



Press Release

November 18, 2005
For Immediate Release
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Middleware Integration Case Studies Available Online

Washington, DC – The Southeastern Universities Research Association (SURA) has published a series of educational case studies as part of the completion of a three-year testbed program to deploy and evaluate middleware for the NSF Middleware Initiative (NMI). Middleware is the software and services that orchestrate separate resources across the Internet, allowing applications to seamlessly and securely share computers, data, networks and instruments. SURA established and managed the NMI Integration Testbed Program in partnership with Internet2 and EDUCAUSE, under the NMI EDIT (Enterprise Desktop & Integration Technologies) Consortium cooperative agreement with the National Science Foundation (NSF ANI-0123937).

NMI Testbed Sites were established at the University of Alabama at Birmingham, the University of Alabama in Huntsville, Georgia State University, Florida State University, the University of Florida, the University of Michigan, Texas Advanced Computing Center (University of Texas at Austin), the University of Virginia, and the University of Southern California. These sites provided practical evaluation of NMI components within the context of real projects and application scenarios from June 2002 through November 2004. NMI Testbed Site representatives collectively submitted over 170 evaluation reports as direct feedback into the NMI development cycle while actively inspiring, promoting and facilitating the integration of middleware throughout their institutions.

The NMI Integration Testbed Case Study Series documents the most significant influences and outcomes of NMI Testbed sites' middleware integration efforts. The series highlights intersections with established projects, application contexts and influences, drivers for innovation, and decision points and challenges. Through this, the work of these pioneering institutions is captured to provide a breadth of insight and experience for others to use towards successful middleware deployment.

The establishment of a robust information technology infrastructure, in which middleware will play a major role, is key to growing the science capacity in the South and nation – a key focus of the SURA mission. SURA's participation has been consistent with its desire to enhance the research capacity of the region and beyond. According to Mary Fran Yafchak, SURA IT Program Coordinator and NMI Integration Testbed Manager, "By studying how to better integrate middleware across the broad expanse of the science community, we're learning how to effectively leverage our grid-computing and research capacity for our schools and the entire research community." Researchers at several sites gained experience in advancing computationally intensive science through the integration of NMI components and concepts. Numerous sites also enhanced their enterprise middleware infrastructure, through more secure, scalable identity management, and the development of campus grid infrastructure.

SURA's management of the NMI Integration Testbed Program also resulted in the development of the NMI Testbed Grid, which provided Testbed Sites with a foundation for formal collaboration in the area of grid development and deployment. The NMI Testbed Grid has since evolved into SURAGrid, a multi-institutional initiative to enable heterogeneous (vs. project-specific) inter-institutional resource sharing via grid technologies. "SURAGrid is a logical extension of the work begun within the NMI Testbed Program

and is leading to the development of valuable and viable regional grid infrastructure,” notes Gary Crane, SURA’s Director of IT Initiatives. SURAGrid is a unique effort among current grid initiatives due to its diversity, long-term view of grids as generalized infrastructure, and the persistent peripheral objective to discover and understand grid use for and by those outside the scope of expected grid users today.

The NMI Integration Testbed Case Study Series is available on the SURA Web site at:
<http://www1.sura.org/3000/NMI-Testbed.html>. More information about SURAGrid is available at:
<http://www1.sura.org/3000/SURAGrid.html>.

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The Southeastern Universities Research Association (SURA) is a consortium of over 60 leading research institutions in the southern United States and the District of Columbia established in 1980 as a non-stock, nonprofit corporation. SURA serves as an entity through which colleges, universities, and other organizations may cooperate with one another, and with government and industry in acquiring, developing, and using laboratories and other research facilities and in furthering knowledge and the application of that knowledge in the physical, biological, and other natural sciences and engineering. For more information, visit www.sura.org.