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Title: Remote operation of the vertical plasma stabilization @ the Golem tokamak for the plasma physics education

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Keywords: Tokamak technology; remote participation; plasma stabilization; education; nuclear fusion.

Corresponding Author: Mr. Vojtech Svoboda,

Corresponding Author's Institution:

First Author: Vojtech Svoboda

Order of Authors: Vojtech Svoboda; Jindrich Kocman; Ondrej Grover; Jaroslav Krbec; Jan Stockel

Abstract: The GOLEM tokamak at the Czech Technical University has been established as an educational tokamak device for domestic and foreign students. Remote participation in the scope of several laboratory practices, plasma physics schools and workshops has been successfully performed from abroad. A new enhancement allowing remote control of vertical plasma position in two modes i) predefined and ii) feedback control are presented. It allows to drive the current in the stabilization coils in any time-dependent scenario, which can include as a parameter the actual plasma position measured by magnetic diagnostics. Arbitrary movement of the plasma column in a vertical direction, stabilization of the plasma column in the centre of the tokamak vessel as well as prolongation/shortening of plasma life according to the remotely defined request are demonstrated.

Dear colleagues,

On behalf of the co-authors, I would like to submit revised version of the manuscript "Remote operation of the vertical plasma stabilization @ the Golem tokamak for the plasma physics education" for publication in the Fusion Engineering and Design within the SOFT 2014 conference Special Edition.

Sincerely,

Vojtech Svoboda
Dept. of Physics
FNSPE Czech Technical University in Prague
Czech Republic
svoboda@fjfi.cvut.cz

Response to Reviewers

* Reviewer #1:

We really thank to referee for extremely valuable comments to the manuscript.

* This paper deserves a cleaner writing, associating the expressed ideas in an organized way; in fact the paper mix in various sections pedagogy with technical matters. I strong recommend to organize the full structure of the paper in a better way by creating a specific section on the academic use of the framework, one for describing the software (or the framework as a whole) and another for the vertical plasma control.

~ We have adopted the suggestion and reorganized the article with the aim to better distinguish academic and technological part.
See the whole structure of the paper.

* Moreover it is not very clear what is the aim of the paper, from the conclusions it look like that the aim was to achieve a good control but from the intro it is expected a framework description for educational goals. In my view the later are off-topic and should be state only on a specific sub-section (probably in the introduction).

~ The primary aim of the presented work is to introduce the new level of the remote tokamak GOLEM control on the vertical plasma position. We believe that the introduction as well as conclusion state it. Nevertheless we have completely reorganized the intro part of the paper and modified a bit the conclusion as well to better stress the main purpose of the idea.

* Regarding the control it must be stated why the focus is on the vertical position when (i) horizontal one is much more relevant for long plasma operation and (ii) why not to invest on the toroidal field stabilization; as a matter of fact the plasma is created in a relative low toroidal field (~30% top current). I recommend that sub-section 1.1 should be a promoted to an entire section bringing up such discussion.

~ We are pretty well conscious about the importance of the horizontal control, but the main purpose of the paper is to introduce the idea to remotely control the stabilization itself on the educationally accepted level, so we have demonstrated the strategy on the simplest possible example - vertical type of stabilization reflecting our step by step approach to the overall solution of this problem with respecting the fact that the system is developed by the student of the master degree in the frame of his diploma thesis. The horizontal version is a bit complicated matter being implemented into the overall plasma stabilization system nowadays.
We have stressed it in the introduction as well as in the conclusion.

* Although the camera evidence is clear, figure 3 will benefit if sin/cos rogowsky coils signals or integrated Mirnov signals corroborate quantitatively the results.

~ We have added the requested signal into the Fig. 3.

* On fig 1 the term "current drive" express other means to generate plasma current than ohmic, I suggest to use "Primary current".

~ Adopted

I recommend using the term "research" or "studying" instead of "investigation" as the latter refers more to enquire.

~ Adopted

* The last but not the least I did not find any evidence on the paper supporting the term "Advance" in the title, from previous reported results from CASTOR, this paper do not present any breakthrough from previous experiments. To be fair, the author should include some references to previous works on CASTOR providing such evidence.

Maybe the title "Remote operation of the Golem tokamak with improved vertical stabilization" suits better?

~ We have accepted that the title should be more concrete and the word "Advance" should be avoided, so we came to a new version of the title such as "Remote operation of the vertical plasma stabilization @ the Golem tokamak for the plasma physics education" which we believe better expresses the main idea.

Now we have indicated in the paper that the old CASTOR plasma position system was obsolete, that it was necessary to completely reconstruct it

* Reviewer #2:

We really thank to referee for his opinion and mistake notification.

