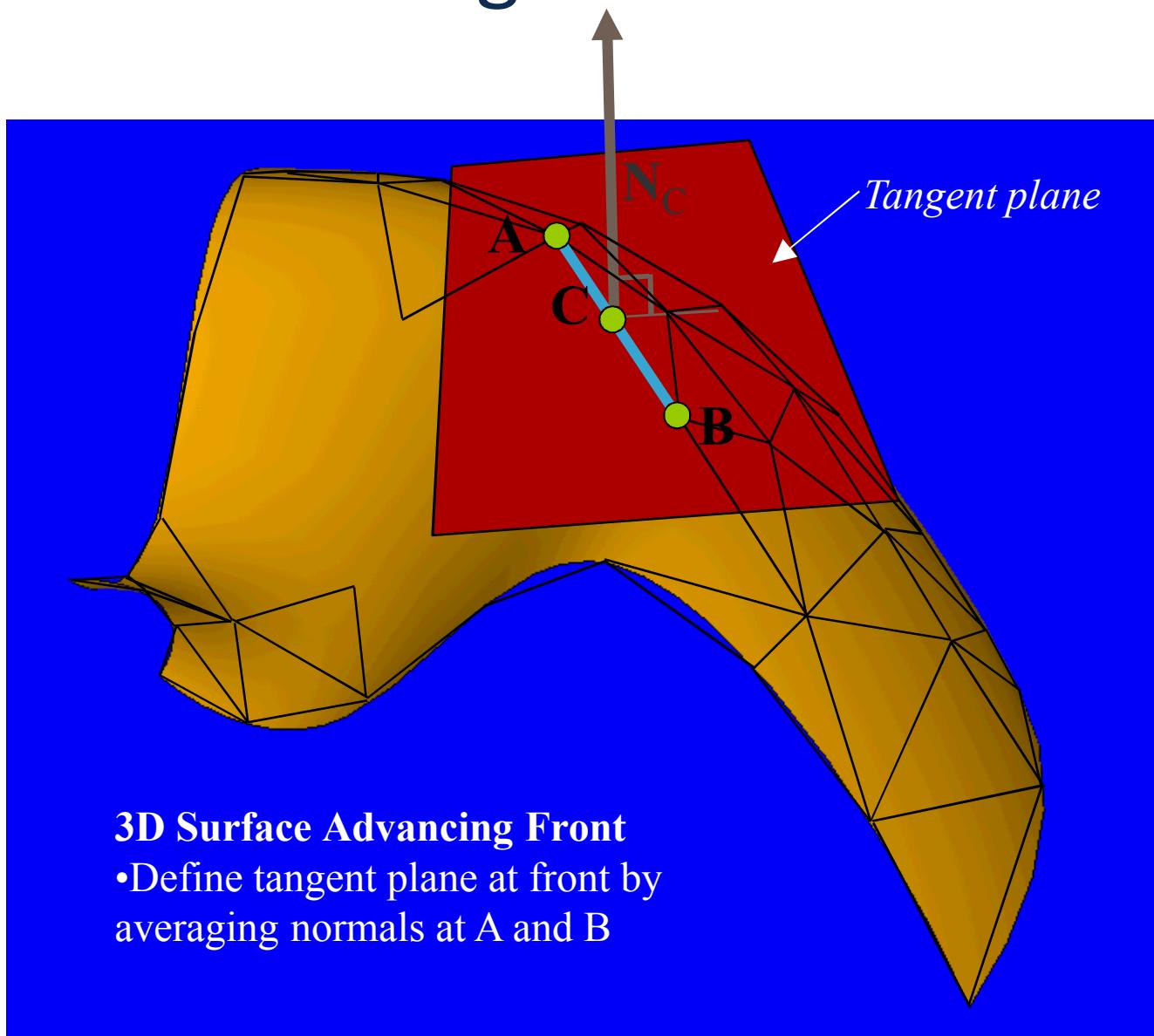


- Elements formed in 2D using parametric representation of surface
- Node locations later mapped to 3D

