

Local Surface Theory and Gauss Curvature

Let $S: U \rightarrow \mathbb{R}^3$ be a "surface patch", that is, with

$$S(u, v) = (x(u, v), y(u, v), z(u, v)) \text{ and}$$

$$S_u = \left(\frac{\partial x(u, v)}{\partial u}, \frac{\partial y(u, v)}{\partial u}, \frac{\partial z(u, v)}{\partial u} \right) \text{ and}$$

$$S_v = \left(\frac{\partial x(u, v)}{\partial v}, \frac{\partial y(u, v)}{\partial v}, \frac{\partial z(u, v)}{\partial v} \right), \text{ we require that}$$

$S_u \times S_v \neq \vec{0}$. Define the unit normal by

$$\vec{N} = (S_u \times S_v) / \|S_u \times S_v\|. \quad N = N(u, v) \text{ depends on } u \text{ and } v.$$

Definition: The plane generated by S_u and S_v is called the tangent plane of S (at a given (u, v) value)

Example: If $S(u, v) = (u, v, \sqrt{1-u^2-v^2})$ then the tangent plane is the plane generated by $(1, 0, -u/\sqrt{\quad})$ and $(0, 1, -v/\sqrt{\quad})$. The unit normal is

$$(1, 0, -u/\sqrt{\quad}) \times (0, 1, -v/\sqrt{\quad}) / \| \quad \| =$$

$$\left(\frac{u}{\sqrt{\quad}}, \frac{v}{\sqrt{\quad}}, 1 \right) / \| \quad \| = (u, v, \sqrt{1-u^2-v^2}) = \vec{N}(u, v)$$

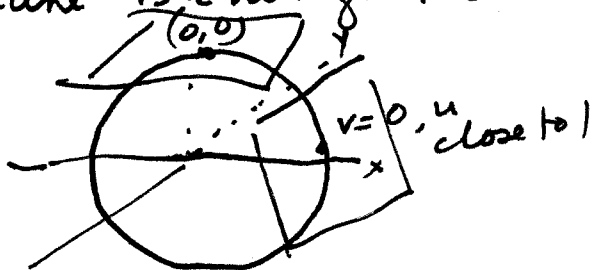
(Check: This is unit length & \perp to S_u and S_v). This coincides

with geometric intuition: the position vector is normal to the sphere around the origin. Note that as $u^2 + v^2 \rightarrow 1^-$ the normal approaches lying in the (x, y) plane so the tangent plane becomes ^{nearby} vertical, i.e., approaches containing $(0, 0, 1)$.

When $(u, v) = (0, 0)$, the normal is $(0, 0, 1)$: the tangent plane is horizontal.

The patch here is defined (nonsingular) only when $u^2 + v^2 < 1$,

$$\text{i.e. } U = \{(u, v) \in \mathbb{R}^2 : u^2 + v^2 < 1\}$$



We are interested in how $N(u,v)$ varies. This interest arises from noting that change in N corresponds intuitively to S being curved. The extreme case of this intuition is made formal by this result:

Theorem: If $U \subset \mathbb{R}^2$ is connected and $S: U \rightarrow \mathbb{R}^3$ is a patch (with $S_u \times S_v \neq \vec{0}$), and if $N(u,v)$ is constant, then $S(U)$ lies in a plane in \mathbb{R}^3 .

Proof: Suppose $N(u,v) = N_0$ for all u,v in U .

Then $\frac{\partial}{\partial u} \langle S, N_0 \rangle = \langle S_u, N_0 \rangle$ since $\frac{\partial}{\partial u} N_0 = 0$.
 $= 0$ since S_u is \perp to $N(u,v) = N_0$.

Also, by the same reasoning $\frac{\partial}{\partial v} \langle S, N_0 \rangle = 0$. Hence $\langle S(u,v), N_0 \rangle$ is a constant c so $S(u,v)$ lies in the plane $\{ \vec{v} : \langle \vec{v}, N_0 \rangle = c \}$. \square

In this argument, we used the Leibnitz Rule for differentiation of inner products, that we used earlier in curve theory.

