



Embedded Systems with Drones

The State Estimator and the Extended Kalman Filter

Project-based Learning Center | ETH Zurich

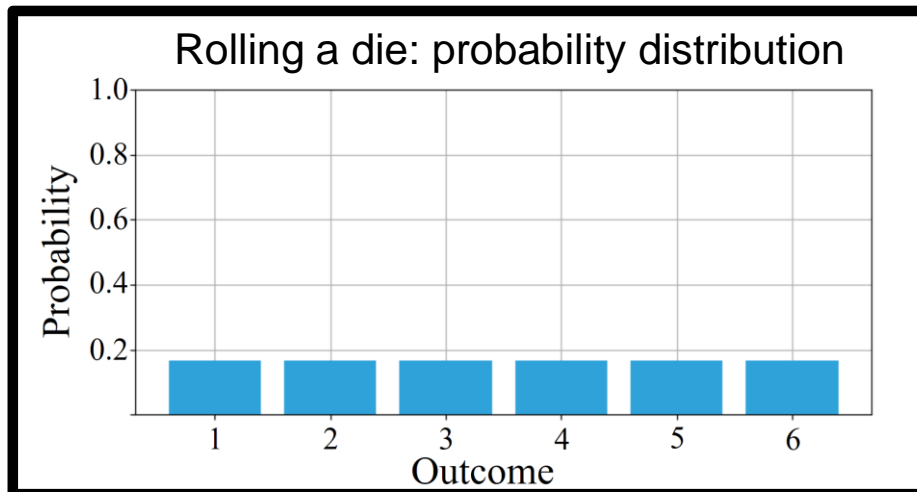
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Basic statistics knowledge

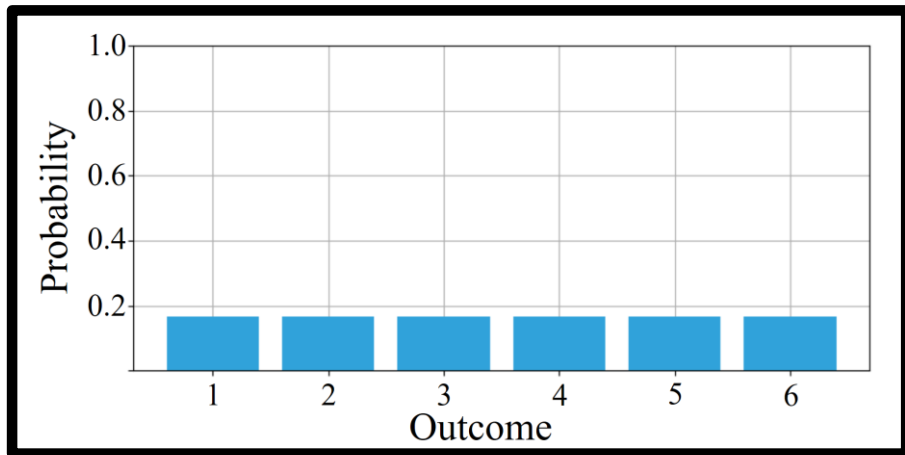
- Each time you roll a die the **outcome** will be between 1 and 6.
- **Random variable**: the combination of values and the associated probabilities.
- The range of values is called the **sample space** (die: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6).
- The **probability distribution**: gives the probability for the random variable to take any value in a sample space.



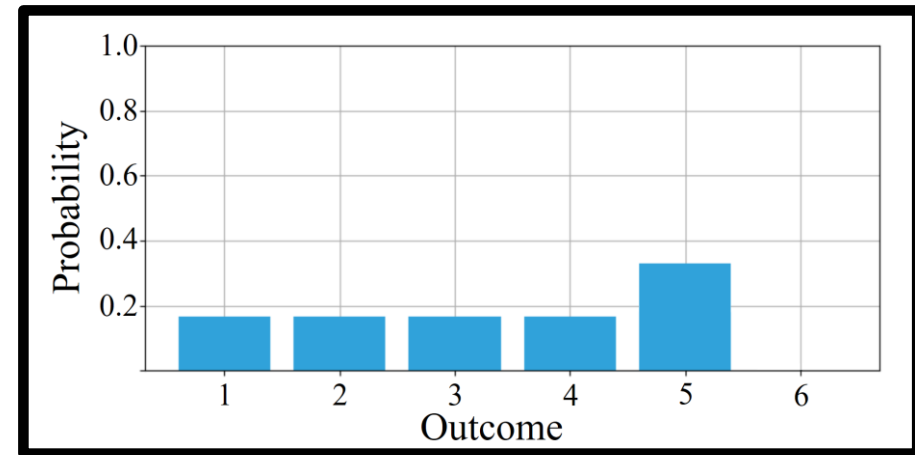
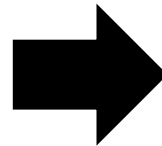
| Value | Probability |
|-------|-------------|
| 1 | 1/6 |
| 2 | 1/6 |
| 3 | 1/6 |
| 4 | 1/6 |
| 5 | 1/6 |
| 6 | 1/6 |

Basic statistics knowledge

What if the die is biased? What if the face containing a 6, in fact is another 5?



| Value | Probability |
|-------|-------------|
| 1 | 1/6 |
| 2 | 1/6 |
| 3 | 1/6 |
| 4 | 1/6 |
| 5 | 1/6 |
| 6 | 1/6 |



| Value | Probability |
|-------|-------------|
| 1 | 1/6 |
| 2 | 1/6 |
| 3 | 1/6 |
| 4 | 1/6 |
| 5 | 2/6 |
| 6 | 0 |

Basic statistics knowledge

- The **Expected Value** (mean) of a random variable: the average over an infinite number of samples.

$$\mu = E(X) = \sum_{i=1}^n x_i p(x_i)$$

- The **Standard Deviation**: how much the sampled numbers vary from the mean.

$$\sigma^2 = Var(x) = E[(x - \mu)^2] = \sum_{i=1}^n (x_i - \mu)^2 p(x_i)$$

Example:

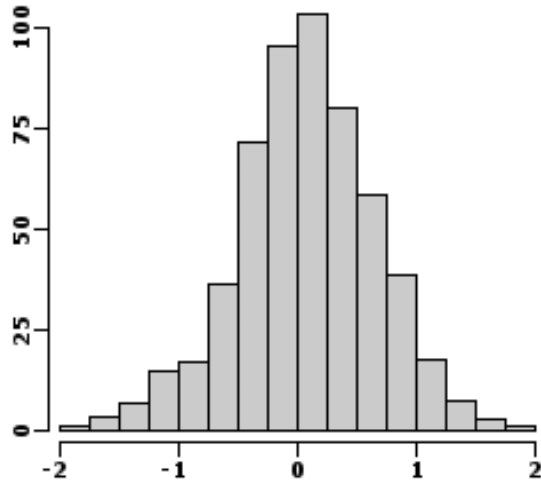
| Value | Probability |
|-------|-------------|
| 1 | 1/6 |
| 2 | 1/6 |
| 3 | 1/6 |
| 4 | 1/6 |
| 5 | 2/6 |
| 6 | 0 |

$$\mu = 1 \cdot \frac{1}{6} + 2 \cdot \frac{1}{6} + 3 \cdot \frac{1}{6} + 4 \cdot \frac{1}{6} + 5 \cdot \frac{2}{6} + 6 \cdot \frac{0}{6} = 3.33$$

$$\sigma = \frac{(1 - 3.33)^2 + (2 - 3.33)^2 + (3 - 3.33)^2 + (4 - 3.33)^2 + 2 \cdot (5 - 3.33)^2}{6} = 1.49$$

