

Standards and Tools in Neuroscience

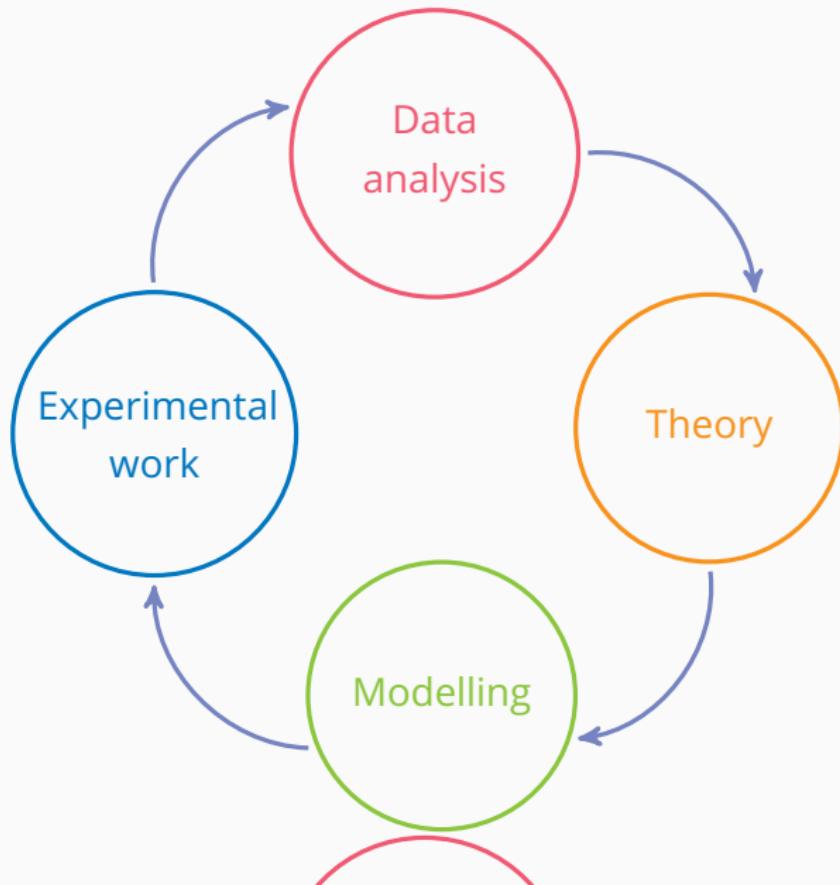
A summary of the Open Source Brain workshop,
September 2019

Ankur Sinha

Ph.D. candidate: UH Biocomputation Group, UK,
Volunteer: Fedora Project.

The problem statement

Neuroscience is complex, and massive



Free/Open science:

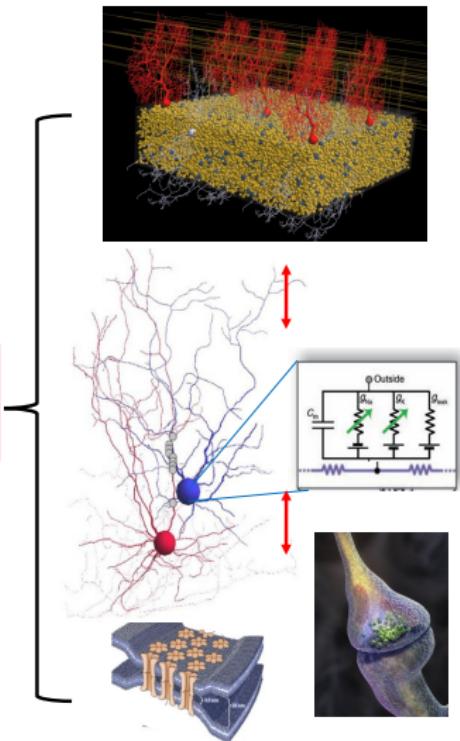
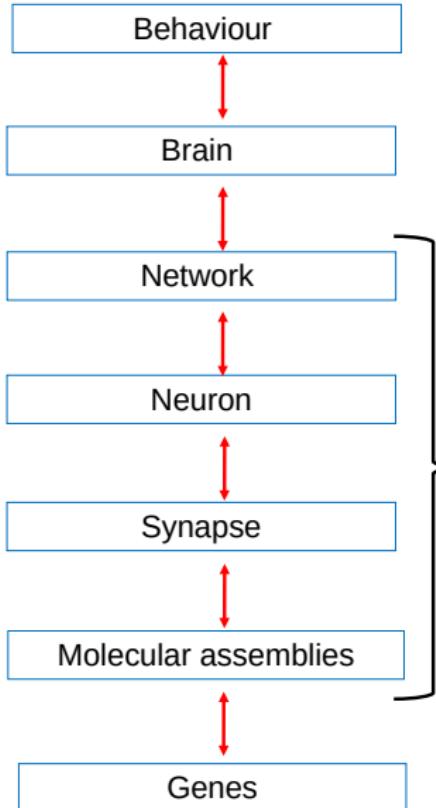
Scientific material should be easily, openly **accessible to all**.

Experimental neuroscience data is heterogeneous, multiscale and analysis is complex

Anatomy	Electrophysiology	Functional imaging	Behaviour
Receptor Immunohistochemistry	Single/ensemble channel recordings	Synaptic imaging	Restricted task
Neuronal morphologies	Whole cell patch-clamp recordings	Single cell imaging	Freely moving
Brain mapping & Connectomes	Multielectrode array	Population imaging	Natural environment

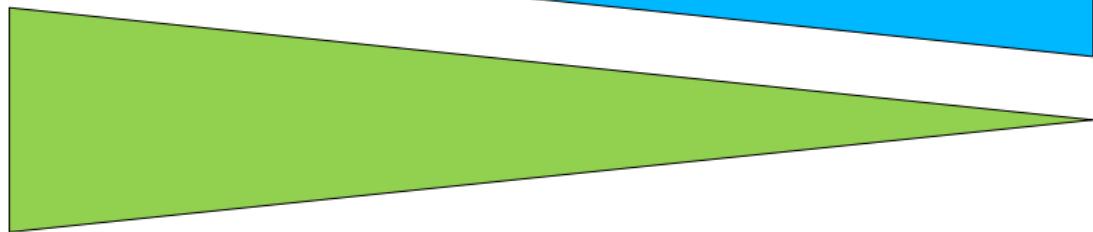
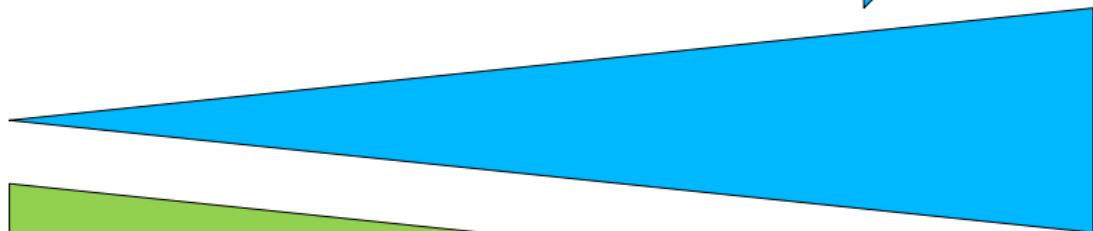
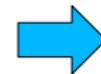
How can we structure neuroscience data to facilitate reuse?

