e-ScienceTalk

RELAUNCH OF ISGTW

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Abstract

This report summarises the method of work that has led to the rebranding of the weekly online publication iSGTW into The Digital Scientist. It provides details of the decision making processes involved, the website design and functionality developments, the working group and decision making body structures and the processes undertaken. This document supports the EC Deliverable D3.2, which is the redesigned website for The Digital Scientist itself.

I. COPYRIGHT NOTICE

II. DELIVERY SLIP

	Name	Partner/Activity	Date
From	Adrian Giordani	CERN	25/11/2010
Reviewed by	**Moderator:** Catherine Gater **Reviewers:** Project Team	EGI.eu Various	26/11/2010
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III. DOCUMENT LOG

Issue	Date	Comment	Author/Partner
1	25/11/2010	First draft	A Giordani/CERN
2	30/11/2010	Final draft	C Gater/EGI.eu
3			

IV. APPLICATION AREA

This document is a supporting document for a formal deliverable for the European Commission, applicable to all members of the e-ScienceTalk project and its beneficiaries and collaborating projects.

V. DOCUMENT AMENDMENT PROCEDURE

Amendments, comments and suggestions should be sent to the authors.

VI. PROJECT SUMMARY

Over the last 10 years, the European Commission and governments have invested substantial funds in distributed computing infrastructures. Scientists have access to state-of-the-art computational and data resources located around the world, putting European research into a leading position to address the greatest challenges facing us today, such as climate change, pandemics and sustainable energy. The advent of the European Grid Infrastructure, combined with the blurring of boundaries between grids, clouds, supercomputing networks and volunteer grids, means that a clear consistent source of information aimed at non-experts is now more important than ever, through dissemination projects such as e-ScienceTalk, that crosses national boundaries.

Objectives:

- e-ScienceTalk will build on the achievements of the GridTalk project in bringing the success stories of Europe's e-Infrastructure to policy makers in government and business, to the scientific community and to the general public.

- e-ScienceTalk will work with EGI-InSPIRE and other collaborating projects to expand the scope of the existing GridTalk outputs, and to report on the interactions of grids with e-Infrastructures such as cloud computing and supercomputing.

- The project will explore options for the sustainability of e-ScienceTalk's products.

- e-ScienceTalk will produce a series of reports aimed at policy makers to disseminate key policy issues underpinning grid and e-Infrastructure development in Europe. The project will also coordinate e-concertation activities.

- The GridCafé, GridCast and GridGuide suite of websites will cover new topics and explore novel web technologies; they will integrate closely with GridPP's Real Time Monitor, combining live views of grid activity with the human aspects of computing.

- The growing weekly publication, International Science Grid This Week (iSGTW) will bring news and events to the existing and potential e-Science community under a new name of The Digital Scientist.

VII. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The International Science Grid This Week online publication has been published weekly throughout the GridTalk and e-ScienceTalk projects. Under e-ScienceTalk, the publication is to be relaunched with a new design and updated functionality, as The Digital Scientist. This report puts the development process for The Digital Scientist into context and outlines how the new website was created. It provides background material, including screenshots, statistics and documentation covering the decisions and processes involved in each stage of the design and development. It also highlights the roles key stakeholders played in the project.

A number of groups were set up to direct the redevelopment processes, including the Working Group, made up of the European Editor, European Science Writer, e-Science Talk Web Designer and US Editor; the Strategy Group which included two iSGTW board members; the iSGTW Advisory Board Group comprising the eight iSGTW board members who are sent the iSGTW preview each week for review before it is published online. Final decisions were sent to the Project Management Board of e-ScienceTalk for approval.

The goal for The Digital Scientist is to expand the coverage of the publication beyond grid computing alone, to include technologies such as supercomputing, volunteer computing, distributed computing, networks, data and cloud computing, as well as grid computing. This reflects the expansion in remit of the e-ScienceTalk project itself, compared with the previous phase, GridTalk. The publication will continue to show that these computing resources go beyond the world of physical sciences, to encompass much of modern science and research.

This background document describes the overall objectives for the iSGTW/Digital Scientist Editorial team, shows a snapshot of the current statistics of the publication's readership and content profile. The statistics gathered support the fact that iSGTW has been consistently growing in popularity since its inception. During the development process, the overall goal was to make the publication look fresh and new, and to incorporate some of the latest technologies in interactive social media – while still keeping all the familiar features that the readers tell us they know and love. The rationale behind the new features is included in the document, including a screenshot of the design concept together with detailed annotated notes.

