



Compute shaders

**The future of GPU computing or a late rip-off of
Direct Compute?**



Compute shaders

Previously a Microsoft concept, Direct Compute

Now also in OpenGL, new kind of shader since the recent OpenGL 4.3

”Bleeding edge” even today since 4.3 is not fully universal



Why is this important?

Why use that instead of CUDA or OpenCL?

- + Better integration with OpenGL**
- + No extra installation!**
- + Easier to configure than OpenCL**
- + Not NVidia specific like CUDA**
- + If you know GLSL, Compute Shaders are (fairly) easy!**



Not only plus...

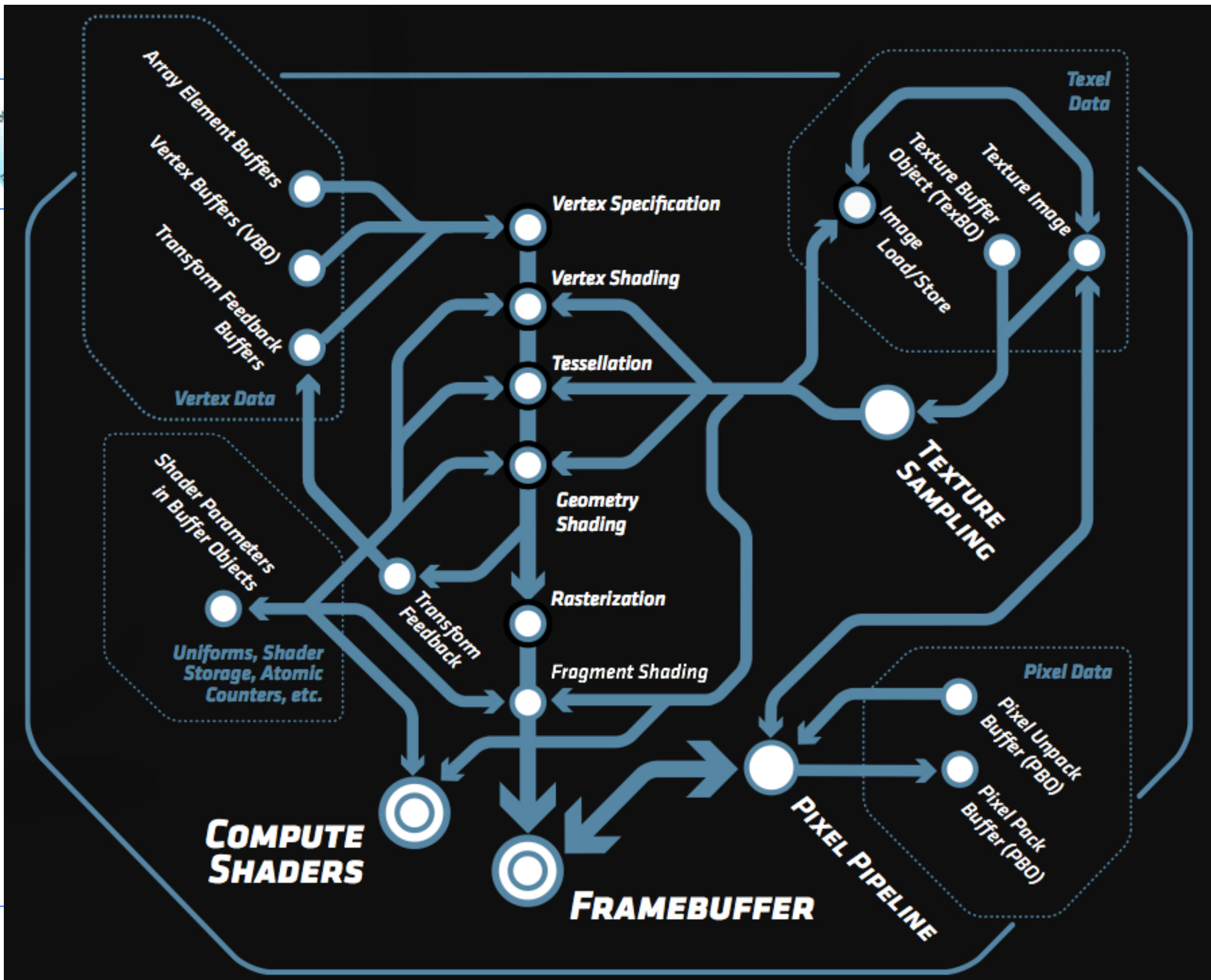
- **Fairly steep hardware demands! Kepler + 4.3**
- **Some new concepts**
- **Not part of the main graphics pipeline like fragment shaders**
 - **Some vendors (Apple) lagging behind**

Compute shaders run alone, not compiled together with others.



