Lecture 16 of 41

Transparency, Painter’s Algorithm, & Z-Buffer
Lab 3a: Shading & Transparency

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Public mirror web site: http://www.kddresearch.org/Courses/CIS636
Instructor home page: http://www.cis.ksu.edu/~bhsu

Readings:
Today: §2.6, 20.1 Eberly 2e
OpenGL: A Primer on shading, alpha blending
Khronos Group docs on transparency: http://bit.ly/hRaQgk

Lecture Outline

- Reading for Last Class: §4.1 – 4.3, Eberly 2e; CGA handout
- Reading for Today: §2.6, 20.1, Eberly 2e; OpenGL primer material
- Reading for Next Class: §5.1 – 5.2, Eberly 2e
- Last Time: Scene Graphs; CGA Demos, Videos
  - Scene graphs and state – main topic
  - State of CGA: videos and discussion
  - Demos to download
    - Adobe Maya: http://students.autodesk.com
- Today: Shading and Transparency in OpenGL
  - Transparency revisited
  - OpenGL how-to: http://bit.ly/hRaQgk
    - Alpha blending (15.020, 15.040)
    - Screen-door transparency (15.030)
  - Painter’s algorithm & depth buffering (z-buffering)
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Images © 2007 A. Bar-Zeev

Review [1]: Scene Graphs

- **Scene Graph**: General Data Structure used in CG
  - Used to: compute visibility, set up rendering pipeline
  - Actual graph: general graph, forest, or rooted tree
- **Scene Graph Traversal**: Initial Step – Drives Rendering
- **Features of Scene Graphs**
  - Spatial partitioning: e.g., using bounding volume hierarchies
  - Leaves: primitive components
  - Interior nodes: assembly operations, modelview transformations
  - Root(s): scene or major objects
Review [2]:
Aesthetic Considerations

- **Non-Photorealistic Rendering**: Aimed at Achieving Natural Aesthetic
  - **Cartoon shaders**: use sharp gradient (thresholded)
  - **Pencil shaders**: blurring, stippling

- **CGA and Realism**

  - Term from signal processing
  - Two sampled signals indistinguishable from (aliases of) one another
  - Examples: jaggies, Moiré vibration (Moiré pattern)
  - Anti-aliasing: operations to prevent such effects

- **Temporal Aliasing**
  - Similar effect in animation
  - Small artifact can be much more jarring!
  - Example: think of flecks in traditional film reels

Review [3]: CG Feature Films & Shorts

- **Monsters Inc. 2** © 2012 Disney/Pixar
  - [http://youtu.be/cJHUBYyWUg](http://youtu.be/cJHUBYyWUg)

- **Kung-Fu Panda** © 2008 DreamWorks Animation SKG

- **Happy Feet** © 2006 Warner Brothers

- **Toy Story 3** © 2010 Disney/Pixar
  - [http://youtu.be/jcFmWXa2qeg](http://youtu.be/jcFmWXa2qeg)

- **WiiFit**: © 2008 Nintendo

- **Luxo Jr.** © 1986 Pixar Animation Studios

- **Tron: Legacy** © 2010 Walt Disney Pictures
  - [http://youtu.be/pIwXwVJZ3BY](http://youtu.be/pIwXwVJZ3BY)

- **Monsters Inc. 2** © 2012 Disney/Pixar
  - [http://youtu.be/cJHUBYyWUg](http://youtu.be/cJHUBYyWUg)

- **Kung-Fu Panda 3** © 2016 DreamWorks Animation
  - [http://youtu.be/JW2zJzOs9Lw](http://youtu.be/JW2zJzOs9Lw)

- **Happy Feet** © 2006 Warner Brothers

- **Toy Story 3** © 2010 Disney/Pixar
  - [http://youtu.be/jcFmWXa2qeg](http://youtu.be/jcFmWXa2qeg)

- **WiiFit**: © 2008 Nintendo

- **Luxo Jr.** © 1986 Pixar Animation Studios

- **Tron: Legacy** © 2010 Walt Disney Pictures
  - [http://youtu.be/pIwXwVJZ3BY](http://youtu.be/pIwXwVJZ3BY)
Review [4]: OpenGL Shading (Overview)

