

# Presenting InCommon to SP CIO (DRAFT)

## Improve Your Business with InCommon

*How a federation will help you focus, make you more efficient, and improve your bottom line.*

You have a business to run. So you may be interested in an arrangement that allows you to:

- easily add new clients
- reduce your cost of doing business
- improve efficiency, allowing staff members to focus on your core business
- streamline your workflow

Additional clients. Time and money saved. A focus on your core business and service. What is this magic bullet?

A federation.

Because you provide resources and services online, you probably spend a significant amount of time coordinating account access for users at universities, research labs or government agencies. Maintaining these identity management systems for multiple clients may mean using a variety of methods for updating the user information database - weekly, daily or even several times a day.

Because you store your clients' user information, you spend time and energy ensuring the data is protected. One data spill could mean the loss of a valued customer. You must also understand and comply with many different policies and procedures at your various institutional customers.

There is an easier way to do business.

## How a Federation Helps

In a federation, organizations establish mutual practices and policies about the exchange of information. By agreeing with federation trust policies, you avoid negotiating a long series of bilateral agreements with each partner. A federation provides single sign-on convenience and allows for all identity data to remain with the university. Online resource providers no longer maintain identity databases, but draw on the information maintained by the university or other agency, in real time.

In a nutshell, a user signs on at his or her institution, the institution passes along attributes affirming that this person has the right to access a resource, and the authentication and authorization is finished.

## Making it Happen with InCommon

InCommon is a federation of universities, research labs, government agencies and online service providers in research and education. InCommon establishes the trust relationship among organizations through common policies and procedures. Use of a common authentication and authorization software provides single sign-on convenience and allows the home institution to make access decisions without necessarily releasing a user's identity.

The institution continues to manage its user database and passes along a common set of attributes to describe users. Best of all, once an institution is a participating member, setting up a new relationship can take as little as a few minutes.

## The Benefits of InCommon and Single Sign-on

**InCommon Saves Time:** When you join the federation and set up the trust fabric (policies and procedures), you need not do so again. Affiliating with a new partner can take just a few minutes.

Your staff can focus on establishing collaborative relationships and improving your service offerings, rather than worrying about authentication and account provisioning. InCommon also serves as a source for identifying potential new clients.

**InCommon Saves Money:** You will reduce or eliminate account management overhead by removing the need to maintain a database for each client. When you join InCommon, it's one and done - you set up the authentication framework just once, removing the need for many bilateral agreements. InCommon has proven to dramatically reduce helpdesk overhead by eliminating the need for multiple passwords that users juggle and forget.

**InCommon Means User Convenience and Satisfaction:** Single sign-on convenience - with university-assigned credentials as the cornerstone - eliminates the need for multiple IDs and passwords. When you fine-tune the exchange of attributes with an institution, you can also provide personalized web content for users.

**InCommon Means Security:** Your company no longer needs to set up databases and provision user accounts. The university controls user privacy and the release of information. The software used for authentication and authorization makes access decisions based on attributes that define a user's status. This ensures the user is authorized to access the resource, respecting your copyrights and access agreements. Data spills become less and less common.

**Available Resources:** InCommon participants include universities, government agencies, and companies that provide online services and resources. See a complete list at [www.incommonfederation.org](http://www.incommonfederation.org).

**Why Not Join InCommon?** With an upfront investment of resources - both time and funds - you can enhance services to your customers, eliminate account provisioning responsibilities, and make it a snap to add additional clients to your customer base.

## Contact InCommon

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