

Progress on 4D Tracking R&D in ATLAS experiment

Hongtao Yang (USTC) on behalf of all the contributors

2026年超级陶粲装置研讨会

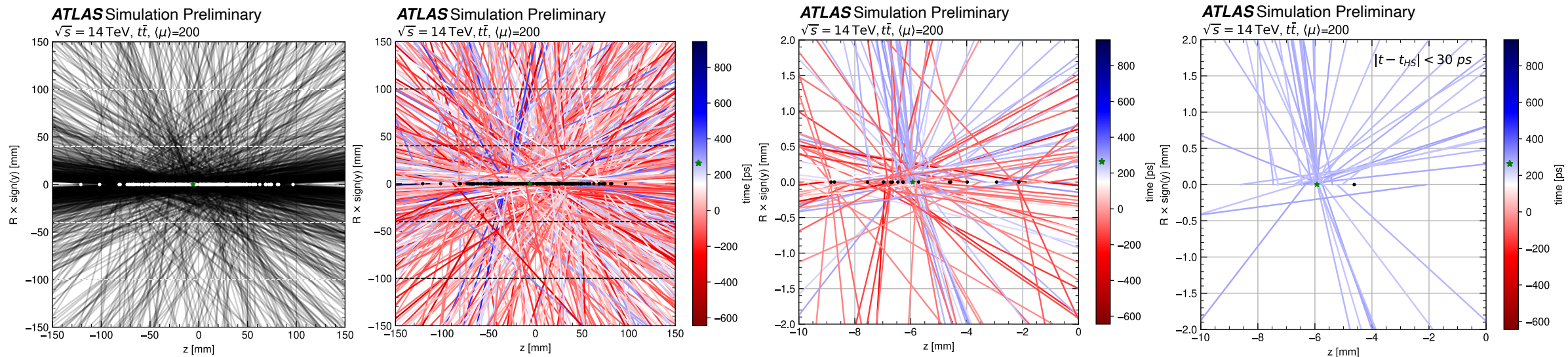
July 3, 2026

Introduction

Chance of future 4D tracking for ATLAS ITk

➤ Motivation – LHC upgraded to HL-LHC

Luminosity up to $7.5 \times 10^{34} \text{ cm}^{-2} \text{ s}^{-1}$, pile-ups up to **200**



Longitudinal view of a simulated $t\bar{t}$ event with $\langle \mu \rangle = 200$ in ATLAS ITk

No time information

Add time information

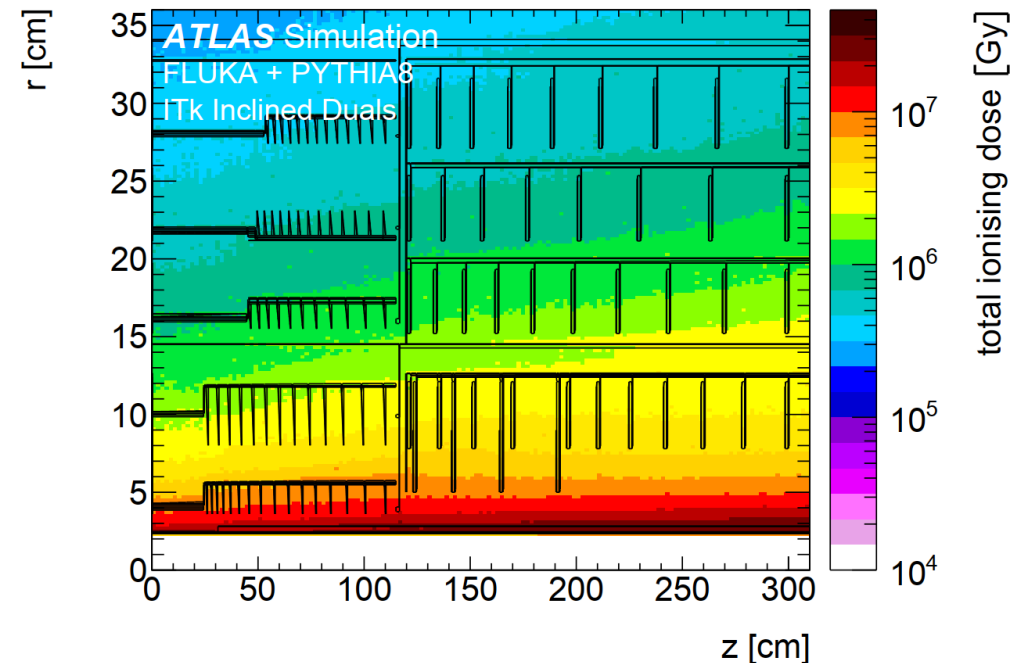
Zoom in space

Separation by time

Introduction

Chance of future 4D tracking for ATLAS ITk

- ATLAS ITk Pixel only has traditional 3D tracking and vertexing capability
 - ❑ The two innermost layers of the ATLAS ITk Pixel detector are designed for a maximum luminosity of **2000 fb⁻¹**
 - ❑ ATLAS High Granularity Timing Detector (HGTD) also provides timing, but only 1 year in endcap out of ITk volume
- Replacement of ITk Pixel inner layers ATLAS in the middle of HL-LHC operation provides a chance to implement **4D tracking & vertexing**
- This talk reports the latest progress of **4D tracking algorithm and detector R&D**



The total ionizing dose distributions for the ITk Pixel Detector.
<5 MGy in 4000 fb⁻¹ for unreplaceable part
up to 10 MGy for 2000 fb⁻¹ for Layer 0

4D tracking with ACTS

Introduction to Software

- **ACTS** (A Common Tracking Software) is an general toolkit for charged particle track reconstruction in particle physics experiments

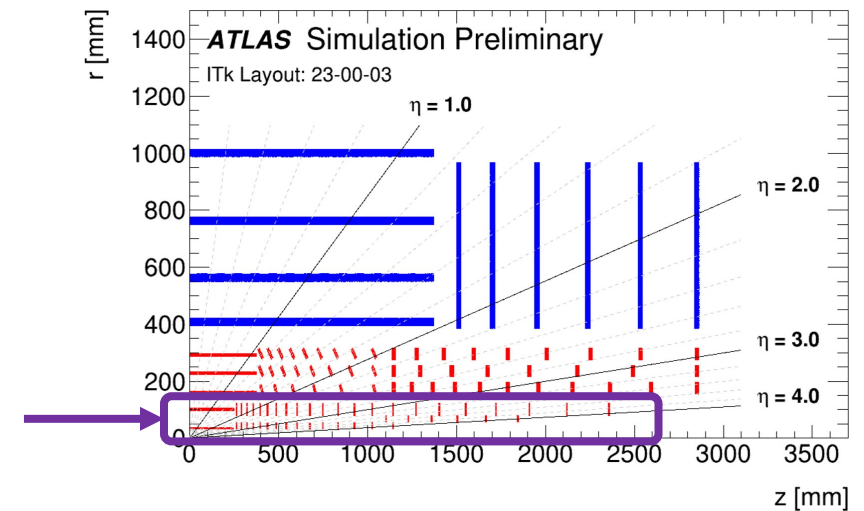
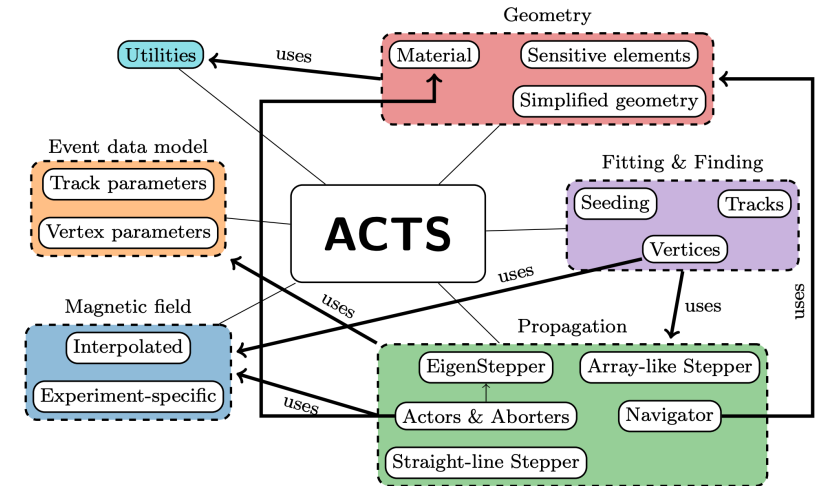
➤ A track in ACTS is described by $\vec{x} =$

$$\left(l_0, l_1, \phi, \theta, \frac{q}{p}, t\right) : \text{time is naturally included}$$

- Smear truth hit information in the ITk innermost 2-layer pixel region with gauss distribution

