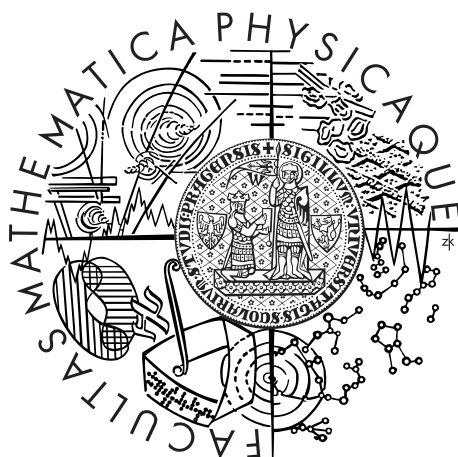


Charles University in Prague
Faculty of Mathematics and Physics

BACHELOR THESIS



Šimon Rozsíval

Vector Screencast

Department of Distributed and Dependable Systems

Supervisor of the bachelor thesis: Mgr. Martin Děcký

Study programme: Computer science

Specialization: Programming and software systems

Prague 2015

Dedication.

I declare that I carried out this bachelor thesis independently, and only with the cited sources, literature and other professional sources.

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Název práce: Vektorový screencast

Autor: Šimon Rozsival

Katedra: Katedra distribuovaných a spolehlivých systémů

Vedoucí bakalářské práce: Mgr. Martin Děcký

Abstrakt: Cílem bakalářské práce je vytvořit software pro záznam a přehrávání výukových videí pro potřeby Khanovy školy. Na rozdíl od běžných videí nejsou obrazová data uložena ve formě bitmap, ale jako vektory, což umožní snížit datovou náročnost a vykreslit obraz ostře při libovolně velkém rozlišení obrazovky uživatele. Přehrávač videa i nástroj pro nahrávání běží ve webovém prohlížeči. Součástí práce je také návrh a implementace vhodného formátu pro uchovávání obrazových a zvukových dat a implementace v softwarové architektuře klient/server.

Klíčová slova: screencast, vektory, video, on-line

Title: Vector Screencast

Author: Šimon Rozsival

Department: Department of Distributed and Dependable Systems

Supervisor: Mgr. Martin Děcký

Abstract: The goal of this bachelor thesis is to create a software for recording and playback of educational videos for Khanova škola (Czech clone of Khan Academy). Contrary to common videos the visual data is not stored as a sequence of bitmaps, but as vectors. This allows to reduce the data bandwidth and playback sharp images in any target resolution. The player and also the tool for recording the videos runs in a web browser. The thesis also focuses on designing and implementing a suitable file format for storing the visual and audio data and implementing the software according to the client/server paradigm.

Keywords: screencast, vector, video, on-line

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Introduction

Each and every person on earth explores the world from the day of and continues to learn new things all his life. Education in the so-called developed world is essential for later employment.

@todo

Khan Academy

Khan Academy is an online tool providing free access to instructional videos and practice exercises covering various subjects including math, history, programming, economics, and more.

@todo more info

Vector Screencast project

A year ago two members of *Khanova škola*; the czech brach of the Khan Academy, with an idea of improving the current technical solution of recording and displaying videos on their website. Their idea was not to capture classical bitmap-based videos, but rather a vector-based animation that could be scaled to any display resolution or edited in the future to improve quality of their videos, as some of videos recorded only a few years ago don't look nice or are't even well readable on large displays. The other extreme are small displays of tablets and smartphones where the downscaled letters are too small to read and can't be zoomed well in most video players.

One of the other reasons for this type of solution was the possible decrease of the size of data transfered over the Internet, as most of the image does not change between each two frames and very often the image doesn't change at all.

Thesis structure

@todo

1. Distance education

Distance education is not only a phenomenon of the last few decades, but can be traced at least back to the 18th century, when Caleb Phillipps posted an advertisement called “Teacher of the New Method of Short Hand” in Boston Gazette, saying “Persons in the Country desirous to Learn this Art, may by having the several Lessons sent weekly to them, be as perfectly instructed as those that live in Boston.” [1]

With the development of the Internet and its general accessibility in the developed world, providing distance education has become much easier and has spread widely. In some countries tuition rates are high and young people take loans so they can afford to study. This topic is covered in a fitting way by John Oliver in his show [2]. The flexibility and low cost of distance education over the Internet gives people, who wouldn’t be otherwise able to attend a traditional university, an opportunity to gain knowledge and train skills from their homes [3] spending much less money or even for free.

Students in the developing world are also taking the advantage of educational content available on the Internet. Several of the top U.S. universities, like Harvard, Stanford or MIT, put some of their materials on so called MOOCs (Massive Open Online Course) like Coursera, edX or Udacity. This content is then available to anyone with a computer and Internet connection and knowledge of the language. A great example is *Kepler* - a non profit university project in Rwanda [5]. The goal of this project is to “provide an American-accredited degree, a world class education, and a clear path to good jobs for thousands of students for around \$1,000 tuition per year.” [6]

A concept of teaching often referred to as *Flipped Classroom* uses distance education. The idea is to let students study lecture materials at home at their own pace and then apply gained knowledge at school the next day by doing activities to illustrate the concepts. The teacher can then help them or explain details in person. These materials are often in the form of videos either from an open source, like the Khan Academy, or created by the teachers themselves.

1.1 Current systems

In the next few paragraphs I will try to pick some of current distance education services and tools available on the Internet. This list is not complete and is only meant to give the reader a notion of available technologies and their paradigms, on which the project of Vector Screencast is based.

1.1.1 Coursera

The mission of *Coursera* is to “provide universal access to the world’s best education.” [9] Anyone can, for free, go through materials published by universities and other organizations aimed at education.

Courses at Coursera consist mainly of video lectures commonly with a transcript and an attached presentation document. These videos can be viewed directly in web browser on demand or downloaded to user’s computer. After study-

ing the materials, students can submit assignments' solutions and take quizzes and receive a Verified Certificate for the accomplishment of the course. These certificates are not for free.

Most of the courses are in English and only a few of the courses are also translated into other languages. It is not possible for everyone to publish his materials through Coursera.

1.1.2 Youtube.com

Youtube.com [10] is not an educational service by design. Youtube allows people to create their own channels and upload their video content to share it with other Internet users for free.

