

Discrete differential geometry in homotopy type theory

Greg Langmead

February 26, 2025

Abstract

Higher inductive types can capture some concepts of differential geometry in two dimensions including connections, curvature, and vector fields. We define connections on higher inductive types. We then define tangent bundles and vector fields by looking at the special subclass of combinatorial manifolds, which are discrete in the sense of real cohesion[1], drawing inspiration from the field of discrete differential geometry. We prove the Gauss-Bonnet theorem and Poincaré-Hopf theorem for combinatorial manifolds.

“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]

Changelist

Commented (Greg): New definition	8
Commented (Greg): Orientation of link	8
Added (Greg): There are important examples in four dimensions of [...]	9
Commented (Greg): New comment on 4 dims, combined figures	9
Commented (Greg): new ¶	10
Added (Greg): The diagrams also provide a map [...]	10
Commented (Greg): New notation $\mathbf{Type}_m^{[n]}, \mathcal{R}_m^{[n]}$	10
Added (Greg): The diagrams also provide a map [...]	11
Commented (Greg): reworded ¶	11
Commented (Greg): All new, up to section 4.1	16
Added: of maximum length n	19
Added: It is convenient to fix one value of n for all the lassos, [...]	19

Commented (Greg): New proposition, incomplete	20
Commented (Greg): Lost the plot a bit. This isn't quite a conjugation.	20
Commented (Greg): All new section	21

Todo list

1 Overview

We will define

- combinatorial 2-manifolds
- circle bundles, and principal circle bundles of 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
- and the Poincaré-Hopf theorem.

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 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.”

We will see in Section 3.3 that $\text{EM}(\mathbb{Z}, 1)$ contains all the polygons. We will construct a map $\text{link} : M \rightarrow \text{EM}(\mathbb{Z}, 1)$ that maps each vertex to the polygon consisting of its neighbors. Then we can consider the type of pointed mere circles $\text{EM}_\bullet(\mathbb{Z}, 1) \stackrel{\text{def}}{=} \sum_{Y:\text{EM}(\mathbb{Z},1)} Y$ as well as the first projection that forgets the point. This is a univalent fibration (univalent fibrations are always equivalent to a projection of a type of pointed types to some connected component of the universe[3]). If we form the pullback

$$\begin{array}{ccc} P & \xrightarrow{\quad} & \text{EM}_\bullet(\mathbb{Z}, 1) \\ \text{pr}_1 \downarrow & \lrcorner & \downarrow \text{pr}_1 \\ M & \xrightarrow{\text{link}} & \text{EM}(\mathbb{Z}, 1) \end{array}$$

then we have a bundle of mere circles, with total space given by the \sum -type construction. We will show that this is not a principal bundle, i.e. a bundle of torsors. Torsors are types with the additional structure of a group action. But if link satisfies an additional property (amounting to an orientation) then the pullback is a principal fibration, i.e. link factors through a map $K(\mathbb{Z}, 2) \rightarrow \text{EM}(\mathbb{Z}, 1)$, where $K(\mathbb{Z}, 2)$ is an Eilenberg-Mac Lane space.

We will argue that extending link to a function T on paths can be thought of as constructing a connection, notably one that is not necessarily flat (trivial). Moreover, lifting T to $T_\bullet : M \rightarrow \text{EM}_\bullet(\mathbb{Z}, 1)$ can be thought of as a nonvanishing vector field. There will in general not be a total lift, just a partial function. The domain of T_\bullet will have a boundary of circles, and the degree (winding number) on the disjoint union of these can be thought of as the index of T_\bullet . We can

then examine the total curvature and the total index and prove that they are equal, and argue that they are equal to the usual Euler characteristic. This will simultaneously prove the Poincaré-Hopf theorem and Gauss-Bonnet theorem in 2 dimensions, for combinatorial manifolds. This is similar to the classical proof of Hopf[4], presented in detail in Needham[5].

1.1 Future work

The results of this note can be extended in many directions. There are higher-dimensional generalizations of Gauss-Bonnet, including the theory of characteristic classes and Chern-Weil theory (which links characteristic classes to connections and curvature). These would involve working with nonabelian groups like $SO(n)$ and sphere bundles. Results from gauge theory could be imported into HoTT, as well as results from surgery theory and other topological constructions that may be especially amenable to this discrete setting. Relationships with computer graphics and discrete differential geometry[6][7] could be explored. Finally, a theory that reintroduces smoothness could allow more formal versions of the analogies explored here.

2 Torsors and principal bundles

The classical theory of principal bundles tells us to look for an appropriate classifying space of torsors to map into.

Definition 2.1. Let G be a group with identity element e (with the usual classical structure and properties). A G -**set** is a set X equipped with a homomorphism $\phi : (G, e) \rightarrow \text{Aut}(X)$. If in addition we have a term

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

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

If $(X, \phi), (Y, \psi) : BG$ 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 2.1. There is a natural equivalence $(X =_{BG} Y) \simeq (X \rightarrow_G Y)$. \square

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

Lemma 2.2. 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 2.1. The pointed type $(BG, *)$ is a $K(G, 1)$. \square

In particular, to classify principal S^1 -bundles we map into the space $K(S^1, 1)$, a type of torsors of the circle. Since S^1 is a $K(\mathbb{Z}, 1)$, we have $K(S^1, 1) \simeq K(\mathbb{Z}, 2)$.

2.1 Bundles of mere circles

We find it illuminating to look also at the slightly more general classifying space of $K(\mathbb{Z}, 1)$ -bundles, that is bundles whose fiber are equivalent to $K(\mathbb{Z}, 1)$. We can understand very well when these are in fact bundles of circle torsors, which will in turn shed light on orientation in this setting.

We will follow Scoccola[8]. 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 2.2. Let $\text{EM}(G, n) \stackrel{\text{def}}{=} \text{BAut}(K(G, n)) \stackrel{\text{def}}{=} \sum_{Y:\mathcal{U}} ||Y \simeq K(G, n)||_{-1}$. A $K(G, n)$ -**bundle** on a type M is the fiber of a map $M \rightarrow \text{EM}(G, n)$.

