

Background to the Consultation

Definition of Business and Community Engagement

The definition formulated by the JISC Business and Community Engagement Advisory Group is used in this consultation:

? Business and community engagement is the strategic management, by higher and further education organisations, of relationships with external partners and clients, and of the associated knowledge exchange and workforce development services. The objective is to deliver benefits to the economy and society, resulting in a more highly skilled workforce, a more efficient, dynamic and sustainable economy and a more cohesive, knowledge-enabled society.

- The scope of engagement includes the commercial sector, the public sector (including charities and trusts), the cultural landscape and the social and civic arena. All organisations undertake business and community engagement across this scope of engagement, but the exact mix and the resulting services deployed depend on organisational strategies.

The term “higher and further education organisations” is assumed in this consultation to include Research Council establishments. For brevity the term “universities and colleges” is used to include all three types of organisation.

Use of Janet in Business and Community Engagement

Broadly, there are two areas in which a university or college might wish to use Janet in support of business and community engagement:

? to collaborate with a business or community partner also connected directly to Janet because the nature of the collaboration requires the special characteristics of Janet, rather than rely upon the partner’s Internet connection; or

- as its network supplier (i.e. rather than using a commercial ISP) when it is itself supplying ICT services to a business or community partner, for example where that partner is located on the university or college campus.

The first of these is covered by existing regulations. The Janet Acceptable Use Policy regulates how any organisation with a Janet connection may legitimately use that connection. There is no impediment in this policy to the use of Janet in pursuance of an institution’s business and community engagement activities, whether with the aim of commercial gain or otherwise. (There is however a perception that the Acceptable Use Policy forbids this – a Janet “urban myth” that this initiative should help lay to rest.) The Janet Connection Policy (see below) also allows for the connection to Janet of collaborating partners, whether in pursuit of business and community engagement or of teaching or research, where this is needed to facilitate the collaboration.

Sponsored Connection Licensing Scheme

The second category of use is the subject of this consultation. Activity in this respect is regulated by the Janet Sponsored Connection scheme. This came into operation in 1993 and allows an organisation with a Janet connection to offer use of the Janet IP service (a “sponsored connection”) to another organisation via the former’s own connection to Janet. In doing so it becomes the host for the sponsored connection (the “hosting organisation”) and assumes responsibility for the support of the use of Janet by the connecting organisation (the “sponsored organisation”).

Sponsored connections are regulated via a licensing scheme. Janet licenses the hosting organisation to pass on Janet IP services to a named sponsored organisation and there is a licence fee payable by the hosting organisation to Janet. The charge is made to cover the administration of the licence and a contribution to the Janet bandwidth resources that are presumed to be consumed by the sponsored organisation.

The hosting organisation’s responsibilities include management of and any onward charging for the sponsored connection, and any other associated service levels and regulatory responsibilities. All these are a matter between the hosting organisation and the sponsored organisation. There is no involvement by Janet in any agreement struck. The connection covers only the provision of an IP service to the sponsored organisation; other Janet services are not available. The hosting organisation must also ensure that users within the sponsored organisations abide by the Janet Acceptable Use and Security Policies.

(Janet is also reviewing the Sponsored Connection scheme more generally, with a view to discontinuing it altogether . Our sense is that it has now served the purpose for which it was intended at the time it was set up – an intervention at a time when there was an undeveloped commercial ISP market in the UK and universities were a means of providing these services more widely to their collaborators. This was, ironically, an early example of business and community engagement. This matter will be consulted upon separately, in terms primarily of implementation and timing considerations.)

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