

Some intuitions of Higher Dimensional Algebra, and potential applications

Askloster

Ronnie Brown

July 23, 2009

Some
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Higher
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Algebra,
and potential
applications
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Algebra
structuring
space

Groupoids in
topology

Higher
dimensional
algebra

Higher
homotopy
theory

Commutative
cubes

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Rotations

Algebraic
topology of
filtered spaces

Potential
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Consilience, John Robinson

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Consilience, John Robinson
www.popmath.org.uk



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www.popmath.org.uk

www.bangor.ac.uk/r.brown/hdaweb2.htm

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'Nonabelian algebraic topology: filtered spaces, crossed
complexes, cubical homotopy groupoids', R. Brown, P.J.Higgins
and R. Sivera (to appear 2010) (downloadable as pdf: [xx+496](#))

This will be largely about work with Philip Higgins 1974-2001. 'Nonabelian algebraic topology: filtered spaces, crossed complexes, cubical homotopy groupoids', R. Brown, P.J.Higgins and R. Sivera (to appear 2010) (downloadable as pdf: [xx+496](#)) Other large input in this area from C.B. Spencer (1971-73), Chris Wensley (1993-now) and research students Razak Salleh, Keith Dakin, Nick Ashley, David Jones, J.-L Loday, Graham Ellis, Ghaffar Mosa, Fahd Al-Agl, . . .

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F.W. Lawvere: The notion of space is associated with representing motion.

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F.W. Lawvere: The notion of space is associated with representing motion.

How can algebra structure space?

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How can algebra structure space?

Moving in the space around a knot



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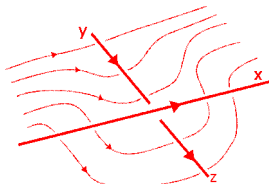
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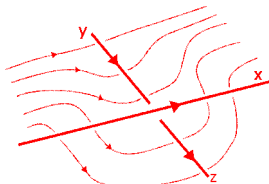
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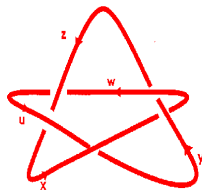
$$y = x z x^{-1}$$

Relation at a crossing

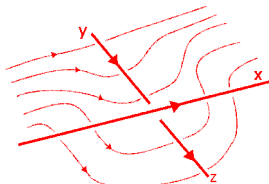


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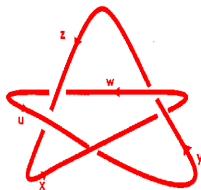
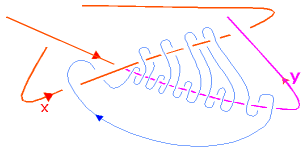


$$x y x y x y^{-1} x^{-1} y^{-1} x^{-1} y^{-1} = 1$$

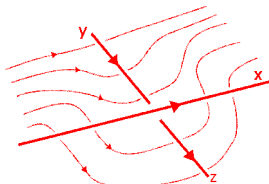


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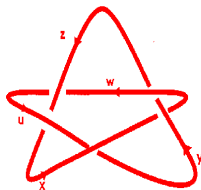
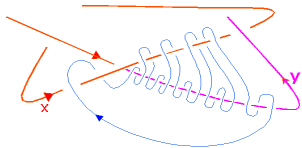


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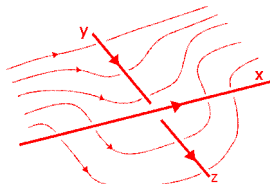
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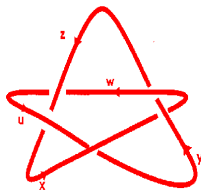
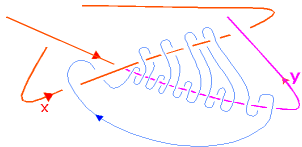
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Local and global issue.



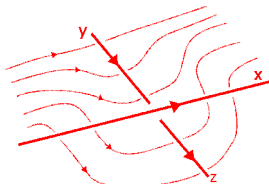
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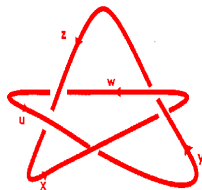
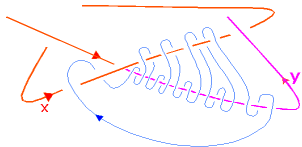
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Local and global issue.
Use rewriting of relations.



$$y = x z x^{-1}$$

Relation at a crossing



$$x y x y x y^{-1} x^{-1} y^{-1} x^{-1} y^{-1} = 1$$

Local and global issue.
Use rewriting of relations.
Classify the ways of pulling the loop off the knot!

