

Service Desk staff are often the first point of call for all types of queries, but unfortunately high staff turnover and regular third-party system changes means that knowledge either walks out the door or becomes out-dated very quickly. The Council of Australian University Directors of Information Technology (CAUDIT) and the Australian Access Federation (AAF) are currently working on a framework to better support Institutions' Service Desks within the Australian Research and Higher Education sector.

The AAF is supported by CAUDIT and the Department of Industry Innovation, Science, Research and Tertiary Education (DIISRTE). The AAF's vision is to be increasingly valued as the provider of access management services for Australian Higher Education and Research. This is realised through its mission to support the collaboration and resource sharing objectives of its subscribers through provision of effective access management technologies and services.

During the Australian eResearch Organisations (AeRO) forum in February 2012, user support was voted as one of the highest priority activities for improvement. Because of the centralised role the AAF plays within this sector, the AAF received funding from DIISTRE to develop a user support framework to improve issue coordination and reduce end user confusion when providing support in a federated environment.

As we continue to move into the age where technology and research have formed eResearch, users are becoming more proficient and embracing these newly developed tools and services. The need for self-support and improved issue coordination is a must in order to enable the sector to perform their roles efficiently. The AAF are addressing these concerns by focusing on a number of strategies to form a user support framework.

The strategies being developed are intended to assist with solving some of the issues around better equipping institution's Service Desks to effectively resolve end-user support issues for users of AAF-connected services, as well as minimising the support issues referred to AAF-connected Service Providers. The strategy will also have a focus on engaging Australian eResearch support organisations and improving service event communications relating to systems availability. The framework will be specific to the AAF, however it will be designed with the intention of it being reusable for the sector.

To find out more about the AAF, visit <http://www.aaf.edu.au>

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