Who am I?

Peter Couvares — Senior Scientist, Syracuse University Physics Dept.

Two hats:

- LIGO Scientific Collaboration— I help lead LIGO's data analysis computing effort.

- Syracuse University Information Technology and Services — I work with ITS to help foster research computing on campus.

Why am I here?

Ruth and Rob asked Syracuse ITS to provide feedback on our experiences with OSG this summer. I think they know we are eager to engage but have struggled to do so.

Today I'm wearing my Syracuse University ITS hat, *not* my LIGO hat.

Also attending from Syracuse University:
Eric Sedore (Associate CIO)
Rich Ameele (Unix Group Manager)
Duncan Brown (Professor)

Syracuse University's goals (and experiences thus far) affiliating with OSG:

Short story: mostly goals and issues — not much progress to report.

- Goal (A) — use OSG as a means to enable external researchers to use backfill cycles on Orange Grid[1]. Bursty local demand == lots of cycles to offer.
- Goal (B) — enable Syracuse researchers to access cycles at other OSG sites, help them learn how to adapt to and effectively utilize distributed computing resources.
- Goal (C) — build local Syracuse ITS expertise and familiarity with national cyber-infrastructure technology, processes, and people by becoming a part of OSG.

What we (still) need:

1. A clear conversation about the right way to engage, both architecturally and in terms of process.
2. Agreement on timeline and milestones that help us all understand what we can expect and what we need to deliver. (Written down and circulated!)
3. A site visit from an expert[2] to review the deployment and resolve or escalate any remaining issues.

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[1] Syracuse campus grid consisting of a mix of 10k dedicated and opportunistic cores.

[2] *cough* Brian Bockelman? *cough*

Issues

1. OSG computing model and architectural options for affiliation are extremely confusing — both the simple enumeration of what options exist and the pros/cons of each remain unclear even now. We initially chose to affiliate via OSG Connect but never really understood the alternatives or tradeoffs.

2. There's doesn't seem to be a clear process for engaging or managing an interaction with a "new" OSG campus like us — so there's been a big mismatch in expectations for the collaboration latency and priority.

    - Round-trip interactions routinely take weeks, not days — everyone we've worked with is friendly and helpful but also busy, and this is clearly not something they can devote much time to; technical issues are overlooked or go unresolved for weeks or months.
    - We tried (and maybe failed) to emphasize from the start that we were interested in moving quickly and getting some kind of useful integration working in a matter of weeks — it would have been helpful to know early if that wasn't realistic.
    - We proposed to fly someone to Syracuse at our expense to help with the initial integration — I still feel that this would have been invaluable.
    - Currently ~4 months in, and no real jobs running successfully.

To be fair:

- We may have failed to clearly communicate our long-term goals (see A-C above) at the start, leading us to an initial approach that didn't match those goals, or a process that couldn't support them.

- We could have complained more — but we weren't sure what expectations were reasonable. We're not paying for support, so what can we demand? (On the other hand, we're trying to offer ~10k cores of computing to OSG as a first step — please help us give you our cycles!)

Plan B: CondorCE

A few weeks ago, after a conversation with Miron, we started trying to deploy a CondorCE, in parallel with the ongoing OSG Connect effort. This has required more technology deployment on our end — but that's not a bad thing. The CondorCE collaboration seems to be moving much faster.

Conclusion

We are still eager to engage! What can we do better or differently to make the process faster and more successful? What's the right model for SU to join OSG?