

# GRASS GIS loves lidar

## FOSS4G NA 2016

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available at

[wenzeslaus.github.io/grass-lidar-talks](https://wenzeslaus.github.io/grass-lidar-talks)

# GRASS GIS

- ▶ all in one
  - ▶ hydrology modeling, image segmentation, point clustering, ...
- ▶ from small laptops to supercomputers
  - ▶ Raspberry Pi, Windows, Mac, GNU/Linux, GNU/Hurd, FreeBSD, IBM AIX
- ▶ learn now, use forever
  - ▶ over 30 years of development and interface refinement
- ▶ probably used more than you think
  - ▶ similarly to C/C++ is often not mentioned but is somewhere in there



**GRASS** GIS

latest release 7.0.4

Sunday, May 1, 2016



```
Welcome to GRASS GIS 7.1.svn (r68305M)
```

```
GRASS GIS homepage:
```

```
http://grass.osgeo.org
```

```
This version running through:
```

```
Bash Shell (/bin/bash)
```

```
Help is available with the command:
```

```
g.manual -i
```

```
See the licence terms with:
```

```
g.version -c
```

```
Start the GUI with:
```

```
g.gui wxpython
```

```
When ready to quit enter:
```

```
exit
```

```
To run a command as administrator (user "root"), use "sudo <command>".
```

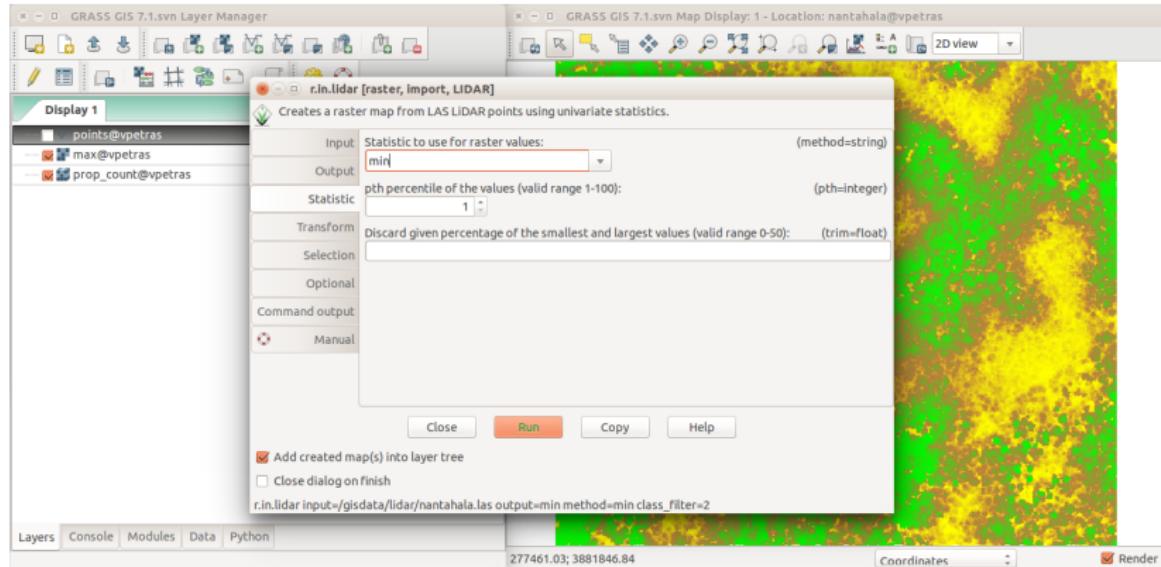
```
See "man sudo_root" for details.
```

```
GRASS 7.1.svn (nantahala):~/dev/grass/gcc_trunk > g.region vector=points
```

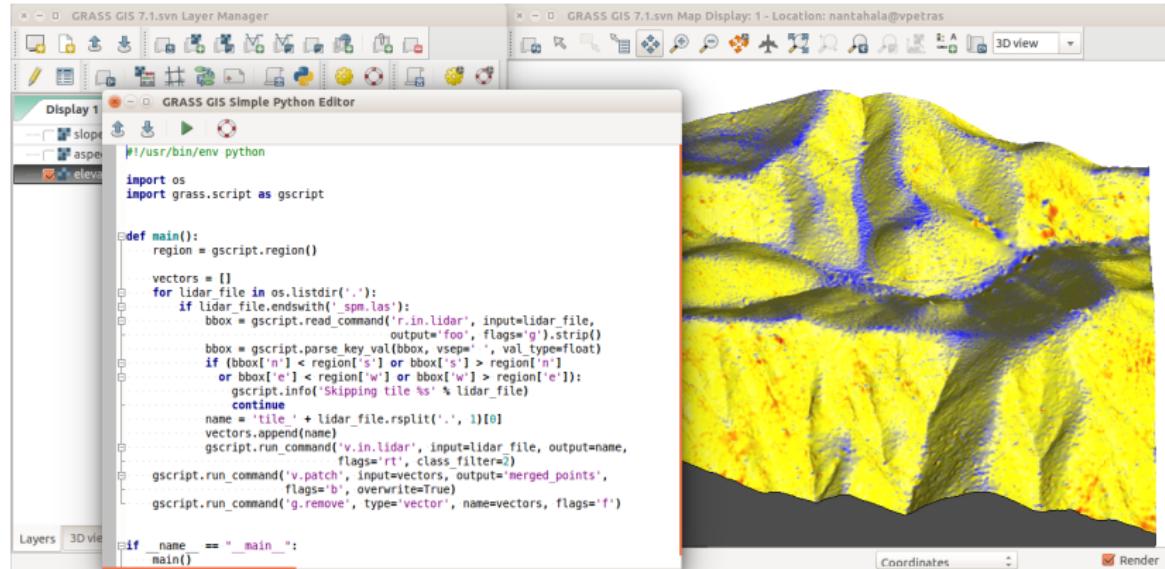
```
GRASS 7.1.svn (nantahala):~/dev/grass/gcc_trunk > g.region res=5
```

```
GRASS 7.1.svn (nantahala):~/dev/grass/gcc_trunk > r.in.lidar input=/gisdata/lidar/points.las output=mean
```

