Overview
TF-CPR held an afternoon joint meeting with TF-MSP in between separate meetings of the two task forces. The focus of the joint meeting was marketing.

List of participants

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<td>Toby Young</td>
<td>DANTE</td>
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Agendas & slides are at:  

List of actions and conclusions on page 10.
Welcome: Introductions and agenda

*Gitte Kudsk & Walter van Dijk*

**Hands up and discuss**

*Walter van Dijk*

Which participants have ‘marketing’ explicitly named in their job title / description? 6 people

What is marketing?

SURFnet has core marketing (product managers) / marketing-comms. Marketing is how you put a service into market, segmentation, pricing, business case. One aspect is how to communicate about service to market = 4th P.

John – Marketing is not just selling and communications, it begins in strategy, understanding customers, ensuring have right products and can deliver them properly and supporting that. Includes everyone in the organisation.

Alberto – agree with John, but too little in practice at RedIRIS as only 20 people, mostly techies, only 1 for organising events, comms etc. so she can’t specialise – need to organise the techies to be involved – how to make the business case, collaborate in dissemination etc. In managing the service portfolio you need to have the overview.

Melanie – 4 Ps = Product, Place, Price, Promotion. A lot of services now are accessed through a user interface so it’s important to also think about the communication design of the interface and does it do the service justice. How do you knit it together so that users get what they need in the way they need. Even a year ago the name ‘marketing’ was contentious word.

Alberto – yes people thought it made us look too commercial / competitive, but we use it in internal processes to be prepared. Not the M word to be avoided. Some people in the community are against it though not against promotion.

Is that sentiment growing / decreasing?

Alberto – I infer it’s becoming acceptable

Lonneke: It’s essential if NRENs can show added value to users.

Melanie – maybe it’s just a lack of understanding of what marketing means and what the breadth of it is.

Q: Do we need to educate the managers?

Christian – At ACOnet we still have IT departments of our customers as our direct customers and avoid bypassing them and promoting directly to end users etc. This is a delicate path to take - have to convince them to take part in marketing, but therefore risky to use the term as it is used in the commercial world. Need to advertise towards end users together as a group.
Martin: we use same word but mean something different. Although value of network is not lost if people don’t know about it, it has greater value if people do know.

CESNET: marketing for NRENs is mainly about pro-active care for our communities.

David (Janet) – having been there for about 10 years, now have very active team focused on marketing. Community never thought it was bad, more internal disapproval because assume bad to look commercial. Users are bombarded with marketing and if we don’t keep up we get left behind.

Maria – EENet never before had strategy, will get one this year, so this will help to set goals etc.

Lajos – Marketing can just be about telling something good about what we’re thinking about offering. But more and more frequently we talk about missing business model of our activities. NREN often didn’t think about cost elements and how prices compared with other suppliers.

Melanie – funding models are different for all NRENs, but many receive public funds so could argue negligent not to do marketing in order to best spend our resources.

Toby – hear ‘selling’, ‘commercial’, and ‘marketing’ – Marketing is fundamental – understanding what communities need, providing to them and telling them what we’ve got. Selling we don’t really do.

Marketing - insights into the approach adopted in UNINETT

Lars Fuglevaag

In Norway there has been a dispute between UNINETT and tax authorities about whether UNINETT is commercial / non-profit, so UNINETT very careful about terminology.

UNINETT network part owned by NREN and part leased from commercial vendors. Challenging geography. Giga campus programme helped make best practice docs – taken up by GEANT. Busy with federations – Feide and Kalmar, eduGAIN. Have subsidiary for Norwegian HPC activity. Have a subsidiary that manages the .no domain.

2 years ago tried to look ahead to challenges and opportunities – new strategy. Saw that customers and government are increasingly preoccupied with value for money, efficiency, better services for their money. Also have new generation of ‘digital natives’ who bring their own devices to education and expect apps and services to be online all the time, whether in a private or educational setting = challenges for them and us. Have increasing competition from cloud vendors which digital natives also accustomed to using. Jury is out on MOOCs whether they will be the next big thing or not. 1/3 mandatory service fees cover connection to network, 1/3 for services that customers can choose to buy = where potential for growth lies. Must not forget our basic task = the network – otherwise could be perceived as just another service provider and some may be cheaper.

Asked our customers how they perceive us, what do they want more / less of? Good standing, respect skills etc., but some areas seen to be weaker – innovation – although we’re good at it, people didn’t know. Value for money questioned – people not sure what they’re paying for and how. Improve customer service & communications - top management didn’t know a lot about us.

New strategy of 3 points = 2 pages.

