Introduction to Computer Graphics with WebGL

Ed Angel

Professor Emeritus of Computer Science

Founding Director, Arts, Research, Technology and Science Laboratory

University of New Mexico

Models and Architectures

Objectives

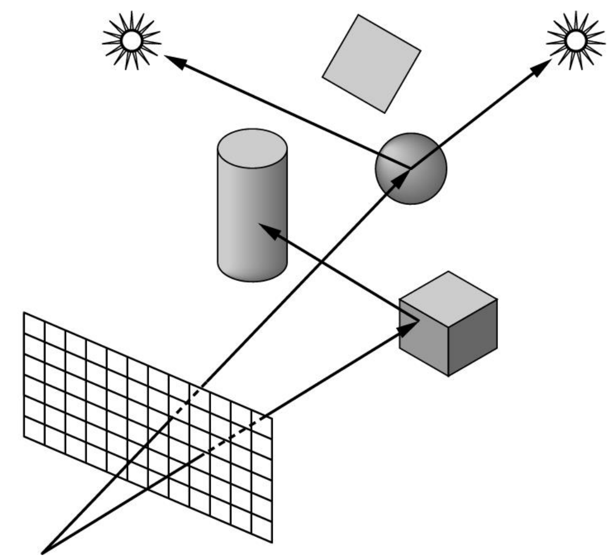
- Learn the basic design of a graphics system
- Introduce pipeline architecture
- Examine software components for an interactive graphics system

Image Formation Revisited

- Can we mimic the synthetic camera model to design graphics hardware software?
- Application Programmer Interface (API)
  - Need only specify
    - Objects
    - Materials
    - Viewer
    - Lights
- But how is the API implemented?

Physical Approaches

- **Ray tracing**: follow rays of light from center of projection until they either are absorbed by objects or go off to infinity
  - Can handle global effects
    - Multiple reflections
    - Translucent objects
  - Slow
  - Must have whole data base available at all times



- **Radiosity**: Energy based approach
  - Very slow

Practical Approach

- Process objects one at a time in the order they are generated by the application
  - Can consider only local lighting
- Pipeline architecture

application program

display

- All steps can be implemented in hardware on the graphics card

Vertex Processing

- Much of the work in the pipeline is in converting object representations from one coordinate system to another
  - Object coordinates
  - Camera (eye) coordinates
  - Screen coordinates
- Every change of coordinates is equivalent to a matrix transformation
- Vertex processor also computes vertex colors

Projection

- *Projection* is the process that combines the 3D viewer with the 3D objects to produce the 2D image
  - Perspective projections: all projectors meet at the center of projection
  - Parallel projection: projectors are parallel, center of projection is replaced by a direction of projection

Primitive Assembly

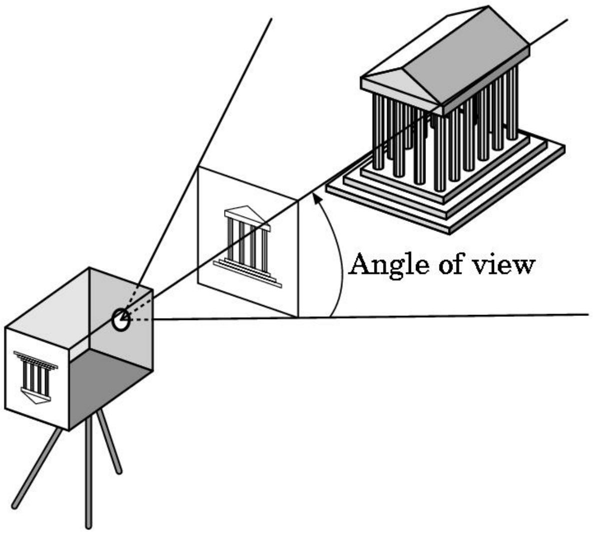
Vertices must be collected into geometric objects before clipping and rasterization can take place

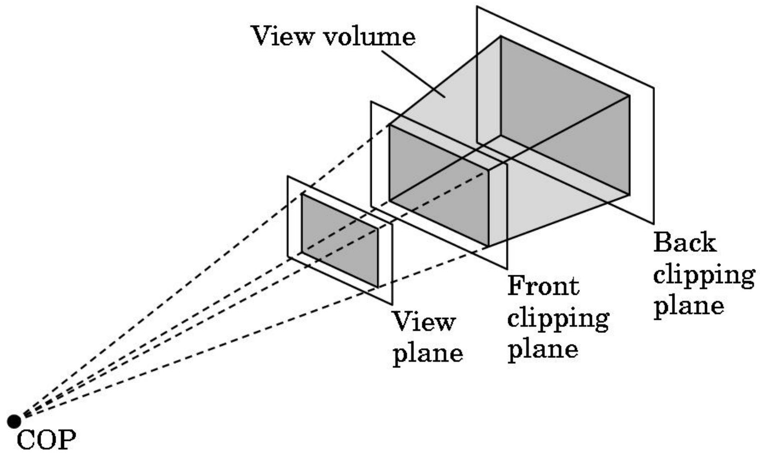
- Line segments
- Polygons
- Curves and surfaces

Clipping

Just as a real camera cannot “see” the whole world, the virtual camera can only see part of the world or object space

- Objects that are not within this volume are said to be *clipped* out of the scene





