

Physics Computer Facility

By the PCF Staff

September 2009

The Physics Computer Facility provides computing and networking to the Department, its faculty, staff, and students. *We do computing so you can do science.*

1 Services

The PCF staff:

- Runs the Ethernet and wireless networks in the Physics Research Building (PRB), Physics' portion of Smith Lab, and various administrative offices. The PRB wired network has about 1,000 connections at 1 gigabit/second, with 100 megabit/second service at the other sites.
- Runs Unix/Linux, Windows, and VMS servers, with about 200 terabytes of disk storage, several networked printers, and secure remote access.
- Provides web services, E-mail, file services, printing, program development environments, and many other software services.
- Supports OSU-owned desktop and laptop systems running Windows, MacOS, or Linux.
- Assists its customers in selecting, purchasing, installing, and using computer systems to meet individual needs, and provides consultation over the life of those systems.

- Helps its customers deal with other service providers on campus: the Ohio Supercomputer Center (large-scale parallel computing and data storage), Arts and Sciences (Media Manager and other shared services), OSU Libraries (online journals and databases), the Office of Information Technology (site-licensed software, security), OSU Purchasing (discount-priced hardware), and various OSU administrative groups (student records, financial data, research records).
- Obtains and distributes software of interest to the Physics community, both licensed (Matlab, Mathematica, LabVIEW) and open-source.
- Supports instructional computing and provides an advanced videoconferencing facility for both education and research.
- Updates these services and maintains their security.
- Represents Physics' and the research community's interests on a variety of committees and panels throughout OSU.

2 Frequently-asked questions

1. *Where do I get help?*
Send E-mail to action@mps.ohio-state.edu, telephone 614-292-4269, or visit room 1199 in the Physics Research Building.
2. *How do I get a computer account?*
Come to PRB 1199 and fill out a form to obtain accounts on our Windows and/or Unix systems. If you are a student, you'll need to be sponsored by a faculty or staff member.
3. *What are my options for E-mail?*
 - Physics provides robust E-mail services on our Unix and VMS systems. You can read your mail from either system with any POP or IMAP client such as Outlook or Thunderbird. The mailing address is *username@mps.ohio-state.edu*.
 - OSU provides basic E-mail service for employees (osu.edu) and contract services for students (buckeyemail.osu.edu). Whether or not you use this service, you should visit the Office of Information

Technology's web site *shelp.osu.edu*, activate your *OSU Internet Username*, and tell them where to send your campus E-mail. (This is a separate username and password than your Physics credentials.)

- We discourage you from using a commercial provider, such as Gmail. You are not allowed to send any confidential information such as grades, student rosters, or proprietary research data to such providers, and this is difficult to avoid if you use them for OSU business.

4. *What are my wireless options?*

- Physics runs a local 802.11g wireless system which is accessed with your Physics E-mail password. This system covers the office and public areas of PRB. See the PCF staff for an access key and instructions.
- OSU runs a campuswide system in classrooms and libraries. This system is present in some PRB conference rooms and in our classrooms in Smith Lab. You can activate your *OSU Wireless Network* password through *shelp.osu.edu*.

5. *Where can I print?*

There are more than a dozen public printers in PRB and Smith Lab. They are named for the room where they sit. The five large color printers are the most popular (PRBX002, PRB2050, PRBM2020, PRBX301, and SMITH2097). The public printers can be easily added to a Windows or MacOS client; please see the PCF staff for assistance with Linux printing.

6. *Where do I find documentation?*

Go to the Physics Department web site *www.physics.ohio-state.edu* and select "Help". The Help page has links to "Physics Computing Help" and "Physics Department Faq-O-Matic". There is a great deal of online documentation within software packages such as Mathematica. The PCF staff will help you find any needed information.

7. *Where can I buy computer equipment and software for personal use?*

OSU runs two stores that sell these items at a discount: WiredOut in

the Central Classroom Building (see *wiredout.osu.edu*) and the Apple store in the Wexner Center (*store.wexnercenterstore.com/apple.html*).

8. *Where can I obtain site-licensed software?*
softwaretogo.osu.edu contains an index of all campuswide software. The PCF staff can help you find other free or inexpensive packages.
9. *What am I required to do to protect my machines and data?*
 - Apply vendor security patches. PCF staff can help.
 - Upgrade applications frequently. Many security problems arise in packages such as Office, Adobe Acrobat, Flash, etc.
 - Run up-to-date anti-virus and anti-spyware software on Windows systems. OSU provides this software for your personally-owned computers.
 - Choose difficult passwords, change them from time to time, and *never* reveal them to anyone. PCF staff can provide guidelines for password selection.
 - Do not store *OSU Restricted Data* such as grades on personally-owned equipment. Use (in order of preference) *Carmen* (OSU's courseware management system), our servers, or an encrypted OSU-owned machine.
10. *Who are the PCF staff, and what are their specialities?*

Terry Bradley: instructional computing support; databases; Windows applications.

Bryan Dunlap: Unix services; E-mail; physical environment for our computers.

John Heimaster: Director of Scientific Computing; hardware and software architecture; VMS services.

Brian Keller: Director of Information Technology; Windows infrastructure; security; acquisition of computing equipment.

John Langkals: Audio/Visual services; multimedia preparation and distribution.

Tim Randles: Research computing support; Linux services.

J.D. Wear: Windows infrastructure and deployment; web services.