


Soft Shadows & Global Illumination

CPSC 314

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Ray-Tracing


Basic Algorithm (Whithead):

```

for every pixel  $p_i$  {
  Generate ray  $r$  from camera position through pixel  $p_i$ 
  for every object  $o$  in scene {
    if(  $r$  intersects  $o$  )
      Compute lighting at intersection point, using local
      normal and material properties; store result in  $p_i$ 
    else
       $p_i$  = background color
  }
}

```

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Ray-Tracing

Issues:

- Generation of rays
- Intersection of rays with geometric primitives
- Geometric transformations
- Lighting and shading
- Efficient data structures so we don't have to test intersection with every object

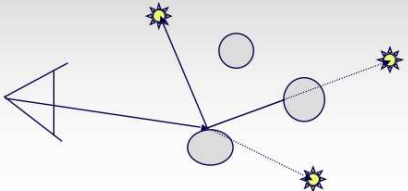
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Ray-Tracing Shadows

Approach:

- To test whether point is in shadow, send out shadow rays to all light sources
 - If ray hits another object, the point lies in shadow



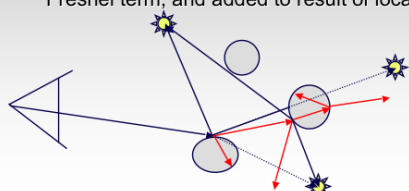
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Ray-Tracing Reflections/Refractions

Approach:

- Send rays out in reflected and refracted direction to gather incoming light
- That light is multiplied by local surface color and Fresnel term, and added to result of local shading



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Ray Tracing

Data Structures

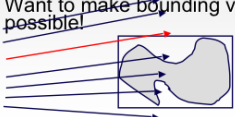
- Goal: reduce number of intersection tests per ray
- Lots of different approaches:
 - (Hierarchical) bounding volumes
 - Hierarchical space subdivision
 - Oct-tree, k-D tree, BSP tree

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Bounding Volumes

Idea:

- Rather than testing every ray against a potentially very complex object (e.g. triangle mesh), do a quick *conservative* test first which eliminates most of the rays
- Surround complex object by very simple, easy to test geometry (typically sphere or axis-aligned box)
 - Want to make bounding volume as tight as possible

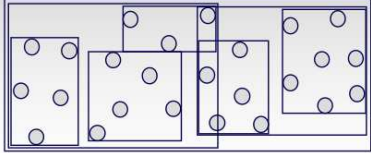


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Hierarchical Bounding Volumes

Extension of previous idea:

- Use bounding volumes for groups of objects

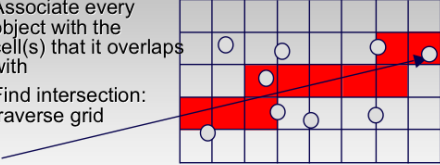


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
Regular Grid

Subdivide space into rectangular grid:

- Associate every object with the cell(s) that it overlaps with
- Find intersection: traverse grid



In 3D: regular grid of cubes (**voxels**):



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Soft Shadows & Area Light Sources

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Area Light Sources

So far:

- All lights were either point-shaped or directional
 - Both for ray-tracing and the rendering pipeline
- Thus, at every point, we only need to compute lighting formula and shadowing for **ONE** light direction

In reality:

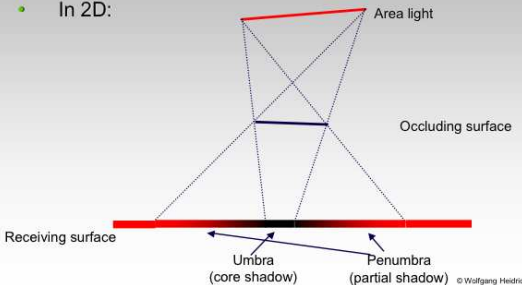
- All lights have a finite area
- Instead of just dealing with one direction, we now have to **integrate** over all directions that go to the light source

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Area Light Sources

Area lights produce soft shadows:

- In 2D:



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Area Light Sources

Point lights:

- Only one light direction:

$$I_{reflected} = \rho \cdot V \cdot I_{light}$$

- V is visibility of light (0 or 1)
- ρ is lighting model (e.g. diffuse or Phong)

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Area Light Sources

Area Lights:

- Infinitely many light rays
- Need to integrate over all of them:

$$I_{reflected} = \int_{\text{light directions}} \rho(\omega) \cdot V(\omega) \cdot I_{light}(\omega) \cdot d\omega$$

- Lighting model visibility and light intensity can now be different for every ray!