Scoccola uses two self-maps on the universe: suspension followed by $(n + 1)$ -truncation $||\Sigma||_{n+1}$ and forgetting a point F_\bullet to form the composition

$$\text{EM}(G, n) \xrightarrow{||\Sigma||_{n+1}} \text{EM}_{\bullet\bullet}(G, n + 1) \xrightarrow{F_\bullet} \text{EM}_\bullet(G, n + 1)$$

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

Definition 2.3. Given $f : M \rightarrow \text{EM}(G, n)$, the **associated action of M on G** , denoted by f_\bullet is defined to be $f_\bullet = F_\bullet \circ ||\Sigma||_{n+1} \circ f$.

Theorem 2.1. (Scoccola[8] 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.

Let's relate this to *orientation*. Note that the obstruction in the theorem is about a map into $EM_\bullet(G, n + 1)$ and further note that $EM_\bullet(G, n) \simeq K(\text{Aut } G, 1)$ (independent of n). The theorem says that the data of a map into $EM(G, n)$ factors into data about a map into $K(G, n + 1)$ and one into $K(\text{Aut } G, 1)$. Informally, $EM(G, n)$ is a little too large to be a $K(G, n + 1)$, as it includes data about automorphisms of G .

In the special case of $EM(\mathbb{Z}, 1)$ the conditions of the theorem are met when $f_\bullet : M \rightarrow K(\text{Aut } \mathbb{Z}, 1)$ is contractible. $\text{Aut } \mathbb{Z}$ consists of the $\mathbb{Z}/2\mathbb{Z}$ worth of outer automorphisms given by multiplication by ± 1 . If we look at the fiber sequence

$$K(S^1, 1) \rightarrow \text{BAut } S^1 \rightarrow K(\text{Aut } \mathbb{Z}, 1)$$

we see the automorphisms of the circle as an extension of the group of automorphisms that are homotopic to the identity (which are the torsorial actions) by the group that sends the loop in S^1 to its inverse. This is another way to see that a map $f : M \rightarrow \text{BAut } S^1 \simeq EM(\mathbb{Z}, 1)$ factors through $K(S^1, 1) \simeq K(\mathbb{Z}, 2)$ if and only if the composition to $K(\text{Aut } \mathbb{Z}, 1)$ is trivial. This amounts to a choice of loop-direction for all the circles, and so deserves the name “ f is *oriented*.” In addition the map $\text{BAut } S^1 \rightarrow K(\text{Aut } \mathbb{Z}, 1)$ deserves to be called the first Stiefel-Whitney class of f , and the requirement here is that it vanishes.

Note 2.1. Reinterpreting more of the theory of characteristic classes would be an enlightening future project. Defining a Chern class and Euler class in 2 dimensions is related to the goals of this note, but the full theory is about a family of invariants in different dimensions that have various relations between each other and satisfy other properties.

2.2 Pathovers in circle bundles

Suppose we have $T : M \rightarrow EM(\mathbb{Z}, 1)$ and $P \stackrel{\text{def}}{=} \sum_{x:M} T(x)$. We adopt a convention of naming objects in M with Latin letters, and the corresponding structures in P with Greek letters. Recall that if $p : a =_M b$ then T acts on p with what's called the *action on paths*, denoted $\text{ap}(T)(p) : T(a) = T(b)$. This is a path in the codomain, which in this case is a type of types. Type theory also provides a function called *transport*, denoted $\text{tr}(p) : T(a) \rightarrow T(b)$ which acts on the fibers of P . $\text{tr}(p)$ is a function, acting on the terms of the types $T(a)$ and $T(b)$, and univalence tells us this is the isomorphism corresponding to $\text{ap}(T)(p)$.

Type theory also tells us that paths in P are given by pairs of paths: a path $p : a =_M b$ in the base, and a pathover $\pi : \text{tr}(p)(\alpha) =_{T(b)} \beta$ between $\alpha : T(a)$ and $\beta : T(b)$ in the fibers. We can't directly compare α and β since they are of different types, so we apply transport to one of them. We say π lies over p . See Figure 1.

Lastly we want to recall that in the presence of a section $X : M \rightarrow P$ there is a dependent generalization of ap called apd : $\text{apd}(X)(p) : \text{tr}(p)(X(a)) = X(b)$ which is a pathover between the two values of the section over the basepoints of the path p .

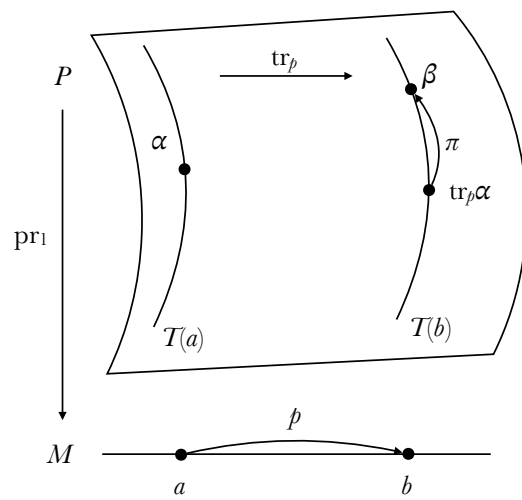


Figure 1: A path π over the path p in the base involves the transport function.

3 Discrete manifolds

3.1 Abstract simplicial complexes

Definition 3.1. An **abstract simplicial complex** $M \stackrel{\text{def}}{=} [M_0, \dots, M_n]$ **of dimension** n is an ordered list consisting of a set M_0 of vertices, and for each $0 < k \leq n$ a set M_k of subsets of M_0 of cardinality $k + 1$, such that any $(j + 1)$ -element subset of M_k is an element of M_j . The elements of M_k are called **k -faces**. Denote by SimpCompSet_n the type of abstract simplicial complexes of dimension n (where the suffix **Set** reminds us that this is a type of sets). Let $M_{\leq k} = [M_0, \dots, M_k]$ and note that $M_{\leq n} = M$. We call $M_{\leq k}$ the **k -skeleton** of M , and it is a (k) -complex in its own right. M is automatically equipped with a chain of inclusions of the skeleta $M_0 \hookrightarrow M_{\leq 1} \hookrightarrow \dots \hookrightarrow M_{\leq n} = M$.

Definition 3.2. An **enumeration** for a simplicial complex of dimension n is a choice for each top-dimensional face $f_i : M_n$ of a total ordering of its $n + 1$ vertices, denoted $f_{i,E} = [f_{i,1}, \dots, f_{i,n+1}]$. This is the same as an orientation plus a starting vertex. Additionally we impose a compatibility condition: when two n -faces f_1, f_2 share an $n - 1$ -face $e = \{x_1, \dots, x_n\}$, the two total orders for e inherited from f_1 and f_2 differ by an odd permutation. Equivalently, f_1 and f_2 assign opposite orientations to e .

