

GridConnections

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News and Information for the Open Grid Forum Community

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Stakeholder Survey Q&A

The following article was originally published by GridToday on March 24th. The article resulted from a Q&A session with members of the OGF Tiger Team concerning the results of the stakeholder survey and plans for the future of the organization.

Why did OGF embark on this strategic process?

From time to time, all organizations need to take stock of their current situation and reevaluate their priorities. While the organization has been relatively stable, and one could argue more productive than ever, some of the primary sponsor organizations have been shifting priorities. This motivated the OGF board of directors to task a "tiger team" with answering the following questions:

- *Who are the stakeholders in the OGF?*
- *Why do they build/support/supply Grids?*
- *What are their greatest pain points?*
- *Who do they go to overcome these pain points?*
- *How do OGF's existing efforts map onto stakeholder priorities?*

We felt that answering questions such as these would help us understand where we are as an organization and where we should be going.

How has the stakeholder profile of the OGF changed over the past few years? Who currently comprises the OGF?

Surprisingly, the stakeholder profile has remained pretty consistent since the launch of OGF. Our event attendance and group participation trends tell us that our working core is very stable. The respondents to the stakeholder survey aligned pretty well with those we see engaging in our work. About 55% considered themselves either from eScience or infrastructure providers (mostly serving eScientists) and another 35% considered themselves either vendors or enterprise end-users.

Where and how did the interests of your core working members and your organizational sponsors begin to diverge?

The survey showed that there is a gap between the working core of the OGF community and OGF's traditional sponsors, specifically hardware and software platform vendors. This is true in three areas:

- 1. Goals - while achieving network scale is a broadly shared goal, the working core sees inter-organizational collaboration (and thus the tools and standards that enable it) as being far more important than the sponsor stakeholders.*
- 2. Pain points - The working core sees the development of scalable applications as its greatest problem, followed by a concern about immature technology and then interoperability. The latter reflects the high priority given to the desire to enable inter-organizational collaboration. However the platform providers, a key subset of OGF's traditional sponsors, were far more concerned with manageability and integration.*
- 3. Providers of solutions - The most telling difference however was with respect to where the various groups look to get this work done. Specifically the working core looks externally to their communities of practice and to open source, before looking internally, to standards bodies and then, finally, to vendors. The platform providers do almost the opposite or say their customers do almost the opposite, looking internally and to other vendors before looking to external communities and standards bodies. And this maps very closely to the enterprise user stakeholders.*

How will this new understanding of your community affect the organization's activities going forward?

OGF is a community that comes together because we share some set of common problems or experiences with respect to Grids and we want to give others the benefit of our experience and help each other solve our problems. We are an open community and welcome all who want to participate, whether they are academics, high performance computing specialists, enterprise end users, platform hardware and software vendors, funding agencies, partner standards organizations, etc. The output of the community is driven by the needs of the community and can take the form of best practices, standards and so forth. Prioritization will be determined by the community based on participation and on stakeholder surveys such as this.

Will OGF continue to push vendor and commercial interests, or will your focus realign around the e-science and technical communities?

The people that engage in OGF and the problems they bring and show leadership to solve are the interests that OGF will support moving forward. As a "volunteer army", OGF can and will address issues wherever there is critical mass in the community to do so. OGF has enterprise activities that seek to engage the commercial community. We hope that OGF will continue to be a place where commercial work can get done, but it will largely depend on who is engaging and willing to do the work.

What, if anything, do these findings imply? Anything about the decision to merge the Enterprise Grid Alliance and the Global Grid Forum? Might the needs of both organizations' members have been better met had the two entities remained separate?

The decision to merge the EGA and the GGF was taken by the organizations' respective members. In the case of the EGA, these members were in fact, generally members of both organizations. The overlap in interests, output and membership was such that having two organizations was confusing to the broader community and resulted in spreading resources too thin. Thus maintaining two organizations was, and still is, untenable. The OGF is structured to ensure that the work of both pre-merger organizations can continue if the membership chooses to. This has in fact been the case, as evidenced by the continuing work within the Enterprise

Community and the ongoing development of the OGF Reference Model (once the EGA Reference Model).

