The safe share project
Highlight report 4

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)

- The first router at a pilot site was set up at University of St Andrews in December and initial test connection made with the HAN core.

- Some minor reconfiguration of the core has taken place whilst waiting for customer sites to be ready for further testing.

- A Hardware Security Module has been installed for transition to a new method of authentication.

- The management slice and DNS server are also now configured.

- Briefings have taken place with HSCIC and eMedlab/Francis Crick Institute. The meeting with the HSCIC was also to help understand their planned new Data Services Platform.

- Good progress has been made on developing the safe share policies and procedures required for ISO27001.

- Draft Terms and Conditions and Service Level Descriptions are ready for review.

- There have been ongoing talks with the Cabinet Office in using The safe share project as a means to extend the reach of the Public Services Network (PSN) to public sector organisations who are neither able to access nor afford a dedicated PSN connection. As this could become another "service slice", a PSN connection has been ordered to enable us to start testing with a council.

- There have been discussions within the ESRC SafePods project about whether The safe share project model fits their requirement.

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

Briefings have taken place with UCL.

University of Manchester is looking at hiring external resource to help implement Moonshot for use of Assent.

Discussions with the Cloud Infrastructure for Microbial Genomics (CLIMB) project has led to Jisc commissioning work to integrate Moonshot into CentOS 7, the Operating System they use for OpenStack. This should be complete by the end of March.

Organisations signed up to Assent are now listed here[1]

Next Steps

- Deployment of HAN equipment at pilot sites that are ready, followed by testing. The pilot sites expected to be ready are Swansea University, Cardiff University, University of Manchester and University of Leeds.
- Further review then acceptance and implementation of required policies and operational procedures.
- Clarification on whether safe share can meet the requirements of the ESRC SafePods project.
- Progress with the Leeds HPC AAAI pilot working with Leeds and Manchester and further planning with the eMedLab pilot as eMedLab becomes operational, and the CLIMB pilot once the technical work has been done on Moonshot to work with the CLIMB operating system for OpenStack.

This communication was reviewed at the last Project Board meeting on 9th March 2016. The next meeting is on 8th June 2016.

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

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1 **https://community.jisc.ac.uk/library/network-and-technology-service-documentation/assent-service-customer-list**