



SHARKFEST '14

WIRESHARK DEVELOPER AND USER CONFERENCE

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Diagramming IT Environments

<http://www.skendric.com/seminar/>

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The Concept

Diagramming IT Environments

I developed this seminar as a day-long Hands-On Lab, in which we alternate between working together as a class and working individually.

:START

1. Review a species of diagram, focus on specific techniques
 2. Work individually to sketch a first draft of a diagram applicable to your environment
 3. Print our drafts
 4. Come back together as a class to review our drafts and what we have learned
- goto START

Today, we have 75 minutes. Hmm. So, we'll skip the 'work individually' part, go faster, and skip many of the diagrams.

I promote interactivity: please interrupt, contribute, heckle as you see fit. Then again, if you prefer to sit back, watch, and listen, you are welcome to do that also.

Each table should have a print-out of most of the diagrams. Feel free to get up, walk around the room, peer closely at the diagrams hung on the walls.

Philosophy

- *If I can't draw it, I don't understand it*
- Without understanding, I'm trouble-shooting by guessing
- I prefer nudging my future rather than throwing myself to the winds

In this session, I provide you with electronic templates, practical techniques, and real-world examples of diagrams which support an operational IT shop's needs for trouble-shooting: cabling, power, networks, storage systems, applications. We'll see examples of what has worked and examples of what hasn't worked. From this review, I propose deeper lessons around how sustainability and supportability interact with design and architecture and how to use diagramming to inform your trouble-shooting strategies horizontally as well as to communicate the cost of business decisions upward.

Success

- You grab your diagram at 2am to help trouble-shoot a problem
- Your colleagues ask *Would you print me a copy of that diagram?*
- Your manager asks *Would you print me a copy? I want to show it to my boss*

I am a fan of Edward Tufte and recommend his course:

<http://www.edwardtufte.com/tufte/courses>

Tufte teaches critical thinking ... but in doing so, he demos a ton of ways to reason visually

Mechanics

Talk

- I encourage interactivity
- If you want to contribute, feel free to interrupt me
- Or raise your hand, and I'll call on you
- I'm good with either approach

Move

- You have copies of the small diagrams at your tables (ideally, one copy per table)
- The big ones are posted on the walls
- Get up and walk around the room while I'm talking – get close to these diagrams

URLs

- See <http://www.skendric.com/map> for examples and templates
- Want the .cvx or .vsd version? If the URL on the Web site says:
<http://www.skendric.com/map/Host-Ethernet-IP.pdf>
Then try typing <http://www.skendric.com/map/Host-Ethernet-IP.vsd> or
<http://www.skendric.com/map/Host-Ethernet-IP.cvx> into your browser, and see what you get ☺ ... Doesn't always work ☹
- This deck available at <http://www.skendric.com/seminar/>

Me

Multi-disciplinary IT trouble-shooter / Root Cause Analysis

<http://www.skendric.com>

sbk@cornella	<i>student</i>	1981
stuart@cpvax5 (Science Applications Inc)	<i>programmer</i>	1984
sbk@cornellc.cit.cornell.edu	<i>desktop / server</i>	1985
stuart.kendrick@med.cornell.edu	<i>server / network</i>	1991
skendric@fhcrc.org	<i>multidisciplinary</i>	1993
stuart.kendrick@isi lon dot com	<i>sustaining engineer</i>	2013

IT Architect | ITIL Problem Manager | Problem Analyst | Device Monitoring | Transport

Geeky Highlights

PL/1 on IBM mainframes	<i>Cornell University</i>	<i>Ithaca</i>	1981
FORTRAN on CRAY-1	<i>SAIC</i>	<i>San Diego</i>	1984
Terak, DisplayWriter, IBM PC, Macintosh	<i>Cornell University</i>	<i>Ithaca</i>	1985
Netware, Corvus Omninet, TCP-IP / IPX / AppleTalk	<i>Cornell University</i>	<i>Ithaca</i>	1988
AppleShare, QuickMail, Farallon, NRC, Cisco, Sniffers	<i>Cornell Medical College</i>	<i>Manhattan</i>	1991
Solaris, Windows, Linux, Perl, SNMP, Wireshark, Cisco, Fluke	<i>FHCRC</i>	<i>Seattle</i>	1993
OneFS	<i>EMC Isilon</i>	<i>Seattle</i>	2013

Geek credentials: I missed punch-cards by one semester ... grew up on shared machines (IBM and Cray) ... my first network ran at 1Mb/s over Cat 2 (Corvus Omninet) carrying IPX + AppleTalk with IP encapsulated in both. I bored a vampire tap (once) ... my first analyzer was a Network General Toshiba 286 laptop ... and alpha versions of EtherPeek

Tools

Software

- I'm fond of ACD Canvas – drew my first network map with it in the late '80s
- I also use Microsoft Visio – it has some neat features (stay away from the clipart)
- My bud tells me that CAD is ideal for physical layer work
- I bet that there are plenty of other excellent diagramming tools out there

Printers

- I've only used color HP LaserJets ... I bet other manufacturers produce excellent printers
I'm addicted to 600 x 600 dpi
- I strongly recommend tabloid-size; in the USA, that translates into 11 x 17
I find it hard to deliver useful diagrams on classic letter sized paper

Plotters

- I have never been successful with plotters
 - In my experience, they are finicky, requiring dedicated technicians to maintain them*
 - The cheap ones tend to be more expensive than lasers and only print at 300 x 300 dpi, which is too coarse for my kind of diagrams*
 - Transporting folded / taped paper is easy; transporting a rolled map is hard*

Conventions

In these examples, the authors assume their audience understands these conventions:

Infrastructure Naming

- esx Switch (Layer 2 only, always Ethernet)
- fsx Fibre Channel switch
- rtr Router (Layer 3 only ... might be a Layer 3 switch, might be a classical router)
- sr Server Room (aka Data Center)
- ups Uninterruptible Power Supply

{building}{floor}-{type}

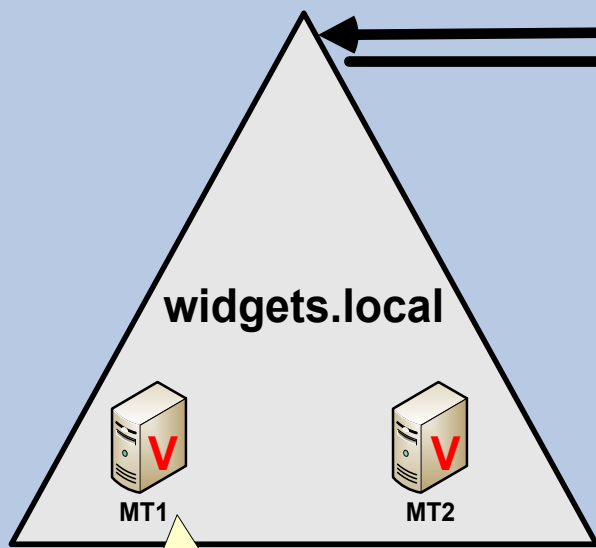
j4-esx denotes the Ethernet switch on the 4th floor of the J Building

j4sr-a-esx belongs to a redundant pair ... you immediately know that its redundant partner is named *j4sr-b-esx*. *j4sr-x-esx* is short-hand for '*j4sr-a-esx* and *j4sr-b-esx*'

Host Naming

RFC 1178 names (aka theme-based naming) ... the human brain is hardwired for language, associating massive amounts of context with *cutsey* names: one to two syllable strings. Take the fast path through cognitive hardware; avoid *process-switching* when you read a name

In the local vernacular, J4, M1, and DF translate into the names of data centers



**PDC Emulator
RID Master
Global Gatalog
RUS
DNS
WINS
Stunnel**



**DNS
Stunnel**

widgets.com

**Schema Master
Domain Naming Master**

**Infrastructure Master
DNS
WINS
Stunnel**



**Global Catalog
DNS
WINS
Stunnel**



What do you notice?

What is the most important thing to know about this diagram?

I don't know what those triangles do, but they must be important

- ✓ What do the triangles tell you?
- ✓ What do the rectangles tell you?
- ✓ This diagram shines at illustrating what services you lose when a given data center goes off-line

❑ What does *stunnel* do for us?

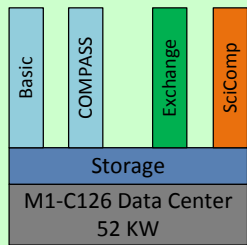
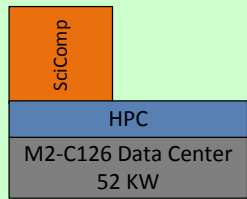
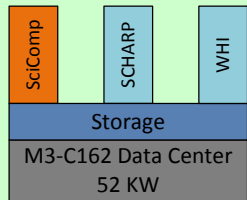
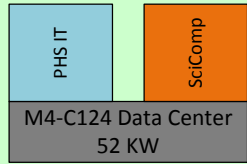
Encrypted access to LDAP (listens on TCP Port 636 ... we hadn't figured out how to enable Windows-native encrypted LDAP-access: stunnel was a hack)

❑ Bet there's lot more info that could be packed into this diagram

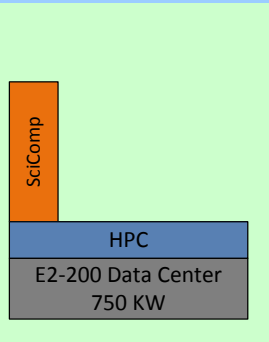
Perhaps around what these AD-specific services do, how they relate to each other. For example, I know this installation provides Kerberos and LDAP services ... but you can't tell that from the drawing

The deeper your content knowledge, the richer your diagrams

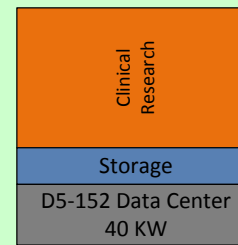
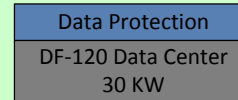
Services by Data Center



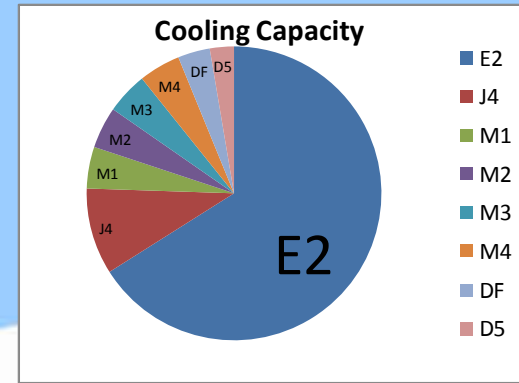
Arnold



E Building

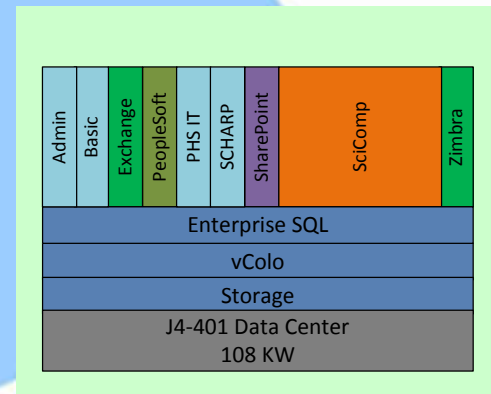


Thomas



Arnold, Thomas, Yale, E ... are the names of buildings containing data centers

PHS, SciComp, SCHARP, WHI, Basic, Compass ... are all names of departments



Yale

skendric 201210-15

What do you notice?

