

GDC®

A Practical Approach to Developing Forward-Facing Rigs, Tools and Pipelines.



GAME DEVELOPERS CONFERENCE® | MARCH 19-23, 2018 | EXPO: MARCH 21-23, 2018 #GDC18



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A Practical Approach to Developing Forward-Facing Rigs, Tools and Pipelines.



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The Problem: Changing requirements and the need for fast implementation

Clean & Tidy

**Slight Change
of Focus**

**Extension of
Functionality**

**Extend and
re-purpose**

**Bin and
rewrite**





The Problem > The Pattern > An Implementation > Abstracting Abstraction > Plugin Powered Pipelines

```
# -- Collate a list of meshes to export
exportable_meshes = list()

# -- Only export skeletons if we find meshes with skin
# -- clusters
found_skins = False

# -- Find our exportable meshes
for mesh in pm.ls(type='mesh'):

    # -- Dont export meshes if they are not tagged as exportable
    if mesh.hasAttr('exportable') and mesh.exportable.get():
        exportable_meshes.append(mesh)

    # -- Check if this has a skin cluster attached
    if pm.mel.findRelatedSkinCluster(mesh.name()):
        found_skins = True

# -- Write them out
write_fbx(exportable_meshes)

# -- Now find our export roots
if found_skins:
    for joint in pm.ls(type='joint'):

        # -- Skip any non-root joints
        if isinstance(joint.getParent(), pm.nt.Joint):
            continue

        # -- Check if this exportable
        if joint.hasAttr('exportable') and joint.exportable.get():
            write_fbx(joint)
```




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# -- Find our exportable meshes
for mesh in pm.ls(type='mesh'):

    # -- Skip any non-exportable meshes
    if not mesh.hasAttr('exportable') or not mesh.exportable.get():
        continue

    # -- Collate the mesh for exporting to fbx
    exportable_meshes.append(mesh)

    # -- Check if this has a skin cluster attached
    if pm.mel.findRelatedSkinCluster(mesh.name()):
        found_skins = True

    # -- Check if the mesh has cloth applied to it
    if mesh.inputs(type='customClothSolver'):
        write_cloth(
            mesh,
            find_affecting_bones(mesh)
        )

# -- Write them out
write_fbx(exportable_meshes)

# -- Now find our export roots
if found_skins:
    for joint in pm.ls(type='joint'):

        # -- Skip any non-root joints
        if isinstance(joint.getParent(), pm.nt.Joint):
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        # -- Check if this exportable
        if joint.hasAttr('exportable') and joint.exportable.get():
            write_fbx(joint)
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        continue

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    exportable_meshes.append(mesh)

    # -- Check if this has a skin cluster attached
    if pm.mel.findRelatedSkinCluster(mesh.name()):
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        )
```




```
# -- Collect a list of meshes to export
exportable_meshes = list()

# -- Only export meshes if we find meshes with skin
# -- Skinning
found_skin = False

# -- Store a list of meshes that have vertex data
# -- relating to runtime rigging
runtime_meshes = list()

# -- Find our exportable meshes
for mesh in ps.iter(ps="mesh"):

    # -- Skip any non-exportable meshes
    if not mesh.hasAttr("exportable") or not mesh.exportable.get():
        continue

    # -- Collect the mesh for reporting to the
    exportable_meshes.append(mesh)

    # -- Check if this has a skin cluster attached
    if ps.set_findRelatedObjects(mesh, "skin"):
        found_skin = True

# -- Write our runtime rig data if we're a skinned mesh
if mesh.hasAttr("runtimeVertexData"):
    runtime_meshes.append(mesh)

# -- Check if the mesh has skin applied to it
if mesh.inputs["skin"] != "none":
    mesh =
    find_affecting_bones(mesh)

# -- Write the skin
write_skin(mesh)

# -- Store list of runtime bones
runtime_bones = list()

# -- Now find our export bones
if found_skin:
    for joint in ps.iter(ps="joint"):

        # -- Skip any non-export bones
        if not joint.hasAttr("exportable") or not joint.exportable.get():
            continue

        # -- Check if this exportable
        if joint.hasAttr("runtimeData"):
            runtime_bones.append(joint)

# -- Export any runtime data
if runtime_meshes and runtime_bones:
    write_vertex_attachment_data(
        runtime_meshes + runtime_bones
    )
```

```
# -- Store a list of meshes that have vertex data
# -- relating to runtime rigging
runtime_meshes = list()
```

```
# -- Write our runtime rig data if we're a skinned mesh
if mesh.hasAttr('runtimeVertexData'):
    runtime_meshes.append(mesh)
```

```
# -- Store list of runtime bones
runtime_bones = list()
```

```
if joint.hasAttr('runtimeData'):
    runtime_bones.append(joint)
```

```
# -- Export any runtime data
if runtime_meshes and runtime_bones:
    write_vertex_attachment_data(
        runtime_meshes + runtime_bones
    )
```





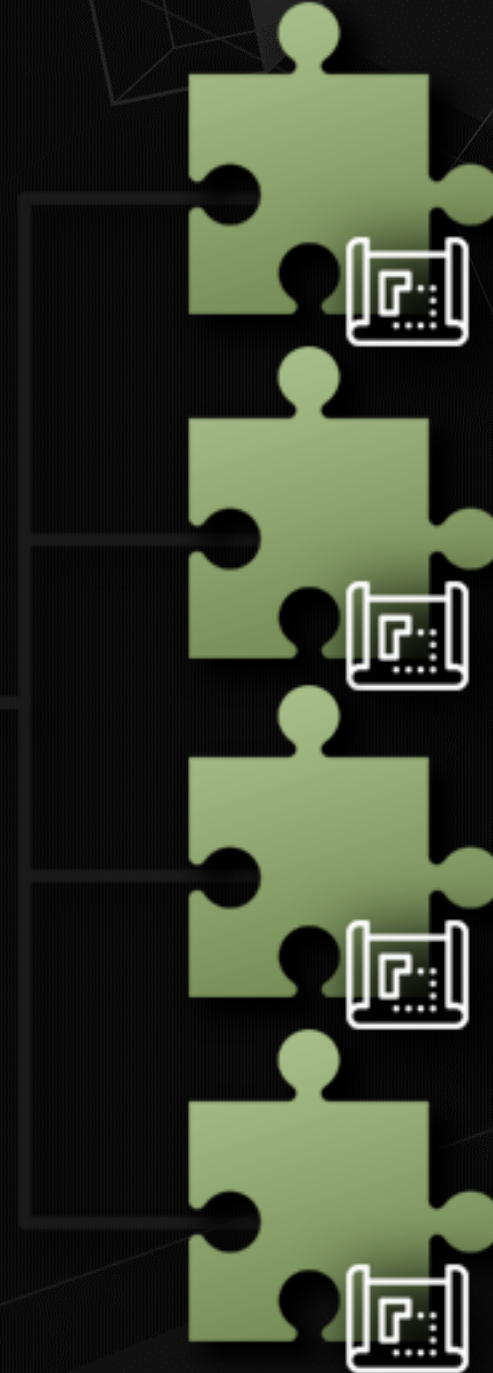
The Problem > **The Pattern** > An Implementation > Abstracting Abstraction > Plugin Powered Pipelines



https://sourcemaking.com/design_patterns



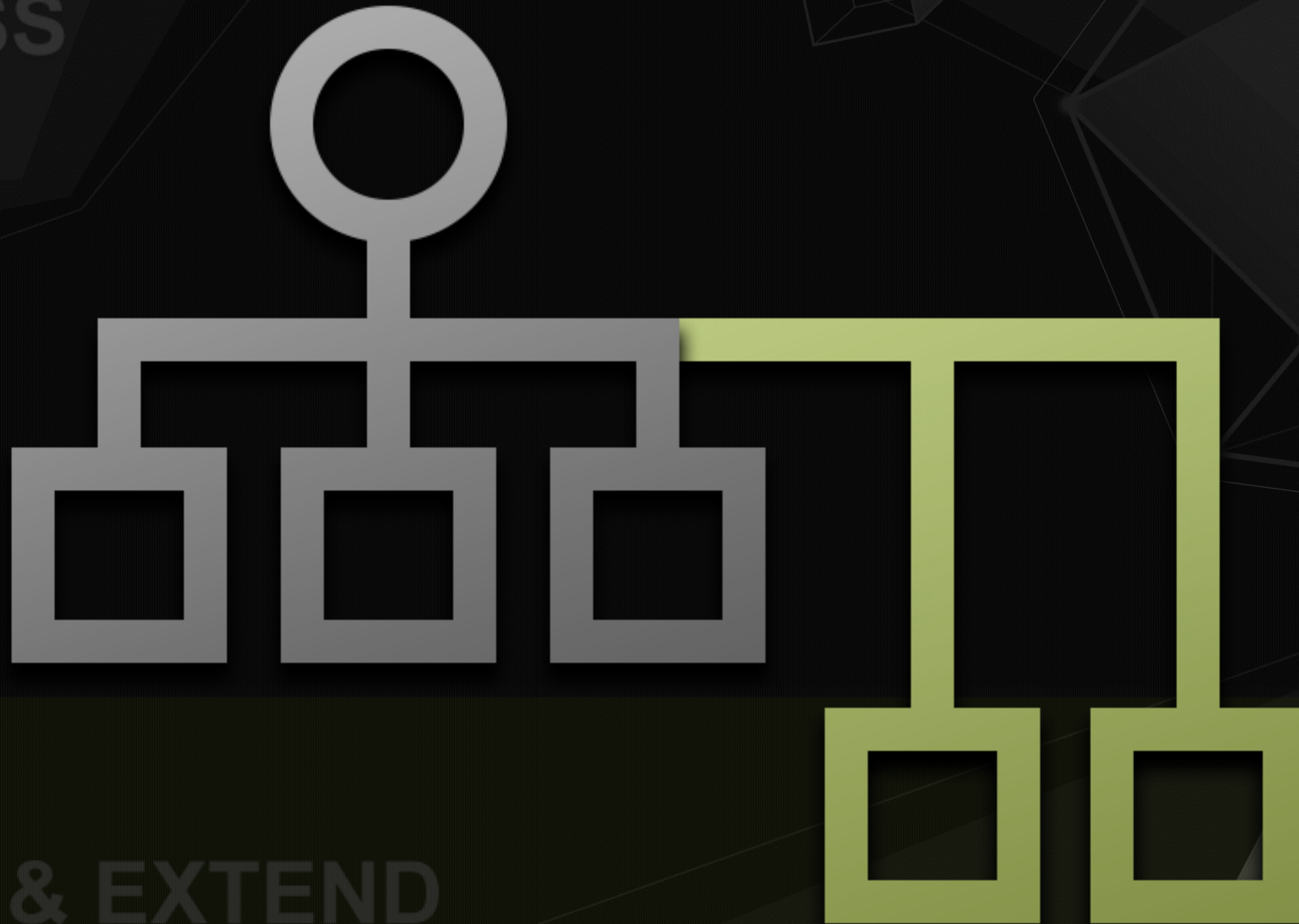
The Problem > **The Pattern** > An Implementation > Abstracting Abstraction > Plugin Powered Pipelines





The Problem > **The Pattern** > An Implementation > Abstracting Abstraction > Plugin Powered Pipelines

BASE CLASS



SUBCLASS & EXTEND



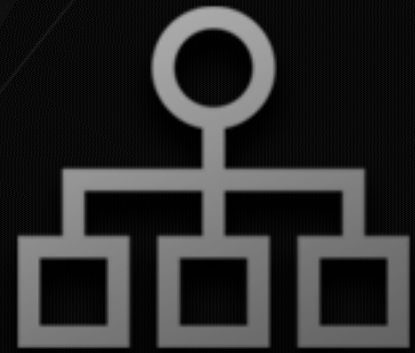
An abstract class...

- Can never be instanced directly
- Contains no functionality
- Must have all methods re-implemented by subclasses

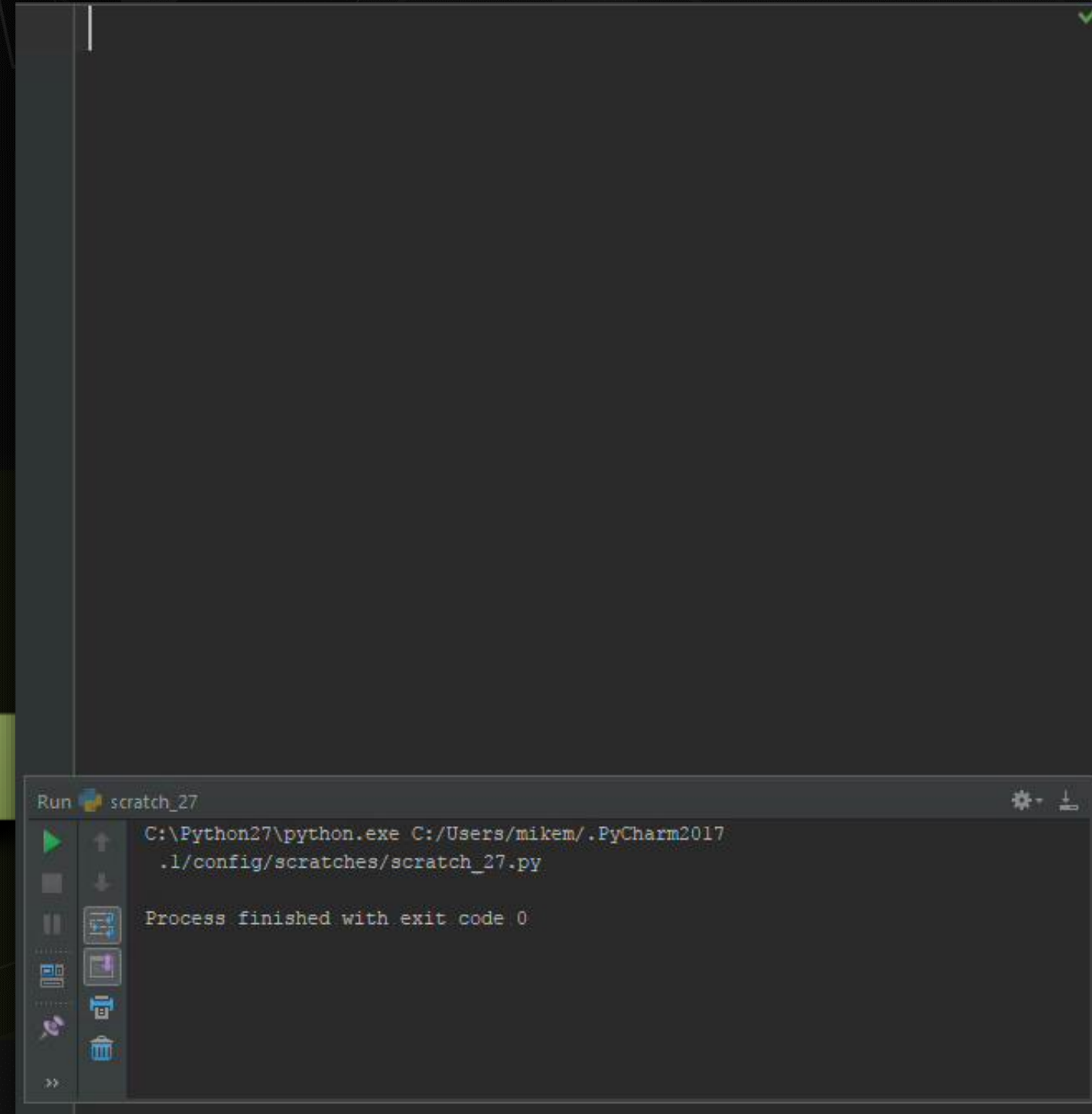


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ABSTRACT

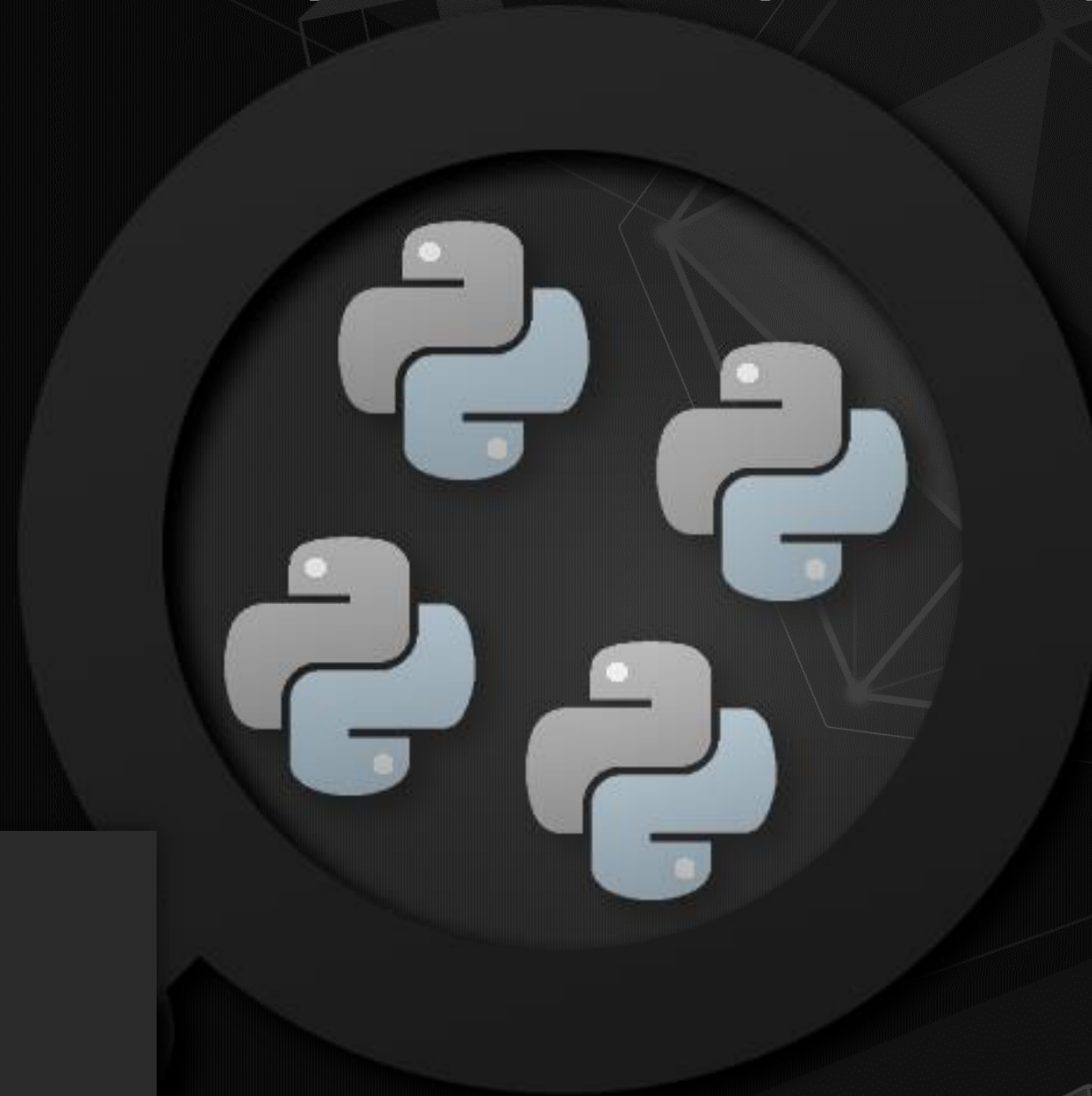
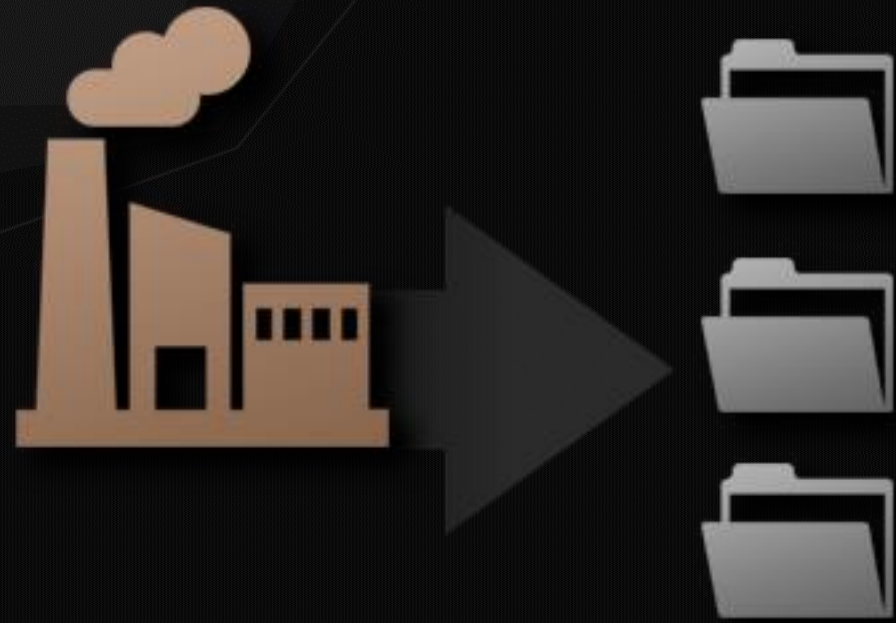


SUBCLASS & IMPLEMENT





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```
# -- Cycle the available plugins
for plugin_name in factory.available():

    # -- Get the plugin
    plugin = factory.get(plugin_name)

    # -- Instance the plugin and do something with
    # -- it
    plugin().do_something()
```

```
# -- Cycle all locations recursively
for root, _, files in os.walk(directory):
    ...
    # -- Cycle all the items in the module
    for item in dir(py_module):
        ...
        # -- If it is a subclass of the defined abstract
        # -- register it (store the plugin)
        if issubclass(item, self._expected_base):
            self.register(item)
```




```
class ExportPlugin(object):

    # -- Unique identifier to differentiate this plugin
    # -- from any other plugin
    Identifier = ''

    @classmethod
    def viable(cls, **kwargs):
        """
        Should test for anything in the scene/context which the
        plugin can extract

        :param context: If None, the entire scene is searched, otherwise
            any nodes under the contextual node will be searched

        :return: True if anything is found
        """
        return False

    @classmethod
    def export(cls, directory, **kwargs):
        """
        This will export any data out to external files

        :param directory: Location to store/save data
        :param context: Context to search within
        :param kwargs: Optional arguments to pass to the plugin

        :return: List of files exported
        """
        return list()
```




```
C PluggedFactory(object)
  m __init__(self, name_attr='name', version_attr, env_vars, base_class, paths)
  m available(self)
  m available_versions(self, plugin_name)
  m clear_plugins(self)
  m get(self, plugin_name, version=-1, refresh=False)
  m paths(self)
  m plugins(self)
  m refresh(self)
  m register(self, plugin_class)
  m register_paths(self, paths, refresh=False)
```




```
class ExportPlugin(object):

    # -- Unique identifier to differentiate this plugin
    # -- from any other plugin
    Identifier = 'Geometry'

    @classmethod
    def viable(cls, **kwargs):
        return bool(cls._exportables())

    @classmethod
    def export(cls, directory, **kwargs):
        for mesh in cls._exportables():
            write_fbx(
                mesh,
                os.path.join(
                    directory,
                    mesh.name(),
                ),
            )

    @classmethod
    def _exportables(cls):

        # -- Find all meshes which may be exportable
        exportables = list(
            maya.cmds.ls(
                '*.exportable',
                objects=True,
                recursive=True,
                type='mesh',
            )
        )

        # -- Return True as soon as we hit an exportable mesh
        for exportable in exportables:
            if maya.cmds.getattr(exportable + '.exportable'):
                yield exportable
```




```
class ExportPlugin(object):

    # -- Unique identifier to differentiate this plugin
    # -- from any other plugin
    Identifier = 'Skeleton'

    @classmethod
    def viable(cls, **kwargs):
        return bool(cls._exportables())

    @classmethod
    def export(cls, directory, **kwargs):
        joints = list(cls._exportables())

        write_fbx(
            joints,
            os.path.join(
                directory,
                joints[0].getParent(-1).name(),
            ),
        )

    @classmethod
    def _exportables(cls):

        # -- Find all meshes which may be exportable
        exportables = list(
            maya.cmds.ls(
                '*.exportable',
                objects=True,
                recursive=True,
                type='joint',
            )
        )

        # -- Return True as soon as we hit an exportable mesh
        for exportable in exportables:
            if maya.cmds.getattr(exportable + '.exportable'):
                yield exportable
```




