



SALSA service manual: Reference document for SALSA support



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Abstract

SALSA-Onsala (“Such A Lovely Small Antenna”) is a 2.3 m diameter radio telescope built at Onsala Space Observatory, Sweden, to introduce pupils, students and teachers to the marvels of radio astronomy. The sensitive receiver makes it possible to detect radio emission from atomic hydrogen far away in our galaxy, the Milky Way. From these measurements we can learn about the structure and kinematics of the Milky Way.

This document is not intended for users of SALSA. Instead it is intended for the support and maintenance of SALSA, as a document to collect instructions and useful notes about how the system works in detail and how to fix errors or perform certain support duties.

Coverimage: Image of the SALSA telescopes in Onsala.

Chapter 1

Basic maintenance

1.1 Remote power control

Sometimes it is needed to cut the power to a part of the SALSA system, for example to reboot the USRP. The SALSA electronics are connected to an electric outlet which can be remotely controlled via internet at <http://pwcontrol2.oso.chalmers.se\verb>

1.2 RIO

RIO 47200 from Galil comref: <http://www.galil.com/download/comref/com47xxx/index.html#com47200>
Weather: <http://www.oso.chalmers.se/weather/> Try to keep below 10m/s

1.3 Usage report

To compile a usage report, go to the Usage Report page on the admin pages in the SALSA portal. Then, enter date interval to select. Note that long interval, such as a year, may take a few seconds to load. When loaded, open up LibreOffice Calc. With the pointer, mark the table on the webpage and copy it. then Paste it in a Libreoffice Calc sheet. You now have a column with time for each booking. Problem is, the booking time should be doubled if we have two telescopes for the session. One way of doing this is the following; add a new colum besides the one with times. In one cell in this column, insert

```
=IF(OR(B246="Vale, Brage",B246="Brage, Vale "),A246*2,A246)
```

with 246 being the row numbers, change accordingly. Then drag downwards, and it will follow the relative cell paths, causing all duplicated bookings to show dopuble hours. Then, sum the new time column at the bottom, and you have a total time for your date range.

Chapter 2

System installation

In this chapter we describe how to set up a SALSA system from scratch. Currently only the software part is included, the hardware part will be added later.

2.1 Software

This log was written by Eskil Varenius 2015-11-16 as he re-installed all software on the computer vale from scratch. Below follows the polished log, where I have tried to improve the clarity of the text for easy reading. All commands in the terminal are in bold face. In general things should work as described, but there may be one or several reboots of the computer missing to read in config files etc. If you get stuck, try a reboot. This manual may also be useful for a client computer like brage which is not running the booking system server. In that case, large parts can be omitted, in particular setting up mysql and apache servers, and only a mysql client should be needed.

2.1.1 Pre-requisites

At the start of this, I had one completely clean computer (Dell Optiplex 760) and one Live-DVD of Linux Mint 17.2 Mate 64-bit. I also had a backup of the directories /opt and /var/www as well as a SQL-dump of the drupal database.

2.1.2 Installing Linux Mint 17

First I plugged in the internet cable and inserted the live-DVD. I had to press F12 when starting the system to get the boot menu, then wait a minute until I was sure that the computer had accepted the DVD, and then press Boot from dvd option. After some time, the Linux Mint Live environment was up and running, and I used the Install Linux Mint option on the desktop. I ran the guide with default options, since the hard-drive was clean no re-formatting etc. was needed. When the install finished the screen was black, probably because I left it long enough for the screen-saver timer to start, but no screen save was active. I had to press space on the keyboard to wake it up, and it then asked me if I wanted to restart or continue with Live DVD. I choose restart and was then told to eject install media and close tray. I choose **salsa_admin** as user and choose a new password to reflect the year :). The system now booted up all fine.

First thing I did was to choose not to display the startup dialogue all the time. Then I ran a complete update using the graphical software updater. Then I rebooted the system. To remove Mint Welcome screen for new users, which is only confusing to describe in the instructions for remote login, I ran `sudo apt-get purge mintwelcome`. Finally I installed the editor vim which I like to use to edit config files etc. by typing `sudo aptitude install vim`.

2.1.3 Network configuration

To make Vale resolve other local computers, as being able to write `ssh brage` instead of the `ssh brage.oso.chalmers.se`, manual config was needed. The file `/etc/resolvconf/resolv.conf.d/base` was edited to contain the following four lines

```
domain oso.chalmers.se
search oso.chalmers.se
nameserver 129.16.1.53
nameserver 129.16.2.53
```

