

Moving your computing tasks and data from personal computer to supercomputers and clouds

Resources, support and training courses available to you

September 24, 2026, 12:00 pm - 1:00 pm EDT

Presented
by

Shared Hierarchical Academic Research Computing Network

SHARCNET

The Shared Hierarchical Academic Research Computing Network is a high performance computing consortium consisting of 19 academic partner institutions covering a geographical span of about 1,800 km from Windsor to Peterborough and from St. Catharines to Thunder Bay making it the largest HPC consortium in Canada by number of institutions. **It operates the national supercomputer nibi (“water” in *Anishinaabemowin*) and provides services to academic researchers (See <https://www.sharcnet.ca/>).**

Digital Research Alliance of Canada

Alliance de recherche numérique du Canada

The Digital Research Alliance of Canada (the Alliance) is a national not-for-profit membership-based organization playing a central role in helping to advance the establishment of a researcher focused, accountable, agile, strategic and sustainable digital research infrastructure (DRI) ecosystem for researchers in Canada (See <https://www.alliancecan.ca/>).

Academic/research computing at Western

Campus IT groups - academic computing

- Science: <https://sts.uwo.ca/>
- Social science: <https://ssts.uwo.ca/>
- Engineering: <https://www.eng.uwo.ca/itg/>
- More <https://wts.uwo.ca/>

SHARCNET/DRAC - advanced research computing

- Compute (clusters)
- Storage
- Clouds
- DBaaS, AlaaS, Nextcloud (free personal storage)
- Training on advanced research computing, data science, machine learning

Academic/research computing across Canada

Getting an account

Anyone from a Canadian research institution may apply for an account free of charge. Faculty should apply at <https://ccdb.alliancecan.ca/>. Students, postdoctoral fellows, visiting scholars and other individuals may apply for an account sponsored by a faculty member.



Academic/research computing across Canada

What you can access

A user with an account from the Digital Research Alliance of Canada has access to all supercomputers, clouds and storage services operated by the Alliance and its members across the country free of charge. See the services (<https://www.alliancecan.ca/en/services>) for details.



Academic/research computing across Canada

Getting help

Send email to help@sharcnet.ca. Check online video recordings at <https://youtube.sharcnet.ca/>. Visit our local staff in Western Science Centre.



Academic/research computing across Canada

Training courses

SHARCNET offers a variety of training courses.

A glance of the courses throughout the year:

- Fundamentals and practice of advanced research computing (13 weeks)
- Using Alliance's resources
- Shell, git, Python, R...
- Programming shared and distributed memory systems
- Programming GPUs
- Machine learning and AI
- Visualization
- And more

Visit <https://training.sharcnet.ca/>



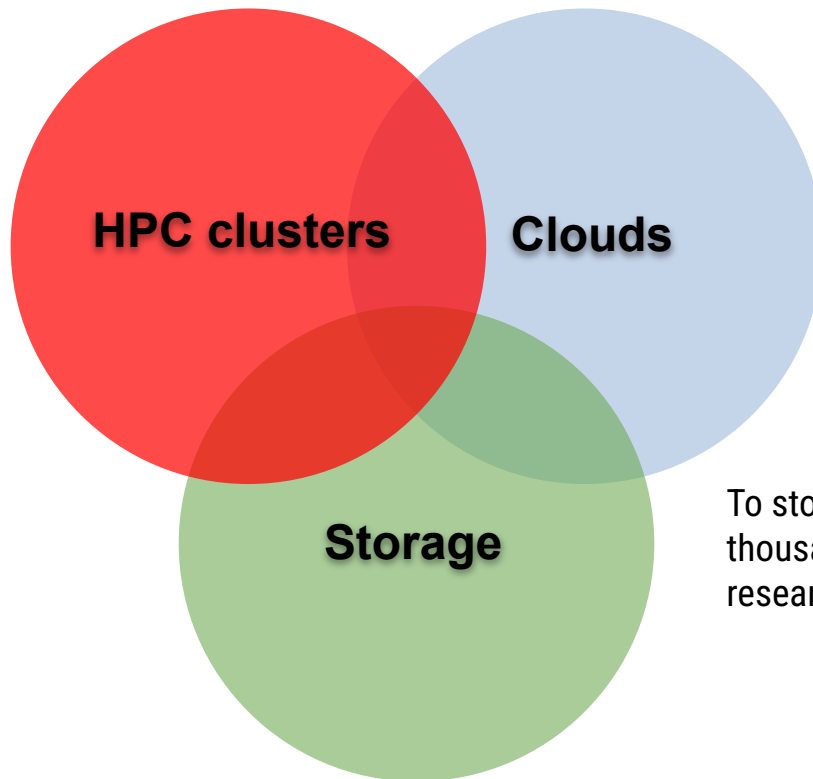
Supercomputing at Western, SHARCNET and beyond

- Supercomputing at Western, SHARCNET and beyond
- Requests for more compute, storage and cloud resources
- What everyone should know
- Training courses
- Q & A

A tour from [here](#)

Resources: *HPC clusters, clouds and storage*

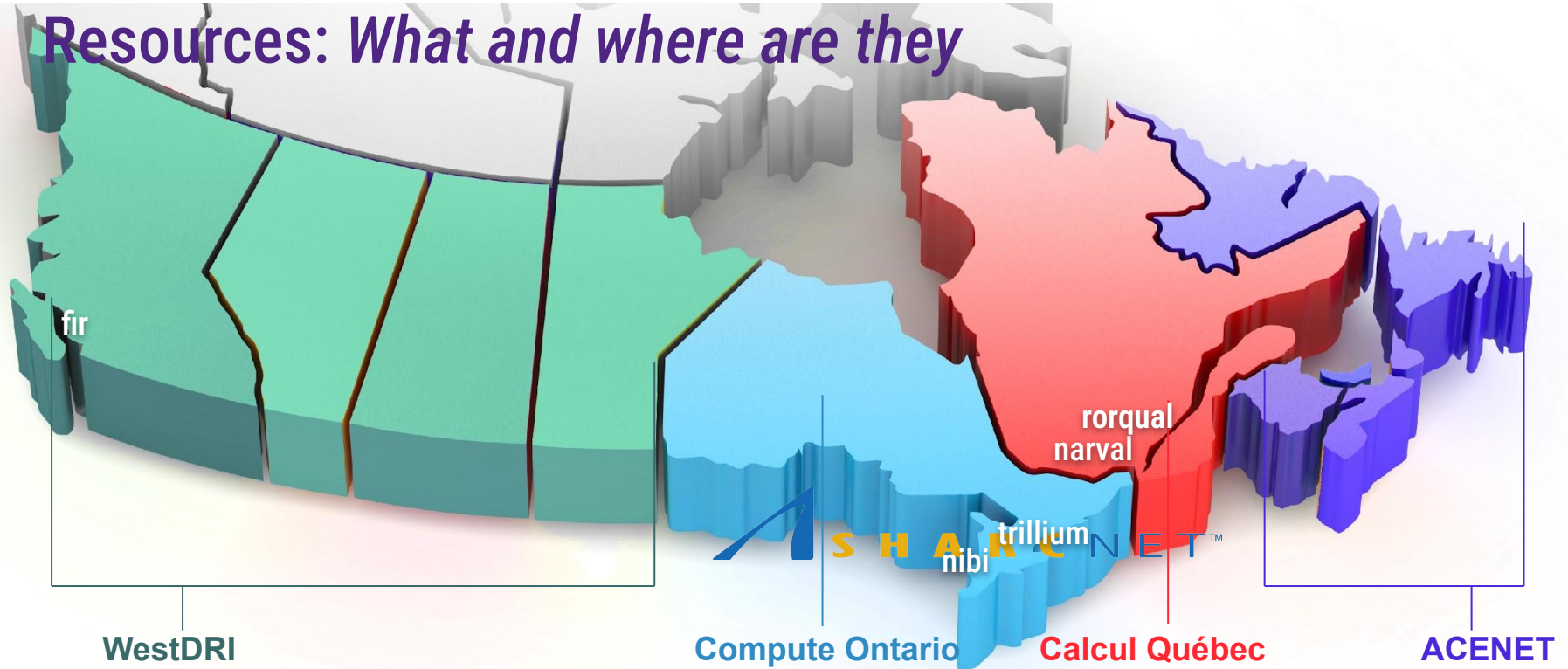
To run large and exascale simulations that need dedicated access to hundreds of thousands CPU and GPU cores and low latency, fast interconnect fabric; or to run hundreds of thousands of simulations simultaneously



