

1st TF-VVC meeting
16 November 2004
Via H.323 video conference

Author: Baiba Kaškina

Participants:

Pantelis Balaouras	GRnet
Rodrigo Castro	RedIRIS
Mirosław Czyrnek	PSNC
Erik Dobbelsteijn	SURFnet
Alessandro Falaschi	University of Roma
Franca Fiumana	CINECA
Jose M. Fontanillo	RedIRIS
Bartolomiej Idzikowski	PSNC
Zlatko Jelacic	CARNet
Baiba Kaškina	TERENA
András Kovács	NIIF/HUNGARNET
Michal Krsek	CESNET
Mihály Mészáros	NIIF/HUNGARNET
Rui Ribeiro	FCCN
Jan Ruzicka	CESNET
Harri Salminen	CSC / Funet-TV
Egon Verharen	SURFnet
Steve Williams	UKERNA

Apologies:

Dan Mønster	UNI-C
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1. Welcome and roll call

Egon welcomed the participants of the first official TF-VVC meeting. The focus of this meeting would be to describe the plans for each of the activity areas and work items. Egon made a roll call to see who had joined the meeting and thanked András and HUNGARNET for hosting it.

2. Agenda bashing

Egon proposed to start the meeting with a couple of announcements. No other changes to the agenda were made.

Egon gave a short report of the meeting of another TERENA task force – TF-EMC2. He was invited to their meeting to present the TF-VVC task force. The possible collaboration between the task forces was discussed. Egon thought that they could collaborate in the following areas - B: Content Delivery Infrastructures, J: Access control to video resources, L: End-to-end measurements. He encouraged others to contact TERENA, himself or Diego Lopez from RedIRIS to start some joint activities. Some people from TF-EMC2 will be invited to the next TF-VVC meetings.

Egon reminded the group about the survey on the video conference resources in Europe. So far the updated information has been received from 9 countries. He encouraged representatives from other countries to send their input. The results of this survey could be used for other European projects, e.g. GN2, and other task forces, to assist their intentions to use H.323 video conferencing. The TF-VVC group also could benefit from wider group of users; it could receive more feedback and suggestions for improvements.

3. Work item deadlines and “how to start a work item”

Regarding the deadlines for the deliverables, Egon said that most of the task force’s work should be presented at TNC2005. He asked Steve to inform others about the possibilities to submit papers for the TNC.

Steve said that the Call for Papers for the TNC was published and the deadline for submission was 30 November 2004. A full paper was not yet needed, it could be complemented later. He encouraged everyone to submit their short papers/extended abstracts in order to get a slot in the main programme of the conference. The other possibility would be to respond to the call for recent results which would be published in January 2005. For this call less conference sessions would be available, therefore Egon suggested people not to wait.

Before or after the TNC a TF-VVC task force meeting would be held. Egon would not participate in person but he thought that all the activity leaders should have some first year results to show in this meeting.

It was reminded that the TF-VVC task force has very open Terms of Reference which allowed introducing new activity areas and work items. At the beginning of the task force 12 activity areas had been identified, the list could be complemented or changed. The procedure how to start a new work item should be agreed upon.

Baiba told about her proposal on how to start a work item. It was sent to the TF-VVC mailing list and put on-line as well (<http://www.terena.nl/tech/task-forces/tf-vvc/start-work-item.html>). The procedure will be very informal: a person who would like to start a new work item or activity area, should identify the goals, deliverables, deadlines and contributors of that item. Egon asked if anyone had any comments about the procedure. No comments were received and the procedure was approved.

4. Discussion of Activity areas and Work items

Egon asked each activity area and work item leader to describe their plans and ideas.

A: Various guides relating to providing voice, video and data collaboration services

Rui told the group about the project he was involved in. FCCN has started the project “Projecto ESTUDIOS “ (“Videoconferencing Studios”) which would build 6 rooms capable of producing and receiving video streams. That was a complex project which required a know-how guide for the community. Rui hoped to produce that document in English as well. At the time of the meeting the project was half-way and the documentation would be produced later. The main objectives of the documentation would be to talk about the preferred hardware, audio systems, cabling, screens, projectors, software and other issues. Some specific topics were also pointed out, e.g. right usage of the video cameras showing the audience, usage of the smart ports, etc.

