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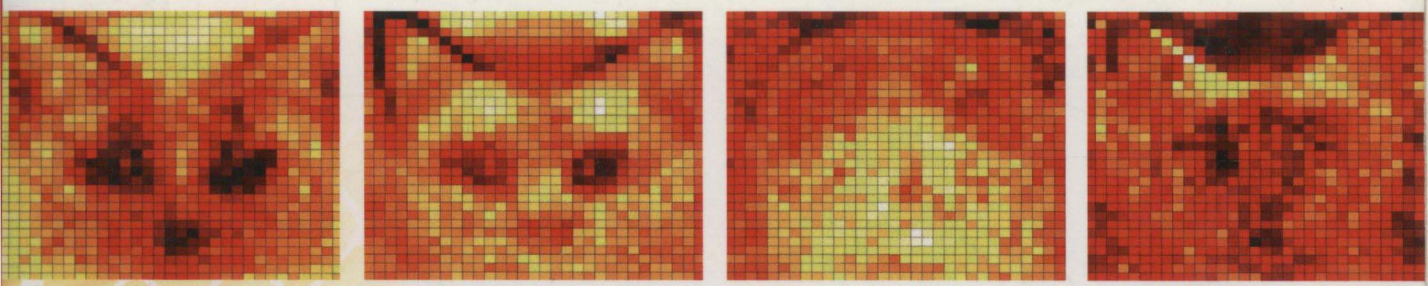
Methods for Complex Systems & Big Data



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Methods for Complex Systems & Big Data

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Dedication

For Kristy, Lauren and Katie

Acknowledgments

The idea of the first part of this book began as a series of conversations with Dave Muraki. It then grew into the primary set of notes for a scientific computing course whose ambition was to provide a truly versatile and useful course for students in the engineering, biological and physical sciences. And over the last couple of years, the book expanded to included methods for data analysis, thus bolstering the intellectual scope of the book significantly. Unbeknownst to them, much of the data analysis portion of the book was heavily inspired by the fantastic works of Emmanuel Candés, Yannis Kevrekidis and Clancy Rowley and various conversations I had with each of them. I've also benefitted greatly from early discussions with James Rossmanith, and with implementation ideas with Peter Blossey and Sorin Mitran; and more recently on dimensionality reduction methods with Steven Brunton, Edwin Ding, Joshua Proctor, Peter Schmid, Eli Shlizerman, Jonathan Tu and Matthew Williams. Leslie Butson, Sarah Hewitt and Jennifer O'Neil have been very helpful in editing the book so that it is more readable, useful and error-free. A special thanks should also be given to all the many wonderful students who have provided so much critical commentary and vital feedback for improving the delivery, style and correctness of the book. Of course, all errors in this book are the fault of my daughters' hamsters Fluffy and Quickles.

Prolegomenon

Scientific computing is ubiquitous in the physical, biological and engineering sciences. Today, proficiency with computational methods, or lack thereof, can have a major impact on a researcher's ability to effectively analyze a given problem. Although a host of numerical analysis courses are traditionally offered in the mathematical sciences, the typical audience is the professional mathematician. Thus the emphasis is on establishing proven techniques and working through rigorous stability arguments, for instance. No doubt, this vision of numerical analysis is essential and provides the basic groundwork for most numerical analysis courses and books. This more traditional approach to the teaching of numerical methods generally requires more than a year in coursework to achieve a level of proficiency necessary for solving practical problems since the focus is on establishing rigor versus implementation of the methods with a high-level programming language.

The goal of this book is to embark on a new tradition: establishing computing proficiency as the first and foremost priority above rigorous analysis. Thus the major computational methods established over the past few decades are considered with emphasis on their use and implementation versus their rigorous analytic framework. A terse time-frame is also necessary in order to effectively augment the education of students from a wide variety of scientific departments. The three major techniques for solving partial differential equations are all considered: finite differences, finite elements and spectral methods. And the addition in this manuscript of data analysis techniques represents a fairly radical departure from the standard curriculum in mathematics and applied mathematics departments.

MATLAB has established itself as the leader in scientific computing software. The built-in algorithms developed by MATLAB allow the computational focus to shift from technical details to overall implementation and solution techniques. Heavy and repeated use is made of MATLAB's linear algebra packages, fast Fourier transform routines, and finite element (partial differential equations) package. These routines are the workhorses for most solution techniques and are treated to a large extent as blackbox operations. Of course, cursory explanations are given of the underlying principles in any of the routines utilized, but it is largely left as reference material in order to focus on the application of the routine. It is assumed that when necessary, one could implement these techniques by using standard libraries from, for instance, LAPACK.

