



---

# 2 Technical Overview of the OASIS 3 Security Assertion Markup Language 4 (SAML) V1.1

5 **Committee Draft, 11 May 2004**

6 **Document identifier:**

7 sstc-saml-tech-overview-1.1-cd

8 **Location:**

9 [http://www.oasis-open.org/committees/documents.php?wg\\_abbrev=security](http://www.oasis-open.org/committees/documents.php?wg_abbrev=security)

10 **Editors:**

11 John Hughes, Entegriety Solutions  
12 Eve Maler, Sun Microsystems

13 **Contributors:**

14 Rob Philpott, RSA Security

15 **Abstract:**

16 The Security Assertion Markup Language (SAML) standard defines a framework for exchanging  
17 security information between online business partners. It was developed by the Security Services  
18 Technical Committee (SSTC) of the standards organization OASIS (the Organization for the  
19 Advancement of Structured Information Standards). This document provides a technical  
20 description of SAML V1.1.

21 **Status:**

22 This non-normative document has been approved as a Committee Draft by the SSTC and is  
23 considered completed. This document is not currently on an OASIS Standard track. Readers  
24 should refer to the normative specification suite for precise information concerning SAML V1.1.

25 Committee members should submit comments to the [security-services@lists.oasis-open.org](mailto:security-services@lists.oasis-open.org) list.  
26 Others should submit comments by filling out the form at [http://www.oasis-  
27 open.org/committees/comments/form.php?wg\\_abbrev=security](http://www.oasis-open.org/committees/comments/form.php?wg_abbrev=security). The committee will publish vetted  
28 errata on the Security Services TC web page (<http://www.oasis-open.org/committees/security/>).

29 For information on whether any patents have been disclosed that may be essential to  
30 implementing the SAML specification suite, and any offers of patent licensing terms, please refer  
31 to the Intellectual Property Rights web page for the Security Services TC ([http://www.oasis-  
32 open.org/committees/security/ipr.php](http://www.oasis-open.org/committees/security/ipr.php)).

---

34 **Table of Contents**

35 1 Introduction.....3

36 2 SAML Overview.....4

37 3 SAML Architecture.....6

38     3.1 SAML Concepts.....6

39     3.2 SAML Structure and Examples.....7

40     3.3 Security of SAML.....10

41 4 Use Cases and Profiles.....11

42     4.1 Browser/Artifact Profile.....11

43         4.1.1 Detailed Processing for the Source-Site-First Scenario.....12

44     4.2 Browser/POST Profile.....13

45         4.2.1 Detailed Processing.....14

46     4.3 Destination-Site-First.....15

47         4.3.1 Detailed Processing for the Destination-Site-First Scenario.....15

48 5 Documentation Roadmap .....17

49

---

# 1 Introduction

50

51 The Security Assertion Markup Language (SAML) standard defines a framework for exchanging security  
52 information between online business partners.

53 More precisely, SAML defines a common XML framework for exchanging security assertions between  
54 entities. As stated in the SSTC charter, the purpose of the Technical Committee is:

55 *...to define, enhance, and maintain a standard XML-based framework for creating and*  
56 *exchanging authentication and authorization information.*

57 SAML is different from other security systems due to its approach of expressing assertions about a  
58 subject that other applications within a network can trust. What does this mean? To understand the  
59 answer, you need to know the following two concepts used within SAML:

## 60 **Asserting party**

61 The system, or administrative domain, that asserts information about a subject. For instance, the  
62 asserting party asserts that this user has been authenticated and has given associated attributes. For  
63 example: This user is **John Doe**, he has an email address of [john.doe@acompany.com](mailto:john.doe@acompany.com), and he  
64 was authenticated into this system using a **password** mechanism. In SAML, asserting parties are also  
65 known as SAML authorities.

## 66 **Relying party**

67 The system, or administrative domain, that relies on information supplied to it by the asserting party. It  
68 is up to the relying party as to whether it trusts the assertions provided to it. SAML defines a number  
69 of mechanisms that enable the relying party to trust the assertions provided to it. It should be noted  
70 that although a relying party can trust the assertions provided to it, local access policy defines whether  
71 the subject may access local resources. Therefore, although the relying party trusts that I'm **John**  
72 **Doe** – it doesn't mean I'm given carte blanche access to all resources.

## 2 SAML Overview

74 Why is SAML needed? The SSTC developed a number of use cases to drive SAML's requirements. For  
 75 SAML 1.x, the most important of these use cases described a SAML-based solution to the problem of  
 76 Web Single Sign-On (SSO). Web SSO allows users to gain access to website resources in multiple  
 77 domains without having to re-authenticate after initially logging in to the first domain. To achieve SSO, the  
 78 domains need to form a trust relationship before they can share an understanding of the user's identity  
 79 that allows the necessary access. Figure 1 illustrates the high-level Web SSO use case; more details  
 80 about how this is achieved are provided later in the document.

