

Remote Job Submission Security

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Abstract

This paper presents the middleware needed to deploy jobs to non-geographically co-located clusters with decentralized look-up servers. We have named our framework the Initium Remote Job Submission (RJS) system. Initium generates a jar file that is signed by a trusted certificate authority CA [Lyon]. The jar is run by a Computation Server (CS), (a remote computer running the *Initium Computer Server Software*). A Web Server (WS) has a Java Network Launch Protocol (JNLP) file that makes reference to a signed jar file on a web server. The signed jar file contains a job for the computation server. This jar file is called the *computation jar*. The computation jar is executed on the CS and the answer is sent back to the server using RMI over SSL (RMI/SSL). A look-up server (LUS) is used to register computation servers as they come on line. When a computation server is started, it registers with a LUS. The LUS then updates its list of computation servers, in the cluster. Look-up servers can be started using Java Web Start. They can be contacted with multicast protocols.

1 THE DISTRIBUTED COMPUTING SECURITY PROBLEM

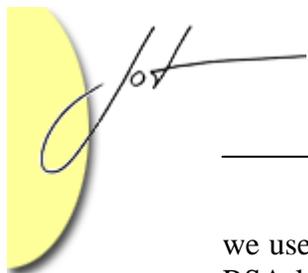
We seek to create a framework that exploits idle CPU's on the network. We are subject to the constraint that our code must be downloaded over the Internet (that is, a normally insecure channel). Further that the configuration should be automatic. In addition, the code should be verified as originating from a trusted source. Finally, computed answers should be returned over a secure link to a Web Server (WS). The web server is able to hold "jobs" for deployment, and hold computed answers.

1.1 Approach

Our approach for authentication and encryption is to use Java Secure Socket Extension (JSSE) to implement a Java technology version of Secure Socked Layer (SSL) protocols. This is integrated into the Java 2 SDK, Standard Edition v 1.4 [Sun 2004].

Our goal is to securely download a list of jobs to the LUS, and securely upload the answer jar to the WS. All LUS – CS commutation is on the LAN behind the firewall. Most grid systems use SSL for authentication, but by default do not establish encrypted communication in a secure manner [Globus 2]. Our approach requires that we encrypt all WS-LUS communication via a session key. In order to establish the session key, WS and LUS must agree on shared key, without sending any secret data in the clear. To do this,

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we use the RSA key exchange algorithm as a standard method for SSL key exchange. In RSA key exchange, the WS encrypts a number of random bytes with the LUS's public RSA key and they both use this shared secret to create the session keys. In order to guarantee the integrity of the messages, we use the Message-Digest 5 (MD5) algorithm. The MD5 algorithm is intended for digital signature applications, where a large file must be "compressed" in a secure manner before being encrypted with a private (secret) key under a public-key cryptosystem such as RSA [Rivest]. The CS receives a URL to a jnlp file and downloads the Java Web Start "job" in order to compute it. The owner of the CS must accept the job owner certificate. Once the certificate is trusted, all jobs signed by it will be executed automatically .

RSA algorithms ensure secure communication and MD5 message digest ensures that no one has altered the data in transit.

An alternative approach to security might use the Kerberos network authentication protocol [Kerberos] or SSH protocol [OpenSSH]. However, such tools are vulnerable, as the attackers can gain access to user's password as it is being typed [Basney].

1.2 Motivation

Industrial computers are typically idle 14 or more hours per workday. If we assume that they are also idle on the weekend then they are idle 118 hours out of every 168 hours during the week (i.e., 70% of the time).

We are motivated to address security issues in grid computing because an insecure network could be exploited by an adversary in order to gain access to data, destroy data, and steal logins or services (email, CPU cycles). Users will not agree to donate their CPU time without an assurance of security. A grid-based virus can spread faster than a normal virus, since it uses push technology to deploy itself and runs on-demand.

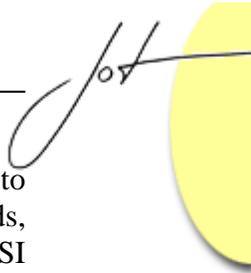
Grids need to be protected not only because they are high-value assets representing lots of hardware and software, but also because they often serve a strategic function that's central to success [Myer].

2 LITERATURE SURVEY

Grid Computing is not new, nor for that matter is grid security. The use of grid computing on a heterogeneous network is also not new. What is new is our use of Java Web Start to distribute jobs on the grid. This opens the door to grid computing on a heterogeneous network for Java programmers.

SETI, for example, does not work in Java [SETI]. Additionally, it is a closed system in that others can only contribute CPU cycles (but not programs). Our system differs from SETI in four major ways:

1. RJS is written in Java and so has binary portability,
2. RJS enables others to submit jobs to the grid,
3. RJS automatically configures the CS,
4. RJS is secure.



