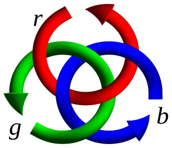
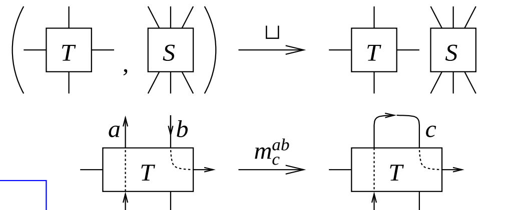
Some very good formulas for the Alexander polynomial, 1

Abstract. I will describe some very good formulas for a *(matrix plus scalar)*-valued extension of the Alexander polynomnial to tangles, then say that everything extends to virtual tangles, then roughly to simply knotted balloons and hoops in 4D, then the target space extends to *(free Lie algebras plus cyclic words)*, and the result is a universal finite type of the knotted objects in its domain. Taking a cue from the BF topological quantum field theory, everything should extend (with some modifications) to arbitrary codimension-2 knots in arbitrary dimension and in particular, to arbitrary 2-knots in 4D. But what is really going on is still a mystery.

Tangles.





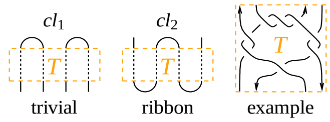
(meta-associativity: $m^{ab}_a /\!/ m^{ac}_a = m^{bc}_b /\!/ m^{ab}_a$)

Why Tangles?

- Finitely presented.
- Divide and conquer proofs and computations.
- "Algebraic Knot Theory": If K is ribbon,

$Z(K) \in \{cl_2(Z) \colon cl_1(Z) = 1\}$.

(Genus and crossing number are also definable properties).



Theorem 1. ∃! an invariant γ: {pure framed S-component tangles} $\to R \times M_{S\times S}(R)$, where $R = R_S = \mathbb{Z}((T_a)_{a\in S})$ is the ring of rational functions in S variables, intertwining

$$\textbf{1.}\ \left(\begin{array}{c|c}\omega_1 & S_1\\ \hline S_1 & A_1\end{array},\ \begin{array}{c|c}\omega_2 & S_2\\ \hline S_2 & A_2\end{array}\right) \xrightarrow{\ \sqcup\ } \begin{array}{c|cc}\omega_1\omega_2 & S_1 & S_2\\ \hline S_1 & A_1 & 0\\ S_2 & 0 & A_2\end{array},$$

$$\textbf{2.}\ \begin{array}{c|ccc}\omega & a & b & S\\ \hline a & \alpha & \beta & \theta\\ b & \gamma & \delta & \epsilon\\ S & \phi & \psi & \Xi\end{array} \xrightarrow[\mu:=1-\beta]{m^{ab}_c} \left(\begin{array}{c|cc}\mu\omega & c & S\\ \hline c & \gamma+\alpha\delta/\mu & \epsilon+\delta\theta/\mu\\ S & \phi+\alpha\psi/\mu & \Xi+\psi\theta/\mu\end{array}\right)_{T_a,T_b\to T_c},$$

and satisfying $\left(\,|_a;\ {}_a{\nearrow}_b,\ {}_b{\nwarrow}_a\right) \xrightarrow{\ \gamma\ } \left(\begin{array}{c|c}1 & a\\ \hline a & 1\end{array};\ \begin{array}{c|cc}1 & a & b\\ \hline a & 1 & 1-T_a^{\pm1}\\ b & 0 & T_a^{\pm1}\end{array}\right)$.

In Addition,

- This is really "just" a stitching formula for Burau/Gassner [LD, KLW, CT].
- $L \mapsto \omega$ is Alexander, mod units.
- $L \mapsto (\omega, A) \mapsto \omega \det'(A - I)/(1 - T')$ is the MVA, mod units.
- The "fastest" Alexander algorithm.
- There are also formulas for strand deletion, reversal, and doubling.
- Every step along the computation is the invariant of something.
- Extends to and more naturally defined on v/w-tangles.
- Fits in one column, including propaganda & implementation.

Implementation key idea:

ωεβ/Demo

$(\omega, A = (\alpha_{ab})) \leftrightarrow$
$(\omega, \lambda = \sum \alpha_{ab} t_a h_b)$

```
ΓCollect[Γ[ω_, λ_]] := Γ[Factor[ω],
   Collect[λ, h_, Collect[#, t_, Factor] &]];
Format[Γ[ω_, λ_]] := Module[{S, M},
   S = Union@Cases[Γ[ω, λ], (h | t)a_ ⧴ a, ∞];
   M = Outer[Factor[∂h#1t#2 λ] &, S, S];
   M = Prepend[M, t# & /@ S] // Transpose;
   M = Prepend[M, Prepend[h# & /@ S, ω]];
   M // MatrixForm];
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```
Γ /: Γ[ω1_, λ1_] Γ[ω2_, λ2_] := Γ[ω1 * ω2, λ1 + λ2];
ma_b_→c_[Γ[ω_, λ_]] := Module[{α, β, γ, δ, θ, ϵ, ϕ, ψ, Ξ, μ},
  (α β θ; γ δ ϵ; ϕ ψ Ξ) = (∂ta,ha λ  ∂ta,hb λ  ∂ta λ; ∂tb,ha λ  ∂tb,hb λ  ∂tb λ; ∂ha λ  ∂hb λ  λ) /. (t | h)a|b → 0;
  Γ[(μ = 1 - β) ω, {tc, 1}.(γ + α δ / μ   ϵ + δ θ / μ; ϕ + α ψ / μ   Ξ + ψ θ / μ).{hc, 1}]
   /. {Ta → Tc, Tb → Tc} // ΓCollect];
Rpa_b_ := Γ[1, {ta, tb}.(1  1 - Ta; 0  Ta).{ha, hb}];
Rma_b_ := Rpab /. Ta → 1 / Ta;
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Meta-Associativity

Runs.

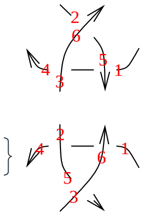
```
γ = Γ[ω, {t1, t2, t3, tS}.(α11 α12 α13 θ1; α21 α22 α23 θ2; α31 α32 α33 θ3; ϕ1 ϕ2 ϕ3 Ξ).{h1, h2, h3, hS}];
(γ // m12→1 // m13→1) == (γ // m23→2 // m12→1)
True
```

R3

... divide and conquer!

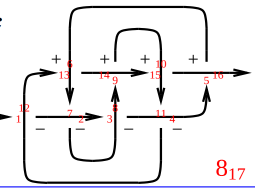
```
{Rm51 Rm62 Rp34 // m14→1 // m25→2 // m36→3,
 Rp61 Rm24 Rm35 // m14→1 // m25→2 // m36→3}
```

$$\left\{\begin{pmatrix} 1 & h_1 & h_2 & h_3\\ t_1 & \frac{T_3}{T_2} & 0 & 0\\ t_2 & \frac{-1+T_2}{T_2} & \frac{1}{T_3} & 0\\ t_3 & -\frac{-1+T_3}{T_2} & \frac{-1+T_3}{T_3} & 1\end{pmatrix}, \begin{pmatrix} 1 & h_1 & h_2 & h_3\\ t_1 & \frac{T_3}{T_2} & 0 & 0\\ t_2 & \frac{-1+T_2}{T_2} & \frac{1}{T_3} & 0\\ t_3 & -\frac{-1+T_3}{T_2} & \frac{-1+T_3}{T_3} & 1\end{pmatrix}\right\}$$




```
γ = Rm12,1 Rm27 Rm83 Rm4,11 Rp16,5 Rp6,13 Rp14,9 Rp10,15;
Do[γ = γ // m1k→1, {k, 2, 16}];
γ
```

$$\begin{pmatrix} -\frac{1-4T_1+8T_1^2-11T_1^3+8T_1^4-4T_1^5+T_1^6}{T_1^3} & h_1\\ t_1 & 1\end{pmatrix}$$

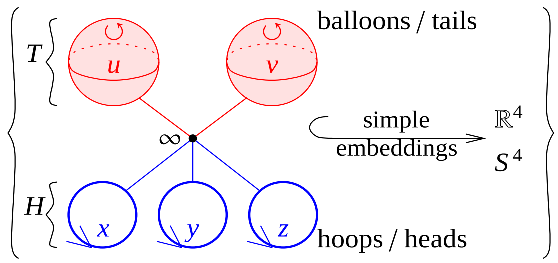


Weaknesses,

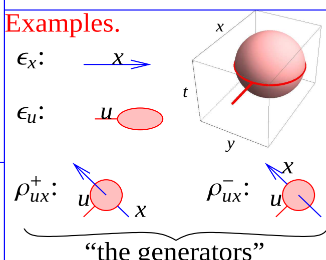
- m^{ab}_c is non-linear.
- The product ωA is always Laurent, but proving this takes induction with exponentially many conditions.

$\mathcal{K}^{bh}(H;T)$.

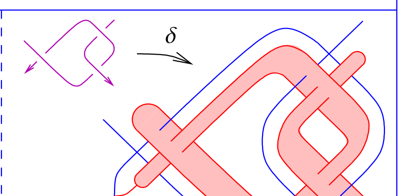
"Simply-knotted balloons and hoops"



Examples.

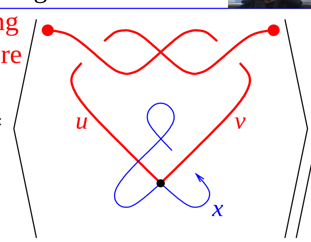


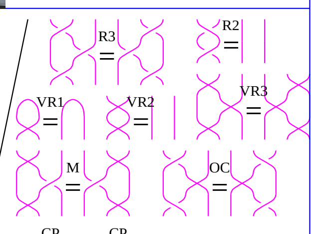

Shin Satoh



Disturbing Conjecture

$\mathcal{K}^{bh} \overset{?}{=}$





Dictionary.

"v-xing"