Finally, some ideas for the marketing strategy for the new publication are outlined, including how increase subscriber numbers, advertise the publication more widely, and make best use of social media platforms. A full marketing strategy will be published in PM9 in D3.3 *Strategic Report on Marketing*.

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1 INTRODUCTION

The International Science Grid This Week online publication has been published weekly throughout the GridTalk and e-ScienceTalk projects. Under e-ScienceTalk, the publication is to be relaunched with a new design and updated functionality, as The Digital Scientist. This report puts the development process for The Digital Scientist into context and outlines how the new website was created. It provides background material, including screenshots, statistics and documentation covering the decisions and processes involved in each stage of the design and development. It also highlights the roles key stakeholders played in the project.

In order to ensure all that stakeholders were kept apprised of the design and functionality of The Digital Scientist's new website, a hierarchy of sub-groups was set up. Each stage of the development process was debated and agreed upon by a particular sub-group, and then, once a consensus had been reached, responsibility for decision-making or requests for feedback would be sent to the next sub-group in the hierarchy. Therefore, various tasks of the project were dependent on all the stakeholders providing input and reaching a consensus within a given time period so that the project could move forward. The sub-groups were as follows:

Working Group: Made up of the European Editor, European Science Writer, e-Science Talk Web Designer and US Editor. This group worked directly with Xenomedia, the US-based web design agency, on agreeing design concepts and functionality for the new Digital Scientist website. Once a consensus was reached, information would be made available to the Strategy Group.

Strategy Group: Made up of two iSGTW board members who provided top-level strategic input during the web design and development process to the Working Group. Once a consensus was reached by both sub-groups, information would be made available to the iSGTW Board.

iSGTW Advisory Board Group: Made up of the eight iSGTW board members who are sent the iSGTW preview each week for review before it is published online. Once this group's comments were addressed, final decisions were sent to the Project Management Board of e-ScienceTalk for approval.

Project Management Board Group: This group has final say on any decisions regarding design and website functionality and their approval was needed before any work was submitted to the European Commission.

2 WHY ISGTW IS BECOMING THE DIGITAL SCIENTIST

The contribution that iSGTW is making to the international grid community is apparent in its growing popularity and increasing appeal, as shown by a readership that grew 89% in two and half years, drawing its readers from nearly 200 countries. iSGTW is ranked 8 out of 10 on Google's Page Ranking system. As of November 2010, iSGTW has recruited 6,833 email subscribers worldwide and this continues to grow[1].

Now, the goal is to expand the coverage of the publication beyond grid computing alone, to include technologies such as supercomputing, volunteer computing, distributed computing, networks, data and cloud computing, as well as grid computing. This reflects the expansion in remit of the e-ScienceTalk project itself, compared with the previous phase, GridTalk. The publication will continue to show that these computing resources go beyond the world of physical sciences, to encompass much of modern science and research. To do so, longer, more in-depth, and greater multi-source stories will be produced. To reflect iSGTW's increased scope, the publication will be distributed to all readers in January 2011 as The Digital Scientist, with the major redesign of the underlying website released in beta format in November 2010. The Digital Scientist will introduce new interactive features, such as the facility for readers to comment on and rate stories, to share them with other websites and social media sites, and to take part in polls and surveys. The Digital Scientist calendar will feature events from across the grid and e-Infrastructure spectrum, including a wide range of EC events such as information days, workshops and concertation meetings.

The European editor based at CERN and the US based editor alternate the task of publishing The Digital Scientist each week, both contributing content to every issue. The editors will continue to be responsible for locating stories, researching, interviewing, writing, fact-checking, locating illustrations, editing and proofreading the original content for each issue, as well as acting as day-to-day webmasters.

The European editor will also gather statistics on how the new publication is being read, including the number of visitors to the site, time spent on the site and on individual articles, and take a snapshot of reader comments. The editor will coordinate an annual readership survey to be sent out to all readers in order to gather feedback on the type and breadth of stories being covered by the new publication, feedback on the new features and to understand the evolving profile of the readership.

As well as editing The Digital Scientist, the European editor will continue to manage the human aspects of the publication by maintaining contact with projects and content providers, drawing stories from a wide geographic area. In particular, the European editor will act as the main point of contact between the European and US teams, liaising with the US editor to ensure a smooth and timely publication process each week. The European editor will also work with the US editor to coordinate communications with The Digital Scientist Advisory Board, which as for iSGTW, will consist of members based at EGI.eu, CERN and Fermilab.

