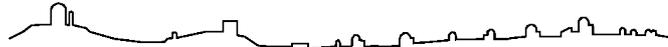
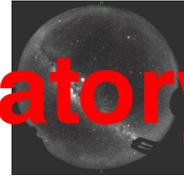




La Silla Observatory



THE NEW LA SILLA ALL SKY CAMERA

Frequently Asked Questions

Question 1 What is this FAQ about?

This FAQ is about the new La Silla All Sky Camera; this system is already running since March 1st, 2007.

Question 1 why did you change the system ?

Mainly for maintenance purposes. The old LASCAM was not under configuration control and nobody really knew in details how it worked. For example, the acquisition PC uses WIN98, so I don't think we are capable of rebuilding it if a major crash affected it. Second, the LASCAM is there, in an official ESO's web page. If no one has taken the decision to decommissioned it, the system must be working, i and we needed a project for our summer student !.

Question 2 how the old LASCAM worked?

The old LASCAM needed a Windows based PC to acquire the images, then those images were transferred from this PC to wg5drl , where a script processed this images to generate the gifs and html pages, and finally all were transferred to www server, also knows as epu.

Question 3 and, how the new LASCAM works?

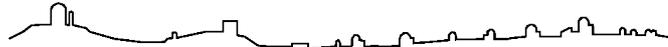
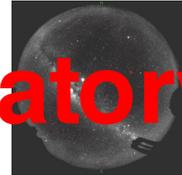
Now, there is a new workstation, wlascam, with Scientific Linux and VLTSW JAN2006. The software module acquires directly the images from the camera, then the FITS is processed and the gifs is transferred to the www server.

Question 4 So, is the LASCAM VLTSW compliant?

Yes and no, Is compliant because it can be compiled and it works in a VLTSW Linux machine, but there is not VLTSW process, I mean, no DB, no messages, no environments, etc.



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Question 5 But the final result is the same, what is new?

That was the idea!! Regardless, the only requirement found was an old Oli's documents. In fact, in the wlascom the software module performs basically the same image processing, the midas scripts are +/- the same. But, in the web page side, wlascom doesn't build each time all the html file, only transfer the gifs and index files, and the last 20 minutes animation was improved, that is why now you can access and see the page quickly.

Question 6 do the new LASCAM need some kind of operation or maintenance?

It doesn't need to be started or stopped. There is a cron service installed that check the status of LASCAM, if the service isn't found, the cron start it automatically. There are others crontab entries that clean old FITS, GIFS and logs files.

Question 8 ok, so what exactly are the cron doing?

Entry 1, every 10 minutes, health check, if the service is not found, It starts it!

Entry 2, Fits cleaner, every Monday at 14:00 UTC, remove all files

Entry 3, Gifts cleaner, every days, clean all the files.

Entry 4, Log cleaner, every three days, rotate last 10 log files.

Question 7 Where are the image files?

The FITS files are stored in `$INS_ROOT/SYSTEM/DETDATA`

The GIFS files are stored in `$VLTDATA/tmp`

Question 9 What about troubleshooting? What can we do if something fails?

Well, if you detect some problem in the LASCAM web page, you can check it in the following way:

a) check the process.

Connect to wlascom `> rlogin wlascom - l lascom`
Password: `.5arcsec`

Check status `> /etc/init.d/lascam status`

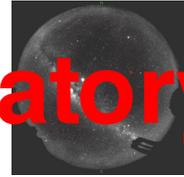
If the process is not found, start it

Start process `> /etc/init.d/lascam start`

If process is OK, check the log file.



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Check log file

```
> tail /vltdata/tmp/lascam.log
```

Check the camera alive

```
> ping (ip the la camarits)
```

c) As usually, call software!!

Question 9 where is the software?

There is just one module, `lascam`, currently in 0.2 version.

The module is installed from `lascam@wlascam ~/SOURCES/LASCAM/lascam`

Question 10 If sciops want to make same changes, can they do it?

Of course!!! The software is not too big and is really simple, and the image processing is a midas script. There is just one golden rule, all changes must be commented and keep the module under configuration control.