



Global Illumination

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Course 600.456: Rendering Techniques, Professor: Jonathan Cohen



Local vs. Global Illumination

Local

- **Direct illumination of surfaces by light sources**
- **e.g. Phong and Cook/Torrence illumination**

Global

- **all light/surface interactions for entire environment**
- **Recursive ray tracing and radiosity compute this partially...**



Rendering Equation

$$I(x, x') = g(x, x') \left[e(x, x') + \int_S r(x, x', x'') I(x', x'') dx'' \right]$$

I: illumination at first point from second

g: geometry term for visibility and distance

ϵ : emitted light from second point to first

ρ : reflectivity of light from x'' to x via x'

Note that the equation is **recursive**



Ray Tracing

Modifies reflectivity term

- **Computes specular interreflections among surfaces**
- **Computes diffuse and specular reflections between light sources and surfaces**

Typically integrates using point sampling of direction space



Radiosity

Also modifies reflectivity term

- **Computes diffuse interreflections among surfaces (light sources not distinguished)**

Integrates by quantizing surface points and summing



Path Tracing

Similar to distribution ray tracing

Applies Monte Carlo sampling to estimate integral

Traces a single path for each eye ray (only a single ray spawned at each surface intersection)



Two-Pass Radiosity/Ray Tracing

First pass: radiosity

- Compute extended form factors and diffuse illumination

Second pass: ray tracing

- Perform standard ray tracing
- Diffuse component of illumination radiosity solution rather than just local illumination

Note: still doesn't handle light reflected specularly and later diffusely