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[1] Data from Mailman, iSGTW email list manager

2.1 Objectives for the Editorial Team

Below, the objectives for the new Digital Scientist publication and its European support team are summarised:

- European Editor is to produce a weekly electronic newsletter in partnership with the US editor, and disseminate information about grid-related projects and other e-Infrastructure projects around the world, including EGI and its collaborating projects.

- Expand the coverage of The Digital Scientist to report from geographic regions outside Europe and the US, particularly Asia and Latin America.

- Expand story coverage to other forms of distributed computing, such as clouds, volunteer grids, supercomputing, networks and data.

- Draw from the other e-ScienceTalk products and events for sources of stories to maximise the impact of the work.

- Expand The Digital Scientist resources section, including the glossary and the image bank. The image bank will encourage other publications to pick up The Digital Scientist stories and offer a further incentive for contributions from scientists – their images will have a potential circulation beyond the publication.

- Coordinate annual readership surveys to gather feedback on the publication and build up a profile of the readership.

- Build on the work already started in marketing iSGTW during GridTalk to expand readership through social networking tools such as Twitter, Nature Networks, Facebook and other social networking sites.

3 RECENT ISGTW PERFORMANCE METRICS

The statistics gathered below support the fact that iSGTW has been consistently growing in popularity since its inception. The data was collated in October 2010.

Subscriber numbers for iSGTW over the past few months, compared to the same time one year ago:

Feb '09: 4303	Feb '10: 5843
Mar '09: 4732	Mar '10: 5881
Apr '09: 4755	Apr '10: 6068
May '09: 4823	May '10: 6131
June '09: 5019	June '10: 6287
July '10: 5051	July '10: 6444
Aug '09: 5090	Aug '10: 6561
Sep '09: 5236	Sep '10: 6631
Oct '09: 5610	Oct '10: 6725

All data from Xenomedia & Googleanalytics unless otherwise noted.
Total Subscriptions as of October 31, 2010 was 6,725

New Subscribers
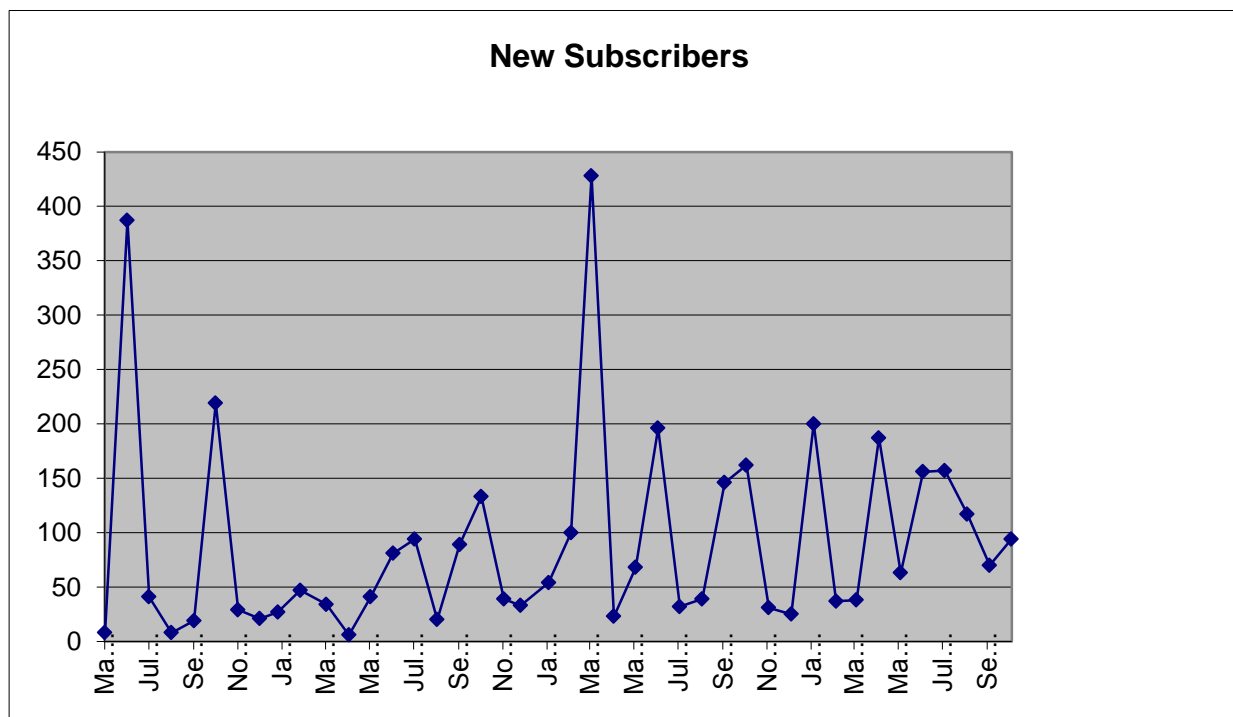
Below is listed a snapshot of the iSGTW content that appeared in the October, 2010 issues:

- 4 issues published:

  06 Oct http://www.isgtw.org/?pid=1002769
  13 Oct http://www.isgtw.org/?pid=1002781
  20 Oct http://www.isgtw.org/?pid=1002791
  27 Oct http://www.isgtw.org/?pid=1002808

- 4 'lead' feature stories -- those in the most prominent position on the front page, below the headline, with 2 US lead feature stories, 2 EU.

- 8 "ordinary" features (less prominently placed on the front page, which users have to scroll down to in order to read.) 4 US, 4 EU. One of the EU stories was a profile piece "Domenico Vicinanza, master of fusion," while another EU feature was on a joint DEISA/TeraGrid supercomputing education effort ("DEISA and TeraGrid host joint EU/US Summer School in Italy"). Three of the US stories had a supercomputing angle: "A lasting ocean observatory," "Astronomical computing," " Climate model tackles clouds."

- The balance between the US and the EU was maintained.

- Links and Images: 4 EU, 4 US.

- 2 features on grid computing, 1 link on volunteer computing, 3 features on HPC, 1 link on GPU (graphics processing units), 1 feature on data infrastructure, 1 on software, 1 on education. In addition, there was a feature on the AMS experiment and a feature on dark matter.

- Some computing topics include: graphics processing units; software, data infrastructure, data management, education in computing, computational chemistry.

- Subject areas outside of pure computing include: muscle simulation, ocean observations, climate simulation, dark matter, IgNobel prize, astronomy in South America.

- Geographic coverage -- including Features, Links, Images and Announcements -- came from Australia, New Zealand, France, UK, Chile, Belgium, Germany, Washington State, Illinois, Brazil, Massachusetts, Switzerland, Tennessee, Malaysia, Italy, Washington DC, and New York, among others.

**Total number of iSGTW page views as of 31 October 2010 was 25,600**

A "page view" is an instance of a page being fully loaded by a web browser.

**Page Views for all visitors (source: Googleanalytics)**
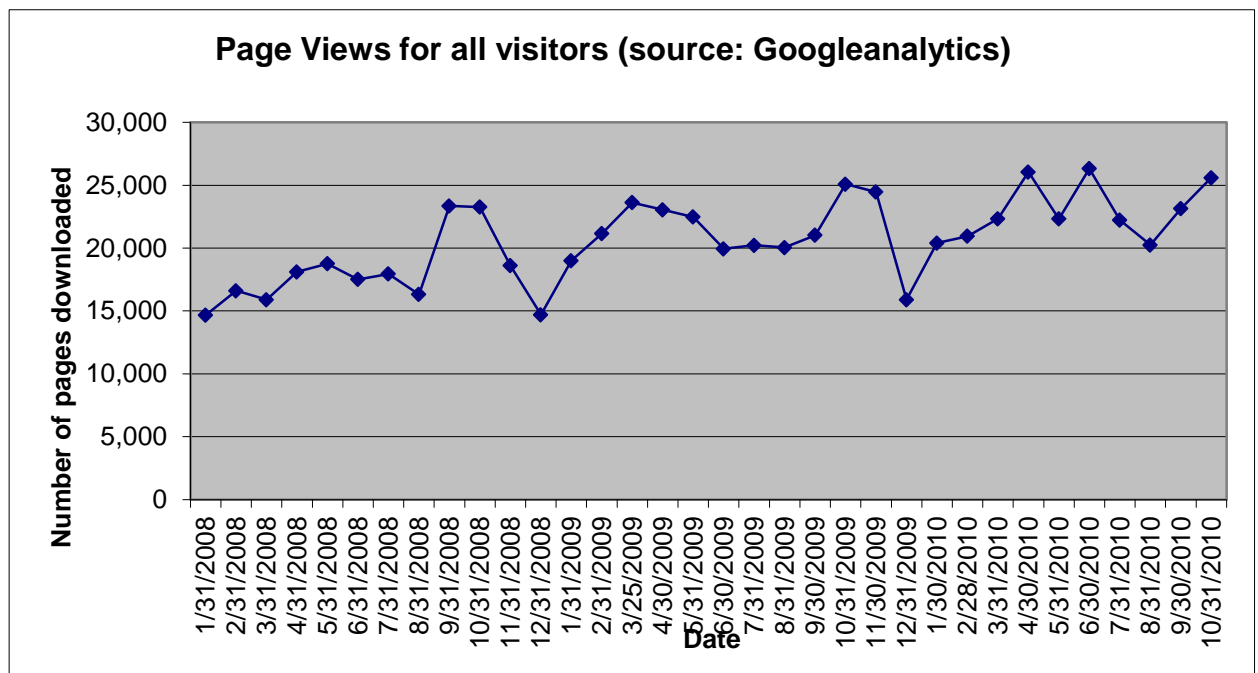
Total number of Unique Visitors to iSGTW, 31 October 2010: 13,462

