Meeting notes for the ns-3 Consortium Annual Meeting, May 14, 2015

Attendees: Tom Henderson, George Riley, Walid Dabbous, Nicola Baldo, Manuel Ricardo (all ns-3 Consortium steering committee members), and various other participants attended from the Workshop on ns-3.

The ns-3 Consortium Annual Meeting was hosted by CTTC on May 14, 2015. The agenda of the meeting was to review the goals of the consortium, review 2014-15 activities, and discuss next steps. The meeting was open to all interested participants. Tom Henderson presented a set of overview slides, and discussion on specific topics is summarized below.

The first point of discussion was the funding model and current budget of the consortium. The original goal of enrolling a number of industrial members to pay recurring membership dues has not resulted in any interest, so while the consortium can still look to recruit such members, it is more likely that sustainment will have to come from other sources. There may be other ways in which industrial supporters can support the project, ranging from allowing their developers to contribute time to ns-3 maintenance or to upstream patches, writing letters of endorsement or support for research projects, making one-time contributions, or donating equipment. The meeting agreed that perhaps some small level of maintenance (e.g. one software maintainer for two or three years) might be funded in the future by NSF or a similar agency if a number of letters of support from industry could be rallied. In the meantime, the project will continue by crowdsourcing the maintenance activities as needed.

We discussed the result of the experiment on providing restricted (password protected) access to the ns-3 training videos from 2014 (Atlanta). The videos were seen as perhaps one incentive to encourage industrial members to join, but there were no such requests. There were only about 100 video views (the videos were available to consortium members and the previous attendees of the training only). The meeting agreed that we perhaps may stand to benefit more from making these available to the public, so the meeting agreed to remove the password restriction and announce availability of the 2014 (and forthcoming 2015) videos.

Tom Henderson noted that his term as Executive Director of the Steering Committee was coming to an end at the end of 2015 and that the Steering Committee needed to move towards finding a successor.

The meeting next discussed Workshop on ns-3 issues. WNS3 was a success and grew by a factor of 1.5 to 2 in most metrics (number of papers submitted/accepted, number of attendees). We discussed the following points:
1) whether it was worth paying ACM $500 for digital library inclusion, vs. using a free (and open access) alternative such as arXiv.org. The decision was that many people derive benefit from the ACM status, and that ACM has a policy to allow authors to self-post their author-prepared versions, so we decided to continue with ACM for next year.
2) Site selection for 2016 (and 2017). Tom Henderson volunteered Seattle WA (the University of Washington) for WNS3 2016, and Manuel Ricardo volunteered Porto (INESC Porto) for WNS3 2017, and the participants agreed to these sites.
3) Technical Program Co-Chairs (one or possibly two) are needed for WNS3 2016. The Steering Committee will commence a search.
4) The meeting discussed whether to provide multiple tracks (e.g. industrial) with different reviewing criteria, since it was observed that some papers of a more industrial focus were rejected by reviewers applying academic criteria to the paper (despite the paper being still valuable for this forum). Consensus was to not add multiple tracks (workshop is too small for

this yet) but to give clearer reviewer guidelines about allowing a wider breadth of papers.
5) Eric Gamess's contributions as Proceedings editor were noted, and all participants received a memory stick with the published Proceedings.
6) The issues of remote participation and streaming were discussed. The participants felt that, for paper presenters, attendance in person was important, so we agreed to continue to require that paper presenters physically attend WNS3. Regarding streaming or video archiving to allow remote participation, the participants seemed to agree that it would be not such a bad thing if the costs and logistical support required were minimal. Tom Henderson took the action item to investigate options for WNS3 2016.
7) We discussed the possibility of raising money by attracting corporate sponsors for the workshop, such as general sponsorship or sponsorship of coffee breaks, etc. Tom also agreed to look into this for Seattle.
8) For training in 2016, we agreed to solicit proposals to teach training sessions, so that the existing maintainers were not solely responsible for this.

An additional item was clarifying (writing down) some of the informal procedures for conducting reviews and making paper acceptance decisions. In general, the following decisions were taken:
1) use ACM guidelines for dealing with any issue of plagiarism raised by reviewers.
2) Lean towards making WNS3 more inclusive rather than more selective. The Workshop took this step in 2015 by extending the workshop to 1.5 days based on the number of submissions.
3) try to avoid outcomes of drastically different reviews by offering better review guidelines and guided review questions for reviewers
4) continue with the process for conditional inclusion if small modifications to papers are demanded by reviewers
5) allow customary 1-week extension for paper submissions, and build into the schedule, and try to ensure that everyone has equal access to the extension and some advance notice is given.
6) all reject decisions are final (may not be appealed or contested)
7) use standard definitions/guidelines for noting conflicts of interest, such as used by other conferences or journals

The meeting discussed requests by other workshops to reuse the ns-3 logo, and agreed to adopt guidelines such as the Mozilla foundation has used.

The meeting discussed whether to allow people to post call for papers announcements on ns-3 mailing lists, and the recent request for ACM MSWIM demos and posters was provided as an example. The participants agreed to permit this as long as the CFP was clearly scoped to be related to ns-3 in some way.

The meeting agreed to continue the travel stipend program for 2015 summer projects; three such stipends were awarded this year. The stipends provide travel grants to any summer students who have a paper on their summer project accepted to ns-3.

The open source project status was reviewed. Usage statistics are up in all categories observed (ns-3-users subscribers, messages to mailing lists, etc.). Tom Henderson reviewed an informal survey of ns-3 usage in the literature and usage in comparison to other simulation tools.

The next topic reviewed was the current issues the project has in covering the codebase with an active maintainer for each module, and in the logjam of new feature additions to ns-3. Tom Henderson suggested that the proposed modular build system based on bake would alleviate some of this (allowing

some modules to become available through bake without going through the formal review process). He also suggested some website enhancements that more clearly describe how people can get involved in maintenance activities. More prominent overview material (demos, screenshots, videos) will also be collected and assembled. Tom described a proposed plan for ns-3.24 to start to enable the availability of some third party modules as contributed code. The meeting agreed to continue technical aspects of this discussion on the next day's developers meeting, and the meeting then adjourned.