



64-424 Intelligent Robotics

https://tams.informatik.uni-hamburg.de/ lectures/2018ws/vorlesung/ir

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Technical Aspects of Multimodal Systems

Winterterm 2018/2019



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64-424 Intelligent Robotics

Outline

1. Force and Tactile Sensors



1 Force and Tactile Sensors



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1. Force and Tactile Sensors

Motivation Strain gauge Force/Torque Sensors Human Tactile Sensing Tactile Sensors Advanced Sensors Robot Skin Application Example



1 Force and Tactile Sensors



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Today's agenda

- recall some physics: force, torque, stiffness
- pure position control vs. manipulation
- so, forces can't be neglected
- strain-gauges
- six-axis force/torque sensor
- tactile sensors
- advanced sensors and robot skin
- application example





Force

Application of force to a point of an object accelerates the object in the direction of the applied force

Newton's second law defines acceleration of an object as proportional to the applied force (F) and inversely proportional to the mass (m) of the object, hence:

$$a = \frac{F}{m}$$

- ► The unit of force is the Newton (N):
- One Newton of applied force accelerates an object with a mass of 1 kg with 1 m/s²





Torque

When a force F is applied to a rigid object and the axis of rotation is known (e.g. a robot joint axis), the corresponding torque is given by the vector cross product

$$au = \mathbf{r} \times \mathbf{F}$$

where r is the vector from the axis to the point of action of the force.

► The unit of torque is the Newtonmeter (Nm)

The angular acceleration α of an object is proportional to the torque τ and inversely proportional to the moment of inertia I of the object, hence:

$$\tau = I \cdot \alpha \qquad \iff \qquad F = m \cdot a$$





Measuring forces

Force cannot be measured directly, only by its effects:

- acceleration of a rigid object
- deformation of an elastic object

Hooke's Law:

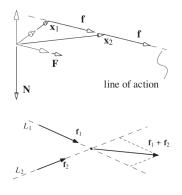
- the force F needed to extend or compress a spring by some distance x is proportional to that distance,
- $F = k \cdot x$ with stiffness k
- most solid materials obey this law when the elongation x is small
- calculate F from known stiffness k and observed x





Multiple forces and torques applied to a rigid object

- ► force f = (f_x, f_y, f_z) a vector, along its line of action
- independent of contact location
- vector addition $f = f_1 + f_2$
- forces can be combined into one,
- unless force vectors are (anti-) parallel
- this situation called a pair
- combine into one force and one torque
- ► six-axis sensor gives complete information: measures (f_x, f_y, f_z) and (τ_x, τ_y, τ_z)



Proof: Mason, Mechanics of Manipulation





Manipulation tasks and position control...

typical industrial manipulator (example PA-10 robot):

- \blacktriangleright 10 kg payload, 1 m reach, lower arm weight pprox 10 kg
- ▶ position accuracy better than 0.2 mm (total load 10+10 kg)
- calculate corresponding stiffness: $k = F/x \ge 9.81 \cdot 10^5 \text{ Nm}^{-1}$

accidentally moving into an obstacle:

- 0.2 mm: contact force > 200 N (20 kg)
- ▶ 1.0 mm: contact force > 1000 N
- 1.0 cm: contact force > 10000 N



- even minor position errors can be catastrophic
- need sensors to measure the interaction forces
- need fast control to limit contact forces





Manipulation tasks and position control (cont'd)

moving a stiff robot into an obstacle...

