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Interactive Stream Surface Placement: A Hybrid Clustering Approach Supported By Tree Maps

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Abstract: The ability of a CFD engineer to study, capture, and visualise multi-field, 3D flow simulation data is a challenge. Stream surfaces are a useful tool for visualising 3D flow because of their ability to convey many field attributes from their structure. It is important that the CFD engineer can interact with, and examine specific characteristics of the CFD data. We introduce an interactive, cluster based stream surface placement strategy for structured and unstructured CFD data. A two-phase hybrid clustering algorithm is used to visualise interesting subsets of the flow. An interactive tree map interface provides a visual overview and enables interactive selection of cluster details corresponding to interesting features of the data at which to place stream surfaces. We demonstrate the performance and effectiveness of our interactive framework on a range of flow simulations and provide domain expert evaluation of the results, providing valuable insight for the CFD engineers.

1 Introduction

The Challenge of visualising CFD simulations include handling large, unstructured, high dimensional data. This motivates the need for visualisation techniques to address this challenge. Although many algorithms have been described for the placement of streamlines, relatively few have been presented for stream surfaces. An important process for the revealing flow characteristics is the seeding of such techniques. In this context, we extend recent work automating the placement of stream surfaces (Edmunds et al., 2012b) (Edmunds et al., 2012a) (Edmunds et al., 2011). We study the surface placement algorithm with emphasis on reducing the memory requirements and computational time for the clustering, while working with unstructured data. Part of the motivation behind our work is a request from CFD experts to interactively select a sub-set (or cluster) of the multi-field CFD data and obtain more details. We further study the domain expert requirements, developing a visual interface and tools for interactive selection and filtering of cluster representations of CFD data. The requirements of the domain experts include: interactive selection of specific areas of interest, combined visualisation of flow and CFD data, and visualisation of the evolution of the flow in both upstream and downstream directions.

In order to accelerate computational speed, and process large datasets, we introduce an algorithm for the interactive and semi automatic placement of stream surfaces by exploiting a two phase clustering technique that emphasises interesting features of real world CFD simulation data. We present a novel use of k-means clustering combined with Density Based Spatial Clustering of Applications with Noise (DBSCAN) (Ester et al., 1996). The clustering technique is used to locate areas of interest for the domain user, and then to generate seeding curves and surfaces local to a given cluster, which yield insightful representations of multi-field CFD data. This allows the investigation of simulation attributes as they evolve in up and downstream directions of the flow.

Vector field clustering has been used to show interesting flow features for real world data sets (Peng et al., 2012). They offer the benefit of not having to make a binary decision based on the presence of a feature. K-Means Clustering algorithms provide a general approach to partitioning data. Density based distance functions are another useful tool for partitioning the domain into smaller subsets. We employ both of these approaches in our framework for automatic placement of surfaces in multi-field data sets. Data samples clustered with k-means in attribute space may well be separated in Euclidean space. To

deal with this we use the DBSCAN clustering to further partition each k-means cluster into sub clusters separated in Euclidean space. This approach enables the domain expert to focus on an individual structure in the flow.

Selecting and interacting with large numbers of clusters positioned in 3D space is a challenging task. A novel approach to enabling selection and interactivity of flow field clusters in 3D space is to couple them to tree maps. The different cluster attributes are displayed with the tree map in an interactive visual interface, for the user to guide the selection of clusters to place stream surfaces. Tree maps enable the user to select individual (or groups of) clusters and drill down the hierarchy to obtain more detail. We illustrate how to capture the characteristics of the flow field for the domain users. Our focus pays particular attention to the performance and flexibility of the clustering combined with the interactive seeding curve placement. The main benefits and contributions of this paper are:

- Improved computational speed and memory usage over recent vector field clustering work, with the ability to process large, high-dimensional datasets fast and efficiently.
- An algorithm to partition the flow field using k-means clustering, providing superior performance / memory footprint, and a feature based overview of the data.
- A technique that subdivides the resulting clusters based on Euclidean density to support interactive hierarchical analysis, and semi-automatic stream surface placement.
- A tree map interface to support interactive selection of hierarchical clusters in a focus and context manner.
- The application of these visualisation and interaction techniques to real world CFD data with reviews from the domain experts who prefer the proposed method over previous techniques.

