Geometry 3: Field Integration

Dennis Wright
Geant4 Tutorial at Jefferson Lab
20 August 2025

based on slides by Soon Yung Jun (Fermilab), John Apostolakis (CERN) and Makoto Asai (Jefferson Lab)

Outline

Introduction

Magnetic field implementation

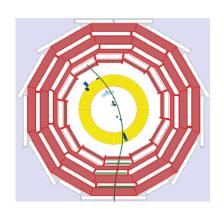
Field integration

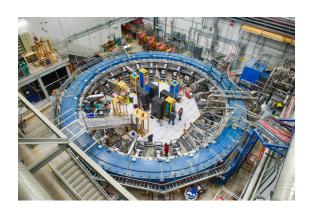
Field parameters

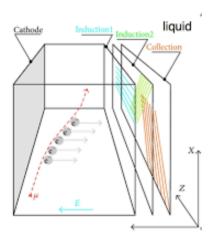
Customizing field integration

Introduction

- Changed particle transport in an EM field: $F = q(\mathbf{E} + \mathbf{v} \times \mathbf{B})$
- Used for:
 - measuring momenta of charged tracks
 - bending or acceleration of charged tracks or beams
 - drifting charged particles through volumes
 - many other HEP applications







Magnetic Field Support in Geant4

- General user interfaces provide for field implementations
 - G4MagneticField (magnetic field base class)
 - G4VUserDetectorConstruction::ConstructSDandField (method to place field in detector)
 - G4UniformMagField, G4UniformElectricField (special case for simple fields)
- Field integration methods
 - Default stepper is G4DormandPrince745
 - Many other Runge-Kutta family integrators, including G4ClassicalRK4
 - QSS (quantized state system) and symplectic algorithms are used in integration
- Tunable parameters to control accuracy and performance
- Source code and examples:
 - source/geometry/magneticfield
 - source/geometry/navigation (G4PropagationInField)
 - examples/basic/B2 and B5
 - examples/extended/field

Magnetic Field Integration and Driver

- Goal: for a given step within a field, find final position and direction of charged particle within a tolerance
- Guiding principle:
 - stride in a plain (take big steps if field varies slowly)
 - crawl in a valley (small steps in a stiff, rapidly varying field)
 - → better accuracy, performance
- Elements of field integration
 - Field (E, B, ...)
 - Equation of motion
 - Stepper (integration routine, e.g. RK4, ...)
 - Driver (code that guides stepper, controls step size, errors, ...)
 - Chord finder (splits complex path into straight segments)
 - Multi-level locator (finds intersection of track with volume boundary)
 - Propagator in field (navigates particle through a field)
 - transportation (advance the particle by integrated step)

Field Implementation

Magnetic Field Implementation

- Derive a user magnetic field class from G4MagneticField and implement the method MyField::GetFieldValue(...)
- Instantiate this field in user detector construction and pass the field to G4FieldManager in MyDetector::ConstructSDandField()

```
//! \file MyDetector.cc
   A user magnetic field class
                                                                       // Static thread local stoage
class MyField : public G4MagneticField
                                                                       G4ThreadLocal MyField* MyDetector::fMyField = 0;
                                                                       G4ThreadLocal G4FieldManager* MyDetector::fFieldManager = 0;
   MyField();
   ~MyField() override;
  // Return field values at a given point
  void GetFieldValue(const G4double point[4], G4double* field) const;
                                                                            Construct sensitive detectors and a user magnetic field
                                                                        void MyDetector::ConstructSDandField()
  Evaluate the field at a given position [and time]
                                                                          // Create a user field
    param point[4] input position and time, point[4] = \{x, y, z, t\}
param *field returning magnetic values, field[3] = \{Bx, By, Bz\}
                                                                          fMyField = new MyField();
                                                                          // Set the user field to the field manager
void MyField::GetFieldValue(const G4double point[4], G4double* field) const
                                                                          G4FieldManager* fFieldManager = new G4FieldManager();
                                                                          fFieldManager->SetDetectorField(fMyField);
```

