InCommon Adds 200th Organizational Participant

January 26, 2010 - Augsburg College in Minneapolis has become the 200th participant in the InCommon Federation. Participating organizations include colleges and universities, research labs, agencies of the U.S. government, and private companies that offer web-based resources and services.

When institutions join InCommon, their faculty, researchers, students, and staff can use their organizational IDs and passwords to access on-campus and off-campus services, rather than maintaining multiple passwords and usernames. As a result, people use the same credentials to access such third-party services as library databases, multimedia content, research information and services provided by U.S. government agencies, and career center systems and tools.

"We welcome this continued growth of InCommon," said Kevin Morooney, chief information officer and vice provost for information technology at Pennsylvania State University and chair of the InCommon Steering Committee. "Augsburg is an excellent example of the direction of InCommon's recent growth, as we see increased interest from colleges and universities of all sizes."

InCommon allows universities to provide access to a wide range of off-campus resources while still protecting the security and privacy of their students, faculty, and staff.

The federation includes two types of members - identity providers and service providers. The identity providers - like colleges, universities, and research agencies - already supply user IDs and passwords to their students, faculty and staff to allow them to access campus resources like email. Service providers deliver some type of online resource, such as a library database or a course management system.

When these organizations join InCommon, they agree on a set of shared policies, processes, and technology standards. One of those standards is a process for single sign-on, so one set of credentials provides access to resources from any service provider, without the need for another user ID or password.

This greatly streamlines collaboration among multiple organizations because federation members agree on these policies and processes once, rather than each time they sign a contract with a new partner. It also improves security and privacy, as the identity provider releases only the information needed for the service provider to make an access decision. Many times, this does not require the release of even an individual's name or other personally identifiable information.

InCommon is one of the organizations recognized with the 2009 EDUCAUSE Catalyst Award, honoring innovations that provide groundbreaking solutions to major information technology challenges in higher education.

For more information on InCommon and a full list of participants, visit: http://www.incommon.org