Deliverable 6.1.1

Report on the VRC infrastructure, functionality and user statistics

Grant Agreement number:	RI-261572
Project acronym:	WeNMR
Project title:	WeNMR, A worldwide e-Infrastructure for NMR and structural biology
Deliverable type and status	Report – Public
Due Date	November 1st, 2011
Delivery Date	November 11th, 2011
Project coordinator name, title:	Prof. Alexandre M.J.J. Bonvin
Organization:	Utrecht University, The Netherlands
Tel:	+31 30 2533859
Fax:	+31 30 2537623
E-mail:	a.m.j.j.bonvin@uu.nl
Project website address:	www.wenmr.eu

Table of Contents

Section 1: Summary of Deliverable

Background

The WeNMR Virtual Research Community website forms the central point of access for the users, developers and contributors that are targeted by the WeNMR project, to help them harness the potential of the WeNMR services and thus improve their research. Information, training, technical support and direct access to the grid services are provided through the VRC portals with access on different levels to serve different communities. Active participation of users from various backgrounds is strongly encouraged and available through the Forums, Blogs and Wiki areas of the website.

Goal

The VRC website is an important tool in reaching the ultimate goal of the WeNMR project: to establish an e-Infrastructure-based global virtual research community for structural biology in the life sciences.

From a technical point of view, the website should be built on a modern online community building platform, be secure and include backup facilities.

From the user point of view, the site has to be user-friendly, secure, easy to be found and accessed, and contain quality content and easy access to services for users from different backgrounds and at different levels of expertise. Content on the site should consist of "official content", such as tutorials, which are created and validated by partners and other experts, and community-contributed content such as forum posts and wiki. Services comprise Support services (Help center), as well as the access to software tools (NMR and SAXS services).

The goal in the first 12 months of the project was to set up the VRC website that fulfills the requirements depicted above, and provides a steady basis for further development and spreading of VRC gateway technology to other communities.

Summary

In summary, the goal of setting up the VRC website with extensive functionality and content for users of different backgrounds has been achieved in the first reporting period. The VRC portal is known in the NMR community, and is being used by an increasing number of registered users. A wide range of tools that are essential for online communication within research communities have been implemented, including wiki, forums, blogs, help center and others. A special partner portal with additional tools has been setup to simplify management tasks such as coordinating and publishing events. The development of the available services, tutorials, use cases and documentation is on schedule.

Section 2: VRC infrastructure and user statistics

VRC website deployment – www.wenmr.eu

Deployment of the initial version of the VRC website

Development and deployment of the Virtual Research Community website started at the beginning of the WeNMR project, involving partners 1, 2, 5 and 8. The progress of the site development has been faster than anticipated, and has thus resulted in a fully functional VRC website at month 12. All milestones related to the VRC website development were reached in due time:

- MS2: wiki operational, M6
- MS3: initial version of the VRC website, M6
- MS11: Tutorial "Using and contributing to the WeNMR VRC" online, M12

It is expected that the current version will need only minor adaptations in the near future, but will be upgraded to make use of the latest web technology and will be kept up-to-date with new, relevant information for the users.

Website design, functionality and structure

The design of website was completed at an early stage and will require no further adaptation. All functionality that is required for the user community has been implemented and tested, and currently includes among others:

- Project information pages
- NMR service portals
- News and Events
    - Blogs
    - Calendars
    - Archives
- Support
    - Tutorials
    - Wiki
    - Forums
    - Surveys
    - EGI tools
    - Help center
- Partner portal
- Various
    - Secure user registration forms
    - Video content
    - Video chat
    - Google analytics
    - Doodle polls
    - Webforms

The structure of the website has matured over these first 12 months and is expected to require little change in the future. The only significant change that is planned is the splitting of the current wiki into an official "WeNMR documentation", with restricted permissions and only editable by WeNMR partners, and a real wiki that is open for registered users to add, edit and comment on content. The latter should further stimulate the use and contributions of the community to the VRC.

To further enhance the site, improve user friendliness and keep up with the latest developments in community site building, the current VRC website will be upgraded in Months 13-24 to the latest release (version 7) of the Drupal content management system.
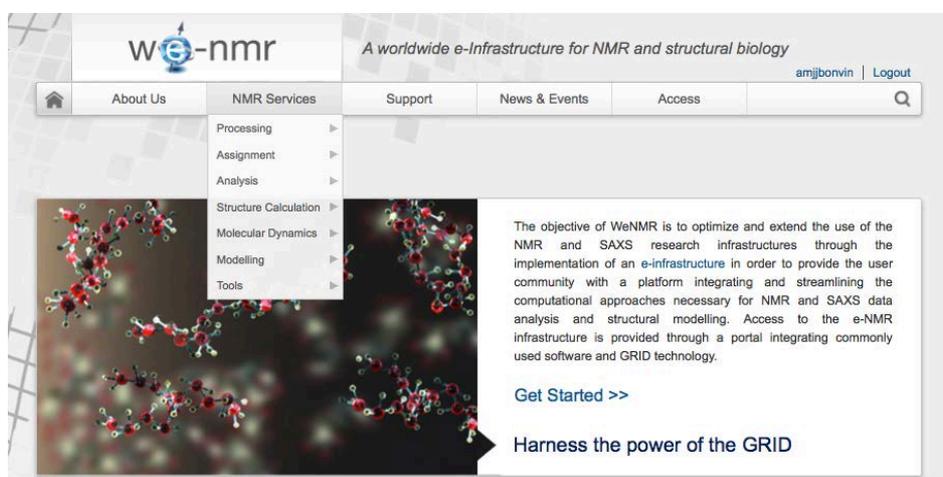
Partner Portal

