

Geant-val: a web application for validation of detector simulations

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Abstract. One of the key factors for the successful development of Monte-Carlo programs for physics simulations is to properly organize regression testing and validation. Geant4, the world-standard toolkit for HEP detector simulation, heavily relies on this activity. The CERN SFT group, which contributes to the development, testing, deployment and support of the toolkit, is also in charge of running on a monthly basis a set of community-developed tests using the development releases of Geant4. We present the web application Geant-val developed for visualizing the results of these tests so that comparisons between different Geant4 releases can be made. The application is written using Express.js, Node.js and Angular frameworks, and uses PostgreSQL for storing test results. Test results are visualised using ROOT and JSROOT. In addition to pure visual comparisons, we perform different statistical tests (χ^2 , Kolmogorov-Smirnov, etc) on the client side using JavaScript Web Workers.

1 Introduction

Geant4 [1] is a toolkit for the simulation of the passage of particles through matter. Its areas of application include high energy, nuclear and accelerator physics, as well as studies in medical and space science.

The Geant4 team produces a public release once a year, with monthly internal testing releases. These releases need to be validated.

Physics validation of Geant4, which includes regression testing (comparing physics output from one release to another), comparison of performance between different physics models and validation testing (comparing physics output with published experimental results), requires analysing a large number of data produced by Geant4 tests.

2 Requirements

Software validation is a continuous complex process involving the entire Geant4 community. The main goal of the application we describe here is to provide a fast and convenient web-based validation tool for Geant4 developers.

Below there is a brief list of the design ideas and how they were implemented:

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- The procedure for integrating new Geant4 tests should be simple and straightforward;
- User should be able to display and analyse one- and multidimensional histograms and scatter plots, with same or different binning;
- User should be able to compare tests results with experimental data;
- It should be possible to produce high quality plots with custom plot style, ranges, scales, etc. using only the website;
- Application should have intuitive, modern and fast user interface;
- Should use the technologies that allows a fast feature development and integration.

To implement these ideas in practice we decided to write the server and client parts of the application in JavaScript, using Node.js [2] and AngularJS [3], respectively, and to use ROOT [4] framework along with JSROOT [5] library to produce high quality plots. Python and C++ were used for writing service utilities.

In order to keep data consistent over all application services a *plot* data type was introduced. A *plot* object is a central element of the data model of Geant-val application, used for exchanging data between different parts of the web application: displaying data on the web page, calculating result of statistical tests etc. Files containing *plot* objects in JSON [6] format are used for uploading data to the database, generating plots with standalone C++ plotter utility. Each *plot* consists of histogram or scatter plot data and necessary metadata describing configuration used to run Monte-Carlo simulation (Geant4 version, physics list), test parameters (beams, targets, energies, etc.) and its results (e.g., the name of the quantity measured).

A Python tool named `mc-config-generator` was developed to produce JSON files containing *plot* objects from test output. It also provides a uniform way to prepare and run tests on the batch system (LSF, Torque PBS, HTCondor), and to get information about execution times and any Geant4 exceptions generated during test execution.

For faster deployment, the application is distributed as a Docker image which is hosted on virtual machine provided by CERN VM service. The website is optimised for asynchronous access and plotting and can be easily scaled "horizontally" by launching new instances.

3 Software components

The components of Geant-val web application and the interactions between them are shown in the Figure 1:

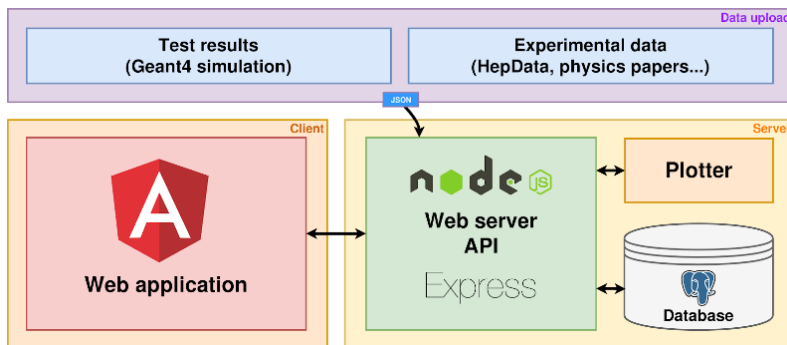


Figure 1. Components of Geant-val web application and flow of data between them.

