Effective Methods for Human-Robot-Environment Interaction by means of Haptic Robotics

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A thesis submitted for the fulfilment for the degree of DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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March 2012
Declaration of Authorship

I, Pholchai Chotiprayanakul, certify that the thesis titled, “Effective Methods for Human-Robot-Environment Interaction by means of Haptic Robotics” and the work presented in this thesis are my own. I confirm that:

- This work was done while in candidature for the degree of doctor of philosophy at the University of Technology, Sydney.
- This thesis has not previously been submitted for a degree or any other qualification at any other institution.
- The thesis is based on work done by myself and where I have consulted the published work of others, this is always clearly attributed.
- All information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

Signed:

Date: 21/03/12
Abstract

Industrial robots have been widely used to perform well-defined repetitive tasks in carefully constructed simple environments such as manufacturing factories. The futuristic vision of industrial robots is to operate in complex, unstructured and unknown (or partially known) environments, to assist human workers in undertaking hazardous tasks such as sandblasting in steel bridge maintenance. Autonomous operation of industrial robots in such environments is ideal, but semi-autonomous or manual operation with human interaction is a practical solution because it utilises human intelligence and experience combined with the power and accuracy of an industrial robot. To achieve the human interaction operation, there are several challenges that need to be addressed: environmental awareness, effective robot-environment interaction and human-robot interaction.

This thesis aims to develop methodologies that enable natural and efficient Human-Robot-Environment Interaction (HREI) and apply them in a steel bridge maintenance robotic system. Three research issues are addressed: Robot-Environment-Interaction (REI), haptic device and robot interface and intuitive human-robot interaction.

To enable efficient robot-environment interaction, a potential field-based Virtual Force Field (VF²) approach has been investigated. The VF² approach includes an Attractive Force (AF) method and a force control algorithm for robot motion control, and a 3D Virtual Force Field (3D-VF²) method for real-time collision avoidance. Results obtained from simulation, experiments in a laboratory setup and field test have verified and validated these methods.

A haptic device-robot interface has been developed for providing intuitive human-robot interaction. Haptic devices are normally small compared to industrial robots. Thus, the workspace of a haptic device is much smaller than the workspace of a big industrial manipulator. A novel workspace mapping method, which includes drifting control, scaling control and edge motion control, has been investigated for mapping a
small haptic workspace to the large workspace of manipulator with the aim of providing natural kinesthetic feedback to an operator and smooth control of robot operation. A haptic force control approach has also been studied for transferring the virtual contact force (between the robot and the environment) and the inertia of the manipulator to the operator's hand through a force feedback function.

Human factors have significant effect on the performance of haptic-based human-robot interaction. An eXtended Hand Movement (XHM) model for eye-guided hand movement has been investigated in this thesis with the aim of providing natural and comfortable interaction between a human operator and a robot, and improving the operational performance. The model has been studied for increasing the speed of the manipulator while maintaining the control accuracy. This model is applied into a robotic system and it has been verified by various experiments.

These theoretical methods and algorithms have been successfully implemented in a steel bridge maintenance robotic system, and tested in both laboratory and a bridge maintenance site located in Sydney.
Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my supervisor Professor Dikai Liu for his great effort and time to advise and assist me throughout my candidature years. I also would like to thank my co-supervisor Professor Gamini Dissanayake for his support through my study. Without they support this thesis would not have been possible.

I would like to thank all my friends and colleagues at the ARC Centre of Excellence for Autonomous Systems (CAS), especially DalongWang, Ngai Ming Kwok, and Stephen Webb for their helpful comments and support. Special thanks to Gavin Paul, who gave a lot of helpful suggestions on improving the thesis.

Thanks to everyone at the Department of Industrial Engineering at King Mongkut’s Institute of Technology Ladkrabang, especially Associate Professor Pornsak Auttavanich, Assistant Professor Sunpasit Limnorarath, and Associate Professor Rattikorn Varakulsiripun for giving me the best opportunity of my life.

Thanks to my sponsor, Ministry of Science and Thai Government for the scholarship and the Office of the Civil Service Commission (OCSC) and the Office of Educational Affairs in Australia for look after me all years long of study.