Script Editor

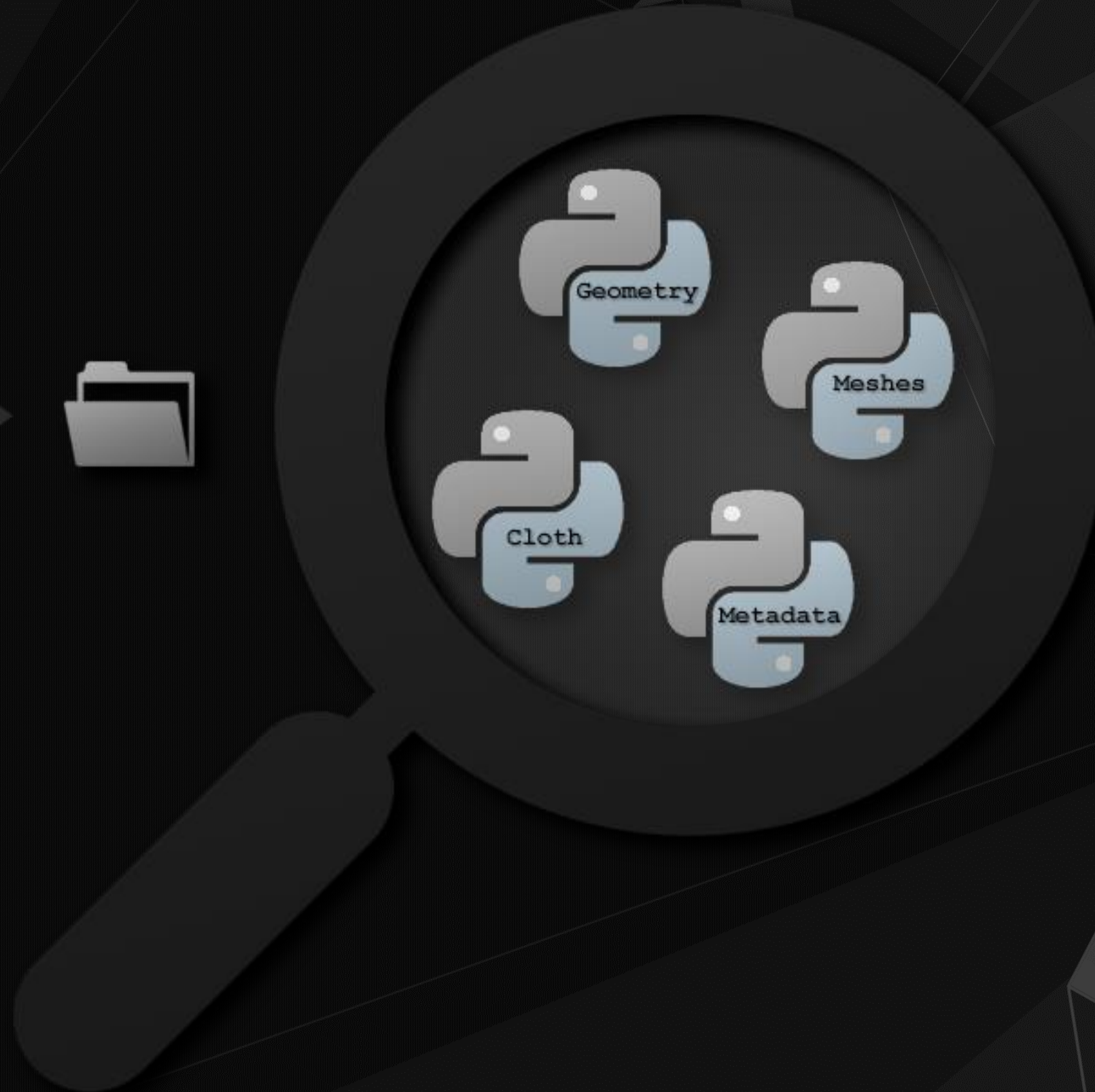
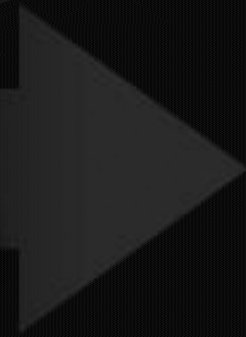
File Edit History Command Help

```

1 # -- Instance the exporter
2 exporter = export_demo.Exporter()
3
4 # -- Cycle all the registered plugins
5 for plugin_name in exporter.factory.available():
6
7     # -- Get the plugin class
8     plugin = exporter.factory.get(plugin_name)
9
10    # -- Check if it is viable...
11    if plugin.viable():
12        plugin.export()
  
```




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```
def export_scene(directory, **kwargs):

    # -- Cycle all our export plugins
    for plugin_type in factory.available():

        # -- Get the plugin class
        plugin = factory.get(plugin_type)

        # -- Check if the plugin has anything it can operate
        # -- on
        if plugin.viable(context=None, **kwargs):
            plugin.export(
                directory,
                context=None,
                **kwargs
            )

    # -- Call the export, passing a skin-specific option
    export_scene(
        'c:/some/dir',
        bones_per_vertex_limit=4,
    )
```

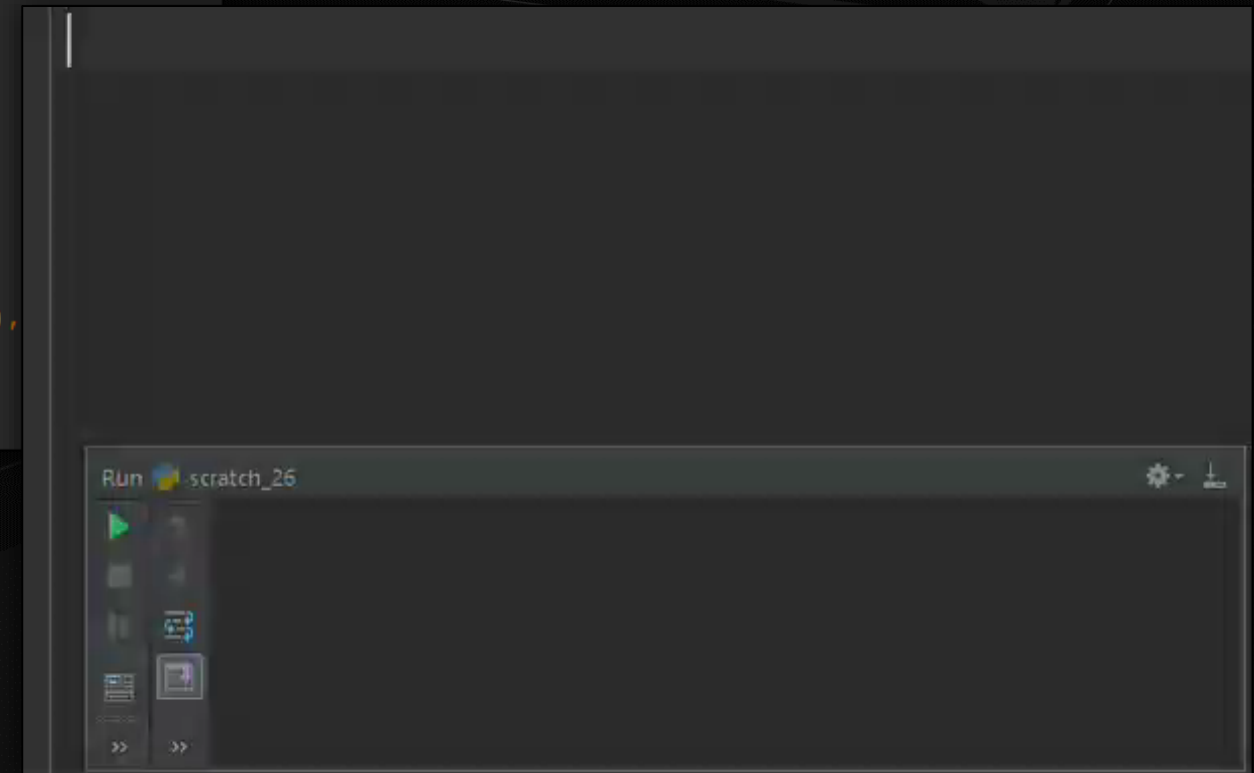
```
class ExportPlugin(object):

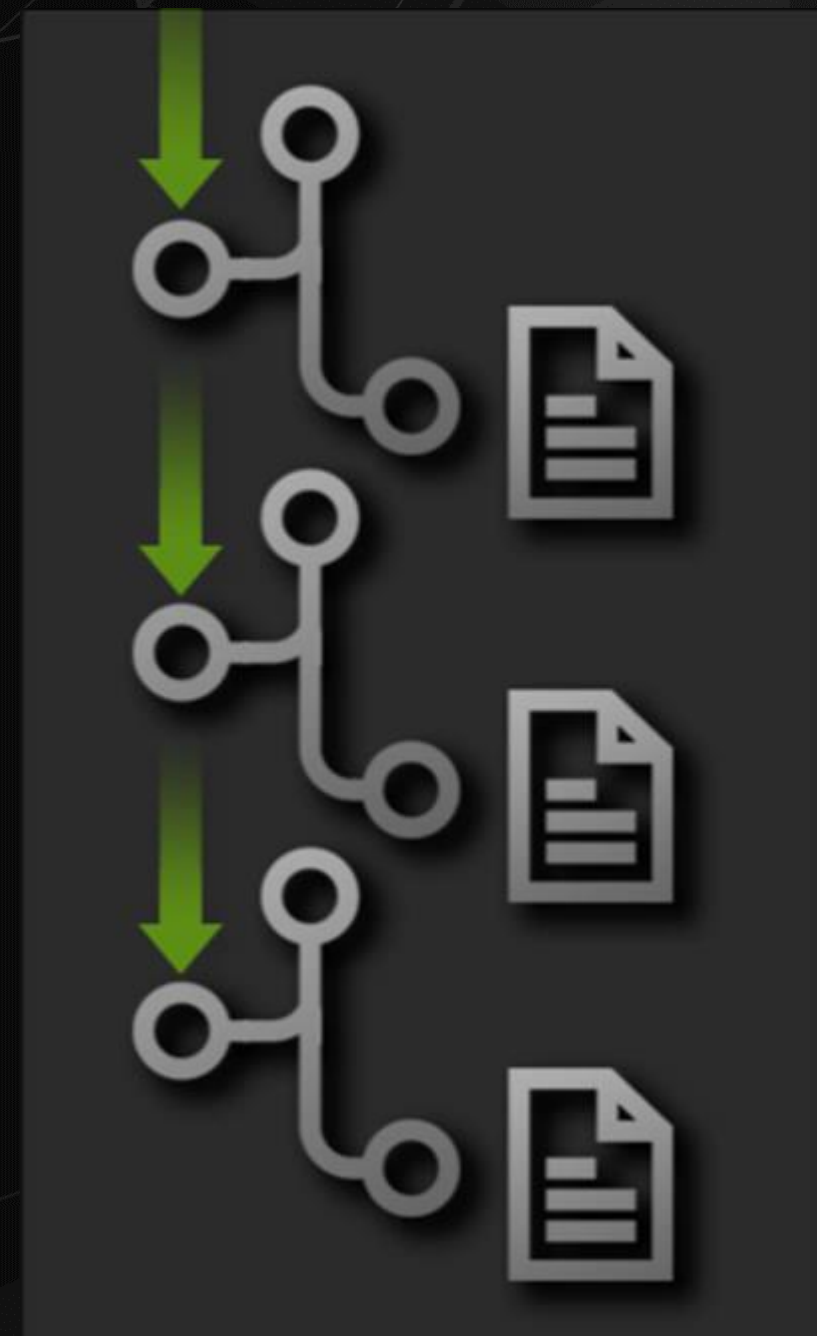
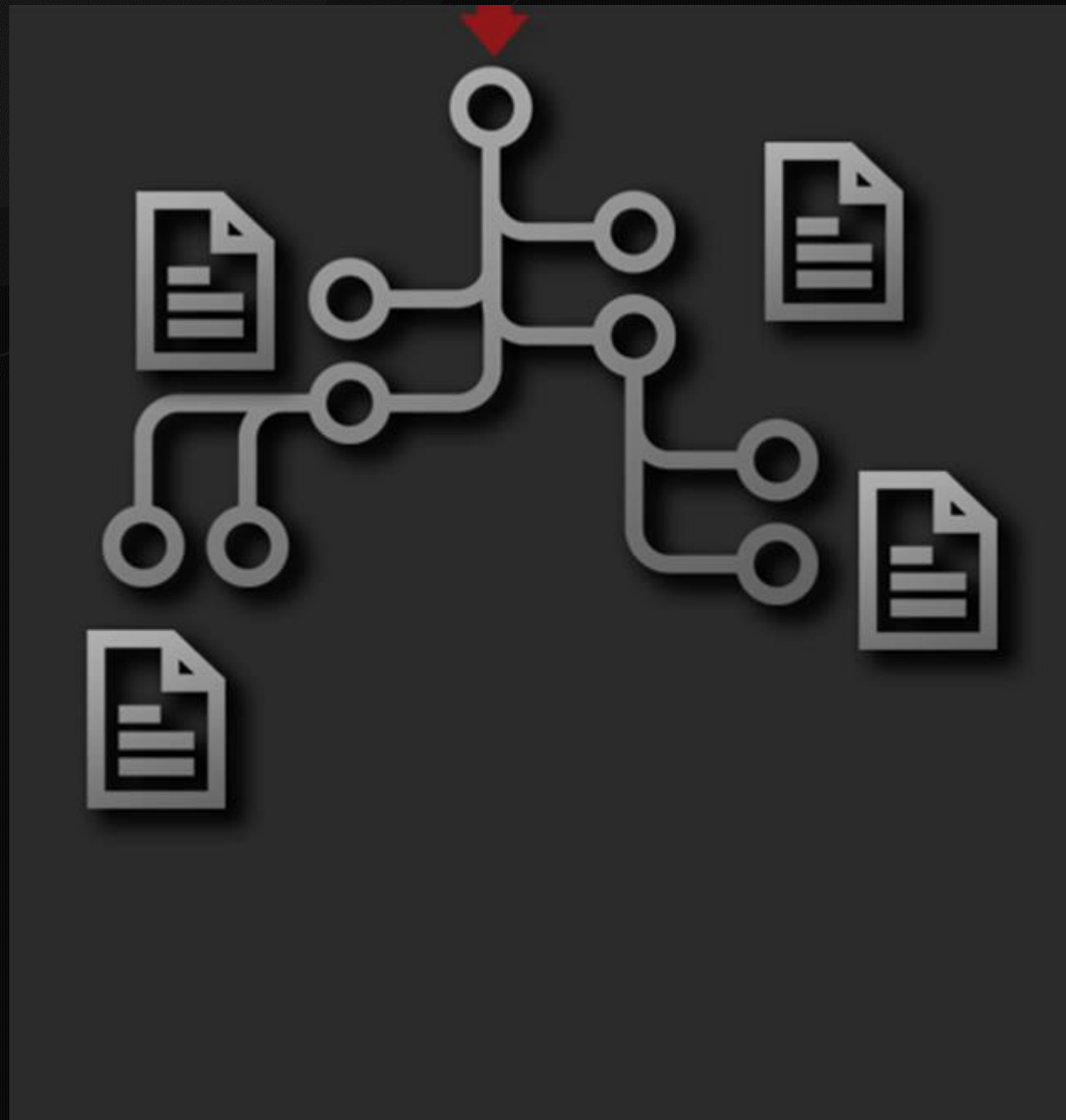
    Identifier = 'Skeleton'