Youtube was launched in 2005 and has become one of the most frequently visited websites on the Internet according to Alexa Internet [11]. Uploading video to Youtube is free, advertisement is displayed to the user while watching videos though.

The ease of making original-created videos available for wide audience makes Youtube a perfect place for all individuals and organizations, who want to share their ideas or any video materials. Many educational channels can be found here, for example *Numberphile* [12], *Veritasium* [?], and *Khan Academy* [14].

Youtube videos can be viewed only online in a web browser or a specialized mobile app. There are only unofficial tools for downloading these videos.

The form and content of the video is practically unlimited, as long as it does not violate the terms of the service. The maximum file size of a video is 128 GB in size and 11 hours in length. To upload larger or longer videos, user must split them into several parts. Video can have a text description which might contain the transcription of the video content and any subtitles can be attached to a video. Youtube also downscales videos to multiple resolutions so they can be viewed with a low speed Internet connection, for the cost of reduced quality.

1.1.3 Moodle

Moodle [7] is an open-source project used by millions of users [8] providing a robust platform providing custom learning materials to students. The source code of Moodle can be downloaded and deployed on any server. Teachers use Moodle mainly for publishing study materials and assigning homework.

1.1.4 Educreations and ShowMe

Educreations is a service for creating and sharing educational videos similar to Khan Academy videos. The idea is that teachers create their own videos by drawing onto a digital whiteboard and then share these videos with their classes.

Educreations is designed for an iPad, but can be used also as a web application from any web browser, which supports Adobe Flash Player. Web application supports playing and recording of videos and the video player can be easily embedded into any website and watched without registration. Content of the video is scaled appropriately to the output screen and the lines are drawn smoothly.

The iPad app is free and users download it through the Apple AppStore. Users must create an Educreations account to use the app. There is a free usage

Figure 1.1: Khan Academy lesson

plan, which allows users to watch, create, and share videos. The free plan allows only a limited use of some of the features, some are not even unavailable. For more storage capacity for user recorded videos, and advanced tools, users must pay monthly fees. The software is proprietary and so is the file format of the video.

*ShowMe*¹ is a very similar service. An iPad app is available for recording and viewing videos. Recorded videos be played in a web browser, but not recorded. Pricing is very similar to *Educreations*.

Both *ShowMe* and *Educreations* target mainly tablets users. The advantage of tablets is their touchscreen, which can be used for drawing in a natural way with fingers or a special stylus.

1.1.5 Khan Academy

A similar service to Coursera is *Khan Academy*. The idea of Khan Academy originated in 2003 when Salman Khan began tutoring his cousin over an instant messenger via drawing pictures with a computer mouse. Salman then started to record these videos and put them on his Youtube channel, so someone could watch them later. This channel became the basis of Khan Academy.

Khan Academy became known and has grown a lot, but the style of Khan Academy videos remained the same. A person draws lines and diagrams using a bitmap editor on his computer and talks about the subject aloud while recording his computer screen and recording his voice using a microphone. This style is sometimes called the “Khan-style video” (KSV)². These videos are then uploaded to Youtube and embedded in the Khan Academy website [15].

Apart from the video lectures, the website also contains exercises and quizzes to encourage students in learning. The pace of the lesson depends on the student. He can pause the videos or watch them multiple times before continuing with the lesson. An example of Khan Academy lesson is shown in figure 1.1.

Most of the videos are recorded in English, but many of the videos are translated into other languages - by replacing the audio track with a different one or with subtitles. One of the projects working on the localization of Khan Academy videos is an official Czech branch called *Khanova Škola*[16].

¹<http://www.showme.com/>

²<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ohu-5sVux28>

2. The Vector Screencast project

In the spring of 2014 the people behind “Khanova Škola” – the Czech branch of the Khan Academy – were looking for a person to develop an experimental video technology based on vector graphics. Their idea was to record raw data of user’s input as he creates a Khan-style-video and later, when another user watches the video, draw the video scaled to match user’s device’s resolution and thus achieving maximum quality of the output. As a result, the video will never become obsolete because its quality is not keeping up with the times.

Thanks to the sparse nature of vectors, in comparison to bitmaps, data consumption might also be reduced or at least similar. This animation would also be linked to an audio track of authors voice commentary forming a complex KSV suitable for educational purposes.

2.1 Screencast recording tool requirements

User, who wants to create a new screencast, should enter a website in his web browser and without installing any additional software start recording a video using his mouse, touchscreen or digital stylus and a microphone. This video should then be uploaded to a server.

If the user uses a pressure-sensitive stylus, then the applied pressure during drawing should be recorded too. The more pressure the user applies, the thicker the line will be and vice versa. Using this specific hardware might require additional drivers or specific software installed.

Different brush sizes, brush colors and background colors are available to the user. User must be able to erase certain parts of the canvas or the whole canvas at once. User must be able to pause and continue recording at any time.

Lines are immediately rendered on the screen as the user draws them, so he sees exactly the same output as the viewer will, when he is playing the video later. All the raw data collected from the user should be stored, including the data that have no effect for video playback, like recording cursor movement while recording is paused. This will allow the user to simulate the process of video recording and use it for further post-processing in any distant future. Recording of this extra information should be optional.

2.2 Screencast player requirements

Any user should be able to play vector video on-line in all major modern web browsers without any special software or plugin installed, including mobile browsers.

Video should be scaled appropriately to the size of the player and device’s screen resolution. The lines should have the same shape they had as the author saw them while he was recording the screencast.

User can pause and continue with the playback of the video at any time. User can skip to any point of the video either forward or backward.

If the author of the video had recorded his voice, it will be played along with the video. Audio must be synchronized with the video whenever user plays or

pauses the video or when he skips to a different point of the timeline.

User interface should be intuitive and easy to use either on a desktop computer using mouse and keyboard, but also with touchscreens on mobile devices.

2.3 Goal of the thesis

The result of this thesis should be an open-source library suitable for extending any web application with the abilities of recording and playing KSVs in all modern web browsers. An appropriate vector-based file format should be chosen or defined to store screencast data.

The library should be easily adjustable and configurable for different purposes. User interface should be fully translatable.

