Managed Platform Unit 2009 Q2 report

1   Effort

This quarter saw a further increase in the effort expended on unit activities (from 2.51 FTE to 2.64 FTE), a decrease in effort expended on Building work and a continued reduction in effort attributed to HOC (0.35 FTE) as Tim deputised as HoC.

Chris is no longer seconded to the Services unit.

Development work accounted for 47% (0.90 FTE) of this quarter; 38% for specific projects and 9% for misc development. This is marginally down, in real effort terms, from Q2 2008 (1.13 FTE) due to an increase in holidays and illness.

The unit is contributing development effort to the AFS and TiBS deployment projects, in the form of authoring LCFG components to manage the relevant services; this accounted for 14% of our development work.

The percentage of effort expended on operational work, 30%, is the same as in the last quarter. It is likely that some of the effort attributed to "operational" might well be considered to be "development" work; we are introducing a new "bucket" to breakdown effort in this category.

Targeted staff development continues to be pitifully low at 2%. However new technical skills are being developed as a result of development projects; eg AFS and TiBs.

Computing Support Officer effort amounted to 0.17 FTE; this was expended on DIYDICE under virtualisation testing, various LCFG profile housekeeping and server moves.

2   Development

2.1   Power Management implementation (94)

12% 0.23 FTE 105 hrs

This project is implementing the conclusion of the Power Management investigation report.

In this quarter, the sleep component was deployed for testing purposes to desktop DICE machines on the "develop" release (mostly used by computing staff). Various problems were revealed and tackled: bugs were fixed, the sleep support levels for various hardware/software combinations were progressively refined, and a considerable amount of investigation went in to improving idleness detection on machines running X sessions.

2.2   RPM submission (13)

11% 0.21 FTE 94 hrs

This project is concerned with moving our RPM (Redhat/Fedora's software packages format) repository from NFS to AFS and modifying our RPM submission technology appropriately.

This quarter saw significant progress. All the required code was completed, tested and reviewed. New servers were ordered.

2.3   AFS (2)

8% 0.15 FTE hrs 68 hrs

The MPU's work on this unit is focused on authoring an LCFG component to manage the AFS service.

During this quarter a new LCFG component (lcfg-openafs) was developed for managing openafs clients and servers. This provides facilities for manipulating the client and server configuration options that might be needed in Informatics. Also, in most cases the changes can be made without needing to restart processes. New high-level LCFG headers were created for clients, file servers and database servers for the common configuration requirements. These have been tested with a test database cluster and a new test file server.

2.4   TiBS (122)

6% 0.12 FTE 55 hrs

The MPU's work on this unit is focused on authoring an LCFG component to manage the TiBS service.

This quarter effort was expended on learning about TiBS and identifying requirements for the LCFG component.

2.5   Misc Development

9% 0.18 FTE 83 hrs

This category covers all minor development work which is too small to be a full project. This quarter this has included :-

- Shipped Scientific Linux 5.3 upgrade
- Shipped DIYDICE on virtual machines
- Developed a remctld component
- Rewrote large chunks of "om"
- Various small enhancements to LCFG components

3   Plan for Q3 2009

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- Complete work on RPM submission project and deploy.
- Increase effort spent on targeted personal development
- Start work on the LCFG refactoring project
- Continue work on the TiBS project
- Continue work on Power Management implementation project
- Assist in deploying the new AFS LCFG component.