Doubly Connected Edge List

Crossed with a KD Tree to allow for orthogonal range search

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# Doubly Connected Edge List (DCEL)

The Doubly Connected Edge List is a winged edge data structure, meant for representing planar graphs. It provides queries to obtain the edges around a face, and edges incident on a vertex in O(m) time where m is the number of edges around the face or vertex. Because it can obtain this information so quickly it is an ideal data structure for making local edits [1].

The data structure is comprised of a series of edges. Each edge is made up of six references. Two of the references lead to sets of coordinates that define the start and end points of the edge. Another two of the references lead to the faces on either side of the edge. While the last two are references to other edges, the next clockwise edge on the Start vertex, and the next clockwise edge on the End vertex.

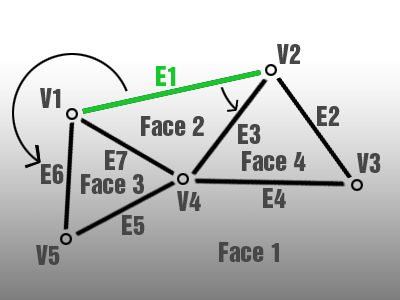
|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Edge | |
| Start:VertexPtr | End:VertexPtr |
| Face1:Integer | Face2:Integer |
| StartNextCCWEdge:EdgePtr | EndNextCCWEdge:EdgePtr |

## Construction

The data must be set up in a specific way. The preconditions to creating a DCEL would be to have a valid set of lines that have a vertex at any point two lines cross; this would define a planar graph. We also the data set up in a way to find all edges on a vertex.

The next step would be to create a temporary data structure that is used in the construction of the DCEL. This edgeCycle datastructure holds information about the order in which edges are incident in a clockwise manner around each vertex. The structure is an array of two integers. The first of which containing a reference to the ending vertex of the particular edge around the vertex in question, the second integer is an index into the edgeCycle array of where to go to get the next clockwise edge around that vertex. It is used in conjunction with another array, edgeCycleVertexIndex, that is of size n, where n is the number of verticies. This array gives you the index into edgeCycle for the first edge of a given vertex E.g.

Once we have the edge cycles we can construct the edges of our DCEL. This is done by two functions, constructVertexCycles and constructFaceCycles. First we call constructVertexCycles. Its responsibility is to fill Edge.Start, Edge.End, Edge.StartNextCWEdge and Edge.EndNextCWEdge. It basically does this by iterating through the edgeCycle array, adding edges as it goes. It again uses the edgeCycle array to find which the next counter clockwise edge is on the start vertex and end vertex. Now that constructVertexCycles is complete we no longer need the edgeCycle and edgeCycleVertexIndex arrays.

In the example to the left we see edge 1 being processed. The edge data structure for edge 1 after running constructVertexCycles would look like this:

Edge { Start = 1, End = 2, Face1=NIL, Face2=NIL, StartNextCCWEdge=6, EndNextCCWEdge=3 }.

As you can see we still haven’t initialized Face1 or Face2. It is the responsibility of the next function, constructFaceCycles, to do so.

When we run the constructFaceCycles function we will iterate over the edges we have so far. Each time we find an edge that doesn’t have a face set we will assign a number for that face and follow the edges’ next counter clockwise edge variables to traverse all edges on that face. On each edge we encounter we will set the face number. The data structure for edge 1 of our example would look now like this:

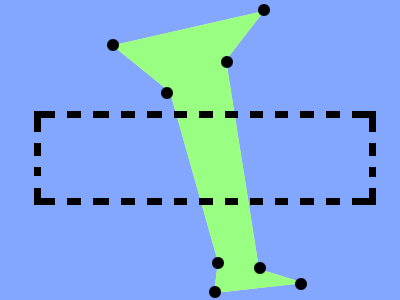
Edge { Start = 1, End = 2, Face1=1, Face2=2, StartNextCCWEdge=6, EndNextCCWEdge=3 }.

# Purpose of Project

The purpose of this project was to implement a Doubly Connected Edge List and include functionality to perform queries on it. A secondary purpose was to include another data structure to allow for orthogonal range search. A KD-Tree was determined to be the most suitable data structure to allow for this. The main idea was to implement the data structure and try querying it with different datasets to get an idea of the time it takes to perform certain queries.

# Range Search

The orthogonal range search process is performed by making use of the KD-Tree’s ability to search for points within a multi-dimensional orthogonal range. We can use this ability to find all verticies within the search range. The next step is to find all edges incident on those verticies. The DCEL provides a very efficient way to do this for a single vertex. In my trials more time was spent creating a unique list of these edges then acquiring the edges themself. We then take those edges and create a unique list of the faces on either side of each. Again, removing duplicates took longer than creating the list. With the list of faces we query the DCEL for all edges that make up each face. We then have all edges surrounding areas who have at least one vertex in the search area.

The weakness in this vertex based approach is we can miss areas that intersect our search rectangle, but do not have any verticies within it. Consider the following example to the left. We have a search rectangle that intersects both blue and green areas. However there are no verticies within the search area, so the query returns nothing. Obviously this query would be useful for some applications while not appropriate for others.

