

Global Grid User Support: the model and experience in the Worldwide LHC Computing Grid

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The organization and management of the user support in a global e-science computing infrastructure such as the Worldwide LHC Computing Grid (WLCG) is one of the challenges of the grid. Given the widely distributed nature of the organization, and the spread of expertise for installing, configuring, managing and troubleshooting the grid middleware services, a standard centralized model could not be deployed in WLCG. We therefore have a central coordination model with distributed expertise and support, able to provide solutions for thousands of grid users and administrators with capacity for up to thousands requests per week. Problem reports can be submitted either through a central portal or using the regional support centers. The central infrastructure has been interfaced to the regional units to allow requests to flow in both directions from centre to region and vice versa. A first line support team provides support for generic grid problems while specialized units answer to middleware, deployment, network, other grid infrastructures and virtual organization specific problems. Furthermore, regional centers provide support for local site problems. Whenever the expertise is missing at a regional center, the problem can be forwarded to the central system for solving or forwarding to an appropriate specialist. The system plays a great role in daily operations support and therefore it is interfaced to the grid Core Infrastructure Center (CIC) for grid monitoring and specific virtual organization information.

The central portal provides a set of useful services such as a collection of up to date and useful documents, a facility for problem report browsing, a powerful search engine, e-mail access, and hot-line service. Tutorials for users and supporters are organized regularly by the support training service.

In this paper we describe the model and general infrastructure of the Global Grid User Support and provide results from experience with statistics on the operation of the service.

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