

Digital Certificate Operation in a Complex Environment
*A project within the Joint Information Systems Committee's Authentication,
Authorisation and Accounting middleware programme*

First six months report

Project abbreviation	DCOCE	
Project Title	Digital Certificate Operation in a Complex Environment	
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Lead Institution	University of Oxford (Computing Services; Library Services; e-Science Centre)	
Duration of award	1 January 2003 to 31 December 2004 [†]	Total amount (JISC): £245,506
Period of report	1 January 2003 to 30 June 2003	Total co-funding: £382,182
Key abbreviations	Oxford University Computing Services (OUCS), Systems and Electronic Resources (SERS) at Oxford University Library Services.	

Document History

Version	Date	Comments
1.0	29 August 2003	

1. Confirmation Statement

I confirm that the project development is being conducted under the terms agreed in the initial contract with JISC.

2. Aims, Objectives and Methodology

There have been no changes to the original aims, objectives or methodology as detailed in the project plan.

[†] A move from the previous (anticipated) project start- and end-dates (of 1 October 2002 to 30 September 2004) has been verbally agreed with the programme manager.

3. Highlights, Outcomes and Important Findings from project

Much effort so far has been in the recruitment of staff, which was more difficult than anticipated (see section 5, below). The project has established a stakeholder/advisory group with broad interest and expertise across and beyond the University of Oxford. Due to the size of this group, it is expected that it will meet physically only once or twice. Therefore, email lists have been established. Where appropriate, members have been asked to nominate a technical 'backup' person with whom each stakeholder can consult. It is possible that this technical 'group' could be convened at some stage in the project if that is deemed useful. A series of meetings with people concerned with authentication and authorisation within OUCS has also taken place to establish the project within the framework of the organisation.

Sites with experience of digital certificates and public key infrastructure (PKI) have been contacted and exchange is thus taking place for background to the project with regard to designing a PKI architecture for Oxford. We expect to have much to report within the next three months, as much work has been prepared and the presence of the new staff will facilitate moving forward.

4. Changes to original award

There have been no major changes to the original project plan. However, finding good 'study sites' for the background review for workpackages 3 and 4 has been a little more time-consuming than anticipated. A questionnaire approach has been developed to streamline – or even avoid the need for – site visits and it is possible that more sites could be contacted later using this mechanism. It may be possible to send the questionnaire and to conduct much of the detailed analysis by email and telephone.

5. Project staff

The project manager, Mark Norman, was recruited in January/February and began work on the project on 19 March 2003. Alun Edwards was recruited as the OUCS (0.5 FTE) evaluator and began work on 1 May 2003 at 0.2 FTE, but will begin as 0.5 FTE on 1 October 2003. Christian Fernau began work as systems developer on 4 August 2003 and we are hoping to recruit the SERS evaluator during August of this year. We have a short secondment to us from within OUCS in August and September 2003.

6. Involvement with Programme

Mike Fraser, the project co-director attended the programme meeting on 4 February 2003.

Mark Norman, the project manager, attended an Athens Devolved Authentication seminar on 24 April 2003 and then met with Lyn Norris, David Orrell and Neil Drage of EduServ/Athens on 30 April 2003.

Mike Fraser and Mark Norman met with David Salmon, the programme manager, on 13 May 2003

Mark Norman met with David Chadwick at the University of Salford on 21 July 2003 and Dave Holdsworth, Ray Powell, and Adrian Cumiskey at the University of Leeds on 22 July 2003. David Chadwick presented some interesting background for the project and the Leeds University Certificate Issuing Engine (LUCIE) team at Leeds have provided some code for its certificate issuing engine. The DCOCE project is very likely to look into establishing this at Oxford for further investigation

Mike and Mark also met other participants in the programme on 31 July 2003 in the AAA Programme 'Projects Meeting' in London.

7. Publications and Publicity

The project web site (www.dcoce.ox.ac.uk) is soon to be launched. This will include background to the project, the project plan, the PKI questionnaire and any progress reports. It will also refer to mailing lists for interested parties to join.

Two JISMAIL mailing lists have been formed DCOCE-ADVISORY (for stakeholders and those very close to the project) and DCOCE-DISC (for discussions and for others with an interest in the project). The ADVISORY list is a private list and the DISC list is open to all.

7.1. Presentations relating to the project:

6 November 2002, Michael Fraser. Briefing For Access Management Conference, London (see http://www.angel.ac.uk/accessmanagement/061102_FRASER.ppt).

4 December 2002, Matthew Dovey. Managing Access to Resources on the Grid workshop, Edinburgh (see <http://www.nesc.ac.uk/talks/140/3.ppt>).

7.2. Calling of and attendance at meetings

April/May 2003. Mark Norman had various meetings with Matthew Dovey, technical manager of the Oxford e-Science Centre and Francisco Pinto of the Subject Portals Project (authentication and authorisation).

7 May 2003. Mark Norman met with Ross MacIntyre of Manchester Information and Associated Services (MIMAS – project partner).

8 May 2003. Mark Norman chaired a fact-finding meeting with OUCS individuals concerned with authentication and authorisation across many roles and projects.

26 June 2003. Michael Fraser attended the University of Oxford IT Support Staff Conference. A flyer detailing the project was also included in the conference pack.

8. Engagement with Potential Outcomes Users

As mentioned in section 7 above, two JISMAIL mailing lists have been created in order to disseminate findings and to elicit input from interested parties as well as stakeholders and advisors.

9. Detailed Progress and Future Plans

9.1. Workpackage 1

Workpackage Title:	Project management
Partner Responsible:	OUCS
Other Partners Involved:	
Start Date:	1 January 2003
End Date:	24 December 2005
Progress:	The project manager is in place and the project plan finalised. Project progress is roughly on track.

9.2. Workpackage 2

Workpackage Title:	Stakeholder group
Partner Responsible:	OUCS, SERS
Other Partners Involved:	MIMAS, Athens, OeSC
Start Date:	March 2003
End Date:	June 2003
Progress:	The stakeholder group has been formed and will meet in the autumn.

Stakeholders have joined mailing lists for dissemination and consultation.

9.3. Workpackages 3 and 4

Workpackage Title:	Modelling of administration architecture and
Partner Responsible:	Modelling of system architecture
Other Partners Involved:	OUCS, SERS, MIMAS, Athens, OeSC
Start Date:	October 2003
End Date:	February 2004
Progress and future plans:	A questionnaire for the 'existing implementation reviews' will be finalised within August 2003. We are likely to test a certificate issuing engine and other such components in order to investigate connectivity issues within Oxford during August and September.

Mark Norman. 29 August 2003