Zlatko commented that CARnet was involved in a similar project with 14 rooms. He could contribute their guides and effort. The result could be the joint documentation or two opinions about the same topic.

ACTION 1.1 – Rui to inform the TF-VVC mailing list about the details of the FCCN project.

B: Content Delivery Infrastructures for Live Streaming

Alessandro asked to change the activity name so that it would reflect his developments for the live streaming rather than for video on demand (VoD). Some of the OpenCDN developments could be used for the VoD as well, i.e. OpenCDN closest surrogate to the client discovery. Egon agreed with him.

Alessandro explained his plans in the framework of this activity area. He would like to collaborate with four other activity areas, i.e. D: Metadata, C: Content Access Portal, E: Academic Netcasting Channel, J: Access control to video resources. The following work items were mentioned: guide to the OpenCDN configuration and use; extension of the OpenCDN architecture to the Helix Universal server and Windows Media server; some advanced development including the usage of the domain suffixes; a node auto configuration; a GUI for entities configuration and resulting distribution topology analysis.

Egon thought that Alessandro ideas were very interesting and the results could be very valuable. He told the group about other development in this area, i.e. Roger Bolam from UKERNA has worked on the content delivery infrastructure on demand. It was agreed to invite Roger to participate in the next TF-VVC meeting and to update the group about his activities.

ACTION 1.2 – Egon to contact Roger Bolam from UKERNA and invite him to participate in the TF-VVC activities.

Egon also told about the SURFnet's streamsplitting approach in this area. They have created some successful projects, together with other ISPs and commercial companies were interested in paying for usage of their architecture. SURFnet's own streamsplitter can also function as a multicast/unicast gateway, and IPv4/IPv6 gateway for live streams. In general he would like to contribute to this activity area.

ACTION 1.3 – Egon to send the links from the SURFnet's projects to the TF-VVC mailing list.

András asked whether Alessandro was planning to support Windows Media server as well. Alessandro replied that so far he had written only support for the Darwin streaming server, but one of his students was porting the OpenCDN software to the Helix Universal platform. He would appreciate contributions from others, particularly porting for the Windows Media platform.

C: Content Access Portal

Egon said that SURFnet had a portal. They were working to create a video library, which could offer information about the video resources in other places. Therefore it would be necessary to describe existing information in other places which would require collaboration with metadata and access control activities. Also digital rights management would become a hot topic.

Egon would like to start the work item with making an inventory about the publicly available video libraries and portals. He knew that other NRENs, e.g. UNI-C, CARnet have similar systems. A joint database about the video resources would imply many issues, i.e. languages,

access rights, allowed frequency to use particular resources, etc. The inventory should investigate the existing libraries, their setup. Egon would like to discuss with the group requirements for the content access portal and later to devise some recommendations. He thought that discussions would be more administrative than technical.

Harri added that Funet also had a portal – MEDAR (<http://tv.funet.fi/medar/>). This portal was in English, but it used a different metadata standard, therefore a metadata conversion would be required to exchange the information. Egon agreed that the metadata conversion should be a serious topic. See D.

D: Metadata

Harri continued discussion about the metadata issues. Funet's content access portal was almost finished, some more testing was needed and additional interfaces for exchanging the content. So far the content has been produced by the Funet's staff only. Harri has written the report about the metadata with references to other sources. He wondered if the TF-VVC group would need a common metadata scheme for collaboration.

The question also was whether it would be necessary to work with live metadata or to take care about the synchronization of the time only. Harri thought that apart from the time issue, VoD and live streaming metadata would be similar. He asked if anyone else was using different schemas. Egon said that he liked to learn from other experiences as well. He proposed writing some guidelines for the shared model and to contribute to this activity area.

Michal thought that a common model would not be the best approach. Instead all content access portals and their metadata models should be described and the conversion should be developed. It would be very important to be able to harvest the data about all the available video and audio content and to search within these data.

