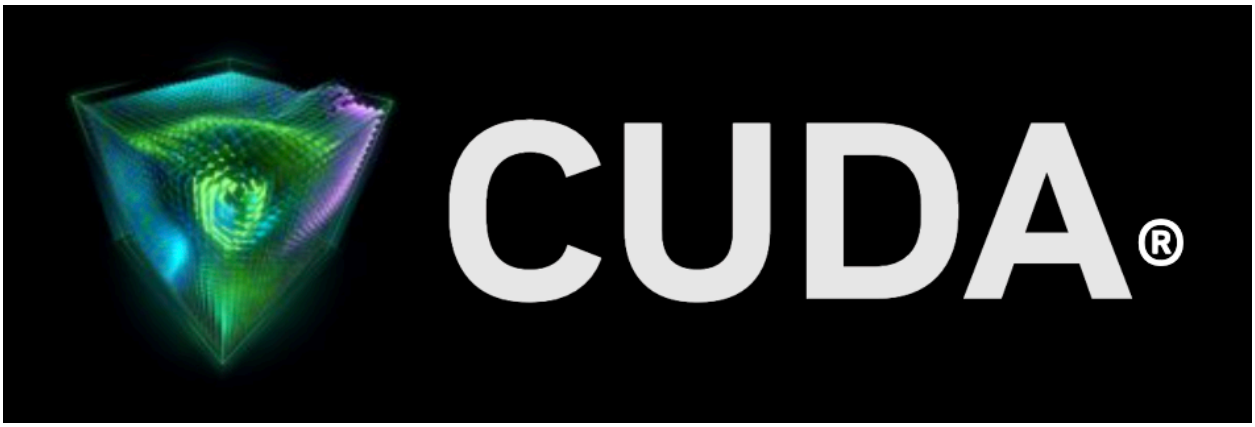


CUDA Compile Time Advisor

Release 13.4

NVIDIA Corporation

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Compile Time Advisor

The User guide for the Compile Time Advisor (`ctadvisor`).

Compile Time Advisor (`ctadvisor`) is a tool that helps users analyze the compilation time of their CUDA C++ code and provides suggestions to reduce it.

Currently, `ctadvisor` provides five different types of advice:

Expensive Templates Advice:
Identifies template functions/classes that took the longest to instantiate, how many times they were instantiated by which files, how many sub-templates were instantiated, and the depth of the sub-template tree.

Expensive Headers Advice:
Identifies header files that took the longest to include and breaks down the time spent on processing each sub-header file.

Parallelizable Compilation Advice:
Checks if source files were compiled for multiple architectures (multiple `-gencode` targets) and the `--threads` flag was unused. The build can then benefit from using `--threads` to run compilation for each architecture in parallel.

Split Compilation Advice:
Identifies source files with high optimization time that could benefit from the `--split-compile` flag to run optimizations in parallel.

Compile Time Breakdown Advice:
Breaks down the compile time of each translation unit into various compilation steps, lists significant source files that took the largest compilation time, and helps identify which stages of compilation are a bottleneck.

Chapter 1. Getting Started

1.1. Installation

`ctadvisor` is part of the CUDA Toolkit release. It is a standalone tool which is installed automatically with the CUDA Toolkit.

1.2. Command-line Options

1.2.1. `--trace-file-path (-path)`

Specify the location of trace file(s). The path can be one trace file or a directory recursively containing all trace files. This is a required option.

1.2.2. `--thread-number (-thread)`

Specify the maximum number of threads that `ctadvisor` uses to process trace file concurrently. Default value: 8.

1.2.3. `--breakdown-advisor-entries (-breakdown-advisor-entries)`

Specify the maximum number of entries that compile time breakdown advisor is going to show. Default value: 20.

1.2.4. --header-advisor-entries (-header-advisor-entries)

Specify the maximum number of entries that expensive headers advisor is going to show. Default value: 20.

1.2.5. --template-advisor-entries (-template-advisor-entries)

Specify the maximum number of entries that expensive templates advisor is going to show. Default value: 20.

1.2.6. --max-hash-table-size (-size)

Specify the maximum size of the hash table that stores the index of long template names. The template names are stored on disk. And a hash table is used to store the index of template names. Increasing this number will reduce analysis time but increase memory usage. Default value: 100000000.

1.2.7. --verbose (-v)

Enable verbose mode. `ctadvisor` outputs full specialized template names in the analysis of expensive template advisor and more entries in analysis.

1.2.8. --version (-V)

Print version information on this tool.

1.2.9. --options-file (-optf)

Include command line options from specified file.

