Australian Access Federation
For Research and Higher Education

Introduction

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What is the AAF?

Facilitates trusted electronic communications and collaboration within and between institutions of higher education and research in Australia and other organisations worldwide.
AAF participants

- User logs in to access resources
- Institution manages user’s access credentials
  - Username and password and/or certificate
  - Attributes and other details that affect resource access
- Resource manager controls authorisation
  - What rules determine who may access a resource?
  - E.g., who you are or characteristics you have
- Federation sets policies and provides services
  - How members agree to exchange and handle information
  - Operates the central technology infrastructure
  - Provides support, packaging, training
Some AAF use cases

- Research data and facilities
- Institutional repositories
- Cross-institutional course delivery
- Collaboration tools and shared services
- Trusted electronic communications
- Scholarly and information resource licensing
Use cases: Research facilities

- Examples:
  - ANSTO Bragg Institute & Australian Synchrotron
  - Bureau of Meteorology
  - National Computational Infrastructure
  - Queensland Facility for Advanced Bioinformatics

- Benefits:
  - Facilitates access to national research investments
  - Reduces administrative overhead for managing access
Use cases: Institutional repositories

• Benefits:
  – If repository contains objects that may not be accessed by the world at large but may be accessed by authorised members of the Australian HER community

• Examples:
  – Objects with copyright restrictions
  – Objects with commercialisation issues
Use cases: Cross-institutional courses

• Benefits:
  – May provide a smoother user experience for students and staff in cross-institutional study programs
  – May reduce administrative overhead for providers
  – Potential to facilitate programs between Australian and international universities

• Examples:
  – Many universities share units, e.g. UQ shares mining and resources units with UWA.
  – Some degree partnerships exist, e.g. Open Universities Australia is a partnership amongst Curtin, Griffith, Macquarie, Monash, RMIT, Swinburne, and UniSA.
Use cases: Shared services

• Examples:
  – Data storage services
  – Application services
  – Real-time communications services
  – Wikis and other collaboration tools

• Benefits:
  – Productivity and collaboration benefits to the sector from shared services approach
  – AAF allows access to shared services to be scalable
Trusted electronic communications

• Examples:
  – Proving a sender’s or receiver’s identity
  – Providing a digital signature
  – Providing a trusted timestamp
  – Encryption so communications can only be read by the intended user

• Where you might use it:
  – Research applications and committee responses
  – Communication of research data or results
  – Student enrolment submissions and transcript requests
  – Student assignment submission and responses
  – Human resources communications
Scholarly and info resource licensing

• Examples:
  – Elsevier Science Direct
  – EBSCOhost
  – Ovid Gateway

• Benefits:
  – More elegant than EZProxy/IP addresses

• Caveat:
  – A working solution is already in place in Australia
  – No urgency to use AAF for these if business case does not warrant it
Australian Access Federation Project

• Builds on previous projects
  – CAUDIT PKI, eSecurity Framework, MAMS

• Funded by the Australian Government ~ $4.8 M

• Lead Institution: UQ

• Partners
Thank you!

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