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Deliverable DN2.0.7,1: PR Network Meeting Report



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Abstract

This Deliverable contains a report of the first meeting of the GÉANT2 PR Network, which took place in Tartu, Estonia, on 28 September 2005 to discuss GÉANT2 user communications.

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0 Executive Summary

The first meeting of the GÉANT2 PR Network took place in Tartu, Estonia on 28 September 2005 to discuss the objectives and challenges of user support and to identify ways in which the project partners can work together in future to progress user communications work. Fifteen NRENs, plus TERENA, DANTE and JISC (UK) were represented by a total of 27 attendees.

The meeting was productive and fruitful. It was recognised that the NREN networks and GÉANT2 struggle with low user awareness of their existence and services, and that it is very difficult to reach the end user. NRENs and GÉANT2 face similar issues and challenges and would benefit from greater cooperation. The particular importance of demanding users for the NRENs and GÉANT2 was recognised.

Good ideas and input were generated for structuring, organising and prioritising the GÉANT2 user base. User requirements need to be identified and analysed in order to develop suitable materials for users. For communicating with the user base, existing communications channels can be used but activities and content will need to be further developed in future.

A number of actions were agreed, including work to progress the user segmentation, including the identification of priority sub-groups, with the aim of arriving at a single, agreed segmentation used across Europe. Existing knowledge of user requirements, mainly from surveys, will be collated and appropriate materials/content developed to address these requirements. Standard questions will in future be inserted into national user surveys to capture user requirements in a manner that permits uniform analysis.

These actions will be followed up over the coming months. It is planned to hold a further meeting of the PR Network in late March 2006 in Cambridge.

1 Introduction

The PR Network was first established under the GÉANT project in December 2002. Its purpose was to publicise GÉANT and improve communication on publicity-related issues for GÉANT between the NRENs and DANTE. By late 2003, around twenty NRENs were represented on the PR Network contact list.

The PR Network did increase the level of contact between the GÉANT project partners but did not become a highly active forum during the lifetime of GÉANT. Many of the members of the PR Network met, however, at meetings of the TERENA PR Task Force, which was formed in late 2003. This provided a forum for NREN and DANTE PR staff to get to know one another and to discuss general issues of interest. Occasional discussions of GÉANT-specific issues took place within the TF-PR.

Since the PR Network was originally set up, many more NRENs have appointed dedicated PR professionals to their staff. In June 2005, the PR Network contacts list was updated, and now includes representatives from nearly all GÉANT2 project partners, including several from the individual Nordic NRENs which are connected to GÉANT via NORDUnet.

The increased focus on network users in GÉANT2 increases the importance of the PR Network, which is the ideal forum to use as a basis for discussion amongst the project partners about user communications.

In recognition of this, the first formal meeting of the GÉANT2 PR Network was held on 28 September 2005 alongside a regular meeting of the TF-PR, in Tartu, Estonia. The meeting was well attended and proceeded in a cooperative and constructive manner. Fifteen NRENs, plus TERENA, DANTE and JISC (UK) were represented by a total of 27 attendees.

This report provides information on the content, proceedings and outcome of the meeting.

2 PR Network Meeting

2.1 Objectives

The objectives of the meeting were:

1. to introduce and explain GÉANT2
2. to present in detail the work performed in work packages NA2 (Dissemination), NA3 (User Support) and NA7 (Events)
3. to discuss the challenges and objectives of user support in particular and identify ways in which the project partners can work together in future to progress this work
4. to discuss ways in which the project partners can help and become involved in dissemination about GÉANT2, particularly aimed at network users.

2.2 Meeting Content

Attendees were shown the GÉANT2 video and then presented with a general introduction to GÉANT2, outlining the project structure, objectives, content and the work performed during project year 1.

This was followed by a session on dissemination and events, introducing the objectives and content of work packages NA2 (Dissemination) and NA7 (Events).

The main focus of the meeting was on user support. This topic was introduced in a presentation which covered:

- The need for dissemination to users
- The objectives of the NA3 (User Support and Consultancy) work package

- What we want to achieve in communicating with users (outreach and requirements gathering)
- The priority given to demanding users
- The work on user support and consultancy during project year 1
- Current state of play and future challenges
- The need to focus on user support
- User base segmentation work aims and priorities

Deliverable DN3.0.1 – Initial Segmentation of the GÉANT2 User Base was circulated to attendees well in advance of the meeting.

Following this presentation, the meeting broke into four groups, each of which addressed one of the following questions:

1. How to define and prioritise GÉANT2 user groups?
2. How to identify emerging non-vanilla GÉANT2 users?
3. How to communicate with GÉANT2 users?
4. How to capture GÉANT2 user requirements on a pan-European basis?

Each break-out group reported its findings to the full meeting. These findings are summarised in section 3.2.

There then followed presentations and discussion of opportunities and ideas for collaboration between the project partners on publicity and events activities. The aim of such collaboration is to increase the amount of dissemination about GÉANT2 in NREN publications, on NREN websites, at national conferences at which NRENS have a presence, and in numerous other ways. The primary target of such activity is the networks' user base.

A short presentation on project reporting requirements in GÉANT2 followed, and then the meeting closed with a wrap-up session during which participants expressed their feeling that the meeting had been worthwhile and interesting.

The meeting agenda is available as Appendix A, and attendees as Appendix B.

