

Swedish council enjoys secure user authentication

Vallentuna kommun automates and secures its Active Directory management for government and HR systems—saving time and money

Key Facts

Company

Vallentuna kommun

Industry

Local government

Country

Sweden

Employees

2,500 (plus 5,000 students)

Website

www.vallentuna.se/sv/english/

Challenges

To deliver secure, Active Directory-based single sign-on for its users, Vallentuna kommun needed to connect easily and securely to both its internal HR system and to the national social security and tax systems. It also wanted to eliminate the security risks inherent in its manual deprovisioning of users.

Results

- Delivered the secure, AD-based access authentication required for single sign-on
- Eliminated the need for weeks of work by expensive external consultants and delivered quality results in just hours, a time savings of 87 percent


Products

Active Roles

One of 290 municipalities in Sweden, Vallentuna kommun is situated 25 kilometres north of Stockholm. Its council provides local government services to its growing population of 30,000 residents, including delivering IT services to the municipality's 7,500 employees and students. The council turned to One Identity for help to improve its identity and access management (IAM).

Secure access for users and IT staff

Vallentuna kommun's IT department had decided to introduce a secure, single point of user access across its multiple IT systems. "Every day, our teachers need to access different systems to check timetables, homework submissions, students' grades, etc., and each system required a different login procedure," explains Stefan Nyberg, IT Manager at Vallentuna kommun. "In one day, a teacher would typically access 10 different systems, around 15 times." Implementing a secure, single point of user



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Stefan Nyberg, IT Manager Vallentuna kommun

access would simplify access, improve security and reduce maintenance requirements.

Automated and secure user and group management

The municipality wanted to make use of its current infrastructure, which was based on Microsoft® Active Directory® (AD). However, stronger authentication was required in order to guarantee security. “Our systems would need to verify the identity of each AD user against our HR system,” continues Nyberg. “Equally, any new employees in our HR system would need to be verified against the national social security and tax systems.” The council needed a way to automate secure connections between these different systems.

Security also requires automated user and group termination

Vallentuna kommun also recognised that its current manual method of disabling AD accounts when employees stopped working for the

municipality or when students finished school was insufficient, since accounts could remain active for months afterwards.

“We undertook a cleanup of old and unused AD accounts twice a year,” says Nyberg. “We hadn’t experienced any problems with this approach, but we recognised that it posed a security risk.” Consequently, the municipality wanted its AD to be updated in line with the HR system so that when an employee or student left, their corresponding AD account would be disabled automatically.

Custom solutions are expensive

However, Vallentuna kommun’s IT department knew how expensive it would be to create a custom solution to link its HR and AD systems and to securely connect to the government systems. “We had previously used an external IT consultant for this type of work, which had proved expensive,” says Nyberg.

Some vendors’ products are also expensive to purchase and time-consuming to configure

Vallentuna kommun investigated the AD management solutions available on the market. “We initially considered solutions from the larger vendors such as Novell and Microsoft,” says Nyberg. “However, these solutions were big, expensive and needed to be configured, so there wasn’t a significant business case for replacing our bespoke scripts.”

User lifecycle management and connections to a wide variety of systems are simplified

Vallentuna kommun had come across One Identity at various IT events and were impressed by its solutions. In particular, the council found that Active Roles offered a more efficient approach whilst still delivering the necessary security.

Active Roles delivers an efficient and secure administrative process for managing user and group lifetimes. It automates not only the process of creating AD user and group accounts in AD, but also of reassigning and removing user access rights—when a user’s access needs to be changed or removed, updates are made automatically in AD and other Windows systems, as well as any AD-joined systems (e.g., Unix, Linux and Mac OS).

Active Roles connects to a wide range of common systems—such as HR, ERP, corporate directories, databases and applications—and synchronises identities and passwords. This enables an Active Directory user to log on to non-AD applications and data sources. As user identity requirements change, the connector provisions and matches existing users and groups, synchronised group memberships and properties, and deprovisions users. And, unlike other synchronisation solutions, Active Roles requires no programming.

Easy connection to other systems and synchronisation of identity data strengthens security

With Active Roles, Vallentuna kommun was able to implement AD-based single sign-on with the enhanced security of verification of AD users against the HR system. They were also able to connect securely to government systems to verify the identities of new employees.

The IAM solutions also ensure that users’ AD accounts are automatically deprovisioned as soon as a termination is recorded in the HR system. “Any unused AD accounts are automatically disabled when their users leave the municipality,” comments Nyberg. “This reduces the risk of security threats by previous employees.”

No external consultants slashes costs and timelines

The IAM solutions also enabled the municipality to establish the required connections to government systems—and the work took just a few hours, rather than weeks of custom development, which translates to significant cost savings. “By using Active Roles, it took us less than two hours to connect to systems that previously took an external consultant two days to connect to, which equates to a time saving of 87 percent,” notes Nyberg. “Similarly, when we needed to connect to Sweden’s social security system, we got a quote from a consultant for two weeks of work; it took us just half a day using the Identity Manager solution. This is a 95 percent time saving, and a considerable cost saving.”

Next on the agenda: using roles to streamline permissions management

The IT team at Vallentuna kommun currently runs a script in order to change permissions when employees move to different roles, but they recognise that Identity Manager can deliver the same functionality far more efficiently and effectively. “This script works OK, but it’s a beast to run and maintain, and it’s particularly hard to diagnose problems when they arise,” says Nyberg.

About One Identity

The One Identity family of identity and access management (IAM) solutions, offers IAM for the real world including business-centric, modular and integrated, and future-ready solutions for identity governance, access management, and privileged management.

Learn more: OneIdentity.com