Stokes' Theorem

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1 Introduction

One of the most exciting results in multivariable calculus and differential geometry is the Stokes' Theorem. It is a generalization that relates the surface integral of the curl of a vector field over an open surface to the line integral of the vector field around the boundary of that surface. At its heart, Stokes' Theorem serves as a bridge connecting local and global perspectives, tying together seemingly disparate theorems such as Green's Theorem, the Fundamental Theorem of Calculus, and the Divergence Theorem into a broader mathematical framework. First introduced in the 19th century and attributed to the Irish mathematician Sir George Gabriel Stokes, the theorem has since become foundational in mathematics and physics alike.

In its classical vector calculus form, Stokes' Theorem relates a surface integral of the curl of a vector field over a surface to a line integral of the vector field along the boundary of that surface. Symbolically, if F is a vector field and S is an oriented smooth surface with positively oriented boundary curve ∂S, then the theorem states:

$$\iint_S (\nabla \times \vec{F}) \cdot d\vec{S} = \oint_{\partial S} \vec{F} \cdot d\vec{r}$$

This deceptively simple equation encapsulates profound geometric and physical insights. On one hand, it allows us to calculate difficult surface integrals by transforming them into easier line integrals. On the other, it reveals intrinsic connections between rotation (curl), circulation, and boundary behavior of vector fields. It is no surprise, then, that Stokes' Theorem finds extensive application across electromagnetism, fluid dynamics, differential topology, and manifold theory.

Yet beyond its computational utility, Stokes' Theorem opens the door to a more abstract understanding of mathematics. In the language of differential forms and manifolds, the theorem takes a more generalized and conceptual form, stating that the integral of a differential form ω over the boundary of some oriented manifold M equals the integral of its exterior derivative $d\omega$ over the manifold itself:

$$\int_{\partial M} \omega = \int_M d\omega$$

This abstraction not only extends the theorem to higher-dimensional and non-Euclidean settings but also highlights its deep structural role in differential geometry and topology. Understanding Stokes' Theorem from both the classical and modern perspectives thus provides a richer view of how calculus, geometry, and analysis intertwine.

This paper seeks to provide an expository account of Stokes' Theorem, beginning with necessary preliminaries in vector calculus and differential forms, progressing through multiple proofs of the theorem, and culminating in a discussion of its applications and theoretical implications. By tracing its classical roots and exploring its modern extensions, we aim to appreciate both the utility and beauty of this mathematical cornerstone.

2 Intuition behind the Stokes' Theorem

To build an intuition for Stokes' Theorem, we start by asking: what does the curl of a vector field measure?

The curl $\nabla \times \vec{F}$ at a point measures the local spinning tendency of the vector field around that point in other words, how much the field wants to rotate around that point. If you imagine placing a tiny paddle wheel at the point, the curl tells you how strongly and in what direction it would spin.

Now consider a surface S (such as a portion of a plane or a curved sheet) with a boundary curve ∂S. Stokes' Theorem tells us that the total circulation of the vector field along the boundary ∂S is equal to the sum of the infinitesimal rotations (the curl) over the surface S.

You can think of it like this: divide the surface into many tiny patches. Each small patch contributes a bit of rotation given by the local curl. When you add up all those tiny rotations across the surface, the result equals the total circulation of the field around the edge of the surface.

2.1 A Concrete Example

Let's consider the vector field $\vec{F}(x, y, z) = (-y, x, 0)$. This is a field that causes rotation in the xy-plane (think of spinning around the z-axis).

Suppose S is the flat disk of radius R in the xy-plane, centered at the origin. Its boundary ∂S is the circle $x^2 + y^2 = R^2$, traversed counterclockwise.

- The line integral $\oint_{\partial S} \vec{F} \cdot d\vec{r}$ measures how much the field circulates around the circle and in this case, it turns out to be $2\pi R^2$.
- The surface integral $\iint_S (\nabla \times \vec{F}) \cdot d\vec{S}$ computes the sum of the curl over the disk, and since $\nabla \times \vec{F} = (0, 0, 2)$, this integral also gives $2\pi R^2$.

Thus, both sides match exactly, illustrating Stokes' Theorem.