[Greg 1]
New definition

Definition 3.3. Let Δ^n be the standard n -simplex in \mathbb{R}^n given by $\{x_1, \dots, x_n \mid \sum_i x_i \leq 1\}$. Let $M : \text{SimpCompSet}_n$. The **geometric realization** $|M| : \text{Top}$ of M in the category of topological spaces is given inductively as follows: $|M_0| = M_0$, and given $|M_{\leq k-1}|$ we form $|M_{\leq k}|$ by the pushout in sets

$$\begin{array}{ccc} M_k \times \partial \Delta^k & \xrightarrow{\text{attach}} & |M_{\leq k-1}| \\ \text{id} \times \text{incl} \downarrow & & \downarrow i_k \\ M_k \times \Delta^k & \longrightarrow & |M_{\leq k}| \end{array}$$

which attaches each k -simplex by taking the convex hull of the appropriate $k+1$ points in $|M_{\leq k-1}|$. The collection of vertical maps on the right gives a sequence of inclusion maps of skeleta $|M_0| \xrightarrow{i_1} |M_{\leq 1}| \xrightarrow{i_2} \dots \xrightarrow{i_n} |M_{\leq n}| = |M|$.

Definition 3.4. In an abstract simplicial complex M of dimension n , the **link** of a vertex v is the $n - 1$ -dimensional subcomplex containing every face $m \in M_{n-1}$ such that $v \notin m$ and $m \cup v$ is an n -face of M . We will call a total ordering of the link an **enumeration**, as we did for the faces.

The link is easier to understand as all the neighboring vertices of v and the subcomplex containing these. See for example Figure 2.

[Greg 2]
Orientation of link

Definition 3.5. 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 $n - 1$ (meaning its geometric realization is homeomorphic to an $n - 1$ -sphere). Denote by CombMfdSet_n the type of combinatorial manifolds of dimension n (which the notation again reminds us are sets).

In a 2-dimensional combinatorial manifold the link is a polygon. See Figure 3 for some examples

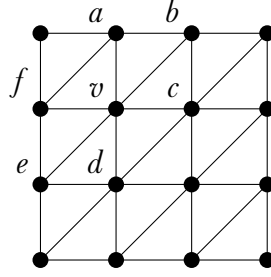


Figure 2: The link of v in this complex consists of the vertices $\{a, b, c, d, e, f\}$ and the edges $\{ab, bc, cd, de, ef, fa\}$, forming a hexagon.

of 2-dimensional combinatorial manifolds of genus 0, 1, and 3.

A classical 1940 result of Whitehead, building on Cairn, states that every smooth manifold admits a combinatorial triangulation[9]. So it appears reasonably well motivated to study this class of objects. See for example the classic book by Kirby and Siebenmann[10]. [There are important examples in four dimensions of topological manifolds that do not have any smoothness structure or triangulation.](#) These will be out of reach of the theory we are building.^{Greg}

[Greg 3]
New comment on 4 dims, combined figures

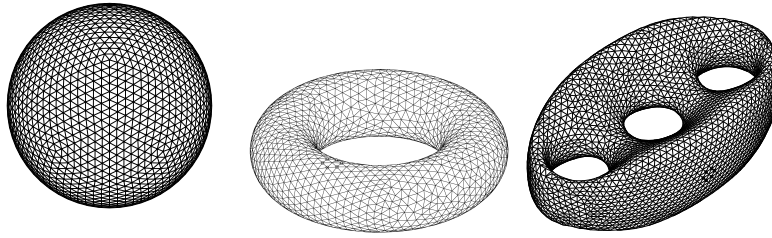


Figure 3: Combinatorial triangulations of a sphere, torus, and 3-holed torus. Sphere created with the tool `stripy`; torus from Wikipedia (By Ag2gaeh - Own work, CC BY-SA 3.0.); 3-holed torus from Wikipedia (By Ag2gaeh - Own work, CC BY-SA 3.0.)

3.2 Higher inductive combinatorial manifolds

Instead of $|M|$: Top we can use the simplicial complex to obtain \mathbb{M} : Type by forming a sequence of *homotopy* pushouts. For example in dimension 1 we could take the triangle with vertices $\{v_1, v_2, v_3\}$ and edges $\{e_{12}, e_{23}, e_{31}\}$ and form a polygon C_3 :

$$\begin{array}{ccc}
 C_{3,1} \times S^0 = \{e_{12}, e_{23}, e_{31}\} \times \{N, S\} & \xrightarrow{\text{pr}_1} & C_{3,1} \\
 \begin{array}{l} e_{12} \times \{N, S\} \mapsto \{v_1, v_2\} \\ e_{23} \times \{N, S\} \mapsto \{v_2, v_3\} \\ e_{31} \times \{N, S\} \mapsto \{v_3, v_1\} \end{array} \downarrow & \nearrow h_1 & \downarrow *_1 \\
 C_{3,0} = \{v_1, v_2, v_3\} & \longrightarrow & C_3
 \end{array}$$

The left vertical map expresses the connectivity between the edges and vertices in the set-based complex. The right vertical map $*_1$ provides a hub point for each edge, and the homotopy h_1 provides the spokes that connect the hub to the vertices. So in contrast to a geometric realization, the 1-dimensional cells in the HoTT sense are generated by the filler homotopy.

In dimension 2 we could fill in maps from C_3 into our higher type by adding faces (hence reusing the object we just built above):

$$\begin{array}{ccccc}
 & & M_2 \times C_3 & \xrightarrow{\text{pr}_1} & M_2 \\
 & & \downarrow \partial_1 & \nearrow h_2 & \downarrow *_2 \\
 M_0 = \mathbb{M}_0 & \longrightarrow & \mathbb{M}_1 & \longrightarrow & \mathbb{M}_2 \\
 \uparrow \partial_0 & \searrow h_1 & \uparrow *_1 & & \\
 M_1 \times S^0 & \xrightarrow{\text{pr}_1} & M_1 & &
 \end{array}$$

The types C_3 and \mathbb{M}_1 are 1-types, \mathbb{M}_2 is a 2-type, and the rest are sets. The map ∂_0 maps each pair (e, S^0) to the pair of points this edge connects.