Models of brain function span multiple spatial scales



A scaling problem

Model complexity



Transparency, accessibility, reproducibility,
reuse.....and utility as a scientific tool

Standards: the common tongue

NWB:N 2.0: An Ecosystem for Neurophysiology Data Standardization

Oliver Rübel

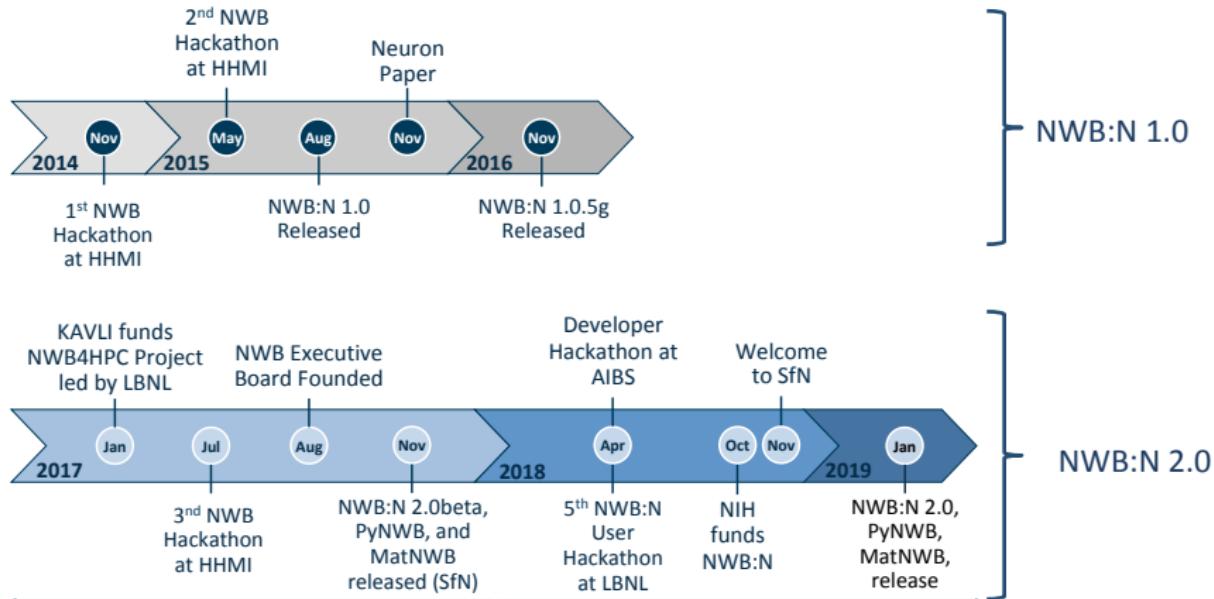
Computational Research Division, Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory

Open Source Brain Workshop

Alghero, Sardinia

September 10, 2019

A brief history of NWB:N



Overview

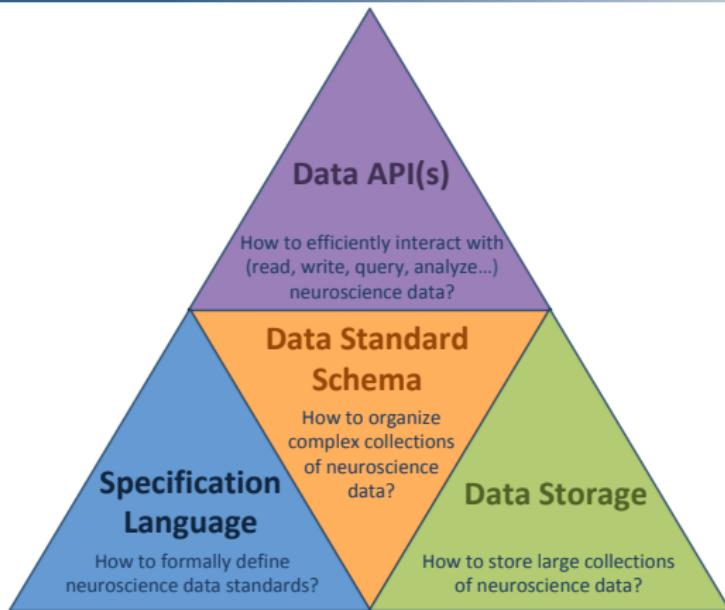
Motivation: Lack of standards for neurophysiology data and related metadata is the single greatest impediment to fully extracting return-on-investment from neurophysiology experiments, impeding interchange and reuse of data and reproduction of derived conclusions

NWB:N – An Ecosystem for Neuroscience Data Standardization

- The NWB:N data standard defines a unified data format for neurophysiology data, focused on the dynamics of groups of neurons measured under a large range of experimental conditions
- NWB:N is more than just a file format but it defines an ecosystem of tools, methods, and standards for storing, sharing, and analyzing complex neurophysiology data

Goal: With NWB:N we aim to develop a next generation data format and software ecosystem that will enable standardization, sharing, and reuse of neurophysiology data and analyses, enhancing discovery and reproducibility

Main components of the NWB:N ecosystem



Specification language



Goal: Enable the formal definition and programmatic interpretation of neuroscience data standards

Format specification language: Schema for defining hierarchical data schemas

Main primitives of the specification language:

- **Object primitives:**

- **Group:** A group is a collection of objects i.e. subgroups, datasets, links
- **Dataset:** n-dimensional array with associated data type, dimensions, etc.
- **Attribute:** small metadata dataset defined on a Group or Dataset
- **Link:** Like a POSIX soft link to given target neurodata_type (specifying a Group or Dataset)

- **Data type specifications**

- **Basic data types:** strings (ascii, utf8), numeric types (float, int, uint, bool etc.) etc.
- **Compound data types:** build complex data type, similar to structs
- **Isodatetime:** ISO8601 datetime string, e.g. 2018-09-28T14:43:54.123+02:00
- **Object reference:** Like a link to given neurodata_type but stored as values of a dataset (or attribute)
- **Region reference:** Links to regions (i.e., select subsets) of datasets stored as values of a dataset (or attribute)

- **Namespace specification:**

- Used to define a namespace for format specifications
- Needed to define and avoid collisions between extensions and to enable the creation of new data standards

Data storage



Primary function: Map NWB:N primitives (Groups, Datasets, Attributes etc.) to storage

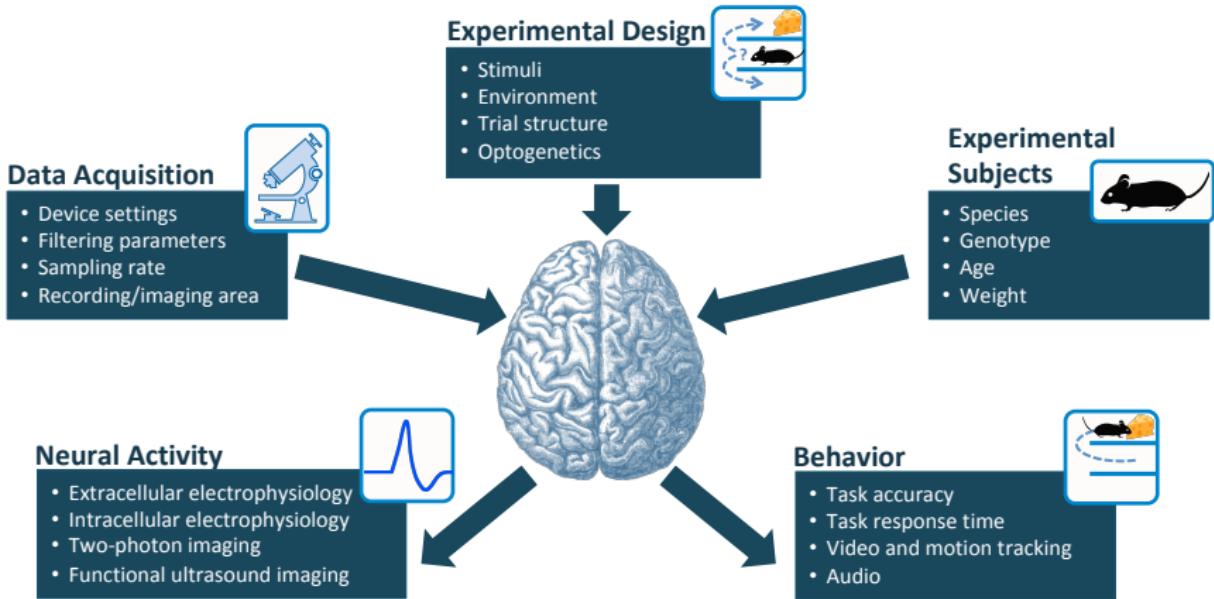
NWB:N uses HDF5 as its main file storage backend:

