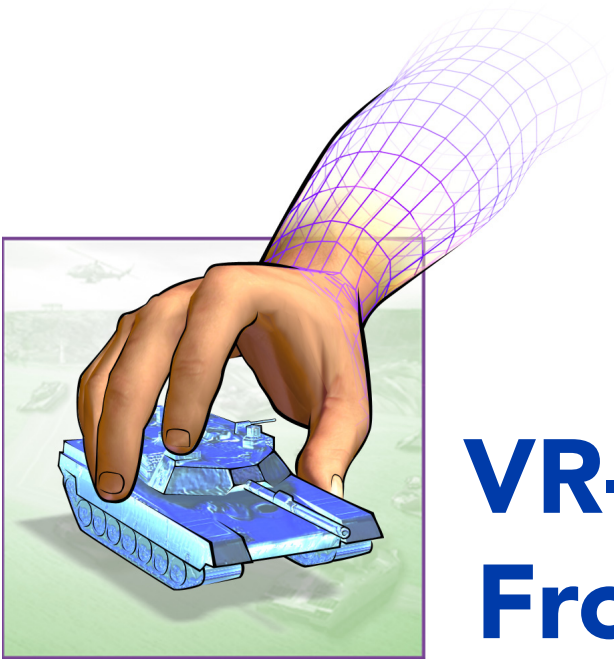
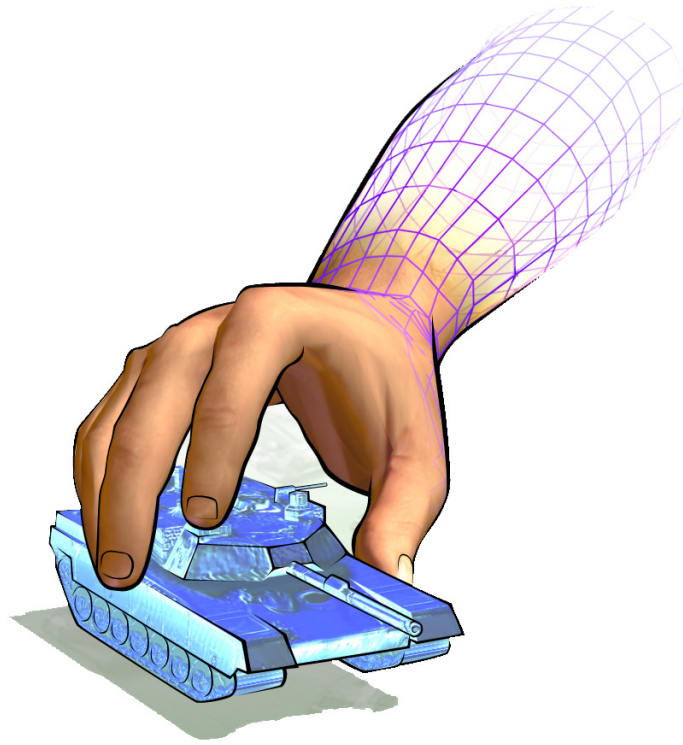




# VR-Forces Front-End

Developers Guide





# VR-Forces Front-End

Developers Guide

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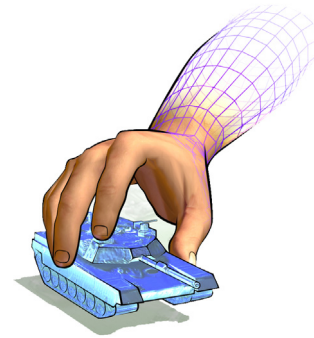
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Revision VRF-4.0-19-110120



# Contents

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## Preface

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|                                                        |      |
|--------------------------------------------------------|------|
| How This Manual is Organized .....                     | ix   |
| VR-Forces Documentation.....                           | x    |
| MÄK Products .....                                     | xi   |
| How to Contact Us .....                                | xiii |
| Document Conventions .....                             | xiv  |
| Hardware and Operating System Naming Conventions ..... | xiv  |
| Mouse Button Naming Conventions.....                   | xv   |
| Third Party Licenses .....                             | xv   |
| Boost License.....                                     | xv   |
| libXML and libICONV .....                              | xvi  |
| pThreads Library.....                                  | xvi  |
| EHS, PCRE, and PME .....                               | xvi  |
| Freefont OpenType Font Set.....                        | xvi  |

## The VR-Vantage Toolkit

---

|                                                        |     |
|--------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| 1.1. Introduction .....                                | 1-2 |
| 1.2. Third-Party Software and Content .....            | 1-3 |
| 1.2.1. SilverLining .....                              | 1-3 |
| 1.2.2. GL Studio .....                                 | 1-4 |
| 1.2.3. DI-Guy .....                                    | 1-4 |
| 1.2.4. SpeedTree .....                                 | 1-5 |
| 1.2.5. 3D Models, Terrain, and Graphical Content ..... | 1-5 |
| 1.2.6. OpenSceneGraph .....                            | 1-6 |
| 1.2.7. osgEarth .....                                  | 1-6 |
| 1.3. VR-Forces and VR-Link .....                       | 1-6 |
| 1.4. The Qt Toolkit .....                              | 1-6 |
| 1.5. Example Projects .....                            | 1-6 |

## Front-End Architecture

---

|                                                      |      |
|------------------------------------------------------|------|
| 2.1. Introduction .....                              | 2-2  |
| 2.2. Extending the VR-Forces Front-End .....         | 2-2  |
| 2.3. Getting Started with the VR-Vantage API .....   | 2-4  |
| 2.3.1. Creating a Plug-in .....                      | 2-4  |
| 2.3.2. Examples .....                                | 2-4  |
| 2.4. Architectural Overview .....                    | 2-5  |
| 2.4.1. The VR-Vantage Application Control Flow ..... | 2-7  |
| 2.4.2. Roadmap to VR-Vantage API Classes .....       | 2-8  |
| 2.4.3. Displays, Windows, and Channels .....         | 2-9  |
| 2.4.4. Terrain and Environment .....                 | 2-11 |
| 2.4.5. Entities and Props .....                      | 2-11 |
| 2.4.6. Observers and Observer Attachment .....       | 2-12 |
| 2.4.7. Drivers .....                                 | 2-12 |

## GUI Architecture

---

|                                                           |      |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|------|
| 3.1. GUI Architecture .....                               | 3-2  |
| 3.1.1. Menus .....                                        | 3-2  |
| 3.1.2. Dockable Widgets .....                             | 3-3  |
| 3.1.3. Dialog Box Pages .....                             | 3-3  |
| 3.1.4. Standalone Dialog Boxes .....                      | 3-3  |
| 3.1.5. Toolbars .....                                     | 3-4  |
| 3.2. The Event Loop .....                                 | 3-5  |
| 3.2.1. Qt Event Loops .....                               | 3-5  |
| 3.3. Runtime Settings .....                               | 3-5  |
| 3.3.1. Settings Directory Structure .....                 | 3-5  |
| 3.3.2. Loading and Saving Settings .....                  | 3-6  |
| 3.4. Managing Settings .....                              | 3-6  |
| 3.4.1. Managing Dependent Settings .....                  | 3-7  |
| 3.4.2. Managing Independent Settings .....                | 3-8  |
| 3.5. Implementing Save/Restore for Dialog Box Pages ..... | 3-8  |
| 3.5.1. Auto-Save .....                                    | 3-8  |
| 3.5.2. Backing Up and Restoring Settings .....            | 3-9  |
| 3.5.3. Enforcing Dependencies Among Settings .....        | 3-11 |
| 3.6. Records .....                                        | 3-13 |
| 3.7. Creating Toolbars .....                              | 3-15 |
| 3.8. Configuration Files .....                            | 3-16 |

## The Display Engine

---

|                                              |     |
|----------------------------------------------|-----|
| 4.1. The Display Engine .....                | 4-2 |
| 4.1.1. Channels, Windows, and Displays ..... | 4-2 |
| 4.1.2. Channel Keywords .....                | 4-3 |
| 4.2. Distributed Rendering .....             | 4-5 |
| 4.2.1. Proxies .....                         | 4-5 |
| 4.2.2. Distributed Objects and Agents .....  | 4-6 |

|                                                                |      |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| 4.2.3. Distributed Rendering Transport .....                   | 4-6  |
| 4.2.4. Example of Using an Agent .....                         | 4-7  |
| 4.3. Generating Code for Agents .....                          | 4-8  |
| 4.3.1. The Object Class Definition .....                       | 4-9  |
| 4.3.2. Distributed Code Generator Limitations .....            | 4-9  |
| 4.3.3. Starting the Distributed Code Generator .....           | 4-9  |
| 4.3.4. Creating an Object Class Definition .....               | 4-10 |
| 4.3.5. Building Agent Classes .....                            | 4-11 |
| 4.3.6. Distributed Code Generator Command-Line Arguments ..... | 4-13 |
| 4.4. Observers .....                                           | 4-14 |
| 4.5. The Observer API .....                                    | 4-15 |
| 4.5.1. Controlling the Observer .....                          | 4-16 |

## Drivers

|                                                               |      |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| 5.1. Drivers .....                                            | 5-2  |
| 5.1.1. Starting and Stopping Drivers .....                    | 5-2  |
| 5.2. The Scene Driver ( <i>DtSceneDriver</i> ) .....          | 5-3  |
| 5.3. The Input Driver .....                                   | 5-3  |
| 5.3.1. Creating Observer Configurations .....                 | 5-4  |
| 5.3.2. Input Driver Signals .....                             | 5-4  |
| 5.3.3. The Keyboard and Mouse Listener .....                  | 5-6  |
| 5.3.4. The Observer Controller .....                          | 5-6  |
| 5.3.5. The Key Map Manager .....                              | 5-7  |
| 5.3.6. Custom Event Processors .....                          | 5-7  |
| 5.4. Simulation Drivers .....                                 | 5-8  |
| 5.4.1. Stopping and Starting Simulation Drivers .....         | 5-8  |
| 5.4.2. Using Shared Source Files for Simulation Drivers ..... | 5-8  |
| 5.4.3. Simulation Driver Classes and Namespaces .....         | 5-8  |
| 5.4.4. Connections .....                                      | 5-9  |
| 5.4.5. Listeners .....                                        | 5-9  |
| 5.4.6. Visualizers and Processors .....                       | 5-9  |
| 5.5. Adding Functionality to a Driver .....                   | 5-10 |

## Composing Scenes

|                                                             |     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| 6.1. Scene Composition .....                                | 6-2 |
| 6.2. Models, Model Instances, and Model Definitions .....   | 6-2 |
| 6.3. Terrain Structure .....                                | 6-3 |
| 6.3.1. Terrain Patches .....                                | 6-3 |
| 6.3.2. Feature Layers .....                                 | 6-4 |
| 6.3.3. Loading Point Features .....                         | 6-4 |
| 6.3.4. Extracting Geometry .....                            | 6-4 |
| 6.4. Environmental Effects and the Lighting Model .....     | 6-5 |
| 6.4.1. Managing Clouds, Visibility, and Precipitation ..... | 6-5 |
| 6.4.2. Managing the Time and Date .....                     | 6-5 |
| 6.5. Forests .....                                          | 6-5 |
| 6.6. Scene Objects .....                                    | 6-6 |

## Contents

---

|                                 |      |
|---------------------------------|------|
| 6.7. Entities .....             | 6-6  |
| 6.7.1. Aggregate Entities ..... | 6-7  |
| 6.7.2. Sensor Volumes .....     | 6-8  |
| 6.8. Props .....                | 6-8  |
| 6.9. Effects .....              | 6-8  |
| 6.9.1. Ribbon Effects .....     | 6-9  |
| 6.9.2. Particle Effects .....   | 6-9  |
| 6.9.3. Animated Effects .....   | 6-10 |
| 6.10. Grid Lines .....          | 6-10 |

## 3D Graphics

---

|                                                   |     |
|---------------------------------------------------|-----|
| 7.1. 3D Rendering .....                           | 7-2 |
| 7.1.1. OpenGL .....                               | 7-2 |
| 7.1.2. OpenSceneGraph .....                       | 7-2 |
| 7.1.3. Rendering Images .....                     | 7-2 |
| 7.2. The VR-Vantage Renderer .....                | 7-4 |
| 7.2.1. The OSG-Specific Renderer .....            | 7-4 |
| 7.3. VR-Vantage Model Classes .....               | 7-4 |
| 7.4. OpenSceneGraph Extensions in VR-Forces ..... | 7-4 |
| 7.5. Cockpit Display Updaters .....               | 7-5 |

## Design Patterns

---

|                                                         |      |
|---------------------------------------------------------|------|
| 8.1. VR-Vantage Design Patterns .....                   | 8-2  |
| 8.2. The Rooted Singleton Pattern .....                 | 8-2  |
| 8.2.1. The Rooted Singleton Pattern Specification ..... | 8-3  |
| 8.3. The Signaler Pattern .....                         | 8-4  |
| 8.3.1. The Signaler Pattern Specification .....         | 8-5  |
| 8.4. The Factory Pattern .....                          | 8-6  |
| 8.4.1. The Factory Pattern Specification .....          | 8-10 |
| 8.5. The Creator Pattern .....                          | 8-10 |
| 8.5.1. The Creator Pattern Specification .....          | 8-11 |
| 8.6. The Humble Dialog Pattern .....                    | 8-12 |
| 8.6.1. The Humble Dialog Pattern Specification .....    | 8-14 |

## The VR-Vantage Control Toolkit

---

|                                           |      |
|-------------------------------------------|------|
| 9.1. The VR-Vantage Control Toolkit ..... | 9-3  |
| 9.1.1. Implementation Details .....       | 9-3  |
| 9.2. The VR-Vantage Remote Draw API ..... | 9-4  |
| 9.3. Major Classes .....                  | 9-4  |
| 9.4. Objects .....                        | 9-5  |
| 9.5. 2D Objects .....                     | 9-6  |
| 9.5.1. 2D Lines .....                     | 9-7  |
| 9.5.2. Rectangles .....                   | 9-7  |
| 9.5.3. Ellipses .....                     | 9-8  |
| 9.5.4. 2D Triangles .....                 | 9-9  |
| 9.5.5. 2D Text .....                      | 9-11 |

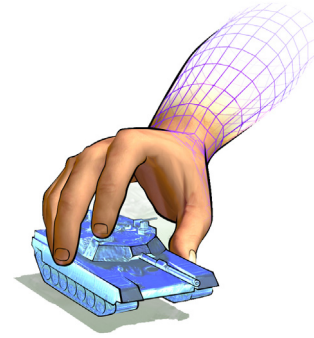
|                                        |      |
|----------------------------------------|------|
| 9.6. 3D Objects .....                  | 9-12 |
| 9.6.1. 3D Lines .....                  | 9-13 |
| 9.6.2. Cylinders .....                 | 9-14 |
| 9.6.3. Cuboids .....                   | 9-14 |
| 9.6.4. Ellipsoids .....                | 9-15 |
| 9.6.5. 3D Triangles .....              | 9-15 |
| 9.6.6. 3D Areas .....                  | 9-16 |
| 9.6.7. 3D Text .....                   | 9-16 |
| 9.7. Attributes .....                  | 9-17 |
| 9.7.1. Attribute Group Templates ..... | 9-18 |
| 9.7.2. Attribute Templates .....       | 9-18 |
| 9.7.3. Attribute Groups .....          | 9-20 |
| 9.8. Remote Graphic Sets .....         | 9-21 |

## Building and Compiling the Front-End

|                                                           |      |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|------|
| 10.1. VR-Forces Front-End Libraries .....                 | 10-2 |
| 10.2. Conventions .....                                   | 10-2 |
| 10.2.1. Include Files .....                               | 10-2 |
| 10.2.2. Namespaces .....                                  | 10-3 |
| 10.2.3. Naming Conventions .....                          | 10-4 |
| 10.3. The Qt Toolkit .....                                | 10-5 |
| 10.3.1. Qt Designer .....                                 | 10-5 |
| 10.3.2. Qt Signals and Slots .....                        | 10-5 |
| 10.4. Boost Notes .....                                   | 10-5 |
| 10.4.1. NOMINMAX (Windows Only) .....                     | 10-5 |
| 10.4.2. Boost and Qt Signals .....                        | 10-6 |
| 10.5. Compiling and Linking the VR-Forces Front-End ..... | 10-6 |
| 10.5.1. Windows .....                                     | 10-6 |
| 10.5.2. Building Examples .....                           | 10-6 |
| 10.6. Distributing Data with Plug-Ins .....               | 10-7 |

## Index





# *Preface*

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This manual is written for persons who want to extend or replace the VR-Forces GUI API. The manual assumes that you are familiar with your operating system, development environment, and C++.

Please see release documentation for updates to this manual and the latest information about your version of VR-Forces.

## *How This Manual is Organized*

The chapters are organized as follows:

Chapter 1, *The VR-Vantage Toolkit*, is a general introduction to the VR-Forces toolkit. It also describes the licensing restrictions of third-party libraries.

Chapter 2, *Front-End Architecture*, presents a high-level view of the VR-Forces architecture and shows how to create a simple VR-Forces application.

Chapter 3, *GUI Architecture* describes the architecture of GUI elements and covers other implementation details.

Chapter 4, *The Display Engine*, provides details about the display engine, which is the core component of any VR-Forces application.

Chapter 5, *Drivers*, describes how VR-Forces uses drivers to control objects.

Chapter 6, *Composing Scenes*, describes the objects that make up a VR-Forces scene.

Chapter 7, *3D Graphics*, describes how 3D graphics are rendered.

Chapter 8, *Design Patterns*, describes the design patterns used for much of the code in VR-Forces.

Chapter 9, *The VR-Vantage Control Toolkit*, explains how to use the VR-Forces Control Toolkit to send view control PDUs to VR-Forces applications. It also explains how to use the VR-Vantage Remote Draw API, which lets remote applications draw various kinds of geometric shapes and text on the VR-Vantage scene.

Chapter 10, *Building and Compiling the Front-End*, describes some of the libraries used to build VR-Forces and how to build the front-end.

## VR-Forces Documentation

VR-Forces documentation is provided as manuals in PDF format, online help, and HTML class documentation. The PDF files are in the *.doc* directory. The VR-Forces documentation set is as follows:

- ♦ *VR-Forces Getting Started Guide* is a quick introduction to VR-Forces. It covers the basics of installing VR-Forces, running a scenario, and creating a scenario. It focuses on helping new users avoid common mistakes.
- ♦ *VR-Forces Documentation Center* is your central starting point for accessing the VR-Forces manual set. It has a documentation roadmap, tables of contents for all manuals, and a master index, including the TDB Tool, to help you find references to subjects that are covered in two or more manuals or locate the manual in which a particular topic is discussed. All table of contents entries and index entries are live links to the manuals.
- ♦ *VR-Forces Users Guide* describes how to install VR-Forces and configure license management. It explains how to use the VR-Forces graphical user interface to view simulations and how to manage aspects of VR-Forces that are not directly related to creating and running scenarios.
- ♦ *VR-Forces Scenario Management Guide* explains how to create and run scenarios.
- ♦ *VR-Forces Configuration Guide* explains advanced features for configuring performance and how to edit VR-Forces configuration files. It includes documentation of the Entity Editor, OPD Editor, and Scenario Merge tools.
- ♦ *VR-Forces Developers Guide* explains how to use the VR-Forces simulation and remote control APIs. It focuses primarily on the simulation engine.
- ♦ *VR-Forces Front-End Developers Guide* explains how to extend or modify the VR-Forces graphical user interface (GUI).
- ♦ *VR-Forces Migration Guide* collates API migration information for each release in the VR-Forces 3.x series.
- ♦ Online help. The VR-Forces front-end, the OPD Editor, the Entity Editor, and the TDB Tool have online help accessible from the Help menu.
- ♦ Class documentation. Classes are documented in linked HTML pages.
- ♦ *VR-Forces Release Notes*.

## **MÄK Products**

VR-Forces is a member of the VT MÄK line of software products designed to streamline the process of developing and using networked simulated environments. The VT MÄK product line includes the following:

- ♦ **VR-Link® Network Toolkit.** VR-Link is an object-oriented library of C++ functions and definitions that implement the High Level Architecture (HLA) and the Distributed Interactive Simulation (DIS) protocol. VR-Link has built-in support for the RPR FOM and allows you to map to other FOMs. This library minimizes the time and effort required to build and maintain new HLA or DIS-compliant applications, and to integrate such compliance into existing applications.

VR-Link includes a set of sample debugging applications and their source code. The source code serves as an example of how to use the VR-Link Toolkit to write applications. The executables provide valuable debugging services such as generating a predictable stream of HLA or DIS messages, and displaying the contents of messages transmitted on the network.

- ♦ **MÄK RTI.** An RTI (Run-Time Infrastructure) is required to run applications using the High Level Architecture (HLA). The MÄK RTI is optimized for high performance. It has an API, RTIsby®, that allows you to extend the RTI using plug-in modules. It also has a graphical user interface (the RTI Assistant) that helps users with configuration tasks and managing federates and federations.
- ♦ **VR-Forces®.** VR-Forces is a computer generated forces application and toolkit. It provides an application with a GUI, that gives you a 2D and 3D views of a simulated environment.

You can create and view local entities, aggregate them into hierarchical units, assign tasks, set state parameters, and create plans that have tasks, set statements, and conditional statements. VR-Forces also functions as a plan view display for viewing remote entities taking part in an exercise. Using the toolkit, you can extend the VR-Forces application or create your own application for use with another user interface.

- ♦ **VR-Vantage™.** VR-Vantage is a line of products designed to meet your simulation visualization needs. It includes three end-user applications — VR-Vantage Stealth, VR-Vantage XR, and VR-Vantage IG — and the VR-Vantage Toolkit. VR-Vantage Stealth displays a realistic, 3D view of your virtual world. You can view this world from the inside of a simulated moving vehicle, or place the eyepoint at another moving or stationary location. The Stealth lets you switch rapidly among several predefined viewpoints while the simulation is underway.

VR-Vantage IG is a configurable desktop image generator (IG) for out the window (OTW) scenes and remote camera views. It has most of the features of the Stealth, but is optimized for its IG function.

VR-Vantage XR provides a common operational picture using the same 3D views as VR-Vantage Stealth, a 2D plan view, and an exaggerated reality (XR) view. Together these views provide both situational awareness and the big picture of the simulated world.

The VR-Vantage Toolkit is a 3D visual application development toolkit. Use it to customize or extend MÄK's VR-Vantage applications, or to integrate VR-Vantage capabilities into your custom applications. VR-Vantage is built on top of Open-SceneGraph (OSG). The toolkit includes the OSG version used to build VR-Vantage.

- **MÄK Data Logger.** The Data Logger, also called the Logger, can record HLA and DIS exercises and play them back for after-action review. You can play a recorded file at speeds above or below normal and can quickly jump to areas of interest. The Logger has a GUI and a text interface. The Logger API allows you to extend the Logger using plug-in modules or embed the Logger into your own application. The Logger editing features let you merge, trim, and offset Logger recordings.
- **MÄK Plan View Display.** The Plan View Display (PVD) provides a 2D, “big picture” of a virtual environment. It shows simulated entities, such as vehicles, soldiers, and tanks moving over a 2D-map display.
- **VR-Exchange™.** VR-Exchange allows simulations that use incompatible communications protocols to interoperate. For example, within the HLA world, using VR-Exchange, federations using the HLA RPR FOM 1.0 can interoperate with simulations using RPR FOM 2.0, or federations using different RTIs can interoperate. VR-Exchange supports HLA, TENA, and DIS translation.
- **VR-TheWorld™ Server.** VR-TheWorld Server is a simple, yet powerful, web-based streaming terrain server, developed in conjunction with Pelican Mapping. Delivered with a global base map, you can also easily populate it with your own custom source data through a web-based interface. The server can be deployed on private, classified networks to provide streaming terrain data to a variety of simulation and visualization applications behind your firewall.

## ***How to Contact Us***

For VR-Forces technical support, information about upgrades, and information about other MÄK products, you can contact us in the following ways:

### **Telephone**

|                    |        |                                        |
|--------------------|--------|----------------------------------------|
| Call or fax us at: | Voice: | 617-876-8085 (extension 3 for support) |
|                    | Fax:   | 617-876-9208                           |

### **E-mail**

|                                |                                                              |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| Sales and upgrade information: | <a href="mailto:info@mak.com">info@mak.com</a>               |
| Technical support:             | <a href="mailto:support@mak.com">support@mak.com</a>         |
| VR-Vantage support:            | <a href="mailto:vrv-support@mak.com">vrv-support@mak.com</a> |

### **Internet**

|                                           |                                                                                                      |
|-------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| MÄK web site home page:                   | <a href="http://www.mak.com">www.mak.com</a>                                                         |
| License key requests:                     | <a href="http://www.mak.com/support/licenses.php">www.mak.com/support/licenses.php</a>               |
| Product version and platform information: | <a href="http://www.mak.com/support/productversions.php">www.mak.com/support/productversions.php</a> |
| For the free, unlicensed MÄK RTI:         | <a href="http://www.mak.com/products/rti.php">www.mak.com/products/rti.php</a>                       |
| Support FAQ:                              | <a href="http://www.mak.com/support/faq.php">www.mak.com/support/faq.php</a>                         |

### **Post**

|                                |                                                      |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| Send postal correspondence to: | VT MÄK<br>68 Moulton St.<br>Cambridge, MA, USA 02138 |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|

When requesting support, please tell us the product you are using, the version, and the platform on which you are running.

## Document Conventions

This manual uses the following typographic conventions:

|                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Monospaced               | Indicates commands or values you enter.                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Monospaced Bold</b>   | Indicates a key on the keyboard.                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <i>Monospaced Italic</i> | Indicates command variables that you replace with appropriate values.                                                                                                                                                           |
| { }                      | Indicates required arguments.                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| [ ]                      | Indicates optional arguments.                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|                          | Separates options in a command where only one option may be chosen at a time.                                                                                                                                                   |
| (   )                    | In command syntax, indicates equivalent alternatives for a command-line option, for example, (-h   --help).                                                                                                                     |
| /                        | Indicates a directory. Since MÄK products run on both UNIX and Windows PC platforms, we use the / (slash) for generic discussions of pathnames. If you are running on a PC, substitute a \ (backslash) when you type pathnames. |
| <i>Italic</i>            | Indicates a file name, pathname, or a class name.                                                                                                                                                                               |
| sans Serif               | Indicates a parameter or argument.                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| ➤                        | Indicates a one-step procedure.                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Menu → Option            | Indicates a menu choice. For example, an instruction to select the Save option from the File menu appears as:<br>Choose <b>File</b> → <b>Save</b> .                                                                             |
| <b>i</b>                 | Indicates supplemental or clarifying information.                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>!</b>                 | Indicates additional information that you must observe to ensure the success of a procedure or other task.                                                                                                                      |

Directory names are preceded with dot and slash characters that show their position with respect to the VR-Forces home directory. For example, the directory *vrforces/doc* appears in the text as *./doc*.

## Hardware and Operating System Naming Conventions

Unless otherwise specified, references to UNIX include Linux, regardless of the type of computer it is running on. References to PCs refer to Intel processor-compatible computers running a version of Microsoft Windows.

## **Mouse Button Naming Conventions**

An instruction to click the mouse button, refers to clicking the primary mouse button, usually the left button for right-handed mice and the right button for left-handed mice. The popup menu refers to the menu displayed when you click the secondary mouse button, usually the right button on right-handed mice and the left button on left-handed mice.

## ***Third Party Licenses***

MÄK software products may use code from third parties. This section contains the license documentation required by these third parties.

### **Boost License**

VR-Link, and all MÄK software that uses VR-Link uses some code which is distributed under the Boost License. All header files that contain Boost code are properly attributed. The boost web site is: [www.boost.org](http://www.boost.org).

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## **libXML and libICONV**

VR-Link and all MÄK software that uses VR-Link, links in libXML and libICONV. On some platforms the compiled libraries and header files are distributed with MÄK Products. MÄK has made no modifications to these libraries. For more information about these libraries please see the following web sites:

- ♦ The LGPL license is available at: <http://www.gnu.org/licenses/lgpl.html>
- ♦ Information about IconV is at: <http://www.gnu.org/software/libiconv/>
- ♦ Information about LibXML is at: <http://xmlsoft.org/>

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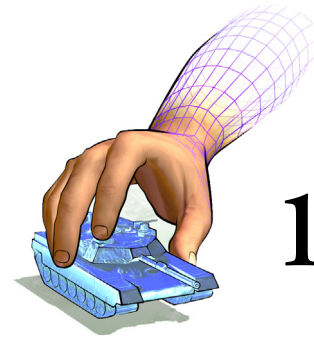
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- ♦ EHS: <http://xaxxon.slackworks.com/ehs/>
- ♦ PCRE: <http://www.pcre.org/>
- ♦ PME: <http://xaxxon.slackworks.com/pme/index.html>

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# *The VR-Vantage Toolkit*

---

This chapter introduces the VR-Forces toolkit and describes the third-party libraries it uses and their licensing requirements.

|                                                 |     |
|-------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Introduction .....                              | 1-2 |
| Third-Party Software and Content.....           | 1-3 |
| SilverLining.....                               | 1-3 |
| GL Studio .....                                 | 1-4 |
| DI-Guy .....                                    | 1-4 |
| SpeedTree .....                                 | 1-5 |
| 3D Models, Terrain, and Graphical Content ..... | 1-5 |
| OpenSceneGraph .....                            | 1-6 |
| osgEarth .....                                  | 1-6 |
| VR-Forces and VR-Link .....                     | 1-6 |
| The Qt Toolkit .....                            | 1-6 |
| Example Projects.....                           | 1-6 |

## **1.1. Introduction**

The VR-Forces front-end is built using the VR-Vantage Toolkit. VR-Vantage is MÄK's line of visualization products, which includes VR-Vantage Stealth, VR-Vantage IG, and VR-Vantage XR. For all practical purposes, the VR-Vantage Toolkit is the VR-Forces GUI API. All of the VR-Forces functionality in the front-end has been implemented as plug-ins to the basic VR-Vantage GUI architecture.

This manual is, for the most part, identical to the VR-Vantage Developers Guide, which describes the VR-Vantage Toolkit. It has been customized to refer to VR-Forces. However, some graphics and conceptual material that refers to core VR-Vantage features, continues to refer to VR-Vantage rather than VR-Forces.



The VR-Forces SDK (which includes the VR-Vantage Toolkit) is installed separately from the VR-Forces runtime application. Make sure that you have installed the SDK before you try to do any development.

---

The VR-Vantage Toolkit is an API that comes with all the software you need to completely rebuild visual applications like the VR-Forces front-end. It also allows you to customize and extend these applications to fit your unique requirements. The Toolkit also gives you the power to embed any of the VR-Vantage GUI capabilities directly into your simulation applications. The VR-Vantage Toolkit is based on OpenSceneGraph<sup>1</sup>, so you can leverage value-added plug-ins built by the OSG community and MÄK partners.

---

1. "OpenSceneGraph is an Open Source, cross-platform graphics toolkit for the development of high-performance graphics applications such as flight simulators, games, virtual reality and scientific visualization. It is based on the concept of a SceneGraph, providing an object-oriented framework on top of OpenGL." (<http://www.openscenegraph.org/projects/osg/wiki/About/Introduction>)

## 1.2. Third-Party Software and Content

The VR-Forces front-end includes software and content licensed from third parties, including:

- ♦ SilverLining™: real-time sky and 3D cloud rendering from Sundog Software
- ♦ GL Studio®: interactive cockpit instrumentation and HMI from DiSTI®
- ♦ DI-Guy™: realistic human character animation from Boston Dynamics
- ♦ SpeedTree®: animated, 3D foliage from Interactive Data Visualization (IDV)
- ♦ 3D models, terrain, and graphical content from Simthetiq, RealDB, TurboSquid, Terrex (now Presagis), and TerraSim
- ♦ OpenSceneGraph: an open source 3D graphics toolkit hosted at <http://www.openscenegraph.org>
- ♦ osgEarth: an open source streaming terrain plug-in by Pelican Mapping, at <http://osgEarth.org>.



The run-time and developers' rights for VR-Forces customers vary from vendor to vendor. Please read this section carefully to understand which rights are included with VR-Forces licenses, and which rights require additional third-party licenses.

---

### 1.2.1. SilverLining

VR-Forces uses SilverLining software and content to compute lighting and to render the sky, clouds, sun, and moon. SilverLining is developed by Sundog Software (<http://www.sundog-soft.com>).

Most VR-Forces customers do not need to buy a SilverLining license of any kind. In general, a VR-Forces customer has the right to use the SilverLining technology that is built into VR-Forces in any VR-Forces-based application (including custom applications built using the Toolkit). However, there are two exceptions:

- ♦ If you want to extend or change the way that MÄK has integrated SilverLining into VR-Forces by writing directly to the SilverLining API, then you need a SilverLining Developer's License.
- ♦ If you are building a commercial video game or other “mass-market” (consumer-level) commercial product on top of the VR-Forces API, and the resulting product includes the SilverLining functionality, then you need a SilverLining Developer's License.

SilverLining libraries, textures and other graphics resources are distributed in the VR-Forces package solely so that VR-Forces can use them. Use of SilverLining software or content outside of VR-Forces-based applications is not permitted by the VR-Forces license.

### 1.2.2. GL Studio

VR-Forces uses GL Studio software and content to render interactive cockpit instrumentation displays. GL Studio is developed by DiSTI (<http://www.disti.com>).

VR-Forces is delivered with several generic cockpit displays. You can use the built-in cockpit displays in any VR-Forces-based application (including custom applications built using the Toolkit), without a GL Studio license of any kind.

If you want to build custom cockpits using the GL Studio editor or GL Studio API, you need a GL Studio Developer's license. If you want to execute custom cockpits in VR-Forces-based applications (regardless of whether the custom cockpits are built by you or a third party), you need GL Studio Run-Time licenses.

GL Studio libraries and graphics resources are distributed in the VR-Forces package solely so that VR-Forces can use them. Use of GL Studio software or content outside of VR-Forces-based applications is not permitted by the VR-Forces license.

### 1.2.3. DI-Guy

VR-Forces uses DI-Guy software and content for human character animation. DI-Guy is developed by Boston Dynamics (<http://www.bostondynamics.com>).

VR-Forces comes with DI-Guy functionality built-in, and with a large set of DI-Guy characters, appearances, and animations. A VR-Forces customer does not need a DI-Guy license of any kind to use DI-Guy animated characters in a VR-Forces-based application (including custom applications built using the VR-Forces Toolkit).

However, you need a DI-Guy Developer's license if you want to:

- ♦ Develop new character types, or alter the geometry, appearances, textures, or motions of DI-Guy characters.
- ♦ Directly access the DI-Guy API to modify or extend the way that VR-Forces uses the DI-Guy API or access DI-Guy functionality that MÄK has not already integrated into VR-Forces.

DI-Guy libraries, models, textures, motion files, and other graphics resources are distributed in the VR-Forces package solely so that VR-Forces can use them. Use of DI-Guy software or content outside of VR-Forces-based applications is not permitted by the VR-Forces license.

For more information, please see Section 6.6.4, “[DI-Guy Animation](#)” and Section 7.11, “[Set DI-Guy Appearance](#)”, in *VR-Forces Scenario Management Guide*, and Section 2.3, “[Configuring DI-Guy Integration](#)” and Section 5.4.7, “[Editing a Lifeform's DI-Guy Character, Appearance, and Animation](#)”, in *VR-Forces Configuration Guide*.

### **1.2.4. SpeedTree**

VR-Forces uses SpeedTree software and content for animated real-time 3D foliage and vegetation. SpeedTree is developed by Interactive Data Visualization (IDV) (<http://www.speedtree.com>).

A VR-Forces customer does not need a SpeedTree license of any kind to use the SpeedTree functionality that is built into the VR-Forces applications that MÄK delivers. You may build and run plug-ins to our out-of-the-box applications without a SpeedTree license, as long as your plug-ins do not need to directly access the SpeedTree API.