# GUI



# Python



```
#!/usr/bin/env python

import os
import grass.script as gscript

def main():
    region = gscript.region()

    vectors = []
    for lidar_file in os.listdir('.'):
        if lidar_file.endswith('_smpl.las'):
            bbox = gscript.read_command('r.in.lidar', input=lidar_file,
                                         output='foo', flags='g').strip()
            bbox = gscript.parse_key_val(bbox, vsep=' ', val_type=float)
            if (bbox['n'] < region['s'] or bbox['s'] > region['n']
                or bbox['e'] < region['w'] or bbox['w'] > region['e']):
                gscript.info("Skipping tile %s" % lidar_file)
                continue
            name = 'tile' + lidar_file.rsplit('.', 1)[0]
            vectors.append(name)
            gscript.run_command('v.in.lidar', input=lidar_file, output=name,
                                flags='rt', class_filter=2)
    gscript.run_command('v.patch', input=vectors, output='merged_points',
                        flags='b', overwrite=True)
    gscript.run_command('g.remove', type='vector', name=vectors, flags='f')

if __name__ == "__main__":
    main()
```

## Python versus CLI

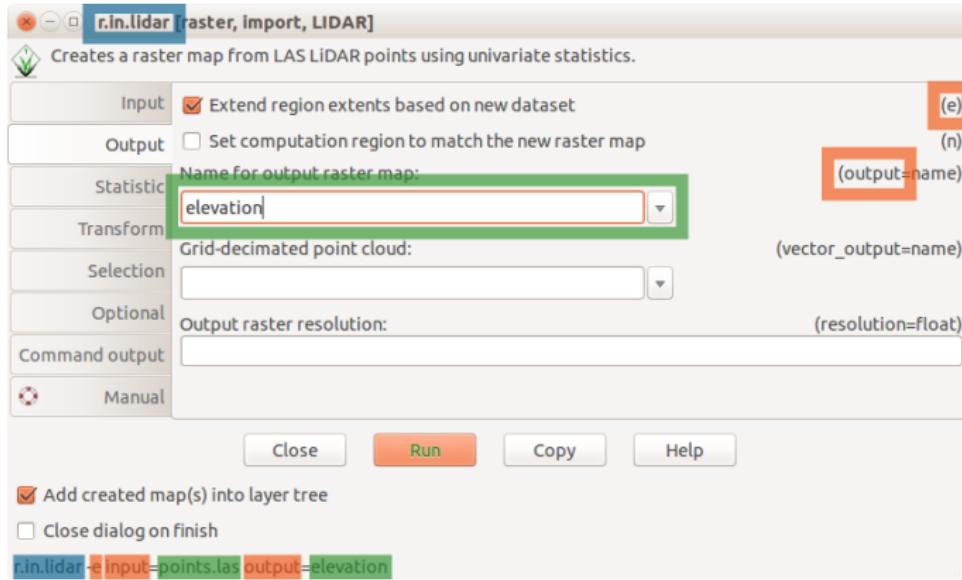
Documentation, Command Line (Shell, Bash, cmd.exe):

```
r.in.lidar input=points.las \
    output=elevation -e
```

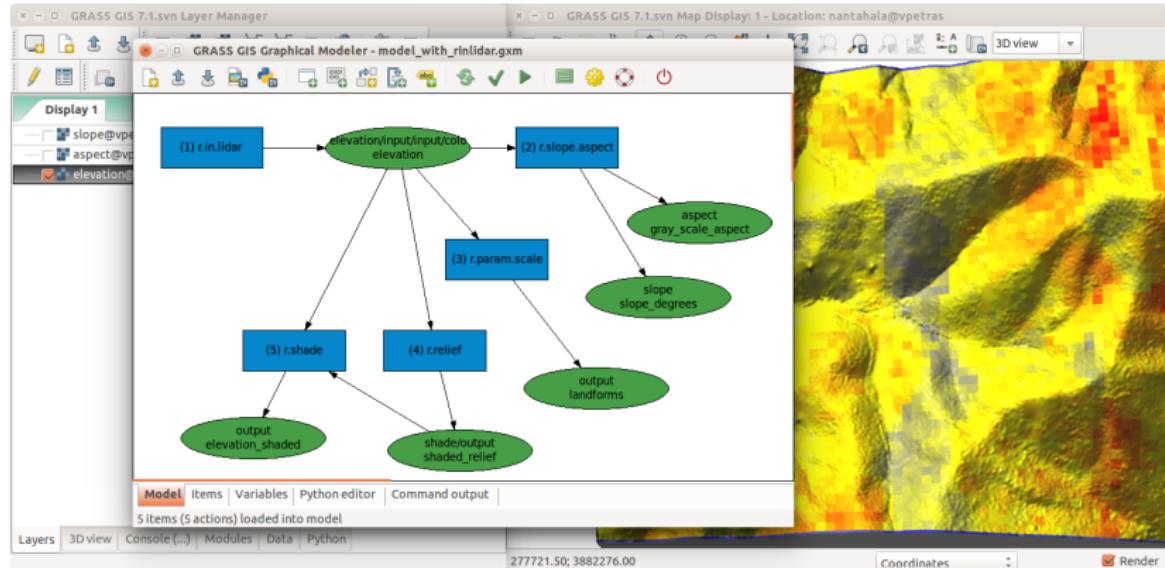
Python:

```
from grass.script import run_command
run_command('r.in.lidar',
            input="points.las",
            output="elevation",
            flags='e')
```

