

# Motion Planning Lecture 5

Sampling-Based Geometric Motion Planning: PRMs

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# Recap

## Foundations

2 Weeks (problem formulation, terminology, collision checking)

## Search-based

2 Weeks (A\* and variants; state-lattice-based planning)

## Sampling-based

5 Weeks (RRT, PRM, OMPL, Sampling Theory)

## Optimization-based

2 Weeks (SCP, TrajOpt)

## Current and Advanced Topics

3 Weeks (Comparative Analysis, Machine Learning and Motion Planning, Hybrid- and Multi-Robot approaches)

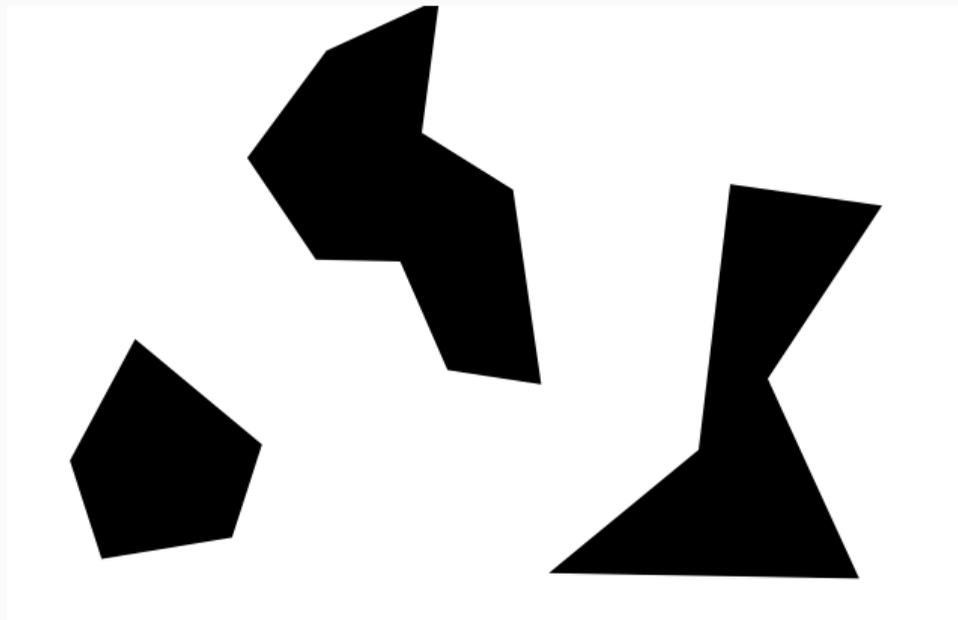
# PRM: Probabilistic Roadmaps

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## Recap: Lecture 3: Probabilistic roadmap

### Probabilistic roadmap

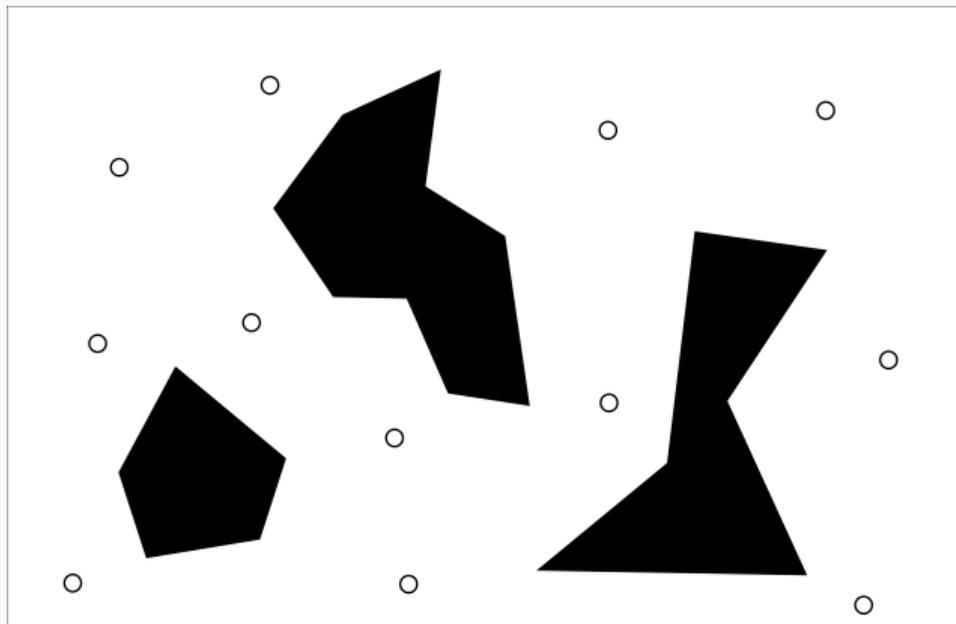
Idea: Sample random points in configuration space



## Recap: Lecture 3: Probabilistic roadmap

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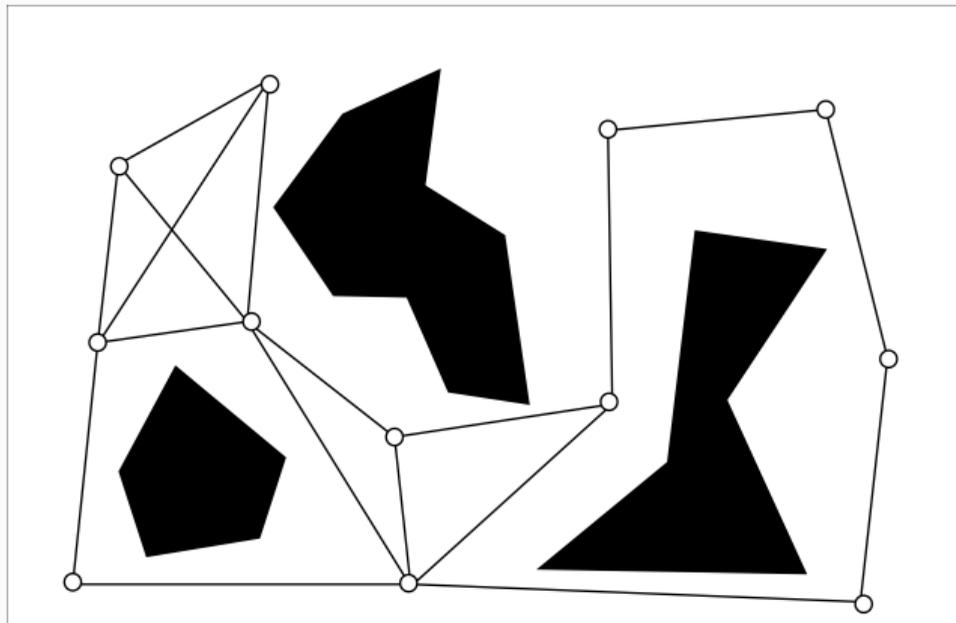
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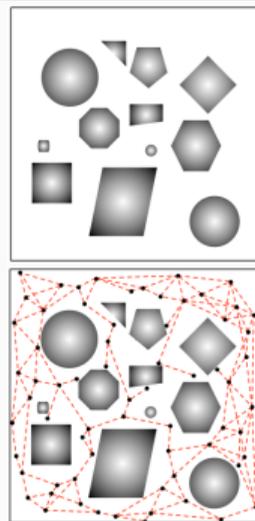
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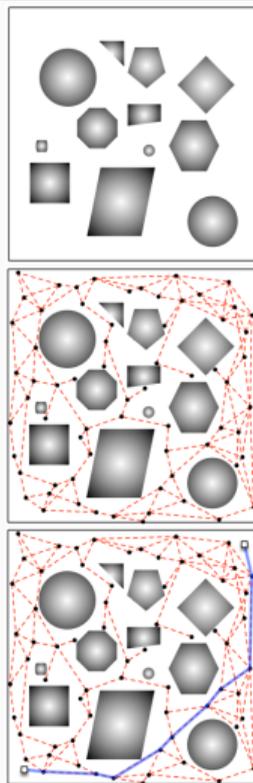
# Probabilistic Roadmap [1]

- **Randomized** algorithm, published in 1996
- Two stages
  1. Pre-processing (given environment and robot)
    - Generate a weighted graph (**roadmap**)



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  2. Query (given start and goal configuration)
    - Graph search

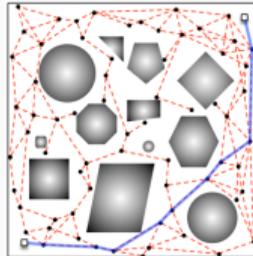
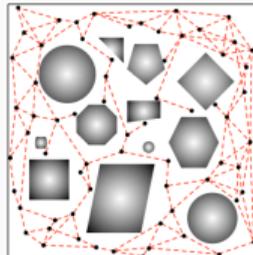
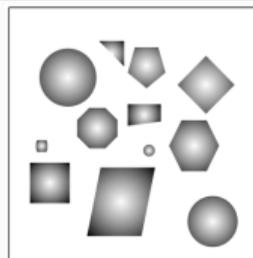


# Probabilistic Roadmap [1]

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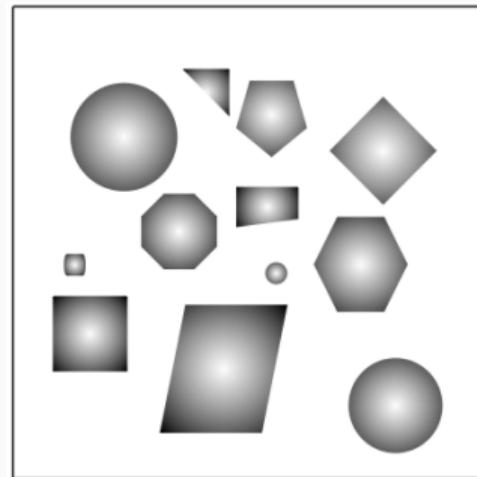
## Multi-Query Planning

For the same environment and robot, only state 2 needs to be executed. Thus, PRM is a **multi-query planner**.



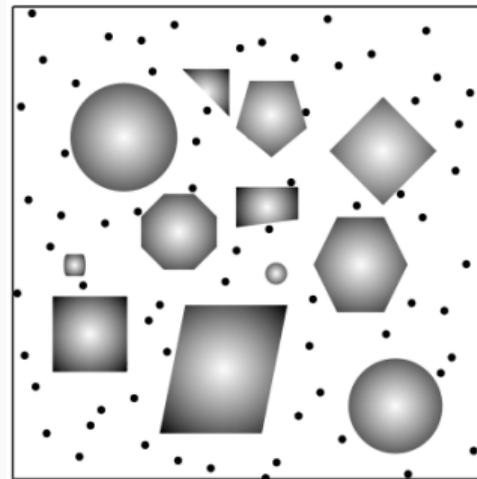
# Graph Generation

```
1 def GenPRM( $\mathcal{Q}$ ,  $\mathcal{W}_{free}$ ,  $\mathcal{B}(\cdot)$ ,  $N$ ):  
2    $\mathcal{G} = (\mathcal{V}, \mathcal{E}) = (\emptyset, \emptyset)$   
3   # Generate  $N$  vertices  
4   while  $|\mathcal{V}| < N$ :  
5      $\mathbf{q} = \text{Sample}(\mathcal{Q})$   
6     if  $\mathcal{B}(\mathbf{q}) \subset \mathcal{W}_{free}$ :  
7        $\mathcal{V} = \mathcal{V} \cup \{\mathbf{q}\}$   
8     # Connect vertices  
9     for  $\mathbf{q}$  in  $\mathcal{V}$ :  
10      for  $\mathbf{p}$  in  $\{\mathbf{p} \in \mathcal{V} : \text{isNeighbor}(\mathbf{p}, \mathbf{q})\}$ :  
11        if path  $\mathbf{q}$  to  $\mathbf{p}$  feasible:  
12           $\mathcal{E} = \mathcal{E} \cup \{\text{path } \mathbf{q} \text{ to } \mathbf{p}\}$   
13    return  $\mathcal{G}$ 
```



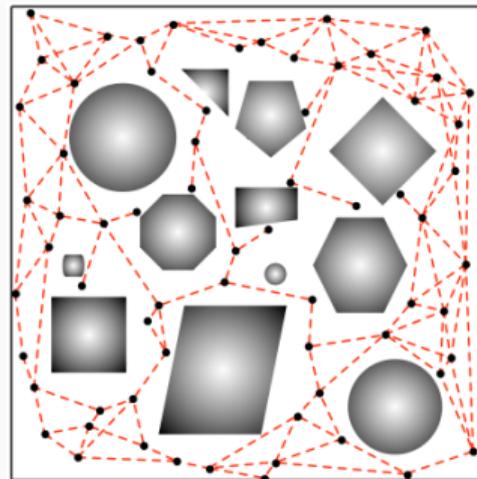
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# Ideal Roadmap Properties (1)

What constitutes a “good” roadmap?

