

# Challenges to Communication with Users

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Official Host to 500 PHENIX Users

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**Part I: General Issues of User Communication**

**Part II: My History (briefly) as User and User Rep.**

**Part III: A Specific Example (RHIC & AGS)**

# Part I: User Questions and Concerns

## As a user, how do I understand:

- ❖ What is expected of me.
- ❖ What has changed.
- ❖ Who can help me.
- ❖ To whom to report problems and suggestions.
- ❖ How to convey the importance of my work.

# Partners in Communication:

- ❖ User Administrators in a Users' Center or Office
- ❖ User Organization or Executive Committee
- ❖ Experimental Research Team
- ❖ Facility or Host Department Administration
- ❖ Laboratory Administration (if not same as above)
- ❖ The Public and Stakeholders in Washington

# Methods of Communication

- **PUSHing** information to users  
web pages, e-mail, face-to-face
- **PULLing** information from users  
web pages, e-mail, face-to-face, surveys
- **RESPONDing** to user concerns  
telephone, web pages, e-mail, face-to-face
- **Rarely Used:**  
paper mail, FAX, telegraph, pony express

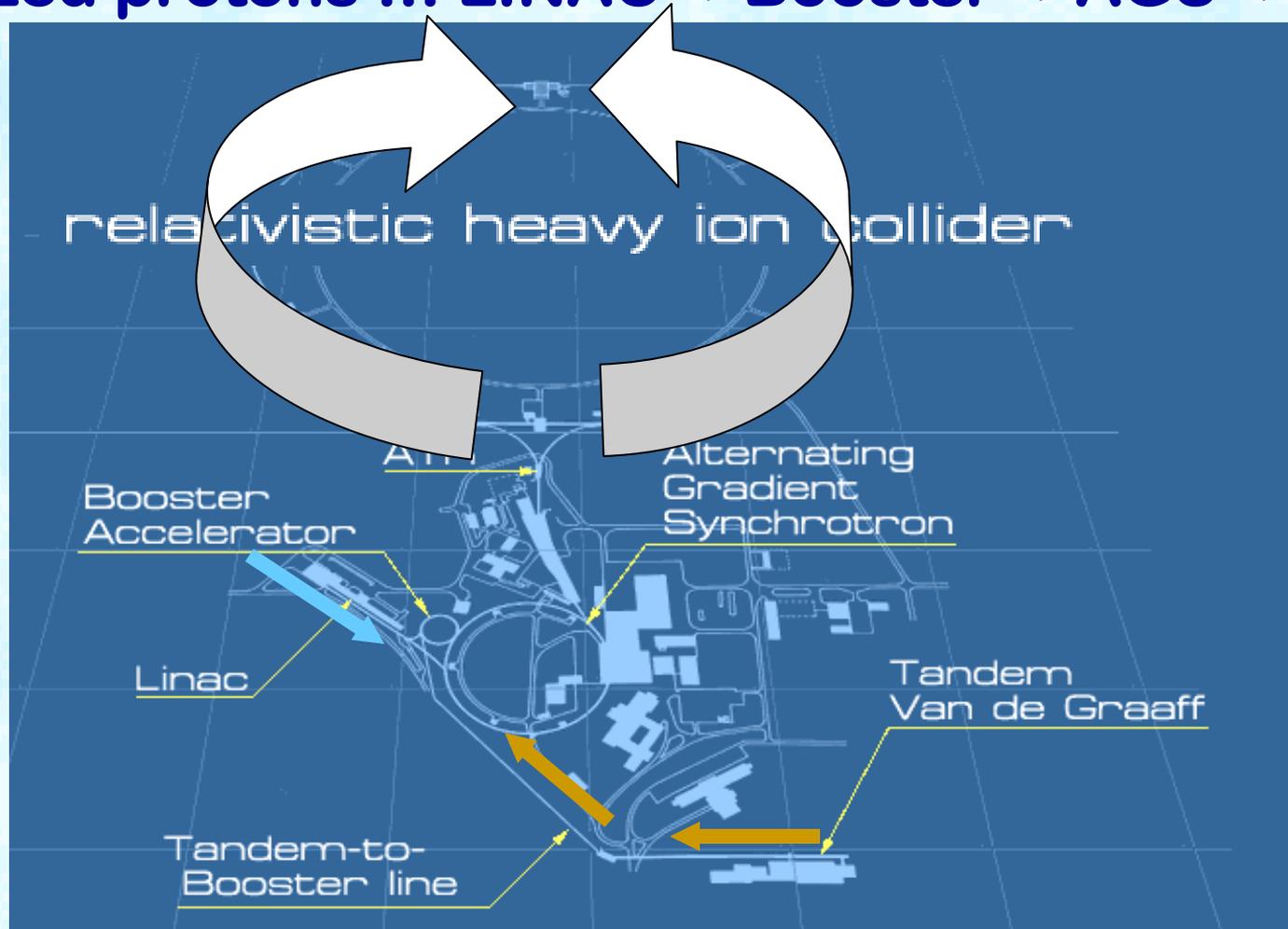
# Part II: My History as a facility user



