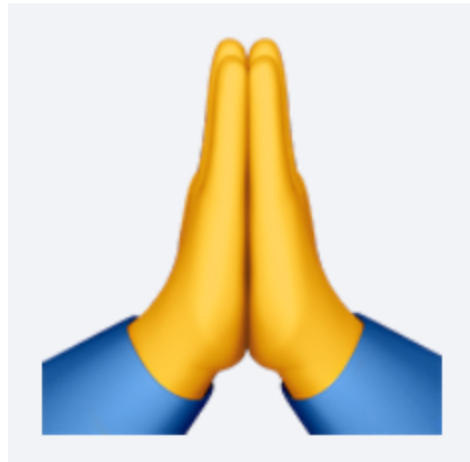


Help us help you

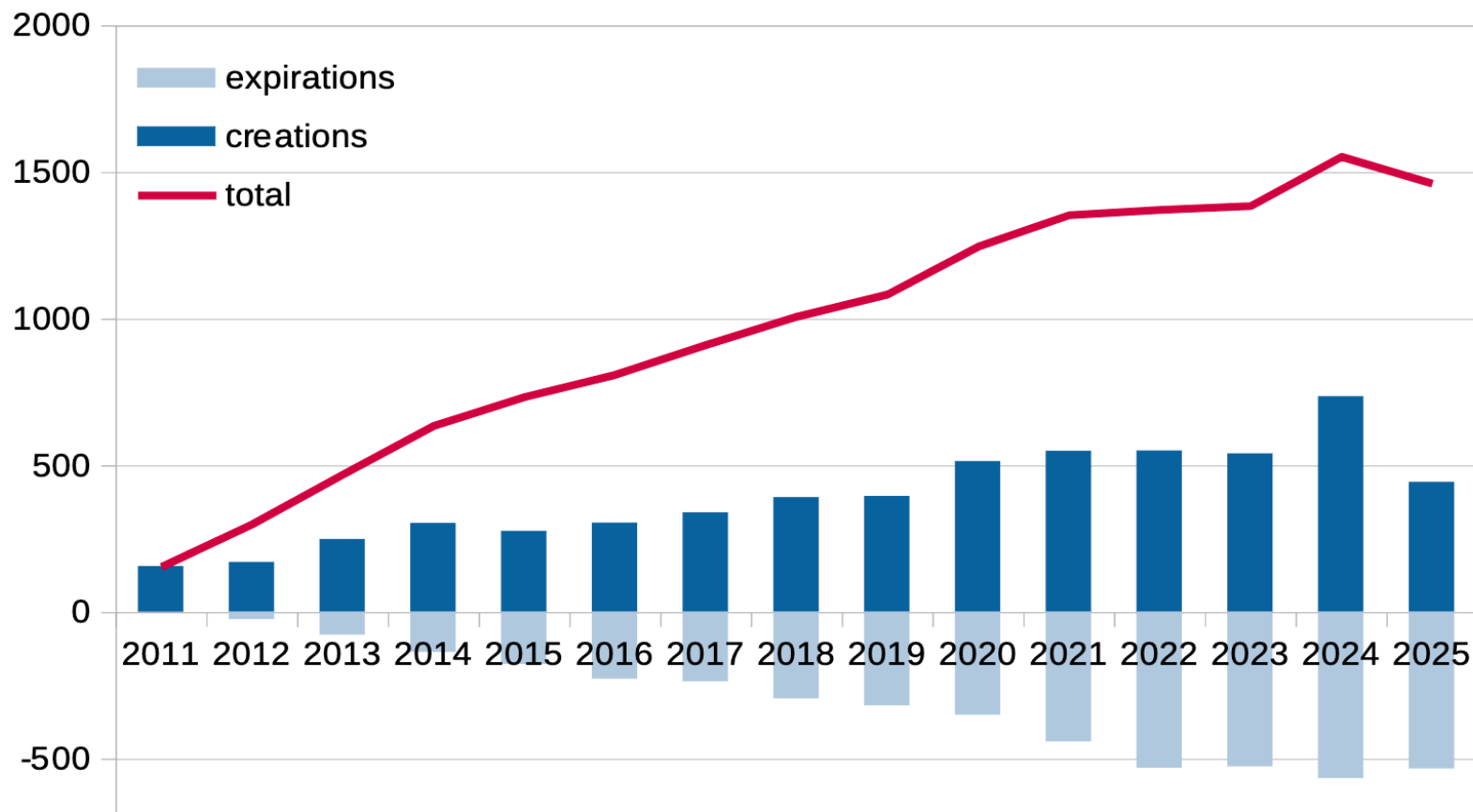


damien.francois@uclouvain.be

October 2025

You, the CÉCI users, are legion

April 2011 - Sept. 2025



We, the CÉCI administrators, are a small team

- UCLouvain: CISM (5.4)
- ULiège: nicadm (2.5)
- UNamur: PTCL (2)
- UMons: CMN (1)
- ULB: HPC team (2)

Our goals :

-  provide as much uptime as possible for the CÉCI infrastructure
-  maximize resource (CPUs, GPUs, memory) utilization
-  accommodate a wide spectrum of jobs
-  minimize turnaround for your jobs

How can you help us?

1. cooperation: play along with others
2. communication: prepare your interactions with us
3. education: be demanding with yourself

play along with others



Know the rules

- the rules of your university
- the rules of the university hosting the cluster you are using
- the rules of CÉCI: <https://www.cec-hpc.be/faq.html#2.5>
- do not harm security
 - **do not share secrets**
 - **do not give access to the clusters to others**

 **The rules exist so that everyone's data are safe and secure**

Be cooperative

- agree to be registered to mailing lists for announcements related to the infrastructure or events we organise (a dozen email per year) and **read the emails**
- participate in the ceci **user days**, take the **surveys**
- **acknowledge** the CÉCI and other providers in your publications that use their infrastructure

 **All this is important when requesting funding for the clusters**

Do not game the system

- when we enforce something on users it is always to ensure fairness among users
- more constrains hinders performances and harms complex workflows
- do not stalk other users their science is as important as yours

Loss of trust ultimately results in loss of resources

Be thoughtful of others

avoid problem-generating workflows:

- Running anything CPU-intensive on the head node: *bad*
- Issuing many requests per unit of time to the scheduler: *bad*
- Submitting large amounts of jobs without testing: *bad*
- Performing excessive I/O on a global filesystem rather than on a local filesystem: *bad*
- Storing large number of small files rather than consolidating them: *bad*
- Leaving data on the scratch for ever: *bad*
- Leaving typos in the email options: *bad*

Be thoughtful of others

do not waste resources, e.g. with

- jobs whose output is discarded because of misconfiguration
- jobs whose output is unsaved due to file manipulation error
- jobs under-using the resources requested because of misconfiguration
- jobs under-using resources due to bad scaling
- jobs sitting idle waiting for interactive commands
- jobs whose results are lost because of hardware failure