However, you need a SpeedTree Developer's license if you want to:

- ♦ Write a plug-in that uses the SpeedTree API directly to extend or modify the way that SpeedTree is integrated into VR-Forces.
- ♦ Use the VR-Forces Toolkit to develop new applications, and you want your applications to include SpeedTree functionality.

SpeedTree libraries, models, textures, and other graphics resources are distributed in the VR-Forces package solely so that VR-Forces can use them. Use of SpeedTree software or content outside of VR-Forces-based applications is not permitted by the VR-Forces license.

### **1.2.5. 3D Models, Terrain, and Graphical Content**

VR-Forces includes a rich set of 3D models for vehicles, weapons, cultural features and urban clutter (signs, barriers, lampposts, and so on). It also includes several sample terrain databases to help you get started with VR-Forces, and to help demonstrate VR-Forces. Much of this content is derived from 3D data that we have licensed from third parties:

- ♦ Many of the high-quality vehicle models come from Simthetiq (<http://www.simthetiq.com>).
- ♦ Some models come from Real DB (<http://www.realdb.qc.ca/company>)
- ♦ Some of the middle-eastern building models and urban clutter objects that are used in our sample terrain databases were licensed from Turbosquid (<http://www.turbosquid.com>)
- ♦ The TerraSim\_SampleUrban terrain database comes from TerraSim (<http://www.terrasim.com>)
- ♦ The HarrisAfghanVillage terrain database was created using source data from Harris Inc.
- ♦ The Berkeley Database was developed by Terrex (now Presagis) (<http://www.presagis.com>).

All of this content is distributed in the VR-Forces package solely so that VR-Forces can use them. Use of any of the VR-Forces models, textures, terrains, or other content outside of VR-Forces-based applications is not permitted by the VR-Forces license.

### **1.2.6. OpenSceneGraph**

VR-Forces uses OpenSceneGraph for its underlying scene graph representation, rendering, file loading, and many other capabilities. OpenSceneGraph is an open source, cross-platform graphics toolkit for the development of high-performance graphics applications. The OpenSceneGraph source repository is maintained by Robert Osfield at <http://www.openscenegraph.org/projects/osg>. It is distributed under the OpenSceneGraph Public License (OSGPL), which is based on the GNU Lesser General Public License (LGPL).

### **1.2.7. osgEarth**

VR-Forces uses osgEarth to import streaming terrain elevation and imagery data. The data can be streamed from external servers and sources or from a directory on the computer running VR-Forces. osgEarth is an open source plug-in to OpenSceneGraph, maintained by Pelican Mapping at <http://osgEarth.org>. osgEarth is distributed under the GNU Lesser General Public License (LGPL).

## **1.3. VR-Forces and VR-Link**

VR-Forces relies on VR-Link to handle DIS and HLA networking. A VR-Forces developer's license includes a license for VR-Link so that you can use VR-Link functions and classes directly from applications that use any of the VR-Forces APIs.

VR-Link provides a protocol-independent interface to DIS and HLA. If you use it, you do not need to know the lower level details of these protocols to build VR-Forces. VR-Forces takes advantage of VR-Link's tools for managing objects and interactions, such as reflected entity lists.

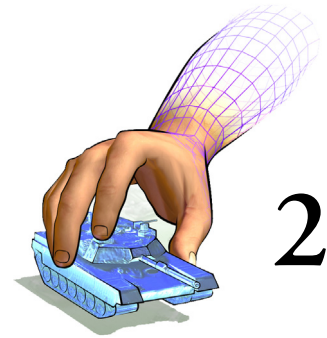
If you are not already familiar with VR-Link, we recommend that you review the conceptual material in *VR-Link Developers Guide* and the description of the protocol-independent interface.

## **1.4. The Qt Toolkit**

VR-Forces uses the Qt™ Toolkit from Qt Software to build the graphical user interface (GUI).

## **1.5. Example Projects**

VR-Forces has many example projects to help you understand various aspects of using the VR-Vantage Toolkit. For a complete list, please see the Front-End Examples link on the Examples link in the class documentation.



## *Front-End Architecture*

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This chapter introduces key classes, and shows how to create a simple application.

|                                              |      |
|----------------------------------------------|------|
| Introduction .....                           | 2-2  |
| Extending the VR-Forces Front-End.....       | 2-2  |
| Getting Started with the VR-Vantage API..... | 2-4  |
| Creating a Plug-in .....                     | 2-4  |
| Examples .....                               | 2-4  |
| Architectural Overview .....                 | 2-5  |
| The VR-Vantage Application Control Flow..... | 2-7  |
| Roadmap to VR-Vantage API Classes.....       | 2-8  |
| Displays, Windows, and Channels.....         | 2-9  |
| Terrain and Environment .....                | 2-11 |
| Entities and Props .....                     | 2-11 |
| Observers and Observer Attachment .....      | 2-12 |
| Drivers .....                                | 2-12 |

## 2.1. Introduction

As noted previously, the VR-Forces front-end is built with the VR-Vantage Toolkit. The VR-Vantage Toolkit includes the classes and functions needed to build or extend 3D visualization applications. The API gives you access to almost all of VR-Forces's functionality, including:

- ♦ Windows and channels
- ♦ Scene objects such as entities, props, terrain, and the environment
- ♦ Observers
- ♦ Drivers (the classes that manipulate the objects in the scene)
- ♦ The graphical user interface (GUI)
- ♦ The top-level objects and application framework that tie all of the functionality together.

You can use the VR-Forces API to customize or extend the functionality of VR-Forces – either by creating plug-ins, or by starting with our sample code and building your own similar applications. You can also use the API to embed pieces of VR-Forces functionality into your own applications. This chapter provides an introduction to the VR-Forces API. It introduces the *DtDe* class (*DtDe.h*) – the top-level class in the VR-Forces API, and describes the various ways in which your code can interact with it. (“De” stands for display engine.)

Subsequent chapters describe the other key elements of the VR-Forces API – the classes that represent scene objects, drivers, and so on. The *DtDe* class uses these classes to perform most of its work. You will typically access these classes through the *DtDe*. And when you want to extend or customize these classes (to extend or customize the behavior of VR-Forces applications), you will typically register your subclasses with VR-Forces through the *DtDe*.

## 2.2. Extending the VR-Forces Front-End

If you want to modify or extend VR-Forces, there are two main approaches you can take:

- ♦ Build a plug-in
- ♦ Create a new application.

In most cases, if your goal is just to extend VR-Forces, we recommend the plug-in approach. Most of our examples demonstrate how to extend our applications through plug-ins. In fact, most of the VR-Forces front-end is implemented by creating plug-ins to the basic VR-Vantage GUI.

For typical application extensions, plug-ins have the following advantages:

- ♦ Plug-ins facilitate easy integration with the work of other developers. If multiple developers add different capabilities through plug-ins, it is likely that you can use some, or all of them together, without additional development. On the other hand, if each of the developers added features by building separate custom applications, you would have to do additional work to merge the various extensions into one application.
- ♦ Plug-ins allow you to easily include or exclude a feature to meet the needs of a particular project. If you do not want to use a feature, do not load the plug-in that implements it.
- ♦ It will usually be easier to port a plug-in to a new version of VR-Forces than it would be to port a custom application. It is less likely that you will have to merge project settings, or merge any source code, if the base source code changes.
- ♦ Using plug-ins may help you avoid the need to purchase licenses for third-party libraries. Some of the third-party libraries that we have licensed (notably Speed-Tree), require that developers buy a third-party developers license if they are building new applications using the VR-Vantage Toolkit, but do not require a developers license if a customer is modifying our existing applications using plug-ins.

Ideally, a plug-in module should be limited to a specific, single piece of functionality. For example, if you want to add a new menu to the GUI, and an unrelated new kind of scene object, use separate plug-ins. However, if the new features work together, such as a new kind of scene object and a menu option to configure or control it, then these two pieces of code should probably be built into the same plug-in.

Regardless of whether you choose the plug-in approach or the new application approach, the code you write to implement your new functionality will be largely the same. The principal difference in code between the two approaches is how you access the *DtDe* to register your new classes:

- ♦ In a plug-in, the *DtDe* is passed to the plug-in's `initDeModule()` function.
- ♦ In a custom application, you ask the main application framework class (*DtVrvApplication*, in *DtVrvApplication.h*) for a pointer to its *DtDe*.

Switching between the two approaches is usually quite straightforward, if your new code is really an application extension.

## 2.3. Getting Started with the VR-Vantage API

This section briefly explains how to register a plug-in and how to build a basic VR-Forces application.

### 2.3.1. Creating a Plug-in

A typical VR-Forces application (such as VR-Forces) creates a *DtDe*, then immediately creates a *DtPluginManager* (*DtPluginManager.h*) – a class responsible for loading and initializing plug-ins. The Plug-in Manager loads plug-ins before *DtDe* is initialized, because a plug-in developer often wants to affect the way a *DtDe* is initialized. The *DtPluginManager* loads each of the plug-ins in the *./plugins* folder, and tries to call a global function called *initDeModule()*. The Plug-in Manager passes a pointer to the *DtDe* to *initDeModule()*, so that the plug-in has access to the *DtDe*. Therefore, the main responsibility of every plug-in developer is to implement and export (with C linkage) a global function called *initDeModule()*.

What you actually do in your plug-in is up to you. A typical plug-in may subclass one of the key VR-Vantage classes and register the subclass with the display engine within *initDeModule()*. For example, the following plug-in code registers a new subclass of *DtChannel* (*DtChannel.h*) (the class that represents visual channels) with the display engine:

```
// This method is called by the DtPluginManager during startup.
void initDeModule(makVrv::DtDe* de)
{
    // Tell the display engine to use an instance of MyChannelCreator
    // instead of the base DtChannelCreator to create channels.
    // MyChannelCreator will create MyChannels instead of base
    // DtChannels.
    DtChannelCreator::registerInstance(de, new MyChannelCreator);
}
```

Once you build your plug-in, place it in the *./plugins* folder, so that *DtPluginManager* can find it.

### 2.3.2. Examples

VR-Forces includes many examples of plug-ins and VR-Forces applications. They are listed and documented in the Examples section of the class documentation (select the Front End Examples link).

## 2.4. Architectural Overview

This section provides an overview of the VR-Vantage Toolkit architecture. It describes the main classes and how they relate to each other, and provides some insight into which classes you will probably have to work with to accomplish particular development goals.

To understand the VR-Vantage API, you need to understand that it is a multi-layered toolkit. At the lowest layer is OpenGL – the standard low-level API supported by most graphics cards. Above OpenGL is OpenSceneGraph – an open-source toolkit that helps organize 3D geometry into a “scene graph”, and provides functions for traversing the graph and making the appropriate calls to OpenGL to render the scene. Above OpenSceneGraph is the VR-Vantage Rendering System layer. The classes at this layer associate some semantics with the geometry. Instead of just thinking of 3D geometry as generic “nodes”, the API supports application-level concepts like terrain, props, the environment, models, and scene objects.

Above the VR-Vantage Rendering System is the VR-Vantage Control Interface. This layer provides agents, proxies, and higher-level objects that allow you to control objects in the Rendering System independently of whether they exist in your application or in a remote display engine. (This allows VR-Forces applications to support multi-channel distributed-rendering).

Finally, above the Control Interface is a Driver layer, which is where your application logic goes. Drivers tell the Rendering System (through the Control Interface) what objects to create, where to place them, and how to display them.

[Figure 2-1](#) illustrates the various layers of the VR-Vantage Toolkit.

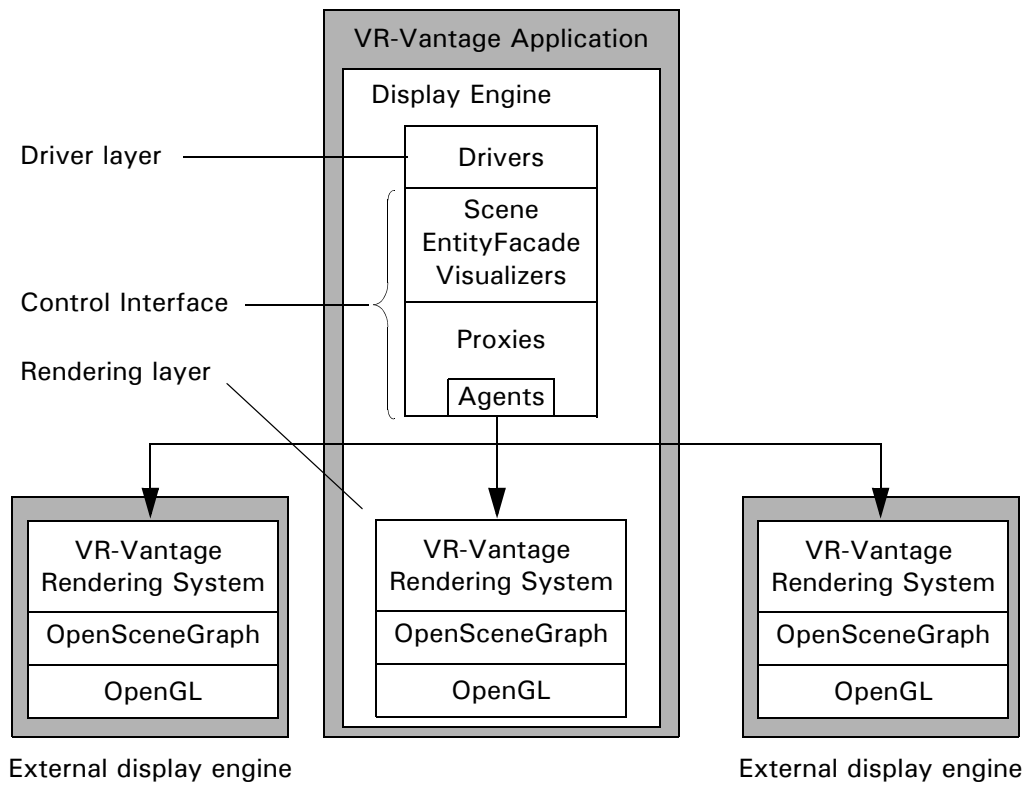


Figure 2-1. VR-Forces application architecture

### 2.4.1. The VR-Vantage Application Control Flow

This section looks at the VR-Vantage layers from top to bottom.

Drivers decide what needs to get drawn based on application business logic. For example, a DIS or HLA driver decides what to draw based on information it gets from remote simulation applications over the network; an input driver controls the location of the eyepoint based on user input.

Drivers communicate with both local and remote objects in the VR-Vantage Rendering System through the Control Interface (agents, proxies and other higher-level Control Interface objects). The Rendering System objects act on the commands that they receive from the Control Interface by making changes to the OSG Scene Graph, or by changing other OSG rendering parameters. OSG makes calls to OpenGL, which ensures that the correct scene is rendered by the graphics card.

*DtDe*, the top-level class, provides access to objects in all of these layers (as well as direct access to OpenSceneGraph!) You can write your application code so that it makes direct calls to the Rendering System (or to OSG). But if you just want to use the built-in capabilities of the VR-Forces Toolkit (rather than trying to extend the capabilities of the toolkit), we recommend that you stay at the level of the Control Interface rather than going directly to the Rendering System. There are two reasons for this:

- ♦ The Control Interface layer provides more power. For example, a Control Interface class like *DtEntityFacade* (*DtEntityFacade.h*) allows you to associate multiple Rendering System objects with a simulation entity (for example, a vehicle) and control them all through a single interface. When you position an entity through a *DtEntityFacade*, not only will the entity's primary 3D model move through space, but trailing effects (vapor trails, and so on), track history graphics, and smoke and flames (if appropriate) will automatically follow.
- ♦ Your application will automatically support distributed-rendering. You or your application's users will be able to add additional display channels to your application merely by running the VR-Vantage Display Engine application, and connecting to it from your application.



VR-Forces does not support use of the VR-Vantage Display Engine applications.

---

If you want to extend the capabilities of the VR-Forces Toolkit, you will need to work at the level of the Rendering System. For example, if you want to incorporate a new OSG nodekit into VR-Forces, or if you want to generate geometry procedurally rather than loading and positioning existing 3D models or effects, you will need to subclass Rendering System objects. (You will also have to provide agents if you want applications working at the Control Interface level to be able to control your new objects.)

## 2.4.2. Roadmap to VR-Vantage API Classes

The VR-Vantage API does not group all of the Rendering System classes under a single “Rendering System” object, and all of the Control Interface objects under a “Control Interface” object. Instead, both sets of classes are accessible from *DtDe*. So it can sometimes be difficult to tell which classes are parts of which layer. For the most part, classes that end in the word “Object” represent scene objects that are part of the Rendering System. Classes that end in the word “Agent” are the agents that are used in the Control Interface to pass commands to their corresponding scene objects. There is usually a one-to-one relationship between scene objects and the agents that command them. For example, a *DtObserverObjectAgent* (agent classes are generated, so there are no header files for these classes) is used to control *DtObserverObjects* (*DtObserverObject.h*) in the Rendering System.

However, in many cases, a higher-level class in the Control Interface layer groups together several agents, and provides an interface that allows you to control several different Rendering System objects from a single object (through multiple agents). Two important examples of this are *DtScene* (*DtScene.h*) and *DtEntityFacade* (*DtEntityFacade.h*). They use a variety of agents to control several objects related to terrain, the environment, and moving entity models.

Here is a short example that uses *DtScene* and *DtEntityFacade* to load a terrain database and place a 3D model of an F16 into the world:

```
int main(int argc, char** argv)
{
    // A DtVrvApplication wraps up all the components required to build a
    // complete VR-Vantage application (DtDe, DtPluginManager,
    // DtEventLoop, and a DtVrvApplicationConfiguration).
    DtVrvApplication vrvApp;

    // This causes the Plug-in Manager to load plugins, causes a display
    // configuration to be realized, creates the default environment, etc.
    vrvApp.initialize(argc, argv);
    DtDe* de = &vrvApp.de();

    // Load makland.
    std::string maklandPath = de->dePathConfiguration().userPath();
    maklandPath += "//terrains//makland_fast.mtf";

    // DtScene is a Control Interface level object that is responsible for
    // managing terrain and the environment
    DtScene* scene = &de->scene();
    scene->loadTerrain(maklandPath);

    // Create the entity
    DtEntityFacade* entityFacade = new DtEntityFacade(de->agentManager());

    // Load and position the model over palace
    entityFacade->setVisualDefinition("FixedWing_F-16_Falcon");
    entityFacade->setPosition(DtVector(1600, 1400, 300));
    // Create an event loop and begin running it, causing the creation
    // of frames.
    vrvApp.run();
}
```

New example, maybe just reference it.

In general, when you create a particular Control Interface object (for example, *DtEntityFacade* or one of the agents), the corresponding Rendering System objects will be automatically created in all display engines to which you are currently connected (including the one that is local to your application). The only thing that the Control Interface objects need to communicate with the Rendering System is a pointer to an interface object called an Agent Manager. The Agent Manager is created automatically by a *DtDe*, and is accessible by calling `displayEngine->agentManager()`.

The next few sections briefly describe some of the key classes in the Rendering System layer and the Control Interface layer. [Figure 2-2](#) illustrates the class relationships in the two layers as described in these sections.

### 2.4.3. Displays, Windows, and Channels

A *DtDe*'s *DtDisplay* (*DtDisplay.h*) is the Rendering System layer object that manages the display engine's system of windows and channels. (Each display engine can own one or more windows, and can be configured to render one or more 2D or 3D channels into each window. As in most visual systems, a channel is a rendering of the scene from a particular point of view). You can get to a *DtDe*'s *DtDisplay* by calling `displayEngine->display()`.

The *DtDisplay* owns a *DtWindowManager* (*DtWindowManager.h*), which manages a list of *DtWindows*. Each *DtWindow* (*DtWindow.h*), owns a *DtChannelManager* (*DtChannelManager.h*), which manages the list of *DtChannels* (*DtChannel.h*) that are associated with a particular window. However, all of these classes are part of the Rendering System layer, which means that if you use these classes, you will only be able to access and control windows and channels that are owned and rendered by the display engine that is local to your application.

To control displays, windows, and channels independently of whether they are owned locally or by an external display engine application, use the corresponding Control Interface classes: *DtDisplayProxy* (*DtDisplayProxy.h*), *DtWindowProxy* (*DtWindowProxy.h*), and *DtChannelProxy* (*DtChannelProxy.h*). Get a pointer to the *DtDisplayProxy* object associated with each display using *DtDe*'s `findDisplay()` or `findDisplayByIndex()` functions. Once you have the *DtDisplayProxy*, you can use it to get pointers to window and channel proxies. For more detail about displays, windows, and channels, please see [“Channels, Windows, and Displays,”](#) on page 4-2. For information about proxies, please see [“Proxies,”](#) on page 4-5.

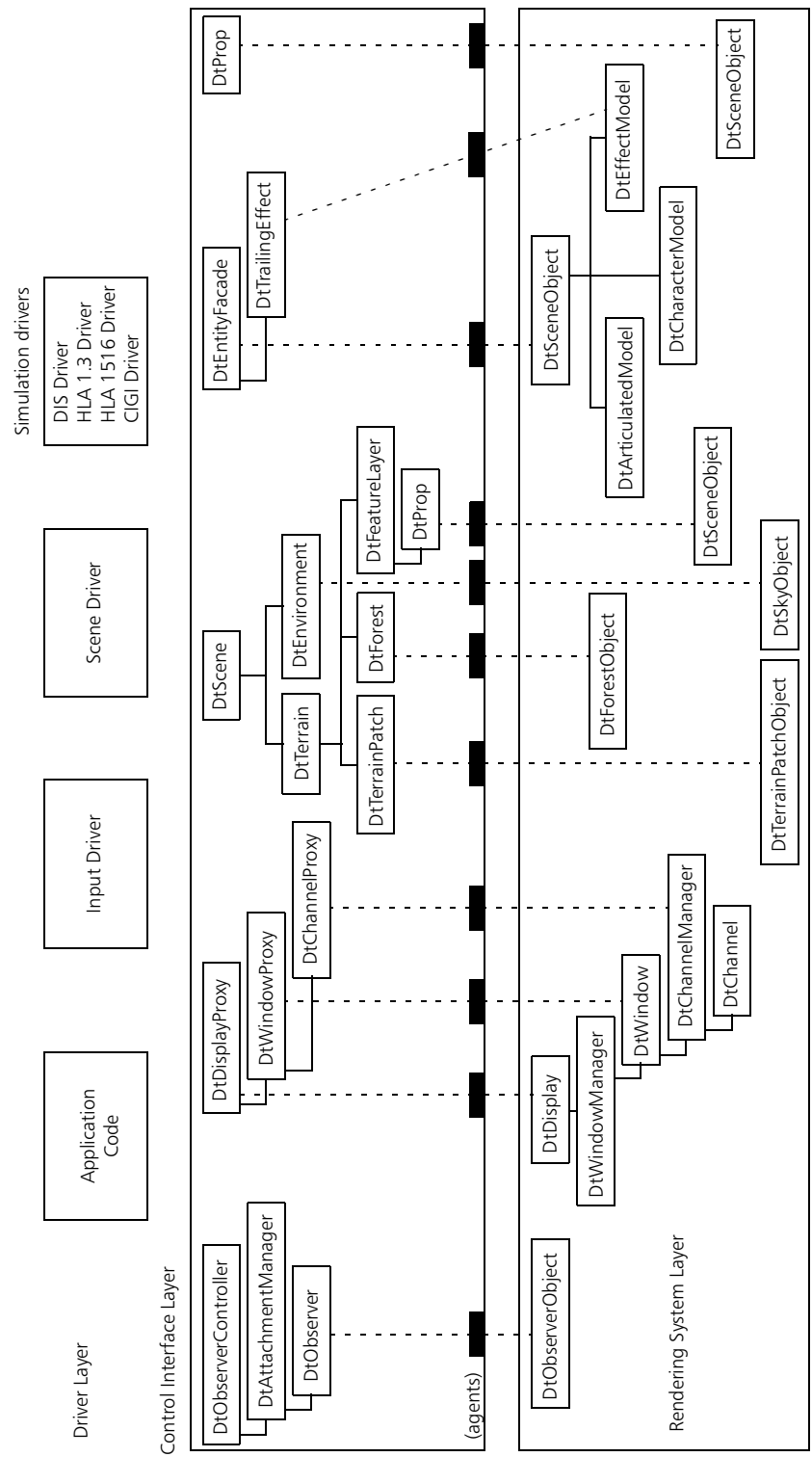


Figure 2-2. Class roadmap

### 2.4.4. Terrain and Environment

The Control Interface class *DtScene* manages the terrain and environment. It delegates much of its work to the *DtTerrain* (*DtTerrain.h*) and *DtEnvironment* (*DtEnvironment.h*) classes. *DtTerrain* further delegates to:

- ♦ *DtTerrainPatch* (*DtTerrainPatch.h*) to manage each “patch” of terrain
- ♦ *DtFeatureLayer* (*DtFeatureLayer.h*) to manage layers of point features that are overlaid on top of the terrain
- ♦ *DtForest* (*DtForest.h*) to manage trees.

All of these classes exist in the Control Interface layer. They command the Rendering System classes *DtSkyObject* (*DtSkyObject.h*), *DtTerrainPatchObject* (*DtTerrainPatchObject.h*), and *DtForestObject* (*DtForestObject.h*) through their respective agents: *DtSkyObjectAgent*, *DtTerrainPatchObjectAgent*, and *DtForestObjectAgent*. For details about agents, please see “[Distributed Objects and Agents](#),” on page 4-5.

The *DtDe* will automatically create a *DtScene* for you when it is initialized. Use `displayEngine->scene()` to get a pointer to the *DtScene*, and use its members to access and manipulate the *DtTerrain* and *DtEnvironment*.

### 2.4.5. Entities and Props

The main components of any 3D scene are the terrain and environment discussed in previous sections, and entities and props. Props are static objects such as buildings or Jersey barriers (like the props that are placed on a stage for a play). Entities are moving objects such as vehicles, missiles, and human characters (the actors in the play).

*DtEntityFacade* is the main Control Interface level class used to add an entity to the scene and to control its location and state. It uses another Control Interface level class called *DtTrailEffect* (*DtTrailEffect.h*) to manage attached effects. *DtEntityFacade* commands Rendering System classes such as *DtSceneObject* (*DtSceneObject.h*), *DtArticulatedModel* (*DtArticulatedModel.h*), and *DtEffectModel* (*DtEffectModel.h*) through their respective agents. As shown in the example in “[Roadmap to VR-Vantage API Classes](#),” on page 2-8, you can create an instance of *DtEntityFacade* for each entity that you want to add to the scene, then call its member functions (or members of objects that are owned by *DtEntityFacade*) to position the object and set additional state.

The *DtProp* (*DtProp.h*) class is used to create and manipulate props. Like *DtEntityFacade*, you can create an instance of *DtProp* for each prop you want to add to the scene (although it often makes sense to let a *DtTerrain*’s *DtFeatureLayer* manage *DtProps* for you). *DtProps* command Rendering System classes such as *DtSceneObject* and *DtModel* through their respective agents.

### 2.4.6. Observers and Observer Attachment

*DtObserver* (*DtObserver.h*) is a Control Interface level class that represents an observer – that is, an eyepoint into the virtual world. Through a *DtObserver*, you can control the location of the corresponding *DtObserverObject* (*DtObserverObject.h*) that exists in the Rendering System. In order to associate a *DtObserver* with a channel, just make sure the *DtObserver*’s name matches the observer name specified by your channel’s configuration:

```
// Channel config initialized elsewhere.
DtChannelConfiguration channelConfig = getChannelConfigFromSomewhere();
DtObserverConfiguration configuration(channelConfig.observerName());
DtObserver* observer = new DtObserver(de, de.agentManager(),
    configuration);
```

You can call *DtObserver*’s member functions directly to set observer location and other state. However, we recommend using one of two higher-level classes to call *DtObserver* functions on your behalf: *DtAttachManager* (*DtAttachManager.h*) or *DtObserverController* (*DtObserverController.h*). Use *DtAttachManager* to perform attachment-related operations, so that other parts of the VR-Forces system are notified when attachment changes. *DtObserverController* implements a higher-level navigation interface on top of *DtObserver*. It lets you perform operations like “move left” and “pitch up”, calculating resulting changes to the observer and calling *DtObserver* functions for you.

### 2.4.7. Drivers

In the previous sections, we described how the control logic of your application can use Control Interface classes to control objects in the Rendering System. Control Interface classes like *DtEntityFacade* and *DtScene* do not “decide” what to draw – the code that uses those classes does. In the example in [“Roadmap to VR-Vantage API Classes,”](#) on page 2-8, it was the application code itself that decided that the application should load *makland\_fast.mtf*, and that it should add an F16 model to the scene. As that example showed, the API does not require you to put your control logic in any particular place. You can instantiate classes like *DtEntityFacade*, or access the *DtDe*’s *DtScene* object from anywhere in your application – in *main()*, in your GUI code, and so on. However, we recommend that you organize your control logic into objects called drivers.

VR-Vantage application logic is in its drivers. Drivers are implemented as subclasses of the *DtDriver* (*DtDriver.h*) class. If the Rendering System objects are like the actors and props on a stage, then a driver is like the director of the play. Drivers direct the action by communicating their intent to the actors (Rendering System objects) through their agents (or other Control Interface classes).

Putting your control logic into VR-Forces drivers has the following benefits:

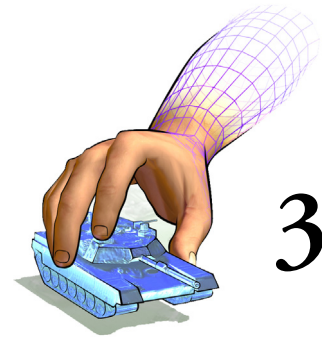
- ♦ Drivers are automatically “ticked” every time the *DtDe* is ticked, so that you do not have to worry about making sure your logic is executed at the right time.
- ♦ VR-Forces lets you start and stop drivers through the GUI. This means you have run-time control over the execution of your control logic if you put it into a driver.
- ♦ *DtDrivers* automatically find out when external display engines connect or disconnect from your application and provide a place to put logic that needs to be executed when those events occur. In other words, since you are the one deciding what goes in the scene, it is your responsibility to ensure that late-joining display engines find out what you have already put in the scene before it joined. And the *DtDriver* class helps you to meet that responsibility,

The VR-Forces front-end has plenty of application-level logic built in. *DtDrivers* hold that logic, for example:

- ♦ The *DtInputDriver* (*DtInputDriver.h*) is responsible for processing mouse and keyboard input, and making calls to objects like the *DtObserverController* or *DtAttachManager* based on the control input received from the user.
- ♦ The *DtDisDriver* (*DtDisDriver.h*), *DtHla13Driver* (*DtHla13Driver.h*), and *DtHla1516Driver* (*DtHla1516Driver.h*) “drive” the contents of the scene based on information received from the network through their respective simulation protocols.
- ♦ The *DtSceneDriver* (*DtSceneDriver.h*) makes sure that a new scene is created when a *DtDe* is initialized, and can populate a scene based on information in a saved scene file.

For more information about drivers, please see Chapter 5, [Drivers](#).





# *GUI Architecture*

---

This chapter describes the VR-Forces GUI architecture and various runtime implementation details.

|                                                      |      |
|------------------------------------------------------|------|
| GUI Architecture.....                                | 3-2  |
| Menus .....                                          | 3-2  |
| Dockable Widgets .....                               | 3-3  |
| Dialog Box Pages.....                                | 3-3  |
| Standalone Dialog Boxes .....                        | 3-3  |
| The Event Loop .....                                 | 3-5  |
| Qt Event Loops .....                                 | 3-5  |
| Runtime Settings .....                               | 3-5  |
| Settings Directory Structure .....                   | 3-5  |
| Loading and Saving Settings.....                     | 3-6  |
| Managing Settings .....                              | 3-6  |
| Managing Dependent Settings.....                     | 3-7  |
| Managing Independent Settings .....                  | 3-8  |
| Implementing Save/Restore for Dialog Box Pages ..... | 3-8  |
| Auto-Save .....                                      | 3-8  |
| Backing Up and Restoring Settings.....               | 3-9  |
| Enforcing Dependencies Among Settings .....          | 3-11 |
| Records .....                                        | 3-13 |
| Configuration Files .....                            | 3-16 |

## 3.1. GUI Architecture

All of the VR-Forces GUI elements (menus, menu items, and dockable widgets) and dialog box pages and pagers are provided by plug-ins. The presence of the GUI in applications based on the *DtVrvApplication* class is controlled by its configuration's `assembleUserInterfaceComponents()` member.

The GUI is constructed by the *DtUserInterfaceAssembler* (*DtUserInterfaceAssembler.h*), and dialog boxes are created by the *DtDialogManager* (*DtDialogManager.h*). To add or remove GUI elements, register or destroy the appropriate builder with the *DtUserInterfaceAssembler*. Similarly, to add or remove dialog boxes, register or unregister their builders with the *DtDialogManager*.

### 3.1.1. Menus

VR-Forces's menu system is configured by each application, controlled by the `vrvCore` module, and implemented in various plug-ins.

The implementation for the menu system is part of the Qt plugin (*vrvCoreQt.dll*). This plugin defines concrete menus and menu items with Qt-based implementations, such as *DtAddFeatureLayerItem.h* and registers their creators with the *DtDe*. (For details, please see *DtMainMenus.h* and the various classes implementing *DtMenuItem* (*DtMenuItemBuilder.h*.) When registered, each menu and menu item creator is given a unique name, such as *DtTerrainContentsPage*, that is used to identify it.

The menu interface used directly by the *DtDe* is defined in the `vrvCore` module by the classes *DtMenuAssembler* (*DtMenuAssembler.h*), *DtMenuConfiguration* (*DtMenuConfiguration.h*), and *DtMenuPath* (*DtMenuPath.h*). The *DtMenuPath* class is used to specify the location of a single menu or menu item in terms of its location and the name of the creator that generates its implementation. For example, the *DtTerrainContentsPage* menu item is specified by

```
makVrv::DtMenuPath::mainMenu( "DtTerrainMenu" ).item(
    "DtTerrainContentsPage" )
```

*DtMenuConfiguration* contains a collection of menu paths and provides several methods to conveniently add, access, and modify menu paths. The *DtMenuAssembler* acts as a sort of menu configuration interpreter. It takes a *DtMenuConfiguration* and executes the creators necessary to create the menus and menu items. The Qt plugin overrides the default menu assembler to assemble the menus in a Qt-specific fashion. If you want to replace Qt with another GUI toolkit, you will probably need to implement your own *DtMenuAssembler* as well.

The *DtDeApplication* framework class has the functions `masterModeMenuConfig()` and `slaveModeMenuConfig()`. It uses them to generate the correct menu configuration. The source for VR-Forces overrides these functions to produce their respective menus. For details, please see the included source code.

### 3.1.2. Dockable Widgets

Qt requires that the application run using the Qt event loop. The *DtQtEventLoop* implementation wraps the Qt event loop and registers a timer which will regularly tick the *DtDe* object. The *QtEventLoop* can itself be replaced by subclassing and registering an instance with the *DtDe* after the *vrvcCoreQt* library is initialized.

### 3.1.3. Dialog Box Pages

Most dialog boxes in VR-Forces are implemented as pages in a paged parent dialog box. These dialog boxes inherit *DtDialogPage* (*DtDialogPage.h*), which is a *QWidget* with some page-related functionality. Dialog pages are added to the GUI using the Creator pattern: each page must have a creator, which is registered by the dialog pager that will contain the page. For example, the DIS Qt plugin adds a DIS connection dialog page to the simulation settings pager in its initializer as follows:

```
DtSimulationSettingsDialogCreator::instance(ig).registerPageCreator(  
    "DtDisConnectionPageCreator",  
    new DtDisConnectionPageCreator,  
    DtDeInitializer::MasterMode);
```

In this example, the *DtDeInitializer::MasterMode* argument specifies that the page should only appear if the *DtDe* is running as a master.



