

Re-writing the digital landscape

Earlier this month EGI (European Grid Infrastructure) signed a Letter of Intent with two European Commission funded projects aiming to provide the arts and humanities with an e-Infrastructure of their own. The two projects, DARIAH and CLARIN, both signed the three-way agreement, which has the express intention of ensuring that technology developed by the two ESFRI projects and EGI are compatible and provides the best service to their users. The agreement also provides a blueprint for similar arrangements between EGI and other user communities that are interested in exploring grid technology but are temporarily constrained from establishing a Virtual Research Community.

While there is a wide range of research using the European grid, the arts and humanities are currently under represented but both DARIAH and CLARIN aim to remedy this. CLARIN (Common

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umanities) supports the wider humanities and arts community. The two projects are part of the European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures (ESFRI) programme. This initiative helps to support a coherent approach to policy-making on research infrastructures in Europe so that researchers get the resources/technologies they need.

This latest agreement cements the relationship between the 2 ESFRI projects and EGI.eu helping all three to develop common tools and technologies while exploring further opportunities for collaboration. Connecting EGI with the infrastructures developed by these two projects will have benefits for the sites within partner countries providing the resources, benefits for the countries themselves in terms of integrating the resource centres with the EGI monitoring and support services and finally, benefits for the research communities in terms of support, advice and influence over the evolving infrastructure. The first priority however is to understand the needs of the communities that DARIAH and CLARIN represent so that they can build and manage an infrastructure for their users. The areas of greatest concern are; data storage and availability, the hosting and monitoring of services as well as authentication and authorisation issues.

Chief Community Officer, Steve Brewer said: “For EGI this is the first step in establishing and welcoming a valuable new user community onto the European grid, DARIAH and CLARIN represent a broad range of interests across the arts, humanities and social sciences with, between them, a wealth of digitally-enabled methods and tools to integrate with the infrastructure.”

Outside the agreement with EGI CLARIN and DARIAH have also agreed to co-organise the SDH 2011 conference in Copenhagen later in the year. The meeting, the full name of which is “Supporting the Digital Humanities: Answering the unaskable”, will be held in the Danish capital on the 17th and 18th of November. It will provide a forum for discussing the benefits of the e-Infrastructures to the arts and humanities alongside how new forms of research can be facilitated and supported.

You can learn more about the agreement and the two projects at http://www.egi.eu/collaboration/CLARIN_DARIAH.html

More information about SDH 2011 can be found at <http://cst.ku.dk/sdh2011/>