

PSU & Webassign

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In the Beginning...

- What we had
 - DCE based central authentication ~ 184,000 principals (give or take a few thousand)
 - IBM Secureway LDAP directory
- Early Shibboleth Experience
 - Beginnings around spring '02 - Renee Shuey and I were tasked with bringing up test Shib Origin
 - Shib Version Alpha 2.5 - Running from my desktop (800MHz P3 - 256MB RAM)

Webassign Phase I

- Summer '02 - Limited trial with 20 users
 - Students enticed to try it out for class credit
- Fall '02 - More dedicated trial with 200 users (one physics class, three sections)
 - Shibboleth Beta 1 - Still on my desktop
- Spring '03 - Shibboleth access to webassign rolled out to all physics classes (~1800 students)
 - Shibboleth 0.7 - Finally on a real machine (Dell Poweredge 1550)

Phase I Experience

- Only used for authentication into existing Webassign Accounts
 - Attributes: eduPersonPrincipalName & eduPersonAffiliation
- Accounts still created manually
 - Automatic account creation was the goal, but this required more data than we had in LDAP
- No performance issues but Tomcat had some stability issues at this point.

Webassign Phase II

- Fall '03 - Switched to dynamic account creation
 - Shibboleth 1.1 - Now running on two IBM HS20 Blades - 2.4 GHz, 2.5GB RAM
- Load Balancing done with Cisco's SLB at the router
- Webassign pilot declared success at this point, Shibboleth now an official PSU production service.

Dynamic Account Creation

- Prior to Fall '03, class lists were FTPd to Webassign to create their user database.
- Accounts are now created dynamically as students log in the first time.
- We now pass in addition to earlier values:
 - CommonName & eduPersonEntitlements
- eduPersonEntitlements contains multi-value class list (example- urn:psu.edu:course:up:physo01.001)
 - Release of course list tightly controlled by ARP

Tangible Results

- 80% decrease in helpdesk calls
 - Attributed to no longer requiring two separate accounts
- Easier Webassign account housekeeping
 - No longer FTPing class lists
 - Late course registrations added automatically

Questions/Comments?

- Obligatory final slide
- Thank you :)
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