

"e-Infrastructure: tool for 'grand challenges' or tool for everybody?"

A "Birds of a Feather" session at AHM08,
Monday 8th September 2008 1.00-3.00pm
Lecture Room 6, Appleton Tower, Edinburgh

Organised by the Community Engagement strand
of the JISC e-Infrastructure programme

Session leaders: Alex Hardisty, Neil Chue Hong, Rob Procter, Lorna Hughes, Alex Voss, Mike Fraser.

Introduction

This BoF aims to stimulate the AHM community (including research scientists, computational scientists, computer scientists and software engineers) to actively discuss some of the key questions raised by the JISC Community Engagement projects (e-IUS, e-Uptake and ENGAGE) and to consider the implications of these questions on community engagement with research computing and e-Infrastructure in the UK, and the sustainability of e-Infrastructure and tools. We hope that this BoF will encourage greater community knowledge and sharing, and lead to better engagement between researchers, providers, developers, funders and policy makers. The questions we will discuss during the BoF can be found on page 2.

This BoF complements the AHM08 workshop on "Profiling UK e-Research: Mapping communities and measuring impacts".

Schedule

1. Introduction
 - Purpose of the BoF, format, output
 - Presentation of the context and questions (Prof. Rob Procter) 10 mins
2. Position statements:
 - e-Infrastructure for grand challenges (Dr. Shantenu Jha) 15 mins
 - e-Infrastructure for everybody (Dr. Jean-Claude Bradley) 15 mins
3. Mini-breakout groups to consider discussion questions (up to 6, each led by one of the named BoF leaders) 45 mins
4. Feedback and next steps 30 mins



engage
Engaging research with
e-Infrastructure



e-uptake
Enabling Uptake of
e-Infrastructure Services



eius
e-Infrastructure Use Cases
and Service Usage Models

Community Engagement portal: <http://www.engage.ac.uk>

Questions to be discussed

1. What do you think e-Infrastructure is and what should it be? For example, is it a tool of use only for tackling the 'grand challenges' in research or could it (and should it) be useful for all kinds of research problem?

This question is about teasing out what e-Infrastructure is for, what constitutes it, including the technical, social and organisational arrangements and what this implies for future strategic development goals and priorities.

2. To what extent is the use of e-Infrastructure essential to your research?

Does it help you to tackle what you consider to be grand challenges in your research area? If it is optional but valuable then how do we motivate people to invest effort in adoption?

3. How would you use e-Infrastructure in the future?

What is the vision you have for your research in the future? If you are using e-Infrastructure today, how would you extend this use or make it more valuable? If you are not using e-Infrastructure, what would convince you to start using it?

4. Do researchers need a clearly defined ICT environment and tool suite, or can usage be opportunistic, picking up on functionality that becomes available using light-weight "glue" and pragmatic organisational arrangements?

Should we build cathedrals or bazaars? i.e., should we wait for standards to build perfect systems or take what we have, get on with it and refactor when needed?

How does this affect reproducibility of results?

5. What would be needed to truly embed the use of e-Infrastructure in your work across the whole research lifecycle?

How should we measure effectiveness of the use of e-infrastructures? What are the inspiring use cases? What are the drivers, both rewards and punishments, which would lead to the increased uptake of e-Infrastructure?