

GÉANT Expert Group:

"What role for European Research and Education networking in 2020?"

Terms of Reference

Background

Historically, academic and research networking played a seminal role in the development of the Internet in Europe and worldwide. In the 80's, visionaries from various research institutions initiated packet network infrastructures for serving research communities and campuses. These eventually became National (or regional) Research and Education Networks (NRENs) and formed the backbones of Europe's Internet. European infrastructures connecting these national developments became soon necessary. After several attempts such as EARN, EUNet, COSINE and Ebone, DANTE was created in the 90's and operated EuropaNET, then TEN-34, TEN-155, and finally GÉANT which is in its third incarnation [1]. All these networks benefitted from matching funds from the Commission

In those years the role of the Commission has been to promote European integration of the interconnection infrastructure, to bridge the digital divide through an adequate pricing structure and to stimulate innovation through an instrument that embedded research activities.

The recent Communication "ICT infrastructures for e-Science" [2] highlighted the key role of ICT-based infrastructures (e-Infrastructures) as a crucial asset underpinning European research and innovation policies. Consolidating the world leadership of GÉANT was a key factor of a renewed strategy for e-Science, e-Infrastructures and innovation.

The Commission's Digital Agenda for Europe [3] stresses that "Europe should also build its innovative advantage in key areas through reinforced e-Infrastructures" and urges to "Ensure sufficient financial support to joint ICT research infrastructures".

Mandate/objectives

The GÉANT Expert Group (GEG) will articulate a 2020 vision for European Research and Education networking and will identify an action plan for realising this vision. The report is expected to exercise a strong influence in EU policy in the area, and it will feed into the 2012-2013 FP7 work programme for Research Infrastructures and into the FP8 preparations.

Inputs

The GEG will take input from various sources: official policy documents, public reports, NREN reports, and GÉANT deliverables. It will also conduct interviews with stakeholders from NRENs, DANTE, TERENA, users, policy makers, international participants, industry etc.

Rapporteur

The work of this Group of High Level Experts group will be supported by a rapporteur who will be in charge of preparing the meetings, taking the minutes, drafting the various versions of the report and maintaining a web site for interactions between GEG members.

References

- [1] H. Davies and B. Bressan "A History of International Research and Education Networking", Wiley
- [2] ICT Infrastructures for e-Science, COM(2009) 108 final
- [3] A Digital Agenda for Europe, COM(2010) 245 final