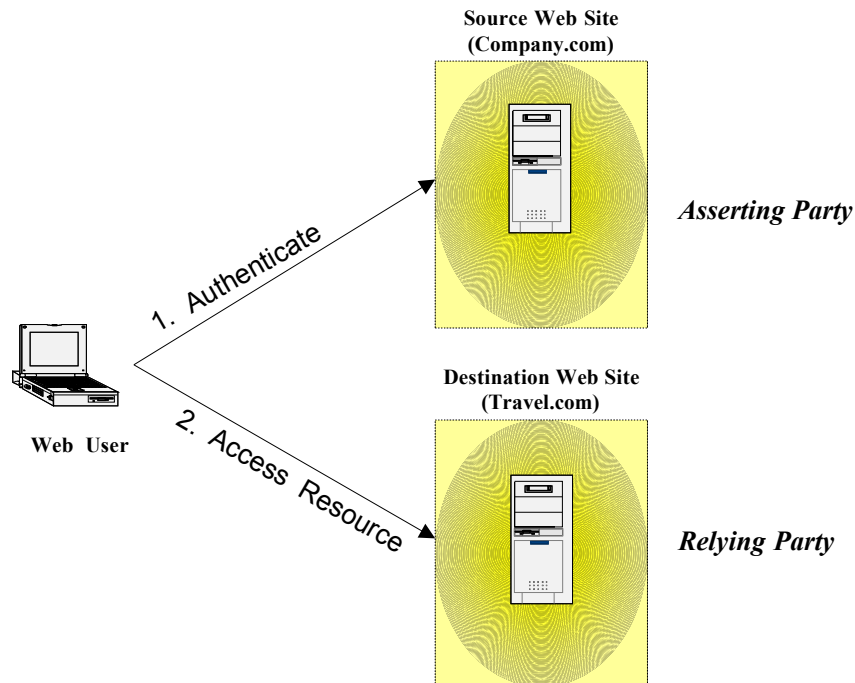


Figure 1: Web SSO High-Level Use Case

82 Following are some specific scenarios to which SAML's SSO capabilities are relevant:

83 • **Government Portal**

84 A Government department has implemented a centralized portal system. Linked to the portal system  
 85 are a number of satellite systems. The central portal system maintains the authentication information  
 86 for all users; however, the satellite systems use a wide range of access management products from a  
 87 variety of vendors. Users should only be required to be authenticated once, and they can either go  
 88 initially to the satellite system or the central portal. In this scenario the portal is the asserting party for  
 89 the whole system and the satellite systems are the relying parties.

90 • **Travel Bookings**

91 Authenticated users of Company.com need to gain access to protected resources at Travel.com in  
 92 order to make travel arrangements. The Company.com users should not need to have to re-  
 93 authenticate to Travel.com. In addition, only certain privileged users (for example, above a certain job  
 94 grade) may book international travel.

95 • **Goods Purchasing**

96 Authenticated users of Company.com use an internal purchasing system to place orders for office  
 97 supplies from Supplier.com. Supplier.com needs to know the user and their shipping address.  
 98 Supplier.com also needs to know whether the user is authorized to purchase goods of that value.  
 99

100 The following technical factors drove an urgent need for SAML when it was first created:

- 101 • **Limitations of browser cookies:** Before SAML, most SSO products used browser cookies to maintain  
102 state so that re-authentication is not required. Browser cookies are not transferred between DNS  
103 domains. So, if you obtain a cookie from www.abc.com, then that cookie will not be sent in any HTTP  
104 messages to www.xyz.com. This could even apply within an organization that has separate DNS  
105 domains. Therefore, to solve the cross-domain SSO problem requires the application of a different  
106 approach.
- 107 • **SSO interoperability:** Products had implemented cross-domain SSO in completely proprietary ways,  
108 meaning that organizations that want to perform cross-domain SSO had to use the same SSO product  
109 in all the domains, whether within one organization or across trading partners.
- 110 • **Web services:** There is an increasing trend towards inter-organizational distributed computing. Many  
111 standards have emerged that facilitate this trend, in particular web services based applications.  
112 However, there has been no standard way to convey security attributes associated with inter-  
113 organizational communications.

114 When SAML V2.0 is released in 2004, additional use cases will be supported. To find out more about the  
115 scope and design of SAML V2.0, visit the SSTC home page at [http://www.oasis-](http://www.oasis-open.org/committees/tc_home.php?wg_abbrev=security)  
116 [open.org/committees/tc\\_home.php?wg\\_abbrev=security](http://www.oasis-open.org/committees/tc_home.php?wg_abbrev=security) and review the SAML V2.0 Scope/Work Items  
117 document.

## 3 SAML Architecture

118

119 The SAML technology is rooted in XML. The information passed around between asserting parties (SAML  
120 authorities) and relying parties is mostly in the form of XML, and the format of these XML messages and  
121 assertions is defined in a pair of SAML XML schemas.

### 3.1 SAML Concepts

122

123 SAML has the following key concepts:

- 124 • **Assertions:** An assertion is a package of information that supplies one or more statements made by  
125 a SAML authority. SAML defines three kinds of statements that can be carried within an assertion.  
126 *Authentication statements* say “This subject was authenticated by this means at this time.” *Attribute*  
127 *statements* provide specific details about the subject (for example, that a user holds “Gold” status).  
128 *Authorization decision statements* identify what the subject is entitled to do (for example, whether a  
129 user is permitted to buy a specified item). The XML format for assertions and their allowable  
130 extensions is defined in an XML schema.
- 131 • **Protocol:** SAML defines a request/response protocol for obtaining assertions. A SAML request can  
132 either ask for a specific known assertion or make authentication, attribute, and authorization  
133 decision queries, with the SAML response providing back the requested assertions. The XML format  
134 for protocol messages and their allowable extensions is defined in an XML schema.
- 135 • **Bindings:** A binding details exactly how the SAML protocol maps onto transport and messaging  
136 protocols. For instance, the SAML specification provides a binding of how SAML request/responses  
137 are carried within SOAP exchange messages over HTTP.
- 138 • **Profiles:** Profiles are technical descriptions of particular flows of assertions and protocol messages  
139 that define how SAML can be used for a particular purpose. They are derived from use cases. Use  
140 cases and profiles are discussed later on in the document.

141 Figure 2 shows the relationship between these components.

142

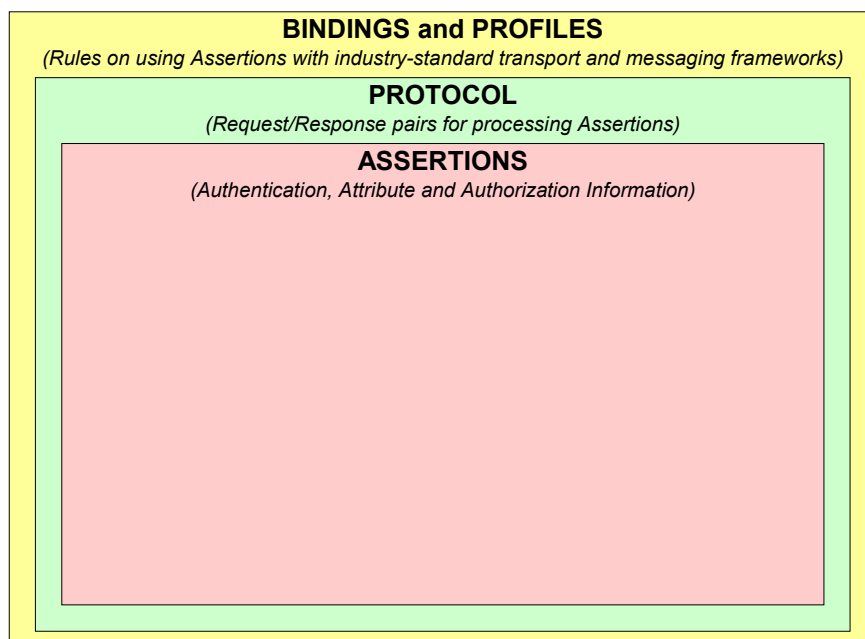


Figure 2: Relationship between SAML Components

144

145 **3.2 SAML Structure and Examples**

146 The sole binding specified in SAML V1.1 is the “SOAP-over HTTP” binding. Figure 3 illustrates the  
147 relationship between SOAP and the SAML protocol messages being transported within the SOAP body.  
148