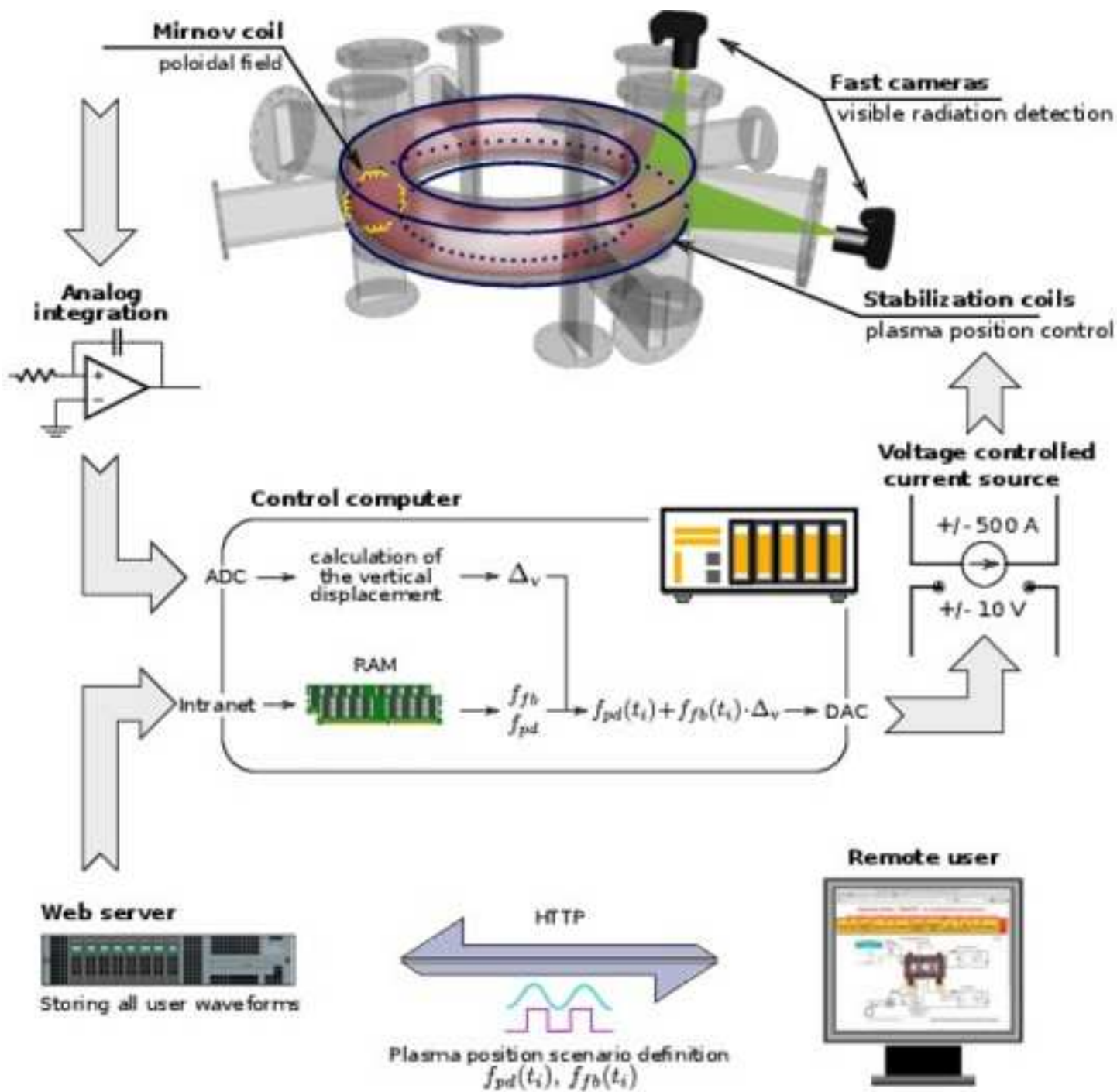
The article, from my point of view, is very well and its contribution is very important for learning in the today world of plasma physics in tokamaks. We are in a stage of plasma physics and controlled thermonuclear fusion process in which it is difficult for students to have direct access to the machines. The author has published articles on the tokamak Golem in its various aspects. This article refers to the control of plasma position, seems that there is an evolution in the various items that forms the control and operation of a tokamak. By this I believe it is very relevant the work that is being developed in the Golem tokamak.

The article has a formula that needs to be corrected:

- Page 2, column 2, line 52 (third line from bottom to top)

Where is written $\text{sgn}(\sin[2\pi t/4])$ I think it should be $\text{sgn}(\sin[2\pi t/0.004])$

~ This mistake have been corrected in the paper.



Highlights

Understandable remote operation of a vertical plasma position control system in the tokamak GOLEM for educational purposes.

Remote operation of the vertical plasma stabilization @ the Golem tokamak for the plasma physics education

V. Svoboda^a, J. Kocman^a, O. Grover^a, J. Krbec^{a,b}, J. Stöckel^{a,b}

^aFaculty of Nuclear Sciences and Physical Engineering CTU Prague, CZ-115 19, Czech Rep.

^bInstitute of Plasma Physics AS CR, CZ-182 21 Prague, Czech Republic.

Abstract

The GOLEM tokamak at the Czech Technical University has been established as an educational tokamak device for domestic and foreign students. Remote participation in the scope of several laboratory practices, plasma physics schools and workshops has been successfully performed from abroad. A new enhancement allowing understandable remote control of vertical plasma position in two modes i) predefined and ii) feedback control is presented. It allows to drive the current in the stabilization coils in any time-dependent scenario, which can include as a parameter the actual plasma position measured by magnetic diagnostics. Arbitrary movement of the plasma column in a vertical direction, stabilization of the plasma column in the center of the tokamak vessel as well as prolongation/shortening of plasma life according to the remotely defined request are demonstrated.

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1. Introduction

High quality education and training in the field of thermonuclear fusion are called for in the Roadmap towards a modern European Fusion Research Program as the demand for a new generation of high temperature plasma physicists and technologists strongly increases. Numerous specialized university curricula, training courses and plasma physics schools are organized in the frame of Fusion Education Network consortium Fusenet [3]. These educational activities suffer from not having appropriate "hands on" laboratory experiments, where the basics of high temperature plasma physics and technology can be demonstrated, trained and practice, since the relevant laboratory devices are extremely complex, sophisticated and expensive. Thus there is an obvious need to create shared and centralized experiments where students can participate both "on site" as well as remotely.

1.1. The Tokamak GOLEM for fusion education

The GOLEM tokamak (re-installed version of the CASTOR tokamak) at the Czech Technical University in Prague (major radius $R = 0.4$ m, plasma radius $a = 85$ mm) operates currently at a modest range of parameters, $B_t < 0.5$ T, $I_p < 8$ kA, pulse duration ~ 15 ms and with a limited set of diagnostics. A well executed discharge scenario (see Fig 1) starts the toroidal magnetic field B_t at the time $t_{Bstart} = 5$ ms after the Data Acquisition System initiation $t_{DAS} = 0$ and the electric field (primary current field serving as a breakdown field as well) is triggered at $t_{CD} = 7$ ms and within this configuration breakdown into plasma occurs at $t_{PIBr} \sim 8.2$ ms.

