

Behind the scenes at
help@mpia.de

Please respect the overall IT concept and guidelines

- See Email by Prof. Rix from 10 December 2020 on supporting our IT team
- Due to the current situation there are NO consulting hours where you just can walk into the helpdesk office.
 - > All requests have to come via Email help@mpia.de
 - > specific appointments are made for requests that cannot be solved via email

roles in IT

- *user support*

roles in IT

- *user support*
- IT security
- maintenance and upkeep of existing infrastructure
- continuous development of infrastructure
- respond to emergencies
- usage of new technologies & training of team
- IT projects - concepts, planing, implementation
- retirement of obsolete systems
- development of general IT strategy for institute
- ...

→ **very broad scope of tasks and requests**

unrealistic expectations

unrealistic expectations

people are (generally) happy if / when we help them

unrealistic expectations

once they have to wait for more than one day for our reply / support

- because we are busy with
 - other support requests (First in - First out principle)
 - project work
 - one of the other 8 roles we cover ...

then

unrealistic expectations

then ...

lack of

appreciation, respect, gratitude patience

Do not forget there's a human being behind help@mpia.de who tries to do his / her job with the resources they are given

2-5 most time consuming / straining issues

- user requests
 - new laptop / desktop
 - create / extend user account
 - give user access to cluster / computer / network share
 - help compile code
 - please turn on my computer
 - it seems I've killed astro-node, can you please reboot it?
 - explain fundamental office applications
 - help me setup VC + owl
 - I need a monitor / adapter / X
 - my out-of-office message doesn't work / how do I set it up?
 - "when can I use room X again?"
 - email ping-pong problem descriptions / basic information
 - I lost my data, I don't have a backup
 - private equipment support
 - ...

2-5 most time consuming / straining issues

- user requests
 - people think we do 1:1 support – *but there are only 5 IT folks for 300 staff members*
 - Often unfocused requests: *Ask clear questions ! Only one subject per email .*
- people are poorly prepared
 - expect immediate support
 - everything is urgent / “I’m the most important person”

→ number of requests add up

→ walk-ins and phone calls disturb work

2-5 most time consuming / straining issues

- project work
 - Kaspersky (replacing Sophos anti-virus SW)
 - vAP (virtual administration work places)
 - new user OS: Win10, Ubuntu, MacOS 10.14 -- replaced almost 200 desktops & laptops
 - compute clusters:
 - setup new compute storage system
 - add new astro-nodes & compute nodes
 - replace many SuSE servers with CentOS
 - virtualize mail server (remember the crash on easter?!)
- non-IT stuff
 - VoIP
 - VC equipment
 - construction work on floors

2-5 most time consuming / straining issues

- maintenance of infrastructure
 - 200 servers & network devices
 - users expect “google like” uptimes and zero maintenance windows
- ordering major hardware items for department after funds release

planned projects for 2021 - as of now

- inSync backup migration
- backup system astro storage + compute clusters
- LDAP + AD account sync (password fan-in)
- migrate telephone system to VoIP
- new interim building
- new Wi-Fi
- setup hardware ordered in 2020
- Windows 10 deployment / self service system
- more video conference systems
- first GPU compute systems
- VPN for external users
-

main avoidable strains/wastes of time that arise from 'customer contacts'

- unannounced show-ups by users at IT office
 - user requests "on the hallway"
 - people ignoring the help@mpia.de policy
 - we send people away
- "I need only 10 minutes", "I don't want to write a ticket", "I only need ..."
- once users have an appointment, things get out of control
 - "oh and I need this, and can you fix this, oh, and I forgot XXX"

main avoidable strains/wastes of time that arise from 'customer contacts'

- please read the FAQs!

In the meantime please take a look at our [FAQ pages](#) (available only from within MPIA and via VPN).

- please reply to default helpdesk emails with the relevant information

Please **make sure** your message contains the **following information**:

- A. computer name & operating system
- B. urgency of your request
- C. what is the exact nature of your problem?
 1. is there an error message?
 2. steps to reproduce the problem?
 3. steps you took to resolve the issue by yourself?
- D. alternatively, what is your exact feature request?

anything else from IT side - plea to users

- please respect our rules and guidelines
 - one single communication channel (help@mpia.de)
 - make an appointment
 - be cooperative, behave like decent human beings
 - show some self-initiative
- please plan ahead (specific deadlines)
 - new employees need to be announced a month ahead
 - what equipment do they need?
- please see the big picture: IT is supporting 300 people plus project work
- learn to prioritize - urgency vs impact
 - if everything is urgent & important, then nothing is.

Reminder for administration users

- Frank Richter is part of administration and IT support for all administration issues at MPIA
 - Use vap-support@mpia.de
 - Most things will be solved by Frank directly, for issues that need interaction with MPIA network etc. he will collaborate with the MPIA IT department
 - Lucom Portal and MPG Employee Self Service (ESS) for ALL MPIA users
- In addition: separate MPG support for SAP issues: it-helpdesk@gv.mpg.de

Way forward – your support is needed !

- request for more manpower in IT department send to directorate and MPG
- directorate, MPIA CC and IT department are discussing short-term and intermediate solutions that could at least partially relieve the high work load of the too few IT staff members
- Please support our IT team by following the guidelines summarised in Prof. Rix' email and - stay friendly 😊