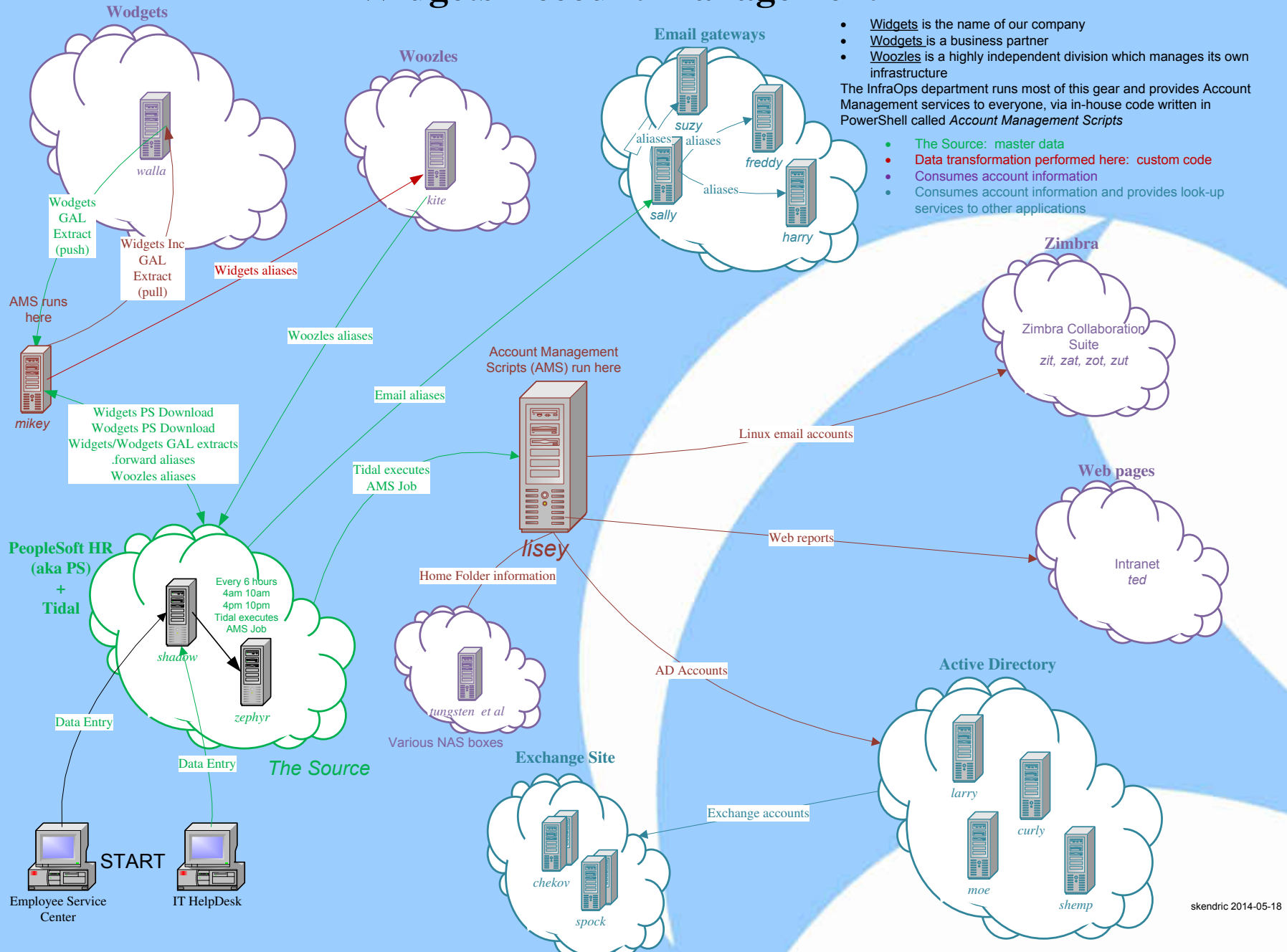
What is the most important thing to know about this diagram?

The Arnold Building is tall and the Yale Building is wide

- ✓ The only effective component of this diagram is the pie chart in the top corner
Which tells us that the E2 Data Center contributes almost two-thirds of the company's cooling capacity and therefore of its Data Center capacity
- ❑ You sure couldn't tell that by looking at the rest of the diagram: the rest of the diagram suggests that the Arnold Building is the most important
Although, on closer inspection, perhaps the Yale Building is also important, as it seems to contain a lot of services
- ❑ And why are department names (SCHARP, WHI) equivalent to what are clearly services (Exchange, SharePoint)?

The author is confused

Widgets Account Management



skendric 2014-05-18

What do you notice?

Step back, take in the diagram holistically, what do you notice?

- *I don't know what **The Source** is, but it sure is important*
- *I don't know what **Lisey** does, but it sure is important*

What does color tell me?

- *Green implies master data or stuff directly produced from master data*
- *Red implies downstream transformations of the master data*
- *Blue means “provides directory services to other stuff”*
- *Purple means “consumes the information”*

More tips

- What does italics tell me?
- What does the use of tower-server icons tell me?
- Notice how we can infer function from the naming scheme
- Notice that we cannot infer Operating System

The relevant sys admins are bilingual and don't care about OS

Why don't the **Zimbra** and **Intranet** clouds contain servers?

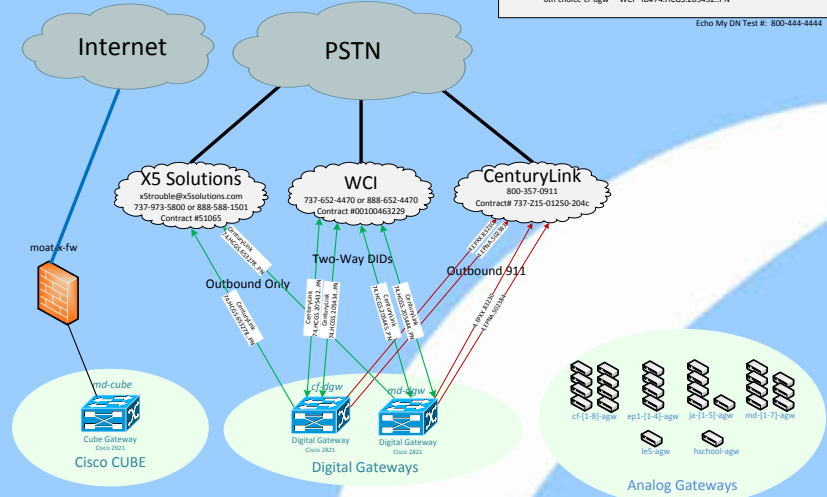
Inconsistency consumes brain cycles and erodes your audience's trust

Conclusion: this diagram tries to show us where we are resilient to failure and where we are vulnerable

Voice Map

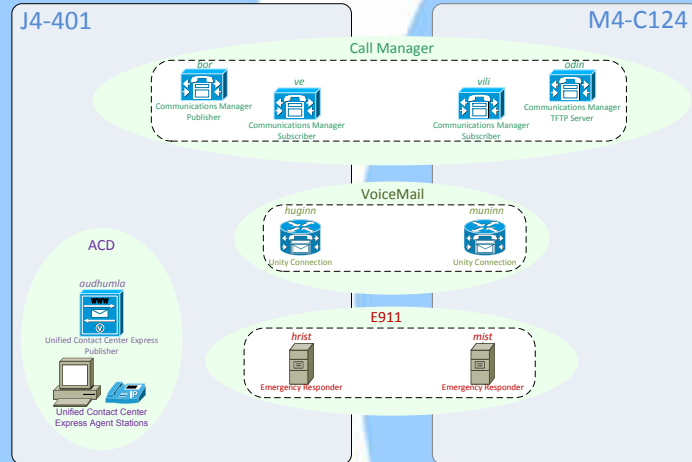
Legend	DIDs	SIP Dialing	Call Routing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> POTS line CAMA Trunk PRI Gigabit Ethernet 	Widgets 2-way DIDs 737-464-xxxx x1000-3950 x3057 x3100-3799 x4000-5319 x5327-5332 x5334-7999	From Widgets to CHIL: 820-XXXXX* From CHIL to Widgets: 737-464-XXXXX* *Replace XXXX with the extension of the person being called	Call Routing Inbound 1st choice cf-dgw - WCI - ID#74.HCGS.205453.PN 2nd choice cf-dgw - WCI - ID#74.HCGS.205434.PN 3rd choice md-dgw - WCI - ID#74.HCGS.205445.PN 4th choice md-dgw - WCI - ID#74.HCGS.205444.PN Outbound To PSTN 1st choice md-dgw - XS - ID#74.HCGS.653278.PN 2nd choice cf-dgw - XS - ID#74.HCGS.653278.PN 3rd choice md-dgw - WCI - ID#74.HCGS.205444.PN 4th choice md-dgw - WCI - ID#74.HCGS.205445.PN 5th choice cf-dgw - WCI - ID#74.HCGS.205434.PN 6th choice cf-dgw - WCI - ID#74.HCGS.205432.PN

Inbound & Outbound Call Routing ... that's neat, helps understand how resilient we are to equipment & carrier failure



And an amorphous blob of Analog Gateways ... which don't relate to anything else

One IP-based trunk ... Two Digital Gateways employing Three carriers ... although on closer inspection, we can see that CenturyLink just handles CAMA (911) trunks



Call Manager, Voice Mail, and E911 split between two data centers

ACD lives entirely within a single data center

BlueArc Storage Cluster

2008-12-15

Our data centers contain redundant pairs of Ethernet switches: a Red switch and a Blue switch

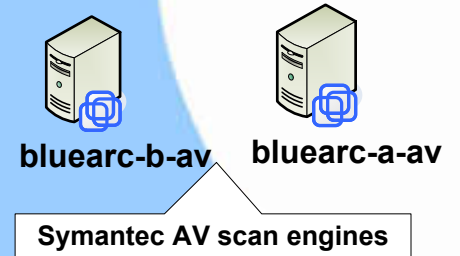


EVS = Enterprise Virtual Server
Allows you to virtualize the Titan to provide for separate administrative domains

EVS Indigo
Used: 6.01TB
Free: 4.37TB

EVS Aqua
Used: 1.25TB
Free: 1.03TB

EVS Sapphire
Used: 1.12TB
Free: 5.42TB



Indigo
(112) 136GB FC 10K RPM
- (8) hot spares
10.38TB usable

What do you notice?

What is the most important thing to know about this diagram?

It consumes a lot of rack space

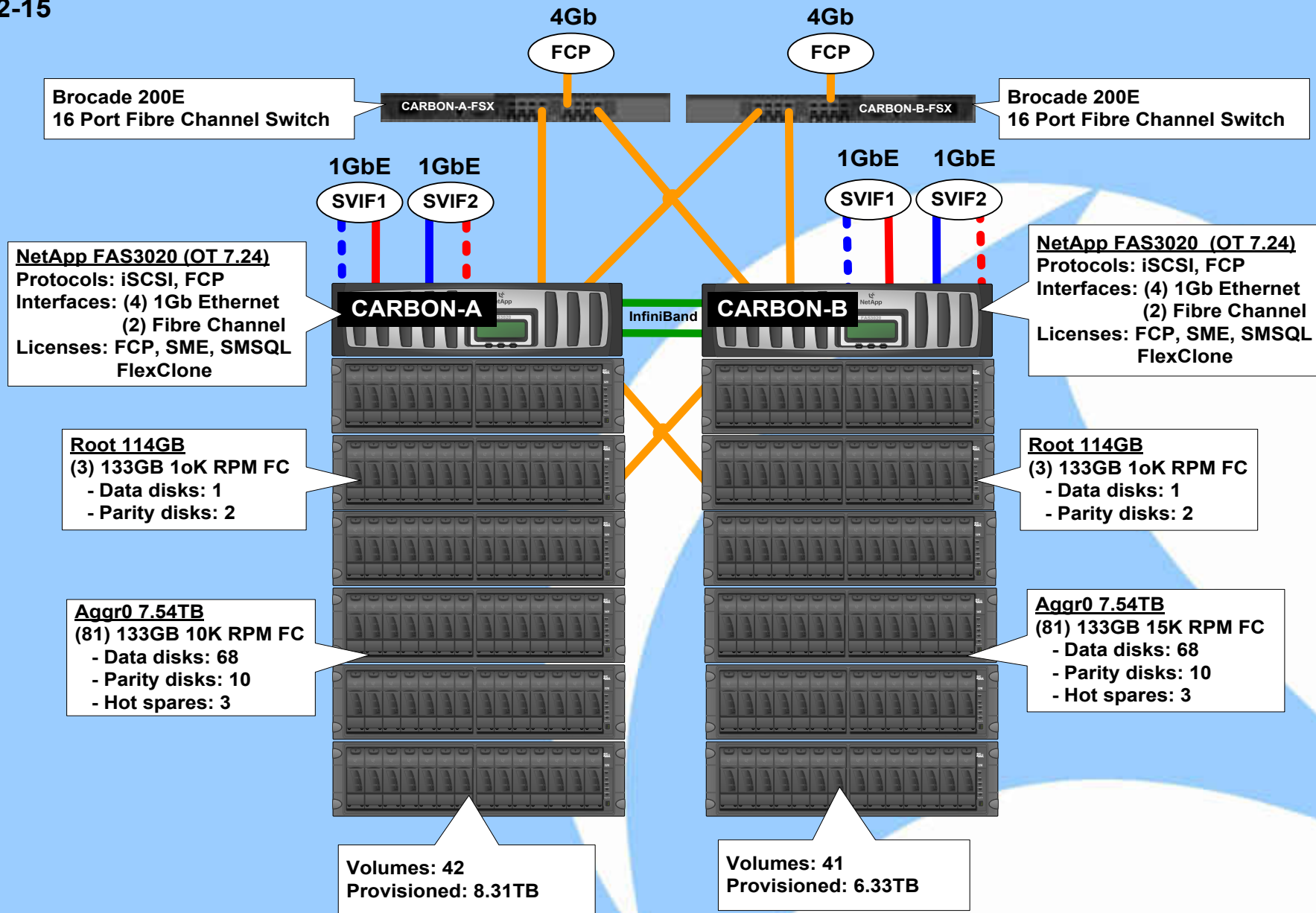
- What do the Blue and Red lines tell us?
- How is Blue-1 attached to the Ethernet network?
- How is Blue-2 attached to the Ethernet network?
- What protocols does Blue support?
- What do the orange lines tell us?
- What does listing space to the second decimal place tell us?
- What information do the stacks of anatomically correct tray icons give us?