After a complete reconstruction of its infrastructure the tokamak became an educational device making tokamak operation accessible to students worldwide via a web application, see [5].

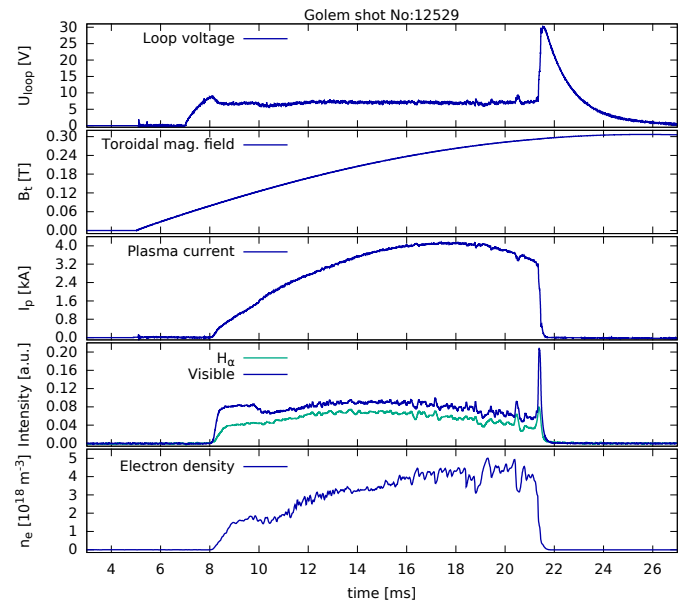


Figure 1: Evolution of a well executed GOLEM discharge. From top to bottom - the loop voltage U_{loop} , toroidal magnetic field B_t , plasma current I_p , the signal of photo-diode with H_α interference filter and electron density n_e .

The device has been used as an educational tool to numerous training courses, plasma physics workshops, demonstrations and remote laboratory experiments. More than 1000 remote discharges from foreign sites have already been successfully performed in the frame of FUSENET since the beginning of operation in 2009. The GOLEM tokamak offers its remote functionality to foreign universities and tutors of high temperature plasma physics and technology are welcome to contact authors to establish cooperation and explore its educational potential

in the frame of various laboratory practices, training courses, plasma physics schools or lecture demonstrations.

1.2. Remote operation - basic level

The basic level of remote operation, see [5], gives remote participants a possibility to set up and submit basic tokamak technology parameters necessary to create plasma into a queue based system: power supplies for the toroidal magnetic field coil and the transformer primary coil, the pre-ionization tool and the injection system of the working gas via a web interface (see Fig. 2). After having checked the discharge set-up against safety and operational limits the control system processes the set-up and the results from basic diagnostics are presented instantly in a hypertext form of a shot homepage. Firing rate of one discharge per \sim minute is available, thus enabling systematic measurements, where participants can study the basic principles of tokamak technology, physics and operation, high temperature plasma diagnostics issues, breakdown studies, isotopic surveys, chamber conditioning examinations and can perform probe measurements, test various discharge scenarios, etc.

1.3. Next step levels of remote operation

Since the tokamak GOLEM is mainly used for educational purposes it is extremely desirable to dive into the complexity of the tokamak control step by step, allowing participants to study the appropriate topics from the basic to the sophisticated levels. The current organization of the human-machine interface is organized as follows: *a)* Level "system check", with the purpose to test individual parts, where students can trigger toroidal magnetic field or toroidal electric field separately and observe their particular effect in the diagnostic system. *b)* Level "basic tokamak plasma", where the minimum technology required to control the tokamak is used to set-up the tokamak plasma: simultaneous trigger of the toroidal magnetic and electric field, while working gas and pre-ionization tool have been engaged in advance to the trigger. *c)* Level "vessel conditioning", where participants can study improved plasma performance regimes after vessel conditioning with the help of baking and glow discharge. *d)* Level " E_t , B_t orientation", where the influence of the mutual orientation of the toroidal magnetic as well as electric field on the plasma performance can be examined.

The presented article introduces a new level of remote operation, where students can set-up via web interface pre-defined or feedback plasma position control scenario that brings new horizons in the tokamak technology studies. The main challenge of such a goal is to link the standard plasma stabilization operation of the tokamak with the remote control room and thoroughly design a human(student)-machine interface.

The control of the plasma position on the old CASTOR tokamak was based on the analogue feedback system [6], which was not compatible with request of its remote control. Therefore, the new digital system have been designed on GOLEM with the strategy to be naturally implemented into the current basic remotely oriented control operation. As a first step the simple vertical direction control have been tested with the plan to clone it with necessary modifications to the horizontal version and finally link them both to the full operation stabilization system.

The paper is organized as follows: the first part introduces the simple methodical strategy to control the plasma position in two regimes: pre-defined and feedback. Then the experimental set-up of the HW arrangement linked to the net technology is described together with the SW solution and finally basic modes demonstrating its functionality are presented.

2. Remote control of the vertical plasma position

The new functionality has been implemented into the system allowing to perform remote plasma position studies. The left-top corner of the Fig. 2 (web oriented control room) represents the dialogue box where participants can set-up necessary parameters for vertical plasma management.

