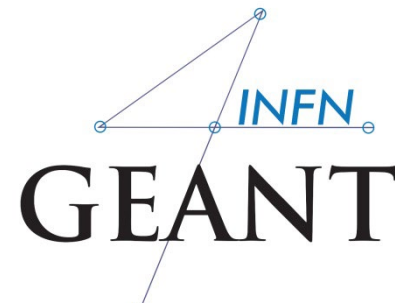
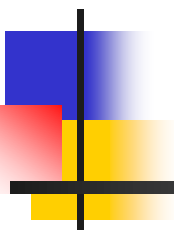




Interaction with the kernel – part 3

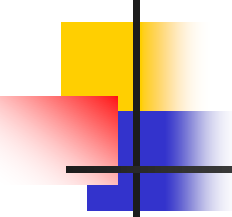


Luciano Pandola

INFN – Laboratori Nazionali del Sud

`pandola@lns.infn.it`

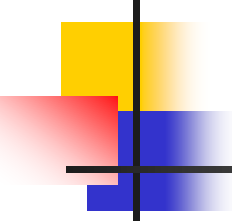
XIII International Geant4 School
Prague, July 27th- 31st, 2026



The ingredients of user SD

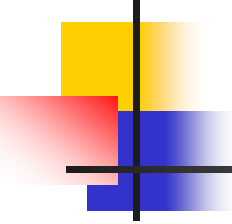
- A **powerful** and **flexible** way of extracting information from the physics simulation is to **define your own SD**
- Derive **your own concrete classes** from the base classes and **customize** them according to **your needs**

	Concrete class	Base class
Sensitive Detector	MySensitiveDetector	G4VSensitiveDetector
Hit	MyHit	G4VHit
		Template class
Hits collection		G4THitsCollection<MyHit*>



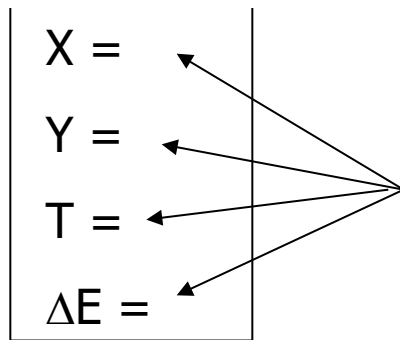
Hit class - 1

- Hit is a **user-defined class** which derives from the base class **G4VHit**. Two **virtual methods**
 - **Draw()**
 - **Print()**
- You can **store various types of information** by implementing your own concrete Hit class
- Typically, one may want to record information like
 - Position, time and ΔE of a step
 - Momentum, energy, position, volume, particle type of a given track
 - Etc.



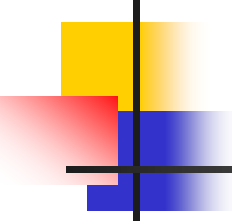
Hit class - 2

A “Hit” is like a “**container**”, a **empty box** which will store the **information** retrieved step by step



The Hit **concrete class** (derived by **G4VHit**) **must** be **written by the user**: the user must decide **which variables and/or information** the hit should **store** and **when** store them

The Hit objects are **created** and **filled** by the **SensitiveDetector** class (invoked at each step in **detectors defined as sensitive**). **Stored** in the “**HitCollection**”, attached to the **G4Event**: can be **retrieved** at the end of the event



Hit class - 3

Example

```
// header file: MyHit.hh
```

```
#include "G4VHit.hh"
```

```
class MyHit : public G4VHit {
```

```
  public:
```

```
    MyHit();
```

```
    virtual ~MyHit();
```

```
    ...
```

public methods to
handle data member

```
    inline void SetEnergyDeposit(G4double energy) { energyDeposit = energy; }
```

```
    inline G4double GetEnergyDeposit() { return energyDeposit; }
```

```
    ... // more get and set methods
```

```
  private:
```

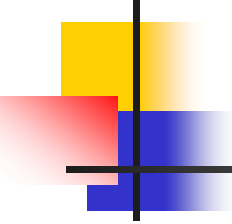
```
    G4double energyDeposit;
```

```
    ... // more data members
```

```
};
```



data member (private)



Geant4 Hits

Since in the simulation one may have **different sensitive detectors** in the same setup (e.g. a calorimeter and a Si detector), it is possible to define **many Hit classes** (all derived by `G4VHit`) storing **different information**

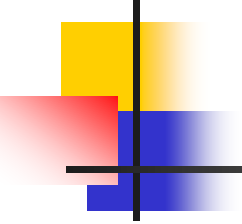
X =
Y =
T =
ΔE =

Class Hit1 :
public G4VHit

Z =
Pos =
Dir =

Class Hit2 :
public G4VHit

More general than the simple (`copyNb`, `quantity`) structure used by the **Geant4 native scorers**



Hits Collection - 1

At each step in a **detector** defined as **sensitive**, the method `ProcessHit()` of the user **SensitiveDetector class** is invoked: it must **create**, **fill** and **store** the Hit objects

X = 1
Y = 2
T = 3
$\Delta E = 1$

Step 1

X = 2
Y = 0
T = 3.1
$\Delta E = 2$

Step 2

X = 3
Y = 2
T = 4
$\Delta E = 3$

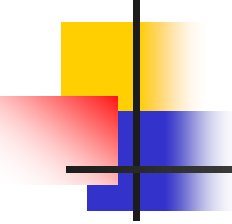
Step 3

.....

