Introduction to Computer Graphics with WebGL

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Programming with WebGL Part 1: Background

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Objectives

- Development of the OpenGL API
- OpenGL Architecture
  - OpenGL as a state machine
  - OpenGL as a data flow machine
- Functions
  - Types
  - Formats
- Simple program

Early History of APIs

- IFIPS (1973) formed two committees to come up with a standard graphics API
  - Graphical Kernel System (GKS)
    - 2D but contained good workstation model
  - Core
    - Both 2D and 3D
  - GKS adopted as IS0 and later ANSI standard (1980s)
- GKS not easily extended to 3D (GKS-3D)
  - Far behind hardware development

PHIGS and X

- Programmers Hierarchical Graphics System (PHIGS)
    - Arose from CAD community
    - Database model with retained graphics (structures)
- X Window System
    - DEC/MIT effort
    - Client-server architecture with graphics
- PEX combined the two
    - Not easy to use (all the defects of each)

SGI and GL

- Silicon Graphics (SGI) revolutionized the graphics workstation by implementing the pipeline in hardware (1982)
- To access the system, application programmers used a library called GL
- With GL, it was relatively simple to program three dimensional interactive applications

OpenGL

The success of GL lead to OpenGL (1992), a platform-independent API that was

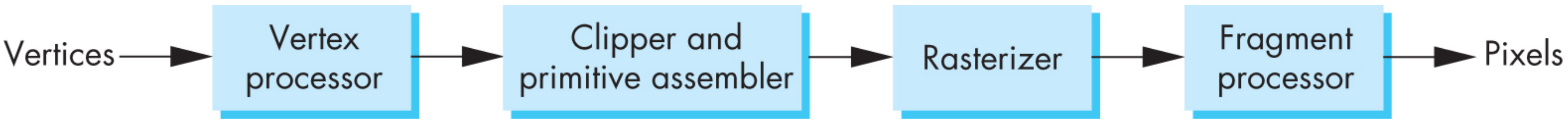
- Easy to use
- Close enough to the hardware to get excellent performance
- Focus on rendering
- Omitted windowing and input to avoid window system dependencies

OpenGL Evolution

- Originally controlled by an Architectural Review Board (ARB)
  - Members included SGI, Microsoft, Nvidia, HP, 3DLabs, IBM,…….
  - Now Kronos Group
  - Was relatively stable (through version 2.5)
    - Backward compatible
    - Evolution reflected new hardware capabilities
      - 3D texture mapping and texture objects
      - Vertex and fragment programs
  - Allows platform specific features through extensions

Modern OpenGL

- Performance is achieved by using GPU rather than CPU
- Control GPU through programs called shaders
- Application’s job is to send data to GPU
- GPU does all rendering



Immediate Mode Graphics

- Geometry specified by vertices
  - Locations in space(2 or 3 dimensional)
  - Points, lines, circles, polygons, curves, surfaces
- Immediate mode
  - Each time a vertex is specified in application, its location is sent to the GPU
  - Old style uses `glVertex`
  - Creates bottleneck between CPU and GPU
  - Removed from OpenGL 3.1 and OpenGL ES 2.0

Retained Mode Graphics

- Put all vertex attribute data in array
- Send array to GPU to be rendered immediately
- Almost OK but problem is we would have to send array over each time we need another render of it
- Better to send array over and store on GPU for multiple renderings

OpenGL 3.1

- Totally shader-based
  - No default shaders
  - Each application must provide both a vertex and a fragment shader
- No immediate mode
- Few state variables
- Most 2.5 functions deprecated
- Backward compatibility not required
  - Exists a compatibility extension

Other Versions

- OpenGL ES
  - Embedded systems
  - Version 1.0 simplified OpenGL 2.1
  - Version 2.0 simplified OpenGL 3.1
    - Shader based
- WebGL
  - Javascript implementation of ES 2.0
  - Supported on newer browsers
- OpenGL 4.1, 4.2, …..
  - Add geometry, tessellation, compute shaders