

## Alternative science operations approach for Large Synoptic Survey Telescope (LSST)

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# 1 Introduction

We are currently experimenting with Google and Amazon services for science platform and processing. These services are priced to deliver compute and storage - our current model at the LSST Data Facility (LDF) is also service oriented but is not proceed in the same manner making comparisons difficult. It has been difficult to get an alternative cost model together. An initial approach to a cloud costing was outlined in DMTN-072, this approach was to try to cost the hardware and compare to cloud pricing.

In this document a radical restructuring of LSST operations is explored - a technology stack underpinned by commodity services which could be provided by commercial providers or computing centers. Here we look first at how we would run something like this -we can then leave one free variable which is the cost of the underlying compute and storage services. This will both help to sanity check the LDF costing and potentially allow us to have a ball park for assessing commodity provider offers.

# 2 Plugable service oriented architecture

In the Kavli workshop in Vegas (Feb 2019) we took a long term view to astronomy archives and data processing. We suggested a layered service model as depicted in Figure 1<sup>1</sup>. Our requirements are no longer unique and we have access to a wealth of open source software, commodity hardware, and managed cloud services (offered by commercial providers and federally-funded institutions) that are well positioned to meet the needs of LSST Momcheva et al. (2019); Bektsev et al. (2019).

We took Figure 1 and made a more LSST oriented version in Figure 2. This is pretty close to how we are currently but we do not treat the compute and storage as pure services.

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<sup>1</sup>The full document is here <https://petabytestoscience.github.io/PetaBytes-2019-04-26.pdf>

# Integrated Cyberinfrastructure

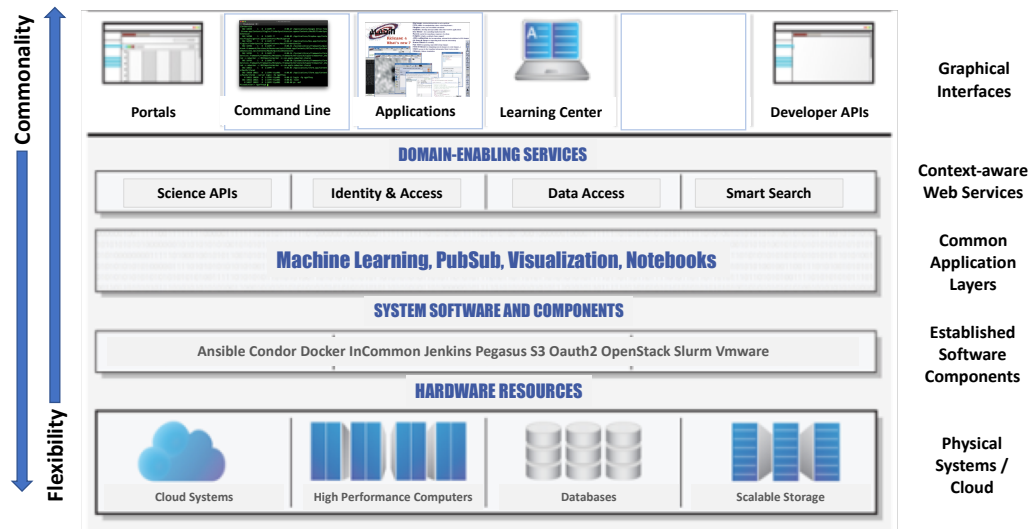


FIGURE 1: An example a cyberinfrastructure built on an Infrastructure as Code design model. Note that while this example does not have astronomy-specific tooling, our recommendations highlight the importance of developing astro-specific layers that are fully accessible to scientists in both the application and the graphical interface layers.

