



Laatste wijziging: 1 oktober 2001

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Date: Wed, 28 May 2003 07:01:20 +0200
Reply-To: NREN distribution list of Silk participants
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Subject: Silk News Letter Issue 5 May 2003
Comments: To: silk-tech@list.rug.nl, silk@list.rug.nl,
Silk.News.list@mailhost.rug.nl
Content-type: text/plain; charset=US-ASCII

Silk News Letter

Issue 5

May 2003

1. Introduction

This fifth issue of the Silk News letter reaches you from Dushanbe in Tajikistan.

2. Status of Silk sites

The problems with the transmit unit have still not been resolved. During these days an extra filter is being tested in Hamburg and if the tests are successful the malfunctioning transmit units will be upgraded with the new hardware. The hardware difficulties are of great concern for the Silk ExCo as the countries are entitled to a stable hardware platform for their Internet connectivity.

The status per country being connected is as follows:

Azerbaijan: in May the Silk NOC was officially inaugurated during a visit of the Secretary General of NATO. More information of this opening at:

<http://www.nato.int/docu/update/2003/05-may/e0514a.htm>

Kazakhstan: as the transmitter problem has not yet been resolved the equipment is still in Hamburg

Kyrgyzstan: shortly after the problem with the switch has been solved the transmitter faulted. For the last three weeks only the west to east link of the connection is operating. For east to west transmission a fall back is being used by way of Moscow.

Turkmenistan: the transmitter problem is also here the cause of further delay.

Tajikistan: the transmitter problem exists here as well and operations can only be continued by resetting the equipment every few hours.

In Armenia, Georgia and Uzbekistan the equipment is functioning normally and the users are making full use of the connectivity. Even more than full use as in Georgia and Uzbekistan the available bandwidth is saturated during working hours.

An overview of the use of the Silk connection cannot be given in this issue of the Silk News Letter, due to the connectivity problems from Dushanbe.

3. Silk extensions

During the next Silk Board meeting several parties will be present to discuss cooperation with Silk. The next News Letter will bring you more information of the progress.

OSI Uzbekistan has announced that they will reserve a considerable budget for regional connectivity and support of the NREN staff until the end of 2004. The final decision of this grant was on May 23 and further details are not yet known. Similar grants in other countries could also be possible.

4. Silk logo contest

The Silk ExCo has selected a Silk logo. This logo will be presented to the Silk Board during their meeting in Tbilisi.

5. Silk exposure

Besides the press attention for the Silk inauguration in Baku (Azerbaijan) the Silk project was also promoted at the TERANA meeting in Zagreb (Croatia). Peter Kirstein, chairman of the Silk ExCo,

gave a presentation of the current status of the Silk project. The attention for the presentation was quite good and it might result in new partners for the project.

The presentation will be available on the Silk web site as soon as connectivity permits this.

6. Silk web site

Some people might have noticed this: the Silk web site was unavailable for several days. A hack attack on the web server site forced the technical staff to remove the server from the Internet and rebuild the system, including the several sites that were hosted on it.

A working group at the University of Groningen is currently redesigning the Silk web site. The design is old fashioned and does not meet the standards of this moment. We hope to present the new web site before the summer.

7. Silk caches

Since recently the Silk cache systems (Cisco Content Engines) are in operation. In the current default situation the bitrate advantage is approximately 10%. I.e.: 10% of the information that is going from the Silk NOC to the country comes from the cache. As during working hours the connection is usually fully saturated this 10% is free extra bandwidth. A research is currently being done to see if the cache gain can be improved.

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