

# OpenSceneGraph

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Programming of Graphics Shaders

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# 1 Introduction

OpenSceneGraph is established as the world's leading scene graph technology [1]. Its history began as Don Burns developed a scene graph component of a hang-gliding simulator for Silicon Graphics International (SGI) in 1998. He wrote a scene graph API, runnable on Linux. This API was later used as the first prototype of OpenSceneGraph. In 1999 Robert Ostfield started to collaborate on the project. Together they took the developed scene graph API, made a standalone open source project out of it and ported it to Windows. After that Robert Ostfield gave the project the name OpenSceneGraph [2].

In the following years, the project received growing interest. In response to that, Robert Ostfield set up OpenSceneGraph Professional Services and provided both commercial and free OSG services. Like Robert Ostfield, Dan Burns also formed his own company, namely Andes Computer Engineering. He pursued to support the further development of the OSG project. After many libraries and packages, like `osgText` for text rendering or `osgFX` for special effects, were added to the project, OSG 1.0 was announced in 2005. Two years later OSG 2.0 was released [2].

Till the release of OSG 3.0 and the support of OpenGL ES and OpenGL 3.0 in 2010 many further packages like `osgWidget` for the integration of UI components, `osgVolume` to make users able to render volumes or `osgAnimation` to animate objects of the scene graph were included in the project [2]. In 2019 the most recent version, OSG 3.6.5, was released and the team behind OSG also started further projects like `VulkanSceneGraph`, an attempt combining Vulkan and C++ 17 to create a next-gen scene graph [1].

This report is intended to provide an introduction and an overview of OpenSceneGraph and its use. For this purpose, OpenSceneGraph is described in more detail in the second chapter. Afterwards, chapter three describes the use and the most important components of OpenSceneGraph. To demonstrate the effect of different nodes and settings within a scene graph, an interactive editor was developed. It is described in chapter four. Subsequently, the features and benefits of using OpenSceneGraph are listed. The report concludes with the personal experiences that were made while using OpenSceneGraph and tries to clarify the question of when it makes sense to use OpenSceneGraph for the development of applications.

## 2 OpenSceneGraph

This chapter is intended to give an overview of OpenSceneGraph. It is an open-source high-performance 3D graphics toolkit, that is used in fields such as visual simulation, games and scientific visualization [1]. As rendering middleware, it raises the level of abstraction of the usage of the low-level OpenGL API [3]. It has been developed using Standard C++ [1]. Actually, OpenSceneGraph supports OpenGL 1.0 up to OpenGL 4.2 as well as OpenGL ES, which makes it possible to develop applications that can run on both rather older and also newer hardware [4].

As the name suggests, OpenSceneGraph is based on the idea of scene graphs [1], so an explanation of scene graphs itself should be given. Since OpenSceneGraph is a retained rendering system [3], the term should be described in more detail and the differences between immediate and retained rendering should be shown as well.

### 2.1 Scene Graphs

A scene graph is a general data structure that is used to define the spatial and logical relationships within a graphical scene to efficiently manage and render the scene. Often it is represented as a hierarchical graph that contains a collection of different types of graphical nodes including a top-level root node, several group nodes that can have any number of child nodes and also a set of leaf nodes that have zero

child nodes. The grouping of child nodes under a parent node makes it possible, on the one hand, to share the information of the parent node among all children and, on the other, to treat them as one unit [5].

## 2.2 Retained Rendering

In general, graphic APIs can be distinguished in retained mode APIs and intermediate mode APIs [6]. Figure 1 displays a side-by-side comparison of both forms.

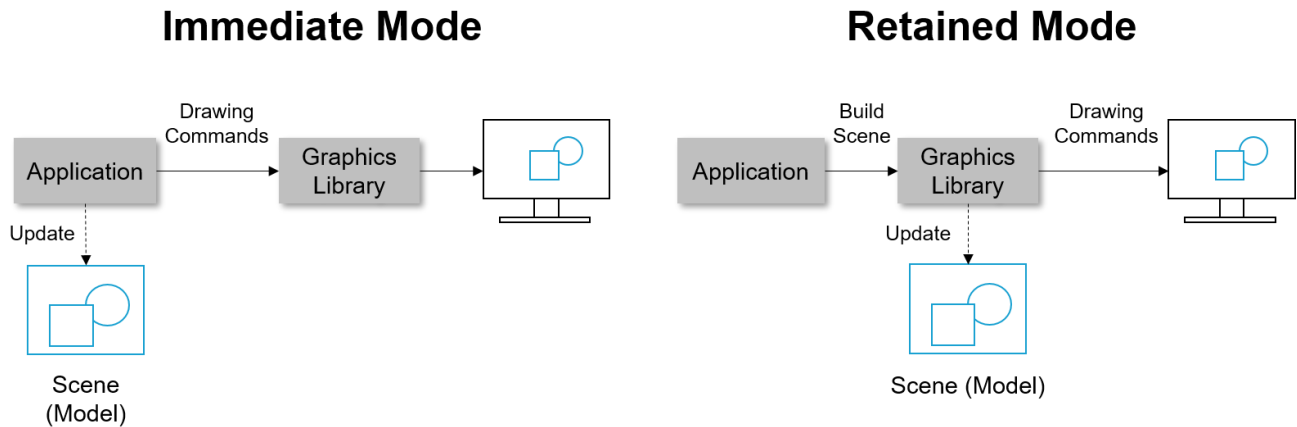


Figure 1: Comparison of immediate and retained mode rendering(based on figures of [6])

When using immediate mode rendering APIs (shown on the left in Figure xxx) the application must store and keep track of their scene model itself. Each time a new frame should be drawn on the screen, the application directly issues the drawing commands in a procedural way [6].

In contrary to immediate mode rendering APIs, retained mode APIs (shown on the right in Figure xxx) are declarative. Here the graphics library stores a model of the scene in memory that is constructed by the application out of graphics primitives. To draw a new frame on the screen, the graphics library transforms it into a set of drawing commands. In order to change the rendered frames (e.g. adding a new shape), the application issues commands of the graphics library to update the scene rather than do drawing commands itself. The library then updates the drawing commands depending on the changes in the scene [6].

On the one hand, retained rendering APIs simplify use, as the API does more work such as initialization, status management and cleanup. On the other hand, they often offer less flexibility than immediate mode rendering APIs because the API imposes its own scene model [6].

In OpenSceneGraph the toolkit stores the scene that is build up by an application in a scene graph representation and records rendering commands and data in a buffer. This enables the toolkit to perform various optimization before the actual rendering. For the actual rendering the OpenGL API is used by the OpenSceneGraph toolkit [3]. The application itself does not issue OpenGL drawing commands itself.

## 3 Use of OpenSceneGraph

After the overview given in Chapter 2, this section explains the use of OpenSceneGraph. First, the code of a simple example of an OpenSceneGraph application is shown. Afterwards, the most important of the libraries provided by OpenSceneGraph are listed and described. Then the existing classes for representing graphic nodes, how scene graphs are traversed, and the concept of smart pointers are explained in more detail. The last subsection of this section deals with the State Set class, which OpenSceneGraph provides to encapsulate the OpenGL state machine [7].

### 3.1 „Hello World“

Listing 1 shows the source code of what is probably the simplest possible OpenSceneGraph application.

```

1  #include <osgDB/ReadFile>
2  #include <osgViewer/Viewer>
3
4  int main(int argc, char** argv) {
5      osg::ref_ptr<osg::Node> root =
6          osgDB::readNodeFile("OpenSceneGraphData\\cow.osg");
7
8      osgViewer::Viewer viewer;
9      viewer.setSceneData(root.get());
10
11     viewer.run();
12 }
```

*Listing 1: A minimalistic OpenSceneGraph sample (strongly inspired by [8])*

In line 5, a model provided by OpenSceneGraph is loaded from a file and the reference to the loaded model is stored in an instance of the `osg::ref_ptr<>` class template. This is a smart pointer provided by OpenSceneGraph for additional features in terms of efficient memory management (further explanation in section 3.5). The stored reference is of the `osg::Node` type. It represents basic nodes of a scene graph (further explanation in section 3.3). Then an `osgViewer::Viewer` object, which provides a simulation loop for the application [8] and allows the rendering of a scene graph on the screen, is generated in line 7. With the call of the method `setSceneData()` it is possible to inform the viewer object which node is the root of the scene graph to be rendered. By calling the `run()` method of the viewer in line 10, a window will be created and the rendering of the scene graph is started beginning with the specified root node. A screenshot of the result of the rendering can be found in Appendix II: Screenshot of the “Hello World” Project.

### 3.2 Libraries

The OpenSceneGraph functionalities are available via several libraries. These are divided into the standard core libraries and a set of additional modular libraries, the so-called node kits [9]. The libraries either can be built from source (available at [10]) using CMake and a C++ Compiler or the pre-build binaries (only available for Windows) from [11] are used [12].

The core libraries are [9]:

- **osg library:** It contains basic methods and elements to build a scene graph including nodes, geometries and rendering states, as well as its own set of math classes to implement vector and matrix operations [9].
- **osgDB library:** This library provides support for reading and writing of a wide variety of images (e.g. .jpg, .png and .bmp [4]) and 3D database (e.g. COLLADA, LightWave and Alias Wavefront [4]) formats via a dynamic plugin mechanism [9].
- **OpenThreads library:** The intention of the OpenThreads library is to give C++ programmers a minimal and object-oriented thread interface [9].
- **osgUtil library:** It is designed to be used to implement OpenSceneGraph rendering backends, that traverse the scene graph, perform culling operations and convert the information in the scene into a series of OpenGL calls. Additionally, functionalities for polygon modification algorithms and user interaction are included [9].

By providing node kits, OpenSceneGraph offers a wide range of rendering functionality that can be compiled within the application or be loaded at runtime [9]. In order to not go beyond the scope of this report, only two of the currently available node kits are exemplarily described here:

- **osgManipulator library:** This library enables developers to add interactive controls, such as moving and rotation, to the scene [9].
- **osgViewer library:** It offers a viewer class that can render a scene and provides a simulation loop for applications (it was already used in the sample in section 3.1). The library also contains further viewer-related classes to integrate OpenSceneGraph scenes in a wide variety of windowing systems [9].

Most of the applications that are based on OpenSceneGraph use the `osg`, `osgDB`, `osgUtil` and `osgViewer` libraries [9]. Additional libraries are used depending on the requirements of the respective application. Figure 5 in appendix I shows all libraries provided by OpenSceneGraph, including all node kits available within the current distribution (Version 3.6.5).

### 3.3 Classes to Represent Nodes

The `osg::Node` class, that is also used in the example from section 3.1, represents a basic element in a scene graph [8]. In order to provide different functionality through different types of nodes, OpenSceneGraph provides many classes that inherit from the `osg::Node` class.