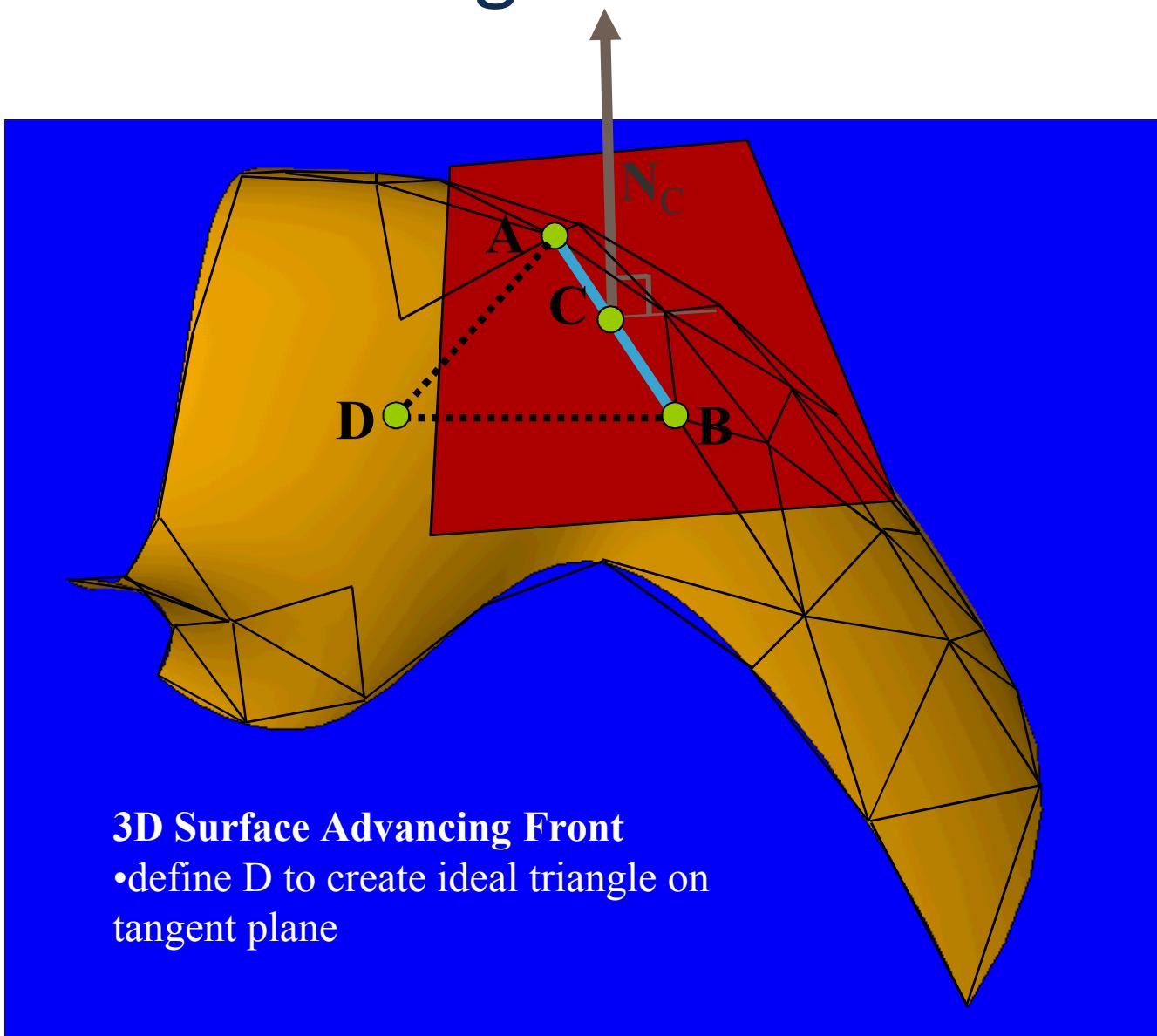
Surface Meshing



Surface Meshing



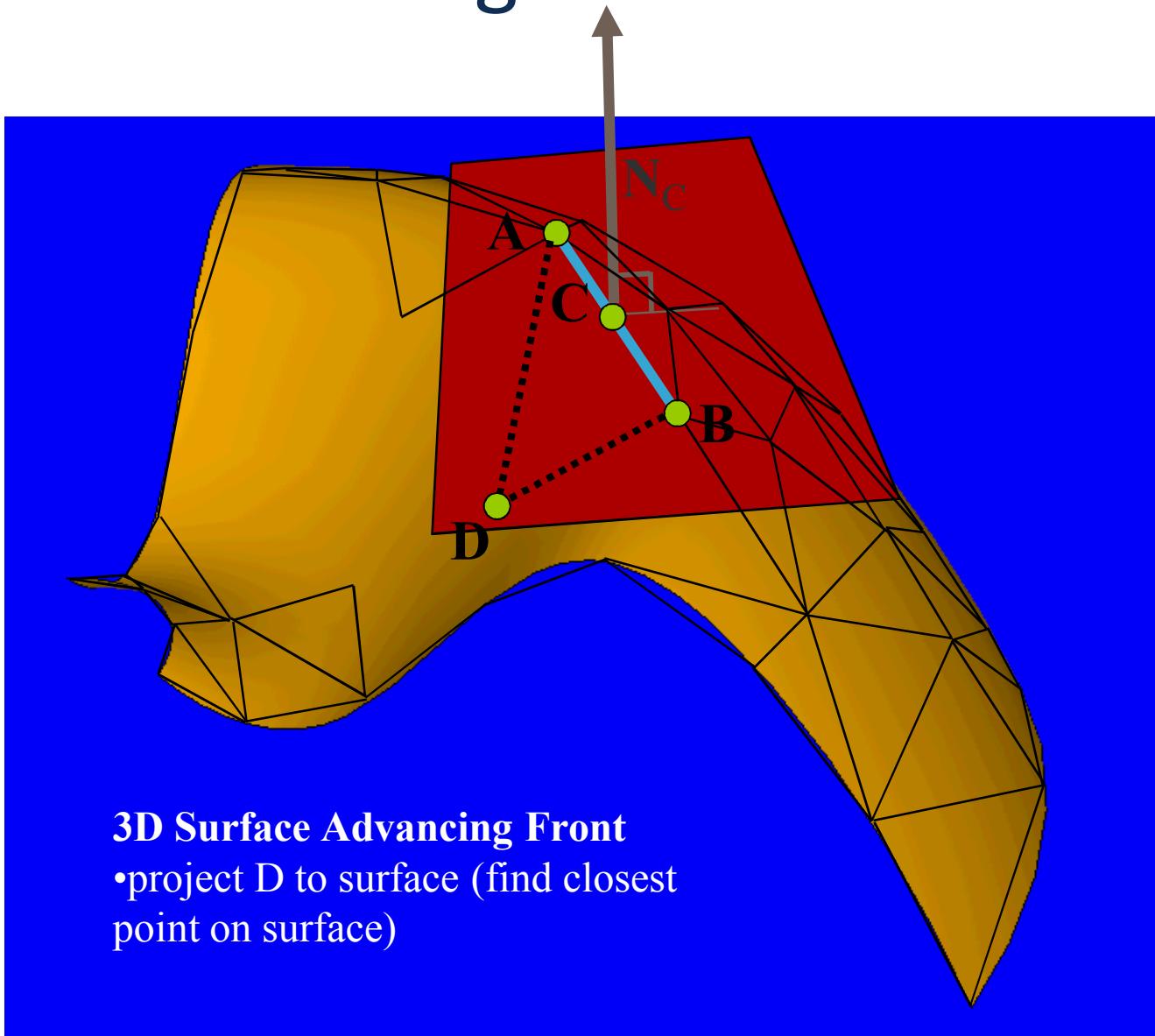
Surface Meshing



3D Surface Advancing Front

- define D to create ideal triangle on tangent plane

Surface Meshing



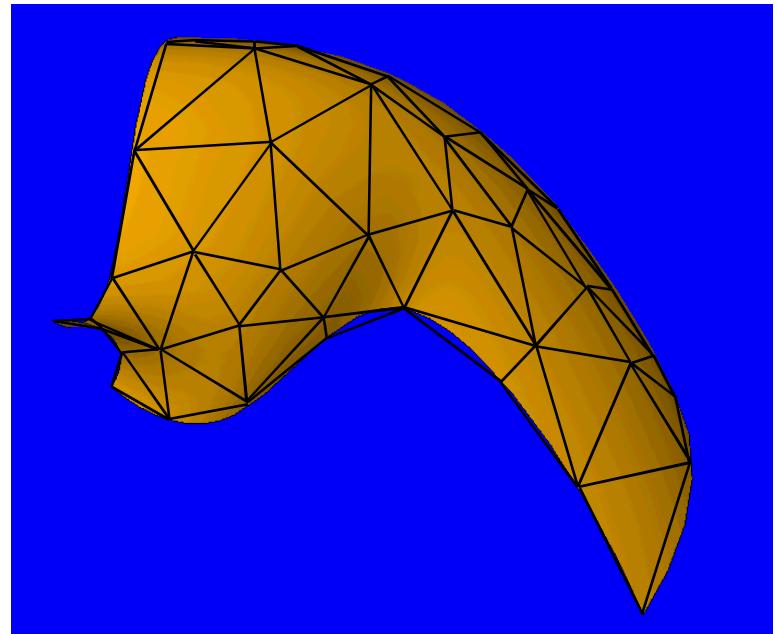
3D Surface Advancing Front

- project D to surface (find closest point on surface)

Surface Meshing

3D Surface Advancing Front

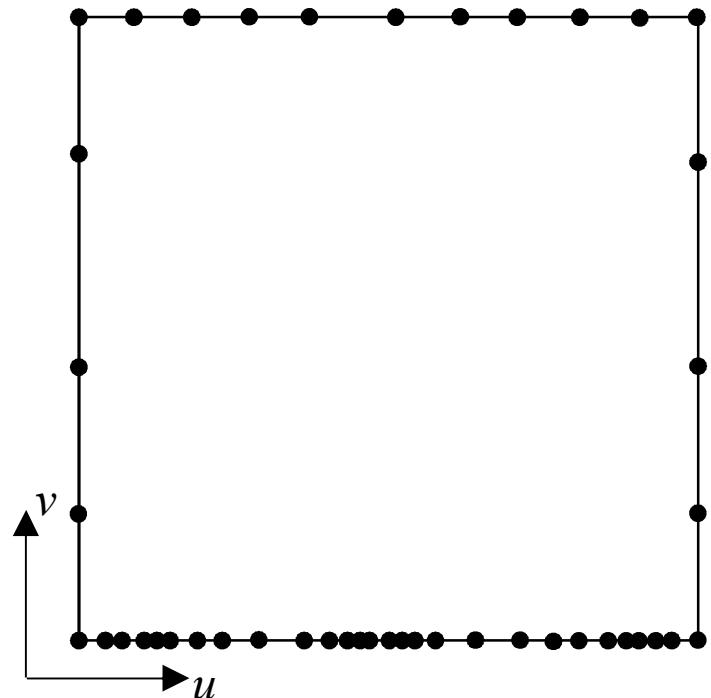
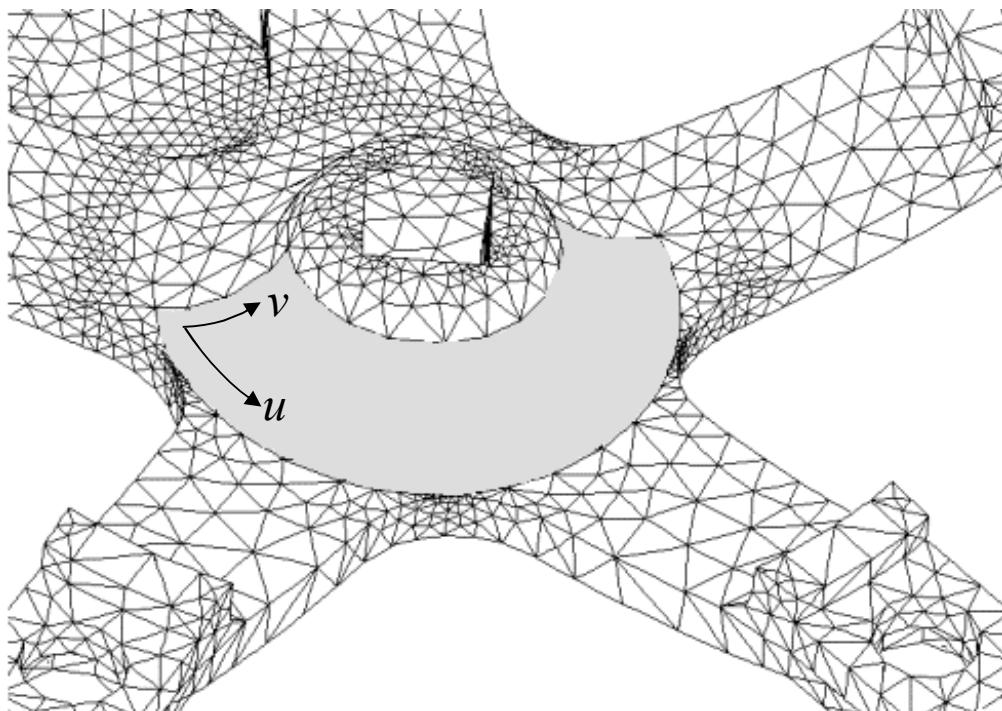
- Must determine overlapping or intersecting triangles in 3D. (Floating point robustness issues)
- Extensive use of geometry evaluators (for normals and projections)
- Typically slower than parametric implementations
- Generally higher quality elements
- Avoids problems with poor parametric representations (typical in many CAD environments)
- (Lo,96;97); (Cass,96)