Globus uses the Grid Security Infrastructure (GSI, Globus Project Toolkit 3.0) to implement grid security [Silva]. GSI provides number of useful services for grids, including mutual authentication and single sign-on. A central concept in GSI authentication is the certificate. Every user and service on the Grid is identified via a certificate, which contains information vital to identifying and authenticating the user or service [Globus2]. Manipulating grid certificates using Globus Toolkit 3.0 (GT3) in Windows environments is awkward. It requires the system administrator or user to install GT3 on Linux systems in order to use command line scripts to generate certificates. Users must move those certificates to their Windows system [Silva 2].

The Globus Toolkit 3.0 consists of APIs that are built into the Java CoG Kit 1.1 that can generate a user certificate or certificate request. It can also sign certificates and create proxies [Globus2].

In many ways our approach is similar to GSI, but we are using pure Java implementation. In our judgment, the GSI technique is very secure; however, it is also cumbersome and costly.

XSOAP and XCAT grid web services use the GSI to provide Public Key Infrastructure [XSOAP]. Also, EU DataGrid project, authentication and delegation project is based on the Globus GSI, which is an extension of the Public Key Infrastructure [Cornwall]. XSOAP and XCAT grid web services use GSI. As a result, XSOAP and XCAT grid web services suffer from the same advantages and disadvantages of GSI.

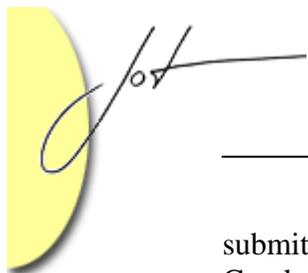
The JPARSS (Java Parallel Secure Stream for Grid Computing) package contains a run-time option of security features that enables the subject (a user or a process) to be authenticated by a JPARSS server only once during a time interval using a temporary X.509 certificate signed by the subject whose permanent X.509 certificate may be issued by any trusted certificate authority (CA) [Chen]. The advantage of this solution is one time authentication, but still there is a need for a CA to sign the temporary certificate. Furthermore, it requires a password to create X.509 certificate. Hence the JPARSS system is also judged to be secure, but cumbersome.

Grid Portal Development Kit (not supported anymore), builds its security using few simple methods for setting the username, password and designated lifetime of the proxy [GPDK]. In addition to being abandoned, the system is not secure.

JGrid introduced an Authentication Service (AS) that provides short-term certificates for users without their own certificate. In this case, a user can register with the AS, log in a custom way, and obtain private key and certificate. So the AS is a CA (Certificate Authority) of the JGrid, but it provides short-term credentials [JGrid].

JGrid is build based on Jini technology. Jini network technology, which includes JavaSpaces Technology [Flenner] and Jini extensible remote invocation (Jini ERI), is open architecture that enables developers to create network-centric services that are highly adaptive to change [Sun2]. The approach of issuing short-term certificates is similar to JPARSS, thus it shares same advantages and disadvantages.

Condor provides support for strong authentication, encryption, integrity assurance, as well as authorization. Most of these security features are not visible to the user (one who



submits jobs). They use configuration macros that are run by the site [Condor]. Since the Condor project use GSI for authentication [Condor2], it suffers from the same advantages and disadvantages of GSI.

Gridbus Project has developed a Windows/.NET-based desktop clustering software and Grid job web services to support the integration of both Windows and Unix-class resources for Grid [GRIDBUS]. Unlike RJS, the installation of Gridbus is time intensive. In most of the cases compilation of the code is required. Also, before installation, many prerequisites, such as: IBM TSpace, Globus toolkit 2.4, MySQL or Microsoft .NET Framework 1.1, are required.

3 REMOTE JOB SUBMISSION DESIGN

RJS architecture is based on Java Web Start technology and is operating system independent. Java Web Start provides the power to launch full-featured Java applications with a single click without going through complicated installations procedures [Sun3]. The system is constructed with three major applications: the Web Server, Look-up Server and Computation Server as shown in Figure 3.1-2. All three systems are designed to run on separate computers.