Types of probability distributions

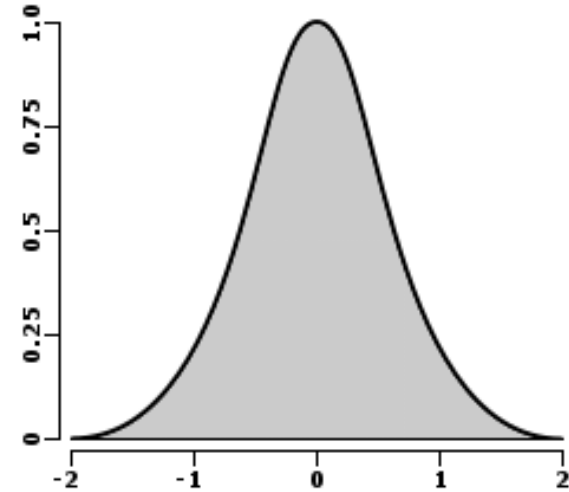
Discrete probability distributions



$$E(X) = \sum_{i=1}^n x_i p(x_i)$$

$$\text{Var}(x) = \sum_{i=1}^n (x_i - \mu)^2 p(x_i)$$

Continuous probability distributions

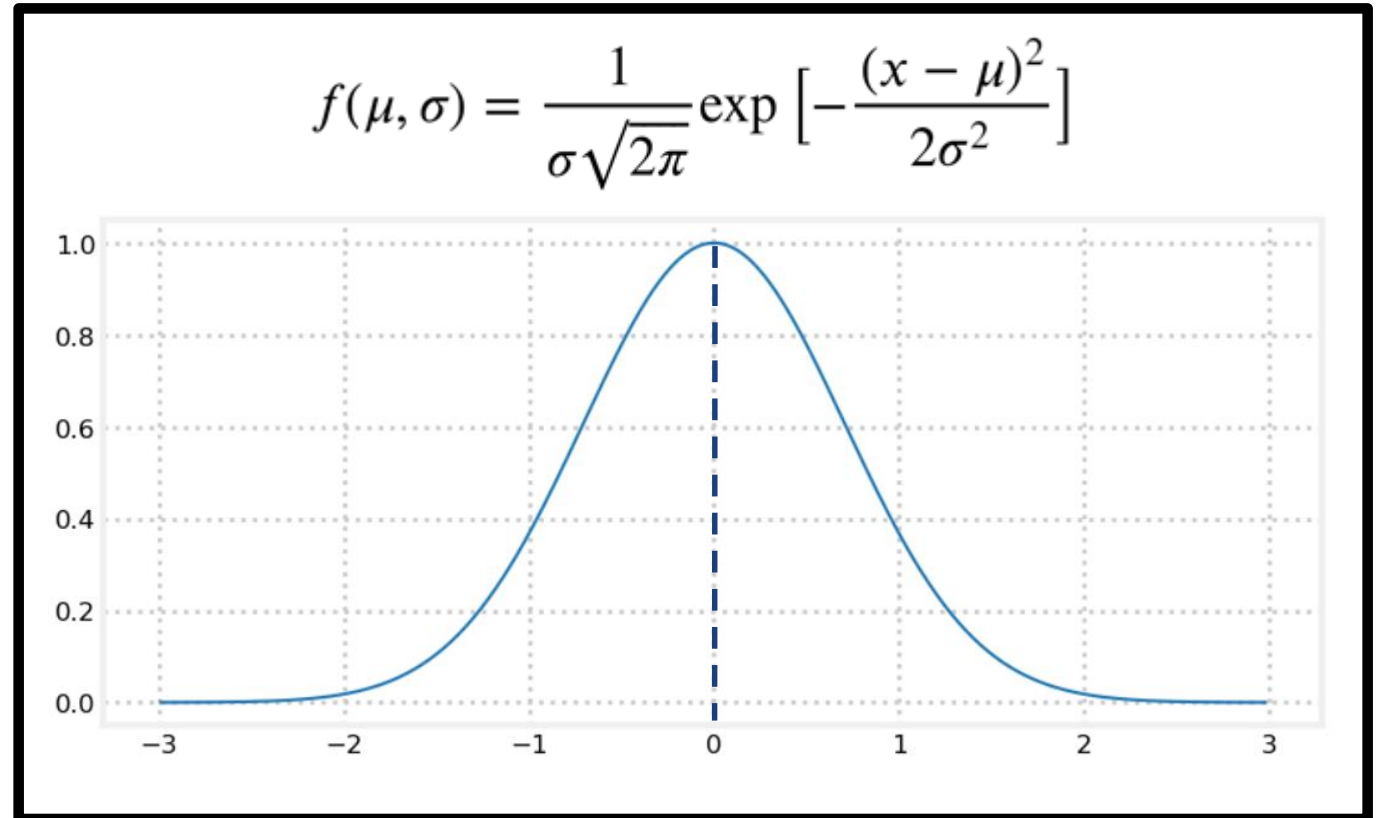


$$E(X) = \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} x_i p(x_i) dx$$

$$\text{Var}(X) = \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} (x_i - \mu)^2 p(x_i) dx$$

Gaussian Distributions

- A Gaussian is a continuous probability distribution completely described by the **mean** (μ) and **variance** (σ^2)
- μ – mean (Expected Value) is the center value of the plot
- σ – standard deviation dictates how “spread” the outcomes can be w.r.t. the mean
- A Gaussian distribution is also called a **Normal Distribution**

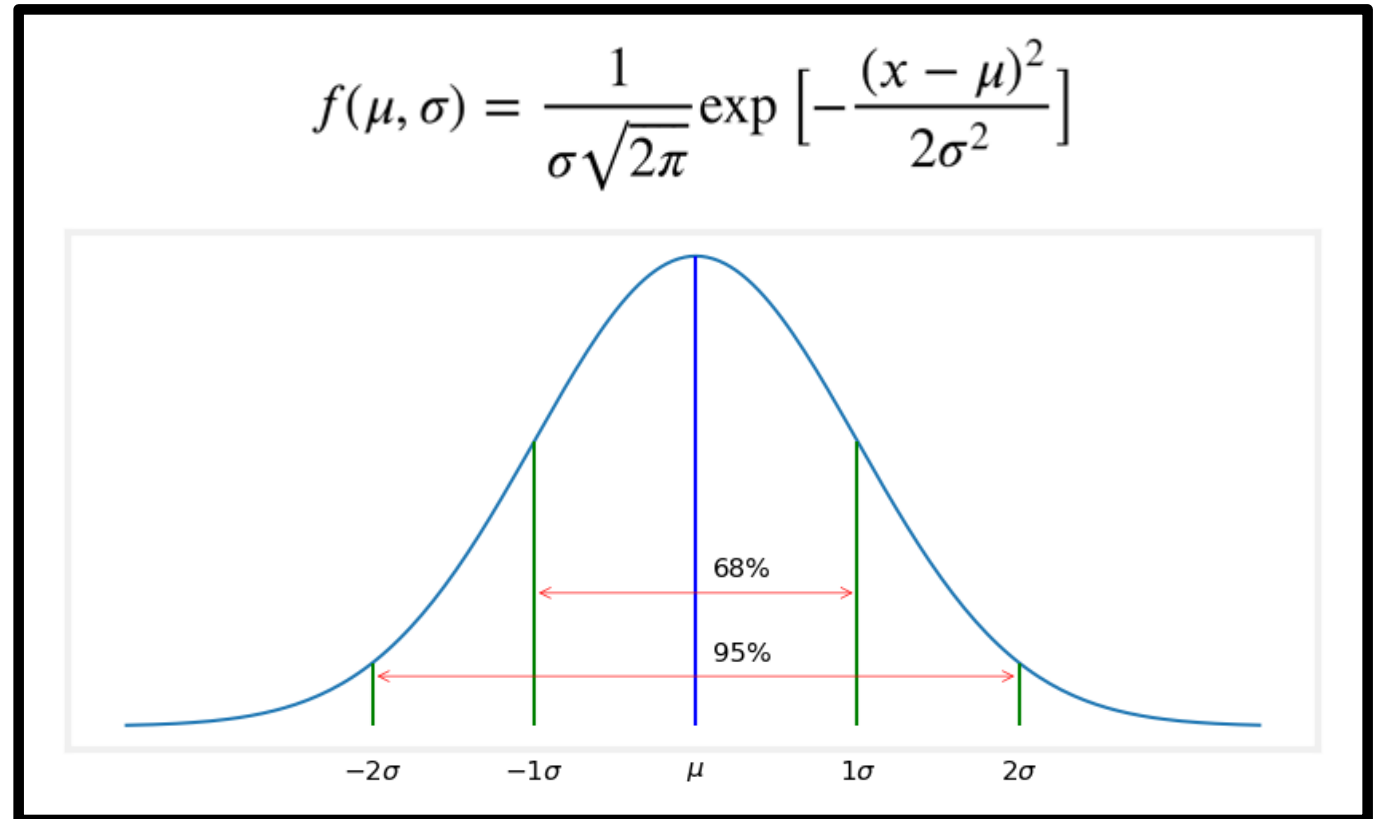


Gaussian Distributions

- A Gaussian is a continuous probability distribution completely described by the **mean** (μ) and **variance** (σ^2)

Within a normally distributed batch:

- 68.27% of the values are found within $\pm\sigma$
- 95.45% of the values are found within $\pm 2\sigma$
- 99.73% of the values are found within $\pm 3\sigma$



Why discussing about Gaussians?

Temperature sensor



36°

How precise is this value?

- Any sensor has noise!
- In practice the sensor noise is modeled as a normally distributed variable.

Why discussing about Gaussians?

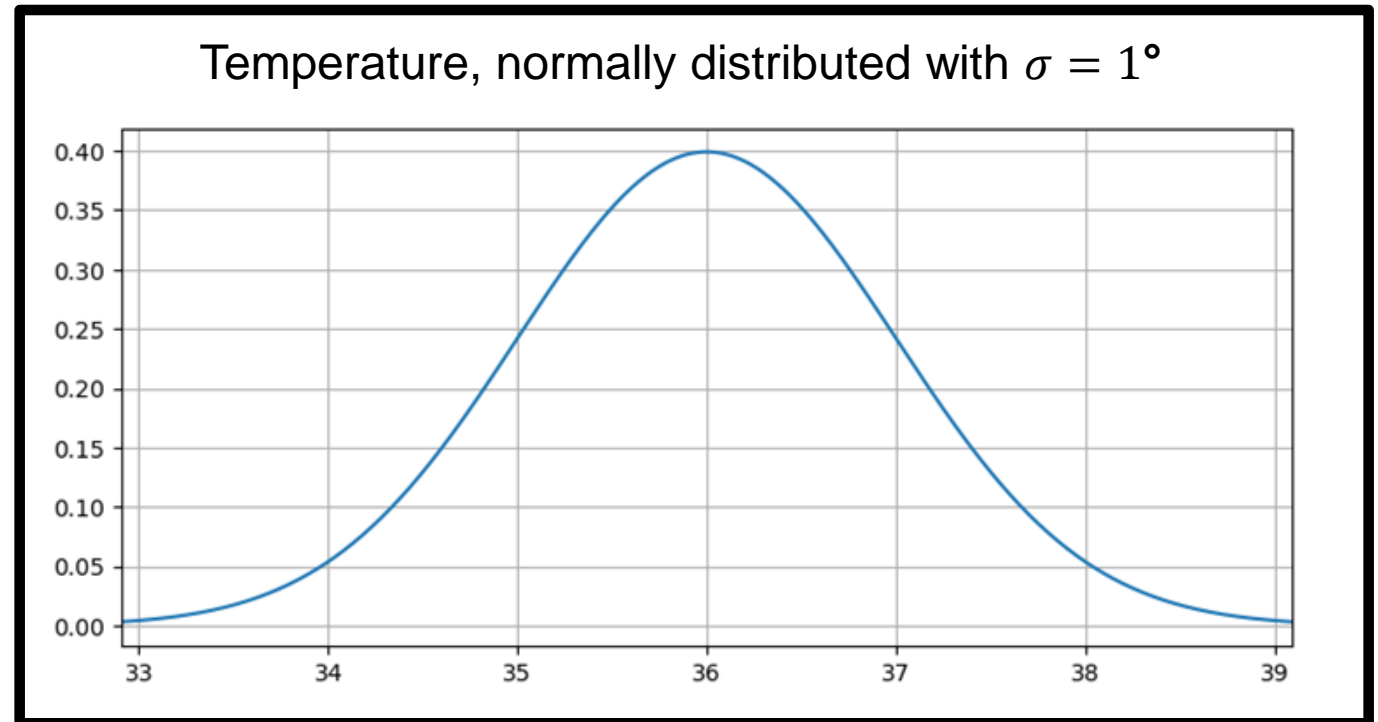
Temperature sensor



36°

How to determine σ in practice?

