

On transverse triangulations

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Abstract. We show that every smooth manifold admits a smooth triangulation transverse to a given smooth map. This removes the properness assumption on the smooth map used in an essential way in Scharlemann’s construction [6].

1. INTRODUCTION

For $l \in \mathbb{Z}^{\geq 0}$, let $\Delta^l \subset \mathbb{R}^l$ denote the standard l -simplex. If $|K| \subset \mathbb{R}^N$ is a geometric realization of a simplicial complex K in the sense of [5, Sec. 3], for each l -simplex σ of K there is an injective linear map¹ $\iota_\sigma : \Delta^l \rightarrow |K|$ taking Δ^l to $|\sigma|$. If X is a smooth manifold, a topological embedding $\mu : \Delta^l \rightarrow X$ is a *smooth embedding* if there exist an open neighborhood Δ_μ^l of Δ^l in \mathbb{R}^l and a smooth embedding $\tilde{\mu} : \Delta_\mu^l \rightarrow X$ so that $\tilde{\mu}|_{\Delta^l} = \mu$. A *triangulation* of a smooth manifold X is a pair $T = (K, \eta)$ consisting of a simplicial complex and a homeomorphism $\eta : |K| \rightarrow X$ such that

$$\eta \circ \iota_\sigma : \Delta^l \rightarrow X$$

is a smooth embedding for every l -simplex σ in K and $l \in \mathbb{Z}^{\geq 0}$. If $T = (K, \eta)$ is a triangulation of X and $\psi : X \rightarrow X$ is a diffeomorphism, then $\psi_*T = (K, \psi \circ \eta)$ is also a triangulation of X .

Theorem 1.1. *If X, Y are smooth manifolds and $h : Y \rightarrow X$ is a smooth map, there exists a triangulation (K, η) of X such that h is transverse to $\eta|_{\text{Int } \sigma}$ for every simplex $\sigma \in K$.*

This theorem is stated in [8] as Lemma 2.3 and described as an obvious fact. As pointed out to the author by Matthias Kreck, Scharlemann [6] proves Theorem 1.1 under the assumption that the smooth map h is proper, and his argument makes use of this assumption in an essential way. For the purposes of [8], a transverse C^1 -triangulation would suffice, and the existence of a such

¹i.e. ι_σ takes the vertices of Δ^l to the vertices of $|\sigma|$ and is linear between them, as in [8, Footnote 5]

triangulation is fairly evident from the point of view of the Sard-Smale Theorem [7, (1.3)]. On the other hand, according to Matthias Kreck, the existence of smooth transverse triangulations without the properness assumption is related to subtle issues arising from the topology of stratifolds [2]. In this note we give a detailed proof of Theorem 1.1 as stated above, using Sard's theorem [3, Section 2].

2. OUTLINE OF THE PROOF OF THEOREM 1.1

If K is a simplicial complex, we denote by $\text{sd } K$ the barycentric subdivision of K . For any nonnegative integer l , let K_l be the l -th skeleton of K , i.e. the subcomplex of K consisting of the simplices in K of dimension at most l . If σ is a simplex in a simplicial complex K with geometric realization $|K|$, let

$$\text{St}(\sigma, K) = \bigcup_{\sigma \subset \sigma'} \text{Int } \sigma'$$

be the *star of σ in K* , as in [5, Sec. 62], and $b_\sigma \in \text{sd } K$ the barycenter of σ . The main step in the proof of Theorem 1.1 is the following observation.

Proposition 2.1. *Let $h : Y \rightarrow X$ be a smooth map between smooth manifolds. If (K, η) is a triangulation of X and σ is an l -simplex in K , there exists a diffeomorphism $\psi_\sigma : X \rightarrow X$ restricting to the identity outside of $\eta(\text{St}(b_\sigma, \text{sd } K))$ so that $\psi_\sigma \circ \eta|_{\text{Int } \sigma}$ is transverse to h .*

If σ and σ' are two distinct simplices in K of the same dimension l ,

$$(1) \quad \text{St}(b_\sigma, \text{sd } K) \cap \text{St}(b_{\sigma'}, \text{sd } K) = \emptyset.$$

Since ψ_σ is the identity outside of $\eta(\text{St}(b_\sigma, \text{sd } K))$ and the collection $\{\text{St}(b_\sigma, \text{sd } K)\}$ is locally finite, the composition $\psi_l : X \rightarrow X$ of all diffeomorphisms $\psi_\sigma : X \rightarrow X$ taken over all l -simplices σ in K is a well-defined diffeomorphism² of X . Since $\psi_l \circ \eta|_{|\sigma|} = \psi_\sigma \circ \eta|_{|\sigma|}$ for every l -simplex σ in K , we obtain the following conclusion from Proposition 2.1.