The end goal is for the student to develop a sense of confidence about implementing computational techniques. Specifically, at the end of the book, the student should be able to solve almost any 1D, 2D or 3D problem of the elliptic, hyperbolic or parabolic type. Or at the least, they should have a great deal of knowledge about how to solve the problem and should have enough information and references at their disposal to circumvent any implementation difficulties. Likewise, with the data analysis framework presented, the key concepts of statistics, time–frequency analysis and low dimensional reduction (SVD) should allow one to have an excellent starting point for moving forward in a given problem where data plays a critical role.

Overall, the combination of methods for solving complex spatio-temporal systems along with understanding how to integrate data into the analysis provides an excellent framework for

integrating dynamics of complex systems with big data. This is especially true in the later chapters (Chapters 18–23) where a clear integration of data methods and dynamics is advocated. Given the growing importance of big data methods, it is essential that scientific computing keep pace with some of the exciting developments in this field, especially as it relates to more traditional scientific computing applications.

How to Use This Book

There are a number of intended audiences for this book as is shown in the division of the book into three numerical methods parts and one applications portion. Indeed, the various parts of the book were developed with different student audiences in mind. In what follows, the specific target audiences are highlighted along with the portions of the book appropriate for their use. Ultimately, this gives a roadmap on how to use this book for one's desired ends. All portions of the book have been heavily vetted by undergraduate and graduate students alike, thus improving the overall readability and usefulness. What is unique about this book is the applications portion which attempts to allow students to solve real problems of broad scientific interest. My own personal frustration with the myriad of MATLAB computing books is that many of the problems designed or used for illustration of key concepts are fairly uninspiring and devoid of real-world applicability. More will be said about this in the following paragraphs.

Undergraduate course in beginning scientific computing

The first part of this book reflects the topical coverage of material taught at the University of Washington campus for freshman–sophomore level engineering and physical science students. Given that MATLAB has become the programming language of choice in our engineering programs, the coverage begins by considering basic concepts and theoretical ideas in the context of programming language infrastructure. Thus programming and algorithm development becomes an integral part of developing practical routines for computing, for instance, least-square fits, derivatives or integrals. Moreover, simple things like making nice plots, generating movies and importing/exporting data files with MATLAB are incorporated into the pedagogical structure. Thus Chapters 1 through 6 give a basic introduction to MATLAB, to programming infrastructure (**if** and **for** loops) and to problem solving development. In addition to these first five chapters, Chapter 6 on differential equations is covered towards the end of the book. The ability to quickly and efficiently solve differential equations is critical for many junior and senior level courses in the engineering sciences such as aeronautics/astronautics (the three-body problem) or electrical engineering (circuit theory). Thus the first part of this book has a well-defined, beginning scientific computing audience.

Graduate course in scientific computing

In addition to beginning students, there is a great deal of effort in providing an educational infrastructure and high-level overview of scientific computing methods to graduate students (or advanced undergraduates) from a broad range of scientific disciplines. A traditional graduate course in numerical analysis, while extremely relevant, often is focused on the mathematical infrastructure versus practical implementation. Further, many numerical analysis sequences are quite devoid of engineering, biological and physical science students. The second part of this book, Chapters 7 through 11, provides a high-level introduction to the computational methods used for solving differential and partial differential equations. It certainly is the case that such

systems provide an underlying theoretical framework for many applications of broad scientific interest. Thus the key elements of finite difference, spectral and finite elements are all considered. The starting point for the graduate students is in Chapter 7 with stepping techniques for differential equations. On the one hand, one can envision skipping all of the first part of the book to begin the graduate level treatment of scientific computing. But on the other hand, the inclusion of Part I of this book allows graduate students to have a refresher section for simple things such as plotting, constructing movies, importing/exporting data, or simply reviewing programming architecture. Thus the graduate student can use the first part of this book as a reference for their intended studies.

Graduate course in computational methods for data analysis

Parts I and II of this book offer a fairly standard treatment, although slanted heavily towards implementation here, of beginning and advanced numerical methods leading to the construction of numerical solutions of partial differential equations. In contrast, Part III of this book (Chapters 12 through 23) offers a unique perspective on data analysis methods. Indeed, one would be hard pressed to find such a treatment in any current textbook in the mathematical sciences. The aim of this third part is to introduce graduate students (or advanced undergraduates) in the sciences to the burgeoning field of data analysis. This area of research is expanding at an incredible pace in the sciences due to the proliferation of data collection in almost every field of science. The enormous data sets routinely encountered in the sciences now certainly give enormous incentive to their synthesis, interpretation and conjectured meaning. This portion of the book attempts to bring together in a self-consistent fashion the key ideas from (i) statistics, (ii) time–frequency analysis and (iii) low dimensional reductions in order to provide meaningful insight into the data sets one is faced with in any scientific field today. This is a tremendously exciting area and much of this part of the book is driven by intuitive examples of how the three areas (i)–(iii) can be used in combination to give critical insight into the fundamental workings of various problems. As with Part II of this book, access to the introductory material in Part I allows students from various backgrounds to supplement their background where appropriate, thus making Part I an indispensable part of the overall architecture of the book.

