

Workgroup: TODO Working Group

Internet-Draft:

draft-secure-credential-transfer-00

Published: 21 October 2021

Intended Status: Standards Track

Expires: 24 April 2022

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Secure Credential Transfer

Abstract

This document describes a mechanism to transfer digital credentials securely between two devices. Secure credentials may represent a digital key to a hotel room, a digital key to a door lock in a house or a digital key to a car. Devices that share credentials may belong to the same or two different platforms (e.g. iOS and Android). Secure transfer may include one or more write and read operations. Credentials transfer needs to be performed securely due to the sensitive nature of the information.

Discussion Venues

This note is to be removed before publishing as an RFC.

Source for this draft and an issue tracker can be found at <https://github.com/dimmyvi/secure-credential-transfer>.

Status of This Memo

This Internet-Draft is submitted in full conformance with the provisions of BCP 78 and BCP 79.

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1. Introduction

Today, there is no standard way of transferring digital credentials securely between two devices belonging to the same platform or two different platforms. This document proposes a solution to this problem by introducing a Relay server which allows two devices to exchange encrypted Provisioning Information securely. The Relay server solves this problem by creating and managing temporary mailbox storage.

Each mailbox can be referenced by devices using a unique mailbox identifier in a URL. The URL pointing to encrypted Provisioning Information is to be passed between devices directly over various channels (e.g. SMS, email, messaging applications). The Security Considerations section provides recommendations on passing the URL and the Secret securely.

This document describes a Hypertext (HTTP) Application Programming Interface (API) that allows Sender and Receiver devices to interact with a Relay server in order to perform secure credential transfer.

2. Terminology

The key words "MUST", "MUST NOT", "REQUIRED", "SHALL", "SHALL NOT", "SHOULD", "SHOULD NOT", "RECOMMENDED", "NOT RECOMMENDED", "MAY", and "OPTIONAL" in this document are to be interpreted as described in BCP 14 [[RFC2119](#)] [[RFC8174](#)] when, and only when, they appear in all capitals, as shown here.

General terms:

- *Relay Server - Web application exposing Secure Credential Transfer API to devices. It serves to securely transfer Provisioning Information between two devices (Sender and Receiver).

*Sender device - a device initiating a transfer of Provisioning Information to a Receiver device so that Receiver can register or provision this credential.

*Receiver device - a device that receives Provisioning Information from Sender device and uses it to register or provision Credential Information.

*Provisioning Partner - an entity which facilitates Credential Information lifecycle on a device. Lifecycle may include provisioning of credential, credential termination, credential update. API to Provisioning Partner is out of scope for this document.

*Provisioning Information - a set of data fields, allowing a device to generate Credential Information or receive it from Provisioning Partner and install it locally. The entire content of Provisioning Information is encrypted by Sender or Receiver device. Therefore, it is not visible to the Relay Server. The structure of Provisioning Information is specific to Provisioning Partner or type of Credential and out of the scope of this document.

*Credential Information - a set of data fields used to facilitate registration or provisioning of Credential Information on the Receiver's device.

*Secret - a symmetric encryption key shared by a pair of Sender and Receiver devices, used to encrypt Provisioning Information stored on a the Relay server. Secret stays the same for the entire credential transfer flow (one Secret per complete transfer). Provisioning Information stored on Relay server is always encrypted using the Secret. In Stateful flow all information exchanged by Sender and Receiver devices through Relay server is encrypted with the same Secret. Thus, effectively, Secret has a one-to-one relation with the mailbox.

API parameters:

*Device Claim - a unique token allowing the caller to read from / write data to the mailbox. Exactly one Sender device and one Receiver device should be able to read from / write secure payload to the mailbox. Sender device provides a Device Claim in order to create a mailbox. When the Relay server, having received a request from the Sender device, creates a mailbox, it binds this Sender's Device Claim to the mailbox. When the Receiver device first reads data from the mailbox it presents its Device Claim to the Relay Server, which binds the mailbox to the given Receiver device. Thus both Sender and Receiver devices are bound

to the mailbox (allowed to read from / write to it). Only Sender and Receiver devices that present valid Device Claims are allowed to send subsequent read/update/delete calls to the mailbox. The value shall be a UUID [[RFC4122](#)].