The rest of this paper is divided into the following sections. A review of related literature is conducted in section 2. A detailed presentation of the algorithm is given in section 3. The results are reviewed in section 4. A domain expert evaluation is provided in section 5. Conclusions and future work are discussed in section 6.

2 Related Work

The related work falls into the following: streamline placement, surface placement strategies, vector field clustering, and tree maps. We refer the readers to (Edmunds et al., 2012c) for a complete overview of flow visualisation with surfaces.

Clustering (Xu et al., 2005) survey the topic of clustering, focusing on scalar clustering algorithms rooted in statistics, computer science, and machine learning. Clustering algorithms can be divided into hierarchical clustering or partition-based clustering. The (Telea and van Wijk, 1999) algorithm utilises a hierarchical approach, as does the work by (Edmunds et al., 2012b). These algorithms are effective in providing a simplified representation of a vector field. However, these algorithms are $O(n^2)$ complex where n is the number of initial samples. This has a significant impact on computation and memory requirements. Alternatively, partitioning algorithms such as k-means clustering (Bock, 2007) are generally $O(i \cdot k \cdot n)$ complex (Kogan, 2007), where k is the number of centroids or means, and i is the number of iterations. Another partitioning scheme of interest is DBSCAN (Density Based Spatial Clustering of Applications with Noise) (Ester et al., 1996). This method is particularly useful in partitioning a space based on the local density, e.g. if two groups of data are spatially separated, DBSCAN will partition the two groups into separate clusters. If neighbourhood connectivity data is stored the overall runtime complexity is $O(n \cdot \log n)$. We utilise the k-means clustering to partition a given field from the multi-field data. We then apply the DBSCAN clustering to each resultant cluster mean, partitioning the cluster based on euclidean density.

Tree Maps (Johnson and Shneiderman, 1991) and (Shneiderman, 1992) introduce a method for the visualisation of hierarchically structured information. The technique makes efficient use of the available space where the full hierarchy is mapped to a rectangular area (Ward et al., 2010). Large hierarchies can be rendered completely, while representing a range of semantic information. Following from this, (Van Wijk and Van De Wetering, 1999) render the rectangles with shading to improve perception. During the subdivision, the rectangles are rendered with a simple shading model. The result is a tree map that consists of recursive cushions.

(Bruls et al., 2000) introduce the squarified tree map to generate layouts in which the rectangles approximate squares. The layout of the children in one rectangle is a recursive procedure which presents the rectangles in either horizontal and vertical rows. The squarified tree map approach provides the domain expert with interaction and real time feedback. This enables selection of individual clusters, and placement of stream surfaces in the flow. This is the first work that we know of that exploits tree maps in order to address the challenges of selecting and interacting with a large number of clusters in 3D space.

