

xCAT 2.0 Beta Release Cookbook

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1.1	Release Description	1
1.1.1	Function supported:	1
1.1.2	Function not supported	2
1.1.3	Prerequisites:.....	2
1.1.4	Licensing.....	3
1.2	Installing xCAT 2.0 Software	3
1.3	Syslog setup	4
1.4	xCAT 2.0 Commands	4
1.5	xCAT Tables.....	7
1.6	Adding and Installing Nodes	8
1.7	Using xCAT Notification Infrastructure.....	10
1.8	Using xCAT Monitoring Plug-in Infrastructure:	12
1.9	xCAT Architecture.....	14
1.9.1	Client/Server	16
1.9.2	Flow	16

1.1 Release Description

xCAT 2.0 is a complete rewrite of xCAT 1.2/1.3 implementing a new architecture (see description at end of this document). All commands are client/server, authenticated, logged and policy driven. The clients can be run on any OS with Perl, including Windows. The code has been completely rewritten in Perl, and table data is now stored in a relational database. For the alpha, we are including SQLite with the xCAT OSS rpm.

The code is being released as RPMs and SRPMs . For the alpha release, there is support for x86_64 hardware (IPMI and Blades only) . The OS must be RedHat 5 or CentOS5.

The alpha code should not be used for production work . When the beta is released, it may not be compatible with the alpha version.

1.1.1 Function supported:

- Tools to manipulate the database tables: tabdump,tabrestore,tabedit, ctab , nodes, nodech, nodeadd, noderm, chdef, mkdef, lsdef, rmdef,
- Cluster setup commands: makehosts, makedhcp ,makeconservercf

- Notification commands (infrastructure allowing users to register for xCAT database table changes): regnotif, unregnotif
- Monitoring commands (monitoring plug-in infrastructure allowing plug-in third party monitoring software to the xCAT cluster): startmon, stopmon
- Hardware control commands : lssl, rscan, rpower, reventlog, rinv, rvitals, lsvm, mkvm, rmvm
- Install commands : rnetboot
- Parallel remote and remote copy commands : xdsh, xdc, xdshbak
- Node discovery and diskfull deployment of CentOS5 and RHEL5 on the supported hardware (see Prerequisites).
- For a list of all 2.0 xCAT commands run *rpm -ql xcat-client*.
- manpages

1.1.2 Function not supported

- Diskless/Stateless clusters
- No imaging
- No flash
- You might be able to get it to work, but not supported in the alpha:
- SLES 10
- Diskless/stateless support using Perceus
- pSeries hardware control using HMC, IVM, FSP for Power5 and Power6 hardware
- Web GUI interface
- Data abstraction commands to make creating node and other database definitions easier

1.1.3 Prerequisites:

- Hardware requirements:
 - x3455, x3550, x3650, x3455, LS21, HS21, LS41, x336, x346
 - no SOL for x386 or x486
 - Must be IPMI based, rack mounted unit.
 - Blades
 - Ethernet switch must be SNMP enabled for node discovery.
- Software supported
 - RedHat5 or CentOS5

1.1.4 Licensing

xCAT 2.0 is OSS with a EPL license. For license information visit

<http://www.opensource.org/licenses/eclipse-1.0.php>

1.2 Installing xCAT 2.0 Software

Install your xCAT management node with RedHat5 or CentOS5, making sure to install all packages available with the distribution to reduce the number of dependency RPMs you need to track down.

1. You can easily use YUM to install xCAT 2.0 on your management node.
 - a. If your management node is connected to the internet, YUM can be pointed directly to the download site. Download the following two files to the management node and place in the `/etc/yum.repos.d` directory.
<http://xcat.org/xcat/xCAT-core.repo>
<http://xcat.org/xcat/xCAT-oss.repo>
 - b. If your management node is not connected to the internet, download the following tar files to a system that is and then copy them to your management node:

<http://xcat.sourceforge.net/yum/core-repo.tar.bz2>

<http://xcat.sourceforge.net/yum/oss-repo.tar.bz2>

Un-tar the files. Each tar file has a `mklocalrepo.sh` script that you will need to run to modify the included copy of the `xCAT-*.repo` file to point to your local copies of the rpms.

2. Make sure that the management node hostname resolves to the ip address set in `/etc/hosts`. The output of “`hostname -d`” should print the correct domain name. If `/etc/hosts` is set with the long and short hostname, this should work.

