

THE EUROPEAN
INFORMATION
SOCIETY GROUP

EURIM



Summary report of the EURIM Personal Identity Group meeting on 18 May 2006 held in Committee Room 13, Westminster Palace at 1000 – 1200 hours

Chair: Stephen Darvill (EURIM); Rapporteur: Dave Wright (EURIM)

SUMMARY OF MAIN POINTS

1. The CIO Council is charged under the Transformational Government plan with determining a consistent approach to standards and architecture across government; the CTO Council will develop the detail of this approach on behalf of the CIO Council. The first priority of the CTO Council will be to agree and publish a standard Enterprise Architecture reference model. Examples of EAs where these have been shown to be beneficial are needed, and what structural and cultural changes are associated with their operation. Please send examples to john.wailing@cabinet-office.x.gsi.gov.uk
2. A 2-day workshop for CTOs and their solution architects has been organised for mid-June 2006, with the aims of articulating an enterprise framework at an appropriate level of detail, and assessing the value that an EA will bring to the organisation, and to quantify the benefits expected. The CTO meeting should produce clear tangible outputs, probably including a set of principles on methodologies to be employed in ensuring that interoperability and sharing are built in to systems and operations.
3. Standards are of fundamental importance to interoperability. It was acknowledged that the corporate standards body Twist is already engaged in increasing interoperability across organisations, and Twist-Identrust might be able to help in this field, especially as the standards involved are user-driven (rather than supplier-driven). This model will be discussed at the EURIM meeting on business models for identity sharing on 8 June.
4. There are a number of target dates in the Transformational Government plan, but eGIF is a long-term endeavour which will be driven by business need. The first task is to set objectives.
5. A pilot project of interest run by City Group Shell, HP, Microsoft and others on standards for bank mandate administration, is centred around working out common data elements. An interoperable solution across the spectrum can replace the use of numerous smart cards, and may provide a private sector analogue for eGIF. However, reliable security in such interoperable systems is essential.
6. Steady progress has been made with preparations for the EURIM Data Sharing Showcase for MPs on 22 June in the Attlee Suite, Portcullis House. There are now 17 confirmed exhibitors, and a general invitation to MPs has been sent by email. Tailored invitations are being sent to MPs who have Showcase exhibitors from their constituencies, and there will be opportunities for MPs and suppliers to have their photographs taken associated with successful initiatives of data sharing that are already delivering benefits to citizens and business.
7. A EURIM panel to act as a 'Select Committee' will be set up, as there is no House committee to monitor and discuss issues around Transformational Government. The aim is to provide ongoing opportunities to discuss relevant issues, not only to help set the agenda over the next few months, but to engage with stakeholders through the implementation period, and provide briefings to interested MPs to ensure that actions happen as and when necessary

1. Introduction

1.1 Stephen Darvill welcomed John Wailing, Director of Technology Policy at the eGU as our guest speaker on developments in e-GIF. The purpose of the meeting was to identify the issues that need to be resolved and to assess how EURIM might help.

2. Interoperability, eGIF and the role of industry – John Wailing

2.1 The context for the development of the e-Government Interoperability Framework (eGIF), is provided by the Transformational Government Implementation Strategy, together with the eGIF and e-Government Metadata Standards (e-GMS) documents.

2.2 The CIO (Chief Information Officers) Council set up by Ian Watmore when he was the Government CIO and Head of Government IT, provided the impetus to help formulate a cohesive IT strategy for the public sector, culminating in the document 'Transformational Government – Enabled by IT' published in November 2005.

2.3 In order to deliver on the TG strategy, Chief Technical Officers (CTOs) were appointed to achieve co-ordination across the public sector, and are effectively the agents of the CIO Council. The CTO Council is the principal intergovernmental forum tasked with improving government practices related to the design, development, modernisation, use, sharing, and performance of IT resources, and supporting 'joining-up' at a technological level.

2.4 In the main the CTOs were nominated by the CIOs and a number are from the private sector, so aware of the drivers for sharing and value-led architectures etc. The CTO Council first met in November 2005, and expressed great enthusiasm for sharing services and data for extracting value and to avoid 're-inventing the wheel'. However, the frequency of meetings was insufficient to provide the necessary impetus to drive plans forward.

2.5 It was agreed that there is a need to clearly articulate an overarching architectural framework covering standards for sharing identity. A 2-day workshop for CTOs and their solution architects has therefore been organised for mid-June 2006, in order to plan a programme of work and ensure everyone has the chance to meet their peers from other departments – an essential element of joining-up. The workshop is organised by 'core-sponsors', including Malcolm Whitehouse (DWP), John Wrennall (HMRC), Andy Ross (NOMS), Carl Bate (Cap Gemini/CJIT) and Stephen Thurlow (PITO), with John Wailing (eGU).