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So how do I use it?

Compiled like other shaders!

**Trivial change from the usual shader loader/compiler
from graphics programs, just compile as
GL_COMPUTE_SHADER.**

Easy:

- **Uniforms work as usual**
- **Textures work as usual**

(Note that you can write to textures in Fermi and up!)



Write to textures?

Only newest GPUs.

Call in shader: `imageStore()`

`imageStore(texUnit, texCoord, color);`

**Needs synchronisation! New call for that:
`glMemoryBarrier()` and `memoryBarrier()` in shaders.**

**GLSL is getting more and more general - but freedom does
not always make life easier.**

Back to Compute Shaders...



A bit different

No longer not one thread per fragment (output pixel)

Thereby: No thread specific output

Shader Storage Buffer Objects:

General buffer type for arbitrary data

Can be declared as an array of structures

Read and written freely by Compute Shaders!



How do I upload input data?

Upload to SSBO:

```
glGenBuffers(1, &ssbo);  
glBindBuffer(GL_SHADER_STORAGE_BUFFER, ssbo);  
glBufferData(GL_SHADER_STORAGE_BUFFER, size, ptr,  
             GL_STATIC_DRAW);
```

How does the shader know?

```
glBindBufferBase(GL_SHADER_STORAGE_BUFFER, id,  
                 ssbo);
```

```
layout(std430, binding = id, buffer x {type y[]};
```



Access data in the shader

Set number of threads per block:

layout(local_size_x = width, local_size_y = height)

Thread number:

**gl_GlobalInvocation
gl_LocalInvocation**

```
void main()  
{  
buffer[gl_GlobalInvocation.x] =  
- buffer[gl_GlobalInvocation.x];  
}
```



Execute kernel

`glUseProgram(program);`

`glDispatchCompute(size_x, size_y, size_z);`

The arguments to `glDispatchProgram` set the number of blocks / workgroups. The number of threads (work items) per block are set by the shader.



Getting output data

```
glBindBuffer(GL_SHADER_STORAGE, ssbo);  
ptr = (int *) glMapBuffer(GL_SHADER_STORAGE,  
GL_READ_ONLY);
```

Then read from ptr[i]

```
glUnmapBuffer(GL_SHADER_STORAGE);
```



Complete main program:

```
int main(int argc, char **argv)
{
    glutInit (&argc, argv);
    glutCreateWindow("TEST1");

    // Load and compile the compute shader
    GLuint p =loadShader("cs.csh");

    GLuint ssbo; //Shader Storage Buffer Object

    // Some data
    int buf[16] = {1, 2, -3, 4, 5, -6, 7, 8, 9,
                  10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16};
    int *ptr;

    // Create buffer, upload data
    glGenBuffers(1, &ssbo);
    glBindBuffer(GL_SHADER_STORAGE_BUFFER, ssbo);
    glBufferData(GL_SHADER_STORAGE_BUFFER,
                 16 * sizeof(int), &buf, GL_STATIC_DRAW);

    // Tell it where the input goes!
    // "5" matches "layuot" in the shader.

    glBindBufferBase(GL_SHADER_STORAGE_BUFFER,
                     5, ssbo);

    // Get rolling!
    glDispatchCompute(16, 1, 1);

    // Get data back!
    glBindBuffer(GL_SHADER_STORAGE_BUFFER, ssbo);
    ptr = (int *)glMapBuffer(
        GL_SHADER_STORAGE_BUFFER,
        GL_READ_ONLY);
    for (int i=0; i < 16; i++)
    {
        printf("%d\n", ptr[i]);
    }
}
```



Simple Compute Shader:

```
#version 430
#define width 16
#define height 16
```

Note: Too many threads
for data (16*16*16)

```
// Compute shader invocations in each work group
```

```
layout(std430, binding = 5) buffer bbs {int bs[]};
```

```
layout(local_size_x=width, local_size_y=height) in;
```

```
//Kernel Program
```

```
void main()
```

```
{
```

```
    int i = int(gl_LocalInvocationID.x * 2);
```

```
    bs[gl_LocalInvocationID.x] = -bs[gl_LocalInvocationID.x];
```

```
}
```



**OpenGL Compute Shaders are (since 2014)
supported in**

GL ES 3.1 (embedded systems!)