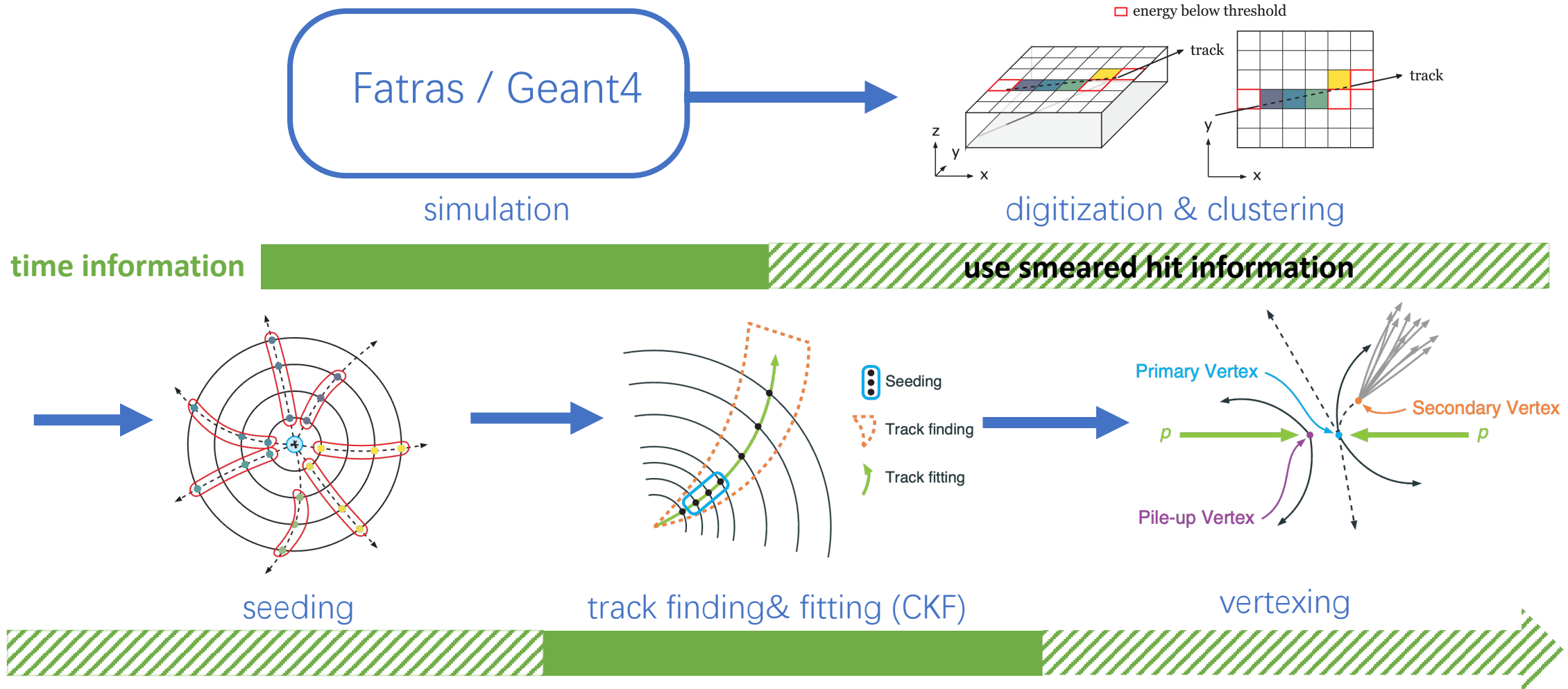
$$\sigma(t) = 50 \text{ ps}$$

as a rough estimation of hardware performance

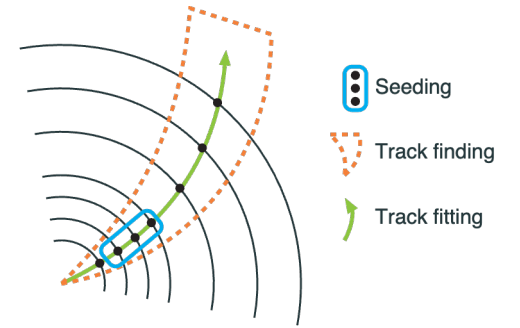


Full chain workflow in ACTS

with time algorithm
propagate time information



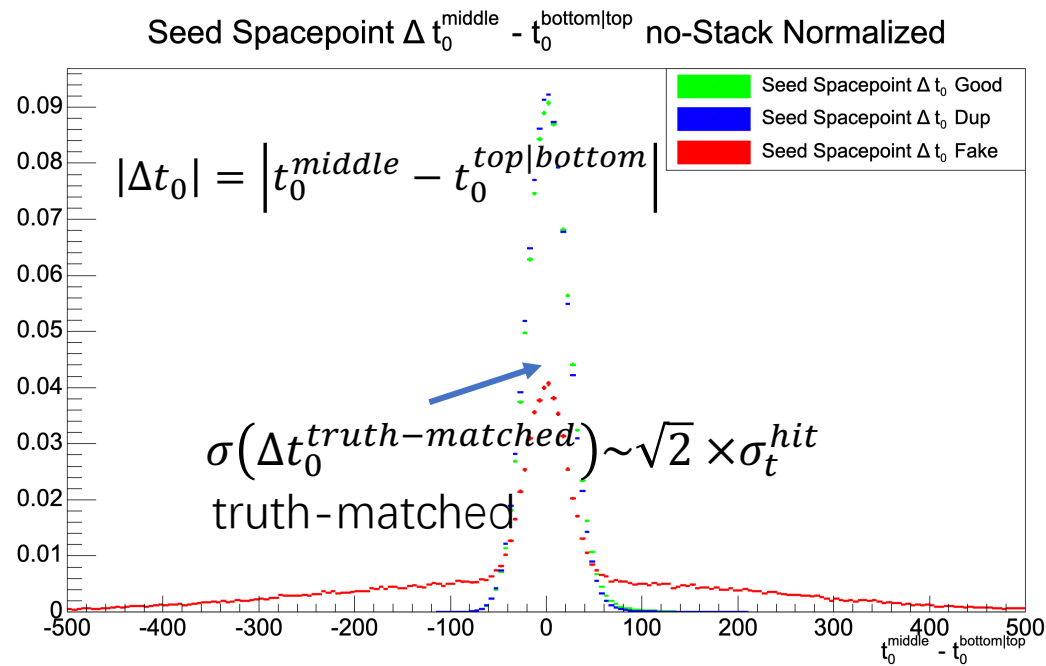
4D seeding algorithm



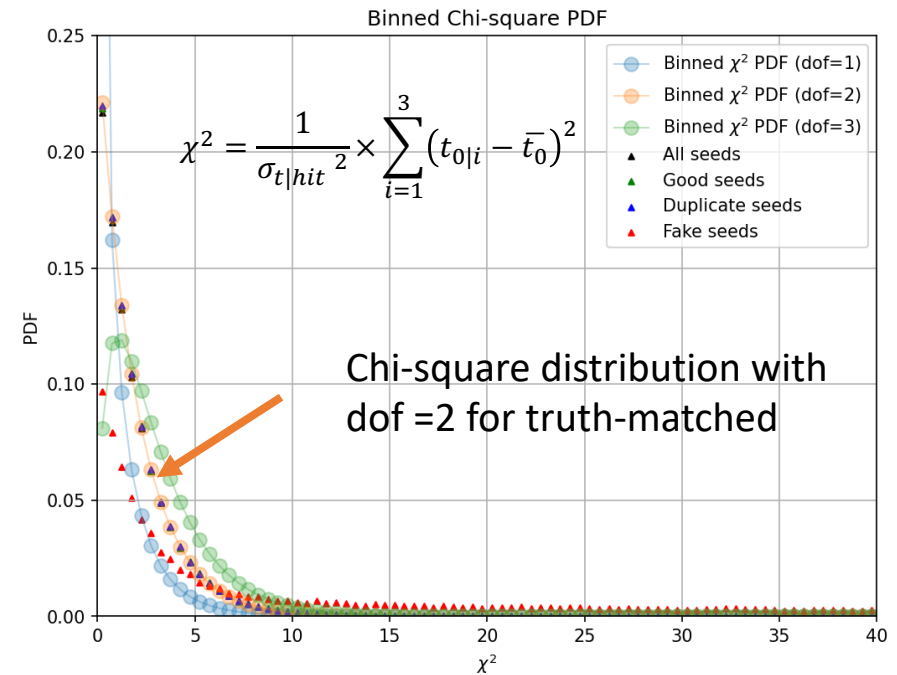
- Variable t_0 for spacepoint

$$t_0 = t_{arrival} - \frac{1}{c} \cdot \sqrt{x^2 + y^2 + z^2} = t_{arrival} - t_{fly}$$

- A gauss filter for **doublets** & a chi-square filter for **triplets**

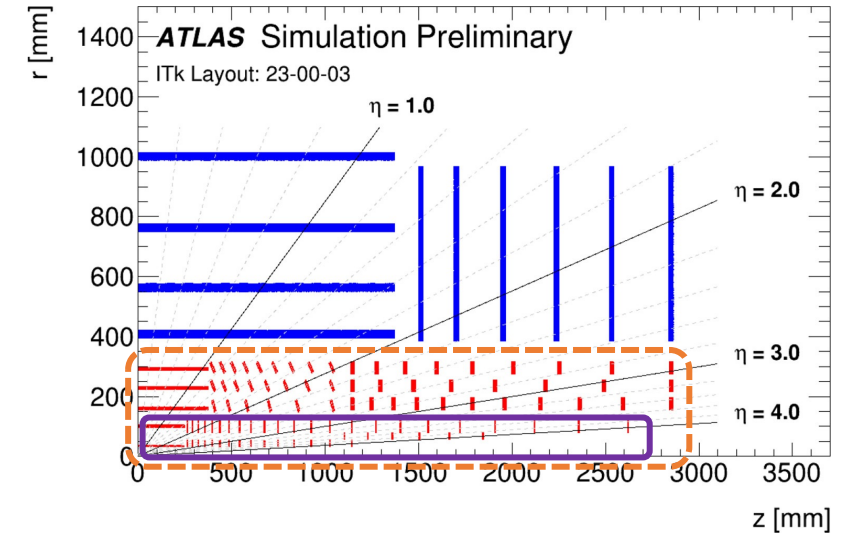
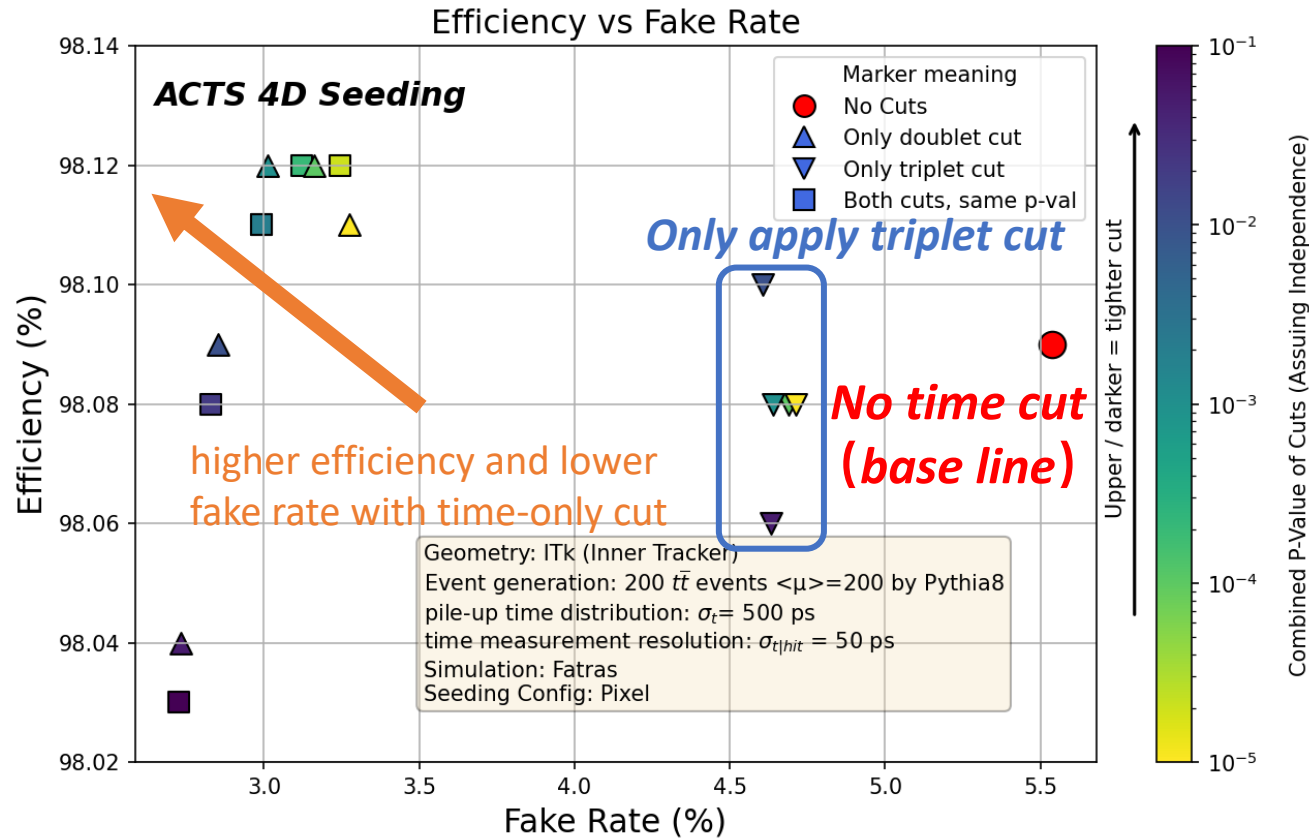