For example: `7.113.47.250 rh5.clusters.com rh5` line in `/etc/hosts` results in

```
[root@rh5 ~]# hostname -d
```

```
clusters.com
```

3. If `OpenIPMI-tools` is installed on your system, remove it “`rpm -e OpenIPMI-tools`”. The version shipped with Redhat 5/CentOS5 is back-level and has many bugs. xCAT will be installing a newer version from the `xCAT-oss.repo`.
4. Now run “`yum install xCAT`” to install the xCAT and dependent OSS rpms. Postscripts in the rpms will set up default xCAT configurations and start the `xcata` daemons.
5. If you are reinstalling xCAT 2.0, run “`yum update`” to update the xCAT packages.
6. Check to make sure the `xcata` daemons started:

```
[root@rh5 xCAT-core]# ps -ef | grep -i xcat
root      3471      1  0 14:07 ?        00:00:00 xcatd: SSL listener
root      3472  3471  0 14:07 ?        00:00:00 xcatd: UDP listener
root      3473  3471  0 14:07 ?        00:00:00 xcatd: install monitor
```

If not, start it manually:

```
[root@rh5 xCAT-core]# service xcatd start
Starting xCATd
```

7. Edit `/etc/xinetd.d/tftp` and change “disable = yes” to “disable = no” and run “service xinetd restart” to enable the TFTP server.
8. Add xCAT manpages `/opt/xcat/share/man` to your `MANPATH`. You may need to export `LC_ALL=en_US` for the manpages to display correctly.

1.3 Syslog setup

The install of xCAT will automatically setup `syslog.conf` with the following entries to log errors to the `/var/log/localmessages` file. Severe errors from commands and errors from the `xcatd` daemon will be logged in `syslog`. You can tailor the configuration but be sure and include the facility `local4` which is used by xCAT.

```
/etc/syslog.conf
*.debug      /var/log/localmessages
*.crit       /var/log/localmessages
```

1.4 xCAT 2.0 Commands

Note: use ‘<xCAT command> -h’ for a usage message from each command. MAN pages are not available at this time.

XCAT COMMAND	DESCRIPTION
chtab (Note: will be renamed to tabch in beta)	To add or update rows in a table. Allows you to add nodes, create groups, add attributes to the xCAT tables. chtab node=devnode01 nodelist.group=all,compute will add a new node devnode01 to the nodelist table and assign to the all and compute groups. chtab key=rsh site.value=/usr/bin/ssh will assign the site table rsh attribute to /usr/bin/ssh chtab -d node=devnode01 will delete the previously create node from the nodelist table.
copycdfs	Copies Linux distributions and service levels to install directories.
chdef	Change xCAT data object definitions.

chvm	Changes HMC- and IVM-managed partition profiles.
lsdef	Use this command to list xCAT data object definitions.
lsslp	Queries selected networked services configuration information.
lsvm	Lists partition profile information for HMC- and IVM-managed nodes.
makeconservercf	Make Conserver Configuration
mkdef	Use this command to create xCAT data object definitions.
makedhcp	Sets up the DHCP server.
makehosts	Creates entries in /etc/hosts for nodes. Node nodenames and ip addresses must be setup in the hosts table.
makenetworks	Builds the networks table
mkvm	Creates HMC- and IVM-managed partitions.
nodeadd	<p>Add a node to the cluster</p> <p>For example: nodeadd <noderange> [table.column=value] [table.column=value]....</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">nodeadd blade1-blade7 nodelist.groups=all,compute</p> <p>nodeadd also supports some short cut tags:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">groups is equivalent to table.column = nodelist.groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • nodeadd blade1-blade8 groups=all,compute <p style="padding-left: 40px;">mgt is equivalent to table.column = nodehm.mgt</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • nodeadd blade7 mgt=blade <p style="padding-left: 40px;">switch is equivalent to table.column= switch.switch</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • nodeadd blade8 switch=switch1
nodech	Change node information
nodels	Display information about a node or range of nodes or all nodes
noderm	Remove Node
nodeset	Installs, boots the nodes uses pxe.
psh	Runs a command across a list of nodes or nodegroups in parallel
rbeacon	Turns beacon on/off/blink or gives status of a node or a range of nodes.

