Introduction to Robotics

Sampling-Based Motion Planning

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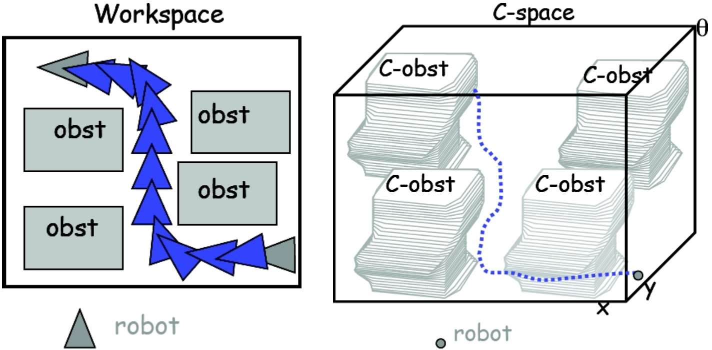
From Workspace to Configuration Space

- simple workspace obstacle transformed into complex configuration-space obstacle
- robot transformed into point in configuration space
- path transformed from swept volume to 1d curve



[fig from Jyh-Ming Lien]

Explicit Construction of Configuration Space/Roadmaps

- PSPACE-complete
- Exponential dependency on dimension
- No practical algorithms

Motion Planning for a Point Robot in 2D

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- Task: Compute collision-free path from initial to goal position

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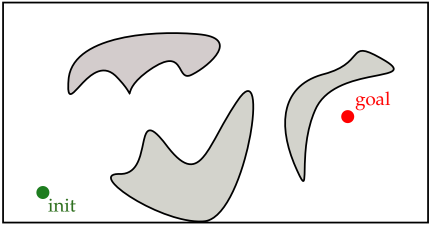

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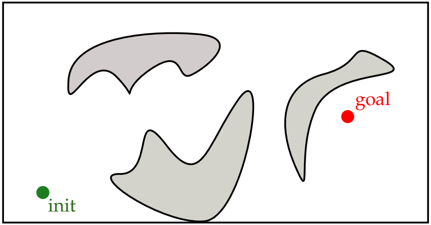

Hint: How would you approximate π?

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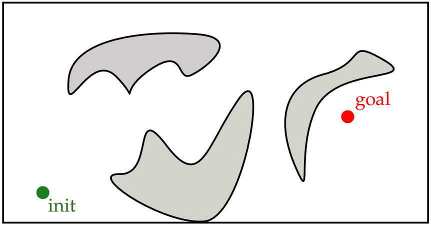

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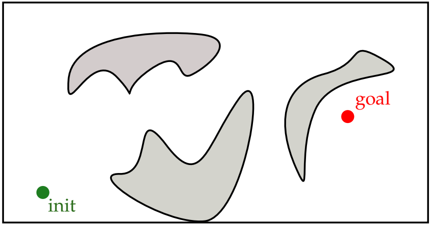

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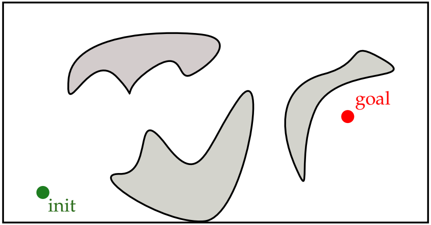

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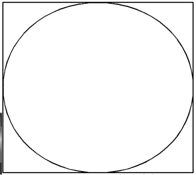

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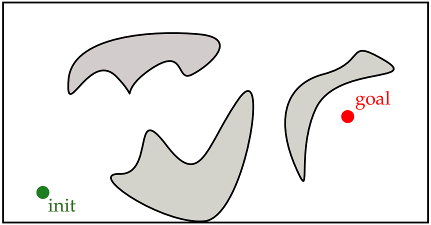

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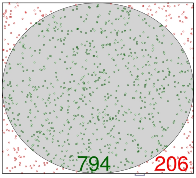

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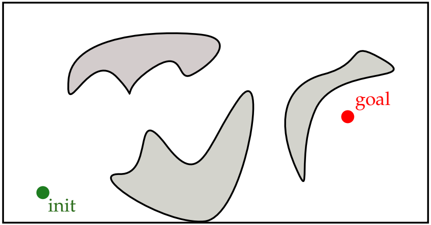

Monte-Carlo Idea:

- Define input space
- Generate inputs at random by *sampling* the input space
- Perform a deterministic computation using the input samples
- Aggregate the partial results into final result

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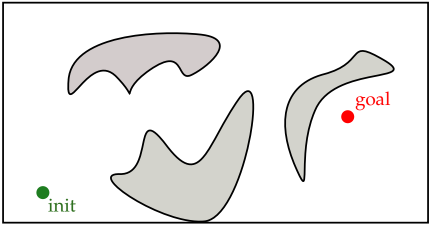

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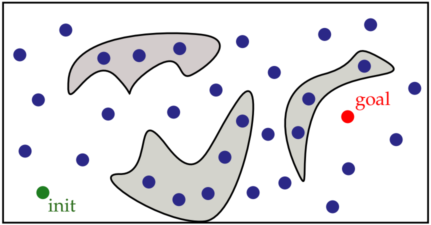

- Sample points

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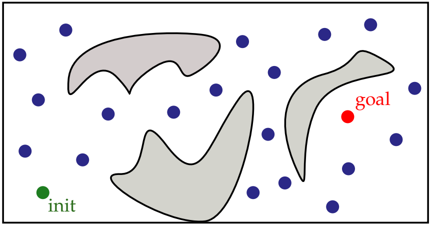

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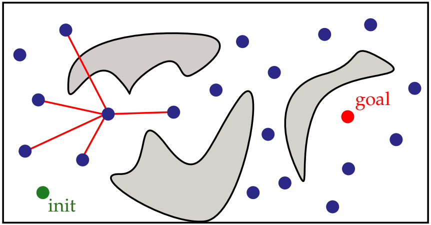

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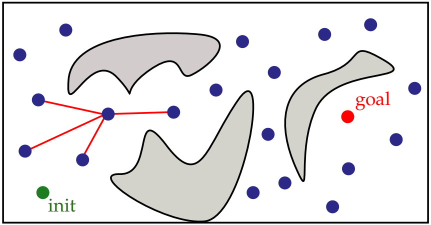

