

Lightning Talk Proposal TNC18

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Title: Don't forget the underdog!

Key Words: NRENs; inclusiveness; societal impact; fringe user communities; building communities.

Abstract:

NRENs have a clear role in contributing to the research competitiveness of a country by underpinning cutting-edge scientific endeavours. By providing high-speed connectivity and associated services, they are recognised as enabling scientists to meet their data-intensive requirements of national and international collaborative research.

But what about catering for users beyond the spectrum of usual suspects with demanding networking needs? To what extent do NRENs actually reach out to those less conventional? What about the NREN impact on society at large? Such pro-active inclusiveness can be challenging, as engaging with new user communities – particularly the less bandwidth-hungry and less network-savvy ones – is resource-intensive, yet with an immense community-building potential.

Drawing on concrete examples from Asia-Pacific the presenter had a direct involvement in, this talk will look at how NRENs have started to embrace this societal mandate by engaging with 'fringe' user communities, i.e. users at the margins of the core NREN constituency, yet with a huge impact potential, such as the infectious diseases community.

The presentation intends to showcase that making such an investment in the 'underdog' will eventually pay off – in the interest of an inclusive global NREN community, building communities, securing kudos from national and international funders and ultimately arguing the case for R&E networking with a societal benefit trump card.

This pitch successfully convinced the presenter's children on what motivated their mother to increase her working hours – it is hoped that the talk at TNC18 will inspire members of the global NREN community to further reach out beyond the 'conventional' users and nurture those at the edges of our networks with not immediate data-intensive requirements.

Biography:

As part of the International Relations team at GÉANT, for over 10 years Helga has been involved in regional network projects across the globe, providing marketing support, mentoring colleagues in these regions and arguing the case for NRENs and R&E networking with an application-driven approach. In this respect she has developed a passion for engaging in particular with less traditional user communities with high societal impact potential which also resulted in her involvement in the 'In The Field' blog.