2.2 Geometric Visualization

Imagine a "sheet" floating in 3D space this is our surface S. Along the edge of the sheet is a wire, which is our curve ∂S. Now, imagine a fluid moving according to the vector field $\vec{F}$.

- The left-hand side of Stokes' Theorem measures how much the fluid moves along the wire a line integral of velocity.
- The right-hand side measures the total microscopic rotation over the surface: the curl integrated over area.

Despite local differences in the field, the total rotation along the boundary is balanced by the sum of the internal spinning. This is a profound idea: it means that global circulation is caused by local rotation.

3 Preliminaries and Notations

Before we start the proof of Stokes' Theorem, it's helpful to understand some basic concepts and definitions that we will use later. This section explains these ideas clearly so that anyone can follow along.

3.1 Vector Fields and Differentiability

A vector field $\vec{F}$ in three-dimensional space assigns a vector to every point (x, y, z). That means:

$$\vec{F} : \mathbb{R}^3 \to \mathbb{R}^3, \quad \vec{F}(x, y, z) = (P(x, y, z), Q(x, y, z), R(x, y, z))$$

Here, P, Q, R are functions that give the components of the vector at each point.

We assume these functions are smooth enough so their partial derivatives exist and don't have any sudden jumps. This smoothness is important because we will use derivatives of these functions later.

3.2 Curl of a Vector Field

The curl of a vector field, written $\nabla \times \vec{F}$, measures how much the field "rotates" around a point. It is defined as:

$$\nabla \times \vec{F} = \left(\frac{\partial R}{\partial y} - \frac{\partial Q}{\partial z}, \quad \frac{\partial P}{\partial z} - \frac{\partial R}{\partial x}, \quad \frac{\partial Q}{\partial x} - \frac{\partial P}{\partial y} \right)$$

This vector points in the direction around which the field is swirling, and its length tells how strong the swirling is.

3.3 Surfaces and Parametrizations

A surface S is like a curved sheet in space. We say it is smooth if we can describe every point on it with a pair of parameters (u, v) like this:

$$\vec{r}(u, v) = (x(u, v), y(u, v), z(u, v))$$

where (u, v) belongs to some region D in the plane.

The edge or boundary of the surface, called ∂S, comes from the edge of the domain D, which we call ∂D. So the boundary of the surface is just the image of the boundary of D under the mapping $\vec{r}$.

3.4 Orientation and Positive Boundary

The orientation of a surface means choosing a direction for the normal vector at every point on the surface. This normal vector points perpendicular to the surface.

The positive orientation of the boundary curve ∂S is related to the surface orientation by the right-hand rule: if you curl the fingers of your right hand in the direction you travel around the boundary ∂S, your thumb will point in the direction of the surface's normal vector.

For example, if the surface normal points "up," then the boundary should be oriented counterclockwise when viewed from above.

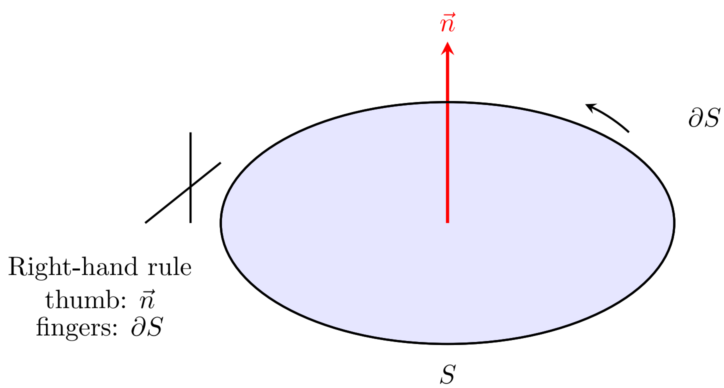


Figure 1: Orientation of surface S with normal vector $\vec{n}$ and positively oriented boundary ∂S following the right-hand rule.

3.5 Surface and Line Integrals

Surface Integral If you have a vector field $\vec{F}$ and a surface S, the surface integral

$$\iint_S \vec{F} \cdot d\vec{S}$$

measures how much of the vector field "flows through" the surface. The surface element vector $d\vec{S}$ has both an area and a direction (the normal).

