



**Summary report of the EURIM Personal Identity Group meeting, 29 September 2005,
1000 – 1200 at Abingdon House, 13, Little College Street,, Westminster**

Chairman: Jim Lound (Experian)
Rapporteur: Dave Wright (EURIM)

SUMMARY OF MAIN POINTS

1. Jerry Fishenden led a discussion on Government Connect. In essence GC is an identity management and communications system, the purpose of which is to help local authorities improve their efficiency and to connect more effectively with their customers, each other and central government. More details can be accessed at <http://www.govconnect.gov.uk/ccm/portal/>
2. A main focus of GC is to simplify the delivery of online services for citizens and business. The GC team is currently working on the technical architecture, discussing roll-out with stakeholders, and working also with eGU on necessary changes in the infrastructure. Most Local Authorities are signed up to GC, but without commercial funding drivers, the programme will build on existing structures.
3. GC is the result of a political agenda for achieving Internet-based joined-up service delivery; wider issues remain, including data sharing. Local Authorities are not able to share information which involves revealing identity, and in any case, GC is not intended to facilitate data sharing per se, but rather to provide access permissions to an account and a process.
4. **EURIM plans to organize a ministerial session with DCA to discuss where and how EURIM might be able to help find ways to realise the service improvements and cost savings that should be realisable from secure data sharing, as requested by the citizen. A major aim is to agree recommendations for cross-departmental action.**
5. An industry group is drafting a short paper for Parliamentarians specifically on the capability of information technology to deliver large-scale personal identity systems. Although no decision has yet been taken, EURIM is expected to be on the circulation list. The planned paper fits the EURIM Board request for a technology briefing, and it would make sense to combine the two initiatives, and perhaps invite other players to join to make the paper more representative. Please contact EURIM (davywright2@ntlworld.com) if you wish to be involved.
6. A final draft of the briefing for MPs on data sharing is expected to be ready this month. A more detailed paper on different data sharing models, and a glossary, are also nearing completion. The material we supply will also be offered to the House of Commons Library for filing, so that it is available for briefing MPs when the issue goes live.
7. Home Office now appears to be looking at a hierarchy of access levels for ID cards, not just the 'gold standard' previously postulated. A Home Office speaker will talk about these issues at the next Subgroup meeting on 6 October, with a short, high-level paper by the Subgroup to follow.
8. Policy debate on ID cards has broadened to embrace departmental requirements for a business case for the processes employed in identity management systems. Dialogue with the private sector has begun, with the capabilities and limitations of biometrics use likely to be a key issue.

1. Introduction

1.1 The purpose of the meeting was to receive a discussion on Government Connect, and to review material for MPs, including on data sharing and the ID Cards Bill.

2. Government Connect, a discussion - Jerry Fishenden (Microsoft)

2.1 ***This section should be read in association with the Powerpoint presentation.*** JF began with an overview of GC and how it is likely to evolve, moving on to the implications of authentication and data sharing, with discussion of points of interest.

2.2 In essence, GC offers a new partnership between central and local government. It is an identity management and communications system which will introduce into the local authority community a package of electronic tools, standards, and guidance. Its purpose is to help local authorities to improve their efficiency and connect more effectively with their customers, with each other and with central government. More details can be accessed at <http://www.govconnect.gov.uk/ccm/portal/>

2.3 GC emerged from collaborative talks between ODPM and eGU that brought together projects initiated under ODPM and the former Office of the e-Envoy. The programme comprises 2 main products, GC Core (containing the essential components of GC) and GC Plus (value-added services that build on GC Core).

2.4 GC Core has 3 main parts:

- GC Register – uses Government Gateway (GG) to enable local authorities to authenticate people and organizations through their websites, and provide online services.
- GC Exchange – passes authenticated XML messages between local authorities (LAs) using a stable platform to link back-office systems. This builds on the parallel initiatives of LGOL-Net and DIS (Departmental Interface Server).
- GC Email – builds on GSI to enable secure email between LAs and others.

The updated launch planned for April 2006 will involve single sign-on (SSO) with registration through a 'white label' facility. This will allow an individual logged in to one LA's website to transition to another without having to re-authenticate, but only after the individual has 'registered' with the LA and has been through an authentication process that allows the individual to be 'connected' to their back office record.

2.5 GC Plus is designed to incorporate a wide range of additional components. These will come from a variety of sources - private sector companies, local authorities or other government agencies and departments. Two components available now are:

- GC Pay - providing an e-payments solution using GG Payments Engine
- GC Alert – a third-party alert service, e.g. using SMS or online alerts.

2.6 The intention is for all the Core and Plus components to be available separately, with a launch through defined pilots to test deployment before wider roll-out, each service to be charged separately. The programme is based on t-Scheme, with different levels of service classification/security, requiring correspondingly different levels of authentication.

2.7 LAs need to map their levels of service and link individual customer accounts within their own systems (e.g. for housing benefit, council tax etc.). Connectivity between LAs and between an LA and central Government will be achieved through DIS or LGOL Edge Server. GC Register sets up a single entry in GG, which the LA can use locally to cross-map to different services. GC Exchange uses a combination of hub and spoke (for transactions between LAs) and peer-to-peer (real-time messaging) models, depending on GC Register and GG authentication.

2.8 The rationale behind GC is to avoid the traditional problem of the need to set up and maintain a complex mesh of trust relationships negotiated between the LA and other agencies, with associated duplication of common components. Instead, the GG affords a common hub that provides a trusted authentication and messaging service.

2.9 An individual accessing the LA website to register using GC register will in reality be directed to a 'white label' site, (which applies a particular LAs branding) to set up their account, and then seamlessly returned to the LA website. Once the GG/GC Register account is set up and the individual has been authenticated and allocated a unique identifier, entry is allowed to the LA website. The LA can then internally map that unique identifier to the local identifiers in their backend systems, giving the LA a joined-up view across the accounts.

2.10 Where an individual has an account with more than one LA, recognition is achieved by the linkage provided through the GG, with the same processes applied in the other LA's systems. The same user identity and password is used when accessing each LA website, though the unique identifier may be particular to each LA. However, joined-up services don't necessarily have to share information about an individual, who can experience a joined-up service through a single sign on.

Questions and discussion

2.11 How will LAs create mapping between identities and different back-end databases?

JF replied that LAs had originally given this as a reason for not using the GG in its original configuration. In the GC model, the mapping takes place locally within the LA rather than being centrally held in the GG.

2.12 While there is still active debate on how to verify identity before issuing a GG account, there is also discussion on the use of an LA smart card that could be used to register with GG. Would level 3 identification be necessary for its use, with identity verified through the presentation of different paper ID documents before the smart card is issued?

The priority of the LA was to provide a service, and so smart card authentication to level 3 was not often practical: identity was less of a problem than ensuring service delivery. However, the smart card must not be accepted as proof of identity in high-level transactions. A traditional problem was verifying that a particular customer X was the same individual X whose data was held in the system.

2.13 Would back-end authentication of the same individual who has different addresses in the LA system, enable effective mapping between the address held in GG and that held in the back-end?

JF replied that GG does not hold addresses; it provides the index between different online government services to provide an improved 'joined-up' experience.

2.14 It was noted that mapping a user from website access to an existing account in the back-end system is only part of the ID management problem. Single binding to several back-end systems can be to each independently (as in the GC system), or it can be solved by asking how do you know that a series of activities by an individual recorded in different systems are the same person? What are the ways you can match the data in back-end systems to prove that 2 records in 2 different systems relate to the same real-world person? Unless there is common data held in a common way, or some other link between them, it is difficult. This explained why individuals are asked to provide proof of associations online.

2.15 The emergence of GC was an evolution of initiatives between eGU and ODPM: what is the driving behind the GC initiative?

JF replied that the main focus was very much still on achieving the original vision of simplifying the delivery of online services for citizens and business. Parts of the GC model and architecture were still being worked through. Although GC Register was reasonably well defined, there was still work in progress on the other components. The GC team is currently working on the technical architecture and discussing roll-out with stakeholders. The team is working closely with eGU on necessary changes in the infrastructure: more updated information on ownership of the different components, the relationship between them and how the aims of the programme will be delivered and driven forward is expected over coming months.

JF added that there is also some debate with suppliers around the charging model (historically the ODPM commissioned and subsidised specific suppliers, whereas the eGU model had been for suppliers to build commercial solutions at their own cost and risk). Although most LAs were signed up to the programme, most parties were looking forward to increased clarity about the detail needed to underpin the original GC Prospectus.

2.16 It was suggested that the two main political drivers are (1) financial pressure for better service delivery that does not require upfront investment and (2) the move to greater efficiency and savings through shared services, support and standards (by incremental advances providing rapid returns). No commercial funding drivers are apparent: rather the road map envisages the programme building on existing structures. Any problems are likely to be resolved down the route that can be afforded by those who currently want to see solutions and are in a position to contribute resource. This has interesting implications.

2.17 The Government Connect ministerial launch on 3 October will confirm the scope of the GC programme, potential budgets that local authorities will need to put aside, details of trials, pilots and additional elements of GC Plus. Speakers will include Local e-Government Minister Jim Fitzpatrick and Government CIO Ian Watmore (further evidence of the collaborative nature of the initiative).

2.18 Are any of the technologies within the GC programme based on XRI (eXtensible Resource Identifier) and XDI (XRI Data Interchange), rather than XML? *(DW, from Wikipedia: XRI is a URI- and IRI-compatible scheme and resolution protocol for abstract identifiers developed by the XRI Technical Committee at OASIS. The goal of XRIs is to provide a universal format for identifiers that are domain-, location-, application-, and transport-independent, so they can be shared across any number of domains and directories. XDI is a generalized, extensible service for sharing, linking, and synchronizing data over the Internet and other data networks using XML documents and XRIs).* If not, there is a real danger of it becoming obsolete.

JF replied that GC was built up on XML and Web services, but the longer term technical road map is still being developed. There is a variety of authentication models emerging and the future of both GG and GC might need to factor in how such differing authentication models could be accommodated.

2.19 It was explained that XRI/XDI is based on the same Internet principles as DNS and has the ability to scale and deal with delegations. Delegating mapping back-ends to identifiers allows changes to be made without affecting the central mapping. XRI/XDI therefore appears to fit the GG/GC model. The federated approach to identity management and data sharing is adaptable to XRI/XDI (and P2P).

In response to a recommendation that the EURIM Personal Identity group look at XRI/XDI, **JF suggested that it might be useful to contact the eGU and GC technical teams to discuss potential future options around identity, authentication (and federation) etc.**

2.20 Beyond SSO, what value is seen in GC for the community served?

JF replied that GC is based on a political agenda for achieving Internet-based joined-up service delivery; wider issues remained about permissioning and how the individual is involved in giving consent. There is no reason why *technically* LAs can't share data relating to the same individual, without either of them knowing who that person is, because this is routed through the central hub. However, there does not appear to be a process that triggers data sharing. And whilst *technically* possible, wider issues come into play in such data sharing initiatives.

2.21 Under current legislation, data is intended to be used only for the purposes for which it was collected; beyond this, legislative procedures must be passed. This might inhibit data sharing even between back-end systems of the same LA. An individual is identified by different unique identifiers; mapping the systems to these is the issue. One local council was known to have 70 separate name and address files because the functions were not permitted to share information.

2.22 An individual cannot give consent to LAs to share his/her personal data: explicit consent to share data cannot be given where the law does not allow it. LAs would not be able to share information about e.g. council tax which involved revealing identity. An individual can give the same data to different LAs, but this is very different from LAs sharing the data, and legally, data cannot be used for anything incompatible with the purpose for which it was collected. In any case, GC is not intended to facilitate data sharing *per se*, but rather to provide access permissions to an account and a process. GG registration can provide multiple 'identities', but this system of identifiers will not in itself help data sharing, although future national legislation e.g. on financial issues, might change this.

2.23 What are the objectives and benefits of GC?

JF replied that the political objective was to make the customer online experience with local and central government as seamless as possible and to improve efficiency. A majority of LAs are now signed up to GC; the target is for all councils to register by December 2005, and for all to be using the service by December 2007.

3. Political objectives – Philip Virgo (EURIM)

3.1 PV reported that political feedback was that the ICT industry was punching well below its weight, and that recent problems e.g. with Government IT systems had allowed negative images to develop in politicians' minds. The new EURIM Chair and Vice Chair (Margaret Moran MP and Ian Taylor MBE MP) as keen supporters of IT seek to counter this.

3.2 Consequently, EURIM needs to press issues of political importance, and one action stream is to **organize high-profile meetings with ministers, officials and CEOs about issues of current concern to the industry**. The first of these will be a political discussion dinner on 2 November with John Thompson, CEO of Symantec, at which a major issue will be differences between the USA and UK in approaches to Internet security and the role of ISPs. Other similar events on different topics are also being discussed, including on modernising government issues.

3.3 **A second action stream is to organize ministerial sessions to agree objectives and deliverables**. A recent meeting on e-crime with Paul Goggins resulted in agreement for a major exercise, in collaboration with Home Office, to help set the political agenda and educate MPs on the issues. This should help ensure a way forward, including the announcement and implementation of a national strategy for e-crime.

3.4 The EURIM 'Points for your Manifesto' document also called for a national strategy framework with regard to personal identity and data sharing to aid joined-up government. We therefore hope to organize a session **with the relevant minister at DCA, agreeing a plan of action to help ensure that there is a meaningful strategy that can be delivered at a practical level**.

3.5 At one level, eGU and the CIO Council is developing an Information Systems strategy for announcement in November 2005. This was intended for inclusion in the 2006 spending review, but the review has been postponed until 2007. This means that while no new money can be expected, there will be pressure on the industry to deliver incremental progress rather than large projects.

3.6 However, DCA has the policy lead for data sharing involving personal information; for property-related data sharing, policy may reside with ODPM, but this appears not to be resolved. Again, particular barriers to sharing may sit with different departments. EURIM may therefore formally offer a forum for bringing stakeholders together without the need to resolve details of status and policy ownership etc. This could lead to **EURIM volunteering a set of politically-relevant and deliverable actions to help move things forward**.

3.7 **A third activity stream is technology briefings by suppliers on Internet safety (the technologies and what they can and cannot do) and personal identity (not just biometrics)**. Suppliers should include e.g. LINK, VOCA, Experian and Equifax who are already running large services which might be considered useful by the CIO Council in providing shared services for delivering the Gershon agenda.

3.8 In the policy area, a paper PV prepared after Ian Watmore addressed the Government IT summit in July will be posted in the private area of the EURIM website. A key message when considering data sharing across Government is that, aside from legal barriers, there may be historically good reasons for the lack of trust in data, processes etc. between departments. Unlike in the private sector, any liability for data quality etc. can be avoided through claims of crown immunity, and a number of politically-sensitive issues arise from this. EURIM therefore plans to write a letter to the relevant DCA minister requesting a meeting to discuss **where and how EURIM might be able to help find ways forward, with the aim of producing agreed recommendations for cross-departmental action**.

3.9 A well-received EURIM paper ('Points for your manifesto') gained all-party support on the need for a data sharing strategy, in which sharing across autonomous organizations can be achieved through protocols that include legal, managerial and cultural, as well as technological components. Discussions with appropriate officials and industry should identify outcomes that industry can deliver, and include these in a prior strategy announcement.

3.10 On the issue of technology briefings, a (currently) 13-strong industry group is planning a short paper for Parliamentarians specifically on the capability of information technology to deliver large scale personal identity systems (akin to those envisaged for ID cards). This fits the request for a technology briefing, and is currently being drafted. However, no decision has been taken on circulation, though it is expected to include EURIM and PITCOM. Project partners with LogicaCMG include 3M, Nortel Networks, Post Office, BT and Oracle. It would make sense to combine the two initiatives, and perhaps invite other players to join to make the paper more representative.

3.11 The aim is not to counter a similar LSE initiative, but to inform Parliamentarians about the technologies involved in identity management, and to correct erroneous statements such as recently given on biometrics by Sir Ian Blair.

4. Data Sharing Subgroup report – Paul McKeown

4.1 PM reported on progress of the papers being drafted by the subgroup:

- the brief for MPs on data sharing, authored by PM and John Newton, had been circulated for comment during Recess, and had received considerable feedback resulting in some modification to the original draft. The latest input has led to a need to resolve the message we give in terms of the relative weight to be given to data sharing as an enabler compared with data sharing as a driver of improved service delivery. PM thanked all contributors, and estimated that **the final draft would be ready for delivery within 2 weeks.**
- a detailed paper on the different approaches to data sharing, including the federated and financial services models. Progress on an earlier draft had stalled following member feedback; **the draft would be prepared anew for circulation.** It is planned to cross-reference the documents.
- a glossary for defining what is meant by the various terms used (e.g. ‘federated’ etc). It was intended to add this to the original paper for eGU, and the terminology will be employed in the paper for MPs. **It was agreed to progress this.**

4.2 EURIM officials are working on deliverables for Ian Stewart, who is running an educational programme for MPs. Any paper intended for MPs must be of current political relevance, or it is likely to be thrown immediately into the ‘pending’ tray or waste bin. All material intended for MPs will thus be filtered. The material we supply should also be offered to the House of Commons Library for filing, so that it is available for briefing MPs when the issue becomes live debate.

4.3 Data sharing is in part currently topical because of its potential relevance to the ID Cards Bill. Any educational material perceived to be of interest by parliamentary researchers may be used by them in writing up their own research and reports, which in turn may afford political influence through think tanks etc. Any material we produce therefore must be politically relevant.

4.4 Data sharing is important in the context of the Gershon review, and the detailed paper should feature in any EURIM-DCA discussions. A late change to the front page of the data sharing paper for MPs refers to recent Social Exclusion Unit research which found that better public services is key to improving the lives of the most disadvantaged. Social exclusion is a priority for the EURIM Chair, Margaret Moran.

5. ID Cards Bill Subgroup report – Chris Francis

5.1 CF reported that prior to Recess, the Subgroup had approved a list of high-level questions on an analysis of the implications of the Bill, with the hope that official answers would help clarify our aims. The main aim was to focus on the intentions of the Bill, since this will determine the Group’s approach and response. However, it appears that Home Office thinking has changed, largely in accordance with views held within the Subgroup. We now need to look at how the processes involved affect the public and private sectors.

5.2 CF explained that HO now appear to be looking at a hierarchy of access levels, not just the ‘gold standard’ previously postulated. This will require a set of tools, and it would be helpful to know more about how far this has been progressed. A Home Office speaker will talk about these issues at the next Subgroup meeting on 6 October, after which **a short, high-level paper by the Subgroup is planned.**

5.3 Since the original questions were asked (including e.g. how do ID cards relate to the mixed economy and the public-private-voluntary sectors), ongoing dialogue between HO and the subgroup has led to the raising of issues such as systems integration and process-modelling, data sharing issues etc., and it is hoped that continuing communication will add value to the debate.

Questions and discussion

5.4 Recent reports attributed to Katherine Courtney suggested that access to the NIR would be limited to avoid requests from the public sector and businesses overloading the system – how does this equate with private sector usage?

CF commented that this is a tiering issue: identification by fingerprints would be required on very few occasions, and high level accreditation would be necessary for that level of access. CRM systems will generally need only low-level security checks, not involving the NIR. It was added that ideas on business models that HM Treasury had suggested to UKPS had proven to be remote from commercial reality, showing that linkages should be improved.

5.5 Is there any evidence that HO is beginning to grapple with issues around authentication to Government Gateway?

CF replied that a debate on how to update public sector processes appears to be underway. Policy debate on ID cards has broadened out from terrorism and immigration issues to looking at the need for departments to have a business case for all the processes involved in identity management systems. Dialogue with the private sector has begun, and the capabilities and limitations of biometrics use is likely to be a key issue. The planned EURIM technology briefing was not confined to biometrics; its intention was to educate, not take a position. The EURIM-CESG event on biometrics provided useful information about experience of large scale roll-out of biometric identifiers, and attendant problems.

5.6 It was argued that an advantage of biometrics is in providing greater proof of uniqueness of identity during the initial registration process. Subsequent checks should then be able to confirm that the card is unique to an individual, with a range of verifications that confirm the presenter of the card is the owner of the card, and that it can be used on different occasions for different services. This would provide a gold standard for identity that can be used in bronze-standard applications.

5.7 CF remarked that the ID Cards Bill has been passed to the Lords, and its return to the Commons for 3rd Reading is not expected before the 1st quarter of 2006.

6. AOB

6.1 Recent events around Shibboleth within the education sector may be of interest, and EURIM may wish to look more closely at this. [DW: Shibboleth is an initiative to develop an open, standards-based solution to the needs for organizations to exchange information about their users in a secure, and privacy-preserving manner. For more, see <http://shibboleth.internet2.edu/shib-intro.html>](#)

6.2 EURIM had replied to the consultation on the National Spatial Address Infrastructure, and identified a number of problems. Information suggested that Ordnance Survey and IDeA had failed to agree on transferring the ownership of the National Land and Property Gazetteer to the OS. Kable Government Computing reported on 12 August 2005 Jim Fitzpatrick MP as saying "I am disappointed that Ordnance Survey and IDeA are unable to proceed as planned with the creation of the National Spatial Address Infrastructure. Given that addressing is a critical piece of infrastructure I hope the parties will continue to consider options to meet the objectives set out in the prospectus we published in May. ODPM continues to offer its active support in achieving this." The current situation is unknown.

6.3 It was suggested that there might be a need to 'go back to basics' on data sharing, to establish what are the business issues and requirements, outside of any technical or philosophical issues. IPPR had pointed out the need for practical guidance on data sharing, and serious interest had been expressed in a number of arenas at the Labour Party Conference. Work was continuing with contacts in Hounslow Council on developing an exceptions list to accompany the flow chart. DCA is aware of existing confusion and developments in eGU, SEU and NRU, and is progressing with work on where extra guidance is needed to enable data sharing.

7. Date of next meeting

7.1 The next meeting of the Personal Identity Group was set for 3 November 2005.