MESA for Intel GPUs (Haswell)

but still not on Macs...



Are Compute Shaders an alternative?

- **Portable between GPUs and OSes**
- **Steep hardware demands less and less a problem**
 - **All advantages in the future?**



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	Portable	Features	Install	Code
CUDA	Weak	Great	Weak	Great
OpenCL	Great	Good	Weak	OK
GLSL Fragment shaders	Great	Weak	Great	Messy
GLSL Compute shaders	Good	Good	Good	OK



But how about the *performance*???

Some comparisons

**One old project: CUDA vs GLSL vs OpenCL,
compared with a mass-spring system**

**One recent project: Multiple platforms,
compared with similar FFT implementation**



Mass-spring system

by Marco Fratarcangeli

Part of my GPU computing PhD course a few years ago.

Published in "Game Engine Gems 2"

Result: CUDA and GLSL almost the same, OpenCL noticably behind.



"FFT everywhere" project

by Torbjörn Sörman

Recent diploma thesis project.

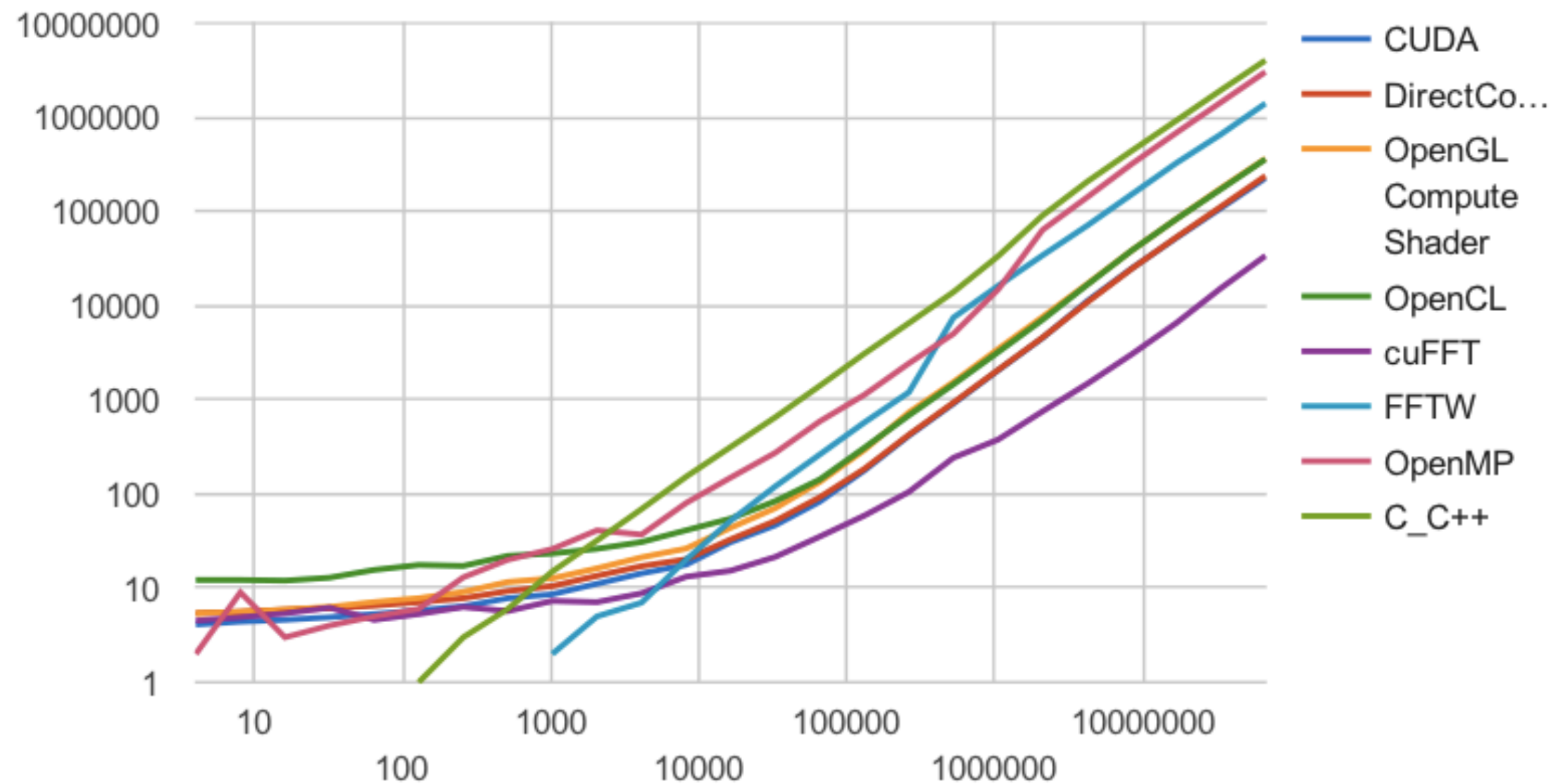
Some interesting results.