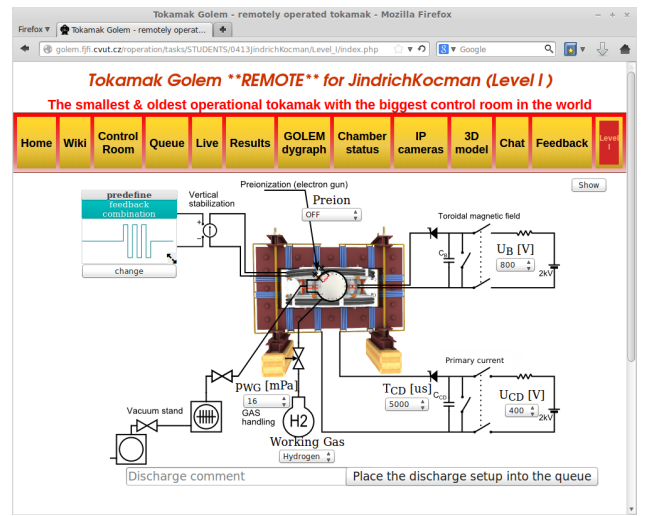


Figure 2: The GOLEM tokamak remote control room layout. Basic engineering scheme of the tokamak combined with the web form enable setting up desired technology parameters to generate the plasma discharge. Left-top corner named "Vertical stabilization" represents the new level of the plasma scenario control.

2.1. The overall arrangement of the remotely defined vertical plasma position stabilization

The overall strategy is described in Figure 5. The remote user defines via a web interface the desired plasma position scenario via two time dependent discrete functions i) pre-defined: $f_{pd}(t_i) : (0, 40) \text{ ms} \rightarrow (-10, 10)$ and ii) feedback-coefficient: $f_{fc}(t_i) : (0, 40) \text{ ms} \rightarrow (-10, 10)$ where t_i denotes a discrete time series with a period of 0.1 ms (according to a feedback processing frequency $f_{FDB} = 10 \text{ kHz}$). Actual horizontal plasma position $\Delta_v \in (-50, 50) \text{ mm}$ is monitored with a set of 4 Mirnov coils poloidally surrounding the plasma. These signals, after analogue integration, are digitized with the frequency f_{FDB} . Specialized Labview SW in real time mode links the scenario functions with the actual plasma position Δ_v and generates a plasma movement request $y(t_i) = f_{pd}(t_i) + f_{fc}(t_i)\Delta_v$ in the range of $(-10, 10)$ which converted into an analogue signal $(-10, 10) \text{ V}$ and amplified to the vertical stabilization current $I_{V_{st}}(t_i) \in (-500, 500) \text{ A}$ maintains the desired magnetic

force for vertical plasma movement. The resulted plasma shift is monitored with the fast cameras Casio FX1 [4] delivering a series of 1200 frames per 1 s.

2.2. The control function

The control function $y(t_i)$ is a superposition of two components: pre-defined $f_{pd}(t_i)$ and feedback $f_{fc}(t_i)$ functions and their time dependent pattern can be specified in three modes: i) it can be selected from a list of pre-defined waveforms; ii) the user can define the waveform in a similar way as adjusting a frequency generator (i.e. select type of the waveform /sawtooth, square, triangle, sine/, the start of the signal with respect to t_{DAS} , the length of the signal, its amplitude, phase and offset) and finally, iii) the user can freely design an arbitrary waveform pattern with the help of a special web application.

2.3. SW

The software is divided into 3 layers. The first layer contains a graphical user interface and takes the form of a web page. The second layer is a server which stores all user waveforms and uploads them to the third layer: a control computer which is responsible for the current in the stabilization coils.

First layer - A web page with an extended web form for remote operation of the GOLEM tokamak. The type of stabilization to be used (predefined, feedback, combination) can be chosen by the user. Existing waveforms can be picked or new ones can be created. The created waveform is sent to the server and added to existing ones so any other user can then use it.

Second layer - A server which stores all waveforms. Provides information about existing waveforms for the first layer and receives the new ones. It also uploads the desired waveform to the control computer during the initialization procedure of a discharge.

Third layer - The control computer with the real-time operating system. The main loop with a frequency of f_{FDB} calculates the plasma position and combines it with the user's waveform. The result is sent to the current source which drives the current in the stabilization coils.

3. Functionality demonstration

Two possible remotely defined example situations have been tested : i) pre-defined and ii) feedback mode.

Figure 3 depicts the ability to shift the plasma column up and downward according to waveform definition $f_{pd} = \text{sgn}(\sin[2\pi t/0.004])$ where $t \in (18, 30)$ ms. The toroidal magnetic field B_t is triggered at $t_{Bstart} = 5$ ms while the toroidal electric field is triggered at $t_{CD} = 14$ ms in the "flat top" part of B_t . Plasma breakdown occurs at $t_{p|Br} \sim 16.5$ ms. The desired plasma movement is initiated according to the pre-defined function at 18 ms, pushing the plasma ring upward. At 20 ms the stabilization current is commuted into opposite direction pushing the plasma column downward. From the fast camera photo series it is evident that the response to this request is (with some time delay, which can be assigned to electronic issues) adequate and it is possible to observe an upward and downward shift of

the plasma column with the same frequency of 250 Hz as the pre-defined function.

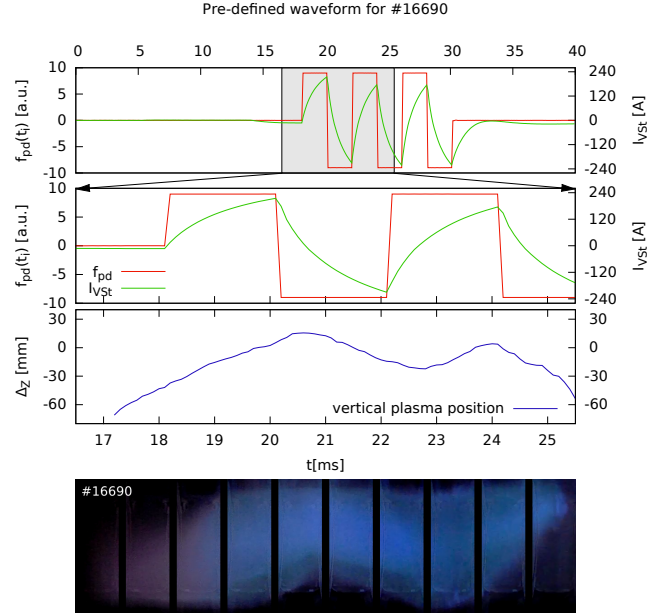


Figure 3: Pre-defined plasma vertical movement mode test. Upper figure (together with zoomed detail) displays the pre-defined function for desired plasma shift, middle figure describes the signal from Mirnov coils reflecting the actual vertical plasma position and bottom figure displays a fast camera series of frames visualizing plasma movement in the vertical direction.

