

9th TF-VVC meeting
May 18, 2006
Face to face meeting in Catania

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Participants

András Kovács	NIIF/HUNGARNET
Uli Schwen	Max-Plank Society
Jesus Alcober	i2Cat Foundation
Fabio Vena	SWITCH
Dan Mønster	UNI-C
Gitte Kudsk	UNI-C (for TF-PR)
Helle Meldgaard	UNI-C
Antonio Pinizzotto	CNR-IIT
Jan Růžička	CESNET
Harri Salminen	CSC/FUNET
Nuno Gonçalves	FCCN
Erik Dobbelsteijn	SURFnet
Dimitris Daskopoulos	AUTH/GRNET
Jani Tiihonen	CSC
Jari Miettinen	CSC/FUNET
Miroslav Vožnák	CESNET
Egon Verharen	SURFnet
Valentino Cavalli	TERENA
Cătălin Meiroșu	TERENA

Apologies

Alessandro Falaschi University of Roma

1. Welcome

Egon welcomed the participants to the 9th TF-VVC meeting. He apologised in advance for having to leave before the end of the meeting and called for new leadership for the successor of TF-VVC.

He then described the technical setup of the conference. The MCU was provided by SWITCH, who have also setup a Breeze room for sharing the slides in real time.

2. Agenda Bashing

Egon presented the agenda and the goal of the meeting. A presentation from Gitte Kudsk representing TF-PR was added to the agenda that was previously announced on the mailing list.

3. Talk by TF-PR representative

Gitte introduced TF-PR, an initiative that aims to help members of the other TERENA task forces promote the results of their collaboration. TF-PR could help in reaching the right audience everywhere, for example by advertising event meetings or preparing press releases. Gitte reminded the audience that news is news only if it is related to current events. TF-VVC and other task forces could send people to TF-PR meetings.

Egon proposed that as TF-VVC is finishing the work, we could use TF-PR to publicise the results. Erik asked whether there are already TF-PR people appointed to the other task forces. Gitte answered that TF-PR currently has representatives only in TF-LCPM.

4. Action items

A brief review highlighted the fact that all the action items from the last two meetings were either done or no longer of interest, so they could be considered closed. No objections from the audience, so all the outstanding action items from the previous meetings are closed.

5. Presentations on the activity areas

Activity area A

Rui could not participate to the meeting, neither in person or online. However, prior to the meeting he sent a document to the tf-vvc mailing list describing the result of his activity. Nuno added that this document could be turned in a cookbook that universities and other entities connected to the NREN could just read and apply. Egon asked Catalin to make the document available on the TF-VVC page.

Action item: Catalin to add Rui's document GOOD PRACTICE GUIDE FOR VOICE, VIDEO AND DATA COLLABORATION on the TF-VVC activity A webpage.

Activity area B

Alessandro could not join for this meeting. He updated the progress report on the work that he did. He also pointed out that he could not do additional research without a network of sites, and that too few people deployed OpenCDN. Egon thanked Alessandro for his work and made a brief summary for the people present, pointing out to the OpenCDN webpage (<http://labetel.ing.uniroma1.it/opencdn/>) for more details.

Activity area C (and other items under Egon's responsibility)

This work item was initially aimed at coordinated actions with the Internet2 Research Channel. Unfortunately, nothing really happened in this direction. However, partners in this work item built a prototype portal (OIA) and provided example pages. CESNET used OIA to harvest information from several portals. The idea of an EU project in this area was discussed, but it turned out that most of the potential participants either had internal portals, or closed ones, or their portals did not have an API and there was no time for people to develop such an interface. Although there is no real deliverable, this activity brought together a group of people and there is hope for proposing an EU project in the area. People that would be interested in participating in such project should contact Michal Krsek from CESNET.

Activity area F

SURFnet performed a survey on real-time group communication and collaboration services in support of international projects, on behalf of TERENA. The information on Video Conferencing services was updated. The webpage was restructured and now contains a list of all the production services, with links to contact persons. One potential idea for improvement would be to add a list of the experimental projects to the website.

When the work on GDS started within TF-VVC, this was the only mechanism for international communications and people wanted to extend its scope. However, several competing technologies exist today. A BoF session on one of these technologies (SIP) was held at TNC 2006 and there are ongoing discussions on coordinating further work in this area through a new TERENA task force.

Action item: (All) to provide input on which information should be kept.

