

WORKSTATION COMPUTERS

PROVISION AND MANAGEMENT

Workstation computer management is the management service of all scientific workstations, office computers and notebook computers, provided by the Information Technology services group of the Data & Computation Department to the scientists at PIK. It encompasses the entire life cycle of all workstation computers, from the specification of standards and the provision of appropriate hard- and software, through the replacement by computer systems of the next generation. Workstation computer management also includes configuration management for hard- and software, security management, and a user help desk.

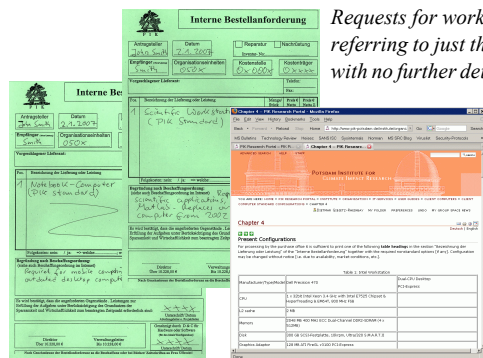
PROVISION OF WORKSTATION COMPUTERS

Procurement: Well defined Standards

DC-IT currently has defined three classes of workstation computers, and specified standards for the following devices:

1. Office PC
2. Scientific workstation
3. Notebook computer

When ordering a new computer (by means of an internal purchase request), PIK scientists do not need to care about the technical details, but rather just specify the device class. DC-IT makes sure that the computers meet the user's requirements.



Requests for workstation computers, referring to just the class of a machine, with no further details or specifications.

Detailed information about the machine classes, as specified by the DC-IT services group, is available on the PIK Intranet

By deploying standard devices, DC-IT is able to handle the provision of new computers in a very efficient and economic manner, and to respond quickly to issues such as hard- and software problems. The standards are periodically (twice a year, usually) reviewed, adjusted, and published on the Intranet, to make sure that they:

- take advantage of the latest technology in hard- and software, and facilitate the usage of advanced network services
- meet the requirements for high performance and capacity, so the computers can handle research and development (R&D) tasks, such as programming and modelling

Operating System (OS) Flexibility (Linux, Windows)

Users can choose the operating system which is the most suitable for their requirements. In any case, they will have access to virtually all types of applications, independent from the OS platform, see poster *Windows Application Service*.

CONFIGURATION AND DEPLOYMENT

All workstation computers are pre-configured by DC-IT and equipped with standard software for using the network services, such as file- and print service, email, backup/archive service and compute service.

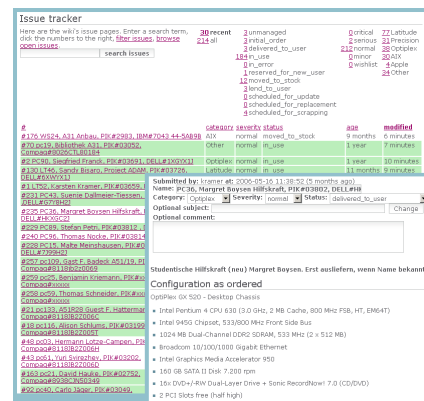
Upon machine deployment, DC-IT staff members support the users to create a working environment for efficiently using the network services. This includes online documentation as well as interactive support for building more complex user environments, e.g. for using PIK network services from remote locations.

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

The local resources of workstations, such as memory and storage usage, processor load etc. can be monitored and managed from the system manager's desktop, using powerful systems management and remote control software, such as SystemTools' Hyena and the SysInternals' advanced system utilities. The management software has been enhanced and customised by the DC-IT services group.

ISSUE TRACKER

DC-IT uses a customised database on the Intranet, to track the status and the history of all workstations. In case of problems reported by users, the computer's history is an important source of information, which helps in identifying the origin of a problem, and finding a stable solution.



The Client Issue Tracker on the Intranet is used by the DC-IT services group for logging events, generating reports and tracking the history and the status of the machines on the network. It is an essential tool for an efficient and pro-active systems management.

USER HELP DESK

DC-IT provides an extensive Help Desk, offering a broad range of solutions, such as

- electronic publishing/authoring tools, support for PDF/PostScript issues, and image processing,
- resolving client-side network issues, OS and application software problems,
- optimisation of resource usage,
- support for printing and plotting.