2.6 The aim of the workshop is to articulate an enterprise framework at an appropriate level of detail. Another issue is assessing the value an EA will bring to the organisation, so as to quantify the benefits expected. Agreement will be followed by decisions on implementation within organisations, and here standards will be of utmost importance.

2.7 This would probably be achieved through a layered approach in order to facilitate communication and ensure that the business logic is translated into practical implementation on the ground. Standards will be based on the OSI (Open System Interconnection) model, and will be driven by business needs, whereby eGIF will be refreshed.

2.8 At the CTO meeting in June, the number of participants will be restricted to facilitate decision-making, but CTOs have insisted that an executive from their principal suppliers should be present where they have experience of delivering value in EAs to clients.

2.9 It was recognized that eGIF would need some updating as it refers to events that have been implemented, and there are impending issues such as GIS and earth observation data. A revised draft of the eGMS has also been circulated for consultation.

Discussion and questions from the floor

2.10 What will be the next steps for eGIF?

This depends on what the CTOs want, and will probably include reliable messaging requirements. This will probably involve specifying profiles. As an example, most departments considering wireless LANS will employ the same standards for allowing access to their main network, but it is unlikely that component parts are interchangeable between the networks. Again, there are choices to be made concerning the Web Services Protocol Stack.

2.11 What support would be available with respect to any profiling – simple access to published information was not enough. How effective is Government Connect?

Interoperability workshops provide one route, but these may not always be appropriate. Developments would be guided by oriented responses to consultation; in this case, Reading may take the lead, develop proposals for consideration and post them on the web. (Reading Borough Council has developed a programme to transform and support the Council's vision for improving service quality, with e-GIF compliance at its core). The CTOs will assess if this is sufficient for current business needs.

Local Government is represented by Tameside and Lewisham on the CTO Council, and the links between the Department of Communities and Local Government and Government Connect provides another channel of communication and a vehicle for joining-up. Local Authority sponsorship of the Government Connect programme has moved from Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council to the North West e-Government Group, under the sponsorship of Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council.

2.12 London Connects is organising what appears to be a closed workshop for local government CTOs on technical interoperability issues following findings that legal issues were blocking interoperability frameworks.

2.13 Do CTOs have a clear idea of what is needed? What are the goal outputs?

The 2-day CTO meeting in June should produce clear tangible outputs, probably including a set of principles on methodologies to be employed in ensuring that interoperability and sharing are built in to systems and operations. Thus, standards developed for messaging should be adopted universally. Sharing may present a challenge for suppliers, e.g. where instead of engineering the entire solution, it may be possible to point to a supplier website that already has that part of a solution, and to aggregate demand.

2.14 After the meeting in June, would CTOs be seeking to work with their suppliers' partners (e.g. VOCA, Experian, Equifax), since there are issues around payment systems, data cleansing etc? This could lead on to groups who are already working on their own exchange standards (e.g. Jericho, Twist and IdenTrust).

Forward planning had not yet reached this stage, but it was recognised that engagement with a much wider audience was needed to achieve the goals.

2.15 It was stressed that standards are of fundamental importance to interoperability, and proprietary products should be avoided. The corporate standards body Twist is already engaged in increasing interoperability across organisations.

It was acknowledged that Twist-IdenTrust might be able to help in this field, especially as the standards involved are user-driven (rather than supplier-driven). This model should be publicised at the EURIM meeting on business models for identity sharing on 8 June.

2.16 Are there any target dates for having interoperability in place?

There are a number of target dates in the TG plan, but the eGIF is a long-term endeavour which will be driven by business need. The first task is to set objectives.

2.17 At a meeting of the eGIF Sponsor Group on 6 April, concern was expressed that CTOs lacked real understanding of changes to the rules on government security (and the gsi) – has this been addressed?

It will be. The rules have been slightly modified, but no guidance has yet been issued and the ramifications are complex. The real change is that security will be much more business-aligned, focused on managing risk and fitness for purpose; there may be a greater use of Commercial-Off-The-Shelf (COTS) products. Would these be eGIF compliant? Security is not really covered as yet, but would probably need to be considered at the profiling stage. Data and voice convergence would also require debate and education.

2.18 Could eGIF, as it exists today, be considered defunct? Reports suggested that central Government had shown little enthusiasm for it compared with local government and industry.

eGIF is in need of refreshing, but it is not out of date. It is a long-term exercise, the public sector is large, but inquiries were constantly being made, with accreditations being booked and examinations sat. Although many people were still unaware of eGIF and its objectives, the principal behind it is correct, and there is a cultural change towards recognising that technological exchange and interoperability are in the business interest. The CTO Council will identify common interests and agree to develop common standards, based on the existing foundation.