It is important to correctly implement the *enableContents()* and *disableContents()* methods in each dialog page.

---

The *exampleDialogPage* example shows how to add a page to a dialog box.

#### Dialog Pagers

Dialog pagers are implementations of *DtDialogPager* (*DtDialogPager.h*), which is a subclass of *QDialog*. Pagers should have a creator registered with the *DtDialogManager*. For example, the *DtSimulationSettingsDialogCreator* (*DtSimulationSettingsDialog.h*) is registered as follows:

```
DtDialogManager::instance(ig).registerDialogCreatorInstance(  
    DtSimulationSettingsDialogCreator::instance(ig));
```

### 3.1.4. Standalone Dialog Boxes

A few dialog boxes in VR-Forces are standalone dialog boxes, rather than pagers or pages. These cannot be registered with the *DtDialogManager*, so they should be avoided if possible

### 3.1.5. Toolbars

The toolbar system is similar to the menu system (see (Figure 3.1.1)). The main classes are:

- ♦ *DtToolbar*. Subclass *DtToolbar* to define a toolbar that can be created and docked. This is analogous to the *DtMenu* class.
- ♦ *DtToolbarConfiguration*. *DtToolbarConfiguration* holds the definitions of toolbars that are passed into the toolbar assembler.
- ♦ *DtToolbarAssembler*. *DtToolbarAssembler* assembles the toolbar configuration.
- ♦ *DtQtToolbarAssembler*. *DtQtToolbarAssembler* creates Qt versions of the toolbars.

Toolbars are configured similarly to menus. The main difference is that toolbars do not have a hierarchy; they are a collection of items.

All toolbar paths must begin with the `::toolbar` directive. This tells the system which toolbar is to be created. All toolbars must be registered with the *DtQtToolbarAssembler*. If the toolbar is not registered, it is not created.

After the toolbar is specified, specify the item to be added. This can be one of the following ways:

- ♦ A menu item (`DtToolbarPath::toolbar("FileMenu").item("ExitItem")`). A menu item registered with the *DtQtMenuAssembler*. It is recommended that these menu items also have an iconic representation on the menu, because the icon will be used on the toolbar.
- ♦ A menu button (`DtToolbarPath::toolbar("FileMenu").menu("OpenMenu")`). A menu that is registered with the *DtQtMenuAssembler*. It will add the menu as a drop down button to the toolbar.
- ♦ A widget, such as a combo box or a line editor (`DtToolbarPath::toolbar("FileMenu").widget("FileMode")`). This is a widget that is registered with the *DtQtToolbarAssembler* using the `registerWidgetBuilder()` method. The widget builder is a subclass of *DtWidgetBuilder* and returns a widget that will be added to the toolbar. These widgets should not be too large or too complex.
- ♦ A separator line (`DtToolbarPath::toolbar("FileMenu").separator("FileMenuSeparator")`).

You can also add menus to the toolbar that are not part of the menu bar. These menu paths are added exactly as they would be to the menu configuration system.

The menus and menu items must still have their creators registered with the *DtQtMenuAssembler*. However, these menus do not need to be part of the system master or slave menu configuration. When the toolbars are assembled, the menus will be created and used in toolbars that reference them.

The exampleToolbar example shows how to create and display a toolbar using menu items that are on the main menu and menus that are created specifically for the example.

## 3.2. The Event Loop

The *DtDe* needs to be ticked regularly by an event loop. We provide a default event loop, *DtEventLoop* (*DtEventLoop.h*), which you can customize by passing it a function pointer to your own event loop function. Use this method for applications that do not use the VR-Forces Qt plug-ins.

### 3.2.1. Qt Event Loops

Qt requires you to use a Qt event loop. Therefore, if you are using one of the Qt plug-ins, it is impossible to use the *DtEventLoop* as your main event loop. Since the *DtVrvApplication* calls whichever *DtEventLoop* is registered with the *DtDe*, in order to use Qt and *DtVrvApplication* together you must create a *DtEventLoop* class that calls `QApplication::exec()` in its run function, and also make sure that the Qt event loop ticks the *DtDe* regularly, for instance with a `QTimer`. The *DtQtEventLoop* (*DtQtEventLoop.h*) class installed by the *vrvtQtWidgets* library does this with *DtQtIgTicker* (*DtQtIgTicker.h*). You can implement your own Qt event loop by subclassing `QEventLoop`. Please see the Qt documentation for more information about how to do this.

## 3.3. Runtime Settings

VR-Forces has various runtime settings, for example, enabling and disabling entity labels. These settings are owned by Settings Managers. Settings at runtime are *DtDeSettings* (*DtDeSettings.h*) objects, owned by the *DtDeSettingsManager* (*DtDeSettingsManager.h*). They are saved into the *./appData/settings* directory, and the factory defaults are in *./factory/settings*.

### 3.3.1. Settings Directory Structure

The *./appData/settings* directory is the root directory for user settings. Settings for *vrfsim* and *vrfgui* are in subdirectories. Similarly, *./factory/settings* is the factory settings root directory, with subdirectories for each application. The settings directories are configured by the *DtVrvInitializer* (*DtVrvInitializer.h*), with the `DtVrvInitializer::setFactorySettingsDirectory()` and `DtVrvInitializer::setSettingsDirectory()` methods. When an application wants to load a default settings file, it should check the user settings directory first. If no appropriate file is found, the factory settings directory should be checked.

### 3.3.2. Loading and Saving Settings

Each *DtDeSettings* object is responsible for loading and saving itself. The settings objects can load and save from default files, factory files, or a specified file path. Please see *DtDeSettings.h* for detailed API documentation. You can get the *DtDeSettings* object for a particular group of settings from the *DtDeSettingsManager*, as follows:

```
DtDeSettings* settings =  
    DtDeSettingsManager::instance(myDe).findSettings("Settings Name");
```

## 3.4. Managing Settings

VR-Forces's dialog boxes allow users to manage a variety of settings that affect application behavior and how objects are visualized. Settings are automatically saved and restored from session to session, and users can also explicitly save, restore, load, and revert them. VR-Forces has two types of settings:

- ♦ **Application Settings.** Application, or independent, settings refer to visual elements such as track histories and trailing effects. When you change an independent setting, it usually does not affect any other setting. If you save, restore, or revert a settings page, only the settings on that page are changed. For the most part, you cannot add or remove independent settings through the GUI.

The pages on the Display Settings dialog box and the toggle options on the Settings menu and Observer menu manage independent settings.

- ♦ **Dependent Settings.** Dependent settings refers to the ecosystem of schemas, model definitions, element definitions, and entity type mappings that determine how objects are visualized. Because these different settings depend on each other, when you change or delete one type of setting, the changes may affect another. Therefore, when you save, restore, or revert the settings on a particular dependent settings dialog box page, all related settings are saved or restored, not just those on the current page.

You can add new dependent settings through the GUI, for example, a new schema. Your ability to add new dependent settings may depend on the existence of other, prerequisite data.

The pages on the Visual Model Editors dialog box and the Entity Type Mappings dialog box are dependent settings.

When a VR-Forces user changes settings the change is automatically saved to disk. When you start VR-Forces, the settings from the previous session are restored. During any session, settings can be reverted to startup settings or restored to the settings as they were when the application was first installed (factory settings).

Independent settings and dependent settings are managed differently. The next two sections describe these differences. The rest of this chapter explains how to implement the save and restore behaviors if you create your own dialog boxes or add pages to existing ones.

### 3.4.1. Managing Dependent Settings

VR-Forces supports the following actions on dependent settings:

- ♦ Automatic Save. VR-Forces automatically saves changes as they are made.
- ♦ Restore. Restores all settings to the configuration when VR-Forces was first installed.
- ♦ Revert. Reverts all settings to the state when this session was started.
- ♦ Import. Replaces the current settings with saved settings.
- ♦ Merge. Merges saved settings with the current settings as follows:
  - Saved settings that do not have a match in the current settings are added.
  - Saved settings replace matching settings.
  - Current settings that are not replaced (that is, for which there is no match in the saved settings) remain valid.

In [Figure 3-1](#), setting A in the saved settings has no match in current settings, so it is added. Current settings B and C are replaced with saved settings. Current setting D has no match in saved settings, so it is retained.

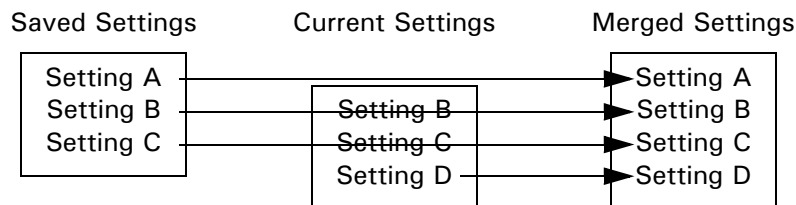


Figure 3-1. Merged settings

- ♦ Export. Save all settings to a file.
- ♦ Save Selected. Saves the settings for the selected object to a file.

As VR-Forces automatically saves changes to settings, and when it restores or reverts settings, all settings are updated. This ensures that the relationships among the different settings are consistent. However, if you import or merge data, there is no certainty that it will be consistent with the existing data. Therefore, it is possible that some settings will not have other settings that they need. For example, you might import an entity type mapping that references an element definition that does not exist.

If VR-Forces detects inconsistent data, the invalid entry is displayed in red and listed separately. In some cases diagnostic messages are displayed.

Restoring or reverting settings affects all settings. For example, if you initiate a revert from the Model Definitions page, all dependent settings get reverted, not just the model definitions. Since this operation might replace changes that you have made to some other settings, for example, an element definition, VR-Forces notifies you which data objects will be changed as part of the operation.

### 3.4.2. Managing Independent Settings

VR-Forces supports the following actions for independent settings:

- ♦ Automatic Save. VR-Forces automatically saves changes to settings as they are made.
- ♦ Restore. Restores all settings on the current dialog box page to the configuration provided when VR-Forces was first installed.
- ♦ Revert. Reverts all settings on the current dialog box page to the settings in use when this session was started.
- ♦ Import. Loads saved settings for this page and replaces the current settings.
- ♦ Export. Saves all settings on this page to a file.

VR-Forces saves, restores, imports, and reverts settings per dialog box page. If you restore, revert, or import settings, all settings on the current page are replaced.

## 3.5. Implementing Save/Restore for Dialog Box Pages

The API has classes that support the save and restore functions discussed in [“Managing Settings,”](#) on page 3-6. If you use the Toolkit to add new settings to VR-Forces or build your own application, you must use the appropriate classes to ensure that the new settings are saved and available to be restored.

### 3.5.1. Auto-Save

All settings are automatically saved when changes are made. The settings on each dialog box page are saved to a record. This is done by calling methods to save defaults for the record. The `saveDefaults()` method typically writes out the contents of the record to disk. When you design a class, be sure to save the contents to disk using your `save()` method every time a settings is changed.

### 3.5.2. Backing Up and Restoring Settings

When you start VR-Forces, it copies all of the default settings to *./appData/backups*. If you revert settings, it replaces all of the current settings with the settings stored in the backup files. If you restore settings, it replaces all of the current settings with the settings stored in *./factory*.

The save and restore process relies on *DtSettingsBackupManager* (*DtSettingsBackupManager.h*) and *DtSettingsBackup* (*DtSettingBackup.h*). The icons for managing save and restore are managed by *DtPersistentToolBarWidget*.

To implement save and restore of an object, you must subclass *DtSettingsBackup* and implement the following pure virtual functions:

```
virtual void restore(const DtSettingsBackup* from) = 0;

virtual std::string backupClassType() const = 0;

virtual DtSettingsBackup* create() const = 0;

virtual void write(boost::archive::xml_oarchive& ar) = 0;

virtual void read(boost::archive::xml_iarchive& ar) = 0;
```

Typically the object being archived will already have a serialization function associated with it. If it does not, the read and write methods can save or load the backup data as they see fit.

The *create()* method is needed to create a clone of the object. When an object is restored, it is restored to a copy of the settings backup object. That copy is then passed into the *restore()* method. The restore method is ultimately responsible for restoring settings to the correct place.

When considering how to back-up and restore settings you might create as part of your application to store application state, the following classes are used:

- ♦ *DtRecordSettingsBackup*. This class maintains a backup of the settings
- ♦ A signaler to let the application know when settings are restored.
- ♦ *DtSettingsChangeManager*. This class manages dependencies amongst settings
- ♦ *DtPersistenceControlsInterface*. This class is used as a GUI element to allow users to restore settings

The *exampleDialogPage* example shows how to implement backup settings to store your own specific settings and how to use a dialog box page to allow a user to restore those settings from a point at startup or from factory based settings. The example:

1. Creates the *DtExampleSettingsManager*. This class is responsible for storing the current state of settings values for this example as well as the settings values as they were at the beginning of the program using the *DtRecordSettingsBackup* class.
2. Shows how to create a backup object that can be used to store the current value of the settings in the constructor of the *DtExampleSettingsManager*.

3. Creates a signaler (*DtSharedSettingsBackupManagerSignaler*) that will be used to signal when settings are restored from as they were when the application was started or from factory.
4. Shows how connections can be made in the logic to that signaler to be notified when settings are restored to correctly restore any GUI or application elements that rely on those settings.
5. Shows how to set in the *DtPersistenceControlsInterface* the backup settings that are used to restore settings since the application has started up or from the factory.



The backup should typically only be done once, at application startup time.

---

The exampleElementDefinition example shows how to manage dependent settings. When a dependent setting is restored, other settings must also be restored. This uses the *DtSettingsChangeManager* class to manage these dependencies. An example of this might be when entity visual definitions are restored, you would also want to restore the entity type mappings that depend on those definitions

### 3.5.3. Enforcing Dependencies Among Settings

VR-Forces manages the dependencies among settings in the *DtSharedSettingsChangeManager*. If you want to track a setting, you register it with the Shared Settings Change Manager. The *exampleElementDefinition* example shows how to do this.

#### Preventing Dependent Settings from Being Deleted

Your code needs to ensure that a user cannot delete a setting that another setting depends on. For example, a user should not be able to delete a schema that is used in a model definition. You do this with the *DtSharedSettingsChangeManager::addSettingsInUseCheck()* method. This method adds a callback that lets an object see if it can be deleted.

```
DtWriteSettingsLock<DtSharedSettingsChangeManager>
changeManager(DtSharedSettingsManager::instance(myDe));
changeManager->addSettingInUseCheck(
    boost::bind(&DtSharedSimulationSettingsManager::checkEntityTypeMapper,
        this, _1, _2));
```

The callback takes two parameters – the item to be checked and the data type that is sending the item to be checked:

```
bool DtSharedSimulationSettingsManager::checkEntityTypeMapper(const
    std::string& node, DtSettingsChangeObject::UseType t)
{
    if (t == DtSettingsChangeObject::ElementDefinition)
    {
        //! Since this is called from a place that is potential non-thread
        //! safe, get a lock here before continuing
        DtSharedSettingsManager& sharedManager =
            DtSharedSettingsManager::instance(myDe);
        DtReadSettingsLock<DtSharedSimulationSettings>
            sharedSim(sharedManager);

        return checkObjectDictionaries(sharedManager, node,
            sharedSim->entityTypeMapper());
    }
    else
    {
        return false;
    }
}
```

If you are creating a completely new dependent setting and you want to be able to have it send messages to see if it can be deleted, you must call the Shared Settings Change Manager:

```
DtReadSettingsLock<DtSharedSettingsChangeManager>
manager(DtSharedSettingsManager::instance(myDe));

inUse = manager->settingInUse(myEditorInterface.selectedPath(),
    DtSettingsChangeObject::ElementDefinition);
```

The *settingInUse()* method checks each item that is registered with the Shared Settings Change Manager to see if the node in question can be deleted. You can supply a new type of settings change object as a unique integer based on your new data type.

## Changing Settings when Related Settings Change

There may be cases where you want to change a setting in response to a change in another setting. For example, if an entity element definition is renamed, you might need to change some internal data structure to match. The `exampleElementDefinition` example shows how to do this.

To respond to a change to a setting, you register a change object class with the Shared Settings Change Manager using the `addSettingsChangeObject()` method:

```
changeManager->addSettingsChangeObject(new
    DtElementDefinitionRenamedChanged(myDe));
```

If a setting gets changed, the change object class is executed. To create a change object class, you subclass *DtSettingsChangeObject*. This class monitors whatever changes are necessary. For example, if you write a class that needs to know when an element definition has been renamed, your subclass of the *DtSettingsChangeObject* class's constructor may look like:

```
DtSharedObjectDictionarySignaler& signaler =
    DtSharedObjectDictionarySignaler::instance(
        DtSharedSettingsManager::instance(myDe).thisThreadEventQueue());

signaler.signal_elementDefinitionRenamed.connect(boost::bind(
    &DtElementDefinitionRenamedChanged::elementDefinitionRenamed,this, _1,
    _2));
```

If, in your change notification callback, you recognize that your structure also needs to change, you must:

- Emit the `signal_changeInvoked` signal, passing the settings change object as a parameter. This lets the system know that something about your data has changed.
- Register with the Backup Manager to have your settings restored when the related setting is restored:

```
DtWriteSettingsLock<DtSharedSettingsBackupManager>
    manager(DtSharedSettingsManager::instance(de));
DtWriteSettingsLock<DtEntityElementDictionary>
    dict(DtSharedSettingsManager::instance(de));

manager->restoreWhenRestored(mySettingsBackup,
    dict->settingsBackup());
```

## 3.6. Records

VR-Forces uses Boost's serialization functionality for reading and writing files. A class that contains data that is to be read from disk and written to disk is called a record.

Record classes are part of the makArchives library. The guidelines for classes in this library are as follows:

- ♦ All classes should be Records, and constructed of POD/Value semantics.
- ♦ All classes should be designed for efficient file storage.
- ♦ All files saved by VR-Forces must represent a single Record that can be loaded using a single call.

Basic usage of records is as follows:

```
const std::string filename = "name.ext" SomeDataRecord rec;
//To read a file.
makArchives::DtXmlFileIo::read(filename, rec, "Name");
//To write a file.
makArchives::DtXmlFileIo::read(filename, rec, "Name");
```

For the most part there is a specific DataRecord type for each file type. However, some records deviate from this standard. All files in *./appData/drivers* are *DtDriverRecord* files, for example, *DIS.DtDisDriver* stores a *DtDriverRecord*. The file extension (*.DtDis-Driver*) is the name of the driver class needed to use the file data.

Here is an example record:

```
class DtTestRecord
{
public:
    // All values in a record *MUST* be initialized.
    DtTestRecord()
        : degrees(0)
        , minutes(0)
        , seconds(0.0)
    {
    }

    DtTestRecord(int d, int m, float s)
        : degrees(d)
        , minutes(m)
        , seconds(s)
    {
    }

    int degrees;
    int minutes;
    float seconds;

protected:
    friend class boost::serialization::access;

    // When the class Archive corresponds to an output archive, the
    // & operator is defined similar to <<. Likewise, when the class
```

```
// Archive is a type of input archive the & operator is defined
// similar to >>.
template<class Archive>
void serialize(Archive & ar, const unsigned int version)
{
    ar & BOOST_SERIALIZATION_NVP(degrees);
    ar & BOOST_SERIALIZATION_NVP(minutes);
    ar & BOOST_SERIALIZATION_NVP(seconds);
}
};
```

To write a test record:

```
std::string filePath = "testRecord.xml";
DtTestRecord data(35, 59, 24.567f);
makArchives::DtXmlFileIo::write(filePath, data, "DtTestRecord");
```

To read a test record:

```
std::string filePath = "testRecord.xml";
DtTestRecord data;
makArchives::DtXmlFileIo::read(filePath, data, "DtTestRecord");
```

### 3.7. Creating Toolbars

The toolbar system is similar to the menu system (see “Menus,” on page 3-2). The main classes are:

- ♦ *DtToolbar*. Subclass *DtToolbar* to define a toolbar that can be created and docked. This is analogous to the *DtMenu* class.
- ♦ *DtToolbarConfiguration*. *DtToolbarConfiguration* holds the definitions of toolbars that are passed into the toolbar assembler.
- ♦ *DtToolbarAssembler*. *DtToolbarAssembler* assembles the toolbar configuration.
- ♦ *DtQtToolbarAssembler*. *DtQtToolbarAssembler* creates Qt versions of the toolbars.

Toolbars are configured similarly to menus. The main difference is that toolbars do not have a hierarchy; they are a collection of items.

All toolbar paths must begin with the `::toolbar` directive. This tells the system which toolbar is to be created. All toolbars must be registered with the *DtQtToolbarAssembler*. If the toolbar is not registered, it is not created.

After the toolbar is specified, specify the item to be added. This can be one of the following ways:

- ♦ A menu item (`DtToolbarPath::toolbar("FileMenu").item("ExitItem")`). A menu item registered with the *DtQtMenuAssembler*. It is recommended that these menu items also have an iconic representation on the menu, because the icon will be used on the toolbar.
- ♦ A menu button (`DtToolbarPath::toolbar("FileMenu").menu("OpenMenu")`). A menu that is registered with the *DtQtMenuAssembler*. It will add the menu as a drop down button to the toolbar.
- ♦ A widget, such as a combo box or a line editor (`DtToolbarPath::toolbar("FileMenu").widget("FileMode")`). This is a widget that is registered with the *DtQtToolbarAssembler* using the `registerWidgetBuilder()` method. The widget builder is a subclass of *DtWidgetBuilder* and returns a widget that will be added to the toolbar. These widgets should not be too large or too complex.
- ♦ A separator line (`DtToolbarPath::toolbar("FileMenu").separator("FileMenuSeparator")`).

You can also add menus to the toolbar that are not part of the menu bar. These menu paths are added exactly as they would be to the menu configuration system.

The menus and menu items must still have their creators registered with the *DtQtMenuAssembler*. However, these menus do not need to be part of the system master or slave menu configuration. When the toolbars are assembled, the menus will be created and used in toolbars that reference them.

The `exampleToolbar` example shows how to create and display a toolbar using menu items that are on the main menu and menus that are created specifically for the example.

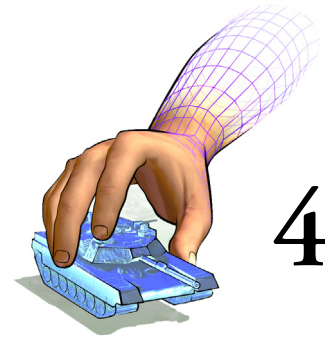
### 3.8. Configuration Files

The front-end saves most configuration files as XML text files. Most files represent a single MAKArchive record encoded as XML. Each file generated by a different record class has a different file extension.

Table 3-1 lists the file extension, the record used to read and write the data, and the contents of the various configuration files saved by VR-Forces.

Table 3-1: VR-Forces file formats

| Extension       | Record Class                            | Description                                       |
|-----------------|-----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| dcx             | None                                    | A display configuration.                          |
| DtDisDriver     | <i>DtDriverRecord</i>                   | An instance of a driver to be created on startup. |
| DtHla13Driver   |                                         |                                                   |
| DtHla1516Driver |                                         |                                                   |
| edsx            | <i>DtSharedSimulationSettingsRecord</i> | The simulation display settings.                  |
| envx            | <i>DtEnvironmentRecord</i>              | The environment settings.                         |
| forx            | <i>DtForestSettingsRecord</i>           | The forest drawing settings.                      |
| ivsx            | None                                    | The render settings.                              |
| kmpx            | <i>DtKeyMapRecord</i>                   | The keyboard to function mappings.                |
| mdex            | <i>DtEntityTypeMappingRecord</i>        | The entity type mappings for decal effects.       |
| mdtx            | <i>DtEntityTypeMappingRecord</i>        | The entity type mappings for detonation effects.  |
| metx            | <i>DtEntityTypeMappingRecord</i>        | The entity type mappings for entity models.       |
| mfex            | <i>DtEntityTypeMappingRecord</i>        | The entity type mappings for flaming effects.     |
| mtex            | <i>DtEntityTypeMappingRecord</i>        | The entity type mappings for trailing effects.    |
| mwfx            | <i>DtEntityTypeMappingRecord</i>        | The entity type mappings for weapon fire effects. |
| odsx            | None                                    | A schema for model definitions.                   |
| omdx            | <i>DtModelDefinitionRecord</i>          | Saves a single object model definition            |
| usdx            | <i>DtCacheSettingsRecord</i>            | The caching settings for the application.         |



## *The Display Engine*

---

This chapter describes the role of the display engine, display management, and distributed rendering.

|                                                        |      |
|--------------------------------------------------------|------|
| The Display Engine .....                               | 4-2  |
| Channels, Windows, and Displays.....                   | 4-2  |
| Channel Keywords .....                                 | 4-3  |
| Distributed Rendering .....                            | 4-5  |
| Proxies.....                                           | 4-5  |
| Distributed Objects and Agents.....                    | 4-6  |
| Distributed Rendering Transport.....                   | 4-6  |
| Example of Using an Agent .....                        | 4-7  |
| Generating Code for Agents.....                        | 4-8  |
| The Object Class Definition.....                       | 4-9  |
| Distributed Code Generator Limitations .....           | 4-9  |
| Starting the Distributed Code Generator.....           | 4-9  |
| Creating an Object Class Definition.....               | 4-10 |
| Building Agent Classes .....                           | 4-11 |
| Distributed Code Generator Command-Line Arguments..... | 4-13 |
| Observers.....                                         | 4-14 |
| The Observer API.....                                  | 4-15 |
| Controlling the Observer.....                          | 4-16 |

## 4.1. The Display Engine

A VR-Vantage application, such as the VR-Forces front-end, can be defined as any application that has a display engine in it. A display engine contains almost all of the major systems and subsystems that are described in this manual. Among the systems that the display engine owns are:

- ♦ Display Engine Initializer (*DtDeInitializer*, in *DtDeInitializer.h*) – Contains the data structure and parameters the display engine was initialized with.
- ♦ Display Engine Communicator (*DtDeCommunicator*, in *DtDeCommunicator.h*) – The component that handles communication between master and external display engines.
- ♦ Display (*DtDisplay*, in *DtDisplay.h*) – Manages windows and channels.
- ♦ Scene (*DtScene*, in *DtScene.h*) – The object that represents everything in a scene.
- ♦ Simulation Data (*DtSimData*, in *DtSimData.h*) – The repository of simulation-specific, read-only data.
- ♦ Driver Manager (*DtDriverManager*, in *DtDriverManager.h*) – The display engine's container of drivers.
- ♦ Distributed Object Manager (*DtDistributedObjectManager*) - The container of distributed objects.
- ♦ Display Engine Shared State (*DtDeSharedState*, in *DtDeSharedState.h*) – Owns all data shared between master and external display engines
- ♦ Renderer (*DtRenderer*, in *DtRenderer.h*) – Draws 3D images onto a screen.

### 4.1.1. Channels, Windows, and Displays

A display (*DtDisplay*) owns and manages windows. A display can own zero or more windows. Windows can own zero or more channels.

To see a rendered scene, you need a display configured with at least one channel inside a window. A channel is a area on the screen onto which a camera's view of the scene is rendered. Channels live inside windows. VR-Forces has the following types of windows:

- ♦ Fullscreen window - A window that takes up the whole screen with no surrounding GUI frame or elements.
- ♦ Embedded window - A GUI toolkit-specific element inside an application (that is, a Qt Widget).
- ♦ Window - A resizable window with a frame and the windowing system controls (maximize, close, and so on).

## Creating a Display Configuration

You specify the number and organization of displays, windows and channels in a display engine by creating a display configuration. You can create a display configuration programmatically and then have it created by a display engine.

Display configurations must have unique names. The display engine will not implement configurations with duplicate names. For an example of creating a display configuration programmatically, please see the `exampleConfiguration` example in the class documentation.

### 4.1.2. Channel Keywords

Channel keyword objects are objects that are created due to the presence of a keyword in a channel's configuration. Possible types of channel keyword objects might include compasses, logos, cockpit displays, message logs, and so on. When a channel gets created, any objects specified by the associated keywords get created, such as a compass, or can be created, such as a cockpit display. If the keyword is removed from a channel by a user, the object gets removed from the scene.

Channel keyword objects are managed by the *DtChannelKeywordObject*, *DtChannelKeywordObjectFactory*, and *DtChannelKeywordObjectManager* classes.

#### **DtChannelKeywordObject**

*DtChannelKeywordObject* is an abstract class that provides a common interface for channel keyword objects.

*DtChannelKeywordObjects* are created in a factory using *DtChannelKeywordObjectCreators*. *DtChannelKeywordObjectCreator* has a `create()` method that takes the same arguments as *DtChannelKeywordObject*, except for the keyword parameter. The creator class itself provides a keyword to the *DtChannelKeywordObject* constructor via a static `keyword()` method. In this way, the keywords are tied to the creator objects, rather than just being “magic strings” that appear in the system. For details about this class's methods, please see the class documentation.

#### **DtChannelKeywordObjectFactory**

The *DtChannelKeywordObjectFactory* is a singleton class that allows you to register channel keyword object creators, and which is used by the *DtChannelKeywordObjectManager* to create channel keyword objects. For details about this class's methods, please see the class documentation.

## DtChannelKeywordObjectManager

The *DtChannelKeywordObjectManager* is a singleton object with an `instance()` accessor. The `instance()` accessor uses a registered creator to create the manager (registered in *vrwCore.cxx*). *DtDe* instantiates the class after initialization (and before `postInitialize`) so that it exists before any channels are realized.



The manager assumes it will exist by the time the first channel is created – it does not search for existing channels when it is constructed.

---

The *DtChannelKeywordObjectManager* listens to the display engine's `signal_channelConfigurationModified`, `signal_channelToBeDestroyed`, and `signal_windowConfigurationModified` as well as the *DtChannelManagerSignaler*'s `signal_channelCreated` signals to manage the display of channel keyword objects within VR-Forces.

When a channel is added, *DtChannelKeywordObjectManager* looks for keywords in the configuration for which there are entries in the *DtChannelKeywordObjectFactory* and if they exist, creates a channel keyword object for that channel.

When a channel configuration is modified, *DtChannelKeywordObjectManager* determines if the channel needs a channel keyword object added or removed. If channel keyword objects already exist for that channel, the objects will be notified via their `channelConfigurationModified()` methods. If an object is to be removed, *DtChannelKeywordObjectManager* calls the object's `objectToBeDestroyed()` method and then deletes or removes it. Additionally, it checks to see if the channel name has changed. If it has, it adjusts the manager's maps for looking up the channel keyword objects on a channel by `display/window/channel` name.

When a channel is destroyed, *DtChannelKeywordObjectManager* determines if it has any channel keyword objects for that for that channel and if so, destroy them.

When a window configuration changes, *DtChannelKeywordObjectManager* notifies any channel keyword objects in that window by calling their `windowConfigurationChanged()` methods. It also checks to see if the window's name has changed. If it has, it adjusts the manager's maps for looking up the channel keyword objects on a channel by `display/window/channel` name.

*DtChannelKeywordObjectManager* maintains an `std::map` of `channelName :: windowName :: displayName` to keyword / *DtChannelKeywordObject* pairs for each channel keyword object created. Given a `channelName :: windowName :: displayName`, the map provides a list of *DtChannelKeywordObjects*, one for each keyword that exists. It will also maintain a map of `displayName::windowName` to a list of `channelName :: windowName :: displayName` strings. This map makes it possible to get all the channel keys for channels that have channel keyword objects on them, given a window key.

## 4.2. Distributed Rendering

The VR-Forces Toolkit, and applications built on it, support distributed rendering. Distributed rendering is the process of rendering a single scene simultaneously on two or more computers. Distributed rendering is managed by a Control Interface running in a display engine in a VR-Forces application. The Control Interface takes input from drivers and manages its rendering system as well as those of external display engines.



VR-Forces does not support use of remote VR-Vantage Display Engines. However, the display engine in the front-end uses the distributed rendering architecture described in this section.

---

In distributed rendering, the VR-Forces application's display engine sends commands to its Rendering System and to connected display engines, which execute them. Since each external display engine executes the same commands, they each display the exact same scene as the master and the objects perform the same actions in the same order. Since the scenes are synchronized across all display engines, the rendering of the scene is also synchronized. However, the scenes are only loosely synchronized, as only the scene itself is synchronized, not the rendering of the scene. VR-Forces does not support low-level rendering synchronization such as frame locking, which ensures that each channel renders at the same frame rate, or Genlock, which ensures that each monitor refreshes the image at the same time.

The commands sent by the display engine are really just function calls. The Toolkit makes it easy to make a function call to a single C++ class instance and have that call get made on one or more objects, existing on one or more display engines.

### 4.2.1. Proxies

The master display engine contains the complete state of all connected display engines. However the master does not have an actual copy of all objects on the display engines. Instead, it has proxy objects. For example, there is a *DtWindow* (*DtWindow.h*) object for each window. To represent a window on a distributed display engine the master display engine has a *DtWindowProxy* (*DtWindowProxy.h*) object, which is a proxy representation of the real object. Calls made on a proxy object are distributed to the display engine that has the real object, which behaves as if the call had been made directly to it.

The communication from a proxy object to a real object is performed by an agent object. An agent instance exists for each proxy/class pair. The master display engine makes calls to an agent and the agent distributes those calls automatically.

### 4.2.2. Distributed Objects and Agents

Objects that exist in display engines are called distributed objects. Each object in the scene is composed of an agent object and a distributed object. When the master display engine creates an agent, each external display engine simultaneously creates the distributed object that the agent will control.

An agent is created with an appropriate subset of the methods that the actual object has. For example, if a distributed object has a `setLocation()` method, then its agent could have it. On the master, you would call a method on the agent, as follows:

```
agent->setLocation(x,y,z);
```

The VR-Vantage distributed rendering architecture handles all the data marshalling (encoding, transport, and decoding) and the corresponding object on each display engine has the `setLocation()` method called.



Each display engine owns an Object Manager. This is a container of distributed objects. At any given time the contents of the Distributed Object Manager on the master display engine and on each of the external display engines is the same.

---

### 4.2.3. Distributed Rendering Transport

The VR-Vantage Toolkit provides mechanisms for implementing communications over any protocol or medium. The implementation provided in the Toolkit and used by VR-Forces uses a TCP socket connection. Once a display engine is connected, most rendering will be distributed unless the application is explicitly designed not to use the distributed rendering functionality.

#### 4.2.4. Example of Using an Agent

The following pseudo code demonstrates use of agents. Suppose you want to add a traffic light to your scene. You want to be able to programmatically change its state from green to yellow to red.

1. Create the TrafficLightObject. This is the object that will get created in each of the display engines and will make changes to the scene graph.

```
class TrafficLightObject
{
    public:

    ...

    void setState(int state)
    {
        myState = state;
        changeState();
    }

    void changeState()
    {
        // change the geometry in the scene graph to reflect
        // the traffic lights new state.
    }

    int state() const
    {
        return myState;
    }
};
```

2. Generate an agent. (For details about generating agents, please see [“Generating Code for Agents,”](#) on page 4-8.) The agent will have a similar API to your object.

```
class TrafficLightAgent : public DtDistributedObjectAgent
{
    public:

    ...

    void setState(int state);
};
```

3. Create an instance of the agent in a master display engine’s driver:

```
TrafficLightAgent* agent = TrafficLightAgent::create();
```

This causes TrafficLightObject’s to get created on each display engine (the master display engine also) and added to the Distributed Object Manager.

4. You can now make calls on the agent to set its state and each object’s setState() method will get called.

```
agent->setState(State_Red);
```

The distributed object framework guarantees that the calls will happen in the order in which you make them. For example, if you make the following calls in your driver:

```
trafficLightAgent1->setState(State_Red);
trafficLightAgent2->setState(State_Green);
```

Each display engine will execute them in order:

```
trafficLightObject1->setState(State_Red);
trafficLightObject2->setState(State_Green);
```

Some drivers are written to run asynchronously in a separate thread. These drivers each have their own interface for setting messages from agents to the implementation. These commands are executed in the order in which they are called, however they may be interspersed with commands generated in the main thread or in other threads. For example, the agent might call functions in the following order:

```
Thread A: fooAgent->doSomething();
Thread A: fooAgent->doSomethingElse();
Main Thread: barAgent->doSomething();
Main Thread: barAgent->doSomethingElse();
```

The functions might be executed in the following order:

```
bar->doSomething();
foo->doSomething();
foo->doSomethingElse();
bar->doSomethingElse();
```

### **4.3. Generating Code for Agents**

Every object needs an agent to manage its creation on the master display engine and external display engines. Since the generic functioning of agents is the same regardless of the object, it is possible to automate the process of creating them. VR-Forces includes a tool, the Distributed Code Generator, that generates source code for agent classes from object classes so that they can be easily integrated into drivers.