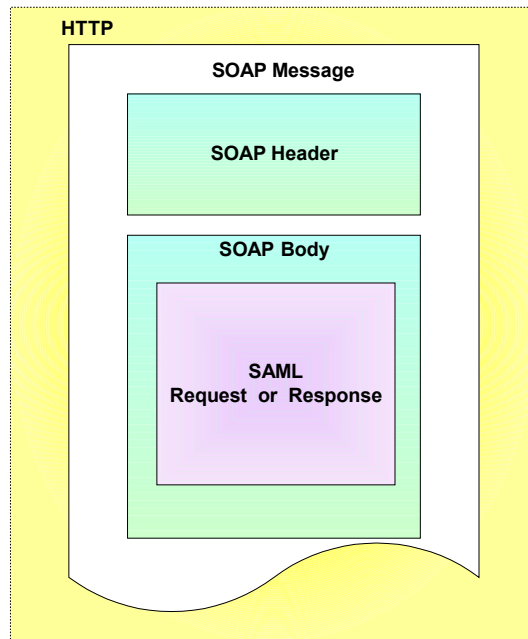


Figure 3: SOAP over HTTP Binding

149 SAML responses carry assertions that satisfy the parameters of the SAML request. Figure 4 illustrates a  
150 SAML response being transported within a SOAP body. Note the following characteristics:

- 151 • The SAML response contains SAML status information in addition to one or more assertions.
- 152 • One or more assertions can be transported, although typically only a single assertion is provided in a  
153 SAML response.
- 154 • An assertion consists of one or more statements. For SSO, typically a SAML assertion will contain a  
155 single authentication statement and possibly a single attribute statement.

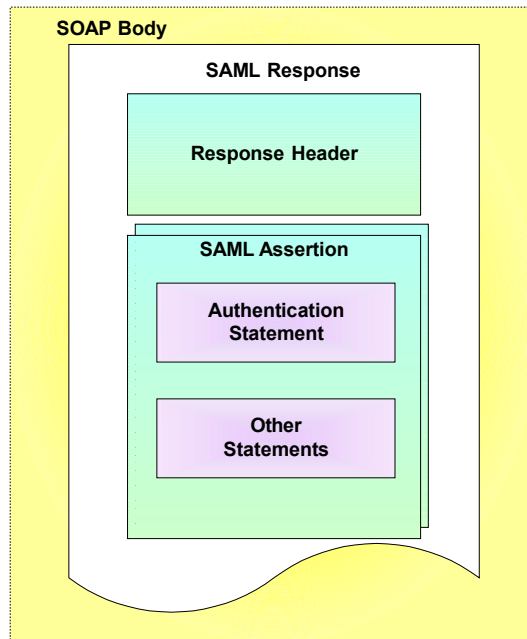


Figure 4: SAML Response Structure

156 So what does the XML look like? Figure 5 shows an example of a SAML request being transported within  
 157 a SOAP message. In this example, a SAML assertion is being requested pertaining to a supplied artifact.  
 158 The use of the artifact is explained later in the Use Case and Profiles section. The SAML request has  
 159 been highlighted.

```

160 <env:Envelope
161   xmlns:env="http://www.w3.org/2003/05/soap/envelope/"
162   <env:Body>
163     <samlp:Request
164       xmlns:samlp="urn:oasis:names:tc:SAML:1.0:protocol"
165       xmlns:saml="urn:oasis:names:tc:SAML:1.0:assertion"
166       MajorVersion="1"
167       MinorVersion="1"
168       RequestID=" 192.168.16.51.1024506224022"
169       IssueInstant="2002-06-19T17:03:44.022Z">
170       <samlp:AssertionArtifact>
171         AAGZE1RNQJEFzYNCGAGPjWvtDIRSZ4
172         lWdQbphqAEYkgG/RBdHoeMsulf
173       </samlp:AssertionArtifact>
174     </samlp:Request>
175   </env:Body>
176 </env:Envelope>
  
```

Figure 5: SAML Artifact Request

177 Figure 6 shows how a SAML response is embedded within a SOAP message. The SAML response  
 178 provides details as to the version of SAML being used and what request it is responding to. The  
 179 ResponseID, InResponseTo, version numbers, IssueInstant and the status code represent the SAML  
 180 response header. Within the response is the SAML assertion and typically one or more statements. The  
 181 SAML response has been highlighted.



182

```
183 <env:Envelope
184   xmlns:env="http://schemas.xmlsoap.org/soap/envelope/">
185   <env:Body>
186     <samlp:Response
187       xmlns:samlp="urn:oasis:names:tc:SAML:1.0:protocol"
188       ResponseID="huGxcDQc4cNdDyocphmi6CxEMnga"
189       InResponseTo=" 192.168.16.51.1024506224022"
190       MajorVersion="1"
191       MinorVersion="1"
192       IssueInstant="2002-06-19T17:05:37.795Z">
193       <samlp:Status>
194         <samlp:StatusCode Value="samlp:Success" />
195       </samlp:Status>
196       ..... SAML ASSERTION AND STATEMENTS
197     </samlp:Response>
198   </env:Body>
199 </env:Envelope>
```

Figure 6: SAML Response

202 Figure 7 shows an example assertion with a single authentication statement. The authentication statement  
203 has been highlighted. Note the following:

- 204 • The subject (e.g. user) that the authentication pertains to is "joe". The format of the subject has been  
205 defined. In this case its a custom format; however, a number of predefined formats have been  
206 provided in the SAML specification, including email addresses and X.509 subject names.
- 207 • Joe was originally authenticated using a password mechanism at "2002-06-19T17:05:17.706Z".

```
208 <saml:Assertion
209   xmlns:saml="urn:oasis:names:tc:SAML:1.0:assertion"
210   MajorVersion="1"
211   MinorVersion="1"
212   AssertionID="buGxcG4gILg5NlocyLccDz6iXrUa"
213   Issuer="www.acompany.com"
214   IssueInstant="2002-06-19T17:05:37.795Z">
215   <saml:Conditions NotBefore="2002-06-19T17:00:37.795Z"
216     NotOnOrAfter="2002-06-19T17:10:37.795Z"/>
217   <saml:AuthenticationStatement
218     AuthenticationMethod="urn:oasis:names:tc:SAML:1.0:am:password"
219     AuthenticationInstant="2002-06-19T17:05:17.706Z">
220     <saml:Subject>
221       <saml:NameIdentifier
222         NameQualifier=http://www.acompany.com
223         Format="http://www.customformat.com/">
224         uid=joe
225       </saml:NameIdentifier>
226       <saml:SubjectConfirmation>
227         <saml:ConfirmationMethod>
228           urn:oasis:names:tc:SAML:1.0:cm:artifact-01
229         </saml:ConfirmationMethod>
230       </saml:SubjectConfirmation>
231     </saml:Subject>
232   </saml:AuthenticationStatement>
233 </saml:Assertion>
```

Figure 7: SAML Assertion

### 234 3.3 Security of SAML

235 Just providing assertions from an asserting party to a relying party may not be adequate for a secure  
236 system. How does the relying party trust what is being asserted to it? In addition, what prevents a “man-  
237 in-the-middle” attack that grabs assertions to be illicitly “replayed” at a later date? SAML defines a number  
238 of security mechanisms that prevent or detect such attacks. The primary mechanism is for the relying  
239 party and asserting party to have a pre-existing trust relationship, typically involving a Public Key  
240 Infrastructure (PKI). Whilst use of a PKI is not mandated, it is recommended. Use of particular  
241 mechanisms is described for each profile; however, an overview of what is recommended is provided  
242 below:

- 243 • Where **message integrity** and **message confidentiality** are required, then HTTP over SSL 3.0 or  
244 TLS 1.0 is recommended.
- 245 • When a relying party requests an assertion from an asserting party then **bi-lateral authentication** is  
246 required and the use of SSL 3.0 or TLS 1.0 using server *and* client authentication are recommended.
- 247 • When an assertion is “pushed” to a relying party (as with the Browser/POST profile), then it is  
248 mandated that the response message be **digitally signed** using the XML digital signature standard.

## 4 Use Cases and Profiles

249

250 Early in its business requirements analysis, the SSTC defined a number of use cases for SAML. To date,  
251 only the Web SSO use case has been profiled. With the emergence of SAML V2.0 in 2004, a number of  
252 other use cases will also be profiled.

253 SAML V1.1 has defined Web SSO two profiles. These profiles assume:

- 254 • Use of a standard commercial web browser using either HTTP or HTTPS
- 255 • The user has authenticated to the local source site
- 256 • The assertion's subject refers implicitly to the user that has been authenticated

257 The profiles are:

- 258 • **Browser/Artifact Profile:** This represents a “pull model”. A special form of reference to the  
259 authentication assertion (called an artifact) is sent to the relying party, which can use this reference to  
260 obtain (or pull) the assertion from the Asserting Party.
- 261 • **Browser/POST Profile:** This represents a “push model”. An assertion is POSTed (using the HTTP  
262 POST command) directly to the relying party.

263 We shall now go on to describe in detail each of these profiles.

### 4.1 Browser/Artifact Profile

264

265 This Browser/Artifact profile is based on a pull model. Figure 8 illustrates the overall processing.

266

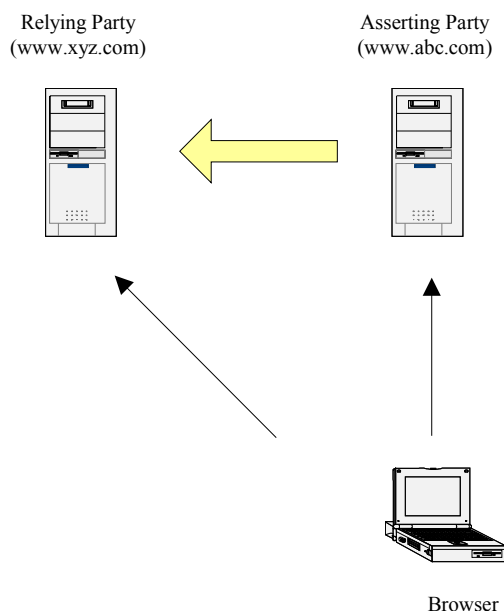


Figure 8: Browser/Artifact Profile Overview

267 In summary, the processing is as follows:

- 268 1. A user has an authenticated session on the local source site (asserting party).
- 269 2. The user wants to access a resource on the destination web site and is directed there. In the HTTP  
270 message, an HTTP query variable is passed called an *artifact*. The artifact is a base-64 encoded  
271 string. It consists of a unique identity of the source site (called the Source ID) and a unique reference  
272 to the assertion (called the AssertionHandle). The artifact therefore enables the destination web site to  
273 reference an assertion on a given web site.
- 274 3. The destination site (relying party) needs to determine the identity and entitlements of the user and  
275 sends a SAML request, containing the artifact, to the local site (the asserting party) asking it what it can

276 assert about the user. The assertions are transferred back in a SAML response.  
 277 4. The destination site then can make whatever authentication and authorization decisions it needs to,  
 278 based on the received assertion(s).  
 279 Two scenarios are possible in this use case:  
 280 • **Source-site-first:** The user visits their local source site first and is authenticated at the source site  
 281 before using a click-through link to gain access to the destination site.  
 282 • **Destination-site-first:** The user visits the destination site first; however, they need to be authenticated  
 283 at the source site prior to being granted access to resources on the destination site. This scenario  
 284 typically represents a centralized portal architecture.  
 285 The SAML 1.1 specifications only define the Source-site-first use case.

