

REAL-TIME 3D TERRAIN ENGINES USING C++ AND DIRECTX 9 (GAME DEVELOPMENT SERIES) BY GREG SNOOK



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- Learn how to build a complete 3D terrain engine from start to finish
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- Discover how to design realistic vertex and pixel shaders for outdoor surface lighting using the new DirectX High Level Shading Language (HLSL)
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Game Development Series



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Review

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About the Author

Greg Snook (Sammamish, WA) has been a game programmer and artist for over eight years. He has worked on a number of successful games with several game development companies. He currently works as an Xbox programmer for Bungie Studios, and has contributed to all three volumes of the Game Programming Gems series.

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With recent advancements in programmable 3D rendering hardware, game developers can create engines capable of making complete outdoor landscapes. Many of today's popular games include entire outdoor environments, but making these environments realistic and fast is a challenge for even the best programmers. Real-Time 3D Terrain Engines Using C++ and DirectX 9 is written to help make the process more efficient, and to bring new programmers into the field of 3D computer game programming. The book is dedicated to teaching the fundamentals of programming a popular 3D engine type - the "Real-Time 3D Terrain Engine." Throughout the book, the focus is on the essential topics of outdoor terrain rendering. So whether you are new to 3D engine programming or a seasoned veteran, Real-Time 3D Terrain Engines Using C++ and DirectX 9 will teach you how to use the latest advancements in hardware-accelerated rendering, and provide all of the tips, tricks, and ideas you need to build your own, complete 3D terrain engine. Skills Needed: It is assumed that you are familiar with C++, Direct X, math, and geometry and that you're ready to move into 3D engine design and real-time terrain visualization.

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programmer for Bungie Studios, and has contributed to all three volumes of the Game Programming Gems series.

Most helpful customer reviews

10 of 10 people found the following review helpful.

Interesting ideas, many faults.

By Amazon Customer

This is a tough book to recommend. If you need your hand held through detailed examples, this is not a good source at all, especially since the sample programs are (1) overly complex and platform-dependent and (2) slow and ugly. On the other hand, this DOES discuss texturing, quadtrees, a few CLOD algorithms, sky and water rendering, Perlin noise, and a few other things as they relate to terrain, and can be a useful source of ideas for the not-quite-novice. Yes, most of the information here can be found on the web, but that's true of practically any programming book.

By the way, a MAJOR annoyance here is the really rather astounding number of typos and basic usage errors ("discreet" vs. "discrete," etc) that somehow were not caught in editing. There seems to be a trend to this effect in game programming books lately, but this one is really exceptionally error-ridden.

7 of 7 people found the following review helpful.

Talented Programmer, Poor Book Approach

By Jason M. Black

While I do not doubt that Gregory Snook is a very talented programmer, the code shown in this book and on the accompanying CD are proof enough, I believe that this book is of no use to anyone except for the most experienced professionals who have weeks of time to burn learning about Terrain Engines. I am not the most experienced programmer, having only worked with C++ and DX for 4 years now, but the problem with this book is not in complex concepts, but in content. All of the fundamentals of creating and rendering terrain are covered, but the example code and the engine (Gaia) on the CD are overly complex for any sort of educational book. Possibly every single library that Snook referenced has special wrapper functions and classes around them, making an examination of any code snippet next to useless unless the reader has spent days going through dozens of wrapper classes learning all of Snook's syntax. While I do enjoy owning this book as a conceptual reference, I am afraid that it is next to useless as an aid in practical programming scenarios.

18 of 22 people found the following review helpful.

You need to enjoy digging through a lot of code...

By N. Davidson

Not an easy book to learn from, all the code from the first demo program on up use the (complicated) final engine to do their rendering, and you'll have to go spelunking through it to try and figure out what's going on. The emphasis of this book is on the whole game engine itself and you're locked into his way of doing it, you're never given smaller programs that teach you how to do specific topics, it's all or nothing.

The first third of the book barely touches on terrain, you'll get overviews of things like memory management, resource pools, High Level Shader Language, render queue's, and a dozen other topics. And if you already have your own systems for these things or don't like his systems, too bad, because they are interwoven in the code throughout the rest of the book and it's difficult to separate it out.

Like the review above, I have to agree that the terrain looks a bit aged for such a new book, and it runs slow on my P4 2.4ghz with GeForceFX card. I've seen plenty of recent games that look much better and run smooth as silk on my setup. You'll need a very high end system for his techniques to run smoothly on.

It's hard to recommend this book when you'll find much better tutorial code on the internet that's more to the point and has better looking results than you will get in this book. It does bring many techniques all together, but not in an easily learnable format when it comes to actually programming it.

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