The Distributed Code Generator generates an agent class, an agent implementation class, a definition class, and a creator class. Most of the time, you will only need to know about the agent class. However, the following is a brief description of all of the generated classes:

- ♦ The agent class is an abstract class that allows the agent to be completely independent of the dependencies of the object class
- ♦ The agent implementation class implements the agent functions and must have access to the object class
- ♦ The definition class stores the data regarding the agent functions to ensure that they are properly forwarded
- ♦ The creator class is used by the drivers and distributed object manager to create these classes.

The exampleDistributedObject example has generated agent classes. Please see the exampleDistributedObject page in the class documentation for a description of the object class, generating agent classes, and adding the agent to a driver.

### **4.3.1. The Object Class Definition**

The Distributed Code Generator generates code based on the information in an object class definition (OCD). An OCD contains all the information the Distributed Code Generator needs to generate the agent classes, such as the object class name, namespace, functions, and comments. The functions that the agent will have are called distributed functions, because these function calls will be distributed to objects in display engines.

You create an OCD in the Distributed Code Generator's graphical user interface. You save the OCD in an object class definition file (extension *.ocdx*).

Once you create the OCD, you can build the classes from the Distributed Code Generator's GUI, from the command-line, or from within Visual Studio.

### **4.3.2. Distributed Code Generator Limitations**

The Distributed Code Generator has the following limitations:

- ♦ Only methods that return void are supported. The agents on the master display engine always send commands to the external display engines. The external display engines do not send anything back. Therefore, no methods on agents can ever return anything.
- ♦ Agents do not have member values. All they do is forward function calls to the actual object.

### **4.3.3. Starting the Distributed Code Generator**

You can start the Distributed Code Generator from the command line. For details, please see [“Distributed Code Generator Command-Line Arguments,”](#) on page 4-13.

#### 4.3.4. Creating an Object Class Definition

To see an example of an object class definition, load *./examples/exampleDistributedObject/DtExampleObject.ocdx*.

To create an object class definition:

1. Run *./bin/dcgen.exe*. The Distributed Code Generator opens (Figure 4-1).

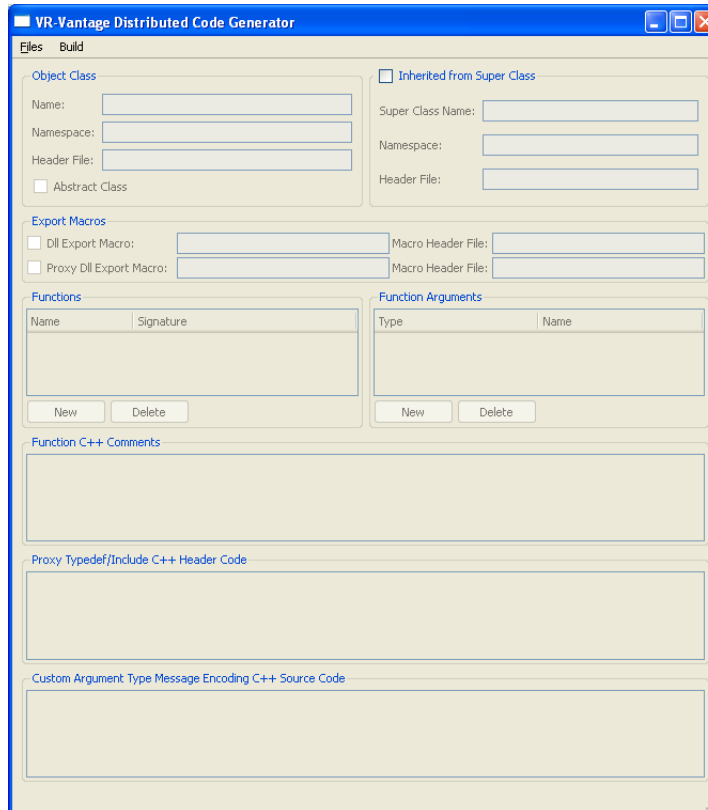


Figure 4-1. Distributed code generator

2. Choose **Files** → **New**.
3. In the Object Class group box, Name text box, type the name of the object class.
4. Type the namespace that the class is in.
5. Type the name of the header file for the object class.

6. Specify the agent functions. For each function:
  - a. In the Functions group box, click New. The cursor jumps to the Name column and an empty signature is added.
  - b. Type the function name in the name column.
  - c. In the Function Arguments group box, click New. The cursor jumps to the Type column.
  - d. Type the type of the argument.
  - e. Double click the Name field. It becomes editable.
  - f. Type the name of the argument.
  - g. Type comments for the function in the Function C++ Comments text box.
7. Optionally, complete other fields in the form.
8. Choose **Files** → **Save**. The Save Class File dialog box opens.
9. Navigate to the location where you want to save the OCD file.



We recommend that you create a directory for your OCD files, for example, *myProject/Object Class Definitions*. Then create a subdirectory called *generated* to store the files generated by the Distributed Code Generator.

---

10. Type a name for the file.
11. Click Save.

### 4.3.5. Building Agent Classes

You can build agent classes from the Distributed Code Generator GUI, from the command-line, or as part of your build process using Microsoft Visual Studio. For command-line arguments, please see “[Distributed Code Generator Command-Line Arguments](#),” on page 4-13.

#### Building Agent Classes in the Distributed Code Generator GUI

To build agent classes from the Distributed Code Generator GUI:

1. Create an object class definition (as described in “[Creating an Object Class Definition](#),” on page 4-10) or load a previously created OCD.
2. Choose **Build** → **Set Output Directory**. A directory chooser dialog box opens.
3. Select the directory in which the Distributed Code Generator should put the generated source code.
4. Click OK.
5. Choose **Build** → **Generate Files**.

## Building Agent Classes in Your IDE

You can integrate creation of agent classes into your build process. This is the recommended way to generate these classes.



This example code in this section procedure is from the `exampleDistributedObject` example. It assumes that you have created an OCD and saved it to *DtExampleObject.ocdx* and created a directory called *exampleDistributedObject*.

---

To generate the agent files using Microsoft Visual Studio:

1. Right click on the *.ocdx* file in the Solution Explorer and examine its Custom Build Step in its properties. It will look something like this:

```
Outputs:
$(InputDir)$(InputName)Agent.hpp;$(InputDir)$(InputName)Agent.cpp
$(InputDir)$(InputName)Classes.hpp;$(InputDir)$(InputName)Classes.cpp
Additional Dependencies: ..\..\bin\sceneObjectCompilerd.exe
Command Line: ..\..\bin\sceneObjectCompilerd.exe "$(InputPath)" -a -S
               "$(InputDir)/" -H "$(InputDir)/" -A "../../include"
```

2. Compile just the *DtExampleObject.ocdx* file (right click on it and click compile). This generates the following files in the *exampleDistributedObject* directory:
  - *DtExampleObjectClasses.cpp*
  - *DtExampleObjectClasses.hpp*
  - *DtExampleObjectAgent.cpp*
  - *DtExampleObjectAgent.hpp*.
3. Add those files to the *generated* folder.
  - a. Right click on the *generated* folder and click add existing item.
  - b. Select those files and add them.

### 4.3.6. Distributed Code Generator Command-Line Arguments

You can run the Distributed Code Generator from the command line if you have an object class definition file to input to it. The syntax is:

```
dcgend.exe input_file [{-i | -a | -p} -A root_dir -H
header_dir -S source_dir -o output_dir -- -v -h]
```

Table 4-1: Distributed Code Generator command-line arguments

| Argument                                          | Description                                                           |
|---------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>input_file</i>                                 | The Object Class Definition file to process.                          |
| (-i   --generateImplementation)                   | Generate all of the implementation classes.                           |
| (-a   --generateAll)                              | Generate all of the classes.                                          |
| (-p   --generateAgent)                            | Generate only the abstract driver class.                              |
| (-A   --RelativeIncludeDirectory) <i>root_dir</i> | The root directory that generated include statements are relative to. |
| (-H   --HeaderOutputDirectory) <i>header_dir</i>  | The directory to write header files to.                               |
| (-S   --SourceOutputDirectory) <i>source_dir</i>  | The directory to write source files to.                               |
| (-o   --OutputDirectory) <i>output_dir</i>        | The directory to write all files to.                                  |
| (-v   --version)                                  | Display version information and exit.                                 |
| (-h   --help)                                     | Display usage information and exit.                                   |
| (--   --ignore_rest)                              | Ignore all command-line arguments after this one.                     |

Suppose that you are generating the file *testAgent.hpp* in the */productRoot/include/test/* directory. However, you want the include statement to look like:

```
#include <test/testAgent.hpp>
```

and NOT

```
#include <testAgent.hpp>
```

Use the arguments `-H /productRoot/include/test -A /productRoot/include` to specify the header location and relative include path.

## 4.4. Observers

An observer is a special kind of distributed object that is not part of the scene. It controls the camera associated with one or more channels. The input driver is responsible for instantiating observers, because they provide the link between mouse and keyboard input and the cameras that determine how a scene is viewed. For details about how distributed objects are managed, please see [“The Input Driver,”](#) on page 5-4.

Observers that control OSG cameras are implemented by the *DtOsgObserverAgent* and *DtOsgObserverObjects* (*DtOsgObserverObject.h*), which are derived from the *DtObserverAgent* and *DtObserverObject* (*DtObserverObject.h*) classes respectively. The *DtObserver* (*DtObserver.h*) class provides a renderer-independent interface for creating and controlling observer objects. The renderer creates and maintains an Observer Object Manager (*DtObserverObjectManager*, in *DtObserverObjectManager.h*).



The *DtObserverAgent* and *DtOsgObserverAgent* classes are generated. They do not have header files and are not in the class documentation.

When the input driver creates an observer object (through the *DtObserver* class), the observer is registered with the renderer’s Observer Object Manager. Channels can then use the Observer Object Manager to look up the observers that have been designated as their controllers. The linkage between channels and observers is made by observer name. Each channel is given the name of the observer that it should use to position its camera. The observer name is specified in the channel configuration (default “Observer 1”). For details about creating observers, please see [“The Input Driver,”](#) on page 5-4.

There are several Boost signals associated with observers. Signals that indicate the creation and destruction of observers are available using the *DtInputDriverSignaler* (*DtInputDriverSignaler.h*) (since the input driver creates and owns all observers). You can also connect to the signals raised by individual observers. [Table 4-2](#) describes these signals.

Table 4-2: Observer signals

| Signal                                 | Description                                                                                                             |
|----------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| signal_objectAttached                  | Called when the observer attaches to an object. Includes the observer name and the unique ID of the object attached to. |
| signal_objectsDetached                 | Called when the observer detaches from all. Includes the observer name.                                                 |
| signal_linearScaledSpeedGain-Changed   | Called when the scaled linear speed gain is changed. Includes a pointer to the observer and the new gain.               |
| signal_linearUnscaledSpeedGain-Changed | Called when the unscaled linear speed gain is changed. Includes a pointer to the observer and the new gain.             |

Table 4-2: Observer signals

| Signal                          | Description                                                                                                                                              |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| signal_rotationSpeedGainChanged | Called when the rotation speed gain is changed. Includes a pointer to the observer and the new gain.                                                     |
| signal_orbitSpeedGainChanged    | Called when the orbit speed gain is changed. Includes a pointer to the observer and the new gain.                                                        |
| signal_gainPrecisionChanged     | Called when the gain precision is changed. Includes a pointer to the observer and the new gain.                                                          |
| signal_terrainConstraintChanged | Called when terrain constraint is turned on or off. Includes a pointer to the observer and a boolean indicating whether terrain constraint is on or off. |
| signal_speedScalingChanged      | Called when speed scaling is turned on or off. Includes a pointer to the observer and a boolean indicating whether speed scaling is on or off.           |

## 4.5. The Observer API

Application code can access an observer by:

- Connecting to the signal\_observerCreated from the *DtInputDriverSignaler*
- Using one of the *DtInputDriver*'s accessors to retrieve the current observer, or any observer by its name.

Both of these mechanisms result in a pointer to a *DtObserver*.

The *DtObserver* class is a facade for the *DtObserverObjectAgent*, which is itself the interface for the distributed *DtObserverObjects* it controls. Calls to *DtObserverObjectAgent* methods are distributed to all of the agent's *DtObserverObjects*. The *DtObserver* class is intended to simplify some operations on observers. However, it is always possible to access the agent itself from the *DtObserver* and make calls directly. There are many methods that you can call to control an observer.

### 4.5.1. Controlling the Observer

*DtObserverObjects* are controlled in the local (database) coordinate system. Given a pointer to an observer, *pObserver*, a call to set a *DtObserverObject's* location would look like:

```
pObserver->setLocation( desiredX, desiredY, desiredZ );
```

You can specify orientation using Tait-Bryan angles or quaternions:

```
pObserver->setOrientation( desiredPsi, desiredTheta, desiredPhi );  
pObserver->setOrientation( xQuat, yQuat, zQuat, wQuat );
```

Since many VR-Forces customers may need to work in geocentric coordinates, *DtObserver* also provides methods that convert from geocentric to local coordinates before distributing the commands to the *DtObserverObject*:

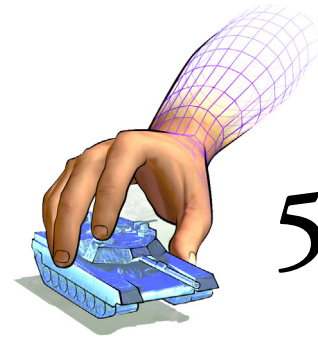
```
pObserver->setGeocentricLocation( geocX, geocY, geocZ );  
pObserver->setGeocentricOrientation( geocPsi, geocTheta, geocPhi );
```

Methods also exist for setting attachments, attach modes, and all the parameters typically associated with those modes.

The keyboard-based navigation code does not set the location and orientation of the observer directly. It uses commands to start and stop observer movement. These methods are not part of the *DtObserver* facade. You can call them directly on the *DtObserverObjectAgent*. For example:

```
pObserver->agent()->startMoveForward();  
pObserver->agent()->stopMoveForward();
```

You can retrieve information about the observer's location, orientation, current attachments and modes, and so on. Please see the class documentation for *DtObserver* and *DtObserverObject* for all the methods available.



# Drivers

---

This chapter explains the function of drivers in VR-Forces and the major drivers supplied.

|                                                        |      |
|--------------------------------------------------------|------|
| Drivers .....                                          | 5-2  |
| Starting and Stopping Drivers .....                    | 5-2  |
| The Scene Driver (DtSceneDriver) .....                 | 5-3  |
| The Input Driver .....                                 | 5-3  |
| Creating Observer Configurations .....                 | 5-4  |
| Input Driver Signals .....                             | 5-4  |
| The Keyboard and Mouse Listener .....                  | 5-6  |
| The Observer Controller .....                          | 5-6  |
| The Key Map Manager .....                              | 5-7  |
| Custom Event Processors .....                          | 5-7  |
| Simulation Drivers .....                               | 5-8  |
| Stopping and Starting Simulation Drivers .....         | 5-8  |
| Using Shared Source Files for Simulation Drivers ..... | 5-8  |
| Simulation Driver Classes and Namespaces .....         | 5-8  |
| Connections .....                                      | 5-9  |
| Listeners .....                                        | 5-9  |
| Visualizers and Processors .....                       | 5-9  |
| Adding Functionality to a Driver .....                 | 5-10 |

## 5.1. Drivers

As explained in [“Architectural Overview,”](#) on page 2-5, the Driver layer contains the application logic. Drivers take input from users and the simulation network and send instructions to the VR-Vantage Control Interface. To display data in a scene, you must write a driver that creates visual objects using domain-specific logic, user input, or simulation data.

Composing a scene is the job of a driver. A driver connects logic, data, and events with the visual system. Logic could be a local high fidelity physics simulation, events could include keyboard and mouse input, and data could be the internal terrain representation. All three could be from a networked, distributed simulation.

Each driver is designed to be modular and may be user-controllable. Drivers can be added and removed from the display engine once it is initialized. The display engine can support many drivers.

### 5.1.1. Starting and Stopping Drivers

A driver can be in a stopped state or a running state. Initially a driver is in the stopped state. A stopped driver is functionally inactive.

Drivers can be started and stopped any number of times. When a driver is started it creates the visual resources it will update. While a driver is running, it creates, destroys, and updates these visual resources. When a driver stops, it must deallocate all allocated visual resources. It must restore the scene to the state that existed before the driver was started. This capability is used to reload the scene when connecting to display engines. (For details, please see [“Distributed Objects and Agents,”](#) on page 4-5.)

You can set drivers to automatically start and stop based upon the existence of windows. When a driver is running it is constantly ticked at the rate of the display engine. To ensure good performance, a driver should try to do as little work as possible in its tick() function.

The display engine supports many simultaneous running drivers. The use, configuration, and runtime behavior of drivers is application-specific. Some drivers are built into the display engine, while others are available from other VR-Forces modules. Two important built-in drivers are the scene driver and the input driver.

## 5.2. The Scene Driver (*DtSceneDriver*)

The scene driver, *DtSceneDriver* (*DtSceneDriver.h*), is the default logic for the built-in scene logic for the display engine. The scene driver owns a scene (*DtScene*, in *DtScene.h*). It can load and save the scene using the VR-Forces scene file format. The scene driver is automatically started when the display engine is initialized. It does not perform any actions during tick(). (For a description of the capabilities of the scene the driver hosts, please see Chapter 6, [Composing Scenes](#).) You can extend the scene driver class by replacing the corresponding creator instance. The VR-Vantage Toolkit assumes there is a valid scene driver at all times.

Typically, VR-Vantage applications get their data from networked simulations or hosts. VR-Forces is designed for this and most of the time the correct place for an agent to get created is in a driver. VR-Forces includes drivers for HLA 1.3, HLA 1516, and DIS. For more information, please see [“Simulation Drivers,”](#) on page 5-8.

## 5.3. The Input Driver

The input driver, (*DtInputDriver* *DtInputDriver.h*), owns the:

- ♦ Observer objects
- ♦ Mouse and keyboard event listener (*DtKeyAndMouseEventListener*, in *DtKeyAndMouseEventListener.h*)
- ♦ Key Map Manager (*DtKeyMapManager*, in *DtKeyMapManager.h*)
- ♦ Observer controller (*DtObserverController*, in *DtObserverController.h*).

Like the scene driver, the input driver is started automatically when the display engine is initialized.

The input driver creates observers as requested, processes mouse events, processes key events using the Key Map Manager, and controls the observer based on the mouse and key events. It also interacts with the Selection Manager (*DtSelectionManager*, in *DtSelectionManager.h*) when processing certain mouse events.

When the input driver is created, it creates the Key Map Manager. It creates the observer controller and the key and mouse event listener when it starts and destroys them when it stops.

### 5.3.1. Creating Observer Configurations

The input driver maintains a list of observer configurations (*DtObserverConfiguration*, in *DtObserverConfiguration.h*) that describe the observers that should be present when the input driver is running. A list of observer configurations is provided to the input driver when it is created. Additional configurations can be added. If a configuration is added while the input driver is running, then that observer is created immediately. Otherwise, it is created the next time (and each subsequent time) the input driver is started. The following example shows how to add an observer configuration to the input driver.

1. Create an observer configuration to describe the observer to be created. The observer configuration lets you change many of the default values for the observer, but all you really need to specify is the new observer's name in the constructor:

```
makVrv::DtObserverConfiguration observerConfig("Example Observer");
```

2. Add the configuration to the input driver's observer configuration list:

```
de.driverManager().inputDriver().addObserverConfiguration(
    observerConfig );
```

By adding the observer configuration to the input driver's observer configuration list, you ensure that the observer will be created each time the input driver is started.

The exampleCreateObserver example shows how to create a complete VR-Forces application with an additional observer created as described in this section. With a second observer, you can open the display configuration editor, select a channel, and change the observer associated with that channel.

### 5.3.2. Input Driver Signals

The input driver uses the *DtInputDriverSignaler* (*DtInputDriverSignaler.h*) to notify other objects of the operations that it performs. [Table 5-1](#) describes the input driver signals.

Table 5-1: *DtInputDriverSignaler* signals

| Signal                               | Description                                                                                                                                    |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| signal_inputDriverCreated            | Emitted when an input driver is created. Provides a pointer to the input driver selected.                                                      |
| signal_inputDriverAboutToBeDestroyed | Emitted when an input driver is about to be destroyed. Provides a pointer to the input driver about to be destroyed.                           |
| signal_observerCreated               | Emitted when an observer is created. Provides a pointer to the input driver and a pointer to the observer created.                             |
| signal_observerAboutToBeDestroyed    | Emitted when an observer is about to be destroyed. Provides a pointer to the input driver and a pointer to the observer about to be destroyed. |

Table 5-1: *DtInputDriverSignaler* signals

| Signal                                | Description                                                                                                                                                       |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| signal_currentObserverChanged         | Emitted when the current observer changes. Provides a pointer to the input driver and a pointer to the new observer.                                              |
| signal_rightClickTerrainMenu-Request  | Emitted when the user right-clicks on the terrain. Provides the <x,y> mouse coordinates and a pointer to the channel that was moused in.                          |
| signal_rightClickSelectionMenuRequest | Emitted when the user right-clicks on an object in the scene. Provides the <x,y> mouse coordinates and a pointer to the channel in which the mouse was clicked.   |
| signal_entityIndicatorsToggled        | Emitted when entity indicators are toggled.                                                                                                                       |
| signal_viewControlsEnable             | Emitted when the Accept View Controls switch is changed. Provides a boolean to indicate whether view control is on or off and a pointer to the affected observer. |

### 5.3.3. The Keyboard and Mouse Listener

Management of keyboard and mouse events for an application is often dependent on which GUI system (if any) is in use. Sometimes other components within an application take responsibility for handling these events. For example, OSG provides a keyboard and mouse event handling system.

The keyboard and mouse event listener provides an interface for handling mouse and keyboard events that is independent of the GUI, the renderer, or other components that may grab events. The base class, *DtKeyAndMouseEventListener*, is a mechanism for registering and creating the type of listener needed for the system in use. It maintains accessors for the *DtDe* and the input driver, which provides a pointer to itself when it creates the listener. The listener is expected to process keyboard and mouse events in whatever manner it chooses, convert them to the VR-Forces-specific *DtKeyEvent* (*DtKeyEvent.h*) and *DtMouseEvent* (*DtMouseEvent.h*) classes, and pass these on to the input driver through its *processKeyEvent()* and *processMouseEvent()* methods.

Since VR-Forces uses an OSG-based renderer, it uses the *DtOsgKeyboardAndMouseEventListener*, which gets the keyboard and mouse events from an OSG event queue, converts them to *DtKeyEvents* and *DtMouseEvents*, and passes them on to the input driver. Each OSG channel has its own event queue. If there are multiple observers, events will affect whichever observer is assigned to the channel in which the events occur.

When a Qt-based GUI is in use (as it is in VR-Forces), Qt grabs the keyboard and mouse events before they get to OSG. VR-Forces uses the *DtOsgAdapterWidget* to convert these events to OSG keyboard and mouse events, and then puts them on the correct OSG event queue for the channel in which they occurred.

### 5.3.4. The Observer Controller

The observer controller tracks which observer is the one currently under keyboard and mouse control, and works with the Key Map Manager to execute observer functions on specific keyboard events. It provides mappable functions that wrap the observer functions that we want to be able to invoke from the keyboard. Mappable functions take no arguments and return void. The observer controller registers each of these functions and a corresponding string name with the Key Map Manager. Once registered, key events can be bound to the string names as part of a key map, which in turn causes the registered functions to be executed when those key events occur.

### 5.3.5. The Key Map Manager

The Key Map Manager maintains a list of all functions that can be bound to a key and the string representation for that function. It also maintains a list of key maps, which provide mappings from key events to those string representations. The string representations are used to find and invoke the desired function. Please see the `exampleKeyMap` example in the class documentation for an explanation of how to register a function with the Key Map Manager, and bind it to a key event in a key map.

The Key Map Manager uses the Key Map Manager signaler (*DtKeyMapManagerSignaler*, in *DtKeyMapManagerSignaler.h*) to emit signals when certain operations are performed. [Table 5-2](#) describes the *DtKeyMapManagerSignaler* signals.

Table 5-2: *DtKeyMapManagerSignaler* signals

| Signal                                       | Description                                                                                                                                   |
|----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <code>signal_keyMapCreated</code>            | Emitted when a key map is created. Provides a pointer to the Key Map Manager and the name of the key map created.                             |
| <code>signal_keyMapAboutToBeDestroyed</code> | Emitted when a key map is about to be destroyed. Provides a pointer to the Key Map Manager and the name of the key map about to be destroyed. |
| <code>signal_keyMapChanged</code>            | Emitted when the current key map in use changes. Provides a pointer to the Key Map Manager and the name of the newly current key map.         |

### 5.3.6. Custom Event Processors

The input driver provides a way to see (and optionally, handle) keyboard and mouse events before it processes them. It maintains a queue of event processors, which are derived from the abstract base class *DtEventProcessorInterface* (*DtEventProcessorInterface.h*). You can add event processors to the front or the back of the queue. When a key or mouse event is received, the input driver invokes the appropriate `processKeyboardEvent()` or `processMouseEvent()` method for the event processor on the front of the queue. If the event processor wants to handle the event, it can return true; otherwise it returns false and the next processor on the queue is invoked. When the queue of event processors has been exhausted, if none of them has handled the event, the input driver handles the event directly.

The *exampleEventProcessor* example shows how to create an event processor. For details, please see the class documentation.

## 5.4. Simulation Drivers

The VR-Vantage Toolkit provides drivers for several protocols in the protocol-specific modules. Each driver provides the same set of capabilities, with minor exceptions based upon the protocol. These drivers visualize entities and interaction effects such as detonations. They also handle advanced visualization features such as track histories. You can have multiple simulation drivers added to the display engine, each with a different configuration. Each instance of a simulation driver is referred to as a simulation connection. You can save exercise configurations and easily switch between connections.

### 5.4.1. Stopping and Starting Simulation Drivers

A simulation driver's state is controlled by its connection state. When a simulation driver is not connected to a simulation, it is in the stopped state. A simulation driver enters the running state (starts) when it successfully connects to a distributed exercise. While the simulation driver is connected to the exercise it continues to run. Disconnecting from the exercise causes the driver to stop.

### 5.4.2. Using Shared Source Files for Simulation Drivers

VR-Forces simulation drivers use VR-Link, which provides a single interface for multiple simulation protocols. Because the interface is largely the same for both DIS and HLA, almost all protocol-specific classes are written once and compiled multiple times (for each simulation protocol). Each class is compiled into a separate namespace to eliminate duplicate symbols. Shared source classes are written in header (*.h*) files and inline (*.inl*) files. However, the inline files are not included by the header files. All shared source inline files are included in a single source (*.cxx*) file to be compiled for the particular library that defines the namespace.

### 5.4.3. Simulation Driver Classes and Namespaces

The functionality of the distributed simulation drivers is implemented in a small number of associated classes and patterns in addition to the primary driver class.

To distinguish between classes with the same name, a different namespace is used under the main *makVrv* namespace. For example the *DtVrlinkConnection* class represents the simulation connection. The DIS protocol library is called *vrvDis*. The complete name of this class is *makVrv::vrvDis::DtVrlinkConnection*. In the header and inline files the namespace is defined using a macro, *DT\_PROTOCOL\_NAMESPACE*, which is redefined for each library that recompiles the code.

#### 5.4.4. Connections

Each driver class has a connection class called *DtVrlinkConnection* (*DtVrlinkConnection.h*), which manages the VR-Link exercise connection and registers listener classes. The connection class manages *DtVirtualBaseClass* (*DtVirtualBaseClass.h*) instances. It deletes all instances before disconnecting by deleting the exercise connection at the appropriate time.

#### 5.4.5. Listeners

A listener class provides signals for a particular type of data. The templated class *DtInteractionListener* can listen to any VR-Link interaction class. The *DtFireInteractionListener* is an example of a specialization that listens for instances of the *DtFireInteraction* class to be received. Stateful objects such as entities have two levels of listeners. The main instance listener class *DtEntityListener* (*DtVrlinkEntityListener.h*) listens for newly discovered entity instances and signals when existing instances are deleted. For each entity that is discovered, there is a *DtEntityStateListener* (*DtVrlinkEntityStateListener.h*), which listens for changes to a particular entity's state and signals when attributes change. Listeners are created lazily on demand from a visualizer or a processor. Listener classes inherit the *DtVirtualBaseClass* and should be registered with the connection to ensure that they are destroyed before the exercise connection is destroyed.



Typically there is only one instance of a listener, because instances are registered with the connection instance of a driver. Individual state listeners are an exception. They are owned by the instance listener, which follows this rule.

---

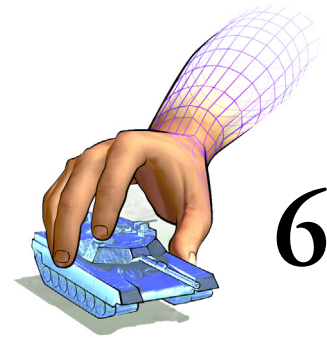
#### 5.4.6. Visualizers and Processors

Visualizer classes and processor classes use listeners to make visualization calls or data processing calls. Visualizer classes do not follow any pattern or class hierarchy other than that they connect to the signals of a particular listener and create scene object and model agents, which interact with the scene. An example of a visualizer is the *DtFireInteractionVisualizer* (*DtVrlinkFireInteractionVisualizer.h*), which creates a muzzle flash effect in the scene for each *DtFireInteraction* that is received. A processor class is similar to a visualizer, but it does not make agents. An example of a processor is the *DtViewControlProcessor*, which receives custom Stealth Control messages and makes calls that control VR-Forces's observers.

Usually there is only one instance of a particular type of visualizer or processor. While not required, it is useful to register the instance of the visualizer or processor with the connection to ensure proper memory management. Visualizers and processors can be dynamically added and removed from a connection. The Driver Accessories pattern lets you add visualizers to existing driver instances, thereby extending the functionality without modifying the existing capabilities.

## **5.5. Adding Functionality to a Driver**

Driver accessories allow functionality to be added to a driver without completely replacing it. Each driver can be written to support different amounts and types of extensibility through creators or signals. The VR-Vantage Toolkit provides a common mechanism for installing additional functionality on a per-driver basis through the use of driver accessories. A driver accessory is a simple interface for executing code when a driver starts. An accessory is registered with the display engine and can support any driver class that it knows how to interface with. The simulation drivers fully support modular extensibility using accessories.



## *Composing Scenes*

---

Scenes are made up of terrain, models, and the environment.

|                                                      |      |
|------------------------------------------------------|------|
| Scene Composition .....                              | 6-2  |
| Models, Model Instances, and Model Definitions ..... | 6-2  |
| Terrain Structure .....                              | 6-3  |
| Terrain Patches .....                                | 6-3  |
| Feature Layers .....                                 | 6-4  |
| Loading Point Features .....                         | 6-4  |
| Extracting Geometry .....                            | 6-4  |
| Environmental Effects and the Lighting Model .....   | 6-5  |
| Managing Clouds, Visibility, and Precipitation ..... | 6-5  |
| Managing the Time and Date .....                     | 6-5  |
| Forests .....                                        | 6-5  |
| Scene Objects .....                                  | 6-6  |
| Entities .....                                       | 6-6  |
| Sensor Volumes .....                                 | 6-8  |
| Props .....                                          | 6-8  |
| Effects .....                                        | 6-8  |
| Ribbon Effects .....                                 | 6-9  |
| Particle Effects .....                               | 6-9  |
| Animated Effects .....                               | 6-10 |
| Grid Lines .....                                     | 6-10 |

## 6.1. Scene Composition

A scene contains an environment, the time of day, and possibly, a terrain. Scenes are composed on the master display engine by creating a set of distributed visualization objects, which are then created (typically as OSG nodes) on each distributed display engine node. The basic visualization object is the model (*DtModel*, in *DtModel.h*), each of which is owned by a *DtSceneObject*. One scene object can contain any number of models and provides an interface for positioning and orienting them as a single unit. The distributed scene objects are in turn owned by a variety of facade objects that organize them and provide convenient interfaces to drive and manipulate their appearance. This chapter summarizes the various types of models, scene objects, and their containers, and how to use them to construct scenes.

## 6.2. Models, Model Instances, and Model Definitions

A *DtModel* is the basic unit of scene composition. One model corresponds to one renderable object on each display engine. For example, visualizing a tank might involve one model for the tank's geometry, one model for its dust cloud, and another to display its track history. The basic types of models in VR-Forces, and their uses are:

- *DtArticulatedModel* (*DtArticulatedModel.h*) – Displays 3D models with articulated parts
- *DtCharacterModel* (*DtCharacterModel.h*) – Displays human characters, typically DI-Guy characters
- *DtDrawModel* (*DtDrawModel.h*) – Draws lines in the scene programmatically
- *DtEffectModel* (*DtEffectModel.h*) – Creates various special effects (fires, treadmarks, and so on)
- *DtModel* – A general purpose model interface
- *DtTreeModel* (*DtTreeModel.h*) – Displays trees in a *DtForest* (*DtForest.h*), typically SpeedTrees.

The details required to draw a model, such as geometry, filename, scale, or texture are provided by a *DtModelDefinition* (*DtModelDefinition.h*). A model definition is a set of parameters, whose names and types are defined by a *DtModelDefinitionSchema* (*DtModelDefinitionSchema.h*). The *DtModelDefinitionManager* (*DtModelDefinitionManager.h*) saves and loads model definitions and schemas and maintains settings for model instancing and caching. Model definitions and schemas are distributed, but not by the usual agent mechanism. Instead, the *DtDeSharedState* (*DtDeSharedState.h*) distributes them directly.

A *DtModel* is only the distributed interface of a renderable scene element. It does not directly modify the scene graph of a display engine. Instead, when the model is given a model definition through its *setModelDefinition()* method, it creates a local *DtModelInstance* (*DtModelInstance.h*) on each display engine, which is then responsible for putting the appropriate nodes in that display engine's scene graph. The attributes of the model instance are determined by the model definition's parameters and schema type.

Model instance types follow the Creator pattern. (For information about the Creator pattern, please see “[The Creator Pattern](#),” on page 8-11.) Each model instance type has a creator registered with the *DtModelInstanceFactory* (*DtModelInstanceFactory.h*), which the model uses to generate its instance. Once created, the instance sets itself up according to the model definition. The setup can either be from scratch, which typically means importing OSG nodes from a file, or if model instancing is enabled, by copying a cached instance from the model definition’s local instance cache. When the model is added to a scene object, the instance inserts the appropriate nodes into the scene graph, usually (but not always) under the scene object’s position and orientation transform nodes.

## 6.3. Terrain Structure

A terrain (*DtTerrain*, in *DtTerrain.h*) in the front-end is a facade around a set of *DtTerrainPatch* (*DtTerrainPatch.h*) and *DtFeatureLayer* objects. The terrain maintains records of each operation performed on it (such as adding or removing a terrain patch), which are saved and loaded to MTF files. The *DtTerrain* is not a distributed object, so it exists only on the master display engine. If you are using external display engines, each display engine must have the same terrain files on its local computer.