    @classmethod
    def export(cls, directory, context=None, **kwargs):

        joints = list(cls._exportables())

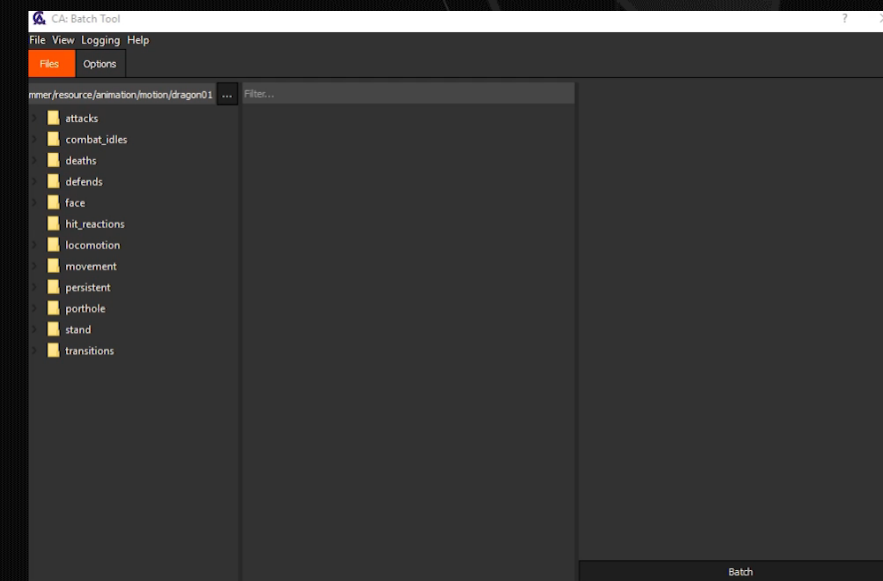
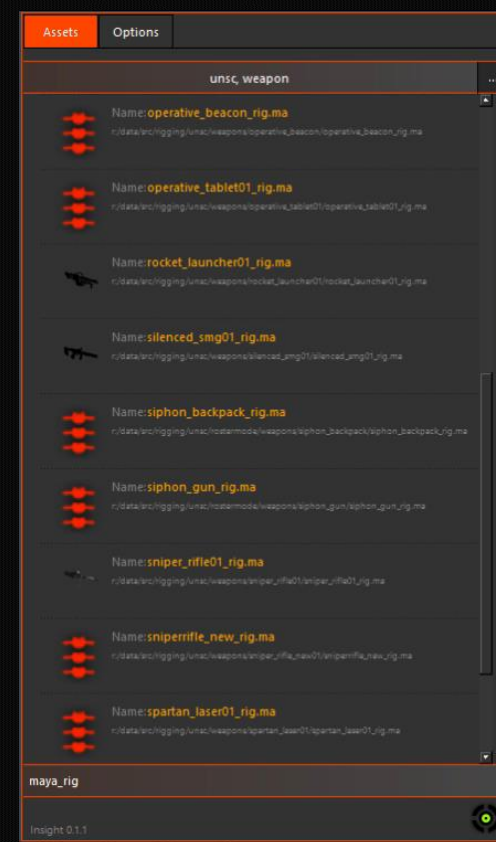
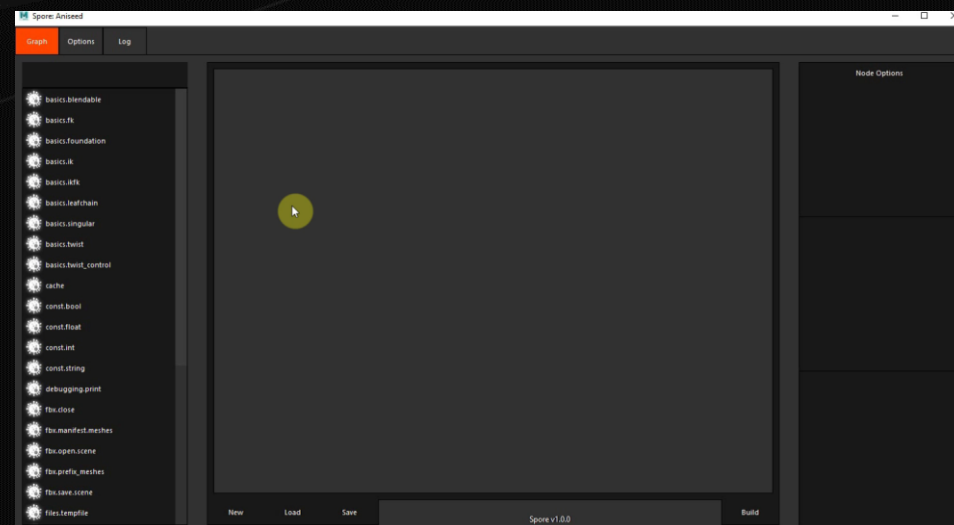
        # -- Limit our bones per vertex to 4, or a value
        # -- specified by the arguments
        limit_bones_per_vertex(
            kwargs.get(
                'limit_bones_per_vertex',
                4,
            ),
            joints,
        )
        write_fbx(
            joints,
            os.path.join(
                directory,
                joints[0].getParent(-1).name(),
            ),
        )
```

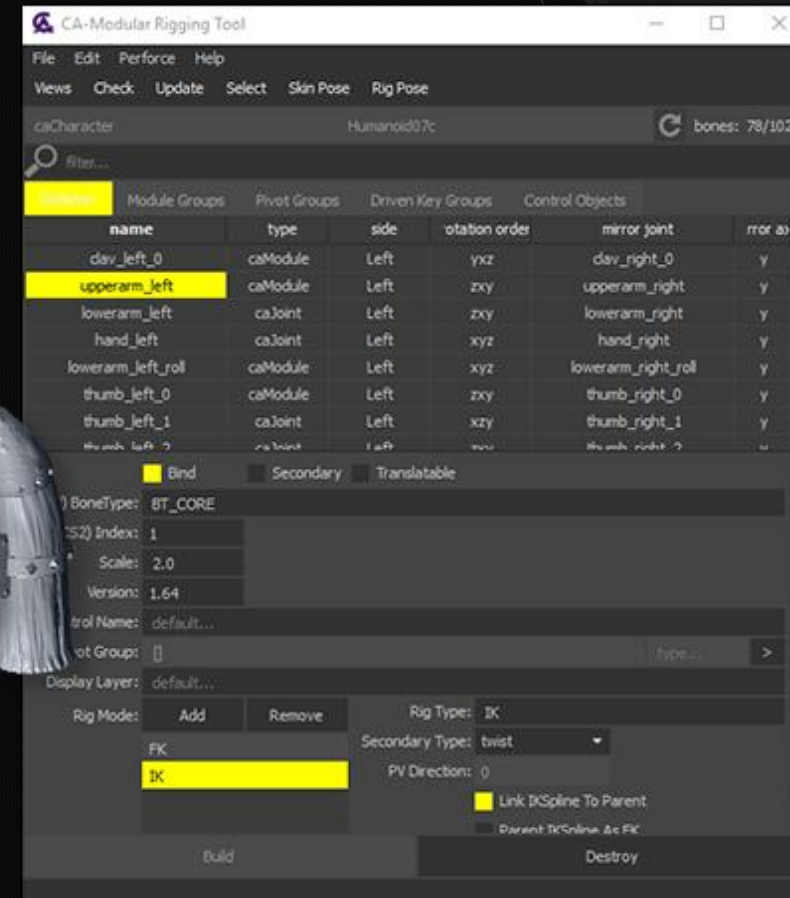






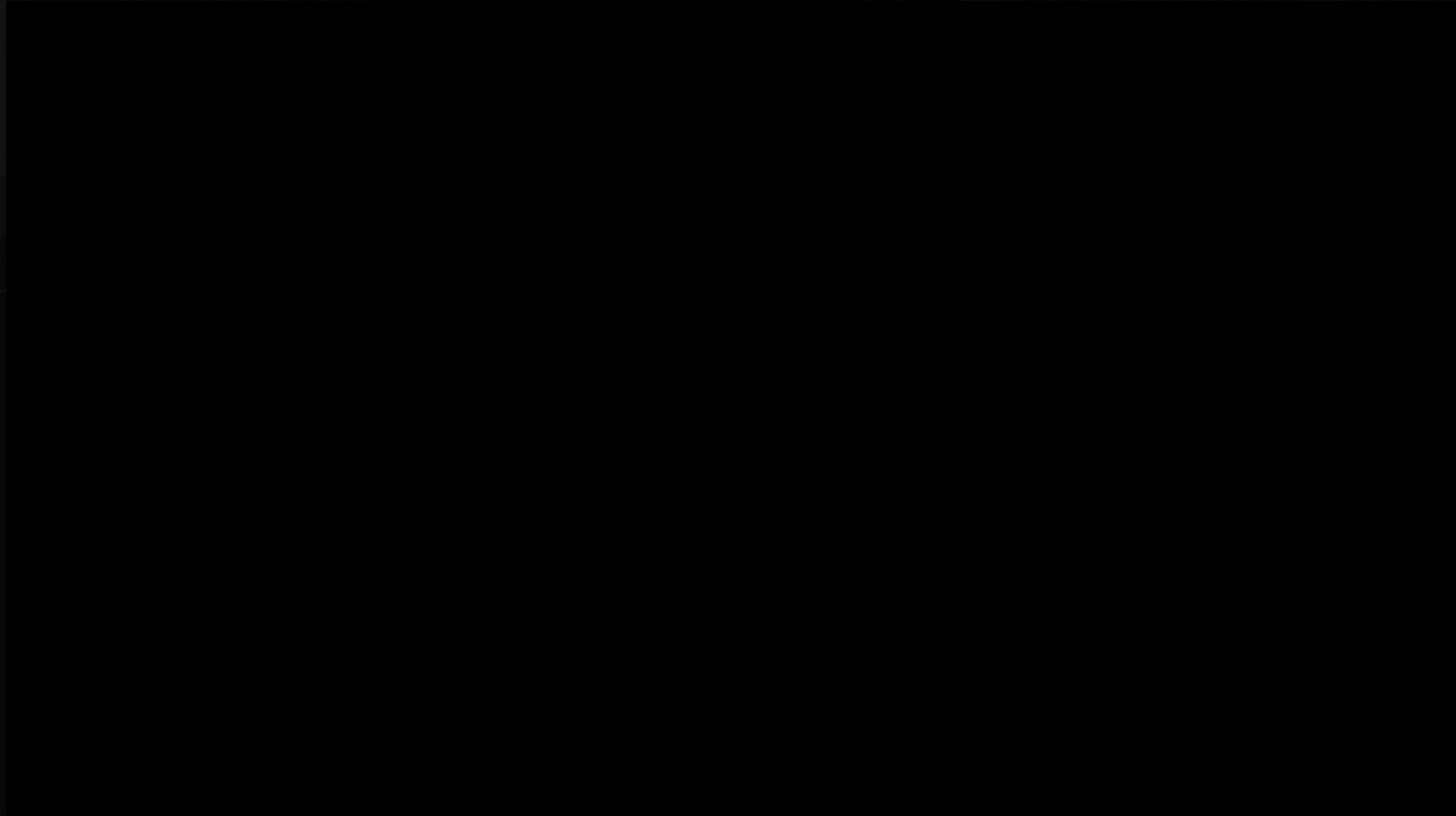
The Problem > **The Pattern** > An Implementation > Abstracting Abstraction > Plugin Powered Pipelines







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The Problem > The Pattern > **An Implementation** > Abstracting Abstraction > Plugin Powered Pipelines



The Problem > The Pattern > **An Implementation** > Abstracting Abstraction > Plugin Powered Pipelines

Growing list of rig requirements:

Standard IK

Spline IK

Optional Ankle Control for >2 bone ik

Standard or Reversed Pole Vector

Ability to rebuild consistently (backward compat)

Stretch



The Problem > The Pattern > **An Implementation** > Abstracting Abstraction > Plugin Powered Pipelines

Growing list of rig requirements:

Standard IK