Be thoughtful of others

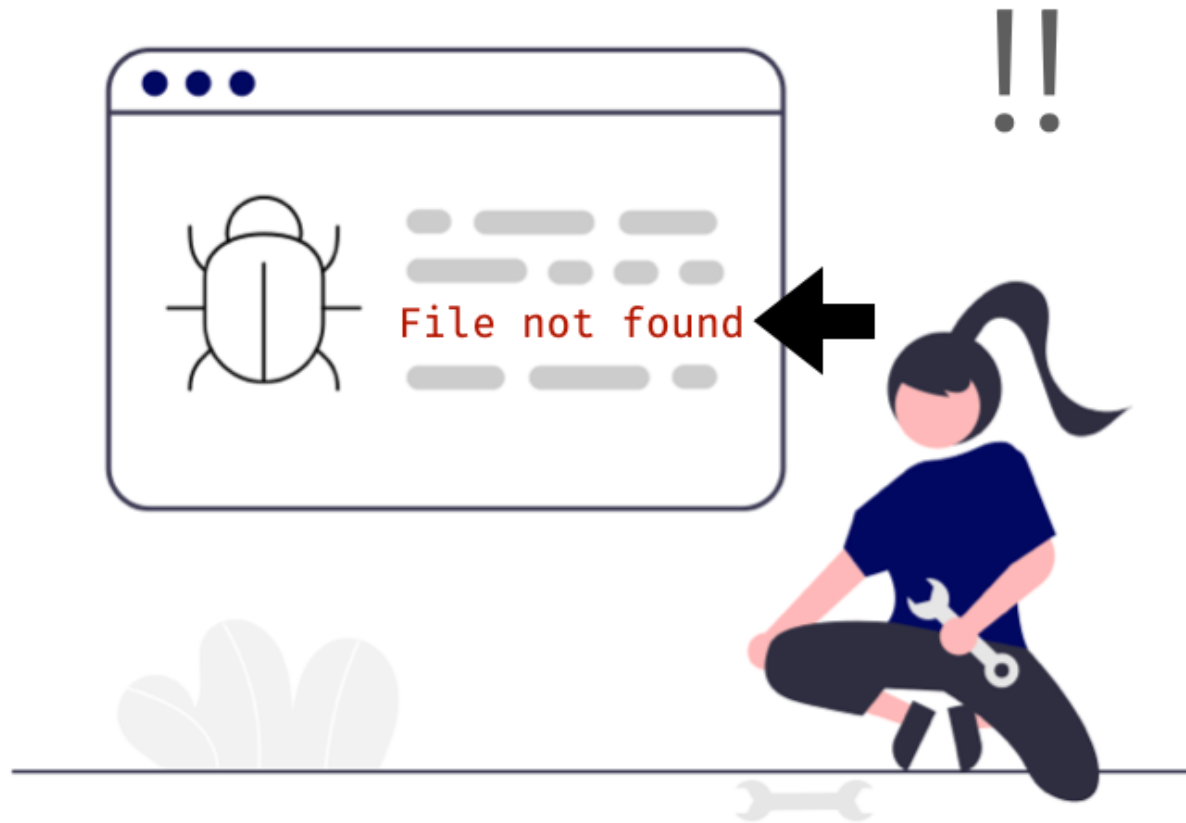
- avoid problem-generating workflows
- do not waste resources

Cooperation is what keeps the cluster running

prepare your interactions with us



🤔 1. Start with your due diligence.



2. Use the correct channel



The screenshot shows the CÉCI website interface. The navigation bar at the top includes links for CÉCI, Clusters, News, Training, **Support** (circled in red), and Contact. A 'Create/Manage Account' button is also present. The main header features the CÉCI logo and the text 'Consortium des Équipements de Calcul Intensif' with a tagline '6 clusters, 10k cores, 1 login, 1 home directory'.

About

CÉCI is the 'Consortium des Équipements de Calcul Intensif': a consortium of high-performance computing centers of UCLouvain, ULB, ULiège, UMon, and UNamur. The CÉCI is supported by the F.R.S-FNRS and the Walloon Region. [Read more.](#)

Videos of the training sessions

The [training sessions Youtube channel](#) is now ready. Do not hesitate to have a look at the videos of the training sessions.

Latest News

First call for the Belgian fraction of LUMI compute time THURSDAY, 07 APRIL 2022

The first call for the Belgian fraction of the LUMI compute time is now open. You have until April, 22 (11:59 pm) to submit a proposal for a [regular](#) (up to 10 million CPU core hours) or [preparatory](#) (up to 500 000 CPU core hours) access. All the details are available on the [Belgian LUMI webpage](#).

Workshop: managing workflow on HPC clusters THURSDAY, 03 FEBRUARY 2022

Thanks to a joint organization between CÉCI and VSC, we organize a PRACE workshop on managing workflow on HPC clusters that will take place on the **15 and 16 of February, 2022**. During this workshop, you will discover tools to manage multiple tasks and jobs, how to automate packaging and deploying software, and some example from different research groups. You can find more details and the registration form [here](#).

