Alternative IdPs Working Group Charter

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Name

Alternative IdPs Working Group

Sponsor

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Group Leader (Chair)

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Mission/Goals

InCommon has two overlapping but also potentially conflicting goals:

1. Increase the number of participating campuses that operate an IdP service. A primary tactic here is to "make it easier."
2. Increase the flow of attributes between IdPs and SPs. To date, strategies have focused on convincing campuses to release a standard set of attributes (including PII) to all InCommon SPs and/or to support the Research & Scholarship Category.

The mission of the Alternative IdPs Working Group is to support both of those goals and to evaluate alternative approaches a campus could adopt for instantiating a SAML IdP, joining the InCommon Federation, and successfully interoperating with a variety of SPs. Current InCommon members have typically installed and operated SAML IdP software on-premise. It is expected that potential members, the so-called "long tail" of higher ed institutions, may not have the same local staff resources and expertise, and may have to resort to a variety of other techniques (including outsourcing).

Membership

Membership in the Working Group is open to all interested parties. Members join the Working Group by subscribing to the mailing list, participating in the phone calls, and otherwise actively engaging in the work of the group. It is particularly important that the work group include schools, both large and small, that are perceiving hurdles to federating their institution. The goal is to make the process easier and that will require broad participation.

The chair of the Working Group is appointed by the InCommon TAC and is responsible for keeping the TAC informed regarding Working Group status.

Deliverables

1. Identify and evaluate a range of viable alternatives to a locally installed SAML IdP for campuses that desire an IdP that interoperates successfully within InCommon. The set of alternatives should include AD FS, various outsourcing and cloud-based options, and the use of gateways with and without social providers. Determine the relevancy of various options commonly deployed in Europe (e.g., hub and spoke models that support user consent).
2. Deliver to the TAC a report describing the architecture, technologies, and functionality of various approaches. List the advantages and disadvantages of each of the identified approaches, including potential "enriching" functionality (e.g., support for MFA, ECP, entity categories, assurance, and user consent) and the effort required beyond the IdP itself. The intent is to make the report available to Steering, and ultimately to the general community. The body of the report should be useful to campus CIOs and Technical Directors. Technical details, if helpful, should be included in an appendix.

Expected End Date

The subcommittee is expected to complete all deliverables and either close or recharter by October 31, 2014.

Required Resources

- wiki space
- google doc space ?
- phone line for conference calls
- incommon.org group email list

Teleconferences

Reference Material