- **The server** is the core of the Geant4 validation system. It provides a web API that allows clients to access the database, asynchronously responds to the clients requests and generates high quality plots "on the fly" whenever they are requested. The server is written in JavaScript and runs with the Node.js engine.
- **The database** is used for storing plots containing simulation results or experimental data, together with meta data describing these plots. PostgreSQL [7] is used as database management system for the application. The database instance is provided by the CERN Database-On-Demand service. The database schema is designed in a way to store scatter plots and histograms with unlimited number of optional test parameters in addition to a few mandatory ones.
- A ROOT-based C++ **plotting utility** was developed to produce high quality plots. It uses data in the JSON format which has been introduced as main interchange format between all parts of the application. The utility is not deeply integrated in the server infrastructure and can be used as a standalone application. It supports all types of application's data, can plot histograms with different binning on one canvas, and produce ratio plots. Ranges and scales of plot axes are selected automatically, but can be overridden if necessary.
- The **Web interface** is an AngularJS single page application which shows plots with tests results together with statistical analysis. The web page is working well on most popular mobile and desktop browsers (Firefox, Chromium-based browsers, Safari, Edge).

Each plot on the website can be displayed as a static image produced by plotting utility or as an interactive JSROOT canvas, which allows changing axes ranges, scales and styles of the data "on the fly" in the same way as it can be done in ROOT. It is possible to export the plots in PNG, ROOT, EPS, Gnuplot [8]. It is also possible to view JSON representation of *plot* objects corresponding to the displayed distributions.

Access to the test results produced with internal Geant4 releases is restricted to the Geant4 developers authenticated via CERN Single Sign-On. For public Geant4 releases the access is open to anyone.

4 User interface

The Geant-val website provides two ways of viewing and comparing results:

- *Statistical comparisons* page allows comparison of simulation with compatible experimental results using statistical tests to be performed.

In visual mode (see Figure 2) one can select various parameters in left side drop down menu and request plots corresponding to the values selected. In this mode it is possible to choose one Geant4 release as "reference" to get ratio plots between several results.

In statistical mode (see Figure 3) the page shows results of χ^2 ($\chi^2/n.d.f.$, χ^2 probability) and Kolmogorov-Smirnov (KS Max(D), KS probability) tests between two Geant4 releases for all matching pairs of test results. All computations are fast and performed asynchronously on the client side using JavaScript WebWorkers. For this purpose, JavaScript code to perform χ^2 and Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests has been written, and their results cross-checked against the same statistical techniques implemented in the ROOT framework (`ROOT::TH1::Chi2Test()` and `ROOT::TMath::KolmogorovTest()` correspondingly).

Results are marked as "bad", "warning" and "good" depending on χ^2 probability, exact ranges for each category can be adjusted by the user. It is also possible to download a PDF file containing the report and all plots.