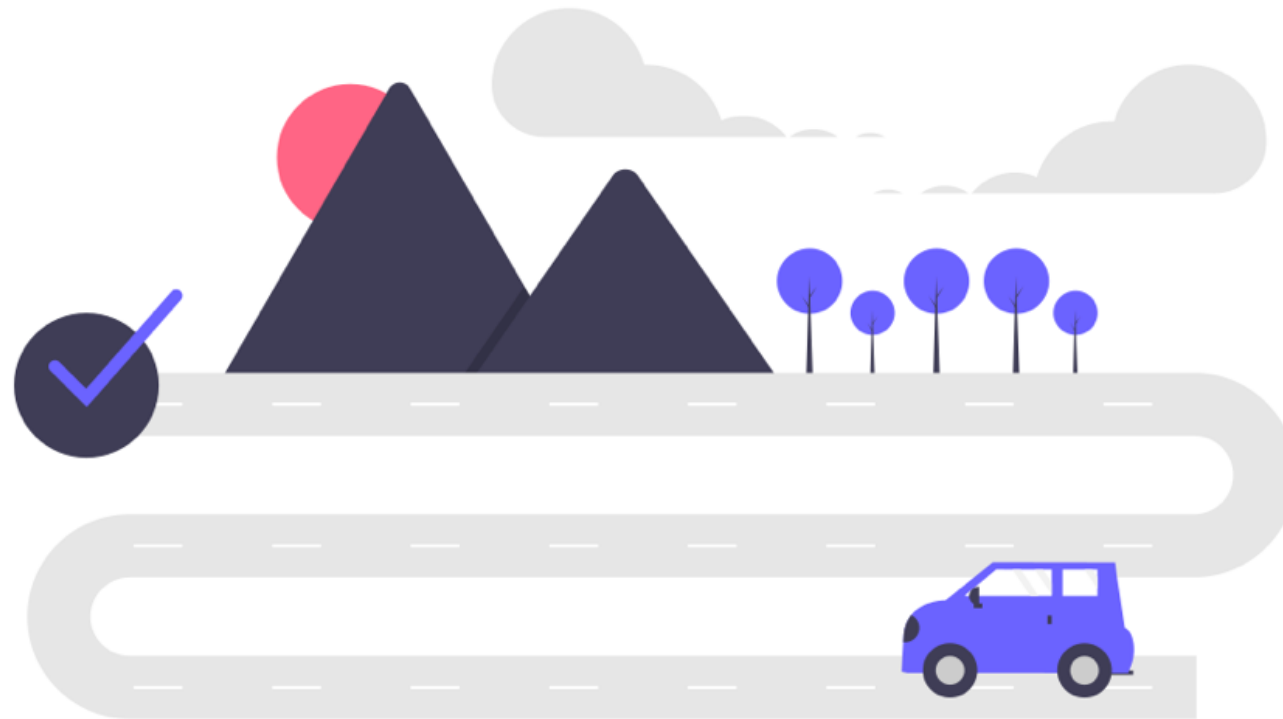
Quick links

- [Connecting from a Windows computer](#)
- [Connecting from a UNIX/Linux or MacOS computer](#)
- [Slurm tutorial and quick start](#)
- [Slurm Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- [Tier-1 Zenobe quickstart](#)
- [Submission Script Generation Wizard](#)

Social media of the CÉCI WEDNESDAY, 17 NOVEMBER 2021

Two social media accounts are now available: [@ceci_hpc](#) on Twitter, and [cecihpc](#) on LinkedIn. Feel free to subscribe to those accounts on your favorite social media, share the posts and mention the accounts when it is relevant. WEDNESDAY, 10 NOVEMBER 2021

🎯 3. State the general goal



4. Provide all important information ("five W")

-  **Who:** what is your login?
-  **What:** what job ID, what file, what modules?
-  **When:** on which date, at what time?
-  **Where:** which cluster, which directory?
-  **Why:** what is the problem?