rbootseq	For boot of Bladecenter node range. Change each node boot order.
regnotif	Register a Perl module or a command that will get called when changes occur in desired xCAT database tables. See Using xCAT Notification
reventlog	Retrieves or clears remote hardware event logs
rinv	Retrieves hardware configuration information for a single or range of nodes
rmdef	Use this command to remove xCAT data object definitions.
rmvm	Removes HMC- and IVM-managed partitions.
rnetboot	Will force an unattended network install for a range of nodes (diskless) .
rpower	Boots, resets, powers on and off and queries nodes Note: "boot" option not implemented yet. Use either "on" or "reset" options as appropriate.
rsetboot	rsetboot (IPMI) is a way to specify the singular device to try to boot only for the next power cycle
rsreset	Used to reset service processors out-of-band
rvitals	Retrieves hardware vital information from the on-board Service Processor for a range of nodes
startmon	starts a monitoring plug-in module to monitor the xCAT cluster.
stopmon	stops a monitoring plug-in module to monitoring the xCAT cluster
tabdump	Display Database table information for table requested. tabdump with no input will display a list of all valid table names.
tabedit	Edit a table . Must export EDITOR to define your editor.
tabrestore	Restore a table from the table.csv template or from a tabdump output file.
unregnotif	Unregistered a Perl module or a command that was watching for changes of desired xCAT database tables.
xdcp	Concurrently copies files to/from multiple nodes. See xdsh and xdcp man page for more information
xdsh	Concurrently runs remote commands on multiple nodes. All dsh code is now shipped with xCAT 2.0. If dsh rpms were obtained from the following website and installed for the alpha release, you should erase the csm.dsh* rpm. http://www14.software.ibm.com/webapp/set2/sas/f/csm/download/home.html . See xdsh man page for more information.

1.5 xCAT Tables

Note: The Database Table Schema can be viewed in the `/usr/lib/perl5/site_perl/5.8.3/xCAT/Schema.pm` file or by running the `tabdump` command.

TABLE NAME	DESCRIPTION
chain	Lists action that occur during node install, node boot . Used by nodeset.
hosts	List of hosts, alias hostname, ip addresses. Used to update <code>/etc/hosts</code> with <code>makehosts</code>
hmc	List information about the hmc – hcp, username, password
ipmi	Lists information on the nodes IPMI interface – bmc, username, password
ivm	Lists information on the nodes IVM interface – hcp, username, password
mac	Lists mac address for each node.
monitoring	Lists the monitoring plug-in module names that are monitoring the xCAT cluster.
mp	This is the management processor network. Whereas the <code>mpa.tab</code> lists the adapter, this table lists devices that are networked off that adapter via daisy chained networks, or in the case of Blade Center, an internal network..
mpa	Lists the MPA, username and password for the nodes.
networks	Defines masks, gateways and DNS servers. Build my <code>makenetworks</code> command.
nodehm	Defines the hardware management method for each node.
odelist	Defines all nodes and groups.
noderes	Installation resources for the node.
nodepos	Node physical location
nodetype	Node install type (osversion, arch, type)
notification	Lists the Perl modules and commands that will get called for changes in certain xCAT database tables.
passwd	user names and passwords used by xCAT scripts
policy	Table controls the policy for the execution of the <code>xcat</code> commands.
ppc	Store Series p hardware components – HMC, IVM, BPA, FSP, LPAR

site	Main xCat configuration file. Holds global information for the cluster.
switch	Lists switch interface(s) for the node.
vpd	Vital product data table. Holds machine serial number and model type.

1.6 Adding and Installing Nodes

- 1) Check the default required site table attributes:

```
[root@rh5 xCAT-core]# tabdump site
#key,value,comments,disable
"xcatdport","3001",,
"master","9.114.47.251",,
"domain","ppd.pok.ibm.com",,
"installdir","/install",,
"timezone","America/New_York",,
"nameservers","176.60.50.209",,
```

To change any of these values, use `chtab` or `tabedit`.

`chtab`:

- a) `chtab key=domain site.value=<your domain name>`
For example: `chtab key=domain site.value=clusters.com`
- b) `chtab key=master site.value=<ip address on the cluster network of Master node>`
For example: `chtab key=master site.value=8.777.43.5`
- c) `chtab key=dhcpinterfaces site.value=<comma delimited list of nics to run dhcp>`
For example: `chtab key=dhcpinterfaces site.value=eth1`

`tabedit`:

- a) `export EDITOR=vim` (or your favorite editor)
 - b) `tabedit site`
 - c) make your changes, and use the editor command to save the file and quit. Your changes will automatically be imported into the xCAT database.
- 2) Check the 1350 default database template files in `/usr/share/xcat/template/e1350` directory to see if they apply to your environment. These templates, or templates you create from them, can be used to load the database xCAT tables using the `tabrestore <path to template>` command. The README, in the directory, explains how to use these files.
 - 3) The `tabdump <tablename>` will dump current contents of the database table. This can be used to dump the contents of a table and, if you redirect the output to a file, you can later reload the data using `tabrestore`.
 - 4) Use `tabedit <tablename>` to make any needed changes to the tables. Check the previous released xCAT tables for definitions. The 2.0 tables contain a header with the format of the fields in comments.
 - 5) Define the nodes in your cluster by using the `nodeadd` command. Ensure that all nodes, bmc or management modules, and switches have hosts definitions, or the dhcp configuration will not update, and the `bmcsetup` will not receive meaningful data. (see `nodeadd` command in the xCAT Tables).

