A million pixels, a million polygons: which is heavier?
François X. Sillion

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A million pixels, a million polygons. 
Which is heavier?

François X. Sillion

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*A joint research project of CNRS, INRIA, INPG and UJF
Why this question?

- Evolution of processing power and architectures
- New applications, demands and markets
  - Giant databases (digital mock up)
  - Virtual reality, games...
- Image-based graphics:
  - Current state and trends
  - Potentialities
A million polygons
Who needs a million polygons?

- Assemblies of CAD models
- Integrated design/manufacturing
- Digital mock-ups
A million pixels
Rendering in Computer Graphics

✓ Models for 3D geometry, light reflection
✓ Global illumination simulation
✓ Real-time rendering

All of these requirements present difficult challenges!
Subtle illumination effects

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Real-time rendering for dynamic scenes

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Image-based rendering (IBR)

- Avoid expensive/difficult 3D model
- Start from a set of images
- Manipulate pixels to create new image
- With real images, elaborate lighting effects are “free”
- QuicktimeVR [Chen95], [Laveau], [McMillan95,97],...
What's an image?

✓ array of RGB (α) samples

✓ add depth sample

✓ add multiple depths, normals...

(Layered Depth Image, LDI)
Tour into the picture [Horry 97]

- Use a single image
- Manually define simple perspective
- Manually create layers with selected portions of the image

See http://www-syntim.inria.fr/~horry/images/s97slide.html
Layered depth images [Gortler97]


✓ Gather multiple depth samples for each pixel

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Layered depth images

✓ Reproject all samples in new image
  – no need for depth comparisons
  – splatting technique
Rendering from a million polygons?

- Transform 1-3M vertices: 20 M flop
- Lighting: 10 M flop
- Texturing: 15 M flop
- Memory bandwidth: 100 Mb
- Raster engine, z-buffering: ?

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Rendering from a million pixels?

- Transform 1M points (coherence) 6 M flop
- No lighting
- No z-buffering
- Memory bandwith (coherent access) 8 Mb

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Rendering performance considerations

✓ 3D rendering reaches the consumer market
  – thousands of lit, textured polygons / second.
  – specialized boards require careful design for efficient integration.

✓ Image processing subsystems
  – video (analog/digital),
  – texture (games),
  – multimedia extensions
Generating and obtaining IBR models

- From synthetic images
  - Ray tracing
  - Range images, LDIs, Lumigraphs

- From real images
  - use panoramic views, vision techniques
  - feature matching (difficult)
  - Lumigraphs (no depth)
Link with vision

✓ Image based modeling (IBM...)
✓ Use images + parameters
  – avoid WYSIAYG
  – object class information
  – interactive modeling (facade)
IBR = sampling + reconstruction

✓ Operate without geometry
✓ More complete representations  
  (higher dimensionality)
✓ Simplified representations  
  (adding simplified 3D model)
Light field - Lumigraph

4D Light Field

Levoy, Hanrahan 96
Gortler et al 96

See http://www-graphics.stanford.edu/projects/lightfield

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Light field - Lumigraph sampling

Slide used with permission (M. Levoy, Pat Hanrahan)
Impostors

✓ Create textured 3D model from images
  – simplified representation
  – rendered as 3D geometry

✓ Planar polygons [Maciel95, Schaufler96, Shade96]

✓ 3D meshes from range images
  [Pulli 97, Darsa 97, Sillion 97]
Textured 3D mesh from a range image

Slide used with permission (K. Pulli et al.)
Blending required to combine views

without blending
(z-buffer)

with blending

[Pulli 97]

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Images used with permission (K. Pulli et al.) See http://www.cs.washington.edu/homes/kapu
Principles of our approach: example
Local model (3D objects)
Distant model (3D objects)
Impostor (Textured 3D mesh)
Combined model (local+impostor)
Combined model (local+impostor)
Deforming impostors

- Talisman [Torborg 96]
  - Render sprites
  - Layered model
  - Affine transforms [Lengyel97]
- Impostor transition

Slide used with permission (J. Lengyel et al, Microsoft research.)
See http://research.microsoft.com/~jedl
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Applications for IBR

✓ Walkthrough / view synthesis
✓ Stereo synthesis
✓ Interpolation/extrapolation
  – Latency compensation
  – Frame rate equalization
  – Network transmission
  – Leverage expensive rendering

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Polygons</th>
<th>Pixels</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓ Continuous</td>
<td>✓ Discrete</td>
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<tr>
<td>✓ Modeling</td>
<td>✓ Capture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Animation</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Level of detail</td>
<td>✓ Filtering</td>
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Pixels

- Discrete, regular nature
  - easy to filter: adaptation to user perceptual limitations
- Work with real images
  - Easy to capture
  - Let nature do the modeling/lighting
  - Work from existing images
    (historical, legal, forensic applications...)
- WYSIAYG

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Polygons

- Complete 3D model
  - solid modeling
  - global illumination
  - path planning, assembly checking, collision detection

- Common denominator for many modeling systems

- Can be simplified but it's hard to keep the model consistent

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Extended notion of image-based models

- Use both images and 3D data
- Combine a simplified model with images
- Model can be extracted from images or other information
IBR and availability of 3D models

- Complete 3D model
  - IBR as graphics subsystem
- No 3D model
  - QTVR, plenoptic rendering
  - The model is the image(s)
- Range data available
  - Scanned data is huge: need to simplify
Problems with current algorithms

- Holes in reconstructed images
- Image deformation (impostors)
- Volume of data
- Sampling/filtering artifacts
Can we expect hardware advances?

- view interpolator
- soft z-buffering and blending
- multiple or view-dependent textures
- decompression
- memory bandwidth
Limitations of IBR

- Specularities
- Lighting/geometry/reflectance changes are hard
- Computer Vision issues: model building
- Images may not be available!
Marketability

- QTVR, panoramic images
- Image-based modeling
- Image-based rendering architectures
- Image caching, impostors
- Network applications (QoS)
- Light field
...and now?

- Simulation of global illumination
- Visibility calculations
- View-dependent texture mapping
  - disparity/depth
  - specularity/shading
  - re-lighting
- Compression of depth values

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Computer-augmented reality

input panorama

Drettakis 97

computed solution
Conclusions

- IBR offers useful advances
  - leverage cost of high-quality rendering
  - fast extension via specialized subsystem
- Vision issues limit applicability of “pure” IBR for real images
- Use combined 3D models and images
- Polygons are still useful!
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