Charter for the Federation Proxies Working Group

(DRAFT - 2023-08-08)

Problem Statement

A "federation proxy" is a type of Service Provider that bridges federated user access to a group of services. Federation proxies extend the reach of federated access, especially important for research cyber infrastructures, thereby adding value to federations like InCommon. But a federation proxy might also undermine its value when used more as a boon to the provider's bottom line than to enable academic pursuits.

As described in "Formalizing the Role of Federation Proxies within the InCommon Federation," the current federation trust model assumes direct, secure communication between an IdP and an SP. An FP's purpose is to mediate; it translates, transforms, and/or enhances the assertions forwarded from IdPs to mediated SPs. Therefore, there cannot be direct communication between IdPs and mediated SPs. For this reason, agreements and guidelines should be enhanced or established for these mediators. These should include the following:

1. protection of the federation's values, its Participants, and the federation itself,
2. operation of the FP with sufficient due care (confidentiality, integrity, availability, and privacy),
3. appropriate use of identity information,
4. responsibilities for incident response and other operational issues
5. transparency of the specific functions performed as part of its mediation of assertions (as appropriate),
6. transparency of existence of the FP's mediated SPs (as appropriate), and
7. transparency of the organization(s) responsible for administering the proxy and its mediated SPs.

Stakeholders/Influencers/Influences

1. R&E FP operators
2. Government research agencies
3. Commercial FP operators (current and potential)
4. InCommon management, staff, and counsel
5. International federation partners

Charter

1. Identify InCommon policy, guidelines, *etc*. that are affected by the policy recommendation in "Formalizing the Role of Federation Proxies within the InCommon Federation."
2. Propose specific text changes to those documents.
3. Other proposed policy changes are out of scope, but note any that the group feels are warranted.
4. The group should complete its work by June 30, 2024.

Membership

The working group is open to all interested parties. There will be targeted outreach to stakeholders and influencers.

Work Products

A final report containing the results of the activities mentioned in Charter, above.