The `osg::Group` is used to group nodes within a scene graph. Instances of this class can have any number of child nodes. Since the `osg::Group` class represents a node, it is derived from `osg::Node` class [13]. Since `osg::Group` nodes do nothing special except for traversing down their to all of their children, OpenSceneGraph offers different derivatives of the `osg::Group` class to be able to pass specific properties and functionalities to child nodes. Figure 2 displays the `osg::Node` class, the `osg::Geode` class and a subset of classes that derive from the `osg::Group` class. For the sake of clarity, only a subset of the classes that inherit from the `osg::Group` class is shown. A full list of all classes that are derived from the `osg::Group` class can be found in [14].

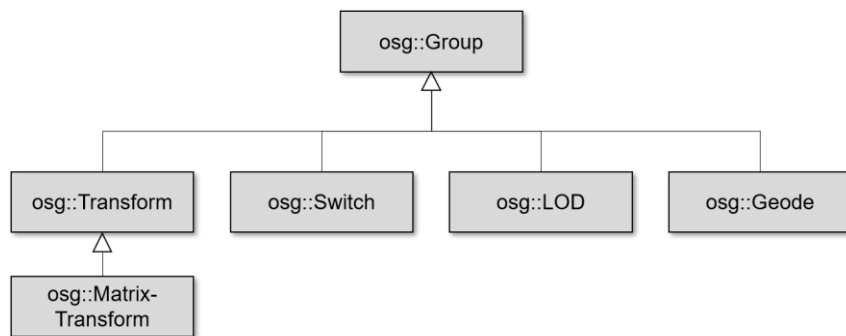


Figure 2: Simplified class diagram of the `osg::Geode` class including some derived classes

The derived classes that are displayed in Figure 2 are described in more detail below:

- **osg::Transform class:** This class is used to apply traversal-concatenated transformations to geometries of child nodes. When a scene graph is traversed down, `osg::Transform` nodes add their own transformation to the currently used transformation matrix (the OpenGL model-view matrix). It is not possible to instantiate an `osg::Transform` node directly. Instead, OpenSceneGraph provides a variety of subclasses of the `osg::Transform` class, like the `osg::MatrixTransform` class, to realize different transformations [15].
- **osg::MatrixTransform class:** As shown in Figure 2, this class is derived from `osg::Transform`. It is used to apply 4x4 double type matrix transformation and uses an `osg::Matrix` variable internally to do so. The `osg::Matrix` class offers methods to create matrices for different types of

transformations. The resulting matrices can be used within an `osg::MatrixTransform` node, to add desired transformations to the scene graph [16].

- **osg::Switch:** This type of node can be used to render or skip specific children depending on a given condition. To achieve this, it attaches a Boolean value, that indicates if the child node (and nodes that are below this) should be rendered or not [17].
- **osg::LOD:** Nodes of this class can be used to represent the same object with different levels of detail, in order to render the object with the appropriate level according to the distance of the viewer. All child nodes of `osg::LOD` nodes should be the same object at varying levels of detail, while they are ordered from the highest to the lowest level. For each level (and therefore also for each child) a minimum and maximum visible range needs to be specified. The renderer automatically can then decide the child node that needs be rendered depending on the viewers current distance to the `osg::LOD` node [18].
- **osg::Geode:** The `osg::Geode` nodes represent leaf nodes of a scene graph. Nodes of this class have no children but they contain and manage geometry information for the actual rendering [19].

Geometry data that should be drawn on the screen are stored in `osg::Drawable` objects. Those can be attached to `osg::Geode` nodes. The `osg::Drawable` class is a pure virtual class and therefore it cannot be instantiated, but it has a variety of subclasses to render models, images and texts to the OpenGL pipeline [19]. For example, to render basic geometry shapes, the `osg::ShapeDrawable` class can be instantiated and attached to an `osg::Geode` node [20].

### 3.4 Traversing the Scene Graph

In scene graphs, various update and rendering operations are carried out on nodes during a traversal. This is why traversing is one of the key functions of a scene graph. The traversal of a scene graph typically consists of repeating steps. Starting from a certain node (at the root node if the whole graph should be traversed) the graph is traversed recursively down to all child nodes until a leaf node or a node that has no children is reached. The graph is then traced back to the first node that has not yet been fully explored. The traversal starts again from this node. This type of traversal is also known as a depth-first search [21].

In `OpenSceneGraph`, four different types of traversals should be performed per frame one after another. First, all mouse and keyboard inputs as well as other user events should be processed in an event traversal. In the next traversal, the update traversal (or application traversal), the application can modify the scene graph (e.g. setting node and geometry properties). Then within the cull traversal checks are made to determine which nodes of the scene graph are within the viewport and are therefore worth rendering. During the last traversal, the draw traversal (or rendering traversal), the low-level OpenGL API is called to actually render the scene. For systems with multiple processors and graphic cards, `OpenSceneGraph` supports processing of the different traversals in parallel to improve rendering efficiency. To implement further rendering traversals, the visitor pattern can be used [21]. This is done in the playground project, which is described in chapter 4 to implement a traversal that generates a tree view of the scene graph of the current application.

### 3.5 Smart Pointer

Typically, when programming scene graphs, a pointer is created to the root node and this node directly or indirectly manages all further child nodes of the scene graph. If a node is no longer needed for rendering, the application needs to traverse the scene graph and delete its internal data carefully. This can quickly lead to errors or memory leaks, as it can be difficult for developers to evaluate if and how many



other objects are still holding a pointer to the object that should be deleted. Some of the modern programming languages, like for example C# or Java, use a garbage collector to free any memory blocks that cannot be reached from any variables of a program. In standard C++ this behavior can be mimicked utilizing of smart pointers [22].

OpenSceneGraph comes with its own native smart pointer, the class template `osg::ref_ptr<>`, to enable automatic garbage collection and deallocation. For this to work, OpenSceneGraph provides the `osg::Referenced` class to manage the reference-counted memory blocks. The `osg::Referenced` class is used as the base class of all classes that can be used as template arguments [23]. The classes for representing nodes and geometries mentioned in section 3.3 are also indirectly derived from `osg::Referenced`.

An integer counter is kept within the `osg::Reference` class to handle the number of allocated memory blocks. This reference count is initialized with 0 when the constructor is called. If the object is referenced by an `osg::ref_ptr<>`, the count is increased by 1. If it is removed from a smart pointer, the count is reduced by 1. If the object is no longer referenced by a smart pointer, i.e. the count falls back to 0, the object will be automatically destroyed. To save resources, to simplify debugging and to avoid bugs, OpenSceneGraph always recommends using smart pointers to manage a scene [23].

### 3.6 State Sets

To keep track of states that are related to the rendering, like attributes such as scene lights, materials, textures and modes that can be turned on or off using the OpenGL functions `glEnable()` or `glDisable()`, OpenGL typically uses a state machine. This may not be suitable for direct use in a scene graph structure. Therefore OpenSceneGraph uses, like already mentioned earlier, the `osg::StateSet` class to encapsulate the OpenGL state machine. This enables developers to create realistic rendering effects [7].

To record rendering state attributes, OpenSceneGraph defines the virtual class `osg::StateAttribute`. It is inherited by different classes to implement various rendering attributes like lights, materials or blend functions [24]. Figure 3: Simplified class diagram of the `osg::StateSet` class including related classes. Figure 3 shows the relationship between the `osg::Node`, the `osg::StateSet`, the `osg::StateAttribute` and derived classes of the `osg::StateAttribute` like `osg::BlendFunc`.

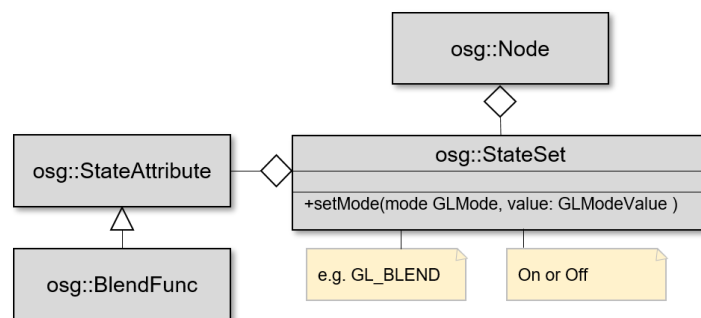


Figure 3: Simplified class diagram of the `osg::StateSet` class including related classes

An `osg::StateSet` object can be applied to an `osg::Node`[7]. Instances of classes that are derived from the `osg::StateAttribute` class can be added to an `osg::StateSet` object to adjust the rendering behavior (like functions that should be applied for the blending of transparent objects) of objects to which the state set is attached to. It is also possible to turn on or off different rendering modes off an `osg::StateSet` by calling the method `setMode()`. The OpenGL type to be set (managed by a `GLenum` enum) and a corresponding value (managed by the type definition `GLenumValue`, on or off are the possible values) are expected as parameters. Sometimes a specific rendering mode is associated with an attribute [24]. For example, the mode `GL_BLEND` determines if specific blend functions, that can be set in a `osg::StateSet` via instances of the `osg::BlendFunc` class (it is derived from `osg::StateAttribute`), are used or not.

The state of a node not only affects itself but also its children. However, it is possible for child nodes to overwrite the state set of their parent. To change the inheritance of state sets, the three flags `osg::StateAttribute::OVERRIDE`, `osg::StateAttribute::PROTECTED` and `osg::StateAttribute::INHERITAT` can be used while setting or adding the values of state sets [25].

State sets also offer the possibility of adding vertex, fragment and geometry shaders [26], as well as uniforms that should be used in the shaders [27], to a node. How this is achieved can be found in the source code of the Playground application (within the `AddShaderOption` class), which is described in the next chapter.

## 4 Playground Projekt

In order to show the effects of different nodes, attributes and rendering modes, an application was developed that enables the user to dynamically add or remove nodes to a scene graph via a UI that is created with ImGui. All of the node classes mentioned in section are addable within the application. It is also supporting the functionality to add nodes from `.osg` files.

In addition, the application provides the functionality to adapt the `StateSet` of each node. This enables the user to select lighting settings and the polygon rasterization mode that should be used for the rendering. The creation of transparent rendering effects using blend functions and the addition of various shaders and associated uniforms is also possible in the application.

In order to make the structure of the current scene graph recognizable for the user, the current scene graph is always displayed in a tree view in the UI (see screenshot Figure 9 in the appendix). The user can select a node via this tree view (see Figure 10 in the appendix). Depending on which type of node is selected, options to add or delete nodes and to adjust the state set, that are allowed on this type of node (e.g. it is not allowed to add further group nodes to nodes of the type `osg::Geode`), are displayed.