Now $\langle N, N \rangle = 1$ so $\langle \frac{\partial N}{\partial u}, N \rangle = 0$ and $\langle \frac{\partial N}{\partial v}, N \rangle = 0$. Thus the derivative $\frac{\partial N}{\partial u}$ and $\frac{\partial N}{\partial v}$ lie in the tangent plane: they are \perp to N !

Moreover, $\langle \frac{\partial N}{\partial u}, S_u \rangle = - \langle S_{uu}, N \rangle$

and $\langle \frac{\partial N}{\partial u}, S_v \rangle = - \langle S_{vu}, N \rangle$

and $\langle \frac{\partial N}{\partial v}, S_u \rangle = - \langle S_{uv}, N \rangle$

and $\langle \frac{\partial N}{\partial v}, S_{vv} \rangle = - \langle S_{vv}, N \rangle$

← these two are equal

These formulas come from differentiating
 $\langle S_u, N \rangle = 0$ and $\langle S_v, N \rangle = 0$!

Now S_{uu} , for example, can have both "tangent and normal parts", that is it can, when expressed as $S_{uu} = \alpha N + (\text{vector in tangent plane})$, it can have both parts nonzero.

Notation:

$$L_{11} = -\langle S_{uu}, N \rangle = +\langle S_u, \frac{\partial N}{\partial u} \rangle$$

$$L_{12} = -\langle S_{uv}, N \rangle = \langle S_u, \frac{\partial N}{\partial v} \rangle = \langle S_v, \frac{\partial N}{\partial u} \rangle$$

$$L_{22} = -\langle S_{vv}, N \rangle = \langle S_v, \frac{\partial N}{\partial v} \rangle.$$

So the tangent part of $S_{uu} = S_{uu} - \langle S_{uu}, N \rangle N$ (since N is a unit vector!) and this $= S_{uu} + L_{11}N$.

Similarly $\text{tang part}(S_{uv}) = S_{uv} + L_{12}N$ and $\text{tang part}(S_{vv}) = S_{vv} + L_{22}N$. We think of the L 's as a matrix

$\begin{pmatrix} L_{11} & L_{12} \\ L_{12} & L_{22} \end{pmatrix}$, which is symmetric ($L_{21} = L_{12}$ in an obvious notation expressing $\langle S_{uv}, N \rangle = \langle S_{vu}, N \rangle$).

For temporary but useful notation, write $T(\) =$ tangent part of whatever is in the $(\)$ parentheses.

Similarly, we write $N(\)$ for the normal part.

We also introduce the (permanent) notations $E = \langle S_u, S_u \rangle$, $F = \langle S_u, S_v \rangle$ and $G = \langle S_v, S_v \rangle$

The quantities (functions of u & v) E, F, G are of interest because

they specify the "geometry of S ": in particular, if $\gamma(t) = (u(t), v(t))$ is a curve in U , then the arclength of the curve $S(\gamma(t))$ in \mathbb{R}^3 is

given by
$$\int \sqrt{E \left(\frac{du(t)}{dt} \right)^2 + 2F \left(\frac{du(t)}{dt}, \frac{dv(t)}{dt} \right) + G \left(\frac{dv(t)}{dt} \right)^2}$$

since the tangent vector of $S(\gamma(t))$ is (by the

Chain Rule) $\vec{S}_u \frac{du(t)}{dt} + \vec{S}_v \frac{dv(t)}{dt}$ (or, putting

the numbers in front of the vectors to be more conventional,

$$\frac{du(t)}{dt} \vec{S}_u + \frac{dv(t)}{dt} \vec{S}_v).$$

Example: Consider the patch $S(r, \theta)$, $0 < r < \pi$, $-\pi < \theta < \pi$, $S(r, \theta) = (\sin r \cos \theta, \sin r \sin \theta, \cos r)$.