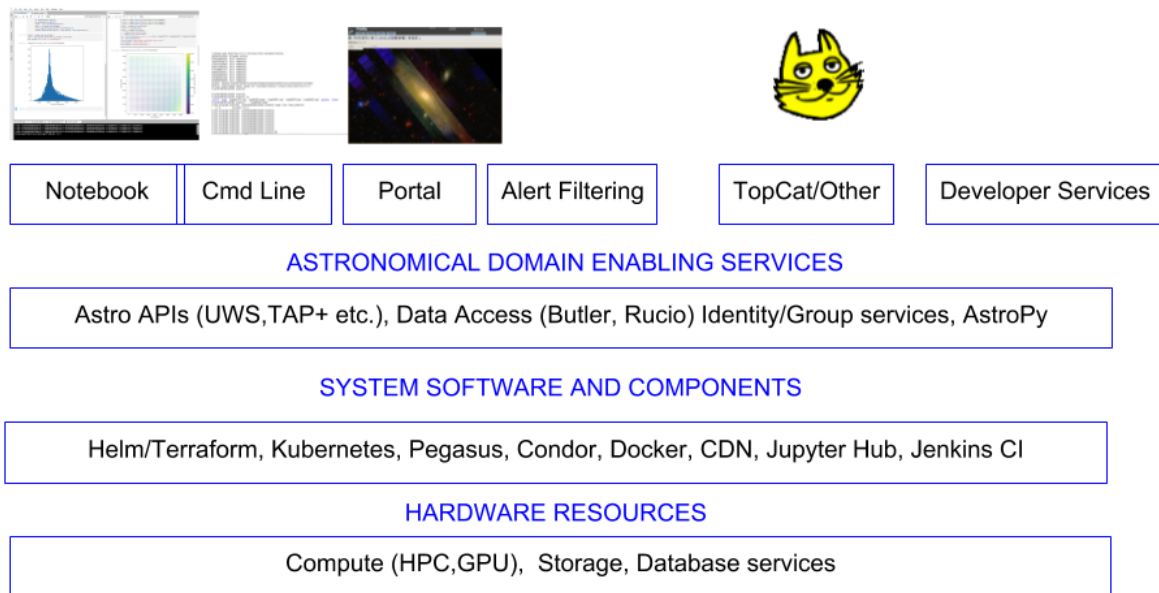


FIGURE 2: An example LSST cyberinfrastructure built analogous to the CI model shown in Figure 1.

In important part of following this architecture is the ability to choose best in class components. In the science platform for example we have probably the best notebook implementation but we could possibly pick up a better portal. In processing National Center for Supercomputing Applications (NCSA) insist on a shared noting approach - a move to an Object Storage could profoundly change that. It may raise other questions though on replication and redundancy. Hence getting to operations in this model will require some rethinking in construction - construction is a big ship which is already steaming ahead so a change in course will take some effort. It is absolutely worth pursuing though.

### 3 Data Production Department

The role of data production within LSST is to deliver LSST's science products: the science images, the alert stream, the annual data releases, the science software, and the Science Platform. In the current ops proposal not all groups required to do this are under control of the science operations Associate Director (AD).

Figure 4 gives a view of the Data Production teams which combine some of the old science operations and LDF departments. This is far more analogous to Data Management moving into operations than in the current proposal and would make for a smoother transition.

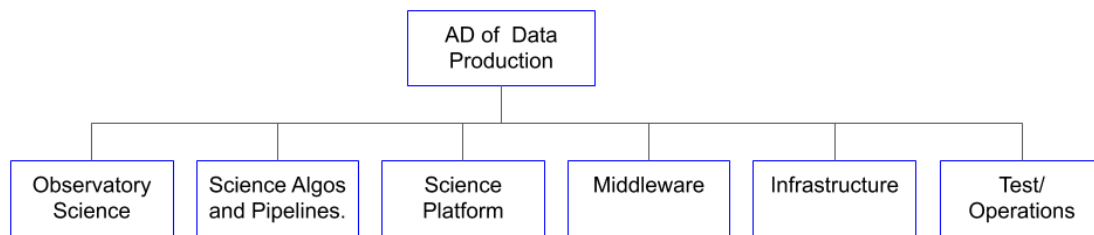


FIGURE 3: Possible configuration of Science Operations Department for operations of LSST

The Full Time Equivalent (FTE) counts are estimated in Table 1, which also gives the team sizes from the operations proposal for comparison. A brief description of the teams is given in Section 3.1.

Table 1: Size (in FTE) of the various teams in data production department with sizes including LDF teams from the proposal in the fourth column - a zero implies the team did not exist in the proposal.

Team	2023	2026	2023(P)	Note
Management (AD)	1.5	1.5	1	
Observatory Science	5.5	5.5	5.5	System performance?
Science Platform	6	6	6.5	
Science Algos and Pipelines	22	16	21	QA to system performance?
Middleware	7.5	6.5	0	
Infrastructure	8	7	0	

Verification/ Operations	5	4	0	
LDF Management (AD)	0	0	3	In infrastruture
LDF Scientific Prod. Services	0	0	6.75	In Verification/ operations
LDF Information Technol- ogy Center (ITC) Security	0	0	8.5	Some in infrastructure/ middleware
LDF Prod. Services Soft.	0	0	7.6	Some in infrastructure
LDF ITC and Facilities	0	0	13	Should be in services charges
<b>Total FTE</b>	<b>55.5</b>	<b>46.5</b>	<b>72.85</b>	

**Note:** The numbers in Table 1 assume we choose the people in the roles based on experience and effectiveness - in the current plan there are a number of Department Of Energy (DOE) provided FTEs where the reason in some case seems to be availability rather than suitability. In the submitted proposal there was probably a certain number of duplicated roles (certainly in LDF) to cover this. We must consider this aspect carefully.

