

PEOPLE AWARE MOBILE ROBOT NAVIGATION

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by

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PEOPLE AWARE MOBILE ROBOT NAVIGATION

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To myself,

Perry H. Disdainful,

the only person worthy of my company.

PREFACE

Theses have elements. Isn't that nice?

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I want to thank people

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SUMMARY

Why should I provide a summary? Just read the thesis.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

CHAPTER II

MAP ANNOTATION

Map Annotation

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Semantic Maps

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2.2.2 Planar Landmarks

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User Interface

2.4 Pointing Gestures for Human-Robot Interaction

Pointing Gestures

CHAPTER III

NAVIGATION AMONG PEOPLE

Autonomous Robot Navigation

3.1 Related Work

Related Work

3.2 State of Autonomous Robot Navigation

State of Autonomous Robot Navigation

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Finding Goal Points for Navigation

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Speed Maps for Safer Navigation

CHAPTER IV

MULTIMODAL PERSON DETECTION AND TRACKING

The ability to robustly track a person is an important prerequisite for human-robot interaction. To realize any task that involves humans, the challenge is the detection and tracking of humans in the vicinity of the robot considering the robot’s movements, sensing capabilities and occlusions. The scope of how much information is needed from the human perception module depends on the objective of the application. First, the robot should determine if there are people nearby. If the robot senses people around, the robot should find out *where* they are. Representing people as points (x,y) in maps is common practice for navigation planning. If the task requires the robot to face a person, then the orientation θ needs be detected. The robot further can determine *who* the detected person is. Identification of humans is necessary for enabling non-generic service. Finally, the robot should interpret *what* the person is doing by analyzing the motion features and through gesture analysis. Tracking body parts of humans over time give significant information about human activity.

We focus on tracking people who are either walking or standing, as these are the two most common human poses around a mobile robot. Many full-body or body part detectors have been developed in the literature, reviewed in Section 4.1. Full-body detectors are not suitable for mobile robot navigation applications because of their inability of capturing the entire body with on-board sensors when people are close to the robot. We aim to robustly track a person 360° around the robot. However, most sensors have a limited field of view and using only a single detector can lead to a system with a single point of failure. Therefore, we think a multimodal detection system is better suited for on-board people tracking for our use cases.

Laser scanners are the natural sensor of choice as state-of-the-art mobile robots are already equipped with an ankle-height laser scanner that is mainly used for navigation. The laser scanners we used on our robot are Hokuyo UTM 30-LX, which has 270° Field of View (FOV), 0.25° angular resolution, $40Hz$ refresh rate and $30m$ maximum range. We are only interested in detections in close range (less than $5m$). In that range interval, and the accuracy of each laser reading is $\pm 3cm$, which is sufficient for our use cases. The relatively higher accuracy and resolution are the two advantages of laser scanners over cameras and RGB-D cameras. Cameras, on the other hand, have the advantage of providing richer information, which can be used to extract body parts. We use a combination of detectors using either a laser scanner and RGB-D camera for robustness and better coverage, described in Section 4.2. Representing people as a points in the map is sufficient for mobile robot navigation and each detector produces a point as a person hypothesis. We use a real-time probabilistic tracking framework that relies on the fusion of the multiple person detections, described in Section 4.3. For certain applications, identifying specific users allows the robot to go beyond generic capabilities. We present our face recognition method in Section 4.4.

4.1 *Related Work*

Person detection was first addressed by the computer vision community as an object detection problem. Early research on person detection using vision is surveyed by Moeslund [15]. Face detection is a common method for detecting people, with the work of Viola and Jones [26] being the most popular one. See Zhang [29] for a survey on contemporary approaches on vision based face detection. Another popular topic has been pedestrian detection in crowded scenes Leibe [14] and Tuzel [25].