#### 286 4.1.1 Detailed Processing for the Source-Site-First Scenario

287 The following figure shows the processing and message flows for the Browser/Artifact profile in the  
 288 Source-Site-First scenario. In this example, the source web site includes a component called an Inter-site  
 289 Transfer Service (ITS). This is an addressable component that provides a point of functionality for SAML  
 290 processing such as artifact and redirect generation.  
 291

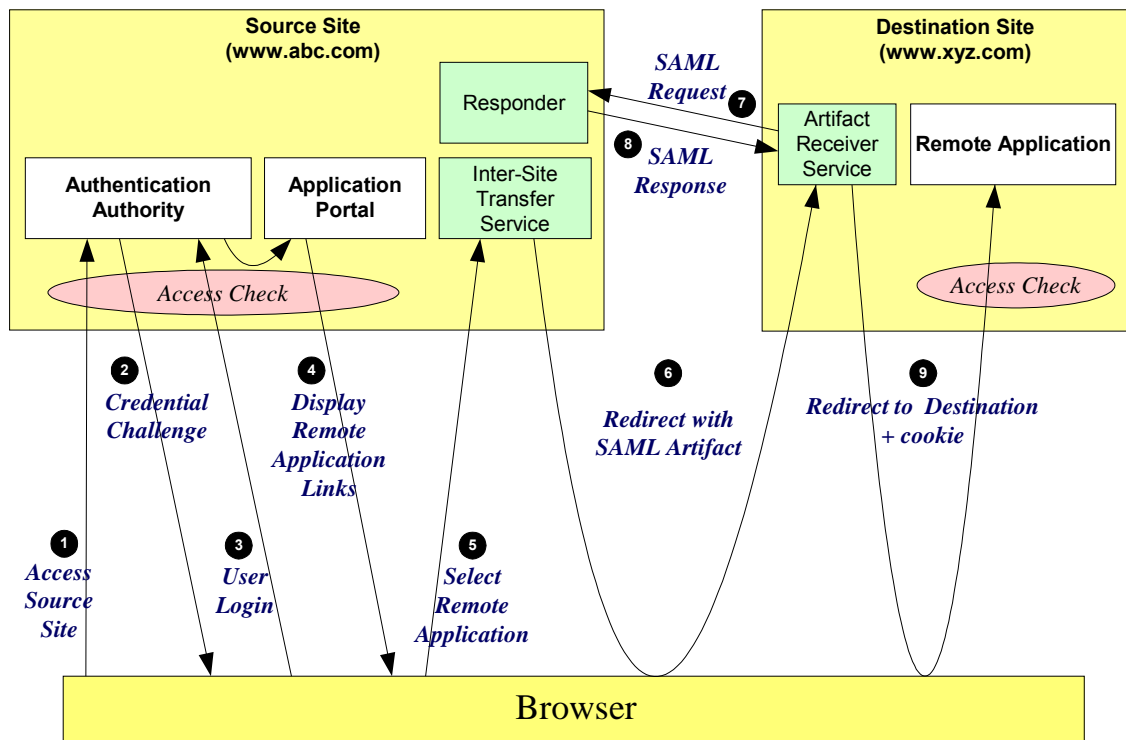


Figure 9: Browser/Artifact Profile – Local-Site-First - Detailed Processing

292 The processing is as follows:  
 293 1. The user accesses the source web site ([www.abc.com](http://www.abc.com)).  
 294 2. The source web site performs an access check and determines that the user does not have a current  
 295 session and requires the user to be authenticated. As a result, the user is challenged to authenticate.  
 296 3. The user supplies back credentials, for instance username and password.  
 297 4. If the authentication is successful, then a session is created for the user and the appropriate welcome  
 298 screen of the Portal application is displayed to the user.  
 299 5. The user selects a menu option (or function) on the displayed screen that means the user wants to  
 300 access a resource or application on a destination web site [www.xyz.com](http://www.xyz.com) (although, of course, the user  
 301 may not be made aware of this). This causes a HTTP request to be sent to the source site's Inter-site

302 Transfer Service (in this example, hosted on the same web site). The request contains the URL of the  
303 resource on the destination site. This is known as the TARGET URL. For instance, the portal  
304 application will issue an HTTP GET to the Inter-site Transfer Service on the [www.abc.com](http://www.abc.com) site which  
305 is listening on port 8002. The URL would look something like the following (without the URL encoding):

306 <https://www.abc.com:8002/InterSiteTransfer?TARGET=http://www.xyz.com/index.asp>

307 6. The Inter-site Transfer Service generates an assertion for the user while also creating an artifact (The  
308 Asserting Party). The artifact contains the source ID of the [www.abc.com](http://www.abc.com) SAML responder together  
309 with a reference to the assertion (the AssertionHandle). The Inter-site Transfer Service then sends  
310 back an HTTP redirection response to the browser, with the HTTP location header containing the URL  
311 of the Artifact Receiver service, the TARGET URL, and the artifact. On processing the redirect, the  
312 Browser will issue an HTTP GET of the form provided below, where the <artifact> is a base 64  
313 encoded number. This will be sent to the server hosting the TARGET URL.

314 <https://www.xyz.com:7001/ArtifactConsumer?TARGET=http://www.xyz.com/index.asp&SAMLart=<artifact>>

315 7. On receiving the HTTP message, the Artifact Receiver, on the destination web site, extracts the  
316 source-ID. A mapping between source IDs and remote Responders will already have been established  
317 administratively. The Artifact Receiver will therefore know that it has to contact the [www.abc.com](http://www.abc.com)  
318 SAML responder at the prescribed URL. The [www.xyz.com](http://www.xyz.com) Artifact Receiver will send a SAML request  
319 to the [www.abc.com](http://www.abc.com) SAML responder containing the artifact supplied by the Inter-site Transfer Service  
320 of [www.abc.com](http://www.abc.com).

321 8. The [www.abc.com](http://www.abc.com) SAML responder supplies back a SAML response message containing the  
322 assertion generated during step 7. In most implementations, if a valid assertion is received back, then  
323 a session on [www.xyz.com](http://www.xyz.com) is established for the user (the relying party) at this point.

324 9. The Artifact Receiver, on the destination web site, sends a redirection message containing a cookie  
325 back to the browser. The cookie identifies the session. The browser then processes the redirect  
326 message and issues a HTTP GET to the TARGET resource on [www.xyz.com](http://www.xyz.com). The GET message  
327 contains the cookie supplied back by the Artifact Receiver. An access check is then back to  
328 established whether the user has the correct authorization to access the [www.xyz.com](http://www.xyz.com) web site and  
329 the index.asp resource.

