

# ENGR 4421: Robotics II

ROS Tutorial: URDF (Unified Robot Description Format)

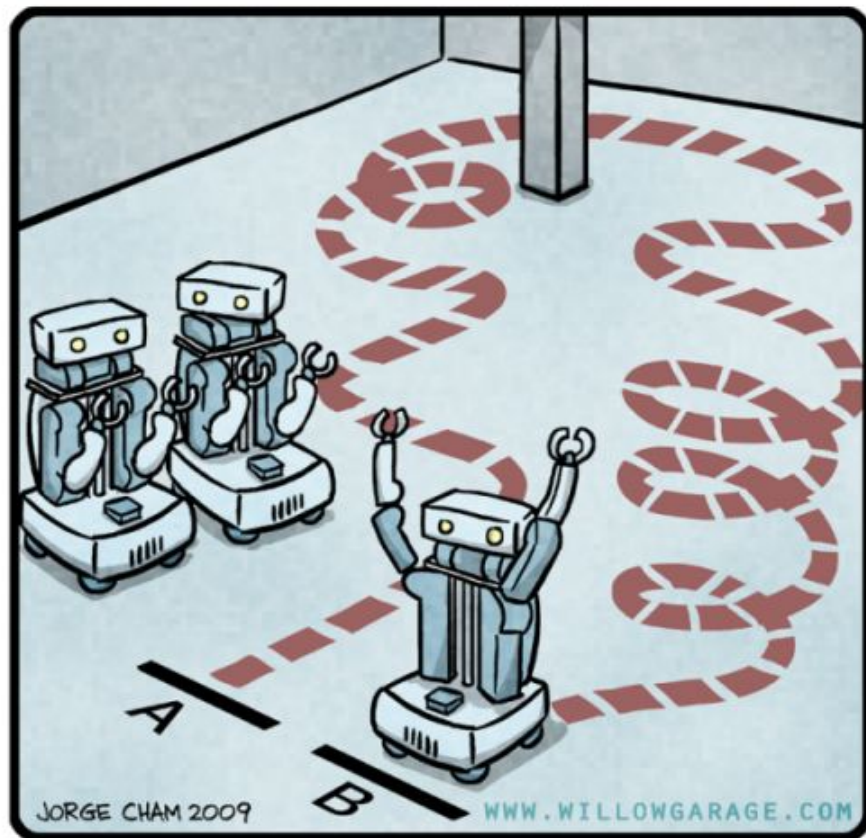
03/02/2023



# Outline

- Concepts
- Link
- Joint
- Walk-through

# R.O.B.O.T. Comics

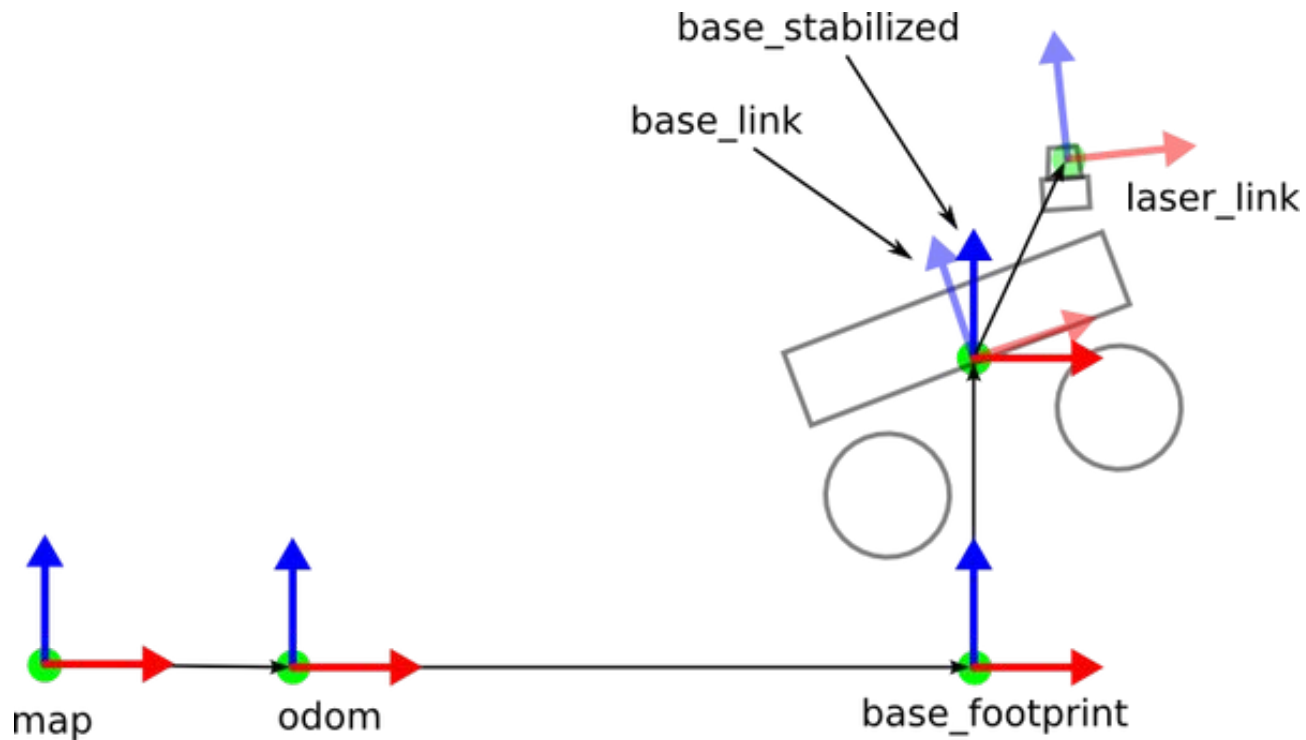


JORGE CHAM 2009

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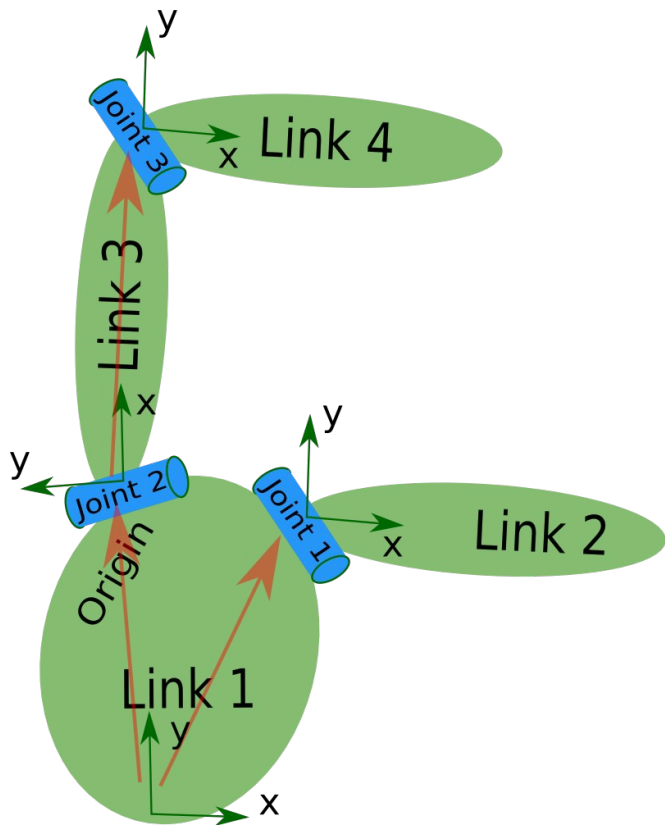
"HIS PATH-PLANNING MAY BE  
SUB-OPTIMAL, BUT IT'S GOT FLAIR."

# Transforms



We can use reference frames to represent spatial relationships between robotic components. In a navigation task, such relationships will be used to localize the robot in a map.

# URDF Concepts



- The Unified Robot Description Format (URDF) is an XML specification to describe a robot, which covers
  - Kinematic and dynamic description of the robot
  - Visual representation of the robot
  - Collision model of the robot
- The description of a robot consists of a set of link elements, and a set of joint elements connecting the links together.
- Limitations: cannot describe parallel robots; cannot deal with flexible/transformable links (rigid body only).
- File structure:

```
<robot name="robot_name">
  <link> ... </link>
  <link> ... </link>
  <link> ... </link>

  <joint> .... </joint>
  <joint> .... </joint>
  <joint> .... </joint>
</robot>
```

# URDF Helpful Resources

- Tutorial page: <https://docs.ros.org/en/humble/Tutorials/Intermediate/URDF/URDF-Main.html>
- Tutorial Package: [https://github.com/ros/urdf\\_tutorial/tree/ros2](https://github.com/ros/urdf_tutorial/tree/ros2)
- Concepts explain/API: <http://wiki.ros.org/urdf/XML>
- Example Repository: <https://github.com/linzhangUCA/homeplater>

