

SC13 Birds-of-a-Feather session report

Getting Scientific Software Installed

Tools & Best Practices

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Report

In our opinion, the BoF session was a success, for a variety of reasons.

First of all, attendance well exceeded our expectations.

As specified in the BoF proposal, we expected between 30 to 50 attendees. At the start of the session, we had about 55 attendees, which increased to a total of 72 attendees as more people trickled in throughout the session.

Second, the format we had outlined worked out very well too.

The first part of the session consisted of a couple of lightning talks on topics relevant to the scope of the BoF, i.e. Lmod, HashDist and EasyBuild. Each speaker briefly presented his project, talk duration was limited to 5 minutes. After each talk, another 5 minutes (max.) were spent on questions specific to that topic. Each of the topics was well received, and yielded multiple interesting questions from the audience.

In practice, a brief introduction to the BoF together with the three lightning talks consumed the first half an hour of the session (12.15pm – 12.45pm).

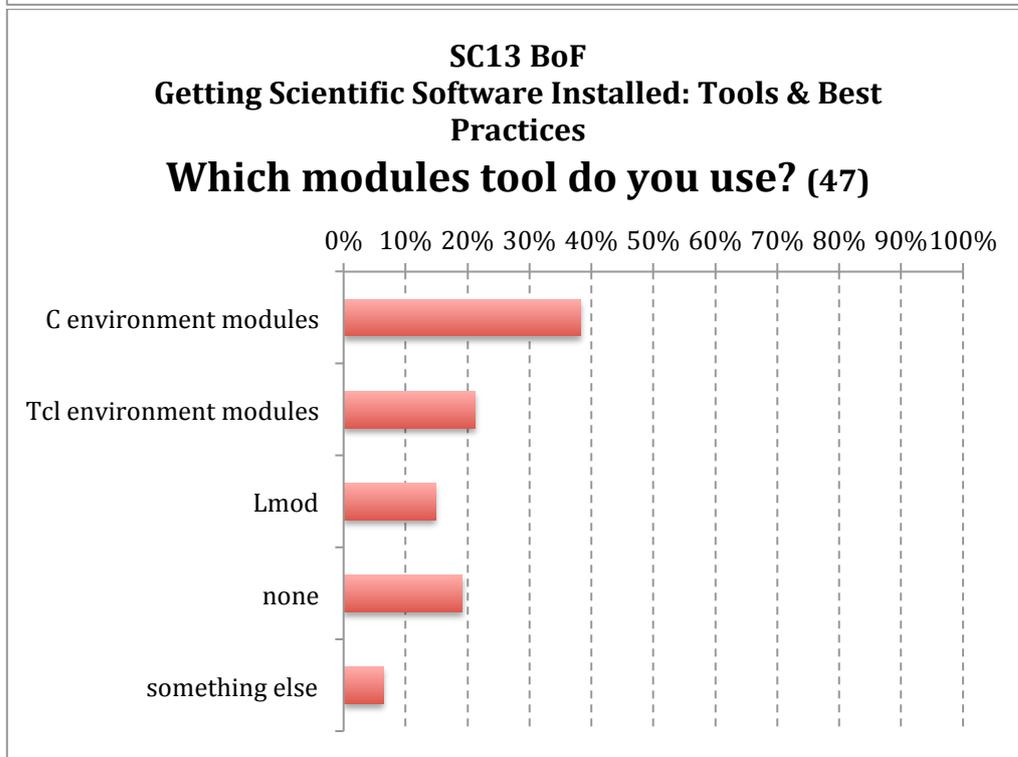
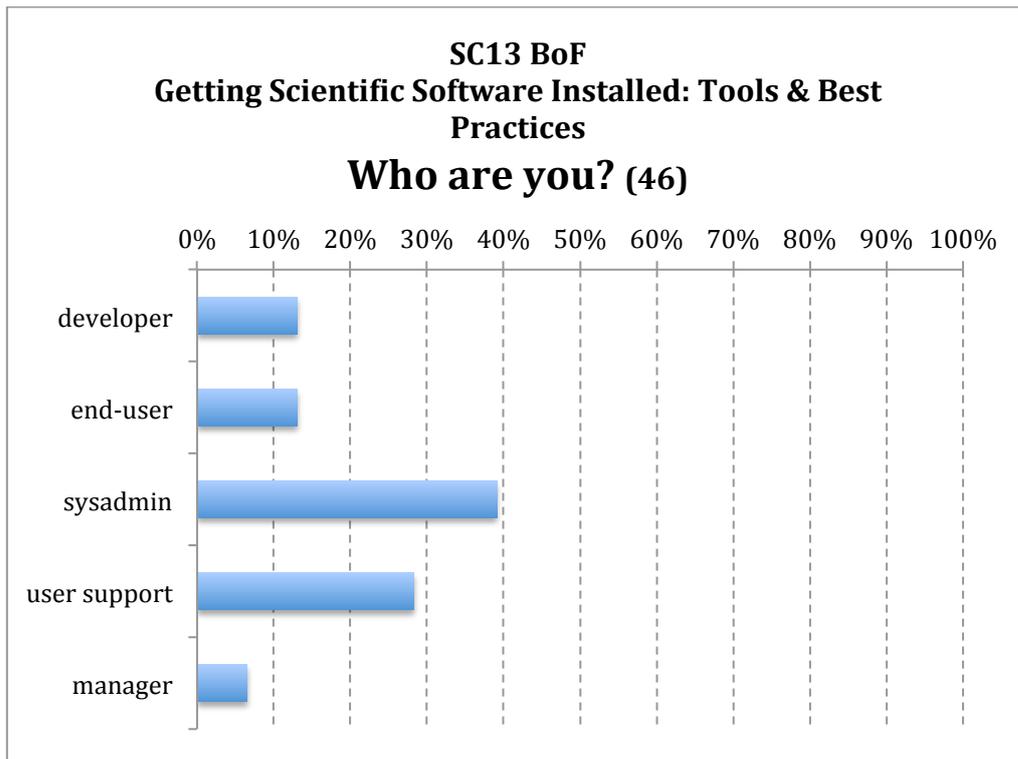
During the second part of the session, we presented the attendees with a couple of show-of-hands questions on various topics (modules, various aspects of getting software to build, collaboration, testing, performance evaluation, ...). Via the Socrative website (<http://socrative.com>) attendees were able to participate in this show-of-hands part using their laptop, smartphone, or tablet. Answering the questions was done anonymously, as Socrative does not require participants to register.

