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To cite this version:
Mohammad Rouhani, Angel D. Sappa, Edmond Boyer. Implicit B-Spline Surface Reconstruction. IEEE Transactions on Image Processing, Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers, 2015, 24 (1), pp.22 - 32. <10.1109/TIP.2014.2366374>. <hal-01101037>

HAL Id: hal-01101037
https://hal.inria.fr/hal-01101037
Submitted on 12 Jan 2015

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Implicit B-Spline Surface Reconstruction

Mohammad Rouhani, Angel D. Sappa, Senior Member, IEEE, and Edmond Boyer

Abstract—This paper presents a fast and flexible curve/surface reconstruction technique based on implicit b-spline. This representation does not require any parameterization and it is locally supported. This fact has been exploited in this paper to propose a reconstruction technique through solving a sparse system of equations. This method is further accelerated to reduce the dimension to the active control lattice. Moreover, the surface smoothness and user interaction are allowed for controlling the surface. Finally, a novel weighting technique has been introduced in order to blend small patches and smooth them in the overlapping regions. The whole framework is very fast and efficient and can handle large cloud of points with low computational cost. The experimental results show the flexibility and accuracy of the proposed algorithm to describe objects with complex topologies. Comparisons with other fitting methods highlight the superiority of the proposed approach in the presence of noise and missing data.

Index Terms—Surface Reconstruction, Implicit Representation, Implicit B-Splines, Partition of Unity, Patch-based Representation, 3L Algorithm, Additional Constraints.

I. INTRODUCTION

SURFACE reconstruction is one of the common fundamental problems in computer vision, graphics and CAD aiming at providing a smooth surface to describe the given point cloud [1]. Thanks to the recent development in 3D scanning technology, multi-view geometry and low cost depth sensors such as Kinect, we are provided with large data volume to be analyzed, which can be noisy or corrupted by outliers and missing data. Therefore, an efficient point cloud representation is the first step for further processing. Triangular mesh, for instance, is one of the simplest ways to process and visualize 3D cloud of points, but it demands huge amounts of memory space for finer representations. Parametric representations, such as NURBS and Bézier surface, deliver smooth representations through their control points, but they suffer from the parameterization problem.

Implicit functions provide smooth and flexible surface representations without requiring any parameterization. They can describe objects with complex geometries through their zero sets and then, visualize them with efficient methods such as Marching Cubes algorithm. Implicit Polynomial (IP), Radial Basis Function (RBF) and Implicit B-Spline (IBS) are some examples of common implicit functions. They have been widely used for computer vision applications such as: range image reconstruction [2], pose estimation [3], point sets registration [4], [5], [6], [7], shape description [8], position invariant object recognition [9], 3D image segmentation [10] and shape transformation [11] to mention a few.

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In the current paper, implicit B-splines are used to model the solution space for object representation. These functions are constructed from locally supported functions that enable local control, but unlike the parametric B-splines, they avoid parameterization problems. First, we propose the 3L-IBS algorithm to provide the IBS coefficients through a fast algebraic fitting method [12]. Then, we show how the obtained IBS surface can be further controlled by a proper regularization term and additional constraints. The proposed method is computationally efficient since all the formulations are based on the least squares forms, which lead to sparse systems of equations thanks to the locally supported basis functions of IBS.

Fig. 1 illustrates how the IBS patches describe the details of Buddha [13]. In this example 219 mid-size IBS patches are reconstructed (all in less than 6 seconds) for describing more than 145k points. In the current work, a novel weighting function for partition of unity is also presented in order to blend these local IBS patches such that the IBS patches are only blended in the overlapping regions and remain the same elsewhere. The blended surface, as depicted in Fig. 1 (right), is smooth over the transitions and switch to an IBS patch in the interior. The proposed method provides a good trade-off between the global fitting, like RBF [14], that delivers a single analytic function and the local fitting methods, like Multi-level Partition of Unity (MPU) [15], that is based on small local quadratic patches.

The main features of our approach are summarized as follows: (i) a sparse system of equations is presented to find the implicit surface through an algebraic fitting that incorporate local geometric information; (ii) this technique is further accelerated to reduce the dimension to the active parameters around the object; (iii) further control on the surface are allowed through the smoothness parameter and the user interaction; (iv) a novel weighting technique has been

Fig. 1. IBS patches are reconstructed in small cells and blended together: (left) 3D point cloud of Buddha; (middle) the overlapping IBS patches; (right) the blended IBS surface.
The most relevant works on surface reconstructions are reviewed and classified based on the solution space and the fitting methodology. The solution space determines the domain where the shape parameters are defined. Moving on this space will change the shape of zero set, and the objective of fitting is to find the best parameters. The goodness of fitting is measured through the distance function which is explained in the next subsection.

A. Solution Space

The objective of implicit fitting, in general, is to describe a given set of points through the zero set of an implicit function \( f_c : Z_{f_c} = \{ \mathbf{x} : f_c(\mathbf{x}) = 0 \} \). The fitting procedure seeks for the best coefficient vector \( \mathbf{c} \) that minimizes the distance between the given points and the zero set. Implicit Polynomial (IP) provides one of the simplest solution spaces for surface reconstruction. An IP of degree \( d \) is defined as:

\[
f_c(\mathbf{x}) = \sum_{\{i+j+k\leq d\}} c_{i,j,k} x^i y^j z^k \tag{1}
\]

where \( \{c_{i,j,k}\} \) are the IP coefficients and \( \{x^i y^j z^k\} \) are the monomials. This definition can be viewed as the inner product of the monomial vector \( \mathbf{m}(\mathbf{x}) \) and the coefficient vector \( \mathbf{c} \) by considering the same order on both sets.

