



CSAR User Survey 2002

Summary Report

January 2003

1) Introduction

The CSAR User Survey for 2002 was conducted between 22nd November and 13th December 2002. An online form was made available for completion and submission via the CSAR website

(<http://www.csar.cfs.ac.uk/admin/forms/usersurvey02.shtml>).

The survey was publicised via two emails issued by Neil Pratt of EPSRC, rather than by the usual emails issued by CSAR. Perhaps for this reason, the response was much better than that received for the previous year.

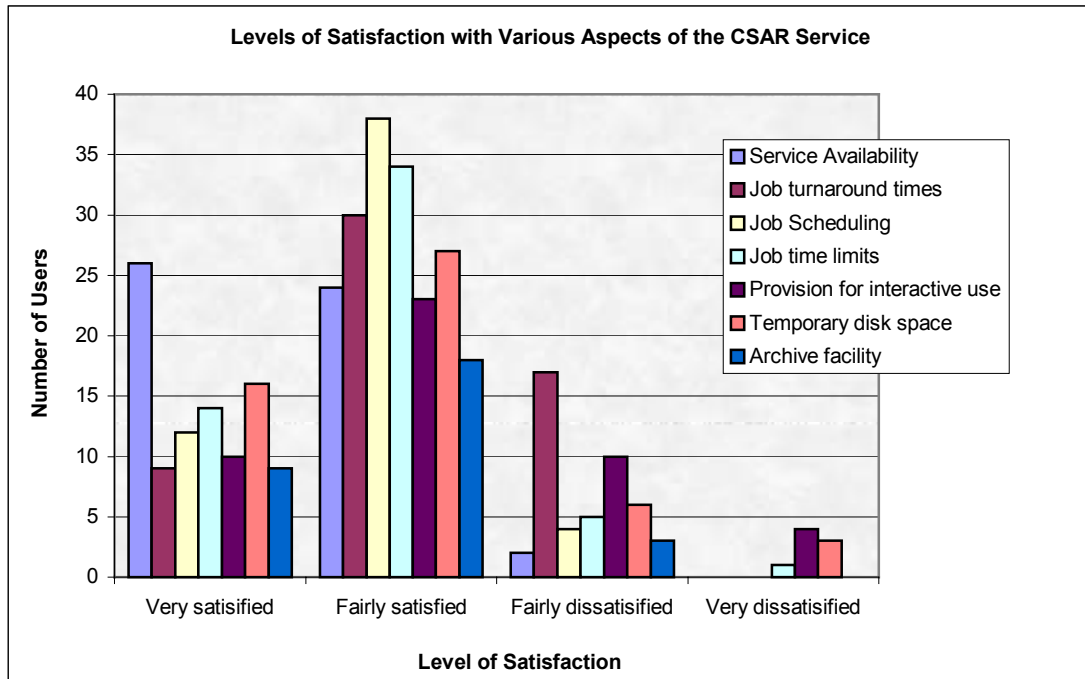
59 people returned completed forms. This represents approximately 11% of all Class 1, 2 and 3 users (554 in total). Although survey submission was entirely anonymous, users were given the opportunity to provide their name on the form. 42 of the people who submitted chose to do so. 10 of the users who responded act as CSAR PIs (project administrators).

Many new users took the opportunity to complete the survey, 27% of the respondents having started using the CSAR service in 2002.

2) Systems

Users were asked which of the CSAR systems they had made substantial use of during 2002. 39 responded that they had made much use of turing, 28 of fermat, 23 of green, 10 of fuji and 6 had made substantial use of the new Origin interactive system Wren.

Users were asked how satisfied they were with a number of aspects of the CSAR systems. The following table charts the number of responses in each category for those who had expressed a view:



To summarise, most of the users who answered this question were very or fairly satisfied with the various aspects of the service. The most satisfaction was with service availability, the least satisfaction with job turnaround times.