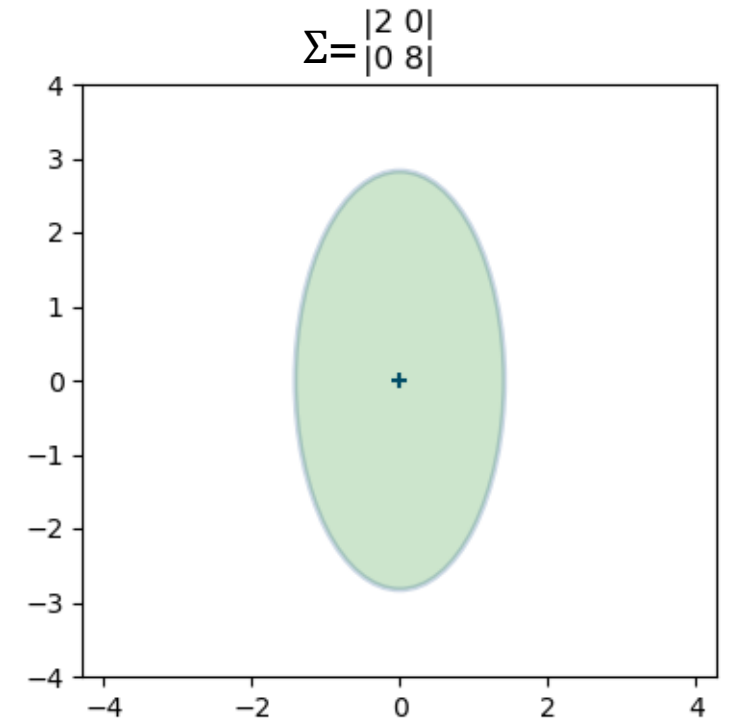
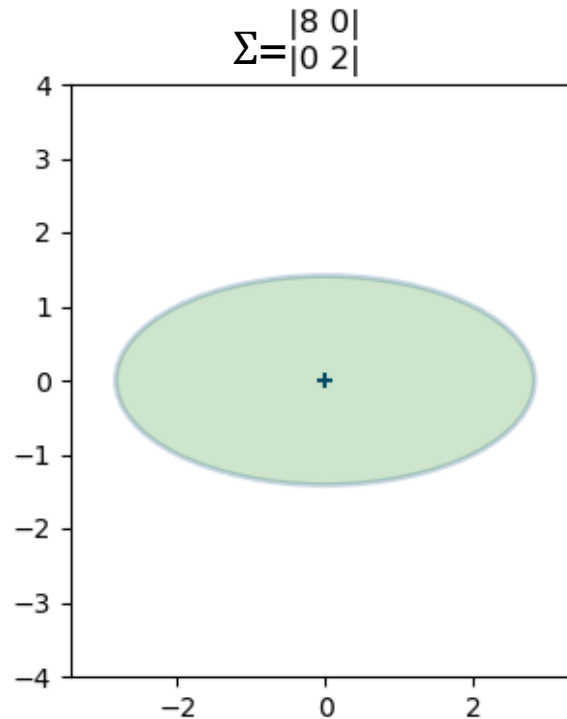
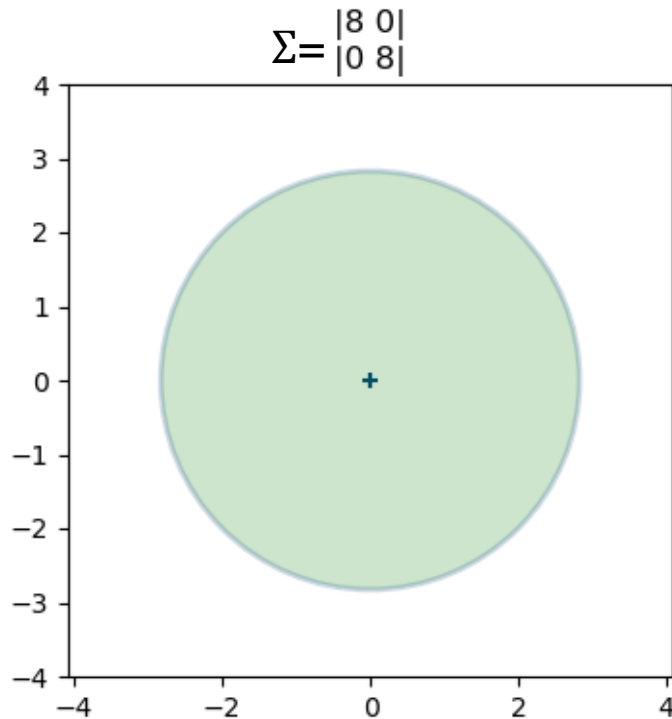
1. Look it up in the datasheet.
2. Acquire a batch of samples and compute μ and σ .



Multivariate Gaussian distributions

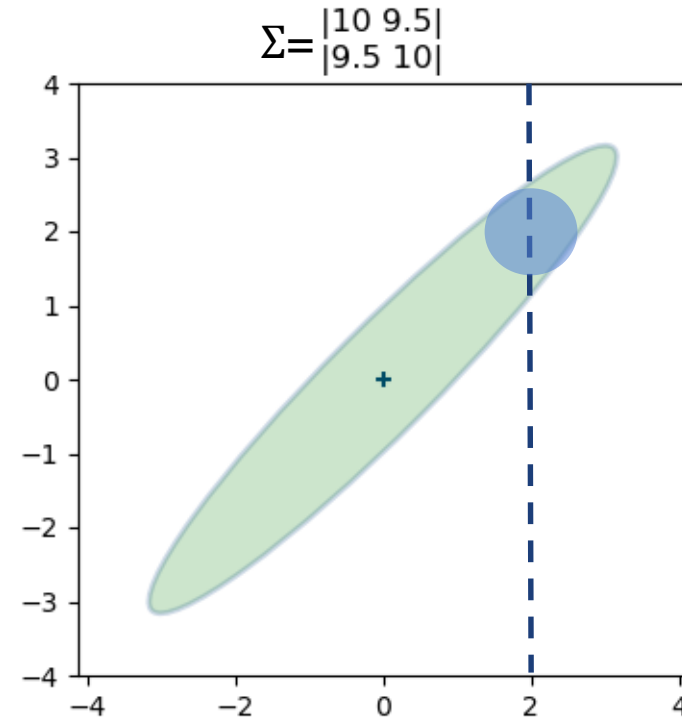
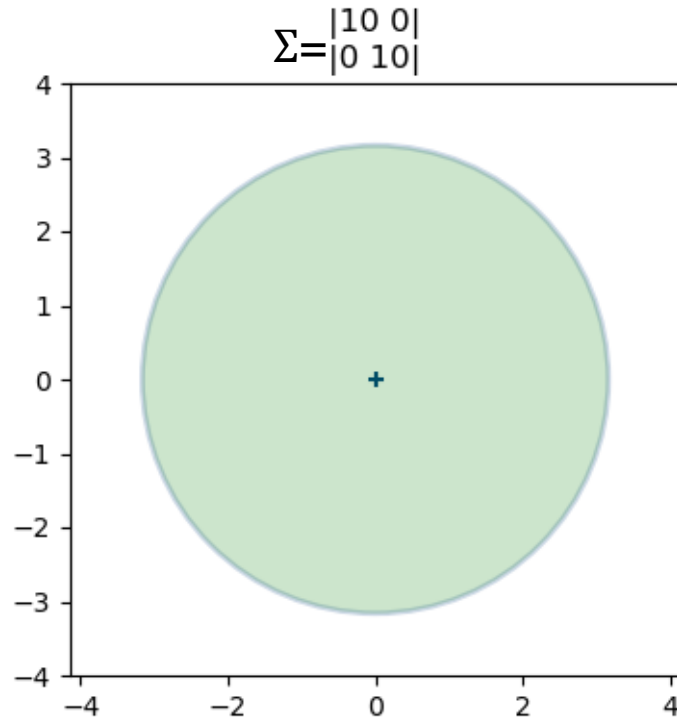
Representing a normal distribution with multiple dimension:

$$\mu = \begin{bmatrix} \mu_1 \\ \mu_2 \end{bmatrix}, \Sigma = \begin{bmatrix} \sigma_1^2 & \sigma_{12} \\ \sigma_{21} & \sigma_2^2 \end{bmatrix}$$



Multivariate Gaussian distributions

Now suppose I were to tell you that we know that $x=20$. What can we infer about the value for y ?
We can infer the position in y based on the correlation between x and y