Implicit polynomial offers a smooth and compact representation of the object through a simple coefficient vector. IPs are defined linearly with respect to the coefficient vector, and this property makes them popular for linear fitting, as explained in the next section. Unfortunately, these monomials are not locally supported\(^1\) and, as a consequence, any change in the coefficients can lead to global changes in the whole shape of the zero set. In addition, the linear systems of IP coefficients may suffer from the instability problem [16].

Radial Basis Function (RBF) provides a good alternative to IPs through some special basis functions. These functions are called radial since their values in each point only depend on the distance from the control points [17]. Linear combinations of these basis functions are widely used for surface approximation:

\[
f(\mathbf{x}) = P(\mathbf{x}) + \sum_{i=1}^m c_i \phi(||\mathbf{x} - \mathbf{x}_i||) \tag{2}
\]

where \( P \) is a low degree IP, \( \{\mathbf{x}_i\}_{i=1}^m \) are the control points and \( \mathbf{c} \) is the coefficient vector. Common choices for the radial function includes \( \phi(r) = r^k \) and \( \phi(r) = r^2 \log r \). The authors in [14] and [18] use RBFs to reconstruct the surface from 3D range data. They present a regularization method for RBF that helps to describe the object in different smoothness orders.

Implicit B-Spline (IBS) offers a flexible representation using some specific basis functions that are locally supported and guarantee the smoothness [19]. IBS is defined through the linear combinations of B-Splines tensor products:

\[
f(\mathbf{x}) = \sum_{i,j,k=1}^N c_{i,j,k} B_i(x) B_j(y) B_k(z) \tag{3}
\]

where \( B_i(x), B_j(y) \) and \( B_k(z) \) are the spline basis functions, \( \{c_{i,j,k}\} \) are the coefficients defining a control lattice of size \( N \times N \times N \). Fig. 2 (right) depicts how an IBS provides a more flexible representation than an IP. Moreover, since it is linear with respect to its coefficient vector it is appropriate for linear fitting [20] as well as the non-linear ones [21], [22]. In Section IV, we show how these functions can be employed in a fast linear fitting accompanied by the regularization energy and additional constraints.

B. Fitting Methodology

Having confirmed the solution space, the fitting procedure seeks the best parameter in this space using a proper fitting metric. This distance function measures the closeness of the given data points to the zero level surface. Geometric approaches approximate the orthogonal distance and try to minimize it through some gradient-based method, while the Algebraic approaches are based on some simple rough estimation of the distance. In this subsection we review the most relevant fitting techniques used by computer vision [2], CAD [20] and graphics communities [1].

Let assume that \( \mathcal{P} = \{\mathbf{p}_i\}_{i=1}^m \) is the set of given points sampled from the object surface. A good fitting function is supposed to reach zero close to these points; hence, as a simple criterion, the deviation of function values from zero can be
used for measuring the distance between the points and the zero set:

\[ E = \sum_{i=1}^{n} f^2(p_i) \]  

(4)

this accumulated residual error can be viewed as a function of the coefficient vector \( \mathbf{c} \), which is linear for the cases of IP, RBF and IBS functions: \( f(p_i) = \mathbf{m}(p_i)^T \mathbf{c} \). Therefore, the algebraic distance can be defined as a quadratic term:

\[ E = \| \mathbf{M}_P \mathbf{c} \|^2 = \mathbf{c}^T \mathbf{M}_P^T \mathbf{M}_P \mathbf{c} \]  

(5)

where the monomial matrix \( \mathbf{M}_P \) is constructed of the monomial vectors \( \mathbf{m}(p_i)^T \) in a row-by-row manner. Minimization of this quadratic term is widely known as Least Squares (LS). In order to avoid the trivial solution it must be accompanied with some constraints on the coefficient vector.

The least squares solution can be computed quite fast by solving a system of linear equations, which is usually unstable. A better fitting metric has been proposed in [24] by using the first order distance approximation. Indeed, it considers the absolute values normalized by the gradient \( |f|/\|\nabla f\| \) instead of \( f \) in (4). The 3L algorithm is another fitting technique that exploits more geometric clues of the point set [12]. In this method the original data is supported by two additional offsets in order to control the function values around the zero set. The 3L algorithm has been originally proposed for implicit polynomial fitting as detailed in the next section.

The associated normal vectors can be also incorporated during the surface fitting. Poisson surface reconstruction finds the best indicator function whose gradient vectors are compatible with the normal vectors by satisfying a Poisson equation. Similarly, in [25] the associated normal vectors are considered to find the best IP. The optimal function is found such that its gradient vectors in the data set are parallel to the associated normal vectors. This method is referred to as the Gradient-one in the literature, since it considers the normals with the unit length. The 3L algorithm and the Gradient-one have been extended in [16] and [26] to improve the instability problem using a ridge regression method. In this work the instability problem is tackled by using a thin-plate energy term that is geometrically meaningful.

The above-mentioned methods are referred to as global fitting, where a single analytic function is obtained to describe the whole shape. On the contrary there are many local fitting methods, where the function value in each point is computed based on the local information around that point. Moving least squares (MLS), for instance, is based on a weighted least squares defined in a local neighborhood [27]. Multi-level Partition of Unity is another local fitting method that is widely used for surface reconstruction [15], [28], [29]. Generally speaking, MPU describes the object based on a set of small patches that blend together in a smooth way. The whole set of points is recursively structured as an oct-tree, where each cell is described by a low degree IP (e.g., quadric). Finally, all these local approximations are smoothly integrated into a global function. In [28] the authors use the gradient-one algorithm and ridge regression techniques to obtain a better result for a local description. In this work we show how the proposed IBS fitting equipped with an efficient weighting function provides a good trade-off between global and local fitting methods.