3 Discussion, Conclusions Drawn and Actions

3.1 General Discussion

Some important general views were expressed, including the following:

NREN networks and GÉANT2 struggle with low user awareness of their existence and of the services they provide. It is very difficult to reach the end user. NRENs and GÉANT2 face similar issues and challenges and would benefit from greater cooperation. In the provision of international services, there needs to be more communication between the NRENs, and with DANTE, when a user group contacts them to ask for help with a particular (international) requirement.

Demanding users are very important for the NRENs and for GÉANT2. Specific demanding users, such as CERN, should be (and are) addressed with individual communications tailored specifically for their needs.

3.2 Conclusions Drawn

The specific conclusions drawn from the meeting were:

1. Good ideas and input were generated for structuring, organising and prioritising the GÉANT2 user base
2. “Non-vanilla” users are a priority for NRENs and GÉANT2
3. Non-vanilla users are widely distributed and need to be encouraged to identify themselves to us
4. Many different communications channels are valuable for reaching users – we can make more effective/focussed use of those we already have
5. “Community ambassadors” should be appointed who can represent GÉANT2 within their user communities

6. It is difficult to identify what materials and content to develop for users without first knowing more about their requirements – need to gather, organise and analyse requirements and then develop suitable materials
7. The main methodical way of gathering requirements is user surveys

3.3 Actions

It was agreed that the following actions would be taken:

1. Further work on segmentation
 - a. revisit proposed initial segmentation and progress from there
 - b. identify priority sub-groups among current segmentation(s) so communications work can begin without waiting for final segmentation
 - c. overall aim is to arrive at a single, agreed segmentation we all use
 - d. survey of NRENS' user support activities
2. Build on results of 2003 GÉANT user survey and NREN surveys – some information on user requirements is known already
 - a. this would allow some development of content and materials without awaiting outcome of new set of surveys
 - b. materials/content development to be based on identified requirements and priority segments
 - c. insert standard questions into national surveys to capture user requirements
3. Volunteers to attend “non-vanilla” users’ events and enlist “strange” users so we can begin to communicate with them
4. Contact person to be identified in each NREN for feedback and collation of information

These actions and others will be used to form the basis of an action plan which is currently in preparation for discussion and implementation amongst the project partners.

4 Conclusions

The meeting was well-attended, and the discussion was held in a constructive and cooperative manner. The participants expressed clearly their opinion that closer collaboration between the project partners on dissemination and user communications was in the interests of all.

There was agreement to proceed with a number of actions, as detailed in the previous chapter, which will be pursued in the coming months. The actions are obviously aimed at progressing the segmentation work in particular, but also at reinforcing this work with a compilation of requirements already known, and increased collaboration and overall activity on user communications work.

The meeting has laid the groundwork for closer collaboration between the project partners on user communications work. This was an important and necessary step in progressing the work to increase our knowledge and understanding of the user base.

A further meeting of the GÉANT2 PR Network is planned to be held in Cambridge in late March 2006.

Appendix A **GÉANT2 PR Network Meeting Agenda**

Held on 28 September 2005 in Tartu, Estonia.

Start: 10:00

10:00-10:30 Session I - Introduction

- * Welcome
- * Objectives of first GÉANT2 PR Network meeting
- * The GÉANT2 project – introduction and explanation of scope, objectives, structure and activities

10:30-11:00 Session II – Dissemination and Events (part 1)

- * Dissemination: responsibilities and objectives in GÉANT
- * Brief summary of dissemination activities within GÉANT2
- * GÉANT2 representation at events and conferences

11:00-11:30 Coffee break

11:30-12:30 Session III – User Communication

- * GÉANT2 user communications and support – objectives
- * GÉANT2 user base segmentation – user communication and user requirements

12:30-13:30 Lunch

13:30-14:30 Session III – User Communication (continues)

- * Brainstorming in break-out groups

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14:30-15:00 Coffee break

15:00-16:00 Session IV – Dissemination and Events (part 2)

- * DANTE and NREN dissemination activities for users audience
- * Required “products” DANTE could develop and provide for use by all with users
- * GÉANT2 "ambassadors" programme

16:00-16:10 Session V - Project administration

- * Time and budget reporting

16:10-16:30 Session VI – Wrap-up

16:30 approx. Meeting closes

Appendix B First GÉANT2 PR Network Meeting - Attendance

Name	Organisation	Name	Organisation
Tomi Dolenc	ARNES	Dimitra Kotsokali	GRNET
Veerle Custers	BELNET	Rose Turner	HEAnet
Zoran Birimisa	CARNET	Robert Haymon-Collins	JISC
Michal Krsek	CESNET	Sandra Kamara	LATNET
Lenka Prazakova	CESNET	Maria Bolado	RedIRIS
Rachael Beale	DANTE	Virginie Blanquart	RENATER
Dale Robertson	DANTE	Lennart Forsberg	SUNET
Helga Spitaler	DANTE	Sandra Passchier	SURFnet
Simon Watts	DANTE	Elise Roders	SURFnet
Liina Pärnamäe	EEnet	Carol de Groot	TERENA
Maria Ristkok	EEnet	Joanne Barnett	TERENA
Gerti Foest	DFN	Russell Nelson	UKERNA
Alessandra De Nicola	GARR	Vanessa Camilleri	University of Malta
Federica Tanlongo	GARR		
		Apologies	
		Mihkel Kraav	EEnet
		Sabine Jaume-Rajaonia	RENATER

		Roland Eugster	SWITCH
		Gitte Kudsk	UNI-C

Table B.1: Attendees at first GÉANT2 PR Network Meeting