Computational methods reference guide

In addition to its primary use as a textbook for either a graduate or undergraduate course in scientific computing or data analysis, the book also serves as a helpful reference guide. As a reference guide, its strength lies in either giving the appropriate high-level overview necessary along with key pieces of MATLAB code for implementation, or the scientific applications portion of the book provides example ideas and techniques for solving a broad class of problems. Using either the applications or theory sections, or both in combination, provides an effective and quick way to refresh one's skills and/or analytic understanding of a solutions technique. In practice, the most common comment I hear concerning this book is that students have found them useful long after their course work has been completed. I believe this is attributed to the low entry threshold for obtaining both practical theoretical knowledge and key snippets of MATLAB code for use in developing a piece of code beyond what is covered in the text. Further, since many high-level

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MATLAB subroutines are introduced, a person referencing the book can be assured of exposure to techniques well beyond the simple and trivial methods that might be at first considered.

Scientific applications—Bringing it all together

The most critical aspect of this book is the scientific applications part (Chapters 24 through 26). The philosophy here is simple: solve real problems. There is something a bit disingenuous to me about developing sophisticated methodology and then applying it to either (i) highly contrived examples, or (ii) greatly oversimplified problems that are constructed for theoretical/analytical convenience. It is well understood that each of these serve their purpose in pedagogy. However, if the aim is to make one proficient in building real code, then real problems, with all their complexities, must be considered. The selection of problems is broad enough that an instructor should be able to pick something of interest to themselves. Further, each problem has a well laid out background so that the problem is developed in its appropriate context. The level of difficulty of each problem increases as the problem is developed so that the same problem can serve for undergraduates, advanced undergraduates or graduate students alike, the only difference being in where the student was asked to stop. This allows students the ability to push beyond the basic formulation if they desire. Moreover, there is a context in which their computations are placed, making connection to important historical problems such as the three-body problem, quantum mechanics, 2D advection–diffusion, etc. It is hoped that such problem formulation is much more exciting for both students and faculty alike. This is a unique way in which to think about implementing the theoretical and computational tools learned in the book.

About MATLAB

MATLAB (**MAT**rix **LAB**oratory) has become the *tool of choice* for the teaching of and rapid prototyping of a myriad of problems arising in the physical, engineering and biological sciences. As a high-level language rooted in matrix and vector mathematics, it provides an exceptional integrated programming environment for algorithm development, data analysis, visualization and numerical computation. Using MATLAB, you can solve technical computing problems at a fraction of the programming effort required with traditional languages such as C, C++ or Fortran.

The objective of this book is to provide methods for computationally solving problems, and then to actually solve them. As such, a high-level scientific language is ideal for generating small, yet extremely powerful algorithms. Moreover, full advantage is taken of professionally developed algorithms that few students could match in terms of efficiency, accuracy and/or cutting-edge relevance. Armed with such high-level program tools, rapid and significant progress can be made in solving significant problems that arise in the sciences. Thus the focus is on solving the scientific problem versus the algorithm implementation and its nuances in accuracy, stability and speed.

MATLAB is not free. It is developed by Mathworks Inc. based outside of Boston, MA. It is a privately held company that today has over one million users from all walks of life and industries. A student version is available online and/or from select bookstores, and is highly recommended, for those studying at any institution of learning (www.mathworks.com).

Given its dominance and importance, it is only natural that there should be a MATLAB-styled version through open source development. GNU Octave is a high-level interpreted language, primarily intended for numerical computations. Much like MATLAB, it provides capabilities for the numerical solution of linear and nonlinear problems, and for performing other numerical experiments. It also provides extensive graphics capabilities for data visualization and manipulation. Octave is normally used through its interactive command line interface, but it can also be used to write noninteractive programs. The Octave language is quite similar to MATLAB so that most programs are easily portable. Octave is free, although there is a suggested donation.

Whether it be MATLAB or Octave, a high-level interpreted language is assumed to be available for your use in going through this book. The availability of such high-level languages is transformative in one's ability to rapidly implement and develop the sophisticated computing algorithms developed herein. It is my view that such high-level languages let one much more clearly see the forest through the trees.

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