



Checkpoint Meeting in Brussels

On the 26th of October, about 25 people representing different research communities and key work items in the AARC project gathered in Brussels. Although the main goal was to discuss the training and outreach results, the meeting offered an opportunity to review AARC's priority, in light of time and budget constraints. The inputs received will be used to inform the preparation of the AARC2 proposal as well as to steer AARC's current work.

One of the AARC's goals is to improve the adoption of federated access. One way to do this is to approach decision makers and convince them to invest in this space. At least 4 groups of decision makers were identified: at campus level, within the libraries, federation operators and e-infrastructures communities. **But how can AARC address decision makers when it is not always known who they are?**

There are of course some constraints that AARC faces: to start with AARC has limited contacts with the universities and/or with the libraries directly and AARC should work to offer support for a wider group rather than for isolated cases; AARC budget although sufficient for the proposed workplan is not huge and any intensive campaign is very budget intensive. The only way for AARC to succeed is by working with its peers and by identifying and prioritising key activities. In this light federations for instance could talk to their universities and try and influence those groups within the universities that bring funding to the institutions. AARC could support them by preparing all the necessary material. This is of course easier said than done, nonetheless worth trying.

An obvious group AARC could influence is the EC, being one of main funding bodies and as such also a stakeholder in the federated access space. An easy way for the EC to push for federated access would be to add a condition in their call for proposals stating that proposals that build



on federated access would be preferred. A similar campaign could be done at the national level with the support of the NRENs.

What should AARC top priorities be?

The attendees when asked what should AARC focus on, answered as follows:

- **Explain what AARC is and its remit is;**
- **Make the case for federated access** - although this seemed initially a done deal, there is a demand for such a thing. Some work to this extend has been done in REFEDS see (add link to heather's doc);
- **Produce general material on how to implement federated access** (many developer and/or cloud providers noted there was no material to explain to them what the first steps are) - this is being done is part of the federation 101 package;
- Work with eduGAIN to **prepare a clear and generally accepted message to explain what eduGAIN can (or cannot) offer** - there seems to be stil some different views on what eduGAIN is;
- **Attribute release**, in particular promotional material to support **entity categories and code of conduct** were mentioned - Entity categories is an approach to solve the attribute release problem, by grouping services. The bundle of services in the same group would receive the list of attributes as listed in that category. The added value of this approach is that Identity Providers would not have to negotiate with each service. AARC could/should invest resources in promoting this approach and also in getting consultancy on the legal aspect which is often what IdPs are very concerned about. Federations operators could then promote the material to their IdPs;
- **Increase the number of IdPs available** in eduGAIN - this translate in two main actions:
 - o **ask eduGAIN policy committee to enforce opt-in** (all IdPs are in eduGAIN by default unless they ask to be out). JISC, GARR and ?? have shown this is possible.
 - o **Influence eduGAIN policy committee to streamline the way in which federation operators use the eduGAIN stream:** too many



- different practices hinder end-user experience;
- **Invest some budget in promoting REFEDS Discovery Guide** - most services provider implement a very poor discovery which results in poor user experience;
 - **Work with those entities negotiating licenses for the libraries to add a non-negotiable clause for publishers to offer federated access.** JISC did that several years ago and it payed back:
 - <http://www.webarchive.org.uk/wayback/archive/20130619222056/http://www.jisc.ac.uk/media/documents/themes/accessmanagement/cc297d001-1.0%20business%20case%20toolkit.pdf>
 - <https://www.jisc-collections.ac.uk/Help-and-information/Federated-access/>
 - **Single branding to identify federated access for R&E** - the argument made was that users get used to a brand, for instance they all recognise Facebook as a mean to access a service. Similarly, if all services were asked to add a edulogin, rather than showing the list of federations/IdPs this would help. It was recognised that it is not only about branding but it is about its usage (and therefore the policy associated with it). It was also noted that in some cases the poor implementation of the discovery is also part of the problem, see bullet above;
 - **Cookbooks to saml-ise different type of SPs** (talk to the community to understand what tools are needed). Clearly AARC cannot produce the material for all type of SPs.
 - **Group management and token translations** - work in this area is being addressed in different groups. AARC will explore existing deployed solutions;
 - **Unique persistent IDs;**
 - **LoA for self-issued accounts;**
 - **Common accepted and deployed policies among e-infra** - this is already in scope for AARC; the work on Sirtfi, LoA are clear example of this.

If AARC manage to really address 3 or even 4 of the items on the list, AARC will be a success.