Surface Meshing

Parametric Space Mesh Generation

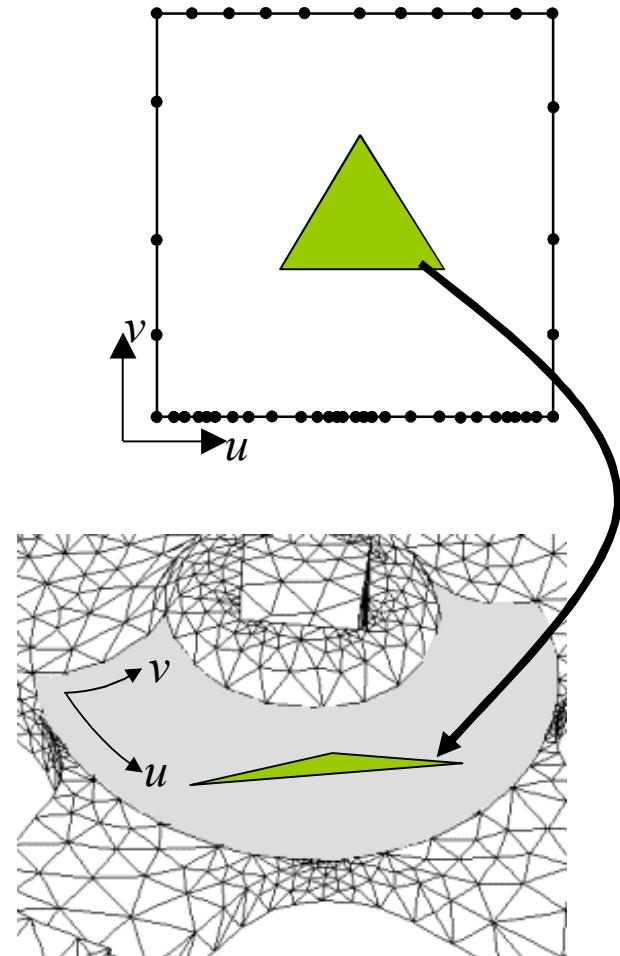
- Parameterization of the NURBS provided by the CAD model can be used to reduce the mesh generation to 2D



Surface Meshing

Parametric Space Mesh Generation

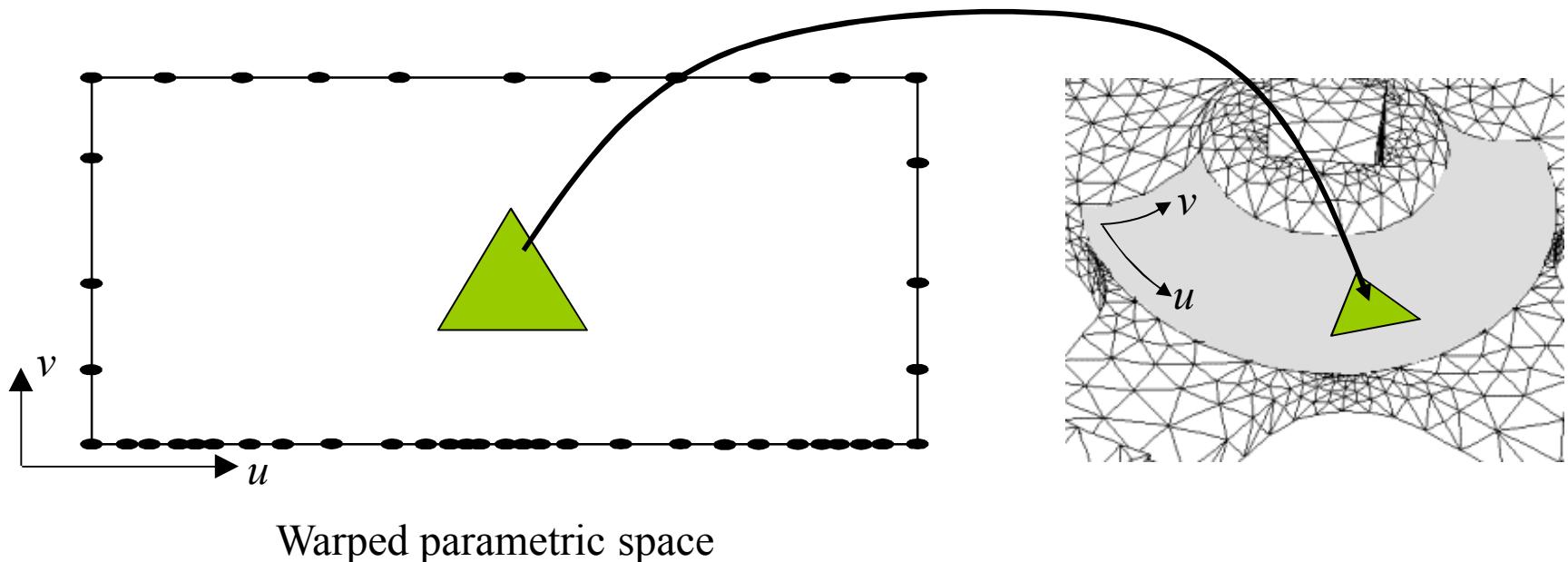
- Isotropic: Target element shapes are equilateral triangles
 - Equilateral elements in parametric space may be distorted when mapped to 3D space.
 - If parametric space resembles 3D space without too much distortion from u - v space to x - y - z space, then isotropic methods can be used.



Surface Meshing

Parametric Space Mesh Generation

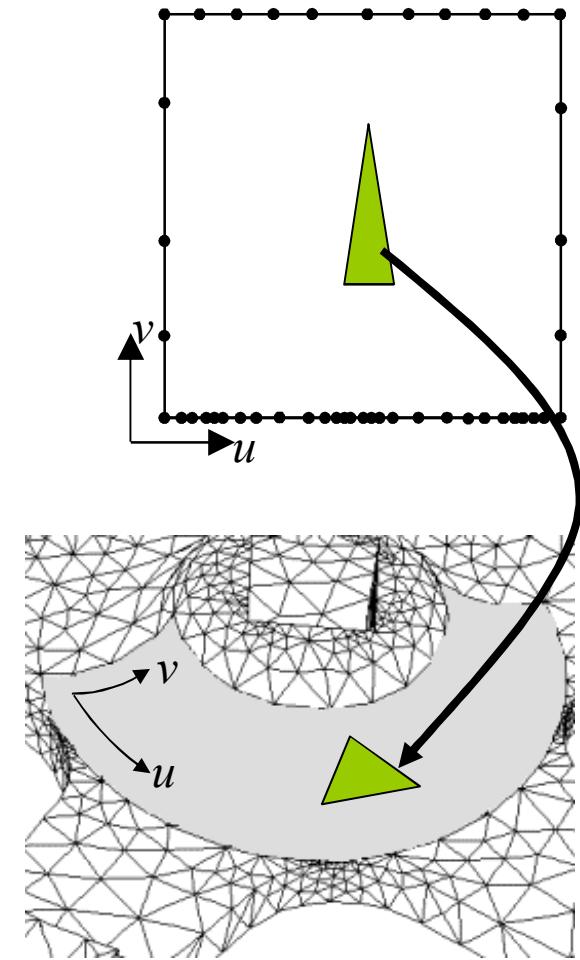
- Parametric space can be “customized” or *warped* so that isotropic methods can be used.
- Works well for many cases.
- In general, isotropic mesh generation does not work well for parametric meshing



Surface Meshing

Parametric Space Mesh Generation

- Anisotropic: Triangles are stretched based on a specified vector field
 - Triangles appear stretched in 2d (parametric space), but are near equilateral in 3D



Surface Meshing

Parametric Space Mesh Generation

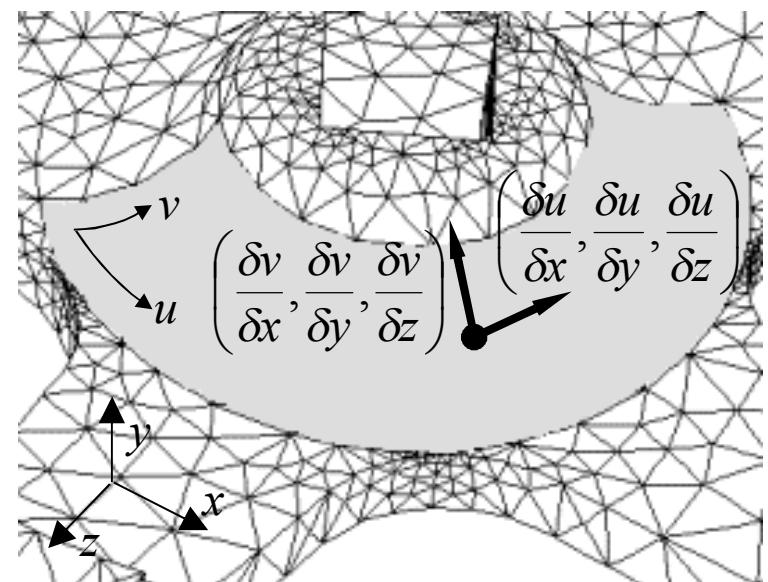
- Stretching is based on field of surface derivatives

$$\Delta \mathbf{u} = \left(\frac{\delta u}{\delta x}, \frac{\delta u}{\delta y}, \frac{\delta u}{\delta z} \right) \quad \Delta \mathbf{v} = \left(\frac{\delta v}{\delta x}, \frac{\delta v}{\delta y}, \frac{\delta v}{\delta z} \right)$$

