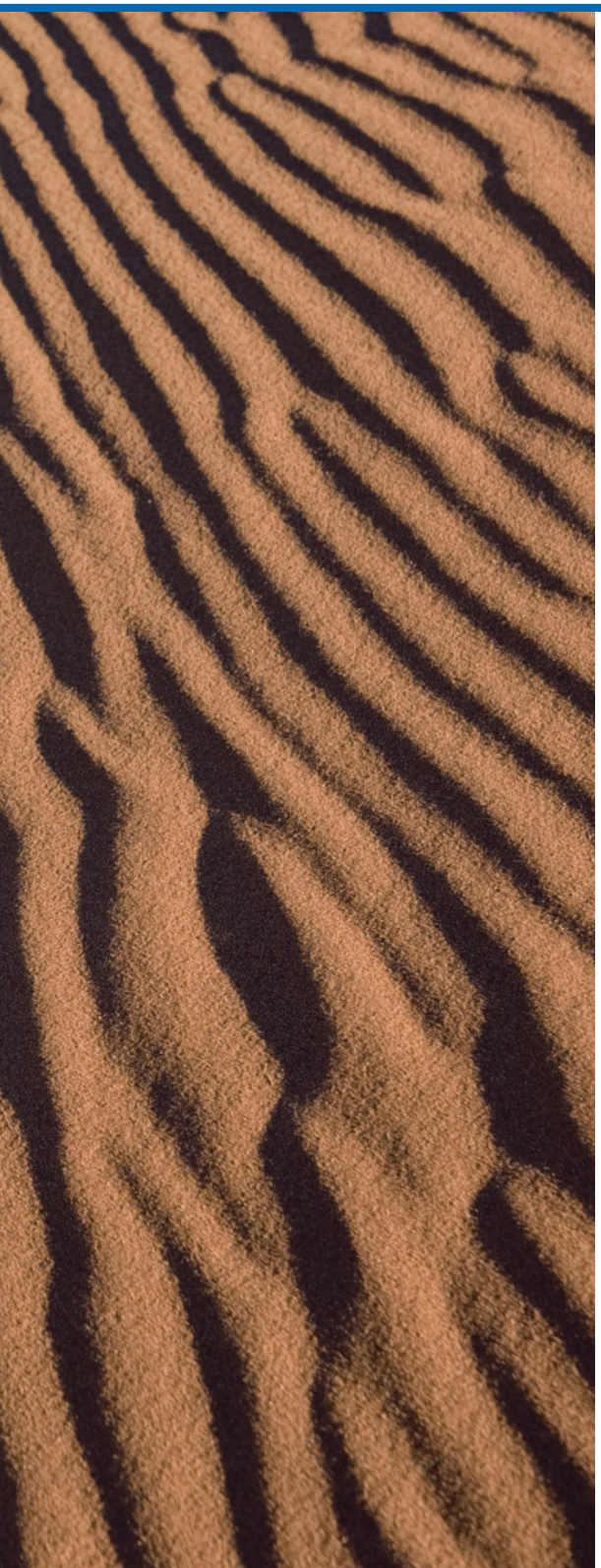
Inspired

Summer 2011

European Grid Infrastructure

News from the EGI community



This Issue

Welcome to the **Inspired Summer 2011** issue! In this edition...

> Cyril L'Orphelin introduces the latest improvements to the EGI Operations Portal
> Steve Brewer reports on the HealthGrid meeting in Bristol
> Richard McLennan wants everyone in the community to visit the new Training Marketplace
> Rosette Vandenbroucke tells us about the newly published e-IRG White Paper 2011
> Sergio Andreozzi is looking for the best Service Level Management practices
> Viviane Li investigated what Lyon has to offer in preparation for the EGI Technical Forum in September
> And I bring you a profile France Grilles, the Technical Forum's co-hosts

If you want to contribute with ideas, suggestions or stories to the newsletter don't forget to let me know!

Sara Coelho
sara.coelho@egi.eu

People take pictures of the Summer / Just to prove it existed
(Credit: Luc Viatour/wikicommos, with thanks to The Kinks)

EGI releases the first Unified Middleware Distribution

Neasan O'Neill

The software provisioning team at the European Grid Infrastructure (EGI) has released the first version of the Unified Middleware Distribution (UMD-1). This is a major milestone in the goal to provide a consistent platform for all European researchers to access integrated computing resources.

Every research community has different goals and requirements for their computing and data needs. Many have developed and maintained their own solutions, which work for them. The objective of the UMD is to provide a system that the community's existing solutions can easily plug into, not replace, so that these solutions can be deployed at scale across Europe. It will offer a set of well-defined, stable and general-purpose software components to meet their needs.