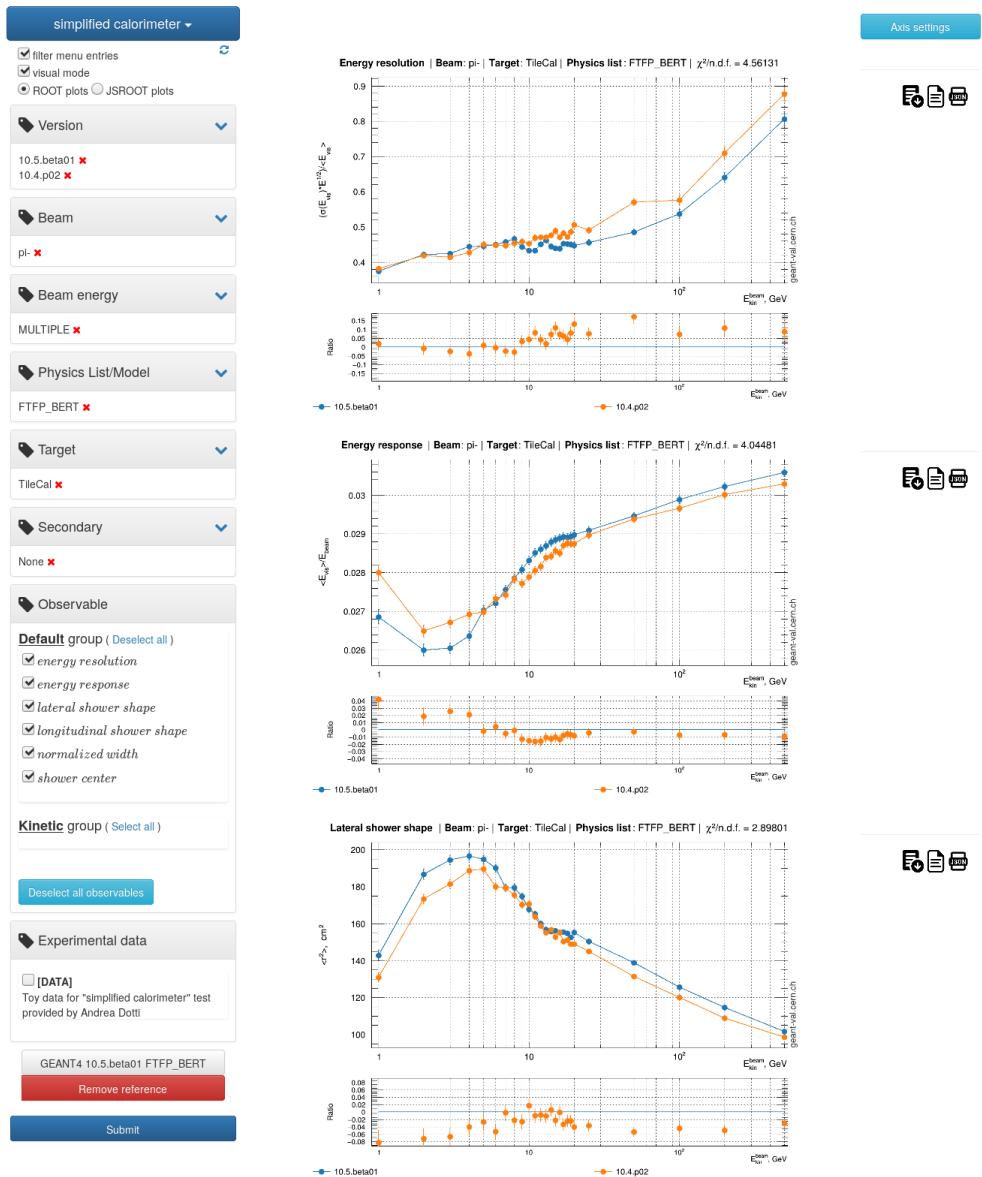


Figure 2. Plots of "simplified calorimeter" test results for Geant4 releases 10.5.beta01 and 10.4.p02 with 10.5.beta01 selected as "reference".

- *User layouts* page (see Figure 4). A *layout* is an XML file describing what plots should be displayed and how should they be laid out on a page. It can be useful for Geant4 tests that produce hundreds of different plots, but for fast "visual" validation it is often enough to compare only a small well-defined subset of them.

On the page the user just needs to select the desired layout, Geant4 version(s), physics list(s) and experimental data. All other plot's parameters should be defined in layout file. It allows performing fast visual comparison of several Geant4 versions/physics lists. It

