

**Computer Puppetry: An Importance-Based Approach**

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## Abstract

Computer puppetry maps the movements of a performer to an animated character in real time. In this paper, we provide a comprehensive solution to the problem of transferring the observations of the motion capture sensors to an animated character whose size and proportion may be different than the performer. Our goal is to map as much of the *important* aspects of the motion to the target character as possible, while meeting the on-line, real-time demands of computer puppetry. We adopt a Kalman filter scheme that addresses motion capture noise issues in this setting. We provide the notion of dynamic importance of an end-effector that allows us to determine what aspects of the performance must be kept in the resulting motion. We introduce a novel inverse kinematics solver that realizes these important aspects within tight real-time constraints. Our approach is demonstrated by its application to broadcast television performances.

## 1 Introduction

Computer puppetry [24] transforms the movements of a performer to an animated character in real time. The immediacy of computer puppetry makes it useful for providing live performances and as a visualization tool for traditional cinematic animation. However, this immediacy creates a number of challenges as solutions to animation issues must be handled in an on-line, real-time manner. A computer puppetry system must capture the movements of the performer, interpret the important aspects of this motion, and determine the movements required to make the character reproduce these important aspects of the performance.

The challenges of mapping a motion from the performer to the target character become more difficult when the target character is of a different size and proportion than the performer [3, 5, 7, 12]. In such cases, the resulting motion of the character cannot exactly duplicate the original performer's. For example, we cannot simultaneously match the original joint angles and end-effector positions. Generally, to preserve the important aspects of the original motion, we must alter the unimportant aspects of the motion. This process of adapting a motion for a new character is called *retargetting* [12, 17].

To date, solutions to computer puppetry issues have been limiting: Either restricting the range of puppets that can be used, or providing restrictive notions of what is important in motions, which implicitly limits the range of puppets since artifacts are introduced as the puppet's differences from the performer are increased.

In this paper, we provide techniques that address the challenges of computer puppetry when the target character is different than the performer. Three major animation issues are addressed in a manner that fits within the real-time, on-line nature of computer puppetry:

1. The sensors used to capture the performer's motion are often noisy. Therefore, we provide a filtering technique that operates on-line with the efficiency required to process whole body motions in real-time. We apply a Kalman Filter to rotation vectors, providing an orientation smoothing technique that is more efficient than previous methods.

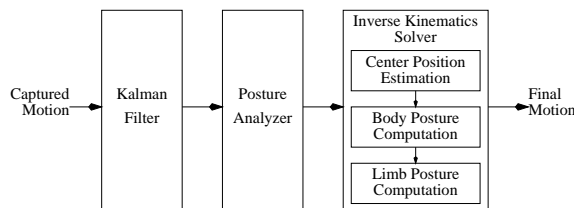


Figure 1: Overall structure

2. The important aspects of the original performance must be determined such that these details can be reproduced in the resulting motion. We provide the notion of a dynamic importance measure that allows us to account for changing situations even when the future is unknown.
3. The resulting pose of the target character must be computed in a way that recreates the important aspects of the original. We provide a fast inverse kinematics solver that provides the necessary real-time performance and predictability.

Our solutions have been used to realize a computer puppetry system that has been used successfully to create animated television broadcasts.

We begin our discussion of computer puppetry by providing an overview of our approach. We examine previous solutions with respect to the issues raised in the overview. The components of our approach are then detailed in Sections 3, 4, and 5. An analysis in Section 6 reviews why our approach avoids introducing unwanted artifacts such as temporal discontinuities. Our experimental results are provided to support our approach. We conclude with a summary and discussion of future directions.

## 2 Overview

Computer puppetry requires the captured movements of the performer to be mapped to the target character in real-time. As shown in Figure 1, our approach for on-line motion retargeting divides the task into three phases. First, a filtering phase “cleans” the sensor data to remove artifacts of the motion capture device. A second phase examines this filtered motion and determines the importance value of every end-effector in relation to its environment. A final phase computes a pose for the target character that achieves as much of the important aspects as possible. In this section, we provide an overview of these components and survey their relationship to previous work.

### 2.1 On-Line Filtering of Orientations

In general, captured motion data are noisy. The real-time sensors required for computer puppetry are particularly problematic in this regard. However, because of the dense sampling rates and signal characteristics of motion capture data, low-pass filtering is an effective tool to suppress noise in the captured data. This is challenging for three reasons:

1. Because computer puppetry is an on-line application, standard off-line filters cannot be employed.
2. Because the orientation space is highly non-linear, standard signal processing methods cannot be applied directly.

3. Because of the real-time demands, filtering should be performed on the entire body very efficiently.

A Kalman filter uses prediction of future values to create a filtering scheme that operates on-line. The technique is common in on-line applications, and was first introduced to the graphics community by Friedman et. al. [9]. Such a filter cannot be directly applied to rotation data without accounting for the non-linearity of the rotation space. To address this problem, Welch and Bishop [26] linearized the orientation space by locally parameterizing the incremental orientation change with Euler angles, based on the result in [1, 6]. Because they were interested only in tracking the head, they were less concerned with efficiency than we are, and therefore address only issues 1 and 2 above. In Section 3, we provide a modified Kalman filter. To achieve real-time performance, we locally parameterize the incremental orientation with rotation vectors instead of the Euler angles used in Welch and Bishop [26].

## 2.2 Importance Determination

The goal of computer puppetry is to create the movement of a target character based on the performer's movements. If the target character is quite different from the performer, there may not be a direct mapping. Indirect mappings are common in traditional puppetry, for example, a marionette is controlled by strings that pull on its end-effectors. Computer equivalents may create arbitrary mappings from sensor input to character parameters. For example, the Alive system from Protozoa [22] allows arbitrary "scheme" functions to be written to perform mapping.

Our interest is in recreating characters with human form, so the target character has equivalent degrees of freedom as the model of the performer. In this paper we consider characters that are articulated figures with identical connectivity. Despite this structural equivalence, the resulting motion will not match the performer's unless the character has identical size and proportion. One approach to performance animation, described by Molet et al. [18, 19], models the character to be as similar as possible to the performer. Bodenheimer et al. [5] presented how to determine the segment lengths of a character that best fit the captured motion data. Restricting the size and proportion of the character precludes the use of stylized cartoon characters, unless we can find similarly proportioned performers.

When the virtual character and performer have different sizes and proportions, not all aspects of the motions can be preserved during mapping. At the lowest level, it is simply not possible to mimic both the locations of the end-effectors and the joint angles. A system must make choices as to which aspects of the motion should be preserved, and which should be allowed to change. We call an approach to motion retargetting that makes this choice explicitly an *importance-based* approach.

Non-importance-based approaches make implicit choices as to what should be preserved during retargetting. For example, the most naive implementation of retargetting simply transfers the parameter (joint angles and root position) values from performer to character. Such a scheme implicitly selects the values of the parameters to be important and, therefore, the positions of the end-effectors to be unimportant. This is a poor choice when the character must interact with other objects in the world, such as the floor.

A common approach to motion retargetting matches the end-effector positions of the character to those of the performer. Such an approach has the advantage that it preserves the interactions between the character and its environment. Badler et al. [3] used only the position data of hands and feet to adopt them to a virtual character with an inverse kinematics technique. Residual degrees of freedom are fixed by exploiting bio-mechanical knowledge. Choi et al. [7] adopted the idea of inverse rate control [27] to compute the changes in joint angles corresponding to those in end-effector positions while imitating the captured joint angles by exploiting the kinematic redundancies.

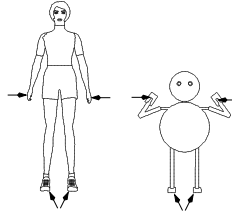


Figure 2: Artifacts of position-based approach

Implicit in end-effector schemes is the notion that the end-effector positions are more important than the joint angles: that the joint angles should be changed to achieve the end-effector positioning goals. While this prioritization is often preferable to the reverse, it is not without its flaws. Consider the example of Figure 2. In this example, the importance of the foot positions are properly reflected, while that of the hand positions are overstated.

The central observation of an importance-based approach is that what is important can only be determined by the context of the motion. At each instant, a system must somehow select amongst the many possible things which are important, so it can change the aspects that are not important.

Constraint-based approaches to motion explicitly represent details of the motion that are important as geometric constraints. Gleicher’s space-time motion editing [11] and retargetting system [12] proposed the notion of preserving the important qualities of the motion by changing unimportant ones, where the important qualities were define by constraints. Lee and Shin’s hierarchical motion editing [17] provided similar results using a different underlying implementation. Popovic and Witkin demonstrated results that made the kinetic aspects of the original motion important to preserve [21].