- ✓ Notice the consistent naming schemes
- ✓ This diagram shines at mapping EVS to physical trays

- The rest ... not so much ... mostly a disorganized catalogue
This is a good start – the author was new to storage and new to diagramming, but took the plunge and started drawing. As you gain experience and expertise, hopefully, you return to your diagrams and refine them

Carbon Storage Cluster

2008-12-15

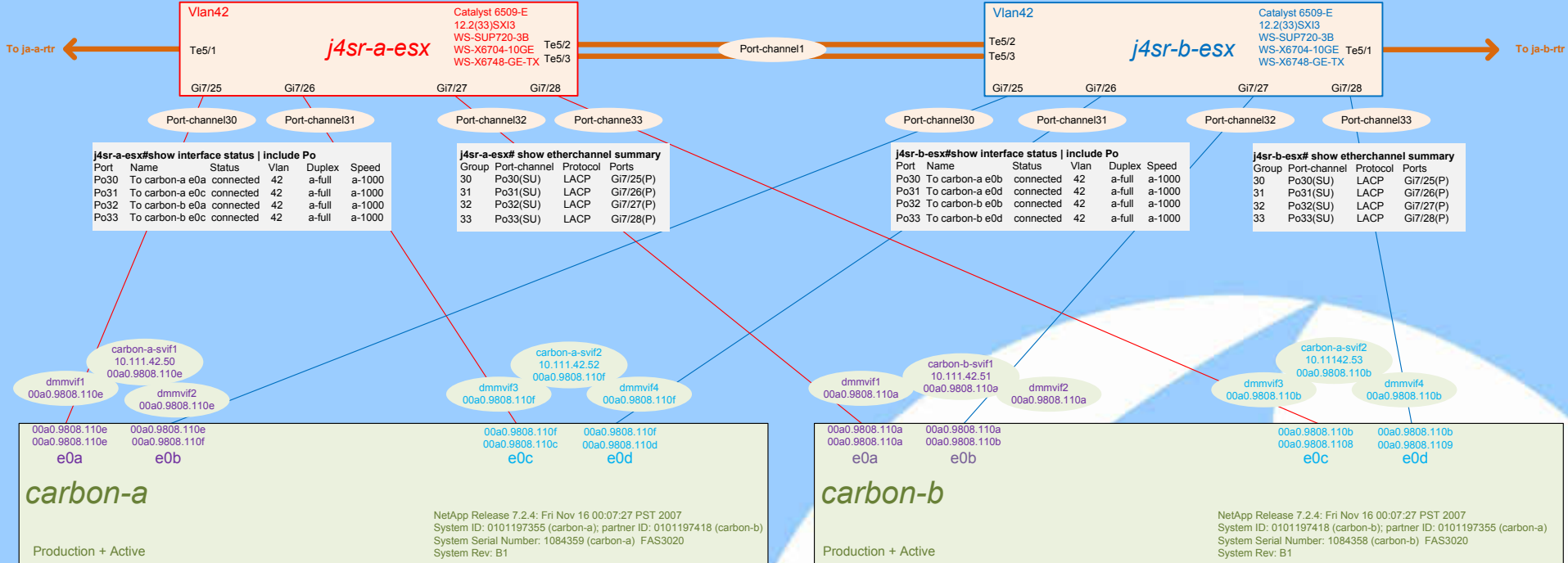


What do you notice?

What is the most important thing to know about this diagram?

- *This thing is highly-available: everything comes in pairs*
- *And it has a lot of disk shelves*
- ❑ Not clear how the lower trays communicate with anything else
- ❑ Nor where those top 4GB FCP Ports are headed
- ✓ Notice the consistent use of color to tell us about network interfaces
Don't even need a legend
- ✓ This diagram shines at illustrating choices around volume / shelf mapping and configuration
And telling us what is possible (licensing & protocols)

Serves as an operator's quick reference: neat



Provides LUNs via Fibre Channel and iSCSI To a handful of Exchange 2003 and MS SQL Servers

```

/etc/rc
hostname carbon-a

vif create lacp dmmvf1 -b ip e0a
vif create lacp dmmvf2 -b ip e0b

vif create lacp dmmvf3 -b ip e0c
vif create lacp dmmvf4 -b ip e0d

vif create single svif1 dmmvf1 dmmvf2

vif create single svif2 dmmvf3 dmmvf4

ifconfig svif1 'hostname'-svif1 netmask 255.255.254.0 mediatype auto partner svif1
ifconfig svif2 'hostname'-svif2 netmask 255.255.254.0 mediatype auto partner svif2

route add default 10.111.42.1 1
routed on
options dns.domainname fhrcr.org
options nis.enable on
options nis.enable off
savecore

/etc/hosts
10.111.42.50 carbon-a carbon-a-svif1
10.111.42.52 carbon-a-svif2
140.107.42.13 loghost
  
```

```

carbon-a# ifconfig -a
e0a: flags=948043<UP,BROADCAST,RUNNING,MULTICAST,TCPCKSUM> mtu 1500
ether 02:a0:98:08:11:0e (auto-1000f-fd-up) flowcontrol full
trunked dmmvf1
e0b: flags=948043<UP,BROADCAST,RUNNING,MULTICAST,TCPCKSUM> mtu 1500
ether 02:a0:98:08:11:0e (auto-1000f-fd-up) flowcontrol full
trunked dmmvf2
e0c: flags=948043<UP,BROADCAST,RUNNING,MULTICAST,TCPCKSUM> mtu 1500
ether 02:a0:98:08:11:0f (auto-1000f-fd-up) flowcontrol full
trunked svif1
e0d: flags=948043<UP,BROADCAST,RUNNING,MULTICAST,TCPCKSUM> mtu 1500
ether 02:a0:98:08:11:0f (auto-1000f-fd-up) flowcontrol full
trunked dmmvf4
lo: flags=1948049<UP,LOOPBACK,RUNNING,MULTICAST,TCPCKSUM> mtu 8160
inet 127.0.0.1 netmask 0xffff0000 broadcast 127.0.0.1
ether 00:00:00:00:00:00 (VIA Provider)
dmmvf1: flags=948043<UP,BROADCAST,RUNNING,MULTICAST,TCPCKSUM> mtu 1500
ether 02:a0:98:08:11:0e (Enabled virtual interface)
trunked svif1
dmmvf2: flags=948043<UP,BROADCAST,RUNNING,MULTICAST,TCPCKSUM> mtu 1500
ether 02:a0:98:08:11:0e (Enabled virtual interface)
trunked svif1
dmmvf3: flags=948043<UP,BROADCAST,RUNNING,MULTICAST,TCPCKSUM> mtu 1500
ether 02:a0:98:08:11:0f (Enabled virtual interface)
trunked svif1
dmmvf4: flags=948043<UP,BROADCAST,RUNNING,MULTICAST,TCPCKSUM> mtu 1500
ether 02:a0:98:08:11:0f (Enabled virtual interface)
trunked svif2
dmmvf5: flags=948043<UP,BROADCAST,RUNNING,MULTICAST,TCPCKSUM> mtu 1500
inet 10.111.42.50 netmask 0xffff00 broadcast 10.111.43.255
partner svif1 (not in use)
ether 02:a0:98:08:11:0e (Enabled virtual interface)
svif2: flags=948043<UP,BROADCAST,RUNNING,MULTICAST,TCPCKSUM> mtu 1500
inet 10.111.42.52 netmask 0xffff00 broadcast 10.111.43.255
partner svif2 (not in use)
ether 02:a0:98:08:11:0f (Enabled virtual interface)
  
```

```

carbon-b# ifconfig -a
e0a: flags=948043<UP,BROADCAST,RUNNING,MULTICAST,TCPCKSUM> mtu 1500
ether 02:a0:98:08:11:0a (auto-1000f-fd-up) flowcontrol full
trunked dmmvf1
e0b: flags=948043<UP,BROADCAST,RUNNING,MULTICAST,TCPCKSUM> mtu 1500
ether 02:a0:98:08:11:0a (auto-1000f-fd-up) flowcontrol full
trunked dmmvf2
e0c: flags=948043<UP,BROADCAST,RUNNING,MULTICAST,TCPCKSUM> mtu 1500
ether 02:a0:98:08:11:0b (auto-1000f-fd-up) flowcontrol full
trunked dmmvf3
e0d: flags=948043<UP,BROADCAST,RUNNING,MULTICAST,TCPCKSUM> mtu 1500
ether 02:a0:98:08:11:0b (auto-1000f-fd-up) flowcontrol full
trunked dmmvf4
lo: flags=1948049<UP,LOOPBACK,RUNNING,MULTICAST,TCPCKSUM> mtu 8160
inet 127.0.0.1 netmask 0xffff0000 broadcast 127.0.0.1
ether 00:00:00:00:00:00 (VIA Provider)
dmmvf1: flags=948043<UP,BROADCAST,RUNNING,MULTICAST,TCPCKSUM> mtu 1500
ether 02:a0:98:08:11:0a (Enabled virtual interface)
trunked svif1
dmmvf2: flags=948043<UP,BROADCAST,RUNNING,MULTICAST,TCPCKSUM> mtu 1500
ether 02:a0:98:08:11:0a (Enabled virtual interface)
trunked svif1
dmmvf3: flags=948043<UP,BROADCAST,RUNNING,MULTICAST,TCPCKSUM> mtu 1500
ether 02:a0:98:08:11:0a (Enabled virtual interface)
trunked svif1
dmmvf4: flags=948043<UP,BROADCAST,RUNNING,MULTICAST,TCPCKSUM> mtu 1500
ether 02:a0:98:08:11:0b (Enabled virtual interface)
trunked svif2
dmmvf5: flags=948043<UP,BROADCAST,RUNNING,MULTICAST,TCPCKSUM> mtu 1500
inet 10.111.42.51 netmask 0xffff00 broadcast 10.111.43.255
partner svif1 (not in use)
ether 02:a0:98:08:11:0a (Enabled virtual interface)
svif2: flags=948043<UP,BROADCAST,RUNNING,MULTICAST,TCPCKSUM> mtu 1500
inet 10.111.42.53 netmask 0xffff00 broadcast 10.111.43.255
partner svif2 (not in use)
ether 02:a0:98:08:11:0b (Enabled virtual interface)
  
```

```

/etc/rc
hostname carbon-b

vif create lacp dmmvf1 -b ip e0a
vif create lacp dmmvf2 -b ip e0b

vif create lacp dmmvf3 -b ip e0c
vif create lacp dmmvf4 -b ip e0d

vif create single svif1 dmmvf1 dmmvf2

vif create single svif2 dmmvf3 dmmvf4

ifconfig svif1 'hostname'-svif1 netmask 255.255.254.0 mediatype auto partner svif1
ifconfig svif2 'hostname'-svif2 netmask 255.255.254.0 mediatype auto partner svif2

route add default 10.111.42.1 1
routed on
options dns.domainname fhrcr.org
options dns.enable on
options nis.enable off
savecore

/etc/hosts
127.0.0.1 localhost
10.111.42.51 carbon-b carbon-b-svif1
10.111.42.53 carbon-b-svif2
140.107.42.13 loghost
  
```

carbon / Ethernet-IP

What do you notice?

What is the most important thing to know about this diagram?

*Hope the text is useful, because there sure is a lot of it
Carbon and j4sr-x-esx are the most important things*

We lost the Fibre Channel detail ... but gained insight into the Ethernet/IP side of the box

Notice the inclusion of both host-specific configuration files and of dynamic ‘show’ output describing the NICs

Allows the observer to sanity-check how the host is configured

The author wanted to illuminate complex host-to-Ethernet switch configuration

We had struggled painfully to configure the host physical and virtual interfaces ... the ‘svif’ and ‘dmmvif’ parts ... and to line those up with the correct switch LACP configurations

This template became popular – we have nearly a dozen of these now

What do you notice?

What is the most important thing to know about this diagram?

Yellow is important (major software components)

This thing tells you about data flows

✓ Which hosts are virtual and which are physical?

Anatomically correct rack-mountable icons are physical; the more abstract desktop icons are virtual

✓ Where does the Extranet database live?

