

JISC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES

Project Document Cover Sheet

PROGRESS REPORT

Project

Project Acronym	SWISh	Project ID	
Project Title	SWISh (South West Implementation of Shibboleth)		
Start Date	01 June 2005	End Date	31 May 2006
Lead Institution	University of Exeter		
Project Director	Alasdair Paterson (University Librarian) Sue Brooks (Director, I.T. Services)		
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Partner Institutions			
Project Web URL	http://www.exeter.ac.uk/swish		
Programme Name (and number)	Core Middleware: Early Adopters (JISC 11/04)		
Programme Manager	Nicole Harris		

Document

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Document History

Version	Date	Comments
0.1	9 September 2005	Draft for approval by Programme Manager & JISC

SWISh Progress Report

Overview of Project

Grant Statement

The project is being conducted under the terms agreed with JISC in the letter of grant and the JISC Terms and Conditions attached to it.

There has been one change from the terms of the original award – JISC granted a new start date of 1st June, owing to delays in the recruitment of the Project Officer, and, by implication therefore, a revised end date of 31 May 2006.

2. Aims and Objectives

The aims and objectives of the project remain as detailed in the project plan.

Targets for the reporting period June – August 2005:

1. *Production and submission of the Project Plan (workpackage 1)*

The Project Plan has been submitted to JISC; other elements of reporting for the duration of the project await completion according to the schedule in workpackage 1.

2. *Establishment of a Shibboleth IdP with InQueue (using LDAP authentication) (workpackage 2)*

A Shibboleth IdP has been established with InQueue. This has been successfully tested first with local authentication, and then with institutional LDAP authentication. Workpackage 2 has been completed.

3. *Creation of a web service interface (workpackage 3)*

The scope and requirements of an interface for the Shibboleth service have been identified and a working model has been built for testing and implementation. Workpackage 3 has been completed.

4. *Produce a pilot service for a controlled set of campus users, utilising Shibboleth/Athens Gateway (Workpackage 4)*

The planning of this objective has been completed and progress is being made towards the implementation of a pilot service. Owing to annual leave both in Eduserv, and the project, there has been some delay in joining the Touchstone Federation to enable the testing of the use of the Shibboleth/Athens Gateway. However delays in this workpackage were anticipated in the project plan, with a contingency of ten working days scheduled at its end. It is anticipated that the workpackage will be completed on time, namely 30 September.

3. Overall Approach

No changes to the overall approach as outlined in the Project plan have been made.

4. Project Outputs

The first three months of the project have witnessed the successful implementation of a Shibboleth IdP and its integration within the wider University credential management structure. Together with extensive documentation, the establishment of change, and content, management systems, and the

utilisation of good project management practice, SWISh is now in a position to begin implementing the first pilot service in time for the first term of the new academic year. The main milestones that have been achieved include the Project Plan, the continuing creation of extensive documentation, the Shibboleth IdP service and the creation of a web service interface.

5. Project Outcomes

All objectives identified for the first three months of the project have been achieved, namely the installation and integration of a Shibboleth IdP service, the development of a web service interface and preparations for the first pilot (planned for the second quarter of the project). At this stage the main interim conclusions have related to the skills set required for the work (see below under lessons learnt) and the need for greater documentation (an issue that the project will address in its dissemination workpackage).

The project will now move towards the implementation of the first pilot, during which Shibboleth-enabled access to a set of online electronic resources will be offered to a defined sub-set of the potential user base. For this workpackage the project will utilise the Shibboleth/Athens Gateway service from Eduserv. Progress is within the schedule outlined in the Project Plan and, at this time of reporting, no changes to the project are anticipated.

Lessons learnt:

Several main lessons have been learnt so far that would be useful for others engaged in similar work:

1) Skills required of the Project Officer

The project has been fortunate to have appointed a very experienced and skilled Project Officer. However, it was difficult, when drawing up the skills requirements for the post advertisement, to appreciate fully the wide range of technical skills that would be required. The project has now, with hindsight, identified that more than a working knowledge of, particularly, mod_jk and Tomcat is required.

