

SANDBOX: Accessing Scientific Data through Experimentation

Andrew Johnson

Farshad Fotouhi

KEYWORDS:

Information retrieval, browsing, virtual reality, scientific databases, visualization, sonification

CONTENT INDICATORS:

I.3.7: Computing methodologies: Computer graphics: Three dimensional graphics and realism, H.5.1: Information systems: Information interfaces and presentation: Multimedia, H.3.3: Information search and retrieval.

ABSTRACT:

In this paper we describe a new interface to scientific databases, the SANDBOX: Scientists Accessing Necessary Data Based On eXperimentation. The SANDBOX is a virtual reality tool allowing an investigator to visualize the contents of a scientific database while retrieving data. As the data in these databases was typically collected through experimentation, an investigator can use the SANDBOX to retrieve data from the database by placing virtual instruments into a virtual reenactment of the original experiment. These instruments give visual and auditory feedback, allowing the user to browse through the data, setting up and running experiments until they have collected the data they need. We have implemented a prototype of the SANDBOX on a subset of NASA's FIFE scientific database using the CAVE virtual reality theatre.

Introduction

Scientific databases store large amounts of information typically collected through experimentation. This information is then made available to investigators from a wide range of disciplines, mostly unfamiliar with databases and their associated query languages.

Since the information was originally collected through experimentation, we can use virtual reality to recreate the original experiments. This allows an investigator to collect data from the scientific database in much the same way that the original data was collected. The investigator places virtual instruments into a virtual environment and collects data from the scientific database in the same way an investigator uses an actual instrument to collect data from nature.

Each investigator uses familiar measuring instruments and collects data in a familiar way. As the environment is virtual the investigator can repeat experiments multiple times using different combinations of instruments. The instruments allow the investigator to visualize the contents of the database and browse through those data values, before retrieving information from the database. We call this interface the SANDBOX: Scientists Accessing Necessary Data Based On eXperimentation. The SANDBOX allows the user to become immersed in the database. The user is surrounded by the data values themselves visualized by the instruments. The SANDBOX gives the investigator an environment to work in, rather than just a screen to look at.

We have created a prototype of the SANDBOX in the CAVE virtual reality environment to access climatological data from NASA's FIFE scientific database. Investigators can place instruments such as thermometers, water beakers and windsocks into the virtual environment to visualize, browse through, and collect climatological data.

Scientific databases

Scientific databases [5, 18] contain very large amounts of data on many different, but related topics. The form of the data is not known ahead of time as the data is collected by investigators from a wide range of disciplines. Each discipline stores data in its own way. All of this makes it very difficult for investigators in other fields to access the data.

When an interface to a scientific database is designed, its creator typically imposes a generic structure on the database. This gives users from all backgrounds a way to access the data, but each user must conform to this generic structure.

Graphical query languages [13, 20] have been proposed to simplify the interface. Unfortunately the schema of scientific databases are so large and complicated that the user rapidly runs out of screen real-estate, and the graphical metaphor quickly becomes cumbersome for complicated queries.

Ioannidis, et al [6] developed a graphical interface for the management of scientific experiments and data which makes large schemas more manageable, however the schema may not match the relationships seen by all users. The users may not know what data is available and may not know enough about the domain to make appropriate choices.

Ahlberg, et al [1] experimented with using graphical widgets to formulate queries on a small database. By hiding the database schema and allowing the user to interact directly with the data values, the users gained a faster and better understanding of the data. Allowing the user to have a more realistic interaction with the data values of a much larger database should give the user a more intuitive way of accessing their data.

Data retrieval is only one aspect of the scientific analysis process [16, 24]. The SANDBOX integrates data retrieval with some visualization capability and represents them using familiar metaphors, reducing cognitive load and enhancing the scientific analysis process.

Investigators using a traditional interface must first take their understanding of the experiments and convert it into an understanding of the database structure (or schema.) As the schema is designed to facilitate efficient storage of information it may be very unrelated to the way users naturally think of the data. Then the investigators need to learn the query language to retrieve the data they require. Then, once they have the required data, they need to visualize that data in a way that is meaningful to them.

Investigators using the SANDBOX have several advantages. The database schema is hidden from the user, while still giving the user access to the data. They deal with familiar concepts and instruments in a more natural environment. They can perform visualization while retrieving data.

Long before there was virtual reality, scientists relied on stereoscopic pictures of molecules. Why? Because two dimensions did not supply enough information. Today scientists can walk around those same molecules, poke their heads inside the molecules and move them around. Using virtual reality an investigator can see 3D relationships more easily and have a better understanding of what they represent [12]. Virtual reality is being investigated as an interface to computational fluid dynamics problems [17], neurological simulations [15] and cosmological data [23].

SANDBOX

The SANDBOX [7, 8, 9, 10, 11] gives the user a virtual laboratory that can be configured for different experiments on different scientific databases by loading in different sets of instruments, and environments. The exact instruments, and the way space and time are modeled, will depend on the environment being recreated.

In the SANDBOX, the user interacts with the scientific database by running experiments in the virtual environment. When the user places virtual instruments into the virtual environment, they give the user feedback. The investigator can use this feedback to add additional instruments to the experiment, move the instruments to other locations, or remove unnecessary instruments. The SANDBOX rewards the investigator's familiarity with

the environment, not with artificial database concepts.

Scientific databases often store information in multiple ways: files, relational databases, object-oriented databases. The database can contain numeric data, textual data, and graphical data. The database may also include meta-data. This data can be integrated into the virtual reality interface, giving the user additional information of any kind.

Instruments

As the user recreates the experiments with the virtual instruments, the SANDBOX retrieves the appropriate information from the appropriate source. Some instruments are linked to numeric and textual experimental data; some to graphical, audio, and other experimental data; some to meta-data.

Each scientific database requires its own set of instruments. The more familiar an instrument is to the user, the more obvious is its function. This may mean that different users of the same scientific database will use different instruments to access the same data. As the instruments are virtual, they can be virtual representations of actual instruments. They can also visualize and retrieve information from a combination of actual instruments, or display statistical information derived from actual instruments.

In the SANDBOX, a virtual instrument can be placed at any site where the information it measures was collected during the actual experiment. Each virtual instrument placed at a site, maintains its own data. This includes the data currently being visualized by this instrument and the current visualization settings on this instrument.

Each instrument is linked to the scientific database. This linkage is a combination of an instrument class, an access function, and a set of filter functions.

The instrument classes convert data into visual and auditory form, allowing the user to see and/or hear the values. Each instrument is a member of some instrument class. Each instrument class has a G-function to represent the instrument and its current value(s) in terms of graphics primitives such as cubes, cylinders, spheres, and pyramids. Each instrument class has an A-function to represent the instrument and its current value(s) in terms of audio primitives such as external sound files, or functions which synthesize sounds.

The access functions retrieve data from the database. An access function takes a site identifier, and a time range and retrieves information from a specified part of the scientific database. Time in the scientific database may have many formats, and each experiment may have a unique rate of collection. Time in the SANDBOX is taken as absolute time from the beginning of the actual experiments with the granularity of time dependent on the individual experiments.

The filter functions perform transformations on the data. The SANDBOX uses two types of filter functions: access filters and display filters. Access filters filter the data values as they are retrieved from the scientific database before they are placed into the local memory. They ensure all the data stored in the local memory has the same format, and perform time consuming operations on large data sets. Display filters filter individual data values before they are displayed by a virtual instrument. They give the users control over the settings on the virtual instruments.

System Overview

An overview of the system is shown in Figure 1. The SANDBOX is composed of three main components: the Virtual Reality (VR) Interface, the Preprocessor, and Local Memory.

The VR Interface is responsible for the maintaining the virtual environment, representing the virtual instruments visually and audibly, as well as monitoring the user's actions within the virtual environment. The primary component of the VR Interface is the Environment Manager. The Environment Manager manages the virtual environment, keeping track of the user's position and actions. Based on these actions the Environment Manager sends requests for data to the Data Manager in the Preprocessor. It also uses Display Data from each of the instruments in Local Memory to display images and sounds in the AudioVisual Environment.

The Preprocessor is responsible for interfacing with the various components of the scientific database to quickly retrieve data according to the needs of the VR Interface and store it in Local Memory. The primary component of the Preprocessor is the Data Manager. The Data Manager receives requests from the Environment Manager and sends requests to the appropriate database access module to retrieve that data. This data is then moved to the appropriate place in the Local Memory.

The Local Memory maintains all the information necessary to support the VR Interface. This includes information on the user, the various tracking devices, and instruments that the user has placed in the virtual environment.

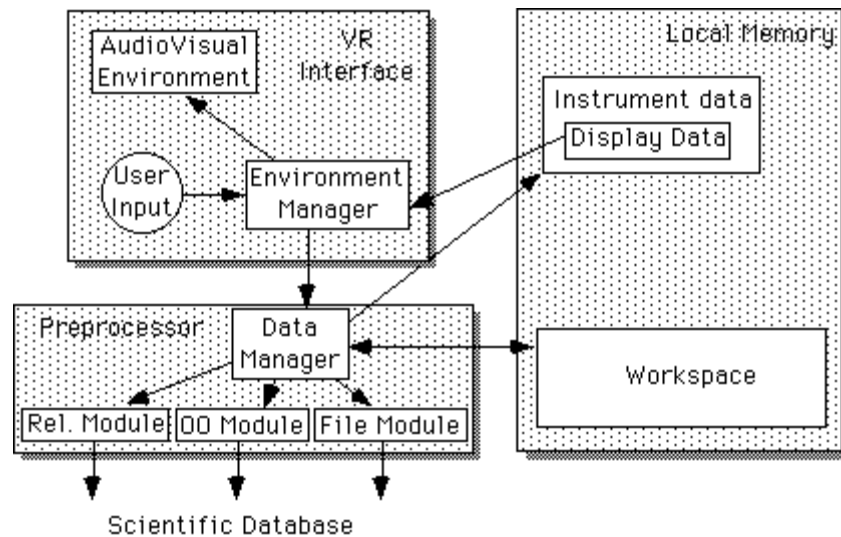


Figure 1: Overview of the SANDBOX

Data Storage

Current database access methods are not fast enough to support the needs of virtual reality. For smooth movement of a 3D image at least 15 frames per second must be generated for each eye. Generating a frame involves accessing all of the relevant information, converting it to graphical form, and then drawing the scene.

Typically in scientific visualization all of the relevant data is brought into RAM before the visualization begins. That is clearly not possible here given the huge amounts of data involved. Since we are using visualization while the data is being retrieved, not just afterward, the entire database needs to be accessible.

Data storage in the SANDBOX is therefore hierarchically organized into four levels:

- Display data - The data to be converted into visual and auditory form for this frame. Each instrument placed at a site maintains its own display data.
- Instrument data - The data currently being indexed by a single instrument - including all of the data for this instrument at this site for the currently selected time interval. For each frame, a subset of this data becomes the Display data. The Instrument data also includes the display filters and the settings on the display filters.
- Workspace - A cache for the Database data. It holds data that is not currently Instrument data, but might become Instrument data in the near future.
- Database data - The scientific database itself. The database may be local or remote, and is probably a heterogeneous environment.

As the user chooses instruments, times, and other experimental parameters, the VR interface passes this information along to the preprocessor. The preprocessor determines which parts of the database are likely to be accessed in the near future. Relational tables can be partitioned vertically and horizontally, objects can be isolated, and files can be marked. These blocks of information can then be moved into local memory before they

are needed by the visualization system.

The SANDBOX requires rapid access to the data values in memory based on time. Given a time index, the data structure must be able to quickly find the nearest stored time and its associated data values. In order to achieve fast access to the instrument data values we are using a modified version of the T-tree data structure proposed by Lehman and Carey [14]. Each instrument placed at a site keeps its own T-tree of instrument data ordered by time.

Implementation

We have implemented a prototype of the SANDBOX using the CAVE [3, 4] virtual reality theatre at the Electronic Visualization Lab at the University of Illinois at Chicago as shown in Figure 2. The CAVE is a projection based virtual reality system. The user enters a 10 foot by 10 foot by 10 foot room where images are projected onto the three of the walls and the floor. When the user dons a pair of lightweight StereoView LCD shutter glasses, the projected images fill the room and surround the user. The user can move around the room reasonably unencumbered, and can walk around or through the virtual objects in the CAVE. Since they can see their own bodies, users have a true sense of being inside the virtual environment. The user carries a physical three button wand to interact with the virtual objects in the CAVE.



Figure 2: Photograph of SANDBOX in the CAVE

We implemented this prototype on a subset of the FIFE scientific database. Developing techniques to determine surface climatology from satellite observations is the objective of the ISLSCP (International Satellite Land Surface Climatology Project.) FIFE (First ISLSCP Field Experiment) was undertaken at a 20km by 20km square site near Manhattan, Kansas in 1987 and 1989. Its purpose was to gather enough data to allow the creation and testing of models to develop these techniques [25].

120 gigabytes of data was collected (300 megabytes textual data, the rest image data including satellite photos, and site photographs taken on the ground.) The textual data fills over 100 tables in a relational database. Each experiment is given its own table with the attributes containing the numeric data collected during that experiment. These tables typically have 10-30 columns each, and over 100,000 rows.

In this reenactment of the FIFE field experiments, the user is surrounded by an elevated 3D plane showing the 20km by 20km square experiment site, a pallet of instruments to choose from on the right wall, and a calendar to choose dates from on the left wall. The 3D plane initially shows an enhanced satellite view of the experiment

site. See Figure 3 for a bird's eye view of the virtual environment and Figure 4 for an investigator's view of the virtual environment.

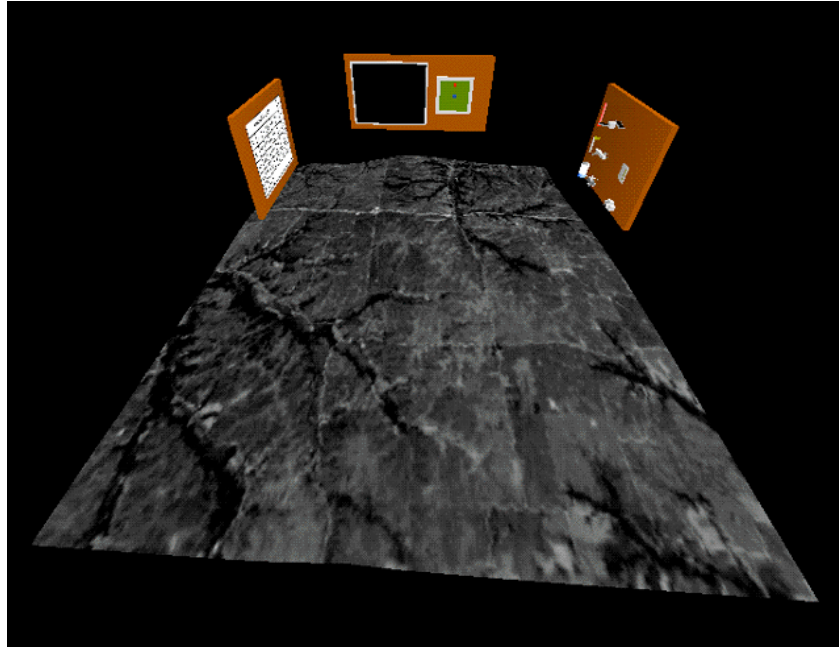


Figure 3: Bird's Eye View of the Virtual Environment

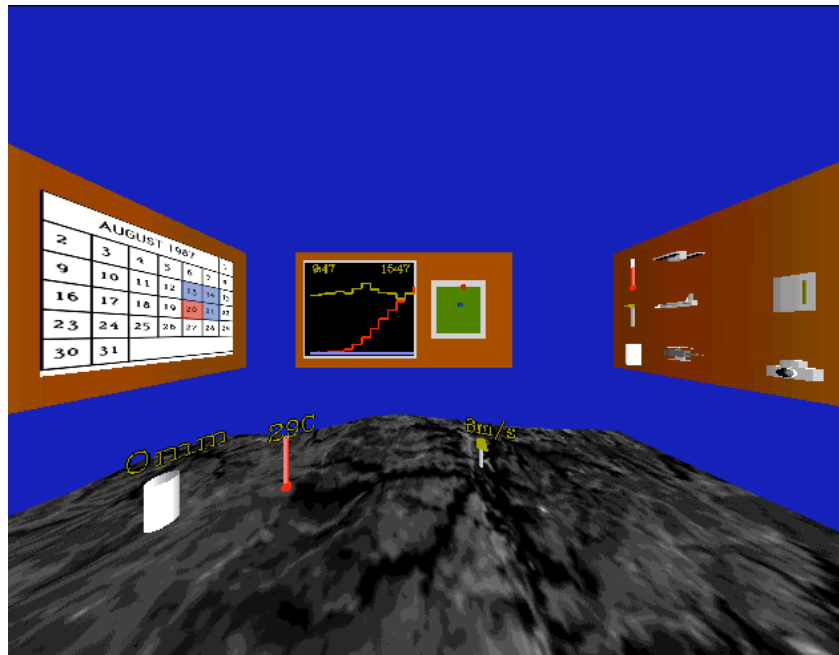


Figure 4: Investigator's View of the Virtual Environment

Instruments

Figure 5 shows a close-up view of the instrument pallet. Some of the instruments (thermometer, wind-sock, and water beaker in the left hand column) are linked to columns in the relational database. Some (LANDSAT satellite, airplane, helicopter in the center column) are linked to graphics files. Some (notepad, camera in the

right hand column) are linked to meta-data. The instruments on the pallet are 3D and animated to improve their recognizability. The instruments have obvious affordances [19].

In a large scientific database there would be many possible instruments. A second, much larger instrument pallet would be needed to hold all of the possible instruments. The user would be able to scroll through this pallet to the appropriate instruments, and then carry instruments over to the smaller pallet. This pallet could also contain additional meta-information about the instruments themselves, helping the user choose the appropriate instrument.

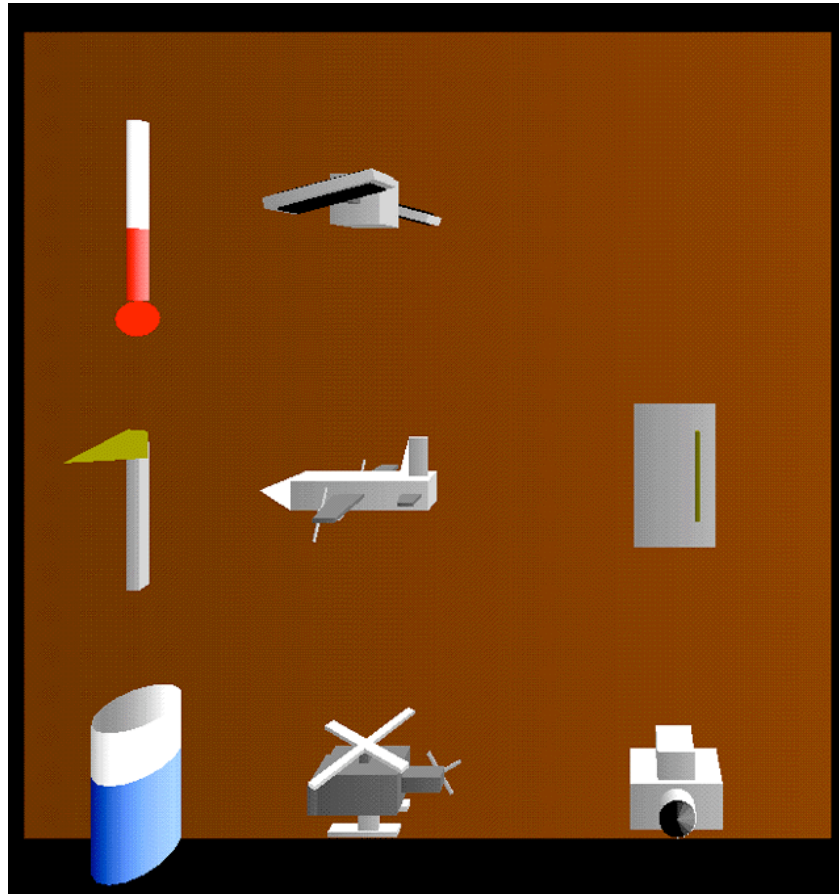


Figure 5: The Instrument Pallet

The user directly manipulates the objects in the virtual environment [21]. The user can pick an instrument off the instrument pallet, carry it over to a site, and place it there. Once the instrument is placed at a site, it begins to operate. The mercury level in the thermometer rises and falls with the temperature. The water level in the beaker rises and falls with the rainfall. The orientation of the wind-sock changes with the direction, and speed of the wind. The user can also hear the instruments. If the user needs a record of how the measured values change over time, the values can be displayed in a graph on the graph wall. If the user needs quantitative numeric values, they can be displayed above each instrument.

A user requiring information about a site (textual meta-data) can place the notepad at a site. A page with the text then appears above it. A user requiring a photograph taken at a site (graphical meta-data) can place the camera at a site. The picture of that site then appears above it. The meta-data is integrated with the numeric information and the graphic information. In the actual scientific database the user would have to integrate this information manually.

Figure 6 shows four instruments placed in the virtual environment: a wind-sock measuring wind speed and direction, a beaker measuring rainfall, a thermometer measuring temperature, and a camera displaying a photograph taken of a site. The wind-sock, beaker, and thermometer have their current values displayed graphically, audibly, and numerically. Their values over the last six hours are shown in the graph. The user is

simultaneously seeing numeric data from the database visualized by the instruments, graphical data showing the features of the 3D plane, and meta-data showing an actual site photograph.

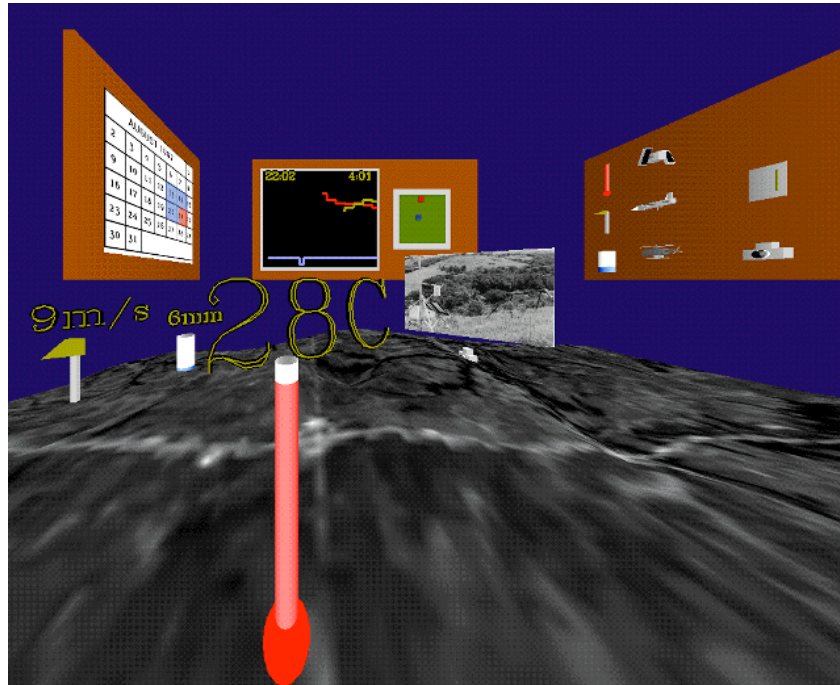


Figure 6: The Instruments Giving Feedback

The user can change the settings on a virtual instruments using the menu shown in Figure 7. Each instrument maintains its own individual settings. The interface employs an object-oriented paradigm. Existing virtual reality systems [22] allow for the creation of sliders, menus, and button panels. These are simply transferences of 2D systems into the 3D virtual environment where operations on objects are performed using a separate detached interface control panel. In our approach each object in the virtual environment maintains its own state, and has its own interface control panel.

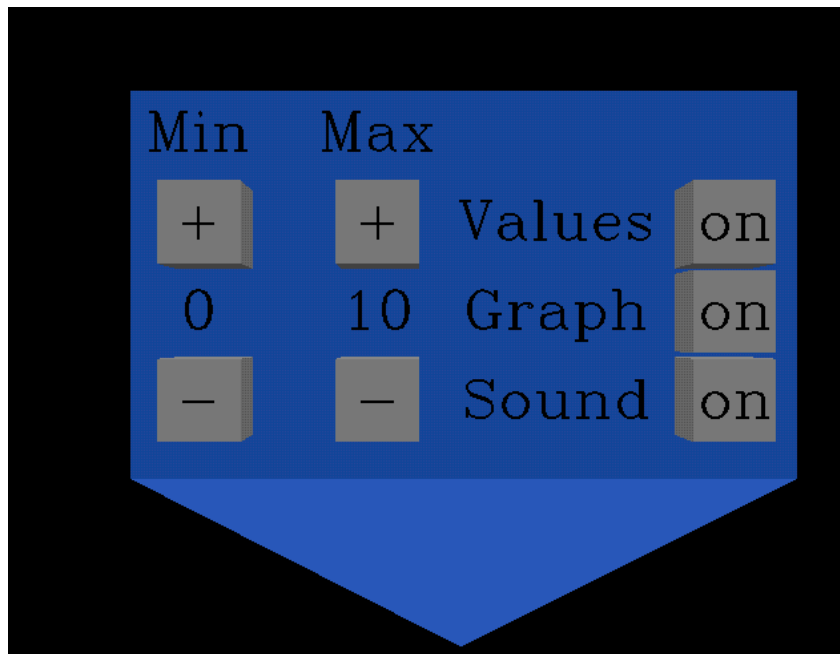


Figure 7: Menu for an Individual Instrument

Environment

The user can enlarge or shrink the 3D plane depending on whether the user wants an overview of the entire experiment, or a close-up view of a certain area. The user can place the 3D plane on the floor to look down at it from high above, or at waist height to get a better sense of the topography, or above the user's head to look at the terrain from below.

When the user grabs the satellite instrument and places it in the sky above the 3D plane, the user can choose which LANDSAT band to view the landscape in. LANDSAT photographs from the database are mapped onto the 3D plane. In the actual scientific database the user must refer to a site using its site ID number. In the SANDBOX the user can see where the sites are located. The user can easily see if a site is on top of a hill, or in a valley, near a river, or near a road. The graphical information is integrated with the numeric information. In the actual scientific database the user would have to integrate this information manually.

The user selects days from the calendar by clicking on them with the wand. The current virtual day cycles through the selected days. A virtual sun orbits the 3D plane rising out of the east each morning at 6am, and setting in the west at 6pm. As the sun dips below the western horizon, the moon rises in the east and continues to orbit the 3D plane opposite the sun. While the Earth's moon does not exhibit this behavior, it gives the user better control over their virtual environment. By grabbing the sun or moon with the wand, the user can adjust the behavior of time, speeding it up, slowing it down, or stopping it.

Viewing External Information

All of the information that an investigator needs to run their experiments may not be in the scientific database. Since the user is not isolated from the real world while interacting with the virtual world inside the CAVE, the user can bring items into the virtual environment. The user may want to bring in a list of experiments to run, or a map of sites to examine.

Unfortunately the CAVE must be kept dark, making it difficult to see anything brought inside. To alleviate this problem, the user can turn on a virtual spotlight in the SANDBOX. This spotlight illuminates the area surrounding the user and follows the user's movements around the CAVE.

3D Desktop Version

This method of extracting data through recreation of experiments, and the integration of multiple information types does not rely on virtual reality. While virtual reality provides more of a direct manipulation immersive environment, these same techniques could be applied to a more common, and less costly, 2D or 3D desktop environment.

The SANDBOX code could also be adapted to a Head Mounted Display or a BOOM. Both of these hardware platforms isolate the user from the real world making it impossible to see external information while interacting with the virtual environment. A 'fish tank' desktop system [2] would probably be the best alternative for those wanting a currently affordable hardware platform, allowing the user to see stereoscopic images using a computer monitor and stereo shutter glasses.

The CAVE and the desktop version each have their advantages and disadvantages. The CAVE is immersive; the desktop version is not. Both the CAVE and the desktop version can generate sounds that appear to emanate from a particular point in space, however the CAVE has a more natural mapping between the visual space and the audio space. The desktop version is overwhelmingly cheaper, more mobile, and built from more common hardware components. The CAVE and desktop users have similar encumbrances, however the desktop user has easier access to external information through books, notes, the telephone, and other computer programs. We are currently conducting tests to better quantify the advantages of each platform.

Evaluation

It is difficult to do direct comparisons because traditional access methods are designed to retrieving data for specific queries, where the SANDBOX is designed to provide an environment where the user can browse through related data.

Traditional access methods favor those who are familiar with the structure and content of the database. They are appropriate for those who know what data they want, where it is in the database, and how to retrieve it. They are appropriate for those who need to retrieve data based on complicated combinations of information. The SANDBOX favors those who are familiar with the original experiments. It is appropriate for those who are not sure what data they are interested in and need to browse through the data to find appropriate data to retrieve. It is appropriate for those who need to integrate multiple types of data. This means there are certain situations where the SANDBOX will be most appropriate and certain situations where a query language will be most appropriate.

Example: Integrating Numeric Data and Graphical Data

Let us assume an investigator is interested in comparing ground temperatures to the infra-red LANDSAT photograph on August 16th, 1987 to see how they correlate. With the existing interface the user must go through the following sequence of actions:

1. Finds AMS_DATA_87 table contains temperature data
2. Finds appropriate columns in AMS_DATA_87 table
3. Queries database for list of all sites in AMS_DATA_87 table on August 16th, 1987 returning a list of 10 sites
4. Finds FIFE_SITE_REF table relates site numbers to site locations
5. Finds appropriate columns in FIFE_SITE_REF table
6. Queries database to find site locations of all the sites in AMS_DATA_87 table
7. Finds IR LANDSAT photo for August 1987
8. Finds site locations on IR LANDSAT photo
9. Chooses sites 3, 7, 25, and 29
10. Queries database to extract temperature information from chosen sites on August 16th, 1987 from AMS_DATA_87 table

With the SANDBOX the user goes through the following sequence of actions:

1. Clicks on August 16th from the calendar
2. Grabs satellite instrument and places it in the sky
3. Clicks on satellite to activate its menu and selects the IR band. The 3D plane now displays infra-red landscape
4. Grabs thermometer instrument. All of the sites where temperature measurements were taken are displayed
5. Places thermometer at appropriate sites

Looking at the resulting file, the user of the query language will find that only site 3 gave measurements throughout the day. The user must now go through the same sequence of actions again to re-query the database for information from other sites.

Placing thermometers at sites 7, 25, and 29, the user of the SANDBOX would immediately see that those instruments were not giving any feedback. The user could then move those thermometers to other nearby sites where the instruments give feedback. The SANDBOX allows the user to easily browse through the data itself, not just the structure that has been imposed on the data.

Other Examples

We conducted some initial studies with naive virtual reality users who were experienced database users. Asking them to determine what direction the wind was blowing during a specific day took less than a minute in the

SANDBOX, but several minutes using a query language. The SANDBOX user could grab a wind-sock, place it into the environment, and see what direction it was pointing. The database user's queries resulted in a wind vector which then had to be translated into an actual direction.

Asking them to determine the rainfall at the highest point on a specific day took less than 30 seconds in the SANDBOX, but over 5 minutes using a query language. The SANDBOX user could grab a water beaker and look at the terrain to see the highest point to place it. The database user required several queries to gather similar information.

Reaction

Our initial testing in the CAVE suggests that users find this paradigm to be very natural. Picking up and placing instruments appears to be very easy and intuitive. We've observed users bending down to place their instruments onto the 3D plane, even when they can just stand over the site and push the button on the wand. The environment and the instruments are realistic enough that the users are treating them as real objects.

Unfortunately this 'realism' can be physically tiring. Users must walk over to the instrument pallet to choose instruments, must walk over to the calendar to choose dates. Allowing the user to choose instruments or dates from anywhere in the CAVE should further reduce this fatigue. Some users have found the calendar and instrument pallet to be uncomfortably high, others found the plane to be uncomfortably low. This suggests that the virtual environment should be more flexible.

It is also currently very repetitive to place an instrument at multiple sites. Future versions should allow a user to select multiple sites simultaneously. While less 'realistic', this would be more efficient.

In the actual experiment scientists could place clusters of instruments simultaneously. The user should have the ability to combining existing instruments into instrument packages. These packages would then be available on the instrument pallet. Each of the individual instruments would function independently but they could be placed and removed as a single package.

Conclusions and Future Directions

Using virtual reality the SANDBOX allows the user to bypass the current structuring of the data and access the contents of a scientific database by recreating the original experiments. The user deals with familiar concepts in a more natural environment and interacts with the data directly. The user can browse through the data, and integrate different types of data.

We are currently working on enhancing the SANDBOX in the following ways: 1. Increasing the visualization capabilities, 2. Increasing the capabilities of the instruments to allow for more aggregate functions, and 3. Applying the concept of instrument-based retrieval to other types of databases.

Acknowledgments

We would like to thank Jason Leigh, Thomas DeFanti and the other members of the Electronic Visualization Lab at the University of Illinois at Chicago for their assistance with the CAVE. We would also like to thank the reviewers for their valuable comments.

References

1

Ahlberg, C., Williamson, C., and Schneiderman, B. Dynamic queries for information exploration: an implementation and evaluation. In *Proceedings of SIGCHI '92* (May 3-7, Monterey, California). 1992, pp. 619-626.

- 2 Arthur, K. and Booth, K. Evaluating 3D task performance for fish tank virtual worlds. *ACM Transactions on Information Systems* 11, 3(July 1993), 239-265.
- 3 Cruz-Neira, C., Sandin, D., and DeFanti, T. Surround-screen projection-based virtual reality: The design and implementation of the CAVE. In *Computer Graphics (SIGGRAPH '93 Proceedings)*, (August, Anaheim, California). 1993, pp 135-142.
- 4 Cruz-Neira, C., Sandin, D., DeFanti, T., Kenyon, R., and Hart, J. The CAVE automatic virtual environment. *Communications of the ACM* 35, 2(June 1992), 64-72.
- 5 French, J., Jones, A., and Pfaltz, J. Summary of the final report of the NSF workshop on scientific database management. *SIGMOD RECORD* 19, 4(December 1990), 32-40.
- 6 Ioannidis, Y., Livny, M., Haber, E., Miller, R., Tsatalos, O., and Wiener, J. Desktop experiment management. *Data Engineering* 16, 1(March 1993), 19-23.
- 7 Johnson, A., and Fotouhi, F. The SANDBOX: A virtual reality interface to scientific databases. In *Proceedings of the Seventh International Working Conference on Scientific and Statistical Database Management*, (September 28-30, Charlottesville, Virginia). 1994, pp. 12-21.
- 8 Johnson, A., and Fotouhi, F. The SANDBOX: Scientists Accessing Necessary Data Based On eXperimentation. Demonstration in the VROOM of SIGGRAPH '94, July 1994.
- 9 Johnson, A. SANDBOX: A virtual reality interface to scientific databases. Ph.D. dissertation. Dept. of Computer Science, Wayne State University, Detroit, MI., 1994.
- 10 Johnson, A., and Fotouhi, F. Data retrieval through virtual experimentation. In *Proceedings of Computer Graphics International 95 (in press)*,(June 26-30, Leeds, UK). 1995.
- 11 Johnson, A., Fotouhi, F., Leigh, J., and DeFanti, T. SANDBOX: an interface to scientific data based on experimentation. In *Proceedings of the Fifth Eurographics Workshop on Visualisation in Scientific Computing*, (May, Rostock, Germany). 1994.
- 12 Koike, H. The role of another dimension in software visualization. *ACM Transactions on Information Systems* 11, 3, 1993.
- 13 Kuntz, M. and Melchert, R. Pasta-3's graphical query language: Direct manipulation, cooperative queries, full expressive power. In *Proceedings of 15th International Conference on Very Large Data Bases*, (August, Amsterdam, Holland). 1989, pp. 97-105.
- 14 Lehman, T., and Carey, M. Query processing in main memory database management systems. In *Proceedings of ACM SIGMOD '86 Conference*, (May 28-30, Washington, D.C.). 1986, pp.239-250.
- 15 Leigh, J., De Schutter, E., Lee, M., Bhalla, U., Bower, J., and DeFanti, T. Realistic modeling of brain structures with remote interaction between simulations of an inferior olivary neuron and a cerebellar purkinje cell. In *Proceedings of the Society for Computing Simulation, High Performance Computing*

1993, (March, Arlington, Virginia). 1993, pp 248-254.

- 16 Marks, G. How do analysts work? user interface issues. *Data Engineering* 7, 1(1994),10-17.
- 17 Meyer, T., and Globus, A. Direct manipulation of isosurfaces and cutting planes in virtual environments. *NASA Ames Technical Report RNR-93-019*.
- 18 Michalewicz, Z. editor. *Statistical and Scientific Databases*. Ellis Horwood, 1991.
- 19 Norman, D. *The Design of Everyday Things*. Doubleday, 1988.
- 20 Özsoyoglu, G., and Wang, H. Example-based graphical database query languages. *IEEE Computer* 26, 5(May 1993), 25-38.
- 21 Schneiderman, B. Direct manipulation: a step beyond programming languages. *IEEE Computer* 16, 8(August 1983), 57-69.
- 22 Shaw, C., Liang, J., Green, M., and Sun, Y. The decoupled simulation model for virtual reality systems. In *Proceedings of CHI '92* (May). ACM, 1992, pp. 321-328
- 23 Song, D. and Norman, M., Cosmic Explorer: A Virtual Reality Environment for Exploring Cosmic Data. In *Proceedings of IEEE 1993 Symposium on Research Frontiers in Virtual Reality* (October, San Jose, California). 1993, pp. 75-79,
- 24 Springmeyer, R., Blattner, M., and Max, N. A characterization of the scientific data analysis process. In *IEEE Visualization 92*. 1992, pp.235-242.
- 25 Strelbel, D., Newcomer, J., and Ormsby, J. Data management in the FIFE information system. In *Proceedings of International Geoscience and Remote Sensing Symposium*. (July, Vancouver, Canada). 1989, pp. 42-45.