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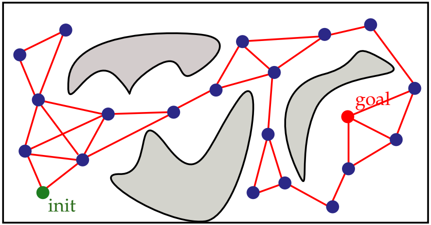

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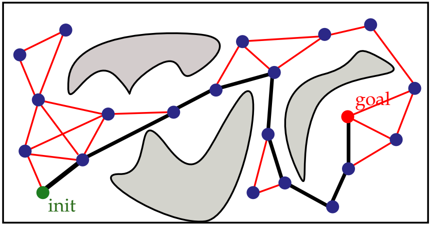

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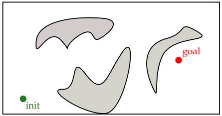
⇒ Collision-free path can be found by performing graph search on the roadmap

[Kavraki, Švestka, Latombe, Overmars 1996]

0. Initialization

add q_{init} and q_{goal} to roadmap vertex set V



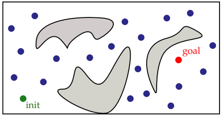
1. Sampling

repeat several times

$q \leftarrow \text{SAMPLE}()$

if $\text{ISCOLLISIONFREE}(q) = \texttt{true}$

add q to roadmap vertex set V



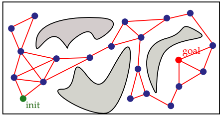
2. Connect Samples

for each pair of neighboring samples $(q_a, q_b) \in V \times V$

$\text{path} \leftarrow \text{GENERATELOCALPATH}(q_a, q_b)$

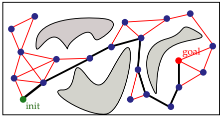
if $\text{ISCOLLISIONFREE}(\text{path}) = \texttt{true}$

add (q_a, q_b) to roadmap edge set E



3. Graph Search

search graph (V, E) for path from q_{init} to q_{goal}



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It offers *probabilistic completeness*

- When a solution exists, a probabilistically complete planner finds a solution with probability as time goes to infinity.
- When a solution does not exists, a probabilistically complete planner may not be able to determine that a solution does not exist.

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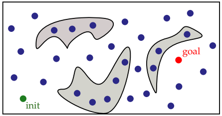

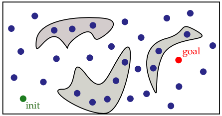

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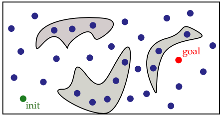
$\textsc{IsSampleCollisionFree}(q)$

- Point inside/outside polygon test



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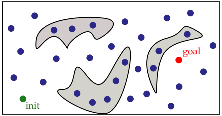

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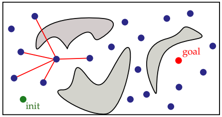
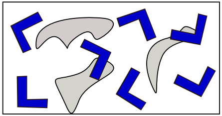
- Segment-polygon intersection test



PRM Applied to 2D Rigid-Body Robot



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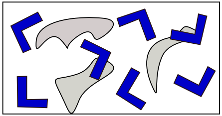

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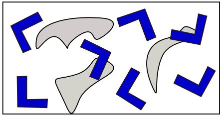

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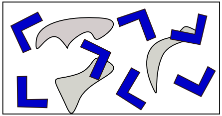

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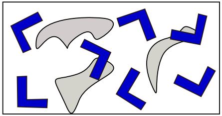

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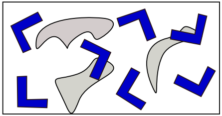

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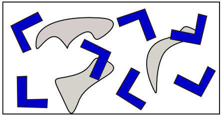

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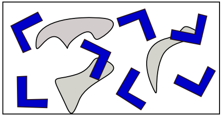

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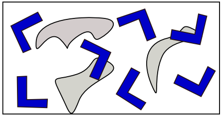

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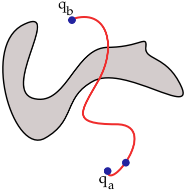

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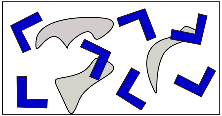
- Incremental approach



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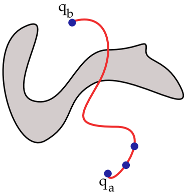

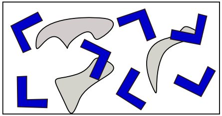

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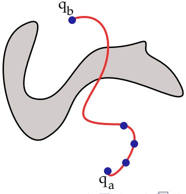
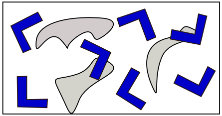
$\textsc{IsPathCollisionFree}(\text{path})$
- Incremental approach





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- Place rigid body in position and orientation specified by q
- Polygon-polygon intersection test

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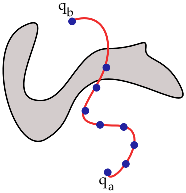

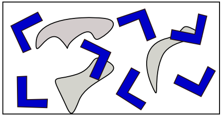

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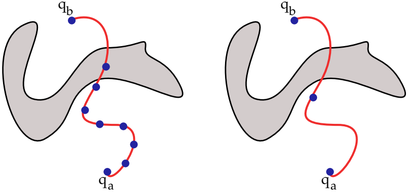

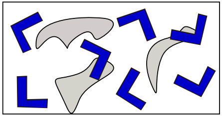

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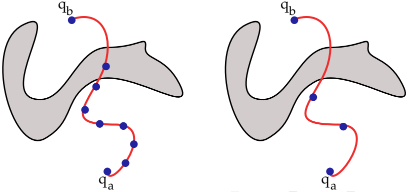

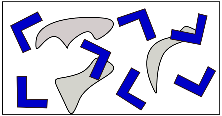

$q = (x, y, \theta) \leftarrow \text{SAMPLE}()$

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$\text{ISSAMPLECOLLISIONFREE}(q)$

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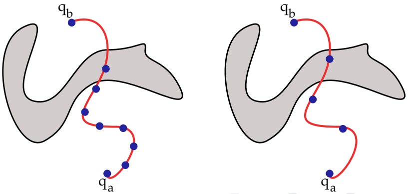
[piano] [manocha] [kcar] [tri] [buggy]



PRM Applied to Articulated Chain

$q = (\theta_1, \theta_2, \ldots, \theta_n) \leftarrow \textsc{Sample}()$

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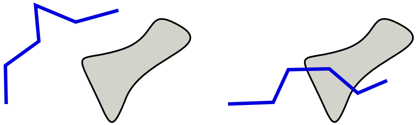