Total number of Unique Visitors over the past 12 months: 124,864

A "Visitor" is a construct designed to come as close as possible to defining the number of actual, distinct people who visited a website. Googleanalytics calls these "Absolutely Unique Visitors."

Absolutely Unique Visitors (source: Googleanalytics
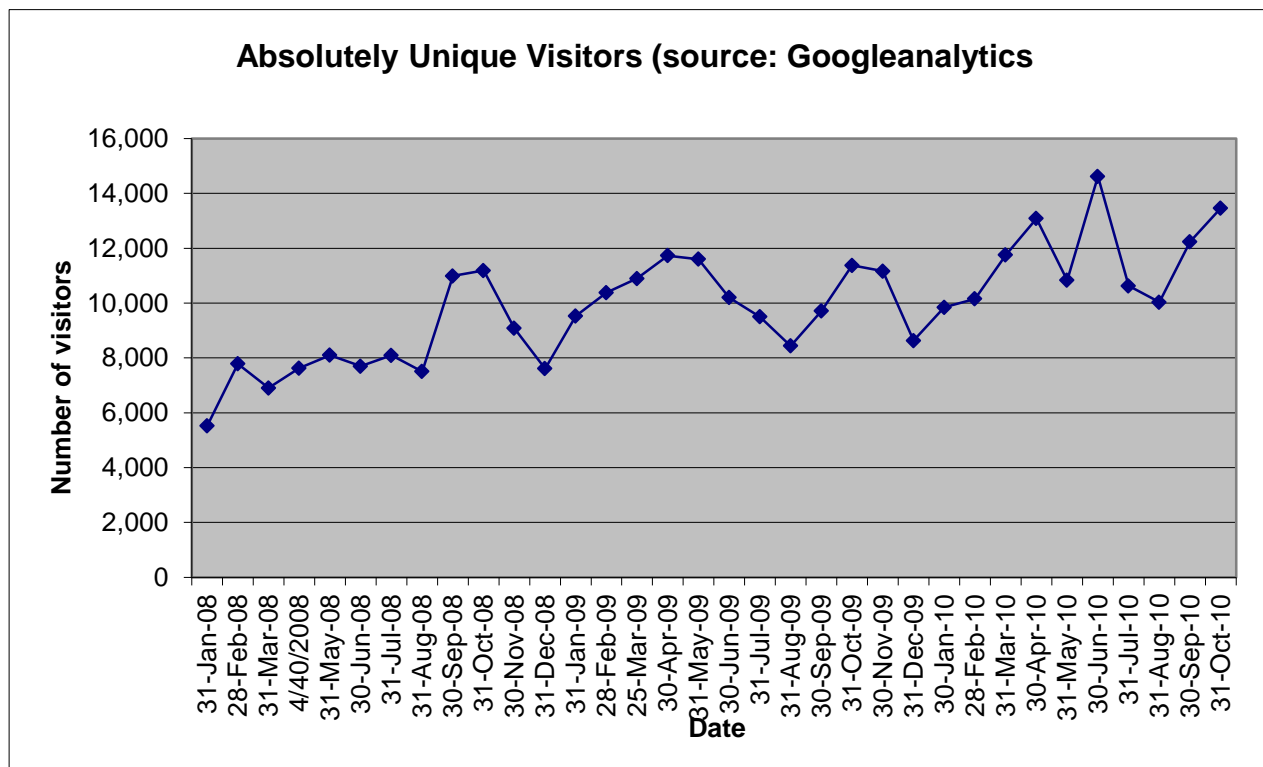
Total iSGTW Subscriptions, as of 31 October 2010 was 6,725
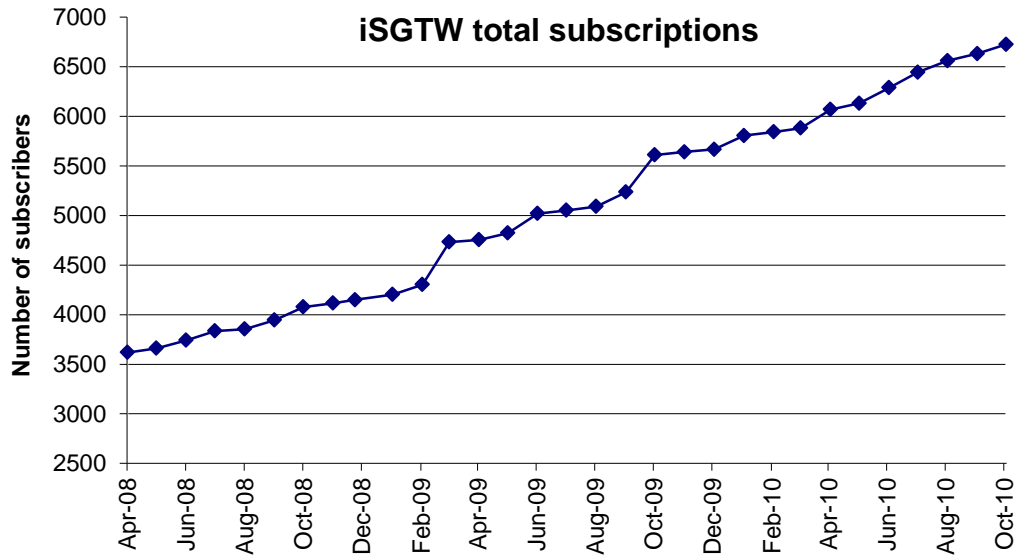
4 REDEVELOPMENT PROCESSES