- Metric, \mathbf{M} can be defined at every location on surface. Metric at location \mathbf{X} is:

$$\mathbf{M}(\mathbf{X}) = \begin{bmatrix} E & F \\ F & G \end{bmatrix}$$

$$E = \Delta \mathbf{u} \cdot \Delta \mathbf{u} \quad F = \Delta \mathbf{u} \cdot \Delta \mathbf{v} \quad G = \Delta \mathbf{v} \cdot \Delta \mathbf{v}$$

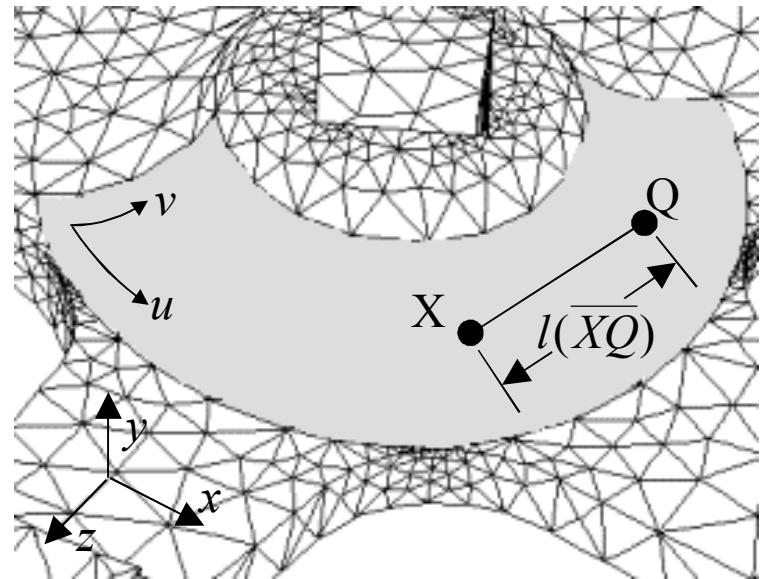
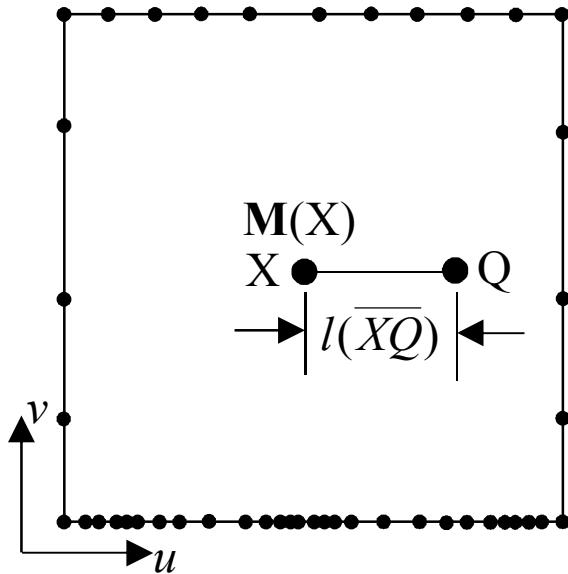


Surface Meshing

Parametric Space Mesh Generation

- Distances in parametric space can now be measured as a function of direction and location on the surface. Distance from point X to Q is defined as:

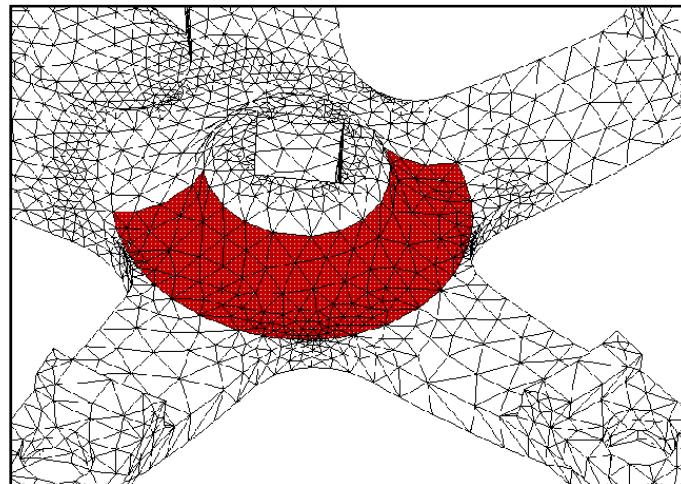
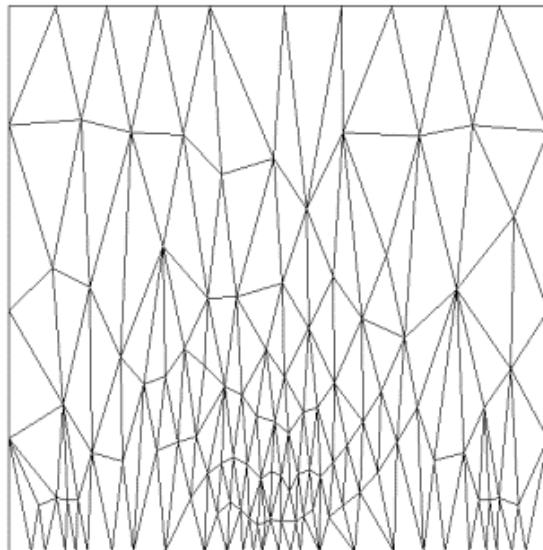
$$l(\overline{XQ}) \approx \sqrt{\overline{XQ}^T \mathbf{M}(X) \overline{XQ}}$$



Surface Meshing

Parametric Space Mesh Generation

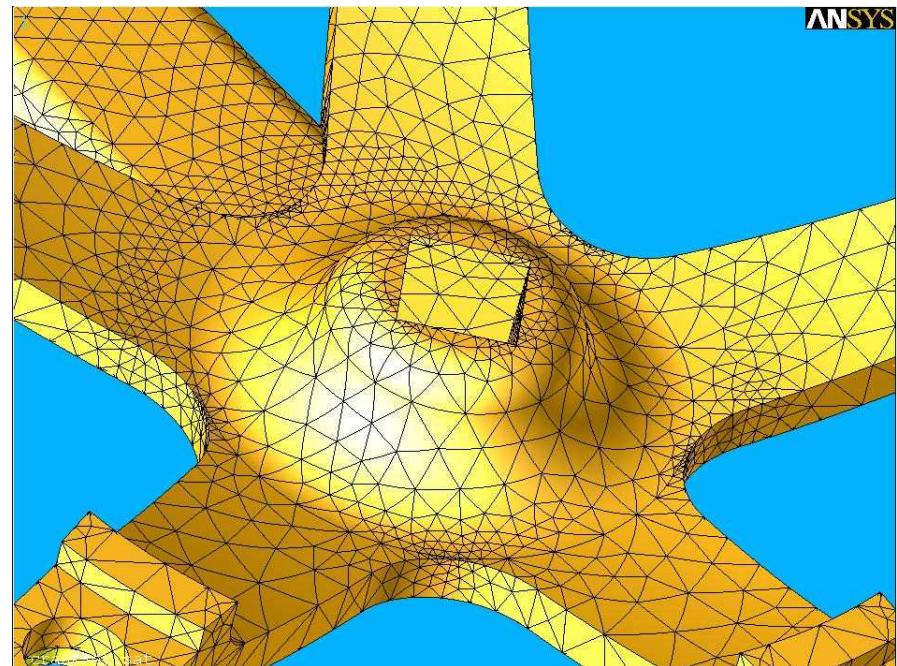
- Use essentially the same isotropic methods for 2D mesh generation, except distances and angles are now measured with respect to the local metric tensor $\mathbf{M}(X)$.
- Can use Delaunay (George, 99) or Advancing Front Methods (Tristano,98)



