

Customer Case Study

Katso

Authentication and Authorization system for Finnish e-government services

Solution:
Identity Management

Products:
BEA WebLogic Server® 9.1

Industry:
Public Sector

Partners:
Ubisecure Solutions, Inc.
WM-Data, a LogicaCMG
Company

Country:
Finland

Business challenge

Create a flexible means of issuing identities to customers, organizations or citizens and authenticate them around the services. Enable government agencies to reduce the cost of supporting customers at the point-of-service and transfer services to the Internet.

Solution

Ubisecure deployed BEA WebLogic Server 9.1 to support an authentication and authorization system for reliable authentication of authorized responsible people in companies when companies report and use e-government services. The solution—now in use by the Finnish Tax Administration and The Social Insurance Institution—is among the largest in Finland, measured in user volumes and is viable in any territory.

Results

Reduced the cost per transaction for services from as much as €50 to between 10 and 15 cents, based on automation of workflow and elimination of manual processes. It implemented a common platform for identity life cycle management, authentication and authorization for the e-government sector or large companies with a large partner network—both in Finland and abroad.

Customer brief

KATSO is an award-winning nationwide identity management, authentication and authorization system, developed by Ubisecure Solutions—a leading partner in providing user authentication and authorization solutions. KATSO is already in use with the Finnish Tax Administration and The Social Insurance Institution and growing rapidly.

Business process challenge

It's a complex task to effectively deploy an identity management solution. The solution needs to be adaptive to business change, enable the organization to reduce risks associated with software vulnerabilities, unauthorized access, and identity theft—while enforcing patch and identity policies. Developed and deployed correctly, secure identity systems protect corporate information, increase operational efficiency, and improve the ability to meet regulatory compliance requirements.

This challenge is especially prevalent in the public sector. E-government services that are targeted at organizations and citizens handle sensitive information concerning the stakeholders—all of which makes it crucial to implement security mechanisms which protect the information. In the context of e-government services, it is also important to track who has done what and when, for audit purposes.

But when several government agencies start building services for customers, the challenges are resolved over and over again as each agency struggles with similar problems, such as creating a flexible way to issue identities to their customers, organizations or citizens and authenticating them around the services. The fundamental challenge is of course the urgent need to reduce the cost of supporting customers at the point-of-service locations and transferring the available services to the Internet, where they can be reached 24/7.

Just ask the Finnish Tax Administration and The Social Insurance Institution. Both of these organizations have been developing e-government services for organizations. As part of this development a solution for role-based identity management and organizational authentication has been delivered. The solution enables role-based use of e-government services for companies and organizations, independently of time and location. For government agencies the 'KATSO' solution as it is known enables the delivery of secure new services to customers. The system delivers a flexible means of identity provision and authorization—either for employees or for other companies and persons to act on behalf of the company.

Solution

The KATSO system developed by Ubisecure Solutions (a leading partner in providing user authentication and authorization solutions) resides on top of BEA WebLogic Server 9.1. This open, service-centric application server infrastructure is the ideal complement to the identity management solution. "BEA is the 'de facto' standard infrastructure for Ubisecure," says Petteri Ihalainen, Development Manager, Ubisecure. "It provides us with a robust, flexible and above all scalable platform to support millions of transactions at reduced cost."

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KATSO implements a common platform for identity life cycle management, authentication and authorization for the e-government sector or large companies with a large partner network. It can be hosted by a service provider or a government agency and its rich functionality includes the ability to create identities, maintain their properties, authorize other identities and delete identities.

KATSO identities can be integrated to the applications using off-the-shelf components within hours, instead of months of development. KATSO identities are divided into three categories, where the Master user can create lower level identities and authorize them to act on behalf of the organization where the Master user belongs. Authorization can be given to other companies as well. This feature essentially outsources the identity management to an organization that needs to use a service which is protected by KATSO. The organization that delivers services integrated with KATSO can create roles that are tied to the service in question and these roles can be assigned to KATSO identities by the master users in the organizations utilizing KATSO.

KATSO is also an authentication mechanism. The strong KATSO one-time-password functionality combines username/passwords with one-time-passwords making it more secure against identity theft attempts. The KATSO utilizes standards such as SAML for Web based authentication and Liberty ID-WSF for non-Web based applications enabling organizations to implement KATSO authentication across the application landscape. KATSO delivers basic attributes about the user to the applications upon authentication. These attributes can be configured so that almost anything available through the KATSO system can be delivered upon authentication. This makes it easy to implement application level authorization functions. But for security reasons it may be necessary to use the standards based Attribute Authority feature available in KATSO, which enables the services to request additional attributes about the user in the backend, between the service and KATSO system.

Results

The KATSO service based on BEA WebLogic Server brings vast cost savings. Previously, the cost per transaction for services was between €20 and €50. This has now been reduced to between 10 and 15 cents with the online environment, based on the automation workflow and elimination of manual processes. At the same time KATSO eases the development of services for customers, due to the uniform identity management, which conforms to standards. The Finnish government agencies are able to offer browser-based services and applications in a uniform way to authenticate and authorize users in the network services.

“The new KATSO service is at the ‘bleeding edge’ of technology development and one of the very first in the whole world to broadly deploy open standards,” says Ihalainen. “The service provides a consolidated identity repository, role and authorization

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*Kalevi Heiliö, Assistant Director,
The Finnish Tax Administration*

management, lifecycle management of identities and it has broad opportunities for deployment and usage.”

KATSO is the largest authentication and authorization system in Finland, by user volumes. Its other benefits include:

- Secure and simple partner and customer access to eServices 24/7
- Centralized audit capabilities for e-government services
- Outsourced identity management
- Outsourced and flexible authorization between companies and people
- Standard based APIs for application integration
- Easy and cost efficient deployment with Ubiogin Agents
- Liberty Web Services and Web browser profiles supported

“The open and flexible BEA infrastructure has played a major role in the development and deployment of KATSO,” says Kalevi Heiliö, Assistant Director, The Finnish Tax Administration. “By adopting this Service-Oriented approach to e-government authentication and authorization, the Finnish Tax Administration is delivering secure, efficient services in a 24x7 environment.”

The Finnish Tax Administration and The Social Insurance Institution are real-world proof of how the broad demands for authentication and authorization in the public sector may effectively be implemented. Better still, the use of standard interfaces means that the solution can be deployed universally in any country or government organization.

About BEA

BEA Systems, Inc. (Nasdaq: BEAS) is a world leader in enterprise infrastructure software. The BEA SOA 360™ platform, the industry’s most unified SOA platform for business transformation and optimization, is designed to improve cost structures and grow new revenue streams. Information about how BEA is enabling customers to achieve Business LiquidITy™ can be found at bea.com.

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