How will any realignment of goals and strategies affect the organization's presence in the overall IT picture? Will we still see the OGF out promoting its work, as well as grid computing in general, at various trade shows and conferences?

OGF's mission is still about accelerating adoption of grids by providing an open forum and by producing open standards. So, in that sense, OGF will continue to promote both the technology itself as well as our specific deliverables in the broader industry. OGF also has an increasingly strong message around the delivery and availability of some very useful standards for grid interoperability. Adoption of these standards is gaining significant momentum and you'll see additional promotion around these standards and other work products of OGF in the future.

What steps, both strategic and institutional, has OGF already taken in light of these organizational findings?

While there are several outcomes, many still in the early stages of definition and execution, the primary step is to prioritize and focus our efforts on those activities that OGF is best equipped to do and that our stakeholders care the most about. As a result, we are looking carefully at the spectrum of groups and activities and making sure they are highly relevant and appropriately manned by volunteers. We will continue to embrace all the work done in OGF, but we also will be giving priority to those activities that are most likely to make a positive impact. After we complete some prioritization work, we expect to simplify our organizational structure which hasn't been visited since our merger two years ago. We will also be simplifying our messaging, including reworking our website so that visitors can see immediately what we are doing and what we have produced.

Looking forward, what can we expect to see from the OGF? How will the organization's look and feel evolve in the years to come, and what types of work will drive its existence?

The answer to these questions lies in how the broader grid and distributed computing community chooses to use OGF's open community to get work done. Technologists in HPC and related environments clearly see the benefit of engaging and working within OGF so we expect this work will continue to blossom. We would like to see more technologists who build and manage grids and grid applications in commercial settings benefit from doing their work in OGF. We have had excellent conversations with IT people in several industrial sectors who know their problems and need a productive environment to solve them. At the end of the day, however, it will be up to them to bring their problems and their expertise, along with others who share the problem and are committed to solving it, to leverage the global community OGF offers. So, in short, the work done in OGF will be determined by those who bring their problems and their technical talent to solve them.

Ultimately, what kinds of results can the grid community (users, vendors, providers, etc.) expect from the OGF, and who will reap the benefits?

Our standards efforts have gained considerable momentum over the last two years and the community can expect this to continue and to expand into areas, like applications APIs, where a slightly different set of technologists will benefit. In addition to standards, we believe growing numbers of practice documents will be produced that help organizations "work around" key grid challenges in the short-term. Finally, our research activities will continue to provide guidance on how grids fit into other technologies and approaches like virtualization, clouds, and Web 2.0.

Is there anything else you'd like to add?

As we started off by saying, strategic efforts like this have to be done from time to time to optimize alignment with our stakeholders and to maximize the results of upcoming opportunities. As an example, something that we're very excited about is the OGF-Europe project funded by the European Union. This project is specifically targeted towards increasing awareness, engagement and adoption of grid technology in Europe. There will be a series of events over the next two years around specific technologies and industrial areas that OGF-Europe will organize in coordination with OGF "Global". All in all, this is a very exciting time for OGF and we feel very positive about the future.

OGF22 Reports

1. Cloud Systems Birds-of-a Feather (BoF)

The meeting, attended by upwards of 60 people, was divided over two sessions with two presentations in each, followed by discussion at the end of each talk. Interested parties can review the full set of workshop notes [here](#). The primary outcome of the meeting was that a significant activity on clouds at the next OGF is essential; with various suppliers of cloud resource invited as well as technologists and users. A [mailing list](#) has been set up for BoF participants (and anyone interested in clouds) to discuss future in OGF including planning a workshop at OGF23. One starting point will be to develop a list of important topics to begin discussing like security implications and separation of services. There is also interest in interoperability between clouds, for example Avner Algom from OGF Affiliate Israel Grid Technologies (IGT) has a group (led by IBM) interested in clouds and standardization.

