Is Julia ready to be adopted by HEP?

26th International Conference on Computing in High Energy & Nuclear Physics (CHEP2023)

Tamas Gal – Erlangen Centre for Astroparticle Physics

https://indico.jlab.org/event/459/contributions/11521/

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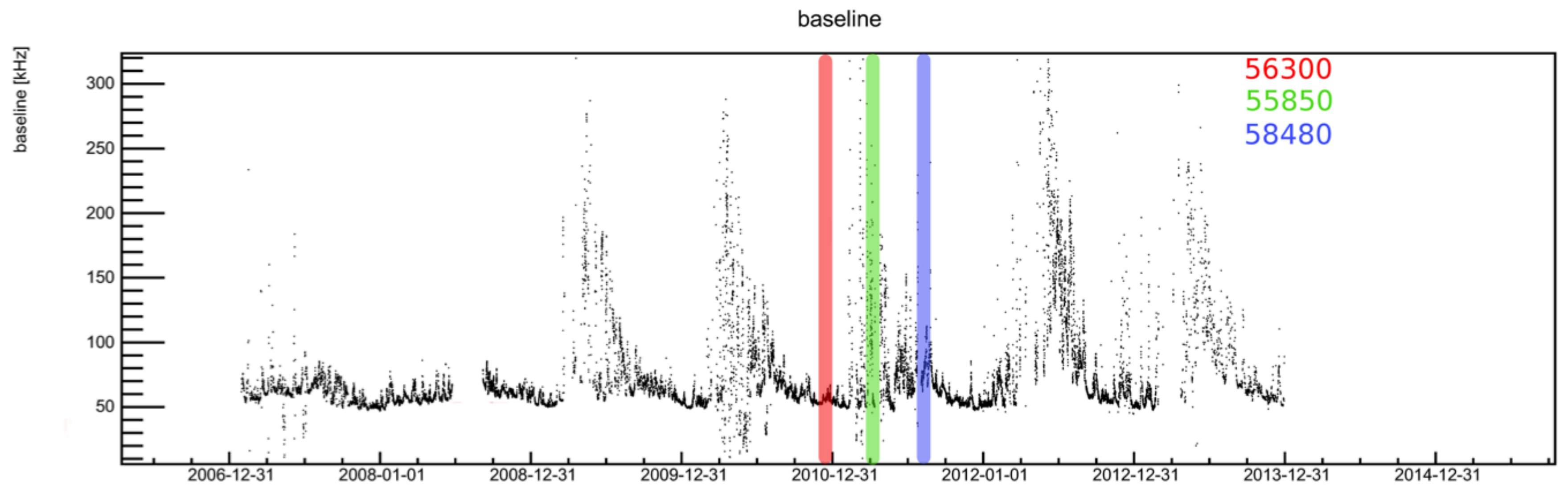

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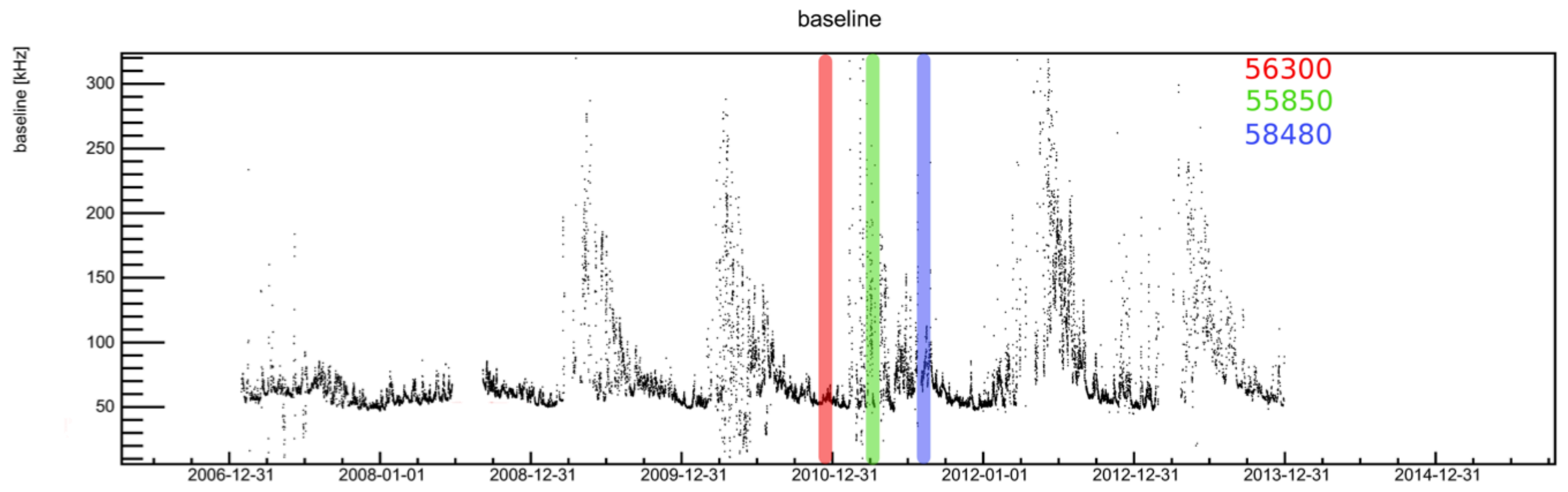

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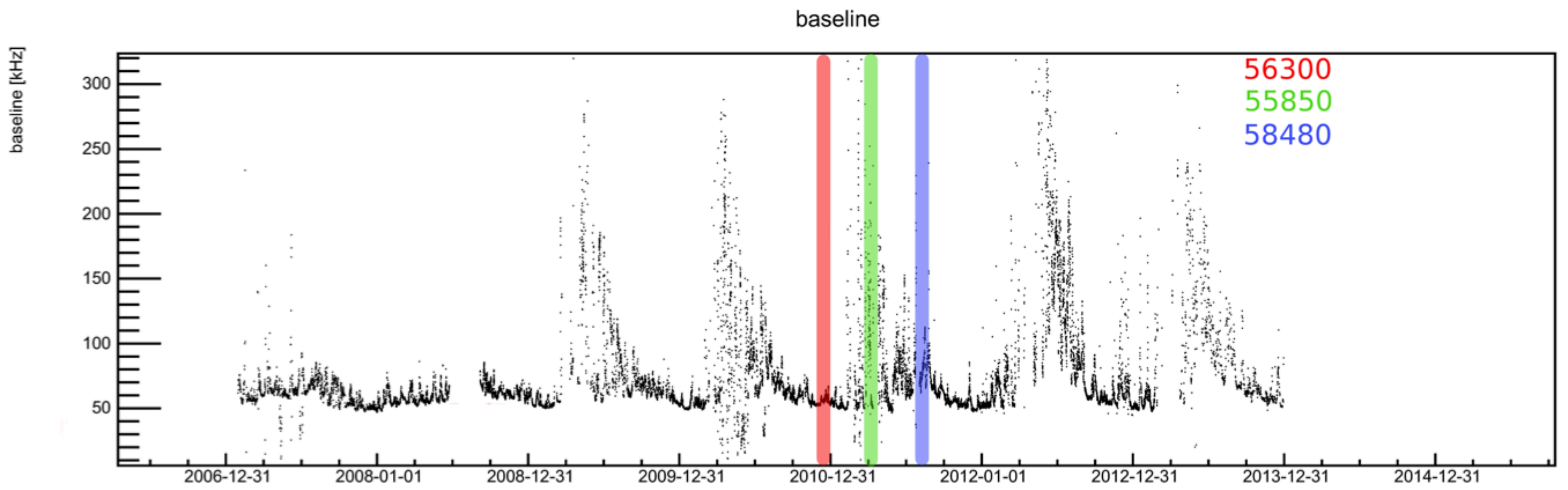

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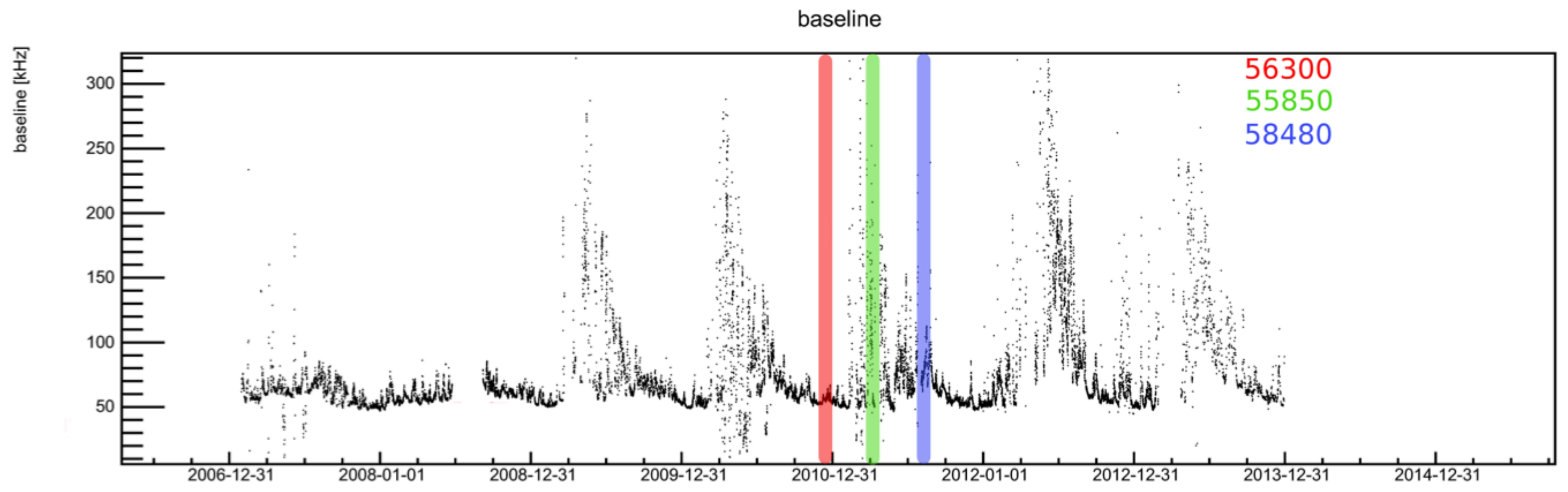

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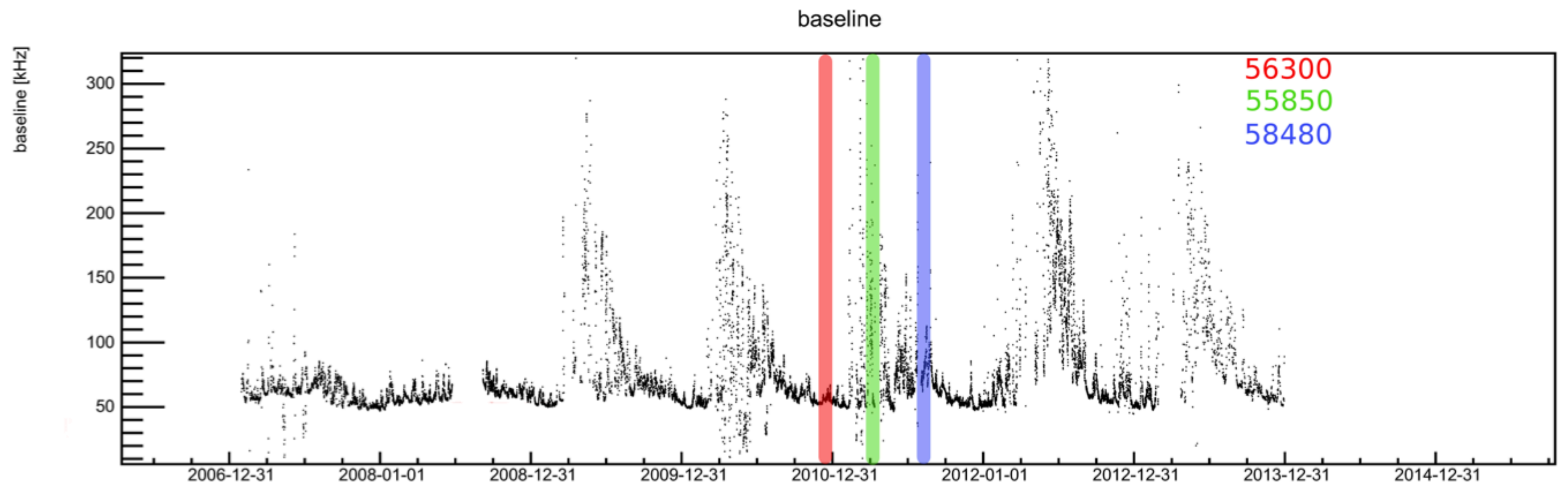

