

Clipping polygons in GNU Octave*

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Abstract

This is a small introduction to using the `OctCLIP` package. In this text, you can overview the basic usage of the functions in GNU Octave¹. If you need a detailed description about the Greiner-Hormann implemented algorithm, please read [2] and visit <http://davis.wpi.edu/~matt/courses/clipping/>.

1 Overview

The `OctCLIP` package allows you to perform boolean operations (intersection, union, difference and exclusive or) between two polygons in GNU Octave using the Greiner-Hormann algorithm as presented in [2]. This method is an efficient algorithm for clipping arbitrary 2D polygons. The algorithm can handle arbitrary closed polygons included the cases when the subject and/or clipper polygons contain self-intersections.

2 Installation

As most of GNU Octave packages, `OctCLIP` installation consists in compiling the C++ kernel sources, link them against GNU Octave library to generate

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¹<http://www.octave.org>

`*.oct` functions and copy this `*.oct` executables and other `*.m` functions into a working directory.

The automagic procedure can be easily done by running the command:

```
octave:1> pkg install octclip-x.x.x.tar.gz
```

where `x.x.x` is the version number.

After that, the functions and documentation are installed in your machine and you are ready for use the package.

3 GNU Octave functions

Two types of functions are programmed for GNU Octave: one `*.oct` function and one `*.m` function.

3.1 `*.oct` function

This function are linked with the C code that actually make the computations. You can use it, but is no recommended because the input arguments are more strict than `*.m` functions and don't check for some errors.

The function is:

- `_oc_polybool`: Performs boolean operation between two polygons.

3.2 `*.m` function

This function makes the computations by calling the `*.oct` function. You must call this function because you can use different number of input arguments and checking of input arguments is performed.

The function is the same as in section 3.1 (without the `_` at the beginning of the name):

- `oc_polybool`: Performs boolean operation between two polygons by calling the `_oc_polybool`.

`oc_polybool` includes too some demonstration code in order to test the functionality of the functions. The demo code can be executed as:

```
octave:1> demo oc_polybool
```

3.3 Error handling

`*.oct` and `*.m` functions can emit errors, some due to errors with input arguments and other due to errors in functions from the C² code.

Errors due to wrong input arguments (data types, dimensions, etc.) can be only given for `*.m` function and this is the reason because the use of this function is recommended. In this case, the execution is aborted and nothing is stored in output arguments.

The `*.oct` function can emit errors due to wrong number of input arguments, wrong value of the operation identifier and internal errors of memory allocation.

²The algorithm is internally implemented in C (C99 standard).

4 Caveats of Greiner-Hormann algorithm

To do.

5 Notes

Apart from <http://octave.sourceforge.net/octclip/index.html>, an up to date version of OctCLIP can be downloaded from <https://bitbucket.org/jgpallero/octclip/>.

References

- [1] EATON, John W.; BATEMAN, David; HAUBERG, Søren; and WEHBRING, Rik; GNU Octave. A high-level interactive language for numerical computations; Edition 5 for Octave version 5.2.0, January 2020; <https://www.gnu.org/software/octave/octave.pdf>; Permanently updated at <https://www.gnu.org/software/octave/support.html>.
- [2] GREINER, Günter, and HORMANN, Kai; *Efficient clipping of arbitrary polygons*; ACM Transactions on Graphics; Volume 17(2), April 1998; Pages 71–83. There is a web link with some example code at <http://davis.wpi.edu/~matt/courses/clipping/>.