Shape representation by skeletonization

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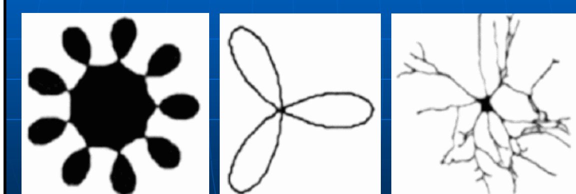
Shape

It is a fundamental concept in computer vision.

It can be regarded as the basis for high-level image processing stages concentrating on scene analysis and interpretation.

Shape

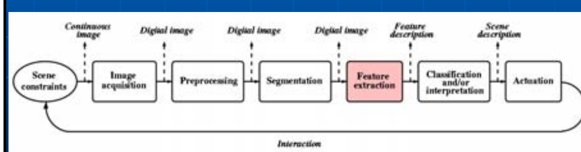
It is formed by any connected set of points.



examples of planar shapes

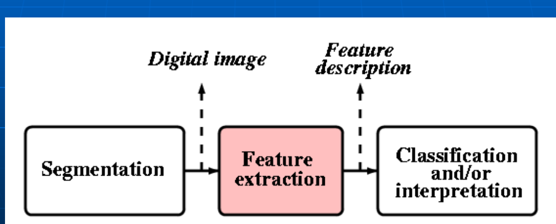
(L.F. Costa, R. Marcondes, 2001)

The generic model of a modular machine vision system



(G.W. Awcock, R. Thomas, 1996)

Feature extraction – shape representation



(G.W. Awcock, R. Thomas, 1996)

Shape representation

- to apply a transform in order to represent an object in terms of the transform coefficients,
- to describe the boundary that surrounds an object,
- to describe the region that is occupied by an object.

Transform-based shape representation

- Fourier description
- wavelet-based analysis
- scale-space / multiscale characterization
- spherical harmonics – based description (3D)
- …

Contour-based shape representation

- chain-code
- run-length
- polygonal approximation
- syntactic primitives
- spline
- snake / active contour
- multiscale primitives
- …

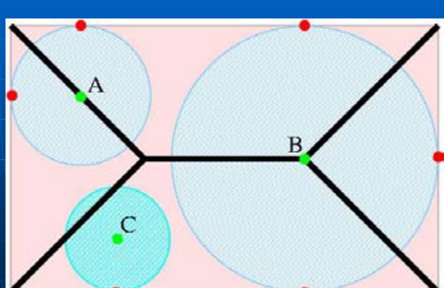
Region-based shape representation

- polygon
- Voronoi / Delaunay
- quadtree
- morphological decomposition
- convex hull / deficiency
- run-length
- distance transform
- skeleton
- …

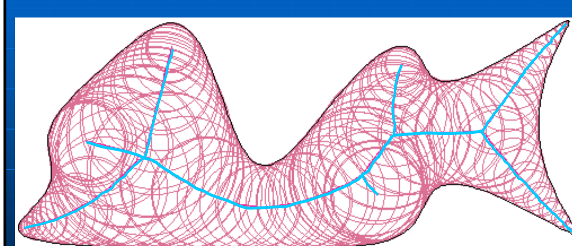
Skeleton

- *result of the Medial Axis Transform:* object points having at least two closest boundary points;
- *praire-fire analogy:* the boundary is set on fire and skeleton is formed by the loci where the fire fronts meet and quench each other;
- the locus of the centers of all the maximal inscribed hyper-spheres.

Nearest boundary points and inscribed hyper-spheres

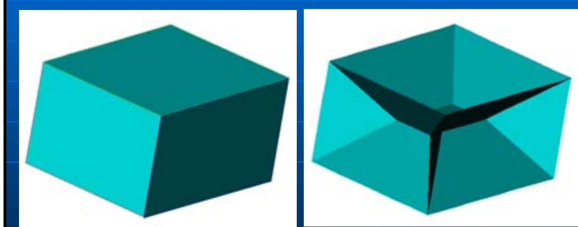


Object = union of the inscribed hyper-spheres



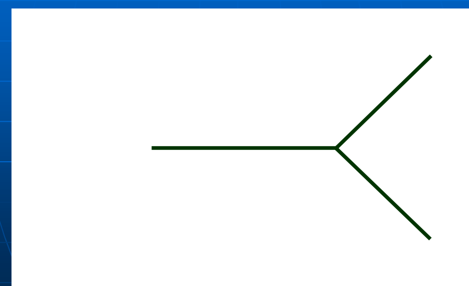
object boundary maximal inscribed disks centers

Skeleton in 3D

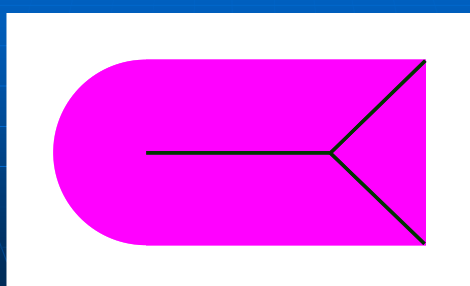


The skeleton in 3D generally contains surface patches (2D segments).