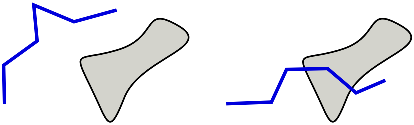

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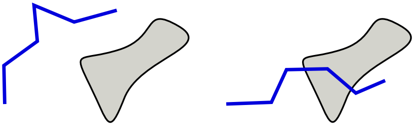

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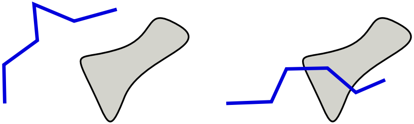

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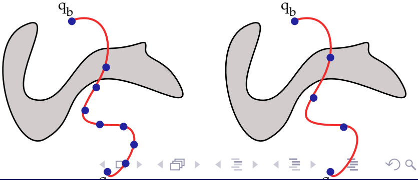

[everest] [skeleton] [knot] [manip]

Path Smoothing

- Solution paths produced by PRM planners tend to be long and non-smooth (due to sampling and edge connections)
- Post processing is commonly used to improve the quality of the paths
- A common practice is to repeatedly replace long paths by short paths

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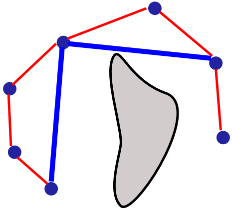
SMOOTHPATH($q_1, q_2, \ldots, q_n$) – one version

1: **for** several times **do**
2: select i and j uniformly at random from $1, 2, \ldots, n$
3: attempt to directly connect q_i to q_j
4: if successful, remove the in-between nodes, i.e., $q_{i+1}, \ldots, q_j$



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```
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```
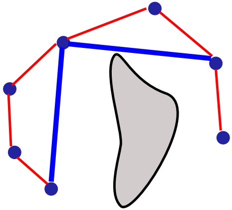
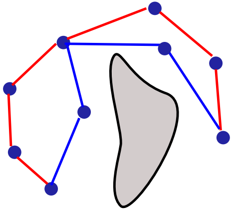
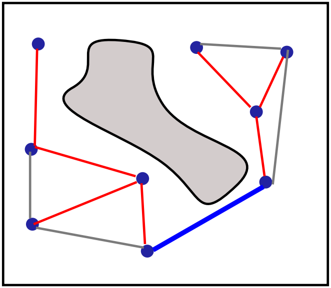



SmoothPath($q_1, q_2, \ldots, q_n$) – another version

```
for several times do
    select i and j uniformly at random from 1, 2, ..., n
    q ← generate collision-free sample
    attempt to connect q_i to q_j through q
    if successful, replace the in-between nodes q_{i+1}, ..., q_j by q
```

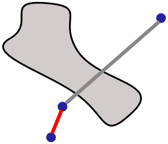


- Edge in cycle does not improve roadmap connectivity
- Edge is added to roadmap only if it connects two different roadmap components

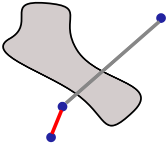


1: **if** SAMEROADMAPCOMPONENT(q_a, q_b) = `false` **then**
2: path ← GENERATEPATH(q_a, q_b)
3: **if** ISPATHCOLLISIONFREE(path) = `true` **then**
4: (q_a, q_b).path ← path
5: $E \leftarrow E \cup \{(q_a, q_b)\}$

- Disjoint-set data structure is used to speed up computation of SAMEROADMAPCOMPONENT(q_a, q_b)



Edges between neighboring nodes are more likely to be collision free than edges between far away nodes



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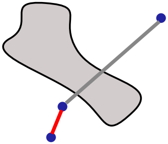

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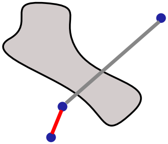

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Connecting Roadmap Nodes to Nearest Neighbors

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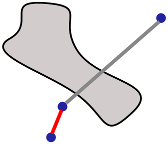

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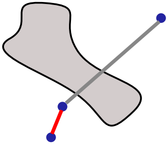

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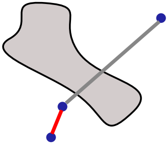

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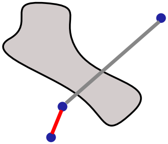
  - Efficiency deteriorates rapidly
  - Not much better than brute-force approach



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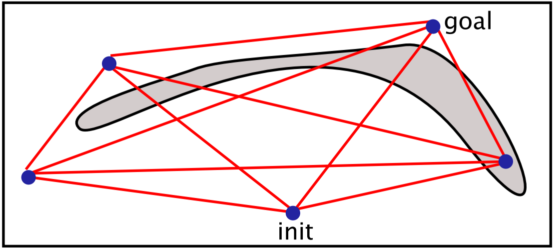
- Computational challenges of nearest neighbors in high-dimensional spaces
  - Efficiency deteriorates rapidly
  - Not much better than brute-force approach
- Alternative approach is to compute *approximate* nearest neighbors

  [Plaku, Kavraki: WAFR 2006, SDM 2007]
  - Minimal losses in accuracy of neighbors
  - No loss in accuracy of overall path planner
  - Significant computational gains

Perform collision checking only when necessary

[Bohlin, Kavraki: Handbook on Randomized Computing 2000]



LazyRoadmapConstruction

1: $V \leftarrow V \cup \{q_{\text{init}}, q_{\text{goal}}\}$; $E \leftarrow \emptyset$
2: **for** several times **do**
3: $q \leftarrow$ generate config uniformly at random; $q.\text{checked} \leftarrow$ `false`; $V \leftarrow V \cup \{q\}$
4: **for** each pair $(q_a, q_b) \in V \times V$ **do**
5: $(q_a, q_b).\text{res} \leftarrow 1.0$; $(q_a, q_b).\text{path} \leftarrow \text{GeneratePath}(q_a, q_b)$; $E \leftarrow E \cup \{(q_a, q_b)\}$

Lazy PRM

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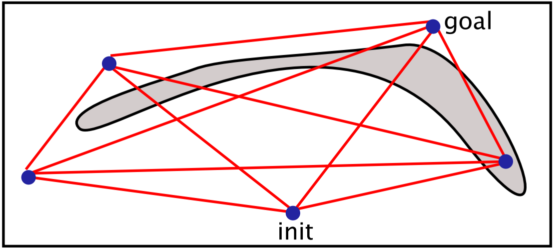
[Bohlin, Kavraki: Handbook on Randomized Computing 2000]



