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enGrid manual

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1 Introduction

ENGRID is an open-source mesh generation software with CFD applications in mind. ENGRID uses the NETGEN [4] library for tetrahedral grid generation and an in-house development for prismatic boundary layer grids. Internally, ENGRID uses the VTK [2] data structures as well as the *.vtu file format. To create grids for Currently ENGRID cannot generate surface grids. In order to create a volume grid it is required to import an existing surface mesh. Gmsh [1] is an excellent open-source tool to create surface triangulations for ENGRID . Gmsh is able to import STEP and IGES files and it can also be used for simple geometry modelling.

The 1.0 release of ENGRID provides native export to OpenFOAM[®] [3]. For future releases, export capabilities for complete OpenFOAM[®] cases (including boundary conditions) and support for polyhedral cells are planned as well.

ENGRID is released under the GPL and we hope that it is a useful addition to the open-source CFD community. So far the implemented algorithm proved to be quite robust and it does not require much user interaction. Figure 1.1 shows a boundary layer grid that has been created around the geometry of what could be a toy plane.



This manual is very much a work in progress and does not claim to be finished, comprehensive, complete, or anything else. We hope that, even in this early stage, it offers a little help while using ENGRID !

¹OpenFOAM[®] is a registered trade mark of OpenCFD[®]Limited

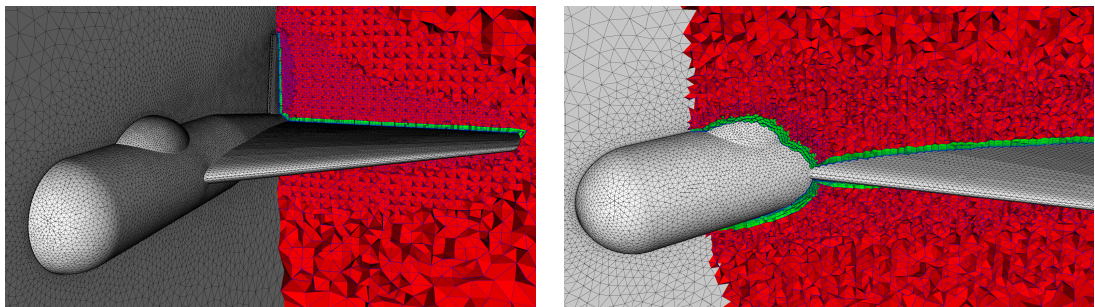


Figure 1.1: Prismatic boundary layer created by ENGRID

1.1 Current Release (1.0)

- volume grids from existing surface triangulations (no surface meshing support yet, but planned for future releases)
- prismatic boundary layer support
- GUI based on Qt4
- direct export to OpenFOAM
- experimental support for polyhedral grids in OpenFOAM

1.2 Supported Platforms

- ENGRID is developed on a LINUX system (OpenSUSE 10.3), using Qt-4.4.1, VTK 5.2, and an SVN snapshot of NETGEN.
- A Windows executable for Windows-XP (32bit) is also available.

1.3 Supported File Formats

- VTK unstructured grids in XML format (ENGRID 's native format)
- VTK poly data in XML format (import)
- legacy VTK files (import)
- OpenFOAM (export)
- Gmsh (import & export)
- STL (import & export)
- NETGEN neutral format (export)

2 Using ENGRID

2.1 Compilation and Installation

2.1.1 ENGRID on a UNIX system

Requirements

ENGRID requires Qt-4.X and VTK-5.X. We use Qt-4.4.1 and VTK-5.2 but ENGRID should also compile with earlier versions. Please report any problems to the mailing list. We would, however, also appreciate if you report success with other versions than the ones mentioned before.



Please make sure that VTK is compiled with GUI support for Qt-4.

Compilation

ENGRID uses Qt's qmake tool to provide a platform independent compilation mechanism. The source distribution has the following structure:

- enGrid_1.0
 - math
 - netgen_svn
 - resources

First of all, you'll need to set up the following environment variables:

- VTKLIBDIR : Directory containing the VTK libraries
- VTKINCDIR : Directory containing the VTK header files

On Debian or Ubuntu:

```
export VTKLIBDIR=/usr/lib/  
export VTKINCDIR=/usr/include/vtk-5.0/
```

On OpenSUSE:

```
export VTKLIBDIR=/usr/lib64
export VTKINCDIR=/usr/include/vtk
```

Then to compile ENGRID you need to first compile the NETGEN library. We have created a Qt project file and a shell script to simplify this. In the main source directory simply type `./build-nglib.sh`. This downloads the latest source code from NETGEN's SVN repository and compiles the necessary library. If this fails, please follow the instructions in the next paragraph. Otherwise compile ENGRID with the following steps:

1. change into the main source directory
2. type `qmake`
3. type `make`

Compiling NETGEN release

This paragraph is only of interest if the `./build-nglib.sh` command failed. Download the latest stable release of NETGEN and place it in the "netgen_svn" folder. The following steps should get you a working NETGEN library:

1. create a folder "netgen_svn/netgen-mesher"
2. unpack the netgen-X.Y.Z.tar.gz file
3. move the folder "netgen-X.Y.Z" to "netgen_svn/netgen-mesher/netgen"
4. change directory to "netgen_svn"
5. type `qmake`
6. type `make`

After a successful compilation of the NETGEN library you can proceed with the compilation of ENGRID as described in the previous paragraph.

Installation

There is no installation script yet. You can simply run ENGRID from the source directory by typing `./engrid` or you copy the binary to a place where it will be found by the system (e.g. `/usr/local/bin`).

2.1.2 Installing the Windows Binary

This should, hopefully, be straightforward:

1. Download and save the installer

2.1. COMPILATION AND INSTALLATION

2. Run the installer
3. Start ENGRID

Of course it is quite possible, if not even likely, that there are issues on certain systems. Please report any problems to the mailing list.

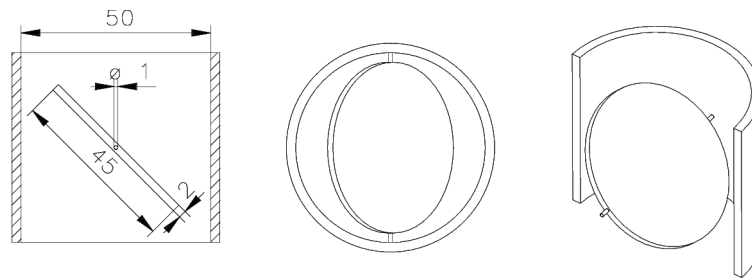


Figure 2.1: Throttle geometry

2.2 Tutorials

2.2.1 Tutorial 1: Creating a First Mesh

Description

This tutorial will demonstrate how to read a surface mesh and create a volume mesh for a CFD simulation. Figure 2.1 shows the geometry which will be used for this tutorial; it represents an adjustable throttle. The file containing the surface mesh for this tutorial is called "Throttle.msh" and it can be downloaded from the ENGRID download page.

Importing the Surface Mesh

To start, please import the file choosing

Import » Gmsh » v2.0 (ASCII)

from the menu bar. A file-dialogue will show and you can browse for the file and open it. Figure 2.2 shows a screen-shot of ENGRID after importing the file. You can use the mouse to rotate, move, and zoom the view. This mouse interaction is the default mouse interaction provided by VTK.

ENGRID colours the faces of the surface grid in order to determine which side of the surface is inside a flow domain and which is outside. The outside is coloured in a pale green, but figure 2.2 shows pale yellow; this means the surface is wrongly oriented and it needs to be corrected. To do this, please choose

Mesh » change surface orientation

from the menu-bar. Afterwards the surface will be oriented correctly.

Defining Boundary Conditions

Unfortunately all faces belong to the same boundary condition and thus it is not possible to see inside the domain. To change this you can pick a surface on the side of the cylindrical geometry and then change its boundary condition to a different value. To pick a face, please point the mouse over a triangle and press the "P" key on your keyboard. Afterwards you should see something similar to figure 2.3. To change the boundary code, please select

