Class 10: GIMP Internals (2): Manipulating Pixels

Held: Thursday, 11 April 2013

Summary: We consider plug-ins that manipulate images at the pixel level.

Related Pages:
- EBoard.

Notes:
- My hazy brain missed one thing about plugins, which we’ll cover today.
- We won’t do return values until next class. (Generally, menu items don’t have return values.)
- I’ll be leaving out details of some approaches today. You can find additional info in parts II and III of http://developer.gimp.org/plug-ins.html.
- Assignment: Another plugin, this time one that deals with pixels in some interesting way.

Overview:
- Updating displays.
- Returning status from your plugin.
- Pixels.
- A Sample Plugin.

Topics Missing from the Previous Class
- I missed a few important (and not so important) topics in the previous class. So, let’s catch up on those.
- You can often use grep to look for details in headers.
  - For example, the definition of the GimpParam struct is in /usr/include/gimp-2.0/libgimp/gimp.h.

Updating Displays
- How do you see what your operation has done? In MediaScheme, we use context-update-displays!. But the underlying PDB function is gimp-displays-flush.
- So, in C, we just write
  ```c
  gimp_displays_flush ();
  ```
Reporting on Success/Failure

- You may have noted that run is a void function.
- So, how do we indicate whether or not run succeeded?
- We do it with the return_vals parameter.
- That is, we need to make an array of return values, the first of which is an indication of the success or failure of our function.
- So, we do something like the following:

```c
static GimpParam results[1];
results[0].type = GIMP_PDB_STATUS;
results[0].data.d_status = GIMP_PDB_SUCCESS;

*return_vals = 1;
*return_vals = results;
```

- Note that the results have to be in static memory so that they are not lost when your procedure returns.
- Your other options for status are
  - GIMP_PDB_EXECUTION_ERROR
  - GIMP_PDB_CALLING_ERROR
  - GIMP_PDB_PASS_THROUGH
  - GIMP_PDB_CANCEL

Pixel-Based Operations

- There are times we want to do interesting things to images a pixel at a time.
  - image-compute involves computing a color for each pixel
  - Simple blurring involves averaging a pixel with the neighboring pixels
  - Most filters involve pixel-level operations.
- Note: You will need to deal with the underlying representation of pixels. In many cases, pixels are arrays of 8 bit values. Getting them right can take some work, though.
- The GIMP provides a host of ways to access pixels, some easy, some more complex.
  - Unfortunately, there seems to be an inverse relationship between complexity and speed.
  - Hence, while I’ll give you an overview of approaches, I’ll focus on the details of the most complex approach.
- Approach 1: Use PDB functions gimp-drawable-get-pixel and gimp-drawable-set-pixel
- Approach 2: Use the GimpPixelRgn struct (which you can get from a drawable id) along with gimp_pixel_rgn_get_pixel and gimp_pixel_rgn_set_pixel
- Approach 3: Use the GimpPixelRgn struct (which you can get from a drawable id) along with gimp_pixel_rgn_get_row and gimp_pixel_rgn_set_row (ro col, or rect)
- Approach 4: Use GimpPixelRgn struct, but let the GIMP tell you which portions to handle.
- Note: When you’re finished dealing with pixels, you need to deal with all sorts of fun cleanup. This includes
gimp_drawable_flush (drawable_id);
gimp_drawable_merge_shadow (drawable_id, TRUE);
gimp_drawable_update (drawable_id, left, top, width, height);

- So, let’s get started.
- ...
- The iteration through tiles is somewhat strange.
  - We use gimp_pixel_rgns_register to start the iteration. That makes regions point to the first tile in their respective drawables.
  - We use gimp_pixel_rgns_process to advance them.
  - Both functions return NULL when they are done.
  - So, something like

```c
    gpointer pr;
    pr = gimp_pixel_rgns_register (2, &source_region, &target_region);
    while (pr != NULL)
    {
        // Do work
        ...
        // Move on to the next tile
        pr = gimp_pixel_rgns_process (pr);
    }  // while
```

- How do we iterate through the pixels in the region? We could use gimp_pixel_rgn_get_pixel and gimp_pixel_rgn_set_pixel. But that turns out to be slow.
- Instead, we need to step through the data structure.

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