Applied Imaging Concepts: An introduction to image processing and analysis

Sara Rolfe

Lead SlicerMorph Developer

University of Washington FHL

&

Seattle Research Children’s Institute

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3D imaging conceptual workflow

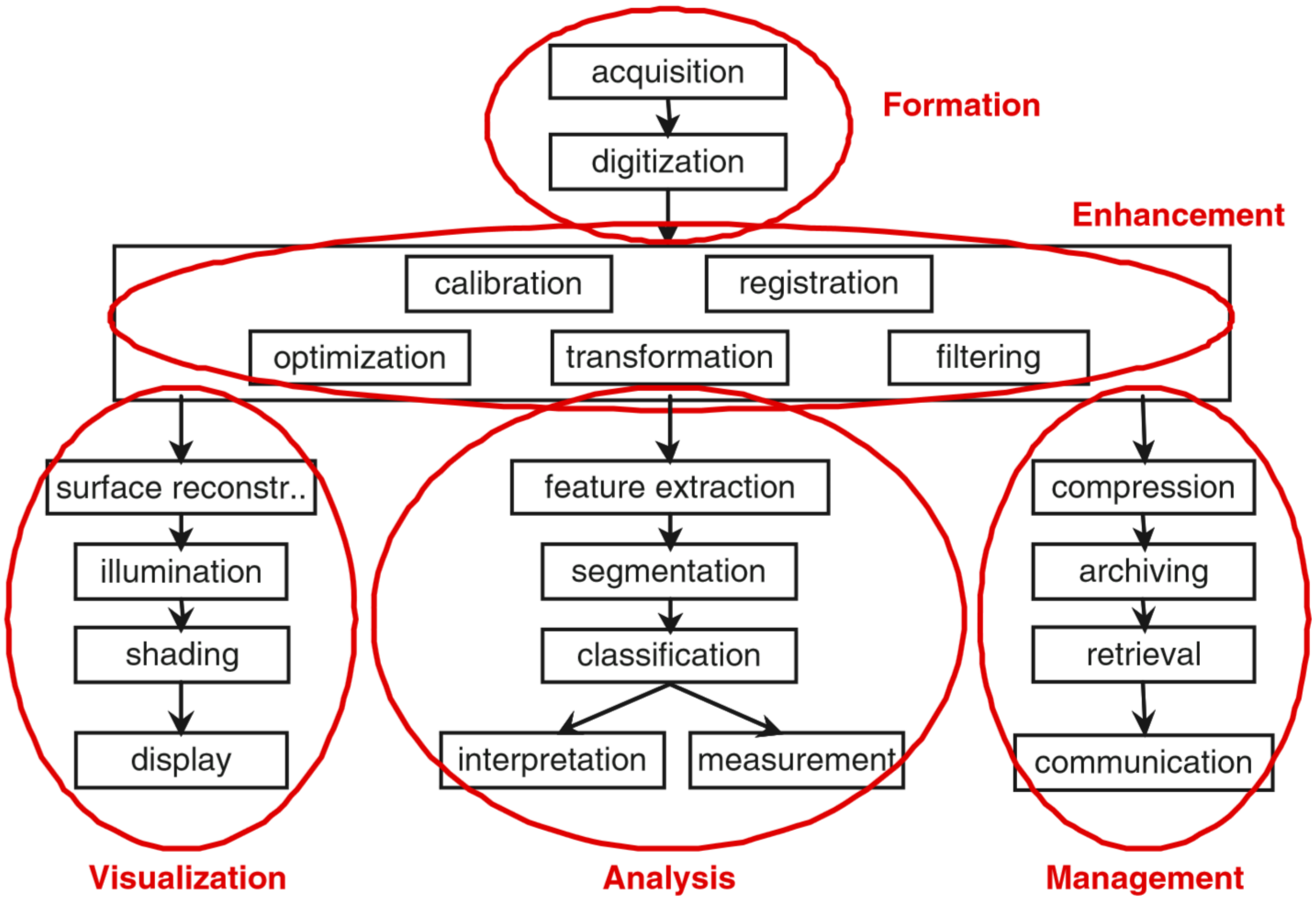

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Image Formation

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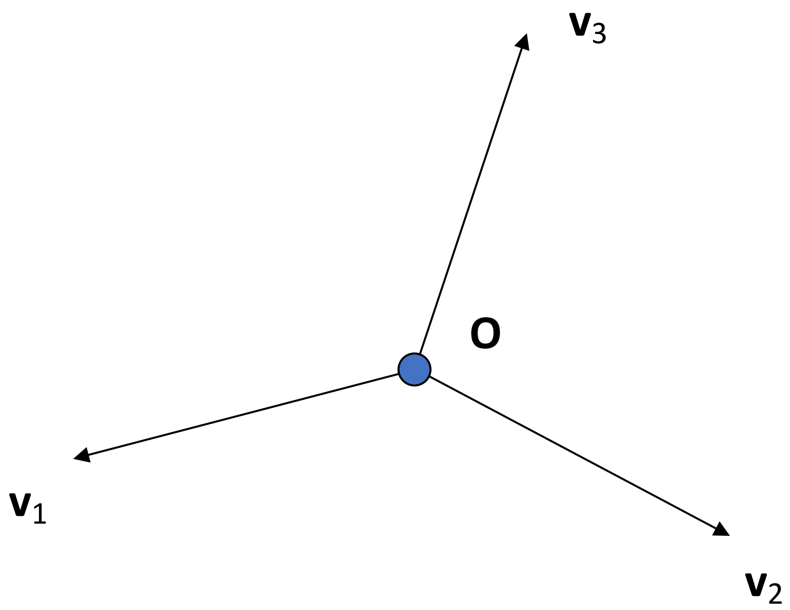
What is a Coordinate System?



A *coordinate system* for a three-dimensional space is a point **O** called the *origin* along with three linearly independent vectors $\mathbf{v}_1$, $\mathbf{v}_2$, and $\mathbf{v}_3$.

Linearly independent here means no two of the vectors are parallel and the three vectors do not all lie in the same plane.

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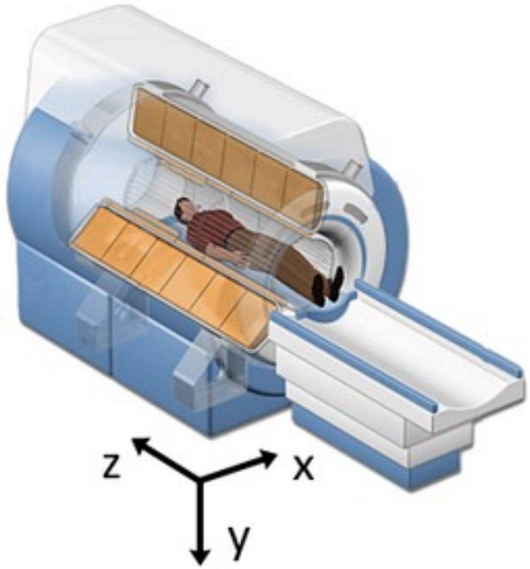
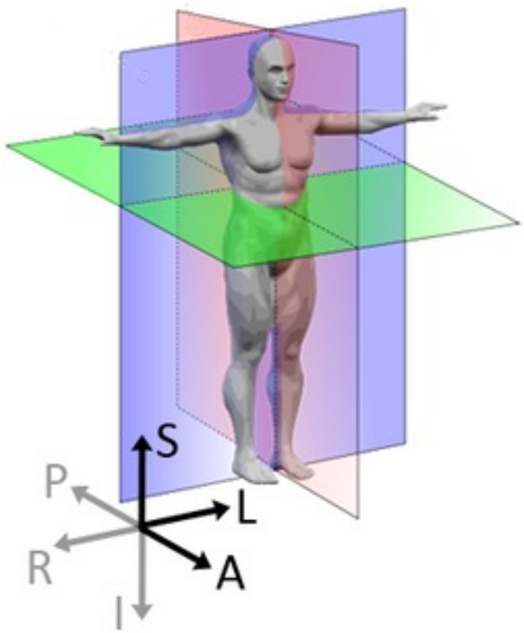
Coordinate Systems