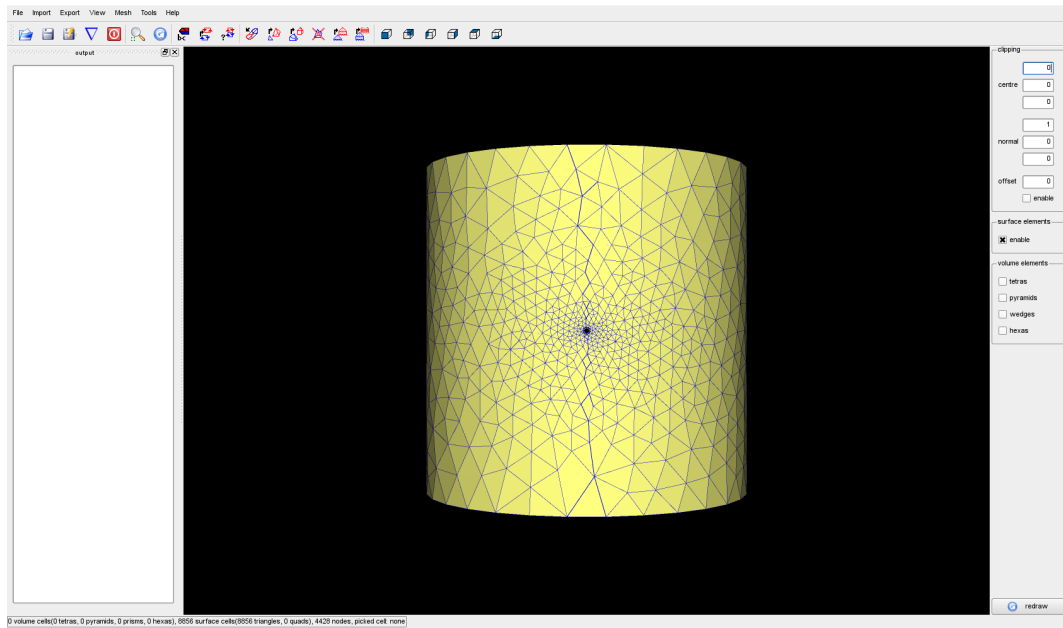


Figure 2.2: After importing the surface mesh

Mesh » set boundary code.

A small dialogue will pop up and it offers to select a feature angle and a new boundary code. The new boundary code should be set to "2" and the feature angle can remain at 45 degrees. With this setting you should set the whole side of the cylinder to a new boundary code and the faces should disappear, because they have not been selected for viewing yet. Now, do the same with the top (boundary condition 3) and the bottom (boundary condition 4) of the cylinder. To get rid of the red box, please point the mouse into an empty space and press "P" again. Now would be a good time to save your work. Select

File » Save Grid As

to save the file.