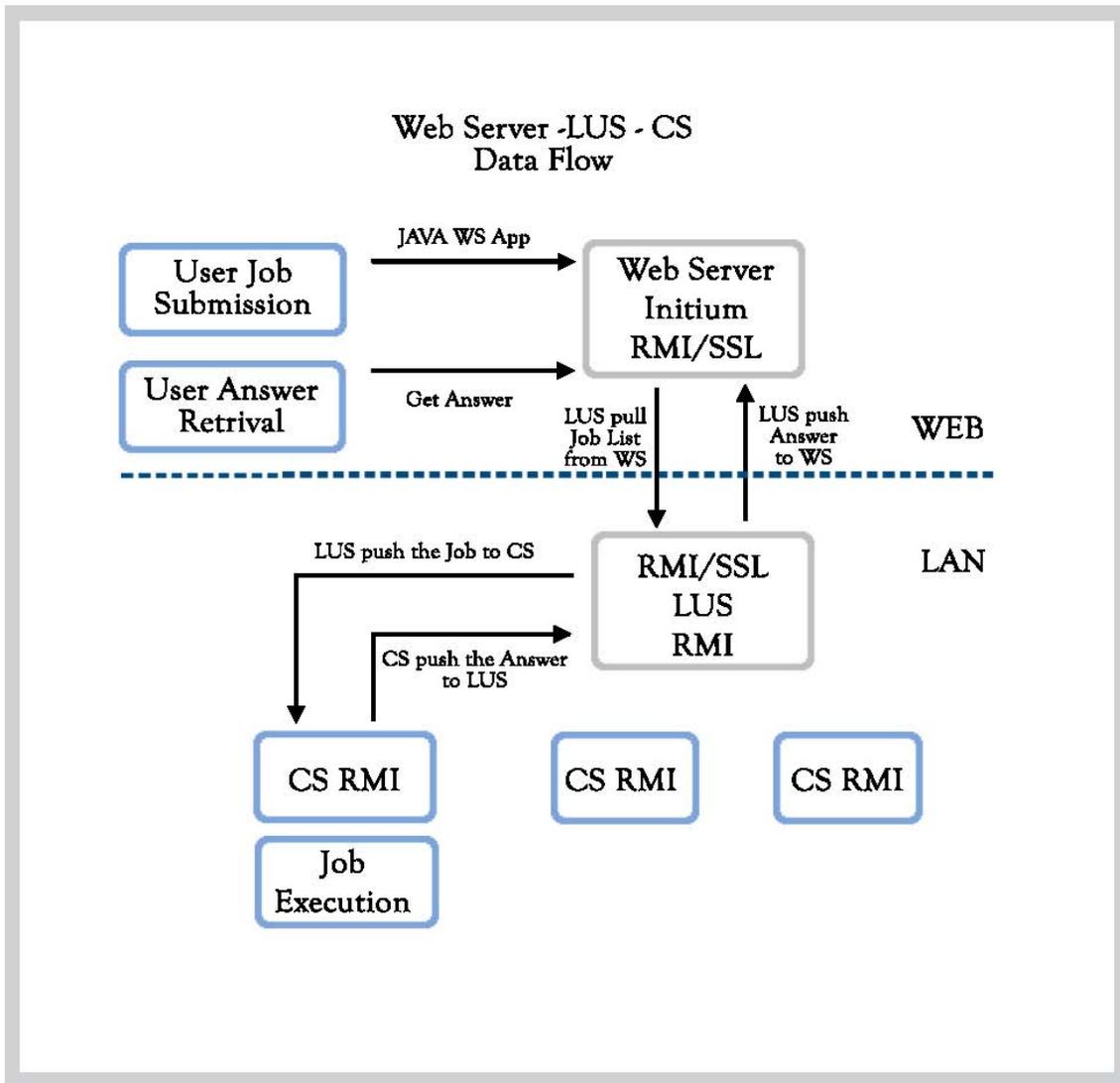
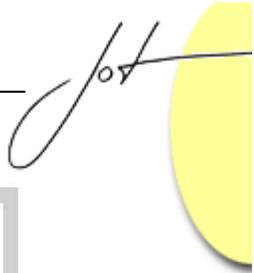


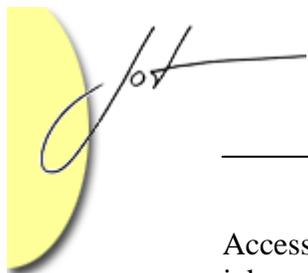
Figure 3.1-2 RJS data flow

3.1 Web Server

The Web Server is designed for jobs and answer holder. Typically, the WS is started on a server with static IP address. The server mime types must be updated to include jnlp extension; otherwise the Java Web Start applications will not be properly mapped and executed. Figure 3.1-1 shows required additions to `/etc/mime.types` file in Linux based web servers:

```
# MIME type                               Extension
application/x-java-jnlp-file               jnlp
```

Figure 3.1-1 Mime type additions in Linux



Access to the RJS is permitted only to registered users. Typically users can upload their jobs using scp. This provides strong authentication and secure communications over insecure channels [SSH].

3.1.1 Job deployment

Jobs are deployed as Java Web Start (JWS) applications. To create and deploy a job, a user can use the Initium application (freely available at <http://www.docJava.com> under Web Start section). The jnlp file needs to be uploaded to user home/jobs directory, and signed jar plus any other resource jars to directories specified in the jnlp file. Figure 3.1.1-1 shows resource sections of jnlp file where some jars are located in libs directory:

```
<resources>
<j2se version="1.4+" />
<jar href="net.rmi.rjs.fc.FractalsJob_1.jar" />
<jar href="libs/jai.jar" download="lazy"/>
<jar href="libs/jmf.jar" kind="lazy"/>
</resources>
```

Figure 3.1.1-1 Resource section of jnlp file.

