Direct Extraction of High-Quality and Feature-Preserving Triangle Meshes from Signed Distance Functions

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Abstract

With advancements in geometric deep learning techniques, neural signed distance functions (SDFs) have gained popularity for their flexibility. Recent studies show that neural SDFs can retain geometric details and encode sharp features. However, during the mesh extraction stage, methods like marching cubes may degrade these geometric details and sharp features, thus compromising the expressiveness of neural SDFs.

In this paper, we aim to develop a general-purpose mesh extraction method for both freeform and CAD models, assuming the availability of a SDF. Our goal is to produce a well-triangulated, resolution-adjustable mesh surface that preserves rich geometric details and distinct feature lines. Our approach is inspired by Centroidal Voronoi Tessellation (CVT) but introduces two key modifications. First, we extend CVT computation to implicit representations, where explicit surface decomposition is not available. Second, we propose a measure for estimating the likelihood that a point lies on feature lines, enabling the extraction of feature-aligned triangle meshes using power diagrams (with site weights positively correlated to the likelihood values). Comprehensive comparisons with state-of-the-art methods demonstrate the superiority of our approach in both feature alignment and triangulation quality.

Keywords: centroidal Voronoi tessellation signed distance function power diagram mesh extraction feature alignment.

1. Introduction

The Signed Distance Function (SDF) is a form of implicit surface representation, where the zero level set defines the underlying surface. It plays a crucial role in various geometric processing tasks, such as surface reconstruction [23, 49], generative modeling [7, 21, 17], shape completion [5, 27], and differentiable rendering [25, 46, 31]. A typical inverse process involves first inferring the SDF of the underlying shape and then extracting a mesh using existing solvers, most commonly the marching cubes algorithm.

In recent years, advancements in geometric deep learning have made neural SDFs [30, 38, 9] an expressive and flexible representation for these tasks. However, when extracting mesh surfaces from a neural SDF, the marching cubes algorithm often fails to capture the full expressiveness of the neural SDF due to limitations like poor triangulation quality and misaligned feature lines. Even improved mesh extraction techniques like Dual Contouring (DC) struggle to maintain geometric details and preserve sharp feature lines. This highlights the need for better mesh extractors, especially for both freeform and CAD models, assuming a SDF is available.

In this paper, we propose a set of strategies to address the aforementioned challenges, assuming the base surface is represented by a SDF. Our approach builds on the concepts of CVT and QEM. First, we introduce a numerical scheme for performing the integration of the objective function at each step. The key operation is to quickly create an umbrella-shaped triangle set for each movable site to sufficiently approximate the implicit surface. Second, while the dual of CVT generates a triangle mesh surface, it does not inherently guarantee feature alignment (as discussed above). To address this, we assign weights to the movable points based on the likelihood of their being located on feature lines. These weights enable the dual of the resulting power diagram to better align with the feature lines.

Our contributions can be summarized as follows:

- 1. We develop a general-purpose mesh extractor for both freeform and CAD models, assuming the availability of a signed distance function (SDF). It is optimization-driven and simultaneously considers triangulation quality and feature alignment.
- Given the difficulty of decomposing an implicit surface using a Voronoi diagram, we propose a numerical integration scheme to estimate the objective function, which also supports running Centroidal Voronoi Tessellation (CVT) on implicit representations.
- 3. We transform the likelihood of a point being located on feature lines into a weight, enabling the extraction of a feature-aligned triangle mesh through power diagrams. Comprehensive comparisons with state-of-theart methods show that our approach retains rich geometric details and distinct feature lines, yielding highquality triangulations.

2. Related work

In this section, we review two categories of research works. The first category pertains to isosurface extraction from SDFs, while the second category focuses on mesh optimization that preserves features.

2.1. Isosurface Extraction

According to De Araújo et al. [8], we can further categorize the relevant methods for isosurface extraction into two groups: Spatial Decomposition and Surface Tracking.

Spatial Decomposition. This kind of approaches involves dividing the space into cells like cubes or tetrahe-

dra. While the Marching Cubes (MC) algorithm serves as a fundamental technique, it struggles with topological ambiguities and sharp feature representation. Several improvements have been introduced to address these issues through enhanced lookup tables, precise interpolation, and increasing vertex/edge counts. Techniques like Dual Contouring [18] place vertices on boundaries for accurate isosurfaces. while Dual Marching Cubes [28] combines methods for better accuracy. Additionally, with advancements in geometric deep learning, network-based methods have shown promising results. Approaches like Deep Marching Cubes (DMC) [22], MeshSDF [32], Neural Marching Cubes [3], and FlexiCubes [34] use neural networks to provide differentiable isosurfacing procedures. Another common strategy is to integrate isosurfacing into end-to-end deep learning pipelines for applications such as shape completion [5, 27], model generation [7, 21, 17], or single-view reconstruction [23, 49].

Surface Tracking. This approach directly extracts the surface without spatial subdivision, starting from an isosurface vertex and generating triangles that satisfy specific constraints. Marching Triangles [15, 16] extends triangle edges to create new vertices while maintaining Delaunay constraints, forming a mesh that covers the entire surface. Subsequent studies have explored triangulation adaptivity [2, 19] and feature preservation [26].

2.2. Mesh Optimization

In fact, the requirements for mesh generation essentially align with those for mesh extraction. Common criteria for evaluating mesh quality include accuracy, triangle quality, and feature alignment.

High-Quality Triangulation. By minimizing the Centroidal Voronoi Tessellation (CVT) energy [10], it is possible to achieve an even distribution of movable points on the surface. There is substantial literature on using CVT to generate high-quality mesh surfaces [36, 37]. A notable implementation is proposed in [24], where high-quality meshing is accomplished by combining Restricted Voronoi Diagrams (RVD) with L-BFGS optimization. Additionally, various CVT variants [35, 12, 44, 11, 39] aim to improve triangulations in specific scenarios. However, most of these methods encounter difficulties in aligning with features.

Feature Preserving. Several approaches [40, 43, 45, 48] begin by pre-detecting features and then perform remeshing to preserve them. For instance, VoroCrust [1] suggests placing points symmetrically along pre-detected feature lines. However, feature line detection is impractical for organic models, as identifying weak features is significantly more challenging than detecting strong ones. A more



Figure 1. Algorithm Overview. Our algorithm iteratively optimizes a set of movable sites on the implicit surface until convergence. It concludes by constructing a power diagram, yielding a well-triangulated, feature-aligned polygonal surface.

promising strategy involves ensuring that movable points naturally align with underlying features. Many existing algorithms leverage the inherent property of the Quadric Error Metric (QEM), which effectively captures strong features. For example, Valette et al. [37] utilized QEM to guide the placement of Voronoi vertices, ensuring feature alignment. Similarly, Chiang et al. [6] proposed mesh quality enhancement through quadric error-based mesh relaxation. Additionally, Gao et al. [14] extended Optimal Delaunay Triangulation (ODT) to surface meshes by solving a quadratic optimization problem. While recent works [29, 47, 41] have employed QEM to preserve sharp features, they cannot deal with implicit representations. Furthermore, weak feature preservation remains a challenge for QEM-based methods.

3. Overview

We formulate isosurface extraction as an energy minimization problem. Similar to CWF [42], our objective function consists of two terms: E_{CVT} and E_{QE} , where E_{CVT} measures vertex uniformity, and E_{QE} represents feature alignment. As shown in Figure 1, the optimization process begins with sampling the implicit surface. During each iteration, we construct the approximate Voronoi partition of the implicit surface and estimate the objective function. At convergence, we compute the likelihood of a point being located on feature lines and transform it into a weight, then extract the final polygonal surface by computing the power diagram.

4. Algorithm

In this section, we will elaborate on the technical details of our algorithm, including the objective function, Voronoi decomposition, numerical integration, and the construction of the power diagram.

4.1. Objective function

Like CWF, the objective function is defined as follows:

$$E(\{\mathbf{x}_i\}_{i=1}^N) = \lambda_{\text{CVT}} E_{\text{CVT}} + \lambda_{\text{QE}} E_{\text{QE}}$$

where $E_{\rm CVT}$ represents the energy of the Centroidal Voronoi Tessellation (CVT), and $E_{\rm QE}$ measures normal anisotropy. During optimization, $E_{\rm CVT}$ attracts each movable site towards the centroid of its corresponding cell, while $E_{\rm QE}$ encourages each site to align with nearby feature points or lines. The weights $\lambda_{\rm CVT}$ and $\lambda_{\rm OE}$ balance these two effects.

The objective function can be rewritten in the following form:

$$E(\{\mathbf{x}_i\}_{i=1}^N) = \sum_{i=1}^N \int_{\Omega_i} (\mathbf{x} - \mathbf{x}_i)^{\mathrm{T}} M(\mathbf{x} - \mathbf{x}_i) \, \mathrm{d}s_i$$

where the kernel matrix M is defined as:

$$M = \lambda_{\rm CVT} M_{\rm CVT} + \lambda_{\rm OE} M_{\rm OE}$$

More specifically,

$$M_{\rm QE} = \mathbf{n_x} \mathbf{n_x}^{\rm T}$$

and we simply set $M_{\rm CVT}$ to an identity matrix, which defines the Euclidean distance.

Gradient. The gradient of our objective function is [42]:

$$\nabla_{\mathbf{x}_i} E = \lambda_{\text{CVT}} \nabla_{\mathbf{x}_i} E_{\text{CVT}} + \lambda_{\text{QE}} \nabla_{\mathbf{x}_i} E_{\text{QE}}, \qquad (1)$$

where

$$\nabla_{\mathbf{x}_i} E_{\text{CVT}} = \int_{\Omega_i} -2M_{\text{CVT}}(\mathbf{x} - \mathbf{x}_i) \mathrm{d}s, \qquad (2)$$

and

$$\nabla_{\mathbf{x}_i} E_{\text{QE}} \approx \int_{\Omega_i} -2M_{\text{QE}}(\mathbf{x} - \mathbf{x}_i) \mathrm{d}s.$$
(3)

4.2. Decomposition and numerical integral

Suppose a set of movable points $\{\mathbf{x}_i\}_{i=1}^N$ determines a Voronoi diagram, where each site \mathbf{x}_i dominates a 3D convex polyhedral cell. We can traverse the edges of these cells to identify all intersections with the implicit surface. Generally, the intersections form a polygonal loop $v_1v_2\cdots v_k$ that approximately encloses the dominating region of \mathbf{x}_i . However, this polygonal cell does not adhere to the implicit surface.



Figure 2. In this example, the polygonal loop consists of 6 vertices (see the left figure). We add a central vertex (yellow) and 6 boundary vertices (blue); See the right figure. The resulting polygonal cell is more accurately adhering to the surface.

Adding k + 1 vertices. In the following, we will present a simple technique to quickly generate a more accurately adhering polygonal cell. Let $v_1v_2 \cdots v_k$ denote the polygonal loop (see Figure 2), where v_j represents the intersection between an edge of the cell and the implicit surface, and n_j is the normal vector of v_j 's tangent plane. The operation requires two steps. First, using the vertices v_1, v_2, \ldots, v_k and their corresponding normal vectors, we can predict a new vertex that best fits the surrounding planes, similar to the approach used in QEM. Second, we add a vertex between each pair of successive vertices v_j and v_{j+1} in a similar manner.

Least squares solution using the Moore-Penrose inverse.

As discussed in QEM method, the newly added vertices can be computed by solving a small-sized linear system. However, the coefficient matrix A may not be full rank, particularly when adding a vertex between a pair of successive vertices v_j and v_{j+1} . In this case, the solution is not unique, but we aim to find a position that is as close to $\frac{v_j+v_{j+1}}{2}$ as possible. Recall that the Moore-Penrose pseudo-inverse A^+ provides the minimum norm solution (closest to the origin). By reshaping Av = b into

$$A\left(v - \frac{v_j + v_{j+1}}{2}\right) = b - A\frac{v_j + v_{j+1}}{2}$$

we can obtain the least squares solution:

$$v = A^{+} \left(b - A \frac{v_j + v_{j+1}}{2} \right) + \frac{v_j + v_{j+1}}{2}.$$

Numerical integral. As mentioned above, we add k + 1 vertices, one of which is the central vertex. It is straightforward to divide the polygonal cell into 2k triangles, each rooted at the central vertex. As shown in Figure 2, the resulting polygonal representation better adheres to the surface. For computing the numerical integral, we use the Albrecht-Collatz quadrature over each triangle, which involves 6 points: 3 at the midpoints of the edges and 3 located inside the triangle.

4.3. Feature aligned mesh extraction

When the optimization terminates, some points are moved to feature lines while others are uniformly distributed elsewhere. According to CWF, the Delaunay triangulation among these points produces a feature-aligned polygonal surface. However, an occasional failure may occur where four sites—two (p_1, p_2) are located on the feature line and the other two (q_1, q_2) are on opposite sides. If these four sites share a common Voronoi vertex (also on the feature line), two possible triangulation configurations can result, each being a minimizer of our objective function. In fact, feature preservation is also violated if q_1 and q_2 share a common segment that aligns with the feature line. Consequently, connecting the movable sites based on the Voronoi diagram may lead to feature misalignment; See the inset figure.



Figure 3. Power diagram and its dual.

To measure how the site x_i is positioned relative to a feature point or line, we compute the difference between x_i 's normal and the normal vectors of the boundary curve:

$$W_{i} = \frac{\int_{\partial\Omega_{i}} \|\mathbf{x} - \mathbf{x}_{i}\|^{2} \left(1 - \left(\mathbf{n}_{\mathbf{x}}^{\mathrm{T}} \mathbf{n}_{\mathbf{x}_{i}}\right)^{2}\right) \mathrm{d}s}{\int_{\partial\Omega_{i}} \mathrm{d}s}.$$
 (4)



Figure 4. Comparison with state-of-the-art methods on the two CAD models.

It can be observed that when the cell is situated on a planar region, $W_i = 0$. Conversely, when the cell is located in a curved region, the use of squared distance in W_i aligns with the definition of power diagrams. Figure 3 illustrates that in the resulting power diagram, the feature-line sites control a larger region, making them more easily connectable.

5. Experimental Results and Evaluation

All of our experiments were conducted on a computer equipped with an AMD Ryzen 5995WX CPU and 128 GB of memory. The tests were performed on a total of 100 CAD models with distinct features, taken from the ABC dataset [20], and 21 organic models with weak features. For CAD models, we set the target vertex count to 2500, while for organic models, we set the target vertex count to 5000.

Evaluation Metrics. To assess triangle quality, we utilize the *TriangleQ* indicator [13], with a value closer to 1.0 indicating proximity to an equilateral triangle, i.e.,

$$TriangleQ(t) = \frac{6}{\sqrt{3}} \frac{S_t}{p_t h_t}$$
(5)

where S_t , p_t , and h_t represent the area, half-perimeter, and the longest edge length of the triangle t, respectively. Moreover, three indicators: *Chamfer Distance* (CD), *F-score* (F1), and *Normal Consistency* (NC) are employed to measure the difference between the extracted surface and the original version. In addition, *OpenB* represents the number of open mesh edges in the simplification result, and *NMV* denotes the number of non-manifold vertices. For CAD models, we employ *Edge Chamfer Distance* (ECD) and *Edge F-score* (EF1), proposed by NMC [3], to measure the extent to which the feature lines are preserved. **Parameters.** In our experiments, the same parameters are set for all the models in this paper, including CAD models and organic models. At the beginning of the optimization, we set $\lambda_{QE} = \lambda_{metric} = 1.0$, where λ_{QE} remains unchanged throughout the optimization, but λ_{metric} undergoes a decaying process. The L-BFGS solver is utilized to solve the optimization problem, where the termination condition is set by referring to the gradient norm, with a tolerance of $1e^{-8}$.

Table 1. Quantitative comparison on 100 CAD models, taken from the ABC dataset [20]. Each CAD model has strong features. The **best** scores are emphasized in bold with underlining, while the **second best** scores are highlighted only in bold.

	Resolution	MC	DC	NDC	NDCx	DMC	Flexicubes	RFS	Ours
	32	0.4310	0.1366	0.2463	0.2435	0.5519	2.7038	38.497	0.0855
$CD(\times 10^4)\downarrow$	64	0.2308	0.5048	0.1048	0.1051	0.2399	25.8899	27.2147	0.0855
	32	0.7610	0.8401	0.8614	0.8661	0.7101	0.3975	0.3583	0.9328
$F1\uparrow$	64	0.8830	0.8979	0.9303	0.9302	0.8716	0.4813	0.5656	0.9328
	32	0.9575	0.9833	0.9731	0.9746	0.9546	0.9335	0.8488	0.9873
$NC\uparrow$	64	0.9789	0.9842	0.9857	0.9865	0.9777	0.9242	0.8925	0.9873
	32	15.97	0.3123	0.3345	0.3237	21.32	0.6124	2.932	0.1431
$ECD(\times 10^2)\downarrow$	64	12.37	0.2013	0.1732	0.2193	21.96	1.837	2.998	0.1431
	32	0.0503	1.0000	0.3906	0.3974	0.0518	0.1590	0.0401	0.5665
$EF1 \uparrow$	64	0.1123	0.5547	0.5484	0.5514	0.0597	0.2886	0.0963	0.5665
	32	0.6373	0.5591	0.6668	0.6640	0.7033	0.6136	0.8241	0.8876
TriangleQ ↑	64	0.6520	0.6739	0.6772	0.6761	0.7046	0.6259	0.8253	0.8876
	32	0.2732	0.5400	0.2215	0.2201	0.3759	1.376	2.155	0.0328
$HD(\times 10^2)\downarrow$	64	0.1544	0.0989	0.1327	0.0716	0.1464	2.182	1.384	0.0328
	32	0	38	207	206	0	64	111	<u>0</u>
$OpenB\downarrow$	64	<u>0</u>	78	618	617	<u>0</u>	105	50	<u>0</u>
	32	10	41	67	65	6	42	1404	0
NMV	64	77	96	201	224	4	88	6626	ō

5.1. Comparison Methods

We compare our method with seven state-of-the-art (SOTA) methods: MC, DC, NDC, NDCx, DMC, Flexicude, and RFS. Marching Cubes (MC) [15] traverses voxel grids cube by cube, determining the surface based on vertex values and predetermined patterns. The resulting mesh vertices are guaranteed to lie on the voxel grid. Dual Contouring (DC) [18] transitions to a dual representation, extracting



Figure 5. Comparison with state-of-the-art methods on the bunny model and duck model.

Table 2. Quantitative comparison on 21 organic models with weak features.

	Resolution	MC	DC	NDC	NDCx	DMC	Flexicubes	RFS	Ours
	32	3.958	21.86	50.283	0.2151	4.309	2.646	92.28	0.0479
$CD(\times 10^4)\downarrow$	64	0.4352	2.877	73.045	53.54	0.4667	48.27	109.8	0.0479
	32	0.6236	0.2649	0.6379	0.7219	0.4358	0.6152	0.1910	0.9923
$F1\uparrow$	64	0.9350	0.5576	0.5713	0.6094	0.8591	0.7189	0.2717	0.9923
	32	0.9340	0.8804	0.8956	0.9314	0.9064	0.9458	0.8241	0.9855
$\mathbf{NC}\uparrow$	64	0.9724	0.9367	0.8974	0.8971	0.9620	0.9076	0.8374	0.9855
	32	0.0741	0.0347	0.0355	0.1045	0.0668	0.0479	0.0572	0.0193
$ECD(\times 10^2)\downarrow$	64	0.0370	0.0211	0.0508	0.0661	0.0356	0.0269	0.0747	0.0193
	32	0.3457	0.3456	0.4083	0.0000	0.3473	0.3402	0.3350	0.5294
$EF1 \uparrow$	64	0.3929	0.3662	0.3032	0.2489	0.3587	0.4248	0.2878	0.5294
	32	0.5853	0.4705	0.6683	0.6498	0.6966	0.6233	0.8018	0.8873
TriangleQ ↑	64	0.5919	0.5019	0.6800	0.6733	0.7074	0.6318	0.8428	0.8873
	32	1.283	1.943	1.986	1.995	1.120	0.7008	4.206	0.0698
$HD(\times 10^2)\downarrow$	64	0.2609	1.066	0.1023	2.297	0.2511	0.6113	4.432	0.0698
	32	0	289	5	3	0	24	631	0
$OpenB\downarrow$	64	0	504	6	5	0	25	919	0
	32	21	226	15	13	6	51	7062	<u>0</u>
$MV \downarrow$	64	14	645	14	12	4	74	9042	Ō