When the surface is given by parameters (u, v), this surface element is

$$d\vec{S} = \left(\frac{\partial \vec{r}}{\partial u} \times \frac{\partial \vec{r}}{\partial v} \right) du\, dv$$

Line Integral The line integral of a vector field $\vec{F}$ along a curve C measures the circulation or "work done" by $\vec{F}$ moving along the curve:

$$\int_C \vec{F} \cdot d\vec{r} = \int_a^b \vec{F}(\vec{r}(t)) \cdot \vec{r}'(t) dt$$

where $\vec{r}(t)$ parametrizes the curve C.

3.6 Summary of Notation

- S: a smooth surface in 3D space
- ∂S: the boundary curve of surface S
- $\vec{F}$: vector field from $\mathbb{R}^3$ to $\mathbb{R}^3$
- $d\vec{S}$: oriented surface element vector
- $d\vec{r}$: infinitesimal line element vector along a curve
- $\nabla \times \vec{F}$: curl of $\vec{F}$
- D: parameter domain in 2D for the surface parametrization

4 The Fundamental Theorem of Calculus & Green's Theorem

One of the first and most important formulas any student that is introduced to calculus learns is the fundamental theorem of calculus.

The fundamental calculus states:

$$\int_a^b f(x)\, dx = F(b) - F(a)$$

where F is the antiderivative of the function f. The interpretation and meaning of the fundamental theorem of calculus is very simple. It suggests that the integral of a function over a domain is equal to its antiderivative evaluated at the boundary of the domain. If we generalize this statement a little more it will suggest that evaluating an integral over a domain is the same thing as evaluating a lower-dimensional quantity over the boundary of the domain. If we look at this closely this sounds a lot like the Green's theorem as well as the Stokes' Theorem.

Statement of Green's Theorem

Green's Theorem is a key result in two-dimensional vector calculus that connects a line integral around a closed curve to a double integral over the region it encloses. It can be viewed as a two-dimensional version of the more general Stokes' Theorem in three dimensions.

Let C be a positively oriented (counterclockwise), piecewise smooth, simple closed curve in the plane, and let R be the region bounded by C. If $P(x, y)$ and $Q(x, y)$ have continuous partial derivatives on an open region containing R, then Green's Theorem states:

$$\oint_C P\,dx + Q\,dy = \iint_R \left(\frac{\partial Q}{\partial x} - \frac{\partial P}{\partial y} \right) dx\,dy$$

This result expresses that the total circulation of a vector field around a closed curve is equal to the sum of the curls inside the enclosed region.

Geometric Visualization

Below is a diagram that helps visualize the setting of Green's Theorem:

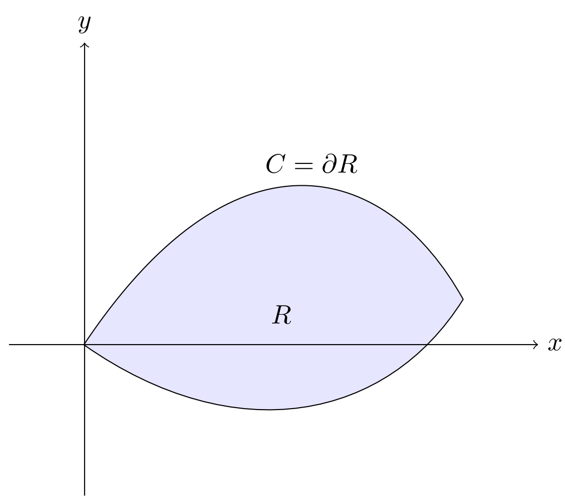


Figure 2: The region R in the plane bounded by the simple closed curve C, illustrating the domain where Green's Theorem applies.

Connection to Stokes' Theorem

Green's Theorem is a special case of Stokes' Theorem in which the surface S lies entirely in the xy-plane. In three dimensions, Stokes' Theorem is given by:

$$\iint_S (\nabla \times \vec{F}) \cdot d\vec{S} = \oint_{\partial S} \vec{F} \cdot d\vec{r}$$

If the vector field $\vec{F} = (P, Q, 0)$ has no z-component and the surface is flat, then the curl becomes:

$$\nabla \times \vec{F} = \left(0, 0, \frac{\partial Q}{\partial x} - \frac{\partial P}{\partial y}\right)$$

and the surface element is:

$$d\vec{S} = \vec{k}\, dx\, dy$$

Then Stokes' Theorem becomes exactly Green's Theorem. This makes Green's Theorem a foundational stepping stone in understanding surface integrals and curl in higher dimensions.