To run web services, databases or use virtual machines (VMs) with full control. The CPU and GPU resources are typically over committed, that is, a CPU core or GPU device might be shared by the running VMs.

To store hundreds of thousands of TB of research data

Resources: What and where are they



One can access all national supercomputers across the country, free of charge.

Resources: *HPC clusters and storage*

Major national systems at a glance

Resource	Fir	Narval	Nibi	Trillium	Rorqual	Total
CPU cores	166,656	49,664	136,320	235,008	131,712	719,360
GPU cores	7,680 H100s	5,068 H100s	6,912 H100s AMD MI300A	5,760 H100s B200s	5,184 H100s	30,604
Storage ¹	49PB	19PB	25PB	29PB	68PB	-
Source: https://docs.alliancecan.ca/wiki/National_systems						

1. These numbers represent the major storage.

Resources: *AI specific systems*

Pan-Canadian AI Compute Environment (PAICE)

- **TamIA** at Mila -Québec Artificial Intelligence Institute.
- **Killarney** at Vector Institute.
- **Vulcan** at Alberta Machine Intelligence Institute (Amii).

Source: https://docs.alliancecan.ca/wiki/National_systems

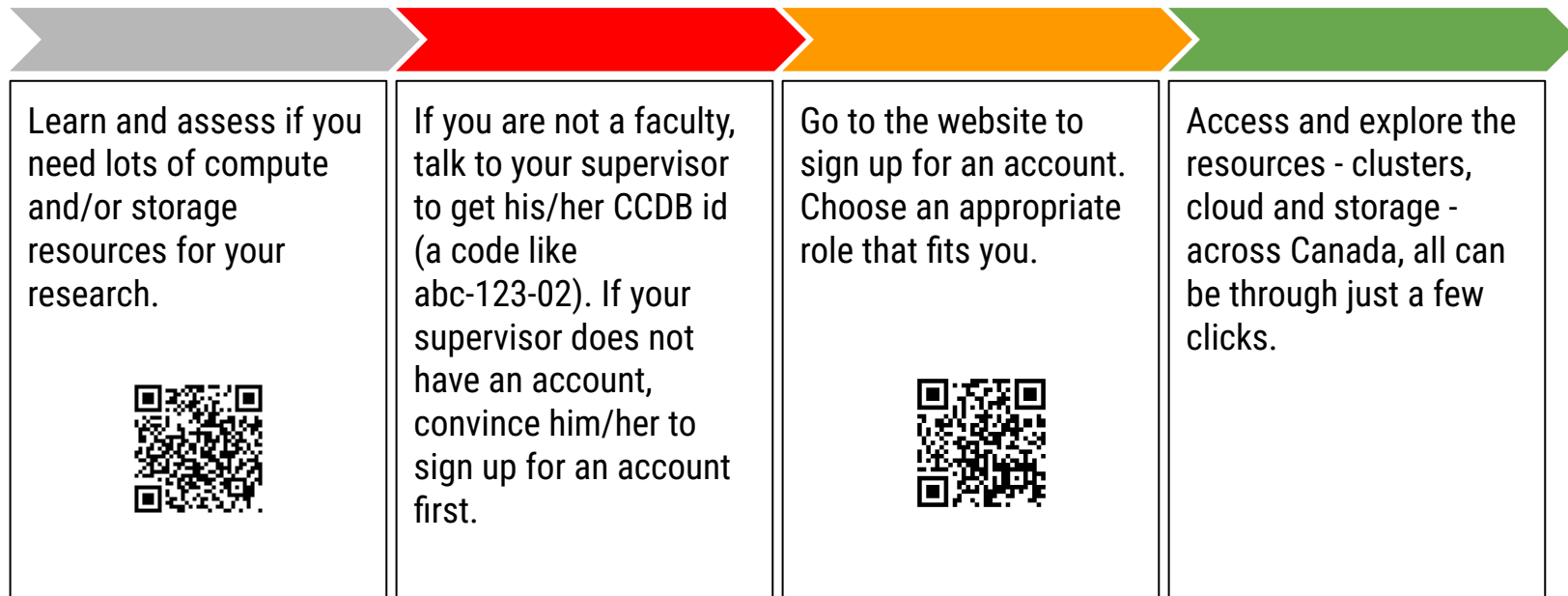
Resources: *Why using national resources*

If you

- do not have many cores or much memory;
- do not have the GPUs of the type needed;
- need a huge amount of disk space, e.g. hundreds of TB;
- need to run large scale of simulations using hundreds and thousands of cores;
- need to run large amount of simulations concurrently;
- need to run a web services;
- need to run a SQL database;
- need to run programs on a cloud;
- need to run AI models at no cost;
- need the compute and storage at no cost.