### III. 3L-IP Fitting

The 3L algorithm, as mentioned in section II-B, is an algebraic IP fitting technique that exploits local geometric clues in the data set [12]. It generates an inner and outer offset denoted by \( \mathcal{P}_{-\delta} \) and \( \mathcal{P}_{+\delta} \) at the distance \( \pm \delta \) from the original data set \( \mathcal{P}_0 \). These sets are generated along the normal vectors that can be obtained either through the triangulation [16] or through the PCA applied in each local neighborhood. Fig. 2 (left) depicts how the additional offsets support a data set in 3D.

Having provided all the three level sets: \( \{ \mathcal{P}_{-\delta}, \mathcal{P}_0, \mathcal{P}_{+\delta} \} \), the 3L algorithm finds an implicit polynomial approaching \( +\epsilon \) inside, \( -\epsilon \) outside and zero in the original data set. This set of constraints can be formulated as an over-determined system of equations \( \mathbf{M}_{3L} \mathbf{c} = \mathbf{b} \) where

\[ \mathbf{M}_{3L} = \begin{bmatrix} \mathbf{M}_{\mathcal{P}_{-\delta}} \\ \mathbf{M}_{\mathcal{P}_0} \\ \mathbf{M}_{\mathcal{P}_{+\delta}} \end{bmatrix}, \quad \mathbf{b} = \begin{bmatrix} +\epsilon \\ 0 \\ -\epsilon \end{bmatrix} \]  

(6)

\( \mathbf{M}_{3L} \) is a block matrix of \( \mathbf{M}_{\mathcal{P}_{-\delta}}, \mathbf{M}_{\mathcal{P}_0} \) and \( \mathbf{M}_{\mathcal{P}_{+\delta}} \) containing the monomial vectors calculated in the point set. The column vector \( \epsilon \) contains the expected value of \( f \) in the additional offsets. Since the zero set is the same for \( \epsilon \) and \( \kappa \epsilon \) for any constant \( \kappa \), we can fix the value \( \epsilon = 1 \) without loss of generality.

Solving the overdetermined system of the 3L algorithm in (6) is equivalent to minimizing the following data term:

\[ E(\mathbf{c}) = \| \mathbf{M}_{3L} \mathbf{c} - \mathbf{b} \|^2 = \mathbf{c}^\top \mathbf{M}_{3L}^\top \mathbf{M}_{3L} \mathbf{c} - 2\mathbf{c}^\top \mathbf{M}_{3L}^\top \mathbf{b} + \mathbf{b}^\top \mathbf{b} \]  

(7)

It should be highlighted that this least squares problem does not lead to the trivial solution for low degree IPs; hence, no extra constraint is required. This function is quadratic with respect to the coefficient vector and its derivatives can be easily computed using matrix calculus:

\[ \frac{\partial E}{\partial \mathbf{c}} = 2(\mathbf{M}_{3L}^\top \mathbf{M}_{3L}) \mathbf{c} - 2\mathbf{M}_{3L}^\top \mathbf{b} = 0 \]  

(8)

Then, the least squares solution can be computed by solving this system of linear equations. This algorithm is quite fast and more stable than the standard algebraic fitting. It finds the solution directly from the monomial matrix without any iterative computation.

In spite of being computationally efficient, the 3L algorithm suffers from some problems. The first one is due to the numerical instability that is common in linear least squares. In [16] a ridge regression (RR) method is presented to increase the stability by adding a diagonal matrix, which can be chosen as the identity matrix. The authors in [16] impose some conditions on this matrix in order to obtain an algebraic-invariant result. Although more stable, the RR method decreases the accuracy. The second problem is regarding the limitation of implicit polynomials for defining the solution space. Increasing the IP degree allows us to describe more complex objects, but it creates some artifacts and outliers around the object.
IV. PROPOSED METHOD

In this section, the proposed method for implicit B-spline surface reconstruction is explained. First of all, the 3L algorithm is adapted for IBS fitting in order to provide a more flexible shape description. We show how the surface reconstruction can be controlled by considering a proper regularization term and imposing some additional constraints. Although the 3L-IBS surface reconstruction is solely strong enough for shape description we show how this tool can be further improved through a blending technique. The resulting method is very fast and it provides a good trade-off between the local and global fitting methods. All the formulations in this article are easy to implement since a simple definition of IBS has been used.

A. 3L-IBS Patch Reconstruction

Implicit B-splines provide a very flexible representation that allows the local control and avoids artifacts (Fig. 2). In this section, we consider this tool to define the solution space of the 3L algorithm. The resulting method, referred to as 3L-IBS, is much faster than the original 3L-IP since it leads to a sparse system of equations due to the compact supports. For the sake of simplicity, all the formulations are presented based on the blending functions, which are small quadratic patches. As illustrated in Fig. 3 these small patches are translated and blended together in order to construct the B-Spline basis functions that is C^2-continuous.

As a key point, the IBS definition in (3) can be viewed as the inner product of the coefficient vector \( \mathbf{c} \) that is to be found and the basis vector \( \mathbf{m}(x) \) that depends on the given point:

\[
f(x) = \mathbf{c}^\top \mathbf{m}(x) = \mathbf{m}(x)^\top \mathbf{c}
\]  

(9)

where the same order has been used for vectorizing the control values \( \{c_{i,j,k}\} \) and the basis functions \( \{B_i(x)B_j(y)B_k(z)\} \).