4.1 Goals

During the development process, the overall goal was to make the publication look fresh and new, and to incorporate some of the latest technologies in interactive social media – while still keeping all the familiar features that the readers tell us they know and love.

The following points summarise the rationale behind the designs and the functional elements included and what they aim to do:

- Incorporate features from the existing iSGTW publication to create a new and exciting website for the relaunch.

- A newsfeed ticker is placed at the top of the page for readers interested in receiving up-to-the-minute news on events as they occur.

- Retain the news format legacy of the current iSGTW newsletter, with three main stories, a 'Link of the Week' and 'Image of the Week'. Existing readers are familiar with this format.

- Add a section that displays stories from the previous week, to provide readers with the ability to catch up on information they might have missed.

- 'External' content will be from sources that are trusted and that the editorial team thinks is valuable for readers.

- Provide multiple ways of accessing various items; for example, via 'Popular' or 'Editor's Pick'. This approach is used in a number of well-respected news publications, such as the BBC News website.

- Provide links to The Digital Scientist social media pages for existing and new readers who want to consume the content and engage with the brand through a range of channels.

- Build stronger ties with our readers, for example by adding a module that invites readers to submit story ideas to the Editorial team.

4.2 Working processes

To implement these principles, the Working Group looked at many different websites, examined logos, colours and typefaces, and debated appropriateness of state-of-the-art features for The Digital Scientist. The Working Group took on board as much information as possible, and came to a collective conclusion, using email, the Google Documents workspace and long-distance Skype calls to communicate. The Group also called on the expertise of specialists such as e-ScienceTalk partner APO for input on a particular facet, such as the logo design. The initial decision on the new name and new logo was reached through a multi stage voting process, involving all members of the iSGTW Board and the PMB.

The Working Group dealt largely with the 'nuts and bolts', working closely with the Strategy Group. Once ratified by the Strategy Group, decisions were then fed up to the Advisory Group and the PMB.

4.3 Digital Scientist design

The Digital Scientist design proposal achieved by the Working and Strategy Groups with Xenomedia, together with the annotations supplied to the Advisory Board Group and the PMB is illustrated below.

An interactive version of the site is available at http://xenostaging.com/tds/ which shows the new design and layout, using the new content management system. The first new issue based on this website will be issued to all subscribers in January 2011, and the site will then be available from the final URL of http://www.thedigitalscientist.org/.

