

More open source moves by Sun: this time it's identity management

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In July 2005 news first emerged of Sun Microsystems' first foray into open source identity management with the Open Web Single Sign-On (OpenSSO) project. Now, more than a year later, the project has been formally launched. Sun has kept to its word with OpenSSO and is releasing source code for the significant chunks of its Java System Access Manager required for web-based single sign-on, including session management, policy and federation as well as administration capabilities. My thoughts on this announcement are the same as those of a year ago and I have seen nothing on the project site which causes me to change that.

This is a smart move by Sun. First, it continues the 'participation age' theme promoted by CEO Jonathan Schwartz. Second, whilst web single sign-on is valuable both in terms of simplifying the user experience and easing user administration, the real opportunity lies in user provisioning, federated identity management, auditing for compliance etc. When the project was first announced last year, Eric Leach, a Sun product manager was quoted as saying 'The idea is that we're going to give developers the tools they need to build basic security into their internal Web infrastructures without additional cost.'. In other words, OpenSSO provides customers with a free platform for Intranet-based single sign-on from which Sun can then build with its suite of identity management products offering higher value identity management capabilities.

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