Figure 4 demonstrates the real-time feedback functionality of stabilizing the plasma column in the center of the tokamak vessel. Discharge #16852 was executed without any stabilization request, the discharge started at the bottom part of the vessel and tendency to move upward can be seen - the typical movement scenario for the GOLEM tokamak without stabilization. Thus the definition of the feedback coefficient f_{fc} function is to switch on the feedback stabilization before the start of the discharge with $\sim 1/2$ strength to create a countering magnetic force through the stabilization current I_{VSt} to preserve the plasma column in the center of the vessel. The result of such a stabilization can be seen from the fast camera observing discharge #16853 demonstrating good functionality of this feedback control system and relative plasma life prolongation from 11.9 ms to 13.5 ms.

4. Conclusions

Understandable plasma position control according to the remote user definition has been implemented in the GOLEM tokamak control system. It provides pre-defined and feedback modes as well as their combination of plasma vertical position control requests. The system now enables remote participants to study the effect of the horizontal magnetic field on the vertical plasma position using their own approach. Relative plasma-life duration prolongation of more than 20% can be reached with respect to the mode without any stabilization and moreover it is possible to set-up arbitrary, even not rational, plasma

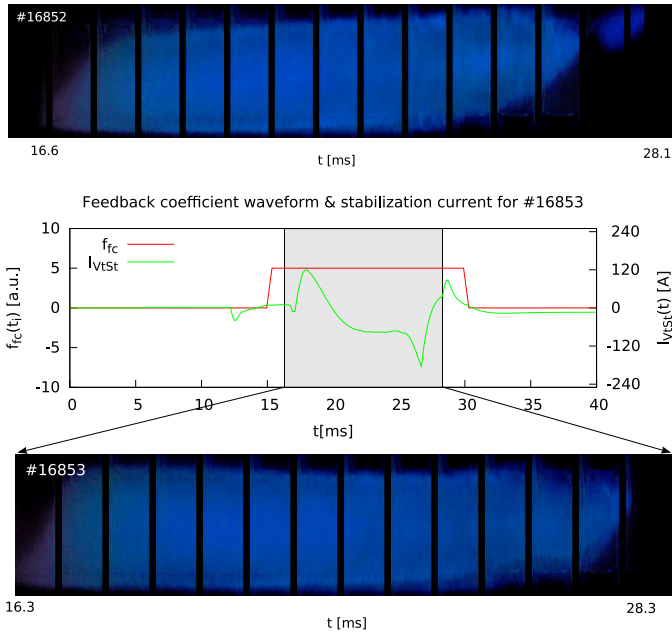


Figure 4: Feedback plasma vertical movement mode test. From top to bottom: a fast camera frame series of a standard discharge without any means of stabilization, definition of feedback coefficient function $f_{fc}(t_i)$ together with resulting stabilization current and finally a frame series showing a stabilized evolution of the plasma column.

position scenarios, that can be used e.g. for testing the specific plasma physics and technology ideas.

Future outlook is as follows: i) horizontal position control is planned to be implemented as a "clone" of the vertical position system, ii) an increase of the stabilization current up to 1 kA for both plasma positioning systems is envisaged, iii) feedback coefficient f_{fc} will express non-linear functionality of actual vertical position Δ_v , and iv) bolometers, electric probes [1] or other means of plasma position Δ_v detection are in the scope of possible inputs into the system.

5. Acknowledgements

The project was supported by the FUSENET, CTU RVO68407700, IAEA technical contract CRP F1.30.14 on Utilization of the Network of Small Magnetic Confinement Fusion Devices for Mainstream Fusion Research. The opinions expressed by authors do not necessarily represent the positions of the European Commission neither IAEA. This work was supported by the Grant Agency of the Czech Technical University in Prague, grant No. SGS: SGS13/145/OHK4/2T/14

Authors express their gratitude to Gabriel Vondrasek for his valuable contribution to the project.