- **Accessible:** For any  $\mathbf{q}_{start} \in \mathcal{Q}_{free}$  we can compute a path to some  $\mathbf{q} \in \mathcal{V}$
- **Departable:** For any  $\mathbf{q}_{goal} \in \mathcal{Q}_{free}$  we can compute a path from some  $\mathbf{q} \in \mathcal{V}$
- **Connectivity-Preserving:** For any  $\mathbf{q}, \mathbf{p} \in \mathcal{Q}_{free}$  that can be connected, there is a path in the roadmap
- **Efficient** with factor  $\epsilon$ : For any  $\mathbf{q}, \mathbf{p} \in \mathcal{Q}_{free}$  that can be connected with cost  $c^*$ , there is a path in the roadmap with a cost of  $\epsilon c^*$  or less
- **Sparse:** As few vertices and edges as possible

## Ideal Roadmap Properties (2)

```
1 def GenPRM( $Q, \mathcal{W}_{free}, \mathcal{B}(\cdot), N$ ):  
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When is the roadmap accessible, departable, connectivity-preserving, efficient, sparse?

$N \rightarrow \infty$

$N \rightarrow 0$

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When is the roadmap accessible, departable, connectivity-preserving, efficient, sparse?

$N \rightarrow \infty$

There will be  $\mathbf{q} \in \mathcal{V}$  for almost every configuration in  $Q_{free}$ .

+ Accessible, Departable, Connectivity-Preserving, Efficient

- Not sparse; very slow computation (both pre-processing and query)

$N \rightarrow 0$

- Not Accessible, Not Departable, Not Connectivity-Preserving, Not Efficient

+ Sparse

## Practical PRM Considerations

- Can run pre-processing and query in **parallel**
  - Incrementally increase roadmap size
  - Periodically check if a solution can be found
  - Avoids picking  $N$  explicitly
- Many variants are possible based on choice of Sample, isNeighbor, and feasible path computation
- Result is in the correct homotopy class, but often far from optimal ( $\Rightarrow$  Path Smoothing)

# Sampling

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## Rejection Sampling

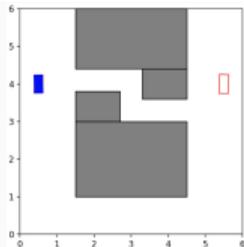
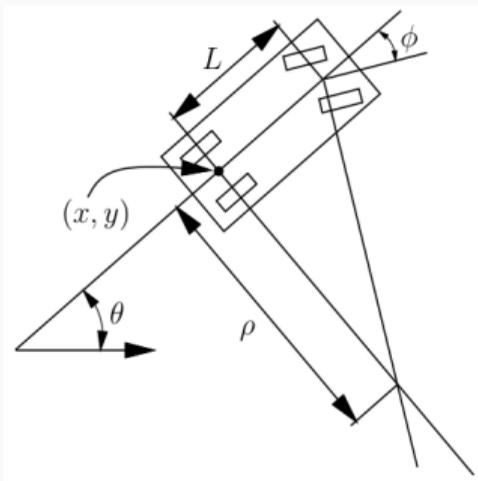
1. Sample  $\mathbf{q} \in \mathcal{Q}$  from a given distribution
2. Repeat until  $\mathcal{B}(\mathbf{q}) \subset \mathcal{W}_{free}$  (or:  $\mathbf{q} \in \mathcal{Q}_{free}$ )

Does not require  $\mathcal{Q}_{free}$  explicitly

Inefficient in highly constrained spaces

Common distributions: Uniform distribution, Gaussian/Normal distribution, Deterministic Sequence

# Composite Sampling (1)



- Configuration  $\mathbf{q} = (x, y, \theta) \in \mathcal{Q}$
- All components are independent  $\Rightarrow$  we can sample all components independently:
  1.  $x \sim \mathcal{U}(0, 8)$
  2.  $y \sim \mathcal{U}(0, 8)$
  3.  $\theta \sim \mathcal{U}(0, 2\pi)$
  4. Resulting state  $\mathbf{q}$  is still drawn from a uniform distribution

## Composite Sampling (2)

What about  $SO(3)$  (orientation in 3D)?

### Idea 0

- Sample three Euler angles uniformly between  $[0, 2\pi)$
- Construct rotation (rotation matrix, quaternion, ...)

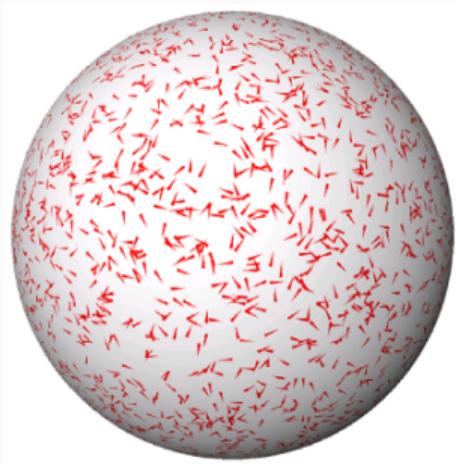
not uniform, because Euler angles are not independent



Source: [2]

## Composite Sampling (3)

What about  $SO(3)$  (orientation in 3D)?



Source: [2]

### Better idea

- Sample three numbers from  $\mathcal{U}(0, 1)$
- Quaternion

$$(qw, qx, qy, qz) = (\sqrt{1 - u_1} \sin 2\pi u_2, \sqrt{1 - u_1} \cos 2\pi u_2, \sqrt{u_1} \sin 2\pi u_3, \sqrt{u_1} \cos 2\pi u_3)$$

More: Section 5.5.2 of [3] and [2]

# Deterministic Sampling (1)

- Halton sequence (1960): better **uniformity** than pseudo-random numbers and **incremental**
- Examples:

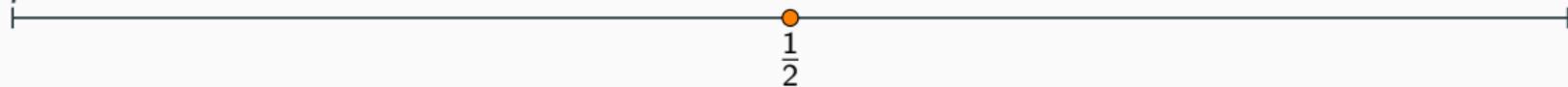
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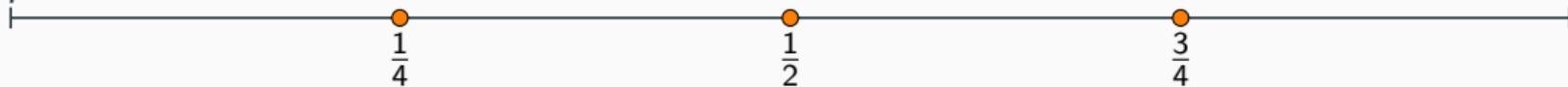
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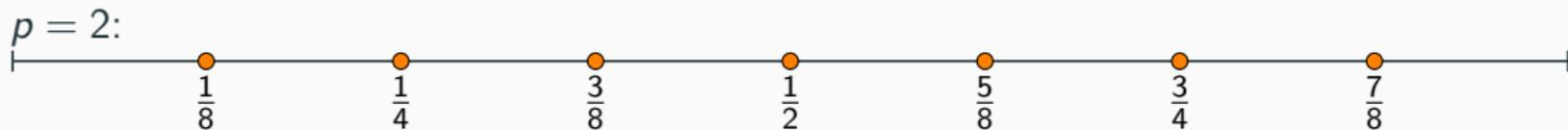
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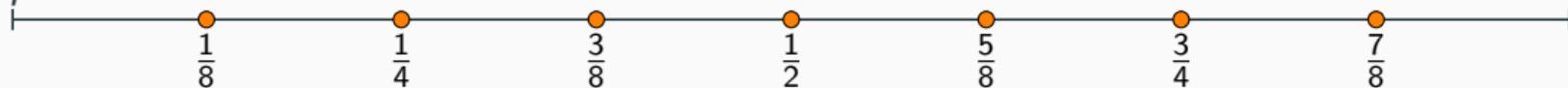
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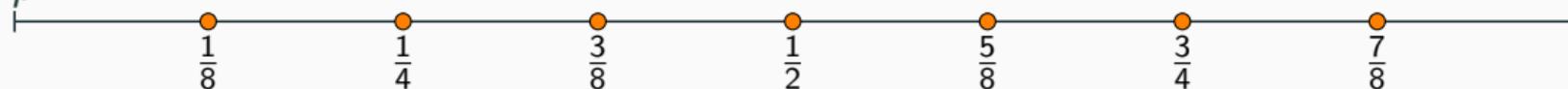
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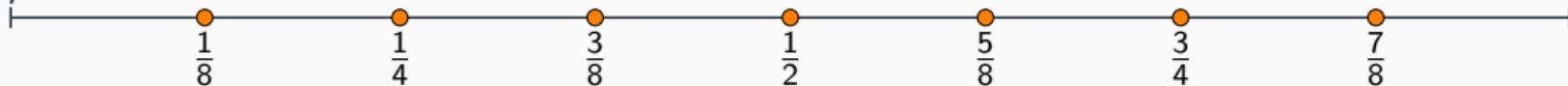
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- Examples:

$p = 2$ :



$p = 3$ :



## Deterministic Sampling (2)

- Key idea: The  $i^{\text{th}}$  number written using prime number  $p$  as base

