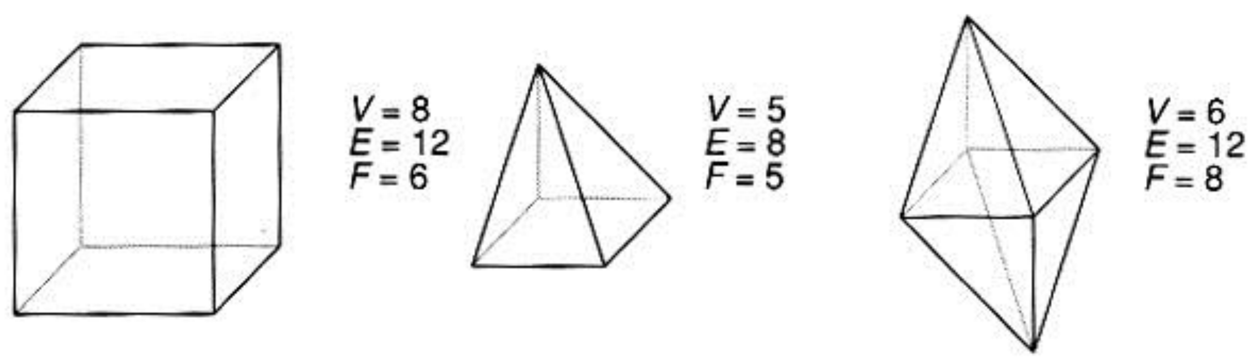
Triangle meshes

COMP575/COMP 770

Notation

- n_T = #tris; n_V = #verts; n_E = #edges
- Euler: $n_V - n_E + n_T = 2$ for a simple closed surface
  - and in general sums to small integer
  - argument for implication that n_T:n_E:n_V is about 2:3:1



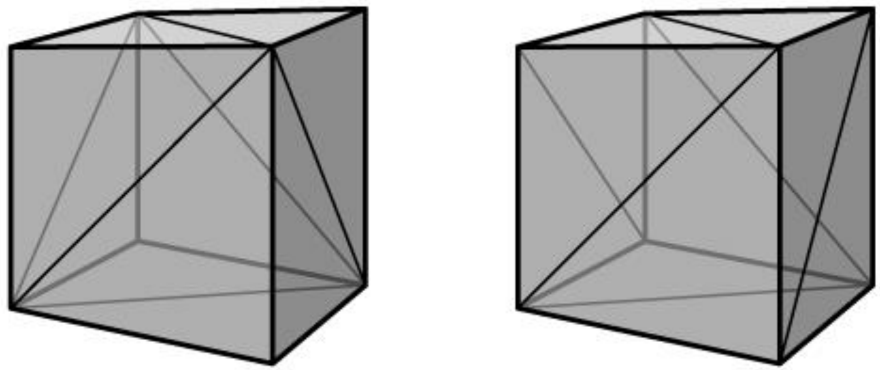
[Foley et al.]

Validity of triangle meshes

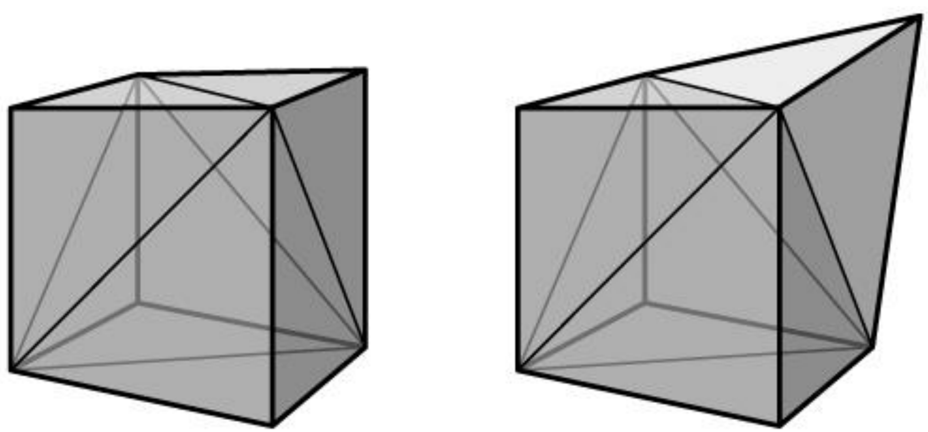
- in many cases we care about the mesh being able to bound a region of space nicely
- in other cases we want triangle meshes to fulfill assumptions of algorithms that will operate on them (and may fail on malformed input)
- two completely separate issues:
  - topology: how the triangles are connected (ignoring the positions entirely)
  - geometry: where the triangles are in 3D space

Topology/geometry examples

- same geometry, different mesh topology:



- same mesh topology, different geometry:



Representation of triangle meshes

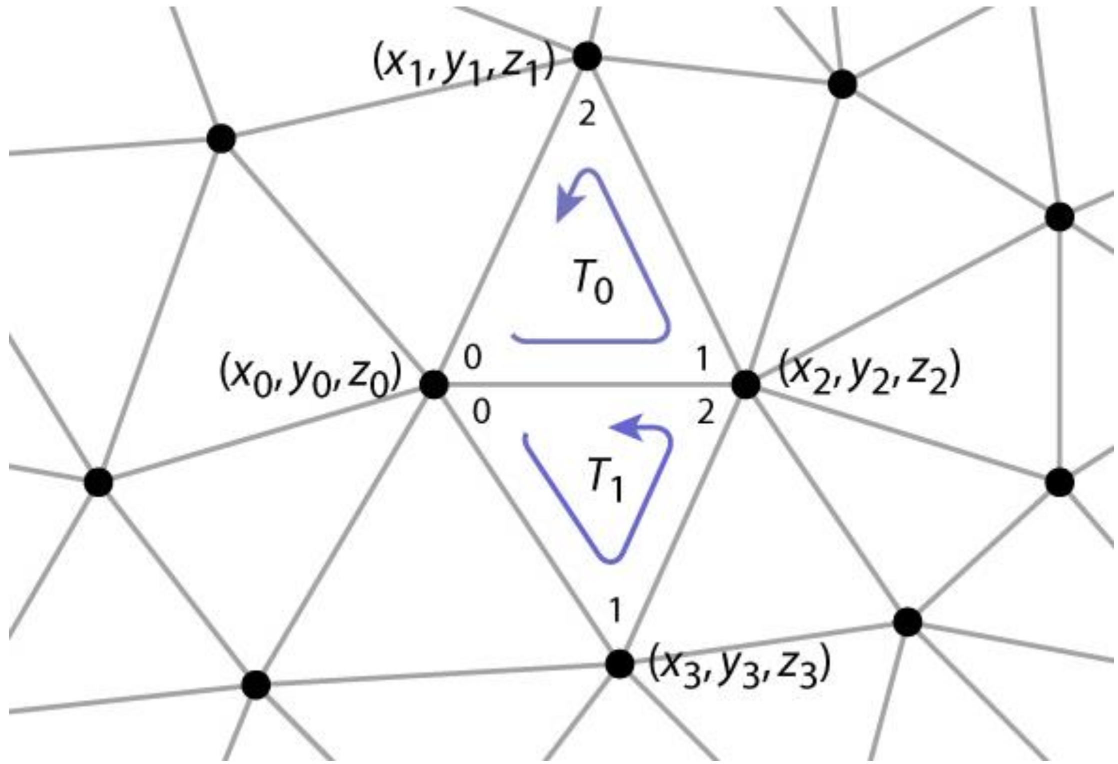
- Compactness
- Efficiency for rendering
  - enumerate all triangles as triples of 3D points
- Efficiency of queries
  - all vertices of a triangle
  - all triangles around a vertex
  - neighboring triangles of a triangle
  - (need depends on application)
    - finding triangle strips
    - computing subdivision surfaces
    - mesh editing

Representations for triangle meshes

- Separate triangles
- Indexed triangle set
  - shared vertices
- Triangle strips and triangle fans
  - compression schemes for transmission to hardware
- Triangle-neighbor data structure
  - supports adjacency queries
- Winged-edge data structure
  - supports general polygon meshes

Separate triangles

	[0]	[1]	[2]
tris[0]	x_0, y_0, z_0	x_2, y_2, z_2	x_1, y_1, z_1
tris[1]	x_0, y_0, z_0	x_3, y_3, z_3	x_2, y_2, z_2
	⋮	⋮	⋮

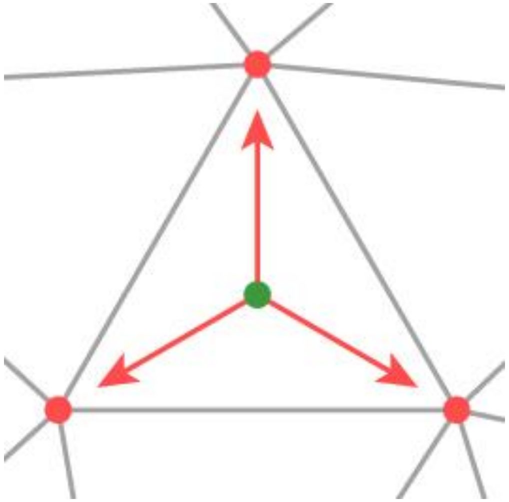


Separate triangles

- array of triples of points
  - float[n_T][3][3]: about 72 bytes per vertex
    - 2 triangles per vertex (on average)
    - 3 vertices per triangle
    - 3 coordinates per vertex
    - 4 bytes per coordinate (float)
- various problems
  - wastes space (each vertex stored 6 times)
  - cracks due to roundoff
  - difficulty of finding neighbors at all

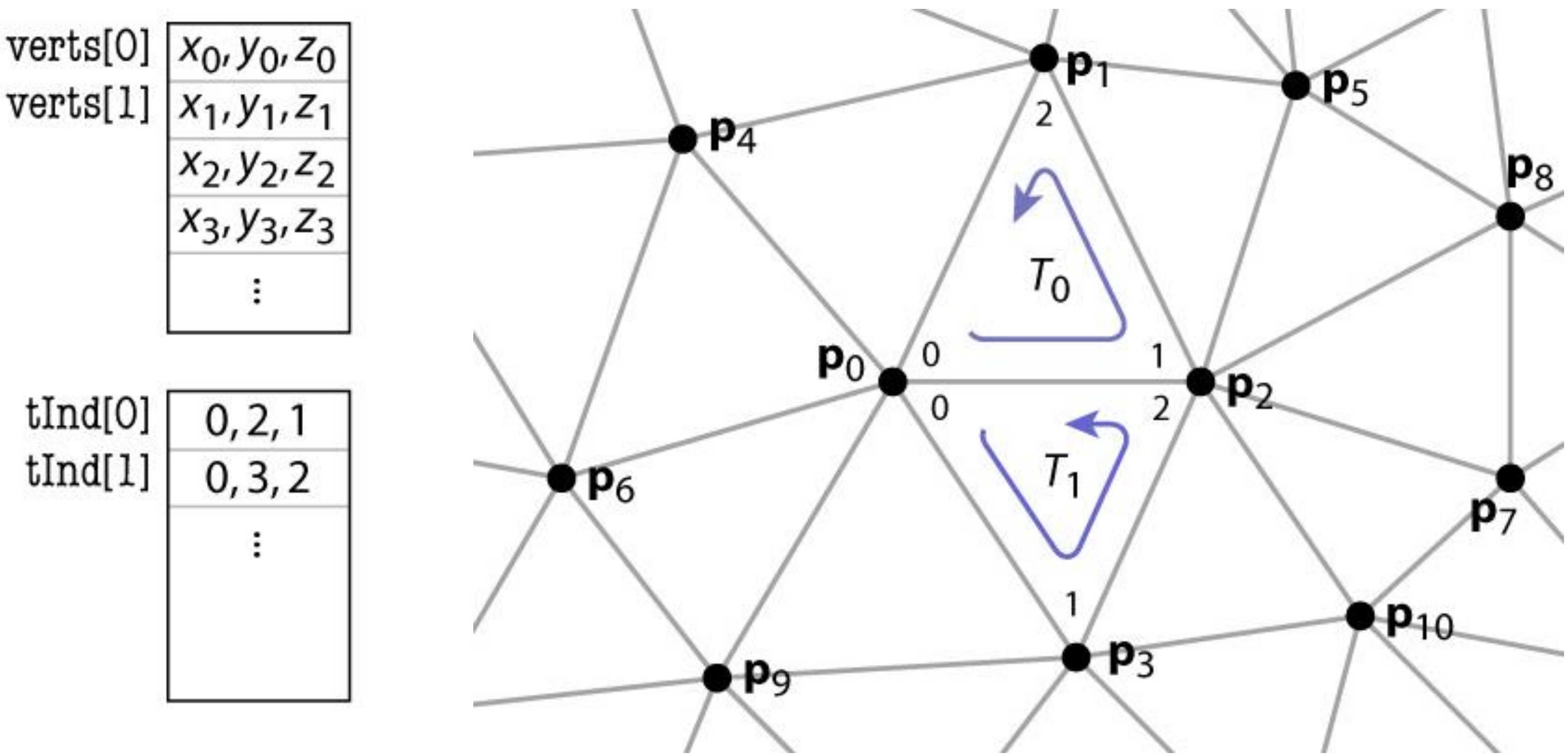
Indexed triangle set

- Store each vertex once
- Each triangle points to its three vertices



```
Triangle {
Vertex vertex[3];
}

Vertex {
float position[3];  // or other data
}

// ... or ...

Mesh {
float verts[nv][3];  // vertex positions (or other data)
int tInd[nt][3];  // vertex indices
}
```

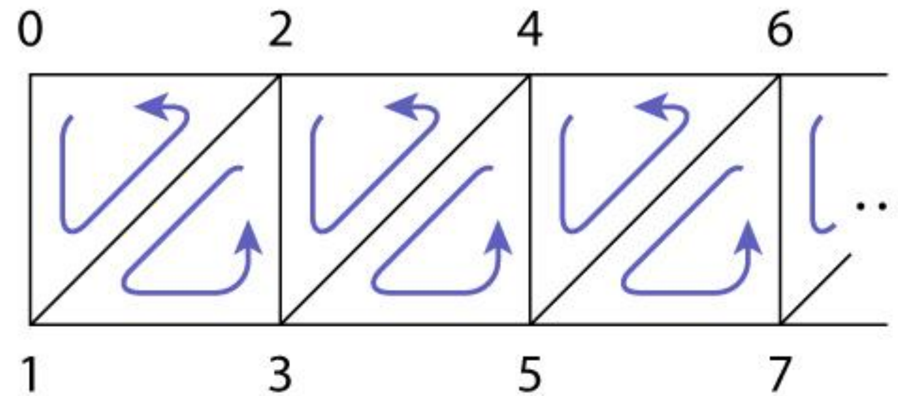
Indexed triangle set



Indexed triangle set

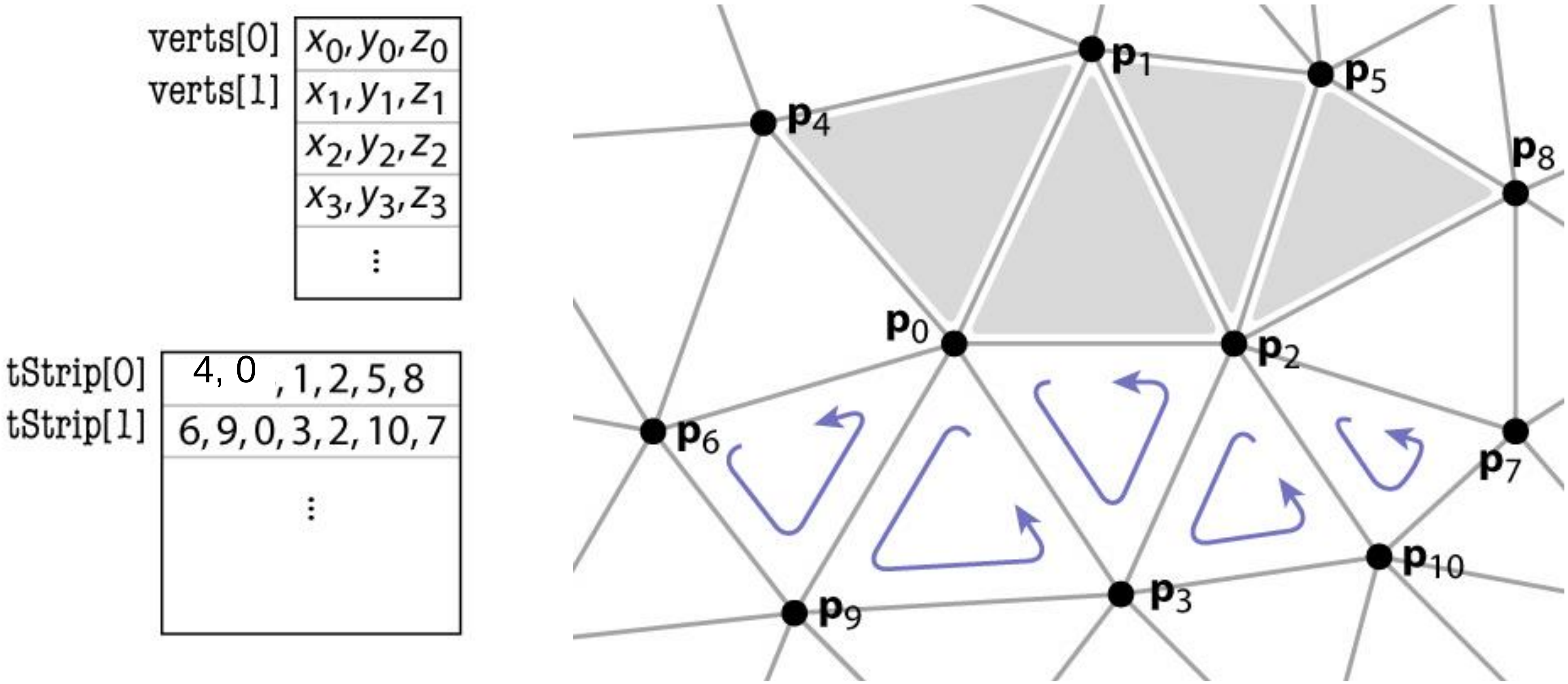
- array of vertex positions
  - float[n_V][3]: 12 bytes per vertex
    - (3 coordinates x 4 bytes) per vertex
- array of triples of indices (per triangle)
  - int[n_T][3]: about 24 bytes per vertex
    - 2 triangles per vertex (on average)
    - (3 indices x 4 bytes) per triangle
- total storage: 36 bytes per vertex (factor of 2 savings)
- represents topology and geometry separately
- finding neighbors is at least well defined

Triangle strips



- Take advantage of the mesh property
  - each triangle is usually adjacent to the previous
  - let every vertex create a triangle by reusing the second and third vertices of the previous triangle
  - every sequence of three vertices produces a triangle (but not in the same order)
  - e. g., 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, … leads to
    (0 1 2), (2 1 3), (2 3 4), (4 3 5), (4 5 6), (6 5 7), …
  - for long strips, this requires about one index per triangle

Triangle strips

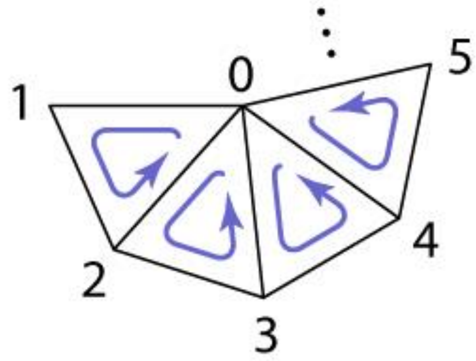


Triangle strips

- array of vertex positions
  - float[n_V][3]: 12 bytes per vertex
    - (3 coordinates x 4 bytes) per vertex
- array of index lists
  - int[n_S][*variable*]: 2 + *n* indices per strip
  - on average, (1 + ∑) indices per triangle (assuming long strips)
    - 2 triangles per vertex (on average)
    - about 4 bytes per triangle (on average)
- total is 20 bytes per vertex (limiting best case)
  - factor of 3.6 over separate triangles; 1.8 over indexed mesh

Triangle fans

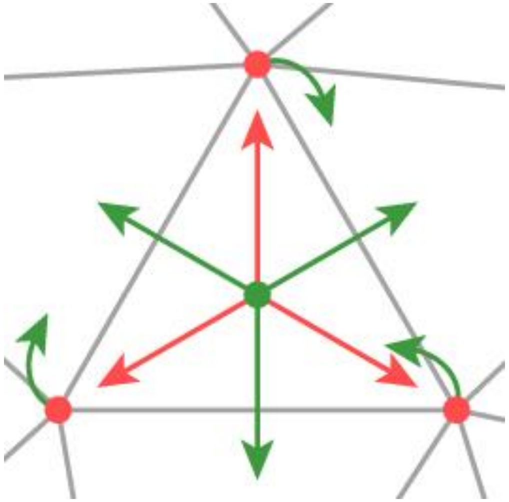
- Same idea as triangle strips, but keep oldest rather than newest
  - every sequence of three vertices produces a triangle
  - e. g., 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, … leads to
    (0 1 2), (0 2 3), (0 3 4), (0 4 5), …
  - for long fans, this requires about one index per triangle



- Memory considerations exactly the same as triangle strip

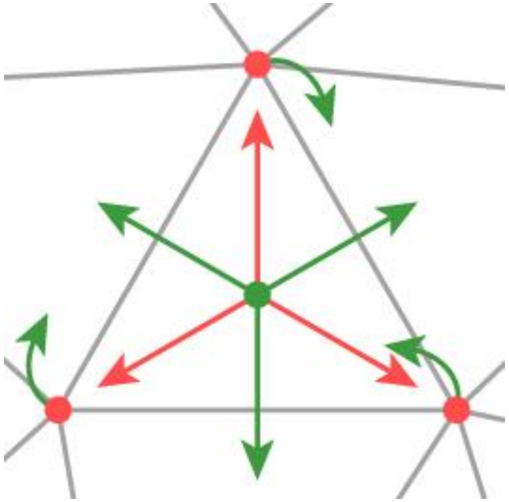
Triangle neighbor structure

- Extension to indexed triangle set
- Triangle points to its three neighboring triangles
- Vertex points to a single neighboring triangle
- Can now enumerate triangles around a vertex



Triangle neighbor structure

```
Triangle {
Triangle nbr[3];
Vertex vertex[3];
}

// t.neighbor[i] is adjacent
// across the edge from i to i+1

Vertex {
// ... per-vertex data ...
Triangle t;  // any adjacent tri
}

// ... or ...

Mesh {
// ... per-vertex data ...
int tInd[nt][3];  // vertex indices
int tNbr[nt][3]; // indices of neighbor triangles
int vTri[nv]; // index of any adjacent triangle
}
```

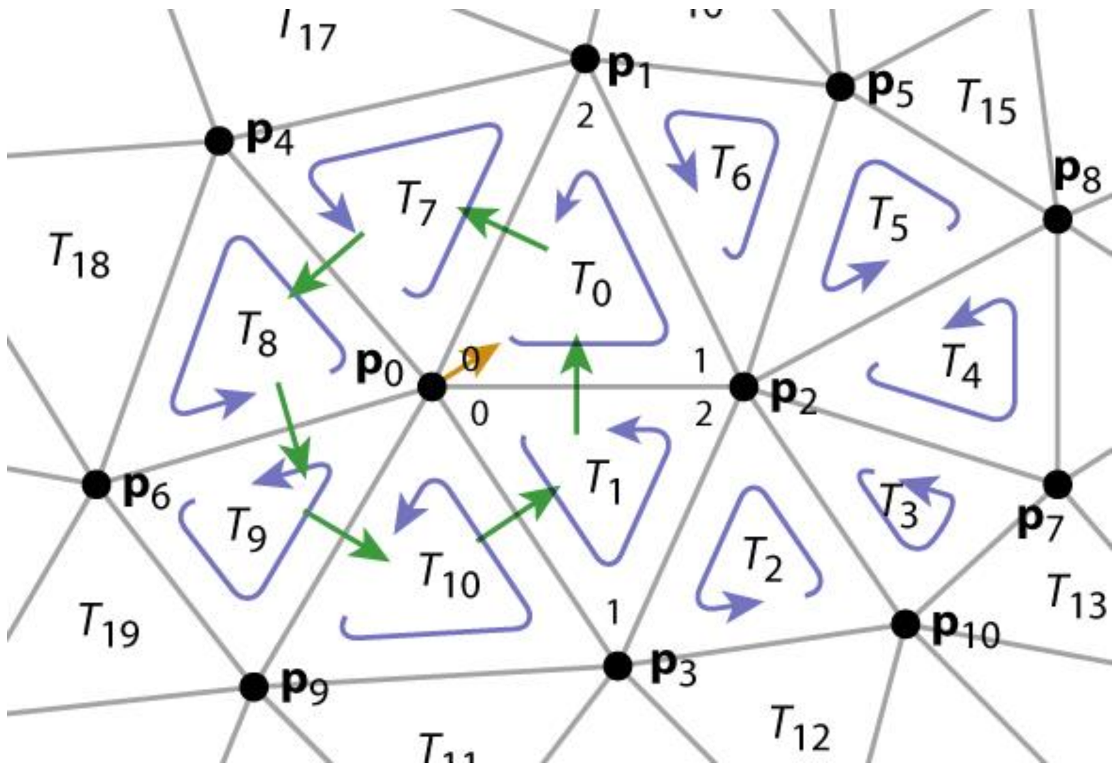


Triangle neighbor structure

vTri[0]	0
vTri[1]	6
vTri[2]	1
vTri[3]	1
	⋮

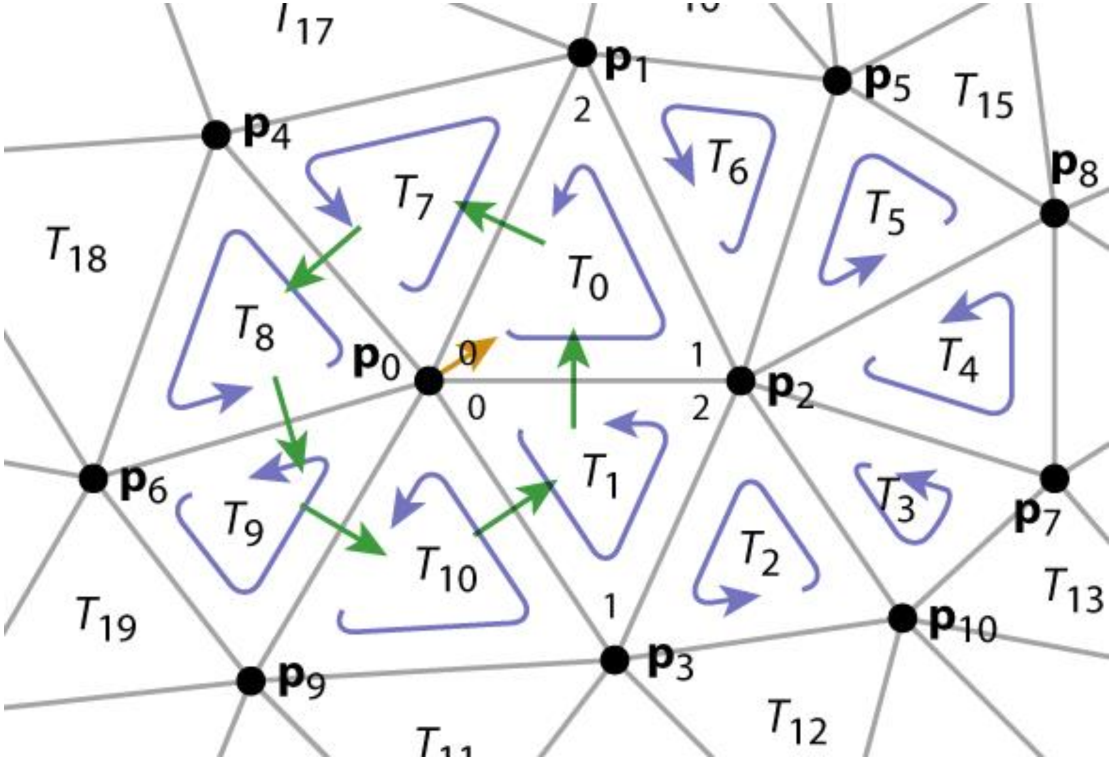
tNbr[0]	1, 6, 7
tNbr[1]	10, 2, 0
tNbr[2]	3, 1, 12
tNbr[3]	2, 13, 4
	⋮

tInd[0]	0, 2, 1
tInd[1]	0, 3, 2
tInd[2]	10, 2, 3
tInd[3]	2,10,7
	⋮



Triangle neighbor structure

```
TrianglesOfVertex(v) {
t = v.t;
do {
        find t.vertex[i] == v;
        t = t.nbr[pred(i)];
        } while (t != v.t);
}

pred(i) = (i+2) % 3;
succ(i) = (i+1) % 3;
```