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Torbjörn Sörman's preliminary
results, 1D FFT

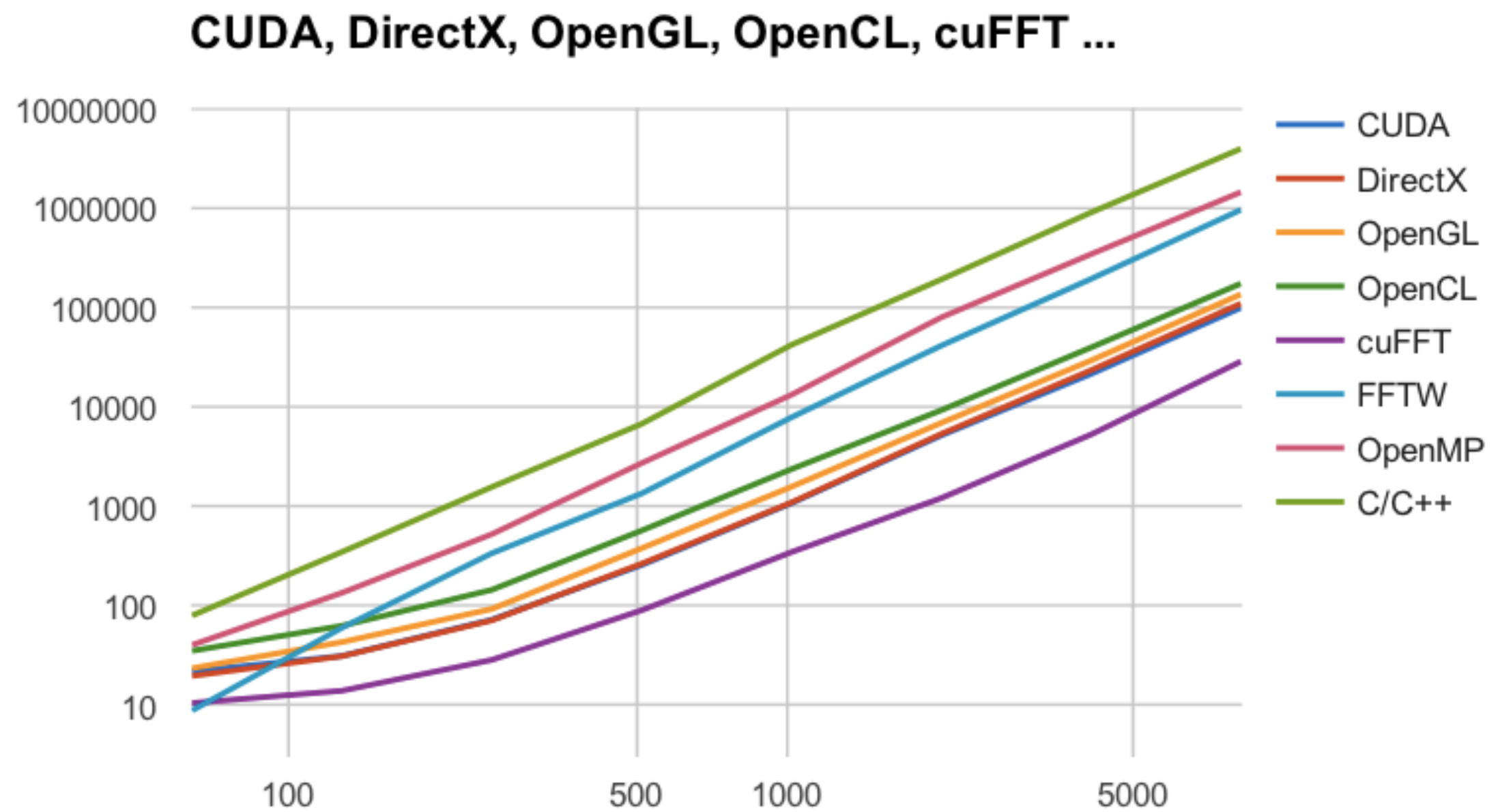
CUDA, DirectCompute, OpenGL Compute Shader, OpenCL, cuFFT ...