The following sections of this chapter give an overview of the architecture of the application and describe exemplary how some of the available functionalities were implemented.

### 4.1 Architecture

When the architecture of the developed application was created, an attempt was made to ensure that actions that can be carried out on nodes are designed as modularly as possible, so that they can be displayed or not depending on the type of node selected. Figure 4 shows a reduced class diagram of the architecture of the application.

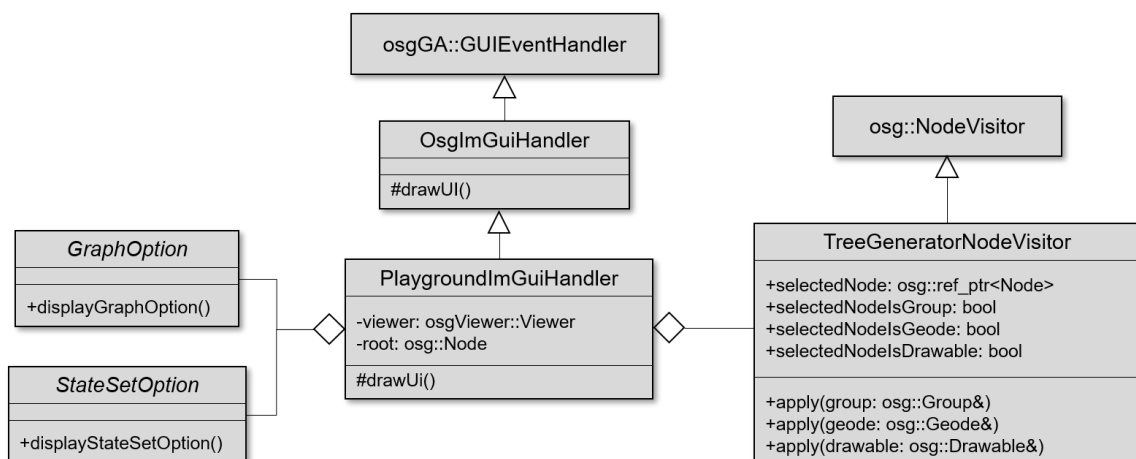


Figure 4: Simplified class diagram of the architecture of the playground project

The start point of the application is the `main()` method as usual. First, an `osg::Viewer` object is created. Then the `axes.osg` file (it is delivered with `OpenSceneGraph` and contains a scene graph representing the coordinate axes) is read out using the `osgDB` library. When reading out, a group node is created that contains the coordinate axes as children. The axes should serve as an orientation for the user. The group that contains the axes represents the root of the application's scene graph.

Drawing the ImGui UI is within the responsibility of the `PlaygroundImGuiHandler` class. An instance of this class is also created in the main method. Instances of the viewer and the root node of the runner object are passed to the constructor. To be able to use ImGui in connection with `OpenSceneGraph`, a class must be created, which inherits from the `osgGA::GUIEventHandler` class. The `OsgImGuiHandler` class is used for this. This class was not created as part of this work. It is imported from [28]. The `PlaygroundImGuiHandler` uses it as base class and overwrites the `drawUI()` method. The `osgGA::GUIEventHandler` and the `OsgImGuiHandler` classes ensure that the `drawUI()` method of the `PlaygroundImGuiHandler` is called in every frame to draw the GUI and that mouse and keyboard inputs are forwarded to the ImGui controls.

The `TreeGeneratorNodeVisitor` class is used to create the tree view, which shows the current state of the scene graph. Derived classes of the `osg::NodeVisitor` class can traverse scene graphs and carry out self-defined operations for each node. To define these operations, the `apply()` method must be implemented. It can be overloaded with several different types of nodes. Depending on which node type is currently available during the traversal, the corresponding method is then called [29]. If the `apply()` method is not overwritten for a specific node class, then the method with next base class in the class hierarchy is called instead. Within the `apply()` methods of the `TreeGeneratorNodeVisitor` an entry in a tree view, to represent the current node, is created. Additionally, the currently selected node is set according to the selected tree view element. To display the possible options on this node, the type of node selected is also saved. The `TreeGeneratorNodeVisitor` implements `apply()` methods that accept the three types `osg::Group`, `osg::Geode` and `osg::Drawable`, since different operations should be possible for these three types of nodes (and their derivatives). Besides, leaf nodes should be displayed differently in the tree view (see Figure 9 in appendix III).

The various options are implemented using derivatives of the two abstract classes `GraphOption` and `StateSetOption`. All these derivations overwrite either the `displayGraphOption` or the `displayStateSetOption` method, depending on the base class. Both methods accept a smart pointer to the currently selected node in order to carry out the respective action on it. For each option, a fold-out label is created in the overwritten method (implemented via a tree) and a corresponding set of input elements which are required for the execution of the operation. The derivatives of the `GraphOptions` class include classes for adding or removing nodes. The derivatives of the `StateSetOption` class contain classes to adapt the `StateSet` of the nodes (e.g. adding shaders).

In the `DrawUI()` method of the `PlaygroundImGuiHandler`, the UI is drawn in each frame. First, the tree view is created using the `TreeGeneratorNodeVisitor` as described above. Then, depending on the selected type of node, the permitted options are displayed using the derivatives of the `GraphOption` and the `StateSetOption`. Also, UI elements are created for adjusting the background color and for updating the camera control (to focus on the currently selected node). The implementation of these functionalities is located directly in the `PlaygroundImGuiHandler`, as they only refer indirectly to the scene graph.

To enable the `PlaygroundImGuiHandler` to draw the UI and to receive user input within the `osg::Viewer`, that is generated in the `main()` method, an instance of it is added to the viewer. Then the `osg::Viewer` is started by calling the `run()` method. This creates a window and the rendering loop is executed until the user exits the program. In this loop the various traverses (see section 3.4), are run through.

## 4.2 Implementation

This section exemplifies the implementation of a `GraphOption` and a `StateSetOption` to show how the implementation of the options, which contain the essential code for adapting the scene graph, was carried out.

### 4.2.1 Add of Group Nodes

The `AddGroupOption` class is a derivative of the `GraphOption` class. It represents the most basic option of the derivatives of the `GraphOption` class. Listing 2 shows the implementation of the `displayOption()` method of the `AddGroupOption` class.

```

1  void AddGroupOption::displayGraphOption(osg::ref_ptr<osg::Node> selectedNode)
2  {
3      if (ImGui::TreeNode("Add Group")) {
4          if (ImGui::Button("Add Group")) {
5              Osg::ref_ptr<osg::Group> groupToAdd = new osg::Group;
6              selectedNode->asGroup()->addChild(groupToAdd);
7          }
8          ImGui::TreePop();
9      }
10 }
```

*Listing 2: Implementation of the method `displayGraphOption()` of the `AddGroupOption` class*

The reference of the currently selected node is transferred as a parameter within a smart pointer. With the condition of the if statement in line 3, an expandable tree node (within ImGui, these nodes have nothing to do with the nodes in the scene graph) with the label "Add Group" is drawn in the UI. If this tree node is expanded, the condition of the if statement is considered valid. A button is then added to the UI via the if statement in line 4. If this is clicked, the code block of the if statement will be executed. First, a new group node is created, and its reference is assigned to a smart pointer. The currently selected node is then cast into a group node because adding nodes using a reference to an `osg::Node` object is not permitted. Since this option is only displayed if the selected node is a group node, it is ensured that the node passed is a group node. The newly created group node is then added as a child to the selected node.

### 4.2.2 Adjust Rendering Hints

In order to exemplarily show how the options to adjust the state sets of nodes are implemented, the `displayStateSetOption()` method of the `AdjustRenderingHintOption` class is shown in Listing 3. The class inherits from the `StateSetOption` class. It offers the user the possibility to assign a rendering hint to nodes, which is used by `OpenSceneGraph` to render transparent objects in front of opaque objects.

```

1 void AdjustRenderingHintOption::displayStateSetOption(osg::ref_ptr<osg::StateSet>
2 stateSetOfCurrentlySelectedNode)
3 {
4     if (ImGui::TreeNode("Rendering hint")) {
5
6         ImGui::Text("Currently used: ");
7         int currentRenderingHint =
8             stateSetOfCurrentlySelectedNode->getRenderingHint();
9         ImGui::SameLine();
10        ImGui::Text(renderingHintToString[currentRenderingHint].c_str());
11
12        ImGui::Text("Set rendering hint:");
13        UtilityFunctions::displayImGuiComboBox("Rendering hint",
14        renderingHintOptions, renderingHintSelection);
15
16        if (ImGui::Button("Set rendering hint")) {
17            stateSetOfCurrentlySelectedNode->setRenderingHint(
18                selectionIdToRenderingHint[renderingHintSelection]);
19        }
20        ImGui::TreePop();
21    }
22 }

```

*Listing 3: Implementation of the displayStateSetOption() method of the AdjustRenderingHintOption class*

A smart pointer (described in section 3.5) to the StateSet object (described in 3.6) of the selected node is transferred as parameter. The current rendering hint in line 10 is then read from the StateSet. The three options default, opaque and transparent are available. The variable renderingHintToString contains a map that assigns the ids of the respective rendering hints strings, which are then used to display the current hints in line 12. Then, with the help of the static method displayImGuiComboBox(), a combo box is generated in lines 15 and 16, which allows the user to select the new rendering to be used. The renderingHintOptions array contains all selectable values and the renderingHintSelection variable is used to save the user's current selection. The if statement in line 18 adds a button to the UI. If this is clicked, the user's current selection is set to the StateSet of the current node as a rendering hint. The selectionIdToRenderingHint map is used to select the corresponding OpenSceneGraph data type for setting the rendering.

In other derivatives of the StateSet class, such as the AddShaderOption or the AdjustBlendFunctionOption, the StateAttributes mentioned in section 3.6 are also used. The explanation of the displayStateSetOption() methods of these classes would exceed the scope of this report. The calls within the respective classes of the source code of the Playground project shows how StateAttribute objects can be read out and be added as well as how various rendering modes can be adapted.

## 5 Features and Advantages of OpenSceneGraph

OpenSceneGraph as the most popular 3D graphics toolkit based on scene graphs comes with several features and advantages. These are explained in this chapter.

The basic functionality that the toolkit offers is the API, which allows the definition and rendering of a scene graph. One advantage that results from this is, that the productivity of developers can be increased compared to the pure use of a low-level API such as OpenGL. Since OpenSceneGraph is a retained rendering system (described in section 2.2), developers no longer have to worry about managing the scene and drawing calls when using it. The developer no longer has to worry about low level coding but can instead focus on developing the content of the application. The performance that is achieved by the support of view-frustum culling, occlusion culling, small feature culling, Level Of Detail (LOD) nodes,

OpenGL state sorting, vertex arrays, vertex buffer objects, the OpenGL Shader Language and display lists is another advantage that OpenSceneGraph can offer [4].

