

glossary-service-provider

A **Service Provider** (abbreviated **SP**) is a network-accessible service that relies on [Identity Assertions](#) for the purpose of making access decisions and/or personalizing the user's experience.[1]

In practice, the term **service provider** is often used as an abbreviation to describe a number of related concepts or entities involved in the federated identity management environment found in research and education federations such as the InCommon Federation:

Service Provider in SAML

A **SAML Service provider** is a system entity that receives and accepts authentication assertions in conjunction with a [single sign-on](#) (SSO) profile of the [Security Assertion Markup Language](#) (SAML).[2]

Service Provider in Shibboleth

A **Shibboleth Service provider** is one of the products developed and maintained by the [Shibboleth Consortium](#).[3] It performs the function of a SAML service provider and is widely adopted in research and education community in the United States and globally.

Service Provider in the InCommon Federation

When used in the context of the InCommon Federation, an **Service provider** specifically refers to a SAML service provider registered by an InCommon participant and published in the InCommon metadata.

Service Provider as an Organization

A **service provider operator** (frequently abbreviated service provider or SP) is an organization that operates a service provider in a federated single sign-on environment.

Within InCommon, an InCommon Participant that primarily participates as a service provider operator is frequently referred to as an **service provider** in casual conversation.

References

1. [Service Provider](#) from the Glossary in Trusted Relationships for Access Management: The InCommon Model
2. [Service provider \(SAML\)](#) from Wikipedia.
3. [Service provider](#) from Shibboleth Consortium.