

Class 34: Storing Images as Simple Pixel Maps

Held: Wednesday, 2 April 2008

Summary: We consider techniques for storing images in files so that these images can later be retrieved.

Related Pages:

- EBoard.
- Lab: Pixel Maps.
- Reading: Pixel Maps: A Technique for Storing Images.
- Due: Assignment 7: Spirograph-Like Drawings.

Notes:

- I will continue to reserve time at the start of class for a discussion of campus issues.
- Preregistration is approaching soon. I hope many of you will think about taking CSC161, the next CS course.
- Happy April Fools' Day! (or not).

Overview:

- Files, revisited.
- Storing images.
- Storing colors.
- Storing images, revisited.

Files, Revisited

- Yesterday, we considered files.
- Files are a heterogeneous compound data type.
 - “data type”: Mechanism for organizing information
 - “compound”: That group together lots of values (similarly to how lists group values)
 - “heterogeneous”: And allow multiple kinds of values in the group.
- We use files to ensure that data persist between invocations of programs.
- We use files to share data between programs.
- Common file formats (such as text files) make it easier to share data between programs.

Saving Images in Files

- Since we've been focusing on images for much of this semester, it makes sense to think about how you would store an image in a file.
- There are dozens of standard file formats for images. Most are relatively complex.

- Hence, we will start by designing our own image file format.
- The easiest model: An image file contains a sequence of color values, one for each pixel in the image.
 - We write and read the pixels row by row from top to bottom
 - We write the pixels in each row from left to right
- The problem of writing images then becomes a problem of writing colors.

Writing Colors

- So, how do we store a color in a file?
- Three obvious options:
 - Write the color name
 - Write the RGB number (whatever that number means)
 - Write the three components
- Color names
 - Easy for humans to read and write
 - Slow to compute with
- RGB numbers
 - Fast to compute with
 - Hard for humans to read and write
- RGB components as numbers
 - Relatively fast to compute with
 - Not too hard for humans to read and write

Looking Ahead

- Over the next few days, we'll consider ways to make the image files we create smaller.
- Two basic strategies:
 - Write less per color
 - Write fewer colors per image

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