Introducing MIT Touchstone

IT Leaders

September 17, 2007

Paul B. Hill, IS&T

Introducing MIT Touchstone

- What is MIT Touchstone?

- Why are we introducing this?

- How will it improve the user experience?

- Why should a department, lab, or center integrate their web application into MIT Touchstone?

- What technologies are used?

- Scope and timelines

What is MIT Touchstone?

- Suite of technologies
  - A web logon server
  - Communicating information about the authentication to appropriate web servers
  - Account management beyond the MIT core community
- Focused on Web authentication
- Is this Single Sign On?

Why are we introducing MIT Touchstone?

- Support a wider variety of authentication methods?

- Minimize the exposure of passwords

- Provide a consistent methodology for web developers and system administrators

- Provide a maintainable approach to introducing evolving authentication technologies

- Provide the ability to use other identity providers

How will MIT Touchstone improve the user experience?

- Users will be able to use a variety of authentication mechanisms

- Users will be able to traverse Touchstone enabled web sites and resources transparently

- Ultimately, less information about the user will have to be released to many web sites

Why should a DLC consider integrating their application with MIT Touchstone?

- Adds the ability to let users authenticate with a username and password without assuming the responsibilities and liabilities associated with consuming usernames and passwords

- Inherits the ability to use multiple account management systems

- Inherits the ability to provide access to users of other Shibbolized sites.

What technologies are used?

- Login server is Stanford's WebAuth server
- Shibboleth developed by Internet2
- Account management for "external users"
  - User ID based on email address
  - Supporting username/password and OpenID
  - Self-service account creation and sponsored accounts

Timeline

- Pilot any day now
  - Login server (without certificates)
  - Shibboleth IdPs and SPs
- By end of IAP 2008
  - Login server including certificates
  - Initial pilot of new account management system
- Fall of 2008
  - Full production

Scope of the pilot

- Any MIT user of a pilot application will have the option of using Touchstone to authenticate

- During the pilot only a limited number of applications will be allowed to integrate with MIT Touchstone

Applications expected to be in the pilot

- Stellar
- Confluence wiki system (now wiki.mit.edu)
- Jira
- Dspace
- Thalia
- Alfresco
- And one NIST application to be determined

URLs for demos

- https://posteverything.mit.edu/MIT-shibenv

- http://stellar.mit.edu/setshib.phtml

- https://stellar.mit.edu/S/login/?u=%2Fatstellar%2F