Graphical Tools for Detector Operations and Validation: Should we be involved?

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Introduction

- was CMS trigger coordinator, during my term oversaw
  - Phase II HLT TDR with first realistic compute estimates
  - CMS's transition to GPUs
  - Run3 prep
- During my term, the biggest problem I identified was not making our code faster
  - this is under control, its challenging but there is a well-thought out plan which SWIFTHEP is a key part of
- It was the lack of tools to operate and run CMS
  - there is laughably little effort on this and the skill set to do so does not overlap with typical skill set we have available

Introduction (II)

More succinctly

- I'm not worried about CMS not being able to meet the computing of the HL-LHC
  - GPU efforts are advanced, lots of code development on going, this is going to converge
- I am worried about not able to turn on the detector or configure it due to broken tools to do so
  - CMS came worryingly close to not being able to change trigger keys when the CERN SSO upgrade happened
    - simply because almost nobody knows how our webbased tooling worked

What I am talking about

- I mean tools like
  - displaying DQM histograms
  - developing trigger paths
  - configuring detector settings
  - displaying detector information
  - presenting information to analyses

typically all need some sort of GUI

- I don’t mean analysis tools
  - RDataframe, coffea, other popular tools
  - already well served by others and in general this is in good shape

Efficient Tools are key to unlocking Physics Potential

- physicists try to do too much
- goal for maximising physics is allow them to achieve more
- efficient tools are key here
  - CMS's physics potential is absolutely limited by the quality of its tools
    - there are some good ones (eg OMS our online monitoring) but the majority are bad
  - trigger development barrier is too high, folks spend their time battling with the substandard tools rather than making performant triggers
- the problem (at least on CMS) is that we have very little ability to build efficient (non-analysis) tools
  - maybe its better on other experiments?

Graphical Tools

- trend is all GUIs moving to running in the browser
  - sometimes it looks native but often can actually be a webapp running on a bundled version of chromium
    - electron is common framework
    - vscode is probably the most popular one
- GUIs in a browser means written in javascript*
  - there have been attempts with python, so far I've not been impressed
- physicists in general do not know javascript
  - nor do they have much experience with REST APIs and other key pardims here
- therefore its very hard to for collaborations to develop such tools as there is a very limited talent pool with the correct skill set
  - difficult to import the skill set: hard to retain full stack devs and hard to communicate the requirements to them

*IMHO any serious development should use typescript which is a superset of javascript in this talk whenever I say javascript, I really mean typescript

Commonality Between Experiments

- many tools needed by experiments will be bespoke
  - say something unique to configurating a CMS run
- but many will be common
  - every experiment needs a way to visualise validation plots efficiently
- even the bespoke tools have common elements
  - usually its just the “business logic” or exactly what information to display
  - having a good example or libraries will help
  - eg if you want to interact with the CERN SSO can use a common package like tsgauth

Designing Tools

- a tool must provide the correct information
- a tool needs to enable the correct workflows

Typically the experts (aka physicists) know what they need do and an external programmer doesn't

There are two approaches

- teach a physicist how to write the tool
- have the physicist write a detailed specification and requirements document
  - this is harder than it sounds!

Case Studies

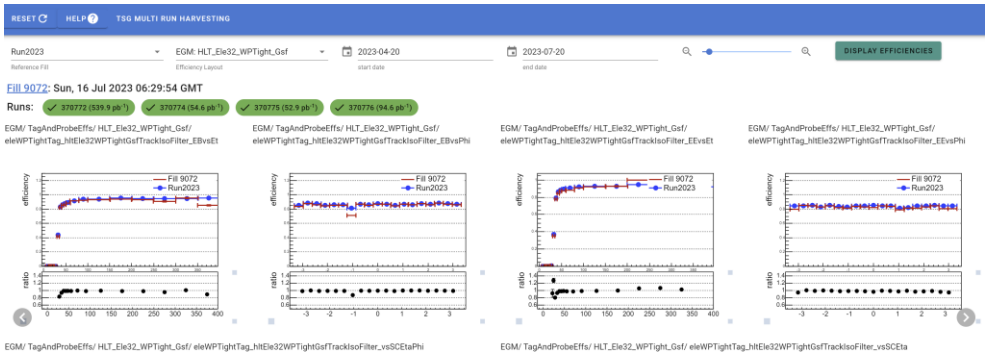
- I learnt typescript, make simple websites hosted on CERN PAAS
- I make tools which I think are most needed
- all tools are somewhat similar architecture
  - frontend : typescript + vue
    - vue is frontend framework, one of the big three (react, angular, vue)
    - still js ecosystem is fast moving, frameworks do get deprecated
  - backend : python using flask (moving to fastapi)
    - try and do as much as possible on the backend as python is very physicist friendly
  - usually some sort of db such as mongo
    - again very physicist friendly, its just json docs
    - note I'm using this to store root histograms now
- once you know how, its very easy to do this
  - the trick is knowing how
- it has been a game changer, I've been busy solving many of the things that irate me on CMS
  - and the tools work exactly how we want it to work

