Program a Game Engine from Scratch

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Development Checkpoint #14

Event Filtering

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4.17 End Game (optional)

Up to this point, Dragonfly is a fairly full-featured, completely functional game engine. A few potential enhancements remain, however, that bring in elements common to many game engines and improve performance, appearance and functionality.

4.17.1 Scene Graphs (optional)

Scene graphs are data structures that arrange elements of a graphics scene in order to provide more efficient rendering. For example, when drawing objects in a 3d scene, a scene graph might arrange the objects based on distance from the camera. Rendering the frame then draws the objects that are farthest away from the camera first, proceeding to the objects that are closest to the camera since the closer objects may occlude those behind.

Consider Dragonfly, where Objects have altitude (see Section 4.8.5 on page 115). Objects that are at lower altitude are drawn first before Objects at higher altitude, allowing the higher altitude to be layered “on top” of the lower ones, as necessary. Without a scene graph, Dragonfly implements altitude by iterating through all the Objects for each altitude implementation, as in Listing 4.81 on page 115 – effectively, doing \( n \times \text{MAX_ALTITUDE} \) comparisons, where \( n \) is the number of Objects in the game world. With a scene graph, the objects can be arranged by altitude, making the WorldManager `draw()` method only go through the list of Objects once, so only doing \( n \) comparisons.

For a game engine, a scene graph often arranges objects for more efficient queries, also. Objects that are not solid do not cause collisions. Without any other organization, detecting whether a moving object collides with any other object must look through all objects, regardless of whether they are solid or not. Thus far, Dragonfly is implemented this way, too, as in Listing 4.102 (page 138), iterating through all Objects, checking for collision with every Object, even the non-solid ones. Other common organizations group Objects by location in the game world, allowing selection and iteration over only those Objects at or near a specific location.

Since a scene graph organizes Objects, whether for drawing or query efficiency, it is naturally part of the world manager. In fact, an easy way of viewing a scene graph is that it replaces a simple list of game Objects with a more complex data structure where the Objects are organized and indexed in different ways. In Dragonfly, this means replacing `ObjectList updates` on line 10 of Listing 4.54 (page 94) with `SceneGraph scene_graph`.

The header file for `SceneGraph` is shown in Listing 4.189. SceneGraph needs to include both `Object.h` and `ObjectList.h`. The definition of `MAX_ALTITUDE` on line 3 has been moved from `WorldManager.h` to `SceneGraph.h`.

To support efficient queries by the WorldManager (e.g., to provide a list of all the solid objects), starting at line 8, the SceneGraph defines three lists of Objects. The first, `objects`, is a list of all the Objects in the game – formerly, this was `updates` in the WorldManager. The second, `solid_objects`, is a list of just the solid Objects in the game. The third, `visible_objects`, is an array of ObjectLists, with each element being a list of Objects at that altitude. Methods to add and remove objects to the scene graph are provided by `insertObject()` and `removeObject()`, respectively.

To support queries that may be made by the WorldManager (or even the game program-
mer), SceneGraph includes methods: `activeObjects()`, which returns all active Objects; `inactiveObjects()`, which returns all inactive Objects; `solidObjects()`, which returns all solid Objects; and `visibleObjects()`, which returns all visible Objects at a given altitude. The methods all return an empty ObjectList if there are no Objects matching the query. The method `updateAltitude()` is invoked when an Object re-positions itself to a new altitude and the method `updateSolidness()` is invoked when an Object updates its solidness.