# Module GUI



# Graphical Modeler



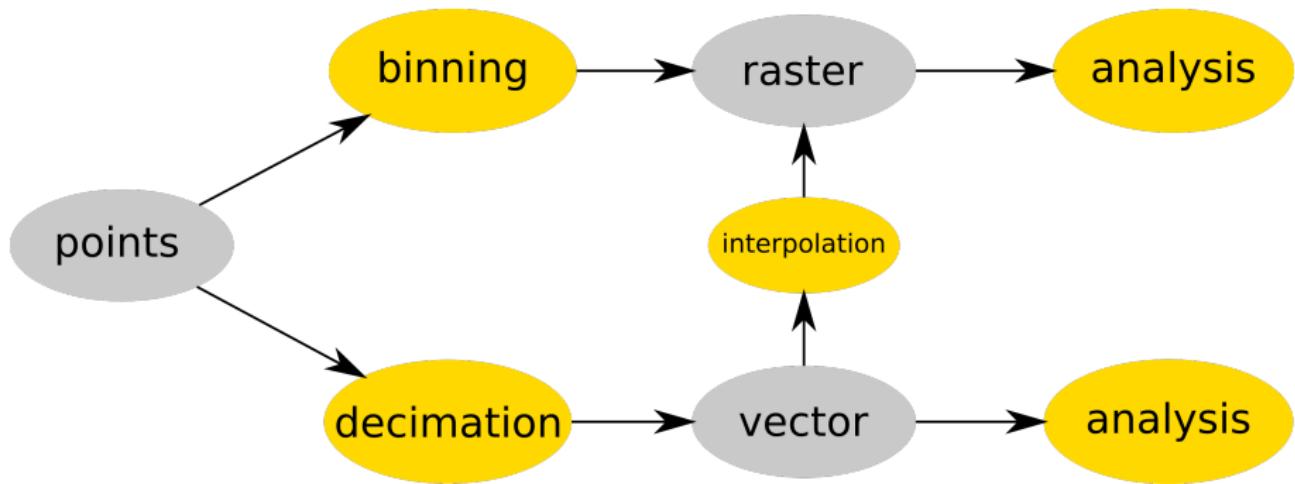
# Points

- ▶ collected by lidar
- ▶ generated by Structure from Motion (SfM) from UAV imagery



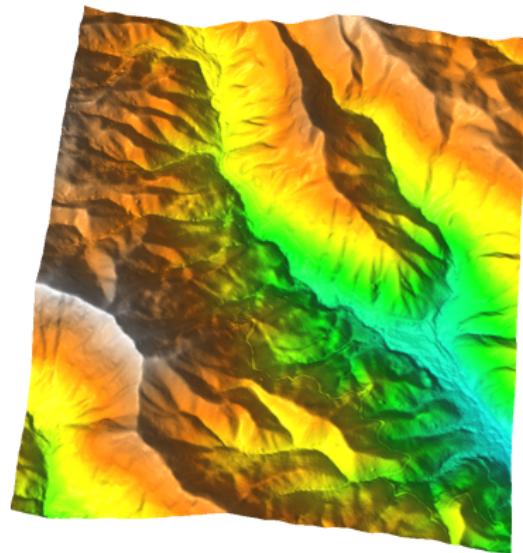
surface interpolated from points and visualized in GRASS GIS

# Workflow overview



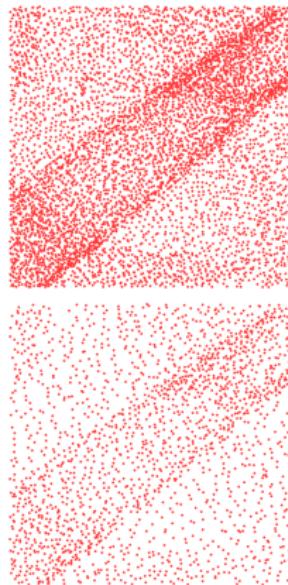
# Surface interpolation

- ▶ *v.surf.idw*
  - ▶ Inverse Distance squared Weighting
- ▶ *v.surf.bspline*
  - ▶ Bicubic or bilinear Spline interpolation with Tykhonov regularization
- ▶ *v.surf.rst*
  - ▶ Regularized Spline with Tension
  - ▶ *v.surf.rst.mp* (experimental)
    - ▶ 2 millions of points in 11 minutes



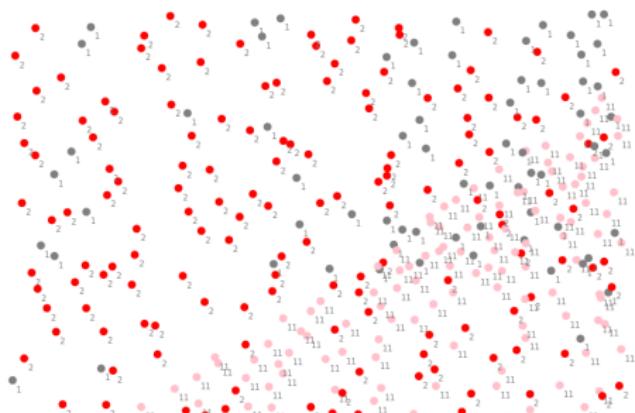
# Import and decimation

- ▶ *v.in.lidar*
  - ▶ libLAS
  - ▶ LAS/LAZ to GRASS GIS native vector
  - ▶ data stored in GRASS GIS database
- ▶ decimation  $\approx$  thinning  $\approx$  sampling
  - ▶ count-based decimation (skips points)
  - ▶ grid-based experimental, others needed?
  - ▶ fast count-based as good as more advanced decimations