Resources: *Getting an account FREE of charge*

Sign up for an account for FREE at <https://ccdb.alliancecan.ca/>



Accessing compute, storage and cloud resources

Default access	Rapid Access Service (RAS)	Resource Allocation Competition (RAC)
Compute: No limit in CPU and GPU cores, but low priority, hence longer wait time. Storage: Limited storage space • 50GB home • 1TB project - work space • 20TB scratch (60 days when over 1TB) - temp space • 10TB nearline (tape) Cloud: Limited cloud resources • 80 VCPU years • persistent 25 VCPU years • 10TB volume and snapshot storage Request: Needed	Compute: May ask for increase in priority <i>temporarily</i>, to improve the throughput of jobs. Storage: Storage • project - up to 40TB across the country • nearline - up to 100TB • Not available at some sites. Cloud: Moderate increase. Request: Any time Email: support@tech.alliancecan.ca	Compute: Best assurance of priority access to allocated number of CPU cores (200+) and GPUs (25 RGUs) throughout a year. Shorter wait time Storage: Guaranteed access to allocated storage spaces: • project (40+ TB) • nearline (100+ TB) Cloud: Guaranteed access to allocated cloud resources beyond the default access limits Request: Annual application

Resources: *How do I access clusters, clouds and storage*

Clusters across the country

- fir.alliancecan.ca
- nibi.alliancecan.ca
- trillium.alliancecan.ca
- rorqual.alliancecan.ca
- narval.alliancecan.ca

Cloud services

- arbutus.cloud.alliancecan.ca
- cedar.cloud.alliancecan.ca
- nibi.cloud.alliancecan.ca
- beluga.cloud.alliancecan.ca

Access: via SSH (from text terminal) or web browser

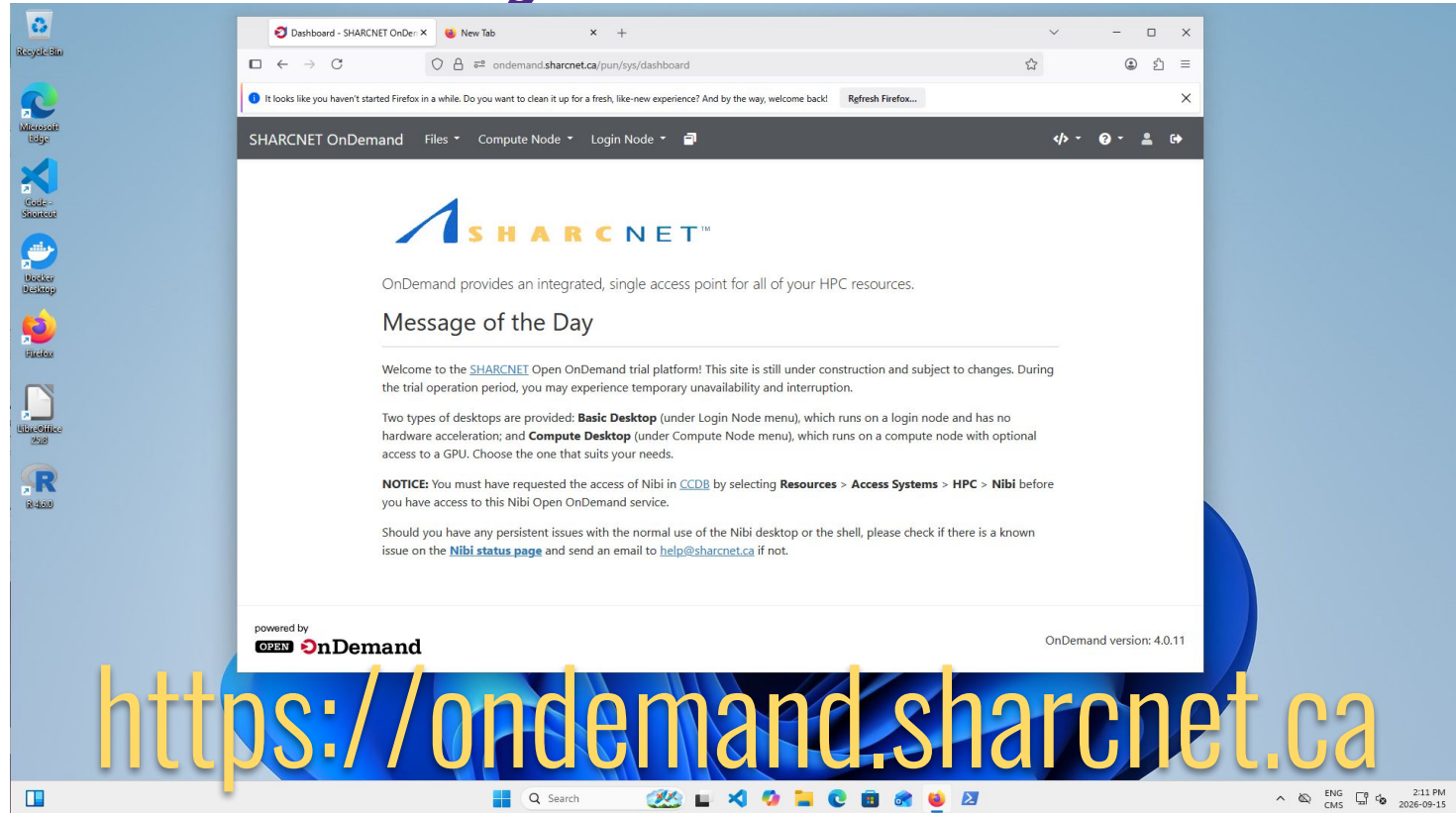
Access: via web browser

Welcome to the Niki cluster.
<http://docs.alliancecan.ca/>
 More details about the new system are available here
<https://docs.alliancecan.ca/wiki/Niki>

Then you submit your jobs using a script

You need to prepare a submission script

Resources: Accessing a cluster



The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying the SHARCNET OnDemand dashboard. The browser's address bar shows the URL ondemand.sharcnet.ca/pun/sys/dashboard. The dashboard has a dark navigation bar with the following items: SHARCNET OnDemand, Files, Compute Node, and Login Node. The main content area features the SHARCNET logo, a welcome message, and a 'Message of the Day'. The message states that the platform is still under construction and provides information about two types of desktops: Basic Desktop and Compute Desktop. It also includes a notice about accessing Nibi in CCDB and a link to the Nibi status page. The dashboard is powered by OPEN OnDemand, and the version is 4.0.11. The browser's taskbar at the bottom shows various application icons and the system clock indicating 2:11 PM on 2026-09-15.

Dashboard - SHARCNET OnDem x New Tab x +

ondemand.sharcnet.ca/pun/sys/dashboard

It looks like you haven't started Firefox in a while. Do you want to clean it up for a fresh, like-new experience? And by the way, welcome back! Refresh Firefox...

SHARCNET OnDemand Files Compute Node Login Node

SHARCNET™

OnDemand provides an integrated, single access point for all of your HPC resources.

Message of the Day

Welcome to the [SHARCNET](#) OnDemand trial platform! This site is still under construction and subject to changes. During the trial operation period, you may experience temporary unavailability and interruption.

Two types of desktops are provided: **Basic Desktop** (under Login Node menu), which runs on a login node and has no hardware acceleration; and **Compute Desktop** (under Compute Node menu), which runs on a compute node with optional access to a GPU. Choose the one that suits your needs.

NOTICE: You must have requested the access of Nibi in [CCDB](#) by selecting **Resources > Access Systems > HPC > Nibi** before you have access to this Nibi Open OnDemand service.

