

Method for image processing

The invention concerns a method for image processing, especially for converting a two-dimensional image of a three-dimensional real subject into a three-dimensional representation of the same three-dimensional real subject, wherein the subject is composed of elements, each of which is represented by a pixel in the two-dimensional image.

The object of the present invention is to provide a new and simple technique which enables colour pictures to be converted from film or video, which is a two-dimensional representation in the image plane with width and height co-ordinates (x, y), into a three-dimensional representation in space with width, height and depth co-ordinates (X, Y, Z). Such a three-dimensional representation may, for example, be used for analysing form elements in the image surface (object diagnostics) or for the production of three-dimensional images/film for a medium suited thereto.

Colour pictures from film or video are a photographic representation of light from one or more light sources with a certain spectral composition which at a given point of time struck objects in the camera's image representation. All objects absorb certain colours and reflect the rest. The object colour is determined by the spectral distribution of the light reflected by the object.

The recording on film of an object is dependent on several elements, including:

- 1) The spectral distribution of the light source(s).
- 2) The spectral reflecting power of the object.
- 3) The distance from the camera and absorption spectrum of this air perspective.
- 4) The photographic material's colour recording ability.

In order to obtain space co-ordinates, including the depth parameter Z, for subject elements in an existing image, the image's colour quality is analysed. The colour quality is a recording of incident light sources and reflecting objects.

The colour quality of light sources is measured in colour temperature and is indicated in Kelvin (K). When photographing a scenario the colour

temperature of the incident and reflected light from objects in the image surface will normally be measured with a colour light meter, using film with a colour recording ability which is adapted for the purpose (daylight, artificial light, etc.). The colour temperature of light sources varies with the distance to the camera.

The individual image points, pixels, in a colour picture represent the reflecting objects in the image representation. The colour quality of the image points is unambiguously determined by three measurable parameters: hue, degree of saturation and degree of brightness. This colour quality varies with the distance to the camera.

The hue refers to the colour's place in the electromagnetic spectrum, cf. Newton's colour spectrum and circle. This is normally indicated by the relative composition of the spectral colours Red, Green and Blue (R, G, B), or alternatively Magenta, Yellow and Cyan (M, Y, C). Cf. also transformation to colour co-ordinates according to the CIE 1931 standard, where all visible colours (i.e. in the wavelength range from 400 nm to 770 nm) for a given degree of brightness can be assigned exact co-ordinates within a diagram which is defined by the spectral colours and a purple line.

The degree of saturation indicates how much a colour has been mixed with other colours, and is designated as a percentage (%). A pure spectral colour is called saturated (degree of saturation 100%), white and grey are called unsaturated colours (degree of saturation 0%).

The degree of brightness (contrast, light intensity or value) is a measure of the incident amount of light relative to reflection from an absolutely white surface (100% reflecting) and is designated thereby as a relative percentage (%).

The recorded colour quality of light reflected from objects which are moving at different distances relative to a film camera varies. The colour temperature of light sources varies with the distance. The individual point's hue (RGB) is constant, but degree of brightness and saturation vary with the distance. A high degree of brightness, saturated colours and low colour temperature occur close to the image surface (short distance), giving so-called active levels. Correspondingly, a low degree of brightness, unsaturated colours and high colour temperature will occur far from the image surface (long



distance), giving passive levels. In addition this works internally in all these levels (active/passive), where warm colours appear more active in complementary contrast to cold colours. Warm colours are M, MY and Y. Cold colours are YC and C.

- 5 Due to the variation in the said characteristics with distance from a film camera, it may be deduced that each colour has its own perspective place in one and the same scenario in relation to the image's other colours. This is the basis of the present invention.

10 According to the invention a method is proposed for image processing, especially for converting a two-dimensional image of a three-dimensional real subject into a three-dimensional representation of the same three-dimensional real subject, where the subject is composed of elements, each of which is represented by a pixel in the two-dimensional image. The method is characterized by determining the distance $d(z)$ to elements in the image

15 surface in relation to a reference plane with specified hues by measuring the colour quality of each pixel in the image expressed in values for colour temperature, degree of saturation and degree of brightness, the distance being measured along a z-axis normally on the reference plane and with origin therein, with the result that for each of the values for colour temperature or

20 degree of saturation and contrast a distance value $d_t; d_s; d_c$ is obtained for the element represented by the pixel concerned in the image, the distance $d(z)$ between the element and the reference plane being established as a weighed average of the distance values d_t, d_s, d_c ; $d(z) = 1/3 * (k_t * d_t + k_s * d_s + k_c * d_c)$, where k_t, k_s and k_c constitute weight factors based on empirical data, for

25 determining on the basis of the established distance value $d(z)$ and the pixel's x,y co-ordinates in the image plane real spatial co-ordinates X,Y,Z for the element represented by the pixel by performing the transformations $d(x) \rightarrow X$, $d(y) \rightarrow Y$ and $d(z) \rightarrow Z$, X,Y,Z being the element's co-ordinates in a three-dimensional co-ordinate system with origin in the reference plane. The

30 transformations $d(x) \rightarrow X$, $d(y) \rightarrow Y$ are obtained by a known procedure for converting image points in the plane to points in space by means of a calculated ratio (scale) between the camera's image plane and the nearest focal plane in space, which in this case is the reference plane. The transformation $d(z) \rightarrow Z$ is obtained by applying the procedure for frontal

35 perspective construction for reading metric distance from a standardised perspective drawing.



In a preferred embodiment the invention comprises the creation of a reference scale by determining values of the parameters for colour quality by means of an image sequence of individual images, each of which depicts the subject in different predetermined focal planes; the changes in the colour quality parameters between the respective focal planes being used for calibration of a geometrical measuring scale which refers the respective measured colour quality parameters to metric or perspective distance values. The geometrical measuring scale preferably comprises geometrically coincident non-linear scales based on reference and empirical data for colour temperature in Kelvin, colour saturation as a percentage and light intensity/contrast as a percentage respectively, the colour temperature increasing towards its maximum value at the scales' common end point or point of convergence where the colour saturation and the light intensity/contrast approach zero, and the non-linear scales' common point of convergence being determined by means of the colour quality parameters for one or more remotely located elements in the image which was focused on the focal plane for furthest distance, the measured values for this element or average measured values for these elements determining the point of convergence. In a further preferred embodiment the geometrical measuring scale is inserted in a frontal perspective diagram corresponding to the format of the two-dimensional image and with the non-linear scales calibrated for the colour quality of the image concerned in order to determine the distance between the reference plane and an element in the image or between the reference plane and one or more pixels which form part of the element. Finally, according to the invention use is preferably made of either a perspective-based distance value or a metric distance value.

By this means exposed colour photographic image material is subjected to an analysis based on empirical and experimental knowledge of characteristics of colour quality, each colour thereby obtaining its perspective place relative to the image's other colours. As a result the invention provides a three-dimensional reference database for all colours in the scenario, from which other perspective parameters such as distance, spatial co-ordinates etc. may be deduced.

In the present invention information is processed which exists in already exposed photographic colour pictures. If the photographic material is of the

traditional analog type, such as negative or positive colour film/paper or video, for further treatment it will be natural to convert the material to digital format, where each point in the image surface is represented by a pixel, i.e. a description of its characteristics, and which should contain amongst other things the point's orientation in the image plane and the desirable data with regard to colour quality (colour temperature, hue, saturation and contrast). Such a digital representation can be provided by means of existing editing units for image processing, in which the invention may also be processed.

In the following description of the present invention a mathematical model is employed based on a geometrical method. The object of this embodiment is to provide the best possible explanation of the method. In practice it will be natural to implement the method in an alternative equivalent mathematical method for processing in a computer.

The invention will now be described in more detail with reference to the attached figures which illustrate the method, in which:

fig. 1 is a schematic illustration of several images of a moving object, employed for deduction of calibration or reference data;

fig. 2 illustrates the location of the different objects represented in the image relative to the reference plane;

fig. 3 illustrates the use of the data in a geometrical measuring scale; and

fig. 4 is a frontal perspective representing the image format.

Figure 1 illustrates an image sequence for an object moving along a Z-axis (parallel with C-B) in a specific scenario. Due to increasing distance from the camera's focal plane, the object's colour quality will change. The focal plane representation of the object will then have colour quality parameters which express the object's distance from a reference plane (e.g. first image in the sequence, 5') to the last image in the sequence 11', and recording of the object's movement between the different focal planes (the actual image sequence 5'-11' in figure 1), thereby obtaining an expression of the object's distance from the reference plane 5'. Known location of the focal plane, i.e. known distance values for the object combined with measured colour quality parameters for the object in each focal plane 5'-11' thereby give a reference

scale which can be used to create a geometrical measuring scale (distance scale) for measured colour quality parameters, as illustrated in figure 2.

Figure 2 illustrates a camera with a lens and how the reference plane (the camera's focal plane) is determined. The figure also illustrates different objects which in reality are located at a specific distance $d(z)$ from the reference plane. In the method according to the invention the object's actual spatial position is obtained on the basis of the colour parameters of the pixels which represent the object in the image. At the bottom of the figure the geometrical scale can be seen which in an embodiment of the invention permits the distance between an object and the reference plane to be established on the basis of the image of the object.

Figure 3 illustrates a geometrical measuring scale with geometrically coincident non-linear scales for colour temperature, colour saturation and light intensity/contrast respectively. The geometrical measuring scale will be the tool for analysing arbitrary elements in the same scenario. The measuring scale is in the form of a right-angled triangle ABC' , which describes the depth range in the image scenario, corresponding to fig. 1. Along the lateral edges there are established scales for the characteristics concerned for colour quality based on reference and empirical data. This geometrical measuring scale, which can be found in the frontal perspective illustrated in fig. 3, is the principal tool in this embodiment of the method according to the invention.

Figure 4 shows a rectangle ADEF illustrating the film/video image's format. Point C in fig. 4 describes the centre points in each focal plane, called the focal points, viewed frontally through the respective images in towards the centre of the scenario illustrated in fig. 1, and the geometrical scale in fig. 3 is indicated inserted in the lower right-hand quadrant. Fig. 4 is adapted to the metric system according to a scale which is calculated on the basis of a known procedure. Metric values will then be stored in its entire surface and contour.

Fig. 4 is called a frontal perspective and is known in architectural procedures in the case of manual designs for performing an exact calculation from outside and into a perspective. In the present embodiment of the invention this can be employed in reverse order (recursively), by means of automatic reading of fig. 3 internally in fig. 4 in an inside out perspective (fig. 3 is

thereby also adapted to the metric scale) in order to obtain exact metric distance data concerning the subject element (objects) of images.

The method according to the embodiment starts with a procedure for establishing and calibrating the tool which is employed, described above with reference to figures 1, 2, 3 and 4. Firstly, the geometrical measuring scale in fig. 3 is established with the different scales. Fig. 3 is established in its geometrical form as a right-angled triangle with corners A, B and C. Along the lateral edges there are established different scales which are responsible for the concept of the invention, viz. analysis of the colour quality in a photographed scenario. The geometrical scale is inserted in fig. 4 and the scales are calibrated by means of measured data. This must be carried out for each scenario which has to be processed.

Procedures for providing perspective-distanced parameters can then be performed, for example for providing metric distance values to objects/elements in the scenario.

Along the hypotenuse AC' in ABC' in fig. 3 the order of the images in the film sequence is marked. Each image's focal plane also follows implicitly by means of vertical construction lines up to leg AB. In the intermediate area (inside the triangle shown in fig. 3) the colour quality of the individual image will be reflected.

Along leg AB in ABC' in fig. 3 a scale is established with a distribution of hues, for example indicated in RGB format by wavelengths, λ (Lambda), designated in nanometres (nm). The scale is non-linear and analytically produced with a bias of certain colours based on reference data, the warmest and frontal colours being placed at point B, and the remaining colours in RGB order with the cool and more distant colours down towards point A. All these colours along line AB belong to the saturated segment of the colours, corresponding to the lowest values of colour temperature in the scenario's perspective. During processing the distribution of the different colours will provide deviation in relation to the initial reference data, and by taking care of such empirical data the probability increases of achieving exact calibration of the scale for various scenarios.