*Notification Token - a short or long-lived unique token stored by the Sender or Receiver device in a mailbox on the Relay server, which allows Relay server to send a push notification to the Sender or Receiver device, informing them of updates in the mailbox.

*MailboxIdentifier - Sender device-defined unique identifier for the given mailbox. The value shall be a UUID [[RFC4122](#)].

3. Credential transfer workflows

We define two flows for credential transfer: 1. Stateless (Relay server facilitates a single credential data transfer: Sender -> Relay -> Receiver) and 2. Stateful (Relay facilitates additional data transfers - there are multiple data transfers in this flow to prepare credential data for registering or provisioning by Receiver). The details are provided below.

Both stateless and stateful share the following common steps. The processes start with a Sender device composing a set of Provisioning Information, encrypting it with a Secret and storing encrypted Provisioning Information on a Relay server in a mailbox. A unique Mailbox Identifier is generated by the Sender device, created using a good source of entropy (preferably hardware-based entropy). Sender device generates a unique token - a Sender Device Claim - and stores it to the mailbox. Device Claim allows the Sender device presenting it to read and write data to / from the mailbox, thus binding it to the mailbox.

Sender device sends MailboxIdentifier to the Relay server as a part of CreateMailbox request. Once a mailbox is created, it has limited time to live. When expired, the mailbox shall be deleted - refer to DeleteMailbox endpoint. TimeToLive mailbox configuration in the request is required to use with the CreateMailbox call (refer to mailboxConfiguration request parameter).

Relay server builds a unique URL link to a mailbox (for example, "http://relayserver.com/m/1234567890") and returns it to the Sender device, which sends the link directly to the Receiver device over communication channel (e.g. SMS, email, iMessage). Please refer to section "Security Considerations" for more details.

Receiver device, having obtained both the URL link and the Secret, generates a unique token - a Receiver Device Claim - and passes it

to the Relay server in order to read the encrypted Provisioning Information from the mailbox.

Relay server now binds a given pair of Sender and Receiver devices to the mailbox by provided Sender and Receiver Device Claims. Only bound devices are allowed to read or write data to the mailbox or to delete the mailbox.

3.1. Stateless workflow

The stateless workflow completes the common steps described in "Credential transfer workflows" section, then finishes the transfer completing the following steps. Receiver device, having read the encrypted Provisioning Information from the Relay mailbox, decrypts it with the Secret received from the Sender and starts credential registering or provisioning process on the device. Once the Receiver device has successfully provisioned credentials, it deletes the mailbox by sending a DeleteMailbox call to the Relay server.

