SAML V2.0 Information Card Token Profile
Version 1.0

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Abstract:
This profile describes a set of rules for identity providers and relying parties to follow when using
SAML V2.0 assertions as managed information card security tokens, so that interoperability and
security is achieved commensurate with other SAML authentication profiles.

Status
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1 Introduction

OASIS has standardized a set of profiles for acquiring and delivering security tokens, collectively referred to as "Information Card" technology. These profiles are agnostic with respect to the format and semantics of a security token, but interoperability between issuing and relying parties cannot be achieved without additional rules governing the creation and use of the tokens exchanged. This document describes a set of rules for the use of SAML V2.0 assertions, as defined in [SAML2Core], as security tokens within the Information Card architecture.

1.1 Notation

This specification uses normative text. The keywords "MUST", "MUST NOT", "REQUIRED", "SHALL", "SHALL NOT", "SHOULD", "SHOULD NOT", "RECOMMENDED", "MAY", and "OPTIONAL" in this specification are to be interpreted as described in [RFC2119]:

…they MUST only be used where it is actually required for interoperation or to limit behavior which has potential for causing harm (e.g., limiting retransmissions)…

These keywords are thus capitalized when used to unambiguously specify requirements over protocol and application features and behavior that affect the interoperability and security of implementations. When these words are not capitalized, they are meant in their natural-language sense.

Listings of XML schemas appear like this.

Example code listings appear like this.

Conventional XML namespace prefixes are used throughout the listings in this specification to stand for their respective namespaces as follows, whether or not a namespace declaration is present in the example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prefix</th>
<th>XML Namespace</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>saml:</td>
<td>urn:oasis:names:tc:SAML:2.0:assertion</td>
<td>This is the SAML V2.0 assertion namespace defined in the SAML V2.0 core specification [SAML2Core].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>md:</td>
<td>urn:oasis:names:tc:SAML:2.0:metadata</td>
<td>This is the SAML V2.0 metadata namespace defined in the SAML V2.0 metadata specification [SAML2Meta].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ic:</td>
<td><a href="http://schemas.xmlsoap.org/ws/2005/05/identity">http://schemas.xmlsoap.org/ws/2005/05/identity</a></td>
<td>This is the Infocard namespace defined in the Identity Metasystem Interoperability standard [IMI].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wsa:</td>
<td><a href="http://www.w3.org/2005/08/addressing">http://www.w3.org/2005/08/addressing</a></td>
<td>This is the WS-Addressing namespace defined in the WS-Addressing specification [WS-Addr].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wsp:</td>
<td><a href="http://schemas.xmlsoap.org/ws/2004/09/policy">http://schemas.xmlsoap.org/ws/2004/09/policy</a></td>
<td>This is the WS-Policy namespace defined in the March 2006 WS-Policy specification [WS-Policy].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wst:</td>
<td>Either <a href="http://schemas.xmlsoap.org/ws/2005/02/trust">http://schemas.xmlsoap.org/ws/2005/02/trust</a> or <a href="http://docs.oasis-open.org/ws-sx/ws-trust/200512">http://docs.oasis-open.org/ws-sx/ws-trust/200512</a></td>
<td>This is the WS-Trust namespace defined in the February 2005 WS-Trust specification [WS-Trust12] or the OASIS...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This specification uses the following typographical conventions in text: <SAMLElement>, <ns:ForeignElement>, Attribute, Datatype, OtherCode.

1.2 Normative References


1.3 Non-Normative References


2  SAML V2.0 Information Card Token Profile

2.1 Required Information

Identification: http://docs.oasis-open.org/imi/ns/token/saml2/200908
Contact information: imi-comment@lists.oasis-open.org
Description: Given below.
Updates: None.

2.2 Profile Overview

Identity providers and relying parties employing the Identity Metasystem Interoperability [IMI] profile to request and exchange security tokens are able to use arbitrary token formats, provided there is agreement on the token's syntax and semantics, and a way to connect the token's content to the supported protocol features.

This profile provides a set of requirements and guidelines for the use of SAML V2.0 assertions as security tokens that, where possible, emulates existing SAML V2.0 authentication profiles [SAML2Prof] so as to limit the amount of new work that must be done by existing software to support the use of Information Cards. It also provides for the use of SAML assertions in this new context that is safe and consistent with best practices in similar contexts.

This profile does not seek to alter the required behavior of existing identity selector software, or conflict with the profile defined by [IMI].

