





e-ScienceTalk

MARKETING STRATEGY FOR ISGTW

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<u>Abstract</u>

This report provides an overview of the marketing strategy for International Science Grid This Week (iSGTW). The strategy aims to increase the website traffic, the number of newsletter subscribers, and range of readers. The document sets out five methods used to achieve this: through conferences and events; media partnerships; collaborating projects; online promotion, including the newsletter, search engines and social media; and setting up iSGTW as a social media site itself. It also looks towards sustainability of the website and newsletter for the future.







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II. DELIVERY SLIP

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3			

IV. APPLICATION AREA

This document is 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 cross 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.







VII. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The weekly e-newsletter International Science Grid This Week, iSGTW, has a target audience of project participants, scientific users and the wider public. With this marketing strategy, we plan to increase the numbers of subscribers by 15% (to 7,545) by February 2012 and by a further 15% (to 8,529) by May 2013. Currently, most of our readers are based in Europe, North America and Asia. We plan to increase our reach in Asia.

The document sets out five methods that will be used to achieve this: through attending conferences and events and disseminating printed materials; through website links and advertising to event registrants via media partnerships and collaborating projects; online promotion, including making the newsletter more social media friendly, using better techniques for delivering more organic searches on search engines to our site, and by promotion through social media including Facebook, Twitter and Reddit; and by setting up iSGTW as a social media site itself, with users able to create a profile and blog.

This document also looks towards sustainability of the website and newsletter for the future, including plans to investigate the possibility of incorporating an Asian partner.







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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 iSGTW and GridTalk

iSGTW was launched in November 2006 at www.isgtw.org, and it originally fell under the auspices of the GridTalk¹ project, in conjunction with the Open Science Grid (OSG) in the US. GridTalk was a two year EU-funded dissemination project that aimed to coordinate publications that informed audiences about grid computing. It had four separate entities, including iSGTW, GridCafé², which focused on educating the general public about grids, GridCast³, a blogging platform that took users behind the scenes of scientific computing events around the world and GridGuide⁴ a website showing the sites and sights behind grid computing

iSGTW is a weekly newsletter of selected stories about grid computing, written for researchers, scientists, EU funders, the media and wider public. Key reporting milestones include in-depth coverage of the Large Hadron Collider start-up and a month of stories dedicated to women's work in grid computing. GridTalk finished in August 2010 and was succeeded by e-Science Talk, which started on 1 September 2010. ISGTW continues to operate under this new EC-funded project.

At the moment, iSGTW has two co-editors: the European editor, Jacqui Hayes, and the US editor, Miriam Boon. Each week, responsibility for the publication switches between the editors. There is also an Advisory Board consisting of eight members, with four members from the US, and while usually it also has four European members, at the moment there are only three Board members and the European members are searching for another member.

All website support and development is currently handled by Xenomedia, a company based in Chicago. A dedicated server is held with Tilted Planet, also in Chicago, which is used to mail the newsletter to subscribers.

1.2 Relaunch of iSGTW and recent work

To highlight the fact that iSGTW was changing its focus to move beyond grid computing stories, to also cover clouds, volunteer computing, supercomputing and more, the Advisory Board decided the publication would require a new name and website re-design. After an in-depth process of debate, deliberation and voting, iSGTW Board and strategy group meetings, "The Digital Scientist" was chosen as the new name and the website design was approved.

On January 12, 2011, the new web design was formally launched. A beta version of the website was launched in November 2010 as D3.2 Relaunch of iSGTW [R1]. This relaunch moved the web editors onto a free, open source content management system called Drupal, which is easier to use and more reliable than the previous proprietary content management system. It contained interactive elements that the previous website did not have such as polls, the ability to comment on an article and to rate an

¹ www.gridtalk.org

² www.gridcafe.org

³ www.gridcast.org

⁴ www.gridguide.org







article (out of five stars, by clicking on one of the stars). It also has a 'share this' feature, which allows a user to easily share the article with their followers on Twitter, friends on Facebook, or other social media sites. It now has an interface for people in other organisations to submit announcements or job advertisements, which are posted on the website and listed in the newsletter. There is also a calendar, which displays all events and conferences submitted by other users.