Green's Theorem and Conservative Fields

An important special case of Green's Theorem occurs when the vector field $\vec{F} = (P, Q)$ is **conservative**. A vector field is conservative if there exists a scalar potential function $f(x, y)$ such that:

$$\vec{F} = \nabla f = \left(\frac{\partial f}{\partial x}, \frac{\partial f}{\partial y}\right)$$

In this case:

$$P = \frac{\partial f}{\partial x}, \quad Q = \frac{\partial f}{\partial y}$$

Then the curl becomes:

$$\frac{\partial Q}{\partial x} - \frac{\partial P}{\partial y} = \frac{\partial^2 f}{\partial x \partial y} - \frac{\partial^2 f}{\partial y \partial x} = 0$$

(assuming mixed partials are continuous and equal).

So the right-hand side of Green's Theorem becomes zero:

$$\iint_R 0\, dx\, dy = 0$$

This implies:

$$\oint_C \vec{F} \cdot d\vec{r} = 0$$

This matches the result from vector calculus that the line integral of a conservative field over any closed loop is zero. Once again, this result is consistent with Stokes' Theorem, which also predicts zero circulation when the curl is zero over a surface.

Summary

Green's Theorem gives us a powerful way to relate local and global properties of vector fields in two dimensions. It can be used to convert difficult line integrals into simpler double integrals and provides key insights into how vector fields behave around closed curves. Importantly, Green's Theorem is a concrete example of the more general Stokes' Theorem in action, offering an intuitive starting point for understanding circulation and curl over surfaces in three-dimensional space.

5 An Elementary Proof of Stokes' Theorem

Stokes' Theorem provides a beautiful connection between the circulation of a vector field along a closed curve and the curl of that field over the surface it bounds. Formally, it states that:

$$\iint_S (\nabla \times \vec{F}) \cdot d\vec{S} = \oint_{\partial S} \vec{F} \cdot d\vec{r}$$

where:

- S is an oriented, smooth surface in $\mathbb{R}^3$,
- ∂S is the positively oriented boundary of that surface,
- $\vec{F} \colon \mathbb{R}^3 \to \mathbb{R}^3$ is a continuously differentiable vector field,
- $d\vec{S}$ is the oriented vector surface element, and
- $d\vec{r}$ is the line element along the curve ∂S.

This theorem is a generalization of Green's Theorem in the plane and unifies the concepts of circulation and rotation in vector fields. The proof below avoids the abstract machinery of differential forms and manifolds, and instead builds the result from vector calculus and parametrization techniques.

Step 1: Parametrization of the Surface

Example: Parametrizing a Hemisphere

To understand parametrization, consider the upper hemisphere of radius R centered at the origin, defined by:

$$x^2 + y^2 + z^2 = R^2, \quad z \geq 0$$

A common parametrization of this surface uses spherical coordinates (with parameters u and v):

$$\vec{r}(u,v) = (R\sin u\cos v,\ R\sin u\sin v,\ R\cos u)$$

where the parameters range over

$$u \in [0, \pi/2], \quad v \in [0, 2\pi]$$

Here, u represents the polar angle measured from the positive z-axis, and v is the azimuthal angle around the z-axis.

The domain $D = \{(u,v) \mid 0 \le u \le \pi/2, 0 \le v \le 2\pi\}$ is a rectangle in the uv-plane. When mapped by $\vec{r}$, it produces the curved hemisphere surface S in $\mathbb{R}^3$. The boundary ∂D corresponds to the edge of the hemisphere where $u = \pi/2$, i.e., the great circle at the "equator" of the sphere.

This example illustrates how a simple 2D region D can be used to describe a curved 3D surface through parametrization.