- 6) If you want *makehosts* to update the `/etc/hosts` file for the defined nodes, bmcs/mms, and switches, use *tabedit* to update the *hosts* table with the hostnames and ip addresses to be added to `/etc/hosts`. Then run *makehosts*.
- 7) *makenetworks* runs during the xCAT install and updates the networks table. You should *tabdump networks* to ensure the settings are correct. If any need changing, *tabedit networks* table. Ensure the networks to be managed have the “dynamicrange” set to a hyphenated range of IP addresses to serve as staging for nodes being brought up. If any new networks are added, the *makenetworks* should be run again.
- 8) Run *makedhcp -n*. Review the `/etc/dhcp.conf` file created to ensure all your network definitions are correct. Note that the node host definitions will no longer appear here, but rather will appear in the leases file (`/var/lib/dhcpd/dhcpd.leases`) after the initial DHCP request from the node. xCAT 2.0 sets up *dhcp* to use the OMAPI command shell to setup, query and change the *dhcp* configuration. See **man omshell**, and <http://linux.die.net/man/3/omapi> for more information.
- 9) Run “service dhcpd start” to load the initial omapi dhcp configuration.
- 10) For blades, make sure your bladecenter management module is configured for the SNMP protocol:
 - a) Telnet into your management module. Once in, do the following (assumes “mm[1]” is the current active mm and “PASSWORD” is your mm password).
 - b) `env -T mm[1]`
 - c) `users -l -ap sha -pp des -at set -ppw PASSWORD`
 - d) Log off the management module and test the connection with a query command such as *rpower <noderange> stat* or *rinv <noderange> all*.

Note: This was only tested with the latest release level firmware BPET32D. Older firmware may not properly support SNMP.
- 11) Set up conserver. Note, **rcons** is not yet supported for xCAT 2.0. You will need to manually start the conserver daemon and open consoles.
 - a) Update the nodehm table (*tabedit nodehm*) to set fields for **cons**, **termport**, and **termserver** for your nodes. Currently, supported values for **cons** are “blade” and “ipmi”.
 - b) Run *makeconservercf* to generate a conserver 8 configuration file. Review `/etc/conserver.cf`. Make sure you have valid “trusted” entries in the “access{ }” stanza for any host starting a console (most likely your management node).
 - c) Start the conserver daemon: `service conserver start`
 - d) Try opening a console: `console -M <management node> <node>`
- 12) xCAT 2.0 will discover your hardware:
 - a) Create the initrd:
 - (1) `rm /tftpboot/pxelinux.cfg/default`
 - (2) *mknb x86_64* (creates the netboot image and writes out the master parameter to the `/tftpboot/pxelinux.cfg/default` file).
 - b) Make sure your boot sequence is set to boot from network before harddrive: *rbootseq <noderange> list*
If not, change it: *rbootseq <noderange> f,c,n,h*
 - c) Power up the system using *rpower <noderange> on*.

