Condor Activities at the University of Southampton

Information Systems Services (ISS) installed Condor in early 2002 with a small dedicated Windows 2000 cluster, re-tasked from the main Linux cluster Iridis. The initial system consisted of just 16 machines with the initial demand for this class of resource coming from researchers in Engineering and Computer Science.

From this initial activity, ISS then developed a joint project with the then Department of Social Statistics who provided approximately 30 additional machines from their own computer suite and several users who wished to use the statistics package R. This experiment was considered to be reasonably successful. However, it was felt that it would be difficult to convince significant computational users of the benefits of this platform with such a limited resource.

It was therefore decided to exploit the workstations that ISS provides for the student population at Southampton University which would therefore eventually lead to a more substantial resource. The roll-out has been continuing over the last 10 months and has been significantly improved by efforts from colleagues within ISS.

Currently, ISS has around 1200 Windows XP machines in the pool and a single Linux based Condor master running Condor 6.4.7. An upgrade to 6.6.x is planned for later this year. The Condor pool is available to any researcher in the University. A small number of significant (>200 concurrent jobs running) users are from the Engineering and Chemistry community. Over the last 10 months around 2.1 Million CPU hours have been run though the pool.

At this point the operation of the Condor pool needs to be assessed to determine the impact of this service on the students that utilise the workstations. This will include investigating issues such as the Job Vacate policy and whether the pool should only run overnight, nice levels for job runs etc.

Oz Parchment  
Primary and Computational Services Manager  
Information Systems Services  
University of Southampton  
Highfield  
Southampton  
SO17 1BJ  
Email: o.g.parchment@soton.ac.uk