## 330 4.2 Browser/POST Profile

331 This profile uses the push model and does not rely on an artifact. The processing, in summary, is as  
332 follows:

- 333 • A user has an authenticated session on the local source site (the asserting party).
- 334 • The user wants to access a resource on the destination web site (the relying party). An HTML form is  
335 provided back to the browser from the source site. The form contains the assertion about the user. The  
336 form will also contain a button (or other type of trigger) that causes a POST of the assertion to the  
337 destination site to occur. This could also be in the form on JavaScript "auto-submit" action so that the  
338 user doesn't have to press a button.
- 339 • The destination site then can make whatever authentication and authorization decisions it needs to,  
340 based on the received assertion contained within the POST message.

As with the Browser/Artifact Profile the SAML 1.1 specifications only define this use case when use in a source-site-first situation.

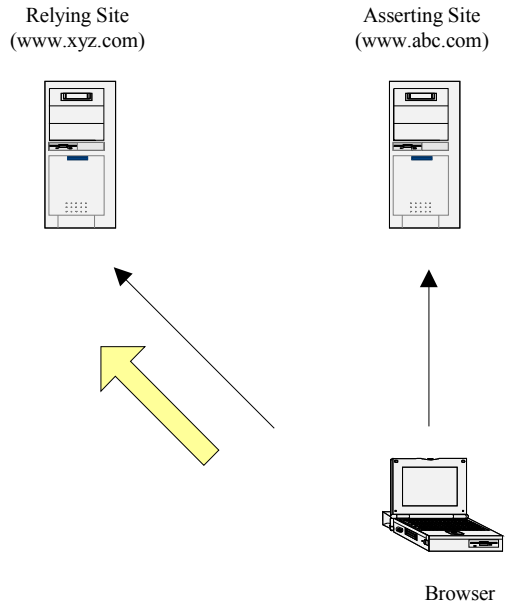


Figure 10 – Browser/POST Profile Overview

341

### 342 4.2.1 Detailed Processing

343 Figure 11 illustrates the processing.

344

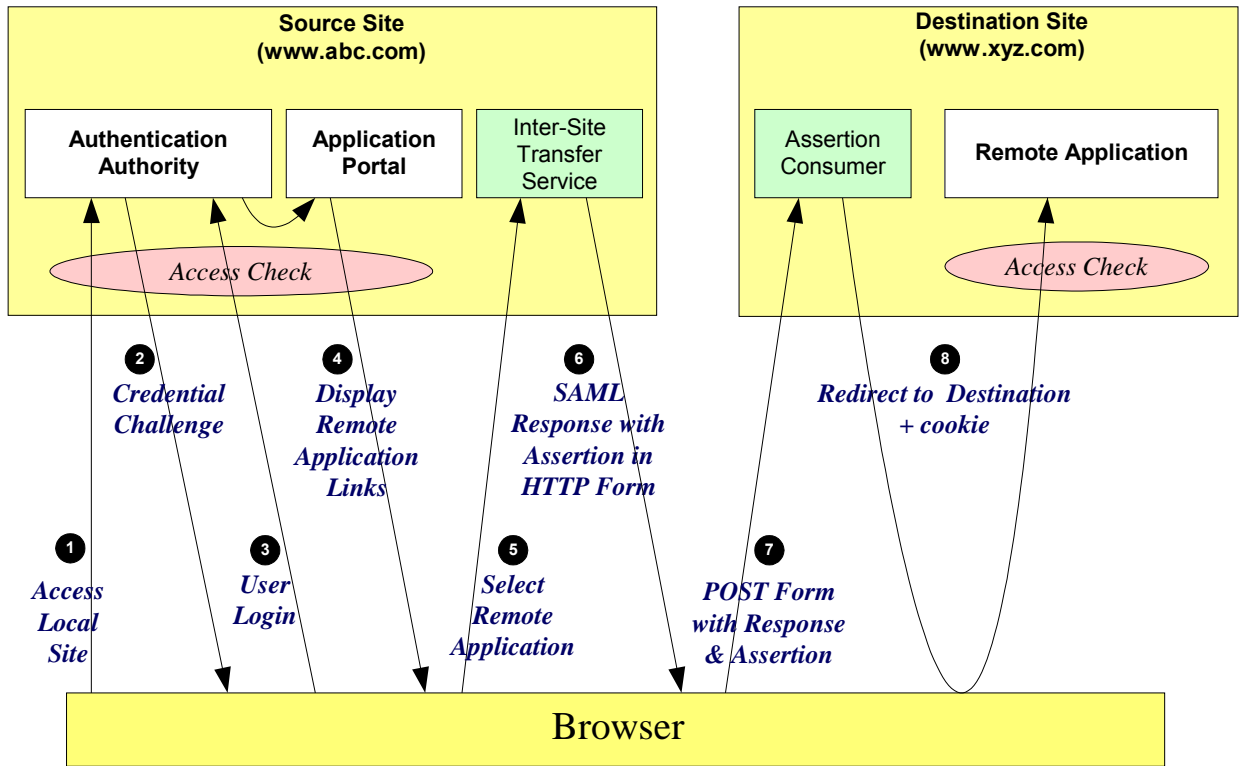


Figure 11: Browser/POST Profile – Detailed Processing

345

- 346 The processing is as follows:
- 347 1. The user accesses the source web site ([www.abc.com](http://www.abc.com))
  - 348 2. The source web site performs an access check and determines that the user does not have a current  
349 session and requires the user to be authenticated. As a result, the user is challenged to authenticate.
  - 350 3. The user supplies back credentials, for instance username and password.
  - 351 4. If the authentication is successful, then a session is created for the user and the appropriate welcome  
352 screen of the Portal application is displayed to the user.
  - 353 5. The user selects a menu option (or function) on the displayed screen that means the user wants to  
354 access a resource or application on a destination web site [www.xyz.com](http://www.xyz.com). The portal application then  
355 directs the request to the local Inter-site Transfer Service (in this example, hosted on the same web  
356 site). The request contains the URL of the resource on the destination site (the TARGET URL).
  - 357 6. The Inter-site Transfer Service sends a HTML form back to the browser. The HTML FORM contains a  
358 SAML response, within which is a SAML assertion. The SAML specifications mandate that the  
359 response must be digitally signed. Typically the HTML FORM will contain an input or submit action that  
360 will result in a HTTP POST.
  - 361 7. The browser, either due to a user action or via an “auto-submit”, issues a HTTP POST containing the  
362 SAML response to be sent to the destination's (relying party) Assertion Consumer service.
  - 363 8. The replying party's Assertion Consumer validates the digital signature on the SAML Response. If this  
364 validates, it sends a redirect to the browser causing it to access the TARGET resource. An access  
365 check is then made to establish whether the user has the correct authorization to access the  
366 [www.xyz.com](http://www.xyz.com) web site and the TARGET resource. The TARGET resource is the returned to the  
367 browser.

