

# Shibboleth and the Australian Access Federation

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An Australian Government Initiative  
Backing Australia's Ability



australian access  
federation

# Shibboleth Key Principles

- Home institution (“Identity Provider”) login
- Institution-backed identities (not self-assertion)
- Services trust Identity Providers, rather than manage local user accounts
- Privacy preservation where required
- MAMS Testbed Federation currently has 1,000,000+ identities across 26 IdPs (inc 14 Aust unis & 2 NZ unis) and 27 SPs (eg, institutional repositories, Grid services, datasets, project wikis, online librarian, etc)

# Key questions for Libraries

- Why the move to Shibboleth?
- Will libraries be required to know anything about it?
- Will libraries be required to do anything about it?
- What will we be able to do that we cannot do now?
- What is the time scale for implementation - in our universities, for libraries?

# Key questions for Libraries

- Why the move to Shibboleth?
  - Too many user accounts and passwords!
  - Poor security arising from too many user accounts
  - Management overheads from too many accounts
    - Up to 75% of helpdesk calls are password related
  - Libraries can focus on providing access, not managing identities
  - Shibboleth can provide strong privacy protection
    - Allows for “trusted anonymous” access
    - This requirement came directly from librarians in 2000
  - Shibboleth was built for higher education, 10+ federations around the world and growing

# Key questions for Libraries

- Will libraries be required to know anything about it?
  - Useful to understand high level concepts, especially the distinction between an Identity Provider (IdP) and a Service Provider (SP)
  - Don't need to know details for managing IdP
    - This is normally the task of IT Services/HR
  - Do need to know details of SP management
    - In Shibboleth, a library is a large collection of SPs
    - Over time, many library services that currently manage their own user accounts will move to become Shibboleth Service Providers

# Key questions for Libraries

- Will libraries be required to do anything about it?
  - Not normally – Shibboleth adoption should be a choice due to its benefits, not a forced requirement
  - Initial focus is likely to be on new Services that require secure access, or existing services with burdensome account management issues
  - Library technical staff should begin to learn about how to implement a Service as a Shibboleth SP
    - MAMS training workshops
  - Long term, IT Services will provide user attributes; libraries will be the experts in deciding policies about who gets access to what, based on user attributes

# Key questions for Libraries

- What will we be able to do that we cannot do now?
  - Less time on account management, so more time for other library priorities
  - Provide access to secure resources based on identity rather than physical location
    - Eg, able to support home access, as no longer rely on IP address based authentication
  - Support secure access for users from other institutions
  - Provide a wider range of access policies, implement them more easily, and change them easily if required
  - Support more complex eResearch access requirements

# Key questions for Libraries

- What is the time scale for implementation - in our universities, for libraries?
  - MAMS Testbed been in operation for 2.5 years – a number of libraries use it for production services today:
    - UQ Institutional Repository
    - Macquarie + Murdoch shared online librarian service
    - WAGUL reciprocal borrowing
  - AAF begins rollout later in 2008
    - Subject to legal agreements and establishment
  - Your local IT Services is a likely first point of contact with AAF (to establish the university's IdP)
  - For libraries, I would encourage technical staff to seek SP training this year so they are ready for projects in 09
    - Could do a libraries SP workshop – just tell us when!