World Coordinate System



Anatomical Coordinate System

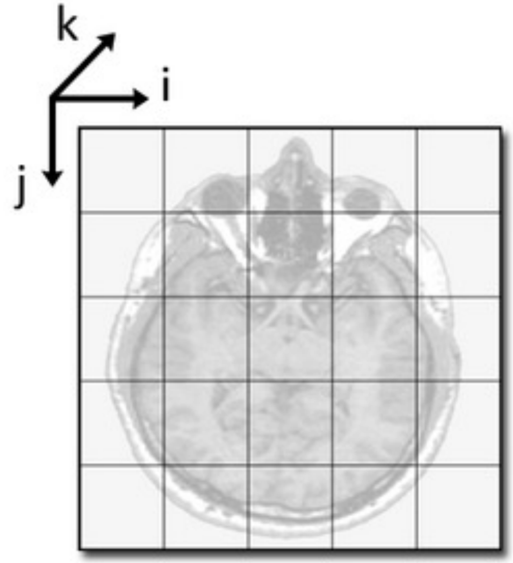


Image Coordinate System

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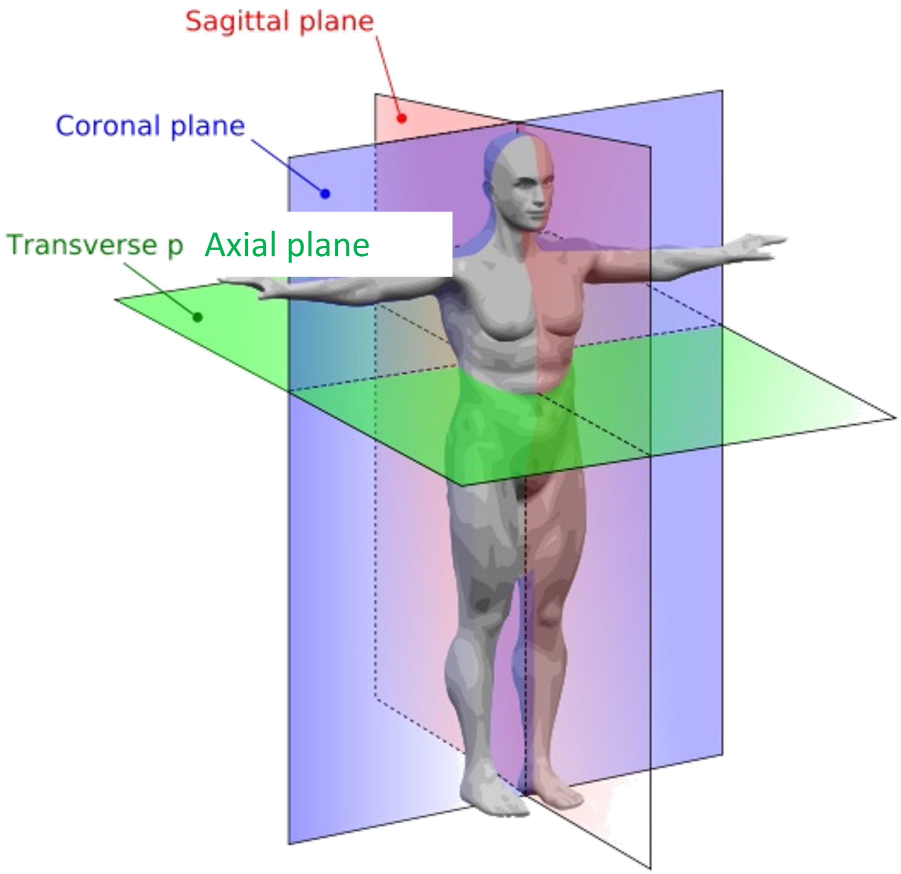
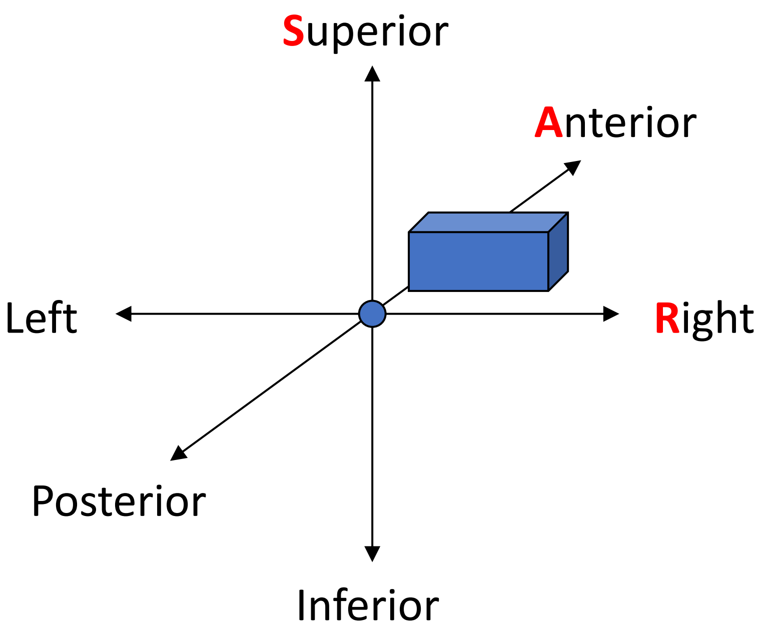
Anatomical coordinate system

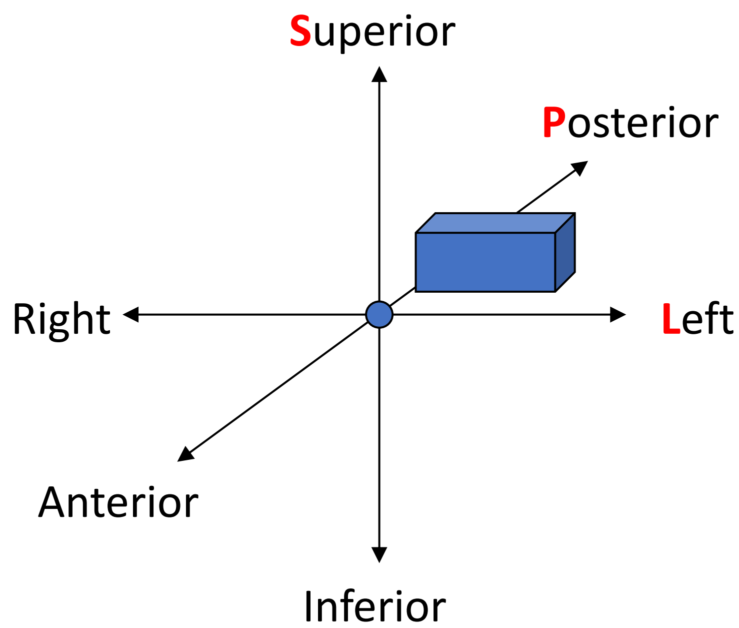
Three planes to describe the standard anatomical position of a human.