The result of each poll question was projected live, which proved to be an excellent catalyst for discussions. Attendees were publicly sharing their opinions and suggestions, or were commenting on the topic of the question as results were rolling in. We feel this would not have been the case (to this extent) with a traditional show-of-hands session. By collecting responses to the show-of-hands questions electronically, we were also able to produce a detailed report in the form of graphs after the BoF session (see below). About 45 people actively participated by answering to the questions, about 30 people answered all the questions.

Overall, we got very positive responses to the BoF session contents and organization. We hope this will be reflected in the evaluation feedback, as we would like to organize BoF sessions like this again during future SC and ISC conferences.

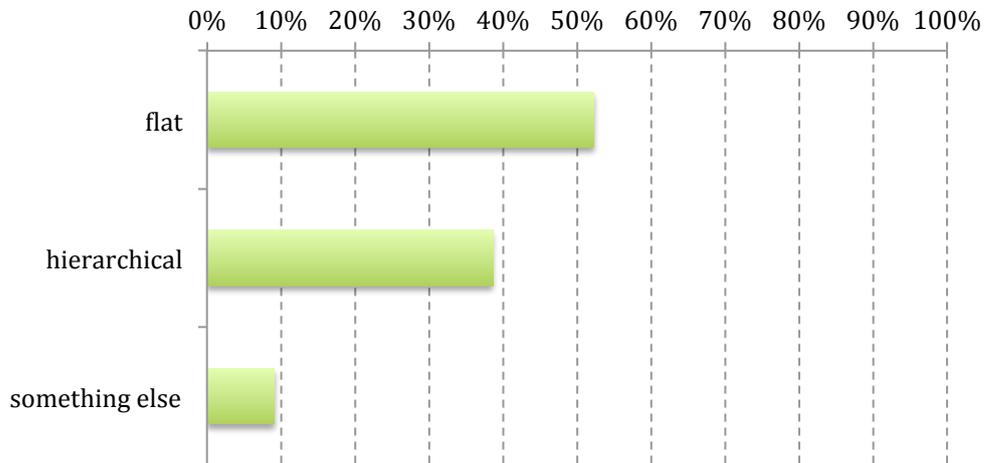
All materials (BoF slides, lightning talk slides and show-of-hands results) are publicly available at <https://github.com/hpcugent/easybuild/wiki/SC13-BoF-session>.

