



Ray Casting

Johns Hopkins Department of Computer Science
Course 600.456: Rendering Techniques, Professor: Jonathan Cohen



Ray Casting Algorithm

For each pixel

- 1. Compute ray from eye through pixel**
- 2. For each primitive**
 - Test for ray-object intersection**
- 3. Shade pixel using nearest primitive (or set to background color)**

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Computing the Rays

Choose eye point, view direction, up direction, fields of view (x and y)

$$p_t = \text{eye} + t * v \text{ (v typically normalized)}$$

Compute rays to two opposite corners

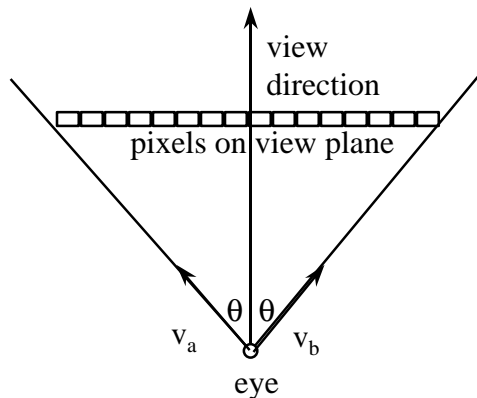
Compute step sizes, Δx and Δy to go from pixel to pixel

To compute new ray: take step, then normalize

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2D ray calculation



view is normalized
view direction

$$\mathbf{right} = (\mathbf{view}_y, -\mathbf{view}_x)$$

$$\mathbf{v}_a = \mathbf{view} - \tan\theta * \mathbf{right}$$

$$\mathbf{v}_b = \mathbf{view} + \tan\theta * \mathbf{right}$$

$$\mathbf{step} = (\mathbf{v}_b - \mathbf{v}_a) / \text{num_pixels}$$

$$\mathbf{v}_0 = \mathbf{v}_a + \mathbf{step} / 2$$

$$\mathbf{v}_i = \mathbf{v}_{i-1} + \mathbf{step}$$

Note: take equal-sized steps in viewing plane, not equal angles!

In 3D, we have an additional step size and field-of-view angle as well as an up vector.

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Computing Intersections

Ray is in parametric form (t is parameter)

Represent primitive in implicit form:

$$f(x,y,z) = 0$$

(any (x,y,z) on surface evaluates to zero)

Substitute (x,y,z) of ray into f(x,y,z) and solve for t

- degree n implicit function will be degree n in t
- quadric surfaces may be solved with quadratic equation -- pick real solution closest to eye

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Example Quadric Functions

Sphere: $(x-a)^2 + (y-b)^2 + (z-c)^2 - r^2 = 0$

Circular cylinder (parallel to z-axis):

$$(x-a)^2 + (y-b)^2 - r^2 = 0$$

Hyperbolic paraboloid:

$$y^2/b^2 - x^2/a^2 - z = 0$$

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General Quadrics

General quadric has form:

$$Ax^2 + 2Bxy + 2Cxz + 2Dx + Ey^2 + 2Fyz + 2Gy + Hz^2 + 2Iz + J = 0$$

or...

$$x^t Q x = 0, \text{ where } x^t = [x \ y \ z \ 1] \text{ and}$$

$$Q = \begin{bmatrix} A & B & C & D \\ B & E & F & G \\ C & F & H & I \\ D & G & I & J \end{bmatrix}$$

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Quadric Intersections

Quadric: $x^t Q x = 0$

Ray: $x = p + tv$

Substituting ray for x:

$$(p + tv)^t Q (p + tv) = 0$$

$$p^t Q p + p^t Q tv + tv^t Q p + tv^t Q tv = 0$$

$$(v^t Q v)t^2 + (p^t Q v + v^t Q p)t + p^t Q p = 0$$

$$(v^t Q v)t^2 + (2v^t Q p)t + p^t Q p = 0$$

(Q is symmetric)

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Common Ray-tracing Primitives

Sphere, ellipsoid

Cylinders

Plane, triangle

- $Ax + By + Cz + D = 0$

Torus

Bezier/Nurbs patches

- parametric, so use implicit form of ray

— **intersection of two planes**

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Local Illumination Shading

Compute normal at closest intersection

- $\nabla f = (\partial_x, \partial_y, \partial_z)$ is normal vector field for implicit function, f