2) Technical Documentation

The project has identified a lack of simple documentation explaining the various steps involved in the Shibboleth process. This is important in understanding Shibboleth and being able to identify the various points where errors may occur. The Project Officer has now prepared slide presentations and other documentation to address this issue. These should be useful in explaining steps to those supporting and wishing to understand Shibboleth.

3) Error Logs

The project has identified difficulties for systems administrators in analysing where errors occur within the Shibboleth process. The process creates numerous log entries but there is a lack of tools available for analysing the various log files. The Project Officer has developed some tools to assist in this area, and these will be made generally available.

4) Status Information for the End User

It became apparent that there is a need to report status information to the end user with regard to progress within the Shibboleth process when connecting to resources. In addition, detailed error messages are important for support staff to be able to analyse where problems occur. The Project Officer is working on introducing improvements to the process to address these issues.

6. Stakeholder Analysis

Four main stakeholders were identified in the Project Plan. To date the engagement with the stakeholders is as follows:

University of Exeter (staff and students)

A small group of library staff were interviewed by the Project Officer during the compilation of the Requirements Document for workpackages 2, 3 and 4.

Partner Institutions (PMS, PAHC, CUC)

Contact has been made with appropriate individuals within these organisations, with a view to preparing for the second pilot in 2006.

Online Hosts

As many of the key resources will not be Shibboleth compliant in time for the first pilot, the project will utilise the Shibboleth/Athens Gateway from Eduserv for that workpackage. As a result, the Project Officer and Project Manager have been in regular contact with Eduserv, particularly in relation to the application to join the Touchstone and Athens UK Federations.

Other Institutions and Projects

In addition to Eduserv (listed above) the project has been in regular communication with MATU. Indeed, the project welcomed two representatives to Exeter during July for a chance to review plans and progress, and exchange experiences.

7. Risk Analysis

The project has not experienced any significant problems. However two issues have required action to be taken:

- 1) the temporary absence of the Project Manager (see section 12 on Project Management), which was addressed by another member of the Project Team taking on the responsibilities for the duration of the absence;
- 2) delays in the processing of the application to join the Touchstone Federation at Eduserv, which has arisen owing to key personnel being on leave – a contingency period, built into workpackage 4, is to be utilised to absorb the delay.

8. Standards

There have been no changes to the standards as outlined in the Project Plan.

9. Technical Development

There have been no changes to the technical development as outlined in the Project Plan.

10. Intellectual Property Rights

There have been no changes to the intellectual property rights as outlined in the Project Plan.

Some local code has been developed by the Project Officer and this will be released in due course under the appropriate creative commons licences.

Project Resources

11. Project Partners

Whilst the project does not have any formal partners, the Project Plan listed several organisations with which the project will liaise. The University of Plymouth has been added to that list, in its role as a partner institution in the Peninsula Medical School and the Combined Universities in Cornwall. Contact has already been established in anticipation of later project phases.

12. Project Management

The Project Management Team and Management Committee remain as detailed in the Project Plan.

During the reporting period the Project Manager was on sick leave (following an operation) for 5 weeks. The JISC Programme Manager was notified and another member of the project team (Bill Edmunds) fulfilled the role of Project Manager for the duration of the absence.

13. Programme Support

Project team members have been in contact with MATU, of which two members visited Exeter in July to review progress and plans, and exchange experiences.

The Program Manager has also been in contact with the Programme Manager via e-mail and telephone as the need has arisen.

The Project Team would welcome a further opportunity to network with other Early Adopter projects, particularly those working on similar implementations of Shibboleth, perhaps at another Programme Meeting. The Project Team would also like to see greater use of the MATU website for provision of content and information, from both central bodies and from other projects, akin to a UK Shibboleth implementation repository.

Members of the Project Team are planning to attend the MATU workshops that are currently being offered.

14. Budget

The project budget is attached as Appendix A.

Detailed Project Planning

15. Workpackages

Progress

Workpackage 1 – Project Management: to ensure that the project runs to schedule and budget and to liaise with JISC

Item 1 (Project Plan) has been completed and version 0.1 submitted to JISC for approval

Workpackage 2 – Shibboleth IdP with InQueue: successful login by all pilot service users
All items, and therefore the whole workpackage, have been completed on schedule.