In the case of cubic splines with uniform knot\(^2\) sequence, the b-spline functions can be simply constructed through the blending functions:

\[
\begin{align*}
b_0(u) &= (1-u)^3/6, & b_1(u) &= (3u^3 - 6u^2 + 4)/6, \\
b_2(u) &= (-3u^3 + 3u^2 + 3u + 1)/6, & b_3(u) &= u^3/6 
\end{align*}
\]  

(10)

Fig. 3 shows how these blending functions are rescaled and translated to construct the B-splines in 1D. Using these cubic blending functions leads to a C\(^2\) continuity.

Without loss of generality we normalize the point cloud into a unit cube. For defining \( N \) basis functions over the unit interval \([0,1]\) the step of the knot sequence must be chosen as \( \Delta = 1/(N-3) \) (see Fig. 3). Then, the IBS definition in (3) can be directly presented based on the blending functions in (10):

\[
f(x) = \sum_{r,s,t=0}^{3} c_{i+r,j+s,k+t} b_r(u) b_s(v) b_t(w)
\]  

(11)

where the starting indices depend on the point coordinates as it follows:

\[
i = \lfloor x/\Delta \rfloor, \; j = \lfloor y/\Delta \rfloor, \; k = \lfloor z/\Delta \rfloor
\]  

(12)

\(^2\text{knot: position where two blending functions join.}\)

and for every given point, \( 4^3 \) control coefficients are incorporated in IBS computation. Based on our setting, the original \( xyz\)-coordinates must be mapped into \( \text{uvw} \) before applying the blending functions:

\[
u = \{x/\Delta\}, \; v = \{y/\Delta\}, \; w = \{z/\Delta\}
\]  

(13)

where \( \{\alpha\} = \alpha - \lfloor \alpha \rfloor \) is the fractional part.

This simple definition of IBS should be used for computing the basis vectors in (9). Having computed the basis vectors in the given points and the additional offsets, the 3L basis matrix \( M_{3L} \) can be constructed row-by-row in order to find the least squares coefficient vector:

\[
\mathbf{c} = M_{3L}^\dagger \mathbf{b} = (M_{3L}^\top M_{3L})^{-1}M_{3L}^\top \mathbf{b}
\]  

(14)

where \( M_{3L}^\dagger \) denotes the pseudo-inverse of the basis matrix. The main advantage of the 3L-IBS algorithm is that the basis matrix \( M_{3L} \) is very sparse for the case of implicit B-splines (\( 4^3 \) non-zero elements in each row), while for the case of IP the basis matrix is highly dense. This fact makes the 3L-IBS algorithm much faster than the original 3L algorithm, while it benefits from a more flexible IBS representation.

B. Regularization

The basis matrix in (14) is very sparse and it could lead to more than one optimal solution. Indeed, some of the control coefficients do not have any contribution during the least squares. As explained in Section III, this problem can be tackled by ridge regression by adding a proper diagonal matrix, but it is not geometrically meaningful. In the current work a global tension term is considered for regularization, which estimates the curvature of \( f \) over the whole domain \( \Omega \) [20]:

\[
T(\mathbf{e}) = \iint_{\Omega} f_{xx}^2 + 2f_{xy}^2 + f_{yy}^2 + 2f_{xz}^2 + 2f_{yz}^2 + f_{zz}^2 dx dy dz
\]  

(15)

This term is added to the objective function of 3L-IBS by using a proper regularization parameter \( \mu \):

\[
E(\mathbf{e}) = \| M_{3L} \mathbf{c} - \mathbf{b} \|^2 + \mu T(\mathbf{e})
\]  

(16)

This is similar to the bending energy used in Thin Plate Spline (TPS) for spatial deformations. Fig. 4 illustrates the effect of regularization parameter on the rigidity of the IBS surface. In general, a high regularization parameter results in a more rigid surface, while a lower value leads to a more relaxed one.

The regularization term is a quadratic function of the coefficient vector that can be analytically pre-computed for the given size of IBS. As detailed in Appendix A, the regularization term can be represented through the matrix notation:

\[
T(\mathbf{e}) = \mathbf{c}^\top \mathbf{Hc}
\]  

(17)
in order to force the IBS zero set to pass through some specific points or to obtain a specific orientation there; they are referred to as positional and orientation constraints, respectively. We show that the proposed framework can be upgraded to allow these interactions.

Let consider the points \( q_1, \ldots, q_k \) as the positional constraints provided by the user. In order to force the IBS zero set pass through these point, we must impose the constraints of the form \( f(q_i) = 0 \) on the optimization problem in (16). Each constraint is linear with respect to the coefficient vector as \( w_i^T c = 0 \), where \( w_i = m(q_i) \) is the basis vector calculated in the constraint point. Considering all these constraints, a constraint matrix \( W \) is constructed that contains all these basis vectors. The constrained least squares is formulated as:

\[
\min_c E(c) = ||M_{3L}c - b||^2 + \mu c^T Hc \\
\text{s.t.} \\
Wc = 0.
\]

In order to solve this problem, the Lagrange multiplier method can be used [12], where the Lagrange function is defined as:

\[
\Lambda(c, \lambda) = E(c) - \sum_{i=1}^k \lambda_i w_i^T c
\]

Since all the terms are either linear or quadratic, it is easy to compute the derivatives through matrix calculus. The derivative with respect to \( \lambda \) obviously leads to the positional constraints \( Wc = 0 \), while the ones with respect to \( c \) result in:

\[
2(M_{3L}^T M_{3L})c - 2M_{3L}^T b + 2\mu Hc = W^T \lambda
\]

