Domain Surface for Object Scanning

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The idea of a domain surface is presented. With this idea, an object scanning algorithm from an RGB-D Abstract: camera can get a simplified mesh. Object scanning usually consists of surface reconstruction and fusion in two steps. Range data is native to surface construction. However, the constructed surface always requires massive data. It is not convenient to directly apply it to another application. To fuse two surfaces correctly, it is critical to have a precise registration of two views. A domain surface can solve the two main problems simultaneously. For the scanned scene, the system will find some domain surface to approximate the described surface. Thus, the object model is being simplified naturally. Traditionally, a registration problem is always solved as a six degree of freedom transformation. Resolving a robust solution from two dependent factors of the rotation and translation by a non-linear form is not straightforward. Usually, an iterative closest point (ICP) algorithm is adopted to find an optimized solution. However, the solution is based on the initial guess, and it is often trapped into a local minimum. From the normal of the mapped pair domain surface, it can estimate the rotation matrix by a linear SVD method. After the rotation is known, the shift of the feature points can more easily recover the translation. The idea of a domain surface is robust and straightforward for surface reconstruction and registration. With the help of this idea, a simplified mesh constructed from range data becomes easier.

INTRODUCTION 1

A depth camera has become popular to capture the environment or the 3D model. However, a massive point cloud has some issues, such as not being easy to use for pathfinding, not being easy to attach color texture, and having a lot of memory usage. A simplified mesh will be more suitable to relieve these problems. A mesh based object scanning algorithm using an RGBD camera is presented. Since it is mesh based, the result becomes easier to port to other environments or applications. During the scanning process, a progressive mesh with texture is constructed. To construct a mesh from depth data, generally, volume data is used. There are many functions to extract the surface such as a Radial basis function or a Poisson function. Traditionally, a truncated signed distance function is used to recode the depth map from each scan and fuse them together. Also, many Marching cube based algorithms can be employed to generate the mesh from the volume data. However, the volume data still contains many vertices inherited from

the voxels structure. To obtain a simplified mesh requires a different kind of algorithm.

To simplify the structure, a domain surface idea is presented. Simplification is very critical, especially in city modeling. Doulamis et al., 2015) proposed a 5D Digital Cultural Heritage Model (3D geometry plus time plus levels of details) be implemented using open interoperable standards based on the CityGML framework. With the idea of a domain surface, the amount of data can be reduced efficiently. A domain surface is a surface that approximates the describing surface. A mesh constructed from the domain surface is simplified, stable and more reliable in estimating the rotation for registration. To construct a mesh structure, a general approach is based on features to find its topological relationship. In this approach, it is not easy to determine how many features are sufficient to describe a surface. Which topology is a better solution? A minimal set of vertices within the mesh made from the domain surface is feasible. Moreover, with the concept of the dual graph, a minimal set of vertices can be found.

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The main idea is to segment the depth image with a predefined candidate surface. Thus, we can partition the area into many regions which have the same normal vector. Each region can find a domain surface to describe such an area. Also, we will track some features with optical flow frame-by-frame to recover the matching relationship for two scans. With these mapping relationships among features, the mapping relationships of domain surfaces also can be found. For each scan, we can locate a new domain surface and estimate its transformation to fuse together the scan results. A box texture is prepared. Each scan will estimate its view position. Based on the camera position, we will find a best-matched texture plane for the new domain surface.

In the following, we will discuss previous work first. Then, we will prepare the input data to find the relationship between the depth image and color image. Also, we will describe the tracking mechanism for recovering the mapping relationship between different scans. Then, we will discuss the main idea in detail: the domain surface. Finally, the transform for each scan will be estimated for the complete fusion.

2 PREVIOUS WORK

A depth camera has many different kinds of applications. Since it can capture the 3d cloud points in real time, it can be used for skeleton recognition and trajectory interpretation(Alexiadis et al., 2011; Papadopoulos et al., 2014; Laggis et al., 2017). Kainz et al. (Kainz et al., 2012) use ten Kinects to place at a different position in a room to scan an object from different views. To reduce interference between the Kinects, the Kinect mounts on a rod which is equipped with vibrators. Pradeep et al., (Pradeep et al., 2013) instead of using Kinect to capture the depth data, utilized only a single, off-the-shelf web camera as the input sensor. They then perform efficient variable-baseline stereo matching between the live frame and a previously selected key frame. Their stereo matcher creates a dense depth map per frame, which is then fused volumetrically into a single implicit surface representation. Ondruvska et al. (Ondrúška et al., 2015) used a similar technique but developed it on a mobile phone. Salas-Moreno et al. (Salas-Moreno et al., 2013) demonstrated realtime incremental simultaneous localization and mapping (SLAM) in large, cluttered environments, including loop closure, relocalization and the detection of moved objects, and of course the generation of an object level scene description with the potential to enable interaction. Zollhofer et al. (Zollhöfer et al.,

