Dynamic State Variables

Creating a Pipeline with Dynamically Changeable State Variables

The graphics pipeline data structure is full of state information, and, as previously-discussed, is largely immutable, that is, the information contained inside it is fixed, and can only be changed by creating a new graphics pipeline data structure with new information.

That isn’t quite true. To a certain extent, Vulkan allows you to declare parts of the pipeline state changeable. This allows you to alter pipeline state information on the fly.

This is useful for managing state information that needs to change frequently. This also creates possible optimization opportunities for the Vulkan driver.

Which Pipeline State Variables can be Changed Dynamically

The possible dynamic variables are shown in the VkDynamicState enum:

- VK_DYNAMIC_STATE_VIEWPORT
- VK_DYNAMIC_STATE_SCISSOR
- VK_DYNAMIC_STATE_LINE_WIDTH
- VK_DYNAMIC_STATE_DEPTH_BIAS
- VK_DYNAMIC_STATE_BLEND_CONSTANTS
- VK_DYNAMIC_STATE_DEPTH_BOUNDS
- VK_DYNAMIC_STATE_STENCIL_COMPARE_MASK
- VK_DYNAMIC_STATE_STENCIL_WRITE_MASK
- VK_DYNAMIC_STATE_STENCIL_REFERENCE
Creating a Pipeline

VkDynamicState
{
    VK_DYNAMIC_STATE_VIEWPORT,
    VK_DYNAMIC_STATE_LINE_WIDTH,
};

VkPipelineDynamicStateCreateInfo vpdsci;
vpdsci.sType = VK_STRUCTURE_TYPE_PIPELINE_DYNAMIC_STATE_CREATE_INFO;
vpdsci.pNext = nullptr;
vpdsci.flags = 0;
vpdsci.dynamicStateCount = sizeof(vds) / sizeof(VkDynamicState); // i.e., 2
vpdsci.pDynamicStates = &vds;

VkGraphicsPipelineCreateInfo vgpci;

vkCreateGraphicsPipelines( LogicalDevice, pipelineCache, 1, &vgpci, PALLOCATOR, &GraphicsPipeline);

If you declare certain state variables to be dynamic like this, then you must fill them in the command buffer! Otherwise, they are undefined.

Filling the Dynamic State Variables in the Command Buffer

First call:
vkCmdBindPipeline( … );

Then, the command buffer-bound function calls to set these dynamic states are:

vkCmdSetViewport( commandBuffer, firstViewport, viewportCount, pViewports );
vkCmdSetScissor( commandBuffer, firstScissor, scissorCount, pScissors );
vkCmdSetLineWidth( commandBuffer, linewidth ... commandBuffer, faceMask, writeMask );
vkCmdSetStencilReference( commandBuffer, faceMask, reference );

vkCmdSetStencilWriteMask( commandBuffer, faceMask, writeMask );
vkCmdSetStencilReference( commandBuffer, faceMask, reference );