

Range Sensors (time of flight) (1)

- Large range distance measurement -> called range sensors
- Range information:
 - *key element for localization and environment modeling*
- Ultrasonic sensors, infra-red sensors and laser range sensors make use of propagation speed of sound or electromagnetic waves respectively. The distance traveled by a sound or electromagnetic wave is given by

$$d = c \cdot t$$

- Where
 - *d = distance traveled (usually round-trip)*
 - *c = speed of wave propagation*
 - *t = time of flight.*

Range Sensors (time of flight) (2)

- It is important to point out
 - *Propagation speed v of sound: 0.3 m/ms*
 - *Propagation speed v of electromagnetic signals: 0.3 m/ns,*
 - ◆ *one million times faster.*
 - *3 meters*
 - ◆ *is 10 ms ultrasonic system*
 - ◆ *only 10 ns for a laser range sensor*
 - ◆ *time of flight t with electromagnetic signals is not an easy task*
 - ◆ *laser range sensors expensive and delicate*
- The quality of time of flight range sensors mainly depends on:
 - *Uncertainties about the exact time of arrival of the reflected signal*
 - *Inaccuracies in the time of flight measure (laser range sensors)*
 - *Opening angle of transmitted beam (ultrasonic range sensors)*
 - *Interaction with the target (surface, specular reflections)*
 - *Variation of propagation speed*
 - *Speed of mobile robot and target (if not at stand still)*

Ultrasonic Sensor (time of flight, sound) (1)

- transmit a packet of (ultrasonic) pressure waves
- distance d of the echoing object can be calculated based on the propagation speed of sound c and the time of flight t .

$$d = \frac{c \cdot t}{2}$$

- The speed of sound c (340 m/s) in air is given by

$$c = \sqrt{\gamma \cdot R \cdot T}$$

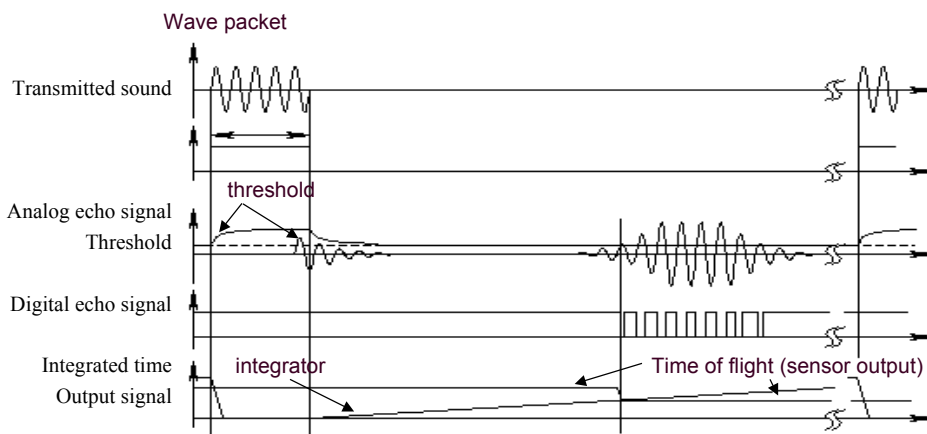
where

γ : ration of specific heats

R: gas constant

T: temperature in degree Kelvin

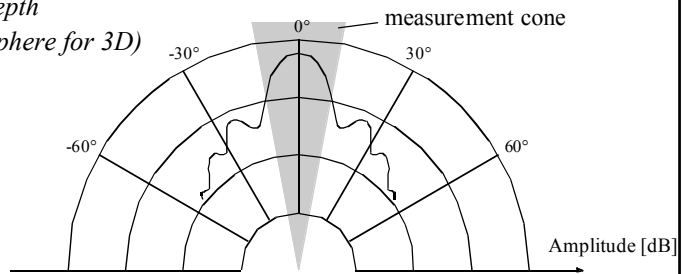
Ultrasonic Sensor (time of flight, sound) (2)



Signals of an ultrasonic sensor

Ultrasonic Sensor (time of flight, sound) (3)

- typically a frequency: 40 - 180 kHz
- generation of sound wave: piezo transducer
 - transmitter and receiver separated or not separated
- sound beam propagates in a cone like manner
 - opening angles around 20 to 40 degrees
 - regions of constant depth
 - segments of an arc (sphere for 3D)

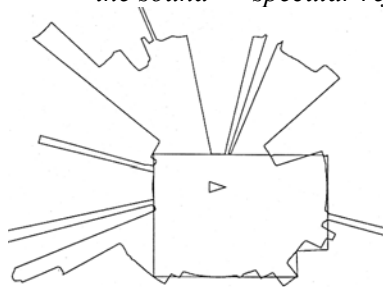


Typical intensity distribution of a ultrasonic sensor

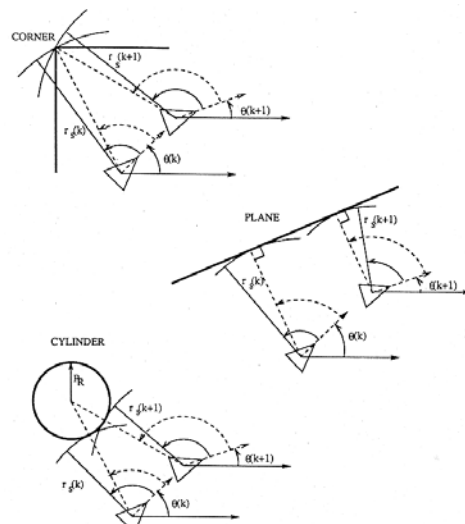
© R. Siegwart, I. Nourbakhsh

Ultrasonic Sensor (time of flight, sound) (4)

- Other problems for ultrasonic sensors
 - soft surfaces that absorb most of the sound energy
 - surfaces that are far from being perpendicular to the direction of the sound -> specular reflection



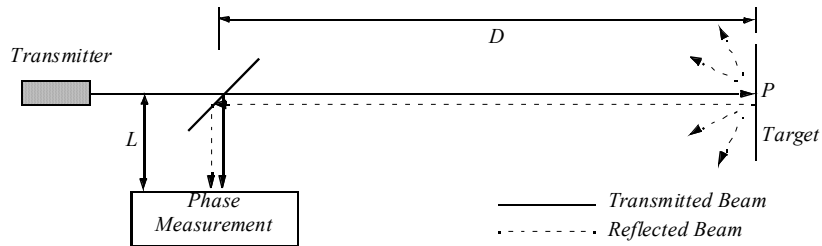
a) 360° scan



b) results from different geometric primitives

© R. Siegwart, I. Nourbakhsh

Laser Range Sensor (time of flight, electromagnetic) (1)



- Transmitted and received beams coaxial
- Transmitter illuminates a target with a collimated beam
- Received detects the time needed for round-trip
- A mechanical mechanism with a mirror sweeps
 - 2 or 3D measurement

© R. Siegwart, I. Nourbakhsh

Laser Range Sensor (time of flight, electromagnetic) (2)

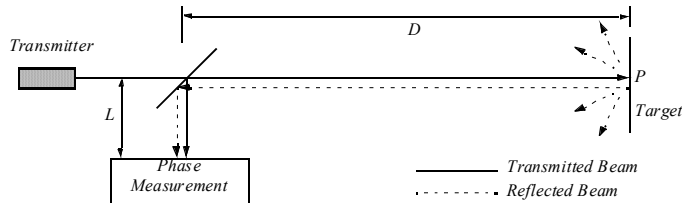
Time of flight measurement

- Pulsed laser
 - measurement of elapsed time directly
 - resolving picoseconds
- Beat frequency between a frequency modulated continuous wave and its received reflection
- Phase shift measurement to produce range estimation
 - technically easier than the above two methods.