# Software User Guide

The program I developed has 7 main functions:

1. Read a GML file and create the data structures to display it and perform queries.
2. Save the file back in the newly created DCEL format.
3. Read the DCEL format to display it and perform queries again.
4. Viewing the dataset.
5. Find all edges around a face.
6. Find all edges around a vertex.
7. Perform an orthogonal range search.

## Read a GML File

To read a GML file we need one that contains lines or areas and it must be formatted in GML 1.0. You can use this online conversion tool to turn pretty much any vector format dataset into a GML 1.0 file.

<http://mygeodata.eu/apps/converter/main_EN.html?dataType=vector>

Using this tool the resulting GML file should be as the application expects. I have provided several working GML files along with the source code and binary. I suggest using NorthAmerica.gml, it contains the political boundaries of north America (all provinces/states).

To read a GML File, open the application and select from the File menu the “Load .GML File” command. An open file dialog will be displayed and you can select the GML file you want loaded.

At this point the application will go through the following steps to create the data structures needed. You can follow the progress in the applications’ status bar.

1. Load the GML File into main memory and parse its contents to get all lines / areas.
2. Create a Vertex/Edge map by finding all points that have the exact same spatial coordinates and considering them to be one vertex with multiple edges.
3. Create the DCEL:
   1. Create a list of edges, ordered clockwise for each vertex.
   2. Construct the vertex cycles as described in the DCEL construction section above.
   3. Construct the face cycles as described above.
   4. Query the DCEL to get the edges for each face and cache this information to be used each time the screen is printed.

The KDTree is not constructed until the user tries to use the orthogonal range search function since it takes the most time and is not necessarily needed or wanted each time we load a GML file.

## Save DCEL File

Once we have a GML File opened we can save the resulting DCEL format to the disk to speed up loading the dataset next time. To perform a save, select from the File menu the “Save as .DCEL File” command. A save file dialog will be displayed and you can choose a filename and location where you want the file to be saved.

## Read DCEL File

To read a file that was saved as .DCEL we can use the “Load .DCEL File” command from the File menu. An open file dialog will be displayed and you can choose which .DCEL file you would like to load.

## Viewing the dataset

There are several features written to help view the dataset you have opened.

### Layers

When you open a GML or DCEL file the application will create several layers that can be optionally turned on or off by pressing the number keys above the letters on your keyboard (not the number pad on the side) . The most useful layers are the first two which print the areas (faces) and print the lines (edges). There are also layers that will print labels for each edge, labels for each vertex, and a list of faces with their comprising edges and an indication on which direction those edges must be travelled to construct the area. Additionally, each time you make a query to the data structure an extra layer will be added to the list so you can view that query or turn it off. Orthogonal range search only has one layer that is replaced if another range search is performed.

### Pan/Zoom

The pan and zoom functions allow you to view the dataset in its entire precision. You can pan the data by right clicking on the map where you want the centre to be, or you can hold down the left mouse button and drag to move the map. To zoom you can either use the mouse’s scroll wheel, or as some touchpads don’t have a scroll wheel ability I have included the option to press the up arrow to zoom in and the down arrow to zoom out.

## Find edges around a face

You can query the DCEL to find all edges around a face by selecting the “Edges of Face” command from the “Query DCEL” menu. A dialog box will be displayed telling you the number of faces and asking you to input the face number you want to query. The application then performs the query and creates a layer to display the results to you.

## Find edges around a vertex

You can perform this query by selecting the “Edges on Vertex” command from the “Query DCEL” menu. A dialog box will be displayed telling you the number of verticies and asking you to input the vertex number you want to query. The application then performs the query and creates a layer to display the results to you.

## Orthogonal Range Search

The orthogonal range search uses multiple data structure queries to accomplish a vertex based search for areas intersecting the search rectangle. To perform an orthogonal range search you must select the “Orthogonal Range Search” command from the “Query DCEL” menu. This command may require a KDTree to be constructed if it has not already been constructed for this file. The KDTree is not saved along with the DCEL so even loaded DCELs will require a KDTree construction the first time they perform a range search. If a KDTree needs to be created you will see a popup window telling you. Press okay, and watch the progress in the status bar below. It can take a bit of time, but watching the percent complete increase makes it go by a little quicker than not having that information. Once that is complete a popup window gives us instructions on how to perform the range search. It will tell you to press okay and then click on the map where you want the points that define the rectangle to search. Once you have clicked the map twice the application has the two points that define the search area. It then goes off and performs a range search on the KDTree to find all verticies in range. With that list of verticies it queries the DCEL to get the edges incident on those verticies. It then creates a unique list of edges. Using that list it queries the DCEL to find all faces on either side of those edges. It then creates a unique list of those faces and queries the DCEL to get all edges around those faces. We then save all those edges and create a layer to optionally display them. The layer prints all those edges in red and prints the search rectangle as a black 3px wide box. Once all that is complete a report is generated and displays information about how long each query took as well as the total time required. It is displayed in a popup window.

# Testing and Evaluation

Test datasets were crucial in the construction of this application. The datasets I used to test this application are included in the source and binary distributions. Some of the more interesting test cases are described below.

# References

[1] <http://www.holmes3d.net/graphics/dcel/>

[2] <http://mygeodata.eu/apps/converter/main_EN.html?dataType=vector>