∂_1 maps each (f, C_3) to the triangle that this face bounds. How? C_3 is itself a pushout, so to map out of it we must map from the span $\{v_1, v_2, v_3\} \leftarrow C_{3,1} \times S^0 \rightarrow C_{3,1}$. This amounts to a choice of three points and three connecting edges. We require these to be the image under $M_0 \rightarrow \mathbb{M}_1$ of the vertices inside the set-based face M_2 itself.

[Greg 4]
new ¶

The h_i are the proofs of commutativity, and the two squares are also both homotopy pushouts. Note that the pushouts could be re-expressed as HIT constructors.

Whereas in geometric realization we use both Δ^i and $\partial\Delta^i$ to attach simplices, in this homotopy picture we need an explicit construction of “ $\partial\Delta^i$ ” as a type equivalent to an $i - 1$ -dimensional sphere and the filling of this sphere with i -dimensional stuff has moved into the proof of commutativity. So in dimension n the picture would be

$$\begin{array}{ccccccc}
 \cdots & \longrightarrow & M_{n-2} & & M_n \times S^{n-1} & \xrightarrow{\text{pr}_1} & M_n \\
 & \nearrow h_{n-2} & \downarrow *_n & & \downarrow \partial_{n-1} & \nearrow h_n & \downarrow *_n \\
 \cdots & \longrightarrow & \mathbb{M}_{n-2} & \longrightarrow & \mathbb{M}_{n-1} & \longrightarrow & \mathbb{M}_n \\
 & \uparrow \partial_{n-2} & \searrow h_{n-1} & & \uparrow *_n & & \\
 & & M_{n-1} \times S^{n-2} & \xrightarrow{\text{pr}_1} & M_{n-1} & &
 \end{array}$$

It’s useful to define types that remember all or some of the data in these diagrams:

Definition 3.6. Denote by $\text{Type}^{[n]}$ the type of **presented types of dimension n** , which consist of a sequence $\mathbb{M}_0 \rightarrow \mathbb{M}_1 \rightarrow \cdots \rightarrow \mathbb{M}_n$ and the mere existence of $M : \text{SimpCompSet}_n$ and maps $\partial_i, *_i$ and h_i as in the previous diagrams. The diagrams also provide a map $\mathcal{R}^{[n]} : \text{SimpCompSet}_n \rightarrow \text{Type}^{[n]}$ we call **presented realization**. If M is a combinatorial manifold then we call $\mathcal{R}^{[n]}(M)$ a **presented manifold**.^{Greg}

The name “presented type” is inspired by von Raumer[11], where he uses such a structure in dimension 2 to construct double groupoids and crossed modules in type theory.

Definition 3.7. Denote by $\text{Type}_m^{[n]}$ the type of **marked presented types of dimension n** , which consists of a complex $M : \text{SimpCompSet}_n$ and maps $\partial_i, *_i$ and h_i as in the previous diagrams. We clearly have a forgetful map $\text{Type}_m^{[n]} \rightarrow \text{Type}^{[n]}$. The diagrams also provide a map $\mathcal{R}_m^{[n]} : \text{SimpCompSet}_n \rightarrow \text{Type}_m^{[n]}$ we call the **marked presented realization**. If M is

[Greg 5]
New
notation
 $\text{Type}_m^{[n]}, \mathcal{R}_m^{[n]}$

a combinatorial manifold then we call $\mathcal{R}_m^{[n]}(M)$ a **marked presented manifold**.^{Greg}

The maps $*_i : M_i \rightarrow \mathbb{M}_i$ pick out vertices when $i = 0$ and hub terms for each edge, face, and so on when $i > 1$. Each of the higher faces has a hub and a family of paths joining the hub to the entire boundary. When we work with $\text{Type}_m^{[n]}$ we may access the vertices and faces, and the explicit paths inside the pushouts.

[Greg 6]
reworded ¶

Going forward we will stick with 2-dimensional complexes, where forming the link of a vertex gives us a map $\mathbb{M}_0 \rightarrow \text{Gon}$ exactly when the complex is a combinatorial manifold, which by Corollary 3.1 means we have a map $\text{link} : \mathbb{M}_0 \rightarrow \text{EM}(\mathbb{Z}, 1)$. Extending this map to all of \mathbb{M} and exploring what we obtain is the main purpose of this note.

3.3 Polygons

The 1-type C_3 we created earlier by pushing out the combinatorial data of a set-based simplicial triangle is clearly an example of a type of marked presented polygons C_n , $n : \mathbb{N}$. The standard HoTT circle itself is usually given as a HIT and is a non-example of a combinatorial manifold since it lacks the second vertex of the edge:

Definition 3.8. The higher inductive type S^1 which we can also call C_1 :

```

S1 : Type
base : S1
loop : base = base

```

Denote by Gon the set of marked presented n -gons for some natural number n . We'll see below that the realization of an n -gon is a mere circle, i.e. we have a forgetful map $\text{Gon} \rightarrow \text{EM}(\mathbb{Z}, 1)$.

3.4 Adding and removing points from polygons

Recall that given functions $\phi, \psi : A \rightarrow B$ between two arbitrary types we can form a type family of paths $\alpha : A \rightarrow \mathcal{U}$ by $\alpha(a) \stackrel{\text{def}}{=} (\phi(a) =_B \psi(a))$. Transport in this family is given by concatenation as follows, where $p : a =_A a'$ and $q : \phi(a) = \psi(a)$ (see Figure 4):

$$\text{tr}(p)(q) = \phi(p)^{-1} \cdot q \cdot \psi(p)$$

which gives a path in $\phi(a') = \psi(a')$ by connecting dots between the terms $\phi(a')$, $\phi(a)$, $\psi(a)$, $\psi(a')$. This relates a would-be homotopy $\phi \sim \psi$ specified at a single point, to a point at the end of a path. We will use this to help construct such homotopies.

Lemma 3.1. Let C_n be the marked presented polygon 1-type with n vertices. Then $C_2 \simeq C_1$ and in fact $C_n \simeq C_{n-1}$.

Proof. (Compare to [12] Lemma 6.5.1.) In the case of C_1 we will denote its constructors by `base` and `loop`. For C_2 we will denote the points by v_1, v_2 and the edges by ℓ_{12}, r_{21} . For C_3 and higher we will denote the points by v_1, \dots, v_n and the edges by $e_{i,j} : v_i = v_j$ where $j = i + 1$ except for $e_{n,1}$.