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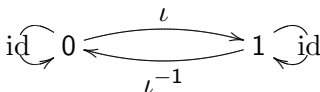
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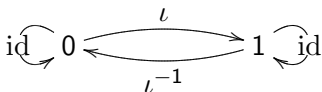
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$$\begin{array}{ccc}
 \text{id} \curvearrowright 0 & \begin{array}{c} \xrightarrow{\iota} \\ \xleftarrow{\iota^{-1}} \end{array} & 1 \curvearrowright \text{id}
 \end{array}$$

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 \mathcal{I} & & \mathbb{Z}
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pushout of groupoids

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- C can be chosen according to the geometry of the situation;

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covering morphisms of groupoids
and of **orbit groupoids**.

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What is Higher Dimensional Algebra?

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But we seem to need a linear formula to express the general law

$$a \times (b + c) = a \times b + a \times c.$$

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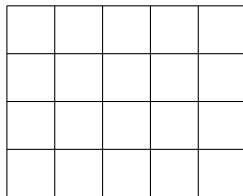
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Note also the figures

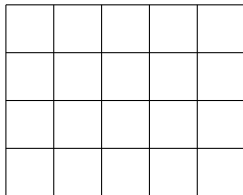
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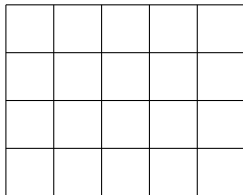


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From left to right gives **subdivision**.

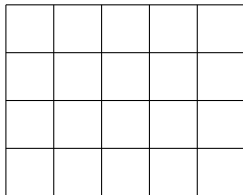
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What we need for local-to-global problems is:

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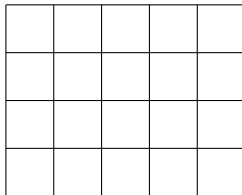


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What we need for local-to-global problems is:

Algebraic inverses to subdivision.

Note also the figures



From left to right gives **subdivision**.

What we need for local-to-global problems is:

Algebraic inverses to subdivision.

i.e., we know how to cut things up, but how to control algebraically putting them together again?

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groups \subseteq groupoids

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groups \subseteq groupoids \subseteq higher groupoids ?

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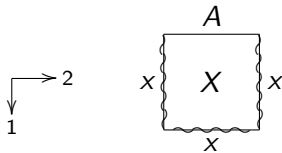
$$\text{groups} \subseteq \text{groupoids} \subseteq \text{higher groupoids} ?$$

Consider second relative homotopy groups $\pi_2(X, A, x)$:

Higher homotopy theory?

groups \subseteq groupoids \subseteq higher groupoids ?

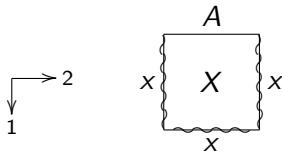
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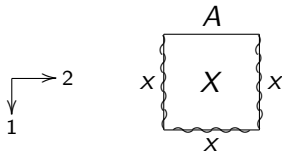


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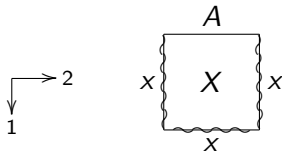
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Higher homotopy theory?

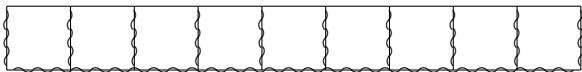
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Brown-Higgins 1974 $\rho_2(X, A, C)$:

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Brown-Higgins 1974 $\rho_2(X, A, C)$: homotopy classes **rel vertices**
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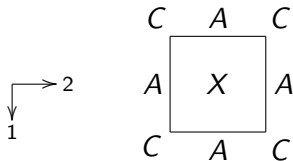
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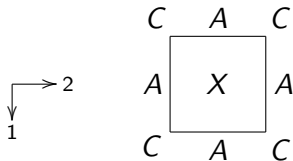
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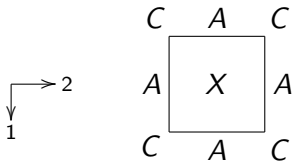
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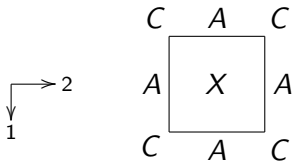


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Horizontal composition in $\rho_2(X, A, C)$, where dashed lines show constant paths.