LazyRoadmapCollisionChecking

1: **for** several times **do**
2: $[q_1, q_2, \ldots, q_n] \leftarrow$ search $G = (V, E)$ for sequence of edges connecting q_{init} to q_{goal}
3: **for** $i = 1, 2, \ldots, n$ **do**
4: **if** $q_i.\text{checked} = \texttt{false}$ **and** IsConfigCollisionFree$(q_i) = \texttt{false}$ **then**
5: remove q_i from roadmap; **goto** line 2
6: **else**
7: $q_i.\text{checked} \leftarrow \texttt{true}$
8: **while** no edge collisions are found **and** minimum resolution not reached **do**
9: **for** $i = 1, 2, \ldots, n-1$ **do**
10: $(q_i, q_{i+1}).\text{res} \leftarrow (q_i, q_{i+1}).\text{res}/2$; check $(q_i, q_{i+1}).\text{path}$ at resolution $(q_i, q_{i+1}).\text{res}$
11: **if** collision found in $(q_i, q_{i+1}).\text{path}$ **then**
12: remove (q_i, q_{i+1}) from roadmap; **goto** line 2
13: **return** $(q_1, q_2).\text{path} \circ \cdots \circ (q_{n-1}, q_n).\text{path}$

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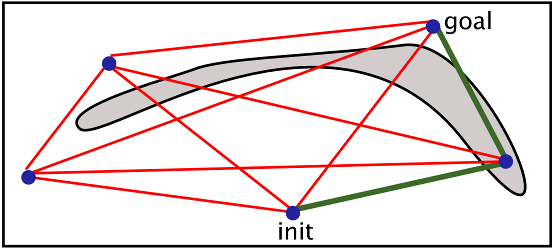

LazyRoadmapCollisionChecking

```
1:  for several times do
2:     [q_1, q_2, ..., q_n] ← search G = (V, E) for sequence of edges connecting q_init to q_goal
3:     for i = 1, 2, ..., n do
4:        if q_i.checked = false and IsConfigCollisionFree(q_i) = false then
5:           remove q_i from roadmap; goto line 2
6:        else
7:           q_i.checked ← true
8:     while no edge collisions are found and minimum resolution not reached do
9:        for i = 1, 2, ..., n − 1 do
10:          (q_i, q_{i+1}).res ← (q_i, q_{i+1}).res/2; check (q_i, q_{i+1}).path at resolution (q_i, q_{i+1}).res
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Lazy PRM

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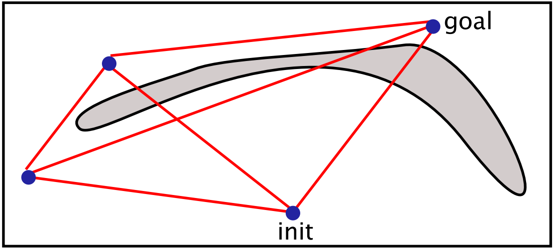
[Bohlin, Kavraki: Handbook on Randomized Computing 2000]



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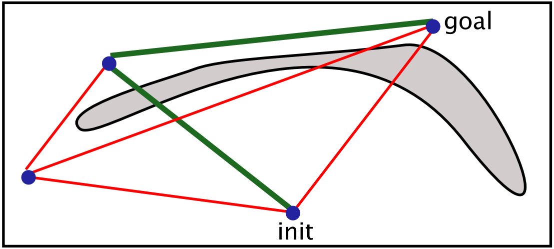

LazyRoadmapCollisionChecking

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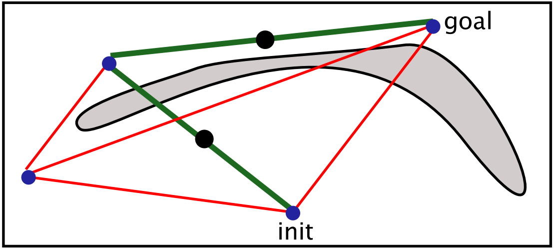

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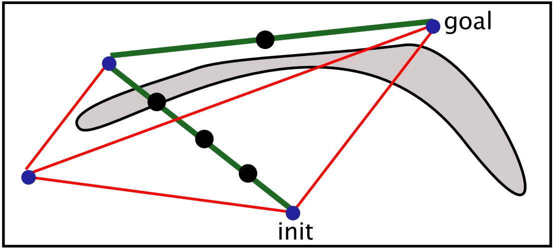

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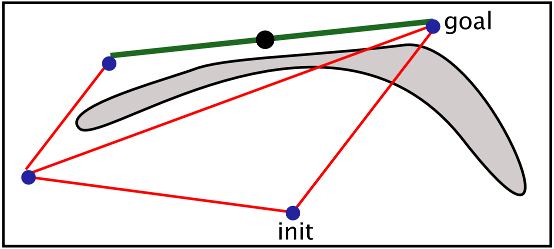

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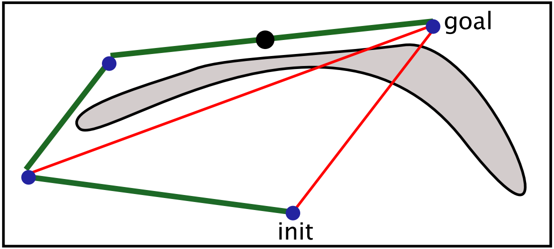

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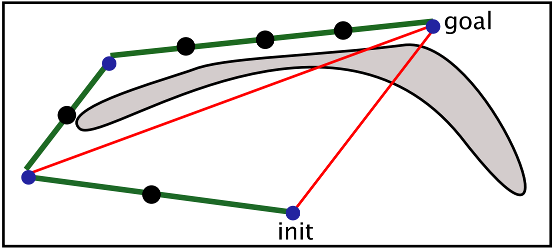

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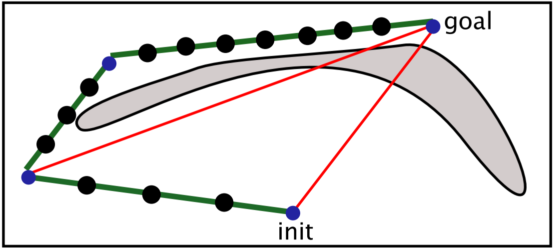

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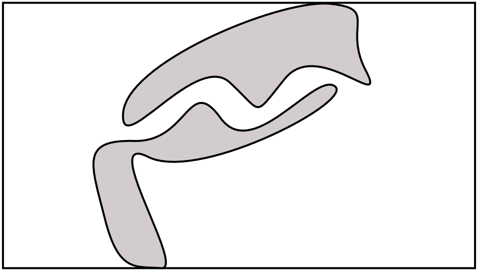
Narrow-Passage Problem



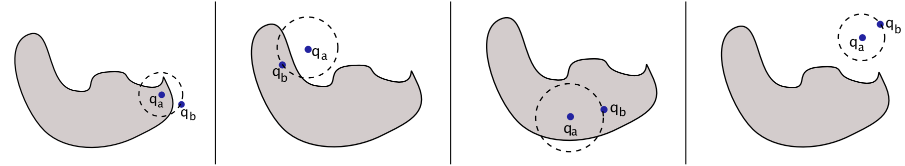
- Probability of generating samples via uniform sampling in a narrow passage is low due to the small volume of the narrow passage
- Generating samples inside a narrow passage may be critical to the success of the path planner
- Objective is then to design sampling strategies that can increase the probability of generating samples inside narrow passages

Gaussian Sampling in PRM

Objective: Increase Sampling Inside/Near Narrow Passages
Approach: Sample from a Gaussian distribution biased near the obstacles

GenerateCollisionFreeConfig [Boor, Overmars, van Der Stappen: ICRA 1999]

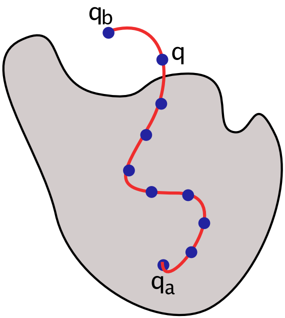
$q_a \leftarrow$ generate config uniformly at random
$r \leftarrow$ generate distance from Gaussian distribution
$q_b \leftarrow$ generate config uniformly at random at distance r from q_a
$\text{ok}_a \leftarrow \text{IsConfigCollisionFree}(q_a)$
$\text{ok}_b \leftarrow \text{IsConfigCollisionFree}(q_b)$
if $\text{ok}_a =$ `true` **and** $\text{ok}_b =$ `false` **then return** q_a
if $\text{ok}_a =$ `false` **and** $\text{ok}_b =$ `true` **then return** q_b
return `null`



Objective: Increase Sampling Inside/Near Narrow Passages
Approach: Move samples in collision outside obstacle boundary

GENERATECOLLISIONFREECONFIG [Amato, Bayazit, Dale, Jones, Vallejo: WAFR 1998]

