DATA STRUCTURE FOR TRIANGULATIONS

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We shall discuss the data structure to represent triangulations and facilitate the mesh adaptation procedure. There is a dilemma for the data structure in the implementation level. If more sophisticated data structure is used to easily traverse in the mesh, for example, to save the star of vertices or edges, it will simplify the implementation of most adaptive finite element subroutines. On the other hand, if the triangulation is changed, for example, a triangle is bisected, one has to update those data structure which in turn complicates the implementation.

Our solution is to maintain two basic data structure and construct auxiliary data structure inside each subroutine when it is necessary. It is not optimal in terms of the computational cost. But it will benefit the interface of accessing subroutines, simplify the coding and save the memory. Also as we shall see soon, the auxiliary data structure can be constructed by sparse matrixlization efficiently. This is an example we scarify a small factor of efficiency to gain the simplicity.

1. BASIC DATA STRUCTURE

The matrices $\text{node}(1:N,1:d)$ and $\text{elem}(1:NT,1:d+1)$ are used to represent a $d$-dimensional triangulation embedded in $\mathbb{R}^d$, where $N$ is the number of vertices and $NT$ is the number of elements. These two matrices represent two different structures of a triangulation: $\text{elem}$ for the topology and $\text{node}$ for the geometric embedding.

The matrix $\text{elem}$ represents a set of abstract simplices. The index set $\{1, 2, \cdots, N\}$ is called the global index set of vertices. Here a vertex is thought as an abstract entity. By definition, $\text{elem}(t,1:d+1)$ are the global indices of $d+1$ vertices which form the abstract $d$-simplex $t$. Note that any permutation of vertices of $t$ will represent the same abstract simplex.

The matrix $\text{node}$ gives the geometric realization of the simplicial complex. For example, for a 2-D triangulation, $\text{node}(k,1:2)$ contain $x$- and $y$-coordinates of the $k$-th node. We shall always order the vertices of a simplex such that the signed volume is positive. That is in 2-D, three vertices of a triangle is ordered counter-clockwise and in 3-D, the ordering of vertices follows the right-hand rule. Note that an even permutation of vertices is still allowed to represent the same element.

As an example, node and elem matrices to represent the triangulation of the L-shape domain \( \Omega = (-1,1) \times (-1,1) \setminus ([0,1] \times [0,-1]) \) are given in the Figure 1 (a) and (b).

![Figure 1](image_url)

**Figure 1.** (Left) is a triangulation of the L-shape domain \((-1,1) \times (-1,1) \setminus ([0,1] \times [0,-1])\) and (Right) is its representation using node and elem matrices.

2. Auxiliary data structure for 2-D triangulation

We discuss ways to extract the combinatorial structure of a triangulation by using elem array only. The combinatorial structure will benefit the implementation of finite element methods.

**edge.** We first complete the 2-D simplicial complex represented by elem by constructing 1-dimensional simplices, i.e., edges of the triangulation. We use edge(1:NE,1:2) to store indices of the starting and ending points. The column is sorted in a way such that for the \(k\)-th edge, \(\text{edge}(k,1) < \text{edge}(k,2)\). The following code will generate an edge matrix.

```markdown
1 totalEdge = sort({elem(:,[2,3]); elem(:,[3,1]); elem(:,[1,2])},2);
2 [i,j,s] = find(sparse(totalEdge(:,2),totalEdge(:,1),1));
3 edge = [j,i];
4 bdEdge = [j(s==1),i(s==1)];
```

The first line collects all edges from the set of triangles and sorts the column such that \(\text{totalEdge}(k,1) < \text{totalEdge}(k,2)\). The interior edges are repeated twice in totalEdge. We use the summation property of `sparse` command to merge the duplicated indices. The nonzero vector \(s\) takes value 1 (for boundary edges) or 2 (for interior edges). We then use `find` to return the nonzero indices which forms the edge set. We can also find the boundary edges using the subset of indices pair corresponding to the nonzero value 1. Note that we switch the order of \((i,j)\) in line 3 to sort the edge set row-wise since the output of `find(sparse)` is sorted column-wise.

