MECHATRONICS BOOK SERIES SELECTED PAPERS FROM ICOM'01, ICOM'05 AND ICOM'08

Editors

Asan G. A. Muthalif Amir A. Shafie Momoh J.E. Salami



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Using Spline Path in Real Time Navigation Simulations Systems, in Continuous Space

Ahmed Mustafa, Aisha-Hassan A. Hashim and Othman Khalifa

Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering, Faculty of Engineering International Islamic University Malaysia, PO BOX 10, Kuala Lumpur, 50728, Malaysia Phone: 03-6196-4488, Fax: 03-6196-4516, E-mail: aisha@iiu.edu.my

ABSTRACT

This work aims to design algorithms usable by real time systems, which can simulate navigation in a graph based network, and uses curves spline's along with the straight line paths. The network will be described with minimum effort, and path number of nodes needs to be minimized. The real time system needs a light weight algorithm with minimum calculations in order for this algorithm to be instantly used. The smart agent will be able to efficiently find its path through a network that consists of curved and straight paths that links between destinations.

1. INTRODUCTION

Traditional software's technologies in the past decades have restrained the realism of the road system simulation. All path finding algorithms avoids the use of curved paths and always tries to transform the space to grid space and perform path finding on a graph formed above the tile grid system[1][2][4].

Video games system --as an example of real time rendering software's, tries to minimize the path simulation calculations in order to reserves the CPU and memory resources for graphics calculations. For this reason we never see a road system that has real time smart agents moving along with a curved path. In fact, most of the Games in that has these roads networks such as Ceasar IV, CivCity Rome and SimCity often restrict roads to horizontal, vertical and 45 degree diagonal straight roads[3].

Real time system avoid the usage of heavy calculative algorithms in simulation navigation through a graph network. Curves are often interpolated using segments of smaller straight lines that unites together to form a path. This will add to the complication of the path finding by adding many more expensive nodes to the graph. The portion of the code that will be made heavier while including a curved path is that portion that is constantly updated[1][5] (the graph structure). Our approach here is to minimize the graph structure so that the curved path will be viewed as a single path between nodes. This means that the graph structure wont have as many segments as in the traditional method, it will have one segment, regardless of its shape.

Path finding algorithms for curved path that are currently available are used in CAD systems in civil design [8] [12] and such, they are not real time based. The algorithms are not designed to be used continuously and repeatedly. The path finding designing software's are meant to be done once in a while, and for the CPU clock, --that has an average discrete simulation time step interval is around 10 ms, using any heavy algorithm once every 1 minute is virtually negligible.

Our goal here is to use interpolation algorithm to describe the curve instead of using multiple segments. The advantages of interpolation beside optimization, is that [7][9] it will be more precise to the actual curve than the finite array of straight segments. However, in order to integrate this interpolated graph into the path finding algorithm there are many considerations.