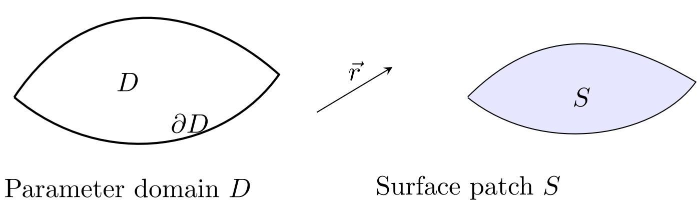


Figure 3: Parametrization from domain to surface

Suppose that the surface S is given by a smooth parametrization with vector value:

$$\vec{r}(u,v) = (x(u,v), y(u,v), z(u,v))$$

where $(u,v) \in D \subset \mathbb{R}^2$, and D is a smooth bounded domain on the uv plane. This parameterization maps each point in the domain D to a point on the surface S. The boundary curve of D, denoted ∂D, maps under $\vec{r}$ to the boundary curve ∂S of the surface. This correspondence allows us to study S and ∂S indirectly through the domain D and its boundary.

Step 2: Rewriting the Line Integral Using the Parametrization

We want to evaluate the line integral of $\vec{F}$ along ∂S. Since ∂S corresponds to $\vec{r}(u,v)$ traced along the boundary ∂D, we can re-express the line integral as:

$$\oint_{\partial S} \vec{F} \cdot d\vec{r}$$

To evaluate this, we express the differential element $d\vec{r}$ along the surface as a linear combination of its partial derivatives with respect to u and v:

$$d\vec{r} = \frac{\partial \vec{r}}{\partial u} du + \frac{\partial \vec{r}}{\partial v} dv$$

The vector field $\vec{F}$ is evaluated at each point on the surface through parametrization $\vec{r}(u,v)$. So the integrand becomes:

$$\vec{F}(\vec{r}(u,v)) \cdot d\vec{r} = \vec{F}(\vec{r}(u,v)) \cdot \left(\frac{\partial \vec{r}}{\partial u} du + \frac{\partial \vec{r}}{\partial v} dv \right)$$

We define two scalar fields on the parameter domain:

$$P(u,v) = \vec{F}(\vec{r}(u,v)) \cdot \frac{\partial \vec{r}}{\partial u}, \quad Q(u,v) = \vec{F}(\vec{r}(u,v)) \cdot \frac{\partial \vec{r}}{\partial v}$$

so that the line integral becomes:

$$\oint_{\partial S} \vec{F} \cdot d\vec{r} = \oint_{\partial D} P\,du + Q\,dv$$

Step 3: Applying Green's Theorem in the Parameter Domain

Now, since $P(u,v)$ and $Q(u,v)$ are smooth scalar fields defined on the planar region D, and since ∂D is a positively oriented, piecewise, closed curve, we can apply Green's Theorem:

$$\oint_{\partial D} P\,du + Q\,dv = \iint_D \left(\frac{\partial Q}{\partial u} - \frac{\partial P}{\partial v} \right) du\,dv$$

This transforms the line integral over the boundary into a double integral over the interior of the domain D, which corresponds via $\vec{r}(u,v)$ to the surface S.

Step 4: Relating the Integrand to the Curl

We now consider the integrand $\frac{\partial Q}{\partial u} - \frac{\partial P}{\partial v}$. Each term involves derivatives of dot products between $\vec{F}$ and the partial derivatives of $\vec{r}$. Applying the chain rule and properties of dot products, it can be shown that:

note: expand here!

$$\frac{\partial Q}{\partial u} - \frac{\partial P}{\partial v} = (\nabla \times \vec{F})(\vec{r}(u,v)) \cdot \left(\frac{\partial \vec{r}}{\partial u} \times \frac{\partial \vec{r}}{\partial v} \right)$$

This result captures the essential geometric idea which is the difference between the directional rates of change of the vector field (as expressed by P and Q) corresponds to the amount of rotational twisting of the field, measured by its curl, in the direction normal to the surface patch.

Step 5: Interpreting the Surface Integral

Recall that the oriented surface element on a parametrized surface is given by:

$$d\vec{S} = \left(\frac{\partial \vec{r}}{\partial u} \times \frac{\partial \vec{r}}{\partial v} \right) du\,dv$$

So the surface integral of the curl becomes:

$$\iint_S (\nabla \times \vec{F}) \cdot d\vec{S} = \iint_D (\nabla \times \vec{F})(\vec{r}(u,v)) \cdot \left(\frac{\partial \vec{r}}{\partial u} \times \frac{\partial \vec{r}}{\partial v} \right) du\, dv$$

This is exactly equal to the right-hand side of the transformed Green's Theorem integral.