Listing 4.189: SceneGraph.h

```cpp
#include "Object.h"
#include "ObjectList.h"

const int MAX_ALTITUDE = 4;

class SceneGraph {

private:
    ObjectList m_objects;          // All objects
    ObjectList m_solid_objects;    // Solid objects.
    ObjectList m_visible_objects[MAX_ALTITUDE+1]; // Visible objects.

public:
    SceneGraph();
    ~SceneGraph();

    // Insert Object into SceneGraph.
    int insertObject(Object *p_o);

    // Remove Object from SceneGraph.
    int removeObject(Object *p_o);

    // Return all active Objects. Empty list if none.
    ObjectList activeObjects () const;

    // Return all active, solid Objects. Empty list if none.
    ObjectList solidObjects() const;

    // Return all active, visible Objects at altitude. Empty list if none.
    ObjectList visibleObjects(int altitude) const;

    // Return all inactive Objects. Empty list if none.
    ObjectList inactiveObjects() const;

    // Re-position Object in SceneGraph to new altitude.
    // Return 0 if ok, else -1.
    int updateAltitude(Object *p_o, int new_alt);

    // Re-position Object in SceneGraph to new solidness.
    // Return 0 if ok, else -1.
    int updateSolidness(Object *p_o, Solidness new_solidness);

    // Re-position Object in SceneGraph to new visibility.
    // Return 0 if ok, else -1.
    int updateVisible(Object *p_vo, bool new_visible);
};
```
// Re-position Object in SceneGraph to new activeness.
// Return 0 if ok, else -1.
int updateActive(Object *p_o, bool new_active);
};

4.17. End Game (optional)

Implementation of SceneGraph insertObject() is shown in Listing 4.190. The method first inserts the Object into the objects list, since that is the “master” list that contains all Objects. Then, if the Object is solid, it is added to the solid_objects list. Next, the Object’s altitude is checked – if it is not in range (calling valueInRange(altitude, 0, MAX_ALTITUDE), see line 1 in Listing 4.135 on page 164), it returns an error (-1). Otherwise, the object is inserted into the visible_objects list at the correct altitude. Note, the calls to ObjectList::insert() need to be error checked. If they encounter an error, an appropriate message should be written to the logfile and insertObject() should return -1.

While it may seem that keeping 3 object lists is inefficient, remember that game objects are stored as pointers to Objects, thus manipulating and copying such lists is not actually doing the much more expensive operation of copying the memory space for each Object. As a refresher, see Section 4.5.2 on page 4.5.2 for details on the ObjectList implementation.

Listing 4.190: SceneGraph insertObject()

// Insert Object into SceneGraph.
int SceneGraph::insertObject(Object *p_o)
{
    // Add object to list.
    insert p_o into objects list

    // If solid, add to solid objects list.
    if p_o -> isSolid() then
        insert p_o into solid_objects list
    end if

    // Check altitude.
    if not valueInRange(p_o->getAltitude(), 0, MAX_ALTITUDE) then
        return error
    end if

    // Add to visible objects at right altitude.
    insert p_o into visible_objects[p_o->getAltitude()] list
}

Implementation of the SceneGraph removeObject() is basically the “undo” of the insertObject() method, as shown in Listing 4.191. The indicated Object (p_o) is removed from the objects, solid_objects and visible_objects lists. As always, the calls to ObjectList::remove() need to be error checked, writing an appropriate message to the logfile and returning -1 on encountering an error.

Listing 4.191: SceneGraph removeObject()

// Remove object from SceneGraph.
int SceneGraph::removeObject(Object *p_o)
{
    remove p_o from objects list
}
4.17. End Game (optional)

if p_o is solid then
    remove p_o from solid_objects list
end if
remove p_o from visible_objects[p_o->getAltitude()] list

The methods allObjects() and solidObjects() just return objects and solid_objects, respectively. visibleObjects() first checks that the parameter altitude is in range (calling valueInRange(altitude, 0, MAX_ALTITUDE), see line 1 in Listing 4.135 on page 164), then returns visible_objects[altitude].

Objects may change their attributes, such as a SPECTRAL Object becoming SOFT or an Object changing altitude from 3 to 4. All such changes need to modify the contents of the SceneGraph lists, solid_objects and visible_objects[], respectively. Listing 4.192 shows the implementation for updating the solidness of an Object. The first block of code checks if the Object is solid and, if so, removes it from the solid_objects list. The second block of code checks if the new solidness value for the Object is solid (HARD or SOFT) and, if so, inserts it into the solid_objects list. Error checking on the ObjectList::insert() calls is needed, as usual. Note, the solidness attribute for the Object is not changed – that is a private value for Object and is done in the Object setSolidness() method.

