Lecture 6

Announcements
Nin 2: Your last (solo) project

- This is the last week of mandatory lectures!
- Demiurge Studios talk on November 8th!!
Optional Lectures

- We will have a few optional lectures covering special topics
- Multiple topics per lecture, all slides will be posted
- Some tentative topics
  - Sound
  - Data Persistence
  - Procedural Generation (perlin noise)
  - Networking
  - Text Boxes / Dialogue
  - Loot Tables
Nin2

- A real game, not just a physics demo!
- Make sure to come to hours if you’re spending huge amounts of time debugging
- This week's topics can be a bit tricky
Nin1 Tips and Tricks

- Gravity is a force, not an impulse
  - If you set it as an impulse, fall speed is dependent on frame rate
- The gravitational constant (“g”) is an acceleration, not a force
  - Multiply by mass (F = ma)
  - Otherwise, heavy objects fall slower than light objects
- Play around with g: if things are falling too slowly, crank it up
Nin1 Tips and Tricks

● Are your players warping through platforms?
● Make sure you’re still translating your player by the MTV upon collision
  ○ This happens regardless of whether objects have a PhysicsComponent
  ○ Maybe do physics update (forces, impulses, velocity) before collision (MTV calculation) update
● Try setting a maximum velocity
● Try setting a maximum tick duration!
● if tickLen > maxLen:
  do multiple ticks of length maxLen
Nin1 Tips and Tricks

- Help! Objects are sinking into each other when I stack them!
- Run collision resolution multiple times per physics step until stabilization
- Make sure to cap the number of checks per tick
Final Design

- Meeting with the TA staff to talk about your final project
  - Your mentor will reach out and schedule a meeting for this week

- You’ll be telling us:
  - What kind of game are you making
  - What engine features you’ll implement (per person)
  - Whose engine(s) you’ll build off of

- Have these in a document that you can share with your TA
Next Semester: 3D Game Engines

- Running next semester!
- Two (soft) prerequisites:
  - Software engineering: 1971, 32, or 33
  - Graphics: 123
- Topics include physics, world/level representation, pathfinding over navigation meshes
QUESTIONS?
Lecture 6
Raycasting
What is raycasting?

- Determine the first object that a ray hits
- A ray is like a ray of light, has a source and direction and goes on forever
- Think of it as shooting a laser in a particular direction
Raycasting Uses

- When would we need to raycast?
  - Hitscan weapons
  - Line of sight for AI
  - Area of effect
The Ray

- A ray is a point (source) and a direction
- Point on ray given by:
  - $\vec{r}' = \vec{p} + t\vec{d}$
- $\vec{p}$ is the source
- $\vec{d}$ is the direction
  - This must be normalized!
- $t$ is a scalar value (length)
Basics

- Raycasting boils down to finding the intersection of a ray and shapes
- Kind of like collision detection all over again
  - If you’ve taken Graphics, there are similarities with raytracing!
- You want the point of collision as well
Ray-Circle

- If the source is outside
- Project center onto ray
- Check if the projection is positive and the projection point is within the circle
  - If within circle, there is a collision
  - If not positive, it means the projection point is *behind* the source.
  - Not checking for the sign could lead to false positives (if the negative projection point is inside the circle).
Ray-Circle

- How to find the point of intersection?
Ray-Circle

- How to find the point of intersection?
- Use the Pythagorean theorem to find the length of overlap within the circle

\[ \vec{p} + d(L - \sqrt{r^2 - x^2}) \]

- \( d \) is the direction of the ray
- \( L \) is the length of the ray from the source to the projection point
Ray-Circle

- If the source is **inside**
- Project center onto ray
- Projection can be negative
  - If the projection point is *behind* \( p \), then \( L \) should be negative (which will work with the equation)
  - Make sure \( L \) is signed correctly in your calculation

\[
\vec{p} + \vec{d}(\sqrt{r^2 - x^2} + L)
\]
Ray-Polygon/AAB

- A polygon/AAB is composed of edges
- We can check for intersection of ray by checking for intersection of all edges
  - Take the closest intersection point to p
- There is no shortcut for AABs this time
Ray-Edge