Via the osgDB library, which was already mentioned in section 3.2, OpenSceneGraph also offers support for reading and writing many 3D databases and 2D image file formats. The provision of the large number of different NodeKits, which offer numerous additional functionalities such as the rendering of texts, volumes or particles, is a feature worth mentioning. Since OpenSceneGraph only requires standard C++ and OpenGL and is designed in such a way that the dependencies on the various platforms are minimal, it can be executed on various platforms such as Windows, Android, MacOS and iOS. Further features are the support of additional programming languages like Java or Python through community projects and the support of multiple graphic contexts. This allows the execution of OpenSceneGraph based applications on multi-threaded and multi-GPU systems [4].

## 6 Conclusion

This report started with a brief introduction to the 3D graphics toolkit OpenSceneGraph and its history. Afterwards, the toolkit itself, retained rendering systems and scene graphs were briefly described. In the third chapter, the use of OpenSceneGraph was explained using a minimal example, followed by a description of some of the central elements for usage such as smart pointers and classes for representing nodes. Then the playground project, which offers an interactive editor for a scene graph, was presented. In the fourth chapter, the features and advantages of OpenSceneGraph were listed. Some of the in chapter 5 mentioned advantages were also evident during the development of the playground project. The object-oriented concept, the use of smart pointers, the easy access to additional functionality via node kits and the flat learning curve, should also be emphasized as positive points during development.

Especially due to the positive experience and the many features that OpenSceneGraph offers, the question of why it is not widely used in large projects appears. There are of course projects, like the flight simulator Flight Gear [30], that uses it. But during the research for this report no large and popular project, like for example AAA game (classification that is used for games that are produced and distributed by mid-sized or major publisher [31]) was found, that is based on OpenSceneGraph. One possible reason for this is mentioned in [32]. In large applications, it is often necessary to map different types of relationships (e.g. spatial and semantic relationships, but also something like the rendering order) of objects. It seems quite difficult to map all these relationships using a single scene graph. It may only be achieved with additional properties or regulations (for example using rendering hints, mentioned in section 4.2.2). Additionally, in projects with very large and complex scenes the mapping of the scene using a single scene graph, will likely result in either a root node with a very large number of single child nodes or into a graph with an unmanageable number of branches [32].

In conclusion, the decision about whether OpenSceneGraph should be used in a software system probably depends on the type of application that should be developed. In applications that cover a limited field that can be controlled by a scene graph, such as the Playground project, which was developed within the scope of this work, the use of OpenSceneGraph has certainly great advantages. In applications that require multiple complex scenes, the use of OpenSceneGraph may be more of an obstacle for developers than it brings advantages.

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# Appendix I: Image of all OpenSceneGraph Libraries

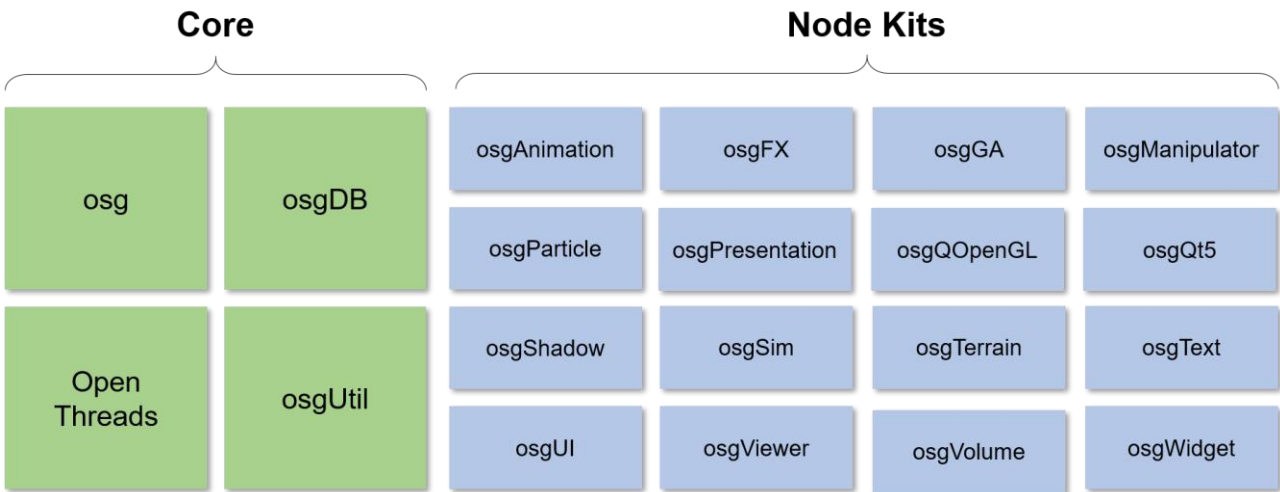
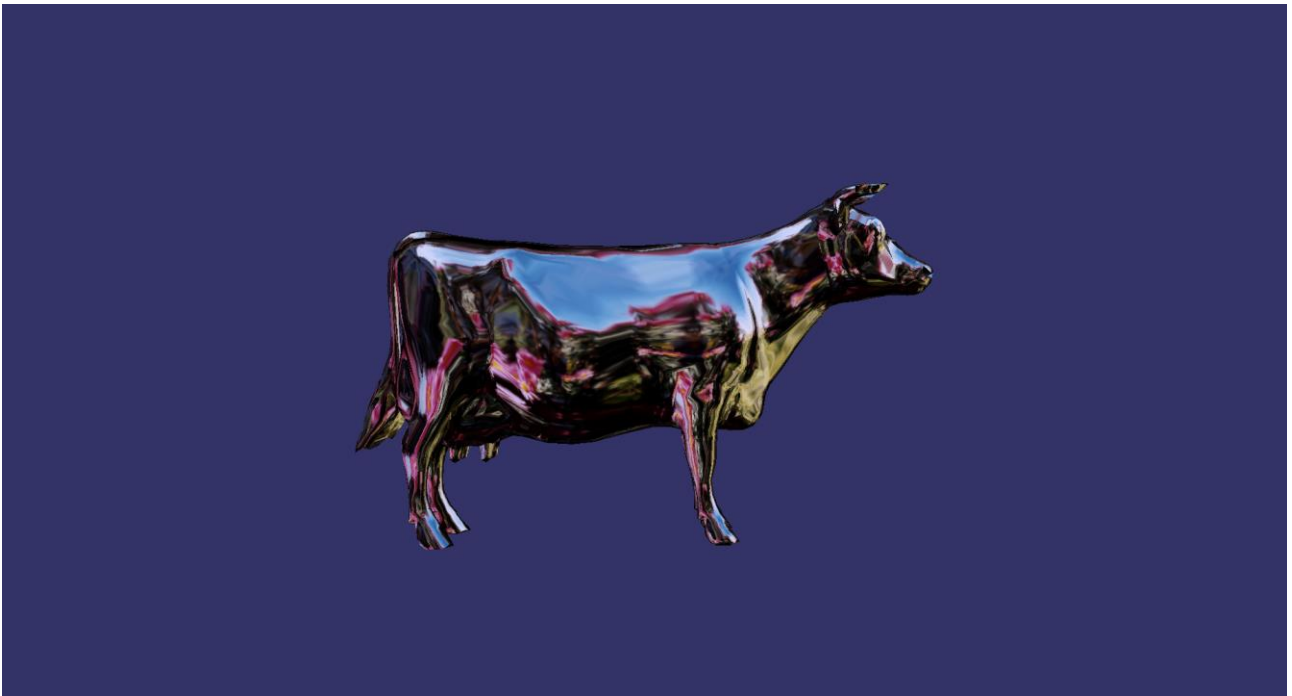


Figure 5: List of all libraries provided by OpenSceneGraph (Version 3.6.5)