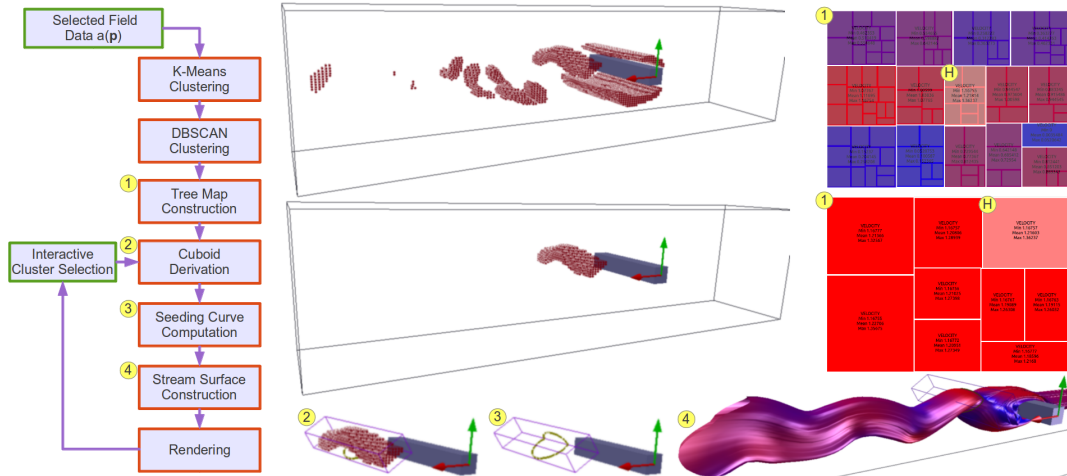


Figure 1: The left image shows our algorithm pipeline. The top centre and right images show a selected k-means cluster. The selected cluster in the tree map is highlighted grey, and labelled with a ‘H’. The centre and centre right images show a selected DBSCAN sub cluster. The bottom right image shows a cuboid fitted to a selected cluster. The bottom centre image shows seeding curves derived at the cuboid boundaries. The bottom right image shows the final rendering of the upstream and downstream surfaces. The dataset shown here has been provided by Tino Weinkauff and used in von Funck et al. for smoke visualisations (von Funck et al., 2008).

3 Interactive Surface Placement

This section describes our interactive stream surface placement algorithm, starting with an overview of the pipeline illustrated in Figure 1. The algorithm features clustering of the selected data field, visualisation and selection of clusters with a tree map, surface placement, and rendering. The input to our visualisation framework is a multi-field CFD simulation. The user selects a single scalar data field $a(\mathbf{p})$ to cluster. The input to the algorithm is $a(\mathbf{p}) \in \mathbb{R}$, where $a \in \mathbb{R}$, $\mathbf{p} \in \Omega$ and is a 3D regular or unstructured grid in \mathbb{R}^3 .

1. We start by partitioning the selected data field into k clusters. The k-means algorithm iterates until it converges to a stable set of means. See Section 3.1.
2. We then use the DBSCAN algorithm to further subdivide the resulting clusters. The purpose is to partition any cluster which has spacial separation. This spacial separation is important when examining individual features of the flow field. See Section 3.2.
3. Next we build a hierarchical tree with k-means clusters as inner nodes, and the DBSCAN sub clusters as leaf nodes. This tree is then visualised with an interactive tree map, displaying meta data about each cluster. The user can interactively select any cluster or sub cluster. The selected cluster is rendered in the main window. See Section 3.3.
4. Once the cluster of interest is selected we calculate the clusters spacial centre, along with the major and minor axis of the covariance matrix derived from the cluster’s second moments. These attributes are used to fit an oriented bounding box

(seeding cuboid) to the cluster. See Section 3.4.

5. Next we compute the seeding curves at the cuboid boundary planes. See Section 3.5.
6. Stream surfaces are propagated from each of the seeding curves. Flow attributes may be mapped to colour and opacity. After the generation of the stream surfaces, the surface data is rendered using a number of illustrative techniques to enhance the perception. See Section 3.6.

3.1 K-Means Clustering

K-Means clustering is a fast, simple, and popular method for clustering data (Bock, 2007). With relatively low computational requirements and memory usage compared to hierarchical clustering, it is a good candidate to solve data partitioning and significantly reduce the computational and memory requirements. This algorithm needs no modification to deal with either structured or unstructured data.

The procedure provides a simple way to classify a given data field through a number k of clusters chosen a priori. The main idea is to define k centroids, one for each cluster. The next step is to take each grid vertex \mathbf{p}_i belonging to Ω and associate it with the nearest initial centroid c (Kogan, 2007). The distance function $d(c, a) = ||c - a||^2$.