In 2000's, laser scanners became the de-facto sensor for localization and mapping. Laser scanners are usually placed slightly above floor for obstacle avoidance, therefore leg detection is common practice. Early works by Montemerlo [16] and Schulz [19]

focused on tracking multiple legs using particle filters. Legs are typically distinguished in laser scans using geometric features such as arcs [27] and boosting can be used to train a classifier on a multitude of features [1]. Topp [23] demonstrates that leg tracking in cluttered environments is prone to false positives. For more robust tracking, some efforts fused information from multiple lasers such as Carballo’s work [6], which uses a second laser scanner at torso level. Glas [10] uses a network of laser sensors at torso height in hall-type environments to track the position and body orientation of multiple people. Several works used different modalities of sensors to further improve the robustness. Kleinhagenbrock [13] and Bellotto [3] combine leg detection and face tracking in a multi-modal tracking framework. Other examples include combining sound localization and vision [4] and combining RFID tracking and vision [9].

Laser-based person methods pertains tracking of humans in 2D, projected to floor plane. Tracking of the body parts has long been a topic of interest in vision [2, 21]. With the recent introduction of 3D sensors such as the Velodyne, Swissranger and Kinect, more robust tracking became possible. Spinello [22] trains geometrical features at different height levels in the 3D point cloud for pedestrian detection. Ganapathi [7] estimates body part locations with a probabilistic model. One of the well-known skeleton tracking algorithms is the Microsoft Kinect SDK by Shotton [20], which trains decision forests using simple depth features in a vast database. This software is not suitable to work on a mobile robot as it is designed to work on a stationary sensor. In the robotics community, there are efforts to develop skeleton trackers that work on mobile robots and in unstructured scenes [5].

Face recognition is a widely used application as surveyed by Phillips [18]. One of the pioneers in face recognition uses a set of patch masks for features that doesn’t necessarily correspond to eyes, ears or noses [24]. [30] combines PCA (Principal

Component Analysis) and LDA (Linear Discriminant Analysis) to improve the generalization capability when only a few samples are available.

There has been some work to identify humans using 3D data, such as the head-to-shoulder signature [12] and body motion characteristics [17]. Biometric person identification techniques, such speaker recognition [11], 3D ear shape [28] and multi-modal cues [8] have potential to be more accurate than face recognition. However, these approaches are better suited to work in controlled environments.

4.2 *Person Detection*

In this section, we present our person detectors, namely leg detection (Section 4.2.1) and torso detection (Section 4.2.2). We also use an implementation of an upper body detector by Mitzel [?], which uses a template and the depth information of a RGB-D camera to identify upper bodies (shoulders and head), designed to work for close range human detection using head mounted cameras.

4.2.1 Leg Detection

A front-facing laser scanner at ankle height is used for leg detection. The output of a laser scanner at each iteration is an array of range measurements, represented in the polar coordinate system. We first convert the range data to Cartesian coordinate system:

$$x_i = \sum_{\phi=\phi_{start}}^{\phi_{end}} r_i \cos(\phi)$$

$$y_i = \sum_{\phi=\phi_{start}}^{\phi_{end}} r_i \sin(\phi)$$

Then we apply segmentation, Segmentation produces clusters of consecutive scan points, which due to their proximity, have a high likelihood of belonging the same object. Two adjacent distance measurements are considered to be in the same segment if the Euclidean distance between them is below a threshold value. Starting from the

start of the range array, a new segment is started if $|r_i - r_{i+1}| < d_{cluster}$. Although some approaches use a variable segmentation threshold that is a function of the range, we use a fixed clustering threshold $d_{cluster} = 0.1m$. The segmentation process results in a set of segments \mathbf{S} . A set of geometric features are extracted from the laser segment.

In a laser scan, legs can appear in different patterns [23]. We look only single leg and person-wide blob patterns as these two cover all the ways legs can be seen in a laser scan. Depending on the application, we accept either only the single leg pattern or both of the patterns (explained in Section 4.3).

There are a number of geometric features that can be extracted from a laser segment, as delineated by Arras [1]. We use three geometric features that is used to detect a leg: segment width, circularity, and Inscribed Angle Variance (IAV):

1. Segment Width: Measures the Euclidean distance between the first and last point of a segment S_i
2. Segment Circularity: This measure is a simple measure to assess if the segment shape resembles a circle. The circularity criterion we used is the ratio of the perpendicular distance from the middle point to the line segment that connects start and end points, to the segment width. For example, in a perfect half circle in Figure 1, the circularity criterion is $|\overline{P_0 P_n}|/d_{mid} = 0.5$. In case of a laser scan, as can be seen in Figure 2, we again consider the ratio of d_{mid} to segment width. For this calculation we only consider the middle point as it provides a simple heuristic on circularity.
3. Inscribed Angle Variance (IAV): This feature is originally proposed by Xavier [27], in order to detect circles. We adopt IAV in order to detect legs, which are not necessarily circle-shaped, especially for the person-wide blob pattern. As an example, inscribed angles on a circle is shown in Figure 3. As a geometric