**1992-pres. RHIC and AGS Facilities at BNL**

# RHIC & AGS Accelerator Complex

polarized protons ... LINAC-->Booster-->AGS-->RHIC



heavy ions ... tandems-->Booster-->AGS-->RHIC

# RHIC & AGS Facilities

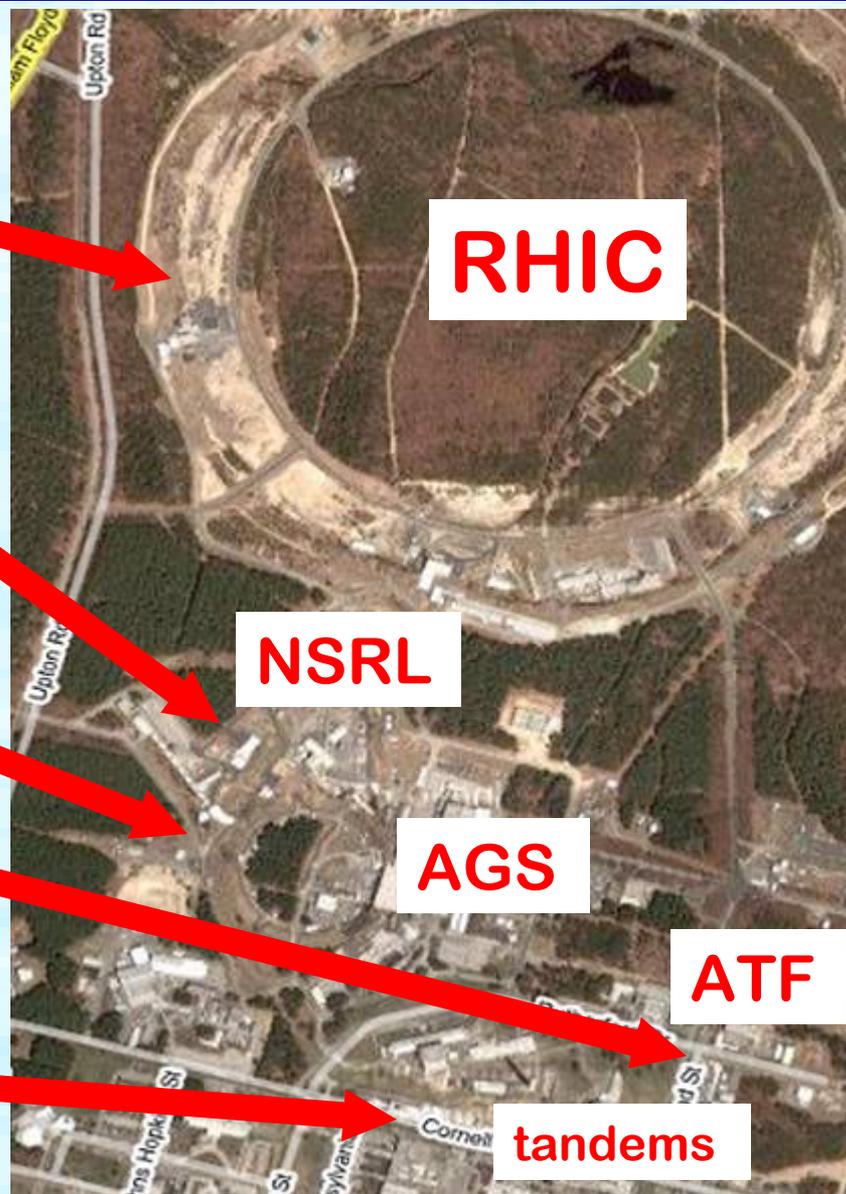
Relativistic  
Heavy Ion  
Collider

NASA Space Radiation  
Laboratory

Alternating Gradient  
Synchrotron

Accelerator Test Facility

dual MP Tandem  
van de Graaff



# My history as a User Rep., Liaison, & Host

- 1989-1992** Member, National Synchrotron Light Source (NSLS) Users' Executive Comm.
- 1991-1992** Chair, NSLS Subcommittee on Beam Line Operation & Safety Awareness
- 1992-pres.** Principal Liaison (now Official Host) for 500 users on PHENIX Experiment at RHIC.
- 2001-2004** Elected Member, RHIC & AGS Users' Executive Committee (UEC)
- 2004-2005** Chair-Elect, RHIC & AGS UEC
- 2005-2006** Chair, RHIC & AGS UEC
- 2006-2007** Past-Chair, RHIC & AGS UEC
- 2007-2010** Elected Member, RHIC & AGS UEC

