Upcoming Change in the Supported Archive Output Media

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In 13 years of data distribution at the ESO/ST-ECF archive, numerous different sorts of media have been offered to our users: 9-track tape reels, DAT-DDS 1 & 2, Exabyte. Still available today are the DAT-DSS 3 and the DLT 4000 and DLT 7000, as well as CD-R and DVD-R. The reasons for the changes have always been adaptation to the available technology, costs, request size as well as the popularity of the media with our user community. For this reason, every few years, the available choice is reviewed: the older, less popular media are removed and replaced by newer, more appropriate technologies.

We think the time has again come to review the available choice and to reconsider what we offer. If the best technology in terms of costs, convenience and compatibility for exchanging data today is the network, studies carried out recently indicate that with many of our archive "customer" sites in Europe, data requests of only up to a few GB could be served using FTP transfer. As the time of VST, VISTA and ALMA is approaching, the need for a hard medium to transport and deliver hundreds to thousands of GB of data is still there. Already today, requests for WFI data regularly go beyond 100GB and in this case the transfer using say, tapes, is more appropriate.

However, the tape formats we are using are outdated and suffer from a lack of user-friendliness. Moreover, the newer high capacity models usually impose both the archive site and the recipient of the data to procure expensive drives that do not always guarantee readability. Disks, however, do not impose any specific reading equipment on the user. In recent years, magnetic disks have become very affordable and their individual capacity has increased to a point where they can easily compete with the largest tape units, and without having the tape disadvantages: they allow direct file access, preservation of file names, etc. The advent of the USB disk has brought to life an opportunity to solve our data transport problems. However, if the price of disk drives has gone down significantly in recent years, they have not yet reached the point where they could simply be given away to users. Recipients of the disks will therefore be required to return them to ESO within a working week.

To make the disks readable on as many computer platforms as possible, we choose to create a file system on the disk so as to make it look like a (very) large CD. In this way, three of the main operating systems used by astronomers could be supported with the same setup: all of Linux, Solaris 8 and MacOS X can easily read the disks that we so produce.

Starting in April 2004, the archive will no longer support tapes as archive data distribution media. The remaining methods to obtain data from the ESO/ST-ECF archive will be -besides FTP- DVD-R and USB/FW disks. More technical details regarding the new system will be published shortly on the archive home page (http://archive.eso.org/). A somewhat more detailed account of this policy change was published in the *ST-ECF newsletter*, 35, January 2004.

ESO - Arcetri Conference on

Chemical Abundances and Mixing in Stars in the Milky Way and its Satellites

Castiglione della Pescaia (Grosseto, Italy)
September 13-17 2004

The Fibre Large Array Multi-Element Spectrograph (FLAMES) will produce a large amount of spectroscopic abundances for stars in different environments, from Galactic open clusters to dwarf galaxies in the Local Group, allowing a quantum leap in different astrophysical areas.
At the same time, in recent years significant advances have been achieved in the modelisation and interpretation of observed abundances, in particular as far as stellar mixing is concerned. Mixing phenomena that occur in stars are responsible for the variations of surface chemical abundances throughout the stellar lifetime. Thus, understanding mixing in stars is necessary for a safe use of the observed abundances as tracers of the evolution of galaxies.
The main aim of the workshop is to interpret observed abundances in the framework of the most recent theoretical predictions from the models. The implications for primordial (BBN) abundances, for stellar yields, and for the chemical evolution of our Galaxy and its satellites will also be addressed.

The format of the meeting will consist of invited reviews and talks, contributed talks, and posters.

SOC members: J. Andersen, G. Gilmore, G. Meynet, P. Molaro, L. Pasquini (Co-Chair), N. Prantzos, S. Randich (Co-Chair), R. Rood, C. Sneden, M. Spite, M. Tosi, A. Weiss

Full details and registration information can be retrieved from http://www.arcetri.astro.it/~cast04/ or by email to *cast04@arcetri.astro.it*

Deadline for pre-registration: 15 February 2004
Deadline for final registration: 15 May 2004