© R. Siegwart, I. Nourbakhsh

Laser Range Sensor (time of flight, electromagnetic) (3)

- *Phase-Shift Measurement*



$$\lambda = c/f \quad D' = L + 2D = L + \frac{\theta}{2\pi} \lambda$$

Where

c : is the speed of light; f the modulating frequency; D' covered by the emitted light is

➤ for $f = 5 \text{ Mhz}$ (as in the A.T&T. sensor), $\lambda = 60 \text{ meters}$

© R. Siegwart, I. Nourbakhsh

Laser Range Sensor (time of flight, electromagnetic) (4)

- Distance D , between the beam splitter and the target

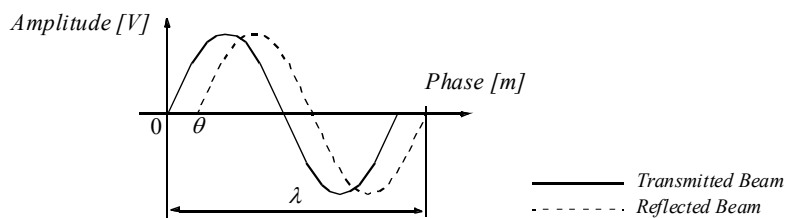
$$D = \frac{\lambda}{4\pi} \theta \quad (2.33)$$

- where

➤ θ : phase difference between the transmitted

- Theoretically ambiguous range estimates

➤ since for example if $\lambda = 60 \text{ meters}$, a target at a range of 5 meters = target at 35 meters



© R. Siegwart, I. Nourbakhsh

Laser Range Sensor (time of flight, electromagnetic) (5)

- Confidence in the range (phase estimate) is inversely proportional to the square of the received signal amplitude.

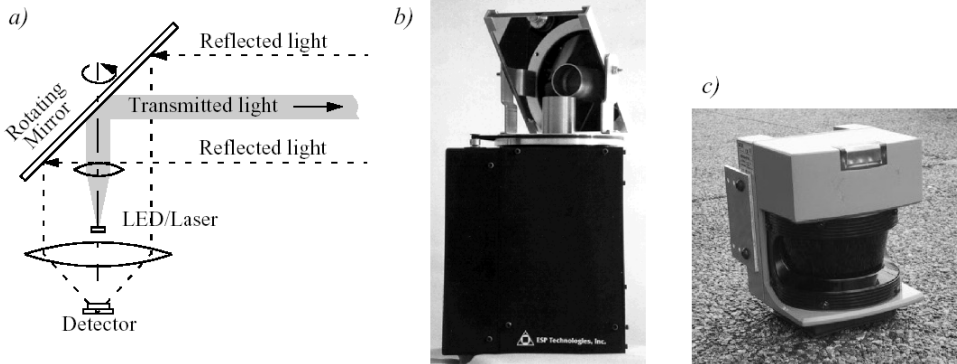
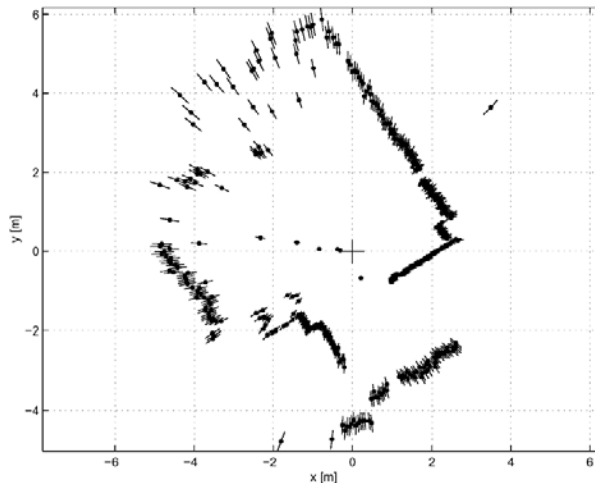


Figure 4.11

(a) Schematic drawing of laser range sensor with rotating mirror; (b) Scanning range sensor from EPS Technologies Inc.; (c) Industrial 180 degree laser range sensor from Sick Inc., Germany

Laser Range Sensor (time of flight, electromagnetic)

- Typical range image of a 2D laser range sensor with a rotating mirror. The length of the lines through the measurement points indicate the uncertainties.