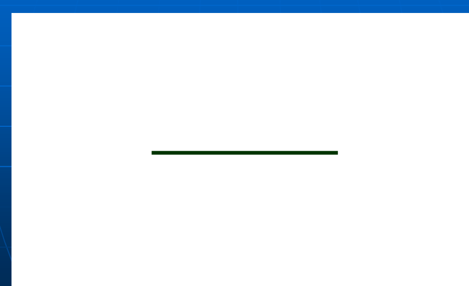
Skeleton → Original object



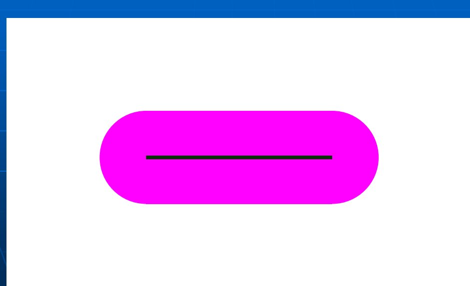
Skeleton → Original object



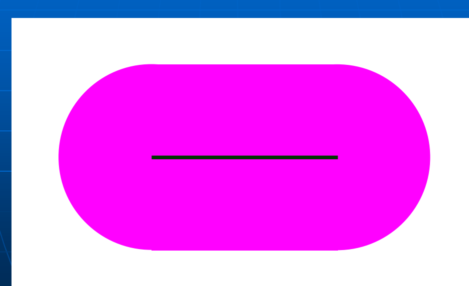
Skeleton → Original object



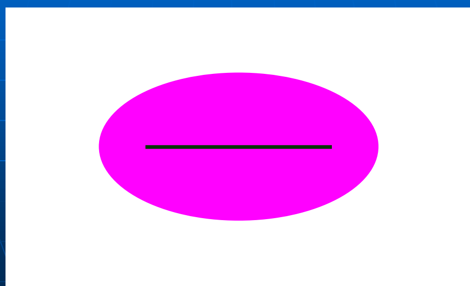
Skeleton → Original object



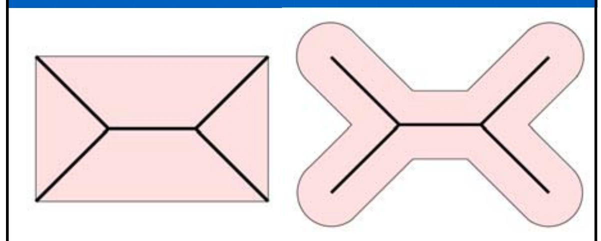
Skeleton → Original object



Skeleton → Original object

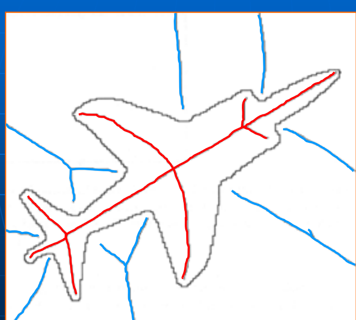


Uniqueness



The same skeleton may belong to different elongated objects.

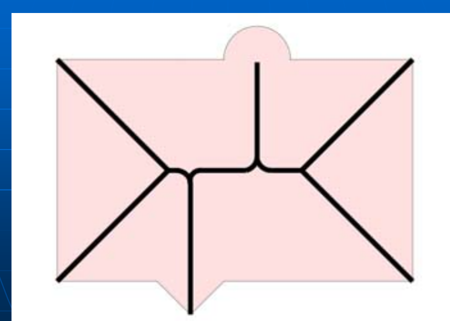
Inner and outer skeleton



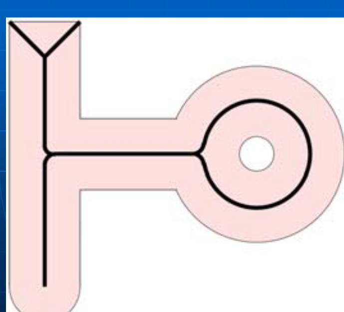
(inner) skeleton

outer skeleton (skeleton of the negative image)

Stability



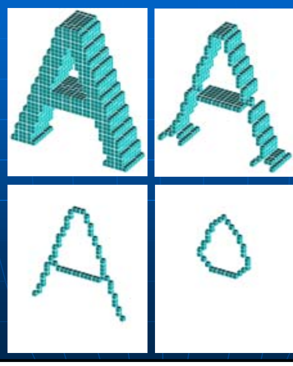
Representing the topological structure

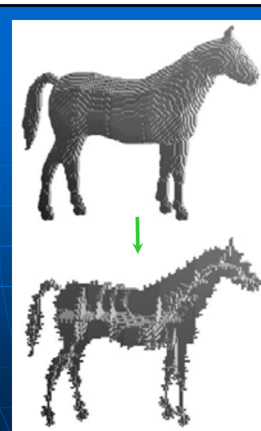


Properties

- represents
  - the general form of an object,
  - the topological structure of an object, and
  - local object symmetries.
- invariant to
  - translation,
  - rotation, and
  - (uniform) scale change.
- simplified and thin.

