

Sysadmins' report

2014–2015

Hardware

Last year we reported that (after various hard drive failures) we had installed two new 4TB drives in pip. We have now completed the upgrade with two more 4TB drives, and vg0 is now 8TB. Over the course of the last year, we purchased one disk (assisted by Retrosnub donations), and received another disk-donation: we are very grateful to Ian Abel.

The SRCF does not take backups, and users are responsible for the security of their own data. However, were we to own a hypothetical backup box, we would have replaced two of its hard drives in the last year. This would have slightly increased its capacity, and substantially increased its speed.

In an arrangement with Dr Stajano, two brand new servers were donated to the SRCF by GCHQ, with one to be used to host “security related” challenges (to be overseen by Dr Stajano), and the other for us to upgrade pip. As a result, pip is now running on substantially faster hardware. The old-pip hardware is currently idle. We intend to add it to the Xen cluster, and may use the increased capacity to offer VMs to societies.

We are grateful to (Michael Rutter / the Theory of Condensed Matter group) for the donation of two second hand servers, which we will use to replace members of the Xen cluster (which constitutes a substantial upgrade).

Software

There are two software projects of note: the infrastructure required to realise the security box mentioned (“smog”), and the control panel.

We made progress on “smog” at the start of the academic year, in that the core functionality is present, though there is still substantial work that needs to be done before it is ready. We do not currently have any details of deadlines or proposed uses of the box.

The control panel executed its first “job” at the last hackday (in March), removing a test user from a society. The front-end is largely done.

Misc

We are no longer expiring the accounts of graduated users, and are allowing them to keep their account as long as they remain contactable (i.e., provided we have a working email address for them). The Terms of Service will be updated to reflect this fact shortly.

This year we have welcomed two new sysadmins: Richard Allitt and Dexter Chua.