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Authentication in the LHC Remote Operations Center

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Fermilab has made major contributions to the new Large Hadron Collider nearing completion at CERN in Geneva, Switzerland, including superconducting magnets, the Compact Muon Solenoid detector, and the networking and computing infrastructure to collect and analyze the avalanche of data to be produced by the collider. And in a departure from the ordinary limitations of proximity to the detector, the Remote Operations Center at Fermilab will extend monitoring and control access to US-based scientists.

Because the ROC is highly visible, we desire to make logins to the operations accounts and shift handoffs as smooth as possible, while maintaining compliance with the lab's security policies. The use of extensions to the pam_krb5 module written by Russ Allbery of Stanford, together with features in newer versions of Jamie Zawinski's xscreensaver program, has made this straightforward.

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