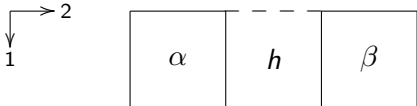
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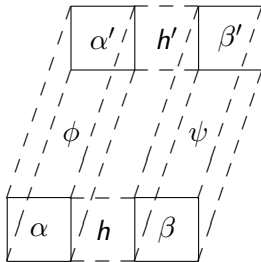
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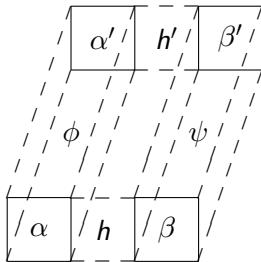
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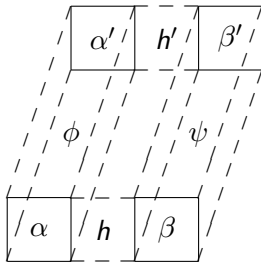


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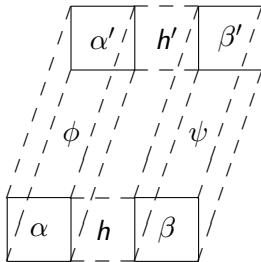
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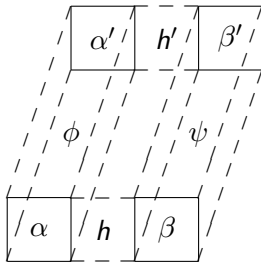
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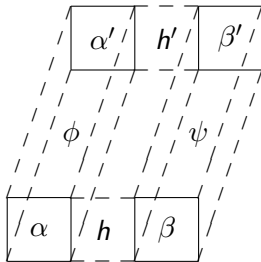
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Thus $\rho(X, A, C)$ has in dimension 2 **compositions in directions 1,2** satisfying the **interchange law** and is a **double groupoid**,

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Thus $\rho(X, A, C)$ has in dimension 2 **compositions in directions 1,2** satisfying the **interchange law** and is a **double groupoid**, containing as a **substructure** $\pi_2(X, A, x)$, $x \in C$ and $\pi_1(A, C)$.

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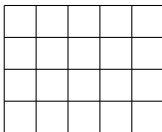
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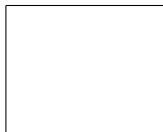
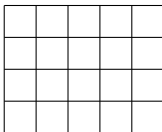
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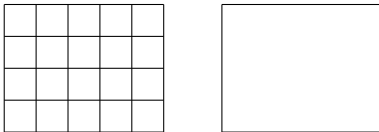
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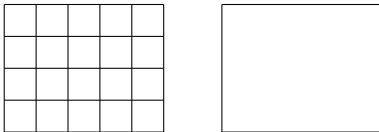


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Aesthetic implies power!!

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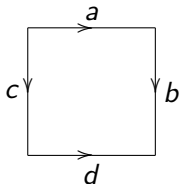
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In dimension 1, we still need the 2-dimensional notion of
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$$ab = cd \quad a = cdb^{-1}$$

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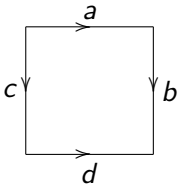
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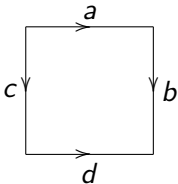
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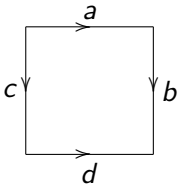
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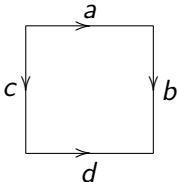
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The commutative squares in a category form a double category!

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The commutative squares in a category form a double category!
Compare Stokes' theorem! Local Stokes implies global Stokes.

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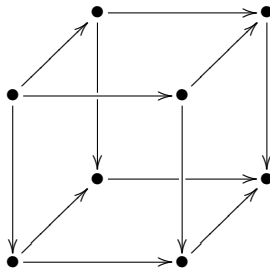
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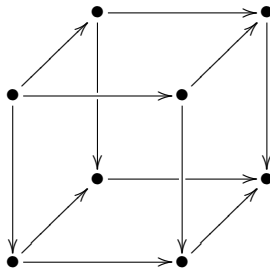
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What is a commutative cube?