Show-of-hands results



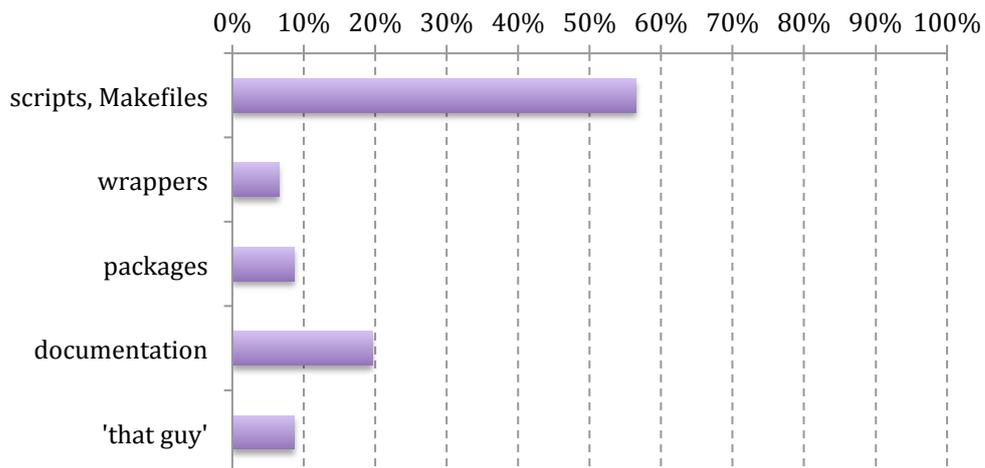
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Which modules naming scheme do you use? (44)