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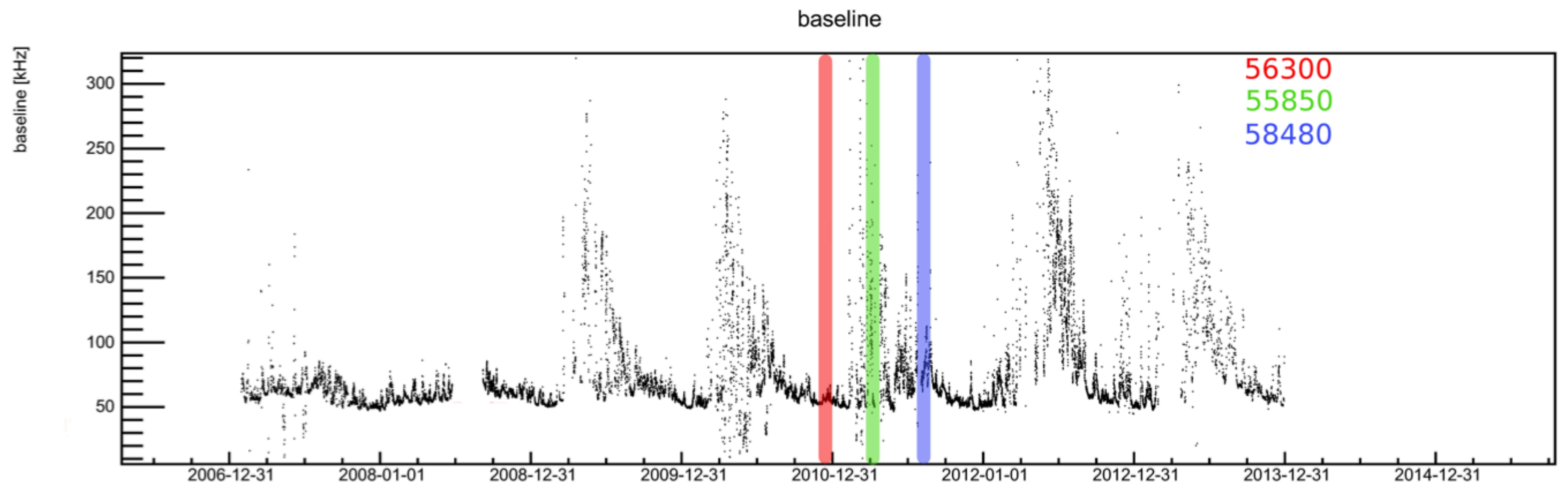

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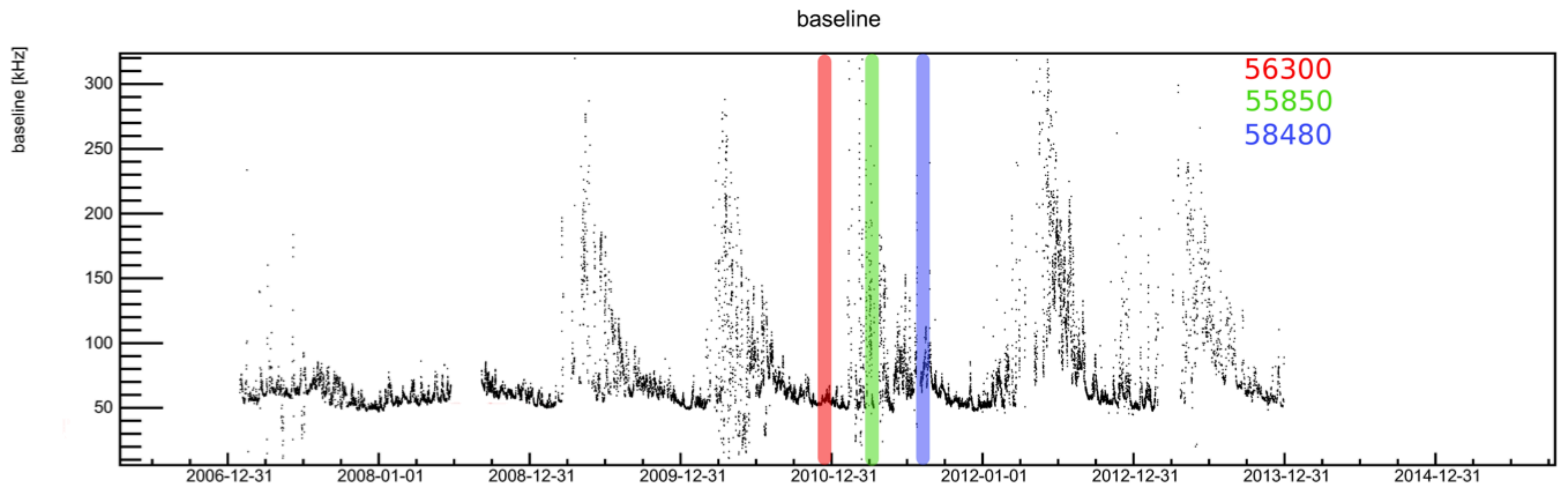

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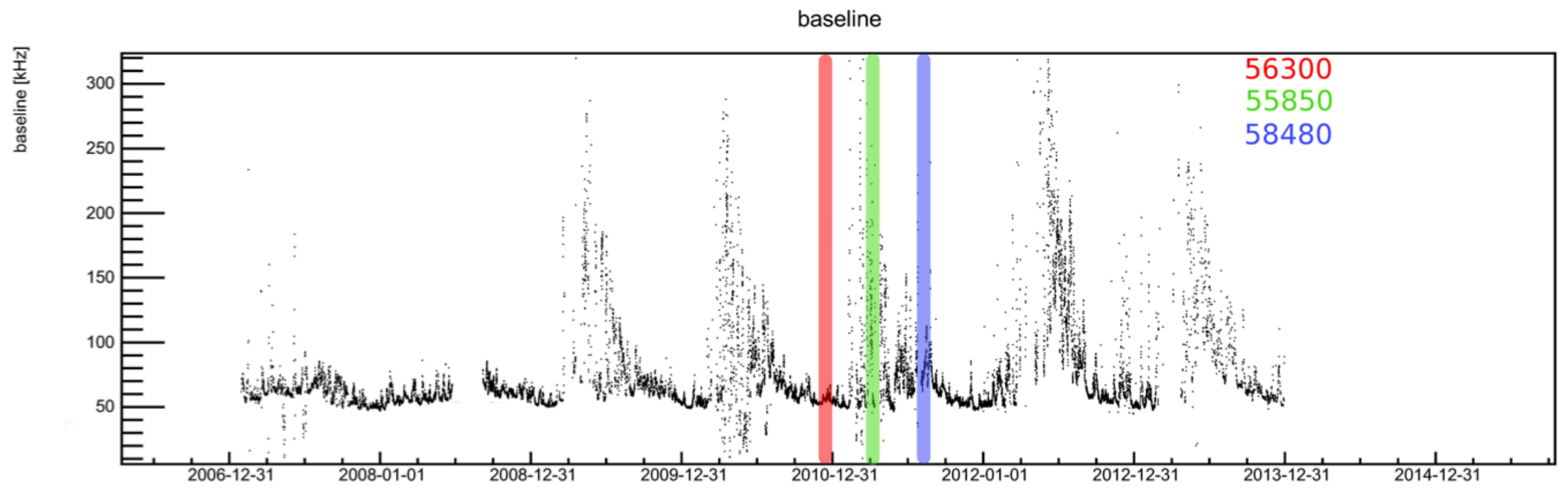

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- Decided to work on (high-level) **Python tools** to **reduce boilerplates**, make things **more accessible** and exploit the benefits of **interactiveness** to lower the entry barrier especially for new-comers

The years after...

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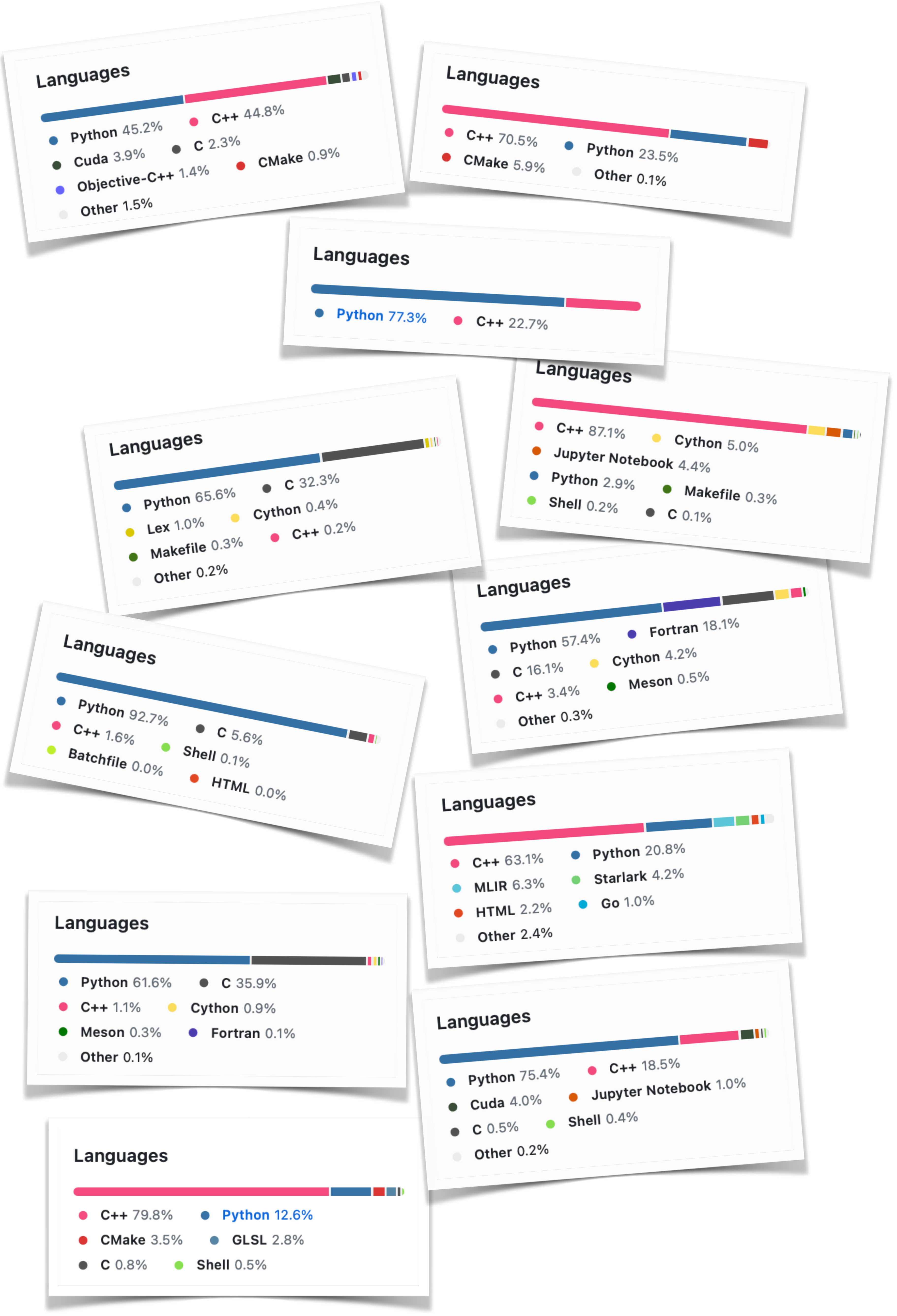