- no force readings until the robot touches the object
- need to stop the robot very quickly once we hit the object
- motion with constant acceleration *a*: $v = a \cdot t$, $s = \frac{1}{2}at^2$
- ▶ most robots use a fixed control cycle, e.g. 100 Hz (PA-10)
- want to brake in one control cycle, t = 0.01 s, so $a = 2s/t^2$
- assuming maximum interpenetration distance s = 0.2 mm
- maximum allowed velocity: $v = 2s/t \le 0.04m/s$
- the motion has to be very slow!
- (or braking accelerations become really large)



1.1 Force and Tactile Sensors - Motivation

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Problem with stiff robots

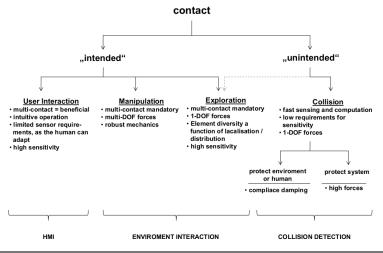


Results of unintended contacts. . . Strohmayr, Dissertation, 2012





Functional taxonomy of contact types



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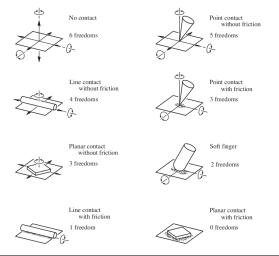


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Geometric taxonomy of contact types



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Duality of motion and force

Motion

A zero-pitch twist is a pure rotation. For a pure translation, the direction of the axis is determined, but the location is not.

A differential translation is equivalent to a rotation about an axis at infinity. In the plane, any motion can be described as a rotation about some point, possibly at infinity.

Force

A zero-pitch wrench is a pure force. For a pure moment, the direction of the axis is determined, but the location is not. A couple is equivalent to a force along a line at infinity. In the plane, any system of forces reduces to a single force, possibly at infinity.

Mason: Mechanics of Manipulation, Lecture 13; 2013





Fun example: Mobipulator

- 4-wheel skid-steering platform
- simple DC-motors, rubber wheels
- tracking with fixed overhead camera
- compare: dead-reckoning navigation and odometry (last lecture)
- position control and interaction forces
- exploits wheel and object friction
- surprising (2D-) manipulation skills
- tasks would be quite difficult with a robot arm and hand...



Matt Mason and students, in Experimental Robotics VI 1999, www.youtube.com/watch?v=kUkxhM4W7Jg



1.2 Force and Tactile Sensors - Strain gauge



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Strain gauge

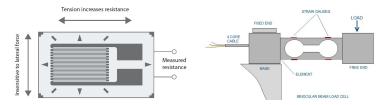
Most modern sensors use the approach of measuring the deformation of an elastic material

- a strain gauge is composed of conducting paths laminated onto an elastic carrier material
- mechanical strain affects the path resistance
- \blacktriangleright the resistance change is very small \rightarrow special measurement circuitry is required
- Specific application of strain gauges allows to measure:
 - the magnitude and direction of mechanical strain
 - force and pressure
 - associated quantities like acceleration, distance, etc.





Strain gauge and load-cell



- resistance of a wire increases with length
- put thin long wire on carrier material
- ▶ foil type: conducting wire layered onto elastic carrier material
- semiconductor: typically polisilizium
- wire type: thin wire on paper





Foil strain gauge

Typical characteristics of foil strain gauges

- resistance values: 120 600 Ω
- \blacktriangleright tolerance of the resistance usually less than $\pm 0,5\%$
- operating voltages: 1 V 10 V
- \blacktriangleright length variation of the strain gauge up to $\pm\,3\,\%$
- typical length variation: 0.1 10 μm
- \blacktriangleright achievable accuracy at 20° C ≈ 1 % 5 %

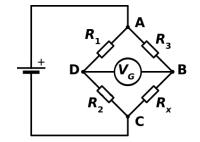




Wheatstone bridge

How to measure the resistance change of a strain-gauge?