Consequently, the optimal control vector \( c \) for the constrained 3L-IBS method can be easily computed as:

\[
c = A(M_{3L}^T b + 1/2W^T \lambda)
\]

where \( A = (M_{3L}^T M_{3L} + \mu H)^{-1} \) and the unknown Lagrange multiplier \( \lambda \) can be easily found by multiplying (22) by \( W \):

\[
\lambda = -2(WAW^T)^{-1}WAM_{3L}^T b
\]

Therefore, the proposed framework for surface reconstruction allows regularization and user interaction at the same time just by solving a system of linear equations. Fig. 7 shows a case where the fitting curve does not interpolate all the points. After introducing three positional constraint by the user, the constrained 3L-IBS in (22) perfectly interpolates these points. In a similar way, orientation constraints can be introduced in the formulation by defining the right constraint matrix \( W \) in (19); the rest remains unchanged since these constraints are still in the linear form.

### D. Blended 3L-IBS Algorithm

The 3L-IBS algorithm proposed in this manuscript is very fast and flexible since it finds the best IBS coefficients through solving a sparse system of equations. This fact makes it very attractive for surface reconstruction from large clouds of data.
the right column. These patches can be smoothly blended in the overlapping regions. Highly detailed IBS patches are reconstructed. We show how some lower size IBS patches are reconstructed each by solving three constraints are added by the user; of IBS patches for out of small IBS patches. Fig. 8 illustrates two different sizes of the object and may overlap another patch in the neighborhood.

Smooth over the transition regions. As the first step, the 3L-IBS can be extremely enhanced by blending some mid-size IBS patches. The resulted method provides a good trade-off normalized and further controlled through the user interactions. In general, the proposed algorithm provides a global fitting, localized and further controlled through the user interactions.

Fig. 7. The user interaction is allowed in the proposed framework. (left) three constraints are added by the user; (right) the constrained IBS passes through these constraints.

In other words, the global function \( F(x) \) is a convex combination of the local patches, whose contributions depend on the weighting functions \( \{ \hat{w}_i \}_{i=1}^n \).

Indeed, these weighting functions provide a partition of unity over \( \Omega \). Moreover, they should be locally supported in order to only include the neighboring patches in the given point. Afterwards, the global fitting function \( F \) can be simply constructed from the local patches:

\[
F(x) = \sum_{i=1}^n \hat{w}_i(x) f_i(x)
\]

In other words, the global function \( F \) is a convex combination of the local patches, whose contributions depend on the weighting functions \( \{ \hat{w}_i \}_{i=1}^n \).

In this work we present a novel weighting technique to blend the local IBS patches. In fact, we aim to blend the patches just in the overlapping regions and let the IBS to remain the same in the interior regions. Fig. 9(left) illustrates a typical cell of size \( SC \) in a regular grid and its narrow regions of width \( d \) where the IBS patches overlap. The interior region \( C_0 \) is where the local patch remains unchanged. In [15] the weighting function is designed such that it increases closing to the center of the cell \( c_i \). In our work, the weighting function is based on the distance of the given point to the interior region:

\[
\text{dist}(x, C_0) = \left[ \| x - c_j \|_p - \left( \frac{SC}{2} - d \right) \right]_+
\]

where, \( \| \cdot \|_p \) is the \( L^p \) norm and \( [t]_+ = \max(t, 0) \). Then, the distance value is zero for the whole interior region and it increases by getting farther from the boundary. Afterwards, the weighting function can be defined as follows:

\[
w_j(x) = b(\alpha \cdot \text{dist}(x, C_0))
\]

where \( b(\cdot) \) is the quadratic B-Spline basis function with the support in \([0, 1.5]\) and \( \alpha = 1.5/d \) is used to re-scale the interval \([0, d]\) to the support interval. Fig. 9(right) shows how the weighting function vanishes by getting far from the interior region, while it remains constant in that region. In order to satisfy the condition in (24) for being a partition of unity, the normalization must be applied on the weighting functions:

\[
\hat{w}_i(x) = \frac{w_i(x)}{\sum_{j \in \mathcal{N}_i} w_j(x)}
\]

where \( \mathcal{N}_i \) is the neighboring cells of \( C_i \).

Having defined the weighting functions in (27) and normalized them in (28) we can handle the patch blending to come up with the global function \( F \) defined in (25). Fig. 8(right) illustrates an example of IBS patch blending through the proposed weighting functions. The transitions between the patches are very smooth since the weights in (27) are differentiable. Moreover, the IBS patches do not change in points. Moreover, it is shown how the final result can be regularized and further controlled through the user interactions.

First, a typical partition of unity approach is presented and then we explain how a new weighting function is designed in order to partially blend the patches. Let’s consider the local IBS patches as \( f_1(x), \ldots, f_n(x) \). The objective is to blend these patches to build a high resolution global implicit function \( F(x) \). Partition of unity makes it possible through a set of weighting functions \( \hat{w}_1(x), \ldots, \hat{w}_n(x) \) that sum up to one over the domain \( \Omega \):

\[
\sum_{i=1}^n \hat{w}_i(x) = 1, \forall x \in \Omega
\]

Fig. 8. Blended IBS: (left) different patch sizes \((N = 10, 20)\); (right) the blended surface using the proposed weighting technique.
Fig. 9. Blending components in 2D: (left) The overlapping cells used to subdivide the domain; $C_0^i$ shows the interior region; (right) the weighting function defined in (27) for blending IBS patches in 2D.

the interior region since $\hat{w}(x) \equiv 1$ over this region; hence, the blending happens only in the overlapping regions. As a consequence, our proposed blended IBS surface reconstruction technique provides a good trade-off between the global fitting (e.g., IBS) and local fitting techniques (e.g., MPU or MLS).

V. EXPERIMENTAL RESULTS

Experimental results together with comparisons with the state of the art fitting techniques are presented in this section. The comparisons are applied for both 2D and 3D data sets, which are either public [13], [30] or obtained through a 3D scanner (i.e., Konica Minolta Vivid 9i) or multi-camera platform [31]. The comparisons are based on the geometric accuracy as well as the CPU time and the reconstruction time.

The fitting accuracy of both IP and IBS is measured through the accumulated fitting error (AFE). It measures the geometric distances between the data points and the zero set of the fitting result. Hence for every single data point $p$ its corresponding foot-point $\hat{p}$ must be iteratively estimated. This point lies on the surface and the line between $p$ and $\hat{p}$ must be parallel to the gradient vector at the foot-point:

$$\left( \begin{array}{c} f(\hat{p}) \\ \nabla f(\hat{p}) \times (\hat{p} - p) \end{array} \right) = 0 \quad (29)$$

This equation can be iteratively solved via Newton method for non-linear system of equations. In each iteration, the point moves to a lower level while its gradient direction gets parallel to the connecting line.

A. Quantitative Comparisons

Several point clouds in 2D and 3D have been reconstructed with the proposed approach and quantitatively compared with the best results obtained with the original 3L algorithm [12], and the Gradient-one [25], [20]. Fig. 10 illustrates six data sets with different complexities. In the second column the zero sets of the optimal IPs obtained with the original 3L algorithm are presented (the IP coefficient sizes are provided in Table I). The third and forth columns correspond to the optimal IBS obtained by the Gradient-one and the 3L-IBS algorithm. The results obtained though IPs (2nd column) clearly suffers from outliers and inaccuracies. This problems gets worse with increasing the object’s complexity.

The main problem of implicit polynomials is the unbounded supports of their monomials. In other words, none of the monomials vanish in infinity and it makes all the coefficients contribute in the curve/surface reconstruction for any given point. On the contrary, the cubic IBS curves have compact supports while they meet $C^2$ continuity. As illustrated in the 3rd and 4th columns of Fig. 10 the optimal IBS curves are smooth with no artifacts. Moreover, as stated in Table I, the optimal IBSs achieve lower fitting error than IPs and the Gradient-one method [20]; the latter has a similar accuracy to our method, but since our method is more based on the point set positions than their orientation, the final zero set is closer to the data set (see Fig. 11).

In addition to high accuracy, the proposed method is much faster in both optimization and reconstruction. As stated in Table I the size of the parameter space in the case of Truncated IBS is much smaller than the Gradient-one. Actually, as already depicted in Fig. 6 the parameter size increases quadratically with respect to the control lattice resolution $N$, while in the Gradient-one case, it increases in a cubic growth. Hence in our case the least squares is applied for a sparse system with smaller number of parameters. This point is even more highlighted when it comes to the 3D surface
**TABLE I**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>3L[12]</th>
<th>GO[25]</th>
<th>PA</th>
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<tr>
<td>Fig. 10-(oni)</td>
<td>231</td>
<td>1.0148</td>
<td>400</td>
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<td>Fig. 10-(dude)</td>
<td>351</td>
<td>1.0612</td>
<td>625</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fig. 10-(fish)</td>
<td>231</td>
<td>2.1222</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fig. 10-(homer)</td>
<td>496</td>
<td>1.2625</td>
<td>900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fig. 10-(camel)</td>
<td>861</td>
<td>2.6782</td>
<td>1600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fig. 10-(hand)</td>
<td>1081</td>
<td>6.2209</td>
<td>2500</td>
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**TABLE II**

<table>
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<td>11039</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>2799</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fig. 13-(2nd)</td>
<td>Hand</td>
<td>16519</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>3090</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fig. 13-(3rd)</td>
<td>Bimba</td>
<td>8857</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>5721</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fig. 13-(4th)</td>
<td>Armadillo</td>
<td>8260</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>7728</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fig. 13-(5th)</td>
<td>Cow</td>
<td>10850</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>4699</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 12. Surface reconstruction for low densities: (1st col.) original 3D data sets. Results obtained, for the zero-sets, by: (2nd col.) 3L-IP[23]; (3rd col.) Gradient-one algorithm; (4th col.) the proposed 3L-IBS.

**Fig. 13**

Implicit surfaces and level set representations, in general, are known to be very efficient for 3D surface editing, including the primitive bolean operations as well as cut-paste editing [32]. As discussed in Section IV-C our proposed approach allows user editing by introducing the positional and orientation constraints. Fig. 14 illustrates the effect of user interaction with the reconstructed surface. The constraints are introduced in the inner ring of *Torus* and around the ears of *Kitten* and the final surfaces perfectly pass through these points, regardless of the regularization effect for the smoothness. In fact, the final surface is still reconstructed by solving a sparse system of equations since the truncated IBS drastically reduces the computations.

