

Toposym 3

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On mild and wicked embeddings

In: Josef Novák (ed.): General Topology and its Relations to Modern Analysis and Algebra, Proceedings of the Third Prague Topological Symposium, 1971. Academia Publishing House of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences, Praha, 1972. pp. 243--244.

Persistent URL: <http://dml.cz/dmlcz/700783>

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ON MILD AND WICKED EMBEDDINGS

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A subset A of a triangulated space X is said to be *tame* iff there is an auto-homeomorphism of X mapping A onto a polyhedron in X . Otherwise A is said to be *wild* in X [1]. It is well-known that every tame subset of X is a deformation retract of a neighborhood in X (which may be taken arbitrarily small) [4]. However, as simple polyhedra as the arc, the simple closed curve, the disk, the sphere and the ball may be so embedded in some 3-manifolds that they are deformation retracts of no neighborhood [2]. This gives rise to the following definition. A subset A of a topological space X is *mildly embedded* in X (for short — is *mild* in X) iff A is a deformation retract of a neighborhood in X . Otherwise, A is said to be *wickedly embedded* in X (is *wicked* in X). It is clear that a wicked topological polyhedron in a triangulated space must be wild.

Obviously enough, if A and X are AR-spaces, then A is mild in X . But, if A or X is only an ANR-space, the situation is quite different as we have already mentioned. Perhaps the most interesting case is the one where X is the Euclidean n -dimensional space E^n or the n -sphere S^n , and A is an m -dimensional manifold with $1 \leq m \leq n$. It has been proved [2] that a topological $(n - 1)$ -sphere is always mild in S^n and there are some indications to support the conjecture that such is the case of any ANR-set which is homotopy equivalent to S^m with $0 \leq m < n$. On the other hand, any orientable closed surface of positive genus may be wicked in S^3 [3].

It can be proved that an orientable closed surface is mild in S^3 if it can be homeomorphically approximated by unknotted surfaces in the sense that each of them bounds a cube with handles in every complementary domain.

Thus, one is led to ask the following questions.

1. Let A be an ANR-subset of S^n which is homotopy equivalent to S^m (or simply, $A \underset{\text{top}}{=} S^m$). Is A mild in S^n ?

If $m = 1$ and $n = 3$, the answer is yes.

2. Do there exist wicked embeddings of an m -manifold in S^n for $1 < m \leq n$ and $n > 3$?

3. Does there exist a sufficient condition for mild embedding of an $(n - 1)$ -manifold in S^n ($n > 3$) similar to the one for closed orientable surfaces in S^3 ?

References

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