Spline IK

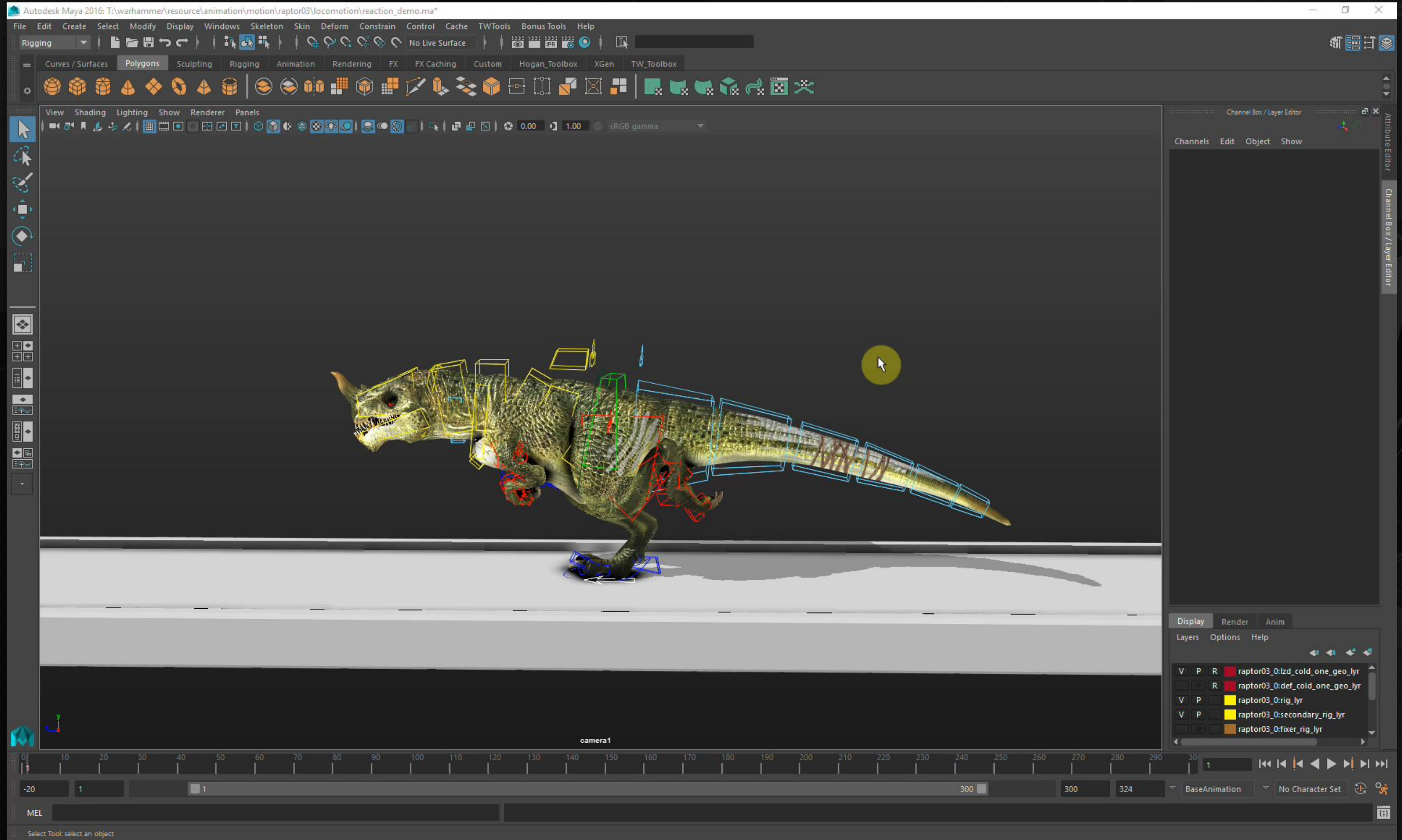
Optional Ankle Control for >2 bone ik

Standard or Reversed Pole Vector

Ability to rebuild consistently (backward compat)

Stretch

Soft Ik





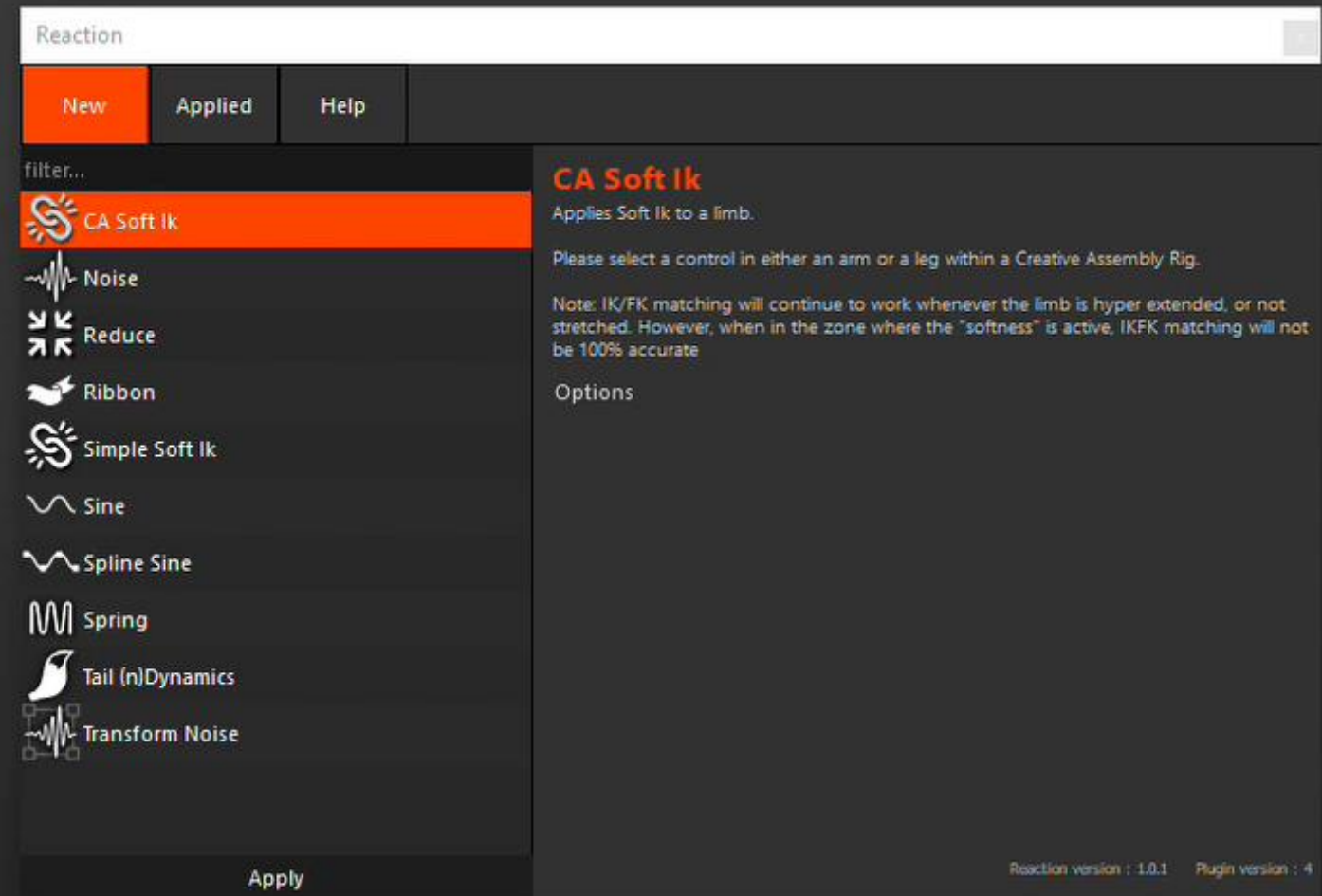
The Problem > The Pattern > **An Implementation** > Abstracting Abstraction > Plugin Powered Pipelines

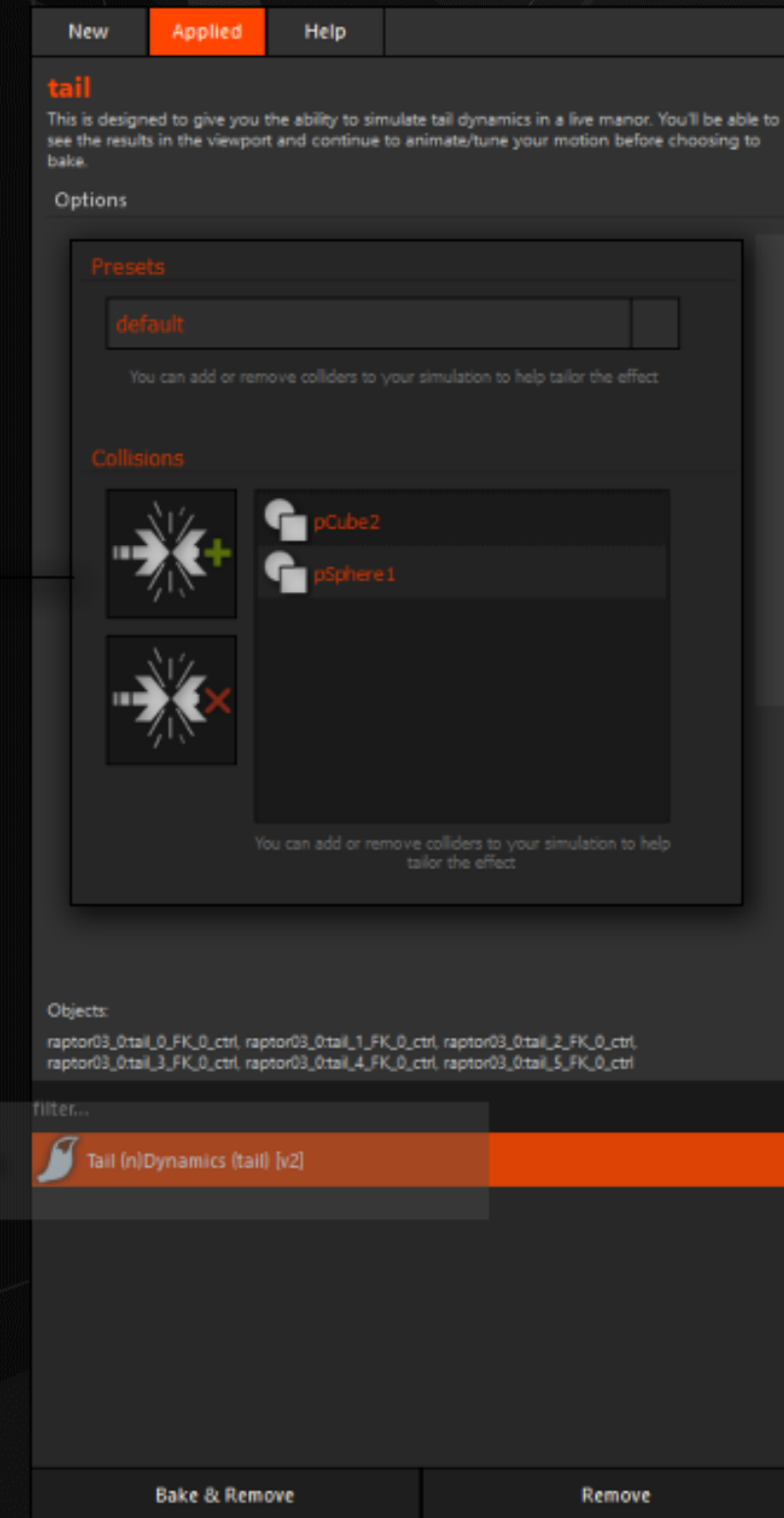
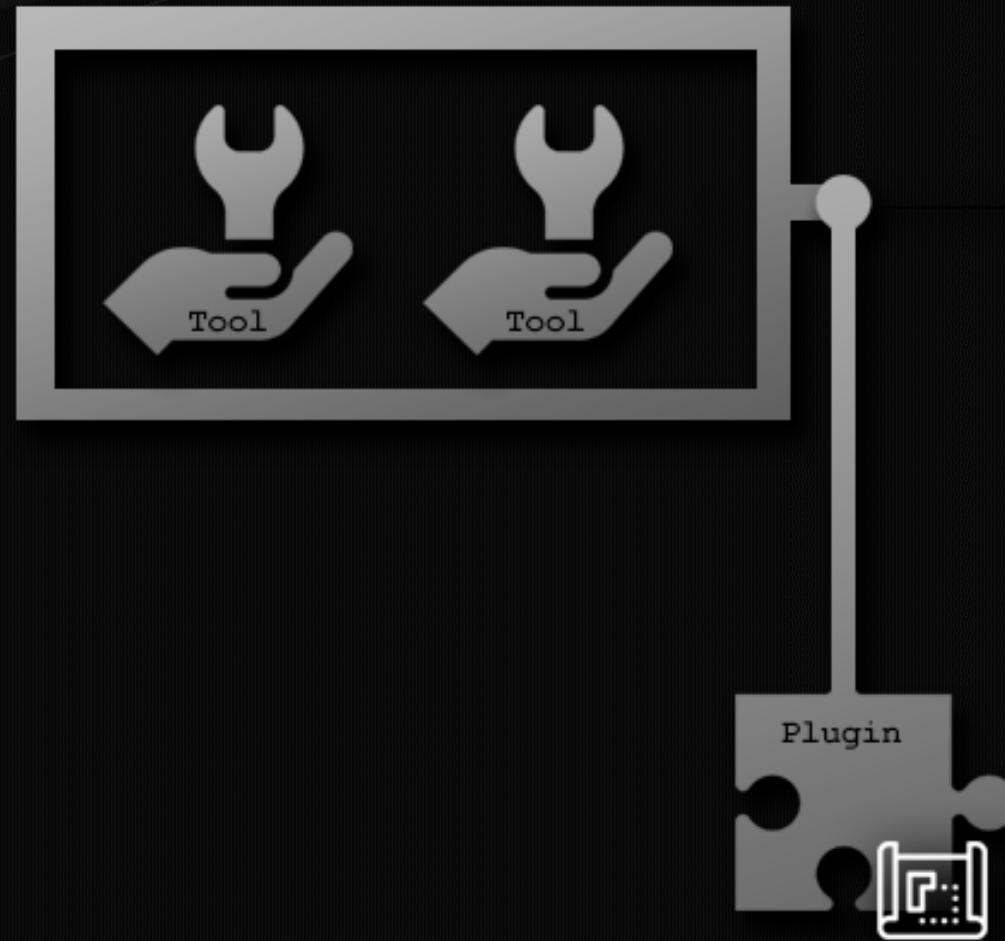
Abstract Methods:

Apply
Remove (bake)
Build Ui
Runtime Ui



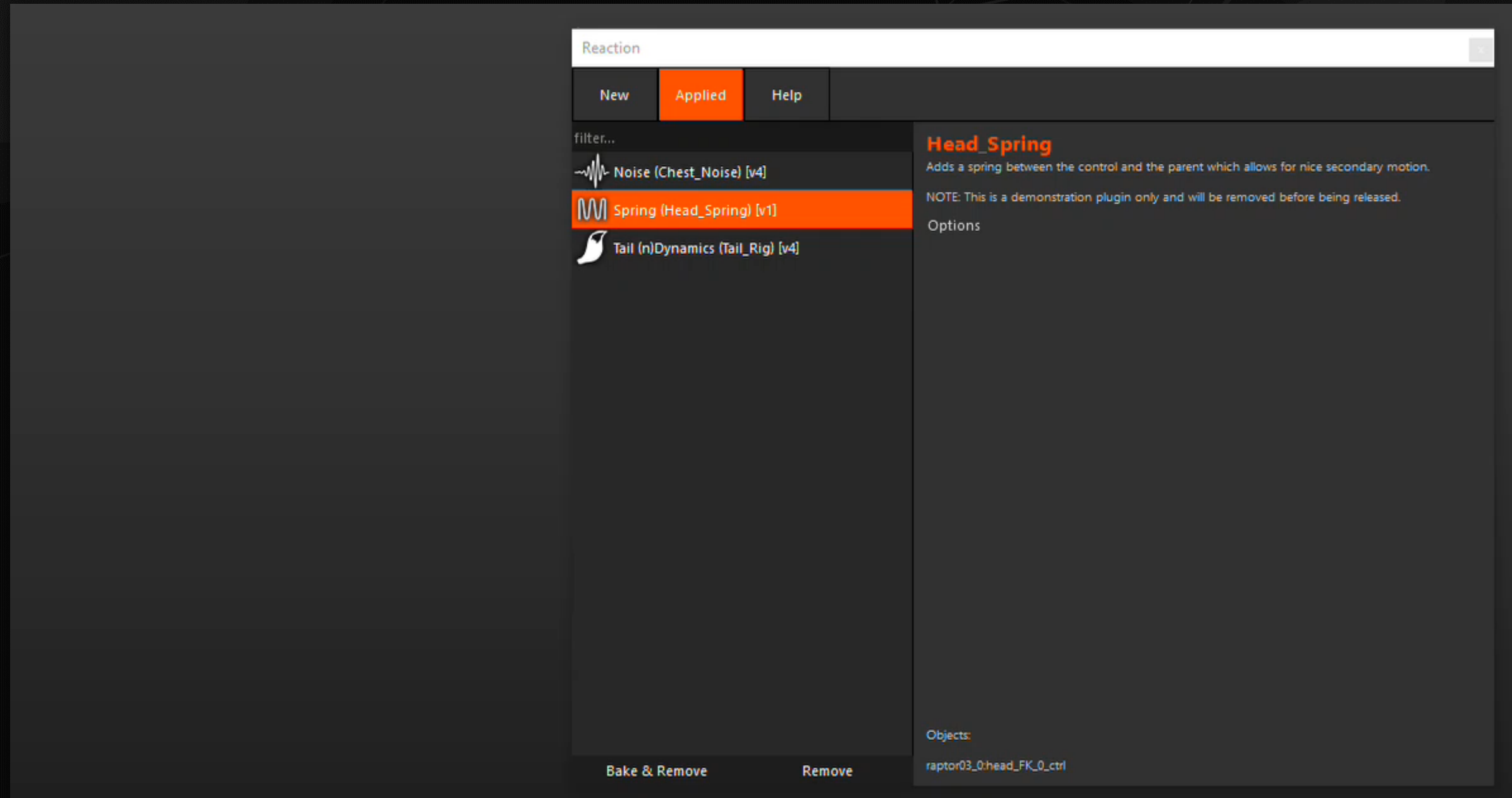
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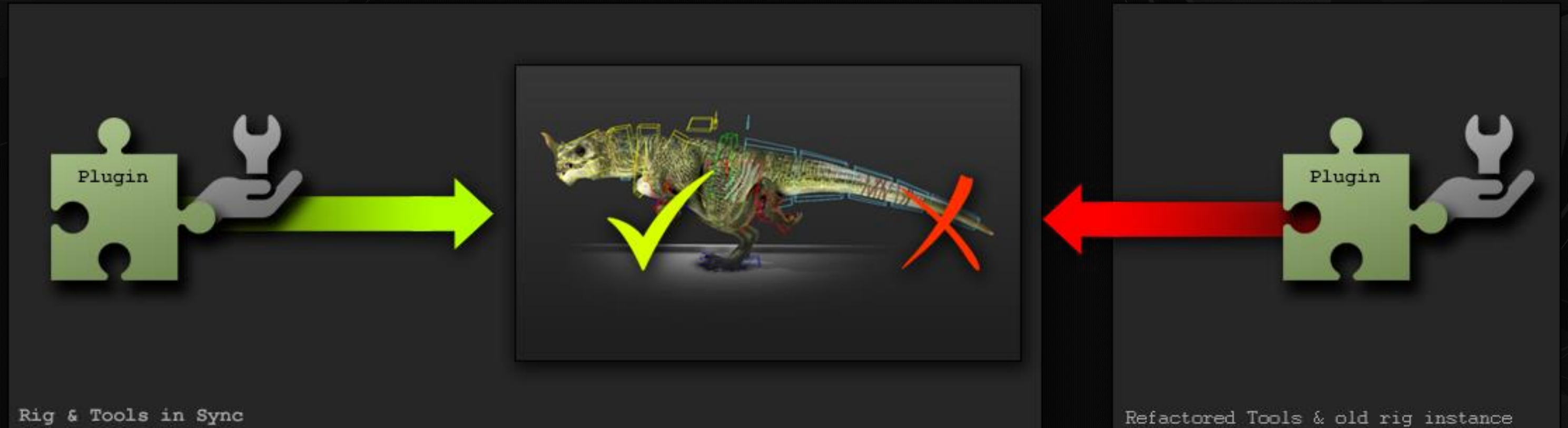


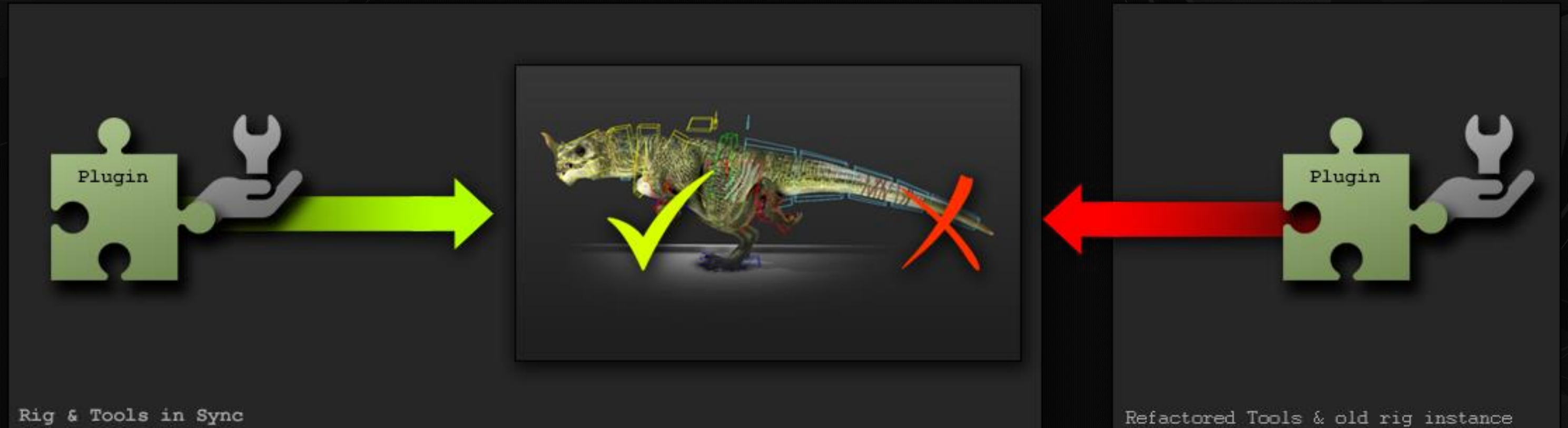


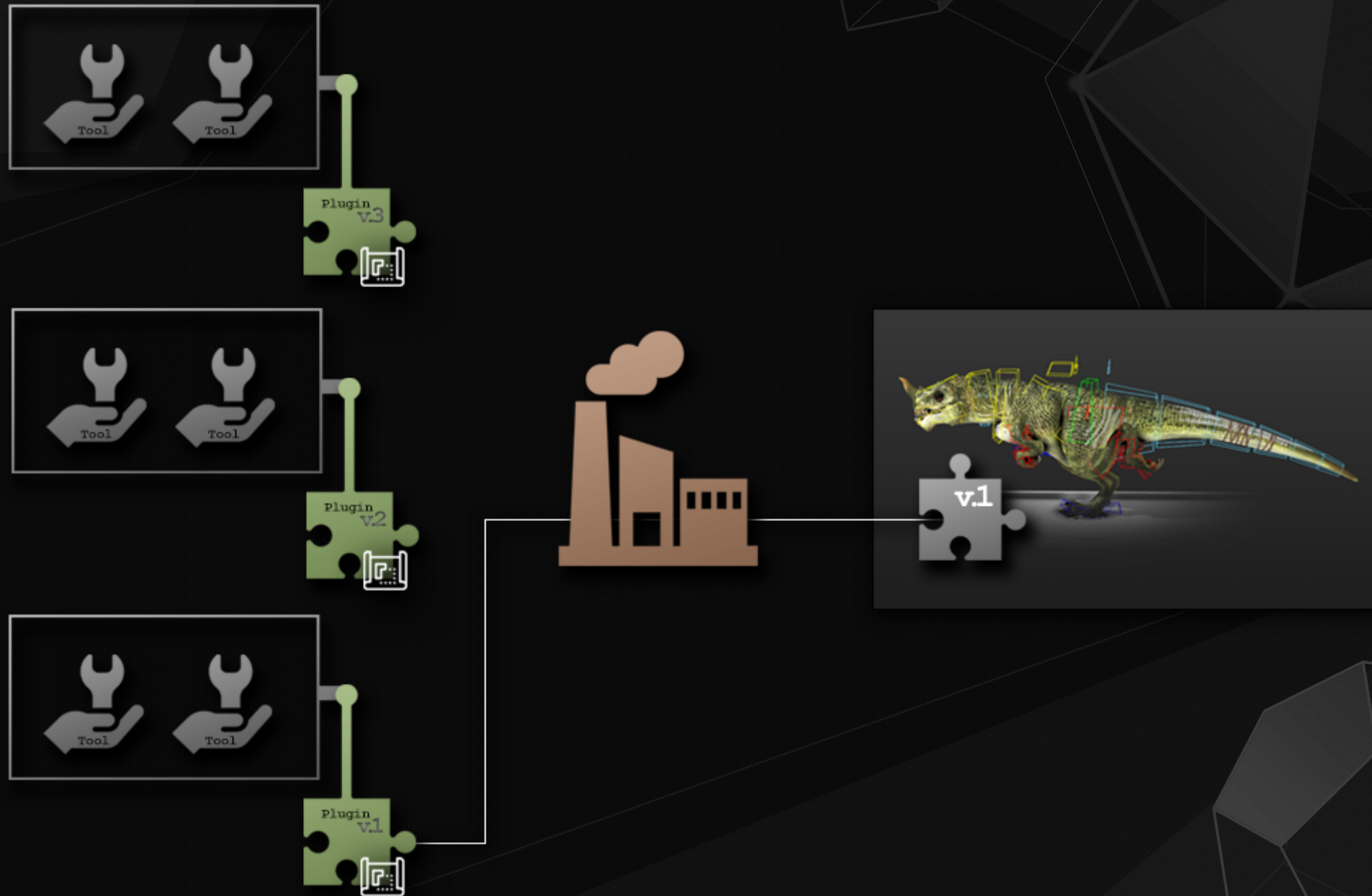


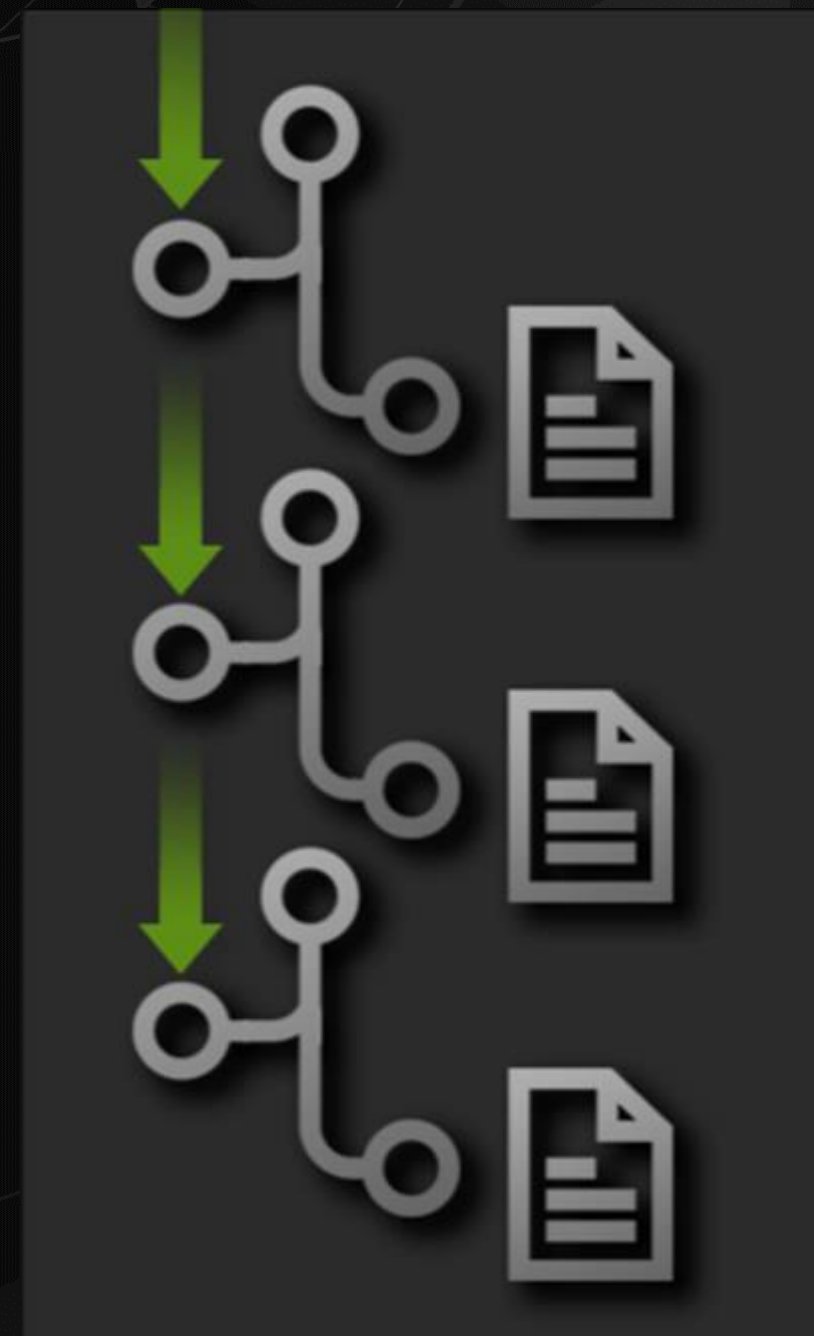
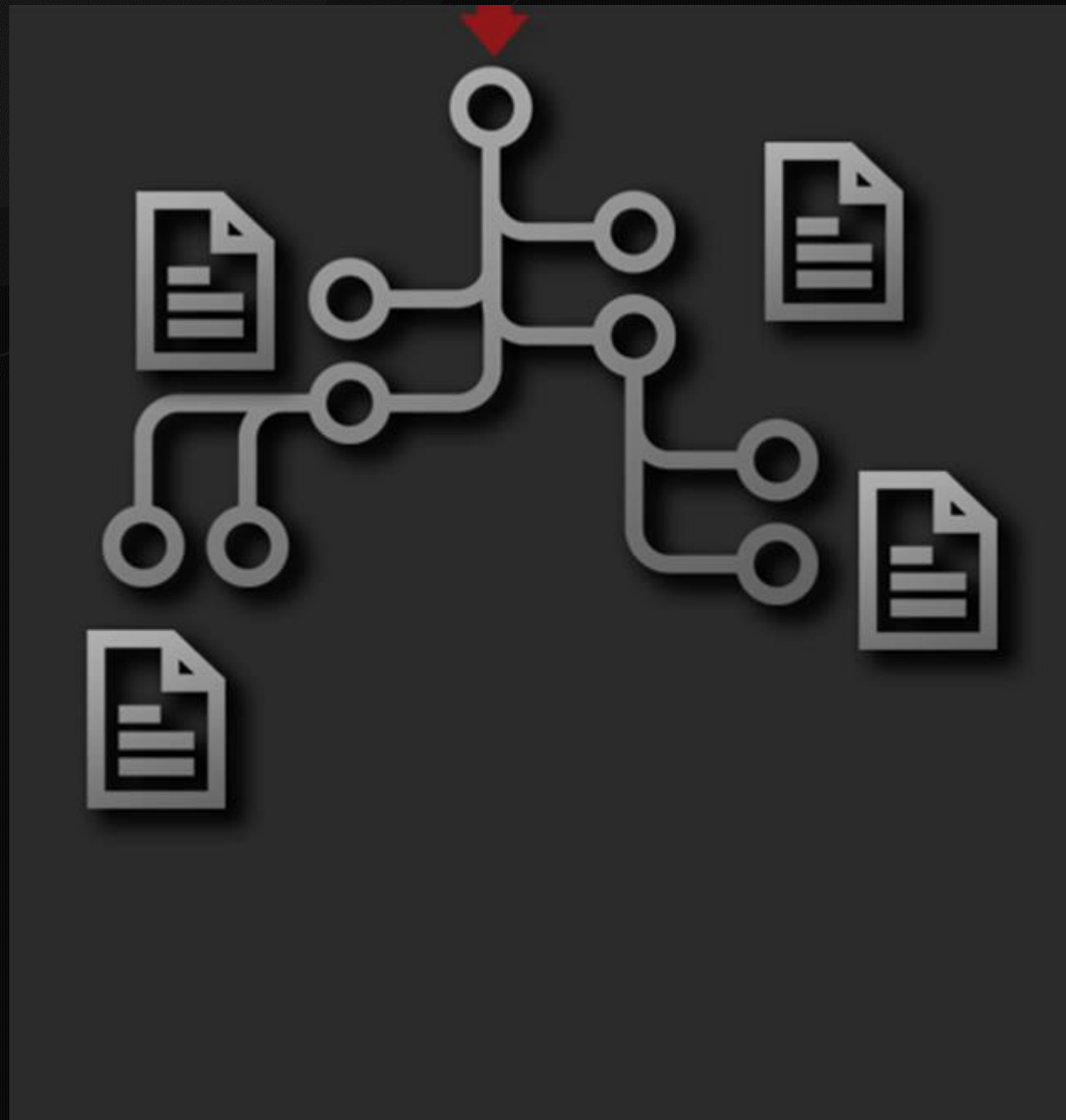
The Problem > The Pattern > **An Implementation** > Abstracting Abstraction > Plugin Powered Pipelines











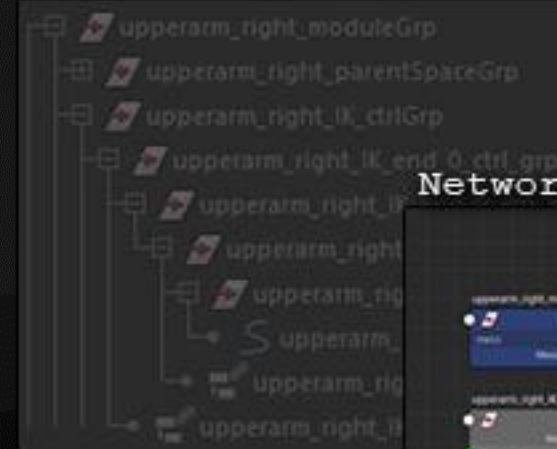


The Problem > The Pattern > An Implementation > **Abstracting Abstraction** > Plugin Powered Pipelines

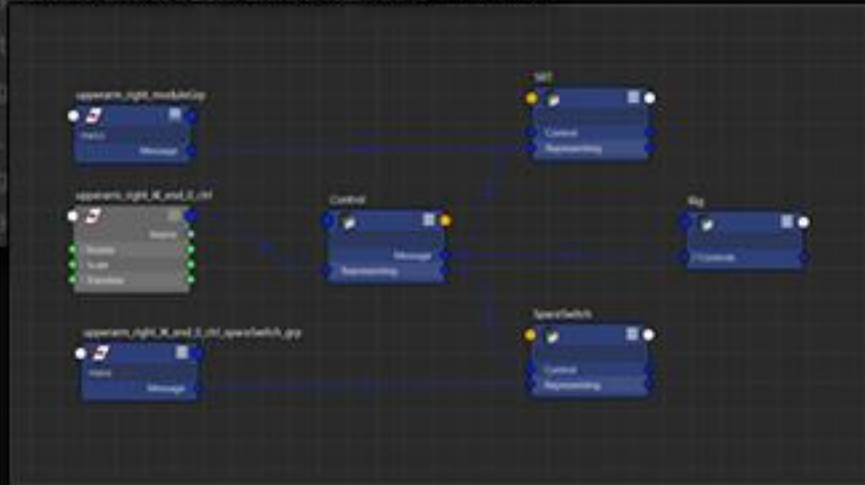


The Problem > The Pattern > An Implementation > **Abstracting Abstraction** > Plugin Powered Pipelines

Actual Rig Hierarchy



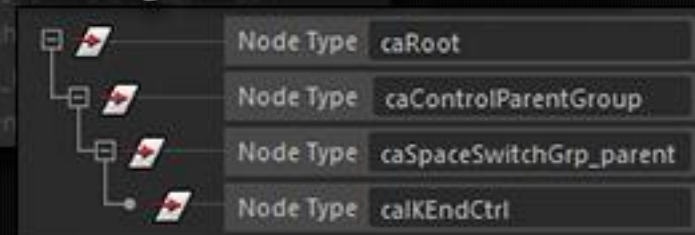
Network Based Metadata



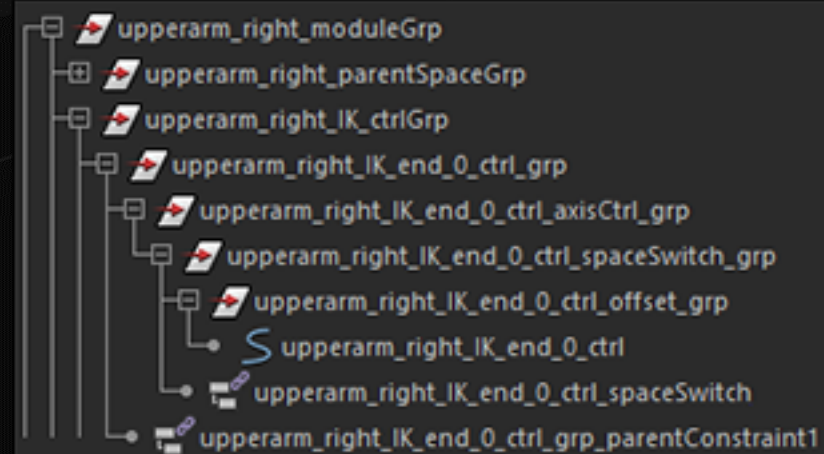
Actual Rig Hierarchy



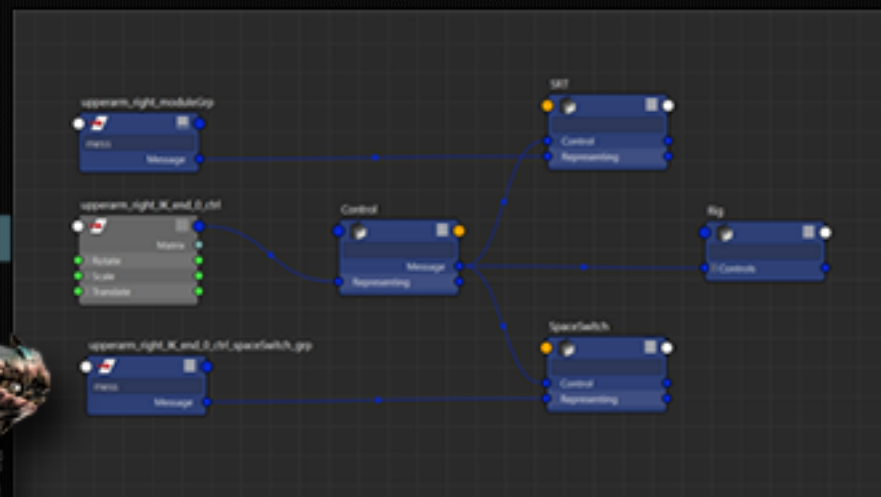
String Attribute Metadata



Actual Rig Hierarchy



Network Based Metadata