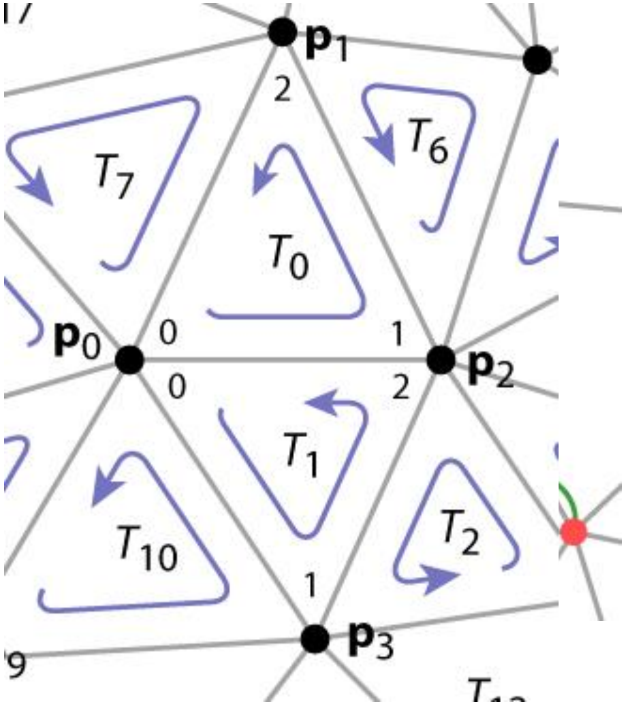


Triangle neighbor structure

- indexed mesh was 36 bytes per vertex
- add an array of triples of indices (per triangle)
  - int[n_T][3]: about 24 bytes per vertex
    - 2 triangles per vertex (on average)
    - (3 indices x 4 bytes) per triangle
- add an array of representative triangle per vertex
  - int[n_V]: 4 bytes per vertex
- total storage: 64 bytes per vertex
  - still not as much as separate triangles

Triangle neighbor structure—refined

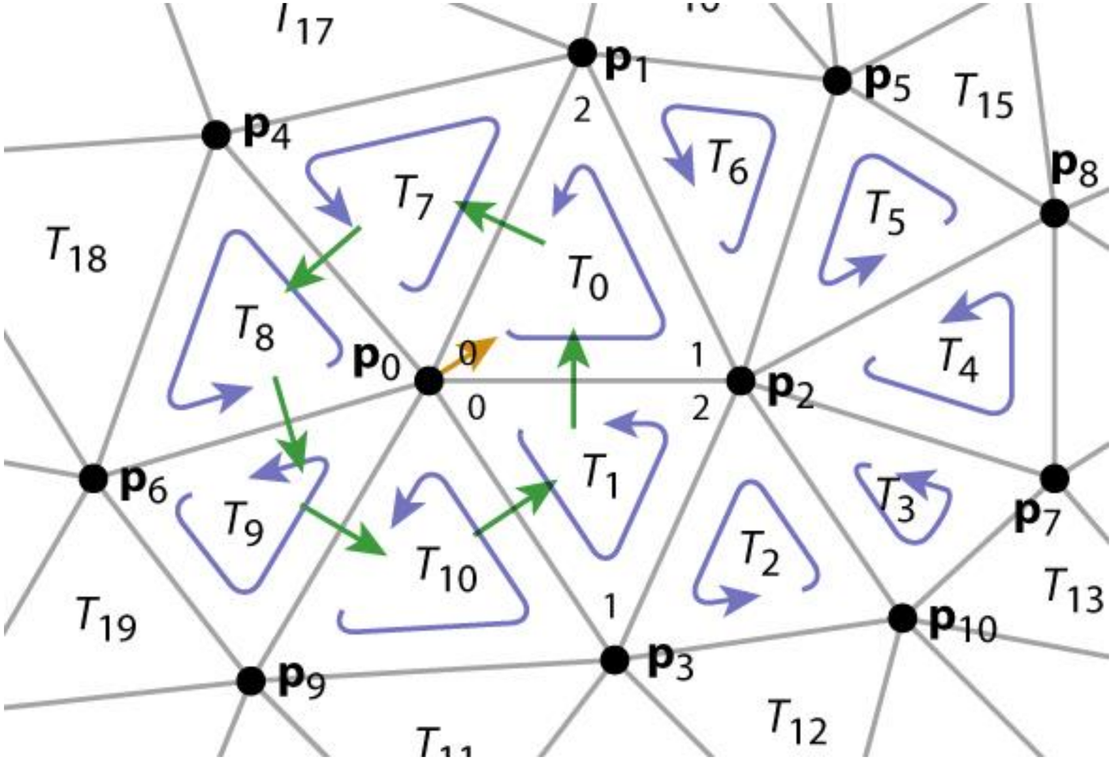
```
Triangle {
Edge nbr[3];
Vertex vertex[3];
}

// if t.nbr[i].i == j
// then t.nbr[i].t.nbr[j] == t

Edge {
// the i-th edge of triangle t
Triangle t;
int i;  // in {0,1,2}
// in practice t and i share 32 bits
}

Vertex {
// ... per-vertex data ...
Edge e;  // any edge leaving vertex
}
```



T_0.nbr[0] = { T_1, 2 }
T_1.nbr[2] = { T_0, 0 }
V_0.e = { T_1, 0 }

Triangle neighbor structure

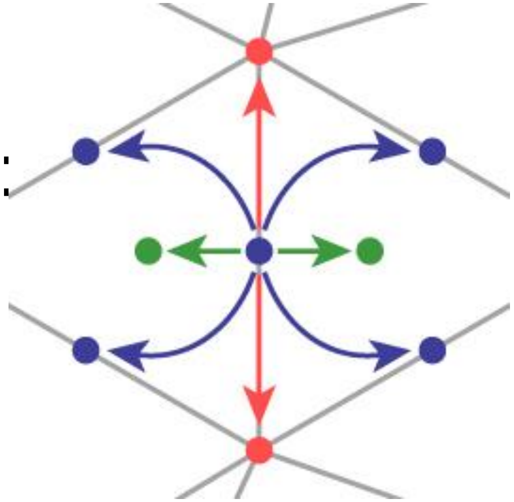
```
TrianglesOfVertex(v) {
{t, i} = v.e;
do {
        {t, i} = t.nbr[pred(i)];
        } while (t != v.t);
}

pred(i) = (i+2) % 3;
succ(i) = (i+1) % 3;
```



T_0.nbr[0] = { T_1, 2 }
T_1.nbr[2] = { T_0, 0 }
V_0.e = { T_1, 0 }

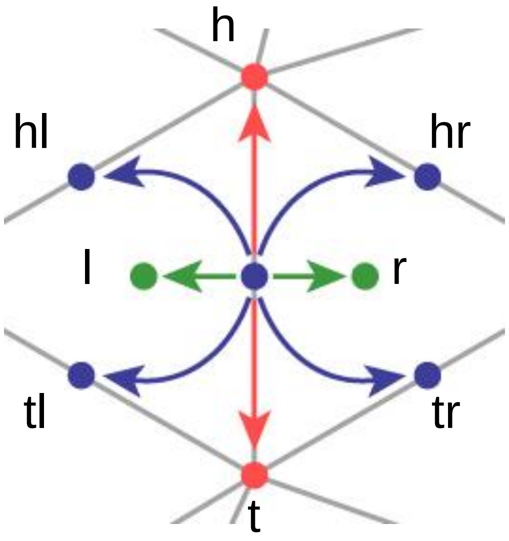
Winged-edge mesh

- Edge-centric rather than face-centric
  - therefore also works for polygon meshes
- Each (oriented) edge points to:
  - left and right forward edges
  - left and right backward edges
  - front and back vertices
  - left and right faces
- Each face or vertex points to one edge



Winged-edge mesh

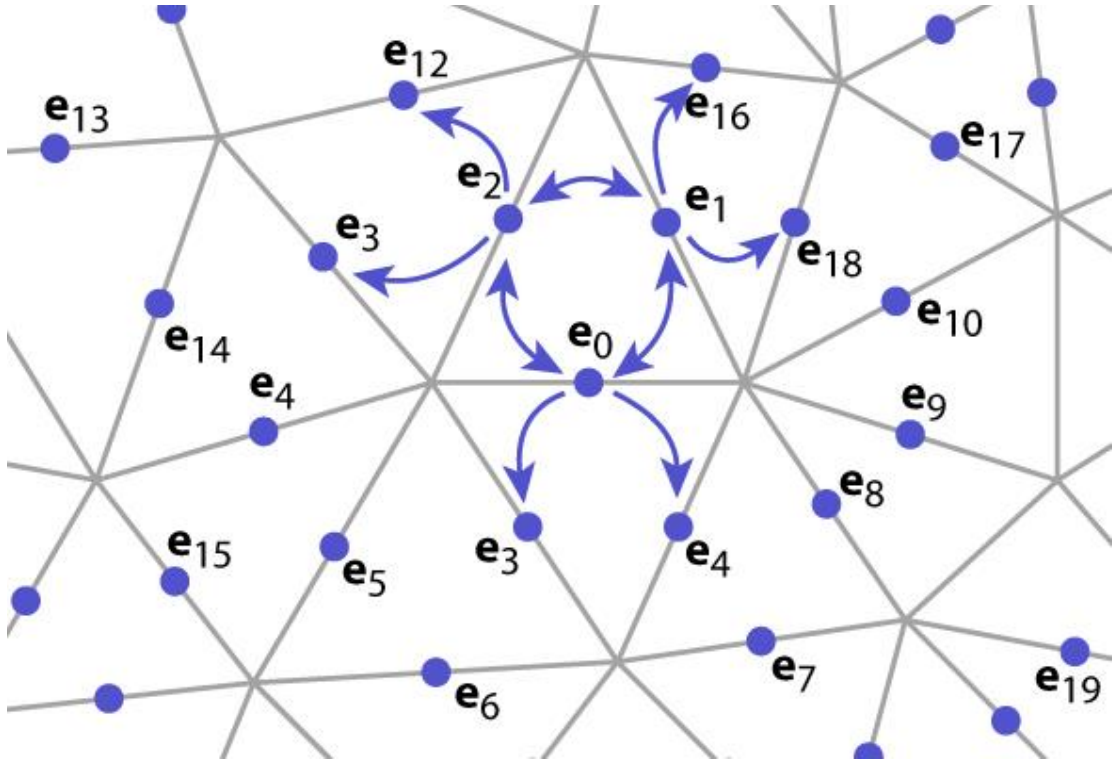
```
Edge {
Edge hl, hr, tl, tr;
Vertex h, t;
Face l, r;
}

Face {
// per-face data
Edge e;  // any adjacent edge
}

Vertex {
// per-vertex data
Edge e;  // any incident edge
}
```



Winged-edge structure

```
EdgesOfFace(f) {
e = f.e;
do {
        if (e.t == f)
            e = e.tl;
        else
            e = e.tr;
        } while (e != f.e);
}
```

	hl	hr	tl	tr
edge[0]	1	4	2	3
edge[1]	18	0	16	2
edge[2]	12	1	3	0
		⋮		

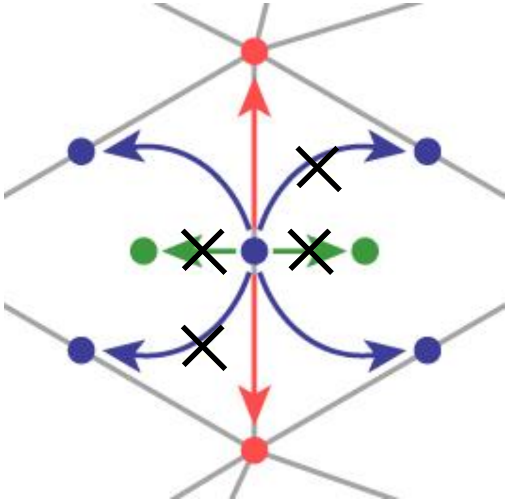


Winged-edge structure

- array of vertex positions: 12 bytes/vert
- array of 8-tuples of indices (per edge)
  - head/tail left/right edges + head/tail verts + left/right tris
  - int[n_E][8]: about 96 bytes per vertex
    - 3 edges per vertex (on average)
    - (8 indices x 4 bytes) per edge
- add a representative edge per vertex
  - int[n_V]: 4 bytes per vertex
- total storage: 112 bytes per vertex
  - but it is cleaner and generalizes to polygon meshes

