Stereographics

Life Magazine

Stereovision is not new –
It's been in common use in the movies since the 1950s

And, even longer than that in stills

Binocular Vision

In everyday living, part of our perception of depth comes from the slight difference in how our two eyes see the world around us. This is known as binocular vision.

We care about this, and are discussing it, because stereo computer graphics can be a great help in de-cluttering a complex 3D scene. It can also enhance the feeling of being immersed in a movie.
The Cyclops Model

In the world of computer graphics, the two eye views can be reconstructed using standard projection mathematics. The simplest approach is the Cyclops Model. In this model, the left and right eye views are obtained by rotating the scene plus and minus what a Cyclops at the origin would see. Looking at everything from the top:

The left eye view is obtained by rotating the scene an angle $+\phi$ about the Y axis. The right eye view is obtained by rotating the scene an angle $-\phi$ about the Y axis. In practice, a good value of $\phi$ is 1-4˚.

Top view of viewing

The Vertical Parallax Problem

This seems too simple, and in fact, it is. This works OK if you are doing orthographic projections, but if you use perspective, you will achieve a nasty phenomenon called vertical parallax, as illustrated below:

The fact that the perspective shortening causes points A and B to have different vertical positions in the left and right eye views makes it very difficult for the eyes to converge the two images. For perspective projections, we need a better way.

The Vertical Parallax Problem

Why not just keep using orthographic projections? Mathematically this is fine, but in practice, the two depth cues, stereo and no-perspective, fight each other. This will bring on an optical illusion. A good example of this is a simple cube, drawn below using an orthographic projection:

Because of the use of stereographics, the binocular cues will say that the Near face is closer to the viewer than is the Far face. However, our visual experience says that the only way a far object can appear the same size as a near object is if it is, in fact, larger. Thus, your visual system will perceive the Far face as being larger than the Near face, when in fact they are the same size.

Diversion #1 – Specifying the Viewing Frustum

The OpenGL glFrustum call can be used in place of gluPerspective:

```
glFrustum( left, right, bottom, top, near, far );
```

This is meant to look a lot like the glOrtho() call.

In the glFrustum case, the values of left, right, bottom, and top are now the boundaries of the viewing volume on the face of the near clipping plane. near and far are the same as used in glOrtho.
Diversion #1 – Specifying the Viewing Frustum

`glFrustum(left, right, bottom, top, near, far);`

But, rather than having to specify the left, right, bottom, and top limits at the face of the near clipping plane (which is what `glFrustum` expects), let's setup a way to specify those limits at some convenient distance in front of us. (This is derived using similar triangles.)

```c
void FrustumZ(float left, float right, float bottom, float top, float znear, float zfar, float zproj)
{
    if (zproj != 0.0)
    {
        left *= (znear/zproj);
        right *= (znear/zproj);
        bottom *= (znear/zproj);
        top *= (znear/zproj);
    }
    glFrustum(left, right, bottom, top, znear, zfar);
}
```

So, if you wanted to view a car from 30 feet away, you could say:

```
FrustumZ(-10., 10., -10., 10., .1, 100., 30.);
```

But, rather than having to specify the left, right, bottom, and top limits at the face of the near clipping plane (which is what `glFrustum` expects), let's setup a way to specify those limits at some convenient distance in front of us. (This is derived using similar triangles.)

Diversion #2 – Where does a 3D Point Map to in a 2D Window?

Take an arbitrary 3D point in the viewing volume. Place a plane parallel to the near and far clipping planes at its Z value (i.e., depth in the frustum). The location of the point on this plane shows proportionally where the 3D point will be perspective-mapped from left to right in the 2D window.

Two Side-by-side Perspective Viewing Volumes

The best stereographics work is done with perspective projections. To avoid the vertical parallax problem, we keep both the left and right eyes looking straight ahead so that, in the vertical parallax example shown before, points A and B will project with exactly the same amount of shortening.

We do this by defining a distance in front of the eye, $z_{0p}$, to the plane of zero parallax, where a 3D point projects to the same window location for each eye. To the viewer, the plane of zero parallax will be the glass screen and objects in front of it will appear to live inside the monitor. The plane of zero parallax is handled by:

1. Set the distance from the eyes to the plane of zero parallax based on the location of the geometry and the look you are trying to achieve.
2. Looking from the Cyclops eye at the origin, determine the left, right, bottom, and top boundaries of the viewing window on the plane of zero parallax as would be used in a call to `glFrustum()`. These can be determined by knowing $z_{0p}$ and the field-of-view angle $\Phi$. 
Two Side-by-side Non-symmetric Perspective Viewing Volumes

Cyclops eye:

\[ L_0p = -Z_0p \cdot \tan(\theta/2) \]
\[ R_0p = Z_0p \cdot \tan(\theta/2) \]
\[ B_0p = -Z_0p \cdot \tan(\theta/2) \]
\[ T_0p = Z_0p \cdot \tan(\theta/2) \]

Left eye:

\[ R_0p = Z_0p \cdot \tan(\theta/2) + E \]
\[ L_0p = -Z_0p \cdot \tan(\theta/2) + E \]

Right eye:

\[ R_0p = Z_0p \cdot \tan(\theta/2) - E \]
\[ L_0p = -Z_0p \cdot \tan(\theta/2) - E \]

Use the Cyclops’s left and right boundaries as the left and right boundaries for each eye, even though the scene has been translated. In the left eye view, the boundaries must then be shifted by +E to match the +E shift in the scene. In the right eye view, the boundaries must be shifted by -E to match the -E shift in the scene.