```
q_a ← generate config uniformly at random
if IsConfigCollisionFree(q_a) = true then
    return q_a
else
    q_b ← generate config uniformly at random
    path ← GeneratePath(q_a, q_b)
    for t = δ to |path| by δ do
        if IsConfigCollisionFree(path(t)) then
            return path(t)
return null
```



Bridge-based Sampling in PRM

Objective: Increase Sampling Inside/Near Narrow Passages
Approach: Create "bridge" between samples in collision

[Hsu, Jiang, Reif, Sun: ICRA 2003]

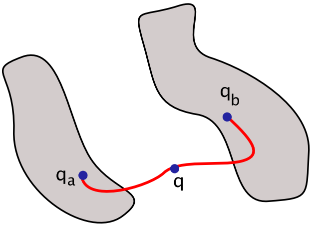
GENERATECOLLISIONFREECONFIG

```
q_a ← generate config uniformly at random
q_b ← generate config uniformly at random

ok_a ← IsConfigCollisionFree(q_a)
ok_b ← IsConfigCollisionFree(q_b)

if ok_a = false and ok_b = false then
    path ← GeneratePath(q_a, q_b)
    q ← path(0.5|path|)
    if IsConfigCollisionFree(q) then
        return q

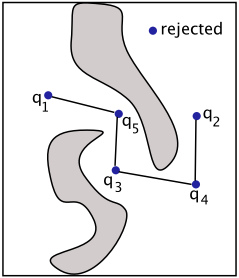
return null
```



Objective: Capture connectivity of configuration space with few samples
Approach: Generate samples that create new components or join existing components

GENERATECOLLISIONFREECONFIG [Nisseoux, Simeon, Laumond: Advanced Robotics J 2000]

1: $q \leftarrow$ generate config uniformly at random
2: **if** ISCONFIGCOLLISIONFREE(q) = `true` **then**
3: **if** q belongs to a new roadmap component **then**
4: **return** q
5: **if** q connects two roadmap components **then**
6: **return** q
7: **return** `null`



- q_1: creates new roadmap component
- q_2: creates new roadmap component
- q_3: creates new roadmap component
- q_4: connects two roadmap components
- q_5: connects two roadmap components

Importance Sampling

Objective: Increase Sampling Inside/Near Narrow Passages
Approach: Improve roadmap connectivity

- Construct roadmap using given sampling strategy
- Identify roadmap nodes that lie in regions that are hard to connect
- Sample more in these regions

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  - combination of different strategies

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- Select sample with probability $\frac{w(q)}{\sum_{q' \in V} w(q')}$
- Generate more samples around q
- Connect new samples to neighboring roadmap nodes

Combine Different Sampling Strategies

- Each sampling strategy has its strengths and weakness
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$$\frac{w_i}{\sum_j w_j}$$

- Sampler weight is updated based on quality of performance

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- Balance between being "smart and slow" and "dumb and fast"

Proof Outline: Probabilistic Completeness of PRM

Components

- Free configuration space Q_{free}: arbitrary open subset of $[0,1]^d$
- Local connector: connects $a, b \in Q_{\mathrm{free}}$ via a straight-line path and succeeds if path lies entirely in Q_{free}
- Collection of roadmap samples from Q_{free}

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Let $a, b \in Q_{\mathrm{free}}$ such that there exists a path γ between a and b lying in Q_{free}. Then the probability that PRM correctly answers the query (a, b) after generating n collision-free configurations is given by

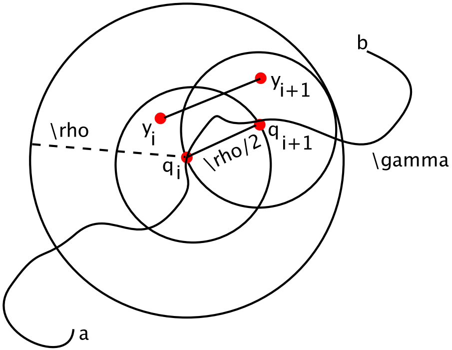
$$\mathrm{Pr}[(a, b)\mathrm{SUCCESS}] \geq 1 - \left\lceil \frac{2L}{\sigma} \right\rceil e^{\sigma \rho^d n},$$

where

- L is the length of the path γ
- $\rho = \mathrm{clr}(\gamma)$ is the clearance of path γ from obstacles
- $\sigma = \frac{\mu(B_1(\cdot))}{2^d \mu(Q_{\mathrm{free}})}$
- $\mu(B_1(\cdot))$ is the volume of the unit ball in $\mathbb{R}^d$
- $\mu(Q_{\mathrm{free}})$ is the volume of Q_{free}

Basic Idea

- Reduce path to a set of open balls in Q_{free}
- Calculate probability of generating samples in those balls
- Connect samples in different balls via straight-line paths to compute solution path

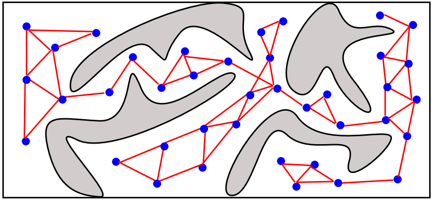


- Note that clearance $\rho = \mathrm{clr}(\gamma) > 0$
- Let $m = \left\lceil \frac{2L}{\rho} \right\rceil$. Then, γ can be covered with m balls $B_{\rho/2}(q_i)$ where $a = q_1, \ldots, q_m = b$
- Let $y_i \in B_{\rho/2}(q_i)$ and $y_{i+1} \in B_{\rho/2}(q_{i+1})$.
  Then, the straight-line segment $\overline{y_i y_{i+1}} \in Q_{\mathrm{free}}$, since $y_i, y_{i+1} \in B_\rho(q_i)$
- $I_i \stackrel{def}{=}$ indicator variable that there exists $y \in V$ s.t. $y \in B_{\rho/2}(q_i)$
- $\Pr[(a,b)\mathrm{FAILURE}] \leq \Pr\left[\bigvee_{i=1}^m I_i = 0\right] \leq \sum_{i=1}^m \Pr[I_i = 0]$
  - Note that $\Pr[I_i = 0] = \left(1 - \frac{\mu(B_{\rho/2}(q_i))}{\mu(Q_{\mathrm{free}})}\right)^n$
    i.e., probability that none of the n PRM samples falls in $B_{\rho/2}(q_i)$
  - I_i's are independent because of uniform samling in PRM

  Therefore, $\Pr[(a,b)\mathrm{FAILURE}] \leq m\left(1 - \frac{\mu(B_{\rho/2}(\cdot))}{\mu(Q_{\mathrm{free}})}\right)^n$
  - $\frac{\mu(B_{\rho/2}(\cdot))}{\mu(Q_{\mathrm{free}})} = \frac{\left(\frac{\rho}{2}\right)^d \mu(B_1(\cdot))}{\mu(Q_{\mathrm{free}})} = \sigma\rho^d$

  Therefore, $\Pr[(a,b)\mathrm{FAILURE}] \leq m\left(1 - \sigma\rho^d\right)^n \leq me^{-\sigma\rho^d} = \left\lceil \frac{2L}{\rho} \right\rceil e^{-\sigma\rho^d}$ □

- PRM-based planners aim to construct a roadmap that captures the whole connectivity of the configuration space



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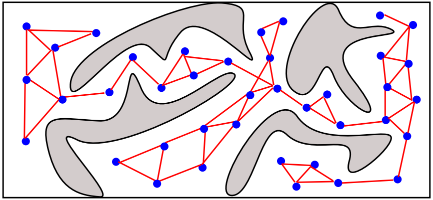

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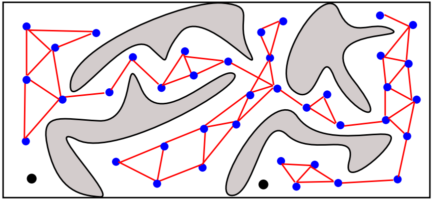

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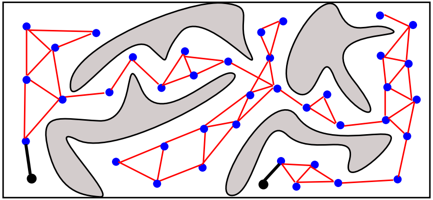

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Motivation: Tree-based Motion Planning

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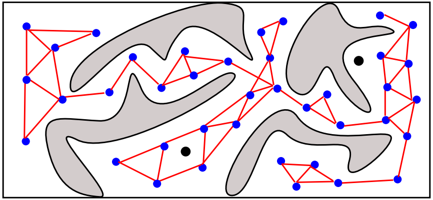

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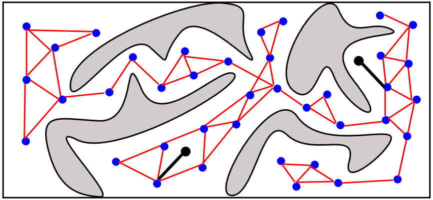

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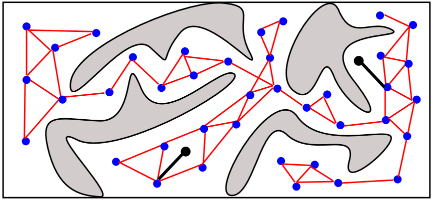
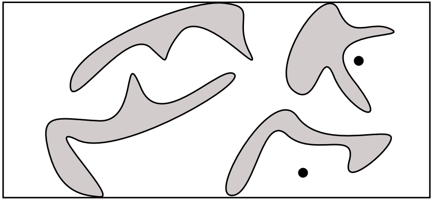
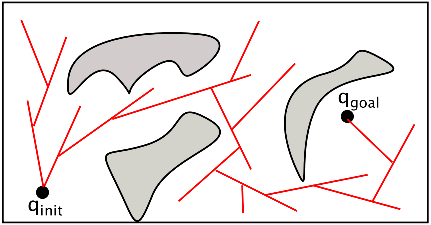


- Good when the objective is to solve *multiple* queries
- Maybe a bit too much when the objective is to solve a *single* query



General Idea

Grow a tree in the free configuration space from q_{init} *toward* q_{goal}



$\textsc{TreeSearchFramework}(q_{\text{init}}, q_{\text{goal}})$

$\mathcal{T} \leftarrow \textsc{RootTree}(q_{\text{init}})$

while q_{goal} has not been reached **do**

  $q \leftarrow \textsc{SelectConfigFromTree}(\mathcal{T})$

  $\textsc{AddTreeBranchFromConfig}(\mathcal{T}, q)$

Critical Issues

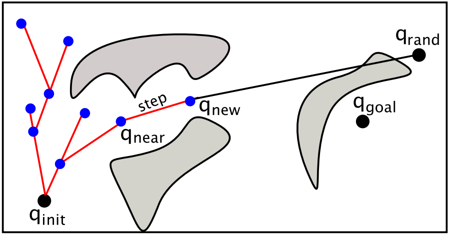
- How should a configuration be selected from the tree?
- How should a new branch be added to the tree from the selected configuration?

Rapidly-exploring Random Tree (RRT)

Pull the tree toward random samples in the configuration space

[LaValle, Kuffner: 1999]

- RRT relies on nearest neighbors and distance metric $\rho : Q \times Q \leftarrow \mathbb{R}^{\geq 0}$
- RRT adds Voronoi bias to tree growth



$\mathrm{RRT}(q_{\mathrm{init}}, q_{\mathrm{goal}})$

$\triangleright$ *initialize tree*

$\mathcal{T} \leftarrow$ create tree rooted at q_{init}

while solution not found **do**

$\triangleright$ *select configuration from tree*

$q_{\mathrm{rand}} \leftarrow$ generate a random sample

$q_{\mathrm{near}} \leftarrow$ nearest configuration in $\mathcal{T}$ to q_{rand} according to distance ρ

$\triangleright$ *add new branch to tree from selected configuration*

$\mathrm{path} \leftarrow$ generate path (not necessarily collision free) from q_{near} to q_{rand}

if $\textsc{IsSubpathCollisionFree}(\mathrm{path}, 0, \mathtt{step})$ **then**

$q_{\mathrm{new}} \leftarrow \mathrm{path}(\mathtt{step})$

add configuration q_{new} and edge $(q_{\mathrm{near}}, q_{\mathrm{new}})$ to $\mathcal{T}$

$\triangleright$ *check if a solution is found*

if $\rho(q_{\mathrm{new}}, q_{\mathrm{goal}}) \approx 0$ **then**

return solution path from root to q_{new}

Aspects for Improvement

Suggested Improvements in the Literature

Aspects for Improvement

- BasicRRT does not take advantage of q_{goal}
- Tree is pulled towards random directions based on the uniform sampling of Q