Corollary 2.2. *Let $h : Y \rightarrow X$ be a smooth map between smooth manifolds. If (K, η) is a triangulation of X , for every $l = 0, 1, \dots, \dim X$, there exists a diffeomorphism $\psi_l : X \rightarrow X$ restricting to the identity on $\eta(|K_{l-1}|)$ so that $\psi_l \circ \eta|_{\text{Int } \sigma}$ is transverse to h for every l -simplex σ in K .*

This corollary implies Theorem 1.1. By [4, Chap. II], X admits a triangulation (K, η_{-1}) . By induction and Corollary 2.2, for each $l = 0, 1, \dots, \dim X - 1$ there exists a triangulation $(K, \eta_l) = (K, \psi_l \circ \eta_{l-1})$ of X which is transverse to h on every open simplex in K of dimension at most l .

²The locally finite property implies that the composition of these diffeomorphisms in any order is a diffeomorphism; by (1), these diffeomorphisms commute and so the composition is independent of the order.

3. PROOF OF PROPOSITION 2.1

Lemma 3.1. *For every $l \in \mathbb{Z}^+$, there exists a smooth function $\rho_l : \mathbb{R}^l \rightarrow \bar{\mathbb{R}}^+$ such that*

$$\rho_l^{-1}(\mathbb{R}^+) = \text{Int } \Delta^l.$$

Proof. Let $\rho : \mathbb{R} \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$ be the smooth function given by

$$\rho(r) = \begin{cases} e^{-1/r}, & \text{if } r > 0, \\ 0, & \text{if } r \leq 0. \end{cases}$$

The smooth function $\rho_l : \mathbb{R}^l \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$ given by

$$\rho_l(t_1, \dots, t_l) = \rho\left(1 - \sum_{i=1}^{i=l} t_i\right) \cdot \prod_{i=1}^{i=l} \rho(t_i)$$

then has the desired property. □

Lemma 3.2. *Let (K, η) be a triangulation of a smooth manifold X and σ an l -simplex in K . If*

$$\tilde{\mu}_\sigma : \Delta_\sigma^l \times \mathbb{R}^{m-l} \rightarrow U_\sigma \subset X$$

is a diffeomorphism onto an open neighborhood U_σ of $\eta(|\sigma|)$ in X such that $\tilde{\mu}_\sigma(t, 0) = \eta(\iota_\sigma(t))$ for all $t \in \Delta_\sigma$, there exists $c_\sigma \in \mathbb{R}^+$ such that

$$\{(t, v) \in (\text{Int } \Delta^l) \times \mathbb{R}^{m-l} \mid |v| \leq c_\sigma \rho_l(t)\} \subset \tilde{\mu}_\sigma^{-1}(\eta(\text{St}(b_\sigma, \text{sd } K))).$$

Proof. It is sufficient to show³ that there exists $c_\sigma > 0$ such that

$$\{(t, v) \in (\text{Int } \Delta^l) \times \mathbb{R}^{m-l} \mid |v| \leq c_\sigma \rho_l(t)\} \subset \tilde{\mu}_\sigma^{-1}(\eta(\text{St}(\sigma, K))).$$

We assume that $0 < l < m$. Suppose $(t_p, v_p) \in (\text{Int } \Delta^l) \times (\mathbb{R}^{m-l} - 0)$ is a sequence such that

$$(2) \quad (t_p, v_p) \notin \tilde{\mu}_\sigma^{-1}(\eta(\text{St}(\sigma, K))), \quad |v_p| \leq \frac{1}{p} \rho_l(t_p).$$

Since $\eta(\text{St}(\sigma, K))$ is an open neighborhood of $\eta(\text{Int } \sigma)$ in X , by shrinking v_p and passing to a subsequence we can assume that

$$(3) \quad (t_p, v_p) \in \tilde{\mu}_\sigma^{-1}(\eta(|\tau'|)) \subset \tilde{\mu}_\sigma^{-1}(\eta(|\tau|))$$

for an m -simplex τ in K and a face τ' of τ so that $\sigma \not\subset \tau'$, $\tau' \not\subset \sigma$, and $\sigma \subset \tau$. Let $\iota_\tau : \Delta^m \rightarrow |K|$ be an injective linear map taking Δ^m to $|\tau|$ so that

$$(4) \quad \begin{aligned} \iota_\tau^{-1}(|\sigma|) &= \Delta^m \cap \mathbb{R}^l \times 0 \subset \mathbb{R}^l \times \mathbb{R}^{m-l}, \\ \iota_\tau^{-1}(|\tau'|) &= \Delta^m \cap 0 \times \mathbb{R}^{m-1} \subset \mathbb{R}^1 \times \mathbb{R}^{m-1}. \end{aligned}$$