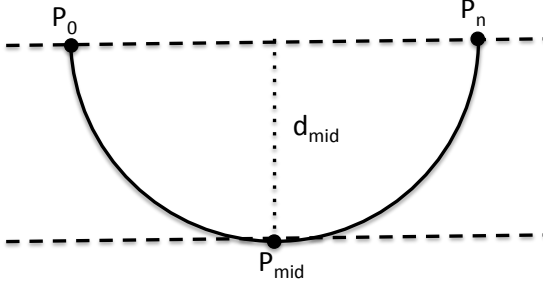


Figure 1: Circularity criterion in a perfect circle is: $|P_0P_n|/d_{mid} = 0.5$

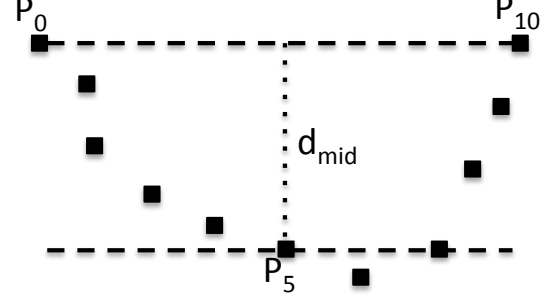


Figure 2: Circularity criterion in a laser segment is: $|P_0P_{10}|/d_{mid}$

property of the circle, $\angle P_0P_1P_4$ and $\angle P_0P_2P_4$ are equal angles. IAV for a given set of points is the average of all inscribed angles:

$$IAV_S = \sum_{P=P_1}^{P_{n-1}} \angle P_0PP_n$$

For a perfect circle, $IAV_S = 90^\circ$. For shapes that are not perfect circles but are similar to circles, IAV feature should be consistent. Laser segments from a leg usually resemble a circle, therefore we use IAV as one of the features for leg detection.

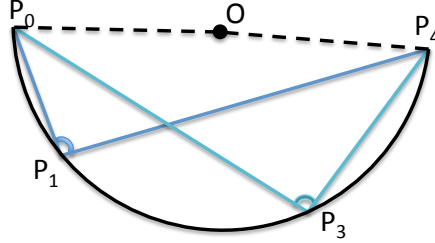


Figure 3: Inscribed angles of an arc are shown in the figure. Inscribed Angle Variance (IAV) is calculated by taking the average of all inscribed angles on a laser segment.

In order to be able to use these values, we first found the nominal feature values for an average human leg. We captured the laser scan data while the robot followed a person through an office environment. The following method used for this experiment will be discussed in detail in Section 5.2. For the training set, two people's legs were

Segment type	Width(m)		Circularity		IAV($radians$)	
	μ	σ	μ	σ	μ	σ
Single Leg	0.13	0.03	0.25	0.15	2.23	0.4
Personwide blob	0.33	0.07	0.14	0.09	2.61	0.16
Other	0.22	0.12	0.1	0.11	2.71	0.38

Table 1: Table shows average and standard deviations of geometric leg features calculated in our dataset.

recorded with different clothing (shorts, baggy pants and trousers) to account for variance in the leg parameters. About 17×10^3 Single Leg patterns and 0.6×10^3 person-wide blobs were manually labeled in the data. In addition, 120×10^3 segments were labeled as 'other' or 'not a leg'. The average and variance of the aforementioned geometric features for single leg, personwide blob, as well as other segments are given in Table 1.

For every segment S_i in a test laser scan, we first extract the geometric features f_1^i, f_2^i, f_3^i . We then calculate the weighted Mahalanobis distance to the average leg parameters for the each leg pattern:

$$D_{mah}^i = \sum_{j=1}^3 k_j \frac{(f_j^i - \mu_j)^2}{\sigma_j^2}$$

where k_j are the weights for each feature, μ_j and σ_j are pulled from Table 1. The resulting Mahalanobis distance is then compared with a detection threshold. If $D_{mah}^i < d_{leg}$, the segment is considered a detection.