3. Analysis

The overall project consists of two separate tools — the *recorder* and the *player*. Each of these tools behaves differently and will be used by different people. While the video player will be used by general audience, the recorder will be used by a much narrower group of content creators.

The recording tool will capture the movement of a virtual chalk and lines drawn on a virtual blackboard, as well as voice of the author using a microphone. The recorder data will be then sent to the server, where it should be stored. The player will receive previously recorded data and display the movement of the chalk and lines created by the author while playing the voice commentary.

For the purposes of recording, the tool must be able to capture the input from a microphone, track mouse movement and left mouse button state, collect information from Wacom graphics tablet devices and draw lines on screen. What the creator sees should be the same as what the end user will watch later.

3.1 Available technologies

Web is a huge and fast growing environment. In only a few years, it has become a universal place for presenting and exchanging information. This put web in the focus of many software companies and organizations and as a result, many different technologies for developing *Rich Internet Applications* (RIA) have been created. Some of them have already faded into obscurity, other are just emerging. One of the main limitations in the selection of the right technology for developing web application is their compatibility with different operating systems and web browsers.

3.1.1 Java applets

Java applets are used for creating interactive applications within web browsers [17]. Java applets meet all the specified technical requirements of both player and recording tool.

Java applets are written in any language, that can be compiled into bytecode, this bytecode is then downloaded to the web browser and then runs using Java Virtual Machine (JVM). This means that to be able to run a Java applet, user needs to have JVM installed on the device and an installed and allowed Java plugin in his web browser. There is no support for mobile operating systems such as iOS and Android [18] and Google Chrome has Java disabled by default in most recent versions for security reasons.

3.1.2 Adobe Flash

Adobe Flash is a multimedia and software platform used for creating vector graphics, animations and games. Flash has all required features: vector graphics manipulation, working with Extensible Markup Language (XML)¹, mouse input capturing, microphone input, and audio streaming [19].

¹<http://www.w3.org/XML/>

To view Flash animations or to execute Flash applications, Adobe Flash Player is needed. Adobe Flash Player is available and being developed for all major operating systems, although that is not true for mobile platforms. There was never any support for Apple iOS [20] and in 2012 development of Flash for Android was discontinued [?]. Using Adobe Flash would mean to exclude most users of tablets and smartphones [23], which is a large disadvantage of this technology.

3.1.3 Microsoft Silverlight

Microsoft Silverlight [24] can be used for creating web applications. It is based on the .NET Framework and it is similar to Java applets and Adobe Flash. It was Microsoft's attempt to compete Adobe Flash, but has not gained much popularity. Development of Silverlight was also discontinued by Microsoft in 2012 and it will not be supported in Microsoft's new web browser Microsoft Edge[25]. These facts make Silverlight unsuitable for this project.

3.1.4 HTML5

HTML5 is the fifth revision of *HyperText Markup Language* (HTML) standard by the *World Wide Web Consortium* (W3C). It has been given the Recommendation status in the end of 2014 and all crucial aspects of both tools can be implemented using the proposed standard. Tracking mouse was long supported even in HTML and ECMAScript/JavaScript² through *Document Object Model* (DOM) Events[29].

Vector graphics are supported through the *Scalable Vector Graphics* (SVG) format [27] and it can be manipulated through DOM API [28], as well as any other XML content. MediaStream API [] enables access to audio input from user's microphone. The <audio> tag can be used to stream audio files and play them in a web browser.

While HTML5 is a new standard, many of the most important features have already been implemented in some web browsers, like Google Chrome and Mozilla Firefox. More specifically, all the features needed to implement screencast player are supported in the latest versions of all major web browsers. The only catch might be disagreement on supported audio file formats among the creators of web browsers. This can be overcome by converting the audio into several used formats and passing them to the browser, which will then choose the one it supports.

Some of the features needed by the recording tool, like the MediaStream API, are not supported by all web browsers yet, but this won't be an issue for content creators, who can easily install a supported web browser on all desktop platforms and even some mobile ones. Fast development in this area is expected and these features will be most likely soon implemented in the next versions of all major browsers.

²ECMAScript is familiarly known as JavaScript after it's most common implementation[26]

Scalable Vector Graphics (SVG) and Synchronized Multimedia Integration Language (SMIL)

SVG SVG is an XML based file format designed for describing two-dimensional vector images[27]. It is an open format developed and maintained by the W3C SVG Working Group [1]. Current W3C Recommendation is SVG 1.1 (Second Edition).

SMIL *SMIL* is an established standard for animation of SVG images using a declarative approach. It is an extension of SVG specification that lets the user to define key-frame animations of SVG elements' attributes. SMIL is not supported by all major browsers³. SMIL's future is unsure at the moment, as Blink rendering engine development team has announced to deprecate the technology in Chromium and Google Chrome in favor of CSS animations and the *Web Animation API* [4].

Web Animation API

A very promising technology is the *Web Animation API* ⁵, which will provide a very effective way of declaring and controlling animations in a web page through a JavaScript API. This technology is currently (3rd July 2015) in the state of Editor's Draft. This means that it is provided for discussion only and may change at any moment [6].

Unfortunately, at the time of writing this thesis, is not supported by several major browsers⁷⁸ and is only partially supported in the remaining few ⁹¹⁰.

3.1.5 Conclusion

The bottleneck of most of the technologies is their support in mobile devices. These devices don't allow some of the above mentioned technologies to run inside them. As the popularity and market share of mobile devices grow, supporting them is a high priority. HTML5 APIs features needed to create the screencast player are implemented all major web browsers, including browsers for mobile devices. Audio recording is not supported by all major browsers at the moment, but this will change with the release of Microsoft Edge [11]. After considering these facts, HTML5 was selected to implement both the recording tool and the screencast player.

³<https://status.modern.ie/svgsmilanimation>

⁴<https://www.chromestatus.com/features/5371475380928512>

⁵<http://www.w3.org/TR/web-animations/>

⁶<http://w3c.github.io/web-animations/>

⁷<https://status.modern.ie/webanimationsjavascriptapi>

⁸

⁹<http://caniuse.com/#feat=web-animation>

¹⁰<https://birtles.github.io/areweanimatedyet/>

¹¹<http://blogs.windows.com/msedgedev/2015/05/13/announcing-media-capture-functionality-in-microsoft-edge/>

3.1.6 Possible issues and known limitations

As mentioned earlier, not all browsers implement all features described in the HTML5 specification in their latest versions. But the trend is to implement as many technologies as possible to bring better browsing experience to users to gain bigger market share, so this situation will get better soon.

