The New Cray Service Program: an Advance Look

Richard Lough, Cray Research, Inc., Customer Service, Chippewa Falls, Wl

1 Service Model Background

Cray' s traditional service model approach has been to either add options to what we offer on our traditional products or to create entirely new service programs for new product lines. As a result, today we offer over 20 service options on our hardware and software products.

The primary motivation for this new service model is to position the CRI Customer Service Organization to better meet customer requirements. For the past three years our primary "listening tools" have been the customer satisfaction survey, the customer advisory boards, CUG, and customer visits which have shown a change in ours customers' expectations regarding service.

From these contacts it became obvious that Cray needed to develop a new service model that offers a unified set of options applicable across all new platforms and could be easily adaptable internationally. The packages needed to be presented in a simple, attractive package our customers and sales force can understand and sell. The offerings need to be competitively priced and structured so realistic comparisons can be made between Cray offerings and the competition. To enhance or support these options we need to offer a variety of onetime or short-term enhancement services that customers can purchase when needed.

2 Meeting Our Customers' Requirements

Cray is not alone in the marketplace. Many other vendors are offering customers alternate computing solutions for their computing needs. With these solutions come sophisticated service programs and packages. In a market where hardware is becoming more of a commodity, service is increasingly important as both a product and a differentiator.

This new service model is aimed at improving our competitive position for services and service prices. It allows Cray to be flexible enough to provide service choices for an increasingly diverse product set and can be easily adjusted to meet our customers' changing expectations for services.

Based on customer input, marketplace studies, and competitive analysis, a competitive service model must deliver on five customer requirements:

Competitive Service Prices - With more vendors to choose from, our service prices are under more pressure to align with industry averages. One way to meet this requirement is to reduce the costs to service our products. Another way to reduce prices is to offer less or different services to our customers. This leads into the need for flexible service options discussed below.

Flexible Service Options - The most fundamental change needed in our service offerings is the ability for the customer to choose the mix of services, level of response, and hours of coverage they want for all their Cray products. Our customers are very clear in their desire to be able to buy only the services they need and value.

Flexible options also means the ability to buy a maintenance contract for the most frequently wanted or needed services, combined with the ability to purchase professional services for the exceptional conditions or occasional needs, such as, short-term increases in coverage hours, training, installation of selected software, short-term consulting, system administrative services, etc.

Rapid Response - There has been a tendency to view response as an obligatory number of hours in which we must respond to a down system, which was based on the customer maintenance contract. This is too narrow a view, especially as the interaction between Cray and the customer expands beyond the few individuals that make up a site team.

Customers call our support centers, they send us questions by email and by fax, and they report software problems. They want us to commit to a rapid response, e.g. returning phone calls in 60 minutes, acknowledge customer faxes and emails by the next business day, supplying expedited fixes for critical problems (with daily progress reports) and supplying fixes for urgent problems within eight weeks for their currently running software.

Expertise - Our customers expect us to be the experts on our products and they would like us to be experts on other vendor's technology. They want skilled people who care. Whether it is fixing a problem, improving performance, upgrading the hardware or software, or porting a new application, they look to us to know how to get the job done. They want us to be available when needed and they especially like to see a familiar face or hear a familiar voice. Our site teams have consistently been our highest rated service feature. As we move to provide more services remotely, we will keep the sense of personal attention our customers value.

High Availability - In our customer minds, any circumstance that takes the system away from its users; PM, interrupts, repair time, system recovery time, dedicated software testing, dedicated disk flawing, etc., reduces availability. Customers are measuring the costs associated with unavailable systems, adding to the pressure for our products to perform.

3 The New Service Model Strategy

The new service model is designed to give Cray a single, unified, flexible, comprehensive service program delivered through specific system service packages and a selection of enhancement services. The service packages are to be sold on a contract basis for one or more years, while the enhancement services are to be sold to customers as needed. Thus a customer can tailor their support to meet their requirements.

Over time, as market conditions change, we can add new packages, change the set of services in a particular package, or remove packages altogether. This type of approach gives Cray a service model which can adjust with the market, be kept competitive, and offers our customers the real choices they have been asking for.

4 Initial Service Offering(s)

<p style="text-align:center">Cray Customer Service enhances and
 protects your investment in Cray technology</p>

is the basis of the marketing theme behind the new model.

For the initial plan introduction, three main packages are proposed to be available and one specialty package, which is designed for customer maintainable platforms.

Our most economical service package, designed for the customer with plenty of computer know-how is our Base package. This package provides access to Cray when needed, a competitive set of primary coverage hours and response times for service and parts, at a competitive price.