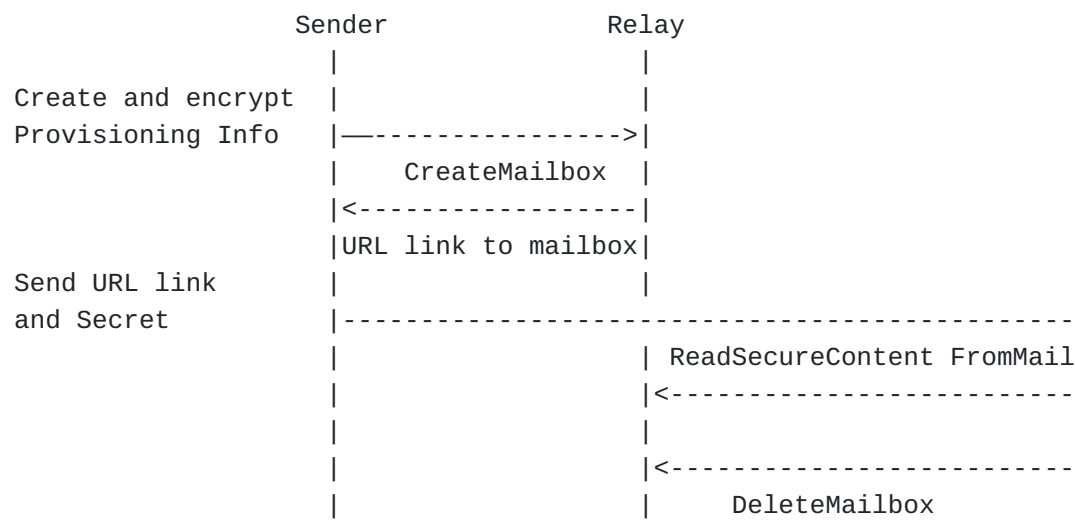


Figure 1: Sample stateless workflow

3.2. Stateful workflow

The stateful workflow completes the common steps described in "Credential transfer workflows" section, then finishes the transfer completing the following steps.

Then the Receiver device, having downloaded the encrypted Provisioning Information from the mailbox by URL and decrypted it with the Secret, generates a new structure of Provisioning Information, e.g. a digital key, and encrypts it with the same Secret, received from the Sender device. It then stores the payload in the same mailbox on the Relay server. In addition to the

encrypted payload, Receiver stores a Receiver Notification Token in the given mailbox.

Having received the encrypted Provisioning Information, the Relay server sends a Notification to the Sender device using the Sender Notification Token.

Sender device, having received the notification from the Relay server, reads secure content from the mailbox and decrypts all using the same Secret. Sender device generates new Provisioning Information, encrypts all fields using the Secret and stores all data in the same mailbox on the Relay server.

Relay server, having stored the data above, sends a notification to the Receiver device using Receiver Notification Token. Receiver device, having received the notification, reads the encrypted Provisioning Information, decrypts the data using the same Secret and uses this data to finalize credential registration or provisioning on device.

Once the Receiver device has successfully registered or provisioned credentials, it deletes the mailbox by sending a DeleteMailbox call to the Relay server. Sender device may terminate the secure credential transfer by deleting the mailbox it created at any time. Deletion of the mailbox on the Relay server stops any on-going credential transfer process.