3) Dealings with CSAR Staff

The survey asked users to inform us how satisfied they were with the response of CSAR staff in the dealings they had had with them. All of the users that responded to this question were very or fairly satisfied with the prompt response by CSAR staff. No one believed that the response had not been prompt enough. Almost all of the users were satisfied that the response they had received was knowledgeable and that they had been dealt with in a friendly and helpful manner, with just two people fairly dissatisfied with these two categories of the service provided.

The following chart plots the nature of the users' replies for those who had expressed a view:



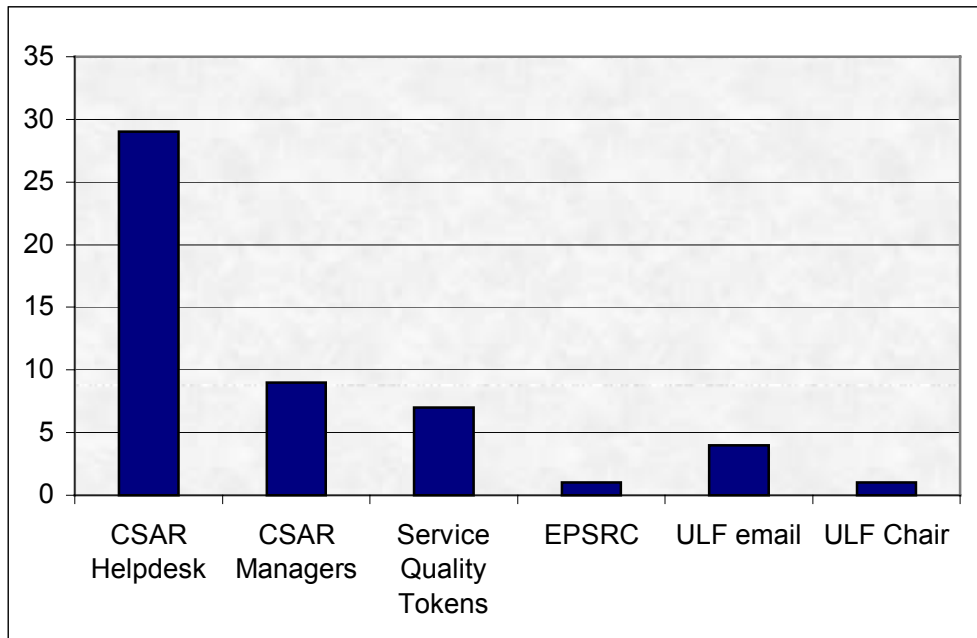
4) Information Provision

87% of users felt that sufficient information is made available to the user community. Of the 56 people who responded to this question, only 4 (7%) would like to receive more information via other methods.

Users were asked whether they were aware of the “Machine Status” page on the web. 33% stated that they were unaware of this page. As this is quite a high proportion we have amended our documentation, particularly with regards to those new to the service, advertising the existence of this page. Other ways of making users aware of this page will also be investigated.

5) Feedback Mechanisms

Users were asked to indicate if they had used the various feedback mechanisms that are in place. The chart below shows the number of users who ticked each:



94% of users thought that the response that they had received had been acceptable.

6) CSAR Training Services

The survey asked whether users had used the CSAR Training Services. 8 answered that they had. All of the users that had used the CSAR training services had found it useful. Of the 50 that had not, the reasons given were that it was not required (34), or 'other' (6) where reasons included lack of time/funds, self-teaching and several users who were looking at attending CSAR training in the near future.

7) CSAR Applications/Optimisation Support Services

7 people had used the CSAR applications/optimisation support services. Of those that had responded that they had not used the support services the reasons given were as follows:

External Support not required	33	
Alternative support used	2	
Other	5	including that support could be used in the future.

8) Code Efficiency and Analysis

Of the 54 responses to question 9, which asked users if they were aware of how efficiently their code was running, 34 (63%) stated that they were aware of the efficiency of their codes and 20 (37%) that they were not. Of the 20 that were unaware of how efficiently their code was running, 14 (70%) said that they would be interested in an analysis into this and 6 (30%) would not.

