

## Accepted Manuscript

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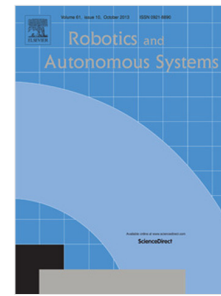
PII: S0921-8890(18)30367-1  
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.robot.2018.08.012>  
Reference: ROBOT 3074

To appear in: *Robotics and Autonomous Systems*

Received date: 1 May 2018  
Revised date: 19 July 2018  
Accepted date: 29 August 2018

Please cite this article as: A. Orthey, et al., Motion planning in irreducible path spaces, *Robotics and Autonomous Systems* (2018), <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.robot.2018.08.012>

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# Motion Planning in Irreducible Path Spaces

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## Abstract

The motion of a mechanical system can be defined as a path through its configuration space. Computing such a path has a computational complexity scaling exponentially with the dimensionality of the configuration space. We propose to reduce the dimensionality of the configuration space by introducing the irreducible path — a path having a minimal swept volume. The paper consists of three parts: In part I, we define the space of all irreducible paths and show that planning a path in the irreducible path space preserves completeness of any motion planning algorithm. In part II, we construct an approximation to the irreducible path space of a serial kinematic chain under certain assumptions. In part III, we conduct motion planning using the irreducible path space for a mechanical snake in a turbine environment, for a mechanical octopus with eight arms in a pipe system and for the sideways motion of a humanoid robot moving through a room with doors and through a hole in a wall. We demonstrate that the concept of an irreducible path can be applied to any motion planning algorithm taking curvature constraints into account.

**Keywords:** Motion Planning, Irreducible Paths, Serial Kinematic Chain, Swept Volume

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