Doublet - Normalized distribution of Δt_0



Triplet - Normalized distribution of χ^2

4D seeding performance

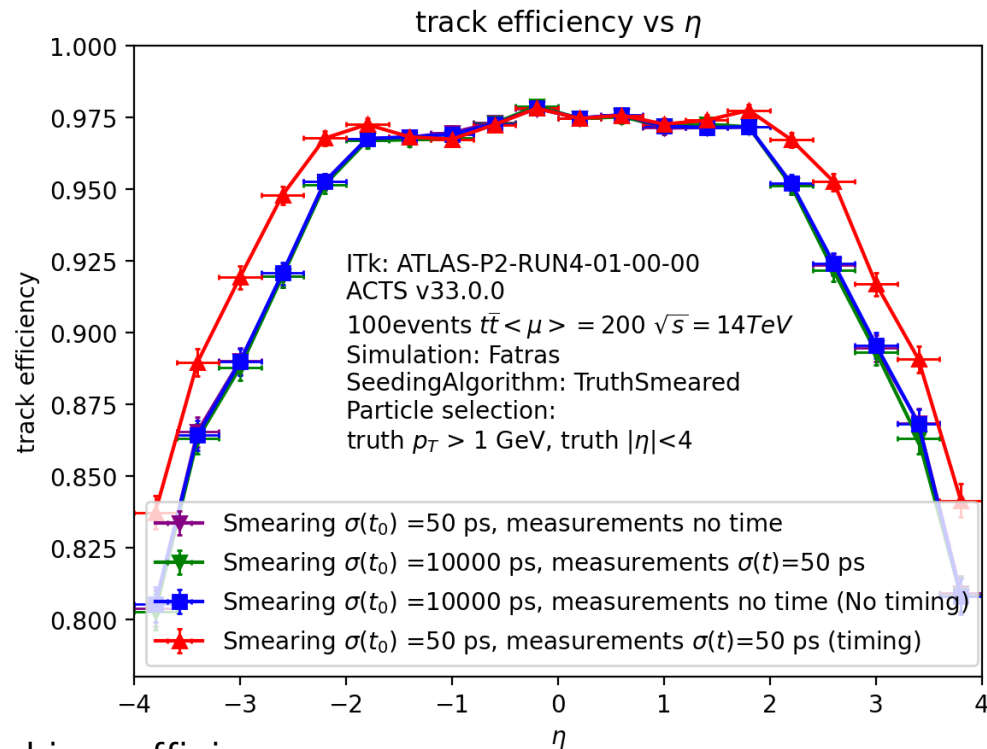


- Using **pixel (5 layers)** spacepoint seeding
- Adding time for innermost **2** layers

p-value: corresponding to the probability of excluding a truth-matched seed by cut

Doublet-cut seems more effective on this condition

4D tracking performance



Combinatorial Kalman Filter $\vec{x} = \left(l_0, l_1, \phi, \theta, \frac{q}{p}, t \right)$

$$\vec{x}_k = \vec{x}_k^{k-1} + K_k(\vec{m}_k - H_k \vec{x}_k^{k-1})$$

- Add time for both **initial track parameters** and **measurements** of innermost 2-layer pixel
- Event generation: **$t\bar{t}$ events** $\langle \mu \rangle = 200$ with Pythia 8
- **Fatras** simulation & **Truth-Smeared** seeding

RED (4D tracking): CKF initial track parameters and measurements have time information

BLUE (3D tracking): no time information for CKF initial track parameters and measurements

Tracking efficiency

93.72% (no timing) to 94.87%↑ (50 ps timing)

93.71% (only “measured” time for initial track parameters)

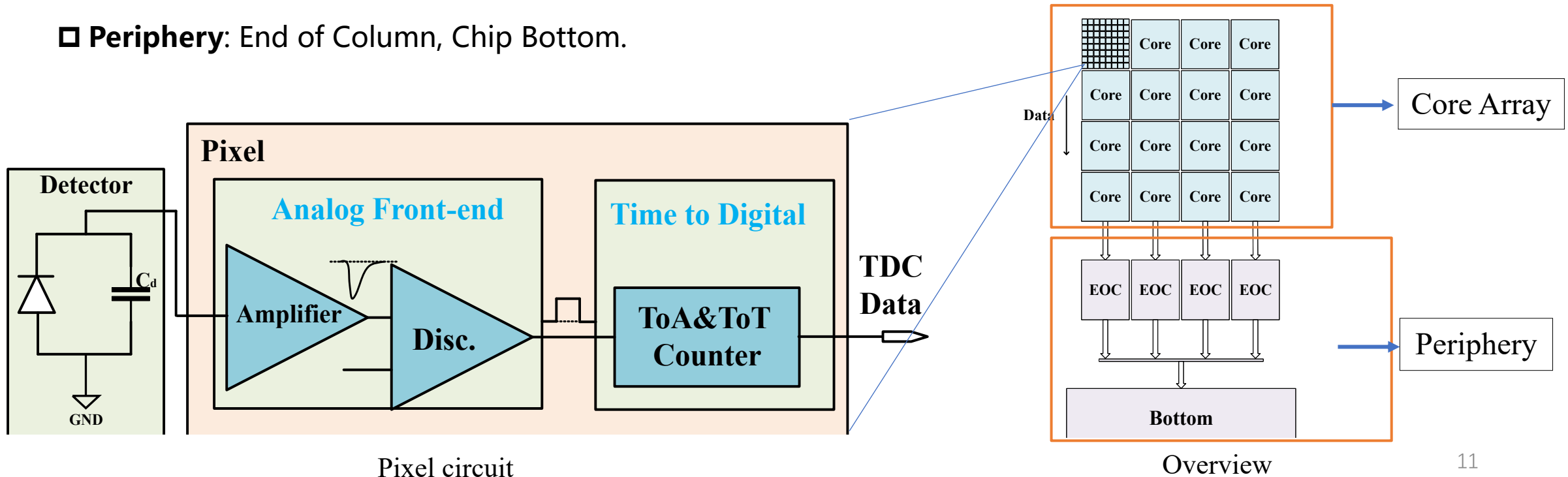
93.63%↓ (only time for measurements)

Timing Pixel ASIC design

Overview

➤ Modules for the Readout ASIC:

- ❑ **Pixel:** Amplifier, Discriminator, Time-to-digital converter, $200\text{ }\mu\text{m} \times 200\text{ }\mu\text{m}$
- ❑ **Cores Array:** 1 core includes 8×8 pixels, same as ITKPix. 8 pixels are in one **region**.
- ❑ **Periphery:** End of Column, Chip Bottom.



Pixel: Analog Front-end

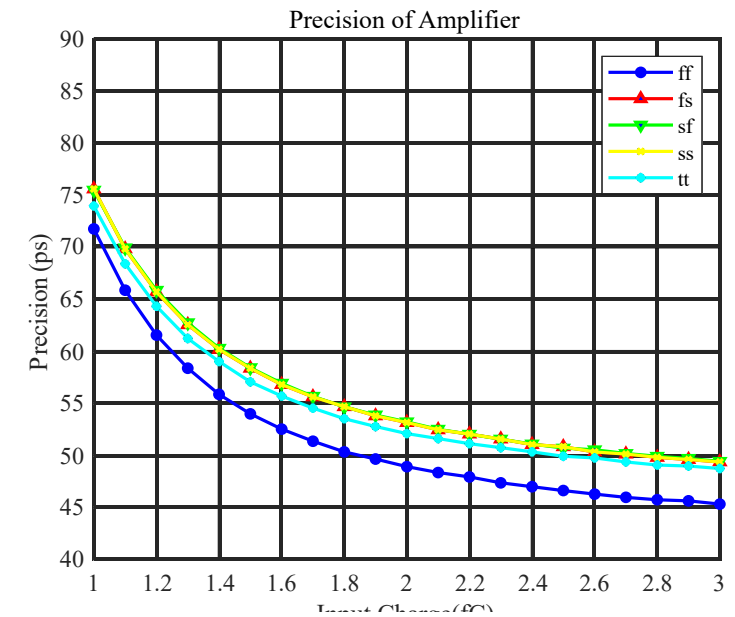
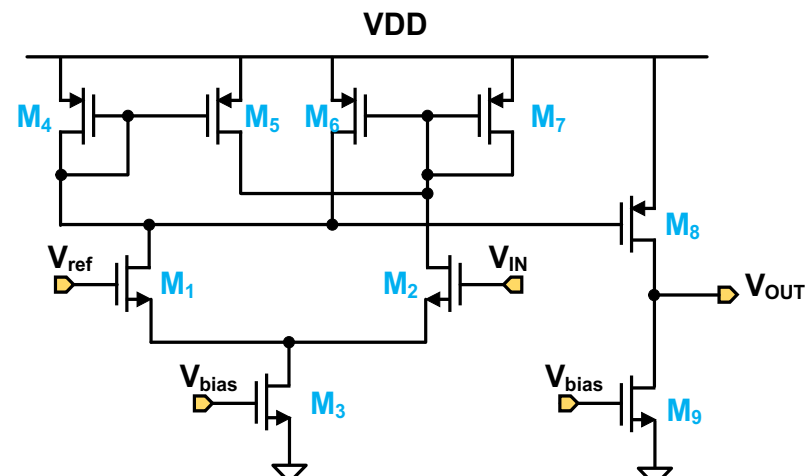
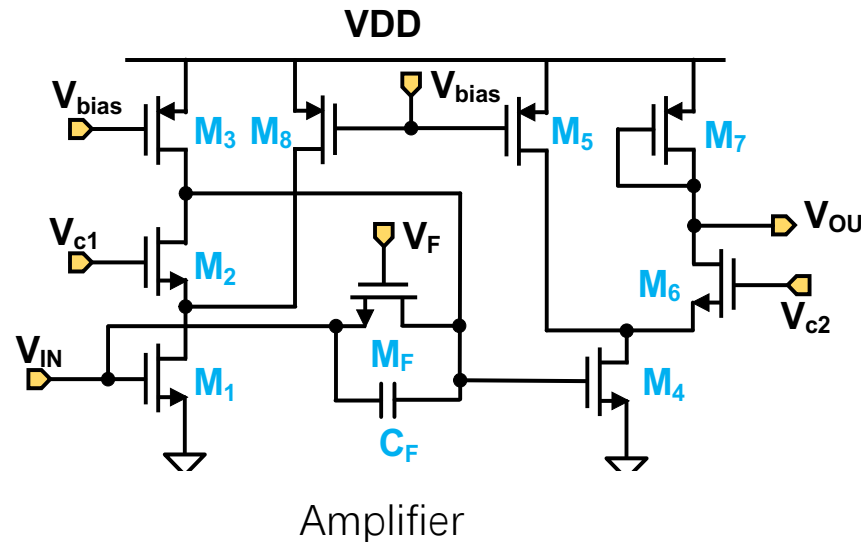
➤ Two-stage Amplifier:

- ❑ Charge sensitive amplifier: folded cascade + Voltage Amp.

➤ Two-stage Discriminator:

- ❑ Differential driver: positive feedback
- ❑ Common source driver: saving power

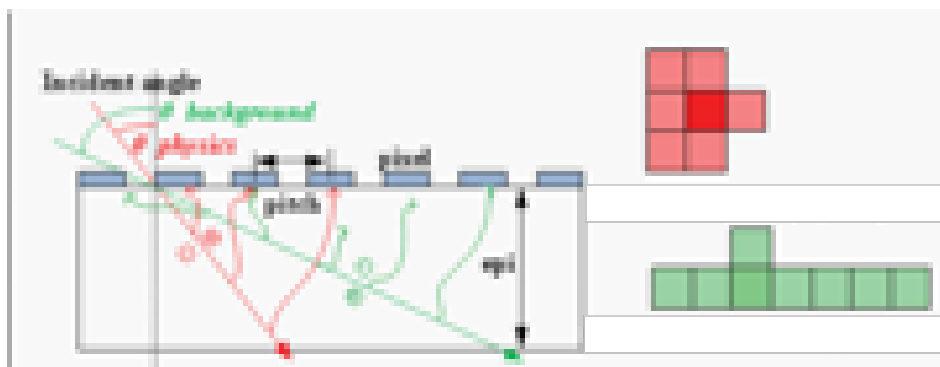
➤ 3D sensor@3fC



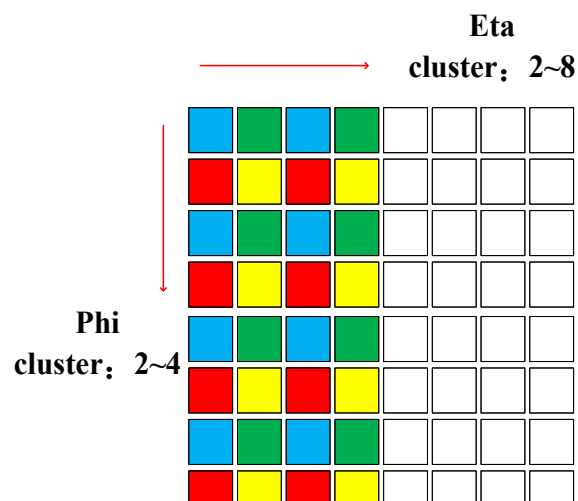
Precisions of Amp. + Discr.
(130nm)

Core

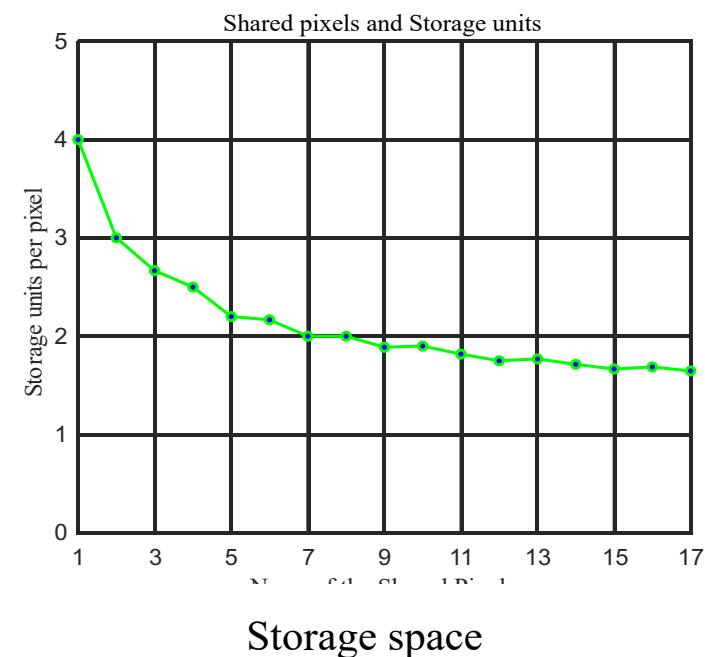
- Shared memory structure:
 - ❑ Reduce the storage space due to the sparse hits
- Considerations:
 - ❑ All pixels shared need to be independent.
 - ❑ The cluster size effect is universal in the detector.
- Eliminating the cluster effect:
 - ❑ Using a specific map to share the pixels



The cluster size



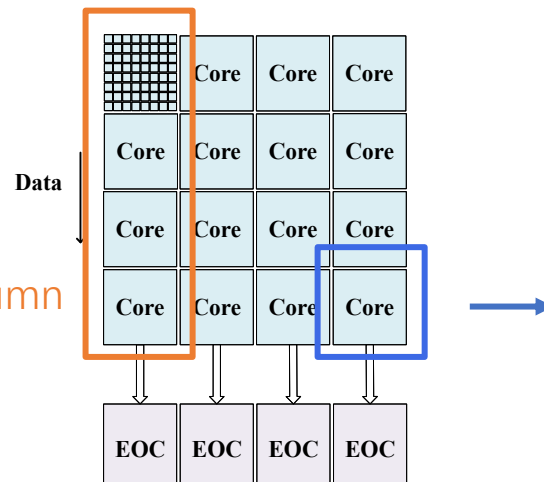
Shared map



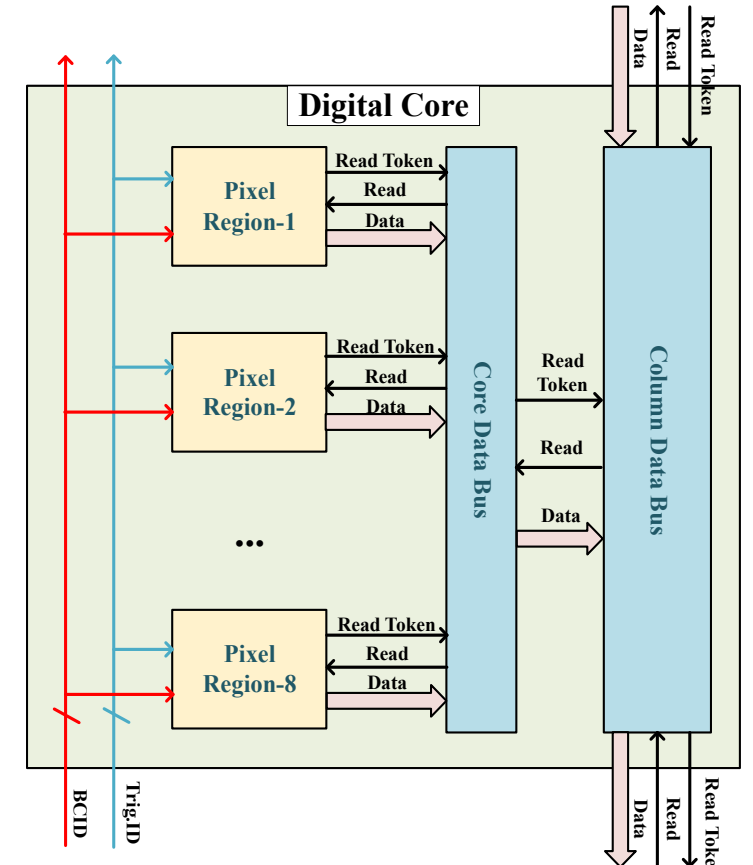
Core

- Core design:
 - ❑ 8×8 pixels, core is same as others and they are connected as a chain
 - ❑ Receiving and buffering data from TDC
 - ❑ complete the trigger matching
- Shared memory structure:
 - ❑ 8 pixels shared in one **region**
 - ❑ One core consists of 8 regions
- Readout:
 - ❑ Priority readout
 - ❑ Core column readout to the End of column

