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Astronomy & Astrophysics Internal Meeting

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Description of the Work

A unique, catch-all VRC for A&A proved to be ineffective: a) it is not able to encompass the expectations of the whole community; b) the identification of a clear counterpart that could take in charge the MoU on behalf of the whole community is tricky and therefore the subscription of a MoU with EGI is extremely difficult to manage; c) the preparation and implementation of a sustainability plan for A&A is practically impossible.

The creation of multiple VRCs, each of them linked to a specific project and/or to a well identified sub-community is more appropriate for A&A, hence at the end of A&A HUC workshop in Paris it was agreed to move towards the multi-VRC model. To achieve this goal it is necessary, first of all, to intensify contacts with the biggest A&A-related projects (ESFRI projects but not only) to identify new candidate VRCs and to start their creation process. A high-level lightweight coordination among these new VRCs is important to avoid divergences in their strategies that could compromise the necessary cohesion of the A&A HUC; it is also important to provide a unique interface to EGI for the whole community.

The process aimed at moving toward the multi-VRC model could be eased by the startup of new big astronomical projects; such projects, in fact, are characterized by challenging requests in terms of computing capabilities and amount of data to be stored and managed and therefore distributed computing and data infrastructures could be the natural strategic choice for them.

The first workshop of the A&A HUC held in Paris in early November 2011 was extremely useful to agree some actions: a) a survey aimed at identifying mature candidate A&A VRCs and their coordinators; b) the quick creation of the identified VRCs; c) The provision of tools and services enabling to consolidate contacts within the A&A HUC through regular meetings of all A&A members engaged in the DCIs business.

Conclusions

The process undertaken in Paris in November 2011 to increase and diversify astronomical VRCs in EGI and to link VRCs to specific projects and organizations is irreversible and mandatory to revitalize the presence of the astronomical community in EGI and to boost the application porting activities.

After the workshop in Paris, the purpose of this meeting is to allow astronomers engaged in the DCIs business to meet a second time and to make a checkpoint of progresses achieved since early November 2011.

The EGI Community Forum is a good opportunity to encourage astrophysicists to attend the Forum and to participate to the A&A internal meeting bringing new contributions and ideas.

As a general rule, the A&A HUC plans to organize at least two face to face meeting per year and to co-locate them with the yearly EGI Community and EGI Technical Forums.

Impact

According to what described above, it is expected a strong impact of the agreed reorganization of the A&A HUC on the whole community. More well-focused VRCs should enhance the effectiveness of undertaken

actions aimed at promoting the adoption of DCIs and related technologies in astrophysics. The homogeneity of the new VRCs should foster some critical processes like the users requirements gathering which is of utmost importance to have DCIs able to meet and fulfill the needs of astrophysical applications. This should trigger a virtuous cycle where DCIs capable of meet the astrophysicists expectations should increase the number of A&A applications ported on distributed e-Infrastructures; this in turn will increase the feedback provided by the community to the e-Infrastructures providers and maintainers and then at the end of the game middleware software releases underlying DCIs more and more suitable for A&A applications. As a final result of this process it is then expected more astrophysical users, projects and organizations which make use of DCIs to achieve their scientific goals and an increasing number of smart tools and services able to ease the utilization of DCIs by end users.

URL

<http://twiki.oats.inaf.it/twiki/bin/view/AstroVRC/WebHome>

Overview (For the conference guide)

A&A has been identified as a Heavy User Community (HUC) in EGI. After the startup phase of EGI-InSPIRE, HUCs have been encouraged to organize themselves as VRCs and to subscribe a MoU (Memorandum of Understanding) to be officially endorsed by EGI.

Until now it was not possible to finalize the process aimed at transforming the A&A HUC in a VRC and this because: a) A&A is a wide and articulated community with many active sub-communities dealing with specific astronomical research lines; b) Each of these research lines has its own specific requirements and expectations toward DCIs and different ways to approach them; c) A monolithic, not-flexible DCI, therefore, cannot work well for AA; d) Virtualization and flexible temporary hardware/software platforms, deployed on-demand according to the Cloud Computing paradigm, could be the right solution for the Astrophysical community and for its different sub-communities, applications and projects.

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