

Utilizing Customer IAM to Better Enable and Protect Your Organization

Enable faster delivery of applications and improved customer satisfaction with a multi-channel approach to identity, access and API security.

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Executive Summary

Today's customers commonly demand access from any device to any app, anywhere, anytime. But managing high-volume customer identities and supporting digital interactions across Web-, mobile- and API-based environments raise new identity and access management challenges and magnify any gaps or inefficiencies in security. Customer IAM (CIAM) can help improve the customer experience and reduce risk.

Challenge

Customers are embracing new technologies, and their expectations are changing rapidly in today's connected world. They want to interact through a variety of applications at any time and from any device. All consumer-facing organizations are racing to enable new interaction channels to innovate while growing their business and improving customer loyalty. As they expand online services and add mobile and social media activities, there is an increasing need to coordinate these activities—securely.

Opportunity

A comprehensive CIAM solution should provide an integrated approach to enabling and securing multiple channels of customer interaction. It would include identity management, access management, advanced authentication, federation and API management in a centralized, scalable format that improves engagement throughout the customer lifecycle.

Benefits

Providing a high-quality customer experience across multiple channels is a difficult challenge, but when it's done in a coordinated and secure fashion, it can result in many benefits. Customer IAM can improve customer satisfaction, reduce time to market and increase the adoption of new services.

Section 1:

The Challenges of Identity and Access in an Application Economy

The “Consumerization of IT” has led to the “Age of the Customer” and put a new emphasis on digital relationships. Customers have shown through their aggressive adoption of Web and mobile applications that they prefer digital interaction for a wide range of activities. As a result, organizations are rushing to provide more robust and engaging forms of digital interaction to better serve their customer base and take advantage of the lower cost model.

Simplifying the User Experience—Securely

One of the key differences between traditional “employee-focused” IAM and CIAM is the stronger focus on the user experience. This needs to be a major consideration across the entire customer lifecycle and across the increasing number of digital interaction methods. In many instances there is a need to provide simplified registration or initial logon by letting prospects use existing social identities. Once logged in, customers need single sign-on (SSO) across the organization’s Web applications so that customer can move around freely. SSO should be extended to both cloud-based services and partner websites as necessary to provide a seamless experience for the customer.

Appropriate, strong authentication should be required to protect the customer’s identity and the organization’s data, but it must be done in a user-friendly format that leverages easy-to-use, self-service capabilities whenever possible. As organizations provide multiple digital interaction methods for Web applications, mobile apps and API-based Web services, it is important to be able to provide low-friction security to help increase adoption, loyalty and revenue.

The Right Security for the Right Channels at the Right Time

The key challenge is to deliver innovative new applications and services quickly and to provide an excellent customer experience across multiple channels in a secure, cost effective manner. To enable and secure multi-channel relationships you need to:

- Improve the customer experience across multiple interaction channels.
- Accelerate the delivery of new applications and services.
- Provide risk-appropriate security across interaction channels.

Another major challenge is keeping up with the volume and velocity of applications and services that are being created to support this new paradigm. As digital interactions become increasingly complex, with more application types, device types and transactions, identity and access security becomes more critical for both the organization and their customers. At the same time, the business needs to be able to react quickly and deliver new services in a timely manner to compete.

Sometimes business units have done independent projects with different security approaches to meet the many requirements for new applications and services. This type of a siloed approach doesn't scale well and usually results in an uncoordinated customer experience and a slower development process. It also leads to escalating support and maintenance costs because IT has to support a growing number of security components. The IT organization needs to be able to provide quick and easy ways to incorporate the appropriate level of security without slowing down the development process and incurring undue expenses.

Providing the appropriate security across the different delivery methods and device types is another challenge. As organizations rush to deliver more Web applications, as well as to create hybrid and native mobile apps, it is important to be able to support the full range of identity-based security needs. This includes social sign-on, SSO, authentication, federation, authorization and administration. The only way to provide consistent and efficient security is to have a coordinated approach that enables SSO across application types and enforces security policies across delivery formats. In this fast-moving, competitive environment, it is important to provide the flexibility to handle new scenarios in an efficient and customer-convenient manner.