2.3 Identity Provider Requirements

While the SAML V2.0 specification [SAML2Core] defines an identity provider solely in terms of the SAML Authentication Request protocol, the term is generally applicable to an entity that issues authentication assertions by means of other, similar protocols. In this case, the identity provider functions as an Identity Provider/Security Token Service (IP/STS) in the Information Card vocabulary, and issues assertions in response to <wst:RequestSecurityToken> messages [WS-Trust12] or [WS-Trust13].

As defined by [IMI], the request contains information that provides input into the assertion creation process. The following sections outline requirements for interpreting this input and the resulting assertion content.

2.3.1 Token Type

Identity providers MUST suport both of the following token type strings in conjunction with this profile:

- http://docs.oasis-open.org/imi/ns/token/saml2/200908
- urn:oasis:names:tc:SAML:2.0:assertion

This string appears in various content produced and consumed by an identity provider, such as (but not limited to) the <wst:TokenType> element.

Information cards issued by the identity provider MUST indicate support for both token types above.
2.3.2 Identifying Token Issuers

Information cards produced by identity providers MUST contain the identity provider's unique name as the value of the `<ic:Issuer>` element. This name corresponds to the SAML concept of an "entityID" and may correspond to an actual entityID in the SAML sense of the term, or a logically equivalent name for the identity provider.

2.3.3 General Assertion Requirements

Assertions issued in accordance with this profile MUST contain a single `<saml:AuthnStatement>` that reflects the authentication of the token requester to the identity provider. Note that it does NOT reflect the authentication taking place by means of the assertion to the relying party. It MAY contain a single `<saml:AttributeStatement>` that carries one or more `<saml:Attribute>` elements reflecting the claims requested by the relying party, in the manner specified by [IMI].

When satisfying these requested claims, the resulting `<saml:Attribute>` element's `NameFormat` XML attribute MUST be:

```
urn:oasis:names:tc:SAML:2.0:attrname-format:uri
```

The element's `Name` XML attribute MUST correspond to the requested claim type's URI value (e.g., in `<ic:ClaimType>` elements).

A `<saml:NameID>` element MAY be included in the assertion's `<saml:Subject>` element. If the requested claim types include a claim type with a URI corresponding to a SAML name identifier format known to the identity provider, it may satisfy that claim request by including a `<saml:NameID>` element of the proper format in the assertion's subject. If more than one claim type corresponding to a name identifier format is requested, the identity provider MAY fault the request or choose any requested format, at its discretion. If two such claim types are "required" by the relying party, a fault MUST be generated.

The assertion's `<saml:Subject>` element MUST contain at least one `<saml:SubjectConfirmation>` element, the details of which are defined in section 2.3.4 below.

Finally, the assertion MUST be signed.

2.3.4 Proof Keys and Subject Confirmation

[IMI] defines three classes of "proof keys" that bind the issued token to key material controlled by the client: symmetric, asymmetric, and no key. The notion of a proof key maps directly to a `<saml:SubjectConfirmation>` element in the issued assertion.

If a token request does not include a `<wst:KeyType>` element, the identity provider SHOULD assume that an asymmetric proof key is required.

Both symmetric and asymmetric proof key types generally correspond to the "holder-of-key" confirmation method defined in section 3.1 of [SAML2Prof]. For the proof key types and algorithms specified by [IMI], the resulting assertion MUST contain a `<saml:SubjectConfirmation>` element with a `Method` of:

```
urn:oasis:names:tc:SAML:2.0:cm:holder-of-key
```

The accompanying `<ds:KeyInfo>` element MUST identify the proof key. In the case of an RSA asymmetric proof key, the key SHOULD be represented as a `<ds:RSAKeyValue>` element within a `<ds:KeyValue>` element.

Proof key algorithms defined outside of [IMI] MAY specify alternate `<saml:SubjectConfirmation>` content, if necessary.
The "no key" proof key type corresponds to the "bearer" confirmation method defined in section 3.3 of [SAML2Prof]. The resulting assertion MUST contain a `<saml:SubjectConfirmation>` element with a Method of:

```xml
  urn:oasis:names:tc:SAML:2.0:cm:bearer
```

In the case of bearer assertions, the `<saml:SubjectConfirmation>` element MUST include a `<saml:SubjectConfirmationData>` element containing a NotOnOrAfter XML attribute to limit their use, typically to a very short window of time, although the exact duration may be use case dependent. The attribute MAY be included for "holder-of-key" assertions, at the discretion of the identity provider.

