

Discrete differential geometry in homotopy type theory

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October 13, 2024

Abstract

Homotopy type theory captures all the major concepts of differential geometry including forms, connections, curvature, and gauge theory. We show this by focusing on combinatorial manifolds, which are discrete in the sense of real cohesion[1], and drawing inspiration from the similarly young field of discrete differential geometry.

“It is always ourselves we work on, whether we realize it or not. There is no other work to be done in the world.” — Stephen Talbott, *The Future Does Not Compute*[2]

1 Overview

We will define

- combinatorial 2-manifolds
- their tangent bundles
- vector fields,

and then observe emerging from those definitions the presence of

- connections
- curvature
- the index of a vector field,

and prove

- the Gauss-Bonnet theorem
- the Poincaré-Hopf theorem
- and the Leibniz formula.

We will consider functions $M \rightarrow \text{EM}(\mathbb{Z}, 1)$ where $\text{EM}(\mathbb{Z}, 1)$ is the connected component in the universe of the Eilenberg-MacLane space $K(\mathbb{Z}, 1)$ which we will take to be S^1 , and where $M :$

Comb2Mfd is a combinatorial manifold of dimension 2, which is a simplicial complex encoded in a higher inductive type, such that each vertex has a neighborhood that looks like a disk with a discrete circle boundary (i.e. a polygon). We can call terms $C : \text{EM}(\mathbb{Z}, 1)$ “mere circles.”

Note that $\text{EM}(\mathbb{Z}, 1)$ contains all the polygons. Therefore we can construct a map $T : M \rightarrow \text{EM}(\mathbb{Z}, 1)$ that maps each vertex to the polygon consisting of its neighbors. This will serve as the circle bundle of the tangent bundle of the manifold, i.e. the principal bundle consisting of nonzero tangent vectors.

Now consider the type $\text{EM}_\bullet(\mathbb{Z}, 1) \stackrel{\text{def}}{=} \sum_{Y:\text{EM}(\mathbb{Z}, 1)} Y$ of pointed mere circles. We have the pullback

$$\begin{array}{ccc} P \stackrel{\text{def}}{=} \sum_{C:T M} C & \xrightarrow{\bar{T}} & \text{EM}_\bullet(\mathbb{Z}, 1) \\ \text{pr}_1 \downarrow & & \downarrow \text{pr}_1 \\ M & \xrightarrow{T} & \text{EM}(\mathbb{Z}, 1) \end{array}$$

from the univalent fibration on the right, forming the usual fiber of T as a sigma type. Such classifying maps are not always principal bundles; there is an extra condition on T that we will get into later. For now it's important only that we are mapping into a univalent fibration so that we can make use of type theory. Univalent fibrations are always equivalent to a projection of a type of pointed types to some connected component of the universe.

We will investigate that the data in dimensions 1 and 2 of T can be thought of as a connection, notably one that is not necessarily flat. Moreover, lifting T to $\text{EM}_\bullet(\mathbb{Z}, 1)$ can be thought of as a vector field. There will in general not be a total lift, just a partial function. The domain will have a boundary of circles, and the winding number on these can be thought of as the index of the vector field. We can then examine the total curvature and the total index and prove that they are equal, and equal to the usual Euler characteristic. This will simultaneously prove the Poincaré-Hopf theorem and Gauss-Bonnet theorem in 2 dimensions, for combinatorial manifolds.

Taking the dimension 1 part of a function can be thought of as its derivative. If the codomain has an H-space structure then we can ask about how the action on paths interacts with pointwise multiplication. This will lead us to the Leibniz formula in this context, which emerges simply from horizontal composition in the codomain.

2 Torsors

Classical geometry tells us to look for an appropriate type of torsors to map into. Homotopy type theory tells us to look for a univalent fibration to map into. The type of torsors is not a connected component of the universe, because torsors have additional structure on top of an underlying type. So we'll need to resolve that.

Definition 1. Let G be a group (a set with the usual classical structure and properties). A G -set is a set X equipped with a homomorphism $\phi : G \rightarrow \text{Aut}(X)$. If in addition we have a term

$$\text{is_torsor} : ||X||_{-1} \times \prod_{g:G} \text{is_equiv}(\phi(-, x) : G \rightarrow X)$$

then we call this data a G -torsor. Denote the type of G -torsors by TG .

If $(X, \phi), (Y, \psi) : TG$ then a G -equivariant map is a function $f : X \rightarrow Y$ such that $f(\phi(g, x)) = \psi(g, f(x))$. Denote the type of G -equivariant maps by $X \rightarrow_G Y$.

Lemma 1. There is a natural equivalence $(X \simeq_{TG} Y) \simeq (X \rightarrow_G Y)$. \square

Denote by $*$ the torsor given by G actions on its underlying set by left-translation. This serves as a basepoint for TG and we have a group isomorphism $\Omega TG \simeq G$.

Lemma 2. A G -set (X, ϕ) is a G -torsor if and only if there merely exists a G -equivariant equivalence $* \rightarrow_G X$. \square

Corollary 1. The pointed type $(TG, *)$ is a $K(G, 1)$. \square

2.1 Univalent replacement for torsors

The homotopy type theory of cohomology and bundles tells us that the type of G -bundles on a type M is the type $M \rightarrow K(G, 1)$. So we will start there as well. But this is a type of structured types, a connected component of G -sets rather than a connected component of the universe. The paths *in the universe* between two G -sets is equivalent to the type of equivalences between the *underlying types*, not just the equivariant equivalences.

We'll resolve this problem with the following discussion, following Scoccola[3]. We will state the definitions and theorems for a general $K(G, n)$ but we will be focusing on $n = 1$ in this note.

Definition 2. Let $EM(G, n) \stackrel{\text{def}}{=} \text{BAut}(K(G, 1)) \stackrel{\text{def}}{=} \sum_{Y:\mathcal{U}} ||Y \simeq K(G, n)||_{-1}$. A $K(G, n)$ -bundle on a type M is the fiber of a map $M \rightarrow EM(G, n)$.