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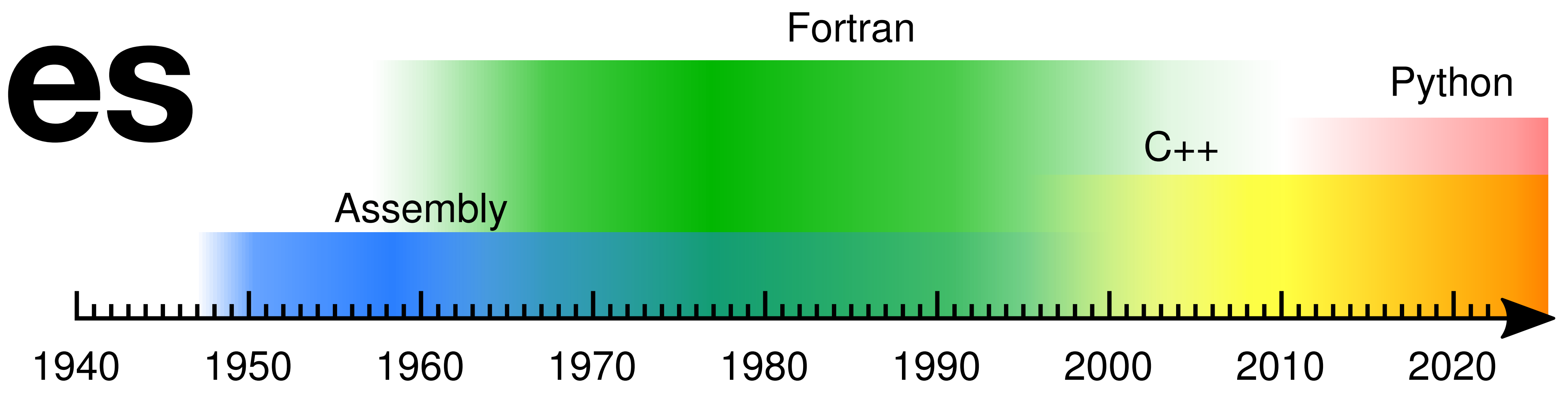
A simplified storyline in HEP



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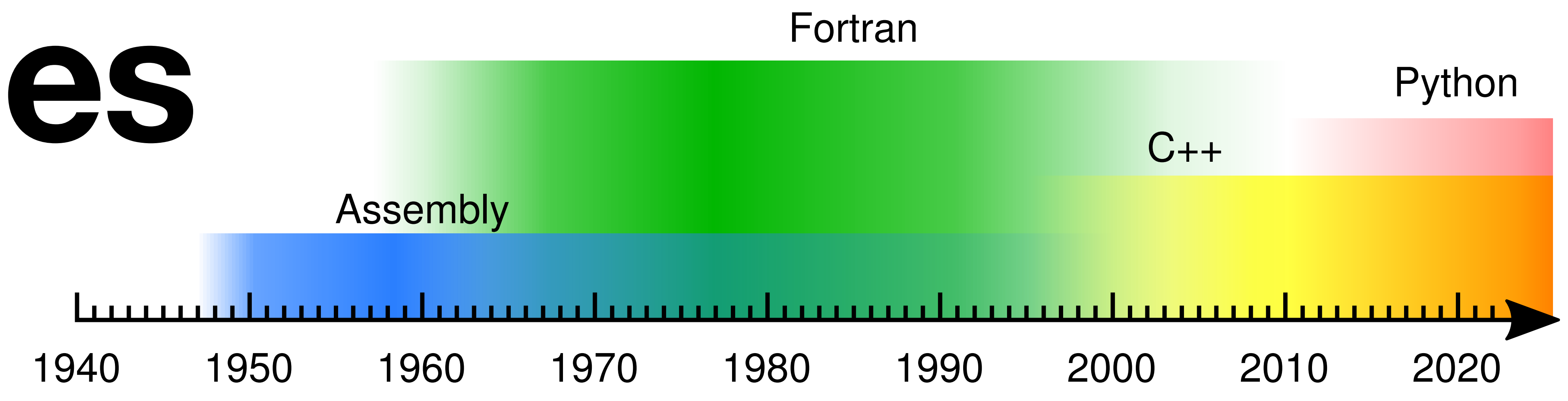

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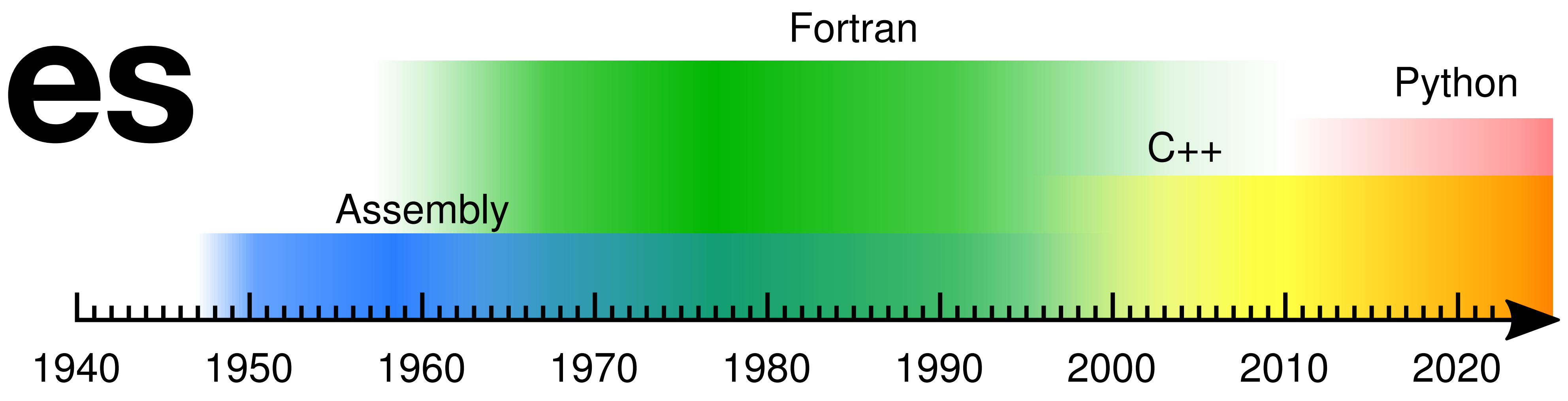

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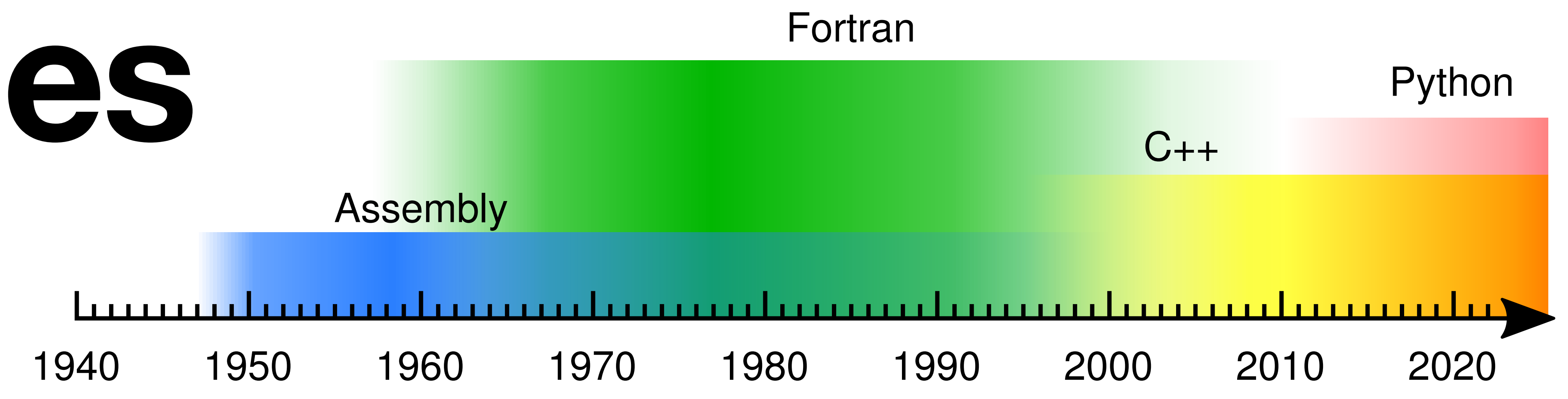

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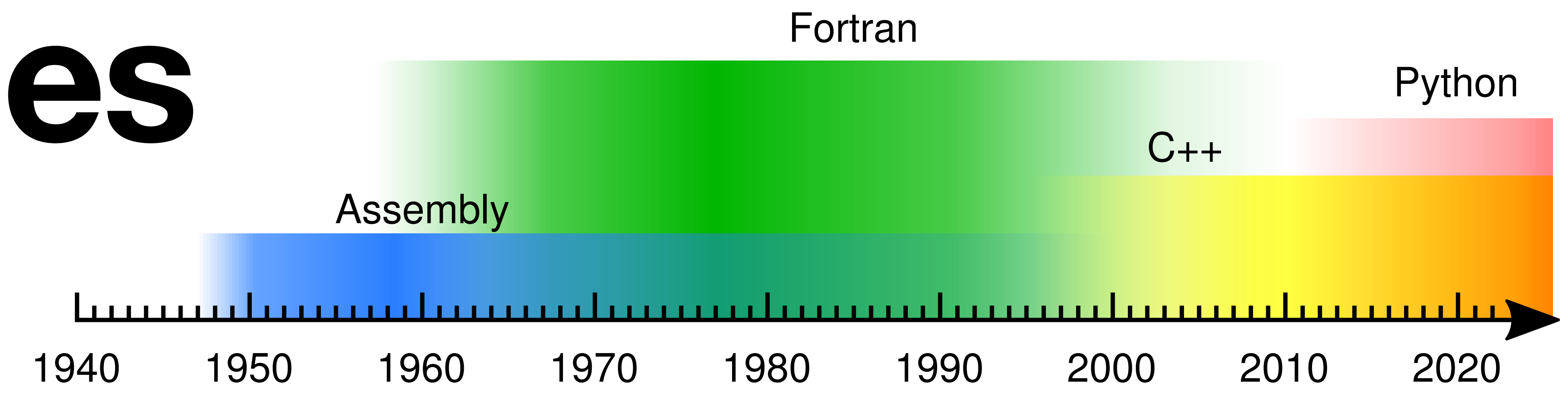

