DirectX Gets Rival With Vulkan

Written by Marco Attard
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The Khronos Group reveals a successor to OpenGL-- and a rival to Microsoft's DirectX-- with the launch of the Vulkan 1.0 specification, an open low-level cross-platform graphics API.

Built on the ashes of Mantle, the previous AMD attempt at an OpenGL successor, Vulkan promises high-efficiency cross-platform access access to graphics and compute GPU resources. As such it should run on just about any device running on Windows, Linux or Android, be it PC, games console, mobile device or embbedded platform. It also features minimised CPU overhead and efficient multi-threaded performance, with all related materials (including conformance tests, specification source and software tools) freely available as open source.

"The release of the Vulkan 1.0 specification is a huge step forward for developers. The Vulkan API, which was derived from Mantle, will bring the benefits of low-overhead high-performance graphics API to the benefit of cross-platform and cross-vendor targeted applications," AMD says. "The promotion of open and scalable technologies continues to be the focus at AMD, as a pioneer in the low-overhead API space. As a member of the Khronos Group, AMD is proud to collaborate with hardware and software industry leaders to develop the Vulkan API to ignite the next evolution in PC game development."

Will Vulkan beat DirectX12 as the de facto PC gaming graphics API? Maybe not on Windows, but it reportedly shows promising results on Linux, bringing a visual boost to games running on Valve's Linux-based Steam Machines. In addition many argue Microsoft rests too much on its DirectX laurels, and a rival might stir the giant into putting more effort in supporting game development.

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Mind, these are still early days for Vulkan-- drivers are available, but only for developer testing. So don't go telling your customers to replace their DirectX drivers, at least as yet.

Go [Khronos Releases Vulkan 1.0 Specification](#)