



Identity is one of those sneaky subjects. The issues surrounding it creep up on you from every angle and you often don't see them coming until they're smack dab in the middle of where you want to go. For many, identity has been a tactical conversation. Get the user in and out of the right application and get a record of it. What's the big deal? It sounds simple, yet it's the basis of just about everything we want to do in a digital world. Don't underestimate its complexity or significance.

For those with the insight and appetite to innovate and take advantage of disruptive new technologies, 2011 is going to be a watershed year because finally, we're going to get a better picture of all the players who will eventually make up the identity ecosystem. Here are a few of the emerging trends to watch for in 2011 and beyond.

### **Cloud Identity Providers**

We're on the cusp of a major new service provider category, the Cloud Identity Provider. The entities behind these services will be responsible for vetting that you are who you say you are and then subsequently authenticating you to the Internet. They will be the trusted guardians of our digital identity from a consumer perspective. Google, Facebook, Microsoft and soon I believe every Telco will all line up to battle for this trusted position in our lives, enabling enterprises to know and engage with consumers in ways that were simply not possible a few short years ago.

### **Directories in the Cloud**

The directory has been the anchor of user management within the enterprise for decades.

That's likely to change in the next ten years. For starters, federation is now able to connect users from outside domains, thus enabling a shift in management to the rightful owner. But the real reason change is inevitable is simple - it's a cost thing. Installing and running directories is expensive. Managing those users is also expensive and to make matters worse, today it's largely redundant. Everyone is managing the same set of users, multiple times. So both from an infrastructure point of view as well as a management point of view, it's inevitable that change is in our future. Identity portability is the enabler. Once identity becomes intrinsically portable (aka "federated"), something interesting happens, it becomes possible for someone else to do it. A best of breed entity which is willing to take on all of the cost, complexity, customer service and risk of managing users, and then federating those users on behalf of the rightful owner into the appropriate applications. This may all sound like science fiction today, and for the most part, what I'm describing is still many years off, but the beginnings of this are all around us, and trust me when I say when the directory becomes unhinged from the enterprise it's going to force a radical shift in thinking to the end-state.

### Mobile Identity

I read an interesting newsletter recently focused on Telco 2.0 wherein the telecom industry is waking up to the goldmine they're sitting on with respect to mobile user identity. I've always believed the mobile device was the ultimate personal identity device and the keystone to just about everything in our digital future. Not only is our workforce increasingly mobile and needing real-time access to corporate resources, but the mobile device is unique in its ability to provide nearly constant authentication and engage the user in authorization decisions. The conversation is just beginning, so don't expect a breakthrough tomorrow, but mobile identity is coming, and it's going to be really big.

As I think about 2011 and beyond and Ping Identity's vision to enable One Secure Identityä, what's clear to me is that our role as the identity industry Switzerland in and amongst the various vendors, platforms and environments couldn't be more needed. We're now within years of witnessing the end-state, where identity becomes a full-fledged citizen and an independent layer of network infrastructure. While stack vendors battles to lock customers into their solution stacks, it's Ping's role to ensure that everything works together and that companies maintain their choice, balance and openness when it comes to seamlessly connecting users and applications over the Internet.

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