

UKIRT: Current Status and Breaking News

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Science From UKIDSS IV
1st June 2012



Minimalist Mode for UKIRT

Strategy:

- reduce operational cost of UKIRT such that

$$\text{cost}(JCMT+UKIRT) - \text{cost}(JCMT \text{ alone}) \cong \text{external income}$$

Implementation:

- streamlined science programme
- remote telescope operations
- reduced access to engineering & software support
- no operational or development projects

Status:

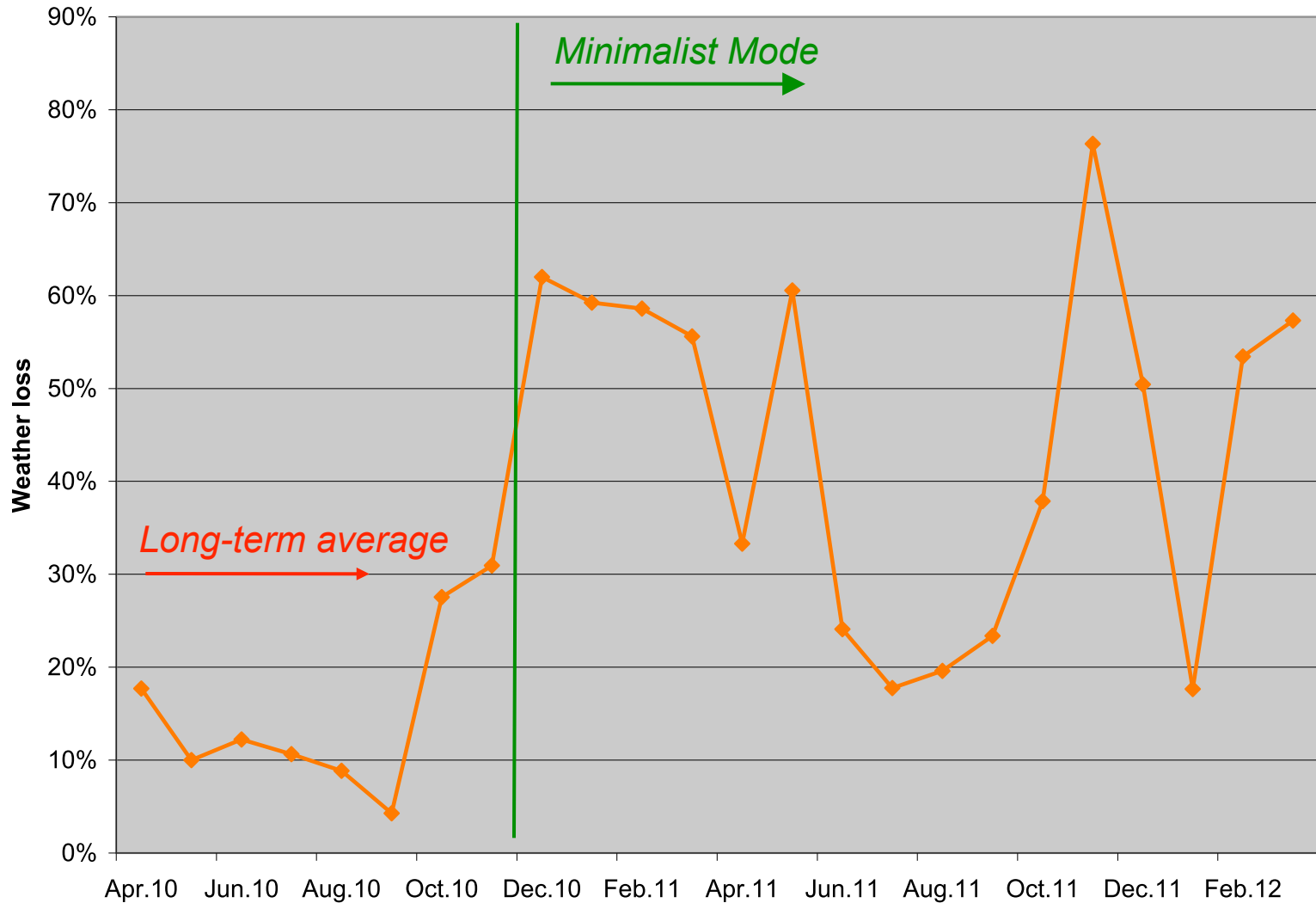
- adopted 16th December 2010



Time Lost to Weather



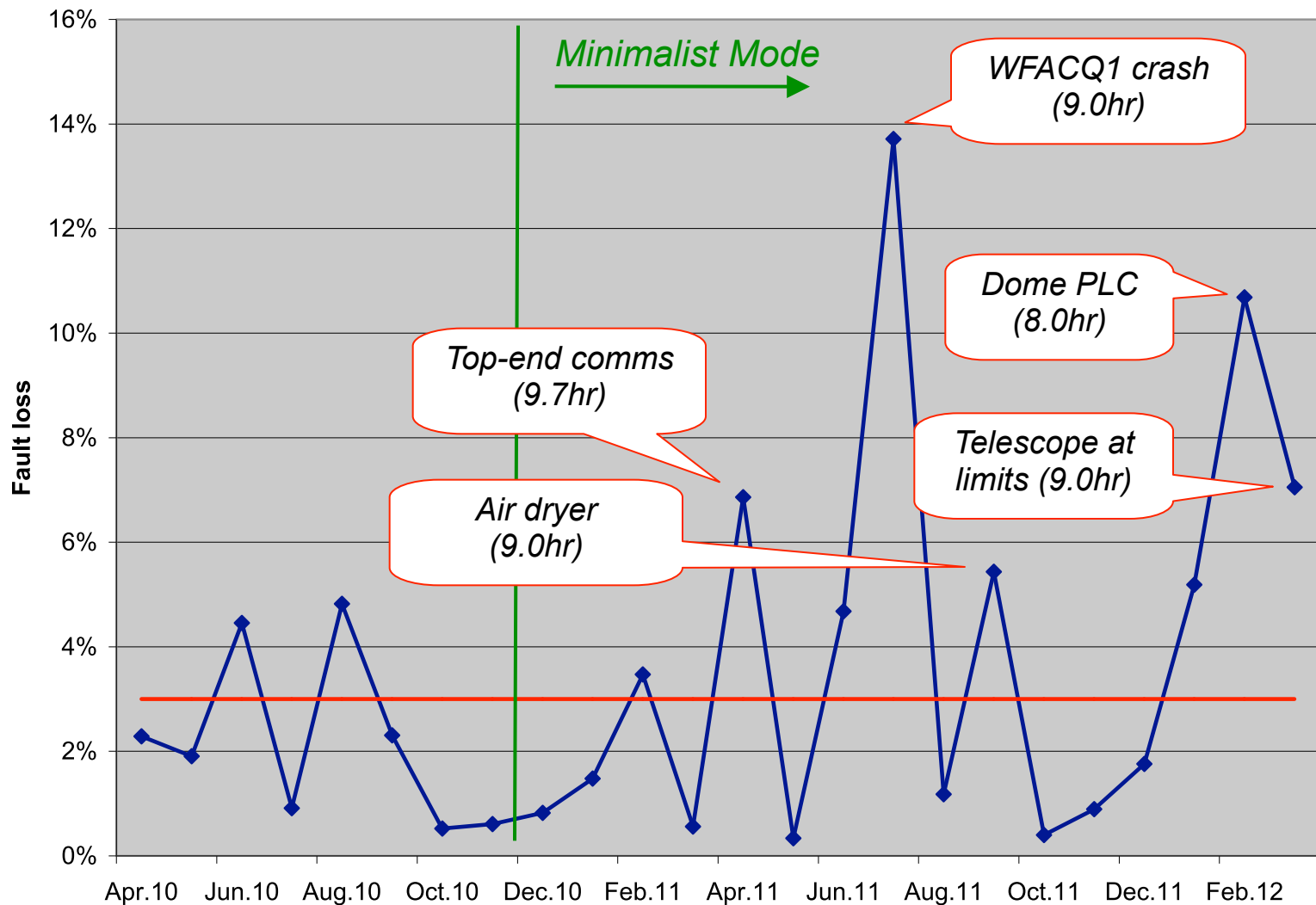
Time Lost to Weather



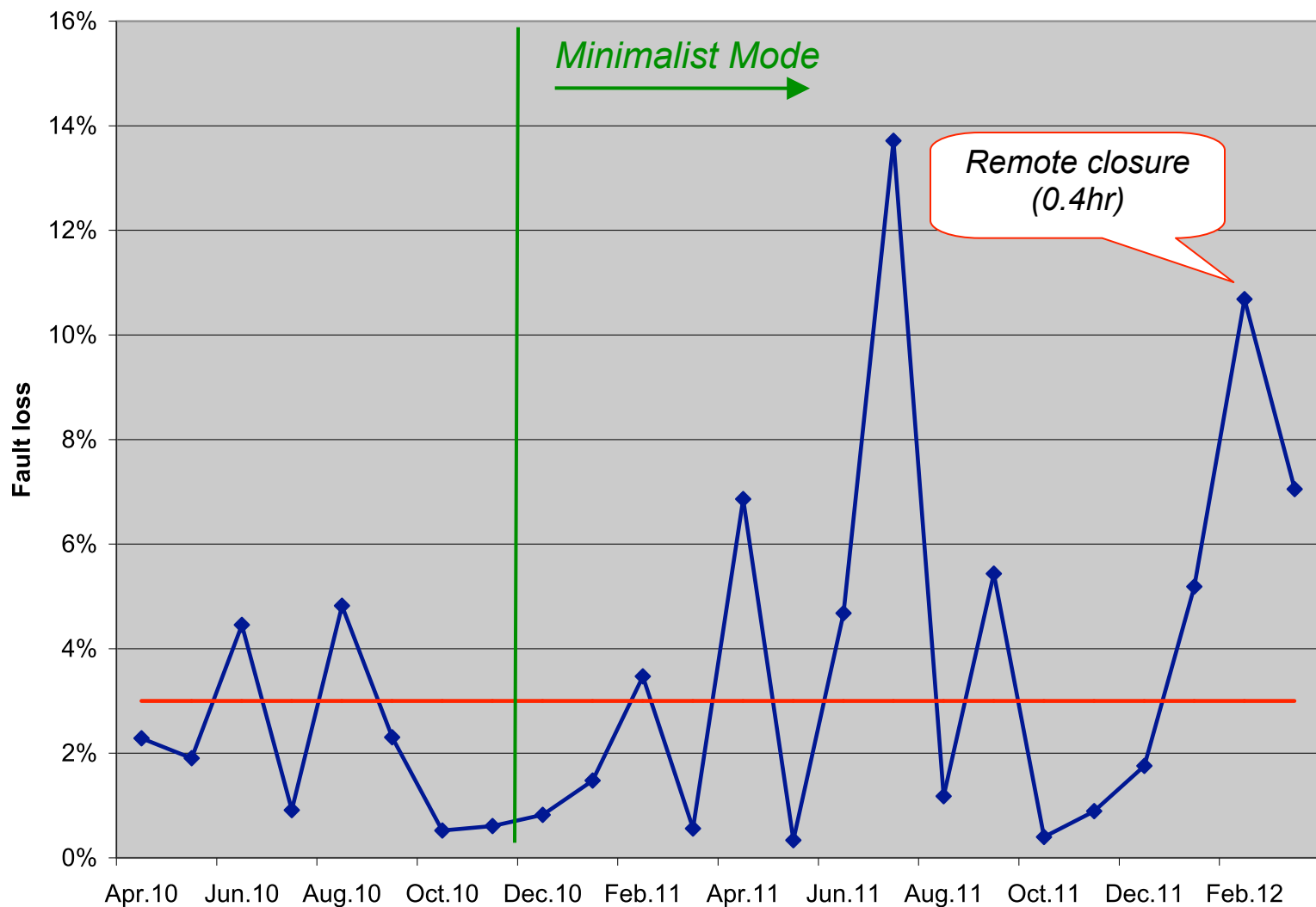
Time Lost to Faults



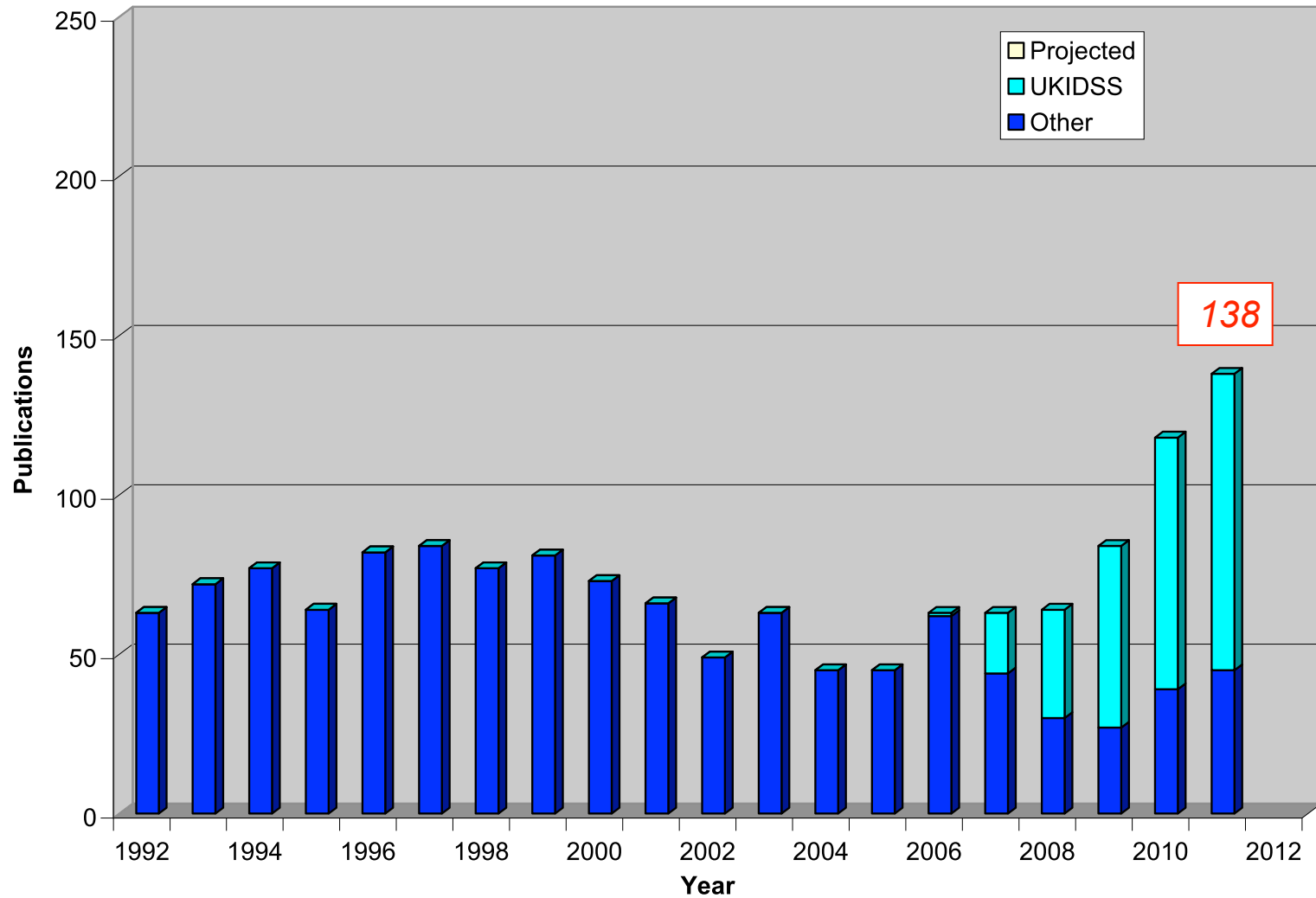
Time Lost to Faults



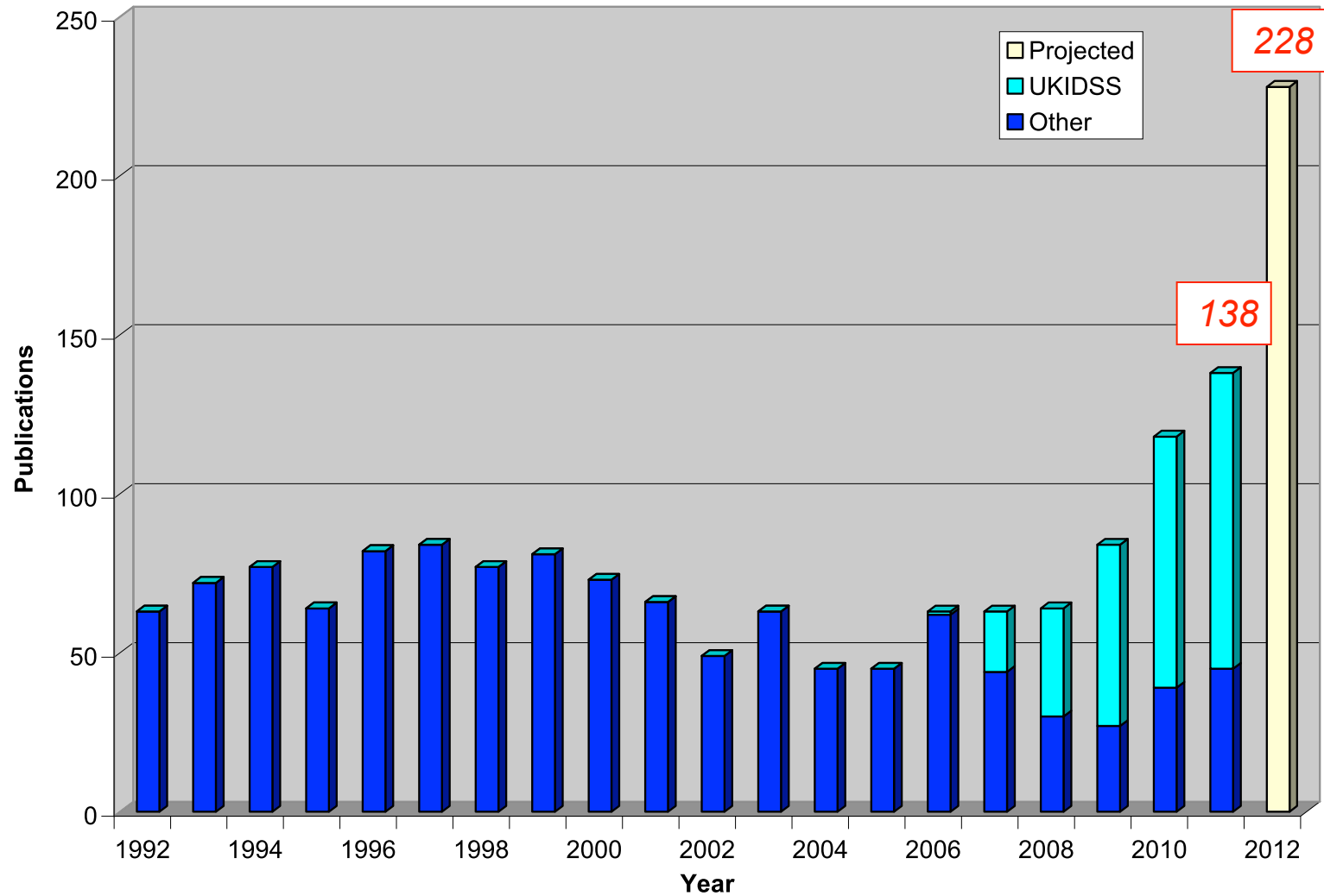
Time Lost to Faults



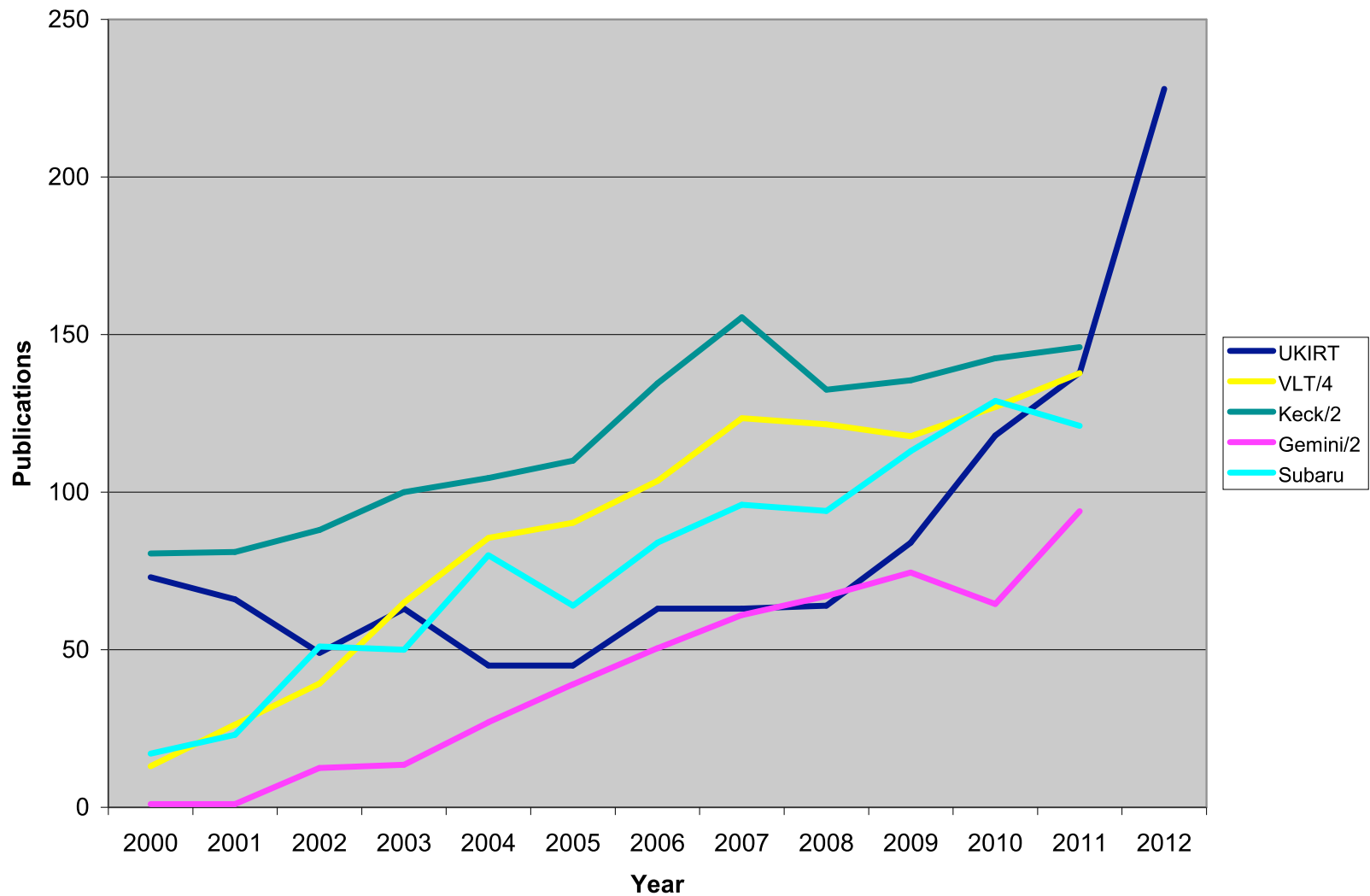
Productivity



Productivity



