

Advancing Layer Surface Mesh Generation

by

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The following individuals certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies for acceptance, the thesis entitled:

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Abstract

Use of unstructured meshes in the simulation of a computational field to solve for a real world problem is ubiquitous. Specially, solving fluid flow over bodies like an airplane or a turbine computationally requires a well discretized domain, or a mesh around the surfaces of these bodies. In Computational Fluid Dynamic (CFD) simulations over these surfaces, the flow at the viscous-boundary layer of the surface is very important as the gradients in the normal direction of the flow are sharp and are orders of magnitude higher than the gradients in the tangential direction of the flow. Hence, resolving the flow field in the boundary layer is vital for accurate simulation results.

A plethora of 3D boundary layer mesh generation techniques start off from a discretization of the surface. A majority of these techniques either use surface inflation or iterative point placement normal to the surface to generate the advancing layer 3D mesh. Generating boundary layer meshes in 3D depends on the quality of the underlying surface discretization. We introduce a technique to generate advancing layer surface meshes which would improve the mesh generation pipeline for 3D mesh generation. The technique takes an input triangulation of the surface, which is fairly easy to get, even for complex geometries. Surface segments are identified and these segments are meshed independently using an advancing-layer methodology. For each surface segment, a mesh is generated by advancing layers from the identified boundaries to the surface interior while deforming the existing triangulation. As the mesh-generation technique introduced here produces a closed-mesh, we get a valid mesh at each iteration of layer advancement.

The method introduced to generate advancing layer meshes produces semi-structured quad-dominant meshes with the ability to have local control over the aspect ratio of mesh elements at the boundary curves of the surface. Semi-structured 2D anisotropic meshes in the boundary layer regions have been shown to have superior fluid flow simulation results. However, the discretization of the surfaces poses challenges in replicating the same for volume meshes. Point placement in layers, local reconnection, front recovery, front collision handling and smoothing techniques used in the study help produce a valid surface mesh at each step of mesh generation. We demonstrate the ability of the meshing algorithm to tackle fairly complex geometries and coarse initial surface discretization.

Lay Summary

Discretization of geometries using a non-regular arrangement of mesh elements, called unstructured mesh generation is used widely for simulating flow over various objects in industry and government. The region near the surfaces of objects is particularly important during the simulation process because of the extreme non-linearity in the flow characteristics near the boundaries of objects. Hence, generating a well-discretized boundary layer mesh is key to superior flow simulation results. 3D mesh generation methodologies use a surface mesh as the starting point. Hence, the surface mesh plays an important role in the overall fluid flow simulation process.

A method to generate an advancing layer surface mesh is introduced in this paper. This method could be used to generate advancing-layer quad-dominant surface meshes with the required aspect ratio at sharp corners of the surface. 3D mesh generation procedures could use this mesh to produce advancing layer mesh or any other mesh. Example meshes are generated and shown to handle complex geometries.

Preface

All the work presented in this thesis is an intellectual product of a close working relationship between Jasmeet Singh and Dr. Carl Ollivier-Gooch. The implementation of the methods, the data analysis, and the manuscript preparations were done by Jasmeet Singh with invaluable guidance from Carl Ollivier-Gooch throughout the process.

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Glossary

This glossary uses the handy `acroynm` package to automatically maintain the glossary. It uses the package's `printonlyused` option to include only those acronyms explicitly referenced in the \LaTeX source. To change how the acronyms are rendered, change the `\acsfont` definition in `diss.tex`.

Acknowledgments

I would like to acknowledge and thank all the people who were a part of my graduate degree at UBC. These include the professors who taught me in lectures, my classmates, my labmates, people in the broader graduate community with whom I met at various academic and social events, my friends and family.

I would like to thank my supervisor, Dr. Carl Ollivier-Gooch.

Thesis Outline

1. Introduction

- Introduction to Meshing
- Introduction to unstructured meshing and its importance
- Boundary Layer Phenomenon and its importance
- Meshes that deal with such scenarios.
- 2D previous works
- 3D previous works
- Surface Mesh generation methods
 - Parametric Mapping
 - Direct 3D methods

2.

Chapter 1

Introduction

If I have seen farther it is by standing on the shoulders of Giants. — Sir Isaac Newton
(1855)

**First paragraph on CFD in laptop

**Second paragraph on what is mesh in laptop

The process of discretization of the domain to form the basis of solving the Navier-Stokes equations, or any other differential equation numerically is called mesh generation. Save a few exotic methods, almost all of the techniques in CFD require a mesh to solve the flow on. Traditionally, mesh generation was a very manual process, where engineers used to place the mesh points and cells by hand. Such heuristic approach to mesh generation gave them a lot of freedom in discretizing the domain. Cells could be aligned to the boundaries of objects. The quality of the cells, which was taken as some measure of the interior angle of the cells, was almost always chosen to be good. The benefits of this method were quite evident. However, there were some major drawbacks. The process of mesh generation was incredibly slow. Engineers would spend hours, sometime days to create the mesh for a given geometry. Also, mesh adaptation with solution was almost non-existent because that would have made the process even slower.

