Govroam – the education perspective

What is govroam?

Govroam is eduroam for a wider public sector audience. It is designed to eliminate the overheads of offering, and (for full participants) making use of, seamless guest connectivity. It makes offsite connectivity simple while enhancing the control the employer has over staff roaming behaviours, all without requiring extensive investment in new infrastructure.

Eligibility for govroam is aimed at organisations that are >50% public funded, plus the charities and commercial entities that work extensively with them. Educational organisations are excluded from full participation in govroam, as they are served by eduroam (we encourage eduroam sites to carry govroam as well at appropriate venues, and vice-versa).

For education organisations considering offering govroam as a visited-only service in support of their interactions with other public sector entities, it offers a trust fabric identical to that of eduroam. This allows you to offer appropriate guest network facilities without having to provide a support service onsite, check identity proof, or help visitors modify the configuration of their mobile devices.

In the vast majority of cases, existing wireless deployments can be reconfigured to offer govroam in less than a day, and there is zero cost in terms of subscriptions associated with offering a visitor-only govroam instance.

Key benefits of offering visited-only govroam

» Derive additional benefit from/extend life of existing WLAN infrastructure
» Meet the connectivity needs of visitors through a ‘zero-touch’ user-friendly approach
» The reassurance of a real-time “member in good standing” check whenever you grant someone guest access to your visited network (backed by the promise of that guest’s home organisation assisting in the resolution of any incident arising from that use)
» Reduce/remove the need for customer-facing visitor support, cutting costs and freeing staff resources
» Reduce/remove the need for ‘temporary account’ processes, reducing the attack surface of the network
» Reduce the overheads of connectivity provision for meetings, conferences and events
Get involved

1. Technical requirements

The mechanism is likely to be very familiar to you from eduroam participation. The bare minimum you need is a guest network capable of 802.1X pass-through, and a standards-based RADIUS server.

To offer govroam, you need to have a guest network (typically Wi-Fi, under the ‘govroam’ SSID, although wired is also possible) that is firewalled to allow standard email, web and VPN as a minimum. Access to this network should be tied to 802.1X pass-through authentication to your local RADIUS infrastructure. Your RADIUS server(s) should be set up to proxy access-requests from visitors up to Jisc’s national proxy servers. We exchange shared secrets with you to secure this transaction. The answer from the visitor’s home institution is proxy’ed back to you by Jisc, and you can use this information to permit or deny visitor access accordingly.

2. Policy requirements

As a govroam visited-only participant, we would ask you:

1. To offer the govroam SSID in relevant areas of your estate. It’s up to you whether this is just specific publically-accessible areas, or whether you do a blanket deployment. We would encourage you to use signage to indicate where govroam is accessible. Templates from Jisc are available.

2. To ensure that you have a technical contact route for govroam that could be used by the tech support function of a visitors home organisation in the course of them troubleshooting any problem that visitor might have. Typically the home organisation can solve 80%-90% of reported issues without having to get in touch with the visited site.

3. To conform to a lightweight set of terms and conditions with Jisc, aimed at ensuring you provide a good user experience to your visitors.

3. On-boarding

When your guest network is configured ready to go, we would run an on-boarding process with you via phone. This would involve exchange of a shared secret; capturing your technical contact route; inviting you to document the location(s) where you are offering govroam via our geolocation web app, so that the govroam mobile companion app can display those locations to end-users; and testing that it all works with some provided Jisc dummy credentials. When you are satisfied that all is up and working as expected, you issue Jisc with a ‘user acceptance certificate’ to indicate that the boarding process has completed successfully.

4. Ongoing support

Jisc’s govroam team (and CSIRT function if ever required) are always available to help with any issues you have arising from offering this service. Particularly demanding issues or development work you invite us to contribute to may require a separate chargeable consultancy agreement.

By Q4 2017 we plan to offer a customer portal for the service, which will both help you with troubleshooting, but also generate reports around the number and types of visitor you have facilitated by offering govroam. We hope these tools will help you continue to demonstrate the value for money of providing a govroam instance for your campus.
Financial aspects

Participation in govroam as a visited-only facility is free of charge, other than the resource you dedicate to getting it set up (which we estimate for an organisation already familiar with eduroam to be less than half a day of a suitable technical staff member’s time).

However, because you might find yourselves introducing the govroam idea to your opposite numbers in health, local government or blue light services, and because there’s a remote possibility that you might (on grounds of your eduroam experience, perhaps) offer to coordinate a local grouping of public sector bodies organising into a regional federation under yourselves as regional federation operator to join govroam, the charging model for govroam participation is presented below.

Pricing

The following table sets out the subscription charging for the govroam service at launch in July 2017 (all figures ex. VAT).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tier</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>One-off boarding charge</th>
<th>Charge per month</th>
<th>Charge per year (5% discount, paid in advance)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual organisation (organisation tier)</td>
<td>A category for exceptional cases where it is inappropriate for an organisation to join a regional federation.</td>
<td>£1,000</td>
<td>£300</td>
<td>£3,420</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional federation (federation tier)</td>
<td>A group of organisations under a single regional federation operator (RFO); A federation may consist of between 2 to 25 organisations. Jisc deals directly with the RFO.</td>
<td>£3,000</td>
<td>£700</td>
<td>£7,980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘super’ regional federation (superfederation tier)</td>
<td>A group of organisations under a single RFO; may consist of 26+ organisations</td>
<td>£5,000</td>
<td>£3,000</td>
<td>£34,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visited-only organisation (e.g. education org)</td>
<td>We encourage education venues that offer eduroam to offer govroam as well; similarly govroam sites are encouraged to offer eduroam.</td>
<td>Free</td>
<td>Free</td>
<td>Free</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Special conditions apply if a regional federation grows or shrink beyond the tariff tier they start in, which are documented in the full pricing document.

If you find yourself discussing costs with an eligible participant, please let them know that they can join govroam either by approaching Jisc directly, or via the G-Cloud public procurement route. The latter option may be important to them as it offers a transparent government approved procurement route.

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Next steps

If you want to learn more, or if you are ready to start working with us towards technical boarding, please get in touch via mailto:govroam@jisc.ac.uk

If you would like to read more background to the service, you might wish to visit the G-Cloud website and consult our offer documentation there:

http://ji.sc/G-Cloud-digitalmarketplace

However, note that this documentation is aimed primarily at full participants, not visited-only sites.