## Appendix II: Screenshot of the “Hello World” Project



*Figure 6: Screenshot of the "Hello World" Project*

## Appendix III: Screenshots of the Playground Project

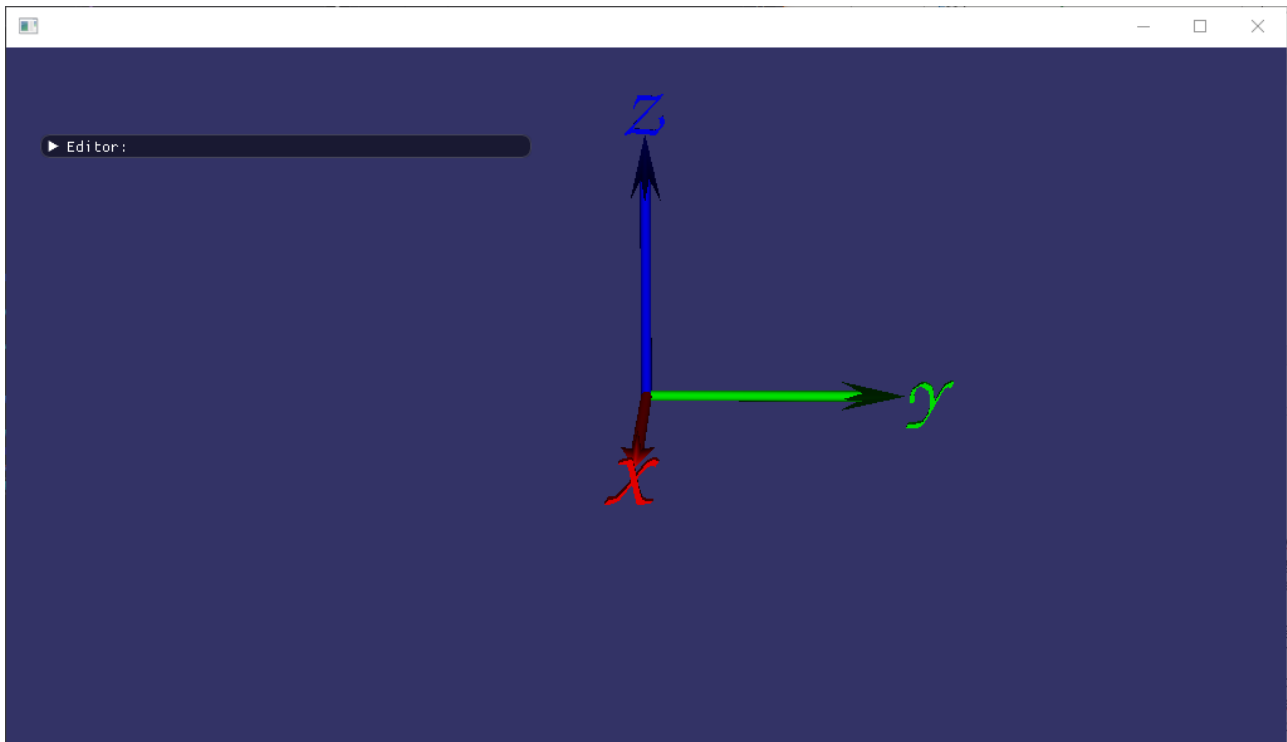


Figure 7: Closed editor

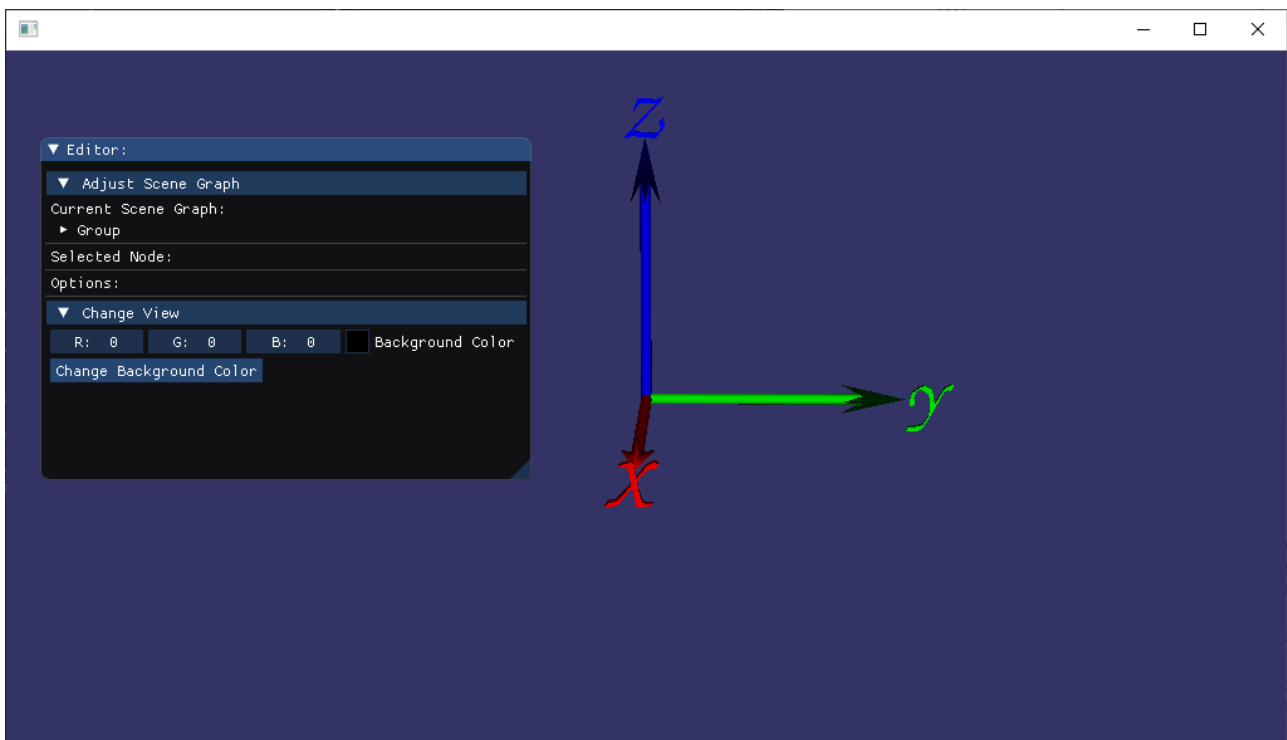


Figure 8: Opened editor

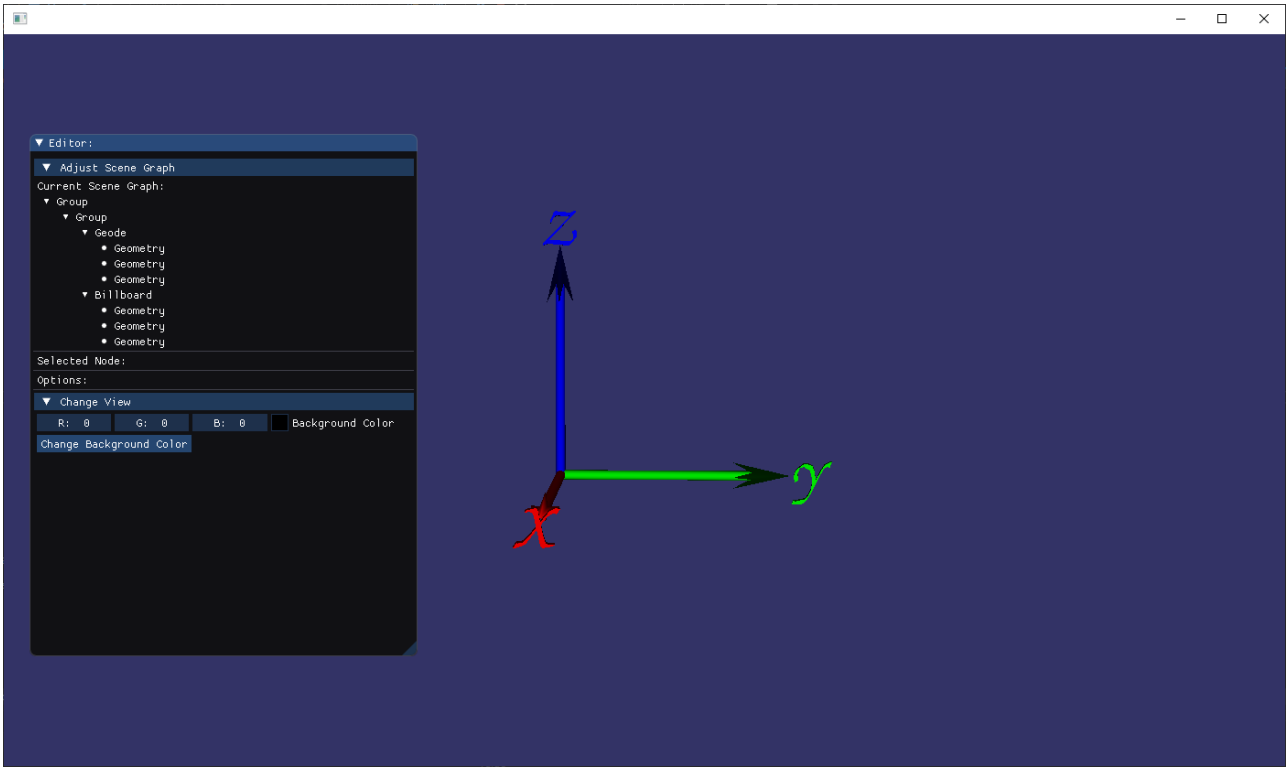