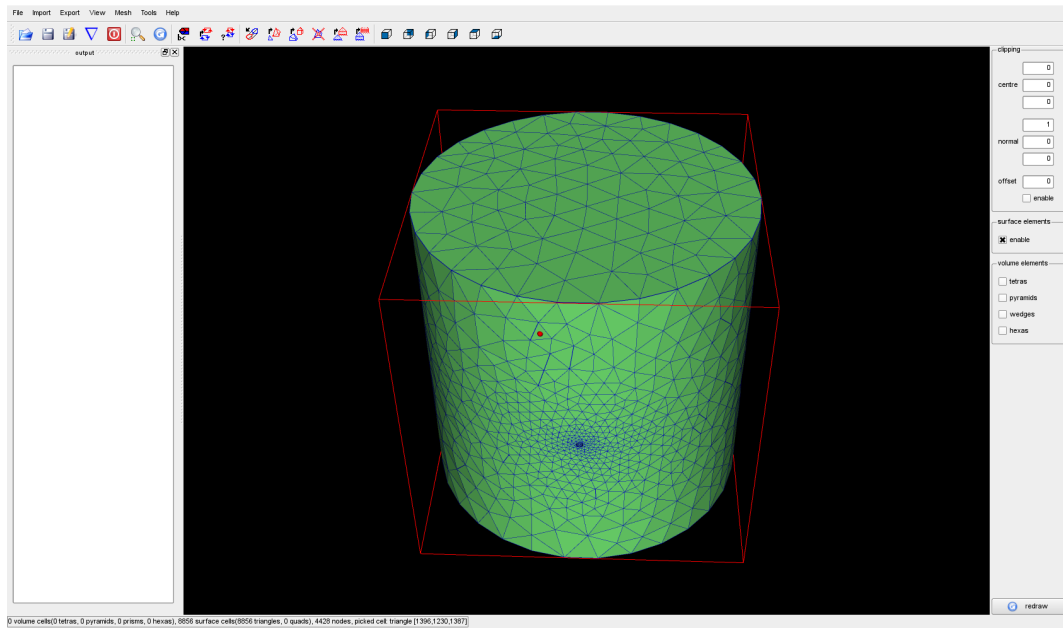


Figure 2.3: After picking a face

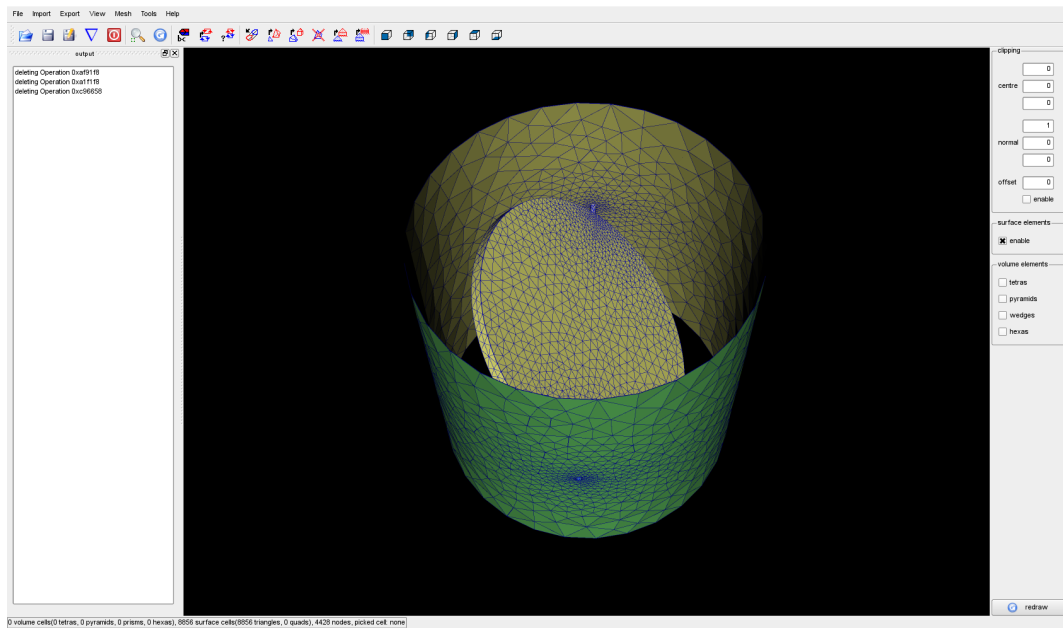


Figure 2.4: Physical walls for prismatic boundary layer

Create Volume Mesh

Creating a first volume mesh, including the boundary layer, is fairly easy now. First choose

View » boundary codes

and select the boundary conditions 1 and 2, because these represent the physical walls of the geometry. You should now have something similar to figure 2.4. To create the grid, simply select

Mesh » create prismatic boundary layer,

select the boundary conditions 1 and 2 and click "OK". You can watch the progress in the output window on the left side of the screen. This output window can be detached, moved somewhere else, or hidden completely. ENGRID indicates that it is busy in the status line at the bottom of the window. After ENGRID has finished you can select "tetras" and "wedges" from the available options on the right side of ENGRID 's main window. In