

**Notes of the REFEDS meeting
Porto, Portugal
Sunday 6 November 2005**

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7 November 2005

An informal dinner meeting took place during the evening of Sunday 6 November in Porto, Portugal immediately before the 2nd EuroCAMP workshop. The event was attended by almost 20 persons representing many of the European NRENs as well as having representation from other regions.

It was noted that the group had not made much progress in publishing policies and this action requires more attention in the coming months. It is clear that some of the technical work is being undertaken by the GN2-JRA5 activity, but little effort has been directed towards policy issues. The consequence is that most current work relies on "sets-of-rules" rather than a policy. It is the becoming urgent to develop and gather policies.

Ken reported that the Australians were in the process of publishing a proposal for using Shibboleth for the peering of federations and this might be a useful source document for REFEDS. He also mentioned the continuing work between the US Federal Government and Incommon. Ken noted that InfoCard has simple framework for writing server-side applications which interact with the Microsoft InfoCards identity system which he sees as an influential development. It is clear that REFEDS will not have much influence in the WAYF (Where are you from) space.

There were some discussions about progress in the Federated Identity Management space. It seems that ORACLE has been developing some use-cases that address the issues of federating. There have been some discussions with Westlaw, an online legal research service for legal and law related materials and services, including searches of international legal materials. It was felt by some that we need to avoid trusting federations before we have a policy relationship with them. Without developing the trust first, we cannot expect peer-to-peer relationships

The community needs to start having discussions about liability which will inevitably be difficult. Perhaps we may need to back-away from seeking full liability agreements and instead settle on some form of limited liability.

There was some discussion on the need to establish trust with federations that you have not talked to before. This has to be dynamic in nature. Possible solutions discussed included the use of metadata and SAML2. The use of metadata for trust establishment is not expected to become an urgent requirement for 2 or 3 years, however we need to start thinking about development right now. There was a suggestion the work be progressed through OASIS. There is no-way the education and research community can achieve a solution to this problem in isolation. It is essential for us to start talking to external providers and get industry involved in developing collaborative solutions. It was suggested that talking to national governments is an essential step – we need to understand which directions governments are thinking of going and who they are talking to about solutions.

Eduroam was mentioned as an example of federated trust. Ken suggested that eduroam has a sufficiently high business driver that developing an eduroam policy might be possible. It was suggested potential difficulties such as roaming agreements (like eduroam) might be seen to break local closed user group rules. It was thought developing a policy for eduroam would be a useful piece of work and could lead to a set of understandings that might help us solve more

difficult future problems. If we are to make successful confederations then we need to start with low security applications and then build on experiences to improve.

There was some concern expressed that as a community we have not been good at documenting all the avenues on federation policy that have been explored. In response, Terry Morrow representing the UK JISC said he believed that they had undertaken some work in this area.

Conclusions and Actions

The layout of the meeting room made for rather fragmented groups of discussions making note taking rather difficult. I hope I have been able to capture all the main points however. If REFEDS is to continue meeting, the note-taker for one would suggest a dedicated daytime meeting with an agenda in a suitable meeting room.

There is still an urgent need to put policies online – Documents and pointers should be sent to TERENA.

All organisations involved in REFEDS need to take positive steps to talk to industry and their national governments reporting any news back to the group.

The group need to consider how to work on using metadata to dynamically establish trust. This will probably mean becoming actively involved in OASIS.

The Australian document on confederations maybe very valuable to this group and we should see if it can be distributed on the REFEDS email distribution list.