Admains28 ... not clear to me what the Extranet database on London does, but perhaps if I knew more about CMS, I could make a guess

✓ This diagram shines at illustrating which protocols carry what kind of traffic to which hosts

Want to figure out why Web content has quit traveling from Staging to Production? This diagram would give you a head start

Serves as a Web master's quick reference: neat

What do you notice?

What is the most important thing to know about this diagram?

I sure hope those Grey and Green boxes are important

This thing tells us about machine resources and dataflows

- ✓ Grey boxes are virtual; Green boxes are physical
Distinguishing between the two was important to the author; in fact, I find it easy to do precisely this
- ✓ Tracking machine resources (CPU, RAM, storage) was important to this author
We were exhausting all three, adding RAM & CPU, scrambling to physicalize previously virtual boxes: This diagram tracks those parameters easily
- ✓ Notice the use of color in lines, e.g. Green lines trace SMTP mail exchange
Green is overloaded: myself, I'm OK with that – I know a little about DNS and SMTP and a lot about this environment, and I find this use of color contributing to my understanding rather than confusing me
- ❑ Too dense, too many overlapping lines: time to expand to multiple sheets

Rewards study

What do you notice?

- Color Must mean something
- Redundancy Some services are redundant; others are not
- Complexity The two Orange boxes are complicated

Color

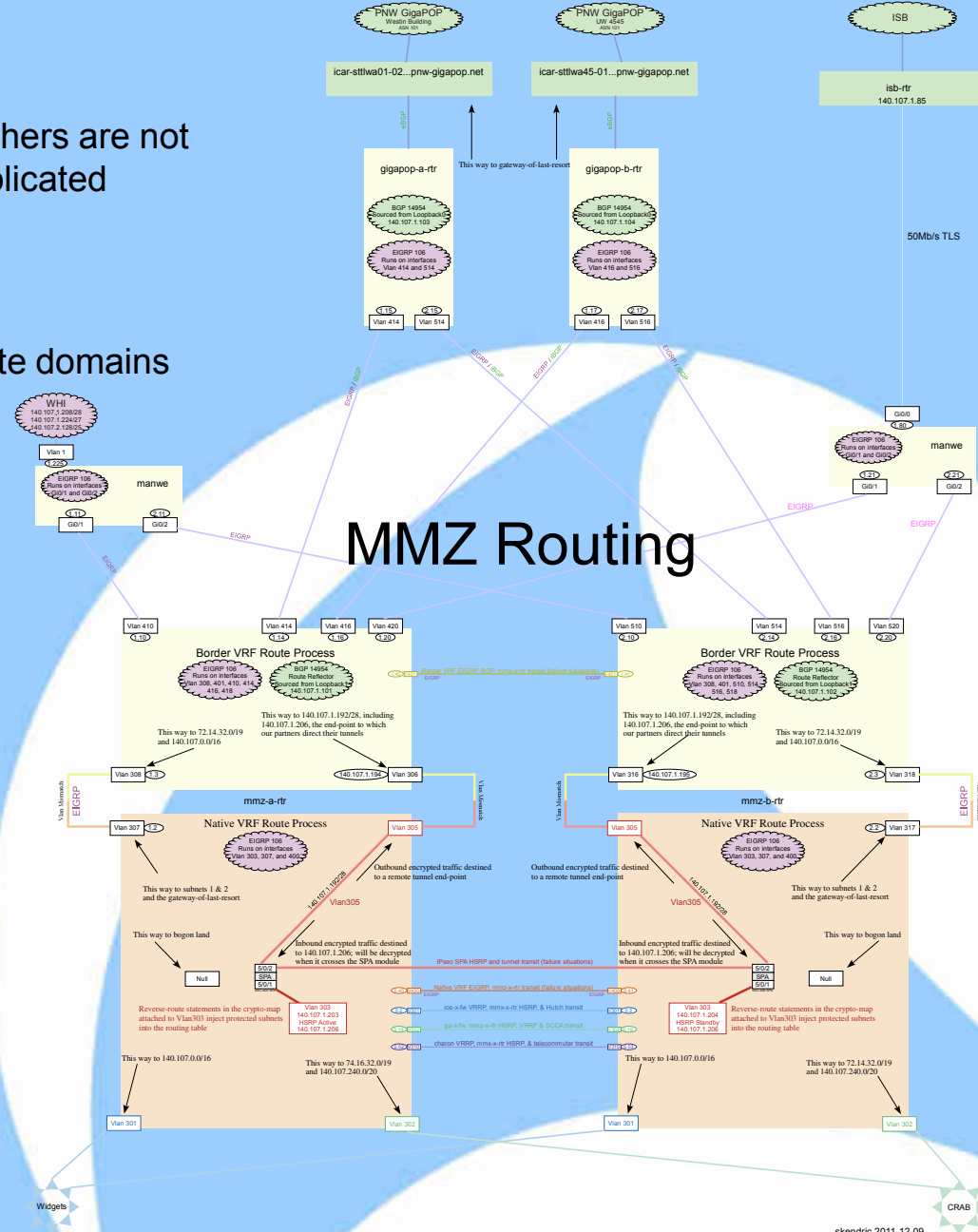
- Green denotes BGP, Purple denotes EIGRP
- Yellow and Orange distinguish richly filtered route domains

Redundancy

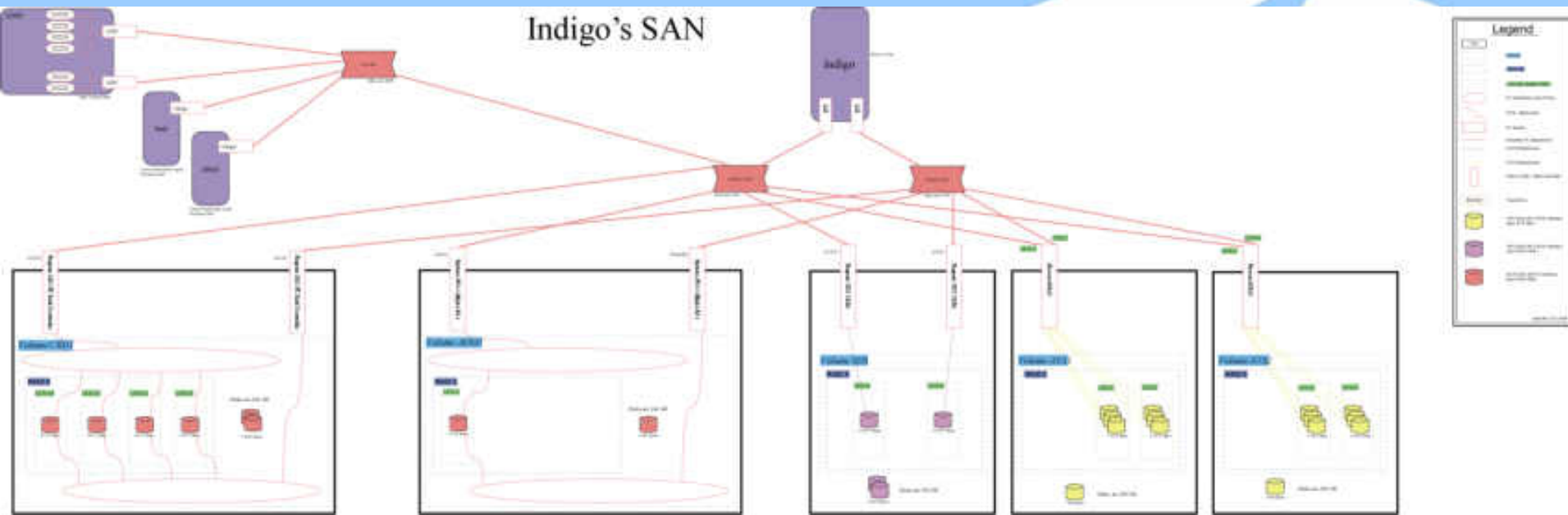
- Yes, some partners connect via redundant gear, others do not

Complexity

- The two Orange boxes support site-to-site VPN tunnel encryption via complex routing
- And HSRP addresses to devices not shown here, notably firewalls and telecommuter VPN servers
- In addition, the bottom four boxes really belong just to two physical chassis' ... which have been carved into Virtual Routing Forwarding (VRF) instances



Indigo's SAN



What do you notice?

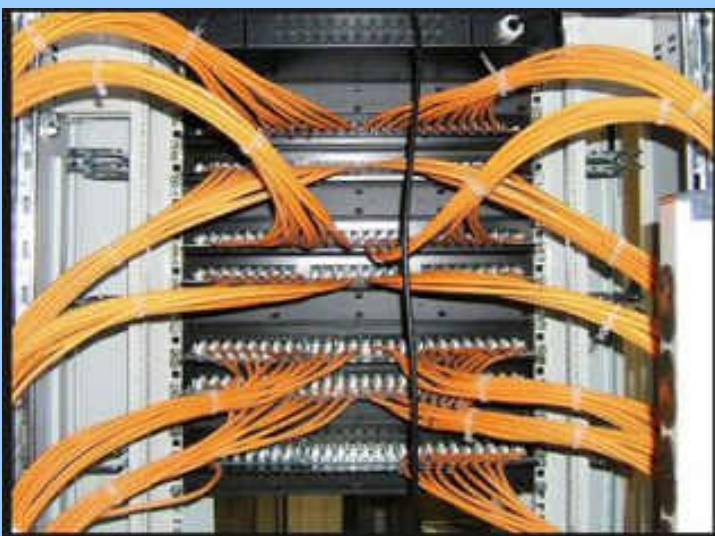
What is the most important thing to know about this diagram?

This thing is mostly air

And somehow, those black boxes and red lines must be important

- ✓ Notice the consistent use of color to distinguish between drive attachment: Fibre Channel, SATA, and ATA
- ✓ You can kind of tell which trays are dual-attached and which aren't
- ❑ But the fact that the drives inside a tray are connected via one (or two) Fibre Channel loops, while initially interesting, turned out not to be important
- ❑ What a fabulous waste of space
 - I predicted that I would need to learn more about the internal workings of a tray, in order to trouble-shoot future problems, and so left myself space to grow ... but ended up not being involved again in this device's exploits*

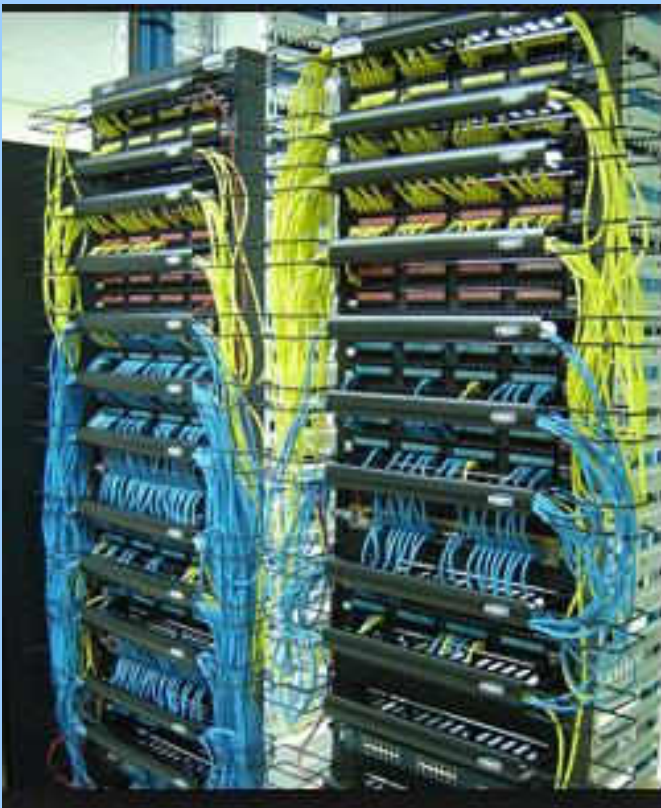
Diagrams evolve as your understanding deepens and your needs change