The methods mentioned in the previous paragraph are all off-line in that they examine the entire motion simultaneously in processing. However, this off-line nature is implicit in the problem formulation, as well as in the solution method. All of the methods require the constraints to be identified before the motion can be processed. The decisions as to what is important in a motion must be known before processing can occur in these previous constraint-based approaches. This is infeasible in on-line applications. Bindiganavale and Badler [4] introduced a constraint determination scheme to generate constraints automatically. However, the their motion adaptation is done in an off-line manner.

For computer puppetry, we must make the decisions as to what is important in a given motion on-line in real-time. We analyze the importance of each end-effector position, based on several factors discussed in Section 4. For example, the proximity of an end-effector position to its surrounding environment can be used as a predictor of its importance. The importance of an end-effector is inversely proportional to its distance to the nearest object in the environment. A key notion of this work is that the power of an importance-based approach, already demonstrated in off-line constraint-based systems, can be brought to the on-line domain of computer puppetry.

### 2.3 Inverse Kinematics

We employ an inverse kinematics (IK) solver to compute the pose of the target character. IK has become a standard technique in animation systems to control the pose of a character based on the positions of its end-effectors.

IK solvers can be divided into two categories: analytic and numerical solvers. Most industrial

**robot** manipulators are designed to have analytic solutions for efficient and robust control. Kahan [13] and Paden [20] divided an IK problem into a series of simpler subproblems each of which has closed-form solutions. Korein and Badler [16] showed that the IK problem of a human arm and leg allows an analytic solution, and Tolani and Badler [25] derived their actual solutions. A numerical method relies on an iterative process to obtain a solution. Girard and Maciejewski [10] generated the locomotion of a legged figure using pseudo inverse of Jacobian matrix. Based on neurophysiology, Koga et al. [15] produced an experimentally good initial guess for a numerical procedure. Zhao and Badler [28] formulated the IK problem as a constrained non-linear optimization problem. Rose et al. [23] extended this formulation to cover constraints that hold over an interval.

For computer puppetry, we make a number of demands on IK that required the development of a novel solver. First, we must achieve real-time performance on the entire body of the character. Secondly, we need the solver to provide predictably consistent solutions: small changes to the problems should provide similar answers. Finally, the solver must be able to account for the importances that are determined dynamically in our system.

Our IK solver is discussed in Section 5. To solve an IK problem in real-time, we divide it into three subproblems: center position estimation, body posture computation, and limb posture computation. First, the center position of a virtual character is computed to provide a good initial guess for the body posture computation. Through numerical optimization, we then refine the body posture, if needed, consisting of the center position, the orientation of the pelvis, and that of the upper body. Finally, we use an analytical IK solver to fix the limb postures with the given body posture. Our solution for each of these subproblems is designed to incorporate the importance values of the end-effectors so that it tries to preserve end-effector positions when their importance values are high, while trying to preserve the captured joint angles of the corresponding limb, otherwise.

### 3 Motion Filtering

In general, motion capture devices capable of providing real-time performance are particularly susceptible to noise. Especially a magnetic motion capture systems, which are widely used for real-time motion capture, suffer from the interference of low-frequency current-generating devices such as a CRT-type display. Thus, there always exists some level of jitter, that is, rapid random changes in reported positions and orientations that do not correspond to actual movement [8]. Since on-line motion retargetting requires a high quality input motion as the reference of an output motion, filtering is an essential part. In the context of computer puppetry, filtering must be real-time, on-line, and performed on orientations.

For on-line filtering, Kalman filters [2, 9, 26] are often employed because of their capability of prediction and correction, that is, predicting future input data from their history and correcting them by incorporating the actual input data.

In a standard (extended) Kalman filter, its state would completely describe the position of a sensor and its orientation. However, because of the non-linearity of the orientation space, this scheme can hardly be applied directly to orientation data. Adopting the results in [1, 6], Welch and Bishop [26] parameterized an incremental orientation change with Euler angles, that is regarded as a 3-vector to filter. The filtered Euler angles are transformed back to an incremental orientation change in the non-linear space to update the target orientation at each time step. However, the conversion between an incremental orientation change and its equivalent Euler angles is inefficient. Moreover, recent motion capture devices measure orientations directly in unit quaternions. Therefore, differently from Welch and Bishop, we parameterize incremental orientation changes with rotation vectors.

To facilitate our scheme, we maintain the target orientation  $\mathbf{q}_e$  externally to the Kalman filter together with the internal state vector  $\mathbf{x}$ . In particular,  $\mathbf{q}_e$  is represented by a unit quaternion:

$$\mathbf{q}_e = (\mathbf{w}, (\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{y}, \mathbf{z})),$$

where  $w^2 + x^2 + y^2 + z^2 = 1$ . The internal state  $\mathbf{x}$  consists of the position  $\mathbf{p}$ , the rotation vector  $\mathbf{r}$ , and their derivatives  $\dot{\mathbf{p}}$  and  $\dot{\mathbf{r}}$ :

$$\mathbf{x} = (\mathbf{p}^T \dot{\mathbf{p}}^T \mathbf{r}^T \dot{\mathbf{r}}^T)^T. \quad (1)$$

Here, the rotation vector  $\mathbf{r}$  parameterizes the incremental orientation change of the actual sensor input  $\mathbf{q}(\mathbf{t})$  at the current frame with respect to the target orientation  $\mathbf{q}_e(\mathbf{t} - \Delta\mathbf{t})$  at its previous frame. Therefore,  $\mathbf{r}(\mathbf{t})$  can be measured through the logarithmic map [14]:

$$\mathbf{r}(\mathbf{t}) = \ln(\mathbf{q}_e^{-1}(\mathbf{t} - \Delta\mathbf{t})\mathbf{q}(\mathbf{t})). \quad (2)$$

At each filter update step,  $\mathbf{r}(\mathbf{t})$  in the state is converted into its incremental orientation change equivalent  $e^{\mathbf{r}(\mathbf{t})}$  through the exponential map to update the external target orientation  $\mathbf{q}_e$  and then reset to be zero. Therefore, incremental orientations are linearized for our (extended) Kalman filter, centered about zero.

Our dynamic model predicts the current position and the rotation by first-order approximations. Therefore, the prediction  $\hat{\mathbf{x}}^-(t)$  of the state can be described as:

$$\hat{\mathbf{x}}^-(t) = \mathbf{A}\hat{\mathbf{x}}(t - \Delta\mathbf{t}) = \begin{bmatrix} \mathbf{I}_3 & \Delta t \mathbf{I}_3 & \mathbf{0}_3 & \mathbf{0}_3 \\ \mathbf{0}_3 & \mathbf{I}_3 & \mathbf{0}_3 & \mathbf{0}_3 \\ \mathbf{0}_3 & \mathbf{0}_3 & \mathbf{I}_3 & \Delta t \mathbf{I}_3 \\ \mathbf{0}_3 & \mathbf{0}_3 & \mathbf{0}_3 & \mathbf{I}_3 \end{bmatrix} \hat{\mathbf{x}}(t - \Delta\mathbf{t}), \quad (3)$$

where  $\mathbf{I}_3$  and  $\mathbf{0}_3$  are, respectively, the identity and the zero matrices in the  $3 \times 3$  dimension. Similarly, the prediction  $\mathbf{P}^-(t)$  of the error covariance is given:

$$\mathbf{P}^-(t) = \mathbf{A}\mathbf{P}(t - \Delta\mathbf{t})\mathbf{A}^T + \mathbf{Q}, \quad (4)$$

Here,  $\mathbf{P}(t) = \mathbf{E}[(\hat{\mathbf{x}}^-(t) - \mathbf{x}(t))(\hat{\mathbf{x}}^-(t) - \mathbf{x}(t))^T]$ , which models estimation uncertainty. The *process noise covariance matrix*  $\mathbf{Q}$  characterizes the accuracy of the dynamic model. In our implementation, we simplify  $\mathbf{Q}$  as follows:

$$\mathbf{Q} = \begin{bmatrix} q_1 \mathbf{I}_3 & q_2 \mathbf{I}_3 & \mathbf{0}_3 & \mathbf{0}_3 \\ q_3 \mathbf{I}_3 & q_4 \mathbf{I}_3 & \mathbf{0}_3 & \mathbf{0}_3 \\ \mathbf{0}_3 & \mathbf{0}_3 & q_5 \mathbf{I}_3 & q_6 \mathbf{I}_3 \\ \mathbf{0}_3 & \mathbf{0}_3 & q_7 \mathbf{I}_3 & q_8 \mathbf{I}_3 \end{bmatrix}. \quad (5)$$

When the values of  $q_i$ 's are small, the filter tends to suppress the detail of the captured motion. On the other hand, if they are large, it tends to preserve the captured motion. Therefore,  $q$ 's should be tuned properly for a good filter response.

