

PSTA Identity/SSO Technical Subcommittee Report

Background

In the current technology landscape, appropriate authorization and authentication are crucial to the success of both hardware and software components. This is especially true within the first responder community where ability to perform their duties in timely fashion relies on responder's ability to easily access the critical information in timely manner while maintaining security. Fundamental to this objective is user identity, which ultimately facilitates access to the critical information necessary for first responders to perform their duties.

PSTA has embarked on creating a standards roadmap for five technical disciplines to provide comprehensive actionable guidance for public safety agencies as well as the industry. These disciplines are Mapping/GIS, LMR Interoperability, Mission Critical Push to X, Situational Awareness, Security and Identity/SSO. Identity/SSO is fundamental to addressing basic identity and access management requirements for every aspect of public safety.

Standards Considered and Discussed

The Identity subcommittee researched and identified three mature and widely adopted IDAM standards. These are:

1. SAML 2.0
2. OpenID
3. Oauth

The committee members assessed these standards based on the following criteria:

1. Maturity of the standard
2. Adoption
 - a. Within First Responder agencies
 - b. Industry
3. Security
4. Functionality

Recommendations

When the three leading IDAM standards were assessed against the above listed criteria, it was determined that PSTA should support two of the three standards. The Identity/SSO subcommittee recommends PSTA support SAML and OpenID.

Specifically, the committee recommends that first responder agencies that are able or are currently in position to be an identity provider (IdP) do so by implementing SAML 2.0 (or newer).

Since large majority of agencies do have enterprise identity solutions that support SAML, it will ease the implementation for agencies. Additionally, SAML integration is available from major solutions providers within the public safety industry.

In addition to SAML, OpenID is another IDAM standard that is currently widely adopted within the industry that provides solutions to the public safety industry. Besides leveraging the existing standard within the industry, adoption of OpenID provides an additional spectrum of solution providers to support the public safety market.

Next Steps

The Identity/SSO subcommittee will work towards the following next steps:

- 1) Creating testing/certification environment where solutions can be tested and certified against these standards in 2019.
- 2) Develop recommendations/guidance for public safety agencies for SAML 2.0 implementation in 2019.