Note that this is (part of a) sphere, namely, the sphere of radius 1 around $\vec{0}$ because

$$(\sin r \cos \theta)^2 + (\sin r \sin \theta)^2 + \cos^2 r = \sin^2 r (\cos^2 \theta + \sin^2 \theta) + \cos^2 r = 1.$$

We compute E , F , and G for this patch.

$$S_r = (\cos r \cos \theta, \cos r \sin \theta, -\sin r)$$

$$S_\theta = (-\sin r \sin \theta, \sin r \cos \theta, 0)$$

$$S_0 \quad E = \langle S_r, S_r \rangle = \cos^2 r \cos^2 \theta + \cos^2 r \sin^2 \theta + (\sin r)^2 = 1$$

$$F = \langle S_r, S_\theta \rangle = -\cos r \sin r \cos \theta \sin \theta + \cos r \sin r \sin \theta \cos \theta = 0$$

$$G = \langle S_\theta, S_\theta \rangle = (-\sin r \sin \theta)^2 + (\sin r \cos \theta)^2 = (\sin^2 r) (\sin^2 \theta + \cos^2 \theta) = \sin^2 r.$$

Let's compute L_{11} , L_{12} , and L_{22} also:

Since $N = (\sin r \cos \theta, \sin r \sin \theta, \cos r)$ (Normal = 5
position vector
for sphere, or
compute $S_r \times S_\theta / \| \cdot \|$)

$$L_{11} = - \langle S_{rr}, N \rangle$$

$$= - \langle \frac{\partial}{\partial r} (\cos r \cos \theta, \cos r \sin \theta, -\sin r), N \rangle$$

$$= \langle (-\sin r \cos \theta, -\sin r \sin \theta, -\cos r), (\sin r \cos \theta, \sin r \sin \theta, \cos r) \rangle$$

$$= +1.$$

Similarly, $L_{12} = - \langle S_{r\theta}, N \rangle = \langle (-\cos r \sin \theta, \cos r \cos \theta, 0), N \rangle$

$$= 0 \quad \text{and} \quad L_{22} = - \langle S_{\theta\theta}, N \rangle = \langle (-\sin r \cos \theta, -\sin r \sin \theta, 0), N \rangle$$

$$= +\sin^2 r.$$

We shall see later that there is some serious geometric meaning to the fact that $(L_{11}L_{22} - L_{12}^2) / (EG - F^2) = 1!$

Returning now to general considerations and recalling our "tangent part" notation $T(\cdot)$, we want to establish a remarkable fact first observed by Gauss: the "tangent parts" $T(S_{uu})$, $T(S_{uv})$ and $T(S_{vv})$ can be computed from E , F , and G (and their derivatives). Let us try $T(S_{uu})$ first.

Now $\langle T(S_{uu}), S_u \rangle = \langle S_{uu}, u \rangle$ since $\langle N(S_{uu}), S_u \rangle = 0$

and of course $S_{uu} = T(S_{uu}) + N(S_{uu})$ where $N =$

the normal part as before. But $\langle S_{uu}, S_u \rangle$

$$= \frac{1}{2} \frac{\partial}{\partial u} \langle S_u, S_u \rangle = \frac{1}{2} \frac{\partial E}{\partial u} = \frac{1}{2} E_u, \text{ the latter}$$

equality being ^{just} a convenient notation now.

What about $\langle S_{uu}, S_v \rangle = \langle T(S_{uu}), S_v \rangle$?

$$\langle S_{uu}, S_v \rangle = \frac{1}{2} \left(2 \frac{\partial}{\partial u} \langle S_u, S_v \rangle - \frac{\partial}{\partial v} \langle S_u, S_u \rangle \right)$$

To Check: $2 \frac{\partial}{\partial u} \langle S_u, S_v \rangle = 2 \langle S_{uu}, S_v \rangle + 2 \langle S_u, S_{uv} \rangle$

$$\frac{\partial}{\partial v} \langle S_u, S_u \rangle = 2 \langle S_u, S_{uv} \rangle. \text{ So works.}$$

$$\text{So } \left. \begin{aligned} \langle S_{uu}, S_u \rangle &= \frac{1}{2} E_u \\ \langle S_{uu}, S_v \rangle &= F_u - \frac{1}{2} E_v. \end{aligned} \right\} (*) \quad 6$$

From this, we can compute $T(S_{uu})$ by linear algebra (of a simple kind: two equations in two unknowns!)

Namely, suppose, as must be true, that

$$T(S_{uu}) = a S_u + b S_v \quad \text{for some } a, b \text{ } \mathbb{R}\text{-valued.}$$

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Then } \langle S_{uu}, S_u \rangle &= a \langle S_u, S_u \rangle + b \langle S_u, S_v \rangle \\ &= aE + bF \end{aligned}$$

$$\text{and } \langle S_{uu}, S_v \rangle = aF + bG.$$

$$\text{Then } aE + bF = \frac{1}{2} E_u \quad \text{and} \quad aF + bG = F_u - \frac{1}{2} E_v.$$

We can solve these for a and b (in terms of E, F, G and their derivatives) because $\begin{pmatrix} E & F \\ F & G \end{pmatrix}$ is an invertible matrix. And why is $\begin{pmatrix} E & F \\ F & G \end{pmatrix}$

invertible? Because $EG - F^2 > 0$ by the Cauchy Schwarz Inequality! (since S_u and S_v are linearly independent).

The corresponding $\frac{\partial}{\partial u}$ items for S_{uv} and S_{vv} are

$$\langle S_{uv}, S_u \rangle = \frac{1}{2} \left(\frac{\partial}{\partial v} \langle S_u, S_u \rangle \right) = \frac{1}{2} E_v$$

$$\langle S_{uv}, S_v \rangle = \frac{1}{2} \frac{\partial}{\partial u} \langle S_v, S_v \rangle = \frac{1}{2} G_u$$

$$\langle S_{vv}, S_u \rangle = F_v - \frac{1}{2} G_u$$

$$\langle S_{vv}, S_v \rangle = \frac{1}{2} G_v$$

So, if, following Gauss, we call items "intrinsic" ⁽⁷⁾ if they can be computed from E, F, G and their derivatives (of any orders), then we have shown that $T(S_{uu}), T(S_{uv}),$ and $T(S_{vv})$ are intrinsic

Continuing our spherical patch $S(r, \theta) = (\sin r \cos \theta, \sin r \sin \theta, \cos r)$; example, let us compute $T(S_{\theta\theta})$ "intrinsically":

$$\langle T(S_{\theta\theta}), S_\theta \rangle = \frac{1}{2} \frac{\partial}{\partial \theta} \langle S_\theta, S_\theta \rangle = \frac{1}{2} \frac{\partial}{\partial \theta} (\sin^2 r) = 0$$

$$\begin{aligned} \langle T(S_{\theta\theta}), S_r \rangle &= \frac{1}{2} \left(2 \frac{\partial}{\partial \theta} \langle S_\theta, S_r \rangle - \frac{\partial}{\partial r} \langle S_\theta, S_\theta \rangle \right) \\ &= \frac{1}{2} \left(0 - \frac{\partial}{\partial r} \sin^2 r \right) = -\sin r \cos r \end{aligned}$$

Since $T(S_{\theta\theta}) = a S_r + b S_\theta$ necessarily for some a, b ,

$$\langle T(S_{\theta\theta}), S_r \rangle = a = -\sin r \cos r, \quad \langle T(S_{\theta\theta}), S_\theta \rangle = 0 = b \sin^2 r$$

$$\text{So } T(S_{\theta\theta}) = -\sin r \cos r S_r.$$

you can check this directly: $S_{\theta\theta} = (-\sin r \cos \theta, -\sin r \sin \theta, 0)$