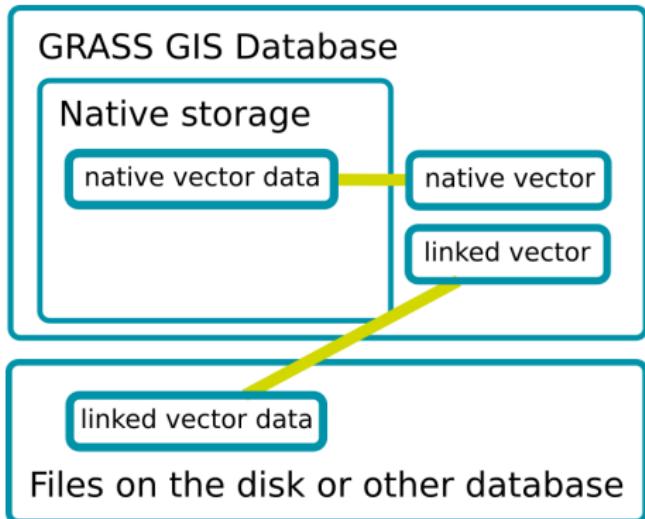
# GRASS vector model and format

- ▶ topology and index
  - ▶ can be disabled (`-b` flag)
- ▶ attributes in a database
  - ▶ SQLite, PostgreSQL, ...
  - ▶ can be disabled (`-t` flag)
- ▶ each feature can have any number of categories/classes
  - ▶ without attribute table



# Linked external data

- ▶ *r.external*
  - ▶ raster data (GDAL)
  - ▶ *r.external.out* for newly created data
- ▶ *v.external*
  - ▶ vector data
    - ▶ GDAL/OGR
    - ▶ PostGIS including topology
  - ▶ *v.external.out* for newly created data
  - ▶ alternative: @OGR  
`v.info map=.../directory@OGR  
layer=file`
- ▶ missing: libLAS/PDAL backend
  - ▶ intermediate C API needed in PDAL or GRASS GIS



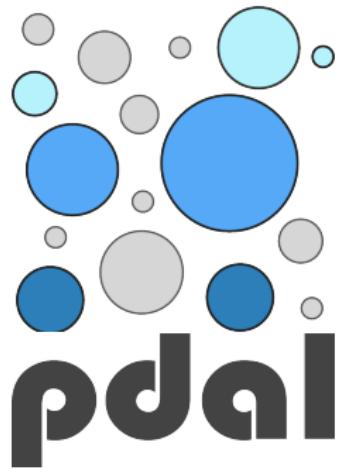
# Current state of integration with PDAL

## PDAL

- ▶ Point Data Abstraction Library
- ▶ format conversions
- ▶ processing, filtering

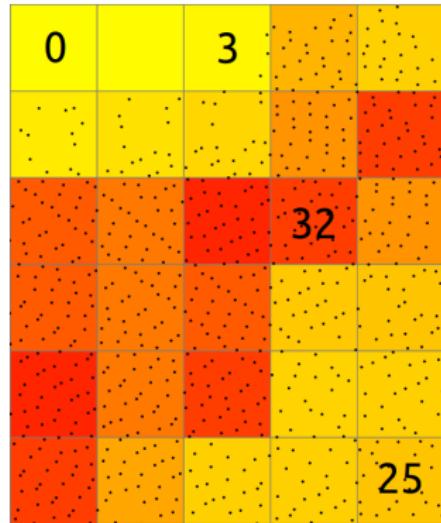
## Experimental integration

- ▶ *v.in.pdal*
  - ▶ next: *r.in.pdal*, *r3.in.pdal*
- ▶ runs PDAL filters during import
  - ▶ filters are followed by GRASS processing



# Binning points to raster

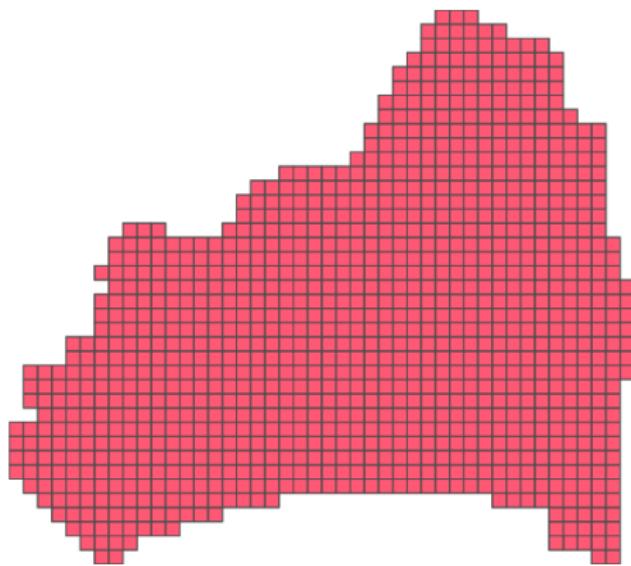
- ▶ *r.in.lidar*
- ▶ import and analysis
- ▶ statistics of point counts,  
height and intensity
  - ▶ n, min, max, sum
  - ▶ mean, range,  
skewness, ...