Another fact, that might cause trouble, is that many users still use an old version of their browser. This is mainly the case of Microsoft Internet Explorer (MSIE), which does not have automatic update mechanism. Fortunately, the number of MSIE users is dropping and Microsoft Edge, the ancestor of MSIE, will have automatic updates built in (@todo: some relevant source).

So far, there hasn't been consensus on formats and codecs support in HTML5 *WebAudio API*. The most supported format across web browsers is MP3. This format isn't supported by some browsers on some platforms due to licence reasons. An up-to-date table with media formats' support can be found at *Mozilla Developer Network* (MDN) website [12]. This inconvenience can be easily solved by providing several `<source>` elements to the `<audio>` element with different formats. Browser will then select the format it supports and it will download and play this audio track. The flaw is the need of having the data stored in several formats on the server and the video as a whole takes more disk capacity.

3.2 Drawing algorithm

One of the key aspects of success of this library is the way it draws the lines. The lines must be nice, smooth and feel natural, as if somebody physically drew them on a blackboard with a chalk, and must not be disturbing or distracting. This library cannot improve the contents of the author's video, but the way it is displayed to the user can have positive impact on viewer's impression of the video. It is also required that stylus pressure has direct proportion to the width of the drawn line.

After a research, the algorithm called "Dynadraw" by Paul Haeberli [?] from 1989, seems appropriate for this project. It is for example used in *Inkscape*¹³ for the calligraphic tool¹⁴.

This algorithm models the tip of the brush as a physical object and simulates its movement. User applies force on the brush by moving the mouse or any other pointing device. The original algorithm is designed for calligraphic strokes and uses mouse speed to calculate dynamic line widths. This technique makes lines drawn by a mouse or other pressure-insensitive device more interesting and can be combined with pressure level of pressure-sensitive device.

For details of the implementation see section 5.3.1 on page 20.

¹²https://developer.mozilla.org/en-US/docs/Web/HTML/Supported_media_formats

¹³Inkscape: <http://inkscape.org>

¹⁴<http://bazaar.launchpad.net/~inkscape.dev/inkscape/trunk/view/head:/src/ui/tools/calligraphic-tool.h>

3.3 Audio recording

Audio input from the microphone will have the form of raw uncompressed *Pulse-code modulated* (PCM) data[46]. The sample rate is chosen by the web browser and cannot be changed by the programmer. The sample rate must be between 22.05 to 96 kHz. If we choose the bit depth of 16 bits per sample, then we can calculate the minimum data load of uncompressed audio recording. Therefore we receive at least 44.1 kB of data per second, which 2.646 MB of data per minute of recording. From experience, desktop browsers target 44.1 kHz sampling rate, which even doubles the data load. This data must be uploaded to the server so users can watch the screencasts with voice commentary.

Buffering microphone input The first possible approach is to buffer all data from the microphone, create an uncompressed audio file and upload this file to the server at the end of the recording. Creating a *Waveform Audio File Format* (WAVE or WAV) file is relatively simple because it contains only a simple header and LPCM data.

Compression of buffered data in the browser The uncompressed audio is relatively large and the upload will take much more time, then uploading a compressed file would take. Audio compression is a complex process. There are several JavaScript libraries, that implement audio compression inside a web browser¹⁵¹⁶, but they have shown to be large, slow and unstable.

Streaming microphone data to the server in background A different method is possible with the use of the *WebSocket protocol*. The WebSocket protocol enables two-way communication between a client and a server [48]. It is built on top of *Transmission Control Protocol* (TCP) sockets, which means it provides ordered and reliable transmission of messages. Either textual or binary messages can be sent over a WebSocket. If the data is transferred over the WebSocket at the time of recording in background, then a considerable part of the data might be already uploaded to the server as soon as the user stops recording, depending on his Internet connection upstream speed.

3.3.1 Conclusion

Streaming the recorded audio data in background over a WebSocket seems to be convenient for the user. It will fasten the uploading process at the end of recording, as part of the audio data is already uploaded before the user even clicks the upload button.

Server must implement WebSocket connections and serve clients. Server might also use a native program, like the open-source FFmpeg¹⁷ to compress the audio and convert it to different file formats.

¹⁵<http://bgrins.github.io/videoconverter.js/>

¹⁶<https://github.com/akrennmair/libmp3lame-js>

¹⁷<https://www.ffmpeg.org>

3.4 File format

All the information of the cursor movement and the pre-drawn lines must be stored on the server, including the time at which every single segment of every line is drawn. For this purpose an appropriate file format must be used. There are a few existing formats, which were designed for vector graphics and animation.

EVA The *EVA* by SHARP[38] is binary file format developed in 1996. It is used to create vector animations and it is popular in Japan. Unfortunately the documentation and resources are available in Japanese only[39].

SWF Another well-known format is Adobe's *SWF*. It is a binary format with a wide range of usage. It can contain bitmap-based video, vector primitives, and ActionScript[40]. It is possible to manipulate contained vector primitives and morph their properties to create a key-frame animation[22]. Documentation of the format is open since 2008.

SVG *Scalable Vector Graphics* was already mentioned earlier. This format can contain SMIL animation definitions, which makes it also a vector animation format. SVG is based on XML and it is therefore a human-readable textual format. As discussed earlier, SMIL animations are not considered to be a good option for this project.

Custom extension of SVG JavaScript is not very good at manipulating binary files. Until the specification of typed arrays¹⁸, manipulating binary files in JavaScript was very ineffective and unintuitive. Even with these new technologies, working with XML in JavaScript is more straightforward. The fact, that SVG is based on XML means, that it can be extended with custom namespace and define custom animation, that will be better for this project.

3.4.1 Conclusion

After considering available options, creating a custom format based on SVG seems like the best option for its human-readability, simplicity, versatility, ease of manipulation using JavaScript, and the possibility of previewing static scenes of the animation in existing software. This format will serve well as a proof-of-concept and can be replaced with a more sophisticated format in the future and the format must not be therefore hard-coded into the library.