Better yet, resources and native methods can be specific to operating system on which the job is executed. Figure 3.1.1-2 shows how to divide resources per operating system.

```
<resources os="Mac OS X" >
  <jar href="libs/rxtx/mac/RXTXcomm.jar" download="eager" />
  <nativelib href="libs/rxtx/mac/native.jar" download="eager"/>
</resources>

<resources os="Linux" >
  <jar href="libs/rxtx/linux/RXTXcomm.jar" download="lazy" />
  <nativelib href="libs/rxtx/linux/native.jar" />
</resources>

<resources os="Windows XP" >
  <jar href="libs/windows/RXTXcomm.jar" download="eager"/>
  <nativelib href="libs/windows/native.jar" />
</resources>
```

Figure 3.1.1-2 Operating system specific jnlp file resource section

The advantage of specifying OS related resources is the download time. The user needs to sign the jar job with his/her certificate, which is subject to verification at the computation server. Web Server starts RMI server registry on port 1099, and creates SSL socket on port 9000.



3.1.2 Web Server RMI/SSL implementation

In order to create RMI calls over SSL channel, we implemented two custom socket factories: *RMIClientSocketFactory* and *RMISSLSocketFactory* (see Figure 3.1-2). *RMIClientSocketFactory* has one method *createSocket()*, which returns an *SSLSSLSocket*.

RMISSLSocketFactory also has one method *createServerSocket()*, which returns *SSLServerSocket*. In each case the SSLSSockets are created on fixed port 9000. This is to work around problems with firewalls, which we have configured to allow communication on port 9000.

Keystore and truststore resources needed for SSL secure communication and are stored in a code as byte arrays in compiled byte codes. Keystores are databases of key pairs and certificates that are used to set up SSL authentication. Truststores are keystores that are used to verify the identities of other clients and servers. When a client or server is setting up an SSL session, it will retrieve its certificates and keys from its keystore. When it verifies the identities of other clients or servers, it will retrieve trusted certification authority (CA) certificates from its truststores [onJava]. Figure 3.1.2-1 shows how to create keystores and truststores from byte arrays.

```
ByteArrayInputStream clientKeyStoreInputStream =  
    new ByteArrayInputStream(ClientKeyStoreFile.getCKSbytes());  
  
ByteArrayInputStream clientTrustStoreInputStream =  
    new ByteArrayInputStream (ClientKeyStoreFile.getCTSbytes());  
KeyStore ks = KeyStore.getInstance("JKS");  
ks.load(clientKeyStoreInputStream, passphrase);  
KeyStore ts = KeyStore.getInstance("JKS");  
ts.load(clientTrustStoreInputStream, null);
```

Figure 3.1.2-1 Loading keystores and truststores from byte arrays.

In most systems, keystores and truststores are stored in files and are deployed as resources and stored in fixed location. Storing them on a PC without administrative permission can cause a configuration issue. We have addressed this issue by bundling the resources directly in our code.

When WS is started, it waits for incoming LUS communication. Only LUS is allowed to contact the WS and remotely, and over secure channel pull the encrypted list of the jobs.

3.2 Look up Server

The Look up server is designed to run on Local Area Network, with many geographical collocated PCs available as Computation Servers. LUS can directly connect to Web Server and initiate communication as a RMI/SSL Client (see Figure 3.2-4). It also starts an RMI File Transfer Server to upload the jobs to CS (see Figure 3.2-4). Since LUS is a

typical “man in the middle” it needs to know the WS and CS IP addresses for proper communication.

When LUS is started it first asks the user for WS IP address, as shown in Figure 3.2-1.



Figure 3.2-1 The RJS Web Server Dialog Box

The next step of the LUS is to discover available CS's. Every CS, multicasts its availability. The LUS discovers the CS via the multicast broadcast and registers the following properties of CS: IP address, benchmark speed in Mega Flops, busy state (true or false) and age (time since last update in milliseconds). All CS's and their characteristics are displayed on a LUS panel as shown in the Figure 3.2-2.

