

MCS Systems Semi-irregular “State of Systems” talk

Craig Stacey

IT Manager

Systems Administrator

Beer Enthusiast

Wearer of Pants

Saucy Puppeteer

Personal Trainer to Lady Gaga

Ruler of the Mole People (Wednesdays only)

Agenda

- ▶ MCS Systems Group Overview
- ▶ Changes since 2008
- ▶ Satisfaction Survey
- ▶ Current Projects
- ▶ Future Projects

MCS Systems

▶ Systems Administrators

- Ti Leggett
- Hunter Matthews
- Ken Raffenetti
- *Craig Stacey*
- Max Trefonides
- *Dan Murphy-Olson*

▶ Network Administration

- Corby Schmitz

▶ Help Desk & Account Administration

- Tina Stanton-Piersanti
- Bryant Fortson
- John Roberts

▶ Web Design and Programming

- Beth Cerny-Patiño
- Chris Walker

▶ Computation Institute / iBi

- Greg Cross
- David Forero
- Robert Johnson
- Joe Urbanski

▶ With a little help from our friends

- Rick Bradshaw
- Narayan Desai
- Jason Hedden
- John Valdes
- Linda Winkler

Management

Craig

CI IT Operations

Ti

HPC Operations

Ti

MCS IT
Operations
Craig

Help Desk &
Account Services
Craig

Hunter Matthews
Dan Murphy-Olson

Jason Hedden
John Valdes

Ken Raffenetti
Max Trefonides
Corby Schmitz
Chris Walker

Tina Stanton-Piersanti
Bryant Fortson
John Roberts

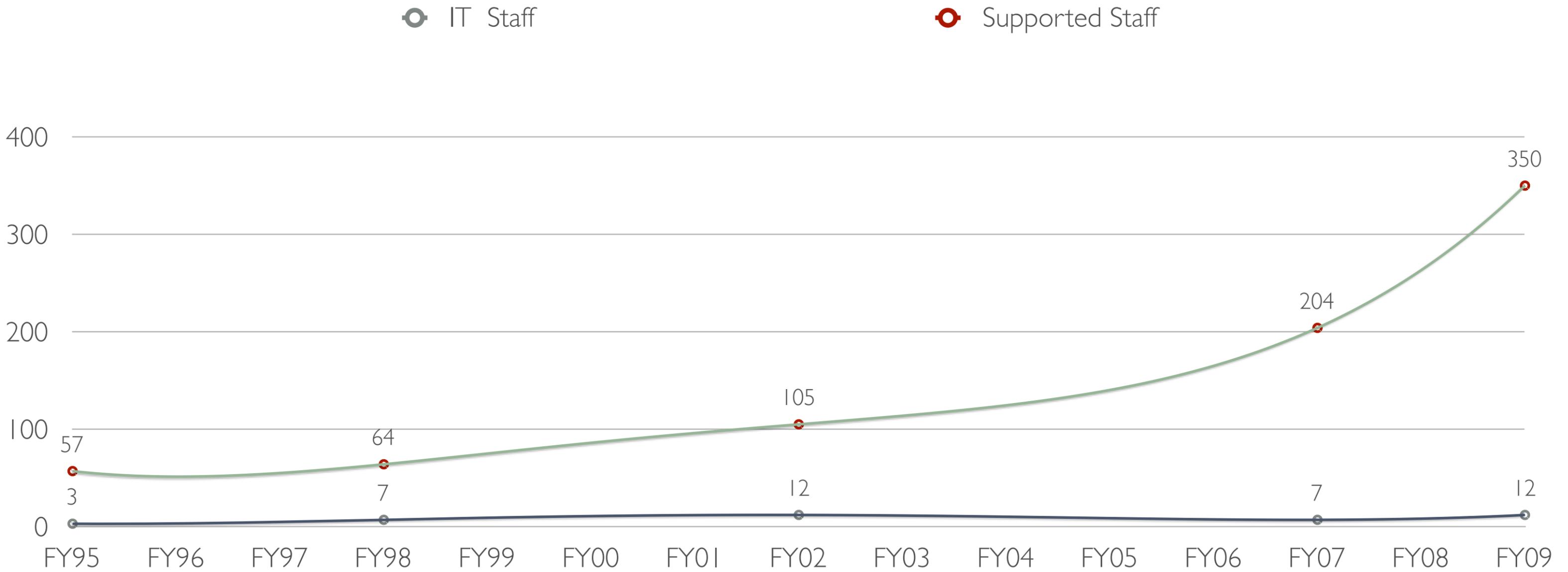
Greg Cross
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Robert Johnson
Joe Urbanski

