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Experiences with the GLUE information schema in the LCG/EGEE production Grid

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A common information schema for the description of Grid resources and services is an essential requirement for interoperating Grid infrastructures, and its implementation interacts with every Grid component. In this context, the GLUE information schema was originally defined in 2002 as a joint project between the European DataGrid and DataTAG projects and the US iVDGL (the predecessors of the current EGEE/LCG and OSG Grids). It has since had three backward-compatible upgrades, with the latest version (1.3) being deployed this year. The schema has major components to describe Computing and Storage Elements, and also generic Service and Site information. It has been used extensively in the LCG/EGEE Grid, for job submission, data management, service discovery and monitoring. In this paper we present the experience gained over the last five years, highlighting both successes and problems. In particular, we consider the importance of having a clear definition of schema attributes; the construction of standard information providers and difficulties encountered in mapping an abstract schema to diverse real systems; the configuration of publication in a way which suits system managers and the varying characteristics of Grid sites; the validation of published information; the ways in which information can be used (and misused) by Grid services and users; and issues related to managing schema upgrades in a large distributed system.

Primary authors: Mr FIELD, Laurence (CERN, Geneva, Switzerland); Dr ANDREOZZI, Sergio (INFN-CNAF, Bologna, Italy); Dr BURKE, Stephen (Rutherford Appleton Laboratory, UK)

Presenter: Dr BURKE, Stephen (Rutherford Appleton Laboratory, UK)

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