

Communication tools between Grid Virtual Organisations, middleware deployers and sites

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Today's Grid usage is still very far from the simplicity and functionality of the web.

While pressing for middleware usability, we try to turn the Global Grid User Support (GGUS) into the central tool for identifying areas in the support environment that need attention. To do this, we exploit GGUS' capacity to expand, by including new Support Units that follow the project's operational structure. Using tailored GGUS database searches we obtain concrete results that prove where we need to improve procedures, Service Level Agreements and deployment methods. These are reliable indicators of the health status of all Grid services. They are also useful to anticipate and plan changes of direction in the required strategy and procedures.

It is via regular reporting to the ROCs and the users within the VOs that we show the value of using GGUS.

It is also by using user input for GGUS improvement that we try to make this a trully useful tool.

3. Impact

The expansion of VOs, sites, users and applications is unavoidable as well as the passage to new middleware releases. This rapidly changing environment leaves holes in the way it tries to pave. Ensuring the necessary centralised (or coordinated) effort for supporting these candidate areas efficiently, will increase the popularity of the Grid.

GGUS contributes in this effort by:

- . offering the users a uniform and simple way to submit problems,
- . using supporters from the Regions on shift as Ticket Process Managers (TPMs) to dispatch problems to the appropriate supporters,
- . addressing all Grid services when a problem is in their area of expertise and responsibility,
- . cross-referencing other web-based tools for monitoring Grid deployment progress, e.g. the savannah trackets for registering bugs and patches,
- . offering documentation links, including FAQs to save supporters' time in re-occurring problems,
- . publishing escalation reports for the ROCs, TPMs and experts.

URL for further information:

<http://ggus.org>

4. Conclusions / Future plans

From Grid users to application developers, a whole chain of people who need information and help is often left frustrated. Solid middleware, is, of course, the indispensable basis of any successful operation. Nevertheless, the use of GGUS is in the users' interest because, it is the central point of recording 'evidence', so it helps spotting areas for improvement in the products and the processes. This approach proved useful for VOs and should expand further in usage and functionality.

Provide a set of generic keywords that define your contribution (e.g. Data Management, Workflows, High Energy Physics)

Sites, Procedures, Release, Monitoring, GGUS, Global Grid User Support, VO, Virtual Organisation

1. Short overview

Grid Deployment suffers today from the difficulty to reach users and site administrators when a package or a configuration parameter changes. Release notes, twiki pages and news' broadcasts are not efficient enough. The interest of using GGUS as an efficient and effective intra-project communication tool is the message to the user community presented here.

The purpose of GGUS is to bring together End Users and Supporters in the Regions where the Grid is deployed and in operation.

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