Scene graph

- Data structure for intuitive construction of 3D scenes
- So far, our GLFW-based projects store a linear list of objects
- This approach does not scale to large numbers of objects in complex, dynamic scenes
Data structure

• Requirements
  – Collection of separable geometry models
  – Organized in groups
  – Related via hierarchical transformations
• Use a tree structure
• Nodes have associated local coordinates
• Different types of nodes
  – Geometry
  – Transformations
  – Lights
  – Many more
Class hierarchy

• Many designs possible
• Design driven by intended application
  – Games
    • Optimized for speed
  – Large-scale visualization
    • Optimized for memory requirements
  – Modeling system
    • Optimized for editing flexibility
Data structures with transforms

• Representing a drawing ("scene")
• List of objects
• Transform for each object
  – Can use minimal primitives: ellipse is transformed circle
  – Transform applies to points of object

Based on slides courtesy of Steve Marschner
Example

• Can represent drawing with flat list
  – But editing operations require updating many transforms
Groups of objects

• Treat a set of objects as one
• Introduce new object type: group
  – Contains list of references to member objects
• This makes the model into a tree
  – Interior nodes = groups
  – Leaf nodes = objects
  – Edges = membership of object in group
Example

• Add group as a new object type
  – Lets the data structure reflect the drawing structure
  – Enables high-level editing by changing just one node
The scene graph (tree)

• A name given to various kinds of graph structures (nodes connected together) used to represent scenes

• Simplest form: tree
  – Just saw this
  – Every node has one parent
  – Leaf nodes are identified with objects in the scene
Concatenation and hierarchy

• Transforms associated with nodes or edges
• Each transform applies to all geometry below it
  – Want group transform to transform each member
  – Members already transformed—concatenate
• Frame transform for object is product of all matrices along path from root
  – Each object’s transform describes relationship between its local coordinates and its group’s coordinates
  – Frame-to-world transform is the result of repeatedly changing coordinates from group to containing group
Hierarchical scene

Hierarchical Scene Composition

Hierarchical Scene Descriptions

A fully instantiated, hierarchical Scene Tree

Scene Graph (DAG) containing Objects and Groups

with Transformations on all Instances: 1 (Inclusions, invocations)

Viewing transformation (for consistency)
Variants of the scene graph

• Parenting
  – Allow any object to have child objects
  – Every object is effectively also a group
  – Common in 3D modeling packages

• Instancing
  – Allow objects to belong to multiple parents/groups
  – Creates multiple copies of geometry
Instances

• Simple idea: allow an object to be a member of more than one group at once
  – Transform different in each case
  – Leads to linked copies
  – Single editing operation changes all instances
Example

- Allow multiple references to nodes
  - Reflects more of drawing structure
  - Allows editing of repeated parts in one operation
The scene graph (with instances)

• With instances, there is no more tree
  – An object that is instanced multiple times has more than one parent

• Transform tree becomes a directed acyclic graph (DAG)
  – Group is not allowed to contain itself, even indirectly

• Transforms still accumulate along path from root
  – Now paths from root to leaves are identified with scene objects
Implementing a hierarchy

• Define shapes and groups as derived from single class

abstract class Shape {
    void draw();
}

class Square extends Shape {
    void draw() {
        // draw unit square
    }
}

class Circle extends Shape {
    void draw() {
        // draw unit circle
    }
}
Implementing traversal

• Pass a transform down the hierarchy
  — Before drawing, concatenate

abstract class Shape {
    void draw(Transform t_c);
}

class Square extends Shape {
    void draw(Transform t_c) {
        // draw t_c * unit square
    }
}

class Circle extends Shape {
    void draw(Transform t_c) {
        // draw t_c * unit circle
    }
}

class Group extends Shape {
    Transform t;
    ShapeList members;
    void draw(Transform t_c) {
        for (m in members) {
            m.draw(t_c * t);
        }
    }
}
Basic scene graph operations

• Editing a transformation
  – Good to present usable user interface
• Getting transform of object in world frame
  – Traverse path from root to leaf
• Grouping and ungrouping
  – Can do these operations without moving anything
    – Group: insert identity node
    – Ungroup: remove node, push transform to children
• Reparenting
  – Move node from one parent to another
  – Can do without altering position
Adding more than geometry

• Objects have properties besides shape
  – Color, shading parameters
  – Approximation parameters (e.g., precision of subdividing curved surfaces into triangles)
  – Behavior in response to user input
  – Etc.