```

def get_opposing_spaceswitch(control):
    """
    Returns the space switch node for the opposing control

    :param control: pm.nt.DagNode

    :return: pm.nt.DagNode
    """
    # -- As for permission rather than forgiveness...
    try:
        # -- Get the meta node for the selected object
        meta_node = control.message.outputs(
            type='CAMetaControl'
        )[0]

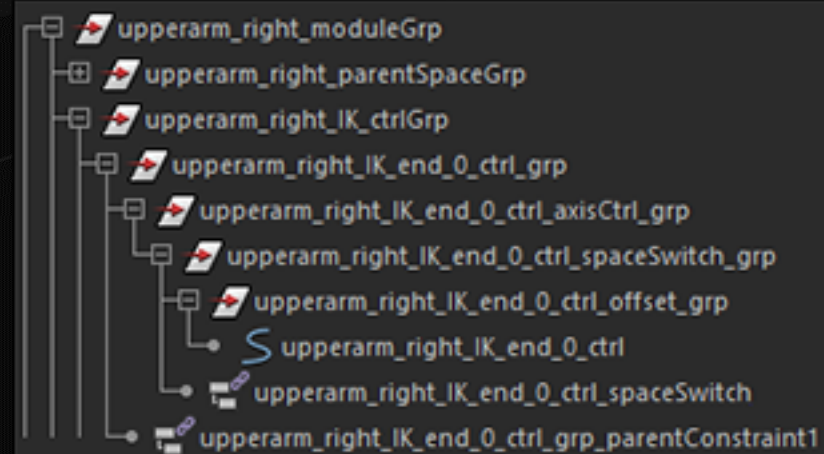
        # -- Look for the opposing (left <-> right)
        opposing_meta = meta_node.opposing.inputs()[0]

        # -- Now get the space switch attribute
        spaceswitch_meta = opposing_meta.message.outputs(
            type='CAMetaSpaceSwitch'
        )[0]

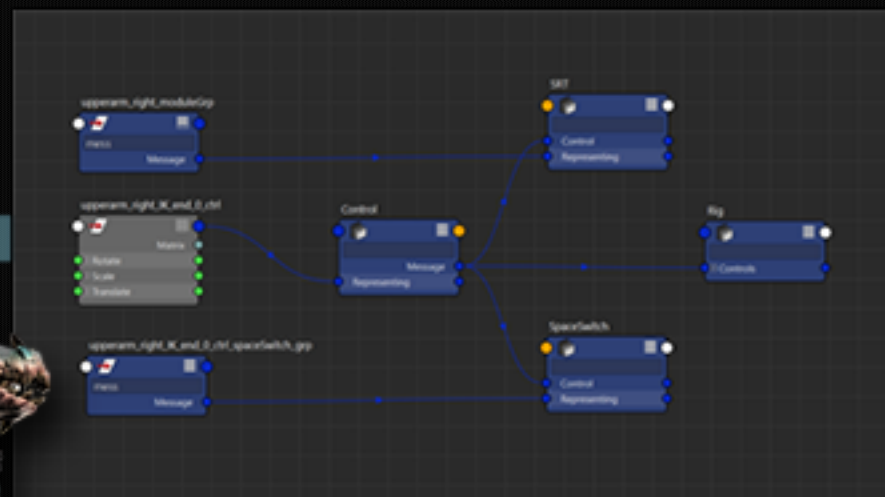
        return spaceswitch_meta

    except:
        return None
  
```


Actual Rig Hierarchy



Network Based Metadata



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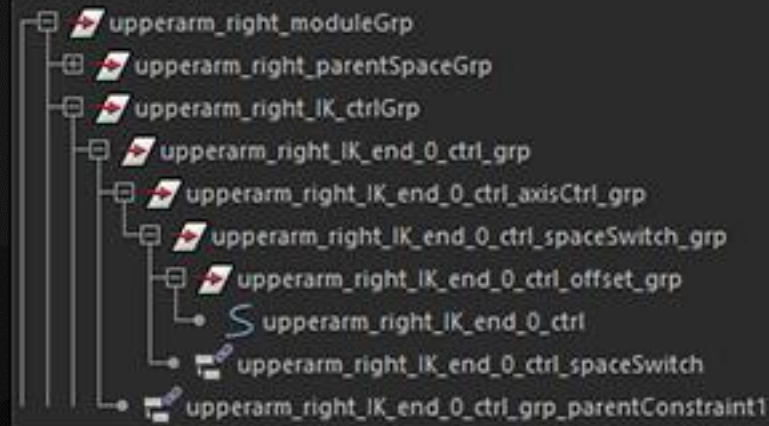
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        )[0]

        return spaceswitch_meta

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        return None
  
```

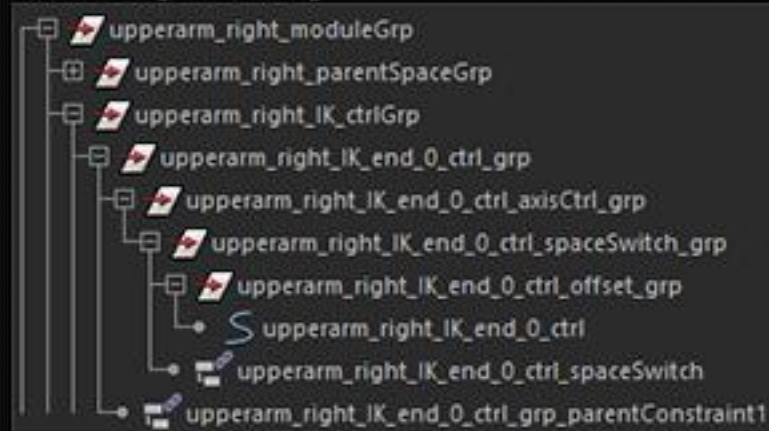

Actual Rig Hierarchy



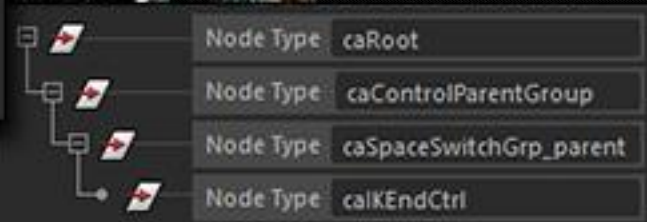
Network Based Metadata



Actual Rig Hierarchy



String Attribute Metadata



```

def get_opposing_spaceswitch(control):
    """
    Returns the space switch node for the opposing control

    :param control: Variable Data Type

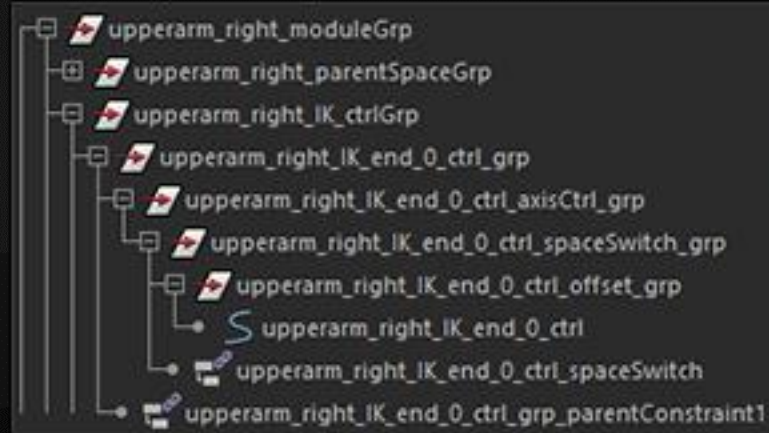
    :return: pm.nt.DagNode
    """
    # -- Do some form of cast to get the metadata object
    meta = MetaSystem.get(control)

    # -- Use a simple API to get what you need
    return meta.opposing_spaceswitch.get('meta')
  
