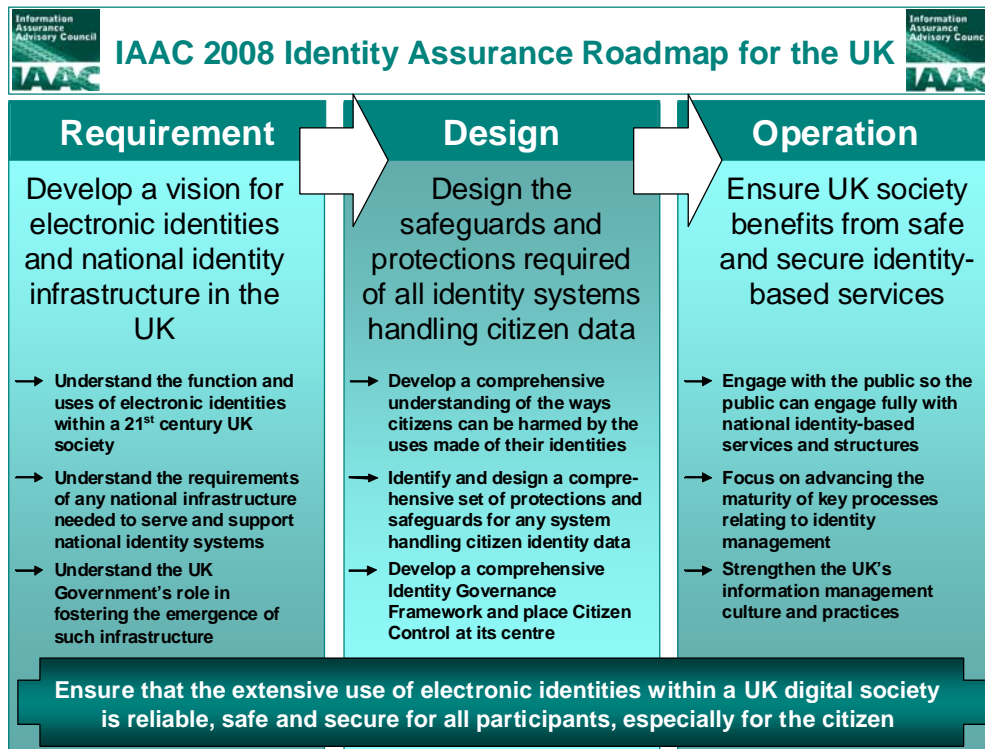


Summary of IAAC's Report on the Conclusion of its Identity Assurance Programme 2006 - 2008

IAAC's report on the conclusion of its two-year Identity Assurance Programme provides IAAC's view of the strategic risks relating to the use of electronic personal identities within the UK in the early 21st century. These risks create a number of challenges for the UK in establishing safe and secure identity systems for its citizens. The report provides IAAC's view of the situation facing the UK in 2008. It also provides many recommendations for the key actions that need to be taken within the UK in the immediate future. The main recommendations, presented in the form of a Roadmap for the UK, are shown below.



The transformation of UK society into an increasingly digital society will bring with it a number of changes to the general practices by which users are identified for on-line activities. The simple identification of the consumer by a convenient label such as an e-mail address will need to evolve to enable much higher levels of assurance that the individual to whom an electronic activity relates truly is the citizen he or she claims to be.

This requirement for trustworthy authentication is likely to lead to each citizen having a legally-recognised electronic identity, probably as one of a number of electronic identities they manage. However, the widespread use of such identities will be accompanied by significant assurance risks. These will include risks to the identities themselves and risks to the information and systems that rely on the trustworthiness of these identities. It is imperative, therefore, that the subject matter of Identity Assurance should be understood in full by all who are involved in the development of identity-based systems for citizens.

This was the context within which IAAC launched its Identity Assurance programme in 2006. IAAC's goal has been to ensure that the extensive use of electronic identities within the UK is reliable, safe and secure for all participants, especially for the citizen. Through research, workshops and policy debates, IAAC brought together insightful contributions from a large number of experts across the field. IAAC developed a deep understanding of a number of issues central to the assurance of identities, and proposed a wide range of solutions to strengthen the reliability, safety and security of national identity-based systems and infrastructures within the UK.

Having pursued this programme for two years, IAAC is now providing its conclusions regarding the strategic situation for electronic identities within the UK. IAAC takes stock of the progress that has been made in the past few years and identifies what it considers to be the most important barrier that currently stands in the way of the UK making further progress. IAAC then develops its recommendations for the key actions that it believes need to be taken forward within the UK.

Firstly, the UK public and private sectors need to work together under Government leadership to articulate a vision that describes the function and uses which will be made of electronic citizen identities in the 21st century. Such a vision would enable focus and direction to be brought to the confusion of ideas and activities which currently exists in the field. It would also enable the structures, bodies and processes needed to support the extensive use of electronic identities to be understood. The lack of a shared vision is, in IAAC's view, the most important barrier that currently stands in the way of the UK making further progress. Within the body of its report, and through the use of analogy, IAAC describes the form it believes such a vision should take and the key aspects such a vision should cover.

Secondly, the UK Government needs to drive forward work on a number of topics essential to the design of successful national infrastructure. These include:

- The development of an Identity Governance Framework (IGF) to apply to all national identity management systems (IMS). Such a framework would ensure that the interests of all participants in the UK digital society are protected appropriately and in proper balance.
- The definition of the protections, safeguards and support needed to make Citizen Control effective. Citizen Control is an essential but widely misunderstood component within the IGF. It is imperative it is properly understood and fully supported by the designers of national IMS.
- The development of effective safety nets to protect the citizen from suffering significant damage or harm when things do go wrong. In particular, there must be effective recovery and restitution arrangements covering a wide range of contingencies, large and small.

IAAC recommends that the UK Government should develop an Identity Governance Programme to co-ordinate this work and that it should, as part of that, take on board IAAC's many specific and detailed suggestions relating to the above topics, carrying them forward to completion and timely implementation.

Thirdly, IAAC believes there are a number of important areas of activity on which the UK should focus attention as the operation of national IMS expands. These include:

- Engaging with the public in an informative and educational dialogue. Citizens need to understand not only the benefits of identity-based systems but also the risks to them personally, and to understand in practical terms what they need to do to keep their electronic identities safe and protected;
- Improving the maturity of the key processes, such as enrolment and identity repair, on which the effectiveness of national IMS will rely. The current focus of R&D primarily on technologies has allowed these key processes to remain relatively under-developed.
- Developing robust information management practices across the whole of the UK. This is imperative for all government departments and other organisations that will personal data within national IMS. It is also very much needed for the citizens of the UK too.

The recommendations made within IAAC's report are either for the UK Government to address or for the UK Government to facilitate and co-ordinate. The necessary leadership has to come from the UK Government. IAAC, in support, has contributed many ideas which it believes are crucial to the UK developing safe and secure national identity-based infrastructures. These recommendations will also be of great interest to other parties active in the field, including technology providers, digital identity service providers, and subject matter experts. They are of most significance, however, to the citizen who is, in all of this, not just the principal subject at the centre of the digital society and the main recipient of its benefits, but also the main bearer of its risks.

The full report will be available freely from www.iaac.org.uk from the 5th February 2009.