X = 3
Y = 2
T = 6
$\Delta E = 1$

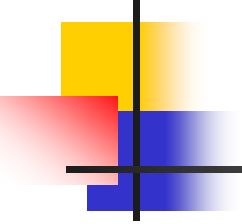
Step N

Hits collection (= `vector<Hit>`)



Hits Collection - 2

- Once created in the sensitive detectors, objects of the concrete hit class **must be stored** in a **dedicated collection**
 - Template class `G4THitsCollection<MyHit>`, which is actually a **vector of MyHit***
- The hits collections can be accesses in **different phases** of tracking
 - At the **end of each event**, through the `G4Event` (*a-posteriori event analysis*)
 - During **event processing**, through the Sensitive Detector Manager `G4SDManager` (*event filtering*)



The HCofThisEvent

Remember that you may have **many kinds of Hits**
(and Hits Collections)

X = 1

Y = 2

T = 3

$\Delta E = 1$

X = 2

Y = 0

T = 3.1

$\Delta E = 2$

X = 3

Y = 2

T = 4

$\Delta E = 3$

.....

X = 3

Y = 2

T = 6

$\Delta E = 1$

Z = 5

Pos =
(0,1,1)

Dir
=(0,1,0)

Z = 5.2

Pos =
(0,0,1)

Dir
=(1,1,0)

.....

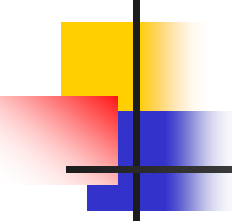
Z = 5.4

Pos =
(0,1,2)

Dir
=(0,1,1)

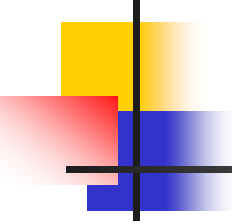
HCofThisEvent

Attached to
G4Event*



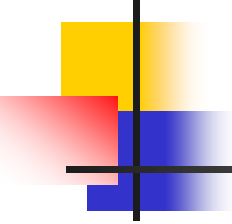
Hits Collections of an event

- A **G4Event** object has a **G4HCofThisEvent** object at the end of the event processing (if it was successful)
 - The **pointer** to the **G4HCofThisEvent** object can be retrieved using the **G4Event::GetHCofThisEvent()** method
- The **G4HCofThisEvent** stores all **hits collections** created within the event
 - Hits collections are **accessible** and can be **processed** e.g. in the **EndOfEventAction()** method of the User **Event Action** class
 - **Transient**: information **cleaned up** at each new event



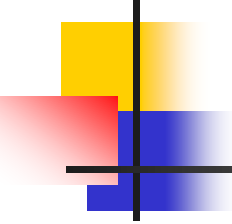
SD and Hits

- Using **information** from **particle steps**, a sensitive detector either
 - **constructs, fills** and **stores** one (or more) **hit object**
 - **accumulates** values to existing hits
- Hits objects can be **filled** with information in the **ProcessHits()** method of the SD concrete user class → **next slides**
 - This method has **pointers** to the current **G4Step** and to the **G4TouchableHistory** of the Parallel World (if defined)



Sensitive Detector (SD)

- A specific feature to Geant4 is that a user can provide his/her **own implementation** of the **detector** and **its response** → **customized**
- To create a **sensitive detector**, **derive** your own **concrete class** from the **G4VSensitiveDetector** abstract base class
 - The principal purpose of the sensitive detector is to **create hit objects**
 - Overload the **following methods** (see also next slide):
 - **Initialize()**
 - **ProcessHits()** (Invoked for **each step** if step starts in logical volume having the SD attached)
 - **EndOfEvent()**