- Supports large-scale storage of complex data collections in a single file
- Optimized for performance (parallel I/O, advanced I/O filters etc.)
- Supported across platforms and programming languages (Matlab, Python, C/C++, Fortran, R...)
- Targets long-term support

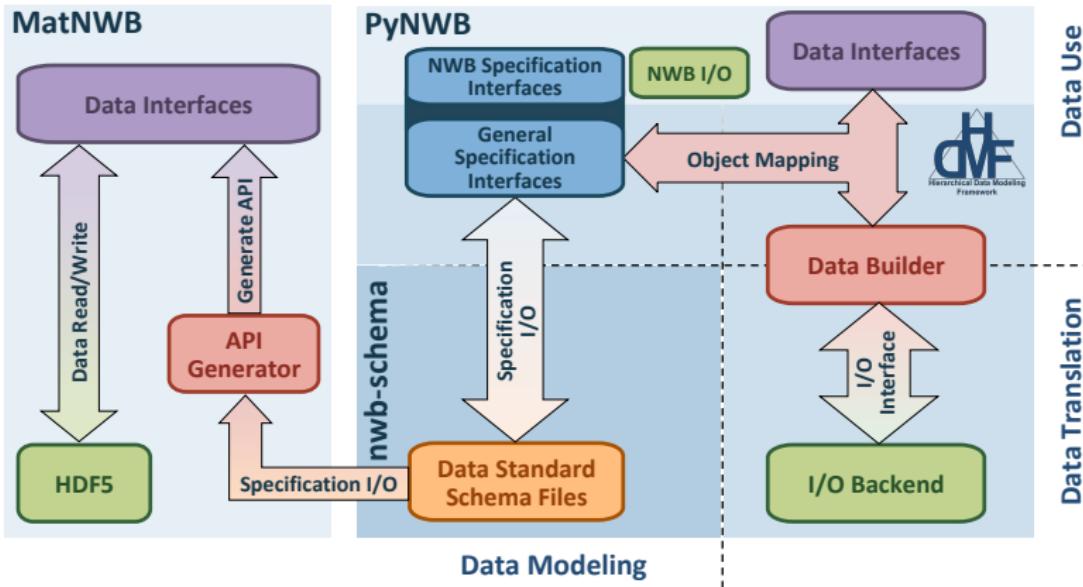
NWB:N supports advanced I/O features:

- Lazy data load → Fast file open and efficient memory usage even for very large files
- Chunking → Optimize data layout, storage, and I/O
- I/O filter → E.g. use compression to reduce storage cost
- Self-contained data storage → Store all data in a single file (e.g. for sharing)
- Modular data storage → Store data across multiple files and integrated via external links
- Iterative data write → Support data streaming, reduce memory usage, and optimize I/O

NWB:N supports complex collections of data required for understanding the brain

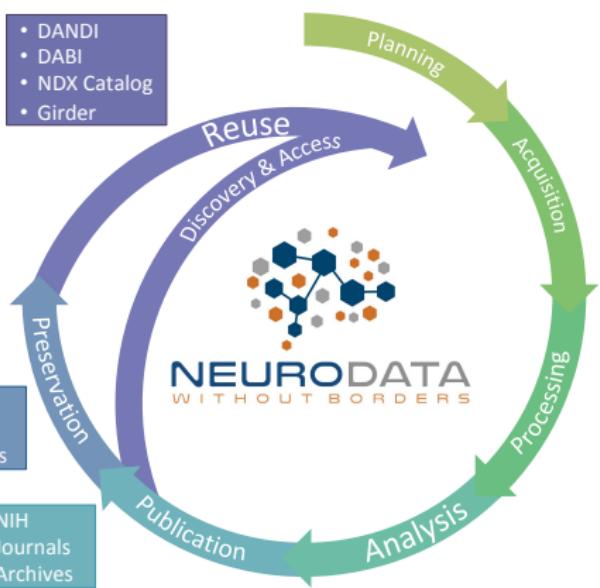


Advanced software architecture for data standardization



Neurophysiology Tools

NWB:N technologies at the heart of the neurodata lifecycle and applications



Electrophysiology	Optical Physiology
DataJoint, NWB Tutorials	MiniScope ScanImage
OpenEphys, Plexon, Neuralynx, Intan, TDT, SpikeGadgets, SpikeGLX	
PyNWB, MatNWB, HDMF, HDF5 tools/libs	
SpikeInterfaces MountainSort, KiloSort, npzsorting	NoRMCorre CNMF-E CELLMax EXTRACT
BrainStorm WaveClust, UltraMegaSort2000, KiloSort Kluster	
NWB-Explorer (OpenSourceBrain) NWB-JupyterWidgets	
BrainStorm, RAVE, Neo, SpikeWidgets, EcogVis, ephys-viz, ...	CalmAn

Reference herein to any specific product, process, or service does not constitute or imply its endorsement, recommendation, or favoring by NWB or LBNL.

Community engagement and outreach

Science Engagement

- NWB User/Developer Days:
 - 65+ scientists from 20 major institutions attended in 2018 at LBNL and AIBS
 - 43 users and developers from 29 major labs and research institutions in 2019 at HHMI
- The NIH proposal included 55 letters of support
- Many groups are already adopting NWB:N, e.g., FrankLab, ChangLab (UCSF), BouchardLab (LBNL), SvobodaLab (HHMI), MeisterLab (CalTech), Redwood (UCB), Allen Institute for Brain Science, among others.
- Broad outreach to tool builders:
- Broad outreach to foster publication of data:
- We have reached out to and are working with NIH BRAIN Initiative U19 projects
- KAVLI seed grants
- Simons data pilots

Industry Engagement

- Kitware (Visualization/CI)
- Vidrio (MatNWB)
- MathWorks (MATLAB)
- Vathes (DataJoint)



Governance

- NWB Executive Board
- NWB Technical Advisory Board
- KAVLI foundation
- NIH BRAIN Initiative

Community Resources

Open Source

GitHub

<https://github.com/NeurodataWithoutBorders>

Open Documentation

Read the Docs

<https://neurodatawithoutborders.github.io>

Developer/User Channels



<https://nwb-users.slack.com>



<https://groups.google.com/forum/#forum/neurodatawithoutborders>

User Engagement

- User- and developer hackathons
- Outreach at neuroscience conferences (CoSyNe, SfN, BRAIN Initiative Investigators Meeting)
- Community discussion and surveys



BERKELEY LAB

LAWRENCE BERKELEY NATIONAL LABORATORY



MetaCell

SOFTWARE FOR NEUROSCIENCE

NWB Explorer

Open Source Brain Meeting

Alghero, Italy

10th September 2019



OPEN SOURCE BRAIN



OpenWorm



wellcome

NWB Explorer

Not Secure | nwbxplorer.opensourcebrain.org/user/fdb1ef05-eaa3-486a-810f-eb483b310e6c/groppoito

Welcome to NWB Explorer^{beta}

Visualise and understand your neurophysiology data

What file do you wish to load?

Paste a URL pointing to an NWB file Load NWB file

Don't have a file to load?

Pick a sample and get started!

[Simple time series](#)

[Ferguson et al. 2016](#) [2](#) [3](#) [4](#) [5](#)

[Triplett et al. 2018](#)

[Lantyer et al. 2018](#)



Brought to you by  OPEN SOURCE BRAIN   MetaCell

Supported by  



NWB EXPLORER

DEMO

Try it out at

<https://nwbexplorer.opensourcebrain.org>

Creating cortical models across scales in NeuroML

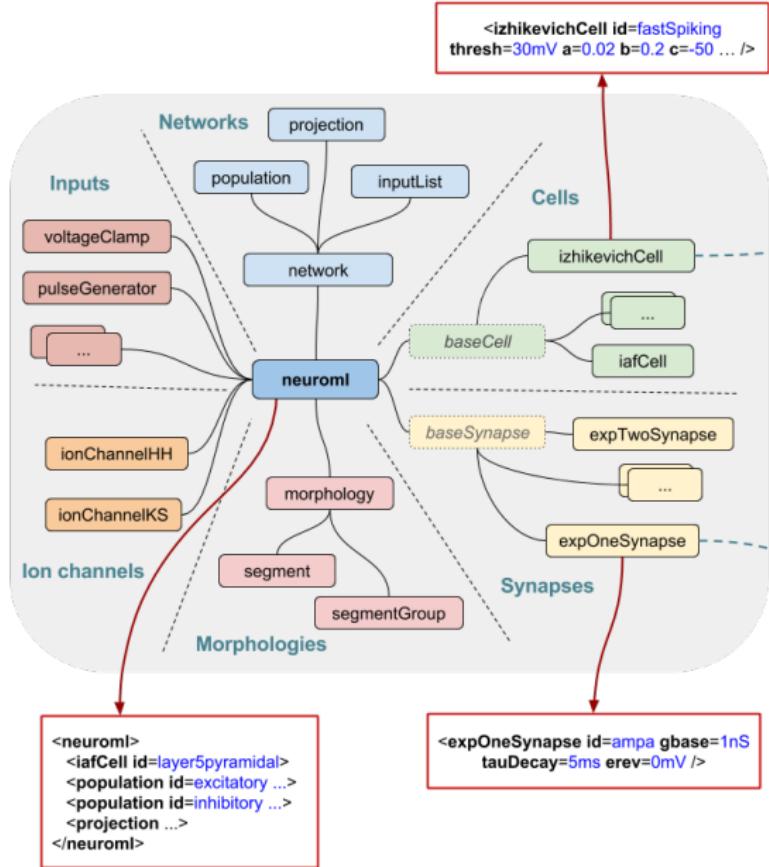


Open Source Brain workshop 2019

11th Sept 2019

Padraig Gleeson
p.gleeson@ucl.ac.uk
University College London

NeuroML 2



LEMS

Standard NeuroML 2 ComponentType definitions

Cells.xml

ComponentType: **izhikevichCell**
Parameters: **thresh, a, b, c, d, ...**

Dynamics
StateVariables: **v, U**
TimeDerivatives:
 $dv/dt = 0.04*v^2 + 5*v + 140.0 - U$
 $dU/dt = a * (v - U)$
OnConditions:
 $v > thresh \Rightarrow$
 $v = c$
 $U = U + d$

Synapses.xml

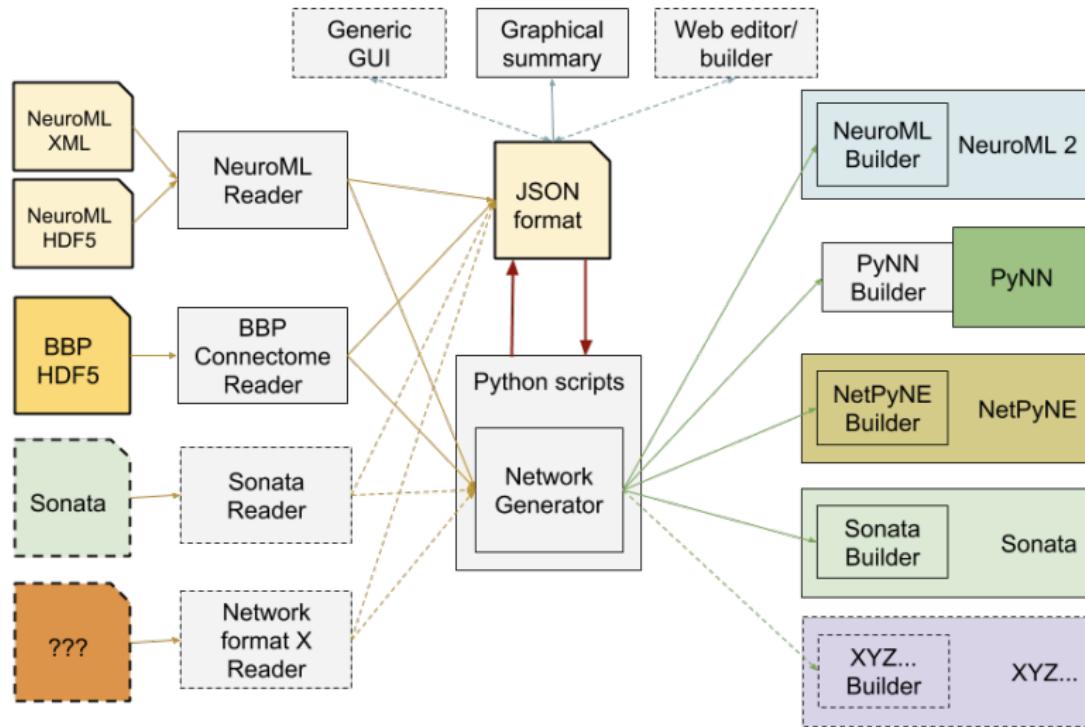
ComponentType: **expOneSynapse**
Parameters: **gbase, tauDecay, erev**

Dynamics
StateVariables: **g**
TimeDerivatives:
 $dg/dt = -g / \tau_{decay}$
DerivedVariables:
 $i = g * (erev - v)$
OnEvents:
 $g = g + gbase$

Networks.xml

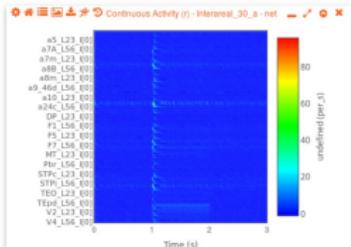
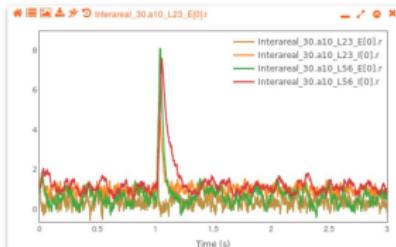
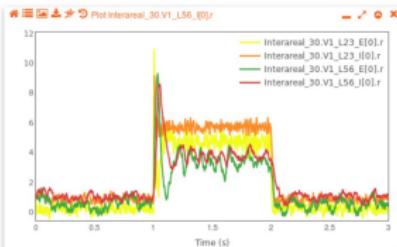
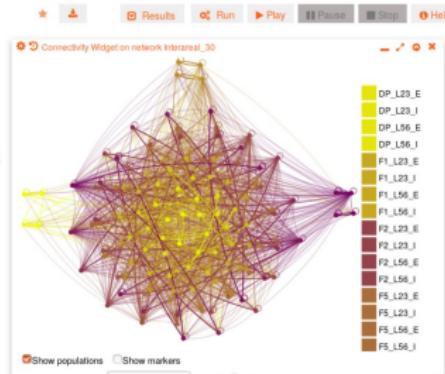
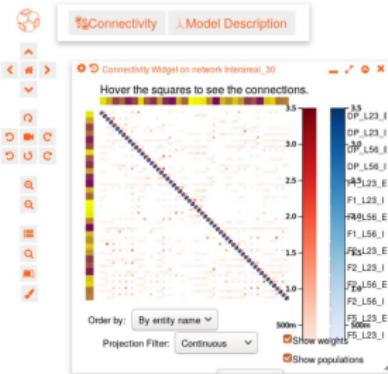
Inputs.xml

