There has been considerable debate over the years about what constitutes a distributed system. It would appear that the following definition has been adopted at SRC:

A distributed system is one in which the failure of a computer you didn't even know existed can render your own computer unusable.

The current electrical problem in the machine room is not the culprit—it just highlights a situation that has been getting progressively worse. It seems that each new version of the nub makes my FF more dependent upon programs that run elsewhere. Having to wait a few seconds for a program to be swapped in is a lot less annoying than having to wait an hour or two for someone to reboot the servers. I therefore propose a development project to make our system more robust. I am not proposing any particular approach (enabling stand-alone operation is just one possibility).

I will begin the effort by volunteering to gather some data on the problem. If you know of any instance of user's FF becoming inoperative through no fault of its own, please send me a message indicating the user, the time, and the cause (if known).

Leslie