

Jisc Access and Identity Management (AIM) strategy (2013-2016)

Vision

The vision of this strategy is one of easy, secure and widespread access to information and resources, anytime, anywhere; a vision with technology and information management at the heart of research and education.

Mission

Our mission is to be world leaders in simplifying, managing and securing online access to resources and networks for users within UK education and research.

Context

With increasing reliance on online transactions in learning, teaching, research and institutional administration, effective access and identity management (AIM) is essential for organisations to know who their users are, and what they are entitled to access and do. Increasingly, AIM services are delivered in a federated context, benefiting from economies of scale and simplifying the user experience. Deployment of AIM also creates opportunities for centralised audit and control by collapsing multiple separate access systems into a common mechanism.

Good access and identity management is critical to achieving the success of e-infrastructure, helps secure access to big data, and enables collaboration both nationally and internationally. Effective AIM also helps customers (both institutions and service providers) avoid financial loss, reduce inefficiency in business processes and meet regulatory requirements in protecting user privacy.

Strategy

This strategy continues the evolution of access and identity management for the UK research and education sectors within an international context, providing leadership in the development and operation of world class AIM services. This involves creating and following international best practices in embedding institution-centric approaches, with a focus on making AIM services easier to adopt and run, whilst continuing to track the development of user-centric approaches; helping facilitate the embedding of identity management in services; highlighting how the correct processes and policies can improve efficiency and effectiveness and reduce costs; making sure customers and the national infrastructure have the capability to derive the most benefit from developments in technology; and leading and engaging in the development of international standards.

Customer and user requirements

To provide a world class service we will seek to improve the customer and user experience through understanding their challenges and needs for online access, and implementing robust services to respond to these needs. Current challenges and requirements have been identified as:

- » Easy to understand, consistent user experience;

- » Incur minimal resource overheads and be delivered in a cost effective way;
- » Developing better packaged services, provided as a managed service as well as locally implemented;
- » A way for organisations delivering services to research and education consumers to reach the maximum audience by standardising access;
- » A way for organisations to monitor and control resource consumption;
- » An auditable, resilient and secure infrastructure to support mission critical applications;
- » Clear guidance on best practice for adopting access and identity management as a means to managing risk within an institution.

Strategic responses

We will work with partners and customers to facilitate access to their networks and any services or resources their users are entitled to access via those networks. We will ensure that our services are easy to use for both customers and their users while maintaining excellence in service delivery and value for money.

To do this we will maintain a customer focus by providing a single point of contact for AIM services and development, making it easier for customers to engage with our activities and services. We will ensure our services have an easy to understand and consistent user experience and will provide tools that will enable increased usability and control allowing for an improved user experience.

We will deliver value for money by ensuring that customers incur minimum overheads in the cost of participating in services and ensure that there is full economic costing for all activities. We will help to demonstrate how AIM can assist customers in monitoring and controlling resource consumption including tracking and billing of usage by recording accounting data.

We will provide services and tools that ensure customers have the capability to take best advantage of AIM, by delivering clear guidance on best practice for adoption as a means to managing risk within an institution and we will provide the infrastructure to deliver AIM as a service as well as providing for local implementation. Our AIM activity will enable organisations delivering services to research and education consumers to reach the maximum audience by standardising access both nationally and internationally.

We will engage with and seek to influence national and international developments for activities that directly impact on our customers' end users in research, education, government and commercial programmes, including identity assurance. In addition we will seek to align policies across products – nationally and internationally. We will strive for greater integration of technologies when appropriate and ensure product development meets customer requirements. We will work with commercial vendors to ensure that our solutions are attractive for wider industry adoption, reassuring industry concerns about information security and facilitating industry engagement, such as securing access to HPC and other infrastructure and services.

Building on existing research and development activities, including the [co-design process](#), we will work with customers and their users to develop, innovate and pilot solutions that meet their requirements for service enhancements, support tools, or activities that could lead to new services. This will be done in such a way that services and tools will be sustainable and will interoperate or integrate with existing services.

We will ensure that Jisc itself is an exemplar in the implementation and usage of AIM.

Details of how we will deliver this strategy can be found in the accompanying 'Evolution and Delivery of Services Plan'.