For each light

- Use position and normal to compute light contribution
- Accumulate light contributions

Color pixel

- Clamp to avoid overflow
-

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Shadows

Only add contribution from a light if it is visible from the point (and vice versa)

- test for intersections along ray in L direction
- accumulate contribution if no occlusion

(illumination is no longer totally local)

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Truncating Primitives

Use another implicit function

- Test which side of the implicit function the intersection is on
- Keep intersection only if it is on the correct side

For example, truncate a cylinder using two plane equations (or perhaps a sphere)

- then cap using the two planes truncated by the cylinder

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Constructive Solid Geometry

Perform hierarchical set operations on primitives

Union: \cup

Intersection: \cap

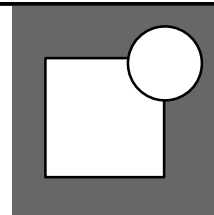
Difference: $—$

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CSG Operators

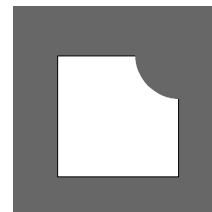
Square \cup Circle =



Square \cap Circle =



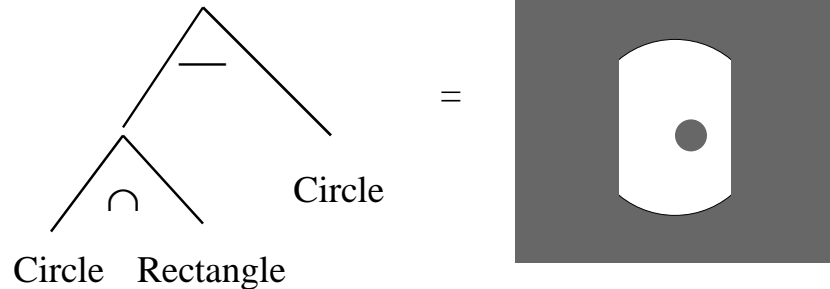
Square $—$ Circle =



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CSG Hierarchy



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Ray Tracing CSG

Each “object” may be a primitive or a CSG hierarchy

Find all ray-primitive intersections for hierarchy

Use CSG operators to determine which intervals are solid or vacant

Use start of nearest solid interval as ray-object intersection

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CSG Tracing Algorithm

Start at root of CSG Hierarchy

Trace ray through left child - result is ordered list of intersections, forming solid and vacant intervals

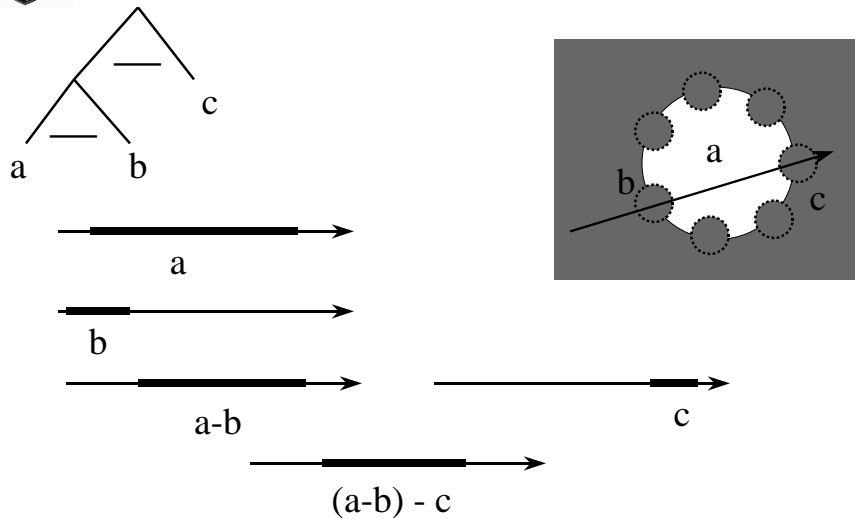
Trace ray through right child

Merge lists of intersections/intervals by applying CSG operator of current node

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CSG Example - golf ball



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Some CSG Details

**Each interval endpoint associated with
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**Normal computed from surface of
intersection**

**Material parameters may come from either
primitive**

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