IT Isn’t Wrong

IT’s different

Jeff Ballard
ballard@wisc.edu
UW Family Tree Subset (IT focus)

• **Black arrow**
  boss to employee relationship

• **Red arrow**
  inverted power relationship

• **Yellow line**
  It’s complicated (and not IT)

**Important!**
Faculty do not have bosses.
How is IT done on Campus?

• IT strategies are a *markedly different* in different parts of campus. Consider:
  • How many people are impacted by an outage?
    • Consider: login.wisc.edu vs a research group’s cluster
  • How much **control** do the people impacted by the risk of an outage have into how the IT service is provided?
    • Consider: any particular faculty member probably has little say over how login.wisc.edu is run, vs a Professor (generally) has a lot of control over how they want their cluster built
IT in Research

• Each Research group operates similar to a startup company.
  • Grants are in the PI’s name, not to the UW.
  • Therefore, UW Research is a collection of startups *barely* held together by an HR and Purchasing system.

• Rule 1 for being an IT support person in research: stay out of the way as much as possible
IT at the Department or College Level

At the School/College or Department level, IT sometimes acts like a research group, and sometimes acts like a top-down IT group.

It depends on what we are doing, who is consuming our service, and what the expectations are.
IT Depends

Therefore the answer to “are you doing IT wrong?” very much depends on where you are on campus, who your customers are, how much control your customers have, and what kind of funding is available.
IT Really Isn’t Wrong

Thanks for listening!

Jeff Ballard - ballard@wisc.edu