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HIFIS: Sync&Share Federation for Helmholtz

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While HIFIS[1] has released its initial Helmholtz Cloud Service Portfolio[2] in October 2020, there has also been specific development in terms of Sync&Share within the Helmholtz Association. The Helmholtz center's Sync&Share administrators are meeting under the umbrella of HIFIS and are planning possible implementations of a Helmholtz-wide Sync&Share federation, which will be provided as a service within the Helmholtz Cloud.

Out of 19 Helmholtz centers with over 42.000 employees, there are currently nine centers operating their own Sync&Share instance. Four of those are currently planning to open their instances for other Helmholtz users via the Helmholtz Cloud. Our goal will be to equally distribute the majority of the remaining center's users on the providing instances. A federation of all Helmholtz based Sync&Share instances is also planned. Both of these goals bring multiple challenges, which lie ahead of us. Each has its own set of possible solutions.

We already observe a big trend to groups of members from multiple centers working in Sync&Share group folders and calendars. This brings up the question: How can we federate in such a way that users reside on only one instance, while collaborating with their group members on other instances, using group folders, calendars and additional extensions in the future?

Another big issue is GDPR compliance, especially since all 19 Helmholtz centers are independent legal entities. Each having their own Data Protection Officer as well as employee representatives. Our approach is based on a Helmholtz-wide cooperation contract, including a specific set of Helmholtz AAI Policies[3], based on international guidelines and templates (e.g., WISE, AARC).

[1] HIFIS Website: <https://hifis.net>

[2] Helmholtz Cloud - Initial Service Portfolio: <https://hifis.net/news/2020/10/13/initial-service-portfolio>

[3] Helmholtz AAI Policies: <https://hifis.net/policies>

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