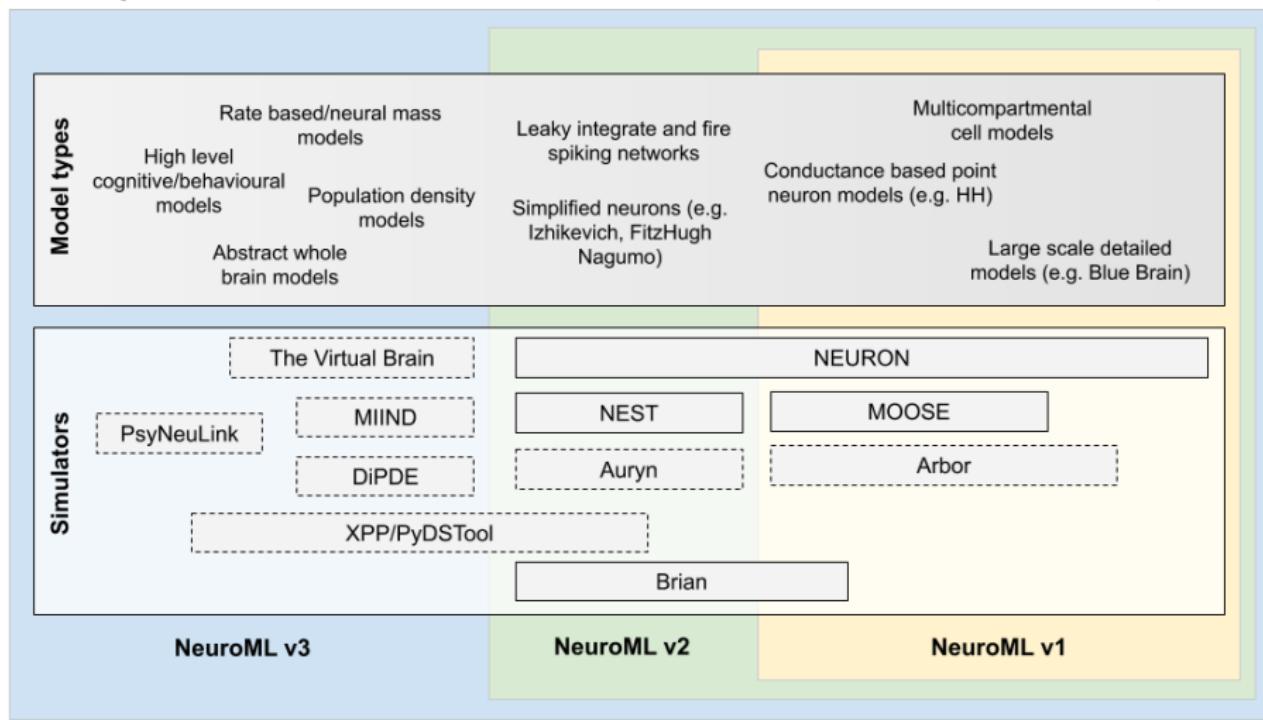
...



Large scale laminar cortical network Melias et al. 2016

 Return to project





INCF SIG on Standardised Representations of Network Structures

This SIG deals with the various tools and formats for creating and sharing representations of biological neuronal networks, and will work towards ensuring these are as interoperable and usable as possible for computational neuroscientists.

Contact info: p.gleeson@uc.ac.uk

Members

Anton Arkhipov, Allen Institute, USA

Tom Close, Monash University, Australia

Sharon Crook, Arizona State University, USA

Kael Dai, Allen Institute, USA

Andrew Davison, UNIC, CNRS, France

Lia Domide, Codemart, Romania & Aix-Marseille Université, France

Salvador Durá-Bernal, SUNY Downstate Medical Center, USA

Viktor Jirsa, Aix-Marseille Université, France

Padraig Gleeson, University College London, UK

Sascha von Albeda, Würzburg Research Centre, Germany

Converting simulator specific formats to NeuroML2

Open Source Brain Meeting 2019



Boris Marin

boris.marin@ufabc.edu.br



Universidade Federal do ABC

Converting NMODL to NeuroML

The Simple™, OSB sponsored way of converting models to NeuroML2



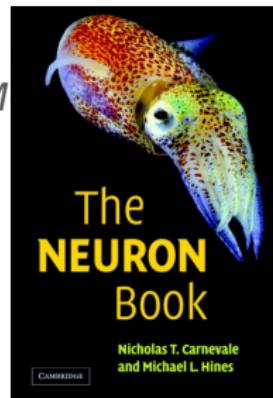
<mailto:p.gleeson@ucl.ac.uk>

The *NEURON* simulator

Defining models in *NEURON*

<https://www.neuron.yale.edu/neuron/>

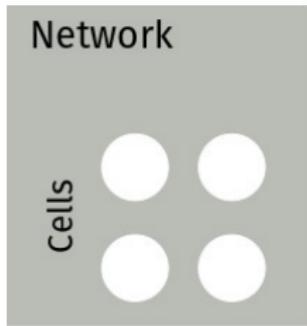
- Cells, Networks: *hoc* language (accessible from Python)
 - morphologies
 - synaptic connections
 - *.hoc* files
- Ion Channels (membrane mechanisms): *NM*
 - *.mod* files



What is NeuroML, and why should I care?

Why can OSB process any NeuroML2 file?

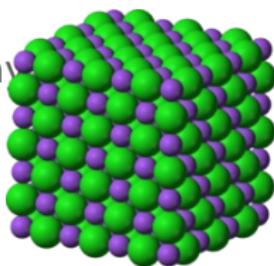
- NML is *structured* (not unlike a *Type System*)



It is all about **Structure**

Structure in NeuroML / NMODL

- A *Type System* (composability rules) is what grants NML its superpowers
- nmodl is also powerful, but can be used as a general purpose language
 - VERBATIM blocks
 - many different ways of achieving same goal
 - prone to *unstructuredness*
- OSB could in theory treat nmodl the same way as NML...
 - if only people stuck to "good practices"!