💬 5. Give the exact error (copy/paste from terminal)



Final remarks

- the sooner we hear about a problem the sooner we can work on it
- one problem per request makes it easier to work in parallel
- reporting that a suggested solution does work helps to organise knowledge
- user requests are prioritized based on the **severity** of the problem

be demanding with yourself



There are certain tasks you can do by yourself

- install software (modules included)
- change permissions back after an error, sharing files among users
- remove a failing `.bashrc`
- change group ownership
- join a Tier-1 project
- fix quota exceedance

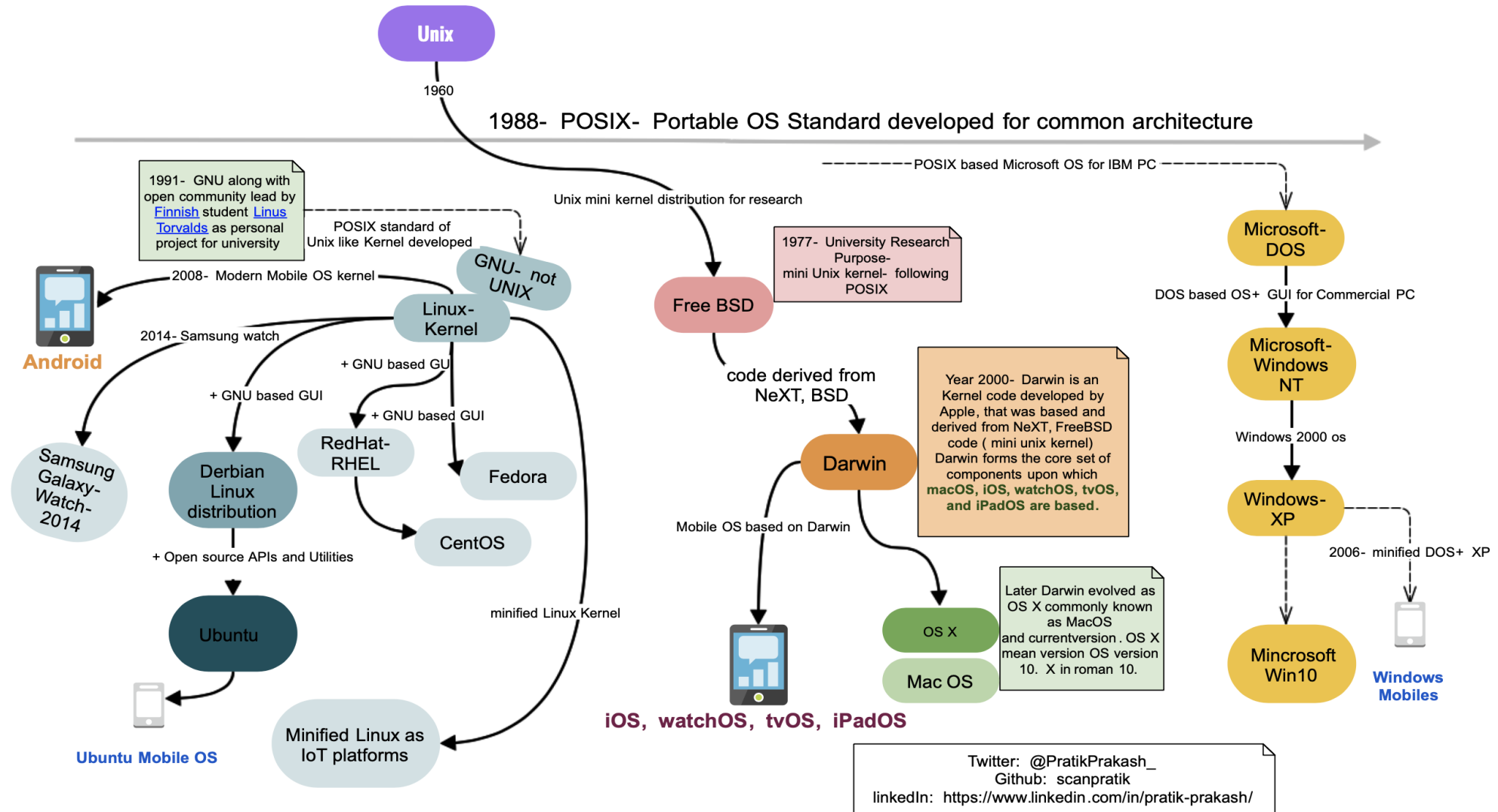
Some you MUST do

