The
ACGT Competition
Report

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Authors: Organisation: Email Address:	Ourania Konstanti, Chris Andronis, Biovista o.konst, candronis - @biovista.com

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ABSTRACT: This document reports on the ACGT Competition

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1	22.07.2010	Final	Ourania Konstanti, Chris Andronis, Andreas Persidis

List of Contributors

- Manolis Tsiknakis (FORTH)
- George Zacharioudakis (FORTH)
- Stelios Sfakianakis (FORTH)
- Stefan Rueping (FhG)

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1 Background

One of the initiatives foreseen by the ACGT Exploitation Plan was the ACGT Competition. The aim was to attract as many 3rd parties as possible and have them develop and submit ACGT compliant applications and resources that will subsequently be available to interested 3rd parties and end users. This was justified on the basis of the need to have available for end users as many resources and modules as possible. It was also hoped that the competition would create a pool of ACGT developers and users that would constitute an expanded ACGT community that would encourage ACGT infrastructure uptake sooner rather than later.

With the above in mind the Competition was originally planned for June 2009 as one of the final tasks organised by the consortium. When the decision was taken to extend the project by 6 months, the PMB decided to postpone the competition by the same amount of time. This preserved the original timing of the competition as one of the closing events of the project but also ensured that the infrastructure would be more stable.

The following sections present the work done, the outcome and lessons learned in connection with the platform itself and the planning of the event.

2 Work Done

The main elements of the competition were laid out in Deliverable D16.1 (see D16.1 Section 4.1). In summary, the specification called for an open to all participation, monetary rewards for the first 3 winners, an announcement plan covering various fora, chat rooms, the ACGT Newsletter and the ACGT web site and an award ceremony. Milestone dates were selected as follows:

> 30th March, 2010, 5pm CET: Deadline for registering entries
>
> 30th May, 2010, 5pm CET: Deadline for submitting entries
>
> 1st June - 15th June, 2010: Judging Process
>
> 20th June 2010: Announcement of winning entries

In support of the preparation of the competition the following work was undertaken:

Preparation of the ACGT Competition Leaflet: Appendix A shows the leaflet that was produced. The leaflet was distributed to all partners, printed locally and displayed in prominent positions in their respective organizations. It was also available from the ACGT site as well as the Newsletter.

Creation of the ACGT Competition WIKI: The ACGT WIKI was created in lieu of a competition Manual and FAQ. It was decided that the flexibility afforded by a WIKI mapped well on the reality of a large number of specialist in support of the infrastructure, the continuous tweaking of that infrastructure and the need to provide access to the latest version.

The top level of the WIKI was structured as follows:

- Main Page
- Calendar
- Register here
- Recent changes
- ACGT Handbook
- ACGT Programmer's Manual
- ACGT Portal

