



TF-MSP Task Forces Meeting

Thursday 4th February 2010
GARR Offices
Rome, Italy

Minutes by John DYER
TERENA

1. Introductions

The task-force chair, Alberto Pérez Gómez of RedIRIS opened the meeting with a round of introductions. John Dyer announced the apologies from Maurice van den Akker. He also told the group that both Yannis Mitsos and Harri Kuusisto would be unable to attend this meeting as each had recently become fathers.

2. Overview of GARR, the Italian NREN, Claudia Battista (GARR)

Claudia provided a short history of GARR from 1973 when there were many independent networks up until the present day. The **Gruppo Armonizzazione Reti della Ricerca** (GARR) was created in 1987. She went on to explain the structure of four founding members; associated members and the sources of funding 75% of which comes from founding members.

GARR has more than 2 million end-users at more than 400 sites, most of these being directly connected to the 43 GARR PoPs. GARR does not operate a "strict" user segmentation or have specific group portfolios. GARR tries to create new services crossing user group boundaries, and drawing from users common practices in their "traditional" environment.

The current GARR infrastructure has 66 links in the 1-10Gbps range; 97 of 100/155Mbps and around 300 links of 34Mbps or less. Claudia explained the ambitious plans for GARR-X which will be rolled out over the next 6 years or so starting in the second half of 2010. The procurement process for fibres and circuits began at the end of 2009. GARR-X is to be funded out of the level income stream from the end-users.

GARR-X will bring increased flexibility and efficiency of the technical and economic aspects of the network. This will enable GARR to keep pace with user requirements and provided a consistent level service to users wherever they are on the network. It is the intention that GARR has direct control and management of the whole network infrastructure. The fibre infrastructure will primarily support 1GbEthernet and 10GbEthernet and is likely to include links to several other NRENs (France Malta, Slovenia, Switzerland, Tunisia) using cross-border-fibres.

The benefits of GARR-X for the users will be: Higher network access capacity; Better performance and new services all of which will be available to the international multi-domain level. Claudia gave details of some specific projects that would benefit including the INFN T1-T2 national OPN (LHC project).

<http://www.terena.org/activities/tf-msp/meetings/20100204/20100204-garr-strategy.ppt>

3. Report on the EQUAL workshop, 9 December 2009, John Dyer

John Dyer provided a report on the EQUAL Workshop on Improving the Quality of Email Services (spam suppression). The idea for the workshop had originally come from discussions in TF-MSP. The workshop was well attended with 36 participants from 15 countries and 20 presentations on a range of approaches to dealing with spam.

The workshop participants expressed a keen interest in the work continuing within TERENA, initially as an ad-hoc group. Members of the other relevant TERENA taskforces: TF-CSIRT, TF-EMC2 and MOBILITY should be invited to participate. The ad-hoc group would focus on capitalising on the knowledge and expertise of the community with a view to establishing some community activities that might include: establishing and recommending best-practice; joint-procurement of commercial offering and continued information sharing.

John reported that for the time being he would continue to oversee the activity on behalf of the secretariat, though in the longer term it would be more appropriate to move the work to the technical staff. In the meantime John would organise a BoF at TNC 2010 (Tuesday 1st June 18:00 – 20:00). In the shorter term, a core steering group would be formed and meet by video conference to draw up concrete plans to put before the BoF.

<http://www.terena.org/activities/tf-msp/meetings/20091209-equal/workshop-minutes.pdf>

Action: John Dyer – Follow-up activities from EQUAL:

- BoF at TNC 2010
- Video conference for core steering group
- Contact MAAWG

4. Novel Anti-SPAM service from Forskningsnett, Martin Bech, UNI • C

Martin Bech opened his presentation by posing the question: “Why should NRENs bother with fighting spam when end institutions already run their own spam filtering services”. All universities are centralizing mail handling and using considerable resources fighting spam. UNI-C thought it might be possible to achieve some economies of scale, innovate and improve the service. One of the major problems of spam is that it consumes resources such as processing and more importantly storage at the recipients site. The novel approach that UNI-C is taking is to move that problem back to the sender whilst maintaining the benefits of having received and examined the emails.

