

Vielbein of the Schwarzschild Metric

7/22/2025

The Schwarzschild Metric using natural units ($G = 1$ and $c = 1$):

$$ds^2 = - \left(1 - \frac{2M}{r}\right) dt^2 + \left(1 - \frac{2M}{r}\right)^{-1} dr^2 + r^2 d\theta^2 + r^2 \sin^2 \theta d\phi^2$$

This gives the following metric tensor:

$$g_{\mu\nu} = \begin{pmatrix} -\left(1 - \frac{2M}{r}\right) & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & \left(1 - \frac{2M}{r}\right)^{-1} & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & r^2 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & r^2 \sin^2 \theta \end{pmatrix}$$

and it's inverse

$$g^{\mu\nu} = \begin{pmatrix} -\left(1 - \frac{2M}{r}\right)^{-1} & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 - \frac{2M}{r} & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & \frac{1}{r^2} & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & \frac{1}{r^2 \sin^2 \theta} \end{pmatrix}$$

Using this, I can calculate the forms of the Vielbein e_μ^a , e_a^μ , and $e^{a\mu}$.

Sanity check: The Vielbein is simply a set of basis vectors for each point of the manifold that express our metric. It will satisfy the following equation:

$$g_{\mu\nu} = \eta_{ab} e_\mu^a e_\nu^b \quad a, b = 0, 1, 2, 3 \quad \mu, \nu = t, r, \theta, \phi$$

where $\eta_{ab} = \text{diag}(-1, 1, 1, 1)$ and is the Minkowski metric. Since the metric is diagonal, the equation can be simplified by saying $a = b$. I will also constrain the Vielbein to being a diagonal matrix, so $e_\mu^a = \text{diag}(e_t^0, e_r^1, e_\theta^2, e_\phi^3)$, which allows me to simplify further by saying $\mu = \nu$. This also gives a correspondance between local and Schwarzschild coordinates, where $a = 0, 1, 2, 3$ correspond to $\mu = t, r, \theta, \phi$ respectively in the Vielbein. Anything else is 0.

So, I am left with the equation:

$$g_{\mu\mu} = \eta_{aa} (e_\mu^a)^2$$

Solving this explicitly:

$$\begin{aligned}
g_{tt} &= -\left(1 - \frac{2M}{r}\right) = -(e_t^0)^2 & \rightarrow e_t^0 &= \left(1 - \frac{2M}{r}\right)^{\frac{1}{2}} \\
g_{rr} &= \left(1 - \frac{2M}{r}\right)^{-1} = (e_r^1)^2 & \rightarrow e_r^1 &= \left(1 - \frac{2M}{r}\right)^{-\frac{1}{2}} \\
g_{\theta\theta} &= r^2 = (e_\theta^2)^2 & \rightarrow e_\theta^2 &= r \\
g_{\phi\phi} &= r^2 \sin^2 \theta = (e_\phi^3)^2 & \rightarrow e_\phi^3 &= r \sin \theta
\end{aligned}$$

So, the Vielbein:

$$\begin{aligned}
e_\mu^a &= \begin{pmatrix} \left(1 - \frac{2M}{r}\right)^{\frac{1}{2}} & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & \left(1 - \frac{2M}{r}\right)^{-\frac{1}{2}} & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & r & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & r \sin \theta \end{pmatrix} \\
e_a^\mu &= g^{\mu\nu} \eta_{ab} e_\nu^b = \begin{pmatrix} \left(1 - \frac{2M}{r}\right)^{-\frac{1}{2}} & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & \left(1 - \frac{2M}{r}\right)^{\frac{1}{2}} & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & \frac{1}{r} & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & \frac{1}{r \sin \theta} \end{pmatrix} \\
e^{a\mu} &= g^{\mu\nu} e_\nu^a = \begin{pmatrix} -\left(1 - \frac{2M}{r}\right)^{-\frac{1}{2}} & 0 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & \left(1 - \frac{2M}{r}\right)^{\frac{1}{2}} & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & \frac{1}{r} & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & \frac{1}{r \sin \theta} \end{pmatrix}
\end{aligned}$$