Dutch e-infrastructure outreach activities

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Goals, scope & background of this presentation

• Goals
  – Provide an example of e-infrastructure outreach on national level
  – Translate lessons learned to European level

• Scope
  – ICT Research support
  – Not dealing with outreach to SMEs

• Background
  – National activities
  – Research Engagement session during Digital Infrastructures for Research conference (DI4R)
  – Design your own infrastructure workshop @DI4R
  – EUDAT outreach task
  – Work for EGI Competence Centres
About SURF

- **SURF SARA**: High-performance computing, data and visualisation for science
- **SURF NET**: Connects users and ICT services and creates new functional possibilities
- **SURF SCIENCE Center**: Reinforces and accelerates multi-disciplinary and data-intensive research
- **SURF MARKET**: Favourable conditions for ICT services, software, content

Research workflow optimisation
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<tr>
<th><strong>SURF - Research Service Portfolio</strong></th>
<th><strong>overview</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>COMPUTE:</strong> high-end solutions 1000 times more powerful than your PC</td>
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<td><strong>DATA SERVICES:</strong> easily accessible storage on disk or tape</td>
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<td><strong>VISUALIZE:</strong> advanced solutions and support to create visualisations</td>
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<td><strong>CONNECTIVITY:</strong> fast end-to-end connections tailored to your research needs</td>
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<td><strong>COLLABORATION INFRA:</strong> single sign-on access to many services</td>
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<td><strong>DIGITALLY ENHANCED SCIENCE:</strong> digital tools tailored for the specific needs of researchers</td>
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<td><strong>MARKET:</strong> reseller of content, cloud solutions, software and hardware</td>
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Challenges for SURF

Integration of ICT, Innovation and research

- Only a small group knows how to find us
- Support model does not scale for LoS
- Position of SURF: local vs. national vs. international e-infrastructures
- Access to resources found to be complicated

![Diagram showing support for researchers](image)
Researchers ask
Where to get facilities?
Where do I find expertise, training and support?
What regulation do I need to comply with?

"Generic" Providers/Support
Int. Research e-Infra
NL Research e-Infra
Instit. Research e-Infra

"LS&H" Support Providers

Support/Guidelines/
Good practices/
Networking

Funding bodies
Regulations
Collaborations

* Project based services
ICT support

Local ICT support

Train-the-trainer

Shape collaboration

Advice, training, hands-on support

Advice, training, hands-on support

scientist

SURF
Complexity of ICT support at research institutes
Support4research: A four year cross subsidiary project to engage research supporters and to further tailor the Dutch national e-infrastructure to the needs of scientists.

Activities 2015 & 2016

• Regular visits (14 universities + 8 University Medical Centres)
• Structured portfolio of services & integration of portfolio in institute websites
• Structured portfolio of courses & organisation of training events
• Yearly national research support event targeting senior support staff
• Collection of use cases and best practices
• Report on research support in the Netherlands

Lessons learned

- Research ICT support being worked on everywhere
  - Degrees of funding and proficiency vary
- Most local ICT groups want to be involved in e-infrastructure support
  - Stick to ‘local first’ principle
  - Institutes with own e-infrastructure see a role for themselves on the (inter-)national level
- No interest in single point solutions: e-infrastructure should be offered as a whole with a single helpdesk
  - Viable alternative: no-wrong-door policy
- The perceived value of (inter-)national e-infrastructure providers is in expertise, not in machines
- Training is required, both for research supporters and scientists
  - e-Infrastructure related
  - Generic ICT skills (basic programming, version control, Unix proficiency, etc.)
Involvement of research funders & policy makers

• Research funders require input on research data management, could something similar be done for e-infrastructure?

• Few institutes have ICT support policies in place which leads to anxiety and lack of commitment.
Visit: surf.nl/support4research

Services and support for research

SURF's operating companies work together to offer a world-class communication and computing infrastructure to facilitate scientific and scholarly research. Learn about the high-end services we offer, that will power up your research. Whether you need solutions for data transfer, compute, collaboration or visualisation, we offer and support it all.

Services overview

- Compute resources: high-end solutions thousands of times more powerful than your laptop
- Storage resources: easily accessible storage on disk or tape
- Data transfer: securely send very large files to other users
- Visualisation: advanced solutions and support to create visualisations
- Translation and integration support: dedicated support by experienced scientists
- Network infrastructure: fast end-to-end connections tailored to your research needs
- Collaboration infrastructure: single sign-on access to many commercial and non-commercial services

Contact us for support

Choosing and using the right resources may be challenging. For that purpose partners within SURF initiated the SURF Outreach and Support Programme (SOS). The SURF SOS team can aid in deciding which infrastructure or solution to choose and can help to set up a research infrastructure that best fits your research.
Transition to Europe
Outreach translated

• Target audience
  – Outreach to LToS has had limited success
  – More successful when user communities are directly involved
    (e.g. EGI Competence Centres, EUDAT Pilot Projects)

• What exactly is the role of EU e-infrastructures when engaging individual scientists?
Session outcome: Possible path to EU wide e-infrastructure collaboration

- One, complete, service portfolio, carried & advertised by all e-infrastructures
- Shared training portfolio & training activities
- Shared helpdesk / no-wrong-door policy
- Participation in user community conferences, provide training, e-infrastructure highlights etc.
Research engagement 2017?

Community specific services & support

Shape collaboration

e-Infrastructure services, maintenance and support
To conclude

- e-Infrastructure providers should define their ‘target audience’
- Focus on collaboration in a pan-European and cross-discipline context
- Research Infrastructures should be motivated to adopt European e-infrastructures
- Part of the responsibility for providing, maintaining and supporting e-infrastructures should be taken up by the Ris; Facilitate knowledge exchange between them.
Thanks!

More info?

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