Core Column



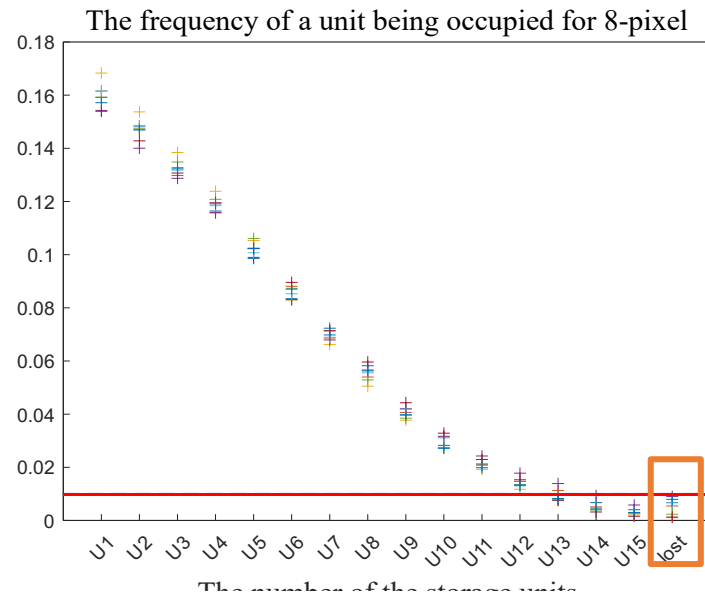
Core array



Core design

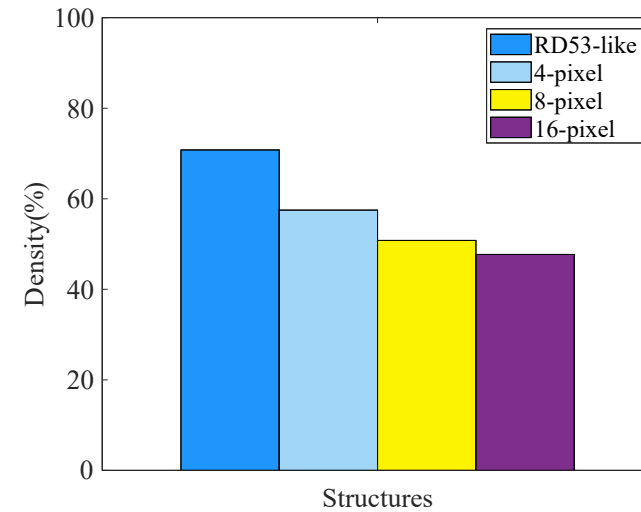
Simulation

- The simulation results (in 130 nm)
 - ❑ Holding the corresponding data rate (~75 kHz/pixel)
 - ❑ Lower power, Lower density.
 - ❑ Shared memory could reduce power and area obviously.

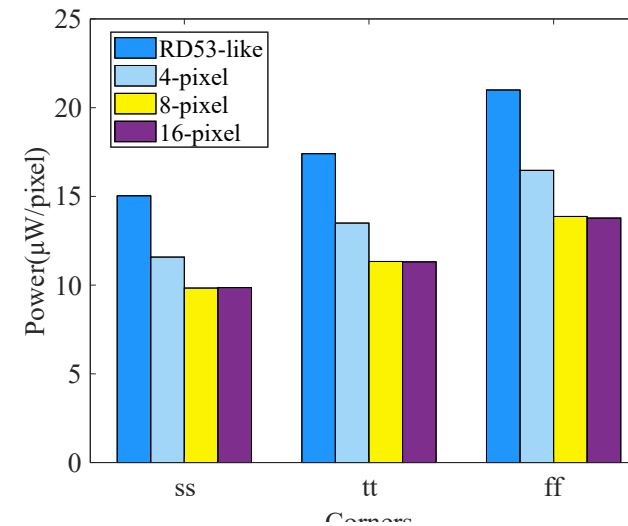


The performance of shared memory (eg.8-pixel)

Lost rate lower than the red line (1%)



The area comparison for the layout

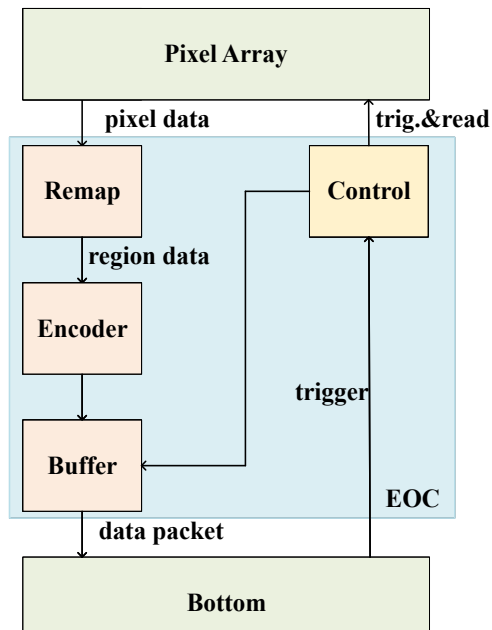


The power comparison for the layout

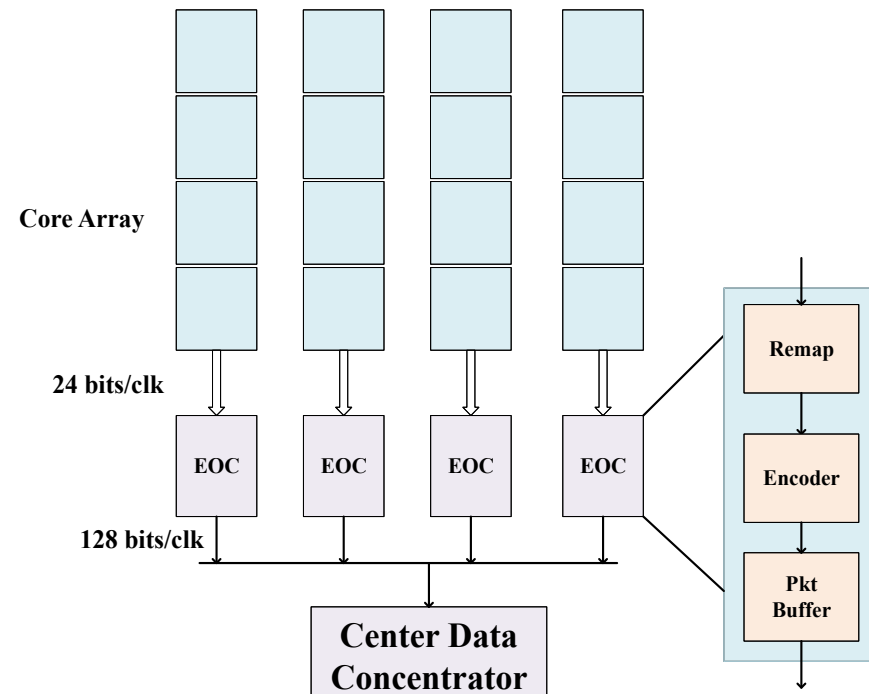
Periphery

➤ Modules for the Periphery:

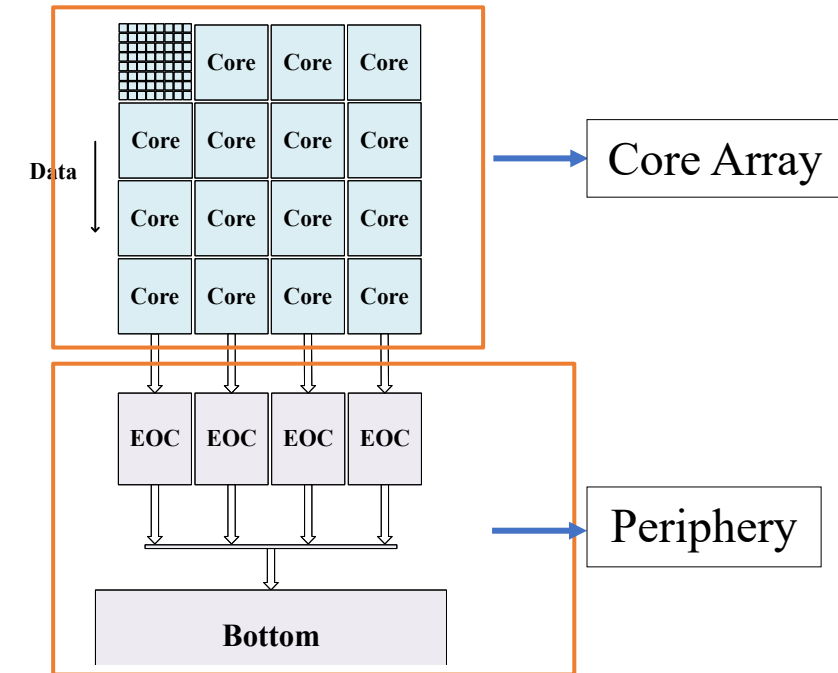
- ❑ **End of Column:** packaging and encoding and compressing the data.
- ❑ **Chip Bottom:** concentrating the chip data and control the trigger.



EOC design



Data flow



Overview

End of Column

End of Column:

- controlling the readout of core column, and packaging the hit data

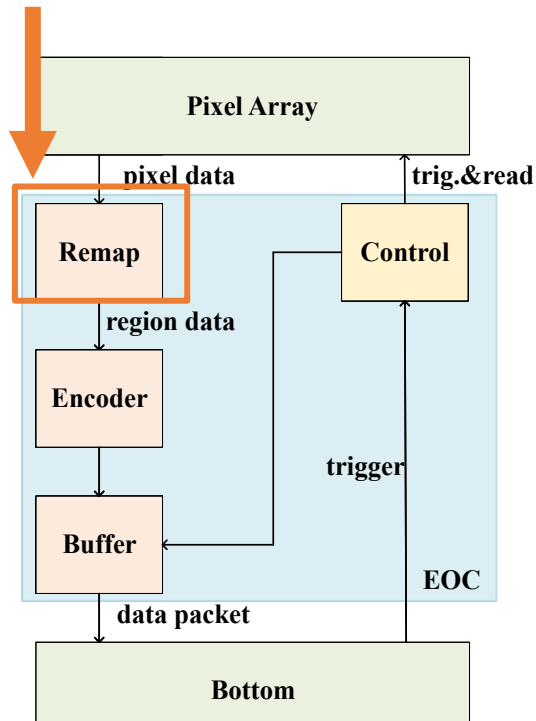
Shared memory:

- **Disrupt** the order of reading data from the core.
- Breaking up the concentration of clusters. Making data more dispersed which is **not conducive** to data compression