```
1 def GenHalton(p, i):
2     h = 0
3     j = i
4     f = 1 / p
5     while j > 0:
6         quotient q, remainder r = j / p
7         h = h + f * r
8         j = q
9         f = f / p
10    return h
```

### GenHalton(2, 6)

$$h = 0; j = 6; f = \frac{1}{2}$$

$$q = 3; r = 0; h = 0; j = 3; f = \frac{1}{2 \cdot 2}$$

$$q = 1; r = 1; h = \frac{1}{4}; j = 1; f = \frac{1}{4 \cdot 2}$$

$$q = 0; r = 1; h = \frac{1}{4} + \frac{1}{8}; j = 0; f = \frac{1}{8 \cdot 2}$$

$$\frac{3}{8}$$

Note: 6 (base 10) is 110 (base 2);

$$\frac{3}{8} = 0\frac{1}{2} + 1\frac{1}{4} + 1\frac{1}{8}$$

## Deterministic Sampling (3)

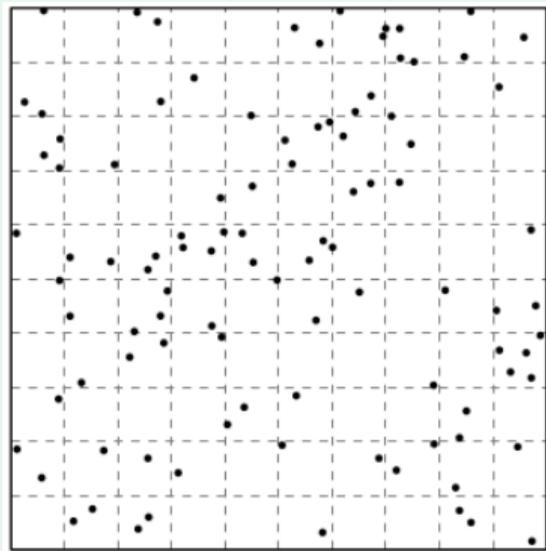
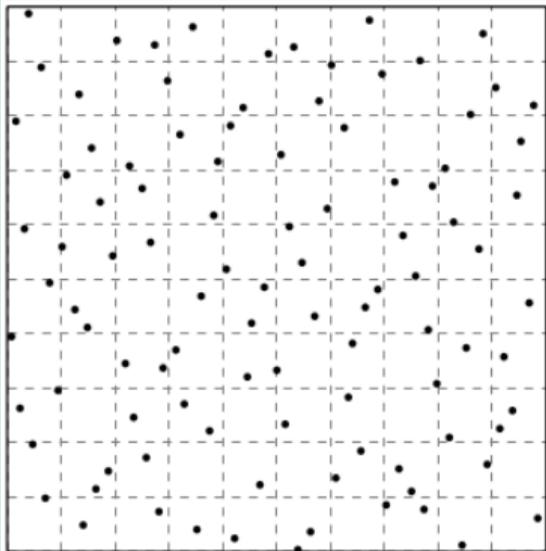
- Example sequence ( $p = 2, i = 1, \dots, 7$ ):

$$\frac{1}{2}, \quad \frac{1}{4}, \frac{3}{4}, \quad \frac{1}{8}, \frac{5}{8}, \frac{3}{8}, \frac{7}{8}$$

- For higher-dimensional configuration spaces, use different prime numbers per dimension
  - $Q \subset \mathbb{R}^2$ : Use  $p = 2$  for  $x$  and  $p = 3$  for  $y$

## Deterministic Sampling (4)

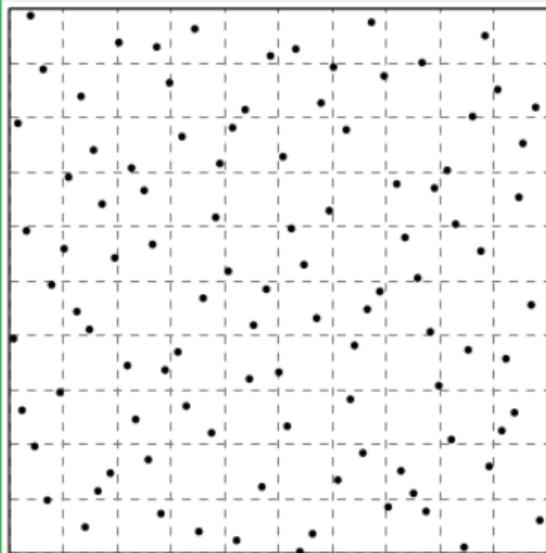
### 2D Case, 100 Samples



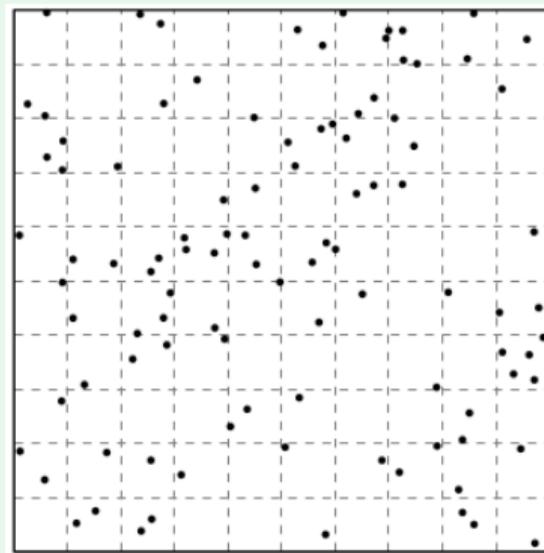
Which one is pseudo-random uniform and which one is Halton?

## Deterministic Sampling (4)

### 2D Case, 100 Samples



Halton



Uniform

## Dispersion: How well does a sampler cover the space? (1)

### Dispersion

Let  $\mathcal{P} \subset \mathcal{Q}$  be a set of points in the configuration space and  $d : \mathcal{Q} \times \mathcal{Q} \rightarrow \mathbb{R}_{\geq 0}$  be a metric. The dispersion is the maximum distance from a configuration  $\mathbf{q} \in \mathcal{Q}$  to its nearest sample  $\mathbf{p} \in \mathcal{P}$ :

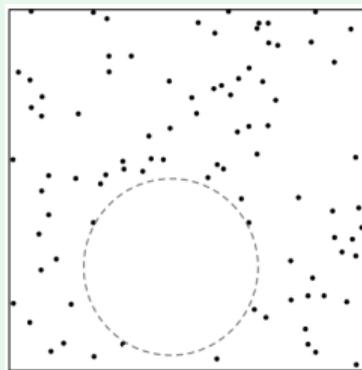