The `<saml:SubjectConfirmationData>` element, if present, MUST NOT contain a NotBefore or Recipient XML attribute. The Address XML attribute MAY be included to indicate the expected network address of the client to the relying party.

Finally, note that other `<saml:SubjectConfirmation>` elements MAY be included at the discretion of the identity provider.

### 2.3.5 Conditions

Assertions MAY contain a `<saml:Conditions>` element with NotBefore and NotOnOrAfter attributes. This validity period can be independent of the window during which the client can present the assertion to a relying party as a security token (see section 2.3.4), but of course must be a superset of that window.

If the request contains a `<wsp:AppliesTo>` element, then a `<saml:AudienceRestriction>` containing a `<saml:Audience>` element MUST be included with the value of that element.

Other conditions MAY be included at the discretion of the identity provider.

### 2.3.6 Encryption

If a suitable key belonging to the relying party is known, the identity provider SHOULD encrypt the resulting assertion in accordance with section 6 of [SAML2Core], and return the result to the requester in the form of a `<saml:EncryptedAssertion>` element.

If a public key belonging to the relying party is communicated to the identity provider in the `<wst:RequestSecurityToken>` request message in the `<wsp:AppliesTo>` element, this key SHOULD be used in preference to any other key known to the identity provider through others means (e.g., SAML V2.0 metadata).

### 2.4 Relying Party Requirements

A relying party uses the mechanisms defined by [IMI] to request security tokens in the form of SAML2.0 assertions issued by particular or arbitrary identity providers. The following sections outline requirements for describing a relying party's needs based on this profile.

#### 2.4.1 Token Type

Relying parties SHOULD use the following token type string when requesting a token in conjunction with this profile:

```xml
  http://docs.oasis-open.org/imi/ns/token/saml2/200908
```

This string appears in various content produced by a relying party, such as (but not limited to) the `<wst:TokenType>` element.
For backward compatibility, relying parties MAY use the following token type string:

```
urn:oasis:names:tc:SAML:2.0:assertion
```

When using the legacy token type, relying parties should be aware that the resulting assertions may or may not conform to this profile. If such a guarantee is required, the newer token type should be used instead.

### 2.4.2 Identifying Token Issuers

When identifying a requirement for a specific token issuer, the relying party SHOULD use the identity provider's unique name (i.e., its "entityID").

### 2.4.3 Identifying Relying Parties

If the relying party provides security policy metadata (see section 3.1 of [IMI]), it MAY include a `<wsp:AppliesTo>` element inside a `<sp:RequestSecurityTokenTemplate>` element that refers to its own unique name (i.e., its "entityID") in the `<wsa:Address>` element.

If it does include a `<wsp:AppliesTo>` element, it SHOULD NOT identify itself using the location of its endpoint, as this complicates the identity provider's ability to identify the relying party. A logical name SHOULD be used instead.

### 2.4.4 Identifying Claim Types

SAML attributes required or desired by the relying party are identified by using the SAML attribute's Name XML attribute in various places, such as the `<ic:ClaimType>` element's Uri XML attribute. Such SAML attributes MUST have a NameFormat XML attribute of:

```
urn:oasis:names:tc:SAML:2.0:attrname-format:uri
```

A claim type URI corresponding to a SAML name identifier format MAY be used to request a particular type of `<saml:NameID>` element in the resulting assertion. A relying party MUST NOT request more than one "required" claim type corresponding to a name identifier format.

### 2.4.5 Assertion Validity

Relying parties SHOULD evaluate assertions using the rules defined by [SAML2Core] (and [SAML2Prof] in the case of the defined subject confirmation methods). Invalid assertions SHOULD NOT be used to authenticate clients that present them.

In assessing validity, a relying party MUST verify the signature over the assertion, evaluate any conditions present, and successfully evaluate at least one `<saml:SubjectConfirmation>` element in the assertion based on the presentation of the assertion. This may include verifying that the `NotOnOrAfter` attribute in the `<saml:SubjectConfirmationData>` (if present) has not passed, subject to allowable clock skew between it and the identity provider.

If the `<saml:SubjectConfirmationData>` includes an `Address` attribute, the relying party MAY check the client address against it.

In the case of the "holder-of-key" method, the relying party MUST establish proof of possession by the client of the key identified by the accompanying `<ds:KeyInfo>` element, such as through the use of a message signature or authentication over a secure transport. The exact means are out of scope of this profile.
In the case of the "bearer" method, the relying party MUST ensure that assertions are not replayed, by maintaining the set of used ID values for the length of time for which the assertion would be considered valid based on the NotOnOrAfter attribute in the <saml:SubjectConfirmationData> element.