Sensitive Detector

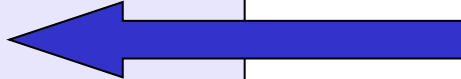
```
class G4VSensitiveDetector {  
    public:                                     abstract base class  
        ...  
        virtual void Initialize(G4HCofThisEvent*);  
        virtual void EndOfEvent(G4HCofThisEvent*);  
    protected:  
        virtual G4bool ProcessHits(G4Step* ,  
                                     G4TouchableHistory*) = 0;  
        ...  
};
```

pure virtual method →

```
// header file: MySensitiveDetector.hh  
#include "G4VSensitiveDetector.hh"
```

```
...  
class MySensitiveDetector : public G4VSensitiveDetector {  
    public:  
        MySensitiveDetector(G4String name);  
        virtual ~MySensitiveDetector();  
  
        virtual void Initialize(G4HCofThisEvent*HCE);  
        virtual G4bool ProcessHits(G4Step* step,  
                                     G4TouchableHistory* ROhist);  
        virtual void EndOfEvent(G4HCofThisEvent*HCE);  
  
    private:  
        MyHitsCollection * hitsCollection;  
        G4int collectionID;  
};
```

User
concrete
SD class



SD implementation: constructor

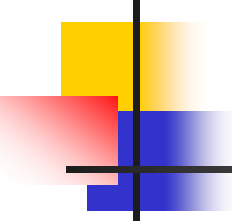
- Specify a **hits collection** (by its unique name) for each type of hits considered in the sensitive detector:
 - Insert the **name(s)** in the **collectionName** vector

```
MySensitiveDetector::MySensitiveDetector(G4String detectorUniqueName)  
    : G4VSensitiveDetector(detectorUniqueName),  
      collectionID(-1) {  
  
    collectionName.insert("collection_name");  
}
```

Base class



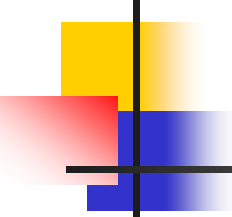
```
class G4VSensitiveDetector {  
    ...  
    protected:  
        G4CollectionNameVector collectionName;  
        // This protected name vector must be filled in  
        // the constructor of the concrete class for  
        // registering names of hits collections  
    ...  
};
```



SD implementation: Initialize()

- The `Initialize()` method is invoked at the **beginning** of each event
- Construct all hits collections and insert them in the `G4HCofThisEvent` object, which is passed as argument to `Initialize()`
 - The `AddHitsCollection()` method of `G4HCofThisEvent` requires the **collection ID**
- The **unique collection ID** can be obtained with `GetCollectionID()`
 - `GetCollectionID()` cannot be invoked in the constructor of this SD
 - Hence, we defined a private data member (`collectionID`), which is set at the first call of the `Initialize()` function

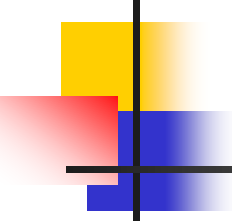
```
void MySensitiveDetector::Initialize(G4HCofThisEvent*HCE) {  
    if(collectionID < 0)  
        collectionID = GetCollectionID(0); // Argument : order of collect.  
                                           // as stored in the collectionName  
    hitsCollection = new MyHitsCollection  
        (SensitiveDetectorName, collectionName[0]);  
  
    HCE -> AddHitsCollection(collectionID, hitsCollection);  
}
```



SD implementation: ProcessHits()

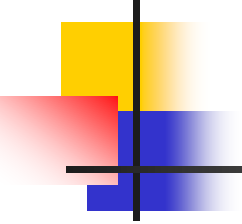
- This `ProcessHits()` method is invoked for **every step** in the volume(s) which **hold a pointer to this SD** (= each volume defined as "**sensitive**")
- The **main mandate** of this method is to **generate hit(s)** or to accumulate data to existing hit objects, by **using information** from the current step

```
G4bool MySensitiveDetector::ProcessHits(G4Step* step,
                                         G4TouchableHistory* ROhist) {
    MyHit* hit = new MyHit();    // 1) create hit
    ...
    // some set methods, e.g. for a tracking detector:
    G4double energyDeposit = step -> GetTotalEnergyDeposit(); // 2) fill hit
    hit -> SetEnergyDeposit(energyDeposit); // See implement. of our Hit class
    ...
    hitsCollection -> insert(aHit); // 3) insert in the collection
    return true;
}
```



Processing hit information - 1

- Retrieve the pointer of a hits collection with the `GetHC()` method of `G4HCofThisEvent` collection using the **collection index** (a `G4int` number)
- **Index** numbers of a hit collection are **unique** and don't change for a run. The number **can be obtained** by `G4SDManager::GetCollectionID("name")` ;
- Notes:
 - if the collection(s) are **not created**, the pointers of the collection(s) are NULL: **check** before trying to access it
 - Need an **explicit cast** from `G4VHitsCollection` (see code)



