

12.03.09

Deliverable DN2.0.7,6: Report of Sixth PR Network Meeting



Deliverable DN2.0.7,6

Contractual Date: 31/07/08
Actual Date: 12/03/09
Contract Number: 511082
Instrument type: Integrated Infrastructure Initiative (I3)
Activity: NA2
Work Item: n/a
Nature of Deliverable: R (Report)
Dissemination Level: PU (Public)
Lead Partner: DANTE
Document Code: GN2-09-076

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Abstract

This document contains a report of the proceedings of the sixth meeting of the GÉANT2 PR Network, which took place on 20 February 2008 in Zagreb, Croatia, hosted by CARNET.

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0 Executive Summary

This deliverable summarises the proceedings of the sixth meeting of the GÉANT2 PR Network, which took place on 20 February 2008 in Zagreb, Croatia, hosted by CARNET.

Due to the nature of these meetings, being general open forums and discussions based around themed presentations, much of the content is presented here as general discussion followed by questions and answers. This represents the cooperative theme of the meeting, and provides a solid background for the conclusions that came out of the event.

The meeting focused on presentation and discussions surrounding:

- GÉANT2 services overview
- PR Strategy
- Project Updates
- GÉANT3 proposal process

From the discussions during the meeting, it became apparent that there was need for more communication between the DANTE PR team and participants of the PR Network in the planning and reporting of PR activities and events. A better level of understanding about the NREN PRs' circumstance, requirements and expectations should also be sought. Several NREN PRs also saw that there was some need for improved internal communications within their own organisations to facilitate information flow about GÉANT, and wider range of support material and assistance for participating NRENS was also suggested.

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1 Introduction

The Sixth PR Network meeting in Zurich focused on the following topics:

- GÉANT2 services overview: an explanation of the full range of current and developing GÉANT2 services and the strategy for their implementation was presented and discussed. The presentation also covered the research programme technologies and an introduction to the other EC-funded networks that extend the reach of GÉANT into other world regions, namely EUMEDCONNECT, TEIN, ALICE and ORIENT.
- PR Strategy: The communications strategy for publicising the GÉANT2 network, services and research activities was presented, including ongoing and planned dissemination work and inviting NREN comment and participation in these plans.
- GN3: A discussion on the forthcoming GN3 project in relation to PR, services and NREN PR involvement.

The report summarises the presentations and discussions that took place around these topics and the notes here are presented as informal discussion points in an attempt to capture the dynamics of the meeting. See Appendix A for the meeting agenda and Appendix B for a list of attendees.

2 GÉANT2 Services Overview

The GÉANT2 Services Overview presentation was intended to give meeting participants an introduction to the full range of current and developing GÉANT2 services, research activities and related networking projects, and to discuss the presentation and marketing of these different activities where appropriate. This included GÉANT2 backbone connectivity, global connectivity and the research programme which engages in R&D to investigate technologies and their potential for service implementation.

2.1 The Services

The presentation material was received with great interest from the PR Network participants; for many this was their first introduction to several of the emerging services, activities and global networks.

The three core connectivity services were identified as:

- GÉANT2 IP Service: general IP access to the network with additional features of VPN, multicast, premium IP.
- GÉANT2 +/- Circuit: point-to-point (P2P) service of less than 10 Gbps, also known as lightpath, sub-lambda or sub-wavelength.
- GÉANT2 lambda services: also a P2P service but a complete wavelength that can be dedicated to one user and not shared out to several users (as per GÉANT2 +/-).

New services were identified as:

- eduroam: protocol to enable roaming access to researchers and students.
- PERT: Performance Enhancement and Response Team, currently operational with 17 countries, aimed at helping network users get optimal performance from networked applications.
- Uniform Resource Name (URN) namespace - a naming schema supporting the assignment of unique, global, persistent names to various kinds of resources by the GÉANT community and its delegates.

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Research activities included:

- GIdP: a temporary IdP (identity provider) service that has been put in place until eduGAIN becomes a production service. It enables secure access to a number of GÉANT2 network services.
- E2EMon: performance monitoring over end-to-end circuits
- perfSONAR MDM: monitoring service enabling users to access network performance metrics across multiple domains.
- AutoBAHN: on-demand, short-term, dedicated P2P service with guaranteed Quality of Service
- eduGAIN: to enable different institutions' AAls to interact seamlessly
- educonf: development of a collaboration tools service encompassing video conferencing and voice over IP

The global networks discussed were:

- TEIN: South East Asia and Australasia
- EUMEDCONNECT: Mediterranean region
- ALICE: South America
- ORIENT: connecting China to GÉANT2

2.2 NREN Feedback and Discussion

There was discussion around the following points after the presentation:

- **What is the level of take-up of these connectivity services?** Not all NRENs offer the P2P services; citing that it is due to lack of user demand. NRENs deliver the GÉANT2 IP service to campuses mostly by default and the majority of national users are satisfied with just having email, expecting to get global network coverage without being interested in how this is delivered (so long as it is), and do not have much understanding of other network facilities. However, most NRENs seem to have a minority of "key" users with whom they might meet and exchange information about network services available. This minority would be interested in knowing which services the NREN provides, and perhaps also which international services are available behind the NREN.
- **How attractive is the concept of global connectivity (linking to ALICE, etc. through GÉANT2) to NREN customers, and is this potentially useful as a marketing tool?** Although there was much interest from the group in the global networks, the view was stated that users tend to see the network connectivity as a bit like electricity supply; they neither want nor need to know the details of exactly what is available but just expect it to work. Some NRENs said that they do not do a great deal of publicity about specific international connections it can offer and that users needing specific international facilities usually communicate with the NREN at a technical level only, so without the communications people being involved.
- **Do/can NRENs "sell" this global connectivity benefit to users?** The availability of connectivity is not necessarily in itself a great selling point, but awareness of the research possibilities that could be opened up as a result would be important; for example, identifying potential areas of international collaborative research or projects

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- **Do NRENs sell GÉANT2 connectivity to all customers?** On the surface it would seem to be that NRENs provided pan-European and global connectivity to all customers as a matter of course, or on request, but on discussion there seemed to be other issues:
 - One NREN explained that any request for global connectivity goes via their technical services. In general, people expect international access. It was recognised that some NRENs might not be interested in pushing GÉANT2 services in particular because they do not pursue extra funding, but other NRENs may always apply for extra available funding and so actively promote GÉANT2 to qualify.
 - One argument was raised that if (potential) users were more aware of the background machine of GÉANT2, they could push for global connectivity from their university/site. But if there is no international connectivity at their site they would not necessarily know how to get connectivity unless were aware of the GÉANT network. For example, if there are researchers who are put off research because they do not think there are the network connections to researchers in other parts of the world to make it viable, they might be able to lobby to get connectivity they need to make this possible.
- **What PR could be developed to assist PERT (Performance Enhancement and Response Team)?**
The knowledge base (kb.pert.geant2.net) is starting to see success, but there is generally a lack of awareness about PERT and how to use it. It was suggested that NRENs could promote PERT to campus network managers and end users so they know help is at hand. Not all the NREN PR meeting participants were aware of PERT, but all were willing to find out how they might be able to promote the service in their NREN, if it was adopted.

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3 PR for Services

In addition to the connectivity services, there are further GÉANT2 services emerging and in development. The DANTE PR team has commenced dissemination for these, working with the Activity Leader of each service to develop communications plans.

By working in collaboration with the ALs, the PR team will be able to better understand the service, its features and benefits, who the target audience is, and thus to identify what is needed for dissemination amongst the different target audiences in each case. The aim is to also enable PR to demonstrate the importance of PR to the AL and how the PR team is there to assist them reach their objectives for the service, or research activity.

For each service, or research activity, the dissemination planning will cover service definition, target audience/users, branding, trade-marking, key messages, objectives, timescales and looking at requirements such as website, brochures, news and media opportunities, demos and events. The role of NRENs is also included in the plan development.

Some examples of work that has already been done are:

- perfSONAR datasheet for Technical Workshops
- eduroam/eduGAIN leaflet for Bled “Global Leader” event
- educonf services webpages
- AutoBAHN leaflet in development for Ineternet2’s Spring Meeting

There was discussion on branding issues and policy, covering service naming, logo development and trademarking, all within the particular challenges presented by the project. The general preference for linking new service names to the GÉANT2 logo was emphasised, to reflect that there was a “family” of GÉANT services, but it was recognised that some of the existing service names were already established with their own logos.

It was agreed that successful branding depends on developing a good understanding of the technologies and concepts of each service/technology and this requires a lot of effort and it was felt that there is still a lot for the project to learn still in this respect, including the fact that many future services are being named in the R&D stage, before the final service has been defined. Potentially this could mean the service delivered inherits a name better suited to the initial concept.

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The DANTE PR team was in the process of producing a comprehensive style guide that will contain guidelines on branding, templates, boilerplate and usage rules for styles and presentation for GÉANT2 and also its related projects globally (ALICE, EUMEDCONNECT, ORIENT and TEIN2/3). As the different elements become ready, it will be made available on the GÉANT2 and project websites, for use by all project partners and also by journalists, suppliers and others wishing to include GÉANT2 or the other projects within their PR activities. This will help to ensure the consistency and accuracy of information (and logo) reproduction by NRENs and third parties.