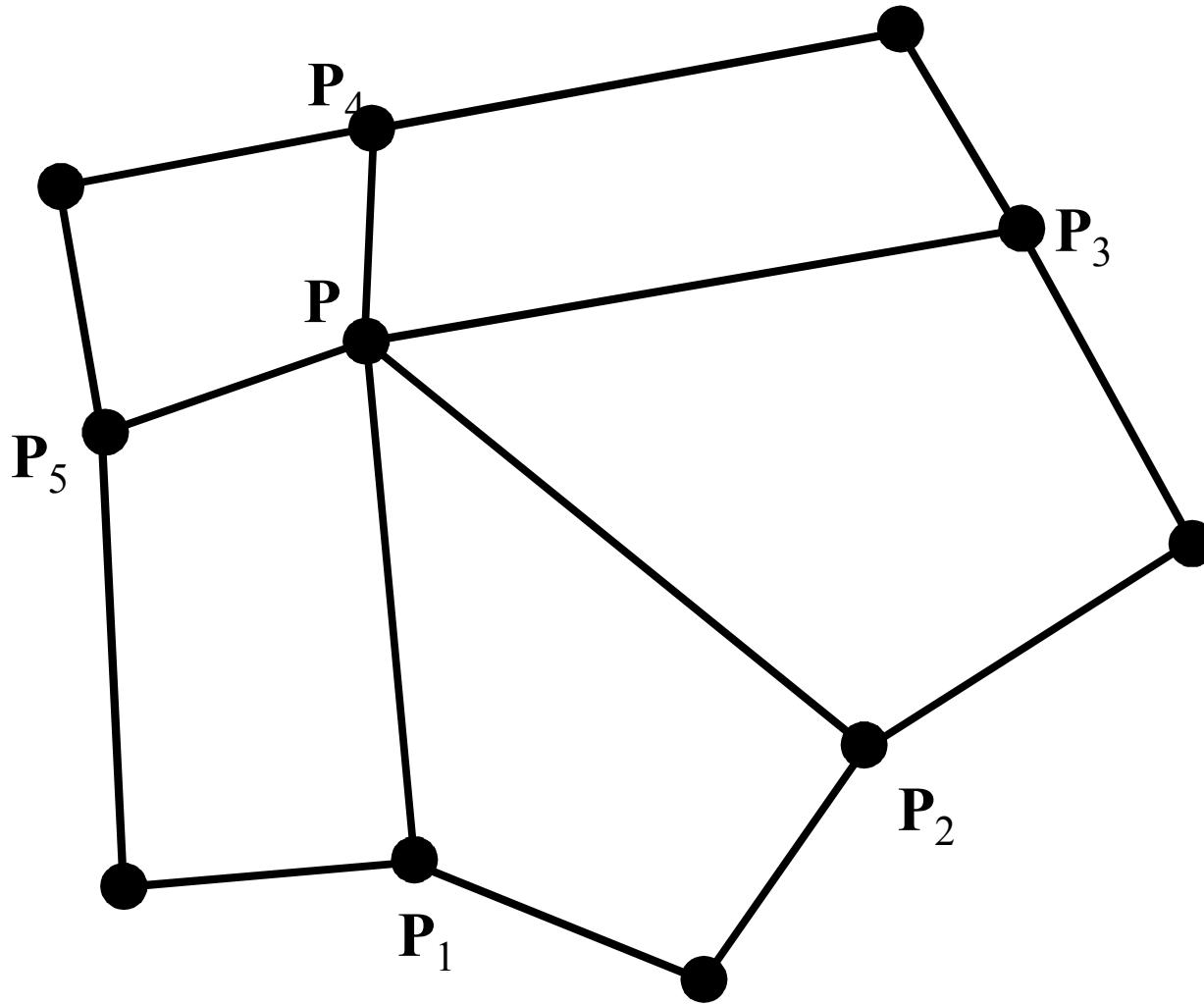
Surface Meshing

Parametric Space Mesh Generation

- Is generally faster than 3D methods
- Is generally more robust (No 3D intersection calculations)
- Poor parameterization can cause problems
- Not possible if no parameterization is provided
 - Can generate your own parametric space (Flatten 3D surface into 2D) (Marcum, 99) (Sheffer,00)



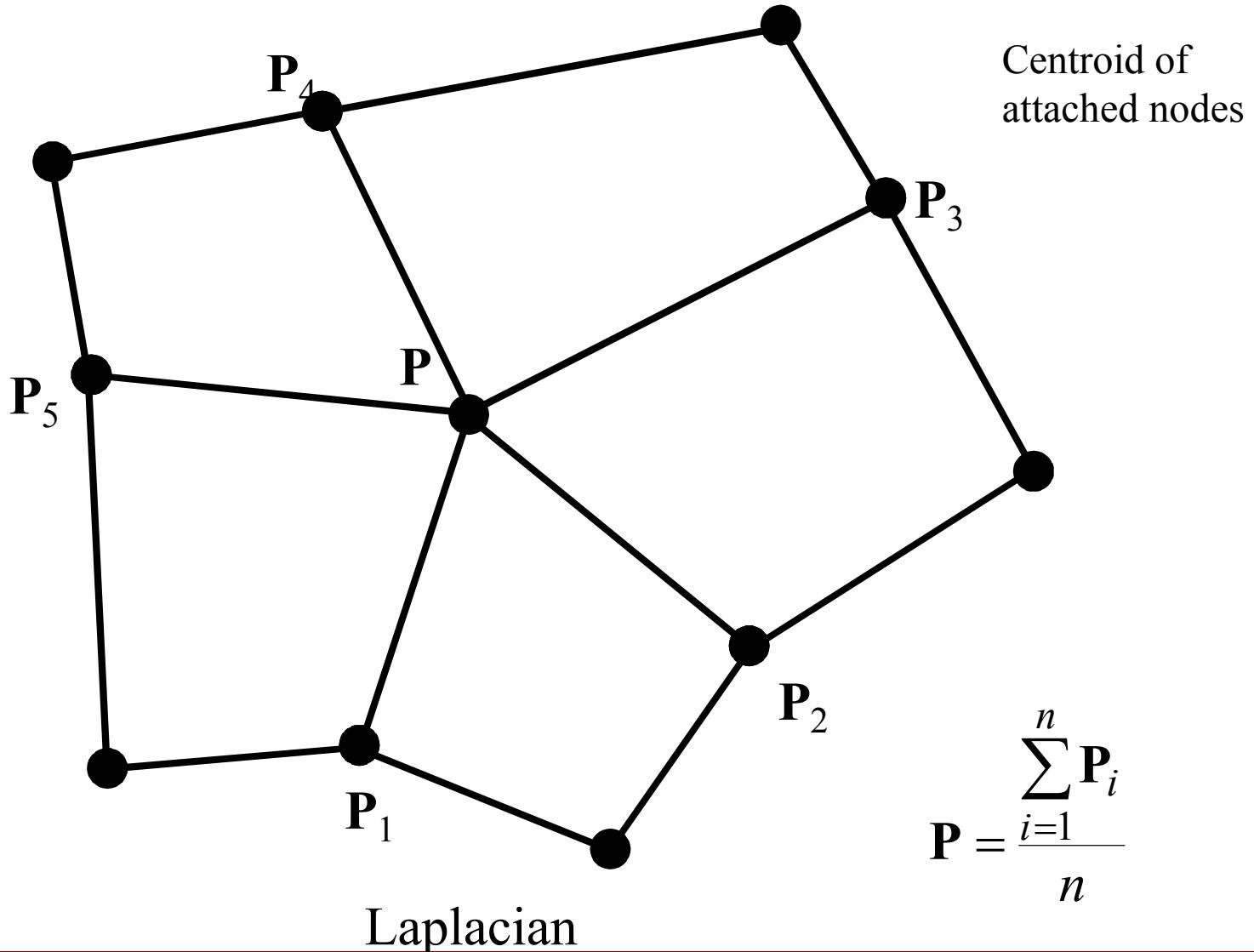
Smoothing



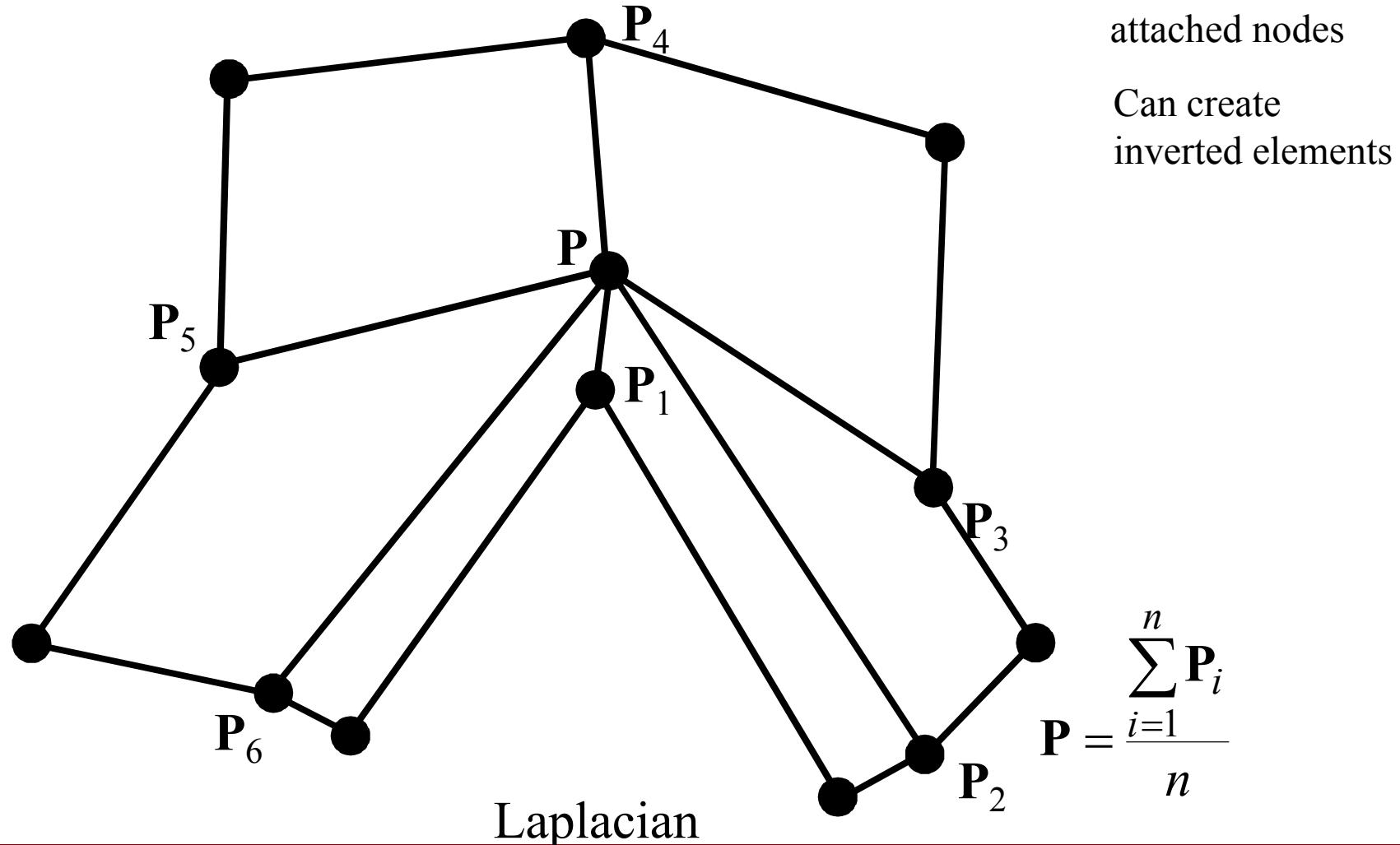
(Field, 1988)

