

Abstract: I will discuss some recent progress towards understanding the asymptotic geometry of mapping class groups. Using techniques involving the *complex of curves*, the first part of my talk will explain some properties of maps from the $\mathcal{MCG}(S)$ to the curve complex of a subsurface X , which are closely related to the map taking a curve in S to its intersection with X . The second half will describe how the geometry of the *asymptotic cone* of the mapping class group is encoded by these maps and discuss some of the connections between my description of the asymptotic cone and the conjectured rank of the mapping class group.