University of Edinburgh

Job Description

1. Job Details

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job title:</th>
<th>Senior Technical Officer</th>
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<tr>
<td>School/Support Department:</td>
<td>Information Services</td>
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<td>Unit:</td>
<td>EDINA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Line manager:</td>
<td>EDINA IT Team Manager</td>
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2. Job Purpose

To investigate, plan, and pilot the introduction of new technology for authentication and authorisation in the UK educational sector, under the JISC Core Middleware Programme.

3. Main Responsibilities

| % time |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| 30                      | 20                       |

1. Manage a technical team working to deliver a new national access management service for UK institutions.

2. Create a development federation for use by other Core Middleware projects to pilot use of the technology in the UK.

3. Collaborate with colleagues in EDINA to integrate the new technology with existing national data library services.

4. Plan team activity, write bids and reports, and make recommendations in support of the aims of the Core Middleware programme.

4. Planning and Organising

Develop a workplan covering the three year lifetime of the project. As JISC intends to announce a follow-up programme this will extend the planning cycle further.

Reevaluate and restate the aims and objectives every 6 months according to the emerging findings of the work.

Anticipate staffing needs well in advance, to allow sufficient time for new staff to become acquainted with the technology.

5. Problem Solving

The main problems are to dispel common misapprehensions about the new technology, to promote recommended policy, and to cope with the vagaries of perceived commercial interest.

Different solutions are required in each area.

6. Decision Making

Write draft policy documents for consideration by the policy authority, covering key aspects of the operation of the new UK access management federation.

While the job holder is responsible for making recommendations on policy and federation structure, these are complex issues and are discussed extensively with project colleagues.

Changes to the staffing complement and decisions on purchasing hardware are made in consultation with the IT Team Manager.
7. Key Contacts/Relationships
Represent EDINA in the national steering committee responsible for roll-out of the service.
Maintain relationships with Internet2/MACE staff who developed the core technology underpinning the access management federation, and with UKERNA and Becta who are responsible for key aspects of delivery of the service.
Maintain relationships with 14 projects funded under the Core Middleware Programme; all projects are members of the pilot federation created at EDINA.

8. Knowledge, Skills and Experience Needed for the Job
Knowledge of authentication and authorisation technologies and wider security engineering issues is essential.
Knowledge of digital library methodology, public key technology, directories, access technologies, digital rights management, scholarly publishing, and licensing is desirable.
Broad experience of IT and in the design and delivery of services is needed to provide the technical leadership required in pursuing lengthy and demanding project goals.

9. Dimensions
The establishment of a new national access management scheme for UK H&FE will have a significant impact on computing services, MIS, and Library personnel across the sector. It will also greatly simplify the way in which users access external resources.
The development federation created under the project will form the basis of the UK national production federation which goes live in June 2006.
The grant for the period April 2004 – March 2007 is £597K. Additional funding from June 2006 – July 2008 is under discussion. The job holder is responsible for negotiating and managing the budget.
The current complement of reporting staff is five (4.5FTE).

10. Job Context and any other relevant information
In the internal context, Shibboleth technology is certainly complex and still undergoing substantial change.
The main external factor is vested interest in the status quo; this affects all parties: Eduserv whose main product is the Athens legacy system, scholarly publishers who are being invited to replace Athens with the new technology, and institutions who face the uncertain costs of technological change.