CPSC 314
Computer Graphics

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A first look at OpenGL

Many slides courtesy of Min Hyuk Kim, KAIST and Steven Gortler, Harvard
What is OpenGL?

- OpenGL = Open Graphics Library
- An open industry-standard API for hardware accelerated graphics drawing
- Implemented by graphics-card vendors
- Maintained by the Khronos-Group
What is OpenGL?

- Pros & Cons:
  - + Full specification freely available
  - + Everyone can use it
  - + Can use it anywhere (Windows, Linux, Mac, BSD, Mobile phones, Web-pages (soon), ...)
  - + Long-term maintenance for older applications
  - + New functionality usually available earlier through Extensions
  - - Inclusion of Extensions to core may take longer
  - ? Game-Industry
OpenGL Pipeline

- Reference: Textbook Chapter 1
OpenGL Pipeline: Vertex Shader

- Vertices are stored in a vertex buffer.
- When a draw call is issued, each of the vertices passes through the vertex shader.
- On input to the vertex shader, each vertex (black) has associated attributes.
- On output, each vertex (cyan) has a value for `gl_Position` and for its varying variables.
OpenGL Pipeline: Rasterization

- The data in gl_Position are used to place the three vertices of the triangle on a virtual screen.
- The rasterizer figures out which pixels (orange) are inside the triangle and interpolates the varying variables from the vertices to each of these pixels.
OpenGL Pipeline: Fragment Shader

- Each pixel (orange) is passed through the fragment shader, which computes the final color of the pixel (pink).
- The pixel is then placed in the framebuffer for display.
OpenGL Pipeline: Fragment Shader

- By changing the fragment shader, we can simulate light reflecting off of different kinds of materials.
Texture Mapping

- A simple geometric object described by a small number of triangles.
- An auxiliary image called a texture.
- Parts of the texture are glued onto each triangle giving a more complicated appearance.
Summary

- What is OpenGL?
  - A software interface that allows a programmer to communicate with the graphics hardware
  - A programming interface for rendering 2D and 3D graphics
  - A cross-language multi-platform API for computer graphics