For a uniform magnetic field, use class G4UniformMagField

```
G4MagneticField* magField = new G4UniformMagField(G4ThreeVector(1*tesla,0,0));
```

Global and Local Fields

 One field manager is associated with the World and is set in G4TransportationManager

- Other volumes can override this
 - An alternative field manager can be associated with any logical volume
 - By default, this is propagated to all its daughter volumes

```
// Override the field manager of a logical volume by a local field manager
G4FieldManager* localFieldMgr = new G4FieldManager(magneticField);
logVolume->setFieldManager(localFieldMgr, true);
```

- where "true" pushes the field to all the volumes it contains, unless a daughter has its own field manager
- A field can be nullified in a volume with a nullptr of G4MagneticField

```
G4MagneticField* bField = nullptr;
logVolume->SetFieldManager(new G4FieldManager(bField));
```

Field Integration

Integrating the Equations of Motion

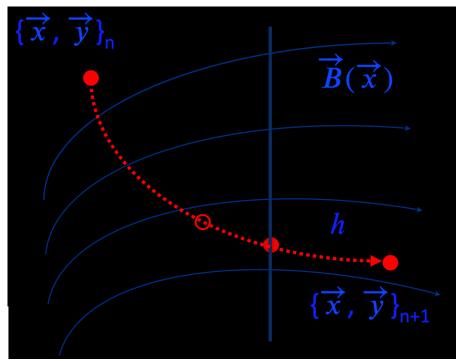
 Solve the equation of motion of a charged particle in a field:

$$m\frac{d^2\mathbf{x}}{dt^2} = q[\mathbf{E} + \mathbf{v} \times \mathbf{B}] = f(\mathbf{x}, t)$$

 Decompose equation along the particle trajectory, s = vt:

$$\frac{d\mathbf{x}}{ds} = \mathbf{y}$$

$$\frac{d\mathbf{y}}{ds} = f(\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{y})$$



• Use an integration method to find x_{n+1} , y_{n+1} for any given step size:

•
$$x_{n+1} = x_n + h$$

•
$$y_{n+1} = y_n + hf(x_n, y_n)$$

Explicit Runge-Kutta Integration

• Taylor expansion of right hand side at a set of intermediate points $h_i=c_ih$ (i=1,...,s) where s is the number of stages, subject to $\Sigma_ib_i=1$ and $\Sigma_ia_{ij}=c_i$:

$$\bullet y_{n+1} = y_n + \sum_{i=1}^{s} b_i k_i + O(h^{s+1})$$

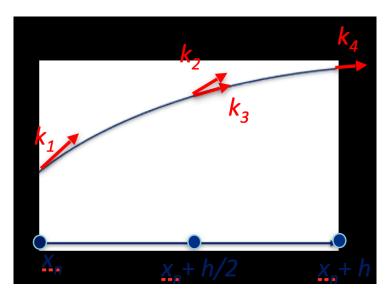
$$\bullet k_i = h f(x_n + c_i h, y_n + h \sum_{j=1}^{i-1} a_{ij} k_j)$$

Classical 4th order (4-stage) Runge-Kutta:

•
$$k_2 = hf(x_n + \frac{h}{2}, y_n + \frac{k_1}{2})$$

•
$$k_3 = hf(x_n + \frac{h}{2}, y_n + \frac{k_2}{2})$$

$$\bullet \ k_4 = hf(x_n + h, y_n + k_3)$$



- Adaptive step control by truncation error of difference between two small steps and one big step: total of 11 evaluations of right hand side of equation of motion
 - ullet If error is bigger than a given tolerance, propose new substep h_i and repeat until $h=\Sigma_i h_i$