$\Rightarrow \langle S_{\theta\theta}, N \rangle = -\sin^2 r$. So normal part of $S_{\theta\theta} = (-\sin^2 r) N$

$$T(S_{\theta\theta}) = S_{\theta\theta} - \text{normal part}$$

$$= (-\sin r \cos \theta, -\sin r \sin \theta, 0) + \sin^2 r (\sin r \cos \theta, \sin r \sin \theta, \cos r)$$

$$= (\sin r \underbrace{(-1 + \sin^2 r)}_{\cos^2} \cos \theta, \sin r \underbrace{(-1 + \sin^2 r)}_{\cos^2} \sin \theta, \cos r \sin^2 r)$$

$$= (-\sin r \cos r) (\cos r \cos \theta, \cos r \sin \theta, -\sin r)$$

$$= (-\sin r \cos r) S_r \text{ as we found intrinsically!}$$

Returning to generalities:

We all know examples of surfaces that are not pieces of a plane and so are curved in that sense, but that are not curved intrinsically: just think of a piece of paper made ^{by bending} into a half-cylinder. Intrinsically, it is still a piece of \mathbb{R}^2 : flat, uncurved — the making it cylindrical did not change the length of curves on it. We can make this explicit: set $S(u, v) = (u, \cos v, \sin v)$ $-\infty < u < +\infty$, $-\frac{\pi}{2} < v < \frac{\pi}{2}$, for example. Then $S_u = (1, 0, 0)$, $S_v = (0, -\sin v, \cos v)$. So $E = 1$, $F = 0$, $G = 1$, the same E , F , and G as for the "planar embedding" $(u, v) \rightarrow (u, v, 0)$.

On the other hand, intuitively it seems that the sphere is curved intrinsically: we ought to be able to compute just in terms of E , F , and G that it is not like a plane. (Otherwise, we could make distance-perfect maps of at least pieces of the earth's surface, and we all have the feeling from experience that this doesn't work: we cannot flatten a piece of paper on a basketball without crumpling it some).

To see how to try to identify "intrinsic" curvature, in this intuitive sense (we'll make this precise soon), let us look first at another example:

Let $S(u, v) = (u, v, f(u, v))$ where $f(0, 0) = 0$ and $f_u(0, 0) = 0 = f_v(0, 0)$. Actually, any surface can be written like this if you translate it and rotate it (Exercise for you).

Then $S_u = (1, 0, f_u)$, $S_v = (0, 1, f_v)$, $N(0, 0) = (0, 0, 1)$, $L_{11} = -\langle S_{uu}, N \rangle$ so

$L_{11}(0, 0) = -\langle (0, 0, f_{uu}), (0, 0, 1) \rangle = -f_{uu}$
 $L_{12}(0, 0) = -\langle (0, 0, f_{uv}), (0, 0, 1) \rangle = -f_{uv}$

$L_{22}(0, 0) = -\langle (0, 0, f_{vv}), (0, 0, 1) \rangle = -f_{vv}$
 $E = (1 + f_u^2)$, $F = f_u f_v$, $G = (1 + f_v^2)$. So

at $(0, 0)$, $E=1, F=0, G=1$ and all first derivatives of E, F, G vanish (at $(0, 0)$). So we can see that S is not part of a plane at $(0, 0)$ if some second derivative of f at $(0, 0)$ is nonzero by looking at the

L_{ij} (normal parts of S_{ij}). But we cannot see that S is curved from looking at the tangent parts of S_{ij} items — two derivatives — $T(S_{uu})$ etc. — at $(0, 0)$, even if f does have some nonzero second derivatives. Thinking about this for a while suggests that to see "intrinsic curvature" — assuming it exists (!) — we ought to look at third order S derivatives: things like S_{uvu} and so on. We need this motivating example because things are about to get a little messy computationally. But we have nowhere else to go, as the example shows.