4.3 Digital Scientist design proposal – annotated notes

1. NEWSFEED TICKER - This newsfeed ticker can be turned on and off at the editor's discretion. We see it being used for updating users when we are live at conferences or there is breaking news. It will NOT be the same as the tweets in the Digital Stream, which will feed from trusted sources. In addition to the example shown here, a tweet displayed in this area could be: "We have captured it! First circulating beam of 2009!" LHC Control Room | 10 minutes ago.

2. FEATURES – For the top feature, editors will have the flexibility of displaying an image full width or partial width. All features will have an author, comments and ratings assigned to them. Users can comment and rate features (moderation and permissions to do so are still being decided; perhaps through the Log-In and Register components at the top-right of the homepage). Features will not be labelled 'Feature' as they currently are on iSGTW.

3. LINK OF THE WEEK– Currently this is missing the 'Link of the week' label; however, our plan is to add some sort of label to the design. We are considering renaming the 'Link of' to a single label appropriate for the variety of 'of the weeks' we traditionally run (statistics, blogs, links, words, etc.). Like 'features', 'link of's' will have an author, comments and ratings assigned to them.

4. IMAGE OF THE WEEK – Currently this is missing the 'Image of the week' label; however, our plan is to add this label back to the design. We are considering renaming the 'Image of' to something else, but will still indicate that this is a visual as opposed to a full-length article. Like features, 'Image of's' will have an author, comments and ratings assigned to them.

5. YOU MIGHT HAVE MISSED – Highlights features from past issues that editors can select to be displayed. The design of this section is in flux; our plan is to style it so that it matches how the current week's features are displayed above (i.e. remove the blue line surrounding the content). We are considering a bit more explanatory text, such as 'You might have missed, from our previous issue'. This section will have links to all features, link and image of the preceding issue.

6. AROUND THE WEB – Displays 'outside' content chosen by the editors. Subsection, 'In the News' displays feeds from trusted news sources such as the science and technology sections of the NYTimes, BBC, Wired, Ars Technica, Slashdot, MIT's Technology Review, HPC Wire, Scientific Computing, etc. 'Blogs' displays blog posts from trusted blogs, much like our current 'Blogosphere'. 'PR Wire' is the next iteration of iSGTW's 'Announcements'; editors will post links to other websites that display the announcement in full versus editing and publishing this content on iSGTW as is currently done. Editors will have full control over placement of links for all sections (e.g. an important 'PR Wire' link can be positioned at the top of the list if required). We plan to add 'View More' links at the bottom of each column, which will take a user to a page on which all past entries will be displayed. We are considering a different title than 'PR Wire'.

7. FEATURES TABBED BOX – Displays links to content that visitors can sort in various ways. Latest is the most recent issue. Either 'Popular' or 'Trending' may still be removed, as many people have difficulty understanding the difference between them (Popular is automatically populated with the stories that have received the most hits; Trending is automatically populated with the stories for which the amount of attention they receive is increasing rapidly). 'Editor's Picks' are manually selected by the editors. The look of this box may still change to make it match the other sidebar boxes more closely.

8. STAY CONNECTED – This box is completely in flux. Currently, it displays methods in which users can follow us or 'stay connected' to The Digital Scientist. Social media icons will link to appropriate pages and an RSS icon allows users to subscribe to the website's RSS feed. Under the current design, 'Become a Digital Scientist' would probably be renamed to Login | Register, and 'Get the Newsletter' allows users to subscribe to the newsletter.

9. TAG CLOUD – Displays the most prominent content tags assigned to stories. Clicking on a tag will take a user to a page with links to all pieces of content that have been tagged with that particular word. The tags can be thought of as rough categories of information, such as 'supercomputing', 'grid', 'cloud', 'biology', 'physics', etc.

10. GET INVOLVED, SEND US YOUR STORY IDEAS – This is an advertisement for The Digital Scientist. Clicking on it would display a pop-up on which there will be a call to submit story ideas to the editors, much like iSGTW's current 'Contribution Guidelines'.

11. CAST YOUR VOTE – Editors will control polls. If no poll is published, then this space disappears and other sidebar elements will shift in position to fill in the space. Multiple polls can be published at once. Editors choose which is shown. The title of this section can be easily changed at any point, as can the colour scheme of the title.

12. DIGITAL STREAM – Displays a combination of feeds from Twitter, Facebook and The Nature Network RSS stream all in one area, from contributors that have been screened, so that the material is from those we know and trust. As new content is produced in these sources, this section will dynamically update. The name 'Digital Stream' could conceivably be something else, such as 'Social Media Stream'.

13. EVENT CALENDAR – Displays events, much like the current calendar functions on iSGTW. Users can click on future months to view events, if desired – while still remaining on the home page. The calendar display is still in flux; if it remains as is, when a user hovers their cursor over a date on the graphical calendar, the events taking place on that date will replace the dates that were listed below previously. Alternatively, the calendar might only show the name of the month and a list of events taking place in that month; the user would be able to select subsequent months by pressing on a button.

14. JOBS IN GRID – a new section or module will be added to the sidebar in which links to jobs will be posted, much like iSGTW's current 'Jobs in Grid'.

15. SUPPORTED BY – displays funder logos. Currently missing certain EU logos will be added to design. We could have a total of either four logos (two from the US and two from Europe) or six logos (three from the US and three from Europe).

5   MARKETING STRATEGY FOR THE DIGITAL SCIENTIST

Deliverable D3.3 *Strategic Report on Marketing* will be produced in PM9 and will cover a full marketing strategy for the new publication, once launched. However, listed below are some initial short and long term strategic marketing ideas for The Digital Scientist that will be employed after January 2011.

1) **Consider purchasing subscriber lists** from science organisations, science magazines and science journals such as IEEE Computer Society. Questions to consider include: age of the list; source of email data; targeted lists; and checking that users on the lists have opted-in to receive emails from third parties.

2) **Social Media:** Publish posts regularly across all media channels, such as Twitter, Facebook and Nature Networks. Posting on other popular websites including Ars Technica http://arstechnica.com/, The Why Files http://whyfiles.org/, the BBC's science program: The Naked Scientists http://www.thenakedscientists.com/, How Stuff Works http://www.howstuffworks.com/, Wikipedia http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main_Page and Wired: www.wired.com. This would further the idea and reach of The Digital Scientist as a primary source for grid computing, cloud and other high performance computing news, thus increasing readership numbers.

3) **Cross-platform availability:** e-ScienceTalk is using 2-D bar codes on posters pointing to URLs that are readable via Smartphone applications. The Digital Scientist should be viewable on Smartphones with different operating systems such as Android, Windows 7 and iOS for the iPhone, as well as all industry standard browsers.

4) **Establish a concise and up-to-date media kit that promotes The Digital Scientist.**

5) **Build stronger ties with journalists** who have a direct voice to the public by attending conferences and events such as the AAAS annual meeting http://www.aaas.org and events organised by the ABSW (Association of British Science Writers) http://www.absw.org.uk, International Science Writers Association http://www.internationalsciencewriters.org and National Association of Science Writers http://www.nasw.org/.

6) **Regular use of news alert services**, such as PRNewswire (http://www.prnewswire.com), Alpha Galileo (http://www.alphagalileo.org), Eurekalert (http://www.eurekalert.org).

7) **Establish reliable web statistics** to gauge the success of The Digital Scientist stories and other various editorial strategies.

8) **Post links in blogs**, such as Slashdot http://slashdot.org/faq, Stumbleupon http://www.stumbleupon.com, Digg http://digg.com/news/science, Reddit http://www.reddit.com/r/science and Boingboing http://www.boingboing.net.

9) **Create a pdf version** of the latest that can be published on digital magazine websites e.g. www.scribd.com and www.issuu.com to attract additional web traffic and enable readers to print a hard copy version of our publication.

10) **Publish testimonials from researchers** and other individuals that iSGTW has worked with in the past, focusing on the benefits this interaction has yielded for their projects.

11) **User Search Engine Friendly URLs**, meaning that clearly defined keywords of a page's content appear directly in the URL string. Pages should then appear higher in Google's search rankings for certain keyword searches

6 CONCLUSION

The development process for the new Digital Scientist publication and associated website has been well-researched and is based on the current state-of-the-art of similar publications. A rigorous process for quality checking decisions has been followed, for the new name, the logo, the features to be included and the look and feel of the website through the hierarchies of the Working, Stategy, Advisory Board Groups and the e-ScienceTalk PMB. Once the new Digital Scientist website has been fully tested in beta version, The Digital Scientist weekly publication will be issued to all 6,800 subscribers in January 2011. It will be complemented by Deliverable D3.3 *Strategic Report on Marketing* which will be produced in PM9 and cover a full marketing strategy for the new publication and incorporate initial feedback on the new publication.