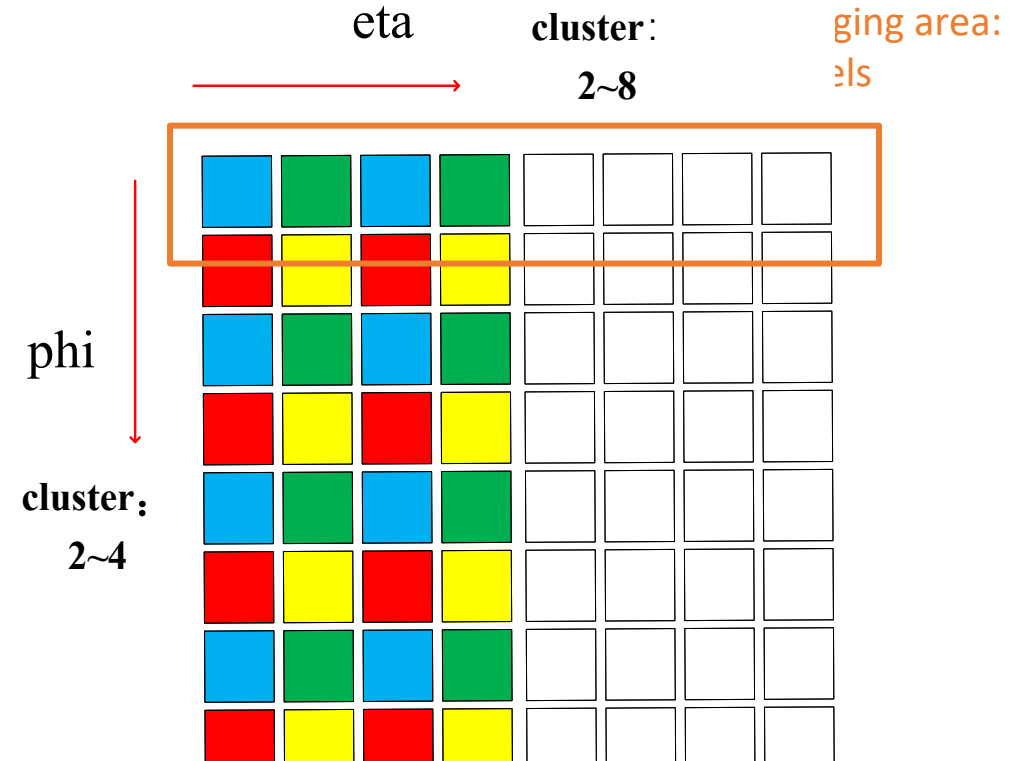
Remap module:

- **Reorganizing** the hit as the packaging area.
- The packaging area use the cluster effect to concentrate the data.

Remap data to make it more concentrated

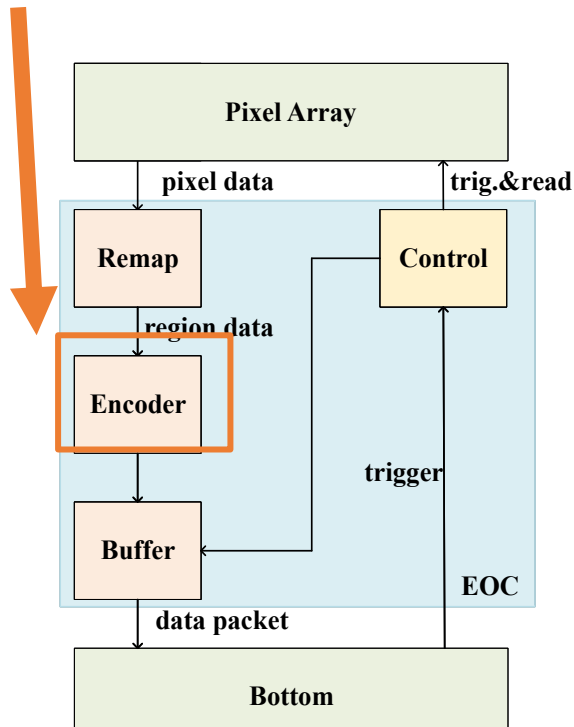


EOC design



End of Column

Hoffman coding to compress



EOC design

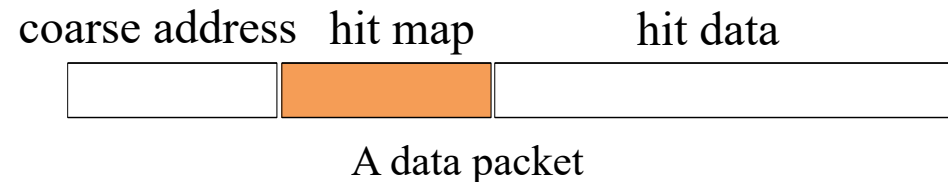
Packaging data: coarse address + hit map + hit data

Encoder:

- Based on the frequency distribution of hit-map in simulation data, use Huffman encoding to compress the hit-map

Encoding schemes:

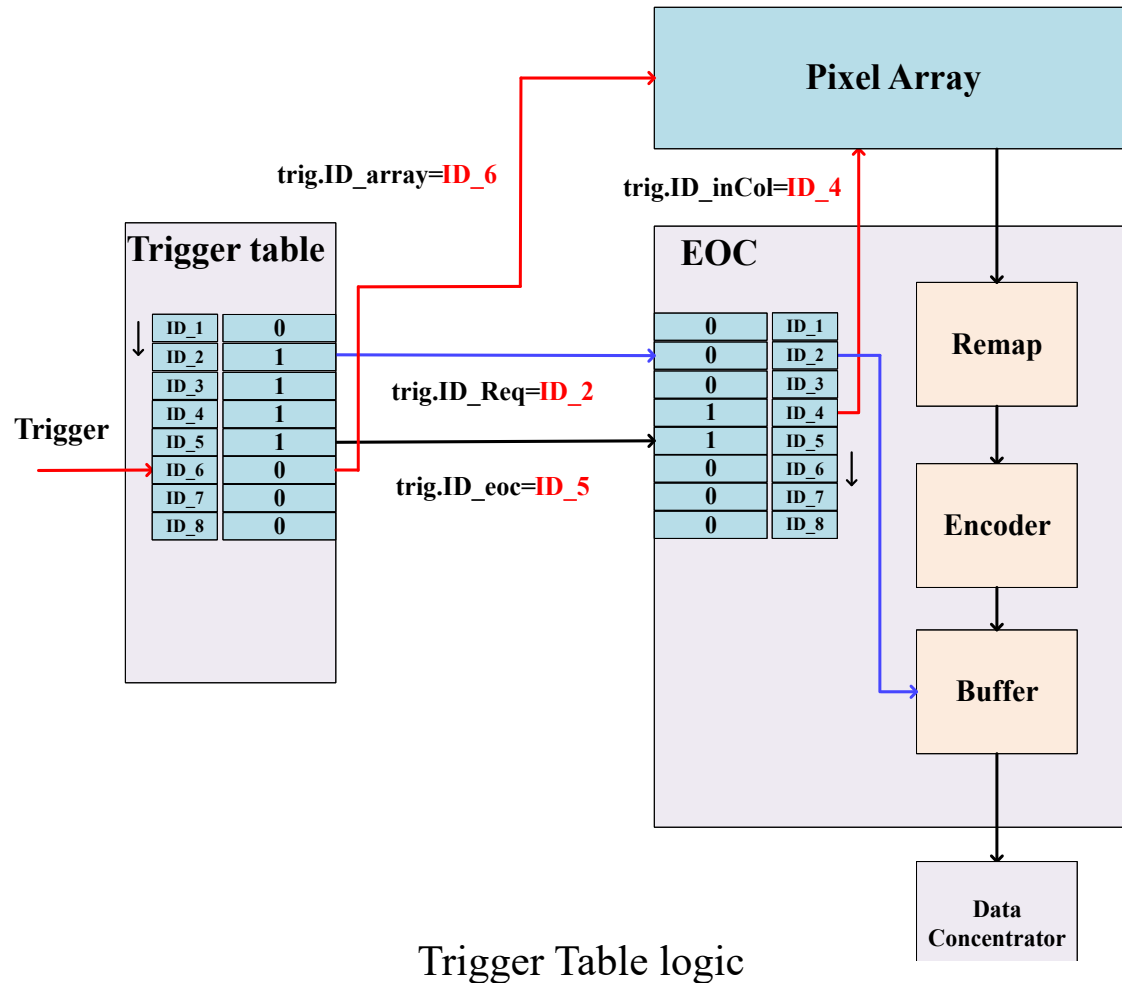
- Comparing several compression schemes to get the best
- Compression efficiency:
packaging + Huffman → ~73% (27% reduced)



Encoding of hit map		Entropy
Bitmask		8
Binary-tree		7.79
Independent address		11.20
Multi-stages Hoffman	4-6-14	7.17
	3-6-14	7.84
	6-14	6.34

Encoding schemes

Bottom



➤ Functions for the Bottom:

- ❑ **Trigger table:** manage the trigger and generate the trigger ID to control the readout.
- ❑ **Data concentration:** concentrating the chip data.

Summary

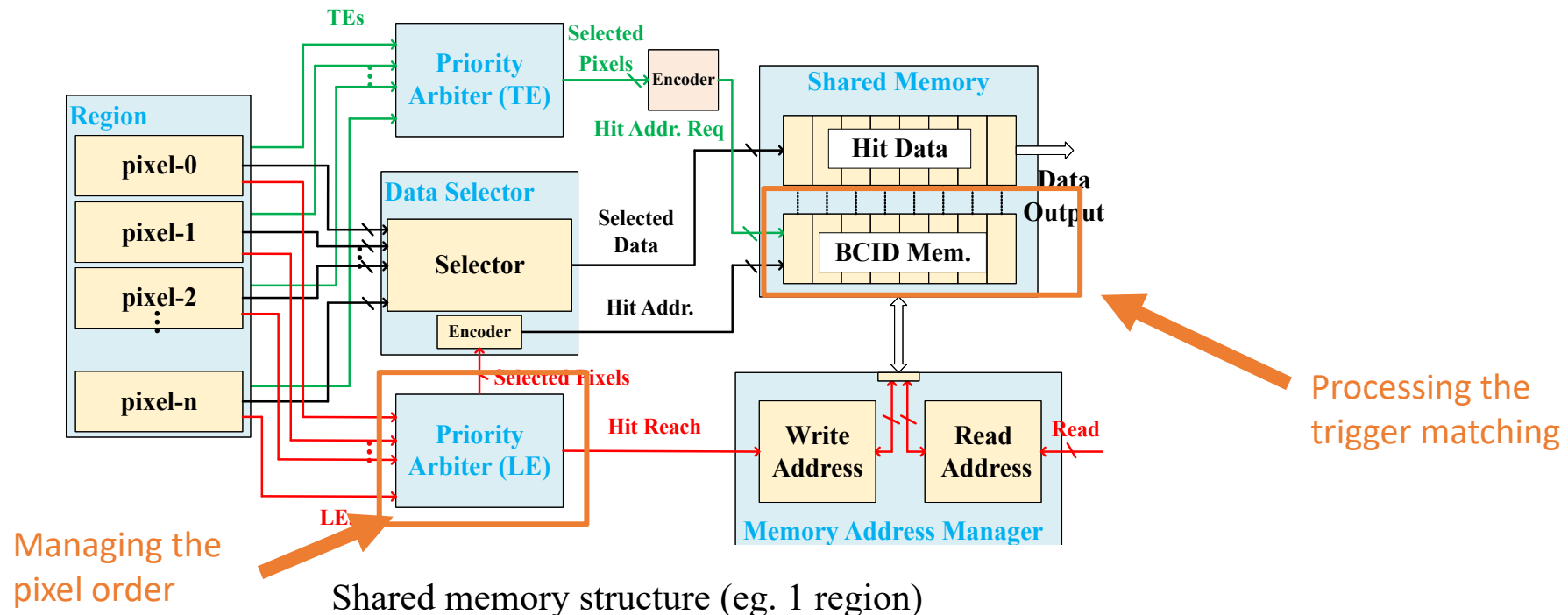
- Full 4D tracking workflow implemented in ACTS as well as ATLAS Software Framework
 - Next step is to carry out physics case study: b-tagging, HH search
- Timing Pixel ASIC design in good progress
 - First 130 nm prototype ASIC expected to be fabricated this year
 - 3D sensor R&D has started

Thank you for your attention!