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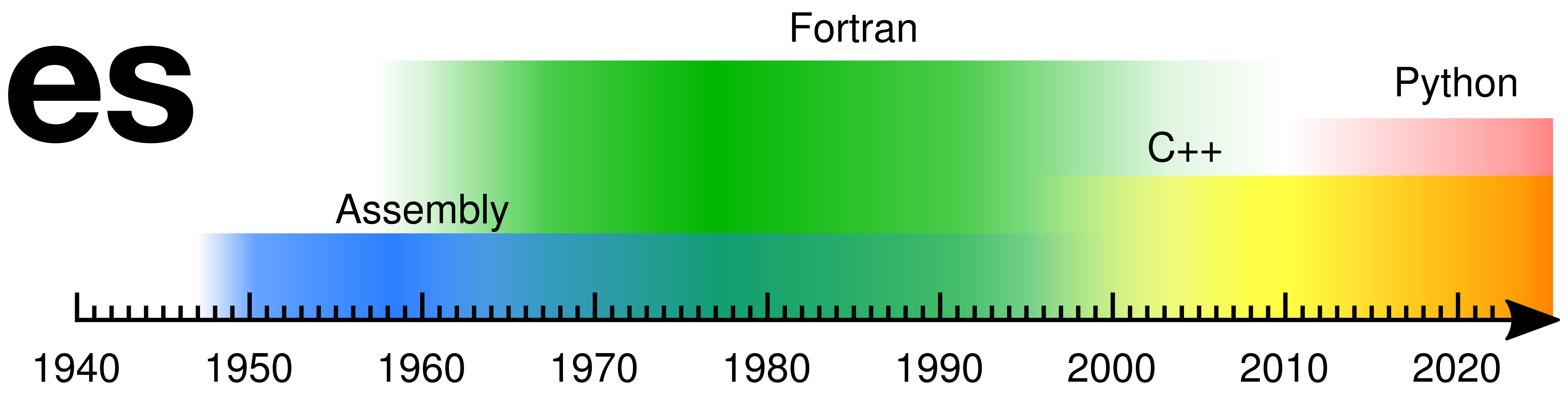

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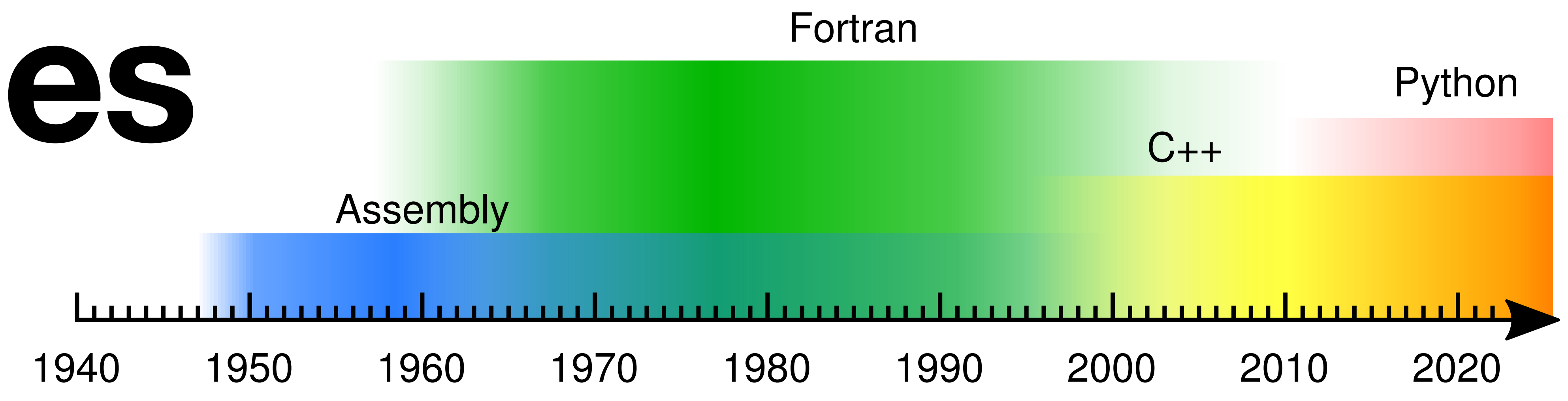

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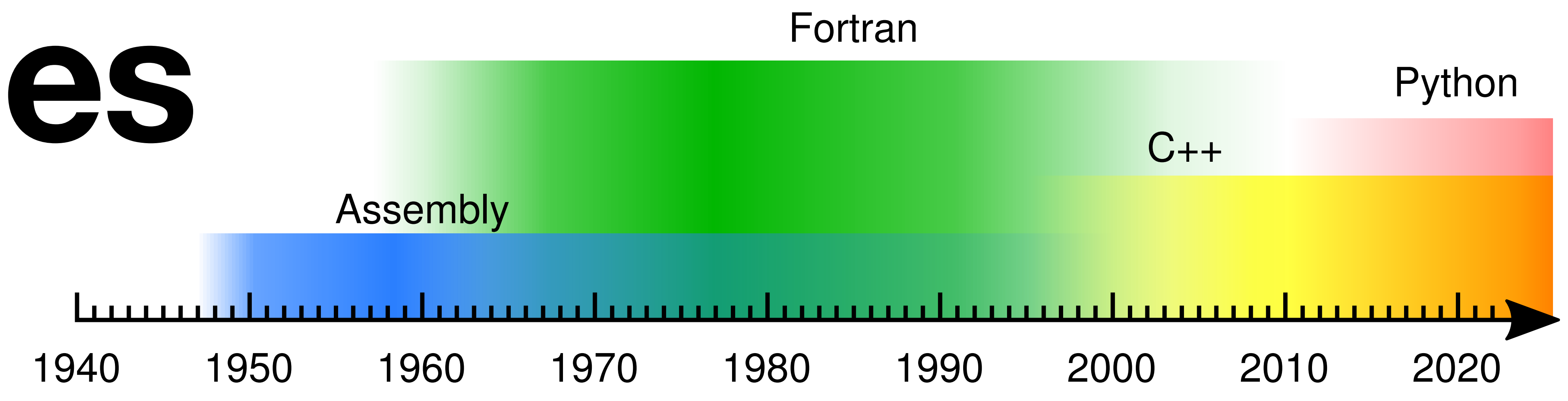

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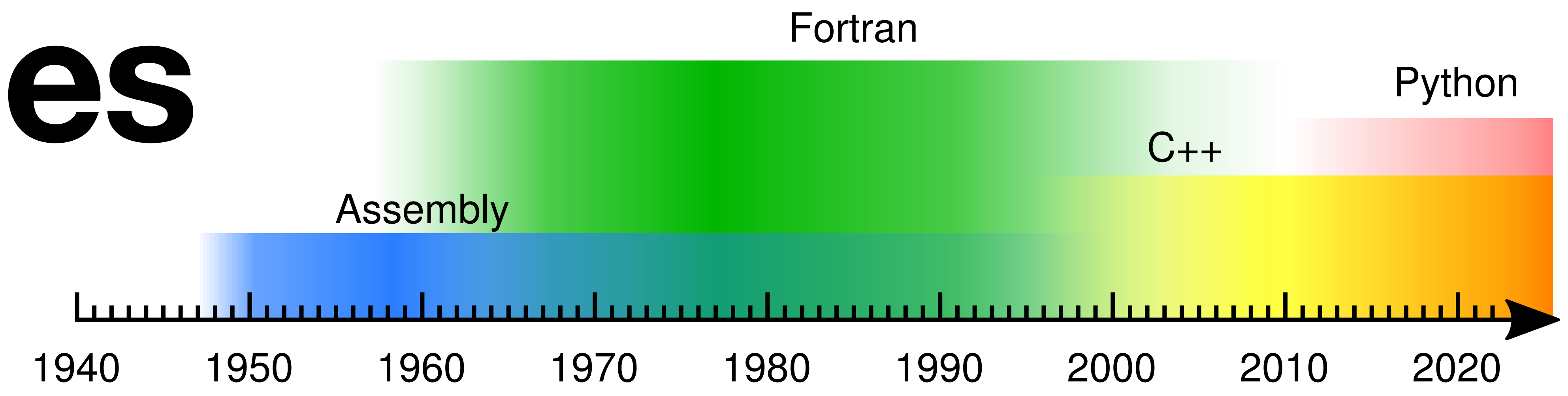

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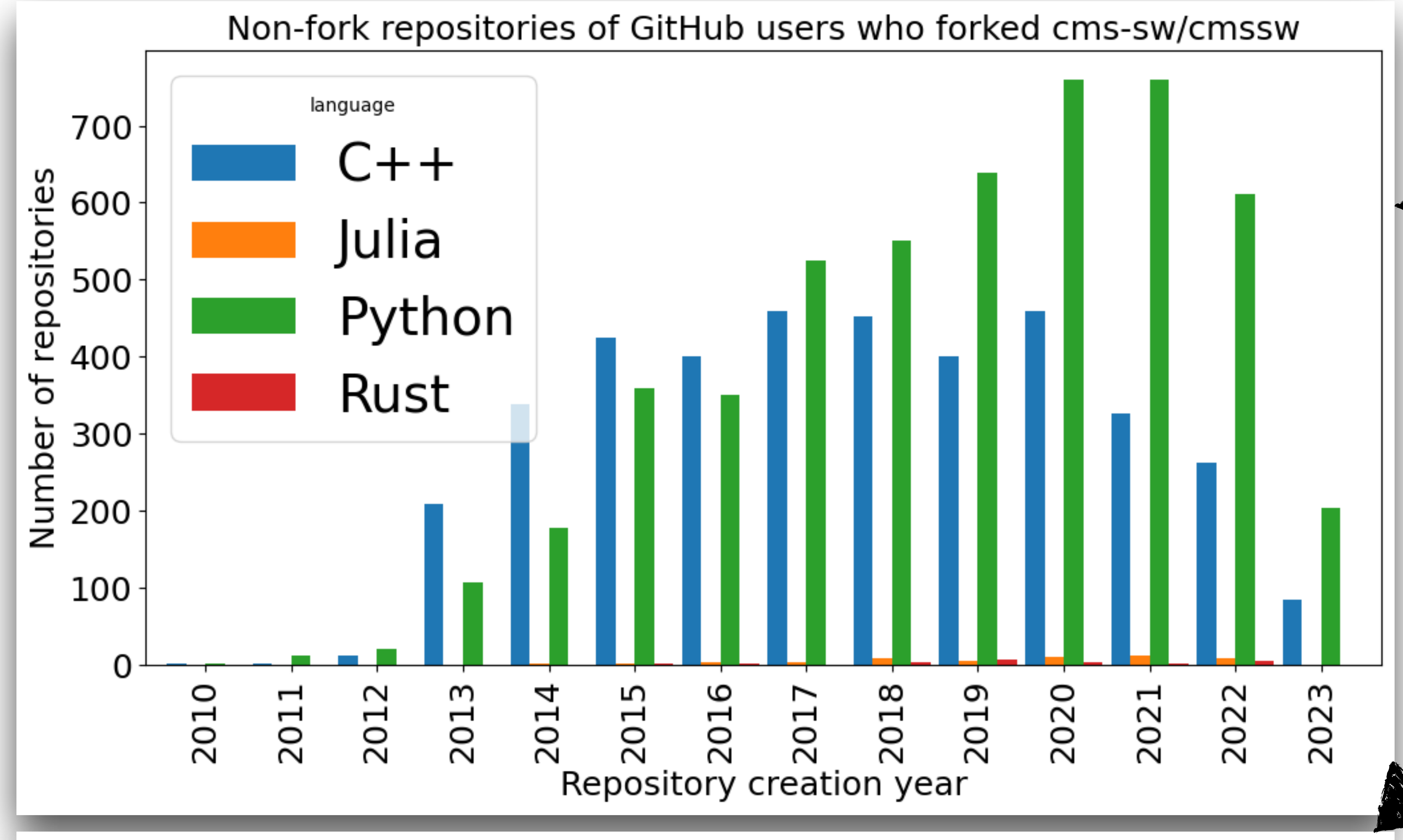
Language usage development in the past 13 years