Final Step: Equating Both Sides

Putting everything together, we see that:

$$\begin{aligned} \oint_{\partial S} \vec{F} \cdot d\vec{r} &= \oint_{\partial D} P\, du + Q\, dv \\ &= \iint_D \left(\frac{\partial Q}{\partial u} - \frac{\partial P}{\partial v} \right) du\, dv \\ &= \iint_D (\nabla \times \vec{F})(\vec{r}(u,v)) \cdot \left(\frac{\partial \vec{r}}{\partial u} \times \frac{\partial \vec{r}}{\partial v} \right) du\, dv \\ &= \iint_S (\nabla \times \vec{F}) \cdot d\vec{S} \end{aligned} \tag{1}$$

Conclusion: General Statement of Stokes' Theorem

Thus, we have shown that:

$$\boxed{\iint_S (\nabla \times \vec{F}) \cdot d\vec{S} = \oint_{\partial S} \vec{F} \cdot d\vec{r}}$$

This completes the proof of Stokes' Theorem for any smooth surface S that can be parametrized in this way. The power of this approach lies in reducing a three-dimensional geometric identity to a two-dimensional integral identity via parametrization, and then using Green's Theorem as a foundational tool to bridge the concepts.

6 Stokes' Theorem via Differential Forms and Manifolds

We now turn to a more abstract and powerful formulation of Stokes' Theorem using the tools of differential geometry. In this framework, the theorem is not limited to three-dimensional space but holds on smooth manifolds of any dimension.

Stokes' Theorem (Differential Form Version)

Let M be a smooth, oriented n-dimensional manifold with boundary ∂M, and let ω be a compactly supported $(n-1)$-form defined on M. Then Stokes' Theorem takes the form:

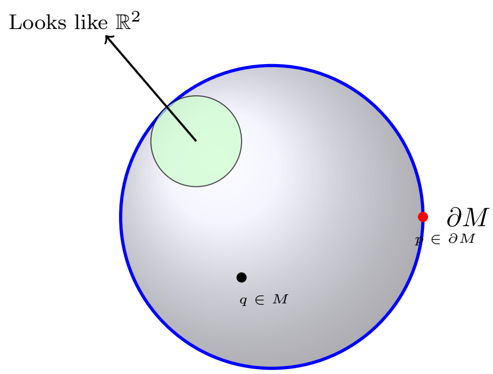
$$\int_M d\omega = \int_{\partial M} \omega$$

Here, $d\omega$ denotes the exterior derivative of the differential form ω, and the integrals are taken over the oriented manifold M and its oriented boundary ∂M.

Understanding Manifolds

A smooth manifold is a space that locally resembles Euclidean space. That is, for every point $p \in M$, there exists a neighborhood around p that is diffeomorphic (smoothly bijective) to an open subset of $\mathbb{R}^n$. This means we can "zoom in" on any point and do calculus as if we were in flat space.

Manifolds may have a boundary. At a point on the boundary ∂M, the neighborhood looks like a half-space in $\mathbb{R}^n$, such as the upper half-plane in $\mathbb{R}^2$.



A 2D Manifold with Boundary

Figure 4: A 2-dimensional manifold M (a disk), with boundary ∂M. Local charts around interior points look like $\mathbb{R}^2$, and boundary charts resemble the upper half-space.

Differential Forms and Exterior Derivative

A differential form is an object that can be integrated over a manifold. The simplest case is a 1-form, which in $\mathbb{R}^3$ looks like:

$$\omega = P(x, y, z)\, dx + Q(x, y, z)\, dy + R(x, y, z)\, dz$$

Forms of higher degree (2-forms, 3-forms, etc.) are built using wedge products. For example, a 2-form might be:

$$\omega = P(x, y, z)\, dy \wedge dz + Q(x, y, z)\, dz \wedge dx + R(x, y, z)\, dx \wedge dy$$

The exterior derivative d is an operator that increases the degree of a form by one and satisfies:

- Linearity: $d(\alpha+\beta) = d\alpha+d\beta$ - Leibniz rule: $d(\alpha\wedge\beta) = d\alpha\wedge\beta+(-1)^k\alpha\wedge d\beta$ - Nilpotency: $d(d\omega) = 0$

where α is a k-form.