Anatomical coordinate system: RAS vs LPS



RAS (Right, Anterior, Superior): 3D Slicer



LPS (Left, Posterior, Superior): DICOM images, ITK toolkit

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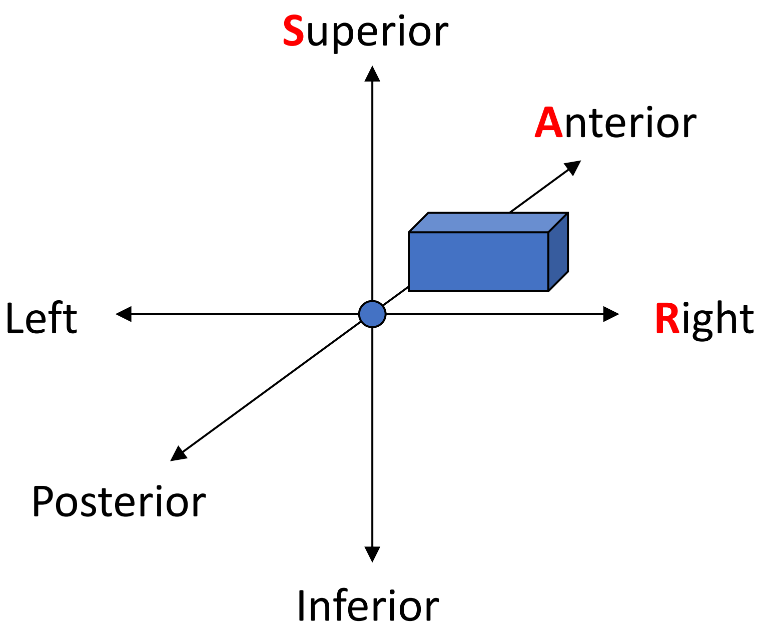
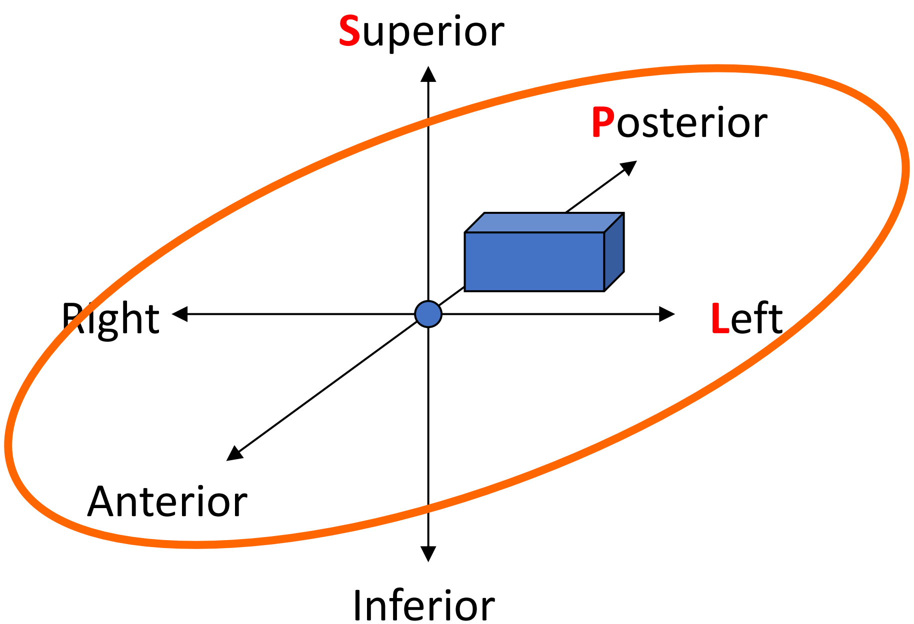
Anatomical coordinate system: RAS vs LPS



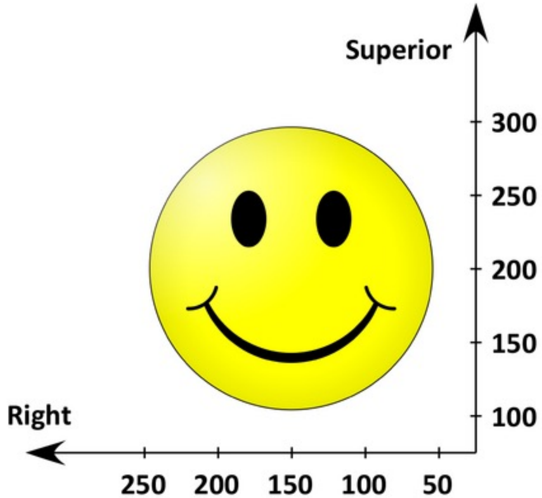


RAS (Right, Anterior, Superior): 3D Slicer

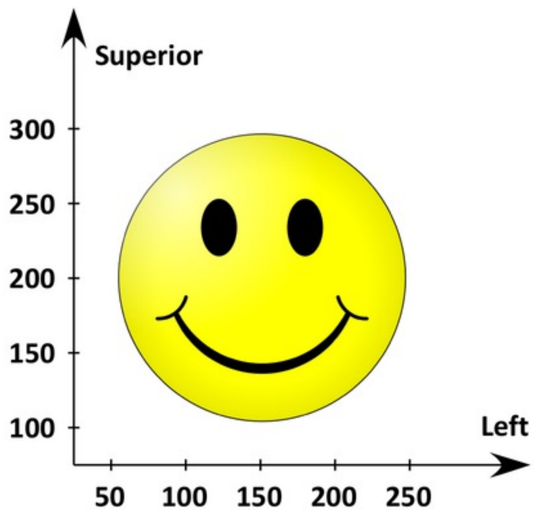
LPS (Left, Posterior, Superior): DICOM images, ITK toolkit

What does all of this mean?

RAS
Anatomical
space



LPS
Anatomical
space



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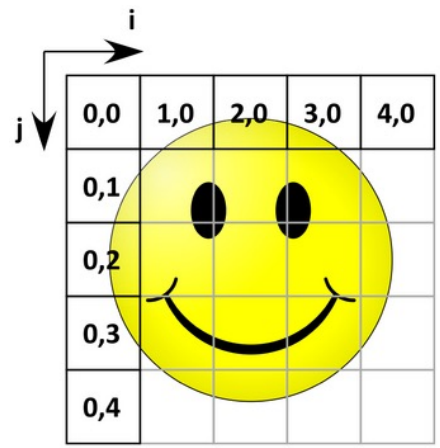

Image Coordinate System

[Discourse thread on on RAS vs LPS coordinate systems in Slicer]()

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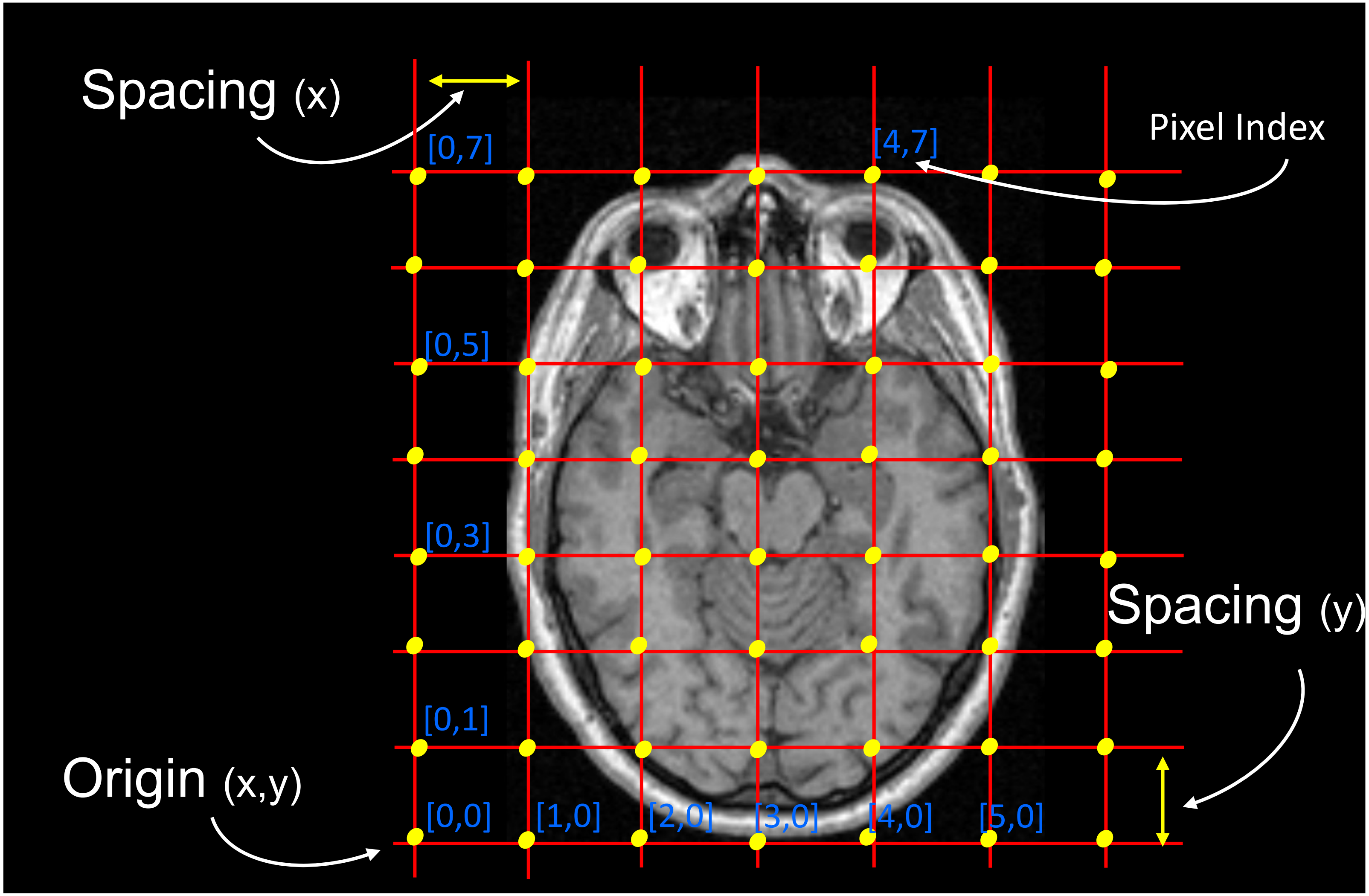
What is an image?



