

French Organization Combines Grouper with uPortal



GIP RECIA*, a public interest group specializing in information and communication technologies, was asked to design information portals for colleges and secondary schools throughout central France. uPortal, the leading open source portal framework for higher education, was selected to provide the gateway to a wide variety of important information, including class assignments, student attendance records and grades, messages from the school administration and more.

The Problem

When GIP RECIA planned information portals for several hundred French educational institutions, it was clear that the project involved managing a large number of groups. At each school, users would include students, parents, teachers, and administrators — and multiple groups would be needed for each category. Display of information and access to resources on the portal would vary based on group membership. For example, teachers might sign onto the portal and see a reminder of tomorrow’s staff meeting, while parents would sign on and be greeted by a reminder of an upcoming parents’ night.

The Solution

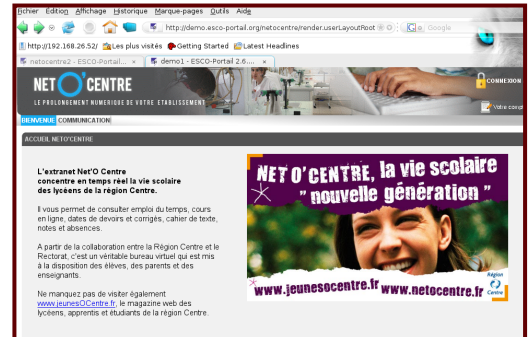
GIP RECIA chose the Grouper Groups Management Toolkit as the basis for categorizing users and managing access to the educational portals. “As part of integrating Grouper with uPortal, we were able to develop a uPortal component (a GroupStore) for accessing the groups defined in Grouper,” explained Arnaud Deman. “A group is defined once in Grouper and can then be accessed everywhere:

in the portal, and in the channels. Soon the groups will also be usable to define mailing lists.”

Another crucial feature for GIP RECIA was Grouper’s distributed group management

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capability. GIP RECIA established the desired group structure for each school using hierarchies of groups and folders based on templates. Local administrators are able to decide who can access a given portal channel in their school. “Grouper’s ability to assign privileges for group creation and maintenance was one of the key points that led us to select it,” according to Deman.



Welcome Screen

The Result

The schools and other stakeholders have been pleased with the rollout of the educational portals. As envisioned, some teachers have become “advanced users,” and have taken on the administrative role of provisioning access to others within their schools. Handling of dynamic groups is one of the goals for an upcoming version.



Defining Group Members

About Grouper

Grouper Groups Management Toolkit development is a result of the efforts of the Grouper Working Group, supported with funding from NSF, Internet2, the University of Chicago, the University of Bristol and JISC. You can read more about Grouper on the back of this page and at <http://grouper.internet2.edu>.

* GIP RECIA stands for Groupement d’intérêt public REgion Centre InterActive.



Grouper Groups Management Toolkit

Giving Stewards Control of Groups to Manage Membership and the Resources They Access

Internet2's Grouper Groups Management Toolkit enables project managers, departments, institutions and end users to create and manage institutional and personal groups. It puts the control of a group in the hands of its steward and enables the person to manage the membership and the resources a group can access.

Why Should I Use Groups?

Separate applications may use groups to track an individual's role, or to determine which users are authorized to access the resource. Because groups are managed separately in each application, keeping the membership roster consistent across these services becomes very difficult. If a member left a project, for example, the group's email list, wiki space, calendar, research database and other shared resources needed to be updated separately.

Grouper provides a way to define a group once and use that group across multiple applications.

Manage from One Location

Grouper consolidates group information and creates a single point of management. Membership changes are done once and provisioned to the applications. A group owner can define membership, create a group structure within a domain, or delegate all of this to someone else.

Distribute Control

Grouper keeps the group membership decisions in the hands of the business/group owners, access control in the hands of the application owners, and the technology management in the hands of the technologists. Individuals can also use the system to review their group memberships.

IT administrators are relieved from the burden of keeping up with the day-to-day group changes and Grouper increases the overall integrity of the policy and technology interaction.

Help Collaboration Happen

With Grouper, an owner sets up a group in one spot, feeding membership information to applications like

email lists and calendars. The owner needs no technical skills to create, change or delete groups or members. For example, a researcher might create a group and enable members to participate on an email list or view a web site. Students use Grouper to set up and manage groups for similar applications as they work together on shared projects and class work.

Grouper enables group management institution-wide and on an individual level, providing more secure, robust and responsive methods to control access to resources.

Ease Staff Support Load

Grouper separates the management of groups from the technical system, so a change in technology has no effect. This reduces the end-user support calls associated with underlying infrastructure changes. Removing IT from the middle of managing groups will help ease your helpdesk headaches as well.

How Do I Get Started?

To learn more about the Grouper Groups Management Toolkit, visit the Grouper website (<http://grouper.internet2.edu>) and join the community by participating on the email lists and attending the workshops and presentations offered around the country.

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