Workpackage 3 – Web Service Interface: unambiguous portal for pilot service users
All items, and therefore the whole workpackage, have been completed on schedule.

Workpackage 4 – First Pilot Service: to produce a working service for controlled set of users, initially to work with the Shibboleth/Athens Gateway

This workpackage is current in progress and not scheduled for completion until 30 September. Progress to date has been according to the schedule, although the implementation of access to the Shibboleth/Athens Gateway is delayed, owing to periods of leave both internally and within Eduserv. The contingency of seven working days built into workpackage 4 will be utilised to address this delay.

Objectives for the Next Period

Workpackage 4 - First Pilot Service: to produce a working service for controlled set of users, initially to work with the Shibboleth/Athens Gateway

The roll-out of the first pilot is an integral part of this workpackage, which is scheduled for completion in December 2005.

Workpackage 5 – Second Pilot Service: to extend the first pilot to higher education institutions beyond campus, and to work with service providers with Shibboleth compliant resources

Preparation for the second pilot will commence in mid-September.

The workpackages and targets remain unchanged from the schedule submitted with the Project Plan.

16. Evaluation Plan

The reporting period has witnessed the application of the first stage of the evaluation plan as detailed in the Project Plan. As the project moves to the first pilot stage, it is anticipated that the questions regarding performance, particularly, will be addressed by the analysis of the server logs and load tests and, as required, the system can be fine-tuned to address concerns.

During the next reporting period the system will have been subjected to campus-wide use and will provide a better environment within which to access a wide range of technical and user issues. To that end the main factor to evaluate will be the success, or otherwise, of the implementation for the stakeholders. No changes to the evaluation plan are anticipated at the current time.

17. Quality Assurance Plan

Progress regarding quality assurance is proceeding according to the timing outlined in the Project Plan. As the first three months of the project have been, in essence, to put in place a Shibboleth IdP in readiness for a two stage pilot, the primary consideration has been that it is fit for purpose. Quality assurance becomes more prominent in the second quarter of the project, as detailed in the Project Plan.

18. Dissemination Plan

At this early stage in the project, dissemination has concentrated on documentation, primarily on the public project website. Some consideration is also being given to releasing some technical tools, developed by the Project Officer, under a creative commons licence, also via the project website at <http://www.exeter.ac.uk/swish> .

Members of the Project Team have received invitations to give talks about the project to various groups, including the staff of some University departments, and the South West England Regional Network (SWERN). An invitation has also been received to write an account of the project for *SCONUL Focus*.

The objectives for the next reporting period remain as detailed in the Project Plan, namely the documentation of the project, talks to interested parties and the gathering and development of material for potential publication.

19. Exit/Sustainability Plan

The key contribution of the project, to date, to an exit and sustainability plan has been the extensive technical and process documentation, and developer tools, written by the Project Officer during the last three months. Much of this material will eventually be made publicly available; MATU has also expressed an interest in hosting some of the material on their website.

The objectives for the next reporting period remain as detailed in the Project Plan, namely the full documentation of the process and technical development of the project.

Appendix A. Progress Report Budget

<i>Indicate Reporting Period</i>	YR1 Budget	YR 1 Spend to [date]	YR 1 Forecast	YR 1 Balance	YR2	YR3	Total
Staff (<i>list all staff with FTEs and salary scale range</i>)							
Project Officer 1.0 FTE	36,250	8,863	36,339	27,387			
Travel & Subsistence	2,500	0	2,500	2,500			
Equipment (<i>items over £10k</i>)	7,500	7,579	7,579	- 79			
Dissemination activities	1,000	0	1,000	1,000			
Evaluation activities	1,000	0	1,000	1,000			
Other							
Advertising & Relocation	800	0	0	800			
Total from JISC	49,050	16,442	48,418	32,608			

Note: The forecasted staff costs for the Project Officer have risen by £88.88. This has arisen because the project commenced one month later than the timescale for which the budget was written. As a consequence the Project Officer will spend one further month at a slightly higher salary level following the (estimated) annual pay award.