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Human-Centered Visualization Environments

GI-Dagstuhl Research Seminar
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Revised Lectures

 Springer

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Preface

Human-Centered Visualization Environments combine traditional Visualization techniques with the ability of the human visual-brain system and the haptic-motoric system to explore and analyze complex data comprehensively. This kind of visualization merges several aspects of different research areas, such as Information Visualization, Scientific Visualization, Human–Computer Interaction, Data Mining, Information Design, Graph Drawing, and Computer Graphics. From all subfields in Visualization, this textbook focuses mainly on Information Visualization, which centers on the visualization of abstract data, e.g., hierarchical, networked, or symbolic information sources, in order to help users understand and analyze such data.

For most practical applications, researchers try to find the best visual representation of the given information. That is the core problem of each visualization; but sometimes the seemingly best representation does not suffice if the human information processing and the human capability of information reception are not adequately taken into account. Additionally, these aspects depend on the data to be visualized and on the user’s background. While developing Human-Centered Visualization Environments, user abilities and requirements, visualization tasks, tool functions, and visual representations should be equally taken into account. The design of Human-Centered Visualization Environments is one of the big challenges of Information Visualization, Software Visualization, and of many application areas, such as the visualization of biological/biochemical or geographical information.

This textbook is the outcome of a GI-Dagstuhl Research Seminar organized by the editors, which was supported by the Gesellschaft für Informatik e.V. (GI) and took place at the International Conference and Research Center for Computer Science (IBFI) at Schloss Dagstuhl, March 5-8, 2006.

GI-Dagstuhl Research Seminars are targeted at doctoral students and recent post-doctoral graduates who are interested in learning actively about new developments not well covered in textbooks. They were selected mainly according to their scientific qualification.

Subtopics from the area of this seminar were assigned to the participants, who prepared comprehensive overview papers. During the seminar, their summaries and findings were presented and discussed. After the seminar, close to 9 months was spent on writing the chapters of this book, which were cross-reviewed internally. The editors intend the textbook to be used as an introduction to the

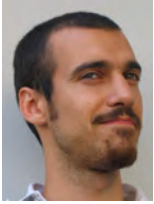
field and as a basis for graduate-level courses in Human-Centered Visualization, Information Visualization, etc.

We would like to thank all participants of the seminar for the lively discussions during and after the seminar as well as for writing the chapters of this textbook. Special thanks go to Wim Fikkert, Carsten Görg, Olga Kulyk, Robert S. Laramée, and Martin Nöllenburg for serving as chapter coordinators. We are also grateful to the GI and Schloss Dagstuhl, Germany, for their support and the privilege to hold the seminar at such a great venue.

December 2006

Andreas Kerren
Achim Ebert
Jörg Meyer

List of Contributors



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Torsten Bierz is a Ph.D. student in the International Research Training Group (IRTG) for the visualization of large unstructured datasets of the University of Kaiserslautern, Germany. After obtaining his Master degree in Computer Science in 2004, he was working on the HapTEK project in the Computer Graphics and Visualization Group at the University of Kaiserslautern, which focused on the design and development of a human machine interface for advanced simulation in developing and production processes. In January 2005, Torsten joined the International Research and Training Group as a Ph.D. student dealing with the topic of immersive visualization systems. His research interests within this topic are haptic interaction, visual representation on large displays and interaction with optical tracking systems, which include the usage of GPU accelerated methods and techniques.



Achim Ebert is an Assistant Professor with the University of Kaiserslautern, Germany, since 2005. Dr. Ebert is also affiliated with the German Research Center for Artificial Intelligence (DFKI GmbH) in Kaiserslautern, Germany. He received his Ph.D. from the University of Kaiserslautern, Germany, in 2004. Dr. Ebert's research interest include virtual and mixed reality, human computer interaction, information visualization, mobile visualization, and artificial intelligence in the visualization context. The application scenarios are manifold: document management, visualization of search

engine results, waste water treatment, virtual clothing, process visualization, etc. Dr. Ebert has lead and has served on multiple conference and program committees. Since 2005, he is the co-chair of the IASTED Visualization and Image Processing (VIIP) conference.