Levels of Abstraction

NeuroML2

```
<ionChannelHH id="kChan" conductance="10pS" species="k">

    <gateHHrates id="n" instances="4">
        <forwardRate type="HHExpLinearRate" rate="0.1per_ms" midpoint="-55mV" scale="10mV"/>
        <reverseRate type="HHExpRate" rate="0.125per_ms" midpoint="-65mV" scale="-80mV"/>
    </gateHHrates>

</ionChannelHH>
```

NMODL

```
BREAKPOINT {
    SOLVE states METHOD cnexp
    gk = gkbar * n ^ 4
    ik = gk * (v-ek)
}
INITIAL{
    n = alpha(v) / (alpha(v) + beta(v))
}
DERIVATIVE states{
    n' = (1 - n) * alpha(v) - n * beta(v)
}
```

```
FUNCTION alpha(Vm(mV))/(ms){
    LOCAL x
    UNITSOFF
    x = (Vm + 55) / 10
    if(fabs(x) > 1e-6){
        alpha=0.1*x/(1-exp(-x))
    }else{
        alpha=0.1/(1-0.5*x)
    }
    UNITSON
}
```

Levels of Abstraction

Declarative vs Imperative

- NeuroML2 operates (at least syntactically) closer to the level of abstraction employed by electrophysiologists
- The gory details exist, but elsewhere: *LEMS*
 - i.e. what to do with α , β ; the definition of an *ExpRate*; how all of that is converted to conductances/currents...
- But we seldom need (want!) to interact with that level
(look under the hood)

```
<Network ...>
  <Cell ...>
    <Channel ...>
      <Gate ...>
        <Rate ...>
```

```
SOLVE{...} METHOD euler
...
DERIVATIVE {...}
...
FUNCTION trap(v){...}
```

Levels of Abstraction

NetPyNE: structured network specification

i)

```
popParams['EXC_L2'] = {
    'cellType': 'PYR',
    'cellModel': 'simple',
    'yRange': [100, 400],
    'numCells': 50}
```

ii)

```
popParams['EXC_L5'] = {
    'cellType': 'PYR',
    'cellModel': 'complex',
    'yRange': [700, 1000],
    'density': 80e3}
```

iii)

```
cellParams['PYR_simple'] = {
    'conds': {'cellType': 'PYR',
              'cellModel': 'simple'},
    'secs': {'soma': {'geom': ('diam': 18, 'L': 18),
                      'mechs': {'hh': {'gnabar': 0.12,
                                      'gkbar': 0.036,
                                      'gI': 0.003,
                                      'el': -70)}},
              ...}}
```

iv)

```
importCellParams(
label = 'PYR_complex',
conds = {'cellType': 'PYR',
          'cellModel': 'complex'},
fileName = 'L5_pyr_full.hoc',
cellName = 'PYR_L5')
```

vi)

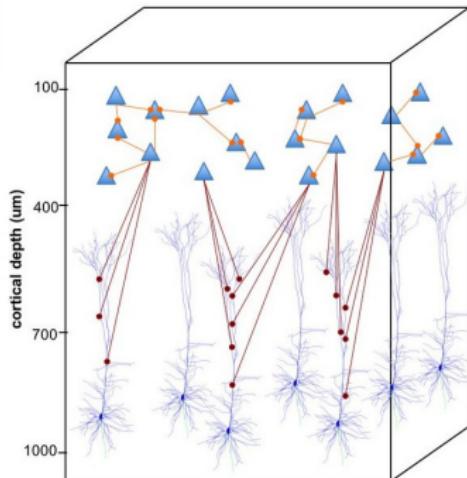
```
synMechParams['AMPA'] = {
    'mod': 'Exp2Syn',
    'taul': 0.8,
    'tau2': 5.3,
    'e': 0}
```

vii)

```
connParams['L2->E2'] = {
    'preConds': {'y': [100, 400]},
    'postConds': {'pop': 'EXC_L2'},
    'probability': '1*exp(-dist_3D/200)',
    'weight': 0.4,
    'delay': 5,
    'synMech': 'AMPA'}
```

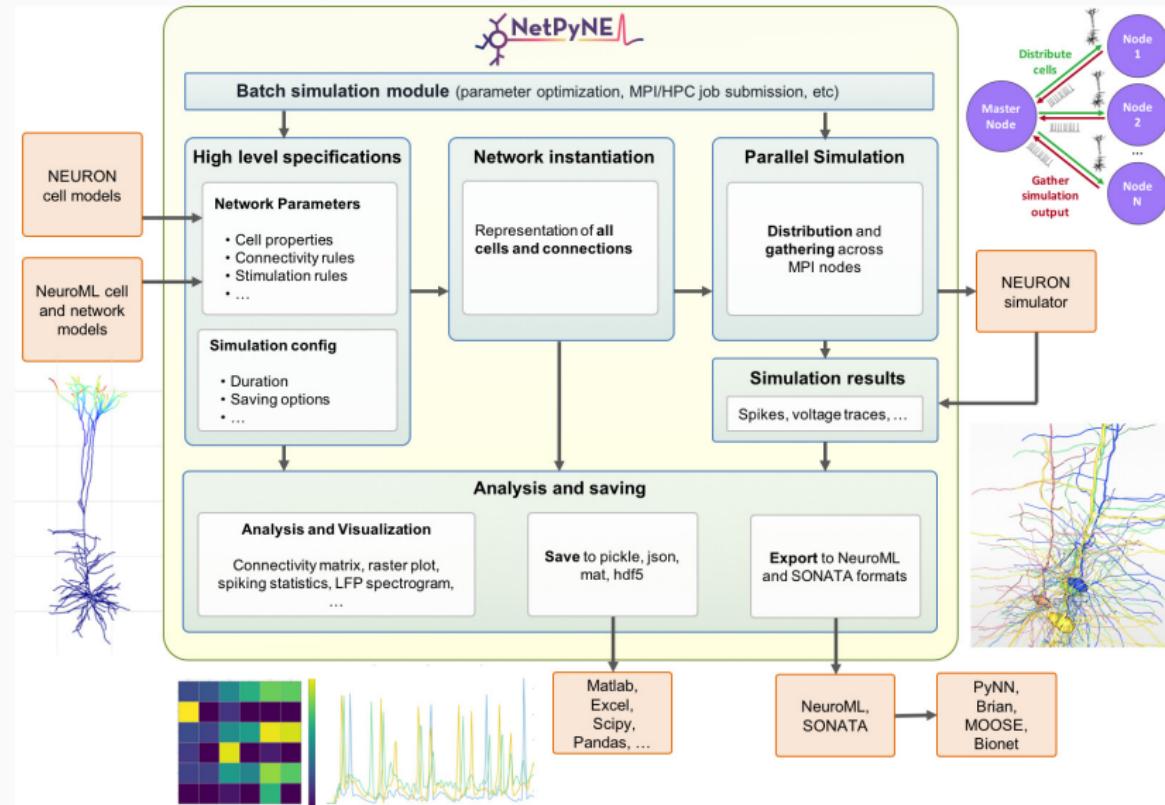
viii)

```
connParams['E2->L5'] = {
    'preConds': {'pop': 'EXC_L2'},
    'postConds': {'y': [700,1100],
                  'cellModel': 'complex'},
    'convergence': 25,
    'weight': '0.001 * post_ynorm',
    'delay': 'dist_3D/propVelocity',
    'sec': 'allbend',
    'synMech': 'AMPA',
    'synsPerConn': 3}
```

