Some thoughts on Identity Management for Distributed Science

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This talk…

- Some thoughts on what we have created with PKIs/X.509
- Challenges of (federated) identity to support distributed science.
- Recommendations

Kudos to Jim Basney of NCSA for many contributions to the ideas in this talk.

Looking back at PKIs

- An impressive infrastructure of global interoperability.
- Usability has been the biggest failure. Revocation close behind.

  The argument that certificates don't belong in the hands of users is compelling.

  Short-lived certificates based on existing IdM systems has done much to address this.

  Lots of swimming upstream against dogma.

Looking back at PKIs (cont.)

- Events (Commodo, DigiNotar) showing incentives problems in commercial PKIs.
  - This is a hairy problem. We need a better trust model that matches incentives.
- PKIs are still a good (if not only) answer for service and service-to-service authentication in distributed science.
  - Maybe evolving in to a different form – DANE/DNSSec, SSH pubkey, Perspectives, etc.

IdM Challenges of the Distributed Science Community

- Privacy/Attribute release is a barrier to collaboration
  - See TeraGrid experiences [1]
  - EU laws and InCommon/Shibboleth de facto policy
  - “Attribute bundles” will help in U.S.
- International collaborations
  - IGTF is only US-EU bridge
  - REFEDS working on it
- Non-web applications
  - CILogon/Moonshot/eduroam/ SAML ECP will solve

Challenges (cont.)

- Relationship with NSTIC, Social Ids

  Churns the waters. Friend or foe? http://xkcd.com/927/

- Adoption slow, Change slower?
- Acceptance by OpSec is a hurdle

  Need to demonstrate trust and risks are understood.

  People are not used to outsourcing these things.

- Compelling Vision

  I've tried [2]. Hard to make compelling for the scientist.
  Is this IT house keeping?

Recommendations for MAGIC

- Foster international interoperability
- Define community requirements
  - E.g. LOA comes from Risk, risk comes from assets, which are increasingly data, but I know of no data security needs assessment.
  - E.g. Should we be leveraging outside IdM rather than rolling our own? If so, what would we need from InCommon, OpenId, NSTIC, etc.?
- Monitor Moonshot/SAML ECP and jump in and support winner at appropriate time

References

1. Jim Basney, Terry Fleury, and Von Welch, "Federated Login to TeraGrid," 9th Symposium on Identity and Trust on the Internet (IDtrust 2010), Gaithersburg, MD, April 2010. http://dx.doi.org/10.1145/1750389.1750391
2. William Barnett, Von Welch, Alan Walsh, and Craig A. Stewart. A Roadmap for Using NSF Cyberinfrastructure with InCommon. 2011