3.2 DBSCAN Clustering

The Density-Based Spatial Clustering of Applications with Noise (DBSCAN) algorithm is used for finding non linear shape structures based on the density (Ester et al., 1996). Once the k-means clustering has converged, the resultant points are neighbouring clusters in the chosen data field. However this is

not necessarily so in euclidean space. Separation of these clusters into sub clusters in euclidean space is important to the domain expert when examining distinct features in the flow field to which the k-means cluster is associated. DBSCAN requires two parameters; ϵ the minimum distance to neighbouring points and the minimum number of points required to form a cluster n_{min} .

3.3 Cluster Selection with Tree Maps

Hierarchical structures are ubiquitous e.g. family trees, and directory structures (Kehrer and Hauser, 2012). Many techniques have been proposed to visualise such structures more effectively. However, few methods have been presented for interacting with a large cluster hierarchy in 3D space. Tree maps are an efficient and compact method to display hierarchical structures. The basis for choosing tree maps is two fold: First, the CFD domain experts specifically requested the ability to select any cluster and obtain more detail. Second, interacting and selecting clusters in a large 3D spacial hierarchy is cumbersome at best.

We utilise squarified tree maps by (Bruls et al., 2000). The method is based on tree maps by (Johnson and Shneiderman, 1991) and (Shneiderman, 1992). The tree map is constructed via recursive subdivision of an initial rectangle. The size of each sub rectangle corresponds to the size of the node. Colour and annotation is used to provide further information about the leaves. We build a hierarchical tree with the k-means clusters represented by the inner nodes. We then build the leaf nodes of the tree with the DBSCAN sub clusters of the parent spherical k-means cluster mean node. Moving the mouse over a node in the tree map view highlights the cluster vertices within the 3D spacial view. If the user moves the mouse over a k-means node, the complete set of cluster vertices are displayed in the 3D spacial view. Meta data about the cluster is shown in the tree map view, along with the DBSCAN children of this cluster. If the user selects the cluster node, the children are displayed in the tree view. Again, if the user moves the mouse over a DBSCAN node, the sub cluster is displayed in the main view. Meta data about sub clusters are shown on the tree map view. (See Figure 2).

The benefits of this method are that user interaction provides feedback about the spacial hierarchies, filtering the spacial hierarchies to examine specific areas of interest, and details on demand. This allows the domain expert to explore and select areas of the data in a focus and context manner and provides visual feedback in the linked 3D view. Once an area of interest is selected, the user can examine with the use of stream surfaces how the attributes of the flow evolve

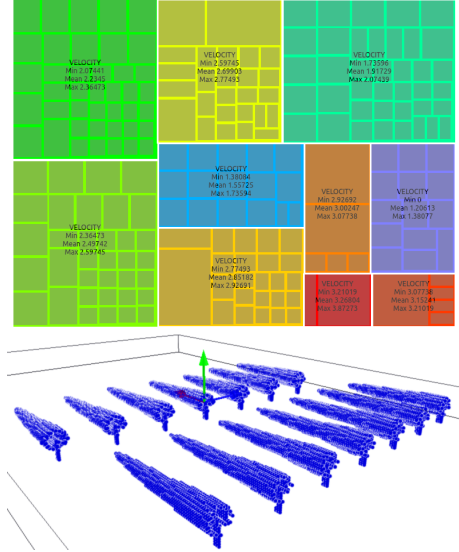


Figure 2: The tree map in the top image shows a highlighted cluster (middle right) which can be seen rendered in the main view (bottom image). The size of the rectangle is mapped to the size of the cluster, and colour is mapped to the mean of the cluster. Meta data about the cluster is overlaid onto the cluster rectangle. The sub clusters generated from the DBSCAN clustering can also be seen in the highlighted tree map cluster, and relate to the spacially separated sub clusters seen in the main view (bottom image). The colour of the cluster in the bottom image is also mapped to its mean.

both upstream and downstream. Stream surfaces are generated from a seeding cuboid, fitted around the cluster of interest.

3.4 Cluster Attribute Computation

An object, e.g. an ellipsoid or bounding box, with nine degrees of freedom, is fitted around the geometry of a cluster. There are three degrees of freedom for the centre point position, three for the orientation of the object axes, and three for the axes lengths.