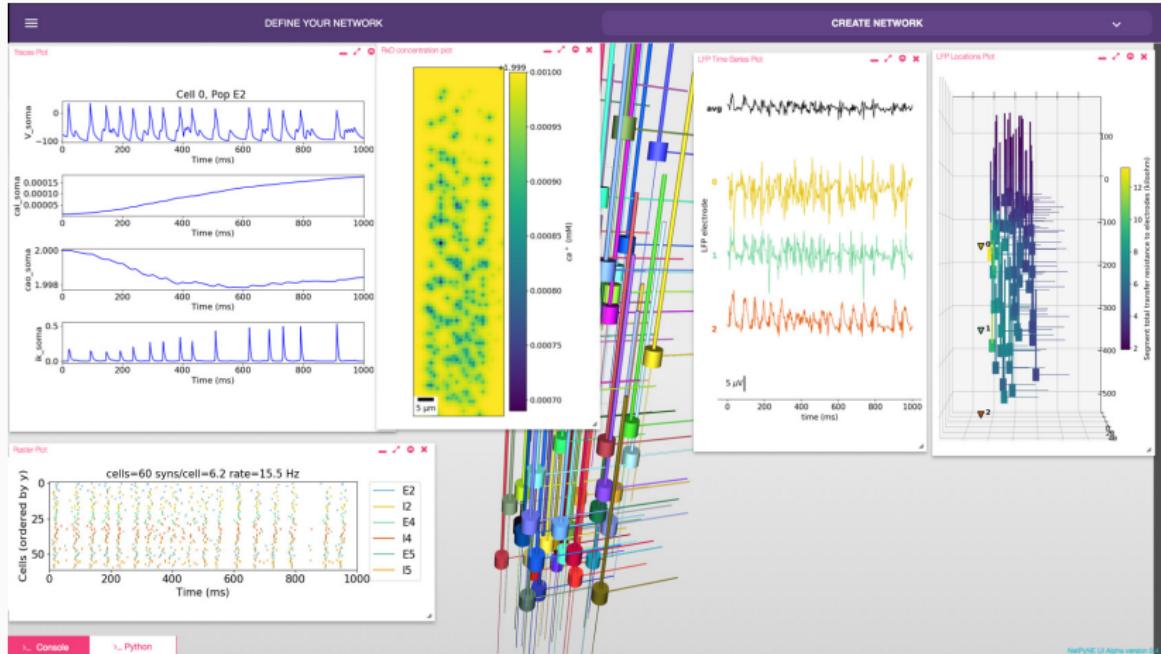


Dura-Bernal, Salvador, et al. "NetPyNE, a tool for data-driven multiscale modeling of brain circuits." Elife 8

Netpyne workflow



Netpyne GUI





Large-scale Datasets and Modeling Tools from the Allen Institute for Brain Science

Yazan N. Billeh

yazanb@alleninstitute.org





ALLEN INSTITUTE for
BRAIN SCIENCE



ALLEN INSTITUTE for
CELL SCIENCE



ALLEN INSTITUTE for
IMMUNOLOGY



THE PAUL G. ALLEN
FRONTIERS GROUP



- Established 2003 by Paul G. Allen
- South Lake Union, Seattle, WA
- 500 employees++

hard problems
complexity
foundational biology



big science
team science

open science



data
knowledge
tools



CORE PRINCIPLES

Team Science

Interdisciplinary teams working towards common goal



Big Science

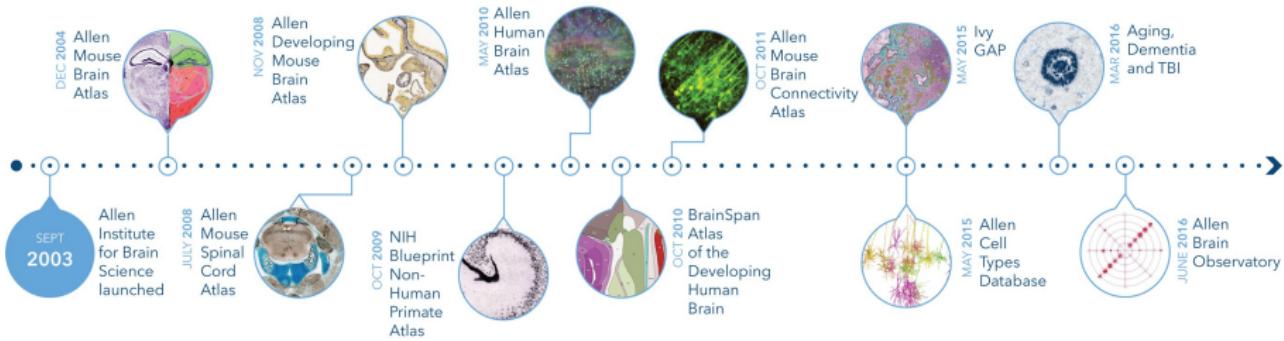
Large-scale projects with robust, massive data

Open Science

All resources available online at
brain-map.org or allencell.org

Allen Institute - Online Public Resources

www.brain-map.org

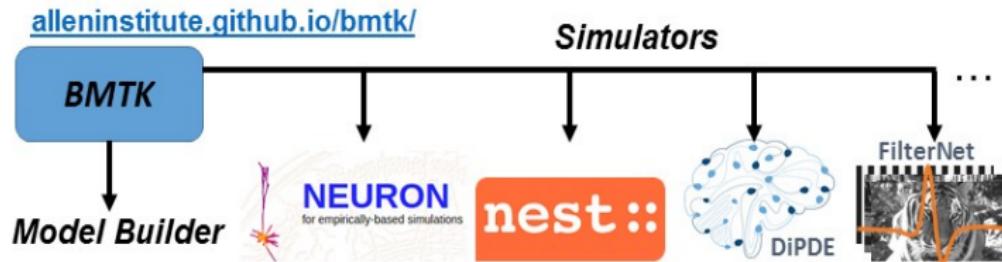


All data are:

- publicly accessible via API as soon as they pass QC
- freely available without any commercial restrictions

Our Models and Modeling Software Are Freely Available to the Community

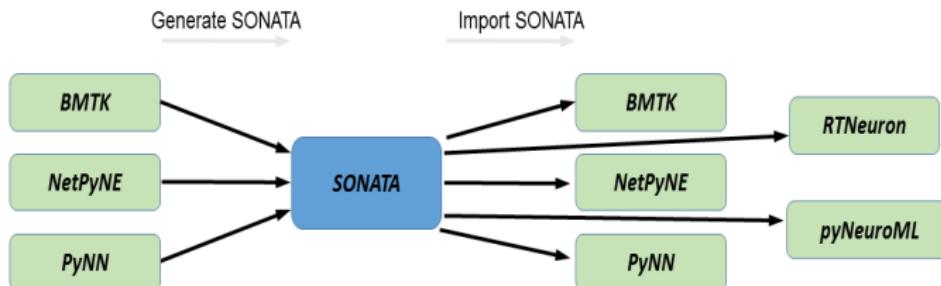
Brain Modeling ToolKit (BMTK): <https://alleninstitute.github.io/bmtk/>



Our Models and Modeling Software Are Freely Available to the Community

Scalable Open Network Architecture TemplAte (SONATA):
<https://github.com/AllenInstitute/sonata>

An interface between SONATA and the NWB format has been developed as well





How model standardization enables new tools and applications in neuroscientific research

Insights from the HBP

Yann Zerlaut

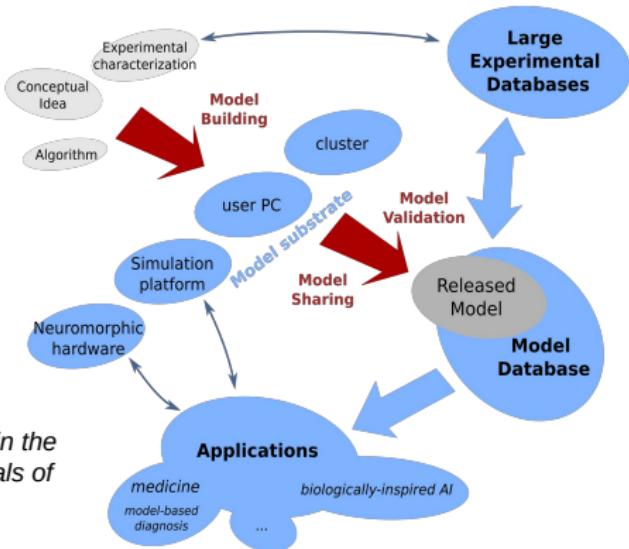
Neuroinformatics team / group of A. Davison
Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, France



Open Source Brain Meeting 2019, Alghero



Motivation





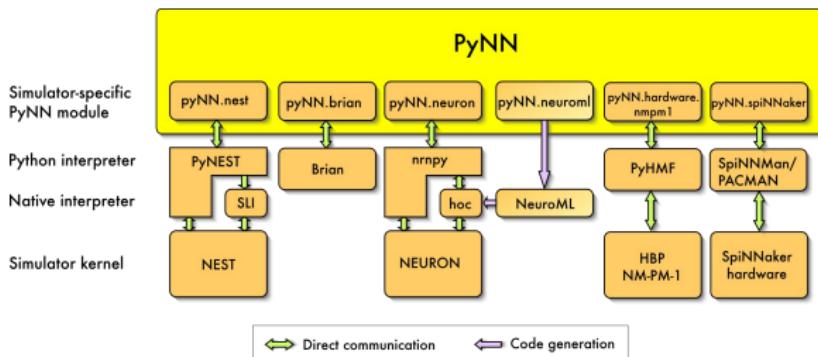
A unified interface for neuronal network simulators

Simulator-independent environments for developing neuroscience models:

- keep the advantages of having multiple simulators or hardware devices
- but remove the translation barrier.

