COmanage-Dev Call 25-July-2008

COmanage Call, 25-July-2008

Attending

Heather Flanagan, Stanford (chair)
Bruce Vincent, Stanford
Michael R. Gettes, MIT
George Brett, Internet2
Ken Klingenstein, Internet2
Jim Leous, PSU
Scotty Logan, Stanford
Dave Donnelly, Stanford
Tom Barton, U. Chicago
Mike LaHaye, Internet2
Ann West, Internet2/Educause
Emily Eisbruch (scribe)
Steve Olshansky, Internet2

New Action Items

[AI] (Scotty) will develop a COmanage demo video by August 8.

[AI] (Digant and Scotty) will develop documentation for the wiki on the
steps for integrating items into the COmanage environment.

Discussion

Status of COmanage

Scotty reported that he is fixing a few bugs in COmanage prior to the upcoming beta release.

The plan is to include Confluence enterprise wiki software and supply the needed configuration on top of it for COmanage in order to include it as part of the virtual machine. The Confluence software is made available on a trial basis for 30 days. After the 30 days, COmanage users would need to obtain a Confluence license if they wish to continue using it. Renee is looking into legal details related to including Confluence with COmanage.

Digant will look at Sympa. There is already a Sympa package for Debian, and Digant will tweak it to work in the COmanage environment.

Requests for other software to be included in the COmanage release include:
- JIRA
- Subversion
- Fresco content management system
- Foodle
- Videoconferencing
- DimDim
- perfSONAR
- Fedora digital repository

Selecting Software and the Integration Process

What is the process for determining which software should be included with COmanage?

Scotty: Packages already in the Debian distribution are easy targets to add to COmanage. It's easy to take a small package and tweak it to understand where the LDAP server is and that the web server is trusted for authentication.
The plan is to give people a basic COmanage environment with wiki software, a mailing list manager (MLM), Grouper, Signet, and LDAP hooks for the underlying datastore. Subsequently the project would provide other packages with instructions about how deployers could include the desired packages to their repository and make those services available to users.

Q: At what point do we draw the line and ask users to do the work of integrating an application into COmanage versus doing the integration ourselves?

A: Scotty: Well-behaved applications generally understand (or can be adapted to utilize) LDAP and SAML assertions and deployers can integrate those on their own. Non-well-behaved applications are harder to integrate.
Foodle, for example, would be easy to integrate, but it sits on an SP using SimpleSAMLphp. Thus Foodle is harder to integrate into COmanage than other tools that already know how to trust the web server.

Ken noted that Foodle (which is a federated Doodle - used for scheduling) was mentioned in a TERENA meeting as a top killer application in Scandinavia, especially Norway.

TomB: should we be more accommodating in our definition of a well-behaved application? Can we add integrative technologies into COmanage? What about making COmanage able to swap out LDAP for another underlying datastore? What about being able to use an IdP in addition to LDAP?

Scotty: yes, adding integrative technology and making it possible to swap out LDAP are both parts of the plan.

Some organizations will have some of the COmanage applications deployed already.

Will there be support for integration of existing applications into COmanage?

Scotty: Yes, we can open up the LDAP ports. And we can include an IdP also to help with integration.

One support approach is to use the COmanage users mailing list where users can share information and experiences about integrating a particular application into COmanage.

Update from Ken

Ken commented that "domesticating" applications is a progressive activity. Applications can begin with externalizing identity, then move on to externalizing groups. Eventually, applications must know how to make calls out to get salient information.

Ken reported that the graphic designer who created the Grouper and Signet logos has been engaged to create a COmanage logo. She will start next week. She might ask this group for feedback.

Ken reported that there is progress on talking with the Confluence people. As long as Scotty can handle Confluence from the packaging side, it should be OK.

Ken: The Internet2 strategic plan calls for Middleware to be nurtured and is very specific about collaboration technologies being really essential.

Plan for Moving Forward and Creating a Video

Scotty will try to get the VMware image posted in the next week so people can download it.
Scotty will also supply documentation for those who do not already have a Debian box on how to do a barebones Debian install. This will involve using an install starter package and the virtual machine won't be needed.

When the virtual machine is ready, Scotty will create a video of how to step through setting it up. MichaelG recommends 1) Snapz Pro for making the video, and 2) doing several practice dry runs before recording.

[AI] (Scotty) will develop a COmanage demo video by August 8.

Website and Wiki

SteveO noted that Digant did great work getting the COmanage website into shape.
http://middleware.internet2.edu/co/

The plan is to open the COmanage wiki in about a week. Everyone on the mailing list is encouraged to contribute. https://spaces.at.internet2.edu/display/COmanage/Home

[AI] (Digant and Scotty) will develop documentation for the wiki on the steps for integrating items into the COmanage environment.

Logistics

The group will keep this regular slot for the COmanage call, 1:30 pm (ET) every other Friday.

Next call: Friday, 8-Aug-08 at 1:30 pm EDT.