# Read multiple tiles as one

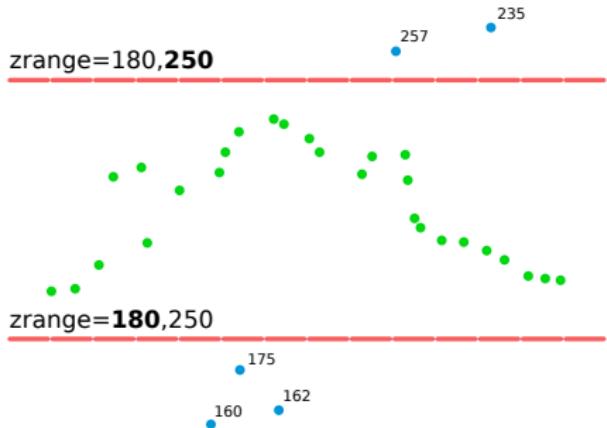
- ▶ `r.in.lidar`, option `file`
  - ▶ read multiple tiles as one
  - ▶ no merging

0.5 billion points in 90 files in minutes



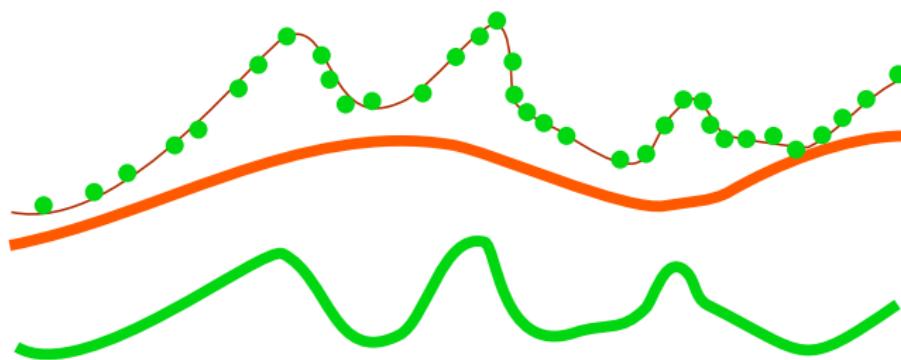
# Filtering points

- ▶ filter points by
  - ▶ range of Z
  - ▶ return
  - ▶ class
  - ▶ ...
- ▶ at the time of binning with  
*r.in.lidar*
  - ▶ minimal additional cost



# Height above a surface

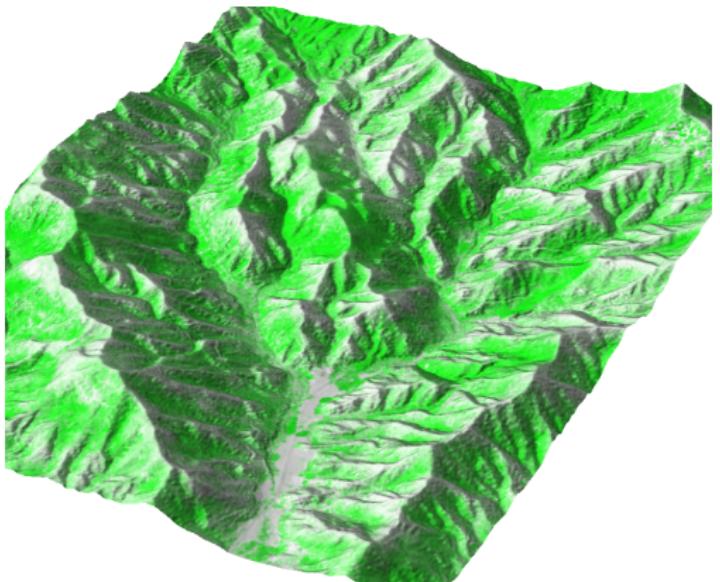
- ▶ `r.in.lidar`, option `base_raster`
- ▶ given surface + points cloud → height of features



- ▶ low additional memory requirements

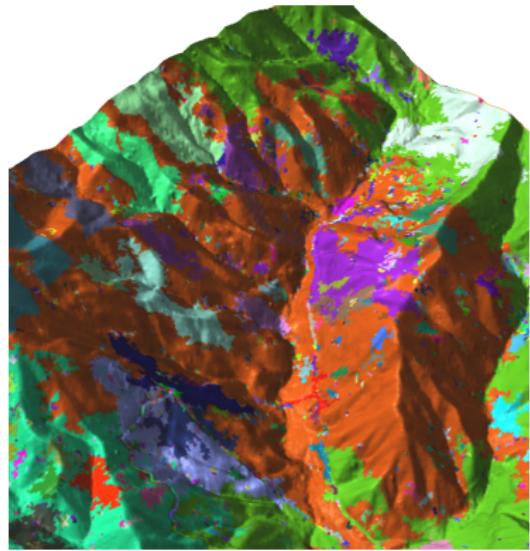
# Height above a surface

- ▶ different resolutions
  - ▶ 1m ground surface
  - ▶ 30m height above ground
- ▶ different statistics
- ▶ different combinations
  - ▶ surface can be e.g. top of the canopy
  - ▶ combine with zrange
  - ▶ combine with intensity



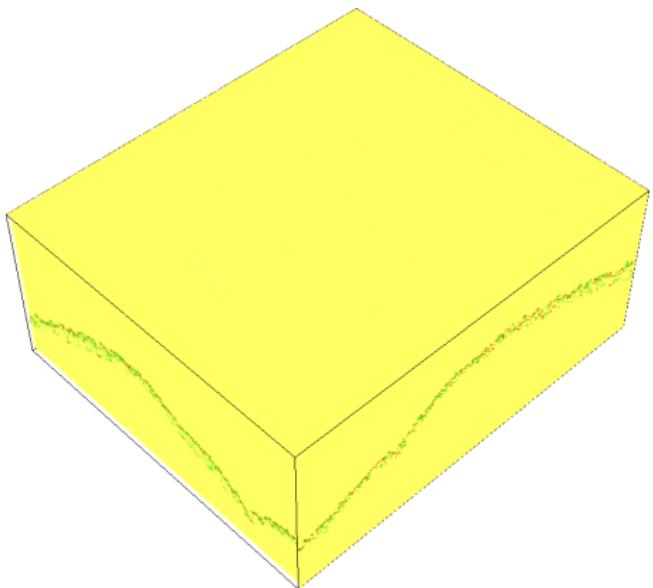
# Rastersize early

- ▶ many algorithms are raster-based
  - ▶ a lot of data with continuous nature
  - ▶ natural spatial index
- ▶ example:
  1. count of ground points
  2. count of non-ground points
  3. used as image bands
  4. segmentation using *i.segment*