What is a commutative cube?



What is a **commutative cube**?



We want **the faces to commute!**

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The problem is a cube has 6 faces divided into odd and

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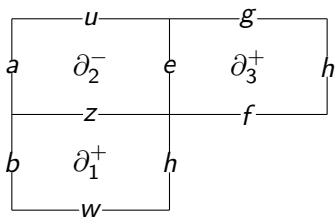
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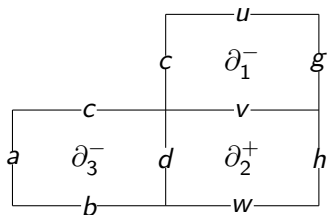
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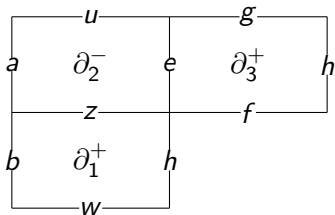


even faces

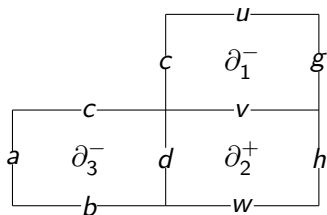


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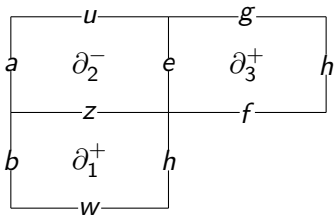
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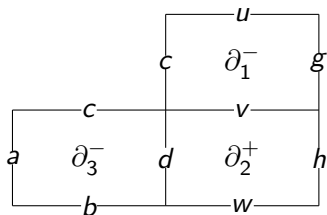
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So the possible compositions do not make sense,

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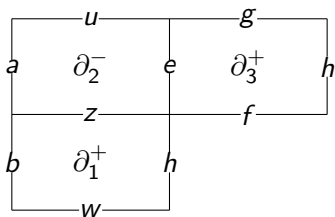
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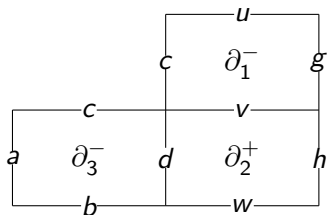
odd faces

So the possible compositions do not make sense, and the edges do not agree.

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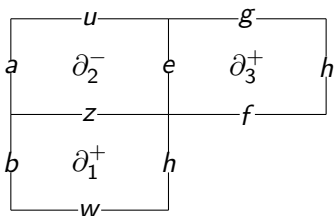


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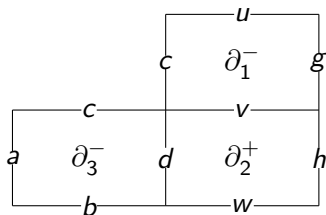
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Need canonical ways of filling in the corners.

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even faces



odd faces

So the possible compositions do not make sense, and the edges do not agree.

Need canonical ways of filling in the corners.

In 2-dimensional algebra, you need to be able to turn left or right.

To resolve this, we need some special squares called **thin**:
First the easy ones:

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$$\begin{pmatrix} 1 & 1 & 1 \\ & 1 & 1 \end{pmatrix}$$

$$\begin{pmatrix} a & 1 & a \\ & 1 & a \end{pmatrix}$$

$$\begin{pmatrix} 1 & b & 1 \\ & b & 1 \end{pmatrix}$$

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\equiv or $\varepsilon_2 a$

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laws

$$\begin{pmatrix} a & 1 & a \\ & 1 & \end{pmatrix}$$

$\bar{\quad}$ or $\varepsilon_2 a$

$$[a \quad \bar{\quad}] = a$$

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$| \quad |$ or $\varepsilon_1 b$

$$\begin{bmatrix} b \\ | \quad | \end{bmatrix} = b$$

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□

laws

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▭ or $\varepsilon_2 a$

$$[a \quad \square] = a$$

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These are the **connections**

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What are the laws on connections?

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What are the laws on connections?

$$[\ulcorner \lrcorner] = \llcorner \quad \left[\begin{array}{c} \ulcorner \\ \lrcorner \end{array} \right] = \llcorner \quad (\text{cancellation})$$

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$$\left[\begin{array}{cc} \ulcorner & \equiv \\ \llcorner & \ulcorner \end{array} \right] = \ulcorner \quad \left[\begin{array}{cc} \lrcorner & \llcorner \\ \equiv & \lrcorner \end{array} \right] = \lrcorner \quad (\text{transport})$$

What are the laws on connections?

$$[\ulcorner \lrcorner] = \llcorner \quad \left[\begin{array}{c} \ulcorner \\ \lrcorner \end{array} \right] = \llcorner \quad (\text{cancellation})$$

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The term **transport law** and the term **connections** came from laws on path connections in differential geometry.

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Now you can use the thin elements to fill in the corners, and in fact you also need to expand out.

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The image shows two commutative cubes separated by an equals sign. Each cube is a 3D grid of vertices connected by edges. The left cube has vertices labeled with 1, a, b, u, z, w, e, f, g, h. The top face is labeled with ∂_2^- and ∂_3^+ . The right cube has vertices labeled with 1, a, b, c, d, h, g, v, h. The top face is labeled with ∂_1^- and ∂_2^+ . The cubes are connected by an equals sign, indicating an equality or relationship between the two structures.

Now you can use the thin elements to fill in the corners, and in fact you also need to expand out.

$$\begin{array}{ccccc}
 & 1 & & u & & g & & \\
 a & \text{---} & a & \partial_2^- & e & \partial_3^+ & h & \\
 & 1 & & z & & f & & \\
 1 & \Gamma & b & \partial_1^+ & f & \lrcorner & 1 & \\
 & b & & w & & 1 & &
 \end{array}
 =
 \begin{array}{ccccc}
 & 1 & & u & & g & & \\
 1 & \Gamma & c & \partial_1^- & g & \lrcorner & 1 & \\
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Now add to the cubical singular complex of a space connections defined using the monoid structures

$$\max, \min : [0, 1] \times [0, 1] \rightarrow [0, 1]$$

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Note that the crossed module above has **structure in dimensions 0,1,2**, and **models weak homotopy 2-types**.

Rotations: clockwise and counterclockwise

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Rotations: clockwise and counterclockwise

$$\sigma(u) = \begin{bmatrix} \llcorner & \lrcorner & \lrcorner & \lrcorner \\ \lrcorner & u & \lrcorner & \lrcorner \\ \lrcorner & \lrcorner & \lrcorner & \lrcorner \\ \lrcorner & \lrcorner & \lrcorner & \lrcorner \end{bmatrix}$$

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$$\sigma(u) = \left[\begin{array}{ccc} \llcorner & \lrcorner & = \\ \lrcorner & u & \lrcorner \\ = & \lrcorner & \llcorner \end{array} \right] \quad \tau(u) = \left[\begin{array}{ccc} = & \lrcorner & \llcorner \\ \lrcorner & u & \lrcorner \\ \llcorner & \lrcorner & = \end{array} \right]$$

Now we prove $\tau\sigma(u) = u$ using 2-dimensional rewriting:

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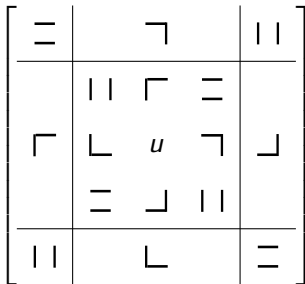
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$$\left[\begin{array}{c|cc|c} \text{=} & & \ulcorner & \text{=} \\ \hline & \text{=} & \ulcorner & \text{=} \\ \ulcorner & \llcorner & u & \ulcorner & \llcorner \\ & \text{=} & \llcorner & \text{=} & \\ \hline \text{=} & & \llcorner & & \text{=} \end{array} \right]$$

$$\left[\begin{array}{c|cccc|c} \text{=} & \ulcorner & \square & \square & \text{=} \\ \hline \square & \text{=} & \ulcorner & \text{=} & \llcorner \\ \square & \llcorner & u & \ulcorner & \square \\ \ulcorner & \text{=} & \llcorner & \text{=} & \square \\ \hline \text{=} & & \llcorner & & \text{=} \end{array} \right]$$

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$$\left[\begin{array}{c|cc} \text{=} & \lrcorner & \text{||} \\ \hline & \text{||} \lrcorner \text{=} & \\ \lrcorner & \text{L} \textit{u} \lrcorner \text{J} & \\ & \text{=} \text{J} \text{||} & \\ \hline \text{||} & \text{L} & \text{=} \end{array} \right]$$

$$\left[\begin{array}{cc|cc} \text{=} \lrcorner & \square \square & \text{||} \\ \square \text{||} & \lrcorner \text{=} \text{J} & \\ \square \text{L} & \textit{u} \lrcorner \square & \\ \hline \lrcorner \text{=} \text{J} & \text{||} \square & \\ \hline \text{||} \square \square & \text{L} \text{=} & \end{array} \right]$$