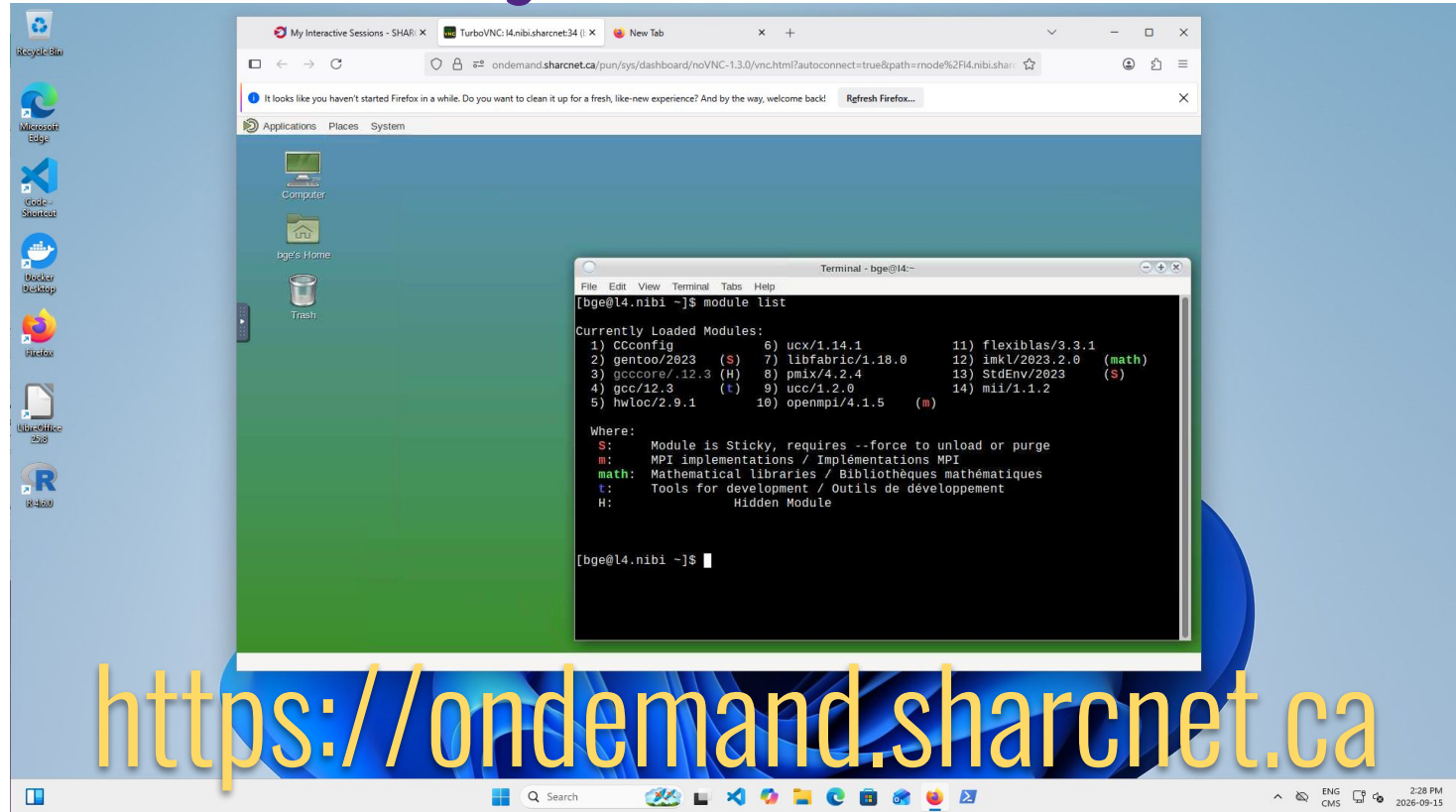
Should you have any persistent issues with the normal use of the Nibi desktop or the shell, please check if there is a known issue on the [Nibi status page](#) and send an email to help@sharcnet.ca if not.

powered by
OPEN OnDemand

OnDemand version: 4.0.11

https://ondemand.sharcnet.ca

Resources: Accessing a cluster



The screenshot displays a Windows desktop with a blue background. On the left side, there is a vertical taskbar with icons for Recycle Bin, Microsoft Edge, Visual Studio Code, Docker Desktop, Firefox, LibreOffice, and RStudio. The main area of the desktop shows a web browser window with the URL ondemand.sharcnet.ca/pun/sys/dashboard/noVNC-1.3.0/vnc.html?autoconnect=true&path=/node%2F4.nibi.sharcnet.ca. Below the browser window, a terminal window titled "Terminal - bge@l4:~" is open, showing the output of the `module list` command. The terminal output lists 14 modules, including `ccconfig`, `gentoo/2023`, `gcccore/12.3`, `gcc/12.3`, `hwloc/2.9.1`, `ucx/1.14.1`, `libfabric/1.10.0`, `pmix/4.2.4`, `ucc/1.2.0`, `openmpi/4.1.5`, `flexiblas/3.3.1`, `ink/2023.2.0`, `StdEnv/2023`, and `mii/1.1.2`. The terminal also shows a legend for the module status: `S` for Sticky, `m` for MPI implementations, `math` for Mathematical libraries, `t` for Tools for development, and `H` for Hidden Module.

<https://ondemand.sharcnet.ca>

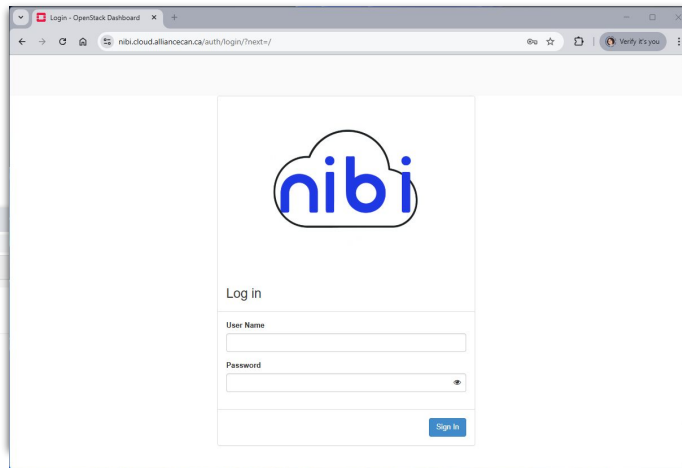
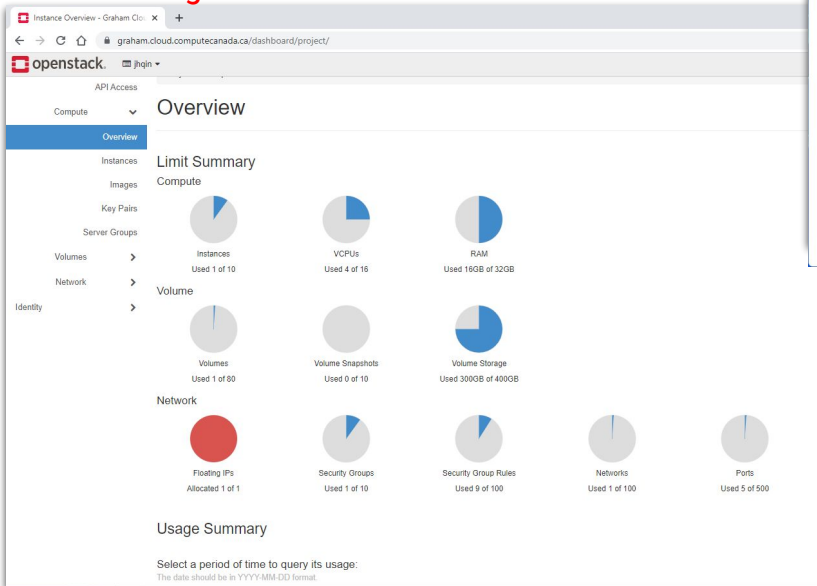
Resources: Accessing a cloud