Use unique position to further collaboration, need to be better at getting services out to customers and
working together, and we need to be more adaptable and flexible.
Have made new action plan and re-organised.
Have established 2 principles to guide actions - customer first, and unified UNINETT - so everyone needs to talk with each other so customers perceive us as one. Putting together a comprehensive service catalogue including pricing using the same principles. 1st overview is online and next will systemise it so people can see how services relate to each other. Co-ordinated and proactive customer handling. New and unified visual profile – web presence includes around 5 portals, websites etc. so instead of trying to get it all into 1 place are implementing a new visual profile.

Get customer input at least every 2nd year.

UNINETT service lifecycle – what is a service? “A repeatable business activity with a known outcome”. Coffee machine analogy – need to separate ‘customer’ service from all the surrounding contracts, SLA’s etc. Then we have system services which is what everyone thought of as a service, which is technical implementation of a service. Need to separate these. If you bring these to customers without contracts SLAs etc., customers don’t use them, because what happens if it goes down etc. Need to get everything into customer service frame.

(digram - slide 7) Each Decision Gate needed to assess e.g. how much would service cost, who would buy it etc. Have at least 4 or 5 services of type where someone had a good idea but no one has responsibility for running it properly, so may need liquidation.

Found also that need to put more emphasis on deployment. Moving into e.g. lecture capture find some people want it but it doesn’t spread widely within user institution – need to get it out more widely. If don’t get enough users then danger is someone at top of institution says, “why should we pay for that?”

Take them out as demonstrations on a roadshow in collaboration with contacts at institutions. In previous company structure had separate departments for different types of services / customers, but now organised more as a production line. So now people responsible for communications are closer together with product managers etc. - in place since 1 Jan 2014.

Q: Toby. Where in this organisational structure is DG1 taken?
When it comes to new services, that would be the management team = heads of 3 departments and head of programmes. When it comes to services already in operation, could be decision of head of that department.

Q: Diana – in the customer survey it says “perceived weak on innovation” - do you know what they would have expected from an NREN?
Some of it was that we weren’t communicating enough. Some people demanded more in e.g. cloud services. So we are sitting with the biggest universities and trying to figure out how to do that.

Lars’s team sits in ‘services’ = 3 service group teams and comms team.
Campus work is part of mandatory services that customers have to pay for and that will stay with us.
SURFnet marketing

Lonneke Walk & Walter van Dijk

Walter explained the departments are organised: network, middleware, advanced services, communications & marketing, community support, account advising.

Three ‘outlets’ - comms & marketing: focus on internal and external comms.

Community support = facilitates end users’ use of services.

Account advising = product managers and manage relations with universities and customers.

Marketing is typically the responsibility of product managers, whereas operations is responsibility of technical product managers and together they make it happen.

Product management – at SURFnet means full-time dedicated function for main services and part-time for other services. Focus on existing services (forward looking activities is part of innovation teams’ scope) but this is going to change.

Focus is on functionality and support, visit users, user panels and market surveys. No-one has formal training in this, all have diff backgrounds, haven't found any one training that’s suitable. But see change in market so will check it out again. Limited set of procedures. Marketing done jointly with Comms & Marketing department.

Reasons for changing this model – customers demand closer fit with their needs. Need their earlier involvement. Financing of innovation changing from national subsidies to tariffs incurred by customers – until this year were lucky to get money from government, but that’s changing. So can downscale activities but hope not to.

‘Doing the right things’ is becoming more important as well as ‘doing things right’. Customers also want a say.

Opportunities arising from fact that ICT at campus level not workable, so centralised ICT organised at NREN level. Could become shared service centres for connected institutions. Developing services with customers more efficient than a push to them once they’re developed.

Future situation = SOLL

Product manager will be more in the lead, invest in training on business modelling, sourcing, marketing, business cases.

Increase focus on business development. Many institutions are now more aware that they’re vulnerable to security issues. If they want us to take over their firewall (as a service) that affects who is in charge of facilities on-campus, so how do you organise this so the end user thinks getting good service from ICT – e.g. wireless-as-a-service – would not have thought of that a few years ago because it was counter to agreements that we don’t go on campus.

Currently jointly developing a new storage cloud service with universities’ ICT managers and users. Becomes operational 1 April – comes from customer demand – steering group.

Focus on distinguishing characteristics of services relative to market, e.g. in trust, privacy, how deal with data compared with price / functionality. Should be able to tell that clearly. SLA’s becoming more
important – have to invest in redundancy and customers willing to pay for that. Mandatory service quality check annually.

Q: Melanie – is this what you’re working towards?
Yes we have started going in this direction - maybe achieve in around 2 years.

Q: Toby – how do you approach users on campus / dealing with soft issues – selling benefits of services?
Don’t enforce anything – community managers communicate with researchers, others deal with IT managers etc.

Q: David – how in practise do you work with customers to make sure services work?
Janet likes to think we do but mostly just talk and take their thoughts away.
Have a community cloud, presented this and functionality we could offer e.g. backup-as-a-service. Universities were immediately very enthusiastic about personal storage service. Selected 1 of group to act as senior user within steering group. Then the customers feel like they own the concept. This was second time did this, already did it with HD videoconference along with 8 teaching hospitals. Only works per sector in small groups.

