

“E-gov 2.0: pave the way for e-participation”
5th October 2009 Madrid

THE DIGITAL IDENTITY ISSUES

One, Nobody, One Hundred Thousand

Dott.ssa Miranda Brugi

Adjunct Professor of ICT Management Padua University - College of Engineering



DIGITAL IDENTITY

- **Digital identity issues**
- **Digital identity to access PA services**

digital identity issues

Not an alternative concept of identity, but a more extensive and destabilising one in comparison to the idea that humans had of themselves before digital technology entered into their private lives.

An identity which is ever more pervasive, so much so that many people ask themselves the role played in development of services, and more generally in digital net applications, by the idea that each person has take on an identity when logging on.

The network user has the possibility to reject their real name (which is unique and static and with which he/she is identified "on sight"), and to use a different variation each time that he/she logs on.

The digital identity issues

- When the same person interacts with a computer based system, effectively assuming a **digital identity**, he/she must be protected by an authentication system in order to verify the reliability of the digital identity presented to the information system.
- For the service provider, on the other side of the net, **the information or the transaction requested by the user** is more important than the precise identity of the real person.
- On the net information is managed by **algorithms and descriptions** that are completely independent from the real person.
- **The expert Internet user**, who frequently visits websites and carries out transactions on-line with or without payments, **is well aware of the weak points of the system and**, depending upon the service he/she requests, **of the necessity to go through steps of identification, authentication and authorisation**.
- Many people are unwilling forced to remain outside of this global digital world, populated **in Italy by 23 million web-users according to CNIPA data (2005)**, due to lack of infrastructures, skills etc. Thus, they suffer from the so-called **digital divide** and cannot access the digital scenario which, both in public and private sectors, offers new behavioural rules and organisational scenarios.

digital identity to access PA services

The relationship between citizens and PA are very well described by Kafka, who manages to transmit many feelings which the reader the remembers when standing in front of one of the many public counters to which we must go in order to take advantage of many of our rights and to fulfil our duties as citizens.

Those who are accustomed to being treated by the PA as a first class citizen, resent having to undertake many of the requested procedures as, while understanding the rational, he/she rarely sees the necessity for him/herself but only for the PA providing the service.

Those who are treated as second class citizens, not being aware of the benefits afforded to the first class, attribute an important marginal usefulness even to minimal improvements to the procedures to be undertaken.

In both cases, the necessity of the procedures provokes displeasure and intolerance for procedures which are considered too complicated and too time consuming.

digital identity to access PA services

The primary objective for the true PA innovator is to avoid transferring such inefficiency to digital bureaucracy. With digital bureaucracy **everyone should feel like a first class citizen through access to clear, simplified and rapid transactions, secure and suitable procedures capable of answering answer our requests or needs.** Hence, **the citizen is willing to acquire one single identity when dealing with the PA,** in order to be free from complicated procedures developed within an organisational structure that does not always allow him/her to fully exercise his/her sense of responsibility.

digital identity to access PA services

The **federal digital identity**, based on the concept of an identity service chain with many different participating service providers **cooperating under various profiles**, can support access to PA services until the complete spread of the **CIE**, while being aware that a citizen's identity is complex by eventual life changes and is therefore not easy to manage through inoperable computerised systems. Moreover, a federal project pushes the **PA to build and share a common language**, dictionary and precise technical rules to overcome interoperability problems.

digital identity to access PA services

- Projects such as People, ICAR, IRIDE, Inter Prama emphasise federal identity management in order to increase the impact of the services of eGovernment in favour of citizens.
- The possible approaches can be divided into the following four typologies:
 - Liberty Alliance
 - OASIS-SAML
 - WS-Federation
 - Transport Layer Security

Conclusions

In this context it is useful for federal entities to define a common response to the question of security within a trusted relationship which must be created ex-novo, firm between themselves and then with the user who, being on the front line in terms of exposing his/her credentials, perceives a sense of protection of his/her privacy which is the fundamental requirement when he/she is on line.

Thank you for your kind attention
Dott.ssa Miranda Brugi

*Assistant Professor of ICT Management Padua University - College of
Engineering*

E-mail: miranda.brugi@libero.it

E-mail: miranda.brugi@unipd.it

Phone: +39 335 8266011

+39 0577 289011