The WIKI content was created and maintained by a number of contributors, primarily the owner of the respective s/w module. Figure 1 below is a screenshot of the entry page of the WIKI accessible at http://www.biovista.com/ACGTCompetition/Main_Page
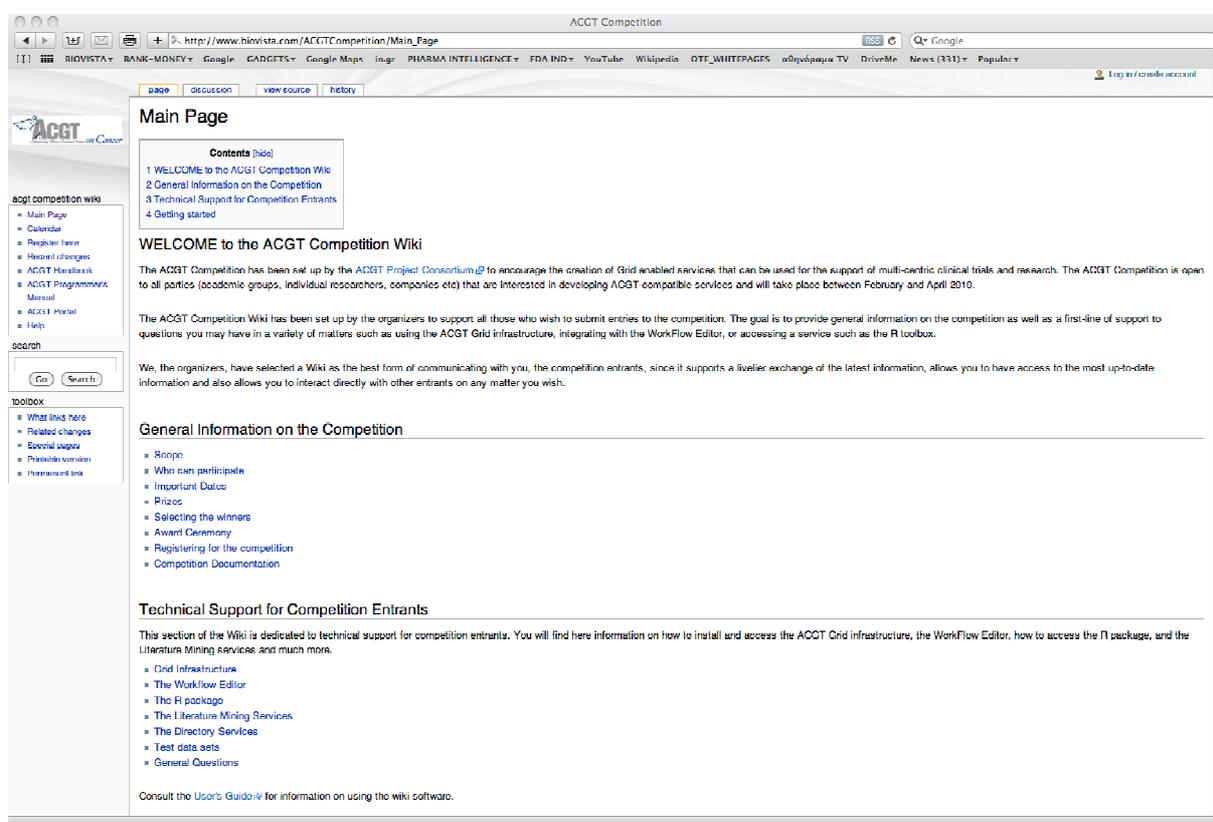

Figure 1: The dedicated ACGT WIKI

Creation of contact procedure and persons: 2 distinct email accounts were set up that mapped on to actual emails, one for general competition questions and one for technical questions. For general ACGT Competition registration and help the following account: acgtcompetition@eu-acgt.org (Healhgrid) was set up. For ACGT technical support the account: acgt-rt@ics.forth.gr was set up. Additional details of the contact procedure are listed in Appendix 2.

Announcement of the Competition: The official competition announcement was made on Thursday February 18th. A dedicated ACGT Competition logo was also designed by Siveco The Announcement document (PDF format) was sent to all partners who were asked to forward it to their personal network and display it at their institutions, as appropriate. In addition, Healthgrid undertook to forward the announcement to appropriate fora. The following is an indicative list of contacted institutions:

- Computational Biology Research Group Oxford
- Oxford Computing Laboratory
- Wellcome Trust for human genetics in oxford
- NCRI informatics unit
- Dana Farber Institute
- MIT
- Harvard
- University of Toronto.

Appendix C lists additional contacted organizations

Following the initial announcement and a poor response it was decided to change the various milestone dates in order to allow interested parties to enter the competition. On April 7th 2010, the milestone dates were updated as follows:

- 30th April, 2010, 5pm CET: Deadline for registering your entry
- 16th July, 2010, 5pm CET: Deadline for submitting your entry
- 19th July - 23rd July, 2010: Judging Process
- 23rd July 2010: Announcement of winning entries
- Award Ceremony: Last week of July

Following this extension, potential entrants and institutions were re-contacted and made aware of this. It was also decided that partners should make an effort to recruit entrants from their personal networks..

