

Class 10: Raster Graphics and RGB Colors

Held: Monday, 14 September 2009

Summary: We consider the basics of *raster graphics*, a common technique for describing and representing images. We also consider *RGB colors*, one of the most common mechanisms for representing colors digitally.

Related Pages:

- EBoard.
- Lab: Raster Graphics and RGB Colors.
- Reading: Raster Graphics: Images from Pixels and Colors and RGB Colors.

Notes:

- Quiz 2 returned. We'll run the code for part two to see what was expected.
- I have not yet graded assignment 2 or writeup 1. Sorry.
- Are there questions on writeup 2? or assignment 3?
- We're hoping to distribute exam 1 on Wednesday. It will be due the following Wednesday. You will not have another weekly assignment due next Wednesday. (You will still have a quiz on Friday and may get a lab writeup somewhere in the middle there.)
- We're going to try something a little different today. I'll take questions about the readings today, but won't lecture first.
- Tomorrow, we learn more about colors, but from a very different perspective. Matt Kluber from art will be lecturing.

Overview:

- Representing images, revisited.
- Pixels and colors: The basics.
- RGB colors.
- Those weird numbers.

Raster

- Many ways to represent colors, too.
- Goals: Unambiguous, fast to process, compact
- The color names we've been using are
 - Ambiguous
 - Slow to process
 - Long
- Whoops!

RGB Colors

- The most common internal representation of colors on computers.
- We think of a color as the combination of three *primaries*: red, green, and blue.
 - These are the primaries for the so-called *additive* colors
 - You are probably used to the primaries being red, yellow, and blue, but those are the *subtractive* colors
- On computers, we represent each component as a number between 0 and 255, inclusive.
- It turns out that you can shove four numbers, each between 0 and 255, into the internal representation of an integer.
 - So, the red, green, and blue components are three of those numbers.
 - What's the fourth? In multi-layer images, it's the alpha channel.
- We use `rgb-new` to create these colors.
- We use `rgb-red`, `rgb-green`, and `rgb-blue` to extract the corresponding components.

Those Weird Color Numbers

- We're representing colors as three integers, each in the range [0..255].
- Yet when we ask MediaScript for a color, we tend to get a single integer which is rarely in that range?
- What's going on?
- Well, most computers have different techniques for representing really small integers (particularly integers in the range [0..255]) and standard-length integers. We're using the smaller representation, but shoving three of those into a standard-length integer.
 - We use that representation because it makes everything faster.
- Even those of us who designed that representation can't read it.

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