Comments as to why users were not interested in code analysis included that their codes were too large to change and that fairly short runs of the codes were being performed.

9) Applications Software

87% of the users were satisfied with the applications software provided on the CSAR systems. Several users suggested software that could be provided on the CSAR systems – more freeware packages, Matlab and so on.

10) Administrative Tools

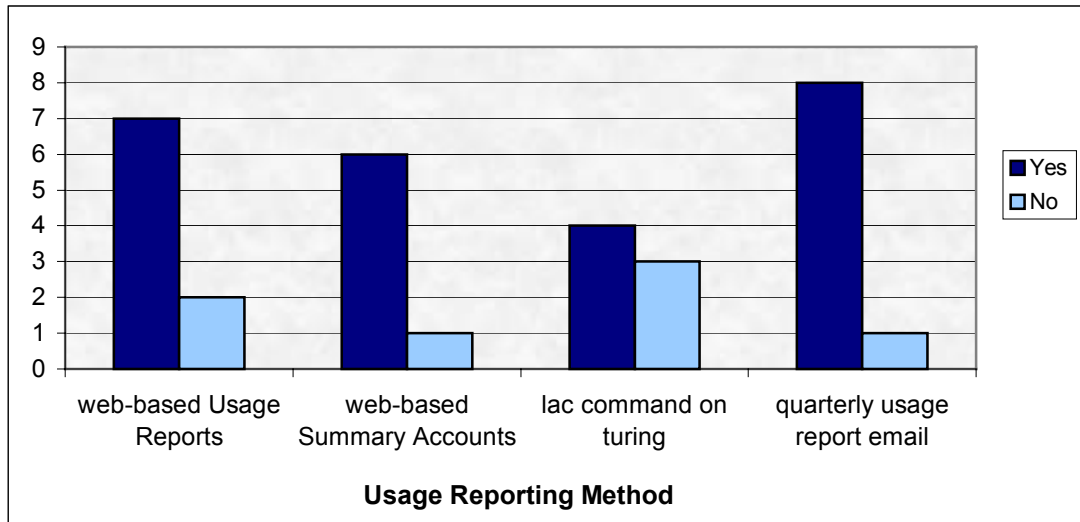
This section was applicable to PIs only, who were asked if they were satisfied with the web-based tools provided. No one was dissatisfied with the web-based tools provided. The PIs who responded made various suggestions regarding enhancing the web facilities but on the whole felt that the web-based Registration System “works very well and efficiently”. It was also suggested that it would be useful for users (in addition to PIs) to have access to details concerning the amount of time remaining on the project.

PIs were then asked if they would prefer the centralised resource management of previous services if they were given the choice, the results were as follows

Yes	1
No	3
Not Sure	6

11) Usage Reporting Facilities

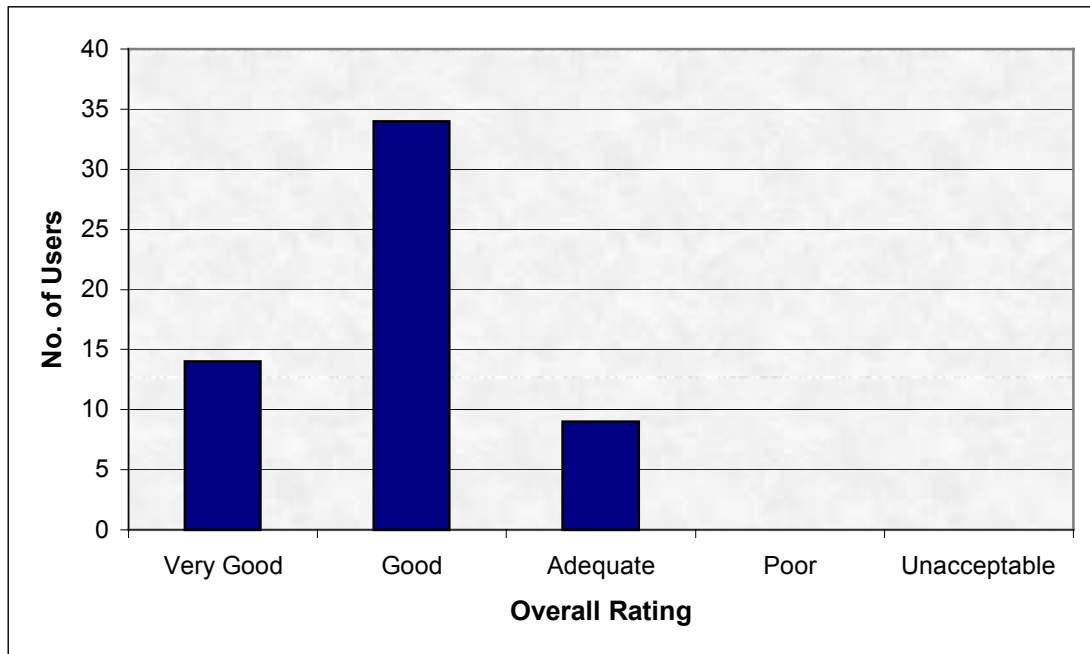
PIs were asked if they used various reporting facilities, here are the findings:



PIs were also asked whether the quarterly usage report email assisted them in monitoring and keeping their project's capacity plan up-to-date. The results were divided – with 4 answering “yes”, 1 “no” and 2 “not sure.”

12) Overall view of CSAR

Users were asked to rate their overall view of the High Performance Computing Service provided by CSAR. The results are as follows:



To summarise, the majority of users (84%) responded in the top two categories (Good or Very Good). No one feels that the service is less than adequate.

13) CSAR's contribution to research

Users were asked whether access to the CSAR systems had contributed to advancements in their research – 97% of users who answered this question agreed that it had. When asked if they could have carried out their research without using the CSAR systems, 25% users expressed that they could have, whilst the majority answered that they could not have carried out their research without using the CSAR systems.

14) Comparison with 2001

The number of users who submitted their views through the User Survey was much higher than last year, with over double the amount of replies received. The figure this year represents 11% of CSAR users (as opposed to 4% last year), making the results of the survey a much more reliable representation.

With regards to the use of the CSAR systems, the aspect that users are most satisfied with has remained the same - service availability (96% either very or fairly satisfied). The aspect that users are the least satisfied with is job turnaround

times (70% satisfied) in contrast to the provision for interactive use, which the survey held in 2001 reflected.

The majority of users remain fairly or very satisfied with how they have been dealt with by CSAR staff, the level of user satisfaction is slightly higher than last year (92% as opposed to 91%). The feedback mechanisms that have been used follow last year's trend with most users using the CSAR Helpdesk. A slight departure from the Survey for 2001 is that the second method used for feedback is now CSAR Managers rather than the Service Quality Token. Users are just as satisfied with the response they have received when they have expressed their views on the CSAR service, the figure remains at 94%.

The view on information provision has decreased slightly (5% less) with 87% satisfied that sufficient information is being made available to users. Awareness of the Status Page has dropped to 66%.

The level of satisfaction with the CSAR training services remains the same as in previous years with 100% of those who have used the training services having found them useful. Again the majority of those who had not used the training services had not done so because they were not required (85%).

Whereas 87% of the last survey's users were aware of how efficiently their code, only 62% are aware of their code's efficiency in the survey for 2002. Last year reflected that the majority of users are satisfied with the applications software provided, this remains the same at 86% for the User Survey 2002.

None of the PIs who completed this year's survey were dissatisfied with the web-based tools provided, this mirrors the result for 2001.

97% of the CSAR users who completed the survey felt that using the CSAR systems had contributed to advancements in their research – this is slightly lower than the 100% who held this view last year. 75% could not have carried out their research without using the CSAR Service, whereas last year's figure was slightly lower at 71%.

In conclusion, the overall satisfaction level of the HPC service provided by CSAR has improved with 100% of the respondents to this year's survey satisfied and 84% viewing it in the top two categories (good and very good). The percentages for the survey held in 2001 were 100% and 78% respectively.