

RESEARCH COMPUTING WORKING GROUP (RCWG)

MINUTES

Date: Thursday 2th May 2013

Time: 2:00pm – 4:00pm

Venue: South Wing Room G14, Committee Room, Gower Street London WC1E 6BT

Members Present:

1. John Brodholt [JBr] – Chair
2. Nick Achilleos [NA] – Dept. of Physics and Astronomy
3. Peter Coveney [PC] – Computational Life and Medical Sciences (CLMS)
4. Mat Disney [MD] – Dept. of Geography
5. Clare Gryce [CG] – Head of Research Computing and Facilitating Services, ISD
6. David Jones [DJ] – Bloomsbury Centre for Bioinformatics (BCB)
7. Nik Kaltsoyannis [NK] – Chair of the CRAG
8. Bruno Silva [BCS] – Research Computing Platforms Team Leader, ISD
9. Romain Studer [RS] - (representing: Christine Orengo – Institute of Structural and Molecular Biology)

Apologies:

10. Richard Catlow [RC] - Dept. of Chemistry
11. Thomas Jones [TJ] – Data Centre Services, ISD Nora H De Leeuw [NDL] – Thomas Young Centre (TYC)
12. Angelos Michaelides [AM] – Thomas Young Centre (TYC)
13. Christine Orengo [CO] – Institute of Structural and Molecular Biology
14. Jacky Pallas [JP] – Platform Technologies

Outline Minutes, decisions taken and Actions agreed are provided below.

Matters Discussed

1. **Approval of Minutes of previous meeting (7th March 2013)**

The draft Minutes of the previous meeting of the group held on 7th March 2013 were approved.

2. **Update on status of Actions from previous meetings**

The list of current actions from the previous meeting was reviewed and updated.

3. Report from CRAG (CRAG chair)

3.1. Cfi Usage *Previously circulated: (See Doc: Q3 (Dec'12-Feb'13) Utilisation information for EMERALD and IRIDIS Systems, File: RCWG_2May13_Cfi_Usage Stats.pdf)*

NK informed all that UCL was fully utilising the 25% share allocation for IRIDIS however, this was not the case for the Emerald facility. PC enquired as to how ISD was promoting these services? CG informed all, that two facilitators have recently been appointed in Research IT Services and that this would enable improved outreach, communications and promotion of services to users as this function gets established.. CG also stated that a new Consortium Manager had been appointed in April who reported directly to the Cfi Consortium and who would be leading the development of the Cfi services going forwards. CG also noted that UCL had a 50% core share on Cfi IRIDIS which it needed to utilise accordingly. NA enquired as to whether industrial partners were permitted to use these facilities, CG advised that 8% of each facility (IRIDIS and EMERALD) had been apportioned for external users, including industrial use. It was agreed that CG would provide Cfi usage reports every four months. (See new action 29)

3.2. Verbal report on investigation into Cfi Emerald usage and review of related access policy.

NK informed all that users had been sent emails promoting the Emerald facilities and that uptake would be measured by whether Emerald usage had increased. If this was not the case, then another email would be circulated, to highlight any technology training issues, if this was the case then one to one meetings with Emerald users could also be initiated.

3.3. Report on Cfi IRIDIS expansion and associated account application process.

Previously circulated: (See Doc: RCWG 2nd May 2013 agenda item 3c – CRAG proposal for future Cfi Iridis Access Policy, File: RCWG_2May13_Iridis.pdf)

NK reported that the CRAG intended to integrate the application process for Legion and IRIDIS, with Legion users whose work was more suited to IRIDIS based on job class being identified and pro-actively provide with accounts on IRIDIS.. The proposal is that Legion be primarily used for jobs under 36 cores or 60 hours e.g. parallel computing and IRIDIS would be then be used for 'capability' jobs of above 36 cores or a wall clock time of 3 days. NK reported that it was currently proposed that there would be two service 'partitions' on IRIDIS, with 'capability' jobs only being allowed to run on the high Quality of Service partition with these partitions being dynamically changed in size according to demand.. The IRIDIS team had suggested a fixed partition and once this had been implemented, the partition would then be developed to become dynamic. This method had been agreed with Southampton, Oxford and UCL. Every Legion user would be given access to low quality partition. DJ suggested IRIDIS be used for work that cannot be done on a third tiered system and running single core jobs on IRIDIS would provide a stepping stone for access to higher quality services.

CG to amend document as follows:

- Section 1 to replace "Low Quality of Service" with "Normal and high priority of service".
- To replace, "partitions to be set up in ratio 1/3" with "ratio of 1:4".
- To stipulate low priority jobs are below 32 CPU cores and high priority jobs are above 32 CPU cores. (See new action 30)

The document was approved subject to changes.

APPROVED

3.4. **Report on role of Consortia Leaders and account application process**

Previously circulated: (See Doc: The Role of Research Computing Consortia and Account Application Process for Research Computing Platforms Services, File: RCWG_2May13_Consortia_and_Accounts.pdf)

JB explained the account allocation process for HECToR, where Consortia Leaders are responsible for users and can set up new accounts and allocate resources almost instantly. There is also no fair share allocation. NERC also gives consortia leaders, an allocation to be used at their discretion. This can be used to help new users and groups who want to try HECToR before asking for a large allocation for themselves. NK highlighted that Consortia Leaders for Research Computing Platforms Services did not have the time and resource to be able to perform such functions. CG indicated that the Research Computing team also were unable to perform these functions due to time and resource constraints. It was suggested that this be brought to the attention of the CRAG and NK proposed that Consortia Leader roles were reviewed further after users had been transferred to IRIDIS.