## 3.1 Teams

Figure 3 introduces several teams some of which were not in the original ops proposal. Little detail is given here about each.

### 3.1.1 Observatory Science

As in the ops proposal the primary responsibility of this team is to understand the end-to-end impact of the Observatory hardware and environment on the science images and to work with the Observatory Operations department to ensure that the image quality meets requirements.

**This team may be better placed in Observatory operations department**

### 3.1.2 Science algorithms and pipelines

This team is responsible to assess and assure the alert stream and annual data releases. In the submitted proposal this includes extensive Quality Assurance (QA) to compare the data products against requirements - this may be better merged with System Performance/Verification. The main responsibility of this team would then be the underlying software pipelines themselves. Monitoring and updating the calibration plan and algorithmic implementation is also a responsibility of this team. The Calibration Support Scientist on the Observatory Science team will be responsible for monitoring the physical implementation of the calibration plan at the summit. In Table 1 this team is initially sized similarly to the AP/DRP teams in construction. There will be significant maintenance in the first two or three years of operations. As mentioned above there may be some consolidation with QA activities in System Performance.

### 3.1.3 Science platform

This team will be responsible for maintaining and evolving LSST's user access portal, the Science Platform. This will include keeping up with evolving technologies and computing infrastructure, as well as providing basic code-base maintenance, bug fixes, and low-level response to science community and internal LSST requests for new features.

### 3.1.4 Middleware

In a service oriented model with a layered architecture as outlined in Section 2 it is essential to have a cross cutting team who compose and debug services. Software such as the butler is not part of the pipeline but the pipeline needs it. In house developments such as Qserv should be covered here (1.5FTE has been included for this - DOE/SLAC personnel - could be 2). This would also cover the builds and how the code interacts with the infrastructure (Section ??).

### 3.1.5 Infrastructure, Site Reliability Engineering

This is for deployment of various systems and pipelines. Configuration is included in this. There needs to be a couple of people who manage keys/secrets for access to commodity services. We would need a security resource as well as database expertise. This then implies using tooling for system management as provided by e.g. Amazon Web Services, one of the largest cloud computing providers. (AWS) console.

In general an Site Reliability Engineering (SRE) team is responsible for the availability, latency, performance, efficiency, change management, monitoring, emergency response and capacity planning of their services Beyer et al. (2016).

This team would include paying for a liaison at any service provider e.g. Google Professional Services or a Service Manager at NCSA. (2FTE calculated)

### 3.1.6 Verification/Operations

This team will take and verify new releases for operations before they are deployed to the operations system. They will monitor the operational system to make sure it is functioning - they should have some science knowledge to know it is actually working properly as opposed to not just giving errors. A team of 4 should be able to handle this. Some support for this is assumed from IN2P3 .

## 3.2 Service budget

If we assume we do not reduce the operations budget then the total cost of the LDF services is the difference in FTE and the non labor costs for computer purchases. This is calculated in

Table 2 .

Table 2: Estimate of service budget/cost using FTE and non-labor costs from the proposal.

	FTE	Cost K\$
Annual labour diff from Table 1	17.35	\$4,338
Non labour hardware (average of all years - NOT CORRECT NUMVER)		\$8,000
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$12,338</b>

**These non labor numbers need to coem out of the proposal sheets - I only had a Probability Density Function (PDF) and di not try to do this properly. It should exclude the BASE hardware and Chilean archive hardware budgets.**

We would still require some hardware on the moutain and the base in Chile where we would potentially still keep a copy of the raw data.

## 4 Other implied changes to the current operations proposal

Notably missing from Figure 3 is QA. Currently QA is spread across three departments - the suggestion here is to place all QA activities under the survey performance department. Consolidation of the QA activities in one department may allow for some personnel saving.

The data release team in science operations would require a verification scientist (this may be 0.5FTE) while the Science Data Quality Assurance (SDQA) and Semantic scientists may move to QA in survey science.