We sample motion signals at a higher frame rate than that actually required for animation to avoid overshooting which occasionally occurs in constant velocity models, especially when the velocity changes suddenly. Our measurement consists of the position of a sensor and its incremental orientation represented by a rotation vector, that is,  $\mathbf{z} = (\mathbf{p}^T \mathbf{r}^T)^T$  which can be obtained from of the state vector directly. Therefore, our measurement can be predicted from the predicted state:

$$\hat{\mathbf{z}}(t) = \mathbf{H}\hat{\mathbf{x}}^-(t) = \begin{bmatrix} \mathbf{I}_3 & \mathbf{0}_3 & \mathbf{0}_3 & \mathbf{0}_3 \\ \mathbf{0}_3 & \mathbf{0}_3 & \mathbf{I}_3 & \mathbf{0}_3 \end{bmatrix} \hat{\mathbf{x}}^-(t). \quad (6)$$

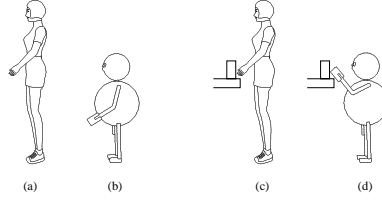


Figure 3: Two different situations

Now, we are ready to compute the Kalman gain  $\mathbf{K}(\mathbf{t})$ :

$$\mathbf{K}(\mathbf{t}) = \mathbf{P}^-(\mathbf{t})\mathbf{H}^T(\mathbf{H}\mathbf{P}^-(\mathbf{t})\mathbf{H}^T + \mathbf{R})^{-1}, \quad (7)$$

where  $\mathbf{R}$  is the measurement noise covariance matrix. That matrix is either given from the device manufacturer or acquired by off-line measurement. In practice, we measure the noise while holding the sensor stationary to compute its noise covariance matrix  $\mathbf{R}$ .

The residual between the actual sensor measurement  $\mathbf{z}(\mathbf{t})$  and the predicted measurement  $\hat{\mathbf{z}}(\mathbf{t})$  from Equation (6) is:

$$\Delta\mathbf{z}(\mathbf{t}) = \mathbf{z}(\mathbf{t}) - \hat{\mathbf{z}}(\mathbf{t}). \quad (8)$$

Then, the predicted state and the error covariance matrix are corrected as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} \hat{\mathbf{x}}(\mathbf{t}) &= \hat{\mathbf{x}}^-(\mathbf{t}) + \mathbf{K}(\mathbf{t})\Delta\mathbf{z}(\mathbf{t}), \text{ and} \\ \mathbf{P}(\mathbf{t}) &= (\mathbf{I} - \mathbf{K}(\mathbf{t})\mathbf{H})\mathbf{P}^-(\mathbf{t}). \end{aligned} \quad (9)$$

We finish filtering at each frame by updating the external target orientation using the rotation vector  $\hat{\mathbf{r}}(t)$ . Taking the exponential map of the rotation vector and post-multiplying it with the external target orientation  $\hat{\mathbf{q}}_e(t - \Delta t)$  at the previous frame, we can find the final target orientation  $\hat{\mathbf{q}}_e(t)$  at the current frame:

$$\hat{\mathbf{q}}_e(t) = \hat{\mathbf{q}}_e(t - \Delta t)e^{\hat{\mathbf{r}}(t)}. \quad (10)$$

The rotation vector  $\hat{\mathbf{r}}(t)$  is reset to zero for filtering at the next frame.

## 4 Importance Analysis

When the performer and the target character do not have the same size and proportion, all aspects of the original motion cannot be preserved in the resulting motion. A system must determine which aspects of the motion are important to preserve, so that other less important aspects are changed in order to preserve them.

For an articulated figure, differing segment lengths means that both the joint angles and end-effector positions cannot be simultaneously be recreated. There are three obvious choices of motion aspects to preserve:

1. The position of the root of the character.
2. The joint angles.
3. The positions of the end effector.



There exist situations under which any of these three might be most important. For example, observe the arm postures in Figure 3. Figure 3(a) shows a captured arm posture from the performer. Retargetting this motion to a virtual character that does not touch any object, we prefer the posture in the Figure 3(b) that preserves the joint angles. However, the position of a hand needs to be preserved when it touches an object as shown in Figure 3(c) and (d).

Our system must choose which of the three choices above is most important in a dynamic and on-line way. To make this decision, we employ a number of heuristics:

1. The position of the center is most likely *not* to be important. This heuristic comes from the observation that the choice of making the center a parameter is arbitrary: we could have just as easily chosen any point as the “root.” In fact, preserving the center position may change some important parameters that characterize a posture itself. Because of this, the importance of the center position is downplayed in many approaches that consider importance. Like our solver, described in Section 5, Gleicher’s retargetting system [12] uses a heuristic that attempts to satisfy the constraints (generally on the end-effectors) as much as possible by moving the root position (generally the center, for motion capture data).
2. If an end-effector is interacting with another object (such as the floor), then its position is likely to be important. Therefore, proximity to objects in the environment should increase importance of an end effector.
3. If an end-effector will be interacting with another object in the near future, then its position is important (as it is likely to be getting ready for the interaction). Therefore, we incorporate prediction of proximity of an end effector to an object in the measure of its importance.
4. If an end-effector has just finished interacting with another object and is moving away from it, its position may not be as important as its proximity suggests.
5. If the end-effector is not in proximity to another object, it is likely that its position is unimportant.

In order to measure the interaction of an end-effector with its environment, we introduce the notion of *importance* of an end-effector, which can be determined by analyzing the posture of the character in relation to the environment. In particular, the distance from the end-effector to the environment is a good measure of interaction possibility. That is, the end-effector is more likely to interact with the environment when it is closer to the environment. Therefore, as the end-effector approaches an object in the environment, its importance value should be continuously increased to enforce the geometric constraints created by the object. As the end-effector moves away from the object, the importance value should be continuously decrease to preserve the captured posture of the corresponding limb. We wish to develop the distance measure to reflect the trajectory of end-effector and its dynamic nature.

Given end-effector  $e_i$  of a character and object  $o_j$ , let  $d_{ij}(t)$  be the Euclidean distance between them at the time  $t$ . The new distance function  $d_{ij}^+(t)$  is defined as

$$d_{ij}^+(t) = \frac{d_{ij}(t) + d_{ij}(t + \kappa\Delta t)}{2} \quad (11)$$

for some positive  $\kappa$  and  $\Delta t$ .  $d_{ij}^+(t)$  represents the average of the current distance and the predicted

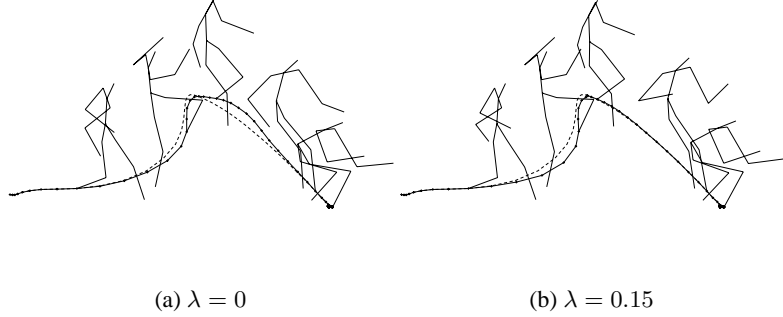


Figure 4: Motions generated by varying importance measure

distance after  $\kappa\Delta t$  time. For small  $\Delta t$ ,  $d_{ij}^+(t)$  can be approximated as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} d_{ij}^+(t) &\approx \frac{d_{ij}(t) + (d_{ij}(t) + \kappa\Delta t \dot{d}_{ij}(t))}{2} \\ &= d_{ij}(t) + \frac{\kappa\Delta t}{2} \dot{d}_{ij}(t) = d_{ij}(t) + \lambda \dot{d}_{ij}(t), \end{aligned} \quad (12)$$

where  $\dot{d}_{ij}(t)$  is the first derivative of  $d_{ij}(t)$ .  $d_{ij}^+(t)$  reflects both the distance at  $t$  from  $e_i$  to  $o_j$  and its changing rate  $\dot{d}_{ij}(t)$ . By varying  $\lambda$ , we can control the degree of prediction for  $d_{ij}^+(t)$ .