2.5 Use of SAML Metadata

While not required, sites exchanging SAML assertions based on this profile MAY rely on SAML V2.0 metadata [SAML2Meta] as a way of deriving information about endpoints and keys, to supplement mechanisms that exist within [IMI]. Where similarities or overlaps exist, precedence MUST be given to metadata information exchanged using the mechanisms defined by [IMI].

When referring to token issuers or relying parties by "logical" names, in the manner described by [IMI], the names used SHOULD correspond to the "entityID" values used in SAML metadata.

The value http://docs.oasis-open.org/imi/ns/token/saml2/200908 MUST be used in the protocolSupportEnumeration attribute to identify support for this profile within a <md:IDPSSODescriptor> or <md:SPSSODescriptor> role. If <md:SingleSignOnService> or <md:AssertionConsumerService> endpoints supporting this profile are included, the same value MUST be used as the value of the Binding attribute. In addition, a <wsa:EndpointReference> element MAY be included within an endpoint element to describe the endpoint and its security policy in accordance with [IMI].

2.6 Security Considerations

2.6.1 Unconstrained Bearer Assertions

The Information Card model's support for hiding the identity of the relying party from the identity provider, combined with constraints on the implementation of the model for use with web browsers, leads to requests for "unconstrained" bearer assertions with no audience or subject confirmation conditions on use. While all uses of bearer assertions are subject to certain threats and attacks (see [SAML2Sec]), the lack of conditions on such assertions introduces additional serious threats to consider.

Ordinarily, the threat of a stolen assertion is mitigated by the fact that it can only be used to authenticate to a particular relying party. Without conditions on use, an attacker that successfully steals such an assertion has many more targets of opportunity. Essentially, the ability to mount an attack against a user's interactions with any single relying party become effective against all parties that are willing to accept such an assertion. Consider that some low value services may choose to forgo the use of TLS/SSL, leaving the assertions issued for their use much more vulnerable to theft. A successful attacker can then impersonate the intended user even with relying parties that choose to deploy such protection, rendering their investment moot.

Perhaps more seriously, relying parties that choose to accept such assertions are in turn empowered with the opportunity to impersonate the user for the duration of the subject confirmation window with any other like-minded relying parties. This threat looms larger when one considers that a compromised relying party could expose all its users to this risk if an attacker can tap the flow of incoming assertions. With traditional constraints in place, this threat is mitigated by the fact that a compromise, while potentially exposing user data, does not extend beyond the scope of access to the affected relying party.

Note that one of the only mitigating mechanisms to these threats are to enforce restrictions on use of assertions based on an IP address placed into the assertion by the identity provider. While moderately effective, this practice often proves impractical for services offered to large user populations, many of whom are likely to encounter proxies and network configurations that result in inability to satisfy the restriction.
As a result, this profile recommends against the use of unconstrained bearer assertions as a general matter, and urges implementations to provide deployers with the ability to control this behavior. The privacy advantages of such a model need to be carefully weighed against the risks to users and relying parties.

2.6.2 Encryption

Identity providers should generally make every attempt to encrypt the assertions they produce if a key for the relying party can be established. If encryption is not used, then the identity provider should be aware of the potential for exposure of the assertion's contents, both to the requester and potentially to network observers if TLS/SSL is not used (particularly between the requester and the eventual relying party).

Caution, however, should be exercised in relying solely on the TLS/SSL certificate found at a relying party's endpoint to identify the key. In particular, the key has to be authenticated in order to ensure that it actually belongs to the eventual endpoint used by the client. Furthermore, there can be no guarantee that the software responsible for decrypting the security token will have access to the corresponding private key.

2.7 Examples

2.7.1 Two Required Claims

In this example, a relying party asks for two required claims, an email address and a displayable name. These are standard, well-known LDAP/X.500 attributes with a standard representation in SAML.

