CNS /Update Newsletter Feature

New Nodes for NERSP Computer

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The RS/6000 SP computer at NERDC (also known as NERSP) has grown again—this time with eight new nodes. NERSP runs AIX/6000, IBM's implementation of the UNIX operating system.

NERDC acquired the new nodes, called "Silver nodes," to upgrade the NERSP complex and improve response time. The eight new nodes add to four other Silver nodes, which NERDC acquired at the end of 1997, bringing the total to 12.

"They all have Power PC 604e processors. We got rid of the old ones," said John Sheehy, NERDC systems programmer.

There were many motivations to improve the NERSP complex: a price break, timing, and standardizing the machine's architecture.

"We got a terrific discount. The old machines (inside the NERSP complex) were aging. Some were over 4 years old. That's the tail end of usefulness for these machines," Sheehy said.

Previously, the NERSP complex was made up of a variety of nodes: some Silver, some Thin2, some Thin, and other types of nodes. Now all the nodes are Silver nodes.

"They also standardize the machine architecture. That eases our administrative burden if they all have the same type of processor, board, and configuration. It makes it easier when the time to upgrade comes around. Then we don't have to treat each node as a 'special' case," Sheehy continued.

Each node has a different primary function. The task line-up is: one node for GatorLink mail, three nodes acting as one node for serving Web pages, one for ADSM backup, one node for USENET news, two nodes for DB2 projects, one node for mail transfer, one node as the interactive machine, one for miscellaneous projects, and one node for LISTSERVs. "They'll all do other things too, but that's the primary break-down," Sheehy said. "We also now have two processors per machine vs. just one per machine like before. The cache is doubled too: from 256K to 512K."

Your Comments are Welcome

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