Setting manual IP

The SALSA computers have two network cards: one to the outside world (public), and one used for the USRP/RIO units (local). The only important requirement is that for the USRP (local) the card has to do 1Gbps (i.e. 100Mbps is not enough). For the public network, vale has a dedicated IP-address, so I changed to manual IP using the graphical tools: Control center -> network connections -> Wired connection 1 -> IPv4. For easy reference I also changed the name of this connection to Public internet, as in connected to the outside world. The IP was set to Manual and one adress line was added (IP, netmask, gateway) as 192.16.208.184, 255.255.255.0, 192.16.208.1. I did not specify any DNS. For the local card I needed two lines of adresses since the USRP and RIO boxes were different: 192.168.10.10, 255.255.255.0, 129.168.10.1 for USRP, and 169.254.212.10, 255.255.255.0, 169.254.212.1 for RIO. The USRP also need some extra settings, else it will complain and suggest one to run the commands `sysctl -w net.core.rmem_max=50000000` and `sysctl -w net.core.wmem_max=1048576`. But, this only works temporarily, I need a permanent fix for all users. From the USRP documentation it is said that this could be fixed by editing the file `/etc/sysctl.d/uhd-usrp2.conf` to contain

```
# USRP2 gigabit ethernet transport tuning
net.core.rmem_max=50000000
net.core.wmem_max=1048576
```

While doing this, we can also get rid of the USRP warning Unable to set the thread priority. by adding, at the end of the file `/etc/security/limits.conf`, the following lines:

```
@salsa_admin    -    rtprio    99
@salsa_users    -    rtprio    99
```

2.1.4 Setting up SSH-access

To be able to login remotely to Vale via SSH, I installed open-ssh server: `sudo aptitude install open-ssh` server and no further configuration was needed.

2.1.5 Install webserver and mysql database

I used apache2 as web server. Install by `sudo aptitude install apache2`. Then I replaced the contents of `/var/www/html` (only default `index.html`) with the backed up files, i.e. `index.html` and `salsa-folder`. I made sure of permission by running `sudo chown -R www-data:www-data salsa/` in the `/var/www/html-folder`. Then I installed a mysql server by `sudo aptitude install mysql-server` and when prompted I choose the root password as the standard admin password. Then I installed phpmyadmin to handle mysql administration `sudo aptitude install phpmyadmin`, where I selected apache2 using space key and set the password to the admin password. I also installed mysql client, not sure if it was needed, as `sudo aptitude install mysql-client`. Finally, phpmyadmin complained that so I solved it by running `sudo php5enmod mcrypt` and `sudo service apache2 restart`.

2.1.6 Creating MySQL users and tables

Now I logged in to `vale.oso.chalmers.se/phpmyadmin` as root. First I added the user `salsa_drupal`, with hostname `localhost` and selected the option Create database with same name and grant all privileges. Note that the username and password chosen here has to be match in the file `/var/www/html/salsa/sites/default/settings.php` line 567 for drupal to work, and in the `crontab` bash script for the handling of bookings to work. I now want to import the old database structure, but before doing so in phpmyadmin we need to allow large files to be imported, since the SQL-dump is around 240Mb. To up the limits, we edit the file `/etc/php5/apache2/php.ini` to say

```
upload_max_filesize = 512M
memory_limit = 512M
post_max_size = 512M
```

, and then we restart apache as `sudo service apache2 restart`. Now the import worked fine and the database was imported, along with the `salsa_archive` table. I now created the `salsa_archive` user and opened privileges for this user only on the archive table, using phpmyadmin edit privileges. This was done only for localhost access, and nicely returned the message `GRANT SELECT , INSERT , UPDATE , REFERENCES ON 'salsa_drupal'.'salsa_archive' TO 'salsa_archive'@'localhost';` as confirmation.

Enable access to booking system

To be able to read the mysql-database from another computer (i.e. not localhost) I need to add another user with name `salsa_drupal` but specify `host=brage.oso.chalmers.se` for brage. But, for this security layer to be considered, I first have to allow access from anything else than the default `127.0.0.1`. this is done by editing the file `/etc/mysql/my.cnf` (on the server computer

vale) and commenting the line `bind-address=127.0.0.1` followed by `sudo service mysql restart`. NOTE: this was also needed for the `salsa_archive` user to be able to send the new fits files.

2.1.7 Setting up Apache and Drupal

For drupal to work we need to make sure the login credentials are OK in the file `settings.php`. I also made sure the `settings.php` file had proper permissions as `sudo chown go-rwx settings.php`. Just checking the webpage showed that I could not access anything except for the front page. Several issues had to be sorted out. It seems Drupal needs the `gd` library, so we need to install it by `sudo aptitude install php5-gd` and then `sudo service apache2 restart`. I then found out that drupal needs `mod_rewrite` enabled in `apache2`, so I did `sudo a2enmod rewrite` and `sudo service apache2 restart` to enable it. After this I needed to modify `/etc/apache2/apache2.conf` to allow overrides, else the `CleanURL`-config in Drupals `.htaccess` file will not work. So I changed the section on `/var/www/` in the `apache` config file to say `AllowOverride All` instead of `none`, i.e.

```
<Directory /var/www/>
    Options Indexes FollowSymLinks
    AllowOverride All
    Require all granted
</Directory>
```

For future drupal maintenance, the software `drush` is very useful, so I installed it as `sudo aptitude install drush`. Finally I changed the password of the web-admin account.