For the specification of this new format, see chapter 4 on page 14.

¹⁸<https://www.khronos.org/registry/typedarray/specs/latest/>

4. Vector Screenshot file format

SVG format is common and is implemented in web browsers and in many programs. These programs can open an SVG image and draw its contents. The idea is to create an SVG file, which contains all the information needed using custom namespace attributes and elements and shows the state of the blackboard at the end of recording.

A valid SVG document must have an *svg* root element with specific namespace attributes and specified *width* and *height* attributes. For the purpose of extending the document, a new namespace *http://www.rozsival.com/2015/vector-screenshot* is added with the prefix *a*. An example of an empty SVG document with this namespace looks as follows:

```
1 <?xml version="1.0"?>
2 <svg version="1.1"
3     width="470"
4     height="100"
5     xmlns="http://www.w3.org/2000/svg"
6     xmlns:a="http://www.rozsival.com/2015/
7         vector-screenshot">
8 </svg>
```

SVG specification allows inclusion of elements and attributes from foreign namespaces anywhere with the SVG context. Attributes from foreign namespaces might be attached to any element. Both elements and attributes will be included in the DOM by the SVG user agent, but will be ignored otherwise [?].

Vector Screenshot `<svg>` root element must have two child elements: `<metadata></metadata>` and `<g a:type="chunks"></g>`

SVG `<g>` element¹ is intended for grouping related graphics elements. These groups might be also nested.

4.1 Video Metadata

The first child element of the `<svg>` element must be a `<metadata>` element. This element must contain these child elements:

`<a:width>` and `<a:height>` The content is the original width and height of the blackboard. These numbers will be used to correct coordinates when playing the video with different resolution. The `width` and `height` attributes of the `<svg>` element may contain different values.

`<a:length>` The content is the duration of the video in milliseconds.

`<a:audio>` Contains the list of audio sources as child elements.

¹<http://www.w3.org/TR/SVG/struct.html#GElement>

`<a:source>` Defines one audio source. It has two attributes: `a:src` – containing the URL of the audio source, and `a:type` – containing the MIME type of the audio source.

4.2 Video Chunks

A video is divided into smaller consequent parts, called *chunks*. Chunks have variable time duration based on user’s behaviour. These chunks are logical units of the video, each of them can be rendered at once as one graphics primitive. This helps optimize skipping parts of the video. Some chunks can be skipped entirely as the canvas will be cleared at some point after the very chunk is rendered, but before the target time point is reached.

There are three types of chunks: *path*, *erase*, and *void* chunk. Each chunk is stored as one SVG group element with a specific `a:type` attribute (*path*, *erase*, *void*) and an `a:t` attribute, which is the time, when this chunk starts to be processed, in milliseconds. Chunks contain the prerendered graphics primitive and a list of animation commands.

“Path” This type of chunk represents one line the user draws. The first child element is an SVG `<path>` element. The `fill` attribute should correspond to the real color of the path, but is not necessary for later screencast playing. The data attribute `d` includes serialized information about the segments of the path in the form of valid SVG path instructions². For more details about the serialization and deserialization of this data, see section @todo on page @todo. One or more child elements might follow after the `<path>`, all of which must be animation command elements.

“Erase” This type of chunk represents clearing the whole canvas with one color. The first child element is an SVG `<rect>` element. The `fill` attribute should correspond to the real color of the new background. One or more child elements might follow after the `<rect>`, all of which must be animation command elements.

“Void” This type of chunk does not render anything on the canvas. It might contain one or more child elements, all of which must be animation command elements.

4.3 Animation Commands

Animation commands are necessary for correct actions’ timing during the video. Chunks contain the information of how the resulting primitive looks like, commands contain user’s gradual forming of these primitives.

Animation command must be a child element of a chunk element. Every chunk must have a `a:t` attribute with the time of the action in milliseconds. The value of the time attribute of an element must be greater or equal to the values of preceding sibling action elements.

²<http://www.w3.org/TR/SVG/paths.html#PathData>

<a:m> *Move cursor* command tells the player to move cursor to a specific position defined by attributes a:x and a:y.

<a:c> *Change color* command tells the player to switch current brush color according to the value of a:c. Value of the attribute must be valid CSS color value³.

<a:s> *Change brush size* command tells the player to change current brush size to the value of a:w attribute. The units of this value are pixels and the size must be corrected according to the width and height stated in the *metadata*.

<a:d> *Draw next segment* will render the next segment of the current path with current brush color and size. This command doesn't carry any additional information, all the information about the segment is carried by the *path* chunk. *Draw next segment* commands can be present only in an *path* chunk. There must not be any *change color* or *change brush size* command between the first *draw next segment* command and the last one inside one *path* chunk – color or size can't be changed in the middle of a path.

³<http://www.w3.org/TR/CSS2/syndata.html#value-def-color>

5. Implementation

5.1 ECMAScript and JavaScript

ECMAScript ¹ is a standardized scripting language widely used in website development. Latest approved edition of ECMAScript is ECMAScript 5.1, which is implemented in most major web browsers, and its implementations in web browsers are commonly called JavaScript ²³.

JavaScript is a dynamic programming language ⁴, which combines multiple aspects of imperative, functional, and object-oriented programming.

Functions are so called first-class citizens. This means they can be stored in variables, passed as function parameters, returned as results of functions, and included in data structures.

JavaScript doesn't provide any mean of static type checking. All types are created during runtime and they are also checked only during runtime. This lack of static checking during compilation might lead to rarely occurring errors and it is important to take this in mind while writing JavaScript code. A good practice is to write documentation comments⁵, where the types are stated.

JavaScript is an interpreted language, some implementations also use a Just-in-time compilation (JIT) ⁶ for better performance. Another very important aspect of ECMAScript which affects its performance is the absence of direct control over memory usage – memory is released when it is not needed any more. This mechanism is called *Garbage collection*. As of 2012, all modern browsers use mark-and-sweep garbage-collector [?].