$$\text{dispersion}_d(\mathcal{P}) = \max_{\mathbf{q} \in \mathcal{Q}} \min_{\mathbf{p} \in \mathcal{P}} d(\mathbf{q}, \mathbf{p}).$$

## Dispersion (2)

### Dispersion

$$\text{dispersion}_d(\mathcal{P}) = \max_{q \in Q} \min_{p \in \mathcal{P}} d(x, p).$$

#### L2-Norm

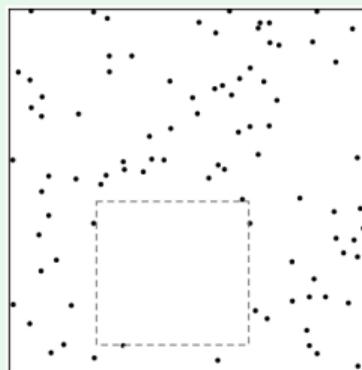


Source: [4]

$$Q = [0, 1]^2 \subset \mathbb{R}^2;$$

$$d(x, p) = \sqrt{(x_1 - p_1)^2 + (x_2 - p_2)^2}$$

#### $L_\infty$ -Norm

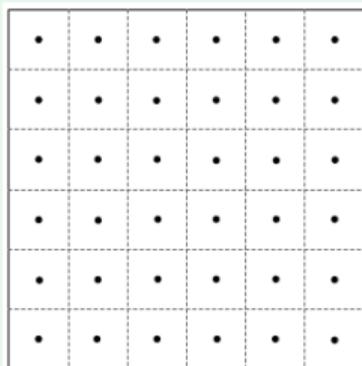


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$$Q = [0, 1]^2 \subset \mathbb{R}^2;$$

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### Minimal $L_\infty$ Dispersion: A Grid



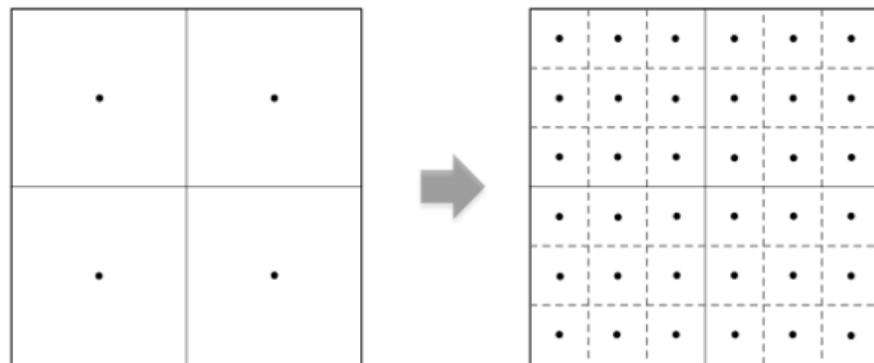
Source: [4]

$$Q = [0, 1]^2 \subset \mathbb{R}^2; \text{dispersion}_{L_\infty} = \frac{1}{2^{\sqrt[4]{n}}} = \frac{1}{2^{\sqrt[4]{36}}} = \frac{1}{12}$$

Why do we not use a grid for sampling?

## Dispersion (4)

Why do we not use a grid for sampling?



Source: [4]

A grid is not incremental (a resolution change requires exponentially many additional points).

Here:  $n = 4 \Rightarrow n \cdot 3^d = 4 \cdot 3^2 = 36$  configurations

## Sampling Method Pros and Cons

Sampling property	Uniform grids	Random sampling	Halton sequences
dispersion	$O\left(\frac{1}{\sqrt[d]{n}}\right)$	$O\left(\frac{\ln^{1/d}(n)}{\sqrt[d]{n}}\right)$	$O\left(\frac{f(d)}{\sqrt[d]{n}}\right)$
incremental	no	yes	yes
lattice	yes	no	yes (more complex)

### Lattice Property

Neighbors can be computed directly

# Nearest-Neighbor Computation

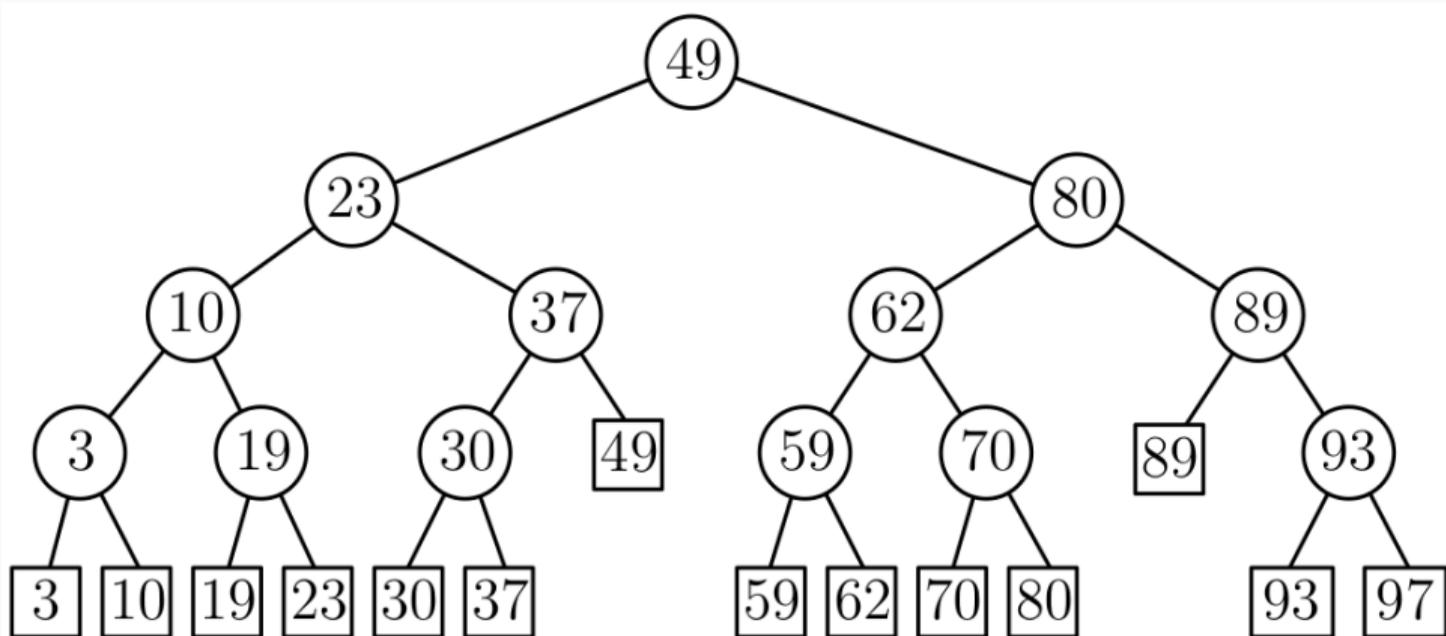
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**Efficient** Nearest-Neighbor calculation with the following interface:

- `addConfiguration(q)`  $\rightarrow$  `None`: Adding a configuration  $\mathbf{q} \in \mathcal{Q}$  to the datastructure