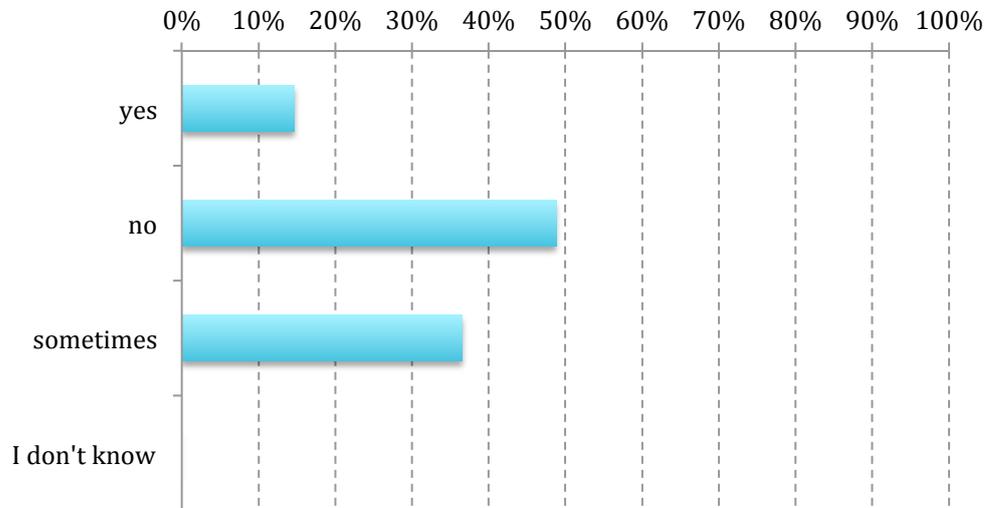


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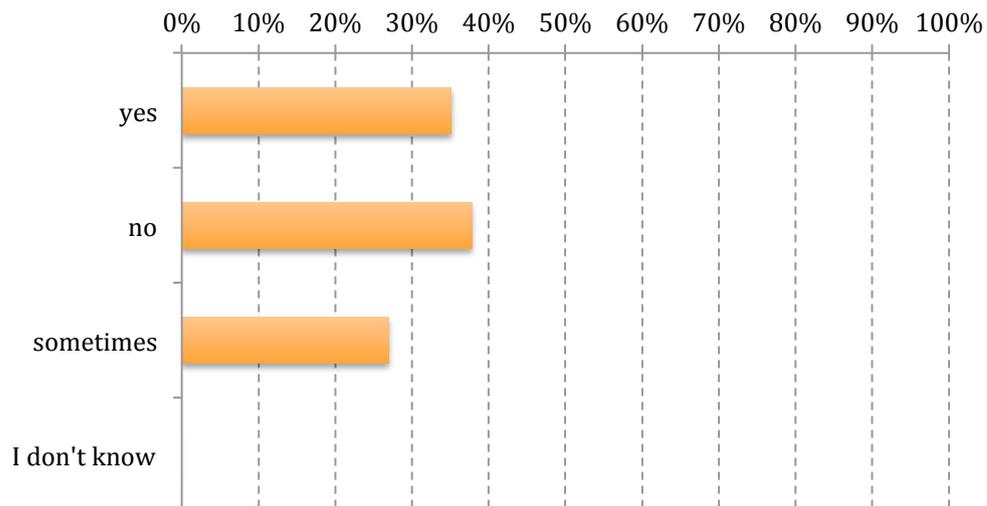
How do you build and install software? (46)



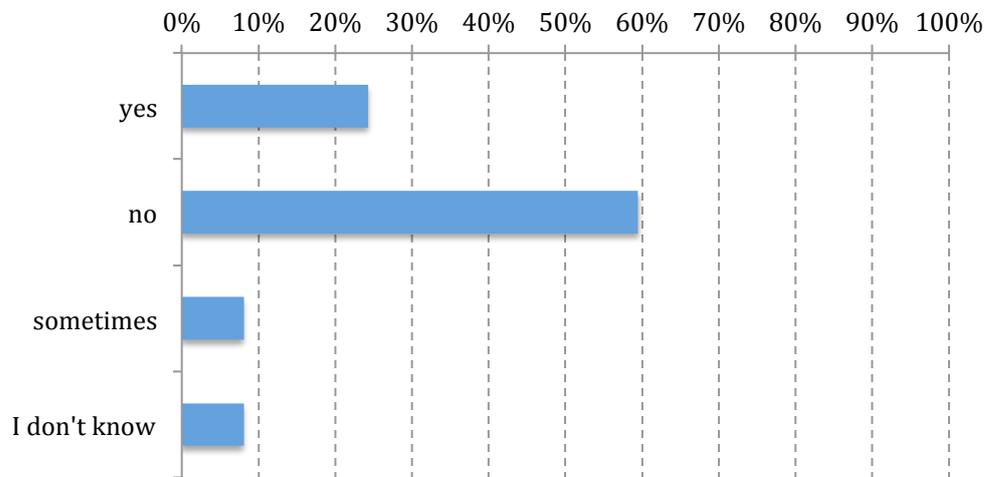
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Do you collaborate with other sites? (41)