You can pay up front, or you can pay later

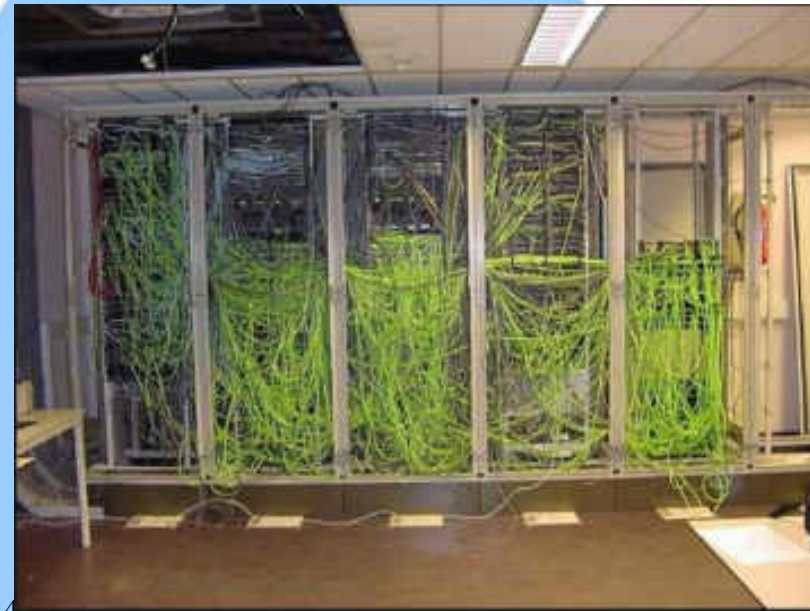


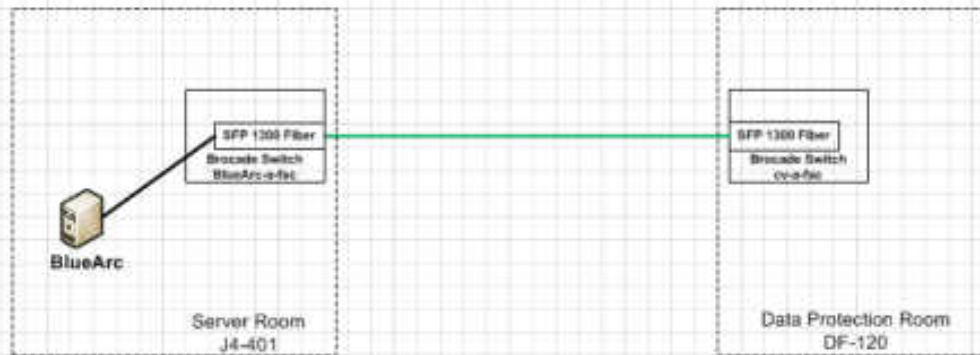
If you pay later, you pay with (exorbitant) interest
This is *Technical Debt*



Paying up front is hard, but you save money in the long run

Skilled physical layer people are hard to find and worth their weight in gold. Look for folks coming from the telco and submariner spaces

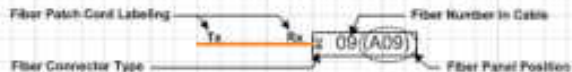




Logical Schematic of Physical Fiber Connections
BlueArc Data Protection Network

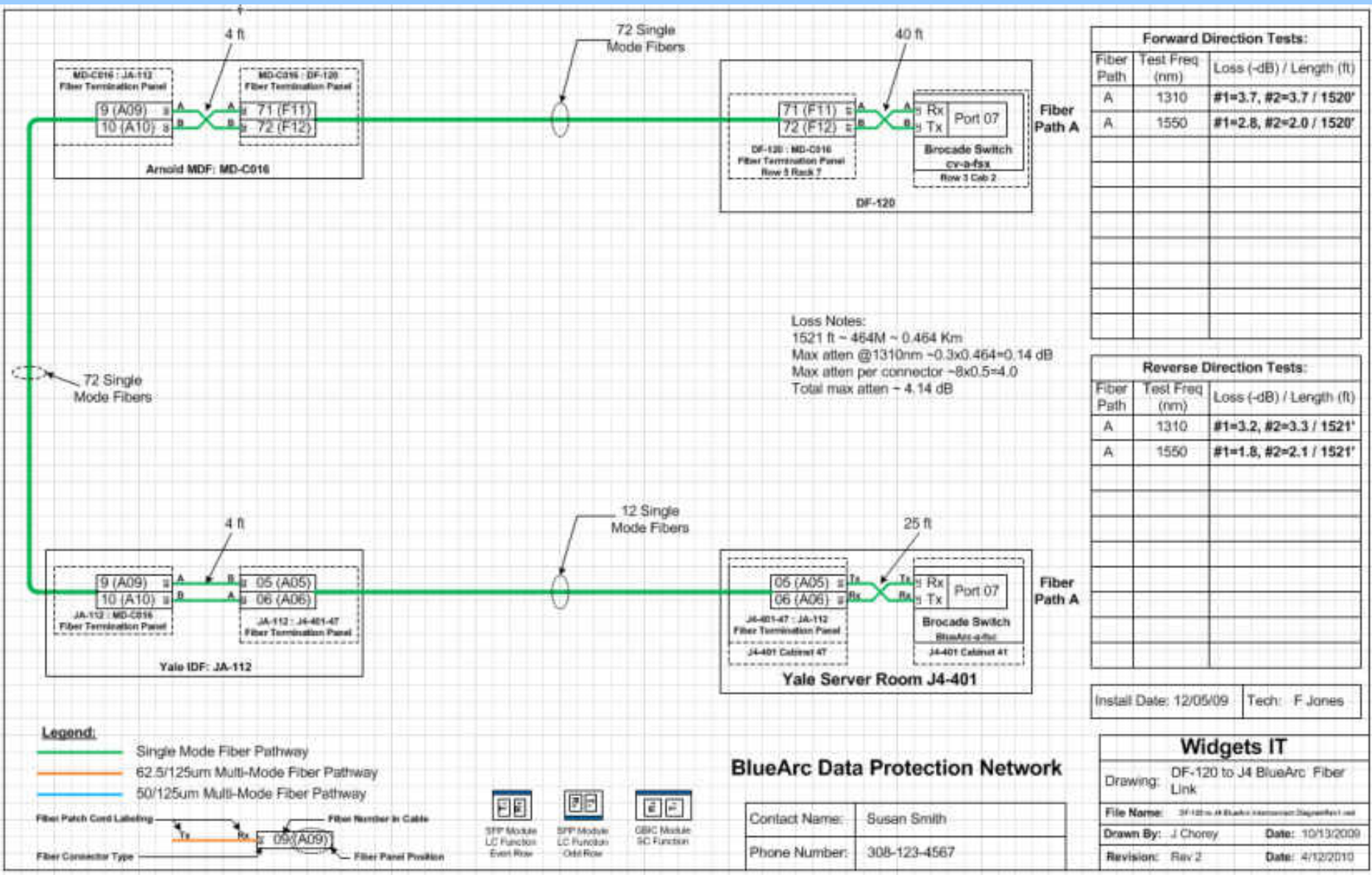
Legend:

- Single Mode Fiber Pathway
- 62.5/125um Multi-Mode Fiber Pathway
- 50/125um Multi-Mode Fiber Pathway

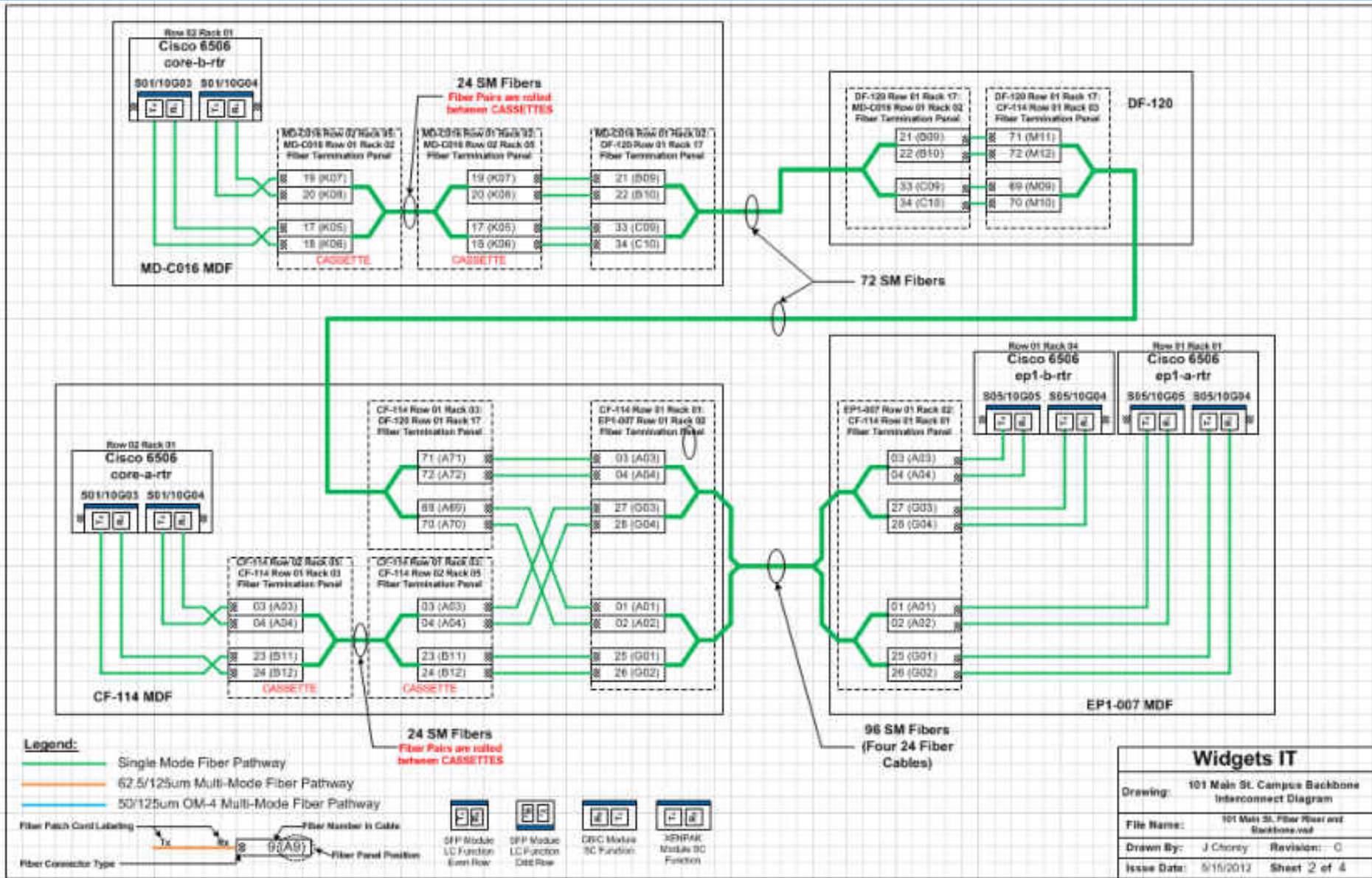


Widgets IT	
Drawing:	DF-120 to J4 BlueArc Fiber Link
File Name:	DF-120 to J4 BlueArc Interconnect Diagram Rev 1.rvt
Drawn By:	J Chorney
Date:	10/13/2009
Revision:	Rev 2
Date:	4/12/2010

One little fiber optic link between the Server Room and the Data Protection Room
How hard can it be?



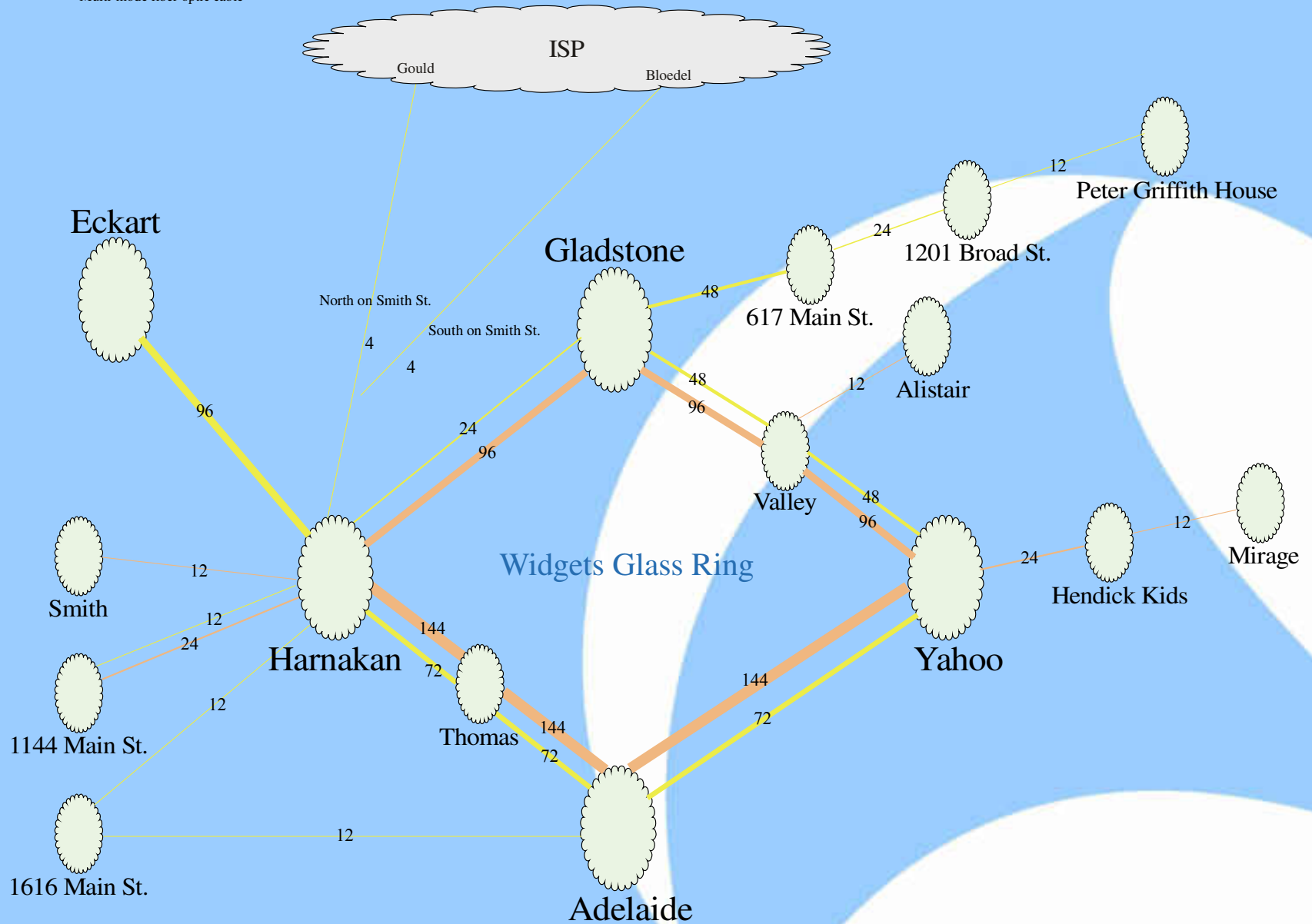
This is what it takes to earn the moniker *Skilled*