Listing 4.192: SceneGraph updateSolidness()

Listing 4.193 shows the implementation for updating the altitude of an Object. First, the altitude values for both the new and old altitudes are checked for validity. It may seem odd to check the old value, since it seems it must be right, but it could have been corrupted someplace – if it was, trying to remove the object from the visible_objects[] list at the altitude may result in a crash. If both old and new are in the valid range, the object is first removed from visible_objects[] at the old altitude, then added to visible_objects[] at the new altitude. Error checking on the ObjectList::insert() calls are needed, as usual.

Listing 4.193: SceneGraph updateAltitude()
if not valueInRange(new_alt, 0, MAX_ALTITUDE) then
    return error
end if

// Make sure old altitude in valid range.
if not valueInRange(p_o->getAltitude(), 0, MAX_ALTITUDE) then
    return error
end if

// Remove from old altitude.
remove p_o from visible_objects[p_o->getAltitude()]

// Add to new altitude.
insert p_o into visible_objects[new_alt]

Calls to updateSolidness() and UpdateAltitude() are made from Object, specifically Object setSolidness() and Object setAltitude(), respectively. The needed extension to Object setSolidness() to support SceneGraph is shown in Listing 4.194. The first block of code checks if the new solidness is valid (HARD, SOFT or SPECTRAL). If not, an error is returned. Otherwise, the updateSolidness() method of the SceneGraph is called and solidness is set in the Object.

Listing 4.194: Object class extension to setSolidness() to support SceneGraph

```
// Set object solidness, with checks for consistency.
// Return 0 if ok, else -1.
int Object::setSolidness(Solidness new_solidness)

    // If solidness not valid, then ignore.
    if new_solidness not (HARD or SOFT or SPECTRAL) then
        return error
    end if

    // Update scene graph and solidness.
    scene_graph.updateSolidness(this, new_solidness)
    solidness = new_solidness
```

Extension to Object setAltitude() to support SceneGraphs is shown in Listing 4.195. The first block of code checks if the new altitude is in a valid range. If not, an error is returned. Otherwise, the SceneGraph updateAltitude() method is called and altitude is set in the Object.

Listing 4.195: Object class extension to setAltitude() support SceneGraphs

```
// Set object altitude.
// Checks for in range [0, MAX_ALTITUDE].
// Return 0 if ok, else -1.
int Object::setAltitude(int new_altitude)

    // If altitude outside of range, then ignore.
    if not valueInRange(new_altitude, 0, MAX_ALTITUDE) then
        return error
    end if

    // Update scene graph and altitude.
```
4.17. End Game (optional)

With the SceneGraph in place, the Dragonfly WorldManager needs to be refactored to use the SceneGraph to manage game world Objects instead of storing the ObjectLists directly. Listing 4.196 shows the change in the WorldManager needed to use a SceneGraph. Basically, the attribute ObjectList updates is replaced with SceneGraph scene_graph. The method getSceneGraph() returns a reference to scene_graph.

Listing 4.196: WorldManager extensions to support SceneGraph

```cpp
private:
  SceneGraph scene_graph; // Storage for all Objects.

public:
  // Return reference to the SceneGraph.
  SceneGraph &getSceneGraph() const;
```

Then, internally, each of the WorldManager methods in Listing 4.197 needs to be refactored to support the SceneGraph. The methods insertObject() and removeObject() call and return scene_graph.insertObject() and scene_graph.removeObject(), respectively. The methods update() and setViewFollowing() call scene_graph.allObjects() to iterate through all the world Objects. The method draw() iterates through each altitude, calling scene_graph.visibleObjects() for each altitude. The method isCollision() checks for collisions only with Objects in the ObjectList returned from scene_graph.solidObjects().

Listing 4.197: WorldManager methods to refactor to support SceneGraph

```cpp
ObjectList getAllObjects ()
int insertObject ( Object *p_o )
int removeObject ( Object *p_o )
int setViewFollowing ( Object *p_new_view_following )
void update ()
void draw ()
ObjectList isCollision ( const Object *p_o , Vector where ) const
```

4.17.1.1 Inactive Objects (optional)

For many games, it is useful for the game program to have game objects be ignored by the engine for some time, but without removing the objects altogether. For example, the Saucer Shoot tutorial game (Section 3.3.11 on page 38) has the main menu become inactive when the game is being played, becoming active again after the player’s ship has been destroyed. Such inactive objects are not drawn by the engine, are neither moved nor considered in collisions, nor do they receive any events.

