



Eduserv Unveils OpenAthens

Low Cost, Easy Access to the UK Access Management Federation for Education and Research

Bath, 12th March 2007 – Eduserv, the not-for-profit IT services group, today unveils OpenAthens, a new access and identity management (AIM) platform using established international standards. The launch builds on the successful and widely adopted Athens service¹, and enables Institutions to gain secure access to Shibboleth protected, UK Access Management Federation² resources and maintain access to Athens protected resources at low cost, within hours.

OpenAthens offers Further and Higher Education Institutions all the benefits of federation membership without the cost of developing, managing and maintaining their own in-house identity provider service. It will also enable institutions to act as both identity providers and service providers, facilitating the sharing of resources across institutions, and enable those institutions to join multiple federations around the world as and when they emerge.

The JISC's procurement of the Athens service makes it possible for institutions to gain access to Athens and Shibboleth protected resources in the Federation at no cost until July 2008. From July 2008, OpenAthens will be available to institutions for as little as £1000 for the smallest institutions to a maximum of £10,000 for the largest. The OpenAthens shared service approach to participation in the Federation compares very favourably with the cost of developing, implementing, managing and supporting in-house identity provider services.

¹ The current Athens service has delivered 99.999% availability since 1998. The service is robust and well proven; in November 2006 in excess of 10 million authentications were managed by Athens.

² The UK Access Management Federation was launched by JISC in November 2006. It is a group of institutions and organisations that have signed up to an agreed set of policies for exchanging information about users and resources, based on Shibboleth technology. Shibboleth enables federated access management by triggering the authentication process within and institution and supporting the secure exchange of information to establish authorisation.



Edward Zedlewski, CTO and Deputy CEO at Eduserv, comments: “OpenAthens is the quickest, easiest and lowest cost way for education and public sector organisations to join the UK Access Management Federation, and other worldwide federations as they are launched. It also enables institutions that join Shibboleth-based federations to maintain access to Athens protected resources.

“Our pricing reflects the economies of scale we derive from delivering a shared service,” Zedlewski adds. “At the same time, our professional approach to service provision means that we provide institutions with support agreements with defined SLAs that guarantee them secure access to critical resources whenever and wherever they’re needed.”

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About Eduserv

Eduserv is a unique, self funding registered charity with the mission to realise the benefits of IT for learners, researchers and the institutions that serve them. Eduserv have an in-depth understanding of Education and is driven by the needs of the community to deliver real benefits and save significant sums of money each year. Services include:

- Access and Identity Management
- E-resource framework agreements for education - Chest
- Managed web hosting
- Content management (CMS) and web development.

Trading surpluses are “gift-aided” to the parent charity to support the work of the Eduserv Foundation in the education sector.

For more information about Eduserv please visit www.eduserv.org.uk or contact:

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