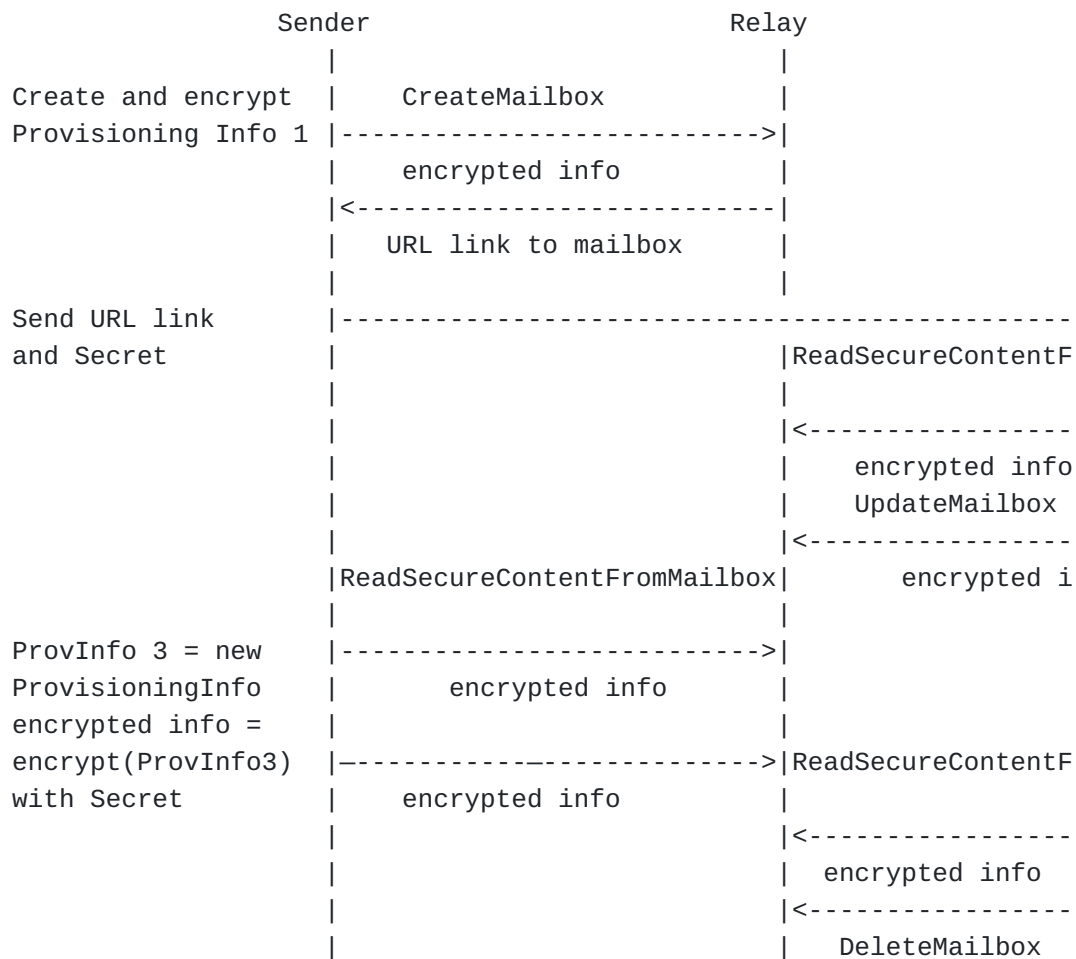


Figure 2: Sample stateful workflow

4. API connection details

The Relay server API endpoint **MUST** be accessed over HTTP using an https URI [[RFC2818](#)] and **SHOULD** use the default https port. Request and response bodies shall be formatted as either JSON or HTML (based on the API endpoint). The communication protocol used for all interfaces shall be HTTPs. All Strings **SHOULD** be UTF-8 encoded (Unicode Normalization Form C (NFC)). An API version **SHOULD** be included in the URI for all interfaces. The version at the time of this document's latest update is v1. The version shall be incremented by 1 for major API changes or backward incompatible iterations on existing APIs.

5. HTTP Headers: Mailbox-Correlation-ID

All requests to and from Relay server will have an HTTP header "Mailbox-Correlation-ID". The corresponding response to the API will have the same HTTP header, which **SHOULD** echo the value in the request header. This is used to identify the request associated to the response for a particular API request and response pair. The

value **SHOULD** be a UUID [[RFC4122](#)]. The request originator shall match the value of this header in the response with the one sent in the request. If response is not received, caller may retry sending the request with the same value of "Mailbox-Correlation-ID". Relay server **SHOULD** store the value of the last successfully processed "Mailbox-Correlation-ID" for each device based on the caller's Device Claim. A key-value pair of "Device Claim" to "Mailbox-Correlation-ID" is suggested to store the last successfully processed request for each device. In case of receiving a request with duplicated "Mailbox-Correlation-ID", Relay **SHOULD** respond to the caller with status code 201, ignoring the duplicate request body content.

6. HTTP access methods

6.1. CreateMailbox

An application running on a remote device can invoke this API on Relay Server to create a mailbox and store secure data content to it (encrypted data specific to a provisioning partner).

6.1.1. Endpoint

POST /{version}/m

6.1.2. Request Parameters:

Path parameters

*version (String, Required) - the version of the API. At the time of writing this document, "v1".

Header parameters

*deviceAttestation (String, Optional) - optional remote device-specific attestation data.