Rasterization

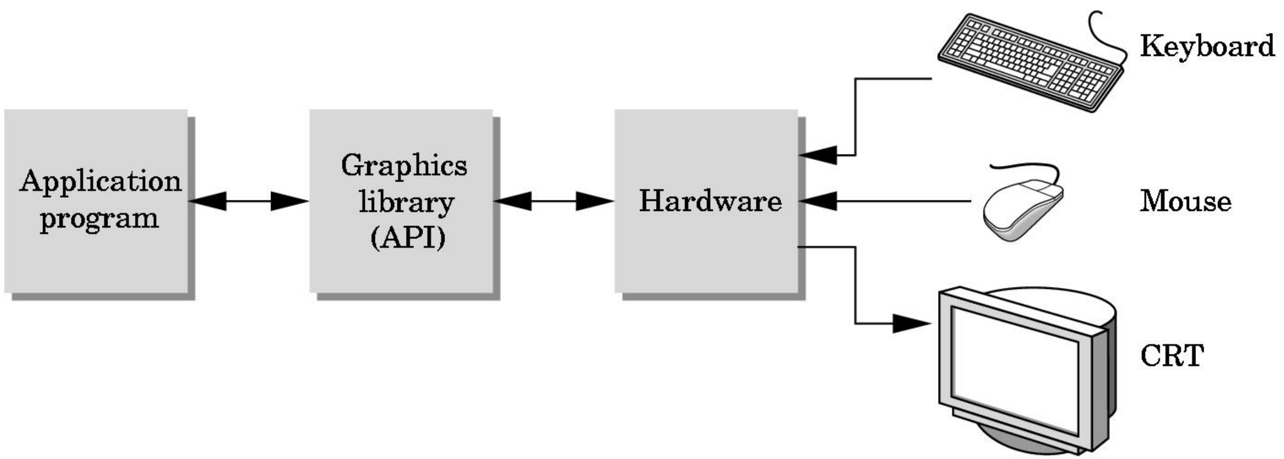
- If an object is not clipped out, the appropriate pixels in the frame buffer must be assigned colors
- Rasterizer produces a set of fragments for each object
- Fragments are “potential pixels”
  - Have a location in frame bufffer
  - Color and depth attributes
- Vertex attributes are interpolated over objects by the rasterizer

Fragment Processing

- Fragments are processed to determine the color of the corresponding pixel in the frame buffer
- Colors can be determined by texture mapping or interpolation of vertex colors
- Fragments may be blocked by other fragments closer to the camera
    - Hidden-surface removal

The Programmer's Interface

- Programmer sees the graphics system through a software interface: the Application Programmer Interface (API)



API Contents

- Functions that specify what we need to form an image
  - Objects
  - Viewer
  - Light Source(s)
  - Materials
- Other information
  - Input from devices such as mouse and keyboard
  - Capabilities of system

Object Specification

- Most APIs support a limited set of primitives including
  - Points (0D object)
  - Line segments (1D objects)
  - Polygons (2D objects)
  - Some curves and surfaces
    - Quadrics
    - Parametric polynomials
- All are defined through locations in space or *vertices*

The University of New Mexico

Example (old style)

type of object

location of vertex

```
glBegin(GL_POLYGON)
 glVertex3f(0.0, 0.0, 0.0);
 glVertex3f(0.0, 1.0, 0.0);
 glVertex3f(0.0, 0.0, 1.0);
glEnd( );
```

end of object definition

Example (GPU based)

- Put geometric data in an array

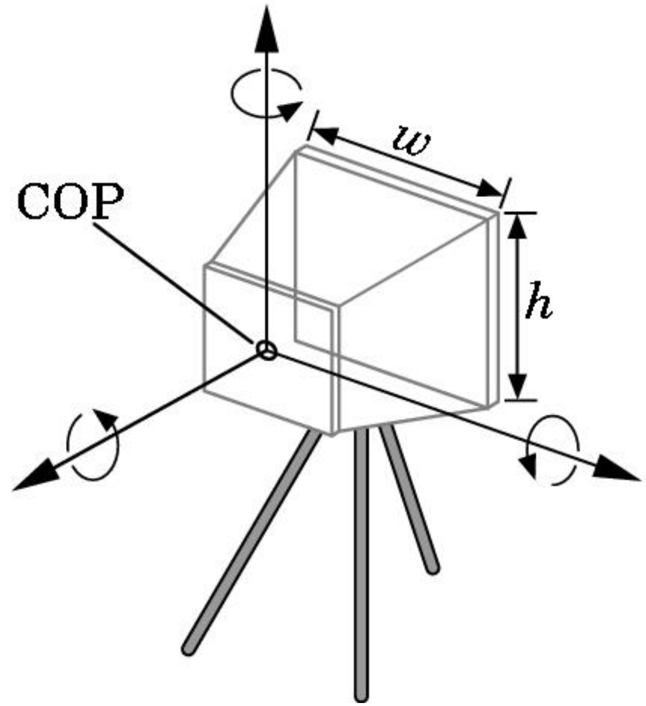
```
var points = [
 vec3(0.0, 0.0, 0.0),
 vec3(0.0, 1.0, 0.0),
 vec3(0.0, 0.0, 1.0),
];
```

- Send array to GPU
- Tell GPU to render as triangle

The University of New Mexico

Camera Specification

- Six degrees of freedom
  - Position of center of lens
  - Orientation
- Lens
- Film size
- Orientation of film plane



The University of New Mexico

Lights and Materials

- Types of lights
  - Point sources vs distributed sources
  - Spot lights
  - Near and far sources
  - Color properties
- Material properties
  - Absorption: color properties
  - Scattering
    - Diffuse
    - Specular

