

INFORMATION SOCIETY TECHNOLOGIES (IST) PROGRAMME



Large Scale Monitoring of BroadBand Internet Infrastructure *Contract No. 004336*

Deliverable D4.1a: Report on Project Website

Abstract: This document provides a report on the establishment and features of the LOBSTER websites, containing publicly available content describing the activities funded under the LOBSTER contract, and password-protected content including internal project documents.

Contractual Date of Delivery	31 January 2005
Actual Date of Delivery	3 February 2005
Deliverable Security Class	PU
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The LOBSTER Consortium consists of:

FORTH-ICS	Coordinator	Greece
VU	Partner	Netherlands
CESNET	Partner	Czech Republic
UNINETT	Partner	Norway
ENDACE	Partner	United Kingdom
Alcatel	Partner	France
FORTHnet	Partner	Greece
TNO	Partner	Netherlands
TERENA	Partner	Netherlands



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1 Executive summary

The purpose of this document is to formally notify the European Commission of the establishment of the initial content of the LOBSTER websites. The websites are:

- www.ist-lobster.org, the official LOBSTER public website
- www.ist-lobster.org/private/, the private area of the project, only available to authorised users who have logged in.

The overall objective of the LOBSTER website is to disseminate and exploit the results of the LOBSTER project and make the benefits and achievements known to relevant target groups, including NRENs and ISPs, security researchers, system and network administrators, other IST projects and other actors interested in security and network monitoring issues.

The public website has been planned with two groups in particular in mind: all potential LOBSTER monitoring infrastructure participants and other parties involved in the network monitoring. Site design has therefore taken into consideration the likely information needs of those groups.

The password-protected private area of the project provides a repository and access point for project-related information, for use by the project partners. It also contains sections which will be accessible to the European Commission and the project reviewers.

The private area is only visible to authorised visitors once they have logged in, and the actual information available to each site visitor depends on their individual access rights.

After launch, it is anticipated that the site will continue to develop and expand. In particular, all relevant software will be made available from the (new) Downloads section, publicly-available Deliverables will be published in the Publications section, and more detailed information about possibilities to collaborate with the LOBSTER project will be made available shortly.

2 Introduction

The purpose of this document is to formally notify the European Commission of the establishment of the initial content of the LOBSTER websites. The sites are:

- <http://www.ist-lobster.org>, the LOBSTER public internet site
- <http://www.ist-lobster.org/private/>, the private area of the project, password protected area available only to authorised users who have logged in.



This document details the overall objectives and process that have guided site planning and establishment. It discusses the standards used, the infrastructure and content of both websites, as well as the use policies of the involved mailing list and private area, security issues and usage statistics of the websites.

3 Objectives and process

The objective of Work Package 4 is to disseminate and exploit the results of the LOBSTER project and to make the benefits and achievements known to relevant target groups, including NRENs and ISPs, security researchers, system and network administrators, other IST projects and other actors interested in security and network monitoring issues. For any IST project, and arguably for any activity these days, a website is the most effective method of disseminating information. As it is accessible to anyone with internet access, this effectively means that information is available on a worldwide basis. For this reason, the development and maintenance of a high-quality website is one of the major activities in the LOBSTER project.

The key issues that were considered in selecting, structuring and writing content for the LOBSTER website are the following:

- To provide a comprehensive description of the work that is being conducted within the project's activities.
- To successfully reach the audiences that may have an interest in LOBSTER – potential participants in the LOBSTER infrastructure, security researchers, system and network administrators, other IST projects.
- To maintain a high profile for content.
- To provide a broad, shallow site structure, in line with the “three clicks” rule¹ and to make the site as transparent as possible.

The public website has been planned targeting in particular to attract two groups of visitors: a) all potential LOBSTER monitoring infrastructure participants, and b) other parties involved in the network monitoring. Site design has therefore taken into consideration the likely information needs of those two groups.

One of the requirements of Activity 4.1 was to establish a website within four months from the start of the project. However, the decision was taken to establish a public website much sooner in order to speed up the external visibility of the project. This target was actually achieved, and the public website went live on 13 December 2004. The websites are hosted by TERENA.

The establishment of a private area for project management purposes was also one of the requirements of Activity 4.1. The project consortium collectively determined what features would be required and developed a specification at their first meeting.

¹ „Three clicks” rule – all the content should take no more than three clicks to access.