4.2.1.1 Associating Leg Segments

After single leg patterns are detected, we try match the leg segments. We extend our leg detection approach to determine which leg segments are connected. Note that this method applies if there is a RGB-D camera pointing to the lower body of the human. For each leg segment pair, if both of them are within the FOV of the RGB-D sensor, we use our algorithm to determine whether there is a connectivity between

two candidate leg segments. If a connectivity is found, then the leg segments pair is qualified to be a leg segment pair representing a person. See Figure 4 as an example result. Figure 5 shows the flow chart of the association algorithm.



Figure 4: Two person detections are seen in this figure. Our leg segment association algorithm propagates pixels vertically from candidate leg segments and connects leg pairs.

First, the centroids each of the two candidate leg segments are found. These points are projected onto the depth image acquired from the RGB-D camera. At each iteration, each leg segment, our algorithm first propagates horizontally to both directions in the depth image, then the center pixel is located and it propagates 1 pixel vertically ($+z$ direction). If there are no connectivity after a number of iterations, then we conclude that the candidate leg pair does not represent a person. If there is a connectivity at some point, we then assign a likelihood score to the pair as a function of the vertical propagation height. If this score is higher than a threshold, then the algorithm concludes that the leg candidate segments represent a person. The propagation scoring eliminates most of the false positives due to sensor noise and non-human shapes.

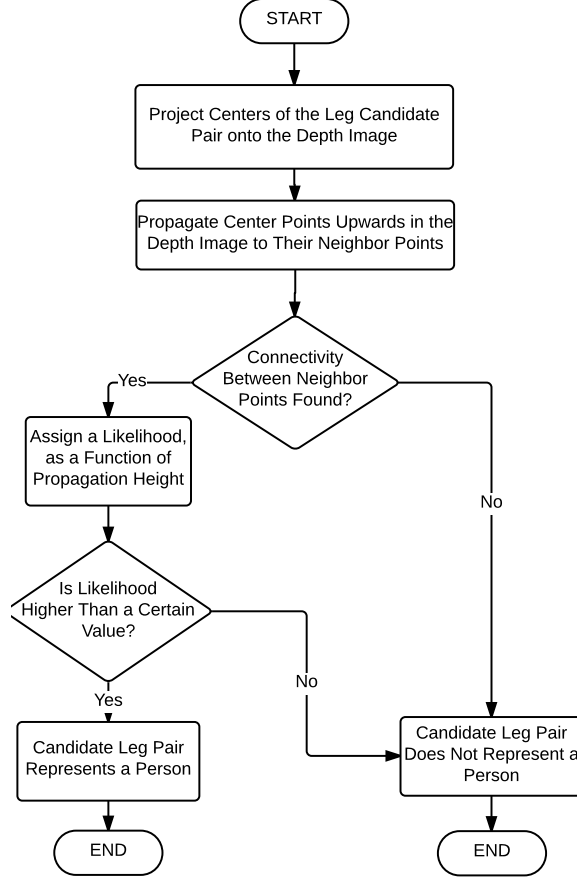


Figure 5: Flow chart for determining if two leg segment candidates belong to a person.

4.2.2 Torso Detection

In this section, we describe our torso detection approach. For this detector, we used another Hokuyo UTM 30-LX laser scanner, placed at torso height (1.27m). Our approach relies on fitting an ellipse to laser segments and determining the detection result by interpreting the axis lengths (Figure 6). Our torso detector allows us to detect the orientation of the person unlike the laser-based leg detectors, therefore this detector is also suitable for applications that relies on extracting the orientation of the person from a single laser scan.

The first step to detect torsos in a laser scan is to segment the laser scan. We use the same segmentation technique used for leg detection, explained in Section 4.2.1.

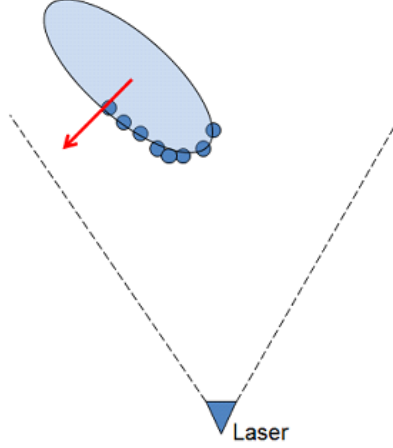


Figure 6: Our torso detector fits an ellipse to the human torso and estimates its position and orientation.