EGI and its partners have been working with technology providers and users to work out what they need to offer as a sustainable base on which users can build their own applications and services. The chosen components are collectively known as UMD and have been verified to work in the environment used within EGI.

Leading the work has been Michel Drescher, EGI's Technical Manager. "Just getting this far has been a mammoth task. We have consulted a huge range of stakeholders, reviewed many software packages currently being used on the grid and come up with what we believe provides the best support structure we can," he says. "This is however only a first step, we will learn a lot from this initial deployment to improve future releases".

UMD 1.0.0 is the first release of UMD-1 for the European Grid Infrastructure. This initial release contains the most critical products from EGI's technology providers, as agreed by the Technology Coordination Board on behalf of the EGI community. Further versions will be released in the near future incorporating more features, including the full EMI (European Middleware Initiative) software stack and IGE (Initiative for Globus in Europe) components. •

More Information

http://repository.egi.eu/2011/07/11/release-umd-1-0-0/

NGI Profile: France Grilles

Sara Coelho looks into the French NGI, co-host of the EGI Technical Forum in Lyon

France Grilles, the French National Grid Initiative (NGI), was set up in June 2010 as a Scientific Interest Group to represent the country's resource infrastructure providers. A year on, France Grilles is celebrating its first anniversary at the French Grid Day, an event co-located with the EGI Technical Forum in Lyon (19-23 September 2011).

The interest of the French research community in grid computing goes back many years. In August 2007, the CNRS (Centre Nationale de la Recherche Scientifique) – the largest research agency in France – paved the way by creating the Institute des Grilles (IDG). Shortly after that, the CNRS put together the steering board "to develop a sustainable model for production grids at European and national scales," says Vincent Breton, director of the IDG. The result of this concerted work was France Grilles, a partnership of eight institutions led by CNRS's IDG.

France Grilles operates 23 sites, supporting gLite, DIET and OAR middleware stacks. "DIET and OAR are middlewares developed within the French research community in computer science," explains Breton.

Over the past year, from June 2010 to May 2011, Frances Grilles was responsible for more than 215 million normalised CPU hours (KSI2K), which represent about 15 per cent of the total EGI output. The largest share of the resources comes from the CNRS-IN2P3 computing centre in Lyon, which providing about 50 per cent of the cores and 80 per cent of the available storage.

Lyon's computing centre is the spine of the resource infrastructure and the host of the technical coordination team.

The French NGI is also heavily involved in the wider EGI community. Besides co-hosting the Technical Forum in Lyon, the country is leading the development of the EGI Operations Portal (task JRA1.5 task within the EGI-InSPIRE project). This is an important contribution to the whole community, since the Operations Portal is the tool used to provide official metrics such as the number of user communities or end-users, and helps to mage and monitor the workload of site operators within the NGIs.

France Grilles has a broad user base and in total, the French Certificate Authority has issued about 900 certificates. A large proportion of users come from High Energy Physics Virtual Organisations and all of the four main experiments at the Large Hadron Collider (ATLAS, CMS, LHCb and ALICE) put French infrastructure resources to good use. The Life Sciences and Computational Chemistry communities are also active infrastructure users.

The scientific output of France's grid research communities has been published in many peer reviewed journals, including the Journal of Molecular Biology, Bioinformatics, Public Library of Science, Nature and the Earth and Planetary Science Letters.

The French NGI provides many services to its users, the first of which is training: "From April 2010 to April 2011, nine tutorials were organised in several French cities reaching about 150 users from all disciplines," says Breton. France Grilles is also setting up a number of services to improve user support and to analyse the scientific activity. "Our first national user forum will take place in Lyon 19 September 2011. It will be the opportunity to get to know the grid users better," he adds.

France has many plans for the future and Breton highlights three priorities for 2011: "Operate a stable infrastructure, improve the services to our users and start a strategic roadmap for cloud computing." •

More Information

France Grilles
> http://www.france-grilles.fr/
Institut des Grilles
> http://www.idgrilles.fr/
CC-IN2P3 Computing Centre
> http://cc.in2p3.fr/

EGI's Operations Portal

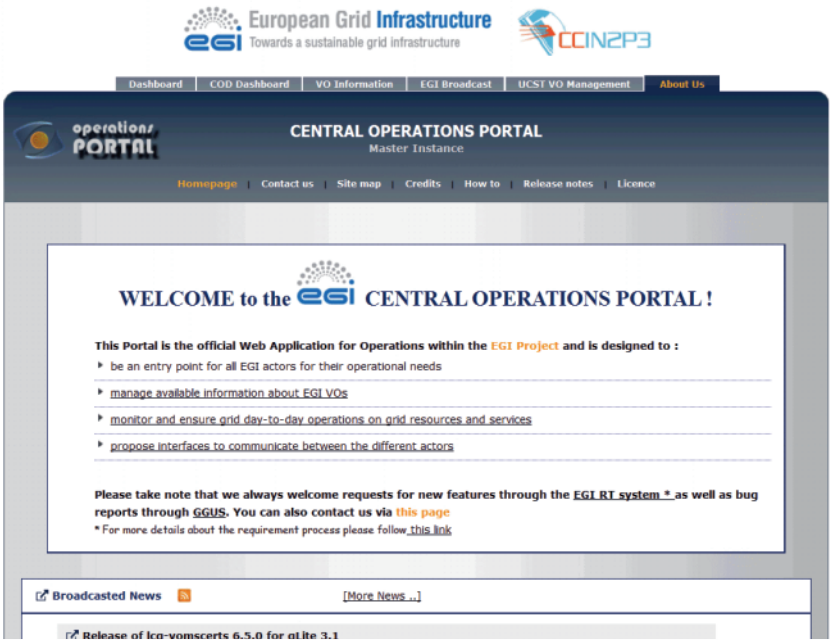
Cyril L'Orphelin, EGI Operations Portal Team Manager, introduces the latest improvements

The EGI Operations Portal is the official entry point for all information and services related to EGI's operations, where the community can manage, monitor, share and discuss information.

As of July 2011, the portal is divided into two instances, both developed and hosted in the IN2P3 Computing Center in Lyon, France:

> The historical CIC Portal

> The new Operations Portal based on the Symfony framework



http://operations-portal.egi.eu

Operations Portal: The story so far

When EGEE-I started, the infrastructure was smaller and was managed centrally from the Operations Centre at CERN. While this worked quite well, troubleshooting of fifty sites was hard because grid operations expertise was concentrated in one place. From October 2004, several federations of countries started to share shifts to spread out the expertise and the responsibility for managing the infrastructure around the globe on a weekly basis. Indeed, this reduced the workload.

However, requirements on tools synchronisation and communication soared along with the complexity of the work. It became necessary to have all operational tools available through a single interface to allow an interactive and integrated use of these tools. This inspired the dashboard for Central Operators on Duty (COD dashboard), which became one of the main features in the first operations portal. The need of a management and operations tool for EGEE and WLCG (Worldwide LCG) lead, in 2004, to the creation of the EGEE Operations Portal, later referred to as 'the CIC Portal', to provide an entry point for all EGEE actors for their operational needs.

The historical CIC Portal has been built as an integration platform, allowing for strong interaction among existing tools with similar scope but also filling up gaps wherever functionality has been lacking. Many of the workflows came out of requirements expressed by end-users or administrators of Virtual Organisations (VO), Regional Operations Centres (ROCs) or Resource Centres and the Operations Coordination Centre of EGEE. Following the same principle, the Operations Portal has been developed from an 'actor's view', where each member of the community has access to information according to his role in the project. This includes the grid operator who monitors resources and grid services daily, regular grid users, as well as VO, site or National Grid Infrastructure (NGI) managers. The portal also fosters communication between different actors, through channels such as broadcast or downtime notifications, and has set-up procedures to address their interaction needs.

Architecture: A look inside

The architecture is the same for both versions of the portal and is made of three modules:

> A database – to store information related to the users or the VO

> A web module – graphical user interface – which is currently integrated into the Symfony framework

> A Data Aggregation and Unification Service named Lavoisier

Lavoisier is the component used to store, consolidate and 'feed' data into the web application. It provides information from various sources, which protects the application from intermittent failures of information sources.

The application was developed to enable easy and efficient cross-data sources queries, independently of technologies used. Data views are represented as XML documents and the query language is XSL.

Year 1 accomplishments: Migration to the new portal

One of the biggest achievements of the first year of EGI activity was the successful migration from the historical CIC Portal to the new Operations Portal, which involved a significant amount of effort.

The improvements were developed and integrated within a new framework named Symfony. The benefits we have seen so far are three-fold:

> An increase in efficiency of the Operations Portal application in terms of response time to end-user requests.

> A decrease in time spent on software maintenance.

> An increase in robustness of the application by developing independent modules.

The Symfony framework approach improves the organisation of the source code, which leads to a high-rate of re-usability. It also brings additional features such as a security layer assuming XSS and CSRF protection, a set of different work environments and the use of plugins developed by the Symfony community.

Features migrated into the new framework

The VO ID card

This system records the life cycle of a given VO and links the VO managers to the project management for operations. The data is stored in the CIC DB, hosted at CC-IN2P3. The VO ID cards are the static repository for VOs with information such:

> the VO contact points (e.g. managers, user mailing list, representatives);

> the VO global information (e.g. enrolment URL, status, discipline, Acceptable User Policy, the specific requirements);

> the VO Membership Service (VOMS) information (e.g. groups and roles, certificate details)

The Dashboard

Allows operations staff to track problems using different results from the various Monitoring Tools (SAM, Nagios and GSTAT) and to open or update trouble tickets. The Dashboard uses the GOCDB to consolidate monitoring information with downtime information, and GSTAT to provide dynamic statuses (Storage Usage, CPU Usage, number of jobs waiting and running).

The broadcast tool

With this tool, every user authenticated with a grid certificate is able to contact several categories of stakeholders interested in a problem, an announcement or in a specific release. The aim is to provide everyone in the grid community with information by mail or RSS feeds. The current model is based on information from GOCDB (sites or ROC/NGI contacts) and from the CIC portal (VO contacts, mailing lists for operations). In addition to sending out information, the broadcast tools also provide an archiving service and a search engine.

Year 1 accomplishments: The regional package

The portal team has also developed a regional package to distribute the different features and modules of the Central Operations Portal in a format that allows NGIs to adapt the portal to their individual needs.

The first regional package was released on 8 June 2010 and included the first release of the dashboard module. The different modules of the package and related documentation are distributed via a SVN repository.

The application is composed of a web service Lavoisier and a PHP web application to provide a user interface. The database is generated automatically during the first installation.

The regional portal is linked with the central instance of Lavoisier; creation, update, delete of records are synchronised so as not to disrupt global oversight operations.

The central and the regional instances were built on the same model to behave in the same way and to be easily interoperable.

Synchronisation between the regional portals and the central instance is achieved through REST and SOAP. Records are synchronised every five minutes using php scripts. Any problem detected during the synchronisation is reported in a mail sent to webmasters.

The regional package is currently deployed in four National Grid Initiatives:

> the Czech NGI

> the Greek NGI

> the Ibergrid NGI

> the Belarus NGI

The Operations Portal Team

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More Information

The Operations Portal
> http://cic.egi.eu
> http://operations-portal.egi.eu

Other links
http://grid.in2p3.fr/lavoisier

The Life Sciences Grid Community

Steve Brewer was at HealthGrid 2011 for the launch of EGI's newest virtual research community

Leading figures from across the biomedical sector met together in June at the annual HealthGrid Conference held this year at the University of the West of England, just outside Bristol, UK. The conference marked an opportunity to promote and celebrate the recent creation of the latest EGI virtual research community – the Life Sciences Grid Community otherwise known as LSGC.

Whilst this community has been operating successfully for a number of years and is also represented within the EGI-InSPIRE project as one of the Heavy User Communities, it nevertheless will benefit from having its own formal identity as a VRC. Life Sciences is a broad, dynamic and fast evolving community. Members of this community have many different requirements for distributed computing infrastructure as well as an insatiable appetite for innovation. Having this mechanism to formalise the community's interaction with EGI will offer numerous benefits to users.

LSGC provides a mechanism to bring together people, processes and communication as well as a vision to drive forward activities that support the needs of the Life Sciences community across Europe. LSGC promotes what this community has achieved and can contribute. This process was facilitated by the support of the HealthGrid organisation and hence their annual conference provided a perfect opportunity to demonstrate this.

The conference itself brought together researchers, academics, clinicians and policy makers to share information and ideas about the challenges and opportunities ahead. Themes covered in the talks ranged from data sharing and security to workflows and gateways. Tristan Glatard, current chair of LSGC, introduced a series of talks showcasing how the community is operating in a selection of countries. The talks highlighted the essence of the EGI federated model whereby users are supported directly through their local NGI, with EGI offering the coordination and glue technologies to maximise local support. David Wallom described the role of the UK NGI which, in addition to coordinating access to the resources available around the UK, provides a combination of central services relating to security and monitoring together with some specialist services on behalf of other providers around the country. David went on to explain and demonstrate how these national services are supplemented by those from EGI.

The benefits of a face to face meeting early in the lifetime of the Life Sciences VRC have paid off in terms of the initiatives and plans that emerged from the HealthGrid conference. A particular success was the interaction with the recently launched ScalaLife project which aims to build a cross-disciplinary competence centre to provide scalable software services for this community. By the time we all meet again at various user-focussed sessions at the EGI Technical Forum in September, the LSGC should be well established as a powerful voice for the life sciences research community. •

LSGC

The LSGC is an open and fast-growing virtual research community committed to the adoption and exploitation of distributed computing infrastructures in healthcare and life sciences .
LSGC covers scientific domains such as bioinformatics, genomics, biobanking, medical imaging, statistical analysis, and systems biology.

http://wiki.healthgrid.org/LSVRC:Index

More Information

Read Steve's latest blog posts:
http://www.egi.eu/blog/authors/steveb/

HealthGrid conference:
http://bristol2011.healthgrid.org/

The EGI Training Marketplace

Richard McLennan wants everyone to contribute to EGI's new training pages and turn the site into a vibrant marketplace

Hmmm... but where can I find a good workshop on gLite installation? (Photo: Jorge Royan / wikicommons)

The new EGI Training Marketplace (developed by a dedicated team at STFC) went live on 7 June. Now that we have tested it, viewed it, talked about it and changed just a little here and there, the time has come to promote this potentially great addition to the EGI tool box. Why only 'potentially'? Put simply, the Training Marketplace is a shiny new tool still that needs us all, as users of the grid, to really start using it.

Using the Training Marketplace couldn't be simpler. It has been set up using the Drupal open source Content Management System and is embedded into a frame of the EGI website. There are three routes in:

> **Search**. This function accesses over 9,000 records of past training events that stretch as far back as the EGEE project era. At the top level, the function provides a broad set of search results which can then be refined through a more granular advanced search capability.

> **Browse**. The new 'Browse' function provides users with four options, the most immediately visual of which is titled 'Events' and opens up a map of the EGI partnering nations. Training events that have been loaded into the database will appear in each country as the mouse pointer hovers over the map. The information is also displayed in the more traditional calendar and list formats. One important addition is the feedback function which now emulates the rating system increasingly common on the internet – users can now anonymously 'Rate' the training events they attend.

> **Advertise**. The 'Advertise' function naturally complements 'Browse' by providing a way for trainers and users to load training events, training-related resources, wishes and university courses into the system's database. This is a completely new functionality and enables members of the EGI community to advertise training-related services for EGI and beyond. Training VOs, training portals, training CAs, training frameworks or any other item can be registered and offered via this new service.

Brilliant!

So we now have a training website that in many ways emulates the hustle and bustle of an old town's market square. As managers in Virtual Research Communities, National Grid Initiatives or even as individual users, our task now is to promote this website to everyone who is planning a training event that is relevant to the EGI community and thereby turn it into a forward looking, popular and well used Marketplace.

> Is someone in your community preparing to run a training event or has something related to offer? Get them to publish it.

> Is one of your team searching for specialist training? Point them to the website to find a suitable course or to publish their training wish.

> Interested in a University course? The Training Market place may have something for you.

> Do you provide a training infrastructure, training portal or any other service that trainers could use? Advertise them in the marketplace!

Wherever and whoever you are within the grid's many communities, please help by encouraging those around you to make this 'the world's largest collection' of grid training materials, events, resources and services... promoted by and for users like you and me. •

More Information

The Training Marketplace
http://go.egi.eu/training

Policy: The e-IRG White Paper 2011

Rosette Vandenbroucke, introduces the newly published e-IRG White Paper

The e-Infrastructure Reflection Group (e-IRG) is an intergovernmental policy body comprising national delegates from more than 30 European countries as well as representatives from the European Commission.

e-IRG's main objective is the creation of a political, technological and administrative framework for an easy, cost-effective and shared use of distributed electronic resources across Europe. It defines and recommends the best practices for pan-European e-infrastructure efforts and analyses the future foundations of the European Knowledge Society.

The White Paper is an important instrument to bring the e-IRG work to e-Infrastructures stakeholders including national governments, the European Commission, resource providers and the user communities. The White Paper 2011 addresses some of the on-going questions related to new e-Infrastructure challenges, such as:

> How do we deal with the increasing energy demands of computing?

> What software is needed to fully harness the power of future HPC systems?

> What are the appropriate governance models for e-Infrastructures?

> How can we facilitate access, discovery and sharing of large and diverse sources of scientific data?

> How can we further advance research networks, and adopt and implement new e-Infrastructure services?

Innovation is the common thread throughout the document but special emphasis has been put on the governance issue. The number and size of e-Infrastructures are growing. Are the governance models in use today sufficient to guarantee their future? Who should be the players in the governance model besides the service providers: the governments, the private sector, the user or a combination of these?

The White Paper 2011 also reflects upon the future role and development of research networks, so well established by now that we risk forgetting to think about their future. Another important topic covered is the sound development of Authentication, Authorisation and Accounting policies, which require the adoption of new visions to realise the interworking and sustainability of the e-Infrastructure ecosystem.

E-Infrastructure energy use and green IT also deserved a chapter, as these are topics on many management agendas. Is cheap energy compatible with green energy?

Supercomputing is not at a standstill and continues to spearhead innovation. Countries and companies strive to own or build the most powerful supercomputer. But can we go from T-flops to P-flops and can we really and efficiently use such a computing power? Does a software revolution need to take place before supercomputing can make a leap forward?

Services are another part of e-Infrastructures of growing importance. Users might not be interested in e-Infrastructures but rather in the services provided by them. Which services should be delivered and with what quality? Finally, the White Paper addresses the issue of data infrastructures, with a few recommendations for their European setup.

e-IRG White Paper 2011

The e-IRG White Paper 2011, especially the recommendations at the end of every chapter, should be taken into consideration by governments, in particular ministries responsible for research, funding agencies and European Commission. It is however also of interest to individual researchers and users of e-Infrastructures as an incentive to let their voices be heard.

You are welcome to visit the e-IRG website and access the e-IRG White Paper 2011. Please note that you will be redirected to a minimal survey page before downloading the document. A summary of comments gathered during the White Paper consultation phase in Spring 2011 is also available on the website. •

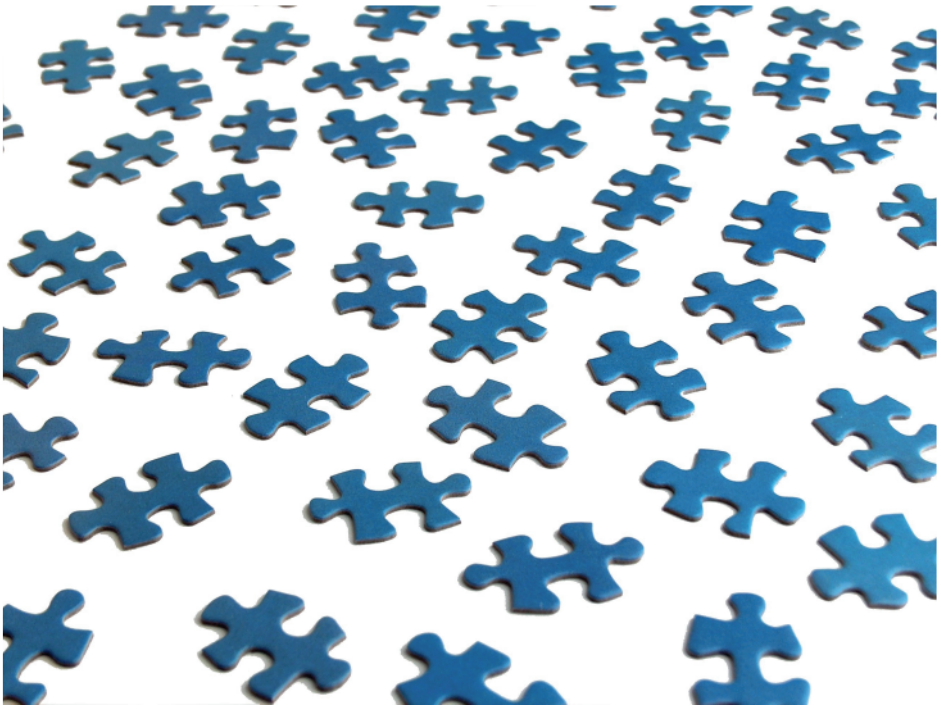
More Information

e-IRG website
www.e-irg.eu

secretariat@e-irg.eu

Policy: In search of best practices for Service Level Management

Sergio Andreozzi, EGI.eu
Policy Development Manager



As the European Grid Infrastructure (EGI) evolves from a project-based governance model to a network of long-term organisations (e.g. National Grid Infrastructures), the service provisioning processes need to adapt to this new scenario. Moreover, now that the new federation of independent service providers is firmly established, the service operation transitioned and the relevant collaborations defined, it is time to have a closer look at how high-performing industries manage their services, what are their best practices and evaluate if they could inspire improvements for EGI.

Luckily for us, the industry-level best practices for IT Service Level Management (SLM) have been collected and organised by the UK Government for the benefit of all under a number of books named IT Infrastructure Library (ITIL). In 2007, ITIL Version 3 was released comprising five 1000-page books covering Service Strategy, Service Design, Service Transition, Service Operations, and Continual Service Improvement. After four years of experience and feedback, and with the advent of cloud computing and its impact in the provision of IT services, ITIL has been refreshed with a new edition released on 29 July 2011 (ITIL 2011, almost 2000 pages).

In an environment like the grid, documenting, managing and policing rights and responsibilities in a fair but enforceable way is extremely complex. Given the evolution and overall complexity of EGI and plethora of information available on ITIL, EGI.eu has established a timely collaboration via a Memorandum of Understanding with the gSLM project aiming to improve service level management in the grid domain. The gSLM project brings together decades of commercial sector experience in the area and is, therefore, the ideal partner to help analyse EGI processes and identify areas of alignment with the ITIL framework.