Dormand-Prince RK5(4)7M

 Use higher order (5th order RK) solutions and a 4th order embedded solution

$$\begin{aligned} \bullet y_{n+1} &= y_n + \sum_{i=1}^7 b_i k_i + O(h^6) \\ \bullet y_{n+1}^* &= y_n + \sum_{n=1}^6 b_i^* k_i + O(h^5) \\ \bullet y_{err} &= y_{n+1} - y_{n+1}^* = \sum_{n=1}^7 (b_i^* - b_i) k_i \end{aligned}$$

```
C_i | a_ij

0 |

1/5 | 1/5

3/10 | 3/40 | 9/40

4/5 | 44/45 | -56/15 | 32/9

8/9 | 19372/6561 -25360/2187 | 64448/6561 -212/729

1 | 9017/3168 | -355/33 | 46732/5247 | 49/176 | -5103/18656

1 | 35/384 | 0 | 500/1113 | 125/192 | -2187/6784 | 11/84 | 0

b*_i | 35/384 | 0 | 500/1113 | 125/192 | -2187/6784 | 11/84 | 0

b_i | 5179/57600 | 0 | 7571/16695 | 393/640 | -92097/339200 | 187/2100 | 1/40
```

- Uses 6 field evaluations per integration because it provides the derivative at the end point
- RK5(4)7M is the most efficient and stable among algorithms
- Other steppers available:
 - BogackiShampine45 (and 23)
 - Runge-Kutta Felberg (4th order embedded solution)
 - Cash-Karp (4th order)
 - And more

Field Parameters

Tunable Parameters

- Most important accuracy parameter is the maximum relative tolerance ε_{max} for the integration error for a given step s and particle momentum p
 - ε_{max} limits the estimated error for large steps:
 - $|\Delta x| < \varepsilon_{max} \, s$ and
 - $|\Delta p| < \varepsilon_{max} |p|$
- ullet The parameter delta one step (δ_1 -step) is the accuracy for the endpoint of integration steps that do not intersect a volume boundary
 - It also limits the estimated error of the endpoint of each physics step (essentially $< 1000 \, \delta_1$ -step)
 - Values of δ -intersection and δ_1 -step should be within one order of magnitude

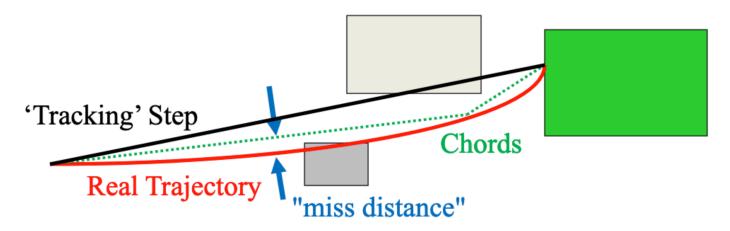
```
// Tunable parameters can be set by, for an example
fChordFinder->SetDeltaChord(miss_distance);

fFieldManager->SetDeltaIntersection(delta_intersection);
fFieldManager->SetDeltaOneStep(delta_one_step);
fFieldManager->SetEpsilonMax(epsilon_max);
fFieldManager->SetEpsilonMin(0.1 * epsilon_min);
```

Further details in Section 4.3 (Electromagnetic Field) of the Geant4 Application Developers Guide

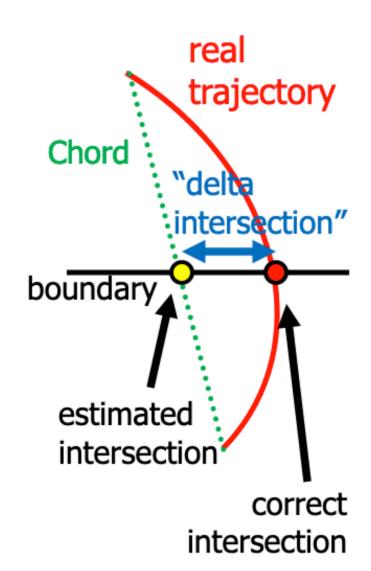
Miss Distance

- Depending on error from integration, Geant4 breaks up curved path into linear chord segments, which approximate the path
- Chords are used to interrogate the G4Navigator to see whether the track has crossed a volume boundary
- One physics/tracking step can create several chords
- User can set the accuracy of the volume intersection by a miss distance which is an indicator of whether or not approximate track intersects a volume
 - CPU performance is sensitive to this value