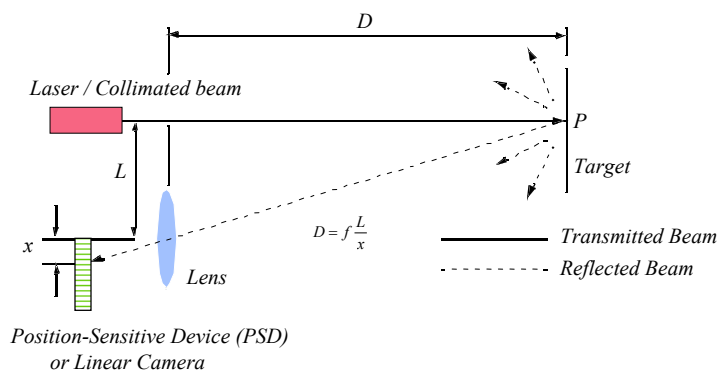


Triangulation Ranging

- geometrical properties of the image to establish a distance measurement
- e.g. project a well defined light pattern (e.g. point, line) onto the environment.
 - *reflected light is then captured by a photo-sensitive line or matrix (camera) sensor device*
 - *simple triangulation allows to establish a distance.*
- e.g. size of an captured object is precisely known
 - *triangulation without light projecting*

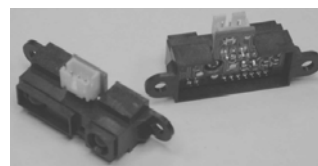
© R. Siegwart, I. Nourbakhsh

Laser Triangulation (1D)



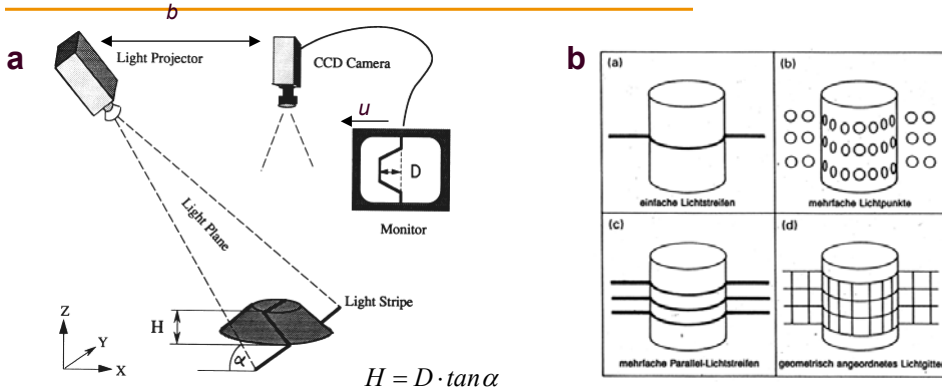
Principle of 1D laser triangulation.

- *distance is proportional to the $1/x$* $D = f \frac{L}{x}$



© R. Siegwart, I. Nourbakhsh

Structured Light (vision, 2 or 3D)



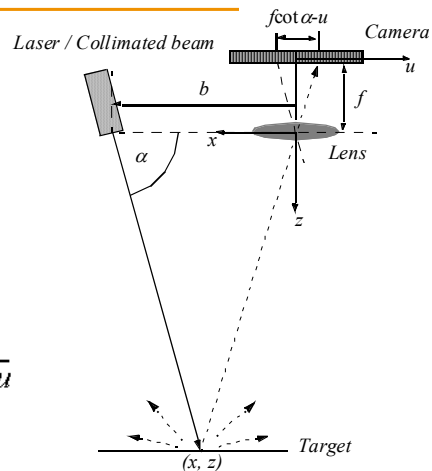
- Eliminate the correspondence problem by projecting structured light on the scene.
- Slits of light or emit collimated light (possibly laser) by means of a rotating mirror.
- Light perceived by camera
- Range to an illuminated point can then be determined from simple geometry.

