



beyond expectations

The Case For InCommon – Not Just for the Big Guys



Indiana University of Pennsylvania

Session Goal

To provide attendees with a better understanding of the challenges encountered by IUP that led to federated identity management exploration and the eventual decision to join InCommon, along with an explanation of how the membership helps to solve those challenges.

Topics of Discussion

- Indiana University of Pennsylvania Profile
- “What Problem were we trying to solve?”
- Why we chose Shibboleth
- InCommon’s value-added
- Next Steps
- Q & A

About IUP

- 15,100 students, 1,800 employees
- Member, Pa. State Sys. Higher Ed. (PASSHE)
- Doctoral, Research Intensive Classification
- Five campuses/centers
- Main campus located in Indiana, Pa.
- Three 501(c)3 affiliates

Taking A Look Around...



IUP Peer Institution Examples

- Bowling Green
- University of Toledo
- Idaho State
- Indiana State
- University of Maryland at Baltimore County
- Louisiana Tech

IUP Computing Infrastructure

- 17,000 Network jacks
- 800 Wireless access points
- 322TB raw storage
- 20,000 active accounts
- 5,700-sq. foot Tier 2 computer room
- 70 IT employees

What IUP Is Not!

- Hoosiers (Crimson Hawks)
- A member of the Big Ten (PSAC)
- West of Ohio (East)
- A national leader in Higher Ed. IT (just your standard mid-sized, public)

Changing User Account Landscape

The number, variety and location of applications requiring university authentication credentials being accessed by the members of the university community were expanding rapidly – SaaS, social networking, PASSHE consortium, traditional on campus, etc.

Problem Statement

IUP did not have a seamless authentication method that allowed users access to their various applications without IT having to create an individual account synchronization strategy for each new application.

Symptoms of the Problem

- User dissatisfaction
 - Too many usernames and passwords with different password rules
- Increased help desk calls for IT
 - Account management knowledge required for a growing number of applications
- Too much time spent on synchronization
 - Concern passing account info. over Internet
 - Timing of synchronization inconsistent

Shibboleth

- R&D quickly revealed Shibboleth could solve much of the purely technical part of the problem
 - Single Sign-on benefits with single point of account activation/inactivation
 - No need to send credentials over the Internet
 - No cost, almost immediate deployment

Case Study: Library Databases

- Numerous SaaS-based library electronic databases delivered via PASSHE consortium
 - IP-based authentication becoming obsolete
 - Use Shibboleth to validate user credentials and send affirmation to database
 - No synching required
 - Single Sign-on benefit preserved

“Ready The Pipes”

- Campus Technology Magazine –
March 1, 2010 (by Katherine Grayson)

“Our UNC vision is to interoperate among our 16 constituent schools and our third-party providers, government applications, and library resources. And it all boils down to having Shibboleth SAML2.”

-Steven Hopper, North Carolina System Director of
Online Services

“Ready The Pipes” (continued)

“For schools considering a federated identity management initiative, the use of federations such as InCommon to provide services has proven to be very beneficial.”

- Brendan Bellina, University of Southern California
Identity Services Architect

The Case for InCommon

- InCommon
 - Included many of our vendors (Microsoft, Desire2Learn, EBSCO, Educause, National Student Clearinghouse, OCLC, Qualtrics, Turnitin, etc.)
 - Included many prominent schools (Ivy League, Big Ten, etc.) plus many who ‘looked like IUP’
 - Solved many trust and standardization issues with formal federation ‘rules of engagement’

InCommon (continued)

- InCommon is all about collaboration within a framework that facilitates partnership
- Solved the trust concern
 - All parties agree to standards of account management that all understand, cutting through ‘one off’ negotiations and/or lowering of standards just to accommodate one vendor’s quirks

InCommon (continued)

- The pricing structure was simple and extremely reasonable
- The risk was even lower because we had already committed to SAML/Shibboleth
- It provided a low cost way for IUP to stand beside major universities and vendors, leveraging their investments in building and enhancing InCommon

InCommon Case Study: Educause

- Concern about synchronizing IUP Educause member accounts
 - By adopting InCommon, IUP credentials are now used – inactivating accounts automatically when appropriate while providing single sign-on benefit to the user
 - Eliminated manual updates to active user lists

Big Results

- About 15 applications are now SAML/InCommon-centric
 - Mix of SaaS and locally hosted
- Deployed business intelligence and learning management system without new usernames
- 57% decline in password reset requests
- Better access to SaaS-based library resources

Next Steps

- Add more applications
- Get PASSHE Consortium on-board
- Look for opportunities within Kinber
- Get the word out to current vendors
- Integrate SAML/InCommon into vendor evaluations for future applications
- Get active with InCommon community



Questions?

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