To construct `edge` matrix only, the above 3 line code can be further simplified to one line:

```markdown
edge = unique(sort([elem(:,[2,3]); elem(:,[3,1]); elem(:,[1,2])],2),’rows’);
```

The `unique` function provides more functionality which we shall explore more later. However, numerical tests show that the running time of `unique` is around 3 times of the combination `find(sparse)`.
Now we have three types of simplices for a 2-D simplicial complex:

- 0-simplex: \(\{1, 2, \ldots, N\}\); 1-simplex: edge; 2-simplex: elem.

We shall discuss data structure to efficiently traverse in these simplices. These data structures use mainly the combinatorial property of a mesh, i.e., using the matrix elem. We do use some geometric properties of the 2-D planar triangulation. For example, we assume each edge is shared by at most two triangles, which may not hold for general abstract simplicial complex.

Following [?], we shall use the name convention \(a2b\) to represent the link form \(a\) to \(b\). This link is usually the map from the local index set to the global index set. Throughout this paper, we denote the number of node, elem, and edge by

\[
N = \text{size}(\text{node}, 1); \quad NT = \text{size}(\text{elem}, 1); \quad NE = \text{size}(\text{edge}, 1);
\]

**Node and Elem.** The elem matrix, by the definition, is a link from triangles to vertices, i.e., elem is elem2node. The link from vertices to triangles, namely given a vertex \(v\), to find all triangles containing \(v\), is stored in the sparse matrix:

\[
t2v = \text{sparse}([1:NT, 1:NT, 1:NT], \text{elem}, 1, NT, N);
\]

The \(NT \times N\) matrix \(t2v\) is the incidence matrix between triangles and vertices. \(t2v(t,i)=1\) means the \(i\)-th node is a vertex of triangle \(t\). If we look at \(t2v\) column-wise, the nonzero in the \(i\)-th column of \(t2v(:,i)\) will give all triangles containing the \(i\)-th node. Since sparse matrix is stored column-wise, the star of the \(i\)-th node can be efficiently found by

\[
\text{nodeStar} = \text{find}(t2v(:,i));
\]

The cardinality of the node star, called *valence*, can be computed by the **accumarray** command. The following one line code

\[
\text{valence} = \text{accumarray}(	ext{elem(:)}, \text{ones}(3*NT, 1), [N 1]);
\]

is equivalent to the double loop:

```matlab
for t=1:NT
    for i=1:3
        valence(elem(t,i)) = valence(elem(t,i))+1;
    end
end
```

When \(NT\) is big, the **for** \(t=1:NT\) loop is not efficient in MATLAB. As we mentioned early, **sparse** and **accumarray** are two most commonly used commands to replace the **for** loop.
node and edge. The edge matrix, by the definition, is a link from edges to vertices. Sometimes we know only vertices of an edge, say \( v_i, v_j \), and want to find the edge using these two nodes. Namely an index map from \((v_i, v_j) \to k\) such that \( \text{edge}(k,:) = [v_i \ v_j] \) or \([v_j \ v_i]\). We shall construct such mapping by the sparse matrix

\[
\text{node2edge} = \text{sparse} (\text{edge}(:,[1,2]),\text{edge}(:,[2,1]),[1:NE,1:NE],N,N);
\]

Here we repeat the edge matrix with the reverse order in the indices set to allow \( i<j \) or \( j<i \) such that if \( [i,j]=\text{edge}(k,:) \) then \( \text{node2edge}(i,j)=\text{node2edge}(j,i)=k \). Thus node2edge is a symmetric matrix.

There is another way to construct the link node \( \to \) edge using the product of sparse matrices. Let us introduce the incidence matrix between edges and vertices as

\[
e2v = \text{sparse}([1:NE,1:NE],[\text{edge}(:,1);\text{edge}(:,2)],1,NE,N);
\]

The sparse matrix \( e2v \) is of dimension \( NE \times N \) such that \( e2v(e,v)=1 \) if \( v \) is a vertex of \( e \). Then \( e2v(:,i) \) or \( e2v(:,j) \) contains all edges using the vertex \( i \) or \( j \), respectively. The intersection of \( e2v(:,i) \cap e2v(:,j) \) is the edge using \( i,j \) as two nodes, which can be found by

\[
\text{find}(e2v(:,i).*e2v(:,j));
\]

edge and elem. The edge matrix is constructed using the element matrix. But there is no direct link between edges and triangles. One indirect link is through the path elem \( \to \) node \( \to \) edge. For example, \( \text{node2edge} (\text{elem}(t,2),\text{elem}(t,3)) \) will give the index of the edge composed by the second and third vertices of the triangle \( t \).