However, on the 14th January, the US editor at Fermilab received a cease-and-desist letter from a commercial company in the US called Digital Scientists. The letter requested Fermilab to stop running the new website by 28th January 2011. The website was temporarily shut down. Within 2 working days, our newly designed website was rebranded back to iSGTW and reactivated. The next issue of the newsletter was issued on Friday 21 January under the iSGTW name, with the full interactive features of the new content management system and web design. The newsletter has continued to publish as iSGTW on a weekly basis. There have been further discussions about creating a process to research a new name, but no formal strategy has been agreed by the iSGTW Board to date. Marketing of the publication will continue under the existing name for now and the same strategy will be followed for the new publication if a new name is decided upon.

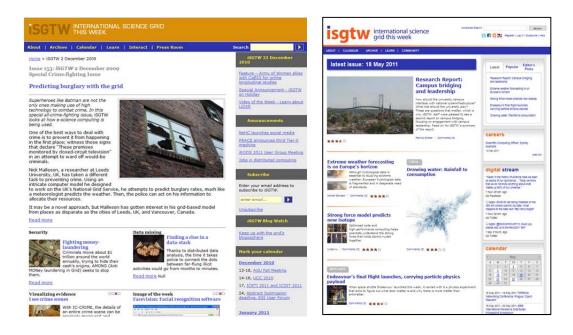


Figure 1: Previous iSGTW website (left) and relaunched iSGTW website (right)







2 OVERVIEW OF READERSHIP AND TARGET DEMOGRAPHICS

International Science Grid This Week passed 8,000 newsletter subscribers in March 2011. Each subscriber receives the newsletter to their email inbox every Wednesday. The newsletter has several links embedded so they can 'click through' to the website to read the articles in full and interact with other element of the website. On average, 13-16% of the subscribers open the newsletter every week, which is on a par with other newsletters that provide news and analysis. The readers know the publication well, and most read the newsletter on publication day. The website itself has between 11,000 and 16,000 visits every month. The difference between the number of newsletters being opened and the number of 'click-throughs' to the website indicates that up to 70% of subscribers open and read the newsletter without going on to read the rest of the website.

Based on GoogleAnalytics software, which we use to monitor website traffic, as well as the results of readership surveys conducted during the GridTalk project⁵ (based on participant responses to the newsletter), we have identified key demographics to target in order to increase the number of iSGTW readers and raise its profile.

2.1 COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

Most of our website readers are from North America and Europe, where the editors and Board members are based, according to Google Analytics software. For example, below is a pie chart showing where our visitors were when they accessed our website in March, 2011:

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⁵ www.gridtalk.org/private/Deliverables-Period-2.php







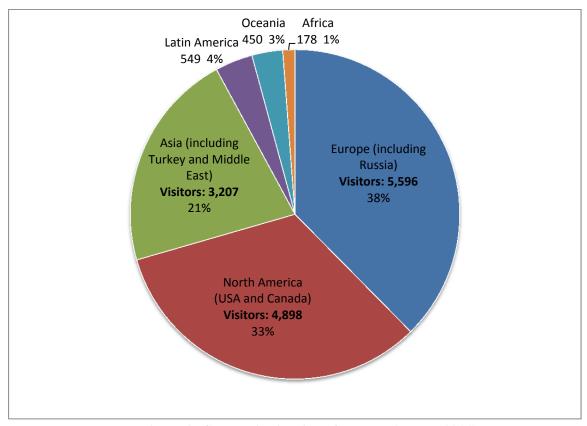


Figure 2: Global distribution of readers (March 2011)

Despite the team being located in Europe and the US, there is significant interest from Asia. We plan to capitalise on this interest, by continuing to cover stories from Asia and by exploring the possibility of adding an Asian editor to the team (see also section 5 Sustainability).

2.2 PROFESSION

Through previous readership surveys, we have recognised a trend in the readership towards scientists and researchers in general, rather than pure IT professionals. This reflects the project's long-term aim to target scientists. In the December 2009 survey⁶, the largest group of readers called themselves a scientist/researcher, at 40% (up from 38% in 2008) while the second largest group was IT professional at 32% (down from 38% in 2008).