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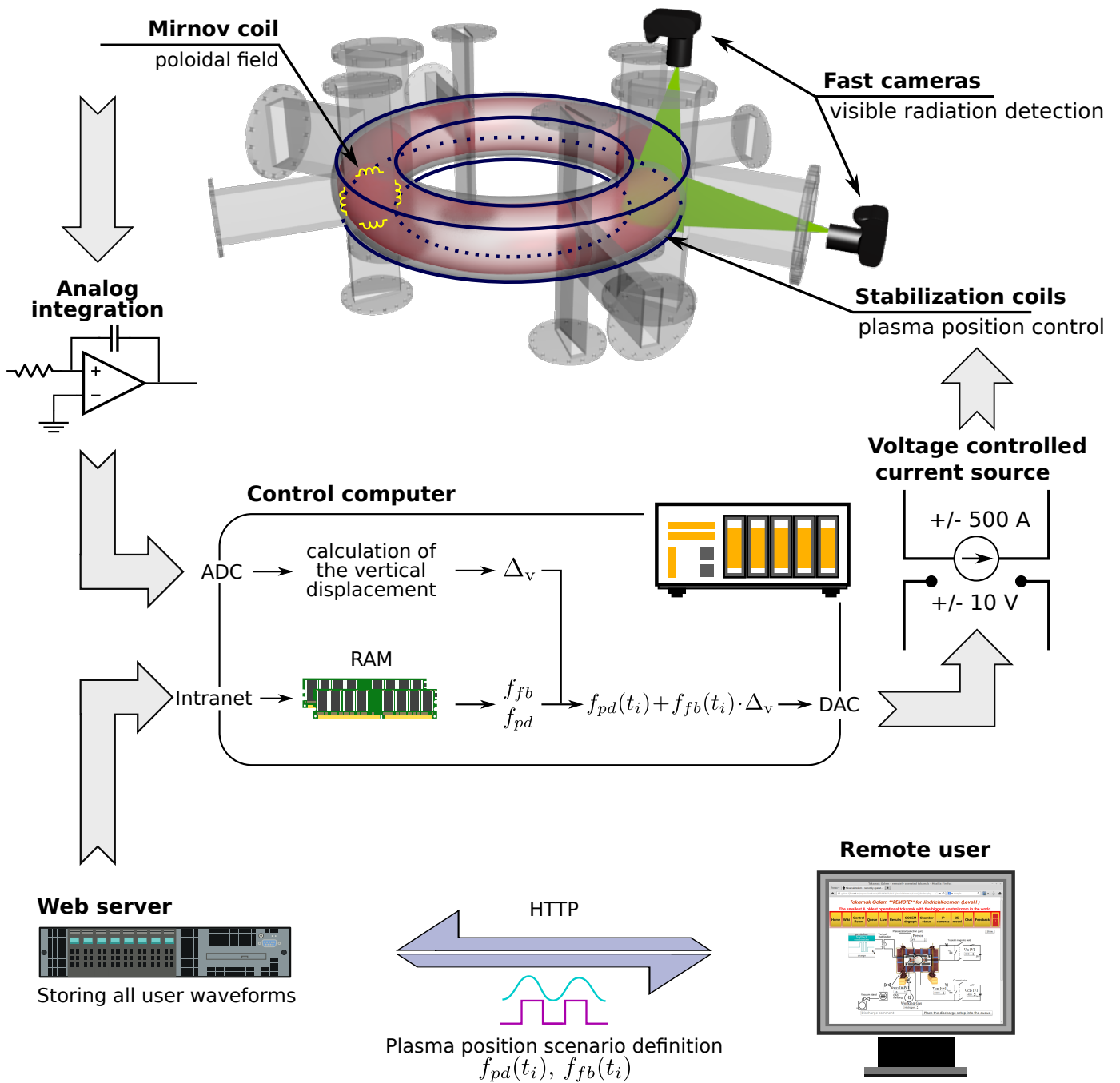


Figure 5: The tokamak GOLEM remote vertical stabilization operation arrangement.

Remote operation of the vertical plasma stabilization @ the Golem tokamak for the plasma physics education

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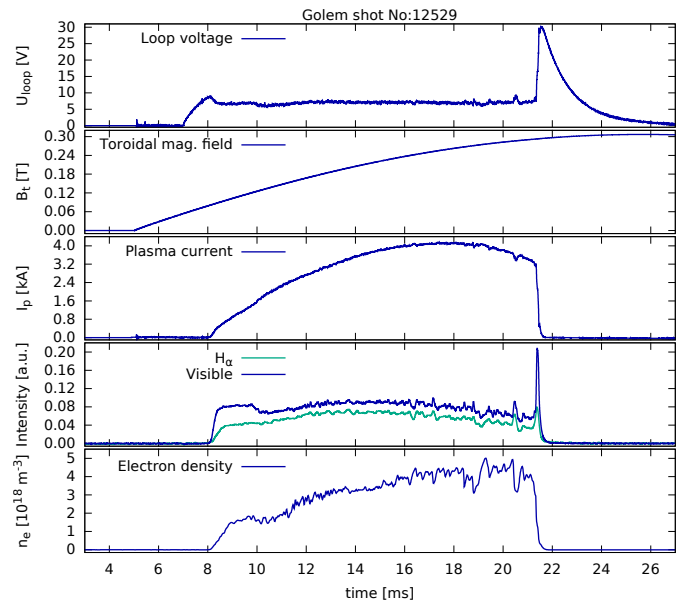


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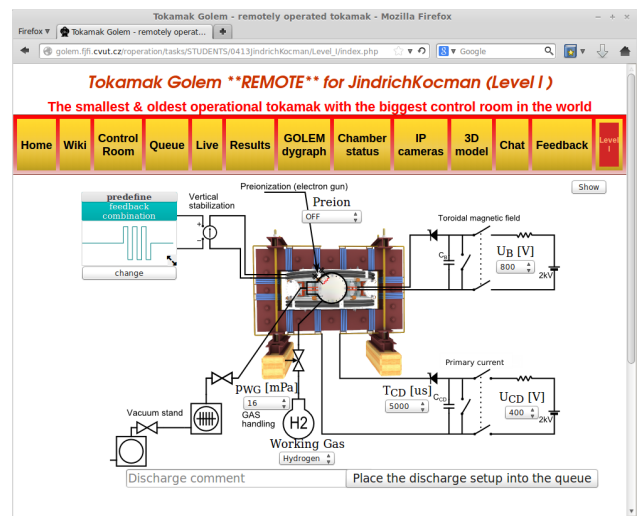


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2.2. The control function

The control function $y(t_i)$ is a superposition of two components: pre-defined $f_{pd}(t_i)$ and feedback $f_{fc}(t_i)$ functions and their time dependent pattern can be specified in three modes: i) it can be selected from a list of pre-defined waveforms; ii) the user can define the waveform in a similar way as adjusting a frequency generator (i.e. select type of the waveform /sawtooth, square, triangle, sine/, the start of the signal with respect to t_{DAS} , the length of the signal, its amplitude, phase and offset) and finally, iii) the user can freely design an arbitrary waveform pattern with the help of a special web application.

2.3. SW

The software is divided into 3 layers. The first layer contains a graphical user interface and takes the form of a web page. The second layer is a server which stores all user waveforms and uploads them to the third layer: a control computer which is responsible for the current in the stabilization coils.