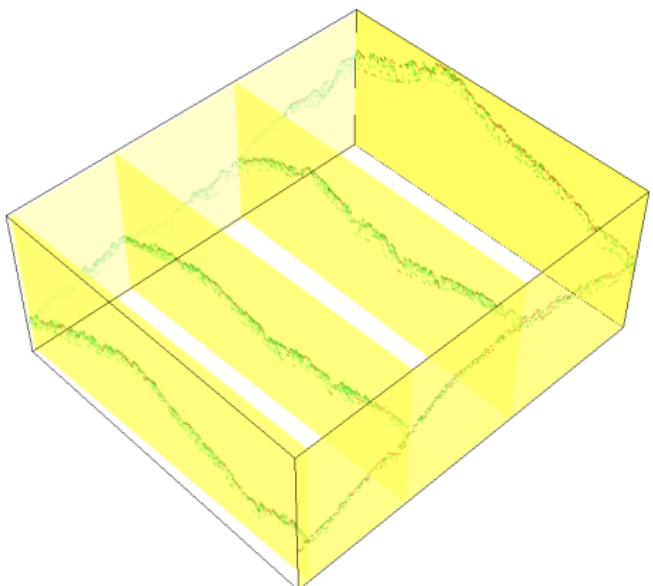
# 3D raster

- ▶ stacked 2D rasters
- ▶ challenging to visualize
- ▶ same principles as in 2D
  - ▶ e.g. 3D raster map algebra



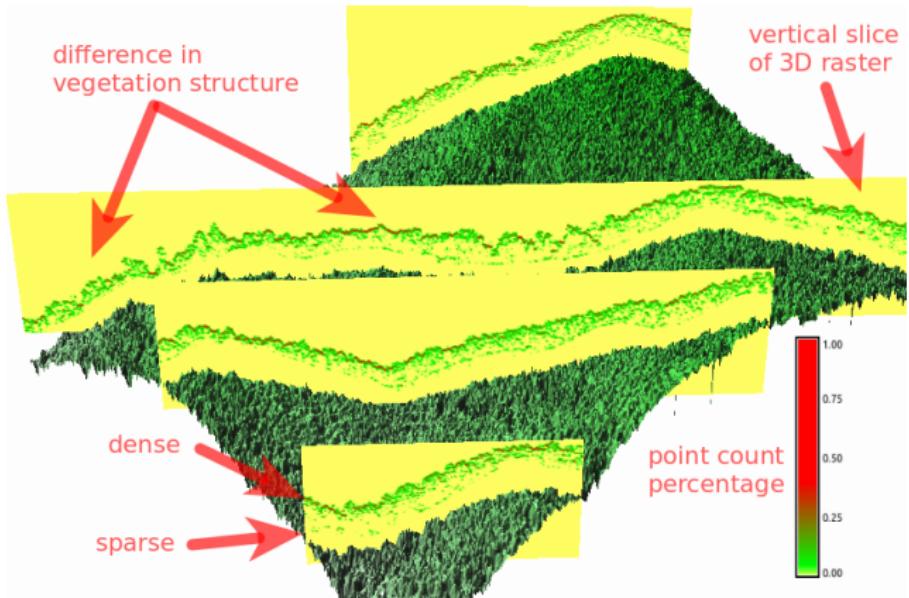
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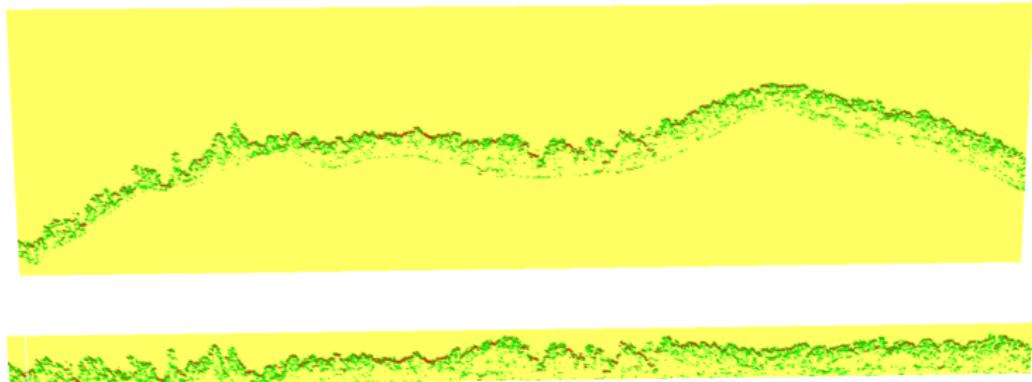


# Binning points to 3D raster

- ▶ *r3.in.lidar*
- ▶ proportional count
  - ▶ count per 3D cell relative to the count per vertical column
- ▶ intensity can be used instead of count