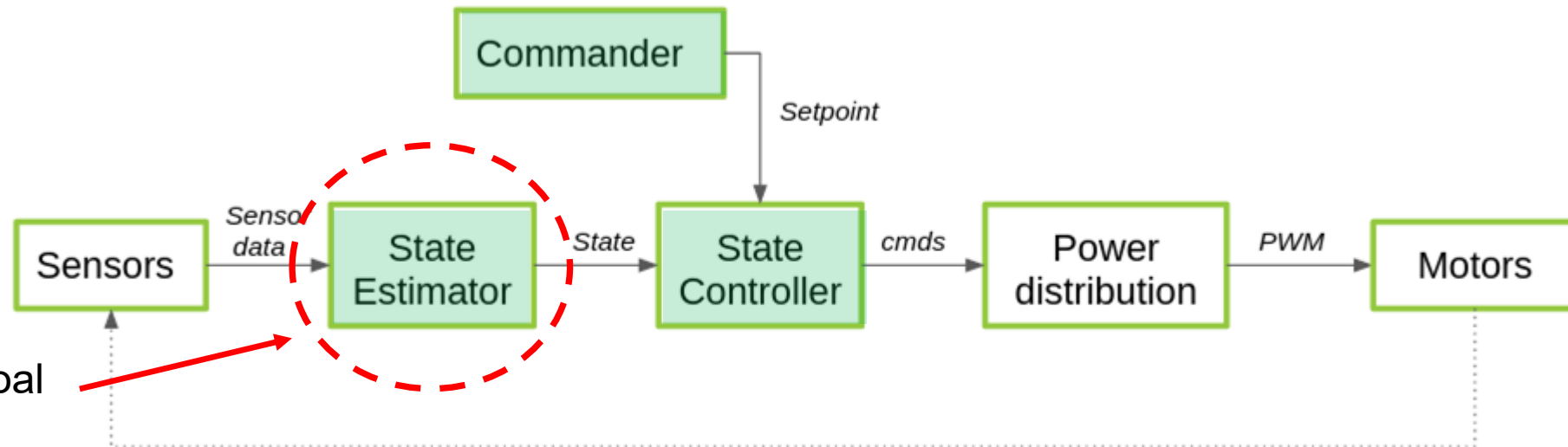


Going back to drones...

Architecture of a Drone's Stabilizer

The stabilizer represents the path from sensor acquisition to motor control. It is the entity which ensures that the drone is properly flying. Elements:

- The State Estimator
- The State Controller
- The Commander



The State Space and the System Dynamics

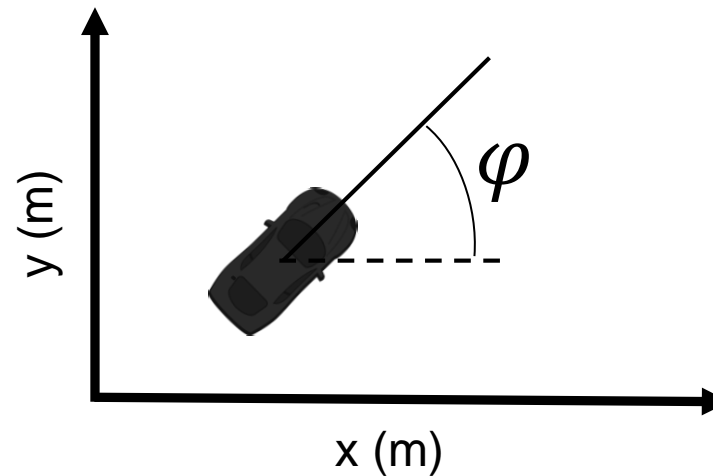
- **STATE:** A set of variables used to describe the behavior of the system at a particular time.
- **DYNAMICS:** A set of linear/non-linear equations which describe the evolution of the system state.

1D moving object



$$\mathbf{x} = \begin{pmatrix} x \\ \dot{x} \end{pmatrix}$$

2D moving object



$$\mathbf{x} = \begin{pmatrix} x \\ \dot{x} \\ y \\ \dot{y} \\ \varphi \end{pmatrix}$$

The State Space and the System Dynamics

- **STATE:** A set of variables used to describe the behavior of the system at a particular time.
- **DYNAMICS:** A set of linear/non-linear equations which describe the evolution of the system state.



$$x = \begin{pmatrix} x \\ \dot{x} \end{pmatrix}$$

Dynamics:

Ideal: $x(k+1) = f(x(k), u(k))$

Real: $x(k+1) = f(x(k), u(k)) + \rho, \quad \rho \sim N(\mu, \sigma)$

System input

timestamp

The State Space and the System Dynamics

- **STATE:** A set of variables used to describe the behavior of the system at a particular time.
- **DYNAMICS:** A set of linear/non-linear equations which describe the evolution of the system state.



$$x = \begin{pmatrix} x \\ \dot{x} \end{pmatrix}$$

Dynamics (ideal case):

$$x(k+1) = x(k) + \dot{x}(k) \cdot \Delta t + \frac{\ddot{x}(k) \cdot \Delta t^2}{2}$$

$$\dot{x}(k+1) = \dot{x}(k) + \ddot{x}(k) \cdot \Delta t$$

The State Space and System Dynamics

Dynamics:

$$x(k+1) = x(k) + \dot{x}(k) \cdot \Delta t + \frac{\ddot{x}(k) \cdot \Delta t^2}{2}$$

$$\dot{x}(k+1) = \dot{x}(k) + \ddot{x}(k) \cdot \Delta t$$



$k = 0$

The State Space and System Dynamics

Dynamics:

$$x(k+1) = x(k) + \dot{x}(k) \cdot \Delta t + \frac{\ddot{x}(k) \cdot \Delta t^2}{2}$$

$$\dot{x}(k+1) = \dot{x}(k) + \ddot{x}(k) \cdot \Delta t$$



$k = 0$

The State Space and System Dynamics

Dynamics:

$$x(k+1) = x(k) + \dot{x}(k) \cdot \Delta t + \frac{(\ddot{x}(k) + \rho) \cdot \Delta t^2}{2}$$

$$\dot{x}(k+1) = \dot{x}(k) + (\ddot{x}(k) + \rho) \cdot \Delta t$$

$$\rho \sim N(\mu, \sigma)$$



$k = 1$

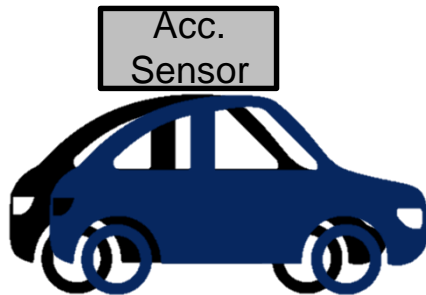
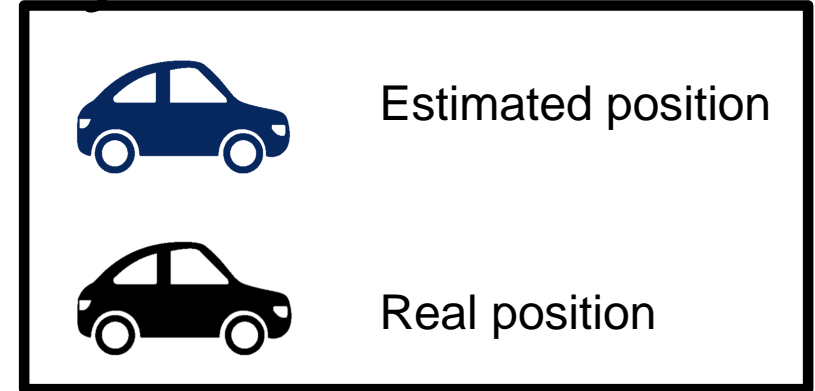
The State Space and System Dynamics

Dynamics:

$$x(k+1) = x(k) + \dot{x}(k) \cdot \Delta t + \frac{(\ddot{x}(k) + \rho) \cdot \Delta t^2}{2}$$

$$\dot{x}(k+1) = \dot{x}(k) + (\ddot{x}(k) + \rho) \cdot \Delta t$$

$$\rho \sim N(\mu, \sigma)$$



$k = 1$

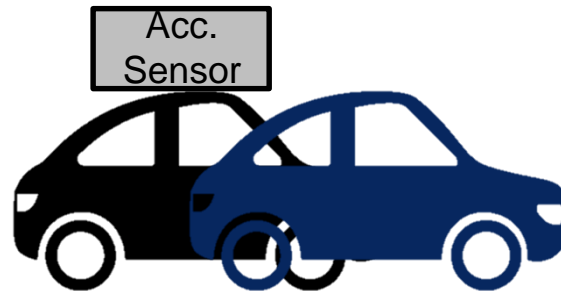
The State Space and System Dynamics

Dynamics:

$$x(k+1) = x(k) + \dot{x}(k) \cdot \Delta t + \frac{(\ddot{x}(k) + \rho) \cdot \Delta t^2}{2}$$

$$\dot{x}(k+1) = \dot{x}(k) + (\ddot{x}(k) + \rho) \cdot \Delta t$$

$$\rho \sim N(\mu, \sigma)$$



$k = 2$

The State Space and System Dynamics

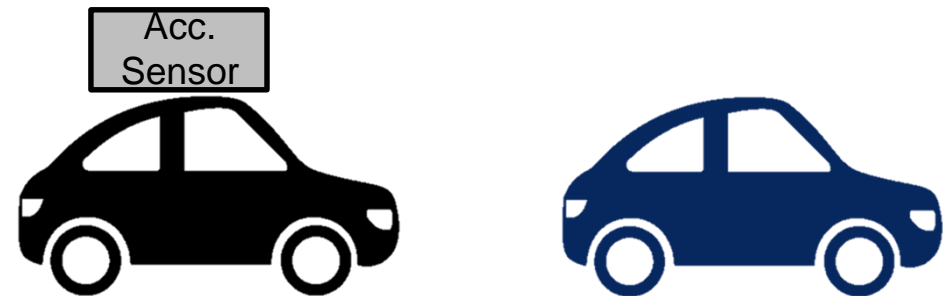
Dynamics:

$$x(k+1) = x(k) + \dot{x}(k) \cdot \Delta t + \frac{(\ddot{x}(k) + \rho) \cdot \Delta t^2}{2}$$

$$\dot{x}(k+1) = \dot{x}(k) + (\ddot{x}(k) + \rho) \cdot \Delta t$$

$$\rho \sim N(\mu, \sigma)$$

ERROR GROWS UNBOUNDED!