First layer - A web page with an extended web form for remote operation of the GOLEM tokamak. The type of stabilization to be used (predefined, feedback, combination) can be chosen by the user. Existing waveforms can be picked or new ones can be created. The created waveform is sent to the server and added to existing ones so any other user can then use it.

Second layer - A server which stores all waveforms. Provides information about existing waveforms for the first layer and receives the new ones. It also uploads the desired waveform to the control computer during the initialization procedure of a discharge.

Third layer - The control computer with the real-time operating system. The main loop with a frequency of f_{FDB} calculates the plasma position and combines it with the user's waveform. The result is sent to the current source which drives the current in the stabilization coils.

3. Functionality demonstration

Two possible remotely defined example situations have been tested : i) pre-defined and ii) feedback mode.

Figure 3 depicts the ability to shift the plasma column up and downward according to waveform definition $f_{pd} = \text{sgn}(\sin[2\pi t/0.004])$ where $t \in (18, 30)$ ms. The toroidal magnetic field B_t is triggered at $t_{Bstart} = 5$ ms while the toroidal electric field is triggered at $t_{CD} = 14$ ms in the "flat top" part of B_t . Plasma breakdown occurs at $t_{p|Br} \sim 16.5$ ms. The desired plasma movement is initiated according to the pre-defined function at 18 ms, pushing the plasma ring upward. At 20 ms the stabilization current is commuted into opposite direction pushing the plasma column downward. From the fast camera photo series it is evident that the response to this request is (with some time delay, which can be assigned to electronic issues) adequate and it is possible to observe an upward and downward shift of

the plasma column with the same frequency of 250 Hz as the pre-defined function.

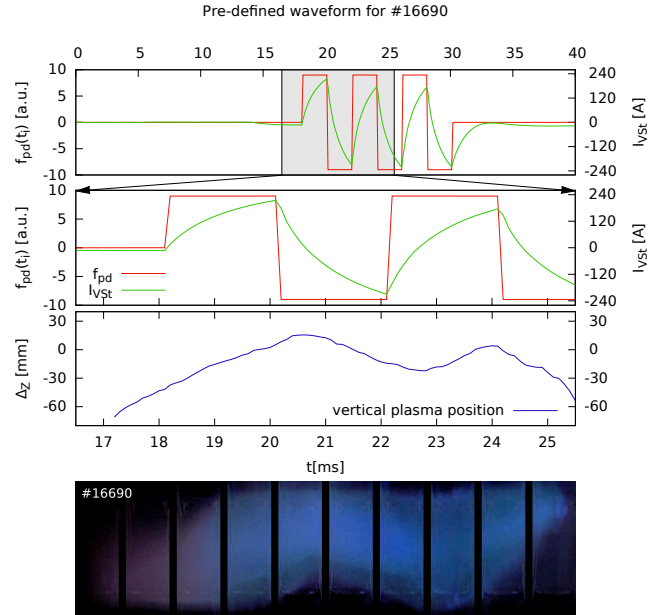


Figure 3: Pre-defined plasma vertical movement mode test. Upper figure (together with zoomed detail) displays the pre-defined function for desired plasma shift, middle figure describes the signal from Mirnov coils reflecting the actual vertical plasma position and bottom figure displays a fast camera series of frames visualizing plasma movement in the vertical direction.

Figure 4 demonstrates the real-time feedback functionality of stabilizing the plasma column in the center of the tokamak vessel. Discharge #16852 was executed without any stabilization request, the discharge started at the bottom part of the vessel and tendency to move upward can be seen - the typical movement scenario for the GOLEM tokamak without stabilization. Thus the definition of the feedback coefficient f_{fc} function is to switch on the feedback stabilization before the start of the discharge with $\sim 1/2$ strength to create a countering magnetic force through the stabilization current I_{VSt} to preserve the plasma column in the center of the vessel. The result of such a stabilization can be seen from the fast camera observing discharge #16853 demonstrating good functionality of this feedback control system and relative plasma life prolongation from 11.9 ms to 13.5 ms.

4. Conclusions

Understandable plasma position control according to the remote user definition has been implemented in the GOLEM tokamak control system. It provides pre-defined and feedback modes as well as their combination of plasma vertical position control requests. The system now enables remote participants to study the effect of the horizontal magnetic field on the vertical plasma position using their own approach. Relative plasma-life duration prolongation of more than 20% can be reached with respect to the mode without any stabilization and moreover it is possible to set-up arbitrary, even not rational, plasma

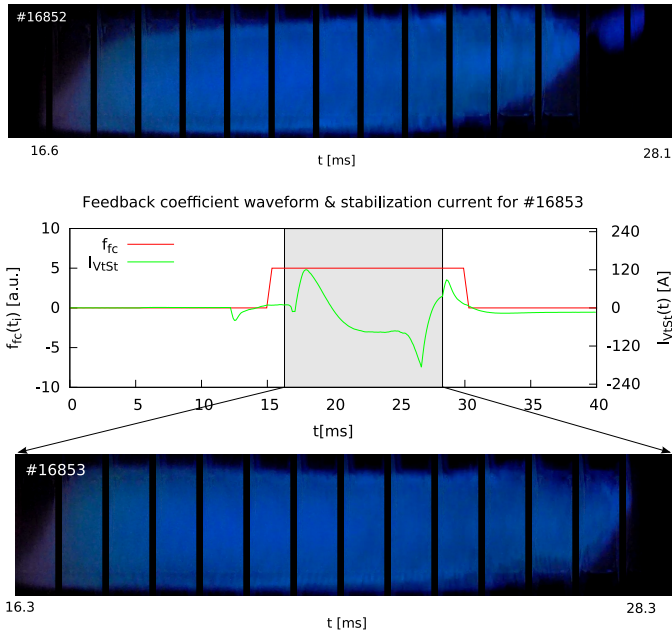


Figure 4: Feedback plasma vertical movement mode test. From top to bottom: a fast camera frame series of a standard discharge without any means of stabilization, definition of feedback coefficient function $f_{fc}(t_i)$ together with resulting stabilization current and finally a frame series showing a stabilized evolution of the plasma column.

position scenarios, that can be used e.g. for testing the specific plasma physics and technology ideas.