Here tracking the connections between the two campus core routers and the two E Building routers

Widgets Outside Glass Cabling Plant

- Single-mode fiber optic cable
- Multi-mode fiber optic cable



What do you notice?

What is the most important thing to know about this diagram?

*Some of those buildings sit on a diamond ... well, ahh ... I guess ... a ring
Which means that those buildings are hardened against fiber cuts*

- ✓ This diagram shines at telling you what happens when a fiber conduit gets cut
- ✓ And you can tell how many raw strands you have running between buildings

Some diagrams have a narrow focus: that's OK, particularly if they tell the story clearly

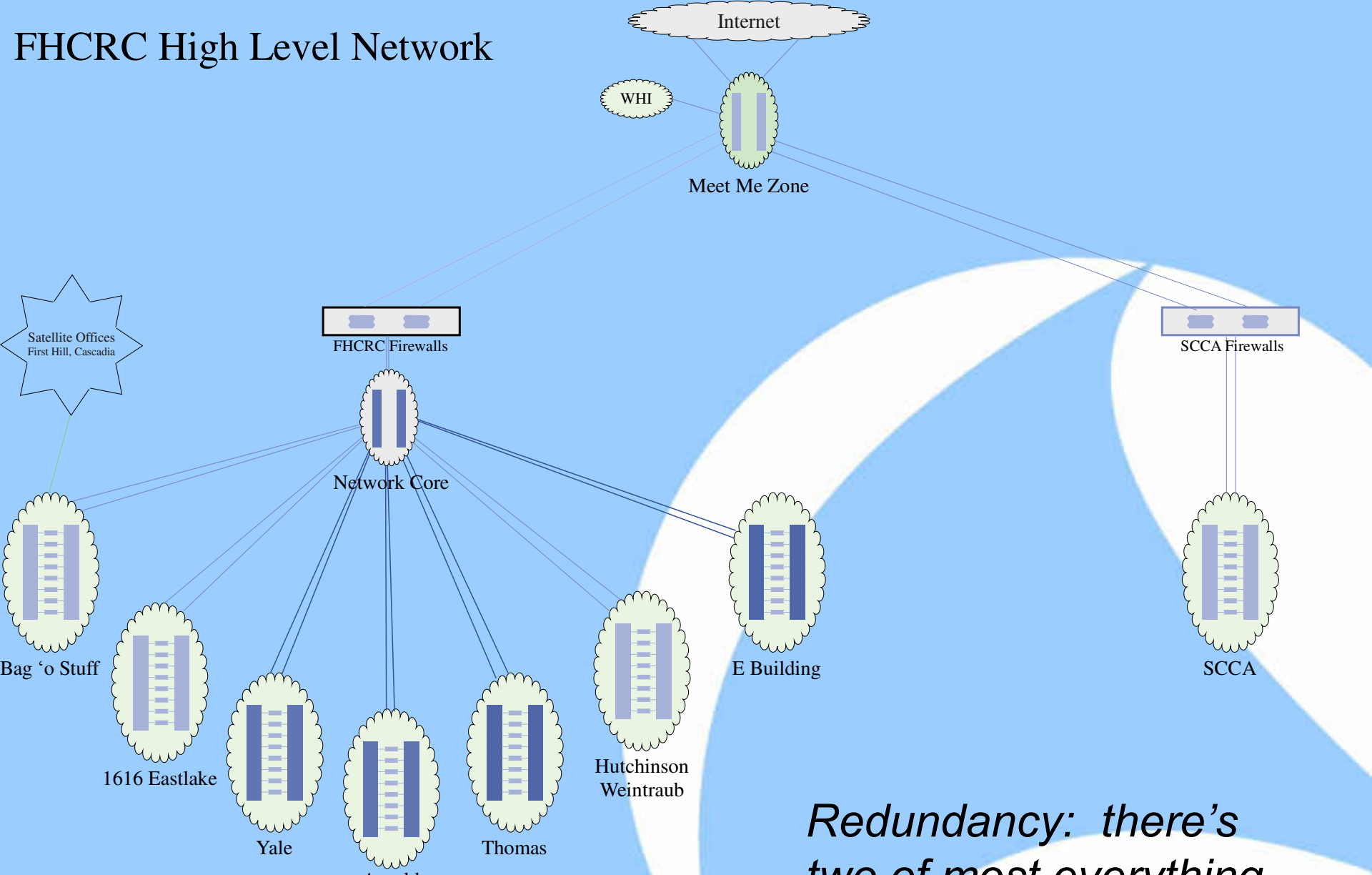
OK, let's get serious

Major jump in expertise here

The cabling diagrams we just saw were drawn by an IT professional with ~40 years experience. He dumbed down his CAD templates into Visio so that the rest of us could contribute – we have dozens of these diagrams now, hopefully more on the way

I'm headed toward showing off the best I have to offer: twenty years working in one environment, nearly two decades of developing and evolving the 'LAN/MAN Map'

FHCRC High Level Network



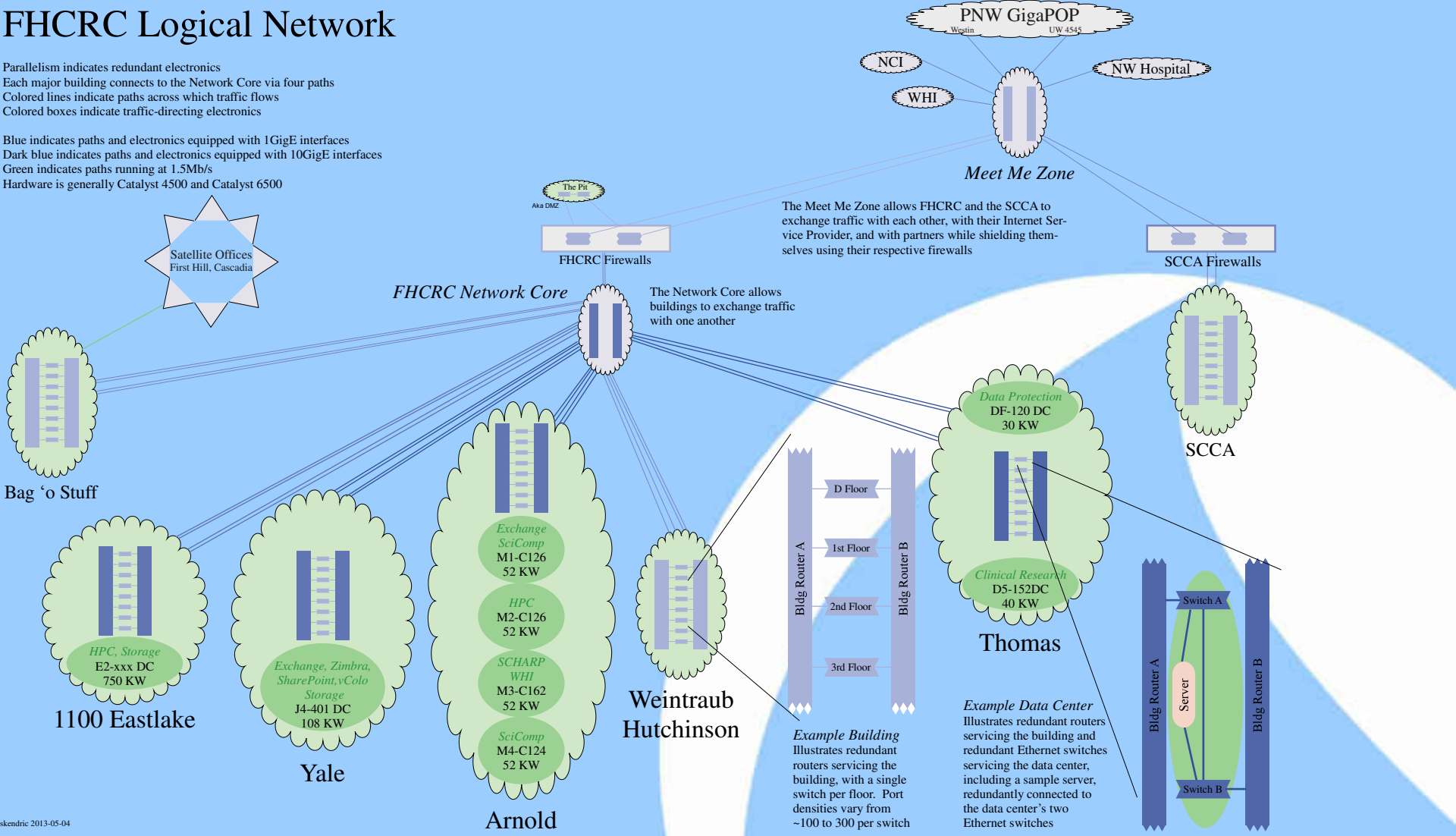
Redundancy: there's two of most everything

skendric 2013-05-04

FHCRC Logical Network

Parallelism indicates redundant electronics
 Each major building connects to the Network Core via four paths
 Colored lines indicate paths across which traffic flows
 Colored boxes indicate traffic-directing electronics

Blue indicates paths and electronics equipped with 1GigE interfaces
 Dark blue indicates paths and electronics equipped with 10GigE interfaces
 Green indicates paths running at 1.5Mb/s
 Hardware is generally Catalyst 4500 and Catalyst 6500



skendric 2013-05-04

Same as the last one ... but with a little more detail, plus explanatory text

How to densify

So the last several diagrams might be suitable for management ... but hardly useful for techs

We want:

- IP addresses to ping
- 10Mb | 100Mb | 1GigE | 10GigE
- How much throughput do I have between location X and location Y?
- A sense of physicality ... the location of data centers and even key servers
- The service providers, circuit IDs, NOC telephone numbers
- Security gear – firewalls, IPS, proxies – because they break things
- Where's the weird stuff? The hacks, the one-offs, the complicated parts?
- Where is the creaky stuff – degrading, overloaded, fragile?