A few notes

- The Alliance provides clouds as an infrastructure as a service (IaaS). Not necessarily seen as a turn-key solution as one might have seen. Users are responsible for running VMs and tasks inside VMs themselves.
- Typical uses of cloud at Alliance: web services, databases, compute intensive applications (small scale), etc.
- Before you proceed, visit the Alliance wiki page on [cloud](#).
- One needs to have a project to use cloud.
- Only a PI can [create a cloud project](#) per cloud.
- Once a cloud project is created, user can access individual clouds to *manage their VMs and services*.

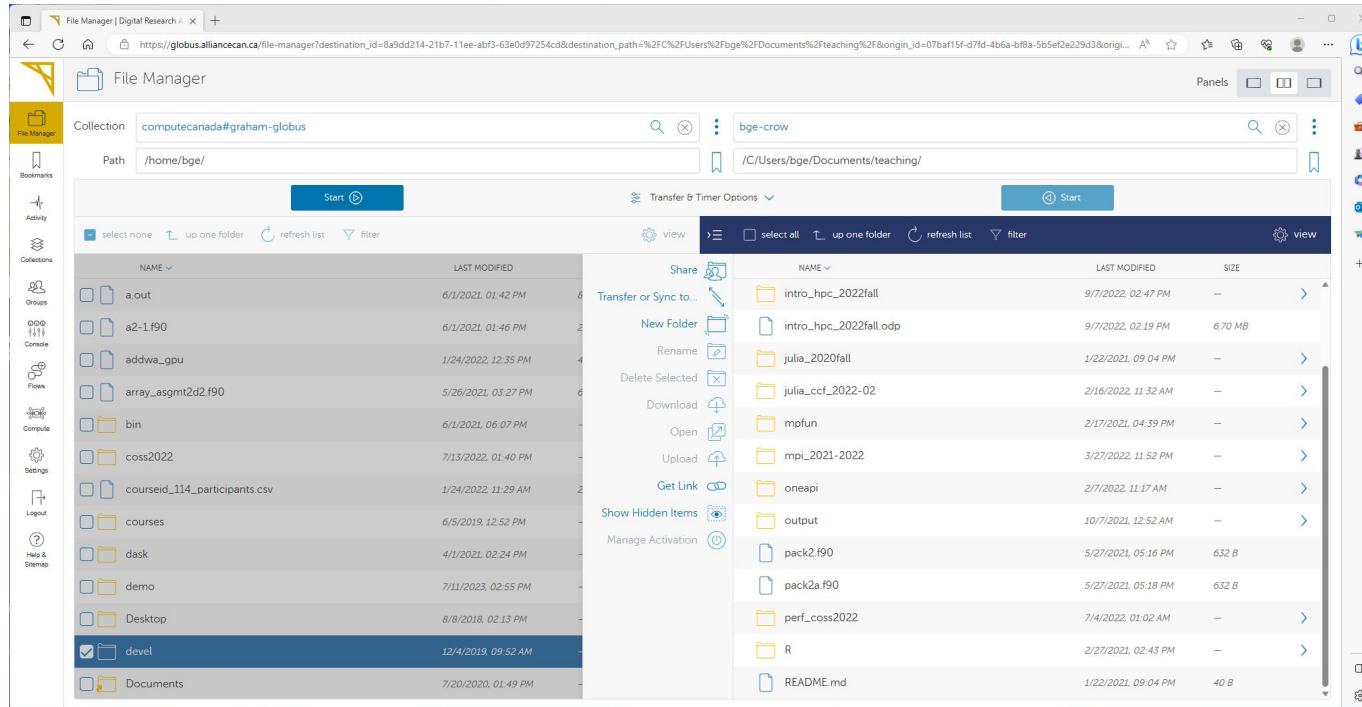
Resources: Accessing a cloud

- **arbutus**.cloud.alliancecan.ca
- **cedar**.cloud.alliancecan.ca
- **nibi**.cloud.alliancecan.ca
- **beluga**.cloud.alliancecan.ca



- One needs a project
- No Windows images, all VMs are Linux.
- Up to 80 virtual CPU cores.
- May have virtual GPUs.
- Up to 10 TB storage.
- Up to 25 persistent CPU cores.