- Edge is defined by two endpoints, \( a \) and \( b \)
- We need some other vectors:
  - \( m \) is direction of the segment (normalized)
  - \( n \) is the perpendicular to the segment (normalized)
Ray-Edge

- Firstly, determine if the segment straddles the ray
- Use cross products—we have support code for this
- \((\vec{a} - \vec{p}) \times \vec{d}\) and \((\vec{b} - \vec{p}) \times \vec{d}\) must be of opposite sign
- If the product of the two cross products is greater than 0, there is no intersection
Ray-Edge

- If there is an intersection, determine where that point is \((q)\)
- Point of intersection
  - \(\vec{q} = \vec{p} + td\)
- We want to solve for \(t\)
  - \(t\) must be nonnegative
Because $(q - b)$ lies on the edge

$$\vec{q} - \vec{b} \cdot \vec{n} = 0$$

So plugging in:

$$\vec{p} + t\vec{d} - \vec{b} \cdot \vec{n} = 0$$

$$t \vec{d} \cdot \vec{n} = (\vec{b} - \vec{p}) \cdot \vec{n}$$

$$t = \frac{(\vec{b} - \vec{p}) \cdot \vec{n}}{\vec{d} \cdot \vec{n}}$$

Note that the $\cdot$ represents dot products
Ray-Polygon

- Intersect the ray with all the edges of the polygon
- Ray intersects polygon if it intersects at least one edge
- Keep track of the point closest to the source (lowest t value)
Putting it all together

1. Intersect ray with every shape
   a. For circles, use the circle-ray algorithm in the slides
   b. For polygons and AABs, intersect each edge and use the closest

2. Keep track of closest intersection point from the source as well as the corresponding shape
Raycasting

QUESTIONS?
Lecture 6

Saving/Loading
Parsing .txt files can be hard

- Must read 1 line at a time
- No easy lookups to earlier/later lines
- Poor formatting or inconsistent data could be anywhere!
Use XML!

- Java supports XML I/O!
- Can query the file for elements by name, ID, attribute, and more
- Information can be organized into hierarchies

```
<level id="lv12.1">
  <player name="The_Hero" health="102" mana="50">
    <inventory>
      <sword quality="Dull"/>
      <armor quality="Rusty"/>
    </inventory>
  </player>
  <Enemies>
    <boss health="2000"/>
  </Enemies>
</level>
```
Writing XML

- XML looks like HTML
- XML has a very rigid structure
- Errors/typos will cause the parser to fail
Writing XML

- XML Declaration:
  - `<?xml version="1.0" encoding="UTF-8" ?>`
- Must be at the top of each XML file
Writing XML

- Construct tags to hold information
- Each opening tag must match a closing tag

<Tag> ← opening tag
<Tag> ← closing tag
Writing XML

- You can nest tags
- Must close tags in the reverse order that they were opened

```xml
<OuterTag>
  <InnerTag>
  </InnerTag>
</OuterTag>
```
Writing XML

- Each pair of tags can hold an arbitrary number of inner tags
- You can freely reuse tag names

<Tag>
  <Tag></Tag>
  <Tag></Tag>
</Tag>
Writing XML

- Tags can be arbitrarily deep (as long as each one is closed)

```xml
<OutermostTag>
  <MiddleTag>
    <InnerTag>
      <EvenMoreInnerTag>
        ...
      </EvenMoreInnerTag>
    </InnerTag>
  </MiddleTag>
</OutermostTag>
```
Writing XML

- Can put text in between innermost tags
- Can use numbers, but they’re parsed as strings

<OuterTag>
  <InnerTag>text, ints, whatever</InnerTag>
  <AnotherTag>5</AnotherTag>
</OuterTag>
Writing XML

- Can add extra information to a tag (attributes)

```xml
<OuterTag name="outer">
  <InnerTag id="inner">
  </InnerTag>
</OuterTag>
```
Writing XML

- Tags can close themselves

<SelfClosingTag/>
<AnotherTag name="tag2"/>
Writing XML

- Comments are held between <!-- and -->
- Comments are multiline
- Very useful for commenting out parts of the file