The previously circulated document was reviewed by members, it was agreed that the following amendments were required, BCS to amend document as follows:

- Under Section "The role of the Research Computing Consortia is as follows:"
- Delete paragraph starting "Consortia will be the means by which...."
- Delete paragraph starting "All Consortia shall have a named Leader"
- Add paragraph to describe usefulness of data. (See new action 31)

The document was approved subject to changes.

APPROVED

3.5 Any other CRAG matters to report

None

4. Honorary staff: policy regarding access to UCL research computing resources

Previously circulated: (See Doc: Use of Research Computing Platforms by Honorary Staff, File: RCWG_2May13_Honoraries.pdf)

4.1. The previously circulated document was reviewed by members, it was agreed that the following amendments be included:

- Include contact information stipulating that any member of Academic staff would be required to initially contact the Consortia Leader for application to access to research computing resources; this would then be approved by the CRAG. (See new action 32)

The document was approved subject to changes.

APPROVED

5. Legion IV project verbal update

Previously circulated: (See Doc: Legion IV Project Update, File: RCWG_2May13_LegionIV.pdf)

- 5.1. BCS explained that the project was now underway and that BCS was exploring three vendors for a best quote. The expansion would entail three racks equivalent to Legion III with 24 servers on each rack containing 6 Fat (large memory) nodes. Equating to 72 servers multiplied by 12 cores, resulting in an increase of 750 cores.

6. AOB

None

7. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be on 12th June 2013 from 12noon to 2pm.

Venue: Barlow Room 807, Roberts Building, Torrington Place, London, WC1E 7JE.

- 7.1. Agenda Items:

List of Current Actions

Shaded Actions will be deleted after next meeting.

No	Date	Minute	Owner	Action	Status and Notes
5	18/11/11	1.6.1	LRAW (Legion Resource Allocation Group, precursor to RCWG)	Establish policy for cluster/consortia leaders.	OPEN 6/2 – no progress 27/4 – no progress. Need to consider which group should own this action (CRAG or RCWG) 16/10 – agreed that the CRAG should own this action CLOSED
6	18/11/11	1.7.1	CG	Progress discussions within ISD regarding research computing use of Desktops.	OPEN 6/2 – this is in progress within ISD 27/4 – still in progress with ISD; ISD to report when significant progress has been made 2/5 – To be continued to be monitored by CRAG CLOSED
10	06/02/12	4.1	NK	CRAG to discuss handling of 'large users; set appropriate threshold above which a report on usage will be required. Design report.	OPEN 27/4 – referred back to the CRAG for recommendation Ownership changed to NK as new Chair or CRAG 16/10 – agreed that this should be linked to the account application/re-application process CLOSED
12	06/02/12	4.3	NK	CRAG to give further consideration to how researchers can be encouraged to make proposals for ambitious use of Legion, how this might be managed, and report back.	OPEN 27/4 – ownership changed to NK as new Chair or CRAG 7/3 – Encourage users to make cases to CRAG re any problems encountered. CLOSED
15	27/04/12	2.1	CG	Legion account application form to be	27/4 – action opened

				amended to indicate whether applicant is taught student or not.	16/10 – devolved to CRAG CLOSED
17	27/04/12	6.2	RCWG	To consider at future meeting; whether projects that do not have direct funding for compute resources but bring in large overhead income should be given access to dedicated or 'priority' resources.	27/4 – action opened 16/10 – to discuss at future meeting 7/3 – CG to report back when Priority Access service is instated. 2/5 – Agreed applications for 'priority' compute resource to go through normal procedure. CLOSED
18	27/04/12	6.3	CG	Consult Research Services to confirm what costs can actually be put on grants, also with regard to need to align allocation periods and processes with the research services costing.	27/4 – action opened 16/10 – CG to do by next meeting 7/3 – ONGOING 2/5 - ONGOING
20	27/04/12	7.5	CG	To seek clarification where infrastructural operating costs for the offsite HPC would be met from in long term.	27/4 – action opened 16/10 – no progress to report 7/3 – CG to report back on costs if service of off-site HPC is passed on. CLOSED
21	16/10/12	3.1	JB	To seek approval from RIISG to change name from Working Group to Executive.	16/10 – action opened 7/3 – JB to report 2/5 - ONGOING
22	16/10/12	6.1	JB	To provide utilisation, usage and throughput data for HECToR	16/10 – action opened 7/3 – JB to report 2/5 - ONGOING
24	16/10/12		CG	CG to request Max Wilkinson to give presentation at next meeting.	16/10 – action opened 7/3 – Pending 2/5 - OPEN

25	7/3/2013	3.3	All	Send CG comments regarding Research Computing Platforms Strategy	2/5 - ONGOING
26	7/3/2013	4.1	JB	<p>JB contact the RIISG Chair with the following concerns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possible re-allocation of £756k for Legion expansion/refresh elsewhere. • UCL Finance inflexible in moving capital items in between UCL's financial year. • Length of time UCL is taking to establish an off-site data centre which impacts on development of long-term HPC strategy. 	2/5 - CLOSED
27	7/3/2013	4.2	CG	To report on the off-site Data Centre at next RCWG meeting.	2/5 – CG to report back after next RIISG meeting
28	7/3/2013	4.4	CG	Collapse £30kCloud & Virtualisation project and the £150k allocated to RC Platforms R&D and name it "Cloud"	2/5 – CG to present at next RIISG meeting
29	2/5/2013	3.1	CG	Cfi usage reports.	2/5 – CG to provide quarterly Cfi usage reports
30	2/5/2013	3.3	CG	CRAG proposal for future Cfi Iridis Access Policy Document	2/5 – CG to amend policy document
31	2/5/2013	3.4	BS	The Role of Research Computing Consortia and Account Application Process for Research Computing Platforms Services Document	2/5 – BCS to amend document
32	2/5/2013	4.1	BS	Honorary staff: access to UCL research computing resources policy	2/5/ – BCS to amend document