The gSLM project has already performed an initial analysis of the EGI Glossary to ensure a consistent understanding and usage of important terms across all the functional areas of the organisation. The EGI glossary was compared with the ITIL glossary, resulting in proposed recommendations from the gSLM partners.

The next step will be to deliver a tutorial at the EGI Technical Forum, providing an overview of the ITIL framework, its most important concepts and content, as well as an outline of management practices and processes. The tutorial will potentially be the most interesting for resource centre managers, NGI managers, or grid operations and technology experts.

The collaboration between the EGI community and gSLM will continue by conducting a survey of both service providers and end-users. The aim will be to understand the current obstacles and service provision requirements to then analyse which processes need to be improved in order to make supporting new users as easy as possible. Later on, we will work on adopting and implementing the suggested alignments as necessary.

While the EGI ecosystem presents unique organisational characteristics, we believe that the overall activity will lead to increasing the value of the EGI services to its users and will facilitate the easier integration with external partners. •

More Information

ITIL: http://www.itil-officialsite.com/
gSLM: http://gslm.eu/
Tutorial at the Technical Forum:
> http://go.egi.eu/egitf11-slm

Destination Lyon

Viviane Li explores Lyon, host city of this year's EGI Technical Forum

© Marie Perrin / Centre de Congrès de Lyon

The EGI forums take grid discussions to some of the most interesting European cities twice a year.

Next stop: Lyon.

The second largest city in France, Lyon has been granted UNESCO world heritage site status. Occupied from as early as the 4th century BC, the city's development is steeped in historical richness and diversity. The original settlement was located between two hills (the Fourvière to the west and the Croix-Rousse to the east), near the convergence of two rivers (the Rhône and the Saône). What started as a strategic trade centre later flourished into an important centre for printing, then silk manufacturing and more.

Evidence of a medieval past meets Renaissance architecture in Lyon's old town, where you can wander through interweaving covered passageways, or 'traboules'. Their paths reveal inner courtyards, galleries and spiral staircases, while linking one street to the next. The Lyon Tourist Office (www.en.lyon-france.com) organises various themed city trails, from silk to gargoyles, or you can download leaflets from its website for self-guided walks. From the old town, take the funicular to the top of Fourvière Hill for a view of the city.

To get acquainted with the locals, book a free personalised tour with a 'Lyon city greeter' (www.lyoncitygreeter.com). Greeters are friendly local 'Lyonnaise' – volunteers from all ages and backgrounds who love their city and are happy to share their insights with visitors. Tours must be booked at least one week in advance indicating your interests (anything from shopping and flea markets to sports and leisure) so you can be matched with a local who share the same passion. Your guide will take you (and up to five companions) off the tourist track, on a walking tour of about two hours and show you the insider's Lyon.

A pair of famous Lyonnaises we unfortunately will not meet are the Lumière brothers – pioneers of cinema. However, you can visit their family home. The Lumière Villa was built by the pair's architect father and later became the headquarter of the Lumière Company. It is now a part of the Lumière Institute (www.institut-lumiere.org).

An even earlier revolutionary lived further afield in a village 14 km north-west of Lyon. Poleymieux au Mont d'Or was the birthplace of André-Marie Ampère, pioneer of electromagnetism, after whom the SI unit for electric current took its name. His childhood home is now a museum dedicated to his life and scientific work (musee-ampere.univ-lyon1.fr). It is open on weekends and can be reached by bus 84 from Lyon's Gare de Vaise.

Last but not least, Lyon's reputation for gastronomy must be sampled. Be sure to visit Les Halles de Lyon Paul Bocuse, a gourmet food market since the 19th century, it sells top quality produce from nearly 60 independent establishments. You can lunch on oysters or do your weekly shop all under one roof. In 2006, after a year of renovation, the market was renamed after its famous customer: Paul Bocuse.

(cont.)

A colourful character, Bocuse once spearheaded a group to lobby Pope John Paul II to remove 'gourmandise' (gluttony) from the seven deadly sins – they were unsuccessful. Dubbed a culinary titan, he is a recognised innovator of nouvelle cuisine and the only three-Michelin star chef in town.

Imagine arriving in style for dinner at Bocuse's restaurant by boat… slowly cruising down the River Saône, as the last rays from the evening sky jostle with the first twinkles of city lights. Well, that is exactly what we have planned for the Technical Forum's gala dinner! But if you had visions of a suave rendez-vous so far, you will find that L'Abbaye de Collonges is more of a curious cross between a carnival and a kitsch Disneyland of haute cuisine. This shall be a unique experience for the senses, in more ways than one.