<!-- I am a comment! -->
<RealTag></RealTag>
Writing XML

- Each file **must** have exactly one pair of outermost tags
- This doesn’t include the XML declaration at the beginning
<?xml version="1.0" encoding="UTF-8" ?>
<Game>
  <Map w="5" h="5">0101000000110111000000101</Map>
  <Object id="player" x="42" y="17">
    <SpriteComponent image="player.png"/>
    <CollisionComponent shape="AAB" w="10" h="25"/>
    <!-- more components -->
  </Object>
  <!-- more components -->
  <Object>
    <!-- more components -->
  </Object>
  <Object ... >
    <!-- more components -->
  </Object>
  <!-- more objects -->
</Game>
Useful Classes

- DocumentBuilderFactory
- DocumentBuilder
- Document (org.w3c.dom NOT javax/swing)
- Element
- Node & NodeList
Writing XML

```java
DocumentBuilderFactory factory = DocumentBuilderFactory.newInstance();
DocumentBuilder docBuilder = factory.newDocumentBuilder();
Document doc = docBuilder.newDocument();

// Create elements, and attributes to them
Element player = doc.createElement("Player");
player.setAttribute("Health", "100");

Element sword = doc.createElement("Sword");

// Add child elements to other elements, and top element to the doc
player.appendChild(sword);
doc.appendChild(player);
```
Reading XML

```java
import javax.xml.parsers.DocumentBuilderFactory
import javax.xml.parsers.DocumentBuilder
import org3.w3c.dom.Document

// Setup the parser
DocumentBuilderFactory factory = DocumentBuilderFactory.newInstance();
DocumentBuilder docBuilder = factory.newDocumentBuilder();
Document doc = docBuilder.parse("<file_path>");
doc.getDocumentElement().normalize();
```
Node node = doc.getDocumentElement();
System.out.println(node.getNodeName());

for (Node n : doc.getElementsByTagName("Object")) {
    if (n.getNodeType() == Node.ELEMENT_NODE) {
        Element e = (Element)n;
        e.getAttribute("e");
        e.getElementsByTagName("SpriteComponent");
        e.getChildNodes();
        ...
    }
}

Reading an XML

```java
DocumentBuilderFactory factory = DocumentBuilderFactory.newInstance();
DocumentBuilder docBuilder = factory.newDocumentBuilder();
Document doc = docBuilder.parse("<file_path>" Fra"");
doc.getDocumentElement().normalize();

NodeList nList = doc.getElementsByTagName("Player");
Element player = (Element) nList.item(0);

System.out.println(player.getAttribute("Health"));
System.out.println(player.getChildNodes());
```

--Output:--

`"100"

`[Element named "Sword"]`
You loaded the file... now what?

- Keep a reference of the available Component types you have
  - Map<String, Class<? extends Component>>
- Keep a reference of the GameObjects in your level
  - Map<String, GameObject>
- NodeList objList = doc.getElementsByTagName("object");
- Iterate over each entry in the list and translate it into a GameObject
Initializing Components

- For each 'object' element:
  - Make a new GameObject
  - Get the components
    - `NodeList cList = obj.getElementsByTagName("Component");`
  - Iterate over them; initialize each component using your map of available components
  - Add the components to your new GameObject

- It's your engine; maybe give each Component an overloaded constructor that takes in a NodeList and initializes it from there!
Saving and Loading

QUESTIONS?
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Tips for Nin II
Goal Velocity

- As a direction key is held down, gradually increment the velocity to a goal velocity
- Don’t go too overboard; might feel slippery
  - Looking at you, Mario 64
- Do this by applying a force
  - $\vec{F} = k(\vec{v}_{goal} - \vec{v}_{current})$
Reflection and Friends

- Avoid `Class.forName()`
  - What happens when code is re-factored?
  - Have to sync data and code
  - You may be tempted to use this this week – don’t!
Tips for Nin II

JAVA TIP OF THE WEEK
Breaking is Awkward

- Let’s say we have nested loops
- A break will only escape the innermost loop
- So we normally need some dumb boolean to keep track

```java
// find the first occurrence of 0
int row, col;
boolean found = false;
for (row=0; row<rows; row++) {
    for (col=0; col<cols; col++) {
        if (data[row][col] == 0) {
            found = true;
            break;
        }
    }
    if (found) {
        break;
    }
}
```
Introducing Labeled Breaks

