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Peer-reviewed author version

KUIJPERS, Bart (2015) Polynomial Spatial Constraint Databases. In: Shekhar, Shashi; Xiong, Hui (Ed.). Encyclopedia of GIS, p. 879-880.

Handle: <http://hdl.handle.net/1942/18539>

Polynomial Spatial Constraint Databases

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SYNONYMS

Constraint Database Systems; Constraint Query Languages; Infinite Relational Databases; Linear Constraint Databases; Moving Object Constraint Databases; Spatiotemporal Constraint Databases

DEFINITION

The framework of constraint databases provides a general model for spatial databases [4]. In the constraint model, a *polynomial spatial constraint database* contains a finite number of relations, that, although conceptually viewed as possibly infinite sets of points in some real space \mathbf{R}^n , are represented as a finite union of systems of polynomial equations and inequalities.

MAIN TEXT

More specifically, in a *polynomial spatial constraint database*, a relation is defined as a boolean combination (union, intersection, complement) of subsets of some real space \mathbf{R}^n (in applications, typically $n = 2$ or 3) that are definable by polynomial constraints of the form $p(x_1, \dots, x_n) \geq 0$, where p is a polynomial in the real variables x_1, \dots, x_n with integer coefficients. For example, the spatial relation consisting of the set of points on the upper half of the unit disk in \mathbf{R}^2 can be represented by the formula $x^2 + y^2 \leq 1 \wedge y \geq 0$. In practice, spatial relations will occur extended with thematic alpha-numeric information, like a name. In mathematical terminology, these spatial relations are known as *semi-algebraic* sets and their properties have been studied extensively [1].

The polynomial constraint database model was introduced by Kanellakis, Kuper, and Revesz [2] in 1990. The application of this model to spatial databases was described by Paredaens, Van den Bussche, Van Gucht [4]. This model was studied extensively in the 1990s and a state of the art book “Constraint databases,” edited by G. Kuper, L. Libkin, J. Paredaens appeared in 2000 [3]. and the textbook “Introduction to Constraint Databases” by P. Revesz was published in 2002 [5].

RECOMMENDED READING

- [1] J. Bochnak, M. Coste, and M.-F. Roy. *Géométrie algébrique réelle*. Springer-Verlag, 1987.
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- [4] J. Paredaens, J. Van den Bussche, and D. Van Gucht. Towards a theory of spatial database queries. In *Proceedings of the 13th ACM Symposium on Principles of Database Systems*, pages 279–288, 1994.
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