Don't miss it! •

EGI Technical Forum 2011

Highlights of the event's programme

For your calendar

The event: 19-23 September 2011
Registration: until 9 September
Gala dinner: 21 September

http://tf2011.egi.eu

Confirmed keynote speakers

> **Alex Szalay**, an astrophysicist based at Johns Hopkins University and involved in the data analysis of the Sloan Digital Sky Survey project, will share his experiences in using high performance networks for data transfer and analysis.

> **Kostas Glinos**, Head of the European Commission's GÉANT & e-Infrastructures Unit, will speak about strategies for e-Infrastructures in Europe.

> **Andrew Grimshaw** from the University of Virginia and a member of the Open Grid Forum and a technical architect with the eXtreme Digital (XD) initiative that follows on from the TeraGrid project.

> **Erik Bongcam-Rudloff** from the University of Uppsala, a biologist and computer scientist who has been active in the adoption of grids and distributed computing within the life-sciences community and the Health Grid association.

> **Carl-Christian Buhr** from the Cabinet of EC's Vice-President Neelie Kroes, active in the EC's Cloud Computing strategy.

Co-located events

> French Grid Day: Monday, 19 September
> GlobusEUROPE: Monday, 19 September
> OGF 33: 19-21 September
> Grid 2011: 22-23 September
> SIENA: Wednesday, 21 September
> 9th e-Infrastructure Concertation Meeting (by invitation only): 22-23 September

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News in Brief

GridKa School 2011: registration is open, Sara Coelho

This year's international GridKa School for grid and cloud computing will take place 5-9 September at the Steinbuch Centre for Computing of Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (KIT) in Germany. The summer school, running since 2003, is organised by KIT, the Swiss National Grid Iniative (SwiNG) and the HGF Alliance 'Physics at the Terascale'.

"GridKa School offers a great opportunity to novices, experienced users and administrators from science and industry alike to expand and deepen their knowledge of grid and cloud computing," says Christopher Jung, of the organising committee.

The GridKa School usually attracts about 100 registered participants from several European countries, from grid and cloud newbies to experienced users and administrators, both from science and industry.

The intense one-week schedule is equally divided between lectures and various hands-on tutorials and workshops, running in parallel sessions. This year the programme will include talks on virtualisation, data storage and cloud computing and practical workshops on several topics.

Users will be able to get training on gLite, Unicore, Globus Toolkit, effective analysis programming and ROOT/RROOF; admins can register for workshops on cloud computing, HADOOP, gLite administration, dCache, ARC, security workshop and volunteer computing.

The school cooperates with the European Grid Infrastructure (EGI), the European Middleware Initiative (EMI) and the Initiative for Globus in Europe (IGE). It offers a broad range of topics, which are chosen from the realm of these projects and beyond.

Registration is now open and early-bird fees apply until 31 July. •

More Information

www.kit.edu/gridka-school

VENUS-C: Europe loves the cloud, Neasan O'Neill

At the beginning of the year VENUS-C launched their open call inviting new projects to get involved in their goal to build a cloud service for European businesses and academics. Last month (9 June), they announced the selected 15 projects at a special event in Brussels.

Funded by the European Commission, VENUS-C started in September 2010 with the aim of providing Europe with an enterprise-standard cloud infrastructure. The project is a collaboration between service providers and users from European academia and industry, working to develop, test and deploy an e-Infrastructure suitable for the 21st century. To encourage wider involvement they offered a fund of €400,000 to set up pilot projects to gather user requirements for the platform, as well as testing and validating it.

The 15 selected projects cover areas as diverse as bioinformatics, marine surveillance, social media and physics. The pilots are not restricted to academia, the initial call was looking to attract small and medium enterprises (SMEs) as well.

The UK-based company Molplex, which works in the area of drug discovery, is one of the new partners. Vladimir Sykora, co-founder of Molplex, understands that having access to a service like VENUS-C can only benefit industry and research: "VENUS-C will enable us to do in a few weeks molecular computations that would have taken a year to complete on our own servers," he says. "Computer resources can be scaled as required without committing to large capital purchases, which is critical to the success of our small business."

It is not just smaller organisation interested in VENUS-C. Fabrizio Gagliardi, Director of External Research for Microsoft in Europe, Middle East and Africa is the Chair of the VENUS-C Project Management Board. He foresees the project being instrumental in the future development of many areas which use computing resources. "By empowering a broad set of users in science and enterprise, VENUS-C will play a key part in bringing about fundamental changes in scientific discovery, results and innovation in Europe and beyond," he says.

Working alongside their new and existing partners, VENUS-C hopes to have the VENUS-C middleware and the case studies moving from the current prototype status to full beta in November 2011. •

More Information

VENUS-C
> www.venus-c.eu/
Full list of Pilot projects
> www.venus-c.eu/Content/Users.aspx