

# **Problem reporting and tracking**

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# Why bother?

- “Aren’t mailing lists / direct E-mails / phone calls / personal discussions enough?”
- Experience has shown that proper reporting and tracking of problems is very important
  - Same bugs have been “found” three times

# Predecessor: GNATS

- In 1997/98, a system was already set up based on Gnats (the GNU system)
  - Gnats is not Y2K compliant
  - No further development
- System was part of the CERN IT system which is being migrated off GNATS
- Although all Atlas computing was covered, only ~ 100 reports registered

# Future system

- CERN IT has moved to Remedy
  - powerful application builder, not a product to be used right out of the box
  - groundwork done, IT ready to take Atlas on board
- Migration issues:
  - Technical: Do we want to take over the concepts of Gnats usage?
  - Cultural/sociological: How do we promote usage of the tool?

# Technical issues (1)

- Gnats: Atlas domain with flat list of categories
  - defined some 15 categories initially
    - was that list frightening?
- Remedy: four levels - we can use two or three
  - Experiments -> Atlas, or Atlas are the top level(s)
  - Offers the possibility of less categories at a given level - should be easier to use
  - Details being worked out now (DAQ will join)

# Technical issues (2)

- Usage very similar to GNATS
  - reports submitted via Web forms (authentication), or via gated E-mail
  - “Notification group” (list of E-mail addresses) for each category; first person to reply becomes the “owner” of the report
  - Maintainers (username/password) can modify Remedy data base
  - Reminders about open reports

# Cultural issues (1)

- Obviously, high threshold in submitting a problem report
  - Are users unsure whether the problem is really a bug?
  - Are users afraid of blaming a colleague of a mistake?
  - Were they put off by the long flat category list, or by the Gnats Web interface?

## Cultural issues (2)

- Problem tracking has been used in a number of HEP projects
  - Initial reluctance
  - Those who carried on very positive
- If we wish to succeed, need a push
  - Users must be strongly encouraged to use the system
  - Maintainers must refer to the system



# Conclusions

- Migration off Gnats inevitable
- Remedy probably offers (more than) what we need
  - CERN/IT would help significantly
  - Main item for us is definition of category tree, and identification of maintainers
- I think it is worth going for it, but we need a strong move