- In particular, tree growth is not directed towards q_{goal}

Suggested Improvements in the Literature

Rapidly-exploring Random Tree (RRT) (cont.)

Aspects for Improvement

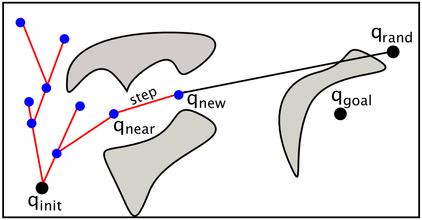
- BasicRRT does not take advantage of q_{goal}
- Tree is pulled towards random directions based on the uniform sampling of Q
- In particular, tree growth is not directed towards q_{goal}

Suggested Improvements in the Literature

- Introduce goal-bias to tree growth (known as GoalBiasRRT)
  - q_{rand} is selected as q_{goal} with probability p
  - q_{rand} is selected based on uniform sampling of Q with probability $1 - p$
  - Probability p is commonly set to ≈ 0.05

Aspects for Improvement

- BasicRRT takes only one small step when adding a new tree branch



- This slows down tree growth

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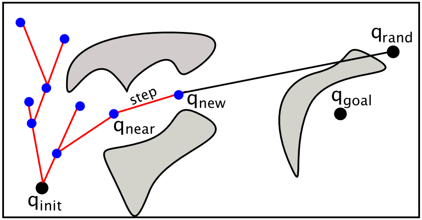

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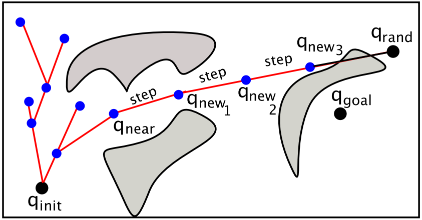

Suggested Improvements in the Literature

- Take several steps until q_{rand} is reached or a collision is found (ConnectRRT)
- Add all the intermediate nodes to the tree

Push the tree frontier in the free configuration space

[Hsu, Rock, Motwani, Latombe: 1999]

Expansive-Space Tree (EST)

Push the tree frontier in the free configuration space

[Hsu, Rock, Motwani, Latombe: 1999]

- EST relies on a probability distribution to guide tree growth
- EST associates a weight $w(q)$ with each tree configuration q
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  - combination of different strategies

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SELECTCONFIGFROMTREE

- select q in $\mathcal{T}$ with probability $w(q)/\sum_{q' \in \mathcal{T}} w(q')$

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$\textsc{SelectConfigFromTree}$

- select q in $\mathcal{T}$ with probability $w(q)/\sum_{q' \in \mathcal{T}} w(q')$

$\textsc{AddTreeBranchFromConfig}(\mathcal{T}, q)$

- $q_{\rm near} \leftarrow$ sample a collision-free configuration near q
- $\rm path \leftarrow$ generate path from q to $q_{\rm near}$
- if $\rm path$ is collision-free, then add $q_{\rm near}$ and $(q, q_{\rm near})$ to $\mathcal{T}$

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[play movie]

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- Tree growth afterwards slows down quite significantly
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Observations in High-Dimensional Problems

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Possible improvements?

Grow two trees, rooted at q_{init} and q_{goal}, towards each other

- Bi-directional trees improve computational efficiency compared to a single tree
- Growth slows down significantly later than when using a single tree
- Fewer configurations in each tree, which imposes less of a computational burden
- Each tree explores a different part of the configuration space

BiTree($q_{\mathrm{init}}, q_{\mathrm{goal}}$)

1: $\mathcal{T}_{\mathrm{init}} \leftarrow$ create tree rooted at q_{init}
2: $\mathcal{T}_{\mathrm{goal}} \leftarrow$ create tree rooted at q_{goal}
3: **while** solution not found **do**
4: add new branch to $\mathcal{T}_{\mathrm{init}}$
5: add new branch to $\mathcal{T}_{\mathrm{goal}}$
6: attempt to connect neighboring configurations from the two trees
7: if successful, return path from q_{init} to q_{goal}

Bi-directional Trees

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- Different tree planners can be used to grow each of the trees
- E.g., RRT can be used for one tree and EST can be used for the other

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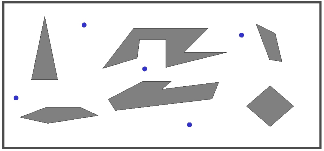
Sampling-based Roadmap of Trees (SRT)

[Plaku, Bekris, Chen, Ladd, Kavraki: Trans on Robotics 2005]

- Hierarchical planner
- Top level performs global sampling (PRM-based)
- Bottom level performs local sampling (tree-based, e.g., RRT, EST)
- Combines advantages of global and local sampling

CreateTreesInRoadmap

