MANAGEMENT OF BIOINFORMATICS ROOM POLICY

About the Bioinformatics Room

The UC Davis Department of Plant Pathology Bioinformatics Computing Lab located in Storer room 5204 is an open environment for members of the UC Davis Plant Pathology Department to process and/or upload large genomic or other scientific datasets. A multitude of both paid and open source bioinformatics and research software is preinstalled on the terminals along with access to a base Ubuntu Virtual Machine for users who require Linux Operating System Environments.

How it Works

The Plant Pathology Bioinformatics Lab is a shared resource by all of the department. Therefore, there are important items to note about how to use the resource without negatively affecting others. Users should familiarize themselves with the topics below before using the Bioinformatics Lab:

Reservations

There will be 2 terminals for the ODIN computer and 3 terminals for the ATHENA computer. The ATHENA terminals will be available for reservation only while the ODIN terminals will be available on a first come first serve basis only. If a user is leaving a computer running unattended, whether reserved or non-reserved, then they must leave a sign/NOTE with contact information and an ETA of when they will be back to the computer. There is no time limit for a reservation (see notes below), but the user must declare an explicit start and end time.

Plant Pathology Department Faculty and their lab members may reserve any available ATHENA terminal for up to five business days at a time. Reservations longer than five business days should be scheduled a minimum
of two weeks in advance. To make a reservation, the user will fill out the calendar on the website for the day(s) they need. Note that sometimes users’ reservations may be cancelled by the IT Staff to perform emergency maintenance or to address security issues. If a maintenance is non-urgent and a users’ reservation needs to be cancelled, the user will be given at least 24 hour advance notice.

Security

The entire Bioinformatics computer lab will be outside of the departmental firewall and outside of the departmental domain. This will grant faculty greater freedom involving administrative privileges while protecting the vulnerabilities of the internal departmental network. The terminals will have basic Anti-Virus and Anti-malware installed by default, but it should be assumed that the computers will not be as secure as a normal departmental network computer for the reason of a shared Administrative account being accessible by all users. To assist with potential security breaches and regular maintenance of the bioinformatics computers, PITS may occasionally make backup images of the host computer hard-drives and restore to past images monthly or as needed. This leads into the important topics of user data management and user installed programs.

User Data

Each user of the Bioinformatics room will be responsible for the security, backups, and integrity of all their own data, both processed and non-processed. Datasets may be brought in to the Bioinformatics lab via user or lab owned external hard drives or temporarily transferred locally to the Bioinformatics room terminal machines as hard drive space permits. However, user data should be on the Bioinformatics lab computers only during the processing of the data; the lab computers cannot be used as data archive or backup of data. Once the data processing is complete, the user is responsible for transferring the results to their own hard drive and removing any temporary files that were left behind on the bioinformatics computer. This will ensure that the hard drives built into the Bioinformatics lab computer have adequate space for holding temporary data processing files for all users of the room. When IT Support performs their maintenance, they may restore the entire machine, including the user partition to an earlier point in time, effectively wiping the machine. Therefore, it is extremely important that users keep their data on their external drives.

User Programs

If users would like for a particular piece of research software to become permanently installed, they can let PITS know and we will integrate the software for them into our base image. Otherwise, the user may install research related programs as they wish on the machines.

User Accounts

Users may use the administrative account on the machine to create their own temporary limited account for keep their own settings and work environment intact. If necessary, a permanent account may be created for the user if a form is filled out on the bioinformatics lab website. Please note that any and all user-created accounts except for permanent accounts may be deleted during the maintenance period. If users would like a permanent account to be created, they can let PITS know and we will integrate an account for them into our base image.

Mailing List Sign-Up
Users can fill out a form on the bioinformatics lab website and be added to a Bioinformatics Lab news mailing list. This mailing list will keep them up to date with important announcements related to the room, including both scheduled and unscheduled maintenance announcements.