## 368 **4.3 Destination-Site-First**

369 As previously described in a number of use case scenarios the user may not initially access the asserting  
370 party. For instance, in the case of a centralized portal system, a user may first access a satellite system  
371 but is required to be authenticated centrally. This is known as “Destination-Site-First”. This particular use  
372 case is not described in the Web SSO Profile, the use of TARGET from the Replying Party to the  
373 Asserting Party is just one way to process this use case. However as a number of vendors support this  
374 scenario, for completeness, the use case is described in this document.

### 375 **4.3.1 Detailed Processing for the Destination-Site-First Scenario**

376 Figure 12 illustrates the processing steps for the Browser/Artifact Profile. Processing is a variant of the  
377 previous use case.

378

379

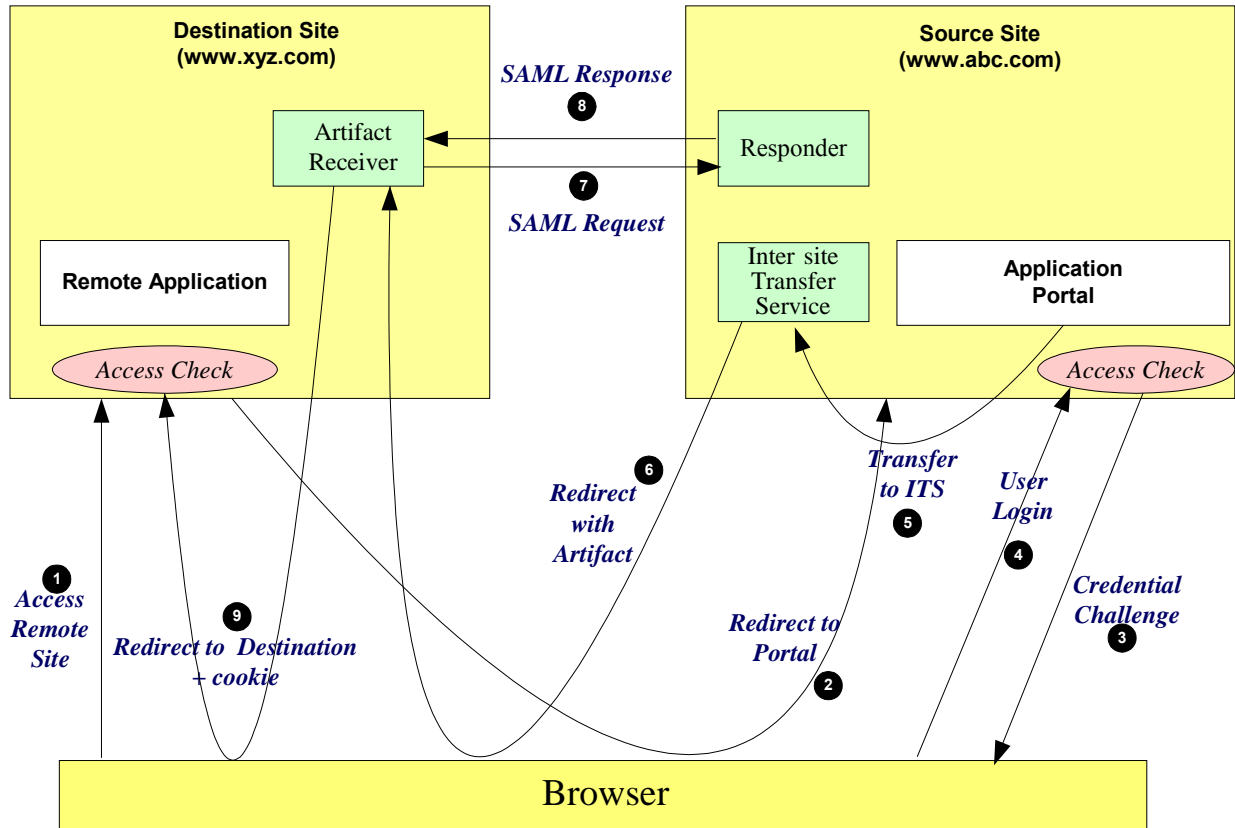


Figure 12: Browser/Artifact Profile - Destination-Site-First – Detailed Processing

380  
381

- 382 1. The user accesses the destination web site ([www.xyz.com](http://www.xyz.com)).
- 383 2. The destination web site performs an access check and determines that the user must be  
384 authenticated by the central site (source site). A redirection is issued to the source site. Typically, this  
385 redirection is to the central site's Inter-site Transfer Service.
- 386 3. The source site (the asserting party) challenges the user for their credentials.
- 387 4. The user supplies back credentials, for instance username and password.
- 388 5. The portal application then directs the request to the local Inter-site Transfer Service (in this example,  
389 hosted on the same web site). The request contains the URL of the resource on the destination site  
390 originally requested.
- 391 6. The Inter-site Transfer Service generates an assertion for the user while also creating an artifact. The  
392 artifact contains the source ID of the [www.abc.com](http://www.abc.com) SAML responder together with a reference to the  
393 assertion (the AssertionHandle). The Inter-site Transfer Service then sends back an HTTP redirection  
394 response to the browser, with the HTTP location header containing the URL of the Artifact Receiver  
395 service, the TARGET URL, and the artifact.
- 396 7. On receiving the HTTP message, the Artifact Receiver on the destination site sends a SAML request to  
397 the [www.abc.com](http://www.abc.com) SAML responder containing the artifact supplied by the Inter-site Transfer service of  
398 [www.abc.com](http://www.abc.com).
- 399 8. The [www.abc.com](http://www.abc.com) SAML responder supplies back a SAML response message containing the  
400 assertion generated during step 7.
- 401 9. The Artifact Receiver, on the destination web site, sends a redirection message containing a cookie  
402 back to the browser. The cookie identifies the session. The Browser then processes the redirect  
403 message and issues a HTTP GET to the TARGET resource on [www.xyz.com](http://www.xyz.com) that was originally  
404 requested in step 1.

