Animated maps are now technically and economically feasible. Like other forms of cartography, map animation has some unique design considerations, which involve a variety of tradeoffs. Making these tradeoff decisions is easier if we acknowledge that different animation software packages seem to embody a number of different perspectives — a ‘flipbook’ style of animation, for example, is suited to different tasks than a ‘stage-and-actor’ or a ‘model-and-camera’ program. This paper contrasts nine different animation metaphors, with special attention to the degree to which a given tool allows a cartographer to make particular kinds of revisions.

A speaker walks over to a control panel and flips a switch: “Let’s look at a map that illustrates the process.” The room darkens; the screen changes to deep violet; and a small green and blue globe appears, turning majestically on its axis and growing in size as the viewer appears to move slowly toward it. On cue, bright yellow dots highlight the poles; after attracting the viewer’s attention, they fade to a dull tan, and lines of latitude and longitude appear. The globe then fades from sight, except for the grid-lines and the outline of North America. Slowly, the spherical grid mutates into a plane coordinate system, and as it does, one can see how the continent is distorted as the grid is flattened. Then the viewpoint begins to shift, first sliding to the left and then curving around in a broad arc and approaching the continent from the west. Seen from this oblique view, the continent begins to lose its planar appearance. Mountain ranges appear as the narrator reads their names: the green-and-tan Coast Ranges, the snow-covered Sierra Nevada, the isolated volcanoes of the Cascades, the block-faulted Bully Choops, the elongated Humboldt Range and its many cousins, and finally the Wasatch and the rugged Tetons.

In forty-five seconds the cartographer has conveyed a vivid impression of half a dozen relationships that are very difficult to communicate with words, or even with diagrams on a flat piece of paper (unless, of course, the audience is a group of cartographers with active imaginations and extensive collections of mental maps). It may be true that impressions of animated images seldom persist if they stand alone, but with timely reinforcement an animated map is one of the best ways to communicate ideas about spatial relationships and their changes through time.

As recently as half a dozen years ago, most cartographers could only dream about adding motion to their maps. The twin constraints of time and money made animation an unaffordable luxury, except for those lucky enough to be producing maps for the Olympic games, television commercials, and other high-budget enterprises. In the last decade of the twentieth century, the problem of inaccessibility has given way to the much more pleasurable task of choosing among perhaps fifty reasonably affordable and effective computer programs that can be used to make animated maps. That choice, however, is complicated by the fact that the phrase ‘computer animation’ is really rather vague; it encompasses many different kinds of computer-assisted graphical motion, with an equally diverse set of potential uses in map production.

The purpose of this article is not to provide a comprehensive review of animation software. Although I am reasonably familiar with perhaps twenty packages, and will cite some of them when appropriate, the suite of available programs is vast and it changes almost monthly. My primary intent in this paper is to address a more fundamental question: the identi-
ANIMATION METAPHORS

Slide Show

According to this metaphor, animation is an orderly but attention-grabbing sequencing of dissimilar still images — maps, photographs, diagrams, etc. Where a traditional slide show has blank-screen pauses between images, most computer programs for slideshow animation provide a variety of transitions from one image to another: fades, wipes, dissolve, pixelations, venetian blinds, insets, fly-aways, pagecurls, and many other effects with similarly evocative names. At their best, slideshow animations can be attractive, fast-paced, and easy to construct (albeit expensive in terms of the number of still images that are required for even a few minutes of rapid animation). Unfortunately for cartographers who prefer a wide selection of tools, good slideshow animation programs are like adjustable wrenches — they do many things reasonably well, and therefore they have already penetrated quite deeply into the business community, with a wide range of programs like Performer, Director, or Animagic on the Amiga, Grasp or Show Partner F/X on MS-DOS machines, and some uses of Hypercard on the Macintosh. For many users of business graphics, the words ‘animation’ and ‘slide show’ are strict syno-
nyms, and the visual world is the poorer for it. A slideshow is, fundamen-
tially, a sequence of dissimilar still images, and therefore it cannot accom-
plish the gradual change of scale or perspective that is one of the most
seductive traits of a good animated map.

**Teleprompter**

In many educational settings, the metaphor of the teleprompter is more
applicable than the slideshow. As proponents (and perhaps even slaves)
of good outline form, many teachers view their material primarily as an
orderly set of nested lists, and therefore a straightforward scrolling of key
words or phrases can be a useful visual reinforcement for their spoken
message. A slideshow program may have lists of words or phrases in its
sequence of images, but the outlines tend to be static, whereas the user of
a teleprompter program usually tries putting words and simple images on
the screen in a more complex way, often in perfect synchrony with the
spoken word. In a pinch, a colleague with a projector and a portable word
processor can do a creditable job of providing simple teleprompter
animation. In choosing a teleprompter program, look for a variety of
backgrounds, fonts, and scrolling speeds or directions. The value of
teleprompting is apparent in the fact that the market seems to be able to
support dozens of these programs (usually described as ‘title-writers’ or
‘character-generators’).

**Pointer**

If words are arranged on the screen so that their position is part of their
message (i.e. as labels that appear on call to identify places on a back-
ground map), then the program is an example of the pointer metaphor, so
called because the animation plays the role of a flashlight pointer in the
hands of a live instructor. Perhaps the most well-known illustration of
this category is the ‘electronic tablet’ used by some television sports
announcers to help them analyze a play during a tape replay. A good
pointer program should be able to handle text, a hierarchy of point and
line symbols, and perhaps a selection of masks that cause background
information to recede and thus help focus attention on the main message.
Unfortunately for my simple taxonomy, the best of the pointer programs
have become much broader and more sophisticated with recent up-
datings, and therefore it is probably fairer to note this metaphor only as a
quick and often surprisingly effective way of using a more general-
purpose program such as Autodesk Animator for the MS-DOS platform
or Studio 1 for the Mac. A variant of the pointer metaphor is a simple tape
recorder—a hardware-software package that transfers to videotape
whatever the instructor (or another statistical or mapping program) is
doing on the screen. Programs of this type include ColorSpace FX for the
Mac, Instant Replay Professional or VGA Producer for MS-DOS machines,
and a truly amazing assortment of software written for the Amiga.

**Flipbook**

This metaphor has its root in a set of stapled cards that are held in one
hand, bent slightly with the thumb of the other hand, and then released in
rapid sequence. Each card has a slightly altered version of the previous
scene, and, when flipped at the proper speed and viewed from the correct
angle, the effect is like a motion picture (albeit a simple and short one). A
good flipbook animation program should have an extensive set of easy-to-
use image-modification tools and a mask or lasso tool that can surround
and modify an irregular shape without resorting to pixel-by-pixel
changes. Pageflipper or LightBox on the Amiga, Animator on the PC, and
Studio 1 for the Mac have good flipbook capabilities. The latter has a demo animation of a robot assembly line that is a masterpiece of intricate optical illusion and suggestion. The TV character Max Headroom was a sophisticated Amiga flipbook, with an assortment of separate poses and color backgrounds that could be assembled in a sequence and synchronized to the narration. Even with that kind of shortcut, the flipbook technique is labor-intensive; each scene must be drawn (or at least assembled) in its entirety, and a convincing illusion of smooth motion usually requires about a dozen scenes per second. Image cloning and electronic modification can lessen this burden considerably, but with today’s equipment the list of options is large, and the flipbook metaphor is seldom the easiest way to add motion to a map.

**Sprite**

A number of popular early video games (e.g. PacMan) illustrate the sprite metaphor. Animations of this kind have an assortment of small and simple-to-draw objects moving along a restricted set of paths on the screen. MovieSetter on the Amiga, early versions of Videoworks for the Mac, and one component of Grasp for the PC use this metaphor, which can be effective for showing concepts that involve persistent or repetitive motion, such as population migration, nutrient flows, and traffic patterns. In more sophisticated sprite programs, the objects have a variety of states (e.g. left foot forward, both feet even, right foot forward, etc.) that can be alternated to add an illusion of complexity to the motion (and incidentally help to mask the squareness that helps to make sprite motion computationally efficient).

**Stage and play**

Later versions of the Macintosh program Videoworks (and its superset, Macromind Director) make extensive use of a Shakespearean metaphor: “All the world’s a stage, and we are but players...” These programs structure an animated sequence as a stage with backdrops and actors (or *cells*, in a traditional painted animation variant of the metaphor). The backdrops are usually stationary throughout an episode, although the program may allow them to be panned sideways, zoomed in or out, faded, or traded with other backdrops. The actors, on the other hand, follow a more complex script that governs their appearance, motion, and relative position (a nicety that allows dominant actors to pass in front of others in a complex choreography). With this metaphor, a detailed animation of an event such as the Crusades might involve defining each army as an actor and a map of Europe as the stage. The difference between an actor and a sprite is the degree of allowable complexity and change — sprites maintain essentially uniform appearance and color, whereas actors can change in a variety of ways as they follow their scripts, which are usually described in stage terms, as opposed to the mathematical abstractions of a sprite program.

**Color Cycling**

A hardware feature makes color cycling a uniquely efficient way of communicating motion along specified paths or across broad areas. In this kind of program, the animator uses a special ‘brush’ to lay down a specified series of colors with each stroke. After the image is finished, multiple frames are produced, with the colors automatically advanced one step along the designated series for each subsequent frame. When these frames are played back in rapid succession, waves of color appear to move down the paths. This metaphor has become common in the weather
segments of many television news programs. Its big advantages are efficiency of memory use and speed of construction. A good color-cycling program provides a range of brushes and color choices. With a program such as DeluxePaint for the Amiga, Macromind Director on the Mac, or Autodesk Animator on the PC, showing three or four complex paths of upper-air wind on a continental basemap takes less time than typing this paragraph. The learning curve for a color-cycling program with even a modest amount of color and brush flexibility, however, can be steep, because it is very easy to have a mismatch between the number of colors, the position of the brush, the length of the line, and the number of frames in the cycle, and the result can be a very jerky and uncommunicative animation.

**Metamorphosis**

A metamorphosis program is designed to make it easy to change the shapes or other features of rather complex individual objects. Someone using this kind of program begins by defining an object with a series of points and placing those points in their appropriate starting and ending positions (say forty points showing the shape of Greenland on a cylindrical and an interrupted elliptical projection). The computer's job is to calculate the position of each point for each 'in-between' frame of an animation — much like the automatic creation of pages 2 through 29 between a given page 1 and page 30 of a flipbook. Fantavision, available for all three basic platforms, the Amiga, the Mac, and the PC, is the least expensive really interesting animation program around. It illustrates the principles of 'tweening' in a thoroughly entertaining way, and it can create some surprisingly sophisticated animated maps if provided with a detailed backdrop from a paintbox program. A number of other programs have tweening options. Animator adds 'tweenable' spline curves and polygons to a flipbook routine, whereas Swivel 3D and Super 3D for the Mac and a number of Amiga programs are able to make three-dimensional models 'tweenable.' In doing so, they cross the border into the domain of the last metaphor on my list.

**Model and camera**

The most flexible (and therefore almost always most demanding of computer hardware, designer foresight, and programmer knowledge) are the model-and-camera programs. These programs define objects as sets of three-dimensional coordinates for key vertices. They then construct the intervening surfaces, add texture to the surfaces, calculate highlights and shadows, define paths for movement of both object and camera, and then encourage you to go out for a long lunch while they render the commands for a three-second animation into visible form (unless, of course, you have a Silicon Graphics Personal Iris workstation or are using Wavefront on a Cray supercomputer, in which case you are obviously in the enviable position of being able to pay for the privilege of watching animations render in real time). Bell Labs has a powerful modeling program for MS-DOS computers with Truevision graphics adapters. Sold by a number of vendors under a variety of names, including Topas and Crystal 3D, this program provides broadcast-quality animation with millions of colors, multiple light sources, and realistic shadow and transparency effects. MacIvory for the Macintosh has similar capabilities with a somewhat gentler learning curve and a substantially higher cost (where have we heard that before?), but the Mac also has some simpler and less expensive modeling programs with changeable camera perspective, such as Swivel 3D and Super 3D. New Amiga-based modeling programs have been
CONCLUSION

appearing every month or two — well-reviewed ones include Opticks, Sculpt-Animate 4D, Turbo Silver, Caligari, and Zoetrope. Nine times out of ten, however, it is more cost-effective to use a modeling program only for short transitional effects, such as viewing a spinning globe from outer space, zooming in on a particular place, and then making a quick and hopefully imperceptible fade to a two-dimensional flipbook or tweening program for the rest of the story. A less costly variant of the camera metaphor involves moving the apparent viewpoint toward, away, or around a flat image. This kind of ‘two-and-one-half-dimensional’ optical illusion is able to provide a host of tilt and tumble effects that can give the viewer a refreshing new perspective on the world (or a serious case of vertigo-induced nausea, if the cartographer isn’t careful).

The available animation programs provide plenty of choices, at a price. In that respect, they are much like print cartography, with digitizers and computer screens, airbrushes, scribes and photo-etched peelcoats, technical pens and stick-on patterns, and hand-drawn symbols all still useful for different kinds of maps. To help a cartographer choose the proper animation metaphor for a given task, it is helpful to ask a few basic design questions:

How can a cartographer attract or focus attention on a particular part of the map? In addition to the traditional variables of size, density, brightness, pattern, orientation, and complexity, animation affords a number of additional and potentially very powerful visual attractants, such as sudden appearance, vibratory motion, color change, flashing, and fringing of foreground objects or graying of the background information. Many of the basic principles revealed by psychophysical research can serve as a guide in choosing ways to depict specified ideas.

How can a cartographer design a hierarchy of backgrounds and objects in order to maintain an adequate amount of visual and auditory ‘headroom’ for the ones that should be emphasized? This question is complicated by the fact that one must keep brightness and color saturation within legal limits for broadcast (and contemporary American broadcast standards are notorious for their inability to handle strong reds and yellows, which are precisely the colors that cartographers like to use as attention-grabbers).

How can a cartographer ensure the variety and pace of information content necessary for successful television? The metaphor of a triage officer may be appropriate — one should lay out the entire story, define those topics that must be rendered within a particular metaphor, and use the proper tools for those topics. Then, consider the time-tested ideas of reinforcement and contrast in selecting graphic options for the intervening topics, where the range of acceptable tools is wider. In that context, it is always worthwhile to remember that television is not the only available medium; printed maps will continue to have a place, because the relatively low resolution and transitoriness of a televised image is simply not appropriate for some kinds of messages.

The final consideration for any cartographic project should be revisability. In print cartography, we use computer drawing programs partly because they make it possible to change area patterns much easier than with peelcoats and screens or stick-on film (and those tools became popular partly because they were easier to revise than ink, which in turn is easier to revise than gouged wood or fired clay). Within the suite of available animation tools, some metaphors make some kinds of revision much easier than others. For example, changing perspective is simple with a model-and-camera program and terribly time-consuming with a
A Glossary Of Terms
For Computer-Assisted Four-Dimensional Cartography

Italicized words are also defined separately in this glossary.

Trait of an entity that can be changed during the sequence of an animation. Different computer programs have different lists of animatable properties, which typically include some combination of position, size, orientation, shape, color, blur, brightness, reflectivity, and transparency; see everything below!

Using intermediate colors to smooth the jagged appearance of diagonal or curved lines; anti-aliased typefaces look much better than solid-color letters and numbers.

Move the camera around an object; this is really a combination of track and offsetting pan or tilt.

Add texture to a 2-dimensional area. See texture-map and wrap.

Two-dimensional feature, bounded by three or more lines in the same plane.

Place on a scene where a normal viewer usually looks first. English-reading people tend to look toward the upper left-hand corner, although a bright color, moving object, or striking shape can divert their attention elsewhere.

Line around which a 2D object is rotated to create a 3D object.

Editing system with two or more tape recorders genlocked together, which allows images to dissolve from one to another.

Fixed part of a sprite or cel animation; the backdrop does not change position, although it can fade in and out of view.

Duration of an electronic signal; when bandwidth is fixed, one cannot increase color complexity without reducing resolution; when one notes that the bandwidth of a high-resolution full-color computer display is on the order of 90MHz, it is easy to see why something must be given up in order to translate the image into NTSC television, with its bandwidth of about 5MHz.

Tendency of a spline curve to anticipate or overshoot the direction it must take after passing a given point.

A shape described as a set of pixels of a specified color.

Make a smooth transition between colors by creating new colors with intermediate hue, value, and chroma.

Transferring information to another frame with a specified guide color or template that is easy to erase later. Named for the non-reproducing blue pencil that print editors sometimes use to mark corrections on a camera-ready manuscript.

Residual image that occurs when objects move too fast for eye fixations.

Additional electronics added to a basic computer to perform specific tasks; animation usually requires frame-grabber, image-manipulation, math-coprocessor, and video-out boards, although some manufacturers combine several functions on one board.

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Animatable property

Anti-aliasing

Arc

Apply

Area

Attention point

Axis

A/B roll

Backdrop

Bandwidth

Bias

Bit-map

Blend

Bluing

Blur

Board
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
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<tr>
<td>Brightness</td>
<td>Color value, from dark to nearly white. See luminance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brush</td>
<td>Basic drawing tool; can be as simple as a single pixel or as complex as a fragment of a detailed multi-color scene.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buffer</td>
<td>Dedicated area of computer memory to store a cell or scene.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAD program</td>
<td>Computer-aided design program. CAD programs are usually vector-oriented and have many layers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camera point</td>
<td>Imaginary position of the observer with respect to a 3D model; see arc, crab, dolly, lift, lower, pan, rotate, tilt, track, zoom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Card</td>
<td>See board.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cel</td>
<td>Picture (of any size) stored in a buffer or placed in a scene.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choropleth</td>
<td>Map with areal units that are political entities (counties, states) or other arbitrary areas that are not necessarily related to the phenomena that are the primary topic of the map.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chroma</td>
<td>Intensity of a color, from gray through dull to bright (Caution: that is not the same as dark to light; see value). High-chroma reds and yellows are prone to crénel and should be avoided.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chrominance</td>
<td>Color component of a television signal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear, Delete, Erase, Move, Swap, Transfer, Zap</td>
<td>Different programs use different commands to empty the screen and/or memory buffer; know these commands, and beware, unless you like losing a day's work in a microsecond.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clearance</td>
<td>Freedom from copyright obligations. Ordinarily, one can copyright only the form of a map, not the data displayed on it. Putting information on another basemap with a different projection may be enough to provide clearance, but if your source contained information that was not in the original data set, you may be legally liable for copyright infringement. Caution: many publishers deliberately put minor errors into a map to trap copyright infringers, and therefore it is always best to check the original data.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clone</td>
<td>Duplicate an object, cel, or keyframe. Cloning and then manipulating the clone is often the fastest way to create two not-quite-identical objects or scenes for an animation sequence. See flipbook.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Color temperature</td>
<td>A way of describing spectral colors in terms of the temperature of the object that would emit those wavelengths; blues are 'hotter' than reds. Fluorescent light is hotter than incandescent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Color-cycling animation</td>
<td>Giving the appearance of motion by systematically changing colors through a designated series. The illusion is of a wave of color moving down a line or through an area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colorize</td>
<td>Add color to a black-and-white image.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Component Signal</td>
<td>Television signal that separates luminance and chrominance. See YC signal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Composite signal</td>
<td>Television signal that includes chrominance, luminance, and sound.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complement</td>
<td>Color that, when added, tends to turn a color into gray. Such as red added to green, yellow to purple, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compress</td>
<td>Increase animation speed by making fewer intermediate frames between keyframes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooler</td>
<td>Dimmer and more red in hue. See color temperature.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copyblock</td>
<td>Device attached to a port on a computer to prevent software piracy. Many of the standard animation programs will not run without a copyblock physically attached to the computer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copyright</td>
<td>Legal ownership of intellectual property. See clearance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPU</td>
<td>Central processing unit of a computer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crab (or track)</td>
<td>Move the camera position from side to side.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Tendency for colors to smear across the line borders of objects; *chroma-crawl* in NTSC television is most obvious with red and yellow, intermediate with magenta and green, and relatively minor with cyan.

Cathode ray tube, the screen on a typical TV or monitor.

Instantaneous replacement of one scene by another.

Repeating a sequence of *cels* or colors to simulate a repetitive motion (e.g. a person walking, a bird flying, or a movement along a path). See *color cycling*.

Subtractive color description, naming colors in terms of standard printers' inks (cyan, magenta, yellow, and black).

Digital elevation model, a file of the *XYZ coordinates of points* that can be used to define a surface.

Cause an entity or scene to gradually disappear and be replaced by another.

Achieve the visual appearance of an intermediate color by randomly scattering *pixels* of the endpoint colors. See *blend*.

Move the *camera position* closer or farther from an object; unlike *zoom*, dollying will alter the perspective as well as the size of the scene.

*Vector-oriented graphics program*. See CAD.

*Time code* designed to accommodate *NTSC bandwidth*.

Darkened fringe that appears to raise an object above its *background*; often used to enhance *figure-ground* of a map.

Add additional audio or video to an existing videotape.

Digital video effects, such as *page turns*, squashes, and tumbles, which can be used during editing to combine animations, *narration* shots, and live scenes (often called ADO, after an early trademark).

Where two *surfaces* of an object join. An edge is defined by a *line* or series of *points*.

Decrease the speed of an animation by adding *frames* between *keyframes*.

Create a 3D *object* by 'pushing' a 2D object 'upward' or 'downward' from the plane of the map and into the third dimension.

Cause an entity to gradually disappear (fade out) or appear (fade in or on).

Half (every other *scanline*) of an *interlaced* NTSC TV image.

Entity that we want viewers to see as a unit (as opposed to ground, the surrounding or background information that we would prefer the viewer to be aware of but not focus on).

Add a color or pattern to the *area* that is enclosed by a specified color or range of colors ('*fill to border*', 'fill to line').

Animation that consists of a sequence of slightly different *scenes* that replace each other in rapid sequence.

Move an object across a *backdrop*.

Combination of *camera* motion to simulate an airplane moving through, over, or around a 3D *model*.

Family of letters and numbers with a specific graphic style and size. Font names and other terms in animation are usually the same as in conventional cartography.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frame-grabber</td>
<td>Device to capture a scene from a tape deck or video camera and translate it so that it can be manipulated by a computer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genlocked</td>
<td>Two or more sources (tape recorders, computers, or cameras) that are driven by the same synchronization clock and therefore can be overlayed or faded from one to another. See A/B roll.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gouraud shading</td>
<td>Creating lighted, shadowed, reflective, and texture-mapped surfaces on a 3D model. More realistic and time-consuming than Phong shading.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade, gradient</td>
<td>Arrange a gradual sequence of colors between two specified colors. Dithering helps to eliminate a 'banded' look.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HAM (hold-and-modify)</td>
<td>Obtaining a larger number of apparent colors by holding one field and modifying the palette before displaying the intervening scanlines.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Headroom</td>
<td>The range of color that is available for emphasis. Making background colors too intense can limit headroom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hide</td>
<td>Cause an object or scene to disappear. See show.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highlight</td>
<td>'Hot spot' of light reflection, even from a dull surface.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hit (hitpoint)</td>
<td>Critical instant in an animation, such as when a window breaks, when audio and video should be perfectly synchronized.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotter</td>
<td>Brighter and more blue in hue (radiometric definition). More intense white, red, or yellow and therefore more prone to crawl (television definition).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hue</td>
<td>Spectral characteristic (wavelength) of a color, from violet through blue, green, yellow, orange, red. See subcarrier phase.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HVC (HLS)</td>
<td>Color description in terms of hue, value (luminance or brightness), and chroma (saturation).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Image</td>
<td>Scene as displayed on a TV screen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intensity</td>
<td>A fuzzy word that can mean brightness or chroma (saturation). See also headroom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interlaced</td>
<td>NTSC television has a nominal 525-line image that is made up of two fields. Every even-numbered line belongs to one field and every odd-numbered line to the other, and the two fields are displayed alternately. The persistence of one image while the other is being refreshed helps to eliminate perceptual flicker. Most computer displays are non-interlaced, and translating a computer image to television is therefore a non-trivial electronic problem.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isoline</td>
<td>Line separating areas of higher value (mathematical definition) from areas of lower value on a map.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jitter</td>
<td>Single-pixel shifting of points and thin lines, usually due to fluctuations in tape speed or electrical current.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Join</td>
<td>Combine two animation sequences, often with a specified transition effect.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jog-shuttle wheel</td>
<td>Tape-deck control for playing television frames at any desired speed, from fast to very slow, forward or reverse.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kerning</td>
<td>Adjusting the spacing between particular sets of letters to improve overall appearance (e.g. by moving a lower-case o so that it fits partly underneath the horizontal arms of the uppercase F in the word 'Ford').</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key, keying</td>
<td>Color (often but not always in the superblack range) that can be used to indicate areas of a scene that should be replaced with other information from the keysourse during editing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keyframe</td>
<td>Reference frame, showing positions and characteristics of objects at a particular time in an animation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Portion of a scene that we would like to replace all areas of a given color (chromakey) or brightness (luminance key). Keying is a powerful tool for live video (e.g. the news where it can cause a map to replace a green patch on the wall behind a person sitting at a desk).

Source of illumination in a scene. Lights may be described by position, intensity, width, color, and motion.

Conceptual group of objects in a computer drawing program (see CAD). Logically similar to overlays or flaps in conventional cartography.

Raise the camera relative to an object, without changing the aim of the camera. The object will appear to move downward in the scene.

Source of illumination for a surface of an object.

Increase the value of a color.

One-dimensional feature, defined by two or more points. Lines can exist within the plane of a map (two dimensions) or extend into the third dimension.

Lower the camera relative to an object. Opposite of lift.

Lightness of a pixel or scene (see value).

Area or color that is protected from alteration by brushes or other drawing tools.

Changing shape between keyframes. See morph.

Set of regulations for communicating performance information (when a key is pressed or released, volume is changed, a drum is hit, a door slammed, etc.) to electronic musical instruments or sound-effects machines. MIDI time-code and SMPTE time-code are different, but translatable.

Combine separate audio and video tracks to produce a final output for broadcast or video-taping.

Computer-aided 3-dimensional drawing program, usually vector-based.

Single shape of an object that changes its shape between frames. See metamorphosis and tweening.

Voice-over or talking head. A favorite animator’s trick is to cut to narrator in order to get out of an awkward projection, cluttered map, or other tight spot!

Closeness to another color. Having RGB or HVC numbers that are within a specified range.

National Television Standards Committee, issuer of rules about bandwidth, brightness, color intensity, and frame speed.

Set of points that define an entity in two or three dimensions. The points are then used to locate edges, surfaces, colors, etc.

Degree to which an object prevents you from seeing other objects through it. Opposite of transparency.

Apparent change in perspective that gives an illusion of 3-D motion in a 2-D series of images. These usually are described with commonsense terms such as lean, squash, spin, tilt, tumble, whirl, etc.

Conventional adjustment for non-square home television screens. See safe area.

Graphic routine to substitute one scene for another: these usually have fairly intuitive names, such as horizontal wipe, cross-fade, dissolve, flip-over, fly-away, page-curl, shatter, shrink-down, tilt-down, venetian blind, etc.

Computer-aided color or monochrome image-creation program. Paintbox programs are usually raster-based.

Keysource
Lamp (Light)
Layer
Lift
Light
Lighten (brighten)
Line
Lower
Luminance
Mask
Metamorphosis (anamorphing)
MIDI (musical instrument digital interface)
Mix (mixdown)
Modeling program
Morph
Narration
Nearness
NTSC
Object
Opacity
Optic move
Overscan
Pageturn
Paintbox program
PAL
The European equivalent of NTSC.

Palette
Graphic display of colors that can be selected at a given time. 6-bit color allows selection of 4 levels of red, green, and blue, for a total of 64 colors; 16-bit color allows 32 levels of each, for about 32,000 colors; 24-bit color has a palette of 16.7 million colors; and 32-bit color adds gray-scale information for better definition.

Pan
Turn the camera sideways while it stays in the same position.

Pantone
Color description in terms of pre-mixed printers' inks.

Pedestal
Darkest legal level of blackness in an NTSC television image. Superblack is reserved for keying and other information.

Phong shading
Creating simple lighted and shadowed surfaces on a 3D model. Less realistic but quicker than Gouraud shading.

Photo-realism
Having enough colors and detailed enough resolution to be visually indistinguishable from a live image.

Pixel
A single point of light on a television screen or computer graphic image. A pixel has position, color, and intensity.

Point
Non-dimensional feature, with x, y, and z coordinates in 3D space. Most computer drawing programs use a series of named points to define lines, surfaces, and volumes.

Position
Mathematical description of location in real or conceptual space. XYZ coordinates.

Posterize
Produce a simpler and often stronger image by reducing the number of colors in a scene and making them more intense.

Preview
Display a model with shaded surfaces but not full rendering.

Radiosity
Total illumination of a surface in a ray-tracing program. It includes light from all sources, both direct from lights and reflected from other objects.

Raster
Horizontal line of pixels on a TV screen.

Ray-tracing
Mathematically following the motion of light from various sources to the objects in a scene. Sophisticated ray-tracing programs are able to produce highlights, shadows, and several generations of reflections from objects of varying reflectivity.

Reflectivity
Degree of reflection from a surface. Reflectivity terms are usually intuitive and include dull, satin, iron, glass, silver, mirror, etc.

Render
Display a 3D model with fully colored, transparentized, highlighted, and shadowed surfaces.

Replace
Substitute a color for another specified color or range of colors. Replacements can be global or selective (under a brush).

Resolution
Number of pixels per image or screen. A Macintosh or IBM-VGA monitor has a resolution of 640 horizontal pixels by 480 vertical; the resolution of standard NTSC television is about 330 distinguishable vertical lines (theoretically 660 pixels) by 486 horizontal scan lines (nominally 525, but they use overscan to accommodate non-square home television receivers).

RGB
Color description in terms of CRT colors: Red, Green, Blue. A signal that sends those three messages separately. See composite.

Rotate
Create a 3D object by 'spinning' a 2D object around a specified axis. When you spin a camera clockwise or counter-clockwise around the axis of its lens, the scene in the frame spins the opposite way.

Rotoscopy
Breaking a smooth motion (i.e. a person walking) into a sequence of still images. Named for an early film technique.

RS-170A
NTSC specifications for color, chroma, overscan, pedestal.
Area near the center of a television image, visible on TV sets with non-square picture tubes. See overscan.

Chroma or color intensity, from dull gray to intense color.

Create a row of illuminated pixels across a TV screen. Enter an image into a computer memory by analyzing it one scan-line at a time.

A single horizontal row of pixels on a video screen.

Collection of objects and backdrop. An image of a scene is what the viewer sees on the video screen at a given instant.

Darkening due to interposition of another object between an entity and a light source.

