Attributes for Collaboration and Federation Working Group Home

Overview

The Attributes for Collaboration and Federation working group completed its work in August 2018.

The community consultation is here

The final report is here: http://doi.org/10.26869/TI.101.1

Key recommendations:

- Make R&S attribute support a requirement in Baseline Expectations
- InCommon should build a bigger tent
- Add more researchers to Internet2 and InCommon governance bodies
- Engage grant funding agencies
- Operate an InCommon IdP as a service
- Improve support for Service Providers
- Improve R&S documentation for IdPs and SPs
- Rethink InCommon's R&S outreach efforts
- Remove the legacy "InCommon-only" R&S Category

Working Group Goals and Charter

The Attributes for Collaboration and Federation Working Group will have participants from the key stakeholder groups that need/use, "own" and protect common attributes used in federated access exchanges. The working group will explore reasons default attribute release policies (ARPs) are not in place at most campuses, propose a default list of attributes for InCommon IdP operators, develop and execute a roadmap for adoption of Research and Scholarship Service Category as well as a default attribute release policy (ARP), and review and enhance online content for identity provider administrators so they have a clear set of steps to follow to implement the desired approach.

Background

The InCommon Federation was founded on a principle of privacy protection (based on local authentication and limited attribute release to SPs) with an expectation that campuses would actively manage their Attribute Release Policies and adopt attribute release "bundles", based on the needs of their respective campus communities. However, this approach, influenced by a conservative interpretation of privacy regulations such as FERPA, and a common assumption that the primary driver for attribute release is enterprise contracts, has resulted in very restrictive Attribute Release Policies on campuses.

The Research & Scholarship (R&S) Category, was created as a scalable way for campus IdPs to easily create a global attribute release policy targeting SPs that have been validated as supporting Research & Scholarship. The underlying principle is that for people accessing these SPs, associating their name with their work is more important than remaining anonymous.

Unfortunately R&S, while a great idea, is an opt-in model and has not been adopted by enough institutions to make federation "work" for research organizations. A joint InCommon Steering, InCommon Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and InCommon Assurance Advisory Committee (AAC) priority for 2017 and the first 6 months of 2018, is to "flip the bit" of R&S, i.e., make it an opt-out model that is a social expectation and the technical default (as much as possible), and dramatically increase the adoption across current higher ed and research identity providers. Otherwise, frustrated research organizations may seek alternatives to the InCommon federation.

In addition, many non-R&S SPs only require a unique identifier or alternatively an email address to allow access to services. These attributes (including in some cases a user's name and campus affiliation) are usually considered "directory information" under FERPA guidelines, and unless a student specifically requests to block release of that information, could be released by default to ALL SPs.

The InCommon Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), InCommon Steering, and the InCommon Assurance Advisory Committee (AAC) (*note the AAC was renamed to the CTAB in 2018*) are committed to re-addressing this issue of basic attributes needed for federation, and working with InCommon participants and their campus stakeholders to ensure attribute release meets the needs of the community.

Charter

Read the Working Group Charter

Meeting Dates and Times

Calls have concluded

Meeting Minutes

Public minutes are here

Working Group Member Roles

1. Brad Christ, Eastern Washington University, representing CIOs **(chair)**
2. Klara Jelinkova, Rice University, representing CIOs
3. Ted Hanss, University of Michigan, representing InCommon Steering (WG Sponsor)
4. Mark Scheible, MCNC, representing InCommon TAC (WG Sponsor)
5. Brett Bieber, University of Nebraska representing InCommon CTAB (WG Sponsor)
6. Kevin Morooney, VP Trust and Identity Programs representing Internet2
7. Tom Barton, University of Chicago and Internet2, SME

Membership

This will initially be an **invitation-only membership** working group in order to ensure we have the right stakeholders contributing their ideas and expertise. However, webinar(s), email lists, and the WG wiki will be used to communicate with the community. **(See member roles in the right sidebar.)**

Blogs of Interest

Attributes Working Group Provides Wide Ranging Recommendations, June 2018, by Brad Christ

Attributes Working Group Focuses on Research & Scholarship, April 2018, by Brad Christ

Help Your PIs: Put InCommon's Research-Enabling Tools in Your Campus CI Plan, Nov 30, 2018, by Thomas Barton

See Also

Attributes for Collaboration and Federation Working Group Minutes (public)

Trust and Identity Working Groups Home

Guidelines for Trust and Identity Working Group Chairs and Flywheels