order to see inside you should also enable the clipping options. The origin of the clipping plane can be set to (0,0,0) and the normal vector to (0,0,-1). If you now select to view only boundary condition 1 and choose

View » redraw

your screen should look similar to figure 2.5. To get a nice tetrahedral part of the grid it is advisable to execute

Mesh » create improve volume mesh (NETGEN)

once or twice. The mesh size distribution is not ideal for the first run of NETGEN. ENGRID uses an existing volume grid to compute a mesh size distribution and uses this as input for the next call of NETGEN. Normally you get a rather coarse tetrahedral grid together with the prismatic layer. The next call will produce a grid that might be somewhat too fine. Starting from the second call of

Mesh » create improve volume mesh (NETGEN)

the grid should look rather nice (see figure 2.5).

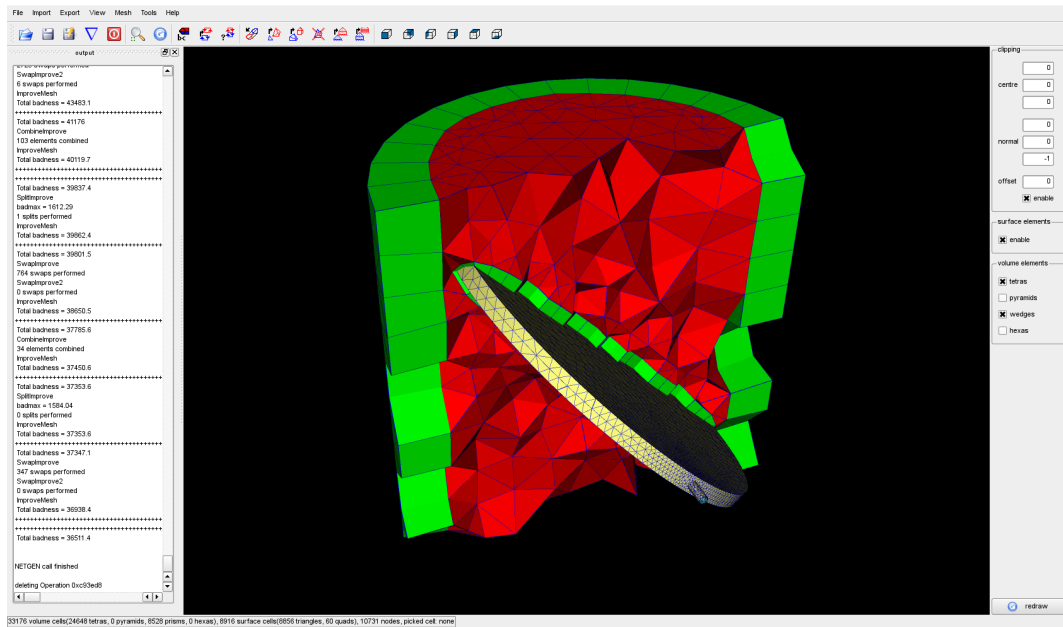
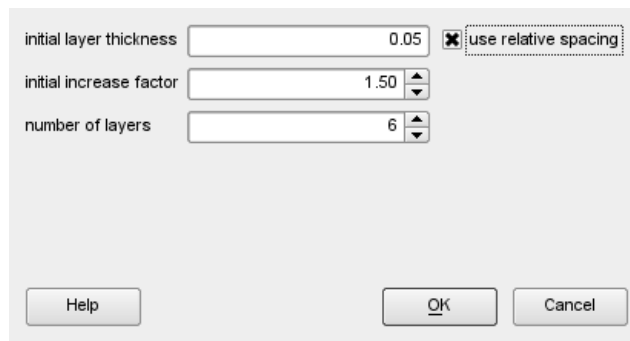