Backup

Region

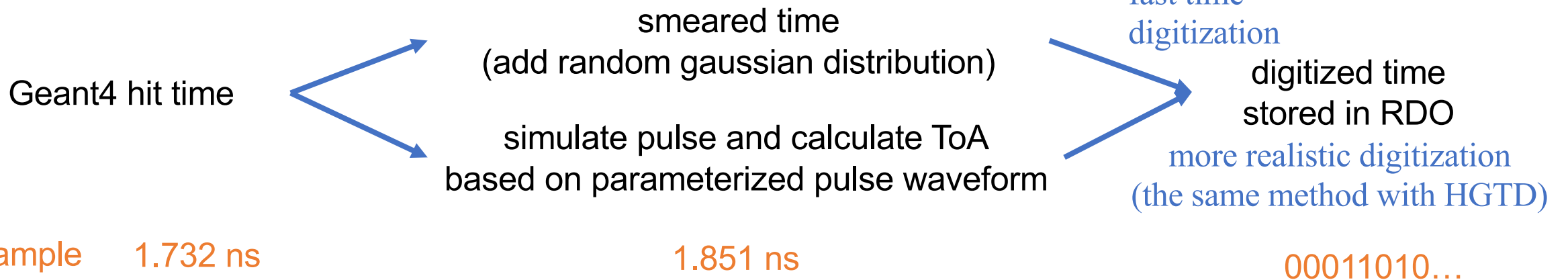
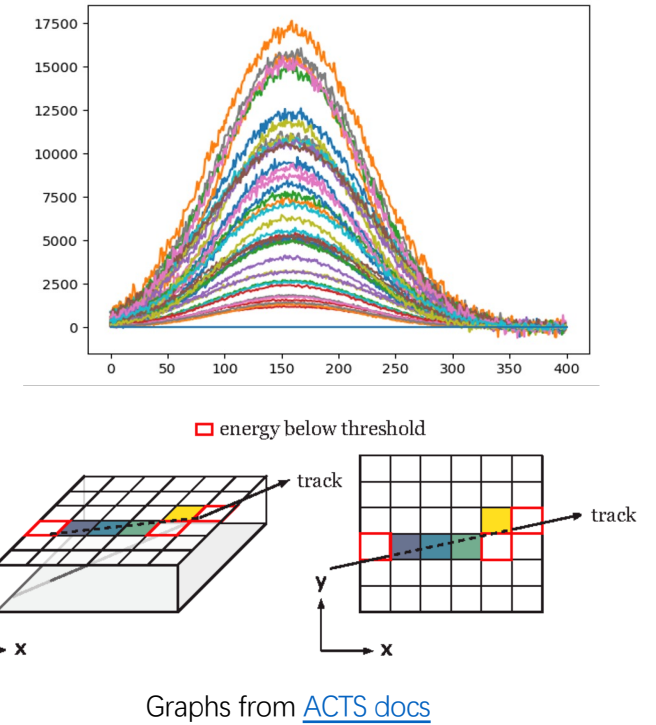
- Functions:
 - ▣ Storing the time stamp (BCID) and TDC data, doing the trigger matching.
- Two **priority arbiters** for Leading Edges and Trailing Edges:
 - ▣ Manage the address of memory.
- Every cell in shared memory needs a FSM to process **trigger matching**.



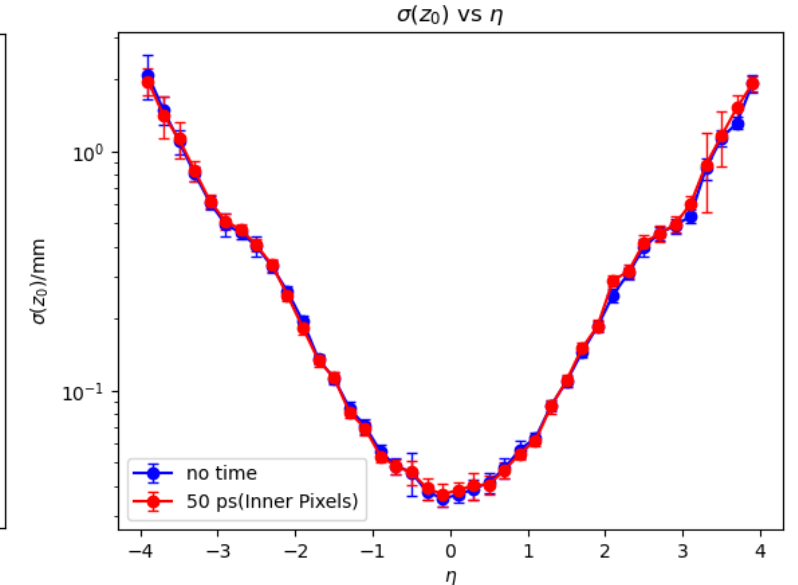
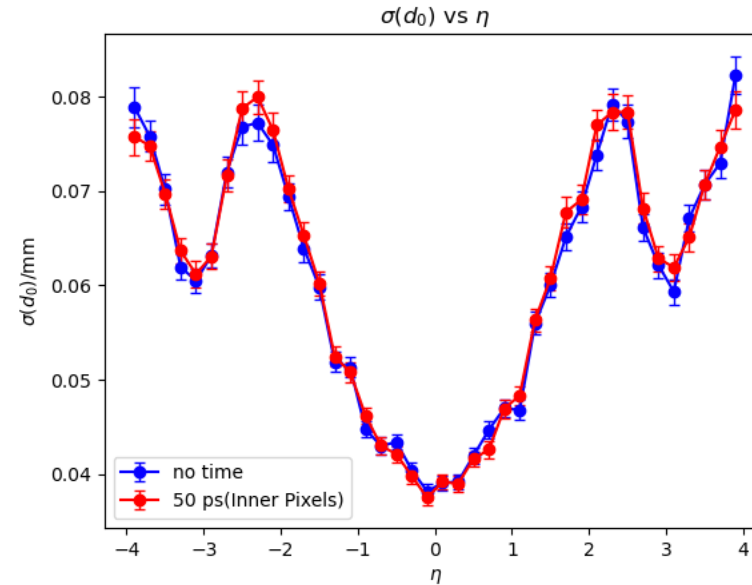
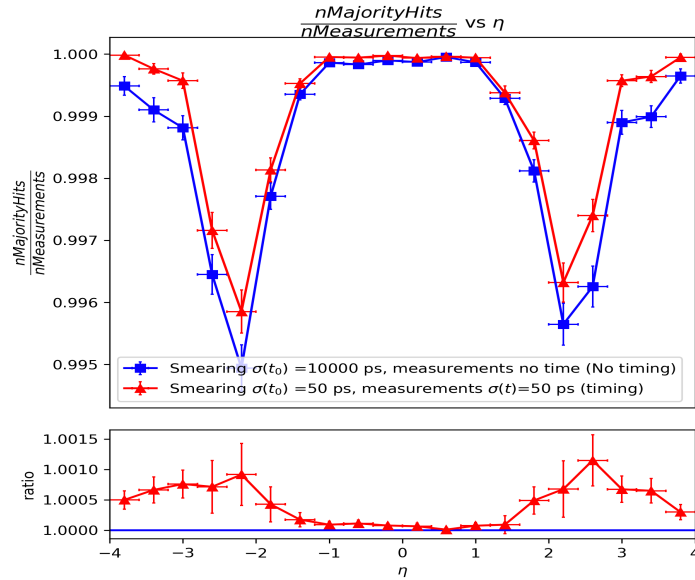
Timing pixel digitization in Athena

➤ Digitization

- simulate detector response from hit simulation inform
- HIT (Geant4 simulation) -> RDO (Raw data output)
- (position, charge...) -> (identifier/position of cells, ToT, ToA)