All data facility work, be it with a partner or in commercial cloud should be firmly under science operations - hence there is no LDF department and no associate director for LDF as depicted in Figure 4.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup>This is in line with AMCL recommendations



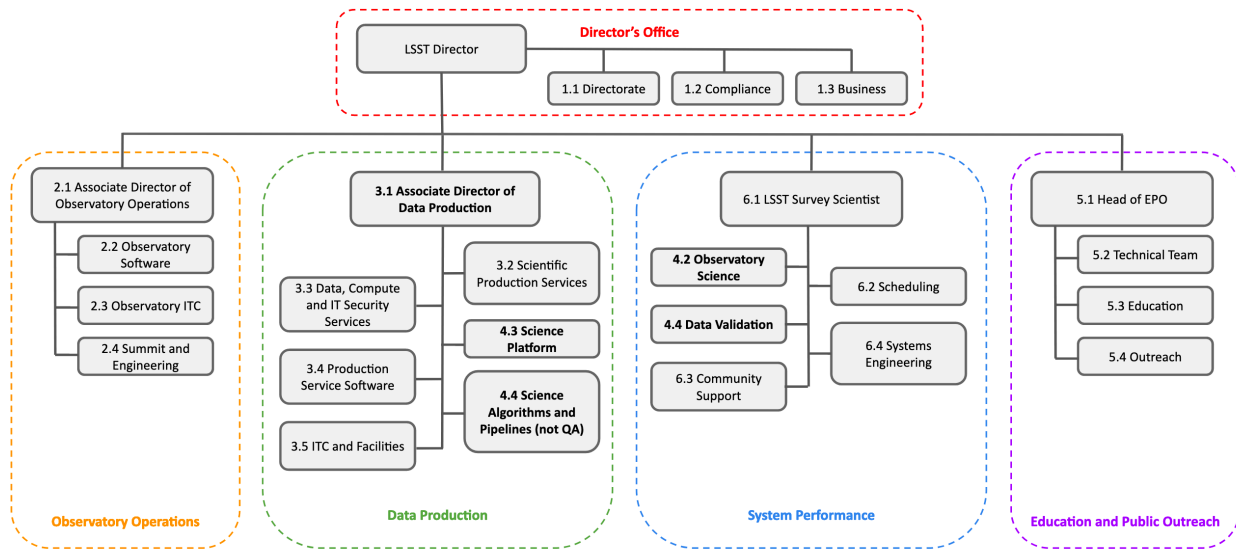


FIGURE 4: Possible new organisation chart for LSST operations

**NOTE: I have said before communications should report directly to the director - in Figure 4 there is NO communications.**

ITC and facilities (Figure 4) in this model should come from National Center for Optical-Infrared Astronomy (NCOA) logically also this does not belong in data production but at a higher level its for the entire org, the observatory already has its own ITC group so they are good.

There are still some developments in NCSA such as Data Acquisition System (DAQ) forwarders which would need to be included in possibly the observatory software.

There are other developments Data Back Bone (DBB) which could be replaced by commodity services like Amazon S3 which includes replications and reliability.

## 5 Conclusion

A restructuring of operations would give more transparent cost, allow for a better comparison to commodity pricing for many services and would yield considerable savings.

## A References

### References

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- Beyer, B., Jones, C., Petoﬀ, J., Murphy, N.R., 2016, *Site Reliability Engineering: How Google Runs Production Systems*, O'Reilly Media, Inc., 1st edn.
- Momcheva, I., Smith, A.M., Fox, M., 2019, In: American Astronomical Society Meeting Abstracts #233, vol. 233 of American Astronomical Society Meeting Abstracts, 457.06, ADS Link
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LSST Data Management Technical Note

## B Glossary

**AD** Associate Director.

**AWS** Amazon Web Services, one of the largest cloud computing providers..

**CI** cyberinfrastructure.

**cloud** A visible mass of condensed water vapor floating in the atmosphere, typically high above the ground or in interstellar space acting as the birthplace for stars. Also a way of computing (on other peoples computers leveraging their services and availability)..

**cyberinfrastructure** Sometimes denoted CI, A term first used by the United States (US) National Science Foundation (National Science Foundation (NSF)), and it typically is used to refer to information technology systems that provide particularly powerful and advanced capabilities..

**DAQ** Data Acquisition System.

**DBB** Data Back Bone.

**DOE** Department Of Energy.

**FTE** Full Time Equivalent.

**ITC** Information Technology Center.

**LDF** LSST Data Facility.

**LSST** Large Synoptic Survey Telescope.

**NCOA** National Center for Optical-Infrared Astronomy.

**NCSA** National Center for Supercomputing Applications.

**NSF** National Science Foundation.

**Object Storage** A storage architecture that stores files as objects (opposed to a hierarchy etc.) commonly provided by cloud services, i.e AWS S3 (Simple Storage Service) or Google Compute Cloud "Cloud Storage"..

**PDF** Probability Density Function.

**QA** Quality Assurance.

**Qserv** Proprietary LSST Database system.

**S3** Structured, imperative high level computer programming language, used as implementation language for the Virtual Machine Environment (Virtual Machine Environment (VME)) operating system.

**SDQA** Science Data Quality Assurance.

**software** The programs and other operating information used by a computer..

**SRE** Site Reliability Engineering.

**US** United States.

**VME** Virtual Machine Environment.