



Meeting in Berlin on Trusted Federations, November 2006

By: Andrew Cranfield, Director, EBLIDA

Access to digital information is complex. Organisational, economic, legal and technical issues all present challenges which are important to find solutions for if libraries and the educational community are to get the most out of their investments in digital materials. At the end of November a number of stakeholders from the library and publishing communities met in Berlin to discuss the role of trusted federations and how to further develop these within an international framework. In the JISC (Joint Information Systems Committee) briefing paper entitled "Connecting People to Resources" a federation is defined as "a group of institutions and organisations that sign-up to an agreed set of policies for exchanging information about users and resources to enable access and use of resources and services. The federation combined with identity management software within institutions and organisations can be referred to as a federated access management". In a sense most of us are familiar with the idea of trusted federations from the world of the ATM. We may all have different cards, but the software will authenticate us (by use of a pin code which is recognised world wide) and then authorise a payment. We don't need 10 different cards and 10 different pin codes. By establishing trusted federations the end user will be able to access information from different resources, through one authentication process and will be able to access whatever materials his or her host institution have signed up for. EBLIDA believes that this simplification in how users access information will, in the long run, also lead to a greater usage of digital content.

At the meeting in Berlin EBLIDA and IFLA made a joint statement which is printed below:

Joint IFLA/EBLIDA Statement on Trusted Federations, November 2006

The increase in digital resources in higher education and libraries poses the question: Are we getting the greatest possible benefit from these resources and providing broad access for users to this information?

There is probably not one easy answer to this, but IFLA and EBLIDA warmly supports the establishment of trust federations for the purpose of supporting and facilitating authentication and authorisation to academic resources in the education sector. In this short statement today we would like to say how we envisage federations working and providing a single sign on identity management sys-

tem for students and researchers who wish to access and share resources across trusted educational and library infrastructures.

User groups using the educational system for higher education, lifelong learning etc are more mobile than ever before expecting to be able to access the information they need any time, any place, on any device, and always on. Users want this to be simple, without the need to have a multitude of different passwords and user names.

A factor also to be considered is one of privacy and the fact that users may have to provide personal data to every institution where they wish to access information from. The aim of the trusted federations should be to provide an internet passport for the resources available. Libraries want to provide these services in cooperation with service providers, but most of the systems we know today have some shortcomings and do not provide an answer to the authorisation question: who is allowed to access what information?

Different service providers and libraries have different authentication components and the use and support of open standards (e.g. the SAML.2 standard) will ensure interoperability between service and identity providers. The identity management service must be flexible and able to incorporate different systems, making it an architecture, which can be used for education (portal, electronic learning environment, digital library), research (institutional repositories, digital library) and administration (students, personnel and finance).

From our perspective we see a series of benefits for users, librarians and institutions. The user has a single sign on using an institutional password and is secure in the knowledge that private data will not be passed on to a third party. The librarian will have to cope with less user administration and be better equipped to deal with licenses and subscriptions. The institution will provide and facilitate a greater use of digital material to their users and therefore benefit the research and educational environment as a whole.

However we also see some challenges and issues to be addressed in the future:

How to define "the student" and "user" in a knowledge society and how to ensure access for off-campus students?

The need for different types of trust federations for e.g. academic and public libraries

The relationship between usage information and publisher business models.

IFLA and EBLIDA will continue to support the concept of trusted federations and bring relevant information to the members of our organisations. We would also strongly support the establishment of a multi stakeholder organisational body to work together to address the issues that have been and will be addressed today in this forum.

The Broadcast Treaty – The Never Ending Story Report from WIPO by Harald v Hielmcrone, Member of EBLIDA Copyright Expert Group

The question of the "Protection of the Rights of Broadcasting Organizations" has been on the agenda of the Standing Committee on Copyright and Related Rights (SCCR) since the very first session of the committee in 1998. The alleged purpose of the Broadcast Treaty is to protect against signal piracy, but the proposals for a Draft Treaty goes far beyond that. The way the Draft Treaty is drafted, broadcasters will also acquire the rights to control broadcasted content, even content which is in the public domain, and they will be allowed to support these rights with Technological Protection Measures, which will prevent users from exerting their rights in accessing the material.

