DXR Tutorial 14

Refit

# Overview

So far, we’ve only handled static meshes. We created the top-level acceleration structure once and assumed that the scene stays static.

In this tutorial, we will learn how to handle dynamic objects by making the outer triangles rotate.

# Rebuild vs Refit

We can animate objects by manipulating their transformation matrix used when creating the TLAS (D3D12\_RAYTRACING\_INSTANCE\_DESC::Transform).

There are 2 options to update the TLAS:

* Rebuild – Creates the TLAS from scratch. Doesn’t use any information from previous builds.
* Refit – **Update** an existing TLAS.

According to the spec, there are different pros and cons for each option. The refit operation is usually faster than rebuild, but traversing a TLAS that supports updates might be slower. As we’ll see in a second, it’s straightforward to switch between the 2 options. This makes it very simple to benchmark both options.

We already know how to build (and therefore rebuild) a TLAS. This tutorial will focus on refit.

# Refitting a TLAS

The code for refitting a TLAS is almost identical to the code creating a TLAS. We need to go through the same steps – allocating scratch, result, and instance-desc buffers, initializing the instance descriptors, and calling **BuildRaytracingAccelerationStructure()**).

There are 3 differences in the arguments we pass to **BuildRaytracingAccelerationStructure()**:

1. We need to create the TLAS with the D3D12\_RAYTRACING\_ACCELERATION\_STRUCTURE\_BUILD\_FLAG\_ALLOW\_UPDATE flag. We also need to pass this flag to **GetRaytracingAccelerationStructurePrebuildInfo()**.
2. When refitting, we need to set the D3D12\_RAYTRACING\_ACCELERATION\_STRUCTURE\_BUILD\_FLAG\_PERFORM\_UPDATE of D3D12\_BUILD\_RAYTRACING\_ACCELERATION\_STRUCTURE\_DESC.
3. When refitting, we need to set a source TLAS buffer into the SourceAccelerationStructureData field of D3D12\_BUILD\_RAYTRACING\_ACCELERATION\_STRUCTURE\_DESC.

Conceptually, these are the only differences. That’s good news, as it means we already have most of what we need to support animation.

# Code Walkthrough

First, let’s change the code that creates the TLAS. We renamed it and changed the signature.

void buildTopLevelAS(ID3D12Device5Ptr pDevice,

ID3D12GraphicsCommandList4Ptr pCmdList,

ID3D12ResourcePtr pBottomLevelAS[2],

uint64\_t& tlasSize,

float rotation,

bool update,

DxrtSample::AccelerationStructureBuffers& buffers)

The last 3 arguments are new:

* rotation – Rotation in radians relative to the Y axis. We will apply this rotation to the 2 outer triangles.
* update – True if this is a refit operation, otherwise false. Remember that we must create the TLAS once before we can update it.
* buffers – Up to now we’ve only stored the result buffer. To avoid reallocating the *scratch* and *instance-desc* buffers every frame, we will store them as members (as we need update now).

First, we query for the required buffer sizes for a TLAS that supports updating by passing the D3D12\_RAYTRACING\_ACCELERATION\_STRUCTURE\_BUILD\_FLAG\_ALLOW\_UPDATE flag.

D3D12\_BUILD\_RAYTRACING\_ACCELERATION\_STRUCTURE\_INPUTS inputs = {};

inputs.DescsLayout = D3D12\_ELEMENTS\_LAYOUT\_ARRAY;

inputs.Flags = D3D12\_RAYTRACING\_ACCELERATION\_STRUCTURE\_BUILD\_FLAG\_ALLOW\_UPDATE;

inputs.NumDescs = 1;

inputs.Type = D3D12\_RAYTRACING\_ACCELERATION\_STRUCTURE\_TYPE\_TOP\_LEVEL;

If this is an update operation, we need to insert a UAV barrier for the TLAS buffer. In this tutorial, we request for an update after the TLAS was used in a DispatchRay() call, which reads from the buffer. We are going to write into the buffer, so a UAV barrier is required to ensure we do not overwrite data that is currently in use.

if (update)

{

D3D12\_RESOURCE\_BARRIER uavBarrier = {};

uavBarrier.Type = D3D12\_RESOURCE\_BARRIER\_TYPE\_UAV;

uavBarrier.UAV.pResource = buffers.pResult;

pCmdList->ResourceBarrier(1, &uavBarrier);

}

If it’s not an update operation, then we will allocate the buffers required for the TLAS creation.

Next, when creating the instance descriptors, you can see we apply rotation to the outer triangles.

mat4 rotationMat = eulerAngleY(rotation);

transformation[1] = translate(mat4(), vec3(-2, 0, 0)) \* rotationMat;

transformation[2] = translate(mat4(), vec3(2, 0, 0)) \* rotationMat;

Finally, if this is an update operation, we set the source buffer and the perform-update flag into the D3D12\_BUILD\_RAYTRACING\_ACCELERATION\_STRUCTURE\_DESC struct used when calling **BuildRaytracingAccelerationStructure()**.

// If this is an update operation, set the source buffer and the perform\_update flag

if(update)

{

asDesc.Inputs.Flags |= D3D12\_RAYTRACING\_ACCELERATION\_STRUCTURE\_BUILD\_FLAG\_PERFORM\_UPDATE;

asDesc.SourceAccelerationStructureData = buffers.pResult->GetGPUVirtualAddress();

}

**NOTE**: There’s a limitation with the current implementation where the source buffer must also be the result buffer.

Finally, we can record a build command. Notice that we use the ALLOW\_UPDATE flag, pass update and use the source buffer we computed before.

Now it’s time to use this function.

# Load Time TLAS Creation

The only thing that changed in **createAccelerationStructures()** is the fact that we now call the function by its new name and request a `create` operation (see line 465).

# Render-Time TLAS Refit

We added 4 lines of code to the beginning of **onFrameRender()**.

buildTopLevelAS(mpDevice, mpCmdList, mpBottomLevelAS, mTlasSize, mRotation, true, mTopLevelBuffers);

mRotation += 0.005f;

We call **buildTopLevelAS()** and request an update operation and update the rotation.

And we’re done. No shader changes are required. Launch the application and you should see the 2 outer triangles rotate.