Given the following OBJECT syntax:

```xml
<Object type="application/x-informationCard" name="xmlToken">
  <PARAM Name="tokenType" Value="http://docs.oasis-open.org/imi/ns/token/saml2/200908">
  <PARAM Name="issuer" Value="https://idp.example.org/entity">
  <PARAM Name="requiredClaims" Value="urn:oid:0.9.2342.19200300.100.1.3 urn:oid:2.16.840.1.113730.3.1.241">
</object>
```

the following assertion could be issued:

```xml
Assertion xmlns="urn:oasis:names:tc:SAML:2.0:assertion" ID="_a75adf55-01d7-40cc-929f-dbd8372ebdfc" IssueInstant="2009-04-17T00:46:02Z" Version="2.0">
  <Issuer>https://idp.example.org/entity</Issuer>
  <ds:Signature xmlns:ds="http://www.w3.org/2000/09/xmldsig#">
    ...
  </ds:Signature>
  <Subject>
    <SubjectConfirmation Method="urn:oasis:names:tc:SAML:2.0:cm:bearer" Address="192.168.1.1" NotOnOrAfter="2009-04-17T00:51:02Z" />
  </Subject>
  <Conditions>
    <Condition NotBefore="2009-04-17T00:46:02Z" NotOnOrAfter="2009-04-17T01:51:02Z">
      <AudienceRestriction>
        <Audience>https://puppies.com/entity</Audience>
      </AudienceRestriction>
    </Condition>
  </Conditions>
  <AuthnStatement AuthnInstant="2009-04-17T00:46:00Z">
    <AuthnContext>
      <AuthnContextClassRef>
        urn:oasis:names:tc:SAML:2.0:ac:classes:Password
      </AuthnContextClassRef>
    </AuthnContext>
    <AuthnStatement>
      ...
    </AuthnStatement>
  </AuthnStatement>
</Assertion>
```
2.7.2 One Required Claim, as Federated NameID

In this example, a relying party asks for a single claim using a name that is recognized by the identity provider as a SAML name identifier format. Any claim name could be interpreted in this fashion since the taxonomy of such formats is extensible, but it is expected that deployments making use of SAML name identifiers would already agree on appropriate use of them.

Given the following OBJECT syntax:

```
<OBJECT type="application/x-informationCard" name="xmlToken">
  <PARAM Name="tokenType" Value="http://docs.oasis-open.org/imi/ns/token/saml2/200908">
  <PARAM Name="issuer" Value="https://idp.example.org/entity">
  <PARAM Name="requiredClaims" Value="urn:oasis:names:tc:SAML:2.0:nameid-format:persistent">
</OBJECT>
```

the following assertion could be issued:

```
<Assertion xmlns="urn:oasis:names:tc:SAML:2.0:assertion" ID="_a75adf55-01d7-40cc-929f-db8372ebdfc" IssueInstant="2009-04-17T00:46:02Z" Version="2.0">
  <Issuer>https://idp.example.org/entity</Issuer>
  <ds:Signature xmlns:ds="http://www.w3.org/2000/09/xmldsig#">
    ...
  </ds:Signature>
  <Subject>
    <NameID Format="urn:oasis:names:tc:SAML:2.0:nameid-format:persistent" NameQualifier="https://idp.example.org/entity" SPNameQualifier="https://puppies.com/entity">
      rfhyfeefod893434923gqwdtmgr9090f
    </NameID>
    <SubjectConfirmation Method="urn:oasis:names:tc:SAML:2.0:cm:bearer" Address="192.168.1.1" NotOnOrAfter="2009-04-17T00:51:02Z" />
  </Subject>
  <Conditions NotBefore="2009-04-17T00:46:02Z" NotOnOrAfter="2009-04-17T01:51:02Z">
    <AudienceRestriction>
      < Audience >https://puppies.com/entity</ Audience >
    </AudienceRestriction>
  </Conditions>
  <AuthnStatement AuthnInstant="2009-04-17T00:46:00Z">
    <AuthnContext>
      <AuthnContextClassRef>
        urn:oasis:names:tc:SAML:2.0:ac:classes:Password
      </AuthnContextClassRef>
    </AuthnContext>
  </AuthnStatement>
</Assertion>
```
3 Conformance

3.1 SAML V2.0 Information Card Token Profile

An identity provider implementation conforms to this profile if it can produce assertions consistent with the normative text in section 2.3.

A relying party implementation conforms to this profile if it can accept assertions consistent with the normative text of section 2.4.

Use of SAML V2.0 metadata [SAML2Meta] per section 2.5 is OPTIONAL.
Appendix A. Acknowledgments

The editors would like to acknowledge the contributions of the OASIS Identity Metasystem Interoperability Technical Committee, whose voting members at the time of publication were:

- TBD

The editor would also like to acknowledge the following contributors:

- Jim Fox, University of Washington
Appendix B. Revision History

- Draft 01, revised from Draft 02 of the SSTC-submitted version of this profile.
- Draft 02, revised based on IMI TC feedback and to correct for spec formatting issues.
- Draft 03, legacy token type language added.