Choose a smooth embedding $\mu_\tau : \Delta_\tau^m \rightarrow X$ from an open neighborhood of Δ^m in \mathbb{R}^m such that $\mu_\tau|_{\Delta^m} = \eta \circ \iota_\tau$. Let ϕ be the first component of the diffeomorphism

$$\mu_\tau^{-1} \circ \tilde{\mu}_\sigma : \tilde{\mu}_\sigma^{-1}(\mu_\tau(\Delta_\tau^m)) \rightarrow \mu_\tau^{-1}(\tilde{\mu}_\sigma(\Delta_\sigma^l \times \mathbb{R}^{m-l})) \subset \mathbb{R}^1 \times \mathbb{R}^{m-1}.$$

³If K' is the subdivision of K obtained by adding the vertices $b_{\sigma'}$ with $\sigma' \supseteq \sigma$, then $\text{St}(b_\sigma, \text{sd } K) = \text{St}(\sigma, K')$.

By (3), the second assumption in (4), the continuity of $d\phi$, and the compactness of Δ^l ,

$$(5) \quad |\phi(t_p, 0)| = |\phi(t_p, 0) - \phi(t_p, v_p)| \leq C|v_p| \quad \forall p,$$

for some $C > 0$. On the other hand, by the first assumption in (4), the vanishing of ρ_l on $\text{Bd } \Delta^l$, the continuity of $d\rho_l$, and the compactness of Δ^l ,

$$(6) \quad |\rho_l(t_p)| \leq C|\phi(t_p, 0)| \quad \forall p,$$

for some $C > 0$. The second assumption in (2), (5), and (6) give a contradiction for $p > C^2$. \square

Lemma 3.3. *Let $h : Y \rightarrow X$ be a smooth map between smooth manifolds, (K, η) a triangulation of X , σ an l -simplex in K , and*

$$\tilde{\mu}_\sigma : \Delta_\sigma^l \times \mathbb{R}^{m-l} \rightarrow U_\sigma \subset X$$

a diffeomorphism onto an open neighborhood U_σ of $\eta(|\sigma|)$ in X such that $\tilde{\mu}_\sigma(t, 0) = \eta(\iota_\sigma(t))$ for all $t \in \Delta_\sigma$. For every $\epsilon > 0$, there exists $s_\sigma \in C^\infty(\text{Int } \Delta^l; \mathbb{R}^{m-l})$ so that the map

$$(7) \quad \tilde{\mu}_\sigma \circ (\text{id}, s_\sigma) : \text{Int } \Delta^l \rightarrow X$$

is transverse to h ,

$$(8) \quad \begin{aligned} &|s_\sigma(t)| < \epsilon^2 \rho_l(t) \quad \forall t \in \text{Int } \Delta^l, \\ &\lim_{t \rightarrow \text{Bd } \Delta^l} \rho_l(t)^{-i} |\nabla^j s_\sigma(t)| = 0 \quad \forall i, j \in \mathbb{Z}^{\geq 0}, \end{aligned}$$

where $\nabla^j s_\sigma$ is the multilinear functional determined by the j -th derivatives of s_σ .

Proof. The smooth map

$$\phi : \text{Int } \Delta^l \times \mathbb{R}^{m-l} \rightarrow X, \quad \phi(t, v) = \tilde{\mu}_\sigma(t, e^{-1/\rho_l(t)}v),$$

is a diffeomorphism onto an open neighborhood U'_σ of $\eta(\text{Int } \sigma)$ in X . The smooth map (7) with $s_\sigma = e^{-1/\rho_l(t)}v$ is transverse to h if and only if $v \in \mathbb{R}^{m-l}$ is a regular value of the smooth map

$$\pi_2 \circ \phi^{-1} \circ h : h^{-1}(U'_\sigma) \rightarrow \mathbb{R}^{m-l},$$

where $\pi_2 : \text{Int } \Delta^l \times \mathbb{R}^{m-l} \rightarrow \mathbb{R}^{m-l}$ is the projection onto the second component. By Sard's Theorem, the set of such regular values is dense in \mathbb{R}^{m-l} . Thus, the map (7) with $s_\sigma = e^{-1/\rho_l(t)}v$ is transverse to h for some $v \in \mathbb{R}^{m-l}$ with $|v| < \epsilon^2$. The second statement in (8) follows from $\rho_l|_{\text{Bd } \Delta^l} = 0$. \square

