ATLAS User Support

ATLAS experience in offering a helpdesk for grid problems
The service

Atlas has chosen to avail itself of the EGEE project GGUS to offer its users a single access point for all the problems and bugs related to the grid.

Users can submit requests for help by filling a web form or by simply send an e-mail to

*Atlas-user-support@ggus.org*
The experience so far

ATLAS has been using GGUS since September 2005. After a first relatively “quiet” period, help requests are now coming at an increasing rate.

This is due to the increasing number of users accessing the grid and to the better advertisement of the system throughout the collaboration.

Useful links

GGUS: [www.ggus.org](http://www.ggus.org)

Lists of supporters:
[http://ggus.pi.infn.it/supporters.html](http://ggus.pi.infn.it/supporters.html)

Documentation on GGUS: [SA1 Documentation web page](http://www.ggus.org/

Helpdesk e-mail address:
user-support@ggus.org
Atlas-user-support@ggus.org
FAQ: what users need

Most of the requests are about
• grid tools
• authentication on grid resources
• site misconfigurations
• need for documentation

How we supply with help through GGUS
• front line support team, with a generic knowledge on Grid and Atlas s/w, able to solve simple requests (tickets submitted to atlas-user-support arrive directly to this team)
• “second line” support units provided by the different research groups inside the Atlas collaboration (in this case, GGUS acts as a triage where different requests are addressed to their specific responsible units)
What we still need

The grid users number is increasing, the middleware is continuously changing (new tools, new features, new architectures), different users have different needs and different habits in using some tools: a better defined usage policy and up to date documentation are vital in avoiding loss of time and of resources.

The VO specific support units are not well integrated with GGUS (they usually rely on Savannah portals, which cannot automatically interact with GGUS).

People responsible for the first line support are usually involved in other time consuming activities, slowing the response time to requests. More people in the team would mean shorter response time.
Evaluation of GGUS

Ease of use: the portal architecture is quite simple and easy-to-use, all sections are clearly indicated and the documentation is quite complete. The integration of other external ticketing systems makes it really easy to forward requests to more competent groups.

What we would need
Some more training would be appreciated, both in the form of a 1-2 days tutorial and (mainly) in the form of documentation with various examples of how to manage some requests.
Plans for the future

Atlas collaboration is finding the GGUS portal really useful and convenient.
Users satisfaction is increasing (short response time and completeness in the answers are vital to guarantee this).

What we lack
Nothing, up to now, should be changed in the GGUS system. Some more documentation (tutorials) could help the support teams.
A good coordination inside the support team is required in order to guarantee a good service (not yet fully achieved: few people really involved in the job and too many parallel activities).

Anyway, the experience so far has been fruitful and things should get better as we go on: we’ve learned what users really need, how to help them and how to move among different support units throughout the computing collaborations.