1.3. Usage

`ctadvisor` accepts a trace file or a directory recursively containing all trace files and then analyzes them. To demonstrate the usage of `ctadvisor`, we will use a simple example here:

```
template <typename T>
class C {
public:
    template <typename S>
    int t_class_fn() {
        return 0;
    }
};

template <typename T>
__global__ void saxpy_kern(int n, T a, T *x, T *y) {
    int t_id = blockIdx.x * blockDim.x + threadIdx.x;
    int stride = blockDim.x * gridDim.x;

    for (int i = t_id; i < n; i+= stride) {
        y[i] = a * x[i] + y[i];
    }
}

template <typename T>
int t_fn() {
    return 0;
}

int main() {
    C<int> c;
    c.t_class_fn<float>();
    t_fn<int>();
    int n = 1UL << 25;
    float *x, *y, alpha=2.0;
    cudaMalloc(&x, n * sizeof(float));
    cudaMalloc(&y, n * sizeof(float));
    saxpy_kern<float><<<32, 1024>>>(n, alpha, x, y);
    cudaDeviceSynchronize();
    cudaFree(x);
    cudaFree(y);
}
```

First, to get the trace file, run nvcc compilation command with `--fdevice-time-trace` flag.

```
nvcc --fdevice-time-trace=- -o saxpy saxpy.cu
```

A `saxpy.json` file is created in the current directory. To analyze the trace file, run `ctadvisor` with the trace file as the argument.

```
ctadvisor -path saxpy.json
```

Here is the output of `ctadvisor`:

```
Trace file loading is complete
************************************************
```

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```
Start expensive template advisor
No advice.
************************************************
Start expensive headers advisor
Top header files by include processing time:
 [0.05s]: (1 times in 1 files) /usr/local/cuda-13.4/bin/../targets/x86_64-linux/
↪include/cuda_runtime.h
    Processing this header itself takes 0.00s (1.65%)
    includes /usr/local/cuda-13.4/bin/../targets/x86_64-linux/include/crt/common_
↪functions.h (1x) taking 0.03s (58.73%)
    includes /usr/local/cuda-13.4/bin/../targets/x86_64-linux/include/crt/device_
↪functions.h (1x) taking 0.01s (22.84%)
    includes /usr/local/cuda-13.4/bin/../targets/x86_64-linux/include/channel_
↪descriptor.h (1x) taking 0.00s (10.00%)
    includes /usr/local/cuda-13.4/bin/../targets/x86_64-linux/include/builtin_types.h
↪(1x) taking 0.00s (4.44%)
    includes /usr/local/cuda-13.4/bin/../targets/x86_64-linux/include/vector_
↪functions.h (1x) taking 0.00s (1.48%)
    includes /usr/include/c++/12/utility (1x) taking 0.00s (0.58%)
    includes /usr/local/cuda-13.4/bin/../targets/x86_64-linux/include/driver_
↪functions.h (1x) taking 0.00s (0.16%)
    includes /usr/local/cuda-13.4/bin/../targets/x86_64-linux/include/library_types.h
↪(1x) taking 0.00s (0.04%)
    includes /usr/local/cuda-13.4/bin/../targets/x86_64-linux/include/crt/host_config.
↪h (1x) taking 0.00s (0.04%)
    includes /usr/local/cuda-13.4/bin/../targets/x86_64-linux/include/device_launch_
↪parameters.h (1x) taking 0.00s (0.02%)
    includes /usr/local/cuda-13.4/bin/../targets/x86_64-linux/include/crt/host_
↪defines.h (1x) taking 0.00s (0.00%)
************************************************
Start compile time breakdown advisor
1 source files analyzed:
  Gross total compile time: 0.44s
    Gross total host compile time: 0.29s
    Gross total device compile time: 0.15s (frontend: 0.13s, NVVM: 0.00s, ptxas: 0.
↪00s, linker: 0.00s)
Top source files by compile time:
saxpy.cu
    compiled with target architectures: compute_75, threads: 1, split compile:
↪disabled
    Total compile time: net 0.48s, gross 0.44s
    Host compile time: 0.29s    Device compile time: 0.15s (frontend: 0.13s, NVVM: 0.
↪00s, ptxas: 0.00s, linker: 0.00s)
************************************************
Start parallelizable compilation advisor
************************************************
Start split compile advisor
No advice.
```

Since the example is relatively simple, `ctadvisor` does not find any templates that took the significant compilation time. Verbose mode can be enabled by using `-v` to get more detailed information and suggestions.

```
ctadvisor -path saxpy.json -v
```

`--breakdown-advisor-entries`, `--header-advisor-entries` and `--template-advisor-entries` can be used to limit the number of entries that each advisor

is going to show in verbose mode.

```
ctadvisor -path saxpy.json -v --breakdown-advisor-entries 1 --header-advisor-entries
↪1 --template-advisor-entries 1
```

Here is the output of `ctadvisor`:

```
Trace file loading is complete
************************************************
Start expensive template advisor
Top template functions/classes by instantiation time:
  [0.00s]: (2 times in 2 files) std::__detail::__hyperg
    [0.00s]: (1 times in 1 files) std::__detail::__hyperg<float>(float, float, float,
↪float)
      [0.00s]: (1x) saxpy.cu, recursively instantiates 12 templates with max depth 5
    (1 more...)
Try 'extern'-izing templates that are repeatedly instantiated (may impact
↪performance).
Try simplifying template logic for instantiations with deep recursive depth.
************************************************
Start expensive headers advisor
Top header files by include processing time:
 [0.05s]: (1 times in 1 files) /usr/local/cuda-13.4/bin/../targets/x86_64-linux/
↪include/cuda_runtime.h
    Processing this header itself takes 0.00s (1.65%)
    includes /usr/local/cuda-13.4/bin/../targets/x86_64-linux/include/crt/common_
↪functions.h (1x) taking 0.03s (58.73%)
    includes /usr/local/cuda-13.4/bin/../targets/x86_64-linux/include/crt/device_
↪functions.h (1x) taking 0.01s (22.84%)
    includes /usr/local/cuda-13.4/bin/../targets/x86_64-linux/include/channel_
↪descriptor.h (1x) taking 0.00s (10.00%)
    includes /usr/local/cuda-13.4/bin/../targets/x86_64-linux/include/builtin_types.h
↪(1x) taking 0.00s (4.44%)
    includes /usr/local/cuda-13.4/bin/../targets/x86_64-linux/include/vector_
↪functions.h (1x) taking 0.00s (1.48%)
    includes /usr/include/c++/12/utility (1x) taking 0.00s (0.58%)
    includes /usr/local/cuda-13.4/bin/../targets/x86_64-linux/include/driver_
↪functions.h (1x) taking 0.00s (0.16%)
    includes /usr/local/cuda-13.4/bin/../targets/x86_64-linux/include/library_types.h
↪(1x) taking 0.00s (0.04%)
    includes /usr/local/cuda-13.4/bin/../targets/x86_64-linux/include/crt/host_config.
↪h (1x) taking 0.00s (0.04%)
    includes /usr/local/cuda-13.4/bin/../targets/x86_64-linux/include/device_launch_
↪parameters.h (1x) taking 0.00s (0.02%)
    includes /usr/local/cuda-13.4/bin/../targets/x86_64-linux/include/crt/host_
↪defines.h (1x) taking 0.00s (0.00%)
************************************************
Start compile time breakdown advisor
1 source files analyzed:
  Gross total compile time: 0.44s
    Gross total host compile time: 0.29s
    Gross total device compile time: 0.15s (frontend: 0.13s, NVVM: 0.00s, ptxas: 0.
↪00s, linker: 0.00s)
Top source files by compile time:
saxpy.cu
    compiled with target architectures: compute_75, threads: 1, split compile:
↪disabled
    Total compile time: net 0.48s, gross 0.44s
```

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```
    Host compile time: 0.29s    Device compile time: 0.15s (frontend: 0.13s, NVVM: 0.
↪00s, ptxas: 0.00s, linker: 0.00s)
*********************************************
Start parallelizable compilation advisor
*********************************************
Start split compile advisor
No advice.
```

nvrtc compilation can also generate trace files with `--fdevice-time-trace`. For example:

```
#include <nvrtc.h>
#include <iostream>

#define NVRTC_SAFE_CALL(x)                                        \
    do {                                                          \
        nvrtcResult result = x;                                   \
        if (result != NVRTC_SUCCESS) {                            \
        std::cerr << "\nerror: " #x " failed with error "         \
                    << nvrtcGetErrorString(result) << '\n';       \
        exit(1);                                                  \
    }                                                             \
} while(0)

const char *saxpy = "                                             \n\
extern       \"C\" __global__                                     \n\
void saxpy(float a, float *x, float *y, float *out, size_t n)     \n\
{                                                                 \n\
    size_t tid = blockIdx.x * blockDim.x + threadIdx.x;           \n\
    if (tid < n) {                                                \n\
        out[tid] = a * x[tid] + y[tid];                           \n\
    }                                                             \n\
}                                                                 \n";

int main()
{
    // Create an instance of nvrtcProgram with the SAXPY code string.
    nvrtcProgram prog;
    NVRTC_SAFE_CALL(
        nvrtcCreateProgram(&prog,         // prog
                           saxpy,         // buffer
                           "saxpy.cu",    // name
                           0,             // numHeaders
                           NULL,          // headers
                           NULL));        // includeNames
    // Compile the program with fmad disabled.
    // Note: Can specify GPU target architecture explicitly with '-arch' flag.
    const char *opts[] = {"--fmad=false", "--fdevice-time-trace=saxpy"};
    nvrtcResult compileResult = nvrtcCompileProgram(prog,  // prog
                                                    2,     // numOptions
                                                    opts); // options

    // Destroy the program.
    NVRTC_SAFE_CALL(nvrtcDestroyProgram(&prog));
    // Load the generated PTX and get a handle to the SAXPY kernel.

    return 0;
}
```

Assuming the environment variable CUDA_PATH points to the CUDA Toolkit installation directory, build this example as:

```
g++ saxpy.cpp -o saxpy \
    -I $CUDA_PATH/include \
    -L $CUDA_PATH/lib64 \
    -lnvrtc -Wl,-rpath,$CUDA_PATH/lib64
```

And run this example as:

```
./saxpy
```

A saxpy.json will be generated in the current directory.

Chapter 2. Notices

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