2014) presented a combined hardware and software solution for markerless reconstruction of non-rigidly deforming physical objects with arbitrary shape in real-time.

The usefulness of an RGBD camera with Kinect-Fusion (Newcombe et al., 2011) is limited by GPU memory capacity for a large scale environment. This problem has wide-ranging implications in practical applications since KinectFusion scans a threedimensional scene in real-time, which is important for an augmented reality application. The problem stems from the data recorded from the truncated signed distance function for supporting the tracking and mapping algorithm. There has been a lot of advanced research (Whelan et al., 2012; Whelan et al., 2013; Nießner et al., 2013; Kähler et al., 2015) to solve KinectFusion's huge memory consumption problem. Chen et al. (Chen et al., 2013) addressed the fundamental challenge of scalability for real-time, volumetric surface reconstruction methods. They design a memory efficient, hierarchical data structure for commodity graphics hardware, which supports the live reconstruction of large-scale scenes with fine geometric details. Zeng et al. (Zeng et al., 2013) used an Octree structure to process the data. Keller et al(Keller et al., 2013) used the same approach as KinectFusion, but their data structure is a set of 3D cloud points to avoid the limitation of the distance field. Lefloch et al. (Lefloch et al., 2015) also used a similar approach but primarily focused on the anisotropic problem.

We want to use a mesh-based object scanning algorithm, which will be more memory efficient. Scanning with a mesh structure has many advantages: smaller memory footprint, natural mesh generation with color texture, data sent directly to a 3D printer, and most importantly data suitability for a roboticcoordinated application. The system can identify an object's position and its dimensions. Then a robot arm will easily grasp or do some operations on the object.

To estimate a planar area, labeling or segmentation is very important. Eigen and Fergus (Eigen and Fergus, 2015) address three different computer vision tasks using a single multiscale convolutional network architecture: depth prediction, surface normal estimation, and semantic labeling. We believe that a planar area shares some kind of consistent information.

A planar surface represents a particular region that will not be so sensitive to noise, and it recently received some attention as a registration tool. Papazov et. al.(Papazov et al., 2015) present a novel triangular surface patch (TSP) descriptor, which encodes the shape of the 3D surface of the face within a triangular area. The proposed descriptor is viewpoint invariant, and it is robust to noise and to variations in the data resolution. Using a fast nearest neighbor lookup, TSP descriptors from an input depth map are matched to the most similar ones that were computed from synthetic head models in a training phase. The matched triangular surface patches in the training set are used to compute estimates of the 3D head pose and facial landmark positions in the input depth map. The surface patch is about a neighborhood relationship. Topology also is a good hint for matching. Choi and Christensen (Choi and Christensen, 2016) present the color point pair feature which enables the votingbased pose estimation to be more efficient. For finding the best matching pair, a hash key is used to minimize the search space.

3 PRELIMINARY PREPARATION

For object scanning, a prior segmentation of the object from the input data would be helpful for the following processes. There are many foreground segmentation algorithms, such as Graph Cut. In our implementation, a RealSense camera is used. In an Intel provided SDK, the blob tracking mechanism can access the foreground more easily.

Since the IR camera and RGB camera are not in the same location, there exists a translation between the two cameras. To bind the depth and color information together, we will rebuild the depth map on the RGB camera's coordinate. It is straight to translate a point in the depth map into the RGB camera's coordinate. However, the unwanted aliasing effects in the depth value become worse when the depth value is translated into another coordinate that will let many pixels lose its depth value in the new map. The effect generates grid noise, just as Figure 1 shows, and lets the following computation become unstable. To deal with this situation, a backcheck mechanism is used to recover the lost depth pixels. Since a pixel in the RGB image will form an Epipolar line on the depth map, thus we can search its corresponding depth value on this line. Firstly, we will search its neighboring pixels to find a depth value as its initial value that has the maximal possibility for the missing pixel. Based on the initial guess value, we will compare its depth value iteratively on its Epipolar line until the difference between the estimated and the corresponding depth is under a threshold.