Corollary 3.4. *Let $h : Y \rightarrow X$ be a smooth map between smooth manifolds, (K, η) a triangulation of X , σ an l -simplex in K , and*

$$\tilde{\mu}_\sigma : \Delta_\sigma^l \times \mathbb{R}^{m-l} \rightarrow U_\sigma \subset X$$

a diffeomorphism onto an open neighborhood U_σ of $\eta(|\sigma|)$ in X such that $\tilde{\mu}_\sigma(t, 0) = \eta(\iota_\sigma(t))$ for all $t \in \Delta_\sigma$. For every $\epsilon > 0$, there exists a diffeomorphism ψ'_σ of $\Delta_\sigma^l \times \mathbb{R}^{m-l}$ restricting to the identity outside of

$$\{(t, v) \in (\text{Int } \Delta^l) \times \mathbb{R}^{m-l} : |v| \leq \epsilon \rho_l(t)\}$$

so that the map $\tilde{\mu}_\sigma \circ \psi'_\sigma|_{\text{Int } \Delta^l \times 0}$ is transverse to h .

Proof. Choose $\beta \in C^\infty(\mathbb{R}; [0, 1])$ so that

$$\beta(r) = \begin{cases} 1, & \text{if } r \leq \frac{1}{2}, \\ 0, & \text{if } r \geq 1. \end{cases}$$

Let $C_\beta = \sup_{r \in \mathbb{R}} |\beta'(r)|$. With s_σ as provided by Lemma 3.3, define

$$\begin{aligned} \psi'_\sigma : \Delta_\sigma^l \times \mathbb{R}^{m-l} &\longrightarrow \Delta_\sigma^l \times \mathbb{R}^{m-l} && \text{by} \\ \psi'_\sigma(t, v) &= \begin{cases} \left(t, v + \beta\left(\frac{|v|}{\epsilon \rho_l(t)}\right) s_\sigma(t)\right), & \text{if } t \in \text{Int } \Delta^l, \\ (t, v), & \text{if } t \notin \text{Int } \Delta^l. \end{cases} \end{aligned}$$

The restriction of this map to $(\text{Int } \Delta^l) \times \mathbb{R}^{m-l}$ is smooth and its Jacobian is

$$(9) \quad \mathcal{J}\psi'_\sigma|_{(t,v)} = \begin{pmatrix} \mathbb{I}_l & 0 \\ (\mathcal{J}\psi'_\sigma|_{(t,v)})_{2,1} & \mathbb{I}_{m-l} + \beta' \left(\frac{|v|}{\epsilon \rho_l(t)}\right) \frac{s_\sigma(t)}{\epsilon \rho_l(t)} \frac{v^{tr}}{|v|} \end{pmatrix},$$

where

$$(\mathcal{J}\psi'_\sigma|_{(t,v)})_{2,1} = \beta \left(\frac{|v|}{\epsilon \rho_l(t)}\right) \nabla s_\sigma(t) - \beta' \left(\frac{|v|}{\epsilon \rho_l(t)}\right) \frac{|v|}{\epsilon \rho_l(t)} \frac{s_\sigma(t)}{\rho_l(t)} \nabla \rho_l.$$

By the first property in (8), this matrix is non-singular if $\epsilon < 1/C_\beta$. If W is any linear subspace of \mathbb{R}^{m-l} containing $s_\sigma(t)$,

$$\psi'_\sigma(t \times W) \subset t \times W, \quad \psi'_\sigma(t, v) = (t, v) \quad \forall v \in W \text{ such that } |v| \geq \epsilon \rho_l(t).$$

Thus, ψ'_σ is a bijection on $t \times W$, a diffeomorphism on $(\text{Int } \Delta^l) \times \mathbb{R}^{m-l}$, and a bijection on $\Delta_\sigma^l \times \mathbb{R}^{m-l}$.

