



**Summary report of the EURIM Personal Identity Group meeting, 3 November 2005,  
1000 – 1200 at Room Q Portcullis House, Westminster**

Chairman: Philip Virgo (EURIM) Rapporteur: Dave Wright (EURIM)

**SUMMARY OF MAIN POINTS**

1. The cross-government strategy document 'Transformational Government, enabled by technology', drawn up by the Chief Information Officers' Council together with the Service Transformation Board, was launched on 2 November, 2005. However, it should be noted that it is a consultation paper, not a statement of government policy. The document is available online at <http://www.cio.gov.uk/documents/pdf/transgov/transgov-strategy.pdf>
2. A number of actions in TG, particularly on shared services, are directly relevant to the EURIM Personal Identity Group. Members wishing to respond to issues raised in the document should send any comments to: [itstrategyprojectteam@cabinet-office.x.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:itstrategyprojectteam@cabinet-office.x.gsi.gov.uk) by **Friday 3 February 2006**.
3. Many of the PI Group's recommendations and arguments on information management and data sharing have been accepted. The task now is to sustain political pressure in order to help ensure delivery.
4. EURIM has also been asked to:
  - produce a draft "map" of current and planned exercises to promote data sharing (including management, governance and security protocols). This may trigger a significant 'change in the landscape' as players discover who else is active on similar exercises and begin to make contact;
  - help identify obstacles to data sharing, including alleged legal obstacles, and how these might be addressed (including the use of data sharing protocols and the provision of improved guidance where legislative action is not necessary);
  - provide current examples of the benefits of data sharing, and the costs of not doing so.

**These should be produced by February 2006.**

5. It is vital to provide information to MPs so that they are able and willing to apply sustained pressure in calling for the joining up of service delivery, not just for meeting departmental targets. Key to this is evidence for the benefits of data sharing, and of the costs of not sharing.
6. The opportunity is now available for the IT industry to influence policy at the beginning of the policymaking process, because of the nature and scale of the reviews in progress. However, this power has to be matched by responsibility – failure to deliver would certainly be placed at the industry's door!
7. XRI (eXtensible Resource Identifier) is a new, open, non-proprietary standard for abstract identifiers. Together with XDI (the data interchange protocol for XRI) this clearly holds major implications for identity management and the delivery of identity-based services. Their potential impact on identity management, identity-centric applications, information publishing, sharing and advanced searching could be very significant.

## **1. Introduction**

1.1 Jim Lound has moved to another position within Experian, and has consequently relinquished his role as Chair of the EURIM Personal Identity Group. His replacement as Chair will be decided by the EURIM Board. The Group gratefully acknowledged that JL had made a most valuable contribution to the Group's operations, and wished him well in his new job.

## **2. Political objectives and forward actions**

2.1 The EURIM note on the Government Information Systems strategy can now be placed in the context of the new publication 'Transformational Government – enabled by technology' (TG), launched on 2 November, 2005. There is much political pressure behind the document, and many political reputations may depend on successful delivery of the key aims across the public sector. A number of actions, particularly on shared services, are directly relevant to this PI Group; please see: <http://www.cio.gov.uk/documents/pdf/transgov/transgov-strategy.pdf>

2.2 The arguments and recommendations from the PI Group on information sharing, as they appeared in the Data Sharing Subgroup's various draft papers, have had almost complete buy-in from Government, having been circulated to those responsible for drafting TG. Thus to some extent our work has been overtaken by events, and we now need to move on to the next stage. However, it should be noted that TG is a consultation document, not a statement of government policy.

2.3 Under the section 'Shared Services', particular attention is given to customer service centres HR, financial and corporate services and a common infrastructure, converging around the citizen. Data sharing is seen as "integral to transforming services and reducing administrative burdens", but privacy rights and public trust must be maintained. There will be a new ministerial focus on finding and communicating a balance between maintaining the privacy of the individual and delivering more efficient, higher quality services with minimal bureaucracy.

2.4 Other sections on personal information management include reference to 'an holistic approach based on a suite of solutions, including wider use of the NINO to index citizen records as a transition path to an ID card, collaborative working, and information assurance to build confidence in the security of shared services.

2.5 EURIM has been requested to provide examples of successful data sharing routines and protocols – how many current initiatives are actually operational? The programme manager of at least one other local government transformation project **has indicated interest in the EURIM Process Map and the work of SS with Hounslow Council.**

2.6 EURIM has also been asked to:

- produce a draft map of the many supposedly current/planned exercises in data sharing. This may trigger a significant 'change in the landscape' as players discover who else is active on similar exercises and begin to make contact. Many EURIM members have both policy and technical involvement in a number of projects, and the list should include exercises that address the managerial, legal and governance areas of data sharing;
- identify obstacles to data sharing, (with reference to the source of any supposed legal obstacles so that the validity of claims can be checked) and how these might be overcome (including the use of data sharing protocols);
- provide current examples of the benefits of data sharing, and the costs of not doing so.

**These should be produced by February 2006.** It was agreed that EURIM should create and maintain a grid of current examples of data sharing projects, what is good practice in information governance, what has worked and what has failed and why etc. Examples of private sector good practice, particularly on governance of data sharing, would also be most helpful. Customer demand for data sharing may help in creating systems that avoid legal obstacles to inter-departmental sharing.

2.7 The current negotiations have a lot of high-level buy-in to this approach; with a fundamental savings review in July 2006, and many of the public sector exercises now underway will feed into this. The 2007 spending review is expected to begin with zero-budgeting on current service delivery, but the real impact of this is likely to be felt 2-3 years on (in the run-up to the next general Election) when the next round of service delivery targets meets demands for joining up.

2.8 It is vital therefore to inform and educate MPs so that they are able and willing to sustain pressure over time for joining up, not just for meeting departmental targets. Key to this is evidence for

the benefits of data sharing, and of the costs of *not* sharing. Examples might be obtained (unattributed) from EURIM corporate members and MPs postbags, supplemented if possible with real costed data.

2.9 Departments will be under pressure to meet joining-up targets, thus affording opportunities for members to work with their clients to help build political pressure, and help departments with their forward plans to submit to Government in the run-up to the savings and spending reviews. Political pressure for delivery is now great, while at the same time, the likelihood of short-term political interference is much reduced (advisors are currently occupied elsewhere) and so industry advice is likely to be accepted provided it is matched to the scale and nature of what is being attempted.

2.10 At the local government level, EURIM is helping to organise 3 separate workshops on policy and joining up, working with local government e-champions in cooperation with the LGA and SOCITM. These will be organised on party-political lines (to encourage high-level participation): via the Conservative Technology Forum, the Labour e-Futures Group and the LibDem equivalent. LA's are committed to joining up in order to meet service delivery and savings targets. This is potentially very good news for suppliers, but advances will be incremental and sponsors will be expected and required to show equal support to each exercise.

2.11 While it was acknowledged that the IT industry collectively had to improve its image, many in the industry did not realise the potential impact IT players could have on the policy process. The opportunity is now available to influence policy at the beginning of the policymaking process, because of the nature and scale of the reviews in progress; however, this power has to be matched by responsibility – the curse of 'may you be taken at your word'! Failure to use the opportunity will, in any case, be placed at the industry's door!

2.12 On the question of whether the CIO Council was committed to the IS strategy, it was pointed out that 'Transformational Government' is a product of the CIO Council's work, which now has high-level political buy-in. The TG paper states that as part of the governance structure for change, "the role of the CIO Council and Service Transformation Board will be formalised to ensure their authority is recognised". While we should not expect too much immediately, the policy groundwork was laid to ensure executive authority for the Council – the key points being that this represents the means of delivering the Gershon agenda, which has full Treasury and prime ministerial support, and the Treasury Paper released two weeks earlier states there will be no increase in overall budgets.

2.13 New departmental permanent secretaries will take time to settle into their positions. Moreover, Government is not an integrated operation, but currently comprises ~1350 separate 'tribes'! Hopefully, these will form loose confederations able to share services and information, but there may be backlashes against the TG strategy by trade union and traditional civil service interests against centralisation. However, the strategy is not about centralisation, but about providing frameworks for the front line departments to share services etc. in the face of budget cuts.

2.14 Would the proposed customer group directors (who would lead the overall development of services to customer groups) control a budget? This was not known, but it is likely that existing budgets would be restructured to accommodate this.

2.15 It was noted that such market segmentation had been tried before, and had generated 'turf wars' about ownership etc. IT alone would not transform government: had equivalent strategies been agreed by the permanent secretaries that would drive change and address the risk-averse traditions of the Civil Service? In reply, it was stated that there is a need to bring the new Civil Service and ICT professionalism agendas under an equally new approach to professionalism in policy formation (as opposed to the current use of graduate policy wonks, secondees from would-be suppliers and alleged inputs from major party donors and supporters). The planned exercises for local government e-champions should provide opportunities for addressing improved policy formation in a less hazardous environment than that of central government. The Government's professionalism agenda for the Civil Service is similar to that of BCS, Intellect and NCC on ICT professionalism. Sir Gus O'Donnell has a parallel agenda on overall professionalism which includes intelligent customer relationships.

2.16 Doubts were raised about the deliverability of T-Government, especially given that many of the proposed reforms and ideas had failed before. However, the budgetary constraints are real, and incremental changes are being sought because big projects are too costly. The Industry is faced with the choice of either helping T-government happen, or sitting on its hands; in fact the situation presents

an opportunity for profit as opposed to revenue. Some recent large programmes have been nearly as expensive for shareholders as for taxpayers, and several suppliers have recently issued profits warnings on the London and/or New York Stock Exchanges with regard to current programmes.

2.17 There are a number of privacy and security reasons why we should be looking at having more than a single identifier in different parts of Government. Government Connect is now looking at having a separate 'citizen number'. **It was agreed to formally invite Steve Lawrence (Director of Solutions Team, eGU) to address a future meeting of the PI Group** on forward plans on this, and any ideas in mind (e.g. separately-held 'confederations of identities', and their governance). **A task for the PI Group might be to suggest credible means of identity governance and how it works in practice.**

2.18 Although the TG document emphasises that services need to be designed around citizens and businesses to ensure effectiveness of delivery to the customer, other messages were inconsistent with this. From the Government perspective, there are natural clusters around taxation and benefits, and it may be possible to develop a business case for selective sharing with different agencies. A number of initiatives on data sharing, including protocols, had been revealed by a short trawl of the Internet, but as yet there is no information on how many are actually in operation. Initially, the data sharing grid will simply list brief details of these, but further details will be added as feedback is received from circulation, and **workshops on clusters may be organised with some of the people involved.**

2.19 Industry inputs on practical examples of data sharing are likely to be particularly valuable, since it is unclear how many of those in government and under pressure to deliver data sharing schemes have any experience of what has been tried before. Successful operational examples from overseas are also suitable for the grid, especially where these deal with the benefits and governance aspects. **DW undertook to chase members for examples for the data sharing grid.**

### **3. Data Sharing Subgroup report**

3.1 The briefing on data sharing intended for MPs has been completed, thanks to the efforts of several members who contributed to an original draft drawn up by PM and JN. It has also passed through EURIM's internal editorial process. However, as the meeting heard, the messages contained in the briefing have to a large extent been overtaken by the publication of the TG strategy report, which shows that many of the Group's recommendations and arguments have been accepted. The good news is that the circulation of the draft among officials helped bring about the current changes. The task now is to sustain political pressure in order to help ensure delivery.

3.2 Much of the material in the more detailed paper drafted by JH might be useful in another context – JH undertook to consider how this might be used.

3.3 Some EURIM members met officials from Westminster City Council on 14 October. One of the topics raised was the work being done on employee accounts on Government Connect, which DfES have shown an interest in. Dave Wright had asked whether this was likely to lead to Government buy in, and whether this might lead to similar Government-LA initiatives, that might lead to critical mass for the GG/GC. WCC replied that they were continuing to work with DfES, but did not develop their ideas, adding only that what was needed for DfES was the appropriate level of security for the employee account, secure internal communications, and mapping in a secure GC network.

3.4 GG/GC offers potentially very significant opportunities for cost savings and benefits all round, from payment of fines to parking permits and a string of other services. However, perceived problems with DPA/data sharing are still very real, causing WCC to proceed with caution. Identity/authentication was still a problem that had to be solved before take-off could be expected.

3.5 At a meeting with DCA officials on 27 October, it was agreed that following EURIM's success in providing a neutral umbrella for 'grids' of current initiatives in other sensitive areas, EURIM members and observers would be invited to contribute to a list of the exercises with which they are involved. This has been reinforced by the developments referred to earlier, and if available by the New Year, the results would help greatly clarify debate. A start has been made, with 4 data sharing projects, including that reported above for WCC, currently listed and circulated to the EURIM PI Group.

### **4. Identity Cards Bill Subgroup report**

4.1 DW conveyed apologies for CF, the Subgroup Chair, who was unable to attend, but sent the following message:

'Home Office presented their current thinking on an overall identity management 'service' to be offered to public and private sectors alike. This material has not yet been publicly presented and clearly represents advanced thinking. It did move on the debate significantly in confirming many of the issues around which we felt clarification was required'.

'Since then the Home Office has issued a consultation on Procurement Strategy. This breaks down the procurement into four main functional blocks. It does not however discuss the management of liabilities and quality assurance between Home Office and suppliers and between suppliers of the functional elements (i.e. between enrolment services, National Identity Register provision & identity services - all may require tightly defined interaction at all levels). These governance and process issues are critical both to define suitable trials of the end to end system and a successful end project. I would welcome thoughts as to whether this would be a useful high level input from the EURIM ID Cards Bill Subgroup as well as relevant points as deadline for the new consultation is 9th November'.

4.2 The House of Lords began debating the ID Cards Bill on 31 October; any technical briefings we organise for MPs should be done before the Lords returned the Bill to the Government (probably with amendments), when the game of Parliamentary 'ping-pong' would begin.

4.3 The industry technology advisory group, ID-entity, had circulated a paper assessing what technology could and could not do with respect to implementation of the National Identity Cards Scheme. ID-entity members were willing to arrange meetings directly with parliamentarians.

## **5. XRI-XDI an ultra-simple guide**

5.1 A paper on this topic had already been circulated to the full PI Group.

5.2 XRI (eXtensible Resource Identifier) is a new, open, non-proprietary standard for abstract (not bound to a physical entity) identifiers, e.g. IP address, location, or any specific data such as a communication channel. Three classes of identifiers are defined, for data, people and organisations.

5.3 The XRI comprises two parts, an 'i-name' (which can change) and an 'i-number' (which does not change). Knowing an i-name does not permit access to an individual's personal details such as telephone number or email address. The i-name, resolved to the i-number, acts as a primary database key by which other personal data may be accessed. The owner of the i-name can control who sees what; anything that can be encoded as an XML schema can be stored using the i-name.

5.4 XDI is the data interchange protocol for XRI. Link contracts can be specified as a set of rules for what information is transferred between parties. Such exchanges can be authenticated using credentials resolved through XRI and both sides of the linked transaction can keep copies. The protocol is not bound to any underlying transport. There are clear implications for this Group, and in drafting plans for identifiers, and data sharing, XRI-XDI should be given serious consideration.

5.5 **It was agreed that this paper should have specific mention, and be posted to the EURIM website as a draft document**, with comments and corrections invited.

5.6 XRI-XDI can be called an enabling technology for individually-owned, person-centric record storage and identity systems using information brokers – something the Data Sharing Subgroup had been discussing for some time.

## **6. AOB**

6.1 The inaugural meeting of the Personal Digital Identity Association (PDIDA) will take place on 17 November, in conjunction with eema (formerly European Electronic Messaging Association). Details are available at <http://www.personaldigitalidentity.com/>

## **7. Date of next meeting**

7.1 The next meeting of the PI Group is set for 15 December 2005, and will review progress on the data sharing grid, and progress in assembling examples of good practice and good governance. **DW also undertook to invite Steve Lawrence to give a presentation on the Gateway at the meeting.**

7.2 In view of Ian Watmore's comments on the progress necessary on shared services, it was agreed that **we invite David Myers (Cabinet Office shared services team) to a future meeting.**