After the depth map is constructed, a normalized depth map can be built by scaling the nearest and farthest pixels among the silhouette area. A normalized depth map is shown in Figure 1. With it, we can calculate a curvature map and find some useful features



Figure 1: (a) Grid noise pattern (b) A normalized depth map.

for transform recovery.

To gather suffusion features on the model, primitive features are collected such as a texture feature from the captured color image, and curvature from the depth image. These features are extracted with the Speeded Up Robust Features (SURF) algorithm. If we update each feature as a vertex on the mesh for each frame, it will produce too many vertices. To avoid a point cloud, only the frame that has a large transform can create new vertices in the existing mesh. A fast evaluation is to check the distance of the trajectory from the texture tracking whether the moving is larger than a predefined value or not. The value is noted as the density parameter. If the criterion is met, that means it is suitable to initialize a new update.

To track the movement of the feature points, a general technique is to use the optical flow. OpenCV provides all these in a single function, cv2.calcOpticalFlowPyrLK(). To decide which points are suitable for tracking, we use cv2.goodFeaturesToTrack(). To use the function cv2.calcOpticalFlowPyrLK(), we pass the previous frame, previous points, and next frame as the input parameters. It returns the next points along with some status numbers. If its value is one, that means the next point is found. Otherwise, its value is zero. Iteratively, we pass these points as previous points in the next step.

In the beginning, the tracking mechanism detects some SURF feature points on the first frame. The calcOpticalFlowPyrLK() function then is used to track those points which implements the Lucas-Kanade optical flow. To improve the robustness of the tracking result, backtracking is applied to check these points still are the tracking pair from the next frame to the previous frame. Figure 2 shows there are some false tracking points already deleted by the backtracking mechanism.



Figure 2: Backtracking.

4 SEGMENTATION

To get a simplified mesh directly from the scanned data, we want to find the planar area first. Taylor and Cowley (Taylor and Cowley, 2013) use planar area to identify the wall structure. They use edge detection and Delaunay triangulation to locate a planar candidate. Then, the depth samples associated with each of the image regions are passed to a RANSAC routine which is used to recursively divide the point set into planar regions. Hemmat (Hemmat et al., 2015) et al. also use edge detection to find a region and test different directions to determine whether their neighborhood is on the same plane or not. Bokaris et al. (Bokaris et al., 2017) is also similar to Taylor's approach, but has better parameters to improve the result.

An input image may consist of many regions which are on the same plane. To determine which pixels belong to the same plane, usually, a RANSAC algorithm is used. Since a planar area shares the same normal direction, if we can segment the pixels by their normal direction, then it will be easier to find the plane. However, this simple idea does not work correctly. For example, the input image is two planes as Figure 3 shown. Since the depth value has a quantization error, we have tried different kernel size of boxes to calculate its mean value to estimate its normal vector. A larger kernel size can get a smoother



Figure 3: Two planes shown on the input depth and RGB images.

result. However, the results are still not good as Figure 4 shown. Because the initial target normal can not be estimated exactly always, some pixels may belong to a normal vector and others may belong to another vector. Thus, the distribution becomes unstable.

To solve the instability problem, a method similar to the RANSAC algorithm is used. A mask is con-



Figure 4: Plane detection is not a stable event with different sizes of kernel boxes.



Figure 5: A mask represents the pixels that have the common normal vector.

structed to indicate which pixels that belong to the same plane can be used to estimate the fitted plane. The Figure 5 shows the mask. After the parameters of the plane are estimated, we can check each pixel to determine whether it belongs to the plane or not. To label each pixel to a suitable plane, we will calculate an approximated error by accumulating the distance from its neighboring pixels to the target plane. If we only compare the distance, the intersecting area from another plane also will become a good candidate. To avoid this situation, we also need to make sure the variation of the normal vector is similar. The labeling result is shown on the figure 6. The error between the estimated plane and the 3d point from the depth image is shown on the Figure 7. The maximal error is 5mm. The average error is 2 mm.