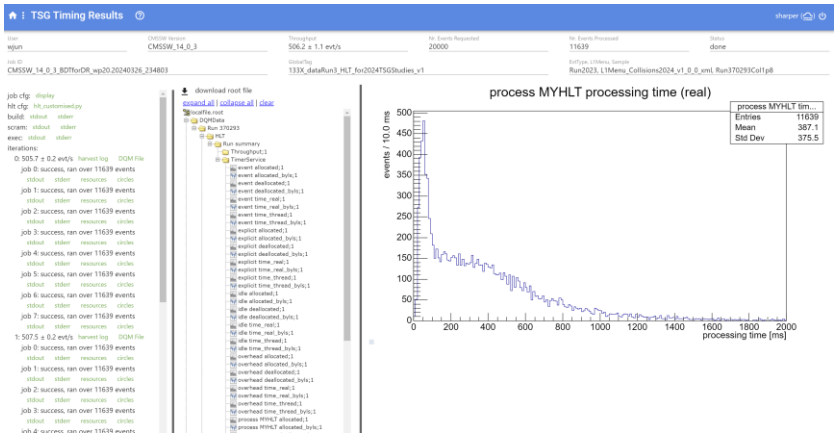
Case Studies: examples

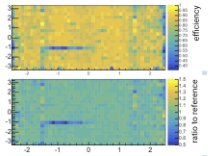
examples:

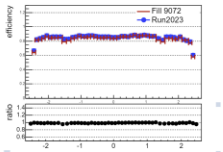
- hltsupervisor: assists shift crew & experts handle trigger issues at P5
  - analyses the trigger rates and offers clear advice on what to do
  - improves operational efficiency at p5
- hltinfo: provides HLT information for analyses
  - before this, very difficult in CMS to find out basic trigger info
- multi run DQM:
  - CMS DQM plots are run based
  - this agreates key plots over a fill and displays a quick summary on triggr health intended for a busy expert
- timing measurement service
  - allows users to run the standard benchmarks to estimate CPU resources of their path with a single script
  - displays the results easily

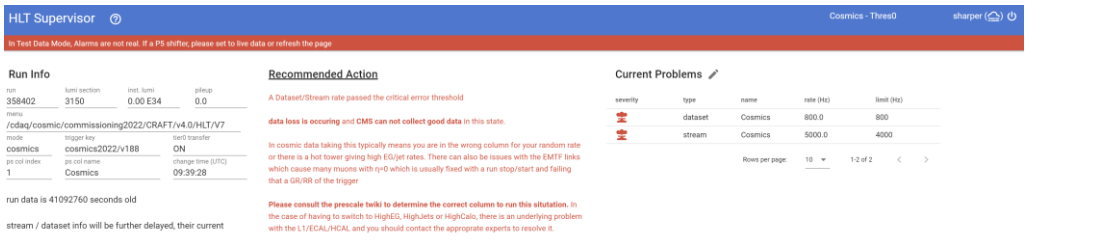
Examples of tools

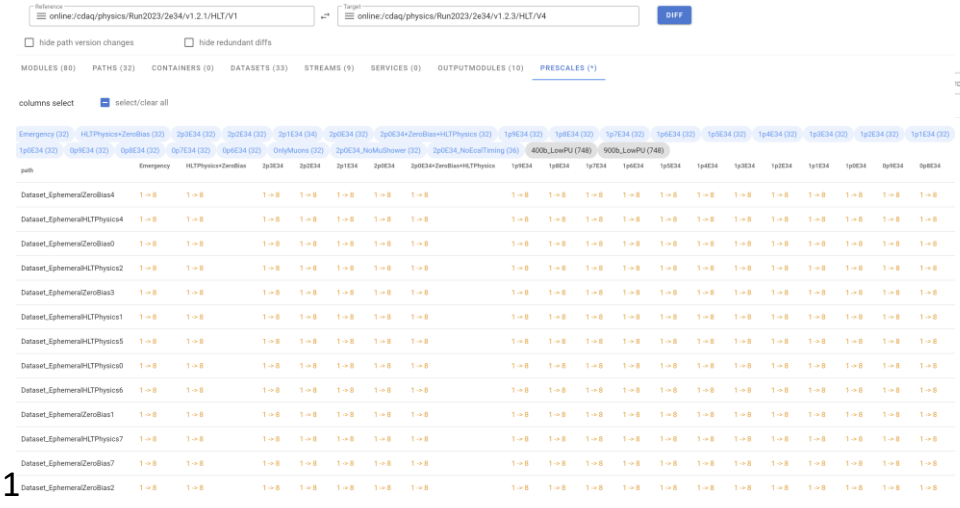












Summary

- I see a big problem limiting our physics by wasting our personpower due to substandard tools
  - its absolutely limiting our physics on CMS
- I have no idea how to properly solve it
- should swifthep be involved here, is this something we should think about?
  - eg provide off the shelf solutions /examples
  - it would have been a huge help for me when starting out
- or is this something we consider more appropriate for others to solve ?