$k = 3$

The State Space and System Dynamics

Dynamics:

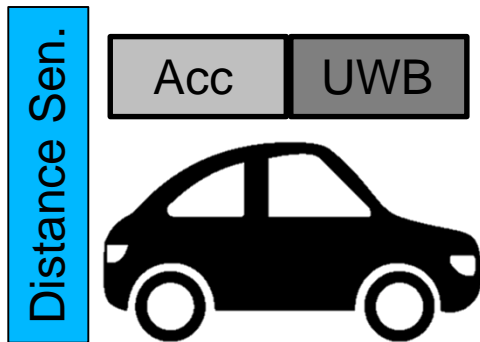
$$x(k+1) = x(k) + \dot{x}(k) \cdot \Delta t + \frac{(\ddot{x}(k) + \rho) \cdot \Delta t^2}{2}$$

$$\dot{x}(k+1) = \dot{x}(k) + (\ddot{x}(k) + \rho) \cdot \Delta t$$

$$\rho \sim N(\mu, \sigma)$$

Measurement model (UWB):

$$z(k) = x(k) + \rho_M, \quad \rho_M \sim N(\mu_M, \sigma_M)$$



$k = 0$

The State Space and System Dynamics

Dynamics:

$$x(k+1) = x(k) + \dot{x}(k) \cdot \Delta t + \frac{(\ddot{x}(k) + \rho) \cdot \Delta t^2}{2}$$

$$\dot{x}(k+1) = \dot{x}(k) + (\ddot{x}(k) + \rho) \cdot \Delta t$$

$$\rho \sim N(\mu, \sigma)$$

Measurement model (UWB):

$$z(k) = x(k) + \rho_M, \quad \rho_M \sim N(\mu_M, \sigma_M)$$



The State Space and System Dynamics

Dynamics:

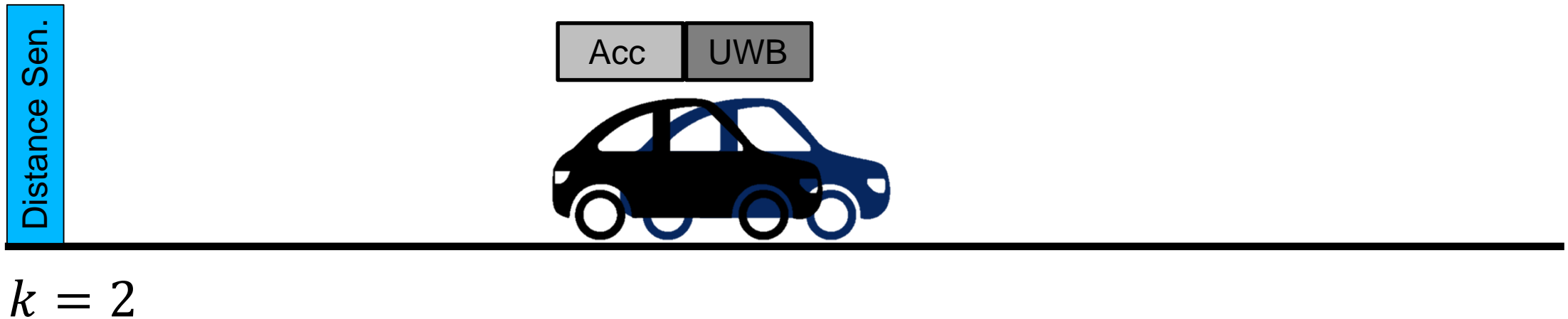
$$x(k+1) = x(k) + \dot{x}(k) \cdot \Delta t + \frac{(\ddot{x}(k) + \rho) \cdot \Delta t^2}{2}$$

$$\dot{x}(k+1) = \dot{x}(k) + (\ddot{x}(k) + \rho) \cdot \Delta t$$

$$\rho \sim N(\mu, \sigma)$$

Measurement model (UWB):

$$z(k) = x(k) + \rho_M, \quad \rho_M \sim N(\mu_M, \sigma_M)$$



The State Space and System Dynamics

Dynamics:

$$x(k+1) = x(k) + \dot{x}(k) \cdot \Delta t + \frac{(\ddot{x}(k) + \rho) \cdot \Delta t^2}{2}$$

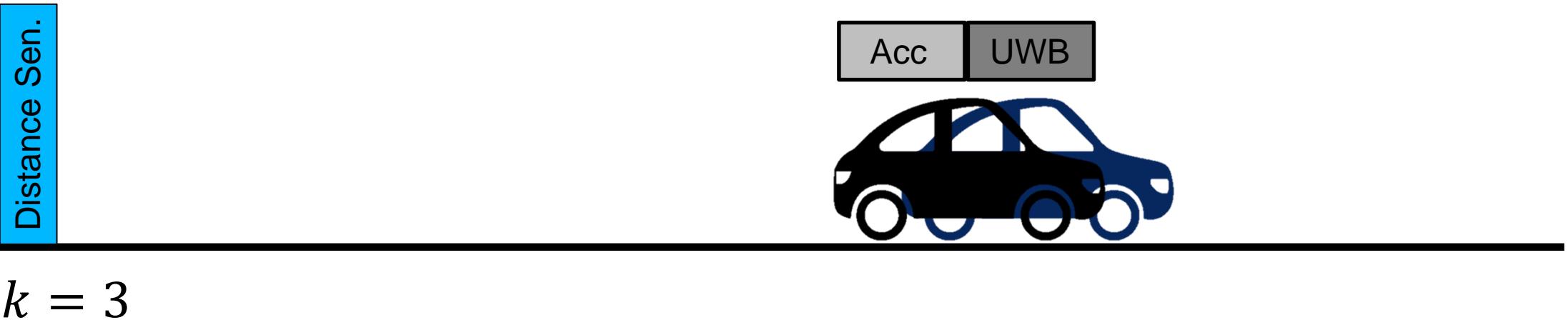
$$\dot{x}(k+1) = \dot{x}(k) + (\ddot{x}(k) + \rho) \cdot \Delta t$$

$$\rho \sim N(\mu, \sigma)$$

Measurement model (UWB):

$$z(k) = x(k) + \rho_M, \quad \rho_M \sim N(\mu_M, \sigma_M)$$

ERROR IS BOUNDED!

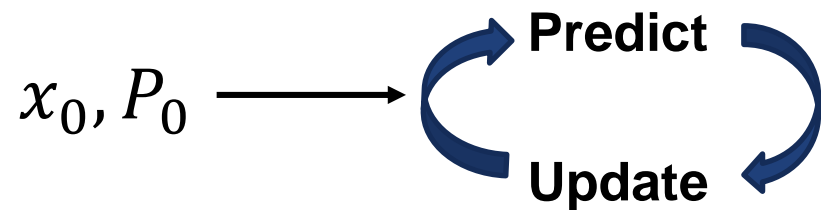


The Kalman Filter

In the previous example, we have two sensor:

- The acceleration sensor
- The distance sensor

How do we combine the information from the two?



The Prediction Step

Dynamics of a linear system:

$$x(k+1) = \underbrace{\begin{bmatrix} 1 & \Delta t \\ 0 & 1 \end{bmatrix}}_A x(k) + a(k) \underbrace{\begin{bmatrix} 0.5 \cdot \Delta t^2 \\ \Delta t \end{bmatrix}}_u + \underbrace{\rho \begin{bmatrix} 0.5 \cdot \Delta t^2 \\ \Delta t \end{bmatrix}}_{w_p}$$



$Q = \text{Var}(v)$ – process noise covariance matrix

$x_0, P_0 \longrightarrow \text{Predict} \longrightarrow x_p(1), P_p(1) \longrightarrow \text{Update}$

$$x_p(1) = A(0)x(0) + u(0)$$

$$P_p(1) = A(0)P(0)A^T(0) + Q$$

The Prediction Step

Dynamics of a linear system:

$$x(k+1) = A(k)x(k) + u(k) + w_p$$

$Q = \text{Var}(w_p)$ – process noise covariance matrix

$x_0, P_0 \longrightarrow \text{Predict} \longrightarrow x_p(1), P_p(1) \longrightarrow \text{Update}$

Prediction equations:

$$x_p(1) = A(0)x(0) + u(0)$$

$$P_p(1) = A(0)P(0)A^T(0) + Q$$



The Update Step

The measurement update

$$z(k+1) = H(k)x(k) + w_m$$

$R = \text{Var}(w_m)$ – measurement noise covariance matrix



$$x_0, P_0 \longrightarrow \text{Predict} \longrightarrow x_p(1), P_p(1) \longrightarrow \text{Update} \longrightarrow x_m(1), P_m(1)$$