Object oriented programming (OOP) ⁷ in JavaScript differs from class-oriented OOP in the way inheritance is implemented. While in class-oriented languages, for example in C++ or C#, inheritance is achieved by declaring classes of objects. In JavaScript, OOP is implemented through object prototypes. Prototype is just a link to another object, which has another prototype. This way a prototype chain is created. The last object in this chain has a `null` prototype. When trying to access a property of an object, it is searched in its own properties. If it is not found, then it is searched in its prototype's properties and so on until the end of the prototype chain is reached [31].

5.1.1 TypeScript

TypeScript is a typed superset of JavaScript that compiles to plain JavaScript[33]. It is an open-source project developed by Microsoft. It is, as its name suggests, is a strongly typed programming language compatible with JavaScript.

TypeScript extends capabilities of JavaScript by static type checking in the time of compilation, which helps the programmer to find errors in source code

¹<http://www.ecmascript.org/>

²<https://developer.mozilla.org/en/docs/Web/JavaScript>

³[https://msdn.microsoft.com/cs-cz/library/d1et7k7c\(v=vs.94\).aspx](https://msdn.microsoft.com/cs-cz/library/d1et7k7c(v=vs.94).aspx)

⁴http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dynamic_programming_language

⁵Commonly used syntax in JavaScript projects is JSDoc (<http://usejsdoc.org/>)

⁶For example Google V8 engine used in Google Chrome. See <https://code.google.com/p/v8/>

⁷http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Object-oriented_programming

sooner, and speeds up the process of coding. TypeScript also introduces *class* semantics. These classes are transpiled into JavaScript prototypes. TypeScript also includes concepts of interfaces and polymorphism, which makes programs written in TypeScript more understandable to programmers familiar with other object-oriented programming languages like Java, C# or C++.

TypeScript uses several features of ECMAScript 6, but is transcompiled into ECMAScript 5.1, and therefore doesn't bring any new functionality. The reason for choosing TypeScript is the clarity of code and more convenient development process for the programmer.

5.2 HTML5

HTML5 a term used to refer to modern web technologies. The core is the *HyperText Markup Language*, designed for describing semantics of documents [34]. HTML5 extends the semantics of HTML 4 with new HTML tags such as `<header>` or `<footer>`, but also defines a huge set of new APIs, which allow web developers to create much richer websites and web applications. Some of these new technologies are needed by the Vector Screencasts project.

Working with XML documents Working with XML data is very similar to working with regular website DOM⁸ in JavaScript. `Document`⁹ interface is used for traversing the XML tree, modifying it or for creating new one. In HTML5, XML files can be opened using a HTTP GET request using an `XMLHttpRequest`¹⁰ object, which parses the data and returns a `Document` instance in its `responseXML` property, if the document meets specified criteria [36].

Web sockets Web sockets allow applications to open bidirectional communication channels with server-side processes [11]. Web sockets are built on top of *Transmission Control Protocol* (TCP) connection. This means that the delivery of data is reliable and ordered [12].

Web Workers JavaScript code of a website normally runs in a single thread. It is common to run asynchronous functions as callbacks and event handlers, but these are still executed in a one thread. Web workers are a means of running heavy tasks in background without affecting the user interface. A real OS-level thread is spawn for each `Worker` object instance.

Web workers have several limitations. They can't change the DOM and have direct links to objects in the main thread. Web workers receive messages from the JavaScript source which created them through an `onmessage` event and can send a response via the `postMessage` function. These messages contain serialized JavaScript objects, which cannot contain any references. As a result, concurrency problems are not typically a problem. Web workers can perform a HTTP requests

⁸Document Object Model, <http://www.w3.org/DOM/>

⁹<https://dom.spec.whatwg.org/#interface-document>

¹⁰<https://xhr.spec.whatwg.org/>

¹¹<https://html.spec.whatwg.org/multipage/comms.html#network>

¹²<https://tools.ietf.org/html/rfc6455>

using the `XMLHttpRequest` object, but the content is not parsed, if the target is an XML file. For more details see the specification of the Worker object¹³

Rendering graphics using HTML5

Displaying text and static visual content is the main purpose of HTML and *Cascade Style Sheets* (CSS). Creating complex polygons or curves would be very hard and would involve various tricks¹⁴ or would be even impossible.

The new HTML specification takes this in mind and brings ways of creating more rich and dynamic content within a web page. There are two technologies that should be taken into account - *Canvas 2D Context* and *SVG*.

Canvas 2D Context The `<canvas>` element provides scripts with a resolution-dependent bitmap canvas, which can be used for rendering graphs, game graphics, or other visual images on the fly [35].

Using canvas seems appropriate for this project. Canvas could be created with respect to user's resolution and web browser window size. All elements can be scaled to fit this viewport. This will make them look sharp and there won't be any artefacts, noise and blur caused by interpolation used for scaling regular bitmap video content.

When the dimensions of the `<canvas>` element change, the image is scaled, but the output won't be very sharp. Canvas contains a bitmap image, onto which the graphical primitives are drawn. All these primitives must be redrawn by the programmer to achieve smooth scaling.

SVG @todo

5.3 Drawing lines

Khan Academy videos are known for it's consistent and simple style. A person draws on a virtual canvas (evoking a school blackboard) with a brush (or possibly a chalk) of a round shape.

Tutor has a pointing device, typically a computer mouse or digital pen, and it's position on the canvas is marked with a moving cursor. When the tutor clicks, a dot is marked on canvas in the current position of the cursor. Tutor can produce a line (typically a curve) following this cursor when he presses a mouse button or increases digital pen pressure and while moving the cursor. The curve ends when he releases the button or pen pressure. The color and size of the dot or line corresponds to the current settings.

At the time of recording, mouse coordinates relative to the drawing board are captured along with current pressure of the digital pointing device (mouse, graphical tablet pen). This data is then used to draw a curve with variable thickness at the moment of recording as visual feedback for the person recording and the same process is done every time the video is replayed.

¹³<https://html.spec.whatwg.org/multipage/workers.html#worker>

¹⁴<http://nicolasgallagher.com/pure-css-gui-icons/>

The outcome of the rendering phase should be the same every time so the intention of the creator is preserved. On the other hand, the rendering algorithm might be improved (i.e. by making the lines smoother) in the future and the video could be rendered using to this algorithm without any editing, while the information in the video will remain untouched.

Rendering at the time of playback gives us the opportunity to adjust the outcome to the environment of the end user. This means that the result can be sharp on every display resolution without the need of having many versions of the same video for each resolution.