# Build A Robot Description Package from Scratch

- Create workspace:

```
mkdir -p ~/<workspace_name>/src
```

- Create a package:

```
cd ~/<workspace_name>/src  
ros2 pkg create --build-type ament_python <package_name>
```

- Create data directories:

```
cd <package_name>  
mkdir launch/ urdf/ rviz/
```

- Edit package.xml:

```
code package.xml # make sure vscode is available
```

- Edit setup.py:

```
code setup.py
```

- Edit launch file:

```
code launch/<launch_filename>.launch.py
```

- Edit URDF file:

```
code urdf/<urdf_filename>.urdf
```

# package.xml

```
<?xml version="1.0"?>
<?xml-model href="http://download.ros.org/schema/package_format3.xsd" schematypens="http://www.w3.org/2001/XMLSchema"?>
<package format="3">
  <name>package_name</name>
  <version>0.0.0</version>
  <description>TODO</description>
  <maintainer email="todo@todo">TODO</maintainer>
  <license>TODO</license>

  <exec_depend>joint_state_publisher</exec_depend>
  <exec_depend>joint_state_publisher_gui</exec_depend>
  <exec_depend>robot_state_publisher</exec_depend>
  <exec_depend>rviz2</exec_depend>
  <exec_depend>xacro</exec_depend>

  <test_depend>ament_copyright</test_depend>
  <test_depend>ament_flake8</test_depend>
  <test_depend>ament_pep257</test_depend>
  <test_depend>python3-pytest</test_depend>

  <export>
    <build_type>ament_python</build_type>
  </export>
</package>
```

CHANGE package\_name (line 4) TO ACTUAL PACKAGE NAME



# setup.py

```
import os
from glob import glob
from setuptools import setup

package_name = '<package_name>' # CHANGE <package_name> TO ACTUAL PACKAGE NAME

setup(
    name=package_name,
    version='0.0.0',
    packages=[package_name],
    data_files=[
        ('share/ament_index/resource_index/packages',
         ['resource/' + package_name]),
        ('share/' + package_name, ['package.xml']),
        (os.path.join('share', package_name, 'launch'), glob(os.path.join('launch', '*'))),
        (os.path.join('share', package_name, 'urdf'), glob(os.path.join('urdf', '*'))),
        (os.path.join('share', package_name, 'rviz'), glob(os.path.join('rviz', '*'))),
    ],
    install_requires=['setuptools'],
    zip_safe=True,
    maintainer='TODO',
    maintainer_email='todo@todo',
    description='TODO',
    license='TODO',
    tests_require=['pytest'],
    entry_points={
        'console_scripts': [
        ],
    },
)
```

# **<launch\_filename>.launch.py**

- Copy the contents in:

[https://raw.githubusercontent.com/linzhangUCA/homeplater/visual/hpr\\_description/launch/view\\_homeplater.launch.py](https://raw.githubusercontent.com/linzhangUCA/homeplater/visual/hpr_description/launch/view_homeplater.launch.py) to  
launch/<launch\_filename>.launch.py

- Change line 13, 14 according to your own configurations:

# Install Dependencies with `rosdep`

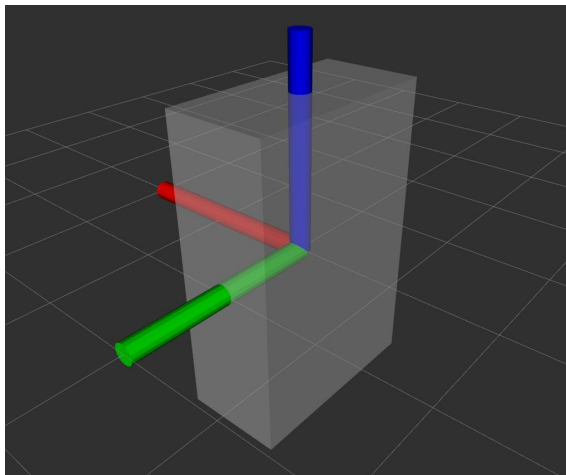
```
sudo rosdep init
```

```
rosdep update
```

