Making access to astronomical software more efficient

Preben Grosbol

European Southern Observatory

Access to astronomical data through archives and VO is essential but does not solve all problems. Availability of appropriate software for analyzing the data is often equally important for the efficiency with which one can publish results. A number of legacy systems (e.g. IRAF, MIDAS, Starlink, AIPS, Gipsy) are still heavily used but they have very different user interfaces and are not any longer fully supported. User may need several different systems and stand-alone packages to complete the full analysis which introduce significant overheads. The OPTICON Network on ‘Future Astronomical Software Environments’ has discussed these issues and outlined a general architectural concept which would solve many of the current problems in accessing software packages. The current status and plans will be reviewed.