Since $\beta(r) = 0$ for $r \geq 1$, $\psi'_\sigma(t, v) = (t, v)$ unless $t \in \text{Int } \Delta^l$ and $|v| < \epsilon \rho_l(t)$. It remains to show that ψ'_σ is smooth along

$$\overline{\{(t, v) \in (\text{Int } \Delta^l) \times \mathbb{R}^{m-l} : |v| \leq \epsilon \rho_l(t)\}} - (\text{Int } \Delta^l) \times \mathbb{R}^{m-l} = (\text{Bd } \Delta^l) \times 0.$$

Since $|s_\sigma(t)| \rightarrow 0$ as $t \rightarrow \text{Bd } \Delta^l$ by the first property in (8), ψ'_σ is continuous at all $(t, 0) \in (\text{Bd } \Delta^l) \times 0$. By the first property in (8), ψ'_σ is also differentiable at all $(t, 0) \in (\text{Bd } \Delta^l) \times 0$, with the Jacobian equal to \mathbb{I}_m . By (9) and the compactness of Δ^l ,

$$|\mathcal{J}\psi'_\sigma|_{(t,v)} - \mathbb{I}_m| \leq C(|\nabla s_\sigma(t)| + \rho(t)^{-1}|s_\sigma(t)|) \quad \forall (t, v) \in (\text{Int } \Delta^l) \times \mathbb{R}^{m-l}$$

for some $C > 0$. So $\mathcal{J}\psi'_\sigma$ is continuous at $(t, 0)$ by the second statement in (8), as well as differentiable, with the differential of $\mathcal{J}\psi'_\sigma$ at $(t, 0)$ equal

to 0. For $i \geq 2$, the i -th derivatives of the second component of ψ'_σ at $(t, v) \in (\text{Int } \Delta^l) \times \mathbb{R}^{m-l}$ are linear combinations of the terms

$$\beta^{(i_1)} \left(\frac{|v|}{\epsilon \rho_l(t)} \right) \cdot \left(\frac{|v|}{\epsilon \rho_l(t)} \right)^{i_1} \cdot \prod_{k=1}^{j_1} \left(\frac{|\nabla^{p_k} \rho_l}{\rho_l(t)} \right) \cdot \frac{v_J}{|v|^{2j_2}} \cdot \nabla^{i_2} s_\sigma(t),$$

where $i_1, i_2, j_1, j_2 \in \mathbb{Z}^{\geq 0}$ and $p_1, \dots, p_{j_1} \in \mathbb{Z}^+$ are such that

$$i_1 + (p_1 + p_2 + \dots + p_{j_1} - j_1) + i_2 = i, \quad j_1 + j_2 \leq i_1,$$

and v_J is a j_2 -fold product of components of v . Such a term is nonzero only if $\epsilon \rho_l(t)/2 < |v| < \epsilon \rho_l(t)$ or $i_1 = 0$ and $|v| < \epsilon \rho_l(t)$. Thus, the i -th derivatives of ψ'_σ at $(t, v) \in (\text{Int } \Delta^l) \times \mathbb{R}^{m-l}$ are bounded by

$$C_i \sum_{i_1+i_2 \leq i} \rho_l(t)^{-i_1} |\nabla^{i_2} s_\sigma(t)|$$

for some constant $C_i > 0$. By the second statement in (8), the last expression approaches 0 as $t \rightarrow \text{Bd } \Delta^l$ and does so faster than ρ_l . It follows that ψ'_σ is smooth at all $(t, 0) \in (\text{Bd } \Delta^l) \times 0$. \square

Proof of Proposition 2.1. Let Δ^l_σ be a contractible open neighborhood of Δ^l in \mathbb{R}^l and $\mu_\sigma : \Delta^l_\sigma \rightarrow X$ a smooth embedding so that $\mu_\sigma|_{\Delta^l} = \eta \circ \iota_\sigma$. By the Tubular Neighborhood Theorem [1, (12.11)], there exist an open neighborhood U_σ of $\mu_\sigma(\Delta^l_\sigma)$ in X and a diffeomorphism⁴

$$\tilde{\mu}_\sigma : \Delta^l_\sigma \times \mathbb{R}^{m-l} \rightarrow U_\sigma \quad \text{such that} \quad \tilde{\mu}_\sigma(t, 0) = \mu_\sigma(t) \quad \forall t \in \Delta^l_\sigma.$$

Let $c_\sigma > 0$ be as in Lemma 3.2 and ψ'_σ as in Corollary 3.4 with $\epsilon = c_\sigma$. The diffeomorphism

$$\psi_\sigma = \tilde{\mu}_\sigma \circ \psi'_\sigma \circ \tilde{\mu}_\sigma^{-1} : U_\sigma \rightarrow U_\sigma$$

is then the identity on $U_\sigma - \text{St}(b_\sigma, \text{sd } K)$. Since ψ_σ is also the identity outside of a compact subset of U_σ , it extends by identity to a diffeomorphism on all of X . \square

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⁴Since Δ^l_σ is contractible, the normal bundle to the embedding μ_σ is trivial.

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