Rick Bradshaw

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Linda Winkler

Who we serve

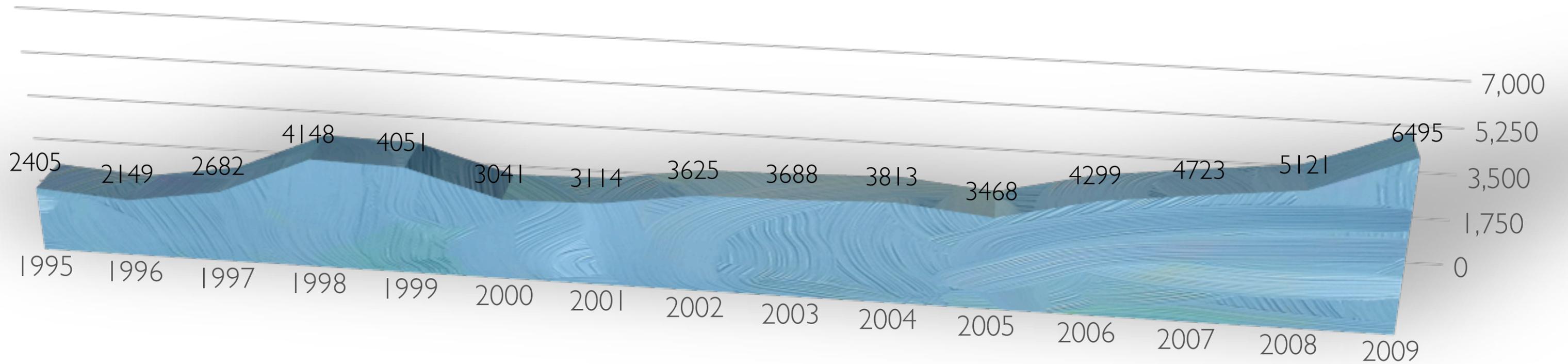
- ▶ MCS (Core IT Services, Networking, HPC)
 - ▶ ALCF (Core IT Services)
 - ▶ IGSB (Core IT Services, Computing Infrastructure)
 - ▶ CELS (Core IT Services)
 - ▶ CI (Core IT, Networking, HPC)
-
- ▶ Core IT includes Help Desk, file services, accounts, mailing lists, desktop/laptop support.



MCS SYSTEMS STAFFING

Compared to Staff Supported
(Not including CI)

■ Trouble Tickets



TROUBLE TICKETS

Over 1700 tickets to date in 2010

Ch-ch-ch-changes

- ▶ Added Ti
 - The CI came with him, right around the same time the CI was absorbing iBi.
 - CI & iBi came with 4 new sysadmins and three new datacenters.
- ▶ Losing Rick
 - Moving to research, Radix, Magellan, etc.
- ▶ Moved into 240 and the Core
 - Got out of the business of maintaining the building's network, but...
 - ... gained a big new datacenter, lots of challenges
- ▶ New Hardware
 - Fusion
 - Magellan
 - PADS
 - FutureGrid
 - T950 Tape Library

Satisfaction Survey

- ▶ Haven't done one in a while
- ▶ 59 people completed the survey
- ▶ Answers were generally positive (Yay!)
- ▶ Good points were raised

- ▶ Let's look at the results...

Roughly, how often do you interact with MCS Systems for support?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Multiple times a day		4.6%	3
Once a day		9.2%	6
Once or twice a week		21.5%	14
Once or twice a month		50.8%	33
Only in case of extra-terrestrial invasion. That is to say, rarely.		13.8%	9
I'd rather not say.		0.0%	0
		<i>answered question</i>	65
		<i>skipped question</i>	0

In general, how would you rate the time it takes to resolve your issues?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Faster than I expected		24.6%	16
About what I expected		69.2%	45
Slower than I expected		6.2%	4
What resolution? I'm still waiting.		0.0%	0
Show replies If you'd like to elaborate on the above, please do so here.			17
answered question			65
skipped question			0

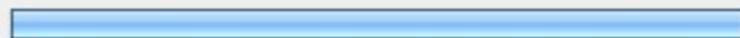
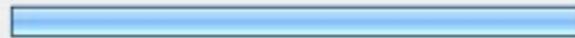
In general, how would you rate the time it takes to resolve your issues?