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⁶ www.gridtalk.org/private/Deliverables-Period-2.php







2. What is your profession?	
Scientist/Researcher	40%
IT Professional	32%
Other	12%
Student	5%
Media	4-5%
Industry	4%
Funding body	2%
Total	100%

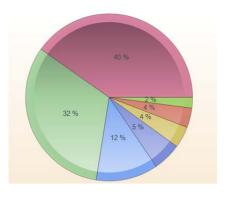


Table 1: From the December 2009 readership survey

ISGTW now includes a background section to provide for this influx of a new audience. It includes an Introduction⁷, Glossary⁸, Technology Primer⁹, Video Tutorials¹⁰, Step-By-Step Guide¹¹ and Directory of grid, cloud and supercomputer facilities¹².

There has also been an increase in the number of media subscribers, at 4-5% (up from 2% in 2008). This shows that previous marketing strategies targeting the media have worked, including directly contacting science journalists, raising the profile of iSGTW through social media and notices of upcoming iSGTW stories in news services such as the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) and AlphaGalileo¹³, the European press service. It has already resulted in several other news outlets publicising iSGTW stories, such as "Ancient musical instrument comes back to life" and "The flat universe society" in publications such as the London *Times*.

⁷ www.isgtw.org/content/introduction

⁸ www.isgtw.org/content/glossary

⁹ www.isgtw.org/content/technology-primer

¹⁰ www.isgtw.org/content/video-tutorials

www.isgtw.org/content/get-started-step-step

¹² www.isgtw.org/content/directory

¹³ www.alphagalileo.org/

www.isgtw.org/feature/isgtw-feature-ancient-musical-instrument-comes-back-life

¹⁵ www.isgtw.org/feature/flat-universe-society







3 AIMS OF THE MARKETING STRATEGY FOR ISGTW

The aims of the marketing strategy for iSGTW are as follows:

- Increase subscriber numbers.
- Increase traffic to the website.
- Broaden the demographics of the readership eg new geographic regions, new subject areas, more scientists.
- Increase interaction with the website eg through blogs, polls, social media sharing.

There are two project milestones in PM18 and PM33 to increase subscriber numbers by 15% at each milestone point, with a total increase of 30% over the lifetime of the project.

A key target audience for iSGTW are scientists who use grid computing, cloud computing, supercomputing or similar computing services and those who could potentially use these services, as well as the general public, particularly teachers and young people.

Another target audience is policy makers and decision makers. Policy briefings¹⁶ produced for e-ScienceTalk are often summarised as articles in iSGTW.

In the past, iSGTW has had success in attracting media subscribers, and through this the computing facilities and scientific discoveries have gained greater coverage through other media outlets. We plan to continue these strategies. We also plan to increase our readership in Asia. The marketing plans outlined in the following sections describe how these aims and target audiences will be addressed.

¹⁶ www.e-sciencetalk.org/briefings.php







4 MARKETING STRATEGIES AND TOOLS

This section outlines the strategies and tools that are currently used to market iSGTW, building on the marketing techniques employed during the two years of the GridTalk project from May 2008 to July 2010. The work carried out to date is described, and plans for how to develop these techniques over the lifetime of e-ScienceTalk.

4.1 Conferences and Events

ISGTW targets delegates at conferences and events around Europe and beyond, in order to encourage subscriptions to iSGTW and to raise awareness of the project. ISGTW's participation at these events includes booths in the exhibition areas for events, including e-ScienceTalk project booths and joint booths with other projects such as EGI-InSPIRE. ISGTW also partners with GridCast to blog live from the events and to source stories for articles. In addition, ISGTW seeks media partnerships with the organisers of the events to increase subscriptions, as described in Section 4.2.