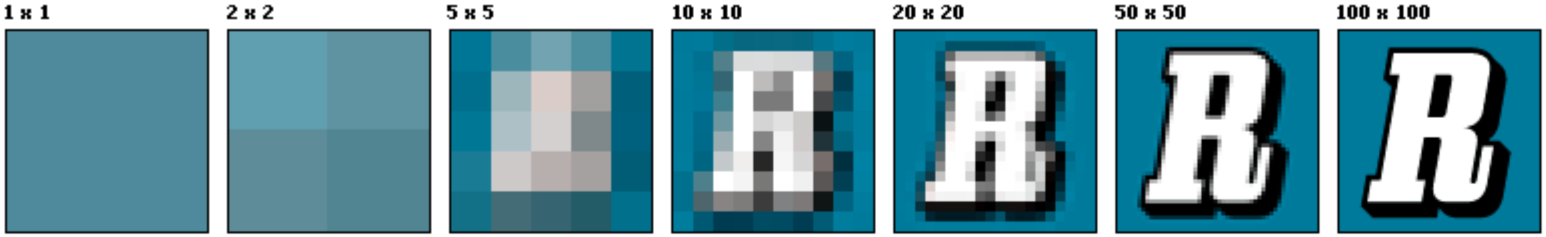
Digitization

- Digitization is the process of representing a continuous object with discrete values on a discrete grid.
  - Resolution: spatial sampling
  - Quantification: value range
- Values in an image are samples on a pixel (2D) or voxel matrix (3D)

Resolution

Resolution is the capability of sensor to observe or measure the smallest object clearly with distinct boundaries. MicroCT scanners have resolutions from sub-micron range to 100s of microns (1000 micron = 1 mm).

Pixel is unit of digital image. How big of a physical structure a pixel represents depends on the resolution (i.e. resolution and pixel size are inversely proportional).



Resolution in 3D

Similar to pixel**, voxel is a unit of digital volume:**

Resolution in each dimension is not necessarily identical: That's especially true for human imaging, where the sampling in Z is a lot coarser than X and Y (i.e. they take far fewer slices, but within a slice you see everything you need to see in high-detail). In this case the voxels are said to be **ANISOTROPIC**. If all dimensions are identical then the voxels are **ISOTROPIC**

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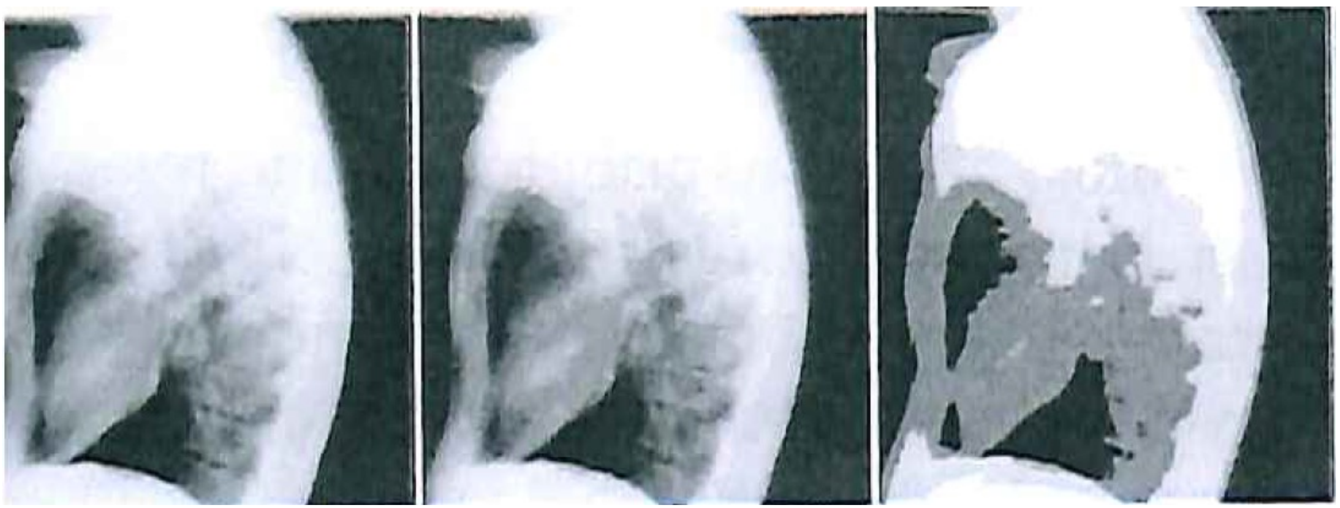
Quantization

- Quantization refers to the digitization of the value range
  - Grayscale image: 8 bits (256 possible states)
  - Color image: 24 bits (16,777,216 possible states)
  - CT scans: 12 bits (4,096 possible states)



6 bit (64 values) 3 bit (8 values) 2 bit (4 values)

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So what does this mean to me?

As a general rule, you need at least **4-6 times as large RAM** than your dataset.

If you want to visualize your dataset in full resolution, you need **a GPU** that has at least **1.5 times as large VRAM** than your dataset.

A typical high-resolution microCT dataset is:
1024 x 1024 x 1024 in dimensions.

If image depth is 8 bits this is: **8 bit = 1 byte**

= 1024 x 1024 x 1024 x 1byte = **1.07 GB**

For a 1GB volume, you need at least 6GB of RAM and a GPU with 1.5GB of VRAM.

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Image compression

Goal: Reduce the amount of data required to represent the information in a digital image

- Can be lossy or lossless
- Eliminates redundancy in the data:
  - **Coding**: optimize number of bits required to code information in image
  - **Interpixel**: exploit correlations between neighboring pixels
  - **Psychovisual**: discard data that is perceptually insignificant

- Avoid JPEG and other lossy compression formats

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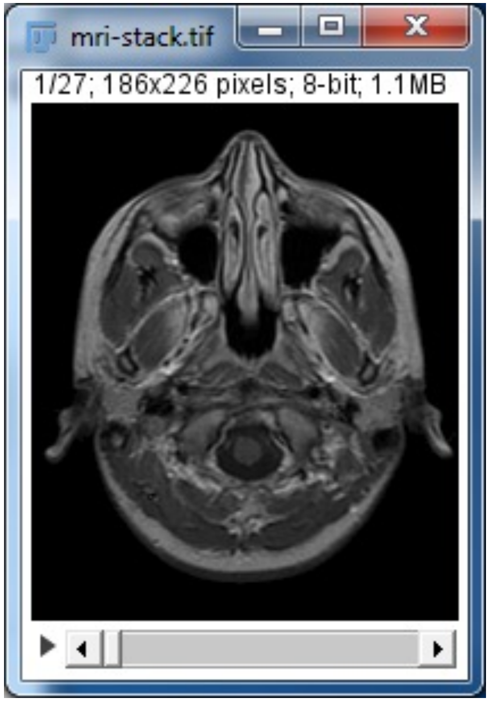
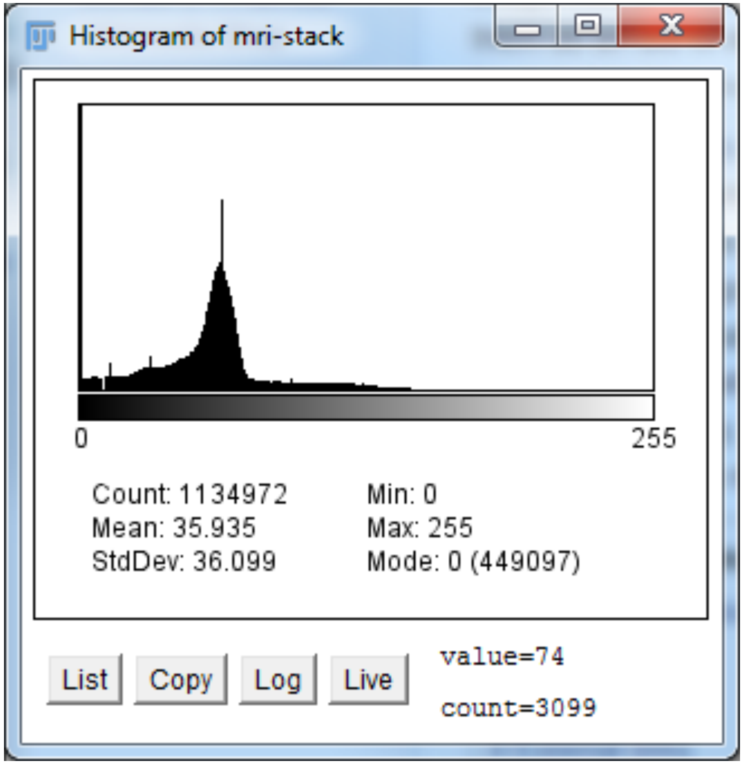
Image enhancement