We then fit an ellipse to each laser segment. We use a numerical ellipse fitting method iterative method that solves the problem with a generalized [?]. This ellipse fitting method is robust, efficient and ellipse-specific, so that even very noisy sensor data will always return an ellipse. Compared to iterative methods, it is computationally very efficient, therefore the speed of the calculations is limited to the laser scan refresh rate.

The ellipse fitting algorithm provides us with the centroid and orientation of the ellipse as well as the minor and major axis lengths. We use the axis lengths and their ratios in order to determine if the laser segment is a person. We first gathered data, and found the average and standard deviation of these two features. We then find the weighted Mahalanobis distance to the averages. This is the same method we used for leg detection, therefore the reader is referred to Section 4.2.1 for more detail.

4.2.2.1 Evaluation of Torso Detection

In order to evaluate the accuracy of the position and orientation estimations of our torso detection method, we collected torso data from 23 people. Subjects were instructed to stand on 4 targets at different distances with 8 different orientations on each target. Experimental setup from the sensor’s view is shown in Figure 7. For

each pose at every target, we logged the position and orientation estimation of the torso detector and compared it with ground truth, which is fixed.



Figure 7: Experimental setup for the evaluation study of the Human Tracker.

Table 2 shows the angular error at every target distance and human orientation with respect to the laser scanner.

Distance To Laser	N	NE	E	SE	S	SW	W	NW	ALL
1.0m	4°	12°	22°	13°	5°	7°	26°	17°	13°
2.5m	5°	16°	19°	10°	3°	6°	14°	17°	11°
4.0m	4°	10°	30°	16°	7°	11°	21°	17°	15°
5.5m	5°	11°	41°	18°	10°	6°	38°	23°	19°
ALL	4°	12°	27°	14°	6°	7°	24°	18°	14.5°

Table 2: Average orientation error of the torso detector with respect to distance from sensor and body pose in a study with 23 people

The average positional error was about 5cm regardless of the distance and the orientation of the human. The average orientation error throughout all the experiments was 14.5°. Error in orientation, however, varied greatly by pose of the person with respect to the laser scanner. Average error in orientation differed slightly with respect to the distance from the sensor and was the least with 11° when the humans were 2.5m away from the sensor. We attribute to the fact that when humans closer than 2.5m to the laser scanner, it captures more of the arms, which makes the fitted

ellipse slightly worse. The orientation of the human with respect to the sensor had a significant effect on orientation error. Least error was achieved when people faced the sensor (4°) or the opposite way (6°). On the other hand, average orientation error was $24^\circ - 27^\circ$ when humans are perpendicular to the sensor, because a large portion of the torso is not visible to the laser scanner in that configuration.

4.3 Person Tracking

Multimodal Person Tracking

4.4 Face Recognition

Face Recognition

CHAPTER V

PERSON FOLLOWING

Person Following

5.1 Related Work

Related Work

5.2 Basic Person Following

Basic Person Following

5.3 Situation Aware Person Following

Situation Aware Person Following

5.3.1 Door Passing

5.3.2 User Activity Awareness

5.3.3 Corners

5.4 Application To Telepresence Robots

Application To Telepresence Robots

CHAPTER VI

PERSON GUIDANCE

Person Guidance

6.1 Related Work

Related Work

6.2 Guide Robot

Guide Robot

6.3 Application To Blind Users

Application To Blind Users

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

Conclusion

Table 3: A table, centered.

Title	Author
War And Peace	Leo Tolstoy
The Great Gatsby	F. Scott Fitzgerald

APPENDIX A

QR CODE BASED LOCATION INITIALIZATION

QR Code Based Location Initialization

APPENDIX B

ASSISTED REMOTE CONTROL

Assisted Remote Control

APPENDIX C

VIBRATION PATTERN ANALYSIS FOR HAPTIC BELTS

Vibration Pattern Analysis for Haptic Belts

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Perry H. Disdainful was born in an insignificant town whose only claim to fame is that it produced such a fine specimen of a researcher.

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