

07 Game Physics

Tvorba a dizajn počítačových hier

Návrh a vývoj počítačových hier

Realistic modeling of the virtual world

- We are mimicking the real world with realistic rendering, environments and animations
- Pre-defined physics animations (exported from a 3D modeling software such as 3ds max) can add physics into our world
- Usually we need to **dynamically** create these animations
- We need to react to user input
- The simplest game physics model: Pong

Pong physics model

- We have a ball moving at constant speed
- We render one frame every 20ms -> 50 FPS
- Whenever the ball hits a paddle, we compute new **velocity**
 - That is, direction and speed
- Paddles are moved only by user input, not affected by the ball

- 3D points: $P, Q, R \dots \in \mathbb{E}^3$
- 3D vectors: $\mathbf{u}, \mathbf{v}, \mathbf{w} \dots \in \mathbb{R}^3$

Pong physics model (2)

- n = current frame, $n + 1$ = next frame
- Update the position of the ball every frame
 - $P_{n+1} = P_n + (v * \Delta t)$
- Bounce off of the top and bottom of the screen
- Detect if a collision occurred between frame n and frame $n + 1$
 - Is the line $\overline{P_n P_{n+1}}$ intersecting the paddle line?
- On collision, change the ball's velocity
 - Compute the exact point at which the ball will bounce off
 - Change velocity by reflecting the velocity vector
- If the ball intersects the left or right of the screen
 - The left or the right player lost

Complex physics models

- To perfectly simulate the real world, we would need lots of different physical mechanics
- Rigid bodies and their dynamics
- Soft bodies
- Fluids
- Vehicle physics
- Ragdoll physics
- Cloth simulation
- ...

Complex physics models

- Most of these mechanics are very complex and have little usage in games
- All the games out there with physics use **rigid body dynamics**
- Racing and simulator games also include vehicle physics
- Ragdoll physics is used for death animations of characters
- Soft bodies are used rarely, too complex or not well plugged into a game
 - Added value to the game is usually negligible
- Cloth simulation
- Fluid dynamics is usually overkill, animating oceans or water is done using simpler tricks
 - These tricks do not allow the player to interact much with it
 - Portal 2 looks like it's using fluid dynamics, but it's a trick as well
 - Terraria, Minecraft use extremely simplified models

Rigid body dynamics

- We will focus only on this part of realistic physics
- Our objects will be **rigid bodies** – non-deformable solid objects
- We want to compute the **dynamics** of rigid bodies
 - The movement and rotation of rigid bodies
 - Based on Newton's laws of motion (a.k.a. dynamics)
- There are also several constraints we can place on objects
 - Static objects – not movable by any force
 - Kinematic objects – moved by the users (such as the player character), but not moved by other objects such as grenades or bullets that hit the character
 - Apply force on other objects, any force applied to them is ignored
 - Joints, connected components (car wheel)...
- We will first go through **linear dynamics**

Moving with constant acceleration

- Movement of the object through the world is a *position function* $X(t)$
- We do not know the values of $X(t)$ until all player input up until time t is known
- Constant velocity $\Rightarrow X(t) = X_0 + t * v_0$
- Derivative of the position function is *velocity*
- $\frac{\partial X}{\partial t} X(t) = v(t)$
- 2nd order derivative: *acceleration*
 - When the acceleration is a zero vector, the velocity is a constant vector
 - Otherwise, velocity is a function of time (const. accel.): $v(t) = v_0 + t * a$
 - Or with variable acceleration: $v(t) = v_0 + t * a(t)$

Example

- Parabolic path of a projectile
 - “ballistic shot”
 - Works for all kinds as long as we ignore air friction
 - Rocks, cannonballs, bullets
- We have an initial velocity \mathbf{v}_0 and initial position X_0
- Acceleration is equal to gravity, which is a constant
 - $\mathbf{a} = (0, -g, 0), g = 9.8ms^{-2}$
- $X(t) = X_0 + t * \mathbf{v}_0 + \frac{1}{2}t^2 * \mathbf{a}$
- $\mathbf{v}(t) = \mathbf{v}_0 + t * \mathbf{a}$
- $\mathbf{a}(t) = \mathbf{a}$

