

Recommendations from User Board on Non-Grid Access to UK Tier 1 Centre and AFS Service

NON-GRID ACCESS

In response to actions from the August Tier 1 Board and the June User Board, Andrew circulated a draft proposal to the September UB on the closure, by 11 January 2008, of "non-Grid" access to the UK Tier 1 centre. After some discussion, the UB agreed the following approach:

Instead of a single deadline, a staged approach should be adopted along the following lines:

- 1) Experiments first need to establish that Castor is a stable Grid storage solution for their needs. The current timescale for deployment of Castor 2.1.4 (i.e. the version with the increased functionality that most experiments demand) is end-October. Experiments are therefore requested to test Castor and to be in a position to make a statement about its adoption by **December 2007**.
- 2) Experiments start to test Grid User Interfaces (UI) on other computing clusters besides the Tier 1 centre and are in a position to report by **December 2007** on any outstanding issues or problems in adopting this approach. Any use cases for special treatment (production management, VO hardship, etc) are identified at this point.
- 3) The PBS "qsub" command is withdrawn **start of January 2008**, obliging experiments to use Grid submission (e.g. "edg-job submit"). Any further special cases are identified.
- 4) Direct logon to the Tier 1 is disabled (except for special cases) from **February 2008**. Access to the UI on the Tier 1 is restricted (except for special cases) from **February 2008**. This obliges experiments to submit work via the Grid from an external UI.
- 5) The "classic" User Registration Service on the Tier 1 is finally terminated (except for special cases) at the **end of March 2008**.

A separate, but related milestone is that final termination of the dCache storage system requires six months notice. Assuming this notice is given when Castor 2.1.4 is deployed, this is currently scheduled (but not confirmed) to happen in **April 2008**.

RAL AFS Cell

The UB also discussed the future of the AFS service at RAL (/afs/rl.ac.uk). Through the user registration formalities, this had previously become entangled with the discussions on non-Grid access.

After surveying the experiments, it was established that if the AFS service is closed, BaBar would be unable to continue any physics analysis and computing activities on UK facilities. In the Babar computing model, AFS is used to distribute the software, binaries and libraries (including CVS and web mirror) to external institutes. Any spare effort is being devoted to development of code to run on the Grid at UK Tier 2 centres – this project would also be terminated by the removal of AFS.

The UB concluded that the AFS service would need to be retained until the end of 2009 to at least meet the requirements of BaBar. It is understood that an investment of ~£20,000 is needed for new hardware and AFS access for non-BaBar users would need to be clarified.

In view of the international agreements with SLAC, the UB is not in a position to support the closure of AFS. With this in mind, the Tier 1 Board is encouraged to clarify support for the future of the AFS service at RAL as soon as possible.