Figure 9: Opened tree view

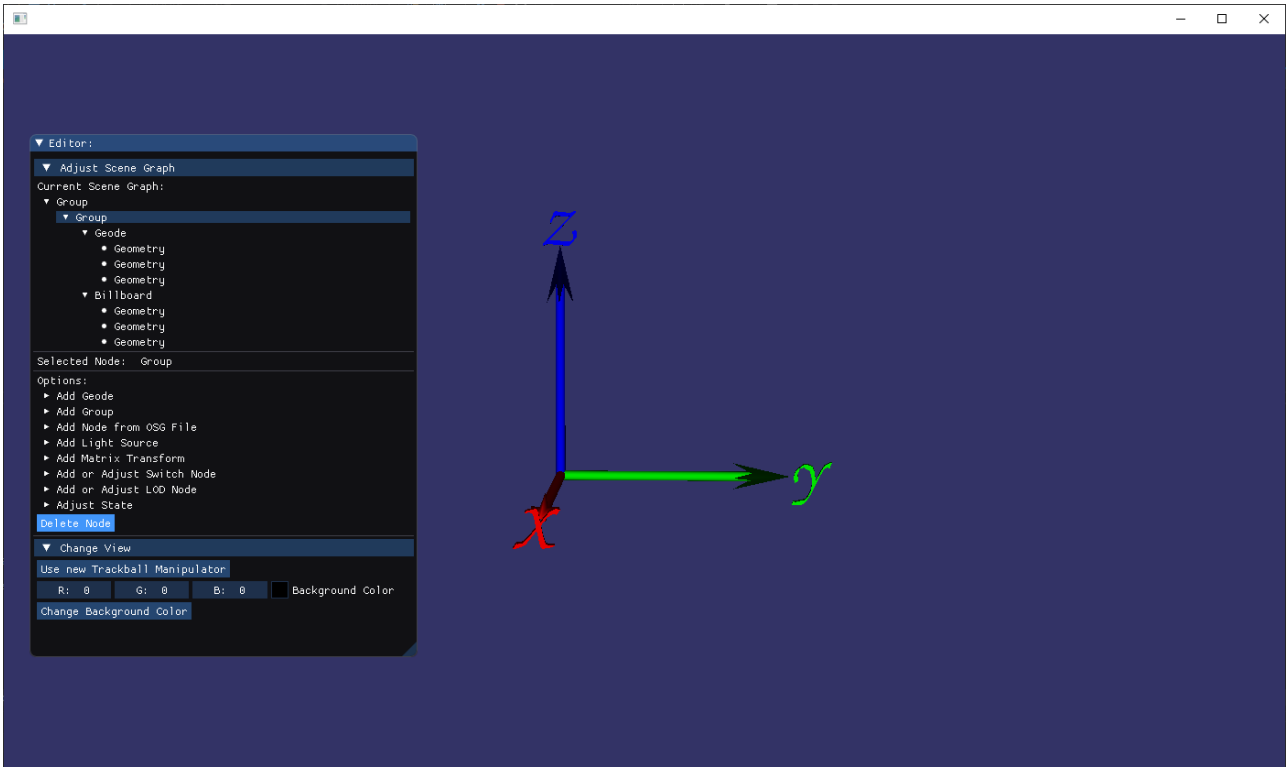


Figure 10: Group node selected

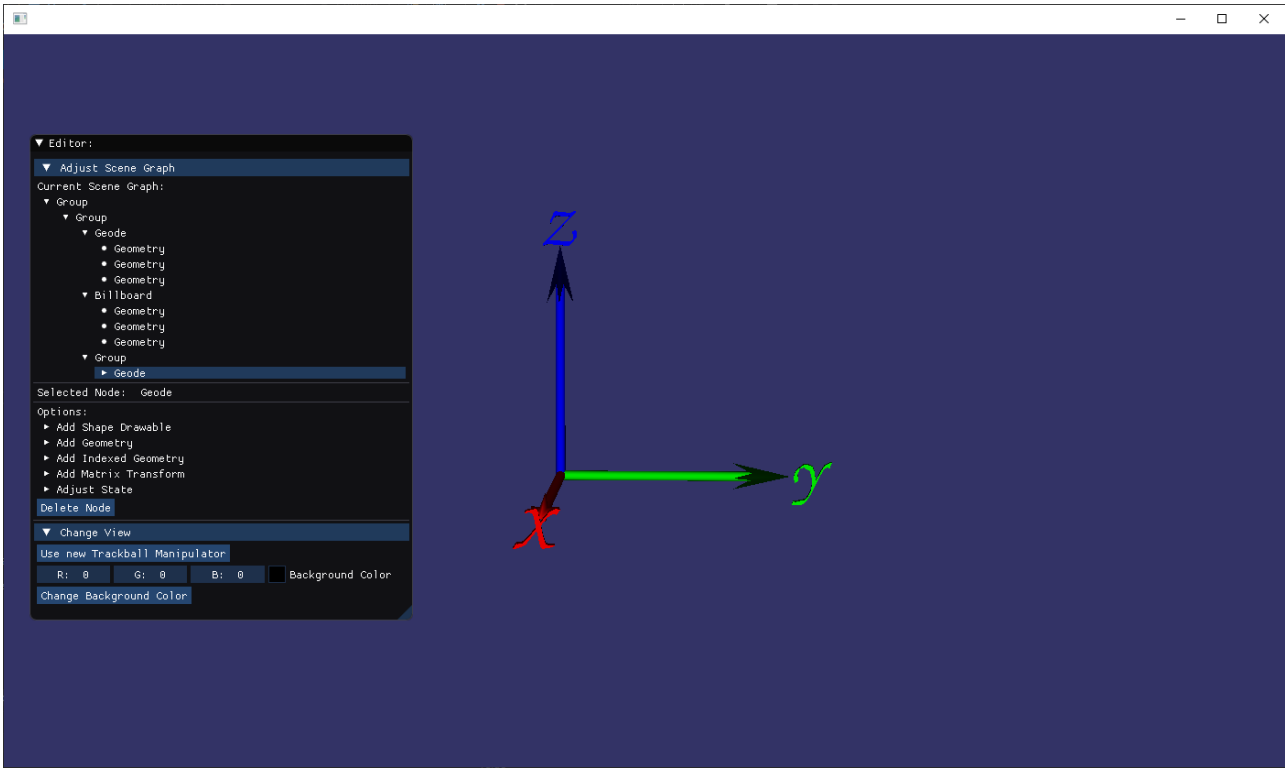


Figure 11: Geode node selected

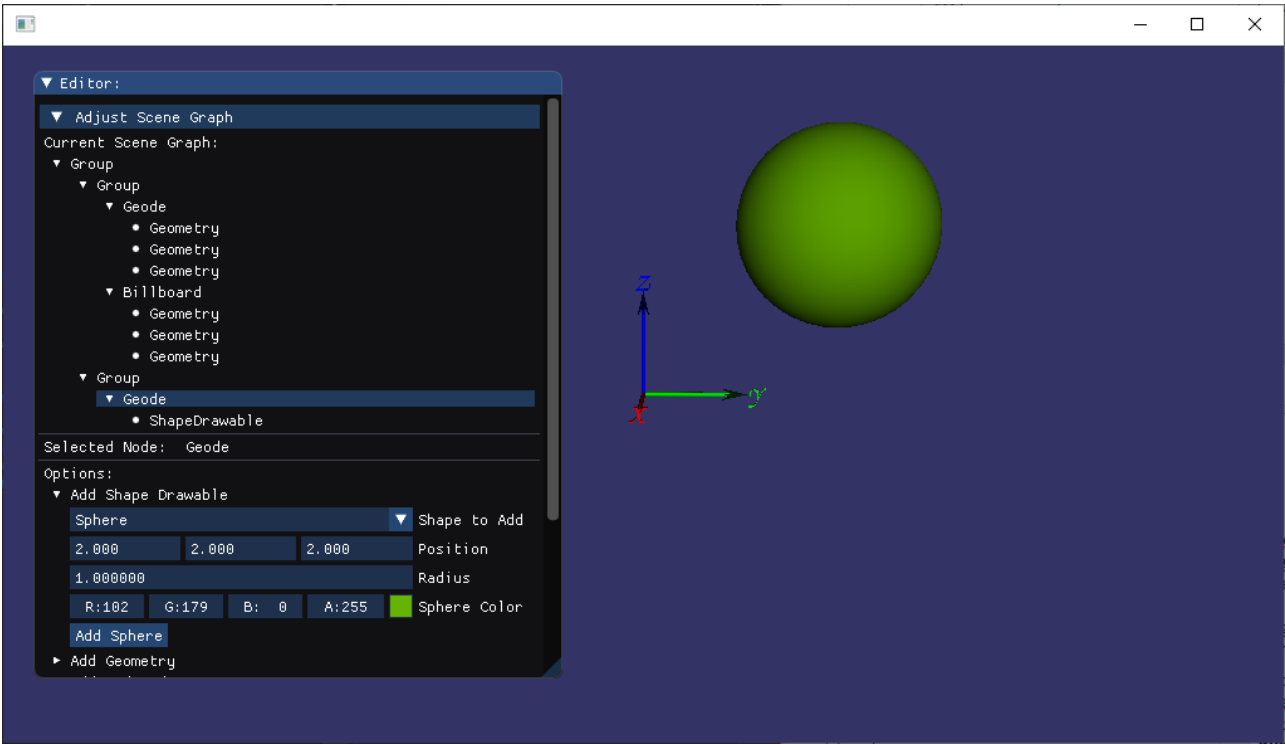


Figure 12: Sphere added

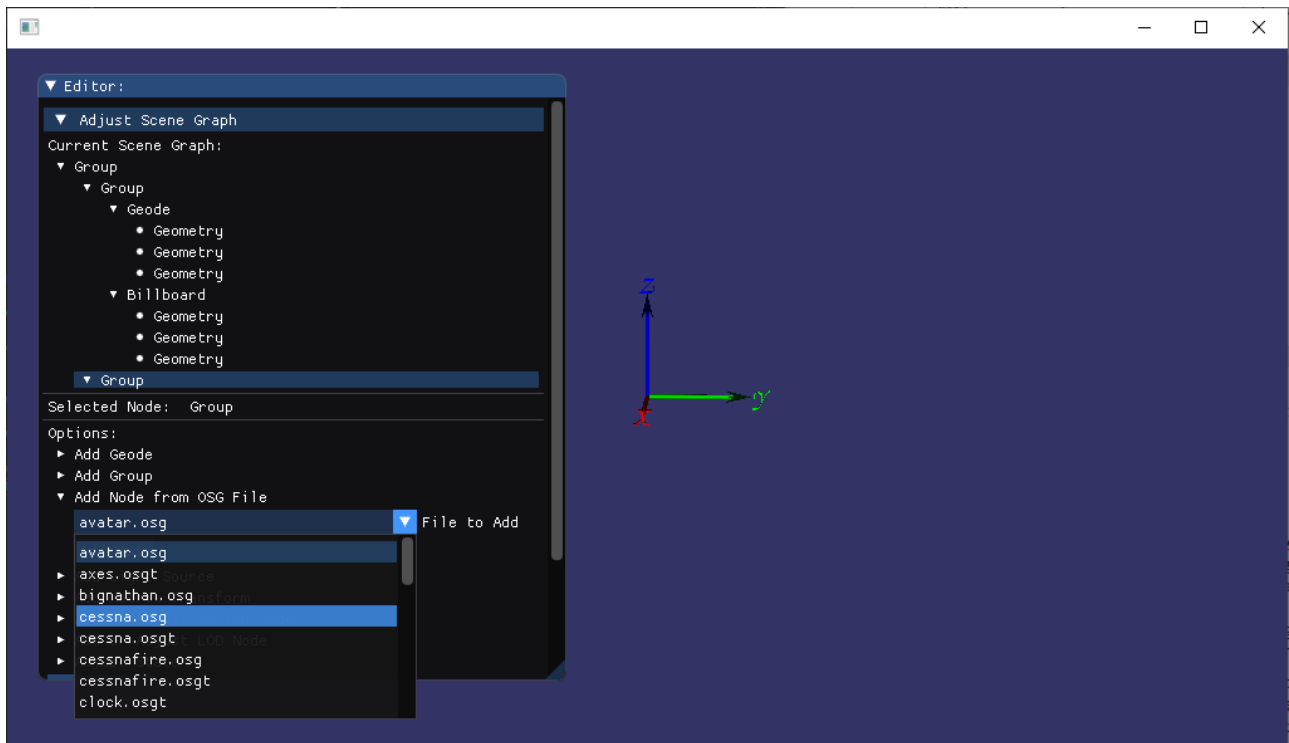


Figure 13: "Add Node from File" option opened