Resources: *Transferring files via Globus*¹



1. Check <https://docs.alliancecan.ca/wiki/Globus>. Go to <https://globus.alliancecan.ca/> and follow the instructions

Resources: Getting help online

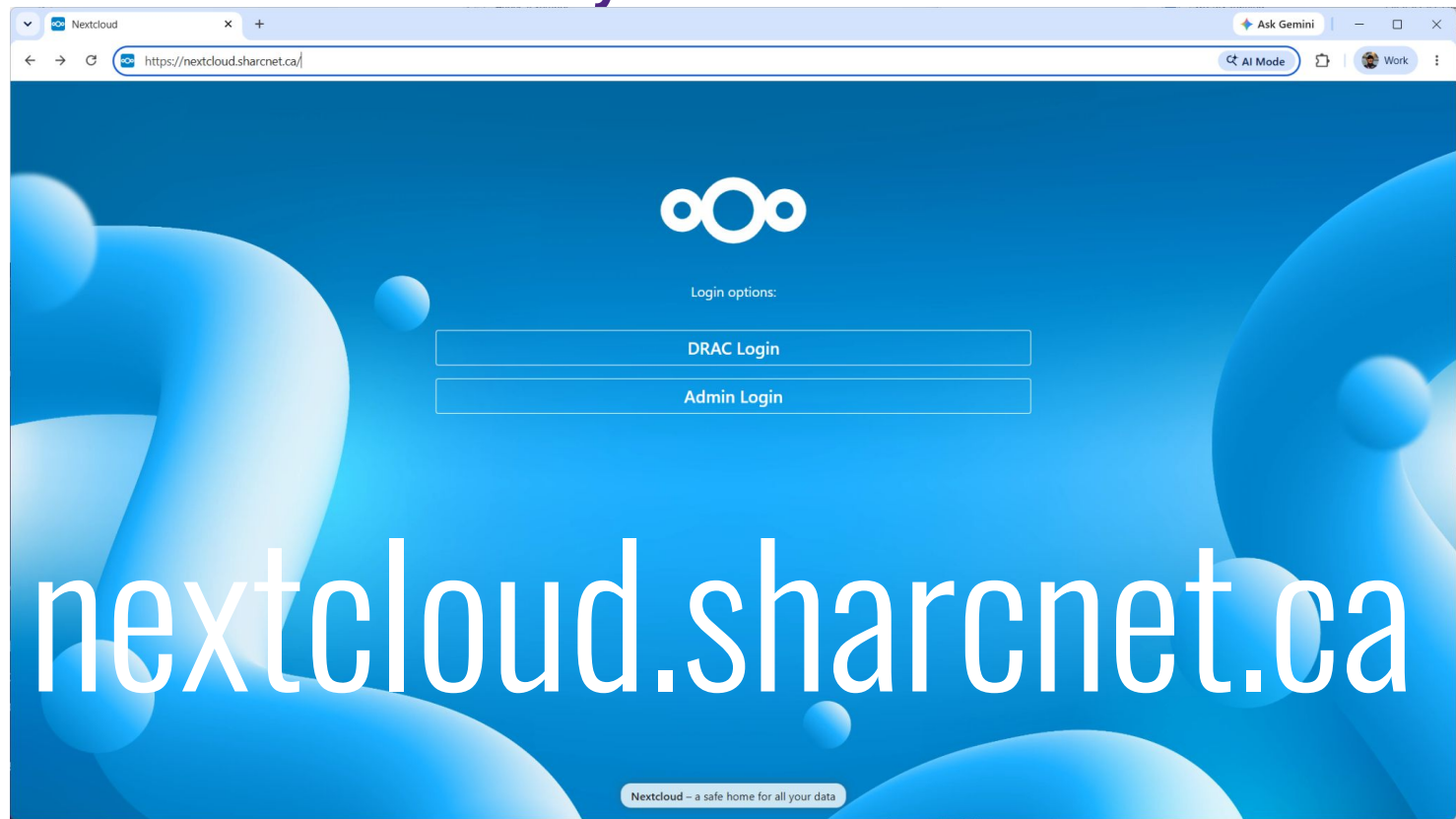
The screenshot shows the 'Technical documentation' page of the Digital Research Alliance of Canada. The page has a header with 'Main Page', 'Discussion', 'Read', 'View source', and 'View history' tabs. A search bar is present. A blue banner states: 'This site replaces the former Compute Canada documentation site, and is now being managed by the Digital Research Alliance of Canada. Ce site remplace l'ancien site de documentation de Calcul Canada et est maintenant géré par l'Alliance de recherche numérique du Canada.' Below this, there are sections for 'Other languages' (English, Français), 'Welcome to the technical documentation wiki of the Digital Research Alliance of Canada (the Alliance)', and 'The focus here is on national services and systems.' A sidebar on the left contains links like 'Support', 'Getting started', 'Running jobs', 'Known issues', 'System status', 'Resources', 'Béuga', 'Cedar', 'Graham', 'Naval', 'Niagara', 'Cloud', 'Available software', 'The Alliance', 'Alliance main page', 'CCDB', 'Getting an Account', 'Acknowledging the Alliance', 'Acceptable Use Policy', 'Authoring', 'Guidelines', 'MediaWiki Help', 'Recent changes', 'Tools', 'What links here', 'Related changes', 'Special pages', 'Printable version', 'Permanent link', and 'Page information'. The main content area has two columns: 'Systems and services' and 'How-to guides'. The 'Systems and services' column lists systems (Béuga, Cedar, Graham, Naval, Niagara) and services (Available software, Cloud computing service, Database servers, Globus file transfer service, Nextcloud cloud storage service, Research Data Management, Research Software, Using a resource allocation, a guide for Principal Investigators - Available Resources, FAQ, Frequently Asked Questions). The 'How-to guides' column lists getting started guides (Getting started with the new national systems, Niagara Quick Start Guide, Cloud Quick Start Guide, SSH - How to connect to our compute clusters, Linux introduction) and running jobs guides (Installing software yourself, Programming guide, Visualization, How to get technical support).

<https://docs.alliancecan.ca/>

The screenshot shows the SHARCNET website. The header includes 'FACILITIES', 'SUPPORT', and 'ABOUT US' tabs. A large banner features a video player with the text: 'New user seminar every Tuesday at 2pm EST. YouTube CA loquium at noon on Wednesday SHARCNET youtube.sharcnet.ca'. Below the banner, there's a section titled 'Neutrinos by the Numbers: Sudbury's SNOLAB' with a description: 'Some of the greatest ongoing problems in particle physics may be solved by taking a closer look at theta_13'. A table with 'EVENTS' and 'NEWS' columns is visible. The 'EVENTS' column lists seminars: 'Tuesday, September 26, 2:00pm New User / Refresher Webinar', 'Tuesday, October 3, 2:00pm New User / Refresher Webinar', 'Tuesday, October 10, 2:00pm New User / Refresher Webinar', 'Tuesday, October 17, 2:00pm New User / Refresher Webinar', 'Tuesday, October 24, 2:00pm New User / Refresher Webinar', and 'Tuesday, October 31, 2:00pm New User / Refresher Webinar'. The 'NEWS' column lists updates: 'RAC 2024 launches on September 26, 2023', 'SHARCNET Dedicated Programming Support Round XXII Call f...', '2023 Compute Ontario Summer School', 'SHARCNET awards Round XXI Dedicated Programming Support', and 'New Weekly Colloquia Series'. A 'GitLab Instance at SHARCNET' section is also present. The footer includes logos for 'Digital Research Alliance of Canada' and 'Compute • Calcul Ontario'.

<https://www.sharcnet.ca/>

Resources: *Nextcloud* - your free OneDrive



Resources: *AI as a service (AlaaS)*

Brine (<https://brine.sharcnet.ca/>), an always-on, OpenAI-compatible API (on NVIDIA H200s) for hosted models that support chat, tool calling, and audio transcription, etc. Models include **DeepSeek-V4-Flash-0731**, **Qwen3.8-27B**, **gpt-oss-120b**, **North-Mini-Code-1.0**, etc. Typical work cases:

- retrieval-augmented generation systems
- agents or workflow automation
- document-processing pipelines
- code assistance
- audio transcription
- workloads that currently use a commercial API or a locally hosted model

Note: Your data stay in SHARCNET, Canada, don't go elsewhere.

Resources: *Meeting local staff*

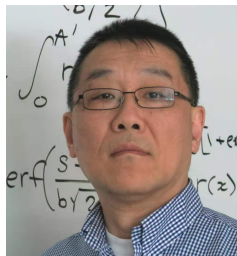
Local staff - we are in Western Science Centre, first floor



Tyson Whitehead, *HPC*,
Math, Stats, EE



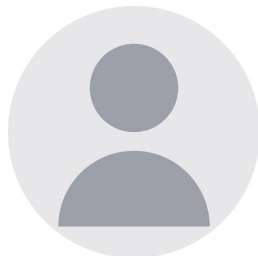
Jinhui Qin, *HPC*, Data
Science tools, CS



Ge Baolai, *HPC*, Applied
Math



Doug Roberts (WLU), *HPC*,
CFD, Commercial Software



Mohamed Elsakhawy,,
Cloud/Backup, CS



Fraser McCrossan,
Sysadmin, CS

Use of systems
Installation of software
Access to commercial software and site licence
Debugging and optimizing code
Programming
Consultation on various research problems
Grant application for compute hardware

... ..