Introduction to Computer Graphics with WebGL

Ed Angel

Professor Emeritus of Computer Science

Founding Director, Arts, Research, Technology and Science Laboratory

University of New Mexico

Programming with WebGL
Part 1: Background

Ed Angel

Professor Emeritus of Computer Science

University of New Mexico

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

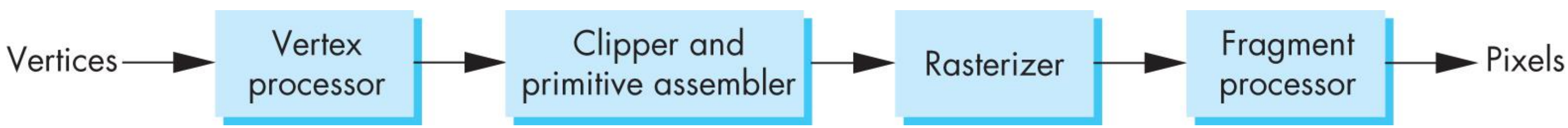
The University of New Mexico

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

Introduction to Computer Graphics with WebGL

Ed Angel

Professor Emeritus of Computer Science

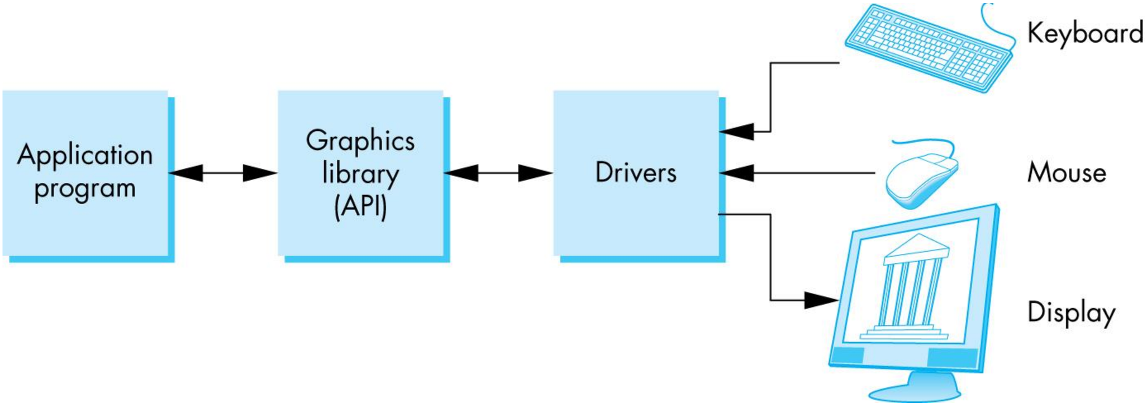
Founding Director, Arts, Research, Technology and Science Laboratory

University of New Mexico

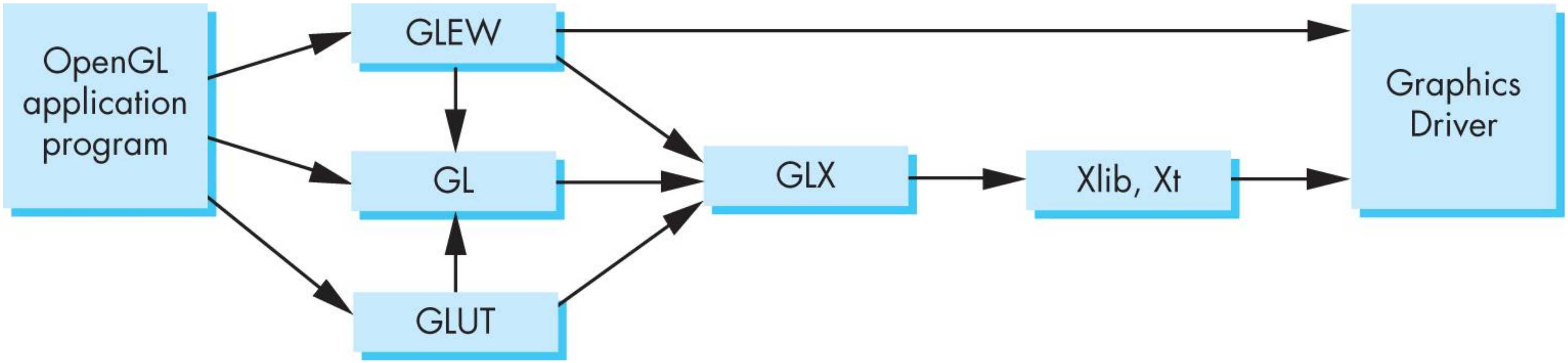
Programming with WebGL
Part 1: Background