Image Histogram

An image histogram shows the frequency distribution of the pixel values (in this context grayscale) in a digital image. It plots the number of pixels for each tonal value.

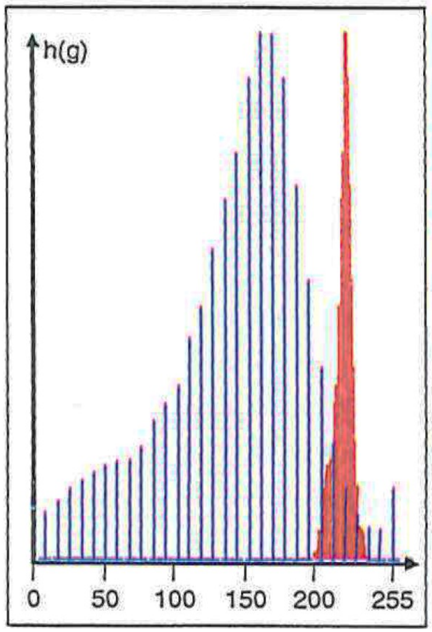




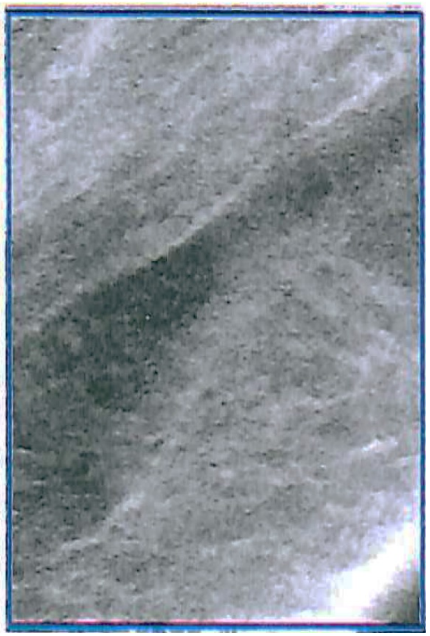
Histogram transformation

- Simple pixel transforms can be defined using the histogram
- In this example the gray scale values of the image in (A) are stretched, resulting in the improved contrast in (C)

A. Original image



B. Original and stretched histograms



C. Enhanced image

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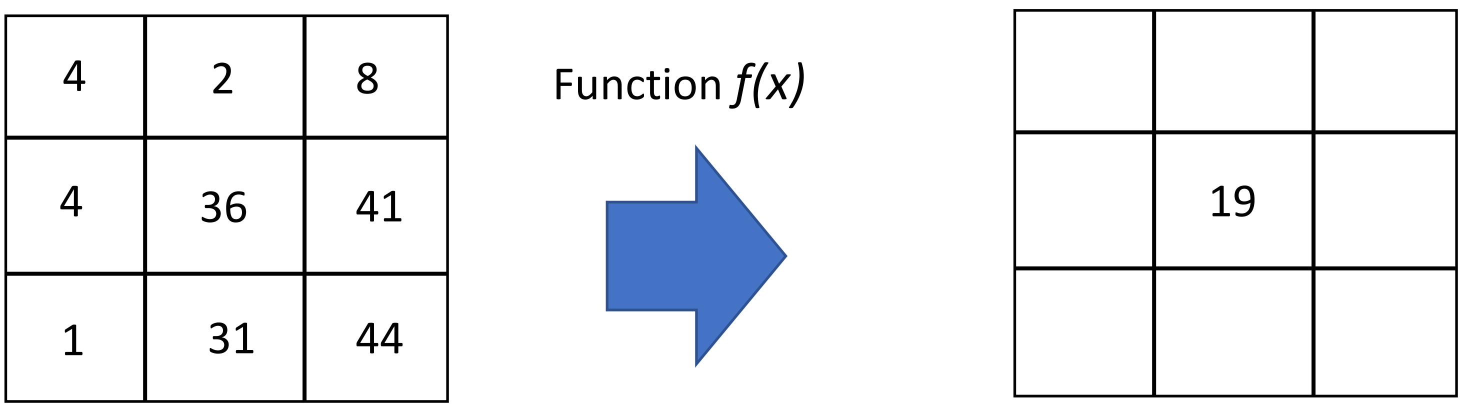
Spatial image filtering

Modify the intensity values of a pixel based on a function of the intensity values from a local neighborhood around that pixel.



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Spatial image filtering

Modify the intensity values of a pixel based on a function of the intensity values from a local neighborhood around that pixel.

4	2	8
4	36	41
1	31	44

Function *f(x)*

	19	

$$f(x) = \frac{1}{n}\sum_{i}^{n} x_i$$

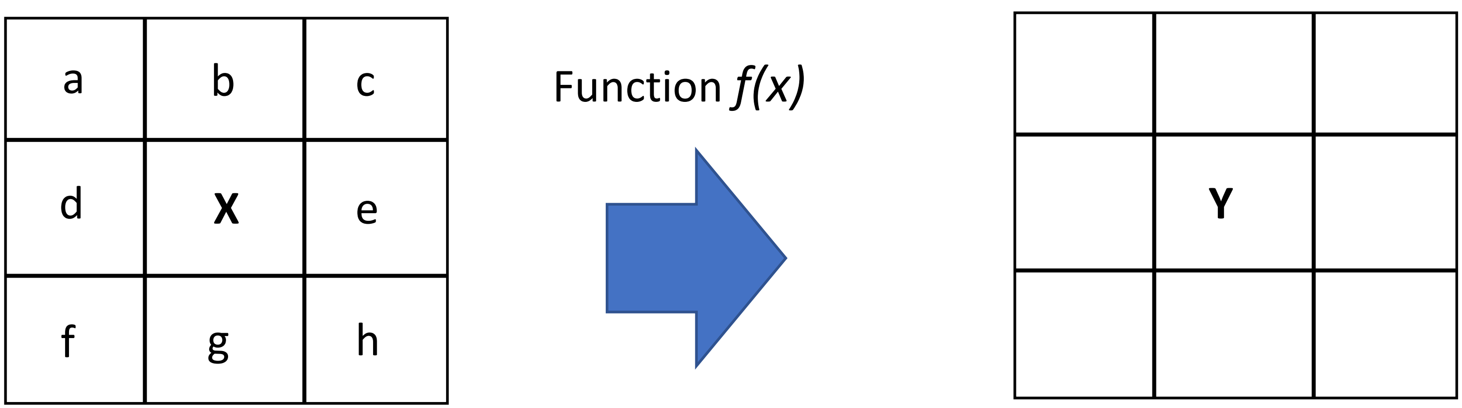
Mean filtering/ moving average

Removes sharp features

Smoothing with a mean filter

Convolutional Filters

- Filters that use a linear combination of pixels in a spatial neighborhood are often defined as convolution with a template, or “kernel”
- The weights of the template are determined by the filter’s kernel and determine the effect of the filter
- The kernel is shifted to each pixel location