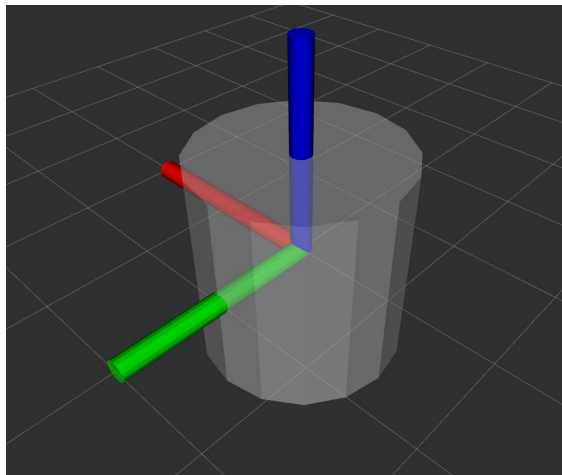
```
cd ~/<workspace_name>/
```

```
rosdep install --from-paths src -y --ignore-src
```

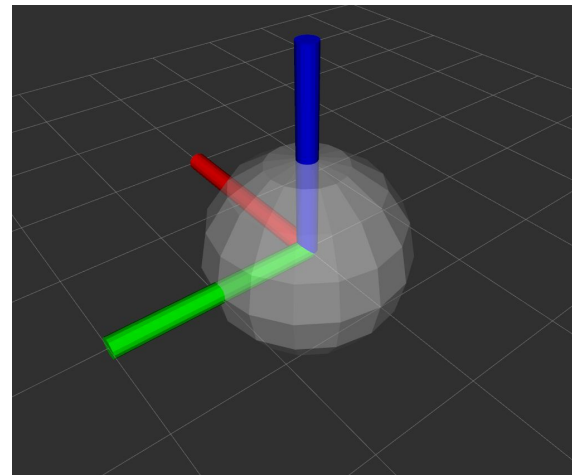
# URDF: Link



```
<box size="1 2 3"/>
```



```
<cylinder radius="1" length="2"/>
```



```
<sphere radius="1"/>
```

# URDF: base\_link

```
<?xml version="1.0"?>
<robot name="homeplater">
  <link name="base_link">
    <visual>
      <geometry>
        <box size="0.16 0.16 0.005"/>
      </geometry>
    </visual>
  </link>
</robot>
```

# LAUNCH RVIZ

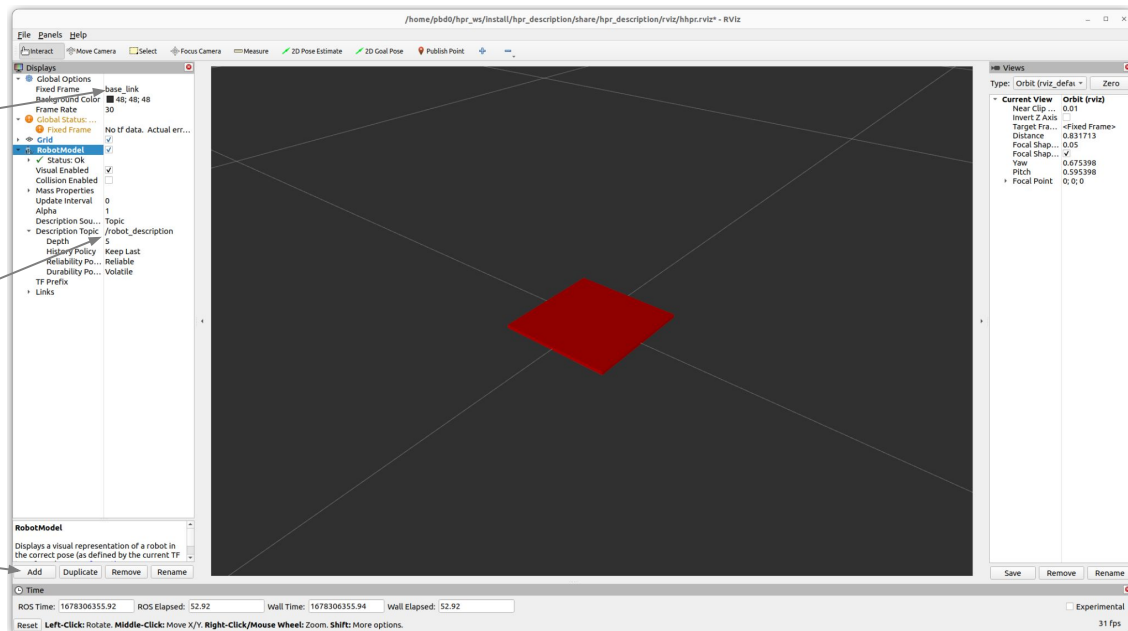
You'll want to perform this step every time you add new stuff in the urdf file.

```
cd ~/<workspace_name>/  
colcon build  
source install/local_setup.bash  
ros2 launch <package_name> <launch_filename>.launch.py # you can execute this anywhere
```