The approach makes use of the SMTP (RFC 2821) requirement that the client is required to wait a minimum of 10 minutes before a DATA termination timeout for can be issued. Once the receiving client has received the final “.” in the mail it can be scanned whilst keeping the connection to the sender open. If the mail passes the scanning and is thought to be a genuine message, a “250 OK” response is issued to the sender thereby accepting responsibility for delivering or relaying the message. If the mail fails the scan and is thought to be spam, then a “550” rejection response can be issued. It is recommended that the 550 response also includes a URL that a “human” sender may use to push his email through if it is really genuine email.

The advantages of this approach are that: it is the obligation of the sending MTA to store the rejected mail and send the non-delivery message (not the receiving MTA). However the receiving MTA may still store the suspect mail for later inspection by the administrator or end-user as required.

Martin presented some views of a web interface to the system that are configurable to be accessible either for administrators or end users. The system has been in production use since December 2009, it serves approximately 100 different domains and 20,000 users. It runs on four servers and takes around 1 FTE to fully support. Martin completed his presentation by offering UNI-C help in replicating the systems at other NRENs.

<http://www.terena.org/activities/tf-msp/meetings/20100204/20100204-fsknet-antispam.ppt>

5. Re-charter of TF-MSP, Alberto Pérez Gómez RED.ES

Alberto presented the new draft Terms of Reference for TF-MSP. John Dyer had prepared the draft to follow the model used by TF-CPR. It enabled much more flexibility whilst defining a concrete framework.

Alberto pointed out that the names of the chair and co-chairs had been left blank and before the new ToR could be sent to the TEC, names would have to be added in order to meet the criteria for approval.

Alberto explained that he had served as chair for two years and thought it was time for him to stand down from that position.

On behalf of the task force and secretariat John thanked Alberto for his hard work and enthusiasm as chair of TF-MSP. Through his leadership, the task force had become a vibrant forum in which lots of progress has been made. Claudia said that she hoped that Alberto would be able to continue to be actively involved in running the task force as his vision and knowledge of managing an NREN was invaluable to the task force. Alberto confirmed that he will not stand down from the task force, just from the role of chairman. After some further discussion, Walter van Dijk from SURFnet agreed to put himself forward as a possible chair. Alberto agreed to himself forward as a co-chair. These nominations were unanimously confirmed. Koen Schelkens of BELNET agreed to continue as a co-chair.

Gabriella Paolini of GARR suggested adding an activity of organising thematic workshops for managers responsible for overseeing the provision and operations of technical services from the management perspective. She used the example of the formalisation of federations into an NREN supported central service. The workshops might include discussion items such as: number of FTEs required to run production services; documentation necessary; promotion of the new service; charging for the service; support issues etc. Alberto agreed that this should be added as an activity in the ToR. Alberto agreed to ask Diego Lopez, chair of TF-EMC2 how to proceed with this.

The Terms of Reference were approved by the members at the meeting subject to John inserting the names of the chairs and adding the additional activity suggested by Gabriella.

Action: John DYER – update ToR and send to TEC for approval.

The updated draft submitted to the TEC is available from:

<http://www.terena.org/activities/tf-msp/documents/20100209-draft-tf-msp-tor.pdf>

Action: Alberto Pérez – Speak to Diego Lopez about using federations as an example of a thematic workshop

6. OVERVIEW OF ITIL, Steve Hogger, JANET(UK)

Steve Hogger told the task force how he had been part of a UK government committee that had foreseen the need for ITIL. This decision was based on the fact that many organisations were becoming increasingly dependent on reliably functioning IT systems.

ITIL documents good practice for IT service management and has become the most widely accepted methodology of its type in the world providing: a qualification scheme; accreditation for trainers and implementation tools. The service support section includes: Change Management; Release Management; Incident Management; Problem Management; Service Desk but most importantly Configuration Management and Asset Control that underpins everything! Service delivery includes: Service Level Management; Capacity Management; Financial Management for IT Services; Availability Management and IT Service Continuity Management.