mesh vertices that typically locate within grid cells to more effectively capture sharp geometric features. Neural Dual Contouring (NDC) [4] replaces QEF solving with neural networks, enhancing the extraction quality from imperfect yet fixed scalar functions. NDCx is basically NDC with a more complex backbone network, which is slower than NDC but has better reconstruction accuracy. Dual Marching Cubes (DMC) [28] enhances the connectivity of the extracted mesh by extracting a mesh along the dual connectivity of the grid compared to Dual Contouring. Flexi-Cubes [34] adopt a specific Dual Marching Cubes formulation and introduce extra degrees of freedom to position each extracted vertex within its dual cell flexibly. In contrast to other methods, RFS [33] begins with a triangle mesh encompassing the surface and then shrinkwraps the underlying surface using a gradient flow to minimize an energy function.

We present the statistics of quantitative comparisons for the 100 CAD models and the 21 organic models with weak features in Table 1 and Table 2, and illustrate the qualitative comparisons in Fig 4 and Fig 5. In comparison with these methods, our approach simultaneously achieves the best performance in terms of accuracy, triangle quality, and feature alignment.

5.2. Comparsion with CWF.

The CWF[42] method can effectively preserve weak features during triangular mesh simplification and has a certain ability to recover features. Therefore, it is an intuitive idea to reconstruct the mesh by traditional reconstruction methods, and then simplify it while preserving features using CWF. However, the traditional RVD method used by CWF is sensitive to the number and quality of input meshes. Because the mesh extraction from SDFs always has an excessive number of triangles, CWF requires a considerable amount of time for intersection operations. Additionally, it may encounter non-manifold or self-intersecting situations, leading to algorithm failure. Therefore, our method based on direct SDF reconstruction is more efficient.

5.3. Using Trilinear Interpolation.

To further reduce the number of SDF evaluations, we can use trilinear interpolation instead of differentiable distance queries, although this may have a certain impact on the accuracy of our algorithm. We demonstrate this effect through two experiments. In one set, only the positions at the vertices of a regular grid are provided, while in the other set, we augment the fandisk model with additional normal information at each vertex. By comparing the visual results in Figure 6, we find that using trilinear interpolation can also yield good results. However, compared to differentiable distance queries, there is a potential risk of losing feature information.

5.4. Run-time Performance.

The run-time performance statistics are presented in Figure 7. The tests were conducted on the block model and bunny model, each with varying target numbers ranging from 0.5K points to 10K points. The total running time primarily includes those for the construction of RVDs and



Figure 6. Comparing with Trilinear Interpolation.

the optimization, with the optimization being the most timeconsuming operation. Additionally, it can be observed that the optimization typically requires 40 to 50 iterations. The practical timing cost is approximately O(kn), where n is the target number of vertices, and k is the number of iterations.

6. Limitations and Conclusion

Limitations In its current form, our method has at least four limitations. Firstly, we have not demonstrated its potential for generating anisotropic meshes with feature alignment, as anisotropic Voronoi solvers are not yet available. Secondly, our implementation requires further GPUbased acceleration in the future. Additionally, due to the non-differentiability of the proposed meshing process, it is not suitable for integration into end-to-end learning frameworks that utilize neural SDFs as internal shape representations. Therefore, the proposed meshing technique can only function as a post-processing step following SDF learning. Lastly, our method is limited to closed surfaces. In the future, it is planned to extend the method to open surfaces by leveraging Unsigned Distance Fields (UDF).

Conclusion In this paper, we propose an iso-surface extraction method that simultaneously considers the requirements of triangle quality and feature alignment, by extending the mesh-based functional optimization framework to SDFs. The proposed method naturally supports running CVT on implicit surfaces. Moreover, a set of strategies are introduced to improve robustness, including surface-adhering projection and feature line consolidation using power diagrams. Finally, extensive comparison experiments validate its advantages over existing state-of-the-art (SOTA) methods.

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Figure 7. Run-time Performance.

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