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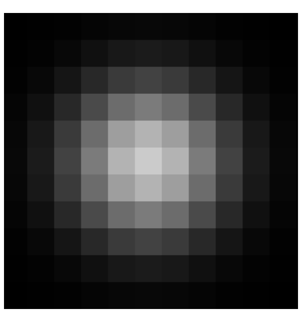
Common kernel choices

1	2	1
0	0	0
-1	-2	-1

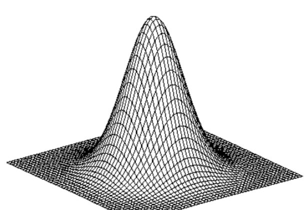
Sobel
Horizontal Edge
(absolute value)

0	0	0
-1	0	1
0	0	0

Horizontal Gradient



Gaussian smoothing
Weight contribution by nearness

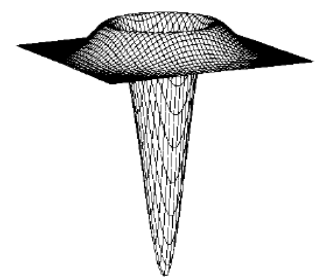


0	1	0
0	0	0
0	-1	0

Vertical Gradient

0	1	0
1	-4	1
0	1	0

LaPlacian of Gaussian
2D edge detection



Mathematical morphology

- Set of logical operations performed primarily on binary images
- Frequently used to clean up shapes after pixel–based segmentation

- Binary mathematical morphology consists of two basic operations

  - **Dilation: based on logical AND**
  - **Erosion: based on logical OR**

  and several composite relations

  - **Closing: dilation followed by erosion**
  - **Opening: erosion followed by dilation**
  - **Skeleton: erosion with various structuring elements**

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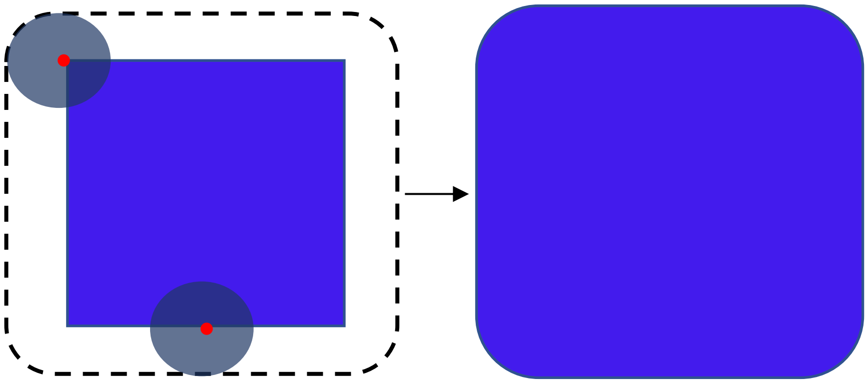
Dilation

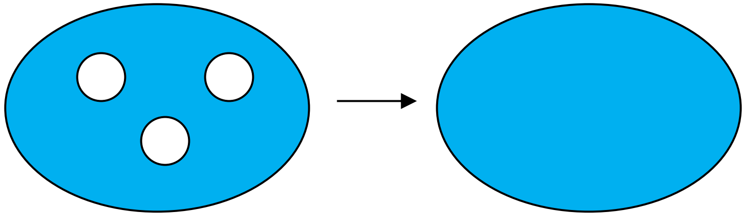
Dilation **expands** the connected sets of 1s of a binary image.

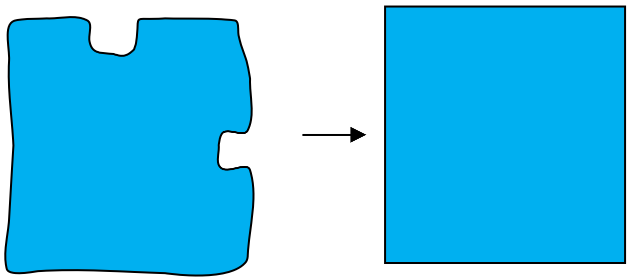
It can be used for



1. growing features

2. filling holes and gaps





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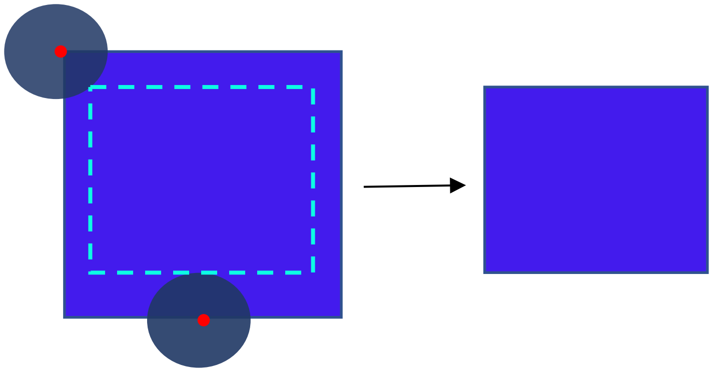
Erosion

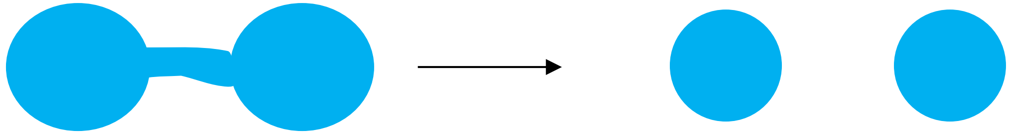
Erosion **shrinks** the connected sets of 1s of a binary image.

It can be used for



1. shrinking features

2. Removing bridges, branches and small protrusions



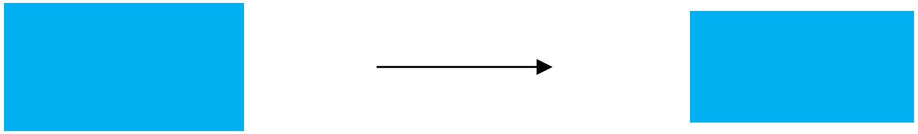


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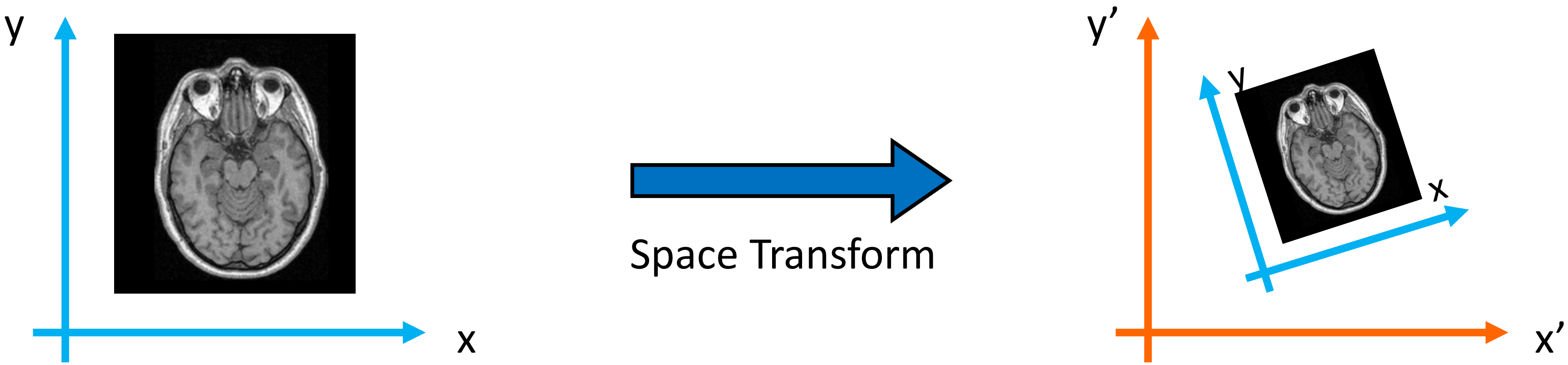
Image Registration

- Registration can be used to obtain a correspondence between images such that a change in measured dimensions can be quantified.
- The moving image will be resampled into the fixed image coordinate system



Physical coordinates of fixed image

Physical coordinates of moving image

- The space transformation can be rigid or non-rigid (more on this later)

