

How to generate a circle through three points

Let the three given points be a, b, c. Use x and y subscripts represent x and y coordinates, so that the x and y co-ordinates of a are a_x and a_y .

The coordinates of the center p = (p_x , p_y) of the circle determined by a, b, and c are:

$$\begin{aligned}A &= b_x - a_x \\B &= b_y - a_y \\C &= c_x - a_x \\D &= c_y - a_y \\E &= A \times (a_x + b_x) + B \times (a_y + b_y) \\F &= C \times (a_x + c_x) + D \times (a_y + c_y) \\G &= 2 \times (A \times (c_y - b_y) - B \times (c_x - b_x)) \\p_x &= (D \times E - B \times F) \div G \\p_y &= (A \times F - C \times E) \div G\end{aligned}$$

If G is zero then the three points are collinear and no finite-radius circle through them exists. Otherwise, the radius of the circle is:

$$r^2 = (a_x - p_x)^2 + (a_y - p_y)^2$$

| | |
|--------------------|-----------------|
| Original resource: | The Delphi Pool |
| Author: | Joseph O'Rourke |
| Added: | 2009-11-06 |
| Last updated: | 2009-11-06 |

Copyright © Peter Johnson (*DelphiDabbler*) 2002-2018