

**Research Computing Q&A Site to be Examined at PEARC20**

Northeast Cyberteam and Campus Champions Will Discuss Evolution and Future of Ask.CI

Holyoke, Massachusetts, July 13, 2020 – [Ask.CI](https://ask.cyberinfrastructure.org/), a Q&A platform for academic research computing that began as a local project and has expanded to include participation from users across the country, is the subject of a paper and two presentations at [PEARC20](https://pearc.acm.org/pearc20/).

The paper, titled *Ask.Cyberinfrastructure.org: Creating a Platform for Self-Service Learning and Collaboration in the Rapidly Changing Environment of Research Computing* will be presented at the workshop “Strategies for Enhancing HPC Education and Training (SEHET20)” that begins on July 27 at 1 pm Pacific Time. Ask.CI will also be discussed at a Birds of a Feather (BOF) session on July 28 at 2:35 pm Pacific Time.

Ask.CI was developed by the [Northeast Cyberteam](https://necyberteam.org/) and [Campus Champions](https://campuschampions.org/) to aggregate answers to a broad spectrum of questions commonly asked by the research computing community. By asking and answering questions on Ask.CI, researchers, facilitators, staff and students create a shared, public, knowledge base for the larger community. It has proven popular among both smaller institutions, where it offers information not previously available in an easily searchable format, and larger universities, where it frees up time for facilitators and cyberinfrastructure engineers to focus on more advanced subject matter.

Since being launched at PEARC18, Ask.CI has attracted more than 250,000 page views, over 400 contributors and hundreds of topics.

“While Ask.CI has shown steady growth in both contributions and audience, it is still in its early stages. Finding ways to continue to grow audience participation through innovation and outreach is an ongoing focus of attention,” said John Goodhue, the Northeast Cyberteam’s principal investigator and the executive director of the [Massachusetts Green High Performance Computing Center](https://www.mghpcc.org/) (MGHPCC).

In the past year, Ask.CI introduced a new program to allow institutions to create sub-categories called “Locales”, where they can experiment with posting institution-specific FAQs and using the site as a component of their support strategy.

“Our hope is that Locales will encourage users to start down a path of self-service learning and establish user-to-user collaborations both within the user’s own institution and across the research computing community,” said Julie Ma, program manager for the Northeast Cyberteam.

Ask.CI now has locales across the country, including at Brown University, the Colorado School of Mines, the Computing Against COVID-19 project, Harvard University, the MGHPCC, Northeastern University, the Ohio Supercomputing Center, Stanford University, Tufts University, the University of Maine, the University of Missouri, and Yale University. Several other locales are in the process of starting up, including MIT, the University of Alabama, the University of New Hampshire and the University of Vermont.

To encourage the creation of new locales, the Ask.CI team is sponsoring a contest at PEARC with a [virtual pizza party](https://ask.cyberinfrastructure.org/t/pearc20-contest-win-a-virtual-pizza-party-for-your-group/1418) for up to 10 people as the prize. Any group that creates a new locale or contributes five topics to an existing locale will be entered into a drawing for the pizza party.

[**About the Northeast Cyberteam**](https://necyberteam.org/)

The Northeast Cyberteam is a three-year NSF funded initiative to make advanced computing more accessible to researchers at small and mid-sized institutions in New England that do not have critical mass to support these resources on campus. It is led by a steering committee comprising leaders from each of the larger institutions that anchor the project: the [Massachusetts Green High Performance Computing Center](https://www.mghpcc.org/) (MGHPCC), [University of Vermont](https://www.uvm.edu/), [Worcester Polytechnic Institute](https://www.wpi.edu/), [University of Maine](https://umaine.edu/) and the [University of New Hampshire](https://www.unh.edu/).

[**About Campus Champions**](https://campuschampions.org/)

The Campus Champions program is a flourishing and evolving one-of-a-kind community of practice within the national research computing ecosystem. The Champions community is currently made up of over 600 Champions at over 300 U.S. colleges, universities and other research-focused institutions, and has evolved to accommodate and support the diversity and growth of today’s research computing community.

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