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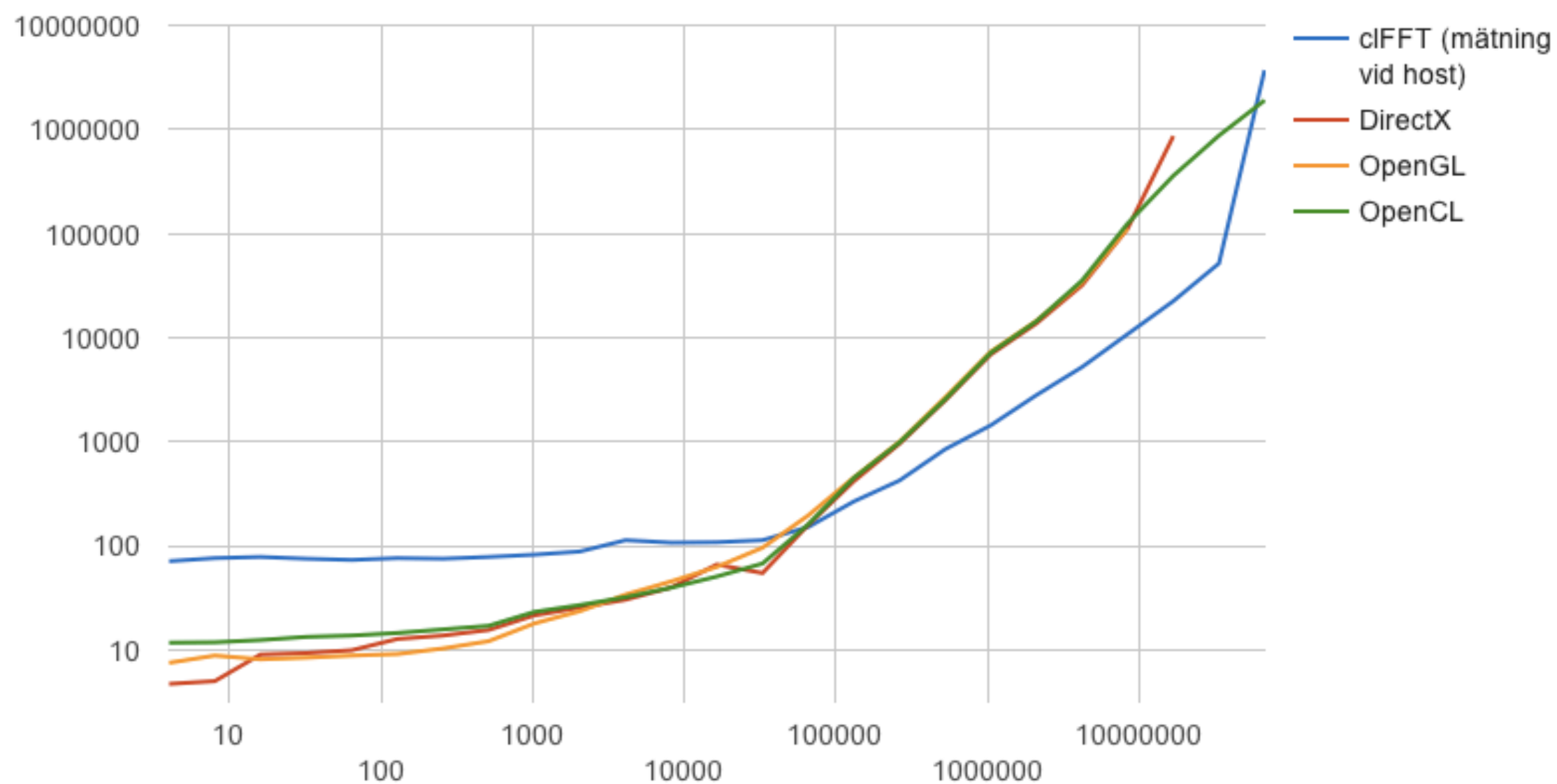
Torbjörn Sörman's preliminary
results, 2D FFT





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**Torbjörn Sörman's preliminary
results, 1D FFT, AMD**





Torbjörn Sörman's results

- **cuFFT so much faster that it is scary...**
- **Torbjörn's own GPU implementations much faster than CPU versions**
- **On NVidia, CUDA and Direct Compute significantly faster than OpenGL Compute Shaders and OpenCL**
- **On AMD, Direct Compute, OpenCL and OpenGL Compute Shaders ran side-by-side**