2.19 In the past, some Government standards had proven to be unworkable, and industry input was necessary to avoid repetition of failure and to inject realism.

CTOs will make industry soundings, focused on specific issues, and interoperability will be driven by business need – e.g. meetings will focus on schemas for a purpose, and not just hold discussions about schemas generally.

2.20 How will eGIF deal with sharing identity?

Sharing identity is a big challenge, and has to be preceded by understanding identity, which is a difficult issue. People may have multiple identities which cannot be merged because the identity cannot be verified or authenticated. Identifying yourself to at different levels of access permissions is also a challenge, especially for Government, and may require a federated model for trust relationships. The multifunction smart card once proposed was likely now to be the identity card.

2.21 Financial services institutions use standards with strong issuance processes; it should be possible to adapt these.

Progress would be made once the lead department for identity had been confirmed. While DCA has overarching responsibility, different departments have responsibility for different applications. MISC31 (the ministerial committee on data sharing) may provide a solution. Establishing who will lead on identity rests with the Identity and Passport Service (see IPS Framework Agreement <http://www.egovmonitor.com/node/5702>). A lead department will be necessary – divided responsibility tends not to deliver.

2.22 How closely is the CTO Council driven by the CIO Council?

The CTO Council is driven completely by the CIO Council. The CIO Council is charged under the TG plan with determining a consistent approach to standards and architecture across government; the CTO Council will develop the detail of this approach on behalf of the CIO Council. The first priority of the CTO Council will be to agree and publish a standard Enterprise Architecture reference model, hence the need for a value proposition. **Examples of EAs where these have been shown to be beneficial are needed**, and what structural and cultural changes are associated with their operation. Please send examples to john.wailing@cabinet-office.x.gsi.gov.uk

2.23 Reed-Elsevier (a EURIM target), as the world's largest electronic publisher, may have useful advice. They had attempted to integrate their CRM systems, but having encountered massive opposition, including from customers, then put in place 4 'families' of federated solutions.

2.24 An organisation's vision should be its driver - but what would be the financial justification? Survival is the key concern for commercial organisations – e.g. without interoperability in the financial services sector, the business would fail. There is no such imperative for Government departments, and this is where a vision is important – there is much rhetoric about efficiency and citizen-centric services, but each department appears to have a different mechanism for contacting business. So the requirement for interoperability has to be justified in business terms. An EA may be valid at the technical level, but at the permanent secretary level, there is no business relevance.

2.25 There is a need to identify benefits in order to justify the investment required, e.g. building in compatibility from the outset which can accept more functionality, including from shared services. It was important to know who was doing what. CTOs acknowledge that they were often unaware of what their colleagues are doing, but the CTO Council provides a forum for keeping in touch.

2.26 How far did people want to go with interoperability – e.g. did they want a mobile phone to intercommunicate with the flight management system of the aircraft they are travelling on? There

needed to be a business case. Again, what sort of information would you want to exchange – customer related, business related and data products etc? This could be resolved into a choice between segmentation and universal interoperability.

2.27 A pilot project of interest is being run by City Group Shell, HP, Microsoft and others on standards for bank mandate administration, centred around working out common data elements. This is a key area for corporates partly because of the number of accounts and the expense and problems of managing these. An interoperable solution across the spectrum can replace the use of numerous smart cards, and may provide a private sector analogue for eGIF. The need for security in interoperable systems was emphasised.

2.28 It is difficult to locate and talk to the large amount of people who could provide useful input. The solution is to find out what you need to know that you don't already know, and then find out who you need to ask! So there is a need to articulate how the framework looks, and then consider the tools needed. But you would not want to use proprietary tools in an open architecture.

2.29 Would it be helpful to extend an invitation for the CTO Council meeting in June to people who could provide operational examples of EAs that had brought benefits to their organisation, and who were prepared to share it with the CTO Council? The rationale for having the EA could also be required. It would also be useful to know what levers had been applied to effect the changes, which of these are available to Government (in addition to eGIF), and what other levers Government might have.

It was agreed this might be useful, but while shared services might add efficiency, funding is stove-piped! Examples might also include allocations of accountability and liability when things go wrong.

2.30 Are MoD part of the consultation process?

This would be most welcome, as MoD have worked extensively in this field (e.g. the development of MODAF - Architecture Framework guidelines and technical standards), but the MoD has yet to nominate a CTO. Better engagement would be useful, though there is a separate channel of communication available.