For reconstructing very complex and detailed point clouds one may increase the IBS degrees of freedom, which results in a huge system of equations. As proposed in Section IV-D, instead of reconstructing a single analytic IBS surface, mid-size IBS patches can be reconstructed and blended smoothly. Fig. 15 illustrates the accuracy of the blended IBS that is reconstructed from the *Bouncing* and *Handstand* data sets in [31]. In this figure the results of blended IBS are compared with the RBF surface reconstruction [14]. The details about the degrees of freedom, CPU time and suracing time are presented in Table IV. For the case of truncated IBS, instead of surfaces reconstructed through the truncated IBS for some standard data sets [13]. In these examples, the details in the point sets are perfectly preserved by the optimized zero level. Table III presents the details about the point clouds as well as the surface parameters. In average less than 1 sec. is spent for solving the sparse system of equations since the truncated IBS drastically reduces the computations.

**Fig. 14.** User interaction on the reconstructed surface: the IBS surfaces are shown before and after imposing the user positional constraints.

**B. Qualitative Comparisons**

In this part of experiments, high density point clouds are considered for qualitative comparisons. Fig. 13 shows the
TABLE II
SIZE OF THE SOLUTION SPACE, CPU TIMES (IN SEC.) SPENT FOR THE OPTIMIZATION AND ACCUMULATED FITTING ERRORS (AFE) TO COMPARE THE RESULTS OBTAINED BY DIFFERENT APPROACHES ON 3D DATA SETS (3L: THE 3L ALGORITHM; GO: THE GRADIENT ONE; PA: PROPOSED APPROACH).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>#pnt</th>
<th>Size</th>
<th>CPU</th>
<th>AFE</th>
<th>Size</th>
<th>CPU</th>
<th>AFE</th>
<th>Size</th>
<th>CPU</th>
<th>AFE</th>
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<td>Bunny</td>
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<td>1771</td>
<td>1.1809</td>
<td>5.1848</td>
<td>8000</td>
<td>3.1369</td>
<td>3.8938</td>
<td>1461</td>
<td>0.2186</td>
<td>3.2303</td>
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<td>Fig. 12-1st</td>
<td>Knot</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>816</td>
<td>0.0783</td>
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<td>8000</td>
<td>2.6430</td>
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<td>1484</td>
<td>0.1829</td>
<td>0.0506</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fig. 12-2nd</td>
<td>Duck</td>
<td>745</td>
<td>1771</td>
<td>0.5538</td>
<td>2.0325</td>
<td>8000</td>
<td>2.8977</td>
<td>1.6983</td>
<td>1511</td>
<td>0.2572</td>
<td>1.3144</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fig. 12-3rd</td>
<td>Mannequin</td>
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<td>0.1427</td>
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<td>Fig. 12-4th</td>
<td>Homer</td>
<td>585</td>
<td>3654</td>
<td>2.3692</td>
<td>3.1584</td>
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<td>2.0398</td>
<td>1453</td>
<td>0.2461</td>
<td>1.6922</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fig. 12-5th</td>
<td>Squirrel</td>
<td>1717</td>
<td>2925</td>
<td>2.5315</td>
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<td>29.4366</td>
<td>3.4695</td>
<td>3253</td>
<td>0.7842</td>
<td>2.8557</td>
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</table>

Fig. 13. (top) Original high resolution 3D data sets. (bottom) Results obtained by the proposed 3L-IBS.

using the regularization matrix in (15) we simply used identity matrices (Tikhonov regularization) to save time. Despite using rather lower degrees of freedom for RBF they require further computation since a full system of equations must be solved, while in our case less than one second is spent for reconstructing all the small patches. The weighting function will be incorporated when the blended surface is being reconstructed. Thanks to the use of b-spline basis functions the reconstruction time of blended IBS for a grid of (200)^3 voxels is around 3 seconds. Please note that how our efficient weighting system in (27) is only applied in the overlapping regions.

Our experiments shows that the proposed reconstruction technique is quite robust in noisy point cloud with missing parts. The author’s face has been scanned by Konica Minolta Vivid 9i including around 170k points. The results of RBF reconstructions, truncated IBS and Blended IBS are qualitatively compared in Fig. 16 and details about the degrees of freedom and timing are presented in Table IV. All these reconstruction techniques somehow interpolate the missing parts; the fitting quality of the blended IBS is further highlighted around the nose and eyes. In the case of truncated IBS and blended IBS, the TPS regularization term in (15) has been used to obtain better results; this is unlike the examples of Fig. 15, where identity matrices are used for acceleration. The RBF representations in [14] and [18] select some (or all) of point clouds to define the control points of RBF; while in our case, the control points are virtually embedded in the whole space (knot sequence over the unit cube). As illustrated in Fig. 17 the MPU technique [15] and RBF reconstruction [18] fail to describe the missing part in the arm of Swing data set, while the blended IBS provides a pretty good result that is smooth in this part. As a part of experience it should be mentioned at the end that the point cloud size does not increase the CPU time that much, since all it cost is a bigger matrix multiplication in the main core (18) while the size of the system does not change as it depends on the degrees of freedom. So no down-sampling is required in our technique unless for saving memory.

VI. CONCLUSION
This paper presents a fast and flexible technique for curve/surface reconstruction from the given point cloud. The
proposed approach is very fast and flexible and quite robust to noise and missing parts. The implicit b-splines have been used for the representation since they do not require any parameterization; they can be linearly described based on their parameter vector and their basis functions have compact supports. This latter fact has been exploited in this paper for proposing a fast reconstruction technique, referred to as 3L-IBS. This technique has been further accelerated just by considering the active control parameters, which leads to a smaller sparse system of equations. The reconstructed surface can be controlled through the regularization term and the user interaction. Finally, we have proposed an efficient weighting technique for blended IBS that merge mid-size patches in the overlapping regions. The qualitative and quantitative comparisons with different reconstruction techniques show the superiority of the proposed method in time complexity and fitting quality.