Ed Angel
Professor Emeritus of Computer Science
University of New Mexico

OpenGL Architecture

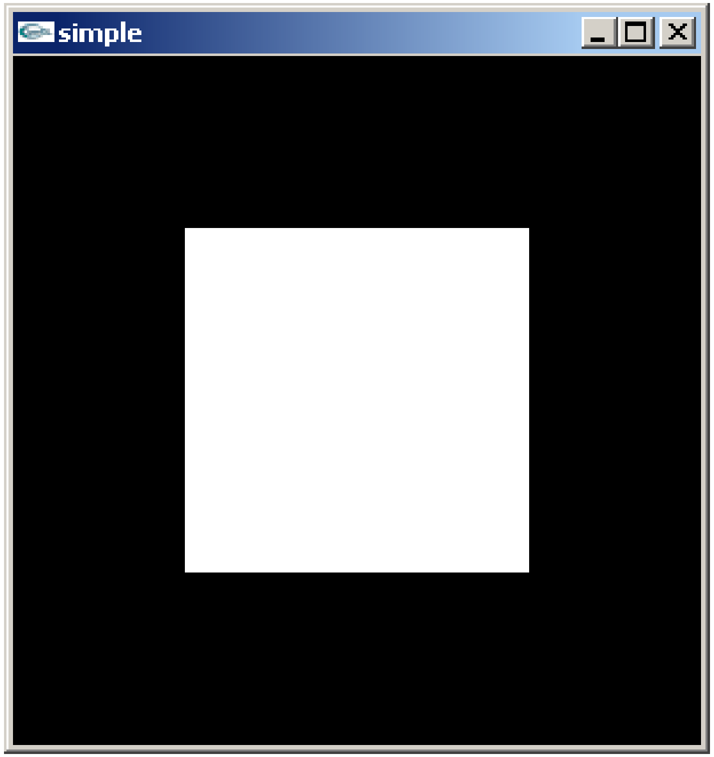


Software Organization



A OpenGL Simple Program

Generate a square on a solid background



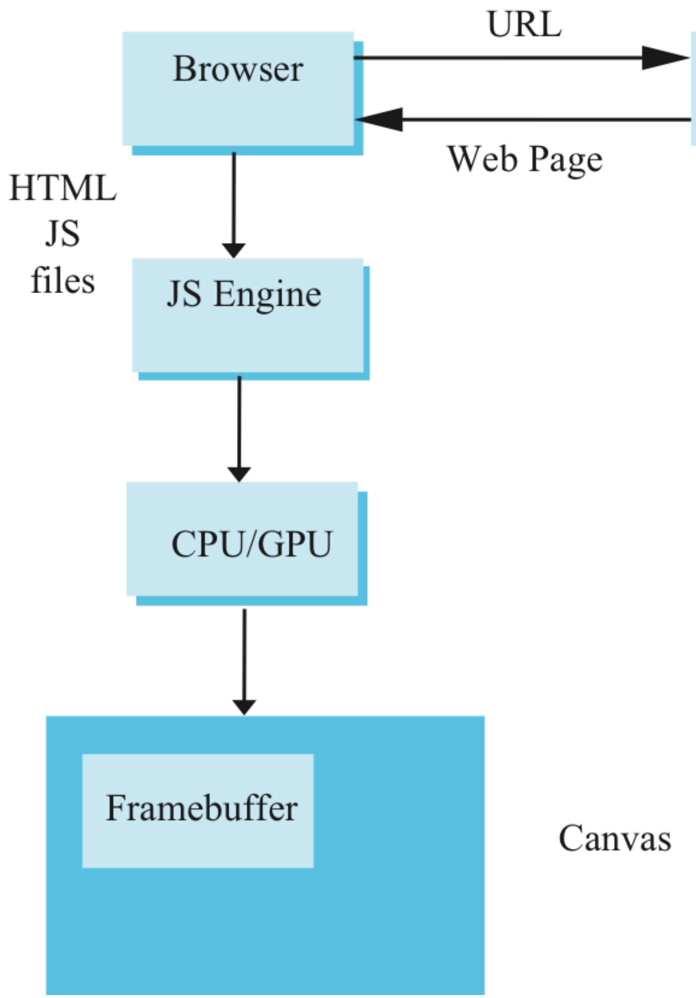
It used to be easy

```
#include <GL/glut.h>
void mydisplay(){
      glClear(GL_COLOR_BUFFER_BIT);
      glBegin(GL_QUAD;
            glVertex2f(-0.5, -0.5);
            glVertex2f(-0,5, 0,5);
            glVertex2f(0.5, 0.5);
            glVertex2f(0.5, -0.5);
      glEnd()
}
int main(int argc, char** argv){
      glutCreateWindow("simple");
      glutDisplayFunc(mydisplay);
      glutMainLoop();
}
```

What happened?

- Most OpenGL functions deprecated
  - immediate vs retained mode
  - make use of GPU
- Makes heavy use of state variable default values that no longer exist
  - Viewing
  - Colors
  - Window parameters
- However, processing loop is the same

Execution in Browser



Event Loop

- Remember that the sample program specifies a render function which is a *event listener* or *callback* function
  - Every program should have a render callback
  - For a static application we need only execute the render function once
  - In a dynamic application, the render function can call itself recursively but each redrawing of the display must be triggered by an event

Lack of Object Orientation

- All versions of OpenGL are not object oriented so that there are multiple functions for a given logical function
- Example: sending values to shaders
  - **`gl.uniform3f`**
  - **`gl.uniform2i`**
  - **`gl.uniform3dv`**
- Underlying storage mode is the same

WebGL function format

function name

dimension

`gl.uniform3f(x,y,z)`

belongs to WebGL canvas

`x,y,z` are variables

`gl.uniform3fv(p)`

`p` is an array

WebGL constants

- Most constants are defined in the canvas object
  - In desktop OpenGL, they were in #include files such as **`gl.h`**
- Examples
  - **`desktop OpenGL`**
    - **`glEnable(GL_DEPTH_TEST);`**
  - **`WebGL`**
    - **`gl.enable(gl.DEPTH_TEST)`**
  - **`gl.clear(gl.COLOR_BUFFER_BIT)`**

WebGL and GLSL

- WebGL requires shaders and is based less on a state machine model than a data flow model
- Most state variables, attributes and related pre 3.1 OpenGL functions have been deprecated
- Action happens in shaders
- Job of application is to get data to GPU