Based on counting non-fork GitHub repositories created by people who forked a specific software.



cmssw users
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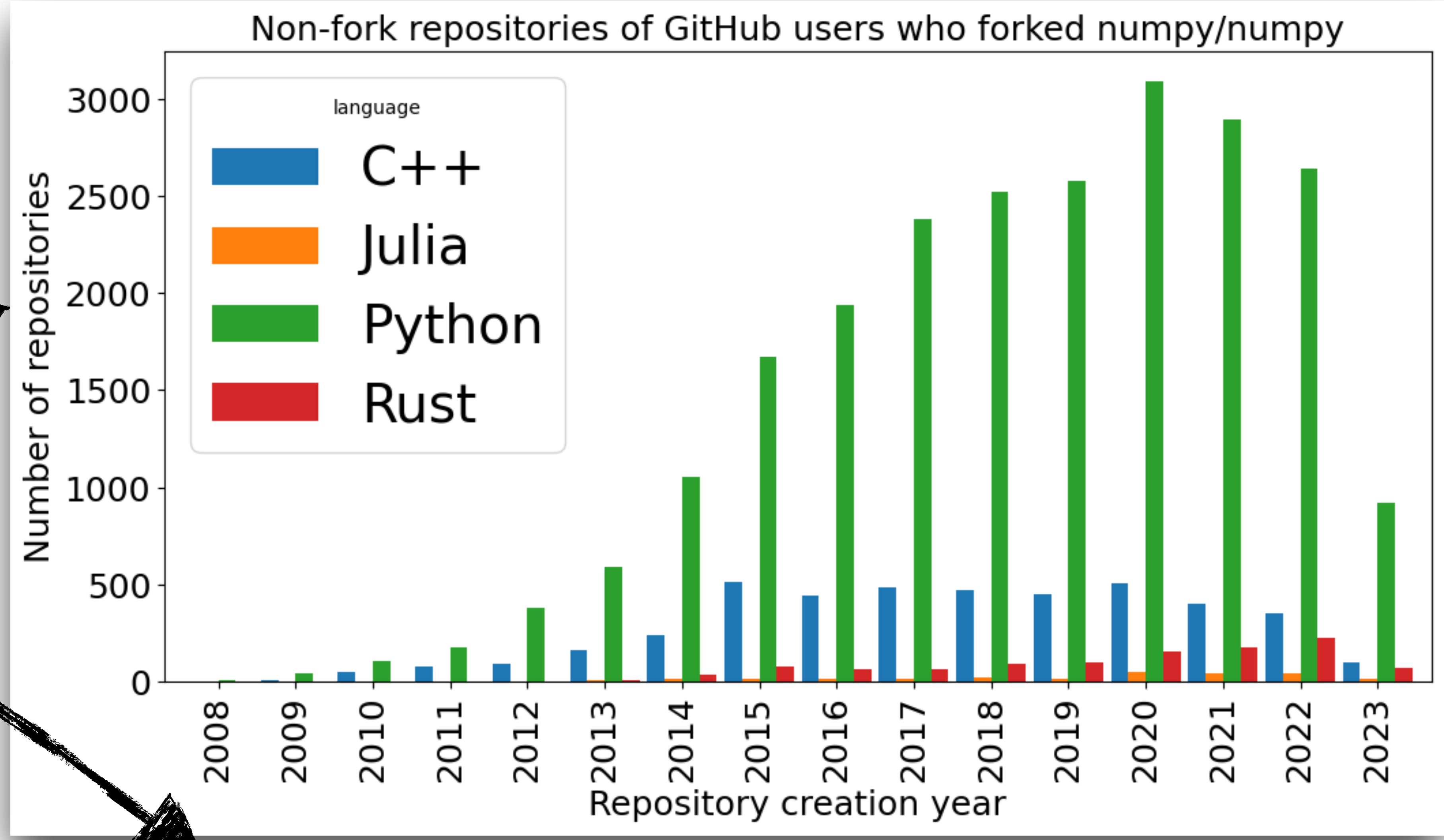
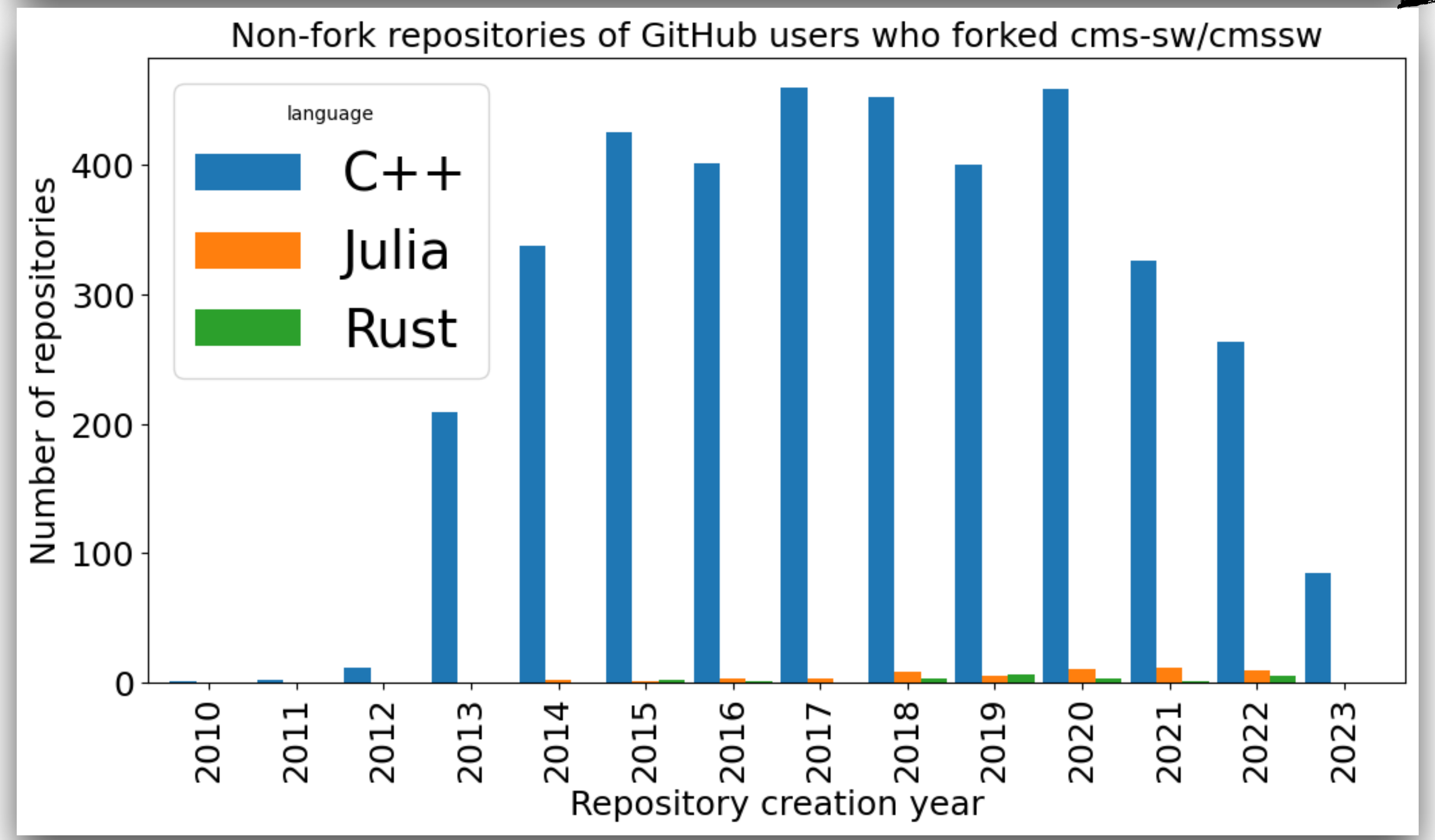
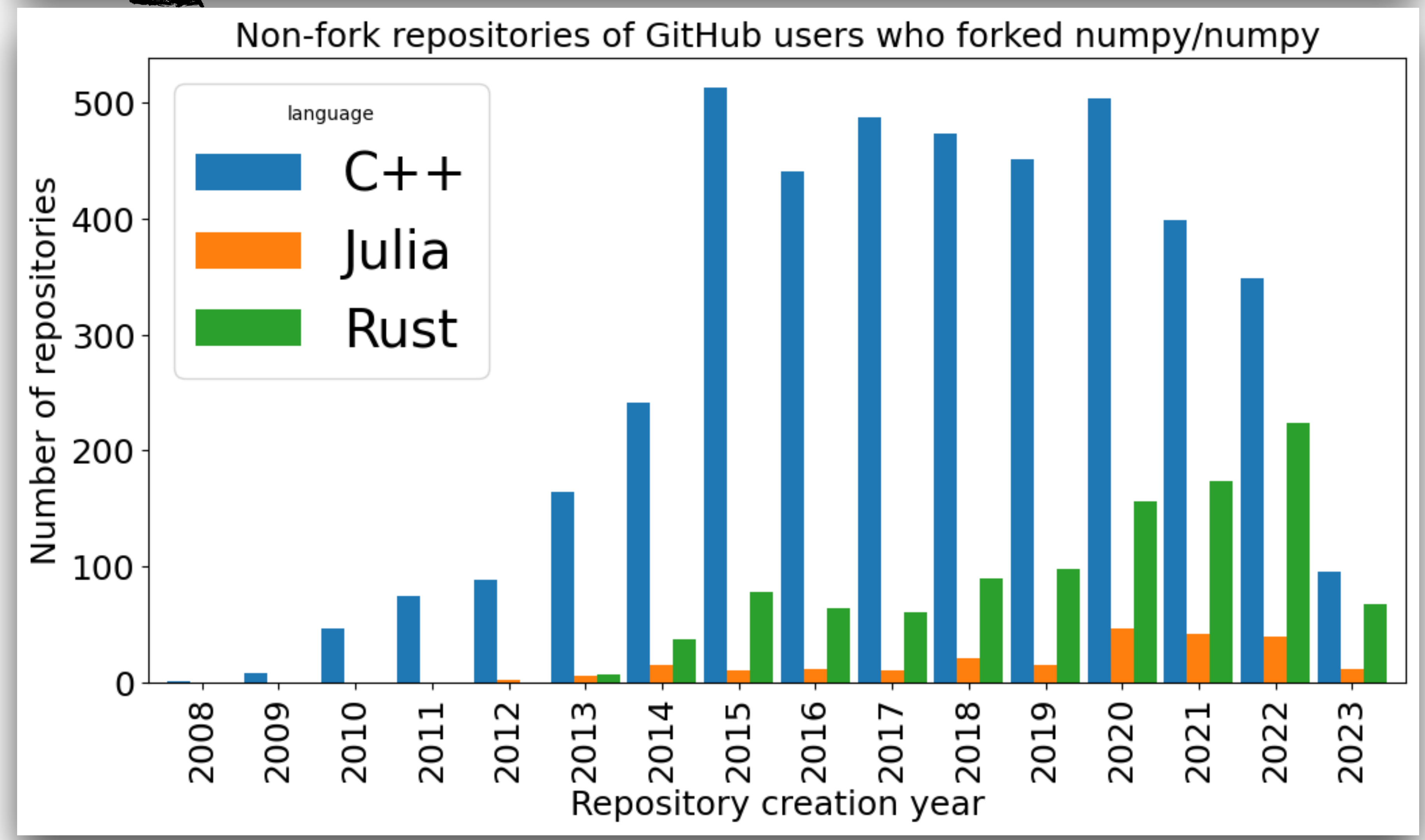


numpy users
("**data scientist**")



- **Python peaked** in **2020/2021**
- **Julia** is slowly emerging
- "**HEP**" seems to **follow the** "data scientist" **trend**
- **Turn-over** point of **Rust vs. C++** on the horizon for "data scientists"

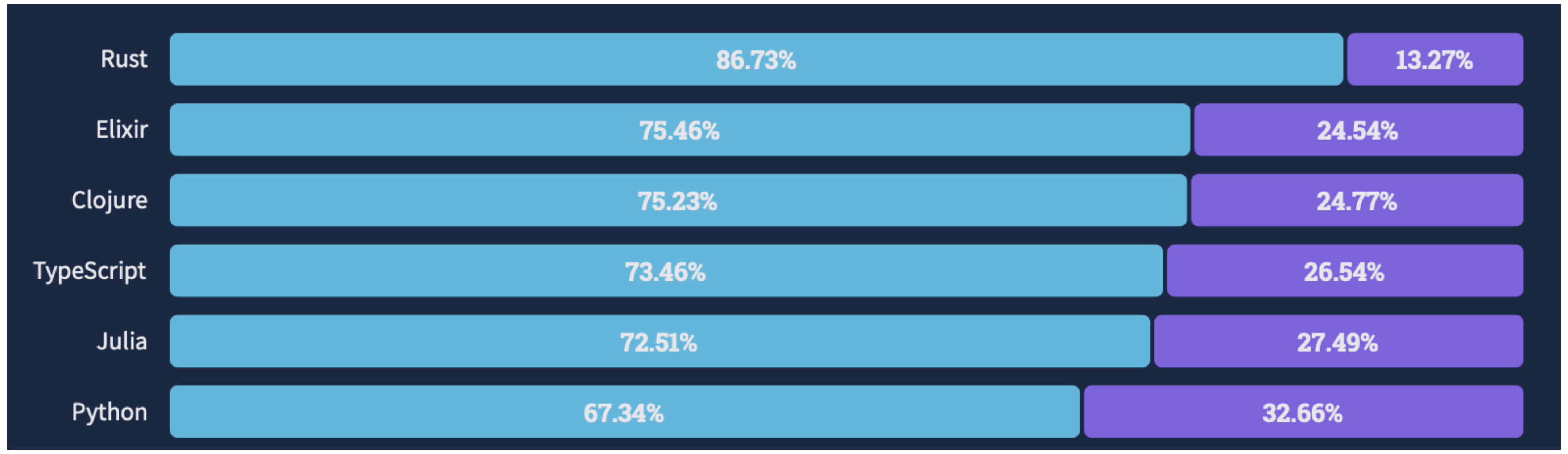


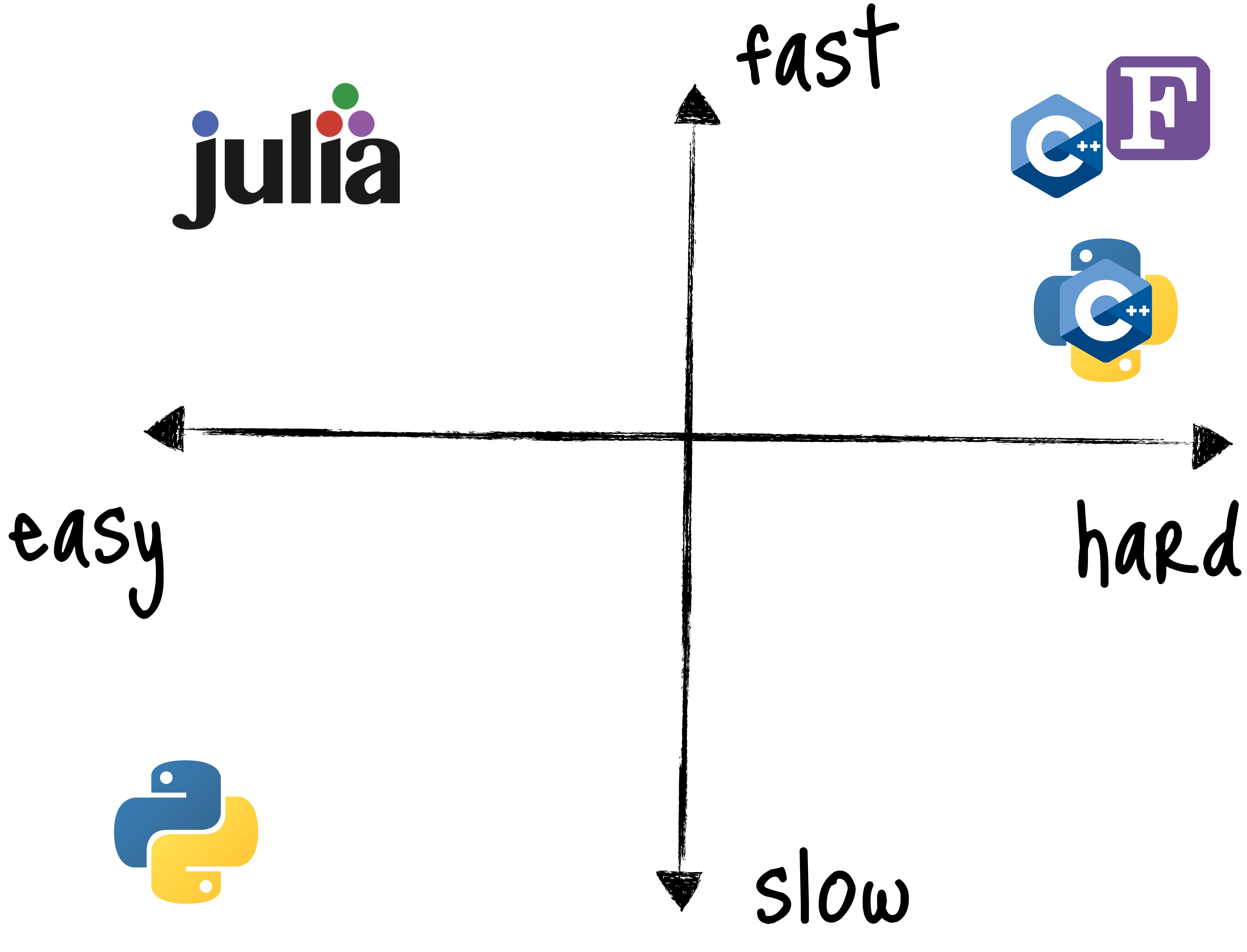
Which language would we have picked in 2013 if we had to choose from today's programming languages?

We think **Julia** is a suitable candidate.

- **High-level** ("easy" and interactive) language without penalty on **performance**
- **Massive code reuse** and **sharing** due to the **multiple-dispatch** design
- **Interface with legacy code** written in different languages
- Well-designed **packaging/distribution system**
- **Parallel and distributed computing** are core features of Julia
- Ability to write **GPU kernels in native Julia**

Most loved languages (top 6 shown) https://survey.stackoverflow.co/2022

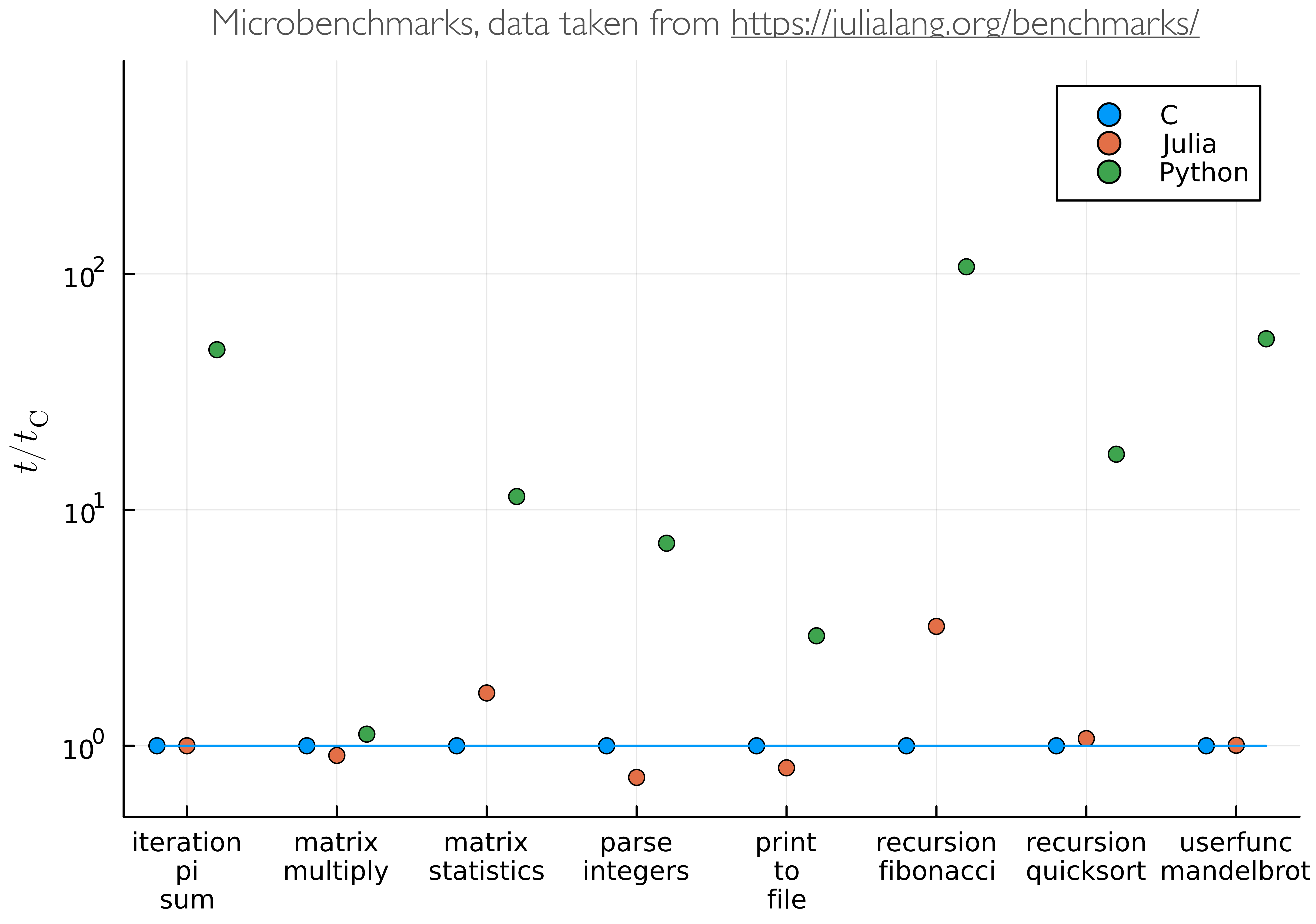




Julia's native speed (compared to C and Python)

Microbenchmarks

- Code "**naively**" **written in Julia** is often close to the peak performance
- It's a big deal since **physics students** do not have CS education and often **approach problems "naively"**
    - Such a code is (according to my experience) often **1-2 orders of magnitude slower** than it should be
    - **memory issues** all over the place (vectorised operations with unnecessary temporary allocations)
    - **bad scaling** due to "whole-meal" programming style
- "**Julia: A language that walks like Python, runs like C" --** K. S. Kuppusamy



Accessing data formats used in HEP

The entry point...