Three (complementary) approaches:

- GUI (e.g. neuroConstruct)
- XML-based language (e.g. NeuroML, NineML)
- interpreted language (e.g. Python)



Sonata (pyNN support)

Large-scale simulation of biophysically-detailed neuronal circuits
→ sets specific constraints

the SONATA Data Format emerges as the standard
optimized for performance for simulation, analysis and
visualization of large-scale circuits
(joint initiative of Blue Brain Project and the
Allen Institute for Brain Science)

Export to Sonata format

```
from pyNN.network import Network
from pyNN.serialization import export_to_sonata

sim.setup()
...
# create populations, projections, etc.
...

# add populations and projections to a Network
net = Network(pop1, pop2, ..., prj1, prj2, ...)

export_to_sonata(net, "sonata_output_dir")
```

Import from Sonata format

```
from pyNN.serialization import import_from_sonata, load_sonata_simulation_plan
import pyNN.neuron as sim

simulation_plan = load_sonata_simulation_plan("simulation_config.json")
simulation_plan.setup(sim)
net = import_from_sonata("circuit_config.json", sim)
simulation_plan.execute(net)
```

Include a validation framework in model development✓ **What is SciUnit?**

A *Test*-driven framework for formally validating scientific models against data.

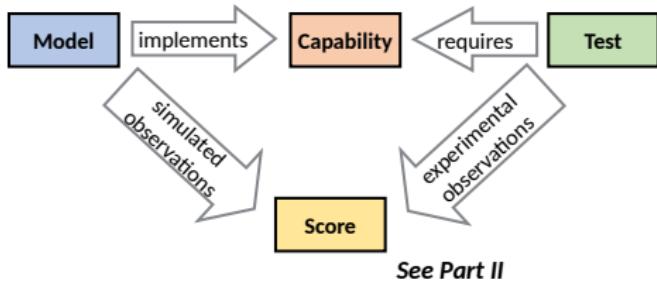
It employs the concept of **Capabilities**.

✓ **What are Tests?**

A procedure intended to establish the quality, performance, or reliability of a model

✓ **What are Capabilities?**

- interfaces through which the model and the validation framework communicate
- implemented as methods (functions) within the model



Requires the participation of modellers:

- ✓ support to wrap your models for SciUnit
- ✓ add/request new tests to the library
- ✓ critique existing tests
- ✓ suggest new features

Test Packages

The overall test suite has been divided into a number of components, some containing validation tests specific to particular brain regions, others more generic. All validation tests are written in Python, using the SciUnit framework. Some of these are listed below:

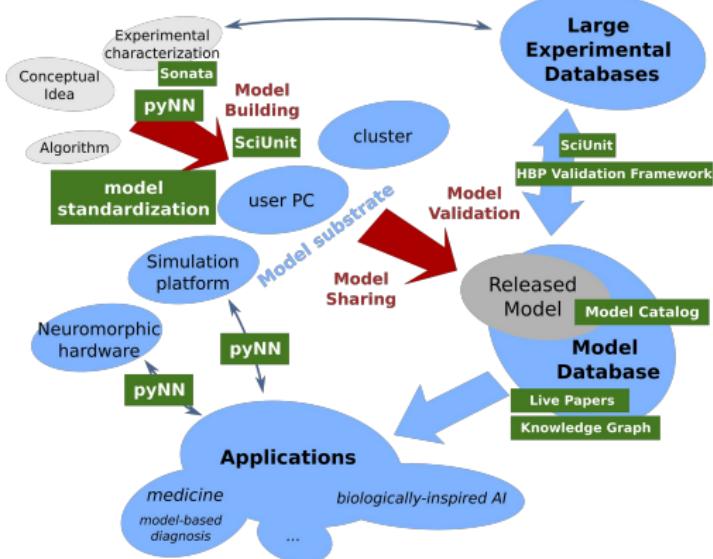
Test suites for specific brain regions

- ❑ **HippoUnit:** <https://github.com/KaliLab/hippounit>
- ❑ **HippoNetworkUnit:** <https://github.com/pedroernesto/HippoNetworkUnit>
- ❑ **CerebUnit:** <https://github.com/lungsi/cerebellum-unit>
- ❑ **BasalUnit:** <https://github.com/appukuttan-shailesh/basalunit>

Test suites for model features, independent of cell type or brain region

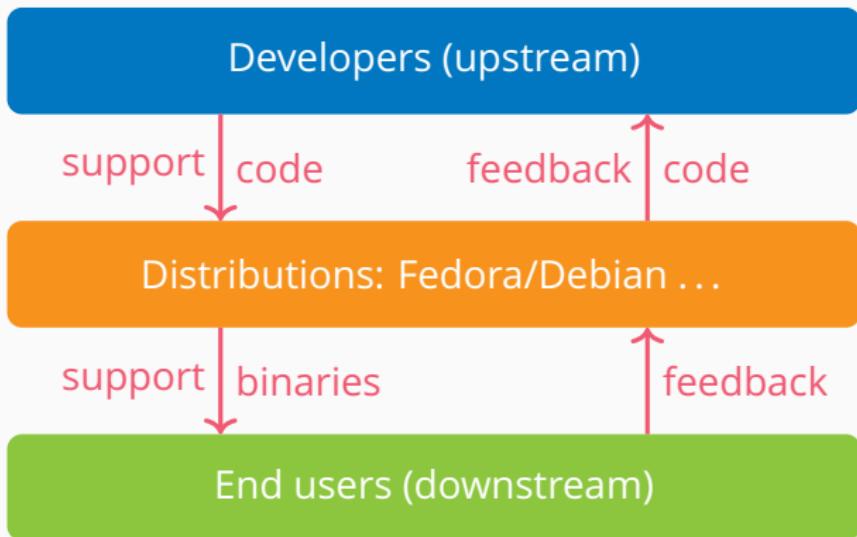
- ❑ **MorphoUnit:** <https://github.com/appukuttan-shailesh/morphounit>
- ❑ **NetworkUnit:** https://github.com/mvonpapen/simrest_validation
- ❑ **eFELUnit:** <https://github.com/appukuttan-shailesh/eFELunit>

Summary



NeuroFedora: marketing pitch

Liaison between developers and users



Search: “NeuroFedora”



“Live” ISO now ready to download (demo)

Mailing list: neuro-sig@lists.fedoraproject.org

IRC: #fedora-neuro on Freenode

Telegram: t.me/NeuroFedora

Documentation neuro.fedoraproject.org

Blog: neuroblog.fedoraproject.org

Pagure.io (FOSS Git forge): [neuro-sig/NeuroFedora](https://pagure.io/neuro-sig/NeuroFedora)

License



This presentation is made available under a
Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-SA 4.0) license.