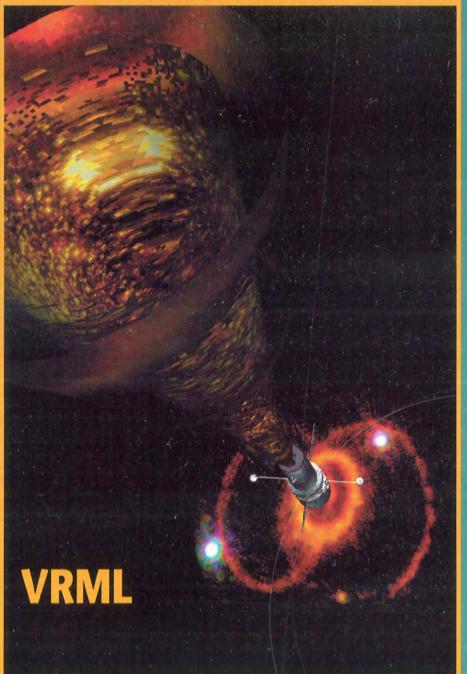
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Articles

VRML

Guest Editor's Introduction: Virtual Reality Modeling Language Maureen Stone

Tutorial: Building Virtual Worlds with VRML David R. Nadeau

VRML makes it easy to create virtual worlds. This tutorial reviews VRML's syntax and features as well as its world construction and animation abilities.

> **TerraVision II: Visualizing Massive Terrain Databases in VRML** Martin Reddy, Yvan Leclerc, Lee Iverson, and Nat Bletter

To disseminate 3D maps and spatial data over the Web, the authors designed massive terrain data sets accessible through either a VRML browser or the customized TerraVision II browser.

Large-Scale Mine Visualization Using VRML

Keith Russ and Andrew Wetherelt Traditionally, mine plans and sections in 2D stored 3D information. This article shows that using VRML to model this information leads to new, interactive methods of data visualization.

"Bottom, Thou Art Translated": The Making of VRML Dream

Stephen N. Matsuba and Bernie Roehl Bringing virtual theater to the Web requires 3D graphics, efficient networking, and strong content. The authors discuss the VRML Dream Project, a realtime Internet performance.

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Developing the VRML 97 International Standard George S. Carson, Richard F. Puk, and Rikk Carey

VRML 97 arose from a cooperative effort between the standards and VRML communities. The methodology employed applies equally well to development of future standards.

VRML Testing: Making VRML Worlds Look the Same Everywhere Mary Brady, Alden Dima, Len Gebase, Michael Kass, Carmelo Montanez-Rivera, and Lynne Rosenthal

NIST tools address problems posed by testing 3D graphics. This article explains the test development strategy and design issues in developing and delivering these testing tools.

A Framework for Streaming Geometry hð in VRML

André Guéziec, Gabriel Taubin, Bill Horn, and Francis Lazarus

The authors introduce a framework for streaming geometry in VRML that eliminates the need to perform complete downloads of geometric models before starting to display them.

Dynamics Modeling and Culling Stephen Chenney, Jeffrey Ichnowski, and David Forsyth

The tools described permit including large numbers of complex dynamic models in a VRML world easily and efficiently while maintaining high frame rates.

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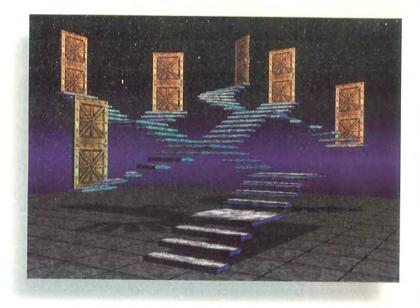
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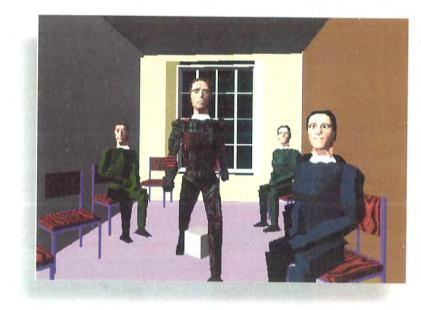
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- 88 Andrew Glassner's Notebook String Crossings

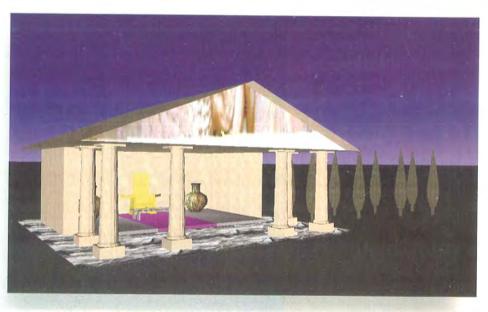
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TerraVision II: Visualizing Massive Terrain Databases in VRML

Martin Reddy, Yvan Leclerc, Lee Iverson, and Nat Bletter SRI International

To disseminate 3D maps and spatial data over the Web, we designed massive terrain data sets accessible through either a VRML browser or the customized TerraVision II browser. Researchers have in-Recreasingly turned to Virtual Reality Modeling Language (VRML) to represent geographic information. In VRML's early days, the result was a few toy examples that did not scale well, such as coarse, single-resolution elevation grids. Today, VRML is drawing more serious interest from researchers across the spectrum, including geographers, cartographers, geologists, and computer scientists, as the sidebar "Related Work" describes. As Theresa-Marie Rhyne noted, geo-

graphic information system (GIS) and scientific visualization tools have begun to expand into each other's domains,¹ and VRML offers cartographers and geographers the potential to disseminate 3D maps and spatial data over the World Wide Web. However, to date we have not seen useful large-scale VRML geographic databases.

We aim to enable visualization of near photorealistic 3D models of terrain that can be on the order of hundreds of gigabytes. This might include different types of terrain imagery for particular regions, as well as site models and auxiliary information for ground features.

The following scenario indicates the capabilities required. Say a user wants to find a particular building in a particular city. Her journey begins with a 3D model of the earth viewed from space. This model is texturemapped with satellite imagery of 100 kilometers resolution—that is, each pixel in the texture map represents a region on the planet's surface covering 100 km². To find the city, the user first rotates the earth to view the

Related Work

Currently, interesting and significant work addresses the problem of representing geographic data in VRML. In the earth sciences, Kate Moore described the work of the Virtual Field Course (VFC) project,¹ which is developing software tools to familiarize students with fieldwork locations and aid data collection and analysis. The VFC project uses VRML and Java to provide interactive 2D and 3D views of geo-referenced data to enhance students' cognition of the real environment.

The US Naval Postgraduate School is currently working on a project to develop a 3D model of the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary. They aim to create a VRML representation of the sanctuary based on raw bathymetry (below sea level) data for a 2.5×2.5 degree region of the bay. Their representation uses multiresolution techniques to deliver these large data amounts over a 28K modem connection. Michael Abernathy and Sam Shaw described their work using VRML to visualize the course for a 197-mile relay race through the San Francisco Bay Area.² They did this using standard US Geological Survey (USGS) 7.5 arc min digital elevation models (DEMs) for the terrain geometry with georeferenced satellite imagery draped over the terrain. Their system also used Global Positioning System (GPS) input to create a line segment showing the race's course over the VRML terrain.

References

- K. Moore, "Interactive Virtual Environments for Fieldwork," British Cartographic Society Annual Symp., 1997; available at http://www.geog.le.ac.uk/mek/VirtEnv.htm.
- M. Abernathy and S. Shaw, "Integrating Geographic Information in VRML Models," Proc. Third Symp. VRML, ACM New York, 1998, pp. 107-114.

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