Will the DOE and DOD be DOA at SC13?

By: Doug Black

The technical presentations and demonstrations depicting the work and accomplishments of the DOD and DOE researchers, typically seen at the SC conferences, were sorely missed at SC12. What can we expect for SC13?

In a recent random poll, (OK, it was in December, 2012) one of the questions we asked was:

What was missing from SC12?
What would make SC13 better?

The top five responses were:

1. A reliable wireless connection
2. The DOE booth
3. The DOD HPC Mod booth
4. Some control over the noise coming from the exhibits
5. Cream-filled donuts

Seriously. Well, some of the booths were really noisy, and the wireless Internet seemed to be down more than it was up. And I guess I can't really argue when it comes to cream-filled donuts. But let's speak to the other two items.

At SC12, many DOE scientists and engineers wandered the exhibit hall with no place to roost. It was strange not seeing that powerful physical DOE booth presence. The ease of collaboration and networking was clearly missing and was noted by many, including a large number of international attendees.

We've heard from numerous sources that DOE will have a combined booth at SC13 featuring the work from all the DOE labs.

This has not been confirmed. SC13 General Chair, Bill Gropp, had this to say. *"SC13 is looking forward to another great year - our exhibit hall is filling out, submissions are coming into the technical program, and we expect strong participation from our community, including government researchers such as those at the US Department of Energy."*

As for the DOD HPC Mod booth, no one has high expectations that things will change. Currently the DOD is operating under a severe travel restriction. When SC13 rolls around, it will be a new fiscal year for the government – so things could change. Most likely we'll see attendee representation, but it's highly unlikely we'll be treated to the cool technology innovation on display we've seen in past years. This truly is a shame.

The HPC Modernization Program is a great example of the rubber hitting the road – where HPC is being used to save lives and protect and defend the country. The DOD HPC Modernization Program epitomizes U.S. competitiveness. I always found their demos and discussions educational, entertaining, and inspiring.

I know I speak for many thousands within the community when I say the entire global HPC community benefits when the DOD scientists, engineers and researchers participate in the SC conferences.