

10th January 2007

Summary of User Board Discussions on Grid Only Access to UK Tier 1 Centre.

SUMMARY

The proposal to limit access to Tier 1 resources by Grid-only interfaces was discussed at the User Board meeting held on 4th January 2007. Comments were also received via email. Although, most experiments accepted the concept of Grid-only access there were a range of responses concerning the details, particularly the question of the User Interface. In conclusion:

1. As SNO expect to finish their Tier 1 work this year, they wish to be considered an exception and continue with their non-Grid arrangements until the end of 2007.
2. All other experiments/projects were comfortable with (or at least resigned to) the idea of Grid-only access from end-August 2007.
3. The precise arrangements of Grid-only access are not so clear with some experiments wishing to retain the ability to develop software and perform short interactive/batch tests for at least a subset of users.
4. Most, but not all, experiments felt there was some need to retain a User Interface (UI) at the UK Tier 1. This was partly due to genuine concerns about the limitations this would impose. It was also partly due to the timing of the proposal with experiments having limited experience of running user analysis and the perceived lack of availability of UIs elsewhere in the UK.
5. It was generally agreed that the details and timing of some aspects of the milestone (such as the UI) should be reviewed and adjusted in the light of further experience from the experiments over the next few months. The Tier 1 centre was encouraged to investigate a GSI-enabled access solution as a means of allowing local login and reduce the level of maintenance of user records.

EXPERIMENT SUMMARIES

ATLAS (Roger Jones): Although it may be initially painful,, there is a need to switch over to the new way of working. Happy with lack of UI at Tier 1.

CMS (Dave Newbold): No problem with the concept of non-Grid access, but need to retain the ability to submit jobs to UK T1 from RAL UI and be independent of problems elsewhere on Grid. Need to carefully define groups of people who can use UI. Only recently started to use Tier 1 centre for expected profile of work (e.g. relatively short reconstruction/skimming jobs), so more experience needed before rushing into deciding details of this milestone.

LHCb (Ulrik Egede/Raja Nandakumar): Concern about removing UI. Data will be distributed over six T1 centres and currently the only alternative UI for submitting analysis jobs is the overloaded lxplus at CERN. LHCb software not guaranteed to be installed at every site. Also, benefited enormously by being able to logon to worker nodes to debug production.

Question concerning AFS future also raised here and needs confirmation (stated previously that only BaBar require AFS, although other experiments "prefer" to have it).

BaBar (Fergus Wilson): Require xrootd environment.

DO (Gavin Davies): No real comment. DO uses the Tier-1 for production tasks at present so submission by a limited number of people, in Grid mode. We are now looking at analysis on the grid (we chose to start with production tasks), but its too early to really make a comment on the proposal.

MINOS (Nick West/Mike Kordosky): Can run software on the Grid. Need to retain ability to logon interactively to update code. Would be extremely helpful to small groups to have a published set of working examples showing how to read, write and catalogue data. Of course data access can take place at multiple levels so even the choice of examples would provide useful guidance. Most generally useful levels for groups such as ours would appear to be: 1) LFC and the lcg-* commands and 2) ROOT: xrootd and TGFALFile.

SNO (Nick West/Simon Peeters): The experiment should finish Tier 1 work by the end of 2007 and would therefore like to be considered an exception and carry on with their current non-Grid arrangement.

MICE (Paul Kyberd): Assumed would set up own UI and submit jobs to Tier 1. without any direct access. Would require support from Tier 1 in the case that jobs were failing or getting lost which were not clear from the diagnostics. Also, assuming that MICE RB would be on RAL site.

H1 (Dave Sankey): No issue with non-Grid access terminating in time with the GridPP2 milestone.

ZEUS (James Ferrando): ZEUS have no problem with termination of non-Grid access to the Tier 1 centre.

UKQCD (Alan Irving): Ramping up for GridPP3 era where will adopt software to Grid. No problem with August deadline as don't make any non-Grid access at the moment.

In the subsequent discussion, the impact of the loss of experiment computing posts lost in the PPGP round was reiterated. It was also emphasised by several people that the reason for investing in distributing computing for the LHC experiments was to give UK physicists the maximum opportunity to exploit the data (especially the early analyses). The experiment requirements should therefore dictate the details of any milestones rather than the other way round. Generally felt that the question of the User Interface needed to be reviewed at a later date when UIs are available elsewhere and experiments had fully tested their analysis models.