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Integrating over Light Source

Rewrite the integration

- Instead of integrating over directions

$$I_{reflected} = \int_{\text{light directions}} \rho(\omega) \cdot V(\omega) \cdot I_{light}(\omega) \cdot d\omega$$

we can integrate over points on the light source

$$I_{reflected}(q) = \int_{s,t} \frac{\rho(p-q) \cdot V(p-q)}{|p-q|^2} \cdot I_{light}(p) \cdot ds \cdot dt$$

where q: point on reflecting surface, p= F(s,t) is a point on the area light

- We are integrating over p
- Denominator: quadratic falloff!

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Integration

Problem:

- Except for the simplest of scenes, either integral is **not solvable analytically!**
- This is mostly due to the visibility term, which could be arbitrarily complex depending on the scene

So:

- Use numerical integration
- Effectively: approximate the light with a whole number of point lights

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Numerical Integration

Regular grid of point lights

- Problem: will see 4 hard shadows rather than as soft shadow
- Need LOTS of points to avoid this problem

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Monte Carlo Integration

Better:

- Randomly** choose the points
- Use different points on light for computing the lighting in different points on reflecting surface

- This produces random noise
- Visually preferable to structured artifacts

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Monte Carlo Integration

one shadow ray

lots of shadow rays

Monte Carlo Integration

Formally:

- Approximate integral with finite sum

$$I_{\text{reflected}}(q) = \int_{s,t} \frac{\rho(p-q) \cdot V(p-q)}{|p-q|^2} \cdot I_{\text{light}}(p) \cdot ds \cdot dt$$

$$\approx \frac{A}{N} \sum_{i=1}^N \frac{\rho(p_i-q) \cdot V(p_i-q)}{|p_i-q|^2} \cdot I_{\text{light}}(p_i)$$

where

- The p_i are randomly chosen on the light source
 - With equal probability!
- A is the total area of the light
- N is the number of samples (rays)

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Sampling

Sample directions vs. sample light source

- Most directions do not correspond to points on the light source
 - Thus, variance will be higher than sampling light directly

Images by Matt Pharr

Monte Carlo Integration

Note:

- This approach of approximating lighting integrals with sums over randomly chosen points is much more flexible than this!
- In particular, it can be used for global illumination
 - Light bouncing off multiple surfaces before hitting the eye

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Global Illumination

So far:

- Have considered only light directly coming from the light sources
 - As well as mirror reflections, refraction

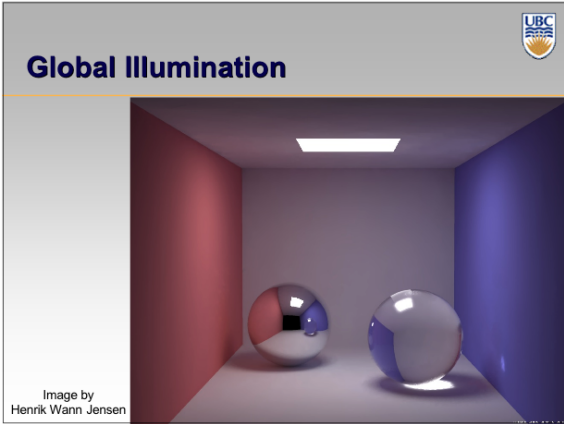
In reality:

- Light bouncing off diffuse and/or glossy surfaces also illuminates other surfaces
 - This is called global illumination

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Direct Illumination

Image by Henrik Wann Jensen



Rendering Equation

Equation guiding global illumination:

$$L_o(x, \omega_o) = L_e(x, \omega_o) + \int_{\Omega} \rho(x, \omega_i, \omega_o) L_i(\omega_i) d\omega_i$$

$$= L_e(x, \omega_o) + \int_{\Omega} \rho(x, \omega_i, \omega_o) L_o(R(x, \omega_i), -\omega_i) d\omega_i$$

Where

- ρ is the reflectance from ω_i to ω_o at point x
- L_o is the outgoing (i.e. reflected) **radiance** at point x in direction ω_i
 - Radiance is a specific physical quantity describing the amount of light along a ray
 - Radiance is constant along a ray
- L_e is the emitted radiance (=0 unless point x is on a light source)
- R is the "ray-tracing function". It describes what point is visible from x in direction ω_i .