Delta Intersection

- Parameter δ_{int} is the accuracy to which an intersection with a volume boundary is calculated
- Especially important because it is used to limit a bias that our boundary crossing algorithm exhibits
- Intersection point is always on the "inside" of that curve
- By setting a value for this parameter that is much smaller than some acceptable error, user can limit the effect of the bias
- User can set this parameter to adjust the accuracy and performance of charged particle tracking in a field



Customizing Field Integration

Choosing a Stepper

- Runge-Kutta integrations are used to trace a charged particle in a general field
 - Many steppers to choose from
 - And specialized steppers for pure magnetic fields
- Default: G4DormandPrinceRFK45
 - Embedded 4th-5th order RK stepper (embedded = compares 4th and 5th order to estimate error)
 - If field is very smooth, may consider higher-order steppers
 - Of most interest in large volumes filled with gas or vacuum
- If field calculated from field map, use a lower-order stepper
 - The less smooth the field, the lower-order the stepper
 - Some low-order steppers:
 - G4SimpleHeum (3rd order)
 - G4ImplicitEuler and G4SimpleRunge (2nd order)
 - G4ExplicitEuler (1st order) useful only for very rough fields
 - For intermediate (somewhat smooth fields) choice between 2nd and 3rd order is made by trial and error

Example: Setting Up Your Own Stepper/Driver

```
An example of how to choose a different field stepper and driver
void MyDetectorConstuction::ConstructSDandField()
 // Create a user field or use G4UniformMagneticField(G4ThreeVector(0, 0, Bz))
 G4MagneticField* bField = new MyMagneticField();
 // Create the equation of motion (include G4MagIntegratorDriver.hh)
 auto equation = new G4Mag UsualEgRhs(bField);
 // Create the integration stepper
 auto stepper = new G4DormandPrince745(equation, fNvariables);
 // Create the integration driver, which manages the error control
 auto driver = new G4IntegrationDriver(fMinStep, stepper, fNvariables);
 // Create the chord finder, and set the field manager
 G4FieldManager* fieldManager
   = G4TransportationManager::GetTransportationManager()-> GetFieldManager();
 fieldManager->SetDetectorField(bField);
 fieldManager->SetChordFinder(new G4ChordFinder(driver));
```

 Note: default is fnVariables = 6 (x, y, z, px, py, pz) but can be extended to include time, or polarization (spin) components

Basic and Extended Field Examples

examples/basic

- B2: use G4GlobalMagFieldMessenger to create global, uniform magnetic field
- B5: create a custom magnetic field and assign it to a field

examples/extended

- field01: exploration of integration methods
- field02: combined E+B (electric and magnetic field)
- field03: define a local field in a logical volume
- field04: overlapping field elements (magnetic, electric or both)
- field05: tracking of polarization and spin-frozen condition
- field06: tracking ultra-cold neutrons in a gravitational field
- BlineTracer: trace and visualize magnetic field lines

Summary

- Geant4 supports general user interfaces for field implementation
 - G4MagneticField::GetFieldValue()
 - G4VDetectorConstruction::ConstructSDandField()
- Runge-Kutta (RK) integration is used to track a charged particle in any magnetic, electric, combined EM, gravitational or mixed field
 - Many general steppers are available/applicable for any equation/field
- Default in Geant4 is the general-purpose G4DormandPrince745
 which is a 5th order RK stepper with a 4th order embedded solution
- Different types of integration methods are available and Geant4 produces interfaces to control field parameters for accuracy and performance tunings and to customize user field integration