- `queryK(q, k)`  $\rightarrow$  `[Configuration]`: Return the  $k$  nearest (with respect to a distance metric) configurations of  $\mathbf{q}$
- `queryR(q, r)`  $\rightarrow$  `[Configuration]`: Return the configurations that are within a given distance  $r$  of  $\mathbf{q}$

## Background: Balanced binary search trees (1)

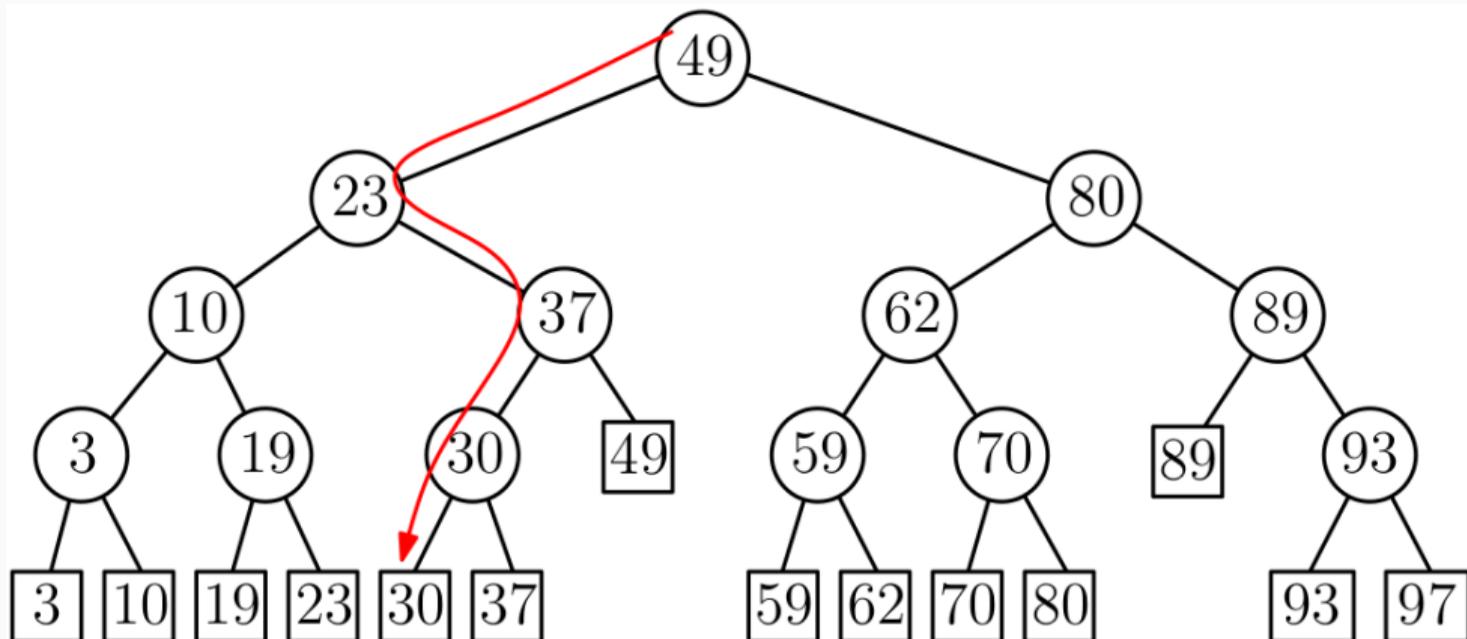
A balanced **binary search tree** with the points in the leaves



Source: [5]

## Background: Balanced binary search trees (2)

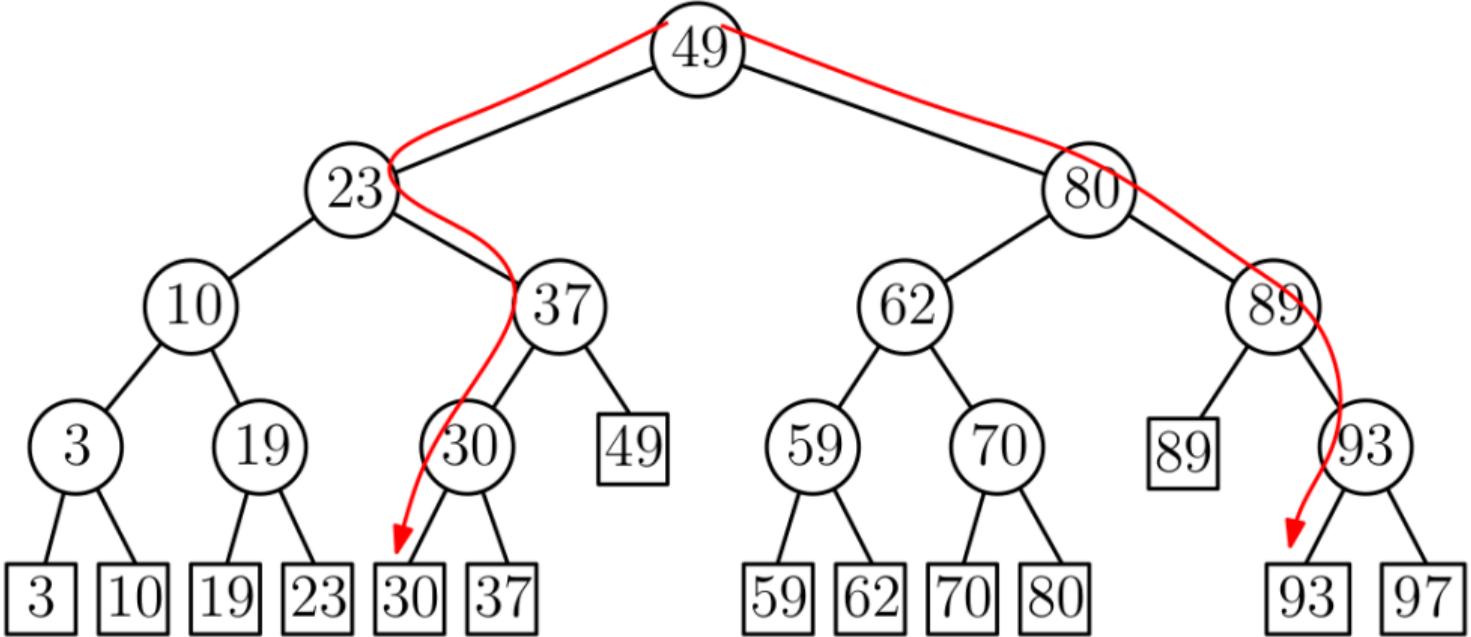
Searching if 25 is part of the tree



Source: [5]

# Background: Balanced binary search trees (3)

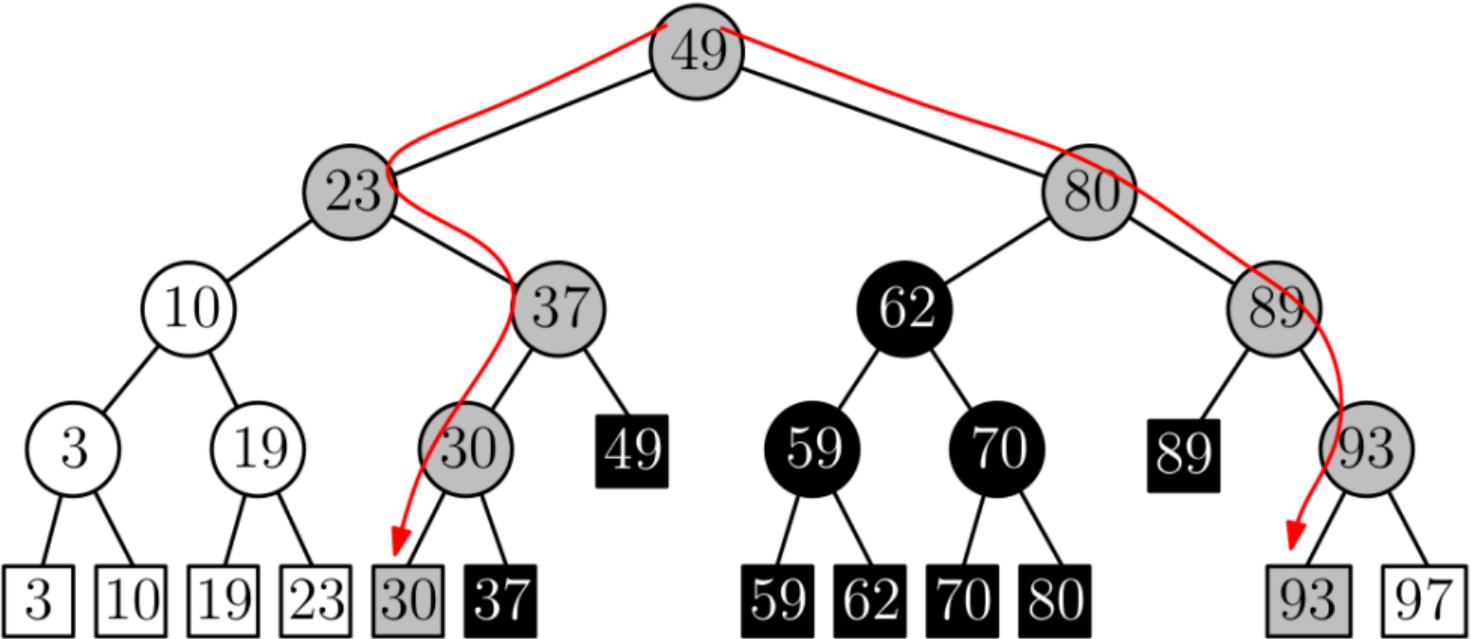
Search path for 25 and 90



Source: [5]

# Background: Balanced binary search trees (4)

A 1-dimensional range query with [25, 90]



Source: [5]

## Background: Balanced binary search trees (5)

- Build a binary search tree of  $N$  numbers (time:  $\mathcal{O}(N \log N)$ ; space:  $\mathcal{O}(N)$ )
- Finding an entry: time:  $\mathcal{O}(\log N)$
- Range query of  $K$  numbers: time  $\mathcal{O}(\log N + K)$

What is the naive Range Query Time Complexity?

## Background: Balanced binary search trees (5)

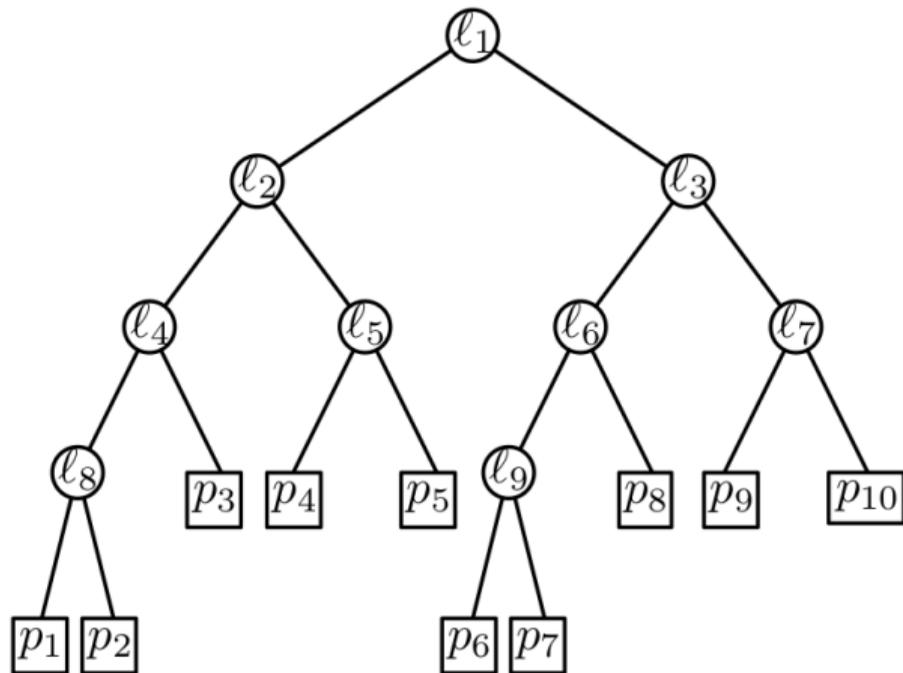
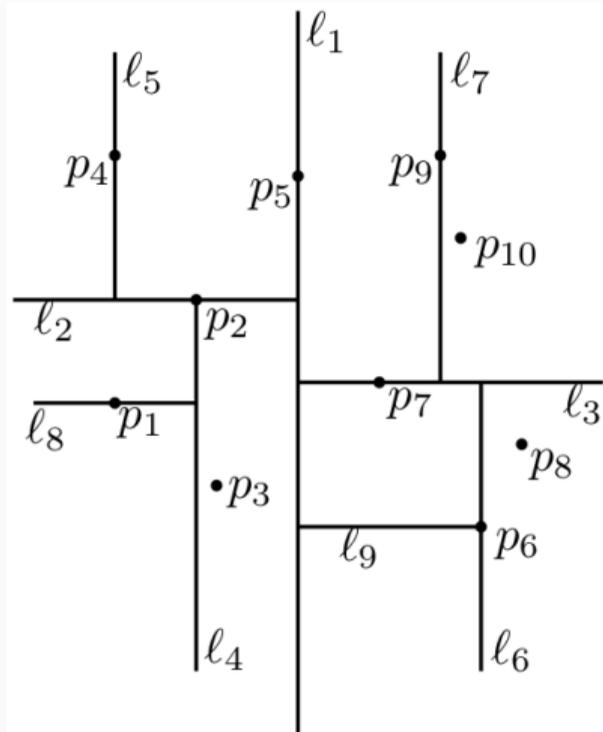
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**What is the naive Range Query Time Complexity?**

We have to consider all  $N$  numbers  $\Rightarrow \mathcal{O}(N)$

- Extend the same idea to multi-dimensional data
- 2D case:
  - Split the point set alternately by  $x$ -coordinate and by  $y$ -coordinate
  - Split by  $x$ -coordinate: split by a vertical line that has half the points left or on, and half right
  - Split by  $y$ -coordinate: split by a horizontal line that has half the points below or on, and half above