© R. Siegwart, I. Nourbakhsh

Structured Light (vision, 2 or 3D)

- One dimensional schematic of the principle
- From the figure, simple geometry shows that:

$$x = \frac{b \cdot u}{f \cot \alpha - u} ; \quad z = \frac{b \cdot f}{f \cot \alpha - u}$$



© R. Siegwart, I. Nourbakhsh

Structured Light (vision, 2 or 3D)

- Range resolution is defined as the triangulation gain G_p :

$$\frac{\partial u}{\partial z} = G_p = \frac{b \cdot f}{z^2}$$

- Influence of α :

$$\frac{\partial \alpha}{\partial z} = G_\alpha = \frac{b \sin \alpha^2}{z^2}$$

- Baseline length b :

- *the smaller b is the more compact the sensor can be.*
- *the larger b is the better the range resolution is.*

Note: for large b , the chance that an illuminated point is not visible to the receiver increases.

- Focal length f :

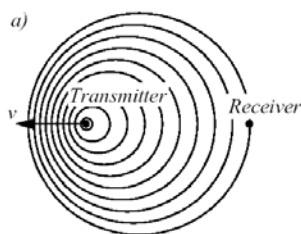
- *larger focal length f can provide*

- ◆ *either a larger field of view*
- ◆ *or an improved range resolution*

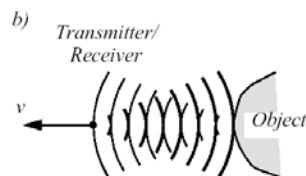
- *however, large focal length means a larger sensor head*

© R. Siegwart, I. Nourbakhsh

Doppler Effect Based (Radar or Sound)



a) between two moving objects



b) between a moving and a stationary object

$$f_r = f_t (1 + v/c) \text{ if transmitter is moving} \quad f_r = f_t \frac{1}{1 + v/c} \text{ if receiver is moving}$$

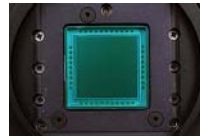
$$\Delta f = f_t - f_r = \frac{2f_t v \cos \theta}{c} \quad \text{Doppler frequency shift} \quad v = \frac{\Delta f \cdot c}{2f_t \cos \theta} \quad \text{relative speed}$$

- *Sound waves: e.g. industrial process control, security, fish finding, measure of ground speed*
- *Electromagnetic waves: e.g. vibration measurement, radar systems, object tracking*

© R. Siegwart, I. Nourbakhsh

Vision-based Sensors: Hardware

- CCD (*light-sensitive, discharging capacitors of 5 to 25 micron*)



2048 x 2048 CCD array



Orangemicro iBOT Firewire



Sony DFW-X700



Canon IXUS 300

- CMOS (*Complementary Metal Oxide Semiconductor technology*)



© R. Siegwart, I. Nourbakhsh

Vision in General

When an image is recorded through a camera, a 3 dimensional scene is projected onto a 2 dimensional plane (the film or a light sensitive photo sensitive array). In order to try and recover some “useful information” from the scene, usually edge detectors are used to find the contours of the objects.

From these edges or edge fragments, much research time has to been spent attempting to produce fool proof algorithms which can provide all the necessary information required to reconstruct the 3-D scene which produced the 2-D image.

Even in this simple situation, the edge fragments found are not perfect, and will require careful processing if they are to be integrated into a clean line drawing representing the edges of objects. The interpretation of 3-D scenes from 2-D images is not a trivial task. However, using stereo imaging or triangulation methods, vision can become a powerful tool for environment capturing.

