

From: CVAX::GATEWAY::"MIKE DAVIS (MDAVIS@NAIC.BITNET)" 2-FEB-1990 18:11
To: ABRIDLE AT NRAO
Subj: Computer Access Philosophy

Date sent: Fri, 2 Feb 90 19:02 AST
<"AOVAX::IN%"MIKE@naic.edu"@UPR1.UPR.CUN.EDU>
To: abridle@NRAO.BITNET
Message-id: <E4888A43B07F00863C@UPR1.UPR.CUN.EDU>
X-Envelope-to: abridle@NRAO.BITNET
X-VMS-To: "in%"abridle@NRAO.BITNET"@UPR1

Date: Fri, 2 Feb 90 19:05 AST
From: "Mike Davis (MDavis@NAIC.BITNET)" <MIKE@naic.edu>
Subject: Computer Access Philosophy
To: "in%"abridle@NRAO.BITNET"@UPR1
X-VMS-To: IN%"abridle@nrao",MIKE

Dear Alan,

Yes, this is clearly the way to do it, and avoid telephone tag. We are just about to get on NSFNET (at last), which raises a number of interesting issues regarding both security and access to resources. I thought you or Bob Burns might be able to give me a summary of what NRAO's policy and experience is regarding user access -- are users encouraged to log in to NRAO computers from their home institutions to run data processing jobs? Are they discouraged from doing so? Or do you have some semi-automatic procedure which limits access without forbidding it?

Our total processing resources at the moment don't add up to much more than a couple of Sparcstation equivalents plus tape and disk drives, and it would be very easy to saturate them. Nevertheless, we have had people successfully log in via telenet for some years and get some of their work done, using Arecibo-specific software. They tended not to clog the system because at 1200 baud it was reasonably self-limiting. At 56 kilobaud we could well run into problems, particularly in the ease with which disk space could get clogged. Any suggestions?

Mike

From: CVAX::ABRIDLE 2-FEB-1990 23:57
To: BITNET::"mdavis@naic",ABRIDLE
Subj: Remote computing

We have had various levels of outside computer use. A few quite large projects have been reduced using AIPS remotely by non-NRAO users. The practical limits have been disk space and need to have tapes mounted rather than CPU use. We have usually had sufficiently few big outside users at a time that we have been able to co-ordinate with them individually to ensure that they do not try to load the CPU or the disks at a time when we have big user projects going on with the visitor actually present. Big tape jobs have been arranged so that they are done on weekends or in the evenings at times when we have local support available (an operator on duty). Otherwise there has not been a big demand or need to police it.

We have encountered some abuse of privileges from passwordless accounts, and now either have "captive" accounts for most of the designated remote logins, or passwords that we change from time to time and distribute verbally to users who are working remotely from "normal" accounts. We had a bit of a problem with users exploiting our connectivity to download large databases from other sites, and getting a lot of priority time running mail daemons during the day. This had to be stopped for one user group, but they were quite happy to write tapes at the remote site when we explained how much of a problem they were causing. We have also had some problems with people getting to us over the net and then dialing out on long-distance phone lines through our modems to talk to bulletin boards. This tended to be computer-literate kids whose parents had shown them how to reach us. Cost a few hundred dollars before we caught on, but was easily cured. Basically, simple password protection on accounts keeps things down to a dull roar, and we're not an attractive enough target for real hackers. So we have not had much of an access problem or an access policy either. Largely because our machines are no bigger or faster than what people have at home.

For software services, e.g. people who want bits of AIPS code or documentation over the net, we have tried to go the E-mail route, e.g. the AIPSSERV system whereby people can send mail that requests a daemon to send them files by return mail. That way they don't actually have to log in to us.

I would guess that with Sparc stations and no great special connectivity out of Puerto Rico, you would not encounter any enormous problems with remote use of your machines. And most of the people who log in are "friendly" and will s#respect simple password protection. Just encourage on-site users to use real passwords, not their names or initials or "password". For software services, Don Wells is our local daemon expert if you want to get into the "mailer" or "exploder" techniquer#; the anonymous-guest protov#col with ftp also works well, though we don't have much on it.# here in C'ville.

That's all I can think of right now. If I can clarify anything, let me know.

Mary says "hi" (I'm doing this from home and she saw sho I was typing to back at the start). Nice to see you at the AAS. Give Jean our love.

Cheers, Alan

From: CVAX::GATEWAY::"MIKE DAVIS (MDAVIS@NAIC.BITNET)" 5-FEB-1990 08:59
To: ABRIDLE AT NRAO
Subj: Many thanks

Date sent: Mon, 5 Feb 90 09:58 AST
<"AOVAX::IN%"MIKE@naic.edu"@UPR1.UPR.CUN.EDU>
To: abridle@NRAO.BITNET
Message-id: <E279036083FF008E3F@UPR1.UPR.CUN.EDU>
X-Envelope-to: abridle@NRAO.BITNET
X-VMS-To: "in%"abridle@NRAO.BITNET"@UPR1

Date: Mon, 5 Feb 90 10:01 AST
From: "Mike Davis (MDavis@NAIC.BITNET)" <MIKE@naic.edu>
Subject: Many thanks
To: "in%"abridle@NRAO.BITNET"@UPR1
X-VMS-To: IN%"abridle@nrao",MIKE

Dear Alan,

Thanks for the very useful summary of NRAO experience with outside remote users of your computing facilities. You touched on just about everything we have been worrying about, as we prepare for the great NSFNET day.

Greetings to Mary. I occasionally log in from home as well, but the phone system usually does me in.

Regards -- Mike