Scoccola uses the action on the universe of suspension and of forgetting a point to form the composition

$$EM(G, n) \xrightarrow{\Sigma} EM_{\bullet\bullet}(G, n) \xrightarrow{F_\bullet} EM_\bullet(G, n)$$

from types to types with two points (north and south), to pointed types (by forgetting the south point).

Definition 3. Given $f : M \rightarrow EM(G, n)$, the *associated action of M on G* , denoted by f_\bullet is defined to be $f_\bullet = F_\bullet \circ \Sigma \circ f$.

Theorem 1. (Scoccola[3] Proposition 2.39). A $K(G, n)$ bundle $f : M \rightarrow EM(G, n)$ is equivalent to a map in $M \rightarrow K(G, n+1)$, and so is a principal fibration, if and only if the associated action f_\bullet is contractible.

And so we can continue to work with the classifying space $EM(G, 1)$ and study $K(G, 1)$ -fibrations, and then later add the extra propositional requirement when it is needed to prove that we are working with $M \rightarrow K(G, 2)$.

3 Combinatorial manifolds

We will adapt to higher inductive types in a straightforward manner the classical construction of *combinatorial manifolds*. See for example the classic book by Kirby and Siebenmann[4].

Definition 4. In an abstract simplicial complex X , the *link* of a vertex v is the set containing every face $f \in X$ such that $v \notin f$ and $f \cup v$ is a face of X .

Definition 5. A *combinatorial manifold* (or *combinatorial triangulation*) of dimension n is a simplicial complex of dimension n such that the link of every vertex is a simplicial sphere of dimension $n - 1$ (i.e. its geometric realization is homeomorphic to an $n - 1$ -sphere).

In a 2-dimensional combinatorial manifold, the link is the immediate neighbors of v and the (1-dimensional) edges between them, forming a polygon.

A classical 1940 result of Whitehead, building on Cairn, states that every smooth manifold admits a combinatorial triangulation[5]. So it appears reasonably well motivated to study this class of objects.

To convert a simplicial complex to a higher inductive type, we will simply convert the data in each classical dimension to a path constructor of the corresponding HoTT dimension. We will begin with a type that is important both for the domain and the codomain of mere circles: a square.

Definition 6. The higher inductive type C_4 (where C stands for “circle”).

$$\begin{aligned} C_4 &: \text{Type} \\ c_1, c_2, c_3, c_4 &: C_4 \\ c_1 c_2 &: c_1 = c_2 \\ c_2 c_3 &: c_2 = c_3 \\ c_3 c_4 &: c_3 = c_4 \\ c_4 c_1 &: c_4 = c_1 \end{aligned}$$

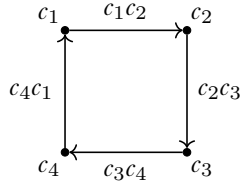


Figure 1: The HIT C_4 .

We may also think of C_4 as the join of the two-element sets $\{c_1, c_3\} * \{c_2, c_4\}$. The circle itself is a non-example since it lacks the second vertex of the edge:

Definition 7. The higher inductive type S^1 :

$$\begin{aligned} S^1 &: \text{Type} \\ \text{base} &: S^1 \\ \text{loop} &: \text{base} = \text{base} \end{aligned}$$

Lemma 3. The function $\ell : C_4 \rightarrow S^1$ given by $\ell(c_i) = \text{base}$ for all i , and $\ell(c_i c_j) = \text{loop}$ for all i, j is an equivalence with inverse $\ell^{-1}(\text{base}) = c_1$ and $\ell^{-1}(\text{loop}) = c_1 c_2 \cdot c_2 c_3 \cdot c_3 c_4 \cdot c_4 c_1$. There are clearly other inverses for different choices of vertex.

Corollary 2. We have $(C_4, ||\ell||_{-1}) : \text{EM}(\mathbb{Z}, 1)$.

3.1 The higher inductive type \mathbb{O}

We will create our first combinatorial manifold, a 2-sphere. We will adopt the convention that a subscript indicates the dimension of a subskeleton of a complex. For instance, we have $\mathbf{base} : S_0^1$.

Definition 8. The HIT \mathbb{O}_0 is just 6 points, intended as the 0-skeleton of an octahedron, with vertices named after the colors on the faces of a puzzle cube.

$$w, y, b, r, g, o : \mathbb{O}_0$$

Definition 9. The HIT \mathbb{O}_1 is the 1-skeleton of an octahedron.

$$\begin{array}{ll} w, y, b, r, g, o : \mathbb{O}_1 & yg : y = g \\ wb : w = b & yo : y = o \\ wr : w = r & br : b = r \\ wg : w = g & rg : r = g \\ wo : w = o & go : g = o \\ yb : y = b & ob : o = b \\ yr : y = r & \end{array}$$

Definition 10. The HIT \mathbb{O} is an octahedron:

$$\begin{array}{lll} w, y, b, r, g, o : \mathbb{O} & & \\ wb : w = b & br : b = r & wbr : wb \cdot br \cdot wr^{-1} = \text{refl}_w \\ wr : w = r & rg : r = g & wrg : wr \cdot rg \cdot wg^{-1} = \text{refl}_w \\ wg : w = g & go : g = o & wgo : wg \cdot go \cdot wo^{-1} = \text{refl}_w \\ wo : w = o & ob : o = b & wob : wo \cdot ob \cdot wb^{-1} = \text{refl}_w \\ yb : y = b & & yrb : yr \cdot rb \cdot yb^{-1} = \text{refl}_y \\ yr : y = r & & ygr : yg \cdot gr \cdot yr^{-1} = \text{refl}_y \\ yg : y = g & & yog : yo \cdot og \cdot yg^{-1} = \text{refl}_y \\ yo : y = o & & ybo : yb \cdot bo \cdot yo^{-1} = \text{refl}_y \end{array}$$

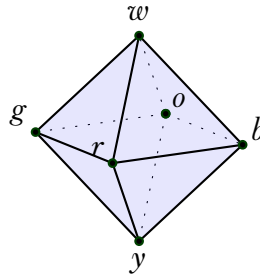


Figure 2: The HIT \mathbb{O} which has 6 points, 12 1-paths, 8 2-paths.