For an example, Figure 4 exhibits a jumping motion adapted with  $\lambda = 0$  and  $\lambda = 0.15$ , respectively. The legs of the character are shorter than the performer's. For  $\lambda = 0$ , the left foot trajectory of the character (solid line) agrees with that of the performer (dashed line) only near the floor (see Figure 4(a)). For  $\lambda = 0.15$ , the former follows the latter while approaching down to the floor (see Figure 4(b)). The foot is moving off the captured trajectory to preserve the captured joint angles, either near the peak ( $\lambda = 0$ ) or approaching to the peak ( $\lambda = 0.15$ ).

Let  $D_{ij}$  denotes the maximum distance within which  $e_i$  is influenced by  $o_j$ . Then, the normalized distance  $\bar{d}_{ij}$  is defined as

$$\bar{d}_{ij} = \frac{d_{ij}^+}{D_{ij}}. \quad (13)$$

An animator assigns  $D_{ij}$  for the pair of end-effector  $e_i$  and object  $o_j$  in the environment in accordance with a given animation context. A wider range of  $D_{ij}$  shows a sensitive interaction of end-effector  $e_i$  with object  $o_j$ . On the other hand, a narrower range exhibits that  $e_i$  moves independently of  $o_j$  unless  $e_i$  is close to  $o_j$ .

The importance is zero when the normalized distance  $\bar{d}_{ij}$  is greater than or equal to one, that is,  $e_i$  is out of the influence of  $o_j$ . As the distance decreases to zero, the importance increases to one. Thus, the importance function  $p$  of the normalized distance  $\bar{d}_{ij}$  can be designed with the condition of  $p(1) = 0$  and  $p(0) = 1$ . In addition, we set its derivatives there to be zero, that is,  $p'(0) = 0$  and  $p'(1) = 0$ , to reduce the rate of change of the function  $p$  at both extreme points. Thus, the importance of  $e_i$  with respect to  $o_j$  is represented by the cubic polynomial function  $p$  satisfying those conditions.

That is,

$$p(\bar{d}_{ij}) = \begin{cases} 2\bar{d}_{ij}^3 - 3\bar{d}_{ij}^2 + 1, & \text{if } \bar{d}_{ij} < 1, \\ 0, & \text{otherwise.} \end{cases} \quad (14)$$

The importance value  $w_i$  of end-effector  $e_i$  over all external objects can be defined as the maximum of them:

$$w_i = \max_j (p(\bar{d}_{ij})). \quad (15)$$

It requires much time to compute the distance  $\bar{d}_{ij}$  from each end-effector  $e_i$  of a virtual character to every object  $o_j$  in the environment, especially for a complex surrounding environment. To achieve a real-time performance, we need to minimize the number of possible objects to interact with each end-effector in accordance with an animation context. An object that is hardly touched during the animation may be eliminated in importance value computation. Moreover, objects may also be described approximately with simpler geometric entities for easy distance computation.

## 5 Real-time Inverse Kinematics Solver

For computer puppetry, we must position the character such that the important aspects of a captured motion are preserved, while providing real-time performance. For our application, this demands computing the character’s posture 30 times per second, every second. Therefore, we need an IK solver that not only can incorporate the importance measures of the previous section, but also have real-time performance even in the worst-case.

As discussed in Section 2.3, previous IK solution methods do not meet the demands of computer puppetry. Analytic methods provide guaranteed performance, but cannot incorporate importance measures required for retargetting. Numerical solvers can achieve the importance metrics, but hardly guarantee real-time performance. To meet these two conflicting demands, we have developed a hybrid solver.

In this section, we present a fast IK algorithm which is specialized for human-like articulated characters. We divide the IK process into three sub-problems: body center position estimation, body posture computation, and limb-posture computation. For each step, we apply a method that is specialized to achieve high-performance. This leads us to employ inexpensive, closed-form solutions if applicable, and reserve numerical optimization for the case in which it is absolutely required.

### 5.1 Body Center Position Estimation

In order to position the end-effectors of a character, an IK solver may change the position of the root of the character or adjust its joint angles. As mentioned in Section 4, the root of the character has been arbitrarily chosen as the character’s center, which is rarely the most important aspect to preserve. Therefore, our solver first attempts to solve the constraints as much as possible by moving the body center position. This strategy was demonstrated for retargetting by Gleicher [12].

Beginning with the positional offset has an important advantage: Unlike angular changes that causes non-linear equations to compute, positional offset computation is trivial and therefore efficient. Let  $\mathbf{p}_i^e$  represent the position of the  $i$ -th end-effector when the character is posed with the captured joint angles, and  $\mathbf{p}_i^g$  denote the goal position for that end-effector. The displacement vector  $\mathbf{d}_i = \mathbf{p}_i^g - \mathbf{p}_i^e$  measures how much the solver must move an end-effector to reach its goal. If there were only one end-effector with a specified goal position, this constraint could be met by simply moving

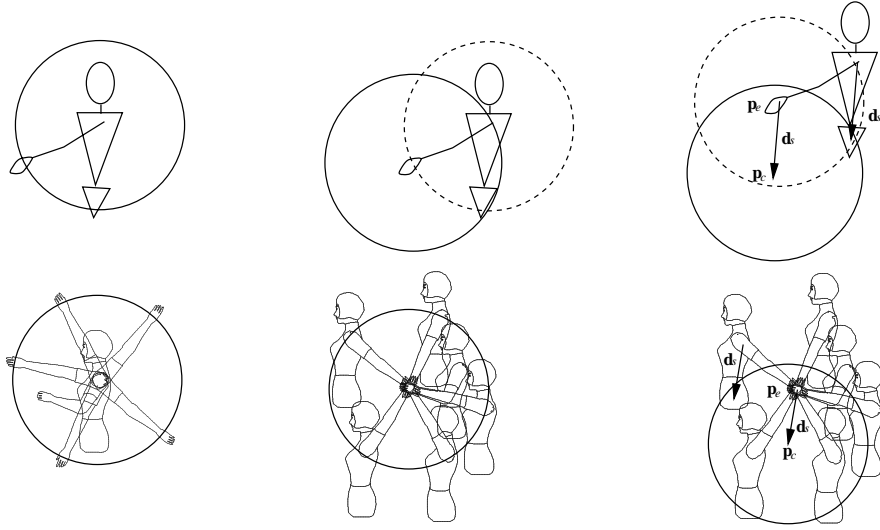


Figure 5: Range 3D disks: range of hand, shoulder, and body center position

the character’s root position by the displacement vector, where the joint angles would not need to be changed.

In the event that multiple end-effectors are to be positioned, we compute the weighted average of the displacements to find an initial offset  $\mathbf{d}$  as follows:

$$\mathbf{d} = \frac{\sum_i^n w_i \mathbf{d}_i}{\sum_i^n w_i}, \quad (16)$$

where  $w_i$  is the importance of the  $i$ -th end-effector. In the (unlikely) event that all end-effectors require the same displacement, this displacement will solve all of the constraints. More likely, the joint angles will need to be adjusted so that all of the end-effector goals can be met.

While the weighted averaging attempts to position the body center to meet all of the goals simultaneously, it does not necessarily guarantee that all goals can be met. Once the body center position is fixed, the character can meet its goals by straightening its joints. Therefore, the center position must be chosen such that all end-effector goals are “reachable,” that is, close enough that straightening limbs will be sufficient. We refine our body center position estimate such that it guarantees reachability if possible. We relocate the body center such that it is as close to the initial estimate as possible, yet still is within the reachability limits to the goals.

As shown in the left of Figure 5, the reachable space of the hand can be represented as the 3D disk centered at the shoulder, and its radius is the length of the arm. Here, a 3D disk consists of a sphere and its interior. The same 3D disk but located at the goal position represents the range of the shoulder joint position as given the middle of Figure 5. Finally, with the orientations of the pelvis and the waist fixed as in the captured posture, we compute the range of the body center as illustrated on the right of Figure 5. Let  $\mathbf{d}_s$  denote the vector from the shoulder to the body center. The translation of the 3D disk at the goal position  $\mathbf{p}_c$  by the vector  $\mathbf{d}_s$  yields the 3D disk that gives the range of the body center position. If the body center is in this 3D disk, the character can reach the goal position by stretching the limb only.