The object fit provides a good indication of the global geometry of a cluster's position, size, and orientation. The centre point position is the average position of the cluster points. The volume of an object can be determined from the axis lengths. The orientation can be determined from the axis directions. The following is a description of the method used to derive the cluster attributes. We describe the analytic and the related discretised version. For any cluster $\pi(c)$ the following volume integrals describe its shape in euclidean space (Jolliffe, 2005) (Reinders, 2001) (Stroud and Booth, 2001). The Euclidean centre of $\pi(c)$:

$$\mathbf{u}_\pi = \frac{1}{v_\pi} \int_\pi \mathbf{p} dv$$

where $\mathbf{p} \in \pi(c)$ is a vertex in 3D euclidean space, and v_π is the volume of $\pi(c)$. We next calculate the second moment of $\pi(c)$. This provides us with the covariance

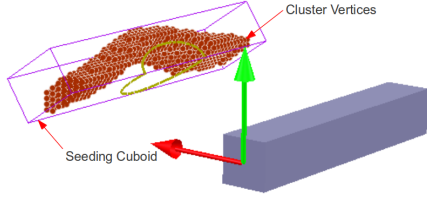


Figure 3: This image illustrates a seeding cuboid fitted to a cluster in the flow past a cuboid data. The seeding cuboid is centred at the cluster centre, oriented according to the eigenvector directions, and is scaled by the eigenvalues.

matrix s_π :

$$s_\pi = \frac{1}{v_\pi} \int_\pi (\mathbf{p} - \mathbf{u}_\pi) (\mathbf{p} - \mathbf{u}_\pi)^T dv$$

The eigenvectors of the covariance matrix s_π are three unit vectors \mathbf{e}_1 , \mathbf{e}_2 , and \mathbf{e}_3 with $s_\pi \mathbf{e}_i = \lambda_i \mathbf{e}_i$ where \mathbf{e}_i is the i^{th} eigenvector and λ_i is the corresponding eigenvalue. The normalised standard deviation σ of the covariance s_π in the i^{th} eigenvalue direction is $\sigma_i = \sqrt{\lambda_i / v_\pi}$. To fit a cuboid C to any cluster $\pi(c)$, it is centred on \mathbf{u}_π where its size and orientation in each axis corresponds to the unit eigenvectors \mathbf{e}_i multiplied by the corresponding normalised standard deviation σ_i . See Figure 3.

3.5 Seeding Cuboid

For the challenge of generating seeding curves between and inclusive of boundary switch curves, we compute a scalar field representing the flow exit trajectory from the cuboid boundary C' . When the flow is parallel to the cuboid boundary the scalar is 0.5. When the flow exits orthogonal to C the scalar is zero, and when entering is unity. The scalar s is calculated as follows:

$$s = \frac{2 \cos^{-1}(\hat{\mathbf{n}}_{\mathbf{p}} \cdot \hat{\mathbf{n}}_{\mathbf{v}})}{\pi}$$

where $\hat{\mathbf{n}}_{\mathbf{p}}$ is the plane normal, $\hat{\mathbf{n}}_{\mathbf{v}}$ is the normalised velocity vector, and $\cos^{-1}(\hat{\mathbf{n}}_{\mathbf{p}} \cdot \hat{\mathbf{n}}_{\mathbf{v}})$ is given in radians. This approach reduces the problem to a simple marching squares isoline extraction. For a generic vector field using the full sphere of possible directions, the set of points on the boundary of a cube, where $\hat{\mathbf{n}}_{\mathbf{v}} \cdot \hat{\mathbf{n}}_{\mathbf{p}} = 1$ or -1 , will be isolated points, not a curve. Thus we generally use isovalues in the range $[0.95 \dots 0.05]$. Next we construct the isolines from $s(C')$ using marching squares. The vertices require sequential ordering for use as a seeding curve. For a more detailed discussion on this technique we refer the reader to (Edmunds et al., 2011).