# Kd-Tree Example

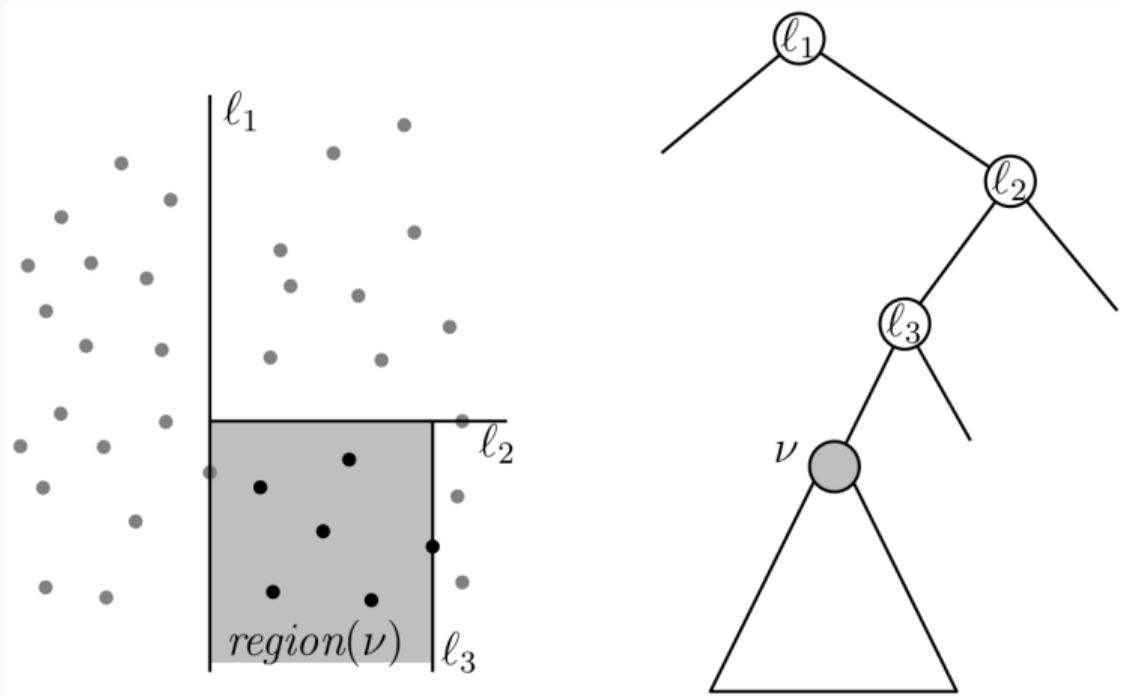


Source: [5]

**Algorithm** BUILDKDTREE( $P, depth$ )

1. **if**  $P$  contains only one point
2.     **then return** a leaf storing this point
3.     **else if**  $depth$  is even
4.         **then** Split  $P$  with a vertical line  $\ell$  through the median  $x$ -coordinate into  $P_1$  (left of or on  $\ell$ ) and  $P_2$  (right of  $\ell$ )
5.         **else** Split  $P$  with a horizontal line  $\ell$  through the median  $y$ -coordinate into  $P_1$  (below or on  $\ell$ ) and  $P_2$  (above  $\ell$ )
6.          $v_{\text{left}} \leftarrow \text{BUILDKDTREE}(P_1, depth + 1)$
7.          $v_{\text{right}} \leftarrow \text{BUILDKDTREE}(P_2, depth + 1)$
8.         Create a node  $v$  storing  $\ell$ , make  $v_{\text{left}}$  the left child of  $v$ , and make  $v_{\text{right}}$  the right child of  $v$ .
9.     **return**  $v$

# Kd-Tree Regions of Nodes

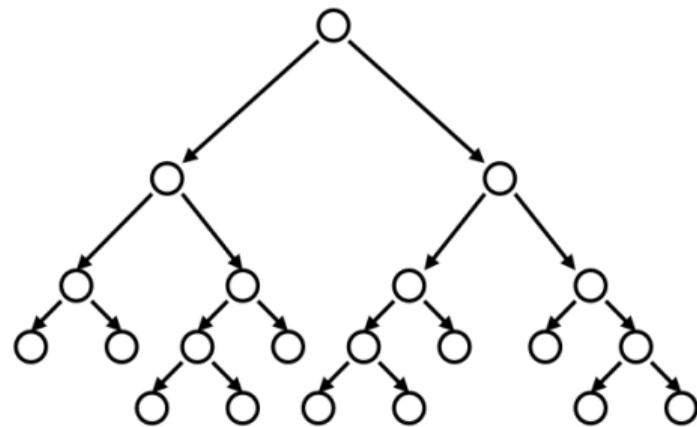
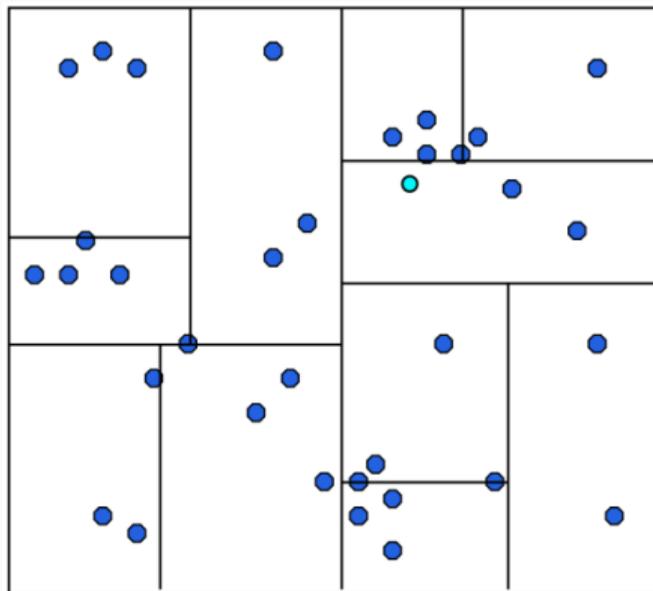


Source: [5]

Region can be:

- Stored explicitly at every node, OR
- Computed on-the-fly, while traversing from the root

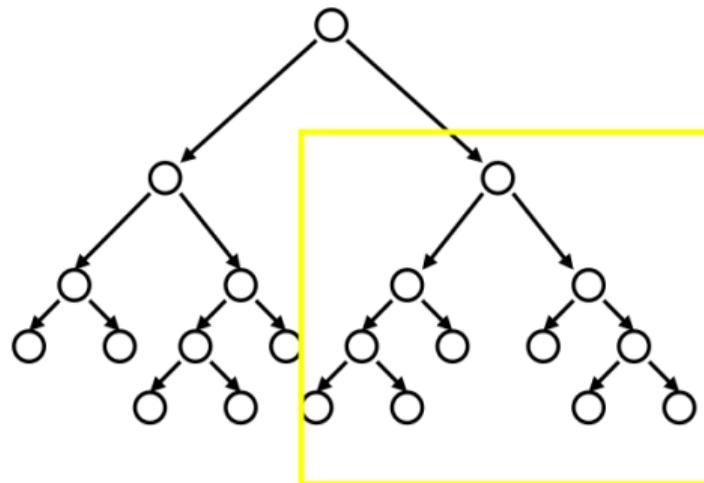
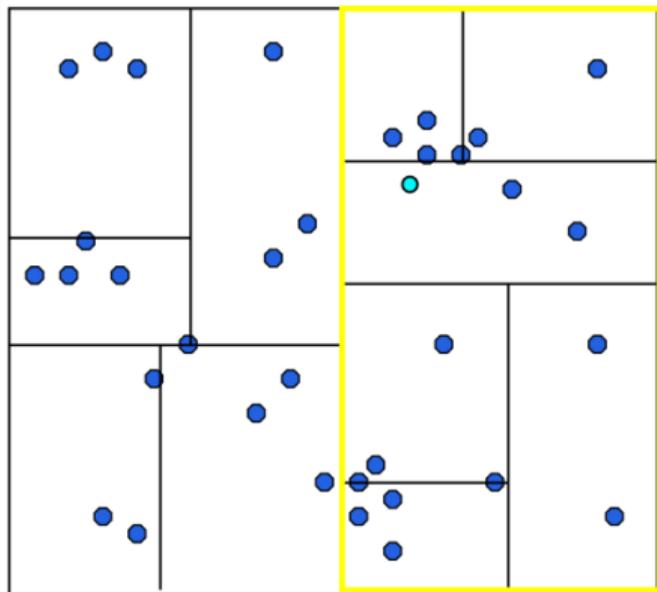
## Kd-Tree Query (1)



Source: [6]

Traverse existing tree to find region of query point (leaf in tree)

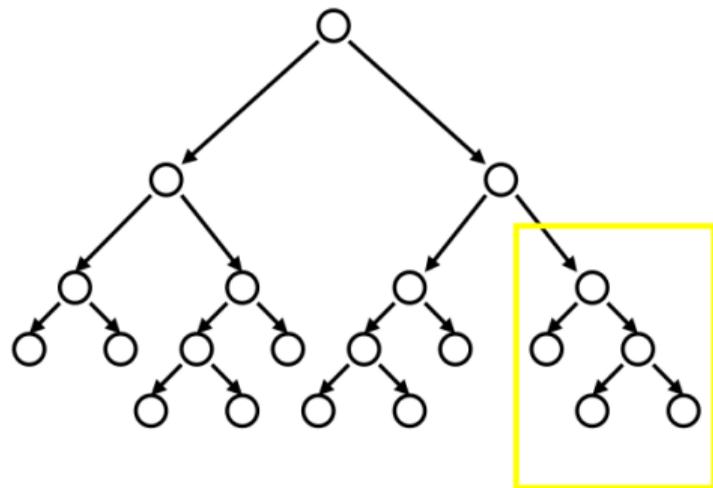
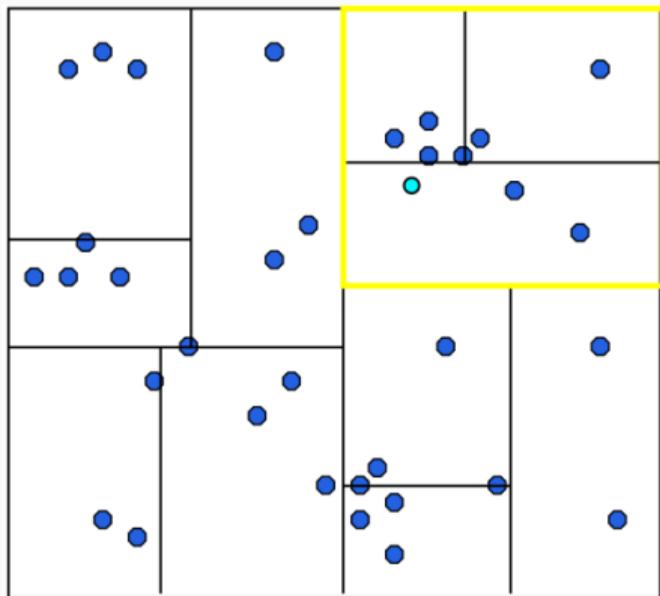
## Kd-Tree Query (1)



Source: [6]

Traverse existing tree to find region of query point (leaf in tree)

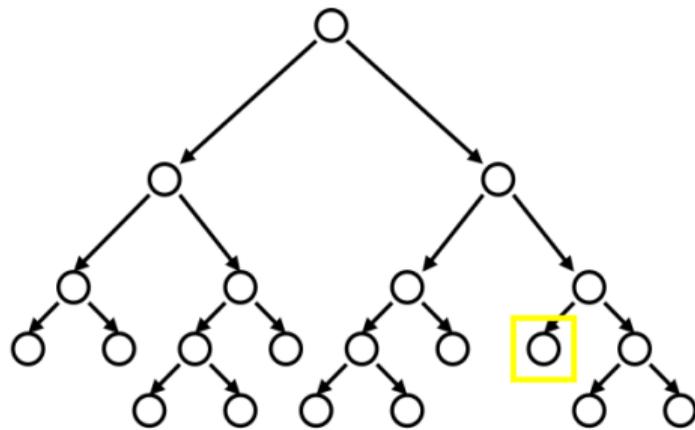
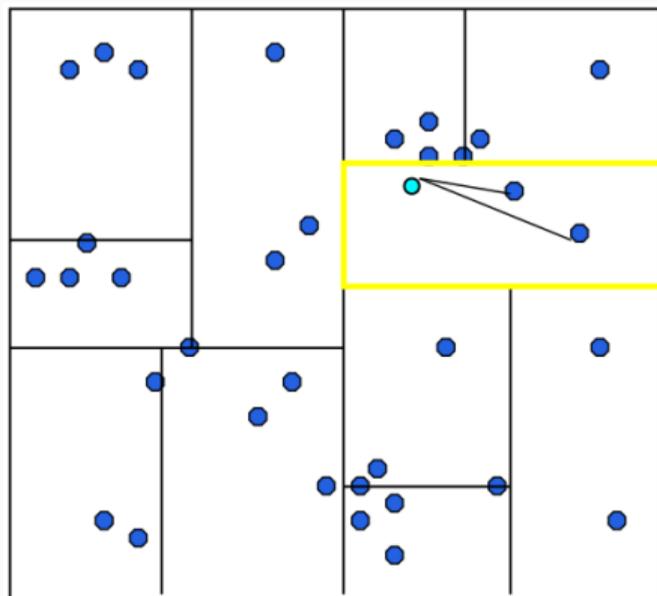
## Kd-Tree Query (1)



Source: [6]

Traverse existing tree to find region of query point (leaf in tree)

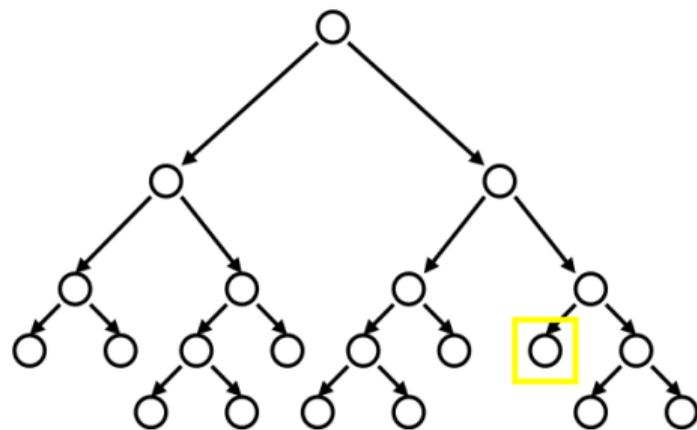
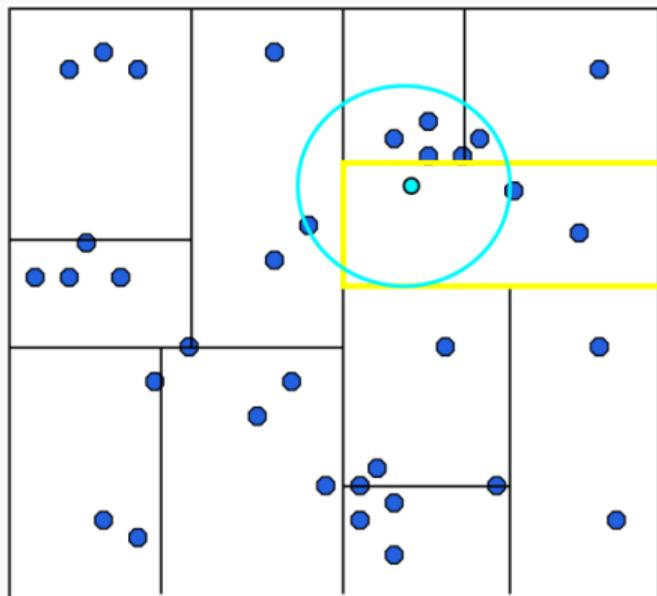