3 Outcome

As a result of the awareness effort only 3 potential entrants had presented themselves by the end of June: an SME from Cyprus, a university group from Crete and an individual from northern Greece.

On June 15th a teleconference was arranged at the PMB level to decide on an appropriate course of action. The options considered were three:

1. to provide an additional extension

2. to continue with the available entrants that had presented themselves

3. to cancel the contest

Option 1 was rejected as the available additional time was minimal. Option 2 was also finally rejected since it was felt that the number was very small for a true competition and more importantly the hoped for data from the event would not be sufficient to extract useful lessons in relation with the various aspects of the ACGT platform that we had targeted. The PMB also considered the possible negative effect on the reputation of the project should such a limited 'competition' be run. Option 3 was therefore selected as the most appropriate course of action, in light of the situation.

4 Lessons learned

Despite failing to run the ACGT Competition as originally envisaged we believe that a small set of lessons can be extracted by looking at the organizational steps taken as well as the interactions with the individual entrants themselves. Despite the fact that such conclusions should be considered in view of their limited statistical significance, it is felt that they can provide useful guidelines in connection with the ACGT platform itself and the organization of competitions of complex infrastructures such as ACGT.

Lessons relating to the organization of competitions

1. Initial Announcement: In view of our experience, it is felt that for such a complex competition and for the size of the contact list used, a significantly longer announcement period is required. This should even approach 1 year rather than the 3 months used. The ACGT organizers felt that all supporting materials should be available and also the platform should be stable. In retrospect with the basic competition materials available an earlier announcement was possible.

2. Target Group: The call for participation failed to generate any interest amongst end-user groups. There was no response or request for additional information from any of

the end-user partner contacts such as USAAR, Oxford and Jules Bordet, ie the non IT-specialists. Conversely it is felt that for IT infrastructure competitions the focus should at least initially be on IT specialists.

3. Champion promoters: Such efforts should seek to identify internal champions within each organization that would actively promote participation. Incentives for such champions might include:

   i. Active involvement in ACGT and invitation to a "Competition Presentation" event where the goal of the project and competition, their role as promoters and all necessary supporting information are provided.
   ii. Paper co-authorship
   iii. Invitation to ACGT dissemination events
   iv. Participation in judging committee etc.

4. Materials used: Although the available data is limited, it is felt that the materials produced in support of the announcement of the competition were sufficient. Both the competition leaflet and the competition WIKI were perceived as adequate by all responders.

Lessons relating to the ACGT platform

1. Platform complexity: all respondents commented on the apparent complexity of the ACGT platform and the effort required on their part to develop applications. Despite the existence of the WIKI and other help materials all respondents expressed the need for additional 'hand holding' to get them started. The large number of involved technologies also seemed to act as a deterrent.

2. Grid Technologies: certain concern was expressed in connection with the use of the Grid and the need o develop applications using Grid technologies.

Appendix A: ACGT Competition Announcement Leaflet

WELCOME!

The ACGT Competition has been set up to encourage the development of Grid enabled services that can be used for the support of multi-centric clinical trials and research. The ACGT Competition is open to all parties that are interested in developing ACGT-compatible services. The competition will take place between March and June 2010.

WHO CAN PARTICIPATE	IMPORTANT DATES
▪ Individual researchers ▪ Academic groups and teams ▪ Commercial companies	▪ 30th March, 2010, 5pm CET: Deadline for registering your entry ▪ 30th May, 2010, 5pm CET: Deadline for submitting your entry ▪ 1st June - 15th June, 2010: Judging Process ▪ 20th June 2010: Announcement of winning entries ▪ Award Ceremony: Date to be announced

PRIZES

Prizes will include monetary awards and/or selected gifts.