The Rome Convention and the TRIPS agreement also protect the rights of broadcasting organisations, but this protection is regarded as being insufficient in the age of the Internet. The USA insisted on including web casting (a transmission of some content by wire or wireless means over a computer network) and the EU wanted simulcasting (simultaneous transmission of a broadcast over a computer network) to be included in the treaty. Most of the developing countries and Canada do not want a treaty at all.

The effects of including web casting in the treaty are quite unforeseeable and hardly anybody supported the USA in this respect. However, the USA did not give in, and so there was a stalemate for many years. In 2006 there was a feeling that this had to come to an end. It was decided to have an extra SCCR meeting in September 2006 to decide whether to recommend to the General Assembly to convene a Diplomatic Conference or scrap the treaty.

Most of the September meeting passed with informal consultations. The main adversaries were the USA and Brazil seconded by India. Only a few hours before the meeting ended the USA gave in and accepted to leave out web casting and agreed to a "signal based" treaty. In return Brazil promised flexibility. The chair's conclusion to recommend a diplomatic conference was accepted by "silent consent" – nobody protested.

The General Assembly decided to have the diplomatic conference ultimo 2007 provided that two special SCCR meetings could provide (near) consensus regarding a suitable text for a Draft Treaty. The first of these special SCCR meetings took place in Geneva 16-19 January this year. When the meeting started it became clear that we were

back to the situation of the September meeting. The USA confirmed the concessions given, while Brazil kept the position of the last player. The chair tried to improve matters by presenting several "non-papers" as unofficial proposals for texts to be considered. This opened for a host of procedural questions and objections. After a round of interventions by NGOs the meeting was closed and it remained so until Friday afternoon. When it was reopened not much had moved forward, and it was not before the very last minutes of the meeting that the chair was authorised to present further non-papers to be communicated to delegations via email to be considered as possible proposals for a Draft Treaty at the next special session in June.

This may all be negotiating tactics, but it rather looks like "the blame game". No one wants to take responsibility for abandoning the treaty altogether. For WIPO, however, there is much at stake and every effort will be made for its adoption. For libraries and their users there is nothing good in this treaty. It introduces a new layer of producers' rights, and in general we are not happy about that. But after web casting has been taken out, a treaty will probably not affect the normal activities of libraries.

LIBER-EBLIDA workshop on the digitisation of library material in Europe

EBLIDA and LIBER are proud to announce their first joint workshop on the digitization of library material in Europe. It will be hosted by the Royal Library of Copenhagen from 24 till 26 October 2007. The main topics will be:

- Strategies for the digitization of library materials (which materials, which priorities, task sharing among various partners, mass vs. selective digitization).
- Legal issues (copyright problems, DRM).
- Overview of present activities and policies.
- Strategies for the optimal usage of these materials: how can we best work towards the European and global digital library? how to reconcile the activities of the national libraries (TEL of the CENL and the EDL-project of the EC) with the metadata-collecting activities of EROMM and the global Registry of Digital Masters?

Expected participants are high-level executives of large libraries and other organizations responsible for digitization activities and strategy/policy development and implementation. More information and details about the programme and registration will be communicated as soon as possible.

From the Secretariat

EBLIDA's director held a meeting on 17 of January with Hans Geleijnse (President) and Raf Dekeyser (Development Director) of LIBER to finalise the wording of a memorandum of understanding (MoU) between the two organisations. Issues discussed were, among other things, the European digital library, open access journals, VAT on electronic information and the planning of a joint EBLIDA/LIBER seminar on digitisation later this year. The full text of the MoU will be available on the EBLIDA website, once finally approved by both organisations.