*deviceClaim (String, UUID, Required) - Device Claim (refer to Terminology).

6.1.3. Consumes

This API call consumes the following media types via the Content-Type request header: application/json

6.1.4. Request body

Request body is a complex structure, including the following fields:

*mailboxIdentifier (String, Required) - MailboxIdentifier (refer to Terminology).

*payload (Object, Required) - for the purposes of Secure Credential Transfer API, this is a data structure, describing Provisioning Information specific to Credential Provider. It consists of the following 2 key-value pairs:

1. "type": "AES128" (refer to Encryption Format section).
2. "data": BASE64-encoded binary value of ciphertext.

*displayInformation (String, Required) - for the purposes of the Secure Credential Transfer API, this is a JSON data blob. It allows an application running on a receiving device to build a visual representation of the credential to show to user. The data structure contains the following fields:

1. title - a String with the title of the credential (e.g. "Car Key")
2. description - a String with brief description of the credential (e.g. "a key to my personal car")
3. imageURL - a link to a picture representing the credential visually.

*notificationToken (Object, Optional) - optional notification token used to notify an appropriate remote device that the mailbox data has been updated. Data structure includes the following:

1. type (String, Required) - notification token name. Used to define which Push Notification System to be used to notify appropriate remote device of a mailbox data update. (E.g. "com.apple.apns" for APNS)
2. tokenData (String, Required) - notification token data (Hex or Base64 encoded based on the concrete implementation) - application-specific - refer to appropriate Push Notification System specification.

*mailboxConfiguration (Object, Optional) - optional mailbox configuration, defines access rights to the mailbox, mailbox

expirationTime. Required at the time of the mailbox creation.
Data structure includes the following:

1. accessRights (String, Optional) - optional access rights to the mailbox for Sender and Receiver devices. Default access to the mailbox is Read and Delete. Value is defined as a combination of the following values: "R" - for read access, "W" - for write access, "D" - for delete access. Example "RD" - allows to read from the mailbox and delete it.
2. timeToLive (String, required) - Mailbox time to live in seconds. E.g. "8640" for 24 hours. Mailbox has a limited time to live. Once expired, it shall be deleted - refer to DeleteMailbox endpoint.

```
{
  "notificationToken": {
    "name": "com.apple.apns",
    "tokenData": "APNS1234...QW"
  }
}
```

Figure 3: Apple Push Token Example

```
{
  "mailboxIdentifier" : "12345678-9...A-BCD",
  "displayInformation" : {
    "title" : "Hotel Pass",
    "description" : "Some Hotel Pass",
    "imageUrl" : "https://hotel.com/sharingImage"
  },
  "payload" : {
    "type": "AES128",
    "data": "FDEC...987654321"
  },
  "notificationToken" : {
    "type" : "com.apple.apns",
    "tokenData" : "APNS...1234"
  },
  "mailboxConfiguration" : {
    "accessRights" : "RWD",
    "timeToLive" : "8640"
  }
}
```

Figure 4: Create Mailbox Request Example

6.1.5. Responses

200 Status: "200" (OK)

ResponseBody: - urlLink (String, Required) - a full URL link to the mailbox including fully qualified domain name and mailbox Identifier.

```
{
  "urlLink":"relayserver.com/m/12345678-9...A-BCD"
}
```

Figure 5: Create Mailbox Response Example

201 Status: "201" (Created) - response to a duplicated request (duplicated "Mailbox-Correlation-Id"). Relay server should respond to duplicated requests with 201 without creation of a new mailbox. "Mailbox-Correlation-Id" passed in the first CreateMailbox request's header shall be stored by the Relay server and compared to the same value in the subsequent requests to identify duplicated requests. If duplicate is found, Relay shall not create a new mailbox, but respond with 201 instead. The value of "Mailbox-Correlation-Id" of the last successfully completed request should be stored based on the Device Claim passed by the caller.