- 1st place winner: 3.000 EUR
- 2nd place winner: 2.000 EUR
- 3rd place winner: 1.000 EUR
- Positions 4-6: 500 EUR each

All entrants will receive Certificate **of Participation**.

Entrants will be featured on the ACGT web site and Newsletter.

TYPES OF ENTRIES

Contestants are invited to submit their entries in one or both of the following 2 categories:

1. **Generic Services**: Entries in this category are self-standing services that are compatible with the ACGT infrastructure. There is no restriction on the scope of the service, although it should be of relevance to ACGT end users such as clinical doctors and bio-researchers. Entries can use existing ACGT services to create a 'compound' service.
2. **Applications**: Entries in this category are applications that address a biologically or medically relevant question or task that end users (bio-researchers or medical doctors) are expected to have. Entries in this category must make use of the Workflow editor.

REGISTER FOR THE COMPETITION

All interested parties must register with the Competition Committee in order to be able to participate in the ACGT Competition. To register, please send an email to **acgt-mb@inria.fr** using the Subject line: ACGT Competition Registration. ☐In the body of the email, kindly provide the following information:

1. Name of Entrant: name of organization entering the competition (your name if entering as an individual)
2. Details of Contact Person of Entrant: name, email, telephone
3. Name of Entry: a brief name by which your entry can be referred to
4. Competition Category being entered: this can be one of "Service" and "Application"
5. Description: a brief (less than 100 words) textual description of the proposed entry

☐All registration information will be kept confidential by the Competition Committee. Once you submit your registration, you will receive an acknowledgement by the Competition Committee, as well as your Registration Number (RN). **All registrations must be received by February 15th, 2010, 5pm CET**.

For More information

ACGT Competition Wiki: http://www.biovista.com/ACGTCompetition/

Email contact: acgtcompetition@eu-acgt.org

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5 Appendix B: ACGT Competition Contact Procedure

On February 11th, 2010 a teleconference was organized with a view to agreeing a number of issues relating to the creation of a support team for the Competition and the corresponding procedures.

It was decided that there should be a procedure for:

1. Handling expressions of interest to participate

2. Technical questions in connection with developing an application

Biovista would be the first filter and recipient of competition related queries. Biovista would be responsible for classifying queries into technical and non-technical ones. Biovista itself would answer the non-technical ones and would pass on the technical ones to a small group (comprising S. Rueping - IAIS, A. Sofronia – SIVECO and S. Sfakianakis - FORTH) who would then forward it to the proper owner(s) depending on the nature of the question. The following procedure was proposed:

1. The main dispatcher is Biovista. Tasks include:

    a. checking the 1st wave address acgtcompetition@eu-acgt.org

    b. directly answering emails regarding registration

    c. forwarding technical emails to the 2nd wave, replacing the subject with a more accurate description (e.g. if a user send Help as the subject of the email, it should be changed after briefly reading the email, to a slightly more "technical" description –e.g "user cannot login"/ cannot access...) – This does not require technical skills only basic ACGT knowledge

2. Technical Support: this would be handled by the competent partner depending on which module the question related to. An appropriate dispatcher would be responsible for forwarding the emails.

6 Appendix C: List of Organizations contacted for the ACGT Competition

Asia-Pacific Grid
DIstributed colLaboratories Infrastructure on Grid ENabled Technology 4 Science
Distributed European Infrastructure for Supercomputing Applications
E-science for Europe and Latin America
Enabling Grids for E-sciencE
European Grid Initiative Design Study
Collaboration between Europe and Asia
Pan-European Gigabit Research Network
Grid for UK Particle Physics
Worldwide LHC Computing Grid
NextGRID
NorduGrid
Open Grid Forum
OGF-Europe
Open science grid
Grid-cast
ISGTW – Internations Science Grid This Week
CaBIG – Cancer Research and Care
Compute Against Cancer.org
AIMES Grid Services CIC
Platform Computing
ActiveEon
Interfusion Servies