

Basement Supercomputing FAQ

Last Updated Monday, 09 January 2006

Do you sell cluster hardware?

No, we do not sell hardware. Just like an architect does not sell building materials or build buildings, we don't sell or assemble computer hardware. Like an architect/engineer, however, we design cost effective high performance systems. There are other organizations who specialize in integrating and supporting HPC hardware.

How do I know what hardware to buy?

Once we determine your needs, we can recommend the hardware that we know will work. Clusters built from glossy data sheets are often a risky endeavor. As part of our services, we can create a RFP (Request for Proposal) that you give to hardware vendors. The proposal will reflect the hardware and commercial software you need and only the hardware and software you need. Our carefully prepared proposal ensures that the hardware will work as intended and meet your expectations.

Can you recommend hardware vendors?

Yes, we can recommend certified hardware vendors that have experience in this area.

What if I have a hardware problem?

We will work with you to isolate the hardware problem and then provide you the information to contact the vendor. In some case we can contact vendor for you.

Do you sell cluster software?

Not really. We sell cluster support and consulting services. We integrate best of breed open source applications and provide support and documentation for the end user. If there are commercial applications that your require, we can integrate them with our Baseline Cluster Suite.

How will you save me money?

We will save you money in several ways. First, when procuring a cluster, we often reduce the hardware cost by determining exactly what your need. We can create an explicit proposal that ensures the end result will work. You will not have to spend the time and effort to guess "what works with what" or "is this better than that". We optimize to your needs,

not the number of boxes we can sell you (remember we do not sell hardware). Second, once the cluster is installed and running, we handle the majority of the administration. These tasks include installation, integration, optimization, and upgrades. Our goal is allow you to do the science and engineering and not have to incur time and expense to support of the cluster.

Can you help with XYZ?

It depends. We have quite a lot of experience with clusters, parallel programming, optimization, and integration into user environments. Unlike some vendors, we tend to take a very pragmatic approach to things. i.e. first and foremost, it has to work and be supportable.

Can you provide trainings?

Sure. We have trained many customers in the past and expect to hold "open" trainings in the near future.

What are your qualifications?

Our principals have been working in HPC for over twenty years. All senior members of our staff currently hold PhD's in various areas. We have worked in academic, government, and commercial settings. We believe in building good working relationships with customers.