EISD Information Systems, University College London

Service Definition for the MySQL Database Service

Service Identifier CSD00152

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1 Document Control

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Revision History:

Date	Version	Author	Purpose
16th December 2002	0.1	Jack Levy	First Draft
3rd June 2004	1.0	Jack Levy	Production Service
18th October 2004	1.1	Jack Levy	Missing section 11 added

2 Introduction

This document has been drawn up to describe the service users can expect when using the MySQL database service. The document is a written aid to support a clear outline of the service described.

3 Purpose of Service

The service is to enable information owners to store data in a relational database using the MySQL package. This is primarily to make such data available as dynamic Web pages, so that the end user can view, interrogate and update data, as specified by the information provider.

4 Eligibility for Service

As the service is primarily for Web use, it is initially available only to users with departmental Web accounts, that is accounts of the form ****www or ****w3*, who maintain their departmental pages on the main UCL Web server. Departmental Web accounts may be obtained by applying to the UCL Web Unit (email web-support@ucl.ac.uk).

5 Detailed Service Description

The service comprises the MySQL relational database package, running on a server maintained and supported by Information Systems, plus a number of tools for creating, maintaining and viewing information in the databases. Eligible users will, on request, be allocated a database on the system and will be able to create, populate, update and remove tables within their own database.

Users with departmental Web accounts with userids of the form ****www or ****w3* may request that a database is created for them. Each database will have the same name as its owner, and an initial password will be allocated. A Web form is provided for users to change their password. Users may also create new databases with their userid as the name's initial substring.

Facilities for accessing the data are:

- The Unix 'mysql' command, available on Socrates and on Solaris workstations
- The ODBC driver MyODBC on Staff WTS, which allows users of packages such as Microsoft Access to maintain data in a MySQL database
- PHP, which runs on the Web server. This enables Web pages to contain embedded code which can include calls to the MySQL API
- phpMyAdmin, a fully-featured Web application written using PHP, which enables users to maintain their databases from any machine with a Web browser
- API for the C language on Unix
- API for Perl scripts on the Web server
- API for the Tcl/Tk scripting language on Unix
- Dreamweaver MX on Staff WTS, which has the ability to create dynamic pages using the PHP/MySQL mechanism without having to write code

6 Service Availability and Quality Expectations.

The MySQL service is generally available for 24 hours a day 7 days a week, although the service will also be unavailable for approximately 10 minutes between 6.30 and 7am on Mondays as part of the system maintenance procedure. The service is dependent on the central filestore, so the MySQL service is not available during outages of the central filestore.

Scheduled Network and Central Service outages normally take place between 7am and 9am on Tuesdays and Thursdays. This allows IS staff to schedule important updates (e.g. for Security purposes) and perform system maintenance on essential service machines. Except in emergencies, one full week's notice is given to users. Outages are advertised in IS Service News, see: http://www.ucl.ac.uk/is/news/index.htm

In addition, a message is put on the Helpdesk phone system the day before an outage is due to take place.

Occasionally weekend service shutdowns are arranged which will affect this service; these weekend shutdowns are agreed with senior College management and advance notice is given. Every effort is made to minimise the number of weekend shutdowns.

Operator cover is usually from 8am to 6pm. All IS systems run unattended overnight and at weekends. If they fail, service may not be restored until the next working day.

7 Support

Requests for registration, password changes and other queries specific to the MySQL service should normally be sent to mysql-support@ucl.ac.uk. Other general queries are dealt with by the Helpdesk either by telephone (extension 37779) or email at helpdesk@ucl.ac.uk. Helpdesk staff will do what they can to answer the majority of queries immediately. However, it is often impossible to answer complex queries in this way. When this is the case a system of referral will be used. Referrals will be logged in the Helpdesk problem tracking system (Remedy ARS) and users will be given a reference number which should be used for follow up calls. If required Helpdesk staff are able to check the status of each referral. Helpdesk referrals are usually passed on to second level support staff in other sections within IS. Referrals are dealt with as soon as possible but these sections have a number of queries referred on to them from other parts of UCL so it may take a while before problems can be resolved.

Documentation on the MySQL service is available on the Web in http://www.ucl.ac.uk/is/mysql. Specific documentation for the Unix 'mysql' command is provided in a 'man' page.

8 Exclusions, Exceptions and Limitations

MySQL is intended for medium scale databases and is not suitable for large databases for which a system such as Oracle would be more appropriate. Also, heavily used databases might require a server of their own, rather than use this general service. We reserve the right to remove access to users making too heavy a demand on the service. For advice, please contact mysql-support@ucl.ac.uk

We do not recommend this service for highly secure access to sensitive data. Users requiring such a service should consult UCL Management Systems.

9 Service Change Requests

Information Systems are always improving services and our services undergo constant development. Users are invited to send comments and requests to the Helpdesk. These communications will be brought to the attention of IS Group Managers to consider changes and implement where appropriate, subject to priority and available resource. Additional applications are investigated at the request of the Software and Standards Working Group (SSWSG) and added according to priorities discussed by them. To make requests of the SSWSG contact via www.ucl.ac.uk/is/cnuf/software .

10 Related Service Elements

Related services that either support this service, are supported by it or are complementary to it include IS Network Connectivity Services, IS Infrastructure Services, IS Filestore, IS Staff WTS Service, IS Information and Support Services.

11 Charging

There is no charge for eligible users to register to use the service..

12 Service Conditions

All use of Communications and Information Technology (C&IT) is governed by the UCL Computing Regulations which is available on the www at: http://www.ucl.ac.uk/cert/swg/papers/Regulations.html.

13 Contact Details

The first point of contact for all queries relating to this service is mysql-support@ucl.ac.uk. See section 7 *Support*