We have obvious maps $\mathbb{O}_0 \xrightarrow{i_0} \mathbb{O}_1 \xrightarrow{i_1} \mathbb{O}$ that include each skeleton into the next-higher-dimensional skeleton.

3.1.1 The function link

Taking the link of a vertex gives us a map to the universe.

Definition 11. $\text{link} : \mathbb{O}_0 \rightarrow \text{BAut}C_4$ is given by induction:

$$\text{link}(w) = brgo$$

$$\text{link}(y) = bogr$$

$$\text{link}(b) = woyr$$

$$\text{link}(r) = wbyg$$

$$\text{link}(g) = wryo$$

$$\text{link}(o) = wgyb$$

We chose these orderings for the vertices in the link, by visualizing standing at the given vertex as if it were the north pole, then looking south and enumerating the link in clockwise order, starting from w if possible, else b .

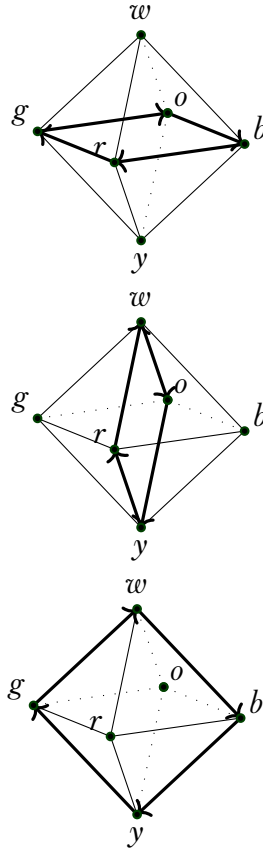


Figure 3: link for the vertices w , b and r .

To extend link to the 1-skeleton, imagine how link changes as we slide from point to point. Sliding from w to b and tipping the link as we go, we see $r \mapsto r$ and $o \mapsto o$ because those lie on the axis of rotation. Then $g \mapsto w$ and $b \mapsto y$.

The full map on the 1-skeleton is:

Definition 12. Define $T_1 : \mathbb{O}_1 \rightarrow \text{BAut}C_4$ on just the 1-skeleton by extending link as follows: Transport away from w :

- $T_1(wb) : [b, r, g, o] \mapsto [y, r, w, o]$ (r, o fixed)
- $T_1(wr) : [b, r, g, o] \mapsto [b, y, g, w]$ (b, g fixed)
- $T_1(wg) : [b, r, g, o] \mapsto [w, r, y, o]$
- $T_1(wo) : [b, r, g, o] \mapsto [b, w, g, y]$

Transport away from y :

- $T_1(yb) : [b, o, g, r] \mapsto [w, o, y, r]$
- $T_1(yr) : [b, o, g, r] \mapsto [b, y, g, w]$
- $T_1(yg) : [b, o, g, r] \mapsto [y, o, w, r]$
- $T_1(yo) : [b, o, g, r] \mapsto [b, w, g, y]$

Transport along the equator:

- $T_1(br) : [w, o, y, r] \mapsto [w, b, y, g]$
- $T_1(rg) : [w, b, y, g] \mapsto [w, r, y, o]$
- $T_1(g o) : [w, r, y, o] \mapsto [w, g, y, b]$
- $T_1(o b) : [w, g, y, b] \mapsto [w, o, y, r]$

It's very important to be able to visualize what T_1 does to triangular paths such as $wb \cdot br \cdot rw$ (which circulates around the boundary of face wbr). You can see it if you imagine Figure 3 as the frames of a short movie. Or you can place your palm over the top of a cube and note where your fingers are pointing, then slide your hand to an equatorial face, then along the equator, then back to the top. The answer is: you come back rotated clockwise by a quarter-turn.

Definition 13. The map $R : C_4 \rightarrow C_4$ rotates by one quarter turn, one “click”:

- | | |
|------------------|------------------------|
| • $R(c_1) = c_2$ | • $R(c_1c_2) = c_2c_3$ |
| • $R(c_2) = c_3$ | • $R(c_2c_3) = c_3c_4$ |
| • $R(c_3) = c_4$ | • $R(c_3c_4) = c_4c_1$ |
| • $R(c_4) = c_1$ | • $R(c_4c_1) = c_1c_2$ |

Now let's extend T_1 to all of \mathbb{O} by providing values for the eight faces. The face wbr is a path from refl_w to the concatenation $wb \cdot br \cdot rw$, and so the image of wbr under the extended version of T_1 must be a homotopy from $\text{refl}_{T_1(w)}$ to $T_1(wb \cdot br \cdot rw)$.

Definition 14. Define $T_2 : \mathbb{O} \rightarrow \text{BAut}C_4$ by extending T_1 to the faces as follows:

- | | |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| • $T_2(wbr) = H_R$ | • $T_2(yrb) = H_R$ |
| • $T_2(wrg) = H_R$ | • $T_2(ygr) = H_R$ |
| • $T_2(wgo) = H_R$ | • $T_2(yog) = H_R$ |
| • $T_2(ybo) = H_R$ | • $T_2(ybo) = H_R$ |

where $H_R : R = \text{refl}$ is the obvious homotopy.

All the faces do the same thing: they map to a homotopy between the identity and clockwise rotation by a quarter turn. Concatenating the eight faces in the 2-groupoid \mathbb{O} would then map to a homotopy between the identity and two full rotations. This makes visible in HoTT the link between curvature and the euler characteristic (which is 2 for the octahedron).

