



Authentication

Atomwide operates a Unified Sign On (USO) service available to every pupil and member of staff in connected schools providing them with a single username and password that simplifies and securely controls access to supported services and resources.

USO has been in use for over 10 years and is an integral part of Atomwide's services wherever they are delivered. It is currently in use by over 2.2 million users nationwide.

In 2005, Atomwide integrated USO with Internet2's Shibboleth® authentication system as part of a pilot project managed by the London Grid for Learning on behalf of Becta. The project went on to win the Computing Awards for Excellence 2006 Public Sector Project of the Year award.

Following the success of this project USO is, to this day, the only Identity Provider used across the LGfL / TRUSTnet estate and their 2800+ schools.

One username and password for all services and resources



Features

- ✓ A single username and password for staff and students for all supported resources
- ✓ Compact, easy-to-remember usernames
- ✓ Credentials are retained as users move between schools
- ✓ Straight-forward account management via a secure website
- ✓ Shibboleth® identity provision included
- ✓ Supports synchronization with Windows® Active Directory
- ✓ Included support from the Atomwide Service Desk

An authentication platform

Many resources require password-authenticated access, whether to track the academic progress of students, store user preferences, or control and monitor service usage. Naturally, users would much rather have a single username and password which grants access to all resources instead of separate credentials for each service, and this is the aim of Unified Sign On (USO).

Under USO, every student and member of staff in a school is issued with a personal user account. For pupil protection, usernames are based on first and last names plus local authority, but do not reveal age, gender or school information. This has the added benefit that usernames do not change when people move between Atomwide supported establishments in the same authority.

A secure web-based management facility allows accounts to be added, edited and retired.

To maintain the accuracy of data following its adoption, USO supports automated update tools that extract information directly from a school's MIS.

An identity provider

USO must be able to respond appropriately to any subsequent query to determine whether or not to grant, or advise of the eligibility for, access to secured or otherwise restricted services, applications and resources, and to use the profile data to personalise the end user's experience of online applications wherever appropriate.

In many, but not all, instances, the aim is to enable a user to access services wherever they are entitled, but without revealing any more of the user's status, location, or identity, than is absolutely necessary and as previously agreed between Atomwide and the provider. This applies equally whether or not the application being accessed uses Shibboleth.

Secure access away from school

USO is applied to services being accessed 'off-net' where licensing or other access restrictions may need to be applied, or anywhere the individual's identity is required to complete the online experience (such as with email services, etc.).

It is bypassed where on-net access is being employed and where IP authentication is sufficiently informative for the Service Provider to grant access. The Educational Content and Resources information showcases the wide range of resources available to school staff and pupils whilst in school ('on-net') via NEN The Education Network and also away from school ('off-net') via USO account credentials.

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