Image Analysis

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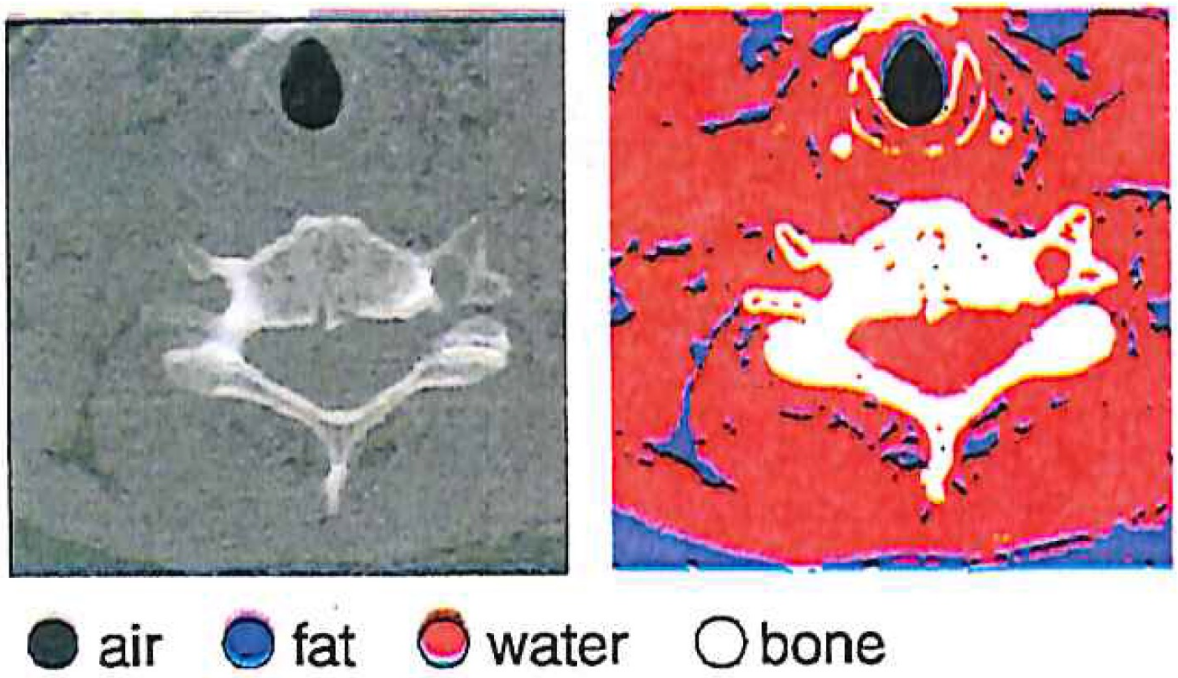
Segmentation

- Dividing an image into connected regions based on the content of the image
- Regions of an image segmentation should be uniform and homogenous with respect to some characteristic, such as gray tone, color or texture and should differ significantly with respect to adjacent regions

Thresholding

- Assigning labels to pixel intensity ranges
- Can be static or dynamic
- Static: known value ranges for types of tissue in CT scans



Segmentation in CT relying on Hounsfield Units (HU) which define a window of values for each tissue type

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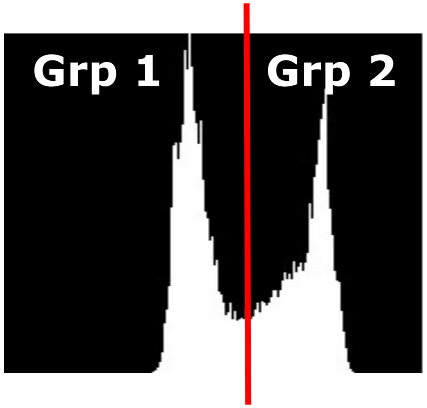
Automatic Thresholding: Otsu's Method



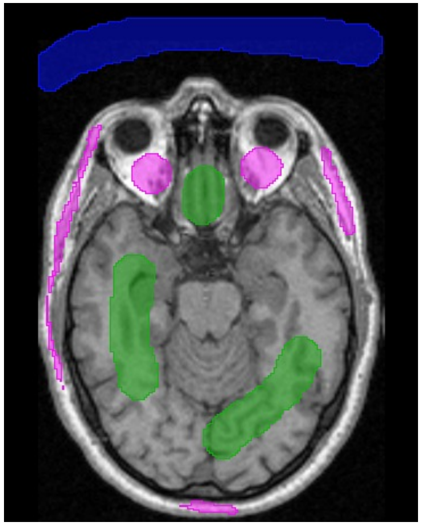
Assumption: the histogram is bimodal

Method: find the threshold t that minimizes the weighted sum of within-group variances for the two groups that result from separating the gray tones at value t.

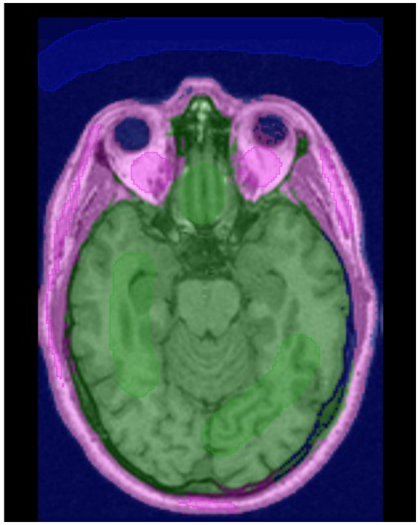
Note: In practice, this operator works very well for true bimodal distributions and not too badly for others.

Grow from seeds

- Region growing techniques start with one pixel of a potential region and try to grow it by adding adjacent pixels till the pixels being compared are too dissimilar
- Can include a priori knowledge of the scene by taking a set of seed pixels can be chosen from the image
- A statistical tests used to decide which pixels can be added to a region



User provided seeds



Segmentation grown from seeds

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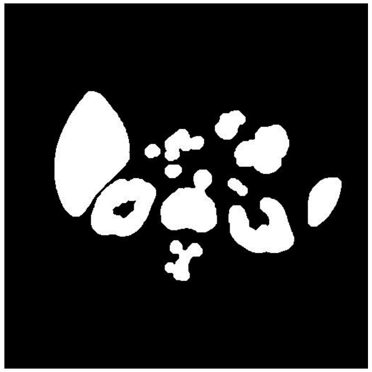
Connected Components Labeling

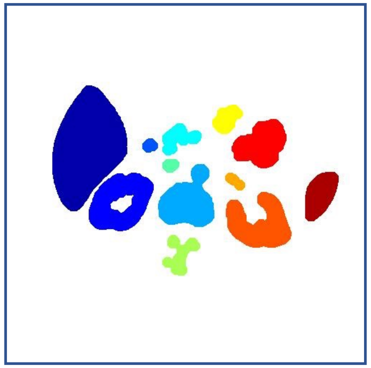
- Identify and then analyze each connected set of pixels.
- The connected components operation takes in a binary image and produces a labeled image in which each pixel has the integer label of either the background (0) or a component.

