

Q&A: Project Bandit

June 12, 2006

Key Message:

Novell Enables Rapid Adoption of Identity Management by Open Sourcing Key Technologies.

Working within the larger identity and open source communities, the Bandit project will address common identity management requirements. This project is the first of its kind to develop higher level identity services including authentication and credential caching, common roles and authorization, and compliance via common record collecting.

Questions and Answers:

What are you announcing today?

Today, we are announcing the Bandit project, an open source project chartered with developing identity services that unify disparate identity systems and provide a consistent approach to securing and managing identity. The open identity services in development by the Bandit community address higher-level identity management challenges including secure, role-based access and regulatory compliance reporting. Examples of these open identity services include authentication, roles, policies and compliance.

The code developed through the Bandit project is open source and works with existing industry standards and open source projects including the Liberty Alliance and the Higgins project. In addition, the Bandit project is supported today by Microsoft, Red Hat, Sun, Symantec, Sxip, and many other industry leaders.

Why is this announcement significant?

This project is the first of its kind to develop higher-level identity services including authentication and credential caching, common roles and authorization, and compliance via common record collecting.

What are the components of the Open Identity Services?

Common Authentication Services Adapter (CASA)

Applications that integrate CASA can securely authenticate and cache credentials for single sign-on purposes. CASA currently provides secure credential storage and a very simple API set to enable SSO for applications. CASA gui provides users a single place where they can manage credentials for kwallet, GKring, and PasswordManager. CASA is evolving to support the ability to authenticate to various identity vaults (LDAP, Kerberos, etc) by providing an authentication selector mechanism.

Common Identity (Higgins)

The Common Identity component is an implementation of the Higgins framework that represents any digital identity. This framework contains context providers that aggregate data from any identity vault (LDAP, Liberty, InfoCard, /etc/password, etc); a configurable, caching, virtual identity object.

Role Engine

The Bandit Role Engine component is a role based system that uses the Bandit Common Identity. The Role Engine is:

- An open source component that can be integrated into any application.
- A consistent role calculator that unifies authorization across diverse systems and services.
- An emitter of Bandit audit records (Audit Record Framework).
- Based on the open standards: RBAC and XACML.

Audit Record Framework

CASA, Common Identity, and the Role Engine will emit unified audit records that policies can filter to verify

compliance to a corporate standard or regulation. This component is an open audit record emitter, so now, applications can provide common event information, including identity, as a basis for compliance verification.

FLAIM

FLAIM is a Flexible Adaptable Information Management database engine for traditional as well as volatile and complex information. Even though FLAIM provides many traditional database features (e.g., transactions, recovery, reliability, scalability), it was conceived with a broader view toward the greater flexibility and adaptability that is offered by an XML data model.

Who is involved in the Bandit Project?

Novell is a key contributor to this project. In addition, partners such as ActivIdentity, Higgins, Liberty Alliance, Microsoft, Novacoast, Red Hat, Sun, Sxip, Symantec, and Trusted Network Technologies are supporting the project. We expect many others to contribute in the future.

How does one get involved/participate in the project?

Anyone can participate in the project. The level of participation depends on each individual's interest in being involved. No registration is required for software/source code downloads or participation in mailing lists. However, registration is required to submit bug reports, enhancement requests, or patches.

Why is Novell involved with this project?

Novell is an industry leader in identity and access management software, and has a broad strategic commitment to open source. We believe that, with the contributions not only of Novell, but other leading identity management organizations and individual thought leaders, that an open source project in this area will result in a better resource for end users than by offering "another proprietary" implementation to the market.

Additionally, Novell will enable its products to use the open technologies developed by Bandit to help its applications, its partners, and other open source technology to be better integrated.

Will Novell be donating code?

Yes, in addition to a significant engineering contribution, most of the code currently available on the Bandit site has been contributed by Novell.

Are you planning on open sourcing any of your current identity management projects?

There are currently no plans to open source any of Novell's security and identity products.

How is the Bandit Project organized and managed?

Initially, Bandit will be supported by Novell personnel, including significant engineering, Web, marketing and management resources dedicated to the effort. Novell, in consultation with the Bandit community, sets the project engineering goals and retains ultimate responsibility for the project. As the Bandit community grows, and as it develops strong community-based leadership, Novell and the Bandit community may consider other organizational models.

Does the Bandit project leverage/work of other open source projects?

Bandit will make use of Higgins, an open-source project, backed by both Novell and IBM, that's meant to give end users more control over managing their passwords for various Internet sites. In addition, Bandit principals are actively engaged in other open source identity projects and have identified numerous synergies that will be explored as part of Bandit's commitment to interoperate with other open source projects.

Does Bandit compete with the Higgins project?

No. The two projects are complementary. In fact, the Higgins organization has actively stated their support for the Bandit project. (Refer to quote in the press release)

How is Higgins related to Bandit?

Bandit leverages as well as contributes to the Higgins project. The two projects will share many components. The Bandit project will also build components with an emphasis on those of use to enterprise identity

management systems --components such audit record collection, and others that are not in scope of Higgins. The Higgins project also focuses more on the user-centric aspect of the emerging Internet identity space.

Why is project called Bandit?

Naming was based on the general principles of open source projects: short, memorable, easy to spell, and not necessarily directly related to the project content. After reviewing several options, the community decided on the common pet name, Bandit.

Where can I find more about the Bandit Project?

For more information about Bandit Project, visit <http://www.bandit-project.org>

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