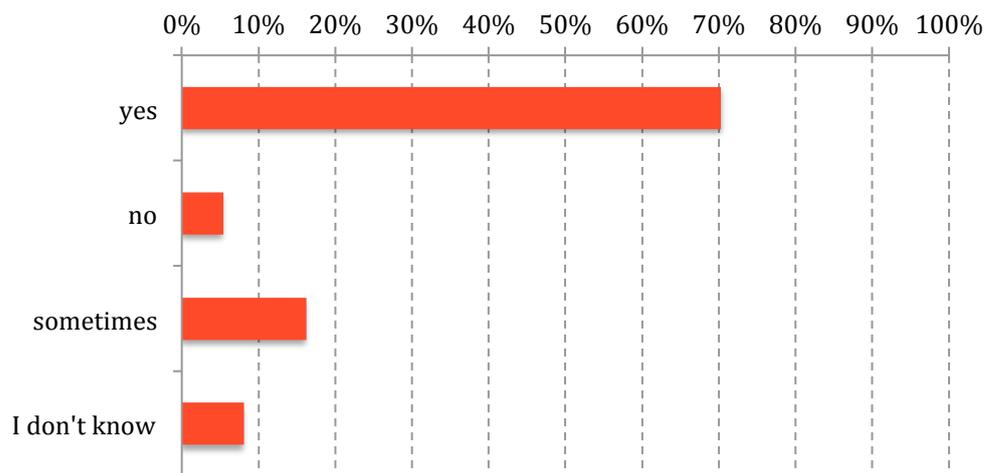
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Do you automate software builds? (37)



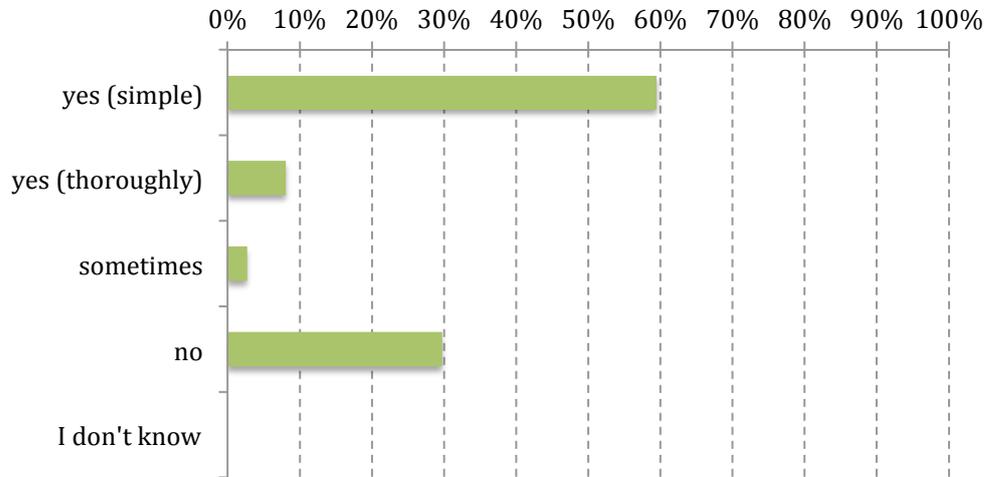
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Are module files generated automatically?
(37)



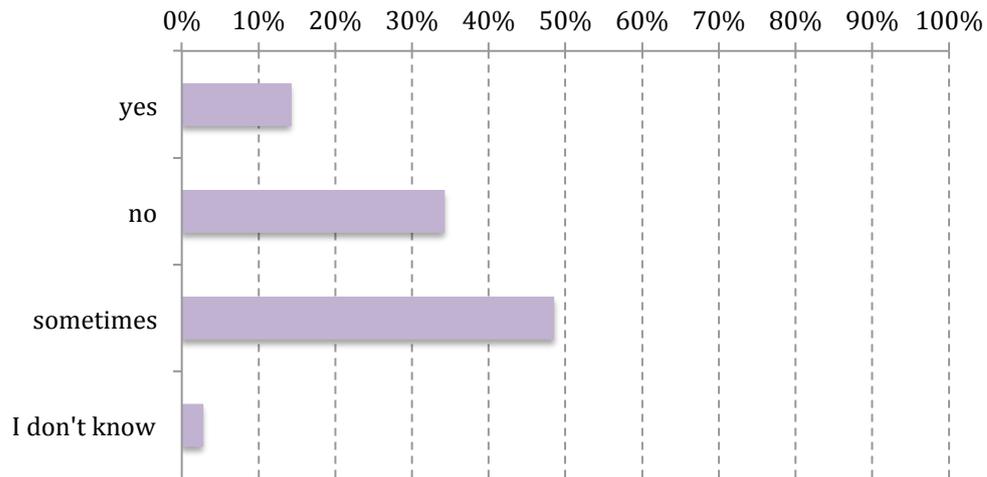
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Do you provide multiple builds per application? (37)