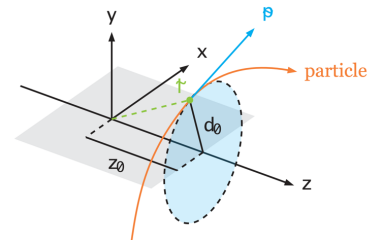


Purity and track-only impact parameter resolution

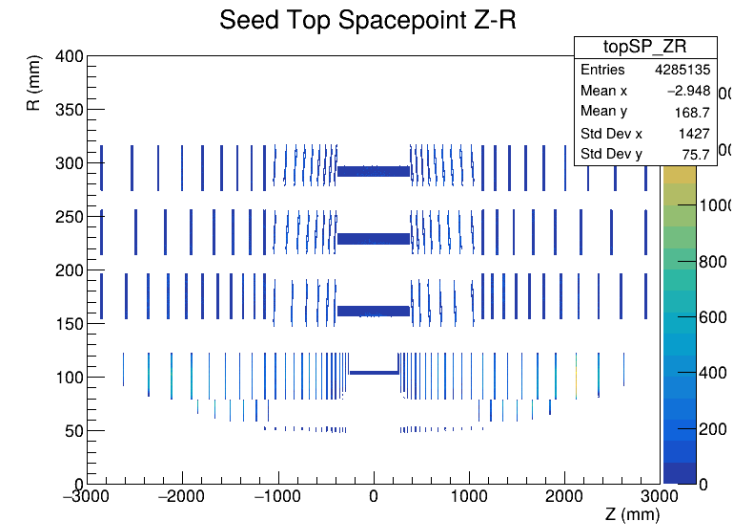
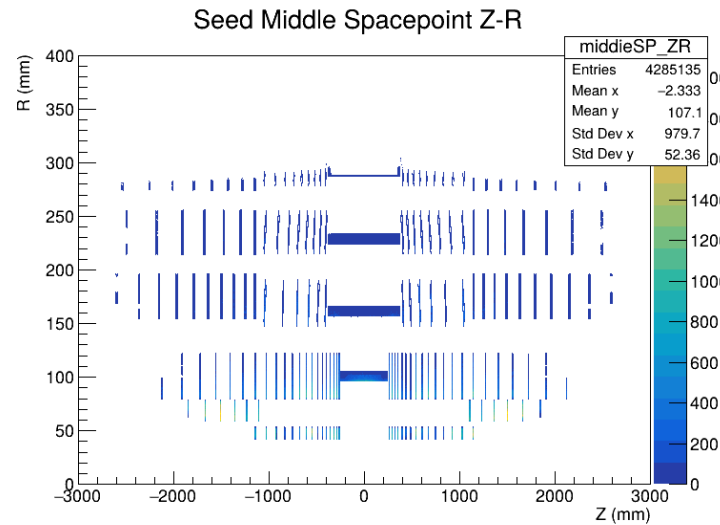
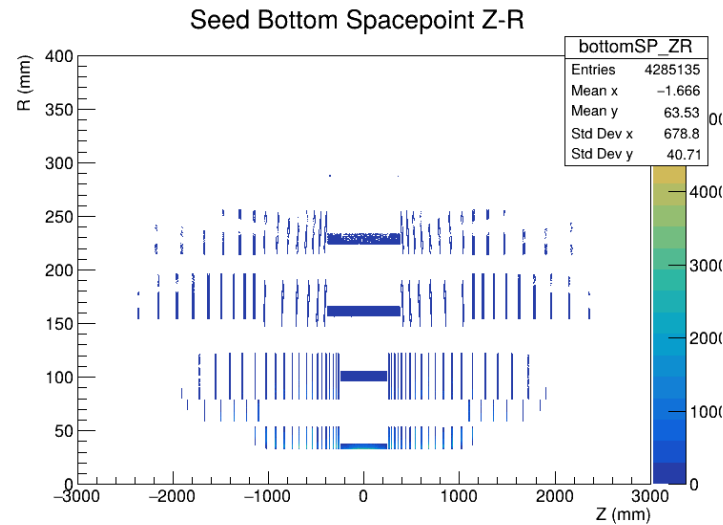


$$\frac{nMajorityHits}{nMeasurements} = \frac{\# \text{ hits that belongs to the particle with the highest fraction of hits on the track}}{\# \text{ total measuremts on a track}}$$

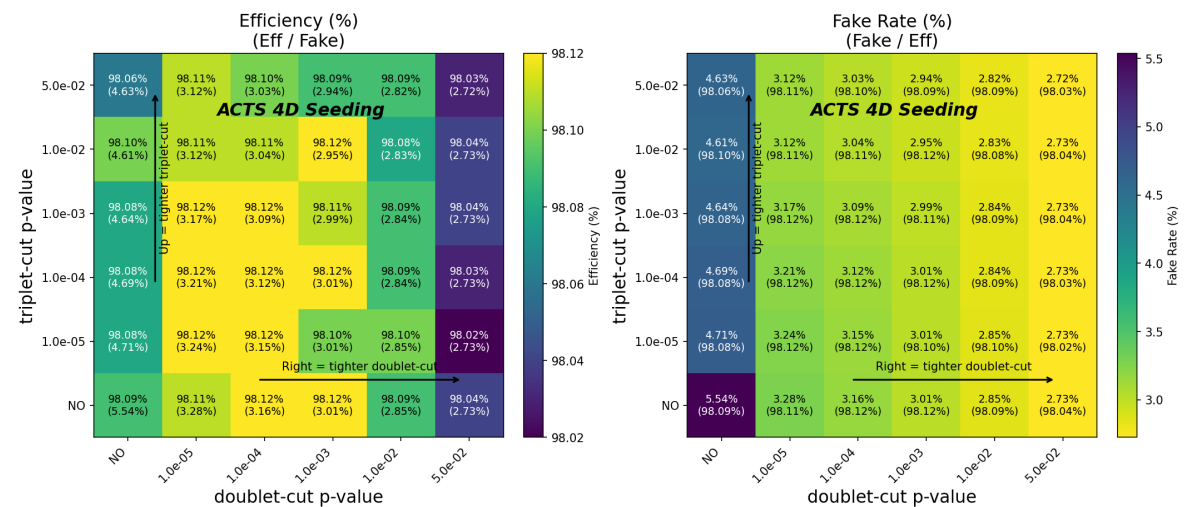
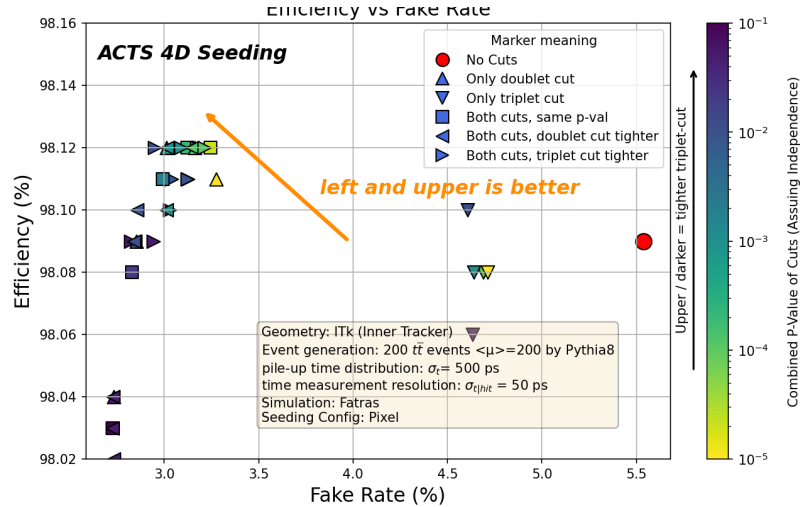
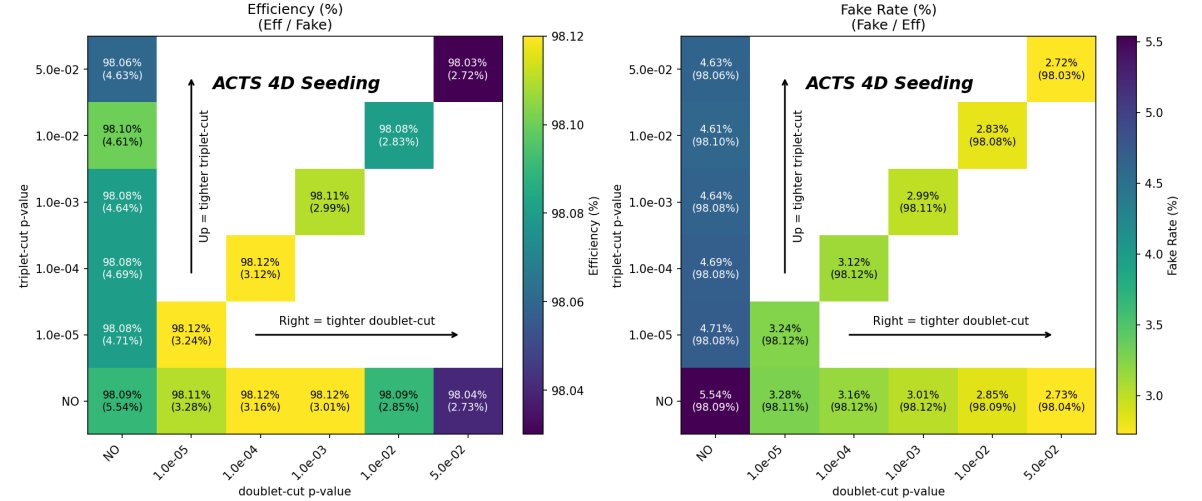
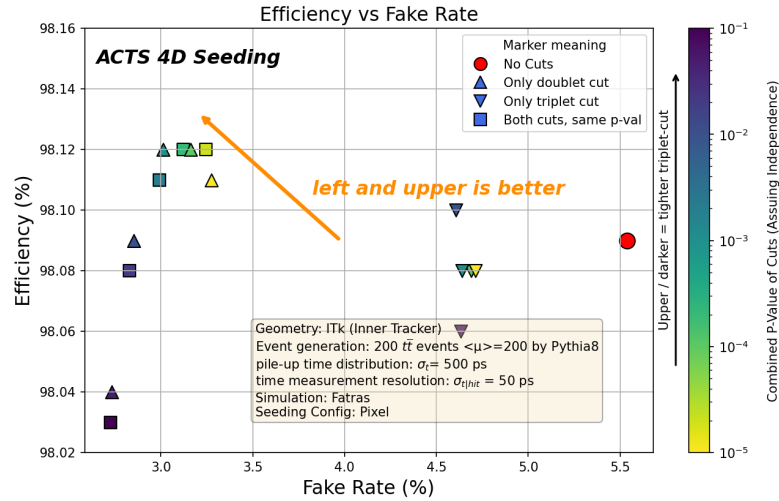
No significant change on the resolution of impact parameters d_0/z_0



ITk spacepoint distribution



4D seeding performance with ITk



Huffman coding

Sort	Hit-map (bitmask)	Frequency	"6-14" mode bits
1	10101010	6.966%	6
2	01010101	6.418%	6
3	01000000	6.183%	6
4	00000010	5.784%	6
5	00000011	5.175%	6
6	11000000	4.533%	6
7	00000001	3.960%	6
...	...	...	
64	11101010	0.173%	6+8
65	11110100	0.173%	6+8
66	00110101	0.150%	6+8
...	...	...	

Huffman Encoding schemes (eg. 6-14 mode):

- For the first 63 high-frequency hit-maps: use 6 bits to encode.
- Since 6 bits correspond to 64 combinations, the last combination will be used as the header for other 193 hit-maps.
- For the other 193 hit-maps: 6 bits header + the original bitmask hit-map (8 bits)

Encoding of hit map		Entropy
Bitmask		8
Binary-tree		7.79
Independent address		11.20
Multi-stages Hoffman	4-6-14	7.17
	3-6-14	7.84
	6-14	6.34

Encoding schemes

Bitmask: 1 bit for 1 pixel,
1 for hit and 0 for not