3.6 Surface Construction/Rendering

Our work utilises an out of the box solution for generating stream surfaces. The stream surface is constructed with an advancing front scheme first introduced by (Hultquist, 1992). An adaptive Runge-Kutta

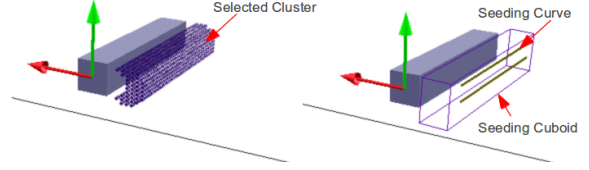


Figure 4: Left image highlights a selected cluster in the region downstream from the cuboid. The right image shows a seeding cuboid fitted to the same cluster, with two seeding curves derived on the rear face.

4th order integrator is used in the surface construction. The user can select downstream and upstream propagation. By default surfaces are terminated when they leave the domain, enter a periodic orbit, or reach a pre-determined maximum length. The user has an option to control the length. A number of techniques are implemented to aid the viewer in perception of the resulting visualisation. Options include the use of transparency, colour, and silhouette edge highlighting. Transparency in visualisations pose problems relating to the order of primitive rendering. We use depth peeling, an order independent transparency technique presented by (Bavoli and Myers, 2008).

Silhouette edge highlighting is used to help the viewer in perceiving where the surfaces curve away from the viewer, and enhance surface edges. Silhouette highlighting utilises a Gaussian kernel in image space (Möller and Haines, 2002). Reducing the saturation of colour as the surfaces curve away from the viewer further enhances the perception of shape (Edmunds et al., 2012b).

4 Results

Interaction and exploratory tools are very useful to the domain expert for the production of insightful and meaningful visualisations. Our clustering approach partitions the domain into meaningful subsets based on the field of interest. Interacting with the clusters utilising a tree map is an intuitive approach for investigating the different characteristics of the data. Placing stream surfaces at the selected areas of interest provide further feedback about the evolution of a given attribute upstream and downstream. In the following section we discuss our technique applied to a well known simulation in the community (Camarri et al., 2005) (von Funck et al., 2008). We then demonstrate our algorithm applied to a CFD simulation from domain experts.

Flow Past A Cuboid For the clustering process, velocity magnitude data is chosen for the input. The number of means are five. Once the clustering process is complete the tree map is displayed. From the tree map the user can see meta data about each cluster describing the velocity range and mean. With size mapped to cluster size and colour mapped to the clus-

ter mean (in this case mean velocity of the cluster), a range of information can be inferred. Combined with the visual representation in the main view, this aids the user in the selection of a cluster of interest. The selected cluster is a sub-cluster with a mean velocity of 0.71 m/s, and a range of 0.58 m/s to 0.78 m/s. See Figure 4. In the final visualisation in Figure 5, after the surfaces are propagated from the seeding cuboid, it can be seen how the area of interest interacts with the upstream and downstream flow. An isovalue of 0.95 is used to generate the seeding curves.

Visualisation of Marine Turbine CFD Simulation

A marine turbine makes use of kinetic energy available in moving water, similar in concept to a wind turbine being powered by the wind. This application is gaining popularity due to the relative advantages marine turbines offer. Modelling and simulation are carried out to investigate how the flow past a marine turbine is affected and thus develop a better and more efficient marine turbine system. The engineers researching this field are investigating the system of turbine arrays and their interaction with each other in different spacial arrangements. The velocity wake flowing downstream of a marine turbine may interact with the downstream turbines. The goal is to find the optimal layout to pack the turbines into a given space and maximise the energy output, while managing the environmental effect and durability (Masters et al., 2011) (Malki et al., 2012). The velocity wake and pressure can have a major impact on the environment, and the marine turbines. The marine turbine multi-field data is defined on an unstructured irregular grid. For the clustering process, pressure data is chosen for the input. The number of means are five. A set of sub-clusters are selected, and an isovalue of 0.05 is used to generate the seeding curves. The final visualisation can be seen demonstrating an optimal solution for the array layout. See Figure 6. We also illustrate a sub-optimal layout where the turbine wake significantly interferes with neighbouring and downstream