A curved surface is very different from a planar surface. The normal vectors of a planar area are the same or very similar. However, the normal vectors of a curved area have many differences. Most are not the same everywhere. Thus, we want to employ



Figure 6: Labeling the pixels belonging to a target plane.



Figure 7: The error between the estimated plane and 3d points from the depth image.



Figure 8: A subdivision of an Icosahedron is used as an initial pattern for labeling.

a few planes as first patterns to label a depth image for segmentation. A normal vector from the subdivision of an Icosahedron is used as the initial pattern as shown in Figure 8. There are forty triangles for the half sphere. The angle between the normal vectors of neighboring triangles is about eighteen degrees.

A mesh structure consists of vertices, edges, and faces. A vertex determines the geometricsl information. An edge is for the topological information. Mesh simplification usually is either by the vertex decimation method or by the edge collapse approach. Our approach is trying to minimize the surface number as much as possible. However, these planes also are constrained by vertices and edges. Thus, a minimal set of vertices are recovered from the domain graph's dual graph. To make sure the planar plane can describe the surface well, tolerance is defined as follows. Let shape *S* be described by a mesh *M* under a tolerance *T*. If a point *p* belongs to a shape *S*, then the distance from *p* to mesh *M* should be less than *T*.

To find a minimal set of planes to describe a target surface, a set of primitive planes is defined first. Since all the surfaces face the camera, a half part of a subdivided icosahedron is suitable as the first planes. For stabilization, each pixel estimates its normal vec-



Figure 9: Depth map is segmented by a minimal set of planes.



Figure 10: The error between an estimated plane and the depth image for a curved surface.

tor from a seven-by-seven box by comparing the angle between its normal vectors to find the best, fittest primitive plane. Thus, the scanned image can be segmented by labeling with different primitive planes. For each segmented region, we can find its best-fitted plane. The segmented image is shown in Figure 9. The error between an estimated plane and the depth image for a curved surface is shown on Figure 10.

5 DOMAIN SURFACE

To find the intersection of two planes, their neighborhood relationship must be defined first. For easy identification of the neighborhood relationship, a Dual graph is constructed from a primitive graph. To construct such a graph, we will find some domain nodes first. A domain node represents a critical area in which every pixel approximates a plane. After an approximated plane is estimated, each pixel around its neighbor area will determine whether it belongs to this plane or not by a predefined threshold. All the pixels belonging to this plane will form a boundary. A domain shape is defined, and this shape can determine some domain nodes. We want to find some positions that are stable and not so sensitive to shape noise. A domain connected graph seems a good candidate (Wu



Figure 11: The shape shrink into a global optimized position even when the shape is very noise.

et al., 2006). It consists of domain nodes. There is an edge between two domain nodes if there exists a neighbor relationship.

A domain node is an energy balance position. A position inside a shape will receive a repulsive force from its boundary and other domain nodes. A configuration of the boundary will generate a repulsive force field for such a shape. We want to construct a function that has only one global minimal point in a convex shape. Thus, a repulsive force field is defined as $F(x) = \int \frac{\vec{r}}{r^n} d\theta$, where *r* is the distance from *x* to the boundary in the direction \vec{r} , and a discrete form is

$$F(p) = \sum_{0 \le \theta < 2\pi} \frac{\vec{u_{\theta}}}{\|p\|^n},\tag{1}$$

where \vec{u}_{θ} is a unit ray with different angles. When $n \to \infty$, the repulsive force field is dominated by the shortest distance d(x), and thus $f(x) \propto d(x)$. In some sense, *n* is a term for a smoothing effect. Each position receives more boundary influence for a smaller *n*.

Let each edge of the shape as an initial position move to an energy balance position iteratively based on the repulsive force field. Finally, the node will shrink into a global optimized position that is a domain node. Each domain node can generate a maximum inscribed circle. This circle will become a new boundary to reconstruct a repulsive force field. Then, we can find all the domain nodes until its radius smaller than a pre-defined value. The shrinking process is shown in Figure 11.