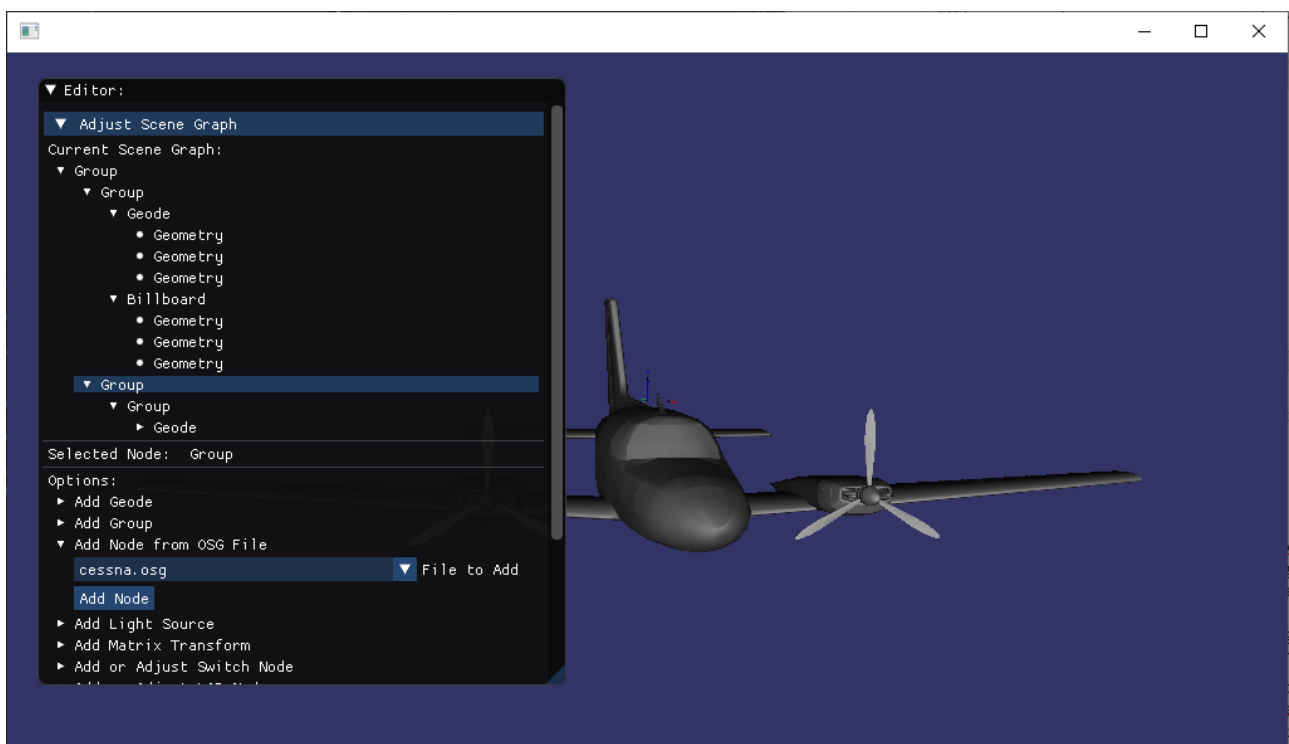


Figure 14: Nodes from cessna.osg file added to the scene graph

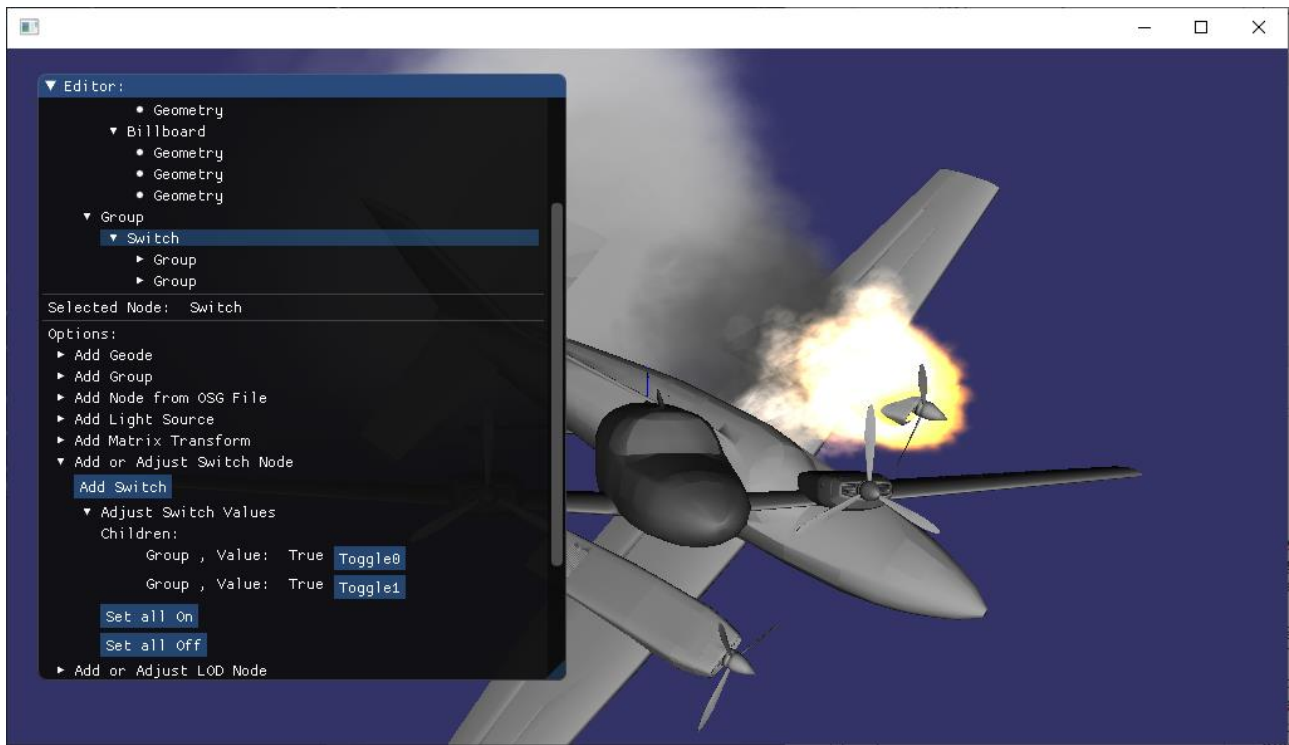


Figure 15: Switch node with nodes from cessna.osg and censsafire.osg as child nodes

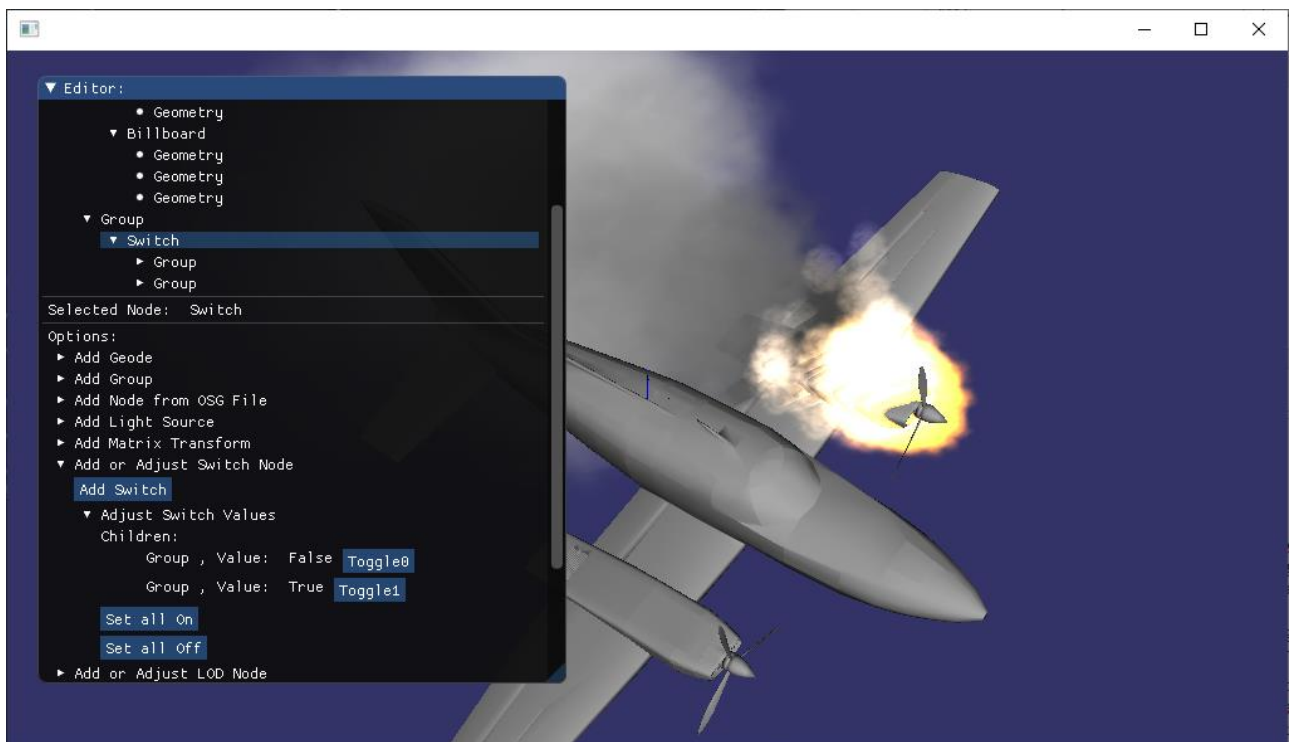
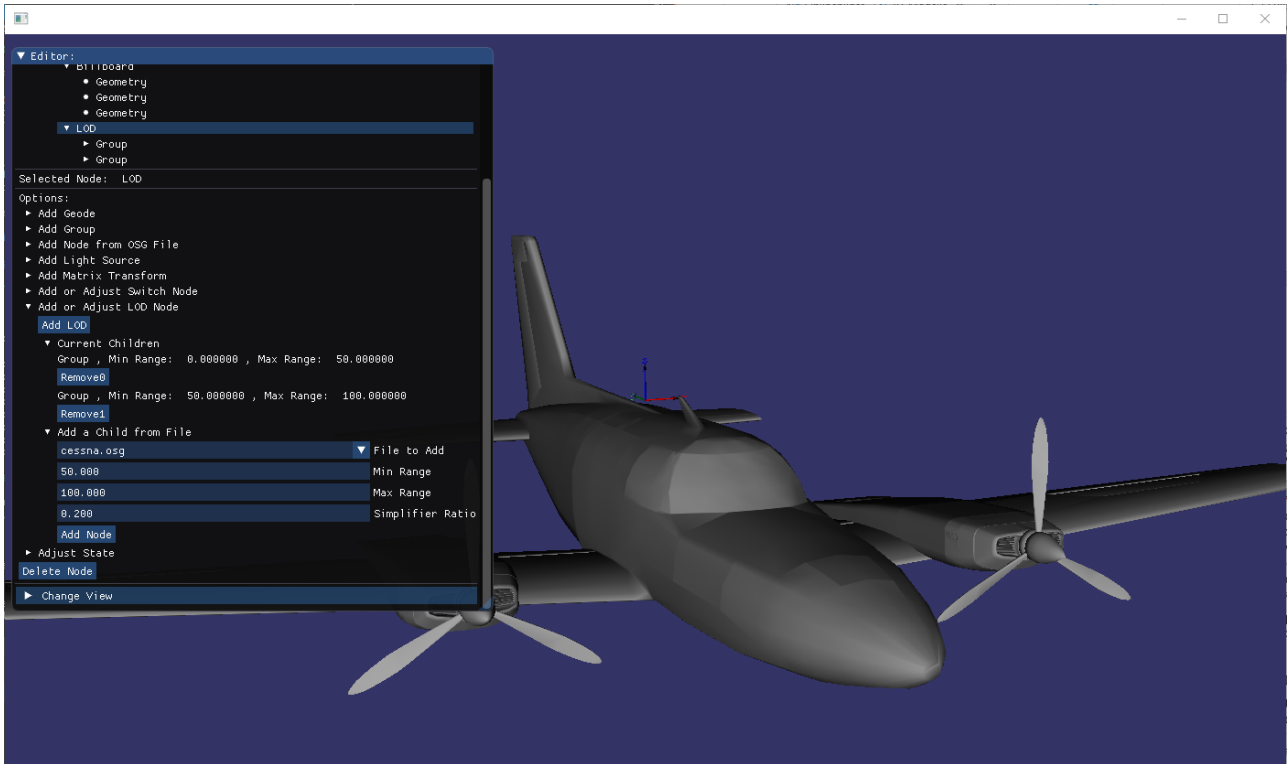
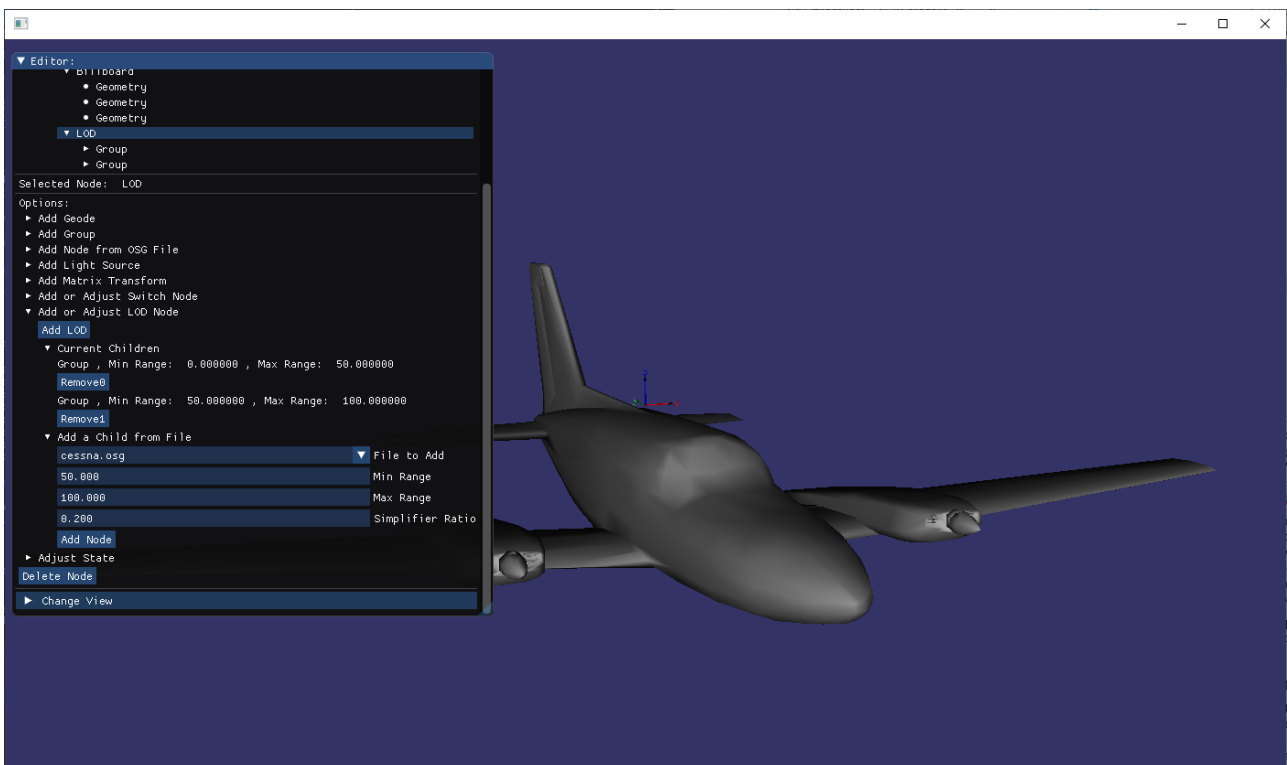