- ▶ “The response has been improving.”
- ▶ “It would be "faster than expected" except sometimes it's hard to get a hold of the right person for a particular thing. example: complex network related stuff takes longer if linda needs to be involved. this is because she's incredibly busy and has her head down with other things (often off site entirely).”
- ▶ “The help desk is always very helpful in either answering my questions or directing me to someone who can. And all of the staff I have had contact with is quick to respond to emails.”
- ▶ “Since most the requests are targeted at specific individuals I end up talking with them personally to speed up response.”
- ▶ “The response can be very spotty - I've had tickets answered in a matter of hours, and some that aren't ever replied to and I find my own workarounds for.”
- ▶ “Well, I expect fast turnaround and you deliver. If I didn't expect such great things, then I'd say "faster". Anyway, I mean it as good.”
- ▶ “Most issues resolved within a day or two. Some languish for weeks without regular prodding.”

In general, how would you rate the time it takes to resolve your issues?

- ▶ “Seems to depend somewhat on how important the request is perceived to be. This is perfectly reasonable, but, if it's going to happen, we may as well have a mechanism for specifying”
- ▶ “Could more things be completely automated and thus instantaneous, like, say, creating a mailing list or an SVN repo? At times people want those *immediately* and so they go to googlegroups et al. instead of using MCS resources.”
- ▶ “It varies a lot.”
- ▶ “Only because service has been so consistently good that my expectations are pretty high.”
- ▶ “My expectations have come to be unreasonably high, so "about what I expected" is terrific.”
- ▶ “except for git repository support. Definitely slower than expected :)”
- ▶ “Tickets are ignored until management brings attention to them, luckily management often brings quick attention.”
- ▶ “Mundane issues are usually resolved quickly. More complicated (that is, ones that can't usually be handled by whoever is manning the helpdesk) ones often linger substantially.”

How would you rate the knowledge or skill level of the people from whom you receive support?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Excellent		47.7%	31
Very Good		36.9%	24
Adequate		15.4%	10
Less Than Adequate		0.0%	0
Poor		0.0%	0
I think the forest creatures would be more able to help me.		0.0%	0
Show replies If you'd like to elaborate on the above, please do so here.			9
answered question			65
skipped question			0

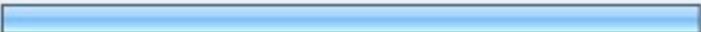
How would you rate the knowledge or skill level of the people from whom you receive support?

- ▶ “There needs to be more knowledge about products from Microsoft.”
- ▶ “the most consistently on the ball & smartest group of people i've ever worked with.”
- ▶ “They are very very helpful. AND knowledgeable, but I would like to see the forest creatures help out more. They need to start pulling their weight. I only see improvements in the satisfaction of the people if they were more involved...I know that it worked out great for Snow White.”
- ▶ “Most are Excellent, but some are only :-) Very Good.”
- ▶ “You don't always know right away what the problem is, but you more than make up for it with enthusiasm and commitment.”

If there are particular individuals or instances you'd like to call attention to (praise or complaints), please do so here.

- ▶ Everyone in the group had someone single them out for praise.
- ▶ As for complaints...
 - “There is one employee in your group who often goes to high-level managers when simple problems/issues come up with our job duties. [...] The need to copy so many high-level individuals on e-mail communications is unprofessional.”
 - “Routine requests are frequently met with terse or snide responses from one individual whom I will not name... This person needs to realize that not everyone is as savvy as "technical support" and that it is their job to help their customers...I find the "self-important" attitude needs to change with this person.”
 - “Are there individuals? I always thought there were a bunch of "robots" I was dealing with.”
 - “Ha ha ha! Just kidding. You guys are fine.”
- ▶ Two complaints about particular individuals, which we won't go into here for what I hope are obvious reasons.

Overall, how would you rate your satisfaction with the MCS Systems Group's ability to solve your computing issues?

		Response Percent	Response Count
I'm practically giddy with satisfaction.		38.5%	25
I think they do a better than average job of it.		46.2%	30
I'm not displeased, they do okay.		7.7%	5
I don't think I'm getting the support I could or should be.		1.5%	1
Meh. I'm pretty unhappy, frankly. Serious improvement is needed.		0.0%	0
Show replies My satisfaction can't be summed up in a multiple choice question, but I'll try in the text box below.		6.2%	4
		<i>answered question</i>	65
		<i>skipped question</i>	0

Overall, how would you rate your satisfaction with the MCS Systems Group's ability to solve your computing issues?

- ▶ “while not giddy, again most of the time I am very pleased with the service.”
- ▶ “Everyone I interact with is awesome. Unfortunately they are way overload most of the time. Keep up the good work. *Hire more people.*”
- ▶ “I think they do better than average, but only okay relative to my high expectations.”
- ▶ “Simple stuff is fine. Issues with svn, trac, web serving, and the breadboard cluster are usually handled in a mediocre way. Either problems entirely can't be fixed, or there is a clear fix but it is indefinitely promised to be "happening soon", or a problem is only half fixed in some sort of hacked-up way.”

How happy are you with the selection of services provided by the Systems Group? (Mail lists, File storage, login machines, desktops, etc.)

		Response Percent	Response Count
Extremely Happy! Every tool and service I need is either there, or put in place as soon as I ask for it.		27.4%	17
Pretty Happy. Just about every service I need seems to be provided by the group.		53.2%	33
Okay. There are some things I wish they provided that they don't, though.		19.4%	12
Ugh. Just about everything relevant to my work I have to provide myself.		0.0%	0
My satisfaction is irrelevant as I am Amish.		0.0%	0
		Show replies Comments and suggestions	11
		answered question	62
		skipped question	3

How happy are you with the selection of services provided by the Systems Group? (Mail lists, File storage, login machines, desktops, etc.)

- ▶ “I wish it were easier (possible?) to set up code repositories that could be shared with the world.”
- ▶ Two complaints about DOE requirements for getting accounts for non-MCSers.
- ▶ “All my life I was a PC, and switch in August to MAC. Still missing some PC features, especially Outlook - Inbox.”
- ▶ “It would be nice to get support for linux (ubuntu/debian) laptops, but I've also enjoyed being my own "sys-admin" ;-)”
- ▶ “A better set of collaborative tools with outside users. That is where most of my work is happening these days.”
- ▶ “Better documentation about the MCS services. For example, I was just about the only nut going compliant with the web style, when appeared, that was hardly maintained properly. As an early adopter I was suitably punished by template files moving not being announced in time (Yes, Ken was terrific of addressing the problem when announced, but I submit that changes should be documented and announced). Even today, I see no user doc on how to use templates for our own web page, etc. And there are many other services not properly documented.”

How happy are you with the selection of services provided by the Systems Group? (Mail lists, File storage, login machines, desktops, etc.)

- ▶ “It would be good to know if they install, support Linux desktops. What brand of linux they use. How often do they make sure that the linux in the desktops is updated, etc. I mean Apple desktops are great, but when you can get a top of the line linux desktop (Nehalem 8 core etc.) for a price that is less than than of the Apple desktop, why would one want to pay Steve Jobs? I hope the MCS Support page make its clear what level of support one can expect on linux desktops.”
- ▶ “It's a shame you're not responsible for other bits of infrastructure which don't seem so reliable.”
- ▶ Requests for git support.
- ▶ “My satisfaction is irrelevant as I am a postdoc.”

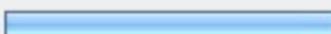
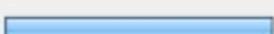
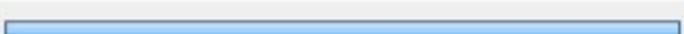
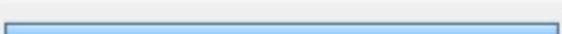
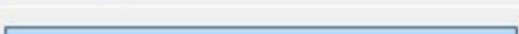
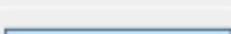
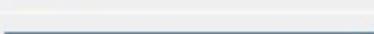
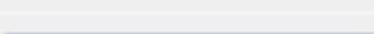
How would you rate the overall quality and reliability of the services provided by the group?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Excellent! Never see a glitch.		16.1%	10
Very good. With one or two exceptions, things tend not to have regular problems.		71.0%	44
Adequate. There are about the number of outages and failures I'd expect, and they're handled in a reasonable timeframe.		11.3%	7
Less than adequate. Service interruptions have an impact on my work more often than I'd like.		1.6%	1
Horrible. Services I rely on are constantly failing, and it takes forever for them to come back.		0.0%	0
Show replies Any particular shining examples or glaring problems?			6
		answered question	62
		skipped question	3

Any particular shining examples or glaring problems?

- ▶ “Not a fan of Zimbra, to be frank. I do try hard to show it the love, but I find it generally lacking in the kinds of features one would expect from an enterprise collaboration suite (or whatever these are called). I don't believe it's a matter of a few bugfixes or small feature improvements, either. Some of this may be the fact that my division doesn't consistently use it, but that's a chicken-and-egg question.”
- ▶ “I'm not happy to reboot practically every day to get back "unixhome". When I was a PC never had to reboot to get back to server. Dont know if its MAC or something else.”
- ▶ “I find myself keeping documents on my desktop to avoid down time when the server is down or I cannot access the shared drive.”
- ▶ “I don't think it's possible to never see a glitch in an organization as complex as ours.”
- ▶ “Linux support is woefully lacking.”
- ▶ “Mainly email. I'd expect close to zero visible problems per year. It's not uncommon to see every 2-3 months have some type of outage.”

Which IT services that MCS Systems provides are important to you?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Mailing lists		65.5%	38
File storage		51.7%	30
Login and compute servers		77.6%	45
Linux Desktops		27.6%	16
Mac Desktops		25.9%	15
Website hosting		53.4%	31
Website design		22.4%	13
Wikis		56.9%	33
Subversion		56.9%	33
Trac		46.6%	27
Mercurial		10.3%	6
Data backups		43.1%	25
MySQL		19.0%	11
PostgreSQL		5.2%	3
Request Tracker Ticket Queue		31.0%	18
Saucy Puppet Shows		31.0%	18
Show replies Any services we didn't list that are important to you?			14
answered question			58
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Show replies Any services we didn't list that are important to you?			14
answered question			58
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Any services we didn't list that are important to you?

- ▶ “You provide Website design?”
- ▶ “calendaring! email! networking support :)”
- ▶ “Password organization. I am on so many business applications here at the Lab, and one must have to remember about 12 passwords. When one password is messed up, it can affect other applications, and later, time is wasted because of one application affecting another.”
- ▶ “Linux laptop (and drop support for windoze ;-).”
- ▶ “Windows support.”
- ▶ “I guess it falls under "File storage", but the NFS server for /home is pretty important. It can be an inconvenience when /home performance leads me to do something like compile something on a local disk.”
- ▶ “Automated schedule notification for the Saucy Puppet Shows.”
- ▶ “Linux desktop support. What if I wanted a linux desktop with SuSE Linux? Will you support it?”
- ▶ “Simple uniform systems for people to keep good backups of their laptops.”

Any services we didn't list that are important to you?

- ▶ “Resetting my password, which happens every time I have to do TMS training.”
- ▶ “The breadboard cluster.”
- ▶ “VM servers as replacements to physical servers.”
- ▶ “Beer recommendations.”

Are there any services we do not currently provide that you wish we did?

- ▶ “It would be nice to have a condor pool”
- ▶ “Website design”
- ▶ “Important Sightings Around Argonne Announcements - I have previously discussed this with John Roberts, and he would love to elaborate on it.”
- ▶ “I am doing my own backups because it was too much trouble to keep the MCS offering going on my menagerie.”
- ▶ “Linux laptop, but I can manage on my own. Some informal support is provided on occasion.”
- ▶ “It would be nice to be able to manage mercurial repositories such that I can set up accounts to give write access to people without requiring them to get a full-blown MCS account (The wikis work this way, unless I'm mistaken.) It would also be nice to be able to optionally use OpenID for that. In this sense, the way that trac works might be a better example.”
- ▶ “Quality MS office support for Linux users, via crossover office or some such. No, tsc.anl.gov doesn't cut it.”

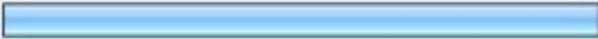
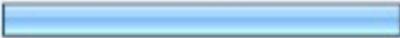
Are there any services we do not currently provide that you wish we did?

- ▶ “Have support for current Windows Versions. We have the problem that many of our collaborators use tools for windows alone and we cannot help them if we do not have this. For example, a lot of my collaborators use Sharepoint integration. (Since it is a project involving virtually all labs)”
- ▶ “Some, any improvements to the local, technology-free echo chambers, otherwise known as TCS meeting rooms.”
- ▶ “Linux desktop support.”
- ▶ “data intensive compute infrastructure.”
- ▶ “I use my laptop for pretty much everything, code development, papers etc. I rarely use the compute machines and file servers. Is the division now spending WAY too much money on an infrastructure that is now not important for the vast majority of users? (For example, big old file servers that can serve lots of machines at the same time). I suggest it may be time to jettison MOST of that infrastructure and focus the money on what is important: Email, webserving, HG+SVN servers, and laptops.”
- ▶ Multiple git mentions.