Q: Alberto - Approach of changing role of NRENs. Is it better for image of service to be open about crisis or does that produce panic?
Another issue that requires close collaboration.

Q: Christian P – mentioned funds are decreasing and customers willing to pay more for redundancy. We did that about 6 years ago at request of customers – now we hear network too expensive – so how can you ensure those who say they want it now will stay committed to it later?
Good that you warn us! Hope that in 5 years many of the same managers still in charge.

Lonneke gave an overview of SURFnet’s marketing communications, which along with corporate comms, internal comms, and comms about innovation is what the comms and PR team handles.
Marketing comms defined in this context as communications about services and is different in business from consumer services (to end-users). These required a lot of effort and resources. But in services to institutions less effort was put – a lot of those services ‘sell themselves’. But things are changing, so see more need for marketing comms.

Current situation:
Had focus on innovation and corporate comms. Marketing comms wasn’t part of bigger marketing plan – was moment and action driven. Within innovation teams were a lot of deliverables around services so were communicating with them about that without contacting product manager – strange they weren’t so involved in those processes.

Now working towards having more time for marketing comms and having more contact with product managers and have more planned comms in marketing process. Inspired by LCPM of DANTE, clear process to see where comms should be involved in marketing, e.g. value proposition. All communication about a service should be checked with the product manager. Also regarding storage service are asking
how comms (marketing) can add value, can we make a toolkit of materials about a service that institutions can use to market to their own end users – were quite positive, so will try marketing together with the institutions.

Q: Melanie – how may people in your teams?
3.7 FTEs in marketing comms, around 12 for accounts advising, around 15 for others

**Belnet marketing overview**

*Laetitia Lagneau*

1st Marketing position at Belnet was in 2009. 1 person with marketing profile was hired. Needed someone to do product management. Didn’t follow a specific strategy. They were first put into customer relations department, then moved into comms. Marketing & comms department created 2 years ago. That person’s role until now is to follow up the service portfolio following the LCPM model. Have monthly meetings with all department heads, including technical, customer relations, marketing-communications, where discuss all services in their cycle, do we need to start one / kill one. She briefs the comms unit and we do information campaigns, mailings etc. together with customer information department to try to inform customers.

Challenges – internal constraints – around 10 years ago at Belnet were many technical staff and few non-techs. Now much more balanced, but marketing not alwas seen as something positive, so hard to make everyone adopt the LCPM – still occasionally get emails from people who have developed a service and we learn about it too late to promote it well and timely. External constraints include – more difficult to buy a service as have to work with public / European tenders that makes process heavy and makes it possible to follow proper LCPM. Have to convince everyone of details before tender can be done.

Measurement of actions – use satisfaction survey each year. Also monitor with one person keeping KPIs. At marketing level try to work with OTs (Operational teams) but difficult to measure impact of what we do on customers.

Since end of 2013 have management plan with strong strategic perspective. Hope it will help us to support marketing actions. In past had more technical and less strategic accent.

What values want to bring to customers – delight, expertise, efficiency and trust – think the latter very important as an NREN eg. in cloud storage context, data does not go out of the network so important for confidentiality.

- 4 strategic objectives – decided that every project started in a team must be linked to at least 1 strategic objective. So try to get participation of everyone, not just a management plan on desk unopened, it should drive everyone’s work.

1st – be a trusted partner – strong contact with community, face-to-face meetings, more on-site, more events, better online presence (web portal for customers, better website, more SM presence). Reinforce partnerships with Belgian internet exchange, with Cert.be and with local, regional and federal authorities. And broaden service delivery, need to evolve. Have good network, but it became a commodity so use it more as base for services. Focus on services and security: improve management of LCPM – force everyone to adopt this model. (how?) Offer cloud services, more focus on AAI services and federation – until now was no strategy of which services were most important for us. Now follow what’s in the management plan. So keep superior network

2nd - Professional organisation – we already are, but have to be prepared to compete with
commercials – feel need to do more to remind customers who we are and why we exist. IT Service Management ITSM = single point of contact for all incidents, service desk, take all questions into account with SLAs, limited time to answer etc. Try to take strong engagement towards the users. Need to apply attention to human resources. Don’t always have a good image as an organisation to attract new staff, and need knowledge management to keep staff knowledge strong. Need to do more with less.

DISCUSSION
Q: How do other NRENs compare with the examples presented? What are the commonalities?

Martin - Gitte is marketing manager, in our view if it stays a secret the money is wasted. We engage in advisory boards around individual services and interact with our community that way. Have leaflets, website, newsletter etc. Main event is user conference each year – 150 people from IT, supercomputing – popular because people in the machine room rarely get to go to conferences. Have portfolio management meetings several times per year. There were things mentioned in the presentations that we call outreach / PR / community engagement / awareness campaigns rather than marketing. How we mean it is close to individual sales and we don’t really do that.