And above all, relationships – how this chunk depends on that other chunk

Shapes for devices

Security (FW or IPS)

Router

Layer 2 Switch

Layer 3 Switch

Versioning scheme

- Minor change

Just change the date

- Major change

New animal

In 1993, we started with Armadillo

Legend

Devices	Symbols	Details
Firewall or IPS		If a device is colored, the Hutch or the SCCA owns it. If a device is white, a service provider or a partner owns it.
High-Availability		Indigo indicates Gigabit throughput Purple indicates Fast Ethernet throughput Turquoise indicates Vanilla Ethernet throughput
Load Balancer		Bandwidth
Media Converter		100Gig Ethernet (100,000Mb) — Darkest
Router		40Gig Ethernet (40,000Mb) — Darker
Switch, Layer 2		10Gig Ethernet (10,000Mb) — Dark
Switch, Layer 2 + 3		Gigabit Ethernet (1000 Mb) — Indigo
Switch, Layer 3 only		Fast Ethernet (100 Mb) — Purple
VPN Tunnel Terminator		Vanilla Ethernet (10Mb) — Turquoise
Wireless Controller		OC3 (155 Mb) — Red
10 Gig Ethernet		T3 (45 Mb) — Orange
Gigabit Ethernet		T1 (1.544 Mb) — Green
LACP EtherChannel		V-Nets
Fast Ethernet		Guest : Indicates the presence of ports assigned to a Vlan dedicated to the GuestNet VRF
Vanilla Ethernet		CSS: Indicates the presence of ports assigned to the VLAN belonging to 140.107.138.0/23, the internal CSS network.
T3		VLANs
T1		Commodity 140.107.0.0/16
802.11g		VoIP 10.5.0.0/16
		SCHARP 10.6.0.0/16
		GuestNet 10.22.0.0/16
		HPC 140.107.216.0/22
		Storage 10.111.0.0/16
		Type Codes
		agw Analog Gateway: TDM to VoIP converter
		brg Bridge (Layer 2, converts media)
		dcp Door Control Panel
		dgw Digital Gateway: TDM to VoIP converter
		emu Environmental monitoring unit
		esx Ethernet Switch: Layer 2 device
		fw Firewall
		hvac Heating/Cooling unit
		ips Intrusion Prevention System
		mc Media converter (repeater)
		nlb Network Load Balancer
		pdu Power distribution unit
		rtr Router: Layer 3 device
		ups Uninterruptible power supply
		vpn VPN tunnel terminator
		wism Wireless Services Module
		wlc Wireless LAN Controller



Yak

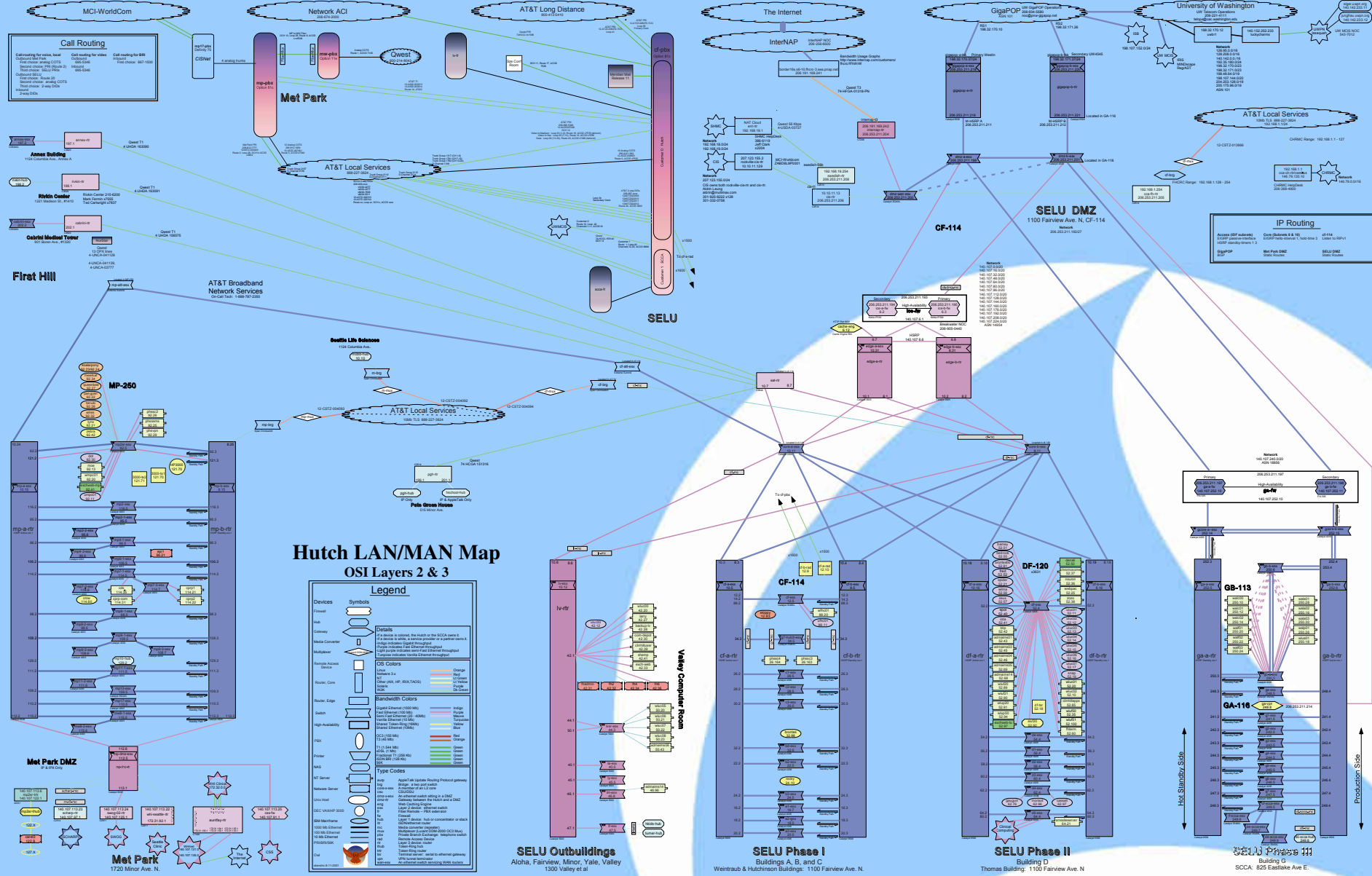
skendric 2013-09-15

Color for throughput

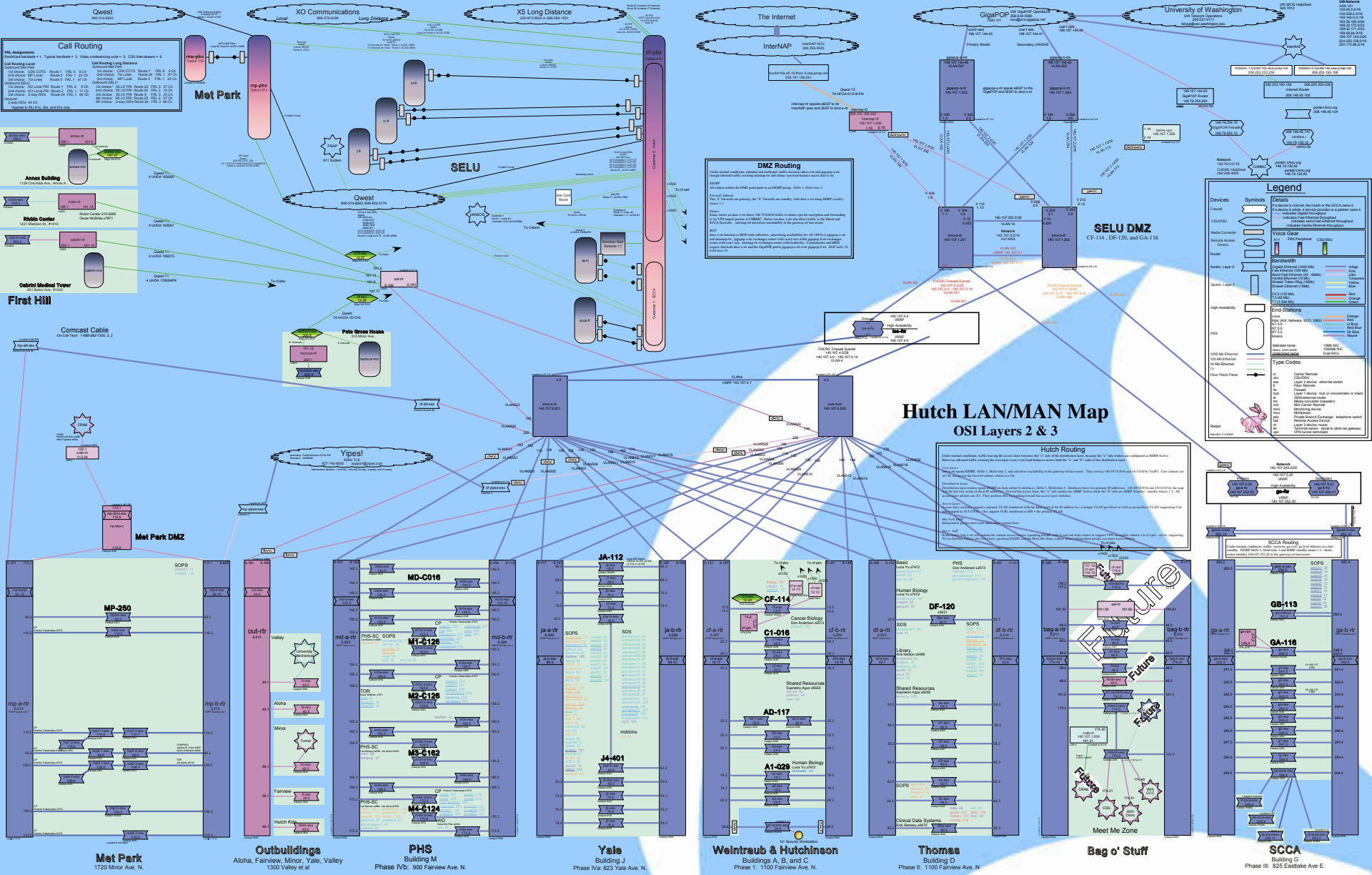
- Blue for GigE and above
- Purple for 100Mb
- Turquoise for 10Mb
- Green for T1

Shading for VLANs

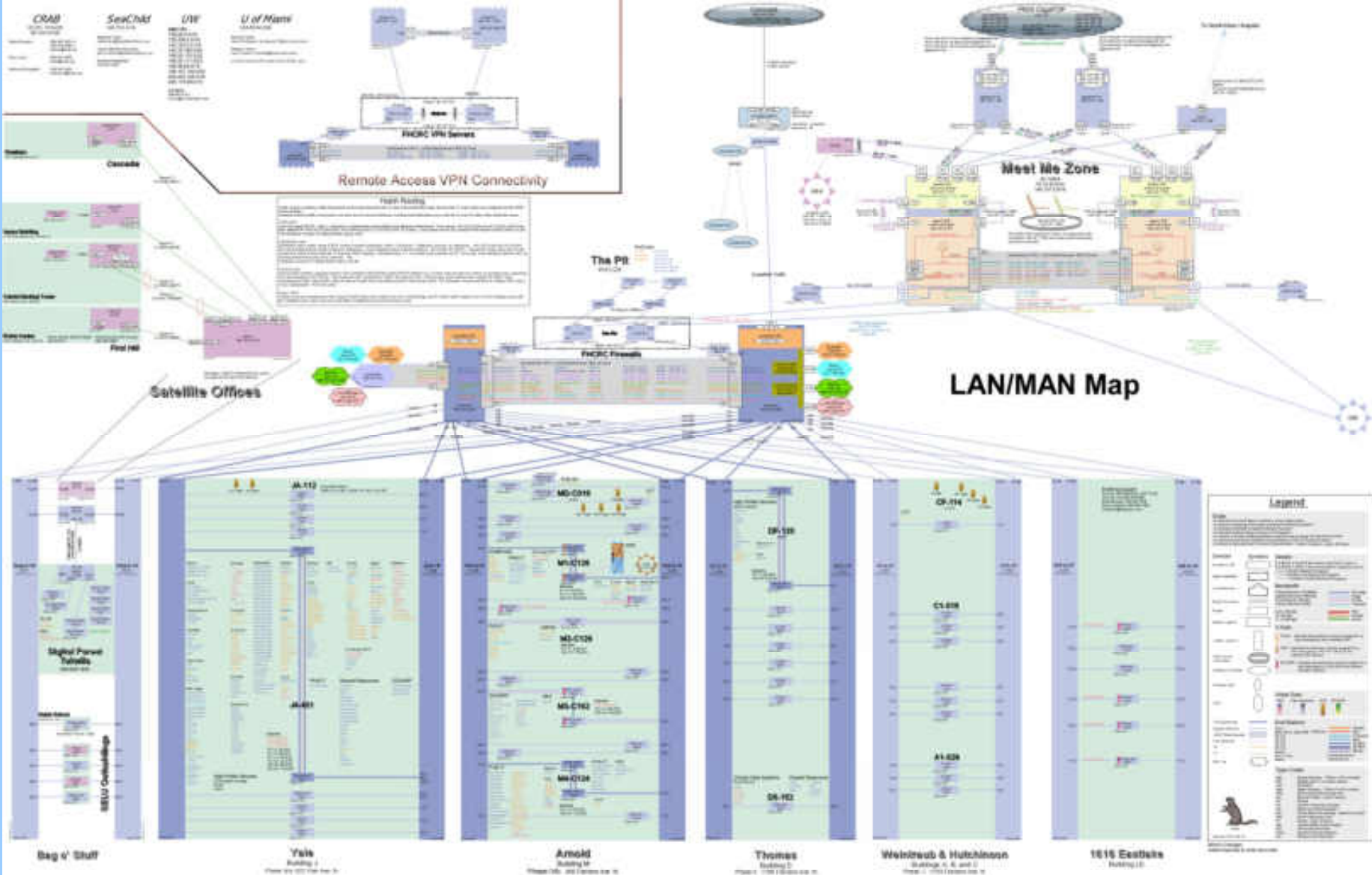
Structured naming convention for infrastructure gear