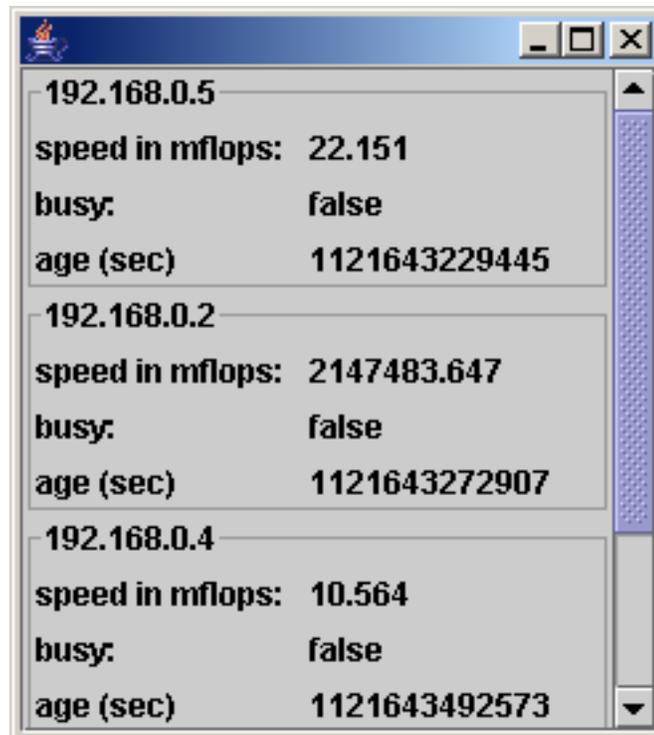


Figure 3.2-2 The LUS Panel

Finally, LUS is ready to get a list of available jobs from web server. In the current setup it is done by clicking a “Get jobs” button on LAN LUS control panel, as shown in Figure 3.2-3.



Figure 3.2-3 The LUS Control Panel

When the “Get Jobs” button is clicked, an RMI/SSL call is made to the Web Server requesting a list of available jobs. The list contains JNLP URLs. Once the list is returned to the LUS, it searches for available computation servers that can execute the job/s. In its search, the LUS selects computation servers that are both available and fast. The search repeats every 10 seconds until the job queue is empty. Once a CS is identified, the LUS uploads the “job URL” to the CS, updates the CS state to busy and removes the job from the queue.

Once the CS completes the job execution it sends the answer jar to LUS. Subsequently, the LUS automatically opens an RMI/SSL call to Web Server and uploads the jar to user home/ans directory.

3.3 Computation Server

Computation Server is designed to execute jobs and upload answers to the LUS. When CS is started, it runs a Linpack benchmark that determines its speed, the CS then multicasts its availability to the LUS and starts an RMI File Transfer Server (see Figure 3.2-4), needed for uploading answers jars back to LUS. Until the LUS sends the job to the CS, the computation server is in a waiting stage. Once the job is received from LUS, the *CSAnswerFactory* is activated. The factory is responsible for running the *WebStartLauncher* and uploading answer jars to LUS. Web Start Launcher executes the Java Web Start job on the URL provided by LUS and creates an answer jar in user home/rjs directory. Then the launcher returns the answer jar to *CSAnswerFactory*, which in turn uses the RMI File Transfer Client to upload the answer to LUS.

An additional feature of CS security is a dialog box that allows CS owners to have control over what runs on their PCs. The dialog box always appears at the time when the job is signed by not trusted certificate. Once the CS owner trusts the Certificate, all other jobs signed by the same certificate will be executed automatically. Otherwise, no jobs will be executed.

