

We know that the standard way to calculate metric in stereographic projection is annoyingly long exercise.

Consider another way to do it.

We use the following fact:

If function f vanishes at the given point, then derivative of function fg at this point is equal to $f'(x_0)g(x_0)$.

This trivial statement very often facilitates calculations.

Let S^2 be a sphere of radius $x^2 + y^2 + z^2 = 1$ with stereographic coordinates u, v

$$\begin{cases} u = \frac{2x}{1-z} \\ v = \frac{2y}{1-z} \end{cases}, \quad \begin{cases} x = \frac{2u}{1+u^2+v^2} \\ y = \frac{2v}{1+u^2+v^2} \\ z = \frac{u^2+v^2-1}{1+u^2+v^2} \end{cases}$$

To calculate metric in stereographic coordinates we have to calculate:

$$(dx^2 + dy^2 + dz^2)_{x=x(u,v), y=y(u,v), z=z(u,v)}$$

If you did these calculations you remember that straightforward calculations are not difficult, but annoying, moreover the final answer appears something as a “rabbit of the hat”

We consider here much more illuminating calculations.

First of all calculate (1c) at the point $u = v = 0$ ($x = y = 0, z = -1$). We see that due to the vanishing of functions u and v at this point we have:

$$(dx^2 + dy^2 + dz^2)_{x=0, y=0, z=-1} = d\left(\frac{2u}{1+u^2+v^2}\right)_{u=v=0}^2 + d\left(\frac{2v}{1+u^2+v^2}\right)_{u=v=0}^2 + d\left(\frac{u^2+v^2-1}{1+u^2+v^2}\right)_{u=v=0}^2 = 4du^2 + 4dv^2.$$

Now use the fact that metric on the sphere is invariant with respect to rotations.

Metric of sphere in stereographic coordinates is invariant with respect to rotations—i.e. rotations of sphere around axis OZ . To calculate metric at arbitrary point of the plane (u, v) we use the invariance of the metric with respect to rotations around other axis. Let $\mathbf{pt} = -(u_0, 0)$ be an arbitrary point of the line $(u, 0)$. Consider the rotation of the sphere around axis OY : $(x, y, z) \rightarrow (\tilde{x}, y, \tilde{z})$ which transforms the point \mathbf{pt} to the origin (respectively the point $(x_0, 0, z_0)$) corresponding to the point \mathbf{pt} to the point $(\tilde{x}, \tilde{y}, \tilde{z}) = (0, 0, -1)$.

$$\tilde{u} = \frac{\tilde{x}}{1-\tilde{z}} = \frac{x \cos \varphi_0 + z \sin \varphi_0}{1 - (-x \sin \varphi_0 + z \cos \varphi_0)} = \frac{\frac{2u}{1+u^2} \cos \varphi_0 + \frac{u^2-1}{u^2+1} \sin \varphi_0}{1 - \left(-\frac{2u}{1+u^2} \sin \varphi_0 + \frac{u^2-1}{u^2+1} \cos \varphi_0\right)},$$

$$\tilde{v} = \frac{y}{1 - \tilde{z}} = \frac{y}{1 - (-x \sin \varphi_0 + z \cos \varphi_0)} = \frac{\frac{2v}{1+u^2}}{1 - \left(-\frac{2u}{1+u^2} \sin \varphi_0 + \frac{u^2-1}{u^2+1} \cos \varphi_0\right)},$$

where angle φ_0 is chosen such that $\tilde{x} = 0, \tilde{z} = -1$:

$$\operatorname{ctg} \varphi_0 = \frac{1 - u_0^2}{2u_0}$$

Now one can easily calculate differentials $d\tilde{u}$ and $d\tilde{v}$ at the origin—i.e. differentials du, dv at the point **pt**: Since for the point **pt** $x = 0, u = 0$, and $\tilde{z} = -1, \tilde{x} = 0$ we can very quickly calculate $d\tilde{v}$ at given point:

$$d\tilde{v}|_{(u,v)=(u_0,0)} = d \left(\frac{\frac{2v}{1+u^2}}{1 - \left(-\frac{2u}{1+u^2} \sin \varphi_0 + \frac{u^2-1}{u^2+1} \cos \varphi_0\right)} \right) = \frac{d \left(\frac{2v}{1+u^2} \right)}{2} \Big|_{v=0} = \frac{dv}{1+u^2},$$

and little bit more difficult (since we need to calculate $\sin \varphi$) but still quick we can calculate the differential $d\tilde{u}$ (at the given point):

$$\begin{aligned} d\tilde{u}|_{(u,v)=(u_0,v)} &= d \left(\frac{\frac{2u}{1+u^2} \cos \varphi_0 + \frac{u^2-1}{u^2+1} \sin \varphi_0}{1 - \left(-\frac{2u}{1+u^2} \sin \varphi_0 + \frac{u^2-1}{u^2+1} \cos \varphi_0\right)} \right) = \\ &= \frac{\overbrace{d(2u \cos \varphi_0 + (u^2 + 1) \sin \varphi_0)}^{\text{vanishes at } u = u_0}}{2(1+u^2)} = \frac{d \left(\overbrace{\left(2u \left(\frac{1-u_0^2}{2u_0} \right) + (u^2 - 1) \right) \sin \varphi_0}^{\text{vanishes at } u = u_0} \right)}{2(1+u^2)} = \\ &= \frac{d \left(\overbrace{\left(2u \left(\frac{1-u_0^2}{2u_0} \right) + (u^2 + 1) \right) \sin \varphi_0}^{\text{vanishes at } u = u_0} \right)}{2(1+u^2)} = \\ &= \frac{\sin \varphi_0 du}{(1+u^2)^2} \left(\frac{1-u^2}{2u} + u \right) \Big|_{u=u_0} = \frac{du}{1+u^2} \Big|_{u=u_0} \end{aligned}$$

The result of calculation: we see that at the origin metric is equal to $4du^2 + 4dv^2$. It follows from the previous calculations that at the point **pt**: $(u, v) = (u_0, v)$

$$G = 4(d\tilde{u})^2 + 4d\tilde{v}^2 = \frac{4du^2 + 4dv^2}{(1+u^2)^2}.$$

Metric is invariant with rotation (corresponding to rotation along axis OZ). Hence we come to the answer:

$$G = \frac{4du^2 + 4dv^2}{(1+u^2+v^2)^2}.$$

This answer can be easily generalised for n -dimensional sphere: