

Vulkan Guide

Khronos Group

Logistics Overview

What is Vulkan?

1. Vulkan is a new generation graphics and compute API
2. Vulkan provides high-efficiency, cross-platform to modern GPUs used in a devices like pc/mobile/embedded platforms
3. Vulkan provide a way for developers to program their modern GPU hardware
 1. Vulkan is a tool for developers to create hardware accelerated applications
4. The Khronos Group is created and maintains Vulkan.

Vulkan and OpenGL

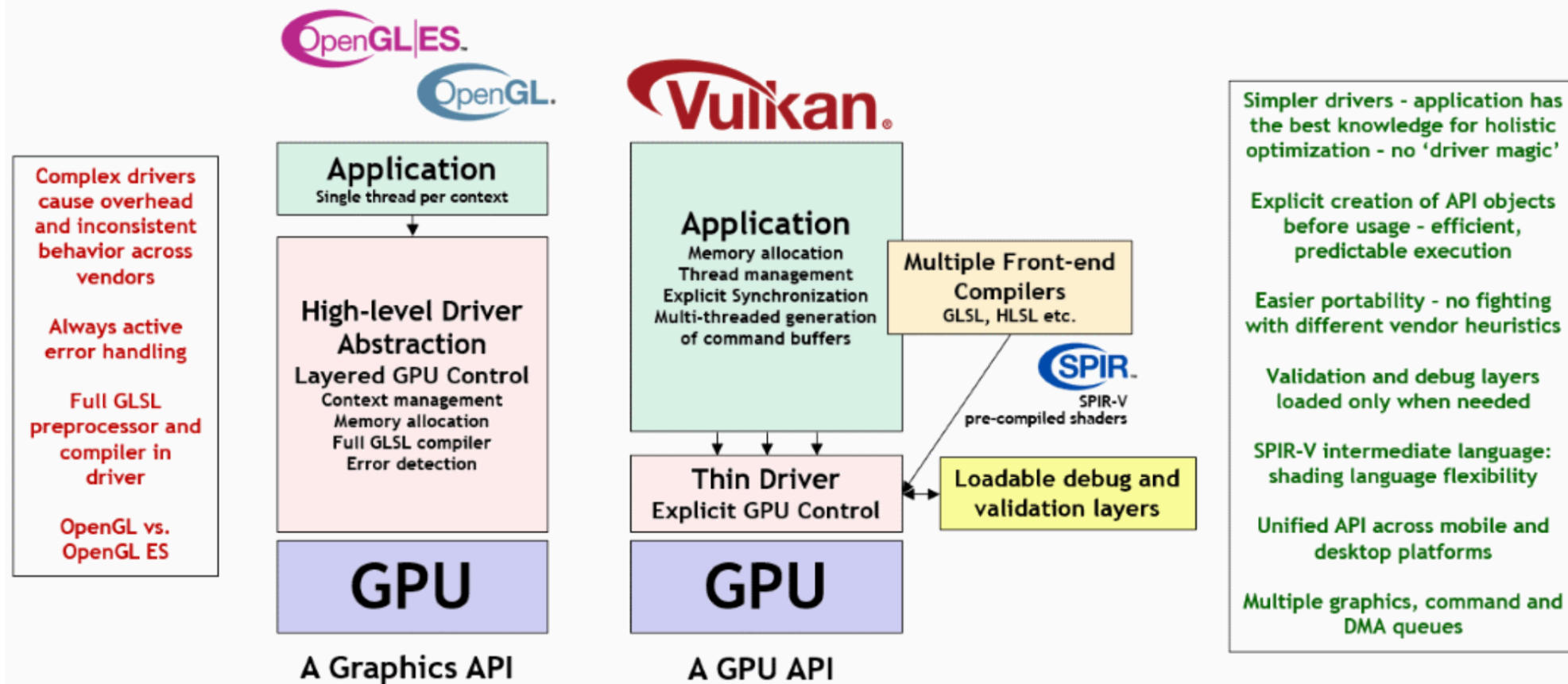
Difference

1. OpenGL is also a 3D Graphics API
2. Vulkan is not a replacement for OpenGL
3. Vulkan is an explicit API allows for more explicit control of the GPU

| Feature | OpenGL ES | Vulkan |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|
| State management | Global state | State objects |
| API execution model | Synchronous | Asynchronous |
| API threading model | Single threaded | Multi-threaded |
| API error checking | Extensive runtime checks | Only via layers |
| Render pass abstraction | Inferred render passes | Explicit render passes |
| Memory allocation | Client-server pools | Shared memory pool |
| Memory usage | Typed allocations | Typed views |