3.2 The torus

We can define a combinatorial torus as a similar HIT. This time each vertex will have six neighbors. So all the links will be merely equal to C_6 which is a hexagonal version of C_4 . See Figure 4.

To help parse this figure, imagine instead Figure 5. We take this simple alternating-triangle pattern, then glue the left and right edges, then bend into Figure 4. The fact that each column in Figure 5 has four dots corresponds to the torus in Figure 4 having a square in front, diamonds in the middle, and a square in back.

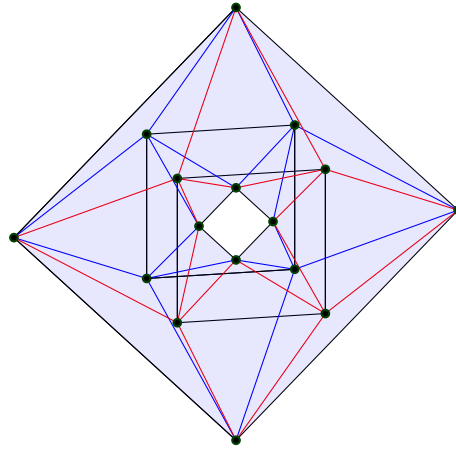


Figure 4: Torus embedded in 3-dimensional space. Black lines trace four square-shaped paths, red ones connect the front square to the middle diamonds, and blue ones connect the back path to the middle ones.

It's a bit of a challenge to visualize how the connection should twist these links as we move around. Part of the issue is that we have actually constrained ourselves quite a bit by requiring the tangent space to be the link of a point, which only has six points. We could be more precise about angles if the tangent spaces had many subdivisions of the circle. The way to achieve better approximations, which we will not pursue in this paper, is to *refine* a given triangulation, and then choose a contractible neighborhood for each point which is not the link but goes “farther out” and consists of many edges and encloses many triangles. We could then transport along a single edge, and map between two circles that each have many segments, approximating to arbitrary precision any real-world application. The theory and practice of refinements is extensive and includes computer graphics research.

Transport along geodesics is minimal in a technical sense, meaning the least twisty. If we use the flat torus diagram to help us, then we can identify the outer and inner diamond, which are three of the vertical black lines, as geodesics, as well as all of the diagonal lines, which are the ones in Figure ??.

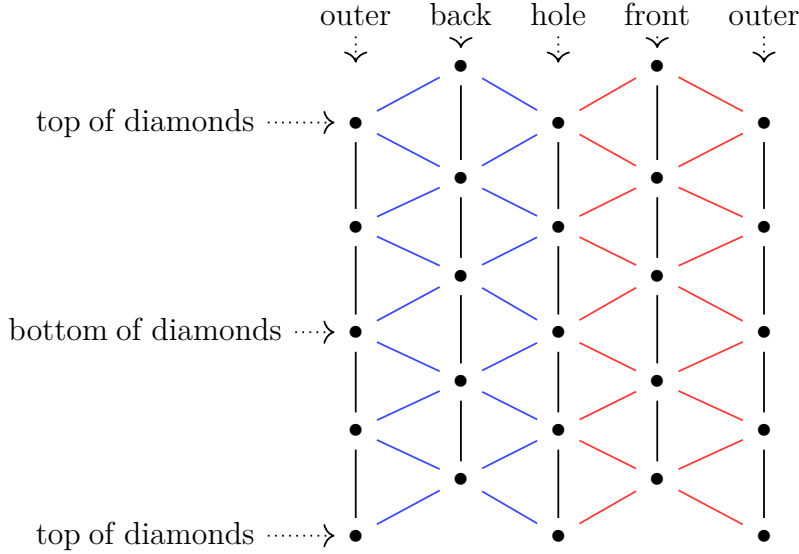


Figure 5: An inspiration for the torus. Identify the sides and then the top, definitionally, to get the actual torus.

That leaves only the black vertical lines that go around the front and back squares. Those are not geodesics, and some twisting will take place there.

I am talking about twisting on individual edges, but that's not a concept with standalone meaning since the hexagons are torsors. I'm implicitly using the flat torus to make the hexagons all pointed, by pointing them at the top as they appear in Figure 5. But let's not use that extra information, and instead let's start talking about loops around faces.

4 Higher geometry

Here are the translations that are covered in the current paper:

Connections are infinitesimal splittings of a principal bundle.	Paths in a sigma type are equivalent to a pair of paths.
Differentials satisfy the Leibniz (product) rule.	Horizontal composition in an H-space is performed in two steps.
Connections with 0-truncated groups are covering spaces with unique flat connection.	Transport around contractible loops is refl when fibers are sets.
The group of gauge transformations (bundle automorphisms) acts on the space of connections.	Homotopies of classifying maps respect the splitting of paths in sigma types.

4.1 Higher maps contain connections

To hew close to the intended context of the term “connection” we will examine manifold-like types mapping into bundle-classifying-like types. The novelty here, compared to other HoTT investiga-