2.31 Have other international standards like the Open Group's Architecture Framework (TOGAF) been considered?

This had been considered, along with EU examples. The CTO Council will look to build systems from COTS products that implement open standards – they do not wish to write software or develop standards. There can be problems with accountability and liability when things go wrong with an Open Source system, but it could be used where it can offer an appropriate package. Interoperability is the key, without payment each time to use an interface – this is one of the concerns with local government. Again, if the best technical solution to a problem is an OS package, but the incumbent supplier is skilled e.g. in Microsoft systems, this would appear to compromise support.

2.32 A recent article on service oriented architecture, revealed that benefits were only realised for outsourcing organisations where the outsourcing suppliers were using compatible SOAs, and had massive teams involved in OS work and using OS within their architectures. On the other hand, major users apparently only rarely demand that their outsourcing suppliers know what is interoperable within the systems used. Obvious concerns are the extent to which suppliers work with each other to ensure system flexibility and interoperability, how much of the interoperability is controlled by proprietary licences, and how to motivate suppliers given that they have to make a profit.

2.33 Interoperability must be justified by the business case; much of the talk about OS is confusing – what does 'Open' actually mean?

One of the agenda items for the CTO Council meeting in June is, by coincidence, clarifying the language! This also applied to terms such as 'enterprise architecture. EURIM offered to help wherever this was deemed useful. It is clear that there is a willingness to succeed; the technology is available, and every opportunity to do so will be taken.

3. EURIM Data Sharing Showcase progress report – Dave Wright

3.1 Steady progress has been made with preparations for the EURIM Data Sharing Showcase event for MPs on 22 June in the Attlee Suite, Portcullis House. There are now 17 confirmed exhibitors, which is very close to the room capacity of 18 stalls. 10 of the exhibitors have provided full details of running titles, key messages, and furniture and connectivity requirements. DW is in regular contact with the senior technician responsible for ensuring arrangements for the stalls are satisfactorily planned, and for ensuring bandwidth availability is not exceeded etc. Other exhibitors have promised to provide the information shortly.

3.3 A general invitation to the Showcase has been sent to all MPs by email. This will be repeated after Recess, and a notice sent to the All-Party Whip. Individual invitations will be sent to selected MPs, including members of relevant committees and all party groups. Tailored invitations will also be sent to those MPs who have Showcase exhibitors from their constituencies, and will include the opportunity for MPs and suppliers to have their photographs taken associated with successful initiatives of data sharing that are already delivering benefits in MPs' constituencies.

3.4 Additional information – Microsoft have most generously agreed to sponsor catering arrangements for the Showcase.

4. Recent developments – Philip Virgo

4.1 The EURIM Council meeting on 9 May that EURIM proposed the setting up of a panel that would act like a 'Transformational Government Select Committee'. This may take the form of a new all-party group, and its purpose will be to function as a select committee because there is no committee of the House that will monitor and discuss issues around Transformational Government. The aim is to provide ongoing opportunities to discuss relevant issues, not only to help set the agenda over the next few months, but to engage with stakeholders through the implementation period, and provide briefings for a cadre of interested MPs to ensure that actions happen as and when necessary.

4.2 Margaret Moran will be discussing plans with Hilary Armstrong (Social Exclusion Minister, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Chair of MISC31) and Stephen Timms (Chief Secretary to the Treasury) to ensure that the panel is set up in a way that will be of most help in driving the TG strategy.

4.3 Another development is that the Code of Practice on encryption under Part III of RIPA (Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000) will be published shortly. EURIM has agreed with Home Office to schedule a workshop on 5 July to discuss the contentious issues around this.

4.4 The Information Commissioner's report to Parliament on the need for a review of the penalties available under the Data Protection Act is appurtenant to EURIM work in this field, and Margaret Moran is organising a press release accordingly. The IC has called for those convicted of illegally selling and buying personal information to be jailed for up to two years. Much better guidance on data sharing is needed for those running systems; now that MISC31 has met, EURIM work on this area can progress once it is clear who is leading on this.

4.5 Margaret Moran has requested help with a draft letter to be sent to the new ID Cards minister (Joan Ryan MP) on clarifying business cases and issues originally raised within the EURIM Identity Cards Bill Subgroup about the difficulties faced by the industry on procurement issues. IBM is leading on this.

5. Date of next meeting

5.1 There will be a meeting on 8 June, 1000-1200 in Room Q, Portcullis House on business models for identity sharing. The purpose is to discuss case studies of large scale identity management systems and to determine how best to produce and publicise briefing material for presentation and publicity in the Autumn, when decisions are likely to be made during the run-up to the publication of the 2007 spending review.

5.2 There will be a round table meeting on 15 June, 1000-1200, Room 'S', Portcullis House, Westminster with the aim of discussing how IPS objectives might best be delivered, and what role there might be for EURIM in helping to meet the many challenges facing the team.

Please contact eurim@eurim.org if you plan to attend.