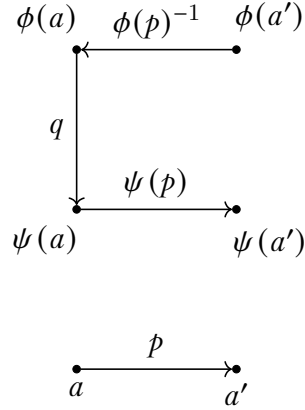


Figure 4: Transport along p in the fibers of a family of paths. The fiber over a is $\phi(a) = \psi(a)$ where $\phi, \psi : A \rightarrow B$.

First we will define $f : C_2 \rightarrow C_1$ and $g : C_1 \rightarrow C_2$, then prove they are inverses.

$$\begin{aligned}
 f(v_1) &= f(v_2) = \text{base} & g(\text{base}) &= v_1 \\
 f(\ell_{12}) &= \text{loop} & g(\text{loop}) &= \ell_{12} \cdot r_{21} \\
 f(r_{21}) &= \text{refl}_{\text{base}}
 \end{aligned}$$

We need to show that $f \circ g \sim \text{id}_{C_1}$ and $g \circ f \sim \text{id}_{C_2}$. Think of f as sliding v_2 along r_{21} to coalesce with v_1 . This may help understand why the unfortunately intricate proof is working.

We need terms $p : \prod_{a:C_1} f(g(a)) = a$ and $q : \prod_{a:C_2} g(f(a)) = a$. We will proceed by induction, defining appropriate paths on point constructors and then checking a condition on path constructors that confirms that the built-in transport of these type families respects the definition on points.

Looking first at $g \circ f$, which shrinks r_{21} , we have the following data to work with:

$$\begin{aligned}
 g(f(v_1)) &= g(f(v_2)) = v_1 \\
 g(f(\ell_{12})) &= \ell_{12} \cdot r_{21} \\
 g(f(r_{21})) &= \text{refl}_{v_1}.
 \end{aligned}$$

We then need to supply a homotopy from this data to id_{C_2} , which consists of a section and pathovers over C_2 :

$$\begin{aligned}
 p_1 : g(f(v_1)) &= v_1 \\
 p_2 : g(f(v_1)) &= v_2 \\
 H_\ell : \text{tr}(\ell_{12})(p_1) &= p_2 \\
 H_r : \text{tr}(r_{21})(p_2) &= p_1.
 \end{aligned}$$

which simplifies to

$$\begin{aligned} p_1 : v_1 &= v_1 \\ p_2 : v_1 &= v_2 \\ H_\ell : g(f(\ell_{12}))^{-1} \cdot p_1 \cdot \ell_{12} &= p_2 \\ H_r := g(f(r_{21}))^{-1} \cdot p_2 \cdot r_{21} &= p_1 \end{aligned}$$

and then to

$$\begin{aligned} p_1 : v_1 &= v_1 \\ p_2 : v_1 &= v_2 \\ H_\ell : (\ell_{12} \cdot r_{21})^{-1} \cdot p_1 \cdot \ell_{12} &= p_2 \\ H_r : \text{refl}_{v_1} \cdot p_2 \cdot r_{21} &= p_1 \end{aligned}$$

To solve all of these constraints we can choose $p_1 \stackrel{\text{def}}{=} \text{refl}_{v_1}$, which by consulting either H_ℓ or H_r requires that we take $p_2 \stackrel{\text{def}}{=} r_{21}^{-1}$.

Now examining $f \circ g$, we have

$$\begin{aligned} f(g(\text{base})) &= \text{base} \\ f(g(\text{loop})) &= f(\ell_{12} \cdot r_{21}) = \text{loop} \end{aligned}$$

and so we have an easy proof that this is the identity.

The proof of the more general case $C_n \simeq C_{n-1}$ is very similar. Take the maps $f : C_n \rightarrow C_{n-1}$, $g : C_{n-1} \rightarrow C_n$ to be

$$\begin{aligned} f(v_i) &= v_i & (i = 1, \dots, n-1) & & g(v_i) &= v_i & (i = 1, \dots, n-1) \\ f(v_n) &= v_1 & & & g(e_{i,i+1}) &= e_{i,i+1} & (i = 1, \dots, n-2) \\ f(e_{i,i+1}) &= e_{i,i+1} & (i = 1, \dots, n-1) & & g(e_{n-1,1}) &= e_{n-1,n} \cdot e_{n,1} \\ f(e_{n-1,n}) &= e_{n-1,1} \\ f(e_{n,1}) &= \text{refl}_{v_1} \end{aligned}$$

where f should be thought of as shrinking $e_{n,1}$ so that v_n coalesces into v_1 .

The proof that $g \circ f \sim \text{id}_{C_n}$ proceeds as follows: the composition is definitionally the identity except

$$\begin{aligned} g(f(v_n)) &= v_1 \\ g(f(e_{n-1,n})) &= e_{n-1,n} \cdot e_{n,1} \\ g(f(e_{n,1})) &= \text{refl}_{v_1}. \end{aligned}$$

Guided by our previous experience we choose $e_{n,1}^{-1} : g(f(v_n)) = v_n$, and define the pathovers by transport.

The proof that $f \circ g \sim \text{id}_{C_{n-1}}$ requires only noting that $f(g(e_{n-1,1})) = f(e_{n-1,n} \cdot e_{n,1}) = e_{n-1,1} \cdot \text{refl}_{v_1} = e_{n-1,1}$. \square

Corollary 3.1. All polygons are equivalent to S^1 , i.e. we have a term in $\prod_{n:\mathbb{N}} \|C_n = S^1\|$, and hence Gon is a subtype of $\text{EM}(\mathbb{Z}, 1)$.

Proof. We can add $n - 1$ points to S^1 and use Lemma 3.1. \square

Definition 3.9. For $k : \mathbb{N}$ define $m_k : \text{Gon} \rightarrow \text{Gon}$ where $m_k : C_n \rightarrow C_{kn}$ adds k vertices between each of the original vertices of C_n .

With m_k we can start with a collection of pentagons and hexagons and make the collection homogeneous: by applying m_6 to the pentagons and m_5 to the hexagons we obtain a collection of 30-gons. This will be useful when we work more with the link function.