Steve went on to explain that using ITIL can reduce costs & improve productivity by using proven best practice. This in turn leads to a more professional approach to service delivery by improved use of skills & experience in the organisation. Further, ITIL can be specified in

procurement activities leading to improved delivery of third-party services. It is important to remember that ITIL is not a cookbook providing solutions but it is a framework and definitely not a substitute for common sense.

In closing his presentation, Steve mentioned that the UK Universities and Colleges Information Systems Association (UCISA) had recently published the first of its ITIL for the HE Community Project deliverables on its website. It comprises of: an Introduction, an ITIL Management Overview; 13 Case Studies and a report on a couple of Service Catalogue workshops. These can be accessed at: <http://www.ucisa.ac.uk/members/activities/ITIL.aspx>

<http://www.terena.org/activities/terena/20100204/20100204-itil-in-uk.ppt>

7. Value for Money Study of the JANET(UK) network, Steve Hogger

An independent consultancy report from PricewaterhouseCoopers was commissioned by JANET(UK). A copy of the report is accessible from the JANET(UK) website at: <http://www.ja.net/documents/company/value-for-money.pdf>

In summary users value the core network services that are provided by JANET, but they did not particularly seem to attach the same degree of value to the additional services. The reason for not immediately seeing the value of the additional services is generally that the end users do not fully understand these services or their relevance to their own work. The challenge for JANET(UK) is hence to bring about some change by more actively promoting added value services. Additionally many users did not understand the funding of the JANET network and consequently had little idea of the costs of the service. This is probably due mostly to the funding being hidden from them by the UK top-slicing model.

Steve explained that JANET(UK) intended to continue following the model of basic services being "free at the point of delivery". Changing that model might well erode the differentiation between JANET and the commercial alternatives even though the NREN closed user group club delivers many intangible additional benefits. It was pointed out that some networks already recover all of their costs from direct user charges and others are moving in that direction. Walter explained that SURFnet plans to have 40% of its income derived from charged additional services by 2012. Alberto thought it would be useful if SURFnet were able to present progress on this activity at future TF-MSP meetings. Martin explained that UNI-C bases its charges to the institutions on the institutions overall budget.

John Dyer said that he had been exploring the applicability of Common Pool Resources based on the work of Elinor Ostrom: *The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action* which he thought contains model of relevance to the NREN community as a whole. He might make a presentation to TF-MSP on the subject at sometime in the future.

Action: John Dyer – Include presentation on changes to charging for services at SURFnet at a future TF-MSP meeting

8. CIRENSE follow-up, Alberto Pérez Gómez RED.ES

For the benefit of those that were not aware, CIRENSE (Coordinating Inter-NREN Service Provision in Europe) was a proposal originally prepared for a European Commission call. Since it had not been successful in getting EC funding, members of TF-MSP had been considering how much of the work could be undertaken within the context of TERENA. In summary, the idea was to undertake joint developments or procurements for NRENs in Europe. Additionally, a "market-place" for NRENs to trade services might be created. Examples of such activities in TERENA have been SCS; TCS; RTIR and now EQUAL. What is need is a concrete proposal to be developed. In order to achieve this we need to identify adequate manpower and possible community funding.

Action: John Dyer – Add CIRENSE to a future MSP meeting agenda.

9. Customer Relations Management (CRM) at BELNET, Koen Schelkens, BELNET

In 2006 BELNET reviewed its approach to the management of information about their customers. It was scattered around the organisation and held in a variety of formats with some level of duplication. To meet management objectives of becoming more efficient and customer oriented, a wish list of additional functionality such as ticketing and dynamic reporting was created. The scoping of the project included development of a corporate data model and identification of workflows.

A project to specify and acquire a CRM system was put in place under the direction of the customer relations unit. During the first part of 2007 a budget had been approved, a call for tenders issued and responses assessed. During the remaining part of 2007 a contract was awarded; the requirements refined and a system installed and debugged. During January and February of 2008 the system entered production service. Debugging and fine-tuning has continued whilst the system has been in use.