## Point heights reduced to surface

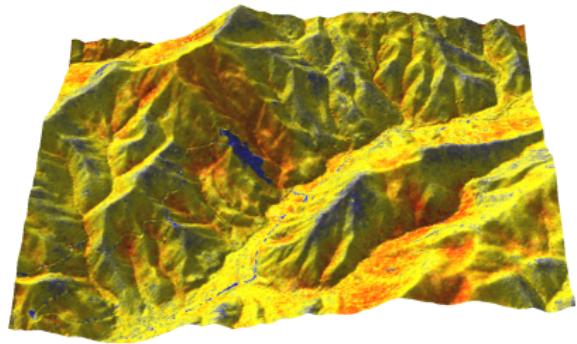


- ▶ *r3.in.lidar*, option *base\_raster*
- ▶ height reduced by raster values

# Trade-offs

## Raster processing

- ▶ high memory (RAM) usage
  - fast
- ▶ low memory usage (high I/O) – slow



visualization: range from binning on interpolated surface

## Vector processing

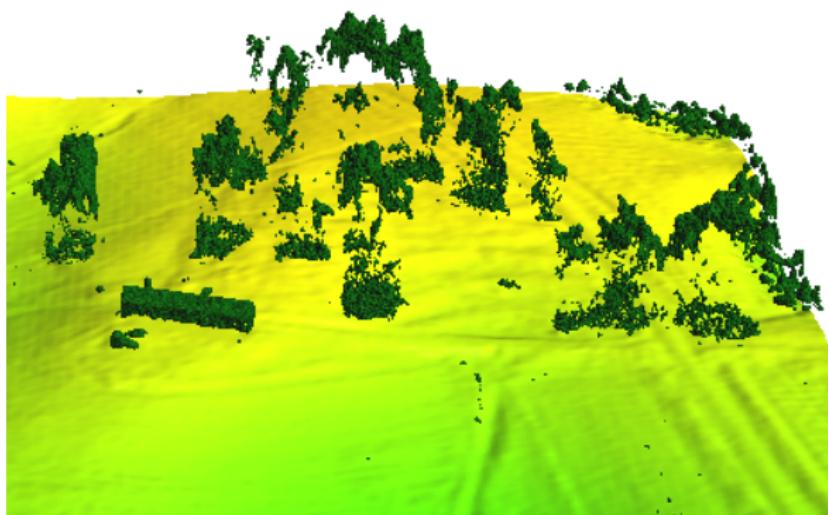
- ▶ slower than raster
  - ▶ e.g., interpolation much slowed than binning
- ▶ hard to make general statements

example: binning with base elevation subtraction:  
 $\approx 1000$  files,  $> 9$  billion points

$\approx 3$  hours,  $\approx 10$  GB of memory (in-memory mode)

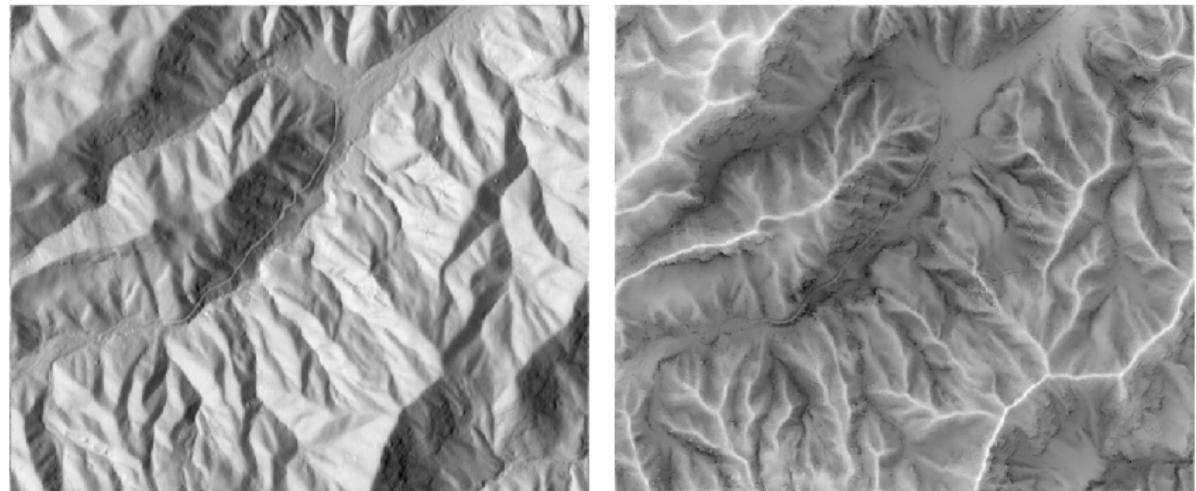
# Ground detection

- ▶ *v.lidar.edgedetection*,  
*v.lidar.growing*,  
*v.lidar.correction*
  - ▶ by Brovelli, Cannata, Antolin & Moreno
- ▶ *v.lidar.mcc*
  - ▶ multiscale curvature based classification algorithm
  - ▶ by Blumentrath, according to Evans & Hudak
- ▶ PDAL filters.ground
  - ▶ now in *v.in.pdal*
  - ▶ progressive morphological filter by Zhang
  - ▶ provided by PCL



# Sky-view factor

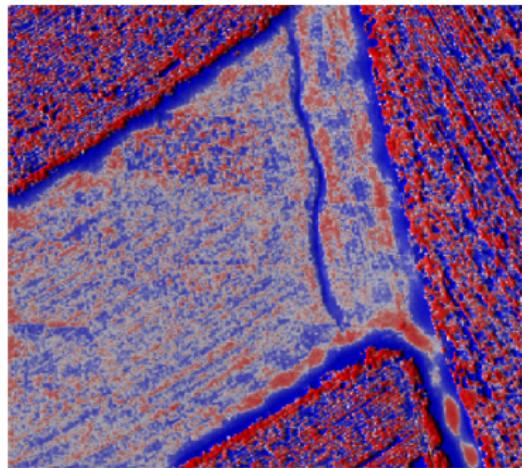
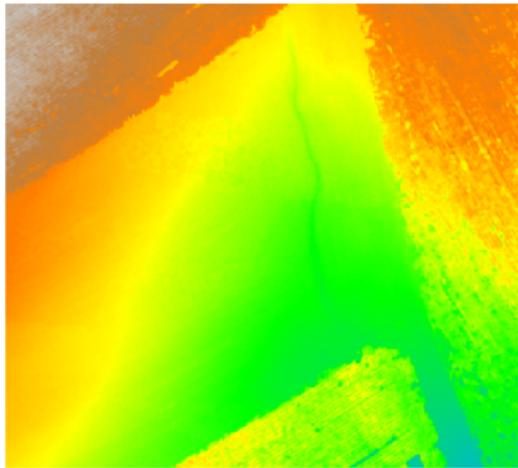
- ▶ *r.skyview* (percentage of visible sky)