Since the access of a sparse matrix is not efficient especially in a large loop, we shall form a direct link elem \( \to \) edge. We label three edges of a triangle such that the \( i \)-th edge is opposite to the \( i \)-th vertex. We define the matrix elem2edge as the map of local index of edges in each triangle to its global index. The following 3 line code will construct elem2edge using more output from unique function.

```matlab
1 totalEdge = sort([elem(:,[2,3]); elem(:,[3,1]); elem(:,[1,2])],2);
2 [edge, i2, j] = unique(totalEdge,'rows');
3 elem2edge = reshape(j,NT,3);
```

Line 1 collects all edges element-wise. The size of totalEdge is thus \( 3NT \times 2 \). By the construction, there is a natural index mapping from totalEdge to elem. In line 2, we apply unique function to obtain the edge matrix. The output index vectors \( i2 \) and \( j \) contain the index mapping between edge and totalEdge. Here \( i2 \) is a \( N \times 1 \) vector to index the last (2-nd in our case) occurrence of each unique value in totalEdge such that \( \text{edge} = \text{totalEdge}(i2,:) \), while \( j \) is a \( 3NT \times 1 \) vector such that \( \text{totalEdge} = \text{edge}(j,:) \). (Try help unique in MATLAB to learn more examples.) Then using the natural index mapping from totalEdge to elem, we reshape the \( 3NT \times 1 \) vector \( j \) to a \( NT \times 3 \) matrix which is elem2edge.

We then define a \( NE \times 4 \) matrix \( \text{edge2elem} \) such that \( \text{edge2elem}(k,1) \) and \( \text{edge2elem}(k,2) \) are two triangles sharing the \( k \)-th edge for an interior edge. If the \( k \)-th edge is on the boundary, then we set \( \text{edge2elem}(k,1) = \text{edge2elem}(k,2) \). Furthermore, we shall record the local indices in \( \text{edge2elem}(k,3:4) \) such that \( \text{elem2edge} (\text{edge2elem}(k,1),\text{edge2elem}(k,3)) = k \). Similarly \( \text{edge2elem}(k,4) \) is the local index of \( k \)-th edge in \( \text{edge2elem}(k,2) \).

To construct edge2elem matrix, we need to find out the index map from edge to elem. The following code is a continuation of the code constructing elem2edge.

```matlab
1 i1((1:NT-1:NT)-1) = 3*NT:-1:1; i1=i1';
2 k1 = ceil(i1/NT); t1 = i1 - NT*(k1-1);
3 k2 = ceil(i2/NT); t2 = i2 - NT*(k2-1);
```
The code in line 1 uses \( j \) to find the first occurrence of each unique edge in the \( \text{totalEdge} \). In MATLAB, when assign values using an index vector with duplication, the value at the repeated index will be the last one assigned to this location. Obvious \( j \) contains duplication of edge indices. For example, \( j(1)=j(2)=4 \) which means \( \text{totalEdge}(1,:) = \text{totalEdge}(2,:) = \text{edge}(4,:) \). We reverse the order of \( j \) such that \( i_1(4)=1 \) which is the first occurrence.

Using the natural index mapping from \( \text{totalEdge} \) to \( \text{elem} \), for an index \( i \) between 1:N, the formula \( k = \text{ceil}(i / NT) \) computes the local index of \( i \)-th edge, and \( t = i - NT \times (k - 1) \) is the global index of the triangle which \( \text{totalEdge}(i,:) \) belongs to. The \( \text{edge2elem} \) is just composed by \( t_1, t_2, k_1 \) and \( k_2 \).

**elem and elem.** We use the matrix \( \text{neighbor}(1:NT,1:3) \) to record the neighboring triangles for each triangle. By definition, \( \text{neighbor}(t,i) \) is opposite to the \( i \)-th vertex of the \( t \)-th triangle. If \( i \) is opposite to the boundary, then we set \( \text{neighbor}(t,i)=t \). Using the index map between edge and elem, we can easily form the neighbor matrix by the following 2 lines of code.

```matlab
1 ix = (i1 ~= i2);
2 neighbor = accumarray([[t1(ix),k1(ix)];[t2,k2]], [t2(ix);t1], [NT 3]);
```

In line 1, to avoid the duplication in the index array, we find the index set of interior edges by noting that if \( e \) is a boundary edge, then \( i_1(e)=i_2(e) \). Since \( t_1 \) and \( t_2 \) share the same edge, we form the neighbor matrix by using \( t_1,k_1 \) and \( t_2,k_2 \) as indices set and \( t_2,t_1 \) as the value in line 2.