# Succession of UEC Chairs in the Era of RHIC

<i>Jim Thomas, LBNL</i>	Chair 1999-2001		
<i>Rich Seto, UCR</i>	Chair 2001-3, Past Chair 2003-4		
	<i>Chair-Elect</i>	<i>Chair</i>	<i>Past-Chair</i>
<i>Vicki Greene, Vandy</i>	2002-3	2003-4	2004-5
<i>Gary Westfall, MSU</i>	2003-4	2004-5	2005-6
<i>Brant Johnson, BNL</i>	2004-5	2005-6	2006-7
<i>John Hill, ISU</i>	2005-6	2006-7	2007-8
<i>Rene Bellwied, WSU</i>	2006-7	2007-8	2008-9
<i>Abhay Desphande, SBU</i>	2007-8	2008-9	2009-10
<i>? To Be Elected in May</i>	2008-9	2009-10	2010-11

# Startup of a Users' Center

During the Construction Phase of RHIC (1990's) over 1000 users were handled through host departments (accelerator, physics, or chemistry) and collaboration offices (BRAHMS, PHENIX, PHOBOS, and STAR).

As RHIC was coming into operation at the turn of the century, Tom Ludlam and I recognized the need for a dedicated User Center for the RHIC & AGS Complex.

Susan White-DePace was selected to establish and become Director of the Users' Center.

# Guests, Users, and Visitors Center

In the aftermath of Sept. 11, 2001, BNL realized that the common services provided for all RHIC & AGS users should be expanded to the entire laboratory, so that changing rules and regulations could be administered through a single office.

The BNL Guests, Users, and Visitors (GUV) Center was created in 2007 to provide “one stop shopping” for all non-employees physically coming to work at BNL or needing remote computer access.

# Users' Group Ex-Officio Members

*BNL employees holding the following positions are registered as Ex-Officio members of the Users' Group:*

- ✓ Director of Brookhaven National Laboratory (BNL)
- ✓ BNL Deputy Director for Science and Technology
- ✓ Associate Director for Nuclear and Particle Physics
- ✓ Chair of the Physics Department
- ✓ Chair of the Collider-Accelerator Department (CA-D)
- ✓ CA-D Accelerator Division Head
- ✓ CA-D Experimental Support Facilities Head
- ✓ Director of Users' Center (and GUV Center)

# Major Concerns of RHIC User Community

1. **FUNDING** for Research (groups and nations)  
**FUNDING** for RHIC and Detector Operations  
**FUNDING** for RHIC and Detector Upgrades  
**FUNDING** for long-term future (acc.upgrades, e-RHIC)
2. **Physical and Remote Computing Access (visa issues):**  
In 2005, of 1030 RHIC Users, only 319 were U.S.,  
while 711 (69%) were non-U.S.  
There were 230 RHIC “sensitive” country users:  
Russia (113), China (62), India (43), Israel (4),  
Taiwan (4), Pakistan (2), Georgia (1), and Ukraine (1).
3. **Safety, Training, and Quality of Life at BNL.**
4. **Staying abreast of changing rules and regulations.**  
e.g., Homeland Security Presidential Directive, HSPD-12

# Addressing the Challenges: 1. List servers

1. ALL C-AD Facility Users
2. RHIC & AGS Users
3. RHIC Users
4. RHIC Experimental Contact
5. AGS Users
6. AGS Experimental Contacts
7. NSRL Users
8. Tandem Users
9. ATF Users

## Addressing the Challenges: 2. E-mail, phone, walk-in



- Location now in close proximity to Research Support (staff services, housing, travel, ID badging, community relations, human resources).
- Starbucks in lobby area was our UEC initiative!
- Closer communication with directorate, because serving entire lab community, rather than a subset.

# Addressing the Challenges: 3. Surveys

An excellent method of “pulling” input from users is to conduct surveys of limited scope, for example:

- **Quality of Life**  
(housing, food, transportation)
- **Cyber Security**  
(remote and local computing access)
- **Site Access**  
(visa problems, front gate challenges)
- **Coffee House**  
(sent also to NSLS users and employees)

# Addressing the Challenges: 4. ASAP

The BNL Association of Students and Postdocs (ASAP) provides an excellent mechanism for communication among our younger users.

As the name implies, only students and postdocs are members.

BNL provides an ASAP lounge with sofas, study and computer areas, game tables, televisions/DVD, a simple kitchen and refrigerator. Activities are planned. Access is controlled and use is monitored.

Our UEC has two one-year term elected positions for junior (student or postdoc) users who are charged with being our liaisons to ASAP

<http://www.bnl.gov/ASAP/>

# Challenges to Communication with Users

- Over three decades of experience as a user, user representative, and host have convinced me that ... as user administrators and representatives we must not forget to ask ourselves: What do the users need?
- We cannot simply “push” information via e-mails and web pages; we must also actively “pull” information (e.g., invite feedback, do surveys).
- We must promptly “respond” to user concerns.

# Closing Plea and Encouragement

- Please continue to support and become actively involved in developing and promoting NUFO.
- Recognize that there are significant challenges to communication with users and develop approaches to overcoming them (then share them with your NUFO colleagues!)
- If your facility or laboratory does not have an association of young researchers, start one!