Wim Fikkert is active as a Ph.D. student at the Human Media Interaction (HMI) group of the University of Twente, The Netherlands. Wim obtained his Bachelor degree in Computer Science in 2003 at the Saxion Universities in The Netherlands by creating a simulator able to control a team in real and simulated robot soccer matches. He obtained his Master of Science in Computer Science in December 2005 at the University of Twente

by researching how to unobtrusively estimate the gaze direction of a student in a commercial driving simulator. Wim started his academic career as a Ph.D. student at the HMI group in January 2006. Presently he is active in the Dutch nation-wide BioRange project in which the research group he works in aims to develop a multidisciplinary scientific collaborative environment. Wim's personal research interests therein lie with natural, human-like gestural input and visualizing the requested output. These interactions are influenced by contextual information that describe (current) user(s') tasks.



Carsten Görg is currently working as a postdoctoral research fellow, funded by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), at the College of Computing at the Georgia Institute of Technology in Atlanta. He studied computer science and mathematics as a double major at Saarland University in Germany where he also received his Ph.D. in computer science. His research interests include graph drawing, in particular dynamic

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T.J. Jankun-Kelly is an assistant professor of computer science and engineering within the James Worth Bagley College of Engineering, Mississippi State University. His research areas are at the intersection of scientific and information visualization. His goal is to make visualization techniques and systems more effective by improving interaction methods and visualization utilization. Towards this end, he focuses on visualization interfaces,

visualization modeling, and applications such as volume, graph, and security visualization; recent efforts include extending these to large-scale displays. T.J. has a Master's and Ph.D. from the University of California, Davis and a B.S. from Harvey Mudd College. He is a member of the ACM, SIGGRAPH, IEEE, and the IEEE Computer Society and was a founding Contest Co-Chair for IEEE Visualization during 2004-2006.



Andreas Kerren is currently a Senior Researcher at the Computer Science Department of the University of Kaiserslautern, Germany. He will move to Växjö University, Sweden, in Spring 2007, where he has been appointed for a position as Associate Professor in Computer Science. Until the end of his Ph.D. studies in 2002, he was Research Assistant at the Computer Science Department of the Saarland University in Germany. From 2002 to 2004, he worked as Assistant Professor at the Institute of Computer Graphics and Algorithms at the Computer Science Department of the Vienna University of Technology, Austria. Andreas Kerren was involved in various successful research projects, e.g., in the DFG project "Generation of Interactive Multimedia Visualizations and Animations for Learning Software in Compiler Design" or in the FWF project "Hierarchies of Plane Graphs for the Acquisition, Analysis and Visualization of Geographic Information". Dr. Kerren was and is a member of several program and organizing committees, for example, the ACM Symposia on Software Visualization 2005 and 2006 or the IASTED International Conferences on Graphics and Visualization in Engineering as well as on Visualization, Imaging, and Image Processing in 2007. He has served as reviewer for several international journals. His main research interests lie in the areas of Software Visualization, Information Visualization, Software Engineering, Computer Science Education, Human-Computer Interaction, and Programming Languages.



Robert Kosara is currently an Assistant Professor at the Department of Computer Science, College of Information Technology, at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte (UNCC), where he is also a member of the Charlotte Visualization Center. He received both his Ph.D. (2001) and M.S. (1999) degrees from Vienna University of Technology, Vienna, Austria. Before coming to Charlotte, he worked at the VRVis Research Center, and the "in-silico" pharmaceutical research company Inte:Ligand. His main research focus is Information Visualization (InfoVis), which is the search for methods to depict abstract data in ways that allow one to find patterns, correlations, clusters, etc., by simply looking at and interacting with the resulting images. His goal is to bring together computer science, statistics, perceptual psychology, and the arts. His main interests are developing effective means of visualization and interaction with large and complex data, and finding the link between InfoVis and the visual arts.



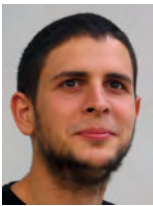
Olga Kulyk is a Ph.D. student at the Human Media Interaction Group, University of Twente, The Netherlands, since October 2005. Her research interests include human-computer interaction, collaborative visualization environments, computer-supported cooperative work, analysis and design of complex interactive systems, and situational awareness. Her current research within Bsik project BioRange is on the user-centered de-

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Robert S. Laramee received a bachelors degree in physics, cum laude, from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst in 1997. In 2000, he received a masters degree in computer science from the University of New Hampshire, Durham. He was awarded a Ph.D. from the Vienna University of Technology, Austria at the Institute of Computer Graphics in 2005. His research interests

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Mircea Lungu is a Ph.D. student at the University of Lugano, Switzerland, where he is working together with Prof. Dr. Michele Lanza. Before joining the University of Lugano, he received his Diploma-Engineer title from the Computer Science Faculty of the Polytechnic University in Timisoara, Romania. His diploma thesis, developed in collaboration with the Software Composition Group in Bern, proposed a novel way of aggregating metrics

into higher level abstractions that can be used for software quality analysis. His current research interests are related to software engineering and reverse engineering with a special emphasis on program understanding and software visualization. He maintains a live interest in generic information visualization and programming languages.



