Lecture 3: History of Video Gaming Hardware: The 3-D Era

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Sega Saturn (1995)

- **Two** ≈29 MHz Hitachi SuperH-2 7604 32-bit
- Hitachi SuperH-1 - controller for CD-ROM
- 11.3 MHz Motorola 68EC000 sound controller
- 22.6 MHz Yamaha FH1 DSP sound processor
- 1 MB SDRAM, 1 MB DRAM
- 1.5 MB VRAM
- 4 KB VDP2 on-chip color RAM
- 512 KB audio RAM
- 512 KB CD-ROM cache
- 32 KB nonvolatile RAM
- Initial launch price $400
  - Not initially sold at a loss
- 10 million sold

Photo and info from Wikipedia
Sega Saturn - Complexity

“One very fast central processor would be preferable.

I don't think all programmers have the ability to program two CPUs — most can only get about one-and-a-half times the speed you can get from one SH-2.

I think that only one in 100 programmers are good enough to get this kind of speed [nearly double] out of the Saturn.”

- Yu Suzuki, on Saturn Virtua Fighter development

Quote from Wikipedia
Sega Saturn - Graphics

- ≈7.1590 MHz “VDP 1” 32-bit Video Display Processor
- ≈7.1590 MHz “VDP 2” 32-bit
- Quadrilaterals - not triangles!
- No hardware decompression
Sony Playstation (1995)

- ≈34 MHz MIPS R3000A-type (R3051) 32 bit
- 2M main RAM
- 1M video RAM
- 512K sound RAM
- 32K CD-ROM Buffer
- 512K OS ROM
- 128K Memory cards
- $300 at launch
- 102 million sold

Insomniac’s “Disruptor” (1996)

www.youtube.com/v/VdfV7BtYVF5s
Sony Playstation - Graphics

- 24-bit color, 256x224 to 640x480 resolution
- “Geometry Transformation Engine”
  - Built into same chip with MIPS R3000A CPU
  - 66 MIPS
  - 360,000 flat-shaded polygons per second
  - 180,000 texture mapped, Gouraud shaded polygons per second
- “Data Decompression Engine”
  - 16x16 Inverse Discrete Cosine Transforms (ICDT)
  - DMA transfer of uncompressed images to GPU

Photo and info from Wikipedia
Nintendo 64 (1996)

- ≈94 MHz MIPS R4300i-type
  - 64 bit registers, instructions, internal data path
  - 32 bit external data path
- 4M RAM - unified address space
- 32K colors, 256x224 to 640x480 resolution
- $200 at launch
- 32 million sold
- SGI CPU/GPU combo design
  - SGI bought out MIPS
  - Originally for Sega, but deal fell through

Photo and info from Wikipedia
Nintendo 64 - Graphics

- ≈65 MHz “Reality Coprocessor” (RCP)
  - Designed by SGI
- “Reality Signal Processor” (RSP)
  - MIPS R4000-based 8-bit integer vector processor
  - Programmable through microcode
  - Geometry transforms, clipping, lighting
  - SGI Fast3D microcode: ~100,000 polygons per second
  - Can also handle some sound duties
  - Presages some of the programmability of modern GPUs
- “Reality Drawing Processor” (RDP)
  - Rasterizer (turns triangles into pixels)

Photo and info from Wikipedia
Nintendo 64 Killer App - Rare’s “Goldeneye 007”

- 4-way split screen multiplayer
  - [http://www.youtube.com/v/7cf5kkoYexI](http://www.youtube.com/v/7cf5kkoYexI)

Info from Wikipedia
Nintendo 64 - Last console to use cartridges

- 4 MB to 64 MB (Resident Evil 2)
- Some cartridges have nonvolatile RAM for saved games

Pros
- More piracy resistant than CDs
- Faster loading time (CD-ROMs slow at the time)
- No lengthy load screens like on Playstation
- More durable (important for children)

Cons
- Small capacity compared to CD
- Higher manufacturing costs and lead times - turned off third-party vendors, ate into profit margins

Photo and info from Wikipedia
Sega Dreamcast (1999)

- 200 MHz Hitachi SuperH
  - 32-bit instruction set, 128-bit FPU functions
- 16M main ram, 8M video RAM, 2M sound RAM
- Launch price: $200
- 10.6 million sold