5.3.1 DynaDraw algorithm

Paul Haeberli has created a simple algorithm called "*DynaDraw*" in 1989, which is suitable for calligraphy. Brush is modeled as a physical object with it's mass, velocity and friction coefficient ¹⁵ []. Mouse movement is interpreted as a way of exerting force on the brush – the faster you move the brush, the greater the force applied on the brush is. Acceleration is then calculated according to Newton's second law of motion considering brush's mass and velocity of the brush is derived with respect to the amount of brush's friction. This velocity is then applied and brush is moved. The trace brush should leave behind is then drawn onto the blackboard.

The advantage of this algorithm is it's simplicity and the possibilities of configuring the brush with different values of mass and friction (the author of the algorithm refers to this constant also as a drag, which better fits the purpose of slowing down the brush).

Heavier brushes move slowly, but the path they leave behind is much smoother, as the hand shaking is eliminated by composition of forces in different directions.

Light brushes move faster and are often very close to the cursor during the movement. When the cursor stops abruptly, light brushes with little friction tend to keep moving past the cursor and wrap around it. This produces little curls at the end of lines.

This approximation of cursor movement with appropriate constants selected improves quality of user's input and leads to nice results even when the user is using an ordinary mouse instead of a digital drawing pen.

Brush movement simulation

One step of simulation applies force on the brush according to current mouse position and thus moves it in the direction of the pointer. This process of applying force must be done periodically, at the frequency of 60 Hz in ideal case¹⁶. Implementation of this simulation is not identical to the original *DynaDraw* algorithm, but all of it's key aspects are preserved. Pseudocode 1 describes the algorithm used in this theses.

The main difference between the original implementation and the one used in Vector Video is brush width calculation. The original algorithm calculates the

¹⁵DynaDraw: <http://www.graficaobscura.com/dyna/index.html>

¹⁶HTML5 provides `requestAnimationFrame` function, which is intended for animations and which targets 60 frames per second

width of the line in a specific point by measuring it's velocity – the faster the brush is moving, the thinner the drawn line is. This width dynamics gave the algorithm it's name.

In our implementation, this effect is implemented, but is much more subtle. Brush dynamic in this implementation relies mainly on the pressure of a digital pen on a graphics tablet. Since the exact value of pressure in the point of current brush's location is not always known, the value is linearly interpolated between the value of pressure in the previous position of the brush and the value of pressure in the current mouse position according to distance from each of these points.

As this simulation isn't deterministic, this process cannot be reconstructed afterwards and when the video is being played, only the already computed values of points along the path must be used. The precise value of pressure is therefore redundant for later playback of the video and

Pseudocode 1 One step of brush movement simulation

```

function ONESTEP( $M, \Delta t$ )            $\triangleright M$  - mouse position,  $\Delta t$  - elapsed time
  if  $M \neq \emptyset$  then
     $brushMoved \leftarrow \text{APPLY}(\vec{M}, \Delta t)$ 
    if  $brushMoved = true$  then
      DRAWSEGMENT
    end if
  end if
end function

function APPLY( $M, \Delta t$ )
   $\vec{F} \leftarrow M - P$                                 $\triangleright P$  - current position of the brush
   $\vec{a} = \frac{\vec{F}}{m}$                                         $\triangleright m$  - mass of the brush
  if  $\|\vec{a}\| \leq C_a$  then                              $\triangleright C_a$  - minimum acceleration constant
    return false;
  end if
   $\vec{v} \leftarrow \vec{v} + \vec{a}$ 
  if  $\|\vec{v}\| > C_v$  then                                $\triangleright C_v$  - minimum velocity constant
     $P \leftarrow P + \mu \Delta t \vec{v}$                   $\triangleright \mu$  - coefficient of friction
    return true
  end if
  return false
end function

```

Rendering of one line segment

Line consists of many segments that are drawn after every simulation step, which causes brush to move. There are several ways to draw the segment, the most straightforward is to draw a simple quadrilateral between two points as shown in Figure 5.1 and Pseudocode 2.

The curves drawn with quadrilaterals are not very smooth. For smoother curves, straight lines must be replaced with interpolation splines. Both SVG and Canvas 2D Context implement cubic Bézier curves. Cubic Bézier curves are defined by four control points, $\mathbf{P}_0, \mathbf{P}_1, \mathbf{P}_2, \mathbf{P}_3$. Path starts in \mathbf{P}_0 and end in \mathbf{P}_3 , it

Pseudocode 2 Draw one segment of a line

function DRAWSEGMENT

 $\vec{n} \leftarrow \frac{(-\vec{v}_y, \vec{v}_x)}{\|\vec{v}\|}$
 $w \leftarrow \text{CURRENTBRUSHPRESSURE} \cdot b$
 $\triangleright b$ - brush size

 $L \leftarrow P - w\vec{n}$
 $R \leftarrow P + w\vec{n}$

BEGINPATH

 MOVETO(L')

 $\triangleright L'$ and R' - previously drawn point

 LINETO(R')

 LINETO(R)

 LINETO(L)

CLOSEPATH

 FILL(c)

 $\triangleright c$ - current brush color

 $L' \leftarrow L$
 $R' \leftarrow R$
end function

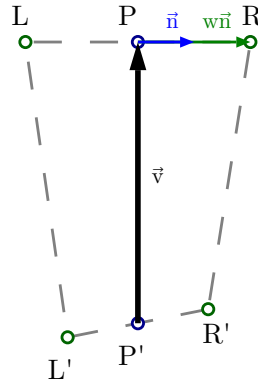


Figure 5.1: Drawn quadrilateral segment of a line

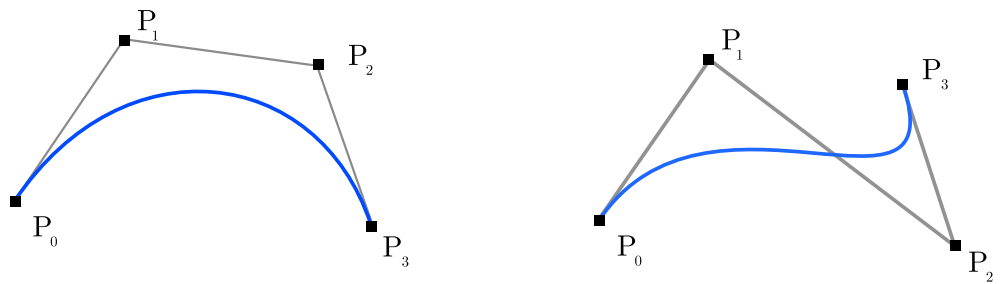


Figure 5.2: Bézier curve interpolation examples

doesn't usually go through points $\mathbf{P}_1, \mathbf{P}_2$. The interpolation formula of the curve is

$$\mathbf{B}(t) = (1-t)^3\mathbf{P}_0 + 3(1-t)^2t\mathbf{P}_1 + 3(1-t)t^2\mathbf{P}_2 + t^3\mathbf{P}_3, 0 \leq t \leq 1$$

