EGI-InSPIRE Technical Note

Analysis of the tickets assigned to the DMSU

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Abstract

This document provides an analysis of the tickets assigned to the EGI DMSU through the GGUS infrastructure for user Help Desk infrastructure.



I. COPYRIGHT NOTICE

II. DOCUMENT LOG

Issue	Date	Comment	Author/Partner
1	04-04-2011	First draft	Michel Drescher, EGI.eu
2	04-04-2011	Update, & DocDB persistence	Michel Drescher, EGI.eu

III. TERMINOLOGY

A complete project glossary is provided at the following page:
http://www.egi.eu/about/glossary/.

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1 MIDDLEWARE SUPPORT

The Deployed Middleware Support Unit (DMSU) provides support for the middleware used in EGI. The GGUS system is used for providing the support. Users or operators, who are experiencing middleware issues create a ticket in GGUS describing the issue. Initial ticket screening is done by TPM; thereafter the ticket is assigned to DMSU. If possible, the ticket is resolved by DMSU, otherwise the ticket is assigned to a specific support unit, which has expertise for the middleware in question. To ensure progress on tickets, a weekly meeting is held with the DMSU assigners and the DMSU task leader. At the meetings unassigned and open tickets are processed, e.g., assigning them or inquiring for more information.

1.1 Middleware support

Initially the number of tickets assigned to DMSU was rather low. The ticket count has however increased steadily, and from late 2010, the ticket count is now more substantial with 40-50 tickets a month.

Table 1: Number of tickets assigned to DMSU since the start of EGI-InSPIRE until 28 February 2011

#	GGUS Support Unit
1	APEL-EMI
1	ETICS
1	gLite_Hydra
1	gLite_Identity
1	gLite_Java
1	gLite_Release
1	gLite_SGE
1	Gridsite
1	Proxyrenewal
1	SAM/Nagios
1	TPM
1	UNICORE-Client

#	GGUS Support Unit
1	UNICORE-Server
2	AMGA
2	ARGUS
2	dCache
2	DGAS
3	ARC
3	EMI
3	MPI
3	VOMS
6	FTS
6	gLite L&B
6	InformationSystem / GIP / BDII

#	GGUS Support Unit
7	VOMS Admin
9	gLite Security
9	lcg_util
9	LFC
10	StoRM
12	gLite YAIM
14	CREAM-BLAH
14	DPM
17	Information System
21	DMSU
21	gLite WMS
41	APEL

Table 1 shows an uneven distribution over the different products. Furthermore the tickets are focussed around gLite middleware components. A not directly measured metric is the nature of the supports issues. It is the impression of the DMSU task leader that the overwhelming majority if the tickets are configuration related, and only relatively few tickets concern actual middleware bugs. The time to respond from support units has not been measured, but is judged to fairly good in general. It is often a much bigger problem to get specific details from ticket submitters. With the current reporting mechanisms in GGUS the ticket overview presented in Table 1 is the level of metrics that is feasible to create.

The reason for having a high number of gLite tickets is probably two-fold. The gLite Middleware is deployed on more sites than ARC, dCache, and Unicore, leading to more tickets. The large share of

configuration related tickets supports this. Furthermore some of the Middlewares already has existing well-functioning support infrastructure, and it is likely that support happens by these or other out-of-band channels. The reasons for this can be that users and operators are used to the existing systems, and are happy using them. While such tickets are not measurable, it is not overly important, assuming users and operators get proper support. If not, using GGUS and DMSU for reporting the ticket can act as a political incentive, as the stakeholders know that metrics are being extracted about the tickets. Furthermore DMSU provides a single point of entry for support, which can be of great value of new users and operators.

The uneven distribution of tickets per support unit indicates that a small numbers of Middleware components cause a rather large portion of the reported tickets. As most of the tickets are configuration issues, the high number of tickets is not due to software defects as such, but instead more likely to be confusing configuration or lack of documentation. Suggestions to communicating these issues to Technology Providers have been raised in a document for the TCB, but with no outcome. The uneven distribution of tickets also mean the some assigners have significantly more tickets to handle than others. This is not a problem in itself, but assigners which handle no or very few tickets are often missing from the weekly meeting. Most likely due to lack of perceived importance, which is not an unfair point of view.

1.2 Tracking Estimated Time of Availability (ETA)

When a ticket is identified as a software issue, the technology provider responsible for the software must provide a fix ETA and version for which the issue will be fixed. A common case is that the issue has already been solved, but either a release has not been created, or the user is running an old version of the software. For the remaining cases, technology providers have usually responded in good manner with an ETA and version for when the issue will be solved. So far, a common reply has been "next EMI release". While next release may sound good, EMI releases are currently so infrequent and is planned to continued being so. This makes the ETA responses less useful.

1.3 Summary

- Configuration issues, not bugs, cause the majority of tickets.
- A small number of middlewares cause the majority of tickets.
- GGUS / DMSU is not the world center for reporting middleware issues.
- GGUS has limited support for metric generation is ill-suited for ETA/bug tracking.

2 REFERENCES