Forces

- We want a way to compute the acceleration
- Acceleration is in a relationship with **force**
- $f = m * a$
 - f – force [$N, kg * m/s^2$]
 - m – mass [kg]
 - a – acceleration [m/s^2]
- Multiple forces affect a single object, we need to compute the position, velocity and acceleration in the next time step with respect to all those forces
- Gravity – we assume the world is flat
- Air friction
- Contact force

Getting the desired positions

- Forces are 3D vectors (direction + magnitude)
- Adding all forces affecting an object in frame N gives us the combined force that will determine the actual movement of the object
- Computing the result
 1. Apply forces $\mathbf{f} = \mathbf{f}_0 + \mathbf{f}_1 + \dots + \mathbf{f}_k$
 2. Compute acceleration from forces $\mathbf{a} = \frac{\mathbf{f}}{m}$
 3. Integrate acceleration to get velocity $\mathbf{v}(t) = \int \mathbf{a}(t) dt$
 4. Integrate velocity to get position $X(t) = \int \mathbf{v}(t) dt$
 5. Move objects to the desired position $X(t)$

Linear momentum

- We have a relationship between acceleration and velocity:

- $a = \frac{dv}{dt}$

- The quantity $p = m * v$ is the **linear momentum** and is related to a force f

- $f = ma = m \frac{dv}{dt} = \frac{dp}{dt}$

- *“The tendency of an object to remain in its current linear motion”*
- If the external force of a system is zero, p is constant
 - Very important for handling collisions

Moving with variable acceleration

- Analytic solution for computing the position and velocity is hard in general
 - We work with forces, so we start from acceleration
 - We will not find the exact equation for $v(t)$ and thus not for $X(t)$
- Impulse forces are simple
- Problems occur with variable forces that are applied continuously
 - Friction, springs, joints...
- Numerical integration solves these equations
 - Advanced topic, not covered here
 - See more in book references

Rotational dynamics

- We have not covered rotation of objects yet!
- Position X becomes orientation q (a quaternion)
- Velocity v becomes angular velocity ω
- Force f becomes torque τ
- Linear momentum p becomes angular momentum L
- Mass m becomes the inertia tensor J
- Center of mass important for computing the center of rotation

- The process of computing rotational dynamics is similar to linear dynamics
 - A little more complex, no time to go into detail

Object-object interaction

- So far, we have talked about a single object affected by forces
- What happens when there are more objects?
 - At the moment, objects will pass through each other
- We need to detect when two objects are colliding
- This area of research is called **collision detection**
- Collision response is the next important part
 - We know two objects are colliding, what now?
 - Objects in contact apply forces to each other

Intersections

- Objects (rigid bodies) are just triangular meshes or simple well-defined shapes (spheres, capsules, boxes...)
- We might use other objects to determine intersections
 - For instance rays when shooting from a gun
 - Or picking an object in 3D
- Other simple helper objects
 - Planes, Spheres, Capsules, Axis-Aligned Boxes, Oriented Boxes...
- When working with intersections, we might want 2 types of result
 - Simple Boolean telling us if we are intersecting or not (our current focus)
 - The actual intersection (point, triangle, mesh, ...)

Determining the intersection

- We have lots of different objects
 - Rays, Triangles, Planes, Spheres, Capsules, Axis-Aligned Boxes, Oriented Boxes...
- To determine intersection between either two, a special algorithm has to be used that is designed especially for the two types
- Very easy and fast-to-compute intersection algorithms
 - Ray-Sphere, Ray-Plane, Ray-AAB, Ray-Triangle
 - Sphere-Sphere, Sphere-Plane, Sphere-Triangle
 - AAB-AAB, AAB-Plane, ...
 - Fast enough to performs thousands of these per second

Slower intersection algorithms

- Convex meshes
 - Intersections with convex meshes are hard in general
 - Usually we need to test every single triangle
- Non-convex meshes
 - Even harder than convex meshes
 - Might need to split non-convex meshes into several convex parts for performance reasons
- So slow that only tens to hundreds of tests can be executed per second
 - Heavily depends on mesh complexity
- Mesh-Mesh intersection
 - Might end up testing every triangle-triangle pair $\Rightarrow O(n^2)$
 - Two meshes with 10000+ triangles (not so much for rendering) will take terribly long