Email us at help@sharcnet.ca or visit us in WSC.

Resources: *Getting help*

- Weekly online office hour, Tue, 2pm: <https://www.sharcnet.ca/my/news/calendar>
- Ticketing system (most recommended): support@tech.alliancecan.ca
- Staff contact info to email or phone: <https://www.sharcnet.ca/>

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- What everyone should know
- Training courses
- Q & A

Requests for compute, storage and cloud resources

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Requests for compute, storage and cloud resources

Type	Resource	Unit	Small	Medium	Large	Very large
HPC	CPU	core-years	≤ 500	$> 500 \leq 2500$	$> 2500 \leq 10000$	> 10000
HPC	GPU	RGU-years	≤ 50	$> 50 \leq 250$	$> 250 \leq 500$	> 500
Cloud	vGPU	RGU-years	≤ 5	$> 5 \leq 10$	$> 10 \leq 25$	> 25
Cloud	Compute Cloud	vCPU-years	≤ 50	$> 50 \leq 250$	$> 250 \leq 1000$	> 1000
Cloud	Persistent Cloud	vCPU-years	≤ 25	$> 25 \leq 100$	$> 100 \leq 250$	> 250
HPC	Project storage	TB	≤ 50	$> 50 \leq 250$	$> 250 \leq 1000$	> 1000
HPC	Nearline storage	TB	≤ 250	$> 250 \leq 1000$	$> 1000 \leq 2500$	> 2500
Cloud	Volume and snapshot storage	TB	≤ 10	$> 10 \leq 50$	$> 50 \leq 250$	> 250
Cloud	Object storage	TB	≤ 10	$> 10 \leq 50$	$> 50 \leq 250$	> 250
Cloud	Shared files system storage	TB	≤ 10	$> 10 \leq 50$	$> 50 \leq 250$	> 250

Requests for compute, storage and cloud resources

2027 Resource Allocation Competition (RAC) - A peer reviewed process

- Application information session dates:
 - September 22 in English
 - September 24 en Français
- Deadline **November 3, 2026, 23:59 EDT**
- Online info: At <https://alliancecan.ca/> look for Resource Allocation Competition
- Show your project needs, the rationale and the execution plan in details.
- Consultation with local staff before you proceed if new.

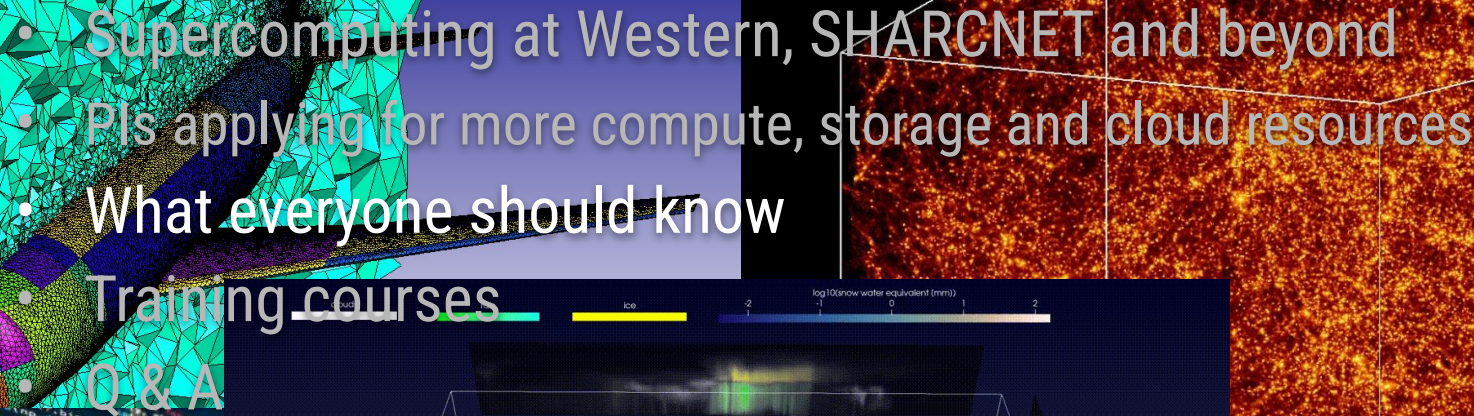


Special services by SHARCNET

- DBaaS - Pls to request at help@sharcnet.ca
- AlaaS (<https://brine.sharcnet.ca/>) - Users to request at help@sharcnet.ca
- Nextcloud <https://nextcloud.sharcnet.ca/> - SSO to access, like OneDrive, but free

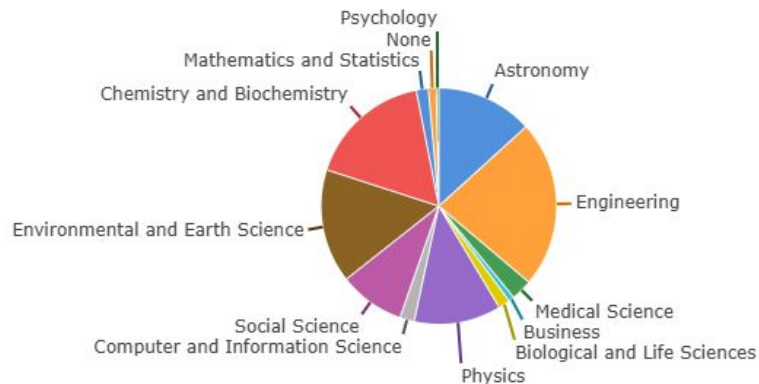
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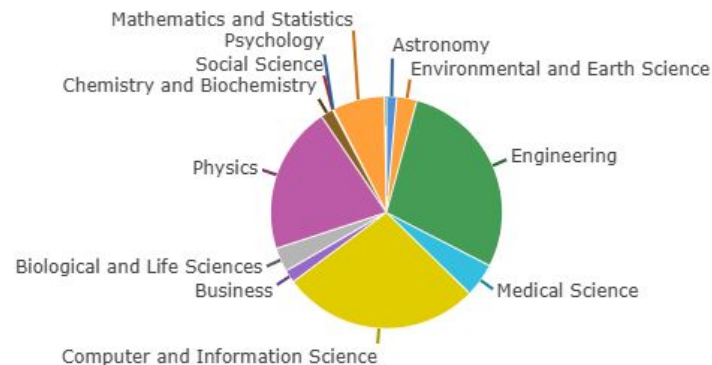
- 
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What to know: *How much is used and by whom*