## Kd-Tree Query (2)



Source: [6]

At leaf node: compute distance to each point in the node

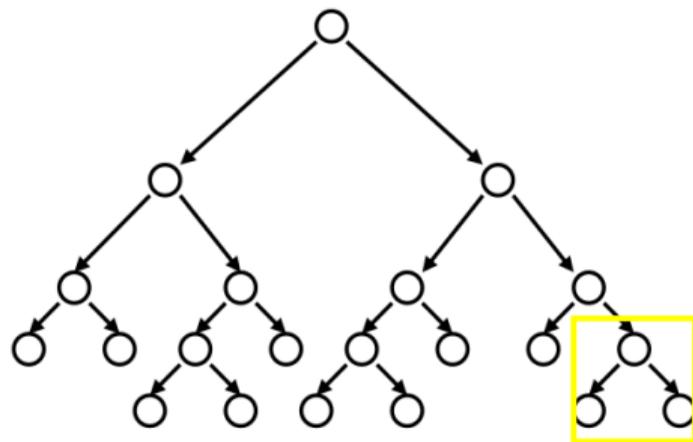
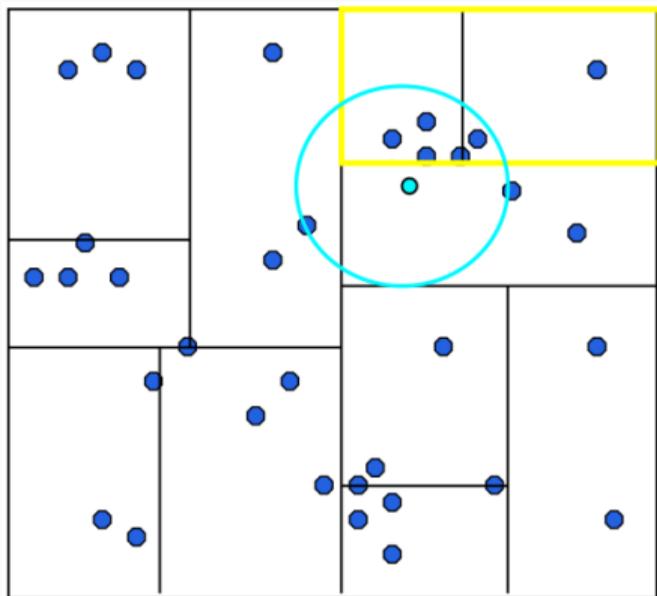
## Kd-Tree Query (2)



Source: [6]

At leaf node: compute distance to each point in the node

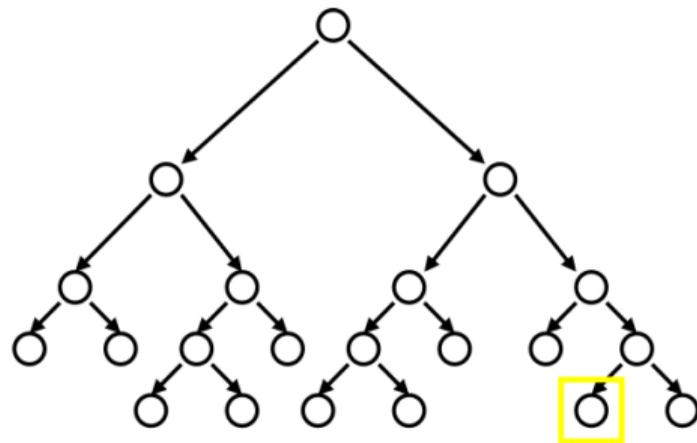
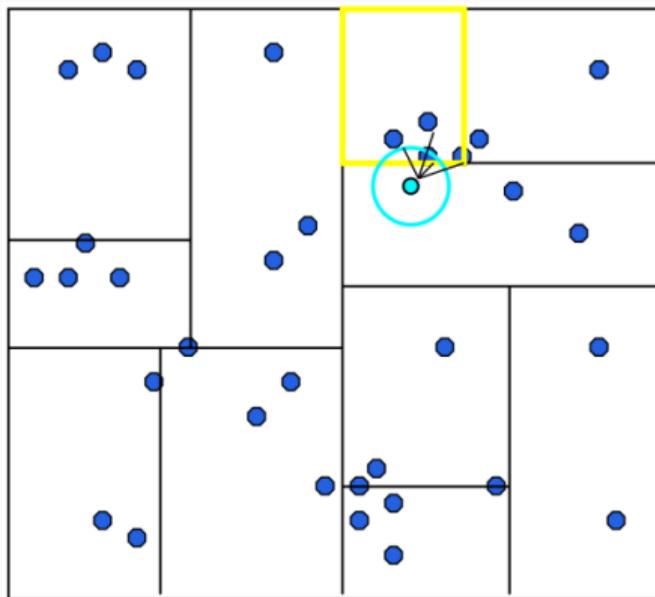
## Kd-Tree Query (3)



Source: [6]

Backtrack to sibling nodes

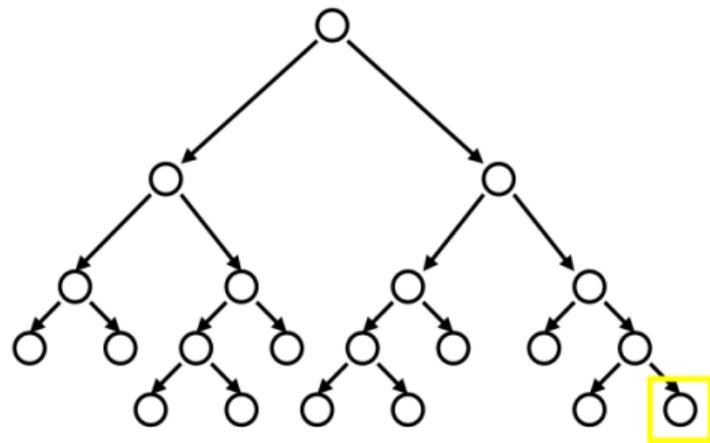
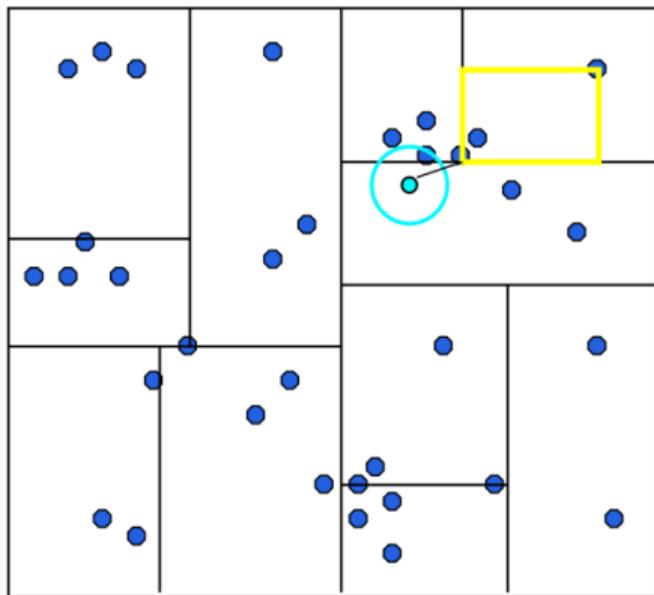
## Kd-Tree Query (4)



Source: [6]

Update distance bounds, when a new nearest neighbor is found

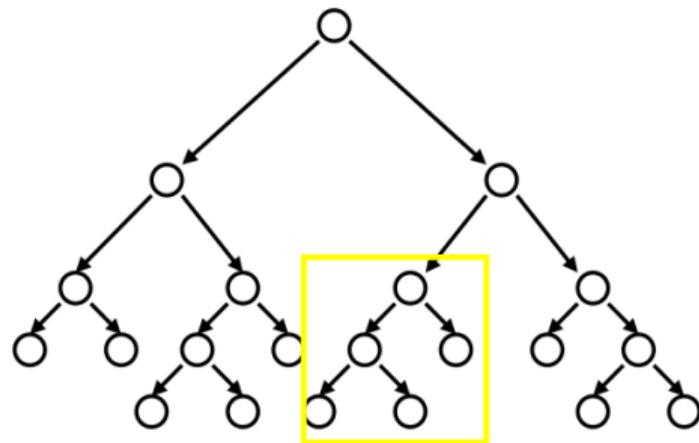
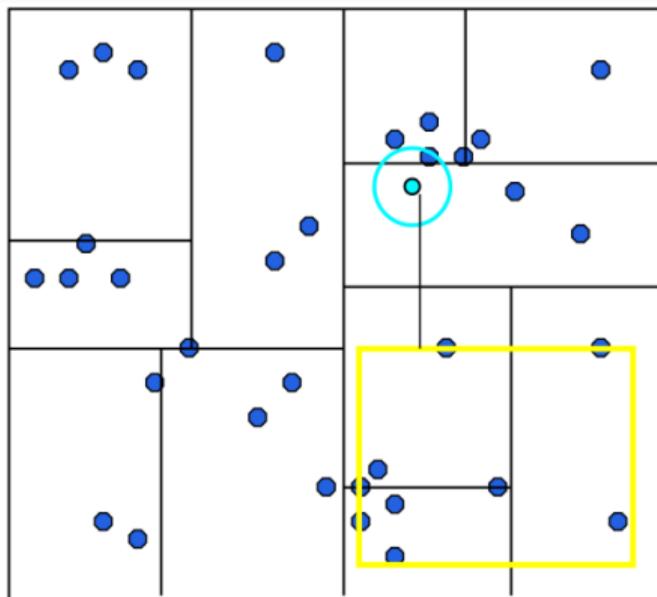
## Kd-Tree Query (5)



Source: [6]

Prune search area based on region bounds and distance bounds

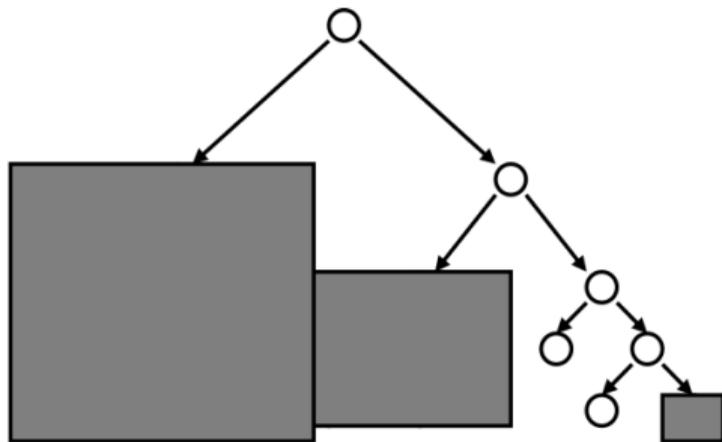
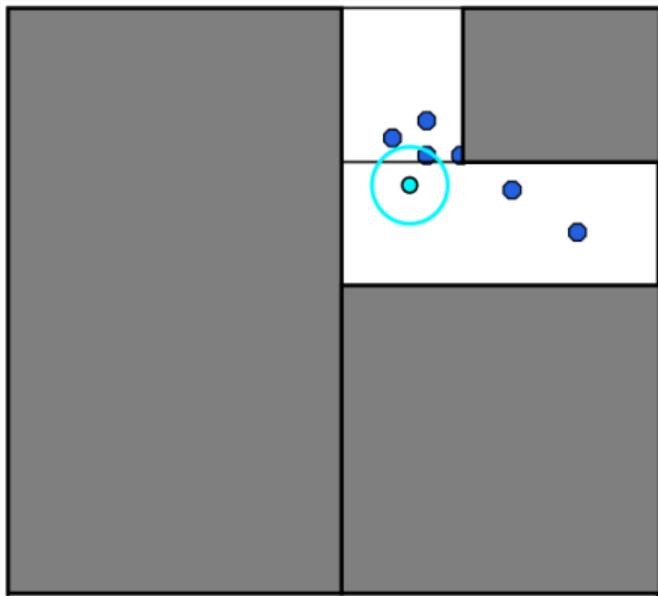
## Kd-Tree Query (5)



Source: [6]

Prune search area based on region bounds and distance bounds

## Kd-Tree Query (5)



Source: [6]

Prune search area based on region bounds and distance bounds

## Kd-Tree: Practical Notes

- KD-trees are much faster than a naive implementation (time complexity:  $\mathcal{O}(N^{1-1/d} + K)$ )
  - This is poor for high-dimensional spaces
  - Approximate Nearest Neighbor Algorithms (ANN) can help (but theoretical implications for sampling-based planners unknown)
- Possible to support more complicated configuration spaces (such as  $SE(3)$ )
- KD-Trees have a construction and query stage!

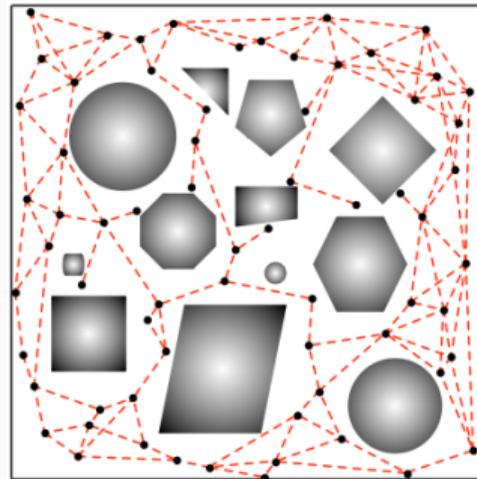
### How can KD-trees be used incrementally?

- Reconstruct the tree only every 1000 nodes, or so
- Keep Kd-tree and plain **list** since last reconstruction
- For a query, search both **Kd-tree and list**

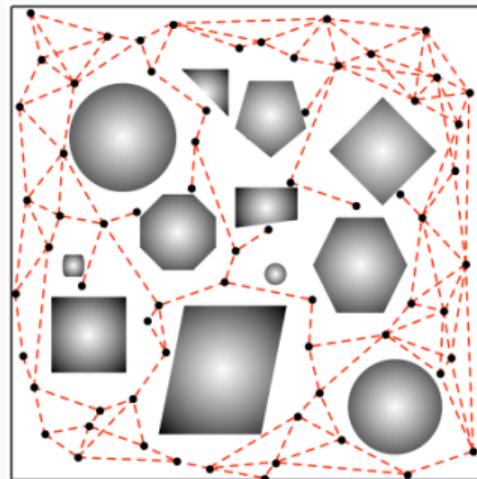
## PRM - Revisited

---