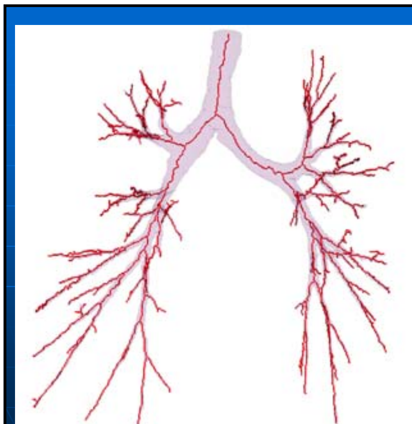
Skeleton-like descriptors in 3D





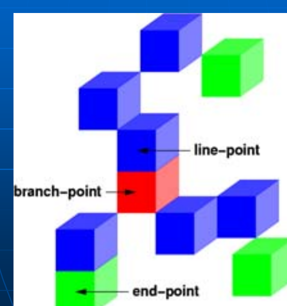
Example of medial surface

S. Svensson (SUAS, Uppsala)

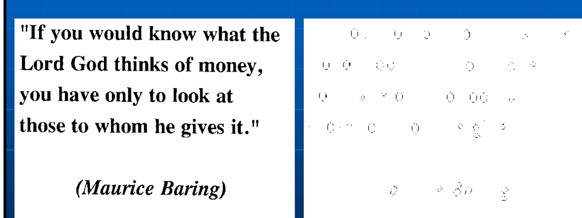


Example of medial lines

Skeletal points in 2D – points in 3D centerlines



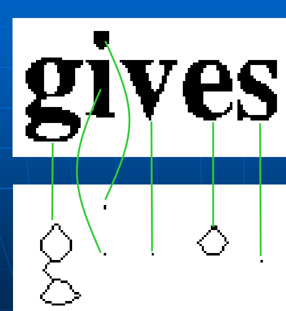
Example of topological kernel



original image

topological kernel

Example of topological kernel



simply connected → an isolated point

multiply connected → closed curve

Skeletonization techniques

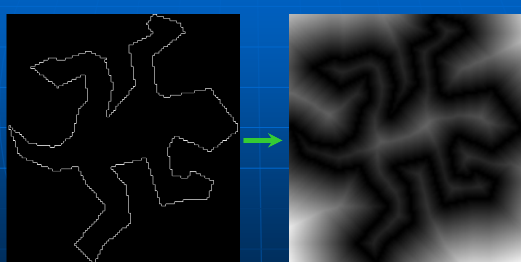
- **distance transform**
- **Voronoi diagram**
- **thinning**

Distance transform

Input:
Binary array *A* containing feature elements (1's) and non-feature elements (0's).

Output:
Non-binary array *B* containing the distance to the closest feature element.

Distance transform



input (binary) output (non-binary)

Distance transform using city-block (or 4) distance

4	3	2	1	2	3	4
3	2	1	0	1	2	3
2	1	0	1	0	1	2
2	1	0	1	1	0	1
1	0	1	2	2	1	0
1	0	1	2	3	2	1
0	1	2	3	4	3	2

	1	
1	0	1
	1	

Distance transform using chess-board (or 8) distance

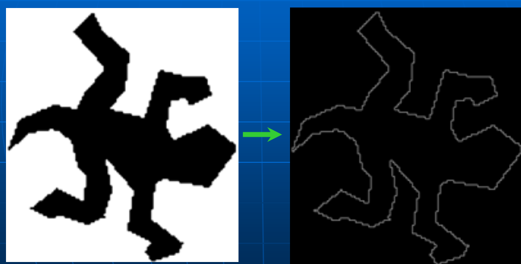
2	2	1	1	1	2	2
2	1	1	0	1	1	2
2	1	0	1	0	1	1
1	1	0	1	1	0	1
1	0	1	1	1	1	0
1	0	1	2	2	1	1
0	1	1	2	2	2	2

1	1	1
1	0	1
1	1	1

Distance-based skeletonization

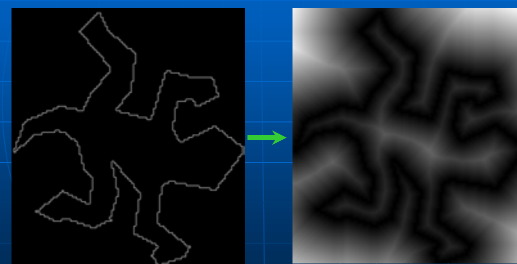
1. Border points (as feature elements) are extracted from the original binary image.
2. Distance transform is executed (i.e., distance map is generated).
3. The ridges (local extremas) are detected as skeletal points.

