

The safe share project

Highlight report 2

Background

To address the need for research in the UK to use and share sensitive data securely and safely, Jisc and leading UK universities are collaborating to provide Higher Assurance Network (HAN) connectivity over the Janet network and access management mechanisms between research centres. The safe share project is working with two particular research communities that use sensitive data to pilot the infrastructure:

- Biomedical researchers e.g. through the Farr Institute and the MRC Medical Bioinformatics initiative
- Administrative data researchers e.g. through the Administrative Data Research Network.

The safe share project is piloting a high capacity, encrypted network between research centres across the Janet network. The project is also piloting an Authentication, Authorisation and Accounting Infrastructure (AAAI) to demonstrate how Jisc's access and identity management services can be used to control access to sensitive data to further enhance the UK's research capacity in areas, such as medical, clinical, health and the social sciences.

There are two streams of activity within the safe share project:

- Higher assurance network connectivity across the Janet network (HAN)
- Access management mechanisms between health informatics research centres (AAAI)

Project status

Stream 1 update – Higher Assurance Network (HAN)

1. HAN design review

This stream will provide a number of virtual network overlays that will be accredited to specific information assurance levels. The project is working closely with the Cabinet Office as the pilot is aiming to achieve accreditation for the Public Services Network (PSN) "service slice". This accreditation will provide a foundation for other uses cases such as the ADRN where specific levels of information assurance accreditation are required. The safe share project envisages three "service slices" as separate virtual overlays:

- Farr
- ADRC/ADRN
- PSN

2. Site Visits

A series of site visits have taken place since the previous project board meeting. The visits have mostly concentrated on the HAN requirements but have also included the opportunity to discuss AAI where appropriate. Members of the project team visited Swansea on 29th June and Edinburgh on 30th, Leeds on 2nd July, and Manchester on 3rd July, and Southampton on 16th July. The visits have been beneficial by providing opportunities to:

- See the set-up and context at each site and have a better understanding of development plans, building moves, for example
- Share the latest on the HAN design, and answer any queries on the set-up (the team came away with a clear idea of how many routers are required and where they will be positioned, for example)
- Explain the safe share vision to colleagues who haven't previously been involved

3. HAN hardware ordering

Following a final review after the site visits and some bench testing of key equipment at the Janet Network Operations Centre, the majority of the HAN kit was ordered in early August. The project team are awaiting confirmation of lead times. Once the kit arrives, pre-stage testing to the core will be undertaken before delivery and installation at the end sites. The rack space for the core equipment has been secured at the shared data centre situated in Slough.

Stream 2 update – Authentication, Authorisation and Accounting Infrastructure (AAI)

A technical update meeting took place on 15th July 2015. Progress continues to be made with Sheffield and Leeds having signed up to Assent, and Manchester in the process of doing so in preparation for the HPC pilot. The Francis Crick Institute has also signed up to Assent as part of the eMedLab pilot; the Wellcome Trust Sanger Institute signing is also in progress.

Project Board

We very much welcome Tanvi Desai, Co-Director (ADS) Data and User Services at the Administrative Data Research Network, to the Board. Members of the project team met with Tanvi to fully discuss the project on 17th August.

Next Steps

- Receipt and pre-stage testing of the HAN equipment and then deployment to pilot sites
- Continued discussions with Cabinet Office on the HAN design
- Progress with the Leeds HPC AAAI pilot working with Leeds, Manchester and Sheffield.

This communication was reviewed at the last Project Board meeting on 9th September 2015. The next meeting is on 9th December 2015.

For more information, please contact malcolm.teague@jisc.ac.uk, see <https://www.jisc.ac.uk/rd/projects/safe-share>, join the Community group at <https://community.jisc.ac.uk/groups/safe-share-project>, and follow [#jiscsafeshare](#)