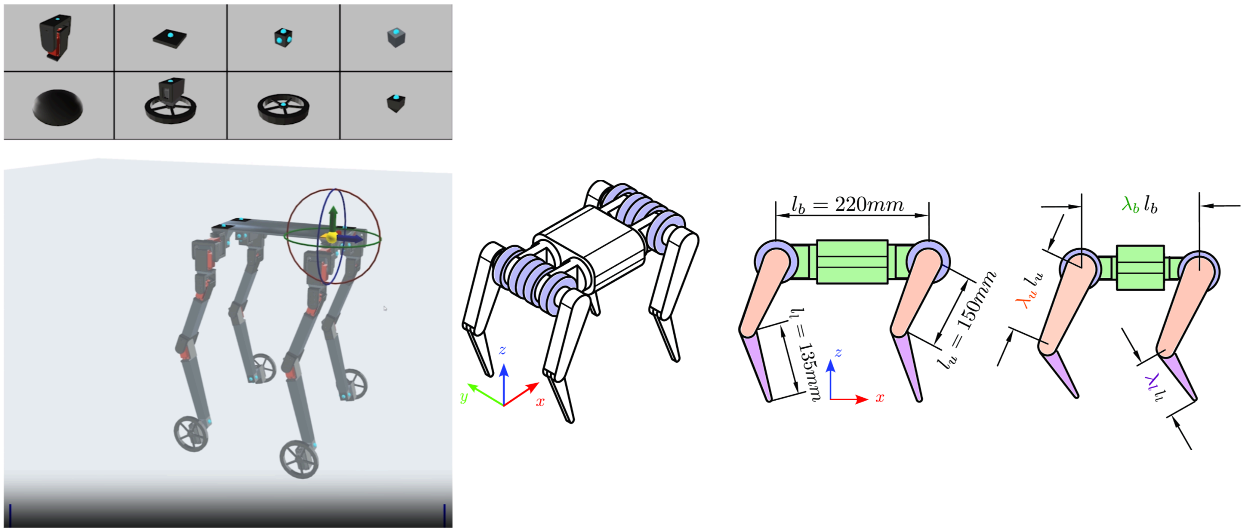
Advanced Co-Design Framework for Legged Robots



Interactive character creation in [2] and parametric design optimization in [1]

Introduction

Legged robots present unique challenges in design and control due to their complex dynamics and the need for energy-efficient, agile locomotion. Some recent work proved this approach viable for these systems [1-4]. This proposal outlines an advanced co-design framework that simultaneously optimizes the mechanical structure and control strategies of legged robots, addressing key challenges in the field.

Objectives

1. Develop a versatile co-design framework that integrates mechanical design and control optimization for legged robots.
2. Enhance the dynamic performance of legged robots through simultaneous hardware and software optimization.
3. Improve the accessibility of legged robot design for users with varying levels of expertise.
4. Bridge the gap between simulation and real-world performance in legged robotics.

Key components

1. Optimization/Learning-based Approach

The developed framework should achieve the selection of efficient and effective designs for several robot motion tasks. The approach will:

- Optimize both the robot's mechanical structure and its dynamic maneuvers concurrently.
- Possibly utilize gradient information and differentiable simulation [5] to improve the convergence capability. Or alternative explore the power of reinforcement learning for the generation of policies.
- Parallelizable simulation techniques to significantly speed up the design process.
- Efficient computation methods for necessary design changes to maintain an interactive design flow.
- Adaptive Control Algorithms: Design control strategies that can adapt to varying robot morphologies and environmental conditions.

2. Interactive Design Interface

To make the co-design process more accessible, an interactive computational design system could be employed:

- Allows users to specify high-level descriptions of desired robot morphologies and behaviors, such as in [7, 8].
- Allows the user to automatically generate motion plans, similarly to [6].
- Optimizing robot size, motion duration, and actuator selection.
- Provides real-time feedback on design feasibility and performance.

Validation and Testing

1. Simulation Studies: Conduct extensive simulations to validate the co-design framework across various legged robot configurations and tasks.
2. Hardware Prototyping: Develop physical prototypes of optimized designs to verify real-world performance.
3. Sim-to-Real Transfer: Evaluate the transferability of optimized designs and control policies from simulation to physical robots.

Expected Outcomes

1. A versatile co-design framework applicable to various legged robot types and tasks.
2. Significant improvements in energy efficiency and dynamic performance of legged robots.
3. Enhanced accessibility of legged robot design for non-expert users.

4. Better understanding of the relationship between hardware design and robot behavior.

Contact Person:
Gabriele Fadini (gabriele.fadini@infk.ethz.ch)

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