Distance-based skeletonization – step 1



detecting border points

Distance-based skeletonization – step 2



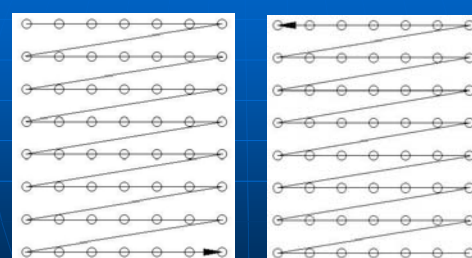
distance mapping

```
remark initialization
 for i=1 to n1 do
  for j=1 to n2 do
   if a(i,j)=1 then b(i,j)=0
   else             b(i,j)=∞
remark forward scan
 for i=1 to n1 do
  for j=1 to n2 do
   b(i,j)=min{
              b(i-1,j-1)+d2,
              b(i-1,j  )+d1,
              b(i-1,j+1)+d2,
              b(i  ,j-1)+d1,
              b(i  ,j  )
             }
remark backward scan
 for i=n1 downto 1 do
  for j=n2 downto 1 do
   b(i,j)=min{
              b(i  ,j  )   ,
              b(i  ,j+1)+d1,
              b(i+1,j-1)+d2,
              b(i+1,j  )+d1,
              b(i+1,j+1)+d2
             }
```

Linear-time distance mapping

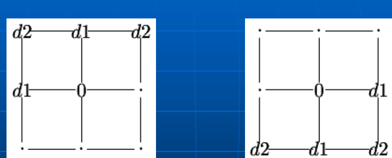
G. Borgefors (1984)

Linear-time distance mapping



forward scan — backward scan

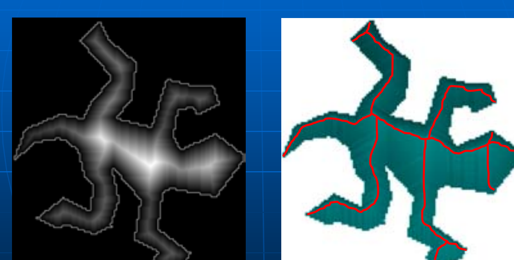
Linear-time distance mapping



forward scan — backward scan

generally: $d1=3$, $d2=4$

Distance-based skeletonization – step 3

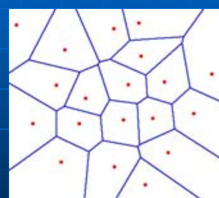


detecting ridges (local extremas)

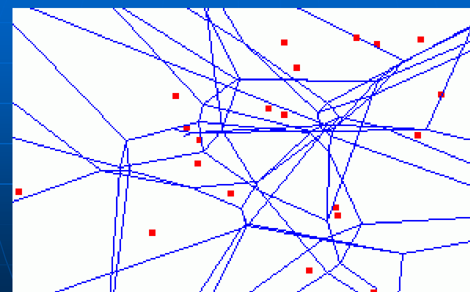
Voronoi diagram

Input:
Set of points (generating poins)

Output:
the partition of the space into cells so that each cell contains exactly one generating point and the locus of all points which are closer to this generating point than to others.



Voronoi diagram in 3D



Voronoi diagram of 20 generating points

Incremental construction

O(n)

Divide and conquer

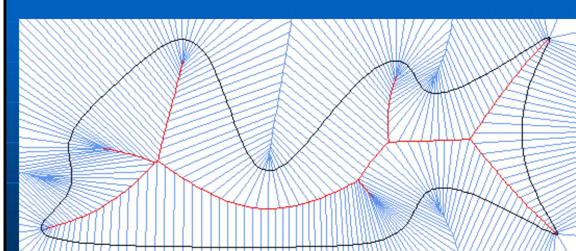
O($n \cdot \log n$)

left diagram

right diagram

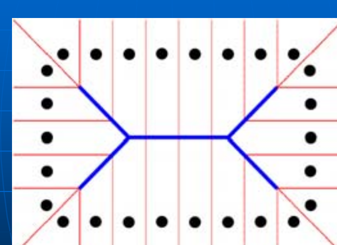
merging

Voronoi diagram - skeleton



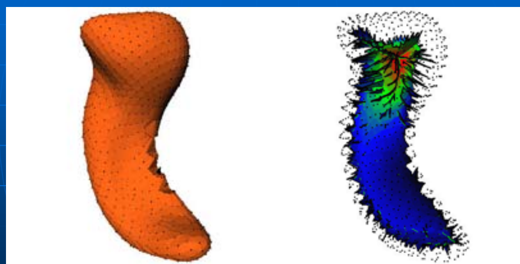
set of generating points = sampled boundary

Voronoi diagram - skeleton



If the density of boundary points goes to infinity, then the corresponding Voronoi diagram converges to the skeleton.

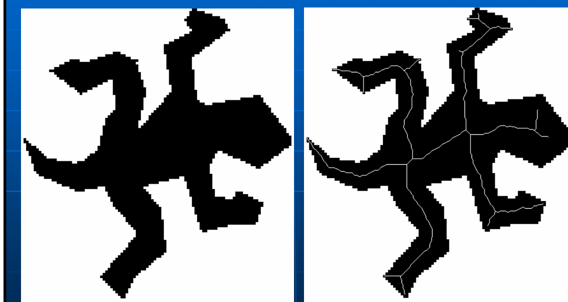
Voronoi skeleton



original 3D object   Voronoi skeleton

M. Styner (UNC, Chapel Hill)

Thinning



modeling fire-front propagation

Iterative object reduction

Matryoshka:
Russian nesting wooden doll.