GLSL

- OpenGL Shading Language
- C-like with
  - Matrix and vector types (2, 3, 4 dimensional)
  - Overloaded operators
  - C++ like constructors
- Similar to Nvidia's Cg and Microsoft HLSL
- Code sent to shaders as source code
- WebGL functions compile, link and get information to shaders

Programming with OpenGL Part 2: Complete Programs

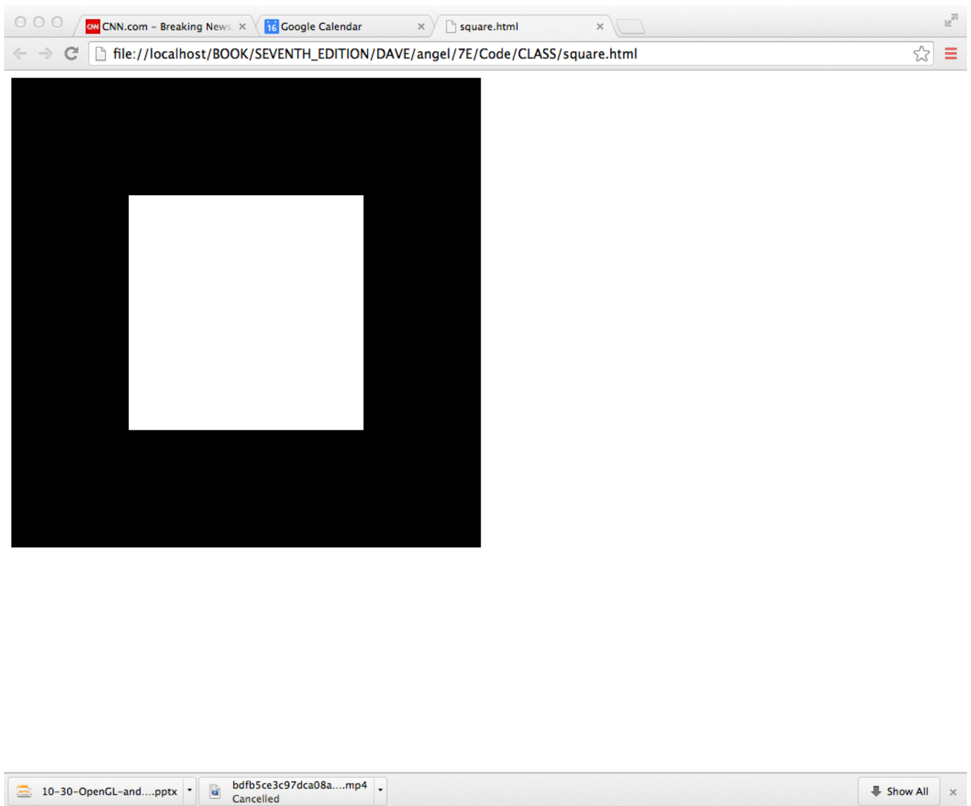
Ed Angel
Professor of Emeritus of Computer Science
University of New Mexico

Objectives

- Build a complete first program
  - Introduce shaders
  - Introduce a standard program structure
- Simple viewing
  - Two-dimensional viewing as a special case of three-dimensional viewing
- Initialization steps and program structure

Square Program

Code in Examples/square.html



WebGL

- Five steps
  - Describe page (HTML file)
    - request WebGL Canvas
    - read in necessary files
  - Define shaders (HTML file)
    - could be done with a separate file (browser dependent)
  - Compute or specify data (JS file)
  - Send data to GPU (JS file)
  - Render data (JS file)

square.html

```
<!DOCTYPE html>
<html>
<head>
<script id="vertex-shader" type="x-shader/x-vertex">
#version 300 es
in vec4 vPosition;
void main()
{
    gl_Position = vPosition;
}
</script>
<script id="fragment-shader" type="x-shader/x-fragment">
#version 300 es
precision mediump float;
out vec4 fColor;
void main()
{
    fColor = vec4( 1.0, 1.0, 1.0, 1.0 );
}
</script>
```

Shaders

- We assign names to the shaders that we can use in the JS file
- These are trivial pass-through (do nothing) shaders that which set the required built-in variable gl_Position and outputs the fColor one

- Note both shaders are full programs
- Note vector type vec2
- Must set precision in fragment shader

The University of New Mexico

square.html (cont)

```
<script type="text/javascript" src="../Common/initShaders.js"></script>
<script type="text/javascript" src="../Common/MVnew.js"></script>
<script type="text/javascript" src="square.js"></script>
</head>

<body>
<canvas id="gl-canvas" width="512" height="512">
Oops ... your browser doesn't support the HTML5 canvas element
</canvas>
</body>
</html>
```

Files

- **`../Common/initShaders.js`**: contains JS and WebGL code for reading, compiling and linking the shaders

- **`../Common/MVnew.js`**: our matrix-vector package

- **`square.js`**: the application file

square.js

```
var gl;
var points;

window.onload = function init(){
    canvas = document.getElementById( "gl-canvas" );
    gl = canvas.getContext('webgl2');
    if (!gl) { alert( "WebGL 2.0 isn't available" ); }

     // Four Vertices

     var vertices = [
         vec2( -0.5, -0.5 ),
         vec2(  -0.5,  0.5 ),
         vec2(  0.5, 0.5 ),
         vec2( 0.5, -0.5)
     ];
```

Notes

- `onload`: determines where to start execution when all code is loaded
- canvas gets WebGL context from HTML file
- vertices use vec2 type in MVnew.js
- JS array is not the same as a C or Java array
  - object with methods
  - vertices.length // 4
- Values in clip coordinates

square.js (cont)