Future outlook is as follows: i) horizontal position control is planned to be implemented as a "clone" of the vertical position system, ii) an increase of the stabilization current up to 1 kA for both plasma positioning systems is envisaged, iii) feedback coefficient f_{fc} will express non-linear functionality of actual vertical position Δ_v , and iv) bolometers, electric probes [1] or other means of plasma position Δ_v detection are in the scope of possible inputs into the system.

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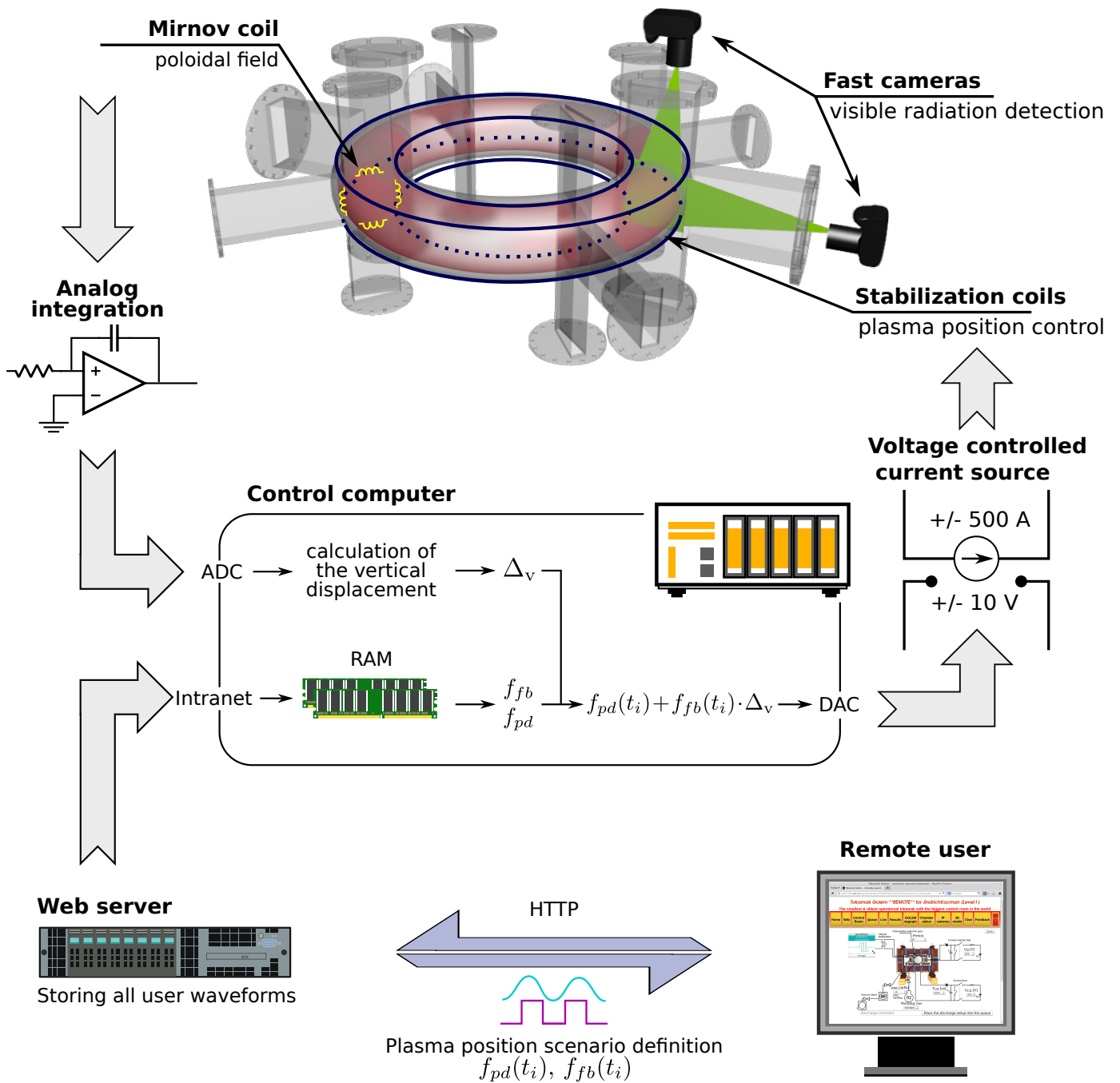


Figure 5: The tokamak GOLEM remote vertical stabilization operation arrangement.

dz_camera.png

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Tokamak Golem - remotely operated tokamak - Mozilla Firefox

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The diagram illustrates the control interface for the Tokamak Golem. It features a central 3D model of the tokamak chamber. Surrounding the model are several control panels and monitoring displays:

- predefine feedback combination:** A panel with a graph showing a square wave and a 'change' button.
- Vertical stabilization:** A control panel with a '+' and '-' sign.
- Preionization (electron gun):** A control panel with a 'Preion' label and an 'OFF' dropdown menu.
- Toroidal magnetic field:** A control panel with a switch, a capacitor C_T , and a voltage display $U_B [V]$ set to 800, with a 2kV scale.
- Primary current:** A control panel with a switch, a capacitor C_{CD} , a time delay display $T_{CD} [us]$ set to 5000, and a voltage display $U_{CD} [V]$ set to 400, with a 2kV scale.
- Working Gas:** A section including a 'Vacuum stand', a 'GAS handling' panel with a pressure display $p_{WG} [mPa]$ set to 16, and an H_2 gas source with a 'Hydrogen' dropdown menu.

Buttons at the bottom include 'Discharge comment' and 'Place the discharge setup into the queue'. A 'Show' button is located in the top right corner of the diagram area.