3.5 The higher inductive type \mathbb{O}

We will create our first combinatorial surface, an octahedron. In SimpCompSet_n the combinatorial data of the faces can be represented with a *Hasse diagram*, which shows the poset of inclusions in a graded manner, with a special top and bottom element. We give an octahedron in Figure 5. The names of the vertices are short for white, yellow, blue, red, green, and orange, the colors of the faces of a Rubik's cube. The octahedron is the dual of the cube, with each vertex corresponding to a face.

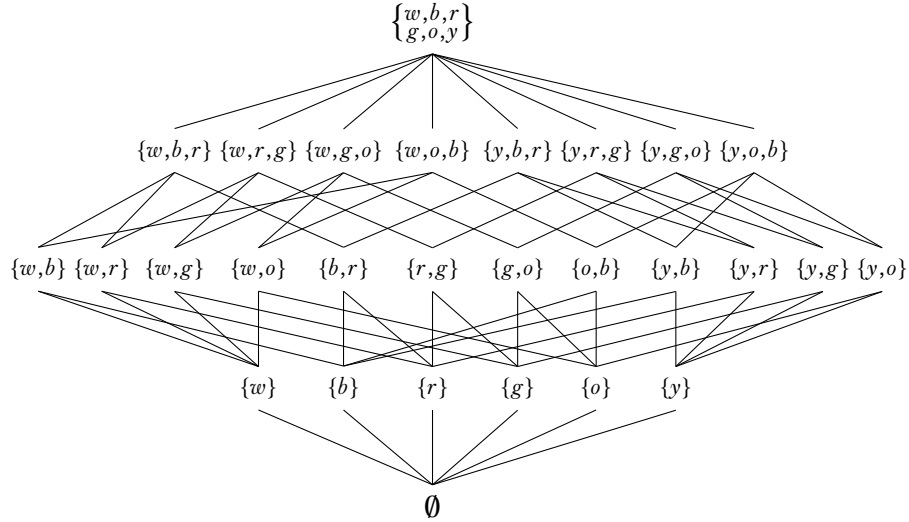


Figure 5: Hasse diagram of an octahedron O . The row of singletons is O_0 and above it are O_1 and O_2 .

Applying the map \mathcal{R} to $O_0 \rightarrow O_1 \rightarrow O$ gives the presented type $\mathbb{O}_0 \rightarrow \mathbb{O}_1 \rightarrow \mathbb{O}$.

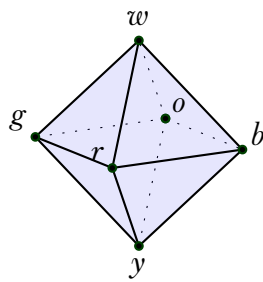


Figure 6: The marked presented type \mathbb{O} which has 6 points, 12 1-paths, 8 2-paths.

4 Bundles, connections, and curvature

We will use the dimension structure of a marked presented manifold(3.7) to construct maps by extending to each higher skeleton. We can state these definitions in the context of an arbitrary-dimensional manifold. Let $M : \text{SimpCompSet}_n$ be a combinatorial manifold and $\mathbb{M} \stackrel{\text{def}}{=} \mathcal{R}_m^{[n]}(M)$ the corresponding marked presented manifold.

[Greg 7]
All new, up
to section
4.1

Definition 4.1. A **bundle** on a higher combinatorial manifold \mathbb{M} is a type family, i.e. a term of $f_0 : \mathbb{M}_0 \rightarrow \mathcal{U}$. If the type family is given by taking the link(3.4) of a vertex then we call the bundle **the tangent bundle** of \mathbb{M} and it necessarily maps $\mathbb{M}_0 \rightarrow \text{EM}(\mathbb{Z}, 1)$.

Definition 4.2. A **connection** on a higher combinatorial manifold is an extension of a bundle f_0 from the 0-skeleton to the 1-skeleton: $f_1 : \mathbb{M}_1 \rightarrow \mathcal{U}$. A connection on the tangent bundle is **orientable** if it factors through $K(\mathbb{Z}, 2)$, and the factorization is called an **orientation of the tangent bundle**.

For a connection to exist, the bundle f_0 must extend to \mathbb{M}_1 . Given two points $x, y : \mathbb{M}_0$ and (the realization of) an edge $e : x = y$ there is an obstruction to the extension, namely that $f_0(x)$ and $f_0(y)$ must live in the same connected component of \mathcal{U} (or of $\text{EM}(\mathbb{Z}, 1)$ in the case of a tangent bundle). The entirety of f_0 can be extended if every vertex maps to the same connected component. If the bundle is an oriented tangent bundle, and if we choose a base point $m : \mathbb{M}_1$ and an orientation of $\text{link}(m)$ then transport along any loop preserves this orientation. Note that this is orientation of a *link*, not orientation of a *face* as in Definition 3.2.

Definition 4.3. The **curvature** on a bundle-with-connection $f_1 : \mathbb{M}_1 \rightarrow \mathcal{U}$ at a vertex v of a 2-face F with boundary path p_F is the automorphism $\text{tr}(p_F) : f_0v = f_0v$. An extension of f_1 to F is a **2-connection on the face F** .

For a 2-connection to exist on a face F the holonomy map $\text{tr}(p_F)$ must be in the connected component of the identity map id_{f_0v} .

Lemma 4.1. A 2-connection on the face F is equivalent to a homotopy $H_F : \text{tr}(p_F)(f_0v) \sim \text{id}_{f_0v}$ from the curvature of F at v to the identity. We will call H_F the **flatness structure on the face F** since it provides a path to the trivial holonomy.

Proof. The face F provides a path $p_F =_{\mathbb{M}} \text{refl}_v$, i.e. a filler of the boundary path. If f_1 extends to a map f_2 on F then by functoriality we have a term $f_2(p_F) = \text{refl}_{f_2v}$, i.e. a term $f_1(p_F) = \text{refl}_{f_0v}$. We then observe that transport is given by this action on paths $f_1(p_F)$. \square

4.1 The function T on \mathbb{O}

We will build up a map T out of \mathbb{O} which is meant to be like the circle bundle of a tangent bundle. And so we will begin with the intrinsic data of the link at each point: taking the link of a vertex gives us a map from vertices to polygons.

Definition 4.4. $T_0 \stackrel{\text{def}}{=} \text{link} : \mathbb{O}_0 \rightarrow \text{EM}(\mathbb{Z}, 1)$ is given by:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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 .

