3D Visualization and Analysis
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Data flow through the 3D imaging pipeline

People involved in image-based research must perform several tasks: image acquisition, processing, rendering, segmentation, and measurement.

3D imaging software includes modules to perform one or more of these tasks.
In cross-sectional imaging, parallel planar (2D) images from various levels within a 3D specimen are collected…
Cross-Sectional Image Acquisition

Several imaging technologies have been developed over the years that can produce cross-sectional images, such as CT and MR in radiological imaging, and confocal and two-photon techniques in optical microscopy.

Optical Microscopes have limited Depth-of-Field

This makes it difficult to study thick specimens

Structures closer to the focal plane are more in focus than structures farther away from the focal plane
Extended Depth-of-Field
But you can create a projection image with extended depth-of-field

Use software to create a composite image (e.g. weighted average) of just the in-focus portions of ALL of the images in the z stack (e.g. used plugin for ImageJ from http://bigwww.epfl.ch/demo/edf)
Confocal microscopes have smaller depth-of-field
e.g. 352 LSCM images – but what is it?

Images collected on Olympus FV1000 using “super 20x” objective at the ICBM
Its... cells growing on a microsphere
Made visible by computing maximum intensity projection

One example of 2D image compositing operation performed on the image stack
What about off-axis viewpoints?

You need 3D imaging software to compute off-axis views of z stacks.

On-axis movie using ImageJ

Off-axis rendering using Voxx

Cystic kidney tubules were rendered using alpha blending.
Visual Analysis (qualitative)

Volume rendering programs can be used to create 2D projection images showing the 3D stacks of cross-sectional images from various points of view.

Image processing operations may need to be performed on 3D images before they are displayed or passed to image analysis software.
Intensity and Color Mapping

You must carefully adjust brightness, contrast, color, and opacity to produce a high-quality 3D effect. Here is a typical sequence of operations that needs to be performed:

1) Select blending mode – alpha, sum, or max.
2) Adjust opacity – so that you can see into deeper portion of image stack. Only need for alpha blending.
3) Adjust contrast and brightness - so that you can see monochrome specimen.
4) Colorize – to highlight structures of interest, and/or improve the 3D effect.
Image Compositing – 2P Microscopy

The various math operators used to combine projection images can produce very different looking volume renderings, so it's important to understand how this works.
Image Compositing – Micro MRI

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http://embryo.soad.umich.edu/animal/animalSamples/animalSamples.html
Image Compositing – Micro CT

The various math operators used to combine projection images can produce very different looking volume renderings, so it’s important to understand how this works.

www.cg.tuwien.ac.at/research/publications/2005/dataset-stagbeetle
Colorization

You need to assign each channel a different color when displaying multi-channel images

You must choose appropriate colors for viewing images on monitors and color prints
Intensity and Color Mapping

Here we improve the visibility of structural details and enhance the 3D effect, by making saturation decrease as the intensity increases in a constant hue image.
Adjust Opacity

Making alpha an increasing function of pixel intensity causes more brightly fluorescing structures to become more visible when the images are averaged.

e.g. polycystic tubules in which large alpha values allow us to see details on the outer surface, while using smaller alpha values allow us to see the brush border inside the tubules...
Volume Rendering: 4D (3D + Time)

Several volume rendering programs can also display sequences of 3D images, which is useful for 3D developmental studies.

e.g. 3D time series of eGFP-labeled developing vasculature in a zebrafish.
Volume Rendering: 4D (3D + Time)

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e.g. dividing cell
Lighting

Lighting can produce an improved 3D effect, by providing an additional depth cue and information about the orientation of surfaces of objects.

volume rendering using Voreen

volume rendering using Exposure Render
Quantitative Analysis (numerical)

Segmentation is the process of separating an image into groups of pixels associated with various structures.

Image segmentation is the critical problem that must be solved in almost every image-based research project before quantitative image analysis can be done.
Segmentation

Just as GPUs have made real-time volume rendering practical and affordable, GPUs have the potential to also do this for 3D image segmentation.

Example

Roberts et al (2010) created an optimized GPU implementation of the narrow band level set method which ran 14x faster than previous GPU level set programs.

Jalba et al (2013) developed a GPU implementation which ran 5x faster than Roberts’ program.

http://graphics.stanford.edu/~mlrobert/publications/hpg_2010
Segmentation

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Segmentation

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I recently had a chance to run Roberts’ GPUSeg program on a GeForce Titan GPU (equipped with 6 GB of memory), and were able to process up to 512x512x400 LSCM liver images. That's a useful image stack size for 3D microscopy...

We’ve still not determined if level-set-based segmentation is going to work for vasculature in liver labelled with lens culinaris agglutinin, but interactively steering GPU-based segmentation software has a lot of potential...

Liver data courtesy of Drs. Sherry Clendenon and Ken Dunn, Indiana University

https://github.com/mroberts3000/AWorkEfficientGpuAlgorithmForLevelSetSegmentation/
Measurements

Why are we interested in semi-automatic segmentation of liver vasculature? Because currently someone has to manually segment vessels using TrackEM in Fiji

The segmented images are rendered using Voxx, skeletonized using Fiji, and then branch length and branch point analyses are performed (Dr. Sherry Clendenon)
**Volume Imaging Software**

There are many 3D image processing programs, but not many can handle the multi-channel 3D and 4D images produced by confocal and 2P microscopes.

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<th>Software</th>
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There is no standard file format for 3D/4D images. Keep this in mind when selecting software to use with your microscope(s). Consider using OME’s image database OMERO (www.openmicroscopy.org).
GPU-Accelerated Video Boards

GPUs are what makes real-time 3D image processing practical.

NVIDIA GeForce
- GTX Titan X (12 gigabytes) $1000
- GTX 980 (4-8 gigabytes) $550-
- GTX 970 (3-4 gigabytes) $330-370
  ...

AMD Radeon
- FirePro S9150 (16 gigabytes) $3100-3500
- R9 290X (4-8 gigabytes) $300-450
- R9 280X (3 gigabytes) $180-300
  ...

Choose video board based on which GPU programming language(s) your 3D imaging software uses...

If it uses CUDA, then you must use Nvidia GPUs. If it uses OpenCL or OpenGL/GLSL, then you can usually use either Nvidia or AMD. Carefully check PC system requirements.
GPU-Accelerated Video Boards

Choose video board based on the size of your largest image stack

1) Compute size of your image stack in pixels =
   image_width x image_height x image_slices x image_channels

2) Multiply size by 2 if your ADC produces images with more than 8 bits
   (e.g. 12 bits is pretty common)

3) Multiply by 3 or 4, in case gpu programs need more image memory
   (e.g. to add or subtract two 3d images, A=B+C, the program needs memory for 3 images)

   e.g. for a stack of 256 images, each 1024x1024 12-bits, with 3 fluors,
   (1024 x 1024 x 256 x 3) x 2 x 4 = 2,147,483,648 bytes (2 gigabytes)

Choose host PC based on power requirement and size of video board

1) Highest-performance video boards need HIGH-CURRENT PC power supply
   (e.g. Titan specs > 42 Amps at 12 volts!)

2) High-performance video boards are physically LARGE
   (e.g. occupy 2 PCIe x16 card slots, need full-length slots (boards typ. 10.5”))
References


Questions?

Cover image generated by JL Clendenon using Voxx