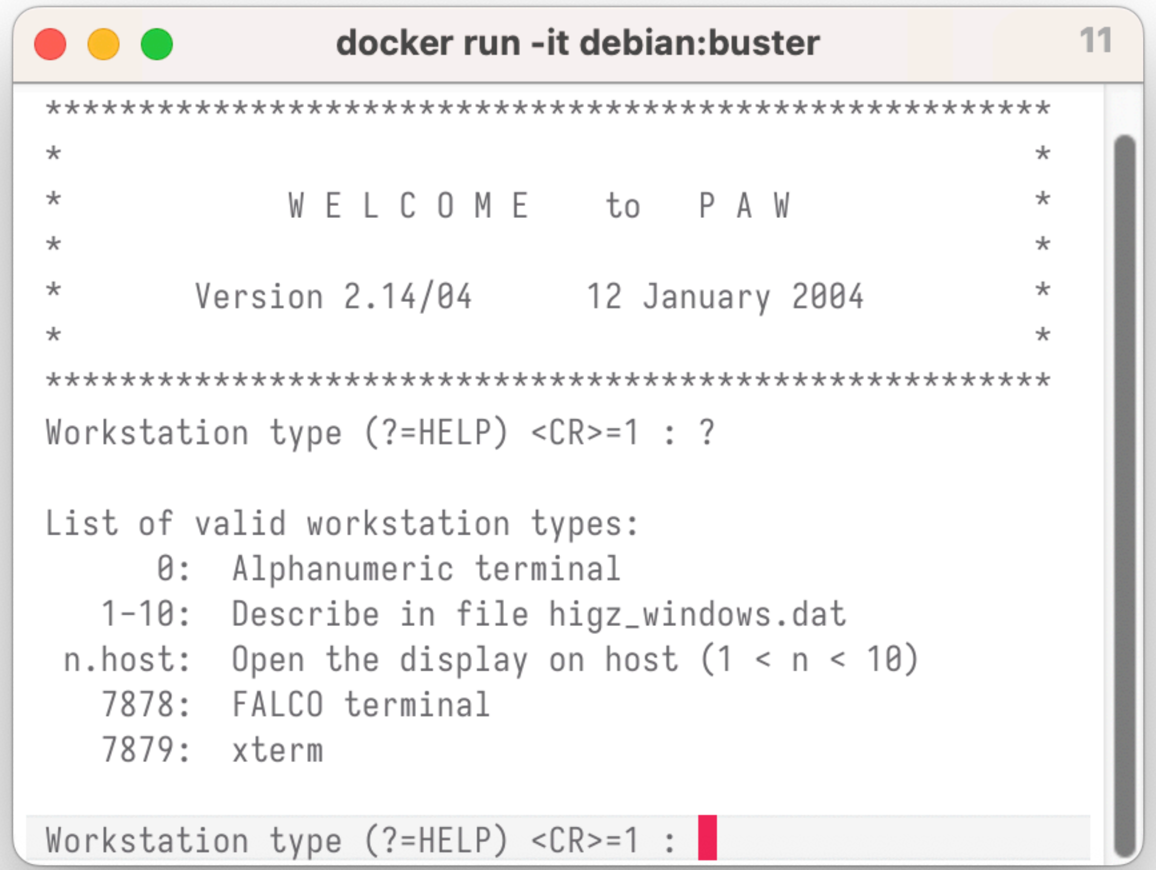
- Being able to **read** (write) data is **essential**
- The most **popular data formats** used in **HEP** are supported with **native Julia** packages*
- Addition formats can be introduced to HEP through Julia

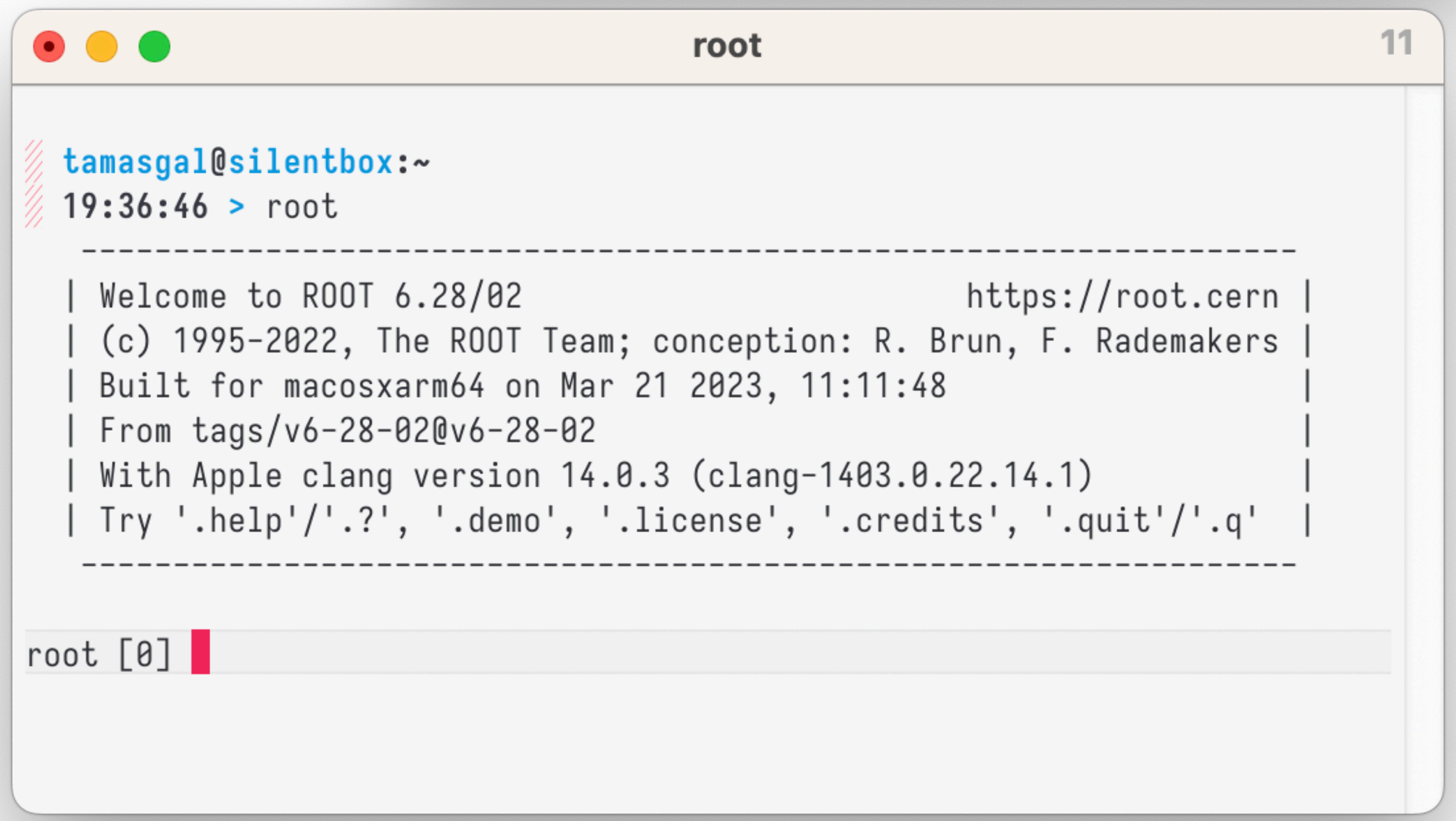
- ROOT Data Analysis Framework → UpROOT.jl, UnROOT.jl
- Les Houches Event File Format → LHE.jl
- LCIO → LCIO.jl
- APACHE ARROW → Arrow.jl
- HDF → HDF5.jl

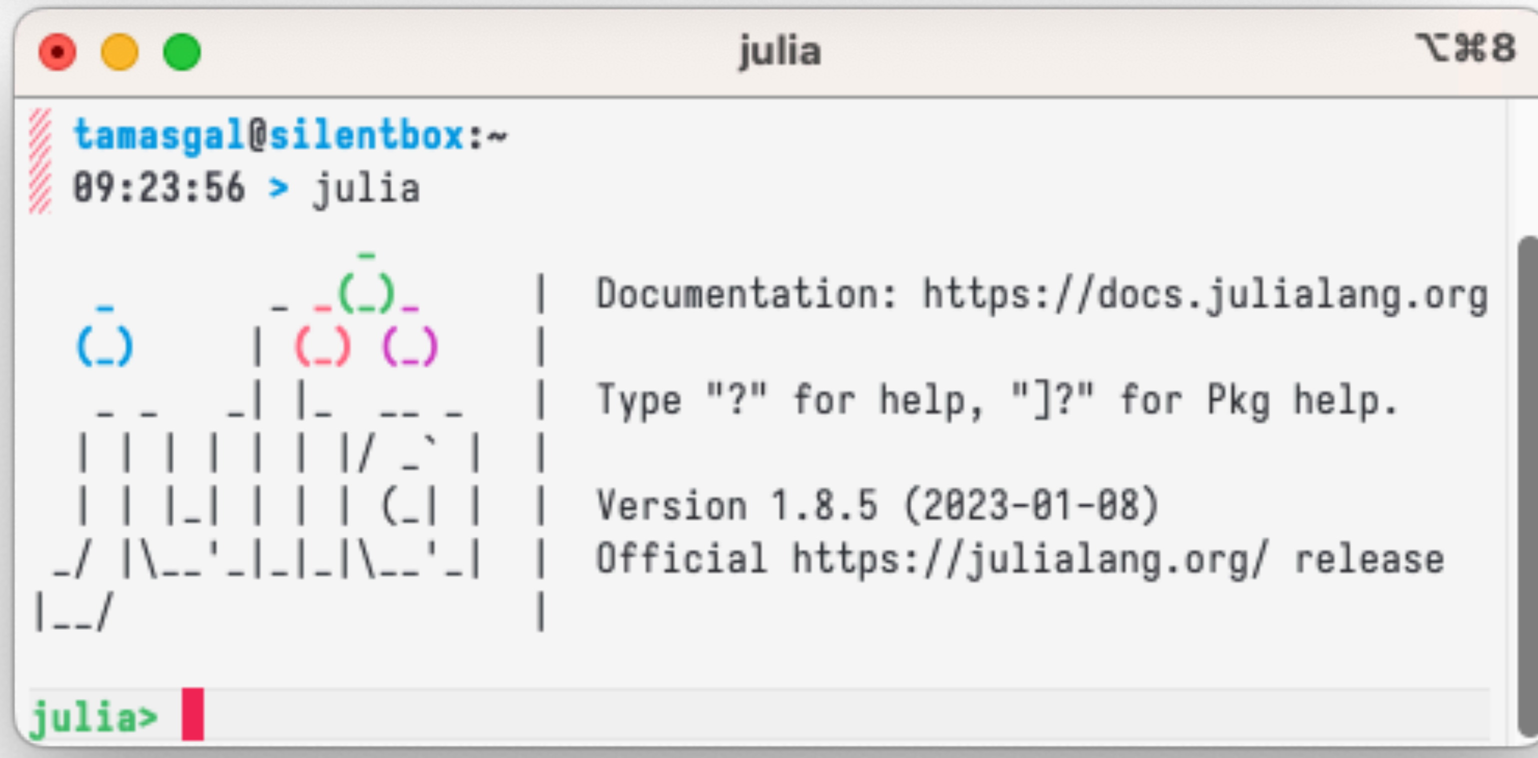
* reading of ROOT files has some limitations
writing ROOT relies on the Python package uproot

High-level and interactive coding

Without penalty on performance







- **Interactive scientific computing** for rapid prototyping has a **long history** in **HEP**, introduced by **PAW** (1986) at CERN and later in **ROOT** (**CINT** 1995, **Cling** 2013)
- **Python** among other languages **popularised the REPL** in other **scientific fields**
- **Julia offers** the **same interactivity** without penalty on **performance**
- **Type inference** allows **generic programming** and yet type safety and optimised machine code
- **Jupyter** notebook support (btw. **Ju** stands for **Julia**...)