2.1.8 Install and configure Cendio ThinLinc

This is a wonderful remote desktop service which is free for less than 10 simultaneous users, perfect with SALSA. First I requested the latest version on the cendio webpage and got an email where I could download the file `tl-4.5.0-server.zip`. This was unzipped and I ran the graphical installer `Thinlinc Server installer`. Following instructions, this also runs a setup utility afterwards, where I choose password for the web admin tools etc. The utility installs a lot of missing dependencies, the only thing I skip is to configure printers. `ThinLinc` can restrict user access in terms of groups. It is easy to modify the group membership of users via the `cronjob` script, so I created a group where I place the current user(s) who can login to the computer using the `ThinLinc` webaccess as `sudo addgroup salsa_weblogin`. This is then read by `ThinLinc` after modifying the file

```
/opt/thinlinc/etc/conf.d/vmsserver.hconf
```

where I set `allowed_groups=salsa_weblogin`. Now I want to tailor the software to SALSA. First is to remove the welcome windows by setting `show_intro=false` in

```
/opt/thinlinc/etc/conf.d/profiles.hconf
```

I also replaced Cendio `thinlinc` with SALSA Vale in short welcome lines. Then I want to make the login-page that users see a bit more SALSA-like. This page is reached at `vale.oso.chalmers.se:300`. First I edit the welcome page by editing the file


```
/opt/thinlinc/share/tlwebaccess/templates/main.tpl
```

with custom replaced html. It should be possible to use the templates in a better way, rather than replacing , but this works. I also added logo.png to the folder

```
/opt/thinlinc/share/tlwebaccess/www/images
```

to show SALSA logo on the login page. Now ThinLinc was ready for use!

2.1.9 Setting up the cronjob

The SALSA booking system works by crontab running a bash-script every minute to check for new bookings. This script needs some software, e.g. members which was installed as sudo aptitude install members. From the backup directory (or from github repo with appropriate modifications) I then copied the crontab files to /opt/salsa. I also copied the skel-files which will be used by the cron-script to place desktop shortcuts to the control program. For this, an icon was also included in the /opt/salsa directory. I also needed to add the group **salsa_users** by running `sudo addgroup salsa_users`. The crontab could now be ran, and was started by using `sudo crontab -e`, and adding the line:

```
*/1 * * * * /opt/salsa/crontab/update_salsa_access_from_drupal.sh
```

at the bottom of the file.

2.1.10 Installing the SALSA control software

The SALSA control software can be obtained from Eskil Varenius github:

```
git clone https://github.com/varenius/salsa.git salsa.git
```

The files in the folder **/Control_program** was now copied to /opt/salsa/controller. The default config file was renamed to SALSA.config and then edited with computer/telescope specific settings. To make SALSA easily accessible by all users, the global configuration file /etc/profile was edited to append the PATH command

```
export PATH=$PATH:/opt/salsa/controller/
```

To make the SALSA python software run, the following was needed `sudo aptitude install python-tk python-scipy python-astropy python-mysqldb python-dev python-matplotlib python-pip` Then, using pip (installed above) the following two python modules were installed `sudo pip install pyephem; sudo pip install tendo`;

Finally we need gnuradio and uhd-drivers to connect to the USRP. No drivers or files are needed for the RIO because we are using telnet for that. To get GNUradio and USRP things: `sudo aptitude install gnuradio libuhd-dev libuhd003 uhd-host`

Make sure that the SALSA item in the /opt/salsa/controller is a symbolic link. Sometimes, when copying, it may be replaced with an actual python file. This will work, but then when updating the software it will not be updated and problems may arise. To create the symbolic link to main.py, use `sudo ln -s main.py SALSA`.

The SALSA program can now be started using SALSA in a terminal (after logging out and in again), or via /opt/salsa/controller/main.py.

Done!

2.1.11 Backup

We want SALSA to be backed up. Currently this is done via root-access using a public ssh key which I got from Glenn Persson in Onsala. By default, root-login was enabled without-password in ssh-config so no changes needed apart from adding the public key to `/root/.ssh/authorized_keys`. Note that the folder `.ssh` and files had to be created. Permissions were set using `chmod 700 .ssh` and `chmod 600 .ssh/authorized_keys`. Backed up folders (as of 2015-11-17) are

```
/home/salsa_admin/  
/opt/salsa/  
/opt/thinlinc/  
/var/lib/mysql/  
/var/www/
```

2.1.12 Setting up GalilTools for RIO development

To develop new features it is useful to communicate directly with the RIO using the software GalilTools available from Galil. Downloaded from

<http://www.galil.com/download/software/galiltools/linux/>

I used the file `galiltools_1.6.4_amd64.deb` from the folder Ubuntu 14.04. and installed with `sudo dpkg -i galiltools_1.6.4_amd64.deb` and then i could start the software using only `galiltools` in a terminal.

2.1.13 Qt-designer for graphical UI development

I use the graphical designer software called `qt4-designer` to construct the SALSA GUI. It is installed by typing `sudo aptitude install qt4-designer`. Then, the SALSA user interface is edited by typing `designer SALSA_UI.ui`. Once saved, the designer file needs to be converted to python code. This is done using the `pyuic` tool, which first has to be installed through `sudo aptitude install pyqt4-dev-tools`. Then, one may run `pyuic4 SALSA_UI.ui > UI.py` to update the `UI.py` file. Possible hooks for buttons etc. are implemented manually in `main.py`.