Figure 2.5: First volume grid



initial layer thickness	0.05	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> use relative spacing
initial increase factor	1.50	
number of layers	6	

Help OK Cancel

Figure 2.6: Parameters for boundary layer

Refining the Boundary-Layer

At the moment the boundary layer consists of a single layer of prisms. Refining the boundary layer is a straightforward process.



Save the grid with the refined boundary layer to a different file name, or don't save it at all (just export). At the moment the refinement cannot be reversed and thus the grid spacing cannot be changed. To do this, load the file with the initial one-layer boundary layer and refine again.

To refine the boundary layer, choose

Mesh » divide prismatic boundary layer.

A small pop-up dialogue appears, where you can enter how many layers and how to space them. Relative spacing means, that the initial step size (on the wall) is a fraction of the average local edge length around a node. Absolute spacing uses a fixed distance for all first layer prisms; this will lead to a first layer of prisms which is parallel to the wall. Not all step sizes are possible and ENGRID will issue a warning if it cannot refine your boundary layer. For this tutorial the settings in figure 2.6 should result in a decent boundary layer mesh.

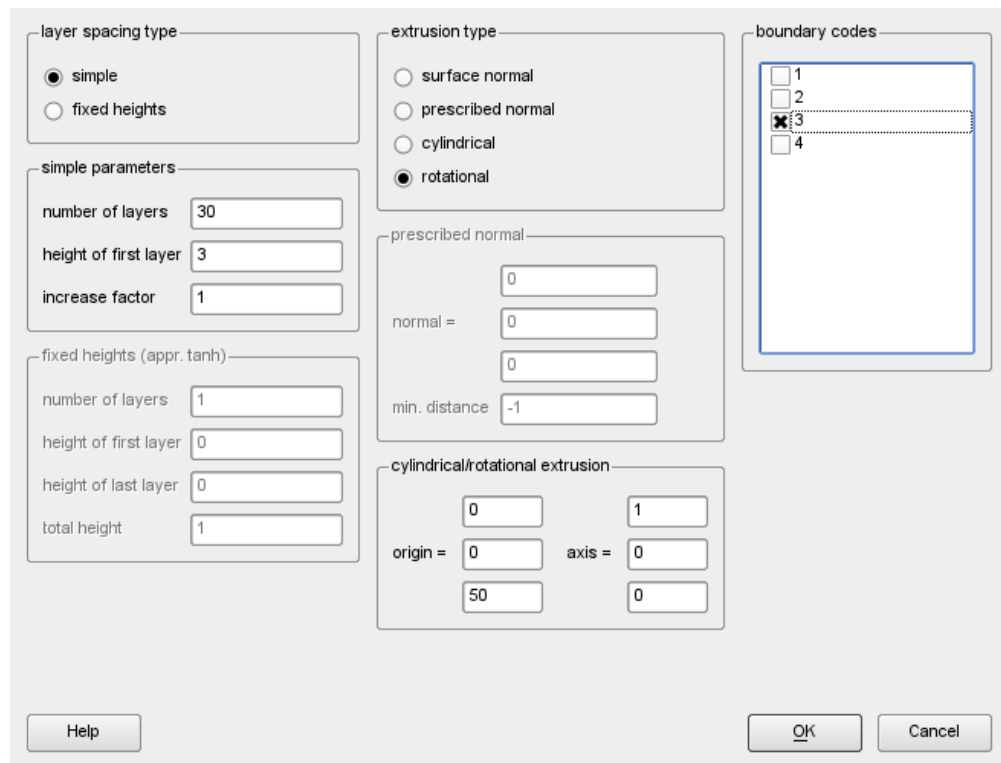


Figure 2.7: Parameters for rotational extrusion

Applying a few Simple Modifications

ENGRID offers the possibility to modify the grid by extruding certain boundaries. First we will add a pipe bend by applying a rotational extrusion to the upper boundary (code 3). Afterwards we will add straight sections for the in-flow and out-flow boundaries with the help of a normal extrusion. Please select

[Mesh » extrusion](#)

and enter the parameters exactly as shown in figure 2.7. After clicking OK you should get a grid like the one shown in figure 2.8. The extrusion adds a new boundary code (5) which needs to be enabled with

[View » boundary codes](#)

in order to view the newly created geometry. The layer height in figure 2.7 corresponds to an angle in degrees for a rotational extrusion. To extend the pipe at the inlet a normal extrusion with the parameters from figure 2.9 shall be used. If you do the same for boundary code 4 the grid should look like in figure 2.10. To simplify the later setup of a simulation it is advisable to reset the newly created boundary codes (5,6,8) to the initially set value of 2 for the pipe.

