UbuntuNet CONNECT 2019

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Research and Education Networking Across the African Continent –From the AfricaConnect2 towards the AfricaConnect3 project and GÉANT´s global activities

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Abstract:

GÉANT global activities and services

GÉANT, the pan-European data network for the research and education community across 38 countries in Europe has contributed and continues to contribute to a number of projects across the globe, keeping GÉANT at the heart of global research and education networking and reaching more than 110 countries worldwide.

In collaboration with partners, GÉANT ensures high performance connectivity is benefitting research while also making a range of services available to various user groups enhancing their ability to work together:

- Under the motto: "Open your laptop and be online!"- eduroam enables students and researchers to enjoy the most secure encryption and authentication standards in existence today as well as roaming access in more than 101 territories. The eduroam community is a worldwide success with over 2 billion international authentications to date.

- With about 2,390 identity providers accessing services from about 1,520 service providers, eduGAIN has fast become the primary interfederation mechanism for research and education collaborations around the world. This secure Single Sign On service simplifies access to content, resources and the trustworthy exchange of information related to identity, authentication and authorisation (AAI). The African research and education community is yet to fully benefit from the service, and we need to have them on board! The presentation aims to raise further awareness on the benefits of joining the eduGAIN family and spark interest amongst African colleagues about services that their respective NRENs can provide and facilitate.

Towards the AfricaConnect3 project

Actively promoting the role of African Regional Research and Education Networks and the growth of the community, GÉANT has been successfully collaborating with the UbuntuNet Alliance in the AfricaConnect and AfricaConnect2 projects focusing on East and Southern Africa.
The AfricaConnect2 project spans across the entire African continent, where GÉANT is also working with two other regional partners WACREN (West and Central Africa) and ASREN (North Africa). For 4,5 years, the project has provided African research and education communities with unrivalled opportunities for global collaborations.

In line with the Digital4Development strategy, DG DEVCO has decided to pursue financing the AfricaConnect3 project for four additional years.

Aiming at increasing the use of digital technologies by African education and research institutions, AfricaConnect3 will build on the success of the two previous projects and go beyond:

In addition to managing, expanding and upgrading the connectivity for researchers in Africa the project will have a greater focus on outreach and establish a multi-stakeholder platform to discuss policy, financial and regulatory issues.

Furthermore, the project will concentrate on the development of dedicated trust and identity services, cloud-based e-infrastructure and pilot federated identity management for libraries and open science platforms.

Finally, AfricaConnect3 will strive to improve sustainability of NREN and RREN in Africa.

The presentation will look back at the success of AfricaConnect2, lessons learnt and describe that plans for AfricaConnect3.

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