

> Federated identity management solutions from Sun



# THE BASICS OF IDENTITY FEDERATION

## What It Is

Identity federation allows partnering organizations to trust and share digital identities and attributes of employees, customers, and suppliers across domains, and to provide single sign-on across partner sites.

Transactions involving multiple organizations can be managed and completed using a single identity. Customers or members can access a variety of online services through just one organization, using just one password. And employees of that organization and its partners can be given secure, "as-needed" access to selected information on partners' sites.

## Why We Need It

Industries such as telecommunications or financial services are eager to meet customers' demands for online services. To do so, they look to partner with other companies to deliver the widest variety of services to customers. The growing customer demand for everything from ringtones to on-demand video, online banking to investments, and much more, requires that partners join forces to compete successfully.

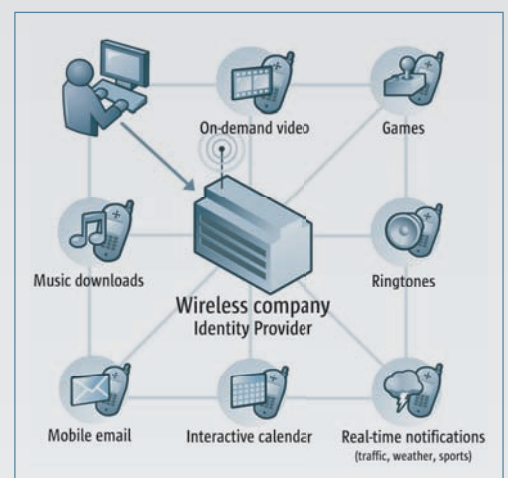
## How It Works

Service providers and other companies have agreed to a common set of rules for sharing identity information securely and privately. Identity federation is based on these standards. They allow multiple partners to access one person's identity on multiple sites at the same time and to authenticate that identity in order to deliver services securely.

A common set of standards allows partnerships to repeat the same information-sharing processes with every partner. Otherwise, anytime a company wanted to create a partnership, it would have to create a whole new set of processes, based on the prospective partner's IT infrastructure, security policies, and other

unique characteristics. This would quickly become impossible as the number of partners increased. But with standards, the ability to partner is infinitely scalable.

Using federation standards, organizations can create circles of trust in which a given provider at the center of the circle – such as the wireless provider in the diagram below – is surrounded by and connected to a multitude of other companies that offer value-added services the provider wants to deliver to customers.



Example of a federation partnership in which multiple service providers enable a wireless company to deliver a wide variety of services to customers online.

### How It Can Benefit Businesses

Federation creates a wide variety of new business opportunities. These include:

- **New revenue streams.** Identity federation means being able to create new sources of revenue by quickly meeting customers' ever-growing demand for online services. In addition to applying a standard set of protocols across partner domains, identity federation automates many manual processes within a secure identity framework, helping to deliver revenue-enhancing services to customers faster.
- **Improved allocation of resources.** Some organizations may want to outsource certain operations, so that they can focus their resources on core competencies. Federation allows them to easily turn over such operations to partners without fear of breaching information security or privacy.
- **Reduced operational cost and complexity.** Federation enables organizations to collaborate freely, without the cost, complexity, and limitations of compiling and sharing manual lists of users or using proprietary web access management tools. It also makes it easier to ensure the security and privacy of shared information.
- **Improved user experience.** Identity federation promotes loyalty by enabling customers and other users like employees and suppliers to enjoy more services and products, more quickly and easily, than ever before. In particular, single sign-on enables an exceptional online experience, by eliminating the need to use multiple passwords for access to online services and products.

- **Enhanced enterprise security.** Thanks to identity federation, employees of partner organizations only have to remember one login, which reduces the risk of passwords being written down and getting into the wrong hands.

### How Sun Is Leading the Way

Sun offers federated identity capabilities as part of its comprehensive identity management product line. A leader in the development of standards for this and other aspects of identity management, Sun is developing and establishing the standards and protocols that make identity federation possible on a practically infinite scale. Sun's own solutions are designed based on these standards to scale to millions of users. To date, more than 2,000 customers are using Sun identity management to manage millions of identities across domains. The company's federation capabilities have been recognized by the telecommunications consulting firm Ovum, which awarded four out of a possible five stars to Sun for federation.

#### For More Information

To learn more about Sun identity federation solutions, please visit [sun.com/identity](http://sun.com/identity)

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