Gauss had a lot of determination, and eventually he figured out that he could get somewhere with this third derivative business. Here is one way it can be made to work: Let's start off by noticing that $(S_{uv})_u = (S_{uu})_v$. This is just an aspect of equality of mixed partials. So (this is just what works!)

$$\langle (S_{uv})_u, S_v \rangle = \langle (S_{uu})_v, S_v \rangle. \text{ Now}$$

$$\langle (S_{uv})_u, S_v \rangle = \frac{\partial}{\partial u} \langle S_{uv}, S_v \rangle - \langle S_{uv}, S_{uv} \rangle$$

$$= \frac{\partial}{\partial u} \langle S_{uv}, S_v \rangle - \langle T(S_{uv}), T(S_{uv}) \rangle - \langle N(S_{uv}), N(S_{uv}) \rangle$$

since $\langle S_{uv}, S_{uv} \rangle = \langle T(S_{uv}) + N(S_{uv}), T(S_{uv}) + N(S_{uv}) \rangle$
and the mixed N & T terms give 0.

Similarly

$$\langle (S_{uv})_v, S_u \rangle = \frac{\partial}{\partial v} \langle S_{uv}, S_u \rangle - \langle S_{uv}, S_{uv} \rangle$$

$$= \frac{\partial}{\partial v} \langle S_{uv}, S_u \rangle - \langle T(S_{uv}), T(S_{uv}) \rangle - \langle N(S_{uv}), N(S_{uv}) \rangle$$

Now $\langle N(S_{uv}), N(S_{uv}) \rangle = L_{12}^2$ while $\langle N(S_{uu}), N(S_{vv}) \rangle = L_{11}L_{22}$

Since $\langle (S_{uv})_u, S_v \rangle - \langle (S_{uv})_v, S_u \rangle = 0$,
combining all this we get

$$L_{11}L_{22} - L_{12}^2 = -\frac{\partial}{\partial u} \langle S_{uv}, S_v \rangle + \langle T(S_{uv}), T(S_{uv}) \rangle$$

$$+ \frac{\partial}{\partial v} \langle S_{uv}, S_u \rangle - \langle T(S_{uv}), T(S_{uv}) \rangle$$

Why is this interesting? Because the right hand side is intrinsic(!) since $\langle S_{uu}, S_v \rangle = \langle T(S_{uu}), S_v \rangle$
and $\langle S_{uv}, S_v \rangle = \langle T(S_{uv}), S_u \rangle$ are, and so are the other two terms

This is already impressive. But, while the right hand side is intrinsic in the sense of being computable in terms of E, F and G and their derivatives with respect to u and v , the right-hand side (and hence the left-hand side) does depend on the choice of "coordinates" u and v . For example, if we doubled u and v , then the right-hand side would be multiplied by 16.

What we would like most of all is something that is not only ~~intrinsic~~ intrinsic but also "invariant" — independent of choice of u and v , too, unchanging under reparameterization. Such an item lies close at hand:

Definition/Lemma: $(L_{11}L_{22} - L_{12}^2) / (EG - F^2)$ a number!
is called the Gauss curvature: it is intrinsic and coordinate-choice independent, depending only on the chosen point of the surface.

Proof the Lemma part: We have disposed of the "intrinsic" part. To get the "invariant" part, suppose \hat{u}, \hat{v} are another coordinate system at the same point.

