8.2 Spatial Data Structures
Ray Tracing Acceleration

• Faster intersections
  - Faster ray-object intersections
    • Object bounding volume
    • Efficient intersector
  - Fewer ray-object intersections
    • Hierarchical bounding volumes (boxes, spheres)
    • Spatial data structures
    • Directional techniques
• Fewer rays
  - Adaptive tree-depth control
  - Stochastic sampling
• Generalized rays (beams, cones)
Spatial Data Structures

• Data structures to store geometric information
• Sample applications
  - Collision detection
  - Location queries
  - Chemical simulations
  - Rendering
• Spatial data structures for ray tracing
  - Object-centric data structures (bounding volumes)
  - Space subdivision (grids, octrees, BSP trees)
  - Speed-up of 10x, 100x, or more
Intersection of Rays and Implicit Surfaces

- Wrap complex objects in simple ones
- Does ray intersect bounding box?
  - No: does not intersect enclosed objects
  - Yes: calculate intersection with enclosed objects
- Common types:
  - Sphere
  - Axis-aligned Bounding Box (AABB)
  - Oriented Bounding Box (OBB)
  - 6-dop
  - Convex Hull
Selection of Bounding Volumes

• Effectiveness depends on:
  - Probability that ray hits bounding volume, but not enclosed objects (tight fit is better)
  - Expense to calculate intersections with bounding volume and enclosed objects
• Amortize calculation of bounding volumes
• Use heuristics

![good](image1)

![bad](image2)
Hierarchical Bounding Volumes

- With simple bounding volumes, ray casting still requires $O(n)$ intersection tests
- Idea: use tree data structure
  - Larger bounding volumes contain smaller ones etc.
  - Sometimes naturally available (e.g. human figure)
  - Sometimes difficult to compute
- Often reduces complexity to $O(\log(n))$
Ray Intersection Algorithm

• Recursively descend tree
• If ray misses bounding volume, no intersection
• If ray intersects bounding volume, recurse with enclosed volumes and objects
• Maintain near and far bounds to prune further
• Overall effectiveness depends on model and constructed hierarchy
Spatial Subdivision

• Bounding volumes enclose objects, recursively
• Alternatively, divide space (as opposed to objects)
• For each segment of space, keep a list of intersecting surfaces or objects
• Basic techniques:

Uniform Spatial Sub
Quadtree/Octree
kd-tree
BSP-tree
Grids

- 3D array of cells (voxels) that tile space
- Each cell points to all intersecting surfaces
- Intersection algorithm steps from cell to cell
Objects can span multiple cells
For A need to test intersection only once
For B need to cache intersection and check next cell for any closer intersection with other objects
If not, C could be missed (yellow ray)
Assessment of Grids

• Poor choice when world is non-homogeneous
• Grid resolution:
  - Too small: too many surfaces per cell
  - Too large: too many empty cells to traverse
  - Can use algorithms like Bresenham’s for efficient traversal
• Non-uniform spatial subdivision more flexible
  - Can adjust to objects that are present
Outline

• Hierarchical Bounding Volumes
• Regular Grids
  • Octrees
• BSP Trees
Quadtrees

- Generalization of binary trees in 2D
  - Node (cell) is a square
  - Recursively split into 4 equal sub-squares
  - Stop subdivision based on number of objects
- Ray intersection has to traverse quadtree
- More difficult to step to next cell
Octrees

- Generalization of quadtree in 3D
- Each cell may be split into 8 equal sub-cells
- Internal nodes store pointers to children
- Leaf nodes store list of surfaces
- Adapts well to non-homogeneous scenes
Assessment for Ray Tracing

• Grids
  - Easy to implement
  - Require a lot of memory
  - Poor results for non-homogeneous scenes

• Octrees
  - Better on most scenes (more adaptive)

• Alternative: nested grids

• Spatial subdivision expensive for animations

• Hierarchical bounding volumes
  - Natural for hierarchical objects
  - Better for dynamic scenes
Other Spatial Subdivision Techniques

- Relax rules for quadtrees and octrees
- k-dimensional tree (k-d tree)
  - Split at arbitrary interior point
  - Split one dimension at a time
- Binary space partitioning tree (BSP tree)
  - In 2 dimensions, split with any line
  - In k dims. split with k-1 dimensional hyperplane
  - Particularly useful for painter’s algorithm
  - Can also be used for ray tracing
Outline

- Hierarchical Bounding Volumes
- Regular Grids
- Octrees
- **BSP Trees**
BSP Trees

- Split space with any line (2D) or plane (3D)
- Applications
  - Painters algorithm for hidden surface removal
  - Ray casting
- Inherent spatial ordering given viewpoint
  - Left subtree: in front, right subtree: behind
- Problem: finding good space partitions
  - Proper ordering for any viewpoint
  - How to balance the tree
Building a BSP Tree

- Use hidden surface removal as intuition
- Using line 1 or line 2 as root is easy
Splitting of Surfaces

- Using line 3 as root requires splitting
Building a Good Tree

- Naive partitioning of n polygons yields $O(n^3)$ polygons (in 3D)
- Algorithms with $O(n^2)$ increase exist
  - Try all, use polygon with fewest splits
  - Do not need to split exactly along polygon planes
- Should balance tree
  - More splits allow easier balancing
  - Rebalancing?
Painter’s Algorithm with BSP Trees

- Building the tree
  - May need to split some polygons
  - Slow, but done only once
- Traverse back-to-front or front-to-back
  - Order is viewer-direction dependent
  - What is front and what is back of each line changes
  - Determine order on the fly
Details of Painter’s Algorithm

• Each face has form \( Ax + By + Cz + D \)
• Plug in coordinates and determine
  - Positive: front side
  - Zero: on plane
  - Negative: back side
• Back-to-front: inorder traversal, farther child first
• Front-to-back: inorder traversal, near child first
• Do backface culling with same sign test
• Clip against visible portion of space (portals)
Clipping With Spatial Data Structures

• Accelerate clipping
  - Goal: accept or reject whole sets of objects
  - Can use an spatial data structures
• Scene should be mostly fixed
  - Terrain fly-through
  - Gaming
Data Structure Demos

• BSP Tree construction
  http://symbolcraft.com/graphics/bsp/index.html

• KD Tree construction
  http://donar.umiacs.umd.edu/quadtree/points/kdtree.html
Real-Time and Interactive Ray Tracing

- Interactive ray tracing via space subdivision
  http://www.cs.utah.edu/~reinhard/egwr/

- State of the art in interactive ray tracing
  http://www.cs.utah.edu/~shirley/irt/
Summary

• Hierarchical Bounding Volumes
• Regular Grids
• Octrees
• BSP Trees