

# Federated Access Management for Schools



## Why use Federated Access Management?

The development of broadband connections to schools and the Government's e-strategy for ICT outlined in the DfES Harnessing Technology document for 'anytime, anywhere' access have highlighted the need for more secure and simplified access to online resources.

The e-strategy also highlights the need for schools to aggregate services, thereby providing value for money. The strategy states:

*'We need common open standards to communicate with each other easily and safely. And we will enable all organisations to benefit from a collaborative approach to purchasing ICT equipment and services.'*

**DfES Harnessing Technology:  
Transforming Learning and Children's  
Services DFES-1296-2005**



## What is the UK Access Management Federation?

Supported by Becta and JISC, and operated by JANET(UK), the UK Access Management Federation ('the UK federation') provides schools, further and higher education and research sectors with a framework for accessing online learning material by using access management technology compatible with the Shibboleth architecture.

The UK federation is made up of 'identity providers' such as local authorities, regional broadband consortia, universities and colleges, and 'service providers' such as publishers of online resources.

Members of the UK federation agree to a set of policies for exchanging information about users and resources. This enables access to, and use of, online resources and services while protecting the security of both the individuals and the resources. Schools can take advantage of aggregated services and therefore get better value for money.

## Shibboleth

Shibboleth is a framework for authentication and authorisation capable of granting individual learners with secure 'anytime, anywhere' access to educational resources.

Shibboleth separates the processes of authentication and authorisation. Authentication is managed by the user's identity provider, such as the local authority or regional broadband consortium. Authorisation is managed by the service provider, based on attributes that are released in a controlled manner by the identity provider.

The ability to grant access based on the role of a user (for example, Key Stage 3 pupil from local authority X) rather than personal attributes, removes the need to release personal information. This protects the privacy of users.

Further information about the Shibboleth architecture can be found at:  
<http://www.ukfederation.org.uk/content/Documents/HowItWorks>



## What are the benefits to schools of Federated Access Management?

### Learners and teachers:

- log-in once per browser session to access resources from all service providers that are members of the federation and that the user is authorised to access
- can be confident that personal information is not being disclosed unnecessarily to third parties, increasing user privacy
- are able to access licensed resources from outside the school environment, such as at home or in a public library

### Schools:

- no longer need to assign users multiple usernames and passwords to allow them to access federated resources
- can more easily comply with regulatory requirements, such as those of the Data Protection Act 1998
- can potentially use the same access management system for all resources, both internal and external



## Why is now a good time?



### Federated access management:

- facilitates the 'anytime, anywhere' access model required to help realise the Government's e-strategy initiative for every student to have a Personal Learning Space
- is the recommended solution to mandatory requirement R22 of Becta's 'Learning platform functional requirements' which states: "Users shall be uniquely identified and verified" for authentication
- is a recommended technology in the DfES funding guidance document *Learning, Teaching and Managing with ICT*
- meets the requirement for secure online access as outlined in the Government's e-strategy target for personalised learning.

## How do schools join the UK Access Management Federation?

Schools can join the UK federation through their Local Authority or Regional Broadband Consortium in England, Classroom 2000 in Northern Ireland, or Learning and Teaching Scotland.

Further information about the UK federation, including a list of current members, can be found on the UK federation website:

<http://www.ukfederation.org.uk/content/Documents/MemberList>

## Updates

To be kept up to date with UK Access Management Federation developments and discussions, please subscribe to the following UK federation mailing lists, through the support section of the UK federation website (see below).

- [UK federation Announce](#)
- [UK federation Discuss](#)

For further information, please refer to the federation website:

[www.ukfederation.org.uk](http://www.ukfederation.org.uk)