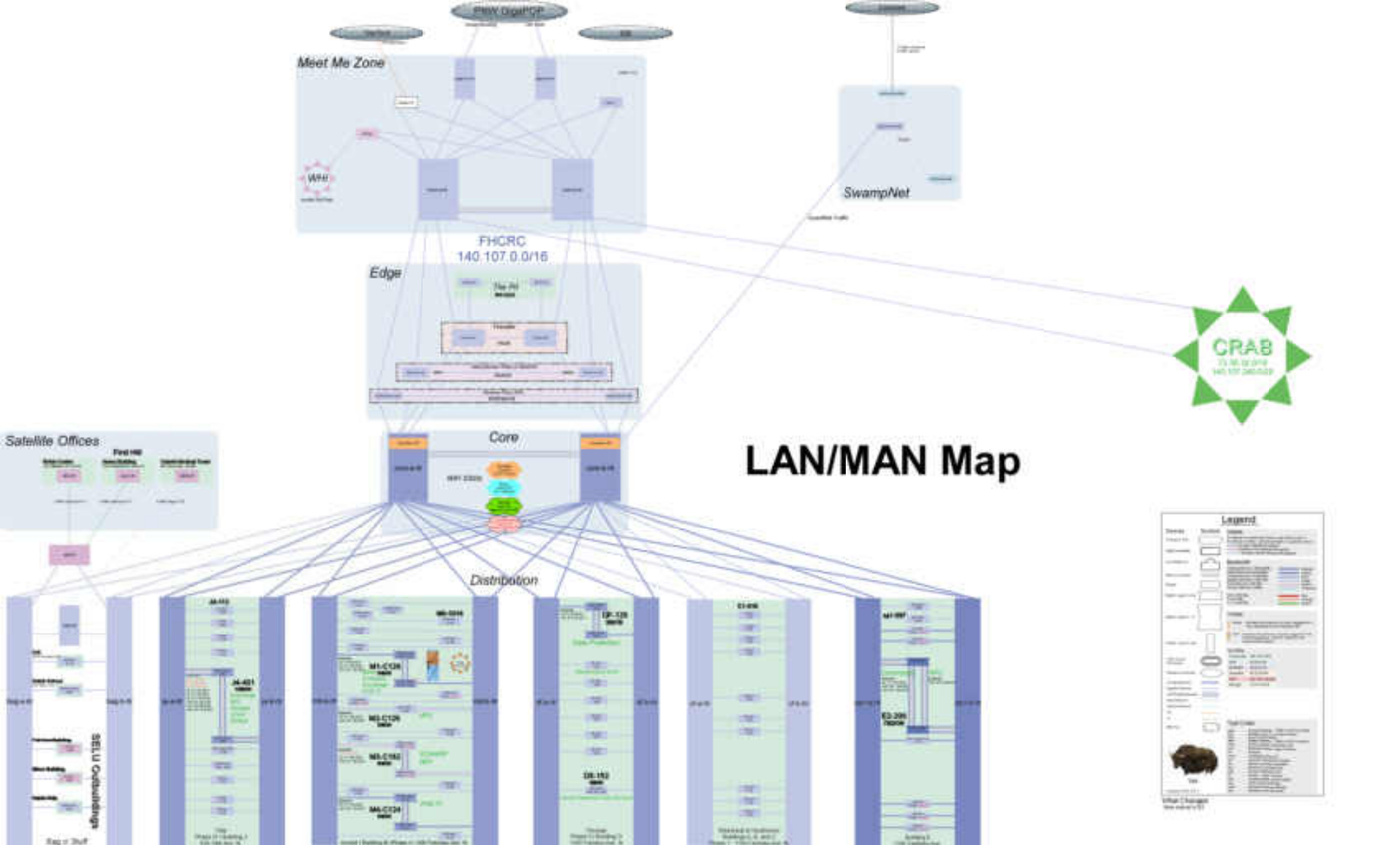
This is Owl, circa 2001



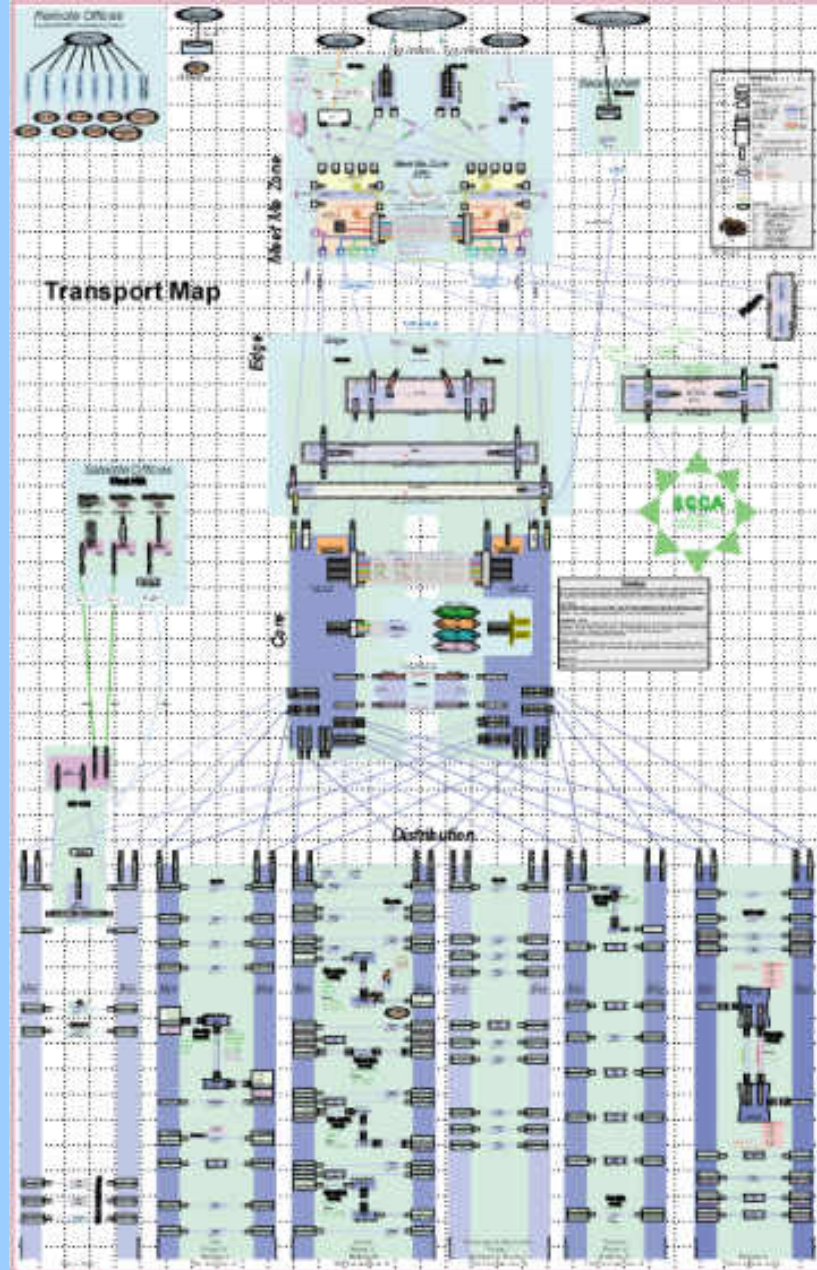
This is Rabbit, circa 2004



This is Xerus, circa 2012



This is Yak, circa Q4 2013



And this is Yak, circa Q4 2013

Complexity

If you struggle to draw it, this is a sign that you're not smart enough to support it

Debugging is twice as hard as writing the code in the first place. Therefore, if you write the code as cleverly as possible, you are, by definition, not smart enough to debug it. --Brian Kernighan

Drawing feeds back into design – if you can't draw it, then perhaps you would be better off simplifying your design, giving up features in exchange for supportability.

Increasingly, people seem to misinterpret complexity as sophistication, which is baffling - the incomprehensible should cause suspicion rather than admiration. --Niklaus Wirth

I have seen diagrams communicate the costs of business decisions. Imagine this conversation with your CIO:

- *Yes, new Product A will deliver features xyz while old Product B does not*
- *But are you happy with the uptime of the Product B? No?*
- *Let's compare the diagrams – see how much more complicated Product A is?*
- *The technical folks warn us that Product A will be harder to fix when it breaks*
- *Are you OK with increasing downtime in exchange for features xyz?*

Diagrams give you a way to communicate risk upward, downward, sideways

Communication is a good thing

Nuggets

When you step back, what do you notice first? Is what you notice first the most important message that you want your diagram to convey?

Building a diagramming culture took us a decade+

The deeper your content knowledge, the richer your diagrams

As you progress, your understanding of technology deepens ... so do your diagrams ... your early diagrams will reflect your ignorance and errors ... your later diagrams will reflect the profundity of your insights ... you cannot short-circuit this process

Don't waste pixels on anatomically correct icons

Consistency and a concise vocabulary supports densifying the information content

When things break – when you experience a major service disruption – return to your diagram: does your diagram explain what happened? If not, what can you add so that it does?

Practicalities

In my experience, each diagram has one and only one owner

We encourage anyone to make changes; in practice, only the owner ever does

Create a map wall, where you post your diagrams

- *Posting the latest version as a PDF to a Web server supports trouble-shooting substantially (everyone can glance at the map without having to physically walk to the map wall) but is hard to maintain – only your most conscientious staff will publish the maps they own this way*
- *Senior staff will prefer to have their own private printed copies*

People vary in their reading and writing skills:

- *Some folks can neither read nor write*
- *Some folks can read maps but stumble when trying to produce them*
- *And some folks think in pictures and find speaking in this medium to be natural*
- *In my experience, trouble-shooting skill and map drawing go together*
- *Skilled trouble-shooters can sketch a model of the problem on the white board, even if they have never fired up Canvas or Visio*

Mechanics

- *Put your name on the diagram*
- *Keep a change log*
- *Archive old versions every now and then*

Software Tips

Visio implements smart connectors – very useful when you're moving boxes around and want those lines to move automatically

Cabling and org charts

Visio makes it easy to waste space using anatomically correct icons

I recommend indulging that urge until you get sick of it ... that's how I overcame my stencil addiction. It took me years to get clean.

Canvas scales

- *sophisticated color control*
- *precise object placement*
- *efficient zooming*

Some day, I would like to take a class in each ... I know I'm only barely touching their feature sets

You know you are succeeding when:

Staff take copies of your diagram home with them when they are on-call

Your diagram rewards study

- *As you examine it, deeper and more subtle insights arise in your mind*
- *Sophisticated diagrams offer insights to the casual observer ... and revelations to the studious*

Peers approach you with additions, corrections, and requests for enhancements

- *Every reasonably interesting diagram I have produced contains errors all the time ... I built the big diagrams over many years, as colleagues found and fixed mistakes, and I introduced new ones*
- *And your peers complain when the maps you post on the wall are out-of-date*

Management ask their staff to drop you e-mail whenever they make changes

This doesn't work well ... as your peers often don't understand the diagrams well enough to know what changes you are drawing and which you aren't ... but it is flattering

Project sponsors require diagrams before allowing the project to close

Well-intended, but I haven't seen this work – senior staff produce diagrams whether required to or not, junior staff don't have the skills and so produce content-free drawings which satisfy the sponsors but are not in fact useful in the field

Thank You!

On-Line Resources

[Rapid Problem Resolution](#) by Paul Offord

LinkedIn [Protocol Analysis & Troubleshooting Group](#)

Old Comm Guy <http://www.lovemytool.com>

Trouble-shooting & Training Outfits

James Baxter <http://www.packetiq.com>

Tony Fortunato <http://www.thetechfirm.com>

Chris Greer <http://www.packetpioneer.com>

Paul Offord <http://www.advance7.com>

Mike Pennacchi <http://www.nps-llc.com>

Ray Tompkins <http://www.gearbit.com>

...

Based Here (will travel for \$\$)

Daytona Beach, FL

Toronto, Canada

Central/South America

London (international)

Seattle, WA

Austin, TX

Conferences

Sharkfest <http://www.sharkfest.org> San Francisco, CA

Follow-up

stuart.kendrick.sea {at} gee mail dot com

This deck visible at <http://www.skendric.com/seminar>