- measure voltage drop over R
- length change small, $\Delta L \ll L$
- $\Delta R \approx 10^{-3} \,\Omega$, $\Delta R/R \approx 10^{-5}$
- difficult to measure tiny changes of large voltage; easier to measure tiny change of near-zero voltage
- Wheatstone bridge uses four resistors,
- tuned so that $R_1/R_2 \approx R_3/R_x$
- useful voltage between D and B





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Six-axis force/torque sensor

- common tool for industrial robots
- mounted between wrist and tool
- sensor measures total force, including weight of sensor and tool
- calibration step to estimate tool size, weight, COG
- subtract tool/sensor from total forces
- gives environment interaction forces
- use for robot control
- note: no force measurements for any contacts between robot base and wrist





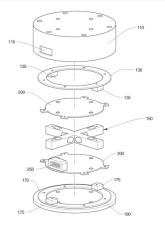
ATi/ABB automation video, youtube





Six-axis F/T sensor: Construction

- stiff upper housing (110) with screw threads (tool connection)
- connector ring from (110) to (150)
- elastic member (150) with strain-gauges
- stiff bottom plate (190)
- amplifier circuit boards (200)
- two strain-gauges on each cross arm
- triangular setup with three elastic arms (at 120°) another popular arrangement



C.G. Kang, Int. Journal of Control, Automation, and Systems, vol. 3, no. 3, 469–476, 2005

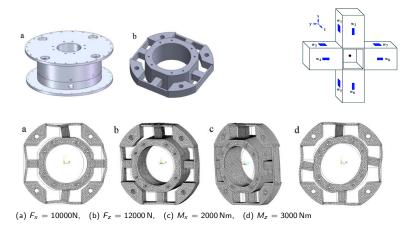


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Six-axis F/T sensor: Deformation under load



D. Cheng et.al., APISAT 2014, doi:10.1016/j.proeng.2014.12.699





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Six-axis F/T sensor: Coupling matrix

- deformation of the elastic part affects different strain gauges
- specific for each sensor design

	F/T DOF	Strain gauges
z	- F _x	W_3, W_7
W3 - W7	F_y	W_1, W_5
w4 - w8	F_z	W_2, W_4, W_6, W_8
	M_{x}	W_4, W_8
	M_{y}	W_2, W_6
w ₅ w ₆	M _z	W_1, W_3, W_5, W_7





Six-axis F/T sensor: Coupling matrix

- resistance change of stain-gauges is linear for small deformation
- therefore, the transformation from stain-gauge values to forces and torques can be written as matrix multiplication
- this is called the coupling matrix K
- coupling matrices are very device specific
- in ideal case, many coefficients zero
- datasheet usually includes detailed K values from factory calibration

W۵



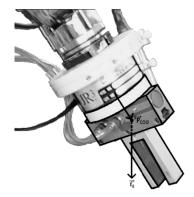
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Six-axis F/T sensor: Calibration

- mass of the attached tool \vec{F}_{tool}
- tool's center of gravity \vec{p}_{COG}
- also, mass and COG of the moving part (tool side) of the F/T sensor
- once tool COG and weight are known, software can subtract those values from the measured data
- this allows estimation of external forces
- calibration is only valid in the configuration it was carried out
- still temperature-dependent



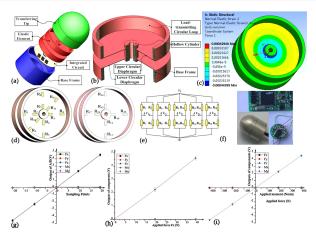


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Miniaturization: Five-axis fingertip F/T sensor



measures

$$F_x, F_y, F_z, M_x, M_y$$

- thin diaphragm as flexible element
- FEM analysis
- 20 strain-gauges
- five Wheatstone bridges

Q.-K. Liang et.al., Scientific Reports 6:24689 2016, DOI: 10.1038/srep24689

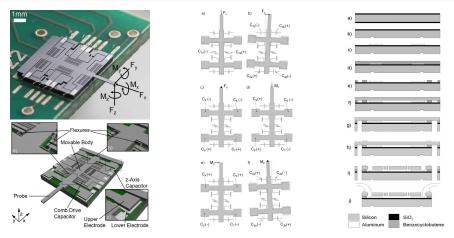


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Miniaturization: MEMS F/T sensor



