

Joint Information Systems Committee

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JISC announces the development of a new access-management system for the UK

In September 2006, JISC will launch its UK Access Management Federation for UK higher (HE) and further (FE) education institutions. Educational institutions throughout the UK will be invited to join the UK Federation and adopt new technology such as Shibboleth. This will provide institutions with a route to single sign-on to resources for users through the implementation of federated, devolved authentication.

The Athens service in its current form will not be funded by JISC after July 2008. JISC has established a transition programme with clear choices to minimise disruption to end-users. The programme will operate from August 2006 until July 2008, enabling all institutions which wish to migrate to the new service, to do so before the end of JISC support for the current Athens service.

This *will* require your institution to take a choice of action and you should pass this information on to your staff. It will also help if you can adjust your institutional Information Strategy to take account of the new arrangements.

Connecting students and staff to the valuable resources subscribed to by UK educational institutions is essential to the HE sector. JISC has made this possible by funding the Athens service to provide usernames and passwords to users within UK education, putting us ahead of the rest of the world in providing a consistent and uniform access mechanism to a wide range of online content.

To maintain its leading-edge status, JISC is devoting significant funds to and collaborating internationally on, the development and implementation of the next generation access-management system based on Shibboleth technology.


Benefits of the new system will include:

- Easier access to online resources for users
- Enhanced opportunities for collaboration
- Facilitation of national e-strategies

JISC will be providing the community with support in the form of bulletins, events, training and early-adopter funding over the transition period. To ensure that your institution stays at the forefront, please fill in the enclosed form nominating an institutional contact to receive information.

A range of information including a detailed timetable and options for the transition is enclosed. If you would like further details, or more copies of the leaflets, please contact Nicole Harris (n.harris@jisc.ac.uk; tel: 020 7848 1802). Further information on the roadmap for Athens services will be sent to you directly from Eduserv in the very near future.

We look forward to working with you.



Dr Malcolm Read
Executive Secretary, JISC

Enc: Briefing paper, Roadmap.