Process hit: example

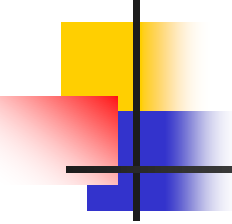
```
void MyEventAction::EndOfEventAction(const G4Event* event) {  
    // index is a data member, representing the hits collection index of the  
    // considered collection. It was initialized to -1 in the class constructor  
    if(index < 0) index =  
        G4SDManager::GetSDMpointer() -> GetCollectionID("myDet/myColl");  
    G4HCofThisEvent* HCE = event-> GetHCofThisEvent();  
    MyHitsCollection* hitsColl = 0;  
    if(HCE) hitsColl = (MyHitsCollection*)(HCE->GetHC(index));  
}
```

retrieve index

retrieve all hits collections

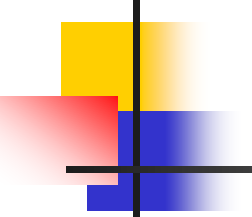
retrieve hits collection by index

↑
Be sure that this is
non-NULL



Processing hit information - 2

- **Loop** through the entries of a hits collection to **access individual hits**
 - Since the HitsCollection is a vector, you can use the **[] operator** to get the hit object corresponding to a **given index**
- **Retrieve** the information **contained in this hit** (e.g. using the **Get/Set methods** of the concrete user Hit class) and **process it**
- **Store** the output in analysis objects



Process hit: example

```
void MyEventAction::EndOfEventAction(const G4Event* event) {
```

```
    // index is a data member, representing the hits collection index of the  
    // considered collection. It was initialized to -1 in the class constructor
```

```
    if(index < 0) index =
```

```
        G4SDManager::GetSDMpointer() -> GetCollectionID("myDet/myColl");
```

```
    G4HCofThisEvent* HCE = event->GetHCofThisEvent();
```

```
    MyHitsCollection* hitsColl = 0;
```

```
    if(HCE) hitsColl = (MyHitsCollection*)(HCE->GetHC(index));
```

Be sure that this is
non-NULL

```
    if(hitsColl) {
```

```
        int numberHits = hitsColl->entries();
```

```
        for(int i1= 0; i1 < numberHits ; i1++) {
```

```
            MyHit* hit = (*hitsColl)[i1];
```

```
            // Retrieve information from hit object, e.g.
```

```
            G4double energy = hit -> GetEnergyDeposit;
```

```
            ... // Further process and store information
```

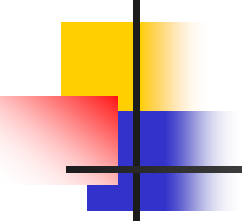
```
        }
```

```
    }
```

```
}
```

cast

**loop over
individual hits,
retrieve the data**



The HCofThisEvent

Remember that you may have **many kinds of Hits**
(and Hits Collections)

X = 1

Y = 2

T = 3

$\Delta E = 1$

X = 2

Y = 0

T = 3.1

$\Delta E = 2$

X = 3

Y = 2

T = 4

$\Delta E = 3$

.....

X = 6

Y = 1

T = 5

$\Delta E = 2$

ID = 0

Z = 5

Pos =
(0,1,1)

Dir
=(0,1,0)

Z = 5.2

Pos =
(0,0,1)

Dir
=(1,1,0)

.....

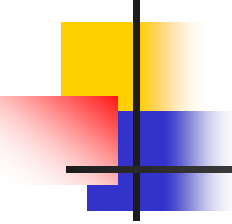
Z = 5.4

Pos =
(0,1,2)

Dir
=(0,1,1)

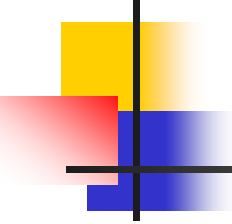
ID = 1

HCofThisEvent



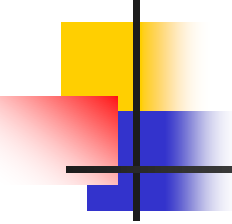
Recipe and strategy - 1

- Create your **detector geometry**
 - Solids, logical volumes, physical volumes
- Implement a **sensitive detector** and assign an instance of it to the **logical volume** of your geometry set-up
 - Then this volume becomes “**sensitive**”
 - Sensitive detectors are **active for each particle steps**, if the step starts in this volume



Recipe and strategy - 2

- Create **hits objects** in your sensitive detector using information from the particle step
 - You need to **create the hit class(es)** according to **your requirements**
- **Store** hits in hits collections (automatically associated to the **G4Event** object)
- Finally, **process the information** contained in the hit in user action classes (e.g. **G4UserEventAction**) to obtain **results** to be stored in the analysis object



Hands-on session

- Task5
 - Custom hits and sensitive detector (optional)
 - Re-do the histogram of task4c (and more) using a custom hit
- <https://geant4.lns.infn.it/prague2026/task5>