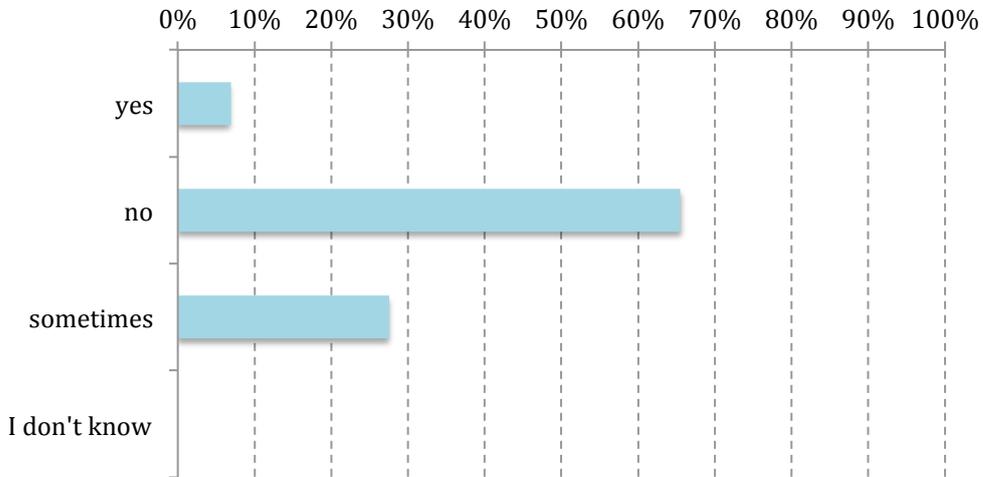
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Do you test the software builds (correctness)?
(37)



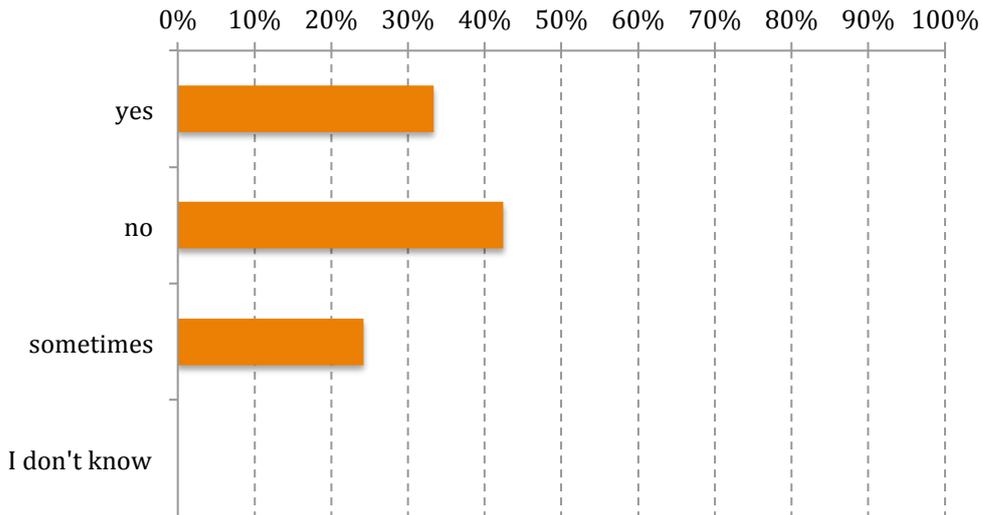
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Do you evaluate performance of the software?
(35)



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Do you monitor performance of the software?
(29)



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Do you keep track of build metadata? (33)



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Do you keep an archive of software sources?
(31)