Vulkan and OpenGL

Vulkan: Performance, Predictability, Portability

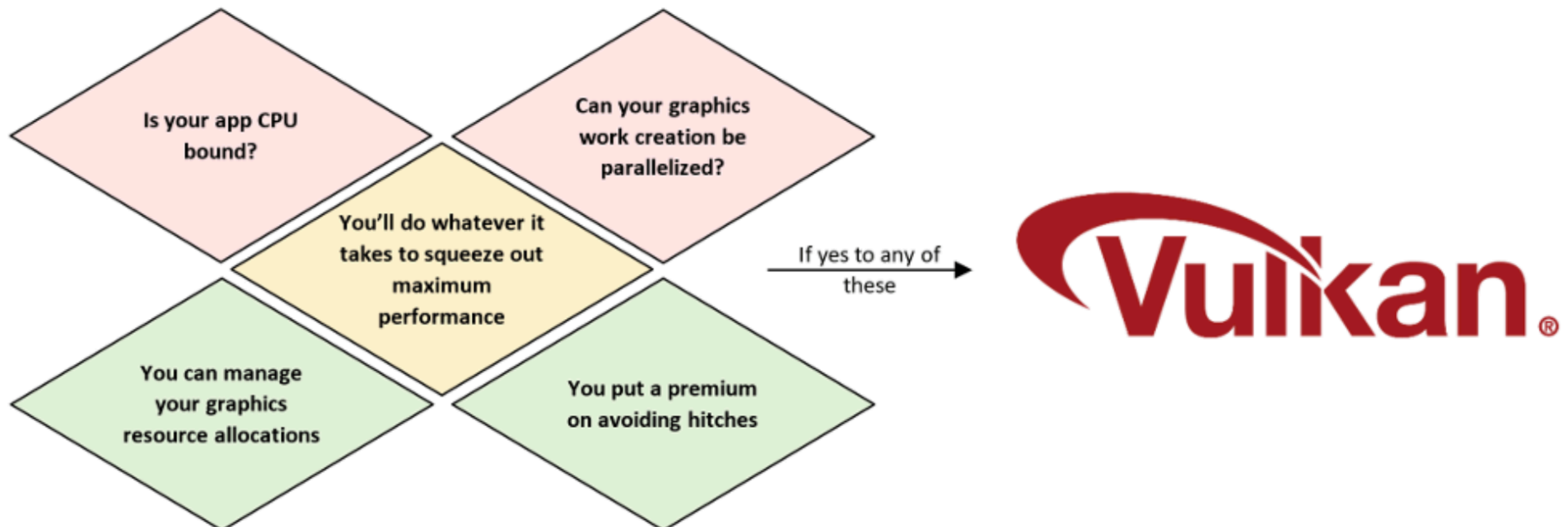


Vulkan and OpenGL

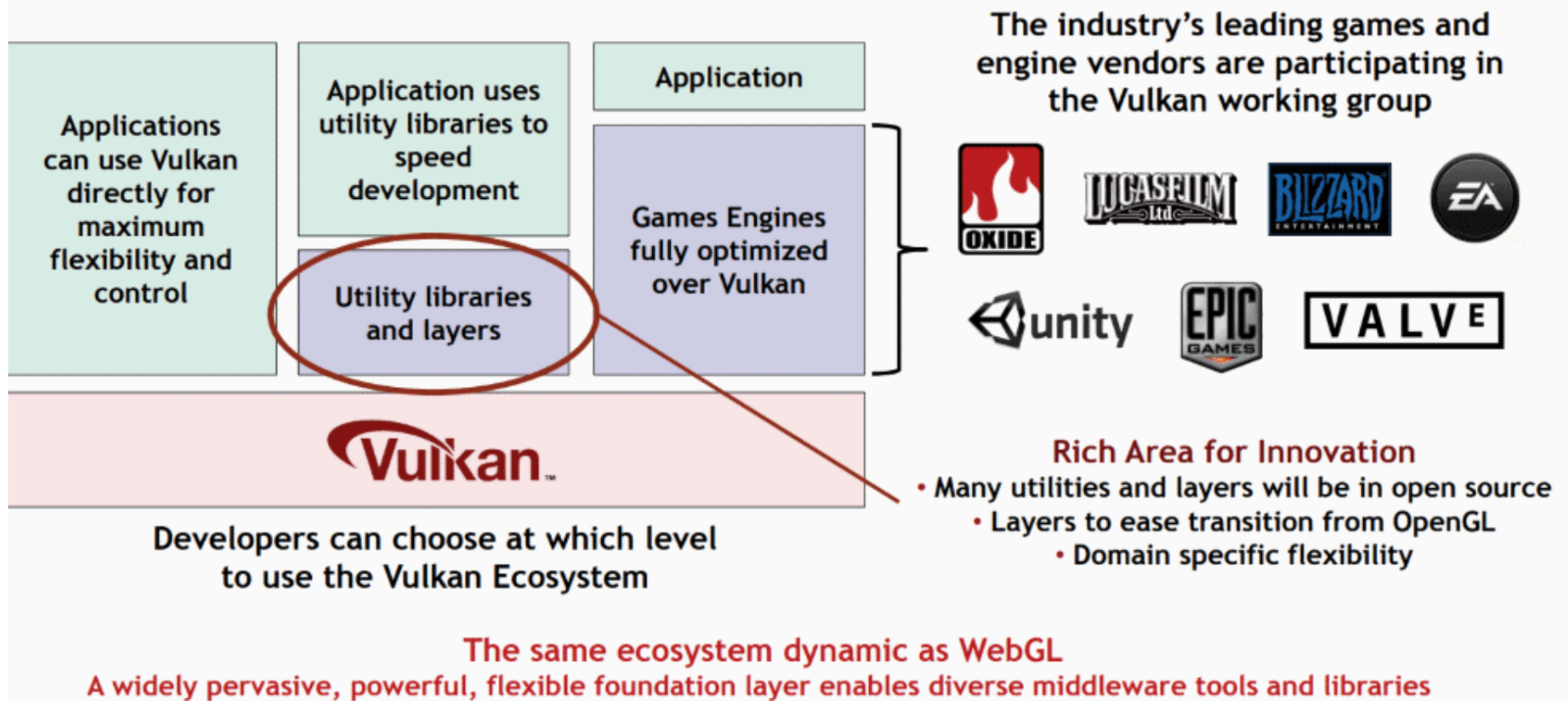
Vulkan puts more work and responsibility into application

