



The
University
Of
Sheffield.

Department
Of
Mechanical
Engineering

MEng Mechanical Engineering

Identifying Dynamic Systems with Probabilistic Numerics

Harvey WALTON

December 2023

Supervisor: Dr Tim Rogers

Report submitted to the University of Sheffield in partial
fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of
Engineering

Contents

1	Background and understanding of the problem	1
1.1	1
2	Aims and Objectives	1
3	Work completed to date	1
4	Plan for future work	1

1 Background and understanding of the problem

Problems in engineering are usually described using a framework of continuous mathematical functions. This means that their output has no jumps or gaps in values, and they can be evaluated using input values that are on a sliding scale of a continuous input domain. For example, time in the real world is on a continuous sliding scale, which means that any interval in time can always be subdivided into a smaller interval. Continuous functions in turn can often be manipulated analytically using mathematics. For example, if the velocity of a particle is given as a continuous function of time, a continuous acceleration function can be derived from the velocity analytically through a mathematical process called differentiation.

However, there are many situations where this analytical approach is unsuitable, for either of two reasons. The first reason is that the

However, to collect data for real world events, it must be sampled or else the amount of information needed to represent the event, as well as the amount of computing power to perform analysis on the event, would tend to infinity. Similarly, many problems in the real world are too complex to be solved analytically and so numerical methods are used to approximate the solution to these problems. However, what if there was a better approach? What if instead of resorting to numerical methods to solve the problem discretely, the original continuous data could be reconstructed in "closed form".

However, these methods are not perfect, and introduce error into the solutions. This error can be quantified, and is often done so using error bounds

However, instead, what if the error was quantified using a probability distribution

Instead, what if we use uncertainty define a pdf of result using (mean and standard deviation) in this case, it may be easier to quantify concepts like risk and improve automation of decision making within engineering

1.1

2 Aims and Objectives

Your text goes here.

3 Work completed to date

Your text goes here. [1]

4 Plan for future work

Your text goes here.

References

- [1] J. Quinero-Candela and C. Rasmussen. “A Unifying View of Sparse Approximate Gaussian Process Regression”. In: *Journal of Machine Learning Research* 6 (2005).