NameFLOW-Paradise launches first International X.500(93) Pilot

In March 1995 participants in the NameFLOW-Paradise[1] international X.500 directory service decided to launch a pilot to test the 1993 edition of the X.500 standard. The pilot has an international flavour and will test X.500(93) implementations at various levels. The short term goal of the pilot is to gain experience with 1993 compliant implementations to pave the way for a full scale X.500(93) service next year, open to many software vendors. The transition is a necessary step towards the creation of a more universal directory. NameFLOW-Paradise is the continuation of the international X.500 directory pilot PARADISE; coordination of the service has been provided by DANTE [2] since May 1994.

When the first X.500 standard was introduced in 1988 it lacked some crucial features, such as efficient replication of data. The Internet community designed RFC1276 to fill some of the holes in the standard, but by doing so it caused interworking problems with conformant X.500(88) implementations. The improved 1993 X.500 standard incorporates the advantages of RFC1276 and adds necessary features to the 1988 edition, such as replication, security, and access control.

Most of the RFC1276 Directory System Agents (DSAs) are based on the Quipu software and during the PARADISE pilot they have proved their qualities for large scale deployment. However, these Quipus are not truly conformant to the X.500 standard which resulted in software development in two different directions. A 'pure' X.500(93) infrastructure will focus future development. X.500(93) is already being implemented by many major software developers and therefore migration to a X.500 (93) compliant service is an important step to a more open and standard directory service.

The pilot will comprise two phases [3]. The first phase will be a small pilot covering three European countries, where 93 conformant services will be run in parallel with the current Quipu based service. This phase is planned to start in May 1995 and will continue until the end of August 1995. The initial organisations involved are DANTE, UKERNA (United Kingdom Education and Research Network Association) who will test the software in their organisation, SURFnet (Dutch national research network) and SWITCH (Swiss national research network) who will be performing tests nationally, while ULCC (University of London Computing Centre, currently operating the NameFLOW-Paradise service) will test a top level (international) service. The ISODE Consortium and NEXOR are the first two vendors to make their X.500(93) products available to the pilot participants.

The second phase will be a large scale pilot covering most of the European countries and possibly some countries outside Europe. The second phase is planned for October-December 1995. During 1996 the pilot structure will gradually replace the current operational directory service. It is foreseen that the deployment of a full 1993 compliant Directory Service may need several operational enhancements, as it has not been tested on a large scale before. As a result the pilot will have a major impact on the current structure of the service.

For more information please contact:

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Notes

1. NameFLOW-Paradise is a distributed directory based on the X.500 standard which provides access to contact details of researchers in over 30 countries.
2. DANTE organises international network services for and on behalf of European national research networks
3. A detailed implementation plan has been drafted by David Chadwick (University of Salford)