Koen explained that the major lessons learned include:

- There are many hidden costs particularly in respect of human resources. These need to be included in budgetary estimates
- It is important to undertake a skilled functional/business process analyses up-front in order to understand the requirements of the system
- At first use of a formal CRM system can seem like a burden to some staff. The system needs to be user friendly; the staff needs to be trained and to understand the value of using a single comprehensive system.

For the future BELNET are considering the possibility of a new system in 2011 which might include full ERP capabilities.

<http://www.terena.org/activities/tf-msp/meetings/20100204/20100204-belnet-crm.ppt>

10. towards a CRM at NIIFI, Hungary, Lajos Balint, NIIFI

Lajos reported that there have been a number of ad-hoc activities (quasi-CRM) at NIIF-Hungary but there is a lack of integration and harmonisation. As part of the new development plans they have the objective of putting in place a web-portal based User Relations and Information Management System (URIM).

The major web-form items such as: IPv4 / IPv6 address registration; DNS registration and LDAP administration were presented. A full list can be found in the presentation material at the URL below. Lajos went on to mention the different players that will have a role in using the system and the proposed content.

The Draft specification; first architecture variants and schedule of development were completed in 2009. The Preliminary implementation plan should be ready early 2010 with the development and implementation due to take place in 2010-2011.

<http://www.terena.org/activities/tf-msp/meetings/20100204/20100204-crm-niifi.ppt>

11. GÉANT Partner Portal
A new way to manage your GÉANT services, Tom Fryer, DANTE

Tom began by describing the various disparate elements for ordering; revising and viewing service subscriptions that NRENs had used in the past. He then went on to describe the new integrated Partner Portal which is a website dedicated to GÉANT NRENs and their service subscriptions. There was a presentation of how the interface will look and feel from the NRENs perspective. During February 2010 the new system will be field trialled and Tom invited NRENs to sign up to assess the interface and system. The system will be launched in two phases so that during second quarter of 2010 it will be live with a fully automated back-end.

<http://www.terena.org/activities/tf-msp/meetings/20100204/20100204-geant-partner-relations.ppt>

12. HEAnet's Client Database - Brian Boyle, HEANET

In common with most other NRENs, the HEANET client relationships had started informally in a people driven way and grown organically. From 1997-2003 it was based on Microsoft Exchange mainly being used for its calendar; email and contacts functionality. The data it contained was unstructured and never used full functionality. In 2003 it was decided to migrate to an Open GroupWare (OGO) platform. Again the system was primarily used for calendar and contacts but the data was structured in a more formal way. The system became used for many tasks including: webmail; the production of bulletins and project management. By 2008 it had become hard to maintain and was very difficult to expand.

With their better understanding of the requirements HEANET surveyed the market but found commercial offerings too much orient to commercial organisation focussed on sales and revenue generation. As a consequence the job of implementing a suitable system was handed to the internal software development team. This meant that the new system could be developed with open interfaces to existing services such as LDAP and HTTP whilst also integrating the email and calendar systems with the possibility for extension to provide additional capabilities such as provisioning and ticketing. Brian presented the client database model and said that the system was implemented using: Ruby on Rails; MySQL and Ubuntu. He went on to demonstrate some of the web-based interface screens including the drill down capabilities.

In conclusion he said that the system was very simple and extensible and already has the calendar function integrated. It works well but he pointed out that HEANET has a relatively small number of clients with 55 main institutions with around 2000 people to keep track of.

<http://www.terena.org/activities/tf-msp/meetings/20100204/20100204-heanet-client-db.ppt>

13. CRM at SURFnet, Walter van Dijk, SURFnet

Walter reported on the CRM system in use at SURFnet which is based on the SugarCRM - Commercial Open Source CRM. He explained that it has been in use for 5 or 6 years and they are not so happy with it. The intention is to develop something new based on Open Source.

Walter also demonstrated the SURFnet dashboard. Dashboard is an online web application that provides the connected institution with an overview of SURFnet's services. Dashboard is completely independent from the CRM.

<http://www.surfnet.nl/en/diensten/hulp/Pages/Dashboard.aspx>

14. Account Advising at SURFnet, Walter van Dijk, SURFnet

Introducing the topic of Account Advising, Walter presented the organisational structure of SURFnet along with the three activities: Account Advising; Community Support and Communications and Marketing. He went on to explain how these three related outlets interface with one another and with the SURFnet Product Managers.