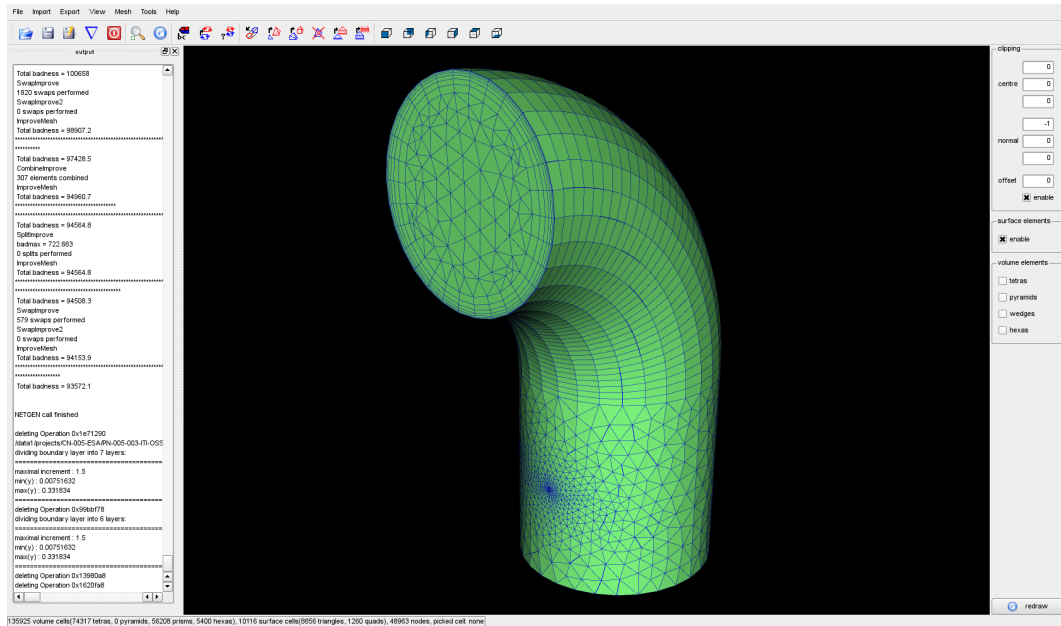


Figure 2.8: Grid after rotational extrusion

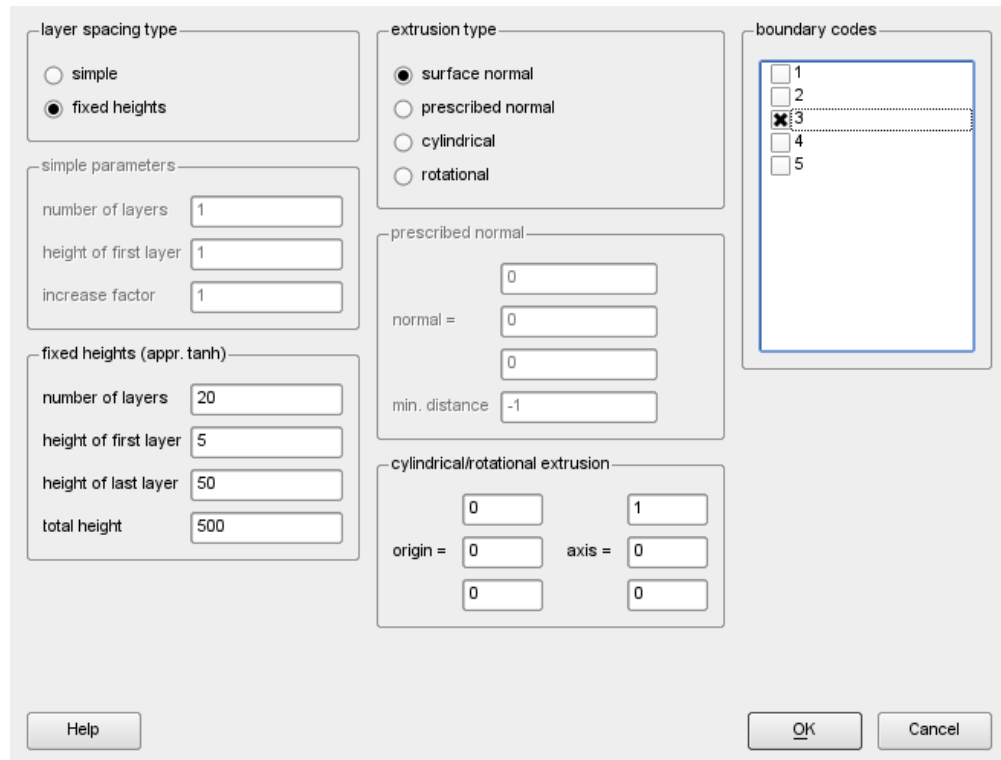


Figure 2.9: Parameters for normal extrusion

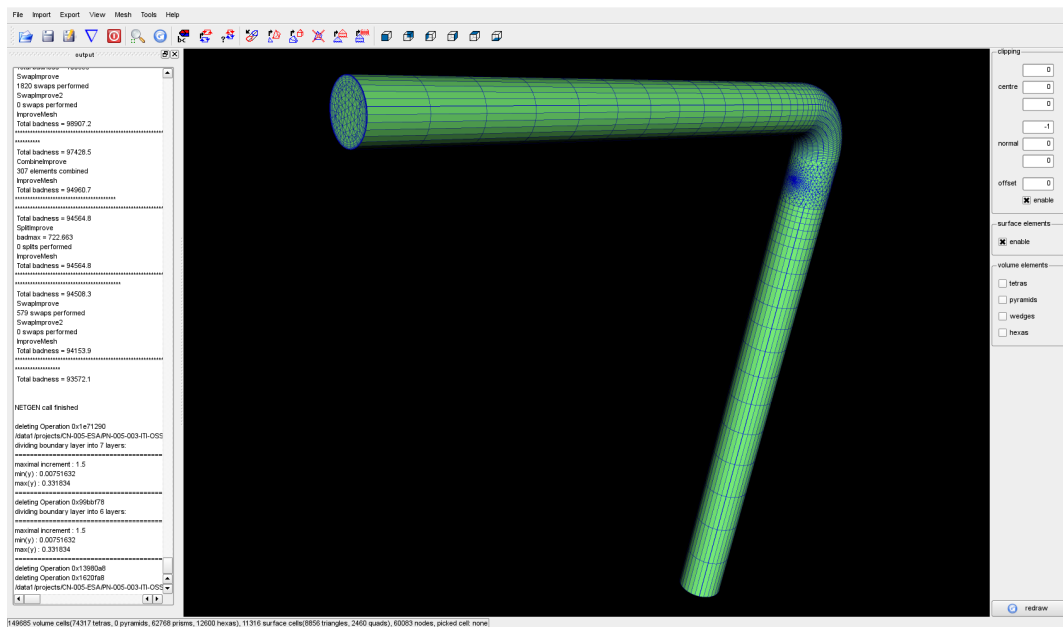


Figure 2.10: Grid after normal extrusion

	BC-index	BC-name	BC-type
1	1	throttle	wall
2	2	pipe	wall
3	3	in	patch
4	4	out	patch

OK Cancel

Figure 2.11: Editing the boundary conditions

Export the Grid to OpenFOAM®

Please select

[Tools » edit boundary conditions](#)

and edit the boundary names and types according to figure 2.11. You can export the mesh using:

[Export » OpenFOAM » OpenFOAM](#).

This will prompt you for an OpenFOAM® case directory and the mesh will be directly imported to the OpenFOAM® format, using the boundary names and types you have defined earlier.



OpenFOAM's checkMesh utility might report a bad mesh in case of very thin prisms. A good strategy is to export the mesh before the boundary layer is refined, run the checkMesh utility, and then - if everything looks alright - refine the boundary layer.