There was a general agreement by the meeting participants that it is important (albeit very difficult) to impress upon the community the purpose, value and importance of branding and, more generally, the marketing and communications activity. There is a cultural tendency in our environment for marketing and communications neither to be properly valued nor represented at a senior level in the way it would be in commercial organisations. It is also very difficult to police or enforce such things as branding guidelines, as there are no sanctions available in cases of infringement. PR functions have a challenge within their own organisations to present themselves as being there to help and able to provide valuable expertise, rather than being the enemy trying to impose things on their more technical colleagues. A valuable suggestion was made that the inclusion of dissemination plans be written into JRA and SA planning process, to secure the place of communications across the project's activities.

It was reported that trademarking is also in progress for selected services and technologies. Careful judgement and selection is necessary to ensure that effort (and the significant amount of money involved in trademarking across the many European countries) is well targeted.

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4 GN3 Planning and PR Proposal

GN3 is anticipated to begin in Spring 2009. The purpose of the discussion at this meeting was to gather ideas and proposals for the role and activity of PR for the new project; and to create plans in good time, and to point out that the level of communication between the attendees of the meeting would need to be far higher than in GN2.

It was stated that the probability would be to keep the GÉANT name, although there had not been a debate about this. The project was recognised as being one of the highest value projects for the European Union, and therefore the importance of PR was very high.

The GN3 proposal was to be approved and signed off by the NRENs, then submitted by 11 September 2008. The European Commission would then evaluate the proposals received, and probably negotiate over any areas they may want to improve. All being well, the project would start by Spring 2009, with GN2 funding being spread over the extra 7-8 months (from the official end of GN2 to the official start of GN3) to cope with the funding gap. The Technical Strategy Committee would be evaluating the R&D areas of the project.

Previously there has been no PR input to proposals; the PR network did not exist when preparing the GÉANT2 proposal, and there was no significant PR presence in the NRENs. Over the last four years of GÉANT2, PR has been effectively established in the NRENs. Now it is clear that working together on the communications activity is just as important as working on any technical activity.

4.1 GÉANT3 Project Structure

The anticipated overall structure of GN3 was described:

- Structure is largely shaped by EC and the way they need to work, and the project would have:
 - Joint Research Activities (JRAs): Research and Development activities.
 - Service Activities (SAs): Responsible for the transition of results from JRAs into service. Also, network procurement and operations are included in SAs.
 - Network Activities (NAs): Support activities for rest of project, includes project management, PR and marketing and possibly other NAs.
- Meeting structures are likely to be similar, for example, the Technical Committee brings together relevant activity leaders.

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4.2 GN3 project objectives

In addition to GN2 objectives associated with the hybrid pan-European network, additional objectives of GÉANT3 are likely to include the delivery of tools to advance networking and improve quality of experience of users; and a larger focus on multi-domain with the technical challenge to achieve end-to-end service. Consequently it was speculated that there would be a greater focus in the next project to achieve implementation and take up of new services, representing a shift into an activity that is not purely technical, involving more organisation, marketing, and product management issues.

There would be more opportunity for contact and dialogue with users. It seems logical as the project moves towards in-service activities that we should look at user requirements, develop technology to meet those requirements, and then roll out a suitable service. This would represent a “Product lifecycle” type of activity.

4.3 NREN Feedback and Discussion

To ascertain the general opinions from the NRENs participating in the meeting, the floor was opened to comments and feedback. The questions and discussions below represent a summary of the discussion.

- **How will we communicate to NRENs the importance of the PR activity?**
Details of this are still to be decided. The concept of what GN3 will look like will go up via the Executive and to the Policy committee. Each NREN will be informed of the proposal content by the NREN managers. There is a risk that PR personnel may be implicated in this project as individuals and not as teams, meaning that the NREN or PR community may not be aware of the effort. Therefore we should use the PR mailing list to inform people of activity.
- **Could the document also contain recommendations to NRENs for allocation of resources?**
DANTE PR will include what they feel is relevant and this will be recommended to the Executive.
- **Do the attendees feel like project partners?**
Many NREN PRs do not feel involved enough in GÉANT2 because there is not enough communication from DANTE about the project and activities, not just PR. There is no lack of goodwill; they want to be involved and would like to help but do not get enough information from us. There is a definite need for better communication within the PR network and beyond. Although Activities use email groups for publishing information, this appears to be daunting to the PR Network and bulk emailing always provokes criticism. DANTE PR and NRENs need to consider improved ways of working together, mainly the two-way information channels so that both sides are informed of what the other is doing. In addition, it was recognised that NREN PRs often do not get informed by the NREN management about relevant GEANT activity or policies, which contributes to the problem.