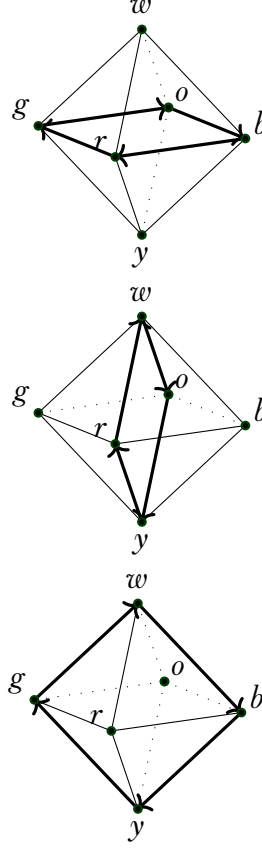


Figure 7: link for the vertices w , b and r .

To extend T_0 to a function T_1 on the 1-skeleton we have complete freedom. Defining a map by induction makes clear that the action on paths is its own structure. Two functions on the octahedron could agree on points but differ on edges. We are going to identify this 1-dimensional freedom with a connection:

Continuing the example, we will do something “tangent bundley”, imagining how T_1 changes as we slide from point to point in the embedding shown in the figures. 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 $b \mapsto y$.

Definition 4.5. Define $T_1 : \mathbb{O}_1 \rightarrow \text{EM}(\mathbb{Z}, 1)$ on just the 1-skeleton by extending T_0 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 7 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 4.6. The map $R : C_4 \rightarrow C_4$ rotates by one quarter turn, one “click”:

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

Note by univalence the equivalence R gives a loop in the universe, a term of $C_4 =_{\text{EM}(\mathbb{Z}, 1)} C_4$.

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 $T_1(wb \cdot br \cdot rw)$. Here *there is no additional freedom*.

Definition 4.7. Define $T_2 : \mathbb{O} \rightarrow \text{EM}(\mathbb{Z}, 1)$ by extending T_1 to the faces as follows:

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

- $T_2(yrb) = H_R$
- $T_2(ygr) = H_R$
- $T_2(yog) = H_R$
- $T_2(ybo) = H_R$

where $H_R : R = \text{refl}_{C_4}$ is the obvious homotopy given by composition with R^{-1} . Passing through univalence we get a 2-path between R and refl in the loop space $C_4 =_{\text{EM}(\mathbb{Z}, 1)} C_4$.

4.2 Total holonomy

Definition 4.8. The **triangular lasso** $L_n : \text{Type with tail of length } n$ (Figure 8) is a 1-type given by:

- a set of tail vertices p_1, \dots, p_n
- triangle vertices v_1, v_2, v_3
- tail edges $e_i : p_i =_L p_{i-1}, i = 1, \dots, n-1$
- edge $e_n : p_n =_L v_1$
- triangle edges $e_{ij} : v_i =_L v_j$

The loop ℓ_L determined by the lasso is the concatenation along the tail towards the triangle, then around the triangle, then backward along the tail:

$$e_1 \cdots e_n \cdot e_{12} \cdot e_{23} \cdot e_{31} \cdot e_n^{-1} \cdots e_1^{-1}.$$

Define the special case $n = 0$ to have an empty tail with $p_1 \stackrel{\text{def}}{=} v_1$ and $e_1 \stackrel{\text{def}}{=} \text{refl}_{v_1}$, so includes only the triangle.

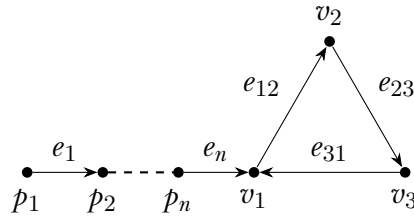


Figure 8: The lasso L_n , a triangle with a tail, for probing manifolds.

The purpose of this type is to probe combinatorial manifolds in an organized fashion, by mapping L into the type \mathbb{M} .

Definition 4.9. Let M be a combinatorial 2-manifold with $k = \#M_2$ 2-faces, and \mathbb{M} its realization as a marked presented type. A **face enumerator of maximum length n** for \mathbb{M} is a set of k maps $\pi_1, \dots, \pi_k : L_n \rightarrow \mathbb{M}$ such that $\pi_i(p_1) = m$ for all i , where $m : \mathbb{M}$ is a chosen basepoint. We further require that each edge in \mathbb{M} is visited an even number of times, an equal number of times in each direction. This set of data is equivalent to specifying a base point $m : \mathbb{M}$, a base point f_i on the boundary of each face, fixed paths $m =_{\mathbb{M}} f_i$, and a uniform orientation for all faces (all clockwise or counterclockwise). It is convenient to fix one value of n for all the lassos, even if some lassos only need a shorter tail (in which case they can repeat some values and use refl for some of the tail).

Given a face enumerator we can form the compositions $T \circ \ell_{L,i}$ with the associated loop to obtain transport isomorphisms $T \circ \ell_{L,i} : Tm = Tm$. We can concatenate all the loops $\ell_{L,1} \cdots \ell_{L,k}$ and obtain a *total holonomy* $T \circ (\ell_{L,1} \cdots \ell_{L,k}) : Tm = Tm$.

Lemma 4.2. The total holonomy of T_1 on \mathbb{O} (Definition 4.6) is R^8 which is two full rotations of C_4 .

Proposition 4.1. For a marked presented manifold $\mathbb{M} = \mathcal{R}_m^{[n]}(M)$ the total holonomy does not depend on the choices of the face enumerator.

[Greg 8]
New proposition, incomplete

Proof. We will prove that changing the image of a point in the tail to an adjacent vertex does not affect the result. We will then prove that moving the master basepoint m to an adjacent vertex does not affect the result. The full result follows by concatenating such proofs. Figure 9 shows the image in \mathbb{M} of two functions f, g on a segment of the tail. If f and g agree on the rest of the lasso, how is total holonomy affected? We will traverse this segment twice: left to right, then later from right to left. When moving to the right we must compare $g(e_i) \cdot g(e_{i+1})$ to $f(e_i) \cdot f(e_{i+1})$. There is a filler $H : f(e_i) \cdot f(e_{i+1}) = g(e_i) \cdot g(e_{i+1})$ and so if the holonomy around the lasso $f(L)$ is

$$f(e_1) \cdots f(e_i) \cdot f(e_{i+1}) \cdots f(e_{i+1})^{-1} \cdot f(e_i)^{-1} \cdots f(e_1)^{-1}$$

then there is a path

$$f(e_1) \cdots H \cdots H^{-1} \cdots f(e_1)^{-1}$$

from $f(L)$ to $g(L)$. □

[Greg 9]
Lost the plot a bit. This isn't quite a conjugation.