```
V ← ∅; E ← ∅
while |V| < n_trees do
    𝒯 ← create tree rooted at a collision-free configuration
    use tree planner to grow 𝒯 for some time
    add 𝒯 to roadmap vertices V
```



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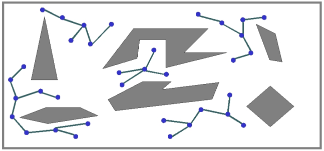

Sampling-based Roadmap of Trees (SRT) (cont.)

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SELECTWHICHTREESTOCONNECT

$E_{\mathrm{pairs}} \leftarrow \emptyset$
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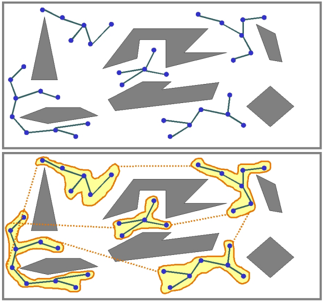

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ConnectTreesInRoadmap

for each $(\mathcal{T}_1, \mathcal{T}_2) \in E_{\text{pairs}}$ **do**
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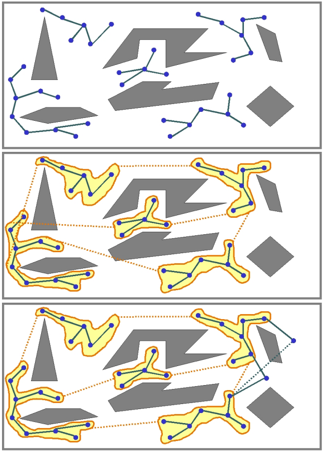

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SolveQuery$(q_{\text{init}}, q_{\text{goal}})$

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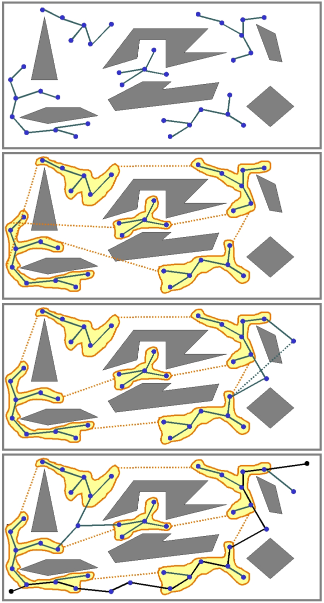
connect $\mathcal{T}_{\text{init}}$ and $\mathcal{T}_{\text{goal}}$ to roadmap
search roadmap graph for solution



Sampling-based Roadmap of Trees (SRT) (cont.)

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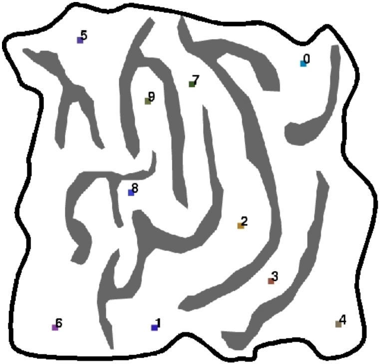

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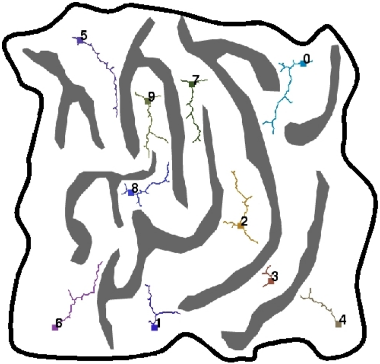

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```

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SolveQuery($q_{\mathrm{init}}, q_{\mathrm{goal}}$)

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T_init ← create tree rooted at q_init
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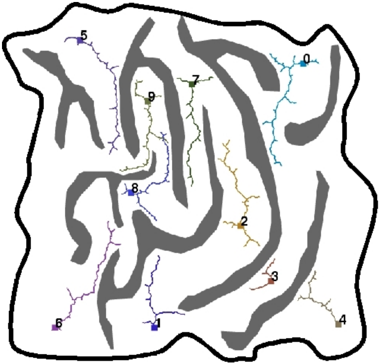

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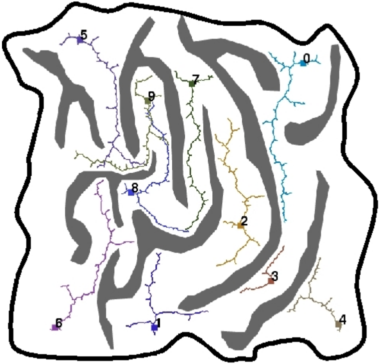

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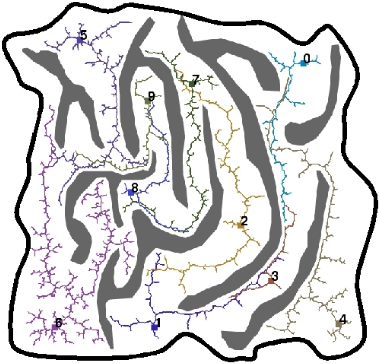

Advantages

- Explores small subset of possibilities by sampling
- Computationally efficient
- Solves high-dimensional problems (with hundreds of DOFs)
- Easy to implement
- Applications in many different areas

Disadvantages

- Does not guarantee completeness (a complete planner always finds a solution if there exists one, or reports that no solution exists)

Is it then just a heuristic approach? No. It's more than that

It offers *probabilistic completeness*

- When a solution exists, a probabilistically complete planner finds a solution with probability as time goes to infinity.
- When a solution does not exists, a probabilistically complete planner may not be able to determine that a solution does not exist.