

## **Report from the JISC NHS-HE Procurement Group of the NHS-HE Forum**

### **1. Berlin Declaration on Open Access**

The Procurement Group invites the Forum to formally embrace the Berlin Declaration on Open Access at <http://www.zim.mpg.de/openaccess-berlin/berlindeclaration.html>. The Berlin Declaration, which the JISC and many European bodies and funders have signed, commits the signatories to pursue Open Access policies and practices wherever possible. Once the Forum endorses the Declaration, this should be advertised on the Forum's website

### **2. Content webpages**

A new set of webpages, advertising the work of the Group in terms of procurement, has been created and is available at <http://www.nhs-he.org.uk/content.html>.

### **3. Joint Procurement activity**

Following the failure of a joint procurement for commercial content between the NHS and HE (reported at the last Forum), I as Chair of the JISC Joint Procurement Group and the JISC Collections Team worked with an Open Access publisher to secure joint membership and cover for author-pays fees for members of the NHS and HE. The publisher, while interested in accepting public funding, could not commit to managing the income stream from the NHS and HE (via the JISC) in a transparent way. The publisher had no mechanism for accounting for how monies would be awarded to authors to cover author-pays charges. Consequently, the agreement between the publisher, the NHS and JISC has been abandoned.

### **4. Mapping of content procurement across the NHS and HE sectors**

The Group held a competitive tender to award £20K for a study to map procurement practices across the NHS and HE. Managed by the JISC< this Invitation to Tender ahs resulted in the contract being awarded to a team from the University of Wales. The successful bidder is being interviewed in Nottingham by the Joint Procurement Group, acting as Project Board for the work, on 3 May.

### **5. Athens Account Linking Project**

The following update was provided by Phil Leahy, Eduserv Athens access management, on 24 March. The project is of great interest to the NHS and HE sectors.

#### *Background*

Users of online data services often have multiple affiliations. A common example of this is across the education/health sector boundary, where you might have:

- a) healthcare staff teaching at universities and medical schools
- b) students working in healthcare organisations as part of their studies

As members of both the healthcare organisation and the university/medical school, these individuals are eligible to use the online data services that each organisation subscribes to. The standard method of enabling access is for each organisation to issue their own set of credentials for their users. In an environment where single sign-on is increasingly becoming the norm, this is unintuitive and confusing for users. The above scenario is simply the most common one; there are cases where some users have three or four Athens accounts through their various affiliations.

### *Athens account linking project*

At the request of many librarians, mainly those working across the education/health sector boundary, Eduserv Athens have been developing a method by which users can link their Athens accounts in a single, but independent, identity. After some initial development work by Eduserv Athens, we informed all Athens service providers of the project. The information included a technical white paper and an overview, and we invited comments from service providers on what impact (if any) they expected upon their service(s). One aspect we were particularly interested in is how many services use sessions e.g. browser sessions, cookies, etc, as we have not requested this information from service providers before, so we wanted to be sure that we understood this.

Although we received some feedback, it was not as much as we had hoped for; at a meeting with service providers earlier this year, some of them asked for an extension to the consultation period, which we agreed to in the interests of ensuring that the project consults as widely as possible.

In our discussions with the NHS Design Authority, it also became clear that it would be useful to create a steering group to review the projects progress. The precise formation of the steering group has not yet been finalised, and at present we do not have any representation from a body that can represent the views of HE organisations, in the same way that the NHS Design Authority is representing the NHS view. I would welcome suggestions on who we could approach for such a role.

Here is the current project timetable:

31 March 2006

End of service provider consultation period

3-21 April 2006

Service provider evaluation and testing

24 April - 5 May

Review of service provider testing results

8 - 19 May 2006

NHS and UK HE organisations pilot (limited to selected users and organisations)

22 May - 2 June 2006

Review of user pilot

### *Account linking FAQ*

#### *Why are we doing this?*

Athens administrators working in the UK education and healthcare communities have been asking Eduserv for this functionality for several years. There are extensive and well-established links between the two sectors, e.g. university medical schools, teaching hospitals, etc, and this project is seen as part of the move towards greater collaboration across the two sectors, e.g. <http://www.nhs-he.org.uk/>.

The NHS Design Authority Group are also interested in this project, and recognise that it will help simplify access for their users.

