

INTERNET2

WHAT'S WRONG WITH MY SHIBBOLETH IDENTITY PROVIDER? – FOR DISCUSSION

For the Community of Trust and Identity in Education and Research Investors

InCommon



OVERVIEW

Roughly 90% of the applications that depend on the InCommon Federation use Shibboleth software to connect. Shibboleth's main components are an Identity Provider (IdP), which serves trustworthy identity data as part of login sessions; and a Service Provider (SP), which protects access to web applications using the identity data delivered to them via the IdP.

Shibboleth Identity Provider 2.x is now end-of-life software, and will become fully unsupported at the end of July, 2016. As of mid-May 2016, roughly three quarters (~75%) of InCommon's participants deploying this old version of the IdP have not yet upgraded to the new, supported version, IdP 3.x. Starting in August of this year, no further updates to the old version of Shibboleth IdP, not even for security fixes, will be provided by the Shibboleth Consortium.

It is critical that the 75% of IdP deployers who have not yet upgraded do so as soon as possible. More details are provided below.

Background

Shibboleth is, fundamentally, security software. As we've seen in recent years, security software such as OpenSSL is regularly attacked and weak points are found. Not even the best security software can withstand sustained attack over time without needing to release security fixes. As such, when Shibboleth IdP Version 2.x is no longer supported, those installations which have not upgraded are immediately subject to a higher risk of critical security issues that will be unresolvable. When that happens, such IdPv2 deployments will cause an enormous risk to the security of other federation participants which rely on them for secure authentication. Because this software is responsible for the secure login of so many federation users, it's critical that it is kept up-to-date and supported.

Next Steps

The Shibboleth IdPv3 has been redesigned from the ground up to have more maintainable code, better extensibility options, more flexibility and easier configuration. There are specific, carefully planned steps that must be considered and coordinated (more info available here: <https://spaces.internet2.edu/x/GYtHBQ>). That's why it's important that you get started on this critical upgrade now.

IdP administrators should familiarize themselves with the documentation at:
<https://spaces.internet2.edu/x/GYtHBQ> and:
<https://wiki.shibboleth.net/confluence/display/IDP30/UpgradingFromV2>