Major events attended by ISGTW and e-ScienceTalk to date include:

- Citizen Cyberscience Summit, 2-3 September 2010, London, UK
- **EGI Technical Forum 2010**, 14-17 September 2010, Amsterdam, The Netherlands
- **ICT 2010**, 27-29 September 2010, Brussels, Belgium
- e-Challenges 2010, 27-29 October 2010, Warsaw, Poland
- 8th e-Infrastructure Concertation Meeting, 4-5 November 2010, CERN, Geneva, Switzerland
- Euro-Africa e-Infrastructures Conference, 9-10 December 2010, Helsinki, Finland
- LIFT11, 2-4 February 2011, Geneva, Switzerland
- Internal Symposium on Grid and Cloud Computing/OGF31, 22-25 March 2011, Taipei, Taiwan
- EGI User Forum 2011 & EMI Technical Conference, 11-14 April 2011, Vilnius, Lithuania
- **FET'11 European Future Technologies**, 4-6 May 2011, Budapest, Hungary
- Role of e-Infrastructures in Climate Change, 16-18 May 2011, Trieste, Italy







• British Science Association Science Communication Conference, 25-26 May 2011, London, UK

Different techniques are used to market iSGTW at these events. WP3 collaborates with WP2 to produce posters for some events, which are displayed at booths or at the venues such as FET'11 in Budapest and the EGI User Forum in Vilnius. These posters contain an image that is iconic of the location, as well as the location and date, the iSGTW logo, and the text: "Do you speak grid?" in the local language, with an English translation. The posters also include 2D QR bar codes that link directly to the iSGTW website, from smart phones for example. These posters are put up at booths at the conferences and have proven to be particularly popular, with several people asking if they can take home a copy of the poster. Two recent posters are replicated below, and the complete list of posters available to download from the iSGTW website.



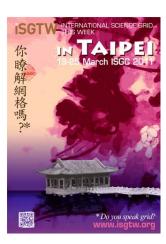


Figure 3: iSGTW posters for FET11 in Budapest, Hungary and ISGC 2011 in Taipei, Taiwan.

4.2 Media Partnerships

The e-ScienceTalk project has negotiated a number of media partnerships with international conferences, whereby we post announcements for the conference in iSGTW, and in the calendar, and report on the science being presented at the conference through the GridCast blog and articles in iSGTW. In return, the conference provides a link to our website, which increases the rank of iSGTW in organic search engines and brings traffic to the site. In some cases, the conference organisers also offer an option to delegates during the registration process to subscribe to the weekly email newsletter. This has proven to be a great way to build an interested audience. Recent media partnerships have been with the Citizen CyberScience Summit, the EGI Technical Forum 2010 and the EGI User Forum 2011. ISGTW was also represented by Fermilab at the Supercomputing 2010 event in New Orleans in November 2010, attended by 10,000 delegates, where the new version of the website was previewed, and delegates given the opportunity to subscribe.

There are a few key projects that we will continue to monitor for potential partnerships. These include XD (the next stage of TeraGrid in the US), DEISA/PRACE, ESFRI and EUDAT.

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¹⁷ www.isgtw.org/content/posters-and-slides







4.3 Collaborating Projects

The e-ScienceTalk project has also signed a number of Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) with collaborating projects, including e-IRGSP2/3¹⁸, European Middleware Initiative¹⁹, EUIndiaGrid2²⁰, LinkSCEEM2²¹, CHAIN²², WeNMR²³ and GISELA²⁴. In these MoUs, e-ScienceTalk aims to collaborate on dissemination activities with the collaborating projects, including:

- Disseminating new applications of relevance through the e-ScienceTalk dissemination channels, such as the GridCafé, GridCast, iSGTW and GridGuide;
- Disseminating the outputs of the project in e-ScienceTalk publications;
- Raising the awareness of other potential users and decision makers, through the presentation of the results of the project, about the usefulness of e-Infrastructures for e-Science;
- Featuring information about the projects on each other's websites and dissemination materials where appropriate;
- Announcing each other's events on websites and in publications where appropriate;
- The collaborating project will provide content and information about the project and applications of relevance to their community to e-ScienceTalk publications such as iSGTW and the policy documents, the e-ScienceBriefings;
- The project will promote e-ScienceTalk's products to its communities and contacts, for example by offering to registrants at events the opportunity to subscribe to iSGTW.
- The project will offer e-ScienceTalk the opportunity to act as media sponsors for events that it organises, including adding the e-ScienceTalk logos and links to e-ScienceTalk products to the event website, in return for promotional activities for the event.