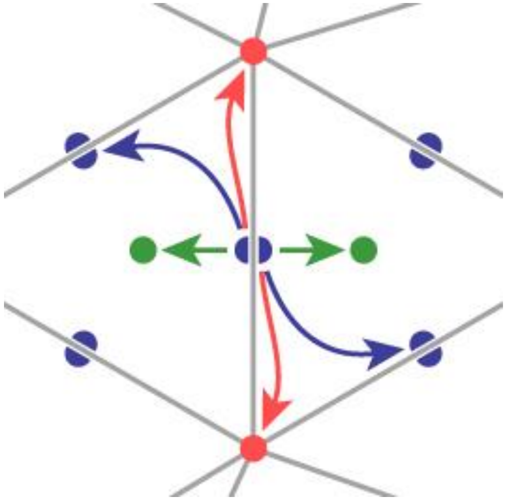
Winged-edge optimizations

- Omit faces if not needed
- Omit one edge pointer on each side
  - results in one-way traversal



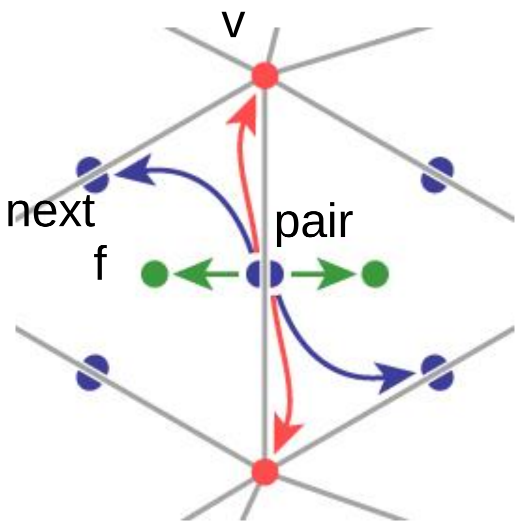
Half-edge structure

- Simplifies, cleans up winged edge
  - still works for polygon meshes
- Each half-edge points to:
  - next edge (left forward)
  - next vertex (front)
  - the face (left)
  - the opposite half-edge
- Each face or vertex points to one half-edge



Half-edge structure

```
HEdge {
HEdge pair, next;
Vertex v;
Face f;
}

Face {
// per-face data
HEdge h;  // any adjacent h-edge
}

Vertex {
// per-vertex data
HEdge h;  // any incident h-edge
}
```

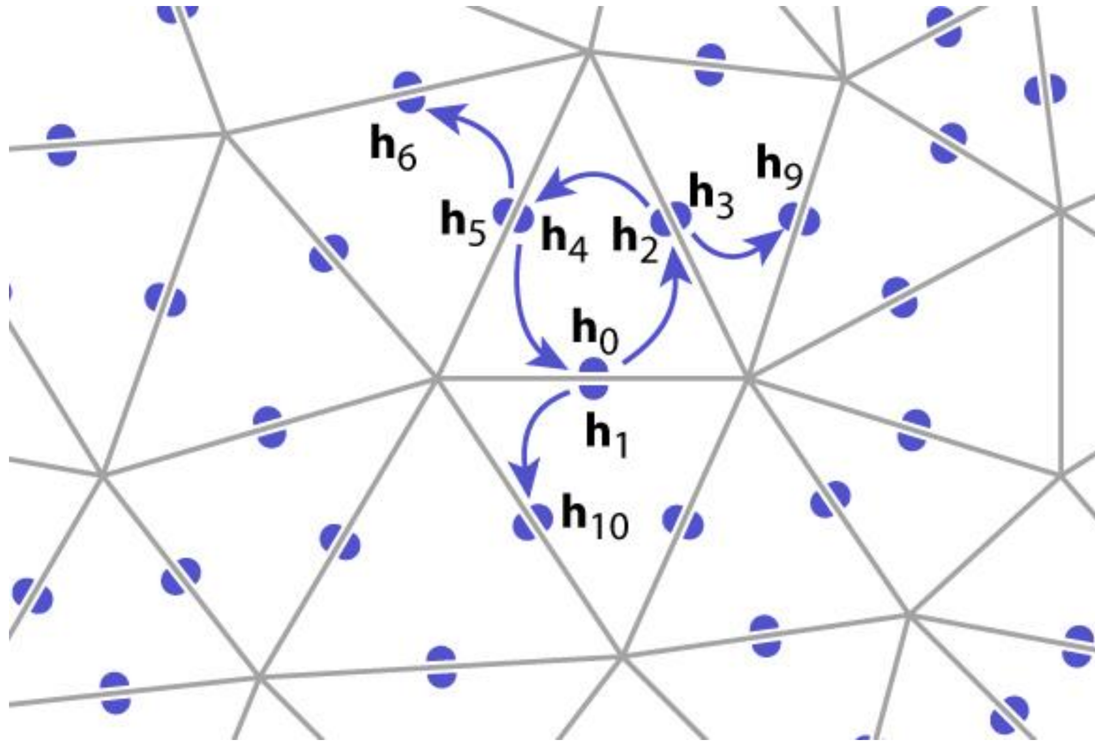


Half-edge structure

```
EdgesOfFace(f) {
h = f.h;
do {
        h = h.next;
    } while (h != f.h);
}
```

```
EdgesOfVertex(v) {
h = v.h;
do {
        h = h.pair.next;
    } while (h != v.h);
}
```

	pair	next
hedge[0]	1	2
hedge[1]	0	10
hedge[2]	3	4
hedge[3]	2	9
hedge[4]	5	0
hedge[5]	4	6
	⋮	



Half-edge structure

- array of vertex positions: 12 bytes/vert
- array of 4-tuples of indices (per h-edge)
  - next, pair h-edges + head vert + left tri
  - int[2n_E][4]: about 96 bytes per vertex
    - 6 h-edges per vertex (on average)
    - (4 indices x 4 bytes) per h-edge
- add a representative h-edge per vertex
  - int[n_V]: 4 bytes per vertex
- total storage: 112 bytes per vertex

Half-edge optimizations

- Omit faces if not needed
- Use implicit pair pointers
  - they are allocated in pairs
  - they are even and odd in an array