Special thanks to my mum, my dad, and my family who have always supported and believed in me. Thanks to my wife “Sasima” and my daughter “Sasicha” for always be by my side and make me smile.
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Nomenclature

General Formatting Style

\( f(...) \) A scalar valued function
\( f(...) \) A vector function
\( F(...) \) A matrix function
\{\ldots\} A set of \ldots
\([\ldots]^T\) Transpose
\(|\ldots|\) Absolute value
\(\|\ldots\|\) Vector length

\( \text{minmin}\{\ldots\} \) The objective function of two parameters minimization

\( \prod\ldots \) Product sign

\( x \) A scalar variable - lower case and italic
\( X \) A scalar variable - upper case and italic
\( x \) A vector or a single-dimensional matrix - lower case and bold
\( X \) A matrix or a set - upper case and bold

\( P(Z \leq a) \) Cumulative probability function
\( P(Z \geq a) \) Complementary cumulative probability function
\( P(b \leq Z \leq a) \) Cumulative point-to-point probability function

General Referencing with Subscript and Superscript

\( x \) A scalar variable

- Front superscript is reference coordinate
- Rear subscript is transforming coordinate

\( x \)  
A scalar variable

- Front superscript is reference coordinate
- Rear first subscript is numerical index, customized abbreviation or description
- Rear second subscript is transforming coordinate

\( X \) or \( x \)  
A matrix

- Front superscript is reference coordinate
- Rear subscript is transforming coordinate

\( X \) or \( x \)  
A matrix

- Front superscript is reference coordinate
- Rear first subscript is numerical index, customized abbreviation or description
- Rear second subscript is transforming coordinate

\( X \)  
A set (does not have front superscript)

- Rear first subscript is customized abbreviation or description
- Rear second subscript is index of set’s member

Local and Global Variables

\( i,j \)  
Index of a set or to refer to a count

\( x,y,z \)  
Axes of Cartesian coordinate

\( \mathbb{R}^3 \)  
3DOF Cartesian space

\( \mathbb{R}^6 \)  
6DOF Cartesian space

\( \mathbb{R}^7 \)  
7DOF manipulator’s joint space

Specific Symbol Usage
A homogeneous transformation matrix (4 by 4)

A rotation matrix (3 by 3)

A directional vector or a normal vector (3 by 1)

A position vector (3 by 1)

A configuration vector (6 by 1), a combination of $\begin{bmatrix} \mathbf{n} & \mathbf{p} \end{bmatrix}$

components of $\mathbf{n}$

components of $\mathbf{p}$

A 6DOF spatial force

A 3DOF linear force, a component of $\mathbf{F}$

A 3DOF angular moment, a component of $\mathbf{F}$

scalar components of $\mathbf{f}$

scalar components of $\mathbf{\sigma}$

A joint position matrix (7 by 1)

A position of joint $i$, a component in $\mathbf{q}$

- joint 1 to 6 are angle (degree)

- joint 7 is length (m)

Mass-inertia matrix of the robot links

Damping coefficient matrix of the robot joints

Stiffness coefficient matrix of the robot joints

A torque-force matrix defining in joint space (7 by 1)

Joint torque-force of a joint $i$, a component in $\mathbf{\Gamma}$

- joint 1 to 6 are torque (N.m)

- joint 7 is linear force (N)

Attractive torque-force matrix

Repulsive torque-force matrix on a link in joint $i$ coordinate
${}^0\mathbf{P}_e$  
Configuration of the end-effector of a manipulator

${}^0\mathbf{n}_e$  
A component of ${}^0\mathbf{P}_e$

${}^0\mathbf{p}_e$  
A component of ${}^0\mathbf{P}_e$

${}^0\mathbf{P}_t$  
Configuration of target/attractive point for the manipulator's end-effector

${}^0\mathbf{n}_t$  
A component of ${}^0\mathbf{P}_t$

${}^0\mathbf{p}_t$  
A component of ${}^0\mathbf{P}_t$

$\mathbf{F}_{\text{att}}$  
A 6DOF spatial attractive force for the manipulator's end-effector

$f_{\text{att}}$  
A 3DOF attractive force (linear force), a component of $\mathbf{F}_{\text{att}}$

$\sigma_{\text{att}}$  
A 3DOF attractive moment (angular moment), a component of $\mathbf{F}_{\text{att}}$

$f_{\text{att}x}, f_{\text{att}y}, f_{\text{att}z}$  
components of $f_{\text{att}}$

$\sigma_{\text{att}x}, \sigma_{\text{att}y}, \sigma_{\text{att}z}$  
components of $\sigma_{\text{att}}$

$K_{\text{att}1}$  
Coefficient of a linear attractive force's amplitude

$K_{\text{att}2}$  
Coefficient of an angular attractive moment's amplitude

$\varepsilon_0$  
A small non-zero positive constant (in this research $\varepsilon_0 = 0.0001$)