- Code blocks can be labeled
- A break can be made to escape to a certain labeled block
- Can also use this strategy with a continue

```c
// find the first occurrence of 0
int row, col;
search:
for (row=0; row<rows; row++) {
    for (col=0; col<cols; col++) {
        if (data[row][col] == 0) {
            break search;
        }
    }
}
```
Other “Fun” Stuff

- Arbitrary blocks of code can be labeled
- Therefore you can have an arbitrary break
- Whee! It’s like a goto!
  - But don’t use it like one
  - Can only jump within the encapsulating block

```java
myLittleGoto: {
    // whatever code blah blah
    if (check) {
        break myLittleGoto;
    }
    // do some other stuff
    return;
}
```

// execution ends up here if // check is true!
Lecture 6

Story in Games
Advantages of Story

- Provides motivation for the player
- Players can take the identity of a character
- Story can create a sense of immersion
Disadvantages of Story

● Story writing takes time and care, similar to artwork
  ○ Plots can become convoluted
  ○ Plots can be bad
● Story requires heavy investment in visuals and audio assets
● Storytelling can slow gameplay
● Replay value
  ○ Why play the same game again?
  ○ Why read the same book twice?
The real story is the player’s

- Not every game’s objective is to write a good story
  - Just like action movies or comedies, some games focus on the player’s story instead
  - The game may not be targeting emotional peaks, but instead mental ones like the feeling of overcoming a boss battle that was frustratingly hard to complete
  - The “player’s story” is a map of how the player feels throughout a playthrough

- Good characters and story can help with immersion, but so can action sequences and giving “power” to the player
  - There’s a big question of should a player level up and earn the title of feeling like a hero (ie Hades) or should the player be a hero at the beginning of the game and instead be responsible for fulfilling the role (ie Spiderman)
  - Neither answer is wrong!
Remember...

- We create the world of the game. We bring the player into that experience. And they fill it with their emotions.
LET’S TALK STORIES!

Story in Games
A Rule of Thumb

- “There is no original story” – *How to Read Literature Like a Professor*
  - Many fantasy RPGs drew from their pencil-paper ancestors (many of which drew from J.R.R. Tolkein’s *The Lord of the Rings*)
- Many stories draw fundamentally from religious / mythological roots as well
The Three Act Story

- All stories must have:
  - The Beginning
  - The Middle
  - The End

- This is a massive oversimplification, but it’s a good way to approach stories in games
The Beginning

- Many writers start by creating a lush world
  - This does not work in games
- The story and game starts the moment a problem is presented to our hero
Some beginnings:

- Limbo – You wake up in a forest…
- Skyrim – A dragon is giving you a second lease on life, don’t waste it!
- Halo – Wake up, get to the bridge
- BioShock Infinite – Find Elizabeth
- Slender: The Eight Pages – Find 8 pages
Crewmate

There is 1 Impostor among us
What to include?

● The best beginnings include:
  ○ Very immediate threats and obstacles that will relate to the more overarching threat or obstacle that will define the story
  ○ Tools to overcome these immediate threats and obstacles

● These lend themselves well to an environment where your player can learn how to play your game as well
The Middle

- Forms the bulk of the story
- This is where you introduce the more finely grained details of the world
  - If you wouldn’t mention it when describing the story in one sentence, it probably goes here.
  - Supporting characters
  - Specific locations within the scope of your universe
- Relate the hero’s action to the overarching background
The End

- The conflict reaches some sort of resolution
  - Does not mean the conflict is fixed/solved!

- The player should feel something and remember it
  - **Achievement**: Civilization, Star Wars: Battlefront
  - **Victory**: Portal, Street Fighter
  - **Shock**: Freedom Bridge, Ace Attorney
  - **Loss/Sadness**: Halo Reach

- This is by no means an exhaustive list
Who is our hero?