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The design brief was to develop a web-based system that integrated document sharing facilities, mailing list archives, contacts databases and remote management. Individual logins were also necessary to allow different types of user rights to be allocated. Finally, the system needed to be extensible so that features could be added as necessary.

TERENA used an in-house developed project management system to create the private area which would meet the LOBSTER needs. This was completed within October, and after user trials, went live on 15 October 2004.

The website continues to be maintained by TERENA on a daily basis. TERENA is responsible for both content and technical management, although the flexible access policy means the private area requires very little intervention.

4 Standards

The website is designed to be conformant with the latest W3C standards; in particular XHTML 1.0, CSS2 and PHP 5.0.x. This means the content and layout of the website should appear similar on most (if not all) modern web browsers.

However, it is recognised there are still many older web browsers in use, so the website has also been designed to be fully accessible to some of the more popular legacy browsers (e.g. Netscape 4.x). Even for other browsers (e.g. text-only Lynx), the basic content should still be readable.

No assumptions have been made about end-user equipment and the website is designed to scale to any size of screen. As a result, the website can just as easily be browsed on a PDA as on a 20-inch monitor. The LOBSTER project believes this is an important consideration as web clients are increasingly being integrated into devices such as televisions and telephones.

5 Infrastructure

The website is currently running on a dual Intel Xeon-based server with 2 GB of RAM and 146 GB of hard disk space in a redundant RAID5 configuration. This is located in a managed facility which has a 1 GB connection to SURFNet (Dutch NREN) and hence to the wider Internet. The server is connected behind the firewall thus ensuring to minimise the security threats.

Backups are being done onsite, and starting from March 2005, also in an automated offsite fashion. It is anticipated this infrastructure will be more than adequate during the lifetime of the project.

The webserver is accessible both via regular IPv4 and IPv6.



6 Public Website

The LOBSTER website can be accessed at <http://www.ist-lobster.org/>. The homepage (see Figure 1) provides an executive summary of the project, highlights recent developments and gives a brief explanation of the various sections.

Several navigation links also appear that are common to all pages. These allow users to quickly access particular sections and to contact the project.



The screenshot shows the LOBSTER project website homepage. At the top left is the LOBSTER logo and the text 'Large-scale Monitoring of Broadband Internet Infrastructures'. At the top right is the 'Information Society Technologies' logo. Below the header is a navigation bar with 'Home' and 'Contact' links. A left sidebar contains a menu with items: 'About LOBSTER', 'Partners', 'Publications', 'Announcements', 'Calendar & Events', 'Related Sites', and 'Private Area' (with a lock icon). The main content area starts with a 'Welcome to LOBSTER!' heading. The text describes LOBSTER as a pilot European infrastructure for accurate Internet traffic monitoring. A 'Hot Topics' sidebar lists a presentation by Kostas Anagnostakis. Below this, it states LOBSTER's contribution to IST 2.3.5 Research Networking test-beds. Further text mentions its role in the overall IST Workprogramme and its status as a successor to the SCAMPI project. A 'Latest News' section lists three items: presentation at EC-Bridge Conference, presentation at BroadBand Europe 2004, and website launch on 13 December 2004. An 'Information' section provides links to Overview, Partners, Publications, and Calendar pages. The footer features a lobster image, the text 'Hosted by TERENA', and 'This page was last updated on 19 January 2005.' A disclaimer states the project is funded by the European Commission.

Figure 1 – The LOBSTER Homepage

The major sections of the website are as follows:

About LOBSTER – This provides more comprehensive information on the objectives and work packages of the LOBSTER project.



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Partners – This lists all the organisations in the LOBSTER project consortium, with logos and contact details.

Publications – This contains all presentations about the LOBSTER project, public deliverables, standards contributions and press releases.

Announcements – This offers the ability to all interested parties to subscribe to the LOBSTER News and Announcement mailing list to receive regular updates on the LOBSTER activities. The webpage offers easy interface for subscribing and unsubscribing. The policy of the LOBSTER News list is the following:

1. Everyone interested to receive regular updates on the LOBSTER activities can subscribe to the list lobster-news@ist-lobster.org.
2. The person will be asked to confirm his subscription by sending a reply to Majordomo@ist-lobster.org to avoid misuse of the email address.
3. The person will not be able to post to this mailing list.
4. Only people form the LOBSTER consortium will be allowed to post to this mailing list.
5. The archive of the mailing list is accessible on-line: <http://www.ist-lobster.org/announcements/archive/>
6. The person can unsubscribe from the LOBSTER News list from the same webpage: <http://www.ist-lobster.org/announcements/>

Calendar & Events – This lists forthcoming LOBSTER events and other important dates. Later there will be links to the past events as well.

Related Sites – This provides links to monitoring and security activities, standardisation bodies, the European Commission, and other IST projects.

Private Area – This section is only accessible to the LOBSTER project partners, the European Commission and the project reviewers (with an appropriate login) and contains the project management system.

It is planned to add new sections later, like for example, a) Downloads, which will contain links to the relevant software, b) LOBSTER Infrastructure, which will contain all the information about the LOBSTER monitoring infrastructure.

7 Private Area

The Private Area of the website is only accessible to the LOBSTER project partners. It also contains sections which will be accessible to the European Commission and the project reviewers. This contains the project management system (<http://www.ist-lobster.org/private/>).

Each project partner has access to the private area. There are two levels of access rights for the project partners. The Coordinating Partner (FORTH) and the maintainer of the private area (TERENA) may add, delete or modify any document in the Private Area, as well as add new sections and new users. Other project partners do not have rights to add new sections or new users, but they can add, delete or modify documents. Since the LOBSTER project has nine partners it has been decided not to



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invent different access rights for different work packages, since most of the partners are involved in most of them. User rights may be granted and revoked as necessary by the Coordinating Partner or WP4 leader, which means the system can be adapted as the project evolves. A separate login will be created for the European Commission and the project reviewers, who will be allowed to access the sections related to the project Technical Audits with read-only permissions.

Users currently have to login with a username/password combination, but the use of security certificates is being investigated. This would improve security and would remove the requirement for users to remember different login details for each web site they visited.

The Private Area (see Figure 2) is divided into number of sections.

Information Society Technologies

Home Search | All Documents | Contact | Stats

Contacts

Contact information of the persons involved in the project.

[New Contact] Search

Name	Organisation
Arne Oslebo	UNINETT
Baiba Kaskina	TERENA
Evangelos Markatos	ICS-FORTH
Ian Graham	Endace Group
Petsagourakis Manolis	FORTHnet S.A - R&D Department
Rutger Coolen	TNO Telecom
Sven Ubik	CESNET

Hosted by [TERENA](#)

Figure 2 – The LOBSTER Private Area

The main sections within the Private Area are:

Contacts – This provides contact details for people involved in the project.



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Deliverables – This is a placeholder for all the submitted deliverables.

Meetings – Under this section separate subsections will be created for each project meeting in order to provide logistical information, agenda and other relevant documents.

Mail archives - Every mailing list run by the project has a web archive. The web archives are fully searchable.

Templates – This contains templates for the project presentations, deliverables and reports.

Presentations – This section store all the project related presentations.

WP0-WP5 – These are sections for each work package of the project to store documents for collaborative purposes.

Contracts – All the project relevant contracts are accessible from this section.

Groups, Users, Sections – These are sections for management purposes to add and delete users, groups and sections, to manage the access rights and the structure of the private area. These sections are accessible only for the Coordinating Partner and WP4 leader.

Comprehensive usage statistics are maintained for the LOBSTER website. These provide information on the total number of hits, the most requested pages, and a breakdown of hits by country and user agent. They may be found at “<http://stats.terena.nl/lobster/>” and is accessible only for the LOBSTER project partners from the private area of the project.

The private area is fully searchable and there is a possibility for users to download all the documents that have been modified in the private area during the selected time interval.

The information in the private area can be updated by all the project partners as frequently as it is necessary for successful collaboration.

8 Conclusions and Future Plans

The LOBSTER website and the private area has been created within the first three months of the project. The website is providing information about the LOBSTER project, partners, publications, upcoming events and other issues. The private area offers the repository and access point for project-related information, for use by the project partners and the reviewers.



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After launch, it is anticipated that the website will continue to develop and expand. In particular, all relevant software will be made available from the (new) Downloads section, publicly-available Deliverables will be published in the Publications section, and more detailed information about possibilities to collaborate with the LOBSTER project will be made available shortly to satisfy the interest of the website visitors.

As the technical work and activities progress, new items will be published under the “Latest News” and “Hot topics” parts. The technical work on the pilot infrastructure will be described in more details under the (new) LOBSTER Infrastructure section as well as the possibilities to collaborate with the LOBSTER project.