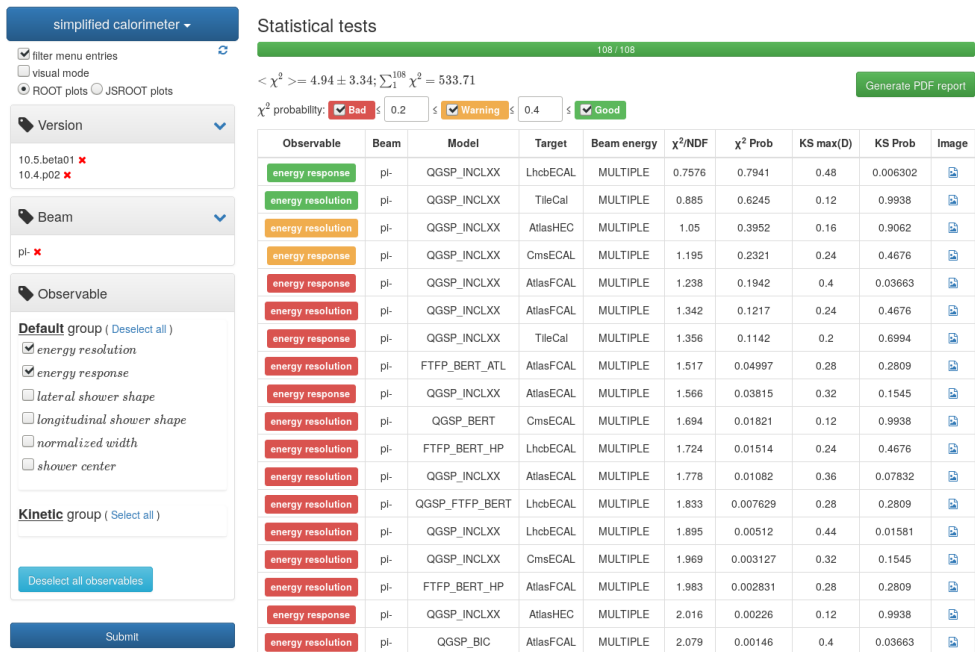


Figure 3. Statistical comparison of "simplified calorimeter" test results between Geant4 releases 10.5.beta01 and 10.4.p02 for π^- beam.

is also possible to produce ratio plots to better visualise the differences between different distributions.

Layouts are available "out of the box" for some tests, however users can define and use on their own layout on the website.

5 Conclusion

The Geant-val web application provides an uniform and clear way of performing all stages of physics validation: from creating configuration files and running simulation code to producing and analysing final plots.

The web interface allows performing quick visual evaluation of MC-experiment agreement for various combinations of Geant4 versions and physics lists. mc-config-generator's submission system allows one to easily submit jobs to any supported batch system, and to analyse the produced results.

The Geant-val web application is actively used by Geant4 developers in CERN and by Geant4 Medical Simulation Benchmark Group (G4BSMG).

References

- [1] S. Agostinelli *et al.* [GEANT4 Collaboration], Nucl. Instrum. Meth. A **506**, 250 (2003). doi:10.1016/S0168-9002(03)01368-8
- [2] NodeJS is a JavaScript runtime <https://nodejs.org/>
- [3] AngularJS is an MWM JavaScript framework <https://angularjs.org/>

User layouts

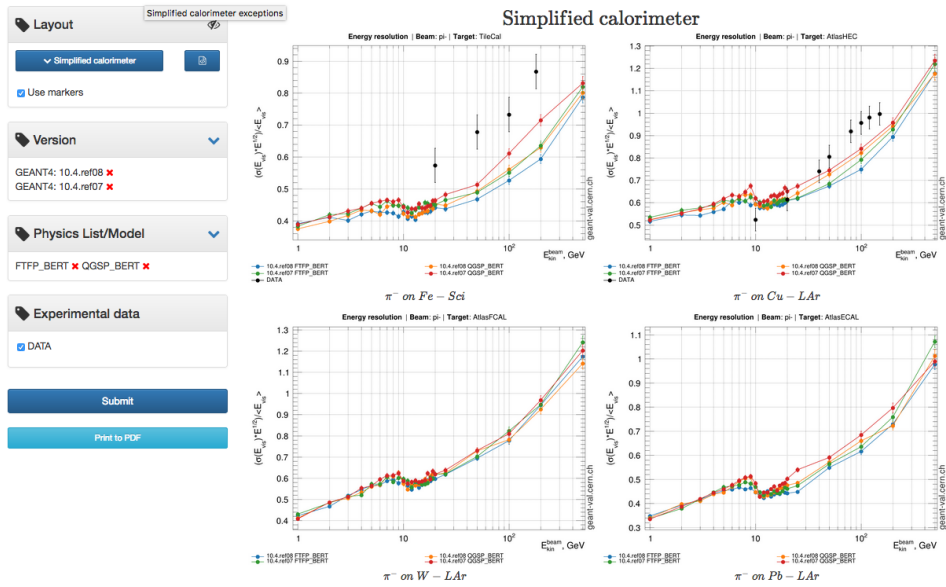


Figure 4. Layout for the Geant4 "simplified calorimeter" test with results for Geant4 reference releases 10.4.ref07, 10.4.ref08 and physics lists FTFP_BERT and QGSP_BERT.

- [4] Rene Brun and Fons Rademakers, ROOT - An Object Oriented Data Analysis Framework, Proceedings AIHENP'96 Workshop, Lausanne, Sep. 1996, Nucl. Inst. & Meth. in Phys. Res. A 389 (1997) 81-86. See also (<http://root.cern.ch>).
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- [6] Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF) Request for Comments (RFC) 8259 "The JavaScript Object Notation (JSON) Data Interchange Format" <https://tools.ietf.org/html/rfc8259>
- [7] PostgreSQL is an open-source database <https://www.postgresql.org/>
- [8] Gnuplot, a portable command-line driven graphing utility <http://www.gnuplot.info/>