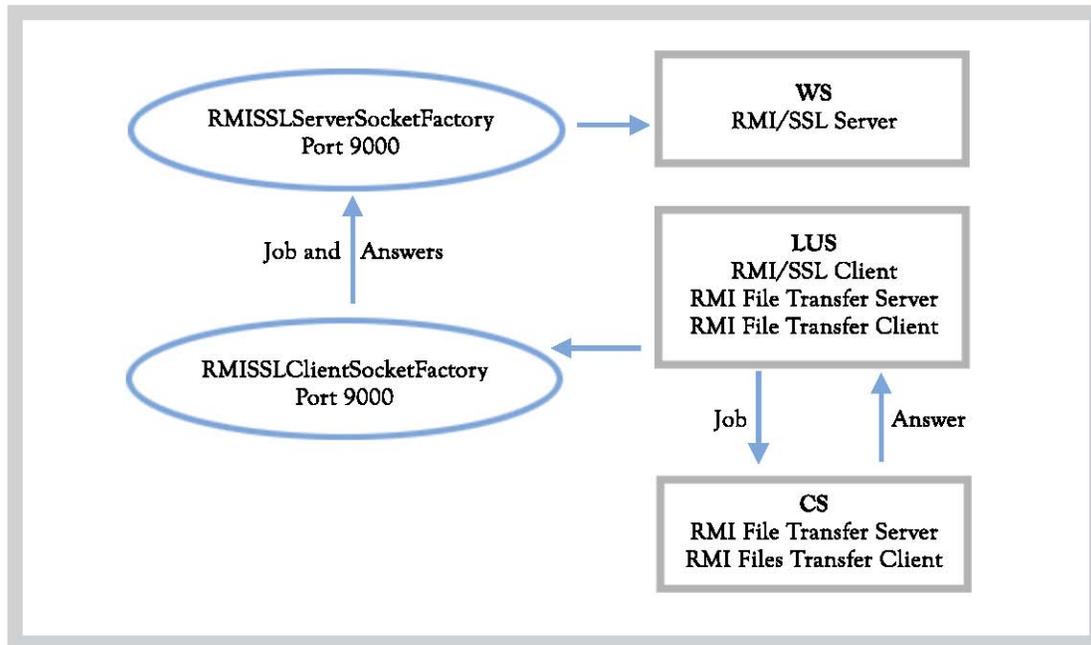


Figure 3.2-4 RJS RMI/SSL and RMI design

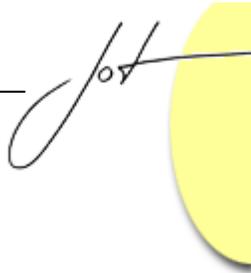
3.4 Users requirements

In order to deploy jobs to the RJS, several requirements need to be fulfilled by the user. Foremost, the user is required to obtain an account on RJS server. Next, the user needs to create jobs directory under user/home. The user must also obtain a certificate of trust. The Initium X.509 Certificate Wizard paper describes the use of the Thawte’s “Web of Trust” X.509 certificates for signing and distributing executable Jar resources [Lyon2].

Subsequently, the user needs to deploy jobs to the account. As mentioned in Section 3.1, Initium can be used for automatic deployment. Initium will perform static dependency analyses (SDA) packing only needed classes, generating signed jar, creating jnlp file and uploading it to chosen server over secure channel (SSH). Lastly, the user is responsible for obtaining the answers generated by RJS.

3.5 Jobs requirements

All jobs posted into the RJS system must be deployed as Java Web Start applications. Each job must be partitioned into several sub-tasks, and each sub-task needs to be deployed as separate Java Web Start application. Each application must call *System.exit(0)* when it is done to prevent multiple JVM hanging on the CS PC. The output of the job, referred to herein as the answer, must be in a jar file. All jobs and answer jars must be clearly identified by a unique file name.



4 RJS SYSTEM BENCHMARK

Our system uses the fastest CS's first. Our experiments demonstrated a mix of macs, Windows and Linux operating systems. Figure 4.1 shows a table with all measurements from the benchmark.

Num of CS	Num of jobs	CS OS /CPU speed	Benchmark speed In M Flops	Num of executed jobs per CS	Time (sec) to complete	AVG Time execution per job
1	8	MAC X 350 MHz	11.83	8	490	60
1	8	PC WIN XP 3.2 GHz	42.17	8	180	22.5
1	8	MAC and XP AVG	27	8	335	42
2	8	MAC X 350 MHz	14.5	2	120	15
		PC WIN XP 3.2 GHz	44.3	6		
3	8	MAC X 350 MHz	14.3	1	80	10
		PC WIN XP 900 MHz	34.33	3		
		PC WIN XP 3.2 GHz	41.24	4		
4	8	MAC X 350 MHz	14.61	1	60	7.5
		PC WIN XP 900 MHz	34.33	2		
		PC WIN XP 1 GHz	34.33	2		
		PC WIN XP 3.2 GHz	45.8	3		
5	8	MAC X 350 MHz	14.61	1	50	6.25
		PC WIN XP 900 MHz	34.33	1		
		PC WIN XP 1 GHz	34.33	1		
		PC WIN XP 1 GHz	34.33	1		
		PC WIN XP 2.4 GHz	41.2	2		
6	8	MAC X 350 MHz	14.61	1	42	5.25
		PC WIN XP 900 MHz	34.33	1		
		PC WIN XP 1 GHz	34.33	1		
		PC WIN XP 1 GHz	34.33	1		
		PC WIN XP 2.4 GHz	41.2	2		
		PC WIN XP 3.2 GHz	45.4	2		

Figure 4-1 Experiment log table

The benchmark clearly shows that using more than one computation server results in quicker job completion. An increase from one to six workers resulted in eight to one improvement in time execution.

Figure 4-2 shows a chart of an execution time versus number of computation servers participating in a grid. For one CS executing all eight jobs, average of Macintosh run (slowest CS) and Windows XP 3.2 GHz (fastest CS) was used. For the rest five runs, data from Figure 4-1 was used. The chart clearly shows that increasing number of computation servers decreases the time of jobs execution.

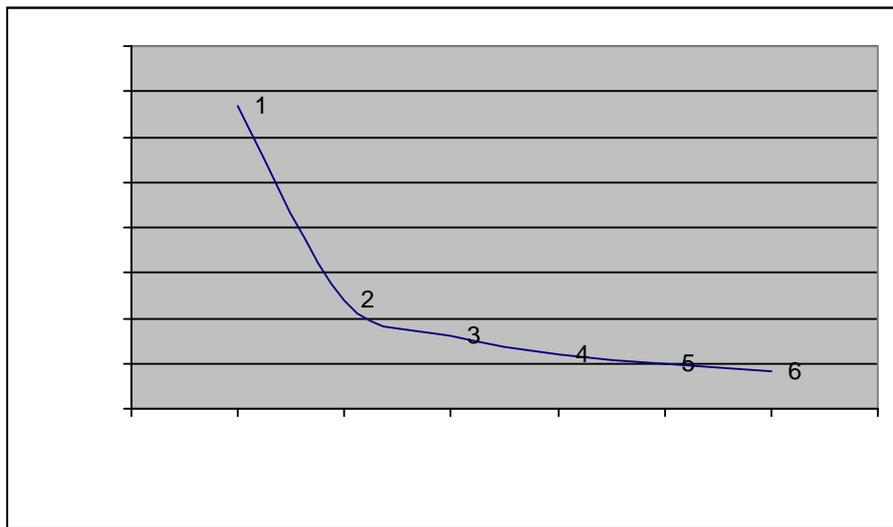


Figure 4-2 Execution Time versus number of participating CS's.