```




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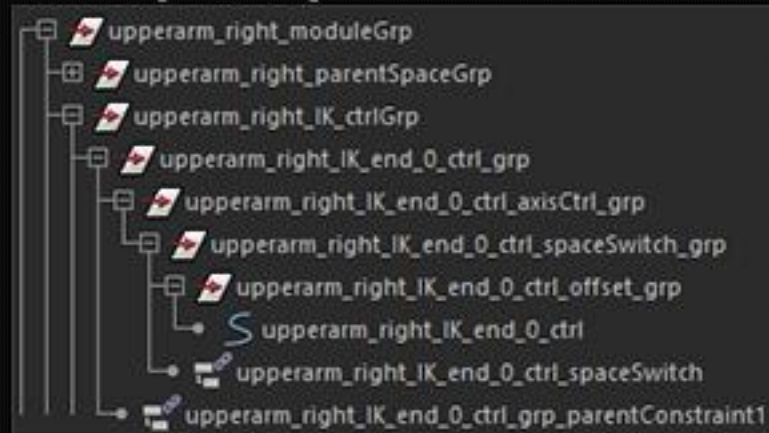
Actual Rig Hierarchy



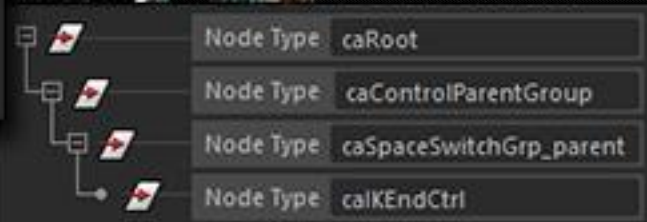
Network Based Metadata



Actual Rig Hierarchy



String Attribute Metadata



```
def get_opposing_spaceswitch(control):
    """
    Returns the space switch node for the opposing control

    :param control: Variable Data Type

    :return: pm.nt.DagNode
    """
    # -- Do some form of cast to get the metadata object
    meta = MetaSystem.get(control)

    # -- Use a simple API to get what you need
    return meta.opposing_spaceswitch.get('puzzle')
```




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```
class GripObjectBase(_GripBase):
    __metaclass__ = abc.ABCMeta

    @abc.abstractmethod
    def get(self, api=API_TYPES.GRIP):
        return None

    @abc.abstractmethod
    def tag(self, flag, value):
        return None

    @abc.abstractmethod
    def untag(self, flag, node):
        return None

    @abc.abstractmethod
    def name(self):
        return None

    @abc.abstractmethod
    def state(self):
        return StateFlags.Unknown

    @abc.abstractmethod
    def states(self):
        return StateFlags.Unknown

    @abc.abstractmethod
    def query(self, flags, api=API_TYPES.GRIP):
        return list()

    @abc.abstractmethod
    def children(self, flags, recursive=False, api=API_TYPES.GRIP):
        return list()

    @abc.abstractmethod
    def parents(self, flags, recursive=False, api=API_TYPES.GRIP):
        return list()

    @abc.abstractmethod
    def connected(self, flags, api=API_TYPES.GRIP):
        return list()

    @abc.abstractmethod
    def rig(self):
        return None
```




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```
class GraphBuilder(GraphBase):
    """..."""
    + abc.ABCMeta

    """..."""
    def get_inout(self, api=API_TYPES.GRAPH):
        return None

    """..."""
    def tag_inout(self, flag, value):
        return None

    """..."""
    def set_tag_inout(self, flag, value):
        return None

    """..."""
    def name(self):
        return None

    """..."""
    def state(self):
        return StateFlags.None

    """..."""
    def state(self):
        return StateFlags.None

    """..."""
    def query(self, flags, api=API_TYPES.GRAPH):
        return None

    """..."""
    def children(self, flags, recursive=False, api=API_TYPES.GRAPH):
        return None

    """..."""
    def parents(self, flags, recursive=False, api=API_TYPES.GRAPH):
        return None

    """..."""
    def connected(self, flags, api=API_TYPES.GRAPH):
        return None

    """..."""
    def tag(self):
        return None

    @classmethod
    @abc.abstractmethod
    def viable(cls, candidate):
        return False
```

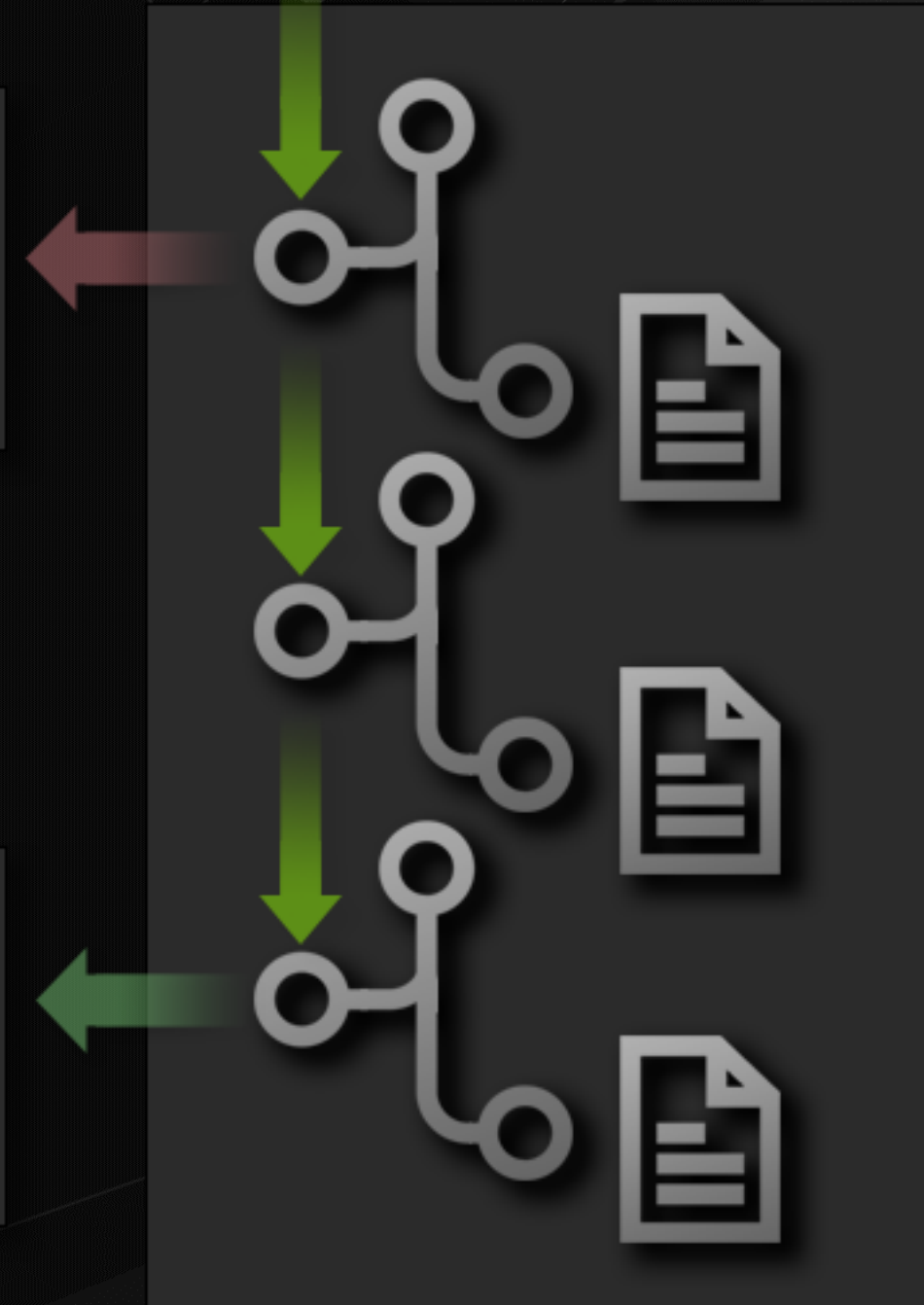


```
class StringMetaPlugin(GripObjectBase):

    @classmethod
    def viable(cls, candidate):
        if maya.cmds.hasAttr(candidate, 'ca_node_type'):
            return True
        return False
```

```
class MetaNodePlugin(GripObjectBase):

    @classmethod
    def viable(cls, candidate):
        for node in candidate.getParent(-1).message.outputs():
            if isinstance(node, CAMetaRig):
                return True
        return False
```



Helper Functionality

```
def grab(self, candidate):
    for plugin in self.factory.plugins():
        if plugin.viable(candidate):
            return plugin(candidate)

    raise Exception(
        'No plugin representation for object %s' % candidate
    )
```

Tool Code

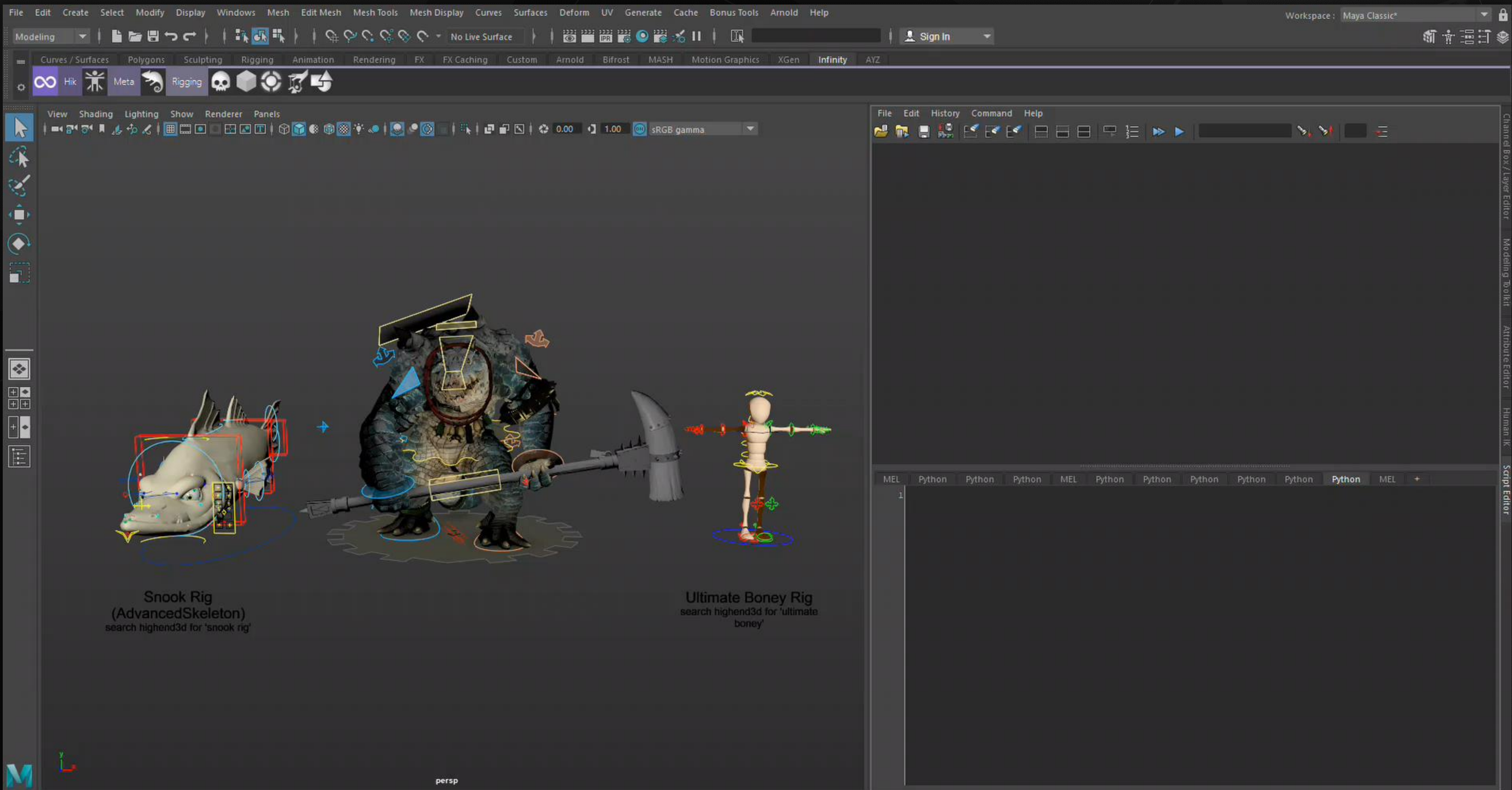
```
# -- Get a metadata representation of the selected
# -- object
meta = grip.grab(pm.selected()[0])

# -- Cycle over all the left controls in the rig
for control in meta.rig().query(RigFlags.Control | RigFlags.Left):

    # -- Get the right control from the left
    opposing_control = control.query(RigFlags.Opposing)

    # -- Get the pymel object, rather than the meta
    # -- object
    node = opposing_control.get('pm')
```

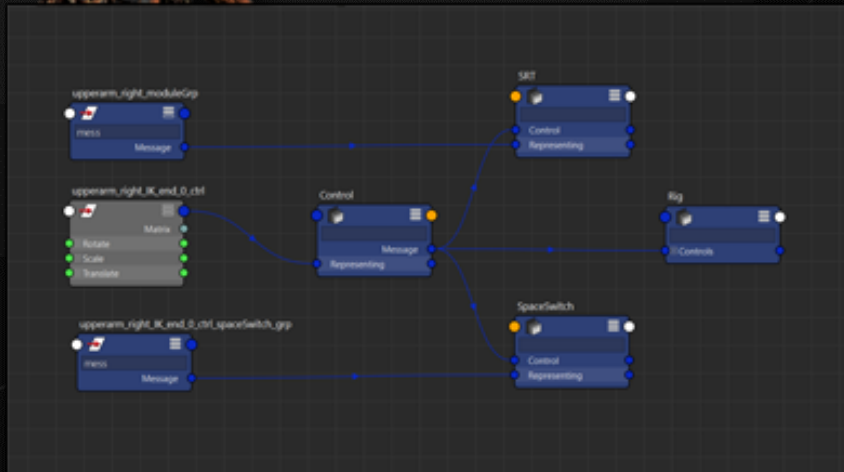






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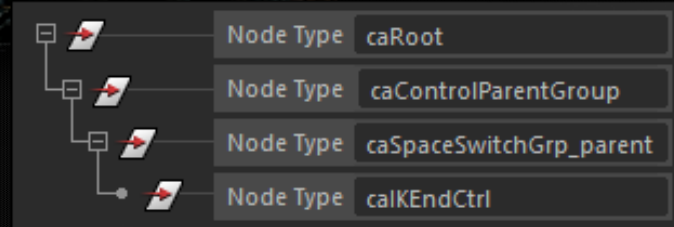
Network Based Metadata



```
class MetaNodePlugin(GripObjectBase):  
  
    def query(self, flags, api=API_TYPES.GRIP):  
  
        if RigFlags.Control in flags:  
            return [  
                MetaNodePlugin(node)  
                for node in self.rig.findChildren(  
                    type='CAMetaNodeControl',  
                ),  
            ]  
  
        return list()
```