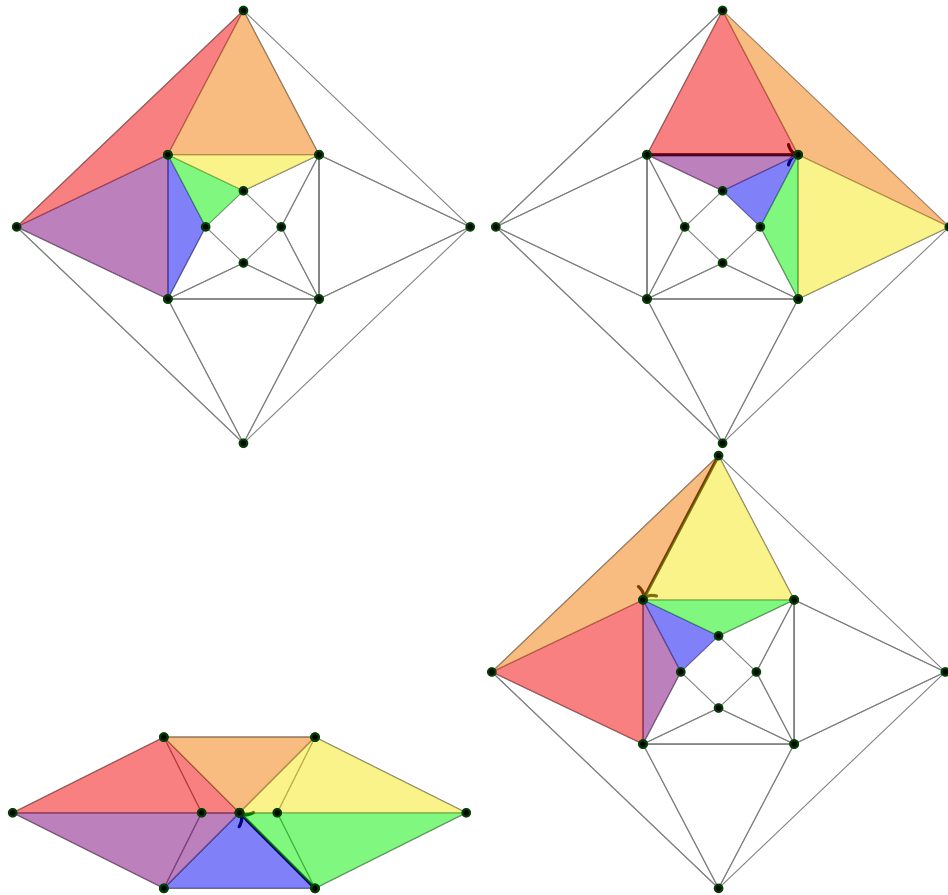


Figure 6: This shows the transport map along the top triangle, in the counterclockwise direction. The first transport is twistier than along other edges: it pivots the hexagon around the top of the outer diamond. The net effect of the three stages is to rotate the original hexagon by one notch counterclockwise.

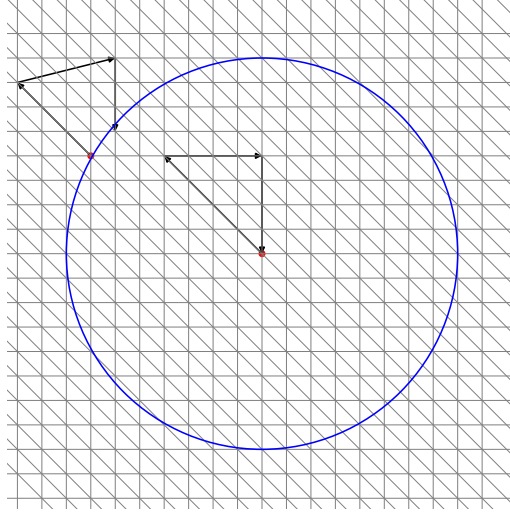


Figure 7: To better approximate small transport angles, we would refine the mesh and instead of the link we would use circle-like paths that include more triangles, and have many edges. Imagine transporting the blue circle around the triangle indicated in the center. The point on the circle might move through the path shown, indicating how the circle comes back rotated just a few degrees counterclockwise. Use your imagination to discretize the smooth circle onto the points of the mesh.

tions, is the focus on combinatorial types to stand in for manifolds.

In recent times it has been believed in the HoTT community that maps from a discrete type to a discrete classifying space can encode only the connections that a classical mathematician would call *flat* (zero curvature). In this context the word *discrete* means having the discrete topology, in the sense of cohesion[1]. This is not the case! We will show that if the codomain is a classifying space of S^1 or other group of homotopy dimension at least 1, then non-flat connections appear despite the type S^1 being topologically discrete. Another common meaning of the shorthand “discrete” is to indicate a 0-truncated type, i.e. a set, as opposed to a type with higher homotopical structures. We will show that indeed if the codomain classifies sets, which is the case for example with the classifying space $B\mathbb{Z}$, the delooping of \mathbb{Z} , then connections are flat. (The type we denote by $\mathbb{S}^1 \stackrel{\text{def}}{=} \{(x, y) | x^2 + y^2 = 1\}$ is a set and is not topologically discrete. We will not be discussing it at all in this paper.)

The DDG philosophy tells us to look at HITs that are polytope-like. A polytope M will have finitely many 0-dimensional (point) constructors $\{m_0^i\}$, finitely many 1-dimensional constructors $\{m_1^{ij} : m_0^i = m_0^j\}$, and so on. Type families $f : M \rightarrow \mathcal{U}$ on this type specify where each of these constructors is sent. In DDG parlance, f restricted to the 0-dimensional constructors of M is a 0-form and f restricted to the 1-dimensional constructors (not the 1-skeleton but just the 1-dimensional parts, whatever that means in HoTT) is a 1-form, and so on.

A principal S^1 bundle is a family of S^1 torsors and so we will often be focusing on the function type $M \rightarrow \text{BAut}_1(S^1)$. The novel claim here is that $M \rightarrow \text{BAut}_1(S^1)$ contains more than just all the principal S^1 -bundles: it also contains all the connections on all the bundles. Every connection is

present, both curved and flat, because we have complete freedom to specify the images of the paths.

Classically, curvature is a property of the connection. It is computed either on infinitesimal loops, or on the infinitesimal surface bounded by the loop. In fact it is “the derivative of the connection” morally speaking. Getting into the details would wreck the simplicity we’re going for¹. We will look for curvature by examining f on 1-dimensional loops. If M is at least a 2-type and if we want to claim that f classifies a bundle with connection, then we will be required to map the 2-faces of M (the 2-dimensional constructors) to a path from refl to the image of a bounding loop. So at dimension 2 we will impose that constraint. Since $\text{BAut}_1(S^1)$ is 2-truncated, f factors through the truncation map $M \rightarrow ||M||_2$ and so that’s the top dimension.

There is an example at the end of this paper. For those who are best served by examples, do look at it and return to this point.