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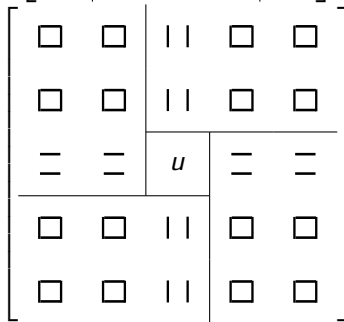
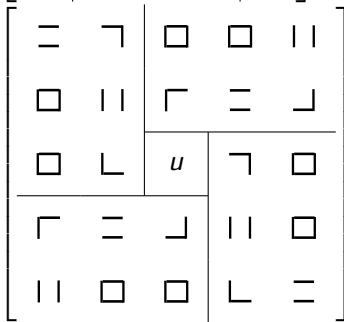
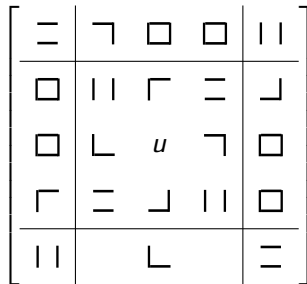
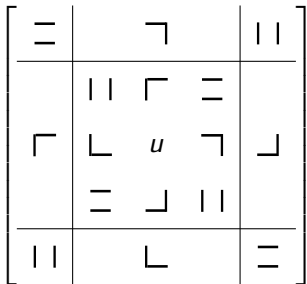
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Further work shows $\sigma^2 u = -1 -2 u$, so

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higher dimensional nonabelian methods for local-to-global problems

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46 years after Čech introduced higher homotopy groups.

Higher dimensions?

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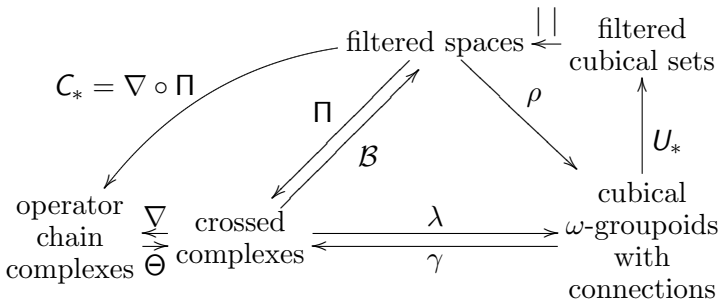
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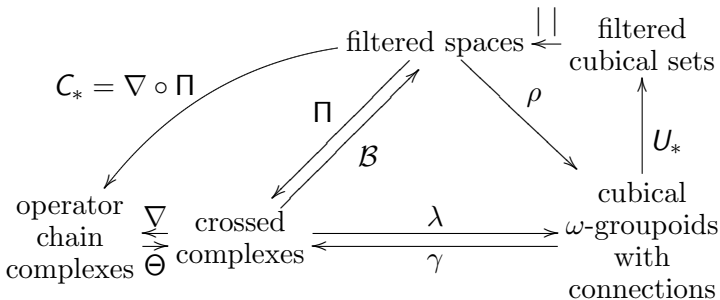
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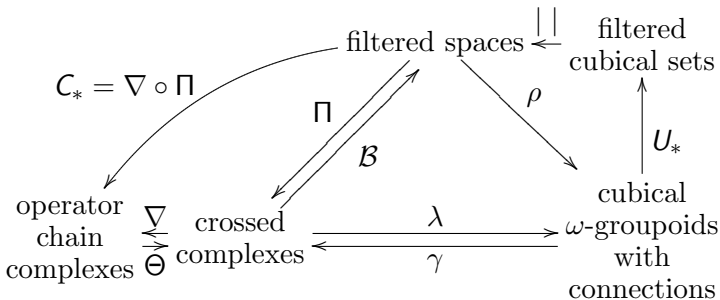


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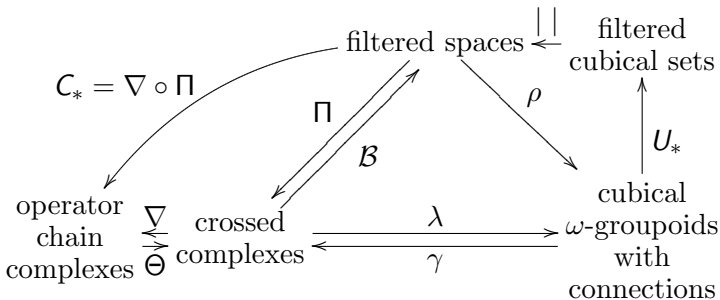
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Best since Poincaré???