- The more a player projects themselves into the protagonist, the better
  - This does not mean the protagonist has to be like the player
  - Nintendo is famous for having generic protagonists
- Does not have to be the entity that the player controls
  - Ex: Starcraft II’s Jim Raynor, Sarah Kerrigan, and Zeratul
Character Growth

- Characters are the first part of your game that the player will grasp onto emotionally, so they need to be dynamic or the players will detach.
- In literature, characters grow through some sort of internal/emotional change.
- In games, characters grow by power-ups and level-ups. These are not the same thing.
  - The take: It’s harder to develop characters in games.
- This leads to the problem of **interactivity**.
Conflict

- Classical classifications:
  - Man against man
  - Man against nature
  - Man against self

- Other classifications
  - Man against machine
  - Man against fate
  - Man against supernatural
  - Man against god
Antagonist… generally speaking

● Stories have some sort of “enemy”
● Does not need to be a single individual
  ○ Doesn’t even have to be an individual
  ○ Overcooked’s “antagonist” is time
● Basically whatever creates the conflict or whatever obstacle exists
Story writing is hard

● If you don’t think you’re good at it, don’t worry
● Here is an example process:
  ○ What do you want your player to feel like?
    ■ Explorer? Conqueror? Soldier? Underdog?
  ○ What kind of universe does that game exist in?
    ■ What is the setting? Does it all take place in one town? One continent? One planet? One timeline?
    ■ What are the rules of your world? Is there something supernatural about it? What is the state of the world’s technology?
  ○ What kind of protagonist will thrive in this world?
    ■ What obstacles are they good at overcoming that makes the player want to project themselves onto the protagonist?
    ■ What obstacles are they bad at overcoming that makes them grow?
The 7 Basic Plots

1. **Overcoming the Monster** (Shrek, Legend of Zelda)
   - Protagonist sets out to defeat some evil force that threatens them or their homeland

2. **Rags to Riches** (Cinderella, Fable 3)
   - Poor protagonist experiences wealth, loses it all, and gains it back by growing as a person

3. **The Quest** (Lord of the Rings, Borderlands)
   - Protagonist and companions set out for an important location or object

4. **Voyage and Return** (Finding Nemo, Halo)
   - Protagonist goes to a strange land, overcomes challenges, and returns with only the experience

5. **Comedy** (Much Ado About Nothing, Saints Row 3)
   - Light and humorous, triumph over adverse circumstance and a happy ending

6. **Tragedy** (Macbeth, Death Note, Spec Ops: The Line)
   - Protagonist falls from grace and becomes a villain, whose death is a happy ending

7. **Rebirth** (Despicable Me, The Good Place, Red Dead Redemption)
   - An important event causes the protagonist to change their ways and become a better person
There is no original story

- Tropes and clichés work!
  - People relate easily to things they have seen
  - Alluding to (but not using directly) other experiences that you know elicit a certain emotion is one of the best ways to get the player to feel a certain way

- Use in moderation, don’t make it the core of your story
  - Works well as a setting
Story writing is hard

● Take away:
  ○ Your player approaches your story from the aesthetic, the overall “feel”
  ○ You approach your story from the details, the rules that govern your universe
  ○ You have to start with the overall effect you want to have on the player, and work backwards
Things to See

- *The Ultimate Guide to Video Game Writing and Design*
  - Flint Dille and John Zuur Platten
- *Game Design (2004)*
  - Bob Bates
  - Advice on genre specific design
QUESTIONS?
Lecture 6

Final Project
Github / Final Checkpoint Submissions

- We made a new repository for you
  - [https://classroom.github.com/a/Hk7U9DC4](https://classroom.github.com/a/Hk7U9DC4)
- Once you decide who’s engine you are using push your code there
- Make releases for Final Checkpoints like normal
  - Final1.0, Final2.0, etc
- Please have README, INSTRUCTIONS, and playtests in each submission
  - README: group member’s bannerIDs, implemented engine features, did you meet the goals you set for this checkpoint, bugs, etc
  - INSTRUCTIONS: How do we play your game, what are the controls, what do I click, what is the objective, how do we activate cheat mode, etc
  - Playtests: next slide
Playtesting

- Each group member is responsible for 2-3 playtests
  - 1 can be from someone in this class
  - Rest should be from people outside of class (friends, sunlab, etc.)

- Watch your victim volunteer play our game
  - Don’t comment unless necessary
  - Take notes
  - Pay special attention to when the player is lost and when the player is having the most fun

- Submit these in your github release
  - A text file is fine
  - Make sure we know who’s playtests are who’s
'Til Next Time!

- Schedule Final Project design checks
- Read the final handout!
- Demiurge Studio on 11/8!!