In order to support inactive Objects in Dragonfly, the Object class is extended with an attribute and methods to support whether an Object is active or inactive, shown in Listing 4.198. The boolean attribute is_active is true when the Object is active (note, all the Objects that have been dealt with to this point are active) and false when the Object is inactive and not acted upon by the engine. This value can be set via the setActive() method and queried via the isActive() method.
As shown in Listing 4.199, the method `setActive()` allows the game programmer to set the Object activeness, changing `is_active` as appropriate. Objects are active (`is_active` is `true`) by default, set in the constructor. In addition, the SceneGraph is obtained from the WorldManager and the SceneGraph `updateActive()` method is called.

The SceneGraph is refactored to have an additional ObjectList, one that holds only inactive Objects while the main object list will hold active Objects. Listing 4.200 shows the changes to the SceneGraph attributes for this. The `objects` ObjectList has been renamed to `active_objects` to differentiate it from the ObjectList holding the inactive objects, `inactive_objects`.
The methods `activeObjects()` and `inactiveObjects()` return `active_objects` and `inactive_objects`, respectively.

Listing 4.201 shows the SceneGraph `updateActive()` method. The first block of code checks if the activeness is being changed. If not, there is nothing more to do and an “ok” (0) is returned. The second block of code does the actual work. If the Object was active and became inactive, `remove()` is called on `active_objects`, `visible_objects[]` and, if solid, `solid_objects` and the Object is inserted into the `inactive_objects` list. Otherwise, if the Object was inactive and became inactive, `insert()` is called on `active_objects`, `visible_objects[]` and, if solid, `solid_objects` and the Object is removed from the `inactive_objects` list. All method calls should be error checked and an error (-1) returned, as appropriate. Otherwise, “ok” is returned at the end.

Listing 4.201: SceneGraph updateActive()
The WorldManager `getAllObjects()` method is refactored, as in Listing 4.202. A boolean parameter `inactive` is provided to indicate whether the method should return only active Objects (`inactive` is `false`, the default) or both active and inactive Objects (`inactive` is `true`).

Listing 4.202: WorldManager extensions to support inactive Objects

```cpp
// Return list of all Objects in world.
// If inactive is true, include inactive Objects.
// Return NULL if list is empty.
ObjectList getAllObjects(bool inactive = false);
```

The revised `getAllObjects()` is shown in Listing 4.203. The inactive case can use the overloaded ‘+’ operator from Section 4.5.2.2 (page 81).

Listing 4.203: WorldManager extensions to getAllObjects() to support inactive Objects

```cpp
// Return list of all Objects in world.
// If inactive is true, include inactive Objects.
// Return NULL if list is empty.
ObjectList WorldManager::getAllObjects(bool inactive) const
{
    if (inactive)
    {
        return scene_graph.activeObjects() + scene_graph.inactiveObjects();
    }
    else
    {
        return scene_graph.activeObjects();
    }
}
```

The Manager `onEvent()` method needs to be modified to check if an interested Object is actually active before sending it an event. This is shown on line 3 of Listing 4.204.

Listing 4.204: Manager extension to onEvent() to support inactive Objects

```cpp
...  
  create ObjectListIterator li on obj_list[i]
  while not li.isDone() do
    if li.currentObject -> isActive() then
      invoke li.currentObject() -> eventHandler() with p_event
    end if
    li.next()
  end while
...  
```

Lastly, WorldManager `shutDown()` should be revised to call `getAllObjects(true)` to delete both active and inactive Objects when the engine is shut down.

4.17.1.2 Invisible Objects (optional)

Another useful property for many game objects is to become invisible. For a game object, invisibility could be a special power, say, for the hero or a bad guy to vanish from sight – but as such, it is rather rare. However, invisibility is commonly used to limit the player’s ability to see objects that may be on the window, but should not yet be shown to the player.
4.17. End Game (optional)  

because of the player’s avatar’s orientation, or because of terrain or other “fog of war” type of effect.

