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The EGI user requirement harvesting and processing workflow

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Impact

The user communities of EGI are heterogeneous, and thus requirements from these communities are diverse, reflecting different fields of study and approaches to their scientific endeavours. Capturing, processing and responding to users' requirements and needs in such an environment in a appropriate manner is a challenge.

The User Community Coordination activity has setup a workflow to capture the needs, requirements and recommendations from user communities of the European Grid Infrastructure. The proposed process ensures a low threshold for user communities to provide feedback. At the same time, normalization and prioritization mechanisms irrespective of the communication channels used are set in place. The requirement gathering process is cyclic with requirements being actively endorsed to technology providers, contributing to timely implementation on the infrastructure.

Overview

To support science and innovation, a lasting operational model for e-Science is needed – both for coordinating the infrastructure and for delivering integrated services that cross national borders. The EGI-InSPIRE project supports the transition from a project-based system to a sustainable pan-European e-Infrastructure. The evolution of the European Grid Infrastructure (EGI) is driven by the users. Therefore, capturing and communicating feedback from users to the infrastructure, as well as technology operators and providers, is a key goal for the project as a whole.

This contribution describes the requirements gathering process that the User Community Support Team of EGI (UCST) has implemented in order to collect, capture, process, and report requirements and recommendations.

Description of the work

The user requirements' gathering is a complex and non-trivial process. Coordination of efforts between Virtual Organizations, Virtual Research Communities, National Grid Initiatives and EGI.eu is crucial, in order to assess the requirements from the communities they embrace. This is one of the main goals of the EGI.eu UCST; to bring together a pro-active user support service across Europe under the EGI umbrella.

The two most important groups of EGI users are the so called End Users (researchers, application developers, etc) and the Service Operators, people who operate grid sites and software services for the end users. Input from these communities is collected by the User Community Coordination Activity (NA3) of EGI-InSPIRE through various electronic channels and face-to-face communication mechanisms. The User Community Board (UCB), the group of representatives of user communities, then prioritises the collected input with the help of the User Services Advisory Group (USAG). The prioritised, weighted requirements prepared by

these groups provide direction for the evolution of middleware services as well as the user-oriented technical services provided by EGI. The established communication channels will always be open, ensuring that community requirements can be communicated and endorsed in a timely and agile manner.

The NA3 activity provides a complete and up to date picture of the requirement gathering process run by the activity [1]. The page describes the goal of the process, the channels, the methods and bodies used by the process, and the actual output which has been achieved so far. This page also includes links to the requirements and recommendations that have been collected through these processes so far.

URL

https://wiki.egi.eu/wiki/WP3:_User_Community_Coordination#Requirement_gathering

Conclusions

The User Community Coordination activity established several channels to EGI user communities. The first set of requirements has already been collected and is available through the EGI Wiki [1]. The UCST supported by the USAG team will process and discuss these requirements further before ratification by the UCB. The first UCB meeting was held in November and the first set of user requirements have been communicated through the EGI Technology Coordination Board to middleware developers.

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