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SIMPLE API FOR 3D APPLICATIONS

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Timișoara, 2015

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Abstract

The application programming interface which is presented in this thesis, alongside implementation related concepts, is actually a small library packed with a couple of graphical effects based on particle systems. The thesis is composed out of four chapters and the content of each chapter is shortly described bellow.

In the *Introduction* chapter, a brief history of computer graphics and particle systems is given. This chapter also specifies the role that particle systems play in computer graphics and why are they necessary.

The *Particle Systems* chapter obviously describes some technical details about particle systems. By the end of this chapter a programmer should already have an idea about how to implement such a system in a graphical application.

The *Application* chapter presents all the particle based graphical effects in the API and gives implementation details about them. It also gives details about the structure of the API and that of the application which uses the API. Besides this it demonstrates the API's use with a couple of screen-shots.

Very few software pieces are perfect at their first implementation. The *Conclusion* chapter emphasizes some changes which can be made in order to improve the performance of the API and gives a short description of my learning experience.

Abstract

Abstract in Romanian.

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 A Brief History of Computer Graphics

First of all, what is *computer graphics*? The term first appeared in 1960 and it was made-up by William Fetter who was, at the time, a computer graphics researcher at Boeing. The term refers to a subfield of computer science which deals with image data representation and manipulation using computers.

The first computer able to do graphics is the Whirlwind computer. Its development was started in 1945 at MIT by a team of computer scientists led by Jay Forrester. The purpose of this computer was to make graphical aircraft tracking possible on a large oscilloscope screen.

Although the tracking application was the first application in the field of computer graphics it was not interactive. It could only display the real time position of the tracked aircrafts. The first interactive graphical application was Tennis For Two and it was created by William Higinbotham because he wanted to kill the boredom of the visitors of the Brookhaven National Laboratory.

In 1959 the TX-2 computer emerged. This computer was used by Ivan Sutherland to program the Sketchpad a tool for creating very precise drawings. This piece of software is known to be the first GUI which is an acronym for Graphical User Interface.

Chapter 2

Particle Systems

2.1 What are particle systems?

This section presents all the specific details of particle systems.

Chapter 3

Application

This is the application chapter.

Chapter 4

Conclusion

This is the conclusion chapter.