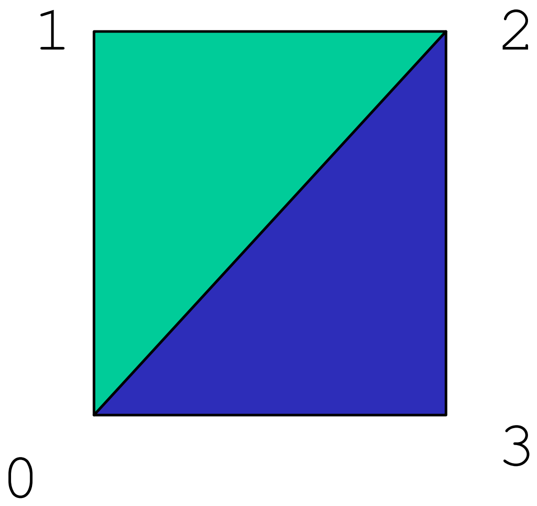
```
//  Configure WebGL
gl.viewport( 0, 0, canvas.width, canvas.height );
gl.clearColor( 0.0, 0.0, 0.0, 1.0 );

 //  Load shaders and initialize attribute buffers
var program = initShaders( gl,"vertex-shader","fragment-shader" );
gl.useProgram( program );

 // Load the data into the GPU

var bufferId = gl.createBuffer();
gl.bindBuffer( gl.ARRAY_BUFFER, bufferId );
gl.bufferData( gl.ARRAY_BUFFER, flatten(vertices),gl.STATIC_DRAW );
 // Associate out shader variables with our data buffer
var vPosition = gl.getAttribLocation( program, "vPosition" );
gl.vertexAttribPointer( vPosition, 2, gl.FLOAT, false, 0, 0 );
gl.enableVertexAttribArray( vPosition );
```

Notes

- `initShaders` used to load, compile and link shaders to form a program object
- Load data onto GPU by creating a **vertex buffer object** on the GPU
  - Note use of flatten() to convert JS array to an array of float32's
- Finally we must connect variable in program with variable in shader
  - need name, type, location in buffer

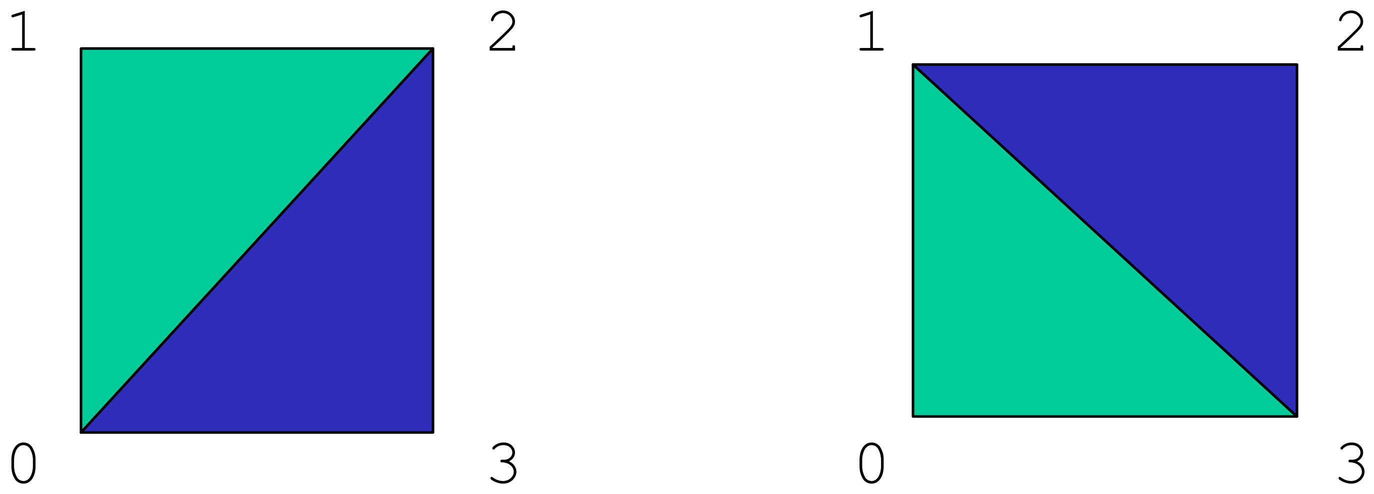
square.js (cont)

```
    render();
};

function render() {
    gl.clear( gl.COLOR_BUFFER_BIT );
    gl.drawArrays( gl.TRIANGLE_FAN, 0, 4 );
}
```



Triangles, Fans or Strips

```
gl.drawArrays( gl.TRIANGLES, 0, 6 ); // 0, 1, 2, 0, 2, 3

gl.drawArrays( gl.TRIANGLE_FAN, 0, 4 ); // 0, 1 , 2, 3
```




```
gl.drawArrays( gl.TRIANGLE_STRIP, 0, 4 ); // 0, 1, 3, 2
```

The University of New Mexico

Programming with OpenGL Part 2: Complete Programs

Ed Angel

Professor of Emeritus of Computer Science

University of New Mexico

Objectives

- Build a complete first program
  - Introduce shaders
  - Introduce a standard program structure
- Simple viewing
  - Two-dimensional viewing as a special case of three-dimensional viewing
- Initialization steps and program structure

Program Execution

- WebGL runs within the browser
  - complex interaction among the operating system, the window system, the browser and your code (HTML and JS)
- Simple model
  - Start with HTML file
  - files read in asynchronously
  - start with onload function
    - event driven input