To support the growing number of websites, mobile applications and API-based Web services that are contained within them, IT has to create an environment that allows developers to easily select and include the appropriate security elements without delaying time to market (TTM) or degrading the customer experience. Managing the high volume of customer identities and enabling their secure interaction across a set of Web, hybrid and mobile apps from a variety of different devices is a big challenge.

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Section 2:

The Opportunity for a Coordinated Approach to CIAM

A comprehensive CIAM solution provides an integrated approach to enable and secure multiple channels of customer interaction. Integrating identity management, access management, advanced authentication, federation and API management in a centralized and scalable format improves engagement throughout the customer lifecycle. One security policy can easily be applied to multiple channels to provide consistent protection and a predictable user experience. This type of coordinated approach to identity and access security both speeds time-to-market and reduces ongoing support costs.

The diversity of delivery methods provide multiple opportunities to connect to customers. Up to this point, the majority of CIAM capabilities have been delivered as on-premises software. CIAM can be delivered this way as an extension to existing systems or as a separate environment. It can also be delivered as a set of cloud-based services, which avoids the typical implementation and infrastructure costs of on-premises solutions. Cloud-based CIAM has a quicker time-to-value but doesn't allow for the same level of customization as on-premises implementations.

From a business perspective a CIAM solution should:

- Enable simple, user-friendly interactions and transactions across multiple applications and devices.
- Provide the flexibility to quickly adjust to new marketplace trends or consumer habits.
- Enforce the necessary security with minimal impact to the user experience.
- Be easy to manage and offer centralized controls across channels.
- Provide high scalability and availability for critical customer-facing business services.

From an IT or security perspective a CIAM solution should:

- Provide a single source of identity management that ties together sessions from multiple channels in one system.
- Enable SSO to on-premises, cloud-based and mobile applications that utilize common authentication methods across channels to simplify the experience and provide consistent security.
- Deliver common security policies across multiple channels by providing seamless federation to cross-domain or partner applications and services.
- Include a user directory that can efficiently scale to hundreds of millions of users.
- Enable automated provisioning and access request/approval workflows to applications and services.

“ One security policy can easily be applied to multiple channels to provide consistent protection and a predictable user experience. This type of coordinated approach to identity and access security both speeds time-to-market and reduces ongoing support costs.”

Section 3:

The Benefits of an Identity, Access and API Management Solution

Get better business insight and enable targeted marketing by aggregating a user's multiple identities into a single account and creating a consolidated view into the account's activities. A higher initial adoption rate and increased loyalty are the benefits from engaging customers in a consistent, intuitive and secure manner. Delivering services to new places and facilitating the use of your services by partners and developers can open new routes to market and expand your brand awareness and revenue.

A comprehensive identity, access and API management solution can support business innovation across web, mobile and APIs by allowing organizations to:

- Simplify registration and logon (including social identities when appropriate).
- Accelerate the time-to-value for new customer-facing applications and services by standardizing the security elements and policies and making it easier to create and find secure APIs.
- Deploy a centralized security solution that covers a broad range of identity and access management challenges and can reduce the total cost of ownership and administration overhead.
- Address different types of consumers and provide them with the appropriate security measures and a consistent experience across channels, whether the delivery mode is on-premises, hybrid or from the cloud.
- Establish federation and collaboration with other businesses, including the social Web.

“Delivering services to new places and facilitating the use of your services by partners and developers can open new routes to market and expand your brand awareness and revenue.”

Section 4:

Conclusion

A centralized approach to identity, authentication and access management across both traditional and new channels of customer interaction helps provide a consistent and positive user experience. Having a flexible, scalable CIAM solution in place can also accelerate time-to-market with innovative new services. The combination of being quick-to-market with service innovations and having a great user experience with consistent security is a good recipe for increased adoption and customer loyalty.



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