© R. Siegwart, I. Nourbakhsh

Vision-based Sensors: Sensing

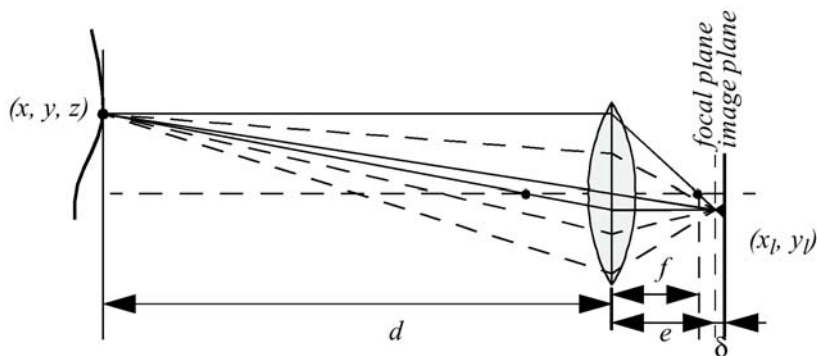
- Visual Range Sensors
 - *Depth from focus*
 - *Stereo vision*

- Motion and Optical Flow
 - *(won't talk about)*

- Color Tracking Sensors
 - *(won't talk about)*

© R. Siegwart, I. Nourbakhsh

Depth from Focus (1)

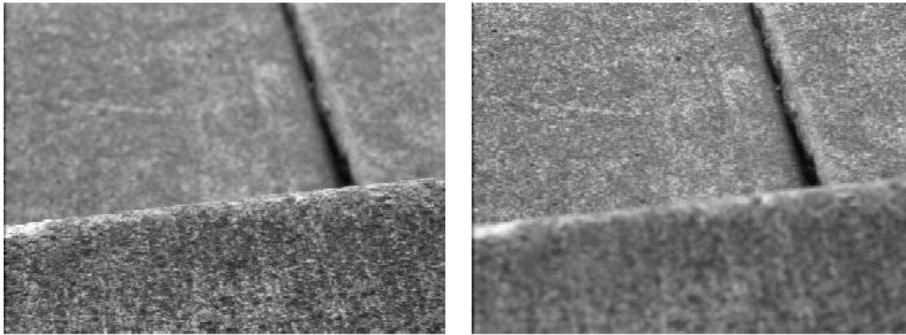


$$\frac{1}{f} = \frac{1}{d} + \frac{1}{e}$$

$$R = \frac{L\delta}{2e}$$

© R. Siegwart, I. Nourbakhsh

Depth from Focus (2)



- Measure of sub-image gradient $sharpness_1 = \sum_{x,y} |I(x,y) - I(x-1,y)|$

$$sharpness_2 = \sum_{x,y} (I(x,y) - I(x-2,y-2))^2$$

© R. Siegwart, I. Nourbakhsh

Stereo Vision

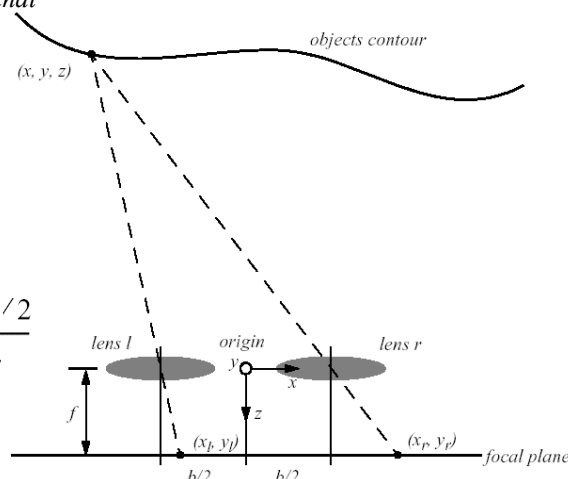
- Idealized camera geometry for stereo vision
 - Disparity between two images -> Computing of depth
 - From the figure it can be seen that

$$\frac{x_l}{f} = \frac{x + b/2}{z} \quad \text{and} \quad \frac{x_r}{f} = \frac{x - b/2}{z}$$

$$\frac{x_l - x_r}{f} = \frac{b}{z}$$

$$x = b \frac{(x_l + x_r)/2}{x_l - x_r} ; \quad y = b \frac{(y_l + y_r)/2}{x_l - x_r}$$

$$z = b \frac{f}{x_l - x_r}$$



Stereo Vision (2)