Egon reminded the audience that UNC no longer runs GDS. Currently the gatekeeper moved to Internet2. Members of the TF-VVC community discussed whether TERENA might host the ViDeNet directory and documentation. Catalin said that, at Valentino's proposal, TERENA might indeed host the documentation as long as the community volunteers to keep it up to date. The hosting of the directory information still needs to be discussed and the exact scenarios involved need to be better understood at TERENA before taking a decision.

Activity area H

Erik reported that a workshop on High-Quality Video over IP was organised in November 2005 (<http://www.terena.nl/news/archive/2005/news-hq-workshop05.pdf>). Several European NRENs participated. The workshop included a contribution from the WIDE project and a presentation from i2cat regarding HDwiki. There is a request from the community that TERENA organises a workshop on this theme during the year 2006.

Jesus quickly introduced i2cat, a non-profit foundation in Catalonia with a mission to promote research on next-generation Internet. Historically, on the uncompressed HD video transmission i2cat collaborated with the Research Channel but their software is not open source. The software developed by Ultragrid is available as open source, so i2cat is focusing on using this. Jesus described an experiment that took place on the 17th of May

featuring a stable platform for uncompressed HD video. They used Ultragrid software operating in the “below 1 Gbps” mode and JVC cameras for a transmission distance of over 25 km.

Egon thanked Jesus for his work. He considered the contribution in the automation area as being very promising. He also found the HDwiki to be a very valuable resource.

Erik asked if Jesus planned to make his HD system SIP-compatible. Jesus answered that any kind of media could be transmitted using SIP. A problem might appear when one would want to use a simple user agent to transmit with a different technology. Jesus considered that as long as the SIP client followed strictly the RFC, there won't be any problems of compatibility. Egon considered this to be encouraging.

Activity area E

There was no presentation, since Michal was not present.

Activity area G

Fabio already had a presentation on this subject at TNC: “A New, All-in Approach to the Use of e-Conferencing services”,

http://www.terena.nl/events/tnc2006/core/getfile.php?file_id=916.

Andras talked about provider scale video conference archiving / streaming. At a poll related to the existence of video conference archive, about 5 people in the audience responded positively. Fabio said SWITCH focused on archiving lectures and workshops. Egon reported that SURFnet's video portal was not really a production service – but they do archiving on a case by case basis for projects. Nuno said that FCCN only supports archiving in Windows Media format. They are able to provision these services to users. When a university asks for an MCU, FCCN could either broadcast or record the stream but recording is only done occasionally. The main reason is that almost no people in the user community thought this would be a valuable service.

Erik pointed out that archiving within the Breeze framework would make more sense because one can also store the slides. He could not quote recent statistics as most of their users were experimenting in private. Dan said that UNI-C had Breeze in a pre-pilot deployment phase, and most users record the content of the session and use it subsequently. He thought that most of the users would also do that for H323 if they could do it easily (and it would be easy to provision for the provider as well). Nuno said that FCCN is keeping an eye on the development of a successor for Starbak.

Andras defined provider scale archiving as a system that would provide H323/SIP playback interfaces for videoconferencing terminals, while providing PIN or password-based security, support for the H239 archiving standard, data export in several formats and an API between the its components.

At this point, Erik took over as chairman of the meeting as Egon left for the airport.

Activity area D

Harri talked about the Metadata survey. Unfortunately, they received only few answers to the questionnaire. He presented the results of the survey and has a list of recommendations to the community.

Erik showed how to integrate Breeze with Microsoft Sharepoint. He reported that SURFnet was in the process of interconnecting openSER, LCS, Nortel MCS and other SIP servers. They intended to do the interconnecting through openSER, but that turned up to be rather challenging. SURFnet deployed H323 conferencing and they are helping the schools in setting up the infrastructure. For people that don't have budget for professional equipment, SURFnet's suggestion would be to deploy Breeze. They only agreed to Windows Messenger because it was based on SIP and they'll try to integrate it with other technologies. For their current solution, Erik considered that integrating the user provisioning required lots of development but was well worth. Dan asked whether one can record presentations in Breeze, and Erik answered that this is possible. SURFnet developed a proxy for SSL and integrated A-Select, so that one no longer needed to login into Breeze once they login in Sharepoint. The future plans include integrating virus scanning for documents and emails. This environment can be used now for many-to-many sessions. They plan to also support a one-to-many approach for professors that want to deliver lectures. Jabber will be supported through an addition to Breeze. Also, Erik was looking into web-based messaging.

- coffee break -

Activity area K

No presentation on the activity in this area was delivered, since Saverio was not present.

Erik thought Saverio's survey was quite comprehensive. He asked everybody to send new developments in the area to TERENA.