For example, if $\omega = f(x, y, z)\, dx$, then:

$$d\omega = \frac{\partial f}{\partial x}dx \wedge dx + \frac{\partial f}{\partial y}dy \wedge dx + \frac{\partial f}{\partial z}dz \wedge dx = \left(\frac{\partial f}{\partial y}dy + \frac{\partial f}{\partial z}dz\right) \wedge dx$$

because $dx \wedge dx = 0$ due to anti-symmetry.

Orientation and Integration on Manifolds

To integrate a differential form over a manifold, the manifold must be oriented. Orientation is a consistent choice of "volume element" across all coordinate patches.

For a manifold with boundary, the boundary inherits an induced orientation. Intuitively, if your thumb points in the direction of the outward normal, your curled fingers trace the positive orientation of the boundary—just like the right-hand rule in classical Stokes' Theorem.

Proof Sketch of Stokes' Theorem

We now sketch the proof of Stokes' Theorem in the language of differential forms.

Suppose ω is a $(n-1)$-form with compact support on an oriented n-dimensional manifold M. Cover M with coordinate charts and write ω locally as:

$$\omega = \sum f_I\, dx^{i_1} \wedge \cdots \wedge dx^{i_{n-1}}$$

Then:

$$d\omega = \sum \frac{\partial f_I}{\partial x^j}\, dx^j \wedge dx^{i_1} \wedge \cdots \wedge dx^{i_{n-1}}$$

This is an n-form, and we can integrate it over each chart in M using the change of variables theorem.

By the generalized fundamental theorem of calculus in this setting, we have:

$$\int_M d\omega = \int_{\partial M} \omega$$

This follows by applying the classical Stokes' Theorem in each coordinate chart and summing the contributions using a partition of unity.

Classical Stokes' Theorem as a Special Case

If we take $\omega = \vec{F} \cdot d\vec{r}$ on a surface $S \subset \mathbb{R}^3$, then:
- $d\omega = (\nabla \times \vec{F}) \cdot d\vec{S}$ - So Stokes' Theorem becomes:

$$\int_{\partial S} \vec{F} \cdot d\vec{r} = \int_S (\nabla \times \vec{F}) \cdot d\vec{S}$$

Thus, the differential form version generalizes the classical result.

Conclusion

The differential forms version of Stokes' Theorem is a powerful unifying statement in mathematics. It tells us that for every smooth, oriented manifold M with boundary, the integral of the exterior derivative of a form over M equals the integral of the form over its boundary. This elegant generalization extends the ideas behind the Fundamental Theorem of Calculus, Green's Theorem, and the Divergence Theorem into a single, elegant framework.

7 Applications

Stokes' Theorem finds powerful applications across various branches of physics and engineering, particularly in fields that involve vector fields and flux integrals. It serves as a unifying principle in classical electromagnetism, fluid dynamics, and the theory of differential equations. Fundamentally, the theorem connects local rotational behavior of a vector field (through curl) with global circulation along a boundary, enabling practical simplifications in both theoretical and applied contexts.

In electromagnetism, one of Maxwell's equations (Faraday's Law of Induction)be expressed using Stokes' Theorem. Faraday's Law in differential form is:

$$\nabla \times \vec{E} = -\frac{\partial \vec{B}}{\partial t}$$

Taking the surface integral of both sides and applying Stokes' Theorem yields:

$$\oint_{\partial S} \vec{E} \cdot d\vec{r} = -\iint_S \frac{\partial \vec{B}}{\partial t} \cdot d\vec{S}$$

This shows that the electromotive force around a loop is equal to the time rate of change of magnetic flux through the surface spanned by that loop.

In fluid dynamics, Stokes' Theorem connects the circulation of a velocity field around a closed loop with the vorticity of the fluid across the surface:

$$\oint_{\partial S} \vec{v} \cdot d\vec{r} = \iint_S (\nabla \times \vec{v}) \cdot d\vec{S}$$

This relationship provides insight into the rotational behavior of fluid elements and is central in analyzing turbulent flows and vortex behavior.

7.1 Brief Overview of Conservative Forces and Stokes' Theorem

Stokes' theorem can be applied to conservative forces by relating the line integral of the force around a closed curve to the surface integral of the curl of the force over a surface bounded by that curve. For conservative forces the curl is zero everywhere which means that the line integral across closed curve is also zero.

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