Measurement update equations:

$$x_m(1) = x_p(1) + K(1)(z(1) - H(1) x_p(1))$$

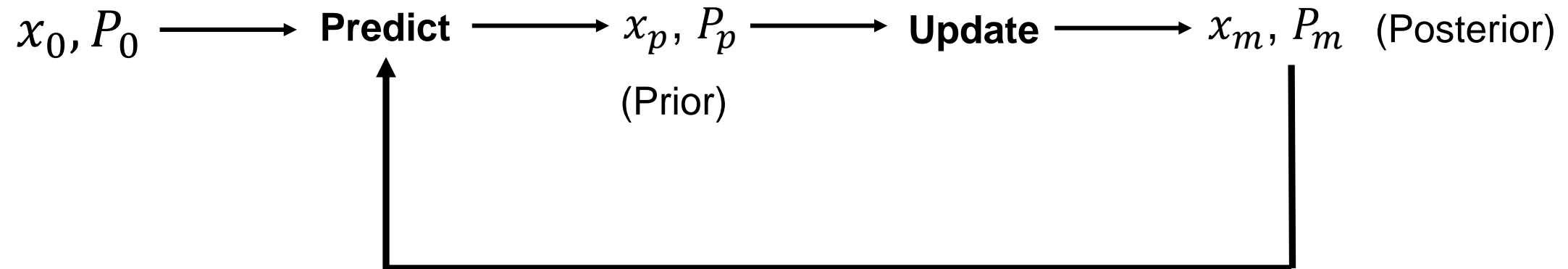
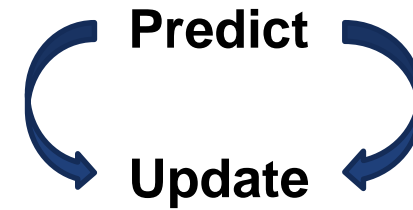
$$P_m(1) = (I - K(1)H(1)) P_p(1)(I - K(1)H(1))^T + K(1)RK^T(1)$$

The Update Step

The measurement update

$$z(k+1) = H(k)x(k) + w_m$$

$R = \text{Var}(w_m)$ – measurement noise covariance matrix

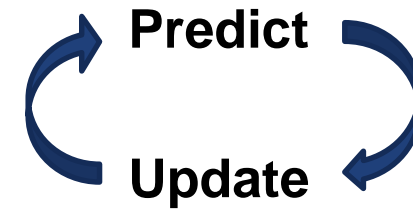


The Update Step

The measurement update

$$z(k+1) = H(k)x(k) + w_m$$

$R = \text{Var}(w_m)$ – measurement noise covariance matrix



$$x_0, P_0 \longrightarrow \text{Predict} \longrightarrow x_p(1), P_p(1) \longrightarrow \text{Update} \longrightarrow x_m(1), P_m(1)$$

$$x_m = x_p + K(z - H x_p)$$

$$P_m = (I - KH) P_p (I - KH)^T + K R K^T$$

Filter Gain (Kalman Gain)

$$K = P_p H^T (H P_p H^T + R)^{-1}$$

$$x_m = x_p + K(z - H x_p)$$

Posterior mean \nearrow x_m \nearrow x_p \nearrow K \nearrow $(z - H x_p)$ \nearrow Correction factor

The Kalman Filter

1. Prediction step:

$$x_p = Ax_m + u$$

$$P_p = AP_m A^T + Q$$

2. Measurement update step:

$$K = P_p H^T (H P_p H^T + R)^{-1}$$

$$x_m = x_p + K(z - H x_p)$$

$$P_m = (I - KH) P_p (I - KH)^T + K R K^T$$

Designing a Kalman Filter:

1. Define the System Dynamics and Measurement Models
2. Calculate A, Q, H, R
3. Initialize the state.
4. Iterate between the **Prediction step** and the **Update step**

Note: Within an application, there are typically multiple measurement models

The Kalman Filter: Example 1

System Dynamics:

$$\mathbf{x} = \begin{bmatrix} x_1 \\ x_2 \\ x_3 \end{bmatrix}$$

$$x_1(k+1) = 2x_1(k) + x_2(k) + v_1(k)$$

$$x_2(k+1) = 3x_2(k) + x_3(k) + v_2(k)$$

$$x_3(k+1) = 5x_3(k) + v_3(k)$$

$$\mathbf{x}(k+1) = \underbrace{\begin{bmatrix} 2 & 1 & 0 \\ 0 & 3 & 1 \\ 0 & 0 & 5 \end{bmatrix}}_{\mathbf{A}} \mathbf{x}(k) + \begin{bmatrix} v_1(k) \\ v_2(k) \\ v_3(k) \end{bmatrix} \longrightarrow \mathbf{Q} = \begin{bmatrix} \sigma_1^2 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & \sigma_2^2 & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & \sigma_3^2 \end{bmatrix}$$

The Kalman Filter: Example 1

Measurement Model

$$\mathbf{x} = \begin{bmatrix} x_1 \\ x_2 \\ x_3 \end{bmatrix} \quad m(k+1) = 4x_1(k) + w_m(k)$$

$$\mathbf{m}(k+1) = \underbrace{[4 \quad 0 \quad 0]}_{\mathbf{H}} \mathbf{x}(k) + w_m(k) \longrightarrow R = \text{std}(w_m)$$

Example 2

Given:

1. The car is equipped with an acceleration sensor
2. A fixed distance sensor measures the distance to the car

Sensors:

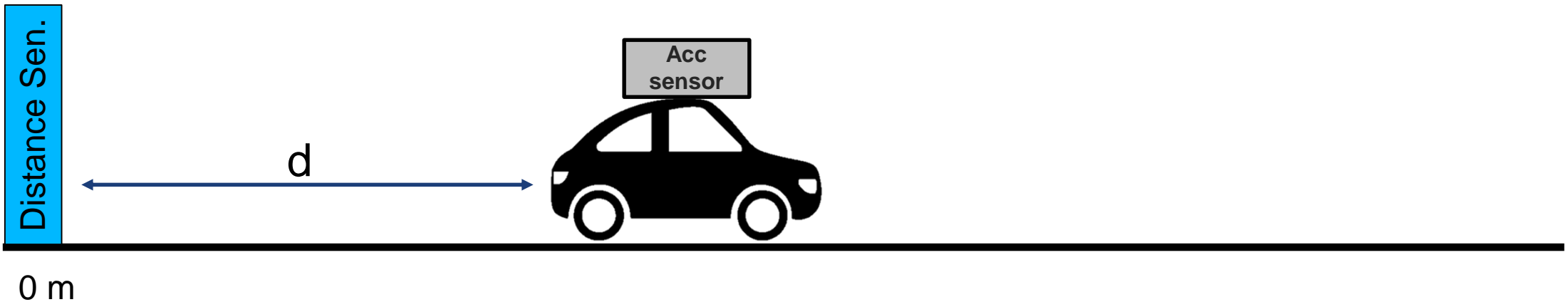
- Acceleration sensor: $\rho \sim N(0, \sigma_p)$
- Distance sensor

State space: $x = \begin{pmatrix} x \\ v \end{pmatrix}$

Dynamics:

$$x(k+1) = x(k) + v(k) \cdot \Delta t + \frac{(a(k) + \rho) \cdot \Delta t^2}{2}$$

$$v(k+1) = v(k) + (a(k) + \rho) \cdot \Delta t$$



Example 2

Given:

1. The car is equipped with an acceleration sensor
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Sensors:

- Acceleration sensor: $\rho \sim N(0, \sigma_p)$
- Distance sensor

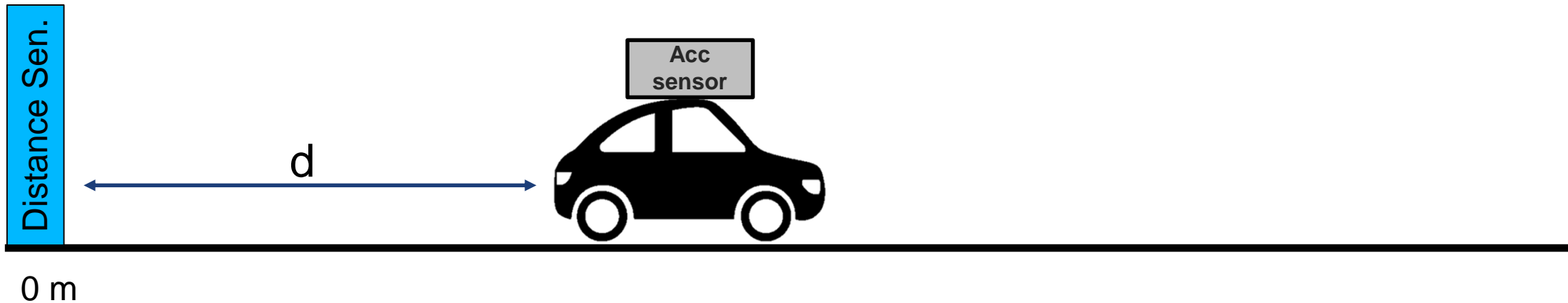
State space: $x = \begin{pmatrix} x \\ v \end{pmatrix}$

Dynamics:

$$x(k+1) = x(k) + v(k) \cdot \Delta t + \frac{a(k) \cdot \Delta t^2}{2} + \frac{\rho \cdot \Delta t^2}{2}$$

$$v(k+1) = v(k) + a(k) \cdot \Delta t + \rho \cdot \Delta t$$

We compute matrix A



Example 2

Given:

1. The car is equipped with an acceleration sensor
2. A fixed distance sensor measures the distance to the car

Sensors:

- Acceleration sensor: $\rho \sim N(0, \sigma_p)$
- Distance sensor

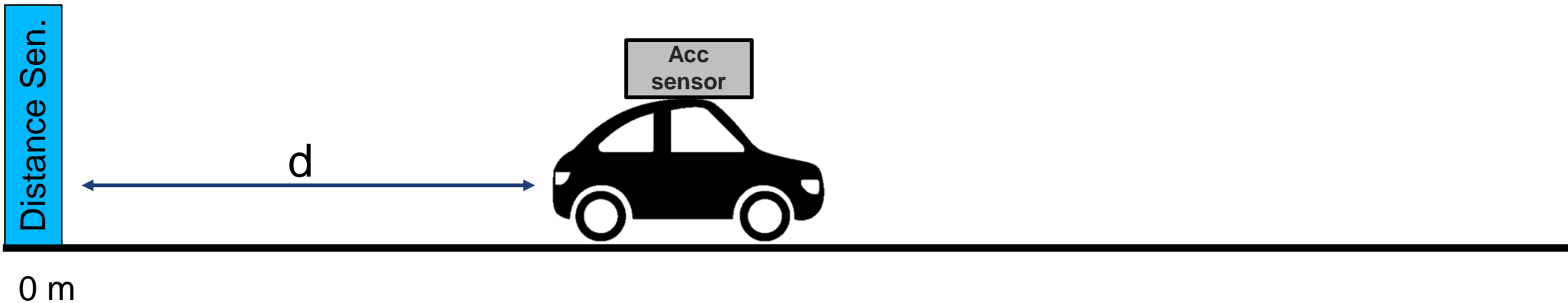
State space: $x = \begin{pmatrix} x \\ v \end{pmatrix}$

Dynamics:

$$x(k+1) = x(k) + v(k) \cdot \Delta t + \frac{a(k) \cdot \Delta t^2}{2} + \frac{\rho \cdot \Delta t^2}{2}$$

$$v(k+1) = v(k) + a(k) \cdot \Delta t + \rho \cdot \Delta t$$

Input



Example 2

Given:

1. The car is equipped with an acceleration sensor
2. A fixed distance sensor measures the distance to the car

Sensors:

- Acceleration sensor: $\rho \sim N(0, \sigma_p)$
- Distance sensor

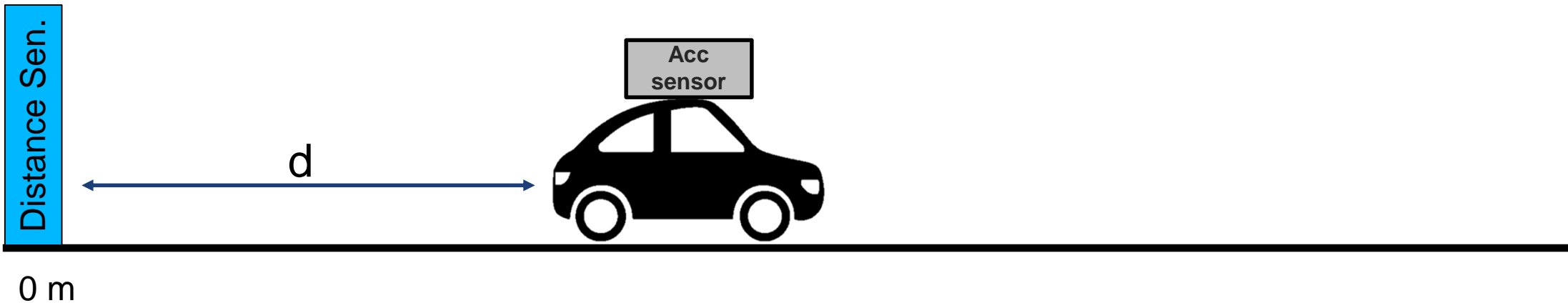
State space: $x = \begin{pmatrix} x \\ v \end{pmatrix}$

Dynamics:

$$x(k+1) = x(k) + v(k) \cdot \Delta t + \frac{a(k) \cdot \Delta t^2}{2} + \frac{\rho \cdot \Delta t^2}{2}$$

$$v(k+1) = v(k) + a(k) \cdot \Delta t + \rho \cdot \Delta t$$

Process noise



Example 2

Given:

1. The car is equipped with an acceleration sensor
2. A fixed distance sensor measures the distance to the car

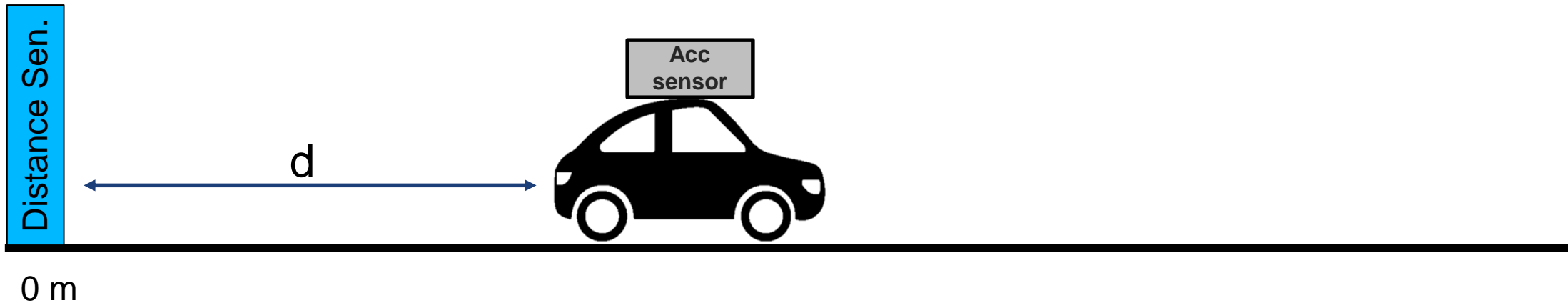
Sensors:

- Acceleration sensor: $\rho \sim N(0, \sigma_p)$
- Distance sensor

State space: $x = \begin{pmatrix} x \\ v \end{pmatrix}$

Dynamics:

$$x(k+1) = \underbrace{\begin{bmatrix} 1 & \Delta t \\ 0 & 1 \end{bmatrix}}_A x(k) + \underbrace{a(k) \begin{bmatrix} 0.5 \cdot \Delta t^2 \\ \Delta t \end{bmatrix}}_u + \underbrace{\rho \begin{bmatrix} 0.5 \cdot \Delta t^2 \\ \Delta t \end{bmatrix}}_{w_p}$$



Example 2

Given:

1. The car is equipped with an acceleration sensor
2. A fixed distance sensor measures the distance to the car

Sensors:

- Acceleration sensor: $\rho \sim N(0, \sigma_p)$
- Distance sensor

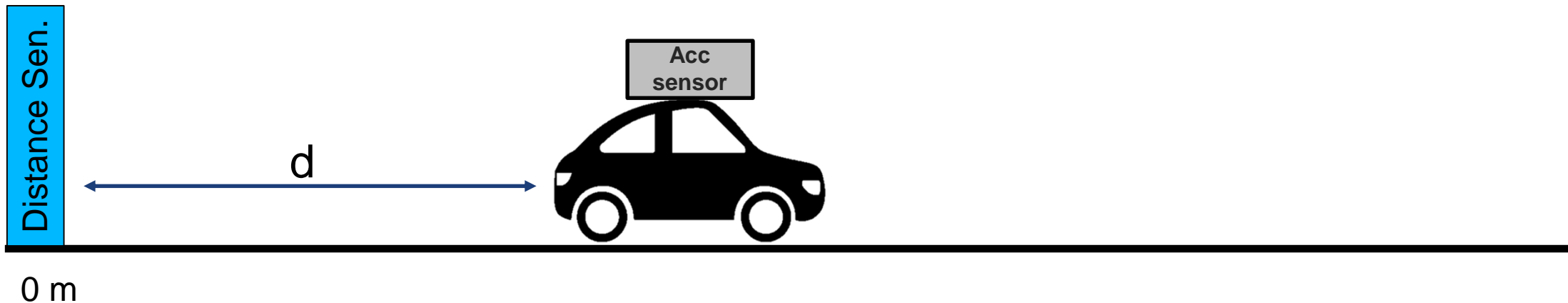
State space: $x = \begin{pmatrix} x \\ v \end{pmatrix}$

Dynamics:

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Calculating Q:

$$1. \quad Q = \text{Var} \left(\rho \begin{bmatrix} 0.5 \cdot \Delta t^2 \\ \Delta t \end{bmatrix} \right) = \begin{bmatrix} 0.25 \cdot \Delta t^4 & 0.5 \cdot \Delta t^3 \\ 0.5 \cdot \Delta t^3 & \Delta t^2 \end{bmatrix} \sigma_p^2$$



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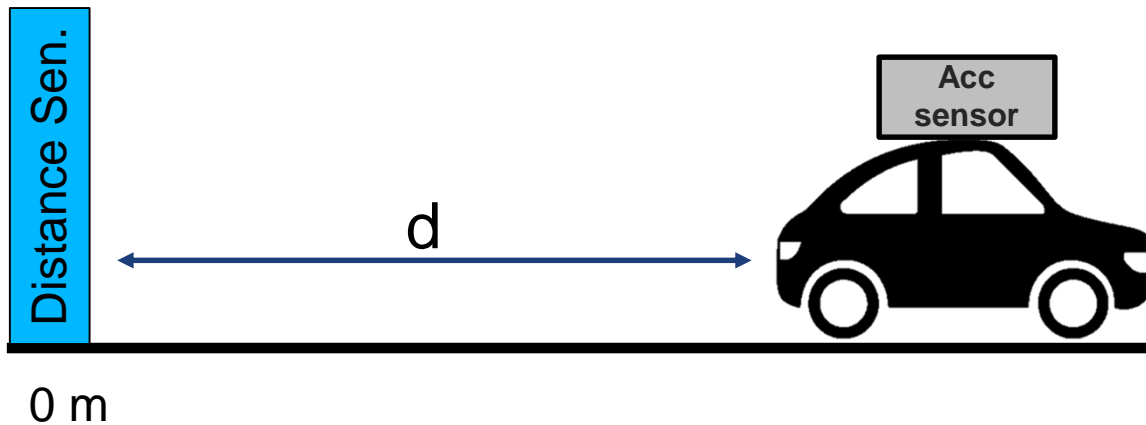
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Calculating Q:

1. $Q = \text{Var} \left(\rho \begin{bmatrix} 0.5 \cdot \Delta t^2 \\ \Delta t \end{bmatrix} \right) = \begin{bmatrix} 0.25 \cdot \Delta t^4 & 0.5 \cdot \Delta t^3 \\ 0.5 \cdot \Delta t^3 & \Delta t^2 \end{bmatrix} \sigma_p^2$
2. $Q = L \cdot L^T \cdot \sigma_p^2$



Example 2

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1. The car is equipped with an acceleration sensor
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Sensors:

- Acceleration sensor: $\rho \sim N(0, \sigma_p)$
- Distance sensor: $\eta \sim N(0, \sigma_m)$

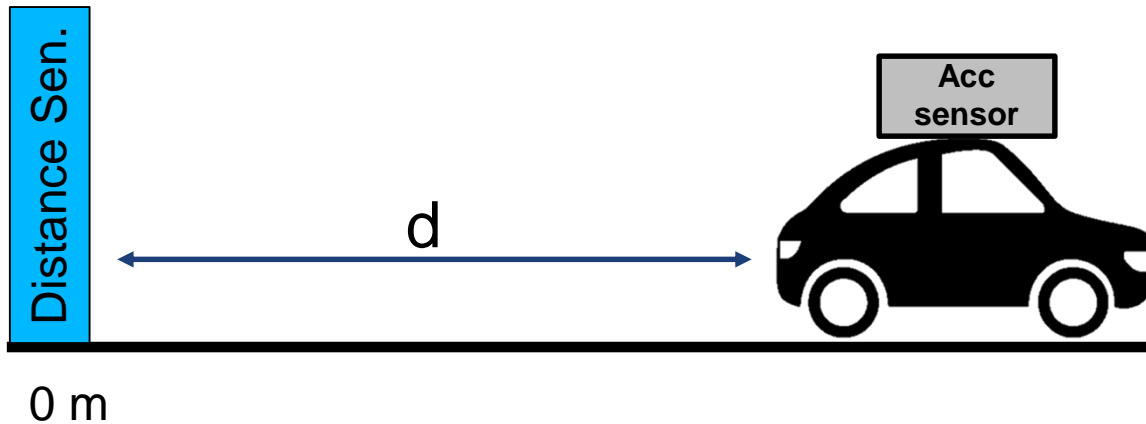
State space: $x = \begin{pmatrix} x \\ v \end{pmatrix}$

Dynamics:

$$x(k+1) = \underbrace{\begin{bmatrix} 1 & \Delta t \\ 0 & 1 \end{bmatrix}}_A x(k) + \underbrace{a(k) \begin{bmatrix} 0.5 \cdot \Delta t^2 \\ \Delta t \end{bmatrix}}_u + \rho \begin{bmatrix} 0.5 \cdot \Delta t^2 \\ \Delta t \end{bmatrix}$$

Measurement model:

$$d(k) = x(k) + \eta \quad R = \sigma_m^2$$



Example 2

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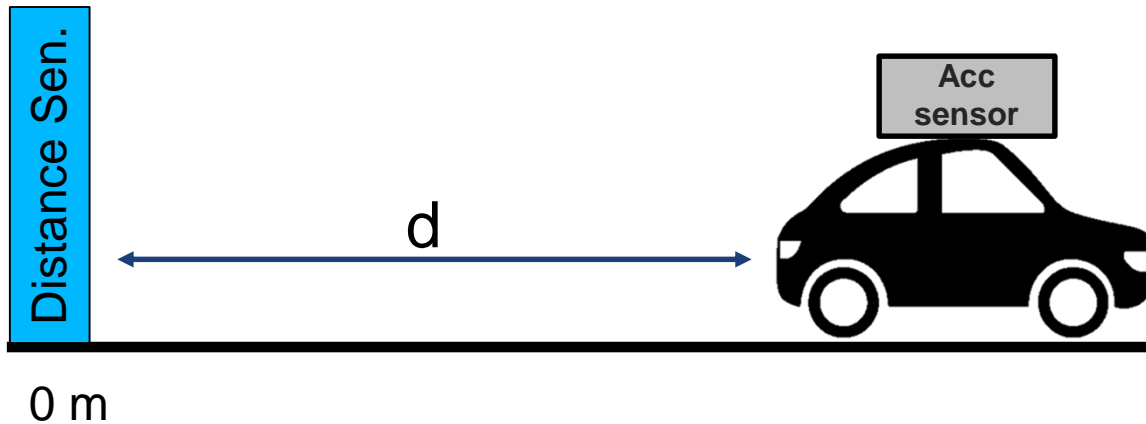
State space: $x = \begin{pmatrix} x \\ v \end{pmatrix}$

Dynamics:

$$x(k+1) = \underbrace{\begin{bmatrix} 1 & \Delta t \\ 0 & 1 \end{bmatrix}}_A x(k) + \underbrace{a(k) \begin{bmatrix} 0.5 \cdot \Delta t^2 \\ \Delta t \end{bmatrix}}_u + \rho \begin{bmatrix} 0.5 \cdot \Delta t^2 \\ \Delta t \end{bmatrix}$$

Measurement model:

$$d(k) = \underbrace{[1 \quad 0]}_H x(k) + \eta \quad R = \sigma_m^2$$



The Extended Kalman Filter

The System Dynamics:

$$d(x, v) = x(k + 1) = A(k)x(k) + u(k) + w_p$$

The Measurement Model:

$$m(x, w) = z(k + 1) = H(k)x(k) + w_m$$

1. Prediction step:

$$A = \frac{\partial d(x_m, 0)}{\partial x} \quad L = \frac{\partial d(x_m, 0)}{\partial v}$$

$$x_p = Ax_m + u$$

$$P_p = AP_m A^T + LQL$$

2. Update step:

$$H = \frac{\partial m(x_p, 0)}{\partial x} \quad M = \frac{\partial m(x_p, 0)}{\partial w}$$

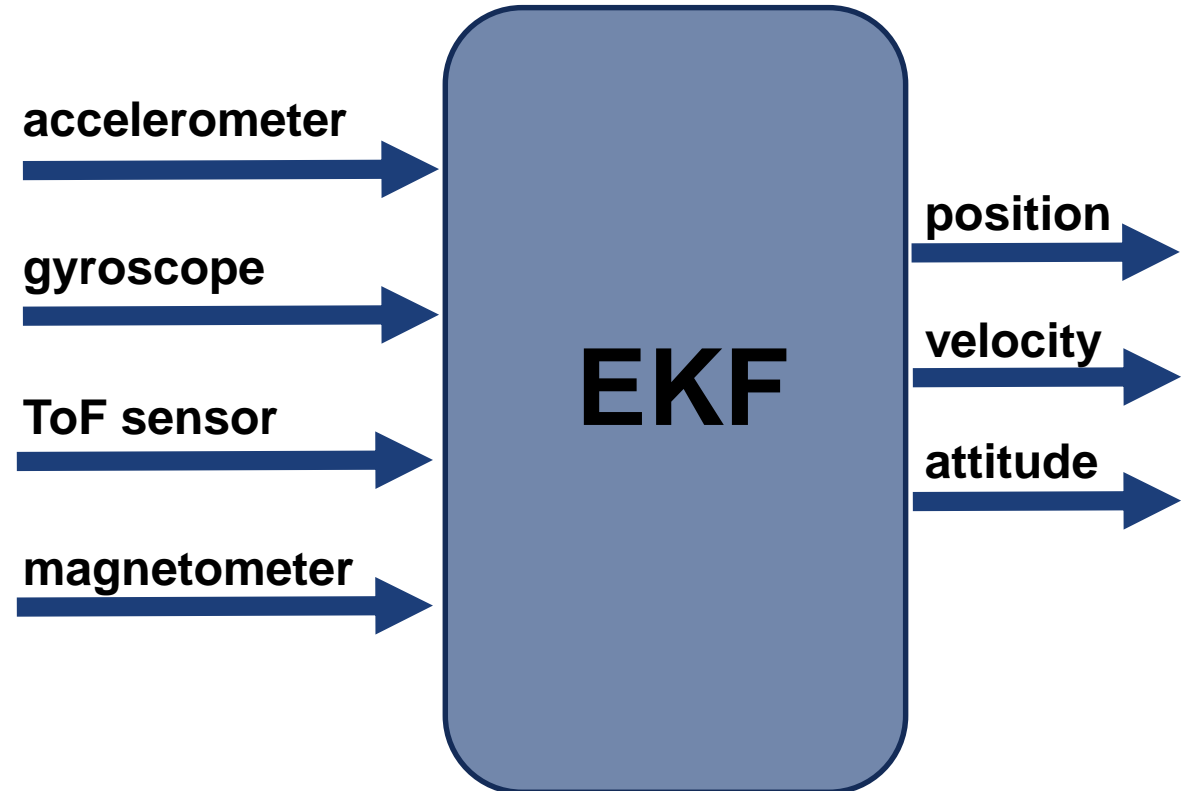
$$K = P_p H^T (H P_p H^T + M R M)^{-1}$$

$$x_m = x_p + K(z - H x_p)$$

$$P_m = (I - KH) P_p (I - KH)^T + K R K^T$$

The Extended Kalman Filter with Drones

- The accelerometer and gyroscope are typically used for the *Prediction step*.
- To run the *Measurement step*, use the appropriate measurement model (of the corresponding sensor).



Conclusions

- KF and EKF are lightweight implementations which easily allow to fuse a large number of sensors.
- The filter is recursive and it only requires to store the previous state.
- When the Dynamics is Linear and the sensor noise is Gaussian, the KF is the best estimator possible (in the MSE sense).
- Used as estimator in most drone applications.

Hands-on

Download the exercise from the following link and follow the instructions:

<https://colab.research.google.com/drive/1rNnwfasbspLDrzsnf8zHzpDwXmxfcerv?usp=sharing>