One iteration step

Thinning algorithms

repeat

remove „*deletable*" border points from the actual binary image } one iteration step

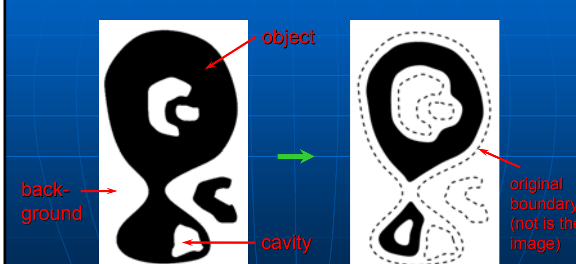
until no points are deleted

degrees of freedom:

– which points are regarded as „*deletable*" ?
– how to organize one iteration step?

Topology preservation in 2D

(a counter example)



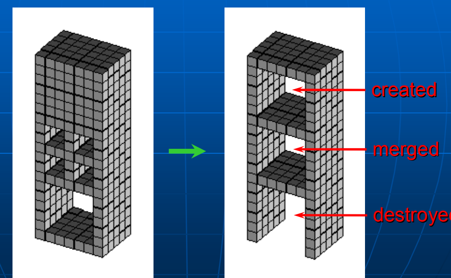
Topology in 3D

hole - a new concept

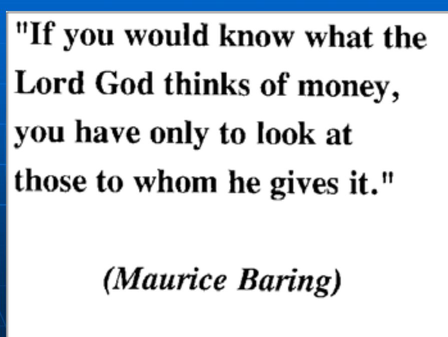
"A topologist is a man who does not know the difference between a coffee cup and a doughnut."

Topology preservation in 3D

(a counter example)



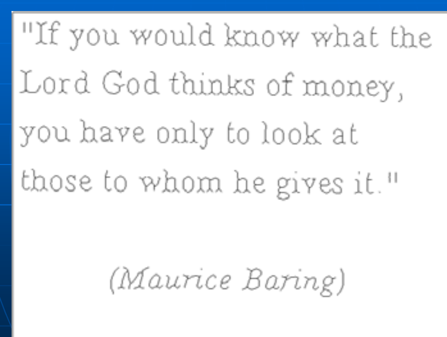
Shape preservation



"If you would know what the Lord God thinks of money, you have only to look at those to whom he gives it."

(Maurice Baring)

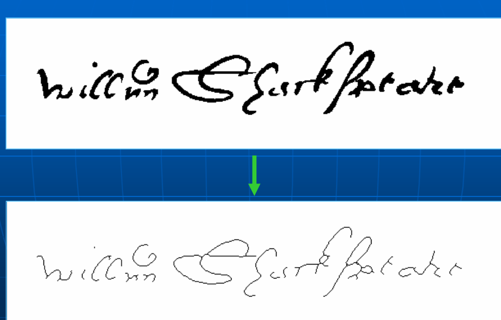
Shape preservation



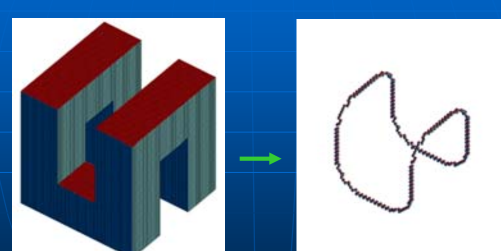
"If you would know what the Lord God thinks of money, you have only to look at those to whom he gives it."

(Maurice Baring)

Example of 2D thinning



Example of 3D thinning



original object

centerline

I prefer thinning since it …

- allows direct centerline extraction in 3D,
- makes easy implementation possible,
- takes the least computational costs, and
- can be executed in parallel.

Requirements

- Geometrical:
  The skeleton must be in the middle of the original object and must be invariant to translation, rotation, and scale change.
- Topological:
  The skeleton must retain the topology of the original object.

Comparison

method	geometrical	topological
distance-based	yes	no
Voronoi-based	yes	yes
thinning	no	yes

Applications in 2D

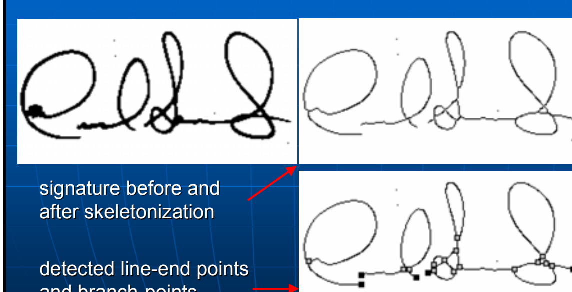
- „exotic” character recognition
- recognition of handwritten text
- signature verification
- fingerprint and palmprint recognition
- raster-to-vector-conversion
- …