Andrés Moreno is a Ph.D. student at the University of Joensuu, Finland, since May 2005. He received his Master's degree from the Polytechnic University of Madrid, Spain. His Master's thesis developed an intermediate code for Program Animation, and was jointly supervised by professors Erkki Sutinen and Mordechai Ben-Ari. He is currently researching on program visualization and animation for novices, focusing on how to make current visualization tools aware of the personal differences of the users. Having published in conferences such as ACM ITiCSE and IEEE ICAIT, he is an active member of the Algorithm Animation community. He has also taken part in several working groups at ITiCSE.



Jörg Meyer is an Assistant Professor with a shared appointment in the Department of Electrical Engineering & Computer Science and the Department of Biomedical Engineering in the Henry Samueli School of Engineering at the University of California, Irvine. He joined UC Irvine in 2002. Dr. Meyer is also affiliated with the Center of GRAVITY (Graphics, Visualization and Imaging Technology) in the California Institute for Telecommunications and Information Technology (Calit2). He received his Ph.D. from the University of Kaiserslautern, Germany, in 1999. He held an appointment as a post-doctoral researcher and lecturer in the Computer Science Department at the University of California, Davis, from 1999 to 2000, and maintains an Adjunct Assistant Professorship at the Computer Science and Engineering Department at Mississippi State University, where he was also affiliated with an NSF-sponsored Engineering Research Center (2000-2002). Dr. Meyer's research interests include large-scale scientific visualization, biomedical imaging, digital image processing, interactive rendering and virtual reality. His research efforts are aimed at developing interactive rendering methods for large scientific data sets. Medical data sets range from Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI), Computed Tomography (CT) and Confocal Laser-scanning Microscopy to Optical Coherence Tomography and other modalities. Other applications are in the field of Civil Engineering and include ground motion and structural response simulations. The common theme in these interdisciplinary domains is the occurrence of giga- to tera-byte volumetric data sets that need to be rendered interactively. Dr. Meyer has developed multi-level-of-detail data representation techniques based on hierarchical space-subdivision algorithms and wavelet-based compression schemes, enabling interactive data storage, transmission and rendering of large volumetric data sets. Dr. Meyer has lead and has served on multiple conference and program committees for various professional organizations, including IEEE, ACM SIGGRAPH and IASTED. He has published over 112 journal articles, book chapters, conference papers, abstracts and posters in his field.



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Ingo H.C. Wassink is Ph.D. student at the University of Twente, the Netherlands, of the sub department of Human Media Interaction of the department of Computer Science. He did his master thesis in dynamic scenario generation for driving simulators. The system is based on the movie world, where a multi agent system is developed for orchestrating the driving scenarios. His main interests are in visualization, computer vision, artificial intelligence and multi agent systems. Currently, he is doing research in computer visualization techniques for physical scientific collaborative environments. In such an environment, visualization and interaction with different kinds of display devices play an important role. These displays can differ in size and the way things are visualized (e.g. 2D or stereoscopic) and therefore require different kinds of visualization techniques. On these displays devices, information should be presented in an efficient way that helps researchers discussing their experiments. Important research topics are visualization of experiments, visualization and control of the flow of the experiment and visualization for comparing (intermediate) results of the experiment.



Kai Xu is currently a researcher at National ICT Australia. He is also an Honorary Associate of School of Information Technologies at University of Sydney. He received his Ph.D. in Computer Science in 2004 from the University of Queensland, Australia. Before that, he received his bachelor degrees in Computer Science and Business from Shanghai Jiao Tong University, China in 1999. His main research interest is applying graph visualization in bioinformatics, which involves modeling, visualizing, and analyzing various biological networks such as metabolic pathways and protein-protein interactome.

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