

# Computer Support Frequently Asked Questions for APS Beamlines

The AES Information Technology Group maintains and supports the APS computing infrastructure including the management of all APS enterprise networks and CAT backbone networks, firewalls, and computer servers in conjunction with supporting all Laboratory cyber security policies. This document provides answers to many of the questions asked by beamline visitors. For additional information please see the IT home page at <http://www.aps.anl.gov/it>.

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## 1. How do I get help from APS IT Support if I have a problem?

### System Status Information

The IT Support Group maintains a web page that displays a summary of current network and server operational status. The URL of the page is <http://status.aps.anl.gov>. The web page is updated to inform users of current network or computer resource issues that may affect them. This page can also be seen on the APS-wide TV system. If you experience network connectivity or server performance problems, please check this page for information before calling for help.

### Beamline Host

Your first line of support for beamline computing issues is your beamline host or contact. He or she should be able to help figure out the nature of your problem and may be able to solve your problem directly. If that is not the case, your beamline host will know the procedure for contacting APS IT Support for help.

### Off-hours Support

APS IT Support provides limited support for critical applications outside of normal work hours, limited to emergencies that affect the operation of beamline experiments. Normal working hours for APS IT Support personnel are Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 pm.

Non-APS beamline users should contact their beamline host for any problems they experience.

APS beamline users or staff should contact the on-duty Floor Coordinator (x2-0101) for off-hours problems. If a Floor Coordinator is not available, they should contact the Main Control Room (MCR), at x2-9424, directly.

## Critical Problems

Whenever a critical problem occurs—i.e., one that affects the operation of a beamline or experiment—APS beamline users should contact beamline staff or the on-duty Floor Coordinator (x2-0101) for off-hours problems. If a Floor Coordinator is not available, they should contact the Main Control Room (MCR), at x2-9424, directly.

During normal business hours, users may call the Argonne IT Support phone number (630-252-9900). If problems occur outside normal business hours, the procedure for off-hours support listed above should be followed.

## 2. Can I bring my laptop to read email or surf the Web?

APS provides a wireless 802.11g/n/ac network for visiting users with laptop computers. Wireless networking is available in all areas of the APS complex, including the beamline area, and most other Argonne buildings, including the Guest House. You must register your computer before it will be allowed to connect to the wireless network. Registration is a simple and quick process that is completed by starting a web browser and filling out the form that is automatically displayed. As part of the registration process, your computer will be scanned for common vulnerabilities. The scan is quick and non-intrusive. If the scan detects a serious problem with your computer, you may be required to address the problem before being permitted to access the wireless network. See <http://www.aps.anl.gov/it/Services/Networking/?page=registration> for additional information.

Wired visitor network connections are also available on some beamlines.

Also note that Argonne employs web content filtering on all networks. Access to web sites that are deemed non-business related for Argonne are blocked by the filter. If you attempt to access such a web site, you will see a message indicating that access to the site is being blocked.

When using a Web browser behind the firewall, access to URLs and references to non-standard ports (for example, port 8080) will NOT work. See <http://www.aps.anl.gov/it/Services/Networking/?page=APSproxy> for information on how to configure the web proxy.

## 3. Can I use Skype while I'm at the APS?

Skype is a VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol) solution and provides the ability to record and playback audio. Skype lets you make free calls over the internet to anyone else who also has the service. Skype is supported at the APS with no required client-side configuration changes for Windows, MAC OS, and Linux. For more information on Skype, see <http://www.aps.anl.gov/it/Services/Comms/?page=Skype>.

## 4. My computer can no longer access the network – what do I do?

Argonne employs a number of automatic network monitoring systems to prevent unauthorized access from outside the APS, and to identify and deal with potential virus infections on its networks. If your computer is infected with a virus or shows activity that the monitoring systems identify as suspicious, access to the APS network will be disabled for your computer.

If you have been accessing the network normally from your computer and suddenly find yourself unable to, your network access may have been blocked by the Argonne monitoring system. If you are on the visitor network and suspect that your computer has been blocked, you should contact the Argonne Help Desk at 2-9900 on an Argonne APS phone to find out why your computer was blocked and what you need to do to have access restored. If the blocked computer is being used as part of an experiment and the blocked access is impacting the experiment, you should contact the beamline staff

or Floor Coordinator to have IT Support help resolve the problem immediately.

