SMOOTHING LOCALLY FLAT IMBEDDINGS[1]

BY R. C. KIRBY

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The fundamental imbedding problem for manifolds is to classify the imbeddings of an n-manifold into a q-manifold under ambient isotopy. We announce here that the differentiable and topological cases of this problem for differentiable manifolds are the same if $2q>3(n+1)$ and $q\geqq 8$.

This follows from Theorem 2 below which states that a locally flat imbedding of a compact differentiable manifold M^n into a differentiable manifold Q^q is ambient isotopic to a differentiable imbedding if $2q>3(n+1)$ and $q\geqq 8$. Since this ambient isotopy may be chosen arbitrarily close to the identity map, the set of differentiable imbeddings is dense in the set of locally flat imbeddings of M^n in Q^q.

It will then follow that two locally flat imbeddings of M^n into Q^q are ambient isotopic if they are homotopic; hence the classification problem reduces to a problem in homotopy theory.

THEOREM 1. *Let $f\colon B^n \to \operatorname{int} Q^q$ be a locally flat imbedding of the unit n-ball into Q^q. Such an f always extends to $f\colon R^q \to \operatorname{int} Q^q$. Let C^{n-1} be a compact differentiable submanifold of $\partial B^n = S^{n-1}$, and suppose that f is differentiable on a neighborhood of C^{n-1} in B^n. Let $q\geqq 7$, $2q>3(n+1)$ and $\epsilon>0$. Then there exists an ambient ϵ-isotopy $F_t\colon Q^q\to Q^q$, $t\in[0, 1]$, satisfying*

(1) *$F_0=$ identity,*

(2) *$F_1 f$ is differentiable on* $\operatorname{int} B^n$ *and on a neighborhood of C^{n-1} in B^n,*

(3) *$F_t=$ identity on $Q-N_\epsilon(f(B^n))$ and on $f(R^n-\operatorname{int} B^n)$ for all $t\in[0, 1]$,*

(4) *$|F_t(x)-x|<\epsilon$ for all $x\in Q^q$ and $t\in[0, 1]$. ($N_\epsilon(X)$) is the set of points within ϵ of X.)*

THEOREM 2. *Let $f\colon M^n\to Q^q$ be a locally flat imbedding such that either $f(M^n)\subset \operatorname{int} Q^q$ and $q\geqq 7$ or $f^{-1}(\partial Q^q)=\partial M^n$ and $q\geqq 8$. Let $2q>3(n+1)$ and $\epsilon>0$. Then there exists an ambient ϵ-isotopy $F_t\colon Q^q\to Q^q$, $t\in[0, 1]$, satisfying*

(1) *$F_0=$ identity,*

(2) *$F_1 f$ is a differentiable imbedding,*

[1] This is an announcement of a portion of the author's dissertation at the University of Chicago written under Professor Eldon Dyer.