MEMO

To: Jeremy Mould, Todd Boroson
From: Dick Shaw
Date: 14 June 2005
Subject: Termination of User Support for IRAF
CC: NOAO Management, Scientific Staff, DPP Staff

This memo describes how IRAF support and operations will change in response to the decision to terminate formal user support. The areas most affected will be support for IRAF users in the community, although there will be some impact to IRAF users within NOAO as well. The following activities will be impacted:

IRAF Site Support

Support for responses to questions from IRAF users will be discontinued. Requests for help with installing and configuring IRAF on personal machines will also cease. All user e-mail will continue to be logged, and the IRAF web site will be updated, though infrequently, when future updates of IRAF are released to the community. Users queries sent to iraf@noao.edu will receive an automated response stating that NOAO is no longer able to provide individual responses to IRAF user queries, and directing them to the IRAF web site and other sources of information about IRAF.

Prior to the cessation of user support, effort will be devoted to updating and improving the IRAF web site and supporting documentation, and DPP will explore the possibility of a community-based IRAF support network, with the aim of ameliorating the transition for the community. IRAF applications and system support for NOAO Scientific and Technical staff will continue on a best-effort basis.

Support for IRAF at KPNO/CTIO, and NOAO in General

Support for mountain installations and configurations of IRAF will continue for those systems where IRAF or related components are critical for data capture and processing by DPP systems (e.g., Archive, pipeline, and the DHS for Mosaic and NEWFIRM). Support for IRAF applications from observers during their observing runs will be continued on a best-effort basis, generally during normal business hours.

IRAF and most external packages (TABLES, STSDAS, XRAY, etc.) will be installed and configured on NOAO servers that are used for general scientific purposes. Support to projects for

the development of applications (including scripts) will be discontinued unless the request is approved by management, and is accompanied by an account number to support the work.

IRAF System Support

IRAF system updates to address OS and compiler changes will be continued at the current rate (about one per year), though with perhaps less priority than before. When a system patch is being contemplated, system or application bug reports from users may be considered and, if significant, may be addressed to the extent resources allow. Responses to bug reports and requests for system updates for Centers dependent on IRAF (e.g., STScI and Gemini) will also be considered, but cannot be guaranteed.

IRAF System Development

Further development of the IRAF system will be considered, but in general will be limited to: DPP-critical systems, including support for NVO services (and interoperability with VO services); and critical system support to extend the utility of IRAF for the community (e.g., platforms with native 64-bit architectures, updates to the FITS standard, etc.). Decisions to proceed with projects such as these will be made on a case-by-case basis, and are much more likely to be carried out if 1) external funding is identified, and 2) the ultimate goal of the enhancement is well aligned with high-priority DPP goals.

Implementation Plan

User support for IRAF will cease on 31 Dec. 2005. An announcement for the community will be included in the *NOAO Newsletter*, to be published on or about 1 Sept. Enhancements to the IRAF web site and related documentation will begin as early as August 2005 and will be complete by the end of December. This memo will be circulated to NOAO scientific staff and managers, as well as to DPP staff, in mid- to late June. At that time we will also inform the other AURA centers of our intention to discontinue IRAF user support, and of our reduced support of the IRAF system.