Beyeler et.al., Microfabricated 6-Axis Force-Torque Sensor, ICRA 2009, 520-525





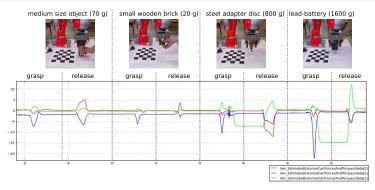
F/T sensor applications

- guarded motions: check motion execution and stop when preset force thresholds are exceeded
- compliant motions
 - peg-in-hole insertion tasks
 - surface following and measurements
 - polishing and grinding tasks, constant normal forces
 - human-guided motion/trajectory teaching
- direct or hybrid force control
 - torque control of individual motors (joints)
 - force / torque control of tool center point
 - mixture of position and force control schemes
 - requires precise dynamics model of the robot
- ▶ note: forces behind the F/T sensor are not measured!





Application example: Force-guided object handover



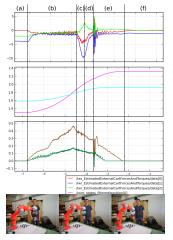
- measured tool forces F_x , F_y , F_z over time, KuKA LWR4+
- grasped object weight plus human interaction forces
- gripper grasp and release triggered by interaction forces

Liebrecht, Bistry, Hendrich, Zhang, IROS-WS 2014





Application Example: In-motion object handover



- top: estimated external forces F_x, F_y, F_z
- middle: robot joint angles ϕ_1, ϕ_6
- bottom: joint velocities ω₁, ω₆
- estimated forces quite noisy while the robot moves (despite good sensors and exzellent LWR4+ robot model)
- reliable force threshold too high for user acceptance
- gripper tactile sensor used as additional sensor
- grasp release triggered by robot force sensing and gripper tactile sensor

Liebrecht, Bistry, Hendrich, Zhang, IROS-WS 2014



1.4 Force and Tactile Sensors - Human Tactile Sensing

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1.4 Force and Tactile Sensors - Human Tactile Sensing



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Human tactile sensing

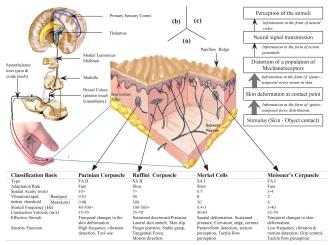
- amazing grasping and manipulation capabilities of humans
- human hand tactile sensing provides a reference system
- reminder: BSc Informatics IKON lectures
- ▶ three layers: subcutaneous (fatty) tissue, dermis, epidermis
- four different receptor types
 - ► FA-I: Meissner's corpuscles: vibration and motion detection
 - SA-I: Merkel's disks: sustained pressure, texture perception
 - ► FA-II: Pacinian corpuscles: skin deformation, vibration, tool use
 - SA:II: Ruffini endings: skin stretch, slip, tangential forces
 - fast and slow adaptation to stimulus
- cold/anaesthesized fingertips: dramatic loss of manipulation capabilities, especially for small objects





$1.4\ {\rm Force}$ and Tactile Sensors - Human Tactile Sensing

Human tactile sensing



R.S. Dahiya et.al., Tactile Sensing From Humans to Humanoids, IEEE T-RO Vol.26, No.1, 2010



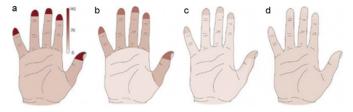
1.4 Force and Tactile Sensors - Human Tactile Sensing

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Human tactile sensing: Receptor distribution



- density (afferents per cm^2) of receptor cells in the human hand
- (a) and (b): fast and slow adapting type I
- ▶ (c) and (d): fast and slow adapting type II
- the special role of the fingertips is obvious
- "two point resolution" at fingertip ca. 1.6 mm, palm 7.7 mm

Yousef et.al., Tactile sensing - A Review, 2011. doi:10.1016/j.sna.2011.02.038





Tactile sensors: Requirements

Tactile sensors \rightarrow special category of force sensors

- usually very thin
- robot skin, palm and finger tip sensors
- ▶ other applications: medical measurements, touch screens, etc.