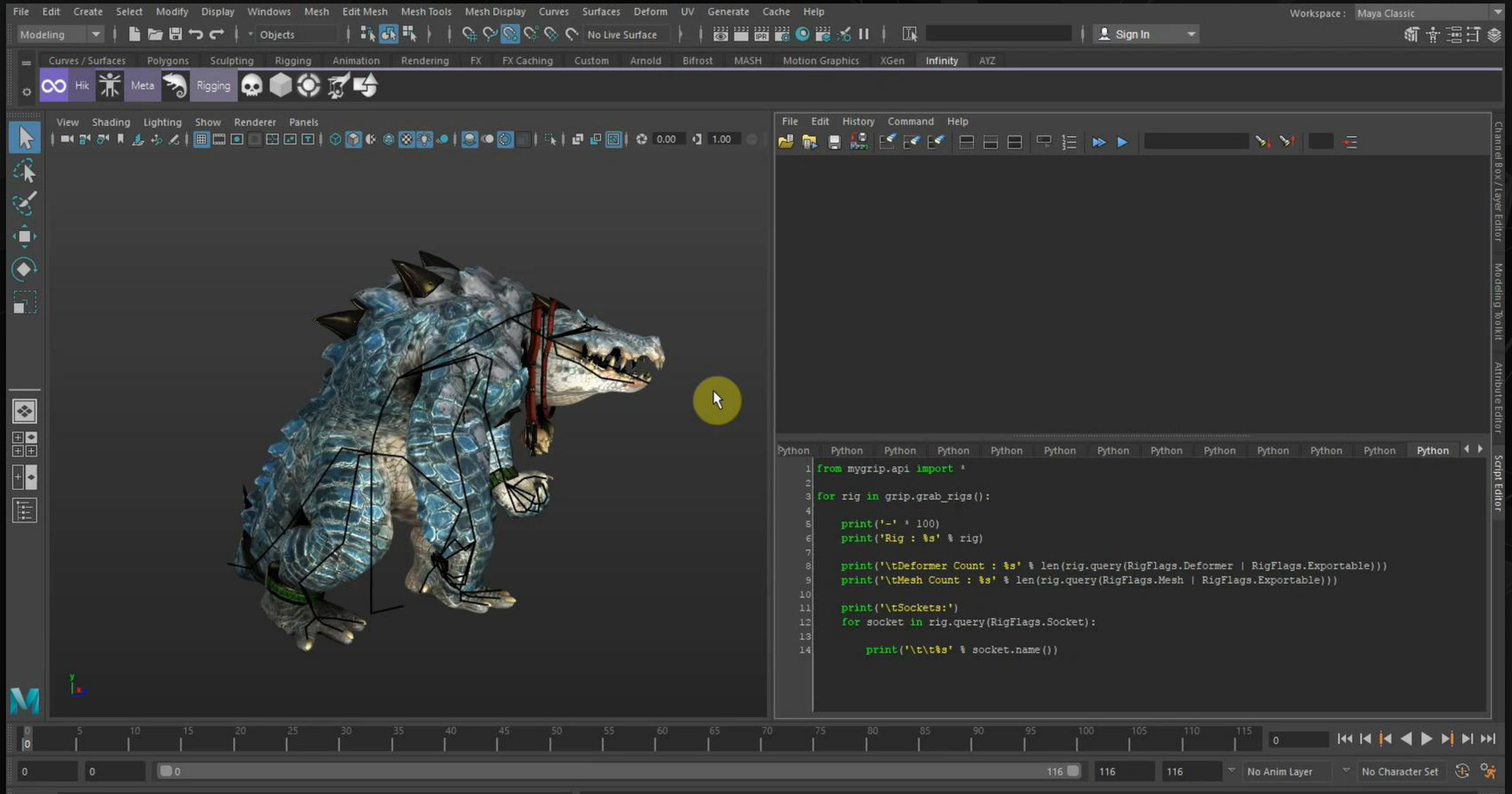
String Attribute Metadata

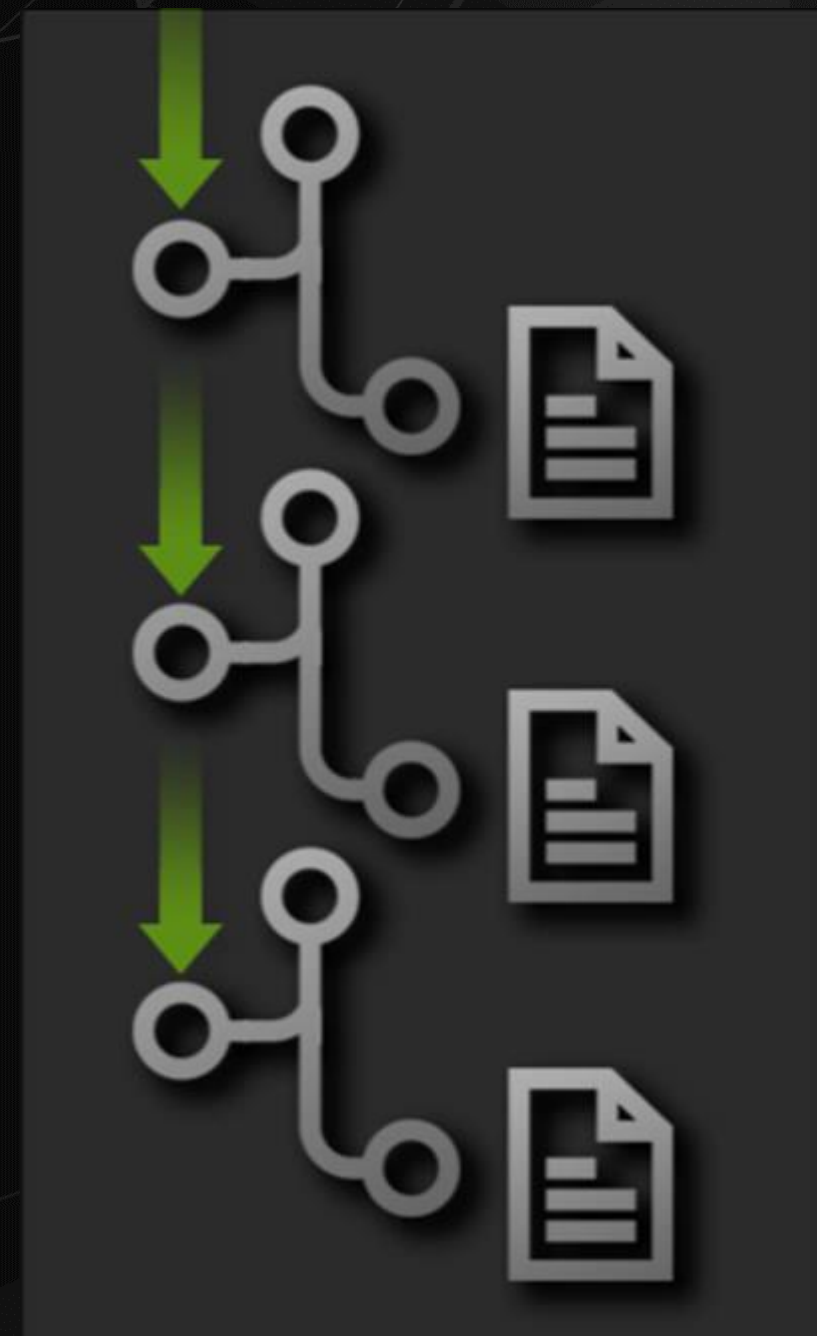
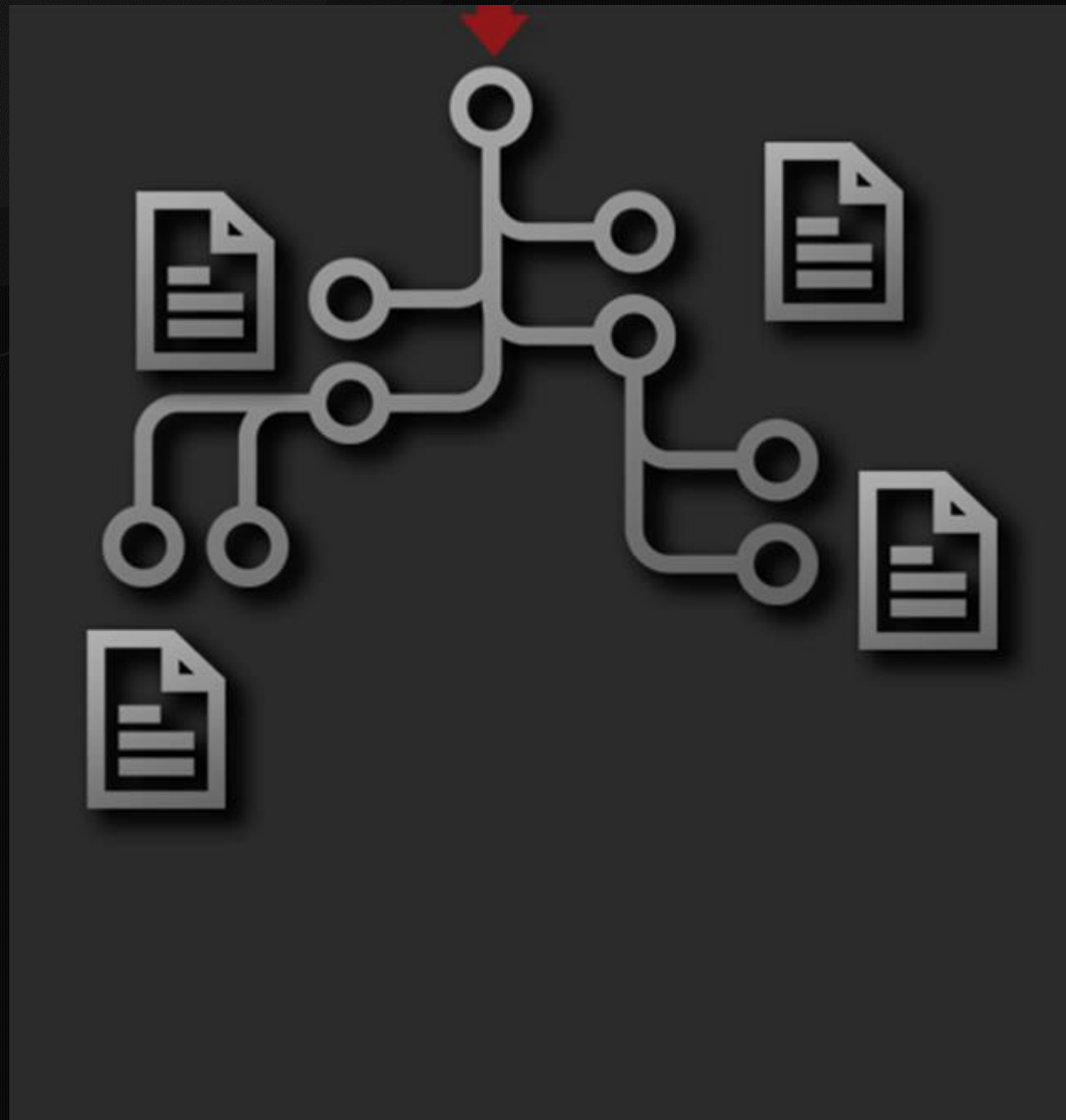


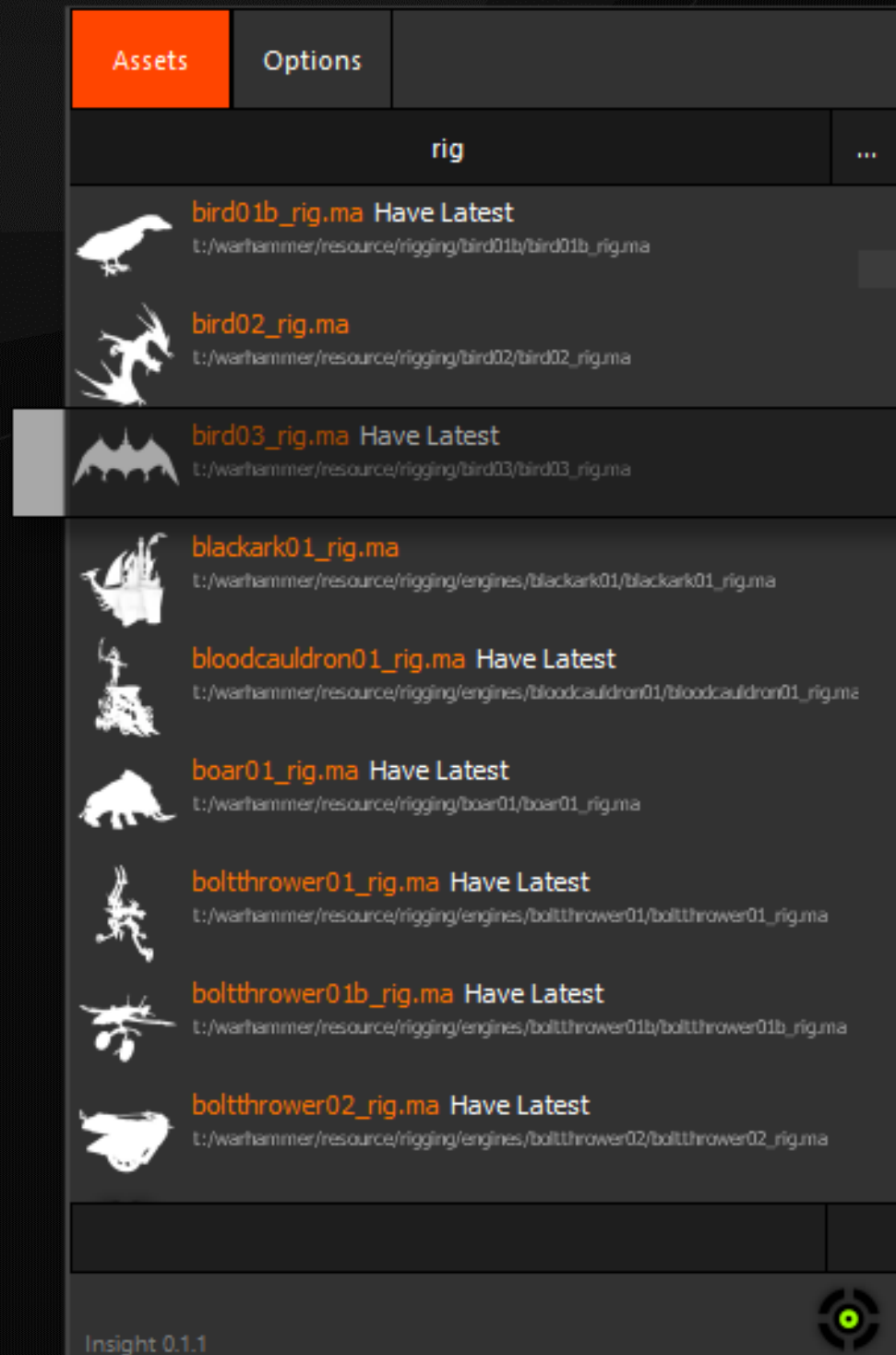
```
class StringMetaPlugin(GripObjectBase):  
  
    def query(self, flags, api=API_TYPES.GRIP):  
  
        if RigFlags.Control in flags:  
            meta_attrs = cmds.ls(  
                '*.ca_node_type',  
                recursive=True,  
            )  
  
            for attr in meta_attrs:  
                if maya.cmds.getAttr(attr) == self.ControlType:  
                    yield MetaNodePlugin(  
                        maya.cmds.attributeQuery(attr, node=True)  
                    )
```




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```
class InsightAssetPlugin(InsightPluginBase):
    __metaclass__ = abc.ABCMeta

    requirement = re.compile('', re.I)

    @abc.abstractmethod
    def dependencies(self):
        return list()

    @abc.abstractmethod
    def metadata(self):
        return dict()

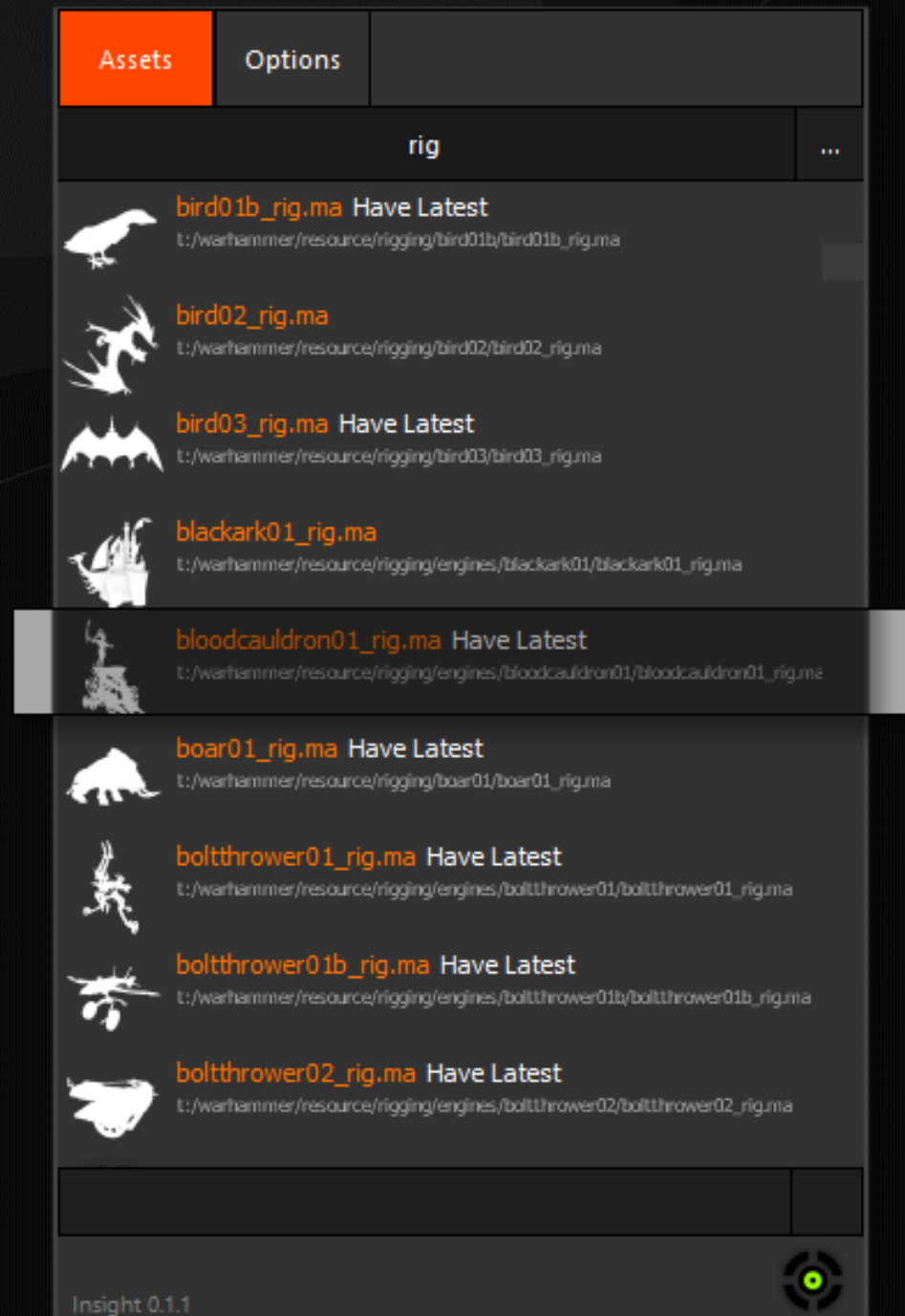
    @abc.abstractmethod
    def hash(self):
        return 0

    @abc.abstractmethod
    def auto_generated_tags(self):
        return list()

    @abc.abstractmethod
    def thumbnail(self):
        return None

    @abc.abstractmethod
    def context(self):
        return dict()

    @classmethod
    def viable(cls, filepath):
        return False
```

```
class AnimationAssetPlugin(InsightPluginBase):
```

```
    requirement = re.compile('.*(animations).*(\s.ma$)', re.I)
```

```
    @classmethod
```

```
    def viable(cls, filepath):
```

```
        return cls.requirement.search(filepath)
```

```
class RigAssetPlugin(InsightPluginBase):
```

```
    requirement = re.compile('.*(rigging).*(\s_rig.ma$)', re.I)
```

```
    @classmethod
```

```
    def viable(cls, filepath):
```

```
        return cls.requirement.search(filepath)
```

```
class MeshAssetPlugin(InsightPluginBase):
```

```
    requirement = re.compile('.*(art).*(\s.max$)', re.I)
```

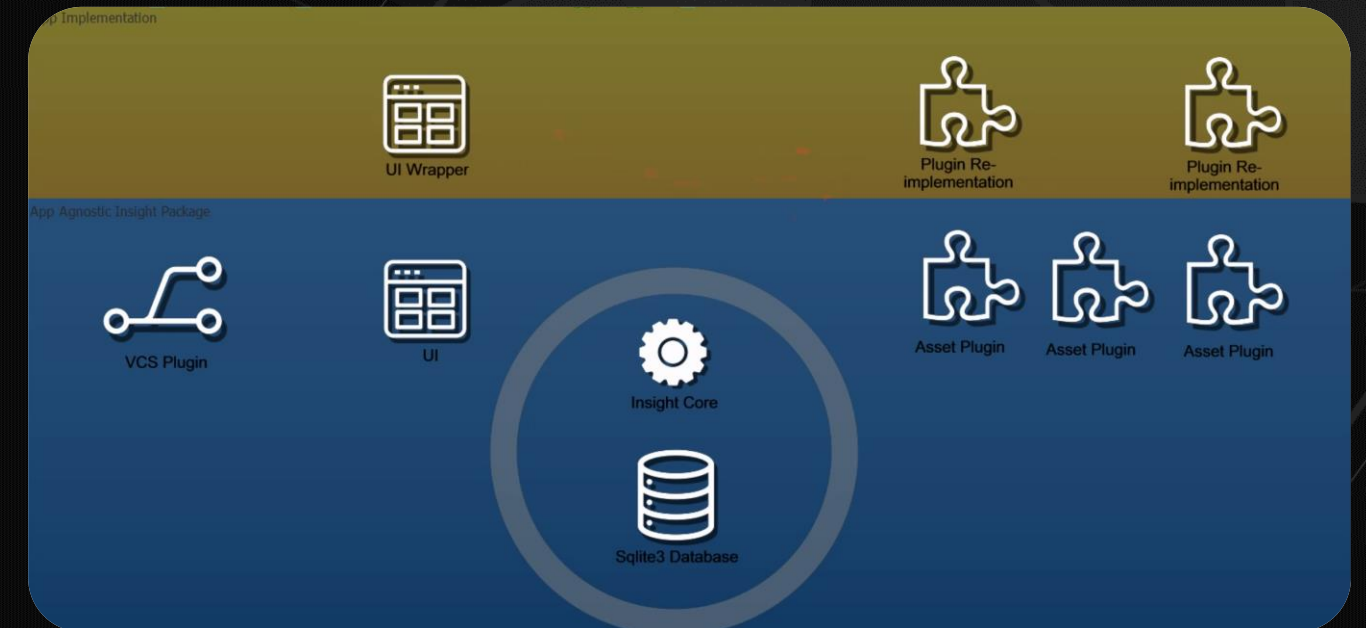
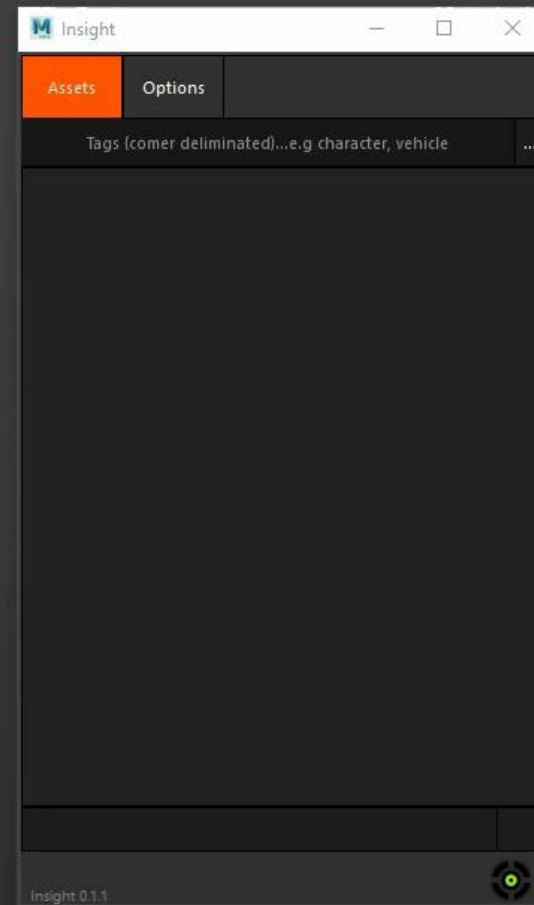
```
    @classmethod
```