Here

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- $\Pi \circ \mathcal{B} \simeq 1$;
- ∇ is left adjoint to Θ , and preserves \otimes ;
- if $B = U \circ \mathcal{B} : (\text{crossed complexes}) \rightarrow (\text{spaces})$ then there is a homotopy classification theorem

$$[X, BC] \cong [\Pi X_*, C]$$

for CW X and crossed complex C .

Cubical versus simplicial and globular?

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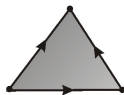
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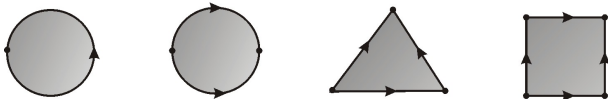
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Cubical versus simplicial and globular?

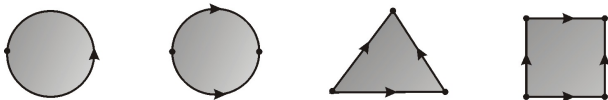


Cubical versus simplicial and globular?



Recent preprint of G. Maltsiniotis:

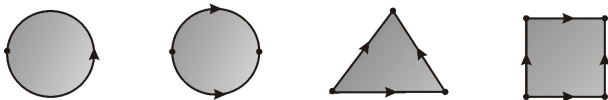
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Recent preprint of G. Maltsiniotis:

Cubical sets with connections form a strict test category, in sense of Grothendieck: i.e. as good as simplicial from a homotopy category viewpoint.

Cubical versus simplicial and globular?

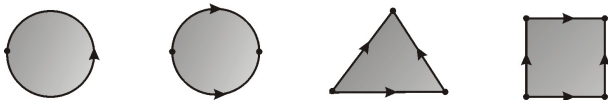


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Notion of multiple composition is clear cubically but **unclear simplicially**

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Potential applications?

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- n -fold groupoids in groups model weak pointed homotopy $(n + 1)$ -types, and there is a HHvKT for these, using n -cubes of spaces.
- That situation generates lots of algebra, including a **nonabelian tensor product of groups** which act on each other (bibliography of 100 items, including Lie algebras, ...).

Potential applications?

- n -fold groupoids in groups model weak pointed homotopy $(n + 1)$ -types, and there is a HHvKT for these, using n -cubes of spaces.
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Higher
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Algebra,
and potential
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Askloster

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structuring
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topology

Higher
dimensional
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Higher
homotopy
theory

Commutative
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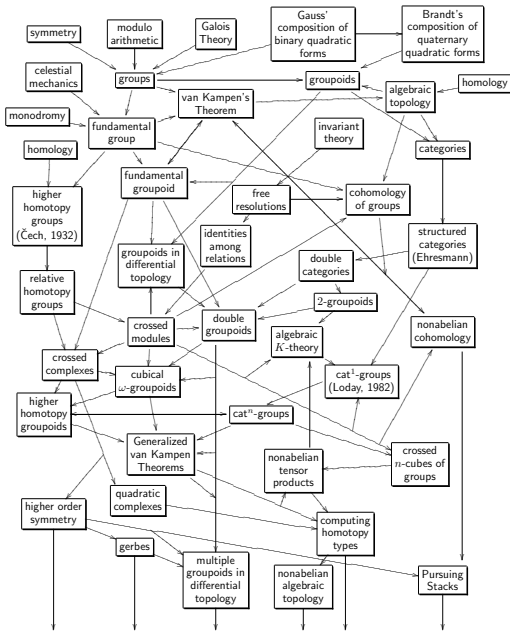
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Link with analysis and geometry may need algebras with many objects. Higher dimensional versions of these have been investigated by Ghaffar Mosa in his 1987 Bangor thesis (now scanned to internet).

Some Context for Higher Dimensional Group Theory



Some intuitions of Higher Dimensional Algebra, and potential applications

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