Photo and info from Wikipedia
Sega Dreamcast - Graphics

- Imagination Technologies PowerVR2
  - PowerVR series competed with Voodoo series by 3dfx
  - Both companies eventually killed by ATI & NVIDIA
- Over 5 million polygons/second (7 million peak)
- Hardware gouraud shading, z-buffering, anti-aliasing and bump mapping

Info from Wikipedia
Sega Dreamcast - Namco’s “Soul Calibur”

www.youtube.com/v/YeJIlf8Vdk4

Screenshot from Wikipedia
Microsoft Xbox (2001)

- Sony’s success with PS1 worried Microsoft
- 32-bit 733 MHz Pentium III-based Celeron
- 64 MB main RAM
- Development very much like developing Windows PC games
  - DirectX API
  - Easy to make PC and Xbox versions
- DVD movie playback
- $300 at launch
- Killer app - Halo: Combat Evolved

Photo and info from Wikipedia
Microsoft Xbox - Graphics

- 233 MHz NVIDIA “NV2A” GPU
- Similar to GeForce 3 and GeForce 4
- 485,416 triangles per frame at 60fps
- 970,833 triangles per frame at 30fps
- Bilinear, trilinear, and anisotropic texture filtering
- Texture compression, full scene anti-aliasing
Nintendo Gamecube (2001)

- “Gekko” - 485 MHz PowerPC 750CXe-based core
- Nonstandard, small optical disk
  - Can’t be used as a standard DVD player
  - Some protection from piracy
  - Avoid DVD Consortium licensing fees
- 24M main RAM
- 1M texture buffer
- 2M frame buffer
- 21 million sold (as of June 2007)

Photo and info from Wikipedia
Nintendo Gamecube - Graphics

• 24-bit color, 640x480 interlaced or progressive scan
• “Flipper” - 162 MHz, co-designed by Nintendo and ArtX
• TEV “Texture EnVironment” engine
  – Similar to “pixel shader”
• Fixed-function hardware transform and lighting
  – 12+ million polygons/second
• Bilinear, trilinear, and anisotropic texture filtering
• Bump mapping, reflection mapping

Photo and info from Wikipedia
Microsoft XBox 360 (2005)

- 3.2 GHz “Xenon” triple-core PowerPC
  - 2 hardware threads per processor
- 256 MB main RAM
- 500 MHz ATI “Xenos” GPU
- Xbox Live online service
  - “Live arcade” game distribution
- HD-DVD drive available as ad-on
- Launch price: $399 core, $299 premium (kind of useless)
- Power Mac G5 early devkits?

Photo and info from Wikipedia
Sony Playstation 3 (2006)

- IBM/Toshiba/Sony Cell processor
  - PowerPC Processing Element (PPE)
  - 8 Synergistic Processing Elements (SPE)
- 256M main RAM, 256M graphics RAM
- Blu-Ray drive
  - Part of Sony’s strategy of establishing Blu-Ray movie format
- Launch price: $500 (crippled), $600 (“real” version)
- Sold at an estimated loss of around $250
- Original $600 model recently dropped to $500
- New $600 (80 gig) model released

Photo and info from Wikipedia
Sony Playstation 3 - Graphics

- 550 MHz NVIDIA RSX
- Closely related to NVIDIA 7800
- Sadly, Linux users currently do not have access to the accelerated graphics
  – Stuck using frame buffer mode

Photo and info from Wikipedia
Nintendo Wii (2006)

- Not a lot of info publically released
- “Broadway” - 729 MHz PowerPC core
- 243 MHz ATI “Hollywood” GPU
- 88 MB main RAM
- 24 MB RAM in GPU
- 64 MB external video RAM
- Regular sized DVDs
  - But original Wii won’t play DVD movies
- Bundled with Wii Sports - “killer app”

Photo and info from Wikipedia
State of Mac Gaming

- PowerPC Mac OS users were lucky to get a few ports here and there
- Intel Mac OS users often boot into Windows for their gaming needs
- At MacWorld, Electronic Arts Chief Creative Officer Bing Gordon announced renewed interest in supporting Mac OS X
- Latest id game engine - “id tech 5” (“Rage”) will spit out Xbox 360, PS3, Windows, and Mac OS executables in a single build

www.youtube.com/watch?v=HvuTtrkVtns