¹⁷

To calculate the control points of a cubic Bézier curve for segment between points \mathbf{X}_i and \mathbf{X}_{i+1} , calculated by the DynaDraw algorithm, we can also take points \mathbf{X}_{i-1} and \mathbf{X}_{i+2} and look at these four points as Catmull-Rom spline control points. Catmull-Rom is a special type of Cardinal spline, with the tension parameter $\tau = 0$ ¹⁸. This approach gives us a nice smooth curve calculated just from consequent points and also guarantee of C^1 continuity (@todo: citation) of the whole path.

A special conversion matrix between Catmull-Rom spline and Bézier curve is defined ¹⁹ and so the conversion is very straightforward. The formula for calculating cubic Bézier control points $\mathbf{P}_0, \mathbf{P}_1, \mathbf{P}_2, \mathbf{P}_3$, from the points $\mathbf{X}_{i-1}, \mathbf{X}_i, \mathbf{X}_{i+1}, \mathbf{X}_{i+2}$ is

$$\begin{pmatrix} \mathbf{P}_0 & \mathbf{P}_1 & \mathbf{P}_2 & \mathbf{P}_3 \end{pmatrix} = \frac{1}{6} \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 6 & 0 & 0 \\ -1 & 6 & 1 & 0 \\ 0 & 1 & 6 & -1 \\ 0 & 0 & 6 & 0 \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} \mathbf{X}_{i-1} \\ \mathbf{X}_i \\ \mathbf{X}_{i+1} \\ \mathbf{X}_{i+2} \end{pmatrix}$$

The first and the last segments must be processed in a special way, as there is no preceding point, or following respectively.

For an example of cubic Bézier curve, see figure 5.2.

¹⁷An introduction to splines for use in computer graphics and geometric modeling, Bartels, Richard H, p. 160, <https://cs.uwaterloo.ca/research/tr/1983/CS-83-09.pdf>

¹⁸<http://people.cs.clemson.edu/~dhouse/courses/405/notes/splines.pdf>

¹⁹<http://therndguy.com/papers/curves.pdf>

6. Integration of the library in a HTML web page

Using Vector Screenshot library is intended to be as simple as possible. All the user needs to do is include a JavaScript file of the library and a CSS file of a theme into his HTML code and configure the player in a few lines of code.

6.1 Obtaining the Vector Screenshot library

Prepared library files can be obtained either from the attached files or from the GIT repository <https://github.com/simonrozsival/vectorvideo> in the */release/VectorScreenshot* and */release/themes/* folders. You only need to copy files *vector-screenshot.min.js* and *theme-default.min.css* into your project.

The library files must be linked to your document and you should make sure that your website will be displayed properly on mobile devices by specifying the *viewport* meta tag in the *head* section of your document¹. Also create an empty element with a specific *id* attribute – this will be the container, into which either the screenshot player or the recorder will be placed.

An example of a HTML5 template with correct setup can look similarly (irrelevant parts of the document were let omitted and replaced by suspension points):

```
1 <!DOCTYPE html>
2 <html>
3   <head>
4     ...
5     <meta name="viewport" content="width=device-width,
6       initial-scale=1">
7     <link rel="stylesheet" type="text/css" href="/path/
8       to/theme-default.min.css" media="screen,
9       projection">
10    ...
11  </head>
12  <body>
13    ...
14    <div id="some-specific-id"></div>
15    ...
16    <script src="/path/to/vector-screenshot.min.js">
17      </script>
18  </body>
19 </html>
```

The initialisation scripts must be executed after all web page resources are downloaded and the DOM is ready – this can be achieved by putting this code inside a handler of the *window.onload* event.

¹<https://developers.google.com/speed/docs/insights/ConfigureViewport>

6.2 Vector Screencast Player

Inside your scripts, create a new instance of *VectorScreencast.Player*. The constructor takes two arguments, first of them is the *id* attribute of a container element and the second is a configuration object. The only obligatory property of the configuration object is the *Source* property – the URL of the source SVG file.

There are several other interesting optional settings, that will help you customize the screencast player. One of them is the *Localization* property, which takes an object implementing the *VectorScreencast.Localization.PlayerLocalization* interface. To see the complete list of all configuration options and further details, please refer to the *VectorScreencast.Settings.PlayerSettings* interface in the API reference of the project in the */docs/* folder of the attached files. You can see an advanced example of *VectorScreencast.Player* usage */demo/public/play.html* in the attached files.

6.3 Vector Screencast Recorder

Inside your scripts, create a new instance of *VectorScreencast.Player*. The constructor takes two arguments, first of them is the *id* attribute of a container element and the second is a configuration object. The only obligatory property of the configuration object is the *Source* property – the URL of the source SVG file.

There are several other interesting optional settings, that will help you customize the screencast player. One of them is the *Localization* property, which takes an object implementing the *VectorScreencast.Localization.PlayerLocalization* interface. To see the complete list of all configuration options and further details, please refer to the *VectorScreencast.Settings.PlayerSettings* interface in the API reference of the project in the */docs/* folder of the attached files. You can see an advanced example of *VectorScreencast.Player* usage */demo/public/play.html* in the attached files.

6.4 Embedding Vector Screencast Player

@todo

6.5 Custom theme

@todo

7. Users' documentation

Users' documentation with screenshot similar to the one I have already done.

Conclusion

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List of Tables

List of Abbreviations

Attachments