Typical requirements:

- spatial resolution ca. 1...2 mm²
- ▶ force sensitivity in range 0.4...10 N
- minimum sampling frequency of 100 Hz
- Inear transfer function and low hysteresis
- Iow crosstalk between neighboring sensors



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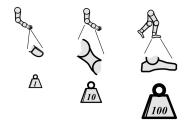


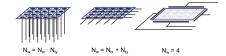
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Tactile sensors: Taxonomy and classification

- sensor technology:
 - switch sensors
 - resistive materials
 - capacitive sensors
 - MEMS (silicon) sensors
 - optical sensors
 - **۰**...
- sensor layout:
 - single sensors
 - ID- and 2D matrix sensors
 - flat and curved shape
 - layer structure

Ioad scale:







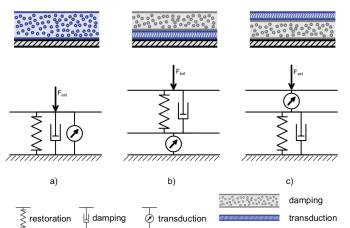
1.5 Force and Tactile Sensors - Tactile Sensors

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Tactile sensors: Layers



Itransduction

transduction

rigid base

Strohmayr, Dissertation, 2012

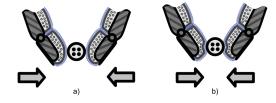




Tactile skin: Layers

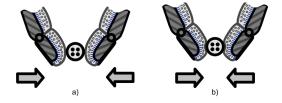
Sensing layer on top:

- high sensitivity
- good spatial resolution
- sensor exposed
- fragile, not robust



Sensing layer inside:

- force "smeared out":
- Iow sensitivity
- Iow spatial resolution
- sensor protected
- robust



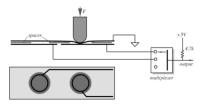


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Switch-type sensor







- mechanical or membrane type switches
- binary on/off decision, no force measurement
- usually, low spatial resolution, no shearing forces



K. Matsuo et.al., Placement of Tactile Sensors for Manipulation Task Recognition, ICRA 2008, 1641-1646

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Force-sensitive resistors

Materials whose electrical resistance is a function of strain

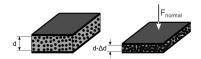
- a force-sensitive resistor (FSR) changes its resistance depending on the applied pressure
- use of conductive elastomeres or pressure-sensitive ink
- integration of the elastomer between two conductive plates
- + very simple functional principle
- + low manufacturing costs

- 0
- drift of resistance during prolonged pressure
- more useful for qualitative measurements

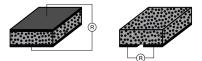


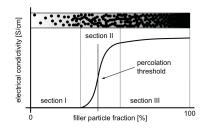


Force-sensistive resistor: Conductive elastomere



- foam with embedded conductive particles
- e.g. metal, coal
- Iow cost
- top and bottom electrodes
- pair of bottom electodes
- nonlinear resistance curves







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Forse-sensitive resistor: Matrix-type sensor

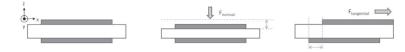


TekScan Inc., How the Tekscan Pressure Sensor is made, www.youtube.com/watch?v=q6_iZwuK3cU





Capacitive sensors



- capacitors made from flexible materials
- plate capacitor

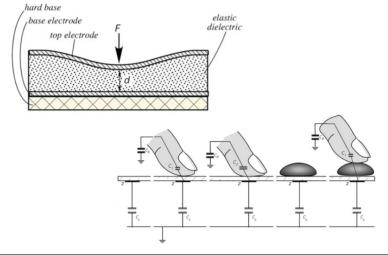
$$C = \frac{dQ}{dV} = \epsilon \frac{A}{d}$$

- an applied force either changes
 - the distance d between the plates (normal forces)
 - the surface area A (shearing forces)
- capacitance measured using frequency response of an oscillating R-C circuit
- also used for contactless proximity sensing (human tissue near the top electrode also changes capacitance)