Coordinate Systems

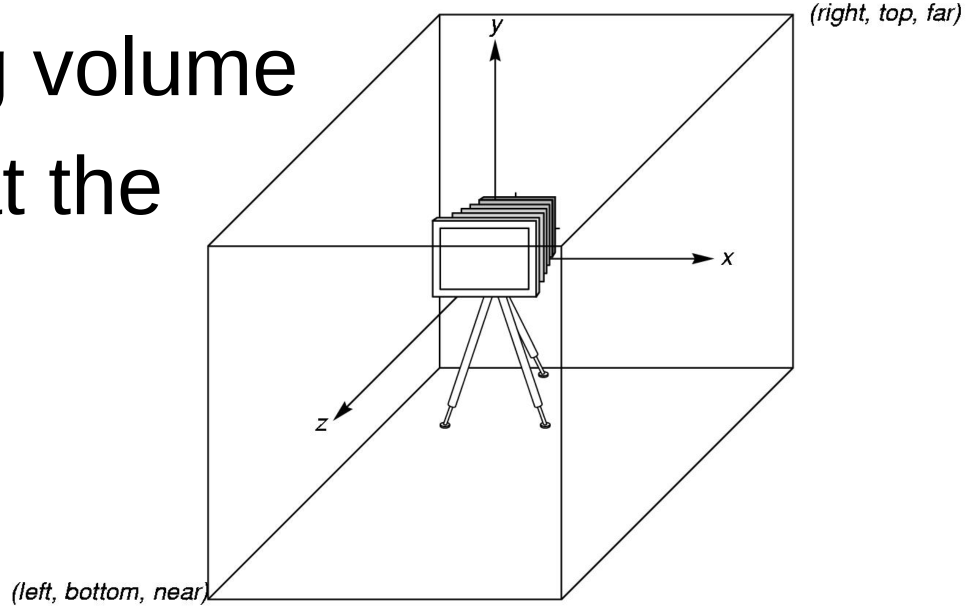
- The units in **`points`** are determined by the application and are called *object, world, model* or *problem coordinates*
- Viewing specifications usually are also in object coordinates
- Eventually pixels will be produced in *window coordinates*
- WebGL also uses some internal representations that usually are not visible to the application but are important in the shaders
- Most important is *clip coordinates*

Coordinate Systems and Shaders

- Vertex shader must output in clip coordinates
- Input to fragment shader from rasterizer is in window coordinates
- Application can provide vertex data in any coordinate system but shader must eventually produce gl_Position in clip coordinates
- Simple example uses clip coordinates

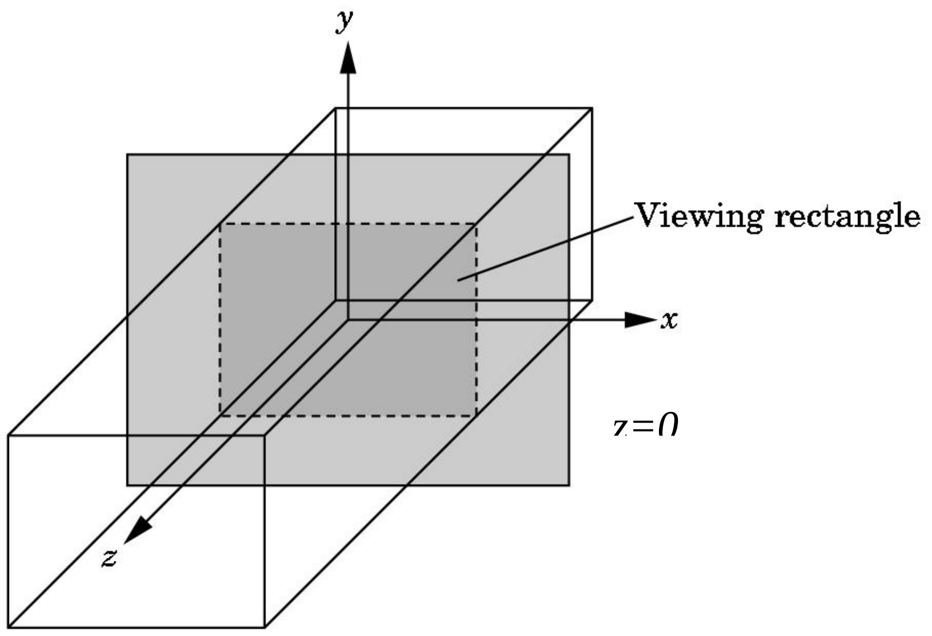
WebGL Camera

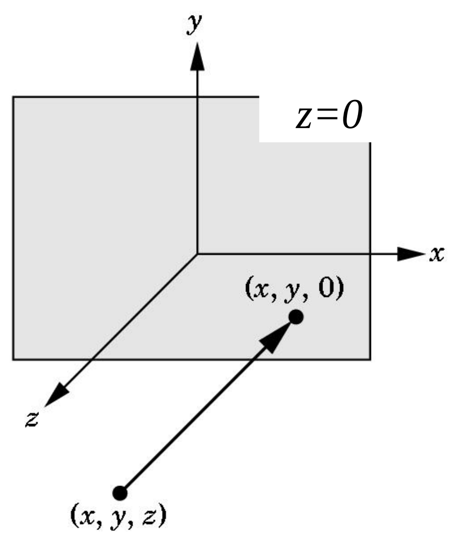
- WebGL places a camera at the origin in object space pointing in the negative z direction
- The default viewing volume is a box centered at the origin with sides of length 2



