

Deep Learning Aided Sensor Fusion for Drift Reduced IMU Orientation Estimation

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Abstract

Inertial Measurement Units (IMUs) are widely used in a variety of applications such as Body Sensor Networks (BSNs) for orientation estimation, however the gyroscope suffers from drift due to sensor bias and noise that when integrated accumulate over time. This project investigates a deep learning-based approach which aims to mitigate gyroscopic errors which can be integrated with sensor fusion techniques to achieve more accurate orientation estimates. The proposed deep-learning architecture leverages both neural networks and a temporal history to learn complex and nonlinear error patterns in IMU data, exploring if it outperforms a standard Kalman Filter without learned corrections. The network outputs a correction for the incoming gyroscope sample and the measurement noise covariance dependent on the incoming acceleration and magnetometer updates. The data used in training, testing and validating the model come from simulations through MATLAB's Navigation Toolbox and from public datasets such as Berlin Robust Orientation Estimation Assessment Dataset (BROAD).

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I would also like to acknowledge the authors and maintainers of the publicly available datasets of BROAD and RepoIMU. Their efforts in collecting and labelling high quality IMU data and optical motion capture ground truth enabled the training, testing, and validation of the neural network. I am grateful for their contributions and cite them accordingly in this report.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Inertial Measurement Units (IMUs) and their applications

IMUs are composed of multiple sensors which include a gyroscope, accelerometer, and occasionally a magnetometer. These three sensors measure the angular rate, linear acceleration, and the local magnetic field vector respectively. These measurements can be used to estimate the orientation of an object through integration of the angular rate. This data acquisition is essential for several applications such as BSNs **FIXME: cite**, robotics, and autonomous vehicles where these systems rely on high-rate orientation updates.

IMUs have emerged as a key technology due to the ability to work in a self-contained environment. In environments where external references of orientation are unavailable or unreliable, technologies such as IMUs are attractive however, they suffer from drift due to sensor bias and noise accumulating over time. This can be partially mitigated through the use of sensor fusion algorithms like Kalman filters. Filters allow the use of accelerometers and magnetometers to guide and correct state estimation, but these also suffer from failures like magnetic disturbances and high linear accelerations corrupting a gravitational reference. Due to these limitations, there is significant motivation to explore data-driven methods that compensate for these conditions and errors.

1.2 Problem Statement: IMU Drift and Its Impact

IMUs have shown promise in determining the orientation of an object in motion. However, IMUs suffer from a limitation called drift. IMU drift is characterised by the accumulation of errors through the integration of the gyroscopic sensor. The sources of these errors include constant bias, scale factor errors and others expanded in **FIXME: section**. These errors are also not exclusive to the gyroscope but also affect the accelerometer and magnetometer. This drift is also dependent on the type of IMU that is used. **FIXME: Find cite** Lower cost/grade IMUs suffer from drift at a higher magnitude which results in orientation inaccuracies much quicker compared to higher cost/grade IMUs. **TODO: find cites for IMUs and add some metrics** These errors then lead to inaccuracies in the orientation estimation of an object determined by the IMU.

Kianifar et al. explored using IMUs for automated orientation estimation in a clinical setting. They found that for rotation angles parallel to gravity, drift due to gyroscope bias cannot be compensated by the accelerometer. **FIXME: cite**. This was compensated for by using a virtual yaw sensor. Even with multiple sensors, it is still challenging to find an accurate orientation estimation. Thus it is important to try and address the drift problem by addressing gyroscopic drift.

Therefore, this project aims to address gyroscopic drift by using deep-learning methods to learn complex and non-linear nature of biases and errors.