

InCommon Federation Test Environment

Working Group Charter

Status: working draft for TAC review

Background

The InCommon community has been asking for an easier, more tangible way to validate that services planning to integrate with the Federation will interoperate seamlessly. In particular, a federation test environment has long been a frequently requested feature.

In 2018, InCommon Operations began drafting requirements for a “test federation”. Since that time, new and clearer interoperability standards (e.g., the Kantara SAML2 Deployment Profile) have emerged. InCommon also transitioned to Baseline Expectations. These new developments will inform the design of federation integration testing tools aimed at easing deployment as well as producing a sustainable operating environment.

In 2020, the InCommon Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) is focusing its work plan on easing federation onboarding and improving the value of federation. Producing a set of prioritized, actionable requirements for a federation test environment is among the activities toward that goal. This environment will be used both by current InCommon participants as well as the broader community interested in interoperating with services in the InCommon Federation to evaluate its offerings against federation requirements and best practices. The TAC is seeking community participation to build on the work done to date and to produce that set of requirements.

Charter

The InCommon Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) convenes the InCommon Federation Test Environment Working Group to identify and prioritize relevant testing and validation best practices, procedures, tooling, and environments when:

- An existing or prospective InCommon Participant integrates services (identity provider and service provider) via the InCommon Federation
- The InCommon federation operator introduces changes to federation infrastructure

The Working Group should:

1. Evaluate the user stories identified by InCommon Operations and the TAC sub-group thus far;

2. As appropriate, identify additional user stories to provide InCommon participants with testing and/or validation tooling to reduce the barriers to entry and to increase the overall value of participation in the InCommon Federation;
3. Consider the testing needs of an identity provider, a service provider, as well as the Federation operator.
4. Where possible, identify existing tools around the global federation community: understand what they test for and who finds the test result useful
5. Assess each story for applicability and implementation urgency. Where relevant, suggest possible adoption challenges
6. Focus on identifying testable items; recommend a prioritized list of implementation actions and how each supports the TAC's goal to streamline integration with services in the Federation and to increase the value of participating in InCommon.
7. Where the Working Group identifies items that are not readily testable, but important in support of the goals of easing integration and operating in a federated environment (e.g., identifier assignment/persistence practice within an organization), the Working Group is encouraged to note these in its final report and suggest further course of action where applicable.
8. Focus on requirements and best practices of the InCommon Federation; inter-federation or other non-federation needs should not be made a priority.

Work Products / Deliverables

This working group shall conclude its work no more than 6 months from its initial convening date. The group will produce a written report at the conclusion of its proceedings. This report should examine use cases/user stories outlined in charter items 1, 2, and 3 above. It should provide recommendations referenced in charter items 4, 5, 6, and 7

This report should capture the community's needs for a Federation Testing Environment. The working group should not overly constrain itself with immediate implementation challenges. Instead, we strongly recommended that the report clearly prioritizes its recommendations based on community needs so that implementers can develop implementation strategies accordingly.

Should unforeseen reasons prevent the group from completing its work at the end of the 6 months period, the groups should still produce a written report describing its work to date as well as recommendations for any follow-up actions.

Membership

Membership in the InCommon Federation Test Environment Working Group is open to all interested parties. The solicitation will take place on the InCommon Participants list. TAC leadership may explicitly name key stakeholders to participate in the working group to ensure balanced representation from IdP, SP, and Federation operators. Members join the Working Group by subscribing to the mailing list and Slack channel, participating in the calls, and otherwise actively engaging in the work of the group.

References

Draft InCommon Test Federation Requirements from Nic Roy

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1vQ_jk7ApSpuCITiQCTqcmbjpGXRpPT0VLbfwD0MEaOI/edit#heading=h.5xox0fk8w6i

Test Federation User Stories and Planning Sub Group notes

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1SW_l2hgLift1XirpAJwf2ZYAG4b22mv6sNqDXCqm0YU/edit#heading=h.xbd497z1biub

Items for Phase 2