comparison of shaded relief and sky-view factor

# Local relief model (LRM)

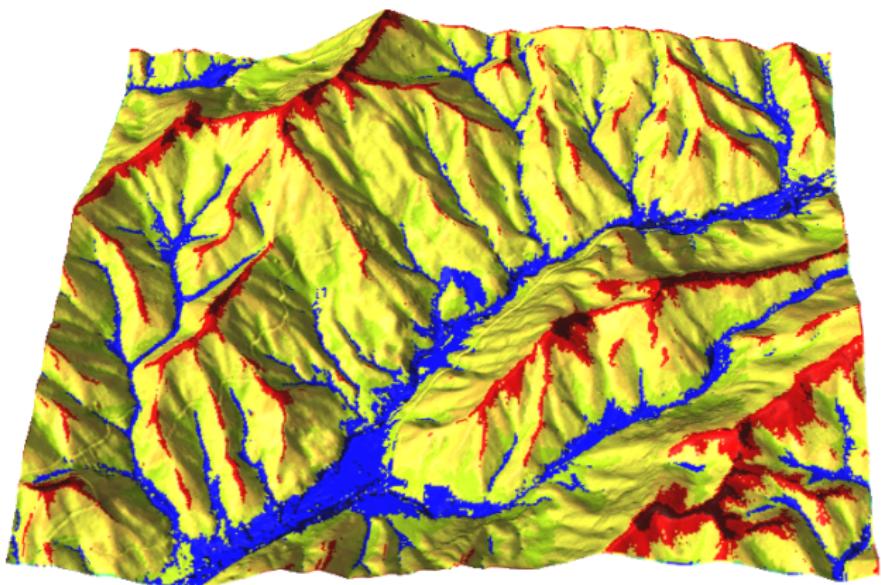
- ▶ `r.local.relief` (micro-topography, features other than trend)



30-60cm wide, 30cm deep, 60m long gully (resolution 30cm)

# Landforms

- ▶ *r.geomorphon*
  - ▶ new landform classification approach
  - ▶ by Jasiewicz & Stepinski

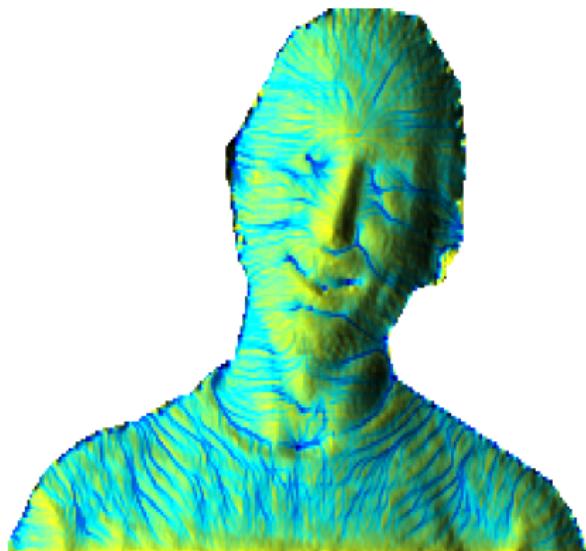


# libfreenect2 + PCL + GRASS GIS = *r.in.kinect*

## *r.in.kinect*

- ▶ scans using Kinect
- ▶ OpenKinect libfreenect2
- ▶ Point Cloud Library (PCL)
- ▶ GRASS GIS libraries
  - ▶ C API
  - ▶ raster processing
  - ▶ regularized spline with tension interpolation

used in  
Tangible Landscape



## Summary

- ▶ rasterize early
- ▶ GRASS modules can work with large data
  - ▶ sometimes a special flag is needed
  - ▶ if not, report a bug
- ▶ 3D rasters, PDAL integration



Get GRASS GIS 7.1 development version at  
[grass.osgeo.org/download](http://grass.osgeo.org/download)

Slides and paper available at  
[wenzeslaus.github.io/grass-lidar-talks](http://wenzeslaus.github.io/grass-lidar-talks)

GRASS user mailing list  
[lists.osgeo.org/listinfo/grass-user](http://lists.osgeo.org/listinfo/grass-user)



# Acknowledgements

## Software

Presented functionality is work done by Vaclav Petras, Markus Metz, and the GRASS development team.

Thanks to users for feedback and testing, especially to Doug Newcomb, Helena Mitasova, Markus Neteler, Laura Belica, and William Hargrove.



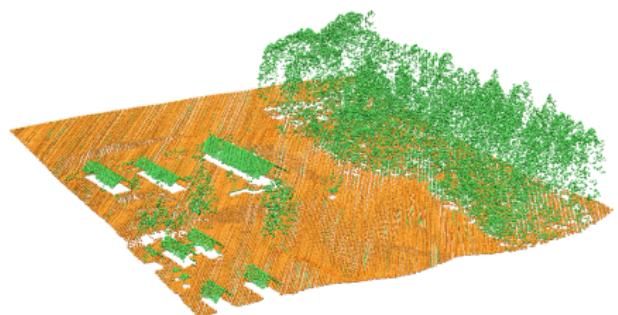
# Acknowledgements

## Datasets

Lidar and UAV Structure from Motion (SfM) data for GIS595/MEA792: UAV/lidar Data Analytics course

Nantahala NF, NC: Forest Leaf Structure, Terrain and Hydrophysiology. Obtained from OpenTopography.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.5069/G9HT2M76>



# Acknowledgements

## Presentation software

Slides were created in L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X using the BEAMER *class*.