Other discussion points and general suggestions on this topic included:

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- Specific materials that could be provided, including providing a DVD update, using PR templates and standard text to assist NRENs in producing PR materials, providing speakers to NREN conferences, sharing best practise/case studies.
- Training on the services and whether more in-depth training for the PR Network will be required in future.
- How to address the rollout and encourage take-up of new services?

4.4 Marketing objectives in GN3

GN3 will generate additional work areas. Although the target audience is perceived to be similar to that of GÉANT2, there will be more need to reach the end network users because of the new project's emphasis on transition to service. This means that NRENs, in addition to being primary customers of the network, will have a role to play in marketing as project partners. If their perception is that there should be more dissemination about GÉANT inside their organisations, that's the first thing for them to tackle.

Also, a further comment was that the community must ensure that the funding given by the European Union is used according to policy objectives.

5 Focus on Events

Organising events represents a significant and constant part of the PR work performed in relation to GÉANT2, and in addition the task of organising the (project-internal) Technical Workshops (TWS) falls to the PR team.

A new model of organising the technical workshops has been attempted recently, with GARR being the first NREN to take care of the logistics of a TWS, by organising the January 2008 workshop in Rome. Feedback from GARR about their experience showed that more communication and clarity is needed between DANTE and the local organiser (in this case GARR) for efficient and effective working. This presentation reflected on their experience and came up with recommendations to assist DANTE PR and future NRENs who may be called upon to assist with TWS organisation, or indeed with other events.

The main issues had been:

- The involvement of two separate parties within DANTE (PR team and the CTO) made communication difficult for GARR. In addition session leaders made disparate and different requests to GARR, and in particular technical requirements for the sessions were not well coordinated.
- The expectations and clear division of responsibilities between the parties involved was not clear enough.

This prompted the need for procedures and guidelines in terms of NRENs assisting with event organisation. Suggested improvements to address these deficiencies were:

- Clear specification of technical and set up requirements at outset of organisation by each session leader.
- Definition of standard procedures and rules in the organisation of the event (for example a standard form for the registration of the participants).
- Both DANTE and NREN partner to have access to the logistic information web pages and to communicate openly, to ensure transparency of information relevant to the event.
- Creation of a “cook book” to provide guidance to NRENs assisting with the TWS in the future.

6 Conclusions and Recommendations

During the discussions it became clear that there was a need for better communication between the PR Network participants and the DANTE PR team. It was suggested that website questionnaires might be suitable for feedback, and perhaps to learn from the experience of JRAs and SAs in their successful use of email lists. Suggestions were made for materials to be made available for re-use by NRENS, including the provision of template or boiler-plate information on GÉANT and services that could be re-used and adapted by NRENS, and more digestible bytes of information such as edited from the GÉANT DVD for use in podcasts.

It also became clear that not all events or activities were known by all members. It was decided that DANTE PR should compile a list of NREN activities and upcoming events, and contact the NREN prior to any event or activity to help provide resource and information. However, it is also vital that NRENS communicate with DANTE PR to ensure that DANTE PR has all the information they need to provide this service.

With the recognition of the need for better internal communications within NRENS individuals took actions to see what they could do within their own organisations to gain a better understanding of which of their colleagues are involved in the project and to assist the flow of GÉANT-related information.

Appendix A Meeting Agenda

Agenda for the Fifth GÉANT2 PR Network Meeting: Thursday 27th September 2007, Lisbon, Portugal.

- 10.00 Welcome and Introductions (Melanie Pankhurst)
- 10.10 Services Strategy (Melanie Pankhurst)
- 11.10 Coffee break; networking time
- 11.40 PR for Services (Helen Martindale)
- 12.10 Segmentation Project Update (Dale Robertson)
- 12.30 Lunch
- 13.30 Focus on Events (Melanie Pankhurst)
- 13.50 GN3 Planning (Dale Robertson)
- 15.00 Coffee break; networking time
- 15.30 Show and Tell: NREN PR Activities
- 15.50 Closing Remarks (Melanie Pankhurst)

Appendix B Meeting Attendance

Sixth GÉANT2 PR Network Meeting attendance: 20 February 2008, Zagreb, Croatia.

Name	Organisation
Christine Dworak	ACONet
Veerle Custers	BELNET
Goran Skvarc	CARNet
Ana Soric	CARNet
Gabriela Krcmrova	CESNET
Helen Martindale	DANTE
Melanie Pankhurst	DANTE
Dale Robertson	DANTE
Maria Ristkok	EEnet
Rose Turner	HEAnet
Russell Nelson	JANET
Robert Haymon-Collins	JISC
Cristina Lorenzo	RedIRIS
Anne Balic	RESTENA
Lonneke Walk	SURFnet
Laura Durnford	TERENA

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