- d) Within a few seconds of booting to the network, any BMCs should be configured and be setup to allow ssh. All nodes will be network booted (you can watch /var/log/messages for DHCP and TFTP traffic).
 - e) **nodels <noderange> vpd.serial vpd.mtm mac.mac** should show interesting data after discovery.
- 13) Run **copycds** with full path to the ISO images
 - 14) Run **nodech** (or **tabedit**) to change nodetype OS and setup node profile :
nodech <noderange> nodetype.os=<os> nodetype.profile=compute
 (for now only, the **compute** template file has been provided. See /usr/share/xcat/install/). Current possible values for **os**: rhels5, rhelc5,centos5
 If using 64 bit distro, the **nodetype.arch** should have been populated with “x86_64” at discovery time. If not, set this value, too. This is the only architecture supported for now.
 - 15) Run **nodech** (or **tabedit**) to set noderes nfsserver :
nodech <noderange> noderes.nfsserver=<server>
 (Note: may need to use your management server IP address instead of the hostname for the nfsserver for now)
 - 16) Also check the following fields to make sure they are set correctly and update as necessary:
 noderes.installnic -- the Ethernet adapter on the node used for installation
 noderes.serialport -- standard SOL for Blades “1”, for IPMI nodes “0”
 nodehm.serialspeed -- standard SOL for Blades “19200”
 nodehm.serialflow -- standard SOL for Blades “hard”
 - 17) Postscripts that will be run during node install are identified in **/etc/xcat/postscripts.rules** and located in **/install/postscripts**. Not all of the postscripts have been ported to xCAT 2.0 yet, so you may get some “script not found” messages during the postscript processing. Also, the **postage** and **postrules** commands have not been ported yet, so debug may take a little more effort.
 - 18) Run **nodeset <noderange> install**, to setup for installing the OS.
 - 19) Run **rpower <noderange> on** or **rpower <noderange> reset**, to boot the systems and start the network install process.
 (note, **rpower <noderange> boot** is not working yet)
 - ❖ The kexec to installers doesn't have the client scripts written yet, necessitating the reboot, if wanting to try kexec for now, you have to manually transfer the kernel, initrd, and run kexec -f with the right arguments to the xCAT nbfs environment)

1.7 Using xCAT Notification Infrastructure

With xCAT 2.0, you can monitor xCAT database for changes such as nodes entering/leaving the cluster, hardware updates, node liveness (to be added later) etc. In fact anything stored in the xCAT database tables can be monitored through the xCAT

notification infrastructure. To start getting notified for changes, simply register your Perl module or command as the following:

regnotif *filename tablename -o actions*

where

filename is the full path name of your Perl module or command.

*tablename*s is a comma separated list of table names that you are interested in.

actions is a comma separated list of data table actions. 'a' for row addition, 'd' for row deletion and 'u' for row update.

Example:

regnotif /opt/xcat/lib/perl/xCAT_monitoring/mycode.pm nodelist,nodhm -o a,d

regnotif /usr/bin/mycmd switch,noderes -o u

Use the following command to view all the modules and commands registered.

tabdump notification

To un-register, just do the following:

unregnotif *filename*

Example:

unregnotif /opt/xcat/lib/perl/xCAT_monitoring/mycode.pm

unregnotif /usr/bin/mycmd

If the *filename* specifies a Perl module, the package name must be **xCAT_monitoring::xxx**. It must implement the following subroutine which will get called when database table change occurs:

processTableChanges(*tableop, table_name, old_data, new_data*)

where:

tableop Table operation. It can be 'a' for row addition, 'd' for row deletion and 'u' for row update.

tablename The name of the database table whose data has been changed.

old_data An array reference of the old row data that has been changed. The first element is an array reference that contains the column names. The rest of the elements are array references each contains attribute values of a row. It is set when the action is u or d.

new_data A hash reference of the new row data; only changed values are in the hash. It is keyed by column names. It is set when the action is u or a.

If the file name specifies a command (written by any programming languages or scripts), when the interested database table changes, the info will be fed to the command through the standard input. The format of the data in the STDIN is as following:

```

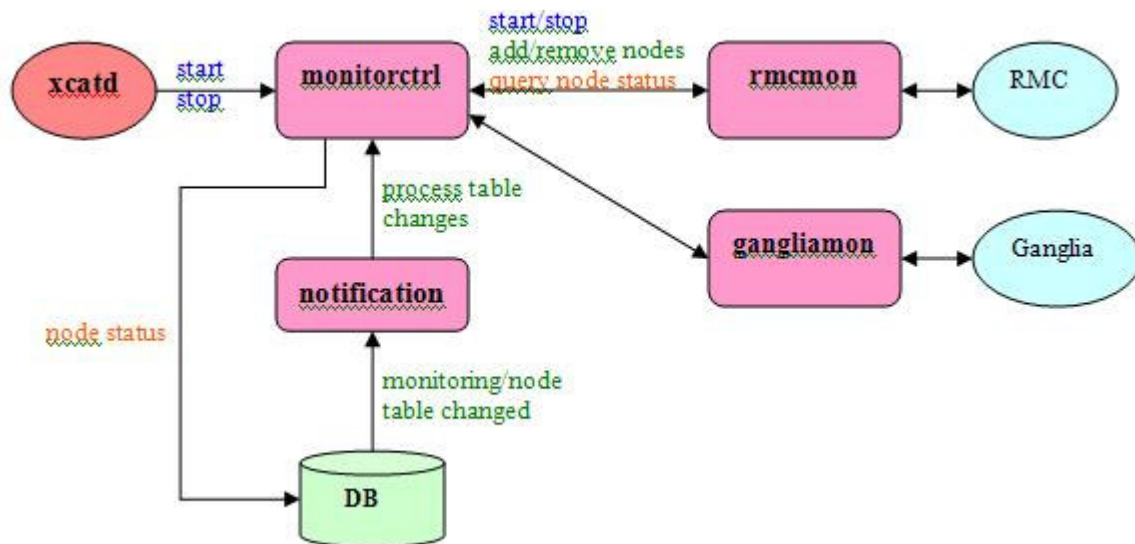
action(a, u or d)
tablename
[old value]
col1_name,col2_name...
col1_val,col2_val,...
col1_val,col2_val,....
...
[new value]
col1_name,col2_name,...
col1_value,col2_value,...
...