In addition to the functionality required for the user community, a dedicated partner portal has been designed that will allow effective project management and communication by the partners. Highlights of the partner portal are:

- a project management system for easy assignment and tracking of tasks in the project
- a downloads section for storing project related documents that are relevant to partners
- an event scheduler that facilitates organizing online meetings, workshops etc. that involve multiple partners
- a simple event organization, sign up and tracking system. This system was already used to organize two WeNMR events in 2011
- video conferencing and chat functionality for online project meetings
- direct links to the EU-reporting tools
- video tutorials for partners that explain the usage of the website and its functionality (>10)
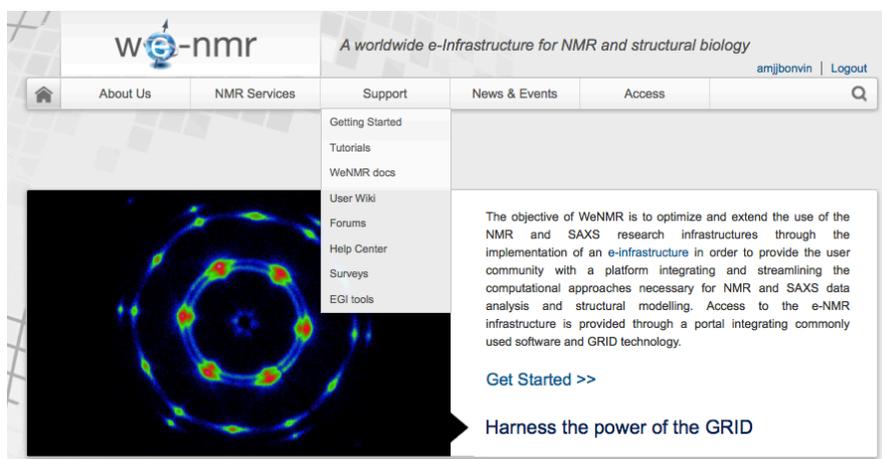- statistics tools (internal Drupal and Google analytics)

Site statistics

NMR service portals

WeNMR is currently running 17 NMR service portals, and the goal of reaching more than 20 service portals by the end of the project period is expected to be reached without problems. In particular the development of the SAXS service portals will be an important addition to the service portals and to attract a wider audience from the Structural Biology communities.

Help Center, wiki and tutorials

The technology for the support and expertise center (Help Center, O6.2) has been implemented and a total of 30 Help Center areas have been manned by project partners and are currently processing help requests.

New materials have been contributed to reach objective 6.3 (NMR/SAXS information, standard methods and tutorials online) by the partners. The steady growth of content has resulted in a current number of 30 tutorials and use cases, and 49 wiki articles.

VRC user statistics

The main indicators of success of the VRC are the total number of visitors of the website, and the number of registered users of the website. The number of visitors has been tracked since March 25, after the addition of Google Analytics to the site functionality, and the statistics are shown in Figures 2 and 3. Visitors to the website are located all over the world, with the highest activity in North America, Europe and India. Visitor numbers so far have been steady at around 50 visits per day. This number is expected to rise now that the site is fully functional and ready for broad announcements. As can be seen in Figure 2, announcements made around October 31 have resulted directly in a large increase in number of visitors and registered users (Figure 2, 4).

Figure 2. WeNMR VRC website visitors per week for the period March 25 - November 3, 2011.

Figure 3. WeNMR VRC website visitors per country for the period March 25 - November 3, 2011.

The number of registered users on the WeNMR website has steadily increased from the start of the project and throughout the first year. As of November 3, 2011, 135 users have registered on the site (Figure 4).

Figure 4. The number of registered users on the WeNMR VRC website for the period March 25 - November 3, 2011.

Spikes in user registrations typically coincide with WeNMR events and other dissemination activities, showing the effectiveness of these outreach activities. The growth in number of registered users is in line with the growth of the eNMR VO users, which grew over the first 12 months of the WeNMR project from 223 to 347 users (see http://www.wenmr.eu/wenmr/files/WeNMR-timeline/index.html).