Responsibility for services and customers are split into two functions or roles:

- Account Advisor - Every customer has a dedicated account advisor who is their primary interface to the SURFnet service-portfolio
- Every SURFnet-service has a Product Manager (PM) & Technical Product Manager with the PM being responsible for all customer related aspects

The priority for 2010 is to strengthen the role of the advisers by a number of activities that bring them into close contact with the customers. Product management will be focused on "priority services" such as: SURFflightpaths, SURFederation and Online Multimedia Cooperation.

In answering questions from the floor, Walter explained how the staff are very technical and can answer very detailed and specific questions about their services directly without the need to refer the customer elsewhere. He also went on to explain the way in which the organisational structure enables SURFnet to negotiate national "deals" for the community, pointing to how Google has agreed to connect to SURFid system for authenticating SURF community Google Mail Users.

Alberto remarked that Account Management and CRM are topics that interest both TF-MSP and TF-CPR and they would be included in the agenda of the joint meeting on 31st May.

Action: John Dyer – Ensure Account Management and CRM are on the joint TF-MSP/TF-CPR meeting agenda for 31st May.

15. SURF Quality Guard (SURFopzichter), Walter van Dijk, SURFnet

The background for SURF Quality Guard (SURFopzichter) is that institutes will use more cloud services for their primary processes (e.g. e-mail, SharePoint). Institutes will deliver more and more services outside the campus (to home workers, part time students, other institutes and so on). The availability of these services is responsibility of the institutional IT department and SURFopzichter is a way of helping these departments manage these services.

Walter presented the SURFopzichter architecture, some screen shots from the system and the roadmap for its development. He invited other NRENs to get involved in the future development of the system or to consider acquiring the system from SURFnet.

<http://www.terena.org/activities/tf-msp/meetings/20100204/20100204-surfnet-quality-guard.ppt>

16. Date and Time of Next Meeting

The next meeting of TF-MSP will take place jointly with members of TF-CPR on Monday 31st May 2010 just before TNC2010 in Vilnius, Lithuania

The following TF-MSP meeting is expected to take place in September 2010.

17. Open Actions

Reference	Who	Action	Status
20100204-01	JD	Follow-up activities from EQUAL: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• BoF at TNC 2010• Video conference for core steering grp• Contact MAAWG	NEW
20100204-02	JD	Update ToR and send to TEC for approval	DONE
20100204-03	AP	Speak to Diego Lopez about using federations as an example of a thematic workshop	NEW
20100204-04	WvD	Presentation on changes to charging for services at SURFnet at a future TF-MSP meeting	NEW
20100204-05	JD	Add CIRENSE to a future MSP meeting agenda.	NEW
20100204-06	JD	Ensure Account Management and CRM are on the joint TF-MSP/TF-CPR meeting agenda for 31 st May	NEW
20100204-07	KS	Make "evolving role of account management at BELNET " presentation at future TF-MSP meeting	NEW Held over from Feb 2010

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List of Participants

In person at the meeting room at GARR		
Lajos	Balint	NIIF-Hungarnet
Claudia	Battista	GARR
Martin	Bech	UNI-C
Brian	Boyle	HEAnet
Tomi	Dolenc	ARNES
John	Dyer	TERENA
Steve	Hogger	JANET(UK)
Gabriella	Paolini	GARR
Alberto	Perez Gomez	Red.es/RedIRIS
Koen	Schelkens	BELNET
Magnus	Strømdal	UNINETT
Sabrina	Tomassini	GARR
Walter	van Dijk	SURFnet
Gloria	Vuagnin	GARR
By Video link		
John	Chevers	DANTE
Tom	Fryer	DANTE
Sabine	Jaume-Rajaonia	RENATER
Paul	Maurice	DANTE

Apologies

Massimo	Carboni	GARR
Harri	Kuusisto	Funet / CSC
Yannis	Mitsos	GRNET
Maurice	van den Akker	SURFnet