Definition 1 A mesh M is a geometrical discretization of a domain Ω that consists of (a) a collection of mesh entities M_i of controlled size and distribution and (b) topological relationships or adjacencies forming the graph of the mesh. The mesh M covers Ω without neither overlap nor hole.

The evolution of mesh generation can be correlated to the evolution of compute power available to the boffins. With the advent of third generation computers (1964-1971) carrying integrated circuits, engineers were able to automate some of the manual processes in mesh generation. Meshes consisting of a template that repeats itself could be generated. These meshes were called structured meshes as their adjacencies or relationships could be known implicitly. The connectivity pattern repeats in such a mesh. Figure 1.1 shows such a mesh for NACA 0012 airfoil.

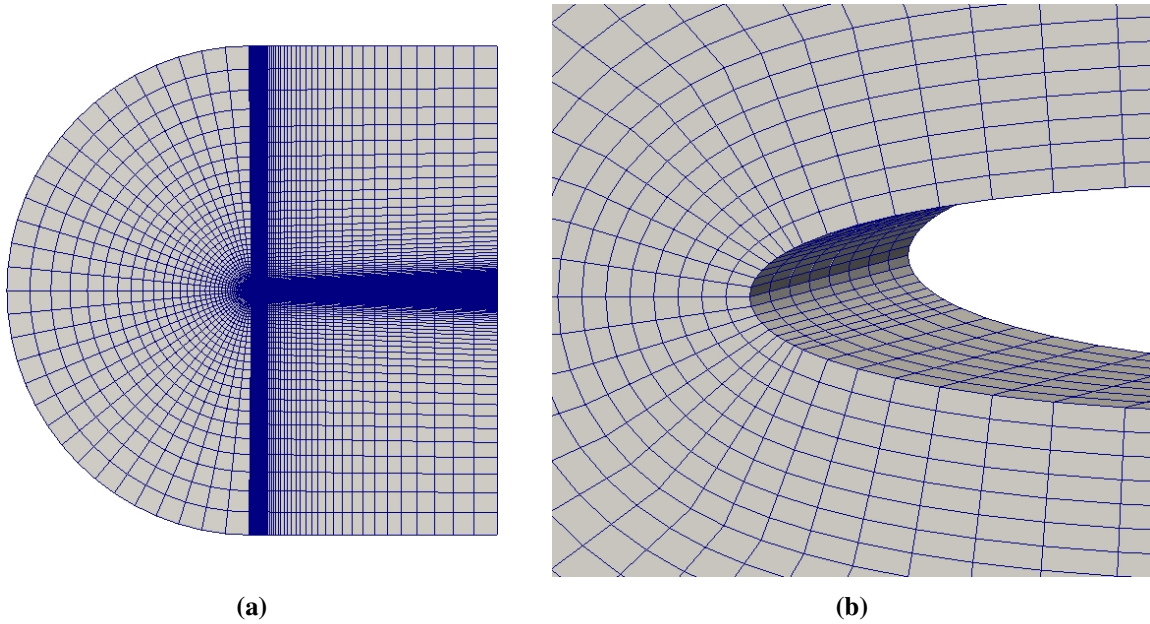


Figure 1.1: Block Structured Mesh of NACA 0012 airfoil. (a) Overall Mesh (b) Close Up Image of the Mesh at the leading edge of the airfoil [2].

Structured meshes were attractive to engineers because of their low memory usage because of repeated topology. Also, given simple domains to mesh, these meshes were optimal for minimizing the errors in CFD, resulting in faster simulations [1].

1.1 Boundary Layer Phenomenon

1.2 Anisotropic Meshing

1.3 Objective and Outline

Bibliography

- [1] E. F. D’Azevedo and R. B. Simpson. On optimal triangular meshes for minimizing the gradient error. *Numerische Mathematik*, 59(1):321–348, 1991. → page 3
- [2] T. B. Iorian Hindenlang and C.-D. Munz. Block structured mesh, 2014. URL https://www.hopr-project.org/index.php/Block-Structured_Meshes.

Appendix A

Supporting Materials

This would be any supporting material not central to the dissertation. For example:

- additional details of methodology and/or data;
- diagrams of specialized equipment developed.;
- copies of questionnaires and survey instruments.