FY23 Topic Areas Research and Technology Development (TRTD)

A super-resolution Machine Learning approach to Topology Optimization to enable rapid generation of low mass designs

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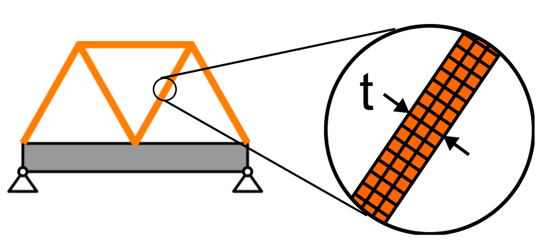
Strategic Focus Area: Supervised and Unsupervised Learning

Background

Topology Optimization (TO) is a physics-based computational design tool with the ability to **generate structural designs often 15-20% lighter** than conventional design approaches. The thin geometries required for many aerospace structures require high resolution finite element meshes to yield quality (TO) designs, resulting in **high computational power needs coupled with long solution times** .

TO requires 3 elements through the minimum feature size of interest.



JPL Ti and Al 3D print build volume
250x250x325 mm

Approach

- Learn the mapping between low and high resolution TO design domains.
- Maintain fine-scale information within coarse-scale optimizations by detuning the optimization to generate fuzzy geometries.
- Build upon existing image-based Super Resolution methodologies.

Results

- Developed an in-house TO framework in both 2D and 3D capable of designing structures with varying load conditions and mass targets.
- ML model is based on a Super Resolution Convolutional Neural Network (CNN) that is implemented in the *fastai* deep learning library.
- Implemented a data tiling approach to address limitations with CNNs applied to variable aspect ratio inputs.
- Trained a model using 6,000 coarse/fine 2D design pairs, spanning varying design space aspect ratios and load cases.

Objective

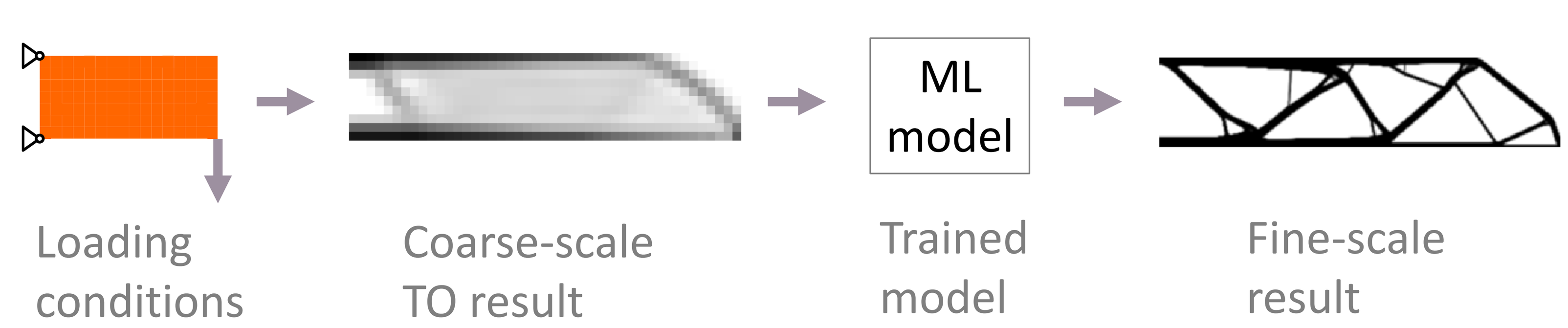
Develop a system that leverages rapid coarse-scale Topology Optimization (TO) designs to seed robust high resolution TO designs through **Machine Learning** (ML), enabling **10x faster design generation** than high resolution TO alone while maintaining comparable performance.

