SCSC Meeting 5/29/2009

Membership

John Arthur, Sebastien Boutet, Tom Devereaux*, Richard Dubois, Gregory Dubois-Felsman, **Gunther Haller (chair-person)**, Aaron Jensen, Catherine LeCocq, Steffen Luitz, Stuart Marshall, Richard Mount, Cho Ng, Sayed Rokni*, Mike Soltis*, Clemens Wermelskirchen

*-Not in attendance

Italics are action items

Minute Taker: Les Cottrell

Agenda:

- Bless Previous Minutes
- Computer Support at Other Sites (Stuart Marshall)
- Service list, feed back from members (Haller)

Action Items from Previous Meetings

We need to discuss the LCLS services coming from SCCS.

Richard must know someone at Argonne... Let's invite someone here or have a SLAC person go there.

Minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting were blessed and will be made public at https://confluence.slac.stanford.edu/display/scscpub/Past+Meetings?SortBy=date.

A question was raised as to whether there is a web page for the CSC. There is a web page at: http://www2.slac.stanford.edu/computing/security/meetings/

Computer Support at Other Places

Stuart Marshall gave a presentation on what he had found out. Three other sites had been contacted: LBNL, PNNL and Google.

- People from PNNL visited SLAC early in March and Stuart and others had a session with them. They appear to have a very heterogeneous support model, large groups providing their own support. Then the smaller groups get support from the larger groups.
- Google uses "puppet" to provide support. This is something developed at Google for IT Management support of Macs & Linux on the corporate side (not the millions of servers and the public side). They access data via NFS servers with a Kerberos, LDAP front end for authentication and authorization. They do have a lot of resources they can apply to support. To first order Google does not Microsoft Office except under special circumstances. There is little use of Windows.
- LBNL is close by and friendly, is a similar environment, has strong ties with SLAC and Sandy came from there. Sandy gave the name of a contact at LBNL and Richard Mount and Gregory Dubois-Felsman who talked to the contact and other contacts obtained from him. LBNL have a well organized web site with a menu of services and costs (see http://www.lbl.gov/IT/rates.html). Sandy was involved in putting this together starting out

with offering free support to attract custom and to enable understanding the real costs. Stuart showed a set of questions (e.g. how is configuration management done, how is backup done, how many people do they have providing the various services, what is the budget, what are the domains) posed to LBNL and others to try and ascertain how support works. NERSC is pretty much separate from LBNL so was not covered. Security is mainly at the border using "Bro" whose development was funded as a research project by DoE for several years. Bro spies on traffic at the border and using sophisticated signatures detect suspicious behavior. This can be reported and also actions can be taken to block it.

Next steps are to take a trip to LBNL. Steffen and Stuart will go. There is interest in understanding how well the support works and who opts to use it and why. For example does the ALS use central services. Is the costing scheme full cost recovery? Is the support 365*24*7? It would also be useful to talk to users of the Advanced Light Source and see how similar the support is to that of SSRL.
Another possibility would be to review Stanford campus IT rates. See for example http://www.stanford.edu/services/itrates/sharedservices/ Stanford is close, and many people have experiences at both sites and in some cases shared appointments at SLAC & campus.
Action: Stuart will put together a short summary of the findings for each of the sites.
Action: Stuart and Steffen will take a visit to LBNL and report on results at the next meeting.

Service list

Gunther got feedback from all except one person. Some responses had extra lines. These were added and Gunther compiled the whole thing. Not everything is complete. Gunther will clean it up, add more coloring for format to help identify who does/does not use central services and for what services. It was also proposed to add color coding of numbers to make them stand-out, and maybe frequencies on the right of the various numbers. Gunther will do the clean up, he will start on Tuesday and incorporate information he has by then. Gregory will contact Homer to add more information on BaBar. Richard Mount will provide information on ATLAS.

A possible later addition will be to cost the various rows to assist in understanding / ranking.

This will be raw data from which to assist with decisions. It will then be reviewed to see how we should move forward. Individuals committee members should be charged to look at the table and see what it means to them, e.g. each person comes with the top two desires/needs. For example are there any services that are never used, what service is unique to a single user? What does SCCS do a good job on, what is less well done? Does 24hrs*7days/week coverage make sense and when, can it be afforded? Does one move to a full cost recovery scheme? What should be centrally/SCCS supported. There is interest from ATLAS tier 3 sites to site clusters at SLAC and get SLAC to manage.

There has been an enormous uncertainty of the future computing needs for the LCLS. This has meant difficulty in getting future computing infrastructure funded, and what is the policy on how this is to be funded. This resulted in there not being a shovel ready plan for the stimulus funding. The bringing forward of the LCLS project time lines has exacerbated this.

Action: Steffen will present what are the plans for the next two years, and what is in the works.
Action: each person will discuss how they expect needs (computing clusters, networking, etc.) to go up

and down in the next 2 years.
Action: Richard will send round a spread sheet of a model of Lab computing infrastructure requirements that he produced. This will be followed up by a presentation of methodology, assumptions, how it was done for PPA, how it can be extended elsewhere (other programs). A driving factor are the power requirements.
Action: In two weeks Gunther will schedule a meeting.