## **5. Can I bring my own computer(s) to do an experiment?**

Visiting users may bring computers to the APS that function as part of their experiment, e.g., operating a detector, collecting data, etc. If you are planning to do this, please coordinate this with your beamline host to make sure that your equipment will be able to work in the APS environment when you arrive.

You must verify with your beamline host what you need to do to connect your computer(s) to the beamline network. If you are an Argonne employee from another division please contact your Cyber Security Program Representative (CSPR) before bringing your computer to the APS beamline. They will need to coordinate the move of the computer and the network registration on the beamline with the APS IT staff.

Any computer connected to an APS network will be automatically scanned for common security vulnerabilities. If the scan finds potential cyber security problems on your computers IT staff will be notified, and they will contact you with more information. If the problem is deemed serious, your computer may be automatically denied access to the network until the problem is addressed.

Non-APS computers connected to a beamline network will have limited access to the network. These computers will have access to all network services on the beamline network, but will not be able to access network services or computers on other beamlines, or central APS services. Most protocols will be available to off-site destinations (HTTP, FTP, etc.).

## **6. What if my computer doesn't meet security requirements?**

Computers connected to the visitor network must be able to pass the cyber security scan in order to be granted access to the network.

APS recognizes that computers that are part of an experiment sometimes have requirements and limitations that prevent them from having the latest patches installed or from running antivirus software while the experiment is active. If this is the case with one or more of the computers that you plan to bring to the APS, please make sure to alert your beamline host about this situation prior to your arrival at the APS.

## **7. How do I use embedded devices on an XSD beamline?**

Embedded devices are typically standalone, network-connected devices that are used as part of an experiment. Examples include Ethernet terminal servers for connecting to remote serial-protocol devices and network-connected monitoring devices or sensors.

The DHCP protocol is supported at all XSD beamlines, and some beamlines have dynamic IP address pools for devices such as these. Additionally, some beamlines have local private networks set up for these devices. Using DHCP-capable embedded devices on these beamlines is as simple as plugging them into the network and turning them on.

If your embedded devices are not capable of using DHCP for network configuration, they will need to be configured manually. If this is the case with your devices, please make sure to inform your beamline host of this, so that they can request configuration information from APS IT Support.

## **8. How can I transfer experiment data from a beamline computer to my computer?**

APS supports a number of different methods of transferring experiment data from an APS computer on

the beamline to your computer, so that you can analyze the data or take it home with you.

- Direct storage: The simplest method is removable media storage: DVD, thumb drive, or USB or FireWire (IEEE 1394) hard drive. Most Linux PCs, Windows PCs, and Macs used on the beamlines support thumb, USB, and FireWire hard drives, allowing you to quickly copy the data files to your own storage device. Check with your beamline host to find out if this option is available on the beamline where you'll be working.
- Remote access: The APS provides an anonymous FTP server to allow XSD beamline users to transfer data from the APS to their own computer or back to their home institution. The server, <ftp.xray.aps.anl.gov>, provides this connection to the Internet. Check with your beamline host on using this service.
- Data Management Software. A number of the beamlines have the DMS software services available which utilize a multi-petabyte data transfer node (DTN) for storing and moving of data to the home institution via Globus Online. Check with the beamline host as to the availability of this service.

## **9. How can I access beamline software from outside the APS?**

Check with your beamline host regarding accessing beamline software remotely. They will coordinate with APS IT Support to set up the access that you need.

## **10. Can I use a borrowed detector on a beamline?**

The APS Detector Pool provides detectors that can be borrowed by XSD and CAT beamlines. These detectors are fully supported by the APS staff. These computers can be connected to any XSD beamline network and will get the proper network configuration at boot time. See your host for the proper configuration on a CAT beamline.

If you need to borrow a detector from another beamline that is not part of the APS detector pool, please discuss this with your beamline host, so that they can alert APS IT Support in advance of your arrival. Generally, these computers have the same requirements as other computers discussed in Questions 5 and 6.