4.2 Connections as splittings

The classical story goes like this.

Definition 15. The *vertical bundle* VP of a principal bundle $\pi : P \rightarrow M$ with Lie group G is the kernel of the derivative $T\pi : TP \rightarrow TM$.

VP can be visualized as the collection of tangent vectors that point along the fibers. It should be clear that the group $\text{Aut}P$ acts on VP : an automorphism $\phi : P \rightarrow P$ sends V_pP to $V_{\phi(p)}P$, where of course $\pi(p) = \pi(\phi(p))$.

Definition 16. An *Ehresmann connection* on a principal bundle $\pi : P \rightarrow M$ with Lie group G is a splitting $TP = VP \oplus HP$ at every point of P into vertical and “horizontal” subspaces, which is preserved by the action of $\text{Aut}P$.

Being preserved by the action of $\text{Aut}P$ means that the complementary horizontal subspaces in a given fiber of $\pi : P \rightarrow M$ are determined by the splitting at any single point in the fiber. The action of G on this fiber can then push the splitting around to all the other points.

The motivation for this definition is that we now have an isomorphism $T_p\pi : H_pP \rightarrow T_{\pi(p)}M$ between each horizontal space and the tangent space below it in M . This means that given a tangent vector at $x : M$ and a point p in $\pi^{-1}(x)$ we can uniquely lift the tangent vector to a horizontal vector at p . We can also lift vector fields and paths in this way. To lift a path $\gamma : [0, 1] \rightarrow M$ you must specify a lift for $\gamma(0)$ and then lift the tangent vectors of γ and prove that you can integrate the lift of that vector field upstairs in HP .

Then, armed with the lifting of paths one immediately obtains isomorphisms between the fibers of P . So the Ehresmann connection, the lifting of paths, and transport isomorphisms between fibers are all recapitulations of the structure that the connection adds to the bundle.

Moving now to HoTT , fix a type $M : \mathcal{U}$ and a type family $f : M \rightarrow \mathcal{U}$. Path induction gives us the transport isomorphism $\prod_{p:x=M^y} \text{tr}(p) : f(x) = f(y)$. We can use this to define a type of *dependent paths*, also called *pathovers* or *paths over* a given path.

¹I’m picking and choosing where to tell the story fully twice (see the next section) and where to simply look for motivation.

Definition 17. With the above context and points $a : f(x), b : f(y)$ the type of *dependent paths over* p with endpoints a, b is denoted

$$a \xrightarrow[p]{=} b.$$

By induction we can assume p is refl_a in which case $a \xrightarrow[p]{=} b$ is $a =_{f(x)} a$.

See [6] for more discussion of dependent paths (where they use the term “path over”), including composition, and associativity thereof.

We recall now the identity type of sigma types:

Theorem 2. (HoTT book Theorem 2.7.2 [7]) If $f : M \rightarrow \mathcal{U}$ is a type family and $w, w' : \sum_{x:M} f(x)$ then there is an equivalence

$$\text{split} : (w = w') \simeq \sum_{p : \text{pr}_1(w) =_M \text{pr}_1(w')} [\text{tr}(p)(\text{pr}_2(w))] = \text{pr}_2(w').$$

In particular, given $p : x =_M y$ and $w : f(x)$ we have $w \xrightarrow[p]{=} \text{tr}(p)(w) \simeq \text{tr}(p)(w) =_{f(y)} \text{tr}(p)(w)$ which has the term refl which we can call “the horizontal lift of p starting at w .” We can imitate the classical definition of a connection by defining $\omega \stackrel{\text{def}}{=} \text{pr}_2 \circ \text{split}$, the projection onto the vertical component. And thus in HoTT we can see the equivalence of transport and lifting of paths into horizontal and vertical components.

4.3 The Leibniz (product) rule

The Leibniz rule for exterior differentiation states that if $f, g : M \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$ are two smooth functions to the real numbers then $d(fg) = f dg + g df$. Here fg is the function formed by taking the pointwise product of f and g . This is an interaction between multiplication in \mathbb{R} and the action on vectors of smooth functions (the 1-forms df and dg).

To examine this situation in HoTT we need type-theoretic functions $f, g : M \rightarrow B$ from some type M to a central H-space B . Let $\mu : B \rightarrow B \rightarrow B$ be the H-space multiplication. How does μ act on paths? Suppose we have $a, a', b, b' : B$ and $p : a =_B a', q : b =_B b'$. Then we also have homotopies $\mu(p, -) : \mu(a, -) =_{B \rightarrow B} \mu(a', -)$ and $\mu(-, q) : \mu(-, b) =_{B \rightarrow B} \mu(-, b')$. Since $\mu(a, -) : B = B$ is an (unpointed) equivalence of B , and similarly for $\mu(b, -)$ and so on, this data assembles into the following diagram of higher groupoid morphisms:

$$\begin{array}{ccc} B & \xrightarrow{\mu(a, -)} & B \\ \mu(p, -) \Downarrow & & \mu(-, q) \Downarrow \\ B & \xrightarrow{\mu(a', -)} & B \end{array} \quad \begin{array}{ccc} B & \xrightarrow{\mu(-, b)} & B \\ \mu(-, q) \Downarrow & & \mu(-, b') \Downarrow \\ B & \xrightarrow{\mu(-, b')} & B \end{array}$$

And so the two homotopies can be horizontally composed to give a path

$$\mu(p, -) \star \mu(-, q) : \mu(a, b) = \mu(a', b').$$

Horizontal composition is given by

$$\mu(p, -) \star \mu(-, q) \stackrel{\text{def}}{=} (\mu(p, -) \cdot_r \mu(-, b)) \cdot_l (\mu(a', -) \cdot_l \mu(-, q))$$

where

$$\mu(p, -) \cdot_r \mu(-, b) : \mu(a, b) = \mu(a', b)$$

and

$$\mu(a', -) \cdot_l \mu(-, q) : \mu(a', b) = \mu(a', b')$$

are defined by path induction. See the HoTT book Theorem 2.1.6 on the Eckmann-Hilton argument[7].

