Ray Tracing Extensions

Goodies

• There are some advanced ray tracing feature that self-respecting ray tracers shouldn’t be caught without:
  – Acceleration techniques
  – Antialiasing
  – Distribution ray tracing
  – CSG

Reading

Foley et al., 15.10 and 16.12

Optional:

Acceleration Techniques

• Problem: ray-object intersection is very expensive
  – make intersection tests faster
  – do fewer tests
Fast Failure
- We can greatly speed up ray-object intersection by identifying cheap tests that guarantee failure
- Example: if origin of ray is outside sphere and ray points away from sphere, fail immediately.

Hierarchical Bounding Volumes
- Arrange scene into a tree
  - Interior nodes contain primitives with very simple intersection tests (e.g., spheres). Each node’s volume contains all objects in subtree
  - Leaf nodes contain original geometry
- Like BSP trees, the potential benefits are big but the hierarchy is hard to build

Spatial Subdivision
- Divide up space and record what objects are in each cell
- Trace ray through voxel array

Antialiasing
- So far, we have traced one ray through each pixel in the final image. Is this an adequate description of the contents of the pixel?
- This quantization through inadequate sampling is a form of aliasing. Aliasing is visible as “jaggies” in the ray-traced image.
- We really need to colour the pixel based on the average
Supersampling
- We can approximate the average colour of a pixel’s area by firing multiple rays and averaging the result.

Adaptive Sampling
- Uniform supersampling can be wasteful if large parts of the pixel don’t change much.
- So we can subdivide regions of the pixel’s area only when the image changes in that area.
- How do we decide when to subdivide?

Distribution Ray Tracing
- Usually known as “distributed ray tracing”, but it has nothing to do with distributed computing.
- General idea: instead of firing one ray, fire multiple rays in a jittered grid.
- Distributing over different dimensions gives different effects.
- Example: what if we distribute rays over pixel area?

Distributing Reflections
- Distributing rays over reflection direction gives:
Distributed ray tracing pseudocode
1. Partition pixel into 16 regions assigning them id 1-16
2. Partition the reflection direction into 16 angular regions and assign an id (1-16) to each
3. Select sub pixel m=1
4. Cast a ray through m, jittered within its region
5. After finding an intersection, reflect into sub-direction m, jittered within that region
6. Add result to current pixel total
7. Increment m and if m<= 16, go to step 4
8. Divide by 16, store result and move on to next pixel.

DRT pseudocode
TraceImage() looks basically the same, except now each pixel records the average color of jittered sub-pixel rays.

function traceImage(scene):
for each pixel (i, j) in image do
I(i, j) ← 0
for each sub-pixel id in (i,j) do
s ← pixelToWorld(jitter(i, j, id))
p ← COP
d ← (s - p).normalize()
I(i, j) ← I(i, j) + traceRay(scene, p, d, id)
end for
I(i, j) ← I(i, j)/numSubPixels
end for
end function
A typical choice is numSubPixels = 4*4.

DRT pseudocode (cont’d)
Now consider traceRay(), modified to handle (only) opaque glossy surfaces:

function traceRay(scene, p, d, id):
(q, N, material) ← intersect (scene, p, d)
I ← shade(…)
R ← jitteredReflectDirection(N, -d, id)
I ← I + material.kr * traceRay(scene, q, R, id)
return I
end function

Pre-sampling glossy reflections
Pre-sampled reflection function for object 2
Pre-sampled reflection function for object 1
Pixel
Pixel indices
Distributing Refractions
• Distributing rays over transmission direction gives:

Distributing Over Light Area
• Distributing over light area gives:

Distributing Over Aperature
Choose a point on a finite aperture and trace through the “in-focus point”:

Distributing Over Time
• We can endow models with velocity vectors and distribute rays over time. this gives:
In general, you can trace rays through a scene and keep track of their id’s to handle all of these effects:

**CSG**
- CSG (constructive solid geometry) is an incredibly powerful way to create complex scenes from simple primitives.
- CSG is a modeling technique; basically, we only need to modify ray-object intersection.

**CSG Implementation**
- CSG intersections can be analyzed using “Roth diagrams”.
  - Maintain description of all intersections of ray with primitive
  - Functions to combine Roth diagrams under CSG operations
- An elegant and extremely slow system