### 6.3.1. Terrain Patches

A *DtTerrainPatch* is a facade around a *DtTerrainPatchObject* (*DtTerrainPatchObject.h*), which is a distributed object that combines the functionality of a model and a scene object. The terrain patch maintains a history of operations performed on it, such as extracting props or adding an overlay image. This history is included when the terrain is saved and executed when it is loaded. Each *DtTerrainPatchObject* has a model definition that specifies where to find the geometry (typically through the `filename` parameter) and a coordinate system (through the `terrainCoordinateSystem` and `terrainCoordinateSystemParameters` parameters).

---

#### i

The coordinate system of the most recently loaded terrain patch is always used as the coordinate system of the entire scene. In contrast to other scene objects, a *DtTerrainPatchObject* has no position or orientation, since all other objects in the scene are transformed in its coordinate system. This may cause undesired behavior if multiple terrain patches with different coordinate systems are loaded into the same scene.

---

Terrain patches are located in the scene graph under the terrain root node. They are included in intersection tests for ground clamping and navigation, but excluded for selection.

### 6.3.2. Feature Layers

A *DtFeatureLayer* is a facade around a collection of *DtProp* objects, which represent distinct terrain-like features such as lampposts and buildings. Feature layers are created in VR-Forces by:

- ♦ Loading point features and mapping them to models
- ♦ Extracting geometry out of a terrain and converting it into a model.

### 6.3.3. Loading Point Features

VR-Forces provides the convenience class *DtPropAdder* (*DtPropAdder.h*) to load point features from files. The prop adder finds point features that match a rule specified by a *DtAddPropsRuleRecord* (*DtAddPropsRuleRecord.h*). Then it creates a prop at the location of each point feature, using the model definition specified in the rule. In order for the feature layer to correctly maintain its state, the *DtPropAdder* should not be used directly. Use the *DtFeatureLayer*'s `addProps()` method, which makes the correct calls on the *DtPropAdder* for you. For instance, suppose you wanted to add SpeedTrees at the sites of tree point features in a GDB file. You could:

1. Add the GDB to the *DtTerrain* as a feature layer (*DtTerrain::addFeatureLayer()*).
2. Create a *DtAddPropsRuleRecord* that maps a tree type to an appropriate model definition (for example, EC030 to *TreesEuropeanWhiteBirchST*).
3. Pass it to the feature layer (*DtFeatureLayer::addProps()*).

### 6.3.4. Extracting Geometry

A *DtTerrainPatch* can find nodes in its scene graph and move them into *DtModel* objects. The *DtModel* for each prop must be created in the driver to be distributed to all display engines, but creating them requires knowledge of the scene graph. Therefore, basic prop extraction happens in a multi-step process:

1. The *DtTerrainPatch* makes a call to extract nodes out of the scene graph and into a list on each display engine. (The nodes must match a search expression.)
2. The master display engine signals the *DtTerrainPatch* with the number of extracted nodes.
3. The *DtTerrainPatch* creates that number of props (including *DtModels*), and passes each model's object ID along with an index back to the display engines.
4. The display engines create local model instances for each model and move the extracted node with the corresponding index into each one.
5. The node search expressions check the name, filename, and description fields of each node for a match. They can use either regular expressions or plain search strings.

## 6.4. Environmental Effects and the Lighting Model

VR-Forces implements environmental and lighting effects through SilverLining. It provides two interfaces to set SilverLining state, the *DtDeTimeManager* (*DtDeTimeManager.h*) and the *DtEnvironment* (*DtEnvironment.h*). The *DtDeTimeManager* controls date and time. The *DtEnvironment* controls SilverLining's clouds, precipitation, air turbidity, and visibility effects.

### 6.4.1. Managing Clouds, Visibility, and Precipitation

The *DtEnvironment* is a member of a *DtScene*. It provides a serializable interface to SilverLining environmental effects and it maintains records of its state, which can be saved or loaded with the `makArchives::DtEnvironmentRecord`. A *DtEnvironment* wraps a *DtSkyObject*, which is the distributed interface to the SilverLining clouds, precipitation, turbidity, and visibility effects. To set your scene's environmental effects, you might do something like the following:

```
scene.environment().clear();
scene.environment().setPrecipitationEnabled(true);
scene.environment().setPrecipitationType(DtEnvironment::Rain);
scene.environment().setPrecipitationIntensity(0.5);
DtCloudLayerRecord cloudLayer;
cloudLayer.setType("CumulusCongestus");
cloudLayer.setEnabledFlag(true);
cloudLayer.setAltitude(1000);
cloudLayer.setWidth(20000);
cloudLayer.setLength(20000);
cloudLayer.setThickness(100);
cloudLayer.setDensity(1.0);
scene.environment().addCloudLayer(cloudLayer);
```

### 6.4.2. Managing the Time and Date

The *DtDeTimeManager* maintains the scene's time and date, as well as changing the time each tick according to its time scale setting. The *DtDeTimeManager*'s settings are distributed to all nodes by the *DtDeSharedState*. This means that you should never modify the *DtDeTimeManager* directly; instead, use the functions `DtDeSharedState::setDateAndTime()` and `DtDeSharedState::setTimeScale()`. The date and time are the main determinants of the VR-Forces lighting model's state.

## 6.5. Forests

SpeedTrees in VR-Forces are implemented as members of a single SpeedTree forest on each display engine. The *DtForest* (*DtForest.h*) is a facade around the distributed *DtForestObject* (*DtForestObject.h*). The *DtForestObject*, like the *DtTerrainPatchObject*, combines some of the functionality of a scene object and a model into a single object.

The forest is located in the scene graph under the object root node, but since SpeedTrees are drawn outside of OSG, they are not included in any intersection tests.

## 6.6. Scene Objects

A scene object (*DtSceneObject*) represents some notional element or element part in the scene within one model set. It may represent the entire element in that model set (such as a tree in the 3D Models model set) or an element component, such as the main model, flames, or a trajectory history line associated with a tank. Each scene object can contain one or more models.

Scene objects are identifiable via a unique ID. They also have the ID of the element that they represent (or partially represent). Each scene object is also classified by a visualizer type, which determines where the models that make up the scene object will be placed in the scene graph.

A scene object can have a list of positions and orientations associated with it. It is up to the scene object's models to determine how those kinematic parameters are used.

The scene object may have an updater (*DtUpdater*) associated with it. The updater is responsible for any changes that need to be made to the scene object (usually position and orientation) in the rendering engine, such as dead reckoning and ground clamping.

## 6.7. Entities

Entities are represented in the scene by scene objects, to which models are attached. These are wrapped by the facade class *DtDeEntity*, which provides simulation-oriented methods to add, remove, and modify the scene object's models.

### 6.7.1. Aggregate Entities

To visualize aggregates in a VR-Forces application, you must first be connected to a communications protocol. This can be DIS, HLA13, or HLA1516 and occurs in the respective simulation driver. Once connected, there must be traffic on that network that VR-Forces can identify as an aggregate. This happens when an application publishes an Aggregate State PDU on the network. When VR-Forces recognizes this PDU, it internally maps the entity type of the aggregate to an aggregate element definition.

A visual definition is a series of visual components that are used to visualize an object on the 2D overlay or as 3D geometry. An aggregate visual definition will usually contain the following visualizers:

- ♦ A main 2525B icon (the Military Symbol Icon Visualizer)
- ♦ A way to position the icon in the database (Kinematic State Visualizer)
- ♦ The bounding extents of the aggregate (Aggregate Extent Visualizer)
- ♦ The selection rectangle (Selection Visualizer).

The *DtVrlinkAggregateExistenceListener* listens to the network. For each aggregate, it communicates with the *DtAggregateElementProcessor* to create new aggregate visuals. The *DtAggregateElementProcessor*, when notified of a new aggregate, creates a *DtAggregateElement*. For each visualized model set, the *DtAggregateElement* creates a *DtAggregateVisualizerSet*. This *DtAggregateVisualizerSet* uses the supplied visual definition set (as discovered from the aggregate type mapping) to visualize the elements contained within.

The *DtAggregateElementProcessor* also uses the *DtAggregateEchelonManager* class to manage the echelon hierarchy. The *DtAggregateEchelonManager* manipulates a *DtElementIDHierarchy* in order to keep parent/child relationships of elements that are created in the system. The *DtAggregateElementProcessor* is also responsible for hiding and showing aggregate elements based on the *DtAggregateSettingsRecord* as well as the expanded/collapsed state of the aggregate. This expanded/collapsed state is communicated from the UI thread to the simulation driver thread via element attributes, specifically the *DtElementIDHierarchyDisplayStateAttribute* attribute.

### 6.7.2. Sensor Volumes

As the entities are placed in the scene, the ones that support emitter systems are created with sensor volume visualizers (*DtVrlinkEntitySensorVolumeVisualizer* for 3D model sets, and *DtVrlink2DEntitySensorVolumeVisualizer* for 2D model sets). These visualizers listen for the creation and destruction of emitter systems by connecting to the signals emitted by the emitter system existence listener (*DtEmitterSystemExistenceListener*).

When an emitter system (*DtEmitterSystemRepository*) is created, a custom implementation is used (*DtVrlinkEmitterStateInterceptor*) to intercept calls that change the state of the emitter system and signals the emitter system's state listener (*DtVrlinkEmitterStateListener*). Visualizers now connect to the additional signals provided by the state listener (for more detailed information about the system's emitter beams and overall configuration), and creates a visual representation for all emitter beams already attached to the discovered emitter system. As new emitter beams are discovered, or when existing emitter beams change, the visualizer updates the sensor volume visualization accordingly.

## 6.8. Props

VR-Forces props are scene elements that act like pieces of terrain, but can be individually manipulated. Props are owned by a *DtTerrainLayer*, which is an interface implemented by the *DtFeatureLayer* and *DtTerrainPatch*. The *DtProp* class is a facade around a *DtSceneObject* and a *DtModel*. It maintains state information on the master side for saving and loading and GUI display.

## 6.9. Effects

The *DtEffectModel* is used to display a variety of special effects in VR-Forces, such as flames and track histories. Effects come in three major types: ribbon and decal effects, particle effects, and animation effects. The type of effect is determined by the schema used for its model definition. The *DtEffectModelInstance* (*DtEffectModelInstance.h*) creates different types of geometry depending on the schema name and parameters provided.

### 6.9.1. Ribbon Effects

A ribbon effect is a flat “ribbon” that stretches out behind a moving scene object. It can be colored, textured, faded out, and moved, depending on the model definition schema used to define it. The OSG node classes in `vrwOsg` that inherit *DtOsgRibbon* (*DtOsgRibbon.h*) are all implementations of ribbon effect variants. Ribbons are located in the scene graph under the effect root node and contain a reference to the scene object that owns them. At each frame, the ribbon finds the location of its scene object and extends itself, if necessary.

The most basic ribbon effect is the *DtOsgTrackHistoryRibbon* (*DtOsgTrackHistoryRibbon.h*), which is a simple colored quad strip with a line along each edge. It is created for the ribbon model schema. Track history effects position and size themselves automatically according to the bounding box of the scene object that they are attached to. Therefore, it is important to add track history effects to a scene object after its main model is added. Track history ribbons have a maximum length parameter to prevent them from growing too large for fast-moving scene objects. Quads that are beyond this length are quickly faded out.

The *DtOsgDecalRibbon* (*DtOsgDecalRibbon.h*) is similar to the track history ribbon, with the addition of a texture. The width and relative position of a decal ribbon must be specified in its model definition, with the `PointA/PointB` parameters. If `PointC/PointD` are also specified, a *DtOsgMultiRibbon* (*DtOsgMultiRibbon.h*) is created instead, which is a composite of two decal ribbons. This technique is used, for example, to create the default missile trail effect. Like track history ribbons, decal ribbons use a maximum length to limit their size.

The most complex ribbon effect is the *DtOsgParticleRibbon* (*DtOsgParticleRibbon.h*). Particle ribbons look similar to decal ribbons, with the addition of motion and lifetime-based fadeout. The **ParticleVelocity** parameter specifies the speed in meters per second at which each horizontal pair of points moves apart. The **AlphaVelocity** parameter sets the change in segment alpha per second, and thereby determines the time in seconds that it takes for a pair of points to fade out. The particle ribbon is used for the default wake effect, which spreads and fades out over time.

### 6.9.2. Particle Effects

VR-Forces uses the `osgParticle` package to create particle effects. Each particle effect model instance has a particle emitter node that is added to the parent scene object, and a particle geometry node that is placed under the effects root. This allows the particles, once emitted, to move independently from their parent scene object. Particle effects are usually loaded from files. These files can be created programmatically or with an editor such as the Delta3D particle system editor. Particle effects use the effect schema.

### 6.9.3. Animated Effects

Animated effects are used by VR-Forces to create particle-like effects with less use of resources. An animated effect is created by setting the **filename** parameter in an effect with the effect schema. This file is loaded at the location of the effect's parent scene object. Animated billboards are loaded as animated effects for VR-Forces's default detonations.

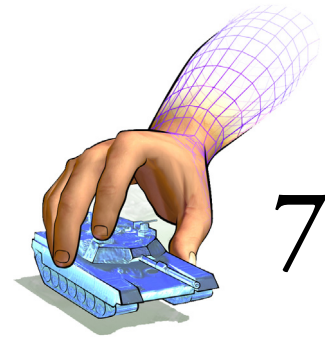
## 6.10. Grid Lines

VR-Forces draws grid lines on a per-channel basis. Channel grid lines use the *DtChannelKeywordObject* mechanism to create distributed channel grid line objects (one for each channel on which lines are drawn).

*DtChannelKeywordGridLines* inherits from *DtChannelKeywordObject*, and depends on the GridLines channel keyword. When all the necessary conditions are met to draw grid lines (terrain loaded, 2D mode, grid lines enabled) *DtChannelKeywordGridLine* creates a *DtChannelGridLines* distributed object (which in turn creates a *DtOsgChannelGridLinesInstance*).

The standard DialogPage pattern is used to provide a page for setting grid lines settings (*DtGridLinesPage*, *DtGridLinesLogic*, *DtGridLinesInterface*).

The standard archival methodology is used to store and back up settings (a *DtGridLinesSettingsRecord* is created, and settings are read from and written to *default\_GridLinesSettings.grdx*).



## ***3D Graphics***

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This chapter describes the technologies VR-Forces uses to render 3D graphics.

|                                              |     |
|----------------------------------------------|-----|
| 3D Rendering .....                           | 7-2 |
| OpenGL .....                                 | 7-2 |
| OpenSceneGraph .....                         | 7-2 |
| Rendering Images .....                       | 7-2 |
| The VR-Vantage Renderer .....                | 7-4 |
| The OSG-Specific Renderer .....              | 7-4 |
| VR-Vantage Model Classes .....               | 7-4 |
| OpenSceneGraph Extensions in VR-Forces ..... | 7-4 |
| Cockpit Display Updaters .....               | 7-5 |

## 7.1. 3D Rendering

VR-Forces uses several technologies for its visualization capabilities. The lowest common denominator is OpenGL. Layered on top of OpenGL is OpenSceneGraph (OSG). VR-Forces builds new technologies and adapts several third party technologies on top of OSG.

### 7.1.1. OpenGL

OpenGL is an industry standard environment for developing 2D and 3D graphics applications. OpenGL is available on many different platforms and is actively supported by the leading graphics vendors. In most cases OpenGL is an API for controlling the functions of a graphics rendering architecture. While this architecture can be implemented using software executed by the CPU, it is more common that dedicated graphics hardware is used to accelerate these functions. VR-Forces takes advantage of the latest capabilities of modern graphics hardware and they are required by most rendering features. OpenGL is a functional API specification typically used by the C language and languages which can interoperate with C.

### 7.1.2. OpenSceneGraph

OpenSceneGraph is a C++ scene graph API built on top of OpenGL. A scene graph is a data structure that represents a scene through connected nodes. OSG follows a number of common patterns for interoperating with the scene. One example is the visitor pattern in which an object is written in a way that allows it to visit each node in a graph and perform an operation such as culling. OSG provides many features that VR-Forces can support, including a wide range of file format loaders, particle effects, weather, data management, paging data, and LOD management. If VR-Forces does not support a particular OSG feature, it can be integrated with minimal effort.

OSG provides plug-ins for additional capabilities and file loading. VR-Forces provides plug-ins for loading MÄK GDB files, MÄK propriety geometry (MEDF), and imagery (MEIF) files.

### 7.1.3. Rendering Images

The component responsible for drawing 3D images onto a screen is called a renderer. Each display engine owns one. VR-Forces's renderer is based on OpenSceneGraph (OSG).

The scene graph starts with a top level root node. Beneath the root node, group nodes organize geometry, transforms, and state. [Figure 7-1](#) represents an abstract scene graph.

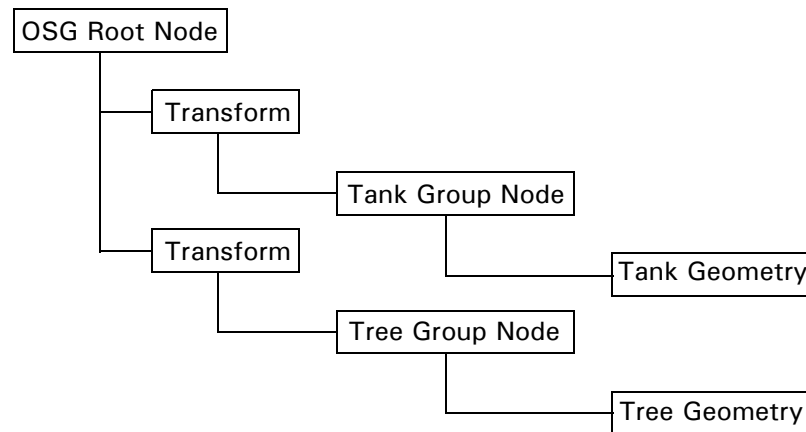


Figure 7-1. Scene graph

Distributed objects usually affect the scene graph. They can add nodes, remove nodes, change transforms, and change state. Therefore, when a master display engine calls an agent, it is causing changes to the scene graphs of external display engines. In [Figure 7-2](#), the master display engine has an agent. The agent has a corresponding distributed object that exists in each display engine. The distributed object adds nodes to the scene (the Tank Group Node) and positions them in the world using a transform.

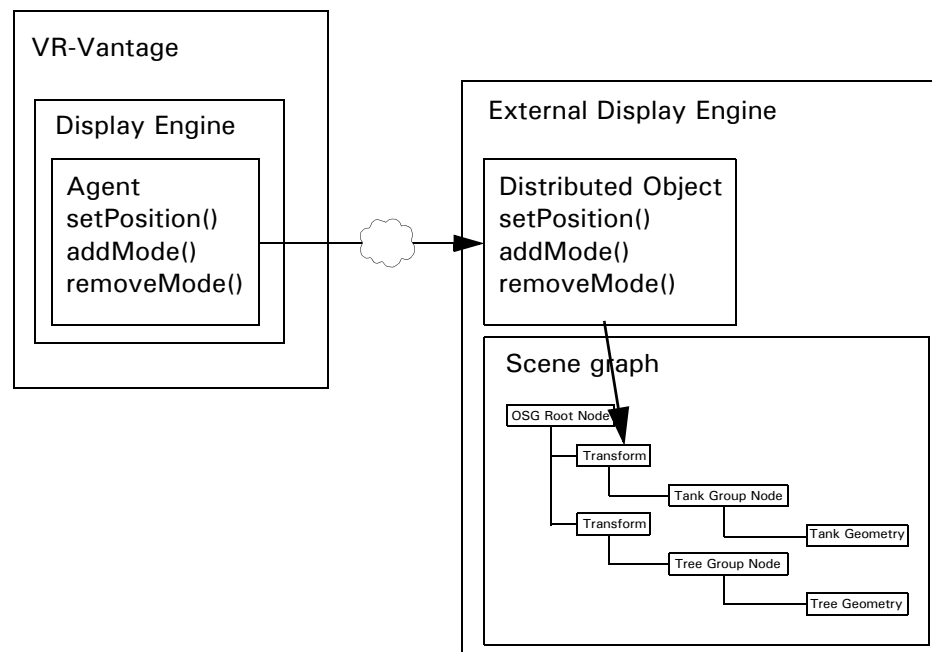


Figure 7-2. Agent and distributed object

## 7.2. The VR-Vantage Renderer

The core VR-Vantage Toolkit framework abstracts away from the underlying rendering implementation. This separation ensures that the rendering-independent code remains independent of OSG, while the rendering code exists in the libraries that depend on OSG. (VR-Forces can support alternate rendering solutions.) The class responsible for rendering in VR-Forces is *DtRenderer* (*DtRenderer.h*). The *DtRenderer* provides an interface for updating the scene graph and rendering the scene. The *DtRenderer* instance is owned by the display engine. Its `update()` and `render()` functions are called each display engine tick.

### 7.2.1. The OSG-Specific Renderer

The *DtOsgRenderer* (*DtOsgRenderer.h*) implements the *DtRenderer* interface and provides access to the various OSG nodes, such as the scene root node, and other nodes where various scene objects are added. VR-Forces provides classes for easily managing objects in the scene. The *DtOsgSceneObject* (*DtOsgSceneObject.h*) manages transformation nodes in the scene graph.

The renderer also starts the OSG update traversal for updating all nodes in the scene. After the update traversal is complete, the renderer starts the render traversal, which causes the scene to be rendered on all the available channels.

## 7.3. VR-Vantage Model Classes

In most cases it is not necessary to add new model classes. The *DtOsgSimpleModelInstance* (*DtOsgSimpleModelInstance.h*) class can load and display any file format supported by OSG and will automatically cache, accelerate, compress, and instance the rendering resources. However, if you need custom visualization, it is easy to add new model classes, and add instances that use the model classes to objects in the scene.

If you create custom model classes, you use them by creating a schema and model definition for the new model. Then you map it to an entity type for display. Please see *VR-Forces Configuration Guide* for details.

## 7.4. OpenSceneGraph Extensions in VR-Forces

VR-Forces implements extensions to OpenSceneGraph. The SilverLining cloud and ephemeris model is integrated by a custom group node and two drawables. An OSG drawable is the generic interface that OSG provides for doing OpenGL drawing. The SpeedTree vegetation rendering is an example of a custom drawable. The *DtSpeedTreeForestDrawable* (*DtSpeedTreeDrawable.h*) can make the SpeedTree rendering API calls. Once a custom model is created, it is free to create custom drawables, which are added to geode nodes.

## 7.5. Cockpit Display Updaters

A cockpit display updater is a C++ object that updates part of a GL Studio cockpit display (HUD). An updater examines the entity state and sends the cockpit display object or its agent the appropriate message. All updaters send their values as text strings, as required by GL Studio cockpit displays.

VR-Forces provides updaters for the cockpit displays it ships. However, you can use the VR-Vantage Toolkit and GL Studio to replace updaters or add custom updaters to be used with the supplied cockpit displays or your own cockpit displays. Custom updaters must derive from *DtGlStudioVrlAttributeUpdater* or *DtGlStudioObjectAttributeUpdater*. Updaters are created using a creator object. New updater creator objects are registered with the factory.

Creators have a name and a protocol. This is because updaters that work with DIS entities do not work with HLA entities. You can generate multiple updaters by using the shared source technique that is used elsewhere in the VR-Vantage API. (For more information, please see [“Using Shared Source Files for Simulation Drivers,”](#) on page 5-10.) The supported protocols are DtDis, DtHla13, DtHla1516, and Object. The updater factory is in the *DtSharedHudSettings* object. Registering a new creator is done through its `registerUpdater()` function.

VR-Forces provides the following cockpit display updaters:

- ♦ Object Protocol:
  - AOA-Angle of Attack. Returns the pitch of the entity clamped (-5 to 30 degrees).
  - FeetAGL-Feet Above Ground Level. Returns the feet above the terrain (or buildings below).
  - FeetMSL-Feet Above Mean Sea Level. Returns the altitude above sea level.
  - FeetPerMinute. Returns the climb rate.
  - KilometersPerHour. Kilometer per hour.
  - MilesPerHour. Miles per hour.
  - KnotsPerHour. Nautical Miles per hour.
  - Pitch. Returns the pitch of the entity clamped (-180 to 180 degrees).
  - Roll. Returns the roll of the entity clamped (-180 to 180 degrees).
  - Yaw. Returns the yaw of the entity clamped (0 to 360 degrees).
  - Value. This is a special updater in that it will send any value to the cockpit display once and then never again. It's used to configure initial setup and to turn display components on or off.
- ♦ DtDis, DtHla13, DtHla1516 Protocol:
  - Headlight. Returns the headlight state of the entity as true or false

Updaters can exist in the simulation thread, owned by the GL Studio Visualizer, or in the render thread, owned by the GL Studio cockpit display object.

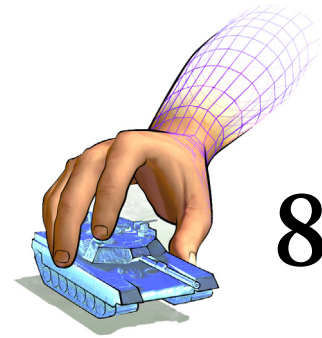
Updaters that live in the simulation thread have access to the entire simulation state in the entity state repository. These updaters are updated at the same rate as the network thread (approximately 15 times per second). The values that these updaters send are not smoothed in the cockpit display. These updaters are derived from the *DtGlStudioVrAttributeUpdater* and have a protocol of DtDis, DtHla13, or DtHla1516.

Updaters that live in the render thread are owned by the GL Studio cockpit display object. They have access to the cockpit display object's smoother. This smoother is updated by the simulation thread and the position, velocity, acceleration, and rotation are smoothed between updates. The render thread updaters update their values approximately 60 times per second. These updaters are registered with a protocol of Object.



It is important to install new updaters after the display engine is initialized. Connect to the display engine object's `post_initialize` signal to be notified when it is done initializing. Then install your updaters.

---



## *Design Patterns*

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This chapter describes the design patterns that underlie much of the VR-Vantage API.

|                                                  |      |
|--------------------------------------------------|------|
| VR-Vantage Design Patterns .....                 | 8-2  |
| The Rooted Singleton Pattern .....               | 8-2  |
| The Rooted Singleton Pattern Specification ..... | 8-3  |
| The Signaler Pattern .....                       | 8-4  |
| The Signaler Pattern Specification .....         | 8-5  |
| The Factory Pattern .....                        | 8-6  |
| The Factory Pattern Specification .....          | 8-10 |
| The Creator Pattern .....                        | 8-10 |
| The Creator Pattern Specification .....          | 8-11 |
| The Humble Dialog Pattern .....                  | 8-12 |
| The Humble Dialog Pattern Specification .....    | 8-14 |

## 8.1. VR-Vantage Design Patterns

VR-Forces uses design patterns, an object-oriented programming technique described in *Design Patterns: Elements of Reusable Object-Oriented Software*<sup>1</sup>.

## 8.2. The Rooted Singleton Pattern

The Singleton pattern provides a single global instance of a class to an application. The Rooted Singleton pattern provides a single global instance of a class associated with a specific root object. It allows Toolkit users to create applications that have two display engines without having them interfere with each other.

The Rooted Singleton pattern involves two classes, the singleton class and the root object class. The singleton class is globally accessed. The root object class is the scope in which the singleton class lives.

Suppose that you want to have two display engine instances in your application. You want to override one of them so that it creates your own derived channel whenever a channel is created, but you want the other display engine to behave normally. If we used the standard Singleton pattern you could not do that. If you overrode the channel creator with your own channel creator, then both display engines would create your derived channel, which is not what you want. The Rooted Singleton pattern lets you register a new channel creator with one instance of the display engine, but leaves the other instance alone.

To create a Rooted Singleton, do something like this:

```
// Example Rooted Singleton
class MyExampleSingleton : public DtVirtualBaseClass
{
public:

    // Lazily create a global instance rooted off a Display Engine
    static MyExampleSingleton& instance(DtDE displayEngine)
    {
        MyExampleSingleton* singleton =
            dynamic_cast<MyExampleSingleton*>(
                displayEngine.findInstance("MyExampleSingleton"));
        if(!singleton)
        {
            singleton = new MyExampleSingleton();
            displayEngine.registerInstance(
                "MyExampleSingleton", singleton);
        }
        return *singleton;
    }

    // DTOR
    virtual ~MyExampleSingleton();
}
```

---

1. Design Patterns: Elements of Reusable Object-Oriented Software, Erich Gamma, Richard Helm, Ralph Johnson and John Vlissides, Addison-Wesley Professional, 1994.

```
// Your methods here...

void myExampleMethod()
{
}

private:

// Private CTOR.
MyExampleSingleton();

};
```

The singleton lazily creates and registers itself with the display engine. Under the hood, the display engine simply has a map of *DtVirtualBaseClasses* with `std::string` keys. When you access this object you use the static `instance()` method:

```
MyExampleSingleton::instance(displayEngine).myExampleMethod();
```

The first time this object is accessed, it is created and registered with the display engine using the key `MyExampleSingleton`. The next time it is accessed, the singleton is just returned. The singleton lives throughout the existence of the display engine. When the display engine is destroyed, all the Rooted Singletons are deleted.

### 8.2.1. The Rooted Singleton Pattern Specification

The Rooted Singleton pattern has the following requirements and behavior:

- ♦ The Rooted Singleton pattern involves two classes: the singleton class, of which there will be one globally accessible instance, and the root object class, which is the scope that the singleton exists in.
- ♦ The singleton class should not have a public constructor.
- ♦ The singleton class should provide a static instance accessor to easily get the singleton instance from the root object.
- ♦ The singleton class must be explicitly registered with the root object. This is usually done through lazy creation.
- ♦ The lifetime of a Rooted Singleton is linked to the lifetime of the root object.



Many of the other VR-Vantage design patterns (Signaler, Creator, and Factory) use the Rooted Singleton pattern.

---

## 8.3. The Signaler Pattern

The Signaler pattern lets signals live outside the object about which they are signaling.

Sometimes signals for objects are hard to use. For example, if `FirstObject` wants to connect to a signal emitted by `SecondObject`, but `SecondObject` does not exist yet, creating the connection is a problem. We have created the Signaler pattern to solve this problem. Now, `FirstObject` connects to signals emitted by *SecondObjectSignaler*, a Rooted Singleton. Then `SecondObject` has the `SecondObjectSignal` emit the signals causing `FirstObject` to get signalled.

Here is a simple example:

```
// Class that wants to let others know about a change in speed.
class Foo
{
public:

    void setSpeed(double s)
    {
        mySpeed = s;
        FooSignaler::instance(
            myDisplayEngine).signal_speedChanged(this, mySpeed);
    }

protected:

    DtDE& myDisplayEngine;

};

// Class that emits signal_speedChanged;
class FooSignaler
{
public:

    // Lazily create a global instance rooted off a Display Engine
    static FooSignaler& instance(DtDE displayEngine)
    {
        FooSignaler* singleton = dynamic_cast<FooSignaler*>(
            displayEngine.findInstance("FooSignaler"));
        if(!singleton)
        {
            singleton = new FooSignaler();
            displayEngine.registerInstance("FooSignaler", singleton);
        }
        return *singleton;
    }

    // Signal to emit.
    signal < void (Foo*, double) > signal_speedChanged;
};
```

Now, an interested party can register with the *FooSignaler* before an instance of the `Foo` object actually exists:

```
FooSignaler::instance(myDisplayEngine).signal_speedChanged.connect(
    boost::bind(&InterestedPartyClass::onSpeedChanged,
```

```
&interestedPartyClassInstance, _1)));
```

The signaler is lazily created and the *InterestedPartyClass* gets signaled whenever an instance of *Foo* comes into existence and *setSpeed()* is called on it.

### 8.3.1. The Signaler Pattern Specification

The Signaler pattern has the following requirements and behavior:

- ♦ The Signaler pattern involves two classes: the subject class, which wants to let others know when something has changed, and a signaler class, the object that parties interested in updates register with.
- ♦ The signaler class should not have a public constructor.
- ♦ The signaler class should provide a static instance accessor to easily get the signaler instance from the root object.
- ♦ The signaler class must be explicitly registered with the root object. This is usually done through lazy creation.
- ♦ The lifetime of a signaler is linked to the lifetime of the root object.
- ♦ The subject class uses the signaler class to emit signals when things in the subject class change.
- ♦ Interested parties connect to the signals in the signaler to find out about changes in the subject class.

## 8.4. The Factory Pattern

The Factory pattern allows creation of specializations on a single base class within the scope of a root object.

The Abstract Factory pattern creates an instance of an object from a family of objects without having to specify the concrete class to be created. Our Factory pattern extends this to include Rooted Singleton support, meaning each root object (display engine) will have its own factory and there can be multiple root objects in an application.

VR-Forces uses the Factory pattern a lot. From creating different kinds of windows, to creating different types of file parsers, it is an important pattern to understand.

Here is an example Factory pattern:

Suppose your program needs to be able to parse different types of terrain files and determine the coordinate system of each one.

1. Write the base class header parser. This provides the API that all your derived file format parsers would conform to. For example, you will need an OpenFlight parser, a DTED parser, 3DS parser, and so on.

```
// Abstract file parser class.
class ExampleFileParser
{
public:

    // CTOR
    ExampleFileParser(DtDE& displayEngine, const std::string& filePath);

    // DTOR.
    virtual ~ExampleFileParser();

    // Returns the terrain coordinate system.
    virtual const std::string& terrainCoordinateSystem() = 0;

protected:

    DtDE& myIg;
    std::string myFilePath;
    std::string myTerrainCoordinateSystem;

};
```

2. Create the file parser factory:

```
class DtFileParserFactory : public DtVirtualBaseClass
{
public:

    // Map of file extensions to creators.
    typedef std::map<std::string, ExampleFileParserCreator*> CreatorMap;

    // Get the instance of the factory.
    static ExampleFileParserFactory& instance(DtDE& displayEngine)
    {
        ExampleFileParserFactory* factory =
```

```

        dynamic_cast<ExampleFileParserFactory*>(
            displayEngine.findInstance("ExampleFileParserFactory"));
    if(!factory)
    {
        factory = new ExampleFileParserFactory(displayEngine);
        displayEngine.registerInstance(
            "ExampleFileParserFactory",factory);
    }
    return *factory;
}

// DTOR
virtual ~ExampleFileParserFactory()
{
    DtClearAndDeletePointersInMap(myCreators);
}

// Add a creator based on file extension
virtual void addCreator(const std::string& extension,
    ExampleFileParserCreator* creator)
{
    CreatorMap::iterator iter = myCreators.find(extension);
    if(iter != myCreators.end())
    {
        delete iter->second;
        iter->second = creator;
    }
    else
    {
        myCreators[extension] = creator;
    }
}

// Create an ExampleFileParser.
ExampleFileParser* createFileParser(const std::string& filePath)
{
    std::string extension = fileExtensionFromFilePath(filePath);
    CreatorMap::iterator iter = myCreators.find(extension);
    if(iter != myCreators.end())
    {
        return iter->second->create(filePath);
    }
    else
    {
        DtTHROW_NEW(
            DtInvalidInput,"No creator found with the given name.");
    }
}

// Get the creators.
const CreatorMap& creators() const
{
    return myCreators;
}

protected:

// CTOR
ExampleFileParserFactory(DtDE& displayEngine);

```

```
DtDE& myDisplayEngine;  
CreatorMap myCreators;
```

```
};
```

3. There is also the base class file parser creator class:

```
// Abstract file parser creator class.  
class ExampleFileParserCreator  
{  
public:  
  
    // CTOR.  
    ExampleFileParserCreator();  
  
    // DTOR.  
    virtual ~ExampleFileParserCreator();  
  
    // Creator method.  
    virtual ExampleFileParser* create(DtDE& ig,  
    const std::string& filePath) const = 0;  
  
};
```

4. Derive the file format parsers and their creators, and register them with the creator:

```
// Openflight header parser class.  
class DtOpenFlightFileParser : public ExampleFileParser  
{  
  
public:  
  
    // CTOR  
    ExampleOpenFlightFileParser(DtDE& displayEngine,  
    const std::string& filePath);  
  
    // DTOR.  
    virtual ~ExampleOpenFlightFileParser();  
  
    // Returns the terrain coordinate system.  
    virtual const std::string& terrainCoordinateSystem()  
    {  
        // open file. parse for coordinate system.  
        return myTerrainCoordinateSystem;  
    }  
  
};  
  
// ExampleOpenFlightFileParserCreator class.  
class ExampleOpenFlightFileParserCreator : public  
    ExampleFileParserCreator  
{  
public:  
  
    // CTOR  
    ExampleOpenFlightFileParserCreator();  
  
    // DTOR  
    virtual ~ExampleOpenFlightFileParserCreator();  
  
    // Create a header parser
```

```
        virtual ExampleFileParser* create(DtDE& displayEngine,
            const std::string& filePath) const
        {
            return new ExampleOpenFlightFileParser(displayEngine, filePath);
        }
    };

    ExampleFileParserFactory::instance(myDisplayEngine).addCreator(
        "flt", new ExampleOpenFlightFileParserCreator());

    // 3DS header parser class.
    class Dt3dsFileParser : public ExampleFileParser
    {
    public:

        // CTOR
        Example3dsFileParser(
            DtDE& displayEngine, const std::string& filePath);

        // DTOR.
        virtual ~Example3dsFileParser();

        // Returns the terrain coordinate system.
        virtual const std::string& terrainCoordinateSystem()
        {
            // open file. parse for coordinate system.
            return myTerrainCoordinateSystem;
        }
    };

    // Example3dsFileParserCreator class.
    class Example3dsFileParserCreator : public ExampleFileParserCreator
    {
    public:

        // CTOR
        Example3dsFileParserCreator();

        // DTOR
        virtual ~Example3dsFileParserCreator();

        // Create a header parser
        virtual ExampleFileParser* create(DtDE& displayEngine,
            const std::string& filePath) const
        {
            return new Example3dsFileParserCreator(displayEngine, filePath);
        }
    };

    ExampleFileParserFactory::instance(myDisplayEngine).addCreator(
        "3ds", new Example3dsFileParserCreator());
```

### **8.4.1. The Factory Pattern Specification**

The Factory pattern has the following requirements and behavior:

- ♦ Factories are not subclassed. The factory only affects the base class.
- ♦ Factories can be lazily created (that is, created on first access).
- ♦ A factory's lifetime is linked to the root object it is registered with. Factories are Rooted Singletons.
- ♦ Factories must create new objects and can only create new objects. They should not be used to access existing objects (for that see the provider pattern).
- ♦ Factories provide a way to register a creator functionality. Creator functionality may be a function, functor, or creator-like object.
- ♦ Factories must have a protected CTOR. Instances are accessible through a static instance function (which does lazy registration).
- ♦ Factories do not have to be explicitly registered.

