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Research in Europe boosted by launch of new cloud-computing marketplace

Last week, 'Helix Nebula – the Science Cloud Initiative' hosted an event at CERN, near Geneva, Switzerland, to mark the launch of its new cloud-computing marketplace service.

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The event was held at CERN's Globe of Science and Innovation. Image courtesy Kristina Gunne, CERN.

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week, an event was held at CERN, near Geneva, Switzerland, to mark the launch of Helix Nebula's new cloud-computing marketplace. 'Helix Nebula - the Science Cloud Initiative' is a pioneering partnership between big science and big business in Europe, which charts the course towards the sustainable provision of cloud computing for science. Now, through a cutting-edge collaboration between commercial providers and public e-infrastructures, including GÉANT and the European Grid Infrastructure (EGI), the Helix Nebula Marketplace offers a first-of-its-kind production service to meet the needs of researchers and facilitate innovation in science.

The Helix Nebula Marketplace will deliver easy and large-scale access to a range of commercial cloud-computing services through the innovative broker technology deployed within the Helix Nebula Initiative over the last two years and tested with flagship applications from CERN, EMBL, and ESA. "This occasion marks an important point for the Helix Nebula Initiative," says Bob Jones, head of CERN openlab. "The Helix Nebula Marketplace is a true-life example of a hybrid system bringing together commercial cloud providers and public e-infrastructures."

The Helix Nebula Marketplace is also the first step in the road towards achieving an even grander vision for supporting research in Europe: "The

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Video courtesy Helix Nebula.

Helix Nebula Marketplace is the root of a science-based ecosystem enabling the creation of an e-infrastructure commons marketplace," says Maryline Lengert, a senior advisor in ESA's IT department. "This should cover the entire scientific workflow, from research to production, from problem-solving to discovery and innovation. It will create a fertile environment that nurtures new scientific ideas and challenges."

"Science today is in a process of very fast, radical change," explains Zoran Stančič, deputy director general of the European Commission Directorate General for Communications Networks, Content, and Technology (DG CONNECT). "We need to support advancements in e-science at both a European and a global level." Frédéric Hemmer, head of CERN's IT department, agrees: "CERN is exploring the origins of our universe, but without the appropriate IT infrastructures - to deal with the large volumes of data produced by the LHC experiments - none of this research could be done."

Video from this event is now available on the CERN Document Server.

- Andrew Purcell

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