Productivity



Science Programme 12A/12B

| Programme | Night |
|-----------------------------|------------|
| Closed, Engineering, DDT | 30 |
| UH PI | 25 |
| UH Survey | 25 |
| CEO | 40 |
| KASI | 22 |
| UK | 223 |
| TOTAL | 365 |

Priorities in UK Time:

- GRB override
- UKIDSS UDS
- UKIDSS (until 22 May)
- UHS (after 15 Jun)
- WTS



Funding Status

STFC Prioritisation 2009:

- ❖ UPF not approved, UKIRT ranked low \Rightarrow minimalist mode
- ❖ operational funding confirmed to 31st March 2012
- ❖ then extended to 31st March 2013 \Rightarrow UHS year 1

Extension Proposal:

- ❖ submitted November 2011, based on SCUBA-2 for JCMT
- ❖ requested extension of operational support to 31st March 2016
- ❖ assessed by Science Board
- ❖ announcement yesterday: STFC will cease operational support for UKIRT on 30th September 2013
 - (one year earlier than JCMT)



What Next?

Should you make a fuss?

- YES - but STFC's decision is a done deal

Science programme to 30 Sep 2013

- 130 nights uncommitted
- Board will issue a Call for Proposals - large programmes consistent with minimalist mode operations

Further extension to 30 Sep 2014

- cost differential to keep UKIRT running in minimalist mode alongside JCMT is <£100k
 - subject to various assumptions, caveats and risks
- suppose someone were to come up with this cash?



What Next for UKIRT?

Site lease options:

- give or sell UKIRT to UH
- sell UKIRT to a third party with UH approval
- decommission the telescope and restore the site



Final Thoughts

UKIRT has been a fabulously successful telescope, serving the UK astronomy community for over 32 years.

Reasons for our success:

- ❖ the site
- ❖ the telescope
- ❖ the instrumentation
- ❖ the common-user operation
- ❖ CASU and WFAU

But the main reason...



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