2. Open Geospatial Consortium (OGC) Grid Workshop

The response to the Call for Participation for this workshop was very strong and there were more grid-enabled implementations of OGC's Web Processing Service (WPS) than anticipated, indicating the huge applicability of geospatial data across many different application domains. A key challenge is how to hide the complexity of grids and to make the end-user tools as easy to use as possible by non-specialists in geospatially-related application domains. If WPS is becoming the accepted way (dominant practice) that people in the OGC community use for their distributed processing needs, then this might very well be the way to enable that large community to adopt grid technology. There were a number of follow-on action items from this workshop:

- OGF will set-up a project on GridForge for viewing and posting documents, browsing the wiki, etc.
- Relevant groups in OGF will be encouraged to review the WPS 1.0 spec, including the HPC-Basic Profile WG, the GridRPC WG, and the SAGA WG, to better determine the breadth of supportability with grid tooling.
- OGC and OGF agreed to coordinate their meetings being held June 2-6 in Europe. OGF-23 will be in Barcelona, Spain, while the OGC Technical Committee meeting will be in Potsdam, Germany. A workshop on digital repositories, with participation by geospatially-related projects such as DEGREE and GENESI-DR, is expected at OGF23. Other candidate technical topics for this coordinated meeting include security, workflow, and programming models.
- The European Geophysical Union will be having sessions on Earth & Space Science Informatics with several sessions explicitly covering grids. European partners in the OGC-OGF collaboration may use this meeting as an opportunity to make further progress.
- OGC and OGF will explore possibilities for concrete engagement in OWS-6, a project that is currently in the planning process.
- As a result of this workshop at OGF-22, the German GDI-Grid and UK SEE-GEO projects are in discussions for further collaborations. Both projects are examining issues relating

- to providing access to geospatial information on national Grid infrastructures and have significant overlap, particularly in the area of security.
- Virtualization was mentioned several times in the workshop and OGC had a sidebar discussion about the implementation of virtualization in the GEO-Grid project (AIST, Japan). This is an opportunity as OGC is leading a related task in GEO.
 - Information Dissemination WG (INFOD-WG) was also discussed as OGC is examining event-based approaches, e.g, pub/sub. There was interest in reviewing an INFOD presentation on sensors that could benefit from using OGC Sensor Web Enablement standards.
 - Vladimir Getov (Westminster, UK), as an editor for IEEE Computer, invited OGC and OGF to co-author a paper on this collaboration, to be targeted for the November 2008 issue, just in time for SC08.

Interested parties can review the full set of workshop notes [here](#).

Sneak Peak at OGF23

The many uses of grid technologies will be examined in detail at the upcoming [OGF23](#) event in Barcelona, Spain on 2-6 June. OGF23 is the first event organized by the EU-funded project OGF-Europe, which is chartered with mobilizing and integrating the EU community on grid standards and best practices. The project will use OGF23 to launch its tutorial series and its initiatives on Digital Repositories and national and international grid interoperation.

Participants will also have a great program with a variety of sessions to choose from including:

- Keynote talks from IT and Grid thought leaders
- Demonstrations of OGF specifications in action
- Best practice sessions where today's grid deployment solutions are identified
- Standards development working sessions
- Numerous open call sessions driven by the latest needs identified by the community
- Workshops on eScience disciplines

Commercial Grid case studies will be presented through the co-location of the EU-funded BEinGRID project's Industry Days event (3-5 June) at OGF23. Results and demonstrations of over 15 different "experiments" with grids in commercial sectors will be presented.

In parallel to these commercial activities, OGF23 will feature several workshops on scientific uses of grids and other emerging technologies such as virtualization and clouds. In addition, an important part of this multi-faceted event will be the commercial exhibition where Europe-based projects and vendors will showcase their latest Grid solutions.

Important OGF23 Deadlines

1. OGF23 Call For Participation

The OGF23 [CFP](#) deadline is Friday, April 11. As with previous OGF events, we are soliciting proposals for content that supports our mission of accelerating grid adoption in both research and industry. While all proposed content related to grid technology and usage is welcome, content related to the following topics is being particularly sought:

- OGF Specification Adoption
- Digital Repositories
- Data Management in a Grid Environment

2. OGF23 Registration

[Register](#) today to take advantage of OGF23's Early Registration rate which expires on Friday, April 11! Registration is available by fax, phone or online.