Egon and Harri agreed with him. Harri said that one common standard and large system would not be the right approach, but some standards should be adopted, because it would not be possible to develop conversion from all possible formats. He also thought that this would imply a lot of financial and administrative issues. The example of the Moving images collection in the US was mentioned. Egon agreed that creating of common portal could be outside the scope of the task force. Instead the distributed index for searching should be developed. Harri thought that two approaches could be used, i.e. metadata exchange, a central portal which would be looking for other content. It was agreed to investigate this topic further.

András said that they would like to be involved in CAP and metadata activity areas. HUNGARNET has a VoD portal and they would like to share their experience.

E: Academic Netcasting Channel (Live Streaming Infrastructure)

Michal spoke about the Academic Netcasting Channel (ANC: <http://live.academic.tv/>). The ANC was almost finished and all the activities should be focused on dissemination and marketing of the portal. The potential users should be motivated to submit information and to the portal. A small addition could be to make the portal more flexible, e.g. to offer the possibility to change to design, to make it easier adoptable.

Egon said that he liked very much the possibility to get information for the Electronic Programme guide from the ANC. Michal added that he would welcome ideas about new enhancements.

Harri added that there was an initiative in the US to create a DV guide for high end videos. In the future that would be a live announcement portal; so far it was only a webpage. He thought that both portals should collaborate. Egon and Harri were participating in both groups and they should advertise both portals and support their collaboration.

F: Global Dialing Scheme

Egon has presented the GDS initiative at the TNC, also with a workshop. There were still countries in Europe not connected to the GDS and Egon would like to help them to join others. That was a joint effort together with UKERNA.

Baiba spoke about the initiative to update information about the video conferencing resources in Europe. She hoped to have some results very soon.

Harri asked about the possibilities to get information about the countries which were not represented in TF-VVC. He offered to help with information about the Nordic countries. Baiba noted that the results from Norway were already received. Egon agreed that it was a problem to get information for sites not participating in VVC and thought that TERENA could help with contact information for other NRENs. He also mentioned that the TNC would be a good place to meet people.

ACTION 1.4 – Harri – to forward information about the VC resources survey to other Nordic countries.

Egon added that GDS was a finite scheme and other dialing schemes should be investigated as well. It could be a separate work item.

G: Integration of conferencing, streaming and data collaboration systems

András spoke about the third work item “Best practice document on archiving video conferences”. So far they have been using video recorders, but he would like to look into possible methods, products in the market, metadata, etc. to describe this process properly. He hoped to get from vendors some equipment for testing. He proposed to start with asking for other experiences in the TF-VVC and ViDe mailing lists.

Regarding the first work item “Best practice report on integration of VC, IM, Presence and data sharing components”, Egon said that they have some experience in SURFnet with integrating different systems. He asked people to inform Erik about other experiences with integrated real time systems.

H: High-end/quality systems

Egon told the group that some years ago there was a seminar in Edinburgh about the high-end systems and experiments. Since then many things have changed and it would be interesting to organise a new workshop. Egon is a member of the Internet2 working group related to the high-end systems. There he could describe the experiments, learn from others about necessary requirements to create high quality streams.

Egon’s goal would be to organise another workshop. Harri proposed to adjunct it to the TNC. Others disagreed, because the TNC week usually was very full already. Egon thought that it could be organised together with another TF-VVC face-to-face meeting and have another half day tutorial/workshop so the programme would be interested enough to come. Egon and Baiba will discuss possibilities to organise together the meeting and the workshop.

ACTION 1.5 – Egon and Baiba – to discuss possibilities to organise together the TF-VVC face-to-face meeting and a workshop about the high-end-quality systems.

I: Usability - improving user interfaces

Egon reminded the group about the idea about this activity area. The group could represent the European Research and Education community and contact equipment vendors to ask for improvements required. He discussed some needs for the VC software.

No fixed plans and no leaders for this area have been identified so far, therefore Egon asked for volunteers.

J: Access control to video resources

Jose said that in the framework of this activity they planned to describe access control providing access to restricted video resources in a distributed mode. The authentication should be an issue for the user's local organisation, but the information providers should have full control over their resources. They would work on an implementation to Darwin Stream Server that would allow access control to the VoD and live video. It would be based on passing parameters in the rtsp URL from the content access portal of activity area C.