Each domain surface maintains a block of the area. To calculate this area, we will find its boundary. Its boundary is determined by its neighborhood relationship. Each pixel is labeled with a different code to represent that it belongs to different domain surface. Then, we can know to which other surfaces a domain surface connects. For each pixel on the boundary of the domain shape, we will check the variation of its depth or normality among its neighboring pixels to determine if this point is a continue pixel. If the variation of depth and normal both are smaller than a predefined constraint, it is a continue pixel. Otherwise, it is a discrete pixel. Based on the shrinking path on the domain shape, each boundary segment belongs to whichever domain node can be determined. Thus, a continue pixel means that it belongs to two different domain nodes at its different sides. Also, it means that the two domain nodes have a neighborhood relationship. A neighborhood edge will be constructed between the two domain nodes. In other words, for two neighbor domain surfaces, we can find an intersection line between these surfaces.

After a domain connected graph is constructed, each face of the graph helps create vertices. A node represents a domain face. Thus, a triangle means that there exists an intersection point of these domain faces. After traversal of all faces of this graph, we can construct a list of vertices.

With these vertices, we can refine the boundary of each domain node. If the boundary is a discrete edge, then the edge remains unchanged, but if it is a continuous edge, it will be replaced by a new edge to connect from the pool of vertices.

If there is a new scan, we should fuse two constructed meshes together. Usually, the portion near the silhouette area is not stable because some of its neighbors are in the invisible area. For stabilization reasons, a continuous area should keep its area to at least a fixed minimum size. A new area will add new vertices and new edges to the old mesh.

6 REGISTRATION

Pose estimation is an important issue for object scanning or robotic applications. Particularly for object scanning, the pose is necessary information to fuse different viewpoints into an integrated model. Merrell et al(Merrell et al., 2007) advocate a two-stage process in which the first stage generates potentially noisy, overlapping depth maps from a set of calibrated images and the second stage fuses these depth maps to obtain an integrated surface with higher accuracy, suppressed noise, and reduced redundancy.

With a depth camera, the 3d cloud points become more accessible to capture. Traditionally, there are two types of approaches. One is based on a set of known 3d points and their corresponding 2d projections in the image. It is called the perspective-npoint (PnP) method. Another type computes the best matching position by an iterative approach to adjust to the closest pose. It is called the iterative closest points(ICP) method.

However, since the estimation of the matching

pairs usually is error-prone, usually massive points are used to minimize the effect of errors. Sometimes, false matching will produce a huge error. To remove such outlier effects, the RANSAC (Random Sample Consensus) Algorithm with an iterative approach finds a better fitting. In fact, pose estimation still does not quickly get a robust result in different situations. Practically solving this problem, a precalibrated camera array in an environment is more feasible to recover the pose in different positions. The other solution may work with the help of an inertial measurement unit (IMU) to improve the precision.

A specific area scanned at i-th time forms a domain surface f_i combined with a region R_i and a local transform M_i . The surface finally will transform into world coordinates and fuse the global model together. An array of vertices V_i is used to describe a region R_i .

A function $f(x)_i = n_i x + d_i$ where n_i is a normal vector and d_i is constant item. A region R_i may consist of domain node c_k and $f(c_k)_i = 0$.

A global model is $G = \cup M_i \times R_i$

(2)

We need to find at least one motion pair whose distance is larger than the density check. If a large transform is found, a pose estimation algorithm will be used to estimate the object's pose. To compare different poses, the traditional approach is to compare shape similarity by calculating the distance from the depth pixel to the mesh surface, defined as $\sum_{x_i} d(x_i, S)$. Thus, the cost function

$$E(R,T) = \sum_{x_i} d(Rx_i + T, S)$$
(3)

is to be minimized to estimate its transform. However, in our experiments, the solution is not so robust, especially in large transform case.

Thus, we will find the paired domain surfaces to estimate the transformation. By the feature tracking mechanism, a set of paired features can be used to determine the mapping relationship between the domain surfaces. Assume that surface f_i contains feature p_x and surface f_j contains feature p_y . If features p_x and p_y are a mapped pair, then surfaces f_i and f_j also are a mapped pair. Then, we can estimate the rotation matrix from the mapped domain surface be $n_1, n_2...n_i$ and $n'_1, n'_2...n'_i$, respectively. Similar to Sorkine and Alexa's research(Sorkine and Alexa, 2007), there exists a rotation matrix R such that $n'_j = R \times n_j$. To find such a rotation matrix R, we need to minimize

$$E = \sum_{j=1...i} \|n'_j - R \times n_j\|^2$$
 (4)

