Geometric Morphing with the Vertex Shader

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Morphing a Cow into a Sphere

vec4 vertex = gl_Vertex;
vertex.xyz *= 4. / length(vertex.xyz);

Note: the "face" in the sphere cow is there because the normals were not morphed into sphere normals – they were left as cow normals.

Morphing a Cow into a Cube

const float SIDE = 2.;
vec4 vertex = gl_Vertex;
vertex.xyz *= 4. / length(vertex.xyz);
vertex.xyz = clamp(vertex.xyz, -SIDE, SIDE);

Note: the "face" in the cube cow is there because the normals were not morphed into cube normals – they were left as cow normals.

For you movie fans, what about “Real Morphing”?

“Real Morphing” involves interpolating key points from one object into key points in another. This flies in the face of graphics hardware’s philosophy of dealing with one triangle and then getting rid of any record of it. Movies do this in software. We got away with it in our class because we knew the equation of a disk, a sphere, and a cube and so could interpolate in a vertex shader.

The first movie-morphing I remember seeing is from the fantasy movie Willow:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kzbsDG58pc
The ‘making of’ video for this is here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kxVwNIZDOJ0

But, my nomination for #1 morphing ever is in Michael Jackson’s Black or White video:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F2AitTP15U0
The morphing starts at around 05:30.