



Subject Minutes of the 2nd meeting of the board of OpenDA

Meeting date December 21st and 23rd 2010

Present Dr. Mark Roest (Vortech), Prof. Arnold Heemink(TU Delft , only 23rd), Dr. Martin Verlaan (Deltares/TU Delft ,only 21st), Dr. Herman Gerritsen (Deltares)

By Martin Verlaan

1. Opening and agenda

Since it was not possible to meet all at once, it was decided to break the meeting in two parts, on December 21st and 23rd. Mark will chair both sessions. This is the second meeting of the board of the OpenDA association. The board members are all present, albeit in two sessions, Prof. Arnold Heemink (chairman), Dr. Mark Roest (treasurer) and Dr. Martin Verlaan (secretary).

A draft agenda was created by Mark Roest. Martin Verlaan would like to add a small discussion at the beginning about the minutes.

2. Minutes of the previous meeting

- As the minutes will be posted on the website, a uniform lay out is important. We agree that the current lay out is OK
- Herman suggests to number the headings
- A list of actions should be added
- Names of potential contacts will not be mentioned in the minutes (because the minutes are public). These names will be kept on a separate list that is accessible only to the board.

Actions:

- 20100629.01 There seems to be no legal way to develop for MAC without MAC hardware. It would be very useful to have e.g. a Macbook for development. Mark mentions that VORtech will have a Macbook available for OpenDA development as of Januari 1st, 2011. Therefore, this issue is closed.
- 20100629.02 In principle it is possible to mirror SVN. An OpenDA project was created at sourceforge. The SVN-repository there was activated. This action needs further work.

3. Announcements

- Herman shows impressive results of OpenDA application for sensitivity analysis / improvement of a tidal model for the Malacca Straits (recently submitted). Arnold also has extensive contact with people from Singapore.

4. Evaluation of the current situation

- Herman reports that OpenDA is more and more applied within Deltares, it does take some effort but the results are impressive in all cases. Also, the operational work quickly improves the quality of the OpenDA software.
- Martin mentions that a lot of errors have been repaired over time, but are not yet in the official version on the website; we need a new release soon.
- We discuss a mail from Arjen Markus (Deltares) with comments regarding the ease of use of OpenDA; his main comments are about the documentation and the lack of real papers (not just the glossy stuff)
- Several users had problems to get OpenDA working. Mark Roest states that often the problems are not really serious (they can be overcome with max a few hours of advice). Herman remarks that we need a help desk manned by people that can help overcome the first hurdles. The real experts should be available for 2nd line support. We agree that it is not reasonable to ask money to help people overcome the problems that we have created ourselves by not providing a flashy installation.
- A former PhD of Arnold Heemink has asked for a Python version. It is decided that we cannot support all languages ourselves. If needed any language can be accommodated with the black-box coupling. If people really want a language binding, they can create one.
- The OpenDA version in SIMONA has been removed temporarily because it did not work properly. We conclude that this is mainly because the version of SIMONA with OpenDA was never properly tested before. However, the lack of an RRSQRT filter is indeed a drawback. Nils van Velzen is now repairing the problems to get OpenDA within SIMONA working again.
- Mark Roest mentions that the current testing system doesn't work: once there is a version on the trunk for which some tests fail, then following programmers do not make the effort to correct errors from their predecessors and simply don't run the tests that didn't work at the start.
- All this leads to the conclusion that starting with OpenDA is now not in all cases a smooth and convincing experience. Improving this would be a major step forward.
- Ideas to improve the situation are:
 - A completely worked-out example
 - Unit-tests that run out of the box
 - Some sort of help desk that can help people through the first problems for free (a few hours)
 - Overnight builds and test runs; remove any stuff that does not stand all the tests
 - Collect experiences with the various wrappers
 - Improve the documentation (make it more accessible)

5. Plans for 2011

- A new release in Spring 2011 to publish all the improvements that have been made.

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- Make it easier to start using the OpenDA software:
 - Reduce the number of versions (2 instead of 5) and concentrate the effort on the two remaining to make sure that they run out of the box.
 - Perhaps a more complete package (including e.g. Java) to avoid compatibility problems.
 - Offer workarounds for common problems.
 - Offer some form of help desk.
- Improve documentation; provide complete examples.
- Improve the quality control of the code (overnight builds etc.).
- Create a roadmap (FEWS developments; no support for other languages except Matlab for analysis; development from the university).
- Install party attached to a small data-assimilation workshop (organized by Ghada El Serafy). It is unclear whether this will be part of the workshop organized around the promotion of Umer Altaf.
- Summer school organized by Remus Hanea.
- Add extra methods that have been developed at Delft University. E.g the work by Umer Altaf.
- Increase (double?) the number of members of the OpenDA association.
- In order to do all this, we need funding. Herman correctly mentions that the current members of the OpenDA association have agreed to supply 20 days of work each year and that gives us some room apart from the financial contributions of the members. Mark mentions that VORtech is supplying Nils van Velzen at cost price for the SWAN research. VORtech finds it hard to generate major projects from OpenDA, and it has little room at this point to invest much effort in generic OpenDA support activities. Likewise, TU-Delft and Deltares need projects to allocate people on the development of OpenDA. We therefore agree to try and organize joint applications for subsidies for generic OpenDA support. The workshop on January 31st around the promotion of Umer Altaf can be used to involve people.
- The members of the OpenDA association have taken part in the Sangoma FP7 proposal, which aims at the integration of OpenDA with similar initiatives within Europe. If this proposal is accepted, it will provide a wonderful opportunity for the development of OpenDA.
- Mark suggests to create a year plan for OpenDA with well-defined tasks that can be allocated to students for their internship. Mark will initiate the development of such a plan.

6. Further items

- Mark Roest will update the year 2010 report that was initiated by Herman Gerritsen
- Mark Roest will create the financial year report for 2010
- Martin Verlaan has created a sourceforge account for OpenDA; he will register others that must have access but they will first have to register themselves with OpenDA
- Mark Roest mentions that Nils van Velzen will gradually take over his role in the association; this does not imply a loss of commitment but rather an opportunity for Nils van Velzen to get more involved.

7. Next meeting

Mark Roest will organize the annual OpenDA meeting around March.

8. Actions

20100629.01	Martin Verlaan	Contact Johan Meijdam about VMWARE image for mac	closed
20100629.02	Martin Verlaan	Investigate possibility to mirror svn to sourceforge	Continued
20101221.01	Mark Roest	Update annual report for 2010	New
20101221.02	Mark Roest	Write annual financial report for 2010	New
20101221.03	Martin Verlaan	Make version control and junit tests more strict	New
20101221.04	Mark Roest	Organize the writing of a plan for 2011	New