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For immediate release

Latest enhancements to the free Access Grid Toolkit are now available for download

ARGONNE, Ill. (Aug. 21, 2006) – A new version of the free and popular Access Grid Toolkit developed at the U.S. Department of Energy’s Argonne National Laboratory, is now available for download. The Access Grid Toolkit is software that uses audio, video, data and text to enable distributed researchers to work together as if they were at the same location. The Access Grid Toolkit is now in its third release, with more than 20,000 downloads across 56 countries. The software is deployed in a wide range of applications: from college courses where the students and instructor are in different locations, to engaging worldwide interaction between scientists and experimental facilities working on fusion power, to providing doctors and specialists with the ability to examine patient scans simultaneously at multiple sites, enriching diagnostics and biomedical applications.

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Access Grid – add one

The Access Grid Toolkit includes Virtual Venues software and Workspace Docking software to facilitate rich collaborations including people, data, and grid computing resources, and is capable of supporting wall-sized display technology, permitting lifesize display of remote collaborators, and visualization of simulations and other digital information in great detail (millions of pixels). This new version includes streamlined user interfaces, robust middleware and low-level services that enable participants to share experiences through digital media. Many of the underlying technologies have been updated or re-engineered to conform to standard Internet technologies and protocols, for a new level of robustness and interoperability.

Thomas Uram, technical lead for the Access Grid effort within the Futures Laboratory at Argonne notes that this release is more stable and more secure, and at the same time increases usability. Uram states that “The emphasis on compliance with standards and insistence on openly licensed technologies in this new version is a key differentiator for the Access Grid; it delivers free software with significant improvements to the users, while providing a platform for exploring how remote researchers can work together effectively. With this release, the Access Grid provides a basis for scientists not only to discuss their research, but also to perform their research.”

Michael Papka, acting Deputy Associate Laboratory Director for Computing and Life Sciences at Argonne said “Collaboration is part of science and the Access Grid provides a robust foundation on which researchers can build collaborative tools for enabling discovery, allowing them to communicate seamlessly and naturally across physical and institutional boundaries”

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Access Grid – add two

The Access Grid Toolkit employs a very open license and is designed to allow researchers to use the toolkit as a platform for further research and to support technology transfer by allowing commercial organizations to develop products centered on the Access Grid. This has resulted in the creation of several diverse communities and synergies that enable innovation and enhancements. For more information about the Access Grid, and to download the software, see <http://www.accessgrid.org>.

This research is funded by the Advanced Scientific Computing Research (ASCR) program in the Department of Energy's Office of Science. ASCR is committed to delivering forefront computational and networking capabilities to extend the frontiers of science by bringing together world-class research efforts along with the knowledge, tools and facilities to revitalize high end computing and enable scientific leadership.

The nation's first national laboratory, Argonne National Laboratory conducts basic and applied scientific research across a wide spectrum of disciplines, ranging from high-energy physics to climatology and biotechnology. Since 1990, Argonne has worked with more than 600 companies and numerous federal agencies and other organizations to help advance America's scientific leadership and prepare the nation for the future. Argonne is managed by the University of Chicago for the U.S. Department of Energy's Office of Science.