

A T O M W I D E

UNIFIED SIGN-ON

The range of resources accessible to schools through RBCs, LAs and the National Education Network is continually growing, as new collections of educational content are added, and major new facilities such as MLEs are deployed. In order to control and simplify access to these resources and other services, Atomwide operates a Unified Sign-On (USO) service available to every pupil and member of staff who uses an LA's education network.

Unified Sign-On features:

- A single username and password for every relevant student and member of staff in an LA, granting access to all supported resources
- Compact, easy-to-remember usernames which are retained as users move between schools in an authority
- Straight-forward account management via a secure web-based management interface
- Shibboleth® identity provision included
- Supports synchronization with Windows® Active Directory for consistent authentication at LAN and WAN levels



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 establishments in the same authority. A secure web-based management facility allows accounts to be added, edited and retired.

The Unified Sign-On system has been available from Atomwide for almost ten years and is used by an ever-increasing number of UK LAs across multiple RBCs to support an ever-growing array of services.

To aid the adoption of USO across a whole LA, and to maintain the accuracy of the data following its adoption, USO supports automated update tools and scripts that can extract information directly from a school's MIS.

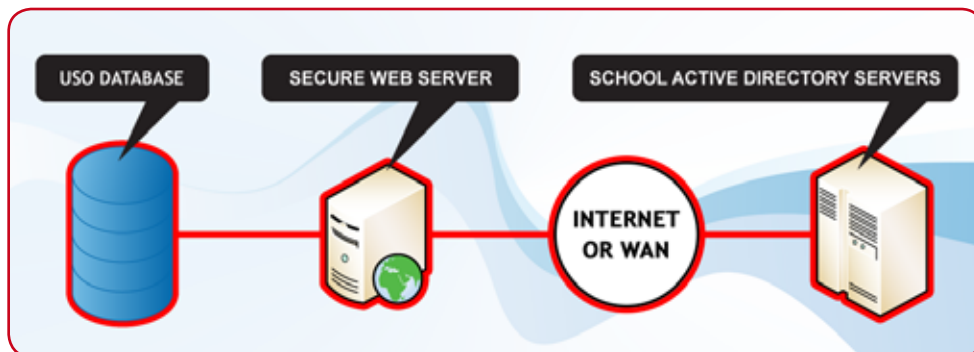
In 2005, Atomwide integrated USO with Internet2's Shibboleth® authentication system as part of a pilot project managed by the London Grid for Learning on

behalf of Becta. Rated highly for its standards-based, privacy-preserving approach, Shibboleth® is now the recommended solution to the authentication and authorisation needs of all UK education sectors, through the UK Access Management Federation which has been formed by Becta in conjunction with JISC and JANET (UK).

Active Directory synchronisation with USO using Atomwide's 'ADSync'

ADSync features:

- Synchronisation of an Active Directory with a central Unified Sign-On database over an encrypted web link
- Details of recently added, edited or removed user accounts are collected and processed, with the Active Directory updated accordingly
- User accounts are created and deleted, typically with pupils organised by year group and staff grouped separately
- A home directory is created for every user, with network sharing and setting of appropriate permissions handled automatically
- One-off setup charge per school on a new Active Directory, with no on-going fees



Atomwide's ADSync enables schools to manage LAN and WAN user accounts from a single location - the USO support web site. Via ADSync, Windows domain accounts within a school can be created in, and removed from, appropriate groups as users join and leave the school; home directories can also be created and shared for new users.

This not only eases the administrative burden on schools, but also means that each user has greater consistency in the username and password which he or she uses, whether accessing resources on the school's Local Area Network or the wider LA/RBC system.

As well as creating Windows user accounts, ADSync groups them in Organizational Units (OUs) for Students (sub-divided by Year Group), Staff and Nominated Contacts, creates and shares home directories, and sets folder permissions, leaving only the management of Group Policies and login scripts (if required) to be handled locally.

"Having one logon for an email system and server authentication is the Holy Grail as far as system administrators are concerned, and the AD Synchronisation product provides it."

Technical Services Manager, Hillingdon Grid for Learning

"ADSync has meant a huge decrease in the administration involved in running our network. I no longer have to spend hours inputting information into Active Directory."

Network Manager, Bisham School, Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead

"This service comes highly recommended. For a very reasonable fee to have ADSync put in place, the school will be saved many hours of 'manual' inputting, thus recovering much needed time to concentrate on the running of the school network."

ICT Technician, Rose Green Junior School, West Sussex

Specifications are subject to change. E&OE. Revision 3

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