

IT Committee Minutes

August 30, 2004

Attending: Polly, Bev, Jerry, Barbara, Loukas, Anke, Kim, YL, Cherri, Jamie, and Manuel

Guest: Bill Spencer (Board)

AGENDA

1. NITSC plan for Year 1
 - discussion of NITSC plan
 - formulation of committee remarks for the Board of Directors
2. Acceptance testing
 - report from Bev and YL on on-site acceptance test observation, with comments from Anke, Jerry, and Cherri on remote observation
 - formulation of our remarks for the Board of Directors
3. Response to Site Operations Committee
 - report from subgroup on their observations
 - formulation of our remarks for the SOC
4. Other items
5. Date/time of next meeting

1. NITSC plan for Year 1

[Anke and Cherri recused themselves; Kim Mish chaired the discussion]

Kim took notes and invited the Committee to submit comments that could be used in preparing the report back to NITSC -- which has been renamed as NEESit. He also invited Bill to send comments privately to him [Kim}, although they couldn't be considered as formal input from the Committee. Various members of the Committee subsequently provided a number of useful suggestions for ways in which the plan could be expanded and clarified; Kim collated them and forwarded them to Anke at SDSC.

2. Acceptance testing

[Anke and Cherri rejoined; Bill Spencer recused himself]

Bev and YL each sent email reports about their observations; Jerry, Anke, and Cherri also had their notes from the remote participation at U of Minnesota, UC San Diego, and Oregon State. All noted that the SI staff were very pleasant and helpful, but there were issues with the tests. Although they said that everything had been tested successfully prior to the meeting, not all of them actually worked; in particular, the critical functionality of being able to obtain/exchange data across sites was not successful. Also, the level of usability was extremely challenging (for example, the components are largely stand-alone rather than integrated together, so in many cases it is necessary to "know" what URL to type in order to access information or tool functionality) and will require a significant learning curve for NEESR researchers. As part of the transition, SDSC has been duplicating some of the tests -- and also testing functionality that is prominent in the interfaces but wasn't included in the test procedures -- and they report that on the whole

tests are not going well. In part, that's because documentation won't be available before Sept. 15 (according to the latest news from the SI).

We discussed what kinds of comments we should forward to the Board. In general, the SI team did not expand the scope of the test plans the way we had suggested last spring, to deal with compatibility, scalability, and performance issues. This led to questions from the committee like the following:

- "Are there functionalities available (and working normally) that just weren't tested, or do they not work?"
- "There are many corners that appear to be untested - when will that occur?"
- "Item #15 [Transport and store data from a running experiment] is key for the success of NEES, but it couldn't be tested. *Will* it be tested? When? How?"

The Committee agreed to furnish personal comments within 15 hours so that Cherri could prepare the summary report that the Board and the CD leadership has been requesting. She will circulate a draft and the Committee will comment on the draft within another 24 hours. We have committed to submit the report to Bob Reitherman by Sept. 1.

3. Response to Site Operations Committee

A subgroup worked on the SOC document. They pointed out the following issues:

- lines 590-619 are the key ones for us to pay attention to
- currently, there are lots of caveats about policies that don't exist yet
- document says that sites will have backup prior to uploading data to the central repository. Right now, most of the sites are relying on NEESgrid for the temporary data archive. There are two issues: What if the SI's delivered solution doesn't work? (Do we need a caveat here, so the sites won't be responsible for any problems?) Also, since the SI is not delivering a central repository, how long are sites going to need to provide the *only* archive service? Will they actually be capable of this?
- we also need to add some caution or constraint indicating that the requirements for backup need to be within reason, given the magnitude of data that some sites are likely to have. Where it says "right to presume...", we need to caution something like "within the stated storage capabilities of the ES"
- where document say "all funded rese. projects must have access to the following:" don't we need to define some minimum capability (after querying sites about it)?
- regarding streaming data/video, what if the SI's delivered solution doesn't work? Do we need a caveat or backup position here?

4. Other items

The subgroup working on the DSAC document asked if Andre had sent an updated version. Cherri committed to remind him that we need it in order to respond.

5. Date/time of next meeting

Cherri proposed Monday, Oct. 4 at 1-2:30 PDT. This will get us back on our schedule of the first Monday in the month. The primary agenda items will be:

- Report from NEESit on how the handoff went (Anke)
- Review and commentary of proposed response to DSAC