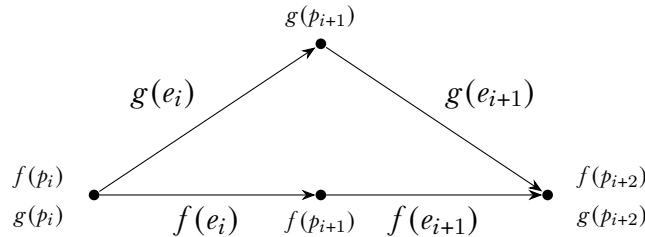


Figure 9: Two images of a part of the lasso tail.

4.3 Existence of connections

How confident can we be that we can always define a connection on an arbitrary combinatorial manifold? Two things make the octahedron example special: the link is a 4-gon at every vertex, and every edge extends to a symmetry of the entire octahedron, embedded in 3-dimensional space. This imposed a coherence on the interactions of all the choices we made for the connection, which we can worry may not exist for more complex combinatorial data.

We know as a fact outside of HoTT that any combinatorial surface that has been realized as a triangulated surface embedded in 3-dimensional euclidean space can inherit the parallel transport entailed in the embedding. We could then approximate that data to arbitrary precision with enough subdivision of the fibers of T .

What would a proof inside of HoTT look like? We will leave this as an open question.

5 Vector fields

We will again use the dimension structure of a marked presented manifold (3.7) to construct vector fields on each skeleton. Let $M : \text{SimpCompSet}_n$ be a combinatorial manifold and $\mathbb{M} \stackrel{\text{def}}{=} \mathcal{R}_m^{[n]}(M)$ the corresponding marked presented manifold.

[Greg 10]
All new section

Definition 5.1. A **nonvanishing flow** on a higher combinatorial manifold \mathbb{M} is a section of the tangent bundle over the 0-skeleton, i.e. a term of $X_0 : \prod_{x:\mathbb{M}_0} Tx$.

Definition 5.2. A **nonvanishing vector field** on \mathbb{M} is an extension X of X_0 from the 0-skeleton to the 1-skeleton: $X : \prod_{x:\mathbb{M}_1} Tx$.

An extension of X to the full 2-skeleton of \mathbb{M} would be a trivialization of the tangent bundle, which we do not stipulate. But we do not lose any classical generality by assuming we have such a section/trivialization on the 1-skeleton. This corresponds to the fact that the zeros of a vector field can be perturbed to be isolated, and to live inside the faces of a triangulation.

On 1-paths $p : x =_{\mathbb{M}_1} y$, X assigns a choice of path over $\pi : \text{tr}(p)(x) =_{T_y} y$, which can also be thought of as a proof of pointedness of the transport map $\text{tr}(p)$. All told, given a loop $\ell : m =_{\mathbb{M}} m$ around a single face, we have the following constructions:

1. $\text{tr}(\ell) : Tm = Tm$, the holonomy around ℓ .
2. $\flat(\ell) : \text{tr}(\ell) =_{Tm=Tm} \text{id}_{Tm}$, the flatness structure.
3. $X(\ell) : \text{tr}(\ell)(Xm) =_{Tm} Xm$, the path over ℓ selected by X , i.e. a pointing of $\text{tr}(\ell)$.

5.1 Index of a vector field: subtracting curvature

5.2 Equality of total index and total curvature

5.3 Identification with Euler characteristic

Bibliography

- [1] M. Shulman, “Brouwer’s fixed-point theorem in real-cohesive homotopy type theory,” 2017.
- [2] S. Talbott, *The Future Does Not Compute: Transcending the Machines in Our Midst*. O’Reilly & Associates, 1995. [Online]. Available: <https://books.google.com/books?id=KcXaAAAAMAAJ>
- [3] D. Christensen, “A characterization of univalent fibrations,” <https://jdc.math.uwo.ca/papers/univalence-ct2015.pdf>, 2015, accessed: 2024-11-01.
- [4] H. Hopf, “Differential geometry in the large: Seminar lectures, new york university, 1946 and stanford university, 1956,” 1983. [Online]. Available: <https://api.semanticscholar.org/CorpusID:117042538>
- [5] T. Needham, *Visual Differential Geometry and Forms: A Mathematical Drama in Five Acts*. Princeton University Press, 2021. [Online]. Available: <https://books.google.com/books?id=Mc0QEAAAQBAJ>
- [6] K. Crane, F. de Goes, M. Desbrun, and P. Schröder, “Digital geometry processing with discrete exterior calculus,” in *ACM SIGGRAPH 2013 courses*, ser. SIGGRAPH ’13. New York, NY, USA: ACM, 2013. [Online]. Available: <https://www.cs.cmu.edu/~kmc Crane/Projects/DDG/>
- [7] K. Crane, “Discrete connections for geometry processing,” Master’s thesis, California Institute of Technology, 2010. [Online]. Available: <http://resolver.caltech.edu/CaltechTHESIS:05282010-102307125>
- [8] L. Scoccola, “Nilpotent types and fracture squares in homotopy type theory,” *Mathematical Structures in Computer Science*, vol. 30, no. 5, p. 511–544, May 2020. [Online]. Available: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S0960129520000146>
- [9] J. H. C. Whitehead, “On C^1 -complexes,” *Annals of Mathematics*, pp. 809–824, 1940.
- [10] R. C. Kirby and L. C. Siebenmann, *Foundational essays on topological manifolds, smoothings, and triangulations*, ser. Annals of Mathematics Studies. Princeton University Press, 1977, no. 88, with notes by John Milnor and Michael Atiyah. MR:0645390. Zbl:0361.57004.
- [11] J. von Raumer, “Formalization of non-abelian topology for homotopy type theory,” Master’s thesis, Carnegie Mellon University, 2015. [Online]. Available: <https://github.com/javra/msc-thesis>
- [12] Univalent Foundations Program, *Homotopy Type Theory: Univalent Foundations of Mathematics*. Institute for Advanced Study: <https://homotopytypetheory.org/book>, 2013.