The Middle package is designed for customers who prefer the economy of Cray's assistance with the system software tasks required to run and administer a Cray System rather than having to do more extensive training of their own staffs. It also includes faster response times for service and parts than does the Basic package.

Our High-end package will provide a bridge between the very robust service currently provided on our traditional systems and our new model. It preserves the industry-leading services most of our customers enjoy today. It makes it easy for existing customers to continue this level of service as new products are introduced.

A summary of the preliminary packages are included in Appendix A.

5 Professional Services

The set of professional services is an important part of the service offerings. These services allow the customer to enhance their service package on an as-needed basis. This is an important part of the flexibility of the new service model.

An extensive array of Professional services will be available in the initial roll-out, including:

- Performance Services
- Train-the-Trainer Services
- Network Services
- UNICOS Upgrade Services
- Help Desk Services
- Parallelization Services
- File Server Services
- Security Services
- Computer Center Operations Services
- Facility Services
- Software Development Services

6 Implementation

The current plan is for Cray to formally announce this program in the third quarter of 1995. The service model will cover the T90 product line (including CS6400 and J90) and all new products as they are announced.

Appendix A - Preliminary Package Summary

Service Packages

	High-end	Middle	Base
Hardware Services			
problem diagnosis	included	included	included
escalation process	priority escalation	priority dispatch	standard
hardware repairs	included	included	included
field change orders	included	included	included
Software Services			
problem diagnosis	included	included	included
escalation process	priority escalation	priority dispatch	standard
software updates	included	included	included
software upgrades	included	included	included
software installation	included	included	professional service
Information Services			
CRSB subscription	included	included	included
CRInform	included	included	included
Call Center Services			
number of calls	unlimited	unlimited	unlimited
number of registered contacts	six	four	two
Support Delivery			
primary support	dedicated, on-site staff	Call Center	Call Center
additional support from	Call Center	local team	local team
Primary Coverage Hours (PCH)	5 x 9	5 x 9	5 x 9
Response Times			
critical	immediate	1 hour	4 hours
non-critical	immediate	4 hours	next business day
Parts Availability	2 hours	4 hours	next business day
Emergency Support Outside PCH	Call Center	Call Center	Call Center

Optional Service Package Enhancements

Add Critical On-site Response Outside PCH	monthly fee	n/a	n/a
Add Critical Call Center Response Outside PCH	monthly fee	monthly fee	monthly fee
Add Additional Registered Call Center Contact	monthly fee	monthly fee	monthly fee
Upgrade Response Times 1 hour & 4 hours respectively	n/a	n/a	monthly fee
Increase Parts Availability			
to 4 hours	n/a	n/a	monthly fee
to 2 hours	n/a	monthly fee	monthly fee
Extend Coverage Hours (ECH)			
Monday-Friday, add in 4 hour increments	monthly fee	monthly fee	monthly fee
Saturday-Sunday, add in 8 hour increments	monthly fee	monthly fee	monthly fee

Specialty Package

	Specialty
Hardware Services	
problem diagnosis	telephone assistance
escalation process	assistance
hardware repairs	fee per repair
equipment updates	included
Software Services	
problem diagnosis	included
software updates	included
software upgrades	included
software installation	professional service
escalation process	standard
Information Services	
CRSB subscription	included
CRInform	included
CRInform hardware extras	included
Call Center Services	
number of calls	unlimited
number of registered contacts	two
Support Delivery	
primary support provider	trained customer personnel
additional support from	Call Center
Primary Coverage Hours (PCH)	5 x 9
Response Times	
critical	4 hours
non-critical	next business day
Parts Availability	next business day
Emergency Support Outside PCH	Call Center

Optional Specialty Enhancements

Add Critical Call Center Response Outside PCH	monthly fee
Add Additional Call Center Contact	monthly fee
Upgrade Response Time 1 hour & 4 hours respectively	monthly fee
Increase Parts Availability	
to 4 hours	monthly fee
to 2 hours	monthly fee
Extend Coverage Hours	
Monday-Friday, add in 4 hour increments	monthly fee
Saturday-Sunday, add in 8 hour increments	monthly fee

Software Service Only

Software-only Service Package (for CraySoft products and systems not covered by a comprehensive service contract)	
Software Services	
problem diagnosis	included
software updates	included
software upgrades	fee per release
software installation	professional service
Information Services	
CRSB subscription	included
CRInform	included
Call Center Services	
number of calls	unlimited
number of registered contacts	two
Support Delivery	
primary support provider	Call Center
Primary Coverage Hours (PCH)	5 x 9
Response Times	
critical	1 hour
non-critical	4 hours

Optional Software Service Enhancements

Optional Software Service Enhancements

Include Automatic Software Upgrades	monthly fee