405



## 5 Documentation Roadmap

406

407 Following is the SAML V1.1 suite of specifications, approved and published on 2 September 2003.

Short Name	Document Identifier	Description
Assertions and Protocol (also known as the "core" spec)	oasis-sstc-saml-core-1.1	Defines the syntax and semantics for XML-encoded assertions about authentication, attributes and authorization, and for the protocol that conveys this information.
Assertion schema	oasis-sstc-saml-schema-assertion-1.1	The schema document governing the formal definition of SAML's XML-form assertions.
Protocol schema	oasis-sstc-saml-schema-protocol-1.1	The schema document governing the formal definition of SAML's XML-form request and response protocol messages.
Bindings and Profiles	oasis-sstc-saml-bindings-1.1	Defines protocol bindings and profiles for the use of SAML assertions and request-response messages in communications protocols and frameworks.
Security and Privacy Considerations	oasis-sstc-saml-sec-consider-1.1	Describes and analyzes the security and privacy properties of SAML. (Note that the Bindings and Profiles specification also contains some security information pertaining to each profile.)
Conformance Program Specification	oasis-sstc-saml-conform-1.1	Describes the program and technical requirements for SAML conformance.
Glossary	oasis-sstc-saml-glossary-1.1	Defines terms used throughout the SAML specifications and related documents.

408

409 The following are other documents related to SAML V1.1.

Short Name	Document Identifier	Description
Technical Overview	sstc-saml-tech-overview-1.1	This document. It provides an overview of basic SAML goals and concepts and the flows specified in the SAML profiles.
Differences from V1.0	sstc-saml-diff-1.1-draft-01	A description of the changes made to the SAML specifications from V1.0 to V1.1.
V1.1 Errata	sstc-saml-errata-1.1-draft-16	A list of problems and resolutions kept during the public review of the SAML V1.1 Committee Specifications. Note that this is <b>not</b> a list of errata on the final SAML V1.1 specifications. <b>This is a historical document only.</b>
V1.1 Issues	sstc-saml-1.1-issues-draft-02	The list of issues from which the SSTC worked during the creation of SAML V1.1. <b>This is a historical document only.</b>

410

411 These documents can all be found at the public SAML home page:

412

[http://www.oasis-open.org/committees/tc\\_home.php?wg\\_abbrev=security](http://www.oasis-open.org/committees/tc_home.php?wg_abbrev=security)

---

## 413 A. Acknowledgments

414 The editors would like to acknowledge the contributions of the OASIS Security Services Technical  
415 Committee, whose voting members at the time of Committee Draft approval were:

- 416 • Conor P. Cahill, AOL, Inc.
- 417 • Hal Lockhart, BEA
- 418 • Gavenraj Sodhi, Computer Associates
- 419 • Tim Alsop, CyberSafe
- 420 • John Hughes, Entegrity Solutions (editor)
- 421 • Paul Madsen, Entrust
- 422 • Miguel Pallares, Ericsson
- 423 • Irving Reid, Hewlett-Packard Company
- 424 • Paula Austel, IBM
- 425 • Maryann Hondo, IBM
- 426 • Michael McIntosh, IBM
- 427 • Anthony Nadalin, IBM
- 428 • Scott Cantor, Individual
- 429 • Bob Morgan, Individual
- 430 • Prateek Mishra, Netegrity (co-chair)
- 431 • Peter Davis, Neustar
- 432 • Frederick Hirsch, Nokia
- 433 • John Kemp, Nokia
- 434 • Nicholas Sauriol, Nortel
- 435 • Charles Knouse, Oblix
- 436 • Steve Anderson, OpenNetwork
- 437 • Darren Platt, Ping Identity
- 438 • Jim Lien, RSA Security
- 439 • John Linn, RSA Security
- 440 • Rob Philpott, RSA Security (co-chair)
- 441 • Dipak Chopra, SAP
- 442 • Jahan Moreh, Sigaba
- 443 • Bhavna Bhatnagar, Sun Microsystems
- 444 • Jeff Hodges, Sun Microsystems
- 445 • Eve Maler, Sun Microsystems (editor)
- 446 • Ron Monzillo, Sun Microsystems
- 447 • Mike Beach, The Boeing Company
- 448 • Greg Whitehead, Trustgenix

---

## B. Notices

450 OASIS takes no position regarding the validity or scope of any intellectual property or other rights that  
451 might be claimed to pertain to the implementation or use of the technology described in this document or  
452 the extent to which any license under such rights might or might not be available; neither does it represent  
453 that it has made any effort to identify any such rights. Information on OASIS's procedures with respect to  
454 rights in OASIS specifications can be found at the OASIS website. Copies of claims of rights made  
455 available for publication and any assurances of licenses to be made available, or the result of an attempt  
456 made to obtain a general license or permission for the use of such proprietary rights by implementors or  
457 users of this specification, can be obtained from the OASIS Executive Director.

458 OASIS invites any interested party to bring to its attention any copyrights, patents or patent applications, or  
459 other proprietary rights which may cover technology that may be required to implement this specification.  
460 Please address the information to the OASIS Executive Director.

461 **Copyright © OASIS Open 2004. All Rights Reserved.**

462 This document and translations of it may be copied and furnished to others, and derivative works that  
463 comment on or otherwise explain it or assist in its implementation may be prepared, copied, published and  
464 distributed, in whole or in part, without restriction of any kind, provided that the above copyright notice and  
465 this paragraph are included on all such copies and derivative works. However, this document itself does  
466 not be modified in any way, such as by removing the copyright notice or references to OASIS, except as  
467 needed for the purpose of developing OASIS specifications, in which case the procedures for copyrights  
468 defined in the OASIS Intellectual Property Rights document must be followed, or as required to translate it  
469 into languages other than English.

470 The limited permissions granted above are perpetual and will not be revoked by OASIS or its successors  
471 or assigns.

472 This document and the information contained herein is provided on an "AS IS" basis and OASIS  
473 DISCLAIMS ALL WARRANTIES, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO ANY  
474 WARRANTY THAT THE USE OF THE INFORMATION HEREIN WILL NOT INFRINGE ANY RIGHTS OR  
475 ANY IMPLIED WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY OR FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE.