**“Getting Started with the** **tmpl8-2023­­­­”**

This template is only the current final evolution of a long list of ‘templates’, that started with [EasyCE](https://www.flipcode.com/archives/12-11-2000.shtml), a minimalistic code base for writing Windows CE games / graphics applications without worrying about OS base code. It evolved though [Tmpl8](https://github.com/jbikker/tmpl8) in various versions for [IGAD](https://www.3dgep.com/cpp-fast-track-2-template/), then [UU](https://www.cs.uu.nl/docs/vakken/mov/2018/), then IGAD again, and in the meantime it has been used to start virtually all my personal mini-projects. In practice, it is great as a basic starting point, but very limited at the same time. Good for teaching. 😊

To use the template:

* you simply extract it from the zip file to a directory of your choice
* you open the .sln file using Visual Studio (versions 2019 and later).

At the time of writing, Visual Studio 2022 Community Edition is an excellent choice. [Get it for free](https://visualstudio.microsoft.com/vs/community/), install it using the default options, and you’re good to go.

The magic (as seen on the right) happens in game.cpp:

#include "precomp.h"

#include "game.h"

TheApp\* CreateApp() { return new Game(); }

// -----------------------------------------------------------

// Initialize the application

// -----------------------------------------------------------

void Game::Init()

{

// anything that happens only once at application start goes here

}

// -----------------------------------------------------------

// Main application tick function - Executed once per frame

// -----------------------------------------------------------

void Game::Tick( float deltaTime )

{

// clear the screen to black

screen->Clear( 0 );

// print something to the console window

printf( "hello world!\n" );

// plot some colors

for( int red = 0; red < 256; red++ ) for( int green = 0; green < 256; green++ )

{

int x = red, y = green;

screen->Plot( x + 200, y + 100, (red << 16) + (green << 8) );

}

// plot a white pixel in the bottom right corner

screen->Plot( SCRWIDTH - 2, SCRHEIGHT - 2, 0xffffff );

}

The default example code shows you the basic functionality implemented by the template:

* A window is opened.
* A pixel is plotted using screen->Plot( x, y, color ).
* The size of the screen can be obtained from SCRWIDTH and SCRHEIGHT.
* A ‘color’ is a 32-bit unsigned value, where red starts at bit 16, green at 8 and blue at 0. Each color component has a range of 0..255.
* You can write debugging info to the text window using printf.

From here: draw your own images using screen->Plot and other Surface methods, handle keys and mouse input using the methods of the Game class (see game.h) and add .cpp and .h files to extend and structure your project.

Basic math classes can be found in precomp.h (starting at line 191). Here you will find float2, float3, float4 as well as (a.o.) int and uint counterparts, with an extensive set of operators. There are also basic classes for storing bounding boxes and for matrix calculations. As with the rest of the template, this serves as a basis; you may find it desirable to add some code of your own depending on what your project needs.

Advanced users may benefit from the integration of OpenCL; see the GPGPU section later in this document. The math classes are designed to work well with the OpenCL functionality.

**Useful things**

In the precomp.h file you will also find the class JobManager, which you can use to run your code on multiple CPU cores. A quick overview of how it is used:

Do once (e.g. in Game::Init), to initialize the job system:

JobManager::CreateJobManager( 8 /\* your logical core count \*/ );

Then, for the actual parallel code:  
  
JobManager\* jm = JobManager::GetJobManager();  
for( int i = 0; i < jobCount; i++ ) jm->AddJob2( &theJob[i] );  
jm->RunJobs();

Here, theJob is an array of objects of a class derived from Job, which must implement Main():

class theJob : public Job { public: void Main() { /\* work \*/ }; }

A high-resolution timer is also provided. See struct Timer for details. A timer is created in an arbitrary scope and queried using its elapsed method:

Timer myTimer;

for (int i = 0; i < 10; i++)

{

myTimer.reset();

// ... do something ...

printf( "iteration took % f milliseconds.\n", myTimer.elapsed() \* 1000);

}

**GPGPU\***

The template provides [OpenCL](https://www.khronos.org/opencl/) support to deploy the GPU in your calculations. Here is an example of its use:

static Kernel\* kernel = 0; // statics should be members of Game of course.

static Surface bitmap( 512, 512 ); // having them here allows us to disable the OpenCL

static Buffer\* clBuffer = 0; // demonstration using a single #if 0.

if (!kernel)

{

// prepare for OpenCL work

Kernel::InitCL();

// compile and load kernel "render" from file "kernels.cl"

kernel = new Kernel( "cl/kernels.cl", "render" );

// create an OpenCL buffer over using bitmap.pixels

clBuffer = new Buffer( 512 \* 512, Buffer::DEFAULT, bitmap.pixels );

}

// pass arguments to the OpenCL kernel

kernel->SetArgument( 0, clBuffer );

// run the kernel; use 512 \* 512 threads

kernel->Run( 512 \* 512 );

// get the results back from GPU to CPU (and thus: into bitmap.pixels)

clBuffer->CopyFromDevice();

// show the result on screen

bitmap.CopyTo( screen, 500, 200 );

The code demonstrates the most important steps in writing GPGPU code: loading and compiling a kernel, creating buffers to pass data between ‘host’ and ‘device’, setting kernel arguments, executing a kernel on the device, and retrieving data from device to host.

A full OpenCL tutorial is outside the scope of this document. If you want to see an example of OpenCL used in the tmpl8, please refer to the [voxel template](https://github.com/jbikker/WrldTmpl8) on GitHub.

**Go Forth and Code**

That should do the job for now; if you have any questions do not hesitate to contact me:

[bikker.j@gmail.com](mailto:bikker.j@gmail.com) / [j.bikker@uu.nl](mailto:j.bikker@uu.nl) / [bikker.j@buas.nl](mailto:bikker.j@buas.nl)

\*: the use of GPGPU is totally optional and only provided for your enjoyment.