Then N and \hat{N} are the same (up to \pm : by interchanging \hat{u} and \hat{v} , which leaves the $(L_{11}L_{22} - L_{12}^2) / (EG - F^2)$ item unchanged, we can assume $N = +\hat{N}$). Then

since $\hat{L}_{11} = -\langle S_{\hat{u}\hat{u}} \hat{N} \rangle = \langle S_{\hat{u}\hat{u}}, N_{\hat{u}} \rangle$ 12

and similarly for \hat{L}_{12} , \hat{L}_{22} we get from the

Chain Rule:

$$\hat{L}_{11} = \left\langle S_u \frac{\partial u}{\partial \hat{u}} + S_v \frac{\partial v}{\partial \hat{u}}, N_u \frac{\partial u}{\partial \hat{u}} + N_v \frac{\partial v}{\partial \hat{u}} \right\rangle$$

$$= \left(\frac{\partial u}{\partial \hat{u}} \right)^2 L_{11} + 2 \frac{\partial v}{\partial \hat{u}} \frac{\partial u}{\partial \hat{u}} L_{12} + \left(\frac{\partial v}{\partial \hat{u}} \right)^2 L_{22}$$

and similar formulas for \hat{L}_{12} and \hat{L}_{22} . Tedious but routine calculation gives

$$\hat{L}_{11} \hat{L}_{22} - \hat{L}_{12}^2 = (L_{11} L_{22} - L_{12}^2) \left(\left(\frac{\partial u}{\partial \hat{u}} \right) \left(\frac{\partial v}{\partial \hat{v}} \right) - \left(\frac{\partial u}{\partial \hat{v}} \right) \left(\frac{\partial v}{\partial \hat{u}} \right) \right)^2$$

A similar calculation gives

$$\hat{E} \hat{G} - \hat{F}^2 = (EG - F^2) \left(\left(\frac{\partial u}{\partial \hat{u}} \right) \left(\frac{\partial v}{\partial \hat{v}} \right) - \left(\frac{\partial u}{\partial \hat{v}} \right) \left(\frac{\partial v}{\partial \hat{u}} \right) \right)^2$$

So $L_{11} L_{22} - L_{12}^2 / EG - F^2$ is "invariant".

This "tedious but routine calculation" may seem at first glance mysterious as to motivation. But it all becomes clear expressed in terms of linear algebra of quadratic forms: Think of $\begin{pmatrix} L_{11} & L_{12} \\ L_{12} & L_{22} \end{pmatrix}$ transforming

under "change of basis": \hat{L} as a matrix one side multiplied on ~~the left~~ by the Jacobian

$\begin{pmatrix} \frac{\partial u}{\partial \hat{u}} & \frac{\partial u}{\partial \hat{v}} \\ \frac{\partial v}{\partial \hat{u}} & \frac{\partial v}{\partial \hat{v}} \end{pmatrix}$ and on the other by its transpose.

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Then } \det(\text{the } \hat{L} \text{ matrix}) &= \det(\text{Jacobian}) \det(\text{Jacobian}^{\text{transpose}}) \\ &= (\det(\text{Jacobian}))^2 \det(L \text{ matrix}) \end{aligned}$$

The proof that the Gauss curvature was both intrinsic and coordinate-choice-independent was complicated. But in practice, the calculation of Gauss curvature is usually easy. In particular, if you go back to the $(u, v, f(u, v))$ example we talked about before, the calculation is very simple: Recall that we were looking at the case where $f(0, 0) = 0$

and $f_u(0, 0) = f_v(0, 0) = 0$. In this situation we found $L_{11} = -f_{uu}$, $L_{12} = -f_{uv}$, and $L_{22} = -f_{vv}$.

So the Gauss curvature at $(0, 0) = f_{uu}f_{vv} - f_{uv}^2$. In words, the Gauss curvature = the Hessian determinant of f . (This is the same item that turned up in two variable maximum/minimum problems).

So Gauss curvature $> 0 \Rightarrow$ locally the surface is on one side of its tangent plane

Gauss curvature $< 0 \Rightarrow$ locally the surface is partly on one side, partly on the other

and for Gauss curvature 0 the situation is not determined and has to be examined on a case-by-case basis. This is in effect the same result one had

for the max/min problems:

Hessian determinant $> 0 \Rightarrow$ local max or min (local)

Hessian determinant $< 0 \Rightarrow$ "saddle point", neither local max nor local min

Hessian determinant $= 0 \Rightarrow$ situation not determined,