1. Why Vulkan put more work and responsibility into application?

1. For those who use Vulkan correctly can find power and performance improvements



The Power of a Three Layer Ecosystem



What Vulkan Can Do?

User can use Vulkan to develop application for many use cases

1. Graphics
 1. Developers can create 2D/3D hardware accelerated graphical applications
2. Compute
 1. Vulkan supports compute variation of VkQueues/VkPipelines, so Developer can use Vulkan for general computation
3. Ray Tracing
 1. What is Ray Tracing?
 1. Ray tracing is an alternative rendering technique, based around the concept of simulating the physical behavior of light
 2. Vulkan support VK_KHR_ray_tracing_pipeline
4. Vulkan Video
 1. Vulkan Video provide fine-grained control over video processing scheduling, synchronization, and memory utilization to the application.
5. Machine Learning
 1. Make Vulkan a first class API for exposing ML compute capabilities of modern GPUs.
6. Safety Critical
 1. Bring the graphics and compute capabilities of modern GPUs to safety-critical systems in the automotive, avionics, industrial and medical space.

Platforms

Vulkan runs on many platforms, each has small variations



Checking for Vulkan Support

Platform support and Device Support

1. How to check if your platform is support Vulkan?
 1. Each platform uses a different mechanism to manage how the Vulkan Loader is implemented
 1. Android: run [Vulkan Hardware Capability Viewer](#) app developed by Sascha Willems.
 2. BSD Unix: run [vulkaninfo](#) in VulkanSDK.
 3. iOS: [Vulkan Hardware Capability Viewer](#) provided by LunarG.
 4. Linux: run [Vulkaninfo](#) in VulkanSDK
 5. macOS: run [Vulkaninfo](#) in VulkanSDK
 6. Windows: run [Vulkaninfo.exe](#) in VulkanSDK
 2. The loader is then in charge of determining if a Vulkan Driver is exposed correctly.

Checking for Vulkan Support

Platform Support and Device Support

2. How to Check if your device is support Vulkan?

1. For device support, one will need to make sure a Vulkan Driver is available that full implements Vulkan.
2. There are a few different variations of a Vulkan Driver
 1. Hardware Implementation
 1. A certain GPU might have the physical capabilities of running Vulkan, it still requires a driver to control it.
 2. The driver is in charge of getting the Vulkan calls mapped to the hardware in the most efficient way possible.
 3. Drivers, like software have different versions and update, so there can be many variations of drivers for the same physical device and platform.
 1. Vulkan Database <https://vulkan.gpuinfo.org/> is the largest collection of recorded Vulkan implementation details.
 2. Null Driver
 1. The term “Null Driver” is given to any driver that accepts Vulkan API calls, but does not do anything with them.
 2. The term “Null Driver” is common for testing interactions with the driver without needing any working implementation backing it.
 3. Many uses cases such as creating CTS Tests for new features, testing the validation layers, and more rely on the idea of a null driver.
 4. Khronos provides Mock ICD as one implementation of a null driver that works on various platforms
3. Software Implementation
 1. It is possible to create a Vulkan implementation that only runs on the CPU.
 2. Is useful to test Vulkan that is hardware independent, but unlike the null driver, also outputs a valid result
 3. SwiftShader is an example of CPU-based implementation.