```

The sample code can be found under `/opt/xcat/lib/perl/xCAT_monitoring/samples/mycode.pm` on a installed system.

1.8 Using xCAT Monitoring Plug-in Infrastructure:

With xCAT 2.0, you can integrate 3rd party monitoring software into your xCAT cluster. The idea is to use monitoring plug-in modules that act as bridges to connect xCAT and the 3rd party software. The functions of a monitoring plug-in module include initializing the 3rd party software, informing it with the changes of the xCAT node list, setting it up to feed node status back to xCAT etc. The following figure depicts the relationship and data flow among xcatd, plug-in modules and 3rd party monitoring software.



To use this infrastructure, first create a monitoring plug-in module and put it under `/opt/xcat/lib/perl/xCAT_monitoring/` directory. If the file name is `xxx.pm` then the package name will be `xCAT_monitoring::xxx`. The following is a list of subroutines that a plug-in module must implement:

```
start
stop
supportNodeStatusMon
startNodeStatusMon
stopNodeStatusMon
addNodes
removeNodes
```

Please refer to `/opt/xcat/lib/perl/xCAT_monitoring/samples/tmplatemon.pm` for the detailed description of the functions.

Second, register the module in xCAT *monitoring* table using the following command:

```
startmon name [-n|--nodestatmon] [-s|--settings tag=value,tag=value...]
```

where

name is the monitoring plug-in module short file name without the extension. In this case `xxx`.

-n or --nodestatmon indicates it can help feeding the node status to xCAT. The node status is stored in the *status* column of the *nodelist* table.

-s or --settings specifies the plug-in specific settings. These setting will be used by the plug-in to customize certain entities for the plug-in or the third party monitoring software. e.g.
`mon_interval=10,toggle=1`

Example:

```
startmon xxx -n (with feeding the node status to xCAT table)
```

or

```
startmon xxx (not feeding the node status to xCAT table)
```

Once it is registered, xCAT will automatically, through the plug-in module, start the 3rd party software for monitoring. To unregister the monitoring plug-in and stop the monitoring use this command:

```
stopmon name
```

Example:

```
stopmon xxx
```

Though you can write your own monitoring plug-in modules, over the time, xCAT will supply a list of built-in plug-in modules for the most common monitoring software. They are:

- xCAT (`xcatmon.pm`) (released in this beta)

- RMC (rmcmon.pm)
- Ganglia (gangliamon.pm)
- Nagios (nagiosmon.pm)
- SNMP (snmpmon.pm)

xcatmon.pm is included in this release. It provides node liveness monitoring using `fping`. This can be used if no other 3rd party software is used for node status monitoring. The *status* column of the *nodelist* table will be updated periodically with the latest node liveness status by this plug-in. To activate, use the `startmon` command:

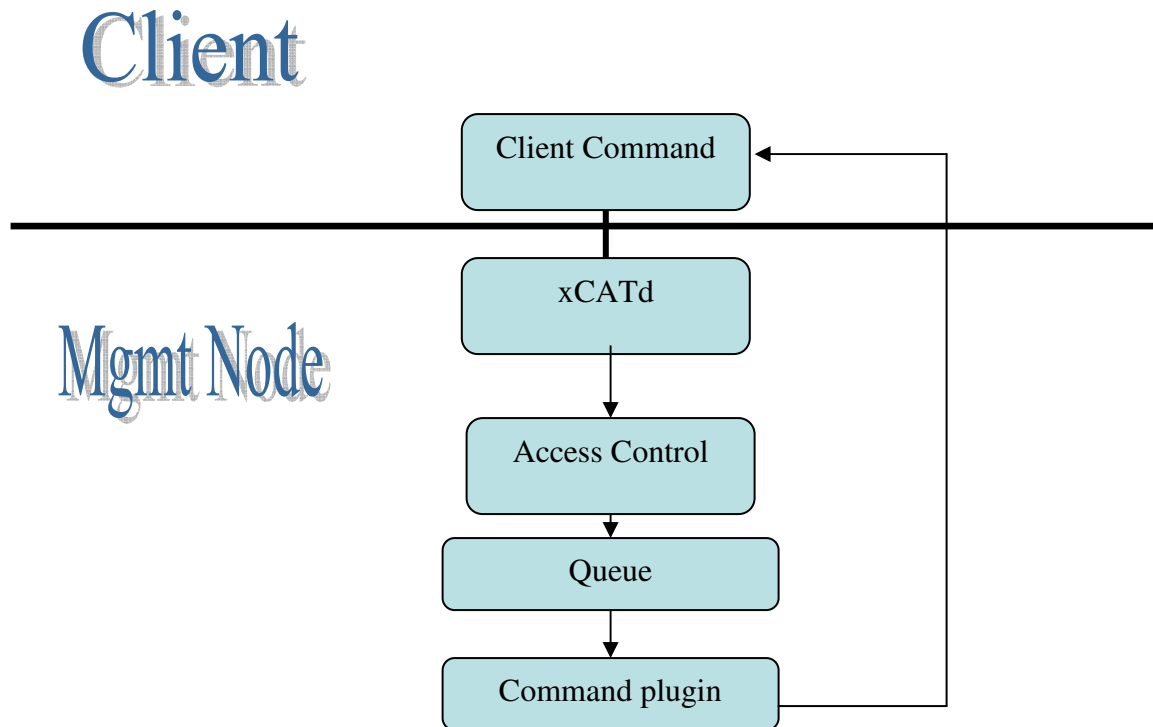
`startmon xcatmon -n -s ping-interval=2`

where 2 means that the nodes are pinged for status every 2 minutes.

