

Towards mutually beneficial industrial engagement with the EUDAT collaborative data infrastructure

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Supporting the innovation capacity of European SMEs is not only a key goal of Horizon2020, but offering services to this class of user can be a significant contributor to providing sustainable funding for EU infrastructure. However, in practice many obstacles - both technical and practical - exist which prevent the uptake of research infrastructure by industrial partners. In this talk we will focus on the issues that we have uncovered trying to engage SME's in the use of the EUDAT collaborative data infrastructure.

We have identified both the need for a more commercial outlook regarding pricing and service provision and the need to give more control of how data is made available to the SMEs as the key challenges that underline this activity. Meeting these challenges requires a change of mind set in terms of infrastructure provisions, which is currently focused at academic usage with its concomitant model of access to resource free at the point of use.

During our work with a number of industrial partners looking to use datasets in conjunction with HPC, this issue is frequently compounded by usage policies adopted by HPC facilities. Furthermore, providing transparent pricing using commercial cloud resources (such as Azure, Amazon and Google) is non-trivial as they often charge depending on the use of the data rather than simply for holding it.

In our efforts to give SME users access to EUDAT on terms that are acceptable to their commercial interests, we have worked on deploying containerised versions of the EUDAT B2SHARE component for use by SMEs, and customising the service offering to their requirements.

In conclusion we believe that active collaborations with SMEs can not only help sustain EU infrastructure projects into the future, but also aid in hardening their services and furthering the development of new services. Such interactions are beneficial not only for the SMEs and infrastructure provider, but the wider research community. However, in order to take advantage of these benefits, projects such as EUDAT need to be flexible in their SME engagement, allowing them to adopt services without compromising their commercial interests and to provide transparent cost models for installation and on going usage of storage services.

Topic Area

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Primary author: ZASADA, stefan (UCL)

Co-author: Dr WRIGHT, Dave (UCL)

Presenter: ZASADA, stefan (UCL)

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