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Title: PISTON: A Portable Cross-Platform Framework for Data-Parallel Visualization Operators

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PISTON: A Portable Cross-Platform Framework for Data-Parallel Visualization Operators

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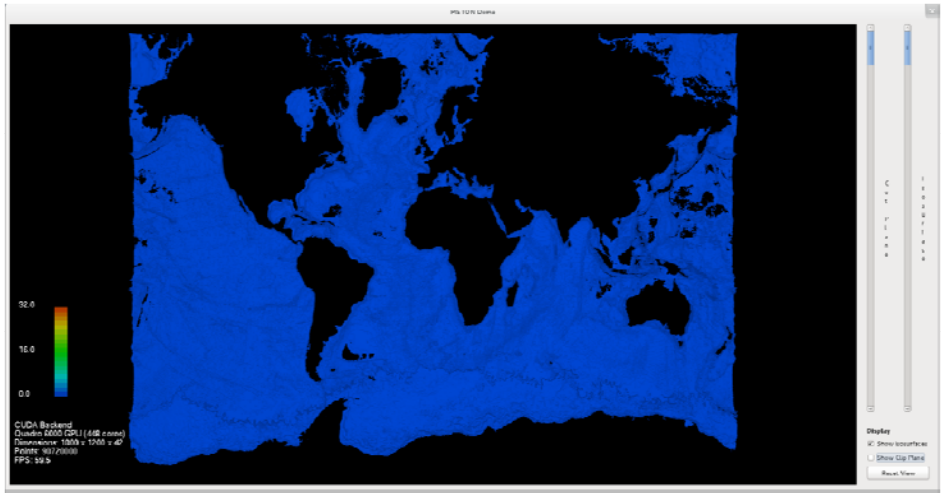

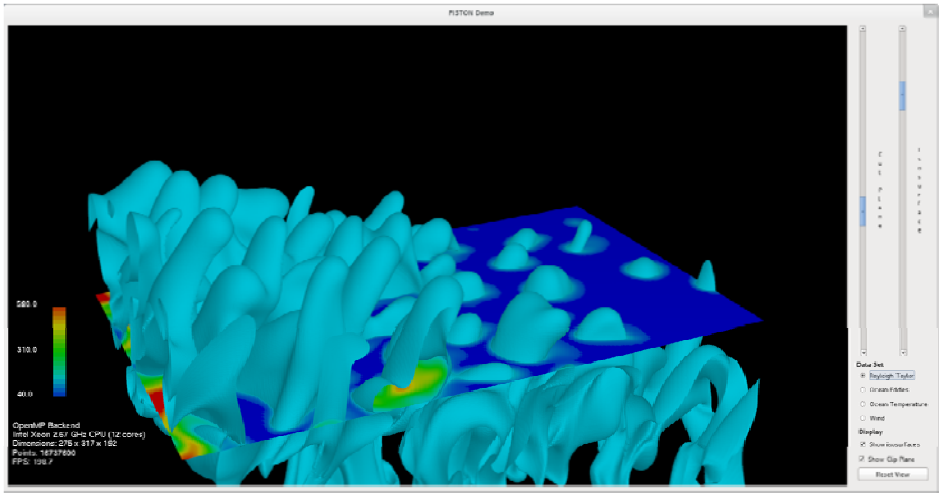

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Outline

- Motivation
  - Portability and performance of visualization and analysis operations on current and next-generation supercomputers
- Introduction to data-parallel programming and the Thrust library
- Implementation of visualization operators
  - Isosurface, Cut Surfaces, Threshold
- Current target architectures and performance
  - CUDA/Nvidia GPU & OpenMP/Multi-core machines
- On-going work
  - OpenCL backend, unstructured grids, more operators, ParaView integration, multi-node parallelism

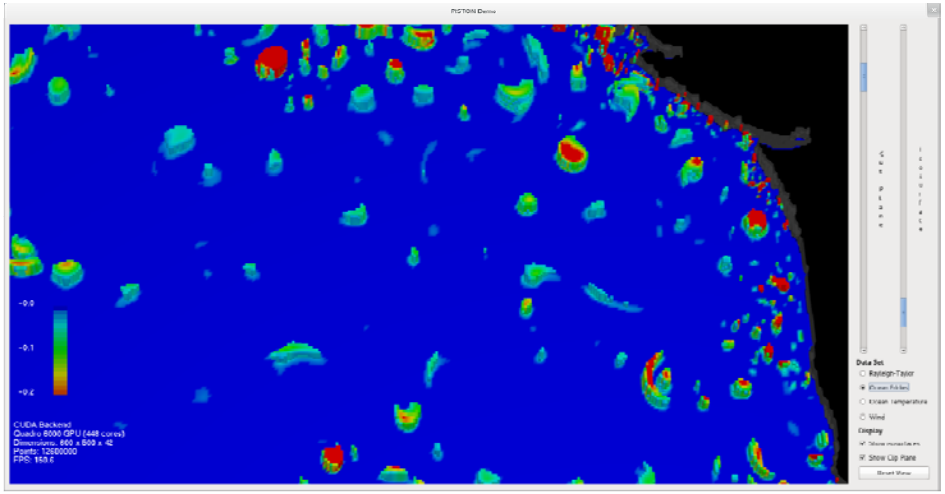
Motivation / Related Work

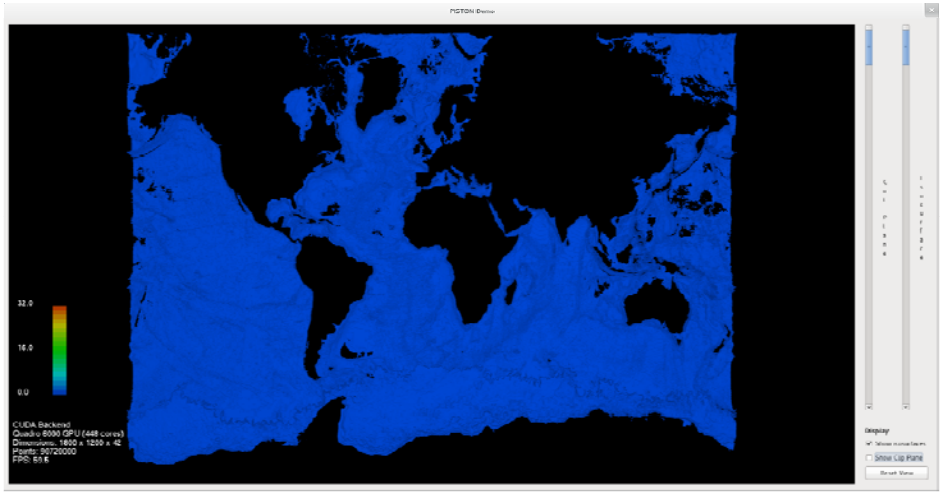
- Current production visualization software does not take full advantage of acceleration hardware and/or multi-core architecture
  - Vtk, ParaView, Visit
- Research on accelerating visualization operations are mostly hardware-specific; few were integrated in visualization software
  - CUDA SDK demo
  - Dyken, Ziegler, "High-speed Marching Cubes using Histogram Pyramids", Eurographics 2007.
- Most work in portability and abstraction layers/languages are not ready (yet)…
  - Scout, DAX, Liszt
- Can we accelerate our visualization software with something that is based on "proven" technology and portable across different architectures?
  - Data parallel libraries
    - NVidia Thrust library

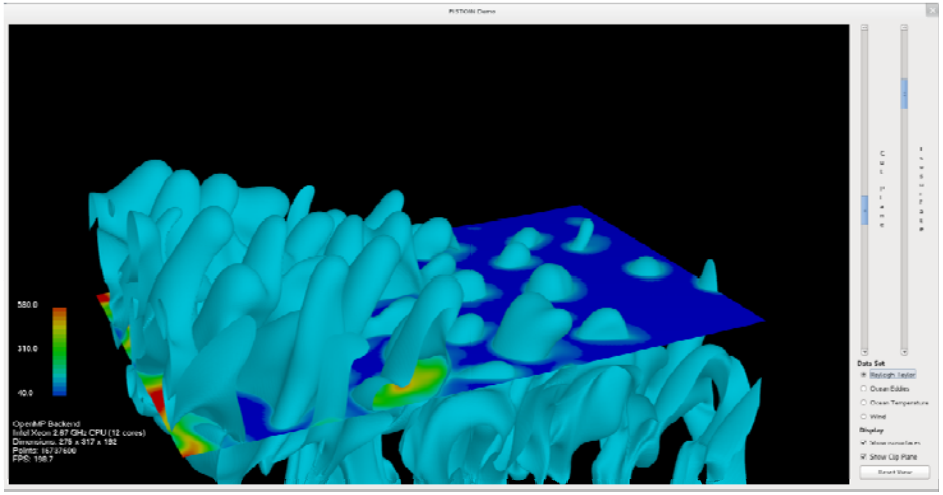
Brief Introduction to Data-Parallel Programming and Thrust

- What is data parallelism?
  - When independent processors performs the same task on different pieces of data
  - Due to the massive data sizes we expect to be simulating we expect data parallelism to be a good way to exploit parallelism on current and next generation architectures
  - "The data parallel bible" - Blelloch, "Vector Models for Data Parallel Computing"
- What is Thrust?
  - Thrust is a NVidia C++ template library for CUDA. It can also target OpenMP and we are creating new backends to target other architectures
  - Thrust allows you to program using an interface similar the C++ Standard Template Library (STL)
  - Most of the STL algorithms in Thrust are data parallel

Videos of PISTON in Action







Brief Introduction to Data-Parallel Programming and Thrust

What algorithms does Thrust provide?

- Sorts
- Transforms
- Reductions
- Scans
- Binary searches
- Stream compactions
- Scatters / gathers

Challenge: Write operators in terms of these primitives only

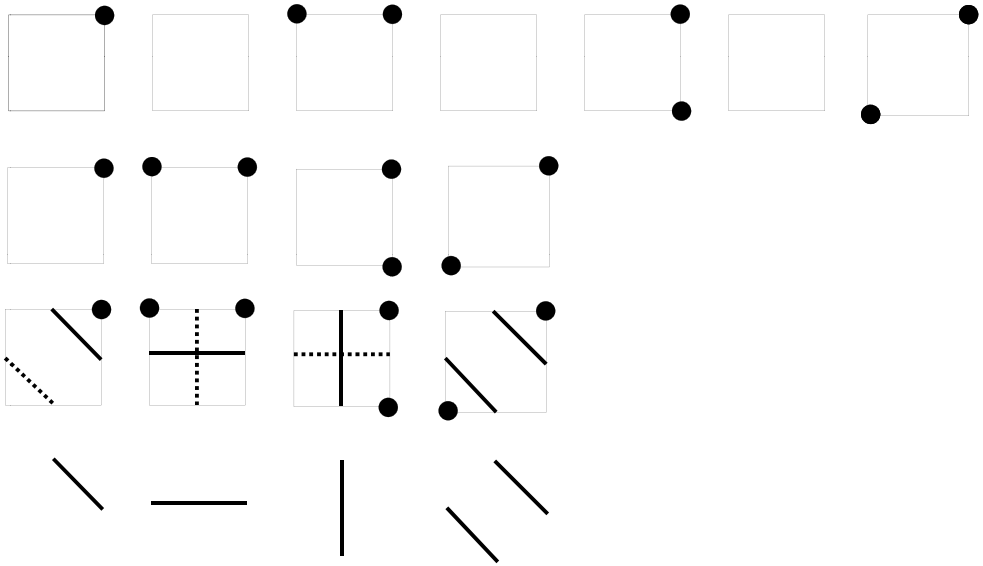
Reward: Efficient, portable code

```
input                    4  5  2  1  3
-----------------------------------------
transform(+1)            5  6  3  2  4
inclusive_scan(+)        4  9 11 12 15
exclusive_scan(+)        0  4  9 11 12
exclusive_scan(max)      0  4  5  5  5
transform_inscan(*2,+)   8 18 22 24 30
for_each(-1)             3  4  1  0  2
sort                     1  2  3  4  5
copy_if(n % 2 == 1)      5  1  3
reduce(+)                            15

input1                   0  0  2  4  8
input2                   3  4  1  0  2
-----------------------------------------
upper_bound              3  4  2  2  3
permutation_iterator     4  8  0  0  2
```

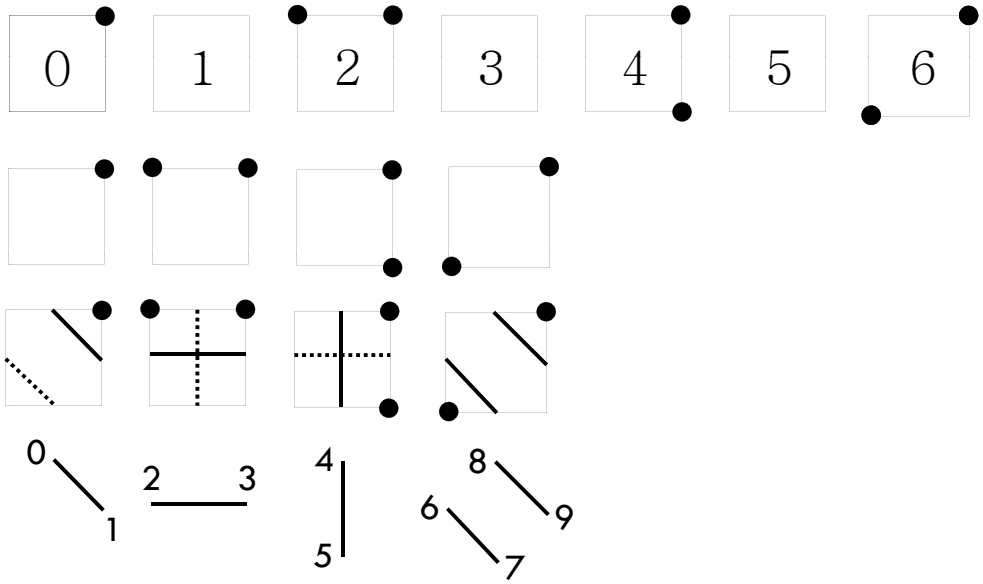
Isosurface with Marching Cubes – the Naive Way

- Classify all cells by *transform*
- Use *copy_if* to compact valid cells.
- For each valid cell, generate same number of geometries with flags.
- Use *copy_if* to do stream compaction on vertices.
- This approach is too slow, more than 50% of time was spent moving huge amount of data in global memory.
- Can we avoid calling *copy_if* and eliminate global memory movement?



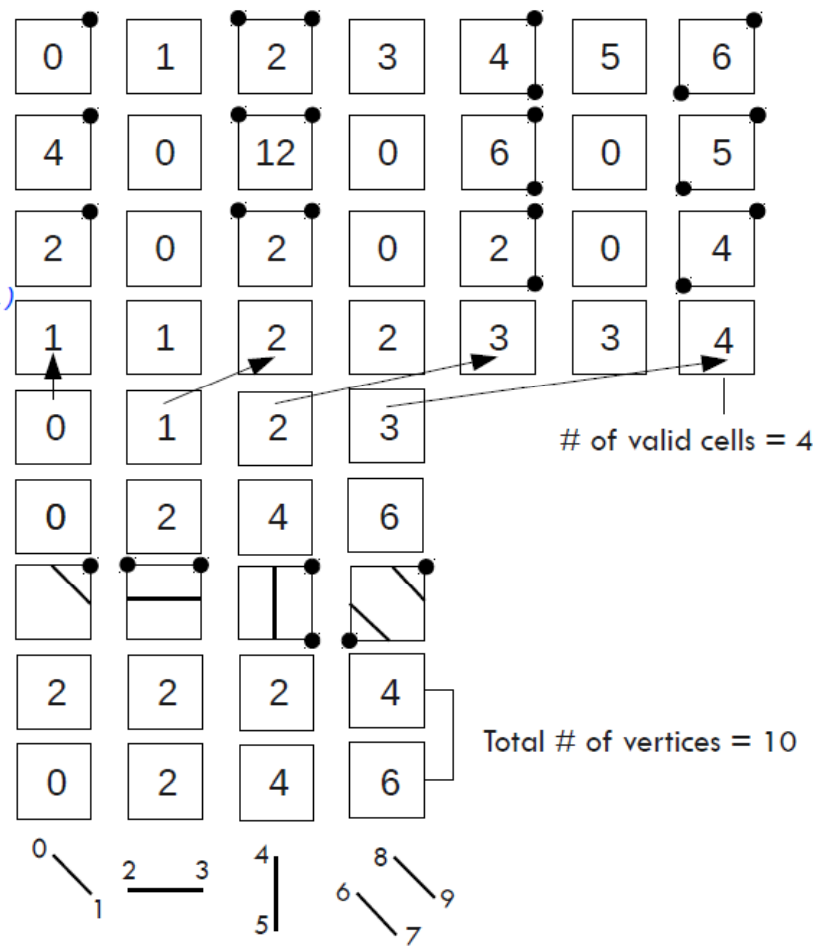
Isosurface with Marching Cubes – Optimization

- Inspired by HistoPyramid
- The filter is essentially a mapping from input cell id to output vertex id
- Is there a "reverse" mapping?
- If there is a reverse mapping, the filter can be very "lazy"
- Given an output vertex id, we *only* apply operations on the cell that would generate the vertex
- Actually for a range of output vertex ids



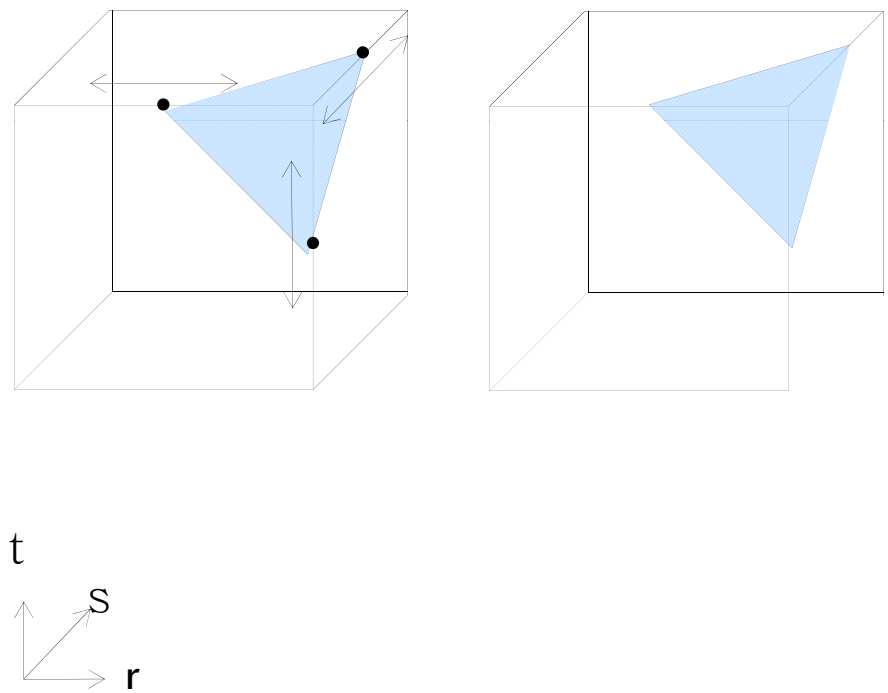
Isosurface with Marching Cubes Algorithm

1. input
   transform(classify_cell)
2. caseNums
3. numVertices
   transform_inclusive_scan(is_valid_cell)
4. validCellEnum
5. CountingIterator
   upper_bound
6. validCellIndices
   make_permutation_iterator
7. numVerticesCompacted
   exclusive_scan
8. numVerticesEnum
   for_each(isosurface_functor)
9. outputVertices



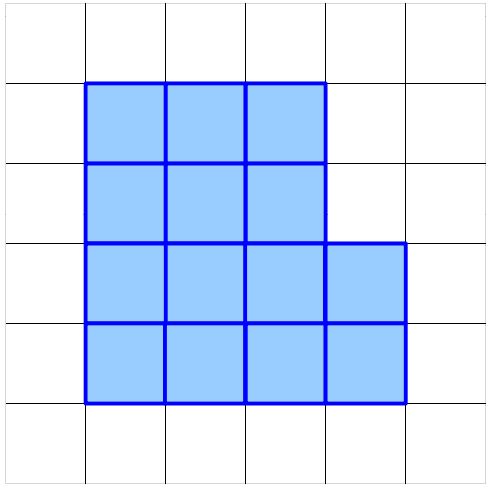
Cut Surfaces

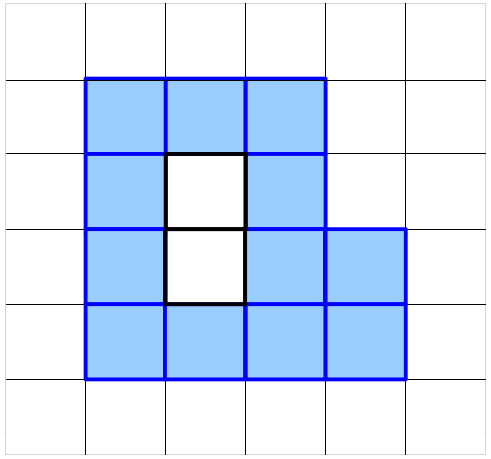
- All the vertices generated by marching cube are on the cell edges.
- They have only one degree of freedom, not three.
- 1D interpolation only, no need to do trilinear interpolation on scalar field.
- Two scalar fields, one for generating geometry (cut surface) the other for scalar interpolation.
- Less than 10 LOC change, negligible performance impact to isosurface.



Threshold

- Again, very similar to marching cube
  - Classify cells, stream compact valid cells and generate geometries for valid cells.
  - Optimization: what does the "inside" of a brick look like? Do we even care?
- Additional passes of cell classification and stream compaction to remove "interior cells"





Additional Operators

- Blelloch's "Vector Models for Data-Parallel Computing"

Data Structures
- Graphs: Neighbor reducing, distributing excess across edges
- Trees: Leaffix and rootfix operations, tree manipulations
- Multidimensional arrays

Computational Geometry
- Generalized binary search
- k-D tree
- Closest pair
- Quickhull
- Merge Hull

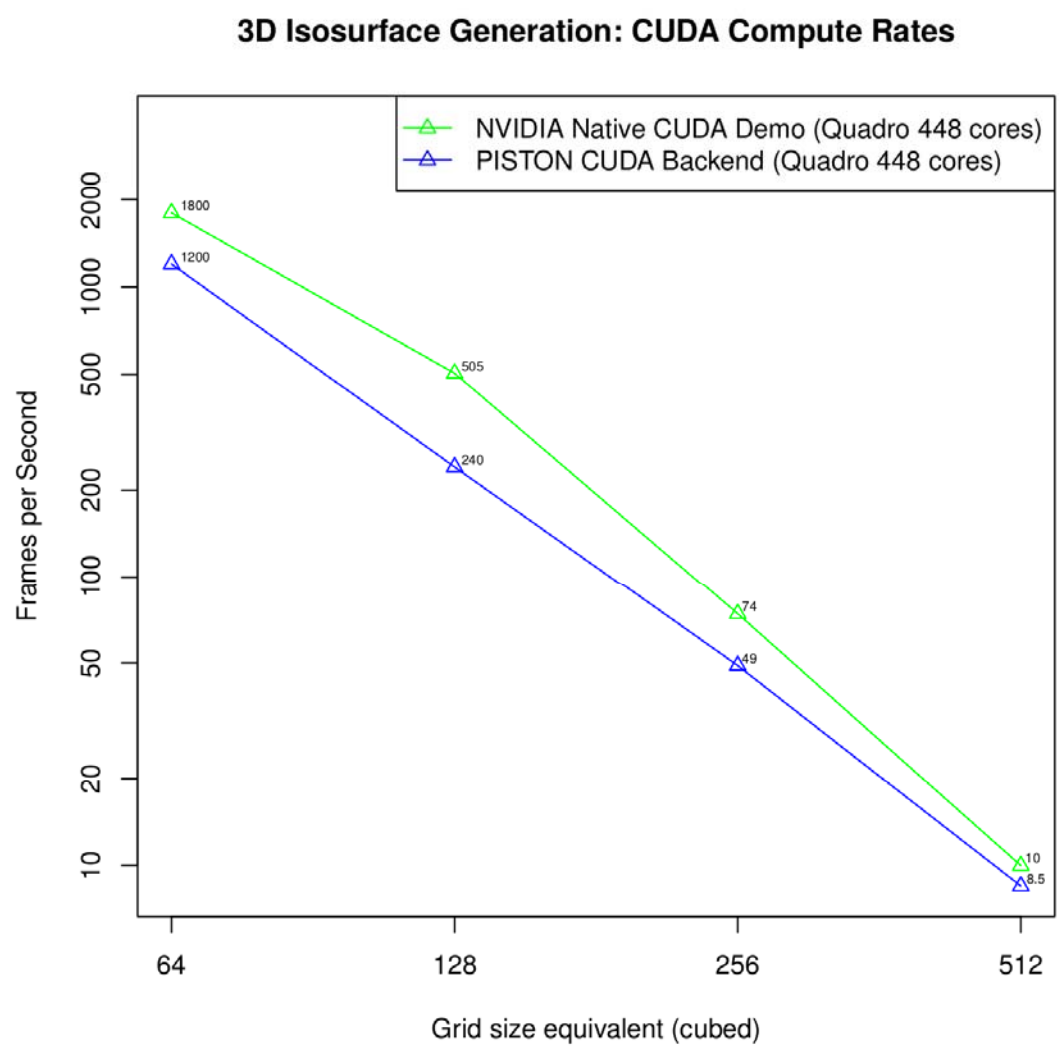
Graph Algorithms
- Minimum spanning tree
- Maximum flow
- Maximal independent set

Numerical Algorithms
- Matrix-vector multiplication
- Linear-systems solver
- Simplex
- Outer product
- Sparse-matrix multiplication

- Our on-going work: glyphs; rendering (rasterizing version and ray-casting version with k-D Tree); statistics with `reduce` primitive
- At least a naïve algorithm usually possible using the flexibility of `transform` and `for_each` primitives with user-defined functors; efficient global communication usually requires use of scans
- Efficient algorithms will still require clever design, but will be beneficial across platforms

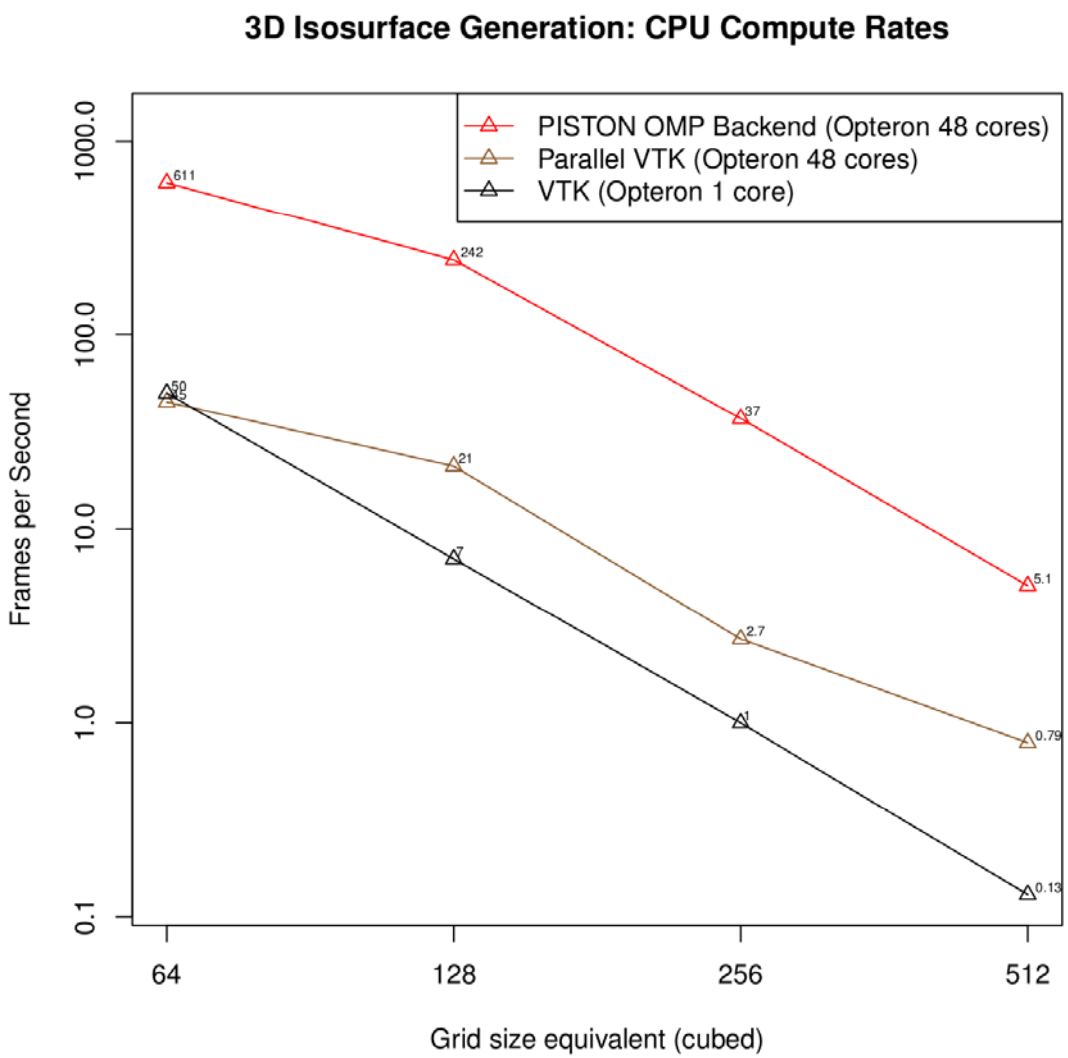
PISTON CUDA Backend Performance

- Limited performance degradation relative to native CUDA optimized code
- PISTON
  - Limited use of shared/texture memory due to portability
- NVIDIA CUDA Demo
  - Works only with data set with power of 2 per dimension, allowing use of shift instead of integer division
  - Memory inefficient; runs out of texture/global memory when data size is larger than 512^3



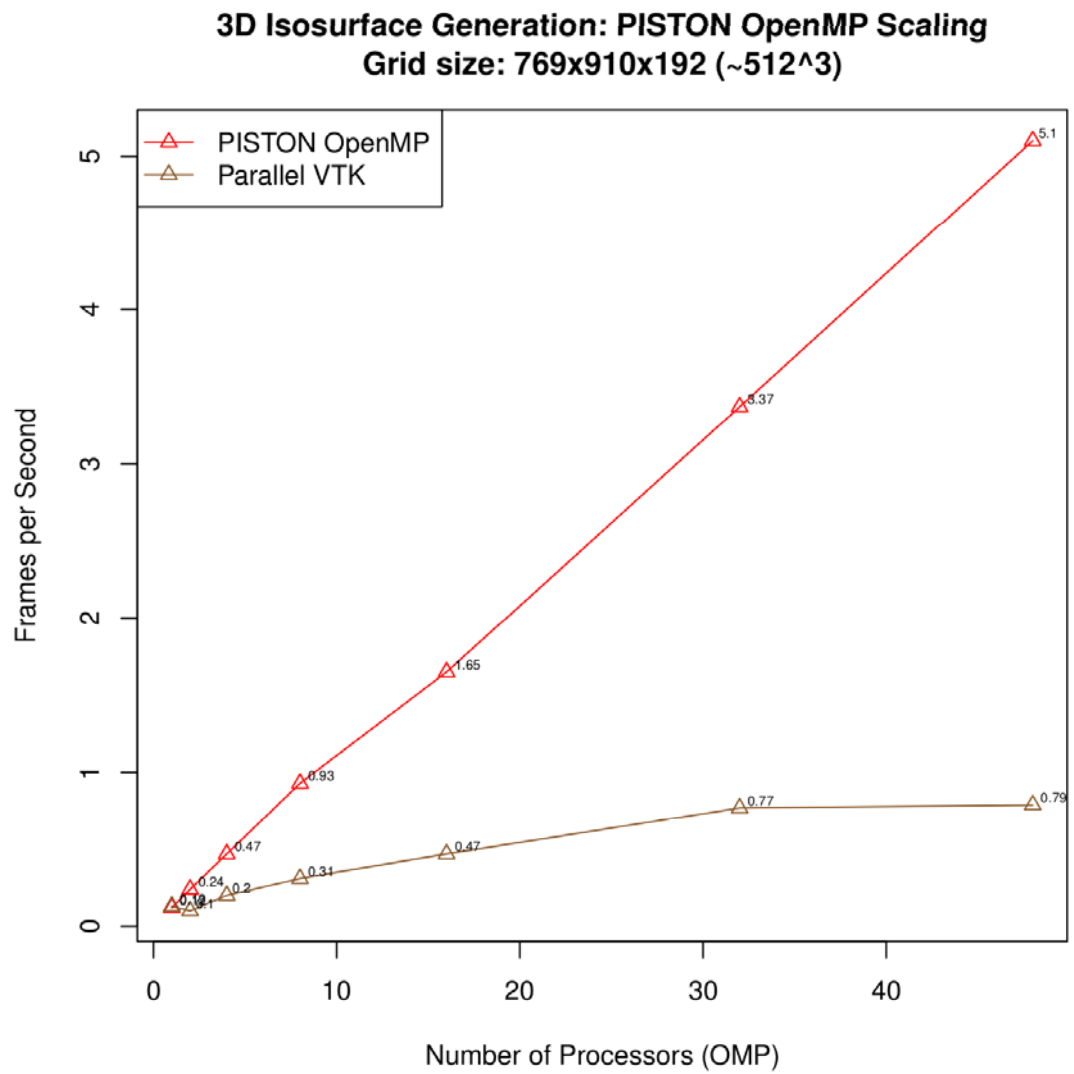
PISTON OpenMP Backend Performance

- Compile time #define/-D switches between backends
- Wrote our own parallel scan implementation for Thrust OpenMP backend
- Significantly better performance than both single process and parallel VTK



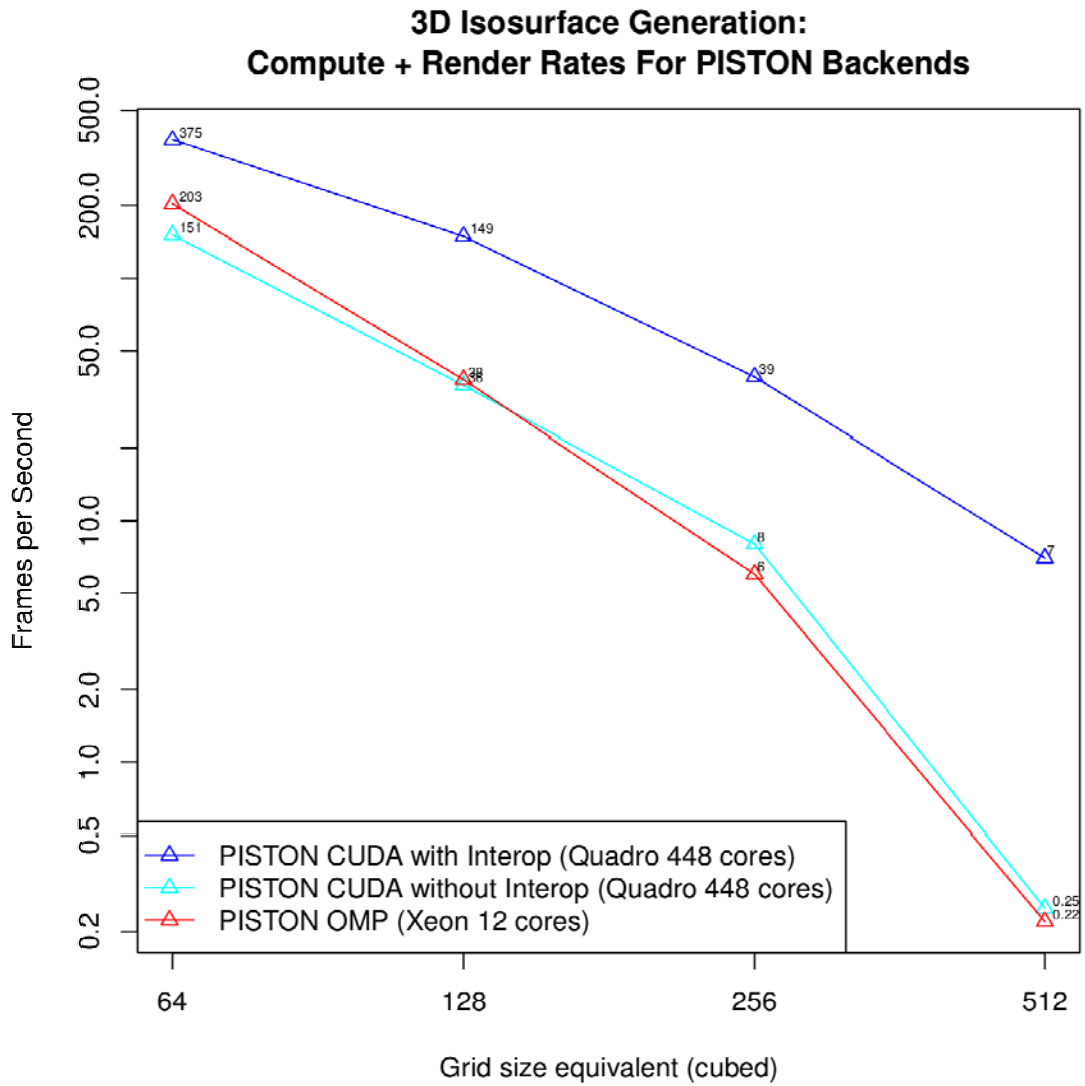
PISTON OpenMP Scaling Performance

- Significantly better scalability in term of # of cores than parallel VTK



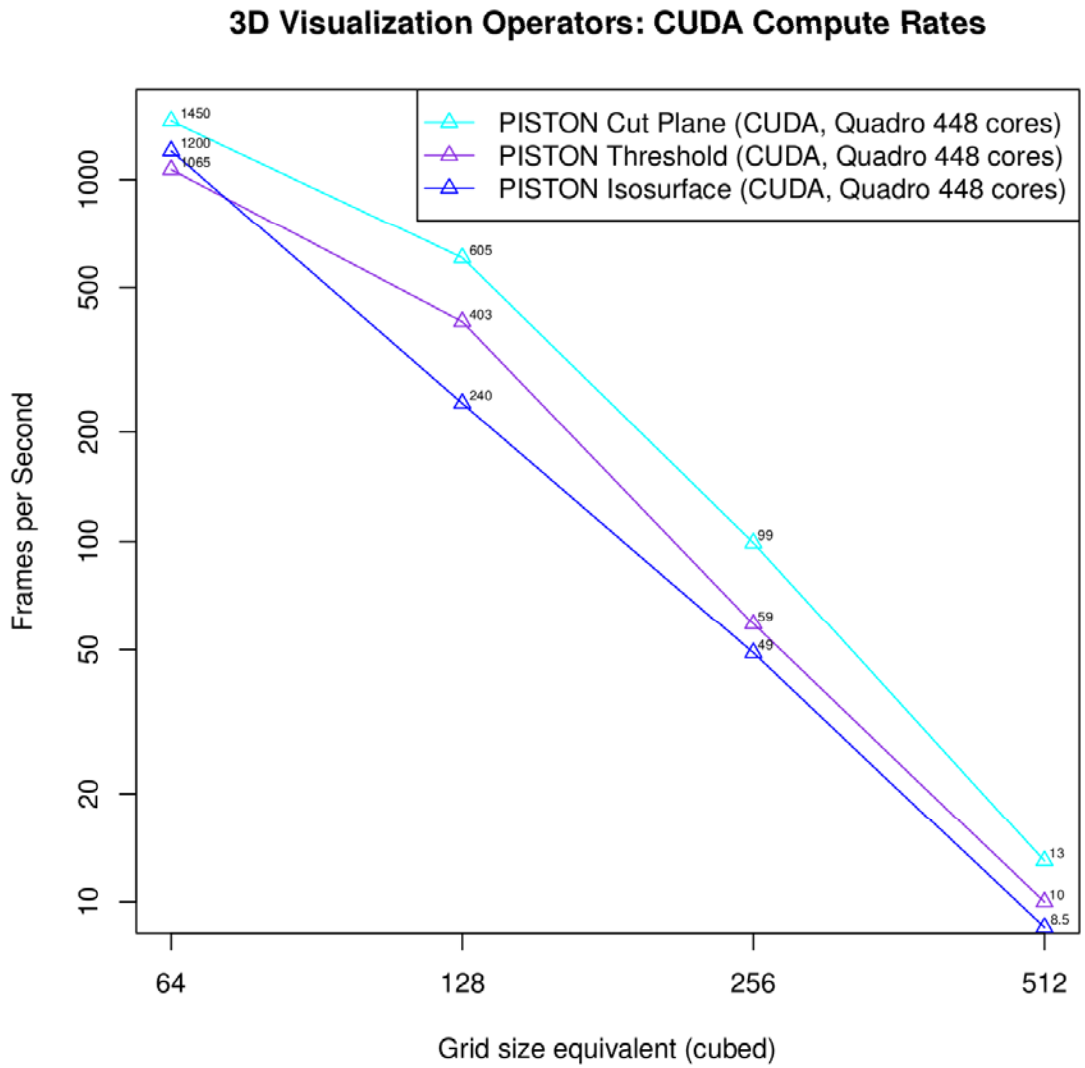
PISTON Compute and Render Results

- Compute and render results
  - CUDA and OpenMP backends
- CUDA/OpenGL interop
  - Platform specific, non-portable
  - Output geometries directly into OpenGL VBO
  - Avoid round trip between device and host memory movement
  - Vastly improves rendering performance and reduces memory footprint



PISTON Visualization Operators

- Three fundamental visualization operations
- All based on the same basic data-parallelism
- Very similar performance characteristics
  - Cut plane is the fastest since it generates 2D planes
  - Threshold comes next because there is no interpolation for scalar nor position
  - Isosurface is actually the most complicated operator