- **Set Up Point Light Sources**
  - Directional light given by "position" vector
    ```
    GLfloat light_position[] = (-1.0, 1.0, -1.0, 0.0);
    glLightfv(GL_LIGHT0, GL_POSITION, light_position);
    ```
  - Point source given by "position" point
    ```
    GLfloat light_position[] = (-1.0, 1.0, -1.0, 1.0);
    glLightfv(GL_LIGHT0, GL_POSITION, light_position);
    ```

- **Set Up Materials, Turn Lights On**
  ```
  GLfloat mat_specular[] = [0.0, 0.0, 0.0, 1.0];
  GLfloat mat_diffuse[] = [0.3, 0.6, 0.4, 1.0];
  GLfloat mat_ambient[] = [0.0, 0.1, 0.3, 1.0];
  GLfloat mat_shininess = 20.0;
  glMaterialfv(GL_FRONT, GL_SPECULAR, mat_specular);
  glMaterialfv(GL_FRONT, GL_DIFFUSE, mat_diffuse);
  glMaterialfv(GL_FRONT, GL_AMBIENT, mat_ambient);
  glMaterialfv(GL_FRONT, GL_SHININESS, mat_shininess);
  ```

- **Start Drawing (glBegin ... glEnd)**

Transparency in OpenGL [1]: Transparent vs. Translucent, Blended

A transparent physical material shows objects behind it as unobscured and doesn’t reflect light off its surface. Clear glass is a nearly transparent material. Although glass allows most light to pass through unobscured, in reality it also reflects some light. A perfectly transparent material is completely invisible.

A translucent physical material shows objects behind it, but those objects are obscured by the translucent material. In addition, a translucent material reflects some of the light that hits it, making the material visible. Physical examples of translucent materials include shear cloth, thin plastic, and smoked glass.

Transparent and translucent are often used synonymously. Materials that are neither transparent nor translucent are opaque.

Blending is OpenGL’s mechanism for combining color already in the framebuffer with the color of the incoming primitive. The result of this combination is then stored back in the framebuffer. Blending is frequently used to simulate translucent physical materials. One example is rendering the smoked glass windshield of a car. The driver and interior are still visible, but they are obscured by the dark color of the smoked glass.
Transparency in OpenGL [2]: Blending vs. Screen Door

15.020 How can I achieve a transparent effect?

OpenGL doesn’t support a direct interface for rendering translucent (partially opaque) primitives. However, you can create a transparency effect with the blend feature and carefully ordering your primitive data. You might also consider using screen door transparency.

An OpenGL application typically enables blending as follows:

```c
glEnable (GL_BLEND);
glBlendFunc (GL_SRC_ALPHA, GL_ONE_MINUS_SRC_ALPHA);
```

After blending is enabled, as shown above, the incoming primitive color is blended with the color already stored in the frame buffer. `glBlendFunc()` controls how this blending occurs. The typical use described above modifies the incoming color by its associated alpha value and modifies the destination color by one minus the incoming alpha value. The sum of these two colors is then written back into the framebuffer.

The primitive’s opacity is specified using `glColor4()`. RGB specifies the color, and the alpha parameter specifies the opacity.

When using depth buffering in an application, you need to be careful about the order in which you render primitives. Fully opaque primitives need to be rendered first, followed by partially opaque primitives in back-to-front order. If you don’t render primitives in this order, the primitives, which would otherwise be visible through a partially opaque primitive, might lose the depth test entirely.

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Transparency in OpenGL [3]: Screen Door

15.030 How can I create screen door transparency?

This is accomplished by specifying a polygon stipple pattern with `glPolygonStipple()` and by rendering the transparent primitive with polygon stippling enabled (`glEnable(GL_POLYGON_STIPPLE)`). The number of bits set in the stipple pattern determine the amount of transparency and opacity, setting more bits result in a more opaque object, and setting fewer bits results in a more translucent object. Screen door transparency is sometimes preferable to blending, because it’s order independent (primitives don’t need to be rendered in back-to-front order).