Optimizing intersections

- Use simpler shapes
 - Encapsulate complex objects with simpler ones
- No need for exact precision
- Take advantage of hierarchical space-partitioning
- Use bounding volumes

Bounding volumes

- Bound complex mesh geometry with simple objects
- Bounding Spheres
- Axis-Aligned Bounding Boxes (AABB)
- Oriented Bounding Boxes (OBB)
- Use hierarchies of bounding objects for compound objects

Space partitioning

- If we have thousands of objects in the scene and need to compute object-object intersection for each
- Again, $O(n^2)$ tests
- Create a data structure that allows fast querying of possibly intersecting objects
- Discard distant objects fast
- Possibilities
 - Regular grid – BAD
 - Irregular grid – better
 - Bounding Volume Hierarchies (BVH) – much better
 - BSP or kD-trees - best

Space partitioning (2)

- Need to take into account dynamic objects
- Our space partitioning system must allow fast rebuilding of the hierarchy
- Or small adjustments in the tree structure during update
- Worst case – rebuilding the whole tree

Collision response

- Once we know two objects are colliding (will be colliding in the next frame), we want to produce a correct response
- Need to take into account physical materials
 - Throwing a ball on concrete vs. throwing a ball on soil
- Collision response is produced as additional forces
- A new force is produced for both objects
- For this, we need to determine the actual intersection locations

Precision problems

- To be fast enough, we cheat, but create several problems that can occur
- Fixed time updates should occur in infinitely short intervals
 - Otherwise, a fast moving object might pass through walls, because we didn't catch the moment when it was colliding
- Using static intersections instead of dynamic
 - Using algorithms that take into account the linear and angular velocity of objects might solve the previous problem
 - However, these algorithms are usually much slower to compute
 - Viable (fast enough) for simple bounding volumes such as spheres
- Solving collision response pair-wise
 - If we solve the collision for objects A, B and decide to move B so that it collides with object C
 - Then, the same happens for B, C => A; C, A => B...

Solutions

- Ostrich approach
 - Ignore the problems and let's hope a bug will never occur
- Selective approach
 - Select dynamic collision algorithms for more important and fast-moving objects
 - Grenades, bullets, ...
 - Any object it will collide with is going to have to use the dynamic intersection version
 - Or at least the "half-dynamic" version (one object dynamic, the other static)
- Know physics limitations
 - Thickness of colliders & maximum object speed
 - Amount of objects
 - Complexity of objects

Unity's physics engine

- The transform component of a game object contains the position X and orientation q
- We add physics through components
- **Rigidbody** - Provides *mass* for our object
 - Other settings such as *drag*, *collision detection settings*, *kinematic settings*...
- **Colliders** - Give our objects *shape*
 - Allow us to detect *collision events*
 - Can be triggers that do not actually collide but provide *trigger events*
 - “regions” we can activate
 - Are used to calculate the inertia tensor automatically
- **Joints and cloth** - Constraints and non-rigid simulation
- **Character controller** – unaffected by forces, responds to collisions
 - Special component for controllable characters – physically unrealistic
- NVIDIA PhysX (3D), Box2D (2D), Havok (experimental 3D replacement)

Unity's physics engine scripting

- The Rigidbody component allows for manipulation of objects with forces
 - Hitting objects with colliders produces contact force
 - Computes center of mass automatically
 - AddForce, AddTorque, AddForceAtPosition
 - Manually setting velocity – possible but not recommended
 - Can have physical material (friction and bounciness)
- Collider components
 - Can have density (for Rigidbody auto-mass computation)
 - Can be triggers
 - Provide collision callbacks
 - OnCollisionEnter, Stay, Exit
 - OnTriggerEnter, Stay, Exit

Unity's physics engine scripting (2)

- Physics class
 - Global physics settings (As well as Project Settings => Physics)
 - Overlap tests
 - Cast tests
 - Closest point computation

References

- <http://www.essentialmath.com/tutorial.htm>
- Mathematics for 3D Game Programming and Computer Graphics
- Essential Mathematics for Games and Interactive Applications: A Programmer's Guide