3 Background

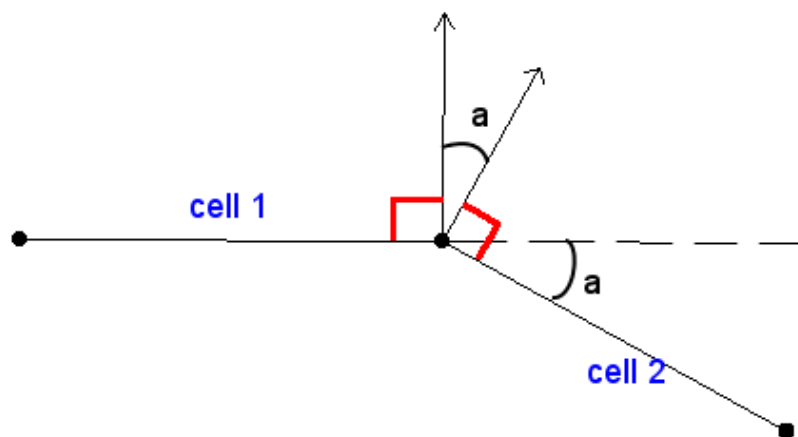
3.1 Settings

3.1.1 Feature angle

The feature angle is used to determine when an edge is a "feature edge", i.e. on the border of a "flat" surface. A feature edge occurs when the angle between the two surface normals of a polygon sharing an edge is greater than the FeatureAngle.

Those feature edges delimit the area which will be set to the given boundary code.

Consider figure 3.1: If you picked cell 1 and chose a feature angle greater than "a", cell 1 and cell 2 will be set to the same boundary code. Otherwise not.



**if $a > \text{FeatureAngle}$ then FeatureEdge=true
else FeatureEdge=false**

Figure 3.1: The feature angle

3.2 Technical Details

3.2.1 Mesh data structures

Cells

Local cells

Depends on:

- cells

Nodes

Depends on:

- cells

Local nodes

Depends on:

- cells
- nodes

N2N (node to node)

Depends on:

- cells
- nodes
- local nodes

N2C (node to cell)

Depends on:

- cells
- nodes
- local nodes

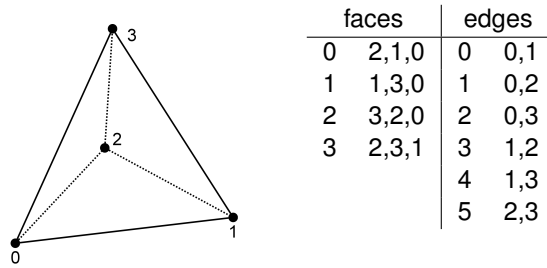


Figure 3.2: Tetrahedron

C2C (cell to cell)

Depends on:

- cells

3.2.2 Initial Boundary Layer Generation

3.2.3 Mesh-Smoothing

3.2.4 Using NETGEN for Tetra-Meshing

3.3 Element Numbering

3.4 Planned Developments

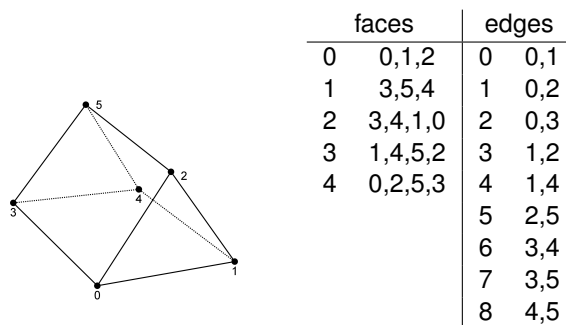


Figure 3.3: Wedge/Prism

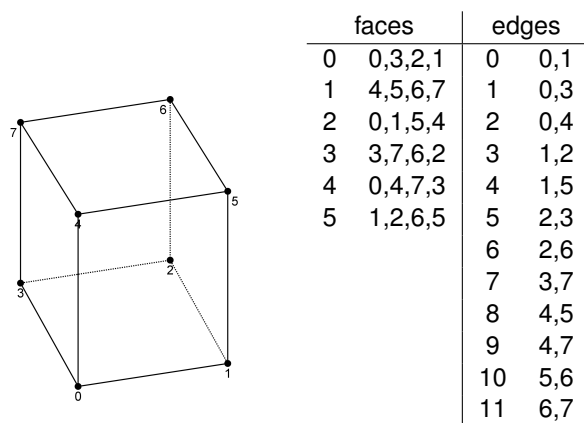


Figure 3.4: Hexahedron

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