Figure 4-3 shows that as the number of computation servers increased, the average job execution time decreased from 42 to 5.25 seconds. Correlation was also observed between the number of CS used and average speed in mega flops. As the number of workers increased, the average speed of mega flops increased from 27 to 34.

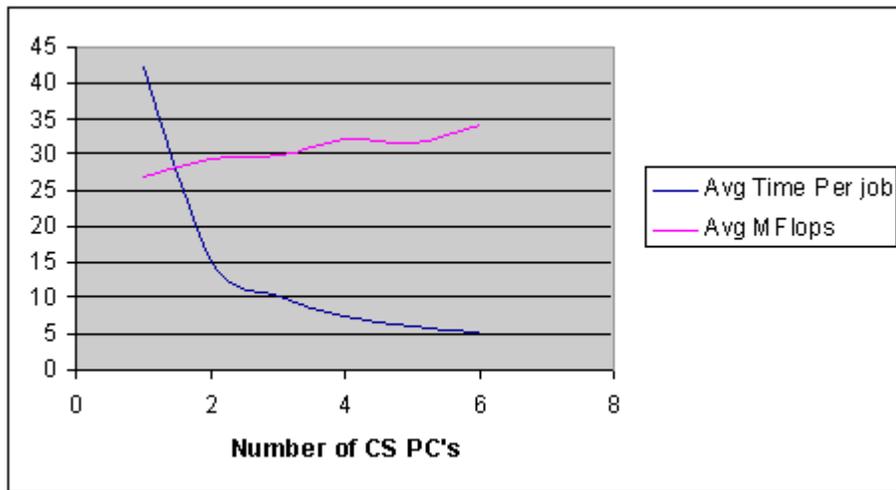


Figure 4-3 AVG Execution Time and AVG Benchmark speed versus number of CS's.

For all experiments completed, the RJS system computed one Mandelbrot task subdivided into eight jobs. After each test experiment, the system created eight answers jars, and uploaded them to user answer directory. Figure 4.4 shows visual output from the all eight jobs. Images listed on Figure 4.4 are displayed in the order that they are returned by the CS's and not the correct order for display.

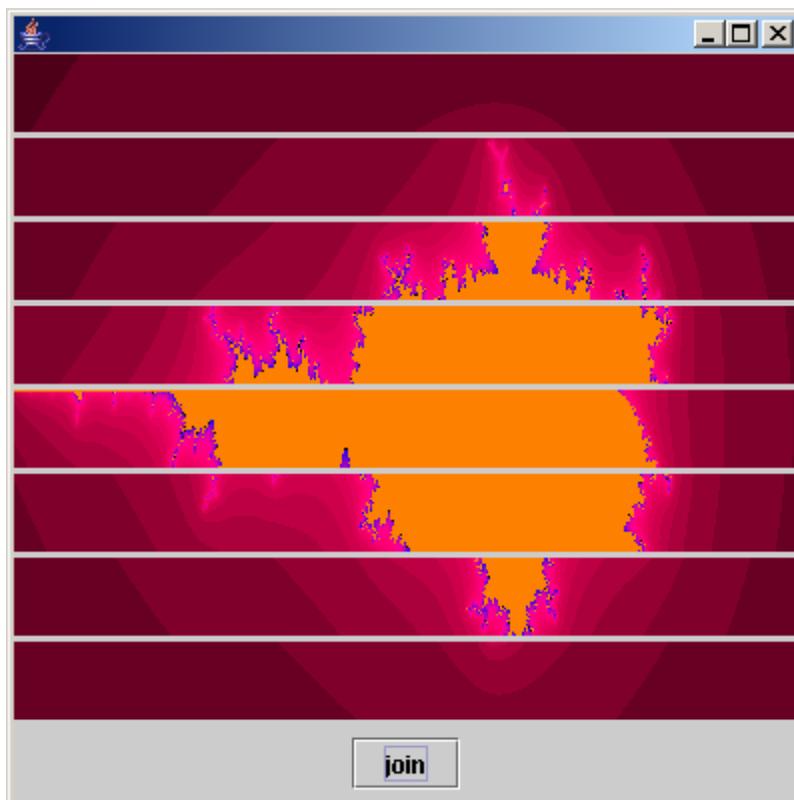


Figure 4-4 Visual outputs from the jobs

Figure 4.5 shows the jobs after they have been spliced together into a single image.