## **8.5. The Creator Pattern**

The Creator pattern lets you replace a single class in a system with a specialized subclass. You might do this to fix a bug, or to add or change the behavior of specific functions. This is usually done through the Factory Method pattern. Unfortunately, if an application allows multiple parallel hierarchies (such as two display engines in the same application), the Factory Method pattern fails, because it indiscriminately sets the override class for all users. To implement similar behavior, but allow for changes to a class implementation tied to a specific root object, VR-Forces uses the Creator pattern.

The Creator pattern involves two classes, the class which can be replaced (called the object class) and a class that does the creation (called the creator class). The creator instance is a Rooted Singleton of a given type registered with the root display engine. It can be accessed by anyone who has a root object pointer. All users of the object class use a Rooted Singleton of the creator class to create an instance of the object class.

The exampleCreator example uses the Creator pattern to cause a derived channel to get created when the display engine creates a channel. For details, please see the exampleCreator example in the class documentation.

### **8.5.1. The Creator Pattern Specification**

The Creator pattern has the following requirements and behavior:

- ♦ The Creator pattern involves two classes, the class that can be replaced (called the object class), and a class that does the creation (called the creator class).
- ♦ All users of the object class use a 'pseudo-global' instance of the creator class to create an instance of the object class. The creator instance is pseudo-global because a single instance of a given type is registered with the root object and can be accessed by anyone who has a root object pointer (in this case the root object is the display engine object).
- ♦ The object class should not have a public constructor.
- ♦ The object class should use mostly virtual functions.
- ♦ The object class should specify the creator as a friend class.
- ♦ The creator class should provide a virtual create function.
- ♦ The creator class should provide a static creator instance accessor to easily get the creator instance from the root object.
- ♦ The creator instance must be explicitly registered with the root object before anyone attempts to create a class object.
- ♦ The creators should be registered during initialization.
- ♦ The lifetime of a creator is linked to the lifetime of the root object.
- ♦ To override the object class, sub-class the creator and implement the virtual create function to return a new subclass instance.

## 8.6. The Humble Dialog Pattern

Developers often put a lot of logic code inside their dialog boxes. This makes it hard to change the logic without changing the dialog box, hard to change the dialog box without changing the logic, and makes it impossible to test the logic outside of the GUI (say in an automated tester).

VR-Forces uses the Humble Dialog pattern to solve this problem. The Humble Dialog pattern provides a smart, tested logic class, and a minimalistic dialog box class.

Figure 8-1 illustrates a *Logic* class that does all the work. Its constructor takes an interface class pointer. The interface is an abstract base class that has methods the logic calls to cause changes in the widget.

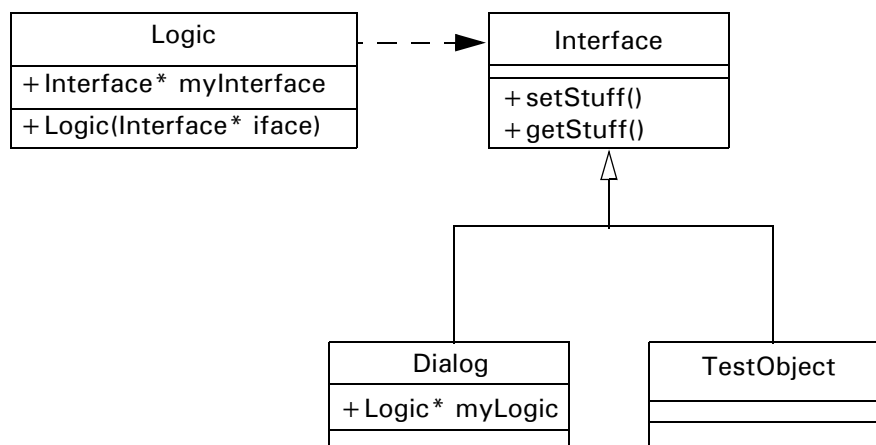


Figure 8-1. Humble dialog pattern

The dialog class implements the interface and creates an instance of the *Logic* class. The *TestObject* also implements the interface class, but does not need to have any of the GUI elements.

The following example shows how to use this pattern. Suppose you want to write a dialog box that lets the user convert a position in one coordinate system into another coordinate system.

First, you would write the logic class. It might look something like this:

```

class ConverterLogic
{
public:

    ConverterLogic(ConverterInterface* iface);

    // Convert position1 into a new coordinate system and
    //store result in position2.
    bool getConvertPostion(const Point3d& postion1, Point3d& position2)
    {
        // do the conversion. Now, position2 has the new point...
    }
}
  
```

```
        // makes a call onto the dialog via the Interface pointer.
        myInterface->setPositionWidget(position2);
    }

};
```

The logic depends on the interface class to provide the methods it can call:

```
class ConverterInterface
{
public:

    void setPostionWidget() = 0;
};
```

The dialog class implements the interface:

```
class ConverterDialog : public ConverterInterface
{
public:

    ConverterDialog()
    {
        // Create the logic and give it a pointer to this dialog.
        myLogic = new ConverterLogic(this);
    }

    // Make the call to change this dialogs position widget.
    void setPositionWidget(const Point3d& position);

protected:

    ConverterLogic* myLogic;

};
```

The dialog creates the logic using itself as the implementation of the interface.

You could write a *ConverterTester* class to test the *ConverterLogic* without needing to run an application with a GUI. This is useful for automated testing.

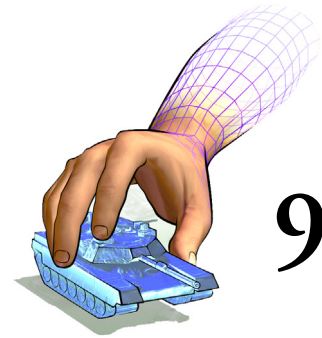
```
class ConverterTester : public ConverterInterface
{
public:

    void setPostionWidget(const Point3d& position)
    {
        if(position != correctPosition)
        {
            testFailed = true;
        }
    }
};
```

### **8.6.1. The Humble Dialog Pattern Specification**

The Humble Dialog pattern has the following requirements:

- ♦ A logic class that does all the work.
- ♦ A dialog or widget interface class that the logic will talk to.
- ♦ A widget class that implements the interface.
- ♦ Optionally, a test object to test your logic.



# *The VR-Vantage Control Toolkit*

---

The VR-Vantage Control Toolkit lets you control VR-Vantage applications from remote applications.

|                                      |      |
|--------------------------------------|------|
| The VR-Vantage Control Toolkit.....  | 9-3  |
| Implementation Details.....          | 9-3  |
| The VR-Vantage Remote Draw API ..... | 9-4  |
| Major Classes .....                  | 9-4  |
| Objects .....                        | 9-5  |
| 2D Objects .....                     | 9-6  |
| 2D Lines .....                       | 9-7  |
| Rectangles .....                     | 9-7  |
| Ellipses .....                       | 9-8  |
| 2D Triangles.....                    | 9-9  |
| 2D Text.....                         | 9-11 |
| 3D Objects .....                     | 9-12 |
| 3D Lines .....                       | 9-13 |
| Cylinders.....                       | 9-14 |
| Cuboids.....                         | 9-14 |
| Ellipsoids.....                      | 9-15 |
| 3D Triangles.....                    | 9-15 |
| 3D Areas .....                       | 9-16 |
| 3D Text.....                         | 9-16 |
| Attributes.....                      | 9-17 |
| Attribute Group Templates.....       | 9-18 |
| Attribute Templates.....             | 9-18 |
| Attribute Groups .....               | 9-20 |

Remote Graphic Sets ..... 9-21

## 9.1. The VR-Vantage Control Toolkit

The VR-Vantage Control Toolkit (VCT) lets you send DIS or HLA messages that can remotely control a VR-Vantage application, such as the VR-Forces front-end. It supports the VR-Vantage attach modes and most visual states, such as track histories, trailing effects, entity labels, and so on.

The control messages store all data in a network centric format. For example, locations are geocentric and entity IDs are strings with the protocol specific global ID of the entity. The control messages are versioned so that future versions of the Toolkit will be backwards compatible with messages sent by applications or recordings that use this version.

All control messages are transported in the data interaction of the specific protocol. The *vrvControl* library provides a templated data marshaller class (*DtVrvControlMessageMarshaller*, in *DtVrvControlMessageMarshaller.h*) that is responsible for loading and unloading data interactions with the control message. The supported commands are in *vrvControlToolkitDataTypes.h*. The *exampleSendControl* example is a simple application that sends a remote control message.



Effective with release of the VR-Vantage Control Toolkit, the Stealth Control Toolkit is deprecated. VR-Forces will continue to support a limited set of Stealth Control PDUs.

---

### 9.1.1. Implementation Details

The Toolkit installs protocol-specific accessories are installed for each of the simulation connection drivers (DIS/HLA13/HLA1516). The accessory installs a data interaction callback with the exercise connection and a control processor with the driver. The data interaction callback receives data interactions from the exercise connection and uses the data marshaller to retrieve the VCT control message. The control message is then passed to the control processor.

When the control processor is created, it creates a command execution agent, which in turn creates a command execution object. When the control processor receives a VCT control message, it converts it to a VR-Vantage command through the VR-Vantage command factory. The command factory must be protocol-specific to do the conversion. This conversion process is required to convert geocentric coordinates to local database coordinates and to convert entity IDs to VR-Vantage-specific unique IDs. Once the control message is converted to a command, the command execution agent's *execute command* function is called. The command execution agent passes the command to command execution object through the standard VR-Vantage agent/object mechanism for execution in the main (display engine) thread.

## 9.2. The VR-Vantage Remote Draw API

The VR-Vantage Remote Draw API allows third party applications to create, send, and manage 2D and 3D objects to be drawn by VR-Forces.

## 9.3. Major Classes

The VR-Vantage Remote Draw API uses three classes extensively when creating and modifying objects. *DtVdcVector2D* (*DtVdcVector2D.h*) is a 2D vector class that is similar in functionality to the VR-Link *DtVector* class – without the need to set a Z-value to 0.0. This is used in all the 2D object classes.

*DtVdcColor* (*DtVdcColor.h*) is used to specify colors in either RGBA (Red, Green, Blue, Alpha) or HSVA (Hue, Saturation, Value, Alpha) formats. *DtVdcColor* also defines const values for several of the most commonly used colors. *DtVdc3DAttachPoint* is only used by 3D Objects, and is discussed in “[3D Objects](#),” on page 9-12.

The following example creates a 2D position in the middle of the VR-Forces window:

```
DtVdcVector2D position( 0.5, 0.5 );
```

The following example creates a color class and sets it to red:

```
DtVdcColor color( 255, 0, 0, 255 );
```

The following example creates a color class and sets it to red using a predefined constant:

```
DtVdcColor color = DtVdcColor::DtVdcRed;
```

The following example changes the color to blue using the Hue parameter:

```
color.setHue( 160 );
```

## 9.4. Objects

You can use the VR-Vantage Remote Draw API to draw several types of objects and text in 2D and 3D. You can specify the parameters of each type of object. Common default parameters are supplied for simplified use. In addition, there are accessors and mutators for each object parameter supported. Every object needs a unique ID. The ID is used to generate the global ID for the object. Each object must also take a pointer to the *DtExerciseConn* object.

The following example creates and displays a red circle in the center of the window.

```
int nextId=1;
DtVdcVector2D position( 0.5, 0.5 );
DtVdcVector2D size( 0.2, 0.2 );
DtEllipseObject* circle = new DtEllipseObject( exconn, nextId++,
    position, size );
circle->setColor( DtVdcColor::DtVdcRed );

circle->update();
```

To change the color of the circle from red to green, and tell VR-Forces about the change, do the following:

```
circle->setColor( DtVdcColor::DtVdcGreen );
circle->update();
```

To remove and destroy the circle object, do this:

```
delete circle;
```

## 9.5. 2D Objects

The VR-Vantage Remote Draw API supports 2D objects such as lines, rectangles, ellipses, and triangles (Figure 9-1). It also supports text. As seen in the example in the previous section, positions and sizes are specified as fractions of the current window size in X and Y (or width and height) using the *DtVdcVector2D* class. You can specify a counter-clockwise rotation in radians.

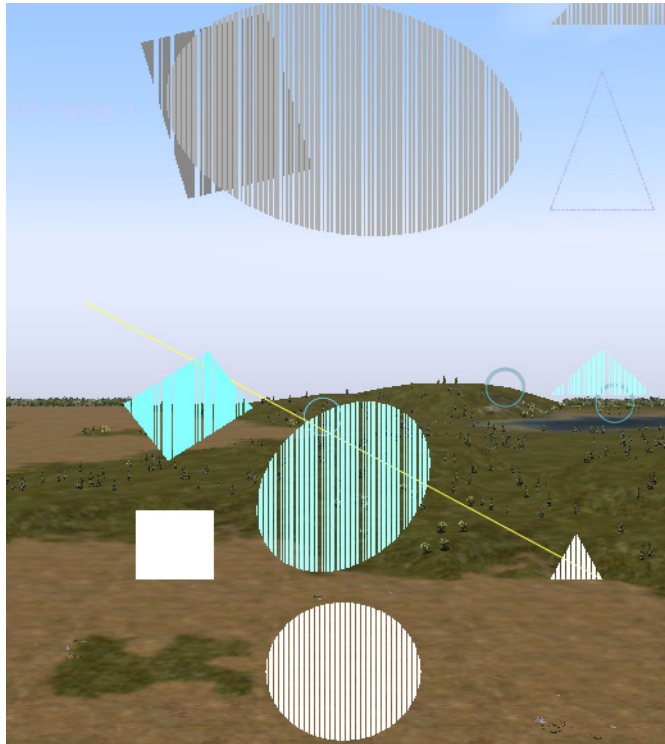


Figure 9-1. 2D ellipses

### 9.5.1. 2D Lines

*DtLine2DObject* (*DtLine2DObject.h*) represents a line that can be positioned and displayed on the screen. The line can be divided into multiple segments of varying relative lengths. Each line has a start point and an end point, specified using *DtVdcVector2Ds*. You can specify a color, line style, arrow style, pattern, and thickness for each segment, and the line can flash.

Line styles are specified using the *DtVdcLineSegment::DtVdcLineStyle* enumeration, which includes:

```
DtVdcLineSegment::DtVdcSegmentStyleStraight
DtVdcLineSegment::DtVdcSegmentStyleLightning.
```

Arrow styles are specified using the *DtVdcLineSegment::DtVdcSegmentArrowStyle* enumeration, which includes:

```
DtVdcLineSegment::DtVdcSegmentArrowStyleNoArrow
DtVdcLineSegment::DtVdcSegmentArrowStyleArrowEnd
DtVdcLineSegment::DtVdcSegmentArrowStyleArrowStart
DtVdcLineSegment::DtVdcSegmentArrowStyleArrowDouble.
```

The following example creates and displays a green line that goes from the bottom left-hand corner of the screen to the top right hand corner of the screen. The first 20 percent of the line should be a separate segment with double arrowheads:

```
DtLine2DObject* line = new DtLine2DObject( exConn, nextId++,
    DtVdcVector2D( 0., 0. ), DtVdcVector2D( 1., 1. ), 2 /*segments*/,
    DtVdcColor::DtVdcGreen );

line->setArrowStyle(
    DtVdcLineSegment::DtVdcSegmentArrowStyleArrowDouble,
    0 /* segment num */ );
```

### 9.5.2. Rectangles

*DtRectangleObject* (*DtRectangleObject.h*) represents a rectangular object that can be positioned and displayed on the screen. The position specified is the lower lefthand corner of the rectangle. The size parameter specifies the length of the x-axis sides and y-axis sides, respectively (as fractions of the window size). You can specify a counter-clockwise rotation, in radians, the rectangle's color, an optional fill pattern, and whether or not it flashes.

The following example creates and displays a white rectangle at the center of the screen. It is 1/10 the size of the screen along the x-axis and 1/5 of the screen along the y-axis:

```
DtRectangleObject* rect = new DtRectangleObject(exConn, nextId++,
    DtVdcVector2D( 0.5, 0.5 ), DtVdcVector2D( 0.1, 0.2 ) );
```

### 9.5.3. Ellipses

*DtEllipseObject* (*DtEllipseObject.h*) represents an elliptical object that can be positioned and displayed on the screen. The position specified is the center of the ellipse. The size parameter specifies the length of the ellipsis' axes parallel to the screen's x-axis and y-axis. You can specify a counter-clockwise rotation, in radians, a color, and optionally, a fill pattern. The object can flash.

The following example creates and displays a flashing yellow circle in the lower right corner. The diameter is ½ the screen.

```
DtEllipseObject* circle = new DtEllipseObject(exConn, nextId++,
    DtVdcVector2D( 0.75, 0.25 ), DtVdcVector2D( 0.5, 0.5 ), 0.,
    DtVdcColor::DtVdcYellow);

circle->setFlashing( true );
```

To hide the ellipse, do this:

```
circle->setVisible(false);
```

### 9.5.4. 2D Triangles

*DtTriangle2DObject* (*DtTriangle2DObject.h*) represents a triangle that can be drawn on the VR-Forces overlay. Each vertex is specified in fractional screen coordinates. Triangles can be rotated, scaled along the X and Y axes independently, and offset from their specified position. They can be colored, filled with an optional pattern, and can flash.

#### i

Because scaling is in screen coordinates, the effect of scaling will vary depending on the aspect ratio of the screen on which the graphic is viewed.

The following example creates and displays an orange-striped pattern-filled triangle that covers the upper right-hand side of the screen.

```
DtTriangle2DObject* triangle = new DtTriangle2DObject( exConn, nextId++,
    DtVdcVector2D( 0., 1. ), DtVdcVector2D( 1., 1. ), DtVdcVector2D( 1., 0.
    ) );

triangle->setFill( true );
triangle->setPattern( 0xf0f0f0 );
triangle->setColor( DtVdcColor::DtVdcOrange );
```

The vertices of 2D triangles are specified as three points (*v\_1*, *v\_2*, *v\_3*) and one offset. The position of each vertex before rotation and scaling is *v\_n* + *offset*, and the rotation and scale operations are centered around the offset.

Figure 9-2 illustrates a triangle with its vertices specified as *v\_1* = (0, 0), *v\_2* = (0.5, 0), *v\_3* = (0, 0.5) and an offset of (0.5, 0.5). Applying the offset to the specified vertices, it is displayed with vertices at (0.5, 0.5), (1, 0.5), and (0.5, 1). (Remember vertices are specified as screen coordinates, with 0,0 being the lower left corner of the screen and 1,1 the upper right.)

If the triangle is rotated  $\pi/2$  (90°), it rotates around the origin, as shown in the second view. If it is rotated and scaled 50%, it is displayed with vertices at (0.5, 0.5), (0.75, 0.5), (0.5, 0.75), as shown in the third view.

The smaller triangle demonstrates rotation around the origin when the origin is not a vertex.

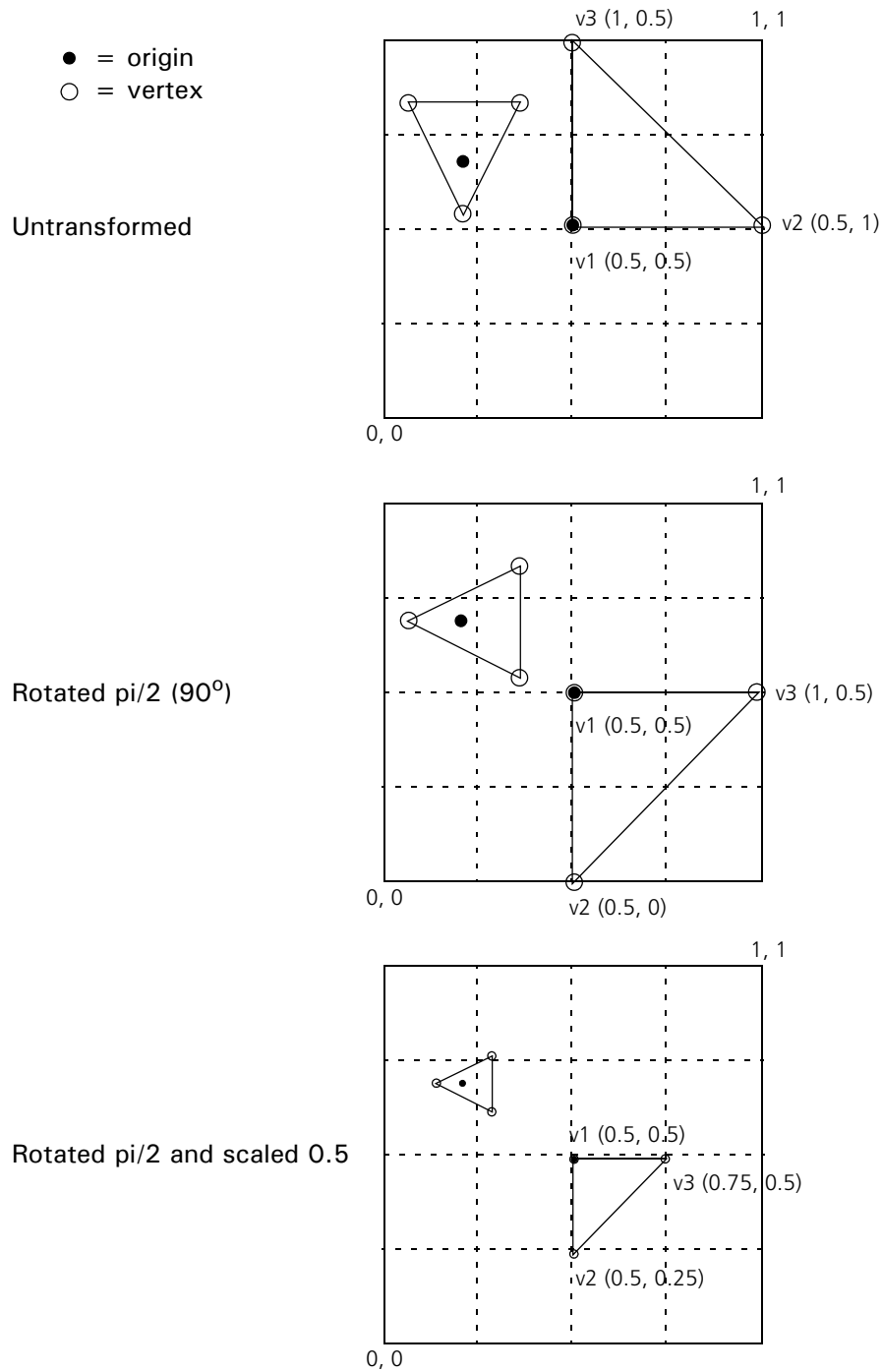


Figure 9-2. 2D triangles

### 9.5.5. 2D Text

*DtText2DObject* (*DtText2DObject.h*) is used to place text on the VR-Forces overlay. The bottom-left corner of the text is positioned using fractional screen coordinates with the *DtVdcVector2D* class. The text can have a color and can flash.

The following example creates and displays yellow text in the upper left-hand side of the 2D overlay that flashes “Hello World”.

```
DtText2DObject* text = new DtText2DObject( exConn, nextId++, "Hello  
World", DtVdcVector2D( 0.05, 0.8 ), DtVdcColor::DtVdcYellow, true );
```

You must provide a font filename and size, in points. The default is *../data/fonts/arial.ttf* at 14 points.

## 9.6. 3D Objects

You can use the VR-Vantage Remote Draw API to create 3D lines, cylinders, cuboids, ellipsoids, and triangles. You can place text on the overlay based on a 3D location. All 3D positions can be specified in any one of the following ways:

- A (3D) geocentric coordinate
- Attached to a remote entity in the scene
- Attached to another draw control object.

When you attach to a line or cylinder draw control object, which itself has two positions, the position of attachment can be specified as a percentage between the two positions that make up the object being attached to. All coordinates, positions, offsets, diameters, and so on are specified in meters unless otherwise indicated. Rotations are in radians about the geocentric axes (as with normal DIS and HLA/RPR objects).

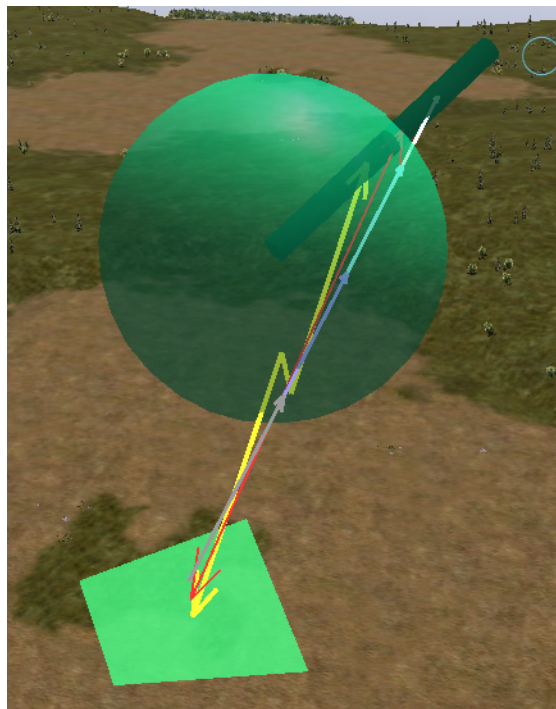


Figure 9-3. 3D objects

All 3D positions are specified using a *DtVdc3DAttachPoint* (*DtVdc3DAttachPoint.h*.) The *DtVdc3DAttachPoint* provides a single class that can represent and manage all the different types of placement into the 3D scene.

The following example creates an attachment point in Geocentric coordinates:

```
DtVdc3DAttachPoint attach(DtVector(3139064.99, 5441231.05, 1101707.26));
```

To modify the y-coordinate using the *DtVdc3DAttachPoint*, do the following:

```
attach.setLocation(DtVector(3139064.99, 5441265.12, 1101707.26));
```

### 9.6.1. 3D Lines

*DtVdcLine3DObject* (*DtLine3DObject.h*) represents a line that can be positioned and displayed in the scene. The line can be divided into multiple segments of varying relative lengths. A color, line style, arrow style, pattern, and thickness can be specified for each segment. The line can flash. The line can be offset from its specified position. Optionally, the line can be terminated if it intersects any intervening terrain. In other words, the line can go from the start point to the end point or the first point at which it intersects the terrain, whichever comes first. Each endpoint of the line can be positioned using any of the member functions described for *DtVdc3DAttachPoint*.

The following example creates and displays a 3D line that goes between two entities whose IDs are in the variables `globalId1` and `globalId2`, respectively.

```
DtVdcLine3DObject* line = new DtVdcLine3DObject( exConn, nextId++,
    DtVdc3DAttachPoint( globalId1 ), DtVdc3DAttachPoint( globalId2 ) );
```

The following example creates and displays a second 3D line that goes from the center of the line created in the previous example to a third entity, whose ID is held in the variable `globalId3`. It indicates that the line should terminate if it intersects the terrain.

```
DtVdcLine3DObject* line2 = new DtVdcLine3DObject( exConn, nextId++,
    DtVdc3DAttachPoint( line->id(), 50.0 ), DtVdc3DAttachPoint(globalId3));
line2->setCheckLos( true );
```

## 9.6.2. Cylinders

*DtCylinderObject* (*DtCylinderObject.h*) allows you to specify the attachment, shape, rotation, and color of a cylinder on the VR-Forces screen. You can also make the object flash. You can:

- ♦ Place the cylinder at a location that becomes its center, and then specify a length and rotation
- ♦ Attach the cylinder at either end.

The diameters of the cylinder in the X and Y directions are specified in meters, using a *DtVdcVector2D*.

The following example creates and displays a cylinder that goes between two entities whose IDs are in the variables *globalId1* and *globalId2* respectively. It gives the cylinder a circular cross section with 0.5 meter diameter.

```
DtCylinderObject* cylinder = new DtCylinderObject( exConn, nextId++,
    DtVdc3DAttachPoint( globalId1 ), DtVdc3DAttachPoint( globalId2 ),
    DtVdcVector2D( 0.5, 0.5 ) );
```

The following example creates a second cylinder that is ten meters long. It is two meters in diameter in the X direction and one meter in diameter in the Y direction. Its center is at a point five meters above the center of the first cylinder.

```
DtCylinderObject* cylinder2 = new DtCylinderObject( exConn, nextId++,
    DtVdc3DAttachPoint( cylinder->id(), 0.5 ), 10., DtVdcVector2D( 2., 1.
), DtVector( 0., 0., 5. ) );
```

## 9.6.3. Cuboids

*DtCuboidObject* (*DtCuboidObject.h*) is used to create cuboid objects (also known as rectangular parallelepipeds). The attachment parameter specifies the center of the cuboid. A length, width, and height must be specified. The cuboid can be offset from its initial attach point and rotated. You can specify a color and flash behavior.

The following example creates a semi-transparent yellow cube with 1.5 meter sides at a specified geocentric location.

```
DtCuboidObject* cuboid = new DtCuboidObject( exConn, nextId++,
    DtVdc3DAttachPoint( DtVector( 3139064.9, 5441231.5, 1101707.3 ) ),
    1.5, 1.5, 1.5 );

DtVdcColor seeThroughYellow = DtVdcColor::DtVdcYellow;
seeThroughYellow.setAlpha( 127 );

cuboid->setColor( seeThroughYellow );
```

### 9.6.4. Ellipsoids

*DtEllipsoidObject* (*DtEllipsoidObject.h*) is used to create ellipsoids (including spheroids and spheres). The attachment parameter specifies the center of the ellipsoid. You must specify the diameters in each dimension. The ellipsoid can be offset from its initial attach point and rotated. You can specify a color and flash behavior.

The following example creates and displays a light blue ellipsoid with a length of ten meters and equal height and width of three meters. It is attached to the end of a previously defined cylinder.

```
DtEllipsoidObject* ellipsoid = new DtEllipsoidObject( exConn, nextId++,
    DtVdc3DAttachPoint( cylinder->id(), 1. ), DtVector( 10., 5., 5. ) );

ellipsoid->setColor( DtVdcColor( 0, 0, 128 ) );
```

### 9.6.5. 3D Triangles

*DtTriangle3DObject* (*DtTriangle3DObject.h*) is used to create triangles positioned in the scene. These triangles are not projected onto the 2D overlay, so 2D effects like fill patterns are not supported. You must specify the vertices of the triangle. Attachment to simulated entities or other VR-Vantage Draw Control objects is not supported. The triangle (outline) can be drawn in any color, and can flash.

The following example creates and displays a green triangle.

```
DtTriangle3DObject* triangle = new DtTriangle3DObject( exConn, nextId++,
    DtVector( 3139064., 5441231., 1101707. ),
    DtVector( 3139064., 5441231., 1101710. ),
    DtVector( 3139064., 5441236., 1101707. ),
    DtVdcColor( DtVdcColor::DtVdcGreen ) );
```

### 9.6.6. 3D Areas

*DtArea3DObject* (*DtArea3DObject.h*) is used to create area objects. A `std::vector` of *DtVector* vertices must be passed in. These vertices must be specified in geocentric coordinates, in counterclockwise order, must be coplanar, and must specify a convex polygon. You can specify color, texture, and flashing for the area. Texture parameters include a texture directory, a texture file name, and a tiling parameter, which specifies the number of times in each dimension the texture is tiled on the area.

The following example creates the specified four-point area with a texture, tiled 10x in each direction.

```
std::vector< DtVector > fixedVerts;
DtVector pt1(-2813408.196, -4333181.164, 3728485.333);
DtVector pt2(-2813248.046, -4332934.554, 3728890.023);
DtVector pt3(-2813667.590, -4332662.117, 3728890.035);
DtVector pt4(-2813827.741, -4332908.728, 3728485.344);

fixedVerts.push_back(pt1);
fixedVerts.push_back(pt2);
fixedVerts.push_back(pt3);
fixedVerts.push_back(pt4);

DtArea3DObject* area = new DtArea3DObject( exConn, nextId++, fixedVerts
);

area->setColor(DtVdcColor::DtVdcBlue);
area->setTextureDirectory("../data/textures/");
area->setTextureFileName( "Water_Ocean_Deep_Blue.rgb" );
area->setTextureTile( 10 );
```

### 9.6.7. 3D Text

Text can be positioned in the 3D scene and then projected onto the 2D overlay using *DtText3DObject* (*DtText3DObject.h*). The lower left-hand corner of the text can be positioned in 3-space using *DtVdc3DAttachPoint*. It can also be offset from that initial position in scene coordinates. The text is then projected onto the 2D overlay, so it is not occluded by terrain. You can set color and flashing attributes.

The following example creates and displays 3D text with the message “Your text here!” one meter above an existing VR-Vantage Draw Control ellipsoid. It is blue and flashing.

```
DtText3DObject* text3D = new DtText3DObject( exConn, nextId++, "Your
text here!", DtVdc3DAttachPoint( ellipsoid->id() ), DtVector( 0., 0., 1
), DtVdcColor( DtVdcColor::DtVdcBlue ), true );
```

## 9.7. Attributes

The VR-Vantage Remote Draw API supports the display of groups of text:value pairs called Attributes. The values can be displayed in a variety of ways. The attributes themselves are organized into Attribute Groups. Attribute Groups can be placed in the 3D scene using *DtVdc3DAttachPoint* objects. Attribute Group positions are projected onto the 2D overlay, where the text and value graphics are drawn. Therefore, they are not occluded by terrain.