Related to Sip.edu, Erik was aware only about the implementation in ETH. Fabio thought there are deployments also at the University of Valencia (Erik agreed) and to a university in Germany. Dimitris said that the University of Thessaloniki had yet to have SIP accounts.

Jan asked whether someone in the audience had actually identified what was really meant by sip.edu. Erik provided an example of a sip.edu deployment scenario when a student could be reached through email but also through a number listed somewhere and automatically mapped to his email address. Jan said that to his knowledge some sites in sip.edu were only reachable via numbers. Erik agreed that this constitutes a good subject for further discussion. Dimitris pointed out another problem that would need to be solved is related to finding a way of addressing users that don't have a real phone number in the current PBXs.

Erik suggested that perhaps TF-PR could perhaps help with organising more workshops at national levels about SIP deployments.

Erik concluded that the TF-VVC addressed a wide problem area with a wide area of expertise. Erik invited everybody to send overviews or links to SIP activities (even if they are on national languages) to the mailing list.

Egon prepared a few slides with ideas about the potential future for TF-VVC. Erik showed Egon's slides. Egon would define a task force as at least two NRENs that decided to work together on a particular problem or area and assigning people for that work. Such a task force should be focused on clear goals and perhaps short lived. With these definitions in mind, Egon identified several areas covered by the current TF-VVC that might be approached in different taskforces in the future: content access portal, European VC coordination, offer an alternative to the hosting of GDS material now that Vide will not longer host it, enhanced communication services. An additional item mentioned contributing to the Visits initiative. Egon also considered the need expressed by several TF-VVC members to maintain the community, by ensuring that the tf-vvc mailing list is supported after the mandate of the task force ends at the end of August.

He also suggested that Special Interest Groups might be formed as wider discussion forums to cover the Special Interest Areas highlighted by the TERENA TAC.

Dan could comment on each of the points exposed by Egon and Erik. He would like to see the successor of TF-VVC as a discussion forum. Erik agreed that all the members of TF-VVC have benefited from the synergy generated by a wider forum dealing with different subjects.

Catalin mentioned TERENA's offer to host the ViDeNet documentation and further discuss with the community on the need for hosting the directory. He also thought that the TF-VVC mailing list could be maintained by TERENA after August.

Fabio pointed out that Special Interest Groups might a good idea since many NRENs have interest in these areas, but actually finding the resources to contribute real work would be more difficult.

Dan ran a quick poll on the audience on who would be interested in contributing to a content access portal. Two people could contribute actively, but nobody offered to lead such activity.

Andras thought that an EU-level videoconferencing service would be a good idea. The GN2 would be a very good place for implementing it. He thought that the study towards defining such a service should restart from zero. There should be coordination from TERENA and TERENA should help organising face to face meetings for the potential contributors to such project. Fabio considered that the overhead of a formal Task Force (electing chairman, writing terms of references, etc.) would be too much for items that have a restricted scope and expected to be short lived.

A poll on active contributors from the audience to a European videoconferencing coordination working group resulted in Andras and Dimitris, but others would be welcome to join. The outcome of such working group should be a high level view architectural document for a videoconferencing service that could later be implemented in GN2.

Dimitris thought that a European videoconferencing service should offer support for peering in general. To him, peering issues were more about ViDeNet and GDS rather than SIP. Erik and Fabio disagreed, on the grounds that in their view the worlds of SIP and GDS should not be peered in a global way. Dimitris thought that at the NREN and campus level, the same people that implemented the GDS that would implement SIP as the next-generation technology.

Fabio announced that a draft Terms of Reference document for a new task force on Enhanced Communication Services (ECS) will be discussed publicly as soon as the new sip-bof-tnc mailing list is operational. This new task force would be the spin-off of the Activity Area K in TF-VVC.

Erik polled the audience whether people would be interested in having a next-generation GDS solution. About 6 people raised their hand in agreement. Dan thought it would be nice to keep GDS running. But he did not use the directory. Nobody in the audience used the directory – Dimitris thought it was mainly unused anyway. Dan considered the zone admin area to be the most useful part of ViDeNet. Erik pointed out that there is a GDS admin mailing list handling issues in this area.

Erik suggested discussing on the tf-vcv mailing list whether ENUM would be enough as a successor of GDS or not. Erik offered to make a template database for all the people involved as GDS admins and make it available as a SURFnet group. The information in this database would not be synchronized with the world gatekeeper, currently maintained by UKERNA. Dan suggested proposing this on the ViDeNet mailing list.

Valentino pointed out that in order to collaborate in Visits (now an established project), people from TF-VVC should just contact Rob Symberlist, who delivered a talk on this subject at TNC 2006.