

Fused Multiply-Add

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Many scientific and engineering computations take the form:

D = A + (B*C);

A "normal" multiply-add compilation would handle this as:

tmp = B*C;

D = A + tmp;

A "fused" multiply-add does it all at once, that is, when the low-order bits of B*C are ready, they are immediately added into the low-order bits of A at the same time that the higher-order bits of B*C are being multiplied.

Consider a Base 10 example: **789 + (123*456)**

```

  123
x 456
-----
 738
 615
 492
+ 789
-----
56,877

```

Can start adding the 9 the moment the 8 is produced!

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Note: In the lower bits of the result, "Normal" A+(B*C) ≠ "FMA" A+(B*C)

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Things Learned from Examining OpenCL Assembly Language

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- The points, vectors, and colors were typedef'ed as float4's, but the compiler realized that they were being used only as float3's and so didn't bother with the 4th element.
- The floatn's were not SIMD'ed. (We actually knew this already, since NVIDIA doesn't support SIMD operations in their GPUs.) There is still an advantage in coding this way, even if just for readability.
- The function calls were all in-lined. (This makes sense – the OpenCL spec says "no recursion", which implies "no stack", which would make function calls difficult.)
- Me defining G, DT, and Sphere1 as **constant** memory types was a mistake. It got the correct results, but the compiler didn't take advantage of them being constants. Changing them to type **const** threw compiler errors because of their global scope. Changing them to **const** and moving them into the body of the kernel function Particle did result in good compiler optimizations.
- The **sqrt(x²+y²+z²)** assembly code is amazingly convoluted. I suspect it is an issue of maintaining highest precision. Use **fast_sqrt()**, **fast_normalize()**, and **fast_length()** when you can. Usually computer graphics doesn't need the full precision of **sqrt()**.
- The compiler did not do a good job with expressions-in-common. I had really hoped it would figure out that detecting if a point was in a sphere and determining the unitized surface normal at that point were the same operation, but it didn't.
- There is a 4-argument **Fused-Multiply-Add** instruction in hardware to perform $D = A + (B*C)$ in one instruction in hardware. The compiler took great advantage of it.



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