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Rendering Equation

Equation guiding global illumination:

$$L_o(x, \omega_o) = L_e(x, \omega_o) + \int_{\Omega} \rho(x, \omega_i, \omega_o) L_i(\omega_i) d\omega_i$$

$$= L_e(x, \omega_o) + \int_{\Omega} \rho(x, \omega_i, \omega_o) L_o(R(x, \omega_i), -\omega_i) d\omega_i$$

Note:

- The rendering equation is an **integral equation**
- This equation cannot be solved directly
 - Ray-tracing function is complicated!
 - Similar to the problem we had computing illumination from area light sources!

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Ray Casting

- Cast a ray from the eye through each pixel
- The following few slides are from Fred Durand (MIT)

Ray Tracing

- Cast a ray from the eye through each pixel
- Trace secondary rays (light, reflection, refraction)

Monte Carlo Ray Tracing

- Cast a ray from the eye through each pixel
- Cast random rays from the visible point
 - Accumulate radiance contribution

Monte Carlo Ray Tracing

- Cast a ray from the eye through each pixel
- Cast random rays from the visible point
- Recurse

Monte Carlo

- Cast a ray from the eye through each pixel
- Cast random rays from the visible point
- Recurse

Monte Carlo

- Systematically sample primary light

Monte Carlo Path Tracing

In practice:

- Do not branch at every intersection point
 - This would have exponential complexity in the ray depth!
- Instead:
 - Shoot some number of primary rays through the pixel (10s-1000s, depending on scene!)
 - For each pixel and each intersection point, make a **single, random** decision in which direction to go next

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Monte Carlo Path Tracing

- Trace only one secondary ray per recursion
- But send many primary rays per pixel
- (performs antialiasing as well)

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How to Sample?


Simple sampling strategy:

- At every point, choose between all possible reflection directions with equal probability
- This will produce very high variance/noise if the materials are specular or glossy
- Lots of rays are required to reduce noise!

Better strategy: importance sampling

- Focus rays in areas where most of the reflected light contribution will be found
- For example: if the surface is a mirror, then only light from the mirror direction will contribute!
- Glossy materials: prefer rays near the mirror direction

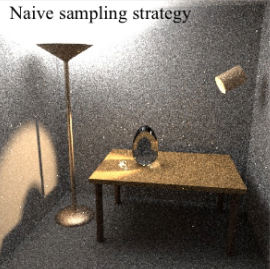
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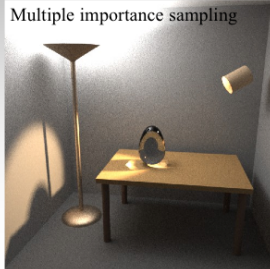
How to Sample?

- Images by Veach & Guibas


Naive sampling strategy



Multiple importance sampling



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How to Sample?

Sampling strategies are still an active research area!

- Recent years have seen drastic advances in performance
- Lots of excellent sampling strategies have been developed in statistics and machine learning
 - Many are useful for graphics


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How to Sample?

Objective:

- Compute light transport in scenes using stochastic ray tracing
 - Monte Carlo, Sequential Monte Carlo
 - Metropolis



[Burke, Ghosh, Heidrich '05]
[Ghosh, Heidrich '06]
[Ghosh, Doucet, Heidrich '06]

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How to Sample?

- E.g: importance sampling (left) vs. Sequential Monte Carlo (right)



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More on Global Illumination

This was a (very) quick overview

- More details in CPSC 514 (Computer Graphics: Rendering)
- Not offered this year, but in 2008/9

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Coming Up

Tuesday:

- Color

Thursday:

- Curves & surfaces

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