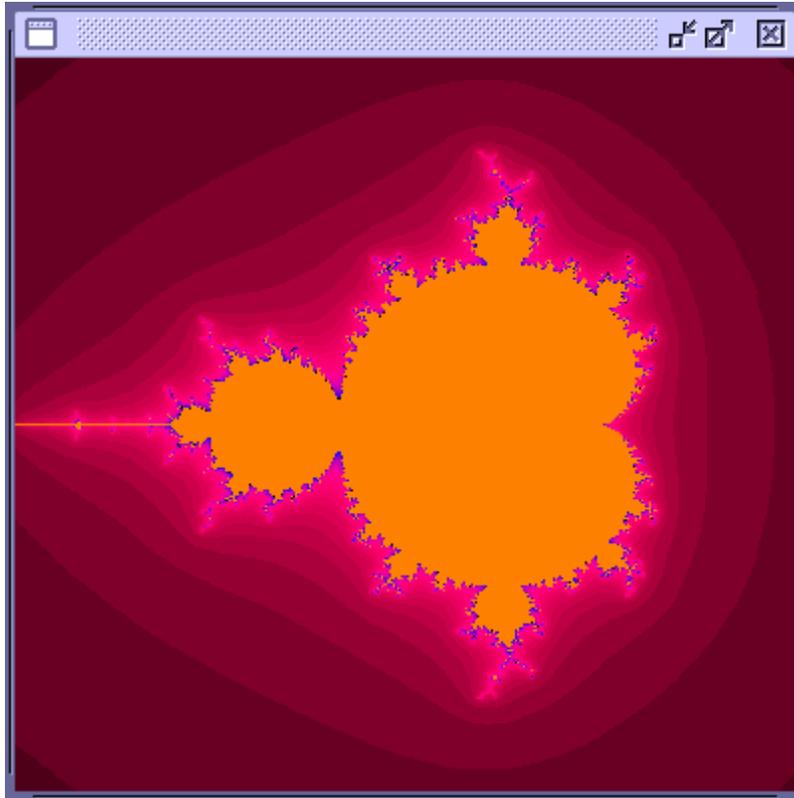


Figure 4-5 Mandelbrot set

5 CONCLUSION

There are several grid systems on the market today. One of them is RJS. RJS differs from most of the grid systems available in many significant ways. The major contributions and advantages of RJS are its deployment, portability and security.

RJS' deployment has many benefits over the grid systems on the market. Unlike many, the RJS system can be deployed and started on a new web server within minutes, through the use of Java Web Start technology.

The uniqueness of the RJS lies in the portability feature. Utilizing Java Web Start technology occurs so that the system is portable to various operating systems and automatic in its deployment. Java Web Start technology is also able to load operating system specific, on-demand.

The third advantage of RJS is its security. The system is secure from the job deployment (SSH) to the job execution. All communications sent on unsecured channels



is encrypted and transmitted over secured protocol (SSL). Further, the owner of the CS PC can refuse suspicious jobs by not trusting his or her certificates. Finally, using a message digest algorithm to verify the integrity of the jar files before web start will execute them thwarts man-in-the-middle attacks.

In the future, a leasing mechanism in the LUS should be introduced. Currently, once the CS is discovered by LUS, it stays registered even if it is no longer available. The only time the CS is removed from LUS list is when it is picked to execute a job, but is not present. Leasing would improve the current system by eliminating CSs that are no longer available. This would be accomplished by enabling CS to renew its lease with LUS periodically. If CS does not renew its lease, it is then removed.

Another possible improvement is on RJS Server. A communication tool could be introduced to notify a user when the job is executed and the answer is ready. A simple email program can be written to send a message to user's account. A more sophisticated way would be to introduce an application that would be running on the user's PC. This application would periodically scan user home/ans directory looking for answer jars. Once an answer is found, it is automatically uploaded to a user directory.

The third and most important area of future work is automatic idle detection. In the current system LUS and CS are started manually. An automatic launcher that can detect idleness of a PC and start computation server on the grid is needed. One way to do this is by introducing screen savers. We are presently working on a new screen saver system that can detect when a computer is idle.

Java Web Start versions 1.4 and older are unable to register users' certificates. Because of this limitation all CS users, run older versions of Java Web Start, will be asked to trust every new job that is posted to grid. In newer versions of Web Start this issue is fixed, where users can trust the signers certificate only once (by clicking Always button) and all jobs signed by the same certificate will execute automatically. This is documented in the j2se enhancements section on Sun's site <http://java.sun.com/j2se/1.5.0/docs/guide/deployment/enhancements-1.5.0.html>.

Source code for this project is freely available from <http://www.docjava.com> under the section titled "*Java for Programmers*".

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