

A view from the deep end !

(Confessions of a Newbie
Cluster Administrator)

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64 Toys

- Sun Microsystems V20z
 - Dual Opteron 252,
 - Dual Disk,
 - Dual Gbit NIC
 - Linux-based Service Processor
- A production system
- A development system
- A IIS web hosting service
- A self-fulfilling prophecy



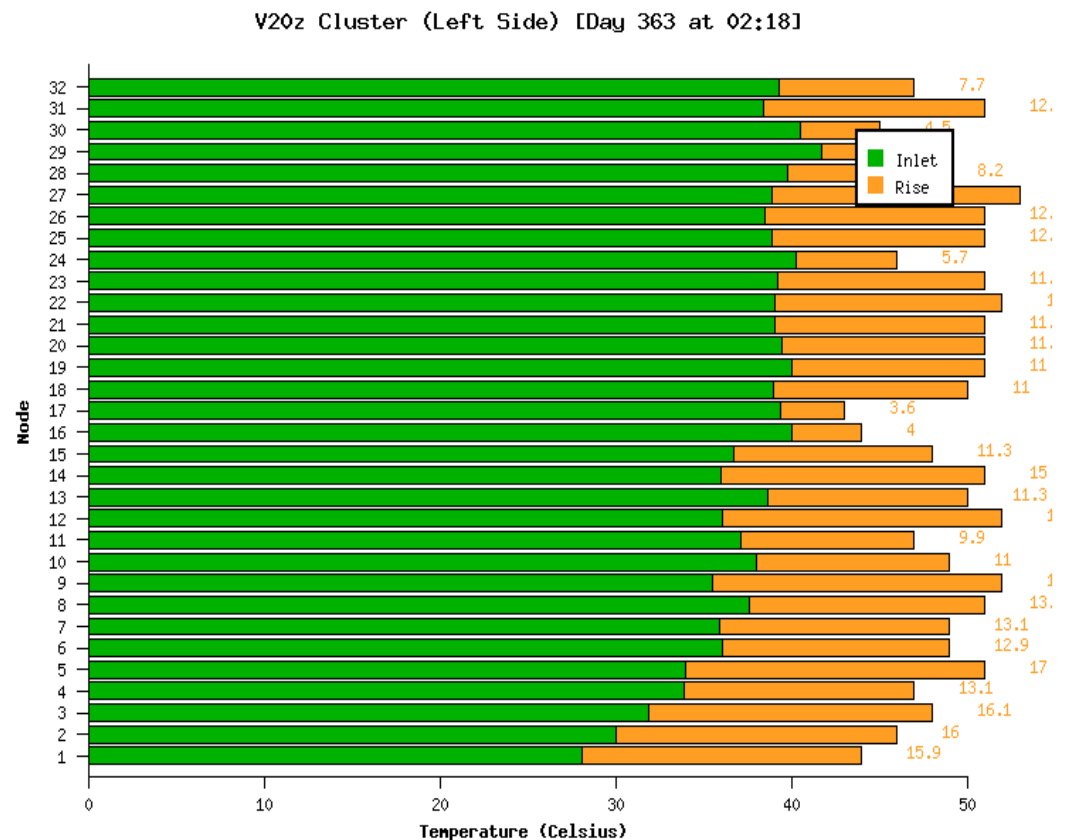
Positives

- Had a great tutor
- Good models for production HPC clusters at Griffith, QPSF and APAC
- Good encouragement for doing the job right (ITIL shop)
- Able to make good use of Service Processor capabilities to manage and monitor the nodes from behind
- PXE + TFTP + KickStart clean installs of FC3
- Finally went into serious production last Fri.



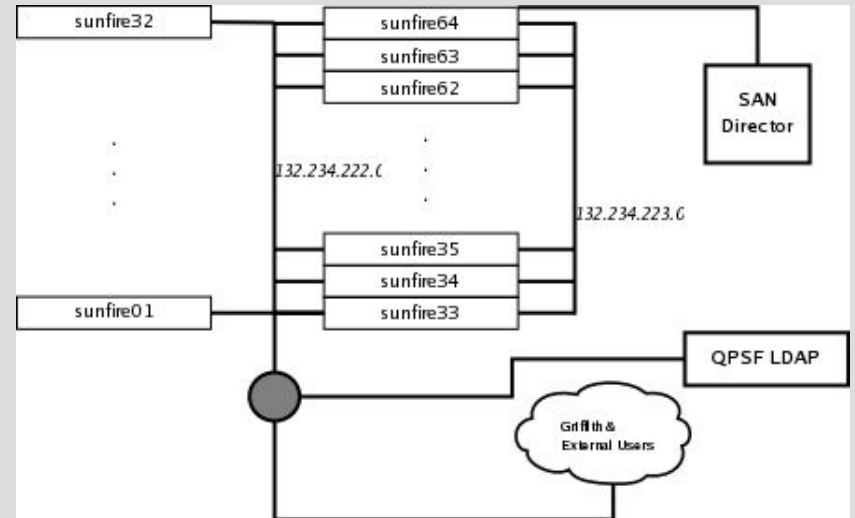
Negatives

- “Have the person responsible for acceptance testing involved at an early stage”
 - Changing requirements
 - Wheel re-invention
- Occasional electrical power outages
 - Did I mention that my office is 65 km up the motorway from the reset buttons ?



Neutrals

- LDAP Auth and NSS over TLS to eDirectory
 - SLES9 = TRUE
 - Solaris 9 = TRUE
 - FC3 = FALSE
- Wrote a parser to pre-include %includes into KickStart configs (now everything is an %include)
- Wrote a stats cruncher to create mean/max/min sar data for bunches of nodes and treats them as one in RRD+cricket.



Wannas

- VServer looks very promising !
 - Will be turning 16 dual nodes into 32 singles
 - Running 32-bit Novell eDirectory on the gw node
- Do more with Nagios+cricket/cacti+ploticus
- ClusterMatic – got any war stories to share ?
- VMWare ESX on V20z to run up Win2K ~~parasites~~ to host IIS services
- Solaris 9/10 to examine some I/O performance issues