EGEE USER FORUM

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User Support for Distributed Computing Infrastructures in Europe

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In a worldwide distributed computing infrastructure such as EGEE (Enabling Grids for E-sciencE) one of the challenging tasks is to build and maintain a reliable user support infrastructure. During the last years the GGUS (Global Grid User Support) system has been developed as EGEE's answer to that challenge. GGUS is designed as a centrally coordinated distributed infrastructure that integrates existing tools instead of trying to replace them.

The next challenge will be to adapt the user support infrastructure to the new operations model on which the EGI/NGI infrastructure will be based.

Detailed analysis

With the series of EGEE project reaching its end in 2010 and the move towards building a sustainable infrastructure based on the national grid initiatives from a large number of European countries and governed by EGI (European Grid Initiative), it will become necessary to adapt the user support infrastructure to fit this new operations model for grid computing in Europe. The big challenge here will be scaling the infrastructure up to 40 NGIs instead of 12 ROCs and at the same time ensuring the production quality of the service provided for the user communities by the established partners. The new partners will need assistance from EGI in reaching the same high level of service.

The EGI infrastructure will consist of a large number of independent projects (EGI-InSPIRE, NGIs, EMI,···). A frictionless and fluent communication between all these partners will become even more important than it is already now. It has to be based on generally accepted tools and has to adhere to agreed formalisms. GGUS will be one of the main components in this communication.

Conclusions and Future Work

This presentation will describe the status of the user support infrastructure close to the transition from EGEE to EGI and present user support processes and integration plans for EGI. The interplay between the involved actors, like EGU.eu, NGIs, EMI and SCCs, will be presented to give a full picture of the EGI user support spanning various projects.

Additionally an outlook will be given on how a unified user support infrastructure for the major European DCIs could be realised.

Impact

The number of user communities making use of different types of computing resources is constantly growing. Therefore one of the mid-term goals of the European e-Infrastructure strategy is to provide the users with seamless access to various distributed computing infrastructures (DCIs). Achieving this will also be a key element in reaching sustainability for these projects. An area of utmost importance for this is to provide a single point of contact for a user experiencing problems with one of the infrastructures. The user should not be forced to acquaint himself with the details of the various DCI's support tools.

GGUS could be used as the integration platform providing this single point of contact as well as providing the means of communication between the experts from the various infrastructures , like for example EGI, PRACE and GEANT. Creating this could be achieved without replacing tools currently in use in the projects, as experience from EGEE has shown.

Keywords

user support, help desk, EGI, DCI

URL for further information

www.ggus.org

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