3. OGF23 Hotel Reservations

OGF has secured a block of sleeping rooms at the Barcelo Sans Hotel (meeting location). Reservations must be made on or before May 4, to receive the discounted rate. Due to the

busy travel season in June, attendees are encouraged to book as early as possible. Reservations can be made by calling the hotel directly (be sure to reference 'OGF23') or [online](#).

4. Group Chair Scheduling

OGF Group Chair [session scheduling](#) will remain open until April 21.

5. Sponsorship Opportunities

[Sponsoring](#) OGF events provides numerous opportunities for your organization to gain greater visibility and recognition as a Grid leader in our global community.

6. OGF23 Student Scholarships

A limited number of [student scholarships](#) are available for qualifying students. Hosted by OGF, OGF-Europe and CoreGRID, the OGF23 student scholarship program provides a unique opportunity for students to participate in OGF program sessions and group sessions as well as network with distinguished community participants and leaders.

OGF at Street Grid 2008

OGF will be participating and sponsoring [Street Grid 2008](#) at the New York Marriott Downtown on April 28. Launched in 2007, Street Grid was hugely successful in attracting senior level architects and technologists providing an open forum to debate the hot issues of grid management and development. This year's event will continue to build on this success providing invaluable educational presentations and thought-provoking debates. This cutting-edge industry forum will examine how financial firms can further develop their grid infrastructures to meet conflicting business demands and explore some of the innovative applications that can be hosted on the grid. With an increased focus on effectively utilizing existing IT resources, there will also be high level debates on creating a dynamically global grid.

Documents Update

Recently Published Recommendations

The following documents were published in March. Congratulations to all the authors and working group members involved in getting this important work accomplished!

DOCUMENT	TITLE	TYPE	AUTHORS	AREA
GFD.127	Configuration Description, Deployment and Lifecycle Management Working Group (CDDL-M-WG) Final Report	Informational	P. Toft, S. Loughran	Management
GFD.126	2nd International Workshop on Campus and Community Grids	Informational	W. Gentzsch, D. Wallom, L. McGinnis	PGS-RG
GFD.125	Grid Certificate Profile	Community Practice	D. Groep, M. Helm, J. Jensen, M. Sova, S. Rea, R. Karlsen-Masur, U. Epting, M. Jones	CAOPS-WG

Documents in Public Comment

Prior to formally publishing a document, OGF solicits "public comments" from the greater grid community, which is an important step in the OGF document process. The following documents are currently available for public comment. Please take a moment to provide your feedback.

- [HPC File Staging Profile, Version 1.0](#)
- [Information & Data Modeling in OGSA® Grids](#)
- [OGSA® Basic Security Profile 2.0](#)
- [OGSA-DMI Functional Specification 1.0](#)

Upcoming Events

- **OGF23 Co-located with the BEinGRID Industry Event** Barcelona, Spain June 2-6, 2008
- **OGF24 Co-located with GridAsia08** Singapore September 15-19, 2008

Other Events

- **INGRID 2008 Lacco Ameno, Island of Ischia, Italy April 9-11, 2008**
3rd International Workshop on Distributed Cooperative Laboratories:
Instrumenting the Grid
- **Street Grid 2008, New York Marriott Downtown, April 28, 2008**
- **Open Source Grid and Cluster Conference, Marriott City Center, Oakland, CA, May 12-16, 2008**
Join us for the [Open Source Grid & Cluster Conference](#) to be held in May. The program will include tracks dedicated to Globus (GlobusWorld), Grid Engine (Grid Engine Workshop), and Rocks (Rocks Cluster Workshop). Other sessions will cover related open source grid and cluster software, and present cross-cutting material focused on end-user applications and grid and cluster operations.

Newsletter Contributors Needed

The purpose of the OGF GridConnections newsletter is to inform and educate the greater grid community about our activities and accomplishments. If you have any news you would like to submit for the newsletter, please do not hesitate to do so. You, our members, drive all of the significant events, activities and accomplishments of our community and we would love to hear from you. Just send an email to the [GridConnections editor](#). We welcome your input!