Melanie – ‘PR’ as used by NRENs always meant ‘media relations’ in previous work.

Jan Gruntorad - In CESNET a special situation – last 2 years have increased infrastructure using structural funds. Now are starting campaign to get it all used. So organise events for potential users, competition for PhD students for best innovative usage – have problem to find best channel to reach decision makers / funders at universities, we want to tell them we have invested 20 million and now there is much better condition for work and need money to sustain this and upgrade in future so they need to pay more, but they need convincing. 70% operation money from government but in 3-4 years will need to buy new storage etc. and if don’t get funding will be difficult. Disappointed that universities see this as CESNET-only problem. How approach rectors, financial officiers etc.? Have working group for marketing, product marketing etc. Need training for security.

Q for Walter – do technical contacts convince financial people?
SURF has contact at board level, yearly plans and budgets are dealt with there. On service level are contact with IT guys, and in between have contract level etc., have one contact per university, 14 people involved in decision making with SURFnet.

Janet – has adopted but not embraced product management. Are two people looking after all services, and need more based on what SURFnet said, i.e. should lead but can’t do that when there are 2. Have challenged them to demonstrate value of product management function.
Toby will talk offline about this.
Martin Bech published report on TERENA website about how value of certain services helped prove value of customers’ having NREN rather than the money. If look to commercial world, they will have well defined times that a development should take and getting a product through that is well understood – delays or loss of quality cost money. Clear how much could be saved if embraced product management throughout the organisation.
Lars – agree getting the right service out in time at right price is advantage if someone controls that process. Product management requires admin and otherwise techies have to do the admin.

Roadmaps – internal documents to keep product development on track. DANTE product marketing function understands needs in good time and documents that against a roadmap so can develop and build towards a vision – restricts ability to be innovative but if have right deliverable that’s ok.

Melanie – this also shows users where you’re going and they’ll come with you today because they can see you’ll be there tomorrow.

Q – marketing research – compare services to those commercially available? Yes, e.g. how many people using Skype. DeIC customers not forced by government to buy from them so they are in situation where need to be aware of competition.

Q - Training – hard to find good PM / marketing training in NL. Could we invite someone to hold a mirror up to us, have an inspirational speaker.

Toby – DANTE had someone consultant company come and tell about PM over 3 days – was tremendous focus on pricing so they failed to understand our brief – need to be careful who we pick.

Q - Do PMs across all NRENs have same qualities / functions / demands? Can we find non-profit focused training by e.g. asking UNESCO?

Mark’s objectives as a PM – have recently recruited PM so have job description and had positive experience with training. Developing appropriate charging / funding models, difficult to know how much a customer is prepared to pay for the Janet brand as we assume can charge a premium / marketing research aspect also / how to make good business case. Toby giving training on this at PMC soon. Could he give a masterclass in future MSP / ask Ian and Jim to research this for this community.

Delivery and packaging of the service – service delivery platform, branding etc. so all customer touch-points are consistent.

Q - Area for training?
Yes. If can identify intersections between communications and marketing.

Tony – not everything is a service. A service requires a support wrapper around it.

Q: - Claudia: How do some NRENs connect with schools, is it different from being with commercial provider? In GARR we want to speak with schools as got special funding to connect them. Fewer than 50 schools were previously connected out of around 10,000. So starting with some high schools but ministry has idea to find way to move all schools to GARR, not clear who will pay for what, but even if they have funds often they don’t know what is NREN and they don’t understand the difference as compared to a commercial provider.

UNI.C connected schools. Schools = lots of work, no money. How survived – made special services for them such as firewall-in-a-box, wireless-in-a-box, they accept that or go away. How to promote use of ICT in general, take best practices etc. into schools
CESNET did course called innovation and creativity, included how to do market research, pricing, etc. will send details.

Q - Joint future collaboration
Satisfaction surveys – and how what they throw up can illuminate issues relevant to several departments in an NREN.
Mark – Janet stopped doing it because of survey fatigue but now have no contacts
Half people in room would come to a joint meeting about this.

Melanie suggested market intelligence and how it is shared within the organisations.

**Meeting summary, actions**

1) Product management training
   **Action:** Toby give a masterclass in future MSP
   **Action:** John ask Ian and Jim to research this for this community

2) Service delivery and packaging e.g. consistent service delivery platform, branding etc.
   **Action:** John and Laura identify intersections between communications and marketing with a view to arranging training in future.

3) CESNET innovation and creativity training course
   **Action:** Radovan / Josef to send information to the lists

4) Future joint activities
   **Action:** John and Laura look into possibility of a joint meeting about satisfaction surveys / market intelligence.