$K_{ax}$  
A constant for defining a transient state of the attractive force

$\delta_a$  
Attractive force function

$\mathbf{P}_{ob}$  
Obstacle point cloud set

${}^0\mathbf{p}_{ob_i}$  
The $i^{th}$ member in the obstacle point cloud set

$m$  
Number of points in the obstacle point cloud set

$D_{\text{min}}$  
in inner force field

$D_{\text{max}}$  
outer force field

$Er$  
distance between $D_{\text{min}}$ and $D_{\text{max}}$

$r_c$  
The radius of $D_{\text{min}}$

${}^0\mathbf{p}_{1_i}$  
Ending point 1 of the centre line of a link in joint $i$ coordinate
0\text{p}_2 \quad \text{Ending point 2 of the centre line of a link in joint } i \text{ coordinate} \\
0\text{p}_3 \quad \text{The nearest point on the centre line of a link on joint } i \text{ coordinate} \\
u \quad \text{A parameter of a centre line of a link function for defining } 0\text{p}_3, \\
0\text{p}_{obs} \quad \text{The point in the point cloud set that is the closest point to a manipulator link at } 0\text{p}_3, \\
ds_i \quad \text{The shortest distance measured from } 0\text{p}_{obs} \text{ to } 0\text{p}_3, \\
d_0 \quad \text{The shortest distance from the point } 0\text{p}_{obs} \text{ to the surface of } D_{\text{min}} \\
\textbf{F}_{\text{rep}_i} \quad \text{A spatial repulsive force on a link of a manipulator in joint } i \text{ coordinate} \\
\textbf{f}_{\text{rep}_i} \quad \text{A repulsive force on a link of a manipulator in joint } i \text{ coordinate, a component of } \textbf{F}_{\text{rep}_i} \\
f_{\text{rep}_x}, f_{\text{rep}_y}, f_{\text{rep}_z} \quad \text{components of } \textbf{f}_{\text{rep}_i} \\
\delta_r \quad \text{Repulsive force function} \\
K_f \quad \text{A coefficient of the amplitude of a repulsive force} \\
\textbf{H}_i \quad \text{Force transformation matrix in joint } i \text{ coordinate} \\
0\text{p}_f \quad \text{Position vector of a force} \\
h_j \quad j^{th} \text{ component of } \textbf{H} \\
\textbf{L}_i \quad \text{Configuration matrix of joint } i \text{ coordinate} \\
\textbf{M} \quad \text{A rotation skew-symmetric matrix (6 by 6)} \\
S(\Delta\textbf{p}) \quad \text{A skew-symmetric matrix (3 by 3)} \\
\Delta\textbf{p} \quad \text{A differential vector between } 0\text{p}_i \text{ and } 0\text{p}_f \\
\Delta\text{p}_x, \Delta\text{p}_y, \Delta\text{p}_z \quad \text{components of } \Delta\textbf{p} \\
\textbf{F}_h \quad \text{A haptic force} \\
k_{vir} \quad \text{Coefficient of virtual spring stiffness} \\
\text{xxiii}
\( \mathbf{0} \mathbf{p}_a \) Position vector of the haptic cursor on the world coordinate

\( \mathbf{0} \mathbf{p}_h \) Position vector of the haptic cursor on the haptic workspace coordinate

\( \mathbf{0} \mathbf{p}_w \) Position vector of the haptic workspace origin on the world coordinate

\( \mathbf{0} \mathbf{p}_h \) Velocity vector of the haptic cursor on the haptic workspace coordinate

\( \mathbf{0} \mathbf{p}_w \) Drifting velocity of the haptic workspace origin on the world coordinate

\( k_c \) Workspace scaling coefficient

\( \dot{k}_c \) Workspace scaling rate (first order differentiate)

\( k_{sp} \) Positive scaling rate of scaling control

\( k_{sn} \) Negative scaling rate of scaling control

\( k_{dp} \) The positive drifting rate of drifting control

\( k_{em} \) Drifting rate of edge motion control

\( v_{hs} \) Haptic cursor speed threshold

\( k_e \) Elasticity coefficient of a 3D-VF\(^2\) (virtual skin)

\( \mu_{cap} \) Energy absorbability of a 3D-VF\(^2\)

\( \mu_m \) Potential energy from the attractive force

\( \varphi \) Probability density

\( O_{acc} \) Pointing accuracy

\( Z_{ac} \) Coefficient of the pointing accuracy

\( \sigma \) Standard deviation of robot end-effector in a pointing task

\( \sigma^2 \) Variance of robot end-effector in a pointing task

\( IP \) Index of Performance

\( \emptyset \) Path-track width

\( \emptyset_{obj} \) Dimension of a task plane

\( \emptyset_{scn} \) Dimension of a computer screen

\( d_r \) A view distance between a camera screen and an object plane
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symbol</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$\alpha_e$</td>
<td>A camera's field of view</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$G_e$</td>
<td>A control display scale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$G_h$</td>
<td>A control movement scale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$G_s$</td>
<td>A control scale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$MT$</td>
<td>Hand movement time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$a$</td>
<td>Operator's start/stop movement time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$b$</td>
<td>Operator's hand movement speed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$v_a$</td>
<td>A haptic cursor speed from hand movement model</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$k_{pw}$</td>
<td>Coefficient of power expense in haptic interface</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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