Chapter 7.22

Integration of Libre Software Applications to Create a Collaborative Work Platform for Researchers at GET

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ABSTRACT

Libre software provides powerful applications ready to be integrated for the build-up of platforms for internal use in organisations. We describe the architecture of the collaborative work platform which we have integrated and designed for researchers at GET. We present the elements we have learned during this project in particular, with respect to contribution to external libre projects, in order to better ensure the maintainability of the internal applications, and to phpGroupware as a framework for specific applications development.

INTRODUCTION

ProGET is a collaborative work platform, built out of a set of specialised libre software applications integrated together. ProGET is designed for the whole of teachers/researchers at GET. It provides every GET research project with the best features found in each application (wiki, mailing-lists management, shared WebDAV folders, Web portal, etc.).

We start with a description of the libre components that have been integrated and of the features that have been selected, as well as elements of architecture of the developed platform. We will

then introduce the strategy for collaboration that we have devised for our contribution to phpGroupware. We finish with a first evaluation at the end of the initial development phase.

RESEARCH AT GET

The *Groupe des Écoles des Télécommunications*[1] (GET) is composed of several engineering and business schools together with research centers in Paris (ENST), Brest (ENST Bretagne), and Évry (INT), in France. The research teams are made up of more than 600 full-time research equivalents. The range of the researchers' expertise is from technologies to social sciences, and enables an integrated approach of characteristic of GET research and fosters its adaptability to new application sectors and new usages in response to current challenges in the fields of information and communication.

To give a clearer view of research at GET, the Research Office started to catalogue the activities from the different locations so that the research may be described in terms of research *projects* and *programmes*. A project is made-up of a group of people working together on closely related subjects. For example the authors belong to the "Collaborative Platforms for Research" (PFTCR) project. A programme associates different projects loosely related. For example our project is related to the "Web and Information Society" programme. Due to the fact that GET teams are located in different areas, the research office also decided to propose a Web platform to help researchers collaborate through groupware tools and animate their research work.

PROGET INTEGRATED PLATFORM FOR COLLABORATIVE WORK

ProGet has been launched in July 2003 with the following goals:

1. Provide all research teams in GET and their external partners (more than 1,250 users) with cutting-edge technologies in terms of Web based groupware tools

Figure 1. Homepage of the GET public research portal
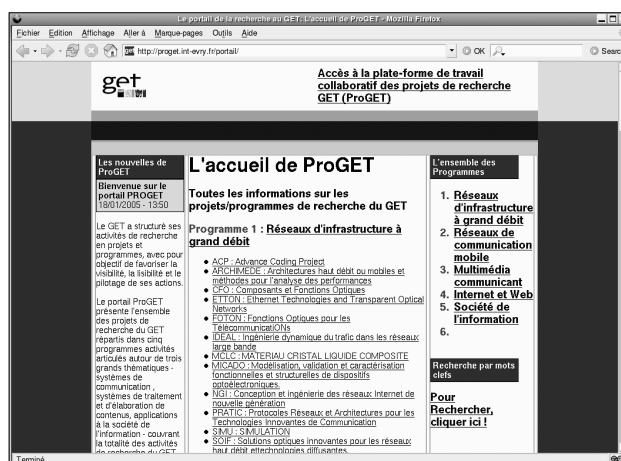
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