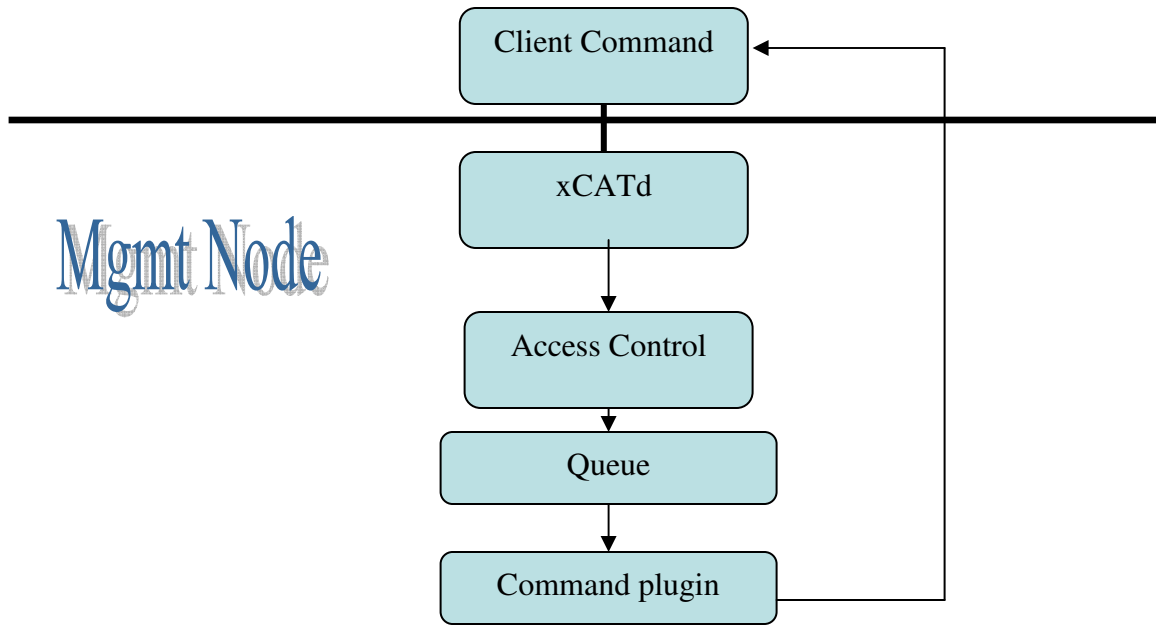
1.9 xCAT Architecture

General/Overall Concepts

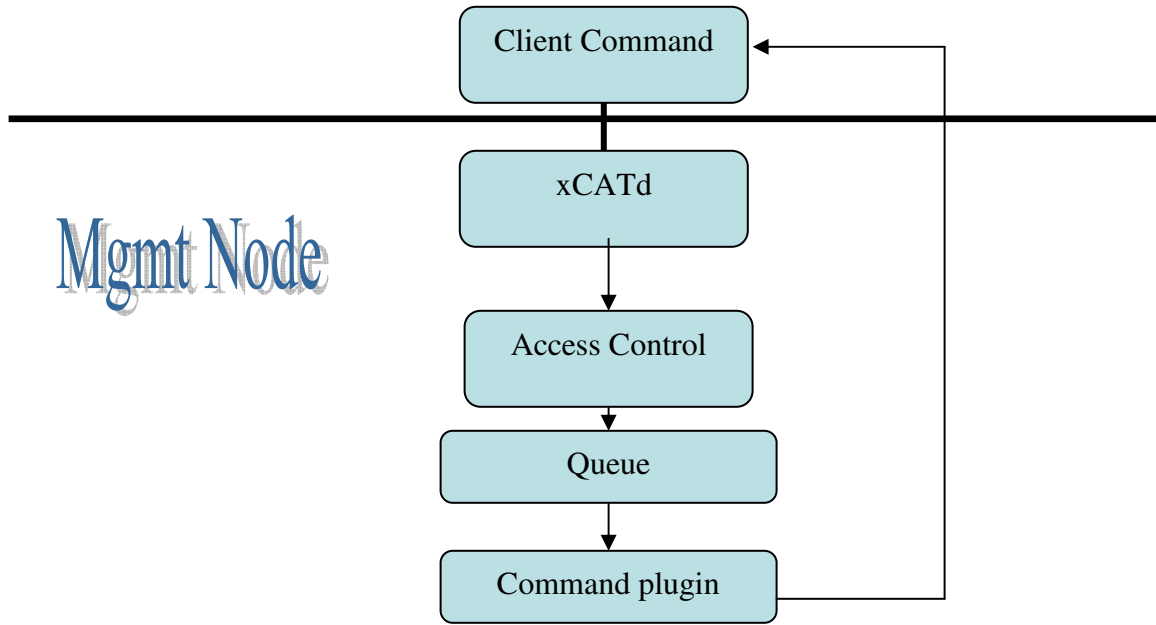
The heart of the xCAT 2.0 architecture is the xCAT daemon (`xcatd`) on the management node. This receives requests from the client, validates the requests, and then invokes the operation. The `xcatd` daemon also receives status and inventory information from the nodes



Client



Client



1.9.1 Client/Server

1.9.2 Flow

- User invokes an xcat cmd on the client
- The cmds can either be a sym link to xcatclient or a thin wrapper that calls xcatclient.
- Some cmds will implement their own xcatclient function, if they have more processing than the generic xcatclient function supports. (e.g. xdsh/xdcp).
- The xcatclient function packages the info into xml and passes it to xcatd
- xcatd receives the request and forks to process the request
- The ACL/Role Policy Engine determines whether this person is allowed to execute this request. It evaluates the following info:
 - The cmd name and args
 - Who executed the cmd on the client machine
 - The hostname/IP address of the client machine
 - The node range passed to the cmd
- If the ACL check is approved, the cmd is passed to the Queue:
 - The queue can run the action in either of 2 modes. The client cmd wrapper decides which mode to use (although it can give the user a flag to specify):
 - Keep the socket connection with the client open for the life of the action and continue to send back the output of the action as it is produced.
 - Initiate the action, pass the action ID back to the client, and close the connection. At any subsequent time, the client can use the action ID to request the status and output of the action. This is intended long running cmds.
 - The Queue logs every action performed, including date/time, cmd name, arguments, who, etc.
 - In phase 2, the Queue will support locking (semaphores) to serialize actions that should not be run simultaneously.
- To invoke the action, the xml is passed to the process_request() function of the appropriate plugin pm which contains the code for the function being run.
 - With the request examined per policy table, and noderange expanded to nodes, the request is passed in its entirety (including tags otherwise ignored) to a plugin's process_request function, which will receive two arguments, the first the aforementioned hash reference, the second a reference to a callback function to call per response message to send back.
 - The appropriate pm is chosen by loading all of the plugins from /usr/lib/xcat/plugins and invoking handled_commands to see which cmds each pm handles.
 - Data is returned from the command plugin back to the client command handle_response routine.

