Grouper History

This page shares a bit of Grouper Project history.

Building Grouper has been and continues to be a broad and impressive community effort.

Thanks to everyone who has helped build Grouper and the Grouper community.

Grouper History from Ken Klingenstein (as of 2019)

A group management tool was part of the original thinking of RL Bob Morgan, University of Washington, and others for the Internet2 Middleware Initiative. I recall group management being mentioned in the Fall 1999 Internet2 meeting in Seattle.

The early interest in groups was driven by two thoughts – when you have a bunch of good identities, the first thing you want to do is put them into groups, and groups were thought to be (and still are) the simple way to do role-based access control. That vision was temporarily parked as we began the federated identity development, which led to the InCommon Federation.

Tom Barton, the primary architect and genius behind Grouper, entered the Internet2 sphere as an early adopter at University of Memphis, and began work on Grouper. This would date the start of Grouper to the first NMI grant, circa fall 2000. For more on NMI, see http://www.nmi-edit.org/

Grouper Project Leadership

- Tom Barton's leadership of Grouper continued as he moved from University of Memphis to University of Chicago.
- Leadership of Grouper passed to Chris Hyzer, University of Pennsylvania in 2015.

Early Grouper Releases

Grouper Version 0.5 was released around December 2004 as part of NSF Middleware Initiative's 6th release of components (ppt)

The first message to the grouper-users list was to announce the release of version 0.5:

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https://lists.internet2.edu/sympa/arc/grouper-users/2004-12/msg00000.html


    From: Tom Barton <>
    To: grouper-users, grouper-dev
    Subject: 2 Grouper news items
    Date: Fri, 10 Dec 2004 13:37:23 -0600

1. The first release of Grouper, v0.5, has been finalized for inclusion in the NSF Middleware Initiative's
Release 6, to be announced early next week. A Grouper website has been created and linked on the MACE-Dir-
Groups website. The Grouper website has the grouper-0.5 source tarball, related documentation, and links to the
project bugzilla and anoncvs web access to the software.

MACE-Dir-Groups website:
http://middleware.internet2.edu/dir/groups/

Grouper website:
http://middleware.internet2.edu/dir/groups/grouper/

2. Gary Brown of the University of Bristol has made a demo of the prototype Grouper UI available for working
group members to play with and comment on. Try it at
http://portal.bris.ac.uk/GroupsManager/

Read about its underpinnings, limitations, and specifically solicited feedback at
http://portal.bris.ac.uk/GroupsManager/doc/Readme.html

Tom
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Version 0.6 (Sep 2005) was the second public release, and the first to include a UI.

Miscellaneous Milestones

July 17, 2008: Last release 1.3.0 of Signet (a similar privilege management system that shared subject API code with Grouper)

2008-2009: UPenn contributed significant enhancements (ppt) leading up to version 1.4:

- ws + samples
- ws client
- loader
- sso
- require group membership for UI access
- improve ui and help for 1.2 (Spring 2008)
- add tooltips for 1.4 (Jan 2009)

January 2010

- Project imported from cvs into svn per Git logs
- https://spaces.at.internet2.edu/display/Grouper/Grouper+Call+6-Jan-2010
- http://anonsvn.internet2.edu/svn/i2mi/ (server not found)

July 17, 2014

- Move from Subversion to Git
- https://spaces.at.internet2.edu/display/Grouper/Grouper+Call+16-July-2014

2017

- TIER Grouper Deployment Guide (PDF)

2019

- Grouper Deployment Guide updated and moved to Wiki format
- Grouper Visualization released

2020

- Grouper v2.5 released, requiring containers for deploying Grouper. Simpler deployment.

2023

- Grouper adopted semantic versioning

Trivia

The demo subject LDAP database "KITN" (which still exists in Grouper's subject/testDB/ldap directory) refers to the fictitious "Kern Institute of Technology, Northam", a mock database originally created for the Signet project. The name was originally the "Kansas Institute of Technology Nashville" which appears in some earlier presentations.

Foundational Documents

For foundational Grouper documents see this wiki

A few Grouper Team and Community photos

2013 at Identity Week in Burlingame, CA

2014 at Internet2 Technology Exchange in Indianapolis

2015 at Internet2 Technology Exchange in Cleveland

2017 Grouper session at Internet2 Technology Exchange in San Francisco

2017 Grouper BOF at Internet2 Technology Exchange in San Francisco

2019 Grouper BOF at Internet2 Technology Exchange in New Orleans