original grayscale image

binary image after threshold applied



binary image after morphology



connected components

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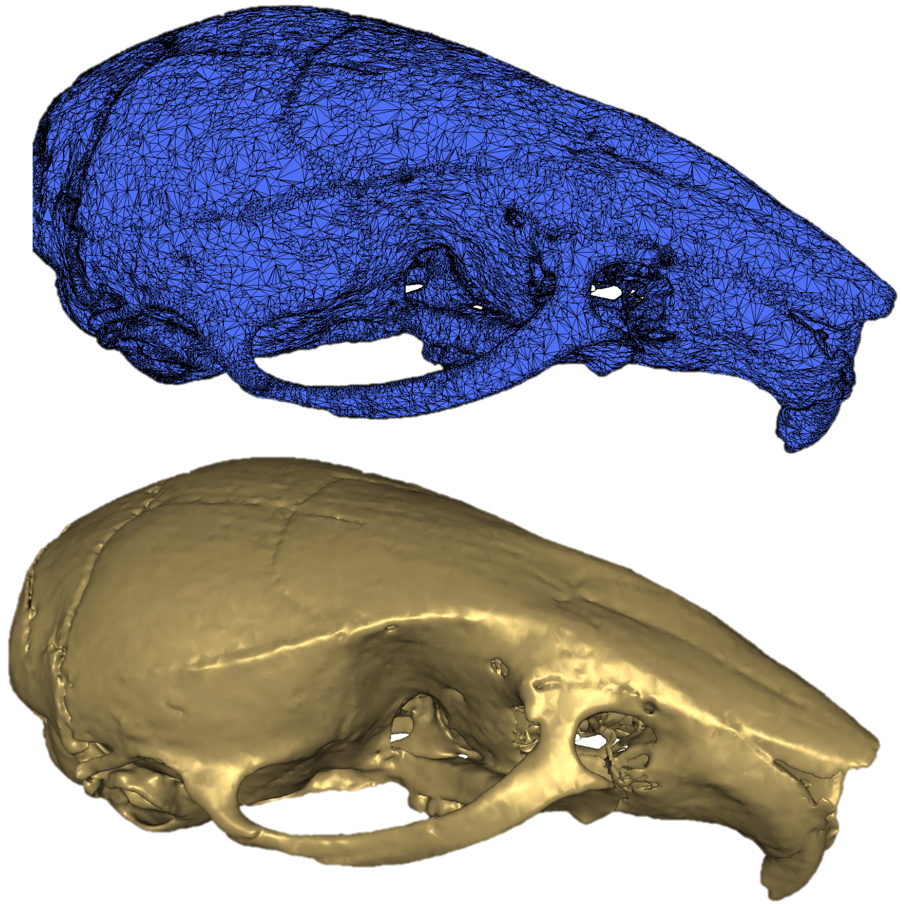
Image visualization

Surface rendering

- Create photo-realistic representations of volume surfaces
- Lighting modeled by constant ambient light overlapped with reflections based on the material properties
- Takes into account translucency, surface texture, and reflections



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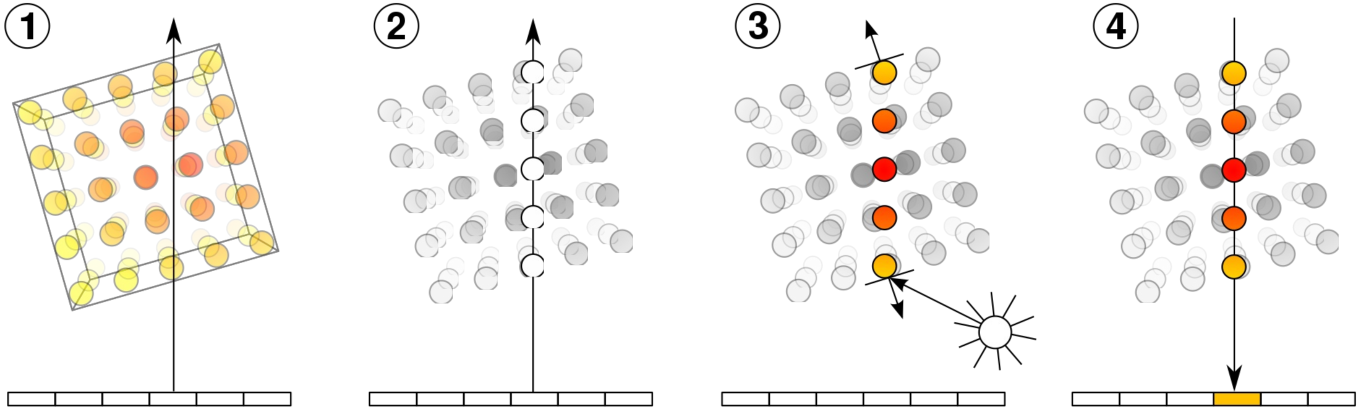
Volume rendering: Ray casting

- Direct volume visualization does not rely on a preliminary calculation of the object surface or segmentation
- Visualization based directly on voxel data
    1. Volume is processed along an imaginary light ray
    2. Parameters are extracted from voxel intensity along the rays and
    3. A transfer function is applied that incorporates material properties and illumination
    4. The final value is applied as color or gray values at the corresponding position on the viewing plane



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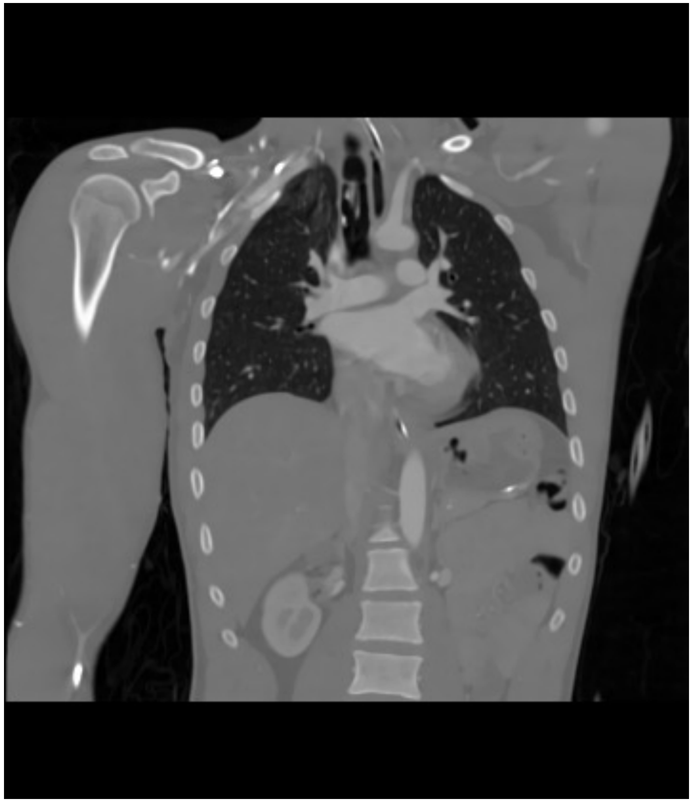
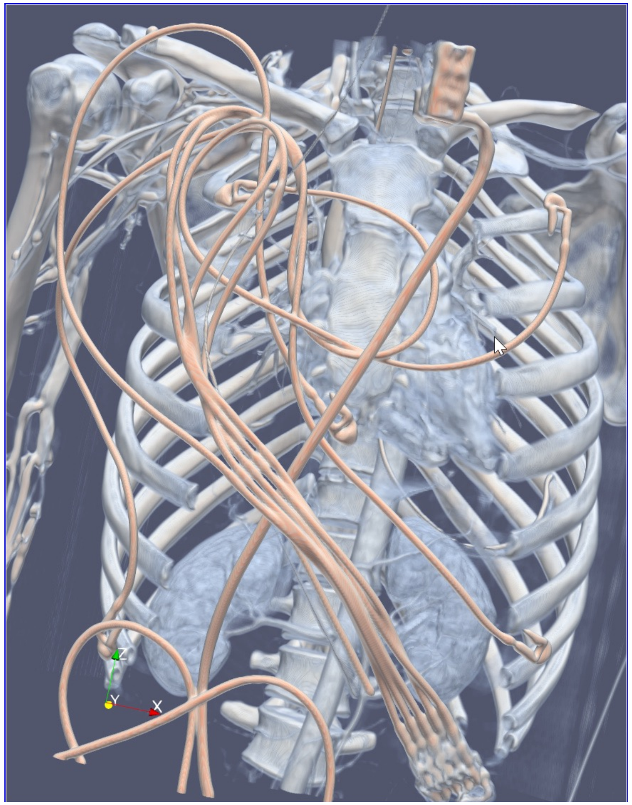
GPU Ray casting



Coronal slice of 3D CTA image



3D volume rendering using ray casting

Resources

Free online texts

Deserno, Thomas Martin. "Biomedical image processing." (2011). Available at this URL

Shapiro and Stockman, Computer Vision, Prentice-Hall, 2001. Original chapters available at this URL

Szeliski, Richard. Computer vision: algorithms and applications. Springer Science & Business Media, 2010. Available at this URL

Online lectures

Noah Snavely's CS5670 - Introduction to Computer Vision class at Cornell Tech (Spring 2019)

Ioannis Gkioulekas's 16-385 Computer Vision class at CMU (Spring 2019)

Coordinate systems

Chand John of Stanford created adetailed powerpoint presentation about the way coordinates are handled in Slicer

Rendering

Udupa, Jayaram K., Hsiu-Mei Hung, and Keh-Shih Chuang. "Surface and volume rendering in three-dimensional imaging: a comparison." Journal of digital Imaging 4.3 (1991): 159.

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Questions?

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