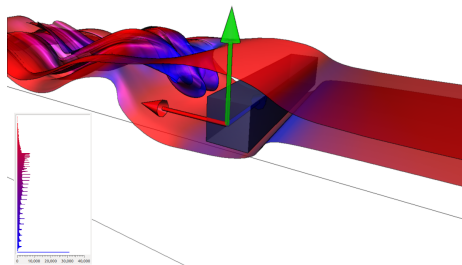


Figure 5: This visualisation demonstrates stream surfaces seeded from the locations illustrated in Figure 4. We capture the singularity at the centre of a double vortex downstream of the cuboid. The surfaces are rendered with illustrative techniques to enhance the perception. Colour is mapped to velocity, see inset colour map histogram.

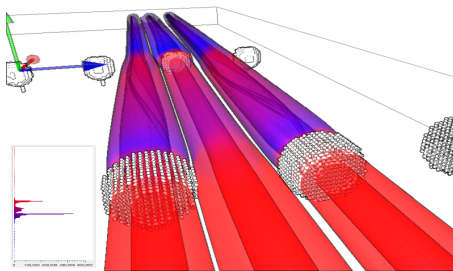


Figure 6: This visualisation demonstrates stream surfaces seeded from the seeding cuboids in Figure ???. Pressure is used for the clustering, while colour is mapped to velocity which enables tracking the velocity wake edge effect on neighbouring and downstream marine turbines.

turbines. See Figure 7.

5 Evaluation

To evaluate our work we compare and contrast with recent work in this area. Our algorithm performs well when compared to the hierarchical clustering of (Edmunds et al., 2012b). The hierarchical clustering is $O(n^2)$, compared with our algorithm; $O(i \cdot k \cdot n)$, and $O(n \cdot \log n)$, for the k-means and DBSCAN clustering respectively. Our algorithm is implemented in C++ and QT4 on a PC with an NVIDIA GeForce GTX480, an Intel quad core 2.8GHz CPU with 8GB RAM. The bottleneck in the performance of our algorithm is the clustering as seen in Table 1. The time for tree map generation is in the 7-65[ms] range. The calculation of the cluster attributes and seeding cuboid fitting is in the 18-174[ms] range. The performance of stream surface rendering is comparable to previous work e.g. (Born et al., 2010), (Hummel et al., 2010), and (Edmunds et al., 2012b). The memory usage for our approach is proportional to the size of the data set e.g. n , where n is the number of initial samples. We store only one integer per vertex to reference which cluster it belongs to. The hierarchical approach stores vector data, location data, cluster size data, cumulative error data, and neighbourhood/connectivity information at each node in the binary tree. The quantity of nodes is $2n - 1$. The hybrid clustering approach is generally one order of magnitude faster than its predecessor. The input to our algorithm is: the selection of which data field to cluster,

Clustering Performance				
Data	Nodes	No.Means	Time[ms]	Time[ms]
Cuboid	192x64x48	5	487	6,898
Turbine	3,693,867	5	5,923	n/a
Isabel	500 ² x100	5	30,724	542,452

Table 1: Clustering performance of a range of simulations. All are regular grid data except the Turbine data, which is an unstructured tetrahedral grid outputted from Tecplot 360 (Tecplot,). For consistency we use 5 means for the timings. **Note:** For reference the last column contains comparative times from (Edmunds et al., 2012b).