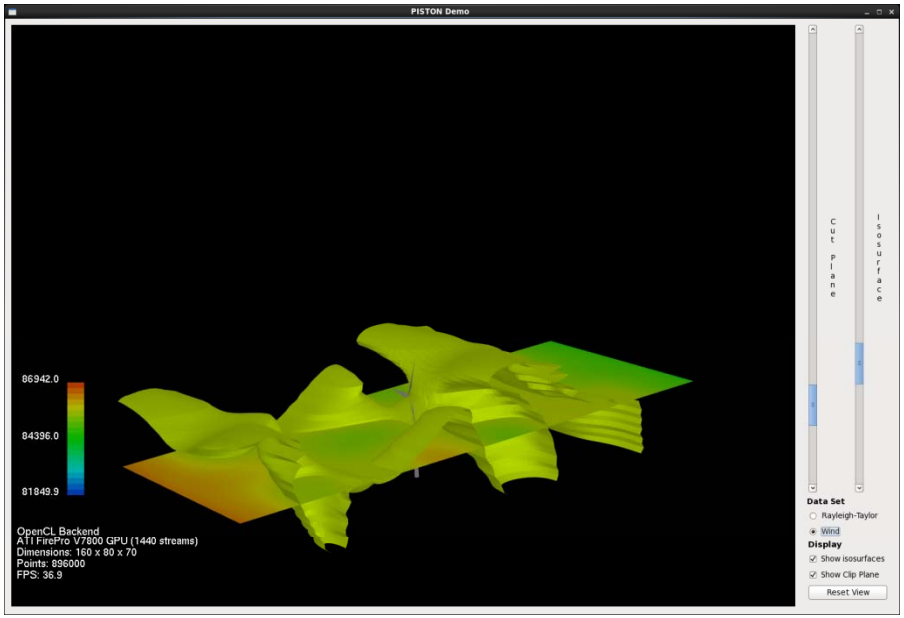


OpenCL Backend

- Motivation: Support for compiling visualization operators for a wide variety of additional GPU and CPU architectures
- Challenges
  - OpenCL is not built into Thrust
  - OpenCL is based on C99, making support for C++ features difficult
  - OpenCL compiles kernels from strings at run-time rather than from source files
- Current Approach
  - Pre-processor extracts operators from user-written functors and outputs them to .cl files
  - At run-time, our Thrust-like backend combines these user-derived .cl files with its own native OpenCL implementations of data-parallel primitives into kernel strings
  - Our Thrust-like backend uses run-time type information to handle simple templating and functor calls, substituting for key words in string
  - Kernel source only needs to be compiled once for each time it appears in code

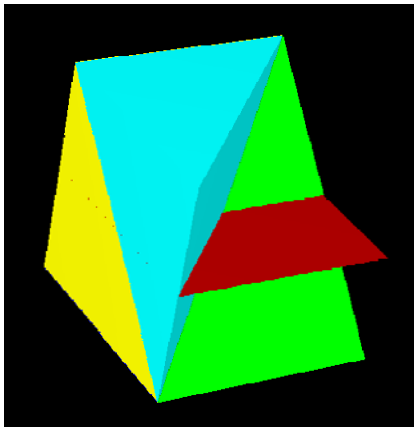
OpenCL Backend Results

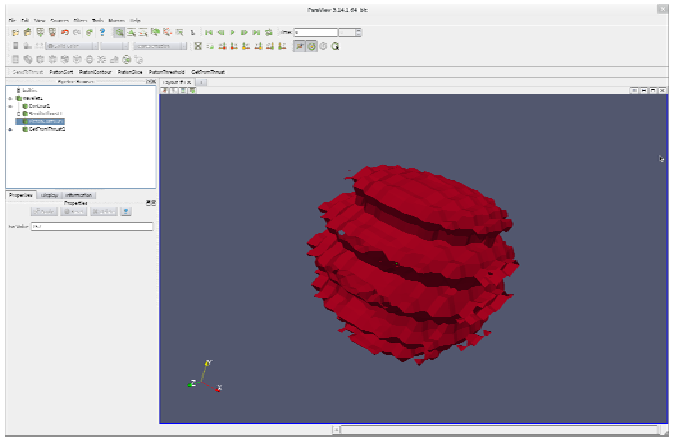
- Preliminary Results
  - Successfully implemented isosurface and cut plane operators in OpenCL with code *almost* identical to that used for the Thrust-based CUDA and OpenMP backends
  - With interop on AMD FirePro V7800 (1440 streams), we can run at about 6 fps for 256^3 data set (2 fps without interop)

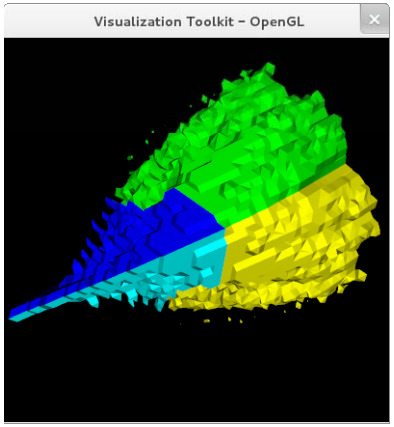


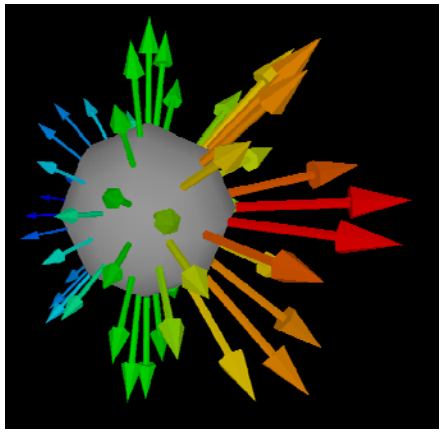
On-going and Future Work

- Marching Tetrahedra: a first step towards support for unstructured grids
- Integration with ParaView
- Multi-node parallelism with VTK/ParaView's MPI constructs
- More operators, more backends









Open-Source Release

- Open-source release
  - Tarball: http://viz.lanl.gov/projects/PISTON.html
  - Repository: https://github.com/losalamos/PISTON

Acknowledgments and Resources

- The work on PISTON was funded by the NNSA ASC CCSE Program, Thuc Hoang, national program manager, Bob Webster and David Daniel, Los Alamos program managers

- For more information, see
  http://viz.lanl.gov/projects/PISTON.html