• Setting properties for entire groups is useful
  – Paint entire window green

• Many systems include some kind of property nodes
  – In traversal they are read as, e.g., “set current color”
Scene graph variations

• Where transforms go
  – In every node
  – On edges
  – In group nodes only
  – In special Transform nodes

• Tree vs. directed acyclic graph (DAG)

• Nodes for cameras and lights?
Example class hierarchy

Based on slides courtesy of Jurgen Schulze
Class hierarchy

• Node
  – Common base class for all node types
  – Stores node name, pointer to parent, bounding box

• Geometry
  – Sets the modelview matrix to the current C matrix
  – Has a class method which draws its associated geometry

• Transform
  – Stores list of children
  – Stores 4x4 matrix for affine transformation
Class hierarchy

• Sphere
  – Derived from Geometry node
  – Pre-defined geometry with parameters, e.g., for tessellation level (number of triangles), solid/wireframe, etc.

• Billboard
  – Special geometry node to display an image always facing the viewer
Class hierarchy

- **3DModel**
  - Takes file name to load 3D model file
- **Trackball**
  - Creates the matrix transformation based on a virtual trackball controlled with the mouse
Scene graph for solar system
Building the solar system

// create sun:
world = new Transform();
world.addChild(new Model(“Sun.obj”));

// create planets:
earth2world = new Transform(…);
mars2world = new Transform(…);
earth2world.addChild(new Model(“Earth.obj”));
mars2world.addChild(new Model(“Mars.obj”));
world.addChild(earth2world);
world.addChild(mars2world);

// create moons:
moon2earth = new Transform(…);
phobos2mars = new Transform(…);
deimos2mars = new Transform(…);
moon2earth.addChild(new Model(“Moon.obj”));
phobos2mars.addChild(new Model(“Phobos.obj”));
deimos2mars.addChild(new Model(“Deimos.obj”));
earth2world.addChild(moon2earth);
mars2world.addChild(phobos2mars);
mars2world.addChild(deimos2mars);
Transformation calculations

• moon2world = moon2earth * earth2world;
• phobos2world = phobos2mars * mars2world;
• deimos2world = deimos2mars * mars2world;
Scene Rendering

• Recursive draw calls

```cpp
Transform::draw(Matrix4 M)
{
    M_new = M * MT;   // MT is a class member
    for all children
        draw(M_new);
}

Geometry::draw(Matrix4 M)
{
    setModelMatrix(M);
    render(myObject);
}
```

Initiate rendering with
world->draw(IDENTITY);
Modifying the scene

• Change tree structure
  – Add, delete, rearrange nodes
• Change node parameters
  – Transformation matrices
  – Shape of geometry data
  – Materials
• Create new node subclasses
  – Animation, triggered by timer events
  – Dynamic “helicopter-mounted” camera
  – Light source
• Create application dependent nodes
  – Video node
  – Web browser node
  – Video conferencing node
  – Terrain rendering node
Drawing a scene graph

• Draw scene with pre-and-post-order traversal
  – Apply node, draw children, undo node if applicable
• Nodes can carry out any function
  – Geometry, transforms, groups, color, etc.
• Requires stack to “undo” post children
  – Transform stacks in OpenGL
• Caching and instancing possible
• Remember: instances make it a directed acyclic graph (DAG), not strictly a tree
Benefits of a scene graph

• Can speed up rendering by efficiently using low-level API
  – Avoid state changes in rendering pipeline
  – Render objects with similar properties in batches (geometry, shaders, materials)

• Change parameter once to affect all instances of an object

• Abstraction from low level graphics API
  – Easier to write code
  – Code is more compact

• Can display complex objects with simple APIs
  – Example: osgEarth class provides scene graph node which renders a Google Earth-style planet surface with progressive refinement and data streaming from server
# Graphics system architecture

- **Interactive Applications**
  - Video games, scientific visualization, virtual reality

- **Rendering Engine, Scene Graph API**
  - Implement functionality commonly required in applications
  - Back-ends for different low-level APIs
  - No broadly accepted standards
  - Examples: OpenSceneGraph, SceniX, Torque, Ogre

- **Low-level graphics API**
  - Interface to graphics hardware
  - Highly standardized: OpenGL, Direct3D
Scene graph APIs

- **OpenSceneGraph** ([www.openscenegraph.org](http://www.openscenegraph.org))
  - For scientific visualization, virtual reality, GIS (geographic information systems)
- **NVIDIA SceniX**
  - Optimized for shader support
  - Support for interactive ray tracing
- **Torque 3D**
  - Open source game engine
  - For Windows and browser-based games
- **Ogre3D**
  - Open source rendering engine
  - For Windows, Linux, OSX, Android, iOS, Javascript
  - [http://www.ogre3d.org/](http://www.ogre3d.org/)
Commonly offered functionality

• Resource management
  – Content I/O (geometry, textures, materials, animation sequences)
  – Memory management

• High-level scene representation
  – Graph data structure

• Rendering
  – Optimized for efficiency (e.g., minimize OpenGL state changes)