An Attribute Group is created by referencing an Attribute Group Template. Attribute Group Templates, in turn, are groups of Attribute Templates. Attribute Templates determine the text for each attribute that will be displayed, and the member function used to display the associated value.

Attribute Templates, Attribute Group Templates, and Attribute Groups are all VR-Vantage Draw Control objects. Attribute Group Templates are created using a constructor in the same way that other VR-Vantage Draw Control objects are created. Attribute Templates are then created using member functions provided by the Attribute Group Templates.

---

### i

VR-Forces must know about an Attribute Group Template and its corresponding Attribute Templates before an Attribute Group can be created that refers to that Attribute Group Template.

---

Attribute Groups are then created by referencing an existing Attribute Group Template, and positioned.

[Figure 9-4](#) illustrates a view of the Attribute Group Templates tab of the Remote Graphics Panel in VR-Vantage and the display of attributes for the entity and packet attributes groups.

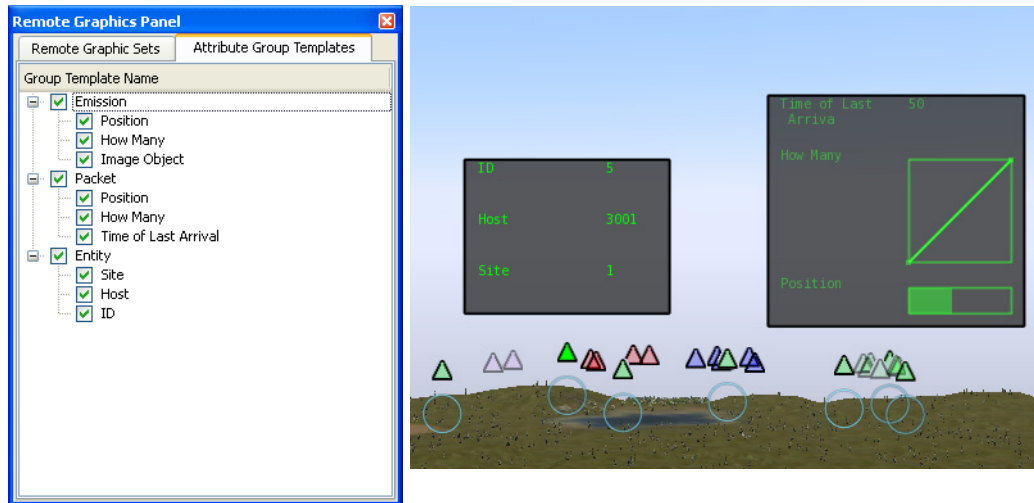


Figure 9-4. Attribute group template display

### 9.7.1. Attribute Group Templates

The *DtAttributeGroupTemplateObject* (*DtAttributeGroupTemplateObject.h*) class represents Attribute Group Templates. The constructor takes an ID (like all VR-Vantage Draw Control Objects), and a name.

### 9.7.2. Attribute Templates

To create an Attribute Template, use the *DtAttributeGroupTemplateObject* member function *createAttributeTemplate()*. It has two forms. Use the first form to create all Attribute Template types except for the Bar type Attribute Template, which requires two extra parameters. Attribute Template types are represented by the *DtAttributeTemplateObject::DtVdcAttributeType* enumeration. [Table 9-1](#) describes the *DtAttributeTemplateObject* templates.

Table 9-1: DtAttributeTemplateObject templates

| Attribute Template Type               | Description                                                                                                                                               |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>DtVdcAttributeTypeNoValue</i>      | The NoValue Attribute Template type allows for attributes with no associated value (just the Attribute Template name is displayed.)                       |
| <i>DtVdcAttributeTypeValueNumeric</i> | The ValueNumeric Attribute Template type displays a value in its numeric form.                                                                            |
| <i>DtVdcAttributeTypeValueBar</i>     | The ValueBar Attribute Template type displays a value using a bar that indicates where the value falls relative to a specified minimum and maximum value. |

Table 9-1: DtAttributeTemplateObject templates

| Attribute Template Type      | Description                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| DtVdcAttributeTypeValueGraph | The ValueGraph Attribute Template type maintains the last 10 X,Y values sent and displays them as a line graph.                                                                                     |
| DtVdcAttributeTypeBitmap     | The Bitmap Attribute Template type displays a bitmap (.bmp file) whose name is the attribute value (if given as a relative path, the filename is relative to the directory VR-Forces was run from.) |

The following example creates and tells VR-Forces about an Attribute Group Template named “Entity,” which contains two Attribute Templates: a ValueNumeric named “Speed:” and a ValueBar named “Health:” that goes from a minimum value of 0.0 to a maximum value of 1.0.

```
// First, create the Attribute Group Template
DtAttributeGroupTemplateObject* attGrpTemplate = new
    DtAttributeGroupTemplateObject( exConn, nextId++, "Entity" );

// Next, create each Attribute Template
attGrpTemplate->createAttributeTemplate( "Speed: ",
    DtAttributeTemplateObject::DtVdcAttributeValueNumeric );

// The interface knows that this is a ValueBar attribute because
// it specifies min/max values
attGrpTemplate->createAttributeTemplate( "Health: ",
    0., 1. );
attGrpTemplate->update();
```

### 9.7.3. Attribute Groups

*DtAttributeGroupObject* (*DtAttributeGroupObject.h*) is used to represent an Attribute Group. An Attribute Group is an instance of an Attribute Group Template. It is positioned in 3-space using a *DtVdc3DAttachPoint*, and can be offset from that. A pointer to the referenced Attribute Group Template is provided to the Attribute Group's constructor. You can specify the color used to display Attribute Group's name and attributes and can set it to flash.

Attribute instances are only created by VR-Forces. Values for specific attributes are set through the Attribute Group object by referring to the ID of the Attribute Template that corresponds to the Attribute value you want to set.

The following example creates an Attribute Group attached to a *DtReflectedEntity* pointed to by pEntity, based on the Attribute Group Template created in “[Attribute Templates](#),” on page 9-18. The example sets the Speed Attribute value to the speed of the reflected entity it is attached to, and sets the Health Attribute to one. It displays the Attribute Group.

```
DtAttributeGroupObject* attGroup = new
    DtAttributeGroupObject( exConn, nextId++, attGrpTemplate,
        DtVdc3DAttachPoint( entity->globalId() ) );

attGroup->setNumericAttributeValue( "Speed: ",
    sqrt( entity->esr()->velocity().magnitudeSquared() ) );

attGroup->setValueBarAttributeValue( "Health: ", 1. );

c++Group->update();
```

To update the speed Attribute for the Attribute Group and inform VR-Forces, do the following:

```
attGroup->setNumericAttributeValue( "Speed: ",
    sqrt( entity->esr()->velocity().magnitudeSquared() ) );

atGroup->update();
```

To hide all speed attributes created by using the Attribute Group Template, do this:

```
DtVrvControlMessageMarshaller<DtDataInteraction> marshaller;
DtRemoteGraphicSet_v1 rgCommand;
DtString name = attGroupTemplate.name();
name += "::Speed: ";
sprintf(rgCommand.mySetName, "%s", name.c_str());
rgCommand.myState = true;
rgCommand.myAppliesToAttribute = true;

DtDataInteraction dataInter;
marshaller.encode(&rgCommand, &dataInter);
exConn.sendStamped(dataInter);
```

## 9.8. Remote Graphic Sets

You can group VR-Vantage Draw Control objects to control their visibility. Showing a set is equivalent to showing each object and any other subordinate sets. These sets are communicated to VR-Forces and appear in VR-Forces's Remote Graphics panel. This panel allows sets to be hidden and shown.

Draw control objects can be added to or removed from sets. You can also add subordinate sets to a set. A set is created implicitly when you add an object to it.

The following example adds two draw control objects to the Squares set. They are pointed to by `DtDrawControlObject*` pointers `square1` and `square2`.

```
square1->setRemoteGraphicSet("Squares");
square2->setRemoteGraphicSet("Squares");
```

To hide everything on the shapes layer, do this:

```
DtVrvControlMessageMarshaller<DtDataInteraction> marshaller;
DtRemoteGraphicSet_v1 rgCommand;
sprintf(rgCommand.mySetName, "Squares");
rgCommand.myState = false;

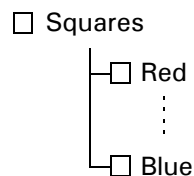
DtDataInteraction dataInter;
marshaller.encode(&rgCommand, &dataInter);
exConn.sendStamped(dataInter);
```

To show the (now hidden) squares using the squares layer:

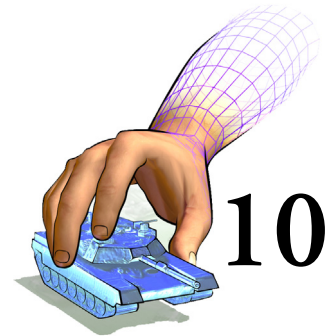
```
DtVrvControlMessageMarshaller<DtDataInteraction> marshaller;
DtRemoteGraphicSet_v1 rgCommand;
sprintf(rgCommand.mySetName, "Squares");
rgCommand.myState = true;

DtDataInteraction dataInter;
marshaller.encode(&rgCommand, &dataInter);
exConn.sendStamped(dataInter);
```

You can group sets hierarchically using double colon (::) syntax. For example, “Squares::Blue” and “Squares::Red” would result in the following hierarchy:







## ***Building and Compiling the Front-End***

This chapter explains how to build and compile the VR-Forces front-end.

|                                                     |      |
|-----------------------------------------------------|------|
| VR-Forces Front-End Libraries .....                 | 10-2 |
| Conventions .....                                   | 10-2 |
| Include Files .....                                 | 10-2 |
| Namespaces .....                                    | 10-3 |
| Naming Conventions .....                            | 10-4 |
| The Qt Toolkit .....                                | 10-5 |
| Qt Designer .....                                   | 10-5 |
| Qt Signals and Slots .....                          | 10-5 |
| Boost Notes .....                                   | 10-5 |
| NOMINMAX (Windows Only) .....                       | 10-5 |
| Boost and Qt Signals .....                          | 10-6 |
| Compiling and Linking the VR-Forces Front-End ..... | 10-6 |
| Windows .....                                       | 10-6 |
| Building Examples .....                             | 10-6 |
| Distributing Data with Plug-Ins .....               | 10-7 |

## 10.1. VR-Forces Front-End Libraries

As has been stated previously, VR-Forces uses the VR-Vantage Toolkit to build the front-end. Therefore, the front-end is considered to be a VR-Vantage application. In this chapter there are many references to VR-Vantage libraries and other software components.

VR-Vantage libraries are organized by dependencies. The VR-Vantage API uses strict naming conventions to indicate the dependency of the library. For example, *vrvVrl* is the VR-Link protocol-independent simulation library. It provides simulation specific but protocol-independent classes. The *vrvVrlQt* library provides simulation specific protocol-independent GUI classes. The *vrvVrlQt* library depends on *vrvVrl*. If you are developing an application that uses these classes and uses Qt, you can use both *vrvVrl* and *vrvVrlQt* libraries. The plug-in libraries are very small libraries, that usually have one or two functions with C language symbols. The plug-in libraries allow for runtime loading and initialization of VR-Vantage libraries. VR-Forces applications are built using all VR-Vantage libraries as plug-ins, for maximum flexibility and extensibility. *vrvVrlPlugin* is the plug-in library for the *vrvVrl* library. There is a corresponding *vrvVrlQtPlugin* library for the *vrvVrlQt* library.

For a list of libraries and details about what they do, please see the class documentation.

## 10.2. Conventions

This section describes the conventions used in the VR-Forces API for including files and using namespaces.

### 10.2.1. Include Files

All header files include the directory path relative to the *include* directory. For example, the file *./include/makVrv/DtDe.h* is included using the include line

```
#include <makVrv/DtDe.h>
```

The forward slash is used to ensure cross-platform compatibility. The convention is also followed by OpenSceneGraph and Boost.

## 10.2.2. Namespaces

All VR-Vantage API classes are in the `makVrv` namespace. When referring to a VR-Forces class in a header file, you must specify the namespace.

To predeclare a class in a header file, use the following syntax:

```
namespace makVrv
{
    Class DtDe;
}
```

To use a class in a header file, use the following syntax:

```
class Test
{
    void doSomething(makVrv::DtDe& de);
};
```

When writing code in a source file, either specify the namespace with the type or use the `using namespace` declaration, as follows:

```
void Test::doSomething(makVrv::DtDe& de) { ... }
```

or:

```
using namespace makVrv;
void Test::doSomething(DtDe& de) { ... }
```



---

Never use the `using namespace` declaration in header files. This will leak the namespace into all files that use that header and potentially cause irresolvable naming conflicts.

---

Most libraries have a secondary namespace that is used when there are duplicate names, such as the standard `init()` functions, or in the protocol-specific libraries when they share the same source code. The name of the secondary namespace matches the name of the library.

For example, *vrvCoreQt* has the secondary namespace *vrvCoreQt*, which has the library's `init()` function. To initialize the *vrvCoreQt* library, use the following code:

```
void init(makVrv::DtDe& de)
{
    // Initialize the Qt library.
    makVrv::vrvCoreQt::init(de);
}
```



---

You must initialize *vrvCoreQt* if you are building an application that links to it or a plug-in that depends on it.

---

### 10.2.3. Naming Conventions

The VR-Vantage API follows the standard MÄK policy of prefixing all classes with “Dt”.

All functions, variables, and enumerations are inside classes. Subtypes and enumerations do not get a leading Dt. All class member variables start with the word “my”. All class static variables start with the word “the”.

The VR-Vantage API uses the following conventions for naming functions:

- ♦ Functions that set the internal state of an object start with the word “set”, for example:  

```
void setSimulationTime(double);
```
- ♦ Functions that return a value through a passed reference start with the word “get”:  

```
void getLocation( double &x, double &y, double& z ) const;
```
- ♦ Functions that return a valid state value in the return type use the name of the value without any qualifying verb, for example:  

```
double simulationTime() const;
```
- ♦ Functions that return an object that may not be valid start with the word “find”, for example:  

```
DtChannel* findChannel(const std::string&);
```

The use of find is to encourage testing the validity of a variable that might be invalid. Functions that return potentially invalid variables through references and return a boolean can also use the word find.

- ♦ Functions that delete or destroy an object contain the word “destroy”, for example:  

```
destroyModelDefinition( const DtModelDefinition&)
```
- ♦ Functions that remove an object from another object’s internal management contain the word “remove”, for example:  

```
removeModel(makVrv::DtModelDriver*);
```

This may assume a transfer of ownership if the second object was the sole manager of the first object.

- ♦ Most VR-Vantage signals that are based on Boost start with the prefix “signal\_”. Signals that occur before an event contain the words ToBe and then the event, for example:  

```
signal_terrainPatchToBeDeleted
```



There are some intentional exceptions to these conventions, usually to improve clarity of the code.

---

## 10.3. The Qt Toolkit

VR-Forces uses the Qt™ Toolkit from Qt Software to build the graphical user interface (GUI). This section provides general information about the Qt toolkit and Qt Designer. For more information, please see Qt Software documentation.

### 10.3.1. Qt Designer

Qt Designer is a Qt application for designing and building user interfaces interactively. In Qt Designer, you can create custom widgets and save the results to a file. The files saved by Qt Designer (.ui files) are called forms. These files are XML files that you compile to source code using the Qt User Interface Compiler (UIC). The UIC takes a form file as input, and generates C++ header and source files as output. The resulting source files can then be compiled and linked into an application.

### 10.3.2. Qt Signals and Slots

Qt provides a mechanism for communicating between objects, known as signals and slots. Under this scheme, an object can emit a signal representing some event, and any number of objects can receive the signal if they are connected to the signal through slots (functions to handle the signal). It is a flexible alternative to traditional callback member functions. The API uses the Qt signal/slot mechanism for communicating between objects. If you plan to use this capability in your derived classes, remember the following:

- Only those classes derived from the Qt class *QObject* can use signals and slots.
- You must include the `Q_OBJECT` macro in the class definition of derived classes that contain signals and slots. Based on Qt documentation, we recommend that you include it in all classes derived from *QObject*.

## 10.4. Boost Notes

This section describes issues specific to the use of the Boost library.

### 10.4.1. NOMINMAX (Windows Only)

The latest versions of Boost include *Windows.h*, which redefines the `min` and `max` macros. The macros cause compile time problems with the standard library implementation. The temporary solution is to disable *Windows.h* and redefine the macros using the `NOMINMAX` macro. This is typically done in the Preprocessor settings for all projects.

### 10.4.2. Boost and Qt Signals

Boost and Qt both use signals. Unfortunately Qt defines a macro that conflicts with the Boost signals namespace. Boost has a workaround in which it creates a namespace alias. VR-Forces provides a header, *signalslib.h*, that implements this workaround. To use it, include *signalslib.h* in any file that uses both Qt and Boost signals before any Qt header. *vrwCoreQt* and all other VR-Forces Qt libraries do this automatically, so most developers will not need to do this.

## 10.5. Compiling and Linking the VR-Forces Front-End



---

Before you extend the VR-Forces front-end, write plug-ins, or develop new applications using the VR-Forces Toolkit, please review the licensing issues covered in “[Third-Party Software and Content](#),” on page 1-2.

---

### 10.5.1. Windows

Development in Windows is usually done using Microsoft Visual Studio. The example projects and the application source include project files to get you started.

Add the root *include* directory to the include directory list for the project:

```
vrforces\include
```

All VR-Vantage libraries are automatically linked, if necessary. No explicit linking is required. Only the *lib* directory needs to be added to the library directory list, as follows:

```
vrforces\lib
```

You must explicitly link VR-Link, OpenSceneGraph, and any other libraries that do not perform auto-linking.

### 10.5.2. Building Examples

The VR-Vantage Toolkit includes examples of plug-ins.

To build the examples:

1. Define the following environment variables:
  - QTDIR. Directory of your Qt installation
  - MAK\_VRLDIR. Directory of your VR-Link installation
  - MAK\_RTIDIR. Directory of your RTI installation (if you are building for HLA)
2. Open the project file for the example that you want to build.

For information about the individual examples, please see the Examples link in the class documentation.

## 10.6. Distributing Data with Plug-Ins

If you write a plug-in that affects schemas, model definitions, or element definitions, you might have new or modified settings that you want to install with your plug-in. You would have created the modified settings file by adding and editing the appropriate settings in VR-Forces and saving the settings to file.

You could install your settings files and ask your customer to merge in the settings by hand in the GUI, or you can merge them in as part of your installation process. VR-Forces includes a tool, `vrvMerge`, for merging settings.

The merge tool can merge files that have the following extensions:

- ♦ SMTX – schema definition file. The schema definition files provided with VR-Forces are:
  - *Model Definitions.smtx*
  - *Visual Definitions.smtx*.
- ♦ OMMX – model definition file. VR-Forces has one model definition file – *Model Definitions.ommx*.
- ♦ VODI – visual definition file. The visual definitions files provided with VR-Forces are:
  - *EntityElementDefinitions.vodi*
  - *InteractionsElementDefinitions.vodi*
  - *TacticalGraphicsElementDefinitions.vodi*.

`vrvMerge` has the following syntax:

```
INSTALL_DIR/bin/vrvMergeTool input_file merge_file  
[output_file]
```

where:

- ♦ `INSTALL_DIR` is an environment variable that specifies the VR-Forces installation directory. (VR-Forces does not add itself to the system path, so the command must specify a fully qualified path to `vrvMerge`.)
- ♦ `input_file` specifies the settings file to merge into VR-Forces.
- ♦ `merge_file` is the settings file to update.
- ♦ `output_file` is an alternative output file for the merged settings. By default, output is to the file specified by `merge_file`.

If the file extensions do not match or if an extension is not supported, `vrvMerge` prints an error.

The following example merges MyModelDefinitions into the default model definitions file.

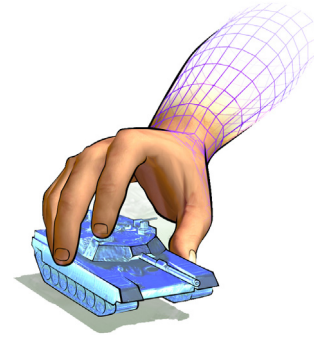
```
[INSTALL_DIR]/bin/vrvMergeTool "MyModelDefinitions.ommx"  
"Model Definitions.ommx"
```

You can run this tool as many times as you wish for model definitions.



The merge tool updates the settings files in *./appData*. If a user restores the factory settings, the merged settings will be lost. You will need to provide your customer with instructions for merging in your modified files if they get overridden.

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# Index

---

class 4-14

## Numerics

### 2D

- ellipse 9-8
- line 9-7
- object 9-6
- rectangle 9-7
- text 9-11
- triangle 9-9

### 3D

- area 9-16
- cuboid 9-14
- cylinder 9-14
- ellipsoid 9-15
- line 9-13
- objects in remote draw API 9-12
- text 9-16
- triangle 9-15

3D model, licensing 1-5

## A

- Abstract Factory pattern 8-6
- accessory, remote control 9-3
- addProps() function 6-4
- addSettingsChangeObject() function 3-12
- addSettingsInUseCheck() function 3-11
- agent 2-8, 2-11, 4-5, 4-6, 7-3
  - class 4-8
    - building 4-11
  - created in driver 5-3
  - creating object class definition for 4-10
  - creator class 4-8

- agent 2-8, 2-11, 4-5, 4-6, 7-3 (continued)
  - definition class 4-8
  - example 4-7
  - generating 4-8
  - implementation class 4-8
  - visualizer and 5-9

- Agent Manager 2-9

- agentManager() function 2-9

- aggregate, visualizing 6-7

- AlphaVelocity** parameter 6-9

- animated effect 6-10

- API 9-4

- application

- compiling and linking 10-6
  - extending 2-2
  - logic 2-5, 2-7
  - setting 3-6

- architecture, introduction 2-5

- area, 3D 9-16

- articulated part 6-2

- assembleUserInterfaceComponents() function 3-2

- Attribute Group 9-17, 9-20

- Attribute Group Template 9-17, 9-18

- Attribute Template 9-17, 9-18

- automatic save 3-7, 3-8

## B

- backing up, settings 3-9

- billboard, animated 6-10

- Boost 3-13

- signal 4-14

- signals 10-6

- Boost library 10-5

## building

- agent classes 4-11
- application 10-6
- example 10-6

**C**

## callback 10-5

## camera 4-14

## channel 2-9, 4-2, 4-14

- keyword 4-3

## channelConfigurationModified() function 4-4

## character, human 6-2

## class

- agent 4-8

*DtAddPropsRuleRecord* 6-4

*DtAggregateEchelonManager* 6-7

*DtAggregateElement* 6-7

*DtAggregateElementProcessor* 6-7

*DtAggregateSettingsRecord* 6-7

*DtAggregateVisualizerSet* 6-7

*DtArea3DObject* 9-16

*DtArticulatedModel* 2-11, 6-2

*DtAttachManager* 2-12, 2-13

*DtAttributeGroupObject* 9-20

*DtAttributeGroupTemplateObject* 9-18

*DtChannel* 2-4, 2-9

*DtChannelKeywordGridLine* 6-10

*DtChannelKeywordGridLines* 6-10

*DtChannelKeywordObject* 4-3, 4-4, 6-10

*DtChannelKeywordObjectCreator* 4-3

*DtChannelKeywordObjectFactory* 4-3, 4-4

*DtChannelKeywordObjectManager* 4-4

*DtChannelManager* 2-9

*DtChannelProxy* 2-9

*DtCharacterModel* 6-2

*DtCuboidObject* 9-14

*DtCylinderObject* 9-14

*DtDe* 2-2, 2-3, 2-4, 2-8, 2-9, 2-11, 2-12, 3-2, 3-

3, 3-5, 4-4, 5-6

*DtDeApplication* 3-2

*DtDeCommunicator* 4-2

*DtDeEntity* 6-6

*DtDeInitializer* 4-2

*DtDeSettings* 3-5, 3-6

*DtDeSettingsManager* 3-5

*DtDeSharedState* 4-2, 6-2, 6-5

*DtDeTimeManager* 6-5

*DtDialogManager* 3-2, 3-3

*DtDialogPage* 3-3

*class (continued)*

*DtDialogPager* 3-3

*DtDisDriver* 2-13

*DtDisplay* 2-9, 4-2

*DtDisplayProxy* 2-9

*DtDistributedObjectManager* 4-2

*DtDrawModel* 6-2

*DtDriver* 2-12

*DtDriverManager* 4-2

*DtEffectModel* 2-11, 6-2, 6-8

*DtEffectModelInstance* 6-8

*DtElementIDHierarchy* 6-7

*DtEllipseObject* 9-8

*DtEllipsoidObject* 9-15

*DtEmitterSystemExistenceListener* 6-8

*DtEmitterSystemRepository* 6-8

*DtEntityFacade* 2-7, 2-11, 2-12

*DtEntityListener* 5-9

*DtEntityStateListener* 5-9

*DtEnvironment* 2-11, 6-5

*DtEnvironmentRecord* 6-5

*DtEventLoop* 3-5

*DtEventProcessorInterface* 5-7

*DtExerciseConn* 9-5

*DtFeatureLayer* 2-11, 6-3, 6-4, 6-8

*DtFireInteraction* 5-9

*DtFireInteractionListener* 5-9

*DtFireInteractionVisualizer* 5-9

*DtForest* 2-11, 6-2, 6-5

*DtForestObject* 2-11, 6-5

*DtForestObjectAgent* 2-11

*DtGltStudioObjectAttributeUpdater* 7-5

*DtGltStudioVrlAttributeUpdater* 7-5

*DtGridLinesInterface* 6-10

*DtGridLinesLogic* 6-10

*DtGridLinesPage* 6-10

*DtGridLinesSettingsRecord* 6-10

*DtHla13Driver* 2-13

*DtHla1516Driver* 2-13

*DtInputDriver* 2-13, 4-15, 5-3

*DtInputDriverSignaler* 4-14, 4-15, 5-4

*DtInteractionListener* 5-9

*DtKeyAndMouseEventListener* 5-3, 5-6

*DtKeyEvent* 5-6

*DtKeyMapManager* 5-3

*DtKeyMapManagerSignaler* 5-7

*DtLine2DObject* 9-7

*DtMenu* 3-4, 3-15

*DtMenuAssembler* 3-2

*DtMenuConfiguration* 3-2

*class (continued)*

*DtMenuItem* 3-2  
*DtMenuPath* 3-2  
*DtModel* 2-11, 6-2, 6-4, 6-8  
*DtModelDefinition* 6-2  
*DtModelDefinitionManager* 6-2  
*DtModelDefinitionSchema* 6-2  
*DtModelInstance* 6-2  
*DtModelInstanceFactory* 6-3  
*DtMouseEvent* 5-6  
*DtObserver* 2-12, 4-14, 4-15  
*DtObserverAgent* 4-14  
*DtObserverConfiguration* 5-4  
*DtObserverController* 2-12, 2-13, 5-3  
*DtObserverObject* 2-8, 2-12, 4-14, 4-15, 4-16  
*DtObserverObjectAgent* 2-8, 4-15  
*DtObserverObjectManager* 4-14  
*DtOsgAdapterWidget* 5-6  
*DtOsgDecalRibbon* 6-9  
*DtOsgKeyboardAndMouseEventListener* 5-6  
*DtOsgMultiRibbon* 6-9  
*DtOsgObserverAgent* 4-14  
*DtOsgObserverObjects* 4-14  
*DtOsgParticleRibbon* 6-9  
*DtOsgRenderer* 7-4  
*DtOsgRibbon* 6-9  
*DtOsgSceneObject* 7-4  
*DtOsgSimpleModelInstance* 7-4  
*DtOsgTrackHistoryRibbon* 6-9  
*DtPersistenceControlsInterface* 3-9, 3-10  
*DtPersistentToolbarWidget* 3-9  
*DtPluginManager* 2-4  
*DtProp* 2-11, 6-4, 6-8  
*DtPropAdder* 6-4  
*DtQtEventLoop* 3-3, 3-5  
*DtQtIgTicker* 3-5  
*DtQtMenuAssembler* 3-4, 3-15  
*DtQtToolbarAssembler* 3-4, 3-15  
*DtRecordSettingsBackup* 3-9  
*DtRectangleObject* 9-7  
*DtReflectedEntity* 9-20  
*DtRenderer* 4-2, 7-4  
*DtScene* 2-8, 2-11, 2-12, 4-2, 5-3, 6-5  
*DtSceneDriver* 2-13, 5-3  
*DtSceneObject* 2-11, 6-2, 6-6, 6-8  
*DtSelectionManager* 5-3  
*DtSettingsBackup* 3-9  
*DtSettingsChangeManager* 3-9  
*DtSettingsChangeObject* 3-12  
*DtSharedHudSettings* 7-5

*class (continued)*

*DtSharedSettingsBackupManagerSignaler* 3-10  
*DtSharedSettingsChangeManager* 3-11  
*DtSimData* 4-2  
*DtSimulationSettingsDialogCreator* 3-3  
*DtSkyObject* 2-11, 6-5  
*DtSkyObjectAgent* 2-11  
*DtSpeedTreeForestDrawable* 7-4  
*DtTerrain* 2-11, 6-3  
*DtTerrainContentsPage* 3-2  
*DtTerrainLayer* 6-8  
*DtTerrainPatch* 2-11, 6-3, 6-4, 6-8  
*DtTerrainPatchObject* 2-11, 6-3, 6-5  
*DtTerrainPatchObjectAgent* 2-11  
*DtText2DObject* 9-11  
*DtText3DObject* 9-16  
*DtToolbar* 3-4, 3-15  
*DtToolbarAssembler* 3-4, 3-15  
*DtToolbarConfiguration* 3-4, 3-15  
*DtTrailEffect* 2-11  
*DtTreeModel* 6-2  
*DtTriangle2DObject* 9-9  
*DtTriangle3DObject* 9-15  
*DtUpdater* 6-6  
*DtUserInterfaceAssembler* 3-2  
*DtVdc3DAttachPoint* 9-4, 9-12, 9-13, 9-16, 9-17, 9-20  
*DtVdcColor* 9-4  
*DtVdcLine3DObject* 9-13  
*DtVdcLineSegment* 9-7  
*DtVdcVector2D* 9-4, 9-6, 9-7, 9-11, 9-14  
*DtVector* 9-4, 9-16  
*DtViewControlProcessor* 5-9  
*DtVirtualBaseClass* 5-9  
*DtVrlink2DEntitySensorVolumeVisualizer* 6-8  
*DtVrlinkAggregateExistenceListener* 6-7  
*DtVrlinkConnection* 5-8, 5-9  
*DtVrlinkEmitterStateInterceptor* 6-8  
*DtVrlinkEmitterStateListener* 6-8  
*DtVrlinkEntitySensorVolumeVisualizer* 6-8  
*DtVrvApplication* 2-3, 3-2, 3-5  
*DtVrvControlMessageMarshaller* 9-3  
*DtVrvInitializer* 3-5  
*DtWidgetBuilder* 3-4, 3-15  
*DtWindow* 2-9, 4-5  
*DtWindowManager* 2-9  
*DtWindowProxy* 2-9, 4-5  
 listener 5-9  
 model 7-4  
 naming convention 10-4

- class (continued)
  - processor 5-9
  - proxy 2-9
  - QDialog* 3-3
  - QEventLoop* 3-5
  - QObject* 10-5
  - root object 8-2
  - singleton 8-2
  - visualizer 5-9
- cloud 6-5
- cockpit display
  - channel keyword 4-3
  - updater 7-5
- command-line, Distributed Code Generator 4-13
- communicating, between objects 10-5
- compass, channel keyword 4-3
- compiling, application 10-6
- composing, scenes 6-2
- composing scene 5-2
- configuration
  - display 4-3
  - observer 5-4
- configuration file 3-16
- connection 5-9
  - exercise 5-9
- Control Interface 2-5, 2-7, 2-8, 2-12, 4-5
  - observer 2-12
  - terrain and environment 2-11
- control logic 2-12
- controller, observer 5-3, 5-6
- controlling, observer 4-16
- create(), function 3-9
- create() function 4-3
- createAttributeTemplate() function 9-18
- creating
  - object class definition 4-10
  - observer configuration 5-4
  - plug-in 2-4
  - toolbars 3-4, 3-15
- creator, agent 4-8
- Creator pattern 3-3, 6-3, 8-10
  - specification 8-11
- cuboid 9-12
  - drawing 3D remote 9-14
- custom, event processor 5-7
- custom drawable 7-4
- customizing, driver 5-10
- cylinder 9-12
  - drawing 3D remote 9-14

## **D**

- date 6-5
- decal effect 6-8
- decal ribbon 6-9
- definition
  - agent 4-8
  - model 6-2
- dependency
  - enforcing
    - enforcing, dependencies 3-11
- dependent setting 3-6
- dependent settings, managing 3-7
- design pattern 8-2
- dialog box 3-2
  - Display Settings 3-6
  - logic in 8-12
  - page 3-3
  - pager 3-3
  - saving and restoring from 3-8
  - standalone 3-3
- DI-Guy 1-3, 6-2
  - license 1-4
- directory, settings 3-5
- DIS 1-6
  - simulation driver 5-8
- disableContents() function 3-3
- display 2-9, 4-2
- display configuration 4-3
- display engine 4-2, 7-3
  - command 4-5
  - driver support 5-2
- Display Settings dialog box 3-6
- display() function 2-9
- distributed, object 6-2
- Distributed Code Generator 4-8
  - building classes 4-11
  - command-line arguments 4-13
  - creating OCD 4-10
- distributed object 4-6, 7-3
- distributed rendering 4-5
- distributed-rendering 2-5, 2-7
- distributing, model definitions and schema 6-2
- dockable widget 3-2
- drawable, custom 7-4
- drawing
  - lines 6-2
  - model 6-2
- driver 2-12, 5-2
  - customizing 5-10