Figure 16: Switch node with nodes from cessna.osg and censsafire.osg as child nodes, while cessna.osg group is toggled to off





*Figure 17: LOD node with nodes of two cessna.osg files as child nodes (first for range 0 to 50 and simplifier set to 1.0; second for range 50 to 100 with simplifier set to 0.2) - current distance to node between 0 and 50*



*Figure 18: LOD node with nodes of two cessna.osg files as child nodes (first for range 0 to 50 and simplifier set to 1.0; second for range 50 to 100 with simplifier set to 0.2) - current distance to node between 50 and 100*

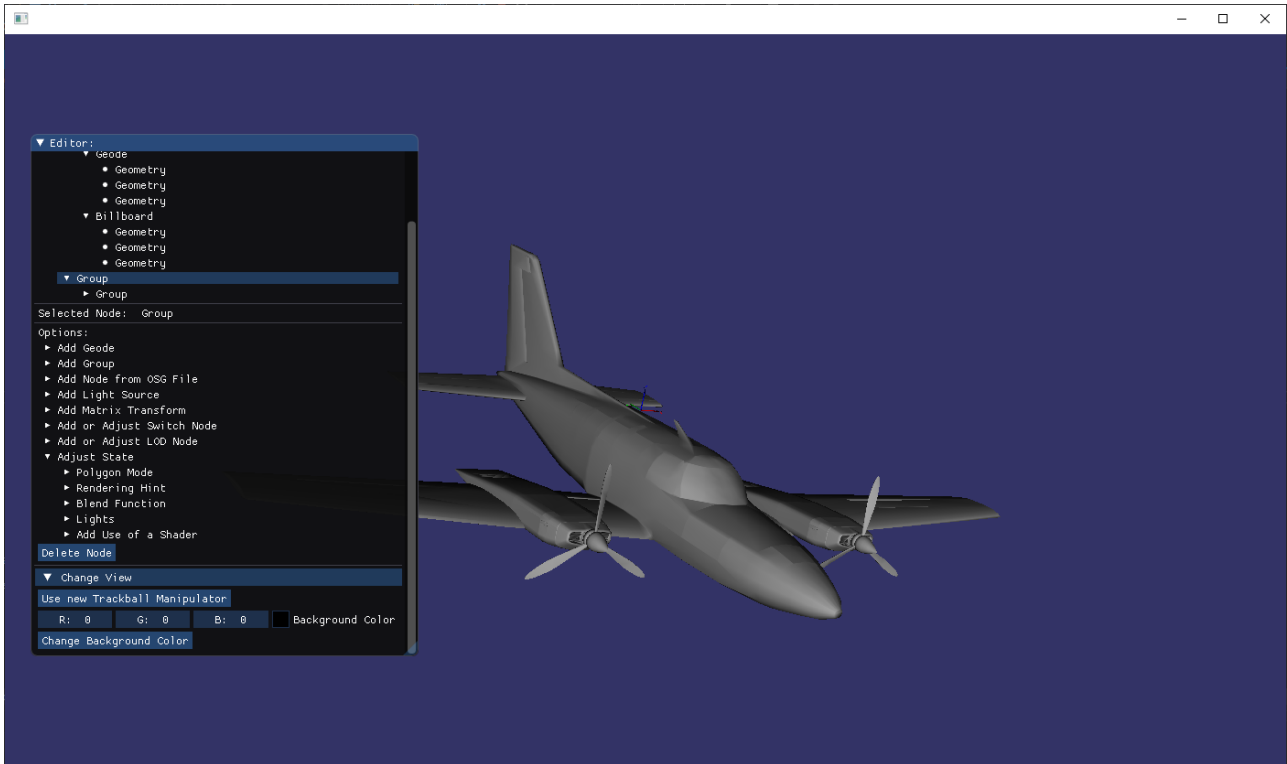


Figure 19: Group node from added cessna.osg file selected and "Adjust State" option opened

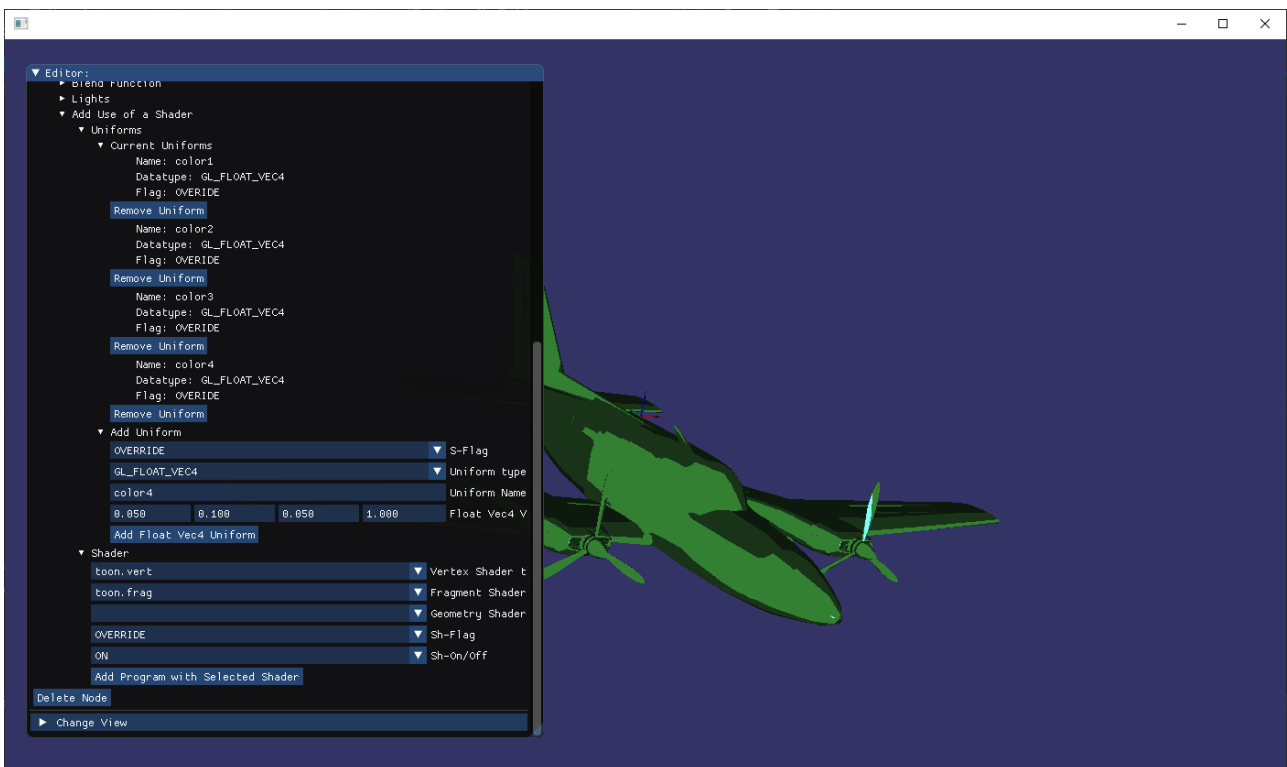


Figure 20: Added toon shader from [33] with uniforms displayed in the editor