Exotic character recognition

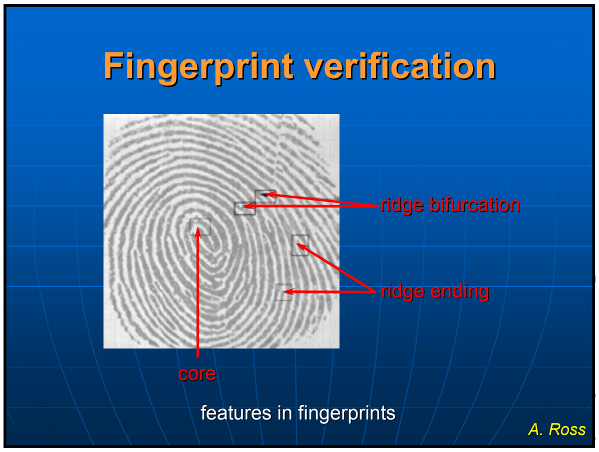
characters of a Japanese signature

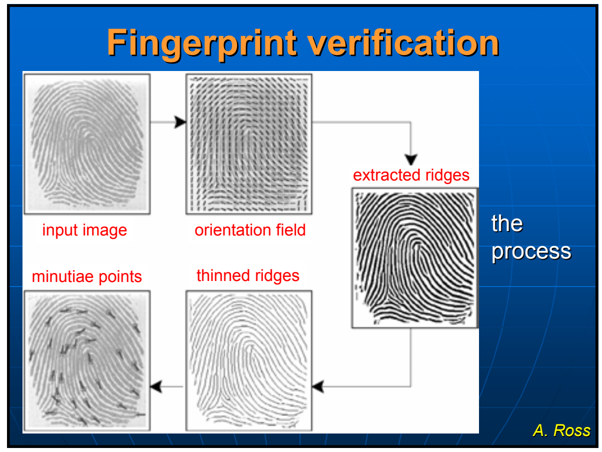
K. Ueda

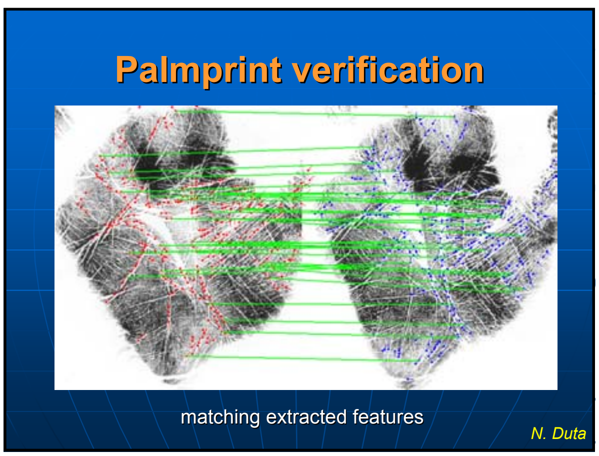
Signature verification

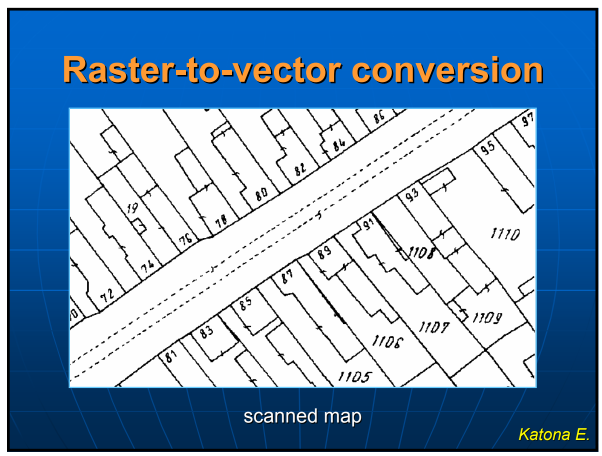


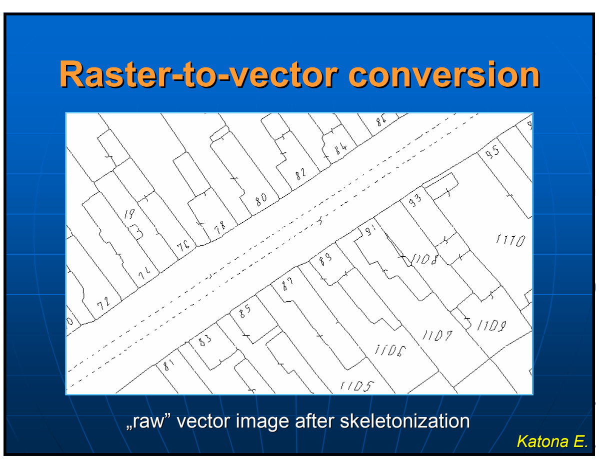
L.C. Bastos et al.

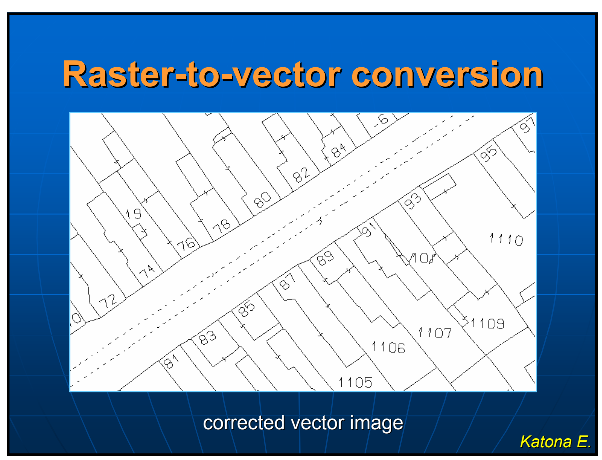

Fingerprint verification
ridge bifurcation
ridge ending
core
features in fingerprints
A. Ross


Fingerprint verification
input image
orientation field
extracted ridges
the process
minutiae points
thinned ridges
A. Ross


Palmprint verification
matching extracted features
N. Duta


Raster-to-vector conversion
scanned map
Katona E.


Raster-to-vector conversion
„raw” vector image after skeletonization
Katona E.


Raster-to-vector conversion
corrected vector image
Katona E.

Applications in 3D

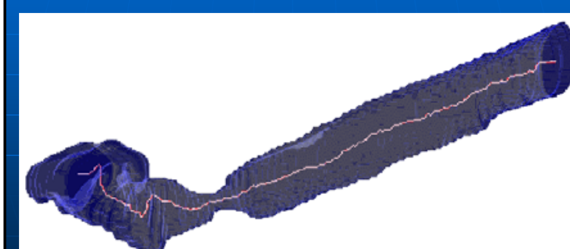
There are some frequently used 3D medical scanners (e.g., CT, MR, SPECT, PET), therefore, applications in medical image processing are mentioned.

There are a lots of tubular structures (e.g., blood vessels, airways) in the human body, therefore, centerline extraction is fairly important.

Blood vessel (infra-renal aortic aneurysms)

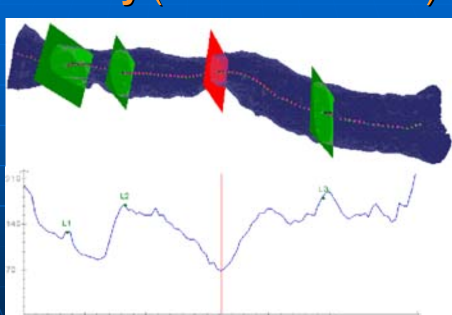
E. Sorantin et al.

Airway (trachealstenosis)



E. Sorantin et al.

Airway (trachealstenosis)

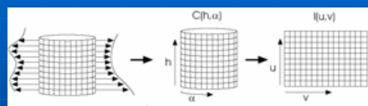


E. Sorantin et al.

Colon

E. Sorantin et al.

Virtual dissection of the colon



cylindric projection

detected polyps

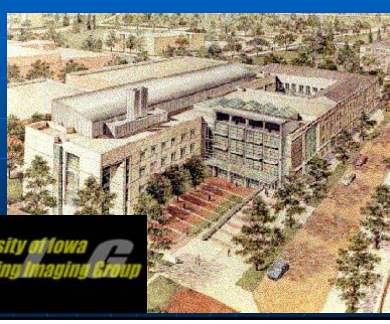
E. Sorantin et al.

Virtual colonoscopy

A. Villanova et al.

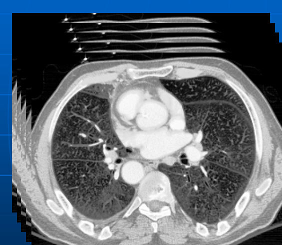
Quantitative analysis of intrathoracic airway trees

Kálmán Palágyi
Juerg Tschirren
Milan Sonka
Eric A. Hoffman



The University of Iowa
College of Engineering Imaging Group

Images



Multi-detector Row Spiral CT

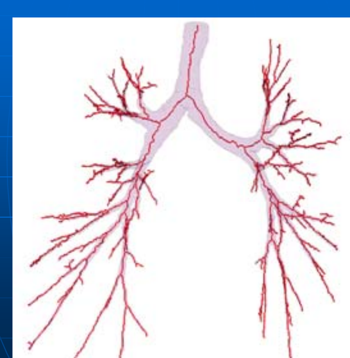
512 x 512 voxels

500 – 600 slices

0.65 x 0.65 x 0.6 mm^3 (almost isotropic)

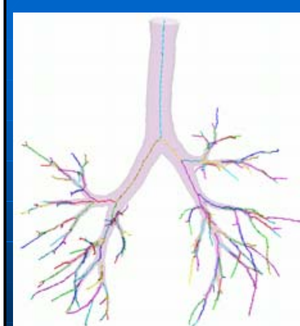
Lung segmentation

Centerlines

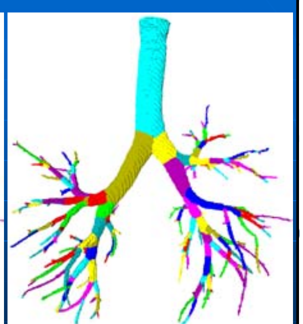


detected branch-points

Branch partitioning

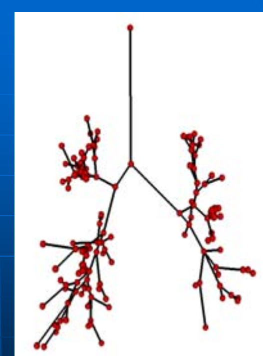


centerline labeling



label propagation

tree with its centerlines



formal tree (in XML)

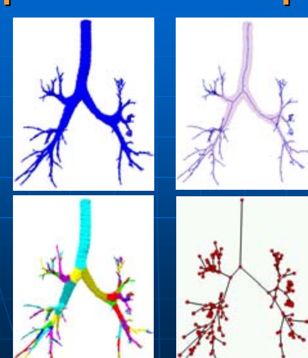
Quantitative indices for tree branches

- length (Euclidean distance between the parent and the child branch points)
- volume (volume of all voxels belonging to the branch)
- surface area (surface area of all boundary voxels belonging to the branch)
- average diameter (assuming cylindric segments)

Example of the entire process

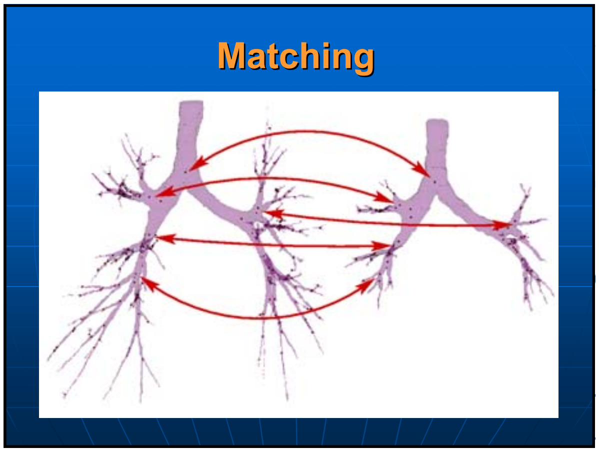
segmented tree

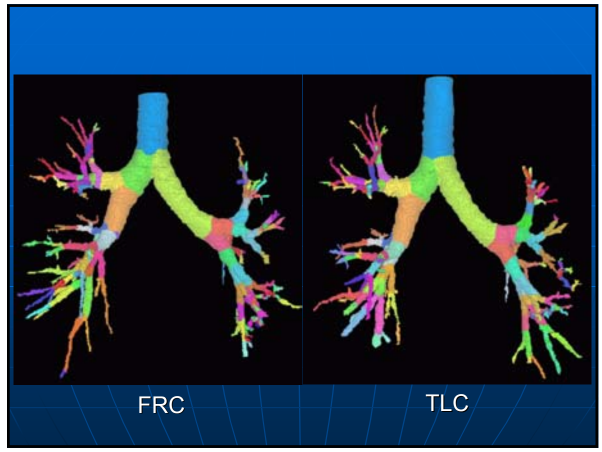
pruned centerlines

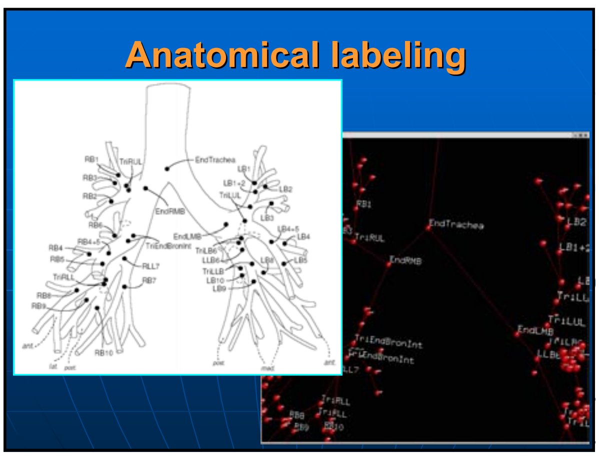


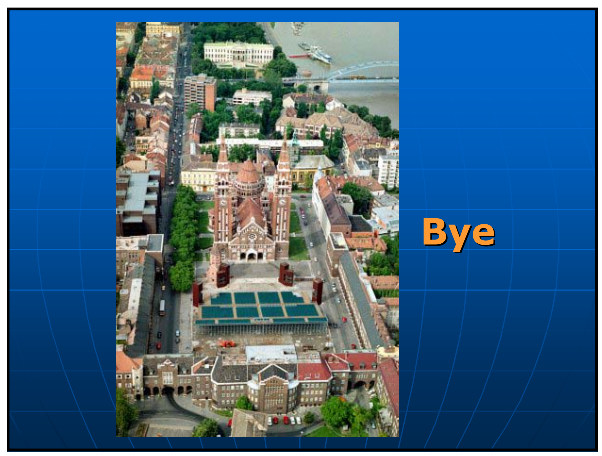
labeled tree

formal tree


Matching


FRC
TLC


Anatomical labeling


Bye