To support invisibility, a new attribute is added to Object with methods for getting and setting it, shown in Listing 4.205. The method isVisible() returns the value of is_visible.

Listing 4.205: Object class extensions to support invisibility

```cpp
private:
  bool is_visible; // If true, object gets drawn.

public:
  // Set visibility of Object. Objects not visible are not drawn.
  // Return 0 if ok, else -1.
  int setVisible(bool visible=true);

  // Return visibility of Object. Objects not visible are not drawn.
  bool isVisible() const;
```

As shown in Listing 4.206, the method setVisible() allows the game programmer to set the Object visibility, changing is_visible as appropriate. Objects are visible (is_visible is true) by default. In addition, the SceneGraph is obtained from the WorldManager and the SceneGraph updateVisible() method is called.

Listing 4.206: Object setVisible()

```cpp
int Object::setVisible(bool visible)
{
  // Update scene graph.
  scene_graph = WorldManager::getSceneGraph();
  scene_graph.updateVisible(this, visible);

  // Set visibility value.
  is_visible = visible;
}
```

Listing 4.207 shows the SceneGraph updateVisible() method. The first block of code checks if the visibility is being changed. If not, there is nothing more to do and an “ok” (0) is returned. The second block of code does the actual work. If the Object was visible and went invisible, remove() is called on the ObjectList, otherwise insert() is called, at the right altitude (p_o->getAltitude()). All method calls should be error checked and an error (-1) returned, as appropriate. Otherwise, “ok” is returned at the end.

Listing 4.207: SceneGraph updateVisible()

```cpp
int SceneGraph::updateVisible(Object *p_o, bool new_visible)
{
  // If visibility unchanged, nothing to do (but ok).
  if (p_o->isVisible() is new_visible)
    return ok;
  else
    if (is_visible is true)
      remove(p_o)
    else
      insert(p_o, new_visible, p_o->getAltitude());
  return ok;
}
```
4.17. End Game (optional)

// If was visible then now invisible, so remove from list.
if p_o->isVisible() then
    visible_objects[p_o->getAltitude()].remove(p_o)
else // Was invisible, so add to list.
    visible_objects[p_o->getAltitude()].insert(p_o)
end if

// All is well.
return ok

4.17.2 Development Checkpoint #14!

To develop the SceneGraph for Dragonfly, use the following steps:

1. Create the SceneGraph class, referring to Listing 4.189 as needed. Add SceneGraph.cpp to the project and stub out each method so the SceneGraph compiles.

2. Implement the SceneGraph insertObject() and removeObject() methods based on Listing 4.190 and Listing 4.191, respectively. Test outside of the game engine by adding and removing Objects.

3. Implement the SceneGraph updateSolidness() method, based on Listing 4.192 and updateAltitude(), based on Listing 4.193.

4. Extend the Object class setSolidness() to support a SceneGraph, referring to Listing 4.194. Do the same for setAltitude(), referring to Listing 4.195.

5. Extend the WorldManager to support a SceneGraph, as in Listing 4.196. Refactor the methods shown in Listing 4.197, as appropriate.

6. Test by verifying that previous code that worked without SceneGraphs still works, such as test code from the last development checkpoint (on page 206).

If support for inactive Objects is desired (optional), continue development:

1. Extend Object to support activeness based on Listing 4.198, implementing setActive() based on Listing 4.199.

2. Refactor the SceneGraph based on Listing 4.200, implementing updateActive() based on Listing 4.201.

3. Refactor the WorldManager based on Listing 4.202, extending getAllObjects() to return inactive Objects, too, based on Listing 4.203.

4. Test with game code that sets another game object to inactive and back, say, based upon key presses.

If support for invisibility is desired (optional), continue development:
4.17. End Game (optional)

1. Extend Object to support invisibility based on Listing 4.205.

2. Implement Object `setVisible()` based on Listing 4.206 and SceneGraph `updateVisible()`, based on Listing 4.207.

3. Test with game code that has game objects set themselves to invisible and back, say, depending upon key presses or positions on the screen.