User Support for Distributed Computing Infrastructures in Europe

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In a worldwide distributed computing infrastructure such as EGEE (Enabling Grids for E-sciencE) one of the challenging tasks is to build and maintain a reliable user support infrastructure. During the last years the GGUS (Global Grid User Support) system has been developed as EGEE’s answer to that challenge. GGUS is designed as a centrally coordinated distributed infrastructure that integrates existing tools instead of trying to replace them.

With the series of EGEE project reaching its end in 2010 and the move towards building a sustainable infrastructure based on the national grid initiatives from a large number of European countries and governed by EGI (European Grid Initiative), it will become necessary to adapt the user support infrastructure to fit this new operations model for grid computing in Europe. The big challenge here will be scaling the infrastructure up to 40 NGIs instead of 12 ROCs and at the same time ensuring the production quality of the service provided for the user communities by the established partners. The new partners will need assistance from EGI in reaching the same high level of service.

To provide the users with a seamless access to various distributed computing infrastructures (DCI) will be one of the longer term goals of the European e-Infrastructure strategy. This will also be a key element in achieving sustainability. An area of utmost importance for this is to provide a single point of contact for a user experiencing problems with one of the infrastructures.

This presentation will describe the status of the user support infrastructure close to the transition from EGEE to EGI and present user support processes and integration plans for EGI. Additionally an outlook will be given on how a unified user support infrastructure for the major European DCIs could be realised.