Create an object or scene to appear.

Series of electrical pulses that define image and sound. See component, composite, and NTSC.

Society of Motion Picture and Television Engineers. 'Simp tee Time Code' is a standard way of describing time (hour, minute, second, frame) for audio and video mixing.

Alter an image by reducing the number and realism of the colors. Usually, muted colors are replaced by ones with more chroma.

Smooth curve fitted through a series of precisely located but potentially movable points.

Object that moves through a scene without changing its shape. Sprites may cycle through several alternative shapes (e.g. PacMan).

Equipment that stores maps, photographs, and other still images and displays them on call, often with appropriate digital effects transitions.

Series of sketches that show the general sequence of events in an animation. A good storyboard has timecode, keyframe characteristics, and transition effects.

Method of describing color hue as an angle on a 360-degree scale. See vectorscope.

Colors darker than the NTSC pedestal (about 5 on a 64-level gray scale). These are indistinguishable from black on a standard television screen and therefore have no visual function, but they do provide a place to transmit keying and other information.

Area defined by several edges of an object.

Place where a subpart is attached to a primary object (e.g. a knuckle where a finger is attached to a hand).

Scene with a narrator speaking directly to the camera.

Guide for painting a scene. See bluing.

Amount of straightening of a spline curve. Full tension will make a series of straight lines out of the curve.

Painting an object with a picture stored in a buffer.

Turn a camera up or down while it stays in the same position.

Device to improve synchronization and thus reduce jitter and chroma-crawl.

Temporal position of a frame, in hours, minutes, seconds, and drop or non-drop frames. See SMPTE and MIDI.

Graph showing keyframes and other events in an animation sequence. A storyboard is a diagram of intent, whereas a timegraph is a record of result.
Toggle  A program feature that can be shifted between two states and exists in one or the other at all times (e.g. draw or erase, mask or write, keycolor or image, alter palette or not, etc.). One must learn what features are toggled in a given program and check them frequently to avoid accidentally doing something that is not intended.

Tool  *Brush, eraser, paint-roller, blender,* or other device to alter the appearance of an *object,* *backdrop, col, scene,* or other graphic element.

Track  Move the *camera* point from side to side. See crab.

Transition  Replacing one scene with another with a *cut, dissolve, wipe, key,* or more complex effect. See page turn.

Transparency  Degree to which an *object* allows you to see other objects through it. A 100% transparent object is invisible.

Tweening  Creating intermediate stages between *keyframe.* The computer calculates intermediate values for any designated *animateable properties.*

Undo  Program command to cancel the last action. To avoid extreme mental anguish, one must quickly learn what kinds of actions can be undone in a particular computer program (and develop a habit of saving work before performing any non-undoable action).

Value  Brightness of a color, from dark to nearly white (graphics definition). Data number associated with a *point, line, or area* (mathematics definition).

Vector  Line connecting two *points* in 2D or 3D space.

Vectorscope  Instrument to display color on a radial graph with *hue* as direction (*subcarrier phase*) and *saturation* or *chroma* as distance from the center. Used to test whether colors meet NTSC specifications.

Vertex  Point where several *lines* come together. The vertex is the most information-rich point in its general region of an *object.*

Virus  Insidious program that gets into a computer and makes it do things you don’t want it to do, such as writing obscenities on the screen, deleting files, or trashing the hard disk. To protect our departmental computers from viruses, we insist that you never (NEVER) put any floppy disk that contains a boot track or an executable program (a file or group of files ending in .EXE or .COM) into any departmental computer at any time for any reason.

Voice-over  Spoken words that accompany a map or other image on the screen. See narration.

Weaken  Reduce the *chroma* of a color (say yellow) by adding its complement (purple). The color becomes grayer (desaturated).

Wipe  Substitute one *image* for another as a *line or object* moves across the *frame.* Wipes can have different directions and speeds. See *transition.*

Wireframe  Display a 3D model with a few *lines* that outline the major *edges* of an *object.*

Wrap  Add texture by painting a 2-D image onto the surface of a 3-D object. See *texture-map* and *apply.*

XYZ coordinates  Mathematical description of spatial position.

X-move  Moving an *object* left or right within the *plane* of the screen.

Y-move  Moving an *object* up or down within the *plane* of the screen.

YC signal  Television signal that sends *chrominance* and *luminance* information separately. YC is one kind of *component* signal.

Z-move  Moving an *object* toward or away from the viewer.

Zap  Cause a *point, line, object, scene,* or *buffer* to disappear from the screen or computer memory. See clear.