ResponseBody: - urlLink (String, Required) - a full URL link to the mailbox including fully qualified domain name and mailbox Identifier.

400 Bad Request - invalid request has been passed (can not parse or required fields missing).

401 Unauthorized - calling device is not authorized to create a mailbox. E.g. a device presented the incorrect deviceClaim or mailbox with the provided mailboxIdentifier already exists.

6.2. UpdateMailbox

An application running on a remote device can invoke this API on Relay Server to update secure data content in an existing mailbox (encrypted data specific to a Provisioning Partner). The update effectively overwrites the secure payload previously stored in the mailbox.

6.2.1. Endpoint

PUT /{version}/m/{mailboxIdentifier}

6.2.2. Request Parameters

Path parameters:

*version (String, Required) - the version of the API. At the time of writing this document, "v1".

*mailboxIdentifier(String, Required) - MailboxIdentifier (refer to Terminology).

Header parameters:

*deviceAttestation (String, Optional) - optional remote device-specific attestation data.

*deviceClaim (String, UUID, Required) - Device Claim (refer to Terminology).

6.2.3. Consumes

This API call consumes the following media types via the Content-Type request header: application/json

6.2.4. Request body

Request body is a complex structure, including the following fields:

*payload (String, Required) - for the purposes of Secure Credential Transfer API, this is a JSON metadata blob, describing Provisioning Information specific to Credential Provider.

*notificationToken (Object, Required) - Mandatory notification token used to notify an appropriate remote device that the mailbox data has been updated. Data structure includes the following: - type (String, Required) - notification token name. Used to define which Push Notification System to be used to notify appropriate remote device of a mailbox data update. (E.g. "com.apple.apns" for APNS) - tokenData (String, Required) - notification token data (Hex or Base64 encoded based on the concrete implementation) - application-specific - refer to appropriate Push Notification System specification

```

{
  "payload" : {
    "type": "AES128",
    "data": "FDEC...987654321"
  },
  "notificationToken":{
    "type" : "com.apple.apns",
    "tokenData" : "APNS...1234"
  }
}

```

Figure 6: Update Mailbox Request Example

6.2.5. Responses

200 Status: "200" (OK)

201 Status: "201" (Created) - response to a duplicated request (duplicated "Mailbox-Correlation-Id"). Relay server should respond to duplicated requests with 201 without performing mailbox update. "Mailbox-Correlation-Id" passed in the first UpdateMailbox request's header shall be stored by the Relay server and compared to the same value in the subsequent requests to identify duplicated requests. If duplicate is found, Relay shall not perform mailbox update, but respond with 201 instead. The value of "Mailbox-Correlation-Id" of the last successfully completed request should be stored based on the Device Claim passed by the caller.

400 Bad Request - invalid request has been passed (can not parse or required fields missing).

401 Unauthorized - calling device is not authorized to update the mailbox. E.g. a device presented the incorrect deviceClaim.

404 Not Found - mailbox with provided mailboxIdentifier not found.

6.3. DeleteMailbox

An application running on a remote device can invoke this API on Relay Server to close the existing mailbox after it served its purpose. Receiver or Sender device needs to present a deviceClaim in order to close the mailbox.

6.3.1. Endpoint

DELETE /{version}/m/{mailboxIdentifier}

6.3.2. Request Parameters

Path parameters:

*version (String, Required) - the version of the API. At the time of writing this document, "v1".

*mailboxIdentifier(String, Required) - MailboxIdentifier (refer to Terminology).

Header parameters:

*deviceAttestation (String, Optional) - optional remote device-specific attestation data.

*deviceClaim (String, UUID, Required) - Device Claim (refer to Terminology).

6.3.3. Responses

200 Status: "200" (OK)

401 Unauthorized - calling device is not authorized to delete a mailbox. E.g. a device presented the incorrect deviceClaim.