Orthographic Viewing

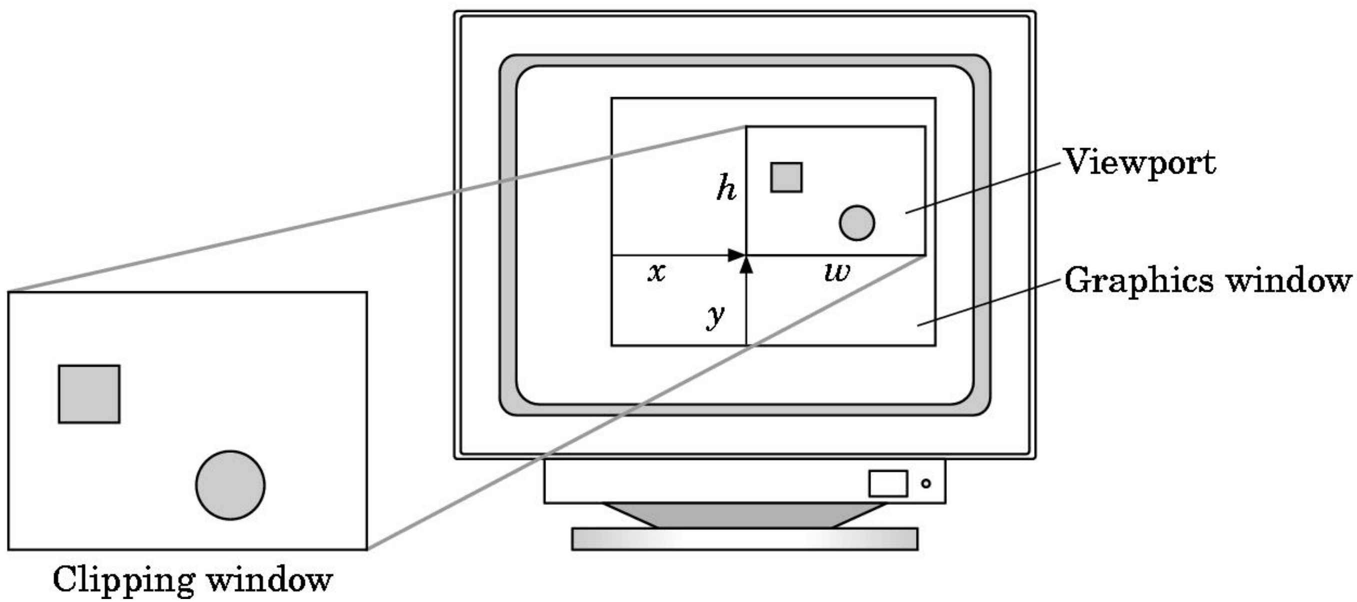
In the default orthographic view, points are projected forward along the z axis onto the plane $z=0$





Viewports

- Do not have use the entire window for the image: **`gl.viewport(x,y,w,h)`**
- Values in pixels (window coordinates)



Transformations and Viewing

- In WebGL, we usually carry out projection using a projection matrix (transformation) before rasterization
- Transformation functions are also used for changes in coordinate systems
- Pre 3.1 OpenGL had a set of transformation functions which have been deprecated
- Three choices in WebGL
  - Application code
  - GLSL functions
  - MV.js

First Assignment: Tessellation and Twist

- Consider rotating a 2D point about the origin

$$x' = x\cos\theta - y\sin\theta$$

$$y' = x\sin\theta + y\cos\theta$$

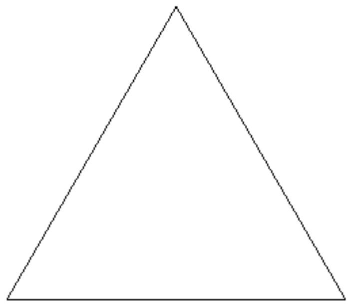
- Now let amount of rotation depend on distance from origin giving us **twist**

$$x' = x\cos(d\theta) - y\sin(d\theta)$$

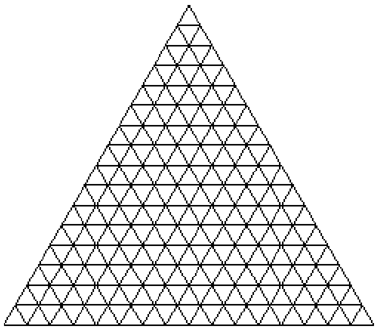
$$y' = x\sin(d\theta) + y\cos(d\theta)$$

$$d \propto \sqrt{x^2 + y^2}$$

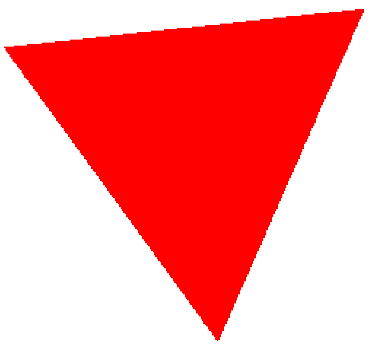
Example



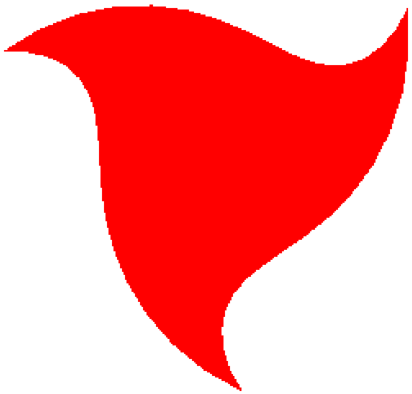
triangle



tessellated triangle



twist without tessellation



twist after tessellation