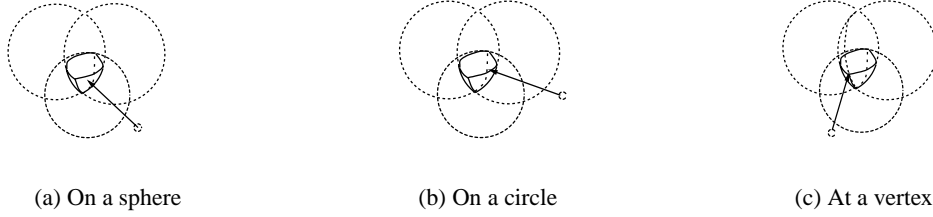


Figure 6: Closest points

When the importance value of an end-effector is low, the position of the body center does not need to be modified to make this end-effector reachable at its goal. Therefore, the ranges corresponding to those end-effectors may be larger than the actual reachable ranges. To avoid unnecessary offset of the body center, we enlarge the size of the 3D disk, so that its size is inversely proportional to the importance value. The increased radius  $r_i$  corresponding to the  $i$ -th limb is given as follows:

$$r_i(l_i, w_i) = \frac{l_i}{w_i}, \quad (17)$$

where  $l_i$  is the length of the  $i$ -th limb and  $w_i$  is its importance value.

Since the virtual character has four end-effectors, we have four 3D disks. The common intersection of these 3D disks is the range of the body center position that makes all of the end-effectors reachable to their goal positions. As an initial guess for the body center, we choose the closest point from the offset body center to this intersection to preserve the posture of the performer as much as possible. Thus, the body center position estimation is formulated as the problem of finding the closest point from a given position to the common intersection of four 3D disks.

The intersection of 3D disks consists of four surface elements as show in Figure 6: spherical regions, circular edges, and vertices. A spherical region is a part of a sphere bounded by a sequence of spherical arcs. A circular edge is a part of a circle that is the intersection of two spheres. A vertex is determined by the common intersection of three spheres.

There are two cases depending on the position of the offset center position with respect to the intersection. If this point is contained in the interior of the intersection, then the point itself is the closest point to the intersection. Suppose that it is not contained in the interior. Then, the closest point must lie on the boundary of the intersection. Therefore, we enumerate all possible surface elements due to the intersection of the four spheres corresponding to the bounding surfaces of the disks, respectively.

Three spheres determine two or less vertices. Since there are four ways of choosing a triple out of four spheres, we have a maximum of eight vertices. Every pair of vertices can possibly admits a spherical edge, and thus we have at most 24 edges. However, these are completely included in a maximum of six circles. Moreover, each spherical face is completely contained in one of four spheres. Instead of enumerating all surfaces elements, we equivalently check those spheres, circles and vertices.

We first compute the closest point to each sphere from the offset body center. Among these points, if any, we choose the point that is contained in the intersection and the closest to the body center. If such a point does not exist, then we compute the set of points, each of them is the closest from the body center to each circle. Out of them, we choose the one that is closest to the body center and in

the intersection. Suppose that there does not exist such a point. Then, one of vertices must be the solution. We choose the one closest to the body center among those contained in the intersection. For more details in computing the initial body center position, refer to Appendix. If there does not exist the common intersection of the disks, we discard the spheres which do not intersect the one whose corresponding end-effector has the biggest importance value, and repeat this process for the rest of disks.

## 5.2 Body Posture Computation

If the initial body center position estimate does not allow all limbs to be reachable to the goal positions, we need to adjust the body posture consisting of the center position, the orientation of the pelvis, and that of the upper body. Since those segments are tightly coupled, a numerical method is adopted to find their configurations. While numerical methods hardly guarantee a real-time response for computing the inverse kinematics of an entire human figure, it is practical to solve only a small part of the IK problem numerically, and to employ analytic methods for the rest of the task. Such a hybrid solver was demonstrated in [17].

We formulate a restricted version of the IK problem for determining the posture of the body center, the pelvis, and the upper body separately from the problem of solving the posture of the limbs. The posture of a character can be written as  $\mathbf{v} = (\mathbf{p}_0, \mathbf{q}_0, \mathbf{q}_1, \dots, \mathbf{q}_n)$ , where  $\mathbf{p}_0$  and  $\mathbf{q}_0$  are the position and the orientation of body center, respectively.  $\mathbf{q}_i$ ,  $1 \leq i \leq n$ , are the orientations of body segments such as the waist and the upper body. When the character has a rigid torso,  $\mathbf{v}$  is simply reduced to  $(\mathbf{p}_0, \mathbf{q}_0, \mathbf{q}_1)$ , since  $n = 1$ .

The objective function consists of two terms:

$$E = E_g + \alpha E_p, \quad (18)$$

where the first term  $E_g$  is for making the end-effectors reachable to their goals and the last term  $E_p$  is to preserve the captured posture. We will explain those two terms in detail.

$E_g$  is the sum of  $E_j$ 's each of which is the squared distance from the  $j$ -th end-effector to its goal position when the limb is maximally stretched. Provided with the shoulder (or the coxa) position  $\mathbf{p}_j^s$  of the  $j$ -th limb and its goal position  $\mathbf{p}_j^g$ ,  $E_j$  is given as follows:

$$E_j = \begin{cases} 0, & \text{if } \|\mathbf{p}_j^s - \mathbf{p}_j^g\| < l_j, \\ \left(\|\mathbf{p}_j^s - \mathbf{p}_j^g\| - l_j\right)^2, & \text{otherwise,} \end{cases} \quad (19)$$

where  $l_j$  is the length of the  $j$ -th limb. This objective function is zero when the end-effector reaches to its goal position. However, an end-effector of low importance has no need to preserve its captured position. Thus, to relax the constraint on this end-effector, we enlarge the range of the shoulder (or the coxa.) By substituting the length  $l_j$  of each limb with the new radius  $r_j = \frac{l_j}{w_j}$  as mentioned in Section 6.1, we have

$$E_j = \begin{cases} 0 & , \text{ if } \|\mathbf{p}_j^s - \mathbf{p}_j^g\| < r_j, \\ \left(\|\mathbf{p}_j^s - \mathbf{p}_j^g\| - r_j\right)^2 & , \text{ otherwise.} \end{cases}$$

Note that with the importance value  $w_j$  of one,  $E_j$  plays a role of pulling the end effector to reach to the goal position exactly. On the other hand, as importance value  $w_j$  approaches zero, the  $j$ -th end-effector keeps the original posture by preserving the joint angles.

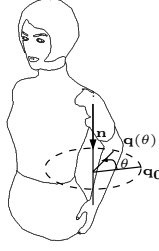


Figure 7: Residual degree of freedom of shoulder

Letting  $\mathbf{q}_i^*$  and  $\mathbf{p}_0^*$  be the captured orientation of the  $i$ -th segment and the position of the performer, respectively,  $E_p$  is a weighted sum of the squared geodesic distances between  $\mathbf{q}$  and  $\mathbf{q}_i^*$  for all  $0 \leq i \leq n$ , and the squared distance between  $\mathbf{p}_0$  and  $\mathbf{p}_0^*$ :

$$E_p = \sum_{j=0}^n \beta_j \|\ln(\mathbf{q}_j^{-1} \mathbf{q}_j^*)\|^2 + \gamma \|\mathbf{p}_0 - \mathbf{p}_0^*\|^2. \quad (20)$$

Minimizing  $E_p$  preserves the captured motion as much as possible. We find the optimal solution that minimizes the objective function by employing the conjugate gradient method. Here, we use the captured joint angles and the body center position computed in Section 5.1 as the initial values for our optimization.

### 5.3 Limb Postures Computation

Given the position of a shoulder and that of the goal together with a hand orientation, we present how our IK solver computes the configuration of an arm. The configuration of a leg can similarly be computed from the hip position and foot position and orientation. As pointed out by Tolani et al. [25] and Lee et al. [17], the angle between the brachium of the arm and its forearm can be computed uniquely from the distance between the shoulder and the goal. We adjust the shoulder joint to locate the wrist at the goal position. Even with the wrist position fixed at the goal position, the shoulder joint still has one residual degree of freedom that rotates the elbow about the axis passing through the shoulder and the wrist. Korein et al. [16] have parameterized that degree of freedom by the swivel angle  $\theta$ . As illustrated in Figure 7, the elbow traces a circle called *elbow circle*, as  $\theta$  varies. Once  $\theta$  is chosen, the joint angle of the wrist is determined uniquely by the orientation of the hand.