404 Not Found - mailbox with provided mailboxIdentifier not found. Relay server may respond with 404 if the Mailbox Identifier passed by the caller is invalid or mailbox has already been deleted (as a result of duplicate DeleteMailbox request).

6.4. ReadDisplayInformationFromMailbox

An application running on a remote device can invoke this API on Relay Server to retrieve public display information content from a mailbox. Display Information shall be returned in OpenGraph format (please refer to <https://ogp.me> for details).

6.4.1. Endpoint

GET /{version}/m/{mailboxIdentifier}

6.4.2. Request Parameters

Path parameters:

*version (String, Required)- the version of the API. At the time of writing this document, "v1".

*mailboxIdentifier(String, Required) - MailboxIdentifier (refer to Terminology).

6.4.3. Responses

200 Status: "200" (OK)

ResponseBody :

*displayInformation (String, Required) - visual representation of digital credential in OpenGraph format (please refer to <https://ogp.me> for details).

```
"<html prefix="og: https://ogp.me/ns#">
  <head>
    <title>Hotel Pass</title>
    <meta property="og:title" content="Hotel Pass" />
    <meta property="og:type" content="image/jpeg" />
    <meta property="og:description" content="Some Hotel Pass" />
    <meta property="og:url" content="share://" />
    <meta property="og:image" content="https://website.com/photos/photo
    <meta property="og:image:width" content="612" />
    <meta property="og:image:height" content="408" /></head>
  </html>"
```

Figure 7: Read Display Information Response Example

401 Unauthorized - calling device is not authorized to create a mailbox. E.g. a device presented the incorrect deviceClaim.

404 Not Found - mailbox with provided mailboxIdentifier not found.

6.5. ReadSecureContentFromMailbox

An application running on a remote device can invoke this API on Relay Server to retrieve secure payload content from a mailbox (encrypted data specific to a Provisioning Information Provider).

6.5.1. Endpoint

POST /{version}/m/{mailboxIdentifier}

6.5.2. Request Parameters

Path parameters:

*version (String, Required) - the version of the API. At the time of writing this document, "v1".

*mailboxIdentifier (String, Required) - MailboxIdentifier (refer to Terminology).

Header parameters:

*deviceAttestation (String, Optional) - optional remote device-specific attestation data.

*deviceClaim (String, UUID, Required) - Device Claim (refer to Terminology).

6.5.3. Responses

200 Status: "200" (OK)

ResponseBody :

*payload (String, Required) - for the purposes of Secure Credential Transfer API, this is a JSON metadata blob, describing Provisioning Information specific to Credential Provider.

*displayInformation (String, Required) - for the purposes of the Secure Credential Transfer API, this is a JSON data blob. It allows an application running on a receiving device to build a visual representation of the credential to show to user. Specific to Credential Provider.

```
{
  "displayInformation" : {
    "title" : "Hotel Pass",
    "description" : "Some Hotel Pass",
    "imageUrl" : "https://hotel.com/sharingImage"
  },
  "payload" : {
    "type": "AES128",
    "data": "FDEC...987654321"
  }
}
```

Figure 8: Read Secure Content Response Example

401 Unauthorized - calling device is not authorized to create a mailbox. E.g. a device presented the incorrect deviceClaim.

404 Not Found - mailbox with provided mailboxIdentifier not found.

7. Encryption format

The encrypted payload (Provisioning Information) should be a data structure having the following key-value pairs: "type", which defines the encryption algorithm and mode used and "data", which contains BASE-64 encoded binary value of ciphertext.

