

Dionysos' answers

INRIA's evaluation seminar

March 22, 2012

GENERAL ANSWERS

Q1: creating/stopping projects¹

- A large amount of freedom in the process
- A continuous and smooth process:
 - creation can take 1 year, or more
 - stopping a team: same, it is announced long before the specific stopping data
- 12 years-rule: an upper bound, not a target
- Usually, associated with this, teams split, or join to give birth to two or three new teams
- Also, when the team leader stops leading, a new project is built (possibly, same members)

¹ project = project-team = team in these slides (typical internal INRIA terminology)

- Creating a team:
 - the group of researchers agree on the proposed main research directions, methodology, etc. and writes a proposal
 - the proposal is examined locally (at the group's INRIA Unit), then modified, examined again (this includes oral presentations), etc., and finally sent to 4 external experts (similar rules for selecting them as for the evaluation seminar)
 - the group reacts to the 4 reports (written response), and the whole material is evaluated locally (at the INRIA Unit) and then (hopefully finally) globally (by the Evaluation Committee)
 - if everything goes well, that's the usual path (resumed)

Q2: team functioning

- Again, a large amount of freedom, in practice
- Functioning model strongly depends on
 1. research topics
 2. type of work: e.g. some teams structure their work around a significant software development project
 3. team's size
 4. then, members' interests and history
- In any case, not the academic US model (even for small teams)

Q2: coherence inside the team

- Basically, same answers as before
- The coherence level strongly depends on the themes and the type of research work
- A decreasing function of size, in general

DIONYSOS

Q1

- Part of Dionysos' members arrived recently
- The rest was there, in the (stopped) Armor team
- Armor grew fast and reached a peak size of 45 members
- Armor was then stopped: it basically split into three teams, a positive result (spin); one of these teams is Dionysos

Q2-Q3

- Our functioning comes strongly from previous history + the goals we defined at the creation
 - a strong past on modeling problems
 - some successes in specific areas
 - some failures in other problems
- It is also a function of the contribution of new members
 - good example: sensor networks work, with nice results when N. Bouabdallah arrived (including an associated team with Raouf Boutaba, Waterloo) and now, a stopped activity since he left

- today,
 - activities around perceptual quality assessment are our main common working area (almost all the team involved) and our major research theme
 - another important area: rare event analysis (2 people involved, B. Tuffin and G. Rubino, an associated team with Pierre L'Ecuyer + other collaborators around the world)
 - model solving techniques, more generally: another federating area
 - the MAPI group's activities
 - specific developments in Markovian techniques, fluid queues, transient queuing analysis

- today (cont'd)
 - skills of recently arrived members + past work on video transport + past work on congestion control + past work on P2P structures -> new federating project on the CCN paradigm
 - this involves several team's members
- concerning the “specificities”
 - strong activity in network economics with external partners
 - strong activity in distributed system analysis economics also with external partners (MAPI group)

NEEDS FOR THE CLOSE FUTURE

- hiring in the network economics area
 - material for feeding a team in the area
- difficult to find good students with double skills in maths and in computer science

COMPLEMENTS
(AFTER “PRIVATE” SESSION)

More generalities

- Remember that Inria “themes” (set of teams to be evaluated simultaneously) are mainly there for the evaluation process, not for animating the research work in the institute.
- Defining a “theme” is a constrained process: not more than something between 12 and 15 teams, say (to be able to work in this seminar form, to implement the evaluation as it is).
- A good example of misunderstanding our organization is the recurrent question in our seminars (in our theme): “how is it that Inria puts so little effort in security?”
Answer: there is much more on security in other themes.

- This means that there is no formal permanent “structure” associated with that set of teams in a theme.
- In the seminars (every 4.5 years for a given team) we discover/learn many things from the presentations of other colleagues. In other cases, we know very well what our colleagues are doing.

- Some DIONYSOS examples of this:
 - we are very familiar with MAESTRO's work on network economics because we have close and stable collaborations with them
 - we are clearly not aware enough of RAP's work on CCNs (this comes out of your questions during the session)
 - we know very well the bounding approaches in the Markov area done in TREC but we know only the main lines in their activities around stochastic geometry

A technical comment about PSQA

- Post-meeting thought: we believe that the question/idea about quantifying or just better formalizing the fact that adding signal-based or content-related information to our PSQA functions is not significantly useful given the information already taken into account, deserves clearly more attention, finally.
- We will consider it explicitly, since, as I said, this is at the heart of our approach. So, I modify my first quick answer on that specific point.