- take responsibility for backups of your files 

Learn the basics before you use the clusters

-  Basics of **Operating systems**
-  Basics of **Text user interfaces and the Terminal**
-  Basics of **Programming**

Evolution of Modern Operating Platforms



If Linux is entirely new to you, please read

<https://www.linux.com/what-is-linux/>

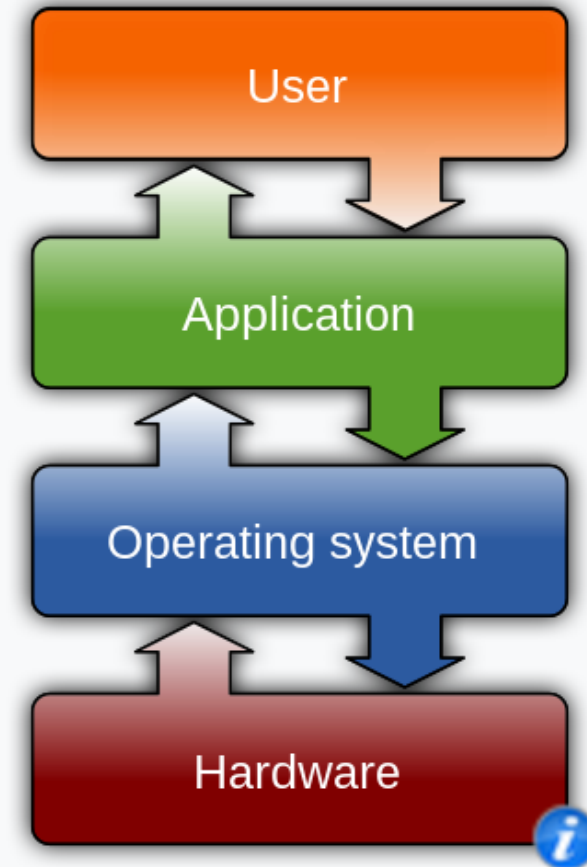
- 5-minutes read
- addresses the basics
- offers links to further documentation

And attend the next sessions.

Operating system, OS

- organises access to resources inside a computer
- allows starting programs, accessing files, etc.
- interacts with the user through:
 - the *desktop* (GUI)
 - the *terminal* (CLI)