```
    def viable(cls, filepath):
```

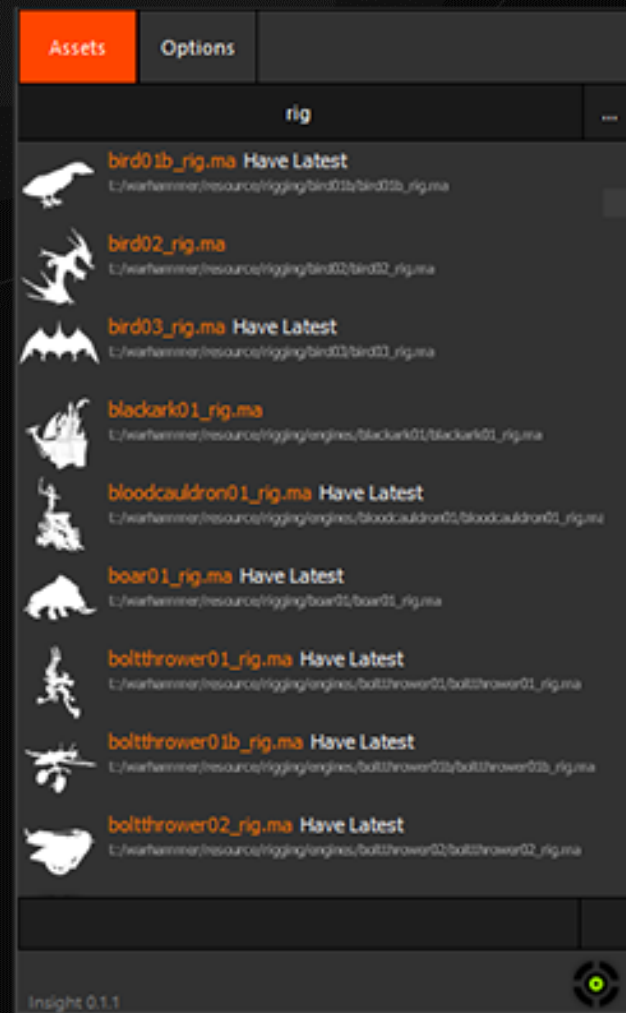
```
        return cls.requirement.search(filepath)
```




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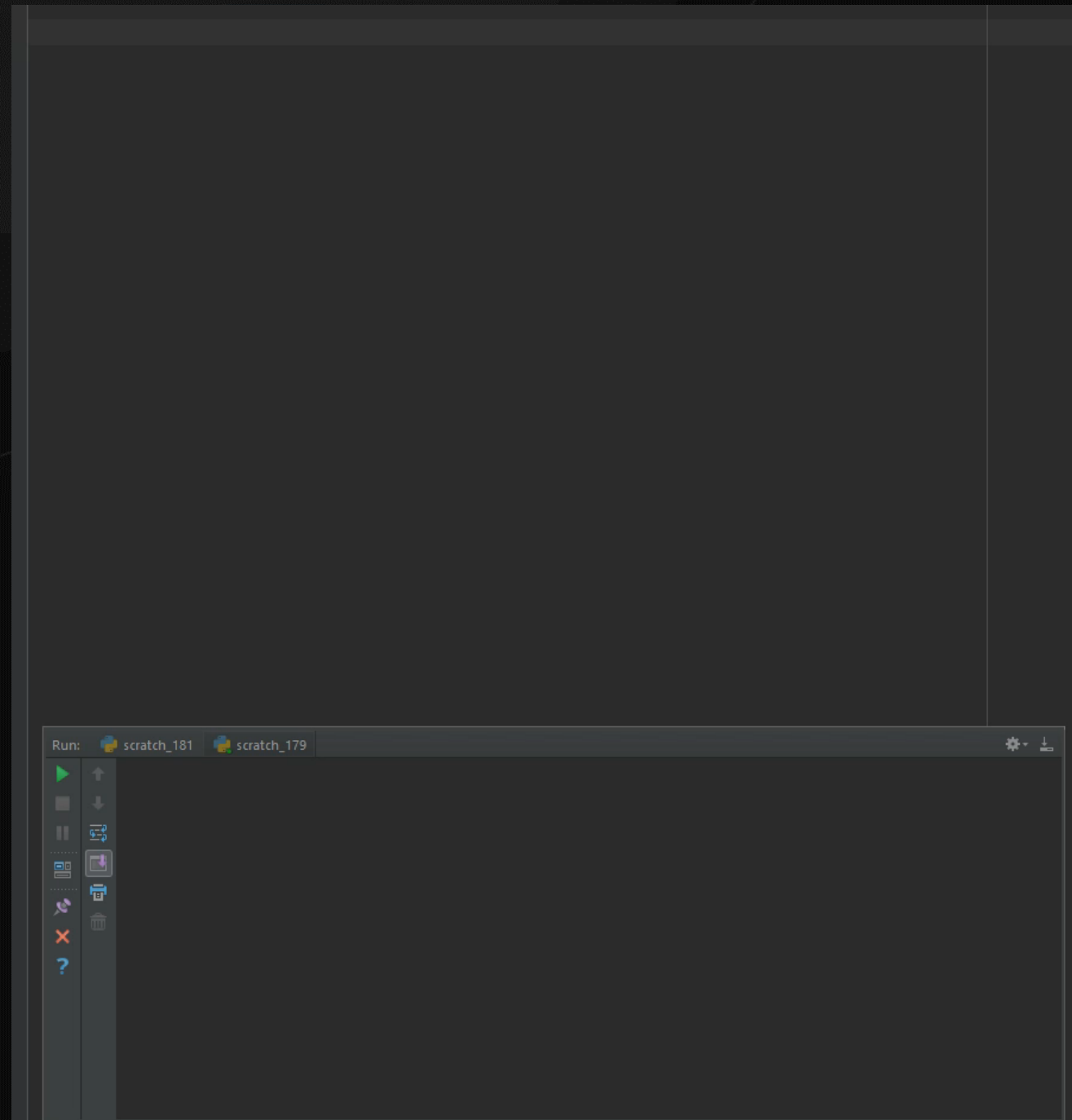


Detailed Blog: www.twisted.space



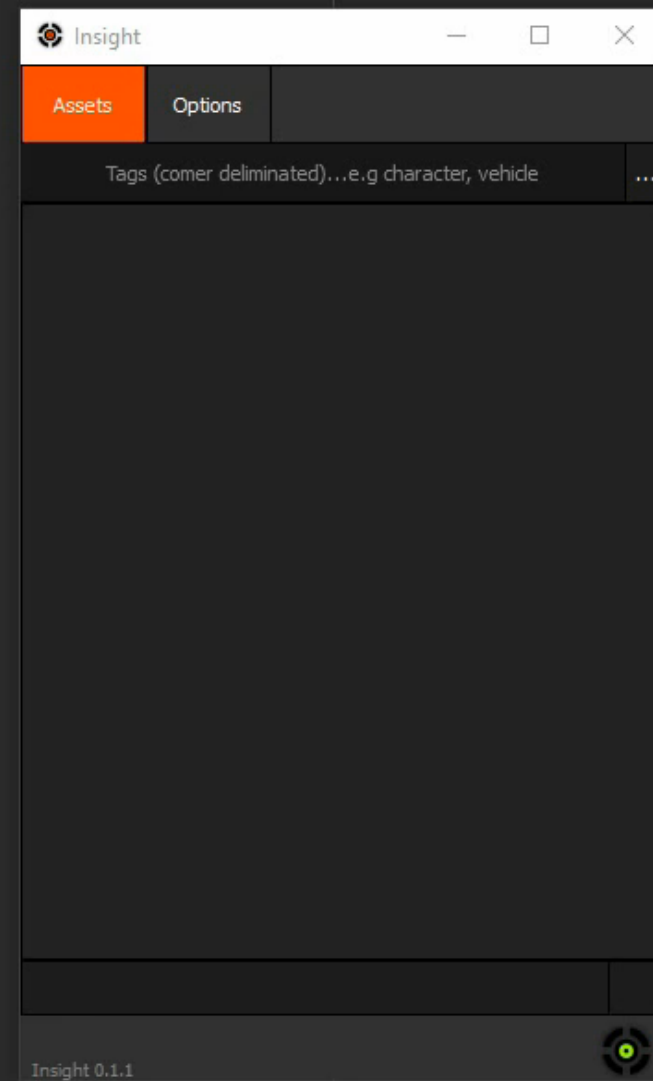


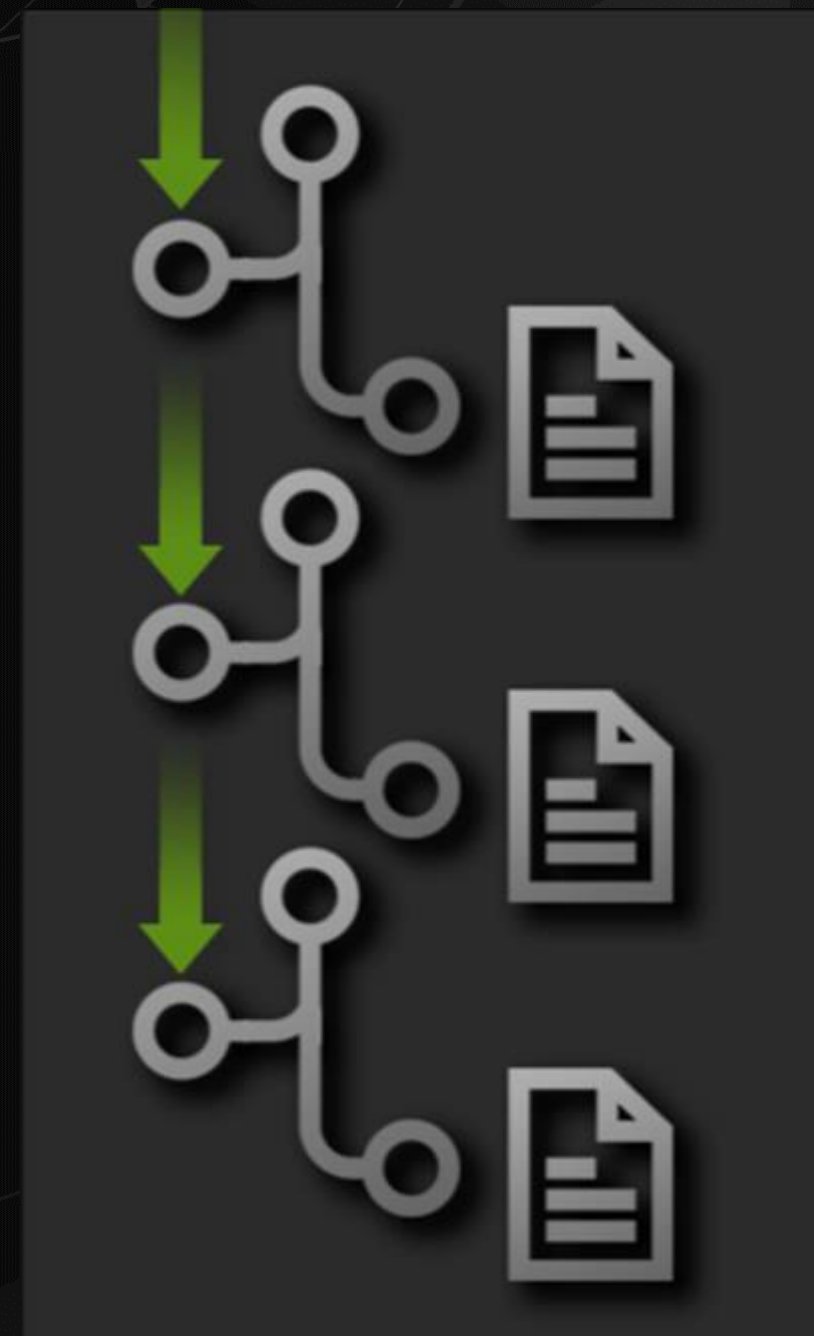
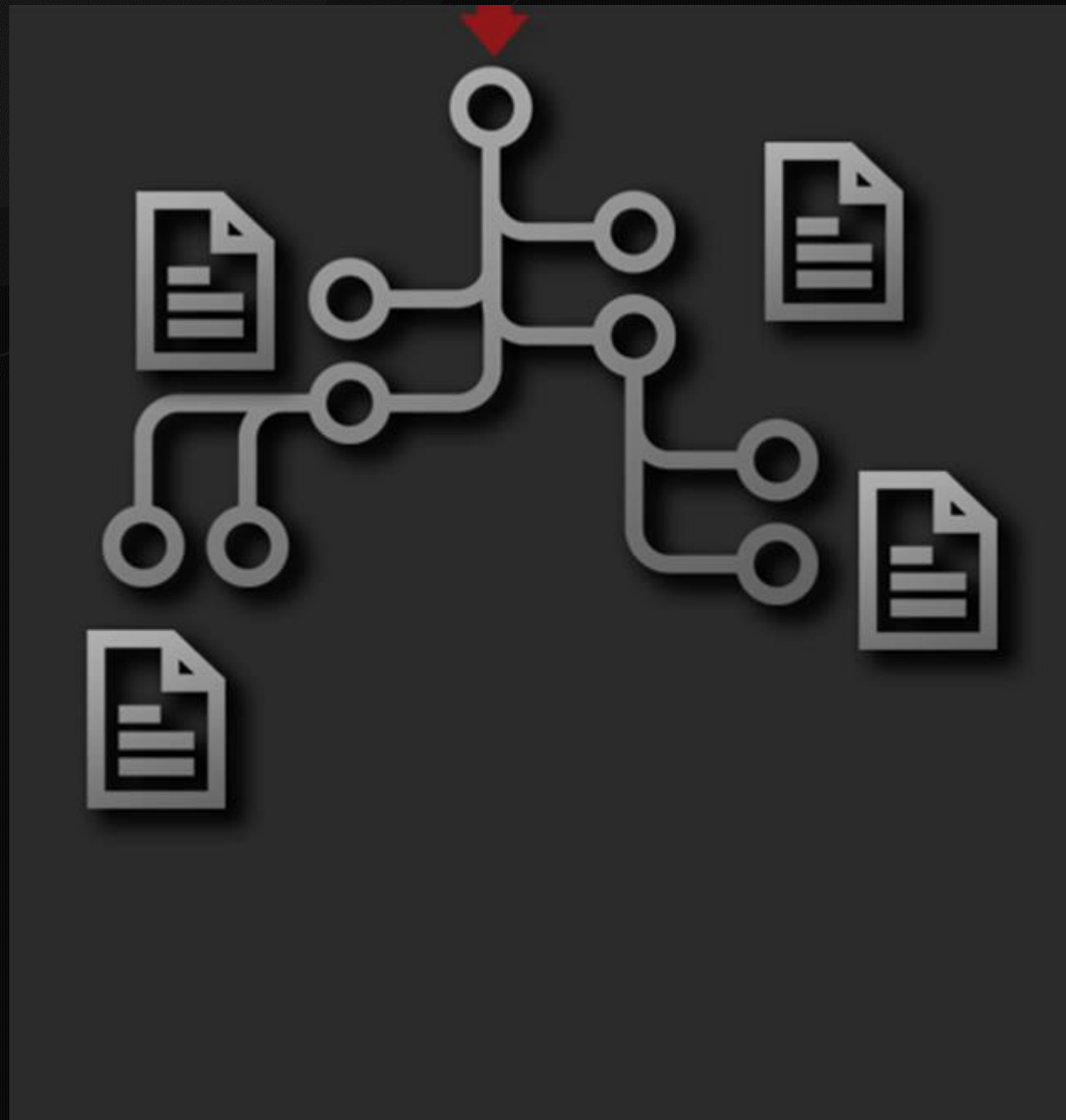
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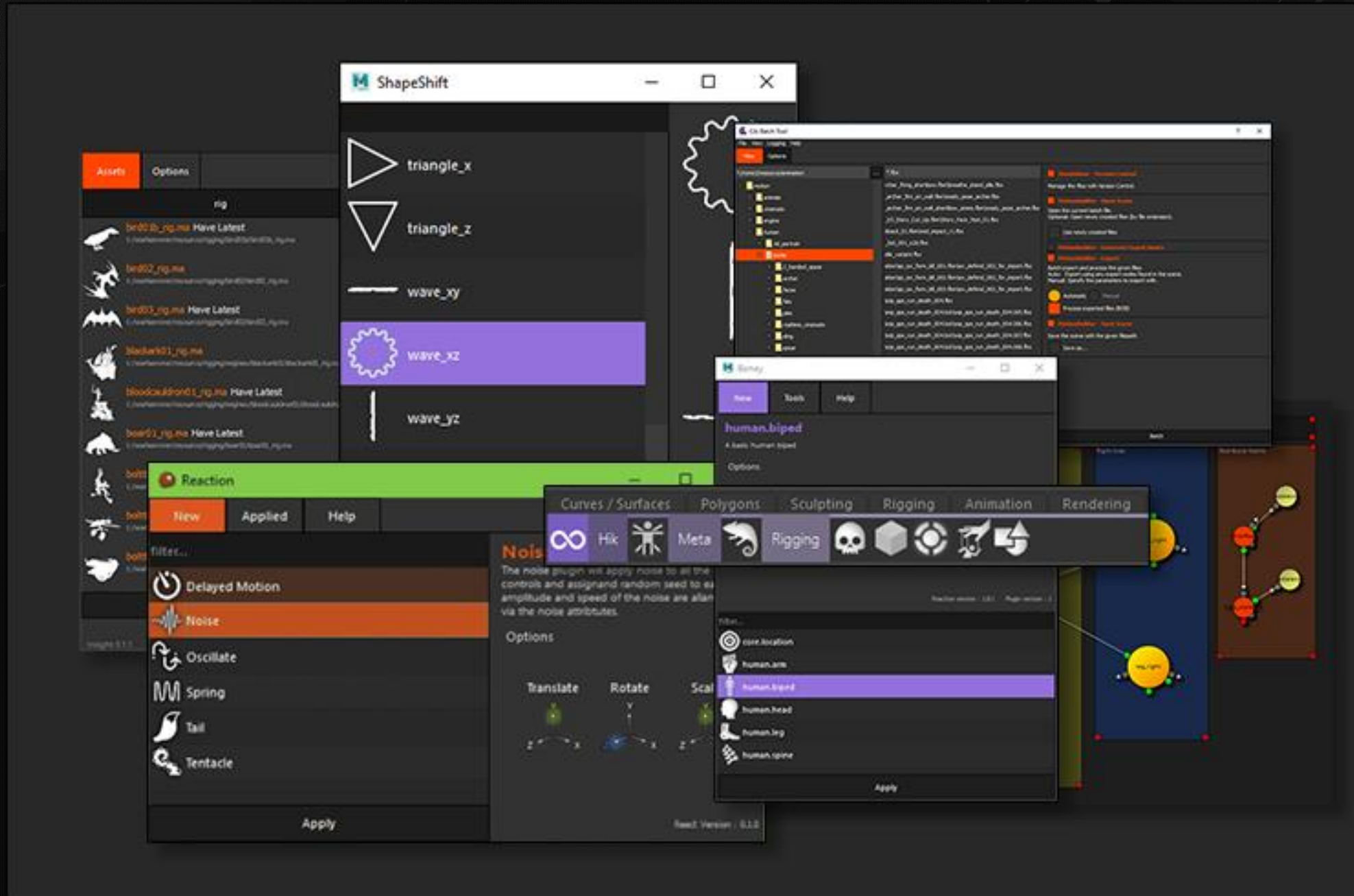






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Tools



Libraries

FBX
PROCESSOR

VCS
MANAGER

TW
EXPORT

RIG
CONFIG



The Problem > The Pattern > An Implementation > Abstracting Abstraction > Plugin Powered Pipelines

Add functionality without adding complexity

Applicable to many frameworks and toolsets

Promotes code consistency

Quicker implementation times for functionality

Encourage creativity and experimentation

GDC®

Mike Malinowski
Lee Dunham
Toby Harrison-Banfield
Joe Hornsby
Jodie Azhar
Mark Perry
Nathan Lawrence



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