

ETSI GS INS 006 V1.1.1 (2011-11)



Identity and access management for Networks and Services; Study to Identify the need for a Global, Distributed Discovery Mechanism

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Foreword

This Group Specification (GS) has been produced by ETSI Industry Specification (ISG) Identity and access management for Networks and Services (INS).

Introduction

Today, discovery of identity data across domains is generally realized with two different ways.

- Discovery Service (DS): A service defined by a group of network entities (providers) which participate in a federation. Identity data (actual data or mappings) are registered in the service and can be provided to all the participants of the group. The location of the discovery service and the protocol for exchanging messages is static and known to the participants of the group (federated model).
- The "user@location" format: By using an identifier of this format, a user directly points to a network point that holds identity information about him (user-centric model). This location may hold information for only one profile of the user (id = email) or for many profiles (id = Virtual Identity [i.1]).

However both of the above ways provide limited discovery of user's identity information. For the federated model, only the identity data which exist within the federation of providers can be discovered (and-or associated). Information outside the federation cannot be discovered. Providers that participate in the federation, have previous knowledge of the location of the DS (where to ask for information), and how to exchanged data with it (how to ask for information). Efforts to locate data outside predefined federations are usually hampered by the proprietary design of the discovery services and the customized identity formats and protocols that each federation uses. For the User-centric model the use of a specific predefined format instantly excludes the discovery of identity data from providers that are not familiar with it. Even though the adoption of a globally accepted identifier would solve major identity issues, this seems to be inapplicable mainly for business reasons and severe protocol modifications in various networks and technologies.

This work item assumes that all data and attributes required to provide a service are not available within a single service provider. For example proof of residence is required to access online streaming services. An acceptable issuer of this attribute may not be known to the streaming services' provider beforehand and must be discovered.

The purpose of the present document is to investigate the current landscape on the IdM area and evaluate if there is a need for such a discovery mechanism, or whether this can be covered by existing solutions.