```
1 def GenPRM( $\mathcal{Q}$ ,  $\mathcal{W}_{free}$ ,  $\mathcal{B}(\cdot)$ ,  $N$ ):  
2    $\mathcal{G} = (\mathcal{V}, \mathcal{E}) = (\emptyset, \emptyset)$   
3   # Generate  $N$  vertices  
4   while  $|\mathcal{V}| < N$ :  
5      $\mathbf{q} = \text{Sample}(\mathcal{Q})$   
6     if  $\mathcal{B}(\mathbf{q}) \subset \mathcal{W}_{free}$ :  
7        $\mathcal{V} = \mathcal{V} \cup \{\mathbf{q}\}$   
8     # Connect vertices  
9     for  $\mathbf{q}$  in  $\mathcal{V}$ :  
10      for  $\mathbf{p}$  in  $\{\mathbf{p} \in \mathcal{V} : \text{isNeighbor}(\mathbf{p}, \mathbf{q})\}$ :  
11        if path  $\mathbf{q}$  to  $\mathbf{p}$  feasible:  
12           $\mathcal{E} = \mathcal{E} \cup \{\text{path } \mathbf{q} \text{ to } \mathbf{p}\}$   
13  return  $\mathcal{G}$ 
```



```
1 def GenPRM( $\mathcal{Q}$ ,  $\mathcal{W}_{free}$ ,  $\mathcal{B}(\cdot)$ ,  $N$ ):  
2    $\mathcal{G} = (\mathcal{V}, \mathcal{E}) = (\emptyset, \emptyset)$   
3   # Generate  $N$  vertices  
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12           $\mathcal{E} = \mathcal{E} \cup \{\text{path } \mathbf{q} \text{ to } \mathbf{p}\}$   
13   return  $\mathcal{G}$ 
```



# Motion Collision Checking

- Flexible Collision Library has **continuous collision checking**
  - Works as long as the motion is a linear interpolation of two configurations
- Alternative:
  - Compute intermediate configurations during the motion
  - Check the collision for each intermediate configuration
  - Note, that this is significantly slower than continuous collision checking

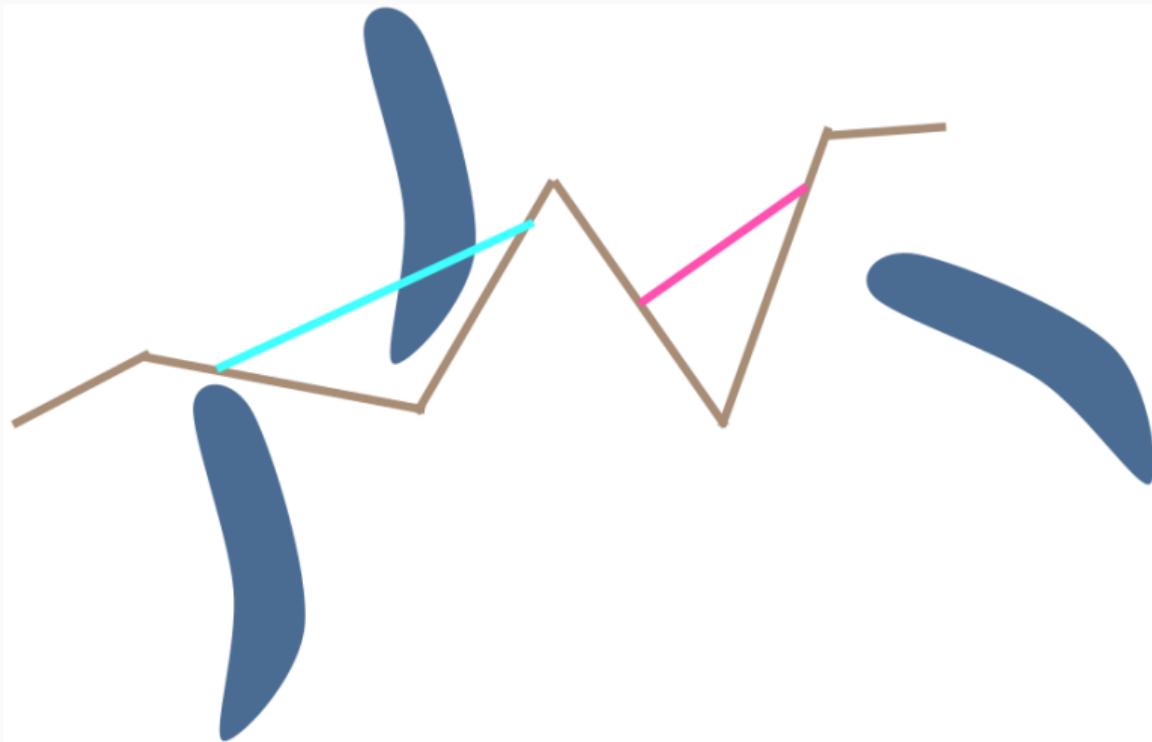
# Path Smoothing

- The output of PRM is often far from optimal
- Post-processing of the data can help

## Path Shortening

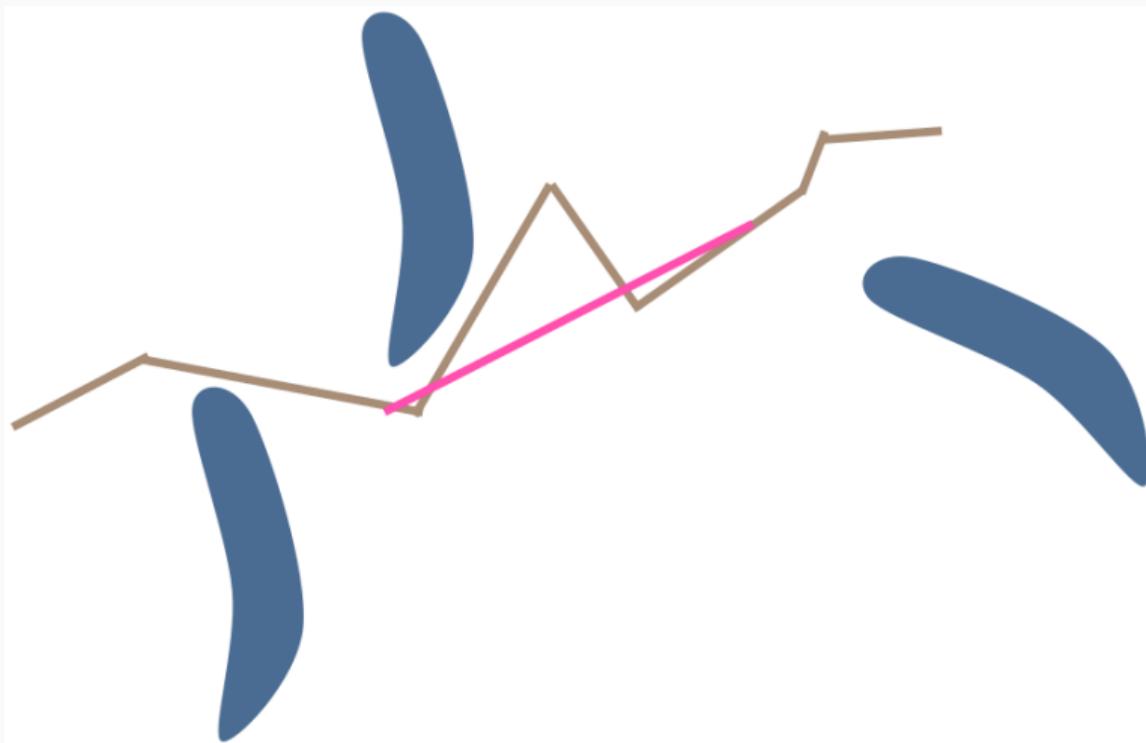
```
1 def PathShortening( $\langle \mathbf{q}_1, \mathbf{q}_2, \dots, \mathbf{q}_N \rangle$ ):  
2     Pick  $\mathbf{q}_i, \mathbf{q}_j$  randomly  
3     if  $(\mathbf{q}_i, \mathbf{q}_j)$  can be connected by a line:  
4         replace path between  $\mathbf{q}_i, \mathbf{q}_j$  using the line
```

## Path Shortening Example



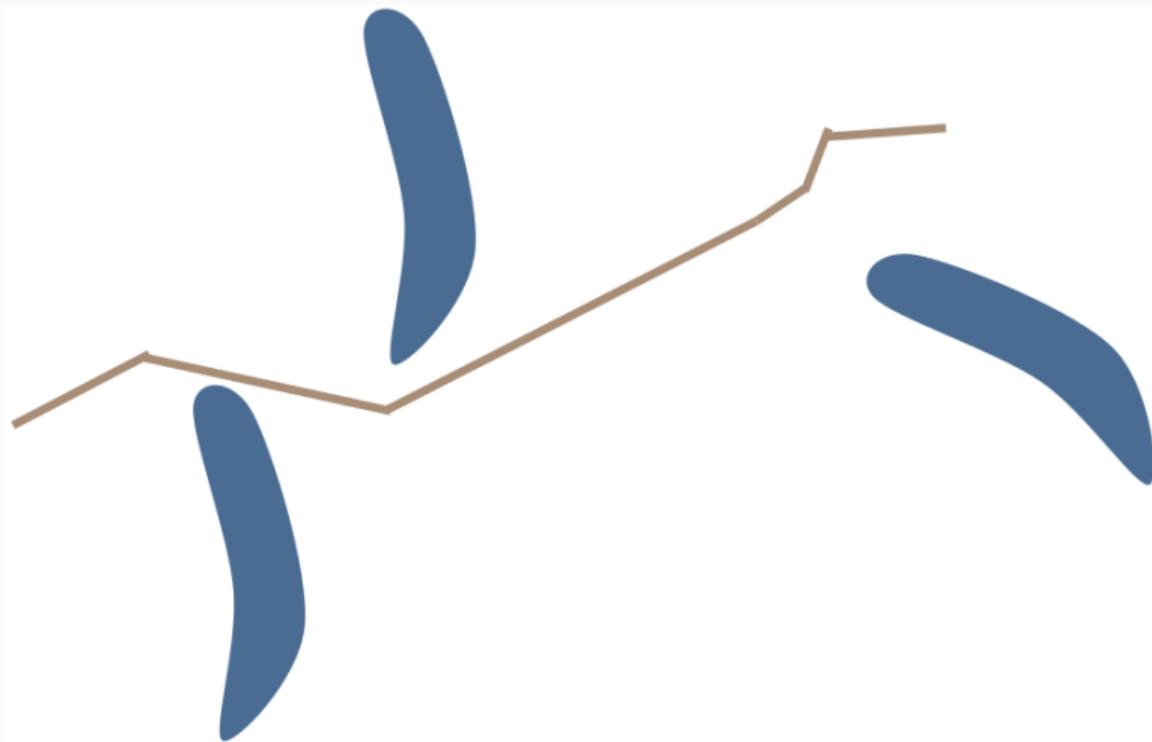
Source: [6]

## Path Shortening Example



Source: [6]

## Path Shortening Example



Source: [6]

### PRMs are probabilistically complete

Guaranteed to find a solution, if one exists, but only in the limit of the number of samples (that is, only as the number of samples approaches infinity).

- This is a milder form of **completeness**
- Typically no convergence guarantee, so not that helpful in practice
- Sampling-based planning works very well in high-dimensional spaces

# Conclusion

- PRM are multi-query planners
- Kd-trees allow fast nearest-neighbor computation
- Concept simple, but difficult in details
  - Choice of sampling
  - Choice of nearest-neighbor computation
  - Handling of metric spaces correctly throughout

## Next Time

- Tree-based Planners; Optimizing Planners

## Suggested Reading

1. Oren Salzman. “Sampling-Based Robot Motion Planning”. In: *Communications of the ACM* 62.10 (Sept. 24, 2019), pp. 54–63. ISSN: 0001-0782. DOI: 10.1145/3318164
2. F. Bullo and S. L. Smith. *Lectures on Robotic Planning and Kinematics*. 2019. URL: <http://motion.me.ucsb.edu/book-lrpk/>, [Chapter 4](#)
3. Steven M. LaValle. *Planning algorithms*. Cambridge University Press, 2006. ISBN: 978-0-521-86205-9. URL: <http://planning.cs.uiuc.edu>, [Section 5.6](#)
4. Kevin M. Lynch and Frank C. Park. *Modern Robotics*. Cambridge University Press, 2017. ISBN: 978-1-107-15630-2. URL: [http://hades.mech.northwestern.edu/index.php/Modern\\_Robotics](http://hades.mech.northwestern.edu/index.php/Modern_Robotics), [Section 10.5](#)

- [1] L.E. Kavraki, P. Svestka, J.-C. Latombe, and M.H. Overmars. “Probabilistic Roadmaps for Path Planning in High-Dimensional Configuration Spaces”. In: *IEEE Transactions on Robotics and Automation* 12.4 (Aug. 1996), pp. 566–580. ISSN: 2374-958X. DOI: 10.1109/70.508439.
- [2] J.J. Kuffner. “Effective Sampling and Distance Metrics for 3D Rigid Body Path Planning”. In: *IEEE International Conference on Robotics and Automation*. Vol. 4. 2004, pp. 3993–3998. DOI: 10.1109/ROBOT.2004.1308895.
- [3] Steven M. LaValle. *Planning algorithms*. Cambridge University Press, 2006. ISBN: 978-0-521-86205-9. URL: <http://planning.cs.uiuc.edu>.

- [4] F. Bullo and S. L. Smith. *Lectures on Robotic Planning and Kinematics*. 2019. URL: <http://motion.me.ucsb.edu/book-lrpk/>.
- [5] Frank Staals. *Geometric Algorithms*. 2021. URL: <http://www.cs.uu.nl/docs/vakken/ga/2021/>.
- [6] Dmitry Berenson. “Motion Planning: Robotics and Beyond”. In: (2021). URL: <https://web.eecs.umich.edu/~dmitryb/courses/winter2021motionplanning/index.html>.
- [7] Oren Salzman. “Sampling-Based Robot Motion Planning”. In: *Communications of the ACM* 62.10 (Sept. 24, 2019), pp. 54–63. ISSN: 0001-0782. DOI: 10.1145/3318164.

- [8] Kevin M. Lynch and Frank C. Park. *Modern Robotics*. Cambridge University Press, 2017. ISBN: 978-1-107-15630-2. URL: [http://hades.mech.northwestern.edu/index.php/Modern\\_Robotics](http://hades.mech.northwestern.edu/index.php/Modern_Robotics).