Capacitive sensors







Capacitive sensors: Shearing forces



- plate capacitor: $C = \frac{dQ}{dV} = \epsilon \frac{A}{d}$
- typically, $A \gg d$
- good sensitivity to normal forces
- but less sensitivity to shearing forces
- use finger electrode layout to increase sensitivity to shearing forces
 - top-right electrode: z direction
 - top-left: z + y direction
 - bottom-right: z + x direction
 - decouple to get F_x, F_y, F_z

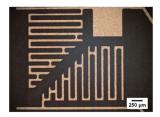


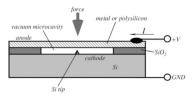
Fig. 2 Top view of one set of the sensor capacitor plates. Each of the capacitors is sensitive to applied forces in a specific direction (top right in the z-direction, top left in the z&y directions and bottom in the z&x-directions).

H. Yousef et al. / Procedia Engineering 25 (2011) 128 - 131





MEMS sensors

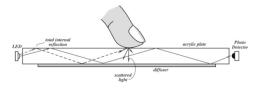


- ▶ integrated (micro-) electronics and mechanical structures
- exploit existing microelectronics fabrication processes
- ▶ e.g. polysilicon structures on top of base silicon material
- typical structure has membranes or thin moving parts
- + small sensor size, good spatial resolution
- + often high sensitivity, high dynamic range
- fragile, sensors too small to cover large areas





Optical sensors

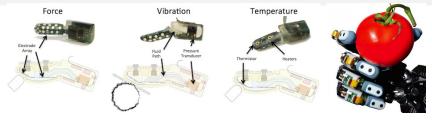


- combination of light emitters and detectors
- many different sensor principles
 - touching object changes refractive properties of surface
 - membrane deflection changes reflection
 - optical proximity/distance sensors
 - bending optical fibers
 - ▶ ...
- usually robust
- unreliable performance in bright ambient light





Syntouch BioTAC sensor



Bio-inspired robot fingertip sensor:

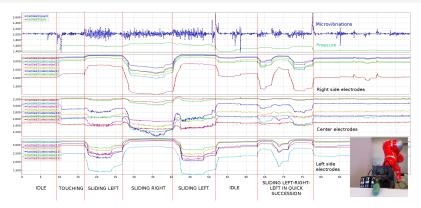
- combines pressure sensor, conductive liquid, thermistor
- static pressure relates to applied normal force
- pressure vibration for surface identification and slip detection
- electrodes provide spatial information, reconstruct force location and shearing forces
- temperature gradient for material identification

Syntouch LLC., 2012, www.youtube.com/watch?v=W_O-u9PNUMU





BioTAC sensor: sliding finger normal and shearing forces, slippage detection

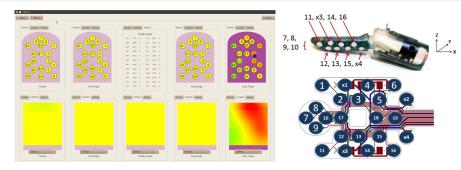


 sensor pre-processing pipeline: on-line calibration, low-pass filter, normal-force estimation





BioTAC sensor: From raw data to sensor fusion



- ▶ Qt GUI: raw sensor data, visualization of force and location
- combine PDC pressure and EC_i electrode values
- estimation of contact location and force

Vlad Ciobanu, PhD thesis, U Hamburg and U Bucarest, 2014





Robot skin

The full body of a robot covered by tactile skin?!

- a lot of new problems of scale
- connecting all those sensors?
- calibration of 1000's sensors?
- mapping sensor positions?
- how to combine sensor readings?

