Inferring and constructing origin-affiliation information across infrastructures

Abstract

Conveying affiliation information from origin providers across infrastructures proxies as defined in G025 is only possible if the origin identity provider releases such information. In case no eduPersonScopedAffiliation is provided, it may be partially reconstructed according to these guidelines. If there is no reliable way to infer origin affiliation, no such affiliation should be asserted by infrastructure proxies.
Table of Contents

Table of Contents ........................................................................................................................................... 2
1. Introduction .................................................................................................................................................. 3
   1.1. Conventions ......................................................................................................................................... 3
2. When to construct origin affiliation ........................................................................................................ 3
3. Construction of origin affiliation ............................................................................................................. 4
   3.1. Automated construction ....................................................................................................................... 4
   3.2. Verified enrolment ............................................................................................................................... 5
References ....................................................................................................................................................... 6
1. Introduction

The AARC Guidelines for expressing affiliation information [AARC-G025] defines how affiliation information should be expressed when transported across AARC BPA-compliant AAs. In it, two different types of affiliation were distinguished, namely ‘affiliation within the home organisation’ (i.e. the ‘origin’ identity provider) and ‘affiliation within the community’, such as cross-organisation collaborations. Both affiliation types should be communicated to the service providers that rely on affiliation information in order to control access to resources, and it designated the voPersonExternalAffiliation attribute (hereafter called vPEA) as the bearer-attribute for the origin affiliation (the affiliation with the home organisation).

However, G025 does not provide guidance as to what should be conveyed in vPEA in case such origin information is lacking. For operational, consistency, and security reasons, for service providers that connect to more than one proxy, it is necessary that all infrastructure proxies act similarly in case of lacking origin affiliation information.

This Guideline defines the conditions and mechanisms governing the inference and (re)construction of origin affiliation information that may be conveyed to service providers connecting to an infrastructure proxy.

In case no eduPersonScopedAffiliation is provided by the origin, it may be partially reconstructed according to these guidelines. If there is no reliable way to infer origin affiliation, no such affiliation should be asserted by compliant infrastructure proxies.

This Guideline does not replace any specification or mechanism defined in G025. In case origin affiliation is provided to the infrastructure proxy by the home IdP, such affiliation must thus be conveyed verbatim in the vPEA attribute as per the guidance in G025. This Guideline has no influence on the eduPersonScopedAffiliation attribute as asserted by an infrastructure proxy.

1.1. Conventions

The key words “MUST”, “MUST NOT”, “REQUIRED”, “SHALL”, “SHALL NOT”, “SHOULD”, “SHOULD NOT”, “RECOMMENDED”, “MAY”, and “OPTIONAL” in this document are to be interpreted as described in RFC 2119 [RFC2119].

Where this document states voPersonExternalAffiliation, also the (OIDC) claim voPerson_external_affiliation may be read. Where this document states eduPersonScopedAffiliation, also the claim edupersonScopedAffiliation may be read.

2. When to construct origin affiliation

A proxy SHOULD NOT assert vPEA unless the service provider requests this attribute. If no origin ePSA attribute is provided, a proxy MUST NOT construct a gratuitous vPEA.

If a service provider requests vPEA, but no ePSA is provided by the origin, a proxy SHOULD infer or construct a vPEA, and if it does, MUST do so only in accordance with this Guideline.
3. Construction of origin affiliation

Origin affiliation MUST be determined either in an automated way, or by explicitly verified enrolment.

3.1. Automated construction

The origin affiliation, of the form affiliationtype@scope, and conveyed by the proxy to service providers in the vPEA attribute, MUST be constructed in the following way:

1. If the origin provides eduPersonScopedAffiliation, its value MUST be used verbatim.

2. If the origin provides eduPersonAffiliation, and the scope of the origin provider can be reliably determined, the vPEA MUST be constructed by concatenating the value of eduPersonAffiliation provided, the “@” (at) sign, and the scope of the origin provider as determined according to the verification rules below.

3. If the origin does not provide any affiliation information, but the scope of the origin provider can be reliably determined, the vPEA MUST be constructed by concatenating the string “affiliate@” and the determined scope of the origin provider. The reliable value of scope for the origin provider MUST be determined in accordance with the verification rules below.

A reliable value of scope for the origin provider MUST be:

a) from the trusted source of meta-data with which the assertion coming from the origin provider is validated, specifically the value of shibmd:scope from the eduGAIN meta-data; or

b) from a (verified) iss claim; or

c) from the value of the schacHomeOrganisation attribute, if that attribute is asserted in the same attribute statement that contains the eduPersonAffiliation; or

d) from the scope element of another scoped attribute whose scope has been validated against a trusted source, e.g., eduPersonPrincipalName; or

e) from matching the attribute signing certificate with that of a public registry of identity providers where the domain-name part of the provider is validated to at least browser-trust domain-control validation standards; or

f) from an explicit validation of the value of scope assigned to that identity provider which confirms its managerial control over the name in the public domain name system corresponding to the scope value.

---

1 As per https://cabforum.org/baseline-requirements-documents/, or in a registry with reep-like functionality.
3.2. Verified enrolment

The proxy MAY determine the appropriate value of vPEA by explicit verification, if all of the following requirements are met:

- The value of scope MUST be determined in accordance with the requirements for reliable in section 3.1
- For asserting the affiliate prefix-value for a user for which vPEA is to be asserted,
  a) the user MUST be able to prove control of a mailbox whose domain name part of the email address is identical or subordinate to the value of scope as determined for its origin provider, by explicit challenge to such an email address; or
  b) the user MUST present a one-time challenge (to the proxy registration service) which has been sent prior to a validated administrative, technical, helpdesk, or billing contact address for the origin provider listed in the eduGAIN meta-data; or
  c) other methods whose strength is equivalent or stronger than one of the methods listed above.
- For asserting member, student, employee, or faculty prefix-value for a user for which vPEA is to be asserted, the user MUST be validated in a way that establishes organisational authority over the claim made.
  a) The user MUST present a one-time challenge (to the proxy registration service) which has been sent prior to a source authoritative for the organisation, contacted in a manner that validates the organisation in a verifiable way. This may be sent by phone call or mail to an organisation whose details (e.g. telephone number) are obtained from a Qualified Information Source² for the country or region of its establishment, and the affiliation information from an officer responsible for personnel or student affairs; or
  b) other methods whose strength is equivalent or stronger than one of the method listed above
- No other prefix-values may be asserted.

For entities where vPEA is asserted based on verified enrolment, special care must be taken not to violate the freshness specification requirements of section 4 of G025 (i.e. the https://aarc-community.org/assurance/ATP/vPEA-period values). The period stated therein start after each verification of enrolment.

² Typical Qualified Information Sources are Chambers of Commerce, Statutory Registries, credit rating agencies like D&B or Equifax.
References

AARC-G025  Expressing affiliation information across infrastructures, AARC
Guideline G025 (11 March 2019); https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3700927

RFC2119  Key words for use in RFCs to Indicate Requirement Levels
https://www.ietf.org/rfc/rfc2119