Code reusability and extensibility

"The Expression Problem"

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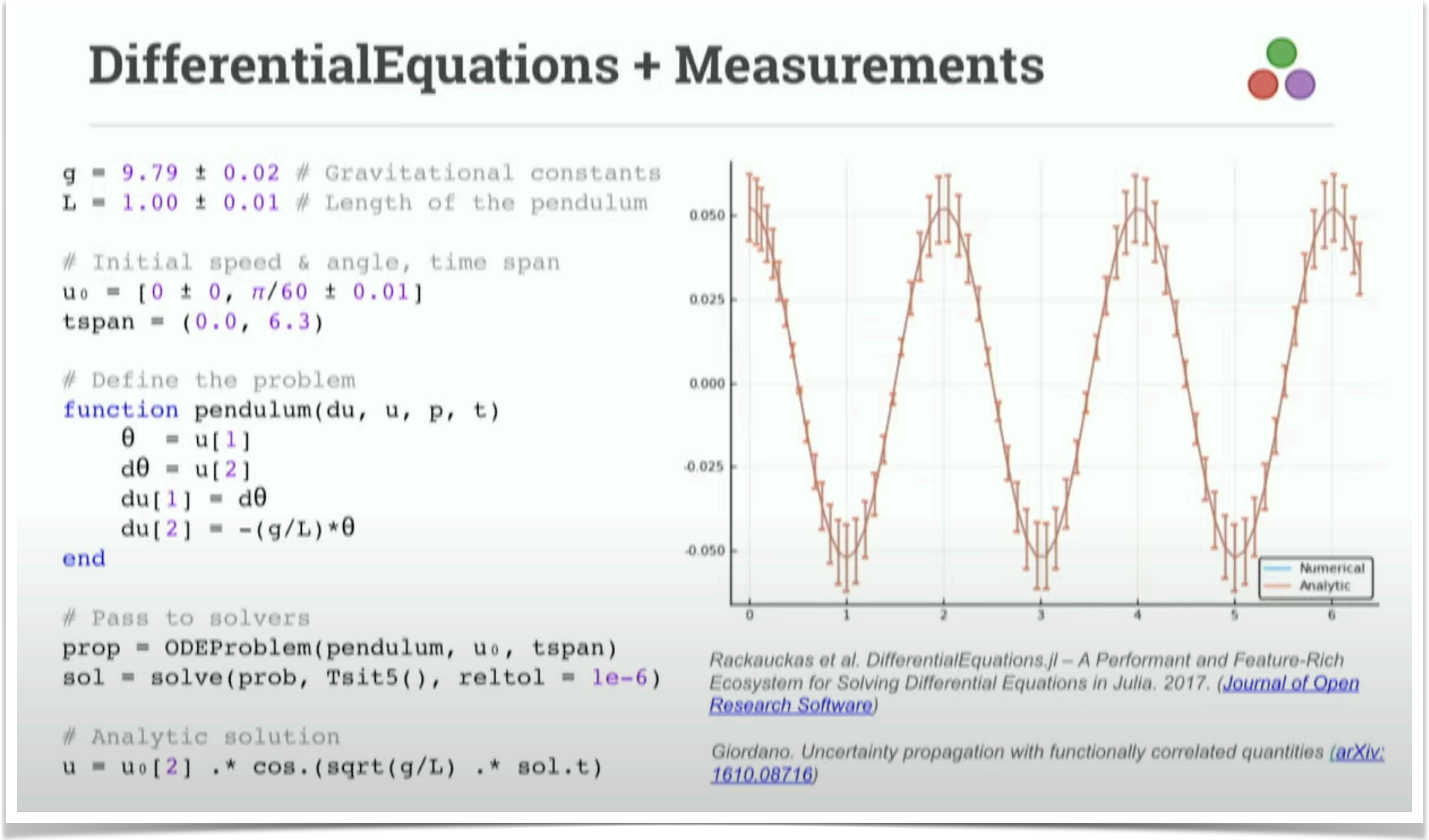

JuliaCon 2019 | **The Unreasonable Effectiveness of Multiple Dispatch** | Stefan Karpinski
https://www.youtube.com/live/kc9HwsxE1OY

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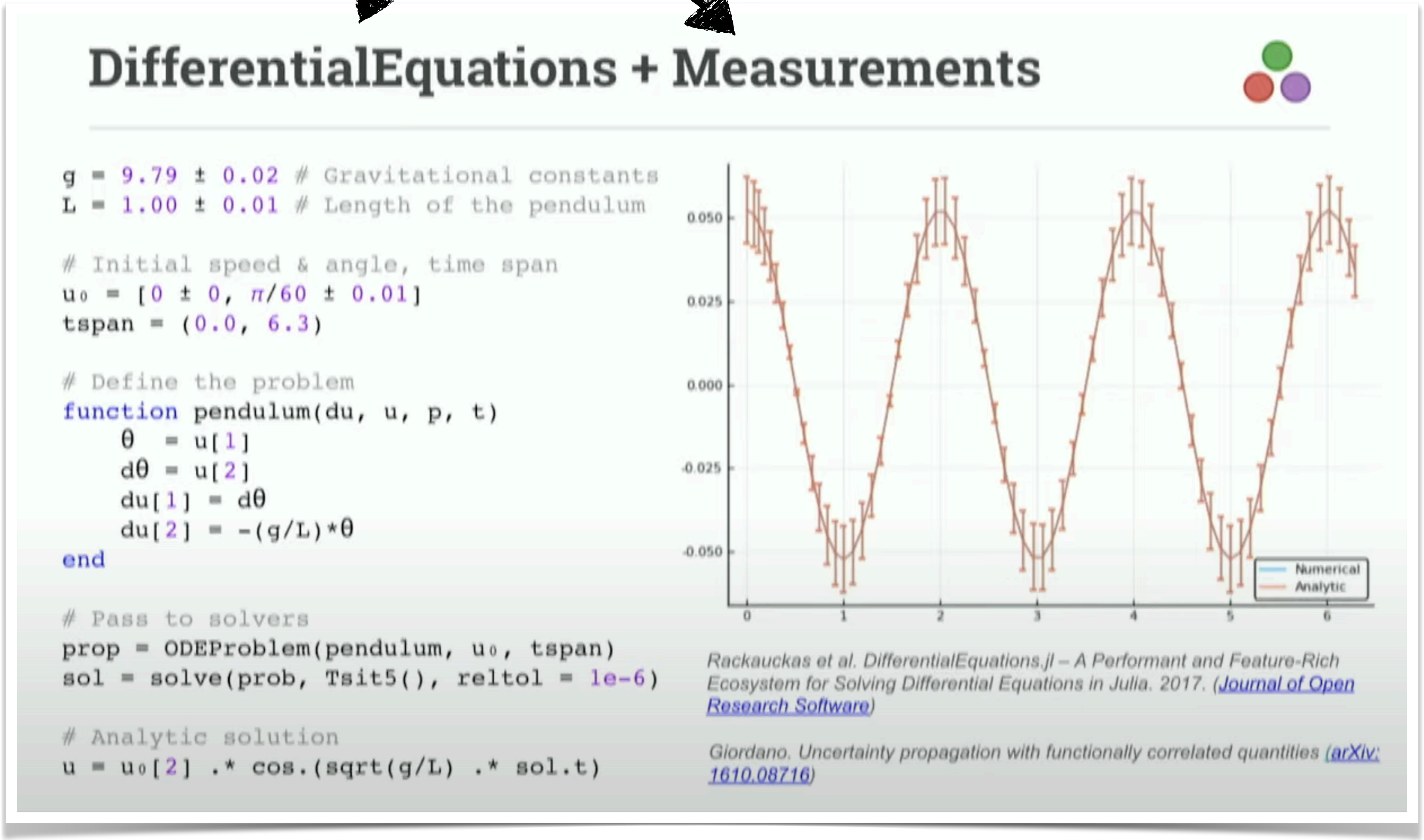
These two packages don't know about each other!



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Interfacing legacy code

- Many high-quality, **mature libraries** for numerical computing written in C and Fortran were developed and optimised over **the past decades**
- Julia supports **native call** (without any glue code) **into C and Fortran** libraries (via the built-in `ccall()` function)
- **C++** wrapping available via external packages like **CxxWrap.jl**
- **Zero-overhead Python** wrapping (**PyCall.jl**)
- An honorable mention for a **fully wrapped HEP** software
    - **Geant4.jl** (fully wrapped using CxxWrap.jl)

```
julia> using PyCall

julia> np = pyimport("numpy");

julia> np.random.rand(3) * 100
3-element Vector{Float64}:
 38.961726053176136
 71.3368957480925
  8.307181033489208

julia> np.sin(rand(5, 2))
5×2 Matrix{Float64}:
 0.784982   0.282252
 0.202079   0.220945
 0.637406   0.0921307
 0.0869371  0.395478
 0.383479   0.150941

julia>
```

Julia's packaging and distribution system

Reproducible environments, private package registries

- **Reproducible environments** with **exact versions** of all **dependencies** is a **built-in** feature in **Julia**
- **Private package registries** can be utilised to distribute unpublished packages, **seamless integration** into the package dependency solver
- **Distribution** of **pre-built binaries** of external dependencies (e.g. HDF5lib, libdeflate, ...) for a **large combinatorics of OS**, **architectures**, **compiler features**, etc.

Parallel, Distributed and GPU Computing
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```
julia> function dotbaseline(a::AbstractArray{T}, b::AbstractArray{T}) where {T}
           s = zero(T)
           @fastmath @inbounds @simd for i ∈ eachindex(a,b)
               s += a[i]' * b[i]
           end
           s
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```

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- **Distributed** (built-in): execute code **asynchronously** in **multiple processes** and/or **multiple machines** (like MPI)

Summary

- We think that the **two-language problem needs** more attention and a **fundamentally different approach than** creating more and more **Python extensions and libraries**
- **Julia** is an **excellent language for scientific computing** with **high potential for HEP**
- **HEP specific needs** are very **well covered** by Julia
- **Code sharing** and **extending** foreign packages **are a no-brainer**, thanks to the package distribution system and the **multiple dispatch** design
- **Distributed and parallel computing** as first-class citizens in Julia
- Upcoming paper:
  Potential of the Julia language for High Energy Physics computing
- Join the **JuliaHEP GitHub** organisation**:** https://github.com/JuliaHEP