- driver 2-12, 5-2 (continued)
  - distributing data 6-4
  - objects owned 5-3
  - scene 5-3
  - simulation 5-8
  - starting 5-2
  - stopping 5-2
  - tick() 2-13
- Driver Accessories pattern 5-9
- Driver layer 2-5
- DT\_PROTOCOL\_NAMESPACE macro 5-8
- DtAddFeatureLayerItem.h* header file 3-2
- DtAddPropsRuleRecord* class 6-4
- DtAddPropsRuleRecord.h* header file 6-4
- DtAggregateEchelonManager* class 6-7
- DtAggregateElement* class 6-7
- DtAggregateElementProcessor* class 6-7
- DtAggregateSettingsRecord* class 6-7
- DtAggregateVisualizerSet* class 6-7
- DtArea3DObject* class 9-16
- DtArea3DObject.h* header file 9-16
- DtArticulatedModel* class 2-11, 6-2
- DtArticulatedModel.h* header file 2-11, 6-2
- DtAttachManager* class 2-12, 2-13
- DtAttachManager.h* header file 2-12
- DtAttributeGroupObject* class 9-20
- DtAttributeGroupObject.h* header file 9-20
- DtAttributeGroupTemplateObject* class 9-18
- DtAttributeGroupTemplateObject.h* header file 9-18
- DtChannel* class 2-4, 2-9
- DtChannel.h* header file 2-4, 2-9
- DtChannelKeywordGridLine* class 6-10
- DtChannelKeywordGridLines* class 6-10
- DtChannelKeywordObject* class 4-3, 4-4, 6-10
- DtChannelKeywordObjectCreator* class 4-3
- DtChannelKeywordObjectFactory* class 4-3, 4-4
- DtChannelKeywordObjectManager* class 4-4
- DtChannelManager* class 2-9
- DtChannelManager.h* header file 2-9
- DtChannelProxy* class 2-9
- DtChannelProxy.h* header file 2-9
- DtCharacterModel* class 6-2
- DtCharacterModel.h* header file 6-2
- DtCuboidObject* class 9-14
- DtCuboidObject.h* header file 9-14
- DtCylinderObject* class 9-14
- DtCylinderObject.h* header file 9-14
- DtDe* class 2-2, 2-3, 2-4, 2-8, 2-9, 2-11, 2-12, 3-2, 3-3, 3-5, 4-4, 5-6
- DtDeApplication* class 3-2
- DtDeCommunicator* class 4-2
- DtDeCommunicator.h* header file 4-2
- DtDeEntity* class 6-6
- DtDe.h* header file 2-2
- DtDeInitializer* class 4-2
- DtDeInitializer.h* header file 4-2
- DtDeSettings* class 3-5, 3-6
- DtDeSettings.h* header file 3-5, 3-6
- DtDeSettingsManager* class 3-5
- DtDeSettingsManager.h* header file 3-5
- DtDeSharedState* class 4-2, 6-2, 6-5
- DtDeSharedState.h* header file 4-2, 6-2
- DtDeTimeManager* class 6-5
- DtDeTimeManager.h* header file 6-5
- DtDialogManager* class 3-2, 3-3
- DtDialogManager.h* header file 3-2
- DtDialogPage* class 3-3
- DtDialogPage.h* header file 3-3
- DtDialogPager* class 3-3
- DtDialogPager.h* header file 3-3
- DtDisDriver* class 2-13
- DtDisDriver.h* header file 2-13
- DtDisplay* class 2-9, 4-2
- DtDisplay.h* header file 2-9, 4-2
- DtDisplayProxy* class 2-9
- DtDisplayProxy.h* header file 2-9
- DtDistributedObjectManager* class 4-2
- DtDrawModel* class 6-2
- DtDrawModel.h* header file 6-2
- DtDriver* class 2-12
- DtDriver.h* header file 2-12
- DtDriverManager* class 4-2
- DtDriverManager.h* header file 4-2
- DtEffectModel* class 2-11, 6-2, 6-8
- DtEffectModel.h* header file 2-11, 6-2
- DtEffectModelInstance* class 6-8
- DtEffectModelInstance.h* header file 6-8
- DtElementIDHierarchy* class 6-7
- DtEllipseObject* class 9-8
- DtEllipseObject.h* header file 9-8
- DtEllipsoidObject* class 9-15
- DtEllipsoidObject.h* header file 9-15
- DtEmitterSystemExistenceListener* class 6-8
- DtEmitterSystemRepository* class 6-8
- DtEntityFacade* class 2-7, 2-11, 2-12
- DtEntityFacade.h* header file 2-7, 2-8
- DtEntityListener* class 5-9
- DtEntityStateListener* class 5-9
- DtEnvironment* class 2-11, 6-5
- DtEnvironment.h* header file 2-11, 6-5

*DtEnvironmentRecord* class 6-5  
*DtEventLoop* class 3-5  
*DtEventLoop.h* header file 3-5  
*DtEventProcessorInterface* class 5-7  
*DtEventProcessorInterface.h* header file 5-7  
*DtExerciseConn* class 9-5  
*DtFeatureLayer* class 2-11, 6-3, 6-4, 6-8  
*DtFeatureLayer.h* header file 2-11  
*DtFireInteraction* class 5-9  
*DtFireInteractionListener* class 5-9  
*DtFireInteractionVisualizer* class 5-9  
*DtForest* class 2-11, 6-2, 6-5  
*DtForest.h* header file 2-11, 6-2, 6-5  
*DtForestObject* class 2-11, 6-5  
*DtForestObjectAgent* class 2-11  
*DtForestObject.h* header file 2-11, 6-5  
*DtGltfStudioObjectAttributeUpdater* class 7-5  
*DtGltfStudioVrlAttributeUpdater* class 7-5  
*DtGridLinesInterface* class 6-10  
*DtGridLinesLogic* class 6-10  
*DtGridLinesPage* class 6-10  
*DtGridLinesSettingsRecord* class 6-10  
*DtHla13Driver* class 2-13  
*DtHla13Driver.h* header file 2-13  
*DtHla1516Driver* class 2-13  
*DtHla1516Driver.h* header file 2-13  
*DtInputDriver* class 2-13, 4-15, 5-3  
*DtInputDriver.h* header file 2-13, 5-3  
*DtInputDriverSignaler* class 4-15, 5-4  
*DtInputDriverSignaler.h* header file 4-14, 5-4  
*DtInteractionListener* class 5-9  
*DtKeyAndMouseEventListener* class 5-3, 5-6  
*DtKeyAndMouseEventListener.h* header file 5-3  
*DtKeyEvent* class 5-6  
*DtKeyEvent.h* header file 5-6  
*DtKeyMapManager* class 5-3  
*DtKeyMapManager.h* header file 5-3  
*DtKeyMapManagerSignaler* class 5-7  
*DtKeyMapManagerSignaler.h* header file 5-7  
*DtLine2DObject* class 9-7  
*DtLine2DObject.h* header file 9-7  
*DtLine3DObject.h* header file 9-13  
*DtMainMenus.h* header file 3-2  
*DtMenu* class 3-4, 3-15  
*DtMenuAssembler* class 3-2  
*DtMenuAssembler.h* header file 3-2  
*DtMenuConfiguration* class 3-2  
*DtMenuConfiguration.h* header file 3-2  
*DtMenuItem* class 3-2  
*DtMenuItemBuilder.h* header file 3-2  
*DtMenuPath* class 3-2  
*DtMenuPath.h* header file 3-2  
*DtModel* class 2-11, 6-2, 6-4, 6-8  
*DtModelDefinition* class 6-2  
*DtModelDefinition.h* header file 6-2  
*DtModelDefinitionManager* class 6-2  
*DtModelDefinitionManager.h* header file 6-2  
*DtModelDefinitionSchema* class 6-2  
*DtModelDefinitionSchema.h* header file 6-2  
*DtModel.h* header file 6-2  
*DtModelInstance* class 6-2  
*DtModelInstanceFactory* class 6-3  
*DtModelInstanceFactory.h* header file 6-3  
*DtModelInstance.h* header file 6-2  
*DtMouseEvent* class 5-6  
*DtMouseEvent.h* header file 5-6  
*DtObserver* class 2-12, 4-14, 4-15  
*DtObserverAgent* class 4-14  
*DtObserverConfiguration* class 5-4  
*DtObserverConfiguration.h* header file 5-4  
*DtObserverController* class 2-12, 2-13, 5-3  
*DtObserverController.h* header file 2-12, 5-3  
*DtObserver.h* header file 2-12, 4-14  
*DtObserverObject* class 2-8, 2-12, 4-14, 4-15, 4-16  
*DtObserverObjectAgent* class 2-8, 4-15  
*DtObserverObject.h* header file 2-8, 2-12, 4-14  
*DtObserverObjectManager* class 4-14  
*DtObserverObjectManager.h* header file 4-14  
*DtOsgAdapterWidget* class 5-6  
*DtOsgDecalRibbon* class 6-9  
*DtOsgDecalRibbon.h* header file 6-9  
*DtOsgKeyboardAndMouseEventListener* class 5-6  
*DtOsgMultiRibbon* class 6-9  
*DtOsgMultiRibbon.h* header file 6-9  
*DtOsgObserverAgent* class 4-14  
*DtOsgObserverObject.h* header file 4-14  
*DtOsgObserverObjects* class 4-14  
*DtOsgParticleRibbon* class 6-9  
*DtOsgParticleRibbon.h* header file 6-9  
*DtOsgRenderer* class 7-4  
*DtOsgRenderer.h* header file 7-4  
*DtOsgRibbon* class 6-9  
*DtOsgRibbon.h* header file 6-9  
*DtOsgSceneObject* class 7-4  
*DtOsgSceneObject.h* header file 7-4  
*DtOsgSimpleModelInstance* class 7-4  
*DtOsgSimpleModelInstance.h* header file 7-4  
*DtOsgTrackHistoryRibbon* class 6-9  
*DtOsgTrackHistoryRibbon.h* header file 6-9  
*DtPersistenceControlsInterface* class 3-9, 3-10

- 
- DtPersistentToolbarWidget* class 3-9
  - DtPluginManager* class 2-4
  - DtPluginManager.h* header file 2-4
  - DtProp* class 2-11, 6-4, 6-8
  - DtPropAdder* class 6-4
  - DtPropAdder.h* header file 6-4
  - DtProp.h* header file 2-11
  - DtQtEventLoop* class 3-3, 3-5
  - DtQtEventLoop.h* header file 3-5
  - DtQtIgTicker* class 3-5
  - DtQtIgTicker.h* header file 3-5
  - DtQtMenuAssembler* class 3-4, 3-15
  - DtQtToolbarAssembler* class 3-4, 3-15
  - DtRecordSettingsBackup* class 3-9
  - DtRectangleObject* class 9-7
  - DtRectangleObject.h* header file 9-7
  - DtReflectedEntity* class 9-20
  - DtRenderer* class 4-2, 7-4
  - DtRenderer.h* header file 4-2, 7-4
  - DtScene* class 2-8, 2-11, 2-12, 4-2, 5-3, 6-5
  - DtSceneDriver* class 2-13, 5-3
  - DtSceneDriver.h* header file 2-13, 5-3
  - DtScene.h* header file 2-8, 4-2, 5-3
  - DtSceneObject* class 2-11, 6-2, 6-6, 6-8
  - DtSceneObject.h* header file 2-11
  - DtSelectionManager* class 5-3
  - DtSelectionManager.h* header file 5-3
  - DtSettingBackup.h* header file 3-9
  - DtSettingsBackup* class 3-9
  - DtSettingsBackupManager.h* header file 3-9
  - DtSettingsChangeManager* class 3-9
  - DtSettingsChangeObject* class 3-12
  - DtSharedHudSettings* class 7-5
  - DtSharedSettingsBackupManagerSignaler* class 3-10
  - DtSharedSettingsChangeManager* class 3-11
  - DtSimData* class 4-2
  - DtSimData.h* header file 4-2
  - DtSimulationSettingsDialogCreator* class 3-3
  - DtSimulationSettingsDialog.h* header file 3-3
  - DtSkyObject* class 2-11, 6-5
  - DtSkyObjectAgent* class 2-11
  - DtSkyObject.h* header file 2-11
  - DtSpeedTreeDrawable.h* header file 7-4
  - DtSpeedTreeForestDrawable* class 7-4
  - DtTerrain* class 2-11, 6-3
  - DtTerrainContentsPage* class 3-2
  - DtTerrainContentsPage* class 3-2
  - DtTerrain.h* header file 2-11, 6-3
  - DtTerrainLayer* class 6-8
  - DtTerrainPatch* class 2-11, 6-3, 6-4, 6-8
  - DtTerrainPatch.h* header file 2-11, 6-3
  - DtTerrainPatchObject* class 2-11, 6-3, 6-5
  - DtTerrainPatchObjectAgent* class 2-11
  - DtTerrainPatchObject.h* header file 2-11, 6-3
  - DtText2DObject* class 9-11
  - DtText2DObject.h* header file 9-11
  - DtText3DObject* class 9-16
  - DtText3DObject.h* header file 9-16
  - DtToolbar* class 3-4, 3-15
  - DtToolbarAssembler* class 3-4, 3-15
  - DtToolbarConfiguration* class 3-4, 3-15
  - DtTrailEffect* class 2-11
  - DtTrailEffect.h* header file 2-11
  - DtTreeModel* class 6-2
  - DtTreeModel.h* header file 6-2
  - DtTriangle2DObject* class 9-9
  - DtTriangle2DObject.h* header file 9-9
  - DtTriangle3DObject* class 9-15
  - DtTriangle3DObject.h* header file 9-15
  - DtUpdater* class 6-6
  - DtUserInterfaceAssembler* class 3-2
  - DtUserInterfaceAssembler.h* header file 3-2
  - DtVdc3DAttachPoint* class 9-4, 9-12, 9-13, 9-16, 9-17, 9-20
  - DtVdc3DAttachPoint.h* header file 9-12
  - DtVdcAttributeType* enumeration 9-18
  - DtVdcColor* class 9-4
  - DtVdcColor.h* header file 9-4
  - DtVdcLine3DObject* class 9-13
  - DtVdcLineSegment* class 9-7
  - DtVdcLineStyle* enumeration 9-7
  - DtVdcSegmentArrowStyle* enumeration 9-7
  - DtVdcVector2D* class 9-4, 9-6, 9-7, 9-11, 9-14
  - DtVdcVector2D.h* header file 9-4
  - DtVector* class 9-4, 9-16
  - DtViewControlProcessor* class 5-9
  - DtVirtualBaseClass* class 5-9
  - DtVirtualBaseClass.h* header file 5-9
  - DtVrlink2DEntitySensorVolumeVisualizer* class 6-8
  - DtVrlinkAggregateExistenceListener* class 6-7
  - DtVrlinkConnection* class 5-8, 5-9
  - DtVrlinkConnection.h* header file 5-9
  - DtVrlinkEmitterStateInterceptor* class 6-8
  - DtVrlinkEmitterStateListener* class 6-8
  - DtVrlinkEntityListener.h* header file 5-9
  - DtVrlinkEntitySensorVolumeVisualizer* class 6-8
  - DtVrlinkEntityStateListener.h* header file 5-9
  - DtVrlinkFireInteractionVisualizer.h* header file 5-9
  - DtVrvApplication* class 2-3, 3-2, 3-5
  - DtVrvApplication.h* header file 2-3

*DtVrvControlMessageMarshaller* class 9-3  
*DtVrvControlMessageMarshaller.h* header file 9-3  
*DtVrvInitializer* class 3-5  
*DtVrvInitializer.h* header file 3-5  
*DtWidgetBuilder* class 3-4, 3-15  
*DtWindow* class 2-9, 4-5  
*DtWindow.h* header file 2-9, 4-5  
*DtWindowManager* class 2-9  
*DtWindowManager.h* header file 2-9  
*DtWindowProxy* class 2-9, 4-5  
*DtWindowProxy.h* header file 2-9, 4-5

## **E**

effect 6-2  
     animated 6-10  
     environmental 6-5  
     lighting 6-5  
     particle 6-9  
     special 6-8  
     types of 6-8  
 effect root node 6-9  
 effects root 6-9  
 ellipse  
     drawing 2D remote 9-8  
     remote draw 9-6  
 ellipsoid 9-12  
     drawing 3D remote 9-15  
 embedded window 4-2  
 emission, electromagnetic 6-8  
 emitter system 6-8  
 enableContents() function 3-3  
 entity 2-11, 6-6  
 enumeration  
     DtVdcAttributeType 9-18  
     DtVdcLineStyle 9-7  
     DtVdcSegmentArrowStyle 9-7  
 environment 2-11  
 environmental effect 6-5  
 event  
     keyboard 5-6  
     mouse 5-6  
     queue, OSG 5-6  
 event listener  
     mouse and keyboard, ownership of 5-3  
 event loop 3-5  
     Qt 3-3, 3-5  
 event processor  
     custom 5-7  
     queue 5-7

example 2-4  
     building 10-6  
     exampleCreateObserver 5-4  
     exampleCreator 8-10  
     exampleElementDefinition 3-11, 3-12  
     exampleEventProcessor 5-7  
     exampleKeyMap 5-7  
     exampleToolbar 3-4, 3-15  
     model loading 2-8  
     terrain loading 2-8  
 exampleCreateObserver example 5-4  
 exampleCreator 8-10  
 exampleElementDefinition, example 3-11, 3-12  
 exampleEventProcessor example 5-7  
 exampleKeyMap example 5-7  
 exampleToolbar, example 3-4, 3-15  
 exercise connection 5-9  
 exporting, settings 3-7, 3-8  
 extending  
     application 2-2  
     driver 5-10  
 extension, OSG 7-4  
 extracting geometry 6-4  
 eyepoint. See observer

## **F**

facade object 6-2  
 Factory Method pattern 8-10  
 Factory pattern 8-6  
     specification 8-10  
 feature, point 6-4  
 feature layer 2-11, 6-4  
 file  
     configuration 3-16  
     formats 3-16  
     header 10-2  
     include 10-2  
     input and output 3-13  
     ocdx 4-9  
     ui 10-5  
 filename parameter 6-10  
 findDisplay() function 2-9  
 findDisplayByIndex() function 2-9  
 fog 6-5  
 forest 2-11, 6-2  
     SpeedTree 6-5  
 form 10-5  
 format, file 3-16  
 frame locking 4-5

fullscreen window 4-2  
 function  
   addProps() 6-4  
   addSettingsChangeObject() 3-12  
   addSettingsInUseCheck() 3-11  
   agentManager() 2-9  
   assembleUserInterfaceComponents() 3-2  
   channelConfigurationModified() 4-4  
   create() 3-9, 4-3  
   createAttributeTemplate() 9-18  
   disableContents() 3-3  
   display() 2-9  
   enableContents() 3-3  
   findDisplay() 2-9  
   findDisplayByIndex() 2-9  
   initDeModule() 2-3, 2-4  
   instance() 4-4  
   keyword() 4-3  
   masterModeMenuConfig() 3-2  
   naming convention 10-4  
   objectToBeDestroyed() 4-4  
   processKeyboardEvent() 5-7  
   processKeyEvent() 5-6  
   processMouseEvent() 5-6, 5-7  
   registerUpdater() 7-5  
   registerWidgetBuilder() 3-4, 3-15  
   restore() 3-9  
   save() 3-8  
   saveDefaults() 3-8  
   scene() 2-11  
   setDateAndTime() 6-5  
   setModelDefinition() 6-2  
   setSettingsDirectory() 3-5  
   setTimeScale() 6-5  
   settingInUse() 3-11  
   slaveModeMenuConfig() 3-2  
   windowConfigurationChanged() 4-4

## G

generating  
   agent classes 4-11  
   agent code 4-8  
 Genlock 4-5  
 geode node 7-4  
 geometry 6-2, 7-2  
   extracting 6-4  
 GL Studio 1-3  
   cockpit display updater 7-5  
   license 1-4

GL Studio 1-3 (continued)  
   Visualizer 7-5  
 graphical user interface. See GUI  
 group node 7-4  
 GUI, architecture 3-2

## H

header file  
   *DtAddFeatureLayerItem.h* 3-2  
   *DtAddPropsRuleRecord.h* 6-4  
   *DtArea3DObject.h* 9-16  
   *DtArticulatedModel.h* 2-11, 6-2  
   *DtAttachManager.h* 2-12  
   *DtAttributeGroupObject.h* 9-20  
   *DtAttributeGroupTemplateObject.h* 9-18  
   *DtChannel.h* 2-4, 2-9  
   *DtChannelManager.h* 2-9  
   *DtChannelProxy.h* 2-9  
   *DtCharacterModel.h* 6-2  
   *DtCuboidObject.h* 9-14  
   *DtCylinderObject.h* 9-14  
   *DtDeCommunicator.h* 4-2  
   *DtDe.h* 2-2  
   *DtDeInitializer.h* 4-2  
   *DtDeSettings.h* 3-5, 3-6  
   *DtDeSettingsManager.h* 3-5  
   *DtDeSharedState.h* 4-2, 6-2  
   *DtDeTimeManager.h* 6-5  
   *DtDialogManager.h* 3-2  
   *DtDialogPage.h* 3-3  
   *DtDialogPager.h* 3-3  
   *DtDisDriver.h* 2-13  
   *DtDisplay.h* 2-9, 4-2  
   *DtDisplayProxy.h* 2-9  
   *DtDrawModel.h* 6-2  
   *DtDriver.h* 2-12  
   *DtDriverManager.h* 4-2  
   *DtEffectModel.h* 2-11, 6-2  
   *DtEffectModelInstance.h* 6-8  
   *DtEllipseObject.h* 9-8  
   *DtEllipsoidObject.h* 9-15  
   *DtEntityFacade.h* 2-7, 2-8  
   *DtEnvironment.h* 2-11, 6-5  
   *DtEventLoop.h* 3-5  
   *DtEventProcessorInterface.h* 5-7  
   *DtFeatureLayer.h* 2-11  
   *DtForest.h* 2-11, 6-2, 6-5  
   *DtForestObject.h* 2-11, 6-5  
   *DtHla13Driver.h* 2-13

*header file (continued)*

*DtHla1516Driver.h* 2-13  
*DtInputDriver.h* 2-13, 5-3  
*DtInputDriverSignaler.h* 4-14, 5-4  
*DtKeyAndMouseEventListener.h* 5-3  
*DtKeyEvent.h* 5-6  
*DtKeyMapManager.h* 5-3  
*DtKeyMapManagerSignaler.h* 5-7  
*DtLine2DObject.h* 9-7  
*DtLine3DObject.h* 9-13  
*DtMainMenus.h* 3-2  
*DtMenuAssembler.h* 3-2  
*DtMenuConfiguration.h* 3-2  
*DtMenuItemBuilder.h* 3-2  
*DtMenuPath.h* 3-2  
*DtModelDefinition.h* 6-2  
*DtModelDefinitionManager.h* 6-2  
*DtModelDefinitionSchema.h* 6-2  
*DtModel.h* 6-2  
*DtModelInstanceFactory.h* 6-3  
*DtModelInstance.h* 6-2  
*DtMouseEvent.h* 5-6  
*DtObserverConfiguration.h* 5-4  
*DtObserverController.h* 2-12, 5-3  
*DtObserver.h* 2-12, 4-14  
*DtObserverObject.h* 2-8, 2-12, 4-14  
*DtObserverObjectManager.h* 4-14  
*DtOsgDecalRibbon.h* 6-9  
*DtOsgMultiRibbon.h* 6-9  
*DtOsgObserverObject.h* 4-14  
*DtOsgParticleRibbon.h* 6-9  
*DtOsgRenderer.h* 7-4  
*DtOsgRibbon.h* 6-9  
*DtOsgSceneObject.h* 7-4  
*DtOsgSimpleModelInstance.h* 7-4  
*DtOsgTrackHistoryRibbon.h* 6-9  
*DtPluginManager.h* 2-4  
*DtPropAdder.h* 6-4  
*DtProp.h* 2-11  
*DtQtEventLoop.h* 3-5  
*DtQtIgTicker.h* 3-5  
*DtRectangleObject.h* 9-7  
*DtRenderer.h* 4-2, 7-4  
*DtSceneDriver.h* 2-13, 5-3  
*DtScene.h* 2-8, 4-2, 5-3  
*DtSceneObject.h* 2-11  
*DtSelectionManager.h* 5-3  
*DtSettingBackup.h* 3-9  
*DtSettingsBackupManager.h* 3-9  
*DtSimData.h* 4-2

*header file (continued)*

*DtSimulationSettingsDialog.h* 3-3  
*DtSkyObject.h* 2-11  
*DtSpeedTreeDrawable.h* 7-4  
*DtTerrain.h* 2-11, 6-3  
*DtTerrainPatch.h* 2-11, 6-3  
*DtTerrainPatchObject.h* 2-11, 6-3  
*DtText2DObject.h* 9-11  
*DtText3DObject.h* 9-16  
*DtTrailEffect.h* 2-11  
*DtTreeModel.h* 6-2  
*DtTriangle2DObject.h* 9-9  
*DtTriangle3DObject.h* 9-15  
*DtUserInterfaceAssembler.h* 3-2  
*DtVdc3DAttachPoint.h* 9-12  
*DtVdcColor.h* 9-4  
*DtVdcVector2D.h* 9-4  
*DtVirtualBaseClass.h* 5-9  
*DtVrlinkConnection.h* 5-9  
*DtVrlinkEntityListener.h* 5-9  
*DtVrlinkEntityStateListener.h* 5-9  
*DtVrlinkFireInteractionVisualizer.h* 5-9  
*DtVrvApplication.h* 2-3  
*DtVrvControlMessageMarshaller.h* 9-3  
*DtVrvInitializer.h* 3-5  
*DtWindow.h* 2-9, 4-5  
*DtWindowManager.h* 2-9  
*DtWindowProxy.h* 2-9, 4-5  
*vrvControlToolkitDataTypes.h* 9-3  
*Windows.h* 10-5  
header files 10-2  
HLA 1-6  
    simulation driver 5-8  
HUD. See cockpit display  
human character 6-2  
Humble Dialog pattern 8-12  
    specification 8-14

**I**

implementation, agent 4-8  
importing, settings 3-7, 3-8  
include files 10-2  
independent setting, managing 3-8  
`initDeModule()` function 2-3, 2-4  
input, file 3-13  
input driver  
    driver, input 5-3  
    event processor queue 5-7  
    observer configurations 5-4

input driver (continued)  
   signals 5-4  
 instance() function 4-4  
 invalid, setting 3-7

## K

Key Map Manager 5-3, 5-6, 5-7  
   signaler 5-7  
 keyboard, listener 5-3, 5-6  
 keyboard and mouse listener 5-6  
 keyword, channel 4-3  
 keyword() function 4-3

## L

layer  
   draw 9-21  
   feature 2-11, 6-4  
 library  
   Boost 10-5  
   makArchive 3-13  
   third party, licenses for 2-3  
   vrvCore 3-2  
   vrvOsg 6-9  
   vrvVrl 10-2  
   vrvVrlPlugin 10-2  
   vrvVrlQt 10-2  
   vrvVrlQtPlugin 10-2  
 license  
   3D models 1-5  
   DI-Guy 1-4  
   GL Studio 1-4  
   OpenSceneGraph 1-6  
   osgEarth 1-6  
   SilverLining 1-3  
   SpeedTree 1-5  
   third party library 2-3  
 lifeform 6-2  
 lighting effect 6-5  
 line 9-12  
   drawing 6-2  
   drawing 2D remote 9-7  
   drawing 3D remote 9-13  
   remote draw 9-6  
 linking, application 10-6  
 listener  
   class 5-9  
   event 5-3  
   keyboard and mouse 5-6

loading, settings 3-6  
 logic  
   application 2-5, 2-7  
   connecting to visual system 5-2  
   control 2-12  
   dialog box in 8-12

## M

macro, DT\_PROTOCOL\_NAMESPACE 5-8  
 makArchive 3-13  
 makArchives 6-5  
 makVrv namespace 5-8, 10-3  
 manager  
   key map 5-3, 5-7  
   selection 5-3  
 managing  
   environmental effects 6-5  
   time and date 6-5  
 masterModeMenuConfig() function 3-2  
 menu 3-2, 3-4, 3-15  
 menu system 3-2  
 merging, settings 3-7  
 Microsoft Visual Studio 10-6  
 model 6-2  
   class 6-2, 7-4  
   creating, example 2-8  
   drawing 6-2  
 model definition 6-2  
   distributing 6-2  
 model definition schema 6-2  
   distributing 6-2  
 mouse, listener 5-3, 5-6

## N

namespace 10-3  
   makVrv 5-8, 10-3  
   secondary 10-3  
 naming convention 10-4  
 networking 1-6  
 node 2-5  
   custom group 7-4  
   effect root 6-9  
   object root 6-5  
   OSG 6-3, 6-9  
   terrain root 6-3  
   transformation 7-4

**O**

- object
  - 2D and 3D 9-6
  - 3D 9-12
  - agent 4-5
  - channel keyword 4-3
  - communication in GUI 10-5
  - distributed 4-6, 6-2
  - entity and prop 2-11
  - facade 6-2
  - proxy 4-5
  - scene 2-8, 6-2
- object class definition 4-9
  - creating 4-10
- Object Manager 4-6
- object root node 6-5
- objectToBeDestroyed() function 4-4
- observer 2-12, 4-14
  - API 4-15
  - controller 5-3
  - controlling 4-16
  - ownership of 5-3
- observer configuration, creating 5-4
- observer configuration list 5-4
- observer controller 5-6
- Observer Object Manager 4-14
- OCD 4-9
- ocdx file 4-9
- OpenGL 2-5, 7-2, 7-4
- OpenSceneGraph 1-3, 2-5, 7-2, 7-4
  - license 1-6
- OSG 2-5, 7-4
  - extensions 7-4
  - node 6-9
  - renderer 7-4
- OSG node 6-3
- osgEarth 1-3
  - license 1-6
- osgParticle package 6-9
- output, file 3-13

**P**

- page, dialog box 3-2, 3-3
- pager 3-3
- panel, Remote Graphics 9-21
- parallelepiped 9-14
- parameter
  - AlphaVelocity** 6-9

## parameter (continued)

- filename 6-10
- ParticleVelocity** 6-9
- terrainCoordinateSystem** 6-3
- terrainCoordinateSystemParameters** 6-3
- parent scene object 6-9
- particle effect 6-8, 6-9
- particle emitter node 6-9
- particle geometry node 6-9
- particle ribbon 6-9
- ParticleVelocity** parameter 6-9
- pattern
  - Abstract Factory 8-6
  - Creator 3-3, 8-10
  - Driver Accessories 5-9
  - Factory 8-6
  - Factory Method 8-10
  - Humble Dialog 8-12
  - Rooted Singleton 8-2, 8-10
  - Signaler 8-4
  - Singleton 8-2
- plug-in 2-2
  - benefits 2-3
  - creating 2-4
- Plug-in Manager 2-4
- point feature, loading 6-4
- precipitation 6-5
- Presagis 1-5
- processKeyboardEvent() function 5-7
- processKeyEvent() function 5-6
- processMouseEvent() function 5-6, 5-7
- processor 5-9
  - class 5-9
- prop 2-11, 6-8
  - creating from point feature 6-4
  - extracting 6-4
  - feature layer 6-4
- proxy 4-5
  - classes 2-9

**Q**

- Q\_OBJECT** macro 10-5
- QDialog* class 3-3
- QEventLoop* class 3-5
- QObject* class 10-5
- Qt 1-6
  - Designer 10-5
  - event loop 3-3, 3-5
  - signals 10-6

Qt 1-6 (continued)  
 toolkit 10-5  
 User Interface Compiler 10-5

queue  
 event, OSG 5-6  
 event processor 5-7

## R

rain 6-5  
 Real DB 1-5  
 record 3-13  
 rectangle  
   drawing 2D remote 9-7  
   remote draw 9-6  
 registerUpdater(), function 7-5  
 registerWidgetBuilder() function 3-4, 3-15  
 remote, draw control 9-4  
 remote control 9-3  
 Remote Draw API 9-4  
   attributes 9-17  
   draw layer 9-21  
 Remote Graphics panel 9-21  
 render, scene 2-5  
 renderer 7-2, 7-4  
   OSG 7-4  
 rendering 7-2  
   distributed 4-5  
 Rendering System 2-5, 2-7, 2-8, 2-11, 2-12  
   classes 2-9  
 restore(), function 3-9  
 restoring, settings 3-7, 3-8, 3-9  
 reverting, settings 3-7, 3-8, 3-9  
 ribbon effect 6-8, 6-9  
   track history 6-9  
 root node 7-2  
 root object class 8-2  
 Rooted Singleton pattern 8-2, 8-10  
   specification 8-3  
 running state 5-2  
 runtime, settings 3-5

## S

save() function 3-8  
 saveDefaults() function 3-8  
 saving, settings 3-6, 3-7, 3-8  
 scale 6-2  
 scene 2-11  
   composing 5-2, 6-2

scene 2-11 (continued)  
   definition 6-2  
   driver 5-3  
   rendered 4-2  
   rendering 2-5, 7-4  
   time and date 6-5  
 scene graph 2-5, 6-5, 7-2, 7-4  
   changing 6-2  
   effect root node 6-9  
   terrain root node 6-3  
 scene object 2-8, 6-2, 6-6  
 scene() function 2-11  
 schema 6-2  
 secondary namespace 10-3  
 Selection Manager 5-3  
 sensor volume, electromagnetic emissions 6-8  
 serialization 3-13  
 set 9-21  
 setDateAndTime() function 6-5  
 setModelDefinition() function 6-2  
 setSettingsDirectory() function 3-5  
 setTimeScale() function 6-5  
 setting  
   application 3-6  
   backing up 3-9  
   dependent 3-6  
     managing 3-7  
   independent, managing 3-8  
   invalid 3-7  
   restoring 3-9  
   reverting 3-9  
   saving 3-6  
 settingInUse() function 3-11  
 settings  
   directory structure 3-5  
   loading and saving 3-6  
   runtime 3-5  
 Settings Manager 3-5  
 Shared Settings Change Manager 3-11, 3-12  
 signal 10-5  
   Boost 4-14  
   Boost and Qt 10-6  
   input driver 5-4  
   Key Map Manager 5-7  
   signal\_changeInvoked 3-12  
 signal\_changeInvoked, signal 3-12  
 signal\_currentObserverChanged 5-5  
 signal\_entityIndicatorsToggled 5-5  
 signal\_gainPrecisionChanged 4-15  
 signal\_inputDriverAboutToBeDestroyed 5-4

signal\_inputDriverCreated 5-4  
 signal\_keyMapAboutToBeDestroyed 5-7  
 signal\_keyMapChanged 5-7  
 signal\_keyMapCreated 5-7  
 signal\_linearScaledSpeedGainChanged 4-14  
 signal\_linearUnscaledSpeedGainChanged 4-14  
 signal\_objectAttached 4-14  
 signal\_objectsDetached 4-14  
 signal\_observerAboutToBeDestroyed 5-4  
 signal\_observerCreated 4-15, 5-4  
 signal\_orbitSpeedGainChanged 4-15  
 signal\_rightClickSelectionMenuRequest 5-5  
 signal\_rightClickTerrainMenuRequest 5-5  
 signal\_rotationSpeedGainChanged 4-15  
 signal\_speedScalingChanged 4-15  
 signal\_terrainConstraintChanged 4-15  
 signal\_viewControlsEnable 5-5  
 signaler, Key Map Manager 5-7  
 Signaler pattern 8-4  
     specification 8-5  
 SilverLining 1-3, 7-4  
     license 1-3  
     state 6-5  
 Simthetiq 1-5  
 simulation driver 5-8  
     shared source files 5-8  
     state, stopped and running 5-8  
 singleton class 8-2  
 Singleton pattern 8-2  
 slaveModeMenuConfig() function 3-2  
 slot 10-5  
 snow 6-5  
 source file, shared 5-8  
 special effects 6-2, 6-8  
 SpeedTree 1-3, 6-2, 7-4  
     forest 6-5  
     license 1-5  
 sphere 9-15  
 spheroid 9-15  
 standalone 2-2  
 standalone dialog box 3-3  
 starting, driver 5-2  
 state 7-2  
     driver 5-2  
 Stealth Control PDU 9-3  
 stopped state 5-2  
 stopping, driver 5-2

## T

TCP socket 4-6  
 terrain 2-11, 6-3  
     loading, example 2-8  
 terrain patch 2-11, 6-3  
 terrainCoordinateSystem parameter 6-3  
 terrainCoordinateSystemParameters parameter 6-3  
 TerraSim 1-5  
 Terrex 1-5  
 text 9-12  
     drawing  
         2D 9-11  
         3D remote 9-16  
     remote draw 9-6  
 texture 6-2  
     decal ribbon 6-9  
 ticking, driver 2-13  
 time 6-5  
 toolbar, creating 3-4, 3-15  
 track history 6-9  
 transform 7-2  
 transformation node 7-4  
 tree 6-2  
 triangle 9-12  
     drawing 2D remote 9-9  
     drawing 3D remote 9-15  
     remote draw 9-6  
 turbidity 6-5

## U

ui file 10-5  
 UIC 10-5  
 updater  
     cockpit display 7-5  
     scene object 6-6

## V

visibility 6-5  
 visualization 7-2  
 visualizer 5-9  
     class 5-9  
     scene object 6-6  
 visualizing, aggregates 6-7  
 VR-Link 1-6  
 VR-Vantage Control Toolkit 9-3  
 VR-Vantage Remote Draw API 9-4  
*vrControlToolkitDataTypes.h* header file 9-3

- vrvCore 3-2
- vrvCore library 3-2
- vrvCoreQt.dll 3-2
- vrvDis library
  - library, vrvDis 5-8
- vrvOsg library 6-9
- vrvVrl library 10-2
- vrvVrlPlugin library 10-2
- vrvVrlQt library 10-2
- vrvVrlQtPlugin library 10-2

## **W**

- widget 3-2
- window 2-9, 4-2
- windowConfigurationChanged() function 4-4
- Windows.h* header file 10-5
- writing, plug-in 2-4







Link - Simulate - Visualize

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