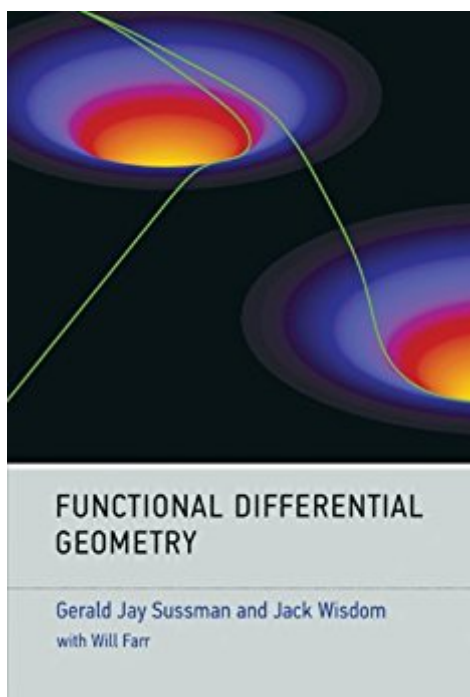


The book was found

Functional Differential Geometry (MIT Press)



Synopsis

Physics is naturally expressed in mathematical language. Students new to the subject must simultaneously learn an idiomatic mathematical language and the content that is expressed in that language. It is as if they were asked to read *Les Misérables* while struggling with French grammar. This book offers an innovative way to learn the differential geometry needed as a foundation for a deep understanding of general relativity or quantum field theory as taught at the college level. The approach taken by the authors (and used in their classes at MIT for many years) differs from the conventional one in several ways, including an emphasis on the development of the covariant derivative and an avoidance of the use of traditional index notation for tensors in favor of a semantically richer language of vector fields and differential forms. But the biggest single difference is the authors' integration of computer programming into their explanations. By programming a computer to interpret a formula, the student soon learns whether or not a formula is correct. Students are led to improve their program, and as a result improve their understanding.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This is a great book! In the same spirit of *Structure and Interpretation of Classical Mechanics* -- in order to really understand differential geometry, you write programs to do the computations. Sussman and Wisdom were very careful and start from the very basics up to applications on relativity and electrodynamics. There is a long appendix on notation and two shorter appendices, one explaining the basics of Scheme (the programming language used in the book), and another with a minimalist introduction to tensors.

A solid account of Differential Geometry to study core concepts. Having computational assets embedded in the theory is an excellent idea. Suggestion: The use of Scheme might be supplemented by Clojure as a online resource. The appendix of tensors is a good refresher. Clearly aimed as an introductory text, it succeeds admirably.

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