$$= \sum_{j=1\dots i} (n'_j - R \times n_j)^T (n'_j - R \times n_j) \qquad (5)$$

$$= \sum_{j=1...i} (n'_j)^T n'_j - 2(n'_j)^T R(n_j) + n_j^T n_j \quad (6)$$

The terms that do not contain R are constant in the minimization and therefore can be dropped. Thus remains

$$\underset{R}{\operatorname{argmin}}\sum_{j}-2(n_{j}')^{T}R(n_{j})$$
(7)

$$= \underset{R}{\operatorname{argmax}} \sum_{j} (n'_{j})^{T} R(n_{j})$$
(8)

$$= \underset{R}{\operatorname{argmax}} (R \times Tr(\sum_{j} n_{j} n_{j}')) \tag{9}$$

Let $S = Tr(\sum_{j} n_{j}n'_{j})$, It is well known that the rotation matrix *R* maximizing Tr(RS) is obtained when *RS* is symmetric positive semi-definite.

One can derive *R* from the singular value decomposition of $S = U\Sigma V^T$:

$$R = V U^T, \tag{10}$$

up to changing the sign of the column of U corresponding to the smallest singular value, such that det(R) > 0. After the rotation matrix is determined, the translation can be obtained by calculating the shift of feature points.

Here we make a comparison among the PNP, ICP and domain surface approaches. For different transformations, try to find which approach is more robust and efficient.

7 FUSION

To construct the mesh, a Delaunay triangulation is applied from the projection plane of the viewpoint, and the connection of the vertices also can be extended into three-dimensional space. Each new pose may create new features that will be added to the existing mesh. When updating the mesh, each extracted feature also will compare its distance error to the tolerance threshold to determine whether it will be discarded, merged or inserted. When updating the mesh, each extracted feature also will compare its distance error to the tolerance threshold. If the distance error is reasonable and this feature point is far away from an existing vertex, this feature point will be discarded. If this feature point is close to an existing vertex, the vertex position can be updated with a weighted mechanism.

 $P(x) = W * p(X) + w * \frac{p(x)}{(W+w)}$, where p(x) represents the position of vertex *x*. Each vertex also maintains a weighted value *W*. Each update also will change the weight to W = W + w.

If the error is large, that means this feature can construct a new vertex. If this feature is located outside of this mesh, it can be inserted to connect with the mesh's boundary vertexes. If this feature is located inside the mesh, edges around this new feature will be checked to delete unsuitable edges. Then, this vertex can be inserted into the mesh.

Since we focus on object scanning, the texture map is assumed to be a cubic map. When the first frame creates the mesh, a virtual box around the object is also created and the color image will be the front texture. The u-v relationship also can be found in accordance with the triangulation result. Each triangle will find its best projection plane on the virtual box. A new update frame also will find its best projection plane to update, and only if the view angle is closer to the center of the projection plane will its color image replace the existing frame as the new texture. All the triangles belonging to that plane need to update their u-v relationship by projecting their position according to that view's transform.

To fuse two meshes into an integrated mesh, a fusion boundary will be located first. Let τ_a, τ_b be a set of features that respectively belong to a mesh M_a, M_b , where M_a is the integrated mesh and M_b is a constructed mesh by a new frame. For a particular view, part of the boundary of M_a called B_a will divide τ_b into two sets $\tau_b^{in}, \tau_b^{out}$. Also, τ_a can be divided into two sets $\tau_a^{in}, \tau_a^{out}$ by the mesh M_b in the view. B_a, B_b are the fusion boundaries on the mesh M_a, M_b , respectively.

In our experience, pose estimation is very important. A poor estimation will produce a bad result or even a mistake. Thus, we need to set a tolerance value to control the allowable error. The tolerance threshold cannot be set too low; otherwise, the system will frequently be interrupted because the system cannot get a good fit to the current model. In general, with our approach, we can get a textured object model immediately and easily.

8 CONCLUSION

In the beginning, we try to construct the mesh from features. We want to find some invariant features as candidates and find their topological relationship with Delaunay triangulation. However, silhouette features provide an abundance of information, which also makes it too noisy. Besides, Delaunay triangulation may not fit the variation of depth data. With the idea of a domain surface, the number of faces becomes as few as possible. From the variation of the mapped area, it is more stable to recover the rotation transformation. The rigid transformation then can be divided into the rotation part and the translation part, and they can be calculated separately. This approach makes the solution more robust.

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