Technical University of Vienna, IEEE VIS 2004

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Transparency in OpenGL [4]: Glass

15.040 How can I render glass with OpenGL?

This question is difficult to answer, because what looks like glass to one person might not to another. What follows is a general algorithm to get you started.

First render all opaque objects in your scene. Disable lighting, enable blending, and render your glass geometry with a small alpha value. This should result in a faint rendering of your object in the back buffer. (Note: You may need to sort your glass geometry, so it’s rendered in back to front order.)

Now, you need to add the specular highlight. Set your ambient and diffuse material colors to black, and your specular material and light colors to white. Enable lighting. Set glDepthFunc(GL_EQUAL), then render your glass object a second time.

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http://bit.ly/hRaQgk
Goon Creative, Maya Transparency Tutorial

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Transparency in OpenGL [5]: Alpha & Painter’s Algorithm

15.050 Do I need to render my primitives from back to front for correct rendering of translucent primitives to occur?

If your hardware supports destination alpha, you can experiment with different glBlendFunc() settings that use destination alpha. However, this won’t solve all the problems with depth buffered translucent surfaces. The only sure way to achieve visually correct results is to sort and render your primitives from back to front.

© 2004 – 2009 Wikipedia, Painter’s Algorithm

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http://bit.ly/hRaQgk
Transparency in OpenGL [6]: Painter’s algorithm & Z-buffering

15.070 If I draw a translucent primitive and draw another primitive behind it, I expect the second primitive to show through the first, but it's not there?

Is depth buffering enabled?

If you’re drawing a polygon that's behind another polygon, and depth test is enabled, then the new polygon will typically lose the depth test, and no blending will occur. On the other hand, if you’ve disabled depth test, the new polygon will be blended with the existing polygon, regardless of whether it's behind or in front of it.

© 2009 Wikipedia, Z-buffering

http://bit.ly/gGRFMA

A simple three-dimensional scene

Z-buffer representation

Partial Transparency

15.080 How can I make part of my texture maps transparent or translucent?

It depends on the effect you're trying to achieve.

If you want blending to occur after the texture has been applied, then use the OpenGL blending feature. Try this:

```glEnable (GL_BLEND);
gBlendFunc (GL_ONE, GL_ONE);
```

You might want to use the alpha values that result from texture mapping in the blend function. If so, (GL_SRC_ALPHA, GL_ONE_MINUS_SRC_ALPHA) is always a good function to start with.

However, if you want blending to occur when the primitive is texture mapped (i.e. you want parts of the texture map to allow the underlying color of the primitive to show through), then don’t use OpenGL blending. Instead, you’d use glTexEnw(), and set the texture environment mode to GL_BLEND. In this case, you’d want to leave the texture environment color to its default value of (0,0,0,0).

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http://bit.ly/hRaQgk
Summary

- Reading for Last Class: §4.1 – 4.3, Eberly 2e; CGA handout
- Reading for Today: §2.6, 20.1, Eberly 2e; OpenGL primer material
- Reading for Next Class: §5.1 – 5.2, Eberly 2e
- Last Time: Scene Graphs
  * Maintaining state
  * Coming up: traversal
- CGA Demos, Videos
  * State of CGA: videos
  * Issues: photorealism, hardware, traditional (non-CG) animation
  * Techniques showcased: multipass texturing, alpha, portals
- Shading and Transparency in OpenGL
  * Alpha blending
  * Painter’s algorithm – less efficient, can handle non-opaque objects
  * Depth buffering (z-buffering) – in hardware, fast, opaque only

Terminology

- Non-Photorealistic Rendering
  * Cartoon shaders
  * Pencil shaders
- CGA and Realism
  * Aliasing – reconstructed image differs from original
  * Alias – artifact in reconstructed image (jaggies, Moiré pattern, etc.)
  * Anti-aliasing – techniques (e.g., area sampling) for avoiding aliasing
  * Temporal aliasing – aliasing over time (e.g., in animation)
  * Temporal anti-aliasing – smoothing out aliasing over time
- Shading and Transparency in OpenGL
  * Alpha blending – using A channel of R, G, B, A to combine colors
  * Painter’s algorithm aka priority fill – back-to-front rendering
  * Depth buffering (z-buffering) – checking z values