

GL2PS: an OpenGL to PostScript printing library

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Version 0.52, 14 February 2002

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1 Introduction

GL2PS is a library for creating PostScript output from any OpenGL application. Though it was primarily designed for three-dimensional geometry, mesh and post-processing visualization, it may be useful every time high quality vector output is desired. The main difference between GL2PS and other similar libraries is the use of sorting algorithms capable of handling intersecting and stretched polygons, as well as non manifold objects.

The library, written in C, is released under GNU Library General Public License (see <http://www.gnu.org/> for more details), and is available at <http://www.geuz.org/gl2ps/>. Any corrections, questions or suggestions should be e-mailed to geuz@geuz.org.

The interface consists of seven functions, all beginning with the prefix `gl2ps`. All the data structures and the symbolic constants peculiar to GL2PS begin with GL2PS.

2 Usage

2.1 gl2psBeginPage and gl2psEndPage

2.1.1 Specification

```
void gl2psBeginPage( char *title, char *producer, GLint format,
                    GLint sort, GLint options, GLint colormode,
                    GLint colorsize, GL2PSrgba *colortable,
                    GLint buffersize,
                    FILE *stream, char *filename )

void gl2psEndPage( void )
```

2.1.2 Description

gl2psBeginPage and **gl2psEndPage** delimit the OpenGL commands that will be caught in the feedback buffer and output to **stream**. The parameters given to **gl2psBeginPage** determine the way primitives are handled:

title Specifies the plot title. For PostScript output, this string is placed in the **%%Title** field.

producer Specifies the plot producer. For PostScript output, this string is placed in the **%%For** field.

format Specifies the output format, chosen among:

GL2PS_PS The output stream will be a PostScript file.

GL2PS_TEX The output stream will be a **L^AT_EX** file, containing only the text strings of the plot (cf. section 2.2), as well as an **\includegraphics** command permitting to include a graphic file having the same basename as **filename**.¹

sort Specifies the sorting algorithm, chosen among:

GL2PS_NO_SORT The primitives are not sorted, and are output in **stream** in the order they appear in the feedback buffer.

GL2PS_SIMPLE_SORT The primitives are sorted according to their barycenter. This can be sufficient for simple scenes.

¹The two steps to generate a **L^AT_EX** plot with GL2PS are thus:

1. generate the PostScript file (e.g. **file.ps**) with no text strings, using the **GL2PS_PS** format combined with the **GL2PS_NO_TEXT** option;
2. generate the **L^AT_EX** file **file.tex**, using the **GL2PS_TEX** format and specifying **file.tex** as the **filename** argument to **gl2psBeginPage**.

You can of course combine the **L^AT_EX** output with other graphic formats than PostScript. For example, you may transform **file.ps** into **file.pdf** and use **pdfL^AT_EX** with the same **file.tex** as for PostScript. You may also use a bitmap image (e.g. Jpeg or png) and still combine it with **file.tex**.

GL2PS_BSP_SORT The primitives are inserted in a BSP tree. The tree is then traversed back to front in a painter-like algorithm. This should be used for complex three-dimensional scenes, but keep in mind that the BSP tree algorithm is quite memory hungry...

options Sets global plot options, chosen among (multiple options can be combined with the bitwise inclusive OR symbol |):

GL2PS_NONE No option.

GL2PS_DRAW_BACKGROUND The background frame is drawn.

GL2PS_SIMPLE_LINE_OFFSET A small offset is added in the z-buffer to all the lines in the plot. This is a simplified version of the **GL2PS_POLYGON_OFFSET_FILL** functionality (cf. section 2.3), putting all the lines of the rendered image slightly in front of their actual position. This thus performs a simple anti-aliasing solution, e.g. for finite element like meshes.

GL2PS_SILENT All the messages written by GL2PS on the error stream are suppressed.

GL2PS_BEST_ROOT The construction of the BSP tree is optimized by choosing the root primitives leading to the minimum number of splits. This is (really) not efficient yet.

GL2PS_NO_TEXT All the text strings are suppressed from output. This is useful to produce the image part of a L^AT_EX output.

colormode Specifies the color mode: **GL_RGBA** or **GL_COLOR_INDEX**.

colorsize Specifies the size of the colormap if **colormode** is **GL_COLOR_INDEX**.

colortable Contains the colormap if **colormode** is **GL_COLOR_INDEX**. This colormap must contain **colorsize** elements of type **GL2PSrgba**.

buffersize Specifies the size of the feedback buffer.

stream Specifies the stream to which data is printed.

filename Specifies a name for the stream to which data is printed.

2.2 gl2psText

2.2.1 Specification

```
void gl2psText( char *string, char *fontname, GLint fontsize )
```

2.2.2 Description

`gl2psText` permits to include text in the PostScript or \LaTeX output in a very simple way. The text is inserted at the current raster position (set by one of the `glRasterPos` OpenGL commands). Beware that text will be sorted according to the position of the leftmost element of the string only. The parameters are:

string Specifies the text string to print.

fontname Specifies the name of a valid PostScript font (for example "`Times`" or "`HelveticaBoldItalic`"). This parameter has no influence for \LaTeX output.

fontsize Specifies the size of the font. This parameter has no influence for \LaTeX output.

2.3 `gl2psEnable` and `gl2psDisable`

2.3.1 Specification

```
void gl2psEnable( GLint mode )
```

```
void gl2psDisable( GLint mode )
```

2.3.2 Description

`gl2psEnable` and `gl2psDisable` delimit OpenGL commands to which a local mode is applied. These modes are:

`GL2PS_POLYGON_OFFSET_FILL` Tries to emulate the `GL_POLYGON_OFFSET_FILL` functionality. The value of the offset is taken as the current value of the corresponding OpenGL offset (set with `glPolygonOffset`). Not fully functional yet.

`GL2PS_POLYGON_BOUNDARY` Not implemented yet.

`GL2PS_LINE_STIPPLE` Tries to emulate the `GL_LINE_STIPPLE` functionality.

2.4 `gl2psPointSize` and `gl2psLineWidth`

2.4.1 Specification

```
void gl2psPointSize( GLfloat value )
```

```
void gl2psLineWidth( GLfloat value )
```

2.4.2 Description

`gl2psPointSize` and `gl2psLineSize` emulate the standard `glPointSize` and the `glLineWidth` functions. They are necessary since the point sizes and line widths are not saved in the OpenGL feedback buffer.

3 Example

Here is a typical calling sequence to produce BSP sorted PostScript output in the file "MyFile", with all the lines slightly shifted front in the z-buffer. The `draw()` function contains all the OpenGL commands.

```
FILE *fp = fopen("MyFile", "w");
int bufsize = 0, state = GL2PS_OVERFLOW;

while( state == GL2PS_OVERFLOW ){
    bufsize += 1024*1024;
    gl2psBeginPage ( "MyTitle", "MySoftware",
                    GL2PS_PS, GL2PS_BSP_SORT,
                    GL2PS_SIMPLE_LINE_OFFSET | GL2PS_SILENT,
                    GL_RGBA, 0, NULL, bufsize, fp, NULL );

    draw();
    state = gl2psEndPage();
}

fclose(fp);
```

To output the text "MyText" at the current raster position, the `draw()` function should contain something like:

```
gl2psText("MyText", "Courier", 12);
```

4 Contributors

Michael Sweet (mike@easysw.com) for the original implementation of the feedback buffer parser; Marc Umé (marc.ume@digitalgraphics.be) for the original list code; Jean-François Remacle (remacle@scorec.rpi.edu) for plane equation fixes; Bart Kaptein (B.L.Kaptein@lumc.nl) for memory leak fixes; Quy Nguyen-Dai (quy@vnilux.com) for output file size optimization; Sam Buss (sbuss@ucsd.edu) for the new smooth shaded triangle code; Shane Hill (Shane.Hill@dsto.defence.gov.au) for the landscape option implementation.

Projects similar to GL2PS include: Michael Sweet's GLP library (<http://dns.easysw.com/~mike/opengl/index.html>); Mark J. Kilgard's renderers (<http://reality.sgi.com/opengl/tips/Feedback.html>); the GLpr library from CEI international (<http://www.ceintl.com/>).

5 Versions

0.1 (Feb 12, 2000) First distributed version.

0.2 (Feb 20, 2000) Added `GL2PS_POLYGON_BOUNDARY` and `GL2PS_BEST_ROOT`. Changed arguments of `gl2psBeginPage` and `gl2psText`. Corrected some memory allocation stuff. First version of this user's guide.

- 0.21** (Mar 16, 2000) Initialization fixes.
- 0.3** (Jul 29, 2000) Code cleaning. Added `GL2PS_LINE_STIPPLE`.
- 0.31** (Aug 14, 2000) Better handling of erroneous primitives.
- 0.32** (May 23, 2001) Fixed memory leaks.
- 0.4** (Jun 12, 2001) Added `gl2psPointSize` and `gl2psLineWidth`. Some code cleaning to allow easier generation of vector file formats other than postscript.
- 0.41** (Aug 6, 2001) Fixed string allocation (1 char too short). Set smaller default line width.
- 0.42** (Oct 8, 2001) Optimization of output file size. PostScript header cleaning. Better line width computation.
- 0.5** (Nov 19, 2001) New `format` and `filename` arguments for `gl2psBeginPage`. Better PostScript handling of smooth shaded primitives. Fix handling of zero-length strings. New options for \LaTeX output. Changed (again) the line width computation.
- 0.51** (Jan 22, 2002) Fixed erroneous drawing of text primitives lying outside the viewport.
- 0.52** (Feb 14, 2002) New `GL2PS_LANDSCAPE` option.