Laplacian

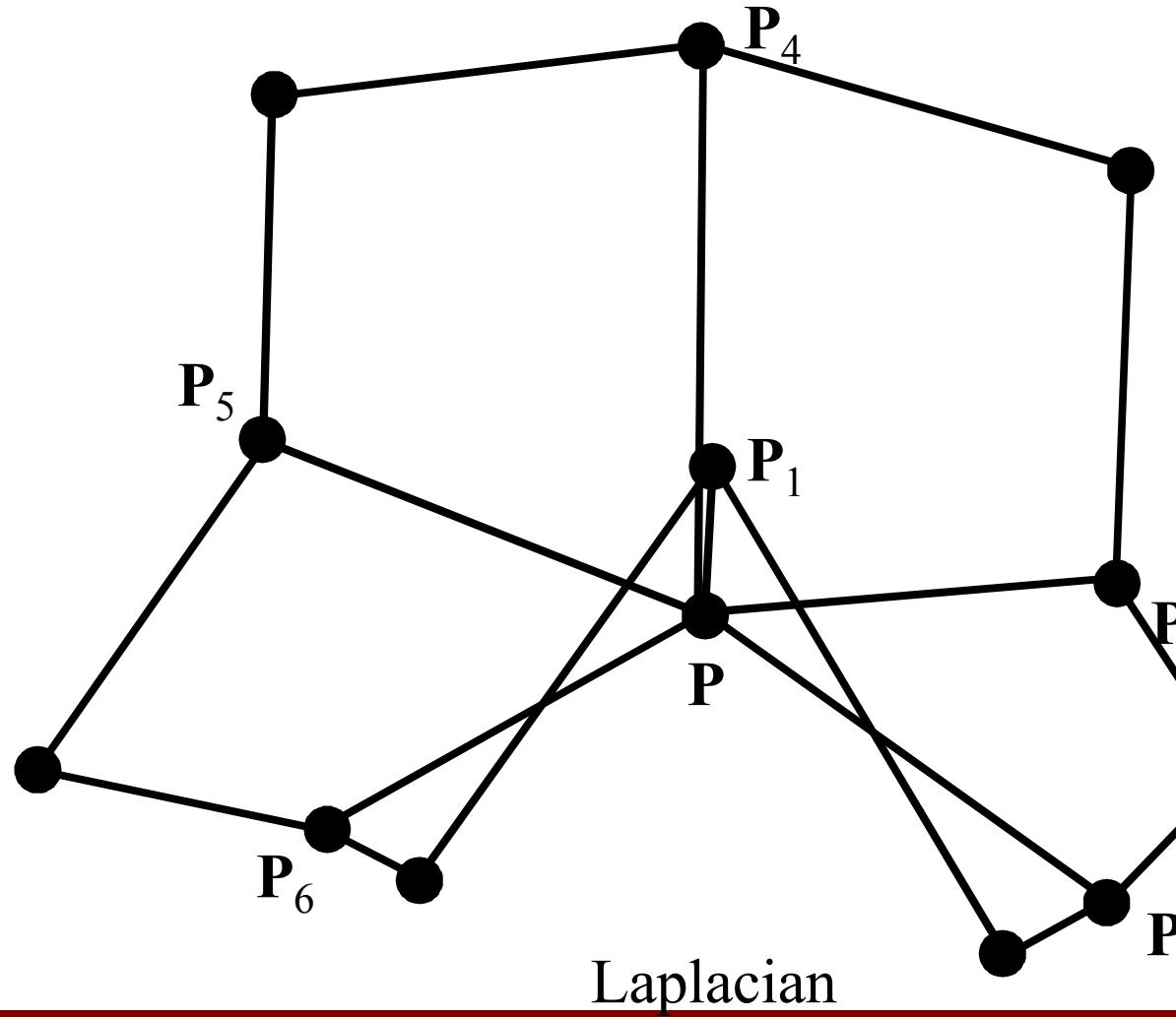
Smoothing



Smoothing



Smoothing

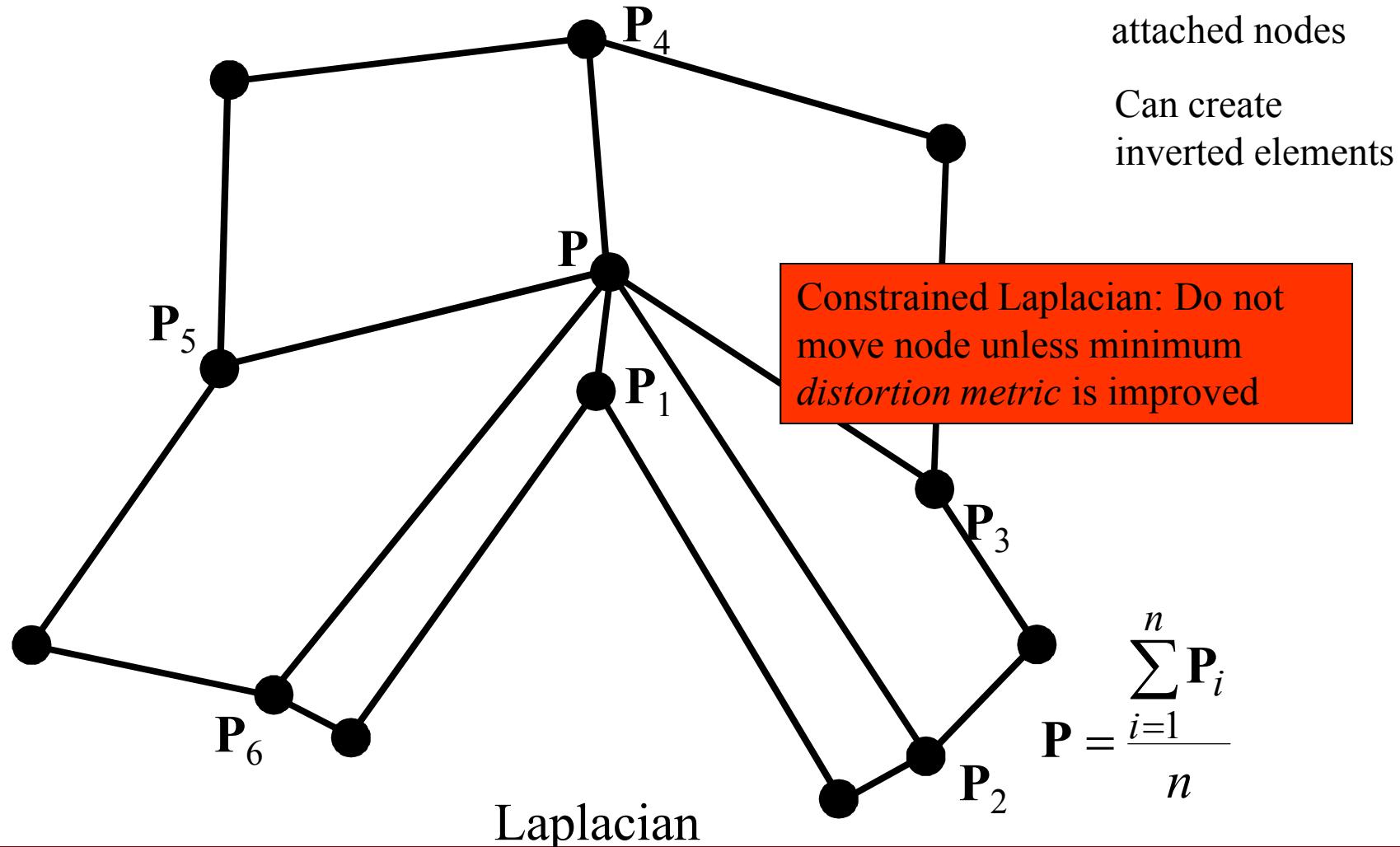


Centroid of
attached nodes

Can create
inverted elements

$$P = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^n P_i}{n}$$

Smoothing



Smoothing

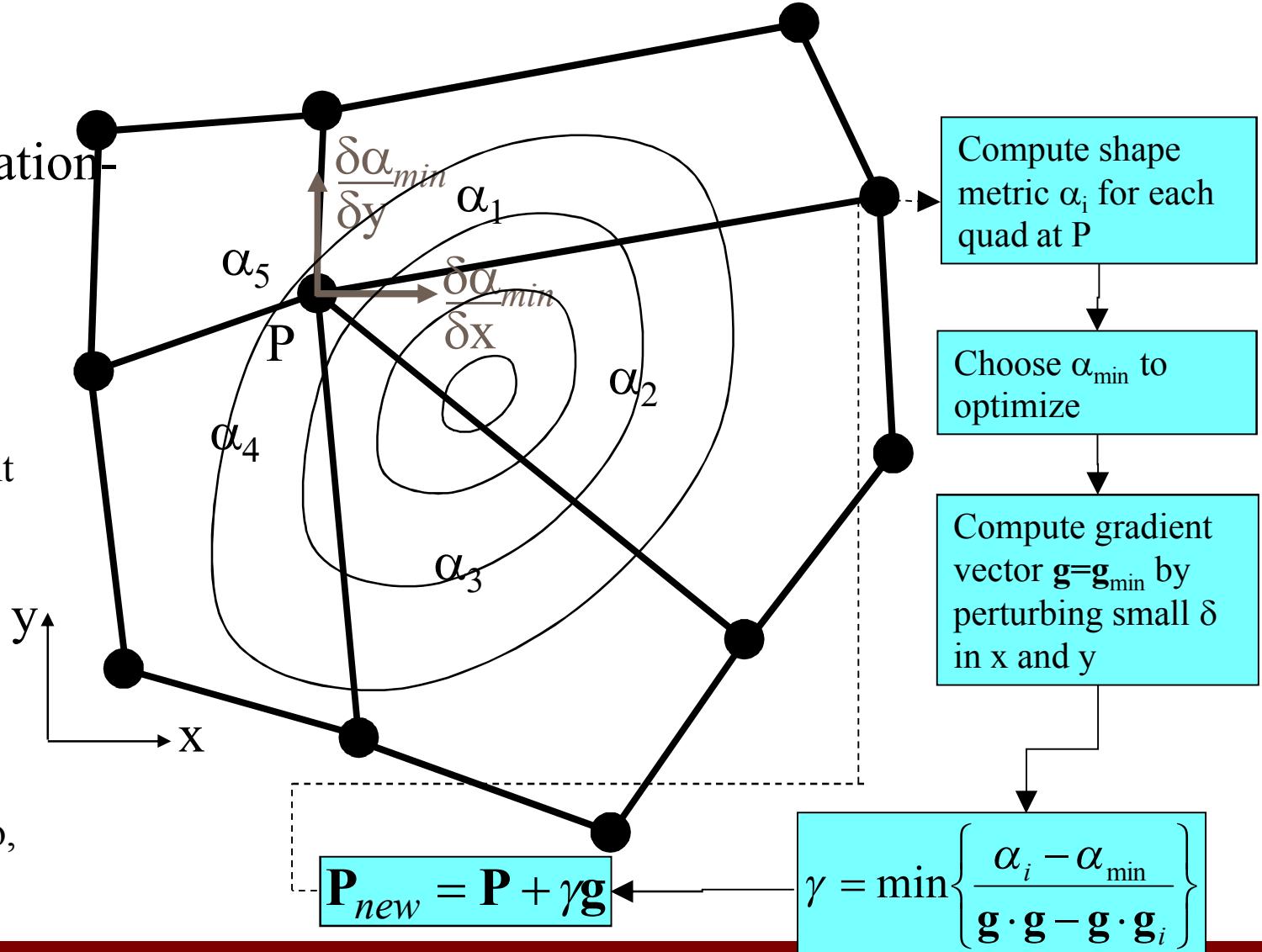
Smoothing Procedure

```
LET iter=0
SET all NODE v to active
REPEAT (main smoothing loop)
    FOR EACH NODE v DO:
        1. If v has been deactivated from smooth, then CONINUE.
        2. distance moved = move_node(v)
        3. If distance moved < move tolerance, then
            deactivate v
            Else,
                Allow move.
                If neighbor node to v is inactive, then activate it.
    END DO
    iter++;
UNTIL all nodes are deactivated OR iter > MAX_ITER (end of main smoothing loop)
```