We summarize the construction of these auxiliary data structures in the subroutine \( \text{auxstructure.m} \).

```matlab
1 function [neighbor,elem2edge,edge2elem,edge,bdEdge]=auxstructure(elem)
2 totalEdge = sort([elem(:,[2,3]); elem(:,[3,1]); elem(:,[1,2])],2);
3 [edge, i2, j] = unique(totalEdge,'rows');
4 NT = size(elem,1);
5 elem2edge = reshape(j,NT,3);
6 i1(j(3*NT:-1:1)) = 3*NT:-1:1; i1=i1';
7 k1 = ceil(i1/NT); t1 = i1 - NT*(k1-1);
8 k2 = ceil(i2/NT); t2 = i2 - NT*(k2-1);
9 ix = (i1 ~= i2);
10 neighbor = accumarray([[t1(ix),k1(ix)];[t2,k2]], [t2(ix);t1], [NT 3]);
11 bdEdge = edge((i1 == i2),:);
12 edge2elem = [t1,t2,k1,k2];
```

### 3. Auxiliary Data Structure for 3-D Triangulation

Most codes discussed for 2-D triangulations can be generalized to 3-D triangulations in a straightforward way. Due to the page limit, we pick up the following important data structures to explain in detail.

**elem and face.** The face matrix, which represents the 2-D simplex, can be generated by the unique function of all element-wise faces. The link \( \text{elem2face}, \text{faceStar} \), and \( \text{neighbor} \) can be constructed similarly using the index map. We list \( \text{auxstructure3.m} \) below and skip the explanation.

```matlab
1 function [neighbor,elem2face,face2elem,face,bdFace] = auxstructure3(elem)
2 totalFace = (elem(:,[2 4 3]);elem(:,[1 3 4]);elem(:,[1 4 2]);elem(:,[1 2 3]));
```
[face, i2, j] = unique(sort(totalFace,2), 'rows');
NT = size(elem,1);
elem2face = reshape(j, NT, 4);
i1(j(4*NT:-1:1)) = 4*NT:-1:1; i1 = i1';
k1 = ceil(i1/NT); t1 = i1 - NT*(k1-1);
k2 = ceil(i2/NT); t2 = i2 - NT*(k2-1);
ix = (i1 ~= i2);
neighbor = accumarray([t1(ix), k1(ix); t2, k2], [t2(ix); t1], [NT 4]);
bdFace = face((i1 == i2), :);
face2elem = [t1, t2, k1, k2];

**elem and edge.** The edge matrix and elem2edge can be generated using unique commands as in the 2-D case.

totalEdge = sort([elem(t,[1 2]); elem(t,[1 3]); elem(t,[1 4]); ...
                   elem(t,[2 3]); elem(t,[2 4]); elem(t,[3 4])],2);
[edge, i2, j] = unique(totalEdge, 'rows');
elem2edge = reshape(j, NT, 6);

We now discuss the construction of edgeStar. This link from edge to elem is important since the 3-D local mesh refinement is always cutting edges. Unlike the 2-D case, we cannot use a NE x 2 dense matrix for edgeStar since the number of elements sharing one edge varies a lot. Again we shall resort to the sparse matrix.

t2v = sparse([1:NT,1:NT,1:NT,1:NT], elem(1:NT,:), 1, NT, N);
nodeStar1 = t2v(1:NT, edge(:,1));
nodeStar2 = t2v(1:NT, edge(:,2));
edgeStar = nodeStar1.*nodeStar2;

The elements containing an edge are characterized as the intersection of two stars of the ending nodes of this edge. The first line generates the incidence matrix t2v. Line 2 and 3 extract columns from t2v. The intersection is found by the Hadamard product of two sparse matrix nodeStar1 and nodeStar2. The resulting sparse matrix edgeStar is a NTxNE sparse matrix and find(edgeStar(:,i)) will give the element indices containing the i-th edge.

In the construction of elem2edge and edgeStar, we use Hadamard product of sparse matrices to find the quantity associated with two index sets. This technique is crucial in 3-D refinement.