CPU usage by Western groups in 2026

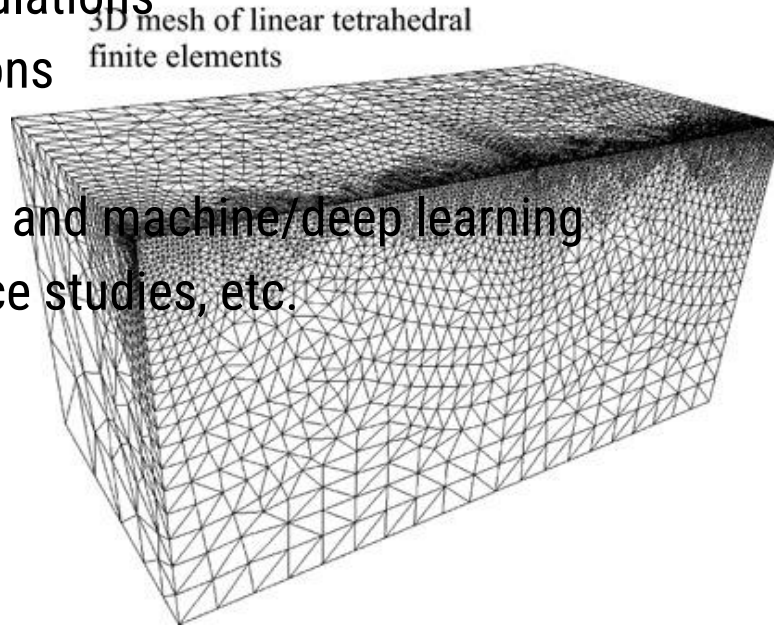


GPU usage by Western groups in 2026

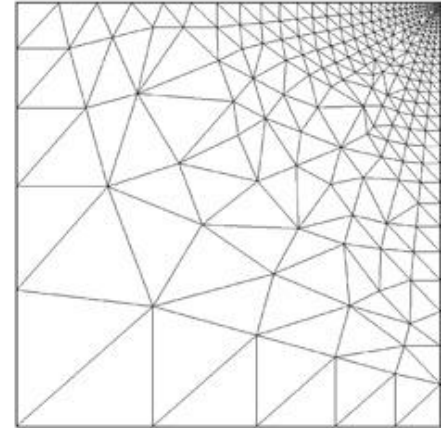
What to know: *Applications*

Typical applications run on supercomputers

- CFD, environmental simulations, other engineering computations
- Astrophysics simulations
- Coupled simulations
- Material science
- Applications of AI and machine/deep learning
- Economics, finance studies, etc.



2D mesh of linear triangular finite elements



What to know: *Diverse user groups*



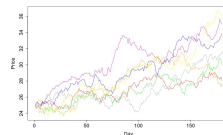
Civil Engineering and WinDEEE

Experimental and computational wind engineering.



Economics

Computational finance, with focus on stock pricing.

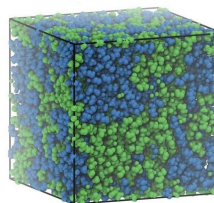


<https://publish.uwo.ca/~lstentof/>



Physics and Chemistry

Computational physics and chemistry, with applications in biological soft matter.

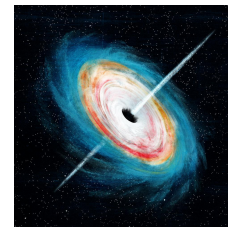


<https://softsimu.net/mikko/>



Astrophysics

Large scale simulation of the formation of the universe and supermassive black holes in the early universe.



<https://physics.uwo.ca/~basu/>



Brain and Mind Institute

Medical imaging, computational brain research.



<https://www.uwo.ca/bmi/investigators/ali-khan.html>

What to know: *Knowledge*

A **supercomputer** has a lot of computers, not a super fast computer

- Thousands of computers with CPU cores, GPUs, and disks
- Requires **concurrent processing** to get work done faster

Research supercomputers run **Linux** and not Windows

- Software has to support Linux to run on the supercomputer
- Linux is a publicly developed Operating System freely available

Background theory

- **Computer architecture**
- **Algorithms and numerical methods**

High performance programming is hard

- Efficient programs, algorithms, and **libraries** take decades – use them

What to know: *Linux and tools*

Using Linux

- Moving around.
- Using shell, automating tasks.
- Remember, the core utilities of Linux are very fast.
- Connecting to other computers via Secure Shell (SSH).
- Access to file systems.
- Running programs.

Using git

- To manage your research project files.
- To access, create git repositories.

What to know: *Popular and lesser known items*

Programming languages

- Higher level: Python, R, Matlab
- Lower level: C/C++, Fortran
- New takes: Julia, Chapel

Libraries

- Parallel programming: MPI, OpenMP, OpenCL, CUDA/HIP
- Numerics classic: BLAS, LAPACK, ScaLAPACK, FFTW
- Numerics exascale/accelerators: magma, slate, heFFTe

Tools

- vi, emacs, nano, VS Code
- Compilers (gcc, Intel), interpreters (python, R), and just in time compilers
- Debuggers and profilers (gdb, DDT, MAP, etc.)
- AI

What to know: *Popular and lesser known items*

Data science/data wrangling:

- Python: numpy, pandas, matplotlib, plotnine, sklearn , dask, rapids
- R: data frames, tidyverse (dplyr, simplr, ggplot, etc.)
- SQL

Machine learning and AI

- TensorFlow
- Keras and PyTorch

Visualization

- ParaView and VisIt

... and more ...

Learning is a lifelong journey...

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- Supercomputing at Western, SHARCNET and beyond
- Requests for more compute, storage and cloud resources
- What everyone should know
- Training courses
- Q & A

Training courses



In Fall 2026 / Winter 2027 semesters, the bulk of training provided by SHARCNET to our users is comprised of a series of independent, self-contained workshops on a wide range of topics pertaining to Advanced Research Computing. The courses are delivered online live. (Some of these courses are also available as self-paced courses.) An Alliance account is required to register for and attend these courses. All our courses are **free**.

Upcoming live courses:

- **Introduction to CMake**: Sept. 29, Oct. 1
- Introduction to GPU Programming: Oct. 6, 9, 13, 16
- Mastering GPU Efficiency: Oct. 20, 23
- Python for High Performance Computing: Oct. 27, 30, Nov. 3, 6
- Introduction to AI agents in research: Nov. 10, 13
- Engineering Software: Nov. 17, 20
- Working with Jupyter on the Clusters: Nov. 24, 27
- Tidyverse: Data Science with R: Dec. 1, 4, 8
- Mastering the Alliance Job Scheduler: Dec. 11, 15, 18



Training courses

Format and schedule

- Live lectures, workshops fall and winter semesters.
- Self-driven, grading offline courses with course materials, recorded videos, quizzes and assignments.
- Summer schools.
- Forums on different topics are open for attendees.

How to enroll

- Sign up for the courses at <https://training.sharcnet.ca/>

Outcome

- Certificates of completion.

Q & A

- SHARCNET <https://www.sharcnet.ca/>
- Digital Research Alliance of Canada <https://alliancecan.ca/>
- Help: help@sharcnet.ca