Smoothing

Optimization
Based
Method

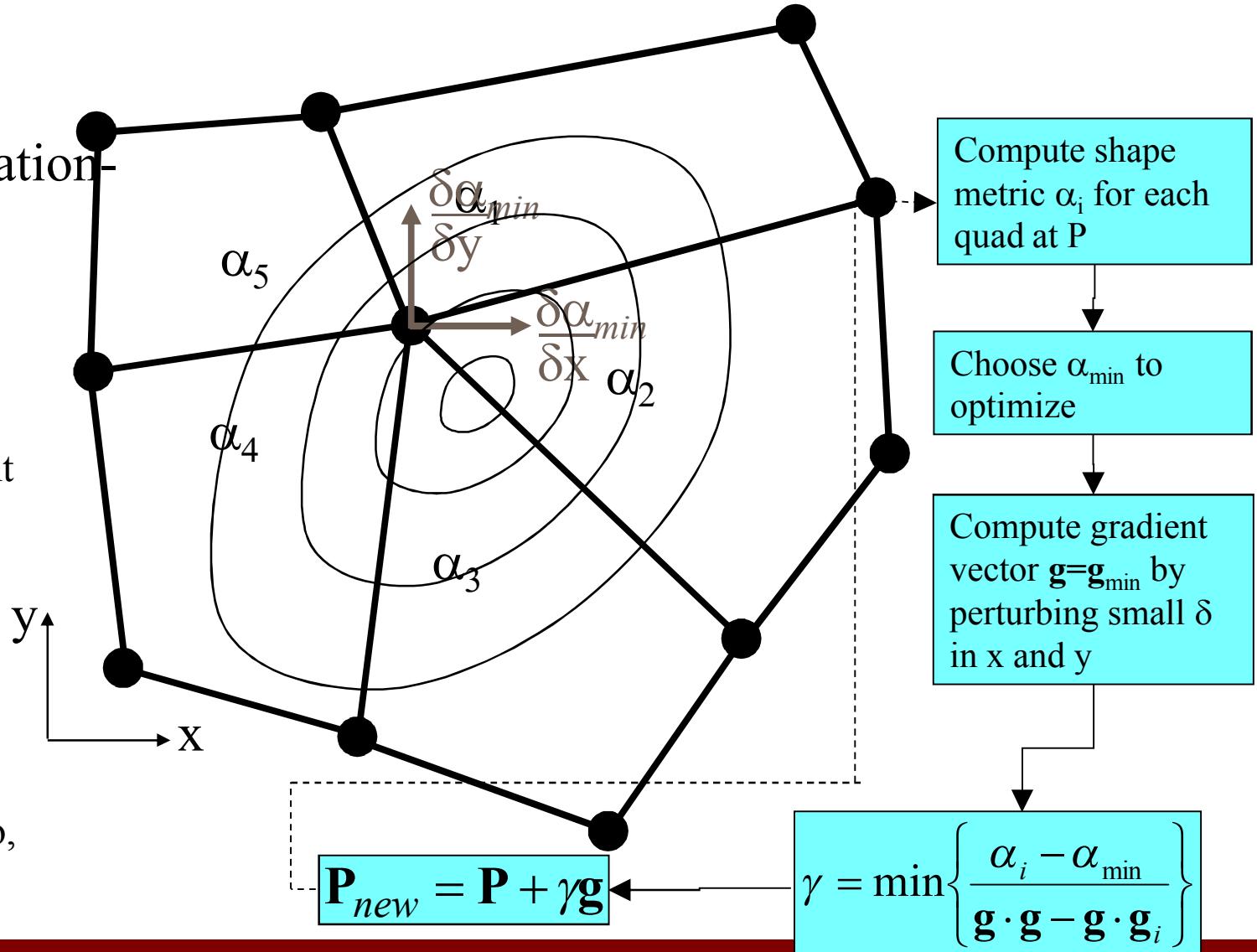
Steepest descent
optimization



Smoothing

Optimization
Based
Method

Steepest descent
optimization

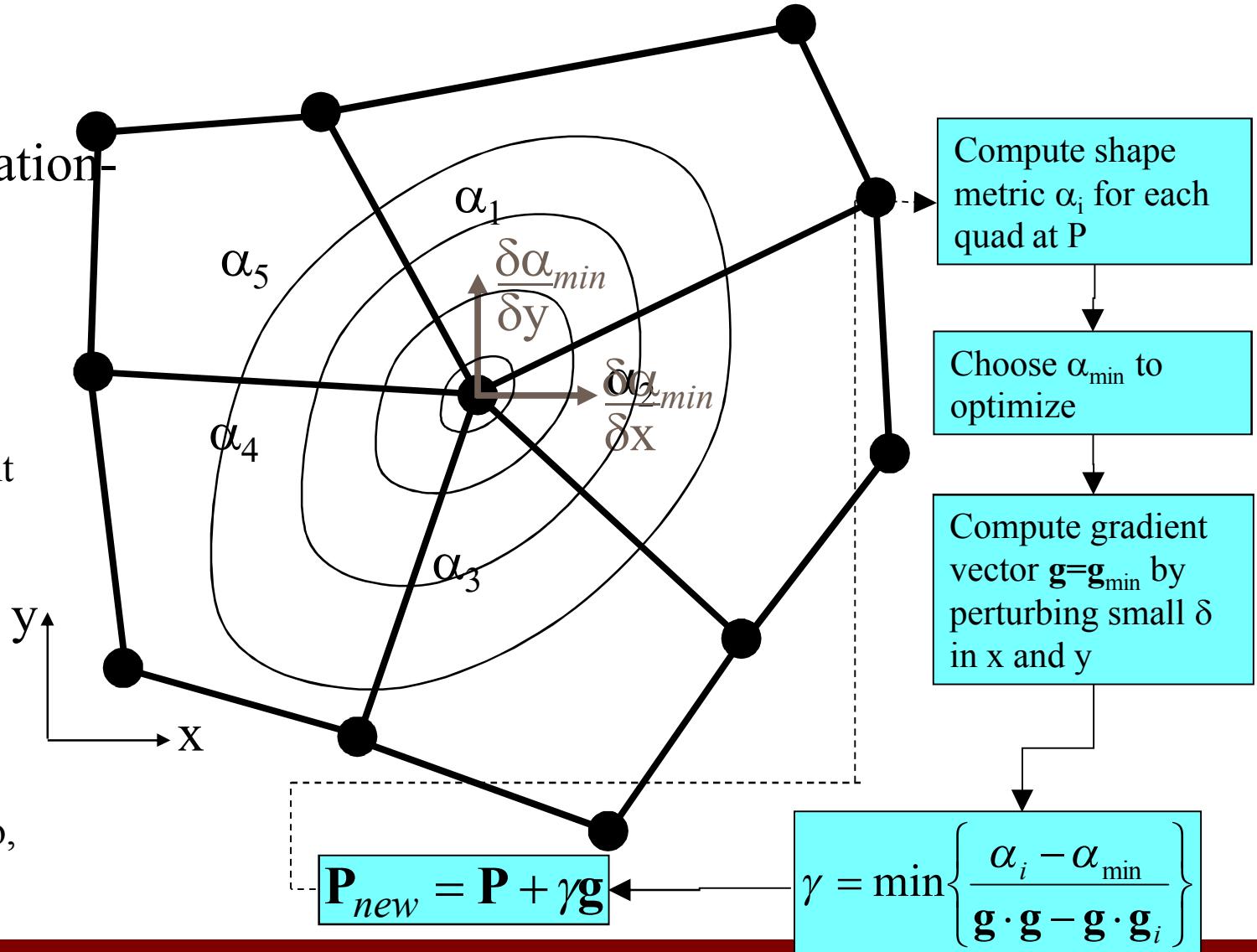


(Canann, Tristano,
Staten, 1998)

Smoothing

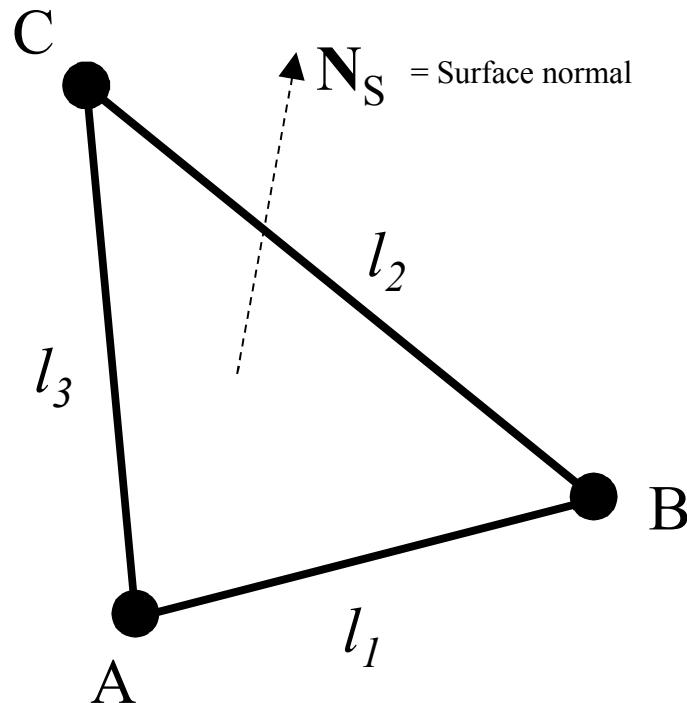
Optimization
Based
Method

Steepest descent
optimization



(Canann, Tristano,
Staten, 1998)

Smoothing

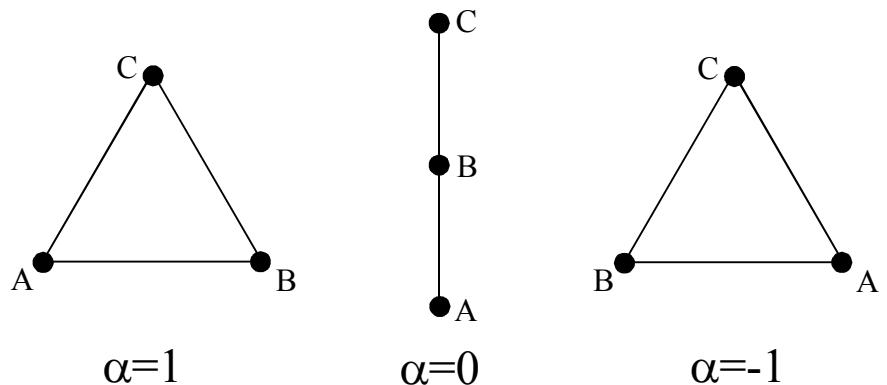


(Canann, Tristano, Staten, 1998)

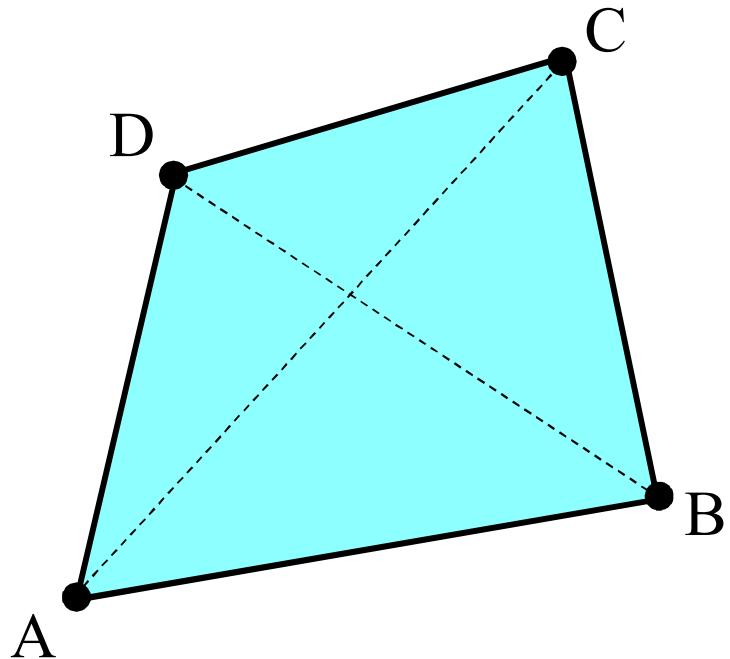
Triangle Distortion Metric

$$\alpha(ABC) = (I)\sqrt{3} \frac{\text{area}(ABC)}{l_1^2 + l_2^2 + l_3^2}$$

$$I = \begin{cases} 1 & \text{for } (\overrightarrow{CA} \times \overrightarrow{CB}) \cdot \mathbf{N}_S > 0 \\ -1 & \text{for } (\overrightarrow{CA} \times \overrightarrow{CB}) \cdot \mathbf{N}_S < 0 \end{cases}$$



Smoothing



Quad Distortion Metric

Compute four triangle metrics

$$\begin{array}{ll}\alpha(\Delta ABC) & \alpha(\Delta CDA) \\ \alpha(\Delta BCD) & \alpha(\Delta DAB)\end{array}$$

Order metrics in descending order

$$\alpha_1 \geq \alpha_2 \geq \alpha_3 \geq \alpha_4$$

$$\beta = \frac{\alpha_3 \alpha_4}{\alpha_1 \alpha_2}$$

(Lee, Lo, 1994)

Smoothing

Combined Laplacian and Optimization Based Smoothing

```

Compute initial distortion metrics for all elements
LET iter=0
SET all NODE v to active
REPEAT (main smoothing loop)
  FOR EACH NODE v DO:
    1. If v has been deactivated from smooth, then CONINUE.
    2. If v wasn't moved by optimization-based smoothing in last iteration, then
       distance_moved = move_node_laplacian(v)
    3. If (iter >= 2) then
       distance_moved = move_node_optimize(v)
    4. If distance_moved < move_tolerance AND  $\alpha_{\min} > \text{min\_allowable\_metric}$ , then
       deactivate v
    Else,
      Allow move, and update adjacent distortion metrics to v.
      If neighbor node to v is inactive, then activate it.
  END DO
  iter++;
UNTIL all nodes are deactivated OR iter > MAX_ITER (end of main smoothing loop)
  
```

(Canann, Tristano, Staten, 1998)
 (Freitag, 1997)