NEW AMSTERDAM OFFICE FOR GEANT

Following the relocation of the GEANT Amsterdam office in December 2017, February’s GEANT Board meeting offered the perfect opportunity to mark the office opening in style!

Board members, GEANT staff and many invited guests enjoyed a great informal evening with welcoming words from Chair of the Board Christian Grimm and Interim CEO Erik Huizer.

Our new address is:

Hoekenrode 3
1102 BR Amsterdam
The Netherlands

The new office is well located in Amsterdam-Zuidoost, Bijlmer, and for our growing Amsterdam-based staff the modern, open space located right opposite the Amsterdam Bijlmer ArenA train station brings a collaborative and exciting feel. For visitors and staff traveling between offices, it also offers fast and easy transport connections to Schiphol airport.

The Netherlands

Andres Steijaert, GEANT Cloud Services Activity leader, looks back at the successes of 2017 and forward to 2018.

The New Year is traditionally a time for reflection. On the year gone by of course, but also with a view toward the future. The GN4-2 Project’s Joint Research Activity for Cloud Application Services Delivery Development (JRA4) has had a very active year and recorded a number of significant achievements. Building on work carried out previously, the team has continued to expand the NREN collaboration on clouds and strengthen GEANT’s position as an efficient service delivery gateway and single route to market.

During the year, the first version of the service delivery channel was applied and 25 new services were added to the GEANT cloud service portfolio. These include IaaS services, private cloud file storage products, and web-conferencing and video-conferencing offerings.

IaaS tender

The IaaS tender was perhaps the most significant achievement. 36 NRENs participated in the tender. 27 NRENs activated a delivery role (Referrer, Reseller and/or Underwriter) and now use the GEANT cloud support resources. 18 NRENs have been allocated 6 man-months of GEANT funding to deliver the IaaS portfolio in their countries via many avenues. 16 NRENs have organised national cloud events related to the IaaS portfolio. This investment has delivered the good news! Here are some highlights:

- 56 institutions from nine countries use cloud services via the IaaS offering: Croatia, Denmark, Ireland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain and Sweden.
- A community of NREN cloud delivery managers (CCM) and support team members numbers 125. The community manages meetings, seminars, workshops, weekly conferences, an active e-mail list, a public clouds website and an intranet workspace for information sharing.
- Tailor-made offerings for use below national tender thresholds were also negotiated with file storage providers Nextcloud and ownCloud.
- JRA4 teams are developing components for open source video-conferencing infrastructures based on the 2016-2017 tender. This tender evaluated multi-tenant on-premises solutions in managed and unmanaged scenarios. The vendors selected are available for 43 NRENs in Europe, plus NORDUnet and GEANT.

While the achievements are impressive and met, or exceeded, all goals and KPIs, the teams are already busy on the next steps.

Looking to 2018

This year, plans are already underway to ensure the portfolio’s General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) compliance. In addition, work continues to further develop and improve the delivery platform, to make it as easy as possible for institutions to use the available services.

Additions to the portfolio itself are also planned. In the area of educational services, priorities are to assess the feasibility of running a pan-European call-for-competition (tender) for Virtual Learning Environments (Learning Management Systems). In the area of web- and video-conferencing the team will evolve the STUN/TURN server backend infrastructure, launch the WebRTC based front-end client and establish monitoring and statistics modules. The community manages meetings, seminars, workshops, weekly conferences, an active e-mail list, a public clouds website and an intranet workspace for information sharing.

Whilst the consensus is clear on how cloud services empower institutions to obtain the IT services they need in an easy, intuitive and cost-effective way, migration is still a daunting task for many. Thanks to the GEANT cloud offering, NRENs are more agile and uniquely able to offer a wider range of relevant services at a faster pace than commercial providers in order to facilitate the dynamic collaboration that academic research needs. We are now seeing NRENs maximizing the benefits of the single digital market for their institutions to ensure best-value services.

Stay tuned for more updates!

For more information on the GEANT Cloud Services Activities visit https://clouds.geant.org

Picture: Andres Steijaert presenting at DI4R 2017