Along leg BC' in ABC' in fig. 3 three scales are established, in which: scale 1 is non-linear and illustrates colour temperature in Kelvin (K), lowest

at B and rising towards C',

scale 2 is non-linear and illustrates the degree of colour saturation as a percentage (%), highest at B and falling towards C', and

scale 3 is non-linear and illustrates the degree of brightness, or contrast, as a percentage (%), highest at B' and falling towards C'.

Scale 3 will have its starting point (100% contrast) in a point B' on line BC.

Point B' is normally provided by drawing a perpendicular line from corner B down to line AC', thereby forming the point of intersection 5'.

A perpendicular line is then normally drawn from point 5' up to line BC', thereby forming point B'.

The vertical 4 in fig. 3 thus marks the closest focal plane, designated 5' in fig. 1.

After having established in fig. 3 scales containing initial reference data, the entire geometrical scale is inserted in fig. 4 as indicated, either in the lower

right-hand or the lower left-hand quadrant. Fig. 4, with fig. 3's geometrical scale inserted, is laid on top of images in a scenario. The geometrical scale's extent is calibrated for the scenario in question according to measured data.

Scale 1, the colour temperature scale, provides a guideline for the further treatment. It is non-linear and produced with a bias of certain colours based on reference data, cf. the RGB scale along leg AB. Scale 1 is calibrated at the end point, and also by means of empirical data if this is available.

Scale 1 will have its end point in an apparently coincident point C' with scales 2 and 3. At point C', called the point of convergence, measurable contrast and colour saturation will converge towards 0%. Correspondingly,

point C' on scale 1 will be the highest possible measurable colour temperature in the scenario. The point of convergence C' is provided by marking these measured values on the three scales concerned from the last recorded focal plane/point in the image series and selecting an average, or alternatively measured values are employed from the most remote element/object recorded in the scenario. If empirical data indicate otherwise, an algorithm may be selected for a weighed mean which gives the end point C'.

Scale 1 for colour temperature is a transfer (depiction) of the figure's saturated colour scale along line AB with regard to colour saturation and

contrast. This implies that the area inside the triangular scale reflects the perspective change for all colours in the scenario. Thus each point in each image in the scenario is represented by its colour, degree of saturation and degree of brightness. The point's orientation in space related to the camera's location is unambiguously defined, and by means of adequate processing exact spatial co-ordinates (x,y,z) can be deduced.

After having established the tool in the form of a calibrated geometrical scale (fig. 3) inserted in a frontal perspective (fig. 4) as described above, the actual processing of the images in a scenario follows, i.e. procedures for providing perspective-distanced parameters. The tool is placed over the individual images in the scenario, and the desired parameters are obtained by known procedures.

If the metric distance to objects or elements in the images is required, the following procedure may be performed:

Desired points in the image surface incidental to the object/element are transferred via construction lines to the main perspective line AC. Perpendicular lines are normally drawn from these points on line AC up to line BC' to a point of intersection, cf. focal planes/points 11', 10' and 9' in fig. 3. From the point of intersection with the main perspective line AC a line is also drawn up to distance point B as well as on down in its extension to a point of intersection with lateral edge AF, or in its extension outside ADEF. The metric distance to the point in the image surface from the camera will then be proportional to the distance from point A depending on the scale (or proportional to the distance from point F if the template is inserted in the lower left-hand quadrant in fig. 4).

If metric height is required incidental to or between objects and elements in the images, a similar procedure may be performed by drawing construction lines up to line CD and then in line from the point of intersection with CD out to line AD where metric values are read off.

If metric height is required corresponding to the object or between the object and elements in the images for determination of contour, a similar known procedure may be performed.

Such metric parameters can be employed in object diagnostics by first determining spatial co-ordinates (x,y,z), i.e. converting from two-dimensional representation to three-dimensional representation for the entire or parts of the image scenario, and subsequently performing a form element analysis with regard to alteration in circumference, contour, colours, etc.

If the colour quality of an object/element relative to a known metric distance is required, the above procedure can be performed in reverse order. Such perspective-distanced colour parameters can be employed to create an exaggerated perspective and to manipulate two-dimensional image material so that it appears to be three-dimensional, and can be viewed by means of known video data technology, for example on high-resolution screens (Virtual 3D TV).

By means of a combination of the above and other possible embodiments of the method according to the invention, data can be deduced which can be used in production of real three-dimensional television (Real 3D TV), for viewing on a medium suited thereto.



PATENT CLAIMS

1. A method for image processing, especially for converting a two-dimensional image of a three-dimensional real subject into a three-dimensional representation of the same three-dimensional real subject, wherein the subject is composed of elements, each of which is represented by a pixel in the two-dimensional image,

characterized by determining the distance $d(z)$ to elements in the image surface in relation to a reference plane with specified hues by measuring the colour quality of each pixel in the image expressed in values for colour temperature, degree of saturation and contrast, the distance being measured along a z-axis normally on the reference plane and with origin therein, with the result that for each of the values for colour temperature or degree of saturation and contrast a distance value $dt; ds; dc$ is obtained for the element represented by the pixel concerned in the image, the distance $d(z)$ between the element and the reference plane being established as a weighed average of the distance values dt, ds, dc ; $d(z) = 1/3 * (kt * dt + ks * ds + kc * dc)$, where kt, ks and kc constitute weight factors based on empirical data, for determining on the basis of the established distance value $d(z)$ and the pixel's x,y co-ordinates in the image plane real spatial co-ordinates X, Y, Z for the element represented by the pixel by performing the transformations $d(x) \rightarrow X, d(y) \rightarrow Y$ and $d(z) \rightarrow Z, X, Y, Z$ being the element's co-ordinates in a three-dimensional co-ordinate system with origin in the reference plane.

2. A method according to claim 1, characterized in that the transformations $d(x) \rightarrow X, d(y) \rightarrow Y$ are obtained by means of a known procedure for converting image points in the plane into points in space by means of calculated ratios (scale) between the camera's image plane and the closest focal plane in the space which constitutes the reference plane.

3. A method according to claim 1, characterized in that the transformation $d(z) \rightarrow Z$ is obtained by recursive application of the procedure for frontal perspective construction for reading metric distance from a standardised perspective drawing.



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4. A method according to claim 3,
characterized in that the empirical data are organised in a geometrical colour
model suitable for use in connection with frontal perspective construction.

5. A method according to claim 1,

5 characterized in that a reference scale is created by determining values of the
parameters for colour quality by means of an image sequence of individual
images, each of which depicts the subject in different predetermined focal
planes, the changes in the colour quality parameters between the respective
focal planes being used for calibration of a geometric measuring scale which
10 refers respective measured colour quality parameters to metric or perspective
distance values.

6. A method according to claim 5,

characterized in that the geometrical measuring scale comprises
geometrically coincident non-linear scales based on reference and empirical
15 data for colour temperature in Kelvin, colour saturation as a percentage and
light intensity/contrast as a percentage respectively, the colour temperature
increasing towards its maximum value at the scales' common end point, or
point of convergence, where the colour saturation and the light
intensity/contrast also approach zero.

20 7. A method according to claim 6,

characterized in that the non-linear scales' common point of convergence is
determined by means of the colour quality parameters for one or more
remotely located elements in the image which was focused on the focal plane
for furthest distance, the measured values for this element or average
25 measured values for these elements determining the point of convergence.

8. A method according to claim 7,

characterized in that the geometrical measuring scale is inserted in a frontal
perspective diagram which corresponds to the format of the two-dimensional
image and with the non-linear scales calibrated for the subject of the image
30 concerned for determination of the distance between the reference plane and
an element in the image or between the reference plane and one or more
pixels which form part of the element.

9. A method according to claim 8,

characterized in that a perspective-based distance value is employed.





10. A method according to claim 8,
characterized in that a metric distance value is emp:



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