**An Example**

Parallel viewing stereo

Cross-eye viewing stereo
Oftentimes, Stereographics Images are printed like this so that both Parallel and Cross-eyed Viewing will Work

Print this page and cut out the left two images

Note to self: don’t resize these images, as much as you are tempted to – they fit perfectly in the viewer as they are now.

Acquiring Stereo Photos Yourself

Places to mount this bar to a tripod
Places to mount two cameras

Acquiring Stereo Video

ESPN's 3D camera
Panasonic's 3D Camcorder
Quad-Buffered OpenGL

Remember double buffering, where you draw into the back buffer and display from the front buffer? OpenGL actually has two back buffers and two front buffers, one for each eye. So, draw the left eye view into GL_BACK_LEFT and the right eye view into GL_BACK_RIGHT. First you need to tell GLUT that you are doing stereo graphics. In InitGraphics():

    glutInitDisplayMode( GLUT_RGBA | GLUT_DOUBLE | GLUT_DEPTH | GLUT_STEREO );

Then go ahead and create the window as normal. After creating the window, you can also expand it to be the full screen with:

    glutFullScreen( );

In Display(), you need to clear both buffers:

    glDrawBuffer( GL_BACK_LEFT );
    glClear( GL_COLOR_BUFFER_BIT | GL_DEPTH_BUFFER_BIT );
    glDrawBuffer( GL_BACK_RIGHT );
    glClear( GL_COLOR_BUFFER_BIT | GL_DEPTH_BUFFER_BIT );

for( int eye = 0; eye <= 1; eye++ ) {
    glMatrixMode( GL_PROJECTION );
    glLoadIdentity();
    if( eye == 0 )  // left eye view
    {
        glDrawBuffer( GL_BACK_LEFT );
        Stereopersp( fovy, 1.0, znear, zfar, z0p, -eyesep );
    } else          // right eye view
    {
        glDrawBuffer( GL_BACK_RIGHT );
        Stereopersp( fovy, 1.0, znear, zfar, z0p, eyesep );
    }
    glMatrixMode( GL_MODELVIEW );
    glLoadIdentity( );
    << draw the 3D scene >>
}
    glutSwapBuffers( );  // this goes outside the eye loop!

Separating the Left and Right-eye Views – Shutterglasses

Uses an infrared transmitter to synchronize the left-right of the glasses to the left-right of the screen refresh

Separating the Left and Right-eye Views – Head-mounted Goggles
Separating the Left and Right-eye Views – the Stereo Mirror

Two filters statically provide the polarization

Separating the Left and Right-eye Views – Dual Projectors (“GeoWall”)

For movies and sporting events

Separating the Left and Right-eye Views – Stereo Movie Projectors

One filter dynamically provides the polarization (L-R-L-R-L-R per 1/24 sec frame)

Circularly polarized glasses
Separating the Left and Right-eye Views – VR Headsets

Uses an accelerometer and a gyroscope to know the head position and orientation

Uses shaders to get the correct fisheye lens distortion

Separating the Left and Right-eye Views – View-Master Viewer for your Cell phone

Uses the phone’s gyroscope to know the head orientation

Uses a moving magnet and the phone’s digital compass to perform a “left-click”

Uses shaders to get the correct fisheye lens distortion

Separating the Left and Right-eye Views – Left-Right 3DTV

Shutterglasses
Stereographics Rules of Thumb

- Stereographics is especially good for de-cluttering wireframe displays.
- Use perspective, not orthographic, projections to avoid the optical illusion.
- Use an eye separation, E, of approximately: \( E = Z_0p \cdot \tan(1.4^\circ) \)
- Use the far clipping plane well. The stereo effects are enhanced when the scene is not complicated by a lot of tiny detail that is far away. The interactive response is improved too.
- Because you are drawing the scene twice, using display lists is especially important.
- It is fun to set \( Z_0p = Z_{far} \) so that the image appears to be hanging out in the air in front of the monitor. However, in real life we rarely see anything hanging out in the air that has its sides clipped for no apparent reason, as the scene is likely to have. Perceptually, it is often better to set \( Z_0p = Z_{near} \) so that the entire scene looks like it is inside the monitor and that you are viewing it through a rectangular hole cut through the glass. This situation is common in everyday life, so we are used to seeing things that way.
- Intensity depth cueing (glFog) nicely enhances the stereo illusion.
- If you are using texture mapping, be sure to use GL_LINEAR, not GL_NEAREST, for the texture filtering.
From what you now know, real stereo images have to be generated from the original data – they cannot be as effectively retro-generated from a mono image, at least not without a lot of work.

Beware the multiple plane effect!

Watch out for a lot of monoscopic movies being “re-released” in stereo!