The e-ScienceTalk project is working to expand these MoUs to other projects in Europe and beyond, including EGI-InSPIRE.

4.4 Online promotion

Almost all of the traffic to the iSGTW website can be attributed to three sources: the newsletter (approximately 37% in April 2011), search engines (36%), and social media sites (about 7%). The remaining 20% of traffic comes from other search engines, links from personal homepages, other news sources linking to iSGTW and so on. Each of these strategies for bringing traffic to the website is different and will be analysed separately below. We will continue to monitor these strategies using statistics from Google Analytics.

 $^{^{18}}$ www.e-irg.eu/about-e-irg/mission-and-vision.html $\,$

¹⁹ www.eu-emi.eu/

²⁰ www.euindiagrid.eu

²¹ www.linksceem.eu

²² www.chain-project.eu

²³ www.wenmr.eu

²⁴ www.gisela-grid.eu







4.4.1 Newsletter

We continue to make slight modifications to the newsletter to engage readers. One strategy we are investigating is whether we can have giveaways, such as books, DVDs, or tickets to see speakers, in the newsletter or on our website to increase the number of people opening the newsletter. Another strategy is to change the subject text of the email version of the newsletter from the date and name to short, catchy titles reflecting the content of the newsletter. This may also help to re-engage subscribers who think our focus is still restricted to grid computing.

4.4.2 Search Engines

Currently, we work to increase our traffic from organic searches by increasing overall traffic to the site, by ensuring fast load times for web pages, and by link swapping with reputable organisations (events, conferences and research institutions). We also cross-post to GridCafé, and, when they launch, we plan to add links from e-ScienceCity²⁵ and the New World Grid 3-D interactive environment. These are online evolutions of the original GridCafé website to cover new areas such as cloud and supercomputing in both 2D and 3D.

After re-launching the website in early 2011, we noticed that it was taking longer than usual to load pages. This is not good, as slow load times are penalised by search engines. Xenomedia, our Chicagobased web development team, installed the Boost module on Drupal (our content management system) in May 2011. Boost provides caching for static pages and significantly decreased page load times for anonymous users.

We are currently investigating even more ways to increase traffic from organic searches through sites such as Google and Yahoo. One strategy that we are in the process of implementing is improving image searches. This will include adding title text (displayed if you mouse over an image) and alternative text (for people who have images turned off). This also helps visitors who use only text browsers or who have screen readers to orient themselves to our content and to explain the purpose of additional elements in our web design. Google uses the words in alternative text to help display results in searches. This is a replacement of 'metadata' tags for images, which now have a much lower priority in search engine algorithms.

4.4.3 Social Media sites

For the last year or so, there has been significant traffic from social media sites to the iSGTW website, including Facebook and Twitter, which are the third largest source after the newsletter and Google searches. However, there has been no social media strategy formally agreed to date for the project. We expect to increase our use of this environment by regularly posting stories to Facebook, Twitter, Reddit, StumbleUpon and to investigating other sites and blogs, such as Slashdot, Nature Networks, Digg, Wikipedia, and Buzz.

Using Twitter²⁶, we can reach a greater audience for the website, by disseminating each of the articles posted on the site. Currently, with limited use of Twitter, iSGTW has 181 followers as of April 2011

²⁵ www.e-sciencecity.org

²⁶ www.twitter.com







and tweets are regularly retweeted to reach a larger audience. We will aim to increase this to the point where there is at least one post on Twitter each day. In addition to using Twitter for dissemination, we plan to use Twitter to engage our community, through posing questions or by inviting them to participate. For example, we will invite them to send us questions to ask interview subjects at conferences. This worked well in an interview with Tim Berners-Lee, the inventor of the World Wide Web.

Facebook²⁷ has 336 people following the International Science Grid This Week page in April 2011. We plan to increase the regularity of our postings on Facebook to try to build on this audience.