Currently proposed "type" includes the following algorithm and mode:

```
*"AES128": AES symmetric encryption algorithm with key length 128
bits, in GCM mode with no padding. Initialization Vector (IV) has
the length of 96 bits randomly generated and tag length of 128
bits. The IV shall be prepended to the payload, and the tag shall
be appended to the payload before sending (the resulting format
is IV || encrypted payload || tag). Please refer to [NIST-
SP800-38D] for the details of the encryption algorithm.

*"AES256": AES symmetric encryption algorithm with key length 256
bits, in GCM mode with no padding. Initialization Vector (IV) has
the length of 96 bits randomly generated and tag length of 128
bits. The IV shall be prepended to the payload, and the tag shall
be appended to the payload before sending (the resulting format
is IV || encrypted payload || tag). Please refer to [NIST-
SP800-38D] for the details of the encryption algorithm.

{
  "type" : "AES128",
  "data" : "IV  ciphertext  tag"
}
```

Figure 9: Secure Payload Format example

8. Security Considerations

The following threats and mitigations have been considered:

- Sender shares with the wrong receiver - Sender should be encouraged to share Secret over a channel allowing authentication of the receiver (e.g. voice).
- Provisioning Partners shall allow senders to cancel existing shares.
- Malicious receiver forwards the share to 3rd party without redeeming it or the Receiver's device is compromised.
- No mitigation, the Sender should only share with receivers they trust.
- Malicious receiver attempts re-use share
- Provisioning Partners shall ensure that the Provisioning Information of a share can only be redeemed once.
- Share URL accidental disclosure. (e.g. share URL sent as a message which gets displayed on a locked screen)
- Knowledge of Secret is required to access Provisioning Information and it should have been sent in a separate channel.
- Device Claim is required (if sender and receiver have already both contacted the Relay server)
- Network attacks
- Machine-in-the-middle
- Relay server shall only allow TLS connections
- URLs displayed to user should include the https scheme
- MailboxIdentifier guessing
- The MailboxIdentifier is a version 4 UUID [[RFC4122](#)] which should contain 122-bits of cryptographic entropy, making brute-force attacks impractical

8.1. Sender and Receiver safety

*Relay server shall be trusted by both Sender and Receiver devices.

*Receiver must be notified by Relay server in case integrity of provided URL was altered.

8.2. Sender/Receiver privacy

*At no time Relay server shall store or track the identities of both Sender and Receiver devices.

*The value of the Notification Token shall not contain information allowing the identification of the device providing it. It should also be different for every new share to prevent the Relay server from correlating different sharing.

*Notification token should only inform the corresponding device that there has been a data update on the mailbox associated to it (by Device Claim). Each device should keep track of all mailboxes associated with it and make read calls to appropriate mailboxes.

*Both Sender and Receiver devices should store the URL of the Relay server they use for an active act of credential transfer.

*The value of DeviceAttestation header parameter shall not contain information allowing the identification of the device providing it. It should also be different for every new share to prevent the Relay server from correlating different sharing.

*Display Information is not encrypted, therefore, it should not contain any information allowing to identify Sender or Receiver devices.

8.3. Credential's confidentiality and integrity

*Content of the mailbox shall be only visible to devices having Secret.

*It is recommended to send URL to the mailbox and the Secret over different channels (out-of-band) from Sender device to Receiver device (e.g. send URL over SMS and Secret over iMessage).

*Relay server **MUST** not receive the Secret with the MailboxIdentifier at any time.

*Content of the mailbox must guaranty it's integrity with cryptographic checksum (e.g. MAC, AES-GCM tag).

*Relay server shall periodically check and delete expired mailboxes (refer to timeToLive parameter in the CreateMailbox request).

*If the Sender device sends both URL and the Secret over the same channel as a single URL, the Sender **MUST** append the Secret as URI fragment [[RFC3986](#)], so that the resulting URL shall look as in the example below. Receiver device, upon receipt of such URL, must remove the Fragment (Secret) before calling the Relay server API.

"http://relayserver.com/v1/{mailboxIdentifier}#{Secret}"

Figure 10: Example of URL with Secret as URI Fragment

9. IANA Considerations

This document has no IANA actions.

10. References

10.1. Normative References

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10.2. Informative References

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Appendix A. Acknowledgments

TODO acknowledge.

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