1. Distance is inversely proportional to disparity
 - *closer objects can be measured more accurately*
2. Disparity is proportional to b .
 - *For a given disparity error, the accuracy of the depth estimate increases with increasing baseline b .*
 - *However, as b is increased, some objects may appear in one camera, but not in the other.*
3. A point visible from both cameras produces a conjugate pair.
 - *Conjugate pairs lie on epipolar line (parallel to the x -axis for the arrangement in the figure above)*

© R. Siegwart, I. Nourbakhsh

Stereo Vision

Calculation of Depth

- *The key problem in stereo is now how do we solve the correspondence problem?*

Gray-Level Matching

- *match gray-level wave forms on corresponding epipolar lines*
- *“brightness” = image irradiance $I(x,y)$*
- *Zero Crossing of Laplacian of Gaussian is a widely used approach for identifying feature in the left and right image*

© R. Siegwart, I. Nourbakhsh

Zero Crossing of Laplacian of Gaussian

- Identification of features that are stable and match well

- Laplacian of intensity image
$$L(x, y) = \frac{\partial^2 I}{\partial x^2} + \frac{\partial^2 I}{\partial y^2}$$

- Convolution with P:

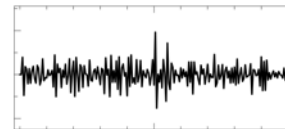
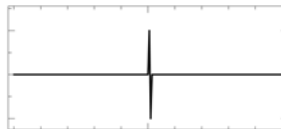
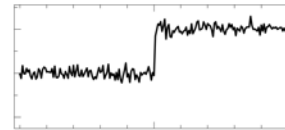
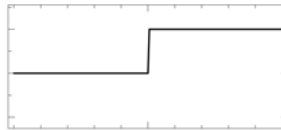
$$L = P \otimes I$$

$$P = \begin{bmatrix} 0 & 1 & 0 \\ 1 & -4 & 1 \\ 0 & 1 & 0 \end{bmatrix}$$

- Step / Edge Detection in Noisy Image

- filtering through Gaussian smoothing

$$\begin{bmatrix} \frac{1}{16} & \frac{2}{16} & \frac{1}{16} \\ \frac{2}{16} & \frac{4}{16} & \frac{2}{16} \\ \frac{1}{16} & \frac{2}{16} & \frac{1}{16} \end{bmatrix}$$



Stereo Vision Example

- Extracting depth information from a stereo image

- $a1$ and $a2$: left and right image
- $b1$ and $b2$: vertical edge filtered left and right image;
filter = $[1 \ 2 \ 4 \ -2 \ -10 \ -2 \ 4 \ 2 \ 1]$
- c : confidence image:
bright = high confidence (good texture)
- d : depth image:
bright = close; dark = far



SVM Stereo Head Mounted on an All-terrain Robot

- Stereo Camera
 - *Vider Desing*
 - www.videredesign.com
- Robot
 - *Shrimp, EPFL*
- Application of Stereo Vision
 - *Traversability calculation based on stereo images for outdoor navigation*
 - *Motion tracking*



© R. Siegwart, I. Nourbakhsh

Summary

- A whole host of different types of sensors.
 - *With varying characteristics.*
- Basic distinctions:
 - *Active/passive*
 - *Exteroceptive/proprioceptive*
- Generally there is a tradeoff between sensor “power” and:
 - *Cost*
 - *Processing*
- For any given robot we typically use a range of different sensors.

© R. Siegwart, I. Nourbakhsh