

LOOKING FOR THE HOLY GRAIL OF IDENTITY MANAGEMENT

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Managing digital identities is a complex task which every administrator of a large computing environment has to solve. Identity Management has recently become a frequently used buzzword. It would almost seem that a new splendid solution has appeared to fill in this apparently empty area. Reality may be a bit different – not all old tools and methods are old hats and not every new identity management software is a magic remedy for all administrator troubles. Identity Management is rather a point of view at a computing environment emphasizing digital identity.

This Presentation summarizes more than a decade of experience with managing the ORION computing environment based on the MIT Athena project. Since early nineties, ORION has been providing centralized management and services to all users at the University of West Bohemia. Currently, nearly 20 thousand ORION accounts form one of the largest centrally managed academic user environments in the Czech Republic. An increasing number of interconnected systems and applications requires more advanced managing tools.

This paper demonstrates how certain parts of the identity management schema (access control, authentication and authorization, directory services, HR & STAG¹ data management, building personal registry, data consolidation, provisioning, management of group and resources, delegation, etc.) have been implemented in the real computing environment of the University of West Bohemia. The current ORION management system consists of various parts ranging from classic and effective components to modern Identity Management packages (Sun Java System Identity Manager). One of the future plans is to implement a larger identity federation project to serve the activities of the University of West Bohemia and CESNET².

All parts of the Presentation are arranged by implementation period and/or by their relation to the generic identity management system model. The end of each part summarizes pros and cons of chosen way in the appropriate area of ORION implementation activities. Previous expectations and current results of individual steps are compared.

The Presentation gives an account of possible solutions as well as dead-ends, most of which have been practically tried and tested. This may help professionals involved with identity management projects.

¹ STAG is a student information system of the University of West Bohemia supporting the internal credit accumulation and transfer. It was awarded the EUNIS ELITE 2000 honorable mention for accomplishments in information services.

² CESNET is a long-time Czech academic network operator participating in research and development of advanced network technologies and applications.