Referee's report on

Application Portals: Practice and Experience

by

Mary Thomas, Maytal Dahan, Kurt Mueller,

Steve Mock, Cathie Mills, and Ray Regno

This paper, submitted after the deadline, appears to have been hastily and sloppily prepared. It is considerably less polished than other submissions. It is poorly organized, replete with obscure (outside the authors' "in crowd") acronyms and jargon, has poor quality figures, and fails to offer any insight or thoughtful assessment of the authors' portal building experience. It is acceptable only after a major revision.

A better title would be "Experience with the GridPort Toolkit", since the paper doesn't really address application portals in general.

1. Abstract

   "We have demonstrated . . . extend multiple sites." This sentence should read ". . . portal environments, and that the software . . . ".

2. Abstract

   "Finally, we discuss . . . ". Replace "being studied" with "is".

3. Page 1, line 12

   "unique methodology". Claim to uniqueness is debatable.

4. Page 1, line 24

   "time to describe the project"

5. Page 1, line 29

   "Finally, we discuss . . . " Replace "being studied" with "is".

6. Page 2

   GridPort appears to be middleware between HotPage and Globus, and thus inextricably tied to these two. Isn't it presumptuous to assume that HotPage and Globus are the world standards for their respective functions?

7. Page 2, line 23

   "separating our portal software into a Globus Perl CoG." Separating into Perl CoG and what else?

8. Page 2, line 33

   "on the through": On the what?

9. Page 2, line 49

   “primary mechanism”

10. Page 3, line 1

    “data about”: Data about what?

11. Page 3, line 4

    O2K is not the name of any SGI system. What **are** these systems? How many processors, what operating system, what memory model?

12. Page 3, line 8

    Define SRB.

13. Page 3, line 15

    “Indiana”.

14. Page 3, line 16

    Define CA.

15. Page 3 figure 1

    “software/services that are currently”

16. Page 4, line 9

    “on the same system use the same”

17. Page 5, line 5-7

    These claims of a converged community and an accepted standard are premature and arrogant. The organizations listed in 1.4 by no means constitute the entire GCE community. GIS is a bad choice of acronym, since it means “geographic information system” to the rest of the world.

18. Page 5, line 45-46

    Define LDAP and LDIF. Are all these acronyms really necessary? They make the paper hard to read.

19. Page 6, line 33

    Define SSL.

20. Page 7, line 6

    “this user must”.

21. Page 7, line 20

"We have found that developing portals to this system is good for startup." What does this mean?

22. Page 7, figure 3

    The arrow directions do not make sense. How can there be no arrows going out from the Jobs box?

23. Page 8, line 8-10

    This point should be emphasized, since the demands on a portal architecture for the former (canned codes) are considerably less than for the latter (optimization and model development.)

24. Page 8, Figures 4-5

    Figures 4 and 5 are useless. Showing a few windows with unreadable text conveys no information to the reader.

25. Page 12, Section 5

    Given the title of the paper, emphasizing practice and experience, the paper would be much stronger if a more careful and critical assessment was made as to the efficacy of the GridPort toolkit. The paper claims that the system has proven to "be a robust and flexible programming environment." At the least, this statement should be qualified by explaining the narrow sense in which the term "programming" is used here, i.e., helping users access community models over the grid. Furthermore, some details about where the system still needs work or improvement would make the paper stronger. As it is, the paper simply says that the portal development needs to be simpler. Do the authors have some specific ideas about how this will be possible?