Chapter 2.5

Rendering Pipeline

Geometry Database

Geometry database:
- Application-specific data structure for holding geometric information
- Depends on specific needs of application
  - Independent triangles, connectivity information etc.

Model/View Transformation

Modeling transformation:
- Map all geometric objects from a local coordinate system into a world coordinate system
Viewing transformation:
- Map all geometry from world coordinates into camera coordinates

Lighting

Lighting:
- Compute the brightness of every point based on its material properties (e.g. Lambertian diffuse) and the light position(s)
- Computation is performed per-vertex

Perspective Transformation

Perspective transformation
- Projecting the geometry onto the image plane
- Projective transformations and model/view transformations can all be expressed with 4x4 matrix operations

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Clipping

- Removal of parts of the geometry that fall outside the visible screen or window region
- May require re-tessellation of geometry

Scan Conversion

- Scan conversion
  - Turn 2D drawing primitives (lines, polygons etc.) into individual pixels (discretizing/sampling)
  - Interpolate color across primitive
  - Generate discrete fragments

Texture Mapping

- Texture mapping
  - “gluing images onto geometry”
  - Color of every fragment is altered by looking up a new color value from an image

Depth Test

- Depth test:
  - Remove parts of geometry hidden behind other geometry
  - Perform on every individual fragment
  - other approaches (later)

Blending

- Blending:
  - Final image: write fragments to pixels
  - Draw from farthest to nearest
  - No blending – replace previous color
  - Blending: combine new & old values with some arithmetic operations
  - Framebuffer: video memory on graphics board that holds resulting image & used to display it

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The Rendering Pipeline

- Geometry Database
- Model/View Transform
- Lighting
- Perspective Transform
- Clipping
- Scan Conversion
- Texturing
- Depth Test
- Blending
- Frame-buffer

Discussion

- Advantages of a pipeline structure
  - Logical separation of the different components, modularity
  - Easy to parallelize:
    - Earlier stages can already work on new data while later stages still work with previous data
    - Similar to pipelining in modern CPUs
    - But much more aggressive parallelization possible (special purpose hardware!)
  - Important for hardware implementations!
  - Only local knowledge of the scene is necessary

Discussion

- Disadvantages:
  - Limited flexibility
  - Some algorithms would require different ordering of pipeline stages
    - Hard to achieve while still preserving compatibility
  - Only local knowledge of scene is available
    - Shadows
    - Global illumination

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