He mentioned two work items, i.e. Video Control Access plug-in for the Darwin Stream Server with deadline 1 March 2005, Description of different ways to implement control access to video resources, deadline 1 June 2005.

K: IP telephony deployments

Erik spoke about the work item "Setting up SIP.edu services". Two implementations were already in place in Europe and he asked if anyone knew about others. His goal would be to make the European version of the SIP.edu – a SIP.eu. He would like to make an inventory about the existing initiatives and support them as much as possible. Another issue here could be anti-spam measures. He believed that SIP would be spammed very soon.

He asked people to contact him if they needed help or information about setting up and using SIP.edu. He could create a separate mailing list if the interest would be sufficient. Another idea would be to write a SIP cookbook, but he could not give any more details.

L: End-to-end measurements

Egon spoke about the idea to have this activity area in order to be able to diagnose problems when video conferences or IP calls would not be performing well. He agreed that it would be a more suitable activity for other (lower layer related) task forces. Some people were interested in this activity but no particular plan or work items have been specified. He thought that the main activity could be sharing experiences of using various monitoring tools to diagnose the problems rather than creating of new tools.

Michal suggested that a permanent testing infrastructure could be created in order to test particular signal or service. He thought that it could be a rather expensive project. Egon agreed with him, he thought that it again should be an activity for people working with lower layers. He suggested people to contact their network engineers and to discuss possibilities to create some testing infrastructure.

Egon mentioned that the Internet2 ResearchChannel working group will set up a multicast beacon to test multicast sending and receiving. He thought that something similar could be created for other services.

5. Summary, action items

Egon summarised the meeting. He said that he was very glad to learn about all the plans for activities in the framework of TF-VVC. He encouraged people to start new work items if they would be doing something which was not covered with the existing TF-VVC tasks and describe them following the procedure outlined above.

Baiba asked people to submit some information about the existing activity areas and work items to put on-line. It was agreed that Baiba would remind each work item leader.

ACTION 1.6 - Baiba – to remind the activity area and work item leaders to provide information for the TF-VVC website.

Resulting action items

- 1.1 Rui to inform the TF-VVC mailing list about the details of the FCCN project.
- 1.2 Egon to contact Roger Bolam from UKERNA and invite him to participate in the TF-VVC activities.
- 1.3 Egon to send the links from the SURFnet's projects to the TF-VVC mailing list.
- 1.4 Harri – to forward information about the VC resources survey to other Nordic countries.
- 1.5 Egon and Baiba – to discuss possibilities to organise together the TF-VVC face-to-face meeting and a workshop about the high-end-quality systems.
- 1.6 Baiba – to remind the activity area and work item leaders to provide information for the TF-VVC website.
- 1.7 Egon – to ask for contact details of the other user communities.

6. Date and time of the next meeting

The next TF-VVC meeting will be held on 2 February 2005 at 14:30 CET via H.323 video conference.

The backup date for this meeting was suggested 3 February 2005.

Regarding the face-to-face meeting two possibilities were mentioned, i.e. before or after the TNC in June 2004 or somewhere else together with some workshop in April 2005. It should be discussed in more detail in the TF-VVC mailing list.

7. Any other business

Egon noted that he is the member of the Internet2 Application strategy council and they have decided to create a new working group in Internet2 – Real Time Collaboration Coordinating Committee (RTCCC). Egon will participate in this WG, but another person to be a liaison between Internet2 and European activities would be needed. He asked for volunteers.

Egon also mentioned that there was a user community around the SURFnet's video portal. He wants to know whether such communities have been identified in other countries. He would like to help establishing contacts between different user communities to share their experiences. Egon would send an email to the TF-VVC mailing list to ask for contact details of the other user communities. He also mentioned that the SURFnet's user community has

presented its experiences in a few conferences (DIVERSE, EduCause) and it was a big success. Michal asked whether this activity could be a part of the activity area A. Egon thought it was a good idea.

ACTION 1.7 – Egon – to ask for contact details of the other user communities.

The formal part of the meeting was concluded, but technical discussions were continued. András proposed to use their MCU for meetings of smaller groups and offered accounts for the work item leaders. Harri added that VRVS community of Funet could be used as well. Later the searching portal and others topics were discussed.