We have also established a discussion group in Nature Networks²⁸, the discussion forum for the *Nature* journal but so far it has not delivered the level of audience participation we expected or wanted. In July 2010, iSGTW hosted an online real time discussion with grid experts and Nature readers. The iSGTW discussion forum has also featured on the home page of Nature Networks, which receives millions of hits. We will work with the editors of Nature Networks to see if there is a better way to promote our site through their audience, instead of through our own.

4.5 iSGTW as a social media site

When the website relaunched in January 2011, interactive features, such as polls, became available. We started experimenting with running polls featuring questions, such as: "Web access is a universal human right.' Do you agree?" This poll question linked back to a story about Tim Berners-Lee and Gordon Brown, who are campaigning for better web access in developing countries²⁹.

At the moment, the iSGTW site has the capability to allow people to create a profile on the site. So far 35 people have created profiles³⁰. This has had varied success, but it delivers a small amount of traffic to the site, as people searching for a certain person's name will land on our site. We recently decided to actively ask anyone who authors an article to fill out a profile in order to start growing this number. At this stage, we are investigating the possibility of creating profiles on our site for people that can start and maintain blogs through iSGTW. Depending on its success, the next stage could be allowing companies or institutes to blog, such as EGI or TeraGrid. Blog posts could also be accompanied by video segments, either from the GridCast blog or elsewhere, which can in turn be advertised on YouTube and blog radio channels.

²⁷ www.facebook.com

²⁸ network.nature.com/groups/isgtw/forum/topics

²⁹ www.isgtw.org/feature/mobile-fast-track-developing-world

³⁰ www.isgtw.org/user-profiles







5 SUSTAINABILITY

We will work with WP1 to develop plans for making the newsletter and website sustainable, feeding into the annual impact and sustainability reports. Some areas that we will explore during the project include commercial sponsorship and in-kind support from collaborating projects.

5.1 The Commercial Space

Due to a partnership with the Fermi National Laboratory in the US, iSGTW cannot currently accept advertising revenues. In addition, the commercial space covering high performance/supercomputing and grid computing is crowded at the moment, including:

- Scientific Computing (scientificcomputing.com)
- *HPC Wire* (hpcwire.com)
- SupercomputingOnline (supercomputingonline.com)
- *VizWorld* (vizworld.com/science)
- *insideHPC* (insidehpc.com)
- *HPC in the Cloud* (hpcinthecloud.com)
- *Dr. Dobbs* (drdobbs.com/high-performance-computing)
- *Computing Now* (computer.org/portal/web/computingnow/internetcomputing)
- *BioIT World* (bio-itworld.com)

Often, these publications cover press releases by the larger computing companies such as Intel. Because iSGTW is not funded by the computing industry, we cover different material to these publications, such as the scientists who use these products to further scientific research. Covering these more commercial topics risks alienating the audience we have built so far. Instead, we plan to position iSGTW as the preferred channel for the research community and major e-infrastructures in Europe (such as GEANT, EGI, DEISA/PRACE as well as the ESFRI projects) and in the US (such as OSG and TeraGrid/XD).

5.2 In-Kind Support

We are looking at adding an editor from other areas of the world, such as Asia Pacific. This would be a new position, funded by a new partner organisation. We are currently developing a plan for an editorial process - for example, the new Asian editor might regularly contribute stories from their region of the world, or publish the issue on a regular basis, for example once a month. The Advisory Board is also looking into the possibility of adding a Board member representing the Asia Pacific region.







6 CONCLUSION

The five major strategies to market iSGTW (conferences and events; media partnerships; collaborating projects; online promotion; iSGTW as a social media site) will be monitored in a variety of ways such as through Google Analytics, annual readerships surveys, the focus groups that feed into the impact and sustainability work of WP1, and reported in the quarterly and annual reports. Some of these strategies are simple yet expensive, while others are affordable but labour intensive. Therefore, we will continually monitor and report on these strategies and this feedback will be used to decide how to best allocate our resources and distribute workload.

ISGTW already has a loyal readership. By reaching out to previously neglected audiences, such as a younger audience or those based in Asia, and by paying close attention to its content, iSGTW can raise its profile further and expand beyond its current core to a larger, more diverse readership.







7 REFERENCES