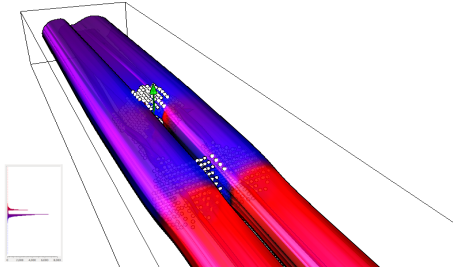


Figure 7: This visualisation illustrate a sub-optimal layout. Velocity spikes can be seen neighbouring the downstream turbine. We use the same parameters as in Figure 6.

the number of centroids (calculated from the required attribute ranges by domain engineer), and a seeding cuboid isovalue of 0.05, 0.5, or 0.95 (outflow, boundary switch curves, and inflow respectively). This set of input parameters is greatly simplified compared to previous work (Edmunds et al., 2012b). The flexibility of using tree maps to select individual clusters of interest is invaluable to the domain engineer. The visual and contextual feedback this approach affords is relevant to the domain engineer’s work flow. The domain engineer can derive the input, then visualise the precise features of interest. The focus and context nature of the clustering combined with the stream surfaces re-enforce the visual feedback, providing an intuitive and meaningful environment focusing on data exploration. When selecting areas of interest, the previous algorithm in (Edmunds et al., 2012b) performed poorly when applied to the marine turbine data. This may be the result of insignificant flow characteristics within the vector field. The seed locations became too dense when trying to capture the particular areas of interest, resulting in a cluttered incomprehensible visualisation. In contrast, the interaction in our approach enabled the domain engineer to select precisely the location to place stream surfaces for a more focused evaluation. In contrast to the work by (Edmunds et al., 2011), we generate seeding curves on the boundary of a seeding cuboid fitted to a cluster in euclidean space. This enables very localised exploration of the flow field. We also modify the scalar field computation. This has the effect of producing a smoother transition between the range of isovalues.

Domain expert feedback This work is carried out in close collaboration with a team of CFD experts. One of the goals of this work is to provide CFD experts with a visual interface and tools for interactive exploration of multi-field unstructured CFD data. Specifically; interactive selection of specific areas of interest, the combined visualisation of flow and different CFD data fields, visualisation of the evolution of the flow. This section summarises their feedback. The interactive stream surface placement method described in this paper is unique compared to similar

approaches evaluated previously in that it facilitates a much greater level of control to the user over the placement of streamed surfaces. One particularly useful feature is the ability of the user to precisely isolate different regions of the domain and evaluate them individually. Furthermore, user access to the tree map provides a useful added feature promoting control, information feedback, and enabling the user to evaluate the sensitivity of different fields of the data. In the context of multiple marine turbine arrays with some level of repetition in the array layout, this is useful as it avoids repetition of stream surface features that may occur around similarly spaced turbines within the layout. Furthermore, the ability to individually control the illustrative techniques of a number of stream surfaces within the same region of the domain enables the user to tweak the final image to improve clarity, and focus attention on certain layers. This work provides valuable insight into the domain expert CFD data, as visualisation tools rarely come equipped with quantitative analysis features which are usually of more use to engineers.

6 Conclusions

The goal of this work is to improve computational performance, memory footprint, exploratory flexibility, robustness of flow visualisation across different multi-field flow data including unstructured data, and intuitive feedback on the fly in an interactive environment for detailed examination of the multi-field data. We improve the performance and memory usage, while providing an environment and tools for the domain engineer to visualise multi-field CFD data. We demonstrate a novel application of k-means and DBSCAN clustering to provide focus and contextual information when combined with tree map interaction. The fast performance brings vector field clustering a large step forward towards clustering of unsteady flow data. The novel use of a seeding cuboid fitted to clusters for the placement of stream surfaces provides intuitive feedback about the evolution of the selected attributes both upstream and downstream from the location of interest. We compare and contrast with other recent work in this field, providing feedback from domain experts utilising our framework who conclude that this technique is a significant improvement over recent work in this area. During our study we examined the possibility of utilising multi-field clustering with the intent of removing the need for the user to select a data field of interest. Because, within our target domain, the various data fields are dependant data, multi-field clustering does not produce results significantly different from clustering a single field. The domain experts preferred the flexibility of selecting the fields of interest.

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