*Why is this a good thing?*

Athens users with multiple affiliations will be able to link their accounts in a single one-off action that will allow them to subsequently login with a single set of credentials to an aggregated set of services. Athens administrators will retain overall control of user accounts: expiry dates, access rights, etc for their organisation's Athens accounts can't be superseded by other accounts they have been linked to. If an Athens account that has been linked is deleted, then the links to the other account(s) will also be deleted.

It also formalises a process which has happened in ad-hoc manner, whereby a user may use multiple account to access a single service. The advantage of formalising this process is that when a user links an account, Athens will be presenting a single unique identifier to the service provider. The consequence of this is that personal information, saved searches etc, stored by the service provider will be shared between all their accounts, making the experience more consistent for the user. This has the further advantage that when users move between organisations, their persistent identity remains constant, removing the necessity to migrate saved information between accounts (or users losing it).

*Will a 'super' account with access to the entire service be created?*

No. When an Athens user who has linked two or more accounts logs into a service, they will pass a list of Athens organisation IDs (org\_IDs) to service providers. This should only enable Athens users to see the sum of the products or services that the user's various affiliations entitle them to.

*How many Athens accounts can be linked together?*

There is no limit at present, but this will be reviewed in-line with the views of the communities we serve.

*Can a single account be linked more than once?*

No. When Athens accounts are linked, an Athens 'identity' is created. An Athens account can only belong to one Athens identity.

*How will usage statistics be logged?*

Statistics will be logged against the account nominated as the primary account for a particular service provider. However, service providers will be able to view which organisations a user is affiliated with, so this information may be used to log additional information, based on the access policy employed by the service provider.

*Is it possible to link AthensDA-enabled accounts?*

Yes, but only one AthensDA-enabled account can belong to an Athens identity.

*Is it possible to link SAML/Shibboleth-enabled accounts?*

Yes, but only one SAML/Shibboleth-enabled account can belong to an Athens identity.

*Will a service provider be able to tell when an account has been linked?*

Yes, multiple organisations will be available in the same way that organisations are identified to service providers at present. The advantage of this is that more accurate information is being provided to a service provider, so that they may apply more accurate access-control policies, based on this information. At present users may access with multiple accounts in an ad-hoc fashion, but logging on with different accounts at different times. Linking of accounts means that the information which may be passed to a service provider will more accurately reflect the user's affiliation(s).

*How will this affect personalisation?*

Personalisation is stored against the user's persistent identifier (a user will never see this). Users will be able to specify a primary account for a service in order for the service provider to retrieve the correct set of personalisation.

*Do service providers need to make technical changes?*

In order to support users with multiple affiliations, we recommend that service providers make greater use of the organisation identifier attribute, which may possess multiple values in the case where a user has affiliations with multiple organisations. The recommended approach is for service providers to use an access policy which aggregates the permissions from the organisations to which the user has affiliations.

However, in order to maintain compatibility with resources which do not take this approach, the user will be able to nominate a primary account, from which their primary organisation affiliation will be obtained, in preference to their other affiliations. In this case a service provider will use the first organisation identifier which they receive for a user.

## **6. Publication**

Malcolm Teague and Paul Ayris worked together on an article on the work of the Forum for *Library and Information Research*, a copy of which is in the UCL Repository at <http://eprints.ucl.ac.uk/archive/00001755/>.

## **7. Future work 2006**

The NHS-HE Procurement Group of the NHS-HE Forum is determined to build on the learning it has gathered, and disseminated, since the formation of the Forum in 2001. The failure of joint procurement activity to date, with both a commercial and an open access publisher, is very disappointing and underlines the barriers to the HE and NHS sectors work together.

Three further pieces of joint work are planned for 2006:

- the JISC and the National Knowledge Service will be working closely together to try and align procurement activity and cycles in NHS England and in the JISC
- recommendation 3 of the *Users First* Report is being taken forward with funding being provided jointly by the LKDN and the JISC. This will produce a Mapping Study of Procurement Practices in the NHS and HE
- through the NHS-HE Forum, Phil Leahy, Business Development Manager, Eduserv Athens: Access Management, is leading the Athens Account Linking Project in collaboration with the JISC NHS-HE Procurement Group.

Paul Ayris

Chair JISC NHS-HE Procurement Group and member of the NHS-HE Forum