HPC in Earthquake Simulation

The Evolution of Earthquake Simulation: From HPC Foundations to Al Frontiers Niccolò Brembilla April 22, 2025

Why Simulate Earthquakes?









CRUCIAL FOR UNDERSTANDING SEISMIC HAZARDS AND DISASTER MITIGATION. EARLY METHODS LIMITED BY COMPUTATIONAL POWER -> ACCURACY ISSUES. HIGH-PERFORMANCE COMPUTING (HPC) REVOLUTIONIZED THE FIELD. TODAY: INTEGRATING HPC WITH ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI).

The Early Years (1990s): Overcoming Constraints

Challenges

Solutions

Severe computational limits restricted model complexity (3D basins)

Complex geology (Unstructured meshes)

Adoption of parallel computing

Development of toolsets (e.g., Archimedes) for parallel FEM on unstructured meshes

Archimedes









Scaling Up (2010s): HPC & Integrated Simulation (IES)

- Emergence of Integrated Earthquake Simulation (IES)
 - Hazard
 - Disaster
 - Response/Anti-Disaster
- Huge computational demand (Urban areas, Billions DOF).
- Integration of real-world data (GIS).





model details

Scaling Up (2010s): HPC & Integrated Simulation (IES)

- HPC essential for IES feasibility, enabling:
 - Larger Scale & Higher Fidelity.
 - Simulation Acceleration.
- Results:
 - Detailed spatial maps
 - Identification of hazard/damage hotspots.





Tackling Uncertainty with High-Fidelity Models

- Challenge: Significant uncertainties (source, geology, structures).
- HPC enables Uncertainty Quantification (UQ) via large-scale ensemble simulations.





CAD polygon surfaces representing each building of a target city



Extraction of position and attribute data from land lot maps relating to official building registry



P Nearest neighbor

3.

Success in matching Matching of CAD polygon surfaces and attribute data



Automatically generated heterogeneous structure datasets of a target city



Structure models for urban earthquake simulation



5.



Conversion of CAD polygon surfaces to 3D shapes with topological information making use of template fitting methodology



Schematic of template fitting



Evaluation of the relative difference between polygons

Tackling Uncertainty with High-Fidelity Models

- Addressing geological complexity: Incorporating heterogeneity (e.g., random fields).
- Requires advanced HPC simulation frameworks (e.g., SEM3D - Spectral Element Method code with excellent scalability).
- Need for improved model validation against observations.







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The AI Revolution (2020s-Present): Data & Adaptation

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AI for Real-Time Integration



AI/ML excels at pattern recognition in large, complex datasets.



Processing diverse, real-time data streams: Seismic networks, GNSS, InSAR, IoT.



Adaptive Simulation: Using real-time data to update models dynamically.



Potential for improved accuracy and reduced latency in predictions.



The AI Revolution: Efficiency & Complexity

- Models are too complex: AI for Dimensionality Reduction:
 - PCA
 - 3D UNet Autoencoders.
- Enables more efficient UQ and potentially faster surrogate models.



Persistent Challenges & Future Directions

- Current Problems:
 - High computational cost:
 - High frequencies (>10 Hz), and large scales are still demanding.
 - Data Fidelity & Integration:
 - Better, more complete input models are needed.
 - Uncertainty Management:
 - Robust characterization and propagation.
- Future:
 - Hybrid AI-HPC
 - Multi-scale modeling
 - Predictive analytics.



Our Journey Ends Here ... for Now

 From Code to Impact Simulation tech is saving lives.
HPC + AI = Power & Precision Together, they break old limits.
The Future Quakes Smarter We're not done, just getting started.