Are there any services we do not currently provide that you wish we did?

- ▶ “unix home file system could be mounted by mac laptop. (and not via sshftp or some other oddball tool)”
- ▶ “Interpretive dance and bacon delivery.”
- ▶ “Beer on Fridays afternoon.”
- ▶ “Could Redmine be offered as well? It's pretty nice for project management. I don't mean as a replacement for Trac, just a way for small teams to collaborate.”

Overall, how satisfied are you with the performance of the MCS Systems Group?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Extremely satisfied! Exceptional value!		40.7%	24
Very satisfied. Very good value.		32.2%	19
Satisfied. It's worth it.		27.1%	16
Less than satisfied. I'm not getting my money's worth.		0.0%	0
Unsatisfied. This is a very poor value.		0.0%	0
		Show replies Comments, rants, suggestions.	12
		answered question	59
		skipped question	6

Overall, how satisfied are you with the performance of the MCS Systems Group?

- ▶ “Is there a print solution for snow leopard in 240? The 'help' documentation at the website could be more comprehensive and more transparent, it is sometimes out of date. On the whole, no major problems, good job!”
- ▶ “Because I don't have direct dealings with money or budgets, I have no idea how much we are paying for the Systems Group. It could be a bargain or we could be irresponsibly wasting money on this level of IT support.”
- ▶ “However, my major complaint is that we do not get the opportunity to pass judgment on things before they happen, particularly as they may turn out to affect us for a long time. I will mention again:
 - the way wildcat transition was handled.
 - Slowly going away support for windows over which I had no say.
 - Which printer goes where (in particular, re scanning capabilities, 1f8 does not have it).
 - e-fax support went away (CTFax) with little or no discussion.
 - Also, on the long term, if I do not get enough support for collaborative tools particularly outside the fence, this will make my work much harder to complete.”
- ▶ “Seriously, I know the meeting rooms aren't your responsibility, but it reflects badly on you. If you aren't already complaining about the problem, you should be. Signing out projectors for meeting rooms is so 15 years ago; having to do it in a new building is just plain embarrassing. Even if the LCD panels were in place, they wouldn't be anywhere near an adequate solution. I could go on and on, but I'll stop there.”

Overall, how satisfied are you with the performance of the MCS Systems Group?

- ▶ “Many thanks to Craig and the MCS systems group for excellent work.”
- ▶ “:)”
- ▶ “You guys are doing a great job to keep us all productive!!!”
- ▶ “You guys deserve more funding.”
- ▶ “You guys do an outstanding job. Kudos!”
- ▶ “It is f-----g awesome that I am allowed to install whatever OS I like (if this is actually not allowed, then ignore my comment). Other DOE labs have ridiculous policies such as "you can only use RHEL4, WinXP or MacOS10.3".”
- ▶ “I've always been very impressed by the quality of the people you can hire (and keep on staff). I don't think I've ever had anyone tell me outright, "I don't know" or just make up an answer. It's always, "I don't know, but I'll find out and get back to you." I'm rarely, if, ever, disappointed.”
- ▶ “I have no idea how much we pay for this stuff, hahaha”

Summary

- ▶ I went fishing for complaints and got a boatload of compliments (alongside some very legitimate complaints).
- ▶ It's a genuine pleasure to work with all of you -- this is the best user community any of us has ever supported.
- ▶ We'll do this annually to keep a pulse on things.
- ▶ We'll also be implementing occasional quick satisfaction surveys on randomly selected trouble tickets.

- ▶ I am always available if you need someone to yell at, vent at, or discuss any problems. My door is open 90% of the time I'm in the office -- please don't feel you need to wait for an opportunity like this to raise an issue.
- ▶ Oh, I'm also available if you want to go have a beer.

Current Projects

- ▶ File Server upgrade
- ▶ Other server upgrades, moving to Virtual Machine infrastructure
- ▶ TCS Information Kiosks, Electronic Posters
- ▶ Linux Desktop Upgrade (Ubuntu 10.04 Lucid Lynx)
- ▶ Integrating management of resources from CI, IGSB, SEED
- ▶ Datacenter Environmental Monitoring
- ▶ Mac Hardware and Operating System Upgrades
- ▶ Request Tracker upgrade
- ▶ Account Management Upgrade
- ▶ Authentication upgrade

Future Projects

- ▶ Condor Pool
- ▶ Interactive poster displays
- ▶ High Performance Storage
- ▶ Big Memory machines

- ▶ What do **you** want us working on?

Q & A