3.Type base\_link in  
Fixed Frame

2.Select  
/robot\_description  
in Description Topic

1.Add RobotModel1



# URDF: joint

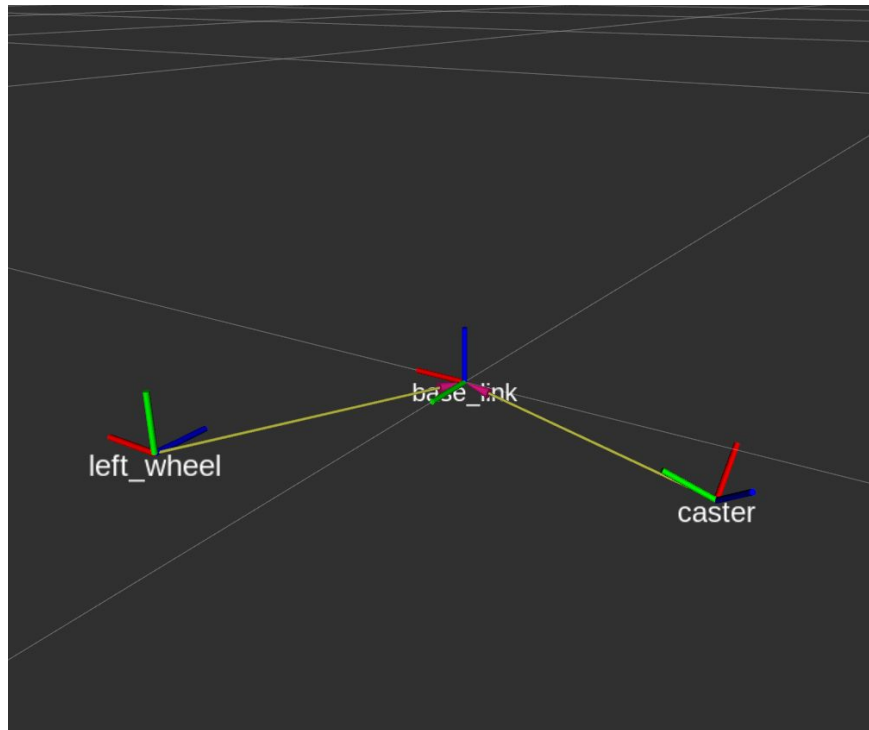
```
<?xml version="1.0"?>
<robot name="homeplater">
  ...

  <joint name="caster joint" type="fixed">
    <parent link="base_link"/>
    <child link="caster"/>
    <origin xyz="-0.092 0 -0.0185" rpy="0.707 -0.707 -1.571"/>
  </joint>

  <link name="caster">
  </link>

  <joint name="left_wheel_joint" type="continuous">
    <parent link="base_link"/>
    <child link="left_wheel"/>
    <origin xyz="0.048 0.095 0" rpy="1.571 0 0"/>
    <axis xyz="0 0 1" />
  </joint>

  <link name="left_wheel">
  </link>
</robot>
```



# URDF: Color

```
<?xml version="1.0"?>
<robot name="homeplater">

  <material name="purple">
    <color rgba="0.3098 0.1765 0.4980 1" />
  </material>

  <link name="base_link">
    <visual>
      <geometry>
        <box size="0.16 0.16 0.005"/>
      </geometry>
      <material name="purple"/>
    </visual>
  </link>

</robot>
```



# URDF: An Example

- A full example can be find here:

[https://github.com/linzhangUCA/homeplater/blob/visual/hpr\\_description/urdf/homeplater.urdf](https://github.com/linzhangUCA/homeplater/blob/visual/hpr_description/urdf/homeplater.urdf)

# Save rviz config

1. Check the `<rviz_filename>` at [line 15](#), in `launch/<launch_filename>.launch.py`
2. When everything is ready (RobotModel and TF added, Fixed Frame set to `/base_link`, the location and color of all the links are correct). Click “File -> Save Config As”. Then, save the config file to [~/<workspace\\_name>/src/<package\\_name>/rviz/<rviz\\_filename>.rviz](#)
3. Next time, `ros2 launch <package_name> <launch_filename>.launch.py` should bring up rviz with the saved configuration.