We can recognize the process of using whiskering to form horizontal composition in the Leibniz rule.

Quick aside: moving from infinitesimal calculus to finite groupoid algebra actually involves two changes. The first is the change from vectors to paths, forms to functions and so on. But it's also the case that tangent vectors have just the one basepoint, whereas paths have two endpoints. You can see this play out in this example, where a and a' were distinct points (and b and b').

The horizontal composition we build lives entirely in B and we didn't make use of M yet. The Leibniz rule will be a pointwise version of what's going on in B . Denote by $\mu \circ (f, g) : M \rightarrow B$ the map which sends $x \mapsto \mu(f(x), g(x))$.

Lemma 4. Given $f, g : M \rightarrow B$ and $p : x =_M y$ then

$$\begin{aligned} \text{ap}(\mu \circ (f, g))(p) &= \mu(f(p), -) \star \mu(-, g(p)) \\ &= [\mu(f(p), -) \cdot_r \mu(-, g(x))] \cdot [\mu(f(y), -) \cdot_l \mu(-, g(p))] \\ &: \mu(f(x), g(x)) = \mu(f(y), g(y)) \end{aligned}$$

4.4 Covering spaces

If G is a 0-truncated group such as \mathbb{Z} then the type of torsors (delooping) BG is 1-truncated. If $f : M \rightarrow BG$ is a type family then $\sum_{x:M} f(x)$ has fibers that are sets (G -torsors). So transport functions are set isomorphisms, and the transport of any contractible loop in M will be refl (the identity) of the fiber, which is what we mean by flat.

4.5 Gauge transformations

A *gauge transformation* is a term inherited from physics. It's an automorphism of a principal bundle $P \rightarrow M$, meaning a homeomorphism of P that commutes with the projection to M and so acts on each fiber. It is further required to be equivariant under the action of the group G , and so it's very similar to the act of multiplying each fiber by a continuously varying element of G .

In HoTT if the bundle is classified by $f : M \rightarrow \mathcal{U}$ then an automorphism is a homotopy $f \sim f$ and the group of gauge transformations is the loop space $\Omega_f(M \rightarrow \mathcal{U})$.

Recall that torsors have a physical interpretation as a quantity without a specified unit, such as mass, length, or time. When we choose a base point in a torsor it becomes the standard torsor G acting on itself (for example, the additive real numbers). A physicist is looking for properties or laws that

are independent of such a choice. In the 20th century physicists further wondered about choices of units that vary from point to point, and began searching for laws that are invariant under this much larger space of transformations. And so they and we are led to explore quotienting by the action of the group of gauge transformations, and in particular the space of connections “mod gauge.” In this scenario the base manifold M is spacetime, and a gauge transformation is a smoothly varying choice of gauge (units) at each point.

Gauge transformations act on connections. When we view connections as infinitesimal splittings of TP into vertical and horizontal sub-bundles, a gauge transformation that is constant in the neighborhood of a point will not change the splitting, it will just shift the fiber rigidly along itself, but one that is changing rapidly near a point will tilt the horizontal subspaces. So there are two effects: the effect of sliding along the fiber, and the effect of the rate of change of the gauge transformation. In classical geometry you’ll see formulas like this:

Theorem 3. Let $P \rightarrow M$ be a principal bundle and $A \in \Omega^1(M, \mathfrak{g})$ a connection 1-form on P . Suppose that $H \in \mathcal{G}(P)$ is a bundle automorphism. Then H^*A is a connection 1-form and in a neighborhood U of a point $x \in M$ we can write H as a function $H_U : U \rightarrow G$ where $H_U(x) \in G$ is a group element multiplying the fiber at x , and then we have

$$H^*A = \text{Ad}_{H_U(x)^{-1}} \circ A + H_U^*(\mu_G)$$

where $\mu_G : \Omega^1(G, \mathfrak{g})$ is the Maurer-Cartan form on G .

This theorem is a combination of Theorems 5.2.2 and 5.4.4 in the excellent recent book on gauge theory for mathematicians interested in physics by Mark Hamilton[8].

It’s not so important to fully understand this formula because we will re-explain it in HoTT terms in a moment. But notice that H^*A (the action of the gauge transformation on the connection 1-form) has contributions from two terms (both of which are vertical — connections always map onto the vertical bundle). The first is the adjoint action at the specific point x . This is always what we expect when we shift the base point in a torsor and look at the resulting group (or in this case, the Lie algebra). The second term involves the Maurer-Cartan form, which is the derivative of subtraction in the group. It takes tangent vectors at $g : G$ to a tangent vector at the identity (the Lie algebra, denoted \mathfrak{g}) by differentiating the action of multiplication by g^{-1} . If we think in terms of finite-length paths, then imagine a path $p : g = g'$ and the function $(g^{-1} \cdot -)$. The function will act on the path to give a path $g^{-1} \cdot p : e = (g' \cdot g^{-1})$ that starts at the identity. So the Maurer-Cartan form shifts paths to start at the identity by subtracting off the start point. Our Maurer-Cartan term is the pullback of the Maurer-Cartan form by H which records how H acts infinitesimally, i.e. the contribution from the gauge transformation H that comes from the rapidity of change from point to point. This term will be large when H_U has a large derivative.

In HoTT the connection’s parallel transport is visible as the transport function, and the horizontal-vertical splitting is visible in the decomposition of paths in the sigma type (total space) into pairs of paths. What is the effect of applying a homotopy $H : f \sim f$ on transport, and on splitting?

H is a family of fiber automorphisms: $H : \prod_{a:M} f(a) = f(a)$ which we can assemble into an equivalence $H' : \sum_{a:M} f(a) = \sum_{a:M} f(a)$ that acts fiberwise. We want to compute the action of $\text{ap}(H')$ on the horizontal-vertical decomposition of paths from Theorem 2 by computing $\omega \circ \text{ap}(H') = \text{pr}_2 \circ \text{split} \circ \text{ap}(H')$.

