



CSAR User Survey 2001

Summary Report

January 2002

1) Introduction

The CSAR User Survey for 2001 was conducted between 23rd November and 20th December 2001. An online form was made available for completion and submission via the CSAR website

<http://www.csar.cfs.ac.uk/admin/forms/usersurvey01.shtml>).

The survey was publicised via email and through the CSAR Bulletins for November and December. This year there was also the added incentive of a prize draw, with the winner receiving a bottle of single malt whisky.

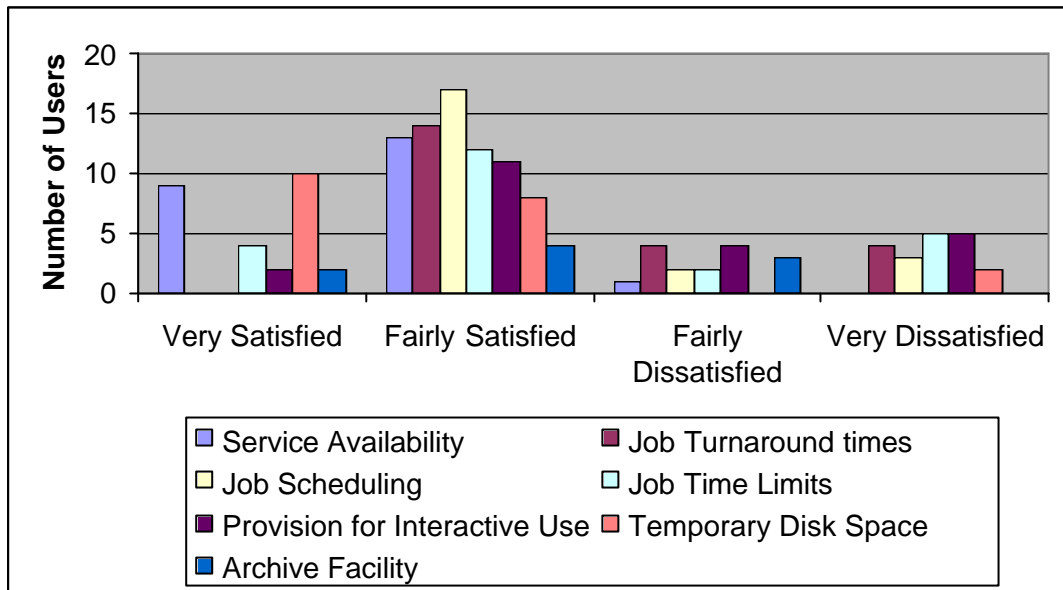
24 people returned completed forms. This represents approximately 4% of all Class 1, 2 and 3 users (554 in total). Although survey submission was entirely anonymous, users were given the opportunity to provide their name on the form. 21 of the people who submitted chose to do so. 4 of the 24 users act as CSAR PIs (project administrators), 1 of them taking on this role only occasionally.

The majority have been users of the system since 1998 or 1999 and 20 of the 24 users completed which class of project they work under – three quarters are Class 1 users (15 in total), 2 are Class 2 and 3 are “Other”.

2) Systems

Users were asked which of the CSAR systems they had made the most use of during 2001. 16 responded that they had made the most use of fermat and turing and 7 had made the most of green. No one responded for either fuji or the guest systems.

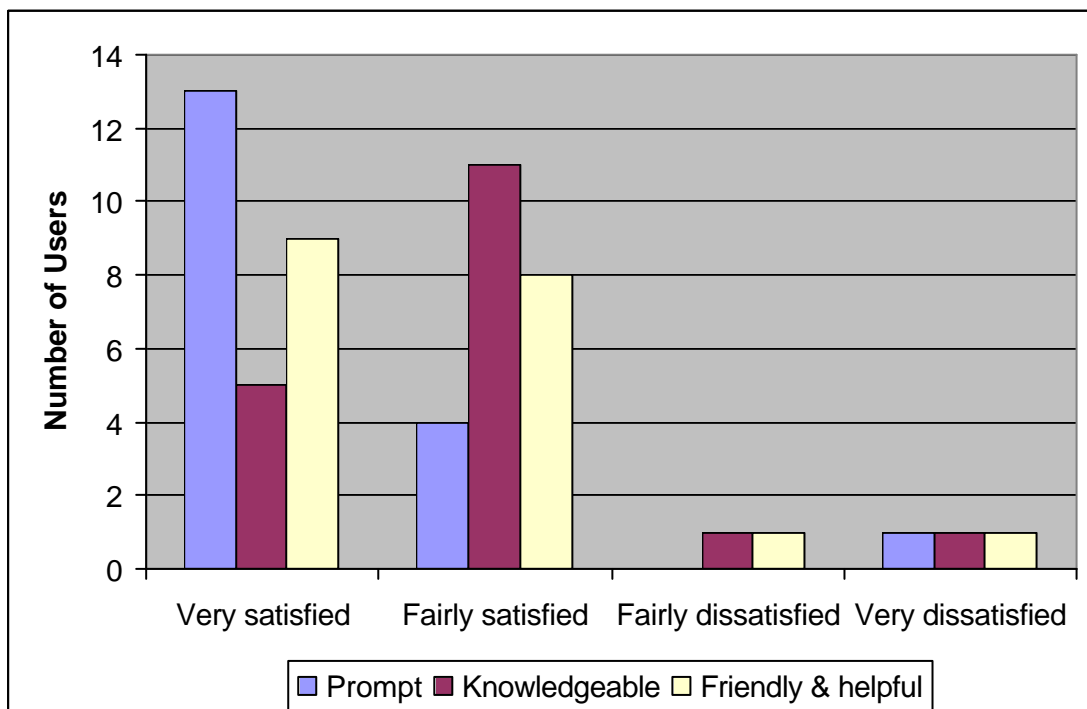
Users were asked how satisfied they were with a number of aspects of the CSAR systems. The following table charts the number of responses in each category for those who had expressed a view:



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 the provision for interactive use.

3) Dealings with CSAR Staff

The survey asked users to comment on how satisfied they were with the response of CSAR staff in the dealings they had had with them. The following chart plots the nature of the users' replies for those who had expressed a view:



In summary, almost all of the users that responded to this question were very or fairly satisfied with the prompt response by CSAR staff. Only 1 person believed that the response had not been prompt enough. Again, 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.

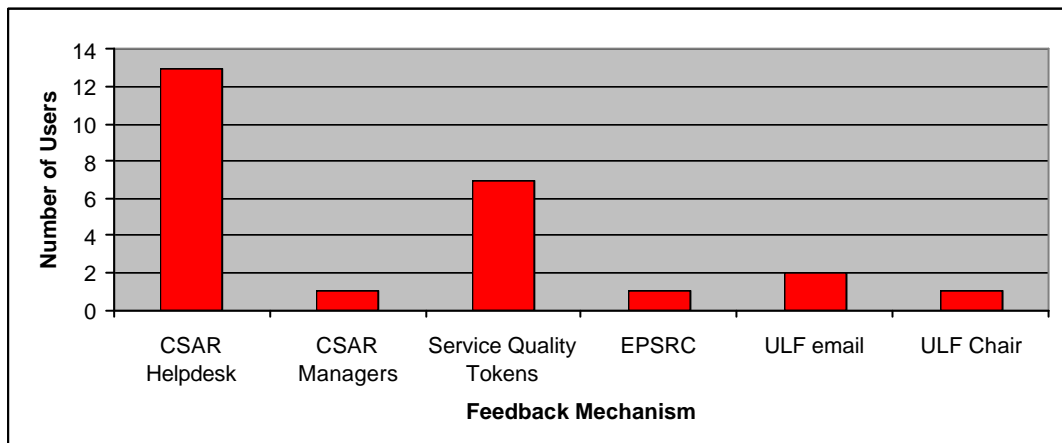
4) Information Provision

22 out of 24 users felt that sufficient information is made available to users. Of the 24, only 4 would like to receive more information via email.

Users were asked whether they were aware of the “Machine Status” page on the web. All completed this question and only one user stated that they were unaware of this page.

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:



16 out of 17 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. 7 answered that they had and 14 that they had not. All of the users that had used the CSAR training services had found it useful. Of the 14 that had not, the reasons given were that it was not required (10), they had taken part in training elsewhere (1) or ‘other’ - one example being that it is too far to travel to Manchester - (3).

7) CSAR Applications/Optimisation Support Services

Only 1 person 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	9	
Alternative support used	5	
Other	1	(Not the primary code developer for the group)

8) Code Efficiency and Analysis

Of the 23 responses to question 9, which asked users if they were aware of how efficiently their code was running, 20 stated that they were aware of the efficiency of their codes and 3 that they were not. Of the 3 that were unaware of how efficiently their code was running, 2 said that they would be interested in an analysis into this and 1 would not. Users were divided as to whether they would like more tools in identifying code efficiency, the results for this were 5 who would like more tools and five who would not.

9) Applications Software

Almost all of the users were satisfied with the applications software provided on the CSAR systems, with 19 saying they were and 3 that they were not.

10) Administrative Tools

This section was applicable to PIs only, who were asked if they were satisfied with the web-based tools provided given the devolution of resource management to projects. No one was dissatisfied with the web-based tools provided.