**APPENDIX A**

**REGULARIZATION TERM IN 2D**

The regularization term in 2D case is a quadratic function of the control vector: \( T(c) = c^\top \mathbf{H} c \), where \( \mathbf{H} \) is a \( N^2 \times N^2 \) symmetric matrix including the integral of basis functions’ derivatives. Since the tension term \( T \) is quadratic with respect to \( c \) and the matrix \( \mathbf{H} \) is symmetric, adding its derivative will lead to the following formula:

\[
\partial E/\partial c = 2(\mathbf{M}_\text{3L}^\top \mathbf{M}_\text{3L})c - 2\mathbf{M}_\text{3L}^\top \mathbf{b} + 2\mu \mathbf{H} c
\]

Then, setting this term to zero will give the optimal coefficient vector:

\[
c = (\mathbf{M}_\text{3L}^\top \mathbf{M}_\text{3L} + \mu \mathbf{H})^{-1}\mathbf{M}_\text{3L}^\top \mathbf{b}
\]

The main objective is to construct matrix \( \mathbf{H} \) in (17) from the monomial vectors. For any \( k, l \in \{1, 2, ..., N^2\} \), the couples \((k_1, k_2)\) and \((l_1, l_2)\) can be found from the table that is constructed when the active control points are detected and sorted. Hence, based on the definition, the \( k \)th entry of \( \mathbf{m}_{xx} \) is equal to \( B_{k_1}'(x)B_{k_2}(y) \) (similarly for the \( l \)th entry), thus we have:

\[
\int_X \int_Y \mathbf{m}_{xx} \mathbf{m}_{xx}^\top dx dy = \int_X \int_Y (B_{k_1}''(x)B_{k_2}(y))(B_{l_1}''(x)B_{l_2}(y)) dx dy
\]

therefore, the double integral on the whole \( XY \) domain is converted to two single integrals on \( X \) and \( Y \) domains; by applying a similar analysis on the other terms in (17) the following compact terms are obtained:

![Fig. 15. Surface reconstruction of human bodies [31]: (top) RBF reconstruction by [14]; (middle) mid-size IBS patches; (bottom) Blended IBS surface reconstruction.](image)
Fig. 16. 3D face reconstruction: (1st) triangular meshes; (2nd) RBF surface reconstruction [14]; (3rd) Truncated IBS; (4th) Blended IBS surface; the fitting accuracy is highlighted around the eyes and nose.

Table IV

Comparisons between the RBF reconstruction [14], the Truncated IBS and the Blended IBS that are proposed; DIM: Dimension of the representation (number of RBF/IBS parameters); CPU: Time (in seconds) for solving the least squares; SUR: Time spent for surfacing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>RBF[12]</th>
<th>Truncated IBS</th>
<th>Blended IBS</th>
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<td>CPU</td>
<td>SUR</td>
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<td>Fig. 15(2)</td>
<td>6,564</td>
<td>12.04</td>
<td>35.54</td>
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<td>Fig. 15(3)</td>
<td>5,667</td>
<td>10.25</td>
<td>35.63</td>
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<td>Fig. 15(4)</td>
<td>5,658</td>
<td>11.49</td>
<td>38.30</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fig. 15(5)</td>
<td>6,534</td>
<td>12.20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fig. 15(6)</td>
<td>12,390</td>
<td>23.87</td>
<td>210.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fig. 15(7)</td>
<td>11,563</td>
<td>31.80</td>
<td>219.26</td>
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<td>Fig. 15(8)</td>
<td>7,071</td>
<td>11.79</td>
<td>31.10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ \Pi_{m,n}^{(d)} = \int X B^{(d)}_m(x)B^{(d)}_n(x)dx \]  

(32)

where \( B^{(d)} \) refers to \( d \)-th derivative of \( B \) and \( m, n \in \{0, 1, ..., N\} \). These matrices are \( N \times N \), and we can compute the entries of \( H \) through them:

\[ H_{k,l} = \Pi^{(2)}_{k_1,k_2} \Pi^{(0)}_{k_1} + 2\Pi^{(1)}_{k_1} \Pi^{(1)}_{k_2} + \Pi^{(0)}_{k_2} \Pi^{(2)}_{k_2} \]  

(33)

Thus, in order to compute the \( N^2 \times N^2 \) matrix \( H \), we must compute three \( N \times N \) matrices \( \Pi^{(0)}, \Pi^{(1)} \) and \( \Pi^{(2)} \). Now the objective is to compute the entries of these matrices based on the blending function. For this purpose we consider three \( 4 \times 4 \) matrices considering different combinations of the blending functions:

\[ \pi_{r,s}^{(0)} = \int_0^1 b_r^{(0)}(u)b_s^{(0)}(u)du \]  

(34)

\[ \pi_{r,s}^{(1)} = \int_0^1 b_r^{(1)}(u)b_s^{(1)}(u)du \]  

\[ \pi_{r,s}^{(2)} = \int_0^1 b_r^{(2)}(u)b_s^{(2)}(u)du \]

where \( b^{(d)} \) refers to \( d \)-th derivative of \( b \) and \( r, s \in \{0, 1, 2, 3\} \). Then, we start moving on the region, and accumulating those values of \( \pi^{(0)}, \pi^{(1)} \) or \( \pi^{(2)} \) that contribute in that sub-region. Note that we use a special property of the B-Spline basis functions: when they are considered in a sub-region (with the length of \( \Delta \)) they are shrunk versions of one of the cubic patches.

References


http://shapes.aimatshape.net/; AIM@SHAPE, Digital Shape Workbench.