EU RoboSKIN project (2010-2012):

- modular sensor modules
- tactile middleware to manage the sensors
- available for the iCub robot



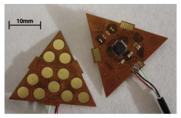




RoboSkin: sensor module

"triangle module":

- triangles can tile curved surfaces
- 12 taxels on each module
- integrated electronics, amplifier and communication
- three ports to neighboring modules
- supports automatic topology detection
- silicone rubber foam that covers the sensors;
- conductive layeer used as ground plane sprayed on top of the module



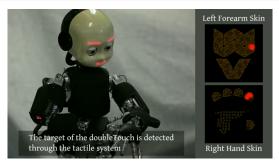


EU project FP7-RoboSKIN, 2011 (website roboskin.eu not active anymore)





iCub: Self-calibration and body schema learning



- ▶ skin consists of many sensor modules, different addresses, etc.
- arms and hands have curved and irregular surfaces
- manual calibration of all modules difficult (a lot of work)
- Iet the robot learn its kinematics and sensor layout
- robot touches itself, correlates arm/hand position and sensor





Application example: Recording human manipulation

- learn grasping from human demonstration
 - 1 record human manipulation experiments
 - 2 annotate and classify the phases of the manipulation
 - 3 learn human strategies
 - 4 transfer to robot system
- complex multi-sensor system
 - Camera(s): video of the overall scene
 - Stereo-Camera: 3D-scene reconstruction, hand position
 - Cyberglove: hand shape
 - Polhemus: 3D fingertip positions (magnetic tracker)
 - TekScan Grip: fingertip and hand palm forces
 - Instrumented Rubik: forces on grasped object



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Multisensor: Polhemus and Tekscan on Cyberglove



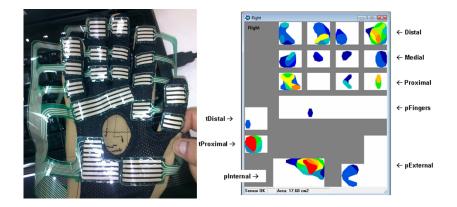


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Tekscan Grip (on Cyberglove)



TekScan Inc., EU project FP7-HANDLE, 2012



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Using a ball-point pen: clicking the pen



- heatmap of sensor TekScan grip activation
- back-view of the right hand: thumb, fingers, palm sensors
- pen is held in a power-grasp, thumb operates the button:
 - (a) idle state, grasp forces are low, distributed evenly
 - (b) thumb touches the button
 - (c-d) clicking, grasp forces increase to stabilize the pen
 - (e-f) idle state, grasp forces are low again.

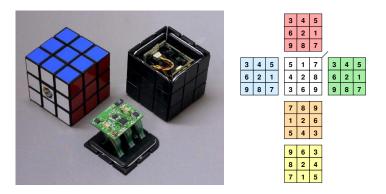


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Force-Sensing Rubik cube



record grasp forces during manipulation experiments

▶ $6 \times 3 \times 3$ FSR sensors, 6×3 -axis accelerometers

Shadow Robot Ltd., EU project FP7-HANDLE, 2011



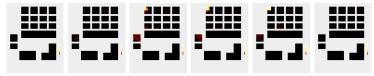
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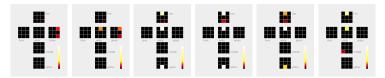


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Grasping the Rubik cube



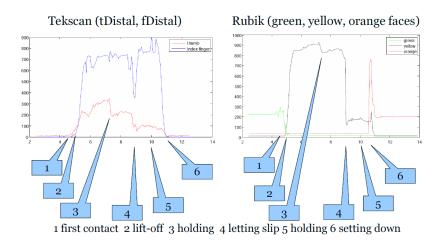








Grasping the Rubik-cube: segmentation







Take home message

- pure robot position control is dangerous
- many robot tasks require force-sensing and -control
 - collision detection and human safety
 - manipulation and grasping
 - interaction in unknown environments
 - (physical) human-robot interaction
- forces measured by object deformation
- strain-gauges, elastic polymers, optical, ...
- six-axis force/torque sensor
- tactile sensors and robot skin
- need for self-calibration and multisensor fusion





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- Hanna Yousef, Mehdi Boukallel, Kaspar Althoefer, Tactile sensing for dexterous in-hand manipulation in robots — A review, Sensors and Actuators A: Physical, 2011. doi:10.1016/j.sna.2011.02.038
- Michael Strohmayr, Artificial Skin in Robotics, Dissertation, Karlsruhe Institute of Technology, 2012.
- several papers (see slides)