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How many users does EGI have?

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Overview (For the conference guide)

To build up a comprehensive understanding about the success, uptake and impact of EGI, one needs to look at several metrics. The “number of EGI users” is one of the most relevant metrics in this respect. While the importance of this metric is apparent, obtaining the number of EGI users is quite a challenge due to the federated, distributed nature of the infrastructure and its user communities. The talk presents the developments that were recently undertaken by the EGI-InSPIRE project within the Operations Portal, on its underlying services and on reporting mechanisms to clarify the number of EGI users. The talk will also report on recent trends in the number of users.

Impact

The number of EGI users being serviced is an important indicator to evaluate the uptake and success of our services within the user communities. The client portfolio is an asset, which should be taken seriously if sustainability is to be attained. As such, data sanitization is important in order to report real values when reporting back to all stakeholders.

The number of users accessing the EGI infrastructure has always been a major concern. The methodology that was in place could not fully grasp the number of users due to a series of issues, inherent to distributed systems and novel ways of infrastructure access. Current problems were briefly reported in this abstract and actions to solve them are currently under development and expected to be in place by the Community Forum. The process of data sanitization will bring several advantages to the e-infrastructure, namely:

- Provide an up to date picture on the user spread per scientific discipline.
- Ensure that information on where to register to VOs is available for users about every EGI VO.
- Active users are separated from users of the past.
- See the size of the community that interacts with EGI through robot certificates.

Description of the Work

Impact metrics, such as the total number of EGI users, are one of the most relevant indicators to evaluate the uptake and success of EGI. Due to the distributed nature and complexity of the infrastructure and of its user communities the number of EGI users is very difficult to capture. The Operations Portal (OP), where the Virtual Organizations (VOs) are registered and are classified into scientific disciplines, is the main tool that provides statistics about users. However, it has been recently recognized that the OP with its current architecture and services cannot provide a complete picture of EGI users. The EGI Operations and User Support activities therefore joint forces and made several improvements to the Operations Portal as well as in underlying services and processes to fill the gaps and obtain a more complete picture on EGI users.

The OP queries the Virtual Organization Membership Service (VOMS) servers of the registered VOs, and obtains the number of users per VO. The following problems have been identified and fixed within this process:

- Incorrect and incomplete registration of VOs in the OP
- Inability for OP to contact the VOMS servers of registered VOs

OP by itself is not enough to capture the total number of users of EGI. The need for new methods and changes to infrastructure services was recognized. We identified and solved the following problems:

- Inactive grid users are not removed from certain implementations of the VOMS server. VOMS servers need to be changed in order to distinguish active users from legacy registrations. The further development of VOMS servers was arranged by EGI.eu through external technology providers.
- A growing number of users access EGI through robot certificates instead of personal certificates. These users are not necessarily registered in VOMS services. A method to capture statistical information about these users was put in place by EGI.eu in collaboration with the robot certificate owners.

Conclusions

The Operations Portal is responsible to provide EGI-InSPIRE with the total number of grid users making use of EGI resources. Due to several identified constraints, this number is known to be an inaccurate estimate of the actual value. The set of actions that are undertaken by EGI.eu and the with its partners from the NGIs are about to change this situation and will provide more reliable figures on EGI users. The new mechanisms will simplify the monitoring of uptake of EGI and will support the transition to a sustainable funding structure. While some of the actions already completed, others are still ongoing and are expected to deliver results in 2012.

URL

<http://operations-portal.egi.eu/vo/usersSummary>
https://wiki.egi.eu/wiki/EGI_robot_certificate_users

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