PIs were then asked if they would prefer the centralised resource management of previous services if they were given the choice – the three PIs were divided on this issue with 1 person answering “yes”, 1 answering “no” and 1 who was “not sure.”

11) Usage Reporting Facilities

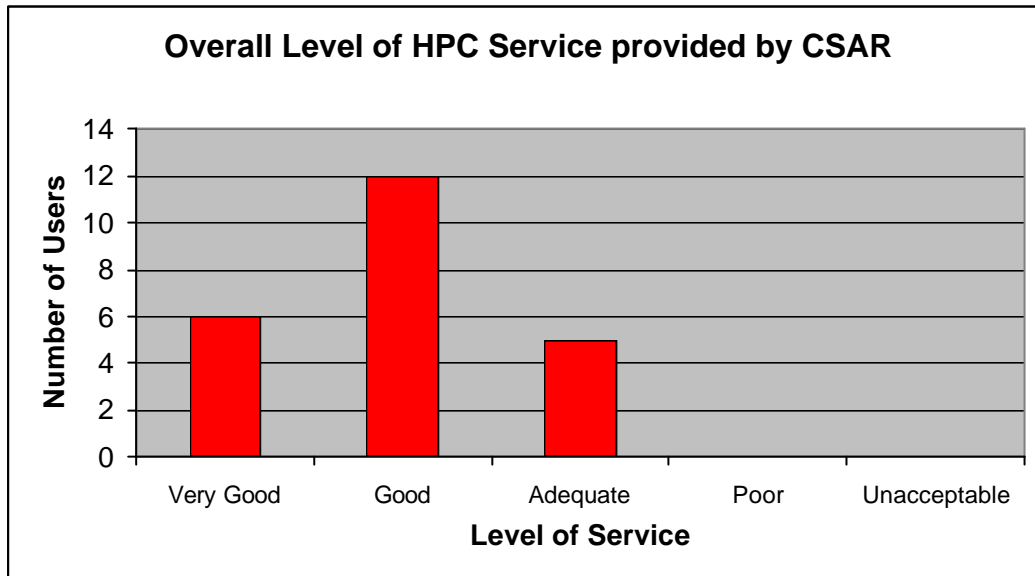
PIs were asked if they used the following reporting facilities:

- ▶▶ Web-based Usage Reports
- ▶▶ Web-based Summary Accounts
- ▶▶ “lac” command on turing
- ▶▶ Quarterly usage report email

All three used each usage reporting facility. 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 1 answering “yes”, 1 “no” and 1 “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 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 – all 22 users who answered this question agreed that it had. When asked if they could have carried out their research without using the CSAR systems, 4 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 2000

The number of users who submitted their views through the User Survey was lower than that of last year – 24 opposed to the 34 who completed the 2000 survey.

On the use of the CSAR systems, the aspect that users are most satisfied with has changed from the archive facility (100%) to service availability (96%). The aspect

that users are now the least satisfied with is the provision for interactive use (59% satisfied), the survey held in 2000 showed that job turnaround time provided the least satisfaction (68% satisfied).

Although the majority of users are still fairly or very satisfied with how they have been dealt with by CSAR staff, the level of user satisfaction is slightly lower than last year (91% as opposed to 98%). The mechanisms that have been used for feedback are similar to last year with most users using the CSAR Helpdesk and the second method used being the Service Quality Tokens. Users are slightly more satisfied with the response they have received when they have expressed their views on the CSAR service, the figure having risen from 91% to 94%.

The view on information provision has increased by 10% with 92% now satisfied that sufficient information is made available to users. Similarly awareness of the Status Page has risen by over 10% to 96%.

The level of satisfaction with the CSAR training services remains the same with 100% of those who have used the training services having found them useful. Again, three-quarters of those who had not used the training services had not done so because they were not required.

The percentage of users who are aware of how efficiently their code was running has risen considerably from 52% to 87%. Last year 68% expressed the view that they would like to see more tools to identify the efficiency of their codes, this has dropped with 50% who would like to see more tools. As last year's survey reflected, the majority of users are satisfied with the applications software provided, although the percentage is lower at 86% (97% for the 2000 survey).

None of the PIs who completed this year's survey were dissatisfied with the web-based tools provided, last year 60% of the PIs were dissatisfied with this aspect of the CSAR service. 80% of the respondents of the 2000 survey received the quarterly usage email, this has risen to 100%.

100% of the respondents felt that using the CSAR systems had contributed to advancements in their research – this is higher than the 91% who held this view last year. Similarly, last year 71% could not have carried out their research without using the CSAR Service, whereas this year the figure was higher at 82%.

Finally, 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 78% viewing it in the top two categories (good and very good). The percentages for the survey held in 2000 were 97% and 74% respectively.