

Internet2 Role With the Shibboleth Consortium

I'm writing this note to Internet2's InCommon community with an update about the Shibboleth Consortium and our role.

As you may know, the Shibboleth project began under the Internet2 Middleware Initiative in 1999, with subsequent significant support from the National Science Foundation. Later that year, the project connected with the work of the OASIS SAML Working Group, participating in SAML from its initiation.

As a founding member of this effort, Internet2 has been and remains firmly committed to the ongoing development and sustenance of Shibboleth as a critical software component for many campus identity management systems. For 2012, Internet2 provided staff at the same level that we always have in previous years. Moving forward, we expect to continue our financial, technical and philosophical leadership role in this important project.

Importantly, as part of this leadership role we began a process nearly three years ago to help expand the global support and adoption for Shibboleth by creating a newly formed organization, the Shibboleth Consortium. Internet2, JISC (the operator of the UK Access Management Federation for Education and Research) and SWITCH (the operator of SWITCHaai, the Swiss Research and Education federation) were the founding members of the consortium and remain the sustaining members today, providing the bulk of the funding for the Shibboleth Consortium.

The global partnership has worked to raise visibility of the project's efforts. While there have been some bumps along the way and transitions in individual participants at the three founding organizations, all remain committed to the project's objectives of furthering the use of Shibboleth within the higher education community and expanding the adoption and support within the commercial sector.

Consortium members have taken additional steps recently to strengthen the governance, funding, and project plan for the Shibboleth efforts and are releasing an updated charter this month. The consortium board has representatives from Internet2, JISC, SWITCH, and the development community that will chart the course for the project in the coming year. I am now serving as Internet2's board representative and believe this global partnership in the middleware space is critical to future seamless adoption of cloud services within education.

The consortium board is hard at work on a revised business plan, which will include a reviewed and approved project plan, a six-quarter roadmap, an updated governance model, and a clear statement of the needed resources to support future development of the Shibboleth system in a sustainable manner.

Here in the United States, I believe the best way for campuses to participate in the Shibboleth Consortium is through InCommon. Toward that end, we will be developing a process by which InCommon participating campuses can help influence the Shibboleth development plan. As we've found with the InCommon Certificate Service, and with many of the Internet2 NET+ Services, coming together as a community and aggregating our input seems to be the best way to make our collective voices heard.

I look forward to working with you in assuring the continued development and success of Shibboleth. If you have questions about the Shibboleth Consortium, please contact me at swaggener@internet2.edu

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