

Unit 8

Introduction to Animation

Introduction to OpenGL

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Computer Animation

Animation means giving life to any object in computer graphics. It has the power of injecting energy and emotions into the most seemingly inanimate objects. Computer-assisted animation and computer-generated animation are two categories of computer animation. It can be presented via film or video.

The basic idea behind animation is to play back the recorded images at the rates fast enough to fool the human eye into interpreting them as continuous motion. Animation can make a series of dead images come alive. Animation can be used in many areas like entertainment, computer aided-design, scientific visualization, training, education, e-commerce, and computer art.

Although we tend to think of **animation** as implying object motions, the term computer animation generally refers to any time sequence of visual changes in a scene. In addition to changing object position with translations or rotations, a computer-generated animation could display time variations in object size, color, transparency, or surface texture.

Some typical applications of computer-generated animation are entertainment (motion pictures and cartoons), advertising, scientific and engineering studies, and training and education. Advertising animations often transition one object shape into another: for example, transforming a can of motor oil into an automobile engine.

Computer animations can also be generated by changing camera parameters, such as position, orientation, and focal length. And we can produce computer animations by changing lighting effects or other parameters and procedures associated with illumination and rendering.

Design of Animation Sequences

In general, an animation sequence is designed with the following steps:

1. Storyboard layout
2. Object definitions
3. Key-frame specifications
4. Generation of in-between frames

This standard approach for animated cartoons is applied to other animation applications as well, although there are many special applications that do not follow this sequence. Real-time computer animations produced by flight simulators, for instance, display motion sequences in response to settings on the aircraft controls. For frame-by-frame animation, each frame of the

scene is separately generated and stored. Later, the frames can be recorded on film or they can be consecutively displayed in "real-time playback" mode.

1. **Storyboard** is an outline of the action. It defines the motion sequence as a set of basic events that are to take place. Depending on the type of animation to be produced, the storyboard could consist of a set of rough sketches or it could be a list of the basic ideas for the motion.
2. An **object definition** is given for each participant in the action. Objects can be defined in terms of basic shapes, such as polygons or splines. In addition, the associated movements for each object are specified along with the shape.
3. A **key frame** is a detailed drawing of the scene at a certain time in the animation sequence. Within each key frame, each object is positioned according to the time for that frame. Some key frames are chosen at extreme positions in the action; others are spaced so that the time interval between key frames is not too great. More key frames are specified for intricate motions than for simple, slowly varying motions.
4. **In-betweens** are the intermediate frames between the key frames. The number of in-betweens needed is determined by the media to be used to display the animation. Film requires 24 frames per second, and graphics terminals are refreshed at the rate of 30 to 60 frames per second. Typically, time intervals for the motion are set up so that there are from three to five in-betweens for each pair of key frames. Depending on the speed specified for the motion, some key frames can be duplicated. For a 1-minute film sequence with no duplication, we would need 1440 frames. With five in-betweens for each pair of key frames, we would need 288 key frames. If the motion is not too complicated, we could space the key frames a little farther apart.

There are several other tasks that may be required, depending on the application. They include motion verification, editing, and production and synchronization of a soundtrack. Many of the functions needed to produce general animations are now computer-generated.