



Novell Looks to Ease Access to Microsoft SharePoint

By Brian Prince

In Novell Access Manager 3.1, Novell adds support for WS-Federation, an identity federation specification. Leveraging a collaboration with Microsoft, Novell with Access Manager 3.1 aims to streamline authentication for non-Windows directory users of Microsoft Web-based products such as Microsoft SharePoint.

[Novell](#) has set its sights on giving non-Windows directory users single sign-on access to [Microsoft](#) Web-based products.

With Novell Access Manager 3.1, Novell has added built-in support for WS-Federation. Part of the larger Web Services [Security](#) framework, WS-Federation is a set of interoperable access and authentication standards used to allow disparate security realms to broker information on identities, identity attributes and authentication.

By supporting WS-Federation and collaborating with Microsoft, Novell with its Access Manager 3.1 enables [IT security](#) administrators to grant non-Windows directory users single sign-on access to Microsoft Web-based products such as Microsoft Office SharePoint.

"One of the differences with Access Manager and some of the other products out there is that federation is an integral part of the product rather than being a separate, for-charge add-on," said Lee Howarth, product manager of identity and security at Novell.

According to Novell, in today's heterogeneous IT infrastructure, identity information is often stored in multiple locations and application-specific identity stores. The idea is to provide a simple way to federate identities from any LDAP directory into a Microsoft infrastructure, preventing users from having to spend hours syncing identity information between disparate identity stores.

"Once that user is authenticated to one of those local stores ... what Access Manager is able to do is transform that authentication then into claims that can be used to control access SharePoint," Howarth said. "Why that's important is that it removes the need to maintain all of the identities within SharePoint's own identity stores."

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Analyst Gerry Gebel of the Burton Group said large enterprises are often confronted with the challenge of providing single sign-on across multiple applications based on user information distributed among various directories.

"Technologies that support industry standards and integrate Web access management, federation and other technologies are well positioned to address enterprise requirements," Gebel said in a statement.