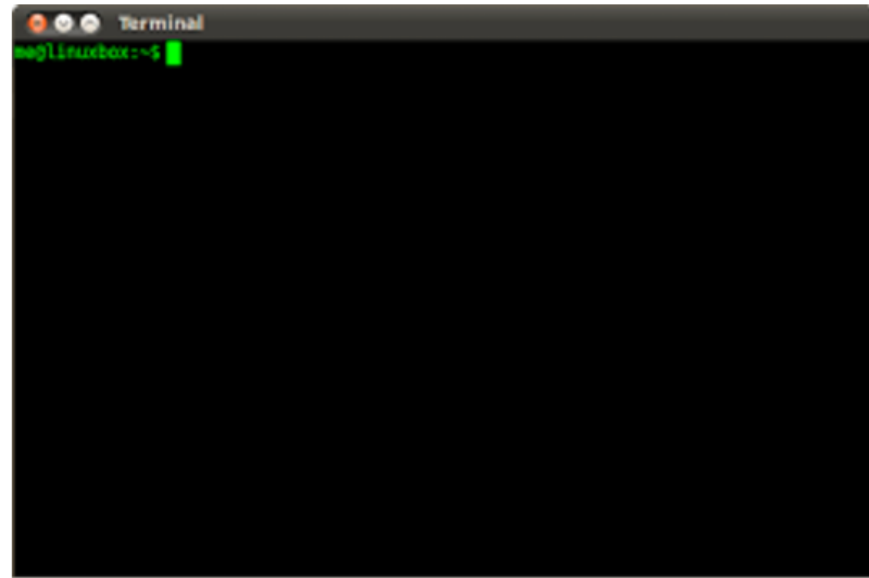
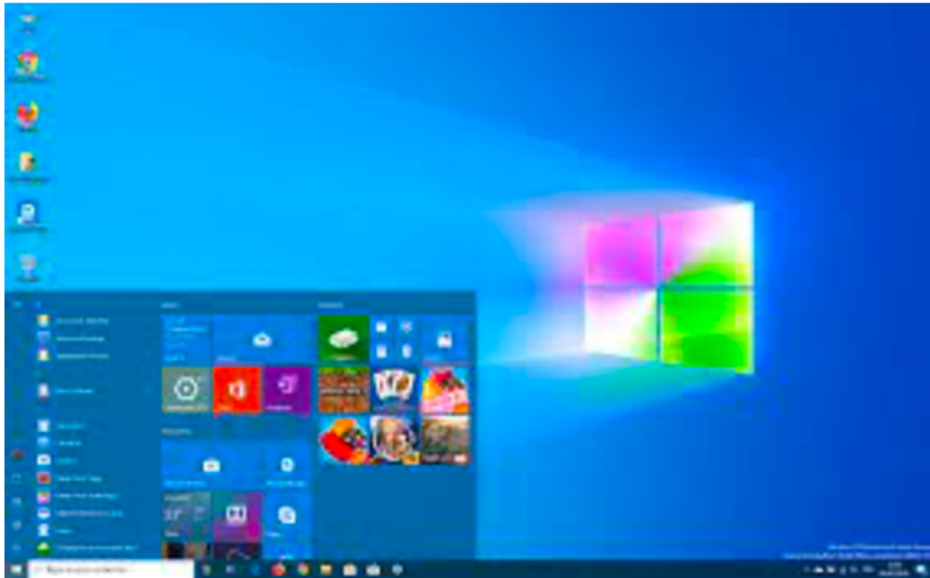
Operating systems



Common features

Process management • Interrupts •
Memory management • File system •
Device drivers • Networking • Security • I/O

The *desktop* vs the *terminal*



Interacting with the *shell* in the *terminal*:

- we type "simplified" sentences after the *prompt* in the *terminal*
- we press the `Enter` key when we have finished our sentence
- the *shell* interprets the sentence and act accordingly
- we wait for the response, which is then displayed in the *terminal*
- and we start again with another sentence 

On the compute servers, the shell is called `bash`

The Bash *shell* gives access to

- a set of basic shell commands
- a set of command-line tools (GNU)
- a rudimentary programming syntax

If the terminal is entirely new to you, please read

<https://frontend.turing.edu/lessons/module-1/getting-around-in-the-terminal.html>

and

<https://www.makeuseof.com/tag/a-beginners-guide-to-the-windows-command-line/>

- 15-minutes read in total
- addresses the basics
- offers links to further documentation

And then attend the next sessions.

About programming

Concept

Writing instructions for the computer in a human-comprehensible language that can be univoquely translated into a computer-understandable language.

"write 'hello' on the screen" -> `echo hello` -> `1010010101110101101001011...`

About programming

Basic constructs

- Variables: type, scope, assignment, and operators
- Conditionals: if-then, if-then-else
- Loops: for, while, etc.
- Functions: call, parameter, return value, side effects

If programming is new to you, please read

<https://www.geeksforgeeks.org/basics-of-computer-programming-for-beginners/>

- 10-minutes read
- addresses the basics
- offers links to further documentation

before you attend the next sessions.

Help us help you

play along others for maximum science per Watt

prepare your interactions with us for most efficient support

be demanding with yourself for getting the most of the resources

😊 We thank you in advance! 😊