Lots of if's and but's... but two clear conclusions:

- **Hard optimization (cuFFT and FFTW) pays, and not just by a little!**
- **OpenCL and Compute Shaders very close - basically the same?**



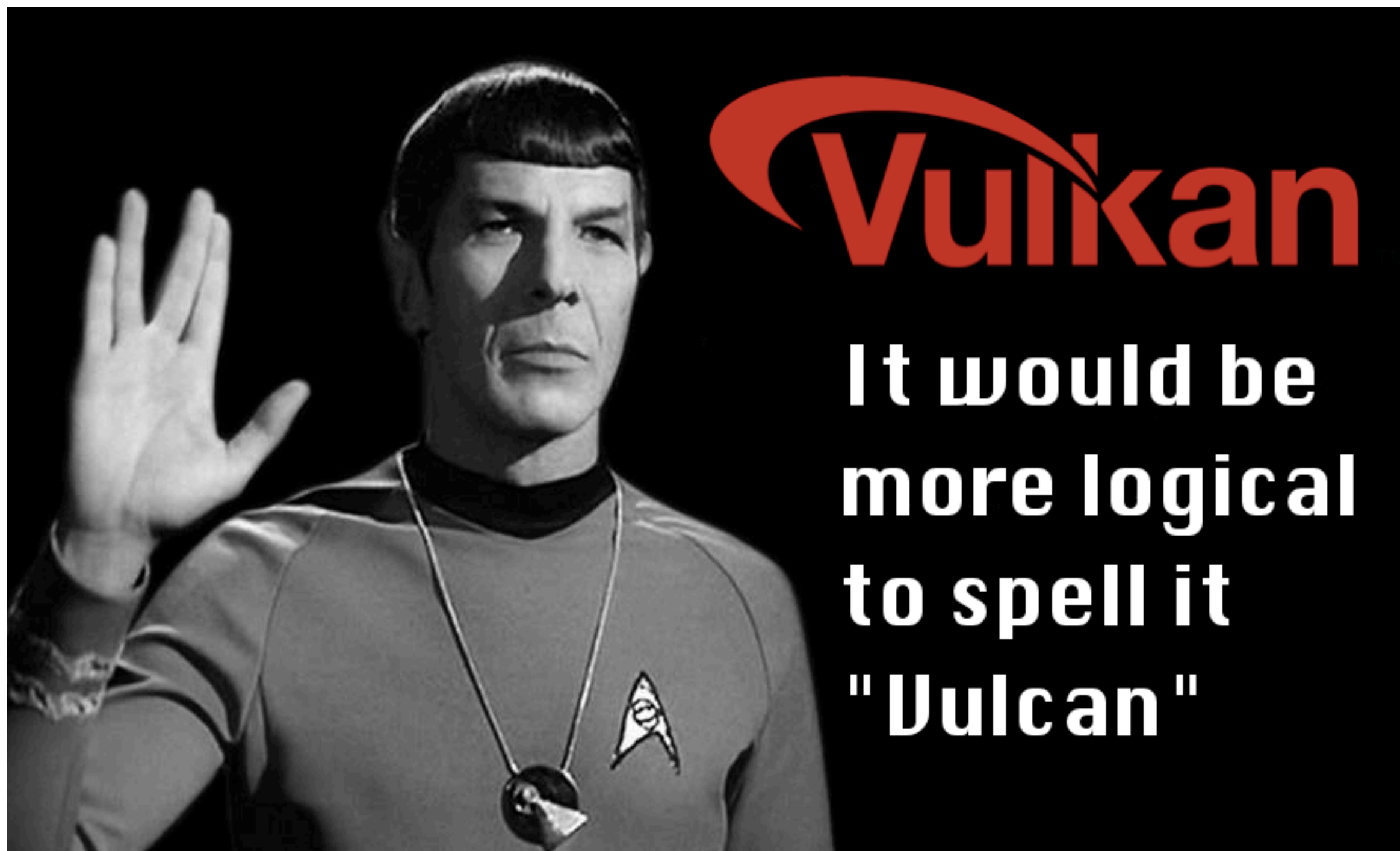
The new OpenGL - also the new open parallel computing platform?

Will it step in and take over?

- **Cross-platform**
- **Built for both graphics and general-purpose computations**



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GPU computing conclusions

The desktop supercomputer

Fast changing area

**Great performance for big problems that fit the
architecture**

Good performance for many other problems