Denote $\sum_{a:M} f(a)$ by P . We'll adopt a convention of roman letters for structures in M and Greek for those upstairs in P . Let $p : a =_M b$ be a path in the base and let $\pi : (a, \alpha) =_P (b, \beta)$ be a path in P over p . Then $\omega(\pi) : \text{tr}_p(\alpha) = \beta$.

Now let's apply H . We have $\text{ap}(H')(\pi) : (a, H(a)(\alpha)) =_P (b, H(b)(\beta))$ which is still a path over p . Applying ω we get

$$\omega(\text{ap}(H')(\pi)) : \text{tr}_p(H(a)(\alpha)) = (H(b)(\beta))$$

. Using the lemma below we can if we wish rewrite this as

$$\omega(\text{ap}(H')(\pi)) : H(b) [\text{tr}_p(\alpha) = \beta]$$

which uses only $H(b)$.

Lemma 5. Given a function $f : M \rightarrow \mathcal{U}$ and homotopy $H : f \sim f$ the following square commutes and so in the type family we have $\text{tr}(H(x) \cdot f(p)) = \text{tr}(f(p) \cdot H(y))$.

$$\begin{array}{ccc} f(a) & \xrightarrow{f(p)} & f(b) \\ H(a) \parallel & & \parallel H(b) \\ f(a) & \xrightarrow{f(p)} & f(b) \end{array}$$

5 Gauss-Bonnet, Vector Fields, and the Poincaré-Hopf Theorem

1. Given Chern-Weil, we can hypothesize that Pfaffians and determinants can be made from the path groupoid structure.
2. Theorem 1: Gauss-Bonnet: curvature vs euler characteristic (2-d)
3. Theorem 2: Gauss-Bonnet-Chern (2n-d, Pfaffian/Euler class, 1944)
4. Theorem 3: Poincaré-Hopf: v.f. index is indep of v.f., and is euler characteristic via a specific v.f.
5. Non-theorem: v.f. on torus is the gradient of a Morse function. Bringing in Morse theory is future work.

6. use

$$\begin{array}{ccc} P \stackrel{\text{def}}{=} \sum_{a:M} f(a) & \xrightarrow{Ef} & ES^1 \\ \uparrow \text{pr}_1 \text{ exp} & \lrcorner & \downarrow \text{pr}_1 \\ X : \prod_{a:M} f(a) & & \\ M & \xrightarrow{f} & \text{BAut}_1(S^1) \\ \downarrow \Omega^2 & & \downarrow \Omega^2 \\ \Omega^2 M & \xrightarrow{\Omega^2 f} & \Omega^2 \text{BAut}_1(S^1) \end{array}$$

5.1 Discrete vector fields

If M is a combinatorial manifold and we form a type family over M using `link`, `xbox`, or `xdisk` then what we want to examine next is the dependent function type of this family, which are equivalent to sections of the sigma type. These sections will play the role of vector fields.

Introduce the notation $P_f \stackrel{\text{def}}{=} \sum_{x:M} f(x)$ and $V_f \stackrel{\text{def}}{=} \prod_{x:M} f(x)$. We will also refer to the 0-skeleton of M as M_0 and the 1-skeleton as M_1 . We'll be interested in P_{xbox} (the xbox bundle over M) and V_{xbox} (the type of sections thereof). Since M is a HIT, then to specify a map $X : V_{\text{xbox}}$ we need to supply a point in each fiber, and for each path $p : x =_M y$ in M a path $X(p) : p_* X(x) =_{\text{xbox}(y)} X(y)$.

Since `xbox` is defined using the neighboring points and paths of M , we can exponentiate P_{xbox} , forming a map $\exp : P_{\text{xbox}} \rightarrow M$: just map the xboxes back onto where they came from in M . This is the finite version of exponentiating a tangent space. It's very different from the projection map pr_1 since it spreads the fibers out along M .

Hence we also have a map $\exp \circ X : M \rightarrow M$ which is in general not an equivalence but can be. We can think of it as the *flow* given by X , the analogue of integrating a vector field for some finite time.

5.2 The index of a fixed point

Suppose that x satisfies $X(x) = \text{refl}_x$, and so $\exp \circ X(x) = x$ and x is a fixed point of the flow. Combinatorial manifolds are finite and decidable so this equation makes sense. In such a situation we can form a map $\text{tr} \circ X \circ \exp : \text{link}(x) \rightarrow \text{link}(x)$. Starting with a point in $\text{link}(x)$ we exponentiate to the actual neighboring point in M , take the value of X on this other point (some neighbor of this neighbor, possibly x), and transport that back to $\text{link}(x)$. Such a map has a degree, and that degree is a discrete version of what is called the *index* of the vector field at a fixed point.

To prove the Gauss-Bonnet theorem one needs a notion of *Euler characteristic* and a notion of curvature. To prove the Poincaré-Hopf theorem, one needs a notion of *the index of a vector field*, and again, a notion of curvature. To prove both and relate them it helps to equate the Euler characteristic to the index of a special vector field.

Definition 18. A vector field is a section X of the disk bundle. A zero of X is a vertex x where $X(x) = x : \text{disk}(x)$, the center of the disk.

The following proofs follow the explanations given in [9]. But as we might hope, the proofs can be brought into HoTT in a much abbreviated form!

Note that X is a pointing of all the fibers. So a second vector field can be lifted to the classifying map to pointed types, which is contractible. That's really all that's going on in these classical proofs!

Definition 19. The index of a vector field at a zero is given by transport composed with \exp .

Theorem 4. The total index is independent of the vector field.

Theorem 5. (Poincaré-Hopf) The total index is equal to the total curvature.

Theorem 6. The total index is equal to the Euler characteristic.

Theorem 7. (Gauss-Bonnet) The total curvature is equal to the Euler characteristic.

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