This swivel angle  $\theta$  can be described with a unit quaternion formulation. The unit quaternion  $\mathbf{q}(\theta)$  representing the rotation by  $\theta$  about the axis  $\mathbf{n}$  is  $e^{\frac{\theta \mathbf{n}}{2}}$  for  $-\pi < \theta \leq \pi$ , where  $\theta$  is measured from a reference point on the circle. Representing this point by a unit quaternion  $\mathbf{q}_0$ , we have

$$\mathbf{q}(\theta) = e^{\frac{\theta \mathbf{n}}{2}} \mathbf{q}_0. \quad (21)$$

Differently from the original version of Lee et al. [17] which determines  $\theta$  by a numerical optimization, we solve for  $\theta$  analytically so that the arm posture deviates as small as possible from the captured posture. Thus, we choose  $\theta$  that minimizes the geodesic distance  $\phi$  from the captured shoulder joint orientation  $\mathbf{q}^*$  to  $\mathbf{q}(\theta)$ . Since  $\phi = \arccos(\mathbf{q}^* \cdot \mathbf{q}(\theta))$ , the geodesic distance  $\phi$  is minimized when  $\mathbf{q}^* \cdot \mathbf{q}(\theta)$  is maximized. By definition,  $e^{\frac{\theta \mathbf{n}}{2}} = \left(\cos \frac{\theta}{2}, \mathbf{n} \sin \frac{\theta}{2}\right)$ . Let  $\mathbf{q}^* = (\mathbf{w}^*, \mathbf{v}^*)$  and

$\mathbf{q}_0 = (w_0, \mathbf{v}_0)$ . Then, their inner product is given as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbf{q}^* \cdot \mathbf{q}(\theta) &= (w^*, \mathbf{v}^*) \cdot \left\{ \left( \cos \frac{\theta}{2}, \mathbf{n} \sin \frac{\theta}{2} \right) (w_0, \mathbf{v}_0) \right\} \\ &= a \cos \frac{\theta}{2} + b \sin \frac{\theta}{2} \\ &= \sqrt{a^2 + b^2} \sin \left( \frac{\theta}{2} + \alpha \right), \end{aligned} \quad (22)$$

where

$$\begin{aligned} \alpha &= \tan^{-1} \frac{a}{b} \\ a &= w^* w_0 + \mathbf{v}^* \cdot \mathbf{v}_0 \\ b &= w_0 \mathbf{n} \cdot \mathbf{v}^* - w^* \mathbf{n} \cdot \mathbf{v}_0 + \mathbf{v}^* \cdot (\mathbf{n} \times \mathbf{v}_0). \end{aligned}$$

The sine function has the maximum at  $\frac{\pi}{2}$  and  $-\frac{\pi}{2}$ . Thus, the maximum of the inner product  $\mathbf{q}^* \cdot \mathbf{q}(\theta)$  is obtained either at  $\mathbf{q}(-2\alpha + \pi)$  or at  $\mathbf{q}(-2\alpha - \pi)$ . Since the distance of two points in the unit quaternion space is inversely proportion to their dot product,  $\mathbf{q}(-2\alpha + \pi)$  is the closest from  $\mathbf{q}^*$  if  $\mathbf{q}^* \cdot \mathbf{q}(-2\alpha + \pi) > \mathbf{q}^* \cdot \mathbf{q}(-2\alpha - \pi)$ ; otherwise,  $\mathbf{q}(-2\alpha - \pi)$  is the closest.

Now, with both captured and computed limb postures available, we blend them together to obtain a realistic motion. For this purpose, we perform spherical linear interpolation between each captured joint orientation of a limb with its corresponding IK solution. Let  $q_k$  and  $q_{ik}^*$  are the orientation of the  $k$ -th joint in the  $i$ -th limb obtained from the IK solver and that from the captured posture. Then the blended joint angle  $q'_{ik}$  can be described by spherical linear interpolation as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} \mathbf{q}'_{ik} &= \text{slerp}(q_{ik}^*, q_k, w_i) \\ &= e^{w_i \ln(\mathbf{q}_{ik} \mathbf{q}_{ik}^{*-1})} \mathbf{q}_{ik}^*, \end{aligned} \quad (23)$$

where  $w_i$  is the importance value of the  $i$ -th limb. That is, the limb with the high importance value can preserve the end-effector position, and that with low importance can preserve the captured joint angles.

Here, non-penetration condition may be violated, since the posture is blended without concerning the constraints. Thus, the blended posture has to be adjusted explicitly to prevent unwanted penetration. Provided with the predefined external objects for each end-effector, this violation can be detected easily. Before penetrating an object, the end-effector touches the boundary of the object. A natural position of the end-effector would move on the surface of the object without penetration. Thus, the preferable position of the end-effector during penetration is the intersection point of the object boundary and the line segment from the shoulder to the end-effector. This position moves continuously in accordance with the end-effector movement. The penetration problem can be effectively eliminated by adjusting the limb posture using the IK solver for limbs.

## 6 Analysis of Temporal Constraints

In retargetting motions, we must preserve important temporal aspects of the motion, as well as spatial aspects. Gleicher [12] emphasizes the importance of avoiding the introduction of high-frequencies during adaptation. Both this work and the work of Lee and Shin [17] provide approaches for avoiding the addition of discontinuities during adaptation. Unfortunately, both schemes rely on examining



durations of motions and therefore can only be applied in off-line applications. In this section, we show that the approach presented in this paper does not introduce unwanted discontinuities into the resulting motion.

To begin, we must assume that the initial motion is free of unwanted discontinuities. This assumption is not restrictive because the movement of the performer is continuous. Discontinuities may be introduced by noise in the capture process, but these are generally removed by the filtering process described in Section 3. The continuity of the initial motion applies to both the captured joint angles and end-effector positions.

Given continuous paths for the end-effectors, our IK solver will provide continuous trajectories for the parameters. Achieving this requires the solver to make consistent changes. That is, similar inputs to the solver must provide similar outputs. To guarantee this consistency, our IK solver tries to find the solution in an on-line manner so that it is close to the filtered posture, while satisfying the kinematic constraints.

For our IK solver, the only kinematic constraints are the positions of end-effectors. These constraints are specified at every frame as temporal constraints. As an end-effector is approaching an object in the environment, its distance to the object is monotonically decreasing. Similarly, the distance is monotonically increasing as the end-effector is departing from the object. When the end-effector touches (or passes by) the object, the monotonicity changes but the distance function is still continuous at that instance.

For any continuous distance function, our importance function gives continuous importance values as described in Section 4. In other words, the importance values are consistently changed to reflect the temporal proximity of end-effectors to the environment. Therefore, the importance values have inter-frame coherence. Since our IK solver utilizes as input the reference motion data and the importance values, we can exclude unexpected motion artifacts such as unwanted jerkiness. That is, enforced to minimize the change from the reference motion, our IK solver tries to find an intended motion. Moreover, guided by the importance values for interaction with the environment, it also predicts the future temporal constraints and continuously pays attention to them for motion coherence.

## 7 Experimental Results

For puppetry performance, we use a MotionStar Wireless motion capture device from Ascension Tech, Inc. with 14 sensors and two extended range transmitters. Each of sensors attached on a performer captures the magnetic field emitted by a transmitter to report its position and orientation up to 144 times per second.

Our prototype system has been deployed for production and has been used successfully to create a virtual character for a children’s television program as well as a virtual news reporter. Both have been shown on Korean national television, called KBS. A frog-like creature shown in Figure 8(a) is called “Pang-Pang”, who regularly appears in a daily TV show for children to demonstrate his comic performance. Thanks to the capability of our system for synthesizing realistic motion in real time, Pang-Pang and a real actor can interact each other. Figure 8(b) shows a virtual character “Aliang” who has performed the role of a news reporter for the election of Korea National Assembly. Even in a time-critical situation such as reporting interim election results, Aliang can accomplish his role successfully.

The skeleton used in our system has 43 degrees of freedom including 11 revolute joints of 3 degrees of freedom, 4 hinges on elbows and knees, and the position of the body and its orientation. The floor is modeled as a plane for all of the uses of our system to date.



(a) Pang-Pang

(b) Aliang

Figure 8: Virtual characters on air controlled by our prototype system

Table 1: The number of iterations in numerical solver with and without center position estimation

motion	#frames	the number of iterations			
		without		with	
		Blubby	Sally	Blubby	Sally
Walk	39	47	0	0	0
Throw	157	244	0	0	0
Jump	88	111	0	0	0
Handstand	211	266	38	0	0
Dance	591	1253	0	1	0
Total (61 Clips)	9692	15634	429	8	0

To test our system’s performance, we created two puppets specifically designed to provide challenging retargetting problems. The character named *long tall Sally* has long arms and legs, while a ball-shaped man called *Blubby* with extremely short legs. To perform experiments, 61 prerecorded motion clips were used as the input for motion retargetting.

Table 1 shows the number of iterations in numerical optimization with and without initial body center position estimation. Statistics for five selected motion clips are given in the first five rows of the table. The total figures for 61 clips are shown in the last row. Since Sally has long arms and legs, she can reach the captured end-effector positions without moving its body position. Thus, the number of iterations for Sally is small even without initial position estimation. However, with estimated initial positions, the number of iterations decreases to zero for our test motion clips.

The effect of initial position estimation is obvious for Blubby with short legs. To make him reach a given position, the numerical solver iteratively adjusts the position of Blubby and the joint angles at its torso. With our body center position estimation, the number of iterations decreases significantly. In most cases, our estimation algorithm finds the body position that makes the end-effectors reachable to their goal positions without any help of the numerical solver.

Table 2 gives an overall performance of our on-line motion retargetting algorithm excluding ren-

Table 2: Elapsed time

motion	#frames	Blubby		Sally	
		elapsed time (msec)	per frame (msec)	elapsed time (msec)	per frame (msec)
Walk	39	203	5.2	206	5.3
Throw	157	864	5.5	876	5.6
Jump	88	466	5.3	474	5.4
Handstand	211	1135	5.4	1139	5.4
Dance	591	3188	5.4	3201	5.4
Total (61 Clips)	9692	52543	5.4	52732	5.4

dering time. Timing information is obtained on a SGI Indigo2 workstation with an R10000 195 MHz processor and 128 Mbytes memory. The execution time for each example depends on the number of iterations in numeric optimization. The tables show a real-time performance for each of examples.

In Figure 13, a captured walking motion is applied to a character with various methods. The upper images of Figure 13 reveal artifacts due to the geometric inconsistency between the performer and the puppet. Since the positions of feet are not cared in motion retargetting, the supporting foot is sliding. In contrast, the middle motion preserves the positions well. However, the motions of the arms look unrealistic, since the joint angles of the arms are over-adjusted to preserve the positions of the hands. The bottom figure is generated by our motion retargetting. The supporting foot is fixed at the proper position without sliding, and the joint angles of the arms are preserved as the original ones.

With conventional approaches based on joint angle preservation, there would also exist foot-sliding artifacts when the character has longer limbs as given in the top of Figure 14. Moreover, the middle image exhibits unintended bending of legs due to position preservation and an ill-selected initial body position. By assigning low importance values to the hands and estimating the body position, we have a better result in which the legs are not bent as shown in right figure. Figure 15 gives images of more examples.

## 8 Conclusions & Future Work

We have presented a new approach for on-line motion retargetting that transforms motions of a performer to a virtual character of a different size. Introducing the notion of the importance of an end-effector, we have been able to generate the realistic motion of the character in real time while preserving the characteristics of captured motions as much as possible. KBS (Korean Broadcasting System), the largest public television broadcasting company in Korea, has been adopting our on-line motion retargetting algorithm to control the virtual character, Pang Pang in a daily TV show for children. This show has become one of the favorites among children partly due to Pang Pang's successful performance. KBS also successfully showed the performance of a virtual reporter, Aliang for the real election using this algorithm.

Our approach addresses only the interaction between the end-effectors of a character and an environment. However, we may also have a different type of interaction among the segments of a character themselves. Due to the geometric difference of the character from a performer, for example, its end-effectors may penetrate its body, and also its hands are hard to touch each other without interpenetration for clapping. Thus, to resolve these artifacts, the IK solver should be enhanced to

efficiently handle self-interactions.

We focus on handling only the geometric discrepancy between a performer and a puppet. To generate more realistic motions, retargetting should also incorporate the characteristics of the puppet. Anthropomorphized animals such as cartoonic birds and monkeys have their unique characteristics of motions. Those motions can hardly be captured directly from a human performer, and thus give an additional barrier to overcome.

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## A Finding the Closest Point on the Intersection of Spheres

As given in Section 6, there are three type of surface elements: spheres, circles, and vertices. We describe how we find the closest point on each type of elements to a given point  $\mathbf{p}$ . It is trivial to find the closest point on a sphere to the given point. Therefore, we skip to explain the other cases.

Now, consider the closest point on a circle to  $\mathbf{p}$ . We start with how to construct the circle  $C$ , which is the common intersection of the two spheres  $S_1$  and  $S_2$ . The radius  $r_c$  of  $C$  can be computed with

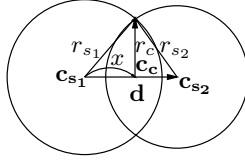


Figure 9: Intersection of two spheres

Pythagorean theorem. Let  $\mathbf{c}_{s_i}$  and  $r_{s_i}$  for  $i = 1, 2, 3$  be the center of the sphere  $S_i$  and its radius, respectively. The radius  $r_c$  of  $C$  satisfies the following equations:

$$r_c^2 + x^2 = r_{s_1}^2, \text{ and} \quad (24)$$

$$r_c^2 + (\|\mathbf{d}\| - x)^2 = r_{s_2}^2, \quad (25)$$

where  $x$  is the distance between the center  $\mathbf{c}_c$  of  $C$  and that of  $S_1$ , and  $\mathbf{d}$  is the vector from  $\mathbf{s}_1$  to  $\mathbf{s}_2$ . Solving those equations, we get

$$r_c^2 = r_{s_1}^2 - \frac{(r_{s_1}^2 - r_{s_2}^2 + \|\mathbf{d}\|^2)^2}{4\|\mathbf{d}\|^2}. \quad (26)$$

Here, spheres,  $S_1$  and  $S_2$  intersect unless if  $r_c^2$  is negative. From Equations (24) and (25),

$$x = \frac{r_{s_1}^2 - r_{s_2}^2 + \|\mathbf{d}\|^2}{2\|\mathbf{d}\|}. \quad (27)$$

Thus,

$$\mathbf{c}_c = \frac{r_{s_1}^2 - r_{s_2}^2 + \|\mathbf{d}\|^2}{2\|\mathbf{d}\|} \cdot \frac{\mathbf{d}}{\|\mathbf{d}\|} + \mathbf{c}_{s_1}. \quad (28)$$

Let  $\mathbf{n}$  be the normal vector of the plane where the circle lies. Then,

$$\mathbf{n} = \frac{\mathbf{d}}{\|\mathbf{d}\|}. \quad (29)$$

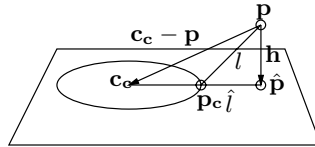


Figure 10: Closest point from a point to a circle

We are ready to find the closest point on the circle  $C$  to the given point  $\mathbf{p}$ . Let  $\mathbf{h}$  be the projection of the vector  $\mathbf{c}_c - \mathbf{p}$  onto the normal vector  $\mathbf{n}$  of the plane, that is,  $\mathbf{h} = [\mathbf{n} \cdot (\mathbf{c}_c - \mathbf{p})]\mathbf{n}$ . Then, the closest point  $\mathbf{p}_c$  on  $C$  to  $\mathbf{p}$  is

$$\mathbf{p}_c = \mathbf{c}_c + \frac{\hat{\mathbf{p}} - \mathbf{c}_c}{\|\hat{\mathbf{p}} - \mathbf{c}_c\|} r_c. \quad (30)$$

where  $\hat{\mathbf{p}} = \mathbf{p} + \mathbf{h}$ , that is,  $\hat{\mathbf{p}}$  is the projection of  $\mathbf{p}$  onto the plane containing  $C$ . As shown in Figure 10, the distance  $l$  from  $\mathbf{p}$  to  $\mathbf{p}_c$  is  $\sqrt{\|\mathbf{h}\|^2 + \hat{l}^2}$ , where  $\hat{l}$  is the distance from  $\hat{\mathbf{p}}$  to  $\mathbf{p}_c$ , that is,  $\hat{l} = \|\hat{\mathbf{p}} - \mathbf{c}_c\| - r_c$ .

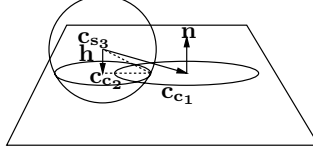


Figure 11: Intersection of a sphere and a plane

Finally, we show how to find the closest among vertices, if any, to the given point  $\mathbf{p}$ . Given those vertices, it is trivial to find the closest. Thus, we focus on explaining how to compute the vertices lying at the corners of the common intersection of three spheres,  $S_1$ ,  $S_2$  and  $S_3$ . We first calculate the intersection circle  $C_1$  of two spheres  $S_1$  and  $S_2$ . Cutting the sphere  $S_3$  with the plane containing  $C_1$ , we have the circle  $C_2$ . Provided with the center point  $\mathbf{c}_{c_1}$  of  $C_1$  and the normal vector  $\mathbf{n}$  of the plain containing the circle  $C_1$ , the center point  $\mathbf{c}_{c_2}$  of  $C_2$  is the projection of the center point  $\mathbf{c}_{s_3}$  of the sphere  $S_3$  onto the plane. Thus,

$$\mathbf{c}_{c_2} = \mathbf{c}_{s_3} + \mathbf{h}, \quad (31)$$

where  $\mathbf{h}$  is the vector from  $\mathbf{c}_{s_3}$  to  $\mathbf{c}_{c_2}$  on the plane, that is,  $\mathbf{h} = [\mathbf{n} \cdot (\mathbf{c}_{c_1} - \mathbf{c}_{s_3})] \mathbf{n}$ . The radius  $r_{c_2}$  of  $C_2$  is given as follows:

$$r_{c_2}^2 = r_{s_3}^2 - \|\mathbf{h}\|^2, \quad (32)$$

where  $r_{s_3}$  is the radius of the sphere  $S_3$ . The sphere  $S_3$  does not touch the plane if  $r_{c_2}^2$  has a negative value. Two vertices determined by three spheres are the intersection of the circles  $C_1$  and  $C_2$ . To

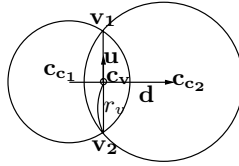


Figure 12: Intersection of two circles

compute the intersection of  $C_1$  and  $C_2$ , we evaluate the mid-point  $\mathbf{c}_v$  of the vertices  $\mathbf{v}_1$  and  $\mathbf{v}_2$  (see Figure 12.) Similarly to the sphere-sphere intersection, the mid-point  $\mathbf{c}_v$  and the distance  $r_v$  from each of vertices to  $\mathbf{c}$  are given as follows:

$$r_v^2 = r_{c_1}^2 - \frac{(r_{c_1}^2 - r_{c_2}^2 + \|\mathbf{d}\|^2)^2}{4\|\mathbf{d}\|^2}, \text{ and} \quad (33)$$

$$\mathbf{c}_v = \frac{r_{c_1}^2 - r_{c_2}^2 + \|\mathbf{d}\|^2}{2\|\mathbf{d}\|} \cdot \frac{\mathbf{d}}{\|\mathbf{d}\|} + \mathbf{c}_{c_1}, \quad (34)$$

where the  $\mathbf{d}$  is the vector from the  $\mathbf{c}_{c_1}$  to  $\mathbf{c}_{c_2}$ . The normalized direction vector  $\mathbf{u}$  from  $\mathbf{c}_v$  to  $\mathbf{v}_1$  is obtained from the cross product of  $\mathbf{n}$  and  $\mathbf{d}$ , that is,  $\mathbf{u} = \frac{\mathbf{n} \times \mathbf{d}}{\|\mathbf{n} \times \mathbf{d}\|}$ . Hence, we have the vertices  $\mathbf{v}_1 = \mathbf{c}_v + r_v \mathbf{u}$  and  $\mathbf{v}_2 = \mathbf{c}_v - r_v \mathbf{u}$ .





(a) the captured joint angles only

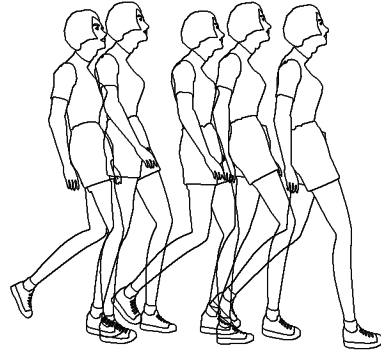
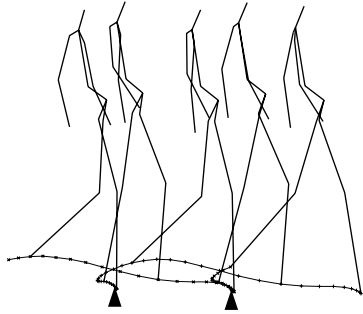


(b) a conventional IK solution with kinematic constraints on end-effectors

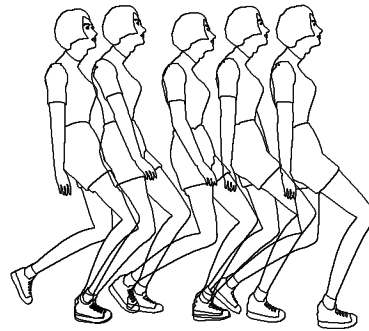
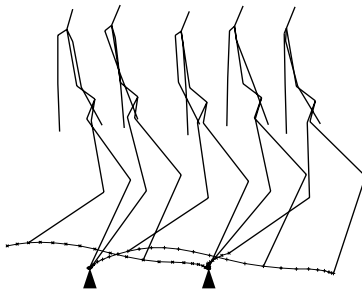


(c) Proposed algorithm combining the captured joint angles and the IK solution

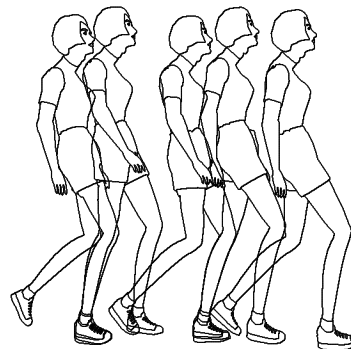
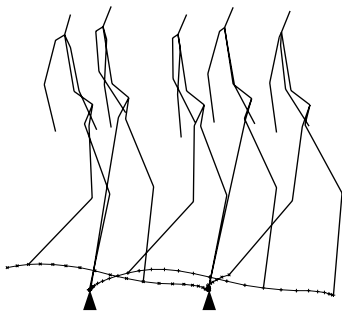
Figure 13: Walking motion of *Blubby*



(a) the captured joint angles only

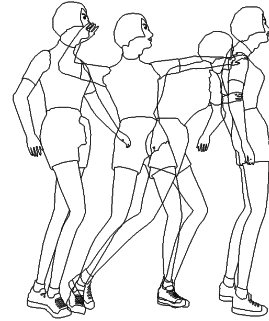
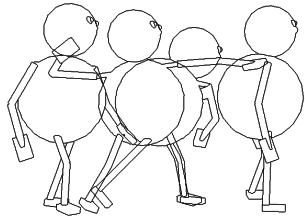


(b) a conventional IK solution with kinematic constraints on end-effectors

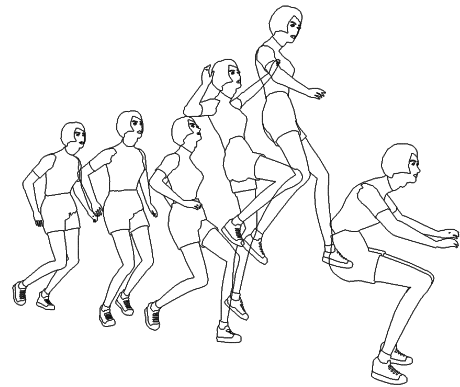
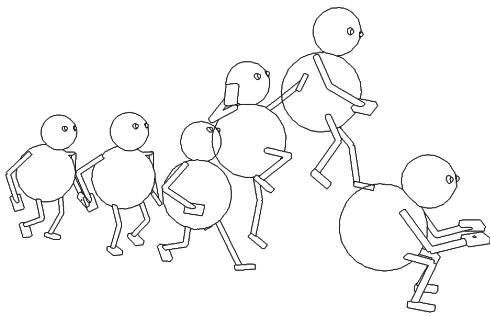


(c) Proposed algorithm combining the captured joint angles and the IK solution

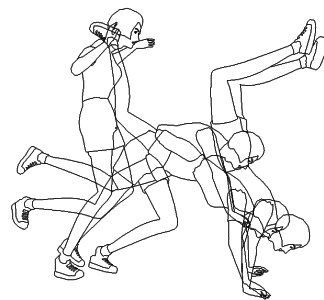
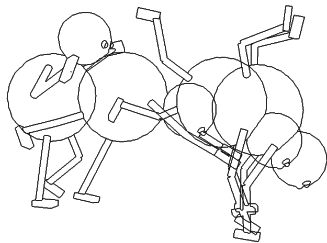
Figure 14: Walking motion of *Sally*



(a) Throwing



(b) Jumping



(c) Handstand

Figure 15: Example motions of *Blubby* and *Sally*