State-of-the-Art

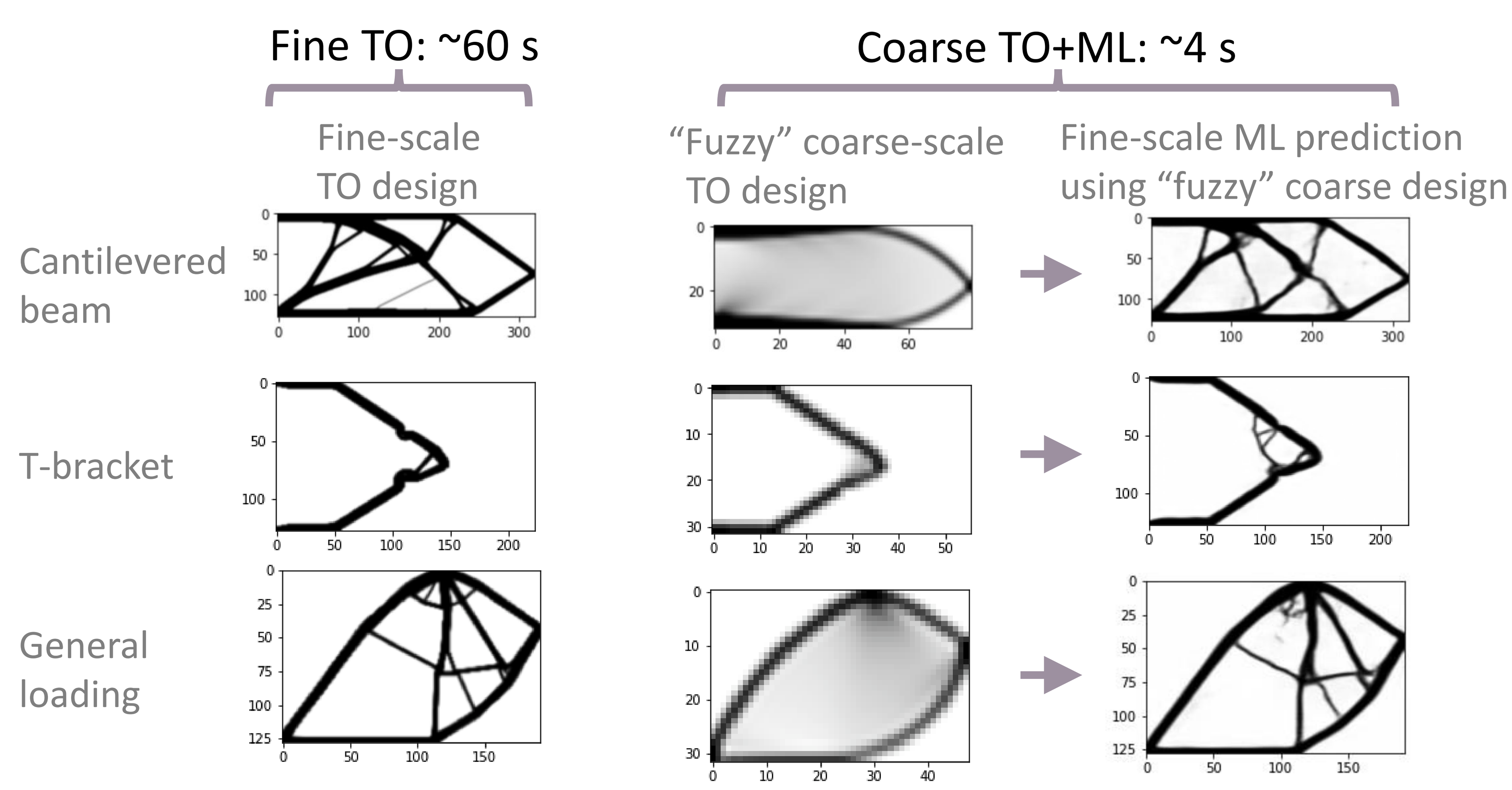
For design volumes consistent with JPL metal 3D printers, TO computational costs often become limiting at small feature sizes.

Feature size (mm)	Number of elements	Computer required	Design time
1	548,437,500	Cluster	Weeks to months
3	20,312,500	High-end PC	Days to weeks
6	2,539,000	Standard PC	Hours to a days
12	317,382	Laptop	Minutes to hours

Developed framework



Select 2D results



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Significance/Benefits to JPL and NASA:
This approach accelerates the design of high performing, low mass spacecraft structures, which has direct applications to the highly mass constrained design problems found on NASA missions.

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